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Index: 26843

# NH QH

## The New Hungarian Quarterly

■ Social and Political Effects  
of the New Economic Mechanism — *Rezső Nyers*

■ A Contemporary Approach to East-West Economic Relations — *József Bognár*

■ Women's Life is One Long War — *Emil Koložsvári Grandpierre*

■ My Very Sole Self — *Sarolta Raffai*

■ Ars Mathematica — *Alfréd Rényi*

■ Sindbad's Autumn Journey — *Gyula Krúdy*

■ Advanced Unescoese — *Iván Boldizsár*

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34

is made up of long and short sentences, ranging from the pithy "horse-power!" (p. 126) to the novelistic "He pays his addresses to Miss Hill; he pays her great attention; he makes love to her; he is courting her" (p. 11). I can't help thinking however that the hero of the novel shows scant regard for propriety in putting the third item idiomatically before the fourth. The polite anglicist would surely reverse the order.

So that's how it is with language. But what are we language learners to make of all this? We are dreaming perhaps of how we too might write a book like this and advance the frontiers of science. In other words, have we grasped what the essence of the English idiom is? Are we better and better linguists? Can we go out with *The Times* under our arms and masquerade as Englishmen?

The best answer to these questions will be to include an extract from my forthcoming anglicised version, idiomatic if you like, of a well-known play. I have refused any help but that of *Anglicizmusok*. Here it is then, the old-fashioned speech in the new-fashioned way.

Enter Hamlet. It is as dark as the inside of a wolf's mouth. Hamlet told his footman he was at home to no-one, and his remark went home. The hour before he had been at a meeting, and an hour later he was at the theatre.

Enter Polonius.

POL. Well met, (my lord). Be of good cheer.

HAM. Has the postman been yet?

POL. (My lord), cast away your prejudices!

HAM. My behaviour admits of no excuse, I warrant, but today I am giving my eyes a holiday, because you look a curious object. You are failing rapidly. Upon my oath, so it is! Have you any objection to my plan? It occurred to me, we met in an odd sort of way. Notice this particularly. I will not abate one jot of my demands. Gentility without ability is worse than beggary. For further particulars, apply to the king.

POL. (Sir), give me fair play. Fall in with my suggestions.

HAM. There is a rumour far and wide you have a daughter. How does your son fare abroad? This news is too good to be true. I had a fancy he gave his money to the dogs...

Polonius draws breath with difficulty. He looked at the prince with an evil eye, but no kind word escaped his lips. He raised the following question:

POL. You study philosophy, (my lord)? To what end? Please mind your p's and q's. I have a pretty well-set up boy. He has sharp eyes and sharp ears. The boy you mention is quite another pair of shoes. He does not live in single-blessedness...

PAUL ASTON

## SCHOLARSHIP AND ITS PITFALLS

NINON A. M. LEADER: *Hungarian Classical Ballads and Their Folklore*, Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Interest abroad in Hungarian folk ballads has grown livelier in recent times. The results of Hungarian research have drawn the attention of experts to this little known

sphere of European folk poetry. Most recently this 350-page book appeared in English. It endeavours to acquaint the British scholarly world with the Hungarian ballad and its problems. For this purpose the author quotes 43 texts in literal translations, making no effort to retain the verse form, so that she could adhere all the more faith-

fully to the original expressions. This procedure is proper in an informative work that is not intended for the general public. Thus the very best in ballad poetry (disregarding two exceptions), almost every important and beautiful type is now available in English. The significance of this fact can be appreciated if one bears in mind that outside this book Hungarian ballads in English can only be found in a book published by the author of this article in 1967—23 types and five motives—but translated in full only in exceptional cases, and mostly given only in details or as a narration of the contents. At the present time, therefore, Mrs. Leader's book is the only one through which anyone interested who has to rely on the English language can become familiar with the Hungarian ballad in all its reality. A further great merit of the book is that the author always quotes in detail divergencies in the corresponding sections of the texts of her examples from the variants she holds in evidence. If we add that in the introduction, and in the discussion of the individual ballads she offers information on the whole of Hungarian ballad folklore, based on research carried on until the present, we can say that a work of comparable significance has never yet been published on the Hungarian folk ballad in a foreign language.

But for the very reason that we are concerned with such an important work which offers an initial impression, it is our duty to review it carefully, because mistaken information may for a long time influence the foreign reader who is not in a position to verify his facts. We must offer information about all elements in the material and the material and the apparatus that are presented to the non-Hungarian reader without expressing the consensus of Hungarian scholarly opinion.

As far as the authenticity of the material is concerned, this is quite beyond reproach on the whole: faithfulness of text, the authenticity of the selected texts (with the exception of two), their beauty, the designa-

tion of the original source, leave nothing to be desired. The two examples to which we take exception are "The Prince and the Princess" (p. 291) and "The Little Maple Tree" (p. 342). The first stems from Kőváry's entirely unreliable collection. It stands alone in the Hungarian heritage, its composition is literary in character—as noted also by Ortutay, from whose anthology the author took it: and all signs indicate that this is also one of the imitations that Kőváry and a number of "collectors" of the last century included with examples of genuine folk poetry. It is true that the author of this review had himself referred to a Kőváry text in his comparative study, but there also existed along with it, noted down among the people, a text in Hungarian that was close to it, as there was also among our neighbours. Even on this basis I had indicated only motifs in its content as "possibly usable," noting that its text was transcribed in this instance also. Under no circumstances would I have quoted its text as a specimen of our folk poetry, let alone in a collection and without comment, and let us add: in translation, where a divergence in style becomes entirely imperceptible. The other—"The Little Maple Tree"—has been recorded among the people in a few scattered instances but its new pulp publications type formulation departs completely from the style of the true—especially the old—ballads. Since the author has left a number of excellent ballads, on the basis of their new, but folk tone, for a following volume—including even some whose kinship with others in Europe bears out their antiquity—it is hard to understand why she made an exception with this new one which is not even in the genuine folk style. In my opinion in a Hungarian ballad anthology it should only possibly be included in the Appendix.

A similar inconsistency is to be found in the enumeration of variants. Right at the first type—among the variants of "Clement Mason" which tells of a building sacrifice—she lists under "G" the text of Kerényi's

popularizing booklet entitled *Madrka* (she mistakenly mentions No. 4 instead of No. 83)—but such a text does not exist. Kerényi ran together two variants—and he also quoted two separate tunes—and the sections of text belonging to the different songs were also differentiated, one of them with two-line stanzas, and the other with four-line ones. The latter is identical with the text quoted under “Q” by Mrs. Leader, whereas the other is a Kodály unpublished notation. It is a strange contradiction that while she adopts evidence from such a popularizing publication which gives no indication of its original sources, she is so reserved with regard to other, scholarly publications. In connection with “Clement Mason” she leaves out of consideration eight published variants, even some that were certainly available to her: in *Ethnographia*, the Bartalus collection, the *Néprajzi Közlemények*—of which she makes use several times—and last but not least, in the *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes*. In the case of the latter doubt was clearly responsible for her failure to quote a “Clement Mason” collected in Nyitra County (Czechoslovakia), although she could have read in the 1961/1 issue of the *Néprajzi Közlemények* the newer collector’s detailed account about the authenticity of this variant. And the “Miraculous Dead” originating in the same region, even more certainly authentic, and also omitted by her, also verifies what Kodály had long ago established in connection with a few melodies, that in the Zobor region of Nyitra County traditional elements have survived which otherwise can be found only in Transylvania. On this basis there was no justification for the omission of the aforementioned two variants and the observation that the two types of ballads were known only in Transylvania and Moldavia. Her failure to include the notation by Bartalus was the consequence of a misapprehension she entertained about him, as noted on page 3, that in a musical respect he was unreliable. No such assertion has been made about Bartalus:

he was a trained musician and music historian, of course he never penetrated the most ancient stratum of folk song to the same degree as Bartók and Kodály; and if he did occasionally, he was unable to record the rubato rhythm as accurately as they, that is, at times he compressed it rigidly into bars. But what he wrote down is authentic, and “Clement Mason” was precisely one of his ancient pieces. (It is true, of course, that he quoted the text in only the first stanza, and since it was identical with Kriza’s throughout, he settled the matter with the reference: “see Kriza.” Naturally one cannot quote it on such a basis, but one can certainly refer to it.)

In other respects she is pedantic in the extreme: she “painstakingly collated” the forms found in the Ortutay and Csanádi-Vargyas anthologies with the initial publications. On the one hand this was easy to do, for both quote the sources of their texts, and on the other hand it was superfluous, because both had carefully made their own comparisons. Of course, there is never any harm in exercising caution, but there is no indication that she might have come across inconsistencies.

The grouping is strange and inconsistent: Group I, “Important Ballads,” Group II, “Less Important Ballads.” Did she judge them on the basis of their beauty and significance? Then “Ladislav Fehér,” “Ilona Budai,” “The Mother of the Rich Woman,” etc. etc., cannot be considered less important! We learn that the types discussed by scholars in the West were included in Group I. But then “The Asp” and “Poisoned John” also belong among them. She included in Group II what can be regarded as secondary descendants of other Hungarian ballads—this claim can be applied to hardly more than one or two songs—or what turned into a new style from ancient elements—in that event about ten more types should have been listed here which she omitted completely from her volume. Strangest of all, however, is the fact that a whole group of themes has

also been included among the “less important”; such as that of family conflicts, which is a most typical group of ballad themes. It is my impression that the “important” was where she felt inclined to go into the details of comparison, and where she did not, that became “less important.” On what basis were the “Miraculous Dead” included among the “magic ballads”? Did according to her people once believe in the “magical” mother who conjured up a mill that ground gold and money, and a tower reaching to the skies and the Tisza, in the way as they did in incantations and love potions? Were they not merely used as a stylized and playful image connected with feigned death, as a way of producing greater intensity?

In her Introduction and the explanations to the individual ballads she revives Solymossy’s view, which was already obsolete in its time, that our ballads originated in the seventeenth century, because that was when our serfs received such surnames as *Kőműves*, *Kerekes*, *Kádár*, etc. One could have known from historians already at that time, and more certainly today, that this process began in the fifteenth century and became quite general in the sixteenth. More important is what Mrs. Leader did not notice, just as Solymossy didn’t, that nearly as many variants preserve the memory of an earlier stage: “*Kelemen kőműves*,” “*Kelemenné asszony*,” where, therefore, the occupation is not yet a name. (The proportion is 7 : 11 out of 40 where the rest mention only the chief mason, or are only fragments.) What every folklorist has asserted for a long time is clear from this also that such elements—name, geographical place, etc.—are the most mobile elements of the heritage, they can change at every subsequent “actual application” and they reveal nothing at all about the age of the text as such.

In connection with dating I am compelled to correct a quotation of my own point of view. She states (p. 41, Note 2) that I put the origin of “Clement Mason” in the twelfth or thirteenth century, when we had

common frontiers with the Bulgarians, whereas according to my emphatically expressed final conclusion it was in the period of Louis the Great, and the establishment of the Bulgarian banate, when Hungarian garrisons and perhaps settlers lived in Bulgarian territory, in the middle of the fourteenth century that I placed the adoption, and also the development of the Hungarian ballad. So much so that in the theoretical chapter I place the development of the ballad in the whole of Europe in the early fourteenth century, and I argue that the genre could not have existed earlier. I cannot see how this could have been misunderstood to such a degree.

The dating of ballad elements produce peculiar contradictions in her work. On the one hand she wishes at all cost to link our ballads to the seventeenth century, and she uses even such facts as evidence as that “Clement Mason” preserved the most brutal form of the building sacrifice (on this basis we should really set it in the pagan epoch), that the power of the mother is expressed so forcefully in them (which is held in evidence as a medieval feature by international ballad research, and there is no reason to regard it as otherwise in our country, either), that “language, imagery and rhythm” also render this probable (naturally the language in them belongs to the nineteenth and twentieth century, but it preserves antiquities, among them some that are expressly from the Middle Ages. Among all their characteristics I know of none that would specifically set them in the seventeenth century). On the other hand she endeavours to link the Hungarian and Danish formulation of the “Three Orphans” with each other on the basis that “pre-Christian magic” can be found in both: the tears, the striking of the grave with a rod to resurrect the dead. (N.B. are we to suppose that magic disappeared from popular belief with the spread of Christianity?) And if a ballad incorporated tale elements within it, then this allegedly places it

with the oldest ballad style—as if it were not just the newest, the individual, the corrupt, the fragmentary variants that for the most part incorporated such elements! (For example, the variant of “Clement Mason” quoted under “Q,” which she notes as “the only ballad with a happy ending,” only she fails to add that this ending resolves the poem in a prosaic story.) Like the name “Mason,” the involvement of a “Turk” is also a time-determining factor for her, because only at the “time of the Turkish conquest” “could they have sold the girl to Turks,” and in quite a singular fashion she sets this in the period between 1526 to 1710. However, following the battle of Mohács, Suleiman—after burning Buda—withdrawed from the country, and there was no occupation until 1541, the fall of Buda; on the other hand, between 1686 to 1688 the entire area of the country was liberated. It is true that the Turks remained our neighbours even after that, but in that case we could set the time from when on we were constantly at war with them on our frontiers at around 1400. But this is not even the main issue, but the fact that the “Turk” could also be a later substitution, since he is not even represented as an enemy at all, nor is the German—the “later enemy” according to Mrs. Leader—but only as an alien. And here the ballads always mention the neighbour, in our case Turks and Germans, occasionally—in Transylvania—Moldavians, in Moldavia, Poles—just as the French ballads speak of the Spanish or the English.

But I pointed all this out in my previously cited study (*Ethnographia*, 1960, 250), which can today be read in English also, on page 106 of the “Researches into the Medieval History of Folk Ballad.” Since the latter is just as readily accessible to English-language readers as Mrs. Leader’s work, I shall not argue with her about matters that can be found there also. I would rather point out aspects in which a lack of knowledge of the Hungarian evidence makes it im-

possible to determine that the information is incorrect.

The chapter on “Bards,” for example, places a very complex question with a vast literature in front of the non-Hungarian reader without separating facts from conjecture, moreover, not even from her own offhand conclusions. Otherwise the aim of this chapter is meant to be “to shed light on the composition of the old-style ballads.” However, we know not a single line from our Hungarian bards, and we only know of their having existed from meagre evidence, hence this whole chapter adds nothing to our existing body of knowledge.

If she had not based herself only on my book published in collaboration with Imre Csanádi in 1954 (occasionally adding to it my comparative studies in the *Ethnographia*, 1960–62), and had taken into account later works as well, she would not have had to argue with me about my mistaken standpoint in connection with “The Virgin Mary Sets Out.” In the Seeman *Festschrift* (*Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* IX, 1964, pp. 77–79) I pointed out its German origin. (The text by the way came from Transylvania, and not the Great Plain.)

Taking it more briefly from here on, I want to draw attention to only a few striking mistakes. The person of the Virgin Mary found its way into the “Three Orphans” during the seventeenth century, because allegedly that was when reverence for her was supposed to have reached its peak? But St. Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state, had already dedicated the country to Mary in 1038, since then the Patrona Hungariae has always been an evident fact, and evidences of the particular reverence for Mary in Hungary are the special names of holidays that originated in the Middle Ages: Feast of the Assumption, Feast of the Holy Virgin’s Nativity (whose Hungarian names—*Nagyboldogasszony*, *Gyümölcsoltó Boldogasszony*, etc.—indicate fusion with some pre-Christian being), the Feast of Annunciation, and the Visitation—the start-

ing day of the harvest. But then reverence for Mary was widespread throughout the whole of medieval Europe, one need not turn to the revival of the Regnum Marianum in the baroque era for the explanation to such a phenomenon. Scottish-Hungarian “ballad kinship” is not a commonplace in Hungary (p. 320); the sentence quoted from the Csanády-Vargyas work means only that this was the way we had indicated in a popularizing text the elements of content and style that are common with the French and the Scots. The formula mentioned on page 96: “cut my heart six ways” does not appear even once in this form, but only as: “take out my heart. . .” and then the analogies mentioned lose their basis. Almost none of her observations in connection with the melodies are correct: that overwhelmingly pentatonic melodies with “irregular” lines make up the ballads, that they go back to the Ugrian community (the author of this review endeavoured to demonstrate this in connection with another style group, but this cannot be found in Kodály’s quoted work), that a later volume of the *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* will allegedly discuss the melodies of the ballads as “exclusive matter” (in these volumes publication is proceeding only according to musical types), that in Transylvania the ballad style gained ground musically (pp. 4–5); Béla Vikár did not do his collecting at the beginning of this century, but between 1892 and 1898; Vargyas later than Domokos, Lükő and Veress, and the song quoted on page 50 was not collected by Vargyas, but by Béla Vikár. The Hungarians of Bukovina are not called Csángós, but Székelys, but the Csángós have lived in Moldavia from the

thirteenth century onward. The battle of Kenyérmező of 1479 (in Transylvania) mentioned in the chapter “Bards” is not identical with the place mentioned in South Slav heroic epic, Kossovo (Rigómező in Hungarian), where the Serbian state fell in 1389 to the Turks, and where later Hunyadi also fought a losing battle in 1448. Child 20: the ballad corresponding to The Cruel Mother is not our Ilona Budai, but the infanticidal Vilma Szabó. The “*Szálláskereső Jézus*” (“Christ searching for a lodging”) is not a Christmas song, but a pilgrim’s hymn, and it was noted down among children as an Advent season greeting on a single occasion, and not on the Great Plain, but in Transdanubia. And lastly Buják is not a locality on the Great Plain, but a Palóc village in the upper country generally known because of its traditional costume.

This enumeration does not mean that these were the only errors in the book, but that they are of this kind. Yet with a little care most of them could have been avoided. In other words, we ask the reader to approach this scientific work with caution, particularly where unverifiable Hungarian connections are concerned.

Nevertheless, we are pleased to welcome the fact that a whole series of our ballads are presented to the world in a reliable translation, that the variant deviations and the variant listings permit a more precise examination of Hungarian ballad material than any so far. With this the gems of Hungarian folk poetry—even if not in the beauty of their original form—at least showing values of their content, begin to penetrate the English-speaking world.

LAJOS VARGYAS