

HOLLÓKŐ – A HUNGARIAN CASE STUDY FOR THE FRUITFUL COOPERATION OF LOCALS AND PROFESSIONALS

HOLLÓKO, un caso de estudio húngaro sobre la fructífera cooperación entre locales y profesionales.

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ABSTRACT

Hollókő, the first Hungarian World Heritage site, has been in the center of attention of many since its new status was elected in 1987. This city is a perfect example for the cooperation of local people and professionals in the fields of cultural heritage and monument protection. These two groups' fruitful, intense and continuous cooperation made it possible that Hungary became acknowledged by the international cultural heritage community. Other result is that the settlement ensures its existence and the locals have found new ways for keeping their economic status stabilized. Also, this new status has drawn the tourists' attention to the village and its protected and practiced traditions. It becomes part of the national cultural narrative too. Besides all the positive outcomes, it has to be noted that the perception of the settlement and its transformation to a World Heritage site have changed drastically throughout the decades. The processes in the past can be highly criticized with our contemporary notions. Accordingly, this site is also a good case study to illustrate the changes of focus from the Venice Charta to the Nara Documents and its most current additions.

Keywords: Hollókő, vernacular heritage, cooperation of diverse actors, first Hungarian World Heritage site, changed evaluation

RESUMEN

Hollókő, el primer lugar Patrimonio Mundial en Hungría, ha estado en el centro de atención desde que fue elegido para ese nuevo estatus en 1987. Esta ciudad es un ejemplo perfecto de la cooperación de la población local y los/as profesionales en los ámbitos del patrimonio cultural y de la protección de monumentos. La cooperación productiva, intensa y continua entre estos dos grupos hizo posible que Hungría pasara a ser reconocida por la comunidad internacional de patrimonio cultural. Otro resultado es que el asentamiento asegura su existencia y la población local ha encontrado nuevas formas de mantener estable su estatus económico. Asimismo, este nuevo estatus ha guiado la atención de los turistas hacia el pueblo y sus tradiciones

protegidas y practicadas. Se vuelve parte de la narrativa cultural nacional también. Además de todos los resultados positivos, debe ser indicado que la percepción del asentamiento y su transformación en un lugar Patrimonio Mundial ha cambiado drásticamente a lo largo de las décadas. Los procesos en el pasado pueden ser altamente criticados con nuestras nociones contemporáneas. De acuerdo con ello, este lugar es también un buen caso de estudio para ilustrar los cambios de atención desde la Carta de Venecia hasta los Documentos de Nara y sus aportaciones más actuales.

Palabras clave. *Hollókő, patrimonio vernáculo, cooperación de diversos actores, primer lugar Patrimonio Mundial de Hungría, evaluación cambiada.*

1. INTRODUCTION – THE COMPLEXITY OF ACTORS THEN AND NOW

Hollókő, this small Hungarian settlement has gone through a very vivid chain of decades since the second part of 20th century. From an almost dead village, it became the center of the Hungarian preservation and then of the international cultural heritage discourse. Through this journey, many have spoken about it in diverse ways and contexts (for instance Andorka 1979; Barabás 1984; Csima, Gergely and Kiss 2005; Faragó 2006; Flórián 1972; Kovács 2012). This intense discussion happened due to anniversaries (2012 was the 25th anniversary of Hollókő becoming UNESCO World Heritage site), official obligations (in 2014 the preparation of the next professional management plan for the upcoming period has started) as well as happy (in 2012 Hollókő won The Most Charming Village of the Country Award) and sad events (2005 was the year when András Román, the Hungarian professional, who worked tremendously for the accreditation of Hollókő as a World Heritage site, passed away).

Hollókő is not just one of the first World Heritage sites from Hungary, but one of the pioneer vernacular tangible heritages on UNESCO World Heritage list too (Kovácsi 1988). Moreover, the success of this settlement led to the establishment of Hungary's international professional network (for instance the Washington Charta of 1987 about the Rehabilitation of Historic Towns and Villages was verbalized by the Hungarian National Committee of ICOMOS), as well as, to many national and international conferences (such as the Békés Vernacular Architectural Conference every second year (see the publications about these conferences Népi Építészeti Tanács 2014) and the meetings towards the establishment of the Vernacular Architecture Charta (ICOMOS 1999). Without any doubt, this international reputation of Hollókő motivated the formation of numerous Hungarian similar organizations. For instance, today there are at least ten institutes that deal with Hollókő. These institutions also influence other local communities to establish similar formations for the protection of heritage in their own settlements (Hollókői civil szervezetek 2011).

The success of Hollókő can be seen in its social and political environment as a reaction to the governing power's intention to suppress national identity and anything that supports its values (Kovács, Molnár 2000). Such motivations were common in the political leadership of Central and Eastern Europe as the Soviet ideologies and influences were strong and general before 1989. However, it is important to mention that Hollókő is said to be famous also for its role in the Great Palócz War. According to historians, in the early modern period there was a chain of fights among the minorities of the country that is named later the Great Palócz War. An important venue of these fighting was at this settlement (Mezősiné 1997), which would provide ethnical significance to Hollókő. The traditional Palócz vernacular architecture trends (ICOMOS 1987) that are mentioned in the World Heritage proposal dated back to the 18th - 19th century, when this minority was a unique and distinct group. But in the late 20th century, when the settlement achieved its new status of international acknowledgement, the named minority had already integrated into the mainstream society (Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon 1977-1982). Accordingly, it would have been useful to research the still existing unique characteristics of this minority in Hollókő; but we should never forget that the current status cannot be identified as original Palócz vernacular architecture.

We could also detect the elements of a more recent social movement called festivity here (Gábor 2000; Zielinski 2014). Tourism, as the sole source of surviving available for the locals, has been present in diverse forms during the last five decades. At the beginning, Hollókő was an ideal location for national tourism by transforming the unique houses into hostel-like institutions. In a later phase, the settlement became a special destination, a kind of exotics for the foreign tourists to whom folk programs and other shows were also successfully offered (Örsi 2013). Today, festival is organized after festival not just the traditional one in Easter, when "Lady is not remained dry" as the marketing quote says (Hollókő Easter Festival 2015), but diverse events are organized almost every month (such as wine feasts and celebration of Saint Stephen, the first king of the country and the anniversary of the establishment of Hungary) (see in Hollókő's official website programs link). These touristic events are organized not just on the homepage of the settlement, but on diverse social media channels as well. It is important to point out that the category of Hollókő's facebook page has nothing to do with heritage, culture, history or even folk art. It goes solely under the category of Travel and Leisure that alludes to the intention of those forming the social presence of the village (Hollókő on Facebook 2014). Moreover, Hollókő leaves its physical boundaries behind not just with the help of the social media, but also by participating on programs outside the village, as well as, by creating their own events also outside the settlement, such as press conference or introductory event in the capital (almost 100 kilometers far away) (A Centrál Kávézóban mutatkozik be Hollókő 2014).

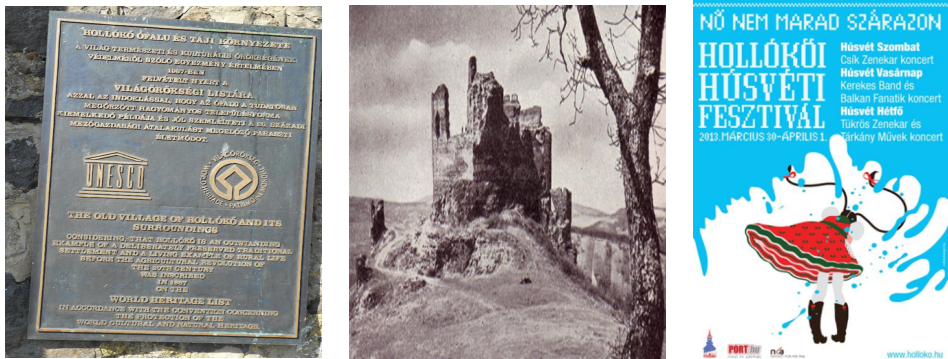


Figure 1: Complexity of Hollókő (parquet about the World Heritage status, the castle connected to the Great Palócz War, poster of the Easter Festival in Hollókő)

2. THE OPPOSITIONAL EVALUATIONS OF THE SETTLEMENT

Based on certain scholars' views, these changes are signs of natural adaptation to modern times. Also according to the world heritage status description, Hollókő is a living village, and as such, it follows the current trends and changes of life (Fejérdy 2008). Others would initiate rethinking of the concept of Hollókő, as the original values are not fully present there (for instance, the locals have moved out from the old buildings, hence there is no living settlement any more). As a result of that Hollókő does not fulfill the requirements (Sonkoly 2010). It is important to point out that even though Hollókő has lost those features, due to which it gained its world heritage status, there has not been any complain or reaction in this regard from the international community. This alludes to the fact that modifications took place within the international organization as well by moving the emphasis to other aspects of the requirements. Nowadays, besides authenticity, integrity and outstanding universal values (that one can find for instance in Venice Charter; ICOMOS 1964), cultural relativism and the participation and involvement of the locals are also important requisites in the evaluation processes (as the Nara Doctrine formulated it; ICOMOS 1999). A concrete example from Hollókő that shows the above described shift would be that even though the whole village was burnt down in the early 1900s, so there is no authentic, original house remained from the earlier centuries, the structure of the houses remained the same; hence it still grabs the authentic aspect of the previous centuries (Koris 1992). The focus of the protection moved from the whole building to its basic structure. Along these lines, later added extra elements have not been counted as mistakes or attacks on authenticity. For example, a Hopper window on the roof of a house originally served as the post office, and currently is the post museum and hostel was seen

acceptable partly as it has a form like a garret window made by tin from the outside (Magyar Építőipar 1991).

These diverse views can be combined and understood if we look at Hollókő as a representation of diverse identities. Sandra Lustig followed a similar chain of thoughts in her research of the mainly Eastern or Central European Jewish Quarters, when she points out to the possibilities and threats of the existing numerous requirements and the countless actors in these cases (Lustig 2009). This plural identity concept is justified with an article in the scholarly paper called *Magyar Építőipar (Hungarian Construction Industry)* in 1993 written by a chartered civil engineer, the planner of the National Monument Protection Office, Janos Koris. He sees the remodel of a house from Hollókő with original furniture in it (that he built with his colleagues) at the World Heritage exhibition in the UNESCO building in Paris, as a representation of the village, of our country's architectural values and its folk art, as well as, of the whole Central Europe (Koris 1993). Based on this chain of thought, the village too has such complex identity that has been formulated both by the locals, the professionals and members of the governing party.

3. HOLLÓKŐ, PART OF THE NATIONAL CULTURAL NARRATIVE DUE TO DIVERSE PARTICIPANTS

If Stuart Hall's network of findings about cultural identity is adapted on the evaluations of Hollókő, it can be easily seen that the settlement is not only the architectural uniqueness of a small village, but a category of an international organization (that is under the guidance and evaluation of diverse charters, agreements and recommendations) in the complex context of the constantly forming national institutional system and the multiple views of the media (Hall 1997). It is also possible to see Hollókő as the representation of the national identity, the value or the memory of a lost national value constructed by diverse communities within the Hungarian society. The five elements of national identity defined by Stuart Hall have been present throughout the history of the settlement.

Hall names the national narrative that unites the imagined community and establishes connections with the past through representations. He points out the roles of media and education (Hall 1997). At our case study the fact that one of the locals, namely Ferenc Kelemen, woodcut artist became member of a nation-wide network (called the Community of Lands, Periods and Museums) ensures the nation-wide importance and fame of the whole village (Kovács 1980). Similarly, the success of the female chorus of the village in a national television contest during the 1970s served the same aim (Mezősiné 2001). In both cases the audience was informed about the history of the settlement and the local culture too. As a more recent case, in 2003, the Hungarian National Bank announced a

series of decorative coins about Hungarian World Heritage sites that contained a 5000 Hungarian Forint coin made of pure silver featured Hollókő that also emphasized the expressed aim (Hollókő Ezüst Emlékpénzérme 2003). In these examples the locals contribution can be detected their appearance is decoded on the national narrative. However it is important to point out that members of the named Community network, the national television or members of the Hungarian National Bank played equally important role in bringing Hollókő into the national narrative both in the 1970s and the early 2000s as well.



Figure 2: Examples for Hollókő's contribution to the nation-wide narrative (female chorus in the television and Hollókő on decorative coins)

Further characteristics of the national cultural narrative are uniqueness, continuity, tradition and timelessness (Hall 1997). There is a rich photo archive about Hollókő's past in the Ethnography Museum, in the Palócz Museum and in the Forster Center as well. These cultural centers are located in the county and in the capital. They have the role to nourish regional art and history, as well as, nation-wide too. Moreover, the Forster Center is the official state institution that protects and spreads the Hungarian cultural within and outside the country's boundaries. Similarly, notes and other types of documentations are protected and stored about the origin of the village and the continuous tradition of the inhabitants at these institutions.

For example Zoltán Szabó in his description about the village from 1930 says that "the village exists isolated within its surrounding as the nut or the pearl in its shell" (Szabó 1986). This image alludes to the timelessness of the national narrative. Continuity and tradition are ensured by the protection of the buildings and the Ferenc Mendele's ideology behind it. Mendele (1934-1994) was an Ybl-awarded architect, conservationist, and the former director of the National Inspectorate of Historic Monuments. He held and adapted the ideology that every function has to be located within the monument buildings (Mendele 1969). That is the reason

of transforming the original buildings to restaurants, museums and hostels. Furthermore, the later established tourist center named after András Román was also established in a monument building.

The world heritage proposal and the facebook site of the village too identify the settlement as living village, which also put emphasis on continuity and timelessness. Similarly, the management of the Office for the Protected Landscape Area of Hollókő still requires an old, traditional method of gardening (small plot gardens) that is not evaluated as an effective and sustainable methodology, and prohibits entirely any construction on the surrounding hill sides in order to ensure the living museum or mausoleum ideas of the settlement (Kiss 2013). Both types of collections, the named actors (Szabó and Mendele) as well as the local office are examples for activities carried out mainly by scholars and professionals in the field of cultural heritage to take care of Hollókő.

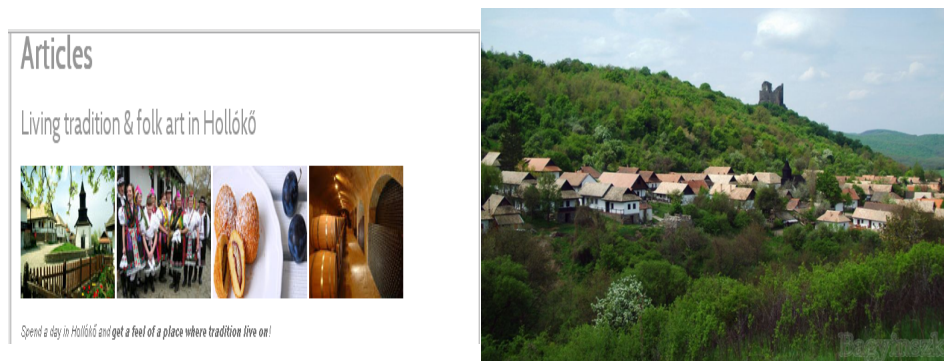


Figure 3: Uniqueness, continuity, tradition and timelessness of Hollókő (living tradition notion in an article, and the still existing “pearl in its shell” location due to the regulations of the Office for the Protected Landscape Area of Hollókő)

4. HOLLÓKŐ AS A RESULT OF THE COOPERATION OF DIVERSE PARTIES

It is important to state that when monument protection started, the village was at the edge of its existence. Its population was dramatically decreased; it lost its identical prefecture status and was a co-settlement with the neighboring Nagylóc village (N: Waigand 2013). Accordingly, not just functions had to be re-established, but also certain traditions needed to be regenerated, such as the female chorus and the sewing as professions (Ács 1990). This re-establishment movement has reached total sovereignty. Costumes and hand craft motifs that were evaluated previously as a combination of regional characteristics and some unique feature of the Palócz culture, are seen today as identical and typical motif

system of Hollókő. This is the third character of national culture by Stuart Hall, the necessity to establish traditions (Hall 1997; Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983).

Another important element of the national culture is the founding myth that is connected to the origin of settlement's name and the castle next to the village in case of Hollókő (Hall 1997). According to the legends, Andras Kacsics, the lord of this region felt in love with a noble woman and stole and kept her in his castle. The nurse of the noble lady was a witch, and she asked the evil to free the lady. The evil sent his sons in the form of ravens to tear the castle stone by stone during nights and rescue the noble lady. The ravens took the stones onto another hill, which got the name Hollókő (raven stone) by the public (*A vár és az ördögfióka* n.d.). It is clear that the foundation storyline with mythical elements ensures the uniqueness and historical character of the settlement that is also emphasized with a huge raven statue at the entrance of the village still today (Holló 2008).

Hall lastly names the notion of pure or original nation, as a typical requirement for the national culture narrative. An outstanding example for this is Viola Tomori's work, who conducted research in the village in the 1930s, but her work has been published multiple times, such as right before the settlement received its world heritage status, in 1986. She speaks about the inhabitants, who live in symbiosis with nature, and have no connection with contemporary human world. They do not want to be educated; marriage is arranged not based on emotional bounds, but on economic benefits decided by the elderly members of the community (Tomori 1986). Such description interprets the settlement and the locals ancient almost pre-civilized. Similar understanding exists today; Hollókő is seen as the representation of aboriginal venue, practice and costume for the tourists. They can meet with the past there. For the effective communication of such view, not just the creators of this notion, but also those, who realize and those, who are targeted with the given notion have to be active members of the processes. All of these examples involve the participation of both the locals and the professionals. For instance without professional research the founding myth could not have been stated and similarly without the will and cooperation of the locals the current statue of the raven could not have been established at the border of the settlement as a kind of reinsurance of keeping alive the founding story of Hollókő.



Figure 4: (Re-)establishing tradition and founding myth (rebirth of the original profession of sewing and the statue alluding the founding myth of Hollókő)

5. POSSIBLE OBSTACLES AND THREATS

Another important aspect is the directing, structuring role of the governing power (Hal 1997). Hollókő would not fulfill such success only by the activities of the locals. Moreover, based on the memoirs, those, who worked for the settlement's world heritage status, did not involve the locals in the processes. András Román in an interview in 1999 for instance answered to the question about the local participation that "No, none asked the locals, neither others (Kovács Molnár 2013)." That can be seen as a threatening sign today, but the contemporary circumstances always have to take into consideration. Hollókő turned from a co-settlement status to an outstanding example of national conservation, as well as, of vernacular architecture that brought unconditional state funds (Dobosyné, Kovács 2013) to the settlement and world heritage status in 1987. Later on these changes attracted tourists from inside and outside the country to the settlement. All the efforts that were made by professionals by dealing with the administrative steps, arranging the necessity conservation activities led also to beneficial outcomes for the locals.

Also the international acknowledgement made Hollókő a topic in the foreign scholarly discourse (Dobosyné, Kovács 2013), and it has become part of the global heritage procedures via norms and regulations. At certain cases, it is stated in parallel with other vernacular world heritage architectures too (Fejérdy 2013). These consequences of Hollókő's new identity have served as advantages for the Hungarian professional community. There have been even other views and discourses that formulated as a kind of reaction to the global heritagization processes, and they emphasize the uniqueness of Hollókő, and its national value got highlighted for example by projecting it on national events outside the settlements (National Horse Ride Tournament). This latter case is a good example for national benefits of Hollókő's success.

Only these few examples show clearly the complexity of Hollókő's identity and the possible obstacles to lead the participants to agreement and cooperation. The diverse understandings differ from each other based on time (whether Hollókő is connected to the past or to the present) and on scope of venue (if Hollókő is researched in its smaller or in its wider location). These views can be also mixed and combined in numerous ways providing new combinations (and sometimes threats as well) (Harvey 1989). Along these lines, the two „extreme” views about Hollókő, as world heritage site and as a concrete unique community are not fully separable. For example, while the inhabitants moved out almost fully from the monument buildings, and established a new settlement next to the authentic one, they have their incomes from tourism and marketing activities of the historic settlement. So they stick to their local unique identity, as well as, they use the possibilities of the world heritage status. This concrete example also shows that seemingly oppositional interests can be melted.

Globalization as the leading force of the current time period has multiple and many times opposing effects too as Stuart Hall points out (Massey 2002). If we adapt his notion to Hollókő and see UNESCO world heritage initiative as a kind of cultural globalizing trend, we can detect these diverse effects in the many times unequal views of the participating actors, the political and the professional representatives as well as the locals. A quote from András Román points out this irreconcilable difference among the three groups of actors and can serve as an alarm sign for later generation about the constant need of cooperation.

“All in all I think the locals have still not yet understood that if their settlement **turned to be** a world heritage site, **they should not distance themselves from this phenomenon** by moving out from it or re-localizing themselves to the new settlement, but on the contrary, they should use this opportunity. Their connection to the world heritage status should not only be that they sell their bookmarks aggressively to the arriving tourists unless they bought them. (Kovács, Molnár 2013).” (highlights by the author to point out the denial of equal partnership and cooperation)

6. CONCLUSION – TASKS AHEAD

The notion of self-image and community-image, the opposition of personal and collective by Jenkins could be connected to the example of Hollókő (Jenkins 2002), but it is not adaptable for the given time period and for the described processes, as the locals did not participated in the formation of community-image or local identity. The scholarly and political communities were the ones, who mainly acted and transformed the view about Hollókő. They had direct

connection to the international organizations, and knew their requirements. The current, wide and multiple identity of the settlement cannot be transformed back to the pure, original identity that Kevin Robins called tradition (Robins 1991). Even though many try to stick to the traditional keeper identity of Hollókő by reestablishing the life before the conservation and protection procedures started. But the settlement is not a living village anymore; and never will be like that.

Homi K. Bhabha offers a possible solution by the notion of translation. This new identity construction is on one hand connects strongly to the past and traditions, but on the other hand it incorporates no intention to turn back to this past due to the awareness of its impossibility (Bhabha 1995). Accordingly, Hollókő needs to have at least a dual identity that are interconnected, and which on one hand protects and passes on its heritage (tangible and intangible ones alike) as values, but on the other hand, develops a contemporary Hollókő identity that serves the contemporary needs and aims of the locals as well. The buildings, the customs of Hollókő or the symbolic raven at the entrance of the settlements, as well as, the diverse communities connected to the settlements (such as the locals, the visitors, and the political and scholarly communities) and their complex relations to each other are all subjects for further research. I have concentrated only on the interconnected roles of the professionals and the locals in the multiple representational roles of the settlement in the last almost six decades due to the conservation procedures.

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