

Sámuel Gyarmathi
**Grammatical Proof of the Affinity of the
 Hungarian Language with Languages of Fennic Origin**

Translated, annotated, and introduced by Victor E. Hanzeli

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The Dutch Publishing Co., John Benjamins, has undertaken the estimate but laborious task of publishing and classifying the classical works of Linguistics. The publications—divided into several subseries—are currently edited by Prof. E. F. Konrad Koerner, from the University of Ottawa. Incidentally, this massive series has been widely recognized as *the* most important publication on the history of Linguistic science.

Thanks to the series, now the above, rarely seen but frequently quoted work by Sámuel Gyarmathi has been able to appear in English. (The original was published in Latin; "Affinitas linguae Hungaricae cum lingvis Fennicae originis grammaticae demonstrata" Göttingen, 1799). The volume is edited by Victor Hanzeli, from the University of Washington, Seattle, and a Hungarian by birth.

The publication, dedicated to Transylvania, begins with Gyarmathi's portrait, and beneath it the dates 1751-1830. The "translator's" introduction tells us that important notations and addenda has been omitted from a 1968 facsimile issue (Bloomington, Uralic and Altaic Series, Vol. 95), probably because of technical shortcomings. Thus, the present translation has come as close as possible to the 1799 original. It also includes A. H. Schlözer's letter to Gyarmathi (3rd appendix), which is found only in certain "Affinitas" issues, and Gyarmathi's corrections to the manuscript. The lengthy introduction (Gyarmathi and his *Affinitas*) is actually a self-contained study, discussing the author's orbit between home and Göttingen, from the time of the work's initial acceptance to its total acceptance.

It also dwells on the present situation of contemporary linguistics, as well as dealing with the development of international Finno-Ugrian studies. Besides being a many-sided etymological dictionary, *Affinitas* is placed in this framework as a basic writing, a covenant for posterity. The references cover all pertinent works in Hungary but also register international connections often unattainable to the Middle European researcher. Etymologically speaking, Gyarmathi's reasoning is especially important, particularly if one considers the fact that this science was just beginning to become important (and demonstrable) at the end of the 18th century.

The text begins with the facsimile cover of the first issue. It is followed by three appendixes that even mark the original page numbers. (The afore-mentioned Schlözer letter is also found in Appendix III., in German.) The book closes with the usual notes and references (most of them from the publishers, but there are more than 50 one-word insertions and marginal notes from Gyarmathi himself. The rest of the annotations identify sources, and people mentioned. The bibliography is quite extensive: there are about 15 separate headings, including sources of publication. The name index is helpful in providing quick information.

All in all, it is a fine compendium, because its apt commentary and references are certainly more useful, if not better, for researchers than the original. The tacit correction of numerous printing errors of the former issues should also be appreciated by today's professionals. But Hungarian linguists may find an added value in Gyarmathi's sensible book: it depicts two centuries of the circumstances of their activity.

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