

OPEN DAY ON HUNGARIAN CULTURE DAY



22 January has been Hungarian Culture Day since 1989 in commemoration of the day in 1823 when – according to the manuscript – Ferenc Kölcsey completed the final manuscript of the National Anthem in Cseke. The commemorations connected to the anniversary give us the opportunity to devote more attention to our millennium-old traditions, our roots, the strengthening of our national consciousness as well as demonstrating and communicating the physical and spiritual heritage that evokes our past.

In this spirit we organised a library open day on 21 January 2010 on the occasion of the Hungarian Culture Day. The open day this year was organised around our *Relics of the old Hungarian language* exhibition, as what can express a nation's culture more faithfully than its language.

According to feedback from visitors, the exhibition presenting the history of Hungarian writing with Latin letters was a special experience for every age group. The younger generation could familiarise themselves with language relics by means of various games and educational museum activities, whilst older visitors could simply immerse themselves with the help of the installation evoking a monastery cloister, expressive background music and the sound of texts read out as they passed the showcases.

Guided tours proved to be very popular, and besides the five advertised times we organised two further tours in response to demand.

Alongside the public programmes we also arranged an academic conference chaired by Jeno Kiss, academician of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Professor of Linguistics, in which four outstanding researchers from the field of language relic studies presented the results of their latest research. István Hoffman outlined a comprehensive method of examining sporadic language relics, while Lea Haader summarised her conclusions drawn from an analysis of scribal errors. Iván Horváth gave a captivating lecture entitled *Hungarian Poems: What has been Lost?*, in which he explored the boundaries between linguistic and literary history. This was followed by a summary



Guided tour of the exhibition.

lecture by the curator of the exhibition, Edit Madas, entitled *Adaption, Translation, Compilation*.

In the second part of the afternoon, visitors were able to enjoy a website, CD, and book presentation combined with a press conference. Jolán Mann and Máté Török from the Content Provision Department introduced the Language Relics website to the press and the general public, which was launched in connection with the exhibition.

Following this, Klára Korompay presented the Old Hungarian Codices series, emphasising the importance of the results of new research, and at the same time also providing a glimpse into the future of the series. Special collections director, János Káldos commended the NSZL's *"Digital Library"* CD series to the audience's attention. Among other items, several language relic codices appeared in the series (the *Festetics Codex*, the *Legend of Saint Margaret* and the *Jókai Codex*). Finally, restorer Zsuzsanna Tóth gave an illustrated talk about the process of restoring the *Apor Codex*.

The library tours presenting the institute as well as the programmes outlined above, each of which took place in one of two successive afternoon sessions, were extremely popular. The public welcomed the discounts offered for the open day, and more than two thousand readers and visitors came to the library that day.

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