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The Sources of Ferenc Verseghy's Handbook of Aesthetics

(*Usus aestheticus linguae hungaricae*, 1817)

One of the primary characteristics of Hungarian literature from the very beginnings of its history has been that literatures of other nations have been an inspiring source for Hungarian authors and the practice of literary translation has greatly enriched literature in Hungarian. In the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century, a significantly higher number of translations were done and published than in the earlier period, and most of the most prominent writers were also translators. The notion that translation serves as a point of departure, a kind of foundation on which the structure of national literature should rest, became widespread opinion.¹ This view was also shared by Ferenc Verseghy (1757–1822), one of the most significant figures of intellectual life in Hungary at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.² He was a well-trained and industrious translator of poetry, fiction, and scientific works, so when scholars evaluate the outstanding quantity of his literary production, he is generally overtaken by contemporary writers who are considered more original. One would not consider Verseghy an original thinker or writer on the basis of his works on aesthetics, but this was true of most of the Hungarian and foreign authors working in this field. Even so, he was a talented translator, compiler, and editor, who wrote about the elements of contemporary anthropological aesthetics in a unique way, arranged in a logical, transparent system.

Ferenc Verseghy entered the Order of Saint Paul in 1778. In the following years, he pursued studies at the University of Pest. The Paulist convent was a preferred meeting place for contemporary intellectuals of Pest, and it was where the young monk acquainted himself with the leading figures of cultural

1 On this characteristic of Hungarian literature see: *Nunquam autores, semper interpretes. A magyarországi fordításirodalom a 18. században* [Translations in 18th Century Hungarian Literature]. Ed. Réka Lengyel. Budapest 2016

2 For the life and works of Ferenc Verseghy see *Handbuch der ungarischen Literatur*. Eds. Tibor Klaniczay et al. Budapest 1977, 122, 130, 144–145; *A History of Hungarian Literature*. Eds. Tibor Klaniczay et al. Budapest 1983, 142–143; Lóránt Czigány: *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature. From the Earliest Times to the Present*. Oxford 1984, 94.

life. Verseghy promoted progressive ideas, and as a preacher he emphasized the importance of re-evaluating the role of the Church and fostering a renewal of religious life. In the 1780s, he joined the freemasonry movement. He translated *Éléments d'histoire générale* by Claude François Xavier Millot, a work on world history, in Hungarian. The first volume of which was published in 1790.

He translated Antoine Guyard's *Dissertation sur l'honoraire des Messes* (1748) into Hungarian. His translation was based on the German version by the Austrian Karl Joseph Huber, entitled *Dringende Vorstellung und die Religion wider der Halbguldenmesse, und Priestermethe* (1783). The Order of Saint Paul was dissolved in 1786, and Verseghy continued to work as a preacher and an army priest. He had applied for the position of official censor several times, but he had been rejected on political grounds, since his conduct had been classified as dangerous. Meanwhile, he was both writing and translating poems and plays, plays by Aeschylus and by contemporaries such as August von Kotzebue, for instance.³ These works were presented on stage in Pest and in other parts of the country. In addition, he translated Jakob Dusch's fictional epistolary novel entitled *Moralische Briefe zur Bildung des Herzens* (1759). He was also a member of the editorial board of the journal *Magyar Museum* [Hungarian Museum], in which he published translations of poems and studies related to poetry. In 1793, he published a Latin-language book of Hungarian grammar and a study on aesthetics and poetic theory.⁴

In 1795, Verseghy was condemned for his revolutionary activities in the Jacobine movement, and he spent the next nine years in prison. He was released in 1803. He returned to Buda and soon was offered a job: János Szapáry, palatine József's major-domo, employed him as his daughter's preceptor. Thanks to Szapáry, with whom Verseghy could have met in freemasonry circles, since the count himself was a member of several Hungarian and international Lodges in the 1780s and 1790s, Verseghy was accorded an important duty: he taught the palatine Hungarian for a whole year. From this period until his death, he lived in the Buda castle, near the palatine. Later, he worked as a preceptor for

3 Cfr. Ferenc Kerényi: »Angaben und Gesichtspunkte zur August Kotzebue-Rezeption auf den ungarischen Bühnen«. In: *Rezeption der deutschen Literatur in Ungarn. 1800–1850, 1. Teil. Deutsche und ungarische Dichter*. Ed. László Tarnói. Budapest 1987 (= *Budapester Beiträge zur Germanistik*, 17), 125–168; see also *Verseghy Ferenc drámái* [Verseghy's Dramatic Works]. Ed. Etelka Donczecz. Debrecen 2014 (= *Csokonai Könyvtár. Források. Régi kortársaink*, 11).

4 Ferenc Verseghy: *Mi a poézis és ki az igaz poéta?* [What is Poetics and who is the Real Poet?]. Buda 1793.

the Prónay family. He was friends with one of the sons of the Prónay family, a member of which had also been condemned in the Jacobine movement. From 1805 on, he started to publish again, including lyrical and epical pieces of literature, chants for instrumental accompaniment, translations of dramas, a German-language book of Hungarian grammar, and Hungarian-language works on history and linguistics. Meanwhile, he took a job as proof reader at the University Publisher, and also edited and translated popular works, calendars, and companions on livestock farming. In the last years of his life, he worked on the revision and correction of the Catholic translation of the Bible, and he compiled a scholarly dictionary of the Hungarian language, which was published after his death in 1826.⁵

The leading thinkers of Hungarian cultural life all regarded furthering the cause of the Hungarian language as one of their most important tasks.⁶ They believed that the sophisticated use of Hungarian and the spread of Hungarian-language education would lead to political independence and an increase in general cultural standards. The regulation of Hungarian language as a subject of study in schools took a new turn in 1814, spurred by government incentives. The same year, Verseghy was commissioned to write grammar school textbooks for use in language education, as the aim of the government was to replace earlier books based on different approaches to language. In his various works, Verseghy promoted the cultivation of Hungarian from the outset. He contended that the different dialects should be replaced with a generally accepted grammar and this system should be taught in the schools. His general stance was that the rules of Hungarian should be learned by native speakers as well, so that unified use of language could spread. He insisted that this was a prerequisite for quality scientific and literary work.

Verseghy accomplished the 1814 state commission with the composition of works which set a high standard: by 1820, he had written a total of seven textbooks and a textbook series, three of which were in Latin, two in Hungarian, and two in German.⁷ When editing his books, he followed a pedagogical

5 Ferenc Verseghy: *Lexicon Terminorum Technicorum*... Buda 1826.

6 Cfr. István Margócsy: »Some Aspects of Hungarian Neology«. In: *Hungarian Studies* 5 (1989), 3–7; *Latin at the Crossroads of Identity. The Evolution of Linguistic Nationalism in the Kingdom of Hungary*. Eds. Gábor Almási and Lav Šubarić, Leiden, 2015.

7 The bibliographic data of Verseghy's grammar companions: *Epitome institutionum grammaticarum linguae hungaricae* (1816–1820, 5 voll.); *Exercitationes idiomatis hungarici secundum regulas epitomes concinnatae in usum gymnasiolorum regni Hungariae* (1816); *Analyticae Institutionum Linguae Hungaricae*, (1816–1817, 3 voll.); *Magyar ortografia, avagy irástudomány* [Hungarian Orthography] (1816, 1817, 1820, 1821, 1840); *Un-*

approach, and he presented Hungarian phonetics, grammar, syntax, and etymology in a neatly systematized manner. If one compares the contents of the textbooks, it becomes clear that he had worked out the same units in Latin, Hungarian, and German and that he had incorporated some chapters from his earlier linguistic works. However, the discussion of Hungarian was fundamentally determined by the language of the presentation: in the German textbooks, he compares the typically Hungarian phenomena with German, in the Latin ones with Latin, and he includes a bilingual glossary as well. These works are considered relevant documents on the teaching of Hungarian as a foreign language. Dialogues written for practising spoken language in *Exercitationes* and *Ungarische Sprachlehrer* are interesting sources of early 19th-century cultural history and culture in general. Verseghy's textbooks proved to be enduring in school education, as they went through several reprintings over the course of the next 10 years, and the *Magyar ortográfia* (*Hungarian Orthography*) was even republished in 1840.

Of his textbooks written and published between 1815 and 1817, the *Analytica Institutionum Linguae Hungaricae* occupies a special place.⁸ The work, published in three volumes, comes to more than 1,100 pages. In the first two volumes, Verseghy summarizes Hungarian phonetics, grammar, syntax, and etymology. In the third volume, he discusses the rhetorical, poetical, stylistic, and aesthetical aspects of literary genres. In fact, the idea of writing a companion of such ambitious dimensions occurred to Verseghy as early as the 1790s. He mentions his plans in one of his letters addressed to the Transylvanian Linguistic Society (Erdélyi Nyelvművelő Társaság), dated September

garische Rechtschreibung, als Einleitung in die ungarische Sprachlehre. Zum Gebrauch der Nationalschulen (1817); *Ungarische Sprachlehre zum Gebrauche der ersten Lateinischen und Nationalschulen* (1817); *Magyar grammatika avagy nyelvtudomány* [Hungarian Grammar or Linguistics] (1818, 1821).

- 8 Ferenc Verseghy: *Analyticae Institutionum Linguae Hungaricae. Pars 1–3*. Buda, 1816–1817). The main sections of the first two books are: Pars 1. Etymologia linguae hungaricae: Sectio 1. Etymologia Nominum, ac Pronominum; Sectio 2. Etymologia verborum, conjunctionum, adverbiorum, interjectionum; Pars 2. Syntaxis linguae hungaricae: Sectio 1. Syntaxis Nominum, ac Pronominum; Sectio 2. Syntaxis verborum, conjunctionum, adverbiorum, interjectionum. In the second half of the 20th century, a Hungarian translation of *Analytica* was also published: Ferenc Verseghy: *A magyar nyelv törvényeinek elemzése*. Ed. Ernő Szurmay, transl. Bartha Lászlóné et al. Szolnok 1972–1979, 12 vol.

1794.⁹ In the letter, he notes that the language of the book will be Latin, since the necessary terms in grammar, philology, aesthetics, and musicology did not have generally accepted Hungarian equivalents. However, we do not have any information indicating how much of the text of *Analytica* had already been written in the 1790s.

The 1816/17 publication does not include a preface in which the author himself writes about the circumstances of the creation and formation of the work or about his own intentions. Nevertheless, a manuscript was found which could have been intended at some point to be the preface of *Analytica*.¹⁰ The short text was dated in Buda, December 1817, and it is a tract composed by Versegby in self-defence against his potential opponents who might criticize him for writing his work in Latin and not in Hungarian. One of his reasons for choosing Latin was that he did not want readers to dwell on Hungarian terminology which they might find inappropriate, since they might then base their judgement of the book solely on this instead of on the totality of the work. Indeed, one of Versegby's main claims concerning language usage was that generally accepted foreign-language expressions should be incorporated into Hungarian and there was no need forcefully create new words which had never been used before. He clearly opposed the program of the neologists, a fact that also favoured his choice of Latin, since by writing in Latin he ensured that he would have an international academic readership and, were he to be criticized in Hungary, the polemics would be brought to an international public. In this manuscript, he emphasizes that he is working on the Hungarian-language version of the grammar chapters and, if there were demand, he would publish an abridged Hungarian translation of the third volume. Furthermore, he notes that the third volume of *Analytica* is intended to fill a gap on the Hungarian companion-book and textbook market. Versegby considers the practice of teaching rhetoric and poetics on a non-aesthetic basis and having Aesthetics as an *extraordinarium studium* at universities a mistake. Accordingly, this chapter summarizes rhetorical, poetic, and aesthetic knowledge related to Greek and Roman literature based on international academic work. Versegby assumes that genre rules can be equally applied to every language, so the principles he presented were to be retained by authors writing in Hungarian.

9 See in *Versegby Ferenc kiadatlan írásai* [The Unpublished Works of F. Versegby]. Eds. Zoltán Deme, Ernő Szurmay. Szolnok 1982, II, 244–245.

10 See in *Versegby Ferenc kiadatlan írásai* [The Unpublished Works of F. Versegby]. Ed. István Fried, Ernő Szurmay. Szolnok 1987, III, 33–35.

Presumably, it is due to this latter consideration that Verseggy decided to entitle the third volume of his *Analytica Usus aestheticus linguae hungaricae*. The book is divided into two main parts. There are nine chapters in the first part, in which the following subjects are discussed: the aim and the sources of rhetoric in Hungarian; rhetorical and literary usage of periods, tropes, and figures; *locutio pictorica* and *affectum movente*; characteristics of the authors of fine works; the art of creating an aesthetic work; and the different kinds of so-called aesthetical forces. In the second part of the book, Verseggy presents rhetorical and poetical topics, such as eloquence, letter writing, minor writings, and orations. After this, he comes to the literary genres: poems, prose, and dramas.

Contents of *Usus aestheticus linguae Hungaricae*

Part 1: Sciagraphia: Aesthetices Patriae

- I. De scopo et fontibus ornatae orationis Hungaricae (§. 1–10.)
- II. De periodica, tropica, et figurata locutione (§. 11–15.)
- III. De locutione pictoria (§. 16–23.)
- IV. De locutione affectum movente (§. 24–33.)
- V. De dotibus in auctore operis aesthetici requisitis (§. 34–48.)
- VI. De arte construendi operis aesthetici (§. 49–64.)
- VII. De viribus aestheticis, quae ex perfectione oriuntur, et intellectum afficiunt (§. 65–82.)
- VIII. De viribus aestheticis, quae ex pulchritudine oriuntur, et imaginationem afficiunt (§. 83–93.)
- IX. De viribus aestheticis, quae ex bonitate oriuntur, et animum afficiunt (§. 94–114.)

Part 2: Sciagraphia: Rhetorices et Poëtices Patriae

- X. De Eloquentia in genere (§. 115–121.)
- XI. De Epistolis (§. 122–126.)
- XII. De minoribus solutae Eloquentiae operibus (§. 127–132.)
- XIII. De Oratione (§. 133–142.)
- XIV. De Poësi in genere (§. 143–146.)
- XV. De Metro (§. 147–152.)
- XVI. De versu, et characteristicis ejus dotibus (§. 153–156.)
- XVII. De variis versuum generibus (§. 157–169.)

- XVIII. De didacticis, et aliis minoribus Poëseos operibus, quae lirica non sunt (§. 170–176.)
- XIX. De Lyricis Poëseos operibus (§. 177–190.)
- XX. De Epopoeja (§. 191–200)
- XXI. De Dramate in genere (§. 201–218.)
- XXII. De variis Dramatum speciebus (§. 219–236.)
- XXIII. De actoribus scenicis (§. 237–242.)

A philological analysis of the text shows that *Usus aestheticus* is the least original part of *Analytica*. The author composed it based on international and Hungarian companions to aesthetics and rhetoric, and, apart from some short paragraphs Verseghy had written himself, the text can be considered a compilation of translations. Verseghy's main source was Johann Georg Sulzer's lexicon entitled *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*. He also used some other sources, primarily the companion on rhetoric by the Jesuit András Zachár entitled *Paradigmata orationis solutae* and published in Trnava in 1794. Verseghy also refers to a course book used in schools since the age of Maria Theresa, entitled *Institutiones oratoriae in usum gymnasiorum*. Although this fact has been discussed in scholarly publications, several researchers have analysed and interpreted the views expressed in *Usus aestheticus* as if they were the author's observations. Actually, with this piece of work, Verseghy proves to be most apt pursuer of the Sulzerian spirit of German popular philosophy and anthropological aesthetics. At this point, we should consider some examples of Verseghy's compilation techniques. Of the Hungarian researchers, Etelka Doncsecz was the first to carry out a comparative analysis of Sulzer's and Verseghy's texts.¹¹ After having examined the chapters on dramatic genres, Doncsecz showed that, while Verseghy's system bears resemblances to the division of Batteux's companion to aesthetics, the text itself is a contracted compilation of translations based on Sulzer's respective entries. Analysis of other chapters of *Usus aestheticus* yields.

The second chapter of *Usus aestheticae* is divided into five paragraphs, in which the rhetorical usage of periods, tropes, and figures is discussed (»Caput II. De periodica, et figurata locutione«).¹² As the table shows, Verseghy's text can be divided into smaller parts, and textual-philological analysis even reveals the sources of these parts. Some of the sources are identified by Verseghy himself, for example András Zachár's *Paradigmata orationis solutae*. From this work, Ver-

11 Verseghy: *Drámái* (= note 3), 483–491.

12 Verseghy: *Analyticae Institutionum* (= note 8), vol. 3, 13–38.

seghy cites only a shorter section in paragraph number 11 (»Animadversiones de mechanica periodorum structura«). »Primum ornamentum, cujus adminiculo sermo communis ad altiore venustatis aestheticae gradum assurgit, periodica locutio est, cujus leges quilibet humano idiomati communes, in libris, qui juventuti in Gymnasiis nostris praelegi solent, copiosis exemplis illustratae, ex ass, ac fuse traduntur. Solida harum epitome legitur in praeclaro opere Viri Clarissimi, ac de re literaria optime meriti, Andr. Zachar, Eloquentiae Professoris publici, quod sub nomine *Paradigmatum orationis solutae* Tirnaviae editum est.«

The following paragraph is translated almost entirely from Sulzer.¹³ Here, Verseggy has done a very close translation of the entry on the periods.

§. 12. Usus periodorum aestheticus

[original text/unknown source]

»Aestheticus periodorum usus non minorem profecto, quam grammatica earum constructio, adtentionem postulat. De hoc sequentia sunt notatu digna.

1^o) Oratio aut rem aliquam pingit, aut iudicium quodpiam evincere nititur. etc.«

Sulzer: *Allgemeine Theorie. Periode*«

»2^o) Periodus enim momenta, convincendo intellectui idonea, ita connectit, ut adtentionem nulla earum sibi soli vendicat. Auditor ergo cogitur quodammodo, ea sibi non interrupto filo repraesentare; quo fit, ut vim eorum in fine periodi quasi conglobatam sentiat, eique assensum tanto certius praebeat.« etc.

»Eben so wichtig ist die Periode, wo es um Ueberzeugung zu thun ist, wenn diese von mehr einzelnen Sätzen abhängt. Die Periode schlinget die zur Ueberzeugung nöthigen Sätze so in einander, daß keiner für sich die Aufmerksamkeit festhält. Man wird genöthiget sich alle in einem ununterbrochenen Zusammenhang vorzustellen, und empfindet deswegen am Ende der Periode, ihre vereinigte Wirkung zur Ueberzeugung mit desto größerer Stärke.« etc.

In other cases, the translator modifies the Sulzerian text: in paragraph number 13, which can be considered more or less the Latin version of the entry on the sound of speeches (»Klang«), two sentences were omitted. A few lines below in the same paragraph we find the translation of the Sulzerian entry on »Numerus,« but with some remarkable changes. In Sulzer's encyclopaedia, the quotation from Cicero is put in the footnotes, while Verseggy puts it in the main text. After this, he borrows another section, in which Sulzer quotes Cicero again, who said that rules which we have not learned but accepted should not

13 I cite the electronic edition of the *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* [1771–1774], see <<http://www.zeno.org/Sulzer-1771>> [20.03.2018].

be called written, but inborn. Proverbs offer a very good example of this phenomena, Sulzer says, and he illustrates it with the proverb: »Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen« (›Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein‹). Verseghy does not translate the proverb. Instead, he inserts a Hungarian one (specifically, the passage in Proverbs 26:27): »Aki másnak vermet ás, maga esik bele.« (›Harm watch harm catch.‹) After this comes the translation of another part of Sulzer's handbook, a part of the entry »Lebendiger Ausdruck.« Verseghy gives an abridged version, with the omission of shorter and longer sentences. At the end of this paragraph, he talks about the ways in which musical instruments can be used by the actors to create, for example, a frightening atmosphere. At this point, Verseghy refers to one of his own works, a narrative poem entitled *Rikóti Mátyás*, published in 1804.

§. 13. *Vis terminorum physica et aesthetica*

»Antequam ad tropicam et figuratam locutionem transeamus, necessarium esse existimo, ut aliquid de vi terminorum praelibetur.« etc.

»1.) Vis animum movendi, quae in terminis latet, nunquam se tam efficaciter exerit, si absque enunciatione solis oculis legantur, quam si clara voce declamentur: dubium ergo non est, magnam ejus partem in sonorum physico delitescere.

Quo hic plenior et perfectior est, eo profecto fortius ac vividius imprimit imaginationi singulas ideas; compositas praeterea imagines in formam perceptu facilem ac gratam cogere adjuvat; imo affectum etiam in repraesentationibus dominantem mirifice roborat.« etc.

»Auditum longe vividiorum ac validiorem sensum esse, quam visum, vel inde manifestum fit, quod tonis, sive gratis, sive ingratiss, multo efficacius moveamur,

[original text/unknown source]

Sulzer: *Allgemeine Theorie*. »Klang«

»Man bedenke, wie schwach uns die Sprache rühren würde, wenn wir sie blos in der Schrift, ohne Klang hätten. Schon finden wir einen sehr großen Unterschied zwischen dem stummen Lesen und dem lauten Vortrag einer Sache; und doch wird auch dem stummen Lesen einigermaßen durch den Klang aufgeholfen, der sich wenigstens in der Einbildungskraft immer dabey hören läßt. [Für die redenden Künste ist der Klang der Rede von großer Wichtigkeit. Seine ästhetische Kraft kann sich auf dreyerley Art äussern.] Je vollkommener er ist, je stärker und lebhafter prägt er einzelne Begriffe in die Vorstellungskraft; zusammengesetzte Vorstellungen, hilft er in eine leicht faßliche und angenehme Form zubringen; endlich kann er auch das Leidenschaftliche der Vorstellungen verstärken.« etc.

Sulzer: *Allgemeine Theorie*. »Numerus«

»Es ist schon an mehreren Stellen dieses Werks angemerkt worden, daß das Gehör weit lebhafter und nachdrücklicher empfin-

quam ejusdem generis, ac indolis coloribus. Praecipua igitur cura et sollicitudo in operibus eloquentiae utriusque eo tendere debet, ut in periodicis e vocibus sonoris, et recte coordinatis suavis ille sonorum ordo consurgat, quam euphoniā dicimus. Sine hac quamcumque graves aut jucundae proponantur rerum imagines, nihil omnino agitur: auribus enim laesis, adtentio a sensu verborum resilit, quod Cicero in Orat. sequentibus docet: Quamvis enim suaves, gravesque sententiae, tamen, si inconditis verbis efferuntur, offendunt aures, quarum est iudicium superbissimum.»

»Ex symmetria membrorum consurgit aliquantum altior numeri gradus, qui gravior quidem priori, sed tamen adhuc artis utcunque expertus est; nam, ut ait Cicero, paria paribus adjuncta, et similiter definita, itemque contrariis relata contraria, sua sponte cadunt plerumque numerosa; quod tali exemplo ex sua oratione desumpto illustrat: »Est enim non scripta lex, sed nata, quam non didicimus, sed accepimus.« Hunc numerum pleraque adagia habent, ut a' ki másnak vermet ás, maga esik bele.«

»Longe alia terminorum dos est, quae naturalem rerum corporearum indolem exprimere putatur, et cujus studiosa consecratio tam dignitati verae eloquentiae obest, quam fini longe nobilissimo, aesthetico nempe animorum motui, adversatur. Virgilii versus quarupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum citatum equi cursum pingere dicitur; Homeri vero aequens Ὀὐδ' ἐπὶ δεξιά, οὐδ' ἐπ' ἀριστερά νομῆσαι βῶν, Ἀζαλεην. (Il. VII. 238.) [...] An non videmus in dramatibus musicis, humiliter comicis, ludicrum adminiculo similium

det, als das Gesicht; daß angenehme und wiedrige Töne stärker auf uns wirken, als dergleichen Farben und Figur. Hierauf gründet sich die Nothwendigkeit den Werken der redenden Künste Wolklang zu geben. Schon die gemeine Rede des täglichen Umganges verliehret einen großen Theil ihrer Kraft, wenn sie nicht wenigstens mit einer gewissen Leichtigkeit fließt, und sie wird sehr unangenehm und wiedrig, wenn sie alles Wolklanges beraubt ist. Wo das Ohr sich beleidigt fühlt, da merkt man nicht auf den Sinn der Rede. Man kann, angenehme, so gar wichtige Sachen sagen, und doch, wenn es in einem holperigen Ausdruck geschieht, damit dem Gehör, das gar sehr empfindlich ist, beschwerlich fallen.«

Sulzer: Allgemeine Theorie. »Numerus«
»Zunächst an diesen gränzet der Numerus, der neben den erwähnten Eigenschaften noch das Gefällige hat, daß aus Gleichheit, oder aus dem Gegensatz einzelner Theile, einige Annehmlichkeit bekommt. Diesen Numerus zählt Cicero auch noch unter die kunstlosen. Nam paria paribus adjuncta, et similiter definita, itemque contrariis relata contraria, sua sponte cadunt plerumque numerosa. Er führet davon folgendes Beispiel aus einer seiner eigenen Reden an. Est enim non scripta lex, sed nata, quam non didicimus, sed accepimus u.s.f. Insgemein trifft man ihn bey alten Sprüchwörtern an – Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen, und dergleichen.«

Sulzer: Allgemeine Theorie. »Lebendiger Ausdruck«

»Der Klang der Rede, in so fern er ohne den Sinn der Worte etwas Leidenschaftliches empfinden läßt, wie die meisten Ausrufungswörter; (Interjektionen) daher man diesen Ausdruck eigentlicher den leidenschaftlichen Ausdruck nennen würde. Einige Kunstrichter rechnen auch den mahlerischen Klang hieher, der die natürliche Beschaffenheit körperlicher Gegenstände ausdrückt, wie der bekannte Vers des Virgils:

imitationum optime pingi ac exprimi? ut dum quis terrorem suum comice expressus, palpitationem cordis versu ac cantu imitatur. Confer, quae a me in Rikóti Mátyás pag. 104. in notis dudum ja min hanc rem dicta sunt.»

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.
Durch dessen Klang der Dichter das Galoppiren eines Pferdes habe schildern wollen. [...] [quotation from Homer] [...] Sehen wir nicht in einigen niedrig comischen Operetten, daß gerade dergleichen Schilderungen am besten das poßirliche ausdrücken; wie wenn ein Mensch im Schrecken das Pochen des Herzens durch Vers und Gesang nachahmet?
Die ungeschickteste Anwendung des schildernden Ausdrucks wird da gemacht, wo man den Gegenstand der uns in Empfindung sezet, gerade gegen die Empfindung schildert; wie es bisweilen sehr unüberlegt in der Musik geschieht.»

These examples illustrate clearly the methods and techniques used by Verseghy in the compilation of his own handbook. As noted, his primary source is the *Allgemeine Theorie*, of which he selected and translated smaller parts, which he arranged in his own way.

Sulzer's lexicon was one of Verseghy's preferred readings as early as the end of the 1780s, and one can assume that he regarded this work as an essential companion to aesthetics. Already then, he began translating parts of it, including the entries »Künste« and »Musik«, the Hungarian versions of which were published in the journal *Magyar Museum*. The Hungarian reception of Sulzer's work dates back to the 1770s, when József Sófalvi translated *Versuch einiger Moralischen Betrachtungen über die Werke der Natur* and *Unterredungen über die Schönheit der Natur* into Hungarian.¹⁴ Sulzer's lexicon on fine arts was an important source for writers and litterateurs of Verseghy's generation who wished to familiarize themselves with theories of literature and art. The work inspired aestheticians like György Szerdahely, and it was used by poets and writers like Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, Ferenc Kazinczy, and Dániel Berzsenyi.

Naturally, this phenomenon was not limited to Hungary. With regard to the European reception of *Allgemeine Theorie*, it is worth mentioning that the *Encyclopédie française* incorporated the French version of 44 Sulzerian entries,

14 Johann Georg Sulzer: *A természet munkáiból vétetett erkölcsi elmélkedések*. Kolozsvár 1776; Johann Georg Sulzer: *A természet szépségéről való beszélgetések*. Kolozsvár 1778.

and a further 76 were added to its supplementary volume.¹⁵ In addition to writers and litterateurs, other artists made great use of this work: its commentaries on musicology influenced Beethoven's work as a composer.¹⁶ With respect to other translations, I have found one piece of data: in 1806, a selected English-language edition entitled *Illustrations of the Theory and Principles of Taste* was published, translated by Elizabeth-Annabella de Brusasque.¹⁷ The book was reported in the 1809 volume of *The Monthly Review*. According to the reviewer, Sulzer's »several opinions will be found to repay the task of examination, since they display much acuteness of research, and considerable richness and felicity of illustration.« Furthermore, he says that this work »may be consulted with advantage by amateurs, critics, and artists, who may learn from it how to admire with intelligence, to judge with accuracy, and to execute with skill«. It is interesting to observe which characteristic of the translation is criticized by the reviewer: he thinks that the translator uses the expressions »sensational« and »science of sensation« interpreted incorrectly as »sensatology«.¹⁸

In an analysis of Verseghy's work in aesthetics, István Margócsy drew attention to the author's conservatism in adapting Sulzer's then partly outdated companion into Latin in the 1810s.¹⁹ Margócsy's contention seems astute, since at the time there were already works available in Hungarian and other languages, and therefore it would have been a more progressive choice to promote, for example, Kantian aesthetics. However, it is important to know that Sulzer's

- 15 Cfr. Lawrence Kerslake: »Johann Georg Sulzer and the Supplement to the Encyclopédie«. In: *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 148 (1976), 225–247; Élisabeth Décultot: »Éléments d'une histoire interculturelle de l'esthétique. L'exemple de la 'Théorie générale des beaux-arts' de Johann Georg Sulzer«. In: *Revue germanique internationale* 10 (1998), 141–160; Léonhard Burnand, Alain Cernuschi: »Circulation de matériaux entre l'Encyclopédie d'Yverdon et quelques dictionnaires spécialisé«. In: *Dix-huitième Siècle* 38 (2006), 253–267. Carsten Zelle points out that although the reception of Sulzer's work has already been explored in the case of the *Encyclopédie* supplements, much remains to be done, with regard to its translations into other languages. Cfr. Carsten Zelle: »Ästhetischer Enzyklopädismus. Johann Georg Sulzers europäische Dimension«. In: *Berliner Aufklärung. Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien, Band 4*. Ed. Ursula Goldenbaum, Alexander Košenina. Hannover 2011, 62–93.
- 16 Owen Jander: »Exploring Sulzer's Allgemeine Theorie as a Source Used by Beethoven«. In: *The Beethoven Newsletter* 2 (1987), 1, 1–7.
- 17 Johann Georg Sulzer: *Illustrations of the Theory and Principles of Taste*. Transl. Elizabeth-Annabella de Brusasque. Vol. I, London 1806.
- 18 »Art. XIV. Illustrations of the Theory and Principles of Taste«. In: *The Monthly Review* 58 (1809), 422–426.
- 19 István Margócsy: »Verseghy Ferenc esztétikája« [The Aesthetics of Ferenc Verseghy]. In: *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 85 (1981), 545–560.

lexicon was not yet considered old-fashioned; it was cited, for instance, in Ferenc Kölcsey's 1817 critique of Csokonai. Several authors (for instance Aurél Dessewffy and Lajos Bitnitz) used it together with other 18th-century and more recent companions.²⁰ Also, there are data indicating that *Allgemeine Theorie* was a valuable gift even in 1863: András Fáy offered the leather-bound 1775 Leipzig edition to a painter.²¹ But the steady popularity of Sulzer's work long after its publication was not unique to Hungary. Sandra Richter points out that »Sulzer's high reputation even after the advent of romanticism and German classicism may serve as a proof for the thesis that the *Allgemeine Theorie* was still regarded as an impressive work even in Eduard Mörike's and Friedrich Theodor Vischer's aesthetics« in 1832, and that a hundred year later Oskar Walzel »pleads for a more differentiated positive evaluation of Sulzer's account, and provides such an evaluation in a detailed reading of Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie*«. ²²

It can be therefore concluded that Verseghy did not make an erroneous decision when adapting this substantive work by his predecessor. It is unfortunate that *Usus aestheticus* was not translated into Hungarian (or at least no Hungarian translation survives), since only some chapters of Sulzer's encyclopaedia are available in Hungarian today. Compared to his contemporaries, Verseghy was very original in adapting the entries of the popular *Allgemeine Theorie* into Latin. Considering the tendency of Hungarian aestheticians still writing in Latin at the time, this decision cannot be regarded as exceptional. The real value of his work lies in the fact that, through his adoption of Sulzer's examples, he became the first Hungarian literary historian to talk about lesser-known works of European art. In addition, he provides Hungarian translations of several quotes. Among the examples presented in *Usus aestheticus*, as I mentioned above, there are very few Hungarian works cited, which the contemporary reader may see as a deficiency. Like other popular aestheticians, Verseghy avoids identification with particular philosophical positions, borrowing »his ideas from different contexts and remodel[ing] them in order to reach their public: students, an educated civil audience, all of them critical consumers of aesthetics and poetics.«²³

20 Cfr. Lajos Bitnitz: *A' magyar nyelvbeli előadás' tudománya* [The Science of Hungarian Language-Rhetoric]. Pest 1827, 7

21 Cfr. Eszter Ojtozi: »Fáy András három könyvajándéka sajátkezű dedikációival« [Three Books as Gift, with the Autograph Dedications of András Fáy]. In: *Magyar Könyvszemle* 117 (2001), 1, 138–139.

22 Sandra Richter: *A History of Poetics. German Scholarly Aesthetics and Poetics in International Context 1770–1960*. Berlin/New York 2010, 44.

23 Ibid., 41.

The main motivation for Versegby was the idea of the polite usage of language as the most important instrument for the cultural and political development of a nation for whose independence and liberty the quondam freemason struggled until the end of his life.