

IN QUEST OF THE 'MIRACLE STAG':
THE POETRY OF HUNGARY

IN QUEST OF THE 'MIRACLE STAG': THE POETRY OF HUNGARY

An Anthology of Hungarian Poetry
in English Translation from the 13th Century to the Present
published in 1996 in Commemoration of the
1100th Anniversary of the Foundation of Hungary
and the 40th Anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956

Second revised edition published in 2000
in Commemoration of the Christian Millennium of Hungary,
inaugurated by King Stephen I, sainted by the Catholic Church,
and the 44th Anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956

Edited by
ADAM MAKKAI

with the co-operation of
†GEORGE BUDAY and LOUIS I. SZATHMÁRY II
and special assistance of
AGNES ARANY-MAKKAI, EARL M. HERRICK,
JÓZSEF JANKOVICS and VALERIE BECKER MAKKAI

Foreword by
DR. ÁRPÁD GÖNCZ
President of the Republic of Hungary (1990–2000)

Co-published by ATLANTIS-CENTAUR (Chicago),
FRAMO PUBLISHING (Chicago) and TERTIA (Budapest)
International Distribution by UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS
(Urbana, Chicago & London)

This book is published with the financial assistance of the
Millennium Office of the Hungarian Government



*IN QUEST OF THE 'MIRACLE STAG':
THE POETRY OF HUNGARY*

An Anthology of Hungarian Poetry in English
Translation from the Thirteenth Century to the Present

Edited by
ADAM MAKKAI

Woodcut Illustrations by
GEORGE BUDAY

Cover Design by
ANDREW KNER

Copyright©1996 and 2000 by Atlantis-Centaur, Inc.

Printed in Hungary, PrinterArt, Inc.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG NUMBER: 00-132827

ATLANTIS-CENTAUR, Inc., Chicago (ISBN 0-9642094-9-7)

FRAMO PUBLISHING, Inc., Chicago (ISBN 0-936398-95-7)

TERTIA, Budapest (ISBN 963 86024 2 2)

International Distribution by
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS, Urbana, Chicago & London

In memoriam
LADISLAS GARA (1907–1966)
WATSON KIRKCONNEL (1895–1977)
PAUL TABORI (1909–1975)

Pioneers
in the Field
of the Translation
of Minority Literatures
into French and English

FOREWORD

Foreword

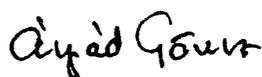
To write poetry is an act of daring. Obeying an inner imperative, poets set out toward the unknown, toward many, or maybe one single stranger who—so poets believe—is or will be capable of sharing the message of that inner command with them.

To translate poetry is sheer audacity. Translators of poetry write poems under the inspiration of the poetry of another, attempting to cross the inter-language ocean toward someone who—so translators believe—will be able to share with them that particular message which carries the underlying intention that occasioned the original poem.

To edit an anthology of translated poetry invites the fury of the gods. The world of poetry has as many viewpoints as there are readers of poetry and an anthology takes aim at all of those readers at once, while remaining fully aware that it is impossible to reach all of them.

Honor and respect, then, to all of those who, in full knowledge of the consequences of this temptation, nonetheless set out on the voyage. Columbus's enterprise is dwarfed by theirs. But they, too, like Columbus, are led by faith—faith in the fact that there are human beings on the other side as well, and that the human spirit is one, even as it manifests in many languages. They are all of this, those who gathered and launched the poetic messages of a small linguistic island, Hungarian, toward the distant shores of The World Language, because they believe that there will be a few people capable of picking individual flowers out of this bouquet of messages, and delighting in them either as a whole, or just stem by stem. And this in order that the recipients themselves may be enriched.

I trust that their faith will become reality. It is in this hope that I launch this volume, whose roots sprouted in the very depths of our souls.



Árpád Göncz
President of the Republic of Hungary
(1990–2000)

Előszó

Verset írni merészség; aki verset ír, belső parancsra, az ismeretlennek vág neki valaki – valakik felé – akik hite szerint képesek megosztani vele e belső parancs üzenetét.

Verset fordítani vakmerőség; aki verset fordít, az verset ír egy más vers ihletében, s nekivág a nyelvek közti óceánnak valaki – valakik – felé, akik a túlparton hite szerint képesek megosztani vele azt az üzenetet, amit az eredeti verset létrehozó belső parancs üzenete hordoz.

Antológiát szerkeszteni istenkísértés; a költészet világának annyi közepe van ahányan verset olvasnak, s egy versantológia egyszerre célozza meg valamennyit. Bár tudván-tudjuk, hogy mindet eltalálni lehetetlen.

Tisztelet-becsület mindazoknak, akik erre – a kísértés természetének ismeretében – vállalkoznak. Columbus vállalkozása eltöprel az övékéhez képest. De őket is, mint Columbuszt, a hit vezérli. A hit, hogy a túlparton is emberek élnek, s az emberi lélek egy, ha sok nyelven nyilvánul is meg.

Mindazoknak, akik egy kis nyelvsziget – a magyar – belső parancsra kelt vers-üzeneteit összegyűjtötték s útnak indították egy távoli világnyelv partjai felé, mert hitük szerint lesz, aki ott képes ezt az üzenetsokrot szálaira szedni, s szálanként is, egészében is gyönyörködni benne. Hogy ezzel maga is gazdagodjék.

Hiszem, hogy hitük valóráválik. Ebben a reményben indítom útjára ezt a lelkünkben lelkedzett kötetet.

Göncz Árpád

Göncz Árpád
a Magyar Köztársaság elnöke
(1990–2000)

Preface to the Second Revised Edition

The first edition of this book appeared in 1996 when Hungary, having been founded in 896 A.D., was celebrating its millicentennial and the 40th anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. The present edition of 2000 celebrates Hungary's having become a European Christian nation under King Stephen I, who was later sainted by the Catholic Church and is commonly remembered today as St. Stephen not only by Hungarians but all over the world.

During the four years between the first edition and the present one, Hungary became a member of NATO together with Poland and the Czech Republic and preparations are under way for Hungary to become a member of the European Community.

Volume I, which features only the completed oeuvres, has received enthusiastic notices and reviews from such notable Anglophones as Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, Professors Audrey Lumsden-Kouvel, and Emery George. Dissatisfaction with the book came from exclusively Hungarian sources, which was predictable. With the first edition, which reached all points in North America, Hawaii, England, Australia, and even Kenya completely gone, it became necessary to reissue the book. We have tried to eliminate the typos and other infelicities that inevitably manage to sneak into a book of this size. In a number of places we have added additional translations of a given poem, when such additional material became available and the poem in question was of sufficient importance to warrant the duplication. I would like to mention Gyula Illyés's "One Sentence on Tyranny," Attila József's "Ode" and "On My Birthday," which are generally considered untranslatable. The latter had four versions in the first edition, now there are six. We expanded the material on Bálint Balassi and Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos.

The physical format of the second edition has also changed. Instead of pushing stanzas together in order to save space, the present version restores all poems to their original format. This was made possible by the expertise of Tertia Publishers in Budapest, whose 10 point Garamond letters, although smaller than the 11 point Times Roman the first edition appeared in, are much more appealing.

I have benefited from the insightful remarks of numerous colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Indiana University as well as from Thomas Kabdebo, George Gömöri, Clara Györgyey, and Emery George, living in Ireland, the UK, and in the USA, respectively.

Volume II is scheduled to appear at the end of Hungary's Christian millennium. This officially started on August 20, 2000 and lasts until August 20, 2001. It will contain the poetry of living authors ranging from the 90-year old classics György Faludy and Amy Károlyi through such octogenarians as Győző Határ, followed by the seventy and sixty-year olds, who can be considered as Hungary's most important living authors. We intend also to include young poets with a proven talent and a distinct voice of their own.

Any infelicities that still remain are my sole responsibility.

Adam Makkai

THE LEGEND OF THE
'MIRACLE STAG'

The Legend of the 'Miracle Stag'

The great Oriental King, Nimrod, had two sons, Hunor and Magor. They went hunting one day and saw a creature that was snow white and had golden antlers—it was both female and male, “hind” and “stag.” It lured them farther and farther to the West, where the hunting grounds were richer and the land more fertile. The sons of Hunor became the Huns, and the sons of Magor became the Magyars, the Hungarians.

Some people could see the miraculous creature flying in the air. They saw the stag with the huge golden antlers between which it carried the Sun and Moon.

The “Miracle Stag” thus led the Magyars to present-day Hungary where they arrived in the year 896. They were shamanists and warriors who terrorized Europe for over a century. In the year 1000 Saint Stephen, who ruled until 1038, converted the Hungarians to Christianity.

Then once again the “Miracle Stag” appeared. It had burning candles on the tips of its antlers—it was, in fact, a living cathedral and the very messenger of the Virgin Mary and of Jesus Christ Himself.

Hungary's poets have been pursuing the “Miracle Stag” for over seven centuries, each according to his or her vision. In all its incarnations, the image of the “Miracle Stag” is a perennial symbol of an Oriental people whose destiny it was to become European and to act as the guardians of the West—against the Tartar invasion of the 13th century, the Turkish invasion of the 16th and the 17th, and the Soviet Communist invasion of the 20th century. In Hungary's poetry, ancient Oriental Shamanism blended with the Christianity of Europe.

The “Miracle Stag” prances ever westward. It has appeared in Germany, France, and England, giving voice to the poetry of Hungary. And now, on the 1,100th birthday of Hungary, the “Miracle Stag” has reached the shores of America.

Chicago, 1996.

Adam Makkai

THE LEGEND OF THE "MIRACULOUS HIND"¹by János Arany (*q.v.*)

The lark's aloft from bough to bough,
 the song is passed from lip to lip.
 Green grass grows o'er old heroes now
 but song revives their fellowship...

Forth to the hunt they ride again
 two brave sons that fair *Enéh*² bore,
Hunor and *Magyar*, champions twain,
Ménrót's³ twin sons in days of yore.

Each chooses fifty doughty knights
 to go in escort at his side;
 armed as for bloody war's delights,
 they seek out game in youthful pride.

Wild beasts in pools of blood they drag;
 they slaughter all the elk they find;
 they have already killed the stag,
 and now they all pursue the hind.

They chase the hind continually
 along the Salt Sea's⁴ barren shore,
 where neither wolf nor bear may be
 lest it be lost forevermore.

1 'Miraculous Hind' or 'Wonder Hind' in Hungarian is *csodaszarvas*, literally 'the miracle-antlered-one,' as *sarvas* is a generic term covering both sexes. Arany's epic seems to concretize the hunt; the English translation separates 'stag' from 'hind.' The mythological creature the title of this volume designates was androgynous, as expressed by the fact that it carried both the Sun, the ancient masculine symbol, and the Moon, the symbol of femininity.

2 In Hungarian mythology, the wife of King Ménrót (Nimrod) about whom see footnote 3. The name *Enéh* is cognate with both *anya* 'mother' and *ünő* 'doe' or 'hind.'

3 Known in the West from the Bible as *Nimrod* the founder of cities in Sumer and Assyria as well as a great hunter. His figure is similar to that of *Gilgamesh*, but cannot be precisely identified with any one personage. He became a part of Hungarian mythology in the 13th century because of the zeal of the Chronicle writers in the reign of King Béla III.

But 'cross those wastes of prairie earth
 the panther and the lion yelp;
 the tawny tiger there gives birth
 and in her hunger eats her whelp.

On flies the bird, the song flies on
 of *Enéþ*'s sons' fair fellowship:
 the lark's aloft from bough to bough,
 the song is passed from lip to lip.

The sun is passing from their view,
 piercing the clouds with fiery spears,
 but still the hind they all pursue...
 at sunset, lo, it disappears.

They find themselves as daylight sinks
 where *Kur*'s⁵ broad waters sweep and swell.
 on meadows by the river-brinks
 their weary steeds may pasture well.

Says *Hunor*: "Let us bivouac,
 water our steeds, and turn to rest."
 Says *Magyar*: "When the dawn comes back,
 let us go homeward from our quest."

But "ho, ho my heroes, knights of mine,
 what mystifying land is this?
 To eastward see the sunset shine.
 it looks to human eyes amiss!"

4 The migration route of the early Hungarians, as reconstructed by archeologists and linguists, most probably took them past the Caspian Sea and Black Sea. Old Ossetic and Turkish loanwords indicate extended contact with Indo-Iranian and Altaic tribes. Arany's place names, which were based on oral tradition, are partly borne out by this newer research.

5 The *Kura* river which has its origin on the Armenian Plateau and flows into the Caspian Sea.

"It seems to me," a warrior claims
"the light from down south issues forth."
Another vows "No, it remains
and it is glowing in the north..."

Dismounting all, their steeds they tend
and slumber by the river's foam,
and purposed, when the night should end,
to journey with their escort home.

The dawn is cool; a light wind blows;
the broad horizon brims with blue;
the hind across the river goes
and bravely leaps before their view.

On flies the bird, the song flies now
of *Enéh's* sons' fair fellowship:
the lark's aloft from bough to bough,
the song is passed from lip to lip.

"Now, my quick lads! Speed on the chase,
let's catch this apparition hind!"
Blithe or reluctant, forth they race
and press on, to their task resigned.

So then they ford the river *Kur*,
and find the waste-land still more wild;
no drop of water dewes the moor
no blades of grass in verdure smile.

The crumbling surface of the land
sweats soda from its sterile brow,
springs ooze with poison from the sand
and sulphur stinks in many a slough.

With bubbling oils the springs are bright;
they burn untended here and there;
like watch-fires in a gloomy night
their fulgor flickers everywhere.

Each night they bitterly repent
 their longing for this game they traced
 with such unwearying intent
 into the mazes of the waste.

But when the dust of morning thins,
 to chase the hind their hearts are stirred
 as thistledown obeys the winds
 or shadow-wings pursue the bird.

On flies the bird, the song flies now
 of *Enéh*' sons' fair fellowship:
 the lark's aloft from bough to bough,
 the song is passed from lip to lip.

They search the waste: they track the *Don*⁶
 as far as *Meót*'s lesser sea;⁷
 through boggy marshes they press on
 to isles of fenny greenery.

And there the hind, like fleeting mist
 of fog about her in the skies,
 —again? But how could they have missed?—
 now disappears before their eyes.

"Halloo!" they cry, "where is the game?"
 "Yonder she dashes!" one does call.
 Another shouts: "this way she came!"
 A third: "she is not here at all..."

6 The *Don* river flows into the Sea of Azov, the northeastern arm of the Black Sea, cut off by the Crimean Peninsula.

7 *Meót* or *Meotis* was the name of the Black Sea in antiquity, along with other names such as *Pontus Euxinus*. "Meót's lesser sea" refers to the Sea of Azov on whose northern banks was '*Levedia*,' historically attested as the penultimate station of the Hungarians on their westward march; they left there ca. A.D. 840–850.

Through every nook and copse they search;
through every bush they track the hind,
by lizard-lair and partridge-perch,
but what they seek they cannot find.

Then *Magyar* speaks with many a sigh:
"Who knows the way that leads us back?
on every side there's boundless sky—
we'll perish on this far-off track."

Says *Hunor*: "Let us not retreat!
But build a camp and call it home—
the grass here's soft, the water's sweet—
and trees with sap are all afoam.

Bright fishes are the river's gift,
and tawny game makes tasty food.
The bows are taut, the arrows swift,
and booty—our adventure's gift..."

On flies the bird, the song flies now
of *Enéh*'s son's fair fellowship:
the lark's aloft from bough to bough
the song is passed from lip to lip.

But soon they wish to venture out,
they yearn for newer, different game—
as they get bored with fish and trout,
and so they enter on the plain.

And there across the level prairie
at dead of night, strange music streams,
out in the wasteland, wide and airy,
as if from heaven or in dreams.

There fairy maidens did subsist
and danced with joy in elfin measure;
housed in a tent of woven mist,
they passed their nights in tuneful pleasure.

No man may spy the elfin school;
 for mortal maids surpassing fair—
 daughters of Kings, *Belár* and *Dúl*,⁸
 are learning elfin magic there.

Fairest are *Dúl*'s two girls to view,
 old *Belár*'s twelve are sweet and warm;
 their company, five-score and two,
 are poised to take on fairy form.

To win it, each must kill a man,
 bewitch nine youths with magic lure,
 tease them along to love's hot plan
 yet keep their own white bodies pure.

Thus are they taught the fatal art
 the fearful knowledge of the fairy;
 each night their progress they impart,
 each night in dancing they make merry.

On flies the bird, the song flies now
 of *Enéh*'s sons' fair fellowship—
 the lark's aloft from bough to bough,
 the song is passed from lip to lip.

The men follow the fairy-sound
 they stalk a-tiptoe on the sly;
 the flickering lights they spy and hound,
 as if chasing a butterfly.

Says *Magyar*: "Brother, that sweet fife
 tickles my marrow through and through!"
 Says *Hunor*: "Nothing in my life
 has stirred me as those maidens do!"—

⁸ Legendary figures of the Hungarian Chronicles whom history has not been able to identify.

“Up, knights, and at them! Join the chase!
Let each one bear a woman back,
holding her tight in his embrace!
The wind will cover up our track!”

They spur their horses on and fling,
the reins aside that they may seize
the maidens dancing in a ring
all unprepared for deeds like these.

The girls run wild with piercing cries,
but fire and stream hem in their charms;
whichever way a virgin flies,
she falls into a rider's arms.

Away their fairy teachers fly,
on frightened wings they flutter free...
But what can mortal maidens try
to save their sweet virginity?

Now, in that place, no maid remains;
the horsemen gallop with a will,
exultant; and upon those plains
the empty night is dark and still.

On flies the bird, the song flies now
of *Enéb's* sons' fair fellowship—
the lark's aloft from bough to bough,
the song is passed from lip to lip.

King *Dúl's* two daughters, the most fair,
to *Hunor* and to *Magyar* fall.
The hundred knights in rapture share
the hundred girls, and love them all.

Proud maids in time do reconcile,
though thwarted in their virgin plan.
They seek their homes no more, but smile
atonement, bearing sons to man.

Their isle becomes a country sweet;
their tents become a treasured home;
their beds become a blest retreat,
from which they do not wish to roam.

They bring forth boys, brave clans to please,
fair girls they bear for love's warm hour—
the handsome slips of youthful trees
in place of their lost virgin flower.

Heroic children, two by two,
become the heads of every clan;
five-score and eight their branches grow,
and fertile marriage spreads their span.

Brave *Hunor's* branch become the Huns,
and *Magyar's* is the Magyar nation;
beyond all number are the sons
that overrun their island station.

On Scythia⁹ then they sweep in spate,
King *Dúl's* rich empire in the south—
since when, O pair of heroes great,
your glory flies from mouth to mouth!

*Watson Kirkconnell,
Anton N. Nyerges and Adam Makkai*

9 An ancient region extending over a large part of European and Asiatic Russia, inhabited by the Scythians.

The reader is asked to turn to the following poems in order to see the development of the 'Miracle Stag' theme:

- (1) *I Chant of the Miracle Stag* (Shamanistic version) p. 25
- (2) *I Chant of the Miracle Stag* (Christian version) p. 26
- (3) *The Stag of Irisora* p. 628
- (4) *The Sons Changed Into Stags* p. 667
- (5) *The Splendid Stags* p. 668
- (6) *The Magic Stag* p. 784
- (7) *The Young Miracle Stag* p. 1014
- (8) *The Boy Changed Into a Stag Clamours at the Gate of Secrets* p. 1036

The Coming of Age of a National Anthology of Poetry and Editor's Acknowledgments

This book originated as a private conversation between two Hungarian émigré writers in London, shortly after the French publisher Les Éditions du Seuil produced the collection entitled *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise*.¹

The French anthology's editor, Ladislav Gara, had realized several years earlier that the French practice of translating foreign poetry always into prose could be changed to result in actual French poetry, if the French translators could somehow be made to hear and appreciate what poetry in a foreign tongue sounded like. He thus invented what came to be known as the "Gara Method of Translation," which, at least theoretically, works as follows.

The editor, helped by a team of volunteer co-editors, prepares a word-for-word, indeed morpheme-for-morpheme 'Pidgin-French' (or in our case, 'Pidgin-English') translation to help the native poet-translators appreciate the grammatical structure of the text at hand. This is accompanied by a free prose translation in idiomatic Target Language diction without any regard for the rhyme and meter of the original piece. Then, in order to help the translators appreciate the sound of the original, the editors create a series of mock stanzas in the Target Language—this time without regard for the meaning of the original—solely in order to suggest a rhythmic and rhyming pattern that may be followed.

In order to make the package complete, the editor and his colleagues should also add a tape-recorded reading of the poem in the original Source Language (Hungarian in our case) in educated and clear poetic diction.

The French became intrigued.

Gara's *Anthologie de la poésie hongroise* opened a new chapter in the history of French literary translation. The poets collaborating with Gara and his team included Guillevic, Alain Bosquet, Éluard, Aragon, Lucien Feuillede, Anne-Marie Backer, and many more—all known and respected French poets with voices of their own.

The results were of exceptionally high quality. The *Anthologie* received some of the highest critical acclaim ever accorded a foreign anthology in France. Some

1 The book appeared in Paris in 1962. The editor, Ladislav Gara, tragically took his own life in 1966.

of the translators took their job so seriously that they wound up giving themselves crash courses in Hungarian; some even travelled to Hungary.

Even so, Gara did not include every possible translation in his book. In fact, he sometimes asked the various poets to translate a certain piece more than once; additionally, he often gave the same piece to several poets, sometimes to ten or more. He then judiciously compared all the possible versions harvested in this manner and only included what he and his team thought were of the highest quality. Gara actually concludes his famous *Anthologie* with an essay in which he shows how four particularly difficult lines by Hungary's greatest poet of the 19th century, János Arany (q.v.), sound in a dozen different versions.

Les Éditions du Seuil became known as the publisher of innovatively translated foreign literatures, mostly poetry. Other anthologies followed. They all used the now famous "Gara Method" with considerable success.

Shortly before his death, Ladislas Gara spoke to Paul Tabori,² the London-based Hungarian expatriate writer of over one hundred books, three dozen feature films and hundreds of essays and articles (including some early Hungarian poetry), and suggested that Tabori do in English for the poetry of Hungary what Gara had done in French. Tabori recalled that Gara's voice was unusually heavy, sounding foreboding and prophetic. Tabori felt mesmerised by it and agreed on the spot.³ In the ensuing conversation Gara explained his method to Tabori and urged him to follow it to the letter.

Tabori contacted his friend, the young Hungarian writer and librarian, Thomas Kabdebo, a 1956 emigré, who had studied at University College London and was, *inter alia*, in charge of the linguistics section of the Library, working with Professor Michael A.K. Halliday. A gifted poet, novelist, and essayist in both Hungarian and English, Kabdebo undertook the Herculean task of preparing the word-for-word 'Pidgin English translations' of some of the oldest texts and began to distribute these to the then best known available poets and translators in Britain including René Bonnerjea, Neville Masterman, Dermot Spence, John Wain, Roy Fuller, Watson Kirkconnell, Vernon Watkins, Alan Dixon, Ted Hughes, and W.H. Auden.⁴ Excellent progress had thus been achieved by Tabori and Kabdebo and the roughly one hundred contributing editors and translators scattered over Europe, North America, Australia, South America, and even India, when the present editor, at Tabori's and Kabdebo's joint invitation, joined the team in late 1966.

2 Born in Budapest in 1910; died in London in 1975.

3 Personal communication from the late Paul Tabori in 1972.

4 For a full list of the contributing translators please see the Table of Contents in the present volume.

After several years of concentrated labor, the volume was accepted for publication by Mouton in the Hague, but the publisher's subsequent financial problems, long delays in production, and eventual removal to Berlin persuaded the editors to cancel the contract.

At this point, Tabori suddenly died in London of a heart attack in 1975. This, in turn, led Kabdebo and me to various reconsiderations of the book. Was it too long as it stood? Were all the authors originally included truly representative of the poetry of Hungary? Should we perhaps judiciously prune it? And if so, on whose advice? Our own?

One problem was that the manuscript was physically enormous.⁵ With a generous financial contribution from Louis Szathmáry⁶ and with additional financial contribution from the Hungarian Cultural Foundation, directed by the late Dr. Joseph Értavy-Baráth and his wife, Katalin Értavy-Baráth, M.D.⁷, the editors succeeded in obtaining the co-operation of the eminent linguist-anthropologist and American poet Roger W. Wescott⁸ and of the late Paul Carroll of the University of Illinois at Chicago, the poet, critic, and Professor of creative writing,⁹ who agreed to read the entire manuscript and to provide guidelines as to which poems should be retired and which should be included. Wescott and Carroll never met, but their recommendations were so strikingly similar as to be nearly identical.

Thomas Kabdebo, who bore the brunt of this project for decades, withdrew in 1993 to my immense personal regret. His invaluable work remains present throughout the entire volume, though I alone am responsible for any mistakes or inaccuracies that remain.

When the political situation drastically changed in the wake of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, ideological problems,

5 1,300 pages in typescript.

6 He also generously sponsored the artist, George Buday, who prepared the 25 original woodcuts for this anthology. A restaurateur, painter, sculptor, essayist, poet, and philosopher, Szathmáry made innumerable contributions to Hungarian culture in America, his involvement in this book being only one of many.

7 Formerly residents of Buffalo, N.Y., now of Stone Mountain, Georgia, Prof. and Mrs. Értavy-Baráth were the Founders of the Hungarian Studies Foundation. They published English translations of Sándor Petőfi, János Arany, Endre Ady, and Attila József (qq.v) by Anton N. Nyerges.

8 Roger W. Wescott taught at Michigan State University, then at Drew University. He is the author of hundreds of articles and numerous books on language and is a poet and translator featured in numerous anthologies.

9 Paul Carroll, the noted American poet, was poetry editor of *Chicago Review* and *Big Table*. He taught poetry in the Creative Writing Program at UIC, whence he retired in 1993.

such as allusions to 1956 in the Introduction as originally written in 1971–1972 by the late László Cs. Szabó, ceased to exist. Cs. Szabó, the leading Hungarian essayist, was Section Chief of the Hungarian Program of the BBC in London. Shortly before his death, he asked me to update, amend, and annotate his preface as I might deem necessary.

Hungary celebrates its 1,100th anniversary in 1996, on which unique occasion an International World Fair was planned jointly to be organized in Vienna and Budapest, but was subsequently abandoned as economically unfeasible. Although an isolated and modest event in itself, the appearance of this anthology may be an appropriate tribute.

We live in an age of a general decline of interest in literature in the West, with television and its familiar topics holding the public attention. The post-Cold War economy of East-Central Europe is dismal and the publishing of serious literature has sustained one blow after another.

We are extremely grateful to the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education without whose generous grant this book could never have been published. Thanks are due also to Minister Dr. Bálint Magyar, Under-secretary Péter Inkei, former Minister Gábor Fodor, former Under-secretary András Török, and Mr. Pál Perlik, Executive Secretary of the Hungarian National Cultural Foundation. Two past Presidents of the Hungarian Writers' Association, novelist Anna Jókai and József Tornai, a leading poet, have given the National Cultural Foundation and the Ministry their endorsements on behalf of this volume. Miklós Hubay, novelist and playwright, and Éva Tóth, poet, translator and editor, President and Vice President of the Hungarian P.E.N., respectively, have given their endorsement to the project and helped organize public discussions on the translation of Hungarian poetry in the spring of 1995.

A large number of excellent poets I wanted to include in Volume I will instead appear in Volume II, due to severe space limitations. The poem by Ferenc Juhász 'The Boy Turned Into a Stag Clamours at the Gate of Secrets' appears nevertheless in this volume, because the stag theme brings our millennial theme to a modern conclusion. We intend to make the forthcoming Volume II as comprehensive as possible.

My special thanks go to the following who, jointly and severally, helped me with all aspects of the production of the present version of this book including bibliographical and reference work, wording, typography, alternative rhyming, etc.: Kate Barlay, István Bart, Bruce Berlind, David Cohen, Elisabeth Cserenyey Cserép, István Csicsery-Rónay, Joseph Értavy-Baráth, George Faludy, István Gál, George Gömöri, Clara Györgyey, Ferenc Györgyey, Agnes W. Kabdebo, Thomas Kabdebo, Alajos Kannás, Albert Kner, Rebecca Rose Makkai, Kenneth

McRobbie, Ferenc Mózsi, Krisztina Passuth, András Sándor, Mátyás Sárközi, Béla Szász, George Szirtes, and Peter Zollman. Whatever inflicities remain, are my sole responsibility.

I am most grateful to the late Watson Kirkconnell and the late Anton N. Nyerges for their verbal permissions over the phone to carry out a few minor touch-ups. My name after theirs indicates all such editings. My special thanks go to Mr. Peter Tabori, executor of the literary estate of the late Paul Tabori, who gave us the full rights to all materials included in this anthology.

We are collectively most grateful both to the authors, to their heirs, and to the translators, who have unselfishly donated their labor in agreement with the late Paul Tabori, the originator of this project, and agreed to accept one copy of the book in lieu of honorarium. Their generosity is fully in keeping with the nature of this commemorative volume and the time of its publication: “an act of faith and love.”

Chicago and Budapest, October 23, 1996.

Adam Makkai

A Note on the Hungarian Language: Provenance, Spelling, and Pronunciation

Hungarian is spoken by fifteen million people, with ten million living inside the borders of today's Hungary and five million outside. Most of these, possibly up to 2.8 million, live in Romania; the rest are in Slovakia, Serbia, Austria, and Ukraine, with one million in Canada, the USA, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and Western Europe. Recently even South Africa acquired pockets of Hungarian speakers variously acculturated to their new surroundings.

The majority of Hungary's leading poets were born outside of today's Hungary. This is the result of the tragedy of the Versailles-Trianon peace treaty of 1920 in which Hungary lost two thirds of her territories.

The Hungarian language belongs to the Ugric subgroup of the Uralic family of languages. It is an "agglutinating" language, i.e., a language that uses large numbers of suffixes and post-positions. Typical constructions in this system are the one-word phrases *kezemben* 'in my hand', which breaks down into *kéz-* 'hand', *-em* 'my', and *-ben* 'in'; and *házamban* 'in my house', which can be analyzed into *ház* 'house', *-am* 'my', and *-ban* 'in'. In Indo-European languages these relationships are shown by separate words; Hungarian piles them up as suffixes. Yet Hungarian is easier to learn than Greek, Sanskrit, or Russian, because it lacks obligatory gender and the usual Indo-European agreement rules between adjectives and nouns.

The Hungarian alphabet consists of 44 Roman letters and combinations as follows: A, Á, B, C, CS, D, DZ, DZS, E, É, F, G, GY, H, I, Í, J, K, L, LY, M, N, NY, O, Ó, Ö, Ő, P, Q, R, S, SZ, T, TY, U, Ú, Ü, Ű, V, W, X, Y, Z, ZS. The acute accent does not mean stress—stress is always on the first syllable of each word, no matter how long—but means a difference in vowel quality; the double acute accent—unique to Hungarian—similarly indicates length of the unlauded vowels. An impressionistic English example (using both British and American pronunciations) follows after each letter:

- A** as in *Bob, lot, got* (British); or *saw, moth* (US).
- Á** as in *father* (most dialects) or *Bob, got* (US).
- B** as in *Bob, bean, better*.
- C** like English *ts* in *cats*; word initially as in *tse-tse*.
- CS** like *ch* in *Charlie, chicken, choose*.

- D** as in *do, did, Douglas*.
- DZ** like *ds* in English plurals such as *lads, lids, needs*.
- DZS** like English *j* in *June, Jill*, or *dg* in *judge*.
- E** as in 'open *e*' pronunciations of *let's, get, set*, noticeably different from Australian and New Zealand 'closed *e*' pronunciation.
- É** as in French *été*, Australian *leg, Meg, keg*; does not have a glide at the end like the Anglo-American 'long *a*' in *Able, came, bay*.
- F** as in *Frank, fist, foot, fight*.
- G** is always 'hard' as in *goose, go, get*.
- GY** is a 'palatalized *d*', as in the British pronunciation of *due, dew, adieu*.
- H** as in *Howard, hill*.
- I** is as 'high' and 'tense' as *ee* in English, but shorter; it has no real English equivalent.
- Í** has the same quality as Hungarian **I** but is long; it therefore approximates English *ee* as in *feet, sheep, heel*, but it lacks the diphthongal glide at the end of those English sounds.
- J** like English *y* in *yes, you, Yankee* and German *j* in *ja, Jugend, jemand*.
- K** as in *skill, school, skate*; it does not have the extra puff of air after it that occurs in *kill, cool, Kate*.
- L** as in *look, like, love*.
- LY** is a historical digraph always pronounced with a silent L, like English *y* in *buyer, by-and-by, you*.
- M** as in *mom, Mike, limb*.
- N** as in *no, enemy, bend*.
- NY** is a digraph for the 'palatalized *n*' sound spelled *ñ* in Spanish in *español, otoño* and spelled *gn* in French in *espagnol, agneau*; a similar sound, divided between two syllables, occurs in English in *canyon, onion, opinion*.
- O** as in Northern British and some quasi-Scottish pronunciations of *lots, hot, boy, mob*; distinct from the pronunciations of **A** discussed above.
- Ó** has a similar quality to Hungarian **O** but is long; comparable to the Scottish pronunciation of *go, so, no, woe*; does not have a glide at the end like either the British or the American pronunciations of these words.
- Ö** as in German *ö* or *oe* in *Götter, Goetz* and French *e* in *meurt*; it has no real English equivalent.
- Ő** has the same quality as Hungarian **Ö** but is long; comparable to the long French *eux* in *deux* and to German *öb* in *öb!*; it has no real English equivalent.
- P** as in *spill, spoil, lisp*; it does not have the extra puff of air that occurs after it in *pill, Peter, pull*.

- Q** is mostly used in foreign words and is pronounced like **K**.
- R** is a trilled sound as in Scottish English; it is never pronounced as in American *bear, her, murmur*; most British dialects pronounce a similar but shorter trill in the words *very, American*.
- S** like *sh* in most English words, *shoe, she*; and like English *s* in *sugar, sure*.
- SZ** like English *s* in *Sam, Sit, sew, this*.
- T** as in *still, stole, empty*; it does not have the extra puff of air that occurs in *Tom, till, tidy*.
- TY** is a 'palatalized *t*' as in the British pronunciation of *student, stew, Tudor*; American *get you, meet you, met you*, come close unless turned into the *ch* sound in faster, more informal speech.
- U** lies between English *oo* as in *soot, foot* and *u* as in *tube*.
- Ú** has the same quality as Hungarian **U** but is long, resembling North English and Scottish English versions of *who, knew, woo*, unlike the diphthongized Anglo-American forms which have a glide at the end.
- Û** like French *u* in *tu*, and German *ü* in *zünden, Sünde*; English has no real equivalent.
- Ű** has the same quality as Hungarian **Ū**, but is long. It is like German *spüren, fühlen, Mühe*.
- V** as in *victory, nave, live*.
- W** is pronounced the same way as Hungarian **V**.
- X** occurs only in foreign words and is pronounced like **KS**.
- Y** forms digraphs with preceding **N, G, T**; after any other letter it is pronounced like **I**.
- Z** as in *zoo, zany, amaze*.
- ZS** like English *s* in *pleasure, leisure, measure*; and like French *g* in *garage, mirage, dommage*.

Most Hungarian given names have Western equivalents, thus *András* = 'Andrew'; *Dezső* = 'Desider' or 'Desiré'; *Endre* = 'Andrew'; *Ferenc* = 'Frank' or 'Francis'; *Frigyes* = 'Frederick'; *György* = 'George'; *Gyula* = 'Julius'; *Imre* = 'Emery'; *István* = 'Stephen'; *János* = 'John'; *József* = 'Joseph'; *Károly* = 'Charles'; *Lajos* = 'Louis'; *László* = 'Leslie' or 'Ladislas'; *Lőrinc* = 'Lawrence'; *Margit* = 'Margaret'; *Mátyás* = 'Matthias' or 'Matthew'; *Mihály* = 'Michael'; *Miklós* = 'Nicholas'; *Sándor* = 'Alexander'; *Sebestyén* = 'Sebastian', etc.

Some names are, of course, international: *Ádám, Ágnes, Anna, Dániel, Dávid*, etc.

Balassi's name *Bálint* is related to *Valentine*, but *Béla, Géza, Levente, Zoltán*, etc. have no English equivalents. Several family names have obvious meanings,

too; e.g. *Arany* = 'gold'. *János Arany*'s whole name could therefore be rendered as 'John Gold'. The surname *Szabó* designates the occupation 'taylor'; hence the name of *Lőrinc Szabó* could be Anglicized as 'Lawrence Taylor.'

Petőfi's name, which was originally the Slovak *Petrovics*, means 'Peterson' both in Slovak and in Hungarian; *Sándor Petőfi*, is therefore, "translatable" as '*Alexander Peterson*'. Even *Vörösmarty*'s family name has an etymology; the first part means 'crimson,' and its second part means 'bank' or 'grave'; his entire name rendered into English could therefore be the same as that of the famous actor, (Sir) 'Michael Redgrave.' These possibilities are merely mentioned as curiosities. Other family names are derivatives of toponyms or are of obscure etymology.

Adam Makkai and Earl M. Herrick