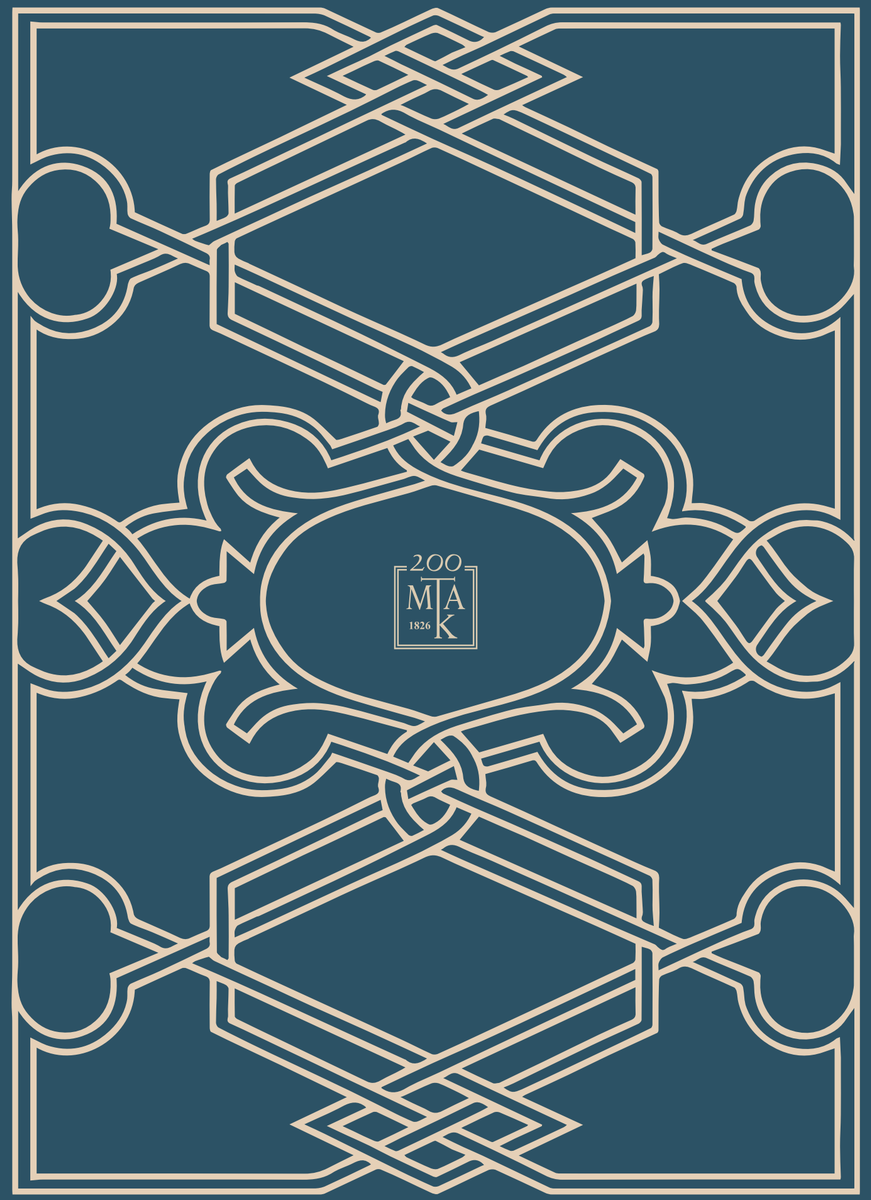

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Two Hundred Years of Growth in Anecdotes
1826–2026

MTA

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Two Hundred Years of Growth in Anecdotes
1826–2026

Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Toldy (Schedel) Ferenc
(1805–1875)
Responsible for the Library as Secretary General of the Academy: 1835–1846
Age at appointment: 30 years

Hunfalvy Pál
(1810–1891)
Chief Librarian: 1851–1891
Age at appointment: 41 years

1864
Palace

1875
central heating with hot water

Fröhlich Róbert
(1844–1894)
Chief Librarian: 1892–1894
(23 January 1893–23 May 1894)
Age at appointment: 48 years

Heller Ágost
(1843–1902)
Chief Librarian: 1894–1902
Age at appointment: 51 years

1895
electric lighting

Szily Kálmán
(1838–1924)
Chief Librarian: 1905–1924
Age at appointment: 66 years

Ferenczi Zoltán
(1857–1927)
Chief Librarian: 1924–1927
Age at appointment: 67 years

1925
Royal Standard typewriters

Szinnyei József Jr.
(1857–1943)
Chief Librarian: 1928–1943
Age at appointment: 71 years

1927–1928
new electric cables

1940
modernization of the heating system

Melich János
(1872–1963)
Chief Librarian: 1943–1948
Age at appointment: 71 years

Keresztury Dezső
(1904–1996)
Chief Librarian: 1 October 1948–1 March 1952
Age at appointment: 44 years

Kovács Máté
(1906–1972)

Mátrai László
(1909–1983)

Temporary Committee:
October 1952–September 1953

1945–1952
renovations after the Second World War

Scher (Rubinstein) Tibor
(1912–1975)
Director: March 1950–October 1952
Age at appointment: 38 years

Haraszthy Gyula
(1910–1990)
Director: 1953–1960
Age at appointment: 43 years

Rózsa György
(1922–2005)
Director, Director General (from 1977): 1960–1996
Age at appointment: 38 years

Rejtő István
(1928–1991)
Temporary Librarian: 1969–1975
Age at appointment: 41 years

1985–1988
transformation of the "Academic Apartment House " into Library

Mrs Dr Károly Domsa née Alojzia **Szabó**
(1943–2014)
Temporary Director General: 1 March–30 June 1996
Age at appointment: 53 years

1989–1996
reconstruction of the Palace

Engel Pál
(1938–2001)
Director General: 1 July 1996–30 September 1997
Age at appointment: 58 years

Monok István
(b. 1956)
Director General: 1 July 2013
Age at appointment: 57 years

2008
WI-FI

Náray-Szabó Gábor
(b. 1943)
Director General: 1 January 1998–30 June 2013
Age at appointment: 55 years

2023–2025
reconstruction of the Palace

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Two Hundred Years of Growth in Anecdotes

1826–2026



Johann Nepomuk Ender: The Coat of Arms of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1834

MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 95

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Two Hundred Years of Growth in Anecdotes

1826–2026

Library and Information Centre of the
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Budapest
2026

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The cover was prepared using the book binding of the volume Petrus Niger, *Clypeus Thomistarum...*, Venetiis, Raynald von Nimwegen, 1481 (sign. Ráth F 1438).

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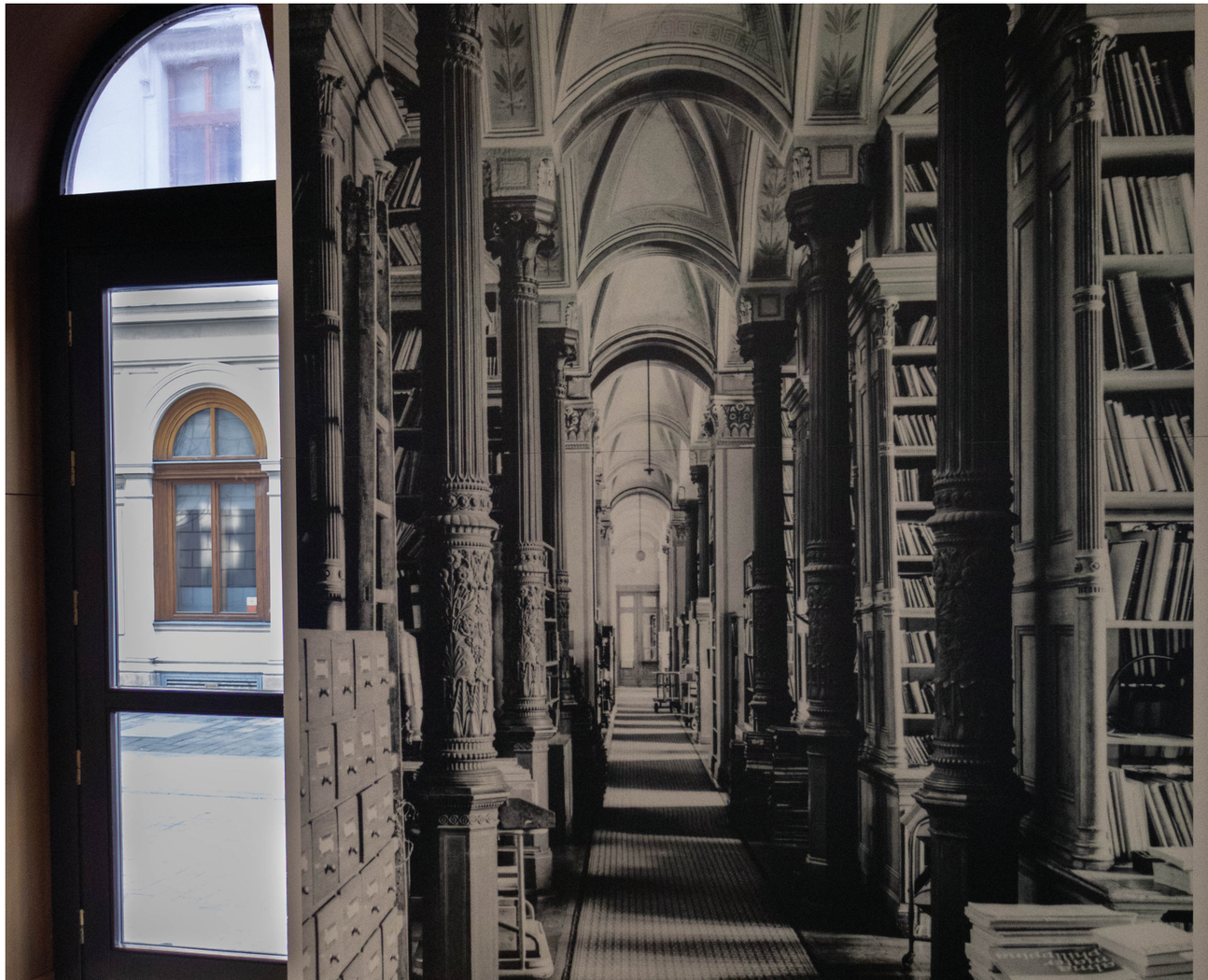


How old is a library? It is possible to answer this question very briefly. If there is a deed of foundation, or documentation describing the act and circumstances of a given foundation, and that documentation is dated, then one can say exactly how old, legally, a library is. Following this logic, the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences can celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of its foundation on 17 March 2026. Provided, that one speaks about its first known deed of foundation. Given that an institution is legally re-founded many times and adapts to changes in its legal and operational environment, it is always the institution's maintainer who defines the tasks of the institution through its new deed of foundation. The difference in the tasks established in any given new deed of foundation indicates that a two-hundred-year-old library is, indeed, continually renewing itself. It adapts again and again to its changing societal circumstances. It fights for its possibilities, often even fights to defend its rights. It fights because it operates under constant pressure to be stripped of its traditional tasks, which have been assigned to libraries since antiquity. Certain library tasks, such as the acquisition, cataloguing, and registration of documents, defining the collection's profile, and making it available to well-defined circles of readers, are public tasks that can also appeal to private, profit-oriented institutions. They are appealing because, at least in theory, the financial background of public library and archival services has been provided by their maintainers themselves, since the establishment of a civil society in Hungary, in fact, since the Compromise between the Habsburg rulers and their Hungarian subjects in 1867. The financial guarantee for public library and archival services is similar to the privileges of printing in history. Following profit-oriented logic, therefore, providing public services is a good investment and assures a regular income. It is true, then, that an investment based on pre-existing library services also means basing such investments on the intellectual property and records developed since the foundation of a given library. Consequently, if one removes from the equation those long-term intellectual properties, the investment also suffers.

Similar to the optimism of Renaissance humanists, who believed they could learn the God-given rules of nature and thereby become gods, recent generations of intellectuals, who helped birth the information society, have optimistically dreamed of establishing a system of Open Science (Open Access, Open Data, Citizen Science). The world of libraries at the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially that of reference libraries, is based on a similar idea: we believe that libraries are the pillars of a society founded on Open Science. That is why the two-hundred-year-old Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences aims to transform itself, through its new deed of foundation presently in the making, into the Library, Archives and Research Support Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The goal of the transformed institution is to continue and, if possible, amplify its profile of hard-won public services. Thus, the Library's two hundred years of history serve as a source of renewal in the present.

How old is any given library? Many judge an institution's age by the age of its documents. However, in the view of a professional librarian, the historical value of a written source is, and must be, inherent, notwithstanding its age. Or, at least, any honest librarian must confess that no one can foretell which documents will be valuable in the eyes of coming generations. Contemporary reflection on the value of any given document – be that reflection on its material value, i.e. its price, or be that reflection on the value of the information it contains – is only one of many viewpoints to be taken into consideration when preserving them. However, a librarian or archivist must acknowledge that it is not their task to decide when it would become a sin to relativise the value of any given document, because 'Everything in excess turns into a vice', *omne quod nimium, vertitur in vitium*. An intellectual worker of a public collection is the person who can give effect to the idea of the historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus (A.D. 55/56–117/120), according to whom a historiographer must work *sine ira et studio* 'without anger and without bias'. The already mentioned ideal of Open Science could, potentially, be implemented in the world of digital documents. That is why we, as librarians, must respect even the latest digitally born documents. Our activities increasingly involve handling digitally born materials. Public collections are the custodians of digital common property. Thus, the documents kept in a public institution could date back to classical antiquity, but the collection itself remains young and up-to-date.

Thus, the Library's two hundred years of history serve as a source of renewal in the present.

How old is any given library? – If one gives an overview of European libraries, examining which collection celebrates when, and how many years have passed since its foundation, one may ask a series of questions. For instance, the National and University Library in Zagreb celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of its self-defined foundation in 2007. The anniversary was established because Croatian Jesuit Bartol Kašić (1575–1650), and, truth to be told, his Hungarian colleague, István Szini (1580–1645), arrived in Zagreb in 1607, to establish a school there, which could eventually be developed into a university. Naturally, their expressed goal was also to equip the school with a basic reference library. The "idea of a national and university library", thus, is four hundred years old in Croatia. According to its website, the National Library of Finland (Finnish: Kansalliskirjasto, Swedish: Nationalbiblioteket) has existed since 1640. Truth to be told, in 1640, the Swedish Crown funded an Academy that was burnt down in 1817, and whose library was destroyed. The few surviving books were transported from there to Helsinki, the new capital since 1812, where the predecessor of the actual National Library was founded. Again, the "idea of an academy and a university" was already born in 1640; that year is considered the library's foundation date. We could continue the list with Hungarian examples as well: the University of Pécs was founded in 1367, and the University of Szeged considers 1588 to be its year of foundation. At any rate, all the libraries above celebrate the birth of the intention to found their collections.

When was the idea of a Hungarian (operating in Hungary) academy born? Was it born with the Academia Istropolitana at the end of the 15th century? Or was it constituted by the "Sopron Learned Society" at the beginning of the 17th century? Or was it established only in the plans for a "Learned Society", or called into being by "learned circles" in the 18th century? Is it possible that it was established only by those men who had planned an expressly Hungarian Learned Society and not by those who would have been satisfied already with an academy operating in Hungary? Finally, the date of István Széchenyi's offer to the Parliament (3 November 1825) and the donation of József Teleki (17 March 1826) were elected as the foundation dates of the Learned Society and its Library, respectively. The Library began regular operations years later. It is a pleasing plot twist of history that two hundred years have passed since the Teleki donation, by the time an elderly couple of librarians presented an outstanding gift of incunabula to the special collection where both had worked for decades. Clearly, the idea of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences does not age.

Indeed, the Library's two hundred years of history serve as a source of renewal in the present.

In sum, as we close the introduction to this volume recounting two hundred years of history, we may state with pride that the young and eager Library, Archives and Research Support Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences salutes its readers and wishes them a pleasant time reading about two centuries of its growth as accounted in these anecdotes.

István Monok
Director General

Translated from Hungarian by Ágnes Máté

Prologue



A.D. 2026. Two hundred years after its foundation, the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is situated in the heart of Budapest, in its 5th District, on the left bank of the Danube, next to the impressive Széchenyi Chain Bridge, at 1 Arany János Street, in a building standing back to back with the Palace of the Academy, and connected to it through an internal door.

A.D. 1826. The Hungarian Learned Society, which was still in the early stages of its formation, received a magnanimous offer from Count József IV Teleki de Szék (1790–1855) to establish the basis of its library. The approximately 30,000 volumes owned by the Teleki family, which at the time were housed at their palace on Szervita Square in Pest[1] and at their estates in Szirák (Nógrád County), would become the most significant donation ever made to the Library of the Hungarian Learned Society.



2. The View of the Library from Arany János Street

On the previous page: 1. Budapest covered in snow with the view of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, photographed by János Gehring in January 2026

1 Today in Budapest's 5th District.



3. Portrait of Count József IV Teleki, painted by Miklós Barabás in 1836, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 2



4. Marble plaque commemorating the Teleki Offer, MTA KIK, without signature

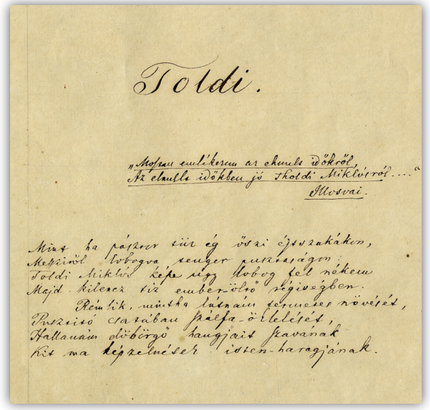
The two paragraphs above describe two very different stages in the history of a national institute in Hungary and also call attention to the country's distinct historical circumstances between the Library's foundation and its present status.[2] For instance, in 1826, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences itself had a very different name: between 1825 and 1840, it was called the Hungarian Learned Society. Until 1865, it had no palace of its own. The Széchenyi Chain Bridge was under construction for ten years and would not be finished until 1849. The Hungarian capital, bearing the name Budapest, formed by the unification of three cities, Pest, Buda, and Óbuda, did not come into existence until 1873. The namesake of the street where the Library stands today, János Arany (1817–1882), a distinguished poet of Hungarian Romanticism, author of *Toldi* (sign. K 503) or *The Bards of Wales* (sign. K 512/13), and Secretary General of the Academy (1865–1879),[3] was only nine years old in 1826, when Count Teleki "donated his family's library for the use of all the citizens of the country".[4]

2 The latest English-language summary of the cultural history of Hungary provides a comprehensive overview of the country's most important historical periods. However, none of the three volumes discusses the history of reading or the book culture of Hungary. Szentpéteri ed. 2023.
3 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 253–259.
4 Szabó 2019b, 115.

In the following, the reader can learn about many men who, through their activities that shaped both the political creed and the socio-cultural attitudes of nineteenth-century Hungary, later became the namesakes of streets and squares surrounding the Library. Although they are less often commemorated in public spaces, several women will also be mentioned. One may learn about ladies who, due to their social status and, in times closer to ours, thanks to their own achievements, also contributed significantly to the formation of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



5. Portrait of János Arany, painted by Miklós Barabás, 1884, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 13. Arany holds his own Toldi in his right hand, while on the table there is a copy of a popular print, Péter Ilosvai Selymes' A Hires neves Tholdi Miklósnak históriája, *which served as an inspiration for Arany's work*



6. Manuscript of Arany's Toldi *(sign. K 503)*

A Library with Three Birthdays

The Library has three dates of particular importance during its early stages of formation.[1] The first one is the day of the initiative that would call the Hungarian Learned Society into existence, 3 November 1825. The second date is the day on which the generous offer Count József IV Teleki made on behalf of his family was presented, 17 March 1826. The third date is when the first five volumes, written by the donor himself, entered the Library's collection on 7 March 1831. As one may notice, the Library as an institution considers the Teleki family's donation as its date of foundation; hence, it is celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of its existence in 2026.

The initiative for "the foundation of a society entrusted with the safeguarding and promotion of the Hungarian language" was made on 3 November 1825. That day, Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860),[2] at the time a captain of the Habsburg Imperial Army, and one of the wealthiest aristocrats of Hungary, offered the full annual income of his estates, i.e. 3,600 forints, for the sake of a Hungarian Learned Society.[3] His speech at the Upper House of Parliament was deliberately staged to be memorable in history. Although Latin was the official language of Hungary, and would remain so until 1844, Count Széchenyi purposefully used his quite underwhelming knowledge of Hungarian in his speech. Széchenyi's offer instantly became an incentive for other aristocrats as well. Among other noblemen, Count György Károlyi (1802–1877), Count György Andrássy (1797–1872), and Baron Ábrahám Vay (1789–1855) contributed to Széchenyi's initiative with their own offers, bringing the total to 58,000 forints by the end of the same day. Széchenyi's speech on 3 November 1825 defined an entire period of Hungarian history, known as the "era of reforms".

The four founding fathers of the Learned Society, Széchenyi, Károlyi, Andrássy and Vay, submitted their written initiative to Palatine Joseph Habsburg (1776–1847) and to the two chambers of Parliament by the end of November 1825. They requested the formation of a committee for establishing the statutes of the Learned Society. The committee fulfilled its task by 15 March 1826.

Only two days after these positive developments, on 17 March 1826, Count József IV Teleki, on behalf of his brothers, Ádám and Sámuel, their stepmother, Baroness Johanna Mészáros, and their half-brother, László, offered their family library of approximately 30,000 volumes to establish the core collection of the Library of the Hungarian Learned Society. Soon, Palatine Joseph Habsburg would also give his consent to Count Teleki's appointment as the first President of the Hungarian Learned Society.

However, the Teleki family's books were not moved from their Palace on Szervita Square to another location for almost two decades, as the Learned Society was housed in various rented premises with limited space. Finally, in 1844, a transport of 20,812 volumes was moved from Szervita Square to the so-called Trattner-Károlyi House (now at 3 Petőfi Sándor Street, Budapest's 5th District), where the Hungarian Academy of Sciences had lodged since 1833. Approximately 9,000 additional volumes of theological works, which had been kept at the Teleki family estates in Szirák, were transported to Pest only a year after the death of Count József IV Teleki, in 1856.

As mentioned above, the third date that could be considered a kind of birthday for the Library is 7 March 1831. On that day the first books as physical objects entered the Library's collection,

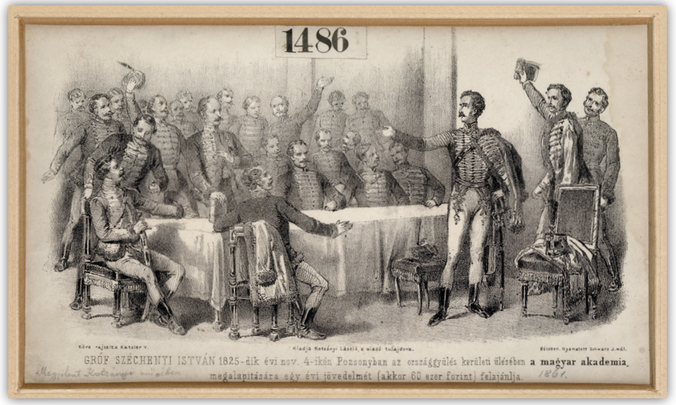
1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 9–39.
2 His father, Count Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820), was the founder of the National Museum (1802), the predecessor of two present-day institutions: the Hungarian National Museum and the National Széchényi Library. It is important to emphasise that father and son spelt their family name differently.
3 Thereafter referred to simply as the Learned Society.

which at the time was housed in a tenancy at the Deron House on the Danube's riverbank in Pest. The donor who presented five of his scholarly works to the Library was Ferenc (Franz) Schams (1780–1839). He was born in Bohemia and trained as a pharmacist and found a new home and a new passion in Hungary. Schams later became a professional viticulturist and established the first wine-culture garden in the Buda Hills, collecting samples of vine branches from all around the country. Nowadays, it is not possible to identify with certainty the exact items of his donation in the Library's collection. None of the surviving copies of Schams' early works in the collection bears any clear sign of his donation. The Library introduced the use of its own stamps to mark its property only in 1835.

In sum, the initiative to establish a learned society, the first offer to develop the core collection, and the first entries to the collection gifted by a private donor mark the first three milestones in the Library's early history.



1. Portrait of Count István Széchenyi painted by Friedrich von Amerling, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 97



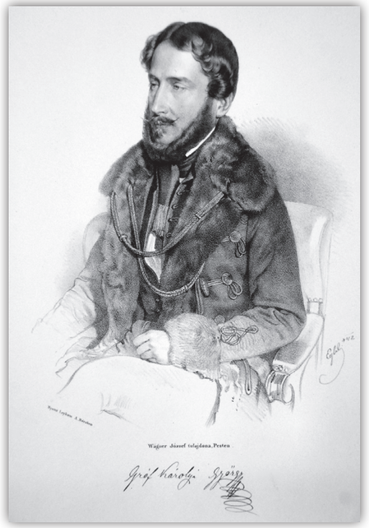
2. Count Széchenyi's offer at the Parliament, lithograph by Vinzenz Katzler (sign. K 294/24)



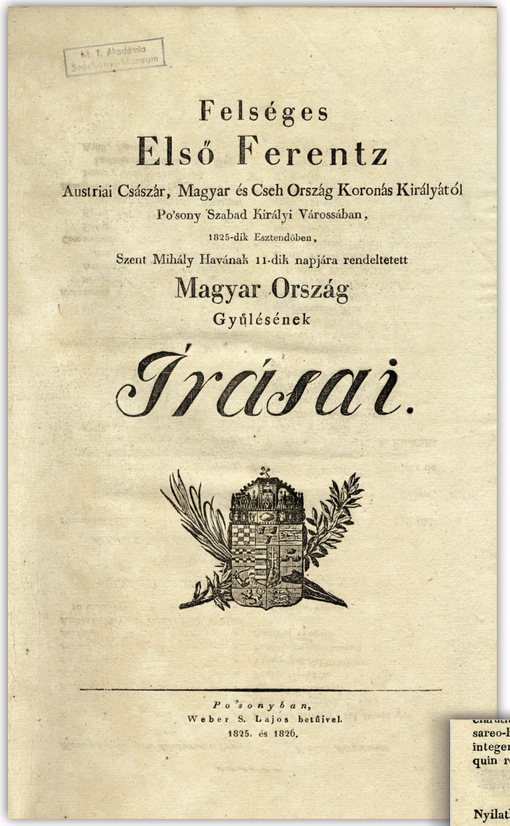
3. Portrait of Baron Ábrahám Vay, lithograph by Josef Kriehuber, 1847.



4. Portrait of Count György Andrássy, lithograph by Franz Eybl, 1842.

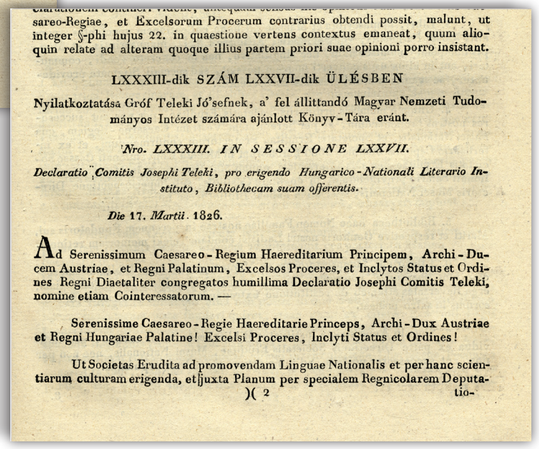


5. Portrait of Count György Károlyi, lithograph by Franz Eybl, 1842.



Felséges
Első Ferentz
Austriai Császár, Magyar és Cseh Ország Koronás Királyától
Po'sony Szabad Királyi Városában,
1825-dik Esztendőben,
Szent Mihály Havának 11-dik napjára rendeltetett
Magyar Ország
Gyűlésének
Irásai.

Po'sonyban,
Weber S. Lajos betűivel.
1825. és 1826.



sareo-Regiae, et Excelsorum Procerum contrarius obtendi possit, malunt, ut integer §-phi hujus 22. in quaestione vertens contextus emaneat, quum alioquin relate ad alteram quoque illius partem priori suae opinioni porro insistant.

LXXXIII-dik SZÁM LXXVII-dik ÜLÉSBEN

Nyilatkoztatása Gróf Teleki Jó'sefnek, a' fel állittandó Magyar Nemzeti Tudományos Intézet számára ajánlott Könyv-Tára erán.

Nro. LXXXIII. IN SESSIONE LXXVII.

Declaratio Comitis Josephi Teleki, pro erigendo Hungarico-Nationali Literario Instituto, Bibliothecam suam offerentis.

Die 17. *Martii* 1826.

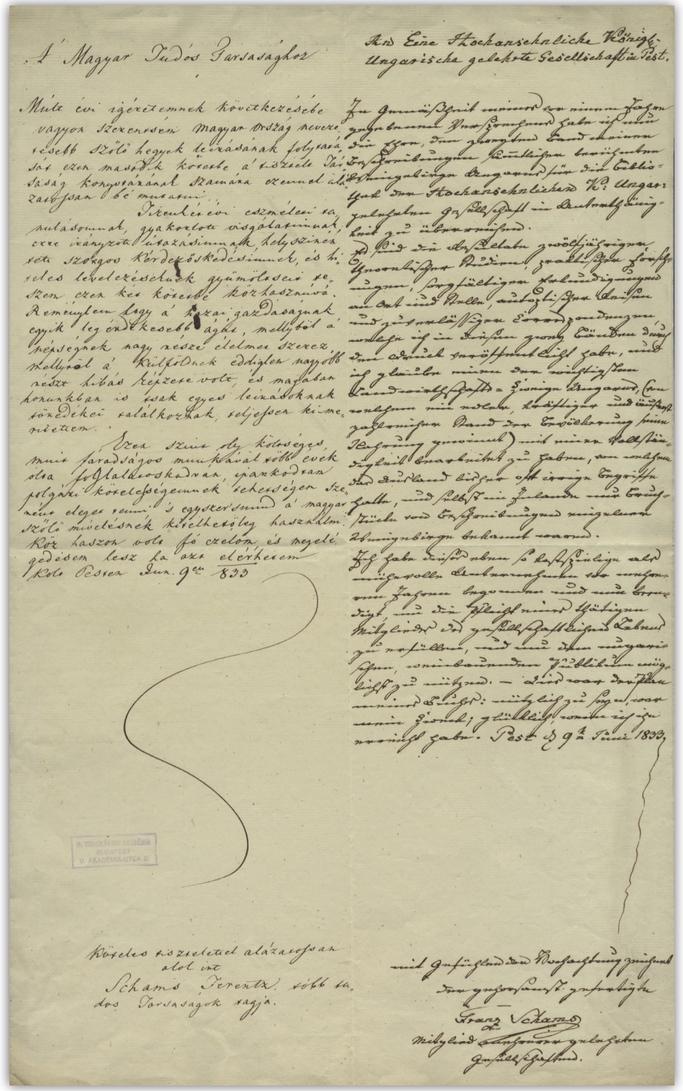
Ad Serenissimum Caesareo-Regium Haereditarium Principem, Archi-Ducem Austriae, et Regni Palatinum, Excelsos Proceres, et Inclytos Status et Ordines Regni Diaetaliter congregatos humillima Declaratio Josephi Comitis Teleki, nomine etiam Cointeressatorum. —

Serenissime Caesareo-Regie Haereditarie Princeps, Archi-Dux Austriae et Regni Hungariae Palatine! Excelsi Proceres, Inclyti Status et Ordines!

Ut Societas Erudita ad promovendam Linguae Nationalis et per hanc scientiarum culturam erigenda, et juxta Planum per specialem Regnicolarem Deputa-

)(2 tio-

6–7. *The Teleki donation from the Parliament's Acts: title page and excerpt (e.g. sign. 526.739)*



A' Magyar Tudós Társasághoz

Kis Eine Hochansehnliche Königl. Ungarische gelehrte Gesellschaft Löbl.

8. *Ferenc Schams' letter to the Hungarian Learned Society (sign. RAL 1833/47)*



Vollständige Beschreibung
der
königlichen
Freystadt Pest
in Ungern.

Von

Franz Schams,

der k. k. Landwirthschafts-Gesellschaft in Wien wirkliches, dann der patriotisch-ökonomischen Gesellschaft in Prag, und der kais. russischen freyen ökonomischen Gesellschaft in St. Petersburg correspondirendes Mitglied.

Mit einer Kupfertafel.

Pest, 1821. Hartlebens Verlag.

9. Opening illustration from Ferenc Schams' History of the City of Buda, showing a pontoon bridge, the predecessor of the present-day Széchenyi Chain Bridge (e.g. sign. 520.083)



10. Ownership stamp of the Library (Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, without signature)



11. Image of the imprint of the Library's ownership stamp

The Library's Lodgings: From Tenancies to the Present-day "Academic Apartment House"

The Library's collections were housed in five buildings in Pest and in many storage spaces across the Budapest agglomeration over its long history. Nowadays, they are distributed across three buildings, depending on their rarity, historical importance, frequency of use, and physical dimensions. The special collections have their own rooms in the Palace of the Academy. One part of the core collection is stored in the so-called "Academic Apartment House" on Arany János Street in Budapest's 5th District, and another part is stored in off-site storage facilities in the depot city of Törökbálint, approximately fifteen kilometres from the main building of the Library.

In the early stages, the placement of the Learned Society and its Library was inseparable. Their administrative documents and subscription periodicals were stored together in their lodgings. The founding Teleki collection, however, was held in the Teleki Palace at Szervita Square until 1844. The Learned Society began its activities in 1831 in a two-room tenancy on the first floor of the so-called Deron (later Nákó) House on the left bank of the Danube in Pest. Due to the narrowness of the physical spaces there and the high rent demanded by the widow of Antal Deron, Teréz Schopper, the President of the Learned Society, Count Teleki, decided to find alternative premises.

The Learned Society started its second period of tenancy in the Trattner-Károlyi House (today 3 Petőfi Sándor Street, Budapest's 5th District) in 1833, where it was lodged until 1865. At the beginning of that long tenancy, the Learned Society occupied the first floor of the wing facing Urak Street. Later, they also rented the second floor of another wing of the Trattner-Károlyi House, which took its name from its owners, a prominent printing dynasty active in Pest. As mentioned before, in 1844, the first major transport of the Teleki collection was moved to the second wing; thus, the Library began to have its own spaces. The opening ceremony of the Library at the Trattner-Károlyi House was held in December 1844.

By 1865, the new Palace at the feet of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge was finished. Its opening ceremony took place on 11 December 1865. The organisation, which had changed its name to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1840, could finally occupy its own building, forty years after its foundation. Nowadays, the Palace of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is situated at 9 Széchenyi István Square in Budapest's 5th District, named after the institution's founder, Count Széchenyi.

The Library of the Academy was placed on the ground floor of its brand-new building, on the side overlooking the Danube. The reading room occupied the spaces facing the South-West, while the stack rooms occupied the north-facing spaces. The ground floor was divided into six rooms, each equipped with an equal number of bookshelves, for a total of 1,820 shelf metres. Moreover, the special collection of manuscripts occupied four rooms facing the courtyard. This division of the Library's physical spaces remained the same for more than a century, from 1867 to 1988.

In 1860, when the city of Pest donated the site near the Széchenyi Chain Bridge to the Academy, its leaders decided to divide the land into two parts. The Palace was to be erected on two-thirds of the site, while a so-called "Academic Apartment House" was to be built on the remaining third. To ensure a steady income to finance the maintenance of both buildings, an unknown number of apartments for rent were designed in the latter building. The tenancy was active there, with probable structural alterations to the spaces, until August 1985. That year, the occupants of altogether thirty-seven apartments had to be moved to other flats in order to transform the "Academic Apartment House" into the Library.

After three years of construction, the Library building at 1 Arany János Street was inaugurated on 3 November 1988, the one hundred and seventy third anniversary of the Academy's foundation. Since then, the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has operated there. Its off-site storage facilities, however, have

been permanently located in the depot city of Törökbálint since 1983, after having had various storage locations across Budapest. Moreover, the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books and the Oriental Collection still have their own rooms in the Palace of the Academy, as those spaces were specifically (re)built for their purposes in 1950–1951. The Palace of the Academy and the Library building are connected by an internal door that can be opened only with personnel magnet cards.



1. Carl Vasquez, Nákó House, 1837. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, no. 28234.3



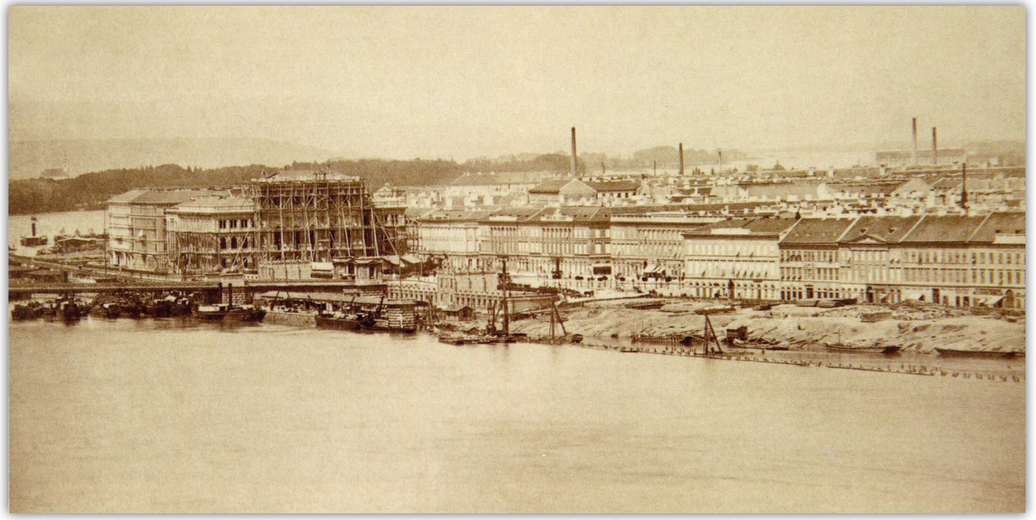
2. The Trattner-Károlyi House in the early 1900s (sign. microfilm D 4948)



3. Joseph Fuchsthaller, Szervita Square. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, no. 14.777 M 762



4. Plan of the Academy's new Palace, 1862



5. The construction of the Academy's Palace near 1864. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, Photograph Collection inv. no. 32.786

A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia elérte végre óhajtott czélját, hogy szűk és bizonytalan bérlakásból saját kényelmesebb és biztosb hajlékába költözve, zavartalanabbúl folytathassa tudományos működését, s immár azon kellemes helyzetben van, hogy nemzeti adakozásból ujonnan épült díszes palotáját, a folyó évi **december 11-ik napján tartandó ünnepélyes közülése** által, megnyithatja.

Midőn Akadémiánk e saját házában első ünnepélyes közülésére a **tisztelettel Kivül-czímzettet** ezennel meghívni legkedvesb kötelességünknek ismertük, hazafiúi állandó tiszteletünk kifejezése mellett maradunk

Pest, nov. 15. 1865.

Báró Eötvös József,
másodelnök.

Arany János,
titoknok.

6. Invitation to the inauguration of the Palace, signed by the President of the Academy, Baron József Eötvös and by the Secretary General of the Academy, János Arany (sign. RAL 817/1865)



A magyar tud. akadémia az uj palotában.

A m. tud. akadémia palotájának megnyitási ünnepélye mellett pesti gyanánt képzeltük elmúlt a fényes körülyi napoknak Budapesten.

A magyar tudományos akadémia az idei nagygyülése, egyuttal megnyitási napja is volt az uj palotának.

Dicza 11-ének történt eldöntse, hogy a tudományok az ünnepét azon palota megnyitó czeremoniában tűnik meg, melyet a nemzet hálkos áldozatkészsége emelt szellemkincsei őrzésére.

E palota, mely legdicsőbb tettünk dicsőségét képezi, ha van fejsere s az épület nemes arányai a kedvező viszonyoknak folytán, teljes érvényre juthatnak.

A főhomlokzat előtt tágas tér nyílik, honnan a szem szabadon legellhet az épület szerű szépségein s a gazdag ornamentika érdekes részletein.

A reggeli tíz órára szóló gyülés határidejéül már jóval előtt [illegible] a főbemenet szép faragású tölgyfa ajtaji megnyíltak s tanuljon tömött közönség tarkáját a kettős oszlopsorral ékesített előcsarnokba, mely nem annyira pompája, mint inkább a főhomlokán anyagnak gazdag volta s a mészegyüttet által eszközölt gyönyörű hangzásnál. Az emlepek nehéz selemegi márványból valók s barnavörös márványtalpon nyugosznak, míg két végén fehér tiroli márványból van faragva. Az előcsarnokból a diszes lépcsőházba jutunk, mely aranyozott rostélyával kellemesen fogadnak ki a pénz sötét márványból s oldalt [illegible] az emberi az uj palotában. — (Hasító rajz.) — A magyarnak országos 1865. évi 51.

Gróf Dessewffy Emil, ki öt évvel ezelőtt kihozatott s a nemzetben intézeti eszmét által adta az első lendületet a már most teljes szépségben befejezett diadalterhez s ki a legnagyobb erélyével, az akadályok nagy tömegét legyőzve, az általa kedvkapcsolt eszme valósulását épí-nyével fáradozott: fájdalom, megtört egészsége sietett nem élvezhetését a mai gyülésben. Az elnök, b. Eötvös József, ki helyette vezeté a gyülést, a következő elnöki távolítás fölötti örömben sajnálkozást mondott és elrendelése fölött.

Erre következett az üdvözlő „szózat", melyet gr. Dessewffy szent-mihályi jószágtól fordul az akadémiához s melyet b. Vay Miklós olvasott fel. E „szózat", melyet [illegible] örvénő s gyakoribbszor tapsolt által mély benyomást gyakorolt a jelenvoltakra, kik szerbeli kívánatok egészséget a betegeskedő s ő nejének élteték. Utána Arany János, az akadémia titkára, adta elő az akadémia mult évi működéséről történetét, megtartó szavakkal üdvözlte az akadémia elhunyt tagjai emlékezetének is. Ezt követő b. Eötvös emlékbeszéde Szalay László fölött, melyben érzemlegesnél szebb emlékét emelt a jeles írónak, a kitűnő történetírónak s államférfiúnak, a barát a barátnak. Végre Toldy Ferenc, az akadémia egyik legrégibb s érdemekben gazdag tagja, a magyar irodalomnak a nemzeti életre való befolyásáról tartott egy, irodalomtörténeti adatokkal gazdagon illusztrált nagyérdekű előadást.

Az ünnepélyt — vidám, elmés pohárköszönetekkel összevont lakoma zárta be.

A dísztermen az ünnepélyes alkalomnak diszes ruhákban tűnik közönséget tett meg. A főhölgyek egyik emelkedő részét az akadémia tagjai. Jelen volt többi között az ország bíborosok primása, Lonovics de Bartakovics érsekek, Pulitz váczi püspök, Mailáth György kanonikus, b. Sina Simon, gr. Károlyi István és György, gr. Apponyi György s az ipagyati tanács több tagja, képviselnek, vérnek, iskolák s közföldi tud. intézetek képviselői, a magyar főbb- és alsóbb színész tagja stb.

Sajtval: a tudományoknak épülő házat mihu dámnál és fényével avatta fel a nemzet Legyen rajta az ég áldása!

7. Celebrating crowds inside the Academy during the inauguration ceremony, excerpt from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság



8. Rooms of the Library c. 1900 (sign. Ms 10754)



10. The "Academic Apartment House" before its transformation, from the side overlooking the Danube (sign. Ms 11219)



9. Elderly tenants in the "Academic Apartment House" in the 1980s (sign. Ms 11217)



11. The "Academic Apartment House" after its transformation, from the side overlooking the Danube (sign. Ms 11219)



12. The Entrance Hall of the new Library building in 1988 (sign. Ms 11219)



13. The Entrance Hall of the Library in 2026



14. The timeline of the Library's history in the Entrance Hall

Eighteen Leaders of the Library over Two Hundred Years



2. Timeline of the Library's Leaders*

Toldy (Schedel) Ferenc
(1805–1875)
Responsible for the Library as Secretary General of the Academy: 1835–1846
Age at appointment: 30 years

Fröhlich Róbert
(1844–1894)
Chief Librarian: 1892–1894
(23 January 1893–23 May 1894)
Age at appointment: 48 years

Szily Kálmán
(1838–1924)
Chief Librarian: 1905–1924
Age at appointment: 66 years

Szinnyei József Jr.
(1857–1943)
Chief Librarian: 1928–1943
Age at appointment: 71 years

Keresztury Dezső
(1904–1996)
Chief Librarian: 1 October 1948–1 March 1952
Age at appointment: 44 years

Kovács Máté
(1906–1972)

Mátrai László
(1909–1983)

Temporary Committee:
October 1952–September 1953

Haraszthy Gyula
(1910–1990)
Director: 1953–1960
Age at appointment: 43 years

Rejtő István
(1928–1991)
Temporary Director: 1969–1975
Age at appointment: 41 years

Engel Pál
(1938–2001)
Director General: 1 July 1996–30 September 1997
Age at appointment: 58 years

Monok István
(b. 1956)
Director General: 1 July 2013
Age at appointment: 57 years

1864
Palace

1875
central heating with hot water

1895
electric lighting

1927–1928
new electric cables

1925
Royal Standard typewriters

1940
modernization of the heating system

1945–1952
renovations after the Second World War

1985–1988
transformation of the "Academic Apartment House " into Library

1989–1996
reconstruction of the Palace

2008
WI-FI

2023–2025
reconstruction of the Palace

Hunfalvy Pál
(1810–1891)
Chief Librarian: 1851–1891
Age at appointment: 41 years

Heller Ágost
(1843–1902)
Chief Librarian: 1894–1902
Age at appointment: 51 years

Ferenczi Zoltán
(1857–1927)
Chief Librarian: 1924–1927
Age at appointment: 67 years

Melich János
(1872–1963)
Chief Librarian: 1943–1948
Age at appointment: 71 years

Scher (Rubinstein) Tibor
(1912–1975)
Director: March 1950–October 1952
Age at appointment: 38 years

Rózsa György
(1922–2005)
Director, Director General (from 1977): 1960–1996
Age at appointment: 38 years

Mrs Dr Károly Domsa née Alojzia **Szabó**
(1943–2014)
Temporary Director General: 1 March–30 June 1996
Age at appointment: 53 years

Náray-Szabó Gábor
(b. 1943)
Director General: 1 January 1998–30 June 2013
Age at appointment: 55 years

* Illustration by Zsanett Kun

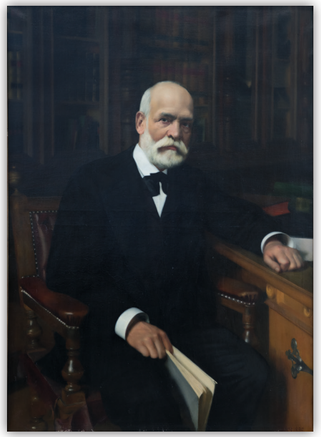
Eighteen Leaders of the Library over Two Hundred Years

The history of the Library can be divided into two extended periods from the viewpoint of the requirements for its leader.[1] The first period covers the first one hundred and twenty years of its history (1826–1946), while the second period has been ongoing since the end of the Second World War. In the first period, appointing the Library's leader was a kind of feudal right of investiture exercised by the founding branch of the Teleki family, as donors of the core collection. Until 1946, the formal consent of the head of the Teleki family was to be obtained for appointing someone from the Academy's membership to the life-long position of Chief Librarian. All requirements were changed in 1946. Since then, the Teleki family has not had a say in appointing the Library's leader; the Director of the Library is preferably someone with professional training in the field of librarianship, and the Director is appointed for a five-year term at a time. Despite the more democratic requirements of the post-war period, and professional training in librarianship available at the university level since 1949, over its two hundred years of history, the Library has been led by seventeen men who held the title of Chief Librarian, later Director, and, since 1977 Director General of the institution. Exceptionally, a female leader was appointed for four months in 1996 as a temporary solution. Mrs Dr Domsa Károly, née Alojzia Szabó (1943–2014), worked in the Library for thirty years, for eleven of them as Vice Director, and was entrusted by the Academy's Secretary General to fill the position until a Director General could be appointed. In fact, she was the leader of professional activities at the Library under two consecutive Director Generals until her retirement in 2006.

The timeline above shows the age at which each leader received their appointment and the length of time they served as Chief Librarians, Directors or Director Generals. It helps explain some long-standing tendencies in the Library's history. Firstly, after their donation in 1826, the founders, the Teleki family, did not appoint a Chief Librarian until 1851, well into the period when the collection was lodged in two branches of the Trattner-Károlyi House in Pest. In the earlier years, Ferenc Toldy (born Schedel, 1805–1875), the Academy's Secretary General,[2] was also responsible for the Library. Toldy had gained such expertise in librarianship in twelve years that he used it as a professional reference when applying for the leadership position of the University Library in 1843. During the nineteenth century, the Academy, in accordance with the wishes of its founders, aimed for long-term solutions by appointing relatively young men to the position of Chief Librarian. The first time they were lucky: starting at the age of forty-one, by that time a corresponding member of the Academy for ten years, the linguist Pál Hunfalvy (1810–1891) served in the Library for forty years. After his long service, as an honoured member of the Academy, Hunfalvy received a ceremonial funeral in its building. The next two Chief Librarians, however, had much shorter careers.



3. Photograph of Ferenc Toldy (sign. Ms 4825/494)



4. Portrait of Pál Hunfalvy, painted by Róbert Wellmann, MTA KIK, inv. nr. Kt 42.

On page 35.: *1. The lapel pin of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and that of the Library*

1 See also the following pages in Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 9–39; 49–92; 103–154; 193–209; 269–290; 369–394; 433–466.

2 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 235–242.

Róbert Fröhlich (1844–1894), historian of classical antiquity and archaeologist, was elected a member of the Academy in 1892, thus becoming eligible for the position of Chief Librarian as well. However, almost right after his appointment the following year, he fell ill and died at the age of fifty in 1894. The next Chief Librarian, Ágost Heller (1843–1902), had professional experience in library management. As a physicist, railway engineer, and historian of science, he oversaw the Society of Natural Sciences' book collection for twenty years (1875–1895). He assumed leadership of the Library in 1894, and within two years, he had managed to set up the Goethe Room[3] on the ground floor of the Palace. Heller also decided that, instead of the founding collection, the new arrivals should be catalogued first to help readers find the latest specialist literature. His expertise and innovations made Heller a great leader of the collection, but he died after only eight years of service in 1902, at age fifty-nine. As a member of the Academy since 1887, Ágost Heller, like his predecessor, Pál Hunfalvy, had the honour of lying in state at the portico of the Academy before his burial.

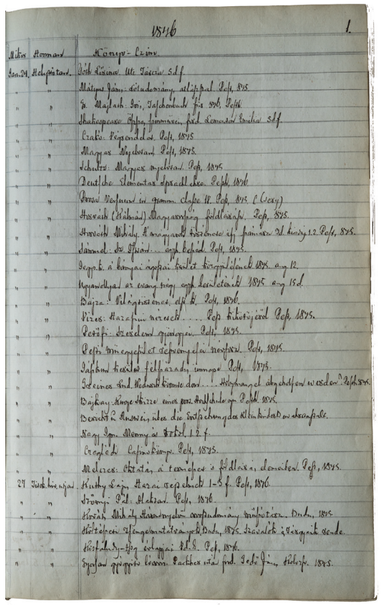


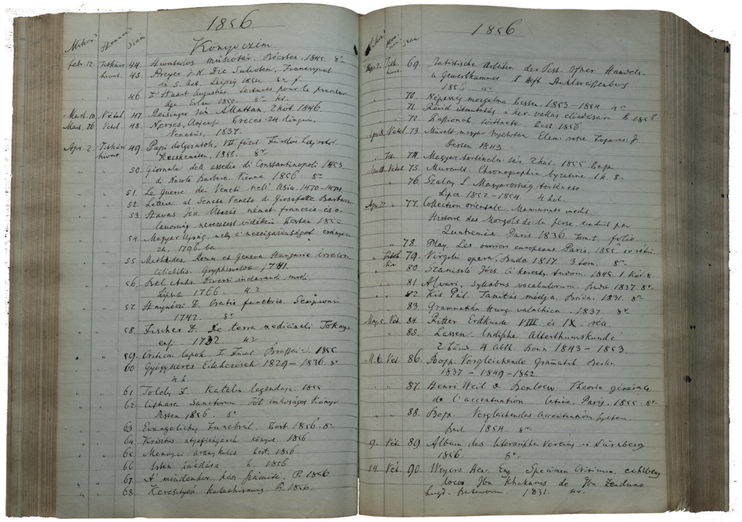
5. Portrait of Róbert Fröhlich from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság



6. Portrait of Ágost Heller, painted by Andor Boruth, MTA Art Collection, inv. nr. 358.

3 See the chapter on the Memorial Collections below.





7–8. Excerpts of the accession register from between 1846 and 1856

The next four Chief Librarians, serving until the end of the Second World War, were all gentlemen already well into their sixties or even their seventies at the time of their appointment. Hence, it is not surprising that the newly established communist regime after the war accused the Academy of being an outdated, feudal institution in need of reform, and its Library of being in urgent need of transformation.

Kálmán Szily (1838–1924), a physicist, linguist, and member of the Academy since 1865, served for fifteen years as Secretary General of the Academy,[4] before deciding to change his career path, and requesting an appointment as Chief Librarian. He was appointed in 1905, at the age of sixty-six, and he spent almost twenty years leading the Library. Szily was a highly energetic organiser who dreamt of unifying the three most essential libraries in Budapest into one "national institution". Unsurprisingly, neither the leadership of the National Széchényi Library nor that of the University Library found the idea acceptable, not to mention the lack of the funds required to finance such a massive transformation. However, as an experienced administrator, Szily understood the importance of collecting scientific data. Thus, in his capacity as Chief Librarian, he asked the Academy's members in 1910 to donate a copy of each of their publications to the Library. This initiative can be regarded as a precursor to the Repository of the Academy's Library (REAL), which was launched in 2008 with the aim of building a digital collection of publications by Hungarian scholars.



9. Portrait of Kálmán Szily painted by Géza Biczó, MTA KIK, inv. nr. Kt 30.

4 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 269–275.

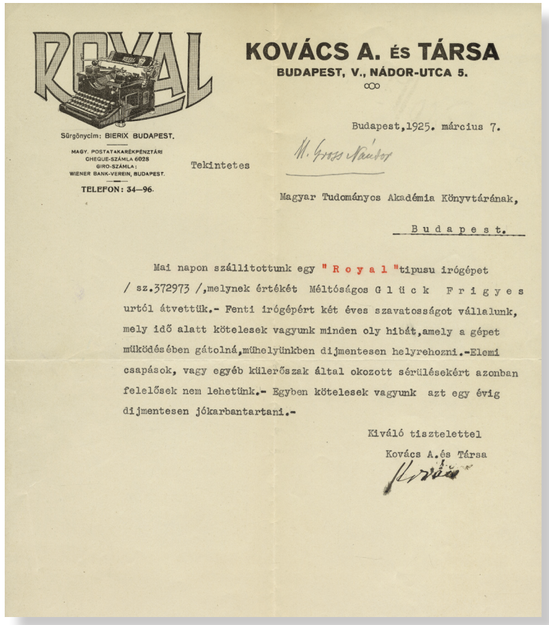
After the long leadership of Szily, Zoltán Ferenczi (1857–1927), a sixty-seven-year-old literary historian and librarian, a member of the Academy since 1905 and former Director of the University Library, took over the position. Ferenczi was an accomplished scholar who had also published two works on librarianship. During the three short years of his leadership, Ferenczi introduced several important changes at the Library. First, instead of registering the new arrivals by acquisition group, a general accession register was to be used to avoid duplication. Second, to modernise and accelerate cataloguing, he purchased six Royal Standard typewriters. Third, Ferenczi managed to obtain legal deposit copies from many publishers that had often evaded their obligation to the Academy. In fact, in 1895, a law came into force regulating compulsory copies for accession to libraries of national importance, such as the Library of the Academy.



10. Portrait of Zoltán Ferenczi (sign. Ms 5071/7)



11. Sepulchre of Zoltán Ferenczi (sign. Ms 4405/88)



ROYAL

Sürgönycím: BIERIX BUDAPEST.

MAGY. POSTATAKARÉKPÉNZTÁRI CHEQUE-SZÁMLA 6028
GIRO-SZÁMLA:
WIENER BANK-VEREIN, BUDAPEST.

TELEFON: 34—96.

KOVÁCS A. ÉS TÁRSA
BUDAPEST, V., NÁDOR-UTCA 5.

Budapest,1925. március 7.

Tekintetes

Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárának,

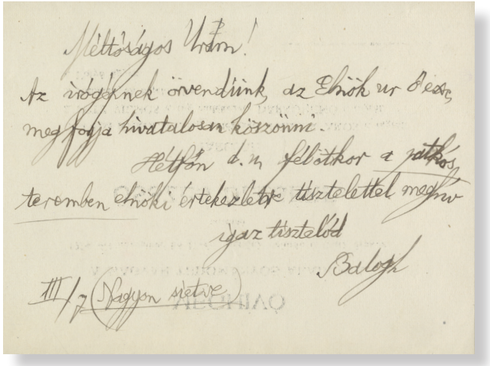
Budapest.

Mai napon szállítottunk egy "Royal"típusu irógépet / sz.372973 /,melynek értékét Méltóságos Glück Frigyes urtól átvettük.- Fenti irógépért két éves szavatosságot vállalunk, mely idő alatt kötelesek vagyunk minden oly hibát,amely a gépet működésében gátolná,műhelyünkben dijmentesen helyrehozni.-Elemi csapások, vagy egyéb külerőszak által okozott sérülésekért azonban felelősek nem lehetünk.- Egyben kötelesek vagyunk azt egy évig dijmentesen jókarbantartani.-

Kiváló tisztelettel

Kovács A.és Társa

12. Bill of delivery of the Royal Standard typewriters (sign. K 810 1925/51/1)



Méltóságos Uram!

Az irógépnek ünnepünk az Ehök ur 8 órás megfogja hivatalosan köszönni.

Pénteken d.u. félkettőkor a ... teremben ehöki értekezletre tisztelettel megyw ... az tisztelőd

Balogh

13. Letter from Jenő Balogh, Secretary General of the Academy, to Chief Librarian Ferenczi, concerning the donation of the typewriters to the Library (sign. K 810 1925/51/2)

The next Chief Librarian was a linguist, specialising in comparative linguistics of Hungarian, Finnish, and Ural-Altaic languages. József Szinnyei Jr. (1857–1943), a member of the Academy since 1896, was destined to become a scholar, his father being a famous lexicographer. József Szinnyei Sr. (1830–1913) indeed prepared a monumental series of bibliographies on the lives and works of authors active in, or connected to, Hungary.[5] His bibliography is still referred to as "the Szinnyei" among Hungarian scholars to this day, in a similar vein to Henry Gray's *Anatomy* (1858), a basic reference work in medicine in the English-speaking world.

Szinnyei Jr. was rigorous in enforcing the Library's regulations, especially in limiting the number and duration of loanable books. At the end of his career, during the Second World War, his colleagues began preparing the Library's most valuable collections against air raids. Among other things, with the help of personnel at the National Archives, they undertook the photo-reproduction of *cimelia* using 1,000 metres of Agfa film in 1943.



14. Portrait of József Szinnyei Jr. (sign. Ms 5073/43)

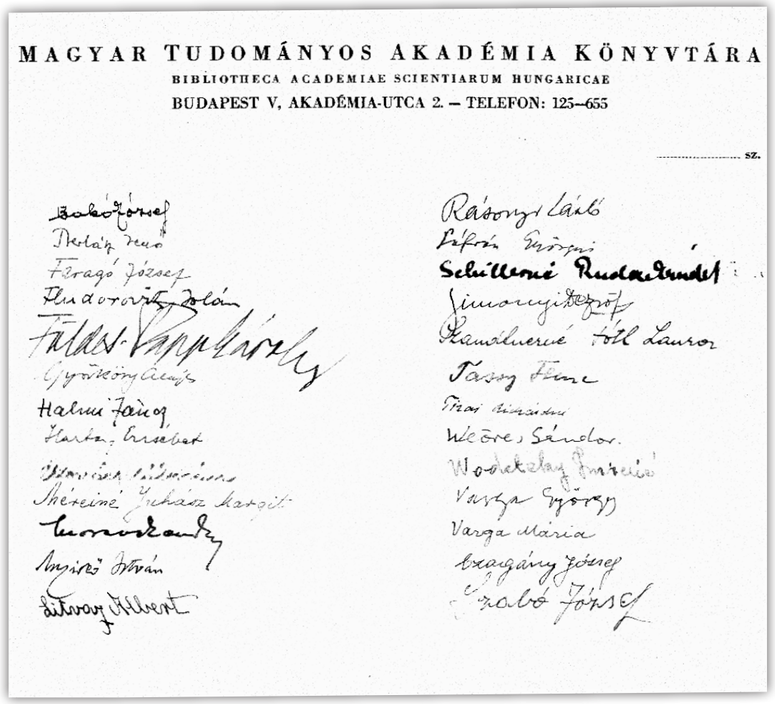


15. Portrait of János Melich (sign. Ms 5075/186)

5 Szinnyei 1891–1914.

János Melich (1872–1963), linguist and president of the First Section of Linguistics and Literary Scholarship of the Academy, took over leadership from József Szinnyei Jr. in May 1943. At the moment of his appointment, the same rules applied to him as to other Chief Librarians since 1869. Thus, to the best of his knowledge, Melich became the leader for the remainder of his life. He made plans to transform the Library accordingly. However, in 1946, the rules were modified: the Chief Librarian was no longer required to be a member of the Academy and could be appointed for only five-year terms. In Melich's view, the rules were changed to facilitate his own retirement, as the new regime sought to break free from the "old-school" leadership of the Academy. János Melich was indeed forced into retirement after five years of service.

Altogether, János Melich and his colleagues had to face many challenges during the war and the first years of post-war reconstruction. Throughout its history, the Library of the Academy was understaffed and its personnel underpaid, given the size of the collection and the expertise it required of its librarians. In 1943, eighteen librarians worked there, of whom six were women, five of whom held a doctorate. The first female librarian, Lívia Rüblein (1900–1953), at the time Mrs Antal Bezzegh, began working at the Academy in 1925. According to records from 1943, Rüblein had remarried and was now Mrs Imre Wodetzky. Her female colleagues were Dr Laura Cs. Tóth (b. 1911), i.e. Mrs Dr Pál Szantner Jr., Dr Margit Rozgonyi (1898–1943), Dr Erzsébet Rudas (b. 1903), i.e. Mrs Pál Schiller, Dr Jolán Fludorovits (1904–1955), and Dr Erzsébet Hartay (1909–1970).



MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRA
BIBLIOTHECA ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARUM HUNGARICAE
BUDAPEST V, AKADÉMIA-UTCA 2. — TELEFON: 125–655

..... sz.

16. Signatures of Jolán Fludorovits, Erzsébet Hartay, Erzsébet Rudas, Laura Cs. Tóth, Mrs Imre Wodetzky and other librarians on a document from 1950 (sign. microfilm A 7304/III)

During the first one-and-a-half years of his leadership, the main task of János Melich and his colleagues was to relocate the most important treasures of the Library for safekeeping outside or inside the Palace. Altogether, fifty chests and strongboxes containing manuscripts and precious objects were sent for safekeeping to the National Bank in Veszprém (Veszprém County), under the Castle Hill and to the dungeons of the National Museum in Budapest. Moreover, in the Palace's dungeons, two rooms used originally for storaging wine barrels were filled with precious manuscripts and walled in. The chests kept in Veszprém were captured by the American troops and transported to Austria, from where they were returned to Budapest in August 1946. The other valuables hidden in various parts of Budapest were largely recovered intact after the war.

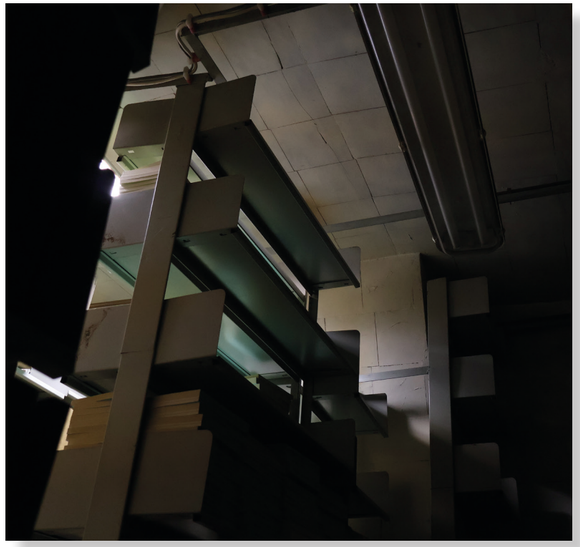




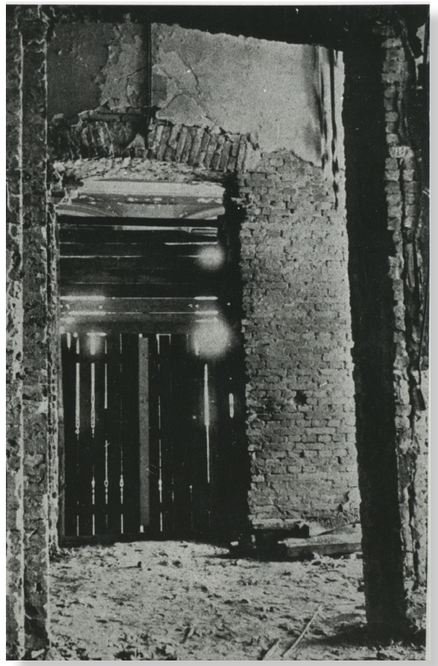
17–18. Strongbox from the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today







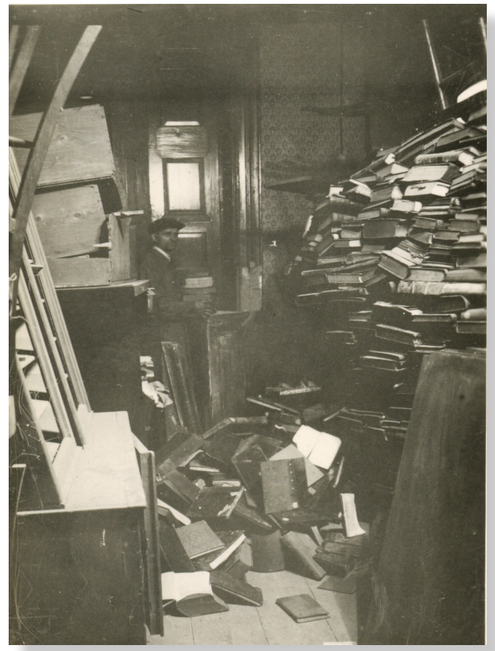
19–21. The basement of the Palace of the Academy, where several manuscript treasures were walled in for safekeeping during the Second World War





22–26. Five photographs documenting war damage in the Palace of the Academy (signs. Ms 6298/184 and Ms 10295/2)









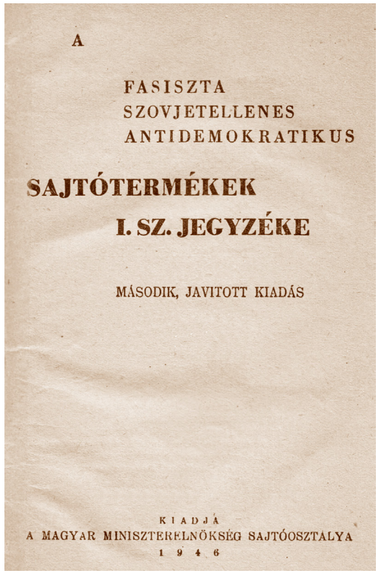
27. The Chain Bridge in ruins, source: Fortepan no. 175162



28. The Kossuth Lajos Street (Budapest's 5th District) in ruins in 1945 , source: Fortepan no. 217777

During the siege of Budapest in 1944–1945, the air raids by the Allied Forces and the Soviet troops caused severe damage to the Library. By spring 1945, there was no intact glass surface in the whole Palace, and there was no room that was not used by the Soviet soldiers as a lavatory. The full physical reconstruction of the spaces took more than seven years. For instance, there was no running water in the building until 1948. The Library began receiving readers for limited opening hours from June 1945, but the number of its visitors remained small compared to other collections in Budapest.

The circumstances were still barely acceptable for everyday work in the Library when a wave of ideological pressure also hit Melich and his colleagues. In a way, the Library became a theatre for a bad comedy, where the spirits of Stalin and Hitler fought each other, but only the Chief Librarian fell victim to their battle. Twice in 1946, lists of "fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-democratic books" were published in Hungary. The titles on those lists were to be removed from library catalogues and/or transported for destruction. Melich and his colleagues transported seventy-four volumes to a police station on 20 April 1946.


A

FASISZTA
SZOVJETELLENES
ANTIDEMOKRATIKUS

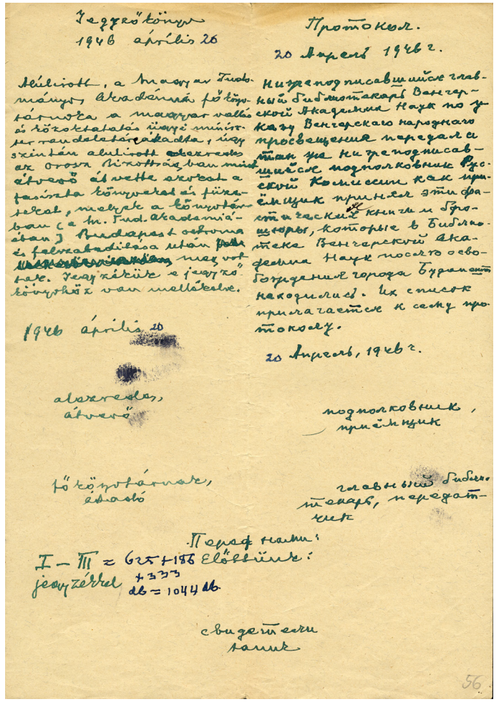
SAJTÓTERMÉKEK
I. SZ. JEGYZÉKE

MÁSODIK, JAVITOTT KIADÁS

KIADJA
A MAGYAR MINISZTERELNÖKSÉG SAJTÓOSZTALYA
1 9 4 6

29. Title page of a list on " fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-democratic books" (sign. 152.487)

The Library of the Academy was visited by Soviet and Hungarian secret police on several occasions, leading to a major scandal on 20 January 1947, exactly one day before the deadline for another campaign to remove prohibited books from libraries. A certain lieutenant-colonel Sergeichuk, who could neither speak nor read any language other than Russian, "following his own instincts", selected for transportation approximately 3,000 volumes of fascist literature. What was worse was that his men discovered the personal collection of the philosopher Sándor Kibédi Varga (1902–1986) and the publications of the Hungarian German Society, including two copies of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, in the Chief Librarian's room. However, neither János Melich nor his colleagues present at the time in the Library could remember how and when those books were placed in that room.



30. Draft handover document concerning prohibited books, written in Hungarian and Russian by János Melich (sign. K 829 177/1946)

Later, when Dr Erzsébet Rudas returned from her sick leave, she recalled that back in June 1945, the books in question were in one of the flats of the "Academic Apartment House", and the owner's mother-in-law offered them to the Academy as a donation. However, the librarians accepted the collection only for safekeeping and did not consider it Library property. This scandal, widely publicised in communist newspapers that regularly criticised the Academy, was the final pretext for removing János Melich from his position, as he had been a thorn in the side of the emerging regime since March 1945. János Melich was a brilliant linguist, an energetic organiser as the Chief Librarian, but also a man of a sanguine character; thus, he had managed to gain adversaries, if not enemies, during his long career in the Academy. In 1948, Melich was removed from his position as head of the Library. In 1949, the Academy, reorganised following the example of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, also reduced Melich's full membership to consulting membership. János Melich, a once prolific scholar whose personal bibliography totalled 1,000 items, had lost all his vitality and published only fifteen articles until his death in 1963.



Kultúrbotrány a Tudományos Akadémián

Megsemmisültek Arany János levelei

Filmre vesznek munka közben az élmunkásokat

Az egyesülési kongresszus anyaga

Szemináriumok anyaga

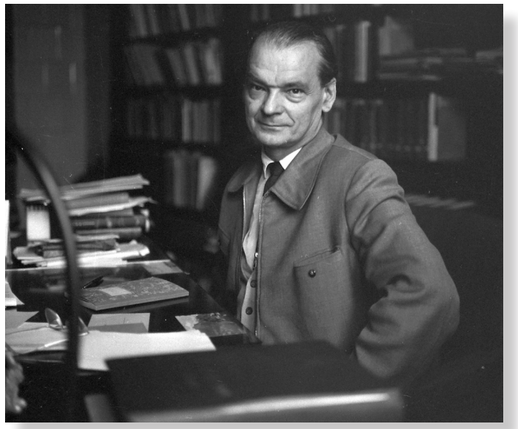
Alapfokú szemináriumok számára

Haladó szemináriumok számára

31. Excerpt from the newspaper Népszava*, 24 June 1948, concerning the "Cultural Scandal at the Academy"*

During the 1950s, the "long-awaited new blood" arrived at the Library in the shape of leaders in their late thirties or early forties. However, those youngish men came in quick succession, as their ideological trustworthiness often outweighed their professionalism in the eyes of the new regime.

It is quite telling of the political situation in post-war Hungary that the next Chief Librarian after Melich was Dezső Keresztury (1904–1996), one of his adversaries. Back in March 1947, Keresztury, as Minister of Religion and Public Education, assigned János Melich full responsibility for the scandal of the *fascist* books held in the Library of the Academy. After losing his position as a minister, Keresztury became Director of the Eötvös Collegium of Budapest.[6] He was also removed from there in the summer of 1948, due to a scandal concerning the election of the president of the Student Body.



32. Portrait of Dezső Keresztury, source: Fortepan no. 20101



33. Chief Librarian Keresztury hosting his colleagues at his summer house, 9 June 1949 (sign. Ms 6446/134)

6 The Eötvös József Collegium was founded in 1895 by Baron Loránd Eötvös (1848–1919), who modelled it after the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. The Eötvös Collegium admitted talented, lower- or middle-class students, until the 1960s, exclusively male students. Since 1910, it has been situated on Gellért Hill, at 11–13 Ménesi Street, in Budapest's 11th District. Since 1956, the Institute of Literary Studies of the Academy has also had its lodgings there. The institution was named after the founder's father, Baron József Eötvös (1813–1871), a writer, politician, the third President of the Academy, and Minister of Religion and Public Education. A table clock of President József Eötvös is an iconic object, forming part of the representation of the office of the President of the Academy since his time. Its four dials can show the month, the date, the day of the week, and the hour and minutes. (Clock of mahogany wood, with mechanisms by Peter Paul Huber, Buda, c. 1800. MTA Art Collection, inv. nr. 258.) For the activities of the father and the son as Presidents of the Academy, see Szilágyi ed. 2023, 43–53, 77–88.



34. Building of the Eötvös Collegium on Ménesi Street, today



35. Photograph of Baron József Eötvös, President of the Academy



36. Eötvös table clock, MTA Art Collection, inv. nr. 258.

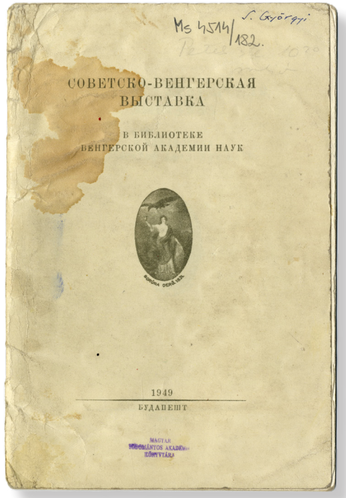
Keresztury himself was a corresponding member of the Academy and was thirty years younger than his predecessor; thus, the new regime could trust him to be open to reforms transforming the Library into "a modern, large, scientific collection". The main task of Keresztury was to lobby for funding through his political contacts to continue the Library's physical reconstruction. His deputy, István Nyireő (1893–1977), personally designed the spaces and furniture for the planned Oriental and Manuscript Collections. In 1948, political changes were still unfolding slowly. For instance, Gyula Ortutay (1910–1978), then Minister of Religion and Public Education, had to write a reminder to public servants that 8 December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, was no longer a bank holiday in Hungary. By 1949, communist influence was also intensifying in the Library. During that year, there was a Lenin Memorial Day and an exhibition on Pavlov held at the Library, and to celebrate Stalin's birthday with Stakhanovite work, the institution's opening hours were extended until 8 p.m.



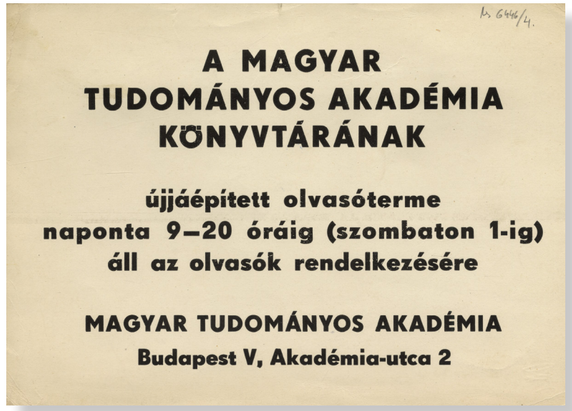
37. Photograph of István Nyireő from his later years



38. Reading Room of the Oriental Collection, designed by István Nyireő in the 1950s (sign. Ms 5075/283)



39. Catalogue of the Soviet Hungarian exhibition from 1949 (sign. Ms 4514/182)



40. Advertisement announcing the extended opening hours of the Library (sign. Ms 6446/6)





41–42. Two photographs on the Soviet Hungarian exhibition (sign. Ms 4514/182)

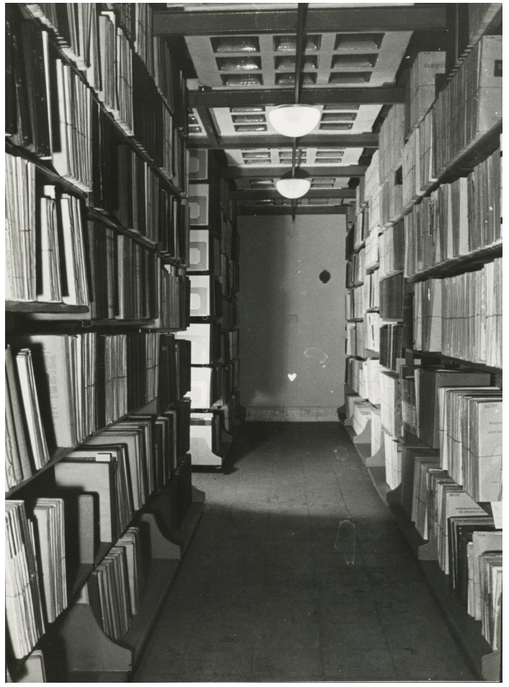




43–49. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s: the Catalogue Room, the Main Reading Room, the Reading Room of Periodicals (two photographs), the Storage of Periodicals on the second floor (two photographs), the Microfilm Reading Room (sign. Ms 5075)





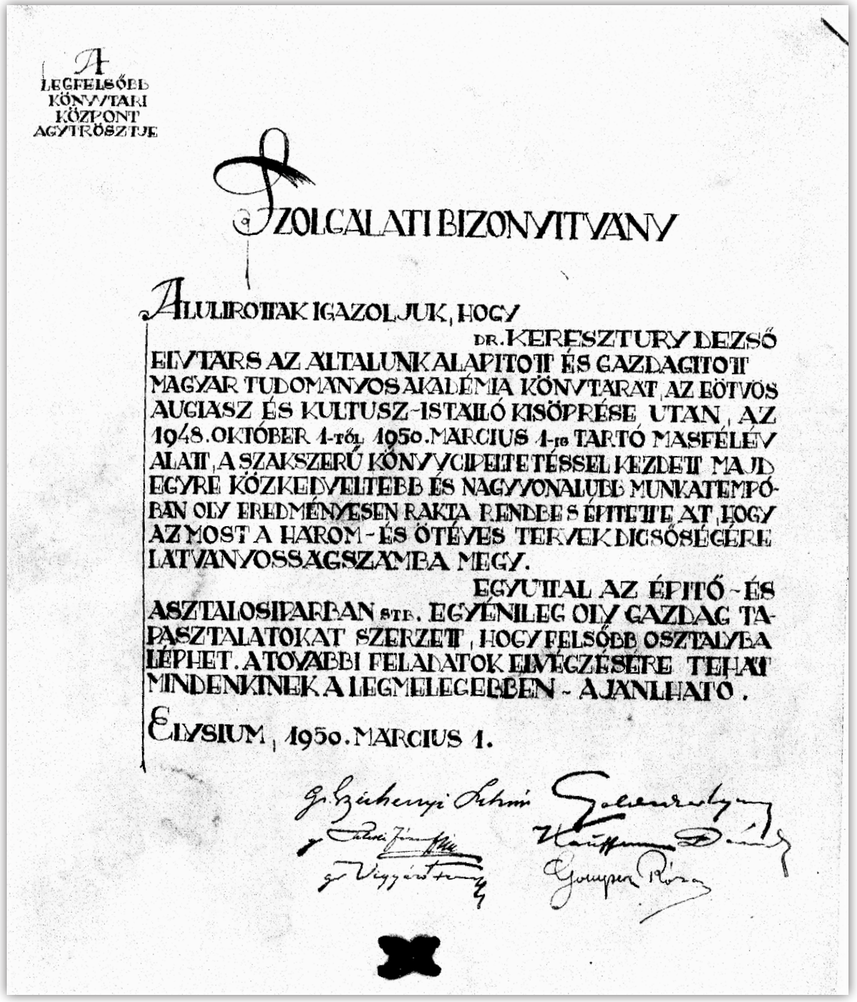






The transformation of the Academy in autumn 1949 altered both the institution's structure and Keresztury's fate. The Section of the Academy that had guaranteed Keresztury's membership years earlier had since been closed, and Keresztury himself was eventually removed from his leading position at the Library.

50. Certificate of appreciation for the leadership years of Dezső Keresztury from his colleagues. The hand-written document contains copied signatures of the most important donors of the Library: Count István Széchenyi, Count József IV Teleki, Count Ferenc Vigyázó, Ignác Goldziher, Dávid Kaufmann and Róza Gomperz (sign. microfilm A 7304/III)



A
LEGFELSŐBB
KÖNYVTÁRI
KÖZPONT
AGITRÉSZTJE

SZOLGALATI BIZONYITVANY

ALULIROTTAK IGAZOLJUK, HOGY
DR. KERESZTURY DEZSŐ
ELVTARS AZ ALTALUNK ALAPITOTT ÉS GAZDAGITOTT
MAGYAR TUDOMANYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTARAT, AZ EÖTVÖS
AUGIASZ ÉS KULTUSZ-ISTALLÓ KISÖPRÉSE UTAN, AZ
1948. OKTÓBER 1-TŐL 1950. MARCIUS 1-IG TARTÓ MASFÉLÉV
ALATT, A SZAKSZERŰ KÖNYVCIPELTETÉSSEL KEZDETT MAJD
EGYRE KÖZKEDVELTEBB ÉS NAGYVONALUBB MUNKATEMPÓ-
BAN OLY EREDMÉNYESEN RAKTA RENDBE S ÉPITETTE AT, HOGY
AZ MOST A HÁROM- ÉS ÖTÉVES TERVEK DICSŐSÉGÉRE
LATVANYOSSAGSZAMBA MEGY.
EGYUTTAL AZ ÉPITŐ- ÉS
ASZTALOSIPARBAN STB. EGYÉNILEG OLY GAZDAG TA-
PASZTALATOKAT SZERZETT, HOGY FELSŐBB OSZTALYBA
LÉPHET. A TOVABBI FELADATOK ELVÉGZÉSÉRE TEHAT
MINDENKINEK A LEGMELEGEBBEN - AJANLHATÓ.

ELYSIUM, 1950. MARCIUS 1.

The next leader of the Library, appointed as Director, rather than Chief Librarian, Tibor Scher (1912–1975), was both a member of the communist regime's cadre and an experienced librarian. As a new leader, Scher had to complete the post-war reconstruction of the Palace. More importantly, he had to prepare the Library's first five-year plan in accordance with Hungary's newly introduced planned economy. During his two-and-a-half-year leadership, however, Scher was forced to rewrite the plan at least three times as the Academy's principal ideologists and senior librarians did not agree on whether to adopt the system of the Lenin Library in Moscow. In the end, after taking into account the collection's long-established profile at the Academy, imitating the library of the Soviet Academy proved both irrational and excessively far-reaching. Despite his results in 1951, the Academy was dissatisfied with Scher's leadership. Consequently, Tibor Scher was removed from his position without explanation and assigned to work at the University Library of Pécs.



51. Photograph of Tibor Scher

The political committee supervising the Library had quickly selected a new Director, Gyula Haraszthy (1910–1990). However, before Haraszthy took over as the Library's sole leader in 1954, he worked with two other men, Máté Kovács (1906–1972) and László Mátrai (1909–1983), between October 1952 and September 1953. Their task was to transform the Library's structure, identify its primary functions, and define the collection's profile. By 1953, the three collaborators had defined the Library's profile. According to their decision, the collection should be focused on reference works in every field, with special attention to the developments of science and philosophy in the Soviet Union, and should function as a specialised library in the fields of the history of classical antiquity, world literature and its history, classical philology, Oriental studies, and linguistics in all its aspects. Before Haraszthy took over, the political committee sent Vice Director István Nyireő into retirement, the last representative of the pre-war Library system.

Haraszthy established a structure of departments in the Library, which functioned until the beginning of the 1990s. Moreover, he managed to establish or maintain international exchange cooperation with foreign collections, even in countries that did not officially have diplomatic relations with communist Hungary. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the Harvard University Library, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and collections in Greece, Spain and Japan cooperated with the Academy despite political circumstances. By 1960, the Library had international exchange relations in most countries of the world. In the second half of the 1950s, the Library returned to its original profile, serving mainly scholarly purposes and focusing on providing research materials and secondary literature for professionals. As its profile required professional librarians as well, the cadre appointees there were traditionally few, never exceeding 20 per cent of the personnel. After the Revolution in 1956, however, political re-profiling, characterised by the appointment of more faithful cadres, affected every part of the Academy. Haraszthy's role during the 1956 Revolution is discussed in detail below, in the entry on the Department of Manuscripts. It is sufficient to state here that, due to the role he played in 1956, Haraszthy was disqualified from his position during the so-called examinations of (political) integrity in 1959. He later worked at the Ministry of Culture and at the National Széchényi Library.

In sum, during the 1950s, the Library of the Academy developed into a modern library with its own profile, focusing on assisting professional scholars and on cultivating international exchange



52. Photograph of Gyula Haraszthy



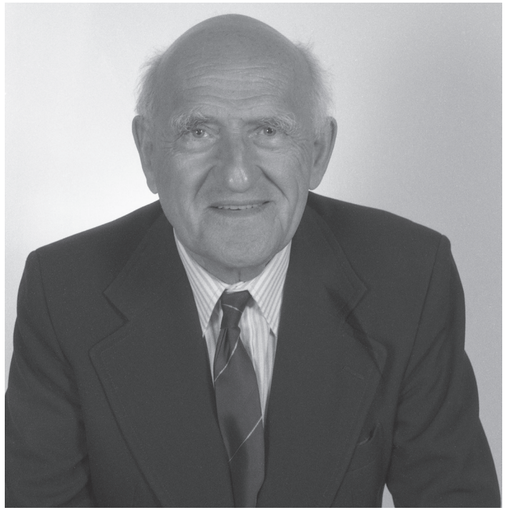
53. Photograph of Máté Kovács



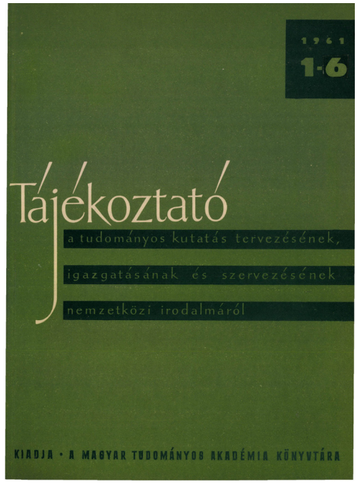
54. László Mátrai at the Academy (sign. D 7679)

and cooperation, even under Hungary's totalitarian, and later authoritarian leadership. In a somewhat controversial way, this development also meant returning to the Academy's finest traditions, as the institution was originally founded to serve the purposes of all forms of scholarship cultivated in the Hungarian language.

In 1960, a new Director was appointed who, except for a six-year period spent at the United Nations Library in Geneva, served for thirty-six years at the Library of the Academy. The long leadership period of György Rózsa (1922–2005) spanned decades of the established Kádár era, extending well into the years following Hungary's political changes in the 1990s. By the time Rózsa came to work at the Academy, he had to face a series of vicissitudes in his private life. Rózsa was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Transylvania. In 1944, he was included among the 1,686 passengers of the so-called Kasztner train, who were saved from annihilation at the camp of Bergen-Belsen by the Zionist leader Rezső Kasztner (1906–1957). After one year in a detention camp in Switzerland, Rózsa came to Budapest and trained as a diplomat, serving in Moscow in 1948. In 1950, while working at the Documentation Centre of the Economy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Rózsa was arrested and kept without trial or sentence for a year in a political detention centre in Kistarcsa (Pest County). According to the allegations, back in the detention camp in Switzerland, Rózsa had formed connections with a collaborator of the recently executed reform communist leader, László Rajk (1909–1949). After a year of captivity, Rózsa returned to freedom, and in the summer of 1956 the Communist Party fully rehabilitated him. Rózsa remained a member of the Communist Party until 1990. Rózsa began working as a librarian at the Centre of People's Libraries in 1951, earning a degree in library studies by 1953. Rózsa had served as the head of the Institute of Economics Library for five years when he was offered the position of Vice Director at the Library of the Academy. After some months, however, in July 1960, he was appointed the institution's Director. According to the Decision No. 123/1961 of the Academy's leadership, Rózsa had three main tasks. First, he had to develop the Library's reference and bibliographical services, in accordance with the Academy's central position in the country's research environment and as a central institution in the network of scholarly libraries affiliated with the Academy. Second, aside from the general tasks of a research library, Rózsa was expected to add scholarly work to the Library's profile. The directive expected publications in different fields, from librarianship



55. Photograph of György Rózsa from 1995



56. Bulletin on the International Literature of the Planning, Administration and Organization of Scientific Research: a periodical publication of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, initiated by György Rózsa (sign. 312.396/1)*

and catalogues of the collection to research organisation and research support. Third, a close cooperation between Rózsa and the newly (re-)founded Supervisory Board of the Library from 1961 onwards was prescribed. Rózsa successfully accomplished the first two tasks by finding the appropriate personnel for each field of activity. During his leadership, he started the publication of different series of catalogues and reference works on research organisation, and the Archives of the Academy, as a new branch of the Library, was also established. Personally, Rózsa was interested in developing scientific information services. He published regularly on that subject, both in Hungarian and in foreign languages, and actively participated in the activities of international organisations in the field (CIDSS, FID).[7] Rózsa's achievements were recognised with a six-year appointment in Switzerland (1969–1975) at the United Nations Library. There, among other tasks, he supervised the modernisation of the Universal Decimal Classification system. Aside from Rózsa's expertise in the field, the UN's election of a librarian from the Eastern Bloc to the position was also a symbolic act that eased Cold War-era tensions. In 1978, Rózsa received an award from the International Council on Archives for his innovations introduced in the library in Geneva.



57. The counter of the new reference service and lending in the Main Reading Room, 1961

7 French abbreviations of the International Committee for Social Science Information and Documentation and the International Federation for Information and Documentation (1895–2002).







58–60. Photographs from the libraries of the Institute of History, Institute of Animal Healthcare and the Institute of Nuclear Research joining the network of research libraries (signs. AL 2938, AL 2955, AL without signature)

During Rózsa's appointment abroad, the Library of the Academy was led by Vice Director István Rejtő (1928–1991). Rejtő had a degree in Hungarian Language Teacher Education, and started working at the Library in 1961, and from 1968, as its Vice Director. After Rózsa's return, Rejtő resumed his position and served as Vice Director until his retirement in 1988. The main task during Rejtő's leadership was to solve the ever-pressing problem of storage space inside and outside the Library. Rejtő prepared the plans and designs for the off-site storage facility in Törökbálint, which was not ready until 1983, instead of the originally planned 1975 inauguration.

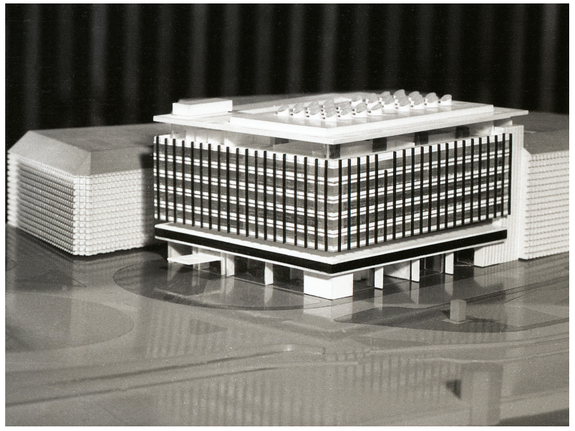


61. Photograph of István Rejtő



62. Off-site storage facilities in Törökbálint, 1983

The hardest long-term task György Rózsa faced during his leadership was the planning and replanning of the Library's new building. There were different concepts for the location and design of the future building, some of which even reached the executive planning stage, but none were ever realised. The first major phase of planning fell through in 1969, when the planned costs increased by 100 per cent due to economic changes in Hungary. That year, the Academy had to choose between building a new library or a new Biological Research Centre in Szeged (Csanád-Csongrád County). The latter institution was more important for the scholarly network of the Academy, both at home and abroad, and the plan of the library building was abandoned. After his fruitful years in Switzerland, Rózsa returned home, and in the late 1970s he had to restart the planning process. As mentioned above, the "Apartment House" of the Academy, transformed into its Library, was finally inaugurated in 1988. During the building process librarians worked in semi-transformed spaces of the flats for some time.



63. Model of the planned Library building, 1966

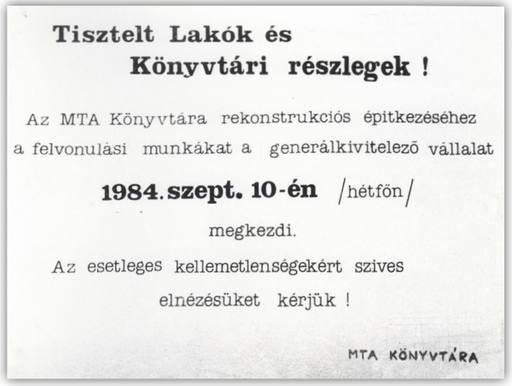


64. The Biological Research Centre in Szeged (Szegedi Biológiai Központ)





65–66. Façade of the "Academic Apartment House" from the Arany János Street and from the Danube (sign. Ms 11219)



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megkezdi.

Az esetleges kellemetlenségekért szíves
elnézésüket kérjük !

MTA KÖNYVTÁRA

67. Announcing the start of the transformation of the "Academic Apartment House", 10 September 1984 (sign. Ms 11218)



68. Librarians of the Scientific Information Services working in a semi-transformed flat, with the original wallpaper still on the walls (sign. Ms 5094/13)



69. Architect Katalin Varjas coordinating the transformation process from one of the flats overlooking the Danube (sign. Ms 5097/22)



70–73. The "Academic Apartment House" during its transformation between January and November 1986 in various photographs (sign. AL 5979)









74. The inner courtyard of the "Academic Apartment House" from the entrance on Arany János Street (sign. Ms 11219)



75. The new Entrance Hall of the Library after the transformation (sign. Ms 11219)



76. The revolving door of the Library, later transformed into a safety-glass door in the 1990s (sign. microfilm C 3085)



77–78. Inauguration of the new Library building



At the beginning of the 1990s, Rózsa had to face the spirit of Hungary's democratic transformation within his own institution, when librarians broke the traditional hierarchy of decision-making in the name of logic.[8] In preparation for the computerization of loans and the cataloguing of the collection, a disagreement arose between trained librarians and specialists in computer science. The latter proposed beginning the computerisation of loans without first creating an electronic catalogue of books, a solution regarded by librarians as illogical. As a result, in a manner quite unheard of during communist times, librarians working in reader services, as *subordinates* defiant of official channels of communication within the institution, without first consulting their own *superior*, addressed an official letter *directly* to Director General Rózsa requesting a solution to an increasingly absurd situation on 20 May 1991. Although surprised by the bottom-up initiative, Rózsa consulted experts who were already using a new ALEPH system at the library of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME). Eventually, Rózsa decided to introduce the Academy to the ALEPH cataloguing system, designed by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, rather than a system built by IBM in the 1970s. In the end, the bottom-up initiative was successful: computerised lending began at the Library in 2007, only *after* the creation of an electronic catalogue of recent accessions by 1994 and following many years of retrospective data conversion. In 2025, a new, cloud-based ALMA system, a modern version of ALEPH, was introduced at the Library.



79. The Vasarely Room on the ground floor of the Library, 1988, named after the artist Viktor Vasarely (1906–1997), who donated the carpet to the Library



80. The same carpet by Vasarely in the so-called Small Assembly Room on the Library's second floor, today

8 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 471–472.



81. The reference service in the Main Reading Room

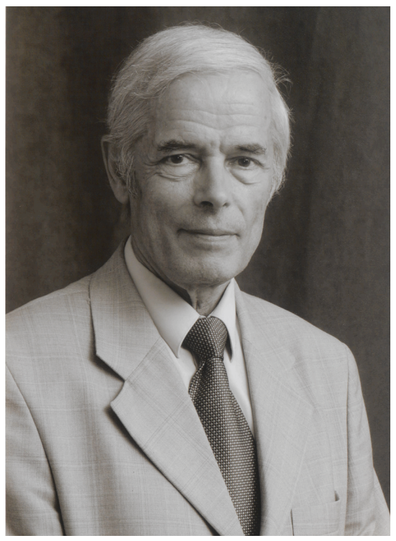
The political changes in Hungary began on 23 October 1989, with the establishment of the Third Republic of Hungary on the basis of the amended 1949 constitution. Nevertheless, the first democratically elected government of Hungary passed the new law regulating the position and functions of the Academy only at the end of its term, in March 1994. The legal environment regulating the Academy and its Library was fully established by May 1995. Due to the slow pace of political change, György Rózsa remained in office until 30 June 1996, although at the time of his retirement, no one had been appointed to take over from him. The leadership of the Academy had managed to convince Pál Engel (1938–2001), a historian and librarian who had been a corresponding member of the Academy since 1995, to take on the position. Engel officially started work on 1 July 1996. After five months spent inspecting the Library's professional and financial situation, he was shocked by the scope of the task awaiting him. In fact, according to Engel's report, the Library provided multifaceted services to its readers in a professional manner. However, its limited financial resources had diminished the possibility of accession through purchase, international exchange and development in general.



82. Photograph of Pál Engel

While in 1991 38 per cent of the Library's full budget was spent on the accession of the collection and 51 per cent on salaries, by 1996 salaries altogether required 79.5 per cent of the budget, and only 10.3 per cent could be spent on accession. After a first attempt to resign from his position in November 1996, Engel stayed another year. He prepared a detailed plan to save the Library from bankruptcy while safeguarding its traditional profile, with a focus on the humanities and a large collection of reference works in the natural sciences. Different committees examined Engel's suggestions, guaranteeing sufficient financial support for the Library to avoid bankruptcy (a maximum of sixteen million forints), but far less than what was required to fulfil Engel's plan (c. fifty million). Under these unfavourable circumstances, Engel resigned from his position and returned to his work at the Institute of History of the Academy.

The pressing task of resolving the financial situation was entrusted to Gábor Náray-Szabó, Vice Secretary of the Academy, on 1 January 1998. Náray-Szabó suggested cutting off accession in the natural sciences and reducing salary expenditure to a maximum of 50 per cent of the full budget. In practice, this meant that the Library had to lose nineteen members of staff while gaining the possibility of subscribing to one hundred periodicals. After those rather radical changes and additional financial support from the Academy in 1999, the Library's economic situation was consolidated. In the years that followed, until her retirement in 2006, the executive leadership was entrusted to Mrs Károly Domsa, née Alojzia Szabó, although with limited authority as Vice Director of the Library. Mrs Domsa led with professionalism in every respect. For instance, in 2001, to celebrate the one hundred and seventy fifth anniversary of the Library's foundation, she initiated the placement of a memorial plaque in the Teleki family tomb in Szirák to honour their donation. By the time of her retirement, 100,000 books had been added to the electronic catalogue, and the library cards and volumes were equipped with barcodes to facilitate electronic lending.



83. Photograph of Gábor Náray-Szabó



84. Photograph of Mrs Károly Domsa



85. Commemorative plaque for the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the Teleki foundation in Szirák, 2001 (sign. AL without signature)



86. Commemorative ceremony in Szirák led by Mrs Károly Domsa, 2001 (sign. AL without signature)



87. Retirement party of Mrs Károly Domsa, 2006

Mrs Domsa's retirement made it necessary finally to appoint a new Director General. The only applicant for the post, a professor of chemistry and member of the Academy, Gábor Náray-Szabó (b. 1943), who previously supervised the Library as Vice Secretary of the Academy, took up his appointment on 1 May 2006. The executive leadership was in the hands of Ágnes Téglási (b. 1954), a professional librarian, who developed a new national programme for an electronic information service (EISZ) while working at the Ministry of Education between 1996 and 2006. The Ministry allocated the management of the EISZ programme to the Library of the Academy in 2012. Hence, the institution changed its name to the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 1 January 2013. The Library established a secretariat for the EISZ programme to facilitate access to scientific databases for 138 member institutions of the national research network. Since 2019, the EISZ secretariat has been elevated to a directorate level within the Library's structure, due to its access to a much larger annual budget than that of its host institution.



88. Photograph of Ágnes Téglási at her retirement party, December 2015

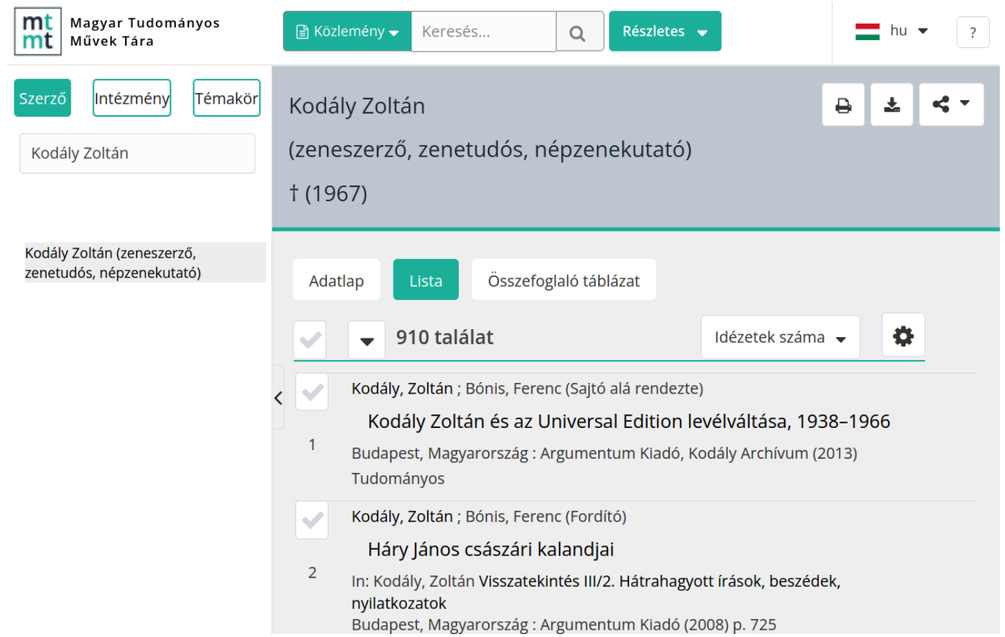


89. Representatives of the consortial members of the EISZ national research network at the Library, 9 June 2022



90. Focus on Open Science conference at the Academy, 21 November 2024. From left to right: Tiberius Ignat, Eva Mendez, Julien Roche, Szilvia Maróthy

In 2007, the Academy expressed its intention to amplify the Library's traditional profile by adding the tasks of a cultural centre, with outreach activities targeting a wider public. Hence, the so-called Agora programme of the Library was launched, and the Oriental Collection and the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books began regularly organising on-site and online exhibitions (see the entries on the special collections below).
The database, that collects all scholarly publications by Hungarian researchers under the acronym MTMT (Magyar Tudományos Művek Tára), was launched in 2009. The institute operating the database was integrated into the Library as one of its departments in 2013. Since 2015, the MTMT has been Hungary's national bibliographic database, in which every state-financed research publication must be registered by law. Those publications should be placed in REAL (Repository of the Academy's Library) as well. For the Library's bicentenary, the colleagues developing MTMT and REAL also prepared an online retrospective bibliography of past members of the Academy.[9]



91. Zoltán Kodály's MTMT profile, excerpt

9 See also: Hay – Molnár 2026 eds., 506–508.

The latest directorial era of the Library started on 1 July 2013, when István Monok (b. 1956), librarian, cultural historian, professor at different universities, and former Director of the National Széchényi Library (1999–2009), was appointed. The new Director General focused on developing the institution's digital infrastructure. First, in 2013, he integrated the MTMT into the Library's structure, appointing András Holl (b. 1959) as Vice Director responsible for information technology. Second, Monok decided to set up a new information technology department, responsible for the digital library and the ALEPH integrated library system, effective from 1 March 2015. By 2025, the department had established eight thematic subsections of REAL, including, among other materials, doctoral dissertations, old prints and out-of-copyright books, manuscripts, images and all the Library's publications. After a 2006 change in the regulation allowing all scholars with a PhD or equivalent title to borrow books from the Library of the Academy, in 2014, PhD candidates also received the same right.



92. Photograph of István Monok



93. András Holl at the LIBER 2023 conference

The present Director General, being himself an outstanding scholar, encourages the Library's personnel to pursue scholarly achievement as well, guaranteeing research days for projects in widely understood cultural history. This emphasis on the research potential of librarians became even more important after 2019, when an unexpected decision by the Hungarian government separated the Academy from its network of research institutes. As in previous decades, the Library continues to participate in international library organisations. For instance, in 2023, the annual conference of LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche) was organised in Budapest, and jointly hosted by the Academy, its Library and the Central European University (CEU). Cooperation with international organisations in librarianship is one of the main tasks of Vice Director Dóra Kalydy (b. 1974), who joined the institution in 2015 after the retirement of Ágnes Téglási.



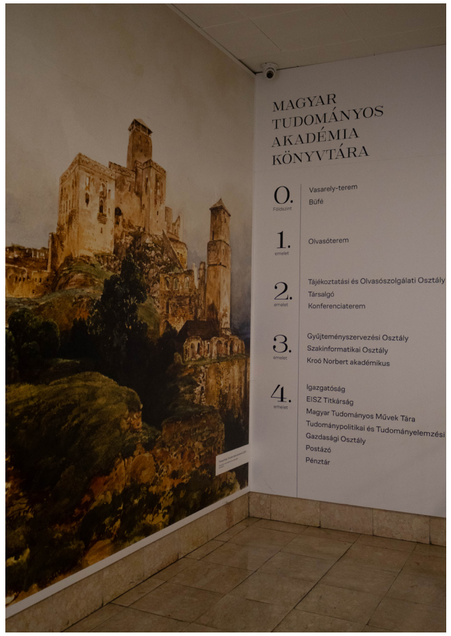
94. István Monok and Dóra Kalydy at the LIBER 2023 conference



95–96. Participants at the LIBER 2023 conference



The Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in keeping with the oldest traditions of the Learned Society, is committed to safeguarding every element of the cultural heritage entrusted to its care, while paying particular attention to the effective collection and stewardship of scientific data generated by Hungarian scholarship.





97–98. The Entrance Hall of the Library



99. The Staircase of the Library



100. The Main Reading Room



101. The Small Assembly Room



102. The Conference Room



103. Office 304 with bookshelves



104. The Library's community visiting the Teleki Castle in Szirák, 16 March 2026, photograph by József Áts



105. The Library in the late 1980s



106. View of the Danube from the Conference Room



107. The Library's logo on the platform in the Conference Room

Life and Death inside the Palace: Residents and Funeral Catafalques



1. Photograph of József Budenz



2. Photograph of Emil Dessewffy

The Academy's budget, in general, and the financial sources for its Library in particular, were already tight at the opening of the new Palace in 1865. Librarians were underpaid, even compared to the administrative staff, receiving half the salary of their colleagues. To address the situation, the Academy decided to offer the Chief Librarian a two-room apartment in the Palace, as the Secretary General and the Treasurer already had service flats there. In 1865, it was not the Chief Librarian, Pál Hunfalvy, but his deputy, József Budenz (1836–1892), who moved into the service flat, due to his limited financial means. The German-born Budenz, a linguist and a corresponding member of the Academy since 1861, had decided to become a Hungarian scholar when he chose the Finno-Ugric languages as the subject of his doctorate at the University of Göttingen some years earlier. Being only twenty-five years old when he became a librarian and not having to waste time and money on a daily commute, Budenz could invest his youthful energies in organising and operating the Library inside the Palace.

The constant presence of staff was not only a financial necessity but also a matter of safety. In fact, despite the repeated demands of Emil Dessewffy (1814–1866), then President of the Academy,[1] the builders of the Palace did not take into account all the fire safety regulations, and a fire broke out in the new building some years later, in 1869. Fortunately, it was discovered in time, without serious damage.

1 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 33–42.

After his election to the position of Secretary General in 1865, the aforementioned poet and editor János Arany also lived in the Palace with his family. They lived in an apartment that is now occupied by the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, but an armchair of Arany's and a tile stove from the flat are preserved in his memory. By the time Arany received his appointment, similar to the majority of Hungary's intellectual elite, he had to face the harsh consequences of the failed Revolution and War of Independence against Hungary's Habsburg rulers. Many who participated in the war had fallen, and many men had to live in hiding to survive political vengeance. The greatest loss for János Arany was the death of his fellow poet and best friend, the shooting star of the Reformed Era, Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), who was never seen again after the Battle of Segesvár (today Sighișoara, Romania) on 31 July 1849. After the years of political vengeance, Franz Joseph Habsburg, King of Hungary (r. 1848–1916), visited his rebellious country for the first time in 1857. The Hungarian government asked Arany to write a commemorative poem for the occasion, but he refused. Instead, around the same time, Arany began composing a poem about the bad conscience of a ruler, entitled The Bards of Wales (*A walesi bárdok*) (sign. K 512/13), which made him famous posthumously in the English-speaking world. The poem was based on an old Welsh legend, according to which King Edward I Longshanks (r. 1272–1307) sent five hundred bards to the gallows for refusing to commemorate his victory over the Welsh in 1277. The poem contained quite a transparent reference to Petőfi's and Arany's own fates, Petőfi being the dead poet and Arany the cursing bard, in the following stanza:

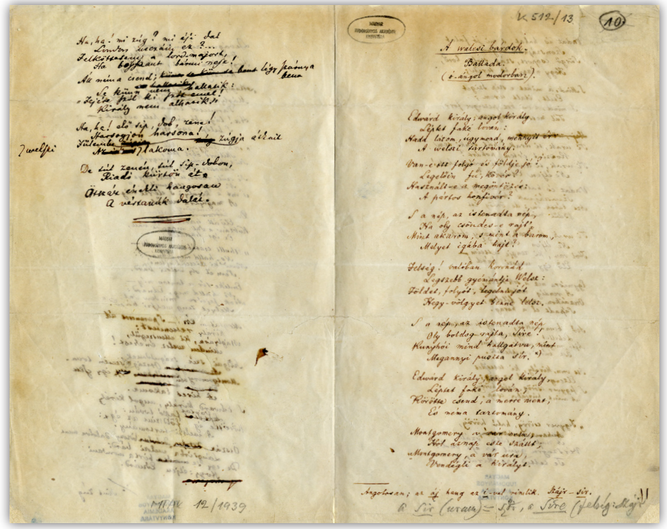
> "*He* may be gone, but *his songs* live on-
> The toast is 'King beware!'
> You bear the curse–and even worse–
> of Welsh bards everywhere."[2]

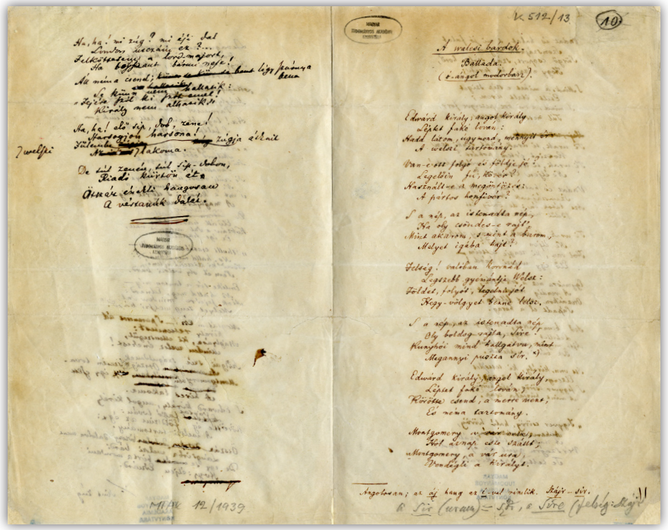
Arany did not publish his work until 1863, but since then, many generations of Hungarian schoolchildren have had to learn by heart that "Edward király, angol király / Léptet fakó lován." ("King Edward scales the hills of Wales / on his stallion.")[3] Thanks to the poem, which was also published in English translation at different times, the city of Montgomery, the poem's setting, awarded János Arany the title of Free Citizen of Montgomery in 2017, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of his birth.



3. Lithograph of Sándor Petőfi

2 Translation by Peter Zollmann, as published in: Makkai ed. 2000, 319–323, there: 322.
3 Makkai ed. 2000, 319.





4–5. The manuscript of The Bards of Wales *(A walesi bárdok) (sign. K 512/13)*

The tragedies in János Arany's life did not end after he began his appointment at the Academy. Sadly, from 1868 onwards, Arany and his wife, Julianna Ercsey (1818–1885), had to take care of their daughter's only child, as their daughter had died six months after giving birth to the baby girl. Both the processing of these personal tragedies and serving for fourteen years in an administrative position at the Academy required enormous effort from Arany, who, despite his private struggles, was remembered as an outstandingly diligent and precise Secretary General of the institution.



6. Armchair, stove and portrait of János Arany at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books in the room that once pertained to the Secretary General's service flat



7. Photograph of Julianna Ercsey



8. The fifty-year-old János Arany, 1867



9. Portrait of László Arany, painted by Ede Balló, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 17



10. Photograph of Gizella Szalay (sign. Ms 2/11a)



*11. Photograph of Géza Voinovich, Hungarian National Museum, Historical Photograph Collection (*Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Történeti Fényképtár*), inv. no. 62.1238*

In a way, the family of János Arany was present at the Palace until 1949. His son's widow, Gizella Szalay (1857–1945), married for a second time to Géza Voinovich (1877–1952), who served as the Academy's Secretary General between 1934 and 1949.[4] The Szalay-Voinovich couple became the exclusive heirs and researchers into the Arany bequest, resulting in significant losses. While working on the three-volume biography of János Arany, Voinovich kept most of the Arany family bequest at home, on Gellért Hill in Buda. The family mansion at (today's) 23 Ménesi Street in Budapest's 11th District was destroyed by German artillery in January 1945. Thus, at least one hundred letters of the Arany family, known only from mentions by Voinovich in different parts of his work, perished forever.

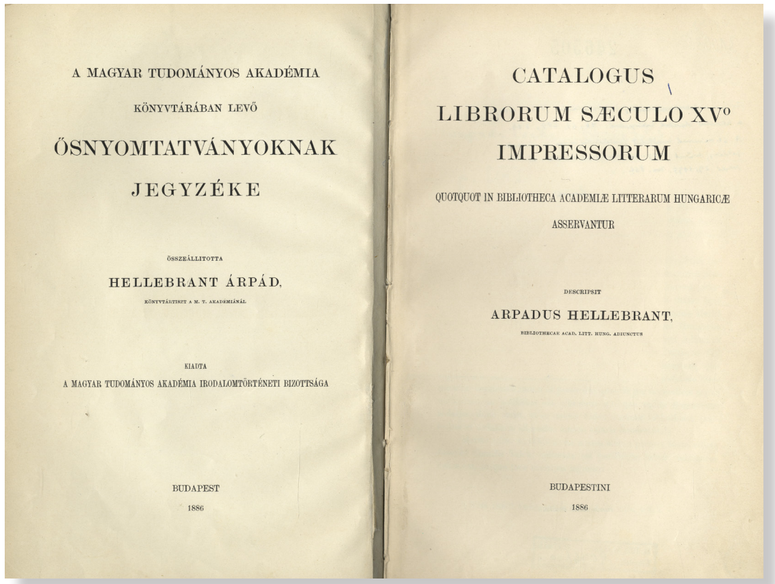
The importance of János Arany's work both as a poet and as an administrator of the Academy is reflected in the fact that the street where the Library stands today was renamed in his honour only three years after his death, in 1885.

If the name and life of János Arany became one with the Academy, the same is true of Árpád Hellebrant (1855–1925) among the employees of the Library. In a way, young Hellebrant was destined for a career at the Academy. His father, Ágoston Hellebrant, held the position of "library servant," i.e. an employee without a university degree, between 1867 and 1875. Árpád Hellebrant began working at the Library in January 1876 in a minor position, and after completing his university degree in Greek and Latin Philology, he became a "library officer" in 1878. His first and most lasting accomplishment was preparing the catalogue of incunabula in the Academy's collection.[5] Fortunately, Hellebrant considered international scholarly standards when describing the pre-1501 book collection in a Latin-language catalogue, not in a Hungarian-language one. Thus, after years of work and two years of waiting for the opinion of his two editors, the catalogue was published in 1886, earning the appreciation of international scholarship. Aside from his position at the Library, Hellebrant also continued his search for *Hungarica* abroad. In 1896 and 1898, he published two volumes[6] in continuation of the catalogue begun by Károly Szabó[7] on pre-1711 prints connected to Hungary. In 1894, the then and future Chief Librarians, Ágost Heller and Kálmán Szily, both interested in mathematics,[8] published, with notes, a mathematical work by a certain Georgius de Hungaria, an incunabulum discovered abroad by Hellebrant.[9]



12. Photograph of Árpád Hellebrant by Ede Ellinger. Petőfi Literary Museum – individually catalogued photograph collection, inv. no. F.7728

4 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 295–302.
5 Hellebrant 1886.
6 Szabó – Hellebrant 1896–1898.
7 Szabó 1879–1885.
8 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 272.
9 *Georgius de Hungaria arithmetikája 1499-ből. Szily Kálmán és Heller Ágoston rávonatkozó jelentéseivel.* Bp., 1894. (e.g. sign. Math.O.1286).


A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA
KÖNYVTÁRÁBAN LEVŐ
ŐSNYOMTATVÁNYOKNAK
JEGYZÉKE
ÖSSZEÁLLITOTTA
HELLEBRANT ÁRPÁD,
KÖNYVTÁROSTISZT A M. T. AKADÉMIÁNÁL.
KIADJA
A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA IRODALOMTÖRTÉNETI BIZOTTSÁGA
BUDAPEST
1886

CATALOGUS
LIBRORUM SÆCULO XVo
IMPRESSORUM
QUOTQUOT IN BIBLIOTHECA ACADEMIÆ LITTERARUM HUNGARICÆ
ASSERVANTUR
DESCRIPSIT
ARPADUS HELLEBRANT,
BIBLIOTHECARIUS ACAD. LITT. HUNG. ADIUNCTUS
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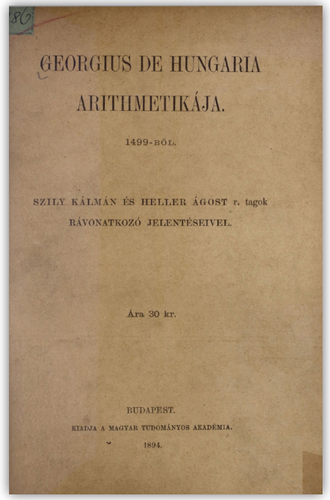
1886

13. Title page of Hellebrant's catalogue of incunabula (e.g. sign. 246.505)


GEORGIUS DE HUNGARIA
ARITHMETIKÁJA.
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SZILY KÁLMÁN ÉS HELLER ÁGOST r. tagok
RÁVONATKOZÓ JELENTÉSEIVEL.
Ára 30 kr.
BUDAPEST.
KIADJA A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA.
1894.

14. Title page of Georgius de Hungaria's Arithmetica *(sign. Math.O.1286)*

It was probably a sign of societal acceptance in his intellectual environment that Árpád Hellebrant could marry into the family of an important member of the Academy. Pál Gyulai (1826–1909), who was friends with János Arany and was the brother-in-law of Sándor Petőfi, and thus one of the leading figures of Hungarian literary circles, gave his daughter, Aranka Gyulai (1858–1915), in marriage to Hellebrant in 1886. They were married for ten years, as Aranka struggled with a kind of depression that exacerbated their relationship, and they divorced in 1896. However, Gyulai blamed his ex-son-in-law both for his daughter's illness and for the failure of their marriage, and he started to obstruct Hellebrant's career actively. Hellebrant had lived in the Palace of the Academy since 1893, but he had to move out even from it in 1898. His work in the Library remained the only source of personal accomplishment, but he had to give up his research and could not even dream of ever joining the Academy. In the years that followed, until his very late second marriage in 1919, Hellebrant grew increasingly morose. At the end of his career, the 1924 scandal of the stolen incunabula (see a separate entry below) and its retribution were a personal indignity for someone who had worked for forty-nine years at the Library of the Academy. And what happened to Aranka Gyulai? She also married again, the second time offering her hand to Dániel Fodor (†1942), a colonel in the Hungarian Army. Aranka's second husband was also to her father's taste, so much so that Pál Gyulai adopted Fodor as his own son. The colonel assumed the name Gyulay-Fodor and survived every member of his new family by decades.



16. Portrait of Pál Gyulai, painted by Ede Balló, MTA Art Colletion, inv. no. 130



15. Bust of Pál Gyulai by Alajos Strobl, MTA Art Collection inv. no. 109



17. The Gyulai family sepulchre with the name of Aranka Gyulai and her second husband on it, Budapest, Kerepesi Cemetery

If the Palace of the Academy witnessed many lives filled with human drama, it also witnessed loss and death. The physical vicissitudes suffered by both the personnel and the walls of the Academy during the two World Wars are extensively discussed below, throughout the history of donations and special collections. However, there was also a solemn way of witnessing death in the Palace. The late members of the Academy were considered the beloved dead of the institution itself, so their honorary funeral began with a catafalque set up in the portico of the Palace. The public could offer their condolences there, before the official orator said goodbye to the deceased on behalf of the Academy, and mourners accompanied the coffin on its last journey. Among the people mentioned in this volume, three Chief Librarians, Pál Hunfalvy (1891), Ágost Heller (1902), Kálmán Szily (1924) and a significant book donor, Ignác Goldziher (1921), were accorded an honorary funeral at the Academy. The Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry (1913), by contrast, expressly refused such a distinction, wishing to be buried with as little ceremony as possible.

After the Second World War, the ceremonial order of funerals was reduced; its complete programme (condolence message to the family, catafalque in the portico, funerary oration at the coffin, portrait placed in the Palace) was hardly observed even in the case of presidents of the Academy. The last President to have an honorary catafalque at the Academy, already during the communist regime, was the world-famous musicologist and folklorist Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967).[10] After the political changes in Hungary, only one president of the Academy, Domokos Kosáry (1913–2007), has so far been given an honorary funeral at the Palace.[11] The official orator at his funeral remembered Kosáry as the president who, between 1990 and 1996, led the institution into a new, democratic era with diligence and a conscious avoidance of past mistakes that would never be repeated at the Academy. The five presidents of the Academy who served after Kosáry are from much younger generations; thus, all of them are alive as of December 2025.

10 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 123–133.
11 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 183–194.



18. Ceremonial general assembly of the Academy, 8 June 1947. From left to right: Speaker: István Varga, President: Zoltán Kodály, Vice President: Albert Szent-Györgyi (1893–1986); Secretary General: Géza Voinovich (sign. Ms 1054/156)



19. Zoltán Kodály's catafalque with his widow Sarolta Péczely, 1967 (sign. Ms 6298/210)

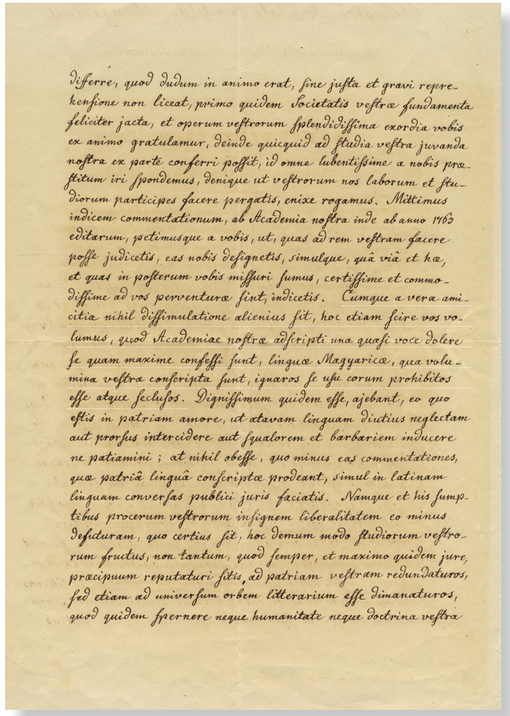


20. Visit of Queen Elizabeth II to the Academy, 5 May 1993. The Academy's President, Domokos Kosáry, welcomes the Queen and Prince Philip at the entrance to the building. Hámori Fotó. Property of Ildikó Láng



21. The leadership of the Academy at Domokos Kosáry's catafalque in 2007 (sign. AL Fényképtár CD 2007)

In 1833, the Hungarian Learned Society decided to initiate international relations with other scientific organisations worldwide. As a first step, they sent two copies of the yearbook, the directory of membership, and the statutes of the Academy, with a cover letter written in Hungarian and in Latin, to the following societies: Institut de France, Royal Society in London, Royal Society in Edinburgh, American Philosophical Society, Asiatic Society in Calcutta, Academia Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae, Königliche Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Königliche Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Königliche Böhmische Gesellschaft zu Prag. In the following years, exchange relations also began with institutions in Stockholm, Rome, Lisbon and Geneva. All new partners sent their most important publications and periodicals to Pest. However, international cooperation was not equally fruitful for all parties involved, as the yearbook of the Hungarian Learned Society was published only in Hungarian. In 1834, the Bavarian academy called attention to this anomaly, asking, in a courteous letter, its Hungarian counterpart to publish works also in the *lingua franca* of the era, i.e. Latin. The Hungarian Learned Society responded in a similar vein. Nevertheless, it denied the request, referring to its statutes: the Hungarian Learned Society aims to cultivate all kinds of sciences and arts *exclusively* in the Hungarian language. In order not to appear dismissive, Hungarian correspondents promised their Bavarian colleagues that they would answer any questions concerning Hungary in the future, in Latin.



differre, quod dudum in animo erat, sine justa et gravi reprehensione non liceat, primo quidem Societatis vestrae fundamenta feliciter jacta, et operum vestrorum splendidissima exordia vobis ex animo gratulamur, deinde quicquid ad studia vestra juvanda nostra ex parte conferri possit, id omne lubentissime a nobis praestitum iri spondemus, denique ut vestrorum nos laborum et studiorum participes facere pergatis, enixe rogamus. Mittimus indicem commentationum, ab Academia nostra inde ab anno 1763 editarum, petimusque a vobis, ut, quas ad rem vestram facere posse judicetis, eas nobis designetis, simulque, quâ viâ et hae, et quas in posterum vobis missuri sumus, certissime et commodissime ad vos perventurae sint, indicetis. Cumque a vera amicitia nihil dissimulatione alienius sit, hoc etiam scire vos volumus, quod Academiae nostrae adscripti una quasi voce dolere se quam maxime confessi sunt, linguae Magyaricae, qua volumina vestra conscripta sunt, ignaros se usu eorum prohibitos esse atque seclusos. Dignissimum quidem esse, ajebant, eo quo estis in patriam amore, ut atavam linguam diutius neglectam aut prorsus intercidere aut squalorem et barbariem inducere ne patiamini; at nihil obesse, quo minus eas commentationes, quae patriâ linguâ conscriptae prodeant, simul in latinam linguam conversas publicii juris faciatis. Namque et his sumptibus procerum vestrorum insignem liberalitatem eo minus defuturam, quo certius sit, hoc demum modo studiorum vestrorum fructus, non tantum, quod semper, et maximo quidem jure, praecipuum reputaturi sitis, ad patriam vestram redunduturos, sed etiam ad universum orbem litterarium esse dimanaturos, quod quidem spernere neque humanitate neque doctrina vestra

1–3. Three-page letter from the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften to the Hungarian Learned Society, 1834. On the second page they confess their ignorance of the Hungarian language with sumptuous words: Cumque a vera amicitia nihil dissimulatione alienius sit, hoc etiam scire vos volumus, quod Academicae nostrae adscripti una quasi voce dolere se quam maxime confessi sunt, linguae Magyaricae, qua volumina vestra conscripta sunt, ignaros se usu eorum prohibitos esse atque seclusos. *'Because in real friendship there is no place for any kind of pretence, we want you to know, that the enrolled members of our Academy almost unanimously confess their painful ignorance of the Hungarian language, in which your publications are written, therefore they are excluded and prevented from using of those writings.' (sign. RAL 55/1834)*

Illustri Societati Eruditae Hungaricae

Academia Scientiarum Regia Bavarica

Salutem.

Quod in comitiis Regni Hungarici, annis 1825–1827 celebratis, factum est, ut summi inter vos viri, praeunte Illustrissimo Comite de Szechény, solo patriae amore ducti, opes se ex suis reditibus collaturos fronte polliceremur, quibus Societas Erudita Hungarica fundari posset; id cum omnium hominum, quorum est, generose facta sentire, et litterarum studia quantum ad gloriam felicitatemque populorum conferant dijudicare, admirationem in se convertit, tum praecipue summo Academiae nostrae plausu exceptum est, quae quos fructus id institutum et vestris rebus et universae rei litterariae allaturum esset, studium animo praesagiebat. Quocirca summa laetitia affecti sumus, cum litterae vestrae ab Illustrissimo Comite de Szechény nobis afferrentur, quibus non modo primum Annalium vestrorum volumen, ceteraque, quae ad Instituti vestri rationem explicandam faciunt, nobis transmittere, sed etiam, quo adversus nos animo sitis, declarare et officia vestra polliceri, nostraque expetere voluistis. Quae omnia quam nobis grata et accepta fuerint, dudum significatum a nobis habuisset Societas Erudita Hungarica, nisi Illustrissimum Comitem de Szechény, cui litteras ad vos nostras tradere optabamus, ex itinere reducem Monachium revisurum spes nobis fuisset. Nunc, cum dictius

Dignum videtur, quam sententiam ut aequi bonique consulatis, impense rogamus.

Valete, Viri Illustres, et tum nobis favere pergite, tum vobis persuasum habete, nos vestrae Societati semper fore addictissimos.

Dabamus e aedibus Academiae Scientiarum Regiae Bavaricae, Monachii die 12. Julii MDCCCXXXIV.

Fr. Xav. de Schmitz, Eques.

Augustiss. Bavariae Regis consiliarius intimus actualis, Academiae Reg. Monachiensis Praeses, et Universitatis Reg. Prof. P. O.

Royal Society of London.

SOMERSET HOUSE.

Sir

I am directed by the Royal Society to express their thanks for

A Magyar Tudós Társaság Evkönyvei. Köt. III - VII

Regi Magyar Nyelvemlékek. Köt. I - III.

and to assure You that the Society duly appreciate this mark of consideration

I have the honor to be

Sir

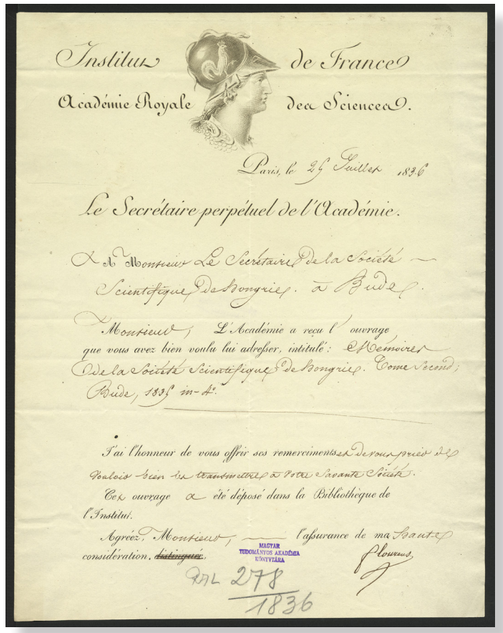
Your obedient Servant

Foreign Secretary

To Mons. le Secretaire de l'Academie Hongroise de la Poste



4–5. Letter of the Royal Society of London and its stamp in red wax, 1836 (signs. RAL 101/1853 and RAL 277/1836)



Institut de France
Académie Royale des Sciences.

Paris, le 25 Juillet 1836

Le Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie.

A Monsieur Le Secrétaire de la Société Scientifique de Hongrie. à Bude.

Monsieur, L'Académie a reçu l'ouvrage que vous avez bien voulu lui adresser, intitulé: Mémoires de la Société Scientifique de Hongrie. Tome second; Bude, 1835 in-4°.

J'ai l'honneur de vous offrir ses remercimens et de vous prier de vouloir bien les transmettre à votre Savante Société.

Cet ouvrage a été déposé dans la Bibliothèque de l'Institut.

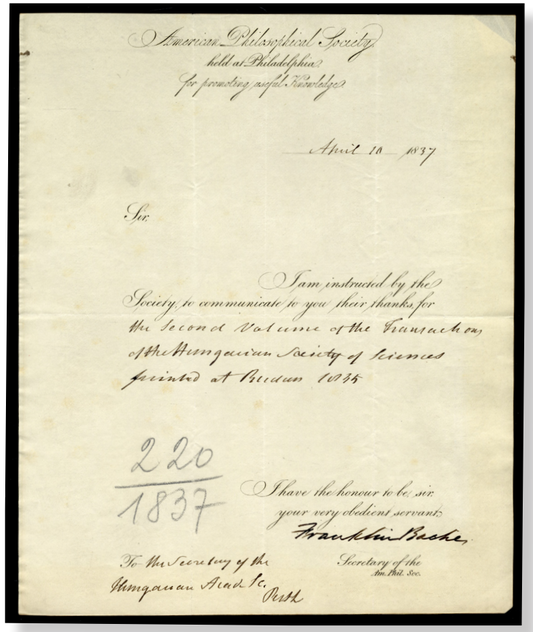
Agréez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma haute considération, ~~distinguée~~.

Plouvens

MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRA

RAL 278/1836

6. Letter from the Institut de France, 1836 (sign. RAL 278/1836)



American Philosophical Society
held at Philadelphia
for promoting useful Knowledge

April 10 1837

Sir,

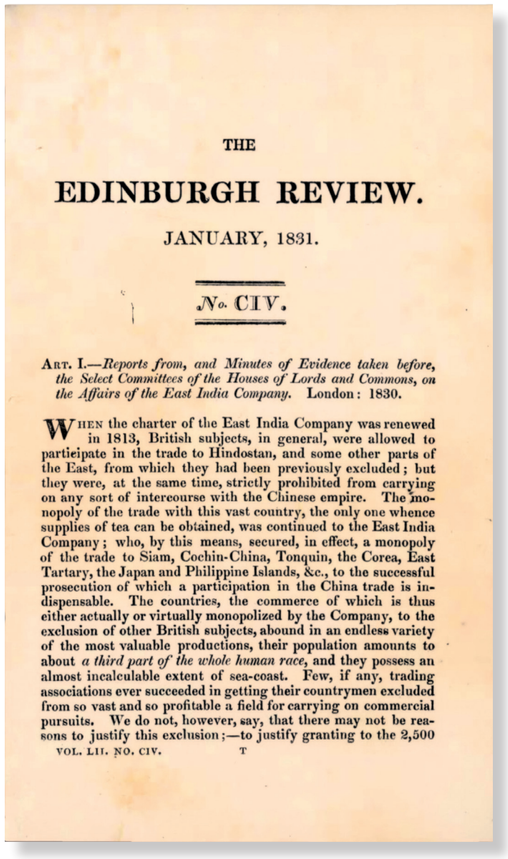
I am instructed by the Society to communicate to you their thanks for the Second Volume of the Transactions of the Hungarian Society of Sciences printed at Budun 1835

220/1837

I have the honour to be sir, your very obedient servant,
Franklin Bache
Secretary of the Am. Phil. Soc.

To the Secretary of the Hungarian Acad. Sc. Perth

7. Letter from the American Philosophical Society, 1837 (sign. RAL 220/1837)



THE

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1831.

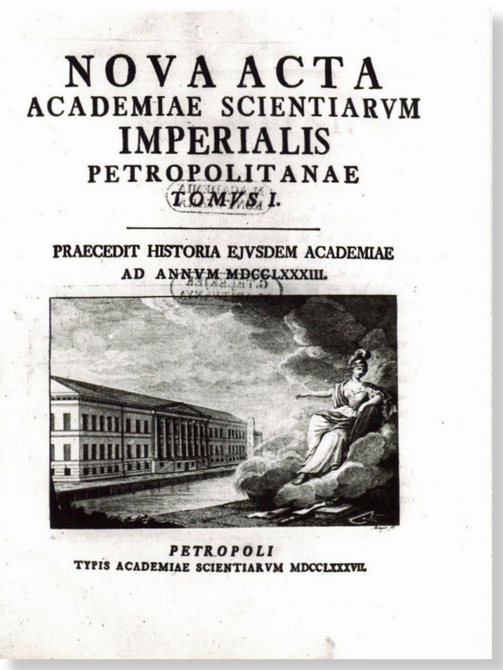
No. CIV.

Art. I.—*Reports from, and Minutes of Evidence taken before, the Select Committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons, on the Affairs of the East India Company.* London: 1830.

When the charter of the East India Company was renewed in 1813, British subjects, in general, were allowed to participate in the trade to Hindostan, and some other parts of the East, from which they had been previously excluded; but they were, at the same time, strictly prohibited from carrying on any sort of intercourse with the Chinese empire. The monopoly of the trade with this vast country, the only one whence supplies of tea can be obtained, was continued to the East India Company; who, by this means, secured, in effect, a monopoly of the trade to Siam, Cochin-China, Tonquin, the Corea, East Tartary, the Japan and Philippine Islands, &c., to the successful prosecution of which a participation in the China trade is indispensable. The countries, the commerce of which is thus either actually or virtually monopolized by the Company, to the exclusion of other British subjects, abound in an endless variety of the most valuable productions, their population amounts to about *a third part of the whole human race*, and they possess an almost incalculable extent of sea-coast. Few, if any, trading associations ever succeeded in getting their countrymen excluded from so vast and so profitable a field for carrying on commercial pursuits. We do not, however, say, that there may not be reasons to justify this exclusion;—to justify granting to the 2,500

VOL. LII. NO. CIV. T

8. The Edinburgh Review *from 1831*



NOVA ACTA
ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARVM
IMPERIALIS
PETROPOLITANAE
TOMVS I.

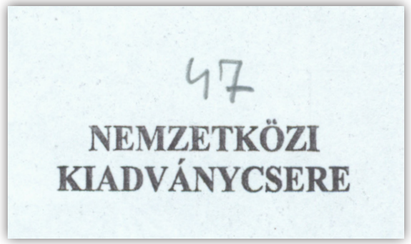
PRAECEDIT HISTORIA EJVSDEM ACADEMIAE
AD ANNVM MDCCLXXXIII.

PETROPOLI
TYPIS ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARVM MDCCLXXXVII.

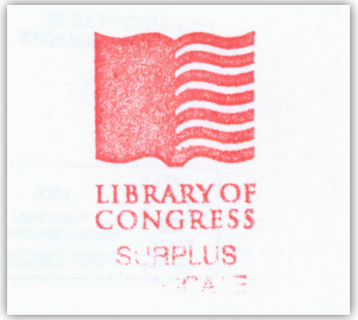
9. Publication of the Academia Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae from 1787

By 1875, the international exchange network of the Academy amounted to one hundred thirty-nine institutions, among them, for instance, the American Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Nevertheless, due to the statutes focusing on the exclusive cultivation of the Hungarian language and culture, the Hungarian Academy seemed to be too closed in upon itself, if not merely chauvinistic, in the eyes of its foreign partners, by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1896, the year of the millennial celebrations of Hungary's foundation, when the Goethe Room was also opened at the Academy, the orator of the occasion himself mentioned the Academy's chauvinistic reputation as an accusation that should be averted in the future. Partly in response to this criticism, the Academy accepted the Association Internationale des Académies' invitation to join its ranks in 1900. The Academy sent the Chief Librarian, Ágost Heller, to the ceremony in Paris as its representative. The main goal of the Association was to facilitate discourse on scholarly questions requiring international cooperation, and it operated successfully until the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1914, the Library already had two hundred fifty international exchange partners, having started new collaborations with thirty universities in the United States of America since the turn of the century. Alas, the two World Wars and the new communist regime in Hungary diminished the number of international partnerships. However, some institutions in the United States and the Vatican continued to cultivate their long-standing partnerships with the Library of the Academy, even in those years when Hungary did not have official diplomatic relations with its powerful political adversary or with the Catholic Church. Despite political polarisation during the Cold War, the Library had international exchange partners in most countries by 1960.



10. "International Exchange" stamp of the Academy's Library, today

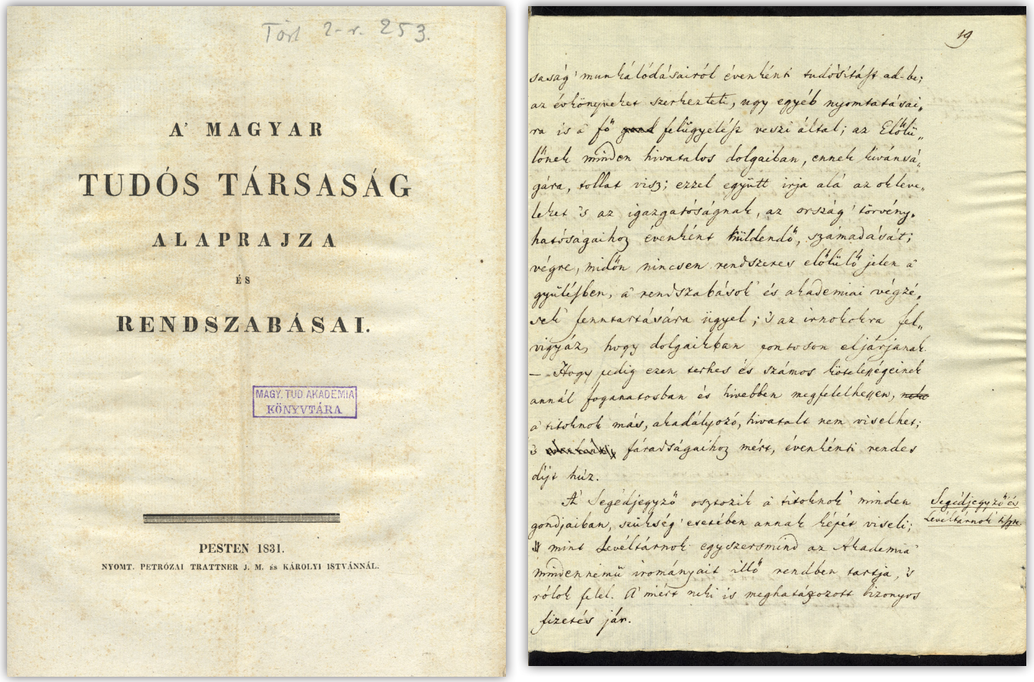


11. The Library of Congress duplicate stamp

Archives of the Academy



The first regulation governing the archiving of the Learned Society's documentation was written in 1833.[1] The regulation appointed the Secretariat of the Academy, led by the Secretary General, to collect and safeguard materials connected to its operative functions. The appointment remained in force until the 1930s, when the documentation was reorganised according to archival standards. After the Second World War, those materials were renamed the Old Academy Archives (Régi Akadémiai Levéltár, with the Hungarian acronym RAL) and entrusted to the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books. Nowadays, the complete RAL material is available online in the Library's REAL-MS digital collection.


Tört 2-r. 253.

A' MAGYAR

TUDÓS TÁRSASÁG

ALAPRAJZA

ÉS

RENDSZABÁSAI.

MAGY. TUD AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRA

PESTEN 1831.

NYOMT. PETRÓZAI TRATTNER J. M. és KÁROLYI ISTVÁNNÁL.

19

ság' munkálódásairól évenkénti tudósítást ad-ja; az évkönyveket szerkeszteti, vagy egyéb nyomtatásait, ra is a fő ~~good~~ felügyeletje reszi által; az Elnök lének minden hivatalos dolgaiban, ennek kívánságára, tollat visz; ezzel együtt iroja alá az elnöknek is az igazgatóságnak, az ország' törvény, hatóságaihoz évenkénti ~~kiküldő~~ számadásait; végre, miként nincsen rendszeres elnöklő jelen a gyülésben, a rendszabásról és akademiai végzésnek fennartására ügyel; 's az inrobotra fel, nyjaz, hogy dolgaikban contoson eljárjanak — Hogy pedig ezen terhes és számos kötelességeinek annál foganatosban és kivebben megfelelhessen, ~~neke~~ a titoknok más, akadályozó, hivatala nem viselhes; 's ~~a titoknok~~ jószágaihoz mérsékelt évenkénti rendes díjat húz.

A Segédjegyző osztozik a titoknok minden gondjaiban, sürüség' esetében annak lépéseit viseli; 's mint levéltárnok egyszersmind az Akademia minden nemü irományait illő rendben tartja, 's rólok pl. A' mire neki is meghatározott bizonyos díjzetés jár.

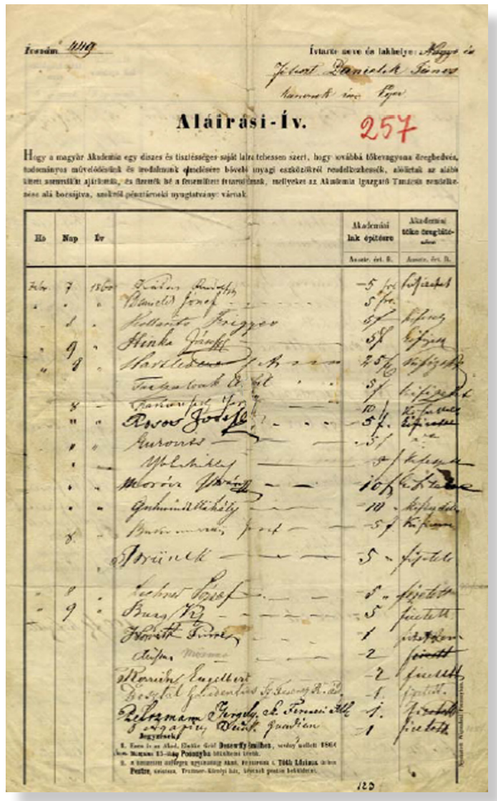
Segédjegyző és Levéltárnok tiszte

2–3. Draft of the regulation of the Hungarian Learned Society written by Ferenc Toldy. This was the first document regulating the Secretary General's activities, including the archiving of official documentation (sign. Tört. 2r 253)

On the previous page: 1. Photograph of a wooden card catalogue cabinet

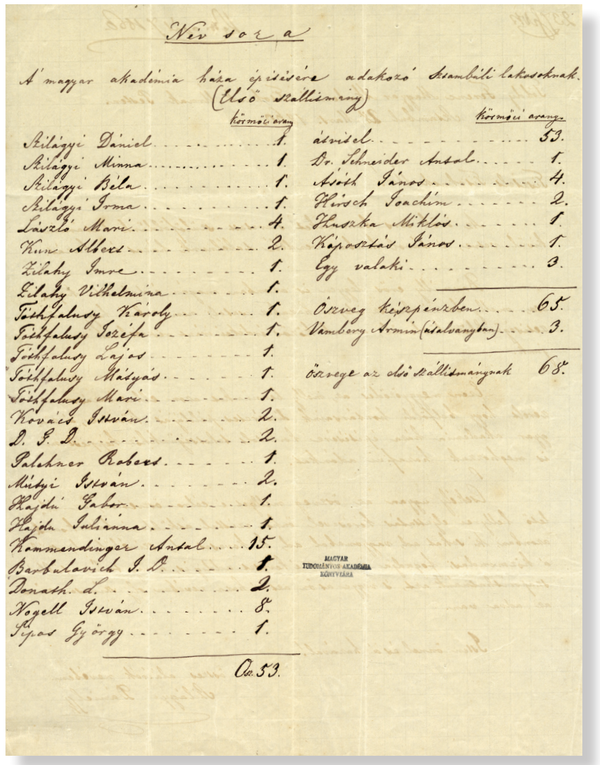
1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 402–409.

Browsing the RAL documents, one can find humorous and occasionally touching details behind some of the major operational challenges of the past. One such example concerns the opening ceremony of the new Palace of the Academy on 11 December 1865, which had to be conceived as an outstanding celebration of national pride, since "all the nation" had been able to contribute to its construction through inscriptions on donors' lists.[2] Emil Dessewffy, the Academy's second President, devoted close attention even to the most minor details of the ceremony. For instance, he decided to designate separate guest zones within the building and to distinguish between guests arriving by coach and those arriving on foot at the Palace. Confined to his bed with an illness at home in Szentmihály (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County), Dessewffy nevertheless continued to supervise the ceremony. On 26 November 1865, he wrote to the architect Antal Szkalnitzky (1836–1878), one of the organisers of the ceremony. Among other practical considerations, Dessewffy drew attention to the need to "purchase additional chamber-pots" for elderly gentlemen, who would undoubtedly require them during the three-and-a-half-hour ceremonial assembly (sign. RAL 1160/1865). Six new "pissatoires" were duly purchased (sign. K 1274/3d, Számlák, nyugták 1865, 1405) and placed behind folding screens near the Office of the President.


Aláírási-Ív. 257

4. Donors' list of subscriptions contributing to the Palace of the Academy from Hungary (sign. RAL K 1278/188)

2 From aristocrats and ecclesiastical dignitaries to parishes of every creed, from private business owners to small school-children and college students donors contributed larger or smaller amounts tot he cause of the Academy. Klement ed. 2024, 49–53.



5. Donors' list of subscriptions from Hungarian immigrants living in Istanbul, sent to the Academy by Dániel Szilágyi (sign. RAL 942/1860)

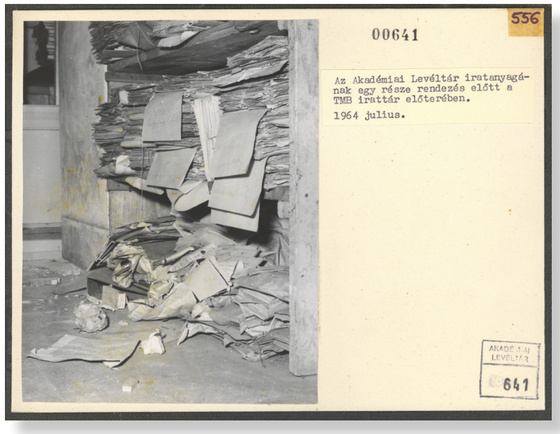
Returning to the history of the Archives itself, we turn to the post-war period. The archival materials concerning the Academy multiplied following the Law 1949/XXVII. which entered into force on 15 December 1949. The new law transformed the Academy into the central organisation of scholarly activity in Hungary, thereby initiating the formation of its network of research institutes. By 1956, twenty-one research institutes, eight research teams, and laboratories operating at different universities constituted the network. Due to the 1949 law, the Library of the Academy also became the centre of the nationwide network of research libraries. Its main tasks were coordinating purchases from abroad in foreign currencies, facilitating access to materials and exchange among network members, and handling microfilm reproduction. Between the late 1960s and the mid-1990s the number of research libraries pertaining to the network coordinated by the Academy fluctuated between forty-seven and fifty-one. The 1949 law remained in force until 1994: its reform also led to the dissolution of the network of research libraries.

The network of institutes, smaller and larger research teams and laboratories, which had multiplied sixfold since 1956, remained with the Academy until 2019.

During the 1950s, a series of laws and statutory rules regulated public archives in Hungary. Consequently, the leadership of the Academy decided to establish its own Archives as a branch of its Library, which has been operating since 1 February 1964. In the last sixty years, five leaders have served at the head of the Archives: three men and two women. Economist László Szelei (†1979), who led between 1964 and 1973, had to establish the Archives' structure, build cooperation with the research institute network, and prepare the basic modules of archival materials. Szelei also published the first guides to the Archives and established the rules for collecting audio recordings, which were regularly sent to the Archives until the end of the 1980s. The next leader of the Archives was a lawyer, László Szöllőssy, who worked there between 1974 and 1981, until his retirement. The biggest challenge of his era was the lack of space in the Palace of the Academy, which was partly resolved by new storage rooms created in the basements in 1975. In 1978, a new task was added to the Archives' profile: in addition to photo- and audio recordings and official documents, it had to begin collecting research trip reports submitted by social science scholars from institutions nationwide. In 1979, the offices of the Archives were relocated, finding a new, spacious building at (today's) 7 Nádor Street, one block away from the Palace.

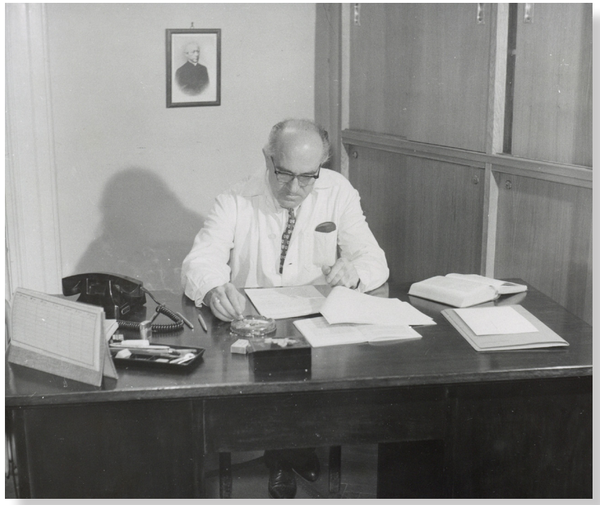


6–7. Unordered archival materials, 1964 (signs. AL 5358 and AL 0641)





8. The first employees of the Archives, László Szelei and Mrs Kálmán Kiss, in their office in the basements of the Palace (sign. AL 5365)



9. László Szelei in his office (sign. AL 5384)



10. Archivists, 1967 (sign. AL 5378)



11. Portrait of László Szöllőssy (sign. AL 5408)



12. Archivists after 1975 (sign. AL 5406)



13. Portrait of Adrienne Körmendy from the 2010s



14. Gyula Wojtilla (in the middle, wearing a brown leather jacket) with his colleagues celebrating his appointment, April 1985 (sign. AL 5391)



15. The office of the Archives in the building at today's 7 Nádor Street, the building has since been demolished (sign. AL 5403)



16. The workroom of the Archives, 1983 (sign. AL 7384)

In 1982, the first leader with a degree in Archival Studies and History was appointed: Adrienne Körmendy (b. 1946), who had worked in the Archives since her final university year, and as a full-time employee from 1968 onwards. Her leadership was short-lived but characterised by two significant accomplishments. First, Körmendy had to coordinate the transport of 308 shelf metres of documentation from the Palace to the newly built outer storage facility in Törökbálint. Second, it was her task to organise the sixth conference of archivists of academies operating in socialist countries, held in Budapest in June 1983. While doing so, Körmendy became bedridden with a complicated pregnancy. After two years of official childcare leave, she did not return to work at the Archives but moved to Warsaw to join her husband, the Professor of African studies, Bronisław Nowak (b. 1942). Thus, historian and Orientalist Gyula Wojtilla (b. 1945), who had held a temporary leadership appointment since 1 May 1983, was appointed full-time in April 1985. He held his position until 1992, when he began leading the Department of Classical Antiquity at the University of Szeged. Wojtilla reorganised cooperation with the research network institutes, taking the archival



17. Diana Hay in the office of the Archives, sometime after 1985 (sign. AL 7383)



18. Diana Hay presenting the Archives to students in the 2010s

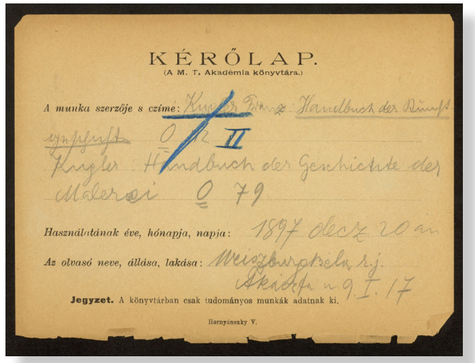
materials directly from each institute's secretariat rather than from the Academy's central office, thus simplifying and rationalizing the archival process. After Wojtilla changed career path, Diana Hay (b. 1956) assumed leadership of the Archives, and has worked there since 1983 to the present. She has degrees in History and French Philology, and after more than four decades spent in the Academy's building, she is one of the most knowledgeable experts on its history. She served as the leading archivist during two major reconstructions of the Palace in the 1980s and again between 2023 and 2025. She had to coordinate the handling of the archival materials during four major administrative transformations of the Academy. The first followed the changes in the Academy's political status and the new archival legislation in 1995. The second took place in 2011, in preparation for the new research network system, which was introduced the following year. The third occurred when the research institutes of history and the social sciences were relocated from their building on Castle Hill in Buda to a modern facility in Pest, 9th District. Finally, in 2019, the Academy's research network was removed from the institution as the result of an unexpected and highly controversial decision by the Hungarian government. To this day, Diana Hay and her colleagues continue to work under conditions far from ideal. The Archives are still located on the ground floor of the Palace, where the staff workspaces, reading areas for scholars, and temporary storage rooms all occupy a single large historical hall. Since 2022, the archivists' major challenge has been to help significantly increased number of scholars who have begun research in preparation for the forthcoming bicentenary of the Academy. The unfavourable circumstances notwithstanding, Diana Hay and her colleagues have supported scholars with professionalism, making a significant contribution to the celebration of a national institution, whose history they know more intimately than anyone else.

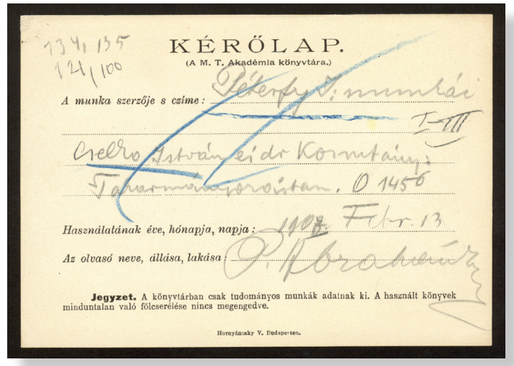




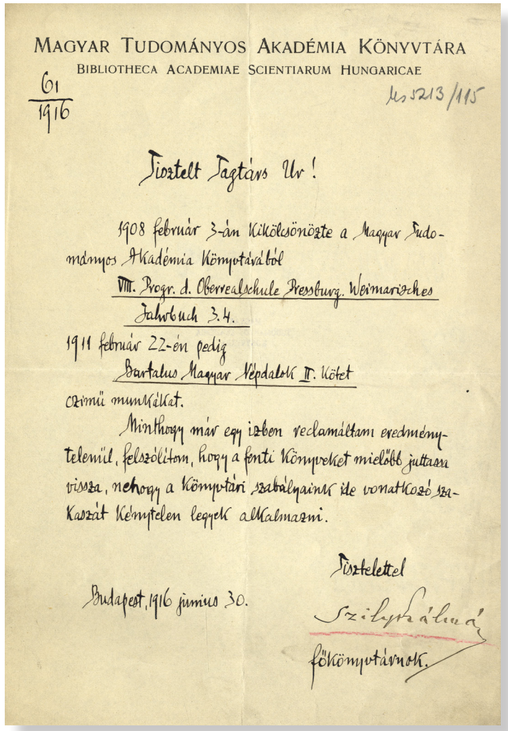
19–20. The multifunctional spaces of the Archives in the 2020s

At the time of their donation, the Teleki family intended to establish a public library open to everyone who wished to learn and cultivate scholarship. As no proper building was available, however, that plan could not be implemented for a long time. The Teleki family opened their house at Szervita Square twice a month for scholars from 1 January 1835 onward. Later, in the Trattner-Károlyi House, however, only members of the Academy could visit the reading room. The Library became open to the public only after moving into the new Palace, in practice, only after 1867. Two reading rooms were furnished there, one for ordinary users and the other exclusively for members of the Academy. The reading rooms were open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., from Tuesday to Saturday. They were closed on Sundays and Mondays, on bank holidays, during the annual Academy assembly, and during the summer break (from 15 July to 15 September and since 1876, from 1 July to 31 August). All readers had to be seated in one of the eighty to eighty-five available places, and they could consult one item (book, periodical, map, or manuscript) at a time. Readers could make notes or copy the texts or designs, but they could not write or draw in the documents. For lack of decorum, a reader could be banned from the Library permanently. The exclusive reading room was also open on Mondays and on days of the Section Assemblies, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., when only members, university professors, and VIP guests were allowed in the building. Loans were available upon possession of a letter of recommendation from a member of the Academy. Moreover, members of the Academy could borrow even uncatalogued manuscripts. For instance, according to his own diaries, Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) once read a manuscript borrowed from the Academy during his summer holidays at Lake Balaton. Much to the great pleasure of the librarians working at the Oriental Collection nowadays, Vámbéry did return the manuscript in question to the Academy.


KÉRŐLAP.
(A M. T. Akadémia könyvtára.)
A munka szerzője s címe: Kugler ... Handbuch der ... II
Kugler: Handbuch oder Geschichte der Malerei Q 79
Használtának éve, hónapja, napja: 1897 decz 20 an
Az olvasó neve, állása, lakása: Weigelsperg Lajos
Jegyzet. A könyvtárban csak tudományos munkák adatnak ki.
Horvátszky V.


KÉRŐLAP.
(A M. T. Akadémia könyvtára.)
A munka szerzője s címe: Pécsi Egyet. munkái I–III
Gedeon István és dr Kornfainz Tanárművészetről, O 1450
Használatának éve, hónapja, napja: 1908 Febr. 13
Az olvasó neve, állása, lakása: P. Horváth
Jegyzet. A könyvtárban csak tudományos munkák adatnak ki. A használt könyvek minduntalan való fölcserélése nincs megengedve.
Horvátszky V. Budapesten.

1–2. Loaning cards of the Library from 1897 and 1907



MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRA
BIBLIOTHECA ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARUM HUNGARICAE

61
1916

Ms 5213/115

Tisztelt Tagtárs Ur!

1908 február 3-án Kikölcsönözte a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárából

VIII. Progr. d. Oberrealschule Pressburg. Weimarisches Jahrbuch 3.4.

1911 február 22-én pedig

Bartalus Magyar Népdalok II. Kötet

czimü munkáikat.

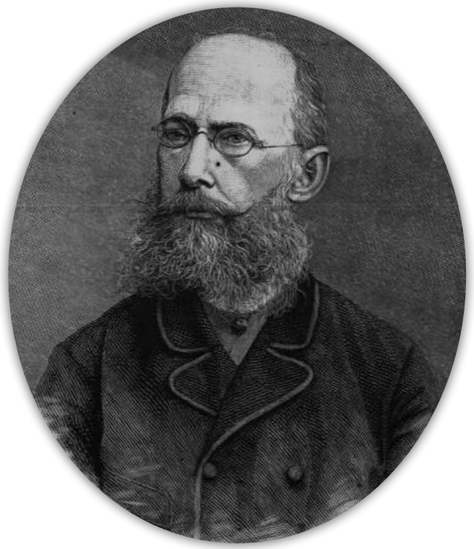
Minthogy már egy izben reclamáltam eredménytelenül, felszólitom, hogy a fenti könyveket mielőbb juttassa vissza, nehogy a könyvtári szabályaink ide vonatkozó szakaszait kénytelen legyek alkalmazni.

Tisztelettel

Budapest, 1916 junius 30.

Szily Kálmán
főkönyvtárnok

3. Letter written by Chief Librarian Kálmán Szily in 1916 to a reader concerning the return of two volumes loaned eight and five years previously, respectively (sign. Ms 5213/115)

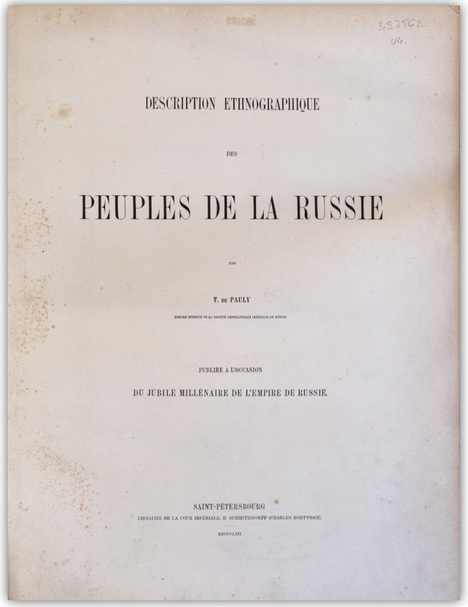


4. Lithograph of Béla Majláth

In contrast, the historian and archaeologist Béla Majláth (1831–1900) reacted indignantly to the Library's requests in 1897. Majláth stated that his signature on the lending card of a codex borrowed five years earlier had been a forgery, or, alternatively, that the codex in question was not even missing from the collection, it had only been misplaced somewhere by the librarians themselves.

In 1875, opening hours were extended (from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.), but in the mornings, only users of the exclusive reading room were admitted to the Library. In the afternoons, anyone with scholarly interests could purchase a moderately priced daily visiting ticket, including high school students in their last two years, provided they possessed a letter of recommendation from the headmaster of their school. Unreturned books were already a problem by then, only eight years after the Library opened its doors to the broader public. According to the new regulation, if a book was not returned within a month of its due date, a member of the library would visit the reader at their address to retrieve the item.

Almost twenty years later, when Ágost Heller became the Chief Librarian in 1894, the unreturned loans were an enormous problem. Heller found thousands of items that had been on loan for fifteen or even twenty years. Some of them could be reclaimed only from the heirs of their original readers. Heller commemorated, in a report, the case of the famous painter of historical tableaux, Mihály Munkácsy (1844–1900). In December 1891, the painter borrowed a large format (52 x 42 cm) album of coloured lithographs, *Description ethnographique des peuples de la Russie*, by Théodor de Pauly (Saint Petersburg, 1862). Seven years later, on 13 June 1898, Munkácsy's wife, Cécile de Munkácsy née Papier (1845–1915), responded to the request of the Chief Librarian. Madame Munkácsy stated in her letter that she could not find the volume in question among her husband's belongings. The Library currently has one copy of the same edition (sign. 352.163); thus, we can show some of its excellent illustrations below.



DESCRIPTION ETHNOGRAPHIQUE

DES

PEUPLES DE LA RUSSIE

PAR

T. DE PAULY

PUBLIÉE A L'OCCASION

DU JUBILÉ MILLÉNAIRE DE L'EMPIRE DE RUSSIE.

SAINT-PÉTERSBOURG

6. Title page of Théodor de Pauly's Description *(sign. 352.163)*



5. Portrait of Mihály Munkácsy









7–10. Excerpts from the Description*: Laplanders, Tatar ladies, Georgians, Livonians (sign. 352.163)*



11. Photograph of István Heinlein (sign. Ms 6456/29)

Despite the repeated efforts of two consecutive Chief Librarians as well, (too) long-term loans remained a problem. Hence, the Chief Librarian, József Szinnyei Jr., decided to further enforce the loan regulation in 1934. Due to the number of borrowed books, the most extreme case was that of a certain Mrs Béla Rignáth. She, referring to letters of recommendation from two members of the Academy, mineralogist Béla Mauritz (1881–1971) and historian of classical antiquity István Heinlein (1874–1945), had already borrowed 150 books from the Academy. Upon close examination, however, Mrs Rignáth's reference letters proved to be non-existent. Thus, Szinnyei Jr. decided that, after the lady had returned the loans, she could borrow only three books at a time if she provided at least one genuine reference letter.

The duration and complexity of reclaiming books from Professor of Law Ede Wertheimer (1848–1930) also made his case an extreme one. In 1928, when the professor had already moved to Berlin, the Library began reclaiming books from him that had been on loan for thirteen years. Two years later, upon Wertheimer's death, his son began arranging their return, searching for books in his father's three apartments across three European capitals: Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin. The process was completed after several years.

As will be mentioned in detail below in the entry on the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, with reference to the *Buda halála* manuscript from the Arany bequest, even interlibrary loan to a Hungarian institution can be risky. Most of the time, however, international loans worked perfectly, from Cracow to Heidelberg, Cologne, and Jerusalem, to mention only those occasions, when treasures from the Kaufmann–Gomperz collection were lent for temporary exhibitions between 1925 and 1927.

To this day, interlibrary loans for exhibitions can offer a unique opportunity to assemble a collection hundreds of years after its dissolution. That was the case with the latest exhibition of Corvina volumes at the National Széchenyi Library in 2018, when experts in the field could prove the existence of a bookbinding workshop in Buda at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, thanks to interlibrary loans from different collections in Hungary, Vienna, and New York City.[1]

1 Zsupán – Földesi 2018.

Gentlemen's Agreement Broken: Theft at the Library

It is not an exaggeration to state that, relative to the dimensions of its collection, the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was generally underfinanced, understaffed, and its personnel underpaid during its two hundred years of history. Nevertheless, the staff, the Chief Librarian, the "library officers" with university degrees, and the "library servants", as assistants without university degrees were once called, were dedicated and hard-working people, until 1925, only men. Because of their noble occupation of serving national culture, they were all considered gentlemen. In 1903, only one staff member, István Fuchs, was removed from his position as "library servant" after ten years of service. Despite the Library regulation expressly requiring both staff and readers to behave courteously, Fuchs was always rude to readers, his behaviour gradually becoming unacceptable in his environment (sign. RAL 579/1903).

From the last years of the nineteenth century onwards, even senior high-school students could use the Library's reading room with daily visiting tickets, but borrowing was restricted. Generally, the members of the Academy, university professors, and high-school teachers in possession of a letter of recommendation from their headmasters could borrow books. Some exceptions to the rule were mentioned in the entry above. Despite the Library staff's preference, full members of the Academy could take home even manuscripts until 1956.

Nevertheless, the most valuable parts of the collection were open to non-academic researchers, subject to restrictions, provided that high-status members of the socio-cultural elite vouched for them. This was the case of a young teacher with a doctorate in arts, Flóris Holik (1899–1967). He had access to manuscripts and rare books thanks to recommendations from Bálint Hóman (1885–1951), then Director of the National Széchényi Museum, and from the Minister of Religion and Public Education, Kuno Klebelsberg (1875–1932). However, as reported in an article published in the *Pesti Hírlap* newspaper in April 1924, Holik became a book thief, stealing various volumes from the Academy's Library. The police investigation following the scandal uncovered the large dimensions of his crime. Holik committed a series of thefts between December 1923 and January 1924, stealing approximately fifty rare volumes from at least four major libraries in Budapest, including the library of the Eötvös Collegium, his own *alma mater* and residence.

Based on the police reports and letters received by the Academy, including some from the culprit himself, Holik had stolen at least nine incunabula from the Academy and sold them to various antiquarians. Six items were purchased by antiquarian Gusztáv Ranschburg (1866–1944), whose son was an accomplice in the sale of the stolen items. Ranschburg had managed to return five of the six books in his possession to the Academy, as he had already sold two items to an antiquarian in Vienna (sign. RAL 850/1924), but he had managed to re-purchase one of the two. Holik and his accomplices were in detention on suspicion of theft for one and a half years. In the meantime, Holik's elder brother, Sámuel Holik (1894–1961), a member of the Catholic Church, sought to have his brother declared mentally unfit. He referred to his younger brother's bad temper and inability to accept refusal, characteristics that had been with him since childhood. Once that attempt failed, Sámuel Holik wrote a letter full of flattery and supplication to the Governor of Hungary, Miklós Horthy (1868–1957) himself, citing, among other things, the upcoming marriage of their younger sister as a motive for mercy. Surprisingly, the thief was legally absolved by the Governor, his case never even reached trial. Thus, thanks to his brother's intervention, Holik could join the Congregatio Missionis for a short time and later start a new life in Rome. Changing his name to Florio Banfi and later marrying into an Italian grand bourgeois family, Holik worked at the Accademia d'Ungheria in Rome. However, his weakness of character never truly changed. During communist period, he became a confidential informant who

reported to the Hungarian political authorities about his own colleagues and visiting scholars residing at the Accademia in Rome, at 1 Via Giulia.

In sum, there were relatively few consequences for the thief, who lived a life away from his stained past, in comparison to what awaited the staff of the Library. During the investigation, the Secretary General of the Academy, Jenő Balogh (1864–1953),[1] admitted that understaffing was a serious problem in the Library, which made theft possible. Nevertheless, he harshly criticised both the Chief Librarian, Kálmán Szily and the "library officer" responsible for the old book collection, Árpád Hellebrant, for enabling the theft. Both Szily and Hellebrant were deeply upset, having served in the Library for many decades, enduring the First World War and the hardships that followed. Partly because of the scandal and partly due to their age, both asked for retirement. Szily did not live to receive his retirement certificate, dying some days after his eighty-sixth birthday on 24 July 1924. He served as Secretary General of the Academy for fifteen years and, at age sixty-six, changed his career, working in the Library for another twenty years. Hellebrant was on a pension for less than ten months when he died at the age of seventy on 5 December 1925, after almost fifty years spent in the service of the Library.

In addition to changes to the staff, new rules were introduced for the Library's reading rooms. For instance, the use of manuscripts and rare books was to be recorded in a book, not only on tickets, and readers were supposed to hand their briefcases to the library officer for safekeeping. As one can see from the reforms of the regulation, until the 1924 theft by Flóris Holik, the Library functioned according to a kind of gentlemen's agreement, where the given word and honour meant something. Before that event, hardly anyone could imagine that a highly educated man, a *connoisseur* of old culture, would wrong that same culture or its institutions.

Which nine books were involved in the theft, and what happened to them? None of the sources list all the stolen volumes, let alone give their full bibliographical descriptions. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct the complete list and later fortune of the nine books in question with considerable certainty.[2]



1. Portrait of Jenő Balogh painted by Oszkár Glatz, MTA Art Collection, inv. nr. 128.

The books are listed below, with their registration numbers in the catalogue of incunabula published by Árpád Hellebrant in 1886,[3] their brief bibliographical descriptions, and, if returned, their actual signatures. During the identification of the volumes returned, we used surviving documentation and asked the following questions: a) which actual copy had the fewest distinctive features, b) which did not bear any stamp, and therefore, c) which copy was the hardest to identify as stolen property by antiquarians.

1 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 287–294.

2 There is a typewritten testimony of the return of five volumes: Hellebrant nos. 83., 151., 209., 253., 315. RAL 850/1924. *Átadási jegyzék a 779/1924. számú akadémiai irathoz*. There is a handwritten note on the same document indicating that a *Herbarius* volume (Hellebrant no. 113) was still missing at the time. Two other stolen and returned items – a *Chronica Hungarorum* (Hellebrant no. 154) and a *Bible* printed in Venice (Hellebrant no. 61) – could be identified from legal documents found by András Horuczi at the Archives of Budapest Capital (BFL. VII. 5. c. 4949/1924. 95.). Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 151–152, 209.

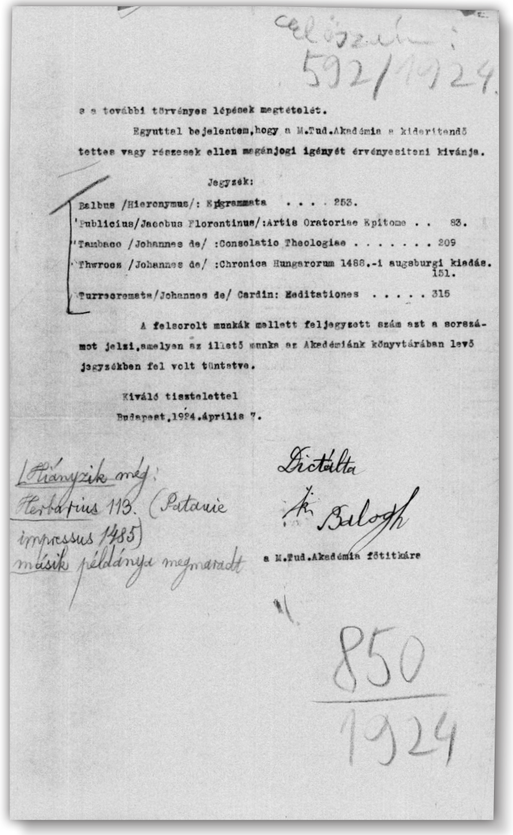
3 Hellebrant 1886.

The stolen and returned seven volumes are:

1. Hellebrant no. 83. Jacobus Publicius, *Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi*, Venice, Erhard Ratdolt, 30 Nov. 1482. sign. Inc. 376.
2. Hellebrant no. 151. Johannes Thuróczy, *Chronica Hungarorum*, Augsburg, Erhard Ratdolt for Theobaldus Feger, 3 Jun. 1488. sign. Inc. 405.
3. Hellebrant no. 209. Johannes de Tambaco, *Consolatio Theologiae*, Basel, Johannes Amerbach, 1492. sign. none. It seems that the stolen and returned item is not present in our collection anymore, as it fell victim to a later theft. The other two copies of Tambaco's work of the same title, which are nowadays in our catalogue, could not have been stolen in 1924. That is because Inc. 507. came to the Library with the Vigyázó bequest after 1928. Inc. 915., on the other hand, was in the main collection (sign. Uj.Lat.Ir.O.650) at the time, thus, it was invisible to the thief. Volume Inc. 915. was described for the first time only in the Rozsondai catalogue.[4]
4. Hellebrant no. 253. Girolamo Balbi, Epigrammata, Vienna, Johannes Winterburger, 1 Aug. 1494. sign. Inc. 385.
5. Hellebrant no. 315. Johannes de Turrecremata, *Meditationes seu Contemplationes devotissimae*, Rome, Stephan Plannck, 21 Aug. 1498. sign. Inc. 358.
6. Hellebrant no. 154. Johannes Thuróczy, *Chronica Hungarorum*, Brno, [Conrad Stahel and Mathias Preunlein], 20 Mar. 1488. ~sign. Ráth F 1045. The stolen and returned item had to be another copy of unknown signature, because the Ráth collection came to the Academy only after 1905, therefore a Ráth item could not have been listed by Hellebrant already in the 1880s.
7. Hellebrant no. 113. "in duos exemplaribus": *Herbarius*, Passau, [Johannes Petri], 1485. sign. Inc. 381 or Inc. 382. The stolen item, whichever of the two copies it was, was returned.

The two stolen but never returned volumes were:

1. Hellebrant 61. *Biblia Latina*, Venezia, 1480. sign. none.
2. Hellebrant 314. *Horae Beatae Virginis Mariae in Usum Curiae Romanae*, Paris, Simone Vostre, 22. Aug. 1498. sign. none.[5] According to anecdotal evidence by librarian Alajos Györkösy (1896–1973),[6] the volume went to "a library in The Hague". According to the *International Short-Title Catalogue* online, the three copies in two libraries in The Hague nowadays were already there at the beginning of the nineteenth century; none of them is a twentieth-century acquisition. Therefore, the anecdotal evidence about the fortune of the Budapest copy cannot be either proved or falsified at present.

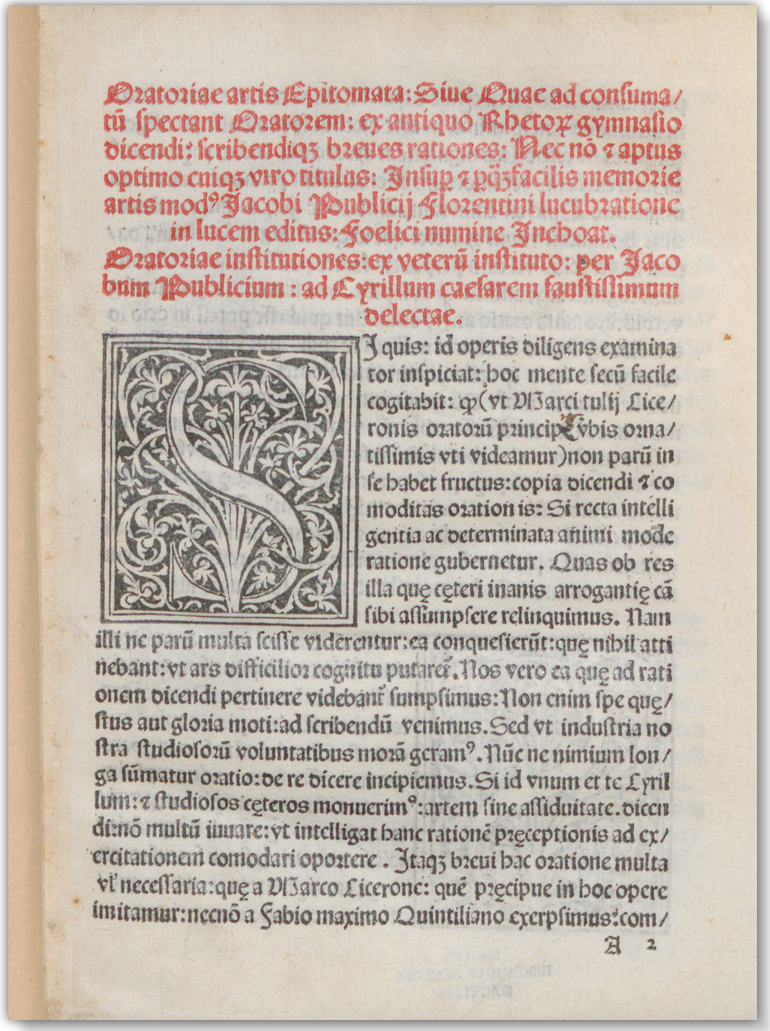


2. List of the volumes returned to the Academy (sign. RAL 850/1924. Átadási jegyzék a 779/1924. számú akadémiai irathoz*)*

4 Rozsondai – Rozsondai 2013, no. 537.

5 The theft was attributed to Holik by Csapodi 1967, 15, n. 79 based on Györkösy's personal communication.

6 He changed his family name from Jirka to Györkösy in 1941.

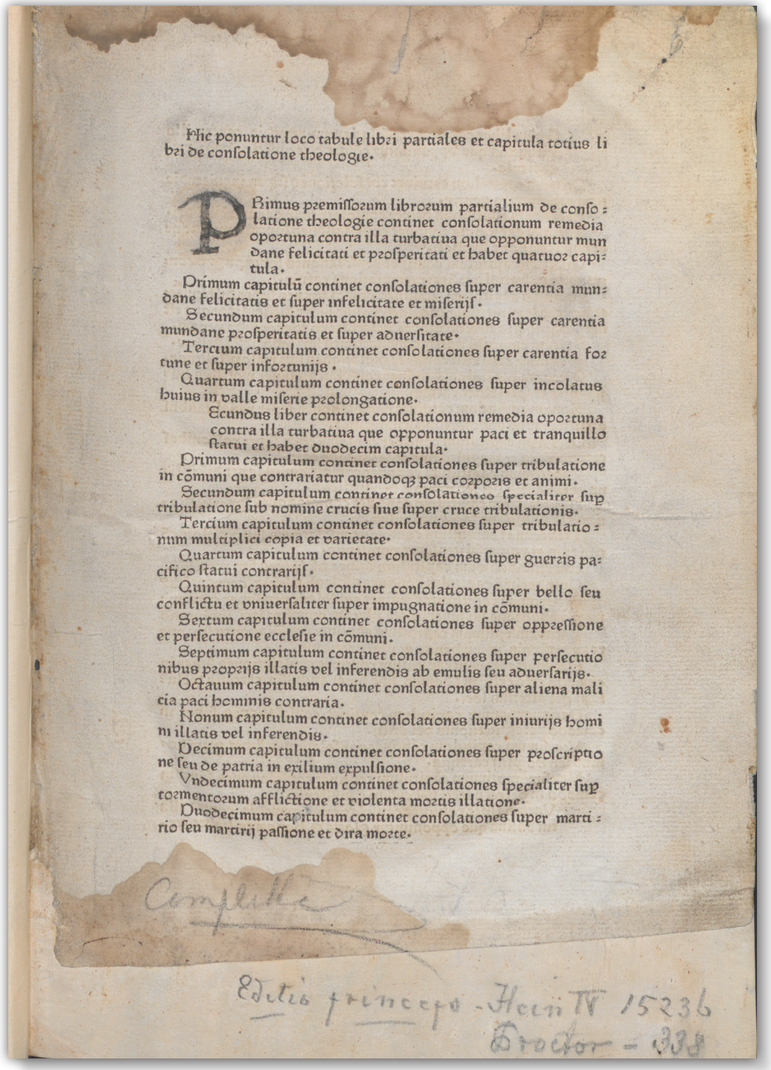


Oratoriae artis Epitomata: Siue Quae ad consuma/
tũ spectant Oratorem: ex antiquo Rhetoꝝ gymnasio
dicendi: scribendiq; breues rationes: Nec nõ ⁊ aptus
optimo cuiq; viro titulus: Insup ⁊ pq̃z facilis memorie
artis mod⁹ Jacobi Publicij Florentini lucubratione
in lucem editus: Foelici numine Inchoat.
Oratoriae institutiones: ex veterũ instituto: per Jaco
bum Publicium: ad Cyrillum caesarem faustissimum
delectae.

Si quis: id operis diligens examina
tor inspiciat: hoc mente secũ facile
cogitabit: ꝙ (vt Marci tulij Lice/
ronis oratorũ princip. vbis orna/
tissimis vti videamur) non parũ in
se habet fructus: copia dicendi ⁊ co
moditas orationis: Si recta intelli
gentia ac determinata animi mode
ratione gubernetur. Quas ob res
illa quę cęteri inanis arrogantię cã
sibi assumpsere relinquimus. Nam
illi ne parũ multa scisse viderentur: ea conquesierũt: quę nihil atti
nebant: vt ars difficilior cognitu putaret. Nos vero ea quę ad rati
onem dicendi pertinere videbant sumpsimus: Non enim spe quę/
stus aut gloria moti: ad scribendũ venimus. Sed vt industria no
stra studiosorũ voluntatibus morã geram⁹. Nũc ne nimium lon/
ga sũmatur oratio: de re dicere incipiemus. Si id vnum et te Cyril
lum: ⁊ studiosos cęteros monuerim⁹: artem sine assiduitate. dicen
di: nõ multũ iuuare: vt intelligat hanc rationẽ pręceptionis ad ex/
ercitationem comodari oportere. Itaq; breui hac oratione multa
vl' necessaria: quę a Marco Cicerone: quẽ pręcipue in hoc opere
imitamur: necnõ a Fabio maximo Quintiliano exerpsimus: com/

A 2

3. Title page of Jacobus Publicius' Artes orandi *(sing. Inc. 376; Hellebrant no. 83.)*



Hic ponuntur loco tabule libri partiales et capitula totius li
bri de consolatione theologie.

Primus premissorum librorum partialium de conso=
latione theologie continet consolationum remedia
oportuna contra illa turbatiua que opponuntur mun
dane felicitati et prosperitati et habet quatuor capi=
tula.

Primum capitulũ continet consolationes super carentia mun=
dane felicitatis et super infelicitate et miserijs.

Secundum capitulum continet consolationes super carentia
mundane prosperitatis et super aduersitate.

Tercium capitulum continet consolationes super carentia for
tune et super infortunijs.

Quartum capitulum continet consolationes super incolatus
huius in valle miserie prolongatione.

Secundus liber continet consolationum remedia oportuna
contra illa turbatiua que opponuntur paci et tranquillo
statui et habet duodecim capitula.

Primum capitulum continet consolationes super tribulatione
in cõmuni que contrariatur quandoq; paci corporis et animi.

Secundum capitulum continet consolationes specialiter sup
tribulatione sub nomine crucis siue super cruce tribulationis.

Tercium capitulum continet consolationes super tribulatio=
num multiplici copia et varietate.

Quartum capitulum continet consolationes super guerris pa=
cifico statui contrarijs.

Quintum capitulum continet consolationes super bello seu
conflictu et vniuersaliter super impugnatione in cõmuni.

Sextum capitulum continet consolationes super oppressione
et persecutione ecclesie in cõmuni.

Septimum capitulum continet consolationes super persecutio
nibus proprijs illatis vel inferendis ab emulis seu aduersarijs.

Octauum capitulum continet consolationes super aliena mali
cia paci hominis contraria.

Nonum capitulum continet consolationes super iniurijs homi
ni illatis vel inferendis.

Decimum capitulum continet consolationes super proscriptio
ne seu de patria in exilium expulsione.

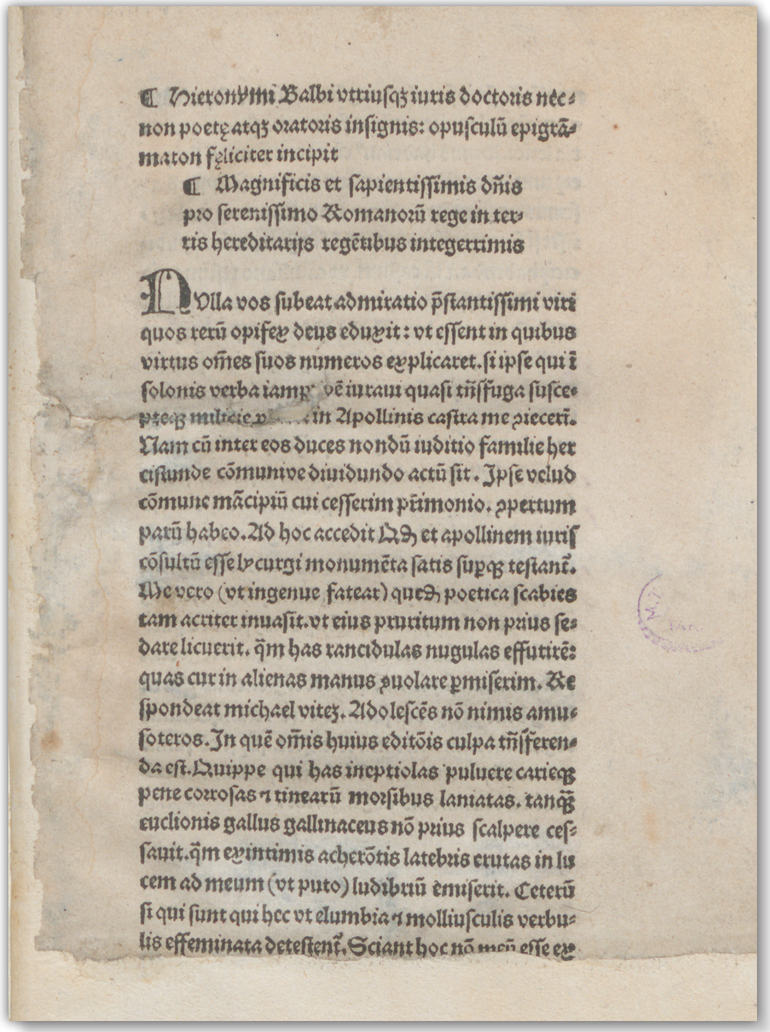
Vndecimum capitulum continet consolationes specialiter sup
tormentorum afflictione et violenta mortis illatione.

Duodecimum capitulum continet consolationes super marti=
rio seu martirij passione et dira morte.

Complete

Editio princeps - Hain IV 15236
Proctor - 338

4. First existing page of Johannes de Tambaco's Consolatio Theologiae *from sign. Inc. 507, representing the stolen copy of Hellebrant no. 209*

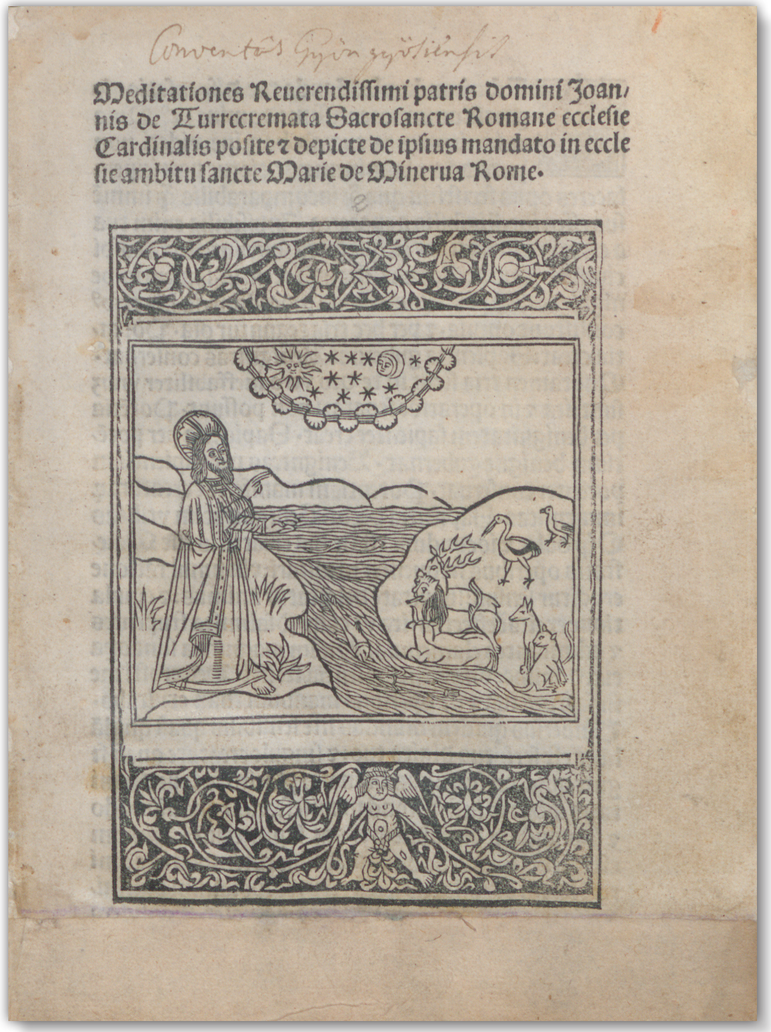


¶ Hieronymi Balbi vtriusq; iuris doctoris nec non poetę atq; oratoris insignis: opusculū epigrāmaton feliciter incipit

¶ Magnificis et sapientissimis dñis pro serenissimo Romanorū rege in terris hereditarijs regēbus integerrimis

Nulla vos subeat admiratio pstantissimi viri quos rerū opifex deus eduxit: vt essent in quibus virtus oēs suos numeros explicaret. si ipse qui i solonis verba iamq; dē in tam quasi tñs fuga susce ptęq; mulcie p[illegible] in Apollinis castra me dieceri. Nam cū inter eos duces nondū iuditio famlie her cisunde cōmunive diuidundo actū sit. Ipse velud cōmune mācipiū cui cesserim pīmonio. ꝑpertum patrū habeo. Ad hoc accedit ꝙ et apollinem iuris cōsultū esse lycurgi monumēta satis supq; testiant. Me vero (vt ingenue fateat) queꝫ poetica scabies tam acriter inuasit. vt eius pruritum non prius sedare licuerit. q̄m has rancidulas nugulas effutirē: quas cur in alienas manus ꝓuolare pmiserim. Respondeat michael vitez. Adolescēs nō nimis amusoteros. In quē oēs huius editōis culpa tñsferenda est. Quippe qui has ineptiolas puluere carieq; pene corrosas ⁊ tineaꝝ morsibus lanatas. tanq; euclionis gallus gallinaceus nō prius scalpere cessauit. q̄m ex intimis acherōtis latebris erutas in lucem ad meum (vt puto) ludibriū ēmiserit. Ceterū si qui sunt qui hec vt elumbia ⁊ molliusculis verbulis effeminata detestent. Sciant hoc nō meū esse ex

5. Title page of Girolamo Balbi's Epigrammata *(sign. Inc. 385; Hellebrant no. 253)*



Meditationes Reuerendissimi patris domini Joannis de Turrecremata Sacrosancte Romane ecclesie Cardinalis posite ⁊ depicte de ipsius mandato in ecclesie ambitu sancte Marie de Minerua Rome.

6. Title page of Johannes de Turrecremata's Meditationes *(sign. Inc. 358; Hellebrant no. 315)*





7–10. The first four pages of the Augsburg edition of Johannes Thuróczy's Chronica Hungarorum *(sign. Inc. 405; Hellebrant no. 151)*

Serenissimo ac inuictissimo principi ac dño dño Mathiae hũgariae bohemiaeq3 regi Theobaldus fegher Salutẽ ⁊ gloriã exoptat.

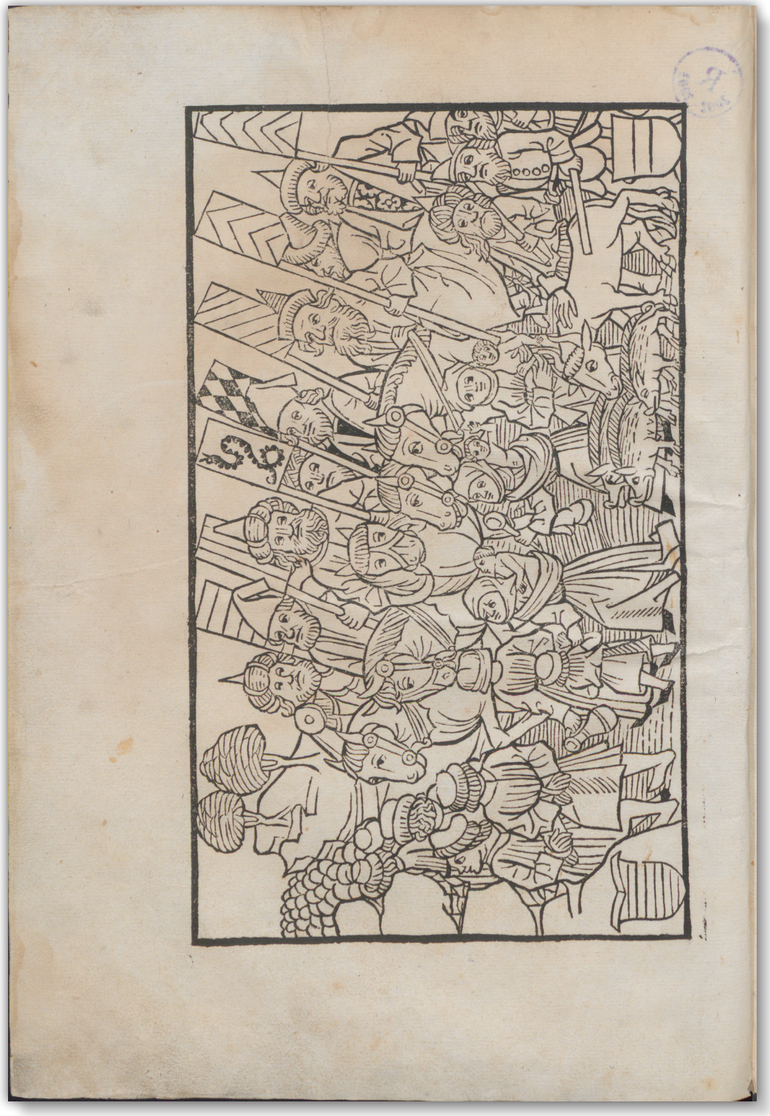
Quod tam ínultae sereníssime ac inuictíssime rex príncipũ ac populoꝝ p̃clarae res gestae quib⁹ domi atq3 militiae se admirãdos oĩbus p̃buerũt ab hoĩũ3 memoria ,p̃sus exciderint: aut ꝓpetua oblionis caligine p̃manẽt: quis aliã facile causaz attulerit: quaz seu inuidia: siue hoĩm illi⁹ aeui ignorantia claros illis scriptoꝛes defuisse. aut editis iam scriptis defuisse notarios qui librorũ numero alioꝝ scripta late diffunderẽt. Quod quum oĩb⁹ cõmune eé nõ ambigã. Quae enĩ gens est quãtũuis etiã nũc obscuro nomine: que nõ aliquãdo suo sidere efflorꝛuerit. In hũgariae tamẽ regibus vel qõ ita ipa necessitas siue finitimoꝝ populoꝝ feritas coegerit indignũ ,p̃sus esset res egregie gestas sine memoria: sine phama veluti sepultas delitescere. Maximeq3 omniu3 in te rex inclite Mathia cuius iam phama ⁊ gloria totiẽs fugatis prostratisq3 christiani noĩs hostib⁹ummanissimis thurcis victisq3 finitimis populis per omne3 late europam inclarescit. Quod etsi nostra hac actate in tanta hoĩm doctissimorum copia nemo facile prumescere possit: quo tamen animi tui magnitudo alijs prioríb⁹ collata regib⁹ inclarescat magis: aut minus ab hoĩm memoria tollaẽ: curaui ut regũ hũgariae facta ad laudẽ maiestatiſ tuae diligẽtissime atq3 cinẽdatissime imprimerenẽ. Addidi ⁊ nõ parũ venustas picturas: quo legẽdi labor picturae varietate leuatus gratioꝛ omnib⁹ occurreret. Ueniat itaq3 ĩ gratiã sereníssime rex hic iste conatus me⁹ atq3 animi institutũ. qõ si non improbatũ iri tuae gratiae p̃sensero: ad alia: q̃cũq3 noĩs tui honori atq3 amplitudini ꝓducere poterint: paratissimũ me atq3 intentissimũ semp exhibebo. Ualeat sereníssima maiestas vr̃a: regnoq3 suo multa cum laude in tempora supſit longissima.

Ad egregiũ dñm Thomã de drag personalis p̃sentie sereníssimi p̃incipis dñi Mathie: hungarie: bohemie ꝛc. regis cancellariũ. ꝑfatio magistri iohannis de thwroc3: in primũ librũ Chronice hungaroꝝ foeliciter incipit.

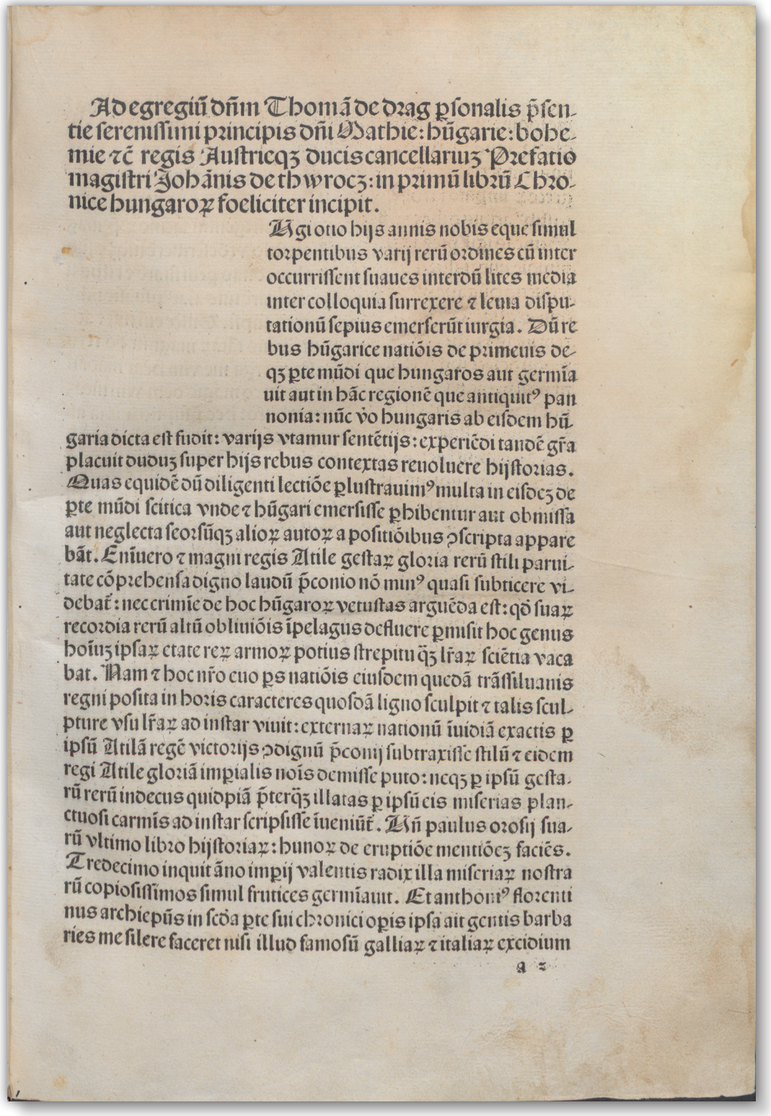
Vigi otio his annis nobis eque simul torpentib⁹ varij rex ordines cũ occurrissent suaues interdũ lites media iter colloquia surrexere ⁊ lenia disputatõnũ iurgia sepi⁹ emerserũt. Dũ de primeuis hũgarice nationis reb⁹: deq3 pte mũdi: q̃ hũgaros aut germinauit: aut ĩ hãc regionẽ q̃ antiquit⁹ pannonia: nũc vo hũgaris ab eisdẽ hungaria dicta est: fudit: varijs vtamur sentẽtijs experiẽdi tandẽ gr̃a placuit dudũ supꝛ his reb⁹ cõtextas reuoluere historias. Quas equidẽ dũ diligẽti lectiõe plustrauim⁹: multa in eisdem de parte mũdi scythica vnde ⁊ hũgari emersisse phibenẽ: aut obmissa aut neglecta: seoꝛsũq3 ab alioꝝ auctoꝝ positiõib⁹ ꝓscripta apparebãt Enĩuero ⁊ magni regis Atile gestaꝝ gloria rex stili parnitate cõ p̃hẽsa digno laudũ pconio nõ min⁹ q̃si subticere videbaẽ. Nec crimine dẽ hoc hũgaroꝝ vetustas arguẽda est: q⁹ suaꝝ memoriã rerũ altũ obliniõis in pelagus defluere pmisit. Hoc gen⁹ hoĩũ3 ipsarũ etate rex armoꝝ potẽ⁹ strepitu q̃s r̃aꝝ sciẽtia sese exercitabat. Nã ⁊ hoc nr̃o euo p̃s nationis eiusdẽ q̃dã trãssiluanis regni posita ĩ oꝛis caracteres quoldã ligno sculpit: ⁊ talis sculpture vsu r̃aꝝ ad instar viuit. Externaꝝ nationũ inuidiã exactis p ipm atlã regẽ victoꝛijs: cõdignũ pconij subtraxisse stilũ ⁊ eidẽ regi Atile gloriã impialis noĩs dempsisse puto: neq3 p ipm gestaꝝ rex in decus quippiã p̃terq3 illatas p ipm eis miserias plãctuosi carminis ad instar scripsisse inueniunẽ. Unde paul⁹ oꝛosi⁹ suaꝝ vltimo libro historiarũ: hunoꝝ de eruptione mẽtionẽ faciẽs: tredecimo inquit anno imperij valentis radix illa miseriarũ nostraꝝ copiosissimos simul frutices germinauit. Et anthoni⁹ florẽtin⁹ archiepiscopus in scõa parte sui chronici opis ipsa ait. Hẽtis barbariesi me silere faceret: nisi illõ famosũ galliaꝝ ⁊ italiaꝝ excidiũ me loqui cogeret. Nemo mũdanã miseria absq3 aliena adept⁹ẽ gloriã. Ninus assirioꝝ rex regna q⁹ in aliena violẽtas iniecit man⁹: vniuersaꝝ oꝛiginẽ historiarũ peperit. Et nisi quondã agamenon

a

MAGYAR
TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA
KÖNYVTÁRA



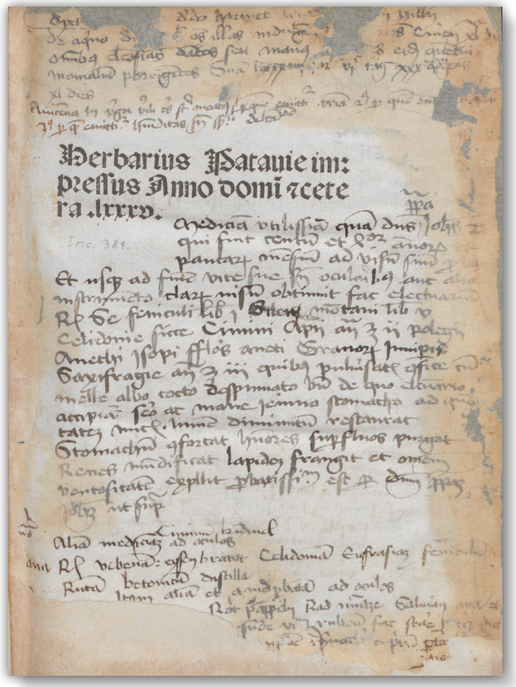
11–12. The first two pages of the Brno edition of Johannes Thuróczy's Chronica Hungarorum *from sign. Ráth F 1045, representing the stolen copy of Hellebrant no. 154. It is worth noting that both the illustrations, including the initials, and the number of lines per page differ in the two editions of* Chronica Hungarorum



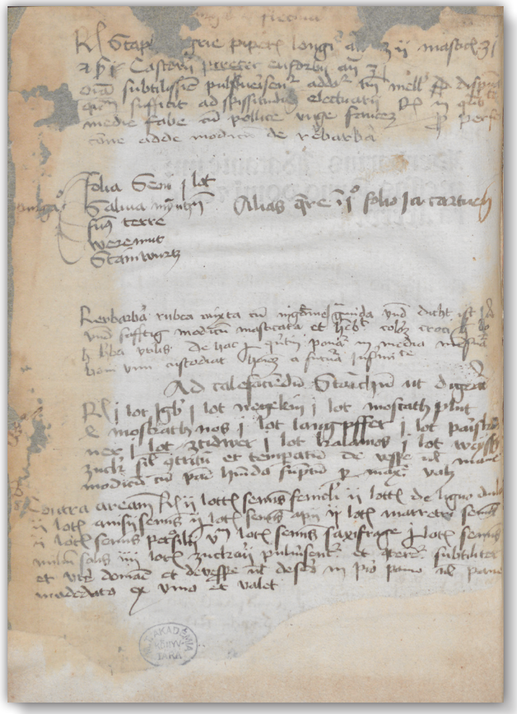
Ad egregiũ dñm Thomã de drag ꝑsonalis ꝑsentie serenissimi principis dñi Mathie: hũgarie: bohemie ⁊c̃ regis Austrieqꝫ ducis cancellariuꝫ Prefatio magistri Johãnis de thwrocꝫ: in primũ librũ Chronice hungaroꝝ foeliciter incipit.

Ugi otio hijs annis nobis eque simul torpentibus varij rerũ ordines cũ inter occurrissent suaues interdũ lites media inter colloquia surrexere ⁊ leuia disputationũ sepius emerserũt iurgia. Dũ rebus hũgarice natiõis de primeuis deqꝫ ꝑte mũdi que hungaros aut germĩauit aut in hãc regionẽ que antiquit⁹ pannonia: nũc v̄o hungaris ab eisdem hũgaria dicta est fudit: varijs vtamur sentẽtijs: experiẽdi tandẽ gr̃a placuit duduꝫ super hijs rebus contextas reuoluere hijstorias. Quas equidẽ dũ diligenti lectiõe ꝑlustrauim⁹ multa in eisdeꝫ de ꝑte mũdi scitica vnde ⁊ hũgari emersisse ꝑhibentur aut obmissa aut neglecta seorsũqꝫ alioꝝ autoꝝ a positiõibus ꝯscripta apparebãt. Eñiuero ⁊ magni regis Atile gestaꝝ gloria rerũ stili paruitate cõprehensa digno laudũ ꝑconio nõ min⁹ quasi subticere videbat̃: nec crimĩe de hoc hũgaroꝝ vetustas arguẽda est: qd̃ suaꝝ recordia rerũ altũ obliuiõis ĩpelagus defluere ꝑmisit hoc genus hoĩuꝫ ipsaꝝ etate reꝝ armoꝝ potius strepitu q̃ꝫ lr̃aꝝ sciẽtia vacabat. Nam ⁊ hoc nr̃o euo ꝑs natiõis eiusdem quedã trãssiluanis regni posita in horis caracteres quosdã ligno sculpit ⁊ talis sculpture vsu lr̃aꝝ ad instar viuit: externaꝝ nationũ ĩuidiã exactis ꝑ ipsũ Atilã regẽ victorijs ꝯdignũ ꝑconij subtraxisse stilũ ⁊ eidem regi Atile gloriã impialis noĩs demisse puto: neqꝫ ꝑ ipsũ gestarũ rerũ indecus quidpiã ꝑterq̃ꝫ illatas ꝑ ipsũ eis miserias planctuosi carmĩs ad instar scripsisse ĩueniũt̃. Uñ paulus orosij suarũ vltimo libro hijstoriaꝝ: hunoꝝ de eruptiõe mentiõeꝫ faciẽs. Tredecimo inquit ãno impij valentis radix illa miseriaꝝ nostrarũ copiosissimos simul frutices germĩauit. Et anthoni⁹ florentinus archiepũs in scd̃a ꝑte sui chronici opis ipsa ait gentis barbaries me silere faceret nisi illud famosũ galliaꝝ ⁊ italiaꝝ excidium

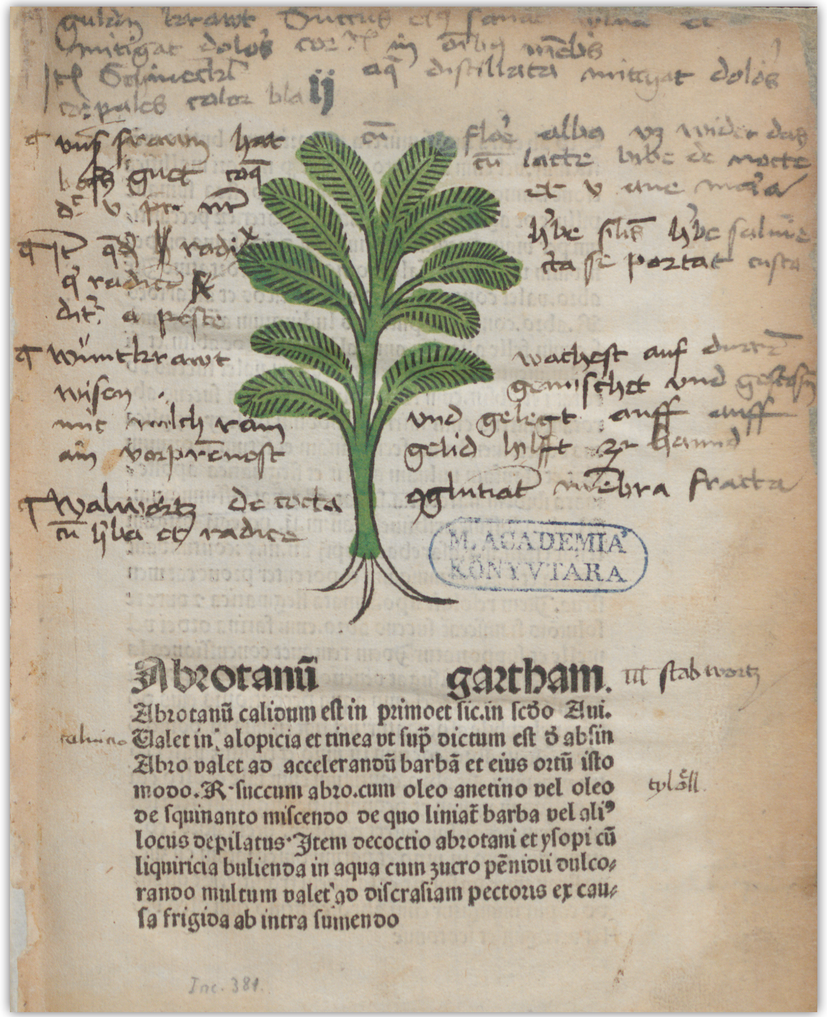
a 2


Herbarius Patauie im:
pressus Anno domi
ra.lxxxv.

13. Title page of Herbarius *(sign. Inc. 381)*



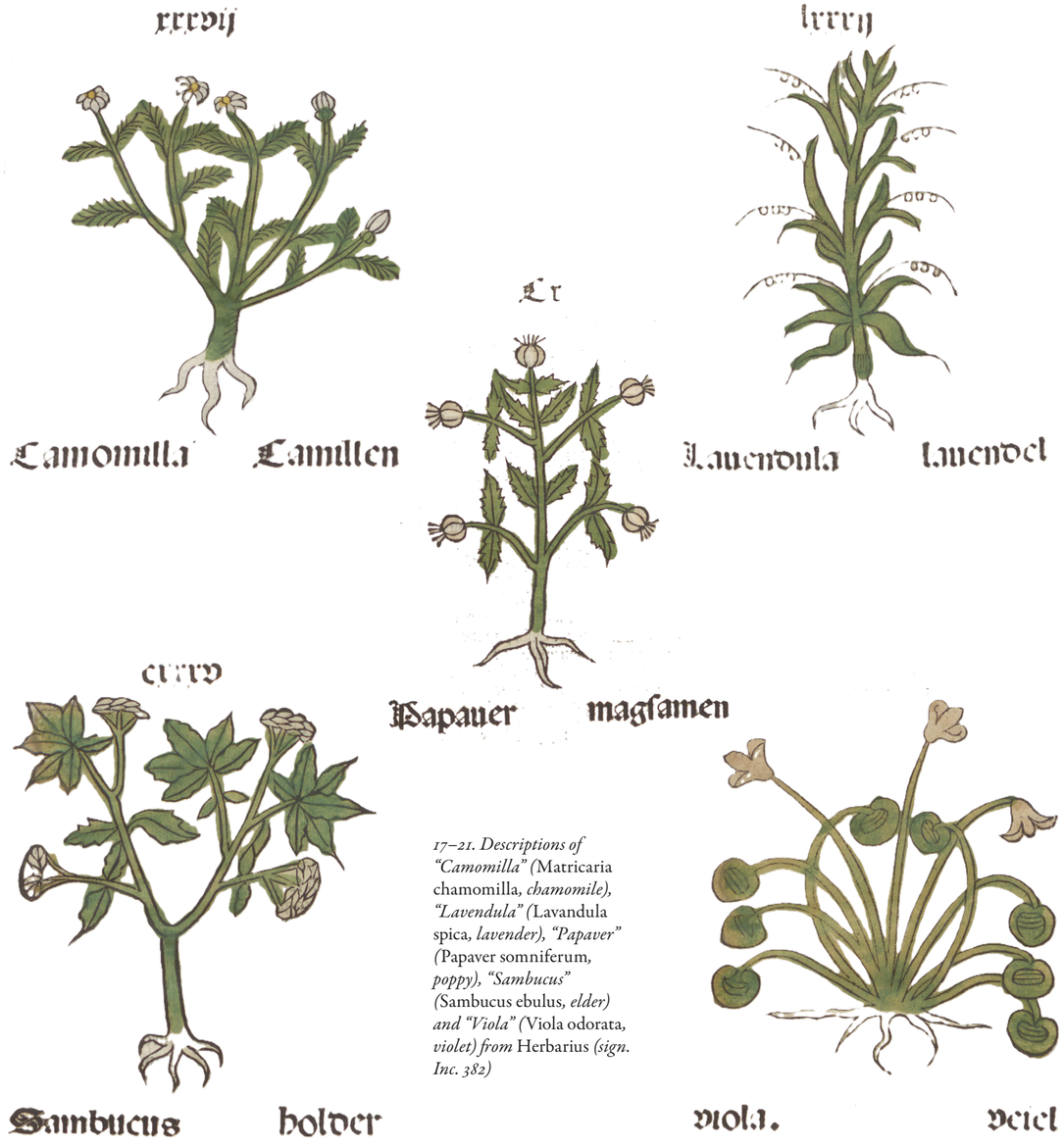
14. Recto of the title page of Herbarius *(sign. Inc. 381)*



15. The first page of Herbarius *with the description of the plant "Abrotanum" (*Artemisia abrotanum*) i.e. southernwood (sign. Inc. 381). The description of Absintheum is wanting in this copy*

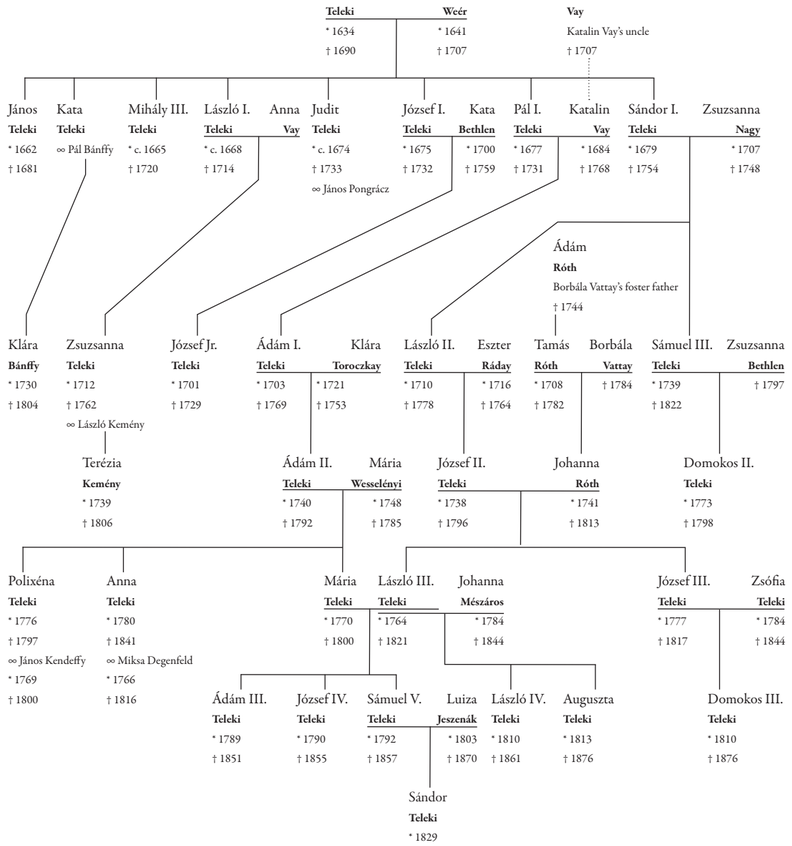


16. The first page of Herbarius *(sign. Inc. 382), with the description of Absintheum (*Artemisia absinthium*). The first pair of leaves i.e. the title page and another blank page is wanting in this copy*



*17–21. Descriptions of "Camomilla" (*Matricaria chamomilla, *chamomile), "Lavendula" (*Lavandula spica, *lavender), "Papaver" (*Papaver somniferum, *poppy), "Sambucus" (*Sambucus ebulus, *elder) and "Viola" (*Viola odorata, *violet) from* Herbarius *(sign. Inc. 382)*

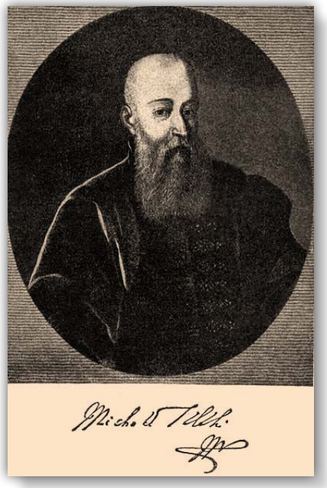
Six Generations of Book-enthusiasts Contributing to The Teleki Family Collections



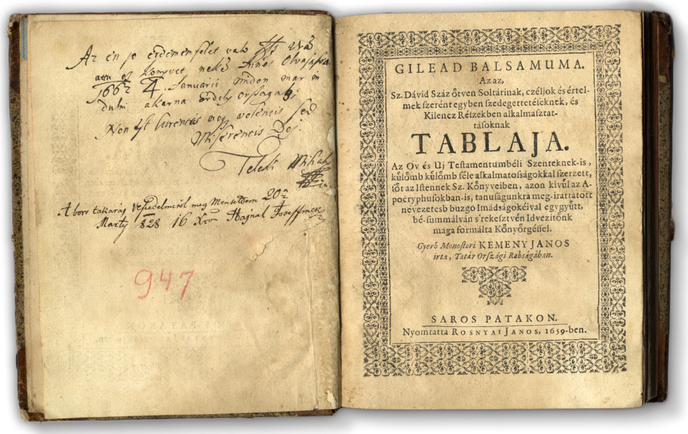
1. Family tree of the Teleki de Szék and Teleki de Kendilóna branches

In this volume, there are many mentions of Count József IV Teleki, the generous donor of the core collection for the Library of the Hungarian Learned Society. Count Teleki, due to his family's offer, and thanks to his own scholarly achievements in the field of historical geography, was nominated as the first President of the Learned Society[1] by its four founding fathers. In truth, Count Teleki was but one descendant of a long line of passionate book collectors. According to scholarship, Count József IV Teleki belonged to the sixth generation of his Transylvanian clan, which contributed significantly to the book culture of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. In what follows, the focus will be on members of the Teleki clan, men and women alike, whose passion for books is reflected in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to the present day.[2]

The ancestor of the Counts Teleki de Szék (in Hungarian: Széki Gróf Teleki) family, who received the title of earl in 1685, was the chancellor of Transylvania, Mihály II Teleki de Szék (1634–1690). After his childless first marriage, in 1662 Mihály II married Judit Weér (1641–1707). A book of historical importance, gifted to Mihály II Teleki by its author, came to our Library. The author was János Kemény (1607–1662), chancellor of Transylvania during the reign of Prince György II Rákóczi (r. 1648–1660). Kemény had gone with his Prince on a military campaign in Poland and was captured by Crimean Tatars in 1657. During his two-year imprisonment, Kemény wrote a theological work on the psalms of David, bearing the title Balm of Gilead (*Gilead balsamuma*). After returning home, he published his book in Sárospatak (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) in 1659. For a very short period, Kemény himself became Prince of Transylvania in 1661–1662. Three weeks before falling on the battlefield near Nagyszőllős (today Seleuşul Mare, Romania), on 2 January 1662, Prince Kemény gifted a copy of his own work to Mihály II Teleki. The biblical quotation from the Apostle Paul to the Romans (9, 16) in the note written by Teleki commemorating the gift, alludes to the tragic end of the gift-giver himself: *Non est currentis neque volentis sed miserentis Dei*. 'So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy' (sign. RM I 4r 37).



2. Portrait of Mihály II Teleki



3. Note by Mihály II Teleki in his copy of Gilead balsamuma *(sign. RM I 4r 37)*

1 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 22–31.

2 The latest publications on the subject of the Teleki family collections are Szabó 2019a–b. However, since 2023, these preliminary results have been significantly expanded by the autopsy work carried out by members of the Old Book Recataloguing Team in our Library: Petra Budai (b. 1984), Andrea Gyuricza (b. 1988), Mónika Mezey (b. 1975) and Ágnes Máté (b. 1983).

There is also a manuscript gifted to Mihály II Teleki by its author, István Fráter Keserű, which is worth mentioning for its lavishly decorated, gilded binding. The binding represents the so-called Kolozsvár-IV type bookbinding decoration with fans, used until the end of the seventeenth century in Transylvania. Both the name of the dedicatee and the monogram of the dedicator are impressed on the cover (sign. K 92).[3]



4. The binding of codex K 92

3 Rozsondai 2019, 338, ill. 96.

According to previous scholarship,[4] there is one book in our Library that was either gifted to or inherited by the Teleki family due to Mihály II Teleki's connection to another princely couple, Mihály I Apafi (1632–1690) and Anna Bornemisza (c. 1630–1688). Prince Mihály I Apafi (r. 1661–1690) did not make any political decision without consulting both his wife and his chancellor, Mihály II Teleki, throughout his reign. Mihály II Teleki probably inherited two books (sign. RM I 4r 79 and RM I 4r 278) also from the Protestant theologian and court preacher Mihály Tofeus (1624–1684) of the princely couple. Tofeus also served as the Protestant bishop of Transylvania in his later years from 1679 until his death.



Már minden épületivel s-fegyveres Házaival edgyütt, el-készült,

SIONVARA,

Mellyet, a' Néhai Bóldog emlekezetű J. C. Hűséges Tanubizonyság-tévője, a' Cassai *Reformata Ecclesia*, Munkás Tanitója

IDVEZÜLT

CZEGLEDI ISTVAN,

A' Magyar Nemzetben lévő CHRISTUS, Igaz *Reformata Ecclesiá*-ja, régen kivánt, lélki javára, *Evangeliumi* Vallásban valo erős és álhatatos megállására, *Elteben* fel-rakott és el-végezett volt; a' végre, hogy mikor ennek Bástyái ostromoltatnak, lehessen készen minden *Munitio*-ival, tudgya magát oltalmazni, és győzedelemmel a' VAR vivokat alolla el-űzni;

Mostan penig, *hólta után*, a' Méltoságos Erdélyi Fejedelem, mostani Kegyelmes Urunk Parancsolattyából és a' meg-hóltnak utolso kötelező Akaratyából, ki-bocsátatott, KŐLESERI SAMUEL, a' Debreczeni K. G. edgyik alázatos Tanitójának forgolodása által.

2. Sam. 5. v. 7. 9. Meg-vövé Dávid a' SION VARAT S-LAKOZEK benne.

Kezdetett Nyomtatása SAROS-PATAKON, s-El-végeztetet COLOSVARAT ROSNYAI JAN. által, *Exiliumában*. 1675.

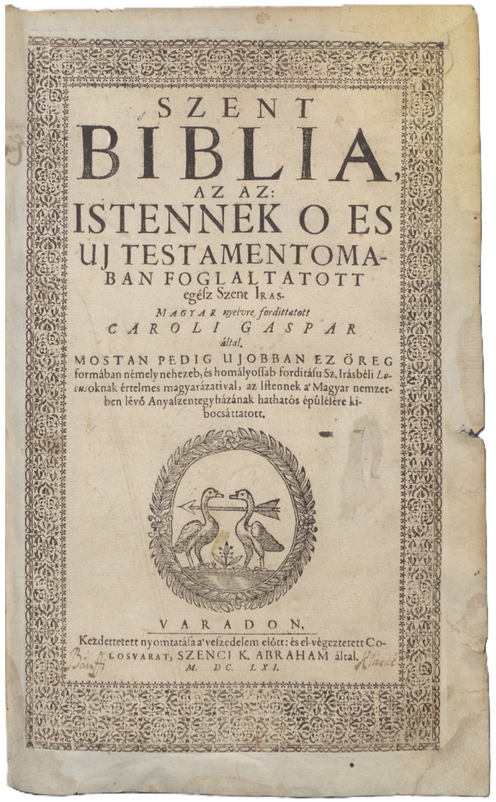
5. Ownership note of Mihály Tofeus (sign. RM I 4r 79)

Another of the earliest rarities coming from the Teleki family to our Library was the property of Mihály II Teleki's wife, Judit Weér. A copy of the revised Calvinist translation of the Bible, printed in Várad-Kolozsvár by Ábrahám Szenci Kertész in 1661, was bound for the lady's personal use in 1688. Judit Weér's name and the date of binding are placed on the upper and lower covers of the book, indicating her ownership (sign. RM I 2r 83). Mihály II Teleki and Judit Weér had thirteen children together, seven sons and six daughters. The lavishly bound Bible was inherited by one of their daughters, a namesake of her mother, Judit Teleki (†1733), from 1691, wife of János Pongrácz de Nagymihály. In turn, Judit Teleki left the Bible in her testament to one of her nieces, Klára Bánffy (1730–1804), daughter of Katalin Teleki and Pál Bánffy. The note about the three consecutive owners was written by Klára Bánffy in the volume. Later, the Bible certainly found its way back from the Bánffy family to the Telekis; that is how it eventually ended up in the Teleki collection of the Library.

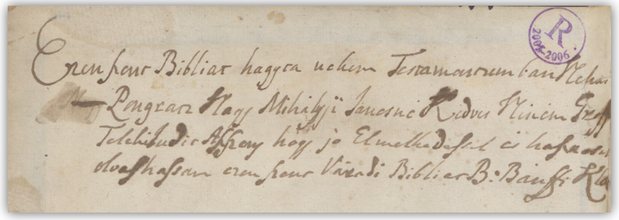
4 Ritoókné 1977, 17.



6–7. Binding of the upper and lower cover of the Bible owned by Judit Weér (sign. RM I 2r 83)


SZENT
BIBLIA,
AZ AZ:
ISTENNEK O ES
UJ TESTAMENTOMA-
BAN FOGLALTATOTT
egész Szent Iras.
MAGYAR nyelvre fordittatott
CAROLI GASPAR
által.
MOSTAN PEDIG UJOBBAN EZ ÖREG
formában némely nehezeb, és homályossab forditásu Sz. Irásbéli Locusoknak értelmes magyarázatival, az Istennek a' Magyar nemzetben lévő Anyaszentegyházának hathatós épülésére kibocsáttatott.
VARADON,
Kezdettetett nyomtatása a' veszedelem előtt: és el-végeztetett Colosvarat, SZENCI K. ABRAHAM által.
M. DC. LXI.

8. Title page of the Bible inherited by Klára Bánffy (sign. RM I 2r 83)



9. Ownership note in the Bible inherited by Klára Bánffy (sign. RM I 2r 83)

Of the seven sons of Mihály II Teleki and Judit Weér, only five had children: József I (1675–1732), Mihály III, Sándor I, Pál I and László I. Among them, only three had male heirs to pass on their name for many generations: Mihály III Teleki (1674–1720), Sándor I Teleki (1679–1754), and Pál I Teleki. The latter son, Pál I Teleki (1677–1731), changed the prefix of his name in 1700, thereby forming the family branches Teleki de Szék and Teleki de Kendilóna.

József I Teleki de Szék died in 1732. By that time, his only son had reached adulthood. József Teleki de Szék *Junior* (1701–1729)[5] also died childless at the age of twenty-eight. They left no trace in their family's collection at the Academy today.

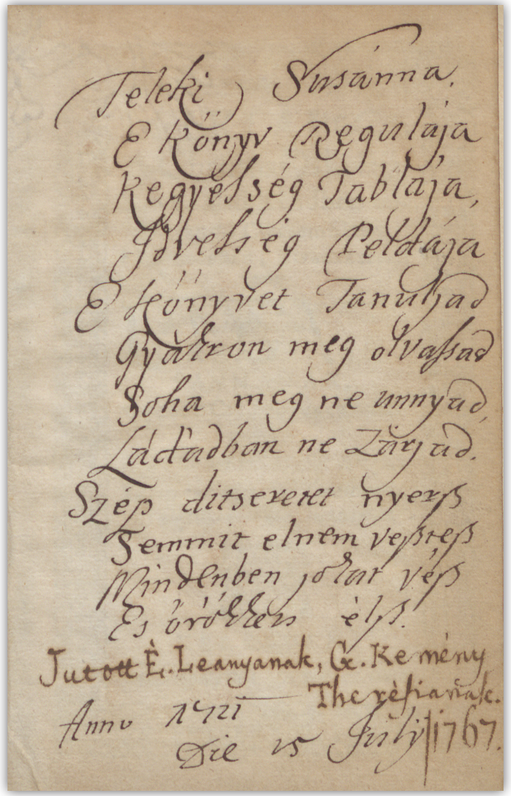
László I Teleki de Szék (c. 1668–1714) married Anna Vay de Vaja, with whom he had only one daughter, Zsuzsanna Teleki de Szék (1712–1762). Zsuzsanna Teleki de Szék married the governor of Transylvania, Baron László Kemény, and they had one daughter, Baroness Terézia Kemény (1739–1806). Zsuzsanna Teleki de Szék acquired a Hungarian-language devotional work[6] on 25 July 1721, which was inherited by her daughter, Terézia, in 1767, according to the ownership notes by the two ladies (sign. RM I 8r 243).

5 It is worth noting that this József is not counted in the family genealogy under the serial number II; therefore, József II Teleki de Szék refers to the family member born in 1738, later known as the Crown Guard József.

6 Medgyesi Pál, *Lelki A Be Ce. A Christus oskolájában az alsó rendben bé-állatandó csecsemöknek közönsegessen; kivaltkeppen penig ... Lorantfi Susannanak, appróbb cselédgyének hasznokra ... anglus tanítónak irásábul [Spiritual Alphabet. Generally to the Small Children Enlisting to the Christ's Army; and Specifically to the Use of Zsuzsanna Lorantfi's Maidens ... transalted from an English Teacher's Writings]*, Keresd, Székesi Mihály, 1684. RMNY 4528, sign. RM I 8r 243.

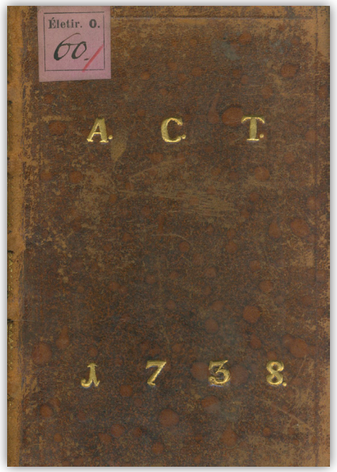

LELKI A BeCe.
A' Christus Oskolájá-
ban az alsó Rendben bé-
állatandó Csecsemöknek
Közönsegessen; Kivaltkeppen
penig
A' Méltóságos kegyes Fejedelem
Aszszonynak
LORANTFI SU-
SANNANAK,
appróbb Cselédgyének hasz-
nokra.
Egy Isten-félő tudós Anglus
Tanitónak irásábúl fordittatott.
Es most újjonnan ki-nyomtattatott.
KERESDEN,
Székesi Mihály által. Año ɔlc. lɔc. Lxxxiv.

10. Title page of Pál Medgyesi's Lelki A Be Ce *(sign. RM I 8r 243)*

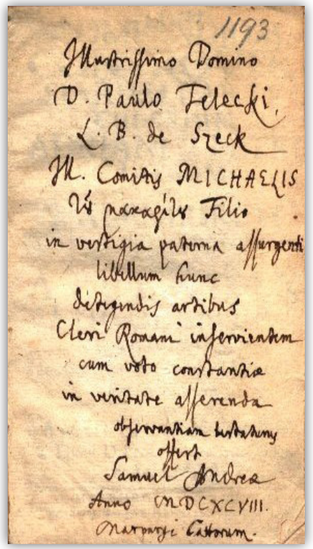

Teleki Susánna,
E Könyv Regulája
Kegyelség Tablája,
Idvesség Peldája
E Könyvet Tanuljad
Gyakron meg olvassad
Soha meg ne unnyad,
Láctadban ne Zárjad.
Szép ditseretet nyerss
Semmit elnem vesztess
Mindenben jolat vess
Es örökkes élss.
Jutott É. Leanyanak, Cz. Kemény
Theréziának.
Anno 1721
Die 15 July 1767.

11. Ownership notes of Zsuzsanna Teleki and Terézia Kemény (sign. RM I 8r 243)

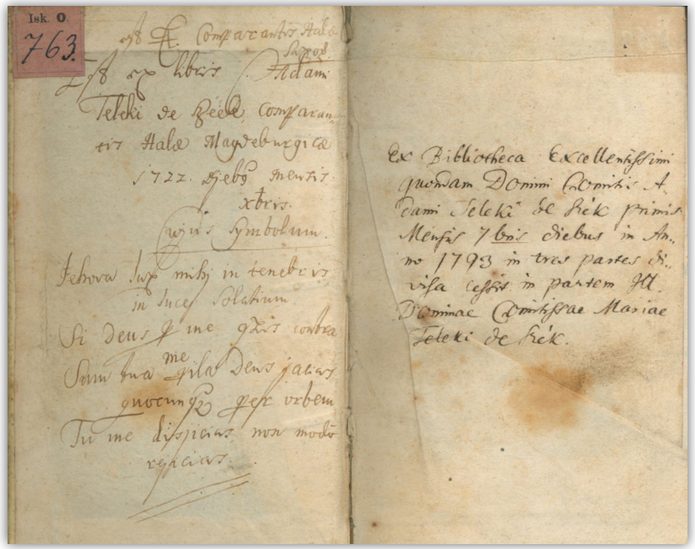
At this point, I continue with the Teleki de Kendilóna branch of the family. In his youth, between 1696 and 1699, Pál I Teleki de Kendilóna undertook an academic peregrination. A book gifted to him in 1698 by his professor and host in Marburg, Samuel Andreae (1640–1699), is a valuable memento of those years (sign. Theol.O.541). In 1701, Pál I Teleki married Katalin Vay de Vaja (1684–1768). They had one son, Ádám I Teleki de Kendilóna (1703–1769), and at least two daughters. As it was customary in the Teleki family, Ádám I was also sent to study abroad in his early twenties. Some of his books purchased during his peregrination (e.g. sign. Isk.O.763), and one bound in 1638 with his monogram A. C. T. (*Adam Comes Teleki*) gilded in gold, are kept in our Library (sign. Életir.O.60). His personal mottos in Latin, *Jehova lux mihi in tenebris, in luce solatium* 'God is my light in darkness, in the light He is my comfort' and *Si Deus pro me, qui contra me* 'If God is with me, who is against me', written in his own hand with textual variants in the different volumes, make those objects intimate testimonies of their owner's life.



12. Gilded super ex libris *of Ádám I Teleki (sign. Életir.O.60)*



13. Dedication from Samuel Andreae to Pál I Teleki de Kendilóna (sign. Theol.O.541)

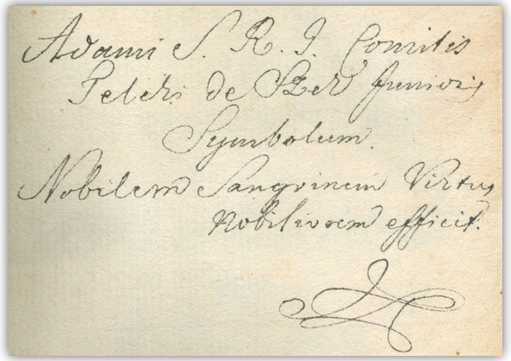


14. Ownership note of Ádám I Teleki and the note indicating that the book later formed part of Mária Teleki's inheritance (sign. Isk.O.763)

Ádám I Teleki had a son from his second marriage to Klára Toroczkai (1721–1753). The boy inherited both his father's wealth and name: he was Ádám II Teleki (1740–1792), a translator and poet in his own right. Continuing the family tradition, Ádám II also went abroad to study with two of his relatives between 1759 and 1763. He accompanied one of his father's cousins, Sámuel III Teleki de Szék (1739–1822),[7] who, despite their generational difference, was only one year older than Ádám II. Returning home, Sámuel III Teleki started the systematic building of a scholarly library, gaining fame in cultural history as the founder of the Teleki Téka in Marosvásárhely (today Târgu Mureș, Romania). It is worth mentioning here that there is one volume among Sámuel III Teleki's possessions in the Library, its upper cover marked with his gilded coat of arms as a *super ex libris* (sign. Gör.Ir.Qu.13).

The other fellow student of Ádám II Teleki in his peregrination was his own cousin, József II Teleki (1738–1796). The latter became known for his political position as the Crown Guard József in the Teleki family history. The book collection of this Crown Guard József will be discussed later.

Returning to the books once owned by Ádám II Teleki de Kendilóna, our collection preserves three volumes that originally belonged to him, each bearing his personal motto as a note of possession in his own hands: *Nobilem sanguinem virtus nobilium effecit* 'Noble blood is made nobler by virtues' (e.g. sign. Tört.O.1556).



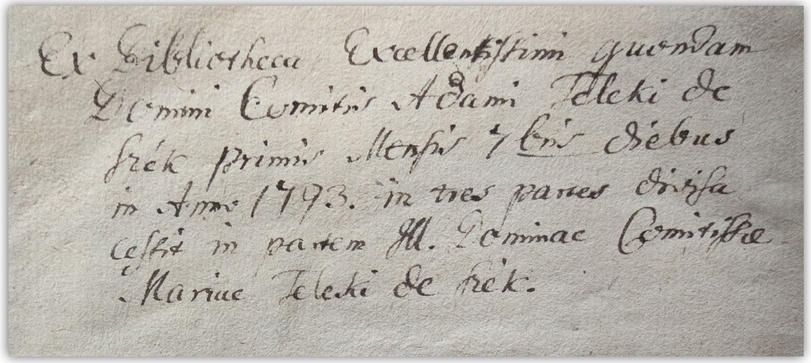
16. Ownership note of Ádám II Teleki de Kendilóna (sign. Tört.O.1556)



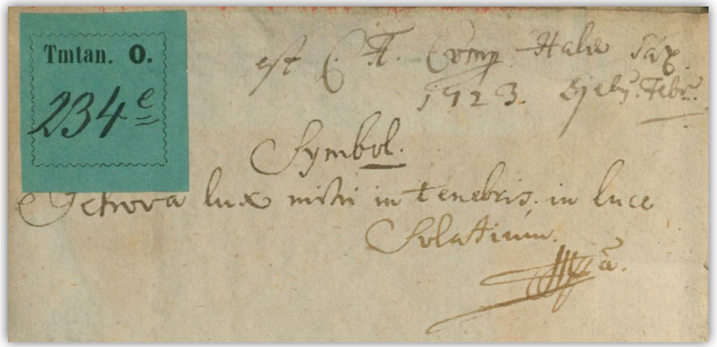
15. Super ex libris of Sámuel III Teleki (sign. Gör.Ir.Qu.13)

Ádám II Teleki married Mária Wesselényi (1748–1785), with whom he had three daughters reaching adulthood: Mária, Polixéna and Anna. Thus, the Teleki de Kendilóna male lineage died out in the third generation, with the death of Ádám II in 1792. One year later, at the beginning of September 1793, the three daughters divided his library into three parts, as stated in the note of possession in the books inherited by Mária Teleki de Kendilóna (1770–1799/1800): "Ex Bibliotheca Excellentissimi quondam Domini Comitis Adami Teleki de Szék primis mensis 7bris diebus in anno 1793 in tres partes divisa cessit in partem Ill[ustrissimae] Dominae Comitissae Mariae Teleki de Szék." This note is repeated in more than two hundred volumes today in the Library, apparently, it was written by the same hand each time (e.g. sign. RM I 4r 93). Thus, one can risk supposing that it was a task for a diligent secretary to mark the provenance of each and every book coming from Ádám II Teleki's estates. However, no volume is known to scholarship today, from the inheritance of the other two Teleki daughters, Polixéna (1776–1797), wife of János Kendeffy (1769–1800), and Anna (1780–1841), wife of Miksa Degenfeld (1766–1816). Therefore, one can only make guesses about the real dimensions of the collection once in Ádám II Teleki's possession.

7 His parents were the aforementioned Sándor I Teleki de Szék (1679–1754) and his second wife, Zsuzsanna Petki Nagy (1707–1748). One volume in the Library (sign. RM II 301), bears the *super ex libris* of Sándor I Teleki, however, it came with the Vigyázó bequest to the Academy.



17. *Ownership note of Mária Teleki (sign. RM I 4r 93)*



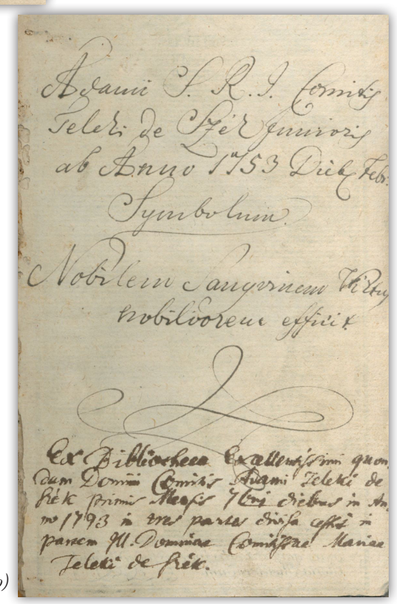
18. *Ownership note of Ádám I Teleki (sign. Orvt.O.234e)*

Among the two hundred volumes inherited by Mária Teleki de Kendilóna are books that once belonged to five of her ancestors. Both her parents, her paternal grandfather, her paternal great-grandmother, and a paternal great-uncle appear as book owners.

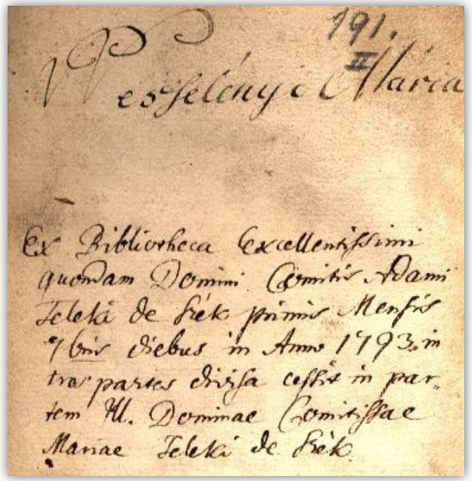
Most of the volumes in Mária Teleki's inheritance came to her directly from her father's collection (e.g. sign. M.Nyelv.O.110). Occasionally, volumes once owned by her grandfather, Ádám I Teleki, appear (e.g. sign. Orvt.O.234e). There are also two volumes originally owned by Mária's mother, Mária Wesselényi, who signed her own name in the Hungarian way, starting with the patronymic (e.g. sign. Theol.O.1081). There are also at least fifteen volumes in the inheritance, that came to Mária's possession from her great-grandmother, Katalin Vay de Vaja. The great-grandmother's own signature, with the abbreviated form of her Christian name, Kata, testifies to her ownership (e.g. sign. RM I 4r 93). If Katalin Vay's known date of birth (1684) and date of death (1768) are correct, she lived for eighty-four years, an exceptionally long life for a woman in the early modern era, and died only two years before her great-granddaughter, Mária, was born. There is also a volume in Mária Teleki's inheritance that came from an earlier generation of the Vay family. One of Katalin Vay's uncles, Mihály Vay de Vaja (†1707), was the owner of a lavishly illustrated folio since 1699, as his name and his personal motto *Superanda omnis fortunae ferendo* 'Endurance overcomes all fortune' testify (sign. Tört.F.325).



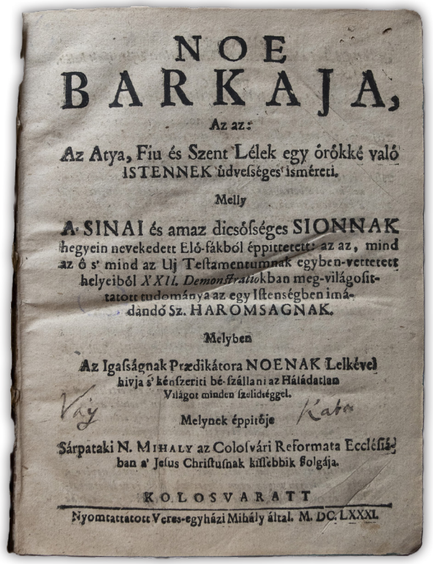
19. *Title page of volume sign. M.Nyelv.O.110*



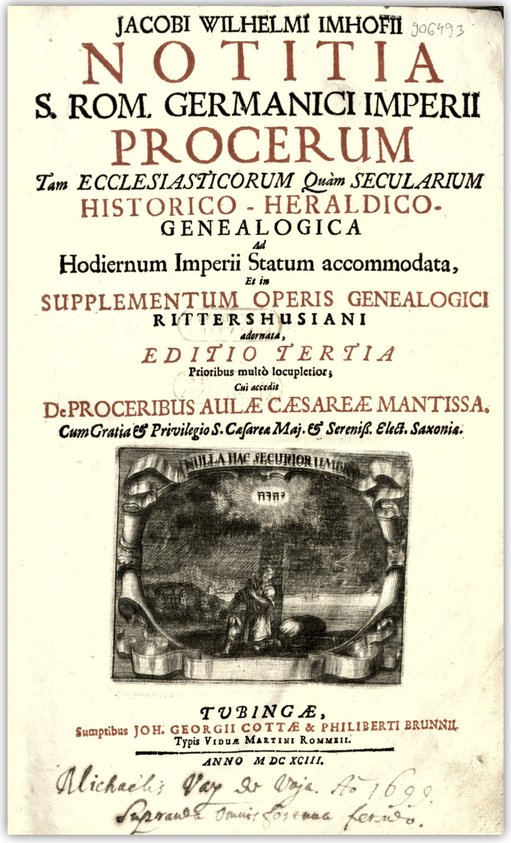
20. *Ownership note of Ádám II Teleki (sign. M.Nyelv.O.110)*



21. Ownership note of Mária Wesselényi (sign. Theol.O.1081)

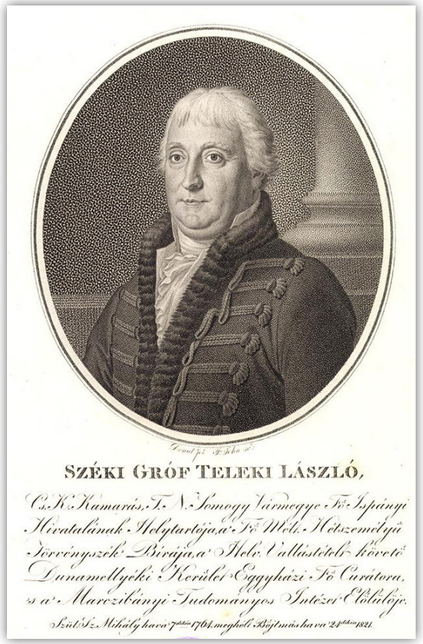


22. Ownership note of Kata de Vay (sign. RM I 4r 93)



23. Title page with ownership note of Mihály Vay (sign. Törtt.F.325)

According to the present state of scholarship, the traces of Ádám II Teleki de Kendilóna's library have survived only because his firstborn daughter's inheritance was taken to her marriage as part of her dowry. In 1788, Mária Teleki de Kendilóna married László III Teleki de Szék (1764–1821), her very distant cousin. Their common ancestor was the great-great-grandfather, Mihály II Teleki, the first Count Teleki de Szék. Count László III Teleki is also known in the Teleki genealogy as the Septemvir László. In his later years, he held a position in the court of appeal (1819), originally consisting of seven judges, hence called *septemvirs*. Mária's inherited books were merged into the library of her husband, so later they could be passed on to all four sons of Count László III Teleki. Mária and László had three sons together: Ádám III Teleki de Szék (1789–1851), the aforementioned József IV, the future historian and first President of the Academy, and Sámuel V (1792–1857). Count László III Teleki also had a fourth son, László IV (1810–1861), from his second marriage to Baroness Johanna Mészáros (1784–1844).



24. Portrait of László III Teleki



25. Portrait of Ádám III Teleki

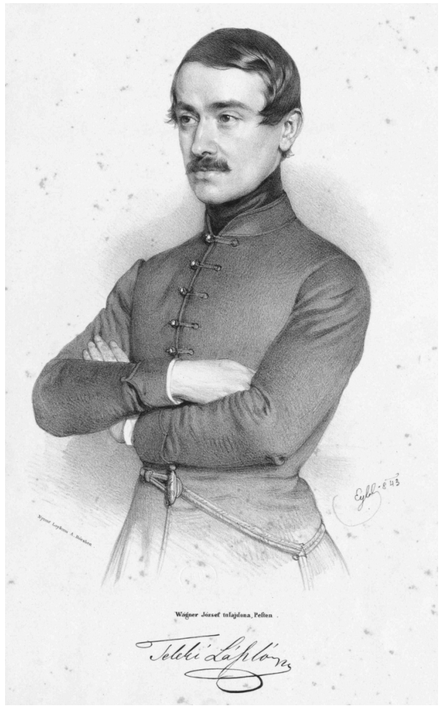


26. Ownership note of Ádám III Teleki (sign. Hadt.O.75)

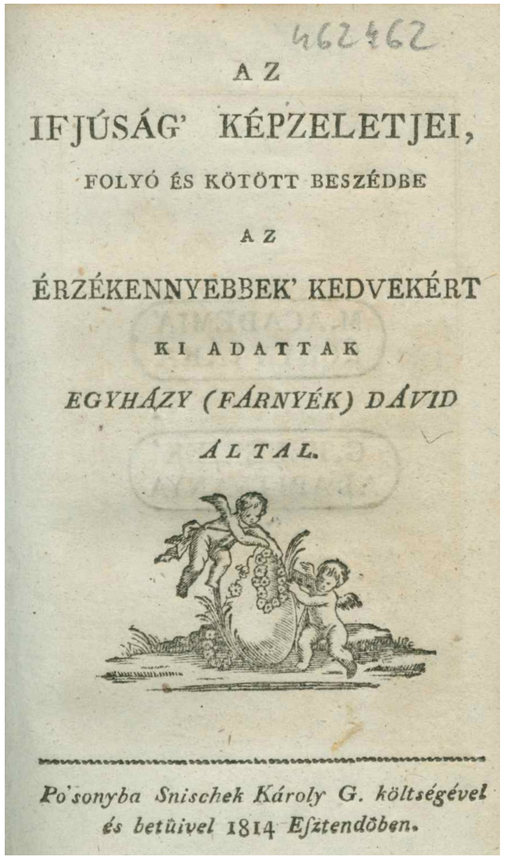
At this point in the genealogy, we meet again the five members of the Teleki family, i.e. the three brothers, their stepmother, and their half-brother, who were mentioned above, as donors of their family collection to the Hungarian Learned Society. One may notice that Count László III Teleki entrusted the responsibility for the family library to his heirs based on their sons' personal qualities, not on their birth order: not his eldest son, Ádám III, but his second-born József IV became the executor of the father's last will concerning the collection. The eldest son, Count Ádám III Teleki, was not a scholar, but he did pursue a military career, serving in the Nádor Hussar Regiment in Bohemia. However, in his testament, Ádám III also donated approximately one hundred fifty books from his personal collection to the Academy, mainly contemporary handbooks on various aspects of warfare. There is one volume in our Library, precisely in the old military history section, bearing the note of possession by Ádám III (sign. Hadt.O.75). The personal contributions of József IV to the Library, made after the 1826 donation, will be mentioned later. It is worth mentioning that one daughter of László III Teleki and Johanna Mészáros, Auguszta Teleki de Szék (1813–1876) also left her trace in the family's library. As a little girl, Auguszta got a gift book from her father commemorating her first successful exam in 1819 (sign. 524.192).



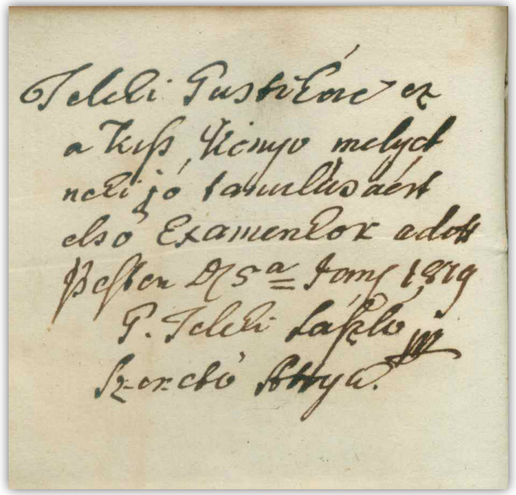
27. Portrait of József IV Teleki, 1841, (sign. 311.123)



28. Portrait of László IV Teleki, lithograph by Franz Eybl



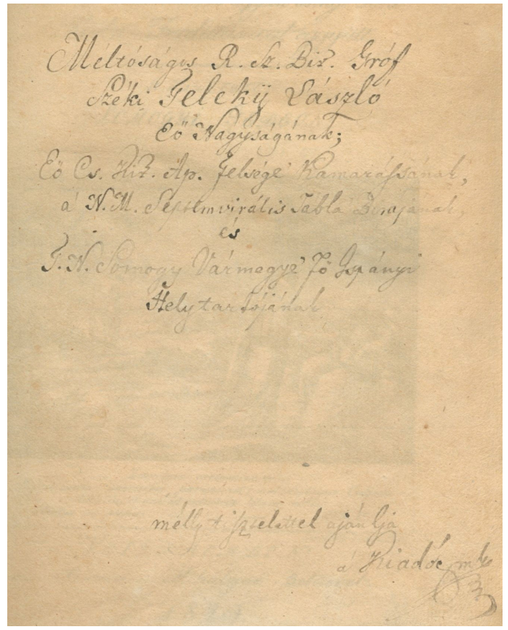
29. Title page of the volume presented by László III Teleki to his daughter, Auguszta (sign. 524.192)



30. Dedication of the gift book commemorating Auguszta's successful examination, 1819 (sign. 524.192)

At this point, we must continue the list of books commemorating different members of the Teleki family in the Library with the Septemvir László. There are lightly more than a dozen books bearing signs of the Septemvir László's ownership, mainly his monogram C. L. T. (*Comes Ladislaus Teleki*), in his own hand, from different periods of his life. The dedication in a volume containing a Hungarian translation of Petronius Arbiter's (27–66) *Satyricon* (sign. M.Irod.O.200) reveals that it may have been a gift on the occasion of Count László III Teleki's election to the septemvirate. The dedicatee's membership in the court of appeal is one of his four titles mentioned in the dedication. Count László III Teleki received that position in 1819, the same year that the gift book was published.

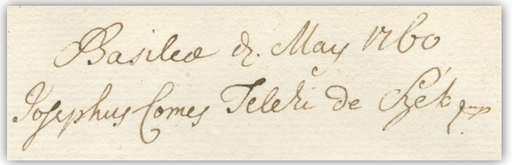
Again, without analysing his activities as a book collector in this entry, one must present some volumes commemorating the Septemvir László's father, Count József II Teleki de Szék (1738–1796), whose family nickname as the Crown Guard József was also mentioned previously. There are approximately a dozen volumes in our Library bearing the signs of the Crown Guard József's ownership in some form. Most of those books testify to his academic peregrination abroad, which he made together with his relatives, Sámuel III Teleki and Ádám II Teleki, as mentioned above. Between 1759 and 1761, Count József II Teleki noted, occasionally in Latin, German, French or Italian, the time and place of purchasing volumes in Germany (Regensburg), Switzerland (Basel), the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Leiden), and France (Paris). Among those volumes, the most interesting is one on Leibniz's mathematics, bought in Basel in 1760. It was probably later bound in brown leather with the gilded *super ex libris* of Count József II Teleki on its upper cover (sign. Math.Qu.149). Three folio-sized illustrated books about the city's attractions, printed in Verona, almost three decades before, were purchased by the Crown Guard József in the same Italian town in 1769 (signs. Régész.F.38 and Régész.F.39).



31. Dedication to László III Teleki (sign. M.Irod.O.200)



32. Gilded super ex libris *of József II Teleki (sign. Math.Qu.149)*



33. Ownership note of József II Teleki (sign. Math.Qu.149)

In 1762, after his studies abroad, Count József II Teleki married Johanna Róth de Királyfalva (1741–1813). The noblewoman was the only child of Tamás Róth de Királyfalva (1708–1782) and Borbála Vattay de Felsővata (†1784). The estates in Szirák (Nógrád County) were part of Johanna Róth's inheritance after her parents' deaths. As mentioned above, a large part of the Teleki family's collections was kept on those estates for many decades, until the death of the President of the Academy, József IV Teleki, in 1855. Moreover, even the Teleki Palace in Szervita Square, Pest, was originally owned by the Róth-Vattay family through inheritance. In 1783, the widow Borbála Vattay, being a woman with limited rights, was forced by law to pass her property in Szervita Square to her son-in-law, József II Teleki, if she wanted to keep the house at all. Thus, Count József II Teleki became the first Protestant in the history of Pest to be allowed to have his own house in that city, notwithstanding his religion. Since 1703, when the Habsburg Catholic rulers of Hungary reinforced the status of Pest as a free royal town (*libera regia civitas)*, Protestants were not allowed to buy or build their own houses there. A family inheritance, however, was unalienable, thus, the Palace in Szervita Square had to pass to the hands of József II Teleki, as the closest male relative of his widowed mother-in-law.

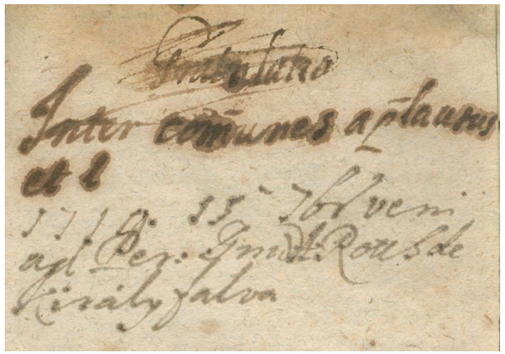
Given the material contribution of Johanna Róth's family to the Teleki family fortune, it is worth noting that three of her father's books are also preserved in the Library. Tamás Róth de Királyfalva had his name recorded in Latin and/or in German in those volumes (e.g. sign. Misc.O.453). There is even one volume commemorating her paternal grandfather, Ádám Róth de Királyfalva (†1744), who was also the legal guardian of her mother, Borbála Vattay (sign. Isk.O.757). There are no known volumes, however, relating to Johanna Róth's mother. Nevertheless, different copies of the funeral oration written for Borbála Vattay still exist in the Teleki collection (e.g. sign. Életir.O.190).



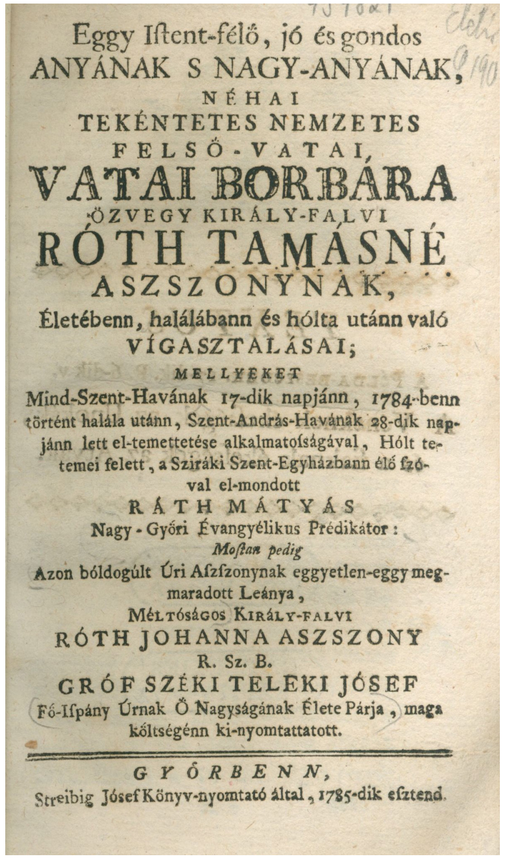
34. Portrait of Johanna Róth de Királyfalva, wife of József II Teleki



35. Ownership note of Tamás Róth de Királyfalva (sign. Misc.O.453)



36. Ownership note of Ádám Róth de Királyfalva (sign. Isk.O.757)



Eggy Iſtent-félő, jó és gondos
ANYÁNAK S NAGY-ANYÁNAK,
NÉHAI
TEKÉNTETES NEMZETES
FELSŐ-VATAI,
VATAI BORBÁRA
ÖZVEGY KIRÁLY-FALVI
RÓTH TAMÁSNÉ
ASZSZONYNAK,
Életében, halálában és hólta utánn való
VÍGASZTALÁSAI;
MELLYEKET
Mind-Szent-Havának 17-dik napjánn, 1784-benn
történt halála utánn, Szent-András-Havának 28-dik nap-
jánn lett el-temettetése alkalmatoſságával, Hólt te-
temei felett, a Sziráki Szent-Egyházbann élő fzó-
val el-mondott
RÁTH MÁTYÁS
Nagy-Győri Évangyélikus Prédikátor:
Moſtan pedig
Azon bóldogúlt Úri Aſzſzonynak eggyetlen-eggy meg-
maradott Leánya,
Mélтóságos Király-falvi
RÓTH JOHANNA ASZSZONY
R. Sz. B.
GRÓF SZÉKI TELEKI JÓSEF
Fő-Iſpány Úrnak Ő Nagyságának Élete Párja, maga
költségénn ki-nyomtattatott.
GYŐRBENN,
Streibig Józef Könyv-nyomtató által, 1785-dik eſztend.

37. Title page of the funeral oration written for Borbála Vattay (sign. Életir.O.190)



38. Borbála Vattay's sepulchre in Szirák with the memorial wreath placed on it by the community of the Library, 17 March 2026, photograph by József Áts

In the previous entry, there were mentions of many members of the Teleki de Szék family whose books are still available in the Library. In the following, emphasis will be placed to the three most important contributors: the Crown Guard József II, the Septemvir László III and the President József IV Teleki, who in genealogical order were grandfather, father, and son to each other. There will be a mention of collateral kinship as well: a cousin of József IV, Domokos III Teleki (1810–1876)[1] and a nephew, Sándor Teleki (1829–1875),[2] who became the head of the donor Teleki family after the death of Count József IV Teleki.



1. Portrait of the Crown Guard József II Teleki



2. Portrait of the Septemvir László III Teleki



3. Portrait of the President József IV Teleki



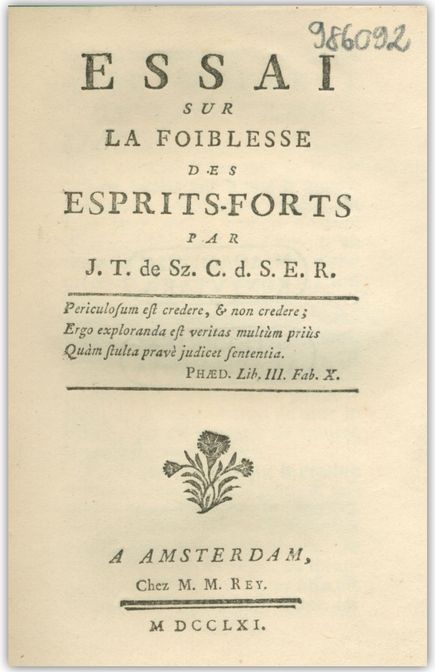
4. Portrait of Domokos III Teleki

1 He was the son of József III Teleki (1777–1817) and Zsófia Teleki (1784–1844).
2 He was the son of Sámuel V Teleki and Lujza Jeszenák de Királyfia (1803–1870).

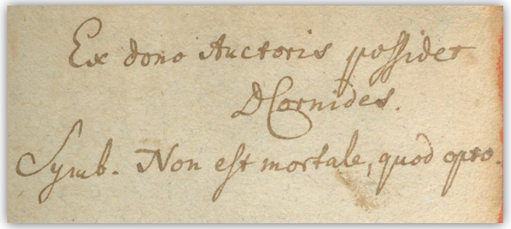
The grandfather, József II, the Crown Guard Teleki, began building his own book collection according to his own taste and scholarly interests. He was familiar with the ideas of the French Enlightenment. He even published a philosophical work, *Essai sur la foiblesse des esprits-forts*[3] (Amsterdam, Rey, 1761), which was appreciated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) himself[4] (e.g. sign. Franc.Ir.O.387/h). His purchases included philosophy, belles lettres, history, politics, and the natural sciences, with a particular preference for various fields of mathematics. The Crown Guard József II Teleki bought approximately seven hundred volumes from the widow of József Péczeli the Elder (1750–1792), three of which bear Péczeli's ownership notes (e.g. sign. Germ.Ir.O.651). It is possible to trace a dozen books once owned by the historian Dániel Cornides (1732–1787), signed in his own hand, which also regularly bear marks of previous owners. These volumes represent but a fraction of the allegedly 2,000 volumes once purchased by Count József II Teleki from Cornides himself. It is interesting, moreover, that the personal motto of Cornides, *Non est mortale, quod opto* 'It is not mortal what I desire' (e.g. sign. Tört.O.3237), is the same motto that Count József II Teleki is depicted with on an engraved portrait published in 1791. According to scholarship, at the death of the Crown Guard József II Teleki in 1796, his collection consisted of more than 3,000 volumes.



6. Ownership note of József Péczeli the Elder (sign. Germ.Ir.O.651)



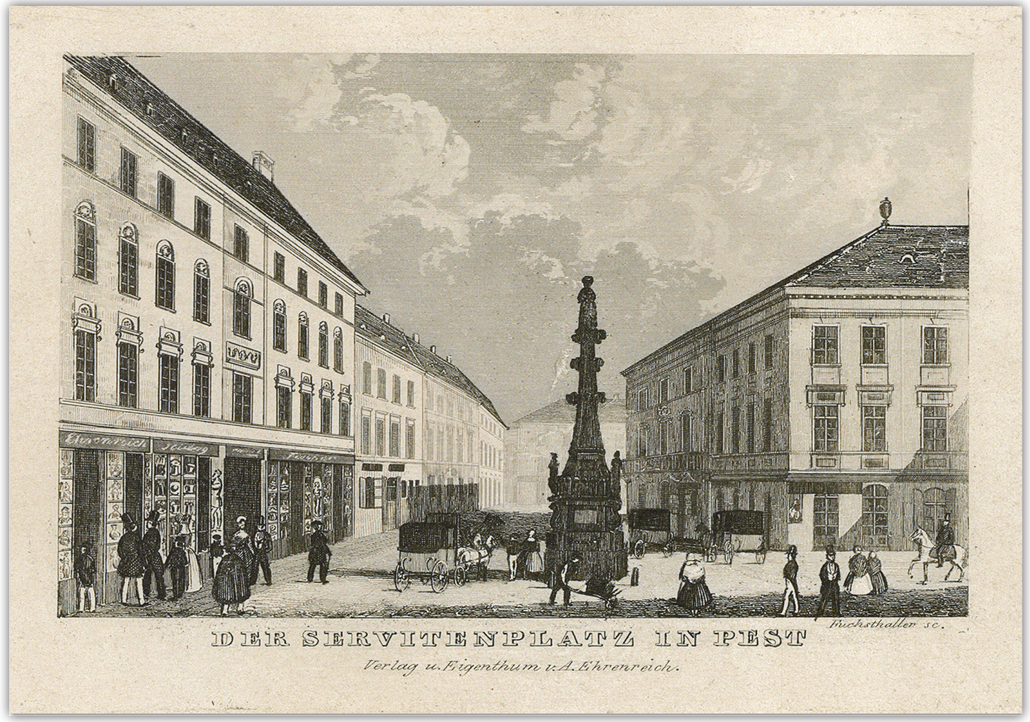
5. Title page of the Crown Guard József II Teleki own work, Essai sur la foiblesse des esprits-forts *(sign. Franc.Ir.O.387/h)*



7. Ownership note of Dániel Cornides (sign. Tört.O.3237)

3 Essay on the Weakness of Freethinkers or Essay on the Weakness of Strong Minds.
4 F. Csanak 2001, 17.

Most of the Crown Guard József II Teleki's collection, his Palace in Pest, and his passion for collecting books were inherited by his eldest son, the Septemvir László III Teleki. László's goal was to expand the family library into a proper scholarly collection that covered all subjects. As did other members of Hungary's leading politico-cultural aristocracy, the Septemvir László dreamed of establishing a national learned society and developed his collection accordingly. Thanks to his conscious purchases, the number of books covering specific fields multiplied by five to six, or even ten, compared to the collection's size in his father's time. The family collection contained approximately 24,000 volumes when the Septemvir László III Teleki died in 1821. As mentioned above, the father entrusted his second-born son, József IV Teleki, with the task of further developing the library and of helping the cause of the Hungarian Learned Society. As it stood, József IV had added another 6,000 volumes to the library by the time it was offered to the newly founded Learned Society in 1826.



8. The Teleki Palace at Szervita Square on a nineteenth-century postcard

9–19. Various gilded super ex libris stamps from the collection enriched by László III Teleki, on eleven pictures



9. Super ex libris *with the coat of arms of Maastricht (sign. Lat. Ir.O.10:3)*



10. Super ex libris *with the figure of Pallas Athaene its circumscription referring to Leiden – Lugduni Batavorum (sign. Lat.Ir.O.12:1)*



11. Super ex libris *with the picture of a bastion (sign. Lat.Ir.O.16:2)*





12–13. Two super ex libris *from the same volume with the motto of the Order of the Garter* Honi soit qui mal y pense *'Shame on him who thinks evil of it' and the image of a city (sign. Lat.Ir.O.22:1)*



14. Super ex libris *with the coat of arms of an unknown family (sign. Math.Qu.48)*



15. Super ex libris *with the coat of arms of the zu Dohna family (sign. Nyelvt.O.994)*



16. Super ex libris with the coat of arms and monogram of Joseph Wenzel Lorenz von Liechtenstein (1696–1772) (sign. Encycl.F.5)

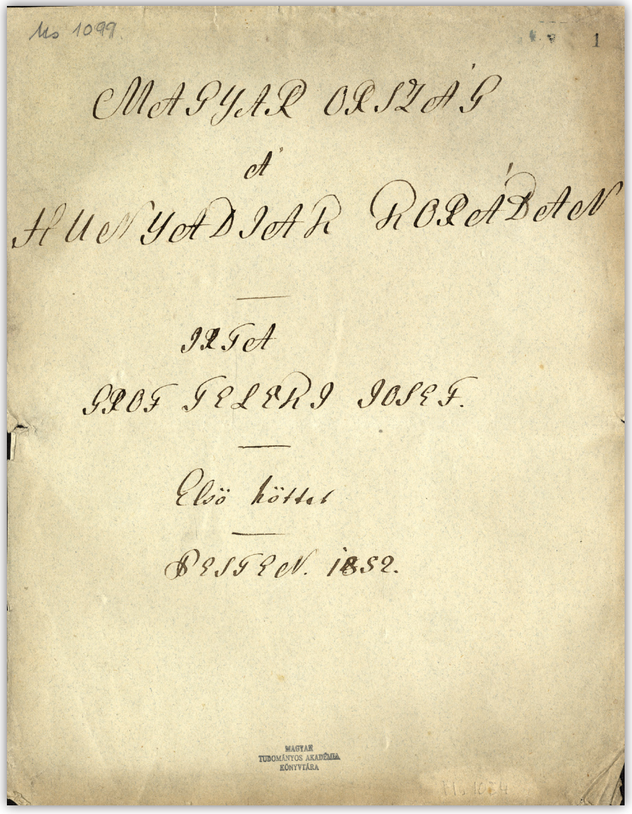


17–19. Three super ex libris *on volumes probably once pertaining to the Bishopric of Olomouc (sign. Tört.F.380:1; 2; 11)*

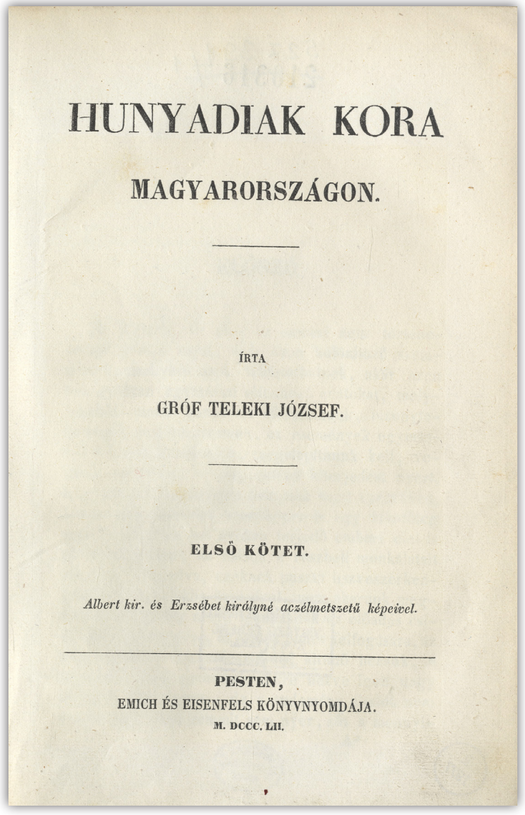




József IV Teleki had never married and dedicated his whole life to the Academy's affairs. He himself was a scholar, interested in historical geography. He planned a twelve-volume series titled Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*), of which five were published in his lifetime, and the rest were edited posthumously by others, based partly on his notes. Due to his rank and his scholarly achievements, it was only natural that Palatine Joseph Habsburg gave his consent to entrust Count Teleki with the presidency of the Learned Society. It is worth noting, however, that despite being its first President, József IV Teleki was never elected to the Academy in recognition of his scholarly achievements. This was an anomaly, quite characteristic of the early stages of the Academy's existence, when many of the rules regulating its operation were only in the making. In a way, the early period of inconsistencies in the Academy's history ended with the death of József IV Teleki himself. In later periods, only members of the Academy could be elected to the presidency, and for a long time the institution also chose the Chief Librarian from its own membership.



*20. Autograph manuscript of the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) by József IV Teleki (sign. Ms 1099)*



*21. Title page of the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. M.Tört.O.151)*



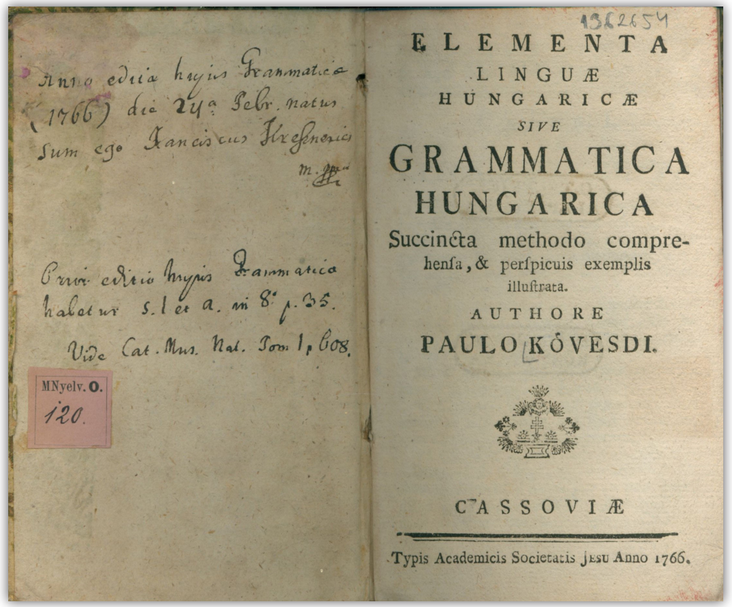
*22. Portrait of Albert of Habsburg, King of Hungary (1397–1439, r. 1437–1439) from the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. M.Tört.O.151)*



*23. Portrait of Elisabeth of Luxembourg, Queen of Hungary (1409–1442, r. 1437–1439) from the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. M.Tört.O.151)*

During his lifetime, Count József IV Teleki fulfilled a multifaceted role as President of the Academy. Besides safeguarding the family library until 1844, as proper library spaces were lacking in the tenancies of the Learned Society, he also made further financial sacrifices from his own wealth to develop the collection. According to scholarship, it is quite certain that in the first decade of the Learned Society's existence Count Teleki paid for its subscriptions to periodicals from his own pocket.

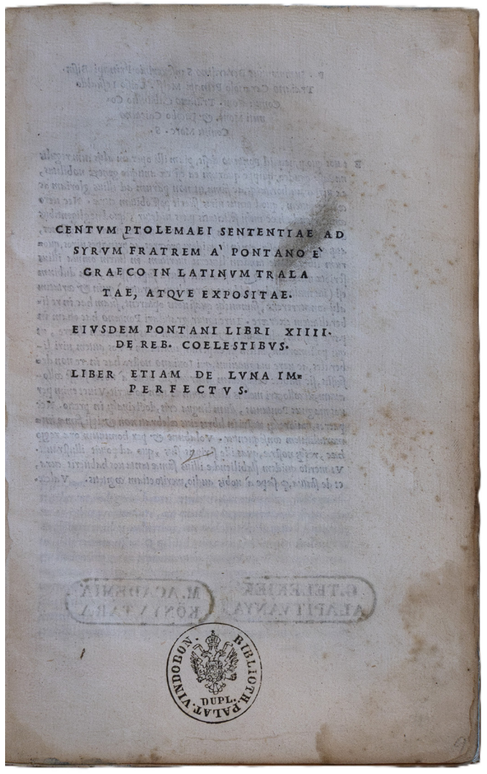
In 1834, Count József IV Teleki bought the book and antiquarian collection of the Catholic priest, teacher, lexicographer, and polyglot Ferenc Kresznerics (1766–1832). Between 1806 and 1809, in Szombathely (Vas County), Kresznerics was a teacher to István Széchenyi, one of the future founders of the Learned Society. Some years previously, Kresznerics had prepared the full catalogue of the antiquities at the museum of Szombathely. This Hungarian city was built on the remains of Savaria, once a place of the cult of the pagan goddess *Isis* in the Pannonia province of the Roman Empire. The bequest of Kresznerics consisted of more than 1,000 books, including two hundred incunabula, manuscripts, and an extensive numismatic collection, which Count Teleki purchased for 4,000 forints. A Latin-language note written in a Hungarian grammar, once in the possession of Kresznerics, summarises both his passion for languages and his enthusiasm for historical accuracy. Kresznerics noted in the volume that he was born on 24 February of the same year, 1766, when the grammar was published. "Anno edita hujus Grammaticae (1766) die 24a Febr. natus sum ego Franciscus Kresznerics. m. propria" (sign. M.Nyelv.O.120). Although the books of Kresznerics were incorporated into the collection of the Learned Society, they were both stamped with the Teleki family stamp and listed separately. That kind of marking was intended to ensure József IV Teleki's ownership of the Kresznerics bequest, in the event of the dissolution of the Learned Society. That hypothetical event, it seems, was still a possibility even eight years after the foundation of the Learned Society.



24. Ownership note of Ferenc Kresznerics (sign. M.Nyelv.O.120)

As a knowledgeable book enthusiast, Count József IV Teleki purchased a valuable manuscript in 1844 and donated it to the Academy. To the present day, the so-called Carbo Codex (sign. K 397) is the only Corvina codex of the Library. (The Carbo Corvina itself is discussed in the entry about the language monument manuscripts below.) In 1850, the President also donated approximately 6,000 volumes from his personal library to the Academy. Among other subjects, it contained a special collection of old and rare books (e.g. Venetian prints by Aldus Manutius), which he bought at the duplicate auction of the Bibliotheca Palatina in Vienna (e.g. sign. Ant. 338).

Considering his personality, which kept him away from strictly defined political affairs for most of his life, it was a personal sacrifice on the part of Count József IV Teleki when, in 1841, under pressure from his younger brother, he became a candidate for the governorship of Transylvania. The following year, he did win the election. When he was to move to Transylvania, in recognition of his achievements, the Learned Society decided to commission a bust of Count Teleki as his representation *in absentia*. The bust, a work of István Ferenczy (1792–1856), sculptor and member of the Academy himself, was ready by 1843. It was already exhibited in the library rooms of the Trattner-Károlyi House in 1844. Later, it stood at the end of the reading rooms in the Palace of the Academy. Nowadays, the bust welcomes visitors entering the Library at 1 Arany János Street.



25. Stamp indicating duplicate volumes from the Bibliotheca Palatina in Vienna, purchased by József IV Teleki (sign. Ant. 338)



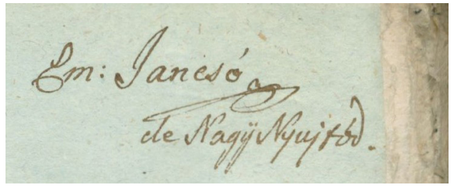
26. Terracotta maquette for the marble bust of Count József IV Teleki by István Ferenczy, (sign. Tárgyak 4)

During the War of Independence in Hungary against its Habsburg rulers in 1848–1849, Count József IV Teleki, as Governor of Transylvania, remained loyal to the national government. He had managed to placate the conflict that had sparked between Hungarians and other political and ethnic minorities, who had been divided over the union between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. After the Revolution's failure, Count Teleki was politically compromised, and the Academy, as a national Hungarian institution, also aroused suspicion in the eyes of the Habsburg government. To save the Academy, one of its founding fathers, Count György Andrássy, who was always loyal to the House of Habsburg, replaced Count Teleki in his position as President of the Academy in 1850.[5] Nevertheless, the Academy's activities were partially suppressed until 1858. In those years, the Academy operated in a latent manner, for instance, calling on citizens to contribute to its Library's collection in newspaper advertisements. The most important book and manuscript donations prompted by those advertisements between 1850 and 1867 are discussed in the entry below on the language monument manuscripts.

It is worth mentioning that those who wanted to donate or sell collections to the Academy regularly contacted Count József IV Teleki, even after he had left his position as President. For instance, in June 1850, Krisztina Hennuy, widow of Imre Jancsó de Nagynyújtód (1793–1848), contacted Count Teleki to offer her late husband's collection for purchase. It consisted of approximately 5,000 books and manuscripts, four-hundred-fifty-five portraits, and more than one hundred engravings and maps. The leaders of the Academy decided to buy it for 5,000 forints, paid in instalments. Although Jancsó himself did not publish any scholarly work on Hungarian history, he had collected many original sources. His collection also included rarities from the history of printing in Hungary, for instance, both incunabulum editions of János Thuróczy's *Chronicle*[6] and the six-language dictionary of Gábor Pesti from 1538.[7] It was Imre Jancsó's habit to write notes on the inside of the upper cover of his books in pencil, and to sign his possessions (e.g. sign. M.Tört.Qu.76).



27. Portrait of Imre Jancsó



28. Ownership note of Imre Jancsó (sign. M.Tört.Qu.76)

5 However, Andrássy is not officially counted among the Presidents of the Academy; thus, according to tradition, the second President was Emil Dessewffy. See: Szilágyi ed. 2023.

6 The historiographer János Thuróczy (c. 1435–c. 1489) composed his *Chronica Hungarorum* between 1480 and 1488. For the two incunabula editions of his work, see their description in the entry "Gentlemen's Agreement Broken" above.

7 Gábor Pesti died around 1550. His work, *Nomenclatura Sex Linguarum. Latinae, Italicae, Gallicae, Bohemicae, Hungaricae et Germanicae, Lingua autem Hungarica nouiter accessit, cum Latinarum dictionum plurimarum, quae prius deprauatae fuerant restitutione...* (Vienna, 1538) was based on a previous five-language dictionary published in Nuremberg in 1531.

Closing this entry about the Teleki family collection, one must return to the first President of the Academy, Count József IV Teleki. As a final generous act of a life spent in service of Hungarian culture, in his testament, Count Teleki bequeathed to the Academy both the remainder of his personal library and an enormous sum of 24,000 forints. His last books, of unknown number, probably covering subjects in history and historiography, were inserted into the main collection in 1855. The interest from the sum above was to cover the increase in the Chief Librarian's salary and the new purchases for expanding the collection.

After the many Teleki donations listed in the previous and the present entries, the donation of Domokos Teleki, a cousin of József IV Teleki, should be mentioned. Domokos Teleki, who lived in Transylvania, primarily on his estates in Gernyeszeg (today Gornești, Romania), was a historian and a member of the Academy since 1836, holding increasingly senior positions. In 1853, Domokos Teleki donated a dozen books to the Academy, most of them sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century rare prints. There was also one incunabulum among the gifts, a colligated volume of two works of medicine, printed by Bernardino Rizzo in Venice in 1492 (sign. Inc. 1003).[8] However, the donations of Domokos Teleki were not signed with the Teleki family stamp to indicate their provenance.

Finally, as appointing the Chief Librarian remained a feudal investiture right of the founding branch of the Teleki family until the Second World War, it is important to emphasize that after the death of József IV Teleki, one of his nephews, the son of Sámuel V Teleki, Sándor Teleki, became the family's representative. He consented to the new subject field order of the Library to be set up in the new Palace in 1863,[9] and to every other suggestion concerning the collection until his untimely death in 1875. Sándor Teleki considered his own consent a mere formality honoring the intention of his predecessors, a modesty that would be worth following by non-experts in every walk of life.

Although a lot of information is available about the expansion of both the Teleki family collection and their later donations, and about purchases made from Teleki funds, it is not possible to precisely reconstruct the composition of the core Teleki collection at any stage. A complete catalogue of the original collection offered to the Learned Society was never prepared. Only partial bibliographies and catalogues of it were composed in the following decades. Moreover, both the volumes in the Teleki family collection and those purchased later from Teleki funds were marked with a double stamp between 1835 and 1863. One stamp indicated the ownership of the Academy ("M. ACADEMIA' KÖNYVTÁRA") and the other signified the Teleki provenance ("G. TELEKIEK' ALAPITVÁNYA"). Considering all the numbers mentioned in the scholarship regarding the Teleki family collection, it is possible that the number of books from that family in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences once exceeded 35,000 volumes. It seems, however, that the exact dimensions of the Teleki collection(s) offered for donation were, at best, *approximately* known even to the donors themselves.



29–30. Ownership stamp of the founding Teleki collection and the image of its imprint



31–32. Ownership stamp of the Academy's Library and the image of its imprint

8 Szabó 2019b, 57.

9 Szabó 2019b, 118.

The Second Largest Donation for the Library: the Batthyány Family Collections

In 1838–1839, two brothers from the Batthyány de Németújvár family donated two separate collections to the Hungarian Learned Society, which were kept in two different estates of their ancestors.[1] The two collections, totalling approximately 28,000 volumes, contained books from four previous generations, from the time of the two brothers' great-great-grandparents onward. The Batthyány family's estates were situated in the western parts of the Kingdom of Hungary. Traditionally, the family members were Catholic and served at the Habsburg royal court in Vienna. In this sense, they were almost exact counterparts of the Teleki family, a clan of Protestant oppositionists originating in Transylvania.

In a letter dated 25 September 1838, addressed to Count József IV Teleki, then President of the Hungarian Learned Society, Count Gusztáv Batthyány (1803–1883) offered for donation the book collection held at his family estates in Rohonc (today Rechnitz, Burgenland, Austria). Count Gusztáv Batthyány initially estimated the number of volumes at 30,000. However, as it turned out later, the collection in Rohonc did not exceed 26,000 volumes. On 13 December 1838, his younger brother, Kázmér Batthyány (1807–1854), donated to the Learned Society his own collection of 2,660 volumes, which were kept at his estates in Kisbér (Komárom-Esztergom County). The donation of the two Batthyány brothers was the earliest extensive collection to enter the rooms of the Library of the Hungarian Learned Society, as it arrived at the Trattner-Károlyi House already in April 1839. As noted above, most of the Teleki donation came to the Trattner-Károlyi House from Szervita Square only in 1844.



1. Portrait of Gusztáv Batthyány



2. Portrait of Kázmér Batthyány, painted by Miklós Barabás

1 Hursán 2019.

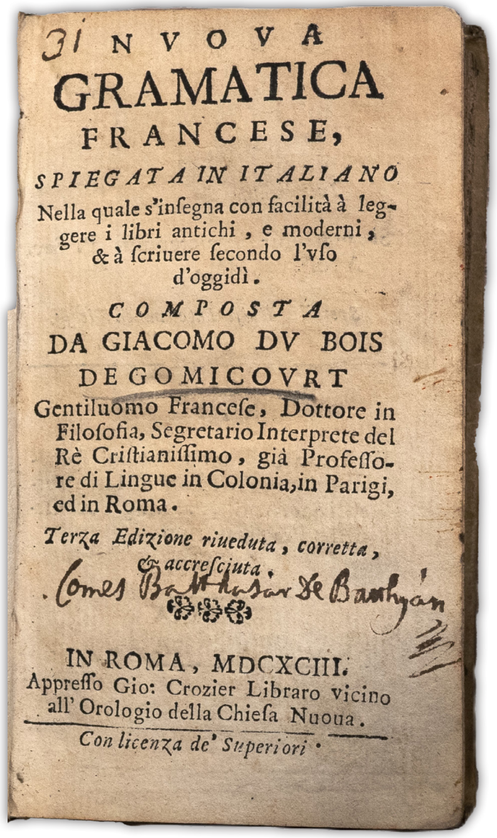
According to Ferenc Toldy, the first cataloguer of the Batthyány collection in 1839, the foundations of the family library were established by Count Lajos Ernő Batthyány (1696–1765), Palatine of Hungary from 1751 to his death. A published catalogue of his books, kept in his house in Vienna from 1743, shows volumes mainly on political, diplomatic and belles lettres subjects, as well as entertainment literature for ladies. The selection of that collection was probably influenced by the taste of the Palatine's late mother, Countess Eleonóra Strattmann (1672–1741). Countess Strattmann, who was widowed from Count Ádám II Batthyány (1662–1703) at the age of thirty-one, thanks to her inherited wealth, could bring up her two sons on her own, without being forced to remarry. Countess Eleonóra Strattmann, a famous beauty of her time, had good connections at the court of Vienna. She was also close friends with Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), the hero of the Battle of Zenta (today Senta, Serbia) against the Ottomans in 1697. The great military commander was a guest of the Batthyánys many times in Rohonc. He helped the career of Countess Strattmann's sons, the above-mentioned Palatine Lajos Ernő and his brother, Károly József Batthyány (1697–1772). Károly József was a successful military commander and, in 1749–1763, the Grand Master of the Court, i.e. the educator of the royal children in Vienna. He had an approximately 3,000-volume collection in his house in Vienna, the remains of which are nowadays safeguarded by the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest.

Alas, in the Batthyány collection in our Library today, there are no volumes commemorating the ownership of either Countess Eleonóra Strattmann or Prince Eugene of Savoy. However, there is an Italian-language grammar describing the basics of French from 1693 (sign. Isk.O.1871), in which an uncle of the Batthyány boys, a brother of their father, Boldizsár IV Batthyány (†1700), noted his own name: "Comes Balthasar de Batthyán". There is also a volume about the art of war (sign. Hadt.O.297), which was gifted in 1751 by the then military commander Károly József Batthyány to one of his nephews, Tódor Batthyány (1729–1812). The gift is commemorated by Tódor's note in French: "Moi, Theodore de Batthyan, aivrem ce livre de Mr. mon trés cher oncle, Charles G. de Batthyan, l'An 1751 10 Janvier"[2] 'Me, Tódor Batthyány, received this book from my lord and very dear uncle, Károly Batthyány on 10 January 1751'.



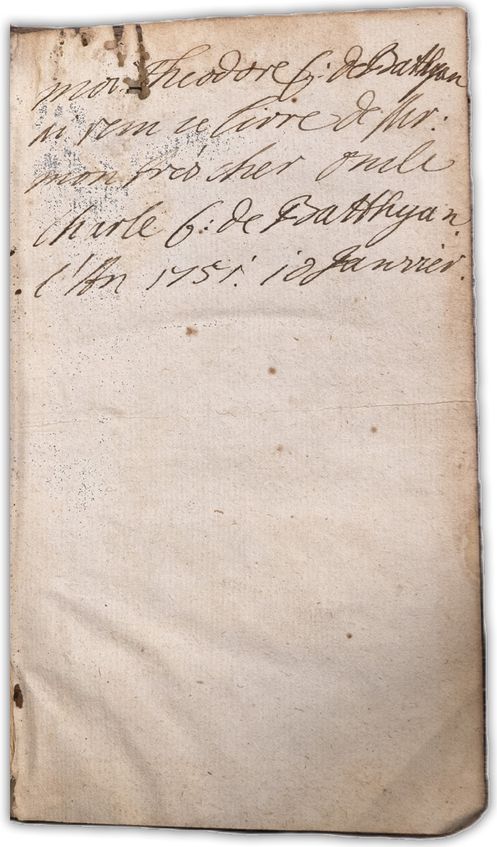
3. Portrait of Eleonóra Strattmann

2 The transliteration preserves the spelling errors of the original ownership note.



NVOVA
GRAMATICA
FRANCESE,
SPIEGATA IN ITALIANO
Nella quale s'insegna con facilità à leggere i libri antichi, e moderni, & à scriuere secondo l'vso d'oggidì.
COMPOSTA
DA GIACOMO DV BOIS
DE GOMICOVRT
Gentiluomo Francese, Dottore in Filosofia, Segretario Interprete del Rè Cristianissimo, già Professore di Lingue in Colonia, in Parigi, ed in Roma.
Terza Edizione riueduta, corretta, & accresciuta.
Comes Balthasar de Batthyán
IN ROMA, MDCXCIII.
Appresso Gio: Crozier Libraro vicino all' Orologio della Chiesa Nuoua.
Con licenza de' Superiori.

4. Ownership note of Boldizsár IV Batthyány (sign. Isk.O.1871)



5. Tódor Batthyány's note commemorating a gift book from his uncle Károly József Batthyány (sign. Hadt.O.297)

Lajos Ernő Batthyány, the Palatine, had four sons from his marriage with Terézia Kinsky (1700–1775): Ádám III Vencel (1722–1787), József (1727–1799), the above-mentioned Tódor and Fülöp (1735–1795). Among the four sons, József and Tódor were the most dedicated book-collectors. József had a stellar ecclesiastical career, becoming Archbishop of Esztergom in 1776. His collection of manuscripts commemorates his name in the Archdiocesan Library of Esztergom to this day. It is, however, quite surprising that, despite his passion for books, he did not sign the volumes in his possession. To our knowledge, there are hardly any known ownership notes and no *ex libris* stamp of Archbishop József Batthyány recorded in any collections today.



6. Portrait of József Batthyány, Archbishop of Esztergom

The person contributing the most to the Batthyány collection was certainly Tódor Batthyány. He had a fascinating character, interested in technical innovation and industry. For instance, he developed a type of ship, patented and christened *Bucentaurus* (1797), which could run against the river's current. Depending on their location and resources, Count Tódor Batthyány established mines and factories on his various estates. He collected there the latest literature on every cultivated profession, possibly even as many as thirteen different locations. His most important collections were in Vienna and in Rohonc. It is quite certain that in Rohonc, there was a subject-based classification of the collection, and the seven main classes were reflected by the colour of the paper book covers as well. There were covers in dark green for agriculture, light green for natural sciences, orange for economy, dark blue for medicine, light blue for geography and politics, burgundy for encyclopaedias and pink for technology. Despite their deterioration over time, most of the colours are still identifiable in the Library today. Count Tódor Batthyány used at least four different ownership notes for his library ("Ex Bibliotheca Theodori Batthyány", sign. Gazd.F.123), sometimes signing his full name ("Theodor Batthyány", sign. Gazd.F.7), other times using his initials ("T. B.", sign. Növt.F.46), or his monogram including his rank ("G. T. B.", sign. Növt.F.25).

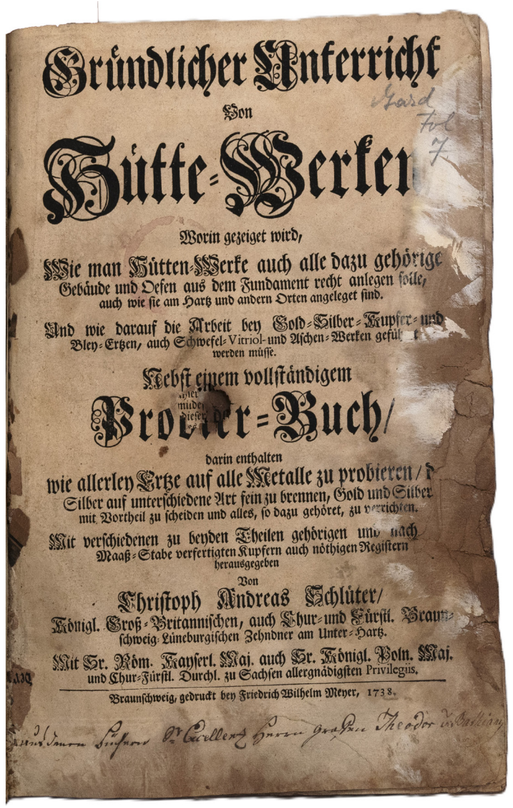


7. Portrait of Tódor Batthyány

The Second Largest Donation for the Library: the Batthyány Family Collections



8. Selection of volumes with colour-coded classification of the book covers from the Rohonc estate in the Library, today



Gründlicher Unterricht
Von
Hütte-Werken
Worin gezeiget wird,
Wie man Hütten-Werke auch alle dazu gehörige Gebäude und Oefen aus dem Fundament recht anlegen solle, auch wie sie am Hartz und andern Orten angeleget sind.
Und wie darauf die Arbeit bey Gold-Silber-Kupfer- und Bley-Ertzen, auch Schwefel-Vitriol- und Aschen-Werken geführet werden müsse.
Nebst einem vollständigem
Probier-Buch/
darin enthalten
wie allerley Ertze auf alle Metalle zu probieren/ das Silber auf unterschiedene Art fein zu brennen, Gold und Silber mit Vortheil zu scheiden und alles, so dazu gehöret, zu verrichten.
Mit verschiedenen zu beyden Theilen gehörigen und nach Maaß-Stabe verfertigten Kupfern auch nöthigen Registern herausgegeben
Von
Christoph Andreas Schlüter/
Königl. Groß-Britannischen, auch Chur- und Fürstl. Braunschweig-Lüneburgischen Zehndner am Unter-Hartz.
Mit Sr. Röm. Kayserl. Maj. auch Sr. Königl. Poln. Maj. und Chur-Fürstl. Durchl. zu Sachsen allergnädigsten Privilegiis.
Braunschweig, gedruckt bey Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer, 1738.

9. Ownership note of Tódor Batthyány (sign. Gazd.F.7). Both the paper book covers and the state of this volume show the physical deterioration of the Batthyány collection in Rohonc



Versuch,
bey angehender Frühlings-Zeit
die
Vergrösserungs-Werckzeuge
zum
nützlich u. angenehmen Zeitvertreib
anzuwenden
von
dem Verfasser der Mikroskopischen Gemüths- u. Augen-Ergötzung.
Nürnberg
Im Verlag bey A. L. Wirsing, Kupferstechern u. Kunsthändl.
1764.
ESSAI,
d'employer les Instruments Microscopiques
avec
UTILITÉ ET PLAISIR
dans
LA SAISON DU PRINTEMS
par
l'Auteur des Amusements Microscopiques
tant des Yeux que de l'Esprit;
traduit de l'Allemand par
I.C. HARREPETER MAITRE ES ARTS
à Nuremberg chez A.L. Wirsing, Graveur.
1764.
M.F. Ledermüller delin. et Sculp. — A.L. Wirsing Sculp. et excud. Norimberg.

10. Title page of a lavishly illustrated work on botany from the collection of Tódor Batthyány (sign. Növt.F.46)









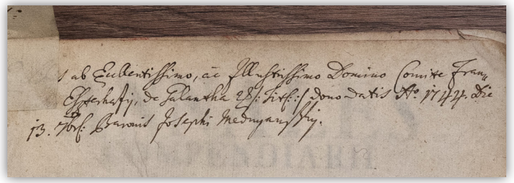
*11–14. Illustrations of the iris flower (*Iris versicolor*), the cherry (*Prunus subg. Cerasus*) and its parasite, the European cherry fruit fly (*Rhagoletis cerasi*) as well as different hybrids of the Persian buttercup (*Ranunculus asiaticus*), from the same volume (sign. Növt.F.46)*

It is known, moreover, that Tódor Batthyány purchased collections of different noble families from western Hungary as well. Among them are the books once belonging to a certain Joseph Gottfried Dombay de Dombóvár, who noted his many purchases in the volumes. Dombay had bought most of his books in Vienna, between 1720 and 1770 (e.g. sign. Utaz.O.361).

There is one volume in Tódor Batthyány's collection, which, according to his note of provenance, was connected to his wife's family, the Esterházy clan. Count Tódor Batthyány married Countess Philippine Esterházy de Galánta (1734–1811) in 1756. The book in question was gifted to Count Ferenc Esterházy de Galánta (1683–1754), the father of Countess Philippine, by another aristocrat on 13 September 1744. The gift itself was a copy of the freshly published *Annales compendiarii regum et rerum Syriae numis veteribus illustrati*[3] by the novice Károly Eszterházy (1725–1799), son of Count Ferenc Esterházy, and brother to Countess Philippine Esterházy (sign. Törtlm.F.38). After a successful ecclesiastical career, Károly Eszterházy died as Bishop of Eger in north-eastern Hungary; today, a university in the city bears his name.



15. Ownership note of Joseph Gottfried Dombay de Dombóvár (sign. Utaz.O.361)



16. Provenance note in a volume from the family of Countess Philippine Esterházy de Galánta to the Batthyány collection (sign. Törtlm.F.38)

3 Annals of the Kings and Affairs of Syria, illustrated with Ancient Coins.

The only son born from the marriage of Count Tódor Batthyány with Countess Philippine Esterházy, Count Antal József Batthyány (1762–1828), was anything but a book enthusiast. He did not inherit his father's scientific mind either. It seems that Antal József Batthyány dedicated his whole life to enjoying the family's wealth, spending most of his time in Milan and Vienna. He also furnished a representative residence for entertaining guests on the family estates in Kisbér. He maintained only the more lavishly decorated books of his father in Kisbér. He sent the rest of the collection to the Rohonc estates, which gradually became a neglected, chaotic repository for books.



17. The Batthyány family estates in Kisbér, today

The two sons of Antal József Batthyány and Countess Cecilia Roggendorf (1778–1814), with whom this entry began as donors of their inheritance to the Learned Society, were Gusztáv and Kázmér Batthyány. The elder brother, Gusztáv Batthyány, spent most of his adulthood abroad, especially in England, where he gained fame with his excellent stable of racehorses. The younger brother, Kázmér Batthyány, after being raised mainly abroad, returned home and also learned Hungarian, as did his friend, Count István Széchenyi, one of the founding fathers of the Learned Society. Kázmér was active in politics and participated in the War of Independence of 1848–1849. After the revolution failed, he was forced to emigrate.

The two brothers signed a contract in Frankfurt am Main in 1837 regarding the division of their inheritance. They soon had to face the sad circumstances of their grandfather's library in Rohonc. According to tradition, it was the former teacher and associate of Kázmér Batthyány, Károly Nagy (1797–1868), a member of the Learned Society since 1836, who suggested to his pupil that he donate the family collection for patriotic purposes. However, Károly Nagy was hardly delighted by the value of the collection at first sight, describing the circumstances in Rohonc as follows: "Someone who has not seen this library could not have any idea how a garbage dump of literature looks. Garbage, *sensu lato* of the term. It is really inconceivable how one would collect such a pile of useless printed paper (*vulgo*: book). I would think that the founders of this library robbed some unfortunate antiquarian bookshop, or motivated by some particular passion, they purchased the most despicable inventions of the human mind by the cubit or by the fathom. At any rate, in my opinion, most of the library is not worth the money its transport would cost." The harsh criticism by Nagy, then, would have probably addressed the library's physical state more than its contents. According to the opinion of the above-mentioned Ferenc Toldy, the first cataloguer of the Batthyány collection in 1839, it was a collection worth having. In his view, most of the books in the Library of the Learned Society were novelties, and the recent volumes on politics, economics and technology had particular value.



18. Selection of volumes from the Rohonc estate in the Library, today

Not to be unjust to the Batthyány collection, there should be mention of its two gems, which Tódor Batthyány probably purchased. Judging by the label inside (Majoris 132., actual sign.: 542.995), a copy of Nicolaus Copernicus' main work, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (Basel, Heinrich Petri, 1566),[4] formed part of Count Tódor Batthyány's collection in Rohonc. According to data from 2010, it is one of three hundred twenty-six copies of that edition worldwide. The other gem is the most enigmatic item in the Library, the so-called Rohonc Codex (sign. K 114). It is a manuscript with illustrations written on sixteenth-century Venetian paper, in an undefined, cryptic language, using more than a hundred different symbols. It has stimulated attempts at code-breaking almost every year by professional linguists and passionate amateurs alike. Nevertheless, no definitive answer exists either about the origins or the real meaning of the Rohonc Codex. The only certain fact is that it pertained to the Batthyány collections in Rohonc, which were donated to the Learned Society in 1838.

In sum, despite the unfavourable initial impression it had made on its first examiner, Károly Nagy, the Batthyány collection would soon become an essential part of the Library of the Learned Society. However, the volumes originally belonging to the Batthyány family, unlike those of the Teleki collection, did not receive a special provenance stamp. Therefore, at present the reconstruction of the Batthyány collection is based on earlier book lists, the donors' letters, ownership notes, and the special colour-coded paper covers of the volumes mentioned above. In comparison with the Teleki collection, the Batthyány collection was formed more spontaneously. It was assembled primarily by a scientifically minded individual whose interests were oriented more towards practical matters than towards encyclopaedic knowledge. Owing to its size and the range of subjects it encompasses, the Batthyány collection became a fortunate complement to the founding Teleki collection in the Library of the Academy.

4 On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres.



19. Pages from the Rohonc Codex (sign. K 114)

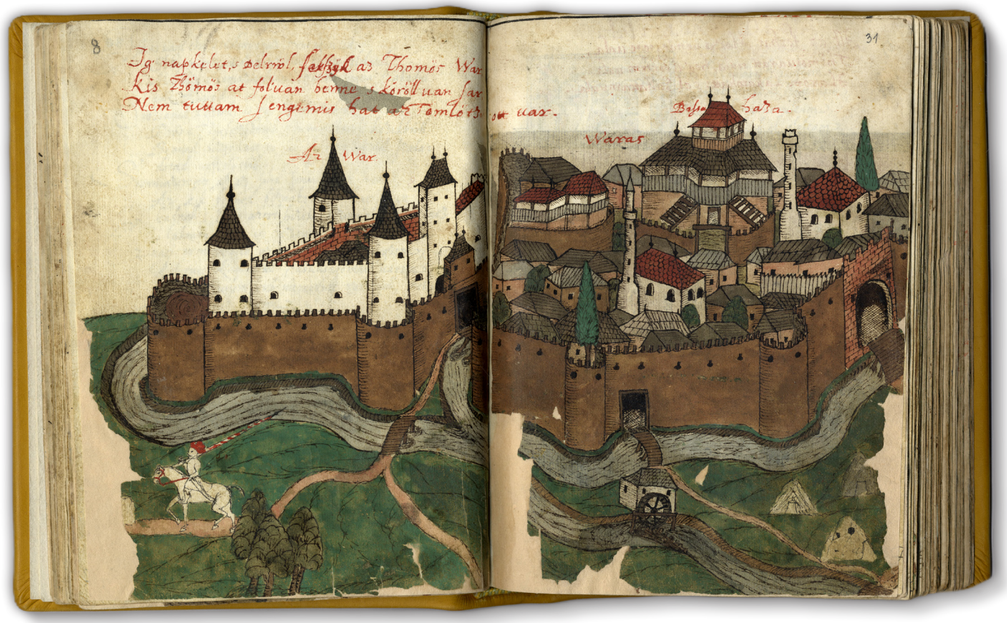
The Second Largest Donation for the Library: the Batthyány Family Collections

In addition to the extensive family collections donated to the Learned Society, many individual donations were also received, in accordance with the institution's patriotic goals. To encourage the donation of essential documents of Hungarian written culture, the Learned Society promised to perpetuate the donors' memory by naming the donations in their honour. Thus, a series of valuable codices, testimonies to the early stages of the Hungarian language, came into the Library's possession. For instance, Károly Guary de Felsőszeleste (1802–1864) donated two manuscripts from his family archives. Guary offered a manuscript perpetuating his name, the Guary Codex (sign. K 34), in 1835. Seven years later, in 1842, Guary also donated to the Academy the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay (sign. K 62), a lavishly illustrated manuscript. It was composed by Ferenc Wathay (1568–after 1609), a Hungarian frontier soldier while in Ottoman captivity in Constantinople, between 1604 and 1606.



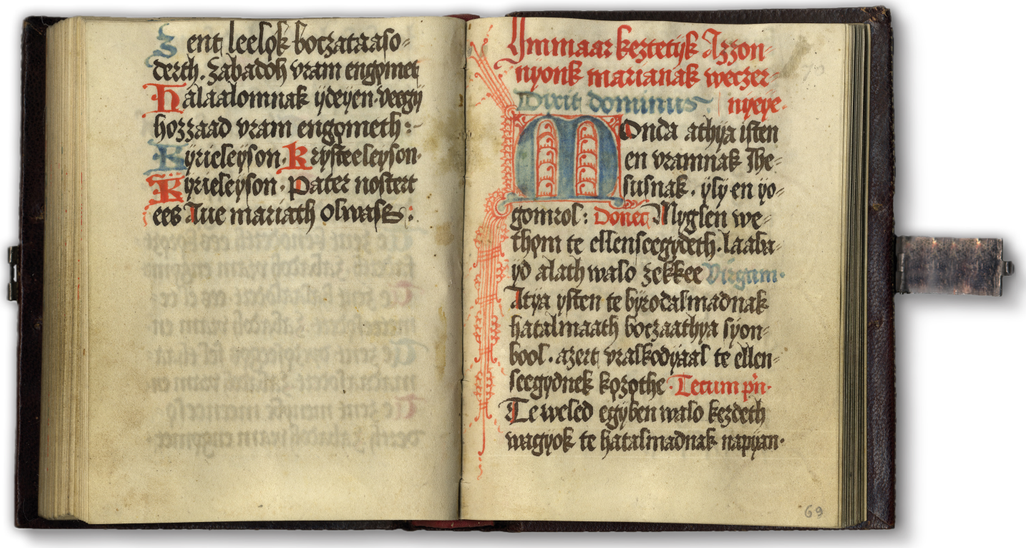


1–4. Multiple images from the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay, including his coat of arms, and the view of Constantinople (sign. K 62)





Many of the extant Hungarian-language monument manuscripts were translations of holy texts for female devotion, for both ecclesiastical and lay audiences. For instance, the so-called Czech Codex (sign. K 42) commemorates the 1834 donation by János Czech (1798–1854), a former mayor and judge of Győr (Győr-Moson-Sopron County). The donor's name obscures the original female lay owner of the handwritten prayerbook, Benigna Magyar (c. 1465–1526), wife of the military commander Pál Kinizsi (1432–1494). The manuscript was discovered by János Czech in the Franciscan monastery of Érsekújvár (today Nové Zámky, Slovakia) in 1833. However, the prayerbook was originally prepared by Pauline monks for their patron's wife, Benigna Magyar, at Nagyvázsony (Veszprém County) on the Kinizsi family's estates.



5. Czech Codex (sign. K 42)

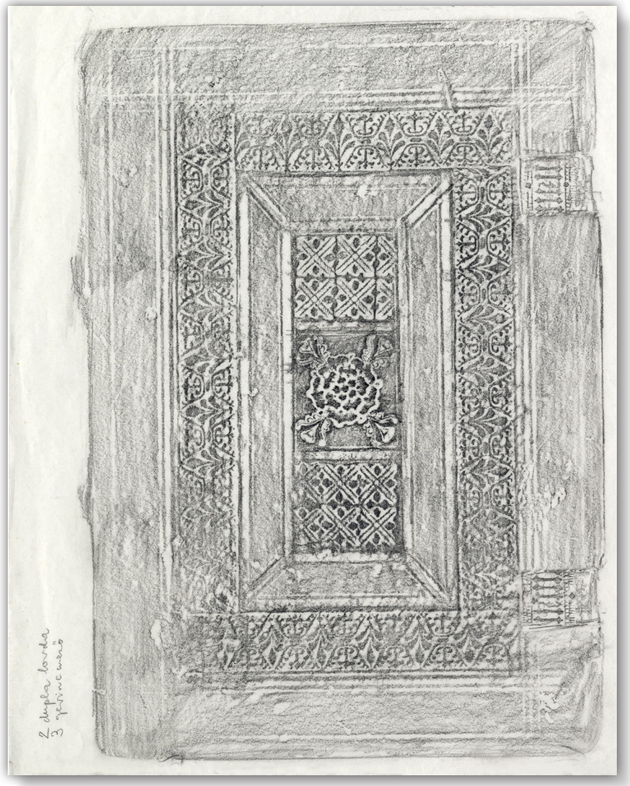
It was also János Czech, who discovered the so-called Érsekújvár Codex (sign. K 45) in the above-mentioned Franciscan monastery in Upper Hungary, in 1836. The manuscript, however, was originally prepared by a community of nuns, led by the *scriptor* and illustrator Soror Márta Sövényházi, in the Dominican Convent on Margaret Island between 1529 and 1531. The convent's ruins are still visible on the Island in today's Budapest. The Érsekújvár Codex was donated to the Academy in 1851 by the Franciscan superior Father Pantaleon Golessényi (1786–1863) and was rebound afterwards.



6–8. Érsekújvár Codex (sign. K 45)



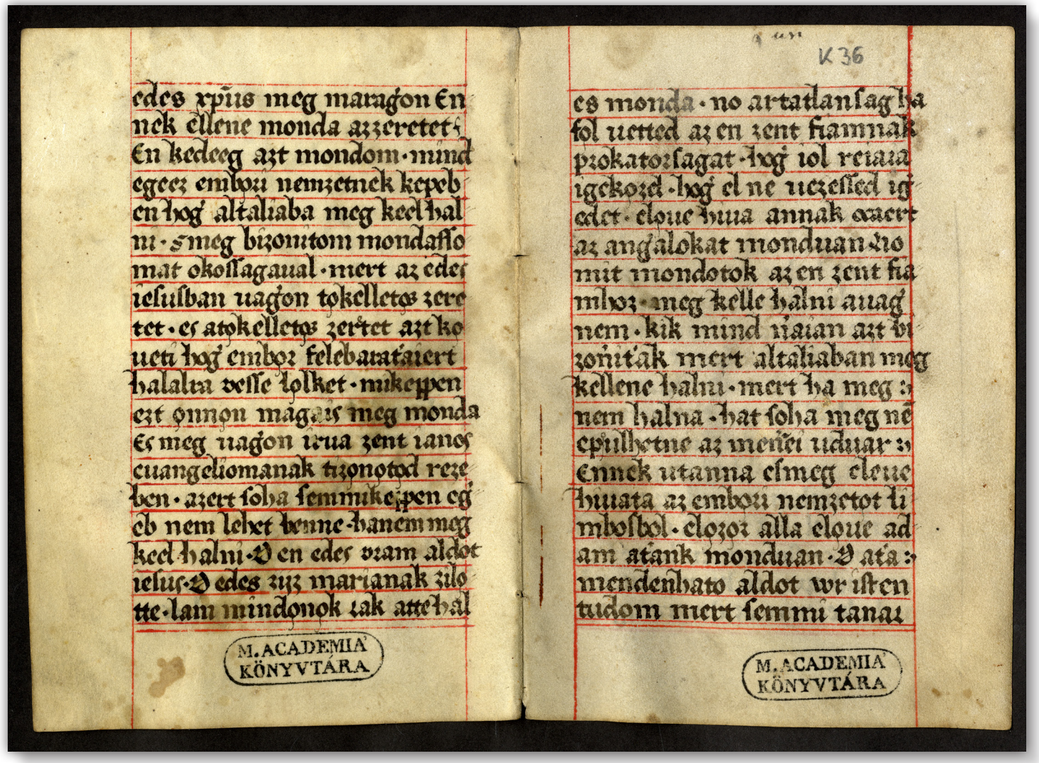
The so-called Virginia Codex (sign. K 40) is of special importance for two reasons: its namesake and its binding. The codex commemorates the name of a lady, Countess Virginia Dessewffy (†1856), who, in 1844, arranged the manuscript's transport from the parish of Tiszalök (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County) to Pest, for the codex to be copied at the Academy. Later, in 1851, the Archbishop of Eger, Béla Bartakovics (1791–1873), on behalf of the Catholic Church, donated the manuscript to the Academy. The manuscript was prepared around 1515, probably in the Dominican Convent on Margaret Island. During the Ottoman invasion, the nuns, looking for refuge, brought the codex with them to Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia). The codex has a special type of Renaissance binding characteristic of artisans once active in Buda. Hence, the latest scholarship calls it the Virginia Codex-type binding, as evidenced by six codices held today in various historical Hungarian collections.[1]



9. Reproduction of the Virginia Codex-type binding (sign. K 40)

1 Rozsondai 2019, 187–191.

As mentioned before, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences existed in an *ex lege* state for almost a decade, between 1849 and 1858, when the Habsburg ruler of the Kingdom of Hungary did not guarantee its legal status. Nevertheless, through newspaper advertisements, the Academy's leadership encouraged the public to donate even fragmentary early testimonies of Hungarian written culture to the Library. Many donors were moved by the advertisement, both by their patriotism and by their vanity. For instance, in 1850, Franciscan monk Czirjék János Piry (1810–1880) discovered in the above-mentioned monastery in Érsekújvár a one-leaf remainder of a mystery play on the necessity of Christ's suffering (sign. K 36). The text is written on parchment; hence, its name refers both to its donor and its material, the so-called Piry-hártya (Piry Membrane).



10. Piry Membrane (sign. K 36)

At present, there are a total of nine language monument manuscripts in our Library (signs. K 33, K 34, K 39, K 40, K 43, K 45, K 46, K 47, K 62). As of 2025, seven of the nine codices have already been published in facsimile editions with transliteration in the *Régi Magyar Kódexek* book series (signs. Mss K 39, K 40, K 41, K 42, K 46, K 45, K 47). The language monument manuscripts are part of the "Hungarian Codices" collection, which occupies the signatures K 31–K 114 in the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books.[2] Moreover, the "Latin Codices" collection (including some Greek ones) occupies the signatures K 393–K 500. The latter manuscripts, however, were mainly prepared abroad and purchased by donors during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, those codices did not influence the development of Hungarian vernacular culture, serving, for instance, as a basis for translations. Their value lies mainly in their role as representatives of the art of manuscript illumination throughout the centuries. For example, thanks to the donations of Ferenc Pulszky (1814–1897), the Library has some lavishly decorated books of hours, exemplary items of fifteenth-century French book illumination (e.g. signs. Mss K 429, K 404). The floral margin decorations of another Latin book of hours (sign. K 424) from mid-fifteenth-century Paris represent the same style as that of a manuscript of a famous Renaissance love story about Eurialus and Lucretia today in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Ms 68.[3]



11–12. Horarium Biturigense, *workshop of Jean Colombe, 1485–1490, donation by Ferenc Pulszky, 1867 (sign. K 429). The months of September–October and December*

2 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 314–327.
3 Schindler 2016, 153–154.





13. Horarium, *c. 1400, France, donation by Ferenc Pulszky, 1867 (sign. K 404)*



14. Medallion issued for the 50th anniversary of Ferenc Pulszky's literary career, 1884. Made by Anton Schraff (sign. Érmek 88)









15–18. The four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (sign. K 424)

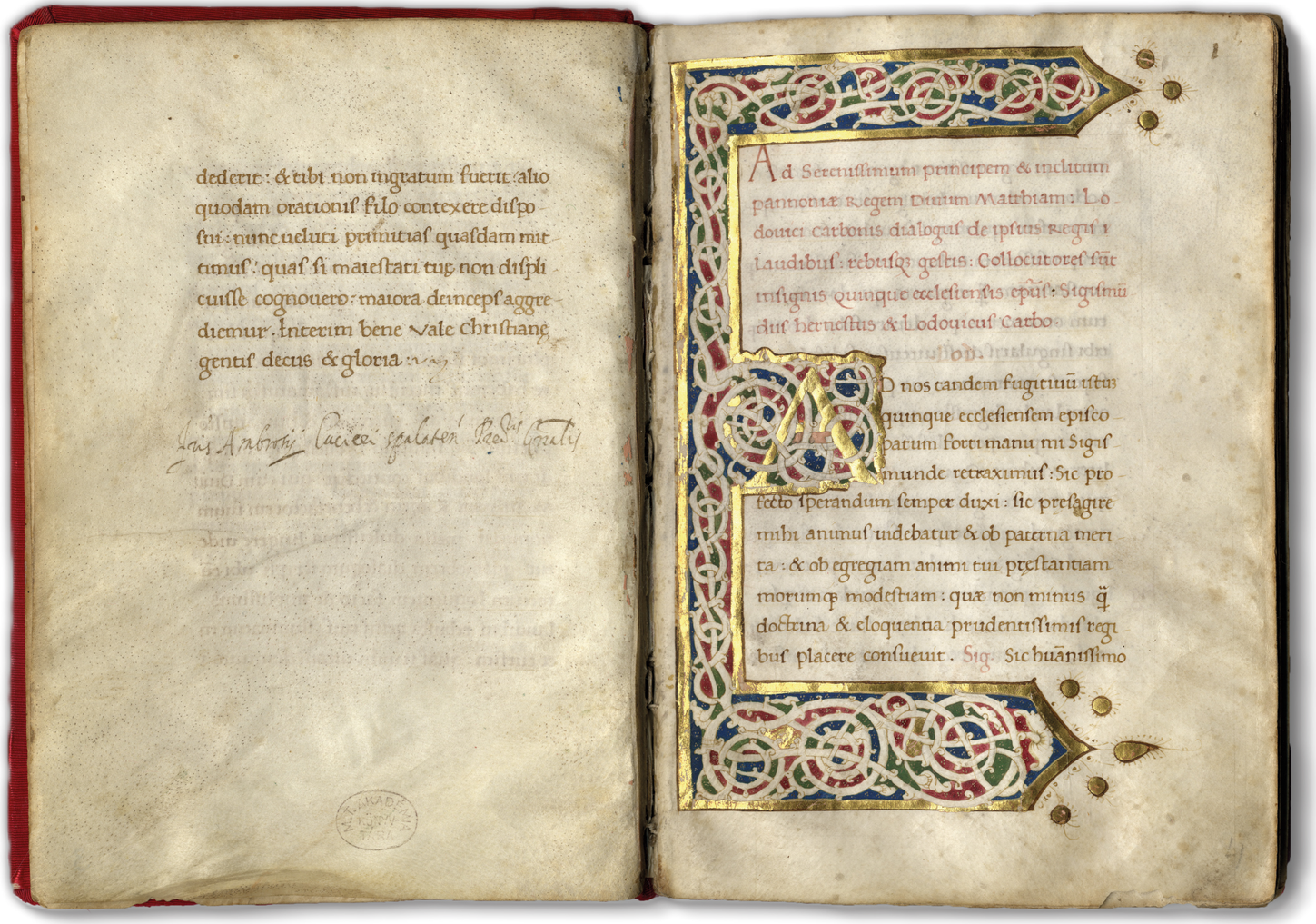
There are two Latin Codices of outstanding cultural-historical importance for Hungary, as well. One is the modestly decorated manuscript of Ludovicus Carbo's *De divi Mathiae regis laudibus*.[4] It is a parchment codex written in Ferrara, between 1473 and 1475 (sign. K 397), that contains the Italian humanist's eulogy for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary (r. 1458–1490). The codex once belonged to the King's famous book collection, the Bibliotheca Corviniana, and is thus also a Corvina. At an unknown date, it was taken to Spalato (today Split, Croatia), and was finally purchased in Munich, after which it was donated to the Academy by the often-mentioned József IV Teleki, founder of the Library, in 1840. The other treasure is an eight-leaf fragment of a paper codex, containing the military manual *Bellifortis* by Konrad Keyser (1366–c. 1405), a work with depictions symbolising the planets (sign. K 465). Among the mounted figures, one can find the King of Hungary and Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1368–1437), representing the Sun, and his wife, Empress Barbara of Cilli (1392–1451), representing the planet Venus. Whether that codex was originally part of the Corvina Library is a subject of academic debate to this day. The codex itself was held in the Old Palace in Istanbul until 1889, when the Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry purchased it and removed it from Turkey with the Sultan's permission, and later, in 1893, donated it to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

4 Eulogy of the Divine King Matthias. The Italian humanist Lodovico Carbone was born in Ferrara in 1435, and, after living in different Italian cities, also died there in 1482.


SACRE REGIE, MAIESTATI DI
VI MATTHIE PANONIE, BOEMIE
DALMATIE, REGIS INVICTISSI
MI: LODOVICVS CARBO S
ALVTEM PLVRIMAM DICIT

Contemplanti mihi di
ligentissime q intuenti
singulor italiæ princi
pum externorumq re
gum uitam & mores no
facile quisq occurrit quem tibi in omni gne
laudis preferre aut et comparare possim
Duce Matthia rex invictissime: Nam si
rei militaris peritiam consideremus q
propria est magnorum uiror: principi
busq maxime necessaria non ad inferendas
sed ad propulsandas iniurias neminem

19. Title page of the Carbo Codex (sign. K 397)



dederit: & tibi non ingratum fuerit: alio
quodam orationis filo contexere dispo
sui: nunc ueluti primitias quasdam mit
timus: quas si maiestati tue non displi
cuisse cognouero: maiora deincepsaggre
diemur. Interim bene vale christiane
gentis decus & gloria.

Ad Serenissimum principem & inclitum
pannoniæ regem Dnum Matthiam: Lo
douici carbonis dialogus de ipsius regis
laudibus: rebusq; gestis: Collocutores sūt
insignis quinque ecclesiensis epūs: Sigismū
dus hermestus & Lodouicus Carbo.

D nos tandem fugitiuū ustus
quinque ecclesiensem episco
patum forti manu mi Sigis
munde retraximus: Sic pro
fecto sperandum semper duxi: sic presagire
mihi animus indebatur & ob paterna meri
ta: & ob egregiam animi tui prestantiam
morumq; modestiam: quæ non minus q̄
doctrina & eloquentia prudentissimis regi
bus placere consueuit. Sig. Sic huānissimo

20. Dedication of Ludovicus Carbo to King Matthias Corvinus (sign. K 397)

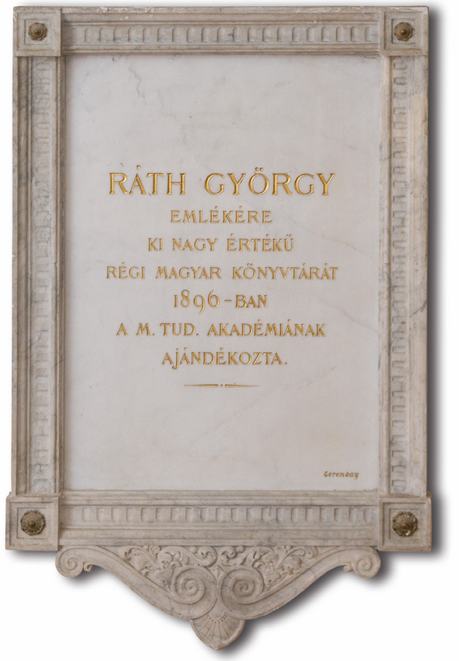


21–22. Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg representing the Sun, and Empress Barbara of Cilli representing the planet Venus, from Konrad Keyser's Bellifortis *(sign. K 465). Their only daughter was Elisabeth of Luxembourg, Queen of Hungary (1409–1442, r. 1437–1439), mentioned above in connection with József IV Teleki's work entitled* Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon



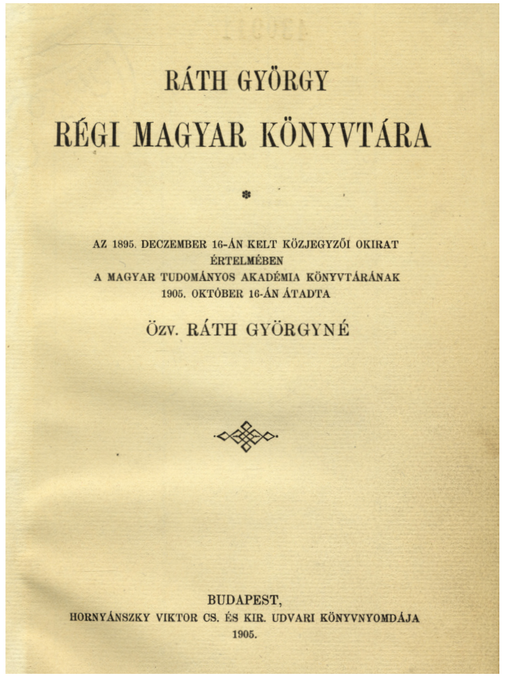
The Old Hungarian Book Collection of György Ráth

On the wall of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books is a marble memorial plaque commemorating the 1895 donation by György Ráth (1828–1905).[1] Ráth, a jurist, expert on antiquities and collector of precious books and artwork, at the time Director of the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest, promised his collection of pre-1711 books to the Academy. In the contract, Ráth required his collection to be held in a separate library cabinet and that its items not be sold under any circumstances. Both of the donor's wishes have been fulfilled to this day: the items of the Ráth collection have their own *numerus currens* and different cabinets. After György Ráth's death (16 October 1905), his widow, née Gizella Melcsiczky (†1917), handed over to the Academy her husband's collection together with its printed catalogue.[2] The catalogue contained 1,042 books printed in Hungary and 1,322 books printed abroad. Among the foreign prints, there were as many as one hundred and forty-one incunabula, i.e. books printed before 1 January 1501. The incunabulum *Obsequiale Strigoniense* (Nuremberg, Georg Stuck, 1496), which had a limited print run for the use of Hungarian clerics, was purchased by Ráth in Germany. The volume (sign. Ráth 1049) is considered to be a unique copy of an exclusive work to this day. The year 1711 as a time limit for Ráth's collection was not an arbitrary decision but was based on historical tradition. The first ever retrospective bibliography of Hungary contained data until that year, when Dávid Czvittinger (1676–1743) published his *Specimen Hungariae literatae … ordine alphabetico exhibens* (Frankfurt–Leipzig, 1711).[3]



1. Memorial plaque commemorating the 1895 donation by György Ráth

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 179–185. N. B. The contract was dated 16 December 1895, but the marble plaque mentions 1896 as year of the donation.
2 Ráth 1905.
3 Specimen of literate Hungary … in Alphabetical Order.


RÁTH GYÖRGY

RÉGI MAGYAR KÖNYVTÁRA

AZ 1895. DECZEMBER 16-ÁN KELT KÖZJEGYZŐI OKIRAT ÉRTELMÉBEN A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRÁNAK 1905. OKTÓBER 16-ÁN ÁTADTA

ÖZV. RÁTH GYÖRGYNÉ

BUDAPEST,
HORNYÁNSZKY VIKTOR CS. ÉS KIR. UDVARI KÖNYVNYOMDÁJA
1905.

2. Catalogue of the Ráth collection from 1905 (e.g. sign. 402.088)

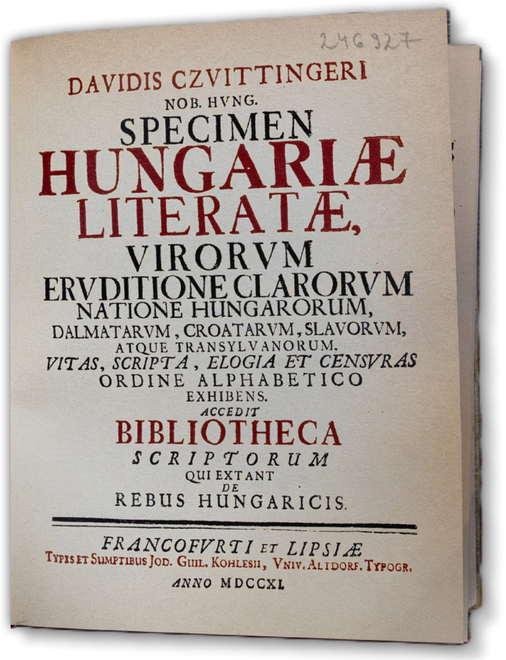


3. Portrait of György Ráth in 1882, from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság

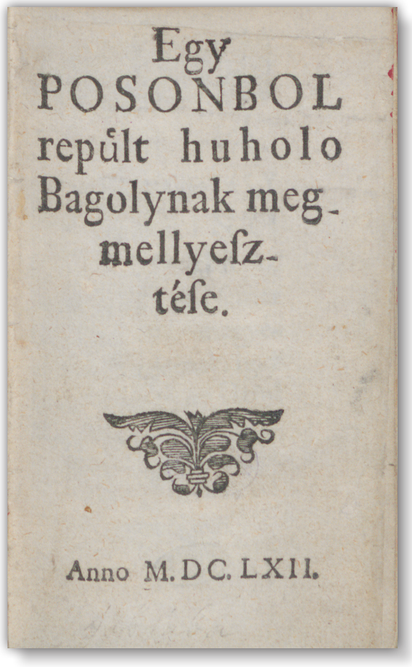
At the end of the donor's life, the Hungarian collection of György Ráth contained forty-nine items, which, according to the then-standard retrospective bibliography of *Hungarica* by Károly Szabó,[4] were unique copies. Since 1961, thanks to the systematic work of the *Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok* (Old Hungarian Prints) research team at the National Széchényi Library,[5] Ráth's knowledge of the uniqueness of his purchases has been verified or falsified. Many items in his collection, mainly calendars and other ephemeral publications (e.g. sign. Ráth 561), are, even today, the only known copies of those prints. For instance, the volume sign. Ráth 274/b is still considered a unique copy of a Protestant pamphlet written against the Catholic and Austrian Habsburgs, rulers of Hungary. The booklet, published in 1662 in an unknown place, probably in Transylvania, and attributed to a certain János Pósaházi (†1686), bears the fascinating title The feather-plucking of a hooty owl coming from Pozsony (*Egy Pozsonyból repült huholó bagolynak meg-mellyesztése*, RMNY 3046, sign. Ráth 274/b). The geographic name of Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia) in the title indicates the royal residence of the Habsburgs as kings of Hungary during the almost one-and-a-half-century period when the traditional Hungarian capital, Buda, was under Ottoman control.

4 Szabó 1879–1885, Szabó – Hellebrant 1896–1898.

5 So far, the research team has published five volumes describing Hungarian prints published between 1473 and 1685. According to their original 1961 plans, the time limit for the series was 1711. However, given changing trends in international scholarship, the series should include publications printed up to 1850.



4. Facsimile edition of David Czvittinger's Specimen *(sign. 037.209)*

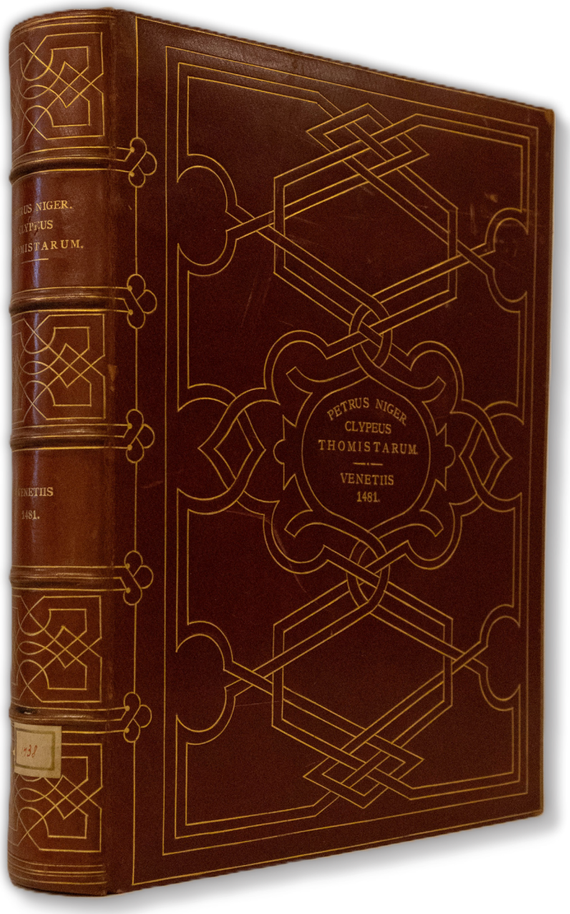


5. Title page of Egy Pozsonyból repült huholó bagolynak meg-mellyesztése *(sign. Ráth 274/b)*

György Ráth systematically developed his rare book collection through correspondence with the most important bibliographers and antiquarians both in Hungary and abroad. Some of the items in the Library's catalogue today bear both the Teleki stamp and the Ráth ownership note. This is because, in 1851, the first donor, József IV Teleki, consented to sell duplicate volumes even of the founding Teleki collection to raise money for new purchases. György Ráth later purchased the Teleki duplicate volumes. Finally, in 1905, the volumes found their way back to the Academy as part of Ráth's bequest.[6] For instance, one incunabulum returning to the Academy from the "duplum venditum" of the Teleki collection is: Petrus Niger, *Clypeus Thomistarum...*, Venetiis, Raynald von Nimwegen, 1481 (sign. Ráth F 1438).

The items in the Ráth collection have a distinctive physical appearance, resembling books freshly off the press. Ráth, as a representative of his era's bibliophile tastes, had his books cleaned and restored to an impeccable state, both inside and out (e.g. sign. Ráth 274/b above). His restorers often combined different copies of the same print to produce a single "perfect" item and cleaned the pages with chemicals to remove traces of earlier owners. From today's perspective, such procedures would be regarded little short of sacrilege, particularly in light of the emergence of book history and the history of reading as scholarly disciplines in the twentieth century.

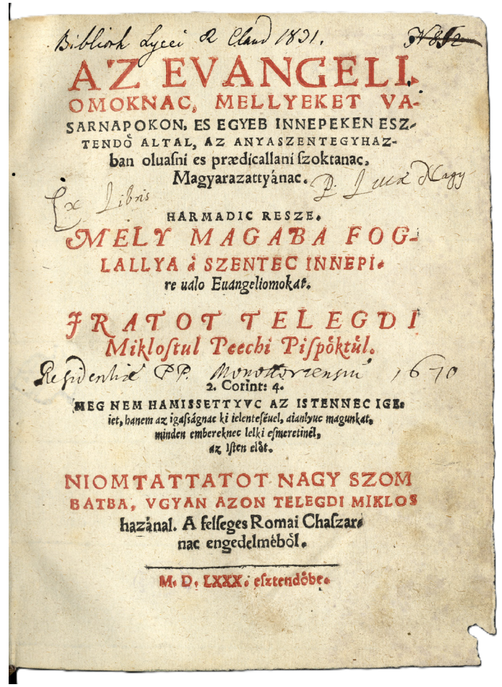
6 Szabó 2019b, 105. notes that fourteen volumes were returned to the Academy through the Ráth and Vigyázó bequests, however, without providing their bibliographical description or signatures.



6. A "duplum venditum" from the Teleki collection, purchased and later rebound in a typical Ráth-style bookbinding (sign. Ráth F 1438)

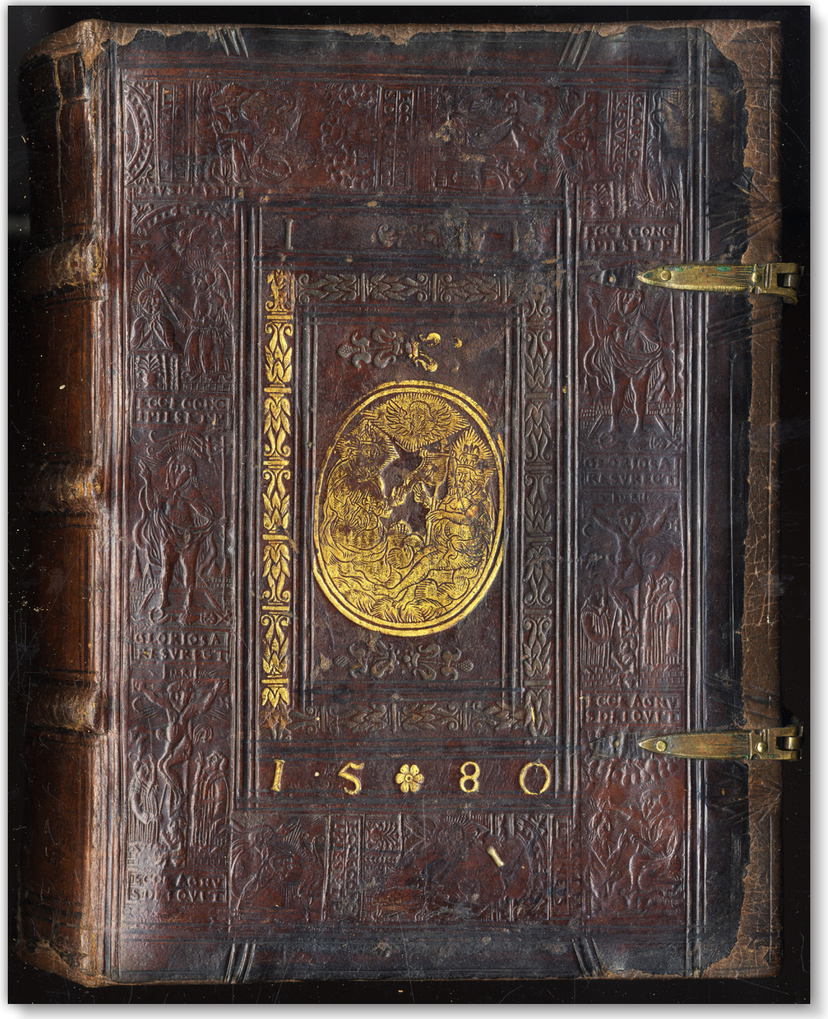
Fortunately, Ráth had a good eye for original book bindings as well. Thanks to his collection, volumes bound in the workshop founded by Miklós Telegdi (1535–1586) in 1580 in Nagyszombat (today Trnava, Slovakia) have survived (e.g. sign. Ráth 37).[7] Among the book bindings connected to Hungary but made abroad, it is worth mentioning the two copies of the New Testament printed by Miklós Misztótfalusi Kis (1650–1702) in Amsterdam in 1678 (signs. Ráth 398/1 and Ráth 398/2). The second copy once belonged to Mihály I Apafi, Prince of Transylvania (r. 1661–1690), as indicated by the initials and the date (1688) still visible in the binding.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that György Ráth was also the initiator and curator of the first exhibition of old, rare and precious books held in the Academy building in spring 1882. Ráth and his colleagues contacted more than two hundred libraries in Hungary and twenty libraries abroad, one hundred and thirty-eight printing house owners, and one hundred and twenty-three bookbinders. They exhibited the most interesting items from Hungary, and they also managed to borrow Corvina codices from Germany and Italy. The exhibition guide and its second edition, published after the exhibition, were sold out immediately, raising public awareness about books both as items of historical value and as pieces of art (e.g. sign. NC-100.245).


AZ EVANGELI-
OMOKNAC, MELLYEKET VA-
SARNAPOKON, ES EGYEB INNEPEKEN ESZ-
TENDŐ ALTAL, AZ ANYASZENTEGYHAZ-
ban oluaſni es prædicallani ſzoktanac,
Magyarazattyánac.
HARMADIC RESZE.
MELY MAGABA FOG-
LALLYA á SZENTEC INNEPI-
re ualo Euangeliomokat.
JRATOT TELEGDI
Miklostul Peechi Piſpöktül.
2. Corint: 4.
MEG NEM HAMISSETTYVC AZ ISTENNEC IGE-
iet, hanem az igaſságnac ki ielenteſéuel, aianlyuc magunkat,
minden embereknec lelki eſmeretinél,
az iſten elöt.
NIOMTATTATOT NAGY SZOM
BATBA, VGYAN AZON TELEGDI MIKLOS
hazánal. A felſeges Romai Chaſzar-
nac engedelméből.
M. D. LXXX. eſztendőbe.

7. Title page of Miklós Telegdi's Az Evangeliomoknac... harmadik resze *(sign. Ráth 37)*

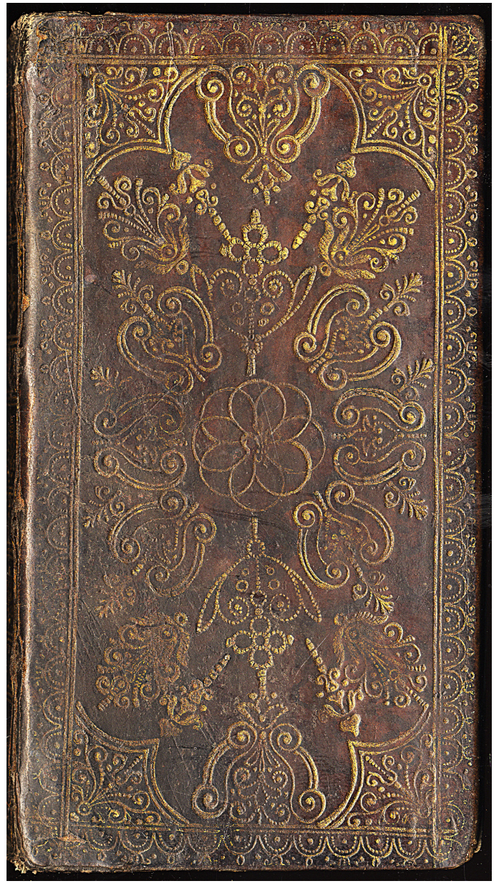
7 Telegdi Miklós, *Az Evangeliomoknac... harmadik resze, mely magaba foglallya a szentec innepire ualo euangeliomokat [The Third Part of the Gospels, Containing the Gospels for the Feasts of Saints]*, Nagyszombat, 1580, RMNY 474, sign. Ráth 37.



8. The Telegdi bookbinding (sign. Ráth 37)



9. The title page of Misztótfalusi's New Testament *(sign. Ráth 398/1)*



10. The New Testament *in the so-called Misztótfalusi bookbinding (sign. Ráth 398/1)*



11. The New Testament *in the so-called Misztótfalusi bookbinding, once owned by Mihály I Apafi, Prince of Transylvania (sign. Ráth 398/2)*



12. Title page of the exhibition catalogue Könyvkiállítási emlék *(sign. NC-100.245)*

The Five "Enrichers of the Library" in Ernő Jálics's High Relief (1948)



1. "A könyvtár gazdagítói" (The Enrichers of the Library) high relief by Ernő Jálics

Upon entering the Library building at 1 Arany János Street, heading towards the elevator on the wall near the main staircase, one finds a marble high relief depicting a seated scholar from antiquity. The lower part of the high relief bears a gilded inscription commemorating five "Enrichers of the Library": Zsigmond Reiner, István Sándor, Tamás Siskovics, Andor Semsey and Ferenc Vigyázó. The high relief, created by the sculptor Ernő Jálics (1895–1964), was initially installed in 1948 in the Library's reading room overlooking the Danube, in the Palace of the Academy. In its present state, the relief bears a trace of a bullet, a probable memento of the Revolution in 1956, when the Palace suffered severe damage. Interestingly, the relief lists the donors without their birth and death dates and therefore they are arranged in a somewhat confused order. Chronologically, the order should be Sándor, Siskovics, Reiner, Semsey and Vigyázó. The first donation came from István Sándor de Luka (1750–1815), whose name appears second on the relief. István Sándor, a writer and author of a retrospective Hungarian bibliography,[1] in his testament dated 1811, left all his books, maps, paintings and numismatic collection to the future Hungarian Learned Society, in anticipation of its eventual foundation. Until the foundation of the Learned Society, Sándor's bequest was entrusted to the National Museum. After 1840, however, the Academy had to take legal action against the Sándor family to recover at least parts of the bequest, a collection of five hundred and forty-eight works in nine hundred and ninety-four volumes.

The remainder of Sándor's bequest seems never to have left the National Museum. István Sándor's books are easily identified by his *ex libris* stamp, depicting a prancing deer with a three-leaf clover or a flower in its mouth (e.g. sign. M.Tört.O.123).



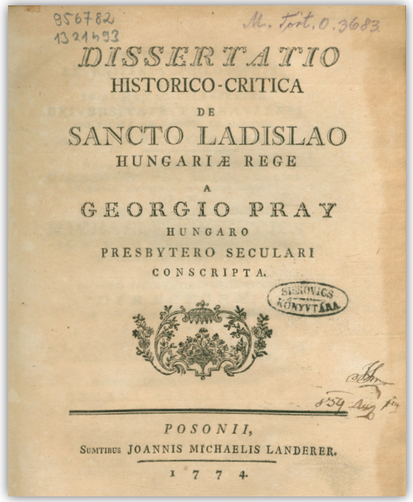
2. Ex libris *stamp of István Sándor (sign. M.Tört.O.123)*

1 Sándor 1803.

The next donation was made by the heirs of Tamás Siskovics (1834–1898), a nobleman from Baranya County, in 1902. Two-thirds of his 1,200 books covering ten main subject fields were welcomed by the Academy; the remainder were refused as duplicates. Among the volumes collected by different generations of the Siskovics family, there were important works of Hungarian historiography (e.g. Matthias Belius and Antonio Bonfini)[2] and rare volumes of other *Hungarica* as well. The volumes can be identified by an *ex libris* stamp bearing the Siskovics family's name, for example, in Georgius Pray's[3] work written on Saint Ladislaus of Hungary (sign. M.Tört.O.3683).

In 1907, the bereaved mother and brothers of the late Zsigmond Reiner (1862–1907), a lawyer and Ministerial Secretary working in the Prime Minister's Office, offered a selection of their relative's rich personal collection of jurisprudence. The gift consisted of 1,000 volumes, each bearing Reiner's personal *ex libris*, along with his finely crafted cherry-wood bookshelves (e.g. sign. 553.526).

In 1911, Andor Semsey (1833–1923), a member of the Academy's board, purchased and donated to the Library the book collection of the late Lajos Katona (1862–1910). Katona, also a member of the Academy, specialised in folklore and ethnography. Among other subjects, Katona wrote the first comprehensive work on Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374) in Hungarian, because of his interest in the *Griseldisstoffe* as a wandering motif in European folklore. His 1,119 books, donated to the Academy, also covered Romanian philology, a research field previously missing from the collection. The volumes bear Katona's personal *ex libris*, an engraving by Valér Telkessy (1870–1950), depicting a stylised scholar's study and alluding to early sixteenth-century illustrations of similar subjects. (e.g. signs. 156.357, Inc. 368). Andor Semsey also donated to the Academy the three hundred and ninety-three volumes of the *Catalogue of the British Museum*, published between 1881 and 1899.



3. Ex libris *stamp with the inscription "Siskovics Könyvtára" (sign. M.Tört.O.3683)*



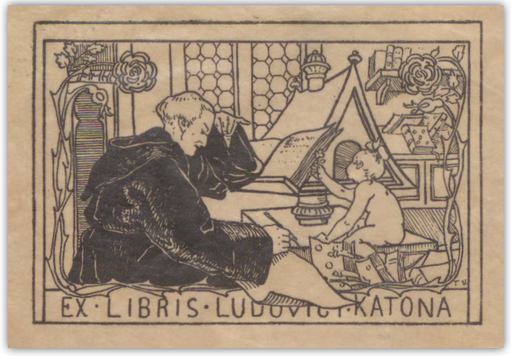
4. Ex libris *of Zsigmond Reiner (sign. 553.526)*

2. Matthias Belius, in Hungarian Bél Mátyás (1684–1749), published his *Notitia Hungariae novae historico-geographica [Historico-geographical description of the New Hungary]* in five volumes between 1735 and 1742. The publication of further volumes, which had remained in manuscript form, began only in 2011. The Italian humanist Antonio Bonfini (1427–1502) worked on his *Rerum Hungaricarum Decades [Decades of the Hungarian History]* between 1488 and 1497. Its *editio princeps*, however, was published only in 1568 in Basel by Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584).

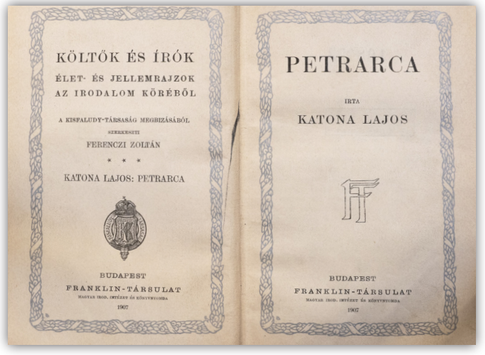
3. The Jesuit Georgius Pray (1723–1801) was a historiographer and the second librarian of the University in Pest. His main work is the *Annales rerum Hungariae [Annals of the History of Hungary]*, published in five volumes in Vienna between 1763 and 1770.



5. Engraving portrait of Andor Semsey from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság, *1899*



6. Ex libris *of Lajos Katona (sign. Inc. 368)*



7. Title page of Katona's work on Petrarca (sign. 108.453)



8. Photograph of Count Ferenc Vigyázó (sign. Ms 5074/16)



9. Portrait of Antal Vigyázó

The last name on the high relief by Jálics is that of Count Ferenc Vigyázó (c. 1874–1928).[4] Vigyázó was a jurist who remained unmarried and the last male heir of his noble lineage. He fulfilled the last wishes of his parents, Count Sándor Vigyázó (1825–1921) and Baroness Zsuzsanna Podmaniczky (1838–1923), when in 1928 he left the family estates and wealth in their entirety to the Academy in his own testament. Although the collateral relatives of the Vigyázó family contested parts of the bequest in court,[5] the magnanimous donation nevertheless helped stabilise the Academy's finances. In fact, the Academy, as the whole of Hungarian society, suffered financial and territorial losses after the Treaty of Trianon, signed at the Palace of Versailles. As is well known, the peace treaties that ended the First World War in 1920 required the thousand-year-old Kingdom of Hungary to relinquish two-thirds of its territory. Thereafter, the pre-World War era and the territory of Hungary are referred to as "historical Hungary."[6] Despite the loss of wealth invested in war loans and post-war inflation, the Academy had an opportunity to stabilise its finances thanks to the Vigyázó donation and its diligent Secretary General, the already mentioned Jenő Balogh, who handled the legal proceedings regarding the bequest.

4 Tömöry 2008.
5 Klement ed. 2024, 360.
6 See the map depicting the transformation of Hungary, showing its historical and post-Trianon borders.



10. Ownership stamp of Antal Vigyázó's Library in Vácrátót and the Vigyázó Library stamp of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (sign. M.Tört.O.6139)



11. Ownership note of Antal Vigyázó (sign. M.Tört.O.6139)



12. Portrait of Sándor Vigyázó (sign. Ms 5074/39)

The Vigyázó collection consisted of 17,000 volumes; its cataloguing required eight years in the interwar period. Since 1971, the volumes formerly belonging to the Vigyázó collection have been identified in the catalogue of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with an ownership note of their own (e.g. sign. M.Tört.O.6139). The Vigyázó collection was originally founded by the donor's grandfather, Antal Vigyázó (1793–1861), with a particular focus on belles lettres in German and Hungarian, Hungarian historiography and periodicals. From 1830 onwards his books were deposited in the family estate in Vácrátót and can be identified by a stamp bearing the family's coat of arms and often by an *ex libris* with Antal Vigyázó's name pasted inside the volumes (e.g. sign. M.Tört.O.6139).

For the donor's father, Count Sándor Vigyázó, enriching the family library was a lifelong and professionally cultivated passion. Count Vigyázó collected codices, incunabula, volumes of old Hungarian literature and books on art history, in addition to the subjects already present in his father's library. The most valuable volumes were rebound in artistic bindings, such as a copy of the Brno edition of Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. Inc. 451). Sándor Vigyázó regularly visited antiquarians in Budapest and maintained correspondence with foreign



13. The Vigyázó family estate in Vácrátót, photograph by György Klösz. Source: Fortepan / BFL XV.19.d.1.11.104, no. 83196

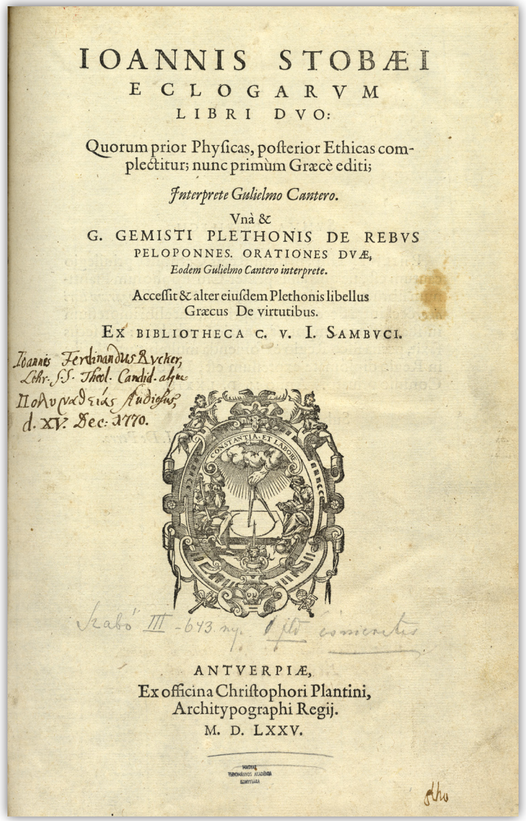
booksellers, meticulously recording the provenance and price of each book he purchased (e.g. sign. RM III 206).[7] One of the highlights of his collection is a manuscript breviary from c. 1450, prepared for the Augustinian monks of Klosterneuburg, Austria (sign. K 451). To shed some more light on Sándor Vigyázó's taste as a collector, one must also mention his collection's extremities: on the one hand, his purchases of four hundred and thirty-one incunabula and on the other hand, the approximately six hundred works in his so-called *erotica* collection. The latter consists of quite salacious stories in French and in German. Due to their lascivious subjects, the volumes were published with a false impressum or none at all, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *erotica* volumes themselves, however, leave much to the reader's own imagination, as they are generally unillustrated (e.g. sign. 298.699). In appearance, they differ markedly from those of the eighteenth-century French books, which were described as "dangerous readings" because of their openly pornographic illustrations, at an exhibition held at the National Széchényi Library in 2007.[8]

At the time of its foundation, the Library of the Learned Society ranked second in importance in Hungary, after the National Széchényi Library. As far as its rare and old Hungarian book collection is concerned, this statement remains valid to this day, thanks in no small measure to the five generous donors commemorated in the high relief by Ernő Jálics.



14. The Library Room at the Vigyázó family estate, photograph by György Klösz. Source: Fortepan / BFL XV.19.d.1.11.101, no. 83193

7 Johannes Stobaios, *Eclogarum libri duo*, Antverpiae, ex officina Christophori Plantini, 1575.
8 Granasztói ed. 2007.



IOANNIS STOBÆI
ECLOGARVM
LIBRI DVO:

Quorum prior Physicas, posterior Ethicas complectitur; nunc primùm Græcè editi;

Interprete Gulielmo Cantero.

Vnà &
G. GEMISTI PLETHONIS DE REBVS PELOPONNES. ORATIONES DVÆ,
Eodem Gulielmo Cantero interprete.

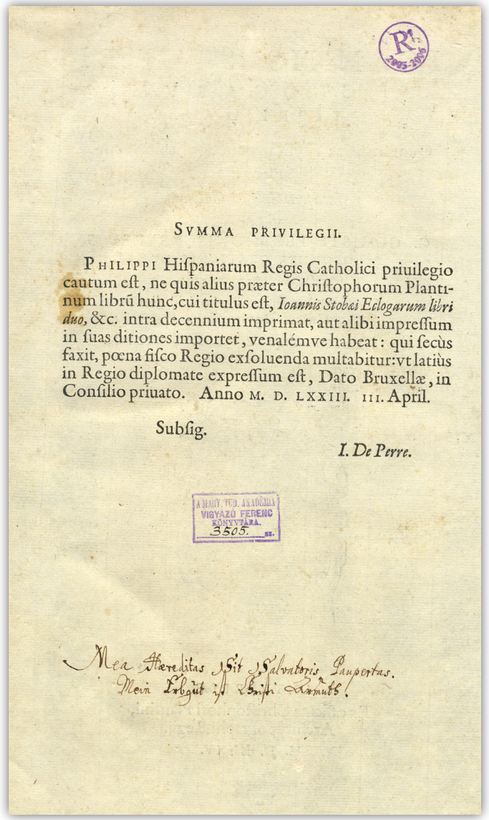
Accessit & alter eiusdem Plethonis libellus Græcus De virtutibus.

EX BIBLIOTHECA C. V. I. SAMBVCI.

Ioannis Ferdinandus Rycher, Lthr. S.S. Theol. Cand. Alpen.
Πολυκράτης Ανδριάνος d. XV. Dec. MDCLXX.

ANTVERPIÆ,
Ex officina Christophori Plantini,
Architypographi Regij.
M. D. LXXV.

15. Ownership note of a previous owner and note of purchase in pencil by the hand of Sándor Vigyázó (sign. RM III 206)



SVMMA PRIVILEGII.

PHILIPPI Hispaniarum Regis Catholici priuilegio cautum est, ne quis alius præter Christophorum Plantinum librũ hunc, cui titulus est, *Ioannis Stobæi Eclogarum libri duo*, &c. intra decennium imprimat, aut alibi impressum in suas ditiones importet, venalémve habeat: qui secùs faxit, pœna fisco Regio exsoluenda multabitur: vt latiùs in Regio diplomate expressum est, Dato Bruxellæ, in Consilio priuato. Anno M. D. LXXIII. III. April.

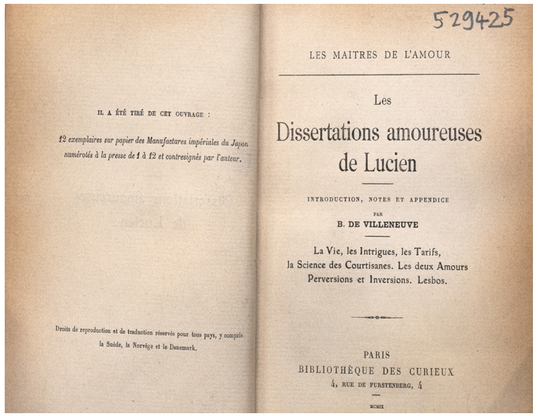
Subsig.

I. De Perre.

A MAGY. TUD. AKADÉMIA VIGYÁZÓ FERENC KÖNYVTÁRA. 3505.

Mea Hæreditas Sit Salvatoris Paupertas.
Mein Erbgut ist Christi Armuth.

16. Ownership note of a previous owner and the Vigyázó collection's stamp (sign. RM III 206)



529425

LES MAITRES DE L'AMOUR

IL A ÉTÉ TIRÉ DE CET OUVRAGE :

12 exemplaires sur papier des Manufactures impériales du Japon, numérotés à la presse de 1 à 12 et contresignés par l'auteur.

Les
Dissertations amoureuses
de Lucien

INTRODUCTION, NOTES ET APPENDICE
PAR
B. DE VILLENEUVE

La Vie, les Intrigues, les Tarifs,
la Science des Courtisanes. Les deux Amours
Perversions et Inversions. Lesbos.

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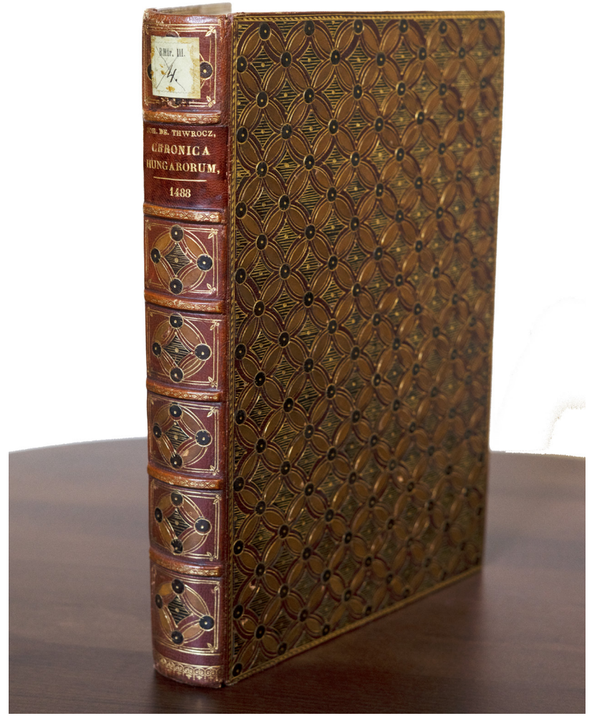
17. A French volume from the Vigyázó erotica *collection (sign. 298.699)*



M. DE THWROCZ,
CHRONICA
HUNGARORUM.
1488

18. A lavishly decorated bookbinding, characteristic of the rare book collection of the Vigyázó family (sign. Inc. 451)

THE FIVE "ENRICHERS OF THE LIBRARY" IN ERNŐ JÁLICS'S HIGH RELIEF (1948)



19. Breviary of the Augustinian monks of Klosterneuburg c. 1450, from the collection of Sándor Vigyázó (sign. K 451)

Memorial Collections in the Library before the Second World War

A series of memorial rooms and library cabinets was established in the Library building to preserve specific bequests separately from the main collection from the late nineteenth century until 1926. Those memorial collections were often initiated by donors who wanted to dedicate a place of memory to their late family members or acquaintances. In this section, only four memorial collections are discussed, those that did not become part of the Oriental Collection in 1949. The Goethe Room, the Széchenyi Museum, the Bolyai library cabinet and the Vörösmarty Room all suffered several losses during the Second World War, and they were never re-established as separate units of the Library thereafter. The Goethe Room,[1] functioning as a museum, was opened in 1896,[2] on the ground floor of the Palace of the Academy. Dr Gyula Elischer (1875–1929), professor of medicine, donated to the Academy the collection of his late uncle, Boldizsár Elischer (1818–1895), who was a lawyer, composer, violinist and founding member of the Academy of Music (*Zeneakadémia*).



1. Photograph of Dr Gyula Elischer



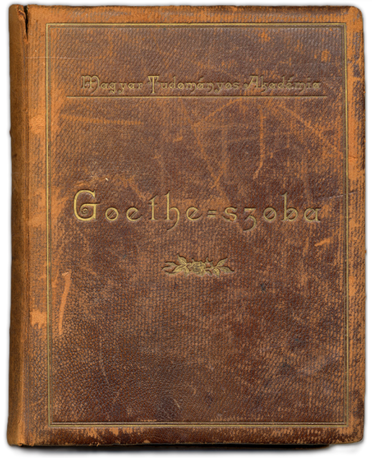
2. Portrait of Boldizsár Elischer, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 34

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 160–167.
2 Heller 1896.

The collection consisted of approximately 4,100 items, including original manuscripts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), eighteen different editions of his complete works, his portraits, memorial coins, original musical compositions based on his poems,[3] scholarly literature and periodicals dedicated to his works. Boldizsár Elischer began building his collection during his 1852 visit to Leipzig, and it was almost complete by 1885. His activities made him famous among Goethe scholars and enthusiasts alike, and his collection was the fourth-largest Goethe collection worldwide.



3. The Goethe Room on an old postcard (sign. Ms 10754)



4. Cover of the Goethe Room visitors' register (sign. K 123/2)



5. A memorial glass from Karlsbad with a portrait of Goethe, exhibited with other items of the Elischer collection in Berlin in 1860 (Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, without signature)

3 For further illustrations see: Horányi 2017, 156–159.

The c. five hundred unposted postcards that Elischer collected in Italy during his *Goethe-Reisen* between 1869 and 1871 serve as a time capsule of artistic representations of the major Italian cities from Venice to the excavations in Pompeii (sign. K 119–1–18). At the opening ceremony of the Goethe Room, in the millennium year of the Kingdom of Hungary, Gyula Wlassich (1852–1937), then Minister of Religion and Public Education of Hungary, celebrated the collection as "a falsification of the unfair accusations according to whom the Hungarian culture is chauvinistic and closed to influences coming from Western Europe". Thanks to further donations, the Goethe Room was regularly enriched until 1944, when it was damaged during Allied bombing. The most significant losses were evident in the portraits of Goethe: out of two hundred and thirty-three catalogued items, only twenty-seven survive to the present day.[4] The Goethe Room was never re-established: its items were transferred to the Core Collection and the Department of Manuscript and Rare Books, while its collection of sheet music was given to the Special Collection of Musicology at the National Széchényi Library in 1980. Thanks to a collaboration between the Hungarian Goethe Society, the Goethe Institute Budapest and the Collegium Hungaricum in Berlin, a website is currently being developed that will contain all surviving items of the Goethe collection in digitised form.



6–13. A selection of postcards from Elischer's Goethe-Reisen*: two images depicting some stereotypes about Italian culture, and landscapes of Venice, Milan, Pisa, Rome, Caserta and Naples (signs. K 119–1–18)*

4 Marth 1974.







Memorial Collections in the Library before the Second World War



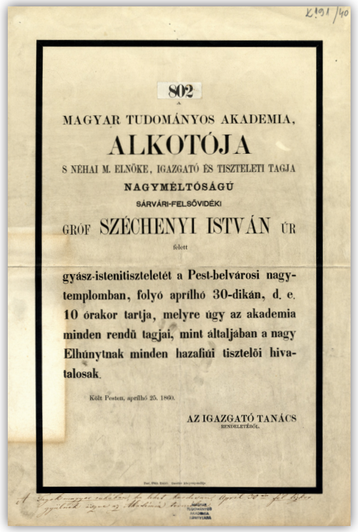




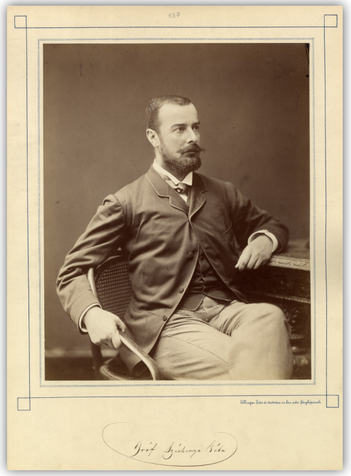
The Széchenyi Collection,[5] founded in 1875, now comprises over 12,000 manuscript items related to the Academy's founding father, Count István Széchenyi. In 1860, following his suicide at a mental asylum in Döbling, Austria, Count Széchenyi bequeathed all his manuscripts, books and the copyrights to their publication to his private secretary, Antal Tasner (1808–1861). As a consequence of his suicide, some of Széchenyi's papers became police evidence, ending up in Vienna. In 1875, the Academy purchased from the secretary's son, Géza Tasner (1838–1914), the documents in his possession at the time and gradually acquired the rest of the materials from various sources. Between 1878 and 1880, Széchenyi's son, Béla Széchenyi (1837–1918), sent to the Academy his father's documents that were kept on the family estates in Nagycenk (Győr-Moson-Sopron County). Finally, in 1943, Bertalan Széchényi (1866–1943), whose great-grandfather and István Széchenyi were brothers, donated a large number of documents to the Academy on the history of their family.



14. Széchenyi as the Royal Commissioner for the Lower Danube, caricature by János Waldstein (sign. K 293/3)



15. Announcement of Széchenyi's death (sign. K 191/40)



16. Photograph of Béla Széchenyi (sign. Ms 10206/VI/137)

5 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 171–179.

Under the auspices of a committee active between 1882 and 1944, the Academy oversaw the publication of Széchenyi's works and supervised the multifaceted activities honouring his memory. To establish a commemorative space for Széchenyi, the Academy set up a Széchenyi Museum in four rooms on the first floor of its Palace by 3 November 1905. The exhibition comprised 6,295 items organised into nine categories, from Széchenyi's original manuscripts to his depictions, personal belongings and publications of his works.[6] The first item in the exhibition was an oil painting in a golden frame, with Széchenyi's reflections engraved on it, expressing his admiration for someone who created something of lasting value from nothing. It was a depiction of the mausoleum of the Orientalist Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842) in Darjeeling, in the Himalayas (sign. K 211), who prepared the first Tibetan-English vocabulary (see also the entry about the Oriental Collection below). It was an inspirational piece of art for Széchenyi, which stood on his desk in Döbling until his death.



17. Painting depicting the mausoleum of the Orientalist Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842) in Darjeeling, in the Himalayas (sign. K 211). The translation of the engraving on the frame reads: "A poor, lone Hungarian, without money or plaudits, but with determined, unwavering patriotic spirit – Sándor Kőrösi Csoma – sought the origins of the Magyars and in the end succumbed to the weight of his travails. He rests in eternal peace far from his homeland, but lives in the spirit of all true Hungarians. His mortal remains lie in this tomb, which was erected by the British Company for his academic achievements. Defending the nation requires neither high status nor wealth, but indestructible patriotism, the self-denial of a pilgrim and an iron-cast will. Oh Thou, the Mighty and Wealthy of our land, heed the example of this poor son of Hungary and be loyal to the Magyars in deeds instead of words, in willingness to sacrifice instead of cheap ostentation. István Széchenyi"

6 Szily – Viszota eds. 1905.



18. The same painting standing on Széchenyi's desk in Döbling

Following an initiative launched in 1902 by a teacher from Sopron (Győr-Moson-Sopron County), Gyula Viszota (1871–1947), systematic research into documents concerning Széchenyi began in archives nationwide, significantly enriching knowledge of Count Széchenyi's private and political activities. The Széchenyi Museum existed until 1944, when, like the Goethe Room, it suffered significant losses during the bombardment of Budapest. The bulk of pre-war scholarship on Széchenyi was carried out by the Museum's custodian, Gyula Viszota, who published his research on Széchenyi in almost eighty studies between 1902 and 1947. After the war, the Széchenyi Museum was never reopened, and its organically developing collection was dispersed among the Academy's special collections and different halls. The librarians of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books reorganised the book and manuscript collection of Széchenyi and published its catalogue in 1976. By 1983, they also published Viszota's personal research catalogue and the documentation of the Széchenyi Museum. Since 2018, the digitisation of the Széchenyi Collection has been underway in order to safeguard the documents against further deterioration, as they remain among the most frequently consulted manuscripts in the Library.



19. The same painting among the family heirlooms in a cabinet at the Széchenyi Museum (sign. Ms 4410/24)



20. Exhibition of the Széchenyi Museum (sign. Ms 4410/24)



21. Writing desk and Széchenyi's portraits at the exhibition (sign. Ms 4410/24)



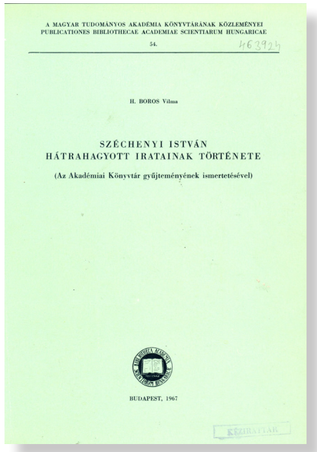
22. Portrait of Gyula Viszota (sign. Ms 5074/41)



23. The Széchenyi Museum after the siege of Budapest (sign. Ms 6298/184)



24. Széchenyi library cabinet at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today


A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRÁNAK KÖZLEMÉNYEI
PUBLICATIONES BIBLIOTHECAE ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARUM HUNGARICAE
54.

H. BOROS Vilma

SZÉCHENYI ISTVÁN
HÁTRAHAGYOTT IRATAINAK TÖRTÉNETE

(Az Akadémiai Könyvtár gyűjteményének ismertetésével)

BUDAPEST, 1967

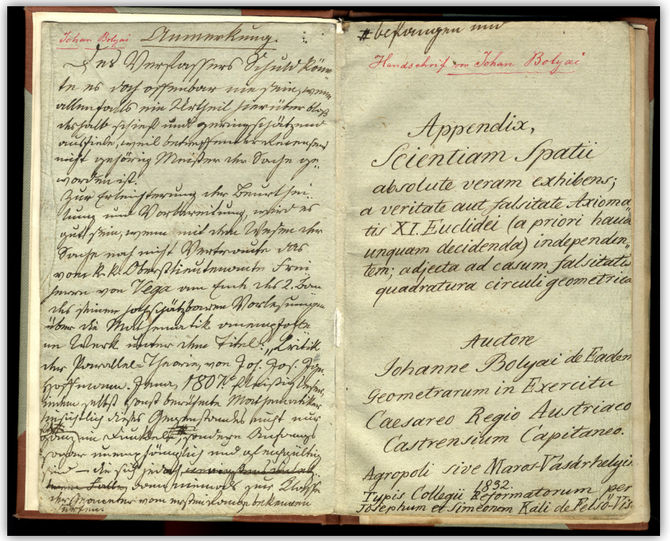
25. Catalogue of the Széchenyi manuscripts, published by Vilma H. Boros (e.g. sign. 427.925)

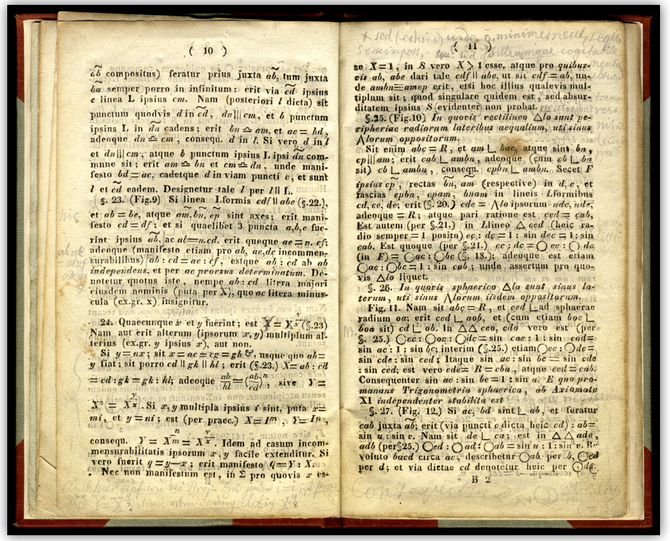
The Bolyai library cabinet,[7] a special collection commemorating two eminent mathematicians from Transylvania, the father, Farkas Bolyai (1775–1856), and the son, János Bolyai (1802–1860), was established in 1914. Several years earlier, a fellow mathematician and teacher in Budapest, Péter Szabó (1867–1914), discovered in the *Kriegsarchiv* (Imperial and Royal War Archives) in Vienna a series of outstanding documents written by János Bolyai. The Kriegsarchiv donated those documents to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1910. After the death of Péter Szabó, his widow donated additional documents to the Academy, including one hundred and fifty-nine letters written by János Bolyai concerning his father, as well as biographies of the two Bolyai mathematicians by various authors. The collection was placed in a separate library cabinet in a designated hall of the Academy in 1914. The most significant item of that collection is a pre-print of János Bolyai's main work, commonly referred to by its shortened title, *Appendix*, as it was published at the end of his father's work, the *Tentamen*, in 1832. The pre-print in question contains handwritten Latin notes by both the father and the son, and one of the illustrations was drawn by János Bolyai himself. The *Appendix* provides a description of János Bolyai's theory of non-Euclidean geometry, which modern scholarship calls hyperbolic geometry. The importance of the work of the two Bolyais was emphasised by architect Ferenc Schmidt (1827–1901) in the periodical *Archiv der Mathematik und Physik* in 1868. Thanks to this article, the work of the Bolyai family did not fade into oblivion. Instead, their name is commemorated in the history of science to this day. The Academy purchased the pre-print copy of the *Appendix* from Schmidt's family in 1901 (sign. 545.091). The volume was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2009. As with the other memorial collections mentioned in this section, the Bolyai cabinet was also dissolved during the Second World War, and its contents were transferred to the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books.[8]



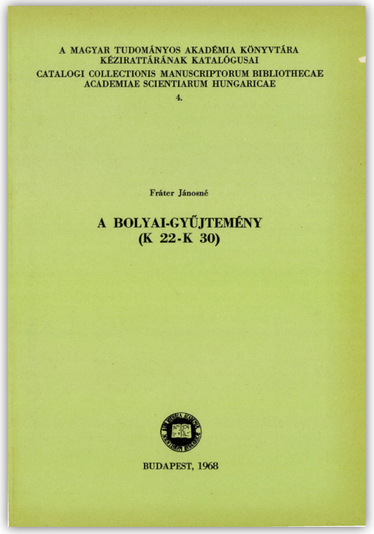
26. Portrait of Farkas Bolyai (sign. K 27)

7 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 167–170.
8 Fráter 1968.





27–28. Pages from the Bolyai Appendix *(sign. 545.091)*


A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA KÖNYVTÁRA
KÉZIRATTÁRÁNAK KATALÓGUSAI
CATALOGI COLLECTIONIS MANUSCRIPTORUM BIBLIOTHECAE
ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARUM HUNGARICAE
4.

Fráter Jánosné

A BOLYAI-GYŰJTEMÉNY
(K 22-K 30)

BUDAPEST, 1968

29. Catalogue of the Bolyai collection (e.g. sign. 449.551)


United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Memory of the World

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Certifies the inscription of

Janos Bolyai: Appendix, scientiam spatii absolute veram exhibens. Maros-Vasarhelyini, 1832

Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
(Institution)

Budapest *(Town)* ***Hungary*** *(Country)*

On
the Memory of the World International Register

Date 31 JUIL. 2009

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General, UNESCO

30. UNESCO Memory of the World Register Certificate for the Appendix

Establishing the Vörösmarty Room to commemorate the nineteenth-century poet, a leading figure of early Hungarian Romanticism, Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855), was initiated by one of his granddaughters, Mrs János Bernrieder née Ilona Széll (1868–1945), in 1926.



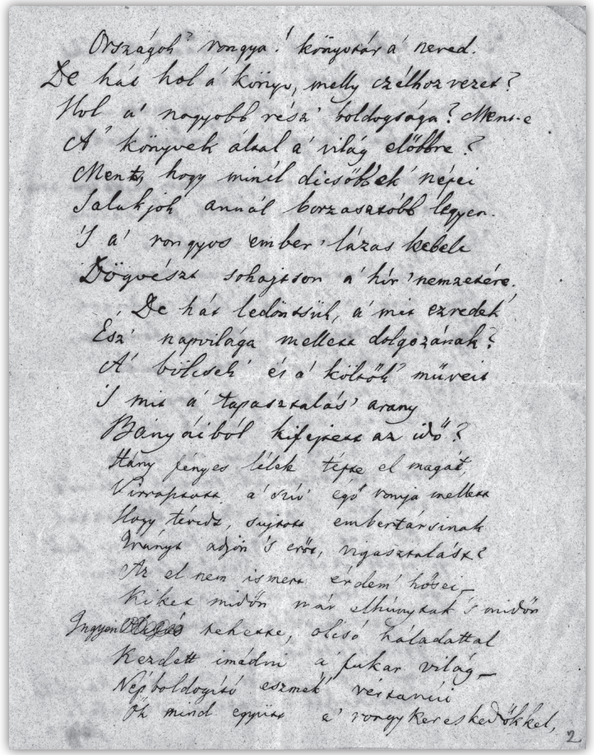
31. Photograph of the aging Mihály Vörösmarty



32. Portrait of Vörösmarty's late wife, Laura Csajághy, 1899, from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság



33. Portrait of Mrs Bernrieder, 1899, from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság



*34. Manuscript of the poem Thoughts in the Library (*Gondolatok a könyvtárban*) (sign. K 305/55)*

Probably inspired by the Széchenyi Museum and the Goethe Room, Mrs Bernrieder proposed that a hall be designated for the public presentation of her grandfather's personal belongings, collected works and scholarship on his oeuvre. The Chief Librarian at the time, Zoltán Ferenczi, welcomed the proposal, not least because of Vörösmarty's personal connection to the Library. One of Vörösmarty's most famous poems, titled Thoughts in the Library (*Gondolatok a könyvtárban*), was inspired by his visit to the Library of the Academy in the Trattner-Károlyi House on 23 December 1844. The poet presented the manuscript to the Academy, and it remains preserved in the collection to this day (sign. K 305/55). Despite his efforts in preparing the Vörösmarty Room, Ferenczi himself could not attend its opening ceremony, as he died twenty days before the occasion. Within the institution's hierarchy, the Vörösmarty Room[9] like the Széchenyi Museum and the Goethe Room, functioned as a separate entity, reporting directly to the Chief Librarian. The siege of Budapest ultimately brought an end to this memorial collection as well; its surviving contents were transferred to the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books.

9 Brisits 1928.





35–36. The two-sides of Vörösmarty's memorial cup (signs. K 2/118. 23. p. 5–6. items, Tárgyak 87/1–2)



Széll Ilona amateur-fényképe után.

SZÉLL KÁLMÁN ÉS CSALÁDJA A RÁTÓTI PARKBAN.



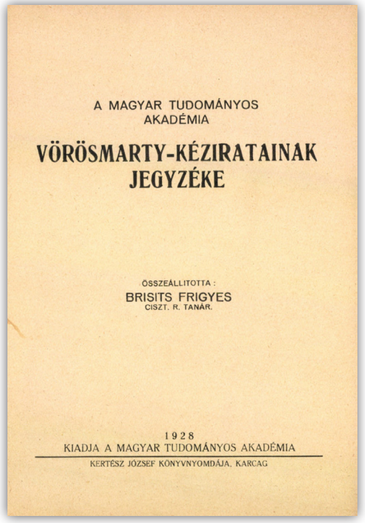
Széll Ilona amateur fényképei után.

A RÁTÓTI KASTÉLY AZ UDVAR FELŐL. DZÁK FERENCZ PIHENŐHELYE A RÁTÓTI TÖLGYEK ALATT.

37–38. Photographs taken by Ilona Széll at their estates in Rátót (Vas County), reproduced from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság *(1899)*



39. The Vörösmarty Room after the siege of Budapest (sign. Ms 10295/2)



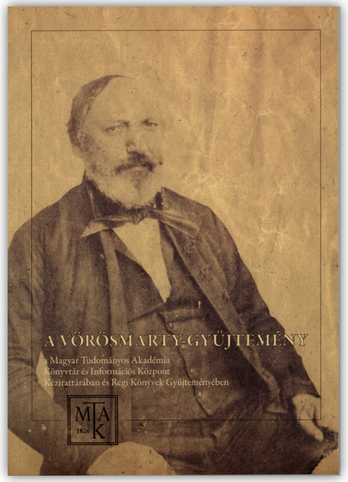
A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA

VÖRÖSMARTY-KÉZIRATAINAK JEGYZÉKE

ÖSSZEÁLLITOTTA:
BRISITS FRIGYES
CISZT. R. TANÁR.

1928
KIADJA A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA
KERTÉSZ JÓZSEF KÖNYVNYOMDÁJA, KARCAG

40. Catalogue of the Vörösmarty bequest at the Academy from 1928 (e. g. sign. 269.961)



A VÖRÖSMARTY-GYŰJTEMÉNY

A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár és Információs Központ Kézirattárában és Régi Könyvek Gyűteményében

41. The catalogue of the Vörösmarty bequest at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books from 2016 (sign. e.g. BA-073.666)

The Formation of the Most Important Collection of Oriental Studies in Hungary



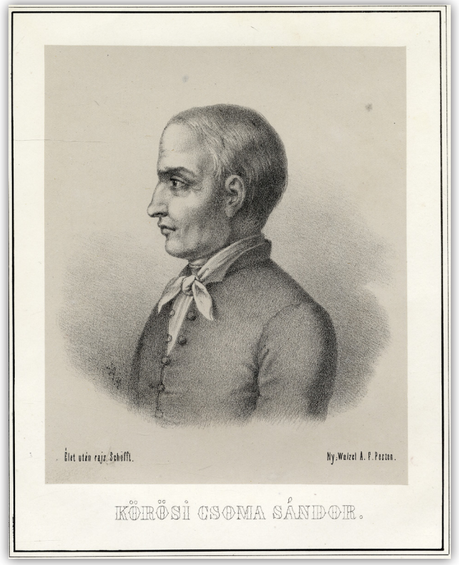
The Library's special collection, known as the Oriental Collection, has existed since 1949.[1] Its development, however, can be divided into three phases of varying duration. The first phase, from 1826 to 1933, was characterised by the donations of private collections. The much shorter second phase, from 1949 to the late 1950s, marked the formal establishment of the separate special collection. It drew on three principal sources: earlier donations, volumes on relevant subjects selected from various parts of the core collection and contributions transferred from other libraries across the country that lacked the necessary linguistic expertise to process certain materials. The third phase, extending from the 1960s to the present, has been characterised by new donations and international collaborations. This development is reflected by English-language printed catalogues, conference proceedings, thematic websites and databases. The treasures and literary rarities of the Oriental Collection are presented in publication series such as the *Keleti Tanulmányok – Oriental Studies, Budapest Oriental Reprints, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica,* and *Oriental manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.*

The First Phase: 1826–1933

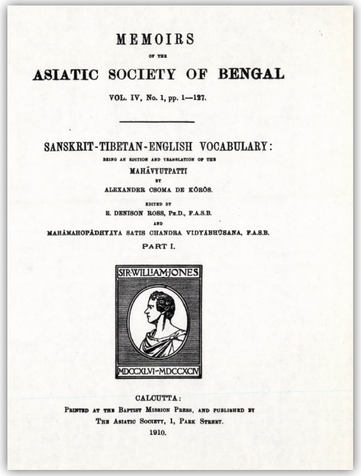
There was increasing interest in Oriental studies in Hungary from the final third of the eighteenth century onwards, driven by linguistic research seeking to identify the origins of the Magyars and their language. One prominent example is the Orientalist Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842), who intended to find the place of origin of the Hungarian tribes when he went to Asia. As mentioned above in connection with the Széchenyi Museum, a depiction of his tomb in Darjeeling was among the objects exhibited there. Although Kőrösi Csoma did not accomplish his original aim, he lived under challenging circumstances in various Buddhist cloisters while studying Tibetan. By 1834, Kőrösi Csoma was able to publish the first-ever Tibetan-English vocabulary, thereby laying the foundations of a new branch of linguistic studies.

On the previous page: 1. Interior design of the Oriental Collection with books

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 333–349.



2. Portrait of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (sign. Ms 5072/2)

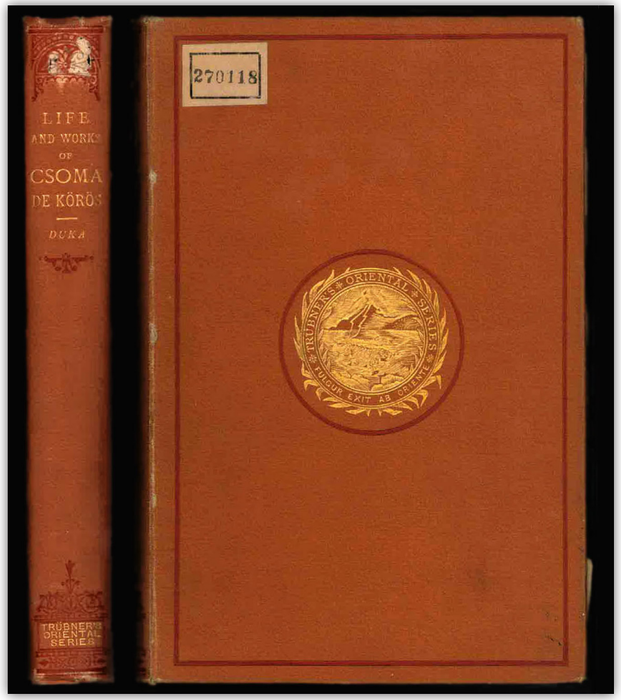

MEMOIRS
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL
VOL. IV, No. 1, pp. 1—127.

SANSKRIT-TIBETAN-ENGLISH VOCABULARY:
BEING AN EDITION AND TRANSLATION OF THE
MAHÁVUTPATTI
BY
ALEXANDER CSOMA DE KÖRÖS.
EDITED BY
H. DENISON ROSS, Ph.D., F.A.S.B.
AND
MAHÁMAHOPÁDHYÁYA SATIS CHANDRA VIDYÁBHÚSANA, F.A.S.B.
PART I.

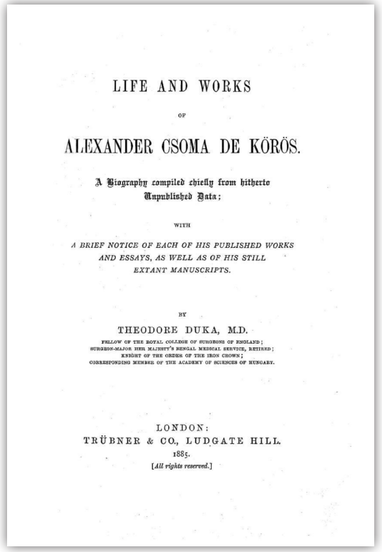
SIR WILLIAM JONES
MDCCXLVI-MDCCXCIV

CALCUTTA:
PRINTED AT THE BAPTIST MISSION PRESS, AND PUBLISHED BY
THE ASIATIC SOCIETY, 1, PARK STREET.
1910.

3. Title page of Kőrösi Csoma's Sanskrit–Tibetan–English vocabulary *(sign. 726.234)*



4. Upper cover of Life and Works of Csoma de Körös *(sign. 766.243)*


LIFE AND WORKS
OF
ALEXANDER CSOMA DE KÖRÖS.

A Biography compiled chiefly from hitherto Unpublished Data;

WITH

A BRIEF NOTICE OF EACH OF HIS PUBLISHED WORKS AND ESSAYS, AS WELL AS OF HIS STILL EXTANT MANUSCRIPTS.

BY

THEODORE DUKA, M.D.
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND;
SURGEON-MAJOR HER MAJESTY'S BENGAL MEDICAL SERVICE, RETIRED;
KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF THE IRON CROWN;
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF HUNGARY.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.
1885.
[*All rights reserved.*]

5. Title page of Life and Works of Csoma de Körös *(sign. 766.243)*

In the generations following Kőrösi Csoma, donors of rich Orientalist collections were motivated by diverse personal circumstances. Some were political émigrés who had to leave Hungary after the failed Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–1849. Others had to pursue careers abroad in order to fulfil their intellectual aspirations. Still others sought to ensure the preservation of their intellectual legacy by entrusting their collections to the Library of the Academy.

Although Sándor Kőrösi Csoma never sought to become a founding father of any scholarly movement, his intellectual legacy nevertheless gave rise to a long line of Orientalist scholars in Hungary. The importance of his work was first recognised by a fellow Hungarian living in exile after the failure of the 1848–1849 Hungarian War of Independence. Tivadar Duka (1825–1908) emigrated to London, where he earned a medical degree and later joined the British Army as a doctor, serving in India.[2] Throughout his life, Duka sought to connect Hungarian scholars with intellectuals around the world. For instance, Duka was one of the first to promote international recognition of the achievements of the physician Ignác Semmelweis (1818–1865). Today, Semmelweis is remembered in the history of medicine as the "saviour of mothers" for introducing antiseptic practices in maternity wards.

2 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 93–98.



6. Photograph of Tivadar Duka (sign. Ms 10206/II/30)



8. Portrait of Salamon Caesar Malan (sign. ORI Csoma 58)



7. Portrait of Ignác Semmelweis

Duka's principal achievement lay in securing and cataloguing the bequest of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma through his connections in India.[3] At Duka's request, Salamon Caesar Malan (1812–1894), a former close friend of Kőrösi Csoma, donated a collection of thirty-six Tibetan manuscripts and woodblock prints to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1885 that he had received from Kőrösi Csoma himself.[4] In 1904, Duka financed a library cabinet in which the Kőrösi Csoma bequest, together with the research materials relating to him collected and written by Duka himself, were placed "for the further scholarly work of coming generations". The cabinet, decorated with Kőrösi Csoma's portrait, contained three sets of documents. The first set was the above-mentioned gift from Malan, the thirty-six books acquired by Kőrösi Csoma during his first research trip to the Himalayas between 1824 and 1830. The second set of documents consisted of two albums: one containing a collection of papers (newspaper clippings, letters, etc.) relating to Tivadar Duka's life, and another including the research materials Duka collected while preparing the first biography of Kőrösi Csoma. The third set of documents comprised the monographs and scholarly papers written by Kőrösi Csoma himself.

The most significant items of the Kőrösi Csoma bequest are four manuscripts, the so-called Alexander books, prepared by Tibetan monks at Csoma's request. They are so named because Alexander is the English equivalent of Sándor, Kőrösi Csoma's first name. The Alexander books discuss essential concepts of Buddhist philosophy in question-and-answer form and describe the fields of knowledge cultivated in Tibetan culture, including medicine, literature, and calendar-making (e.g. sign. ORI Ms Tib. 4). In the absence of linguistic expertise, however, the contents of those four volumes remained unexamined until 1933 and 1942, respectively, when Lajos Ligeti (1902–1987) and Lajos Gyula Nagy (1920–1949/1950) deciphered them. Most of the documents in the Kőrösi Csoma Archives require years of training to understand, yet a Latin-language Tibetan alphabet, a volume used by Kőrösi Csoma during his studies, renders his achievements more approachable even to non-specialists (sign. ORI Csoma 24, 726.197). Among the highlights of the Tibetan collection are several coloured woodblock prints.[5] For instance, an eighteenth-century illustrated block print on Tibetan paper preserves an abridged version of Tsong kha pa's (1357–1419) most famous work, Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (*Lam rim chen mo*). Tsong kha pa was a reformer of Buddhist teachings and the founder of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism (sign. ORI Ms Tib. 15). Thanks to its unique woodblock prints and manuscripts, the Kőrösi Csoma Archives was inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2009.

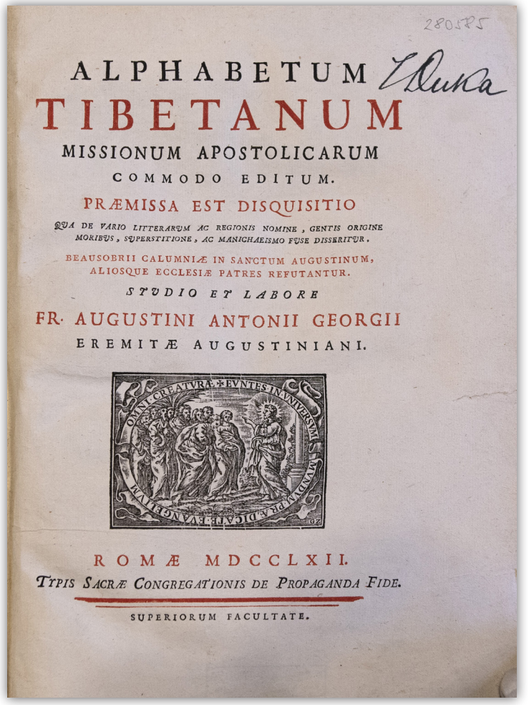
3 Duka 1885.
4 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 360–364.
5 Orosz 2008.



9. Excerpt from one of the Alexander books (sign. ORI Ms Tib. 4)



10. Abridged version of Tsong kha pa's Lam rim chen mo *(sign. ORI Ms Tib. 15)*



ALPHABETUM TIBETANUM
MISSIONUM APOSTOLICARUM
COMMODO EDITUM.
PRÆMISSA EST DISQUISITIO
QUA DE VARIO LITTERARUM AC REGIONIS NOMINE, GENTIS ORIGINE MORIBUS, SUPERSTITIONE, AC MANICHÆISMO FUSE DISSERITUR.
BEAUSOBRII CALUMNIÆ IN SANCTUM AUGUSTINUM, ALIOSQUE ECCLESIÆ PATRES REFUTANTUR.
STUDIO ET LABORE
FR. AUGUSTINI ANTONII GEORGII
EREMITÆ AUGUSTINIANI.
ROMÆ MDCCLXII.
TYPIS SACRÆ CONGREGATIONIS DE PROPAGANDA FIDE.
SUPERIORUM FACULTATE.

11. Csoma's Latin-language alphabet for Tibetan, printed in Italy for the use of Jesuit missionaries (sign. Csoma 24, 726.197)



12. Illustration from the same Tibetan alphabet (sign. Csoma 24, 726.197)

A CATALOGUE OF THE
TIBETAN MANUSCRIPTS AND BLOCK PRINTS
IN THE LIBRARY OF THE
HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

VOL. 1

BY
GERGELY OROSZ

LIBRARY OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
BUDAPEST

13. Title page of the first volume of catalogue of Tibetan manuscripts at the Library of the Academy (e.g. sign. 768.590)



14. The tomb of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma in Darjeeling, today

The second major acquisition for what would later become the Oriental Collection took place in 1886, when the Academy purchased manuscripts from the estate of Dániel Szilágyi (1831–1885).[6] Szilágyi had fought in the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–1849 and after its failure, he followed Governor Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894) into exile in the Ottoman Empire. Szilágyi became a self-taught expert in Turkish studies, specialising in rare books and manuscripts for thirty-six years in his antiquarian bookshop on Timoni Street in Istanbul. Despite his deep interest in Turkish historical sources relating to Hungary, Szilágyi never published any scholarly work. His antiquarian business nevertheless earned him an international reputation and secured valuable contacts both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire. Through his connections at the Sultan's court, Szilágyi played a role in the recovery of thirty-nine manuscripts that allegedly once belonged to the Bibliotheca Corviniana. The volumes were returned to Hungary as gifts in two instalments by two Sultans: four volumes in 1869 and thirty-five volumes in 1877. Of the thirty-five manuscripts that arrived in Budapest in 1877 however, only eleven were deemed authentic Corvina codices by experts.[7]

Szilágyi himself had never returned to his homeland, but he sent his sons, Béla (c. 1853–1896) and Árpád Szilágyi, back to Hungary. Szilágyi wanted his sons to entrust his personal collection to the Academy after his death. However, the Academy was able to afford only the manuscript collection from Szilágyi's heirs, even at an already reduced price. Thus, the printed volumes of the bequest were purchased by the boys' secondary school in Kiskunhalas (Bács-Kiskun County). The purchase was facilitated by the heirs' trusted teacher at the school, Áron Szilády (1837–1922), a linguist specialising in Turkish studies. The subsequent fate of the prints from Szilágyi's bequest, together with the destiny of Áron Szilády's books, will be discussed below.

According to the detailed description of Szilágyi's manuscript bequest, the *Collectio Szilágyiána* (1892),[8] it comprised four-hundred-thirty-eight Turkish, fifty Persian, and ten to fifteen Arabic codices. More than half of the eight hundred Turkish manuscripts in the present Oriental Collection originate from Dániel Szilágyi's collection. Szilágyi's most important manuscripts relate to the history of the Ottoman Empire. Among them is a chronicle covering the era of Sultan Suleyman I (r. 1520–1566) and its aftermath (sign. ORI Ms Török O.217), which also discusses the history of Hungary under Ottoman rule. It was written by a certain İbrahim Peçevi (1572–1650), a historian of Bosnian origin born in Pécs (Baranya County), who drew on both Ottoman and Hungarian sources. Almost two hundred of Szilágyi's manuscripts are literary works, many translated into Turkish from other languages. One of the most lavishly decorated items with gilded illustrations is a Turkish version of the history of Alexander the Great, the *İskendernâme* (sign. ORI Ms Török O.83). The only Turkish-language cookbook in the Oriental Collection also derives from Szilágyi's bequest. The *Aşçı Kitâbı* consisting of twenty-six leaves discusses dishes in six chapters: including soups, main courses (such as lamb, rabbit, fish, etc.), desserts and pickles (sign. ORI Ms Török.O.14).



15. Portrait of Dániel Szilágyi, from the periodical Vasárnapi Újság

6 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 99–102.
7 Mikó 2023, 81–87.
8 Kunos 1892.

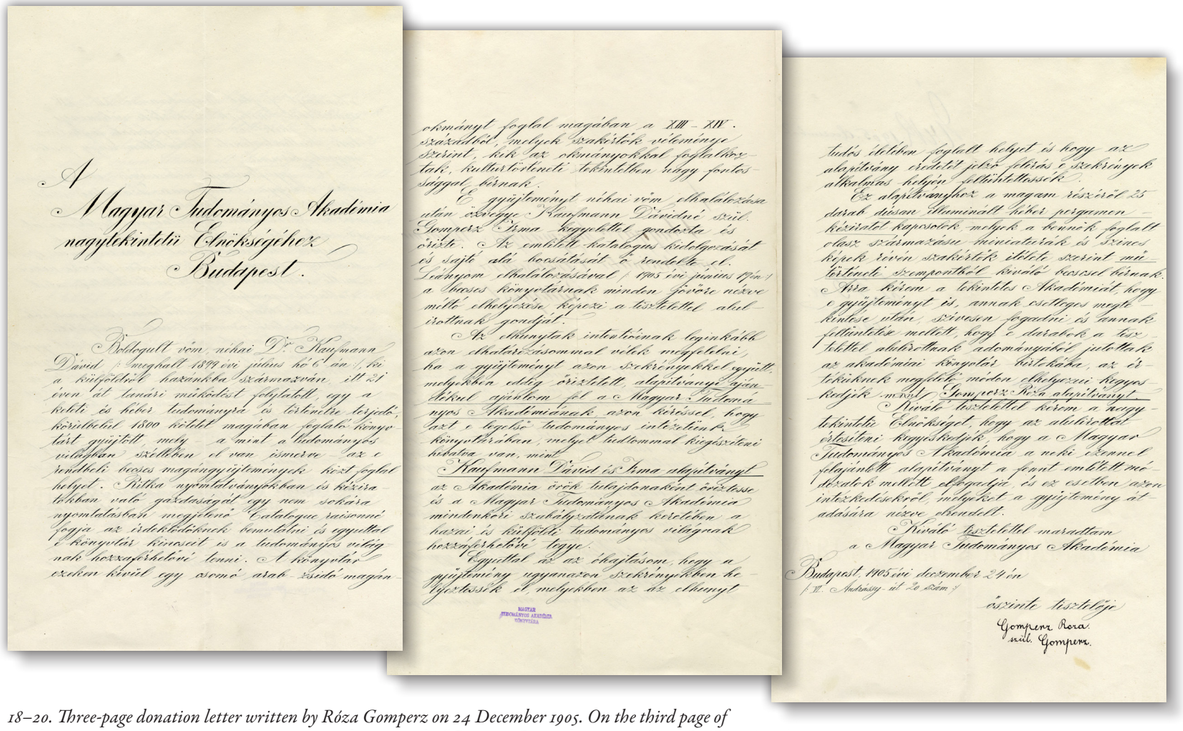


16. Photograph of Áron Szilády (sign. Ms 10206/V/133)



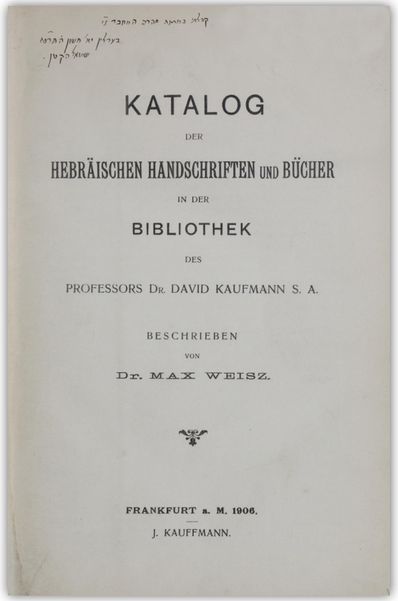
17. Excerpt from the İskendernâme *(sign. ORI Ms Török O.83)*

The third significant donation in the field of Oriental studies came from Mrs Zsigmond Gomperz, née Róza Gomperz (1830–1917), in 1906.[9] Róza Gomperz acted upon the last will of her daughter, Irma Gomperz (1854–1905), and her son-in-law Dávid Kaufmann (1852–1899), who wished to donate their collection, bearing both of their names, to the Academy as a "perpetual possession". Róza Gomperz emphasised the importance of twenty-five lavishly illustrated manuscripts as her own contribution to the gift, the "Gomperz Róza alapítvány", in her donation letter to the Academy. The Kaufmann collection consisted of approximately six hundred manuscripts and 1,100 books, written in Hebrew, Italian, Judeo-Arabic, Yiddish and Aramaic.[10] Moreover, the collection included thousands of genizah fragments from the repository of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, founded in the ninth century in Cairo. As in traditional Jewish culture, the written word has transcendent value: no paper with sacred texts is destroyed but is properly buried or kept in repositories for eternity. The genizah fragments from such repositories numbered in the hundreds of thousands and were distributed to major collections worldwide at the end of the nineteenth century, as they serve as valuable sources for the study of religion, law, history and linguistics. Thanks to international cooperation, by the early 2000s these fragments had been digitised and now form part of the Friedberg Genizah Project, managed by the National Library of Israel.



18–20. Three-page donation letter written by Róza Gomperz on 24 December 1905. On the third page of the document the donor mentions her own contribution as the "Gomperz Róza alapítvány" (sign. RAL 533/1905)

9 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 185–188.
10 Weisz 1906.


KATALOG

DER

HEBRÄISCHEN HANDSCHRIFTEN UND BÜCHER

IN DER

BIBLIOTHEK

DES

PROFESSORS Dr. DAVID KAUFMANN S. A.

BESCHRIEBEN

VON

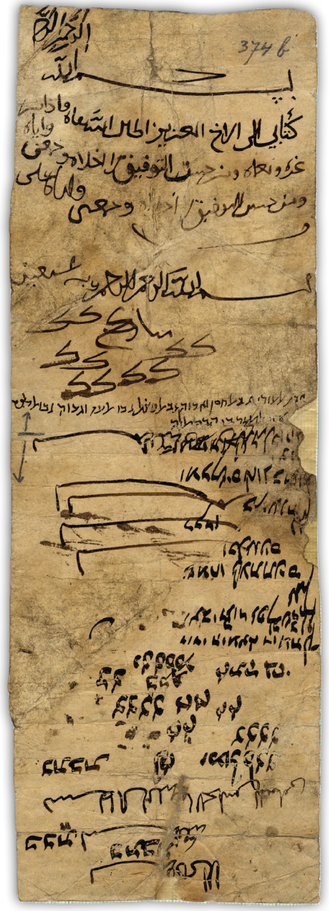
Dr. MAX WEISZ.

FRANKFURT a. M. 1906.

J. KAUFFMANN.

21. Catalogue of the Kaufmann bequest (e.g. sign. 744.189)

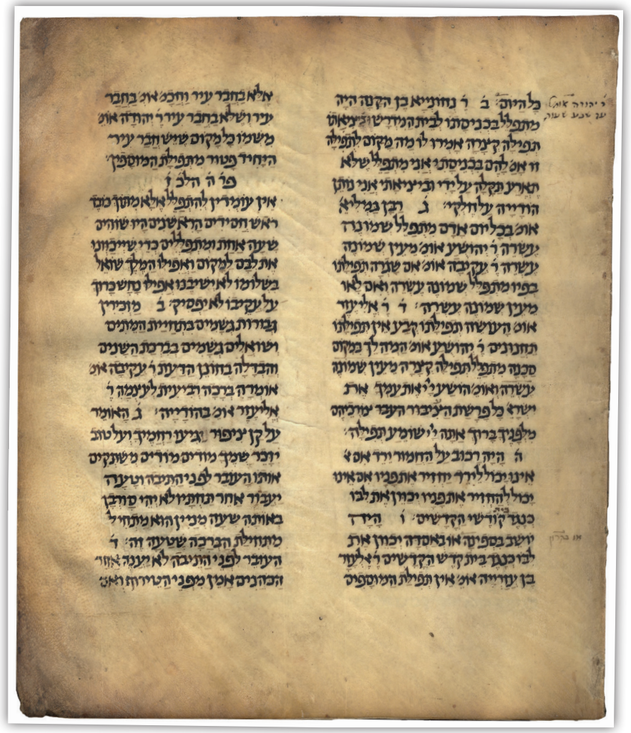




22–23. Two genizah fragments from the Kaufmann collection (sign. ORI Ms KA 374)

Dávid Kaufmann, like many prominent members and donors in the history of the Academy and its Library during the nineteenth century, was a Hungarian scholar by choice. Originally from the small town of Kojetín in Moravia, Kaufmann moved to Budapest in 1877 to take up a professorship at the newly established Jewish Theological Seminary (*Országos Rabbiképző Intézet*). His expertise ranged across numerous research fields, from medieval Jewish philosophy to history, literary studies and cultural history, and he built his personal library accordingly. His collection was particularly rich in manuscripts and printed works coming from Italy. For example, in 1895, Kaufmann purchased the heritage of the famous rabbi from Mantua, Marco Mortara (1815–1894).

Kaufmann often commemorated the joy of new acquisitions with personal notes or even poems written inside the volumes (e.g. sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann B 68). For instance, on 28 February 1896, he celebrated the purchase of the most complete known manuscript of the *Mishnah*, written in eleventh-century Italy (sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 50), with a Hebrew poem. Beyond its unique contents, the manuscript is also important from a linguistic perspective. Its consonants and long vowels were written several centuries before the addition of the short vowels and diacritic marks, the latter testifying to a different phase in the development of the Hebrew language than the former.



24. Excerpt from the most complete known manuscript of the Mishnah *(sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 50)*



25. Excerpt from the Mahzor *prayer book (sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 388)*



26. Excerpt from the tripartite Mahzor *prayer book (sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 384)*

Kaufmann also possessed twenty-five lavishly illustrated manuscripts, purchased from the Trieste family in Padua. He himself prepared their first description from an art-historical perspective. Among them are two manuscripts produced in southern Germany around 1300 (signs. ORI Mss Kaufmann A 388 and A 384). The continuation of manuscript Kaufmann A 384 is preserved today in two further volumes held in the British Library and the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

The collection also includes a manuscript of particular importance for Hungarian history. *Megillat Ofen* (sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 349) is an eyewitness account of the siege of Buda in 1686 and its aftermath, written by rabbi Izsák Schulhof (c. 1645–1733). The Hebrew manuscript, with Yiddish translation in the margins, was copied in Prague in 1800 and later published in a modern edition by Dávid Kaufmann himself in 1895 (sign. ORI Kaufmann B 418). Kaufmann's edition was also translated into Hungarian in 1981.

The Kaufmann and Gomperz collection, as it should properly be called in order to commemorate the names of all three of its donors, unfortunately suffered significant losses in the 1980s. Several lavishly decorated manuscripts (e.g. sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 380) and thirteen of the fourteen incunabula were stolen by an insider. The incunabula in question represented a uniform Venetian printing style, characterised by non-figurative margins on the title pages. The illustration below shows a microfilm reproduction of the title page of Kaufmann B 659, representative of all the stolen incunabula. Since the 1980s, one of the stolen items has been returned to the Library (sign. Kaufmann B 938), while the remaining twelve are still regarded as the Library's lawful property. Consequently, they continue to be listed both in the electronic catalogue and in the printed catalogue of incunabula of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (signs. Kaufmann B 1, B 262, B 927–B 936, B 935/koll. 1–3, B 926, B 658, B 464, B 567, B 659). As of 2025, legal proceedings remain ongoing to recover some of these volumes from the United States and Israel.



27. Microfilm reproduction (A 850) of a stolen manuscript, sign. ORI Ms Kaufmann A 380



28. Microfilm reproduction (A 2908) of a Venetian incunabulum representing the other stolen items, sign. ORI Kaufmann B 659

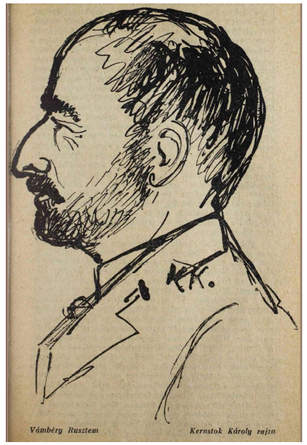
The fourth significant bequest, which substantially enriched the Academy's Turkish manuscript collection, came from Orientalist and Academy member Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913).[11] His only son, Rusztem Vámbéry (1872–1948), donated forty-three Turkish, ten Persian and two Arabic manuscripts from the heritage to the Academy. However, Rusztem donated a portion of his father's book collection to the Metropolitan Library in Budapest and eventually sold the remainder to the New York Public Library.

Among the many nineteenth-century scholars who contributed to the development of academic life in Hungary, Ármin Vámbéry also chose to become a Hungarian scholar. Born into an Orthodox Jewish family in Upper Hungary under the name Hermann Wamberger, he later adopted a name that sounded more Hungarian. He would also, eventually, change his religion, becoming a Calvinist. Nevertheless, throughout his career Vámbéry lived and worked with openness toward different religions, including Islamic culture. After studying Oriental languages in Hungary in 1857, Vámbéry went to Istanbul to investigate the hypothetical Turkish-Hungarian linguistic parentage. The Academy elected him as a corresponding member in 1861, before his long journey to Central Asia in 1862–1863. During his visit to different khaganates under increasing pressure from the Russian Empire, thanks to his near-native level command of Turkish, Vámbéry was able to assume the persona of a Sunni Turk, "a portable version of the Quran in a green sack hanging from his neck all the time" (sign. 772.072). Beyond his travelogues and scientific discoveries, the most remarkable outcome of his long travels was a friendship with Mullah Ishak (c. 1841–1892), who came to Hungary with him. Known in Hungary as Izsák Molla, he began working as a library assistant at the Academy in 1864. He eventually married and started a family in his new country. Thanks to Vámbéry's intervention, Izsák Molla was buried according to Muslim tradition in the Calvinist cemetery in Velence (Fejér County).

11 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 189–192.



29. Portrait of Ármin Vámbéry (sign. Ms 10121)



30. Caricature portrait of Rusztem Vámbéry, from the periodical A Toll*, 1929*



31. Ownership note in the portable version of the Quran by Ármin Vámbéry (sign. 772.072)



32. The tomb of Izsák Molla

After his journeys, Vámbéry pursued an academic career in Budapest, teaching future generations of Orientalists until 1905. In 1882, with a publication on the origins of the Hungarians, he initiated the so-called "Ugro-Turkic war" in linguistics, arguing for the Turkish origins of the Hungarian language, on the basis of a series of Old-Turkish loanwords in Hungarian. Although Vámbéry's hypothesis ultimately proved incorrect, as scholarly consensus now supports the Finno-Ugric origins of the Hungarian language, he correctly recognised that language and ethnicity are not historically identical.

Vámbéry remained active until the final days of his life and died without a testament. He requested a simple Protestant burial, without funeral orations or singing, and that no ceremony be held before his last journey, either at the University or at the Academy, as was otherwise customary for Academy members. He was indeed buried in the Calvinist cemetery on Kerepesi Boulevard in Budapest without the ceremonies described in the section "Life and Death inside the Palace" above.

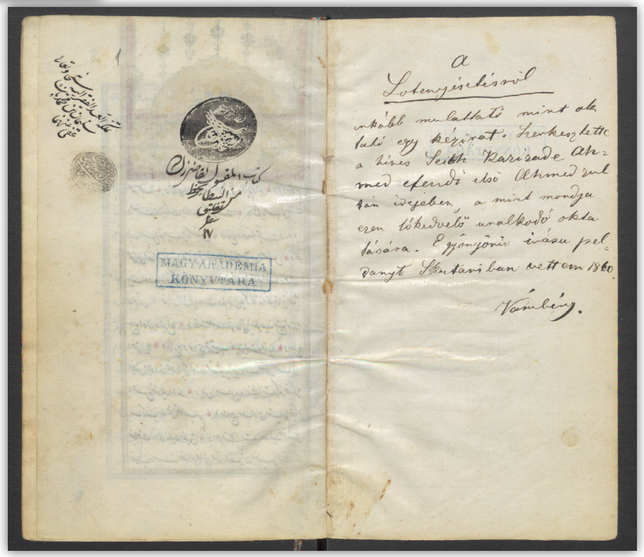
All the manuscripts of Vámbéry's bequest are available in digital form on the Library's website. Therefore, only the most important items are listed here. For instance, Vámbéry discovered the *Târîḫ-i Üngürûs* (History of Hungary), written by a Jewish merchant who had converted to Islam and served as an interpreter to Sultan Suleyman I. The author compiled at least two Latin chronicles of Hungary and supplemented them with stories about Alexander the Great, who appears as an outstanding hero endowed with semi-divine qualities in the Persian and Muslim tradition (sign. ORI Ms Török F.57). According to Vámbéry's personal note in another manuscript, the work on horse-breeding by Şeyh Muhammed Kadı-zâde is "more a reading for entertainment, than for learning purposes" (sign. ORI Ms Török O.171). There is also a fable collection *Ferec Ba ʿde'ş-Şidde* (Joys after sorrow) (sign. ORI Ms Török F.71), which, having been copied in 1451, is the oldest known manuscript of that literary work. It is an interesting coincidence that the Latin saying *Post nubila Phoebus* and its Hungarian counterpart "Borúra derű", the motto of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences both convey the same meaning as the title of this collection of Turkish fables.



33. Excerpt from Târîḫ-i Üngürûs *(sign. ORI Ms Török F.57)*



34. Binding of the manuscript sign. ORI Ms Török O.171



35. Vámbéry's personal note "more a reading for entertainment, than for learning purposes" (sign. ORI Ms Török O.171)



36. Excerpt from Ferec Baʿde'ş-Şidde *(sign. ORI Ms Török F.71)*

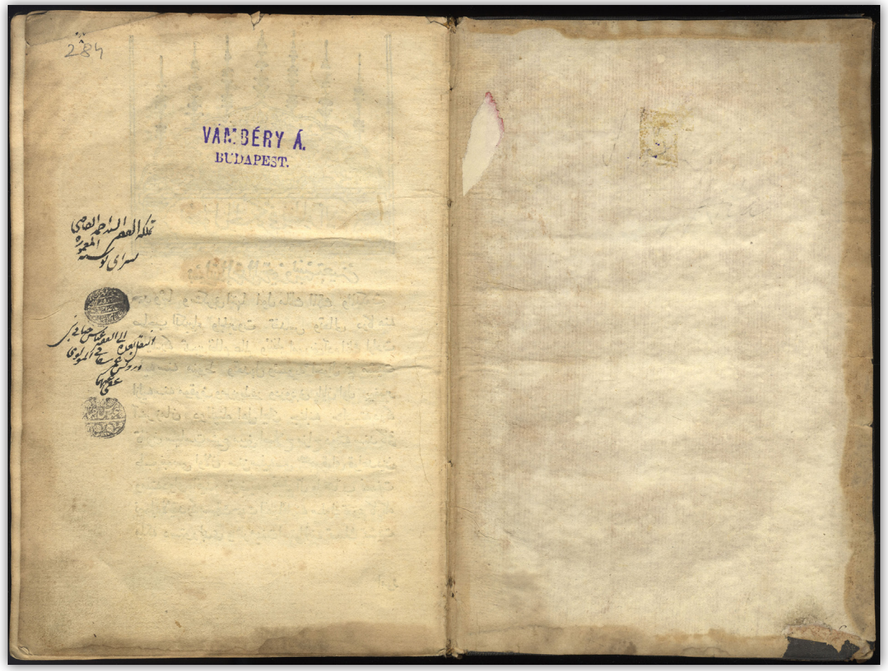


37. The stamp of the Academy with its motto *"Borúra derű" on the title page of its first yearbook*

Finally, with reference to a printed work from Vámbéry's collection that was donated to the Academy after the Second World War (for reasons discussed below), the activity of the Istanbul-based printer İbrâhîm Müteferrika (1670/74–1745) should be mentioned here. The printer, who was born around 1670 in Transylvania and probably educated at the Unitarian College of Kolozsvár (today Cluj, Romania), converted to Islam and opened the first Ottoman Turkish-language printing house in Istanbul in 1728. Until his death, he published seventeen works in twenty-two volumes there, thirteen of which have copies in the Library of the Academy today. His own work, originating from the Vámbéry bequest, is a treatise on statecraft (sign. Kel.Ir.O.185, actual: 768.439). Moreover, a digital collection of İbrâhîm Müteferrika's *opera omnia* is available on the Library's website: muteferrika.mtak.hu.



38. Excerpt from a Müteferrika print (sign. 768.439)



39. Ownership stamps of Ármin Vámbéry in Hungarian and Arabic (sign. 768.439)

Following the timeline of the most important donations to the future Oriental Collection, the library of Sándor Kégl (1862–1920) and the manuscript documentation (letters, notes, photographs, etc.) of his younger sister, Teréz Kégl (1869–1920), should be mentioned next.[12] In 1924, their brother, János Kégl (1865–1925), acting upon his siblings' testaments, donated to the Academy a bequest of 11,108 items, including manuscripts, books and periodicals. In terms of the number of volumes donated to the Academy from his *personal* library, Kégl ranks second only to the aforementioned József IV Teleki, the first President of the Academy. Similar to Teleki in two other respects, Kégl never married and dedicated his life to scholarship. Sándor Kégl was a pioneer of Iranian studies in Hungary, primarily interested in literary history. He developed his library in accordance with his research interests, collecting works in the main European languages as well as in several Oriental ones. After being elected a corresponding member of the Academy in 1906, Kégl prepared the first catalogue of the manuscripts in Oriental languages in the Library of the Academy.

The first acquisitions of Sándor Kégl's Persian manuscripts were carefully selected purchases made during his first research trip to Iran in 1889–1890. Later, Kégl mainly purchased manuscripts through correspondence with booksellers in Great Britain, and his collection of Persian manuscripts amounted to fifty-nine items by the end of his life. Kégl did not prioritise the appearance of his purchases; thus, his collection is of particular interest for its contents. For instance, the volumes produced by means of lithographic technology in Iran mark the beginnings of printing in the Qājār era (e.g. *Ketāb-e Romūz-e Ḥamzah* from 1857, sign. 777.153). His collection of early Iranian printed works was the largest of its kind in Hungary. As for his collection of manuscripts, it contains three volumes that are unique witnesses to specific literary works. Among them is a fragment of an anonymous erotic poem, named after its two female protagonists, *Alfīya va Šalfīya* (sign. ORI Ms Perzsa O.081/1). There is also a Persian translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* by Pandit Dayārām Kāčru Hušdil (1743–1811), which is not known in any other manuscript copy (sign. ORI Ms Perzsa O.075). Thanks to the scholarly priorities of its collector, the Kégl collection continues to offer numerous understudied sources and research opportunities to this day.

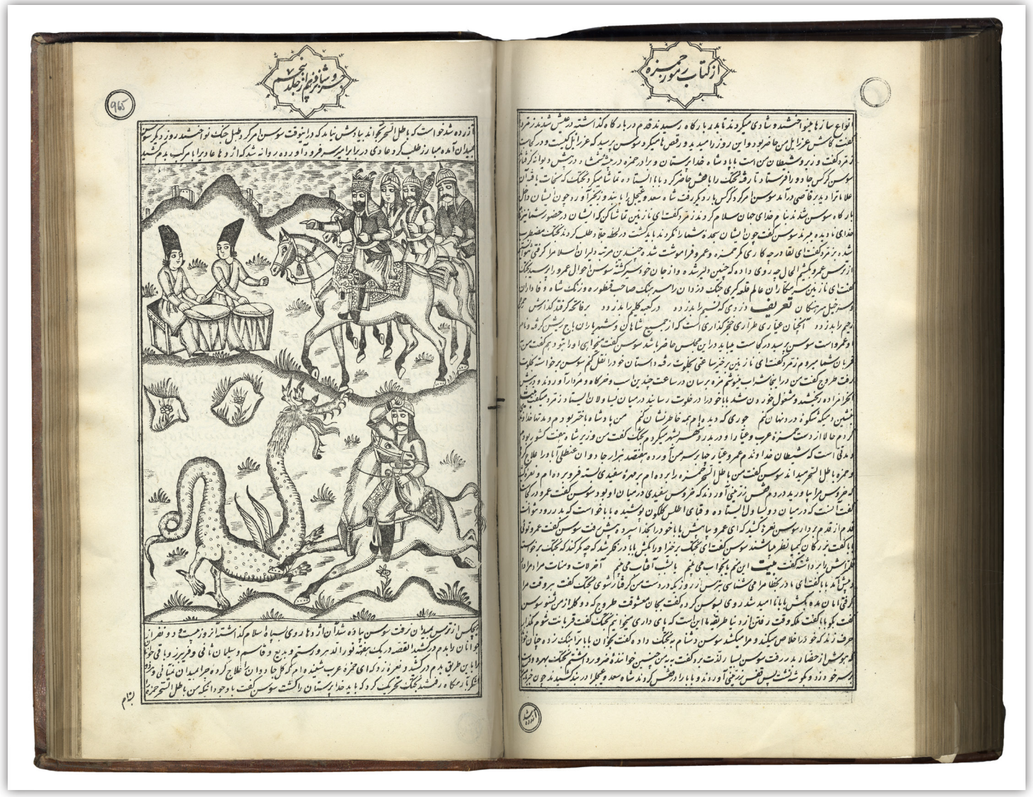


40. Portrait of Sándor Kégl (sign. Ms 5075/107)



41. Portrait of Teréz Kégl (sign. Ms 5075/113)

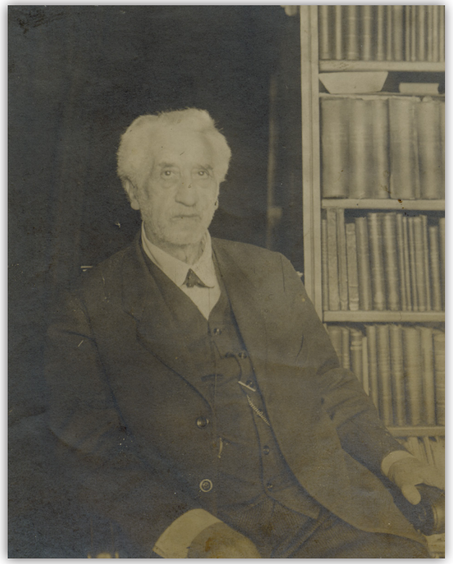
12 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 221–224.



42–44. Three excerpts from Ketāb-e Romūz-e Ḥamzah *(sign. 777.153)*



In 1933, the manuscript collection of Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921), one of the professors of the above-mentioned Sándor Kégl, was donated to the Academy.[13] The donor was Károly Goldziher (1881–1955), the son of Ignác Goldziher and Laura Mittler (†1925). In accordance with his mother's last wishes, in 1926, Károly Goldziher donated to the Academy approximately two hundred items of notes, preliminary studies and manuscript versions of his father's scholarly works as well as more than 13,000 letters and postcards written to Ignác Goldziher. In 1932, copies of a further three hundred letters, written by Goldziher to Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930), professor of Islamic studies at the University of Tübingen, were added to the collection. After two years of cataloguing the correspondence in forty-seven boxes and indexing it by sender, the Ignác Goldziher Memorial Room was opened in the Academy building on 18 October 1933. At the opening ceremony, the then President of the Academy, Albert Berzeviczy (1853–1936),[14] emphasised the necessity of making Goldziher's intellectual legacy accesible to the public, particularly in light of the lack of financial resources to publish his unpublished works. Unfortunately, the Academy's limited financial means had prevented the purchase of Goldziher's book collection in 1924. It was subsequently acquired by the newly founded Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The "Goldziher Library" served as the basis for the National Library of Israel's Islamic and Near Eastern Collection.



45. Portrait of Ignác Goldziher, Hungarian Jewish Archives (Magyar Zsidó Levéltár), sign. 66.102 I–G–1

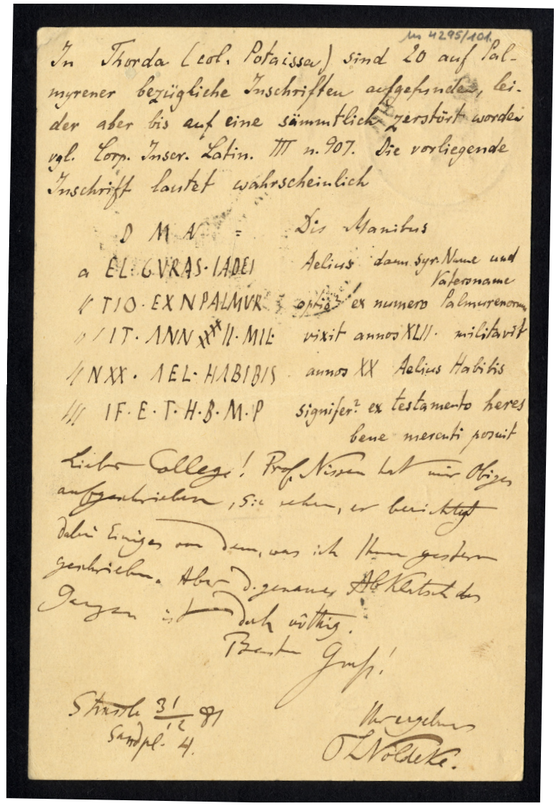


46. Portrait of Laura Goldziher née Mittler, Hungarian Jewish Archives, sign. 66.116 I–G–1

13 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 231–235.
14 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 89–98.



47. Portrait of Károly Goldziher, Hungarian Jewish Archives, sign. 66.111 I–G



In Thorda (col. Potaissa) sind 20 auf Palmyrener bezügliche Inschriften aufgefunden, leider aber bis auf eine sämmtlich zerstört worden; vgl. Corp. Inscr. Latin. III n. 907. Die vorliegende Inschrift lautet wahrscheinlich

D M A = Dis Manibus
a EL·GVRAS·IADEI Aelius dann syr. Name und Vatername
T IO·EX N PALMYR ordine ex numero Palmurenorum
IT·ANN XL II·MIL vixit annos XLII militavit
NXX·AEL·HABIBIS annos XX Aelius Habibis
IF·E·T·H·S·M·P signifer ex testamento heres bene merenti posuit

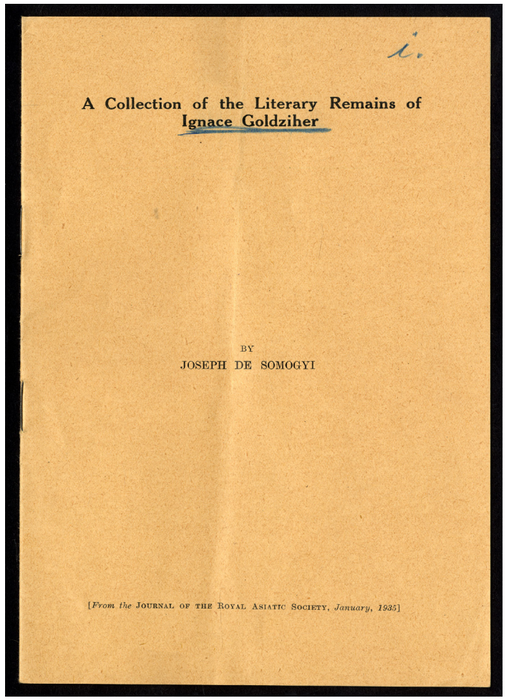
Lieber Collega! Prof. Nissen hat mir Ihren aufgeschrieben, Sie sehen, er berichtigt Ihnen einiges von dem, was ich Ihnen gestern geschrieben. Aber d. genauen Abschrift des Gegen ist doch wichtig.
Beste Grüsse!
Ihr ergebener
Th Nöldeke.
Strassb 31/12 87
Sampl. 4.

48. A letter from Theodor Nöldeke, professor of Islamic studies at the University of Tübingen to Ignác Goldziher (sign. Ms 4295/101)

Ignác Goldziher was a prodigy of Islamic studies who, during his university years, visited all the major libraries in Leipzig, Berlin, Leiden and Vienna, making detailed notes on all the subjects in the available Arabic manuscripts. He was elected a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the age of twenty-six (1876) and a full member at forty-two (1892). He was highly respected and widely admired for his outstanding knowledge among scholars from "four continents". Numerous learned societies elected him as a member, and his works remain foundational in the field of Islamic studies, even a century after his death. Goldziher's personality continues to attract not only scholarly interest, as he was deeply rooted in his own Hungarian Jewish culture while also possessing a profound understanding of Islamic civilisation.

Although the Goldziher Room was never reopened after the devastating effects of the Second World War, its collection has remained at the centre of scholarly attention. By 1942, the description of the previously uncatalogued parts of Goldziher's bequest had been prepared by his last pupil, József Hollósi Somogyi (1899–1976).[15] Since 2012, Goldziher's entire correspondence, more than 28,000 digitised files, has been available in English both in the electronic catalogue and in the Library's repository.

Goldziher's correspondence contains letters from 1,600 different persons in thirty-nine countries, written in eleven languages, primarily in German and Hungarian. Amongst the most engaging items for the non-specialised readers are around six hundred black-and-white (and occasionally coloured) postcards depicting cities, national costumes and works of art. The collection also includes approximately one hundred portrait photographs sent to Goldziher by his scholarly pen pals, who, in keeping with the customs of the era, often enclosed their own pictures with their initial letters. The Library plans to prepare a thematic website that virtually maps the geographical origins of the postcards and letters in the Goldziher Collection.



i.

A Collection of the Literary Remains of Ignace Goldziher

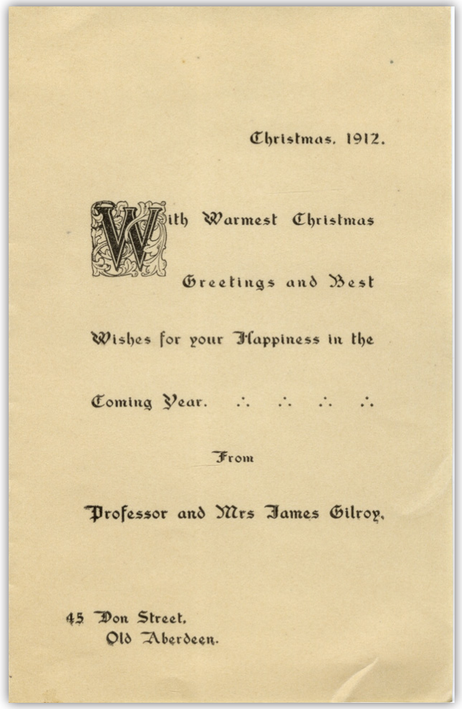
BY
JOSEPH DE SOMOGYI

[From the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, January, 1935]

49. Catalogue of the Goldziher bequest at the Academy (sign. RAL 485/1932)

15 After leaving Hungary to become a professor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States, he used the name Joseph Desomogyi. Somogyi 1935.





50–52. Three illustrated postcards sent to Ignác Goldziher:
1. Coloured Christmas postcard, greetings from Professor and Mrs James Gilroy, Aberdeen, Scotland, 1912 (sign. GIL/12/28/17)
2. Postcard from Michelangelo Guidi, with the view of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome, Italy, 1914 (sign. GIL/14/17/01)
3. Coloured postcard with a bouquet of edelweiss flowers, sent by Placidus Steiniger, Admont, Austria, 1910 (sign. GIL/41/33/70)









Following the timeline of the major donations of Oriental materials in the interwar period, the gift by Aurél Stein (1862–1943) should be mentioned last, as his donation reached the Academy in two instalments, three decades apart, in 1922 and 1957, respectively.[16]

If Ignác Goldziher was characterised above as a prodigy, it is certainly an apt description of Aurél Stein as well. As a third child and a late gift to his elderly parents, Nathan Stein and Anna Hirschler, who reportedly treated him more like a grandson than a son, Aurél Stein was guided towards scholarship by two male members of his close family. His brother, Ernő Stein (1843–1901), who was nineteen years his senior, and their maternal uncle, Ignác Hirschler (1823–1891), professor of ophthalmology and member of the Academy, facilitated Stein's early visits to the Academy's reading rooms during his secondary school years in 1877–1879. According to Aurél Stein's own recollection, he began his Oriental studies, spending many happy hours in those reading rooms, and, among other pursuits, studying Sanskrit grammar from the then Chief Librarian, Pál Hunfalvy. Stein went on to study Iranian studies and Indology in Vienna and Leipzig, earning a doctorate in Vedic language and literature at the University of Tübingen in 1883, at the age of twenty-one. To acquire practical training in cartography, he also spent a year at the Ludovika Military Academy in Budapest in 1885–1886. Stein began his career at the University of the Punjab in Lahore, then India, teaching Sanskrit and accomplishing scholarly works in philology. For instance, he prepared the catalogue of the Maharaja of Kashmir's library in 1894. Despite a promising start abroad, Stein wished to return to Hungary to obtain a university professorship, but he was not awarded one. Nevertheless, at the initiative of Ignác Goldziher and Ármin Vámbéry, Stein was elected a corresponding member of the Academy in 1895. He continued his career abroad for the rest of his life, from 1900 onwards, changing his research profile from philology towards archaeology and geography. In 1904, he became a citizen of the British Empire, obtaining a senior position within the Archaeological Survey of India. Stein organised numerous expeditions into Central Asia, becoming a pioneer in the study of different cultures and languages along the Silk Road, from Chinese Turkestan to Persia, Iraq, Syria and the Trans-Jordan area. He was preparing an expedition in Afghanistan to make archaeological excavations of the ancient Bactria, when, at the age of eighty-one, he fell ill and died on 26 October 1943. Aurél Stein was buried in the Christian cemetery in Kabul.

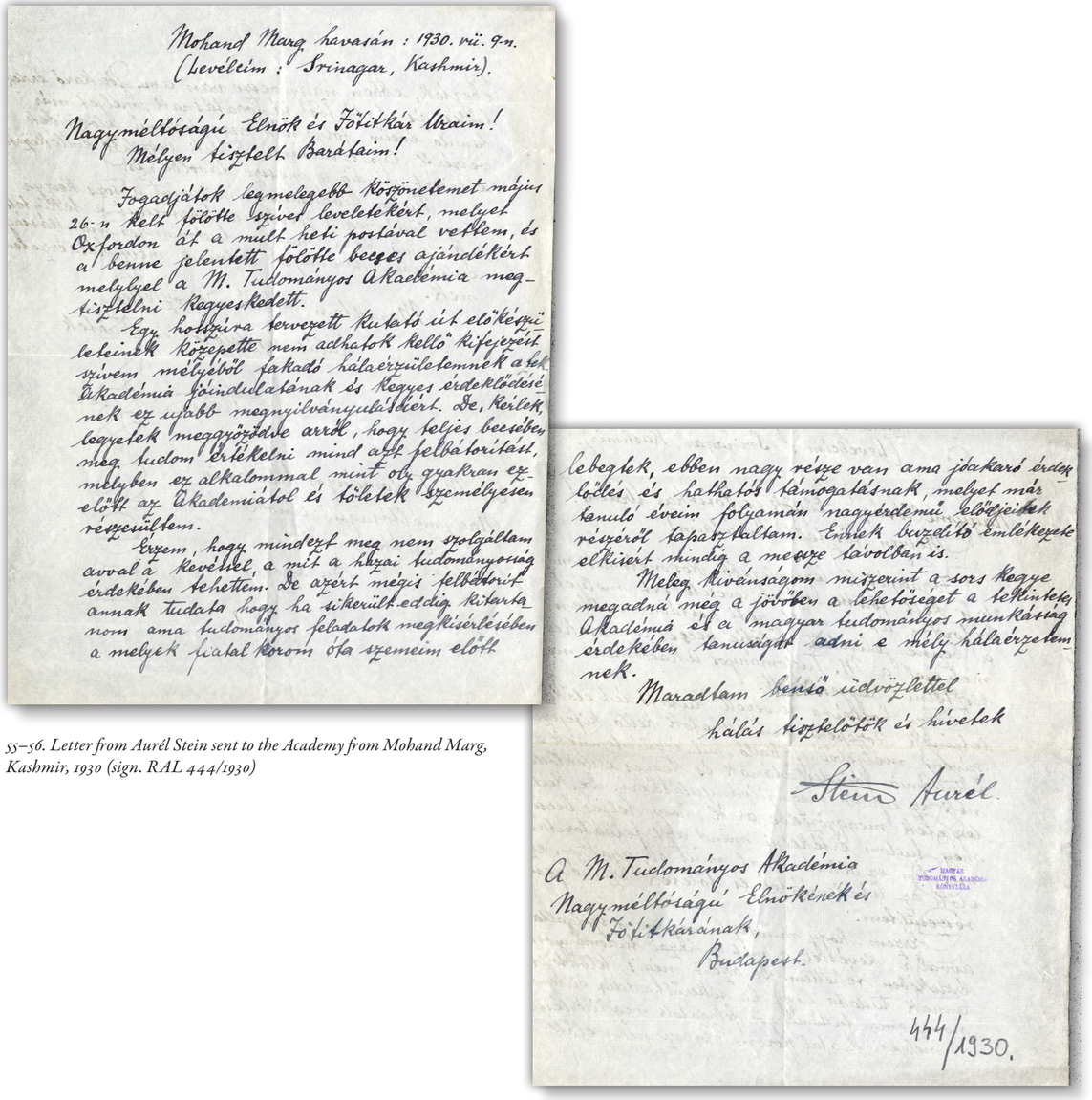


53. Aurél Stein's desk decorated with flowers, with his dog, Dash, in the foreground, in Mohand Marg, Kashmir (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 3/2(010))



54. Portrait of Aurél Stein by Sir William Rothenstein, 1920 (sign. Stein 21)

16 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 350–355.



Mohand Marg havasán: 1930. vii. 9-n.
(Levélcím: Srinagar, Kashmir).

Nagyméltóságú Elnök és Főtitkár Uraim!
Mélyen tisztelt Barátaim!

Fogadjátok legmelegebb köszönetemet május 26-n kelt fölötte szíves leveletekért, melyet Oxfordon át a mult heti postával vettem, és a benne jelentett fölötte becses ajándékért melylyel a M. Tudományos Akadémia megtisztelni kegyeskedett.

Egy hosszúra tervezett kutató út előkészületeinek közepette nem adhatok kellő kifejezést szívem mélyéből fakadó hálaérzületemnek a tek. Akadémia jóindulatának és kegyes érdeklődésének ez ujabb megnyilványulásáért. De, kérlek, legyetek meggyőződve arról, hogy teljes becsében meg tudom értékelni mind azt felbátorítást, melyben ez alkalommal mint oly gyakran ezelőtt az Akademiától és tőletek személyesen részesültem.

Érzem, hogy mindezt meg nem szolgáltam avval a kevéssel, a mit a hazai tudományosság érdekében tehettem. De azért mégis felbátorít annak tudata hogy ha sikerült eddig kitartanom ama tudományos feladatok megkísérlésében a melyek fiatal korom óta szemeim előtt lebegtek, ebben nagy része van ama jóakaró érdeklődés és hathatós támogatásnak, melyet már tanuló éveim folyamán nagyérdemű elődjeitek részéről tapasztaltam. Ennek buzdító emlékezete elkisért mindig a messze távolban is.

Meleg kivánságom miszerint a sors kegye megadná még a jövőben a lehetőséget a tekintetes Akadémia és a magyar tudományos munkásság érdekében tanuságot adni e mély hálaérzetemnek.

Maradtam benső üdvözlettel
hálás tisztelőtök és hívetek

Stein Aurél

A M. Tudományos Akadémia
Nagyméltóságú Elnökének és
Főtitkárának,
Budapest.

444/1930.

55–56. Letter from Aurél Stein sent to the Academy from Mohand Marg, Kashmir, 1930 (sign. RAL 444/1930)

Aurél Stein maintained close professional ties with the Academy throughout his life. Until 1938, he regularly visited Hungary and occasionally delivered lectures at the University or at the Academy. He ensured that copies of all his scholarly works were deposited in the Library of the Academy. In 1921, he donated to the Academy the correspondence of his elder brother, Ernő Stein, and their uncle, Ignác Hirschler, with Boldizsár Elischer, the founder of the Goethe Room at the Academy. In the same year, Stein delivered the scholarly memorial service for Tivadar Duka at the Academy. In 1933, when the Goldziher Room was established, Stein facilitated the acquisition of the letters that Ignác Goldziher had written to Theodor Nöldeke from the University of Tübingen.

In 1922, Aurél Stein made a generous offer to donate to the Library those parts of his book collection that were no longer essential to his daily work. In his last will dated 1934, he formally bequeathed all his books to the Academy. He also established the Stein-Arnold Fund to support research on subjects related to Central Asia by British or Hungarian scholars.

Stein died during the Second World War, and his bequest was divided between India and Great Britain. After the first official communication from Great Britain to the Academy concerning the inheritance in 1947, a full decade passed in political and diplomatic manoeuvring and, finally, in 1957, Stein's donation arrived in Budapest. The preliminary report on the bequest, published by László Rásonyi in 1960, listed more than 8,000 items. It contained 2,300 volumes, 5,000 photographs, approximately 1,400 letters, 180 shelf metres of periodicals, handwritten and printed maps, personal notes, diaries and manuscripts of Stein's scholarly works. Although the cataloguing of the books began right after their arrival, the remaining parts of the bequest were deliberately neglected for political reasons. According to the ideological framework of communist Hungary, Aurél Stein had lived and died as a citizen of a politically adversarial Western country; thus, his achievements were to be met with silence.

Finally, motivated by the cataloguing of Stein's bequest in Great Britain in 1999, international cooperation enabled the completion of its cataloguing in Hungary as well. It was published in two volumes in 2002 and 2007, respectively.[17] The Oriental Collection has presented Stein's donations in different *in situ* and online exhibitions in Hungary and worldwide. Since 2018, the Dunhuang Academy and the Library of the Academy have officially cooperated with each other. For instance, photographs taken by Stein at the Dunhuang Buddhist cave temples were exhibited in Dunhuang and later in Budapest at the 2019 conference, "Dunhuang and Cultural Contact along the Silk Road." The Stein Library has remained the core of the Central Asian materials in the Oriental Collection to this day. It has also significantly enriched the fields of Iranian studies and Indology with valuable works.



57. Aurél Stein's photographs taken during his second Central-Asian Archaeological Expedition (1906–1908): stucco relief heads of gods. Ming-oi, China, 7th–8th century (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 11/1(11))

17 Apor – Wang eds. 2002, Apor – Wang eds. 2007.



58. River Keriya: members of the expedition quenching their thirst after crossing the desert (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 37/5(078))



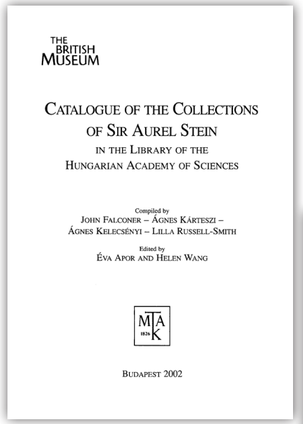
59. The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in Dunhuang and their treasures: partly restored stucco group with the Buddha in the centre, accompanied by his disciples Ananda and Kashyapa, the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Kshitigarbha, as well as two Guardian Kings, Dunhuang (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 11/207(2L))



60. Exterior view of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Dunhuang (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 37/5(078R))



61. Bundles of manuscripts, Dunhuang, Qianfodong (sign. Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 13/1(057R))



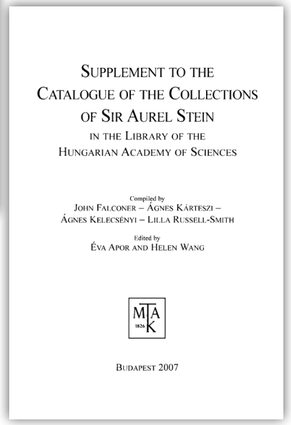
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

CATALOGUE OF THE COLLECTIONS OF SIR AUREL STEIN IN THE LIBRARY OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Compiled by
JOHN FALCONER – ÁGNES KÁRTESZI – ÁGNES KELECSÉNYI – LILLA RUSSELL-SMITH

Edited by
ÉVA APOR AND HELEN WANG

BUDAPEST 2002



SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATALOGUE OF THE COLLECTIONS OF SIR AUREL STEIN IN THE LIBRARY OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Compiled by
JOHN FALCONER – ÁGNES KÁRTESZI – ÁGNES KELECSÉNYI – LILLA RUSSELL-SMITH

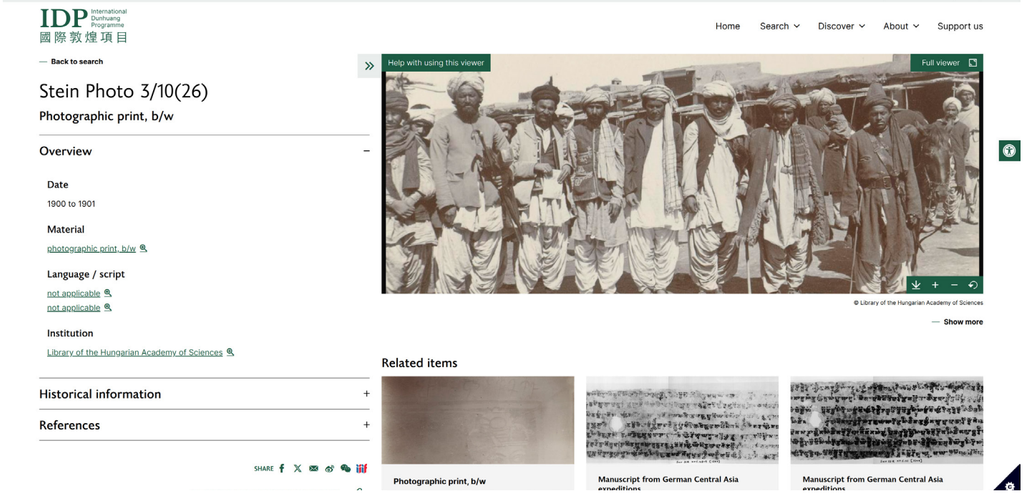
Edited by
ÉVA APOR AND HELEN WANG

BUDAPEST 2007

62–63. The two catalogues of the Stein collection (signs. 761.489. and 767.099)



64. Signing of the bilateral contract between the Dunhuang Academy and the Library of the Academy, 2018



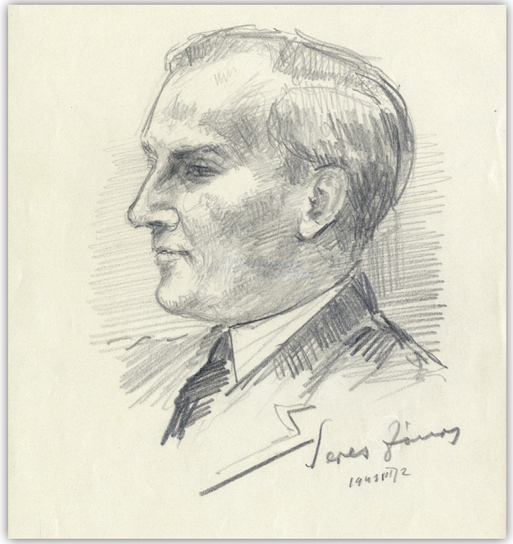
65. Website of the Stein Photo Collection of the International Dunhuang Programme

The Second Phase: Establishing the Oriental Collection

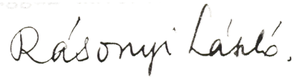
During the siege of Budapest in 1944–1945, the Palace of the Academy suffered considerable damage. The necessity of renovating the building coincided with an opportunity to reform the Library's structure. Moreover, between 1947 and 1949, a number of Orientalist scholars assumed politico-cultural positions within the Hungarian government and the Academy itself, thereby facilitating the establishment of a separate Oriental Collection at the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1947, at the initiative of Lajos Ligeti, a full member of the Academy, the Library Committee appointed the Turcologist László Rásonyi (1899–1984) as librarian responsible for Oriental materials. Rásonyi fulfilled his duties with enthusiasm and professionalism until his retirement in 1961.

In the autumn of 1948, in the spirit of the new communist ideology, the aforementioned Dezső Keresztury became the Library's new Chief Librarian. He sought to assert his leadership by accelerating the institution's transformation. The general linguist and specialist in Iranian studies, Zsigmond Telegdi (1909–1994), directed the leading institution of librarianship in Hungary, the so-called Centre of People's Libraries (*Országos Népkönyvtári Központ*). In late 1949, Lajos Ligeti became Vice President of the Academy. Owing to the influence of these four figures and allowing several months of preliminary discussions on various committees, the Academy finally established its Oriental Collection by a decision dated 11 June 1949.

The transformation of the ground-floor spaces of the Palace of the Academy for the purposes of the Oriental Collection was executed during the tenure of the next Director, the rabbi, Hebraist, and historian, Tibor Scher. Scher succeeded Dezső Keresztury in March 1950 and served as the Library's Director until October 1952. By February 1951, the new reading room of the Oriental Collection had been furnished with pieces of finely crafted cherry woodwork recalling the non-figurative motifs of Islamic architecture. László Rásonyi selected the contents of the special collection, while the spatial design reflected the vision of István Nyireő, the Library's Vice Director.



66. Portrait of Lajos Ligeti (sign. Ms 6502/206)



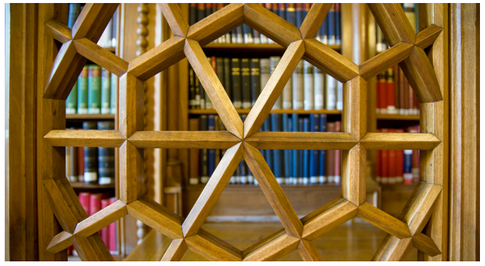
67. Signature of László Rásonyi (sign. Ms 4126/365)



68. László Rásonyi (in the middle) in company of researchers (sign. KGy 32)







69–71. Three colour photographs of the Oriental Collection's interior, today

The first task of László Rásonyi was to identify those parts of the main collection that, on the basis of their subject matter, could be transferred to the newly established Oriental Collection. The principal fields of interest of the new special collection were defined with reference to the volumes of the journal *Orientalische Bibliographie* and those of the *Ungarische Bibliographie der Turkologie und der orientalisch-ungarischen Beziehungen*, the latter published by Rásonyi himself.[18] Rásonyi estimated that, by the time of its opening, the Oriental Collection would have to comprise 15,000 volumes and 1,800 manuscripts, occupying 435 shelf metres.

The newly established special collection drew on various sources. First, the private donations of many prominent Hungarian Orientalist scholars were to be relocated there. Second, the collections of those institutes that had ceased to exist during the war and/or as a result of political changes were to be integrated. Such institutions included, for instance, the Balkán Institute, which was dissolved in 1949, and whose Turkish-language materials were transferred to the Oriental Collection. Likewise, the Turkish materials coming from the Institute of Turkish Philology in Kolozsvár (today Cluj, Romania) were integrated into the new collection. That institution ceased to exist after the Hungarian university moved from Kolozsvár to Szeged (Csongrád-Csanád County) in 1921. It became clear that such an institution would not be re-established in Kolozsvár following the peace settlements that ended the Second World War. Those peace settlements nullified the so-called Second Vienna Award, which had returned Northern Transylvania to Hungary for a period between September 1940 and September 1944.

The communist transformation in Hungary introduced a series of centralising, nationalising and "rationalising" measures that also affected libraries nationwide. The above-mentioned institution, led by Zsigmond Telegdi, the Centre of People's Libraries (hereafter NKK), was formally established in 1945 but operated independently between 1949 and 1954. Its role was to collect and redistribute books from institutions that had been closed or outlawed (see also the section about the KEO collection below). Several significant collections reached the Academy as a result of these NKK redistributions. As noted earlier, the printed volumes from Dániel Szilágyi's bequest had originally been purchased by his sons' secondary school in Kiskunhalas, with the help of their teacher, Áron Szilády. Owing to the NKK redistributions, however, by 1952, both the books of Dániel Szilágyi and the bequest of Áron Szilády had come into the possession of the Academy.

In 1953, Máté Kovács, a member of the temporary committee leading the Library, submitted an initiative to the Executive Committee of Budapest Capital. Kovács proposed relocating the Oriental Collection of the Metropolitan Library (today *Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár*) to the Academy. Between 1906 and 1945, the Metropolitan Library had acquired three important private libraries on Oriental subjects, which together formed its Oriental Collection. First, in 1906, the Metropolitan Library inherited the collection of an Asian explorer and owner of a private museum, Count Jenő Zichy (1837–1906). Second, in 1913, the aforementioned Rusztem Vámbéry, son of the Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry, donated a minor part of his father's book collection to the Metropolitan Library. Finally, in 1916, the Metropolitan Library acquired the inheritance of the Balkan specialist Lajos Thallóczy (1857–1916), comprising 6,000 volumes. The Executive Committee of Budapest Capital accepted Máté Kovács's initiative. According to the extended work plan prepared by László Rásonyi in 1953, and after careful selection to avoid duplicates, 5,209 volumes were transferred from the Metropolitan Library to the Academy's Oriental Collection in that same year.



72. Portrait of Jenő Zichy, source: OSZK Fotótér

18 Rásonyi 1935.



73. The lavishly decorated reading room of the Oriental Collection of the Metropolitan Library in Budapest, source: Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár, Budapest Gyűjtemény

Finally, in 1952, the predecessor institution of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) donated several remarkable items to the Oriental Collection. Three manuscripts written on tree bark and on different kinds of palm leaves (*Borassus flabellifer* and *Corypha umbraculifera*) in Batak (signs. ORI Ms Misc. 1 and ORI Ms Misc. 2) and Old Jawanese languages (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 4) had previously passed from the antiquarian bookshop of the art historian Robert Forrer (1866–1947) in Strasbourg to the BME, and from there to the Academy.[19]

More than a decade after the war, the so-called Second Library Act was introduced in Hungary on 9 March 1956. The new legislation centrally regulated the principal fields of acquisition for each library and also provided for the transfer of underdeveloped parts of individual collections into specialised, designated collections nationwide. Since then, the Library of the Academy has served as the reference library for Oriental studies in Hungary.

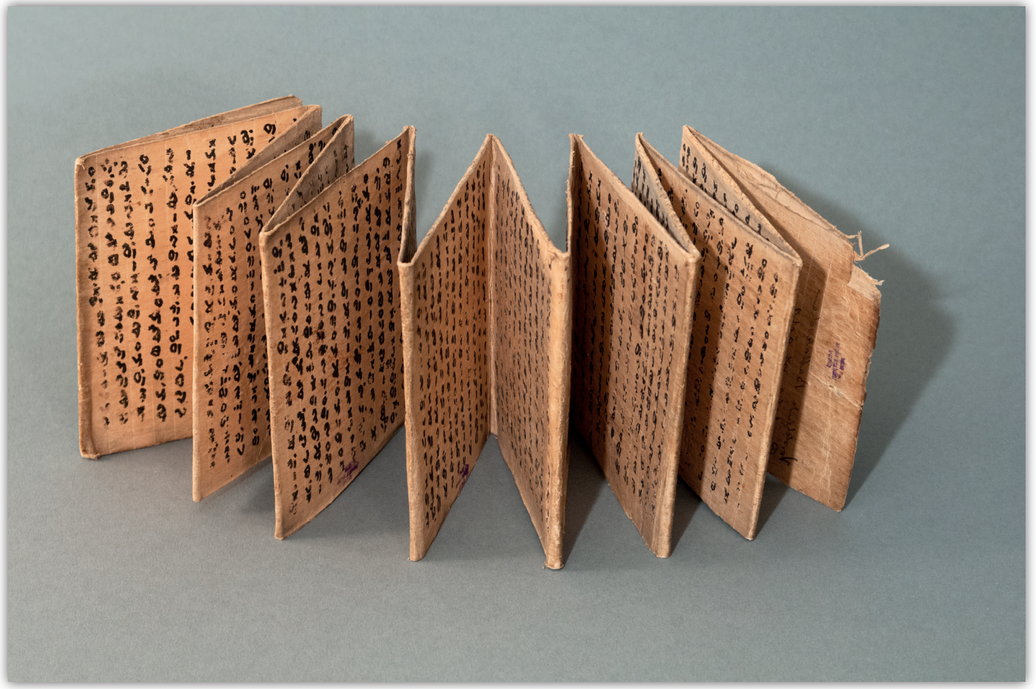


74. Photograph of Lajos Thallóczy

19 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 356–359.



75. Batak-language manuscripts written on tree bark (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 2)



76. Batak-language manuscripts written on palm leaves, so-called pustaha *(sign. ORI Ms Misc. 1)*



77. Old Jawanese-language manuscript written on palm leaves (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 4)

The Third Phase: 1960s onwards

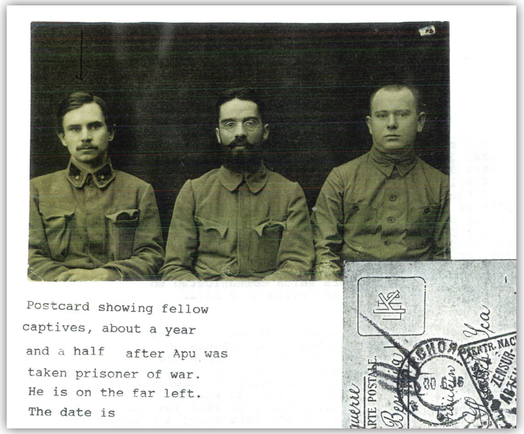
The development of the Oriental Collection continued after the 1950s, in part because the aforementioned Orientalist, Lajos Ligeti, remained in his position as Vice President of the Academy for two decades. Moreover, Oriental studies have continued to be taught at university level in Budapest to this day. Until 1967, the discipline of Greek philology also maintained an independent university department. At present, the Institute of Oriental Studies, with departments of Indology, Iranian Studies, Semitic and Arabic Philology and Turkish Philology, remains active at Eötvös Loránd University in the Hungarian capital.

The bequest of the last head of the Department of Greek Philology in Budapest, Gyula Moravcsik (1892–1972), was donated by his widow, Edit Fleissig (1904–1992), to the Oriental Collection in 1974.[20] Apart from its scholarly value, Moravcsik's bequest is also a fascinating collection because of its owner's personal life. Shortly after Moravcsik began his career as a secondary school teacher, he was enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army in February 1915. After only two months of service in the Carpathian Mountains, Moravcsik was taken prisoner of war, and spent five years in POW camps in Siberia (sign. Ms 6562/44). He used his period of captivity as preparation for his future career as a Byzantinologist, learning Russian, Modern Greek, and Turkish from his fellow prisoners. The manuscript of his paper on the importance of papyrus research, presented in Krasnoyarsk in December 1917, with the approval of the camp censor, is preserved in his bequest to this day (sign. Ms 2459/13).

After the First World War, Moravcsik taught at Eötvös Collegium in Budapest between 1923 and 1936. He then pursued a university career, as head of the Department of Greek Philology, from 1950 to 1967. He was elected a corresponding member of the Academy (1934) and later full member (1945). Moravcsik was deeply interested in the relations between Hungary and Byzantium during the reign of the first Hungarian ruling house, the Árpád dynasty. His edition of On Administering the Empire (*De administrando imperio)* by the Byzantine Emperor Constantinus Porphyrogenitus (913–959) was even translated into English in 1967. Moravcsik was an exceptionally meticulous cataloguer of his own scholarly activity; thus, his bequest arrived with an almost ready-to-use register written in his own hand (sign. Ms 2453/1). He maintained extensive correspondence with colleagues both within and beyond Hungary's borders.



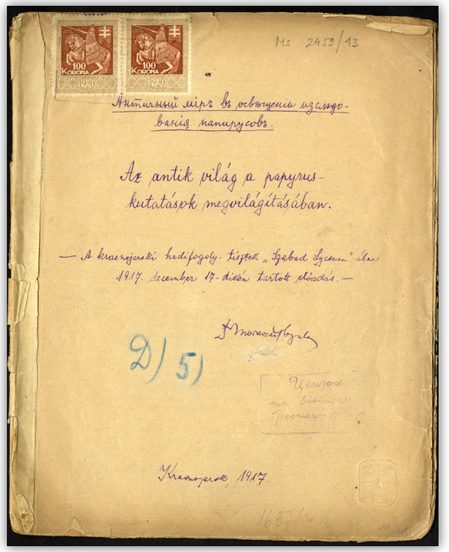
78. Portrait of the elderly Gyula Moravcsik (sign. D 2847)



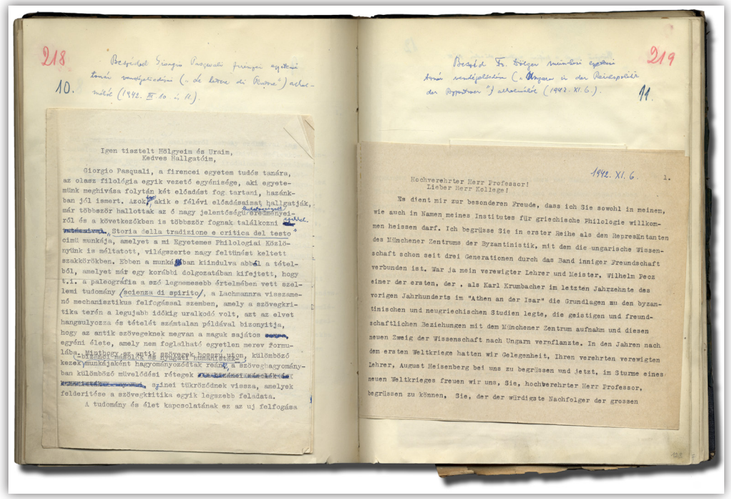
79. Photograph of Gyula Moravcsik and some of his fellow prisoners in a POW camp in Siberia (sign. Ms 6562/44)

20 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 409–414.

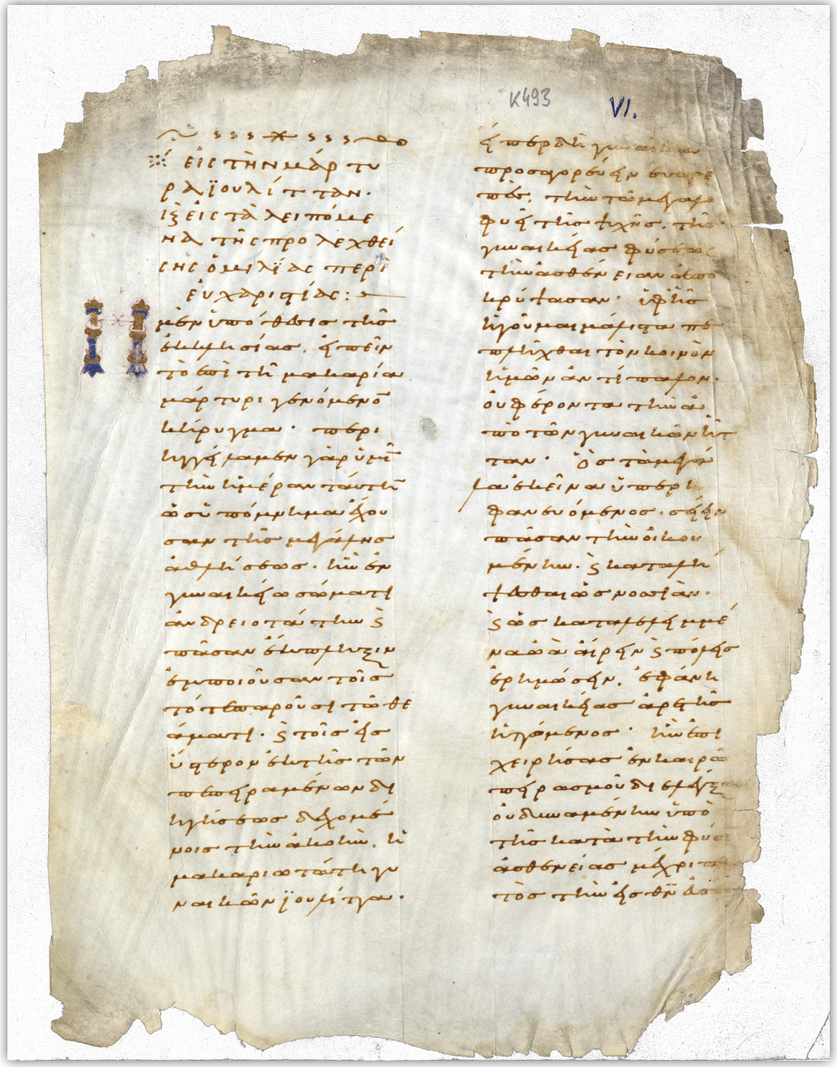
His scholarly achievements were recognised by the *Orden pour le Mérite für Wissenschaften und Künste* in 1967. However, due to political and personal circumstances, he was only able to receive the award in person in 1971, in Budapest. In addition to the materials from his own seminars, Moravcsik also collected works by his pupils, mainly transcriptions of various fragmentary Greek codices that he had personally purchased in the Istanbul bazaar in 1934 and 1937, respectively. Among these are transcriptions by the future professor of classical philology János Harmatta (1917–2004) and by the linguist Edith Moravcsik (b. 1939), Moravcsik's own daughter (sign. Ms ad K 493–494). The bequest of Gyula Moravcsik in its entirity remains at the disposal of scholarship, including the photograph and microfilm copies of the different variants of *De administrando imperio*, the central subject of the late Byzantinologist's career.



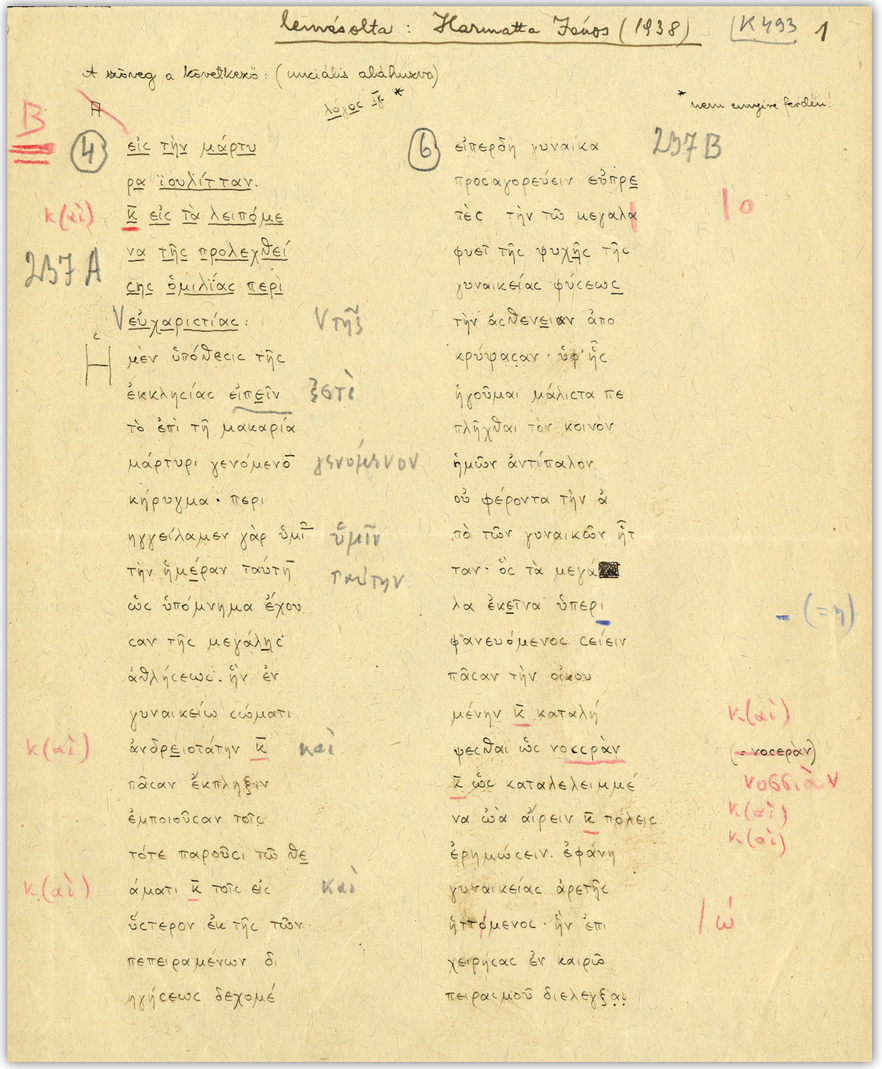
80. Moravcsik's paper on the importance of papyrus research, presented in Krasnoyarsk, December 1917 (sign. Ms 2459/13)



81. Autograph register of Gyula Moravcsik's scholarly works (sign. Ms 2453/1)



82. Greek codex fragment (sign. K 493)



83. Transcription of the Greek codex fragment (K 493), written in the hand of János Harmatta (sign. ad K 493)

The long line of significant donations to the Oriental Collection may be said to culminate in the bequest of the often-mentioned Lajos Ligeti.[21] Another remarkable prodigy who had the good fortune to study at the Eötvös Collegium in Budapest, where he was taught by some of the leading linguists of his time. During his university years he studied Greek and Latin, Turkish and Arabic as well as Chinese and Mongolian. His instructors were Ignác Goldziher, Gyula Németh (1890–1976),[22] Vilmos Pröhle (1871–1946),[23] János Melich and József Szinnyei Jr., among whom the latter two were also the Chief Librarians of the Library of the Academy for specific periods. In 1925, at the age of twenty-three, Ligeti earned a doctorate in Turkish philology, Hungarian linguistics and East Asian languages with distinction *sub auspiciis regis et gubernatoris*. His outstanding talent was further recognised with a scholarship from the governor of Hungary, which enabled Ligeti to study Sinology and Tibetan studies in Paris.



84. Photograph of the young Lajos Ligeti, as a student of the Eötvös Collegium, Budapest (sign. Ms 6482/121)



85. Photograph of Gyula Németh (sign. D 3621)

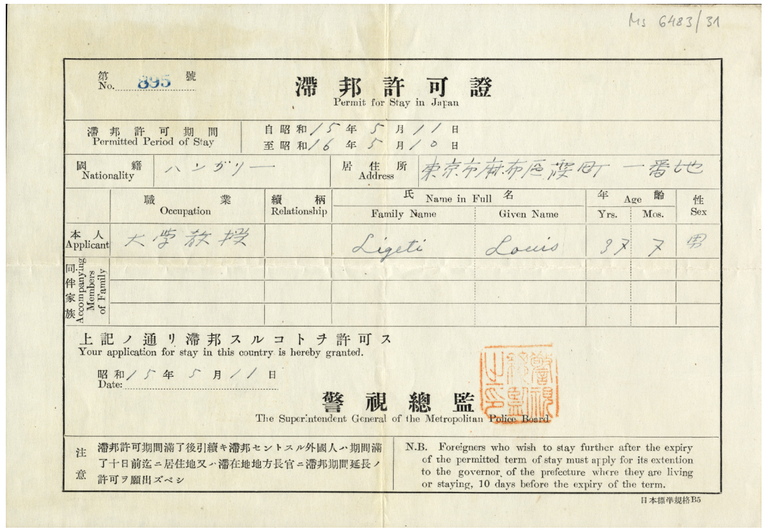
21 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 423–432.
22 He himself was an alumnus of the Eötvös Collegium, a Turcologist and a corresponding member of the Academy since 1922.
23 An Orientalist, specialising in Turkish, Tatar and Persian philology, professor in Budapest since 1923.



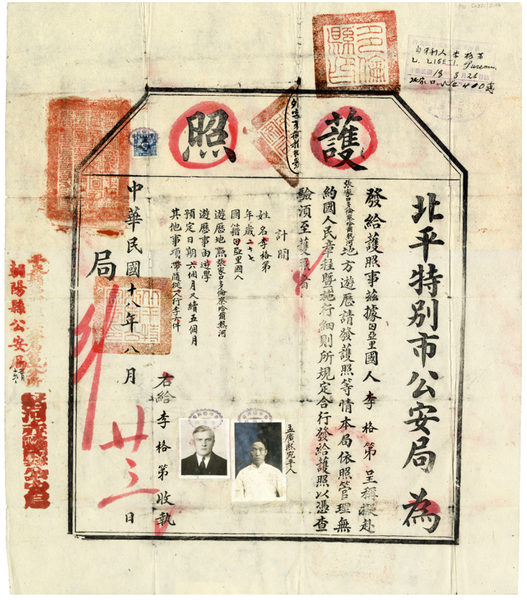
86. Credit book of Lajos Ligeti with the signatures of his professors, Ignác Goldziher and Gyula Németh (sign. Ms 6482/121)

His theoretical knowledge was also reinforced by research visits to the Far East: in 1928–1931, he visited Mongolia and Manchuria; in 1936–1937, Northern Persia and Afghanistan; in 1940, Japan. The core of the Mongolian collection of our Library came from Ligeti, that is, one hundred and twenty manuscripts and woodblock prints, together with twenty manuscripts in Tibetan, nineteen in Manchurian, three in Turkish, and many Chinese documents. Among the many scholarly results of his research trips, the discoveries of Ligeti about the archaic language isolate Dahur (sign. Ligeti/05), about the nearly extinct spoken Moghol language (sign. Ligeti/49–51), and the version of Turkish spoken in Afghanistan are the most outstanding (sign. Ligeti/54–57).[24]

24 Rottár 2022.

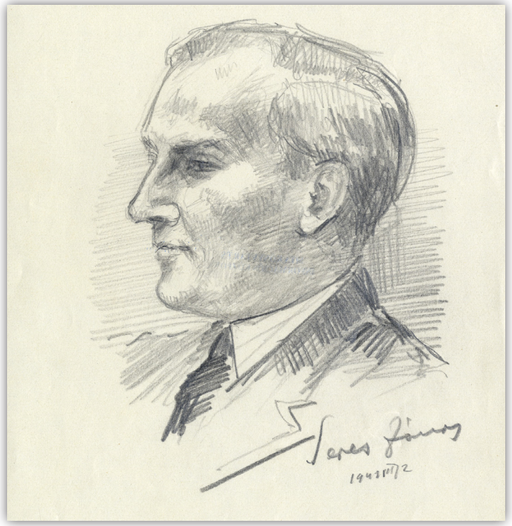


87. Permit for stay in Japan issued for Lajos Ligeti (sign. Ms 6483/31)



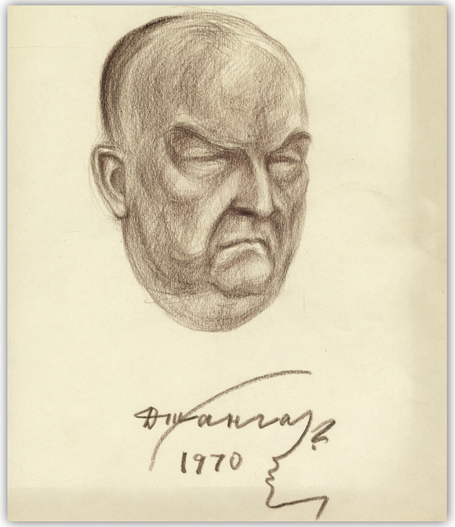
88. Passport and visa for visiting China, issued for Lajos Ligeti and his Chinese interpreter (sign. Ms 6482/214)

After two semesters teaching Mongolian in Paris in 1934, Ligeti declined an offer of French citizenship and a professorship at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes. Instead, he returned to Budapest, where he obtained a teaching position in 1936. From 1942 onwards, Ligeti served as head of the Department of East Asian Studies (later expanded with additional departments) for almost twenty years. He was elected a corresponding member in 1936 and a full member of the Academy in 1947, serving also as its Vice President between 1949 and 1970. Despite his many responsibilities and extensive scholarly work, Ligeti's bequest still contains unpublished materials worthy of research. For instance, his notes on the phonetic reconstruction of Early Mandarin (sign. Ligeti/37–38) and on the historical evolution of the Manchurian language and its linguistic connections (Ligeti/23–24) continue to await a new generation of scholars. Ligeti's correspondence with his pupils, and the documentation of his friendships in his table company of linguists from 1924 onwards (sign. Ms 6502/324–326), as well as at the University (Ms 6502/207), offer insight into his rigorous scholarly standards and his widely appreciated personality. In 2022, to commemorate the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of Lajos Ligeti's birth, the librarians of the Oriental Collection prepared an exhibition, also available online.[25]



89–91. Three caricature portraits of Lajos Ligeti from different phases of his life, drawn in 1943, in 1956 and in 1970, respectively (signs. Ms 6502/206, Ms 6502/336 and Ms 6502/207)





25 ligeti.digitaliskepmuhely.hu.

During the first twenty-five years after its formation, the librarians of the Oriental Collection were trained specialists in different fields, most of them pupils of Lajos Ligeti. Following the retirement of the aforementioned László Rásonyi in 1961, the Mongolist Lajos Bese (1926–1988) assumed leadership of the collection until 1976. Bese worked together with the Sinologist Ildikó Ecsedy (1938–2004), the Tibetologist József Terjék (b. 1939), and Éva Apor (b. 1937), an expert in Iranian studies. All four of them had been students of Ligeti and regularly wrote to their professor seeking his advice on both professional and personal matters. As Ligeti used carbon paper when typing, not only the letters addressed to him, but in many cases his responses to his students have survived in his bequest as well (sign. Ms 6499). In 1976, Éva Apor became the head of the Oriental Collection, retiring in 2005 after forty-four years of service.



92. Lajos Bese with a Mongolian researcher (sign. KGy 9/2)



93. Éva Apor during her retirement ceremony, 2007

In 1976, the first year of Apor's appointment, the Library celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its foundation and the Oriental Collection marked its twenty-fifth birthday. That year, a marble plaque commemorating the ten most important donors was placed on the wall of the Oriental Collection, listing the following names: Dániel Szilágyi, Ferenc Pulszky, Dávid Kaufmann, József Thúry, Tivadar Duka, Ármin Vámbéry, Sándor Kégl, Ignác Goldziher, Aurél Stein and Lajos Ligeti. As one may notice, the two female donors, Kaufmann's wife, Irma Gomperz, and his mother-in-law, Róza Gomperz, were not included in the plaque. It was probably because female contributions have traditionally been overlooked in Hungarian cultural history in general and in the Academy's history in particular. Among the ten donors, two were only mentioned in passing or not at all in this volume: Ferenc Pulszky and József Thúry (1861–1906). Pulszky was an archaeologist, art collector, a politician, a member of the Academy from 1838 and of its leadership from 1873. In addition to the aforementioned French books of hours (signs. Mss K 429 and K 404), he donated two Sanskrit manuscripts to the Academy (see below). Thúry, by contrast, was a Turcologist, a student of Ármin Vámbéry and a prolific scholar, interested in comparative linguistics and the history of the Magyar tribes. He had just been appointed a professor at the University of Budapest when he died untimely at the age of forty-four. His bequest, donated to the Academy, included a Müteferrika print (sign. 766.513) and two outstanding handwritten dictionaries in Chagatai Turkic (signs. ORI Ms Török.O.321. and ORI Ms Török.O.324).



94. Marble plaque commemorating the most important donors of the Oriental Collection



95. Lajos Ligeti, as Vice President of the Academy salutes the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Library and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oriental Collection, 1976 (sign. AL 4948)



96. Librarians listening to Ligeti's speech at the portico of the Palace of the Academy (sign. AL 4951)



97. Exhibition celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Library (sign. AL 4934)



98. Section of the exhibition focusing on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oriental Collection (sign. AL 4945)

During Éva Apor's leadership, the long tradition of donations continued. For instance, the bequest of Sándor Scheiber (1913–1985), a linguist, a literary historian and Director of the Jewish Theological Seminary, was incorporated into the special collection. Scheiber's widow donated a precious collection of 6,000 books, periodicals and offprints to the Academy in December 1985, which was subsequently placed in a separate room within the Oriental Collection. By 1992, its printed catalogue had been published.

After Éva Apor, the next head of the collection was the Arabist Kinga Dévényi (b. 1957), who held the position between 2003 and 2011. During her tenure, the librarians reorganised the bequest of Kőrösi Csoma, making the expanded collection fully accessible in the electronic catalogue. In December 2011, the Indologist Ágnes Kelecsényi (b. 1955) succeeded Dévényi as Head Librarian of the Oriental Collection. Kelecsényi's years in leadership were characterised by the rise of digitisation worldwide; thus, most of the online exhibitions of Oriental materials mentioned above were organised under her direction. Before her retirement, Kelecsényi hosted an Italian visiting scholar, supported by the Rothschild Foundation between 2022 and 2024, who prepared a detailed bibliographical description of the early Italian books in the Kaufmann Collection. In 2024, Fabrizio Quaglia (b. 1964) and Kelecsényi organised an exhibition presenting the most significant results of his research. Quaglia published the complete catalogue of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Italian prints in 2025.[26]

After Ágnes Kelecsényi's retirement in February 2024, the Oriental Collection was entrusted to a young generation of scholars. At present, the head of the special collection is Roland Ferenczi (b. 1989), a specialist in Tamil studies. During his official leave to pursue further research and hopefully, to acquire new materials for the Oriental Collection, his deputy is the Mongolist Máté Rottár (b. 1986). The latest generation of scholars continues the finest traditions of the special collection by publishing English-language catalogues and facsimile editions of its greatest treasures. The second-century *Mishnah* manuscript, Kaufmann A 50, was published in facsimile as early as 1929 in The Hague and again in 1969 in Jerusalem. In 1957, the Library of



99. Kinga Dévényi opening an exhibition, on the right, Ágnes Kelecsényi

the Academy published the lavishly illustrated fourteenth-century *Haggadah* manuscript, Kaufmann A 422. For celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the Academy and its Library, a new facsimile edition of the same codex was published in 2025.[27] Altogether, more than a dozen facsimile editions of *cimelia* from the Oriental Collection have been published in Hungary and abroad since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The "finest traditions of the Oriental Collection" also refer to the generosity of donors who continue to enrich the Library following in the footsteps of Tivadar Duka and others. Among the most recent private donors special mention should be made of Gábor Korvin (b. 1942), professor of mathematics and geophysics, who pursued an academic career in Saudi Arabia. Since 2008, Korvin has donated to the Oriental Collection 3,500 books, manuscripts, and early printed works in Arabic (signs. ORI Arab Qu.3–6, Arab O.141, Arab O.162, Arab O.163), Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Turkish. Among these is a manuscript written in 1842–1843 in Nepal, containing twenty-eight Buddhist hymns, decorated and therefore deteriorated by its previous modern owners with depictions of gods (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 17).

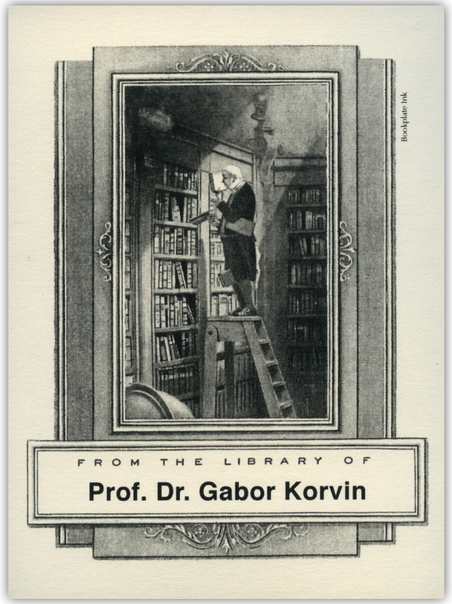
26 Quaglia 2025.
27 Shalev-Eyni – Dávid 2025.



100. Celebration of Gábor Korvin's donation, 2010, in the Small Assembly Room of the Library. From left to right: Ágnes Kelecsényi, Kinga Dévényi, Gábor Náray-Szabó and Gábor Korvin



101. Máté Rottár, Roland Ferenczi and István Monok presenting the treasures of the Oriental Collection to a Mongolian delegation

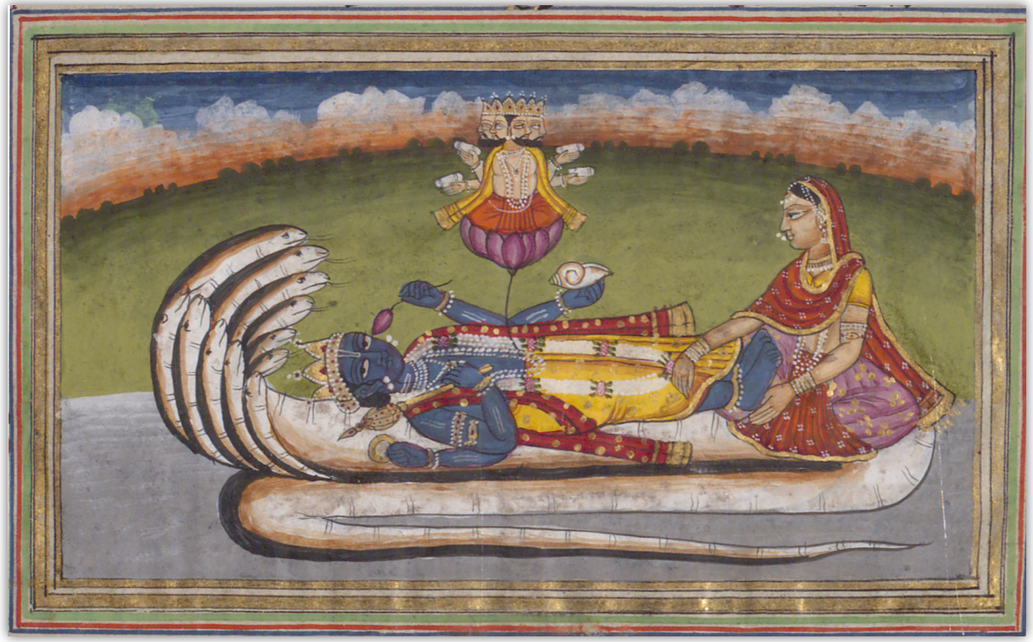


102. Ex libris of Gábor Korvin

The Oriental Collection today contains documents written in around one hundred different languages, encompassing a wide variety of content, format and material. There are, for instance, Indian pothi-format books, rolls, fanfold manuscripts, documents written on different kinds of palm leaves, silk and tree bark. Among the many beautifully decorated manuscripts, a genealogical work entitled *Jamharat ansab al-Arab* by Ibn Hazm (†1064) deserves a special mention. It was copied in 1905 at the order of the ruler of Rampur, at the request of Sir Edward Denison Ross (1871–1940), who sent it as a gift to Ignác Goldziher in Budapest (sign. ORI Ms Arab F.7). Finally, mention should be made of the donation of Ferenc Pulszky: two Sanskrit-language ritual books prepared in Kashmir in 1815, notable for their miniatures depicting the gods of Hinduism (signs. ORI Ms Misc. 22 and ORI Ms Misc. 23). The artistic perfection of these codices is particularly striking, when compared to the modern depictions of gods added to the aforementioned manuscript from Nepal (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 17).



103. Jamharat ansab al-Arab *by Ibn Hazm (†1064), copied in 1905 and sent as a gift to Ignác Goldziher in Budapest (sign. ORI Ms Arab F.7)*



104. A Sanskrit manuscript produced in Kashmir in 1815, donated to the Library by Ferenc Pulszky. The miniature depicting the creation of the world illustrates the poem The Thousand Names of Vishnu*: the blue-bodied god is reclining on the serpent Ananda, and in the chalice of the lotus sprung from Vishnu's navel sits Brahma; the goddess at his legs is Bhumi-Devi, the Earth Goddess (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 23)*





105–115. Manuscript produced in Nepal containing twenty-eight Buddhist hymns, decorated and thus deteriorated by its previous modern owners with depictions of gods (sign. ORI Ms Misc. 17). This is the first publication of its binding, upper cover and four different types of modern depictions, individually painted by hand and randomly pasted on the inside of the upper cover and in the middle of several pages







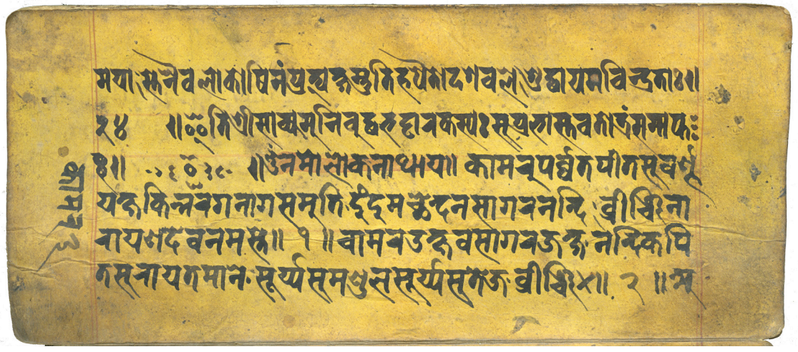












The KEO Collection – Books from the Centre of People's Libraries

The Népkönyvtári Központ (Centre of People's Libraries, hereafter NKK) began operations in 1949 and was integrated into the National Széchényi Library in 1954. Its purpose was to collect and redistribute materials from confiscated or abandoned libraries during the post-war years. In the final years of the Second World War, bombing raids demolished buildings from the air, while the occupying German and Soviet armies, invading castles and monasteries, often showed little regard for the precious collections housed there. During the turbulent post-war period, the NKK played a significant role in saving the remains of these libraries. Notwithstanding its preservation efforts, the evaluation of the NKK as an institution of the emerging communist dictatorship remains ambivalent to this day.

According to its surviving inventories, the first shipment of books from the NKK redistribution ("N.K.K. anyag") arrived at the Library of the Academy on 1 July 1953.[1] In the following years, similar deliveries were received every few weeks. The inventories have recorded accessions by title and author since 1955. According to the records, many of the selected books were relatively recent non-fiction titles that suited the collection's profile. These newly acquired items usually entered the main collection, although some required specialised knowledge available at the Oriental Collection or the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books. As noted in a previous entry, part of Dániel Szilágyi's bequest reached the Oriental Collection through NKK redistributions.



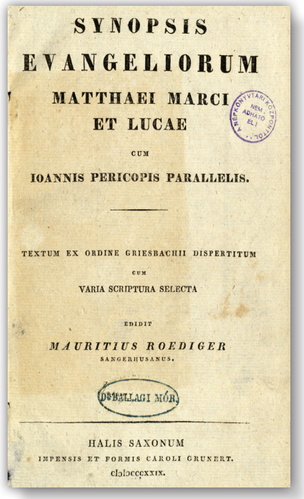
In most cases, the NKK materials were catalogued upon arrival at the Library without mentioning their source. For reasons that remain unclear, however, a specific group of volumes, published abroad in the first half of the nineteenth century, remained uncatalogued until recently. These recent entries, forming the limited KEO collection of 2,127 titles, were assigned separate call numbers starting with KE. The KEO collection mainly consists of non-fiction works in the humanities and social sciences, written in German and French or translated from English into those two languages. Its fiction section includes genres popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as novels, travelogues, biographies and memoirs. Altogether, both the thematic profile and the linguistic composition of the collection shed light on the reading habits of nineteenth-century Hungary.

Taking into consideration the fact that members of both the aristocracy and the clergy were considered political enemies of the communist regime and were hence marginalised, and the religious orders were dissolved after 1948 in Hungary, the historical reconstruction of the former ownership of the volumes in the KEO collection became particularly important. Among the original owners, were scholars from various disciplines as well as entire institutions (mainly ecclesiastical ones). Out of four hundred and thirty-three original owners, the identification of only sixty-two persons has remained unresolved.

Among the former owners, four members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences deserve to be mentioned first. The ownership stamps of Mór Ballagi (1815–1891), linguist and theologian and the first Academy member of Jewish origin (elected in 1840), appear in two volumes (e.g. sign KE-100.091). The ownership stamp of the Benedictine monk and mathematician Adalbert Bresztyenszky (1786–1850) is recorded in works on geometry and physics, as well as in a finely illustrated book on entomology (sign. KE-100.135). Some books bear the stamp or handwritten signature of historian and genealogist Iván Nagy (1824–1898), who compiled the first-ever genealogy of Hungarian noble families. Finally, the *ex libris* of Count Sándor Lajos Erdődy (1802–1881) appears in volumes on cultural history and linguistics.

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 291–297.

On the previous page:
1. Ownership stamp of the Centre of People's Libraries in a sixteenth-century work (sign. Ant. 198)


SYNOPSIS
EVANGELIORUM
MATTHAEI MARCI
ET LUCAE
CUM
IOANNIS PERICOPIS PARALLELIS.

TEXTUM EX ORDINE GRIESBACHII DISPERTITUM
CUM
VARIA SCRIPTURA SELECTA
EDIDIT
MAURITIUS ROEDIGER
SANGERHUSANUS.

HALIS SAXONUM
IMPENSIS ET FORMIS CAROLI GRUNERT.
CIƆIƆCCCXXIX.

2. Ownership stamp of Mór Ballagi (sign. KE-100.091)



3. Finely illustrated book on entomology with the ownership stamp of Adalbert Bresztyenszky (sign. KE-100.135)

The collection also includes volumes from other scholars' private libraries. Books arrived with the owner's mark of historian István Horvát (1784–1846), and of physician János Hermann (†1865?). The historian and Benedictine monk Leó Gácser (1787–1856) and the plant breeder Piarist monk Dénes Katona (1782–1874) are likewise among the original owners. The volume once owned by Dénes Katona contains a Hungarian recipe for ink made from gallnuts (*Galla halapensis*) translated by him (sign. KE-101.382). Katona encouraged his contemporaries to re-introduce the use of dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) in the country, instead of indigo (*Indigofera tinctoria*), which, as an imported commodity, was costly in nineteenth-century Hungary.



4. Depiction of the development of butterflies from the same volume (sign. KE-100.135)

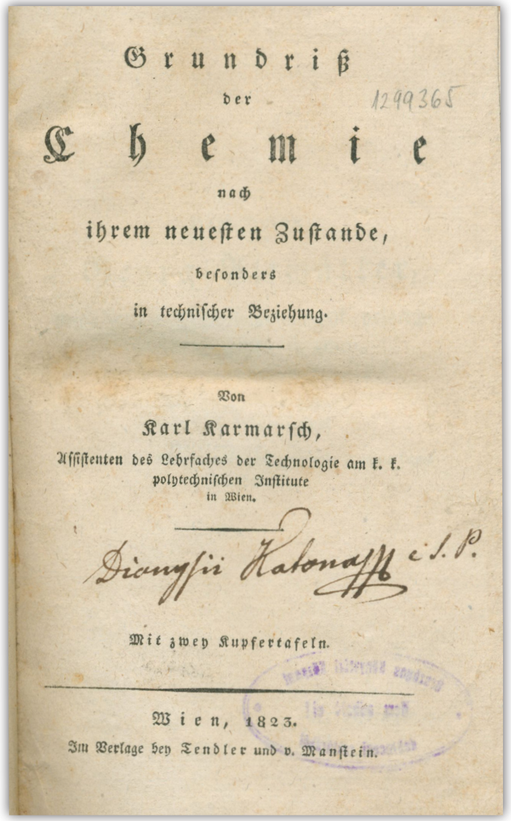


5. Depiction of a mounted butterfly from the same volume (sign. KE-100.135)

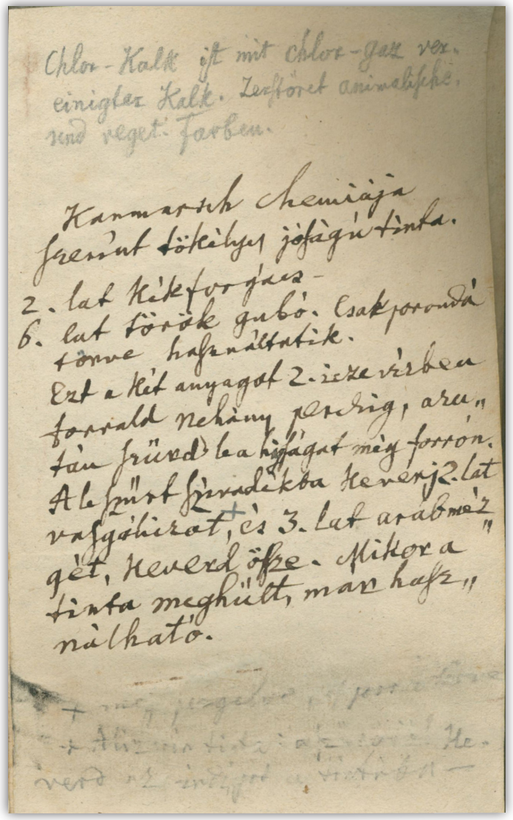
Some books in the KEO collection bear a simple letter F as an ownership mark. The mark can be identified as a reference to the Festetics family, thanks to recent donations from the Research Centre for Economics and Regional Studies of the Academy. Several volumes from that donation, originating from the former library of the Festetics Castle in Dég (Fejér County), were marked with the same letter F.

Another often registered, single-letter ownership mark is a capital M accompanied by a handwritten number in red pencil. As some of the volumes bearing this sign also carry the label of the Dunántúli Tudományos Intézet (Trans-Danubian Scientific Institution) with the inscription "In deposit at the Dunántúli Tudományos Intézet. Montenuovo," the mark most likely refers to the ownership of the Montenuovo family of Baranya County, in the Trans-Danubian region of Hungary.

Approximately one-tenth of the volumes in the KEO collection bear the ownership stamp of the library of Nádasdladány (Fejér County) indicating the library of the aristocratic Nádasdy family's mansion open to the public. During the war, Hungarian soldiers quartered in the mansion seriously damaged and looted the collection. The remaining part of the library was later deposited at the National Széchényi Library.

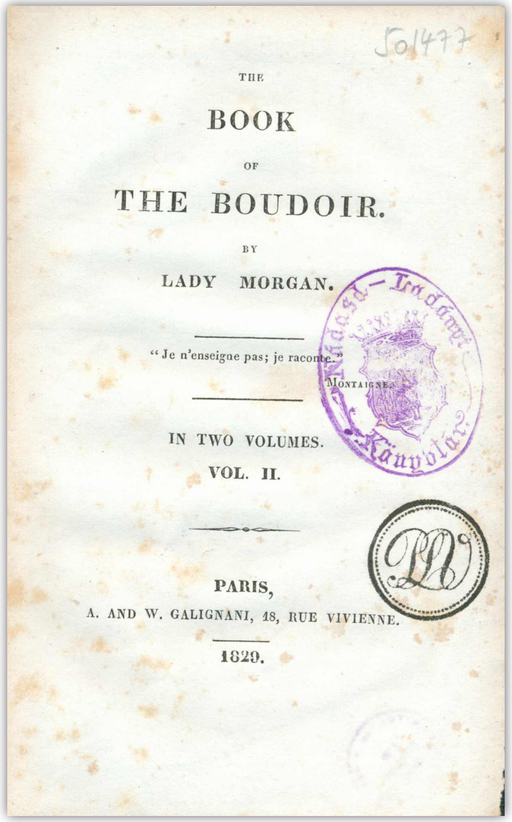

Grundriß
der
1299365
Chemie
nach
ihrem neuesten Zustande,
besonders
in technischer Beziehung.
Von
Karl Karmarsch,
Assistenten des Lehrfaches der Technologie am k. k.
polytechnischen Institute
in Wien.
Dionysii Katonaffy c. l. P.
Mit zwey Kupfertafeln.
Wien, 1823.
Im Verlage bey Tendler und v. Manstein.

6. Ownership note of the plant breeder and Piarist monk Dénes Katona (sign. KE-101.382)


Chlor-Kalk ist mit chlor-gas ver-
einigter Kalk. Zerstöret animalische
und vegetl. Farben.
Kammarsch chemiája
Jeremi tökélyes jóságú tinta.
2. lat Kék vas-
6. lat török gubó. Csak porondá
tömve használtatik.
Ezt a két anyagot 2-szer vérben
forralt nehány pertig, aru,
tán friss bő lében hígságot még forron.
Ale mert hordókba keverj 2. lat
vasgálicot, és 3. lat arabmé
gét, keverd össze. Mikor a
tinta megkült, már hasz
nálható.

*7. The Hungarian recipe for ink made from gallnuts (*Galla halapensis*), translated by Dénes Katona (sign. KE-101.382)*




501477
THE
BOOK
OF
THE BOUDOIR.
BY
LADY MORGAN.
"Je n'enseigne pas; je raconte."
MONTAIGNE.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.
PARIS,
A. AND W. GALIGNANI, 18, RUE VIVIENNE.
1829.

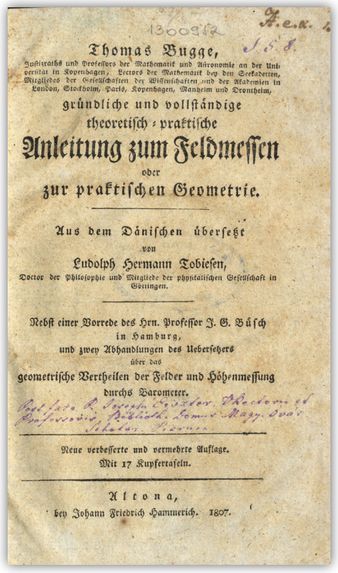
8–9. Two types of ownership stamps of the Library of Nádasdladány (signs. KE-100.041 and KE-100.344)

The library of the amateur archaeologist Count Héder Viczay (1807–1873) faced a similarly tragic fate. A Soviet military hospital was installed in his castle at Hédervár (Győr-Moson-Sopron County), and the library served as a reading room for the convalescents. The Soviet commissioners urged the evacuation of the library because their soldiers were unable to read Hungarian-, German- or Latin-language books. Wagons carried away some 9,000 volumes. The fate of most of the collection remains unknown; only eight books reached the Library of the Academy via NKK (e.g. sign. KE-100.547).

The library of the bibliophile Sámuel Magyary-Kossa (1849–1921), housed at his castle at Tápiószentmárton (Pest County), was also seriously damaged during the war. Later, the castle remained unguarded, and many volumes were reportedly used by locals for heating. In 1953, the surviving books nearly fell victim to the post-war paper shortage. Unfortunately, out of the twenty-three quintals of books removed as wastepaper, only seventeen were saved from destruction. Only eight books bearing the stamp of Magyary-Kossa came into the possession of the Library of the Academy.



10. Ownership mark of Count Héder Viczay (sign. KE-100.547)


Thomas Bugge,
Justitiaths und Professors der Mathematik und Astronomie an der Universität in Kopenhagen, Lectors der Mathematik bey den Seekadetten, Mitgliedes der Gesellschaften der Wissenschaften und der Akademien in London, Stockholm, Paris, Kopenhagen, Mantzim und Drontheim,
gründliche und vollständige
theoretisch-praktische
Anleitung zum Feldmessen
oder
zur praktischen Geometrie.
Aus dem Dänischen übersetzt
von
Ludolph Hermann Tobiesen,
Doctor der Philosophie und Mitgliede der physikalischen Gesellschaft in Göttingen.
Nebst einer Vorrede des Hrn. Professor J. G. Büsch in Hamburg, und zwey Abhandlungen des Uebersehers über das geometrische Vertheilen der Felder und Höhenmessung durchs Barometer.
Neue verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage.
Mit 27 Kupfertafeln.
Altona,
bey Johann Friedrich Hammerich. 1807.

11. Ownership note referring to József Eiszler (1812–1876), a late Piarist professor from Mosonmagyaróvár (sign. KE-101.422)



12. Ownership stamp of the Society of Jesus in a sixteenth-century work (sign. Ant. 171)

Historically, the convents of religious orders, especially those dedicated to education, maintained remarkable libraries. Numerous academic works and textbooks in the KEO collection were initially owned by members of different orders or convents throughout Hungary (e.g. signs. Ant. 171, Ant. 198, KE-101.606, KE-101.422). Piarists (Nagykanizsa, Zala County; Tata, Komárom-Esztergom County; Vác, Pest County; Szeged, Csongrád-Csanád County and Mosonmagyaróvár, Győr-Moson-Sopron County), Jesuits (Nagykapornak, Zala County and Kalocsa, Bács-Kiskun County), Dominicans (Szombathely, Vas County and Budapest), Premonstratensians (Szombathely, Vas County) and Benedictines (Esztergom, Komárom-Esztergom County and Pannonhalma, Győr-Moson-Sopron County) used the volumes redistributed to the Academy.

Although the KEO collection within the Library of the Academy is relatively small, a closer examination reveals a compelling history of nineteenth century reading culture in Hungary and offers insight into the Hungarian cultural policy of the post-war years.



13. Ownership stamp of the Piarist Library of Szeged (sign. KE-101.606)

Safeguarding Széchenyi's Spirit: The Nemzeti Casino Collection at the Academy

In 1827, Count István Széchenyi initiated the foundation of the Pesti Casino, from 1830 onwards called the Nemzeti Casino, a society modelled on English gentlemen's clubs.[1] Its aim was to establish "a space of assembly where well-educated, intelligent men from all walks of life could come together for discussing important issues and reading political newspapers and periodicals." Serving as an example to his fellows, Széchenyi offered his own library of three hundred and thirty-eight volumes to the *National Casino*. Other members of the Casino donated another two-hundred and fifty volumes at the time of its foundation. Functioning as a private collection exclusively for reading on site, only its members could use the Casino's library. It occupied four rooms in the Casino building on Hatvani Street in Budapest by 1884. By the time of the Casino's centenary in 1926, the library contained 32,539 volumes, with a particular focus on politics, history, law and public administration. The collection also contained numerous specialised newspapers and periodicals. For instance, it held the complete runs of the oldest newspapers in the world, such as the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung and the Quarterly Review, as well as many periodicals from Hungary's Reformed Era.



1. Ex libris *of the Nemzeti Casino*



2. Invitation to the annual assembly of the Nemzeti Casino, sent to Count István Széchenyi, year unknown (sign. K 168/23)

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 262–269.



3. Building of the Nemzeti Casino (Budapest's 5th District, 5 Kossuth Lajos Street). Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, inv. no. F.86.102



4. Ownership stamp of the Nemzeti Casino



5. Reading Room. Source: Fortepan / Budapest Főváros Levéltára. Levéltári jelzet: HU.BFL.XV.19.d.1.11.005, no. 83097



6. Gilded book-spine stamp of the Nemzeti Casino



7. Reading Room for periodicals Source: Fortepan / Budapest Főváros Levéltára. Levéltári jelzet: HU.BFL.XV.19.d.1.11.007, no. 83099

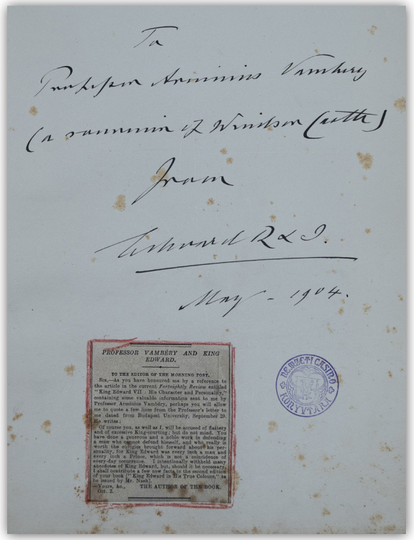


8. Books from the "Travelogues" section

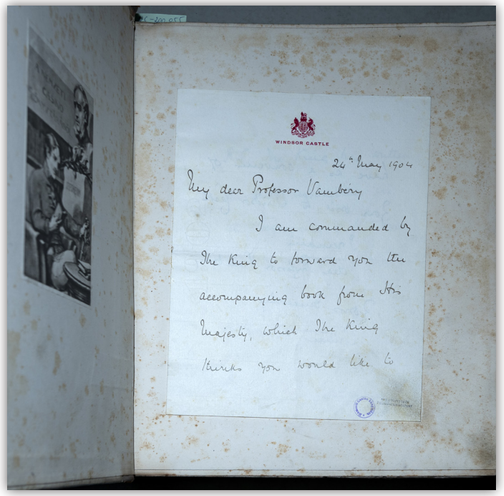
Members were expected to leave a memento of their membership at the Casino in their testaments. Thus, for instance, the often-mentioned Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry bequeathed to the Casino a copy of *The Armoury of Windsor Castle*, dedicated to him by Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom (r. 1901–1910), in 1904 (sign. NC-200.055). The provenance of the book is further attested by the personal note of the King's Assistant Private Secretary, Sir Arthur Davidson (1856–1922), written on the headed paper of Windsor Castle and preserved in the book to this day.



9. Cover of The Armoury of Windsor Castle, *dedicated to Ármin Vámbéry by Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom, 1904 (sign. NC-200.055)*



10. Autograph dedication of King Edward VII in the same volume (sign. NC-200.055)



11. The first page of a letter written by the King's Assistant Private Secretary, Sir Arthur Davidson, with the ex libris *of the Nemzeti Casino on its inside cover (sign. NC-200.055)*

As the Nemzeti Casino had been established and operated as a private society, the Ministry of Home Affairs, under the influence of the Soviet presence in Hungary, declared it "an organisation working against the interests of the country" and dissolved the Casino itself in 1945. Owing to two provisions included in the statutes of the Casino since 1878, however, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences became the lawful heir to all the wealth of the Casino, or at least, to what remained of it after the devastation of the Second World War in Budapest. During the war, the two buildings owned by the Casino were damaged by air raids, while its treasures were hidden in various places. For instance, the personal belongings and papers inherited by the Casino from István Széchenyi, despite being hidden in a safe space maintained by the Upper House of the Parliament in Budapest, were burned by Soviet soldiers for heating in February 1945. After receiving the official state verdict on the inheritance on 9 March 1946, the Chief Librarian, János Melich, and his deputy, István Nyireő, were able to begin organising the transport of the books from the ruinous Casino building and from the University Library to the Academy. Almost 7,000 volumes were moved from the Casino building in May 1946, with the help of high school students, builders and three horse-drawn wagons. A lorry made fourteen trips to transport approximately 23,000 to 25,000 volumes from the University Library in June 1947. Most of the other treasures of the Casino, like paintings, maps and furniture, had vanished without trace. A few exceptions were seven animal trophies from Africa and Europe, which were deposited as a perpetual loan at the Natural History Museum in Budapest in 1947. Unfortunately, two of these trophies were destroyed there in a fire during the 1956 uprising against the communist regime.



12. Ruins of the Nemzeti Casino's building after the Second World War. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, inv. no. 55.5.2



13. Ex libris *of the Nemzeti Casino with bullet marks*



14. A book damaged by a bullet

By 2022, the Nemzeti Casino library, after many years in off-site storage, had been disinfected and recatalogued; it now comprises 18,706 volumes. Many of the books bear bullet marks, numerous book and periodical series lack individual volumes, and the physical condition of the collection reflects its past vicissitudes. Even in its fragmentary state, however, the Casino collection tells a fascinating story of nineteenth-century political thought, cultural interests and reading preferences, and thus is a valuable historical collection. The volumes are currently stored in a specially air-conditioned facility in Törökbálint as a closed, museal collection. In August 2024, a selection of seven-hundred and sixty-nine volumes from forty-six different periodicals was relocated to a newly built exhibition wall in the Vörösmarty Hall of the Academy, on the ground floor of the Palace, where the Library's reading rooms had been situated until 1988.



15. The collection in a specially air-conditioned facility in Törökbálint





16–17. The exhibition wall for periodicals from the Nemzeti Casino, in the Vörösmarty Hall of the Academy

The Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books after the Second World War



After the war, the Library's Department responsible for manuscripts, foreign books printed before 1800 and Hungarian books printed before 1850 underwent several reorganisations and assumed its current form by 1958.[1] The physical renovation and the resumption of intellectual work in the department entrusted with Hungary's most valuable cultural assets required an entire decade, from 1948 to 1958. The present regulations and operational procedures governing the collection were established in 1975. During that initial period, three librarians headed the Department: Jenő Berlász (1911–2015), Erzsébet Hartay (1909–1970) and Csaba Csapodi (1910–2004). Since 1975, another three librarians have served and in one case continue to serve, as heads of the Department: Dóra F. Csanak (1930–2010), Marianne Rozsondai (b. 1945) and Antal Babus (b. 1960).

On the previous page: 1. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts with its reference desk, 2010s



2. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, 1950s (sign. Ms 5075/292)

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 297–313.

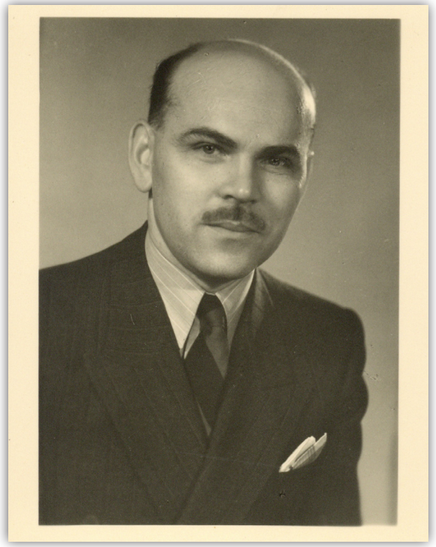


3. Room of the incunabula (sign. Ms 5075/290)

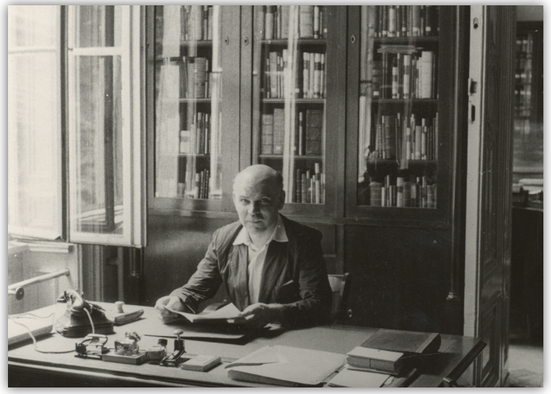


4. Room of the early printed books in Hungarian (Régi Magyar Könyvtár) *(sign. Ms 5466/102)*

The everyday activities of the first head librarians of the post-war period, particularly Berlász and Hartay, were determined by political pressure and personal vicissitudes. In its early period, the forming communist Hungary faced a shortage of cadres, professionals who were both highly qualified and ideologically trustworthy. The communist leadership thus faced the dilemma: well-trained intellectuals capable of holding senior cultural positions were often drawn from the *bourgeoisie*, whose political background, however, was deemed unacceptable. As a result, after having initiated the necessary processes of (re-)establishing certain institutions, such individuals were frequently removed from their positions. This was certainly the case with Jenő Berlász, a historian of economics and head of the Department for two periods. First, he was Head Librarian between October 1948 and the summer of 1950, and again between 1953 and July 1957. Owing to his political background, Berlász had already been removed from two previous positions, one at a research institute and another at the predecessor of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), before being appointed to head the Department. As a tireless individual, Berlász devoted considerable intellectual and physical effort to the renovation of the collection, which was relocated to three new rooms on the first floor of the Palace of the Academy. With the assistance of the above-mentioned István Nyireő, who had earlier designed the interiors of the newly established Oriental Collection, the Department of Manuscripts was furnished with new, functional and stylish furniture by 1951. The woodwork was crafted by master carpenter Lajos Juhász, Berlász's father-in-law. Despite his achievements, the thirty-eight-year-old Berlász was informed about his forthcoming retirement in 1949. In an effort to retain him, the Chief Librarian, Dezső Keresztury, appealed to the highest political authorities. Keresztury emphasised Berlász's professional indispensability to Ernő Gerő (1898–1980), then Head of the Hungarian Scientific Committee, a political organisation seeking to transform the Academy along ideological lines. Following Gerő's intervention, Berlász was allowed to remain at the Library, although a new Head of the Department was appointed: Erzsébet Hartay.



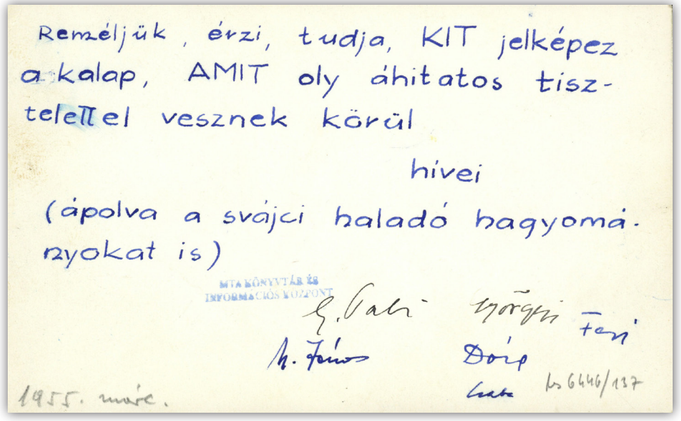
5. Photograph of Jenő Berlász (sign. Ms 6446/135)



6. Berlász sitting at his desk (sign. Ms 6446/140)



7. Librarians of the Department "honouring" a hat, which symbolised Berlász himself according to the note on the back of the same photograph, May 1955 (sign. Ms 6446/137). It is worth noting, that the Széchenyi-related painting depicting the Darjeeling tomb of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma stands on Berlász's desk on this photograph, probably placed there by Berlász's colleagues



8. Back of the same photograph (sign. Ms 6446/137), with the inscription "We hope that you know WHOM the hat symbolises, WHICH we honour with such devotion, yours faithfully (considering also the Swiss traditions) G. Gabi, Györgyi, Feri, M. János, Dóra, Csaba" The signatures possibly indicate Györgyi Sáfrán, Dóra F. Csanak and Csaba Csapodi; the identities of "G. Gabi, Feri and M. János" are unclear

The details of Hartay's life remain unclear.[2] Nevertheless, it seems that she had the potential for a successful intellectual career, which was shattered by physical and psychological trauma she suffered during the siege of Budapest in 1944–1945. It is possible that this personal rupture was also reflected in her German-sounding name being changed to a Hungarian one, from Hartnagel to Hartay by 1948. Still under the name Erzsébet Hartnagel, she had obtained a doctorate with distinction *sub auspiciis regis et gubernatoris* in German and French philology in 1935. She taught at the University in Budapest for years and began working at the Academy on a temporary assignment in December 1943. However, by the time she was appointed Head of the Department of Manuscripts in early 1951, her health and working capacity had become unstable. Because of her psychological condition, she was reportedly avoided even by some of her colleagues. According to the surviving documents, Hartay worked on cataloguing the bequest of Lajos Katona and drafted detailed plans for the re-establishment of the Goethe Museum. However, owing to the political re-profiling of the Academy, these plans were never realised. It must be acknowledged that the political climate of the period often placed immense pressure even on healthy individuals, let alone on someone facing mental health challenges. For instance, in 1952, to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of Hungary's political leader at the time, Mátyás Rákosi (1892–1971), a so-called Stakhanovite competition was organised. In response to the directive, the librarians of the Department fulfilled the promised tasks originally set for 17 March 1952, already by the evening of 6 March.



9. Librarians of the Department in the 1950s, from left to right: István Szegszárdy-Csengery, Pál Gergely, Dóra F. Csanak, Csaba Csapodi, Klára Hamburger (1934–2025), Béla Büky, Gáspár Hajnal (1927–2002), Vilma H. Boros (1899–1991), unidentidfied person, Györgyi Sáfrán, Rudolf Wilhelm (sign. Ms 6227/71)

2 It is unclear whether or not Erzsébet Hartay is depicted on the photograph Ms 6227/71 above.



10. Entrance Hall of the Library, early 1950s, with a portrait of Mátyás Rákosi and a quote by him: 'The Hungarian people were powerful and esteemed, when it belonged to the vanguard of universal human progress.' A magyar nép akkor volt erős és megbecsült, amikor az egyetemes emberi haladás élcsapatához tartozott. Rákosi. *Picture from the* Keresztury emlékkönyv



11. Mátyás Rákosi's portrait below the portraits of Lenin and Stalin, in the Main Hall of the Academy's Palace, during the celebrations of the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Academy's foundation, 26 November 1950 (sign. AL Fényképtár 1397)

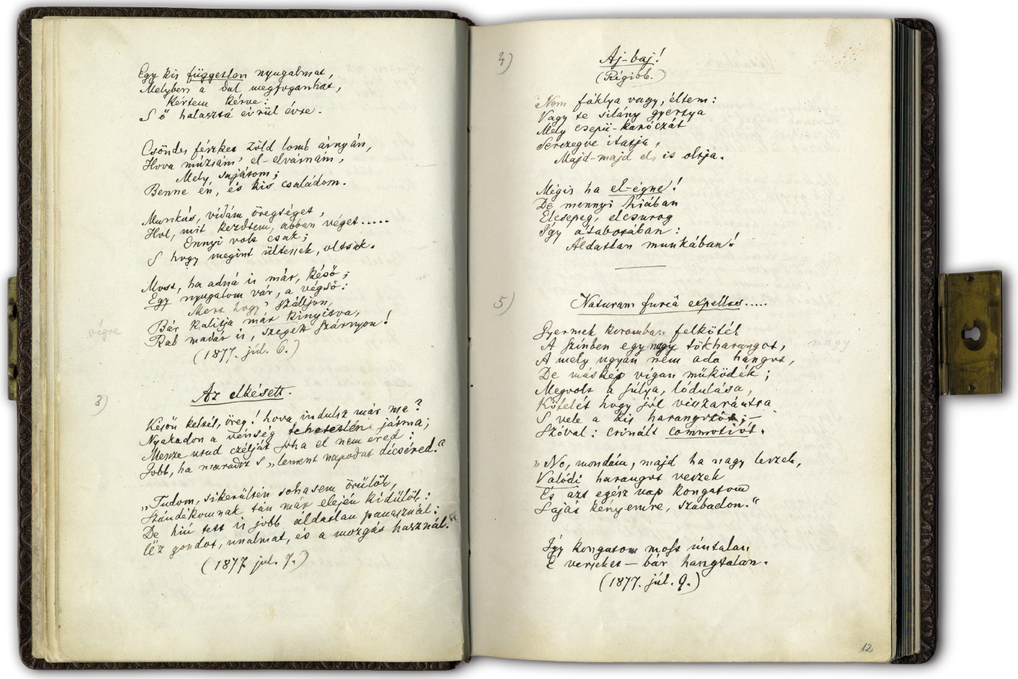
After two years as Head of the Department of Manuscripts (January 1951–January 1953), Erzsébet Hartay was appointed to lead the newly established reference service of the Library and was eventually granted a disability pension in 1960 owing to her deteriorating health. By way of comparison, it is worth recalling that the above-mentioned Lajos Ligeti, who received the same kind of doctorate with distinction in 1925, later became a world-renowned professor and served as Vice President of the Academy for two decades. In light of their similarly brilliant beginnings, Erzsébet Hartay appears as a gifted young scholar whose life was tragically broken.

In January 1953, Jenő Berlász returned to the leadership of the Department of Manuscripts and faced a series of new challenges. It was a sign of a worsening political atmosphere that one of the oldest literary institutions established by private initiative, the Kisfaludy Society, after having gained a role of national importance in its century-long history, was abolished by the communist regime in 1952. In accordance with the Society's regulations, which stipulated the Academy as its lawful heir, its valuable collection of manuscripts, prints and relics was transported to the Department of Manuscripts at the beginning of 1953. Two items from this inheritance deserve particular attention. One is the so-called Lockbook (*Kapcsos könyv*) of János Arany, in which the poet wrote the fair copy of his poems from 1856 onwards (sign. K 510). The other is the original manuscript of The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*), a dramatic poem by Imre Madách (1823–1864), containing János Arany's suggestions and numerous orthographic corrections in his own hand (sign. K 531).

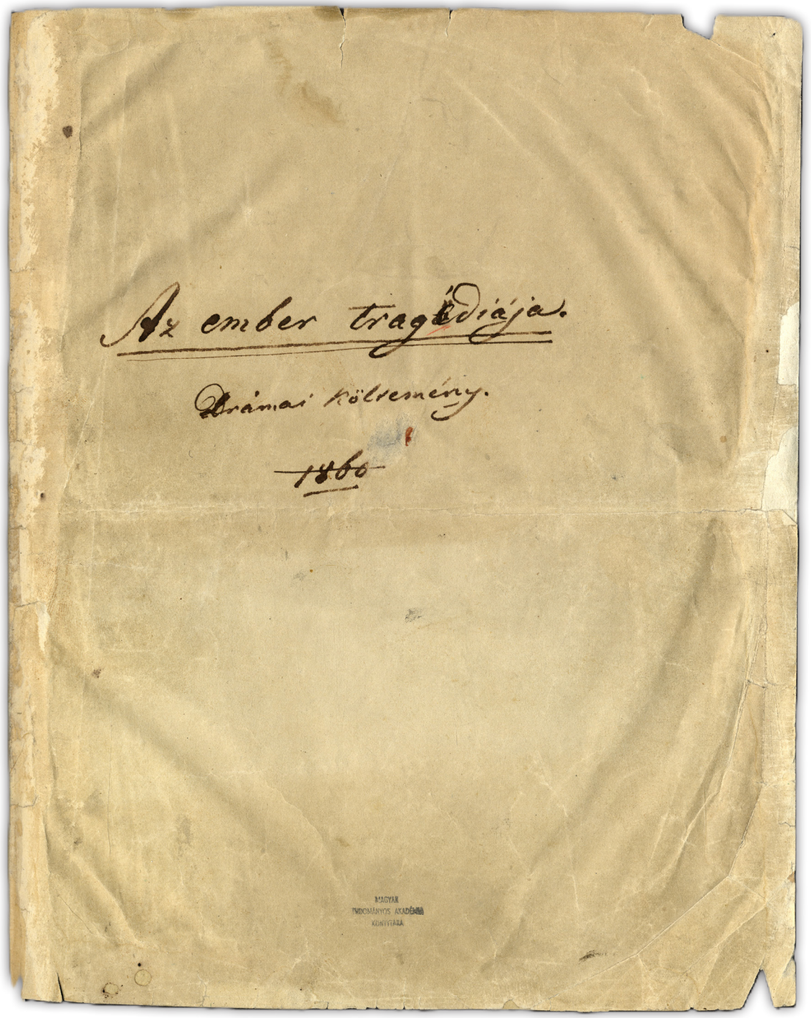


12. Room of the Kisfaludy Society at the Academy (sign. Ms 10754)

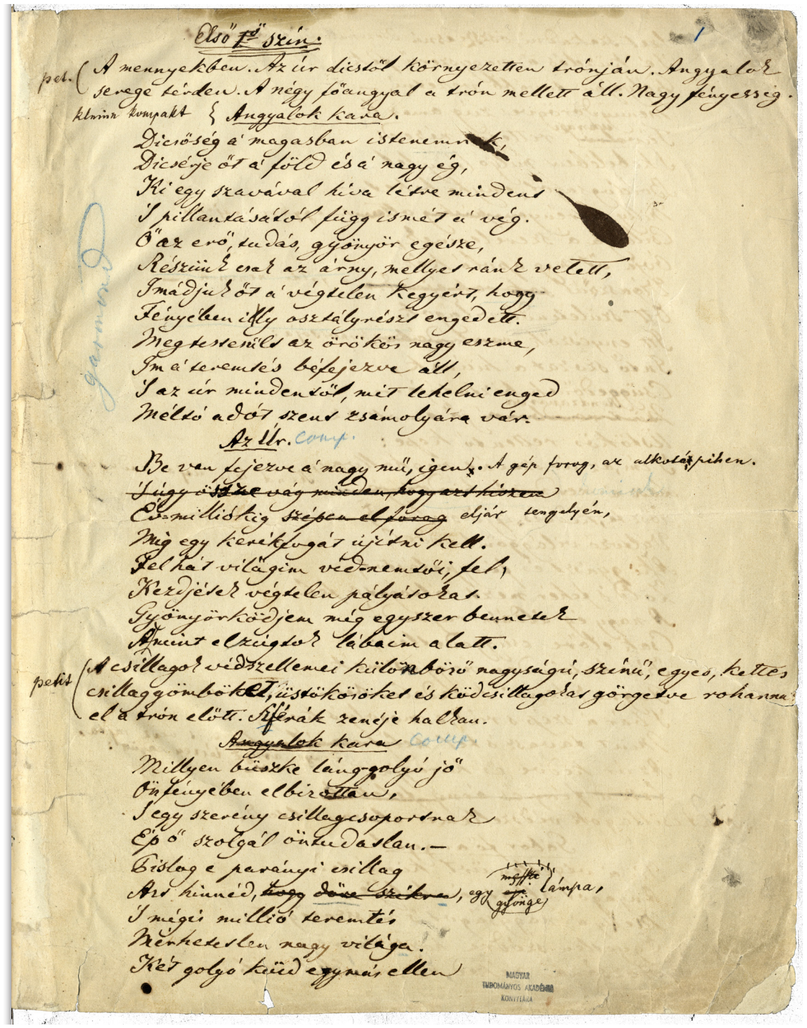
The Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books after the Second World War



*13. Excerpt from the so-called Lockbook (*Kapcsos könyv*) of János Arany (sign. K 510)*



*14. Title page of the original manuscript of The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) by Imre Madách (sign. K 531)*



*15. First page of The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) (sign. K 531)*

In 1954, another physical threat endangered the Department of Manuscripts. The lumber in the collection's second-floor storage rooms was infected with *Serpula lacrymans*, a fungus causing dry rot. Thus, for the period required to replace the old wooden beams with concrete girders, all the collection's materials and furniture had to be moved to the third floor under the Palace's rooftop for two years. By the time the collection returned to its premises and resumed normal operation, a new historic storm was gathering in Hungary.





16–17. Book storage spaces on the third floor under the Palace's rooftop where the Department of Manuscripts also operated for some time in the 1950s

The Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books after the Second World War



18. Present-day exhibition area of the MTA Art Collection in the same space in 2026, photograph by Tamás Szigeti

The suffocating political environment of the Rákosi era in war-stricken Hungary reached its breaking point in October 1956. The wave of unrest that began in the country's major cities reached the capital on 23 October 1956. Hungarians launched an armed uprising against the Soviet-friendly suppressors throughout Budapest and other major cities. After less than two hopeful weeks, the Revolution was crushed by the incoming tanks of the Soviet Army on 7 November 1956.

The presentiment about the coming political change in the Academy, days before the outbreak of the Revolution itself, is retrospectively detectable from specific facts. It is telling that on 20 October 1956, just three days before the outbreak of the Revolution, the leadership of the Academy decided that the personal files of the staff, the so-called "cadres archives", should be burned in the stokehole. The order to destroy written records of individuals who had actively assisted the communist regime in suppressing opposition within the Academy came directly from Tibor Erdey-Grúz (1902–1976), Member of Parliament and the Academy's Secretary General.[3] He resigned from his position immediately after issuing this order.

During the hopeful days of the Revolution, the library staff established a temporary Revolutionary Committee (on 31 October) and later a definitive one (on 2 November), with Jenő Berlász being among its members. When the temporary committee learned of the planned destruction of the "cadres archives", Berlász, together with Gyula Haraszthy, Director of the Library, and István Pónyi (b. 1916), rushed to the basements of the Palace to prevent the burning process. They sealed and impounded the "cadres archives". They also questioned Erdey-Grúz regarding the order by which those documents were to be destroyed, considering them not only historical sources but also potential legal evidence. Confronted in this manner, Erdey-Grúz withdrew his order.

After the failure of the Revolution, members of the Revolutionary Committee were subjected to retribution. According to the legal documents, the librarians spent 11,111 Hungarian forints from the Academy's funds on sending telegrams abroad to fellow institutions, requesting their moral support against the Soviet Union. As part of the reprisals, they were required to repay the sum in monthly instalments from their own salaries. Jenő Berlász, however, was discharged from his position in the Department of Manuscripts, with immediate effect. The decision was signed by the then President of the Academy, István Rusznyák (1889–1974),[4] on 11 July 1957. Thirty-five years later, in October 1992, another President of the Academy, Domokos Kosáry,[5] formally rehabilitated Jenő Berlász.



19. Photograph of Tibor Erdey-Grúz (sign. 265 Akadémikus dosszié)



20. Photograph of István Rusznyák (sign. D 107/3436)

3 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 149–158.
4 Szilágyi ed. 2023, 135–148.
5 See the entry "Life and Death inside the Palace" above.

After Berlász was dismissed in 1957, his close friend and colleague, Csaba Csapodi, assumed the leadership of the Department. Csapodi remained in this position until 1975. Among other initiatives, he introduced improvements in the physical safeguarding of manuscripts. He also broadened the profile of the manuscript collection, which had previously focused primarily on literary bequests, by acquiring numerous legacies from many historians. He reorganised the early print collection and started a book series cataloguing the most important literary bequests preserved in the Department of Manuscripts, bearing the title The Catalogues of the Department of Manuscripts of the Library of the HAS (*Az MTA Könyvtára Kézirattárának Katalógusai*).

One of Csapodi's most significant personal achievements was the recovery of the *Bellifortis* fragments from the Museum of Fine Arts after a decade-long absence, on 11 October 1961. The six watercoloured leaves had been granted as a temporary loan by the above-mentioned Tibor Erdey-Grúz as a personal favour to his comrade, Imre Oltványi (1893–1963), Director of the Museum, on 5 July 1951. Erdey-Grúz had not consulted the Academy's librarians regarding the loan. Instead, the decision was communicated to Jenő Berlász as a fait accompli in a telephone call from the Vice Director of the Museum, Lajos Vayer (1913–2001). Even more troubling was the fact that the Museum's personnel mounted the leaves on paper and illegally registered them in their own inventory. After several attempts, aided by the Academy's leadership, Csapodi succeeded in reclaiming the leaves and demonstrated in a scholarly study that they all formed part of the same manuscript. Csapodi began working on his *Catalogus collectionis codicum latinorum et graecorum* during his active years of service, but he published it only ten years after his retirement, in 1985.[6]

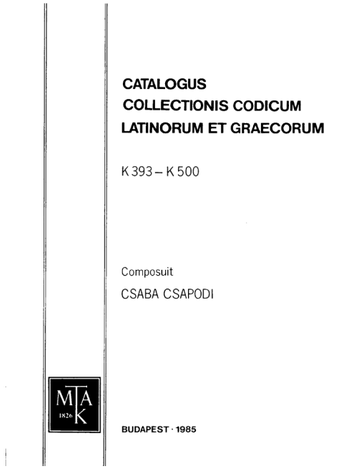
Thanks to the multifaceted activities of Jenő Berlász and Csaba Csapodi as leaders of the Department of Manuscripts, the routines of everyday work, the regulation of cataloguing and the physical requirements for safeguarding materials were firmly established. Many of their practical and theoretical innovations remain part of the collection's professional practice to this day.

In the second phase of the special collection's development since 1975, called by the extended name of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, the Head Librarian position was typically entrusted to the most experienced colleague, often someone who had spent twenty or more years working in the Department.

6 Csapodi 1985.



21. Photograph of Csaba Csapodi



22. Title page of Csapodi's manuscript catalogue (sign. 649.418)



23. Dóra F. Csanak, her collegue and husband Géza Fülöp (1928–1998) and Jenő Berlász at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, September 1954, photograph by Pál Gergely (1902–1982), their colleague at the Department (sign. Ms 6446/136)



24. Dóra F. Csanak with the art historian and corresponding member of the Academy Lajos Fülep (1885–1970), 1964, they were close family friends (sign. Ms 4598/331). Later, F. Csanak prepared the first three volumes of Fülep's letters from his bequest at the Academy

Dóra F. Csanak became leader of the special collection after twenty-four years at the Library and continued the path laid down by her predecessors for another twenty-one years (1976–1997). Her tenure brought steady expansion to the collection. For instance, the full bequests and/or correspondence of more than thirty prominent personalities of the Kádár era were donated or sold to the collection. After the dark years of the Rákosi era, the consolidation of the communist regime in Hungary was characterised by the leadership of János Kádár (1912–1989). Kádár entrusted the supervision of the cultural sphere to his comrade, György Aczél (1917–1991) and to his confidants and protégés. They controlled different cultural areas, from book publishing (István Király, 1921–1989) to literary history (István Sőtér, 1913–1988) as well as the music industry and historiography.

In addition to publishing the first volume on the early history of the Library,[7] Dóra F. Csanak was also a diligent editor in chief of the manuscript catalogue series of the special collection. During her leadership, fourteen volumes were published. Since 1997, the number of volumes in that series has risen to twenty-four.

Toward the end of her tenure, F. Csanak also oversaw a major renovation of the collection's premises, carried out in two phases between 1988 and February 1991. Thanks to these transformations, the collection secured sufficient storage capacity for decades to come.

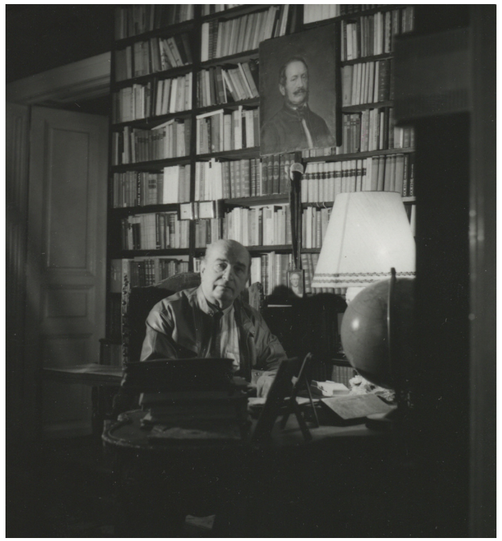


25. János Kádár visiting the Academy, 17 November 1981. Kádár was welcomed by the then President of the Academy, János Szentágothai (1912–1994), photograph by Erzsébet Hámori (sign. AL Fényképtár 1060)

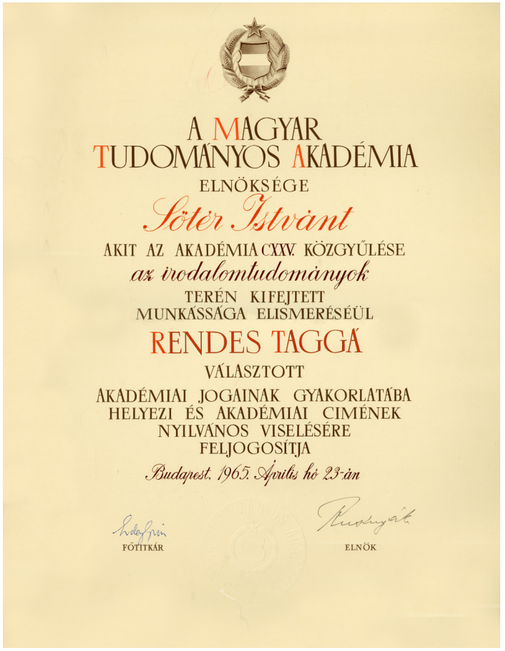


26. János Kádár visiting the Academy, 17 November 1981. From left to right, seated at the table in the Lecture Hall of the Academy's Palace: Miklós Óvári (1925–2003), Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party; Lénárd Pál (1925–2019), Secretary General of the Academy; János Kádár; János Szentágothai and György Aczél, member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and President of the Science Policy Committee, photograph by Erzsébet Hámori (sign. AL Fényképtár 1069)

7 F. Csanak 1959.



27. Photograph of István Sőtér (sign. Ms 2253/591)



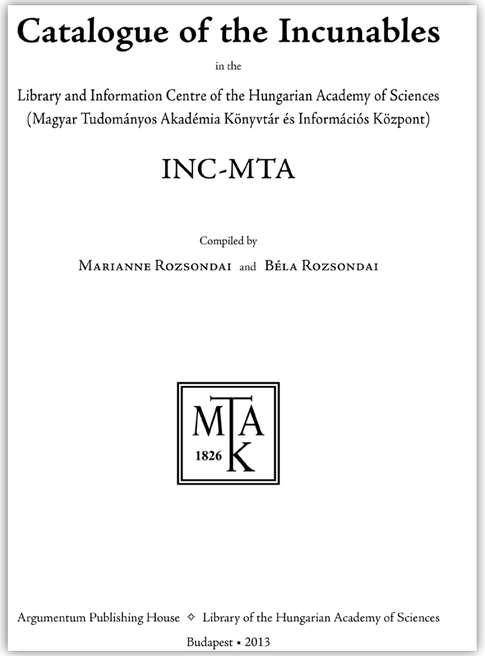
A MAGYAR
TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA
ELNÖKSÉGE
Sőtér Istvánt
AKIT AZ AKADÉMIA CXXV. KÖZGYŰLÉSE
az irodalomtudományok
TERÉN KIFEJTETT
MUNKÁSSÁGA ELISMERÉSÉÜL
RENDES TAGGÁ
VÁLASZTOTT
AKADÉMIAI JOGAINAK GYAKORLATÁBA
HELYEZI ÉS AKADÉMIAI CÍMÉNEK
NYILVÁNOS VISELÉSÉRE
FELJOGOSÍTJA
Budapest, 1965. Április hó 23-án
FŐTITKÁR
ELNÖK

28. István Sőtér's certificate of his election among the members of the Academy (sign. Ms 2264/13)

After the retirement of Dóra F. Csanak, another long-serving librarian and scholar, Marianne Rozsondai, assumed the leadership. By 1997, she had already worked at the Library for twenty-eight years. She specialised in the history of European bookbinding and had completed the catalogue of the old bookbindings in the Department by 1973. However, the expanded version of her comprehensive study on the history of bookbinding in Hungary was published only in 2019.[8] Marianne Rozsondai was engaged in long-term scholarly projects throughout her career. She began working on the catalogue of incunabula during F. Csanak's leadership. She brought the project to completion by 2012, with the help of her husband, Béla Rozsondai (b. 1934), two years after their official retirement. The English-language catalogue of the Academy's incunabula was published in 2013.[9] Compared to the previous union catalogue of incunabula in Hungarian collections, published in 1970, it contained thirty additional entries.[10] In 2025, the Rozsondai family decided to crown their lifelong commitment to the Library with an exceptional act of generosity. They purchased a collection of incunabula of sixty-three items for forty-seven million forints and donated it to the Academy.[11] Since the arrival of four hundred and thrity-one incunabula in the Vigyázó bequest in 1928, the Rozsondai donation has represented the most significant enrichment of the Department's incunabula holdings.



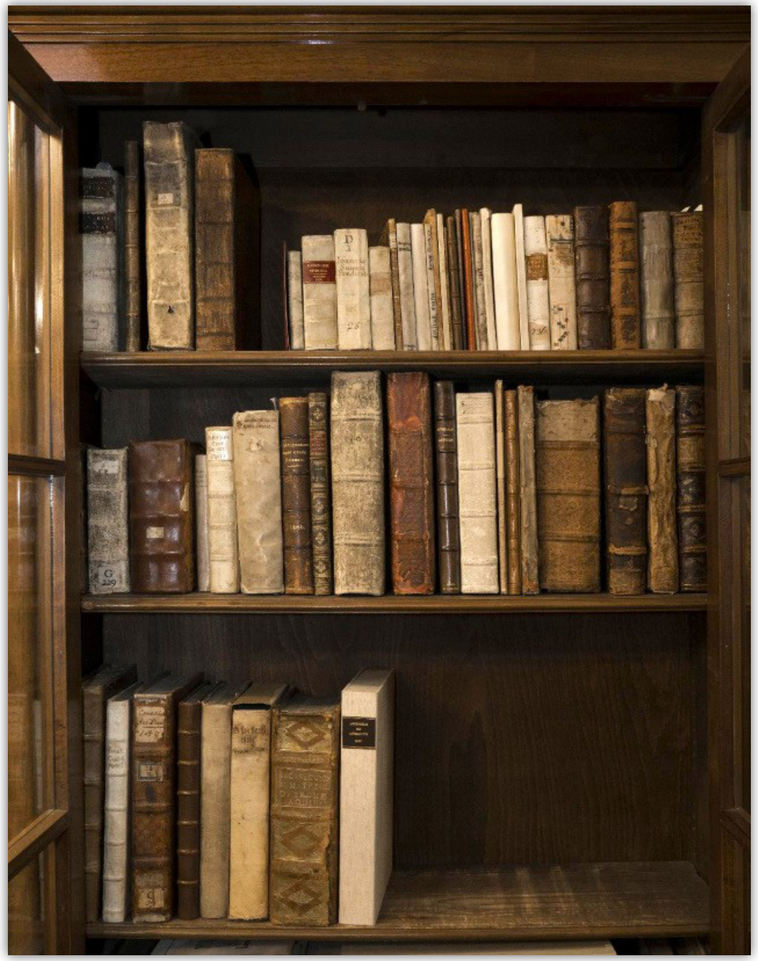
29. Photograph of Marianne Rozsondai, 2006



Catalogue of the Incunables
in the
Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
(Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár és Információs Központ)
INC-MTA
Compiled by
Marianne Rozsondai and Béla Rozsondai
MTA K 1826
Argumentum Publishing House ✧ Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Budapest • 2013

30. Catalogue of incunabula prepared by the Rozsondai couple (e.g. sign. 775.971)

8 Rozsondai 2019.
9 Rozsondai – Rozsondai 2013.
10 Sajó – Soltész 1970.
11 For the first short description of the *Collectio Rozsondaiana* see: Monok ed. 2025.



31. Volumes of the Collectio Rozsondaiana *at the Department of Manuscripts*



32. Marianne Rozsondai presents the Collectio Rozsondaiana *to the press, 8 December 2025*



33. The Rozsondai couple with the President of the Academy Tamás Freund (b. 1959) and with the Director General of the Library, István Monok, after the official donation ceremony

Apart from Marianne Rozsondai's own scholarly achievements, the most significant enrichment during her tenure was the recovery of a manuscript that had been missing from the Library for almost a century. The manuscript on civil and communal law, entitled *Jura civilia ac consuetudines antiquae septem liberarum civitatum*, was copied in the fifteenth century and later bound with a sixteenth-century printed work. The volume, originally part of the Teleki collection, was dismantled and its two parts were rebound separately in the 1920s. It is highly probable that the manuscript part of the colligate volume disappeared at that time and had to be repurchased from a private collector in 2004. Antal Babus assumed the position of Head Librarian at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books on 1 May 2010, after nearly twenty-five years of service at the Library. The major challenges during his tenure, which were less pronounced in his predecessors' careers, have been at least twofold. On the one hand, there is the need for cooperation in large-scale digitisation projects with partner institutions. On the other hand, there is a growing expectation to present and popularise the collection through both *in situ* and online exhibitions. Since 2011, the Department has contributed materials to or cooperated with fifteen digital projects in Hungary and abroad, making important manuscripts or entire collections available online. Moreover, Babus and his colleagues have organised memorial exhibitions for anniversaries of important personalities and historical events almost continuously in different spaces of the Palace of the Academy. This activity has been strongly supported since 2013 by István Monok, the Library's Director General.



34. Antal Babus opens the Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016



35. Strong Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today



36. Manuscripts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hungarian authors in modern bookbindings



37. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today



38. Room of the early printed books in Hungarian (Régi Magyar Könyvtár), today



39. Backmost room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, formerly part of the service flat of János Arany as Secretary General of the Academy

Since 2010, Babus and his team have mounted exhibitions presenting new acquisitions,[12] for marking anniversaries of the publication of important literary treasures and contributing to research on the famous court of King Matthias Corvinus,[13] to mention but a few examples. In 2015, the Department received significant international recognition. Following the earlier inscription of the Kőrösi Csoma Archives and the *Appendix* by the Bolyai mathematicians in 2009, a third item of the Library of the Academy was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2015. This was a twelve-page English-language commercial leaflet, printed in Hungary in 1928 to advertise the Eötvös Torsion Balance, a rarity not least because of its ephemeral character (sign. Ms 5890/67).


United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Certifies the inscription of

Janos Bolyai: Appendix, scientiam spatii absolute veram exhibens. Maros-Vasarhelyini, 1832

Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
(Institution)

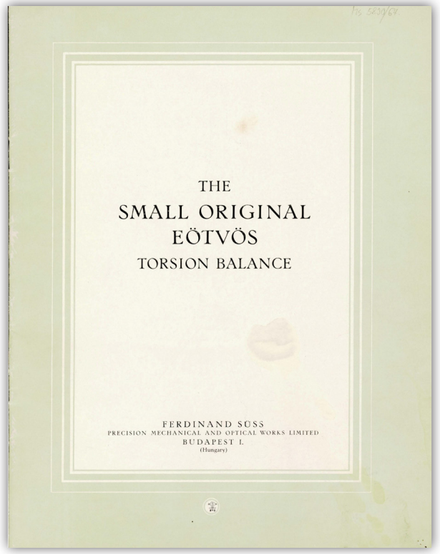
Budapest (Town) **Hungary** (Country)

On
the Memory of the World International Register

Date 31 JUL 2009

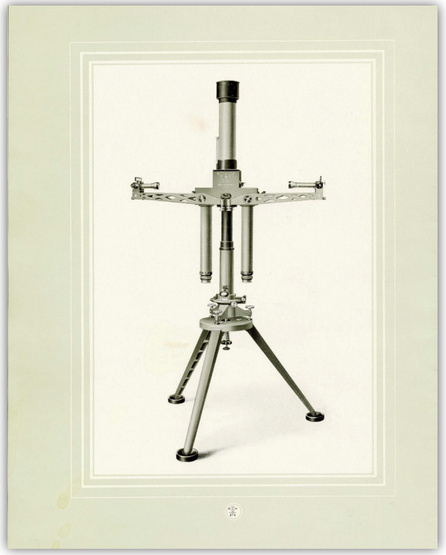
Koichiro Matsuura
Director-General, UNESCO

40. Certificate of the UNESCO Memory of the World Register for János Bolyai's Appendix


THE
SMALL ORIGINAL
EÖTVÖS
TORSION BALANCE

FERDINAND SÜSS
PRECISION MECHANICAL AND OPTICAL WORKS LIMITED
BUDAPEST I.
(Hungary)

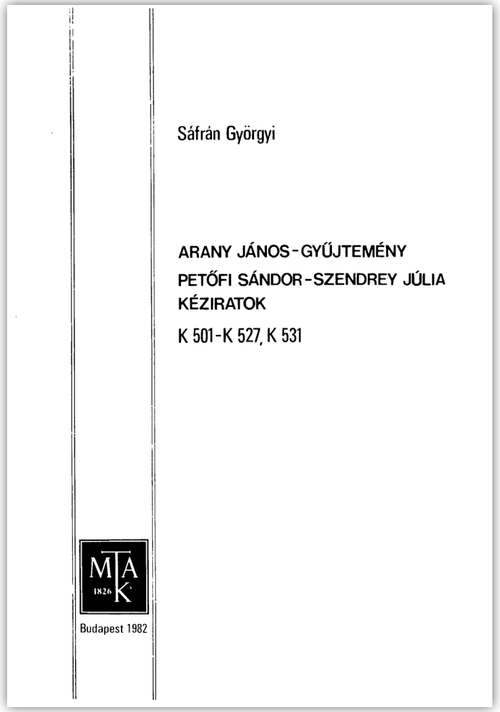
41. The Small Original Eötvös Torsion Balance, Ferdinand Süss, Precision Mechanical and Optical Works Limited. Budapest I. 1928. (sign. Ms 5890/67)



42. Photograph of the Small Original Eötvös Torsion Balance (sign. Ms 5890/67)

12 https://ady.mtak.hu.
13 https://csillagok.konyvtar.mta.hu.

A less pleasant task awaited Antal Babus in 2015, one that he nevertheless executed with moral integrity. As the Department's actual leader, he had to acknowledge publicly a long-standing lacuna in the manuscript holdings. In preparation for the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the often-mentioned poet János Arany, a new series of critical editions of his works was launched. For the purposes of this series, the literary historian János Korompay H. (b. 1947) wished to examine the original manuscript of Arany's Death of Buda (*Buda halála*), which, according to common knowledge, had been in the possession of the Academy since 1939. Under those circumstances, Babus had to admit openly that the manuscript was borrowed by the Petőfi Literary Museum for an exhibition in 1957, and, in fact, had never been returned. According to the documentation still held at the Museum, the manuscript was not actually exhibited either. In 1959–1960, two consecutive Library Directors, Gyula Haraszthy and György Rózsa, corresponded with the Museum's Vice Director, Mrs Béla Varjas, née Vilma Nyilassy (1924–1995), in an attempt to recover the manuscript. Rather than acknowledging the Museum's mistake, Mrs Varjas suggested that the Academy's librarians might have misplaced the manuscript within *their own* collection. A question mark on the list of borrowings at the Museum indicates, to this day, that the manuscript had already been lost by the end of the exhibition in 1957. Although the responsibility lay elsewhere, the loss of the manuscript became a taboo subject in the Library, probably for political reasons. The loss was nevertheless detectable, as Györgyi Sáfrán (1911–1985) did not include the manuscript's description in the printed catalogue of Arany's works preserved in the Academy's manuscript holdings in 1982.[14] Until 2015, librarians responded evasively to readers' enquiries concerning the manuscript. Eventually, silence could no longer be maintained, as the digitisation of catalogues and the availability of online documentation made it increasingly easy to identify *Buda halála* as a missing item. Fortunately, Arany's poem survives in two other manuscripts, and the lost copy of the Academy is preserved in a microfilm copy made in 1952 (sign. A 60. II.). The case of the *Buda halála* manuscript underlines the truth of an English saying that old sins cast long shadows. Librarians today bear no responsibility for their predecessors' errors; their duty is to confront every past schortcoming with honesty, transparency and professional integrity.


Sáfrán Györgyi

ARANY JÁNOS-GYŰJTEMÉNY
PETŐFI SÁNDOR-SZENDREY JÚLIA
KÉZIRATOK

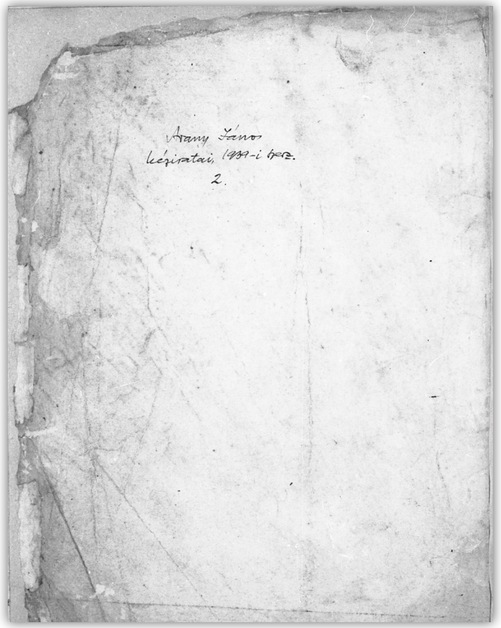
K 501-K 527, K 531

MTAK 1826

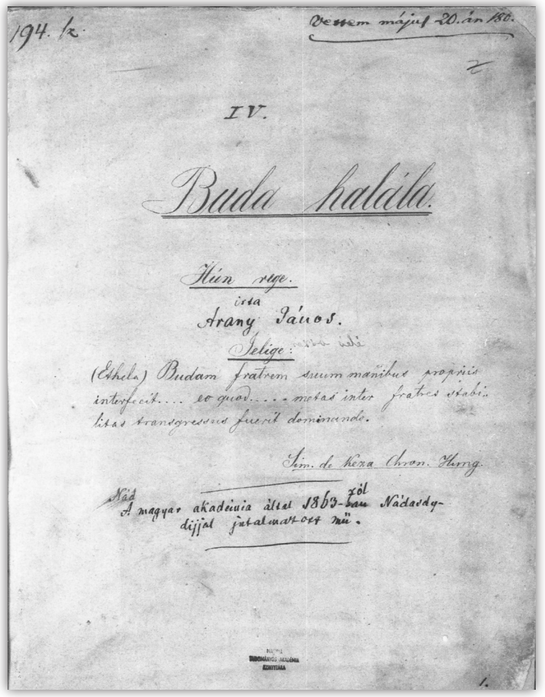
Budapest 1982

43. Catalogue of the Arany bequest at the Academy by Györgyi Sáfrán (e.g. sign. 629.743)

14 Sáfrán 1982.

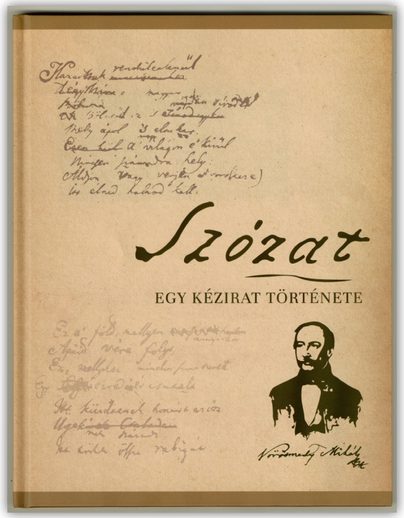


*44. Cover of the manuscript of Death of Buda (*Buda halála*), with the note "Acquisition from 1939", from its microfilm copy (sign. A 60. II)*



*45. Title page of Death of Buda (*Buda halála*) from its microfilm copy (sign. A 60. II)*

It is a source of genuine personal pride for Antal Babus that, in 2016, he succeeded in recovering a set of items from the bequest of Mihály Vörösmarty. As mentioned above, the nineteenth-century Hungarian poet had his own memorial room at the Academy during the interwar period. However, during the darkest years of the Rákosi era, in 1950 and 1953, respectively, the Academy was forced to "loan" some of Vörösmarty's objects to the Petőfi Literary Museum. After several failed attempts, the items were finally returned and exhibited for the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the composition of Vörösmarty's most important poem, the Appeal (*Szózat*), often regarded as the second national anthem of Hungary. Unfortunately, some pieces had been damaged or lost during their fifty-year "captivity". For instance, only twenty-one pieces were recovered of Vörösmarty's original red-and-white ivory chess set (sign. K 2/118. 23. p. 10. item). Since their return, the restored items have been regularly displayed in exhibitions devoted to the Academy's history. Both the surviving chess pieces and Vörösmarty's writing desk (sign. K 2/118. 23. p. 4. item) were exhibited at the Hungarian National Museum[15] and later at the Academy during the 2025–2026 anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the Academy and its Library.[16]



46. History of the Appeal (Szózat), edited by Antal Babus (e.g. sign. 509.143)



47. Mihály Vörösmarty's red-and-white ivory chess set (sign. K 2/118. 23. p. 10. item)

15 *Varázshatalom – Tudás. Közösség. Akadémia.* [Magic Power – Knowledge, Community, Academia] 5 May 2025 – 26 October 2025, exhibition curated by Tünde Császtvay (b. 1960).
16 *Borúra derű. A 200 éves Akadémia kincsei.* [Joys After Sorrow. The Treasures of the Two-Hundred-Year-Old Academy], 5 November 2025 – 13 December 2026, exhibition curated by Antal Babus. Babus 2025.



48. Mihály Vörösmarty's writing desk (sign. K 2/118. 23. p. 4. item)



49. The Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016



50. The Library's Director General, István Monok and the President of the Academy, László Lovász at the opening of the Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016

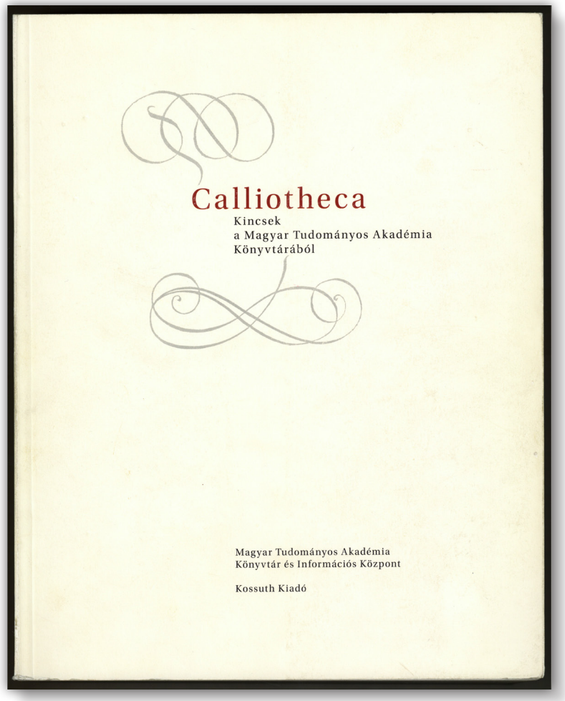


51. Portrait of László Lovász, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, painted by Márta Czene, 2020, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 827. A table clock associated with President József Eötvös appears twice in the painting: its mirrored image evokes the past, marking the moment of the Academy's foundation (3 November 1825, at eleven o'clock); its real image, by contrast, points to the present, showing the day and hour when the Academy was deprived of its research network (1 September 2019, at eight o'clock)

In preparation for the bicentenary, the renovation of the Palace of the Academy, including the second-floor storage rooms of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, began in 2023. The entire inner storage area had to be emptied, requiring the transfer of 2,600 shelf metres of materials to the external storage facility in Törökbálint. For safety reasons, the precious materials were moved by the four male employees of the Department, in accordance with the "tradition" of physically demanding work undertaken by male librarians in previous generations, from Berlász and his colleagues onwards.

The Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books cares for the bequests of hundreds of significant figures in Hungarian literary history, historical and scientific life. The librarians of the Department, in cooperation with other institutions, emphasise the importance of these bequests not only through exhibitions but also through reprint and facsimile editions of outstanding treasures. As of 2025, reprints of approximately thirty literary treasures in thirty-six editions have been published, some repeatedly, some abroad, and one even without authorisation. The above-mentioned Lockbook (*Kapcsos könyv*) of János Arany was published in facsimile three times (1962, 1977, 2017), while The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) by Imre Madách was reproduced in 1973 and again in 2015. The enigmatic Rohonc Codex (sign. K 114), originating from the Batthyány estates, was published in a pirate edition in Romania in 2002. Among the earliest documents reproduced in facsimile are seven of the nine early sixteenth-century Hungarian language monument manuscripts (signs. K 39, K 40, K 41, K 42, K 45, K 46, K 47), as well as the second book ever printed in Hungarian, dated 1535 (sign. RM I 8r 2). The manuscript reproduction chronologically closest to our own time is the unique Notebook of Poems (*Versfüzet*) by János Pilinszky (1921–1981), composed at Easter 1948 (sign. Ms 5932/3). Perhaps the most poignant manuscript in reproduction is Miklós Radnóti's Bor Notebook (*Bori notesz*), a collection of poems recovered together with his body from a mass grave in 1946 (sign. Ms 2642/25). Radnóti's bequest will be discussed in a later entry. In 2018, to mark the seventieth birthday of László Lovász (b. 1948), world-renowned mathematician and President of the Academy (2014–2020), a non-commercial facsimile edition of Bolyai's *Appendix* (sign. 545.091) was prepared in ten copies. Owing to its limited print run, the facsimile itself has become a rarity.

A wide selection of photographs depicting the Library's most remarkable treasures was published in 2017 in the volume *Calliotheca. Gems from the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*.[17] Both the Hungarian and English versions of the album are available in the Library's digital collection.

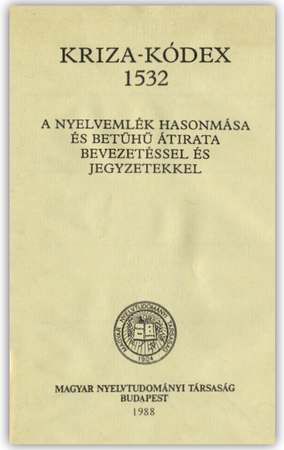


52. Title page of Calliotheca *(e.g. sign. BC-103.800)*

17 Horányi 2017.



53. The so-called Kriza Codex, (sign. K 47)



54. The title page of the facsimile edition of Kriza Codex (e.g. sign. 666.793)



55. The Vörösmarty treasures at the Borúra derű *exhibition, 2026, photograph by Tamás Szigeti*



56. Items of the Arany bequest and the Kőrösi Csoma bequest at the Borúra derű *exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti*



57. The Eötvös Torsion Balance at the Borúra derű *exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti*



58. Portrait of László Lovász at the Borúra derű *exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti*

Recent Manuscript Acquisitions: Two Widowhoods in Hungarian Literary History

Two recent enrichments to the manuscript collection provide an opportunity to discuss the family histories of two iconic figures of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hungarian literary history. Both were poets, both were exceptionally talented, both were considered martyrs by their contemporaries. Each left behind a widow, and each widow had to confront the weight of societal expectations placed upon her. The first of these iconic poets was Sándor Petőfi (1823–1849), whose widow was Júlia Szendrey (1828–1868).



1. Litograph of Júlia Szendrey



2. Armband of Sándor Petőfi worn during the early phase of the War of Independence in 1848 and later presented to Julianna Ercsey (sign. Tárgyak 25)



3. Lithograph of Sándor Petőfi

The second was Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944), whose widow was Fanni Gyarmati (1912–2014). Petőfi fell as a soldier at the end of the 1848–1849 War of Independence. Radnóti perished during a forced labour service that, in effect, amounted to enslavement during the Second World War.

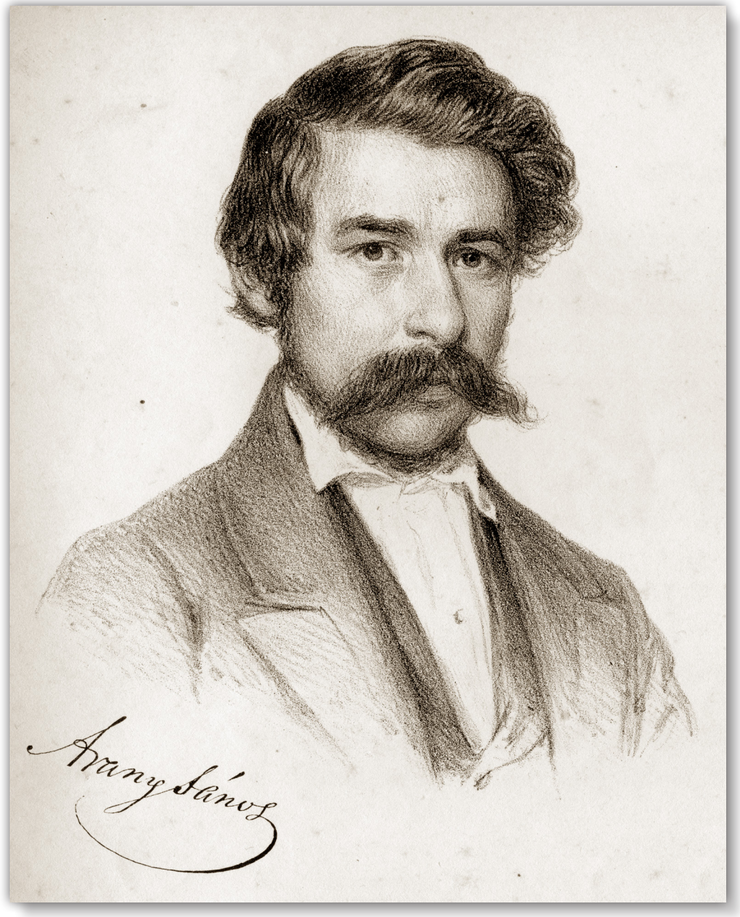


4. Photograph of Fanni Gyarmati (sign. Ms 2678/9)



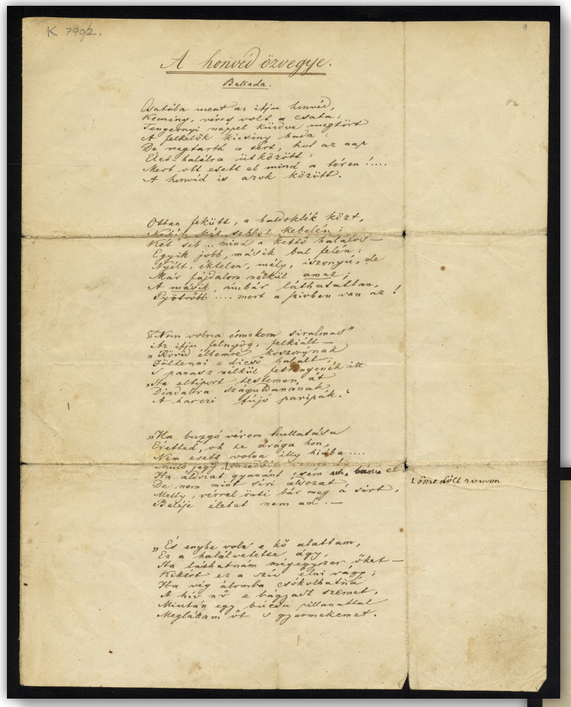
5. Photograph of Miklós Radnóti (sign. Ms 26620/51)

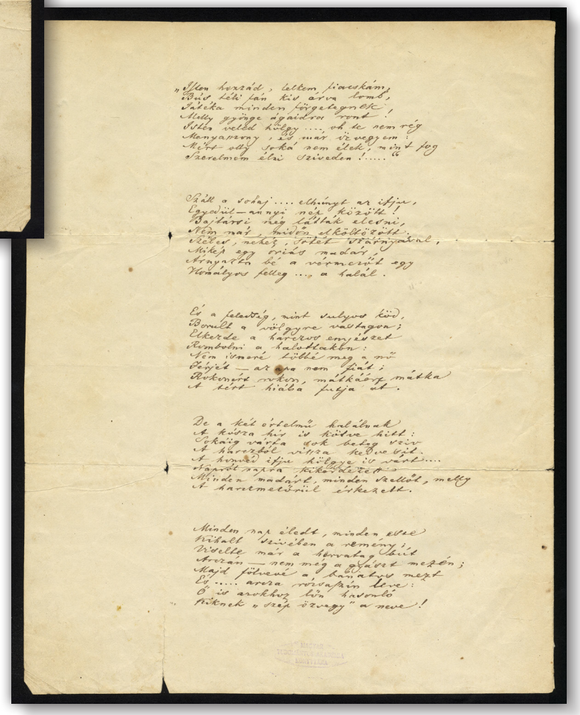
The first enrichment at issue was an undated autograph manuscript copy of János Arany's poem, entitled The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*).[1] The manuscript was purchased by the Library in 2019, with the support of the then President of Hungary, János Áder (b. 1959, in office 2012–2022), and it entered the Arany autograph collection under the signature K 512/31. In total, the manuscript became the fifth copy of the poem in possession of the Academy (signs. K 512/1, Ms 319/39; M. Irod. RUI 4-r91), and the second autograph copy (besides sign. K 790/2).

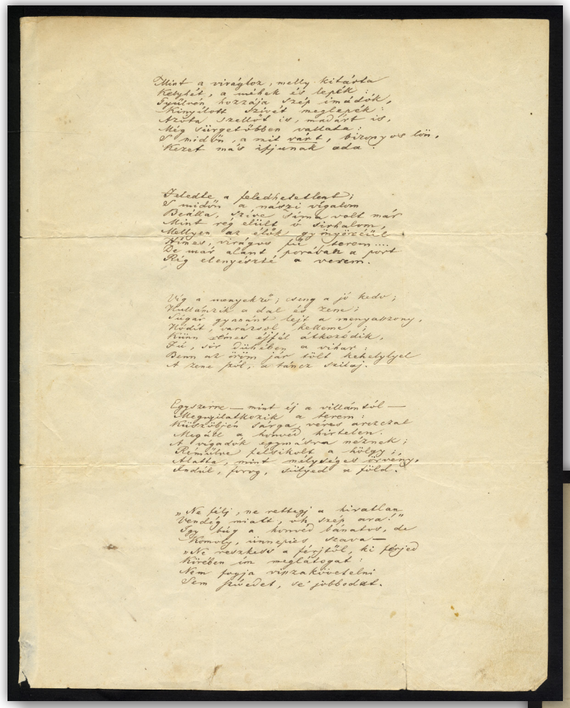


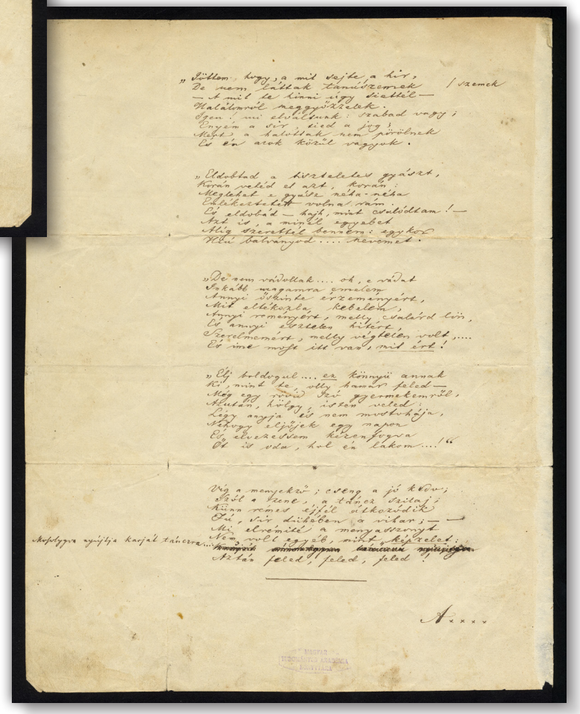
6. Pencil portrait of János Arany from the years of the Hungarian Revolution

1 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 297–314.









*7–10. Autograph copy of The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*) by János Arany (sign. K 512/31). It is worth noting, that Arany did not sign his manuscripts, his name is symbolised by an A and four asterisks*



Nemzeti dal.

Talpra, magyar, hi a' haza!
Itt az idő, most vagy soha!
Rabok legyünk vagy szabadok?
Ez a kérdés válaszszatok! —
A' magyarok istenére
Esküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

Rabok voltunk mostanáig,
Kárhozottak ősapáink,
Kik szabadon éltek haltak,
Szolgaföldben nem nyughatnak.
A' magyarok istenére
Ezküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

Sehonnai bitang ember,
Ki most, ha kell, halni nem mer,
Kinek drágább rongy élete,
Mint a' haza becsülete.
A' magyarok istenére
Esküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

Fényesebb a' láncznál a' kard,
Jobban ékesíti a' kart,
És mi még is láncot hordtunk!
Ide veled régi kardunk!
A' magyarok istenére
Esküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

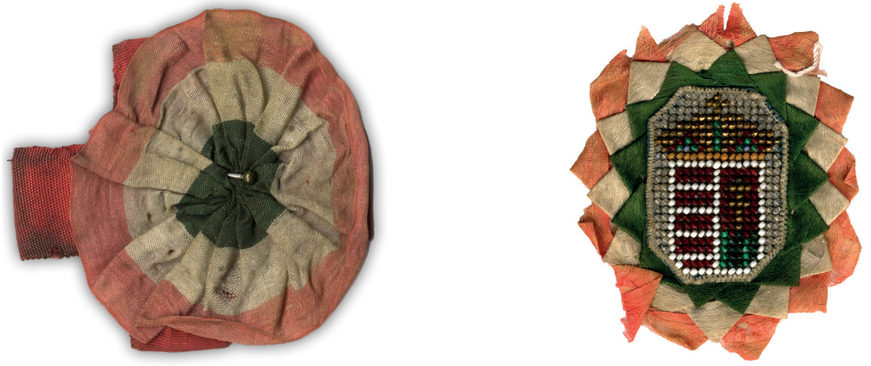
A' magyar név megint szép lesz,
Méltó régi nagy híréhez,
Mit rá kentek a' századok,
Lemossuk a' gyalázatot.
A' magyarok istenére
Esküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

Hol sirjaink domborúlnak,
Unokáink leborúlnak,
És áldó imádság mellett
Mondják el szent neveinket.
A' magyarok istenére
Esküszünk,
Esküszünk, hogy rabok tovább
Nem leszünk.

Petőfi Sándor.

*11. Original print of Sándor Petőfi's National Song (*Nemzeti dal*), the poem that became a symbol of the Hungarian Revolution on 15 March 1848*

The story behind Arany's poem is a mixture of devastating personal grief and unacknowledged societal prejudice. János Arany and Sándor Petőfi, despite the vast differences in their temperament, became close friends in February 1847, after Petőfi had read *Toldi*, Arany's debut narrative poem. They met in person twice that year. On the second occasion, when Petőfi visited the Arany family in Nagyszalonta (today Salonta, Romania), he was accompanied by his newly wed wife, Júlia Szendrey. On 15 March 1848, the Revolution broke out and soon led to the War of Independence against the Habsburg rulers of Hungary. Having been one of the Revolution's initiators, Petőfi soon began his military service in the Hungarian Army. By then, his wife Júlia was expecting their son, Zoltán Petőfi (1848–1870). Arany and his wife, Julianna Ercsey, undertook the honour of being the child's godparents in December 1848. On that occasion, Petőfi presented his armband and the two cockades he had worn during the Revolution to Julianna Ercsey. Those symbolic objects later entered the Library's collection as part of the Arany bequest (sign. Tárgyak 25).

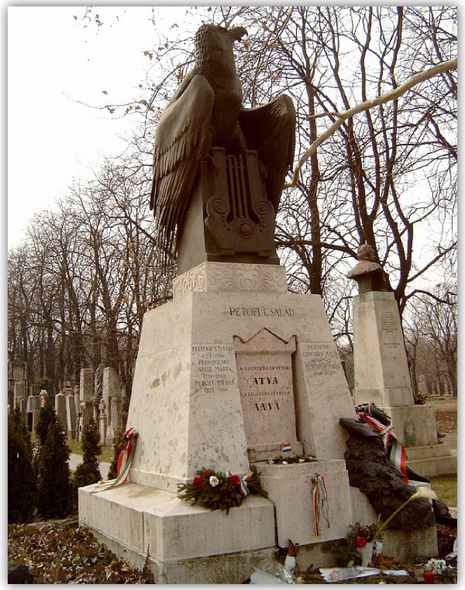


12. Two cockades of Sándor Petőfi presented to Julianna Ercsey (sign. Tárgyak 25)

Between February and May 1849, the Arany couple even took care of Júlia Szendrey and her baby to alleviate their financial hardship. Petőfi and Arany met for the last time in Pest on 7 July 1849. Petőfi continued his military service and was never seen again after the battle near Segesvár (today Sighișoara, Romania), on 31 July 1849. The country lay devastated after the defeat in the War of Independence, while Júlia Szendrey found herself alone with an eight-month-old child and without financial or legal security. On 21 July 1850, she married again, accepting the proposal of the historian Árpád Horvát (1820–1894). In the eyes of the nation, Szendrey's decision was regarded as a scandal, and even Arany was deeply troubled by the news. He composed the satiric poem *A honvéd özvegye*, which transparently accuses Júlia Szendrey of taking delight in hastily forgetting her first husband. As Arany later explained, he wrote the poem on impulse, and sent it to an editor friend in Pest, in early September 1850. He soon regretted the act and forbade its publication. Allegedly, Arany was planning to write a biography of Petőfi, and did not wish to alienate the most important source of information by offending Júlia Szendrey with the poem. Although the projected biography remained unfinished, Arany ensured that the poem was not printed. Nevertheless, it circulated widely in manuscript copies. On 14 May 1868, a newspaper in Eger (Heves County), reported that at a charitable event an actor had recited "*The Soldier's Widow*, a poem by János Arany". Thus, hearsay became public news, and the satirical poem of a *well-known* author may have wounded Júlia once more, had it reached her ears. By then, Júlia Szendrey was already suffering from uterine cancer. She died on 6 September 1868, at the age of thirty-nine. Sándor Petőfi's remains lie to this day in an unknown location near the battlefield where he fell; Júlia Szendrey, however, rests in the Petőfi family tomb alongside her in-laws in Budapest. The case of *The Soldier's Widow* indicates that personal emotions and deeply rooted societal expectations can cloud even the mind of a man as perceptive as János Arany, who so often showed compassion for human tragedy yet failed to recognise the tragic heroine in his own friend's widow.



13. Photograph of Júlia Szendrey at the age of thirty-one

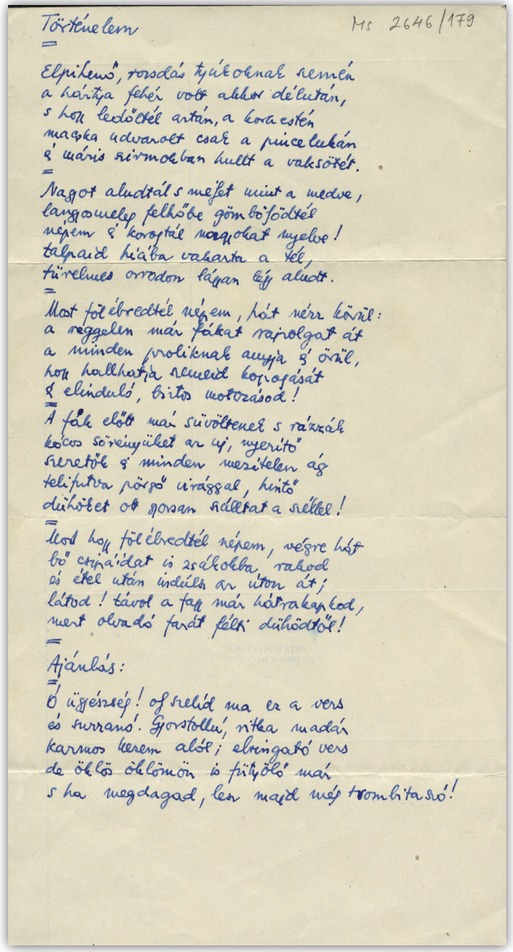


14. The Petőfi family tomb, Budapest, Fiume Road Cemetery

The other manuscript enrichments in question were donated to the Academy in accordance with the last will of Mrs Miklós Radnóti née Fanni Gyarmati.[2] The bequest of her husband, the poet Miklós Radnóti, had already been transferred to the Library in 2008 and was catalogued under the signatures Ms 2631–2663. Fanni Gyarmati died at the age of one hundred and two in February 2014. The following year, her personal documents, letters and diaries were catalogued under the consecutive shelfmarks continuing her husband's bequest (signs. Mss 2664–2680). In 2021, the printed catalogue of the combined bequests was published by Edit Krähling (b. 1972).[3]

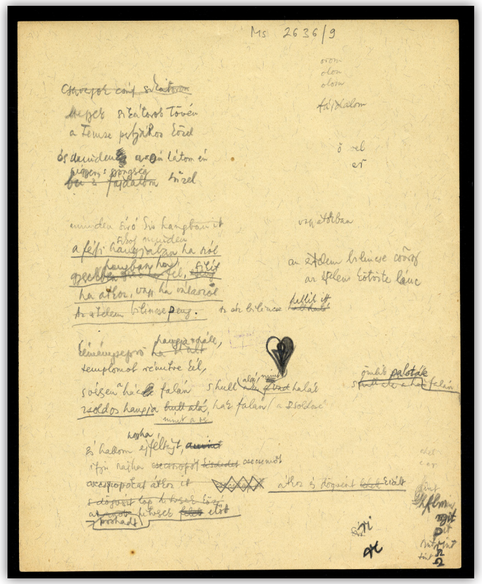
The Radnóti family bequest is of particular significance for several reasons. First, it reflects a lifelong intellectual partnership between husband and wife that extends even beyond the grave. Second, it represents a distinct type of literary legacy, as most of the original versions of Radnóti's poems are not his handwritten autographs but typewritten copies prepared by Fanni Gyarmati. Fanni Gyarmati was a professionally trained teacher of shorthand and typewriting who worked at her father's private school until 1941, thereby supporting the household and providing the financial stability for her husband's literary career to unfold.

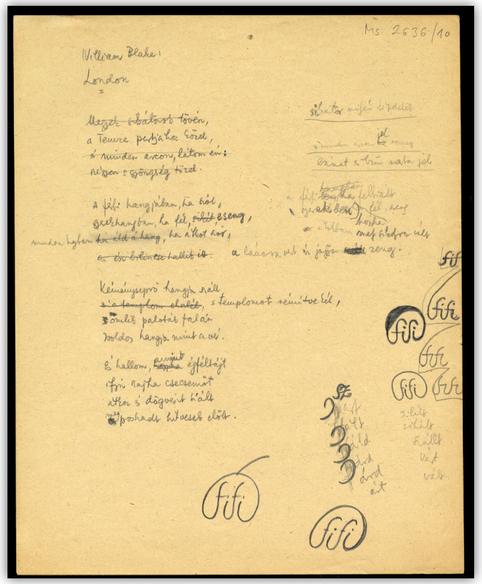
The Radnótis did not dedicate particular attention to the autograph versions of the poems, as they considered the final typewritten version the Urtext of Radnóti's works. For this reason, the relatively few handwritten drafts are particularly valuable testimonies to his *work in progress*. For instance, three versions of his translation of William Blake's poem entitled *London* (sign. Ms 2626/9–11), or the autograph of Radnóti's poem History (*Történelem*) sent as an appendix to one of his letters to Fanni, offer a rare insight into his creative process (sign. Ms 2646/197).

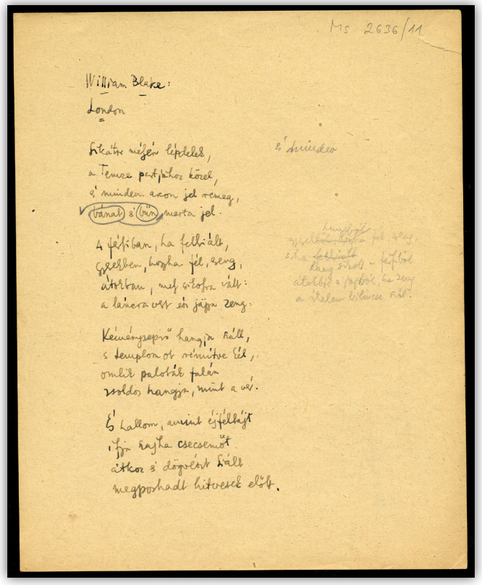

Történelem Ms 2646/179
=
Elpihenő, rosszlás tyúkoknak remeg
a háztya fehér volt akkor délután,
s hon lecsöppent aztán, a kora estén
magyka udvarolt csak a puce lukán
s máris szivmelegben hullt a vaksötét.
=
Nagyot aludtál s mesét mesélt a medve,
langyosmelegbe felhőbe gömbölyödtél
nézem s koraptát nagyokat nyelve!
talpaid hiába vakarta a fel,
türelmes orrodon tápan kéj aludt.
=
Most föl ébredtél nézem, hát nézz körül:
a reggelen már falkát rajtolgat át
a minden frolikoknak anyja s ősöl,
hon hallhatja remeld korogását
s elinduló, biztos mozdulásod!
=
A falk előtt már süvöltenek s rázzák
kocsu sörényüket az új, nyerítő
szeretőt s minden meszitelen ág
telipatva pörpe virággal, hintő
dúhödet ott gorsan oldhatod a szellel!
=
Lesd hogy föl ébredtél nézem, végre hát
bő orrnádat is zsebkebe rakod
s étel után indulsz az uton át;
látod! távol a fag már hátrahagyod,
mert olvadó fardt fölt dúhödtöt!
=
Ajánlás:
=
O ügyészség! of nekid ma ez a vers
és surranó. Gyorsollú, ritka madár
karmon kerem abót; elvingató vers
de öklös öklömön is fityölő már
s ha megdagad, ken majd még trombitaso!

*15. Autograph of the poem History (*Történelem*) by Miklós Radnóti (sign. Ms 2646/197)*

2 Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 478–483.
3 Krähling 2021.

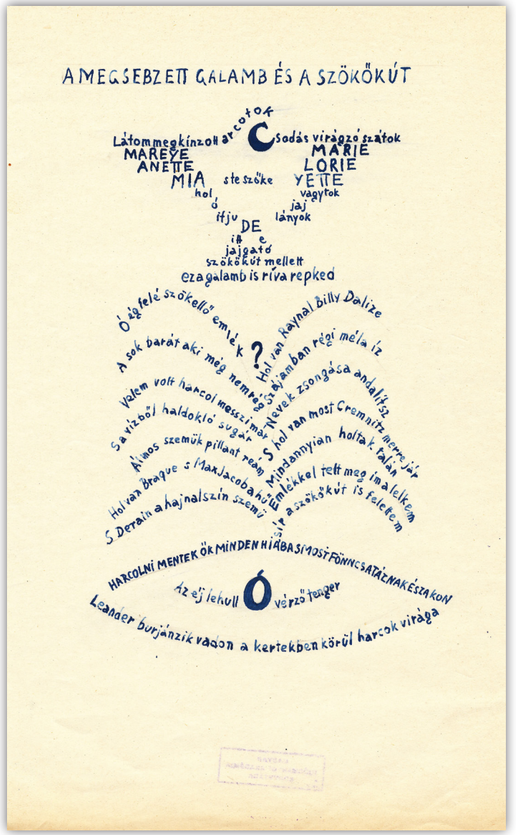




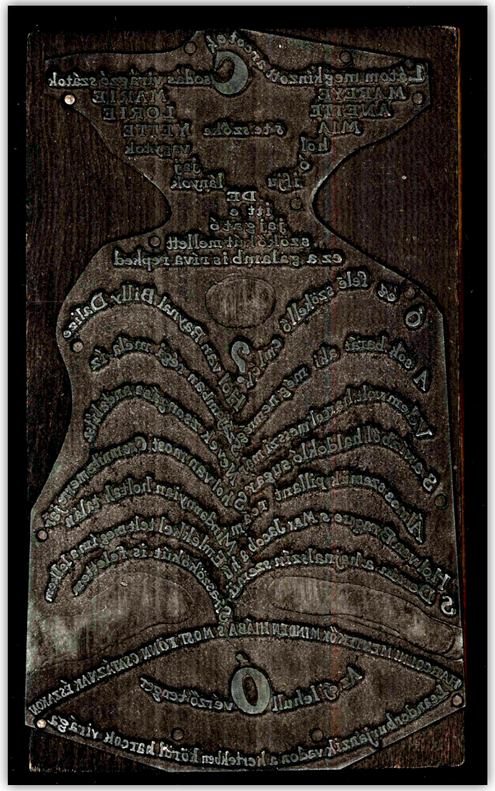


16–18. Three autograph versions of Radnóti's translation based on William Blake's London *(sign. Ms 2626/9–11)*

Miklós Radnóti was also an accomplished translator of poetry from classical authors to his contemporaries, in several languages. One translation of particular importance is based on Guillaume Apollinaire's *Le colombe poignardeé et le jet d'eau (Calligrammes. Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre*, Paris, Mercure de France, 1918, 73). In that case, not only Radnóti's autograph, formally imitating the typesetting of the original, has survived (sign. Ms 2636/209), but the metal printing plate of the Hungarian translation also forms part of the bequest (sign. Ms 2636/231).

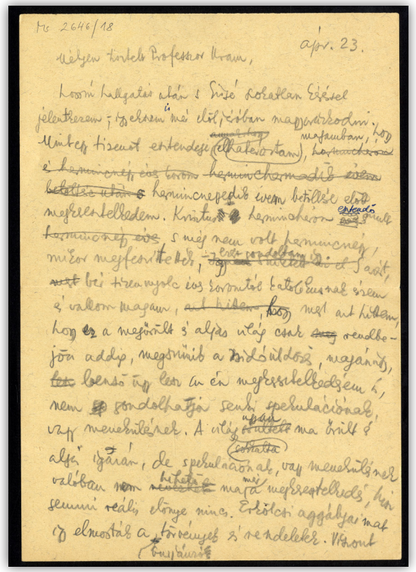


19. Autograph of the poem A megsebzett galamb és a szökőkút *(The Stabbed Dove and the Jet of Water) translated by Miklós Radnóti (sign. Ms 2636/209)*

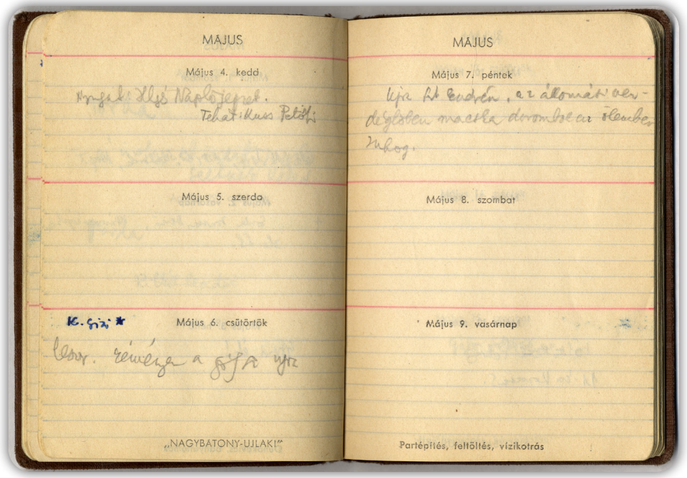


20. Metal printing plate of the same translation, based on Apollinaire's poem (sign. Ms 2636/231)

Both Miklós Radnóti and Fanni Gyarmati were of Jewish origin, children of secularised families, who considered themselves Hungarian and Christian. Miklós changed his family name from Glatter to Radnóti as a young adult, thereby expressing his *ars poetica* of "otherwise being a Hungarian poet". On 2 May 1943, Radnóti was baptised into the Christian faith. His godfather was one of his former professors at the University of Szeged, Béla Zolnai (1890–1969), and the priest concelebrating the ceremony was another of his former professors, the Piarist monk Sándor Sík (1889–1963). The exact circumstances of Radnóti's baptism were reconstructed by Edit Krähling on the basis of documents preserved in various parts of his bequest (e.g. signs. Ms 2645/30 and Ms 2644/17).

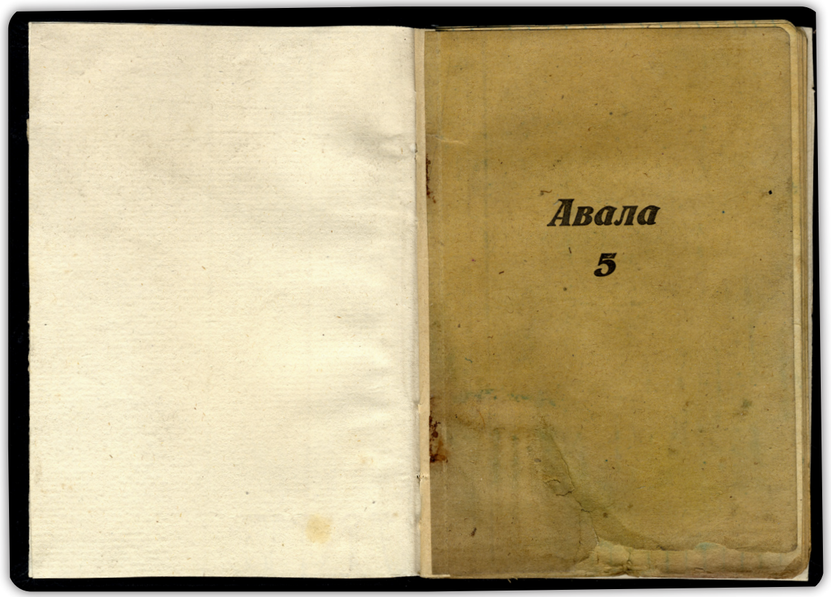


21. Letter from Miklós Radnóti to his former professor Béla Zolnai (sign. Ms 2646/18)



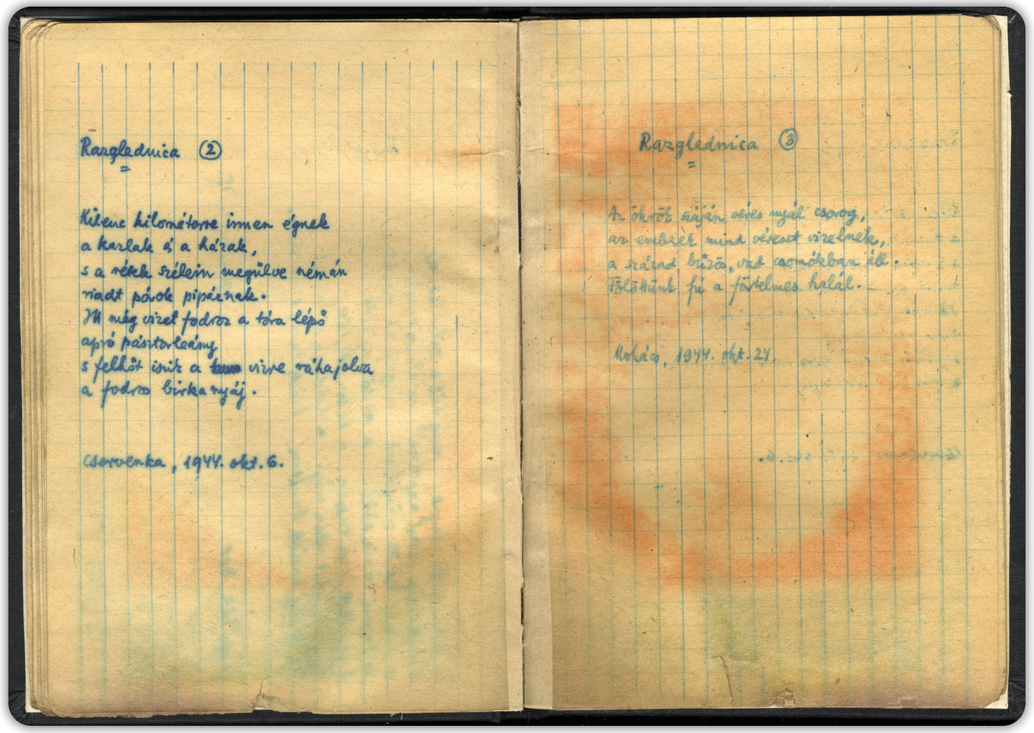
22. Pocket weekly planner of Miklós Radnóti from 1943. The excerpt shows the week after his baptism; on 4 May Radnóti notes the name of Petőfi (sign. Ms 2644/17)

Despite their Christian faith and left-leaning political convictions, Radnóti and Fanni Gyarmati were classified as Jews, under the racial laws of 1940s Hungary and were thus reduced to second-class citizens. As a Jewish citizen, Radnóti was enlisted for labour service on three occasions. His third term of service, between May and August 1944, amounted to modern-day enslavement. The Hungarian state sold Radnóti and his 4,000 fellows to Siemens Ltd. They were sent to Bor in Serbia to construct railway lines for transporting non-ferrous metals from the local mines. As the front line approached, Radnóti and some 3,400 men began a forced retreat towards Germany through Serbia and Hungary. Among the final survivors of this column, twenty-one men, including Radnóti, were executed by their Hungarian guards near Abda (Győr-Moson-Sopron County) around 9 November 1944. The poet and his companions were buried in a mass grave and exhumed only in 1946. During the exhumation, Radnóti's body was identified by his personal papers (e.g. photographs of his mother and wife, his ID, his mugshots, his wife's last letters, signs. Ms 2645/26–56) and a notebook containing his final poems. The Bor Notebook (*Bori notesz*) comprised nine poems in total, of which five had previously been sent home in autograph copies by Radnóti (sign. Ms 2632/223–227). Four poems survived solely in the notebook itself (sign. Ms 2645/25), becoming tragic relics of Radnóti's final months and martyrdom. The anguish endured by Fanni Gyarmati before and after the death of her husband is documented in her diaries from 1935 to 1946 (e.g. signs. Ms 2669/3 and Ms 2669/4), published with her consent in 2014, the year of her death.[4]



*23. Cover of Radnóti's Bor Notebook (*Bori notesz*) (sign. Ms 2645/25)*

4 Radnóti 2014.



Razgledница ②

Kilenc kilométere innen égnek
a karlak és a házak,
s a vének szélein megülve némán
riadt pórok pipáznak.
Ni még vizet fodroz a tóra lépő
apró pásztorkedvtől,
s felhőt ivik a tenn vize vakjolva
a fodros birkanyáj.

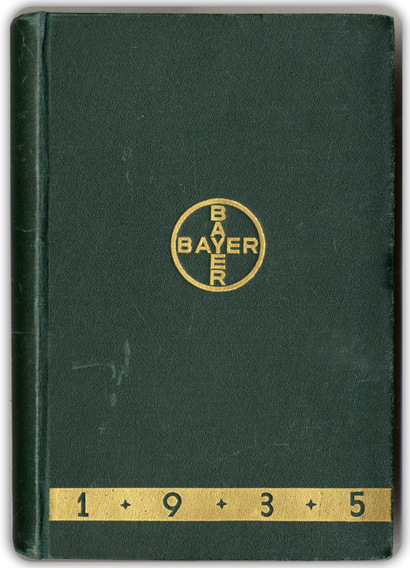
Csorvenka, 1944. okt. 6.

Razgledница ③

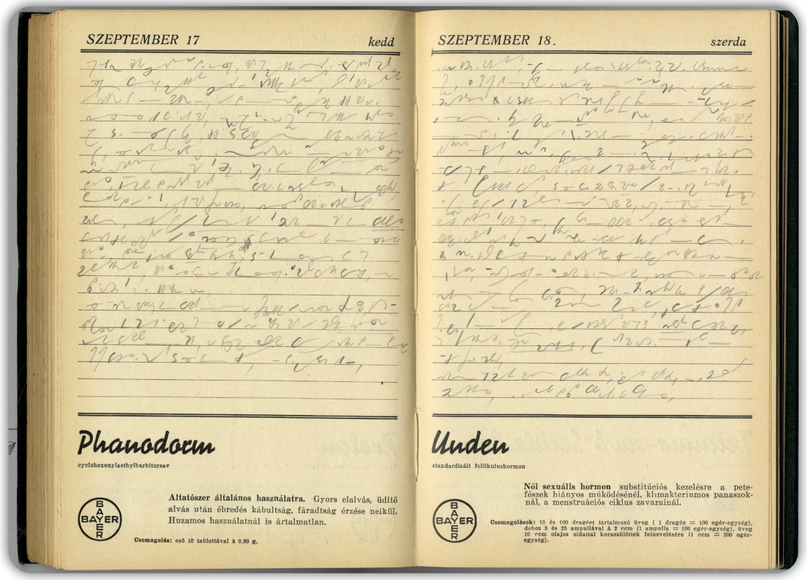
A földről sájón ősies nyájak csorog,
az emberek mind vészet vizelnek,
a határ bűzös, vak sarokban áll.
Bűnünk fia a förtelmes halál.

Kokáj, 1944. okt. 21.

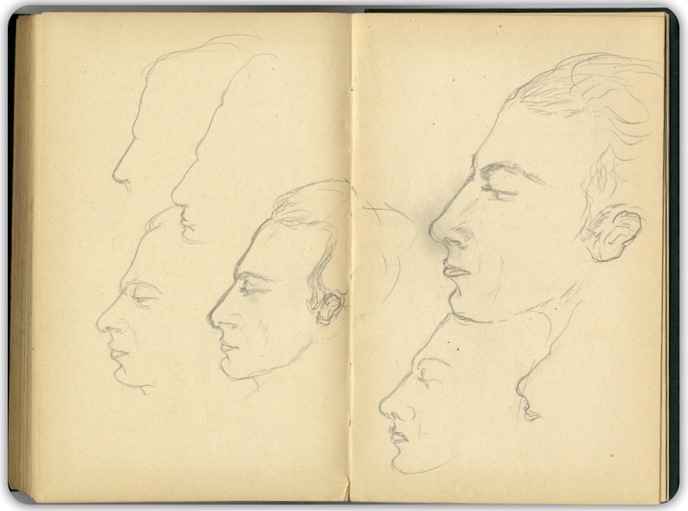
*24. Radnóti's second and third poem of the cycle entitled Postcards (*Razgledničák*), two of the four poems that survived solely in the notebook itself (sign. Ms 2645/25)*



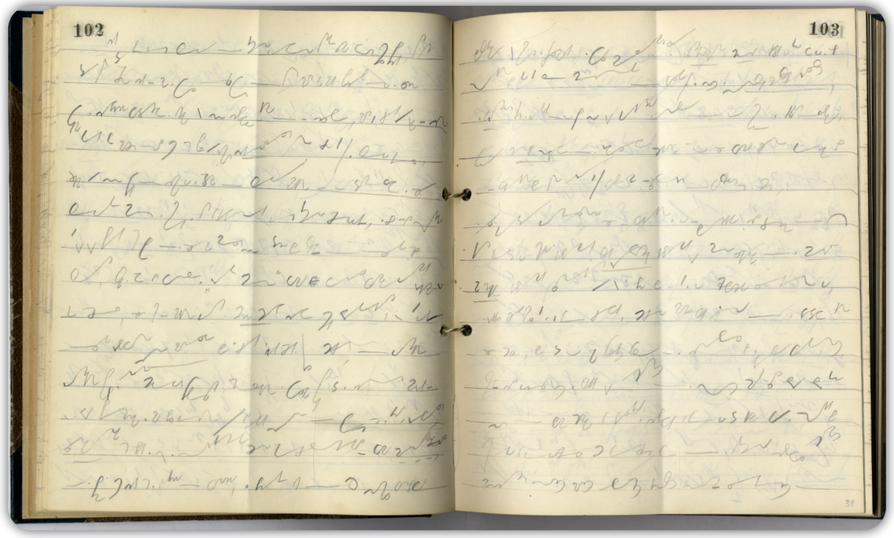
25. Cover of Fanni Gyarmati's pocket planner, 1935 (sign. Ms 2669/3)



26. Notes written in shorthand by Fanni Gyarmati, September 1935 (sign. Ms 2669/3)



27. Portrait drafts of Radnóti in the hand of Fanni Gyarmati in the pocket planner, 1935 (sign. Ms 2669/3)



28. Shorthand notes from Fanni Gyarmati's diary, 1936 (sign. Ms 2669/4)

After the Second World War, several of Radnóti's friends from his university years and later life attained influential political and cultural positions in the newly forming communist Hungary. Gyula Ortutay as Minister of Religion and Public Education, Gábor Tolnai (1910–1990) as professor of Old Hungarian literature at Eötvös Loránd University, and the above-mentioned György Aczél, known as "the cultural pope of the Kádár era," cooperated in the rapid canonisation of their late friend. They depicted Radnóti as an outstanding poet of leftist and anti-fascist beliefs, while his Catholic faith was largely omitted from public emphasis. Radnóti's poems were already being recited on Hungarian radio as early as the final days of the war. Fanni Gyarmati published a posthumous volume of her husband's poems in 1946 (*Tajtékos ég* – Foaming Sky), but later she did not actively participate in building his literary cult. Over time, Miklós Radnóti became a national cultural icon: conferences and memorial skiing competitions were organised in his name, stamps were issued in his honour, schools were named after him, and in 1977, even a seagoing vessel bore his name. Fanni Gyarmati never remarried. She spent her life guarding her late husband's bequest as a private, sealed collection. She lived a reserved life for seventy years, in the same flat that she and Miklós Radnóti had begun sharing in 1935. The Radnóti family bequest preserved at the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences ensures that any future critical edition of Miklós Radnóti's *opera omnia* can be based on the most comprehensive and authoritative documentation of both his life and that of Fanni Gyarmati.



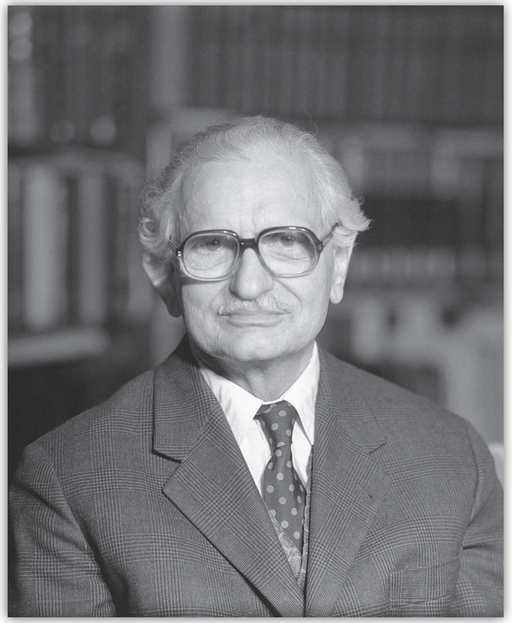
29. Photograph of Fanni Gyarmati and Miklós Radnóti, 1941 (sign. Ms 2660/166)



30. Catalogue of the Radnóti family's bequest at the Academy (e.g. sign. 509.183)

The Hadik-Barkóczy Estates: Two Hundred Fifty Years of Hungarian History Compressed into a Family Collection

A very recent increase in the Library's pre-1850 book collection occurred in 2022. Following István Monok's suggestion, the leadership of our institution decided to purchase the remainder of the aristocratic Hadik-Barkóczy family library. At the time of the purchase, the collection had been on private property and not in the possession of its original owners for more than seventy years. In fact, the heirs of György Györffy (1917–2000), a historian specialising in the early history of the Magyars, and a member of the Academy since 1991, sold the approximately 2,500 volumes to the Library for twenty million forints. Thanks to that purchase, the remains of the last aristocratic library that could still be saved many years after the Second World War finally became available in public libraries. Another part of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection, comprising between 2,000 to 4,000 volumes, was confiscated and transported to the Ady Endre Library in Baja (Bács-Kiskun County) as early as 1948. The fate of the Hadik-Barkóczy family collection is as complicated and marked by loss as the twentieth-century history of Hungary itself. In what follows, the fate of the collection will be discussed in reverse chronological order. First, its history from Györffy's ownership to its purchase by the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will be mentioned. Second, an overview of the Barkóczy, Hadik, and Zichy families' history will be provided to highlight the most important collectors associated with the library.[1] Finally, some of the most interesting volumes in our Library's collection will also be presented.



1. Photograph of György Györffy

1 The latest publication on the subject is Granasztói 2024. However, the results presented there were significantly expanded in 2023 through autoptic examination carried out by members of the Old Book Recataloguing Team in our Library. The present text offers the first communication of these new findings. See also Hay – Molnár eds. 2026, 484–489.

After the Second World War, in 1948, during the increasing communist pressure in the country, György Györffy saved from confiscation and nationalisation some parts of the collection held in the Hadik-Barkóczy Palace at 7 Múzeum Street, Budapest's 8th Disrtict. By that time, the Palace was abandoned by the last member of the noble family, Endre II Hadik-Barkóczy (1899–1999). However, his former partner, Mrs Endre Böröcz, and her children lived there in three rooms. Mrs Böröcz asked Györffy for help, as he was a friend of Hadik-Barkóczy. They resided close to each other, as Györffy lived in an apartment facing the Hungarian National Museum, while the Hadik-Barkóczy Palace stood on the street to the right of the museum. To save at least part of the Hadik-Barkóczy wealth, consisting of the various goods an aristocratic household could possess (e.g. silverware, sculptures, paintings, weapons, ceremonial clothing, etc.), Györffy entered into a pseudo-contract with Mrs Böröcz to purchase the book collection for a symbolic 10,000 forints. By that time, the so-called Economy Police had confiscated the large-format, most expensive-looking books from the collection, which were kept in the Palace's basement. It is only a scholarly conjecture that those volumes, after careful selection for the National Széchényi Library, were transported to Baja, to the Ady Endre Library.



Endre Hadik-Barkóczy, the rightful owner of the collection, never returned to Hungary, finding a new life in the United States. Thus, some years after his book-rescue mission, Györffy made arrangements with Hadik-Barkóczy, finally becoming the legal owner of the collection he already possessed. It is not known precisely how many books were originally rescued by Györffy, because, aside from his own apartment, he had placed volumes in different locations at his workplace and in the apartments of friends and acquaintances. According to Györffy's own estimate, the volumes altogether occupied fifty or more shelf metres. Later, probably in the 1960s, the books were transported to Györffy's house in Leányfalu (Pest County), which he partly built with the proceeds from the sale of two volumes. In 1965, he sold an important historical source to the Budapest Historical Museum: an almanac printed in Venice in 1504 with handwritten notes by a citizen of Buda. Later, in 1971, the source was published with scholarly notes.[2] Györffy allegedly sold an incunabulum to the Library of the Academy as well, but the volume itself has not been identified in the latest catalogue of incunabula.[3]

Adversity did not abandon the Hadik-Barkóczy collection even after it had come into Györffy's possession. After the death of Györffy, there was a robbery in his house, and many books were stolen. Fortunately, most of the stolen items were found and returned to Györffy's heirs by the police. The official evidence tags were still attached to the volumes even in 2022, when librarians began cataloguing them in the Library of the Academy. For the sake of historical accuracy, the evidence tags were left in the books during cataloguing.

The history of the Hadik-Barkóczy bequest begins with the Barkóczy family's genealogy at the start of the eighteenth century, but it is marked by many gaps and uncertainties. There are also many collateral kinsmen who contributed to the family collection throughout its almost two hundred and fifty years of history. Nevertheless, one must certainly begin the genealogy with the four most famous sons, Ferenc IV, József Sándor, Imre and János III, born of the marriage of Count Ferenc III Barkóczy to Júlia Zichy. Count Ferenc III Barkóczy de Szala et Tavarna was the Comes of Zemplén County between 1686 and 1706, but his original family estates were in Zala (later Vas) County. Out of his four sons, Imre Barkóczy (c. 1711–1764) was the Comes of Máramaros between 1751 and 1764. One volume with his ownership note from 1728 came to our Library (sign. RB-100.413). Ferenc IV Barkóczy (1710–1765) and József Sándor Barkóczy[4] both pursued ecclesiastical careers, the former becoming Archbishop in Esztergom (Komárom-Esztergom County) in 1761. He was a passionate book collector, whose library was analysed in a recent monograph.[5] It is uncertain whether any of the undated ownership notes by the name of Ferenc Barkóczy could have indicated the archbishop Ferenc, or whether they were from other members of the family with the same Christian name. It is certain, however, that there is no volume in our collection bearing either of the two types of his gilded *super ex libris* known from Ferenc Barkóczy's library in Esztergom. It is worth arguing, moreover, that those volumes containing an ownership stamp (probably in the form of a signet ring), engraved with the monogram C.F.B. with a nine-armed count's coronet above it, were the possessions of Ferenc V Barkóczy (c. 1759–183?).

2 Granasztói 2024, 148, n. 22.
3 Rozsondai – Rozsondai 2013.
4 His date of birth and death remain unknown to scholarship.
5 Dóbék 2021.



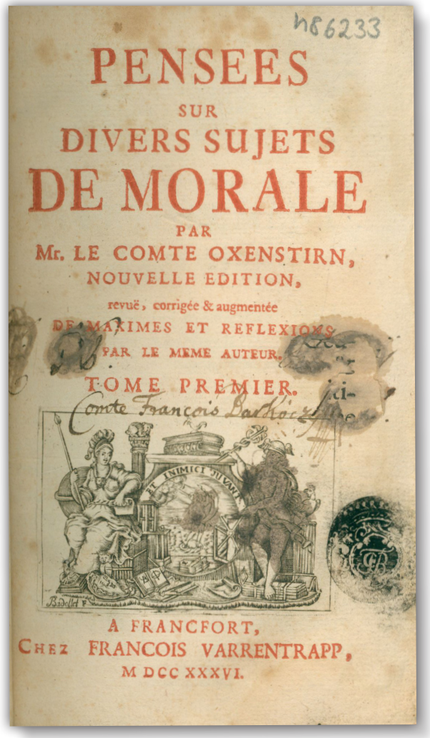
3. Portrait of Ferenc IV Barkóczy, Archbishop of Esztergom





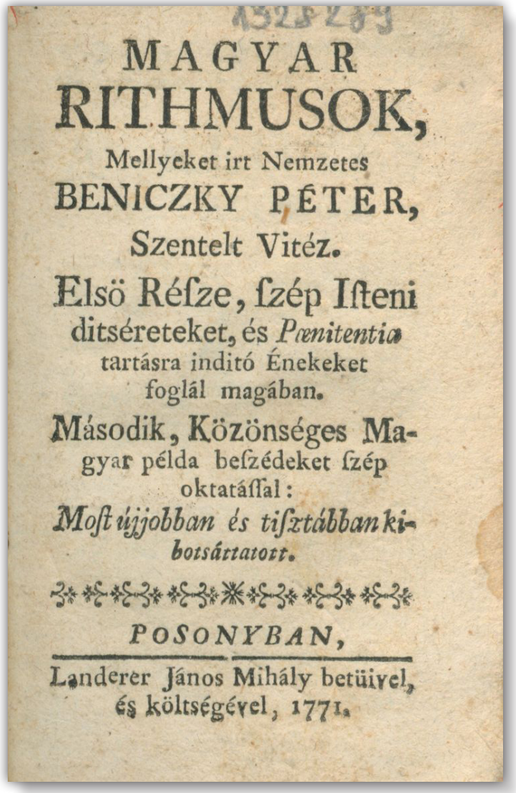
4–5. Two types of gilded super ex libris *of Ferenc IV Barkóczy as Bishop of Eger and as Archbishop of Esztergom, from the Cathedral Library of Esztergom*

The earliest volume, both signed as "Comte François Barkóczy" and bearing the stamp in question, was published in 1736 (sign. RB-100.426), and the same stamp was in use even in a book published in 1789 (sign. RB-100.228). Thus, the stamp could not have pertained to the archbishop Ferenc, who died in 1765 – except, of course, if the signet ring had been inherited as a family heirloom by various members of the family with the same monogram.



6. Ownership note and ex libris *stamp of (allegedly) Ferenc V Barkóczy (sign. RB-100.426)*

On the previous page:
2. The same ex libris *stamp on another title page (sign. RB-100.228)*



MAGYAR
RITHMUSOK,
Mellyeket irt Nemzetes
BENICZKY PÉTER,
Szentelt Vitéz.
Elsö Réfze, fzép Iſteni
ditséreteket, és *Pœnitentia*
tartásra inditó Énekeket
foglál magában.
Második, Közönséges Ma-
gyar példa beſzédeket ſzép
oktatáſſal:
Moſt ujjobban és tiſztábban ki-
botsárttatott.

POSONYBAN,
Landerer János Mihály betüivel,
és költségével, 1771.

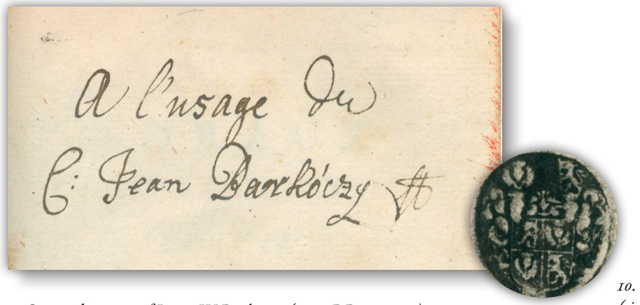
7. Title page of a volume on Hungarian poetry (sign. RB-100.222)

The fourth son of Ferenc III Barkóczy was János III Barkóczy (†1782), who became the Comes of Szabolcs County in 1759. He had two sons, the aforementioned Ferenc V Barkóczy and János IV Barkóczy.[6] The two brothers may have been quite close in age, as Ferenc V gifted one of his books on Hungarian poetry to his brother in 1776, after only two years of use, probably when he finished his own studies at the Piarist school in Vác (sign. RB-100.222). Almost nothing is known about János IV Barkóczy, but his ownership stamp is still visible in one of his signed books (sign. RB-100.424).



8. Donation note by Ferenc V Barkóczy to his brother, János IV Barkóczy (sign. RB-100.222)

6 His dates of birth and death remain unknown to scholarship.



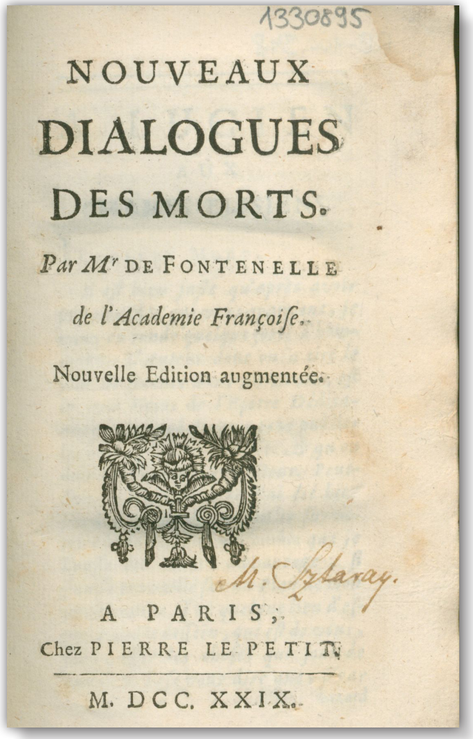
9. Ownership note of János IV Barkóczy (sign. RB-100.424)

10. Ownership stamp of János IV Barkóczy (sign. RB-100.424)



11. Coat of arms of the Barkóczy family engraved in stone

Of the two brothers, only Ferenc V Barkóczy married and had children with Leopoldina Sztáray (sign. RB-100.064). Some books probably came from the lady's family to the Barkóczy collection. Indeed, such names as Mihály Sztáray (1749–1798) (sign. RB-100.348) and, possibly, his two consecutive wives, a certain Countess Sztáray née Migazzy (sign. RB-100.060) and Eleonóra Eszterházy (b. 1758) appear among the owners (sign. RB-100.370).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NOUVEAUX

DIALOGUES

DES MORTS.

Par Mr DE FONTENELLE

de l'Academie Françoise.

Nouvelle Edition augmentée.

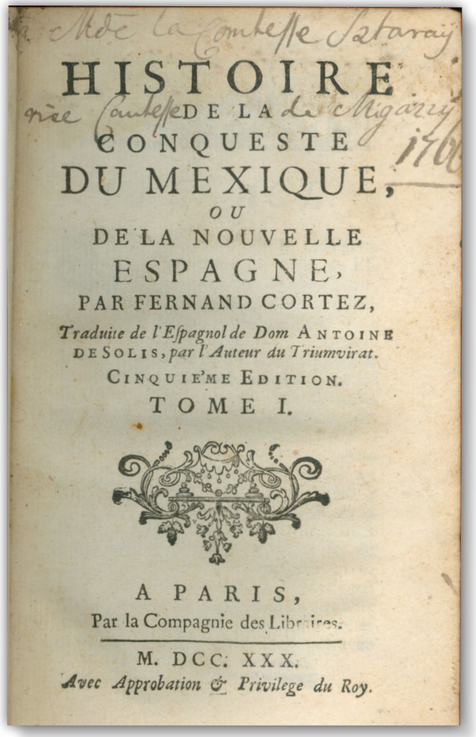
M. Sztaray.

A PARIS,

Chez PIERRE LE PETIT

M. DCC. XXIX.

12. Ownership note of Mihály Sztáray (sign. RB-100.348)


HISTOIRE

DE LA

CONQUESTE

DU MEXIQUE,

OU

DE LA NOUVELLE

ESPAGNE,

PAR FERNAND CORTEZ,

Traduite de l'Espagnol de Dom ANTOINE DE SOLIS, *par l'Auteur du Triumvirat.*

CINQUIE'ME EDITION.

TOME I.

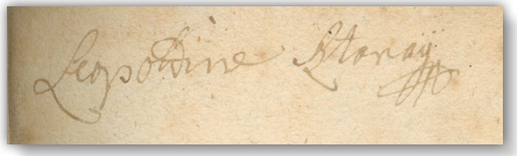
A PARIS,

Par la Compagnie des Libraires.

M. DCC. XXX.

Avec Approbation & Privilege du Roy.

13. Ownership note of Countess Sztáray née Migazzy (sign. RB-100.060)



14. Ownership note of Leopoldina Sztáray (sign. RB-100.064)


A AMSTERDAM,

15. Ownership note of Eleonóra Eszterházy (sign. RB-100.370)

Among the children of Ferenc V Barkóczy and Leopoldina Sztáray, János V Barkóczy (1798–1872) married Antónia Festetics (1808–1886). The Barkóczy-Festetics couple, however, did not have a son, so they asked the king to promote their only daughter, Ilona Barkóczy (1833–1887), to the rank of male heir. After the legal act of *praefectio*, her upbringing as a male heir certainly influenced Ilona's character. According to her contemporaries, Ilona Barkóczy was indeed an exceptional woman. She had a habit of smoking, was interested in alchemy, and even joined a Freemasons' lodge, as the first female member of such an organisation in Hungary. In 1859, Ilona's father transformed his estates into a *fidei-comissum* or entailment, in order that the first-born son of further generations of the Barkóczy family should inherit them. In 1860, Béla Hadik (1822–1885) married Ilona Barkóczy, and they had two sons together, Endre and Béla (1870–1912). The firstborn Endre (1862–1931) officially changed his family name to Hadik-Barkóczy in 1887 in order to inherit both his parents' wealth. As one can see, the Hadik-Barkóczy collection in fact did not include any elements from the Hadik family.



16. Portrait of Ilona Hadik-Barkóczy

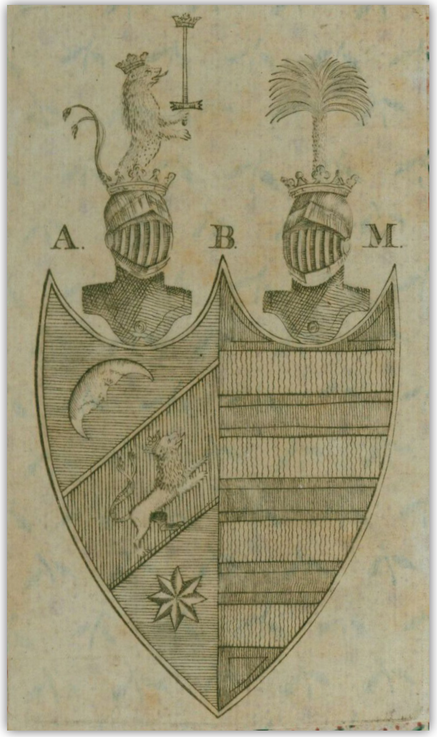


17. Photograph of Endre Hadik-Barkóczy

In the following generation, however, thanks to Endre Hadik-Barkóczy's marriage to Klára Zichy (1875–1946) in 1895, an unknown number of books coming from the Zichy bequest were merged into the Hadik-Barkóczy collection (e.g. sign. KA-104.534). In fact, the widowed mother of Klára Zichy, Jacqueline or Jakobina Péchy (1846–1915), left in her testament to her seven children the famous book collection of her late husband, Rezső Zichy (1833–1893). The origin of some volumes from the Zichy family estates in Abaújenyicke (today Haniska, Slovakia) is attested by the "Enyicke Library" stamp (e.g. sign. RA-100.002). In 1865, the Zichy library at Abaújenyicke was merged with the collection of the late Baron Jakab Meskó (†1838), then numbering approximately 5,000 volumes. Traces of that fusion are still detectable in the Hadik-Barkóczy collection in the Library of the Academy today. As many as six different male owners from the Meskó family can be identified by their books. Besides the above-mentioned Jakab Meskó (sign. RA-100.021), Vince Meskó (†1818, sign. RA-100.057), Antal Meskó (sign. RA-100.384), András Meskó (sign. RB-100.187), József Meskó (RB-100.264) and a Péter Meskó (sign. RB-100.427) appear. One book contains the family coat of arms, with the monogram A. B. M. on an *ex libris*. (sign. RA-100.185).



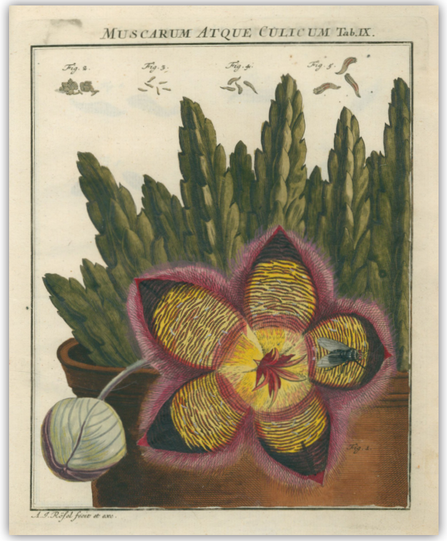
18. Ownership stamp of the Zichy family library from Abaújenyicke (sign. RA-100.002)



19. Meskó family coat of arms (sign. RA-100.185)

It seems that some volumes coming from the Zichy family may have reached the Hadik-Barkóczy collection thanks to the marriage of Endre Hadik-Barkóczy's younger brother, Béla Hadik, to Stefánia Pallavicini (1880–1950) (e.g. sign. KA-104.581). This connection is further complicated by the fact that Béla's daughter, Mária Eduardine Hadik (1912–1980), married György Zichy (1900–1967). After the Second World War, the Zichy collection was also confiscated and eventually transported to the Ady Endre Library in Baja; thus, it is difficult to separate the volumes once owned by different generations of the Zichy clan.

Endre Hadik-Barkóczy and Klára Zichy had a daughter, Eleonóra (1895–1964) and a son, Endre junior, the latter being the last male heir of the family born in Hungary. After its relative prosperity in the previous two centuries, the latter generations of the Hadik-Barkóczy family had to face hardships to an extreme degree. First, due to the peace treaties that ended the First World War, approximately eighty-five per cent of the Hadik-Barkóczy entailment became part of Czechoslovakia.[7] Second, by the end of the Second World War, most mementoes of the family's existence also disappeared. In fact, all of their castles in Varannó, Tavarna, and Páloc (today Vranov nad Topľou, Tovarné, Pavlovce nad Uhom, Slovakia) outside the borders, and Jánk in Hungary, were destroyed to the ground. At the same time, only their house in Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) and their palace in Budapest, on Múzeum Street survived the war. In the interwar period, Endre I Hadik-Barkóczy abandoned Varannó Castle and transported the books held there to Múzeum Street in Budapest in an unsystematic manner. Thus, many book series became incomplete. For instance, György Györffy had already noticed that of the forty-two volumes of György Fejér's *Codex diplomaticus*, only ten were moved to Budapest.



*20. Depiction of a carrion flower (*Stapelia*) (sign. RA-100.384, vol. IV.)*



21. Pressed flower of a similar carrion flower from the Teleki collection (sign. Növt.Qu.14)

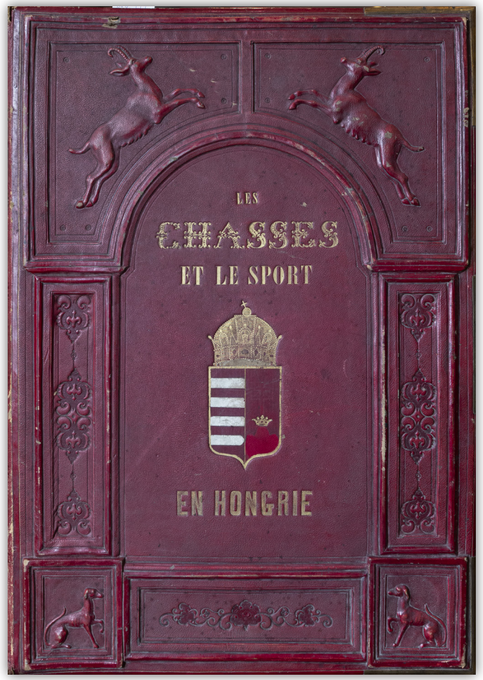
7 As noted above, the Kingdom of Hungary lost approximately seventy-five per cent of its territories as a result of the peace treaties.

Probably in the same period, Count Endre I Hadik-Barkóczy began using an ownership stamp, indicating his Budapest address (e.g. sign. RA-100.052). Some elements of the collection may have been lost during the Second World War, when Endre II Hadik-Barkóczy was already the head of the family. In 1944, he packed the family's wealth from the estates in Upper Hungary into a railway wagon, but the train never arrived in Budapest. In sum, the collection suffered several losses even before its final blows in 1948, when the Economic Police and, later, the State Security Department began confiscating the Hadik-Barkóczy bequest from its palace on Múzeum Street.



22. Ownership stamp of Endre I Hadik-Barkóczy indicating his Múzeum Street address (sign. RA-100.052)

According to the data available to us, 5,871 volumes were transported to Baja in 1948. However, nowadays only 2,000–4,000 books are traceable as parts of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection there. The most valuable pre-1850 prints were catalogued electronically as well, but due to repeated malfunctions in the MOKKA-R catalogue in the last five years, they are invisible to the public. In autumn 2023, after we had finished cataloguing the Györffy inheritance portion of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection, the Ady Endre Library offered the Academy additional books that had been stored at a former military base in poor conditions. In the end, we accepted approximately two hundred large-format and one thousand smaller volumes, which were presumably part of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection. As it turned out during cataloguing, however, some of those books once belonged not to the Hadik-Barkóczy collection but to the Zichy family collection. In 1949, for the modest sum of 2,500 forints for 6,000 volumes, the above-mentioned Count György Zichy, the husband of Mária Eduardine Hadik, sold his family collection to the Ady Endre Library in Baja. The two collections were probably mixed together as early as the late 1940s. There is, for instance, a lavishly decorated album, sixty-four centimetres high, containing twenty-five colour lithographs, bound in red leather with copper edge protectors, which may have been among the large-format volumes taken from the Hadik-Barkóczy Palace on Múzeum Street. Count Hadik-Barkóczy Sr. was a passionate collector of art and served for years as President of the Society of Applied Arts. Both the inside and the outside of the French promotional album intended to popularise Hungary among visitors seeking sporting opportunities transform the book into a work of art (*Les chasses et le sport en Hongrie*, sign. 358.499). However, the volume, published in 1857, may already have belonged to the Zichy collection before it was purchased by the Ady Endre Library and finally transferred to the Library of the Academy.



23. Bookbinding of the volume Les chasses et le sport en Hongrie *(sign. 358.499)*





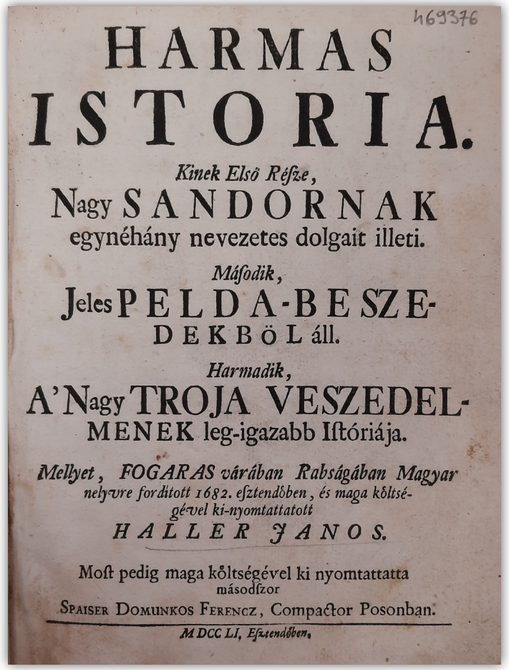


24–26. Depictions of hunting for wolves and bears, and fishing on the river Tisza, excerpts from the volume (sign. 358.499)



27. The mounted figure of Count István Széchenyi with the Chain Bridge in the background, excerpt from the volume (sign. 358.499)

What was, one may ask, the significance of purchasing the Hadik-Barkóczy collection? The most obvious answer to this question is that the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as a public institution, is obligated to safeguard as many elements of Hungarian and shared human cultural heritage as possible. Despite its vicissitudes, the Györffy inheritance, part of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection, still contained some treasures. For instance, it included thirty-one sixteenth-century publications in twenty-nine volumes, most of which are new acquisitions for the Library. Some German-type Renaissance bindings featuring figures of Lucretia, Justitia, Fortuna and Judith make those volumes even more precious (e.g. signs. 527.612, 527.614, 527.620). Other books serve as mementoes of otherwise unknown people. For instance, in 1760, a person called György Nagy, a shoemaker from Pest, bought a copy of the 1751 edition of János Haller's popular print on the life and deeds of Alexander the Great, entitled Triple History (*Hármas Istoria*, sign. RA-100.244). Two years later, Nagy drew a flower under the note announcing the birth of his son, Jánoska, which occurred on 14 June 1762, between 2 and 3 p.m., the baby thus having the double zodiacal sign of Gemini. Finally, treasures can hide anywhere: during the cataloguing of the Hadik-Barkóczy collection, a previously unknown edition of István Gyöngyösi's Deceptive Cupid (*Csalárd Cupido*) emerged from a colligate volume (sign. RB-100.345 Koll/2). The undated print must have been published between 1728 and 1737 in Buda, based on the known activity of its printer, János György Nottenstein (†1737).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HARMAS
ISTORIA.

Kinek Első Része,
Nagy SANDORNAK
egynéhány nevezetes dolgait illeti.

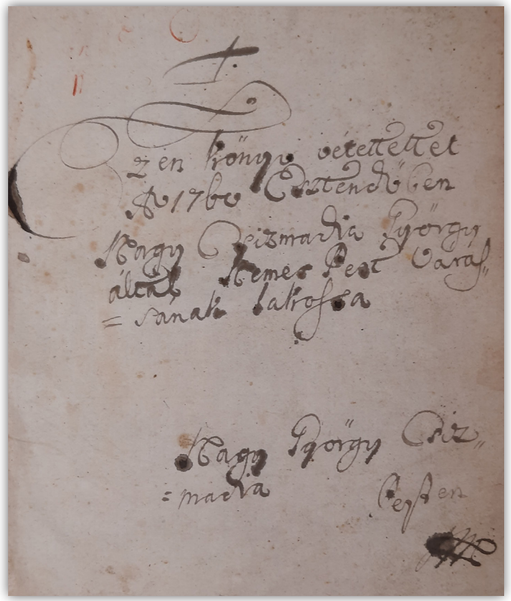
Második,
Jeles PELDA-BESZE-
DEKBÖL áll.

Harmadik,
A' Nagy TROJA VESZEDEL-
MENEK leg-igazabb Istóriája.

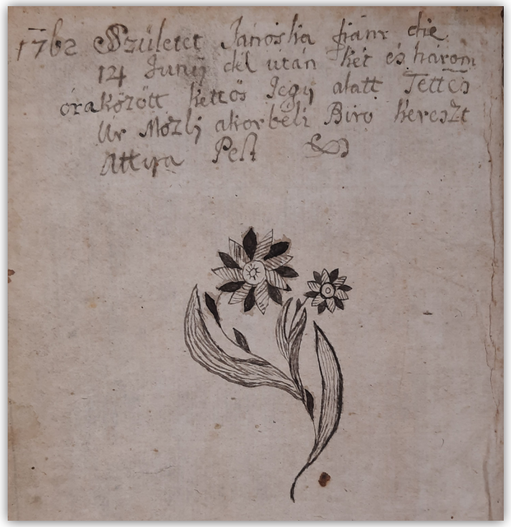
Mellyet, FOGARAS várában Rabságában Magyar nelvre forditott 1682. esztendőben, és maga költségével ki-nyomtattatott
HALLER JANOS.

Most pedig maga költségével ki nyomtattatta
másodszor
Spaiser Domunkos Ferencz, Compactor Posonban.
M DCC LI, Esztendőben.

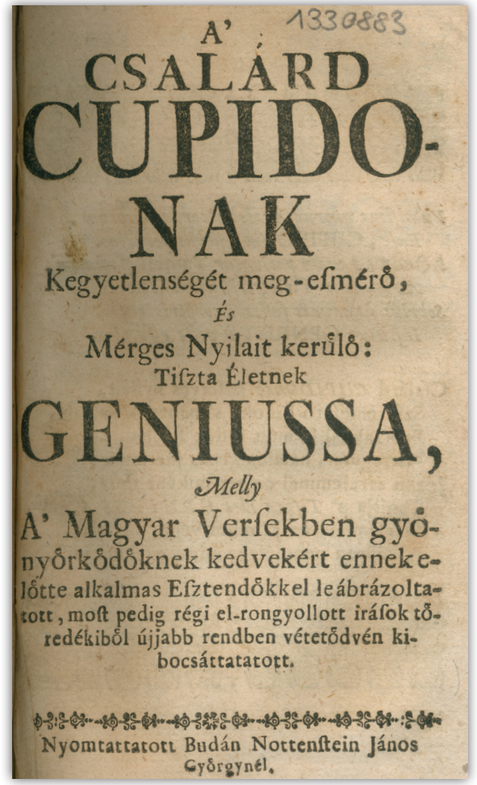
*28. Title page of Triple History (*Hármas Istoria*) (sign. RA-100.244)*



29. Ownership note of the shoemaker György Nagy, 1760 (sign. RA-100.244)



*30. Birth note of a child in Triple History (*Hármas Istoria*) (sign. RA-100.244)*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A'
CSALÁRD
CUPIDO-
NAK
Kegyetlenségét meg-esmérő,
És
Mérges Nyilait kerülő:
Tiszta Életnek
GENIUSSA,
Melly
A' Magyar Versekben gyönyörködőknek kedvekért ennek előtte alkalmas Esztendőkkel le-ábrázoltatott, most pedig régi el-rongyollott irások tőredékiből újjabb rendben vétetődvén kibocsáttatatott.

Nyomtattatott Budán Nottenstein János
Györgynél.

*31. Title page of Deceptive Cupid (*Csalárd Cupido*) (sign. RB-100.345 Koll/2)*

Epilogue

In May 2025, when I first read the unedited manuscript of the Hungarian version of the Library's history, I was struck by its scale. The seven chapters outlining its principal phases, defined by milestones in the history of Hungary, and characterised by the personalities of the institution's leaders, amounted to nearly six hundred thousand keystrokes, approximately fifteen authors' sheets. Almost the same number of keystrokes was devoted to detailed accounts of the many donations and personal collections that had arrived at the Academy during its two hundred years of existence. Twenty-eight active or retired colleagues contributed to the manuscript, depicting parts of the Library's history as subject specialists or as eyewitnesses who had themselves lived through the events they described. I found the material fascinating even in its raw form, because of the deeply human dimensions of the history of a national institution.

As a representative of the Hungarian Young Academy (*Fiatal Kutatók Akadémiája*), of which I am a founding member, I have participated in the work of the committee responsible for celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the Academy and its Library. I therefore felt a personal responsibility for the success of these celebrations and offered my assistance to the Library's leadership. They accepted and set clear parameters: "a maximum volume of 120–130 pages accompanied by abundant illustrations", which corresponds to the length of approximately seven authors' sheets. I thus undertook the task of selecting and restructuring the work of my twenty-eight colleagues, shaping thematic narratives from the vast material, often simplifying complex details and regrettably omitting many names.

I must also confess that I have excluded numerous technical developments introduced in the Library since the 1960s, for various reasons. The main reason is that many such innovations have become widespread in the modern history of librarianship, from the second half of the twentieth century to the 2010s, as professional librarians worldwide have witnessed shifts from punched-card data processing to cloud-based integrated library systems. Instead, I have highlighted only those technical solutions and databases, namely the REAL digital collections, the EISZ services and the MTMT database, that are particularly characteristic of the Hungarian scholarly environment and that can be regarded as continuations of the best practices of the Library's traditions.

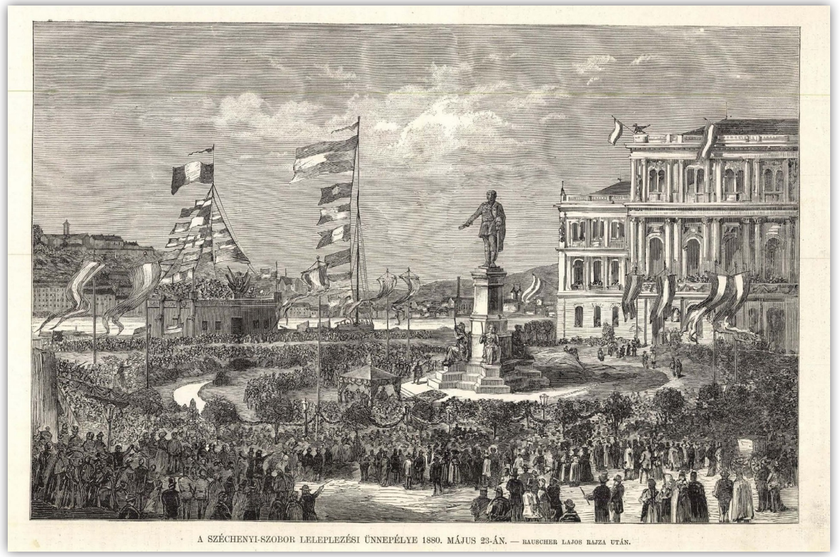
After having read the forty-three shorter and longer chapters of the Library's history, available to me in May 2025, I found myself recalling one of my favourite Latin sentences, the paraphrase of a quote from the ancient Roman comedy, The Self-Tormenter (*Heautontimorumenos*), by Publius Terentius Afer: *Homo sum, nil humani a me alienum esse puto*. 'I am (only) human, nothing human do I consider alien to me.' My colleagues depicted precisely this: the many human faces behind the façade of an institution that had stood proudly in its own Palace at the feet of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge since 1865. These faces are still remembered today for their magnanimous deeds and, at times, also for frailty and error. They were people who dreamt big and sometimes fell steeply, who were believers and sceptics, collectors, travellers, explorers, linguists and engineers; individuals who chose to become Hungarians, curious spirits, and above all, passionate ones. I sought to highlight those dimensions of their lives that are both universally human and specific to the time and place in which they lived, thereby making the narrative interesting even to a reader unfamiliar with the intricacies of Hungarian history while remaining faithful to the complexity of the past.

Let us begin with Count István Széchenyi. He offered a substantial sum to establish the Hungarian Learned Society in 1825. A great act of love for the nation – so remembers the grateful posterity. Also an act of love for a woman, as Széchenyi himself once confessed. Thanks to his carefully staged appearance in the Parliament, the young Count Széchenyi once again drew

the attention of Countess Crescence Seilern (1799–1875), who, eventually became his wife in 1836. Despite her seven previous pregnancies and her age, Countess Crescence Seilern bore three children to her second husband, of whom the two boys lived well into their eighties.



1. Count István Széchenyi with his wife, Countess Crescence Seilern wearing eighteenth-century Hungarian-style clothes, illustration by Domokos Perlasca, published in the magazine Honderű, *1843*



2. Inauguration ceremony of the statue of Count István Széchenyi in front of the Academy, 23 May 1880, illustration from the newspaper Vasárnapi Újság

Let us turn, next, to Count József IV Teleki. He had a mission entrusted to him by his father: to provide a collection for the future Learned Society and, through it, for the nation. The depth of his dedication to the Academy and its Library is perhaps best conveyed by the above-quoted words of his nephew, Sándor Teleki. Sándor Teleki declared that he could not imagine doing anything other than humbly trust the judgment of those members of the Academy concerning the Library, whom József Teleki himself trusted before him. The uncle and the nephew may not have placed unreserved confidence in individuals, but they indeed trusted the institution as a whole.



3. Marble bust of József Teleki by István Ferenczy in the Entrance Hall of the Library

Let us turn, third, to János Arany. As a young man in his late teens, he briefly abandoned his studies to join a travelling theatrical troupe, leaving behind the secure affection of his parents. When he returned home, he found his father blind and his mother dying. The experience marked him deeply. In his adulthood, Arany never forgot the weight of responsibility. It became his duty to mourn his friend Sándor Petőfi, whom he could never bury either physically or, perhaps, psychologically. It became his duty to serve the Academy. And so he did: faithfully and diligently as Secretary General of the Academy, less often for the better and in health, and more often for the worse and in illness.



4. Statue of János Arany at the Hungarian National Museum (1893) by Alajos Stróbl, postcard reproduction from the collection of László Szabados



5. Full view of the statue of Arany after its 2018 restoration. The additional figures of the composition are the fictional characters of Arany's Toldi*-trilogy, Piroska Rozgonyi and Miklós Toldi himself*

Love, mission and duty are all weighty words for weighty deeds. Yet, the Academy also witnessed pettiness and frailty. For instance, what happened to Árpád Hellebrant and Aranka Gyulai within the walls of the Palace would fill the tabloids today. For entirely different reasons and mentioned only by monogram in accordance with the present data-protection standards, the case of Flóris Holik would likewise attract public curiosity today as it did almost a century ago.

The wars and political changes at home and abroad also left their mark on the Library. It is difficult to imagine, eighty years on, the courage of the librarians, men and women alike, who prepared the treasures of the collection for safekeeping during the Second World War. One can only speculate about the personal hardship some of them endured during the siege of Budapest.

Building and rebuilding the collection, and the recurring absence of a purpose-built library building form a leitmotif throughout this volume.

Although there are some often-mentioned personalities and recurring themes, the word most frequently encountered in these pages is undoubtedly 'service'. At the close of this volume, it is therefore my duty to thank the personnel of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for theirs. I am particularly grateful to those colleagues who wrote and edited the Hungarian chapters on which the present work is based. They afforded me the privilege of learning from them and of presenting in English the most moving, troubling, fascinating and, at any rate, deeply human dimensions of the institution's two hundred years of history.

Therefore, thank you, Andrea Molnár, for putting together the main chapters on the defining eras of the Library.

Thank you, Diana Hay, for knowing even the smallest details about the Academy and its Palace.

Thank you, Béla Mázi, András Horuczi, Béla Novák, and Bernát Zsidi, for not skipping the best anecdotes and the occasionally disturbing details in your chapters.

Thank you, passionate *cultores* of rare languages and curators of the Oriental Collection, for your knowledge: Ágnes Kelecsényi, Kinga Dévényi, Judit Jablonkay, Anna Stumpf, Nóra Dávid, Gergely Orosz, Roland Ferenczi and Máté Rottár. And to Máté Rottár in particular, for responding to all my emails and answering all my requests.

Thank you, Marianne Rozsondai, for a lifetime of service to old books, for the catalogue of incunabula, and for the magnanimous gift you gave, together with your husband, Béla, on the occasion of the two-hundredth birthday of the Library.

Thank you, Kinga Körmendy, for finding answers to great mysteries even in the smallest fragments of parchment.

Thank you, Nikolett Lisztes, for calling my attention to the most interesting object of the Széchenyi bequest, the painting of the Darjeeling tomb, which has become a constant presence in this book.

Thank you, Antal Babus, for the history of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, for the Vörösmarty memorabilia, and most of all, for the lesson: "Librarians today bear no responsibility for their predecessors' errors; their duty is to confront every past shortcoming with honesty, transparency and professional integrity." I could not agree more.

Thank you, Ágnes Nagy, for organising a visit to the Ady Endre Library in Baja, after we had finished cataloguing the Hadik-Barkóczy bequest. Visiting the Ady Library, a memento of Hungary's eventful history, once a synagogue, now a library, once a place of worship, now a place of culture, was, for me, a memorable day in our shared history.

Thank you, Ádám Szabó and Szabolcs Hursán, for being pioneers in rediscovering the treasures of the Academy's two founding collections.

Thank you, Pál Tömöry, for the detailed analysis of the Vigyázó bequest.

Thank you, Rita Haffner, for the anecdote about introducing electronic cataloguing at the Library, which captures the spirit of democracy in the changing environment of 1990s Hungary.

Thank you, Mónika Mezey, for appreciating the smallest details you find in old books – who else would be able to celebrate a recipe for ink made from gallnuts?

Thank you, Andrea Gyuricza, for safeguarding Széchenyi's spirit in words and in deeds.

Thank you, Gábor Tóth, for telling me about "Ritoókné's secret box", an important handwritten source about the Library's old book collection, and for calling my attention to the erotica collection in the Vigyázó bequest. I did not write down everything I heard from you, though.

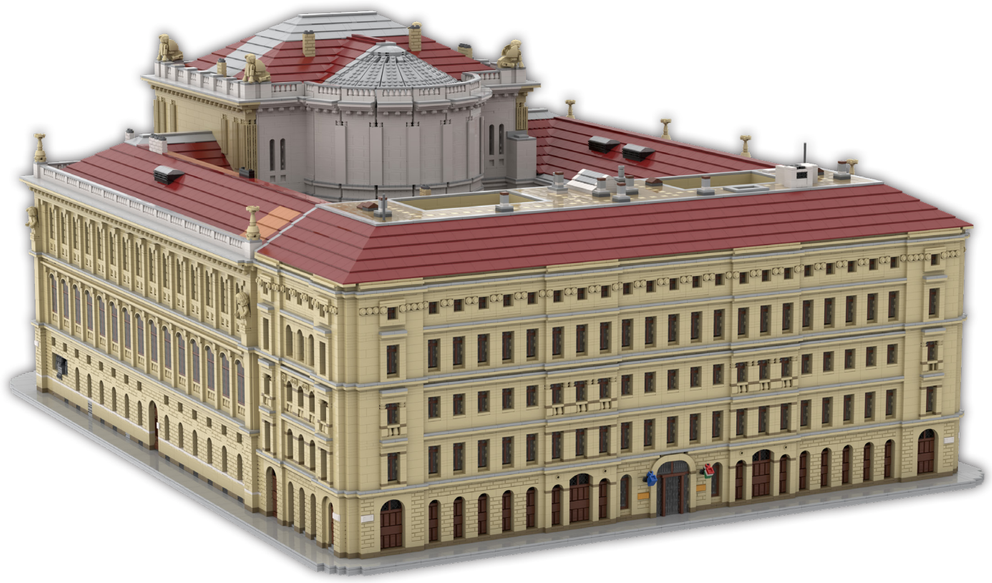
Thank you, Mónika Sziklay Cs., for showing me the details of a collection whose importance will become clearer with the coming generations.

Thank you, Edit Krähling, for caring about a couple separated by death for seventy years, yet whose memories are forever united in our Library thanks to your work.

Thank you, András Holl, for developing Hungary's national bibliographic database.

Thank you, Dóra Kalydy, for believing in community and cooperation, inside and outside the profession of librarianship.
Thank you, István Monok, for trusting me with the task of being the editor of this volume.
Thank you, Andrea Simon, for reading my contribution to this volume, where I appear as one of the twenty-nine authors of this volume.
Thank you, Viktória Vas, for giving this book shape.
And, most of all, thank you, Erika Bilicsi, Zsanett Kun and Andrea Tankó for preparing and making available the illustrations for this volume. I would also like to thank Bálint Ugry, Head of the Art Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*MTA Művészeti Gyűjtemény*), for the reproductions of several pieces of art.
This volume is the achievement of you all. As for the mistakes, I am only human; no mistake is alien to me.
Finally, thank you, Gentle Reader, for having followed two hundred years of the history of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to this point. We continue working for its growth, in deeds and in anecdotes.





6. Model of the Palace of the Academy and the "Academic Apartment House" made from LEGO® bricks. The model, designed by LEGO® Certified Professional Balázs Dóczy (b. 1976) at the initiative of the Hungarian Young Academy, was built in April 2026 and regularly rebuilt on various occasions in the same year by secondary school students on the third floor of the Palace of the Academy. This modern object, eventually placed in the exhibition area under the main staircase of the Library, commemorates the efforts of every donor who contributed to the Palace of the Academy in the 1860s, and every person, who serves the Academy today

Map of Hungary with Its Historical and Post-Trianon Borders
prepared by Béla Nagy



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Illustrations

Indication of the collections

MTA KIK Törzsgyűjtemény = Core Collection. The items pertaining to the Core Collection do not have a separate indication. E.g. MTA KIK Isk.O.763
MTA KIK Kézirattár és Régi Könyvek Gyűjteménye, MTA KIK KRKGy = Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books. E.g. MTA KIK KRKGy Tárgyak 4.
MTA KIK Keleti Gyűjtemény, MTA KIK KGy = Oriental Collection. E. g. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc 1.
MTA Levéltár, Akadémiai Levéltár (AL), Akadémiai Levéltár Fényképtár (AL Fényképtár) = Archives of the Academy. E.g. AL Fényképtár 1397.
MTA Művészeti Gyűjtemény, MTA MGy = MTA Art Collection. E.g. MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 95.

Inside of the Upper and Lower covers

Timeline of the Library's Leaders, illustration by Zsanett Kun.

On the recto of the half-title page

The Coat of Arms of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, painted by Johann Nepomuk Ender, 1834, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 95.

Introductory Thoughts

View of the Arany János Street from a window on the Library's ground floor, photograph by Andrea Tankó.

Prologue

1. Budapest covered in snow, with a view of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, photographed by János Gehring, January 2026.
2. View of the Library from Arany János Street.
3. Portrait of Count József IV Teleki, painted by Miklós Barabás in 1836, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 2.
4. Marble plaque commemorating the Teleki Offer, made by János Marschalkó (1818–1877), MTA KIK, without signature.
5. Portrait of János Arany, painted by Miklós Barabás, 1884, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 13.
6. Manuscript of János Arany's *Toldi* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 503).

A Library with Three Birthdays

1. Portrait of Count István Széchenyi, painted by Friedrich von Amerling, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 97.
2. Count Széchenyi's offer at the Parliament, lithograph by Vinzenz Katzler (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 294/24).
3. Portrait of Baron Ábrahám Vay, lithograph by Josef Kriehuber, 1847. Albertina, Vienna, source: Wikimedia Commons.
4. Portrait of Count György Andrássy, lithograph by Franz Eybl, 1842. Albertina, Vienna, source: Wikimedia Commons.
5. Portrait of Count György Károlyi, lithograph by Franz Eybl, 1842. Albertina, Vienna, source: Wikimedia Commons.
6. The Teleki donation from the Parliament's Acts: title page (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 526.739).
7. The Teleki donation from the Parliament's Acts: excerpt (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 526.739).
8. Ferenc Schams' letter to the Hungarian Learned Society (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 1833/47).
9. Opening illustration from Ferenc Schams' History of the City of Buda, showing a pontoon bridge, the predecessor of the present-day Széchenyi Chain Bridge (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 520.083).
10. Ownership stamp of the Library (MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
11. Image of the imprint of the ownership stamp of the Library.

The Library's Lodgings

1. Carl Vasquez, Nákó House, 1837. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, no. 28234.3.
2. The Trattner-Károlyi House in the early 1900s (sign. MTA KIK microfilm D 4948).
3. Joseph Fuchsthaller, Szervita Square. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, no. 14.777 M 762.

4. Plan of the Academy's new Palace by Friedrich August Stüler (1800–1865), 1862, excerpt from the peridocal *Vasárnapi Újság* (sign. MTA KIK RKGy 527/6).
5. The construction of the Academy's Palace near 1864. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, Photograph Collection inv. no. 32.786.
6. Invitation to the inauguration of the Palace (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 817/1865).
7. Celebrating crowds inside the Academy during the inauguration ceremony, excerpt from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1865. no. 50., p. 632.
8. Rooms of the Library c. 1900 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10754).
9. Elderly tenants in the "Academic Apartment House" in the 1980s (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11217).
10. The "Academic Apartment House" before its transformation, from the side overlooking the Danube (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11219).
11. The "Academic Apartment House" after its transformation, from the side overlooking the Danube (sign. Ms 11219).
12. Entrance Hall of the new Library building, 1988 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11219).
13. Entrance Hall of the Library, today, photograph by Andrea Tankó.
14. The timeline of the Library's history in the Entrance Hall, today, photograph by Andrea Tankó.

Eighteen Leaders in Two Hundred Years

1. The lapel pin of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and that of the Library, photograph by Mónika Mezey.
2. Timeline of the Library's Leaders, illustration by Zsanett Kun.
3. Photograph of Ferenc Toldy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 4825/494).
4. Portrait of Pál Hunfalvy, painted by Róbert Wellmann, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 42.
5. Portrait of Róbert Fröhlich from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1895. no. 36., p. 585.
6. Portrait of Ágost Heller, painted by Andor Boruth, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 358.
7. Excerpt of the accession register, 1846 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Könyvtári iratok K 857).
8. Excerpt of the accession register, 1856 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Könyvtári iratok K 857).
9. Portrait of Kálmán Szily, painted by Géza Biczó, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 30.
10. Portrait of Zoltán Ferenczi (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 5071/7).
11. Sepulchre of Zoltán Ferenczi (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 4405/88).
12. Bill of delivery of the Royal Standard typewriters (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Könyvtári iratok K 810: 1925/51/1).
13. Letter from Jenő Balogh, Secretary General of the Academy, to Chief Librarian Ferenczi, concerning the donation of the typewriters to the Library (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Könyvtári iratok K 810: 1925/51/2).
14. Portrait of József Szinnyei Jr. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 5073/43).
15. Portrait of János Melich (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 5075/186).
16. Signatures of Jolán Fludorovits, Erzsébet Hartay, Erzsébet Rudas, Laura Cs. Tóth, Mrs Imre Wodetzky and other librarians on a document from 1950 (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 7304/III).
17. Strongbox from the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today.
18. Lid of the strongbox from the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today.
19. The basement of the Palace of the Academy, where several manuscript treasures were walled in for safekeeping during the Second World War, no. 1., photograph by Andrea Tankó.
20. The basement of the Palace of the Academy, where several manuscript treasures were walled in for safekeeping during the Second World War, no. 2., photograph by Andrea Tankó.
21. The basement of the Palace of the Academy, where several manuscript treasures were walled in for safekeeping during the Second World War, no. 3., photograph by Andrea Tankó.
22. War damage in the Palace of the Academy, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6298/184).
23. War damage in the Palace of the Academy, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6298/184).
24. War damage in the Palace of the Academy, photograph no. 3. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10295/2).
25. War damage in the Palace of the Academy, photograph no. 4. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10295/2).
26. War damage in the Palace of the Academy, photograph no. 5. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10295/2).
27. The Chain Bridge in ruins, source: Fortepan no. 175162.
28. The Kossuth Lajos Street (Budapest's 5th District) in ruins in 1945, source: Fortepan no. 217777.
29. Title page of a list of "fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-democratic books" (sign. MTA KIK 152.487).
30. Draft handover document concerning prohibited books, written in Hungarian and Russian by János Melich (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 829 177/1946).
31. Excerpt from the newspaper *Népszava*, 24 June 1948, concerning the "Cultural Scandal at the Academy".
32. Portrait of Dezső Keresztury, source: Fortepan no. 2010.
33. Chief Librarian Keresztury hosting his colleagues at his summer house, 9 June 1949 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/134).

34. Building of the Eötvös Collegium on Ménesi Street, today, source: Wikimedia Commons.
35. Photograph of Baron József Eötvös, President of the Academy.
36. Clock of mahogany wood, with mechanisms by Peter Paul Huber, Buda, c. 1800. MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 258.
37. Photograph of István Nyireő.
38. Reading Room of the Oriental Collection, designed by István Nyireő in the 1950s (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075/283).
39. Catalogue of the Soviet Hungarian exhibition from 1949 (sign. Ms MTA KIK KRKGy 4514/182).
40. Advertisement announcing the extended opening hours of the Library (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/6).
41. Soviet Hungarian exhibition, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4514/182).
42. Soviet Hungarian exhibition, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4514/182).
43. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Catalogue Room (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
44. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Main Reading Room (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
45. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Reading Room of Periodicals, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
46. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Reading Room of Periodicals, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
47. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Storage of Periodicals on the second floor, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
48. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Storage of Periodicals on the second floor, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
49. The spaces of the Library in the 1950s, Microfilm Reading Room (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075).
50. Certificate of appreciation for the leadership years of Dezső Keresztury from his colleagues (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 7304/III).
51. Photograph of Tibor Scher.
52. Photograph of Gyula Haraszthy.
53. Photograph of Máté Kovács.
54. László Mátrai at the Academy (sign. MTA KIK microfilm D 7679).
55. Photograph of György Rózsa, 1995.
56. *Bulletin on the International Literature of the Planning, Administration and Organization of Scientific Research: a periodical publication of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (sign. 312.396/1).
57. The counter of the new reference service and lending in the Main Reading Room, 1961.
58. Library of the Institute of History (sign. AL 2938).
59. Library of Institute of Animal Healthcare (sign. AL 2955).
60. Library of Institute of Nuclear Research (sign. AL without signature).
61. Photograph of István Rejtő.
62. Off-site storage facilities in Törökbálint, 1983.
63. Model of the planned Library building, 1966.
64. The Biological Research Centre in Szeged (*Szegedi Biológiai Központ*), 1973 (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár 3756).
65. Façade of the "Academic Apartment House" from the Arany János Street (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11219).
66. Façade of the "Academic Apartment House" from the Danube (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11219).
67. Announcing the start of the transformation of the "Academic Apartment House" (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 11218).
68. Librarians of the Scientific Information Services working in a semi-transformed flat, with the original wallpaper still on the walls (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5094/13).
69. Architect Katalin Varjas coordinating the transformation process from one of the flats overlooking the Danube (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5097/22).
70. The "Academic Apartment House" during its transformation from the side overlooking the Danube, October 1986 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5979).
71. The transformation of the rooftop, January 1986 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5979)
72. The "Academic Apartment House" as an empty shell of a building, November 1986 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5975).
73. The "Academic Apartment House" with the new floors of the Library (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 11219).
74. The inner courtyard of the "Academic Apartment House" from the entrance on Arany János Street (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 11219).
75. The new Entrance Hall of the Library after the transformation, November 1988 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 11219).
76. The revolving door of the Library, 1988, later transformed into a safety-glass door in the 1990s (sign. MTA KIK microfilm C 3085).
77. Inauguration of the new Library building, 3 November 1988, photograph no. 1. Leadership of the Academy.
78. Inauguration of the new Library building, 3 November 1988, photograph no. 2. Librarians.
79. The Vasarely Room on the ground floor of the Library, named after the carpet donated to the Library by the artist Victor Vasarely, 1988.
80. The Vasarely carpet in the so-called Small Conference Room on the Library's second floor, today.
81. The reference service in the Main Reading Room in the 1960s (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár 5043/21).
82. Photograph of Pál Engel.

83. Photograph of Gábor Náray-Szabó (MTA KIK Szakinf. Coraid DVD).
84. Photograph of Mrs Károly Domsa (MTA KIK Szakinf. Coraid DVD).
85. Commemorative plaque for the one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the Teleki foundation in Szirák, 2001 (sign. AL without signature).
86. Commemorative ceremony in Szirák led by Mrs Károly Domsa, 2001 (sign. AL without signature).
87. Retirement party of Mrs Károly Domsa, 2006 (MTA KIK Szakinf. Coraid DVD).
88. Photograph of Ágnes Téglási at her retirement party, December 2015.
89. Representatives of the consortial members of the EISZ national research network at the Library, 9 June 2022.
90. Focus on Open Science conference at the Academy, 21 November 2024; from left to right: Tiberius Ignat, Eva Mendez, Julien Roche, Szilvia Maróthy.
91. Zoltán Kodály's MTMT profile, excerpt.
92. Photograph of István Monok.
93. András Holl at the LIBER 2023 conference.
94. István Monok and Dóra Kalydy at the LIBER 2023 conference.
95. Participants at the LIBER 2023 conference, photograph no. 1.
96. Participants at the LIBER 2023 conference, photograph no. 2.
97. The Entrance Hall of the Library, photograph no. 1.
98. The Entrance Hall of the Library, photograph no. 2.
99. The Staircase of the Library.
100. The Main Reading Room.
101. The Small Assembly Room.
102. The Conference Room.
103. Office 304 with bookshelves.
104. The Library's community visiting the Teleki Castle in Szirák, 16 March 2026, photograph by József Áts.
105. The Library in the late 1980s (sign. MTA KIK C 3078/2).
106. View of the Danube from the Conference Room.
107. The Library's logo on the platform in the Conference Room.

Life and Death inside the Palace

1. Photograph of József Budenz (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10899/27).
2. Photograph of Emil Dessewffy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5967/205).
3. Lithograph of Sándor Petőfi, source: Wikimedia Commons.
4. The manuscript of *The Bards of Wales*, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/13).
5. The manuscript of *The Bards of Wales*, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/13).
6. Armchair, stove and portrait of János Arany at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books in the room that once pertained to the Secretary General's service flat.
7. Photograph of Julianna Ercsey, source: Wikimedia Commons.
8. The fifty-year-old János Arany, 1867 (MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
9. Portrait of László Arany, painted by Ede Balló, MTA KIK, inv. no. Kt 17.
10. Photograph of Gizella Szalay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2/11a).
11. Photograph of Géza Voinovich, Hungarian National Museum, Historical Photograph Collection (*Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Történeti Fényképtár*), inv. no. 62.1238.
12. Photograph of Árpád Hellebrant by Ede Ellinger, Petőfi Literary Museum – individually catalogued photograph collection, inv. no. F.7728.
13. Title page of Árpád Hellebrant's catalogue of incunabula (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 246.505).
14. Title page of Georgius de Hungaria's *Arithmetica* (sign. MTA KIK Math.O.1286)
15. Bust of Pál Gyulai by Alajos Stróbl, MTA Art Collection inv. no. 109.
16. Portrait of Pál Gyulai, painted by Ede Balló, MTA Art Colletion, inv. no. 130.
17. The Gyulai family sepulchre with the name of Aranka Gyulai and her second husband on it, Budapest, Kerepesi Cemetery, source: Wikimedia Commons.
18. Ceremonial general assembly of the Academy, 8 June 1947. From left to right: Speaker: István Varga, President: Zoltán Kodály, Vice President: Albert Szent-Györgyi; Secretary General: Géza Voinovich (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 1054/156).
19. Zoltán Kodály's catafalque with his widow Sarolta Péczely, 1967 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6298/210–211).
20. Visit of Queen Elizabeth II to the Academy, 5 May 1993. The Academy's President, Domokos Kosáry, welcomes the Queen and Prince Philip at the entrance to the building. Hámori Fotó, property of Ildikó Láng.
21. The leadership of the Academy at Domokos Kosáry's catafalque in 2007 (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár CD 2007).

International Relations

1. Three-page letter from the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften to the Hungarian Learned Society, 1834, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 55/1834).
2. Three-page letter from the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften to the Hungarian Learned Society, 1834, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 55/1834).
3. Three-page letter from the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften to the Hungarian Learned Society, 1834, photograph no. 3. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 55/1834).

4. Letter of the Royal Society of London (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 101/1853).
5. Stamp of the Royal Society of London in red wax, 1836 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 277/1836).
6. Letter from the Institut de France, 1836 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 278/1836).
7. Letter from the American Philosophical Society, 1837 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 220/1837).
8. The *Edinburgh Review* from 1831.
9. Publication of the Academia Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae from 1787.
10. "International Exchange" stamp of the Academy's Library, today.
11. The Library of Congress duplicate stamp.

Archives of the Academy

1. Photograph of a wooden card catalogue cabinet.
2. Draft of the regulation of the Hungarian Learned Society written by Ferenc Toldy, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Tört. 2r 253).
3. Draft of the regulation of the Hungarian Learned Society written by Ferenc Toldy, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Tört. 2r 253).
4. Donors' list of subscriptions contributing to the Palace of the Academy from Hungary (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL K 1278/188).
5. Donors' list of subscriptions from Hungarian immigrants living in Istanbul, sent to the Academy by Dániel Szilágyi (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 942/1860).
6. Unordered archival materials, 1964 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5358).
7. Unordered archival materials, 1964 (sign. MTA KIK AL 0641).
8. The first employees of the Archives, László Szelei and Mrs Kálmán Kiss, in their office in the basements of the Palace (sign. MTA KIK AL 5365).
9. László Szelei in his office (sign. MTA KIK AL 5384).
10. Archivists, 1967 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5378).
11. Portrait of László Szöllössy (sign. MTA KIK AL 5408).
12. Archivists after 1975 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5406).
13. Portrait of Adrienne Körmendy from the 2010s.
14. Gyula Wojtilla (in the middle, wearing a brown leather jacket) with his colleagues celebrating his appointment, April 1985 (sign. MTA KIK AL 5391).
15. The office of the Archives in the building at today's 7 Nádor Street, the building has since been demolished (sign. MTA KIK AL 5403).
16. The workroom of the Archives, 1983 (sign. MTA KIK AL 7384).
17. Diana Hay in the office of the Archives, sometime after 1985 (sign. MTA KIK AL 7383).
18. Diana Hay presenting the Archives to students in the 2010s.
19. The multifunctional spaces of the Archives in the 2020s, photograph no. 1.
20. The multifunctional spaces of the Archives in the 2020s, photograph no. 1.

Rebellious Readers and their Long-term Loans

1. Lending card of the Library from 1897.
2. Lending card of the Libray from 1907.
3. Letter written by Chief Librarian Kálmán Szily in 1916 to a reader (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5213/115).
4. Lithograph of Béla Majláth, source: Wikimedia Commons.
5. Portrait of Mihály Munkácsy, source: Wikimedia Commons.
6. Title page of Théodor de Pauly's *Description* (sign. MTA KIK 352.163).
7. Excerpt from the Théodor de Pauly's *Description*: Laplanders (sign. MTA KIK 352.163).
8. Excerpt from the Théodor de Pauly's *Description*: Tatar ladies (sign. MTA KIK 352.163).
9. Excerpt from the Théodor de Pauly's *Description*: Georgians (sign. MTA KIK 352.163).
10. Excerpt from the Théodor de Pauly's *Description*: Livonians (sign. MTA KIK 352.163).
11. Photograph of István Heinlein (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6456/29).

Gentlemen's Agreement Broken

1. Portrait of Jenő Balogh, painted by Oszkár Glatz, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 128.
2. List of the volumes returned to the Academy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 850/1924. *Átadási jegyzék a 779/1924. számú akadémiai irathoz*).
3. Title page of Jacobus Publicius' *Artes orandi* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 376).
4. First existing page of Johannes de Tambaco's *Consolatio Theologiae* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 507).
5. Title page of Girolamo Balbi's *Epigrammata* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 385).
6. Title page of Johannes de Turrecremata's *Meditationes* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 358).
7. The first page of the Augsburg edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 405).
8. The second page of the Augsburg edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 405).
9. The third page of the Augsburg edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 405).

10. The fourth page of the Augsburg edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 405).
11. The first page of the Brno edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth F 1045).
12. The second page of the Brno edition of Johannes Thuróczy's *Chronica Hungarorum* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth F 1045).
13. Title page of Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 381).
14. Recto of the title page of *Herbarius* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 381).
15. The first page of *Herbarius* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 381).
16. The first page of *Herbarius* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).
17. Image of "Camomilla" (*Matricaria chamomilla*, chamomile), from Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).
18. Image of "Lavendula" (*Lavandula spica*, lavender) from Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).
19. Image of "Papaver" (*Papaver somniferum*, poppy) from Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).
20. Image of "Sambucus" (*Sambucus ebulus*, elder) from Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).
21. Image of "Viola" (*Viola odorata*, violet) from Herbarius (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 382).

Six Generations of Book-enthusiasts

1. Family tree of the Teleki de Szék and Teleki de Kendilóna branches, designed by Zsanett Kun.
2. Portrait of Mihály II Teleki, source: Wikimedia Commons.
3. Note by Mihály II Teleki in his copy of *Gilead balsamuma* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 4r 37).
4. The binding of codex sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 92.
5. Ownership note of Mihály Tofeus (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 4r 79).
6. Binding of the upper cover of the Bible owned by Judit Weér (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 2r 83).
7. Binding of the lower cover of the Bible owned by Judit Weér (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 2r 83).
8. Title page of the Bible inherited by Klára Bánffy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 2r 83).
9. Ownership note in the Bible inherited by Klára Bánffy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 2r 83).
10. Title page of Pál Medgyesi's *Lelki A Be Ce* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 8r 243).
11. Ownership notes of Zsuzsanna Teleki and Terézia Kemény (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 8r 243).
12. Gilded *super ex libris* of Ádám I Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Életir.O.60).
13. Dedication by Samuel Andreae to Pál I Teleki de Kendilóna (sign. MTA KIK Theol.O.541).
14. Ownership note of Ádám I Teleki and the note indicating that the book later formed part of Mária Teleki's inheritance (sign. MTA KIK Isk.O.763).
15. *Super ex libris* of Sámuel III Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Gör.Ir.Qu.13).
16. Ownership note of Ádám II Teleki de Kendilóna (sign. MTA KIK Tört.O.1556).
17. Ownership note of Mária Teleki (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 4r 93).
18. Ownership note of Ádám I Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Orvt.O.234e).
19. Title page of volume sign. MTA KIK M.Nyelv.O.110.
20. Ownership note of Ádám II Teleki (sign. MTA KIK M.Nyelv.O.110).
21. Ownership note of Mária Wesselényi (sign. MTA KIK Theol.O.1081).
22. Ownership note of Kata de Vay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM I 4r 93).
23. Title page with ownership note of Mihály Vay (sign. MTA KIK Tört.F.325).
24. Portrait of László III Teleki (MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6221/148).
25. Portrait of Ádám III Teleki, source: Wikimedia Commons.
26. Ownership note of Ádám III Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Hadt.O.75)
27. Portrait of József IV Teleki, 1841, (sign. MTA KIK Folyóirattár T 311.123).
28. Portrait of László IV Teleki, lithograph by Franz Eybl, source: Wikimedia Commons.
29. Title page of the volume presented by László III Teleki to his daughter Auguszta (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 524.192).
30. Dedication in the gift book commemorating Auguszta's successful examination, 1819 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 524.192).
31. Dedication to László III Teleki (sign. MTA KIK M.Irod.O.200).
32. Gilded *super ex libris* of József II Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Math.Qu.149).
33. Ownership note of József II Teleki (sign. MTA KIK Math.Qu.149).
34. Portrait of Johanna Róth de Királyfalva, wife of József II Teleki. Published in: Moravcsik, Gyuláné, *Gróf Teleki Józsefné Róth Johanna 1741–1813 [Countess Mrs József Teleki née Johanna Róth 1741–1813]*, Budapest, 1899, p. 7. (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 433.247).
35. Ownership note of Tamás Róth de Királyfalva (sign. MTA KIK Misc.O.453).

36. Ownership note of Ádám Róth de Királyfalva (sign. MTA KIK Isk.O.757).
37. Title page of the funeral oration written for Borbála Vattay (sign. MTA KIK Életir.O.190).
38. Borbála Vattay's sepulchre in Szirák, with the memorial wreath placed on it by the community of the Library, 17 March 2026, photograph by József Áts.

The Teleki Founding Collection

1. Portrait of the Crown Guard József II Teleki, Vienna, 1791 (MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6221/146).
2. Portrait of the Septemvir László III Teleki (MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6221/148).
3. Portrait of the President József IV Teleki, 1841, (sign. MTA KIK Folyóirattár T 311.123).
4. Portrait of Domokos III Teleki source: Wikipedia Commons.
5. Title page of the Crown Guard József II Teleki's own work, *Essai sur la foiblesse des esprits-forts* (sign. MTA KIK Franc.Ir.O.387/h).
6. Ownership note of József Péczeli the Elder (sign. MTA KIK Germ.Ir.O.651).
7. Ownership note of Dániel Cornides (sign. MTA KIK Tört.O.3237).
8. Joseph Fuchsthaller, Szervita Square. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, no. 14.777 M 762.
9. Various gilded *super ex libris* stamps from the collection enriched by László III Teleki: *super ex libris* with the coat of arms of Maastricht (sign. MTA KIK Lat. Ir.O.10:3).
10. *Super ex libris* with the figure of Pallas Athaene, its circumscription referring to Leiden (Lugduni Batavorum) (sign. MTA KIK Lat.Ir.O.12:1).
11. *Super ex libris* with an image of a bastion (sign. MTA KIK Lat. Ir.O.16:2).
12. *Super ex libris* with the motto of the Order of the Garter *Honi soit qui mal y pense* 'Shame on him who thinks evil of it' (sign. MTA KIK Lat.Ir.O.22:1).
13. *Super ex libris* with an image of a city (sign. MTA KIK Lat.Ir.O.22:1).
14. *Super ex libris* with the coat of arms of an unknown family (sign. MTA KIK Math.Qu.48).
15. *Super ex libris*with the coat of arms of the zu Dohna family (sign. MTA KIK Nyelvt.O.994).
16. *Super ex libris* with the coat of arms and monogram of Joseph Wenzel Lorenz von Liechtenstein (1696–1772) (sign. MTA KIK Encycl.F.5).
17. *Super ex libris* on a volume probably once pertaining to the Bishopric of Olomouc (sign. MTA KIK Tört.F.380:1).
18. *Super ex libris* on a volume probably once pertaining to the Bishopric of Olomouc (sign. MTA KIK Tört.F.380:2).
19. *Super ex libris* on a volume probably once pertaining to the Bishopric of Olomouc (sign. MTA KIK Tört.F.380: 11).
20. Autograph manuscript of the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) by József IV Teleki (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 1099).
21. Title page of the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.151).
22. Portrait of Albert of Habsburg, King of Hungary (1397–1439, r. 1437–1439), from the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.151).
23. Portrait of Elisabeth of Luxembourg, Queen of Hungary (1409–1442, r. 1437–1439) from the first volume of Hunyadi Era in Hungary (*Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*) (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.151).
24. Ownership note of Ferenc Kresznerics (sign. MTA KIK M.Nyelv.O.120).
25. Stamp indicating duplicate volumes from the Bibliotheca Palatina in Vienna, purchased by József IV Teleki (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ant. 338).
26. Terracotta maquette for the marble bust of Count József IV Teleki by István Ferenczy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Tárgyak 4).
27. Portrait of Imre Jancsó, Nemzeti Portrétár 7698.
28. Ownership note of Imre Jancsó (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.Qu.76).
29. Ownership stamp of the founding Teleki collection (MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
30. The image of the imprint of the ownership stamp of the founding Teleki collection.
31. Ownership stamp of the Academy's Library (MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
32. The image of the imprint of the ownership stamp of the Academy's Library.

The Second Largest Donation

1. Portrait of Gusztáv Batthyány, source: Wikimedia Commons.
2. Portrait of Kázmér Batthyány, painted by Miklós Barabás, source: Wikimedia Commons.
3. Portrait of Eleonóra Strattmann, source: Wikimedia Commons.
4. Ownership note of Boldizsár IV Batthyány (sign. MTA KIK Isk.O.1871).
5. Tódor Batthyány's note commemorating a gift book from his uncle Károly József Batthyány (sign. MTA KIK Hadt.O.297).
6. Portrait of József Batthyány, Archbishop of Esztergom, source: Wikimedia Commons.
7. Portrait of Tódor Batthyány, source: Wikimedia Commons.

8. Selection of volumes with colour-coded classification of the book covers from the Rohonc estate in the Library, today, photograph by Zsanett Kun.
9. Ownership note of Tódor Batthyány (sign. MTA KIK Gazd.F.7), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
10. Title page of a lavishly illustrated work on botany from the collection of Tódor Batthyány (sign. MTA KIK Növt.F.46), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
11. Illustration of the iris (*Iris versicolor*) (sign. MTA KIK Növt.F.46), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
12. Illustration of the cherry (*Prunus subg. Cerasus*) (sign. MTA KIK Növt.F.46), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
13. Illustration of the European cherry fruit fly (*Rhagoletis cerasi*) (sign. MTA KIK Növt.F.46), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
14. Illustration of different hybrids of the Persian buttercup (*Ranunculus asiaticus*) (sign. MTA KIK Növt.F.46), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
15. Ownership note of Joseph Gottfried Dombay de Dombóvár (sign. MTA KIK Utaz.O.361), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
16. Provenance note in a volume from the family of Countess Philippine Esterházy de Galánta to the Batthyány collection (sign. MTA KIK Törtlm.F.38), photograph by Zsanett Kun.
17. The Batthyány family estates in Kisbér, today, source: Wikimedia Commons.
18. Selection of volumes from the Rohonc estate in the Library, today, photograph by Zsanett Kun.
19. Pages from the Rohonc Codex (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 114).

Nineteenth-Century Donations of Language Monument Manuscripts

1. Coat of arms of Ferenc Wathay from the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 62, f. 2r).
2. Title page of the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 62, f. 3r).
3. View of Constantinople from the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 62, ff. 32v–33r).
4. Turkish travellers from the Song Book of Ferenc Wathay (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 62, f. 65v).
5. Czech Codex (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 42).
6. Érsekújvár Codex, the Last Supper (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 45, f. 87r).
7. Érsekújvár Codex, Christ sweats blood in the Garden of Gethsemane (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 45, f. 89r).
8. Érsekújvár Codex, modern biding (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 45).
9. Reproduction of the Virginia Codex-type binding (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 40).
10. Piry Membrane (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 36).
11. *Horarium Biturigense*, workshop of Jean Colombe, 1485–1490, donation by Ferenc Pulszky, 1867, the months of September and October (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 429, ff. 8v–9r).
12. *Horarium Biturigense*, workshop of Jean Colombe, 1485–1490, donation by Ferenc Pulszky, 1867, the month of and December (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 429, f. 12r).
13. *Horarium*, c. 1400, France, donation by Ferenc Pulszky, 1867 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 404, ff. 91v–92r).
14. Medallion issued for the 50th anniversary of Ferenc Pulszky's literary career, 1884. Made by Anton Schraff (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Érmek 88).
15. Latin book of hours, mid-fifteenth century, Paris. The four evangelists: Matthew (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 424, f. 16v).
16. Latin book of hours, mid-fifteenth century, Paris. The four evangelists: Mark (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 424, f. 18v).
17. Latin book of hours, mid-fifteenth century, Paris. The four evangelists: Luke (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 424, f. 15r).
18. Latin book of hours, mid-fifteenth century, Paris. The four evangelists: John (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 424, f. 13r).
19. Title page of the Carbo Codex (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 397, f. 1r).
20. Dedication of Ludovicus Carbo to King Matthias Corvinus (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 397, f. 3v).
21. Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg representing the Sun from Konrad Keyser's *Bellifortis* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 465, f. 5v).
22. Empress Barbara of Cilli representing the planet Venus from Konrad Keyser's *Bellifortis* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 465, f. 6v).

The Old Hungarian Book Collection of György Ráth

1. Memorial plaque commemorating the 1895 donation by György Ráth (MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
2. Catalogue of the Ráth collection from 1905 (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 402.088).
3. Portrait of György Ráth, 1882, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
4. Facsimile edition of Dávid Czvittinger's *Specimen* (sign. MTA KIK 037.209).
5. Title page of The feather-plucking of a hooty owl coming from Pozsony (*Egy Pozsonyból repült huholó bagolynak megmellyesztése*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 274/b).

6. A "duplum venditum" from the Teleki collection, purchased and later rebound in a typical Ráth-style bookbinding (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth F 1438).
7. Title page of Miklós Telegdi's The Third Part of the Gospel (*Az Evangeliomoknac... harmadik resze*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 37).
8. The Telegdi bookbinding (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 37).
9. The title page of Misztótfalusi's *New Testament* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 398/1).
10. The *New Testament* in the so-called Misztótfalusi bookbinding (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 398/1).
11. The *New Testament* in the so-called Misztótfalusi bookbinding, once owned by Mihály I Apafi, Prince of Transylvania (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ráth 398/2).
12. Title page of the exhibition catalogue *Könyvkiállítási emlék* (sign. MTA KIK NC-100.245).

The "Five Enrichers" of the Library

1. "A könyvtár gazdagítói" (The Enrichers of the Library) high relief by Ernő Jálics (MTA KIK without signature).
2. *Ex libris* stamp of István Sándor (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.123).
3. *Ex libris* stamp with the inscription "Siskovics Könyvtára" (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.3683).
4. *Ex libris* of Zsigmond Reiner (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 553.526).
5. Engraving portrait of Andor Semsey from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1899.
6. *Ex libris* of Lajos Katona (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 368).
7. Title page of Lajos Katona's work on Petrarca (sign. MTA KIK 108.453).
8. Photograph of Count Ferenc Vigyázó (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5074/16).
9. Portrait of Antal Vigyázó, lithograph, 1866 (MTA KIK KRKGy Képek 2r 11/1).
10. Ownership stamp of Antal Vigyázó's Library in Vácrátót and the Vigyázó Library stamp of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.6139).
11. Ownership note of Antal Vigyázó (sign. MTA KIK M.Tört.O.6139).
12. Portrait of Sándor Vigyázó, lithograph (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5074/39).
13. The Vigyázó family estate in Vácrátót, photograph by György Klösz. Source: Fortepan / BFL XV.19.d.1.11.104, no. 83196.
14. The Library Room at the Vigyázó family estate, photograph by György Klösz. Source: Fortepan / BFL XV.19.d.1.11.101, no. 83193.
15. Ownership note of a previous owner and note of purchase in pencil by the hand of Sándor Vigyázó (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM III 206).
16. Ownership note of a previous owner and the Vigyázó collection's stamp (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RM III 206).
17. A French volume (*Les Dissertations amoureuses de Lucien*, intr. par B. de Villeneuve, Paris, 1909) from the Vigyázó *erotica* collection (sign. MTA KIK 298.699).
18. A lavishly decorated bookbinding, characteristic of the rare book collection of the Vigyázó family (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Inc. 451).
19. Breviary of the Augustinian monks of Klosterneuburg c. 1450, from the collection of Sándor Vigyázó (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 451).

Memorial Collections

1. Photograph of Dr Gyula Elischer.
2. Portrait of Boldizsár Elischer, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 34.
3. The Goethe Room on an old postcard (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10754).
4. Cover of the Goethe Room visitors' register (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 123/2).
5. A memorial glass from Karlsbad with a portrait of Goethe (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy without signature).
6. A selection of postcards from Elischer's *Goethe-Reisen*: Italians eating pasta, as a stereotype about Italian culture (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–7/23).
7. Postcard depicting Italians sharing an overloaded wagon (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–7/24).
8. Postcard with a landscape of Venice (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–18/17).
9. Postcard with a view of the Cathedral of Saint Ambrose in Milan (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–5/21).
10. Postcard with a view of the Pisa Cathedral (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–9/2).
11. Postcard with a view of the Colosseum in Rome (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–11/28).
12. Postcard with a view of the artificial fountains in Caserta (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–6/24).
13. Postcard with a landscape of Naples (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 119–6/7).
14. Széchenyi as the Royal Commissioner for the Lower Danube, caricature by János Waldstein (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 293/3).
15. Announcement of Széchenyi's death (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 191/40).
16. Photograph of Béla Széchenyi (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10206/VI/137).

17. Painting depicting the mausoleum of the Orientalist Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842) in Darjeeling, in the Himalayas (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 211).
18. The painting depicting the mausoleum of Kőrösi Csoma on Széchenyi's desk in Döbling (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 293).
19. The same painting among the family heirlooms in a cabinet at the Széchenyi Museum (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4410/24).
20. Exhibition of the Széchenyi Museum (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4410/24).
21. Writing desk and Széchenyi's portraits at the exhibition (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4410/24).
22. Portrait of Gyula Viszota (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5074/41).
23. The Széchenyi Museum after the siege of Budapest (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6298/184).
24. Széchenyi library cabinet at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today.
25. Catalogue of the Széchenyi manuscripts, published by Vilma H. Boros (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 427.925)
26. Portrait of Farkas Bolyai (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 27).
27. Handwritten pages from the Bolyai *Appendix* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY 545.091).
28. Printed pages from the Bolyai *Appendix* (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY 545.091).
29. Catalogue of the Bolyai collection (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 449.551).
30. UNESCO Memory of the World Register Certificate for the *Appendix*.
31. Photograph of the aging Mihály Vörösmarty (sign. MTA KIK 151/1953).
32. Portrait of Vörösmarty's late wife, Laura Csajághy, 1899, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
33. Portrait of Mrs Bernrieder János née Ilona Széll, 1899, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
34. Manuscript of the poem Thoughts in the Library (*Gondolatok a könyvtárban*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 305/55).
35. The front of Vörösmarty's memorial cup (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 2/118. 23. p. 5–6. items, Tárgyak 87/1–2).
36. The back of Vörösmarty's memorial cup (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 2/118. 23. p. 5–6. items, Tárgyak 87/2).
37. Photograph nr. 1. taken by Mrs Bernrieder János née Ilona Széll at their estates in Rátót (Vas County), 1899, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
38. Photograph nr. 2. taken by Mrs Bernrieder János née Ilona Széll at their estates in Rátót (Vas County), 1899, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
39. The Vörösmarty Room after the siege of Budapest (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10295/2).
40. Catalogue of the Vörösmarty bequest at the Academy from 1928 (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 269.961).
41. The catalogue of the Vörösmarty bequest at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books from 2016 (e.g. sign. MTA KIK BA-073.666).

The Formation of the Most Important Collection of Oriental Studies in Hungary

1. Interior design of the Oriental Collection with books.
2. Portrait of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5072/2).
3. Title page of Kőrösi Csoma's *Sanskrit–Tibetan–English Vocabulary* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 726.234).
4. Upper cover of *Life and Works of Csoma de Körös* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 766.243).
5. Title page of *Life and Works of Csoma de Körös* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 766.243).
6. Photograph of Tivadar Duka (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10206/II/30).
7. Portrait of Ignác Semmelweis, painted by Ágost Canzi (1808–1866), MNM KK Semmelweis Orvostörténeti Múzeum, Budapest, 67.990.1.
8. Portrait of Salamon Caesar Malan (sign. MTA KIK KGy Csoma 58).
9. Excerpt from one of the Alexander books (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Tib. 4).
10. Abridged version of Tsong kha pa's Lam rim chen mo (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Tib. 15).
11. Csoma's Latin-language alphabet for Tibetan, printed in Italy for the use of Jesuit missionaries (sign. MTA KIK KGy Csoma 24, 726.197).
12. Illustration from the Tibetan alphabet (sign. MTA KIK KGy Csoma 24, 726.197)
13. Title page of the first volume of the catalogue of Tibetan manuscripts at the Library of the Academy (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KGy 768.590).
14. The tomb of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma in Darjeeling, today (MTA KIK KGy, without signature).
15. Portrait of Dániel Szilágyi, from the periodical *Vasárnapi Újság*.
16. Photograph of Áron Szilády (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10206/V/133).
17. Excerpt from the *Iskendernáme* (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Török O.83).
18. Three-page donation letter written by Róza Gomperz, 24 December 1905, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 533/1905).
19. Three-page donation letter written by Róza Gomperz, 24 December 1905, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 533/1905).

20. Three-page donation letter written by Róza Gomperz, 24 December 1905, photograph no. 3. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 533/1905).
21. Catalogue of the Kaufmann bequest (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KGy 744.189).
22. A genizah fragment from the Kaufmann collection (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms KA 374).
23. Another genizah fragment from the Kaufmann collection (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms KA 374).
24. Excerpt from the most complete known manuscript of the *Mishnah* (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Kaufmann A 50).
25. Excerpt from the *Mahzor* prayer book (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Kaufmann A 388).
26. Excerpt from the tripartite *Mahzor* prayer book (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Kaufmann A 384).
27. Microfilm reproduction (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 850) of a stolen manuscript, sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Kaufmann A 380.
28. Microfilm reproduction (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 2908) of a stolen Venetian incunabulum, sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Kaufmann B 659.
29. Portrait of Ármin Vámbéry (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY Ms 10121).
30. Caricature portrait of Rusztem Vámbéry, from the periodical *A Toll*, 1929.
31. Ownership note in the portable version of the Quran by Ármin Vámbéry (sign. MTA KIK KGy 772.072).
32. The tomb of Izsák Molla (sign. MTA KIK KGy without signature).
33. Excerpt from *Târîḫ-i Üngürûs* (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Török F.57).
34. Binding of the manuscript sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Török O.171.
35. Vámbéry's personal note "more a reading for entertainment than for learning purposes" (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Török O.171).
36. Excerpt from *Ferec Ba'de'ş-Şidde* (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Török F.71).
37. The stamp of the Academy, with its *motto* "Borúra derű" on the title page of its first yearbook.
38. Excerpt from a Müteferrika print (sign. MTA KIK KGy 768.439).
39. Ownership stamps of Ármin Vámbéry in Hungarian and Arabic (sign. MTA KIK KGy 768.439).
40. Portrait of Sándor Kégl (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075/107).
41. Portrait of Teréz Kégl (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075/113).
42. Excerpt from *Ketāb-e Romūz-e Ḥamzah* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 777.153, p. 965.).
43. Excerpt from *Ketāb-e Romūz-e Ḥamzah* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 777.153, p. 965., illustration).
44. Excerpt from *Ketāb-e Romūz-e Ḥamzah* (sign. MTA KIK KGy 777.153, p. 809.).
45. Portrait of Ignác Goldziher, Hungarian Jewish Archives (*Magyar Zsidó Levéltár*), sign. 66.102 I–G–1.
46. Portrait of Laura Goldziher née Mittler, Hungarian Jewish Archives (*Magyar Zsidó Levéltár*), sign. 66.116 I–G–1.
47. Portrait of Károly Goldziher, Hungarian Jewish Archives (*Magyar Zsidó Levéltár*), sign. 66.111 I–G.
48. A letter from Theodor Nöldeke, professor of Islamic studies at the University of Tübingen to Ignác Goldziher (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4295/101).
49. Catalogue of the Goldziher bequest at the Academy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 485/1932).
50. Illustrated postcard sent to Ignác Goldziher: a coloured Christmas postcard, greetings from Professor and Mrs James Gilroy, Aberdeen, Scotland, 1912 (sign. MTA KIK KGy GIL/12/28/17).
51. Illustrated postcard sent to Ignác Goldziher: a postcard from Michelangelo Guidi, with the view of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome, Italy, 1914 (sign. MTA KIK KGy GIL/14/17/01).
52. Illustrated postcard sent to Ignác Goldziher: Coloured postcard with a bouquet of edelweiss flowers, sent by Placidus Steiniger, Admont, Austria, 1910 (sign. MTA KIK KGy GIL/41/33/70).
53. Aurél Stein's desk decorated with flowers, with his dog, Dash, in the foreground, in Mohand Marg, Kashmir (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 3/2(010)).
54. Portrait of Aurél Stein by Sir William Rothenstein, copy in pencil, 1920 (sign. MTA KIK KGy Stein 21).
55. Letter from Aurél Stein sent to the Academy from Mohand Marg, Kashmir, 1930, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy RAL 444/1930).
56. Letter from Aurél Stein sent to the Academy from Mohand Marg, Kashmir, 1930, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGY RAL 444/1930).
57. Aurél Stein's photographs taken during his second Central-Asian Archaeological Expedition (1906–1908): stucco relief heads of gods, Ming-oi, China, 7th-8th century (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 11/1(11)).
58. River Keriya: members of the expedition quenching their thirst after crossing the desert (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 37/5(078)).
59. The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in Dunhuang and their treasures: partly restored stucco group with the Buddha in the centre, accompanied by his disciples Ananda and Kashyapa, the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara and Kshitigarbha, as well as two Guardian Kings, Dunhuang (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 11/207(2L)).

60. Exterior view of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Dunhuang (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 37/5(078R)).
61. Bundles of manuscripts, Dunhuang, Qianfodong (sign. MTA KIK KGy Cat. Stein LHAS Photo 13/1(057R)).
62. The catalogue of the Stein collection (signs. MTA KIK KGy 761.489).
63. The Supplement to the catalogue of the Stein collection (sign. MTA KIK KGy 767.099).
64. Signing of the bilateral contract between the Dunhuang Academy and the Library of the Academy, 2018.
65. Website of the Stein Photo Collection of the International Dunhuang Programme.
66. Portrait of Lajos Ligeti (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6502/206).
67. Signature of László Rásonyi (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4126/365).
68. László Rásonyi (in the middle) in company of researchers (sign. MTA KIK KGy 32).
69. Reading Room of the Oriental Collection, today.
70. Head of Department's Room of the Oriental Collection, today.
71. An ornamental element of the design of the Oriental Collection, today.
72. Portrait of Jenő Zichy, source: OSZK Fotótér.
73. The lavishly decorated reading room of the Oriental Collection of the Metropolitan Library in Budapest, source: Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár, Budapest Gyűjtemény.
74. Photograph of Lajos Thallóczy, source: Wikimedia Commons.
75. Batak-language manuscripts written on tree bark (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 2).
76. Batak-language manuscripts written on palm leaves, so-called *pustaha* (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 1).
77. Old Jawanese-language manuscript written on palm leaves (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 4).
78. Portrait of the elderly Gyula Moravcsik (sign. MTA KIK microfilm D 2847).
79. Photograph of Gyula Moravcsik and some of his fellow prisoners in a POW camp in Siberia (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6562/44).
80. Moravcsik's paper on the importance of papyrus research, presented in Krasnoyarsk, December 1917 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2459/13).
81. Autograph register of Gyula Moravcsik's scholarly works (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2453/1).
82. Greek codex fragment (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 493).
83. Transcription of the Greek codex fragment (MTA KIK KRKGy K 493), written in the hand of János Harmatta (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy ad K 493).
84. Photograph of the young Lajos Ligeti, as a student of the Eötvös Collegium, Budapest (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6482/121).
85. Photograph of Gyula Németh (sign. MTA KIK microfilm D 3621).
86. Credit book of Lajos Ligeti with the signatures of his professors, Ignác Goldziher and Gyula Németh (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6482/121).
87. Permit for stay in Japan issued for Lajos Ligeti (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6483/31).
88. Passport and visa for visiting China, issued for Lajos Ligeti and his Chinese interpreter (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6482/214).
89. Caricature portrait of Lajos Ligeti, drawn in 1943, (sign. Ms 6502/206))
90. Caricature portrait of Lajos Ligeti, drawn in 1956 (sign. Ms 6502/336)
91. Caricature portrait of Lajos Ligeti, drawn in 1970 (sign. Ms 6502/207)
92. Lajos Bese with a Mongolian researcher (sign. MTA KIK KGy 9/2).
93. Éva Apor during her retirement ceremony, 2007.
94. Marble plaque commemorating the most important donors of the Oriental Collection.
95. Lajos Ligeti, as Vice President of the Academy salutes the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Library and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oriental Collection, 1976 (sign. AL 4948).
96. Librarians listening to Lajos Ligeti's speech at the portico of the Palace of the Academy (sign. MTA KIK AL 4951).
97. Exhibition celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Library (sign. MTA KIK AL 4934).
98. Section of the exhibition focusing on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Oriental Collection (sign. MTA KIK AL 4945).
99. Kinga Dévényi opening an exhibition, on the right, Ágnes Kelecsényi.
100. Celebration of Gábor Korvin's donation, 2010, in the Small Assembly Room of the Library. From left to right: Ágnes Kelecsényi, Kinga Dévényi, Gábor Náray-Szabó and Gábor Korvin.
101. Máté Rottár, Roland Ferenczi and István Monok presenting the treasures of the Oriental Collection to a Mongolian delegation.
102. *Ex libris* of Gábor Korvin.
103. *Jamharat ansab al-Arab* by Ibn Hazm (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Arab F.7).
104. A Sanskrit manuscript produced in Kashmir in 1815, donated to the Library by Ferenc Pulszky. The miniature depicting the creation of the world illustrates the poem *The Thousand Names of Vishnu*: the blue-bodied god is reclining on the serpent Ananda, and in the chalice of the lotus sprung from Vishnu's navel sits Brahma; the goddess at his legs is Bhumi-Devi, the Earth Goddess (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 23).
105. Manuscript produced in Nepal containing twenty-eight Buddhist hymns, decorated and thus deteriorated by its previous modern owners with depictions of gods (sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, without modern pagination). This is the first publication of its binding, upper cover, an intact page and four different types of modern depictions, individually painted byhand and randomly pasted on the inside of the upper cover and in the middle of several pages. Photograph no. 1., binding.
106. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, upper cover.
107. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 4.
108. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 6.
109. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 8.
110. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 10.
111. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 12.
112. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 14.
113. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 16.
114. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 18.
115. Sign. MTA KIK KGy ORI Ms Misc. 17, f. 20.

The KEO Collection

1. Ownership stamp of the Centre of People's Libraries in a sixteenth-century work (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ant. 198).
2. Ownership stamp of Mór Ballagi (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.091).
3. Finely illustrated book on entomology with the ownership stamp of Adalbert Bresztyenszky (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.135).
4. Depiction of the development of butterflies from the same volume (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.135).
5. Depiction of a mounted butterfly from the same volume (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.135).
6. Ownership note of the plant breeder and Piarist monk Dénes Katona (sign. MTA KIK KE-101.382).
7. The Hungarian recipe for ink made from gallnuts (*Galla halapensis*), translated by Dénes Katona (sign. MTA KIK KE-101.382).
8. Ownership stamp of the Library of Nádasdladány, variant A (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.041).
9. Ownership stamp of the Library of Nádasdladány, variant B (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.344).
10. Ownership mark of Count Héder Viczay (sign. MTA KIK KE-100.547).
11. Ownership note referring to József Eiszler (1812–1876) (sign. MTA KIK KE-101.422).
12. Ownership stamp of the Society of Jesus in a sixteenth-century work (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ant. 171).
13. Ownership stamp of the Piarist Library of Szeged (sign. MTA KIK KE-101.606).

Safeguarding Széchenyi's Spirit

1. *Ex libris* of the Nemzeti Casino (sign. MTA KIK Ms 5083/67).
2. Invitation to the annual assembly of the Nemzeti Casino, sent to Count István Széchenyi, year unknown (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 168/23).
3. Building of the Nemzeti Casino (Budapest's 5th District, 5 Kossut Lajos Street). Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, inv. no. F.86.102.
4. Ownership stamp of the Nemzeti Casino.
5. Nemzeti Casino, Reading Room. Source: Fortepan / Budapest Főváros Levéltára. Levéltári jelzet: HU.BFL.XV.19.d.1.11.005, no. 83097.
6. Gilded book-spine stamp of the Nemzeti Casino.
7. Nemzeti Casino, Reading Room for periodicals. Source: Fortepan / Budapest Főváros Levéltára. Levéltári jelzet: HU.BFL.XV.19.d.1.11.007, no. 83099.
8. Books from the "Travelogues" section.
9. Cover of *The Armoury of Windsor Castle*, dedicated to Ármin Vámbéry by Edward VII, King of the United Kingdom, 1904 (sign. MTA KIK NC-200.055).
10. Autograph dedication of King Edward VII in the same volume (sign. MTA KIK NC-200.055).
11. The first page of a letter written by the King's Assistant Private Secretary, Sir Arthur Davidson, with the *ex libris* of the Nemzeti Casino on its inside cover (sign. MTA KIK NC-200.055).
12. Ruins of the Nemzeti Casino's building after the Second World War. Budapest History Museum – Kiscelli Museum, inv. no. 55.5.2.
13. *Ex libris* of the Nemzeti Casino with bullet marks.
14. A book damaged by a bullet.
15. The Nemzeti Casino collection in a specially air-conditioned facility in Törökbálint.
16. The exhibition wall for periodicals from the Nemzeti Casino, in the Vörösmarty Hall of the Academy, photograph no. 1.
17. The exhibition wall for periodicals from the Nemzeti Casino, in the Vörösmarty Hall of the Academy, photograph no. 2.

The Department of Manuscripts

1. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts with its reference desk, 2010s.
2. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, 1950s (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075/292).

3. Room of the incunabula (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5075/290).
4. Room of the early printed books in Hungarian (*Régi Magyar Könyvtár*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5466/102).
5. Photograph of Jenő Berlász (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/135).
6. Berlász sitting at his desk (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/140).
7. Librarians of the Department "honouring" a hat, which symbolised Berlász himself according to the note on the back of the same photograph, May 1955 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/137).
8. Back of the same photograph, May 1955 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/137).
9. Librarians of the Department of Manuscripts, 1950s. From left to right: István Szegszárdy-Csengery, Pál Gergely, Dóra F. Csanak, Csaba Csapodi, Klára Hamburger (1934–2025), Béla Büky, Gáspár Hajnal (1927–2002), Vilma H. Boros (1899–1991), unidentified person, Györgyi Sáfrán, Rudolf Wilhelm (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6227/71).
10. Entrance Hall of the Library, early 1950s, with a portrait of Mátyás Rákosi and a quote by him: 'The Hungarian people were powerful and esteemed, when it belonged to the vanguard of universal human progress.' *A magyar nép akkor volt erős és megbecsült, amikor az egyetemes emberi haladás élcsapatához tartozott. Rákosi.* Picture from the *Keresztury emlékkönyv.*
11. Mátyás Rákosi's portrait below the portraits of Lenin and Stalin, in the Main Hall of the Academy's Palace, during the celebrations of the one hundred and twenty fifth anniversary of the Academy's foundation, 26 November 1950 (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár 1397).
12. Room of the Kisfaludy Society at the Academy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 10754).
13. Excerpt from the so-called Lockbook (*Kapcsos könyv*) of János Arany (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 510).
14. Title page of the original manuscript of The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) by Imre Madách (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 531).
15. First page of The Tragedy of Man (*Az ember tragédiája*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 531).
16. Book storage spaces on the third floor under the Palace's rooftop where the Department of Manuscripts also operated for some time in the 1950s, photograph no. 1.
17. Book storage spaces on the third floor under the Palace's rooftop where the Department of Manuscripts also operated for some time in the 1950s, photograph no. 2.
18. Present-day exhibition area of the MTA Art Collection on the third floor under the Palace's rooftop in 2026, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
19. Photograph of Tibor Erdey-Grúz (sign. MTA KIK AL 265 Akadémikus dosszié).
20. Photograph of István Rusznyák (sign. MTA KIK microfilm D 107/3436).
21. Photograph of Csaba Csapodi.
22. Title page of Csapodi's manuscript catalogue (sign. MTA KIK 649.418).
23. Dóra F. Csanak, her collegue and husband Géza Fülöp (1928–1998) and Jenő Berlász at the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, September 1954, photograph by Pál Gergely (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 6446/136).
24. Dóra F. Csanak with the art historian and corresponding member of the Academy Lajos Fülep, 1964 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 4598/331).
25. János Kádár visiting the Academy, 17 November 1981. Kádár was welcomed by the then President of the Academy, János Szentágothai (1912–1994), photograph by Erzsébet Hámori (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár 1060).
26. János Kádár visiting the Academy, 17 November 1981. From left to right, seated at the table in the Lecture Hall of the Academy's Palace: Miklós Óvári (1925–2003), Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party; Lénárd Pál (1925–2019), Secretary General of the Academy; János Kádár; János Szentágothai and György Aczél, member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and President of the Science Policy Committee, photograph by Erzsébet Hámori (sign. MTA KIK AL Fényképtár 1069).
27. Photograph of István Sőtér (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2253/591).
28. István Sőtér's certificate of his election among the members of the Academy (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2264/13).
29. Photograph of Marianne Rozsondai, 2006.
30. Catalogue of incunabula prepared by the Rozsondai couple (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 775.971).
31. Volumes of the *Collectio Rozsondaiana* at the Department of Manuscripts, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
32. Marianne Rozsondai presenting the *Collectio Rozsondaiana* to the press, 8 December 2025, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
33. The Rozsondai couple with the President of the Academy Tamás Freund (b. 1959) and with the Director General of the Library, István Monok, after the official donation ceremony, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
34. Antal Babus opening the Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016.
35. Strong Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today.
36. Manuscripts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Hungarian authors in modern bookbindings.

37. Reading Room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, today.
38. Room of the early printed books in Hungarian (*Régi Magyar Könyvtár*), today.
39. Backmost room of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books, formerly part of the service flat of János Arany as Secretary General of the Academy.
40. Certificate of the UNESCO Memory of the World Register for János Bolyai's *Appendix*.
41. *The Small Original Eötvös Torsion Balance*, Ferdinand Süss, Precision Mechanical and Optical Works Limited, Budapest I. 1928. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5890/67).
42. Photograph of the Small Original Eötvös Torsion Balance (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 5890/67).
43. Catalogue of the Arany bequest at the Academy by Györgyi Sáfrán (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 629.743).
44. Cover of the manuscript of Death of Buda (*Buda halála*), with the note "Acquisition from 1939", from its microfilm copy (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 60. II).
45. Title page of Death of Buda (*Buda halála*), from its microfilm copy (sign. MTA KIK microfilm A 60. II).
46. History of the Appeal (*Szózat*), edited by Antal Babus (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 509.143).
47. Mihály Vörösmarty's red-and-white ivory chess set (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 2/118. 23. p. 10. item).
48. Mihály Vörösmarty's writing desk (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 2/118. 23. p. 4. item).
49. The Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016.
50. The Library's Director General, István Monok and the President of the Academy, László Lovász at the opening of the Vörösmarty exhibition, 2016.
51. Portrait of László Lovász, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, painted by Márta Czene, 2020, MTA Art Collection, inv. no. 827.
52. Title page of *Calliotheca* (e.g. sign. MTA KIK BC-103.800).
53. The so-called Kriza Codex, (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 47).
54. The title page of the facsimile edition of Kriza Codex (e.g. sign. MTA KIK 666.793).
55. The Vörösmarty treasures at the *Borúra derű* exhibition, 2026, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
56. Items of the Arany bequest and the Kőrösi Csoma bequest at the *Borúra derű* exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
57. The Eötvös Torsion Balance at the *Borúra derű* exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.
58. Portrait of László Lovász at the *Borúra derű* exhibition, photograph by Tamás Szigeti.

Recent Manuscript Acquisitions

1. Lithograph of Júlia Szendrey, source: Wikimedia Commons.
2. Armband of Sándor Petőfi worn during the early phase of the War of Independence in 1848 and later presented to Julianna Ercsey (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Tárgyak 25).
3. Lithograph of Sándor Petőfi, source: Wikimedia Commons.
4. Photograph of Fanni Gyarmati (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2678/9).
5. Photograph of Miklós Radnóti (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 26620/51).
6. Pencil portrait of János Arany from the years of the Hungarian Revolution, source: Wikimedia Commons.
7. Autograph copy of The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*) by János Arany, photograph no. 1. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/31).
8. Autograph copy of The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*) by János Arany, photograph no. 2. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/31).
9. Autograph copy of The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*) by János Arany, photograph no. 3. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/31).
10. Autograph copy of The Soldier's Widow (*A honvéd özvegye*) by János Arany, photograph no. 4. (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy K 512/31).
11. Original print of Sándor Petőfi's National Song (*Nemzeti dal*) (MTA KIK KRKGy K 521/17).
12. Two cockades of Sándor Petőfi presented to Julianna Ercsey (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Tárgyak 25).
13. Photograph of Júlia Szendrey at the age of thirty-one, source: Wikimedia Commons.
14. The Petőfi family tomb, Budapest, Fiume Road Cemetery, source: Wikimedia Commons.
15. Autograph of the poem History (*Történelem*) by Miklós Radnóti (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2646/197).
16. Autograph version of Radnóti's translation based on William Blake's *London*, variant A (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2626/9).
17. Autograph version of Radnóti's translation based on William Blake's *London*, variant B (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2626/10).
18. Autograph version of Radnóti's translation based on William Blake's *London*, variant C (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2626/11).
19. Autograph of the poem *A megsebzett galamb és a szökőkút* (The Stabbed Dove and the Jet of Water) translated by Miklós Radnóti, based on Apollinaire's poem (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2636/209).
20. Metal printing plate of the same translation by Miklós Radnóti, based on Apollinaire's poem (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2636/231).

21. Letter from Miklós Radnóti to his former professor Béla Zolnai (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2646/18).
22. Pocket weekly planner of Miklós Radnóti from 1943; on 4 May Radnóti notes the name of Petőfi "Tehát: kuss Petőfi!" 'So: shut up, Petőfi!' (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2644/17).
23. Cover of Radnóti's Bor Notebook (*Bori notesz*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2645/25).
24. Radnóti's second and third poem of the cycle entitled Postcards (*Razglednicák*) (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2645/25).
25. Cover of Fanni Gyaramti's pocket planner, 1935 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2669/3).
26. Notes written in shorthand by Fanni Gyarmati, September 1935 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2669/3).
27. Portrait drafts of Radnóti in the hand of Fanni Gyarmati in the pocket planner, 1935 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2669/3).
28. Shorthand notes from Fanni Gyarmati's diary, 1936 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2669/4).
29. Photograph of Fanni Gyarmati and Miklós Radnóti, 1941 (sign. MTA KIK KRKGy Ms 2660/166).
30. Catalogue of the Radnóti family's bequest at the Academy (e.g. sign. MTA KIK KRKGy 509.183).

The Hadik-Barkóczy Estates

1. Photograph of György Györffy, photograph by Zsuzsa G. Fábri (MTA KIK microfilm D 10341).
2. *Ex libris* stamp of (allegedly) Ferenc V Barkóczy on another title page (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.228).
3. Portrait of Ferenc IV Barkóczy, Archbishop of Esztergom, source: Wikimedia Commons.
4. Gilded *super ex libris* of Ferenc IV Barkóczy as Bishop of Eger, from the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, source: digital collection of ownership signs, Cathedral Library of Esztergom.
5. Gilded *super ex libris* of Ferenc IV Barkóczy as Archbishop of Esztergom, from the Cathedral Library of Esztergom, source: digital collection of ownership signs, Cathedral Library of Esztergom.
6. Ownership note and *ex libris* stamp of (allegedly) Ferenc V Barkóczy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.426).
7. Title page of a volume on Hungarian poetry (Beniczky Péter, *Magyar rithmusok...*, Pozsony, Landerer János Mihály, 1771) (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.222).
8. Donation note by Ferenc V Barkóczy to his brother, János IV Barkóczy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.222).
9. Ownership note of János IV Barkóczy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.424).
10. Ownership stamp of János IV Barkóczy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.424).
11. Coat of arms of the Barkóczy family engraved in stone.
12. Ownership note of Mihály Sztáray (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.348).
13. Ownership note of Countess Sztáray née Migazzy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.060).
14. Ownership note of Leopoldina Sztáray (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.064).
15. Ownership note of Eleonóra Eszterházy (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.370).
16. Portrait of Ilona Hadik-Barkóczy.
17. Photograph of Endre Hadik-Barkóczy.
18. Ownership stamp of the Zichy family library from Abaújenyicke (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.002).
19. Meskó family coat of arms (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.185).
20. Depiction of a carrion flower (*Stapelia*) (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.384, vol. IV.).
21. Pressed flower of a similar carrion flower (*Stapelia*) from the Teleki collection (sign. MTA KIK Növt.Qu.14).
22. Ownership stamp of Endre I Hadik-Barkóczy indicating his Múzeum Street address (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.052).
23. Bookbinding of the volume *Les chasses et le sport en Hongrie* (sign. MTA KIK 358.499).
24. Depiction of hunting for bears, excerpt from the volume (sign. MTA KIK 358.499).
25. Depiction of fishing on the river Tisza, excerpt from the volume (sign. MTA KIK 358.499).
26. Depiction of hunting for wolves, excerpt from the volume (sign. MTA KIK 358.499).
27. The mounted figure of Count István Széchenyi with the Chain Bridge in the background, excerpt from the volume (sign. MTA KIK 358.499).
28. Title page of Triple History (*Hármas Istoria*) (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.244).
29. Ownership note of the shoemaker György Nagy, 1760 (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.244).
30. Birth note of a child in Triple History (*Hármas Istoria*) (sign. MTA KIK RA-100.244).
31. Title page of Deceptive Cupid (*Csalárd Cupido*) (sign. MTA KIK RB-100.345 Koll/2).

Epilogue

1. Count István Széchenyi with his wife, Countess Crescence Seilern wearing eighteenth-century Hungarian-style clothes, illustration by Domokos Perlasca, published in the magazine *Honderű*, 1843. Source: Wikimedia Commons.
2. Inauguration ceremony of the statue of Count István Széchenyi in front of the Academy, 23 May 1880. Illustration from the newspaper *Vasárnapi Újság*, 25 May 1880, p. 368.

3. Marble bust of József Teleki by István Ferenczy in the Entrance Hall of the Library.
4. Statue of János Arany at the Hungarian National Museum (1893) by Alajos Stróbl, postcard reproduction from the collection of László Szabados (sign. REAL Images kepeslap_02_06_01).
5. Full view of the statue of Arany after its 2018 restoration. The additional figures of the composition are the fictional characters of Arany's *Toldi*-trilogy, Piroska Rozgonyi and Miklós Toldi himself. Source: Wikimedia Commons.
6. Model of the Palace of the Academy and the "Academic Apartment House" made from LEGO® bricks. The model, designed by LEGO Certified Professional Balázs Dóczy (b. 1976) at the initiative of the Hungarian Young Academy, was built in April 2026 and regularly rebuilt on various occasions in the same year by secondary school students on the third floor of the Palace of the Academy. This modern object, eventually placed in the exhibition area under the main staircase of the Library, commemorates the efforts of every donor who contributed to the Palace of the Academy in the 1860s, and every person who serves the Academy today.

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Toldy (Schedel) Ferenc
(1805–1875)
Responsible for the Library as Secretary General of the Academy: 1835–1846
Age at appointment: 30 years

Hunfalvy Pál
(1810–1891)
Chief Librarian: 1851–1891
Age at appointment: 41 years

1864
Palace

1875
central heating with hot water

Fröhlich Róbert
(1844–1894)
Chief Librarian: 1892–1894
(23 January 1893–23 May 1894)
Age at appointment: 48 years

Heller Ágost
(1843–1902)
Chief Librarian: 1894–1902
Age at appointment: 51 years

1895
electric lighting

Szily Kálmán
(1838–1924)
Chief Librarian: 1905–1924
Age at appointment: 66 years

Ferenczi Zoltán
(1857–1927)
Chief Librarian: 1924–1927
Age at appointment: 67 years

1925
Royal Standard typewriters

Szinnyei József Jr.
(1857–1943)
Chief Librarian: 1928–1943
Age at appointment: 71 years

1927–1928
new electric cables

1940
modernization of the heating system

Melich János
(1872–1963)
Chief Librarian: 1943–1948
Age at appointment: 71 years

Keresztury Dezső
(1904–1996)
Chief Librarian: 1 October 1948–1 March 1952
Age at appointment: 44 years

Kovács Máté
(1906–1972)

Mátrai László
(1909–1983)

Temporary Committee:
October 1952–September 1953

1945–1952
renovations after the Second World War

Scher (Rubinstein) Tibor
(1912–1975)
Director: March 1950–October 1952
Age at appointment: 38 years

Haraszthy Gyula
(1910–1990)
Director: 1953–1960
Age at appointment: 43 years

Rózsa György
(1922–2005)
Director, Director General (from 1977): 1960–1996
Age at appointment: 38 years

Rejtő István
(1928–1991)
Temporary Librarian: 1969–1975
Age at appointment: 41 years

1985–1988
transformation of the "Academic Apartment House " into Library

Mrs Dr Károly Domsa née Alojzia **Szabó**
(1943–2014)
Temporary Director General: 1 March–30 June 1996
Age at appointment: 53 years

1989–1996
reconstruction of the Palace

Engel Pál
(1938–2001)
Director General: 1 July 1996–30 September 1997
Age at appointment: 58 years

Monok István
(b. 1956)
Director General: 1 July 2013
Age at appointment: 57 years

2008
WI-FI

Náray-Szabó Gábor
(b. 1943)
Director General: 1 January 1998–30 June 2013
Age at appointment: 55 years

2023–2025
reconstruction of the Palace