

TODORESZKU: EGY KIVETELES KÖNYVTAR KINCSEI – TREASURES OF A UNIQUE LIBRARY – COMORILE UNEI BIBLIOTECI UNICE, Szerkesztette / edited by / redactat de Varga Bernadett (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2020)

The commemorative album, published in 2020, pays tribute to book collector Gyula Todoreszku (1866-1919), the second largest donor to the OSZK and its library in terms of the size of donations. The album was published for the 100th anniversary of the donation. It was preceded by the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Gyula Todoreszku at the National Széchényi Library (OSZK), and in 2016, for the 150th anniversary of his birth, a chamber exhibition was held, where about 100 works of art from the over 3000 volumes of the prominent collection were exhibited, thus presenting this library of unparalleled value and its collector. The publication of this commemorative album was preceded by a series of tributes to the late collector and his library, in order to emphasise and show the esteem in which this library is held and its important place in the collections of the OSZK.

The album contains several pictures as well as two major studies and a catalogue, with a commemorative text by His Excellency Dr. Marius Lazurca, Ambassador of Romania to Hungary. The texts of the album are available in Hungarian and Romanian, with a detailed English abstract. Published in hardback, the appearance of this high-quality publication is also remarkable.

The first study is entitled *The Library of Gyula Todoreszku*, and is authored by Bernadett Varga, who traces Todoreszku's life from a young man curious about books to a conscious library builder, and describes the collector, the development and composition of the collection, as well as its place and role in the OSZK.

In order to outline the biography of Gyula Todoreszku, the author of the study consulted all possible sources that may be relevant to the profile of the bibliophile. Thus, we also gain insight into the family correspondence that is not known to the general public; the author of the study also presents Todoreszku's "professional", official correspondence and his studies published in various professional journals. Data from the archives of the OSZK and of other official bodies was uncovered and used in this study to shed light on several details of Todoreszku's life: these complement the biographies of Todoreszku that have been published so far. At a young age, during his stay in Schnepfenthal, a fellow student introduced him to the passion of collecting, so as to further his German language skills: his early stamp collection grew into an exceptionally valuable library by the end of his life. Bernadett Varga traces Gyula

Todoreszku's life in parallel with the process of building the library, his wide-ranging contacts with the antiquarians, book collectors and publishers of his time. She also presents Todoreszku's professional and research habits and achievements, which are closely connected to this process: his collection of watermarks, a pioneering work in the European history of philigranology, which includes reconstructed drawings of more than 1,000 European paper mill watermarks (now preserved in three decorative boxes in the OSZK). His recognition of the importance of watermarks in the history of art and science also led him to their importance in economic history. His research on the material of printed or on manuscript volumes was closely linked to his interest in book ornamentation: his aim was no less than to write the history of Hungarian book ornamentation. This work on the history of printing, for which he recorded the starting and closing ornaments and initials of the printed volumes, was unfortunately left unfinished, Todoreszku's illness and death preventing its publication in print. His wife, Aranka Horváth, also played an important role in the development of the Todoreszku Library. Todoreszku married late, and in Aranka Horváth he found a worthy partner in the building of his library and in his sacrifices to preserve the values of the past. The cover of the album shows a photograph of the two. The serenity, elegance and harmony radiating from the picture could also indicate the nature of their relationship.

After Gyula Todoreszku's death, she took charge of the fate of the library, and, in fulfilment of her husband's wishes, she handed over their library to the OSZK, thus ensuring access for all, taking a significant moral role in the care of the library while providing invaluable financial support for its expansion even after her husband's death. In recognition of Aranka Horváth's timeless merits, the generous donation bears both of their names: The Library of Dr. Gyula Todoreszku and his wife, Aranka Horváth.

Bernadett Varga, his biographer, explores every detail of his library-building activities. From the acquisition of appropriate and professional furnishings for the library, to the stylistic, artistic re-binding and restoration of damaged, unbound volumes by a master craftsman, he paid attention to every detail. The bindings and restorations created by Viktor Akantisz, a former law student who grew into a specialist in old books, are the result of professional work and artistic skill. The collection's new bindings also showcase the works of well-known and renowned craftsmen such as Álmos Jaschik, József Galamb, Ferenc Helbing and Richard Adolf Zutt. Akantisz was decisive in the history of the development of the Todorescu library. He himself became a book collector by working with Gyula Todoreszku, and after Todoreszku's death he was employed by the OSZK as a bookbinder-restorer, his task remaining the restoration of the Todoreszku-Horváth library. At the same time, he wrote Gyula Todoreszku's first biography and prepared the catalogue of the library. The process of restoration he

practised is no longer used today; however, in his day, replacing missing pages in volumes with authentic reproductions was considered the most modern method, which is now seen as creating new cultural assets by replacing the original materials. This method, now viewed as too intrusive, is a chapter in the history of book restoration. Gyula Todoreszku chose this method for a reason: he tried to “restore” old Hungarian books, which had survived in such small numbers, in many cases only in a few copies, and to turn them into complete volumes. At the same time, the new bindings created by Viktor Akantisz, many of which were silver-plated, are velvet-bound, gilt leather or vellum bindings, many with enamel decorations, some of them reimagining and recreating versions of the original bindings, others bearing the Art Nouveau stylistic traits of the period. One of the most beautiful chapters in the album is the presentation of the decorative bindings of the Todoreszku library, accompanied by numerous colour photographs. By presenting the bindings in detail, the author of the study emphasises that the bindings of the Todoreszku Library are of unparalleled value from the point of view of art history and the history of book binding.

In the final part of the paper, the fate of the Todoreszku-Horváth library is discussed, from its transfer to the OSZK, i.e., from its takeover, which began on 22 March 1920, to the system that was created in the 1950s and preserved ever since. The library meant not only the books and manuscripts: the furniture, specially commissioned by Gyula Todoreszku, was also transported with them. A brief presentation of the names and work of the library’s trustees shows who the guardians and organisers of the Todorescu Library were, the ones who saved it from the dangers of the Second World War.

The second paper in the volume - Gyula Todoreszku and the Cyrillica Collection of the OSZK - is authored by Levente Nagy, head of the Department of Romanian Philology at ELTE, in which he presents the Romanian-related material of the Todoreszku Library, including the items of the Cyrillica Collection of the OSZK that were later added. This study is not unknown to the scholarly community: The author published the results of his research on the old Romanian-language volumes of the OSZK in 2018.¹

As it is well-known in the Romanian scholarly literature, this collection, which contains the most significant Romanian-related material outside Romania, is still unexplored. This applies not only to the Romanian entries of the Todoreszku library, but also to the Romanian volumes of Hungarian libraries in general: Levente Nagy believes that Hungarian researchers were deterred primarily by linguistic difficulties, and that although Romanian scholars have conducted research in many libraries in Hungary, especially after 1990, systematic exploration

¹ Nagy Levente, “Todoreszku Gyula és az OSZK Cyrillica-gyűjteménye,” *Magyar Könyvszemle*, 134 (2018): 185–210.

and processing is still to come. By reviewing the literature on the history of old Romanian books, it also provides a basis for identifying the most urgent tasks of research and processing. Most of the old Romanian books in the OSZK are kept in the Cyrillica Collection (160 in number; 43 of these are Slavic-language books, but not Romanian-related), while the Core Collection contains 29 old Romanian books from the 18th and 19th centuries from the Todoreszku-Horváth Library. Most of the old Romanian books were collected by Gyula Todoreszku. The most important contributions of Levente Nagy's paper are the clarifications and identifications he carried out among volumes that have so far been identified conditionally or incorrectly, or not at all. Five of the conditionally/incorrectly identified volumes were clarified, and four of the unidentified volumes were identified. In several cases identification was hindered by the fact that the the volume(s) are incomplete. Thus, applying a comparative literary and printing history analysis, out of the nine volumes, he identified three, in fact four unique ones (on a 1793 edition of the *Ceaslov* from Blaj(?) only indirect information from 1838 was available so far).

The history of books is inseparable of their former readers. The entries written in the volumes bear witness to them, and their contribution to literary and cultural history is almost immeasurable. Levente Nagy highlights this aspect in his analysis of the old Romanian books in the Todoreszku-Horváth library as he draws attention to a few special entries not only showcasing a few examples but also outlining a research direction. In addition to the autobiographical entries, they also contain comments that are of a philological importance. The majority of the volumes in this collection was once in the possession of Transylvanian owners, and is worthy of further research from the point of view of Transylvanian book and literacy culture.

The third and most ornate and spectacular part of the album is the Catalogue, which contains descriptions of 75 works, accompanied by colour photographic reproductions. The items in the catalogue bear witness to the work of four authors: Zsuzsanna Bakonyi, Levente Nagy, Zsolt Szebelédi, and Bernadett Varga. The catalogue gives a representative sample of the richness of the Todoreszku-Horváth Library and includes the newly identified Romanian-language Cyrillicae. The catalogue presents the old Hungarian and old Romanian books chronologically, with the volumes being preceded by a title indicating their contents and characteristics. In addition to a brief description of the contents, bibliographical references to the work in question are provided and the most recent literature on the subject is indicated. The items in the Catalogue represent all genres of old literature.

The incunabula of the Todoreszku-Horváth library are represented by the Brno edition of Thuróczy's Chronicle from 1488. The subject of history is represented by other chronicles in the catalogue: The first edition of Thuróczy's Ransanus edited by János Zsámboky (Vienna,

[1558]), the first Hungarian-language world chronicle by István Székely (Krakow, 1559), Gáspár Heltai's *Chronica* (Cluj-Napoca, 1575). Among the 17th-century chronicles, the catalogue also includes the biography of Alexander the Great by Pál Forró Háportoni (Debrecen, 1619), written at the court of Gábor Bethlen, and Gergely Pethő's chronicle (Vienna, 1660), representing the Catholic side. The genre of the historical narrative was introduced in Hungarian literature by Sebestyén Lantos Tinódi, whose historical songs were published by Gáspár Heltai in Cluj-Napoca in 1554. The copy in the Todoreszku library was created by merging two incomplete volumes.

The catalogue also includes a manuscript from the Todoreszku-Horváth library: the manuscript history textbook used at the Piarist school in Podolíneć is also an iconographic curiosity, with its watercolour manuscript drawings. The 18th century manuscript (1793) was created by Glicér Heisler, a Piarist teacher at the school from Podolíneć. Among the textbooks, the Catalogue includes another rarity, the Greek Grammar Book (Braşov, 1539) written and published by Honterus, which survived in only two copies, and the very popular *Magyar encyclopaedia* (Hungarian Encyclopaedia, Utrecht, 1655), a textbook compiled for young people by the famous pedagogue, János Apáczai Csere.

The popularization of practical knowledge is represented by Péter Juhász Melius's *Herbarium* (Cluj-Napoca, 1578), a book on medicine, the description of herbs and their effects, while the first volume on veterinary medicine published in Hungarian is the small book discussing the diseases of horses and their cures that nowadays seem rather amusing (*Lovak orvosságos ... könyvetskéje*, Levoća, 1656). The catalogue also includes György Lippay's *Gyümölcsös kert* (The Fruitful Garden, Vienna, 1667), which presents a wealth of horticultural knowledge, and the first Hungarian cookbook in print, *Szakáts mesterségnek könyvetskéje* (The Book of the Craft of Cooking, Cluj-Napoca, 1695). Volumes containing such practical knowledge have survived in very small numbers, making them a curiosity. Annual calendars were also published for practical purposes, and every printing place considered it an important task to publish a calendar and prognosticon every year. A unique example of the famous calendars of Levoća, dating back to 1635, is described in the catalogue.

Among the old Hungarian books, the greatest undertaking was undoubtedly the preparation and publication of the Hungarian-language Bible. This was a long journey, as the partial Bible editions in the catalogue show: Benedek Komjáti's translation of St Paul the Apostle's letters (Krakow, 1533), and János Sylvester's New Testament (Újsziget, 1541), following Erasmus's translation principles. Among the complete Hungarian-language editions of the Bible, all denominations were represented on Gyula Todoreszku's bookshelves: the first complete translation of the Bible, the Vizsoly Bible by Gáspár Károlyi (Vizsoly, 1590), the

Catholic Bible translated by György Káldi (Vienna, 1626), the Váradi Bible (Cluj-Napoca, 1661) and the New Testament in a small format (12^o), corrected and published by Miklós Kis Misztótfalusi, a masterpiece of typography. Péter Dengelegi, a Reformed pastor, summarises the differences between the denominational principles of Bible translation, debates with György Káldi, a follower of the Vulgate tradition, and argues for the validity of the oldest Hebrew and Greek Bible texts. The 16th and 17th centuries in Hungary and Transylvania were the “golden age” of religious disputes. The question of true faith and the salvation of souls generated heated religious debates that implied a specific language, developed a specific culture of debate and became a separate chapter of Hungarian literature. Many written records of this literature have been preserved in the Todoreszku-Horváth library, and representative figures and texts of all denominations are included in the Catalogue. The first piece of this genre is also worth highlighting for its uniqueness: the fragment of the reformed bishop Péter Melius Juhász’s treatise on the state of the soul after death is a unique copy of this work (Debrecen, [1562-63]). The Unitarian side is represented by the German-language teaching on baptism ([Klausenburg, 1570]), which is also preserved in fragments, and was soaked out by Todoreszku from the same bookplate that contained the Romanian-language hymnal bearing his name, the “Todoreszku fragment”. We cannot speak of early modern Hungarian debate literature without mentioning the former Jesuit, later Archbishop of Esztergom, Péter Pázmány. He was a prominent figure of the Catholic revival, one of the most important promoters of the Hungarian literary language, whose works can still serve as a delectable reading today thanks to the linguistic ingenuity and clarity of thought that they exude. The best example of this is his great encyclopaedic work, the *Kalauz* (Bratislava, 1623), which contains the most complete exposition of Catholic beliefs and refutation of Protestant beliefs. The Reformed pastor Mihály Veresmarti, who converted to Catholicism under the influence of Péter Pázmány, defends Catholic beliefs in the form of dramatic dialogues in his *Intő és tanító levél* (Letter of Exhortation and Instruction, Bratislava, 1623).

Sermons are an important literary genre in old literature, perhaps the most frequently published alongside the Bible. Hefty volumes of sermons were published in this period, intended both as a help to fellow preachers and as reading material. The catalogue includes volumes by leading figures on both the Catholic and Reformed sides: the postillas of Miklós Telegdi (Vienna, [1577]), parish priest and later bishop of Nagyszombat and Péter Bornemisza’s *Foliopostilla* (Detrekő, [1584]), the most extensive 16th-century book after the Vizsoly Bible. The most representative book of sermons of the 17th century is the printed version of the ecclesiastical and secular sermons delivered at the funeral of Gábor Bethlen’s

wife, Zsuzsanna Károlyi (Alba Iulia, 1624). The volume containing these Latin texts is presented in the Catalogue. Pious religious texts were available in a series of translations and original works: the collection includes the translations of the works of St. Augustine by the printer Lukács Pécsi (Trnava, 1591), a treatise on the Supreme Good (Levoča, 1630) translated from German by Albert Molnár Szenci, one of the greatest figures of early modern Hungarian cultural history, the 17th century *bestseller*, *Praxis pietatis*, translated from English by Pál Medgyesi (the 1643 edition of the translation, considered the final version by the translator). Closely related to pious readings is the genre of the prayer, exemplified in the Catalogue by the prayer book of the Kuruc soldiers (s.l., 1705) and of Pál Ráday (*Lelki hódolás*, Levoča, 1726), Francis II Rákóczi's chancellor.

The Rákóczi princely family published it in Gyulafehérvár in 1638 in a representative volume as a testimony to the acquisition of the tenets of the faith: the material of the confirmation of Zsigmond Rákóczi and his brother György on 15 August 1637, a copy of which is preserved in the Todoreszku-Horváth library.

In addition to the two basic works of early modern Hungarian legislation (the practical law in force until 1848, Werbőczy's *Tripartitum*, the 1565 Debrecen edition, and the 1584 Trnava edition of *Corpus Juris Hungarici*, intended to eliminate legal uncertainty, also published in numerous editions), the War of Independence led by Francis II Rákóczi also brought changes from a legal point of view. This is reflected in the articles of law adopted at the Diet of Ónod, which declare the dethronement of the House of Habsburg and the alliance of Hungary and Transylvania, which were arguably published in Levoča in 1705. The rhetoric of political language can be observed in the political pamphlets of Count Nikolaus Esterházy published in Vienna in 1645, who feared for the integrity of the country and expounded the arguments of a just war.

There is also a rich selection of literary works in the Catalogue, with the collection of short stories about the "fabulous East", namely *Ponciánus császár históriája* (the history of Emperor Poncianus) by Gáspár Heltai (Cluj-Napoca, [1573]), and a unique volume of romances, a fragment of a relatively late edition (1655-1665) of the very popular work by Albert Gergei, a story already folklorized by the 18th century, *Argirus királyfi* (Prince Argirus), published by the Brewer press in Levoča, and another Levoča print containing the fable of Fortunatus translated from German, of which only two copies have survived. The small volume of poems written on the death of the "first classic" of Hungarian literature, Bálint Balassi and his brother, of which only two copies survived (Bardejov, 1595), and the poetic and sharp social criticism of Vörös Gáspár Nyéki, canon of Győr, based on the dialogue between the soul and the body (Prague, [1623]), are unique copies; the first edition of the

first work of the poet and general Miklós Zrínyi, *Szigeti veszedelem* (The Peril of Sziget, Vienna, [1651]) and László Liszti's epic on the Battle of Mohács (*Magyar Márs*, Vienna, 1653), the volume on the cult of St. Anne received a very decorative binding by the famous craftsman Álmos Jaschik, perhaps because of personal concern.

A unique copy of the type of single leaf prints has been selected for the Catalogue: the death card of János Csere Apáczai, issued in Cluj-Napoca.

The old Romanian book collection of the OSZK was founded by Gyula Todoreszku's library. The catalogue contains 25 old Romanian volumes, written in Romanian and Old Church Slavonic, including, as already mentioned, the newly identified volumes. As we have seen in the case of the old Hungarian books, the Romanian-related items of the Catalogue broadly cover the subjects and types of publications of old Romanian printed books (1508-1830): partial translations of the Bible, Orthodox ecclesiastical service books, liturgical books, volumes of sermons, prayer books, and collections of Orthodox ecclesiastical laws and rules, starting with the first Romanian-related printed book (*Liturghier slavonesc*, Târgoviște, 1508) to the editions printed in Buda in the first third of the 19th century. Among the Romanian-language publications, we read about two Latin script editions, the famous Todoreszku fragment and the partial translation of the Bible, published for the second time in 1799 in Buda, for Roman Catholic Romanians living in Hungary and Transylvania. The publications that are also included in the RMK/RMNY collection (and beyond their timeframes, up to 1830) are exciting from a Hungarian point of view as well: the products of the Hungarian/Transylvanian printers, from the famous Coresi prints to the New Testament (*Noul Testament*, Bălgrad, 1649) and Psalter translations (*Psaltirea*, Bălgrad, 1651) produced by the Princely Press of Alba Iulia, as well as the Greek Catholic publications printed in Blaj (the newly identified *Euhologion, adecă molitvenic...*, Blaj, 1757) or the prayer book from the Todoreszku-Horváth library (*Ceaslov*, Blaj, 1753), which is a suspected unique specimen - not identical with any other such volumes of the book of hours type). In the first third of the 19th century, the Buda university printing house undertook the printing of Romanian language/Romanian-related volumes, and played a significant role in Romanian culture. It did not only supply Greek Catholic Romanians with printed volumes, but it also produced ecclesiastical service books for the Romanians of Wallachia, such as the 1805 volume on the Greek Orthodox Church services in honour of the saints (*Mineiul lunii iulie...*). The printing house in Buda did not only publish volumes for the Romanians for ecclesiastical use, it also published the first book of travelogues in Romanian: the memory of the travels of Dinicu Golescu, a Wallachian boyar to Western Europe. Among the Wallachian publications we highlight the unique copy of the prayer and hymn book (*Paraclisul Precistei*) published in Govora in 1639, the first Romanian-language sermon book

(*Evanghelie învățătoare...*, Govora, 1642), the collection of the Orthodox ecclesiastical laws (*Îndreptarea legii...*, Târgoviște, 1652) and the partial Bible translations from Bucharest (*Sventa și dumnezeiasca Evanghelie*, București, 1682; *Apostolul cu Dumnezeul*, București, 1683). Among the products of the Moldavian printers, the sermon book of Archbishop Varlaam of Moldavia was especially popular, which Todoreszku bought from Transylvanian owners (*Cartea românească de învățătură duminicile ...*, Iași, 1643); we also mention two important volumes by Dosoftei, also Archbishop of Moldavia: his service book aiming to create Romanian liturgical language (*Dumnezeiască liturghie*, Iași, 1679) and his first hagiographical work in Romanian (*Viața și petrecerea sfinților*, Iași, 1682).

In our presentation, we have not covered every single item in the Catalogue. We can only hope that we have succeeded in arousing the curiosity of the general public, not only to browse through this beautifully designed and rich album, but also to visit the Todoreszku-Horváth library. This exceptional couple's passion for collecting has left us treasures, some of which are priceless individually, and their collection is a beautiful reminder of what they did to save and preserve the values of the past.

Translated from Hungarian by Gál Noémi

KATALIN LUFFY

luffykati@gmail.com

doi: <https://doi.org/10.26424/philobib.2022.27.1.13>

Acknowledgement: This article has been written with the support of the MTA BTK Lendület Long Reformation in Eastern Europe (1500-1800) Research Project.