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PRÉCIS OF HUNGARIAN PAREMIOGRAPHY AND
PAREMIOLOGY

Vt sementem feceris, ita et metes Az ki mint vet, vgy arat.
(Baranyai Decsi: Adagiorum I.VI.IX.8)

Abstract: This is a review essay on the rich accomplishments of Hungarian paremiography and paremiology. There exists a long history of Hungarian proverb collections, and while many of them deal primarily with national or regional Hungarian proverbs, there are also numerous collections that include comparative materials from other European languages. It is shown that many aspects of culture, ethnography, folklore, and history are contained in the proverbial materials. The article also includes comments on genre issues, the classification system used in the collections, and their use for educational purposes. Of course, issues of linguistics and semantics are also discussed. An important bibliography of the accomplishments of Hungarian proverb research is attached as well.

Keywords: Bibliography, classification, collection, culture, education, ethnography, European, folklore, genre, history, Hungarian, linguistics, semantics, paremiography, paremiology

In spite of the interesting situation of Hungarian culture and the international contacts of Hungarian paremiologists—until now there is no substantial international (foreign language) summary of Hungarian paremiology. In old and well known handbooks and bibliographies (as e.g. by Archer Taylor and mainly by Wolfgang Mieder) there are references to Hungary, but not systematically. The excellent “International Bibliography of new and Reprinted Proverb Collections” and “International Proverb Scholarship: An Updated Bibliography” entries in the *Proverbium Yearbook* series (thanks to Gyula Paczolay and lately to Anna T. Litovkina) give an idea on Hungarian publications in the recent 20 years. But they are not complete and reflect the personal limits of the individuals involved. General folklore bibliographies (e.g. as the “*Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie...*”, 1917) give much less and very

uneven information. The main problem is that if in the above-mentioned publications there are hundreds of “Hungarian” items, the reader might think their information is, if not complete, still a fairly representative one—but in fact it is not always the case. Of course, it is the task of Hungarian paremiologists to register their own works. But there is still a wishful dream to make a “summarizing” bibliography of paremiography and paremiology in Hungary.

Just by reading Wolfgang Mieder’s recently released “International Bibliography of Paremiography. Collections of Proverbs, Proverbial Expressions and Comparisons, Quotations, Graffiti, Slang, and Wellerisms” (Burlington, Vermont, 2011, The University of Vermont) (*Supplement Series of Proverbium. Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*—volume 34), with its astronomical number of 3615 entries—among them many Hungarian items—I felt it necessary to compile at least a minimal presentation of Hungarian paremiography (and to a lesser extent paremiology). In my work not the collecting but the selecting of data was the decisive factor. (And I feel well the burden of my ignorance of other, important works too...)

Hungarians have used proverbs over time just as long as the other peoples have done. From 19th century they made a difference between “proverb” (*közmondás* ‘common sentence’), an elaborated form, and “saying” (*szólás* ‘saying’), a more simple form. Both of them and the two-terms system have semantic parallels in many European languages. Hungarian paremiologists generally use the term *közmondás*, linguists prefer to use *szólás*. Once (around the 16th century) people used the term *agg szó* (‘old word’), which might be a borrowing from German. (See: Voigt 2004a, with comparative remarks). In spite of the fact that the Hungarian language belongs to the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) language family—nobody could find a “Finno-Ugric” word for ‘proverb’ in Hungarian. On the other hand the word *szó* dates back to the common Ugric vocabulary, probably being a loanword from an ancient Turkic language.¹

Among Hungarian folklorists the dichotomy between *közmondás* and *szólás* is more or less clear. On the other hand Hungarian linguists often add a third term *frázis* (phrase), but the exact meaning of the terms is not always clear.

The first references to Hungarian proverbs and idioms appear in the Middle Ages and later they occur in practical lists of words

and dictionaries, first handwritten, then printed (already from the 16-17th centuries).

In the court of the Renaissance King, Matthias Corvinus, an Italian humanist, Galeotto Marzio compiled a booklet *De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Matthiae ... liber* (critical edition 1934) of clever sayings of the King, but it mentions perhaps only one or two in fact (then or later) existing proverbs. In his time an internationally highly esteemed humanist, János Zsámboky (Joannes Sambucus) published a collection of his emblems (1564). In the introduction he distinguishes *imagines, eikon, metaphora, fabula, Poësis, prouerbia, apophthegmata* etc., but in the poem texts in the work there is not a direct connection with paremiology.

From the 16th century some persons have used the Erasmian tradition of language teaching with the help of proverbs. The first separate printed publication was made by János Baranyai Decsi (*Adagiorvm graecolatinohvngaricorvm Chiliades quinque* Bartpha, 1598, reprint 1978),² a Latin—Greek—Hungarian collection of about 5000 “phrases and sentences”. The author (who learned philology in Germany and was an excellent scholar) closely followed the Erasmian tradition, knowing about some similar attempts in Hungary. In 1998 we have organized an international symposium on the 400 year anniversary of Baranyai Decsi’s work (Barna—Stemler—Voigt 2004), showing the international importance of Erasmian paremiology in Europe (Voigt 2004b). Gyula Paczolay is currently preparing a “critical edition” of Baranyai Decsi’s collection—with thorough comments to each item. In fact the majority of cases Baranyai Decsi’s texts are sayings, idioms and phrases and not proper proverbs. During the last few years Paczolay published a series of studies on “earlier” use of Hungarian proverbs. Voigt (2011a) summarized the same topic with additional source material.

Baranyai Decsi’s book was used by Albert Szenci Molnár for his Hungarian-Latin dictionary (1611), where we find more than 500 proverbs. Also the later, revised editions contained proverbs. (On Szenci’s proverbs see: Paczolay 2007.) It was massively used by Petrus (= Péter) Kisviczay: *Selectiora adagia Latino Hungarica* (Bartpha, 1713)—without mentioning Baranyai Decsi’s name. Thus Hungarian scholars only by the second half of 19th century have realized the importance of the original book by Baranyai

Decsi. Péter Beniczky composed a volume of his poetic works, *Magyar rithmusok* ('Hungarian Verses', published 1664), the second part of which contains 250 proverbs composed in tripartite and rhymed verse form. The book had more than 20 editions, up until the beginning of 19th century. In later Hungarian proverb collections Beniczky's versified forms are often traceable. He versified also 220 proverbs in Slovakian, which have influenced the later use of Slovakian proverbs too. The comparison of Beniczky's Hungarian and Slovak proverbs would need a separate treatment. There is a critical edition (1987) of Beniczky's poetry. (Kisviczay used Beniczky's texts as well.)

It is a commonplace in Hungarian cultural history that Cardinal Péter Pázmány, the leader of the Jesuit counterreformation in Hungary was a great baroque writer, who used thousands of metaphors, poetic images and proverbs. Several papers dealt with his proverb data, but only recently a short summary of the topic was printed (Rajslí 2009). The problem is not as simple as it seems to be. E.g. in Pázmány's "Prayer book" (*Imádságos könyv*)³ in fact we do not find many proverbs! Why? We can only guess: because proverbs in his view belonged to the stylistics in controversial debates with the Protestants—and not to the sacred texts. (See Voigt 2012).

By the end of 18th century several persons have collected proverbs, in order to develop the Hungarian literary language, especially in education. In some cases they have published their material. The direct model was a famous dictionary by an Austrian German Jesuit. Franz Wagner's *Phraseologia* (published first in Vienna 1713, then with additional Hungarian and Slovak parallels made by Hungarian priests in Nagyszombat, 1750, and again in 1775 and 1822) —but in spite of its title—the book does not have proverbs, and contains only very few sayings. It is a great Latin dictionary for the sake of schools. (Wagner's Latin—German "phraseology" has been a bestseller for generations in Bavaria and Austria, exactly as its Hungarian—Slovak mutation. The two books differ from one another. A comparative German—Hungarian—Slovak study of it would be of some interest.)

A Jesuit poet, Ferenc Faludi collected in his notebook 600 phrases, sayings and proverbs. The material was later published in a book, containing Faludi's poetic works (1787). A Franciscan priest, Alajos Noszkó published (in 1791) a practical book: *Virág-*

Szó-Tár (Flower-Dictionary—the Hungarian title refers to the term ‘Florilegium’). He arranged Hungarian poetic phrases and proverbs in alphabetical order. The book was used in school classes of Latin stylistics and rhetoric. Pál Kovács, Benedictine monk and teacher in the town Győr, published in 1794 his anthology *Magyar példa, és köz mondási* (Hungarian parables and common sayings), containing more than 3000 items, sometimes with Hungarian explanations or parallel Latin sentences. (There is a reprint edition: 2008.) He wrote the proverbs he remembered without any order. Another erudite Jesuit, Dávid Baróti Szabó in his book *A Magyarság virágyi* (‘Hungarian Flowers’—(Komárom, 1803) has arranged the texts into 234 semantic groups. It was the first attempt in Hungary to systematize the proverbs, but his actual scheme is chaotic.

In Hungarian cultural history there was a well accepted book by Antal Szirmay *Hungaria in parabolis. sive commentarii in adagia, et dicteria Hungarorum* (Buda, 1804, a second, enlarged edition: Buda 1807), which, as the subtitle tells us, is giving more anecdotes and explanations to the sayings, than their original texts. The book (written in Latin, but the phrases are included also in Hungarian) has also a list of common sayings, according to the order of their “key words” in Latin. Recently it was published in an excellent modern Hungarian edition (Csörsz Rumen 2008) with philological notes.

The noted poet Ádám Pálóczi Horvát compiled a list of proverbs and sayings he knew, and he tried at least two times (1815 and 1819) to publish it. There is a first, rough copy of the manuscript (with 800 items), then a second, well arranged copy (with more than 1800 items), which, however, remained unpublished. (See: Voigt 2011b). He lived in different regions of Hungary, thus his remarks about the use of proverbs and sayings and their different forms are of great importance.

The most important collection of the end of 18th century was made by the prolific Jesuit writer, scholar, and ardent Philo-Hungarian: András Dugonics. His collection was printed posthumously in 1820 in two volumes: *Magyar példa beszédek és jeles mondások* (Hungarian parables and noted sayings). He compiled about 12.000 entries and arranged them into 49 “thematic” groups (as e.g. punishments, bagatelles, dog, talkative people, rich persons, liars, clever persons, thieves, etc.). Dugonics has collected

his material from many parts of Hungary for forty years. His first manuscript dates back to 1792, the second, final version is from 1800. He translated some Latin sentences and often gave explanatory stories, anecdotes to the proverbs—using his very free fantasy. Hungarian folklorists dealt often with the explanations by Dugonics. Recently Zoltán Ujváry (2009) published a bulky volume, giving more than thousand modern folklore explanations to the texts by Dugonics. Tamás Forgács (2009) produced a facsimile edition, and in the postscript he characterized Dugonics as a paremiographer.

Between 1780 and 1810—thus during one and the same generation’s time—about 20.000 Hungarian phrases, sayings and proverbs have been collected, and in the majority they were also published. The activity was aimed at the development of the “new” Hungarian language and poetry. The authors have used old publications, and in some cases they knew about contemporary works by other enthusiasts too. The systematization of the texts was of a thematic character—rather chaotic. It would be an important task to construct a data bank of Hungarian proverbs from 1780 to 1820, placing into one order the several versions from several manuscripts.

After that boom of paremiography, the next century favoured a different kind of publications: special dictionaries of proverbs.

The first among them is the publication by Georg Gaal: *Sprichwörterbuch in sechs Sprachen, deutsch, englisch, latein, italienisch, französisch und ungerisch* (Wien, 1830). Gaal was an important figure in early Hungarian folklore publications and an influential person in German-Hungarian literary contacts. Gaal wanted to publish a larger collection in four volumes. He wrote down proverbs, sayings, phrases etc. he knew, then arranged them according to their German forms, adding to them the parallels from other languages. In the published “first” volume there are 1008 German texts, and only 804 Hungarian proverbs. The principle of arranging the German proverbs is not clear. In Gaal’s manuscripts (today in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) there are about 4240 German proverb texts and about 2000 Hungarian ones. It is surprising, how Gaal could find English, Italian texts too, even though living in the multilingual metropolis Vienna. The multilingual parallels wanted to serve the language ability of poets and learned persons. We do not know which prov-

erb collections he used. Later Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander in his *Deutsches Sprichwörterlexikon* (1867–1880) used the printed volume by Gaal. (As far as I know it is the only early international paremiological book, referring to Hungarian texts.) Hungarian paremiologists did not pay attention to Gaal's book, and they did not know about the other volumes in manuscript. (See for the evaluation: Voigt 1997.)

A young linguist, Mór Ballagi published his *Magyar példabeszédek, közmondások és szólások gyűjteménye* (Collection of Hungarian parables, proverbs and sayings) first in Szarvas, 1850—then the same book again in Pest, 1855. It has 8313 entries, and the systematization follows Wilhelm Körte's *Die Sprichwörter der Deutschen*, 1847—*i.e.* the alphabetical order of the “key words” in the proverbs. Ballagi does not refer to his sources, and there are many misunderstandings in the forms he published. Occasionally he points to international parallels.

The first serious anthology of Hungarian proverbs was made by the great folklorist in the middle of 19th century, János Erdélyi. His *Magyar közmondások könyve* (1851) (Book of Hungarian proverbs) contains 9000 texts (according to the alphabetical key words). Only in some cases he refers to his sources, but we know that he consulted the earlier publications and that some colleagues sent their own collections to Erdélyi. At the end of the book there is a summarizing essay: *Közmondásokról* (On proverbs), giving a description of the genre, its language and poetic value, also a short history of Hungarian paremiology. It is the first noteworthy summary of Hungarian proverbs. Erdélyi's opinion is that proverbs are a genre of folk poetry and that they can be treated in a similar way. He was practical in making a “common style” of the proverbs he knew from different sources. His personal copy of the book contains many handwritten additions. (The copy is kept today in the archive of the family, and, since there was no reprint of the 1851 edition, it might be of interest to publish it.) In 1862 a shortened version of Erdélyi's collection was published, with 7360 items, and with a very few additions.

In the second half of the 19th century some proverb collections were made—but without greater significance. Books by Péter Pelkó (1864), who tried to explain the proverbs according to his own experience, or János Almásy (1890), who stressed the wisdom hidden in proverbs. Andor Sirisaka (1891) does not need a

thorough analysis as for the material; he has copied texts from all available sources to him, and he also asked his colleagues to add more texts. In the introduction he outlines the topics. There is a description of history of the Hungarian paremiography too (Often with mistakes.) His essay was published separately (1891) too. In the book the texts are arranged in alphabetical order, without source references or explanations.

In Hungary until the First World War, Latin was an integral part of secondary education, and German was taught in most of the schools as the modern language. Practical books appeared along that line. A noted linguist, Zsigmond Simonyi, published a medium size dictionary: *Német és magyar szólások* (Deutsche und ungarische Redensarten) (1896) with rich material, giving exact source data of all Hungarian sentences and phrases he used. He included 10.000 German expressions with fivefold more Hungarian equivalents. However, the book is not a product of paremiology—it was made for the sake of better translations.

The Saxonian teacher from Transylvania, Heinrich Schlandt, has published (1913a, 1913b) two “proverb dictionaries”, a German-Hungarian (with 4198 German data, and with 6836 Hungarian data) and a similar Hungarian-German one (with 4343 Hungarian and 6737 German data). He compiled his material from the books by Margalits, respectively from Wander). His later books were used in schools (Bíró—Schlandt 1937), and do not have many proverbs, only phrases. (See Paczolay 1979).

In 1896 for the millennium of the Hungarian state several representative works were published, among them the “great” anthology of Hungarian proverbs. Its editor, Ede Margalits was a Slavist, who organized a group of college teachers in order to collect the generally known Hungarian proverbs. His *Magyar közmondások és közmondásszerű szólások* (Hungarian proverbs and proverbial sayings) contains nominally 25.336 items, arranged by the alphabetical order of important words in the proverbs. It means that the same proverb may occur in more than one place. Practically under a “keyword” the variants follow in undistinguished order. For each sentence the source is given, but only by the initial of the publisher’s name, making it rather troublesome to find the original texts. The orthography of the proverbs was homogenized. About two thirds of the texts are proverbs, the rest are sayings and phrases. The book by Margalits is until today the most reliable Hungarian

anthology. A reprint (without any further remarks) appeared in 1993. There is a booklet containing and classifying all the names in the book of Margalits (Wolosz 1994).

It is less known (also in Hungary) that Margalits published other works belonging to paremiology. Besides his own collection of Slavic proverbs from South Hungary, the book *Florilegium proverbiorum universae latinitatis: proverbia, sententiae gnoma-eque classicae, mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1895) is a practical work, with 13,458 entries. Later he added 6700 more Latin proverbs in a book *Supplementum ad opus Florilegium...* (1910). Both served the secondary schools. A private scholar's work is his book in two volumes: *Isten a világ közmondásaiban* (God in the proverbs of the world—1910), containing altogether more than six thousand ones, *i.e.* about 1000 Latin, 500 Hungarian, 1700 German, 700 Croatian, 700 Serbian, 400 Slovene proverbs; in the second volume there is a similar amount of 400 Slovak, 270 Romanian, 800 Polish, 400 Czech, 200 Ruthenian, and 300 Italian proverbs, in separate chapters, giving sometimes general references to the original source of the items. But for the proverbs—except for the Hungarian texts—there are no source references. Sometimes Margalits hints to some Hungarian parallels.

Because such old publications were out of print, Tamás Forgács compiled (2004) a CD-ROM reprint of four works: Dugonics (1820), Erdélyi (1851), Margalits (1896), and Sirisaka (1891)—only with a short introduction (which appeared also in a form of an offprint), and without additional notes.

A practical book *Idézetek tára* (Treasury of Quotations) was published by an ardent Roman Catholic priest, János Dvorzsák (first edition 1883, second edition 1898), in which 4154 texts from Hungarian and international authors were grouped in thematic order, with careful indices. In the collection there are only some proverbs included. (Until now many similar books were published in Hungary—but I do not list them, because they represent other than paremiographic aspects.)

Hungarian literary men and linguists in the 19th century wrote a handful of essays on the meaning and rhetoric of proverbs. Lajos Katona (1895) in the encyclopaedia entry *közmondások* (proverbs) gives a concise definition, stressing the folklore character of the proverb. His Hungarian and international bibliography is a masterpiece of erudition. The linguist Vilmos Tolnai published a de-

tailed research history (1910), referring both to proverb collections and to (the few) theoretical essays. A generation later he wrote the chapter about proverbs in the four-volume handbook “Hungarian Ethnography” (1935, later edition: 1943). Tolnai characterized the proverbs according to their language use. His summary was a fine paper with some references to international and comparative paremiology.

Between the two world wars a specific trend arose: to give cultural historical explanations to some Hungarian proverbs, sayings, and expressions. Already by the late 19th century, Béla Tóth published several volumes of historical anecdotes, curiosities etc., and besides them compiled a book *Szájról szájra. A magyarság szálló igéi* (From lips to lips. Verbal quotations in Hungary) (1895, also in later reprints), a Hungarian mutation of Georg Büchmann’s *Geflügelte Worte*. Manó Kertész started with essays on Hungarian greeting forms: *Szállok az úrnak. Az udvarias magyar beszéd története* (I raise a toast. History of polite speaking in Hungarian) (1932, reprint 1996), his other book of collected explanations of *clichés* from Hungarian historical sources (1922, reprint 1985) *Szokásmondások* (Stereotypes—Cultural history in the Hungarian language). Both books belong to the same trend. Gyula Csefkó (1930 and in reprint: 2001) *Szállóigék, szólásmódok* (Winged quotations and ways of sayings) used data from Hungarian historical semantics. Both linguists knew the curiosities of cultural history, and their explanations of Hungarian phrases are valid. But they did not use comparative paremiography. Ferenc Szécsi (1936) edited a popular book of “winged phrases”. Among the folklorists only János Berze Nagy (1929–1932) followed the same line, wishing to connect Hungarian proverbs with ancient Hungarian beliefs—not in a convincing way.

I will not refer to later publications of the same kind. But it is very impressive to look into such volumes “of yesterday”, full with similarities and dissimilarities both in the texts and in the use of the proverbs of today or yesterday.

The similar method is characteristic also to the next generation of Hungarian linguists. A prolific lexicographer, Gábor O. Nagy started with a volume of historical proverb explanations: *Mi fán terem? Magyar szólásmondások eredete* (On which tree it is growing? Origin of Hungarian proverbial sayings), which became a bestseller (editions 1957, revised editions 1961, 1965, 1988:

with a biography and a programmatic essay by O. Nagy.) It has more than 350 items, in alphabetical order of the keywords. Being a research worker in the Institute of Linguistics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he published the modern anthology *Magyar szólások és közmondások* (Hungarian sayings and proverbs)—another bestseller book (1966, 1976). It is an alphabetic dictionary, arranged by key words, altogether in 58.995 entries, containing 1005 sayings, 5560 proverbial comparisons, 319 proverbs, 21.280 phrases, etc. O. Nagy gives a number to each item, but does not give source references, and he constructed a “general form of the sayings”. With the = mark he gives the ‘meaning’ of the phrases, usually a plausible one, but not from any source, and following the author’s personal intuition. That is why it is an excellent book concerning Hungarian phrases and clichés—but not a paremiological handbook. It is accepted today as “the” linguistic anthology of Hungarian proverbs. In his essay *Mi a szólás?* (What is the saying?) (1954) he gave a linguistic definition of the phenomenon. In another booklet he summarized the study of Hungarian proverbs—referring to them as “phraseology”: *A Magyar frazeológiai kutatások története* (History of Hungarian phraseological studies—1977). It is a thorough survey, based upon earlier summaries, and ends with the year 1920.

An excellent Hungarian Slavist, László Hadrovics, made a linguistic monograph *Magyar frazeológia. Történeti áttekintés* (Hungarian phraseology. A historical approach - 1995). In the first part of the book in 141 sections there is a systematisation of linguistic constructions. Then follows a chapter “*képes beszéd*” (“figurative speech”) presenting such items as “the human body and its organs”, “the life”, “animals”, “hunting”, “fishing”, “the human society”, “customs”, “belief”. A separate chapter deals with “periphrases”. The sections 220–245 contain some hundred proverbs (in alphabetic order). Quotations from the Bible and the antiquity, or from modern time etc. are exemplified with some sample texts. In special parts the translated sayings are dealt with. As an Annex (sections 287–301), the detailed analysis of 15 sayings is presented. A few additions close the book. There we find references to paremiological literature too. Excellent indices make it easy to find the actual sayings and proverbs. The linguistic data are referred to very precisely. Thus, if somebody wants to know something about a special linguistic form or phrase—one should

look into the book by Hadrovics. The aim of the book was of a linguistic direction.

Because of the popularity of the studies written by the above mentioned linguists it seemed for a while that Hungarian paremiology does not need more works. Only the phraseology (in the strict sense of the word) developed, especially in bilingual and contrastive topics. In his recent survey the Germanist Tamás Forgács (2007) *Bevezetés a frazeológiába. A szólás- és közmondáskutatás alapjai* (Introduction to Phraseology. Basic study of sayings and proverbs) describes the various forms of “phraseological units”. In chapter IV, he deals separately with the proverbs. He finds trouble both in the definition of “proverb”, and its classification. He refers to recent international paremiology (e.g. Kuusi, Röhrich, Mieder, Permyakov, Grzybek etc., “paremiological minimum” tests, the EUROPHRAS meetings etc.) and he mentions his Hungarian colleagues. See especially the proceedings of the (4th) EUROPHRAS—Europäische Gesellschaft für Phraseologie conference, Veszprém 2006, edited by Csaba Földes (2009).

It seems to me that before 1964 (the founding year of the Helsinki-based journal, *Proverbium*) Hungarian paremiology was not part of the international proverb network. Even if some linguists sporadically referred to important international publications (e.g. to Archer Taylor), in practice they did not use their methods and their comparative material. In fact I had to introduce (fifty years ago !) the basic terms and subterms (even *proverbium* and *parömiológia*) into Hungarian, and suggested references to international handbooks and methods. When we made the then new university handbook *A magyar népköltészet* (Hungarian folk poetry), I wrote there the chapter of “shorter epic forms”, including proverbs and kindred genres (Voigt 1966). It was later extended (Voigt 1969), representing the international classification system of proverbs and related forms. In the later editions (Voigt 1979, Voigt 1998), I gave an updated picture of the actual paremiological scene, with hundred comparative and Hungarian references. In some other papers I described the then modern paremiology (Voigt 1975, 1980) especially in Hungary (Voigt 1996). In a specific paper I used the “Flemish Proverbs” of Bruegel, in order to show the way of making a possible historical reconstruction of proverbial lore in Hungary. In further papers I tried to present modern views, e.g. on the “phrases” (see latest Voigt 2006). One of my first uni-

versity students, Ágnes Szemerkenyi in her dissertation (published later: 1994) dealt exhaustively with the attempts to the definition of the proverb, and the use of proverbs in literature, press, advertisement, psychology, art, etc. She wrote the chapter “proverbs” (1988) for the multivolume (“academic”) handbook of *Magyar néprajz* (Hungarian Ethnography), which summarizes the same topics from the same point of view.

From the 19th century there were several attempts to translate “foreign” proverbs into Hungarian, or *vice versa*. Because of the limits of my sketch I do not quote them. Theoretically they do not go beyond their practical aims, as far as I can see. Already Lajos Katona stressed the importance of Finno-Ugric proverbs, collected and published by Hungarian philologists. The same might be said about Altaic and, in general, Oriental philology in Hungary.

19th and 20th century collections of Hungarian folk poetry often have chapters on proverbs. Their number is more than hundred. Just from the recent ones I mention only some of them. Usually they give a good selection of current sayings and phrases in a community, reflect on the dialectal forms, and mention the function or use of all kinds of sayings and proverbs. Usually they are not engaged in issues of theoretical paremiology and paremiography. In the 1970s “new sociolinguistics” under the direction of Professor Mihály Hajdú at the Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) launched a series of booklets, devoted to dialects, language stratification topics, etc., reflecting also on various forms of modern phrases, sayings and proverbs. Among them “new” forms, graffiti, tattoo, greetings, ethnic slurs, slang etc. took also their own place. Thus by now it is possible to compare the contemporary proverbial lore of several villages or of social groups. However, nobody ever tried to make such summary. Even a complete list of such paremiographic publications (about one hundred at least!) is missing. I shall list here only six extraordinarily important works.

One masterpiece of recently collected proverbial lore is a local monograph by Károly Lábadi (and his wife) from the Drávaszög area (between the rivers Dráva and Duna, once in Yugoslavia, today in Croatia). Between 1978 and 1983 they collected proverbs in ten Hungarian villages there, totalling 11.395 items, *i.e.* variants of 2982 proverb texts (Lábadi 1986). In the introduction and systematization, as well as in the excellent indices they have closely

followed the instructions, and the systematization presented in our university handbook. It is my mistake that I did not urge them to consult Croatian (and Serbian) proverb parallels.

Gabriella Vöö (née Zattler) was a Hungarian folklorist in Kolozsvár/Cluj/Napoca, working at the Archives of Folklore there. First she published an anthology of Hungarian proverbs in Romania, kept there in the archives (Vöö 1989). (About it there is a curious anecdote, that the already fully printed book was waiting a long time for release, because it has the title “The right man speaks the truth”. It was the very first book published after Ceausescu’s death.) Vöö in her introduction gives a very good summary of “proverb theory”, refining the classification we made in Budapest. It is the best presentation of (Hungarian) proverbs in Romania. The book has a very thorough indexing system, all texts are retrievable. But there are no comparative remarks, in spite of the fact that Zanne’s epochal Rumanian proverb collection (ten volumes // 1895-1912, and in recent reprint too) had already distinctively registered the Transylvanian–Rumanian proverbs a century ago.

Her second invaluable collection is from the texts of the (State) folklore archive in Cluj (Vöö 1999), as a continuation and addition to the previous publication. It is based on the 38.000 large Hungarian proverbial texts in the Cluj archive. Vöö has selected the “true” proverbs in her previous (1989) book, and in 1999 the “sayings” followed, again with a good introduction, and all the texts might be traced back. The book was reprinted (2007) in Budapest.

József Gágyor, director of the primary school in Tallós (a Hungarian village in South Slovakia) has published dozen books of the folklore and language there. Among them he compiled a complete treasury of proverbs: *Mátyusföldi rózsák és bogáncsok. Szólások, közmondások és nyelvi fordulatok a tallósi nép ajkán* (Roses and thistles from the Mátyusföldje region. Sayings, proverbs verbal phrases told by the people in Tallós), in alphabetical order, five volumes (A–E 2007, F–J 2008, K–Ny 2010, O–Sz 2010, T–Zs and some additions 2011), altogether 12.310 items. In every case there is a full sentence, which contains the proverbial form. At the end of the final volume there are thematic indices.

University professor of folklore in Debrecen, Zoltán Ujváry, has collected Hungarian folklore on both sides of the Slovak-

Hungarian state border, in a region called Gömör. He has extensively noticed the proverb lore, with special emphasis on the use and the given meaning of the texts. His collection—*Szólás-gyűjtemény* (Collection of sayings—2001—about 3000 items) follows the literary language, and is arranged by alphabetic order of the keywords. To each item he gives remarks about the assumed meaning, sometimes several meanings. The collection does not give references to the time and place of the collection. It is plausible that many of the proverbs are known in different villages. In the introduction the author is expressing his views about the everyday use of the proverbs. According to him, “proverb” is a notion, the people do not know about it. They simply “use” the language.

Another book by Zoltán Ujváry, *Egy földműves szólásai és közmondásai* (Proverbs and sayings of one peasant) (1996), contains more than 1200 items, arranged in alphabetical order by keywords. János Lökös, a small land holder (!), schoolmate and life-long friend of Professor Ujváry wrote them down for many years, and he explains in his own words the meaning and the use of them. Unfortunately Lökös died before the completion of the work.

Professor of folklore in Transylvania, Vilmos Tánczos published a whole book (2008) on “language and world-view of a “common Székely peasant”. Accepting the above mentioned opinion by Ujváry (concerning the “only in the theory and not in the practice existence” of the proverb), Tánczos describes the language use and world view of the informant (who is the father of the folklorist), showing the “pictorial language” and the elaborated expressions at the end of the book with 730 proverbs.

In summarizing, we may say that there are other local proverb collections, usually with explanation of the proverbs (and other subgenres). Because they were made at the same time, they are well comparable and reflect the local and social differences too. I list here only a few of them. Jósa (2001) has 1000 items from the Kecskemét region; Bura (1987) 2312 items from the Szatmár region; Mrs. Enyedi (1992) from the village Öcsöd 2967 items, grouped thematically; Molnár (1993) 3772 items from the village Jászszentandrás; Kálnási (2008) 2341 items, expressing in the sayings the common opinion of traditional inhabitants in the town

Debrecen; Balogh (1995) has 3511 items from the West Hungarian, Göcsej region.

The late professor of Ethnography at the Szeged University, Sándor Bálint in a publication (1972) summarizing the proverbs from Szeged, used mainly the written historical sources, or previous collections. Bálint grouped the texts into 16 semantic-thematic chapters. He spent all of his life in Szeged, and compiled also a two-volume large “Szeged Dictionary”, thus he was well informed both about the ethnographic and linguistic context of the proverbs in Szeged..

Other leading Hungarian folklorists have often touched on the problems of proverbs. By name I mention here only Imre Katona (see his bibliography 2006), who has collected and studied proverbs (e.g. Katona 1980), and who wrote about their stylistics (Katona 1974).

An extraordinary publication is by a Jewish folklorist, Ilana Rosen (2011), who collected (or simply heard) proverbs from her Transylvanian—Hungarian—Jewish father-in-law. She registered a handful Romanian, 60 Yiddish, and 300 Hungarian texts. It is amazing to notice the *élan vital* of Hungarian (etc.) proverbs in the very much different Israeli way of life.

Perhaps here I should mention that the world famous Hebraist and Orientalist, Director of the Budapest Rabbinical Seminar, Sándor (Alexander) Scheiber in his philological studies has often quoted and explained Jewish proverbs and sayings (especially, if connected with the Haggadah, or representing the “Stoffgeschichte”). See his collected papers in English (Scheiber 1985) and in Hungarian (Scheiber 1977–1984) containing his bibliography.

From the just mentioned “local” proverb collections we can draw two important conclusions. The first is that from one thousand to ten thousand items may be characteristic to the proverbial lore of one community or of one person. The second is that there is no limit in numbers as reflected by the use of the proverbs. In some cases the paremiographers noted only spontaneous sayings; in other cases they were using Hungarian standard collections, asking the informants, if they know from there this or that proverb or saying? In both cases the results shall be endless. If we write down all proverbial comparisons, personal anecdotes or Biblical sentences, the amount of “proverbs” will increase. Such weakness

of generic definitions of the proverbs is notably an important (but unsolved) problem in paremiography.

In Hungary, during the recent ten years there was a boom in producing “complete proverb dictionaries”. The initiator was Gábor Kiss, director of a dynamic Linguistic Press “Tinta”. The great dictionaries were followed by small and practical ones, directly intended for the schools.

A Romanist linguist, Vilmos Bárdosi (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), published the first (2003) edition of his “treasury of proverbs” with 13.000 entries, and then in an updated (2009) edition a large dictionary of phrases, sayings and proverbs. His other handbook (Bárdosi 2004) contains “situational sayings” too. A third variant is (Bárdosi 2012) a semantic dictionary of all important words which occur in proverbs and saying, with a short thematic index. For example the word *szamár* (Donkey) occurs in 30 sayings, with references to 8 further texts. The texts are standardized and no direct source is given. The number of items is between 20.000 and 25.000 and very modern forms (also erotic and slang versions) have been included. Bárdosi published (together with Gábor Kiss) a part of that material in small handbooks of proverbs.

The Germanist Tamás Forgács (2003) published a large dictionary (with about 6500 items) of contemporary (!) proverbs and sayings, using modern sources, electronic data bases, quotations from the press etc. For every entry there is at least one (sometimes long) quotation, with exact source data. The book in principle does not have old proverbial material. The time slot is from about the end of 19th century until today. In recent publications the author has also used the phrases and sayings from the “great” Hungarian (-English, -German, -French etc.) dictionaries. He edited also a small collection “about animals in the Hungarian proverbs” (Forgács 2005), in which he selected variants from about 26 animals or their groups (e.g. birds).

Anna T. Litovkina studied Hungarian (!) philology at the Moscow University. Her dissertation (Tóthné Litovkina 1983–1989) is about the language forms of Hungarian proverbs, as contrasted with the Russian. Her great proverb anthology (Litovkina 2005) is a collection of Hungarian sayings and proverbs (in more than 1000 entries), combining linguistic and folkloristic methods. She adds a meaning and stylistic characterization of the items, and

thorough quotations (mostly from contemporary press and literature). Because her interest was also in “anti-proverbs”, she added many new (and distorted) variants.

She proved the “paremiological minimum” method in Hungarian, and the experience led her towards parodies of proverbs. The completing and developing of proverbial forms was the topic of her book in English (Litovkina 2000). On anti-proverbs she published together with Wolfgang Mieder two books (Mieder—Litovkina 1999, Litovkina—Mieder 2006), interconnected one with another, and dealing with modern forms of traditional English proverbs (in the first book there are 3000 texts based on 320 proverbs, in the second book 5000 texts based on 580 traditional proverbs). Litovkina (ed. 2007) guest-edited a special issue “Anti-proverbs” of the journal *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*. And she published, together with Katalin Vargha, three popular books of such material (Litovkina—Vargha 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Her interest was extended to humorous forms, and she was organizing three conferences on humour. A joint book with Mieder (Litovkina—Mieder 2005) is the first theoretical publication on modern paremiology in the Hungarian language. It deals with definitions of the proverb (and of similar forms), the analysis of proverbs, historic stratification of the proverbs, common and innovative use of the proverbs. The illustrative material contains both Hungarian and world proverbs. Litovkina also mobilized some of her colleagues (*e.g.* Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Dóra Boronkai) to enter into proverb studies.

The folklorist Ágnes Szemerkenyi published after many years work her anthology of Hungarian sayings and proverbs (Szemerkenyi 2009). She wanted to present there the “classical Hungarian proverbs” from the 16th century until our days. She has selected a good part of the material also from the most important local collections. The texts are grouped by alphabetical order of the key words. Each entry starts with a standardized form, then a common meaning follows, and it is characterized by style and distribution markers. There we find the variants, in some cases up to twenty (usually in a standardized orthography, and in their possible historical order); to each one a source reference is given. At the end of the entry the meaning is described at length, sometimes with historic or ethnographic explanations. The book does not include the modern (mass culture) forms, nor simple quotations,

parodies, anti-proverbs etc. The book has about 15.000 entries with 40.000 variants. There are no indices or cross references added. Today this book is the true treasure of Hungarian proverbs in the strict sense of the word.

The four (and with their mutations more) recent grand anthologies (by Bárdosi, Forgács, Litovkina and Szemerkenyi) represent different aims: from linguistic, phrase-based collections and situational sayings to actualized clichés, proverbs with sentence-value etc. They are sometimes comparable, and in all they complete each other. As for the “amount” of proverbs (and sayings) we can state that about 20.000 items (with about double as much in variants) show the core of the Hungarian proverb stock. Since in all of the books the editors gave their own attempt to the “meaning” of the texts—it is a good idea to contrast them!

Actual international paremiography refers to Gyula Paczolay as one of its living masters. He is a most diligent self-made-man: he got his degrees in chemistry (!), and devoted his interest to paremiology only (!) in the last forty years. (See his bibliography until 2000: Voigt 2000). His world-wide known publications deal with comparative paremiology. He started with a practical Hungarian—English list of proverbs (Paczolay 1975), then a Hungarian—Estonian contrastive volume followed (Paczolay 1985), to which later German, English, Finnish, Latin, Cheremis and Zyryan proverbs were added (Paczolay 1987). European and Far-Eastern proverbs (about 200 Japanese and Chinese ones) are contrasted to the most common “European” ones. (Paczolay 1994). He edited a small volume of corresponding Hungarian—Japanese proverbs (1994b). A crown jewel in Hungarian paremiology is his *European Proverbs* (Paczolay 1997), listing 106 of the “most common” European proverbs in 55 languages. He did not compile a large anthology of Hungarian proverbs, but four “mini-volumes” appeared from his pen: 650 Hungarian proverbs (Paczolay 1989), 750 Hungarian proverbs with English translations—not equivalents—(Paczolay 1991a), and a similar German book (Paczolay 1990 and 1991b). As their continuation he edited (Paczolay 2000) 1000 Hungarian proverbs with English, Estonian, Finnish and German equivalents. The Hungarian data are exact, but without much source references.

During the last 20 years he has worked on the historical sources of Hungarian proverbs, before and after Baranyai Decsi’s

book. As was mentioned above, he is preparing a “critical edition” of Baranyai Decsi (1598), with the notes containing references to all of the later publications of the same proverb or saying.

A young professor of German and of theory of literature in Szeged, Zoltán Kanyó published his dissertation in German (1981). It follows both modern German text logic and the ideas of G. L. Permyakov, defining the proverb as a “simple form” (*Einfache Form*). For the logical analysis he used standardized German proverb texts, and not any first-hand collection. He used the then new “generative poetics” methods. (See my review: Voigt 1982.) Kanyó (1940-1985) died as a very young scholar, and thus left his system of the theory of simple forms unfinished.

A Romanist linguist (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) Péter Barta deals with thematic groups of French proverbs, contrasting them to Hungarian ones. He also deals with anti-proverbs and wrote on the problem of proverb definition (Barta 1993, 1995a, 1995b etc.)

Speaking about 19th and early 20th century paremiography, I mentioned some bilingual publications. For learning Russian, English, and even the Japanese language such publications appeared until today. I do not refer to them, because they are mainly of practical purpose, and the proverbs used in both languages are without further accreditation. I list here only some of them. The Transylvanian linguist (by the way the husband of Gabriella Vöö), István Vöö compiled a Romanian-Hungarian concise contrastive proverb anthology (Vöö I. 1978), containing 2154 items. A parallel volume (Vöö I. 1984) contains Hungarian—Rumanian texts (2112 items). Those small books appeared in a similar series of a Rumanian publisher, and the texts are valuable—but not annotated.

A Japanese person and his Hungarian friend published a five-lingual booklet (Taiji 1989) including 110 Hungarian, English, German, French and Japanese sayings, without any further data.

Professor of Dutch language at Eötvös Loránd University, Erzsébet Mollay (2000) published a Dutch-Hungarian dictionary of proverbs. It has 406 items, with variants, source references, and two introductory studies.

Csaba Földes (1987) published a tri-lingual collection of Hungarian, German and Russian colloquial phrases. (Similar practical books appear regularly.)

It is a curious fact that ethnic minority studies in Hungary did not achieve too much in paremiology. However, there are a few publications, including Hocópán (1974), publishing the proverbs from a Rumanian village in Hungary, Méhkerék.

I do not list here the recent publications of Hungarian Finno-Ugrists, Turkologists, or Orientalists in general. They compiled a very rich material, which needs (but today lacks) its own bibliography. (Just recently my student, Rita Kuzder defended her PhD dissertation about the classification of Tibetan proverb genres—the very first attempt in Tibetan paremiology.)

The variety of works dealing with proverbs in Hungary is great. In order to prove it I call attention only to one interesting book: Bernáth (1986) wrote about thirty semantic groups of erotic phrases and sayings, with explanations from cultural history and folklore. He used Hungarian data, together with some (mostly German) parallels.

Throughout the history of lexicography and paremiography in Hungary valuable and useful publications appeared: several volumes collected citations, quotations, Biblical proverbs, *apophthegmata* or simply *salse dicta*. There are studies devoted to proverbs in famous writer's works. There are very many historical and semantic explanations of individual proverbs and sayings. Because of the size limits of my paper I do not list them.

It is surprising that “proverbs of a statesman/politician” type paremiological studies in Hungary are definitely a rarity. The same could be said concerning the “politician's anecdotes”. E.g. the Prime Minister of Hungary in his speeches around 1999 several times quoted “Dakota Indian proverbs” (which in fact do not exist, but their form and moral resemble the traditional proverbs). There was no scholarly treatment of the phenomenon.

The strength of the actual paremiography and paremiology in Hungary is that it is very diligent, combining linguistics, folklore and cultural history. Devoted specialists work in this field. We know about the actual situation in international paremiology as well. The weakness is that terminology is not always clear, and does not refer to genres, supergenres and subgenres of “proverbs” (in the broad sense of the term). And, in spite of bilingual dictionaries—there is no major collection of Hungarian proverbs, systematically referring to international proverbs. It is much more than to “translate” the sentence, in which there is a proverb, into

any other language. My training in paremiology was to find (for Matti Kuusi's *Proverbia septentrionalia*) Hungarian variants missing from "the Düringsfelds". It would be of great importance to publish a major volume of Hungarian proverbs, with comparative references, just made for the use of international proverb scholarship.

Another serious lack is—despite the works of Tolnai, O. Nagy, Hadrovics and others—that there is no thorough history of proverb studies in Hungary. And—there is no Hungarian paremiological bibliography either. It would be the task of today's young paremiographers.

We can characterize into three chapters the hitherto achieved results. First (to about the first half of 19th century) people wanted to collect and publish Hungarian proverbs serving lexicography and education, in general fostering the development of the language. From the 19th century until today the folklore-type collections and publications dominated. There were attempts also to deal with theoretical problems of common sayings. However, a serious lack was that no multilingual, internationally systematized collection was made, like in the neighbouring countries. Cultural historical explanations were common. The third phase is of today: characterized by modern, large dictionaries of phrases, sayings and proverbs. International contacts became prominent. New phenomena were introduced into the research, thus we live now in a new golden age of Hungarian paremiology.

I do not want to outline here my "theory" of proverbs. But I make a distinction between paremiology, phraseology and semantics, all of those dealing with simple units of speech. I think the folkloristic—generic study of "simple forms" ("*ot pogovorki do skazki*" as Permyakov said, and this phrase is not the same as "from proverb to folk-tale") is another promising way of modern paremiology. I hope that both lines will cooperate also in the future. I always make a difference between two strata in semantics: direct *meaning*—and deep *sense*. I feel that this aspect may lead to results both in interpreting and comparing proverbs.

At the beginning of my paper I have stated that from 1964 on Hungarian paremiology became an inevitable partner in international paremiology. I finish my paper with the same remark. I was lucky to know personally Lutz Röhrich, G. L. Permyakov, Elza Kokare, Démétrios Loukatos, Kazys Grigas, Alan Dundes, Arvo

Krikmann, Wolfgang Mieder, Peter Grzybek and many more leading paremiologists. My first master in paremiology was, however, Matti Kuusi. Upon his request I continued (with the collaboration of Ágnes Szemerényi) his *Proverbium* in three (four) issues, as *Proverbium Paratum* (1980, 1981, 1982). It is today an inaccessible publication, and it existed in a mimeographed hard to read form. But the first issue was dedicated to Matti Kuusi, the second to Permyakov, and the third to Lutz Röhrich. (In fact the last publication appeared years later as Litovkina 1983-1989.)

Hungary has housed several meetings of paremiology. I have listed some of them. And Földes (2004) published an international *Festschrift* in honour of Wolfgang Mieder.

My final word is an apology. Realizing the limits of my paper, I did not mention here many important persons and their works (or some of their works). Especially I omitted non-book publications concerning paremiological matters, i.e. scholarly studies of proverbs and not collections. For this see Wolfgang Mieder's *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* (2009) with its many entries dealing with Hungarian scholarship. But it was my aim to write (and finish) finally this concise report *debuisset iam pridem*.

Notes

¹The Turkic loanword *sab* 'word, speech' occurs also in Vogul and Ostyak vocabulary. See the latest Hungarian etymological dictionary: Zaicz 2006. 801. But this fact does not mean automatically that „pre-Ugric” Turkic proverbs were absorbed into the Uralic (and thus into the Hungarian) languages.

²Here and in the following I give reference to Mieder 2011, by numbers in the Bibliography of my paper, if the publication exists in the International Proverb Archives at Burlington, Vermont.

³Here and in the case of later publications I tried to keep the original orthography, but sometimes with slight modernisation. Please note that I do not register all the quoted publications in my paper. See, however, the annual bibliographies in the *Proverbium Yearbook*. The latest *International Bibliography of Paremiology and Phraseology* by Wolfgang Mieder (2009. Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, Vol. I-II.) has other Hungarian references (among them papers published in journals and collective volumes, etc.)

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