

Preface

This festive volume is rather unconventional inasmuch as it celebrates not one but two of our honoured colleagues, József Andor and Sándor Martsa, on their seventieth birthday.

Preparing a joint Festschrift for this occasion was motivated by the fact that the honourees have been friends since their childhood, and their careers have run parallel starting with being classmates taught by the same English teacher (or rather the legendary “Teacher”), József Bognár, who later became the founder of the English Department in Pécs. Although they attended different universities (Jóska studied at Kossuth Lajos University in Debrecen, while Sanyi at József Attila University in Szeged), they both returned to Pécs, where having held positions at different departments, finally their work brought them together and they became colleagues at the Department of English. This is how they became brothers-in-linguistics in our eyes.

The choice of the title, *Thirsting for the living word*, was inspired by the latest English translation of Psalm 42:1-2 in the Genevan Psalter. This psalm, which inspired numerous musical scores in the Christian tradition from Palestrina, Buxtehude, Handel to Mendelssohn, is sung both in the Protestant and in the Catholic liturgy but originates in a Jewish song, *K'ayal Ta'arog*. Its opening lines run thus:

*K'ayal ta'arog al afikei mayim ken nafshi ta'arog eilecha elohim.
 Tzam'a nafshi l'elohim¹*

The King James Version closely corresponds to the original Hebrew text:

*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.
 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:*

The latest English translation renders the expression *the living God* as *the living word*. So carrying on the metaphorical liberty, we associated the phrase *thirsting for the living word* with the desire for knowledge, the quest for truth, and for understanding linguistic problems. Both Jóska and Sanyi are characterized by an innate thirst for linguistic investigation, the permanent desire to analyse linguistic phenomena, looking into, behind and beyond the Word, searching for the true meaning.

We all have been inspired by their work in one way or another. Two of us were privileged to have them as our teachers, an experience that has had a long-lasting influence on our careers. Jóska's energetic, never-ending, never-resting pursuit of the presentation of an approach to language that is both theoretically informed and empirically based certainly did make him an emblematic figure. This ardent quest for how language actually works has been compelling for his students – we owe him a great deal for making us passionate about language and passionate about discovering ever newer ways of combining theory with

¹ Text quoted from the *Zemiroth Database* accessed at http://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=179

practice. Sanyi's personal credibility and integrity in the academic classroom has definitely been an asset to whichever institute he worked for. Our greatest debts to him are of two kinds: his insightful and fine-grained presentation of how the smallest meaningful units of language can be systematically and rigorously scrutinized, along with his vast knowledge of the niceties of English word-formation certainly succeeded in evoking a passion of a similar kind; likewise did his commitment to a field of linguistic inquiry that concerns itself with the relationship between language and culture. These two fields Sanyi is probably most known for are clearly continued by a younger generation of linguists coming out of his classroom.

Both Sanyi and Jóska are outstanding scholars of linguistics, regardless of whether the subject matter of their investigation is the English, the Russian or the Hungarian language, whose unrelenting enthusiasm, meticulous attention to detail and breadth of knowledge are truly exemplary for colleagues and students alike. Between them, Sanyi and Jóska share an impressively wide range of fields of expertise including, but most certainly not restricted to, language pedagogy, descriptive grammar, morphology, syntax, cognitive linguistics, lexical and cognitive semantics, pragmatics, lexicology, lexicography, corpus linguistics and text linguistics.

Over their decades of work as professors at the University of Pécs, Jóska and Sanyi helped many a future linguist find their calling as they provided invaluable guidance as BA and MA thesis supervisors, doctoral advisors and mentors.

It is spring, and the name-days Sándor and József – which happen to be neighbours in the calendar – are promising warmth and sunshine to return after the gloomy winter period. We wish Sanyi and Jóska many warm and sunny days rejuvenating the soul and invigorating the mind, and we wish ourselves many warm and sunny days to enjoy in the brightness of their company.

The Editors

Acknowledgments

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