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The Beginnings of Hungarian Printing in London

Cultural contacts between Hungary and England go back to the second half of the sixteenth century, a time when visitors' interests and preoccupations already varied considerably. As Protestant clergymen or theologians, Hungarians studied in Wittenberg and Heidelberg and arrived in England via Leiden. Their peregrinations included London, Oxford, and Cambridge, either visiting for shorter periods or more extensively, taking degrees. As a result of their endeavours, on their return to Hungary, a number of significant religious works were translated into Hungarian. Hungarian authors were published in England from as early as 1593, but the contribution of Hungarian visitors to English culture until the nineteenth century was very small indeed.¹

It was the author, linguist and diplomat Sir John Bowring (1792-1872) who first devoted much time to the study of the languages and literatures of Eastern Europe. Having been to Hungary and learned Hungarian to a reasonable standard, he became the first English translator of Hungarian poetry. His *Poetry of the Magyars* (London, 1830) played an important role in arousing interest in Hungarian culture and making it accessible to Victorian England. An informed essay on the Magyar language and Magyar literature introduced an anthology of some 100 poems and 65 popular songs. Although his translations were often inexact, at times even misleading, Bowring's anthology saved Hungarian poetry from sinking into oblivion. Ferenc Kazinczy and Ferenc Kölcsey's poetry received laudatory reviews, as did Dániel Berzsenyi's for his delightful use of classical metre. Hungarian authors for the first time realised they were not only addressing their own countrymen, but foreign audiences beyond their own borders. By the mid-nineteenth century English booksellers were flooded with pamphlets and books written about the 1848-9 revolution and its Hungarian leader Lajos

¹ Szege di Kis István, *Tabulae Analyticae*... (Schaffhausen, 1592; 2nd edn London, 1593).

Kossuth. In the presence of a growing émigré readership there was an increasing need for a Hungarian grammar, to assist those interested in the study of the language. Two such works were published almost simultaneously in mid-nineteenth-century London.

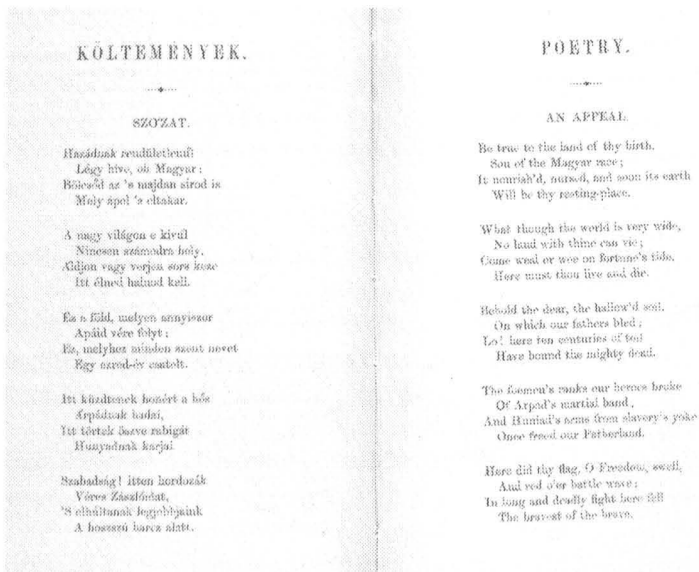


Fig. 1: Sigismund Wékey, *Grammar of the Hungarian language with appropriate exercises, a copious vocabulary, and specimens of Hungarian poetry* (London: Trelawny Saunders; New York: John Wiley, 1852), pp. 124-5.
British Library pressmark: 12962.f.12.

The first was written by Sigismund Wékey, a lawyer and officer in the Hungarian army, who later emigrated to England and became secretary to the committee of Hungarians in exile.² His *Grammar of the Hungarian Language with appropriate exercises, a copious vocabulary, and specimens of Hungarian poetry* was published by Trelawny Saunders of Charing Cross and John Wiley of New York in 1852 (BL 12962.f.12) (fig. 1). From a glance at the short preface Wékey strikes the reader less as a linguist and more as a patriot, hoping ‘to convey to those interested in Hungary a clearer idea of the real character of its oppressed people’. He then gives a traditional outline of Hungarian grammar, starting with the alphabet followed by examples, in Hungarian and English, of

2 Szinnyei’s *Magyar írók élete és munkái*, XIV, 1055-6, gives further details of Wékey’s life and works.

the phonetic characteristics and morphological structure of Hungarian. After sketchy notes on syntax there follow remarks on orthography and a list of Latin grammatical terms with their amusingly dusty Hungarian translation. Progressive reading exercises on parts of the body, human life, the earth and the air, followed by anecdotes, fables and letters include some stilted prose but the vocabulary reassures today's reader that Hungarian has always been a rich enough language to render the use of foreign loan words unnecessary. The inclusion of an extensive list of military expressions could be justified by the political events preceding this publication. The volume ends with an announcement of a related publication in preparation: *A Complete Hungarian-English and English-Hungarian Dictionary*. Regrettably this did not materialise.

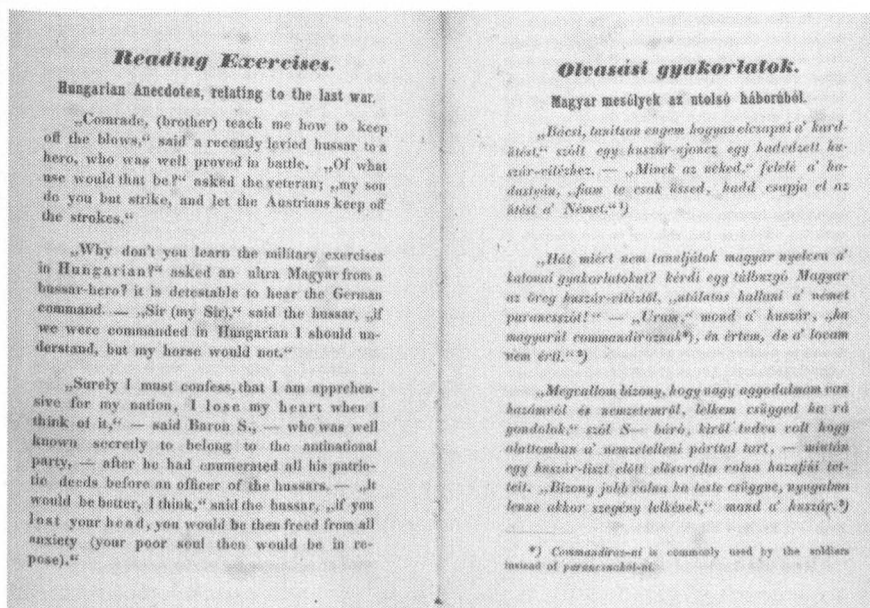


Fig. 2: János Csink, *A Complete Practical Grammar of the Hungarian Language, with exercises, selections from the best authors and vocabularies, to which is added a historical sketch of Hungarian literature* (London: Williams and Norgate 1853), pp. 280-1.

British Library pressmark: 0122977.a.2.

The second Hungarian grammar, written by János Csink, a Hungarian schoolteacher from Késmárk, today in Slovakia, was a more comprehensive offering: *A Complete Practical Grammar of the Hungarian Language, with exercises, selections from the best authors and vocabularies, to which is added a historical sketch of Hungarian Literature*, published by Williams and Norgate of Henrietta Street,

Covent Garden, 1853 (BL 012977.a.2 and 02976.bb.2) (fig. 2).³ The work is divided into three main sections: a phonological introduction, including articulations, sounds and characters; compositions, with practical and theoretical subdivision into grammatical forms and syntax; and finally, reading exercises and a vocabulary to the compositions.⁴ The entire work is far more substantial than Wékey's. Its structure may appear cumbersome in parts, but covers more detail than most modern Hungarian grammars. A review in *The Athenaeum* of 10 December 1853 acknowledged Csink's work as a good introduction to the language and literature of Hungary, but maintained it would have better served an English readership had it been carefully supervised by a methodical English editor.

Both grammars contain excerpts from Hungarian literature. Wékey introduces parallel Hungarian and English texts of poems by Mihály Vörösmarty, Sándor Petőfi, József Bajza, and József Eötvös. Csink's sketches of the history of Hungarian literature followed by a selection of Hungarian classics is equally distinguished and much more substantial. These however do not include English translations. In Csink's selection of Hungarian poetry Vörösmarty is also introduced as one of the first Hungarian translators of Shakespeare, with an extract from Act III, Scene 2, of *Julius Caesar*. The prose selections from Hungarian classics include fables by András Fáy, József Kármán, Ferenc Kazinczy, an oration by Kölcsey commemorating Kazinczy, and József Péczely's history of the reoccupation of Buda. These are demanding texts that even fluent Hungarian speakers would find difficult reading. Both works made a laudable effort to introduce knowledge of the Magyar language and literature to their 'favoured and hospitable nation'.

Available evidence offers little to explain how a small London publisher like Trelawny and Saunders came to issue Wékey's grammar. A mere handful of imprints dated between 1850 and 1852 have been identified in miscellaneous works, mostly in the fields of transport, trade and commerce on British territories.

Conversely, Williams and Norgate's catalogues for 1865 reveal a great variety of themes: Greek and Latin Classics, Theological Books in foreign languages, Natural History Catalogue, Bibliotheca Indica, Medical Catalogue, etc. Their *Linguistic Catalogue* is a classified list of books on and in European Languages, ancient and modern (fig. 3). The 1853 London edition of Csink's

3 Ibid.

4 For a detailed analysis of Wékey and Csink's grammars see G. F. Cushing, 'The Two Earliest Hungarian Grammars for English Students', *Hungarian Studies in English* (Debrecen, 1977).

Greenland]	LINGUISTIC CATALOGUE.	[Icelandic 25
FABRICIUS (O.) Grönländske grammatika. 8vo. Copenh. 1801. 5s		rorana et Lapponum idem esse. 4to. Typ. nou 1770. 4s
GOSPEL-HARMONY in Eskimo. 12mo. Barbi- nino 1804. 6s 6d		STRAHLHEIM (J.) Finnische Sprachlehre mit Beziehung auf d. Ungarische Sprache, Fin- nische und ungarische Mythologie. 8vo. Petersb. 1816. 3s
GREENLAND'S historiske Mindemaerker, vide Islandic.		TESTAMENT. New, in Hungarian. 12mo. 2s
KLEINSCHMIDT (S.) Grammatik der Grün- ländischen sprache mit theilweisem ein- schluss des Labrador-dialects. 8vo. Berl. 1851. 3s		TOMPA (M.) Néprök, Népmondak (Popular Tales, Proverbs). 8vo. Pesth 1846. 3s
PENTATEUCH in Esquimaux. 12mo. Sheep 4s 6d		
ISAIAH in Esquimaux. 12mo. Sheep 3s 6d		
TESTAMENT in Esquimaux. Sheep 4s		
HUNGARIAN.		
ACS (K.) Conversations in Hungarian, Ger- man, Italian, Wallachian, Bohemian, Slo- vac and Serbian. 12mo. Boards. Pesth 1859. 4s 6d		ALEXANDERS SAGA, af Philip Gantler la- tinske Digt Alexandreis, udgivet af C. B. Unger. 8vo. Christ. 1848. 4s 6d
BALLAGI (M.) Wörterbuch der Deutschen und Ungarischen Sprache. 2 vols. 8vo. ib. 1857-62. 18s		ANALECTA Norrena, vide Mölins.
BLOCH (M.) Vollständiges Ungarisch u. Deut- sches Wörterbuch. 2 vols. 8vo. ib. 1857 12s		ANECDOTON Historiam Svererri regis Nor- wegie Illustrans. ed. M. Werlauff. 8vo. Havnie (A.M.) 1815. 4s 6d
CASSEL (S.) Magyarische Alterthümer. 8vo. Berl. 1836. 5s		ANNALER, Antiquarisk, udgivet af den kgl. Com. til Oldsagers Opbevaring. 27 pla- tes. 4 vols. 8vo. Copenh. 1812-37 24s
CSINKS Complete Practical Grammar of the Hungarian Language, with Exercises, Se- lections from the best Authors, and Vo- cabularies; to which is added a Historical Sketch of Hungarian Literature. 500 pages, 8vo. (Cloth boards.) London 1853 (5s) 4s		for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og historie. 1836 to 1860. 18 vols. 8vo. (Numerous plates.) (B.S.N.A.) Copenh. 1837-64 Each Volume 7s
CZUCZOR (G.) as FOGARASI (J.) A Magyar nyelv Szótars. (Dictionary of the Hunga- rian Academy.) Vol. I. H. Roy. 8vo. Pesth 1862-64. 20s		ANTIQUARISK Theskrif. 1852-60 (wood- cuts.) 3 vols. 8vo. Copenh. (H.S.N.A.) 1854-61. 21s
DALLOS (G.) English-Hungarian Dictionary. Vol. I. 8vo. Pesth 1860. 6s		ANTIQUITES AMERICANE, sive scrip- tores septentrion. rerum Antio-Columbi- arum in America, studio C. C. Rafn. (H. S. N.A.) Folio. Havn. 1843. 48s
EÖTVÖS (T. A.) Föld Jegyzöje. Regény. (The Village Notary.) 3 vols. 8vo. Pest 1845. 9s		ANTIQUITES Americaines d'après les monu- ments historiques des Islandais et des an- ciens Scandinaves, publiées par C. C. Rafn. 8vo. Maps. ib. 1845. 12s
EXERCISES, Hungarian and German. 12mo. ib. 1s 6d		ANTIQUITES Russes, d'après les monuments historiques des Islandais et des anciens Scan- dinaves éditées par la Soc. Roy. des Anti- q. du Nord. Vols. I. II. folio. Beauti- fully printed. Copenh. (R.S.N.A.) 1850- 52. 2s
FRENEYCH (E.) Hungarian and English Dia- logues for the use of travellers and stu- dents. 8vo. Pesth 1851. 2s		ARNASON (J.) Islenskar Thjódögur og Ao- bútryi. 2 vols. Roy. 8vo. Leipz. 1864 26s
JOSIKI (M.) Masodik Rákóczy Ferencz. Re- gény. 6 vols. 12mo. ib. 1861. 12s		ARWIDSSON (A. J.) Förtäckning öfver Kongl. Bibliothek. i Stockholm Isländska Hand- skrifter. 8vo. 1848. 4s
KARADY (F.) Dictionnaire Français Hong- rois et Hongrois Français. 12mo. Leipz. and Pesth 1848. 10s		ASBJÖRNSSEN a. Grässe. Nord und Süd. Ein Mürchen-Strauss. 8 woodcuts. Dred. 1859. 3s
MARTON (J.) Lexicon trilingue. Latino-Hun- garico-Germanicum. 4 vols. 8vo. Pien. 1818. (47s) 24s		ATLAS DE L'ARCHEOLOGIE du Nord, re- présentant des Echantillons de l'âge de Bronze et de l'âge de fer publié par la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord. 15 plates. folio. Copenh. 1858. 30s
OLLENDORFFS Methode zur Erlernung der Ungarisch. Sprache, v. F. Ney. 12mo. Pesth 1857 4s—Key. 12mo. ib. 1s 6d		de l'Archeologie du Nord—Texte ex- plicatif. 8vo. ib. 1860. 3s
PETÖFI (S.) Költömenyel. 1842-46. 2 vols. 12mo. ib. 1847. 7s 6d		HANDAMANNA Saga vide Nord. Oldskrifter. 10.
Ujabb Költömenyel 1847-49. 2 vols. 12mo. ib. 1858. 7s 6d		RAHDARSAGA, Snæfellars, Viglandarsaga &c. ved G. Vigfusson. (Nord Oldskr. 27.) 8vo. Kjöb. 1860. 3s
RIEDL (A. M.) Magyarische Grammatik. 8vo. Wien 1859. 5s 6d		BARLAAMS ok Josephats Saga, overs. paa Norsk af Kong Haken Sverresen udg. af H. Keyser og Unger. 8vo. Christ. 1851. 10s
Leitfaden f. den Unterricht in der ma- gyarschen Sprache. 8vo. ib. 1859. 2s		BERGMANN (F. G.) Les Chans de Söl (Söl- ungar. 20, South Frederick Street, Edinburgh.
Magyar Hangtan (Hungarian Etymo- logy). 8vo. Prag 1859. 3s 6d		
SAJNOVICS (J.) Demonstratio, Idioma Un- garici. 8vo. Pesth 1859. 3s 6d		

Fig. 3: Williams and Norgate's Linguistic catalogue, no. 5 (Jan. 1865), p. 25. British Library pressmark: 11903.h.28.

grammar is still listed in the Hungarian section, together with some twenty other works of Hungarian interest imported from Tyrrau, Pest, Leipzig, Berlin or Vienna. Williams and Norgate's stocks were remarkably rich and varied considering the relatively small number of the émigrés living in London at the time. The revolutions of 1848-9 awakened interest in languages and cultures of European nations, much as current political turmoil inspires British readers today.