

“...WE SHOULD REMEMBER OUR GREAT FOREFATHERS...”

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The above title connects the 2011 spring program of the Hungarian Librarians' Association's Bibliography Section with two preceding events: ¹ On 12th January 2005 the Hungarian Librarians' Association's Bibliography Section and the Cultural History Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences held a conference at NSZL², remembering the National Press library established 120 years before. Although there were topical issues of press history research and the infrastructural services behind them, the gesture of recalling bibliographic forefathers was strongly visible in the talks about *József Szinnyei*, *Pál Gulyás* and *Sándor Kozocsa*. The presenters were István Gazda, Zita Kardos-Cseh and György Pogány. One of the organisers and the chairman of the session was László Ottovay, chief head of department in NSZL and the head of the Bibliography Section, who passed away shortly after the conference. His early death was the sad reason for not publishing the conference papers.

Five years later, the next anniversary and the wish to remember the former chairman created the need for a “remake”. On 8th October 2010 the Bibliography Section repeatedly held a conference entitled “*We should remember our great forefathers - In memoriam dr. László Ottovay.*”³ Some of the earlier presenters and themes featured again, but the professional profiles of newly evoked press bibliographers, i.e. *István Kereszty* and *Béla Dezsényi*, outlined the history of an almost legendary organisational unit. Although we referred to this year's conference as “the second part of the press collection's commemorative session”,⁴ this time the lectures covered a wider scope by looking at the entire history of Hungarian bibliography. György Pogány gave a fascinatingly rich and wide-ranging account entitled “*On Dávid Czvittinger: The Beginnings of Historia Litteraria*”. He analysed how the genre of bibliography developed organically

from writing literary history. Gabriella Rózsa-Pogány's talk “*The Beginnings of Hungary-related Bibliography: the Work of Károly Keribeny*” portrayed the cultured and widely travelled bibliographer who intended to bring home foreign experiences. Éva Szőnyi then recalled *Imre Barcza*, the chief librarian of the Chamber of Trade and Industry, who edited the early 19th century volumes of the *Magyar Könyvészet* publication (Hungarian Book Production) jointly with *Géza Petrik*. The last oeuvre that brings us back to the Press Collection and press bibliography is that of *Margit Busa*, who has left behind a unique lifework in, among other things, press bibliography. It is a strange feature of Hungarian bibliography that despite repeated efforts, this type of undertaking has not gained ground in institutional frameworks. Nevertheless dedicated individuals like Busa managed to collect and publish whatever they could in one lifetime.

Starting from a narrow field, the total of the three events has grown into the “gallery of Hungarian bibliographic history.” In line with László Ottovay's plans, the biographies thus compiled would deserve a volume of their own.

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¹ Apart from the common themes, as suggested in the title, their joint coverage is justified by the fact that the previous *Bulletin* failed to report the earlier events.

² The session entitled “*We should remember our great forefathers*” was reported in No. 3 of Vol. 14. (March 2005) of *Könyv, könyvtár, könyvtáros* (*Book, library and librarian*), by publishing the abstracts of three talks.

³ A comprehensive summary was published about the event in No. 1 of Vol. 23 of *Könyvtári levelező/lap* (*Library's post/card*).

⁴ The author is a member of the Bibliography Section's board.