

ARS ENSIS

Lovagi Kör és Kardvívó Iskola Egyesület

Free Scholler Paper

DUELS IN HUNGARY AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY

- BASED ON THE NOTES OF A DUEL EXPERT

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1 Introduction - focus of the paper

The subject of this work is a manuscript left behind by Vilmos Emil Clair, a well-known Hungarian fencer and duel expert (1858 – 1951). He has published the probably most known Hungarian book on duels, the “Párbaj – Codex” (Duel Codex) in 1914. According to József Szinnyei (1891/1914) he was a son of a French noble family living in Hungary since the early 19th century. His father was a sport fencing master. Clair was a jurist, journalist and duel fencing expert, who had real experience in participating a sword duel (Clair, 1899, p.49)¹. In his works as an author and journalist he was often occupied with the topic of duels. His other comprehensive writing on Hungarian duels was published in 1930 (Magyar párbajok Attila hun király idejétől 1923. év végéig).



Figure 1.: Vilmos Emil Clair (source: <http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC02469/02513.htm>)

The hereby processed manuscript on Hungarian duels was left behind by him. The detailed history of the manuscript is unknown, it was sold on a book auction and bought by Árpád Németh, a master of épée fencing, who is collecting books and weapons related to the history of fencing. Mr. Németh made the copying and researching of the manuscript possible by borrowing the original hard copy. The manuscript contains press cuttings of Hungarian, Austrian and German newspapers and personal notes added by Clair.

¹ Clair mentions his own duel among many others in his work published in 1899. According to his one sentence description of this duel, his opponent was heavily injured.

2 The Manuscript

There is no exact time of creation indicated in it, therefore the exact time of creation cannot be identified. To have an approximate assumption on time of creation the earliest and the latest dates can be used. Though the latest date gives a quite exact base when the assembly of the manuscript may have ended, the estimation of the beginning carries more uncertainty. Clair lists a number of very old citations from historical persons who lived much earlier than Clair did, these ones are naturally not to be considered as a point of reference. Excluding items like mentioned, the earliest item carrying a date is from the year of 1865, but it is a handwritten one and refers to a booklet Clair may have had. The next oldest possible one is a newspaper cutting from October 1891.

It is also to take in consideration that Clair was born in 1858 and in 1875 he was already an officer of the parliament (Szinyei, 1891/1914). Based on the date of the item above and Clair's age at that time the starting date of the collection² is assumed to be around 1890. As we have a look at the order of items in the booklet it is to be discovered that the first newspaper cutting with a date displayed is from 1922 (page 8 in the pdf). It allows to suppose that the assembling of the manuscript may have been started around 1920.

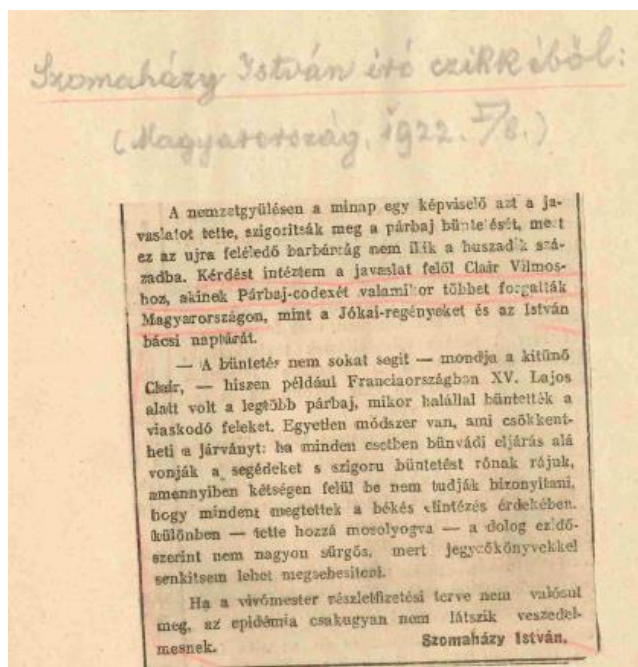


Figure 2a.: The first article cut-out in the manuscript indicating the assumable beginning date of assembling the booklet

² In this case collection and assembling the manuscript are to be differentiated.

The technology of manufacturing of the booklet can also help to make the estimation more accurate, but the detailed physical inspection is out of the scope of this paper – it can be a subject of further research.

The latest date which can be found on one of the last pages (several pages in the booklet are left empty) stands in an article cut out of a newspaper. It's the 7th of July, the year is added by Clair is 1936, so we can assume that it was left in its actual stand somewhat before the Second World War.



Figure 2b.: The last article cut-out in the manuscript indicating the latest date that can be found in the booklet

As statement of the booklet's origin we can rely only on the auction house's statement made at the time of the auction that it was written and assembled by Vilmos Clair.

Considering that there is no reliable information about the time and circumstances of the preparation of the manuscript, the description of the physical outlook can carry useful information for the further research.

2.1 Outlook and physical attributes

2.1.1 The booklet

The manuscript is a booklet in B5 size. It was originally a simple booklet for notes. It contains plain pages without helping lines and page numbers. The cover is paperboard, black and white square patterned. The paper is slightly yellow and rancid because its age.

2.1.2 Handwriting

It can be supposed that the handwriting written directly on the paper would be Clair's. The handwriting shows up small changes from page to page and the one on the first page significantly differs from the one on the last page. It should be inspected by a handwriting expert to get sure if the whole booklet was written by one person. Regarding this work I suppose that the handwriting written directly on the paper of the booklet (and not stuck in) is Clair's own handwriting. The difference that can be observed while progressing in the booklet can be considered as a natural change in anyone's handwriting during several years.

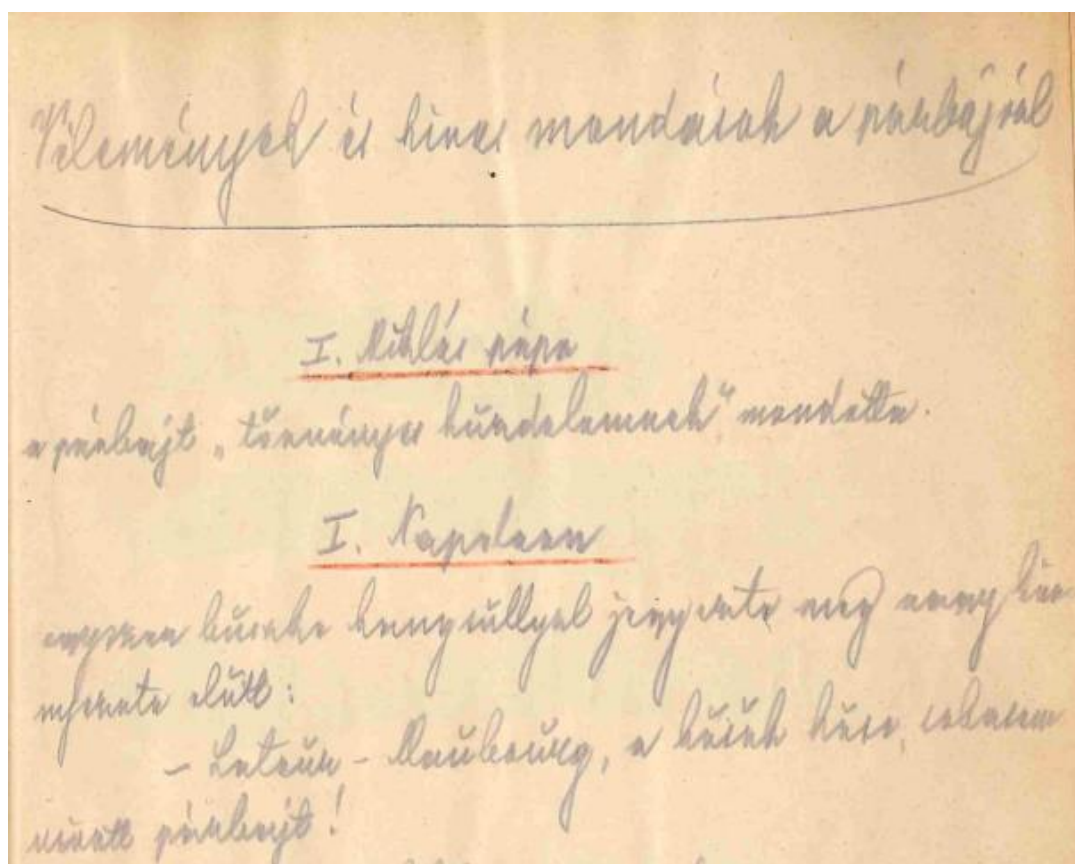


Figure 3.: The first handwritten rows in the booklet

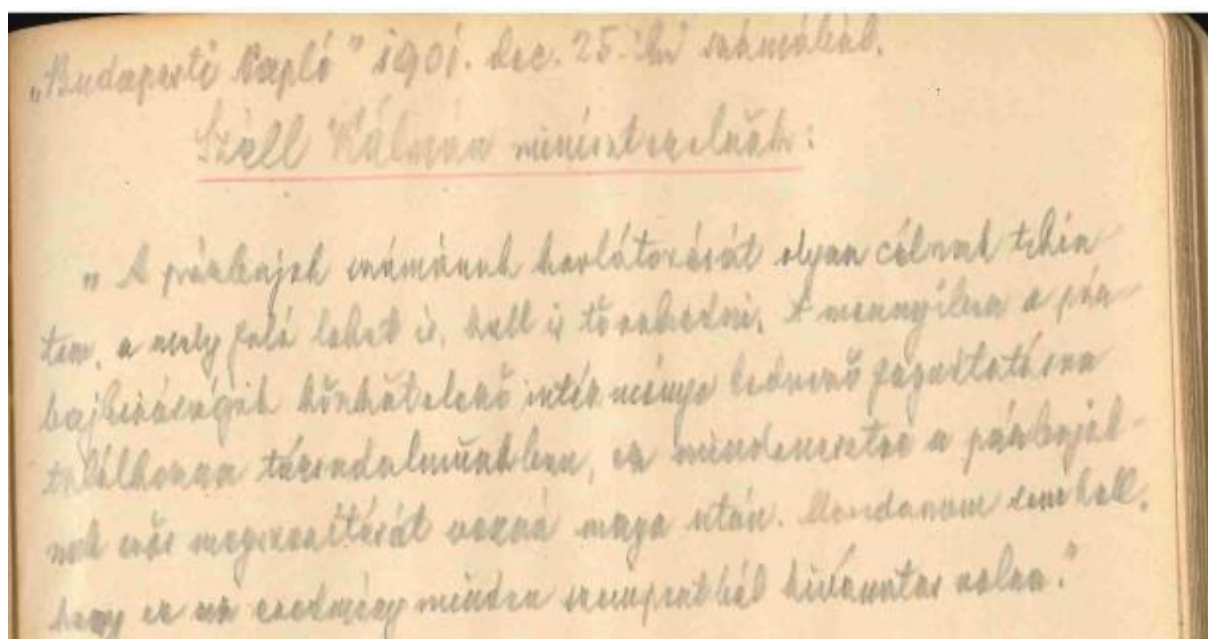


Figure 4.: Handwriting on the 30th page³

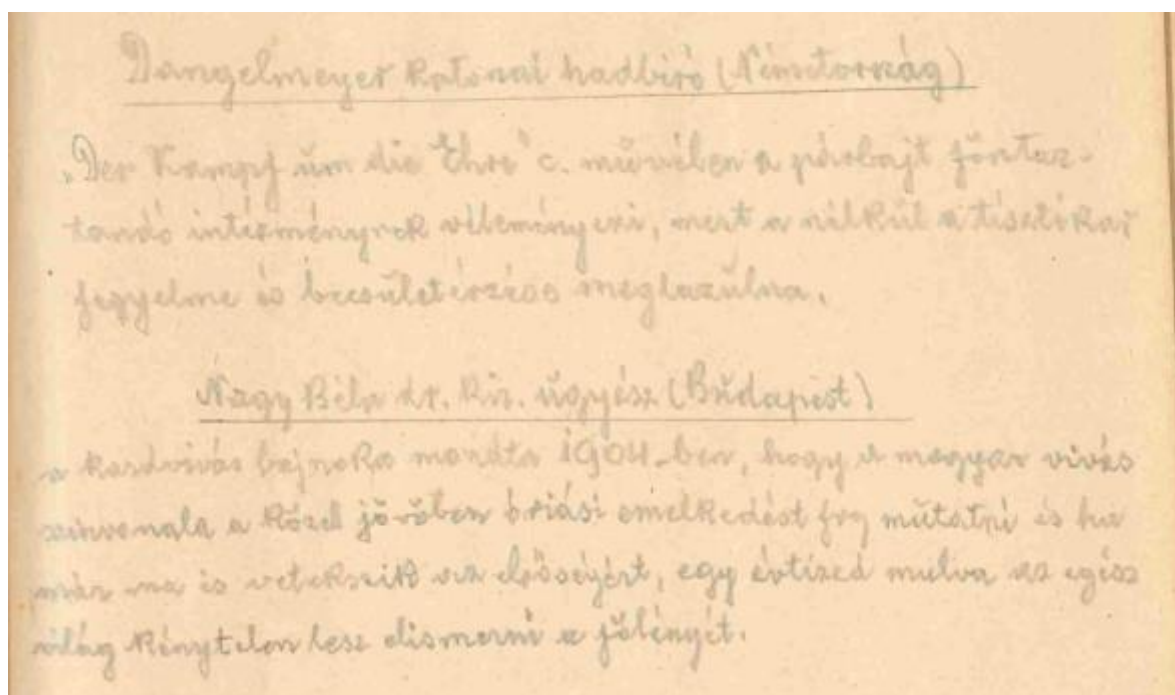


Figure 5.: The last handwritten rows (on the 47th page)

It can also mean that the booklet was compiled during years. Considering that it contains dates from the end of the 19th century, many articles and cites from the very early 20th century

³ The booklet is not page-numbered. All the page numbers used in this work indicate the page numbers of the pdf the booklet is scanned in. One scanned page contains two pages of the booklet.

(e.g. 1901, 1905) and the date on Figure 2. (1936) the assembling process could last even more than thirty years.

The whole booklet was written with pencil. In most of the cases lead pencil is supposed to be used but on some pages coloured ones can be identified. For example a comment on the 15th page amending a German article is written with blue pencil:



Figure 6.: A comment with blue pencil on the 15th page

2.1.3 Press-cuttings and articles

There are many press-cuttings stuck into the booklet. Most of them are from Hungarian press material but some German articles are also present (e.g. see Figure 6.). Unfortunately the titles of the articles are not mentioned, in case of most of the cutting not even the year can be identified. Regarding articles in German language it is also hard to judge if their origin was German or Austrian. Considering that the author was a journalist and has often used his given name as signature in case of some cuttings it can be supposed that they may be written by the author himself:

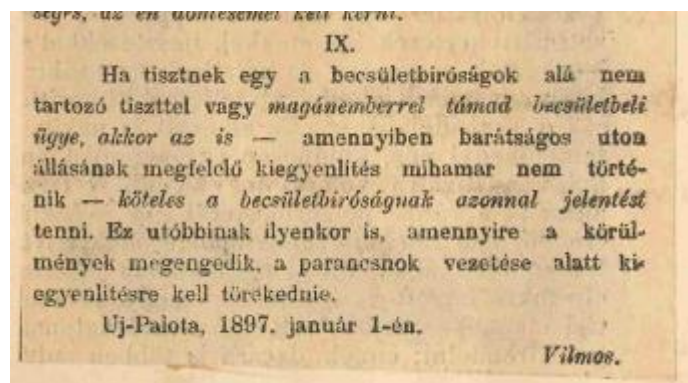


Figure 7.: A newspaper-cutting with a signature „Vilmos” on the 5th page

Regarding press-cuttings it can be observed that they make the biggest part of the whole text amount contained in the booklet. Approximately 25 pages of handwriting and about 20 pages of cuttings stand in the booklet, on some pages other cuttings (containing another person's handwriting and text written on typewriter) can be found in smaller amount. But considering the density of the printed text in relation to Clair's handwriting the amount of articles' content is much bigger than the handwritten text.

2.1.4 Other papers stuck in the booklet

There are some interesting inserts are in the booklet: some other person's handwriting, written on other paper, is cut off and stuck in the booklet in two different sections: one is on the 3rd and one is on the 24th-25th pages. This handwriting definitely differs from Clair's but there is no reference on its owner. It should be inspected by an expert if the two cuttings were written by the same person:

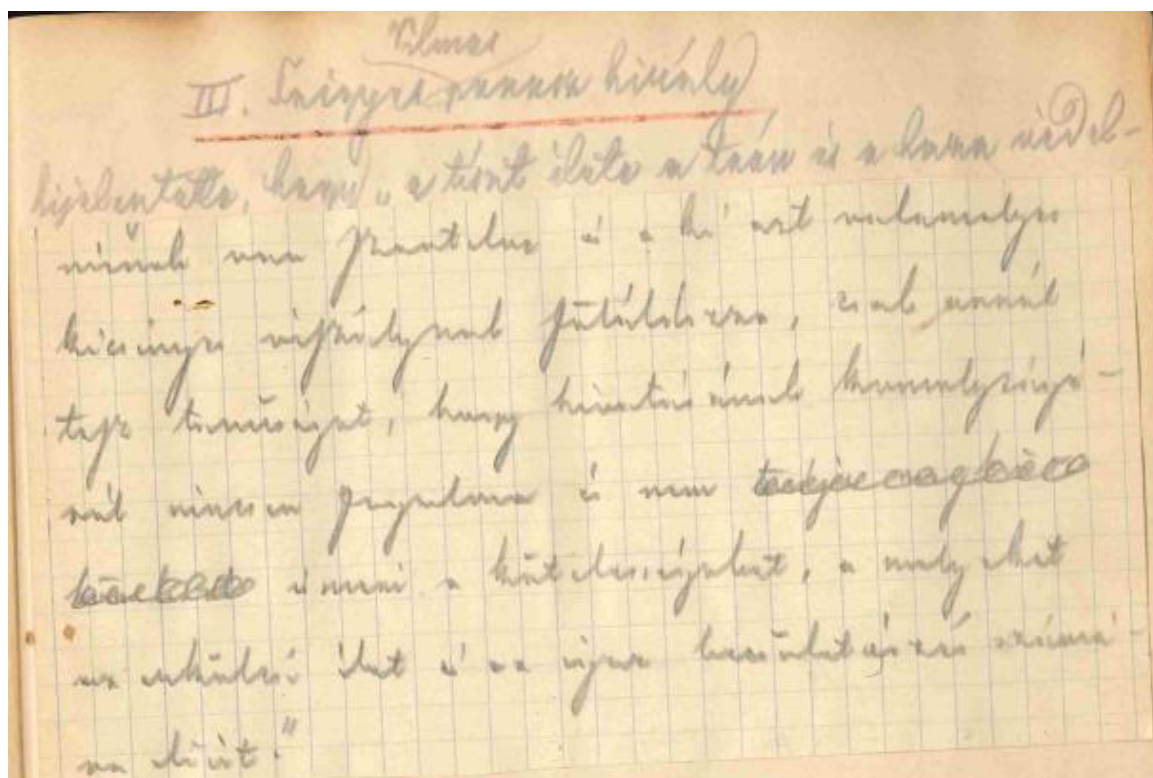


Figure 8.: A stuck in cutting with a different looking handwriting supposed to be written by someone else - on the 3rd page

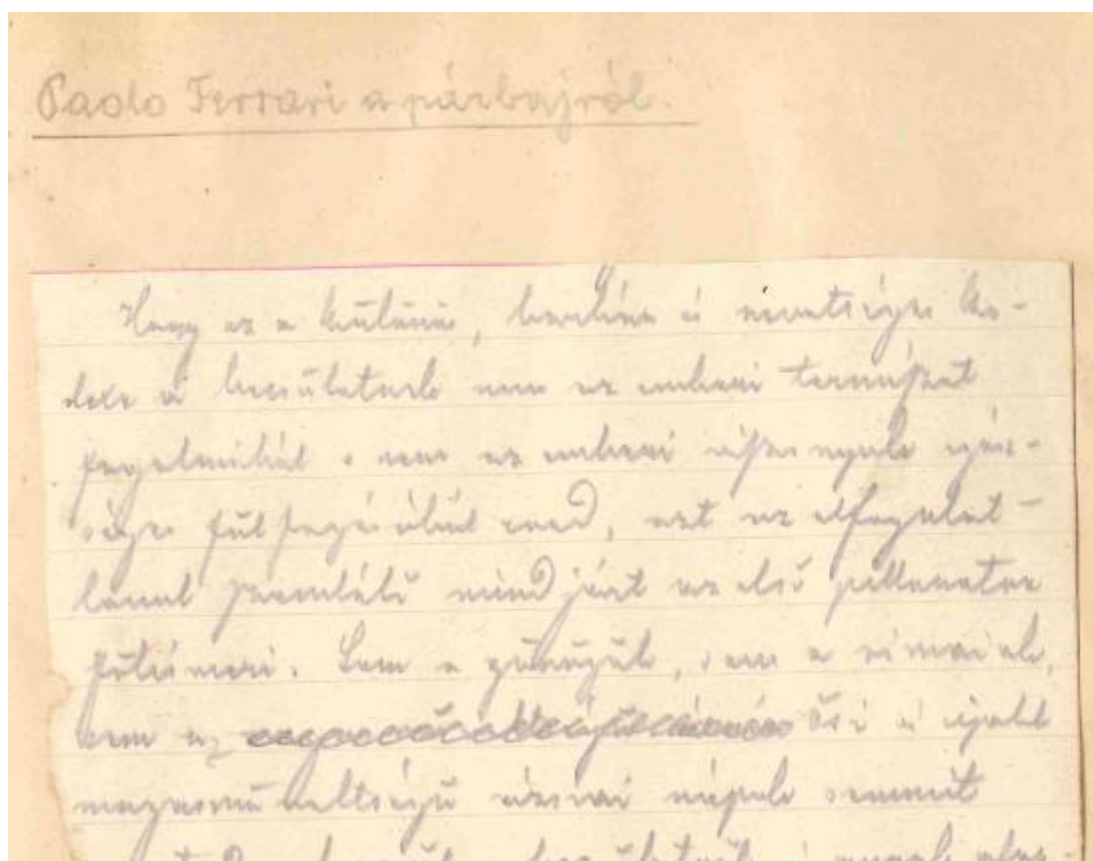


Figure 9.: A stuck in cutting with – possibly – someone else's handwriting on the 24th page

On the 28th page a unique cutting can be found: a short text written on a typewriter is stuck in the booklet.

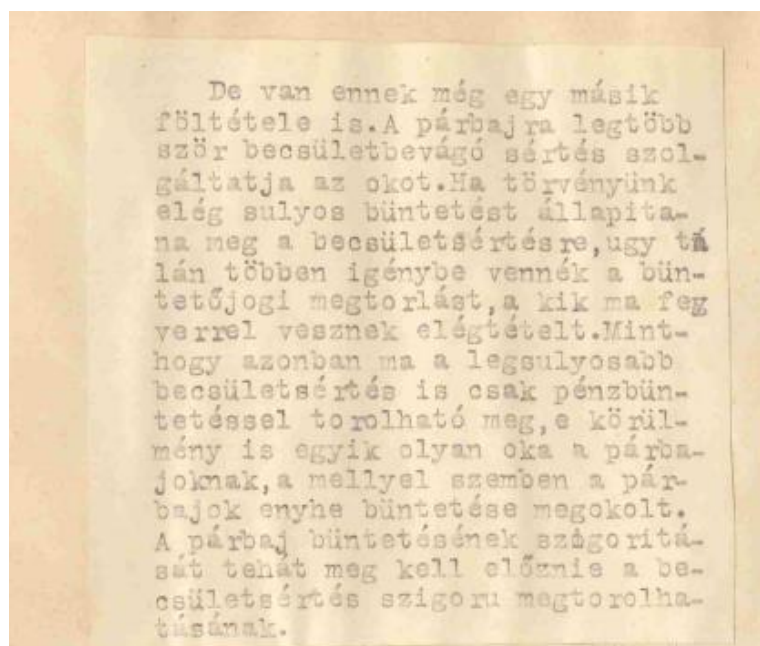


Figure 10.: A stuck in cutting written on a typewriter on the 28th page

2.1.5 Referencing

Clair did not always use references. Some cuttings are simply stuck in to continue the handwritten text (see for example Figure 8.), some others may wear Clair's signature (like on Figure 7.). Press and date are usually not indicated. There are some examples with references too but it can be mentioned more as an exception than a practice.

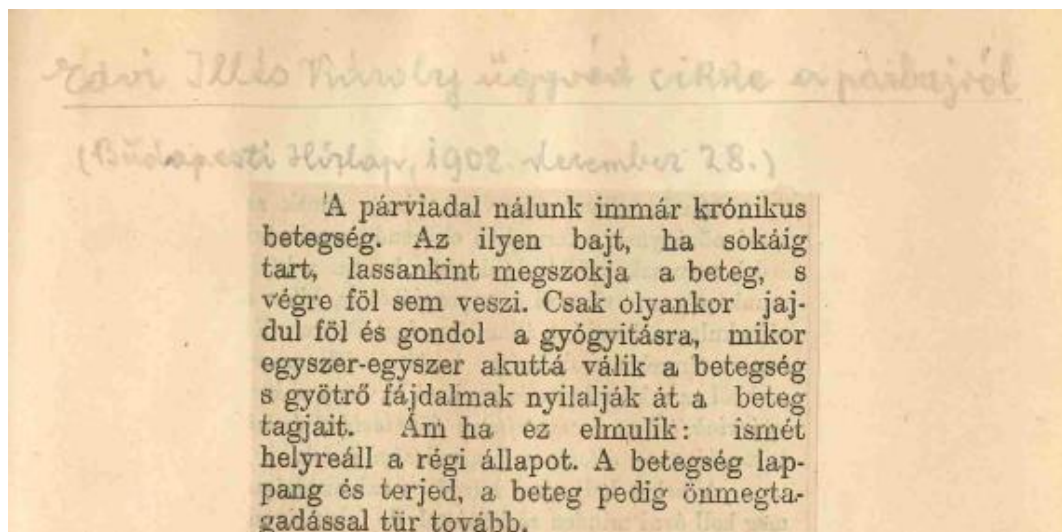


Figure 11.: An example on Clair's source referencing on the 25th page

2.2 Structure

As it stands in the first row (see Figure 3.) the manuscript amends the topic of opinions on the institute of the duel: "Vélemények és híres mondások a párbajról" (~*Opinions and well-known sayings about duels*). Most of the headlines in the booklet indicate famous persons who have shared their opinion about duelling and stand beside or against it. Clair does not qualify the articles or other texts he has stuck in and also does not form his own opinion. The booklet is simply a collection of opinions and sayings as the main headline tells to the reader.

The citations and cuttings are not ordered by time. It underpins the scenario that the booklet was assembled during a shorter period and Clair did not work on it for tens of years. It can also be that after collecting an amount of articles and citations he added it later by several cuttings (e.g.: Figure 2b.) but did not manage to publish it meanwhile.

3 The content of the booklet

3.1 Definition of the focus topic

Considering that the manuscript is rather a collection of raw material than a prepared or just a partly prepared work it cannot be processed in a way how usually books and other ready-to-read writings would be. The aim and the planned meaning of the manuscript is unknown, because Clair did not add any personal ideas or opinions to any of the collected cites or newspaper cuttings. Only their content can allude to a matter which the citations are connected to. Neither the fact facilitates the processing that the citations are not ordered along any concept. They may be collected according to the time of their finding, there is not even an order based upon their dates.

I considered the processing as a primer research of this manuscript. Because of its unique structure and content I decided to define a tailored method of processing. The method aims to gather data about each item in the same structure. The result of processing should give information about the citations' content in general, about their source, age and relationship to the focus topic (for or against the duel). After reading the citations the focus question was formed like this:

“Is there a reason for existence of duels or not?”

After describing the outlook and main parameters of the manuscript notices were taken on the content of each item included in the booklet. Beside the short description on their main content some metadata was added to each, following the same structure.

3.2 The structure of records and their values

All paragraphs of the manuscript were identified as a separate item. As described in chapter 2 items can be handwritten, newspaper cuttings, mixed items or cuttings from a different handwriting. All paragraphs are separated obviously, most of them have a header containing important metadata (mainly source, some of them media and/or time of creation). To each item a record was defined containing following fields (parameters).

The first parameter of each item which is obvious to identify is the page where it can be found in the source file (pdf). As page number the page number is given where the actual item is to be found or – in case of items which concern more pages – is beginning.

As second the author or the source of citation was added. They may be well-known people around the century turn (19th-20th) in Hungary-Austria or popular newspapers without addressing the origin of the ideas they have had published. For each item begins with the source it was easy to record. The only problem that arose at several items was the handwriting of Clair which is hard to read on some places in the text.

As third the possible time of creation of the item was to be identified. At many items Clair has added at least a year, at some items an exact date. Mainly at handwritten citations dates (and even year) is missing. These are usually addressed to be said or written by some well-known people, whose date of birth and death can be easily found in relevant records. If their actual occupation is also added the time range can be narrowed based on the persons' life records (if there are any).

As a fourth field a short description on the items' content was added, focusing mainly on the main question of duels. By formulating these descriptions similar ideas were easy to identify which may be of help while grouping their meanings around the main question.

As a physical parameter of each item their form was added too. Its relevant versions are described in paragraph 2.1 above.

For all items in the booklet address the topic of duels and most of them seem to stand for or against it, it seemed to be an important parameter of the items. It was indicated in the record by a Boolean variable (values: 1 = for; 0 = against). Naturally some of the items have no definitely clear message: they may present pros and contras too. Considering the focus question defined above, if an item leaves any possibility for duels to exist the value of the parameter was defined as '1', else as '0'.

As seen on Figure 12 an example for a full record it looks like this:

#	pdf page	Who	When	What	form	pro/contra
44.	30	Kálmán Széll, minister president / Budapesti Napló (local periodica)	25.12.1901.	Decreasing the number of duels is possible and necessary. Its premise is that the penatly of duel's institution will be accepted by the community.	handwritten	0

Figure 12.: Record no. 44

3.3 Main statistics on the records

There are 104 records in the manuscript. The page number as metadata is easily to determinate by using the pdf's paging function. It is necessary because Clair did not use page numbers to identify pages of his booklet.

There are several differences some records show up in their structure:

- Most of the items have a person as a source of the given opinion or saying indicated on its top. 11 records have not an exact person but a group or a newspaper as an origin given to the item (mainly in the header).
- There are seven “mixed” items, which are built up as a combination of handwriting and newspaper cuttings. Most of these items are structured like using the cutting as a core which is completed with handwriting at the beginning, at the end or both.

As detailed above a variable was defined if the content of the given record would stand for or against the duel (as a social symptom). Form a technical point of view this variable is a Boolean which can have 1 or 0 as a value.

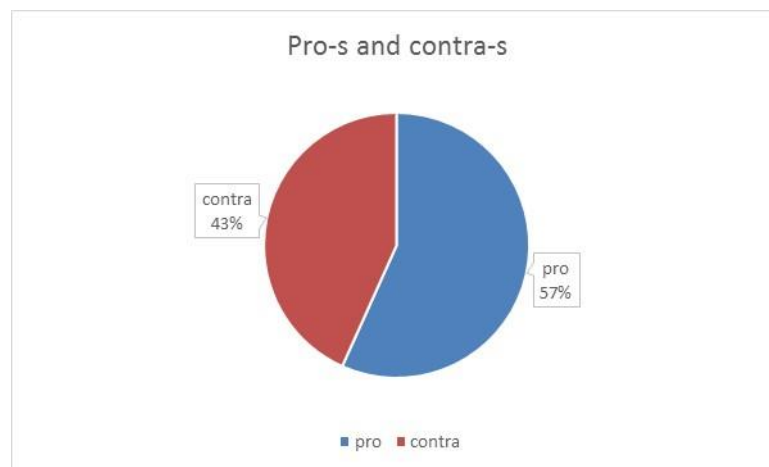


Figure 13.: Relation of records with pro and contra content

As shown on Figure 13 there are slightly more items with a content supporting, or at least not protesting against duels. This view of the whole collection gives a – possibly non-representative – insight into the diversification that the question of duels has caused around the turn of the 19th-20th centuries.

3.4 Content of the items – main collected opinions

The whole content of the booklet is assembled of collected items which represent opinions from different well-known people. As shown in the previous point there are pros and contras. On both sides are some main ideas to be identified which are often formulated by cited people.

3.4.1 General viewpoints

The most simple or general ones do not expose arguments just support or condemn the duel. This category incorporates quite many items, there are 24 writings which support duels in general and 18 other which stand against it without raising any specific idea.

Considering the other 62 items it is obvious that most of them focus on the question why duels exist. Opposing ones are looking for a solution how could duels finally terminated, supporting ones mainly tell why duels are necessary and why they cannot be terminated. Many of these items are based on the idea that duels are part of a normal social life. Mór Jókai, a famous Hungarian writer (1825-1904) was a well-known supporter of duels. His main arguments rely on two facts: most of the common reasons of duels are natural phenomena of a society, and on the other hand he identifies duels as a natural valve to let out “superfluous steam”. He also points on the importance of applying duels only in extreme situations.

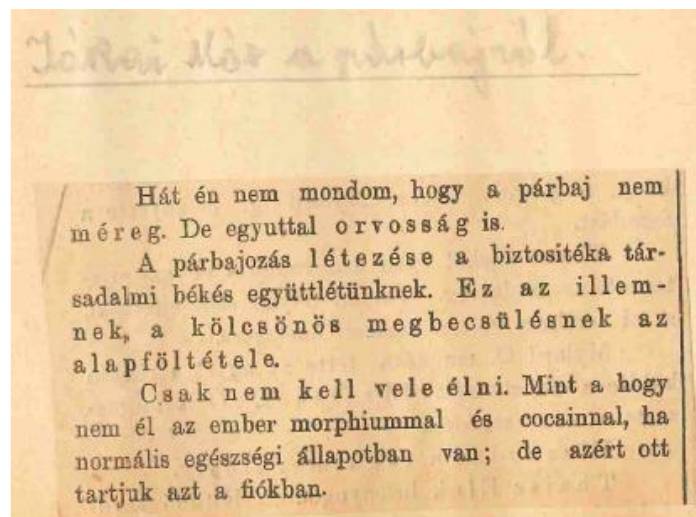


Figure 14.: One of Jókai's opinions on duel

3.4.2 *Specific arguments against duels*

Regarding specific arguments it is clear that honour appears as one of the strongest motivations. Even opposing arguments do not query the significance of honour and also agree that libel is a valid reason for many duels. They form some suggestions to avoid duels and these suggestions seem to be spread among people who were occupied with these questions.

One most common suggestion is that law should punish libels much harder. The idea behind this suggestion is that the actual legal regulation does not give enough satisfaction for the aggrieved party and based on that reason they still feel need for a duel.

Staying by legal aspects some opposers do not go in details looking for reasons, they just support the prohibition of duels backed with serious penalties.

More sophisticated approaches were arising around the centuries' turn in form of anti-duelling societies. Eight items mention them. Six of these eight opinions welcome these initiatives, two of them are sceptic about them. Supporters of this initiative emphasise the importance of prominent people's active participation. Two of them do not hope a solution of them. One of these opinions points on the need of a social change, the other one believes more in strict legal regulations. Items supporting the idea of anti-duelling societies also point on legal aspects: they stand for the need of harder penalty of libels, because insufficient satisfaction of the offense by the law is one of the main reasons for a duel.

There are also some further ideas on how duels could be terminated. Few of the items (2) mention the possibility of extending duel penalties on seconds and also on medicals, though it was a quite common idea. Clair refers in his book (1899:206-216) that it was included in the criminal law in Austria, Germany, Russia, England how seconds and medicals will be punished by helping duels. The actual criminal law in Hungary does not extend penalty on seconds and medicals if they did worthwhile efforts to preclude the duel.

Other opinions (4) suppose that duels may be a part of noble vogue and opposers therefore also call for social changes. It accords to the idea of anti-duelling societies which are mainly led by prominent people (e.g. Don Alfonso Bourbon, see Figure 15). A quite long item on pages 25-28 give a detailed description on a case of Marqui Anton Tacoli, a cavalry lieutenant, who did not ask for recompense for an offence performed by a companion of him. Don Alfonso Bourbon has supported him as he reached the termination of the military legal

Megszüntethetők csak akkor, ha az okait el tudnók enyésztetni.

... ha soha többé senki a más szép asszonyának nem fog udvarolni, —

... ha soha többé két legény egy leányba nem lesz szerelmes, —

... ha soha többé két képviselőjelölt ellenfél egymásról semmi rosszat nem fog mondani, —

... ha a politikai pártfelek egymást soha többé hazaárulónak, pogánynak, tatárnak nem fogják titulálni, —

... ha soha nemzetiségi, felekezeti jellege miatt senkit meg nem fognak sérteni, —

... ha soha senki kártyaadósságot meg nem fog kérni, —

... ha soha senkit kártyaadósság miatt egy kaszinóból ki nem fognak ballotálni, —

... ha soha színészt, színésznőt, poétát keményen meg nem fognak kritizálni, —

... ha soha valakinek a nevéből szójátékot meg nem fognak csinálni, —

... ha soha egy gentleman a másiknak a zártszékét a színházban el nem foglalja: (a hogy mindezekre példákat tudunk),

... ha az újságírók mindig csak igazat fognak írni, s a botrányokat elhallgatják,

... és a többi ... no hát akkor megszűnnek a párbajozások. — És ha még hozzá a magyar ember a maga mostani haragfogó, könnyen felfortyanó, jussát nem engedő, legénykedő, becsületekényes, meg nem hunyázkodó véralkatát valami japáni érzékfásultsággal fel tudja cserélni: — no hát akkor nem lesznek köztünk párbajok.

De a mig megvannak bennünk ezek az erős indulatok, ki kell azoknak törni valami szelentyűn.

"[Duels] can be eliminated, if its reasons could be vanished.

... if no man ever will make a court to somebody else's nice wife, -

... if two men will never fall in love with the same girl, -

... if no campaigners will ever speak evil of the other one, -

... if politician will never call the other treasonous, pagan or Tartar, -

... if nobody will get ever hurt because of his nationality or religion, -

... if nobody ever will ask for paying a play-debt, -

... if nobody ever will be booted out of a casino because of play-debt, -

... if no actor, actress and poet will get a rigorous criticism any more, -

... if no word-play will be made of anybody's name any more, -

... if no gentleman will occupy the other one's box seat in the theatre (as there are examples known),

... if journalists will only write the truth and keep scandals quiet,

... and so on ... than duels will be eliminated. — And thereto Hungarian people would be able to change their envious, effervescent, I-don't-let-my-right, pert, susceptible to honour, never-comes-to-heel character for a Japanese insensible one — than there will be no more duels among us.

*But until these strong emotions are present in us, they must break out through a kind of valve."*⁴

Figure 16.: A newspaper cutting demonstrating Jókai's list about duels' main reasons (pdf page 14)

⁴ There is no professional translation of the original text available, this English version is provided by the author and may not give an unflinching representation of the original one.

3.4.4 *Summary of the opinions*

Both supporters and opposers of duels agree that the main reason for duel's existence roots in the social acceptance of the individual and honour may be one of its strongest component. For this reason if one's honour gets hurt it is important to get it restored. The point where opinions and ideas of the two parties diverge is the way of restoring it. Duel was a tool for it applied through hundreds of years which have grounded its social acceptance very strong. Opposers who have called for a social change had to turn against this tradition. Considering the complexity of duels' social background this work does not aim to judge if they were right and if their striving was finally the key of duels' disappearance, but they have significantly contributed to it.

Extreme changes in the Hungarian society at the beginning of the 20th century have also served a good basis to reach the keyturn in this question, but it is also clear that the disappearance of duels could not happen form one day to another. International trends in Western Europe have also contributed to this process: mainly after the World War I. high circles of military leaders have considered duels as a risk factor by losing valuable military leaders by private reasons and their refill meant a growing challenge for them. It caused the start of a comprehensive social change which has finally resulted the disappearance of duels. (Holland, 2003) This wave may have reached Hungary too.

Some items in the manuscript allow to discover some other factors too, which may have not been mentioned too often but could have a strong effect regarding the mentioned changes.

An article in the newspaper 'Pesti Hírlap' in 1928 (pdf page 16-17, date: 24.02.1928) mentions the economical aspect of the disappearance of duels. As this article tells, 'earlier' the rental cost of a fencing hall was around 10 Forints but "nowadays" it reaches a level of 100 Pengő, which is considered to be extremely expensive. The article also alludes to the changing economic situation of the people mentioning that paying school fees may be a problem too and in this situation there are no funds to finance costly duels. To better understand the value of this amount we should have a look at currencies and average salaries in Hungary at that time. A comprehensive writing about the age of dualism (Fónagy, 2001) supplies a data about average yearly salaries around 1900 – it was 900 Korona⁵. The article adds that well-off people may have earned around the double-triple of this amount. By introducing the Forint in 1892 (actually it became widely used in 1900) its value was defined

⁵ Korona was an official currency of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy between 1892 and 1927.

as 1 kg gold was equal with 3280 Korona (126. Gesetz vom 2. August 1892.) and 1 Kr was equal with $\frac{1}{2}$ Forint. The Pengő⁶ was introduced in 1927 (just one year before the mentioned article) and its value was defined as 1 kg gold was equal with 3800 Pengő (Múlt-kor, 2012). Based on Márki-Zay's estimation on Hungary's GDP-development (Márki-Zay, 2005:21) it can be assumed that incomes around 1928 did not significantly differ from incomes in 1900. Considering these data, amounts in the article can be understood like this: If 'earlier' means not more than 30 years, the cost of a fencing room was 10 Ft = 20 Kr = $20/3280$ kg = 6,1 g gold, which was around 13,3% of the monthly salary of an affluent man⁷. The next amount, the 100 Pengő in 1928 is $100/3800 = 26,32$ g gold, which is about 60% of the monthly salary of a similar man. It is also a factor to be inspected how important it was to hold duels in fencing rooms but it could also be a factor that have contributed to the decreasing popularity of duels.

One quite long – and already mentioned – newspaper cutting (from 25th to 28th pages of the pdf) contains some valuable statistical data which refer to the number of duels. It tells that the court brought judgements in 21 cases concerning duels between 1881 and 1885. 14 years later (between 1895 and 1899) there were 233 cases before the court. The article does not inspect other circumstances like changes in the judging procedure, but the rate of change is impressive without doubt. The proliferation of duels may have reached a social “detection threshold” which factor could also cause that this question was put into focus. Another cutting from 1896 (by Kálmán Porzolt, a well-known journalist) also mentions that the number of duels have significantly increased during the last years. He identifies the increasing number of unframed people taking part in citizens' social life, which causes a high number of offenses based on the lack of education and cultural refinement. These causes often lead to unnecessary duels. The same idea was formulated more than 30 years later again, two cuttings (both from 1931) highlight the decreasing quality of duels because most of the duellers are not qualified fencers. Both journalists claim that actual duels compare more to a kind of scuffle and are not to be considered as a “regulated ceremony” as earlier.

A similar point of view is emphasised by 3 items which identify the duel as a vogue-activity. The reason for this may be found in the fact that duels originally were fought among noble people, therefore who takes part in a duel should be considered as a member of higher circles. These writers suppose that people with inferior ancestry, who indicate duels may hope it. One

⁶ Pengő was the official currency of Hungary between 1927 and 1946.

⁷ 900 Korona yearly income means 150 Kr/month, it is approximately equal with 175 Pengő.

of these items also refers to the German mensur duels which tradition was also often considered as a vogue and as a part of students' derring-do than as a noble way of arranging disagreement among gentlemen.

Women's role is also exposed in a cutting which origins from an Austrian baroness Mizi Stuttner. She highlights that a significant change in women's value judgement could strongly contribute to a desired change that men won't insist anymore to defend their honour by weapons.

There are two articles which mention an additional aspect of duels: they admire how much duels have contributed to the spread of fencing as a sport activity, where Hungary is to be considered as a strong player.

4 Books and Publications around the 20th century's turn with similar content

Around the turn of the 19th and 20th century many publications were issued regarding the topic of duels. Just like the items collected by Clair they could be divided into two main groups: supporters and opposers. It was a typical approach among supporters that their writings originally did not aim to write about duels but about fencing.

4.1 Gusztáv Arlow: Kardvívás (*Swordfencing*)

One of the best examples is Arlow's book on sword fencing (Arlow, 1902). Actually his book is a comprehensive basic guideline containing basic and slightly advanced fencing techniques of sword fencing, but he gives one chapter to duels too. It can also be easily realised that chapters dealing with sword fencing as a sport also contain points on fencing with sharp weapons, describing main differences among fencing with a sport and with a sharp weapon. That's why Arlow's book can also be considered as a technical guideline for duel fencing.

The book itself contains a 11 pages chapter discussing duelling with sharp weapons⁸. As a first point Arlow highlights that he does not aim to take a stand in the question of a reason for existence of duels. He naturally impounds the scope of its chapter on duelling with cold weapons and at the same time he mentions that is a weapon that fits a man more than firearms if it comes to duelling. He outlines his views that the outcome of sword duels is less risky, considering that pistols can hit accidentally too, but fortune plays a minor role in sword fencing. It is also important that conditions can be adjusted better to the exclusion of thrusts, by applying bandages and by choosing the weight of the weapons. He gives a detailed description on the application method of bandages which are also illustrated.

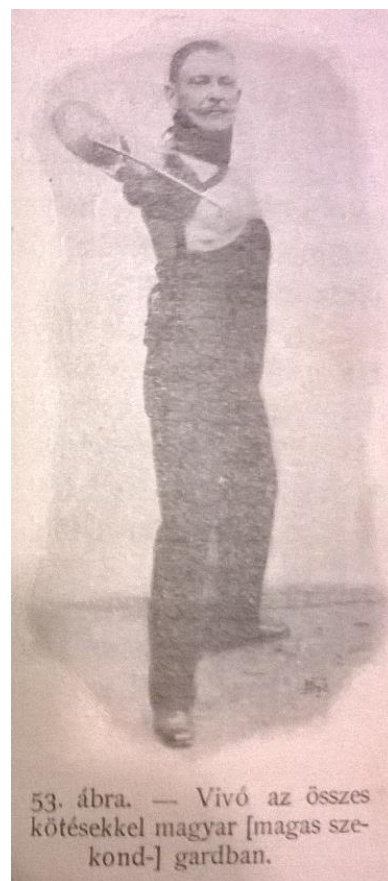


Figure 17.: Portrait of a fencer in complete bandage in Hungarian guard (Arlow, 1902:231)

⁸ It is important to consider that the great majority of sword duels in Hungary were fought with sabre. There were several examples for duels with foil but they can be considered as exceptions (see Clair, 1899).

This chapter also gives a comprehensive description on seconds' tasks and responsibilities, makes recommendations on assets they should use and describes how they should behave during the duel.

By describing duels with sharp swords Arlow adds some further technical hints to the almost complete repertoire he provides about fencing. As an additional value he gives hints how to modify fencing techniques by applying bandages on several body parts. He presents what it should mean for fencers in real action, that already learned attacks and guards work in a different way. For example if the opponent wears a bandage around his belly high guards can be applied much higher for they do not need to protect the lower part of the torso.

Another valuable content in this chapter is the description of usual duelling styles and their manner to handle. He gives advices how to fence against aggressive or nervous opponent, but also discusses the topic how to prepare an untrained fencer for a duel to give him as much chance as possible not to get injured.

As an additional paragraph Arlow presents a short overview of the actual books in the topic of duels in a footnote. He mentions Bolgár's and Clair's books as honourable, but claims that the 'Ehren-Codex' of Barbasetti and Ristow (Barbasetti, 1898) encourages duellers to use unnecessary hard regulations (e.g.: duels until one's death).

It also worth mentioning that on the last page of Arlow's book and advertisement of Clair's book (1899) to be found.

4.2 Sándor Vutkovich (ifj., dr.): Párbaj (*Duel*)

Vutkovich's book (Vutkovich, 1895) provides an international overview on duels' short history and their legal regulation regarding the recent past in the first line. It provides details about history and regulation regarding following countries: France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, England, Greece, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Russia, the USA and Hungary. The structure of the content is quite the same at all of the mentioned countries. After discussing the history of duels in the given country (some main points on regulations already included) he turns on the question of actual regulation.

This book – just like one of Clair’s items – highlights that duels have actually already disappeared from England at that time. The main motivator of a drastic change in England was Prince Albert who has openly communicated that he would be against duels, he would never take part in that and asked all English nobles to join his initiative. After all English noblemen have joined, duels have disappeared from England in some years. Vutkovich mentions England’s example as a good one. He emphasises as a main idea behind it that because duel is a social tradition and its motivation roots in the social reputation of people, only a drastic social change can be effective enough to bring the desired change. It underpins the concept that will be discussed in eight items included in the Clair-manuscript, which are also discussing if anti-duelling movements and associations could be or not the right way to reach a significant result.

Both Vutkovich and Clair’s newspaper cuttings support the opinion that legal regulation cannot be effective enough to solve this problem.

Vutkovich provides a chapter discussing duels’ principal background. He starts this discussion with a fact that the Hungarian law does not give an exact definition on the duel. He also points on that the German “Reichsstrafgesetzbuch”⁹ may show up similar deficiency on definitions. Furthermore Vutkovich (being a lawyer according to Szinnyei) gives a definition that could be used and discusses its details, defining what can be considered as a duel and what not. According to Vutkovich the definition of a duel is:

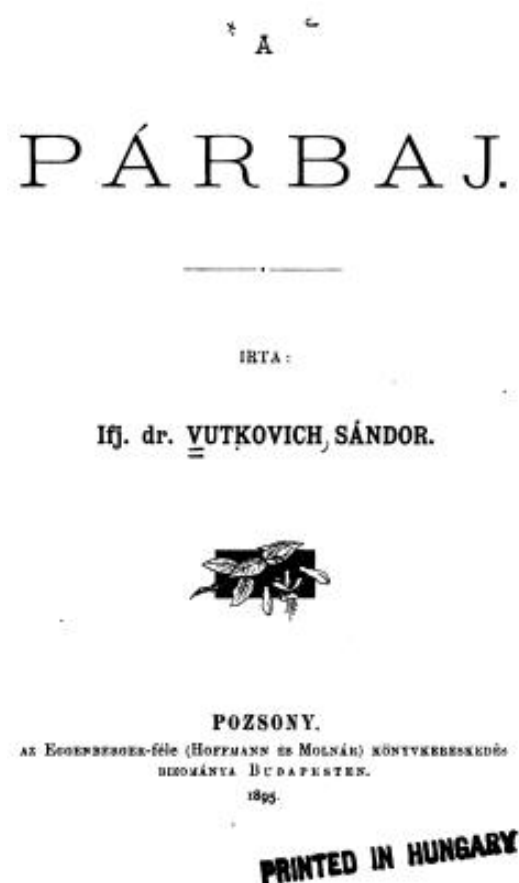


Figure 18.: The cover of Vutkovich’s book (1895)

⁹ The German Book of Imperial Criminal Law

Talán legjobban megközelíti a párbaj fogalmát az a definíció, mely szerint „párbajnak neveztünk két személy között, előzetes meg-egyezés után segédek előtt lefolyt, öldöklő fegy-
verekkel vívott harcot, melynek célja a felek között történt sértés lovagias rendezése.“

Figure 19.: Vutkovich's definition of a duels (Vutkovich, 1895:109-110)

“A duel is a fight among two people, which happens according to an earlier agreement, before seconds, fought with deadly weapons, aiming a knightly arrangement of an insult that happened among them.”

So he lists the conditions that have to exist regarding a case so that it can be named a duel:

1. It happens among (exactly) two people. If a third party is included it cannot be a “duel” anymore. If more duels happen on the same place in the same time, but fights stay among pairs, we can speak about more duels in the same time and the main question is the presence of an interaction.
2. Earlier agreement is a precondition, without that no duel can be hold. In case of a later legal process this point is very sensitive to inspect, because earlier agreement has to happen according to the ‘duel-codex’ of the given country, which is not an official document and will be never considered by lawyers to be a normative regulation. Though it will be often considered indirectly as a normative but it will be never communicated explicit by any court.
3. Accepting and participating a duel is the third condition. It means that parties have a strong intention to fight with the other on the agreed place in the agreed time. The intention to fight is an important momentum, meaning that if one of the parties declares for example that he will not fire his pistol, it cannot be considered as a duel anymore. The so called ‘American duel’¹⁰ is neither to be considered as a duel.
4. Using deadly weapons is an essential condition too, but there is no exact regulation on the quality ‘deadly’. Vutkovich suggests that it should be obviously suited for killing.

¹⁰ An American duel means that parties decide by lot drawing which one of them have to commit suicide. (Herczegh, 1903:12)

Vutkovich defines a clear difference between a duel (according to his points above) and an attack when one party attacks the other – may also calling him to defend himself. The so called ‘rencontre’ is neither to be called a duel. In this case parties start to fight with weapons in trepidity and the fight does not happen based on an earlier agreement, so it does not fulfil all the conditions of a duel.

Vutkovich adds one more important point to the four listed above and this is the question of equality. It means that weapons must not differ from each other to serve the same chances for both parties, but it also means that it’s not allowed to set up a duel among a man and a woman considering basic physical differences.

4.3 Vilmos Clair: *Párbaj-Codex (Duel Codex)*

If there is a book which can serve as a good basis to compare the content of the Clair-manuscript it is definitely his popular book, the *Duel Codex*. An item in the manuscript (on page 9 in the pdf) is a newspaper cutting which contains an interview with Clair, who was asked about the severity of the law punishing participants of duels. The reporter mentions that this book of Clair was read more often than several famous literary works. The *Duel codex* was admitted as a proper work also by other fencing professionals too (see for example Arlow’s book in 4.1).

In the foreword Clair commits himself to duels. Of course he communicates clearly against unnecessary duels but at the same time he highlights that current legal regulations do not punish offenses

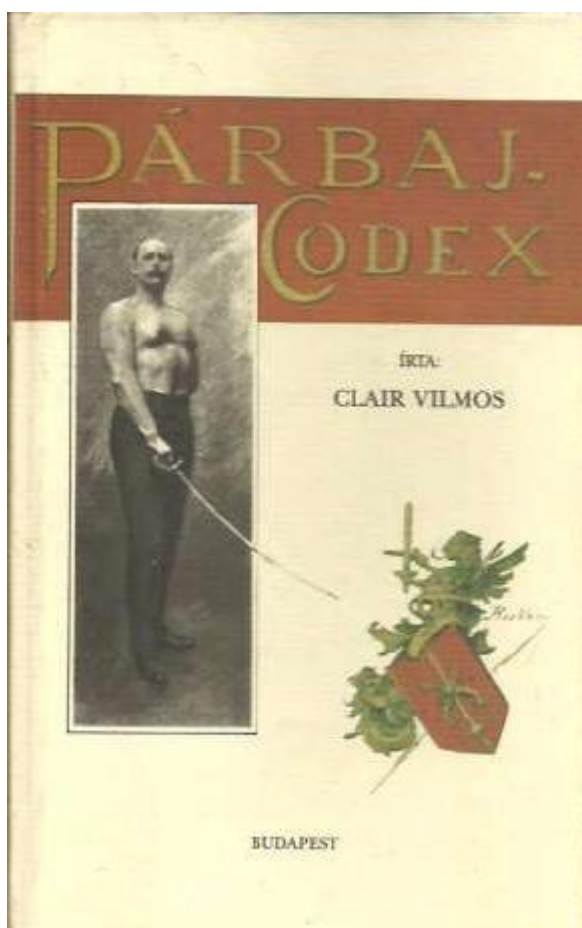


Figure 20.: The cover of Clair' *Duel Codex* (7th reprint in 1914). The cover is of the modern reprint of the 1914 year's version in 1992 by Athenaeum, Budapest)

against one's honour in a proper way (actually it means penalty in money) therefore he considers duelling the only possible way to restore injuries made on one's honour. In his manuscript there are nine items among the total of 104 supporting the same point of view.

In the first main chapter of the book (it makes about 1/3 of the whole book) Clair gives a quite detailed overview of duel's history and actual regulation – similar to Vutkovich - regarding most of the European countries. He mentions notable cases of duels, which means by Hungary that he provides a rather long list of duels which happened in the near past before his book's publication¹¹. On the 49th page he also mentions one of his own duels. It is conspicuous that a great majority of the mentioned duels which were fought by using pistols have ended with one's death, but most of the sword duels had light or – in worst cases – serious injuries as an outcome. It underpins Arlow's statement that duels with fire weapons were significantly more dangerous and uncontrollable than sword duels.

In the second chapter Clair gives a basic regulation on duels, where some definitions are to be found. Among them the three levels of an insult are according to Chappon's specification (see 4.4), but Clair gives some more details and describes special cases (e.g. answering an assault with a harder one).

Clair's Codex – compared to other books described in this paper – has notable specialities. He gives a detailed list of tasks and an exact description on seconds' tasks, responsibilities and on the manner they should manage the duel. In frames of seconds' tasks he also defines the necessary content of a protocol. It is an important, but rarely discussed point of duelling. In case of one's death protocols could have a major significance regarding following legal processing. As Arlow and also Clair highlights, seconds did not fell under any punishment in a case when they did every reasonable effort to circumvent or at least moderate the duel.

Another speciality of this book is a detailed description on foil duels. As Clair mentions foil was not a common duelling weapon in Hungary. Actually this is an important reason why it had to be regulated. Clair describes how and under which circumstances foil could be chosen as a weapon, but considering Hungarian routine in duelling anybody had the 'legal' possibility to refuse foil as a duelling weapon. Considering that most duellers and seconds had just minor experience with this kind of weapon, Clair adds some practical advices to his paragraphs regulating foil duels.

¹¹ By re-publishing his own book Clair has added new duels too. According to this in the 7th edition, which was published in 1914 there are duels mentioned from early 1914 for example.

On the other hand Clair does not aim to provide a fencing manual. According to this he did not write anything about fencing techniques but gives a detailed description on duels fought with pistols. Just like Arlow and Vutkovich Clair warns that duels with pistols are much more dangerous than with cold weapons. He also reminds that there are no such serious offenses which require a pistol duel – all kind of offenses can be satisfied with swords, considering that a duel without a bandage and allowing thrusts carries a high risk of serious injuries, even of death.

Among the items included in Clair's manuscript 13 items refer to a court of honour, other ones to a court of duel. Some of them use these expressions like synonyms, others treat them as organisations with similar functions. Based on these items no clear difference can be made between these 'institutions'. Court of honour and court of duel are the only entities in Clair's manuscript mentioned only in a positive way regarding the decrease in the number of duels. Therefore understanding their meaning can be a key regarding the manuscript's content. In his *Duel Codex* Clair gives a comprehensive description on both of them. As detailed on pages 194-200 (Clair, 1914) a court of honour is in charge to bring decision about one's ethical quality (concerning any insult against one's honour). The court of duel, however, is in charge to decide in cases when seconds do not agree about the proper way of arrangement of the question of honour. It defines if the arrangement should happen with weapons or there may be a way of peaceful arranging. Clair adds a third organisation to this list that can be understood as a third level of control: he calls it 'court of weapon'. This organisation should bring decision in questions when seconds are not able to agree on weapon to be used during the duel to fit the duel to the kind of insult.

It is an important factor regarding the possible time of creation of the Clair-manuscript that the *Duel Codex* does not contain any citations fitting exactly any of the items contained in the manuscript. It allows to suppose that the rough estimation on the earliest date of assembling (around 1920) can be possible. Considering that the last publication of Clair's *Duel codex* during his life happened in 1944 and that Clair has extended his book on the occasion of the new publishing, the inspection of later versions and their comparative analysis could be a scope of further research.

4.4 Baron Samu Chappon: A Vívás Művészetének Elmélete (The Theory of Art of Fencing)

Chappon's book (1892) is similar to Arlow's one, so far that it also gives a theoretical overview on sword fencing and discusses the question of duels only in an additional chapter. Though the book's main focus is on fencing techniques the question of duels is in focus already in the foreword.

The chapter discussing duels begins with a definition, what kind of event is to be considered as a duel. Comparing it with Vutkovich's definition (see 4.2) a definitive similarity is to be discovered.

Chappon keeps his writing according to his book's title as he moves forward on theoretical level. For his definition on duel touches the question of libel he also details this point. As he outlines a libel is an insult

against one's honour. He distinguishes three kinds of a relevant offense, and at the same time he names a clear exception: discourtesy, impoliteness is not to be considered as an insult. This idea is to be compared with an item in Clair's manuscript attributed to the journalist Kálmán Porzsolt (who discusses the growing relation of unfamed people in the society who demonstrate lack on etiquette, see 3.4.4.). The three levels of offense by Chappon are:

- Insult,
- Opprobrium,
- Assault.

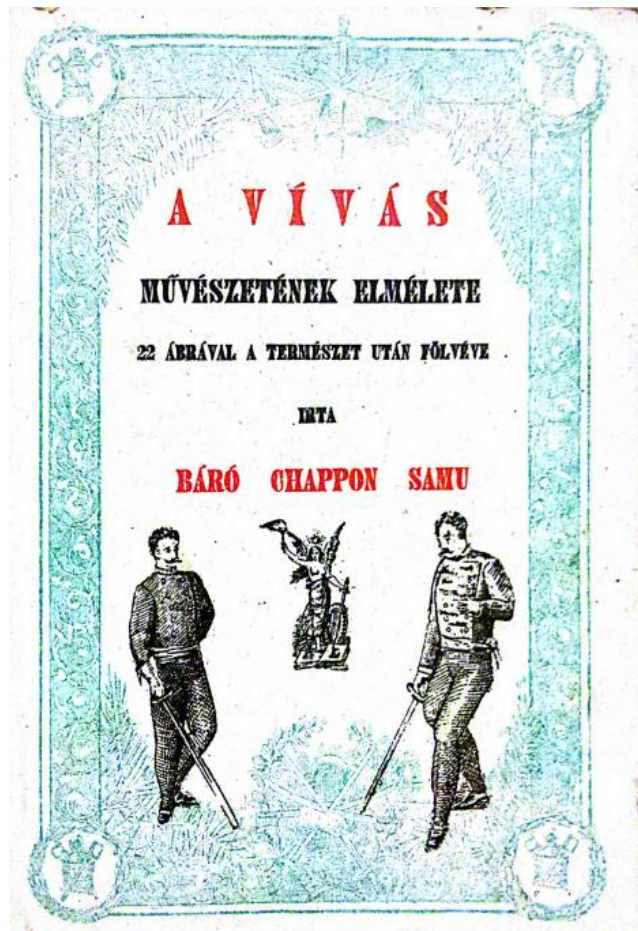


Figure 21.: The cover of Samu Chappon's book (1892)

He highlights that in a case when an Insult happens and it will be answered by another Insult, the one who has received the first insult is to be considered as the aggrieved party who is than still entitled to call for a satisfaction. If the Insult is answered by a harder kind of offense (e.g. with an opprobrium or an assault), it is a conversed case.

Chappon defines the severity of any assault to be equal with an offense against one's moral, seducing one's wife or daughter, or with the wrongful complaint of cardsharp, swindle or thievery.

Chappon lists conditions and possibilities by challenging ones and accepting a challenge. His description is similar to Clair's one but does not mention every detail where Clair does.

Regarding regulations on duel Chappon does not diverge significantly from Clair or Arlow. Considering that Chappon has published his book some years earlier he may have given a solid basis for later publications in this topic.

4.5 Mihály Herczegh: A Párbaj Keletkezése és Csökkentése (The Formation and Reduction of Duels)

This book - compared to the ones above - has a special focus. It does not discuss fencing techniques and only moderately touches the manner of duelling, but it concentrates mainly on questions of honour. Considering this content, this book contains similar ideas as many of the items to be found in the Clair-manuscript.

Regarding the question of honour Herczegh describes the unification of honour's meaning. As he highlights in earlier times there was a difference between civil and military 'kind of' honour. While honour's meaning in military circles was derived from faith and valour, its civil meaning referred to social rank and estate.

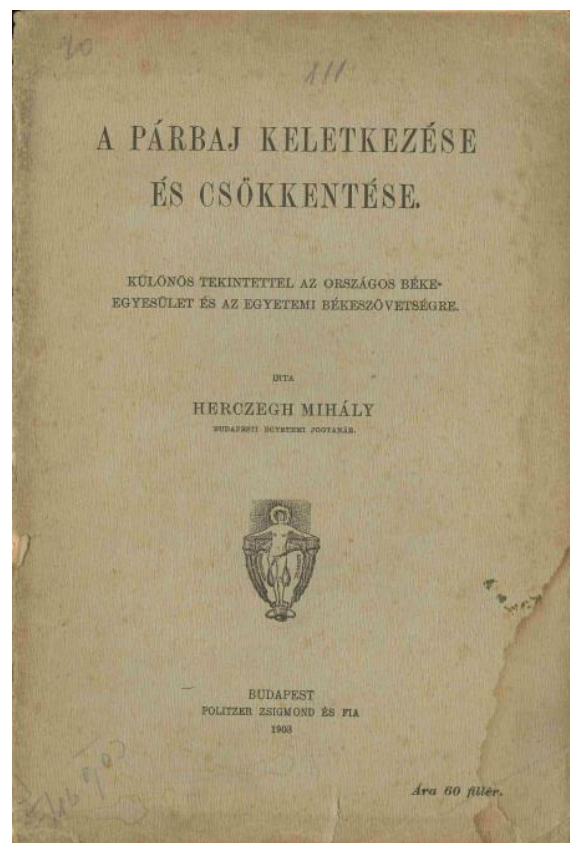


Figure 22.: The cover of Herczegh's book (1903)

Herczegh supposes that at his time both of these approaches have already joined in ‘gentlemen’s honour’ which was a property of every person who was trustworthy and credible – regardless of age, sex and religion.

Discussing libels Herczegh highlights the importance of intention. Hereby he rates impolite behaviour also as a kind of insult – contrary to Chappon who makes it an exception.

By discussing the question of duels in his next chapter Herczegh makes an unquestionable stand against the idea of duel, emphasising that a duel is not suitable to restore any offense or injury made against one’s honour. He mentions a number of prominent people who may support the same point of view. At this point he lists many of people who are already cited by the Clair-manuscript – mainly by handwritten items (e.g. Friedrich III., Wilhelm II. and Blücher).

Just like many opposers - whose name are related to items in the manuscript – Herczegh also admits that legal regulation is not suitable to make duels disappear. Therefore he discusses several possibilities how it could come to avoid duels. As a first opportunity he mentions harder punishment of libels. This idea appears often (10 times) in the manuscript too. As a second possibility he discusses the application of court of duel (as he calls it: jury). It should be noted that under this point he actually gives a very similar description (Herczegh, 1903:15) that is to be found in Clair’s Duel Codex under the point ‘court of honour’ (Clair, 1914:198). Despite his radical paragraphs in the beginning, by this point Herczegh already allows the possibility of duels. In the next point he makes the next step by naming the seconds as mediators who could contribute to avoid duels – in the final stage.

Regarding the army Herczegh supports the point of view that forbidding duels for soldiers would have an advantageous effect on the civil society’s behaviour in questions of honour and their manner to arrange. Similar thoughts are present in two items in Clair’s collection too.

Herczegh also emphasises the importance of social acceptance or deny of duels. He highlights the undesired practice that it was a quite common way of eliminating someone, that he was forced to duel by a well-planned insult by an experienced dueller who was earlier hired for money. It worth to mention that this dishonourable practice is not mentioned in any item of the Clair-manuscript, in spite of the fact that it was a known and used ‘method’. Gyula

Krúdy¹² (a well-known Hungarian writer) builds a novel on this case (see Krúdy, 1965) which was published after the writer's death.

As a further factor mentions Herczegh the role of women whose acceptance of men's behaviour plays a determinant role in the society. Herczegh suggests that women should change their stand toward men who fight duel: they should condemn the practice of duelling and do not accept the approach of men who support the idea of duels. Also they should not admire the spirit and manliness of duel fighters. This idea consonants with one item in Clair's collection which is attributed to Baroness Mizi Stuttnner (see 3.4.4).

Considering findings of chapter 3 of this paper it can be seen that the first main chapter of Herczegh's book contains all main ideas regarding duels and their possible ways of handling which can be found in the Clair-manuscript.

In the second main chapter Herczegh gives an overview on duel's history and on its types on different levels (private level: vendetta, group level: feud fights, and national level: war). He clearly supports every social way of solution that brings society near to the elimination of any kind of fight. He strongly prefers a religious way to be followed. Further he details the so called 'Peace Alliance' and its different forms (e.g.: students' organisation for peace).

4.6 Károly Haller (dr.): A Párbaj mint a Becsületsértés Orvosszere (The Duel as a Medicine for Libel)

As defined in the title of this booklet Haller (1905) seems to support the idea of duels. The basic idea of his reasoning is honour, where he makes a difference between internal and external kinds of honour. According to his definition internal honour can be considered as self-respect and has a clearly emotional background. As external honour he names the reputation as a synonym. In his view both of them can be injured by an offense and in both cases the duel might be a right way to restore one's honour. He brings numbers of

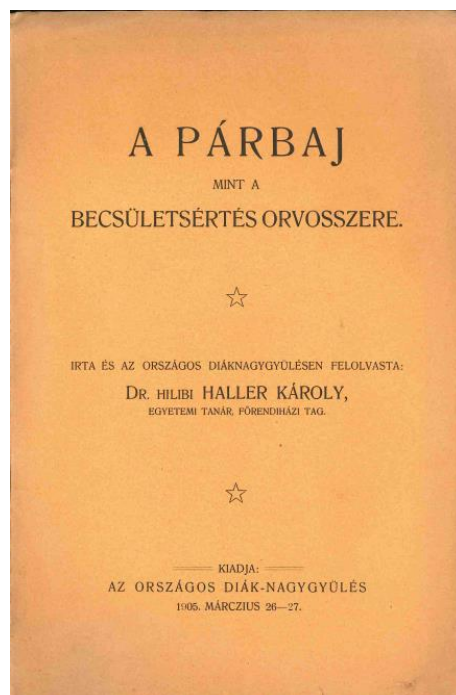


Figure 23.: The cover of Haller's booklet (1905)

¹² Clair mentions a duel in his Duel Codex fought by Krúdy (Clair, 1914:57)

examples, mainly from Hungary but Swiss cases are also often mentioned. Along these examples he lists main reasons which can lead to duels. It is no surprise that these reasons are according to those which are also highlighted in more works detailed in previous chapters of this paper.

In further he gives an insight in the practice of duelling and brings examples with lucky and less lucky outcome. Emphasising some tragically ending duels on page 10 of his 13 pages long booklet, he finally reveals that he stands against the idea of duels and would support the enforcement of a legal way to reduce duels. He claims in the first line – like many others - that the actual way of punishing libels does not bring satisfaction to the aggrieved party. By urging a social way of solution he supports the idea of court of honour.

4.7 Arisztid Dessewffy: Párbajellenes Mozgalom Magyarországon (Anti-duelling Movement in Hungary)

The initial of anti-duelling movement is often mentioned in different publications of that age, the Clair-manuscript also involves eight items which refer to them. Dessewffy (1905) starts his reasoning from the point where he does not claim against the knightly way of arranging cases but makes a difference between the knightly way and a morally questionable kind of fighting. He highlights the common practice of fighting until one's death or at least until one's inability to continue the fight. By the way, he does not query the correctness and usefulness of duelling codices which give a well-regulated frame to duels. He sees the main problem in the unregulated way of fighting which is also often referred to as duels.

As another main issue he points on the significance of the role of seconds and their callowness. He cites the well-known saying of Alphonse Karr: "*Ce ne sont ni les balles, ni les épées qui tuent. Ce sont les témions.*" ("It is

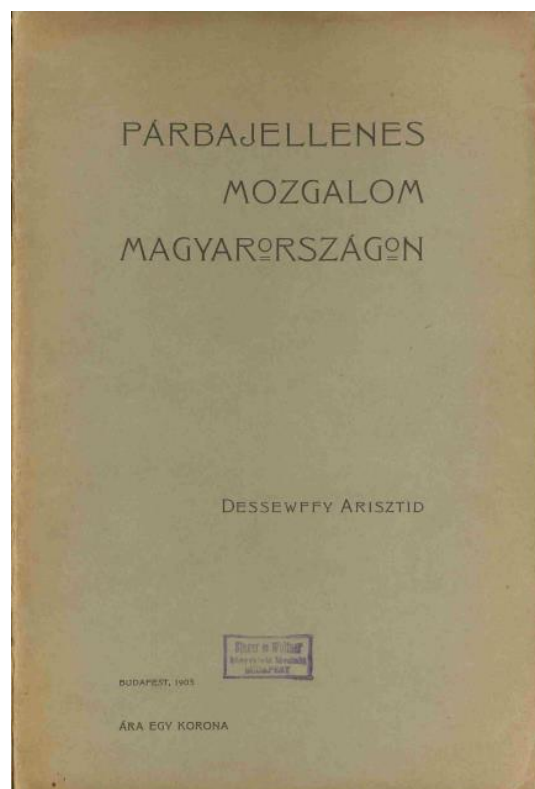


Figure 24.: The cover of Dessewffy's booklet (1905)

neither bullets nor swords that kill. These are seconds.”) (Dessewffy, 1905: 10). He details this idea as far as seconds have a determining role by defining the terms of the duel.

Dessewffy supports the initiative of the anti-duelling association which was formed in 1904 in Nagyvárad and Dessewffy was a vice-president of this organisation.

Az Országos Párbajellenes Szövetség elnöksége, tisztikara és igazgató tanácsa.			
TISZTELETI TAG: DON ALFONSO BOURBON osztárk-esteti herceg, spanyol infáns Ő királyi Fensége,		ELNÖK: RAKOVSKY ISTVÁN az állami számvevőszék elnöke.	
ALELNÖKÖK:			
dr. BÓKAY ÁRPÁD udv. tanácsos, egyetemi tanár.	dr. BALOGH JENO egyetemi tanár.	DESSEWFFY ARISZTID képviselőházi háznyi tanácsos.	ZIPERNOVSZKY KÁROLY műegyetemi tanár.
FŐTITKÁR: GERGELY EDE a magyar lészám. és pénzügytőbank főtitkárja.		ÜGYÉSZ: dr. EDVI ILLÉS KÁROLY ny. kir. ügyész, ügyvéd.	PÉNZTÁROS: KOLLER JÓZSEF főszámtanácsos.
IGAZGATÓTANÁCS:			
madarasi Beck Nándor , udv. tanácsos, a Jelzalog-bank elnökigazgatója		Ivánka Oszkár , orsz. képviselő	
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dr. Berzeviczy Albert , v. b. t. t., orsz. képviselő		Kácsér Lipót , író	
gr. Csáky Albin , a főrendiház elnöke		dr. Kenedi Géza , lapszerkesztő	
Dárday Sándor , az állami számvevőszék alelnöke		dr. Kétly Károly , egyetemi rektor	
dr. Edvi Illés Károly , ny. kir. ügyész, ügyvéd		Klímes Gyula , számszéki elnöki titkár	
lovag Falk Zsigmond , udv. tan., vezérigazgató		Kossuthányi Géza , kir. táblai bíró	
dr. Gerenday György , az Athletikai Szövetség alelnöke, kincstári jogügyi főtanácsos		Lánczy Leo , udv. tanácsos, elnökigazgató	
Glück Frigyes , székesfővárosi biz. tag		dr. Lichtenberg Kornél , egyetemi m. tanár	
Hauszmann Alajos , műegyetemi tanár		dr. Müller Kálmán , fő. tag, egyetemi tanár	
hatvani Hatvany József , főrendiházi tag		Rákosi Jenő , főrendiházi tag, az Otthon elnöke	
dr. Hausser Adorján , kassa-oderb v. főfelügyelő		dr. Szalágyi Aurél , Dunagőzh. társ. felügyelő	
dr. Heil Fausztin , közigazgatási bíró		Szentiványi Árpád , orsz. képviselő	
csetei báró Herzog Péter , földbirtokos		dr. Vámbéry Ármin , egyetemi tanár	
Hoitsy Pál , író		dr. Vámbéry Rusztem , egyetemi m. tanár	
botfai Hűvös József , udv. tanácsos		Vészi József , min. tanácsos, az Újságírók egyesületének elnöke	
		ifj. gróf Zichy János , orsz. képviselő.	

Figure 25: Presidency and leading members of the National Anti-Duelling Alliance (Source: Mission of the Alliance, 1904)

As an interesting idea he mentions that members of the alliance (its presidency included) also may be allowed to fight duels under given circumstances. They also bind themselves to bring their case in front of a court of honour at first and duel can happen only based on the court's decision. Finally Dessewffy – similar to Herczegh (1903) and Mizi Stuttner (see 3.4.4) he calls up women to support a needed social change.

5 Conclusion, further scope of research

In the scope of this paper stands the presentation and review of a manuscript left behind by Vilmos Clair and contains a collection of items – sayings and citations from well-known people about the duel. To understand the possible aim of this manuscript the manuscript itself was inspected, its content was analysed and other relevant works from the time of its possible creation were reviewed to make the interpretation of its content easier.

Though the possible starting date of collecting citations regarding duels by Clair cannot be exactly defined, it can be assumed that the manuscript itself was assembled between 1920 and 1936.

Considering the possible aim of the manuscript it can be assumed that Clair (being a lawyer but also a journalist) did not intend to prepare a standalone publication of it but planned to use (or has used) the collected items as inputs for his published writings. Unfortunately Clair's significant book (*Magyar párbajok Attila hun király idejétől 1923. év végéig*) which was published in 1930 was not available during the preparation of this paper, so its inspection is suggested and may bring mentionable results by featuring items from the manuscript.

Regarding the content of items several ideas were identifiable which have formed the thinking of the Hungarian society regarding the question of duels around those times. These ideas also appear in other publications which are reviewed in this paper - similarities and differences are outlined in the chapter 4. Among these ideas international examples and initiatives similar to Hungarian ones are highlighted. The comparative analysis of relevant Austrian, German, Spanish, French, Swiss and English (just to mention the most important ones) publications can be suggested as a further scope of research.

Some of the reviewed books in chapter 4 have further relevance by research and training of sabre fencing. Especially the books of Arlow (1902) and Chappon (1892) give a really detailed description of fencing techniques. It is remarkable that they emphasise the idea of the advantage of using training weapons in than same way like sharp ones. Both of them identify techniques and mistakes which are often made during training because the lack of experience gained by sharp fencing. Arlow adds some technical modifications to his described basic techniques in case of duel fencing using bandages – he suggests some modifications in guards

and in ways of attacking. These technical details may have been lost by giving up sharp fencing practices but could be part of a HEMA technical material on sabre fencing.

This paper gives an overview of the idea and social acceptance of duel in Hungary around the turn of the 20th century. As far as the most detailed analysed weapon used in duels is the sword (to be understood as sabre) its content may be of further use for the development of Ars Ensis' sabre training material by allowing a deeper understanding of the historical and social context of this weapon.

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