

## REVIEWS

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Beöthy, Erzsébet  
**Hongaars — Fundamentele Grammatica  
voor Nederlandstaligen**  
(Hungarian: a Basic Grammar for Dutch Speakers)

Muiderberg, Coutinho, 1983. pp. 192

Erzsébet Beöthy, associate professor at the University of Amsterdam, has recently published the first descriptive grammar of Hungarian in Dutch. The publication has a certain cultural historical significance in that it may be considered as a symbolic, if belated, reciprocation of the rich intellectual gift that humanities students at Dutch universities brought back to Hungary centuries ago. In addition, two other aspects should be emphasized: the economical and rational scope and arrangement of the communicated material, and the skilful introduction of those specific features, which offer speakers of Dutch an easy orientation in the fundamentals of Hungarian.

The author begins with a concise description of Hungarian (pp. 11–12), and continues with an outline of the history of the language. The introduction is rounded off by an overview of the Finno-Ugric languages (pp. 16–17). The first chapter also contains the Hungarian alphabet and a carefully selected relevant bibliography of the main studies of Hungarian written in foreign languages. It is a sign of ingenious as well as sound editorial method that the author chooses this early point to review the results of contrastive research on Indo-European and non-Indo-European structures. As early as the first chapter we find a comprehensive summary of the characteristic differences between Hungarian and Dutch: vowel-harmony, the variance in conjugation due to the definite and indefinite object, the way of signifying possessive relations etc. It is unfortunate, however, that the introduction neglects to offer the etymology of “magyar” alongside that of “hungarus”. Whether, as suggested, the inner migration caused by the 150 years of Turkish occupation really did result in the multiplication of dialects (p. 15) is open to question.

Part two, on phonetics (pp. 20–42), contains the following subjects: the stock and structure of phonemes, the rules of accentuation and rhythm in Hungarian, the rules of partial assimilation and syllabification, and vowel harmony. Although one welcomes the chapter's treatment of long and short consonants as independent elements in the phonetic system (i. e. the separation of cases like *hal/hall, ép/épp*), the fact that the closed and open vowel variants of “e” were not treated in an independent sub-section (p. 20) is to be regretted.

The material of the two central chapters on the noun and the verb are arranged by the author according to their structural function. Besides the traditionally obligatory parts of grammar (the tenses and moods of the verbs, conjugation and its structure, the irregular forms), we also find separate sections on verbal aspect, as well as supplementary remarks about verb-formation and a list of verbal prefixes (pp. 43–88). The chosen format happily connects the different levels of lexicology, morphology, and semantics, enabling the interested layperson to get a quick and basically complete grasp of the most important characteristics of Hungarian.

The discussion of the grammatical and semantic features of nouns (pp. 89–173) exactly parallels the treatment of verbs. Erzsébet Beöthy describes the formation of the substantive plural in direct connection with the artiled form and within the framework of the phonetical modifications of the root. Once again, she highlights the structural function, when, after introducing the singular and the plural, she focuses on the structural rules of the possessive (pp. 91–103). The lengthiest part is devoted, of course, to the suffixes of the nouns, which are represented in the order of object, direction, location, and modality. This grouping in terms

of function gives the case endings, the postpositions, and their further independent patterns a clear and logical order (pp. 104–127). Thanks to this summational principle of description, the primarily morphological survey of the adjectives, the numerals, and the pronouns builds on the earlier treatment of the nouns.

Syntax receives a relatively short treatment in comparison with the topics already mentioned. The author is content with "syntactic remarks" (p. 7), and illustrates only those syntactic solutions that are remarkably different from Dutch (e.g. double negation, the use of *van* etc.). Similarly, among the so-called sentence-phonetic patterns the author treats only of the patterns that distinguish between sentence modalities. This, however, is probably enough to meet the demands of a reader who only wishes to become acquainted with the fundamentals.

The bibliography of the works that the author has used in preparing this new and pioneering study would necessitate a separate analysis. Let me only mention instead the understandable predominance of pedagogical studies, and conclude this review with the desideratum that Erzsébet Beöthy's work has now made possible the writing of a textbook that could be used directly in language teaching.

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Gans, David

Zemach David

A Chronicle of Jewish and World History

Prague 1592. Edited with Introduction and Notes by M. Breuer

Jerusalem 1983. 495. (Texts and Studies) (Hebrew)

Between 1879 and 1881, in the volumes of *Történelmi Tár* (Historical Sources), Sámuel Kohn published the first collection of Jewish sources of Hungarian history (Hebrew and Yiddish sources and data of Hungarian history). As the continuation of his work, Hungarian–Jewish historians, like Sándor Büchler, Lipót Kecskeméti, Miksa Pollák and others enriched the material adding several, previously unknown texts. Sándor Scheiber, who died quite recently, contributed to this work to a large extent with his last study, registering a further 55 Hebrew documents from the 10th–18th centuries. He had planned to compile a separate volume of *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica* that would have dealt with the critical analysis and translation of all the sources found up to the present time. Unfortunately, however, he did not have enough time for this enterprise. Nor could he examine the recently published critical edition of the chronicle of David Gans of Prague, a book very rich in Hungarian references.

The chronicle of David Gans was always well-known to Hungarian scholars. Kohn, for his own work, borrowed a lot from the edition published in 1682 in Frankfort–Amsterdam (?), and in 1912, a short Hungarian study drew attention to it too. (Mór Weis: . . . *The Life and Works of David Gans* (1541–1613), a *Historian and Astronomer*. Vác, 1912 (in Hungarian).

Since the original edition of "Zemach David" in 1592 in Prague, several versions and amplified editions have been published. Their correct and reliable analysis was made by M. Breuer, the editor, who also referred to the history of the work, the Hebrew and German sources of the author, and his methods in compilation. It is especially useful that within the frame of his Introduction—which in itself would make a complete study—he deals with the biography and the scientific background of Gans as well as the conditions of the birth of his work. We can agree with all of his essential statements. The author of the Hebrew chronicle and other, mainly cosmographic and geographical works, belonged to that group of the Jewish congregation of Prague whose members were well-informed about secular sciences, certain aspects of which they even