MARGINALIA

‘You should have heard him in Hungarian’: Aspects of Lajos Kossuth’s English Oratory

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Even the smallest village in Hungary has a Kossuth Street or a Kossuth Square, the biggest of the latter being in the capital, Budapest, in front of the imposing building of the Hungarian Parliament. These streets and squares commemorate the greatest Hungarian patriot, Lajos (Louis) Kossuth (1802–94), who led the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49 and, when it failed, went into exile, initially in the Ottoman Empire. For many years, however, he continued his fight for Hungarian independence by soliciting the political and financial support of Britain and the United States for a renewed campaign against the Habsburgs. To this end he first visited England for three weeks in October–November of 1851 and then sailed on to the United States, where in 1851–52 he made at least 600 fiery speeches, in a highly oratorical English that regularly left his listeners open-mouthed in admiration. Kossuth often addressed enormous audiences, sometimes numbered in the tens of thousands, and his speeches were regularly printed in their entirety in the contemporary daily press. This ensured that in second half of the nineteenth century Kossuth became the best-known Hungarian in the English-speaking world and contributed significantly to putting Hungary on the political map of Europe.

This piece takes a close look at one of Kossuth’s English orations. It is structured as follows. An introduction expands on the historical backdrop sketched above. Next, I briefly survey Kossuth’s intriguing relationship and contributions to the English language. The third section provides a preface to one of Kossuth’s greatest speeches, which also happened to be

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the last English-language speech he made in America, and is followed by an outline of that speech's dominant theme. Section five is an account of Kossuth's interest, going back to his teenage years, in the Enlightenment philosopher C. F. Volney, and leads on to the core of the piece, a detailed comparison of how much that speech owes to Volney's best-known work, *Les Ruines*. The seventh section briefly considers whether Kossuth also borrowed from another French thinker, C.-A. Helvétius. I conclude with an assessment of what Kossuth's borrowings in this lecture might say about him in terms of the first-century Roman rhetorician Quintilian's notion of the orator as *vir bonus*.

Introduction

An extract from a little-known memoir of Kossuth by John Nichol can serve as an introduction to this article, and also offers one important reason for the failure of Kossuth's tour of the US to achieve its financial and political aims. Nichol writes:

> Kossuth reached the United States in late December 1851, and left them early in the following June [*in fact, 14 July* — PS]. There is no more splendid or sadder record of the results of oratory than that contained in the history of these six triumphant and fruitless months. From the first day of his landing to the last of his leaving Kossuth was treated like Martin Chuzzlewit fairly bound for Eden. Batteries were fired on his arrival, regiments of cavalry and infantry escorted him from Faneu[i]l Hall [in Boston] to Washington, senators and orators attended and applauded his meetings, and even Daniel Webster acknowledged his master. Kossuth's career in the United States, a country singularly pervious to oratory ('the curse of this country,' says one of themselves, 'is eloquent men'), was that of a Roman triumph without the captives. He was everywhere received with the acclamation of thousands; everywhere he pleaded, preached, thundered, and prophesied like Demosthenes, from the volume of his addresses there might be made an anthology of modern eloquence, such as may be sought in vain in the parliamentary reports of any English statesman. But though he pleased, amused, excited, and also often flattered, the Americans […] had their own house to manage, and were already under the shadow of a storm about to shake its rafters. No visitor to the States in those days could escape the question, which Kossuth resolutely refused to answer, "What do you think of slavery?" […]; and he left them a sadder if not wiser man.[1]

[1] John Nichol, 'Louis Kossuth', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 70, 1894, June, pp. 153–60 (pp. 154–55).

John Nichol (1833–94) was better qualified than many of his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic to appreciate the English-language oratory of Kossuth. The first Regius Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Glasgow, he had met Kossuth a number of times (at least twice at his father Professor John Pringle Nichol's astronomical observatory in Glasgow, at least once in London in 1860, and in Turin on 12 April 1890), as well as being present at, for instance, the 5 July 1854 banquet chaired by his father at City Hall in Glasgow,[2] 'which aroused a storm of enthusiasm that perhaps no one present had ever seen approached'.[3] In this memoir Nichol goes on to try to characterize the public performances of Kossuth, who had recently died in his ninety-second year:

> Half his nature was Oriental, his speech almost wholly so. If we compare him with Western precedents, his manner was that of the Elizabethans, among whom he knew Shakespeare almost by heart, and their successors, as Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne, rather than that of John Stuart Mill and other modern models. His eloquence, running like a great river, was continually overflowing its broad banks. Every quoted sentence of his loses half its impress divorced from its emphatic delivery. Every word I have heard him utter, in private or in public, owed half to the 'large utterance' that gave it weight, and the flash of the eye that fired the whole. As an orator, he towered over all his English composers. I have listened to John Bright at his best, and his speech, never weak or false, yet seemed of limited range compared, for instance, with that of the great oration at Glasgow. 'You should have heard him in Hungarian,' said his aide-de-camp Ihá[s]z.[4]

Kossuth and the English language

The Hungarian historian Tibor Frank has written extensively on the political dimensions of Kossuth's acquisition and skilful deployment of the English language in his tireless campaign on behalf of Hungary during his first three weeks in England and the seven months that he spent touring in the United States.[5] As well as uncovering numerous hitherto unknown

[2] *Glasgow Herald*, 7 July 1854, pp. 3–4.

[3] Nichol, 'Louis Kossuth', p. 155.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Tibor Frank, '"Give Me Shakespeare." Lajos Kossuth's English as an Instrument of International Politics', in Holger Klein and Péter Dávidházi (eds), *Shakespeare Yearbook*, vol. 7, Lewiston, NY, Queenston, ON and Lampeter, 1996, pp. 47–73; idem, '"…to fix the attention of the world upon Hungary…": Lajos Kossuth in the United States, 1851–1852',

and invaluable references to Kossuth and his performances in America, Frank has successfully dispelled the enduring myth — promoted not least by Kossuth himself — that he acquired his English in a Hungarian jail with the help of only the Bible, Shakespeare, and dictionaries and grammars of English. He argues on the evidence of Kossuth's correspondence and his library that 'his intimate knowledge of a variety of classical English authors, as well as his remarkable familiarity with the language of both English and American Romantics strongly contributed to the vocabulary, the grammar, and style of his English in the 1850s and early 1860s'.[6]

Seeking further concrete evidence for this highly plausible claim, I have looked at Kossuth's English vocabulary and tried to show, for example, that he contributed substantially to the evolution and popularization in English of the important and now ubiquitous word 'solidarity' and the phrase 'solidarity of (the) peoples'.[7] The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) further suggests that Kossuth was the first to use the expression *to force the issue* (which it defines as 'to bring a situation, state of affairs, etc., to a critical point, to behave in such a way as to compel decisive action by another person or agent') in his speech at Boston's Faneuil Hall on 30 April 1852: 'Remember that your fathers did not design at first to sever the ties that bound the colonies to England, but circumstances *forced the issue*.'[8] As the *OED* says of this phrase that it is 'originally *US*', perhaps we can claim that, to some very small degree, Kossuth expanded the resources of the English language in the United States. (A corresponding phrase, *erzwingen die Entscheidung*, is found in another language in which Kossuth was fluent, German; and at least the verbal element in its Hungarian counterpart, *forszírozni a döntést*, may also have played a role in its calquing, though the earliest use I have found of the latter is during the First World War.)

Furthermore, according once again to the *OED*, the first use of another English expression, *race hatred*, is found in Daniel Webster's early sketch of Kossuth's life: 'Her [Princess Sophie, Archduchess of Austria and mother of

Hungarian Quarterly, 63, 2002, pp. 85–98.; idem, 'Marketing Hungary: Kossuth and the Politics of Propaganda', in László Péter, Martyn Rady and Peter Sherwood (eds), *Lajos Kossuth Sent Word... Papers Delivered on the Occasion of the Bicentenary of Kossuth's Birth*, London, 2003, pp. 221–49.

[6] Frank, 'Marketing Hungary', pp. 229–30.

[7] Peter Sherwood, 'Kossuth and *Solidarity*', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 96, 2018, 2, pp. 310–23.; idem, 'Kossuth Lajos és az angol solidarity szó története', *Századok* (Budapest), 154, 2020, 2, pp. 379–97.

[8] Ralph Waldo Emerson (ed.), *Kossuth in New England: A Full Account of the Hungarian Governor's Visit to Massachusetts; with his speeches, and addresses that were made to him, carefully revised and corrected, with an Appendix*, Boston, MA, 1852, pp. 110–11.

Emperor Francis Joseph] object was not only the maintenance of Imperialism as it stood, but its extension over the whole of Hungary — her means, the awakening of the *race hatred* between the Croats, Servians, and Wallachians, her man for the work, Jellachich.'[9] Finally, it is perhaps satisfying for Kossuth's fellow countrymen today to learn that the first application of the adjective *pan-European* recorded by the *OED* was to Kossuth by his well-known admirer, the writer, poet, and activist Walter Savage Landor: 'May we Englishmen be exempted from a guilt almost as heinous! — the guilt of seeing die among us, without our sympathy and without our help, a man [Kossuth] as virtuous, as ardent an orator, and as pure a patriot — the one [Demosthenes] Pan-Hellenic, the other [Kossuth] *Pan-European*.'[10]

Kossuth's final speech in America, 'The Future of Nations'

Of greater importance, however, to the analysis of Kossuth's English would be a task that I do not believe has so far been attempted, namely the detailed philological-linguistic examination of his speeches. Since no short piece can hope to do justice to the richness of these, in what follows I will consider just a single, hitherto neglected, aspect of just one of them: a source (or possibly two sources) of his final English-language oration in the USA, given before a sweltering but spellbound audience of at least 2,500 in the New York Broadway Tabernacle on 21 June 1852. This bore the title, 'The Future of Nations: In What Consists its Security'.

The exceptional quality of this speech was immediately recognized. Not only was it printed in full the following day,[11] but it was also published with interesting front matter as a booklet in the same year.[12] The editor of Kossuth's New England speeches (not named in the volume but widely thought to be Ralph Waldo Emerson) wrote less than three weeks after it was delivered that 'the uncommon interest of Kossuth's last speech or lecture in New York has induced me to give it insertion at the end of the volume'.[13] (In fact, Kossuth made his 'last speech or lecture in New York'

[9] Daniel Webster, *Sketch of the Life of Louis Kossuth, Governor of Hungary. Together with the Declaration of Hungarian Independence; Kossuth's Address to the People of the United States; all his great speeches in England; and the letter of Daniel Webster to Chevalier Hulsemann*, New York, 1851, p. 6.

[10] *The Times*, 24 March 1856, p. 7; also *London Evening Standard*, 24 March 1856, p. 3.

[11] *New York Evening Post*, 22 June 1852, p. 4.

[12] Louis Kossuth, *The Future of Nations: In What Consists its Security. A Lecture, delivered in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, on Monday evening, June 21, 1852. Revised and corrected by the Author*, New York, 1852 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=miun.agw0359.0001.001&view=1up&seq=1> [accessed 12 July 2020]. Page references in the text are to this booklet.

[13] Emerson (ed.), *Kossuth in New England*, p. iv.

a day later, in German.[14] The two occasions are often conflated.)[15] And it must have remained in demand at least for a time after Kossuth's departure, since I own a copy of the booklet reissued by the well-known phrenological foundation of the Fowler brothers, Fowlers & Wells, in 1854. (Kossuth's links with phrenology have not yet attracted attention. It is possible that his head was examined by Lorenzo Niles Fowler himself: 'When examining his [Mazzini's] head I told him that I had never seen but one man who had such a large organ of Language, and that man was Kossuth.')[16]

This speech was, exceptionally, billed as something like a benefit performance to raise money for his mother and sisters (and the sisters' families) in the USA until they could earn their keep (in Kossuth's own words: 'to secure the means of their first establishment.').[17] For instance, a notice on the front page of the *New York Evening Post* of 21 June 1852 advertised the event as follows: 'This evening, the most eloquent man of his age — the statesman and the hero — whose name alone is as formidable to the tyrants of Europe as "an army with banners" would be, will make an address to his friends. But he will speak not as heretofore on political questions, but on subjects of more universal acceptance, and on behalf, not of his country, but of his exiled mother and sisters.'

Kossuth certainly framed his lecture thus, beginning and ending with such remarks as 'The school which my mother, if God spares her life, will superintend, and in which two of my sisters will teach, and the humble farm which my third sister and her family shall work, will be the gift of your charity to-day'.[18] These statements, however, appear to be somewhat fanciful, at least as regards his mother, to whom he refers with extreme hyperbole as 'an old mother, tried by more severe affliction than any mourning parent on earth' and 'my aged mother, tried by more sufferings than any living being on earth'.[19] At this time Karolina (otherwise Sarolta) Weber was in her eighty-second year and seriously ill; she died in Brussels six months later, on 28 December 1852, without ever setting foot in America, so it is hard to imagine her ever 'superintending' an American school — even if she knew English, which is doubtful.

[14] *New York Evening Post*, 23 June 1852, p. 6.

[15] For example, John Bartholomew St. Leger, *Kossuth in America, 1851–1852*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Richmond, VA, 1961, p. 89.

[16] Lorenzo Niles Fowler, *Lectures on Man; being a series of discourses on phrenology and physiology*, London, 1880 (first published 1866), p. 143.

[17] Kossuth, *The Future of Nations*, p. v.

[18] Ibid., p. 44.

[19] Ibid., p. v and p. 5.

The dominant theme of Kossuth's speech

The actual link between Kossuth's family woes and the title and political content of this lecture is rather more complex, as will be seen below. In its first half, corresponding to pages 8 to 26 of the booklet, he expatiates upon how many of the greatest civilizations of the past considered themselves secure, yet they have fallen, and points out that the United States, too — a great civilization, today the greatest of all nations — though it considers itself secure, may also fall, unless it does the crucial thing. In the second half of the speech, pages 27 to 43, he enlarges on what that crucial thing is: the strict adherence to the tenets of Christianity in government. The fulcrum of the speech will also serve here as a miniature illustration of Kossuth's oratorical style:

> […] though the mournful example of so many fallen nations instructs us, that neither the diffusion of knowledge, nor the progress of industry, neither prosperity, nor power, nay, not even freedom itself, can secure a future to nations, still I say there is one thing which can secure it; there is one law, the obedience to which would prove a rock upon which the freedom and happiness of nations may rest sure to the end of their days. And that law, ladies and gentlemen, is the law proclaimed by our Saviour; that rock is the unperverted religion of Christ.[20]

He asks 'in the name of that Eternal Legislator' whether such tenets as 'love thy neighbor as thou lovest thyself' and 'do unto others as thou desirest others to do unto thee', being the manifestations of Charity, 'that fundamental law of Christianity', 'draw any limit of distinction' between 'man in his personal, and man in his national capacity'.[21] It is at this point that he turns from the personal to the national. His rhetorical skill is evident in that he is not only aware of what he is doing, but he is also aware that his audience is aware of it — and he anticipates their reaction:

> 'There he is again, with his eternal complaints about his country's wrongs;' may perhaps somebody remark: 'This is an assembly of charity, assembled to ease his private woes of family; and there he is again speaking of his country's wrongs, and alluding to our foreign policy, about which he knows our views to be divided.' Thus I may be charged.

[20] Ibid., p. 27.
[21] Ibid., p. 34.

He immediately continues:

> My 'private family woes!' *But all my woes and all the woes of my family, are concentrated in the unwarrantable oppression of my fatherland*, […] but […] can you blame me that my heart, in taking with gratitude the balm of consolation which your charity pours into the bleeding wounds of my family, looks around to heal those wounds, the torturing pains of which you ease, but which cannot be cured but by justice and charity done to my fatherland.[22] (My emphasis — PS)

Conflating the lot of his family with the lot of his nation, Kossuth claims that the security of both derives from the 'Law of Christ', not yet fully implemented anywhere on earth. He charges:

> I should not speak of politics! Well, I have spoken of Christianity. Your politics either agree with the Law of Christ, or they do not agree with it. If they don't agree, then your politics are not Christian; and if they agree, then I cause no division among you.[23]

Kossuth and Volney's 'Les Ruines'

I believe it has not so far been noticed that some of the descriptive material in the first half of the speech is adopted — often taken word for word — from Constantin François (de Chassebœuf, comte de) Volney's (1757–1820) *Les Ruines, ou meditations sur les revolutions des empires* (1791) in an anonymous English translation, *The Ruins, or, Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires; and the Law of Nature*, which was in fact made by the future US president Thomas Jefferson (who was responsible for the *Invocation* and at least the first 19 chapters) and an American businessman, Joel Barlow, who translated the remainder.[24] This volume first came out in Paris in 1802, but after its first US edition (New York: Dixon and Sickles, 1828) it was frequently reprinted, a likely candidate for the edition that Kossuth used in America being that published in 1840 by Charles Gaylord in Boston.

And there can be no question of Kossuth's long-term interest in Volney. As a seventeen-year-old he had translated into Hungarian part of this work of Volney's, working from its German translation,[25] at the instance

[22] Ibid., p. 35.
[23] Ibid., p. 36.
[24] Gilbert Chinard, *Volney et l'Amérique, d'après des documents inedits et sa correspondance avec Jefferson*, Baltimore, MD and Paris, 1923.
[25] *Die Ruinen, oder Betrachtungen über die Revolutionen der Reiche und das Natürliche*

of one of his tutors at the famous Lutheran College of Eperjes (today's Prešov, Slovakia), Mihály Greguss, just nine years older than his brilliant student, whose radical views, imbibed during his studies at Tübingen and Göttingen, greatly influenced the young Kossuth.[26] From a letter by Kossuth to the dramatist József Kolosy it is clear that he was totally smitten by the work, waxing typically lyrical about it and noting how it swept him 'beyond even the Christian faith' ('túl még a keresztény hiten is'). He adds (in my translation):

> Having been convinced by the truth of Volney's assertion that every phenomenon ever observed in human and social life derives from the principles of self-interest, I have attempted in my idle hours to apply the truth of this theory of his to my own person, the outside world and the knowledge of mankind. How far I have succeeded in this endeavour in the essay appended herewith, I leave, my dear sir, to your judgement.
>
> [Volney — minden phänomenont, melly az emberi s társasági életben valaha észrevehető volt, az önszeretet princzipiumaiból deducál, engem állításának igazsága meggyőzvén — üres óráimban ezen theoreticus igazságot a magam individualitására, a külső világra s az emberesméretre próbáltam alkalmaztatni. Mennyibe sikerült igyekezetem, azt a szintúgy ide rekesztve közlött értekezéssel a Tekintetes úr itéletére bízom.]

Unfortunately, this essay, which must have provided further valuable insights into Kossuth's views of Volney, does not appear to have survived.[27]

To appreciate why Kossuth's mining of Volney's work for this speech may be surprising, it will be helpful to take a look at *Les Ruines*, a major source of inspiration for freethinkers in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It consists of two parts. The first and major part is a refutation of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, offering the theory that empires rise when the

Gesetz (trans. Sophie Margarethe ['Meta'] Forkel-Liebeskind), Berlin, 1792.

[26] Ambrus Miskolczy, 'Kant, Greguss, Kossuth. Milyen filozófiát tanulhatott Kossuth Lajos Eperjesen Greguss Mihálytól?', *Valóság* (Budapest), 48, 2005, 9, pp. 21–46; Tibor Fabiny, 'Az evangélikus Kossuth', in Botond Kertész (ed.), *Kossuth és az egyházak. Tanulmányok*, Budapest, 2004, pp. 12–13.

[27] István Barta (ed.), *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái, 6., Ifjúkori iratok 1819. július 5-1837. május 3*, Budapest, 1966; Lajos Kossuth to József Kolosy, Sátoraljaújhely, n.d. [1829] <https://www.arcanum.hu/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-vi-AC0D/ifjukori-iratok-1819-julius-5-1837-majus-3-AC2E/26-satoraljaujhely-kelet-nelkul-1829-kossuth-levele-kolosy-jozsefhez-elkuldi-neki-volney-konyvenek-egy-reszerol-keszitett-forditasat-es-egy-ertek-B489/> [accessed 28 August 2020].

government allows the enlightened self-interest of the citizen to flourish, and fall when it does not. This accorded well with Jefferson's thinking and, doubtless energized by the two weeks Volney spent with him at Monticello in June 1796, Jefferson undertook the translation of *Les Ruines*, for which his French, honed during his five tumultuous years (1784 to 1789) as United States Minister to France, made him well qualified.

The second part of *Les Ruines*, however, reviews the history of the major world religions and argues that conflicting beliefs, each fanatically held to be the sole true faith by its believers, are the chief remaining sources of human misery. Volney goes on to assert that none of the world's religions has any validity and concludes that all religious matters must be absolutely separated from government:

> [T]o live in harmony and peace […] we must trace a line of distinction between those [*sc.* assertions] that are capable of verification, and those that are not; and separate by an inviolable barrier the world of fantastical beings from the world of realities; that is to say, all civil effect must be taken away from theological and religious opinions.[28]

Though taken from the part of the text translated by Joel Barlow, the phrases 'line of distinction' and 'inviolable barrier' echo closely Jefferson's '*wall of separation* between church and state', the fundamental principle linked to the First Amendment to the US Constitution, which he is regarded as having been the first to formulate in these terms,[29] in the very year, moreover, that the Jefferson-Barlow translation of Volney appeared in Paris. The impassioned attack on all religions in these final chapters made the work highly controversial, however, and Jefferson, who was vice-president of the US between 1797 and 1801 and hoped to be elected president of a country with a substantial population of devout Christians (not all of them Baptists, who supported the principle), decided to be prudent and had the translation published anonymously and outside the United States.

Yet these considerations did not prevent Kossuth from adopting some of the material in the second and fourth chapters of Volney's work, which sets out to answer the question, 'What causes have erected and overthrown

[28] Constantin François (de Chassebœuf, comte de) Volney, *The Ruins, or, Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires; and the Law of Nature*, trans. Thomas Jefferson and Joel Barlow, Paris, 1802, chapter 24 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1397/1397-h/1397-h.htm#link2HCH0024> [accessed 28 August 2020].

[29] Thomas Jefferson, Letter to the Danbury Baptists, 1 January 1802 <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letter_to_the_Danbury_Baptists_-_January_1,_1802> [accessed 26 August 2020].

empires?', in a lecture of which, as the press immediately noted, '[a] large part […] was of a highly religious character, expressive of the sublime ideal of Christianity cherished by Kossuth, and of the profound grief with which he contemplates the defeat of its practical application to social and political affairs'.[30]

'Les Ruines' in Kossuth's 'The Future Of Nations'

The question of the exploitation of a fundamentally irreligious work to assert the supreme importance of Christian tenets in government is taken up in the concluding section of this essay. For the moment let us note how the detailed comparison of the relevant parts of Kossuth's speech with Volney's text offers insights into his oratorical technique. In Appendix A, extracts from 'The Future of Nations' are juxtaposed with parts of the 1802 Jefferson-Barlow translation, though I have arranged and marked them up in such a way as to bring out how Kossuth drew on the translation. The major points to be made are as follows:

• Exact or close matches are in **bold**, thus, and have been numbered (separately for each part of Appendix A) for ease of reference.

• Omissions from Volney (not all of which can, of course, be displayed) suggest how Kossuth tailored the material to his audience. Appendix A2 shows two examples in double braces ({{...}}) of material that he must have considered too remote or irrelevant for his immediate purposes; see the translation. He did not always find this line easy to draw, as shown, also in Appendix A2, by the omission from the booklet of one phrase found in the *New York Evening Post* version, **(1)** "**the pearls of Hevila**". As a matter of fact, this is the only substantive difference between the two versions, despite the repeated promotional claim in the booklet that the text was 'revised and corrected by the Author'.

• Additions to Volney are somewhat more striking and of at least two kinds:

a) Enlivening phrases bringing a remote reference closer to his audience, such as that in Appendix A1 on **(1) the ramparts of Nineveh**, a timely comment on Sir Austen Henry Layard's recent excavations.[31] Another case, in Appendix

[30] Cited from Kossuth, *The Future of Nations*, p. vii.

[31] Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, 2 vols, London, 1849; idem, *The Monuments of Nineveh. From Drawings Made on the Spot*, London, 1849.

A2, is the expansion, by a Kossuth always publicly proud of his poverty, of **(4) the shawls of Kachemire/the soft tissues of Kachemire** into **Cashmere's** soft **shawls**, *today yet a luxury of the wealthiest*.

A more subtle example of elaboration in Appendix A1 is Kossuth's expansion of "**splendor**", by the deployment of the well-known rhetorical 'rule of three', into '(Where is) the *power*, the **splendor**, and the *glory* (*of all those mighty nations?*)'. These addenda are *underlined and italicized*, thus. Such threesomes, a familiar rhetorical device, abound in Kossuth's text.

b) More frequent is the studding of the high-flown material in the translation with hyperbole such as *gigantic*, *wonderful*, *unequaled*, *countless*, and the addition of phrases like the gilding-the-lily description, in Appendix A1, of **(o/i) Thebes** as *more splendid than the most splendid of all the existing cities of the world*. (Such formulations may be influenced by Hungarian grammar, which has a morphological hyperlative that identifies a unique item [note the definite article required in both languages]: nagy 'big'; nagyobb 'bigger'; legnagyobb 'biggest'; a legeslegnagyobb, approximately 'the biggest of all'.) Such elaborations are only *italicized*, thus.

• Finally, the addition of numbering serves to highlight Kossuth's careful attention to the arrangement and interweaving of the phrases he selected, some of which he also subtly altered internally, all this presumably to fit better with the flow of his words.

Another possible French source?

In Appendix B I give another possible Enlightenment source of Kossuth's in this lecture, a short passage, apparently taken from the first English translation, *De l'Esprit: or Essays on the mind, and its several faculties*, of an atheistic, egalitarian and proto-utilitarian work by Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715–71) that was condemned by the Sorbonne, the Pope, the Parlement of Paris, and publicly burned by the Paris hangman.[32] As in Appendix A, identical or closely matching words and phrases are numbered and in **bold,** thus, for ease of reference. Apart from one slight difference (the interchange of **(2)** and **(3)**) and the probably strategic omission of **(5)**, Kossuth follows the sequence in Helvétius. *Prima facie* evidence for Helvétius as his source is the inclusion of elements translated from the Latin footnote ((**4b)**, in **bold** and underlined), where '*Apolog. p. Herodot.*' abbreviates the title of Henri

[32] Claude-Adrien Helvétius, *De l'Esprit*, Paris, 1758; idem, *De l'Esprit: or Essays on the mind and its several faculties. Translated from the edition printed under the Author's Inspection*, London, 1759.

(II) Estienne's (1528 or 1531–98) *Apologia pro Herodoto*, the introductory essay — highly critical of the Roman Catholic church — to his 1566 edition of Lorenzo Valla's Latin translation of Herodotus's *History*.

While suggestive, a single, brief passage is nevertheless insufficient to establish that Kossuth sought out Helvétius's text in English translation. Furthermore, the wording does not match as closely as in the case of the borrowings from the Jefferson-Barlow translation of Volney, while at least the St Jerome anecdote may have enjoyed wider currency: an example from an eighteenth-century source is included in Appendix B for comparison.[33]

Conclusion: Kossuth as Quintilian's 'vir bonus'?

Quintilian's 'vir bonus' theory agrees with Plato that 'wisdom, goodness and eloquence are inseparable and that an amorally neutral conception of rhetoric is impossible: for both [Quintilian and Plato], rhetoric is "speaking well," and for both "speaking well" means speaking justly'.[34] Was Kossuth a 'good man' in this sense? Any answer to this question must acknowledge that he was renowned for his 'ability to suit his quotations to the taste of his actual audience',[35] examples of which in his last two speeches are the reference to the Six Indian Nations as antecedents of the Union[36] and, in his address to the New York German community, to the Old Swiss Confederacy's Rütlischwur of 1307.[37] Even before his arrival in America some had pointed to his 'considerable talent for portraying himself as all things to all men […] with one newspaper in early November 1851 noting "Kossuth has played his cards admirably. He has talked constitutionalism with mayors and aldermen, free trade to Cobden and the middle classes, and genuine democracy to the multitudes"'.[38] And while in a letter to Marx Engels who 'grudgingly admired Kossuth's tact in handling the British public, he condemned his evident duplicity: "In Marseille he shouts Vive la République, in Southampton GOD SAVE THE QUEEN".'[39]

[33] James Boswell, et al. (eds), *The Attic Miscellany, Or, Characteristic Mirror of Men and Things*: 'Anecdotes and Bon Mots. Transmitted by Correspondents', 2, no. 16, London, 1789, p. 148.

[34] John Logie, 'Quintilian and Roman authorship', *Rhetoric Review*, 22, 2003, 4, pp. 353–73 (p. 371).

[35] Frank, 'Marketing Hungary', p. 239.

[36] Kossuth, *The Future of Nations*, p. 24.

[37] *New York Evening Post*, 23 June 1852, p. 6.

[38] Gregory Claeys, 'Mazzini, Kossuth, and British Radicalism, 1848–1854', *Journal of British Studies*, 28, 1989, 3, pp. 225–61 (p. 248).

[39] Ibid., p. 253, and references there; for the Marseilles episode, see also Sherwood, 'Kossuth Lajos', pp. 392–93.

These doubts about his character no doubt stemmed partly from Kossuth's need, or decision, to address 'all men' in his quest for material as well as moral support from the two English-speaking nations. It is true that some working men, like the Chartist trade unionist William Newton (1822–76) had great admiration for Kossuth. Newton called him 'one of the greatest men of modern times [whose] whole life seems as if it were a great poem sounding down to us through long gone ages, rather than a reality of the present. In him are blended in one the attributes of the patriot, the hero, and the martyr […]. This man comes to us, not only as the representative of liberty, but, ennobled by effort, hallowed by sacrifice, and purified by suffering'.[40] As the words of Nichol above also suggest, numerous manifestations of what was widely called Kossuth mania in this dithyrambic vein are on record. Yet the 'active Reformer' Thornton Hunt (1810–73), son of the writer Leigh Hunt, felt obliged to inform Kossuth on his first day in England that he would have to bridge a great divide: 'I could not promise that a banquet originating with the working people would be joined by the leading men of other classes […] I told him that to speak to all, he must address himself to the divided halves […].'[41]

Though Kossuth made his mark with, and even, to some extent, on the English language, he failed to 'speak to all' and did not achieve either his political or financial aims. A damning summary verdict on 'The Kossuth Chapter in the United States' in the most widely read, if often sensationalistic, newspaper in New York mentions the pseudonym Kossuth adopted on leaving the city. Even this, the final linguistic imprint Kossuth left on America, is suggestive of the above-mentioned problem: the first name has a more elevated ring, recalling the substance of his appeals to politicians and government (with perhaps a nod also to the great Hungarian poet-hero of 1848–49, Sándor [Alexander] Petőfi), while it is coupled with the commonest of surnames, redolent of his appeal to the masses. The unsigned, probably editorial, piece runs in part as follows:

> The circumstances attending Kossuth's departure form a strange contrast to those of his arrival, and furnish an eloquent homily on the instability of popular enthusiasm. His organs had announced that he would embark for England on a day named, and had thus set at rest all suspicion as to his movements. It was whispered, and generally believed, that he had got into some pecuniary difficulties, arising out of the contracts for munitions

[40] *The Operative* (London), no. 43, 25 October 1851, p. 1; no. 44, 1 November 1851, p. 137.

[41] *New York Times*, 17 November 1851 (Hunt's letter from England, dated 24 October 1851), p. 2.

> of war into which he had been deluded, and that legal proceedings were about to be instituted against him. We cannot say whether it was the anticipation of this which induced Kossuth to leave here by the *Africa* on Wednesday [14 July] instead of Saturday [17 July], the day first named, assuming a fictitious name, Alexander Smith, as if he were a common felon or malefactor eluding the pursuit of justice. He entered the city with all the pomp, and ceremony, and enthusiasm, which of old attended the victorious general in a Roman triumph, and has left it secretly and in disguise, without a solitary huzza to bid him God-speed.[42]

One wonders whether Kossuth's unacknowledged incorporation in his speech of material from at least one freethinker, Volney, to buttress his argument for the strictest observance of Christian beliefs in government provides further evidence of his skill in 'suiting his quotations to the taste of his audience', or is perhaps an instance of 'evident duplicity'. Careful, detailed further study of Kossuth's words will decide.

[42] *New York Herald*, 22 July 1852, p. 4.

Appendices

Appendix A1

VOLNEY, *The Ruins*, 1802. Chapter II: The Reverie, p. 24.

Where are those **(1) ramparts of Nineveh**, those **(2) walls of Babylon**, those **(11) palaces of Persepolis**, those **(3) temples of Balbeck** and **(4) of Jerusalem**? Where are those **(5) fleets of Tyre**, those **(6) dock-yards of Arad**, those **(7) work-shops of Sidon**, and that multitude of sailors, of pilots, of merchants, and of soldiers? […] Alas! I have passed over this desolate land! I have visited the palaces, once the theatre of so much **splendor**, and I beheld nothing but solitude and desolation. – I sought the ancient inhabitants and their works, and **could only find a faint trace, like that of a foot of a traveller over the sand**. […] And the history of former times revived in my mind; I remembered those ancient ages when many illustrious **nations** inhabited these countries; I figured to myself **(12) the Assyrian** on the banks of the Tygris, **(13) the Chaldean** on the banks of the Euphrates, **(14) the Persian reigning from the Indus to the Mediterranean**. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria, **(15) the warlike** states of the **Philistines**, and **(16) the commercial republics of Phoenicia.**

VOLNEY, *The Ruins*, 1802. Chapter IV: The Exposition, pp. 32–33.

Behold **(0) Thebes with her hundred palaces*, the first metropolis of the arts and sciences**. […] There stood the powerful cities of Tyre, of Sidon, of **(8) Ascalon**, of **(9) Gaza**, and of **(10) Berytus** [= *Beirut*, PS].
* [*Homer's '100-gated Thebes' must mean it had '100 palaces' — Volney's footnote*, PS]

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KOSSUTH, *The Future of Nations*, 1852, pp. 9–12.

And among their dissolving views, there I saw the scorched soil of Africa, and upon that soil **(0/i) Thebes with its hundred gates**, *more splendid than the most splendid of all the existing cities of the world*; **(0/ii) Thebes**, the pride of old Egypt, **the first metropolis of arts and sciences**, and the mysterious cradle of so many doctrines which still rule mankind in different shapes, though it has long forgotten their source. There I saw Syria with its hundred cities, every city a nation, and every nation with an empire's might. **(3/i) Baalbec, with its** *gigantic* **temples**, the very ruins of which baffle the imagination […] still, looking at **(3/ii) the temples of Baalbec**, we cannot forbear to ask what people of giants was that, which could do what neither the efforts of our skill nor the ravaging hand of unrelenting time can. And then I saw the dissolving picture of **(1) Nineveh**, with **its ramparts** *now covered with mountains of sand, where Layard is digging up colossal winged bulls, huge as a mountain, and yet carved with the nicety of a cameo* ; and then (**2) Babylon**, with its *wonderful* **walls** ; and **(4) Jerusalem**, with **its** *unequaled* **temple** ; **(5) Tyrus**, with **its** *countless* **fleets**; **(6) Arad,** with **its wharves**; and **(7) Sidon**, with its *labyrinth* of **work shops** *and factories* ; and **(8) Ascalon,** and **(9) Gaza**, and **(10) Beyrout**, and farther off **(11) Persepolis**, with **its** *world of* **palaces.** […] Where is the *power*, the **splendor**, and the *glory of all those mighty nations?* All has vanished **without other trace than such as the foot of the wanderer leaves upon the dust.** […] And

the spirit of history rolled on the misty shapes of the past before the eyes of my soul. After those cities of old came the **nations** of old. **(12) The Assyrians**, **(13) the Chaldeans**, **(15) the war-like Philistines**, **(16) the commercial republics of Phoenicia** and **(14) the Persians, ruling from the Indus to the Mediterranean.**

Appendix A2

VOLNEY, *The Ruins*, 1802. Chapter IV: The Exposition, p. 33.

There were those famous Idumean ports, whence the fleets of Phoenicia and Judea, coasting the Arabian peninsula, penetrated into the Persian gulf, to seek there **(1) the pearls of Hevila**, **(2) the gold of Saba and Ophir**. Yes, there on that coast of Oman and Bahrain was the seat of a commerce of luxuries, which, by its fluctuations and revolutions, fixed the destinies of ancient nations: thither came **(3) *the spices and precious stones* of Ceylon**, **(4) the shawls of Kachemire**, **(5) the diamonds of Golconda** [= *Hyderabad*, PS], {{the amber of the Maldives, the musk of Tibet, the aloes of Cochin, the apes and peacocks of the Indian continent, the incense of Hadramant [*recte: Hadramaut (= Yemen)*, PS],}} **(6) the myrrh, the silver, the gold-dust and ivory of Africa**; {{thence passing, sometimes by the Red sea on the vessels of Egypt and Syria, these luxuries nourished successively the wealth of Thebes, of Sidon, of Memphis and of Jerusalem.}}

VOLNEY, *The Ruins*, 1802. Chapter II: The Reverie, p. 23.

Here a numerous people assembled for the sacred duties of religion, or the anxious cares of their subsistence: here industry, parent of enjoyments, collected the riches of all climates, and **(8) the purple of Tyre was exchanged** for **(9) the *precious* thread of Serica** [= *northern China*, PS]; **(4) the soft tissues of Kachemire** for **(12) the *sumptuous tapestry* of Lydia**; **(11) the amber of the Baltic** for **(10) the pearls and perfumes of Arabia**; **(2) the gold of Ophir** for **(7) the tin of Thule:** and *what remains of this powerful city*; **a *miserable* skeleton**!

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KOSSUTH, *The Future of Nations*, 1852, pp. 21–22.

(8) Tyre exchanged its purple for **(9) the silk of Serica** ; **(4) Cashmere's** *soft* **shawls**, *to-day yet a luxury of the wealthiest*, [**(1) the pearls of Hevila** – *included in the version of this speech printed in the* New York Evening Post *of 22 June 1852 (p. 4), but omitted here*, PS], **(5) the diamonds of Golconda**, **(12) the *gorgeous carpets* of Lydia**, **(2) the gold of Ophir and Saba**, **(3) *the aromatic* spices *and jewels* of Ceylon**, and **(10) the pearls and perfumes of Arabia**, **(6) the myrrh, silver, gold dust, and ivory of Africa**, as well as **(11) the amber of the Baltic** and **(7) the tin of Thulé**, appeared alike in their commerce, raising them in turn to the dominion of the world, and undoing them by too careless prosperity. […] you [Americans] have reproduced the grandeur of those ancient nations, and nearly equal their prosperity. And *what has become of them?* **A *sad* skeleton.**

Appendix B

***De l'Esprit: or, Essays on the mind, and its several faculties*. Written by Helvetius. Translated from the edition printed under the Author's Inspection. London: for the Translator. 1759. [*Translation of Helvétius 1758*]; p. 90.**

> In the simplicity of the ages of ignorance, objects presented themselves under a very different aspect from that in which they appear to enlightened eyes. The tragedies of our Saviour's passion, edifying as they were to our ancestors, appear to us as scandalous. It seems the same with respect to almost all the **(1) subtil** questions then debated in the divinity-schools. Nothing can appear more indecent than disputes in form, **(2) whether God is naked or cloathed in the host? (3) whether, if God be omnipotent, he has the power of sinning? (4a) whether God could assume the nature of** a woman, a devil, an ass, a rock, **a gourd**, and a thousand other questions still more extravagant?*
> [*footnote begins on p. 90, immediately following the above* – PS]
> * **Utrum Deus potuerit suppositare** muli- [*footnote continues on p. 91* – PS] erem, vel diabolum, vel asinum, vel silicem, vel **cucurbitam**; &, si suppositaset **cucurbitam, (4b) quaemadmodum fuerit concionatura, editura miracula, & quonammodo fuisset fixa cruci**. *Apolog. p. Herodot.* vol. iii. p. 127.
> **(5) There was a time, when the arts and sciences were considered by the church as earthly things unworthy of a christian. It is even said on this subject, that (6) an angel whipt St Jerome for endeavouring to imitate Cicero's style. (7) The abbé Cartaut pretends, that this was for imitating him but badly.**

Kossuth, *The Future of Nations*, 1852, pp. 41–42.

> Mighty folios have been written about the problem, how many angels could dance upon the top of a needle without touching each other? The folly of **(1) subtility** went so far as to profane the sacred name of God, by disputing **(3) if He, being omnipotent, has the power to sin? (2) If, in the holy wafer, He be present dressed or undressed? (4a) If the Saviour would have chosen the incarnation in the shape of a gourd**, instead of a man, **(4b) how would he have preached, how acted miracles, and how had been crucified?** And when they went to the theme of investigating if it was a whip or a lash with which **(6) the angels have whipped St Jerome for trying to imitate in his writings** *the pagan* **Cicero**, it was but after centuries that **(7) Abbot Cartaut** dared to write **that if St. Jerome was whipped at all, he was whipped for having *badly* imitated Cicero**. [*'badly' is italicized in the original* – PS]

James Boswell et. al. (eds), *The Attic Miscellany, Or, Characteristic Mirror of Men and Things: 'Anecdotes and Bon Mots. Transmitted by Correspondents'*, vol. 2, no. 16, 1789, p. 148. [*This item is signed only 'G.'*]

> **(5) There was a time, when the arts and sciences were considered by the church as earthly things unworthy of a Christian. It is even said on this subject that (6) an angel whipped St Jerome for endeavouring to imitate Cicero's style. (7) The Abbé Cartaut, however, pretends, that he only whipped him for imitating it so *badly*.** [*'badly' is italicized in the original* – PS]