Kádár Eszter

Count FERENC BÉKÁSSY
the FORGOTTEN ANGLO-HUNGARIAN POET

(Gróf Békássy Ferenc,
az elfelejtett angol-magyar költő)

1997

Előszó helyett

Kedves Olvasó!

Most, az I. Világháború 100 évfordulója táján ismét előkerültek emlékeink, Hőseink.

Gróf Békássy Ferencről először szüleimtől hallottam, akik a Művészeti Alap tagjaként már nászútjukat is a Bezerédj-Békássy kastélyban töltötték, és az óta is mindenévben Zsennyén pihennek egy-egy hetet. A téli esték beszélgetései során ismerkedtek meg a tragikus sorsú fiatal arisztokrata életével, munkásságával. Magam is megszálltam a kastélyban, bejártam az ősi parkot a Sorok mentén.

Gróf Békássy Ferenc alakjának nagyszerűsége nemcsak abban rejlik, hogy nemesként harcba ment és meghalt hazájáért, és emlékét költőink megénekelik, hanem ő maga is irodalmi személyiség volt. Ezt a gondolatot Szörényi László fejtette ki egy könyv későbbi bemutatóján.

Egyetemi tanulmányai során számos érdekességgel kerül kapcsolatba az ember, de szakdolgozatnak való eredetit nehéz ma már felkutatni. Esetünkben valóban az asztalon hevert a téma. Boldogan néztem utána az adatoknak, és hamar kiderült, hogy Magyarországon az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár sem rendelkezik Békássy verseinek megjelent köteteivel. Sőt, talán senkinek sincsenek bizonyos példányok, amiről a téma kutatói hallottak. Így a könyvtárazás munkáját a British Múzeum segítségét igénybe véve folytattam.

Szakdolgozatomat 1997-ben megjelenésre ajánlották, de objektív körülmények miatt a kötet végül is nem került napvilágra. Magánkiadásban nyomtatott két-két példányt elhelyeztem a zsennyei kastélyban és a cambridge-i Trinity College kápolnájába is vittem, hiszen a Kápolna Baráti Társaságában nem sokat tudtak mondani arról a számunkra jelentős falvésetről, amelyet Gróf Békássy Ferenc barátai állítottak a bár ellenséges szövetségben, de mégis a Haza oltárán életét önfeláldozó költőbarátjuk emlékére. A Bloomsbury csoport, a Cambridge-i Apostolok, akiknek korábban olyan ismert és nagyra becsült személyiségek voltak tagjai, mint: E. M. Foster író, Bertrand Russell filozófus-matematikus, Alfred Tennyson költő, Virginia Woolf férje, Leonard Woolf, vagy a későbbi Lord John Mayrand Keynes.

A Cambridge Conversazione Society tizenkét tagja titkos társaságként működött. Egymás nagyrabecsülésének egyik nagyszerű példája az, hogy idegen ajkú társuk nevét a Trinity College Hősi halottaknak emléket állító kápolnájában, tökéletes helyesírással – ékezetekkel ellátva tüntették fel.

A magyar modernista költő, Gróf Békássy Ferenc rövid élete, mely talán nemzetközi kultúra szervező tevékenységben is kivirágozhatott volna, később másokat is megérintett. A 2000-es évek elején filmötlet is megfogalmazódott, de a fényművészeti alkotás ötlet maradt napjainkig.

Weiner Sennyey Tibor Békássy Ferenc egybegyűjtött írásai című munkáját az Aranymadár Alapítvány Irodalmi Jelen könyvek sorozatában, Zsennye-Budapest, 2010-ben jelentette meg, amelyet a magyar nyelvű olvasók boldogan forgathatnak kezükben.

Bízom abban, hogy angol nyelvű írásom szélesebb körben lehetővé teszi az egykor elfeledett angol-magyar költő életének és irodalmi tevékenységének megismerését. A MEK keretein belül elérhető kötet archív felvételeit idő-közben a szerző néhány újkeletű felvétele bővíti.

Fogadják szeretettel:

A szerző

Count Ferenc Békássy (1893-1915)

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Introduction

The death of a man is followed by his mourning.

When a child dies, it is a tragedy to the parents, especially when the mother has to burry her own son.

If a soldier dies, the nation feels sorrows for the tragedy of all the war victims.

The poet's death makes the nation feel the absence of a soul.

When young poets have died in the fight of the First World War, the pathos floated all over. The necrologues were full of sadness and the poetic values of the deads' work were recognised only from the side of loss.

In English literature Rupert Brooke is a well-known name. Some of his poems will be included in antologies. But his name is grown up into a special legend hence he was a young poet from whose friends' group he became a well-known one all over the word. But he died in the war.

Rupert Brooke and Ferenc Békássy were poets and friends at Cambridge King's College. They used to be members of the same group of intellects and they were killed on the two different sides of the same war in the same year. Those who die young inevitably become a legend. The same happened to Count Ferenc Békássy. His name is brightened by legend, too.

He was a bilingual poet, critic and essayist. His pieces were published soon after his death, but he has not become well-known either in Hungary or in England.

At the end of this millenary, more than 80 years later after these poets' death we try to support the idea, that the only reason of his oblivion has been his very early death.

In his biography we can find many reviews of the Hungarian editions from the second half of the 1910s, which were written soon after Békássy's death. These articles recognised the poet's talent, but they are rather full of sorrow for his early death. At the end of the '60s and '70s there were published some articles full of newly printed details of Békássy's manuscripts and letters. They are interesting and remarkable, however, these authors usually concentrated only on one of the features of Békássy's works.

In 1989 in the '*Hungarológiai Ismerettár*' a remarkable study written by Zoltán Éder was published. This edition contains pieces of all kind of Békássy's work and a short biography, too, excluding the earlier published pieces in English.

In our present work we try to put the character of Ferenc Békássy and his work into the contemporary historical and literature trends existing in Hungary and England that time, and we try to reconstruct the image of a gifted young Hungarian educated in England and to find his personality behind the legend.

We would like to divide our work into two parts. First, we want to start with the poet's own story integrated into the history of his family and the history of our country (Békássy started his wonderful essay on Browning with the same structure). Secondly, we are going to give some nice examples of his work. We want to make the reader be familiar with Békássy's essays and poems; we would like to bring him close to the public by his ideas and thoughts in both languages.

Chapter 1

His Home, His Family Background and His Literary Upbringing

To make more understandable how this literary phenomenon appeared, we have to look through centuries and to make a selection of the stories of the poet's family.

In the western part of Hungary in Vas county, where different people have lived since the Roman times, there is a property the first owner of which was mentioned in the documents in 1183 and, the village has been called Senye since 1237. Nowadays its spelling is Zsennye. There has been a fortress which was rebuilt and made bigger six times during the centuries. The castle played different roles in history. In the middle of the 16th century the wife of the Hungarian palatine lived there for a certain time (1). The property was near the River Raba and included the stream Sorok. It had an own brickfactory and mill on the stream and you could find the only bridge over the river near here. The estate came into the possession of the family Bezerédj at the end of the 16th century. However, the centre of this inheritance got hold of them probably only in 1829. (There are some difficulties to get the exact date of it, because the archives were burnt in 1945 in the building of the castle. Károly Majtényi had searched in other archives in Vas county, Szombathely city and he had sent some notes about the dates to Zoltán Éder in 1990).

The family Bezerédj has been a famous one in our country.

György Bezerédj lV (1779-1863) was MP, vicepalatine he had a speech in 1796 at his College called Liceum in Szombathely city and it was published in Latin as well. His wife was the sister-in-law of Sándor Kisfaludy the well-known Hungarian poet, whose letters to the family have been published (2). György Bezerédj's children were Antónia and Elek. Antónia was among the first persons for the Hungarian kindergardens and she wrote the tales known as 'Flóri könyve' (Flori's book).

Elek Bezerédj (4th June, 1823-23th August, 1894) was contemporary of the 'Greatest Hungarian' Count István Széchenyi, who established the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, had the famous Széchenyi-Chainbridge built by Adam Clark, founded the horse-race sports in Hungary and started the regulation of the River Tisza, too.

Elek Bezerédj studied at the Terezianum in the Viennese court but he was not a politician. Since he had been a member of the national army in 1848, fighting against the Austrian authority, he had to finish his career as a diplomat after 1849. He was a representative of the Hungarian nobility with European education. He was fond of science and literature at the same time. His library had to be of high value what is indicated by the remnants coming down to posterity. The owner started to enlarge his old mansion to host his collection of books. In this library there was a small cabinet where he met Ferenc Deák, one of the great political leaders of the country during the

second half of the 19th century, and who sometimes met his neighbours next door. Elek Bezerédj was a lawyer and a botanic. He used to travel all round England; his children had English education. The English Gothic and new Gothic style of architecture had a big influence on him. That is why in 1867 he had his castle rebuilt in the style of the Tudors', which was fashionable at that time and mixed with the elements of the Hungarian National Romantic stream of architecture of his age.

Inscription on the castle's enlargement, Zsennye 1867

That is the sight what we can see at the first in the park even now at the end of the 20th century, after its reconstruction due to the Second World War. (All its inner values like the furniture, different books, letters and other archives of the library, most of the work of Ferenc Békásssy the poet had been destroyed and lost in the war or during the after-war period. That is why the search for his poetic inheritance is very difficult and nearly impossible and understandable why his poetry is not alive among us).

The wife of Elek Bezerédj was Emma Kiss. Her father's friends were Daniel Berzsenyi and Ferenc Kazinczy the great poets and language reformers.

Elek and Emma Bezerédj had three children. Emma (the second child was born on 2nd March 1863 died on 10th November 1944.) got married István Békássy on 2nd March 1889.

The son-in-law of the well- and European-educated Elek Bezerédj, who was born on 1st Dec 1863 was a typical representative of the Hungarian hunting-shooting-riding nobility. He was the high-sheriff (like Lord Lieutenant) of his county. 'He was a surprisingly liberal-minded landowner in western Hungary who sent his sons and daughters to Bedales' (3). He had what would then be called 'advanced ideas' on education, and like many Hungarian gentry of the period, greatly admired English forms of schooling, but Emma was the centre of love and the authority at home.

They had three daughters, three sons (Antónia, FERENC was born on 7th April 1893; János, István, Éva, Klára) and adopted one more girl (Ilona Duczynska).

Emma Bezerédj-Békássy was a nice lady, well-educated at home. She could speak French, German and knew the classical languages. She used her father's library freely so she was very familiar with the English contemporary literature. She educated her own children herself at home. Emma Bezerédj-Békássy accidentally had read a French essay 'A quoi tient la superiorité des Anglo-saxons' on English schools and she sent her children to England to study (4).

Cabinet in the Library

Interior

On 2nd April 1919, she offered the ancient possession in Zsennye to establish a new Academy of Arts named Vörösmarty (the great Hungarian poet) by Mihály Babits. It seemed too early that time, but nowadays from the '60s this castle and the ancient 55-acre nature park are made good use for fine artists and literary men for working and having a rest. Emma Bezerédj-Békássy wanted to open her own library for the public and make this possession a centre of the international Anglo-Hungarian cross-cultural communication with the help of her two sons, Ferenc and János.

The castle of the Bezerédj-Békássy families

After Ferenc's death, in 1922 she went to England, visited her son's schools and friends and tried to collect his works. One volume of Ferenc Békássy's collected works came into the light in 1925 (by V. Woolf at the Hogarth Press).

Since Emma Bezerédj-Békássy was in vivid relation with the leaders of Hungarian and English literature, she succeeded to edit and publish some poems and essays in Hungarian immediately after his son's death, during First World War.

Between the two wars she was the correspondent of *Nyugat* (a prominent Hungarian literary journal) in London about 1929-1930. Her pseudo-name was Magdolna Rosti (5). Her well-written portraits of the writers and reviews were published in Nyugat from 1930 to 1934. She chose with excellent taste from the greatest for the Hungarian audience in her reviews. But the public recognised their value only 20-30 years later. (She wrote on Housman, Strachey's 'Eminent Victorians' and 'Queen Victoria'. J. M. Synge and his 'The Playboy of the Western World', Mary Webb, W. Woolf, D. Garnett, 'The Bridge of San Louis' of Ray Thornton Wilde, Byron, Hamlet and Rhythmic Verses, T. S. Eliot, Sassoon 'Memories of an Infantry Officer', Priestley's 'Angel Pavement', Joyce, Keats, G. Moore, Blake, Naomi Mitchinson, E. Victoria Saqueville but she did not write about Rupert Brooke, because she did not really like him). It is noted in her correspondence with Mihály Babits who was the Hungarian T. S. Eliot at that time (6).

The literary atmosphere of the family was strong indeed. Ferenc Békássy lived in it from 1893 to 1905 when he moved to Bedales School, England. Bedales was established by Quakers (John Haden Badley) in South England, Hampshire, near Petersfield. It was a co-educated school on more than 70 acres, with a lake, forests and farms. The youth was educated in theory and practice in economy, farming and arts as well. John Haden Badley 'had the ability to make everyone feel they could be good at something. He was horrified by the ferocity of corporal punishment as practised at Bedales and, with other members of staff and pupils, began discussion on personal freedom and disciplines. With another member of the teaching staff, the German Herr Hinner who held strong views on the subjects, they condemned the acceptance of force as the only method of maintaining discipline and changes were made by the staff of school. The School Parliament had helped to make the school a more truly self-governing community'. (7)

The school has an own journal called Bedales Chronicle. Bedales is an international school, not only the teachers but the pupils were from Russia, France, Poland, England, Germany and Hungary. On the holidays the Békássy children used to stay at the Jarincov family from Russia. Somebody of this family had written a book on the Russian revolutions and that book was in the castle of Zsennye, too. So when Ferenc Békássy was the student of Bedales from 1905 to 1911, he could be familiar with all the movements of his time in Europe. Ferenc who was interested in a lot of different things of life and had vivid fantasy was classmate with the MacDonald's and Zilliacus children and Noel Olivier, the cousin of Sir Laurance Olivier.

We do not know exactly when he started to write poems. He did it secretly. Maybe, he was fifteen or sixteen, but he had an accurately titled book (for the years 1912-1919) for his poems. It was sent to Mihály Babits when Ferenc Békássy asked for instruction and help in his poetry (8). That time he was at Cambridge King's College. Ferenc went from Bedales to King's College to read history. He wanted to be a poet, translator and essayist. And he did it. Under his mother's influence and, inspired by classical and modern Hungarian and English literature, he wrote some new philosophical verses. He had special interest in Renaissance historians, philosophers and their works. His poems first became known in Cambridge. He became an Apostle (of the group founded by Lord A. Tennyson about 1830, among the members of which we can find A. Kinglake, E. FitzGerald, W. Thackeray, R. Browning etc.). It was an openly secret group of the best students which was roped by the personal friendship between the members. Békássy was one of the very few foreign members. The Apostles, embracing respected Victorians and Georgians as well, were the most celebrated of all university societies.

Trinity College Chapel

'He was a wonderful elder brother' recalled his younger sister, 'who used to tell marvellous tales, a long thriller that went on and on, and fantastic tales of the small people who lived behind the waterfall' (9).

Ferenc Békássy was known as one of Noel Olivier's friends, a Hungarian 'undergraduate of King's who made a mark in Cambridge' (10) and as the most charming, pleasant and attractive figure. At this collage he soon became friends with those of Noel's: John Maynard Keynes, his brother Geoffrey Keynes and the latter's wife, the painter Margaret Darwin, Stephan Gerard Stove, Frankie Birrell, Billy Knox, the other Olivier sister, Katherina Cox, Archibald Rose, Chester Parves, Justine Brooke, G. H. Luce, Clive Bell, G. E. Moore, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Lowes Dickinson the historian, E. M. Forster the writer, Duncan Grant the painter, the goldhanded writer-artist Roger Fry, Harold Monro the editor of some antologies, Ford Madox Ford the

editor of the English Review, Bertrand Russell the philosopher, John Lytton Strachey the autography writer, Rupert Brooke the poet, David Garnett the novelist, the Stephens' sisters - Virginia who married Leonard Woolf and became famous as Virginia Woolf. The Woolfs established the Hogarth Press with some of them.

Most of these persons later became well-known all round the world. A certain group of them would work together called in literature as the Bloomsbury group.

As Békássy had a deep knowledge of English literature, was familiar with the great authors and the works of modern English writers, poems and other works still in manuscript from the pen of his good friends and as he was the patronage of J. M. Keynes, he became the favourite of his group which was proud of him and expected a lot from him. His vote decided that L. Wittgenstein could be the member of the Apostles at the King's College.

In R. Brooke's, D. Garnett's, L. Strachey's, B. Russell's and J. M. Keynes's autobiographies and works there are different texts on their relation to Ferenc Békássy but we can find some details in L. Woolf's, L. Wittgenstein's, R. Fry's, E. M. Forster's, L.

Dickinson's, H. Monro's, F. Madox Ford's and F. L. Lucas's works and biographies, too.

These people, a brilliant circle of students and young intellects in Cambridge had a great time together, they had a lot of fun. Sometime they were sailing on the southern seas or were rowing in their county (Békássy with Lucas to Grantchester (11). They had a lot of parties in a house rented by Virginia Stephen - the would-be Virginia Woolf - and J. M. Keynes.

We have a notice about another festival: 'In the course of their riding they put in at the Crown Hotel, Everleigh, a delightful village in the midst of Salisbury Plain. Keynes was so pleased with it that he formed the plan of taking over the whole place for himself and his friends in the summer holidays. This was not possible in August, but he had the whole house for July and a number of rooms reserved for August'. (It was in 1912 and Békássy could not get part in it. He was at home in Hungary for the long holidays and looked forward to the arriving of Keynes at Zsennye where his best friend would visit the Békássy family. (12, 13.). Keynes preserved the collective poems and drawings composed during the evenings. They argued and talked, read their works aloud to each other. It was a furious intellectual activity. Afterwards Keynes financed the publication of Luce's poems through Macmillan's.

Békássy was highly influenced by the young men of the English school of Georgian poetry as he was one of the members of the circle at the Brunswick Square house of J. M. Keynes whenever they were in London and became well-known as the Bloomsbury group, as has been mentioned above. In Bloomsbury Street, not far from the British Museum, were the famous Thursday evening parties where the guests read from their own works. Békássy, too, was asked for writing and speaking about some themes.

It is possible that Ferenc Békássy talked to Virginia Woolf about 'The Tragedy of Man' by Imre Madách. However, the Békássy family recalled that Ferenc had had plans for translating it into English. It could be as well that Virginia's father had travelled through Europe, had been to Transylvania, in Hungary he had met József Eötvös and he could get information from him about the German variation, too. So Virginia could have known this great Hungarian epic poem written by Imre Madách from her father's library or she got some pieces from the German variation. But Békássy seemed to have a big influence on Virginia Woolf by giving inspiration to publish it in English:

'The Tragedy of Man

Imre Madach

Translated from the Hungarian by

C.P.Sanger

Published by Leonard & Virginia Woolf at The

Hogarth Press, 52 Tavistock Square, London, W. C. 1.'

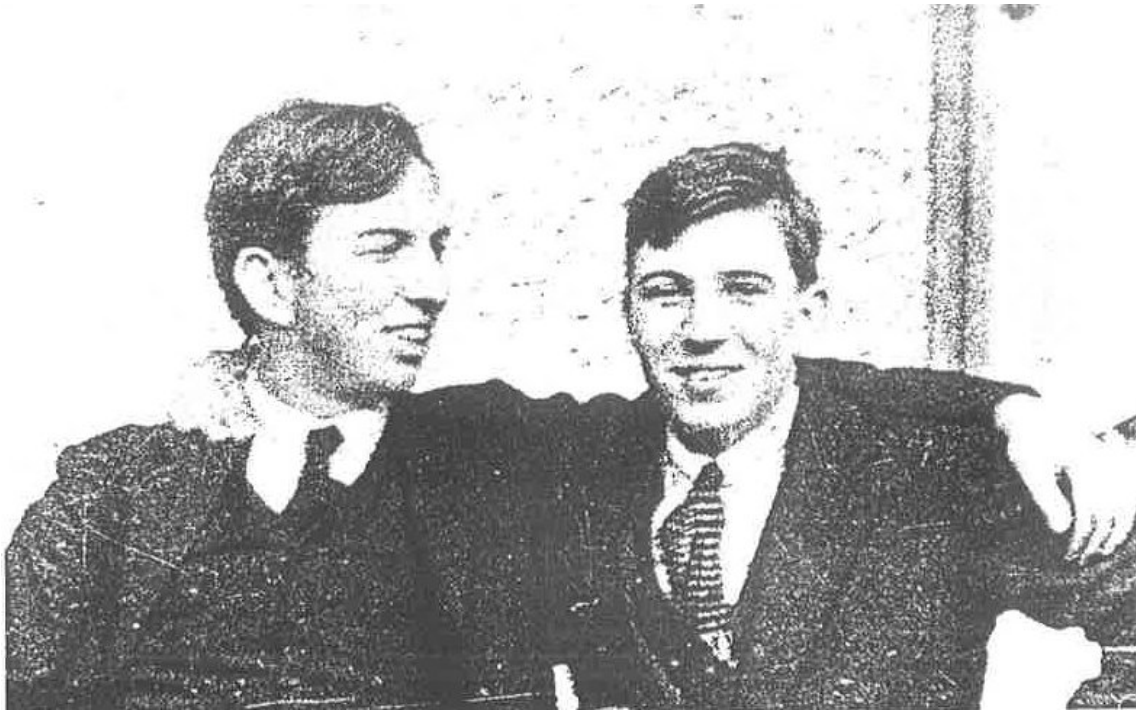
1933

The influence of Madách's ideas is quite clear in the structure of 'Orlando'. The motive of travelling through the history in different images is a relative to the changing situations of the couple in the Hungarian poem. The translator of this adaptation in 1933 was a member of the above mentioned friends' group. (14)

In the summer of 1914 when Békássy returned to Hungary from the summer there were plans for him to become *'The Times'* correspondent in Hungary. But his mind was full of more ambitious schemes of becoming a historian and a poet, and after giving his word to the military authorities to return, he went over to England to fetch his youngest sister home.

In those difficult days, when the First World War started Keynes wanted to help Ferenc Békássy. Like János Békássy (the younger brother who was interned at Aldershot until his rescue through the intervention of Lord Wedgwood, then he ended up marrying Rosamund Wedgwood), had to stay in the territory of his host's property. János Békássy later visited Hungary with his wife, lived in an old house near the ancient castle in Zsennye like a real Tolstoyian nobleman then he returned to England and lived there with his wife), Ferenc could stay in England but he wanted to go to the war. Keynes tried to keep him in England but....The real story is written by David Garnett in his book called *'The Golden Echo'*: 'Maynard told me, that he had succeeded in raising enough money for Ferenc Bekassy to leave England the

night before. The banks were all shut owing to a moratorium and Bekassy was anxious to return to Hungary to fight against Russia. War had not been declared between Britain and Austria-Hungary until the morning after Bekassy left.



Ferenc and Stephen Békássy just before the First World War

I said that I thought Maynard should have refused to find the money on the double grounds that he was sending a friend to his death and strengthening the enemy forces.

Maynard disagreed violently. He said, he had used every argument to persuade Bekassy not to go - but having failed to persuade him, it was not the part of a friend to impose his views by force, or by refusing help. He respected Bekassy's freedom to choose though he regretted his choice. My second argument was ridiculous: what was one man in a score of millions? I agreed that friendship was for more important than patriotism, but asked him if he would restrain the friend who contemplated suicide, or would he lend him the money to buy poison? Maynard replied that in certain circumstances he would lend him the money - if it was a free choice, made by a same man after due reflection, for compelling causes. I remained unconvinced and have never been able to settle the question in my own mind. It seems to me that the theory of Maynard's view is right - but that in practice there is more to be said for mine. Bekassy was killed in the Carpathians. If he had been interned until 1918, he would probably be alive today. Maynard's high ideal of friendship in fact cost his friend's life' (15).

As the fact was recalled above, Ferenc Békássy returned home from Cambridge on 11th August, 1914. He enlisted in Papa city and was in Budapest for a short time. He had written some letters to his friends in England but some of them were not sent.

At the beginning of 1915 Rupert Brooke was killed at the Dardanellas.

In the same year, on 25th June, 1915 after a short four days' battle Ferenc Békássy was killed in a cavalry engagement as a volunteer who went to fight against the Russians at Dobronouc, near Chernovic.

These are the facts and figures but the real reasons and processes of Ferenc Békássy's decisions are hidden in his poems, essays and letters. Without his life story and works we could not know him, his ideas and aims. So in the second part of our essay we are going to unwrap the poet's feelings and thoughts and to know what he wanted to do in his life, what he wanted to achieve, indeed.

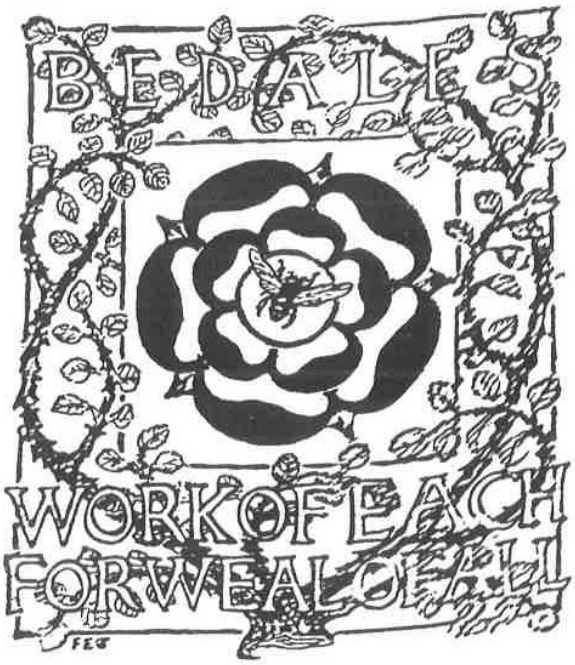
Well, these four memories are connected with the personality of Ferenc Békássy and his death:

Not only the teachers went to the First World War as volunteers but students as well. 'Some Bedalians were on active service on both sides. We shall not forget his devotion to the school or his enthusiasm for the methods of 'no punishment', and though he died fighting in the ranks of our enemies, none will think of him as anything but a true Bedalian.' It was written by John Haden Badley of Herr Hinner after he had been killed fighting in the German Army. But the family Békássy is not forgotten there. Eva stayed at Bedales and became 'the Chief's concern'. And 'By the end of 1914 seventy percent of those who had been to the school were serving the war effort in some capacity or other and Bedley, who had resisted request for military training at the school as he did not wish to encourage a military spirit, had to recognise that it might be a long war and that senior boys would not be involved … .' E. T. Schneider wrote sadly of his own brother's death: 'Bedalians will always think with pride of those who gave their lives for the principle which Bedales represented, and what better finish could a man with for?' (16)

These letters are on the loss because of the wars. The first is one of J. M. Keynes's letters, a letter to his wife, it was dated in three weeks' time after that tragic event:

'…I have been made very miserable this morning by hearing /from his brother/ that Békássy has been killed. He fell in the Bukovina on June 25th after only four days' fighting. Of my party at Everleigh - it seems only the other day - three were now gone.'(17)

BEDALES
SCHOOL



The Chronicle of Bedales School

Bertrand Russell's letter was written to Ottoline Morrell from Cambridge in 1915: 'Did you see in to-day's *Morning Post* a letter from an American, dated 'Ritz Hotel', expressing his horrified bewilderment to find, in New College Chapel, a tablet inscribed 'Pro Patria', on which are being inscribed the names of New College men who have been killed in the war, among the rest *three Germans*! He expressed his horror to the verger, who replied 'They died for *their* country. I knew them - they were very fine men.' It is creditable to New College. The worthy American thinks it necessary to give us a lesson in how to be patriots ... .' (18)

The Altar of the Chapel with the inscription

Windows of the Chapel
Trinity College

The names of the British Heroes of 1914

Inscription of the names of the British Heroes
Chapel of Trinity College

And there is a tablet:

In the Chapel of the College on the right side there is a small cabin for the heroes of this college's students. On the left side there are the columns of the list of the killed in the First World War. It is a very long list. But on the right wall on the door pillar we can see a tablet with the inscription of the name of Ferenc Békássy in good Hungarian spelling. The best friend, John Maynard Keynes had had it done as the memento of his friend, the Hungarian patriot but Anglo-Hungarian poet as well. (19)

Békássy's monument in the castle-park, Zsennye

Chapter 2

His Essays, Translations, and Poems of His Own

During his short life Ferenc Békássy lived in two countries. For the first twelve years he was under the influence of the ancient historical and literary tradition of Hungarian nobility. In his schooling he had strong impressions of his English schoolmates. He wanted to be a poet, critic and essayist but he went to Cambridge to read history. It is not a surprise if we can accept his strong willingness to make a good man of literature. In his childhood he was regarded as a nice boy with a vivid fantasy. Later, he had not changed much but in his teens he looked for his own self. He wanted to find his real soul and voice. During his life in Cambridge he made remarkable progress towards being a genuine poet. He recognized his talent himself but he did not know for what literary field. That is why he collected experiences consciously. However, soon it became clear for him that as a man of erudition he knew much about facts but not about life itself. Later, he struggled for acquiring his own experiences, but he hardly could get them. His quiet and pensive character rescued him of great conflicts. Békássy lived in the network of English literature and culture. He had meditated a lot. He made his literary criticism from the writer's side and his main purpose was to decide his own position in literature. His poems in Hungarian had been published earlier than his essays appeared, apart from his poetic pieces in English. We think that when we are going to reconstruct the complete image of a gifted young personality, we have to examine his works together. Békássy wrote his thoughts one time in poetic form and, another time, in the form of an essay or an aphorism from about 1912 to his death in 1915. While we are reading his work, we may be surprised how wittingly he prepared himself for his future duty. Poems, essays and some letters are what we have left - remnants of an unfinished work of life.

Békássy wanted to become a good poet. While he studied poetry and poems 'openly', he wrote his own poems in secret. Usually we speak about Békássy's poems but it would be better to start with his essays because in these theoretical works we may get his ideas connected with professional poetry so later these ideas could have been found in Békássy's *ars poetica*. As a bilingual author he scrutinized different trends in English and Hungarian literatures. He wrote his opinions in both languages. As his mother, the well-educated English correspondent mentioned it on the pages of the Hungarian editions, Békássy had written his essays in England in English but later he himself translated them into Hungarian. Accidentally, we could reach only these Hungarian variants because the ancient archives in the family castle were burnt down in 1945 and it could be only the case of serendipity if we could find some unpublished and unknown pieces of Békássy in Cambridge College Archives.

In his collected works in 1917 (20) there are many short pieces in connection with the poet's meaning and the aims of literature. A really gifted essayist, who was very interested in different problems, appears in front of us. He wants to clarify different problems and logically looks through his own opinions and communicates abstract facts in a simple way.

He had neither political nor cultural prejudices but he wanted to find originality and if it had been found, he wanted to define it objectively.

He was very interested in all aspects of literature. He wrote studies on the relationship of reading and criticism, the criticism of the poems and some other special themes like the laws of criticism, the rhythm, the meaning of the Beauty and the Good, and the understanding of a poem.

He claimed that writing gave him a special inner feeling that was a kind of resurgence of the reader's natural feelings which were close to the writer's feeling. The acting process is coming with these emotions and makes the reader's fantasy move. These images are very similar to the written thoughts but they are never the same. (21)

Békássy wrote not only about the literary texts but about their authors as well, not about the private lives of the writers but about their personalities, their prime relations to certain things and happenings in general. He preferred the open, sober, brave, original and good intellect like Butler's and claimed that not only Butler was studied by Hungarians from an emotional aspect but Tennyson was approached in the same way by the English. (22)

Békássy thought there were no general rules of literary criticism. He wanted to give an exact definition of the verse and he explained that only a piece of writing which tends to be rhythmic could be a poem. (23) He said that in all the poems not only words and phrases but many other things like an idea, a feature, a character of a poet or a personality of somebody else which could be judged by the readers could be found. (24) So Békássy thought that the rhythm and some other non-definable things like exciting and interesting stories provoking emotions etc. made readers experience beauty. He claimed that the rhythm itself would introduce beauty, but usually it would be accompanied by other effects, too. (25) Békássy reflected to Swinburne and Shakespeare's (Come Away, Come Away) verses where the real rhythm could have been given by sounds, thoughts, sentences, forms, idioms, emotions risen by the themes of the poem but Békássy did not agree with these distinctions. (26) He thought that the poet was the mediator of emotions. He looked for the original style finding out the language and forms which fit the personality of the poet and which could be transformed to unify the poet's poetry. (27) Békássy said that the danger of the style could be the general atmosphere of the age. It is too difficult for a poet to find his own voice in a poetic group which is under the influence of a great original poetic personality. Since communication is the most difficult problem of people, poetry also has difficulties to make contacts among them. (28) So when we are going to make a judgement of the early pieces of Békássy's poems, we have to see clearly that he was a member of such a group where, naturally, the Victorians and Georgians had a great influence on him and where he was

asked to study the members of the romantic, Victorian and contemporary great English authors.

He wrote about literature very accurately, trying to find out the secret points of the process how to make good literature. He analysed the authors and their works in detail like a schoolboy examined his loved tutor as a followable model. Békássy did not mind arguing about poetry but did not allow to withdraw its freedom because poetry (in Békássy's conception) existed by itself, for itself and worked by itself in every age and for everybody. Literature could exist for ever if only it had its own value, usually connected with general human values. His ambitions became very clear in his essay on Browning. In 1912 Békássy wrote a really great analysis which was granted a prize at King's College Cambridge as it was mentioned in the press, too. Békássy's approach is close to the English philologists' approach. (His group studied Principia Ethica. *Supreme value of life in human relations and appreciation of beauty* by G. E. Moore.)

But somehow we can feel that the writer is not a genuine Englishman. He is a young man, who knows very well his cultural surroundings. Some of his observations and new ideas clearly point at the fact that the author is going to establish his own relations to literature. He wanted to classify everything through his feelings. He could find the good and great points in each poem so he was a naturally gifted poet. However, he gave his explanation very accurately and very logically, therefore we suddenly want to claim he was only an eminent schoolboy, but indeed we feel that his only fault is his youth.

Békássy divided his essay into two parts. First he examined Browning the critic and mentioned that Browning was told to be a good craftsman who knew how to make beauty. But Békássy noticed that nobody could reach Browning in the totality of his life and thinking. Békássy expressed his own opinion about the poet and beauty and analysed the poem 'My Lost Duchess'. Békássy noticed the French influence on the theme. He emphasized the existence of an original personality in the poem, the truth of the poet and many intellectual lines of association. He states that the fancy of a poem makes it more understandable for him. In this study Békássy tried to present all the reasons why Browning's poem had been good. He liked that all the themes could be poetical at Browning because Browning and Tennyson could draw their images in an objective way, and interesting characters could be found in the former's poetry.

Békássy looked through the whole work of Browning and mentioned the dramas which had not been readable for fun but the characters made a development over great monologues. He wrote his ideas on 'Pippa Passes' and 'The Ring and the Book', which he called perfect in their reality and truth.

In the second part Békássy studied the common style of Browning's language, mentioned the unusual features in the great English poet's work and recognised the greatness of his knowledge. In a new chapter he wrote about the complexity of his style, the jumpy sentences which sometimes make the text hard to read. Békássy speaks about the highly intellectual

poems without melody, which do not fit the plot but they have wonderful atmosphere.

In the next chapter Békássy pointed to the difference between reality, poetry, ideas and themes of Browning. The Hungarian critic liked the images, examples and method of Browning which started with the analysis of the lyrical personality and which opened up during the speech of the character. Békássy quoted Browning's words in both languages, made his own footnotes that showed his proficiency in English literature (e.g. Chaucer, Wordsworth, Tennyson etc.). While we read this essay, we feel the power of Békássy's and Browning's fantasies as well.

Browning's poetry had a great influence on Békássy. The form of one of his letters from Goring, Oxfordshire on 21st June 1912 is borrowed from the admired English poet. Browning's 'A Toccata of Galuppi's' and the letter to J. T. Sheppard are written in the same rhythmic pattern and there is even a muted textual allusion to this particular poem, a partial repetition of Browning's words 'was a lady such a lady'. But Békássy's tone is not at all serious and he said in his letter: 'The critics ... are as bad as Browning himself who intends to write bad poems though they sometimes come good by chance.'(29)

In the autumn of 1912 some other poems were born. They speak about the great talent of Békássy. They are well-written but not deep; their themes are 'unpoetic', i.e. common stories of everyday life, travelling home, weather and the pleasant memories of nice days in England. At home Békássy rode a horse, hunted and sometimes he tried to study the classical Hungarian writers and Nietzsche whose works were very difficult to read but made a good use to practise and develop his own Hungarian.

Browning and Békássy had a broad cultural background, their fantasies were rich but their knowledge was not a scientific one. Nature and her details reflected in their works.

Among Békássy's essays there is a short piece of Jane Austen and her work. She was compared to the Bronte sisters and their novels, which demonstrated deeper non-intellectual and sometimes wild feelings. She depicts everyday people in everyday manner. The stability of Austen's position is supported by a definite circle of readers and the fashionable trends of reading. The English authors searched after pain, happiness and fate in the deepest spheres and in the frame of their works they tended to make harmony which gave a kind of superiority to real life. They tried to see the complicated world not in its reality. They were not able to live with the idea that the world was bad. They wanted to find evidence that it was better and more organised and useful than it seemed to be. But Békássy thought that the feelings depicted were not dramatic or demonstrative enough but rather sentimental. Neither were the characters nor the author's struggles with the facts of real life reflected in Austen's work. The English shyness spreads over all the feelings and it is why the English audience long for jests and like humour. He admired Austen's observations which were made from a woman's point of view, the well-written style of her novels and the intellectual position of Austen's. He admitted that Jane Austen had no rivals,

so she could remain in the first place but she had not been witty enough, although each piece of her writing was interesting but one page was enough for fun. We think Békássy lacked real and impressive personalities in Austen's works which he found in Browning's and the Brontes' works.

When Békássy returned to Cambridge, he wrote an essay entitled *'The Hungarian Poetry since 1906'* in 1913. Probably, he was asked to deliver a lecture on this theme to his friends, so he wrote the text in English and completed it with his own verse translations. Later it was translated by the author himself into Hungarian with the purpose of publishing. (It was issued by his mother in 1917.) (See further translations in the Appendix p.48.).

He wrote about the Hungarian kind of rhythms, the symbolism of Ady's poetry, about his strong images, some difficult themes. Békássy gives an accurate analysis and translation of some poems, e.g. *'Párizsban járt az ősz'*:

The Autumn walked in Paris yesterday
And swept in silence down St. Michael's street
Under the quiet leaves in summer heat,
And met me on the way.

As I was walking by the river, queer
Light song-twings in my soul were burning high
Sad, smoky, purple songs sang in my ear
Of this: that I should die.

The Autumn came behind me with swift feet
St. Michaels' trembled as along he blew
And whispered something to me. Down the street
Handfuls of gas leaves flew.

A minute. Summer hardly noticed well,
Now out of Paris Autumn laughing flees,
And that he was here only I can tell
Under the groaning trees.

*

He recognised that Kosztolányi as a poet moved against the new movement of the biggest group of poets in Hungary. In his opinion Kosztolányi, whose style was very logical, flexible and expressive, was highly intellectual and handled all verse forms freely. Békássy translated his poem *'A szegény kis gyermek panaszai'*:

All through that night
The clocks struck always out of time
All through that night
The gardens all swam in moonshine

All through that night
Carriages rolled with noisy throbs
All through that night
Our struggling words were choked in sobs
During that night
Bright lamp and candlelight was made
During that night
The shadows made us all afraid
During that night
Our frightened faces were so white
During that night
My poor greyhaired grandfather dies.

*

Békássy wrote about Babits in deep, warm voice. He liked Babits's poems, that looked like jewels, his nice manners, his consciousness and accurate method of writing. The inner inspiration made Babits a great poet whose work would be finished and perfect till his death. Békássy said that Babits could become what Milton had become and that was very acceptable by a group of Békássy's friends since they liked and respected the Hungarian young man of literature.

Békássy started to analyse the relationship between Bergson and Babits and spoke about the great influence of the former on the latter. He compared the facts to the old norms in the character of the Hungarian poet and the forms of his poems. You can find one of the translations of Babits's poems with English title *'O Lyric love'* below:

O lyric love! of you my song must tell
Of you, o lyre-stirred storm, of you, storm-beaten lyre;
Round you the heavens burn, below far open hell,
You swaying step on swaying ground of fire.

A fiery stubble burns against your earthly feet,
You learn the rhythmic beat beneath the burning pain,
The lameness as of one whom, stepping, fearful heat
Or biting snake compels to catch up foot again.

You would cry out I know, your cry becomes a song
For some mouth tuned your mouth to be an instrument,
Some sweet and singing mouth made music of your wrong
As wire makes wire resound, one struck and both intent.

O music making wonder, o snowy-noted lips,
You breathe the tender sounds against the warmed air,
As over vibrant strings the captor pedal slips,
When you cease the heart sounds, vibrating, where you were

Who are you, o my love? Before you open wind
The skies, and radiant you go on radiant fire
O lyric love! and leave abundant Hell behind,
O lyre-stirring storm, o storm-instructed lyre!

*

While Békássy always emphasised the importance of emotions and the atmosphere of the poems and the influence of them on the reader, in his analyses he wanted to be very objective and make intellectual cognition and evaluation.

He compared the different literary trends in Europe. He recognised that everywhere there were changes but in Hungary these changes had already occurred in literature. In his opinion open feelings are not enough to base poems on them. This is why forms have to be more perfect.

It is very interesting that the poems were examined from the point of view of the 19th century, and the essays were written according the requirements of the 20th century.

His main point was that the theme organised the artistic value of the literary work. The good and the bad, morality and amorality are not aesthetic categories. But beauty and stress are more absolute and they can point to general human values. Békássy wrote about these ideas in the form of a dialogue (30) in which there was a debate over the real value of a poem and what the objective was like. He as a poet answered this question that the best poets were able to transform all the subjective feelings into an objective form for the reader.

In Békássy's thinking there was place for ideas about aesthetic truth and simple truth to reconcile them.

First Békássy stated that Hungarian institutions like literature itself are not independent of European influences but the Hungarian literature was very national, socially oriented and political. This study of Hungarian poetry analyses Hungarian literary movements between 1906 and 1913 in detail and emphasised the most important stream of modern literature. He paid great attention to the fact that his audience was English and they did not know anything about Hungarian poetry and actual problems. He drew some literary portraits of the new generation, who became leaders of Hungarian literature (i.e. Ady, Babits and Kosztolányi) later and had a great influence over the next sixty years. This may be of interest to Hungarians as well since Békássy lived in England but knew Hungarian men of literature well. He gives few but very specific and strong features of each of these poets from the point of view of a writer and placed them into the history of the Hungarian literature. This part of his work supports the opinion that later he could have recognised the problems and disorders in Hungarian literature in particular and in modern world literature in general. Thus, he might have taken a very important place in our contemporary literature, too.

Békássy was on a certain level from where he adorned the inner spiritual life, the intellectual thinking and human values. He condemned the mere empty efforts to be new. His essays are clear, serious and carefully written. His opinions about the various spheres of literature open his character for the reader and we slowly can imagine what a colourful personality he might be.

Mrs Elemér Békássy, the aunt of Ferenc Békássy had a literary and art saloon at her estate. She wanted to introduce Ferenc to Babits, therefore she invited the latter on 15th February 1915. (Otherwise, the two persons had not met.) In her letter she pointed to the fact that Ferenc, the student at Cambridge University, had published one of his own article about the new Hungarian poetry in Poetry & Drama Quarterly (31). There is a letter of Harold Monro, which is like a reply to this article. Here is the letter below:

Poetry. And. Drama
Quarterly. 2/6. NET - July 2. 1914.
Annual Subscription. 10/6

THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
35. DEVONSHIRE. STREET.
THEOBALDS. ROAD. LONDON, W. C.
Telephone: Holborn 2248
F. Bekassy Esq.,
38, Brunswick Square, W. C.

Dear Sir,

As I wrote before, I regret very much my long delay with your article. I have now come to the definite conclusion that in its present form it is too long for Poetry & Drama. If you can condense the most vital parts of it into an article of 10 or 12 typewritten pages (including your translations which are interesting) I should be glad to accept it for a future issue of Poetry & Drama at the rate of 10/-per printed page of about 420 words. I fear you may have left England. Will you tell me to what address I shall send the M.S.?

With repeated apologies,

Yours truly,

Harold Monro (32)

In 1914 Békássy published another study on Jarinkov's 'Russia, Country of Extremes' in *Cambridge Review*. About this fact he himself reports in his writings.(33)

Békássy wrote several reading lists of books during his Cambridge years because he always left and lost them. The last remnant one was dated from March 1914. In it he expressed his regret over the loss of the former ones since he would be able to read less and less. In spite of that he succeeded in reading more than 100 books in his last year in Cambridge. The list has 30 pages and full of his comments - like in his grandfather's (i.e. Elek

Békássy's) who had a reading list of similar kind, appreciated highly by Békássy - about history, literature, the authors and thesaurus which would be needed in Hungary, too. He was able to forgive some of the authors' mistakes like the naivety of local colour if the work is written carefully and precisely. He was interested in Renaissance very much, read a lot of this period. His favourite was Leonardo da Vinci since the latter had new hypotheses of his own, based on facts. This is why in Békássy's opinion Leonardo should be studied again because of the new discoveries of modern times.

He was fond of Blake because Blake was sober, bright, honest and intelligent and he made Békássy's fantasy work. The figures of Blake illustrate different attitudes.

From his notes it emerges that life, which is composed of ideas, characters and intellects, should not be forgotten. He associated life with the Good and death with the Bad. However, for Békássy life is good for its variability and its changing quality. A serious life does not seem to be better than the hard existence, but changes and activities are better than non-existence. (Ibid .., 33)

Békássy's best friend was John Maynard Keynes, the famous economist, who after the Second World War rebuilt Europe with Marshall and in 1946 he established the World Bank. They had been in everyday connections for eight months and their friendship lasted till the death of Békássy. They remained in correspondence with each other as well. From these letters we learn more from Békássy:... 'at any rate, I have become quite Hungarian by now; nothing is more absurd than the idea of my thinking in English.' 'I don't ever want to see Cambridge again. Nothing need ever happen, really. I might just as well stay here. Go out to shoot duck in the evenings, keep bees and read the classicals, and be glad I've got some brain.'

The last two letters reflect the complex emotional situation of the country gentleman Békássy. Enjoying the soldier's life though, he was openly unhappy about the war, 'the idiotic hatred of the initial nations'. He wanted to take active part in fighting - 'I want to be in it and forget what I think.' - because he intended to solve this ambiguity and to get real experiences. Békássy had set for his Tripos Part 2 Exams in Cambridge and got his degree for his knowledge but his whole literary work is full of this problem, i.e. while having a deep knowledge in culture, literature, history and society, he is lacking the experiences of everyday life. So off he went to enrich his personal life and to become an authentic poet of real world in the future. 'I hardly know what to write. I am simply WAITING and WAITING to DO something.' But at that time, he did not think about the illusions that the world can be made better. He began to deal with the thought of an early death and sometimes he calmly accepted this possibility but these feelings were treated better in his poems. His light-floating humour had been never lost. 'Love to everybody, a different kind to each - and choose which you like, for yourself.' Keynes visited Békássy in Hungary. Probably, Békássy was afraid that Zsennye would be boring for Keynes, so he introduced his family in detail but: 'I hope you won't find it too few, not too many, not too much!'

It seems to be very nice how Békássy tried to help his friend to find his way to Zsennye by giving the correct Hungarian spelling of the place where to get off the train - RÁBAMOLNÁRI - followed by its Hungarian pronunciation in English: 'reah'bo-mol'-naahry' but he forgot to put down the times of departure and arrival at the given gaps in the letter. (34).

Dining room - archive, Zsennye

Some other letters to Békássy and those written by himself gave not only exact facts about his life and his public role but they picture duly the poet's inner life and works. Some letters of him reflected his poetic background. They are speaking about his studies and are full of hope and schoolish accuracy just like other pieces of his work. In the letter to Babits he wrote about his childish ambitions and dreams.(35)

From Békássy's correspondence we can find out that Brooke and the Hungarian poet were rivals not only in poetry but in love with Noel Olivier, who was the cousin of Sir Lawrence Olivier.

One of the poet's most elementary feeling could be his love. Love is not a usual theme in his poetry and we think the reason of this is that his relation to Noel was not a real love but a friendship. Békássy tried to feel real love but they were schoolmates in Bedales so they were rather good companions since Noel was a sportslady and of boyish behaviour and she attracted other boys as well.

Dining room - nowadays, Zsennye

There is a detail of the correspondence between Noel Olivier and Rupert Brooke, who was six years older than Békássy and died some month earlier than him:

My Dear Noel,

... it is very bloody about Békássy... Thank God, he'll be fighting in a different part of Europe from me ... Dreadful if you lost all your lovers at once - Ah, but you won't lose all - ... (36)

Before his last way into the Carpathians, Békássy wrote a letter, the last one to Noel with his silent manner in which everything is connected with a thin sadness: 'I had felt it would never change and how sad it is that I suppose things will never be quite same again and that last four years were so splendid.' 'Since the war began, I have written poems again. I think they are good but it's not writing for *this* public! - Everything is beautiful now, there are some evenings in which all the lovely things are heaped together,

flowersmells, clouds, water, chestnut-trees (sic), and young corn. There are very beautiful sunsets and all this makes it somehow easier to go …'. 'I wanted to write much more about May and the country …' 'This isn't at all the letter I want to write, but I can't help it.'

'By the time I go, there will be roses and I shall go with a crest of three red ones on my horse's head (but people won't know the reason) because there are three over the shield in our coat-of-arms. This is not a letter I want to write but I can't help it. I long to see you … and we shall meet again, shan't we, one day?'

The letters to Keynes were signed by Békássy as *Feri*, what shows a more familiar contact. These letters included some poems just for demonstrating the writer's technical skill by producing readable English words in unusual metre.

Békássy's poem sent to Keynes
(n.d., n.p. - 1912?)

THE PROPHET TO ZULEIKA

Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus!

When, pleading passionate for feelings fashioned deep from the heart
I waited silently, hoping by love to see they every part
Raised to sublimity; (love scorns what limit he easily scapes,
Fashions reality tortured mentality drearily apes)

Wily with passionless wearying wariness, why did you cast
Dust of doubt over me, lo! who aspired to be first, who was last,
Ranked with the godhead high, raised voice to prophesy unto the lands?
Tamed it the beast of prey, ere night o'er takes the day, under your hands.

So must cries, passionate, clamorous, perforate ever the shame
Blameless virginity silently brings to me! Back whence he came,
Wild among beasts that rage, back to his heritage must the man roam
Brute who aspired to rise, whom you made fool - or wise? - Lust is his own!
Mute, mawkish, senseless, lewd, so shall reap the fruit, since he has sown!

('The title of the poem is a clear allusion to Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson,* an Oxford romance, which was published in 1911 and read by most undergraduates of the day.)

(The rhymes are plainly stunning and the sense is there; I hardly think the metre of Bernard of Cluny exemplified here is really such a grand' mystere!) (Cf., 34)

The Rain and 'Trunk-things floating …' are letters in verse, which convey some humorous opinion of certain literary problems (Browning) and the idyllic English countryside, the journey back to Hungary and some philosophical intentions. The tone of these letters is light, what is proven by the following quotations: 'You can get a dinner if you think you'll be able to

eat it.' 'What you will ride on, I don't quite know yet. Don't expect something too grand.' (The idyllic background of these poems was reflected in the poems written in Hungarian as well.) ('Trunk-things floating...' echoes the rhythm of Browning's poem 'A Toccata of Galuppi's.)

Békássy's humorous letter-poem to Keynes,
July 1912, Kis-Zsennye, Hungary

Trunk-things floating, sisters gloating - dreary prospects, you'll agree -
Still unpacking, yawning, slacking: very hot and half past three.
This to ease me - if it please me - so again you hear from me.

'Hardly settled down to Zsennye; ' nothing write of that self, here,
So you picture (-it's a stricture-); that at any rate is clear.
Just an hour from the journey; now the news! What? none to hear?

'Oh, the Bishop! how they've fished up sacramental ornaments
Operation-inflammation-here official knowledge ends;'
'X and miss S and their blisses' - county scandal twists and bends.

And 'the corn is rain down-beaten; worms have crunched and chafers eaten,
Gnawed the very heart of roses; nothing on the plumb-tree rows is.'
'Then the balls at Mrs H's; dancers rubbing knees and noses -'

So forth. Journey! Such a journey! Long and sooty, dull enough;
Had a neighbour (purple, pouchy, leery-eyed, in manner bluff)
Told me, how his wife's aunt's cousin's daughter had the whooping-cough!

...Was a country such a country, was a lady such a ...
Where we climb the Calycanthus, leaping as with locusts' wings,
And where nightly James talked rightly, in the shrubs, of Love and things?

(For we slept beneath the heavens when the heavens were good enow.)
Where we'd Parsons, murders, arson - (well we acted, all allow)
Yonke Danky Do-s and donkeys, stuff and nonsense. - Well, and now? -

To the circles where no turtles swiftly scurry, ah, where James
Feels at home, once being up to peoples' tricks and little* games
Greeting (but I hope you will not let him call me beastly names.)

What with James and Jews and Browning,
Soon I left them, sadly frowning
As Lord Howard's consort drove me down to Oxted, rain-pour-down-ing

Just as Rupert - but 'tis stupid, - I'm too tired to tell the rest.
So remain in Son and Father and the Holy Spirit blest,
(Nerves not week'ning) beauty-seeking brainy brothers of the West!

* (with apologies to Ruppert)

Békássy's essays are very interesting for us not only because of their thoughts and analyses but because of the translated verses as has been mentioned above. From the notes to the reading list we can also learn that the translator of a verse has to work with the given text. He must not put his own ideas into the translation because they may spoil it. The word by word translation provides enough freedom for the poet-translator's manner. So a proper translation of the poem has to have the original beauty given by the rhythm and meaning of the words. Békássy practised this method. He translated two different verses of W. B. Yeats and a sonnet of Shakespeare into Hungarian. (See Appendix pp.54-56) And he translated a dozen of verses from Hungarian into English during his writing the essay on Hungarian poetry analysed above.

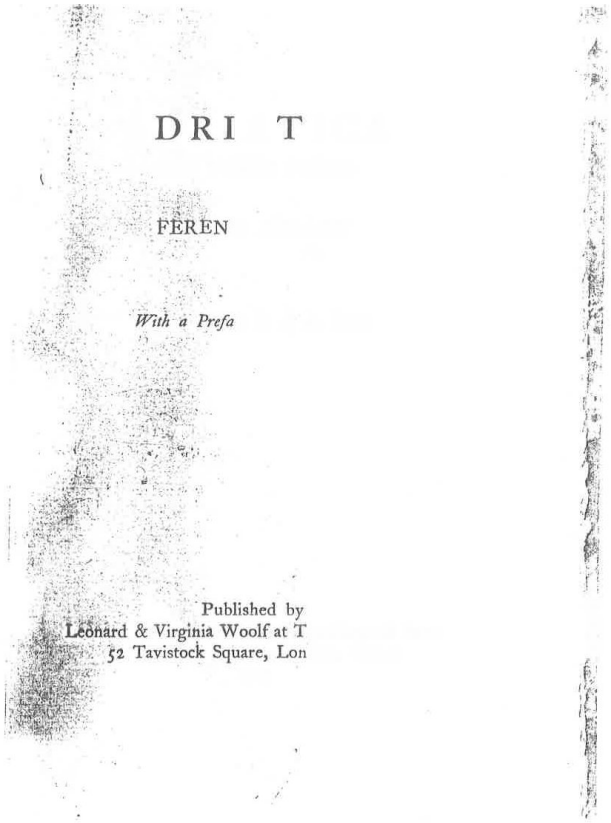
These pieces of bilingual poetry support our opinion that Békássy could have been really a well-prepared poet with all the necessary skills. His art has not been bound only to England but has been practised in his homeland, too. In his work we can feel the influence of János Arany's deep thinking, words and idioms, Mihály Vörösmarty's conservatism, the swinging movement and the pleasure of being of the classical Greek literature, which was transmitted to us mainly by English poetry as it was pointed out by Babits. After the naturalist stream of literature it was a fresh phenomenon and this mingled with Békássy's idealism and Hungarian literary roots what made him original in his age. His humour and pathos appeared together with disappointment, sorrow and naivety of youth and honesty and, in his Hungarian poems, with brooding over personal troubles and, at the same time, his thoughts turn into universal poetry.

Békássy's Hungarian poetry was unfinished and beautiful. His enthusiasm and sensitiveness are expressed in clear tone, but his lyrical poems are not vehement, rather full of hope, willingness and the emotion of youth. His works published in Hungarian were recognised and evaluated by the leading literary men of his age (Babits, Kosztolányi, Árpád Tóth and Aladár Schöpflin). (37) Békássy's Hungarian and English poems show common features with Brooke's poetry concerning patriotism which is embodied in the enthusiastic description of the homeland, i.e. rivers, trees and sceneries that appear just real.

In addition, the English literary world's witty, clear and light urban tone began to emerge at that time and Békássy's friends became well-known as the Bloomsbury group in the 1920s, which reached back to the 18th century for some models. They published the English poems of Békássy in 1925. Viriginia Woolf said that the pre-war poetry took the reader with itself if it adored the enthusiasm embedded in his soul. This has an easy access to the reader because it expresses the reader's existing feelings. In the post-war poetry poets express the feelings of the moment and the reader tries to compare the old and new feelings, therefore he is able to remember only two lines of a verse but not its atmosphere and emotion. She stated that the new poetry began to be sterilized somehow.(38)

Békássy's English poems show great promise; his playfulness and schoolish precision made very nice pieces in different themes of Nature with English intellectual touch. The volume 'Adriatica and Other Poems'(39) contains only few poems. They tend to be classical but they are unmistakable of their time.

In his reading list Békássy himself underlined the titles of the books which had a great influence on him while reading them. One of these books was: *'Perdiccas: Le Breviarie as Courtisans V. G.'* Békássy noticed here that he liked all the books like this which were placed in a certain clique, a closed group of members. He said that his *'Adriatica'* would be similar if it were finished. (40)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With a Prefa

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Cover-page of *Adriatica*

This long poem is distantly related to Byron and his *Child Harold's Pilgrimage.* Békássy's poem is based on an autobiographical fact on a cruise in the Adriatic See where four or five of his friends were together. The poet wrote not only a book of journey but drew the portrait of his fellows, too. E.g. the character of Amrita is obviously Noel Olivier. A song of Amrita is published in Hungarian, too. (See Appendix p.60.) The Nature as an ever changing scene plays an important role in this poem just like with Byron's *Don Juan* and *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*, which are closely related. We can easily imagine that Békássy was influenced by these works. The Adriatica has eight chapters titled by different names of geographical places. Its starts with an instruction followed by dedication. Between the fifth and the sixth chapters there is an interlude and finishes with an epilogue. There are some dialogues in it, too. The Adriatica is well-written in its style but the Byronian

spleen seems to make it boring. The couple of rhythms and five-feet form cover historical value as well. László Cs. Szabó mentioned in his book titled *Őrizők* that an another great Hungarian writer Ferenc Herczeg recognised this journey in the Adriatic in his own poem *Szelek szárnyán.*

Portrait of the poet in Cambridge, 1914

Finally, let us mention the opinion on the poem *Adriatica* of one of his contemporaries from *The Times Literary Supplement* (1925. May 14. For more information see Appendix p.65. No.19.): '... the longest and most original poem ... a fantastic fragmentary, narrative... Adriatica describing how Amrita floated, in the literary sense, a company of four in search of quiet from the disturbing emotion of love and how in their voyage over strange seas they come to determine their relationship to each other, tested the quality of their feelings and purged their cravings by intelligence.'

The volume of English poems of Békássy contains seven different verses. The forms of them are different. Most of them are based on the theme of immortality and death. Although these poems were written in Cambridge and just the pre-war period in Hungary, an own imaginative style with the motive of 'star' appeared:

‘Your memory I shall not always save.
…
Skies talk to me of you, stars say your praise’ (41)
‘Amid the stars God’s treasure of pale stones,
A shaddow now moves endlessly along
Travelling long a long’ (42)
‘When the fires are alight in the meadow, the stars in the sky,
And the young moon drives its cattle, the clouds graze silently’ (43)
Through sixty days of winter, while our star,
Our dreary little planet, rang again
With cries and wails and cannon. …
.
.
Never to think of her, whose eyes were day
And starry night to me: she used to sit’ (44)

I would like to complete this very shaded group images of ‘star’ with a new related one from the former poem:

‘I see the grains, that long ago have pearled
Through time’s dim glass, and know them, tear by tear,
For vanity: but banner-like unfurled,
My love that was, is bright. …’

*

All these poems of Békássy’s published in English are full of melancholy and waiting for death. As it is mentioned in his notes in the reading list what life and death mean for the poet mean in connection with his ideas about the good and bad. But his sadness and brooming over the death’s coming put him closer to Rupert Brooke, who predicted his own death once (*‘I would die!’*) Not only the biographical figures bind these poets together but they have been also bound by their prophecy together. Békássy felt Brooke very close to himself when he had heard from Brooke’s early death in the Dardanellas during the war where Békássy himself was going to fight. The gloomy atmosphere is supported by the different elements of Nature in Békássy’s poems.

‘…
there the wind bloweth only for a space,
joy cometh like a morning in this place,
But hope need never be, nor doubt at all.
Death only is quite certain, and his death,
there silent sermon shall not change again? … (45)
‘Now deep midnight must cling to hills and spheres
…

While shake a little as the wind will die.
Each grain of sand must shift uneasily,
And lazy mist will come when no winds stirs
Over the heath. On such a night it seems
As though … were a desert; …
…
Forsaken roads there lie across the sand,
Pool curl beneath some over knotty tree,
And curly clouds press for above the land.' (46)

'On the foam-clouds of the heaving air' (47)
… it would need a poet, maybe,
…
…
I would need the mother he followed, or the girl he went beside
When he walked the paths of summer in the flush of his gladness and pride,
…

When the fires are alight in the meadow, the stars in the sky,
And the young moon drives its cattle, the clouds graze silently, …
Shadow and sunshine, twist a crown of thorns for my head! (48)

*

And in another verse:

For many nights I dreamt of what must lie
Asleep behind her eyelid: meadows, gay

With purple crocuses, or daffodils,
Where she would wander with the winds, that fly
And drive the pearly rain across the hills.

Or yet a road perhaps, and such a sky
With fast grey clouds that skirt across the sun,
That she unhappy there perhaps would cry.

Beside the reeds, where gurgling waters run.' (49)

*

The feeling of death is enlarged an elliptic way and only Nature and the Universe seem to be for ever.

László Cs. Szabó was a specialist in the 20th century English literature. In his book he chose a motto from the best and antiwar poem entitled *1914* of Békássy. (50) (The whole poem is found in the Appendix p.56.):

'Shadow and sunshine, twist a crown of thorns for my head!
Mourn, O my sister! singly, for a hundred thousand dead.'

This wonderful and perfect poem shows both sides of wars as Békássy and Brooke had to fight on opposite sides. The death of a soldier in this poem forecasts his own death:

'He fell without a murmur in the noise of battle; found rest
'Midst the roar of hooves on the grass, a bullet struck through his breast.'

*

In the correspondence with Noel Olivier Békássy wrote about his feeling that the beautiful Nature helped him to face death:

'... Since the war began, I have written poems again. I think they are good but its no use writing for *this* public! - Everything is beautiful now, there are some evenings in which all the lovely things are heaped together, flowers-mells, clouds, water, chestnuts-trees (sic) and young corn there are very beautiful sunsets and all this makes it somehow easy to go.' (51)

And there is a quotation from the poem '*Fragmentary Views'*:

'Larches all green, and chestnuts hardly white,
Rough grass and clumpy marigolds I see
Within the water; but how changed quite!
A world begins, where tree doth grow from thee.'

*

The great influence of the Victorian and Georgian poets is very obvious in the poem '*Into My Hands, O Love'. (*See in the Appendix p.58.) We would like to draw the reader's attention to the first, fourth and the fifth strophes and to certain phrases like:

...
'The uncertain journey all men had to go!
It was the time when men went out to war;
..
No friends of mine who live; for some died then,
But some died afterwards. What matters it?
That was a bad war, but a time for men.
...
Now all the rest is dust and emptiness.
I give myself to her - for she is here.'

*

This poem demonstrates the romantic influence of Shelley and Keats.

Out of his poems we would like to direct the reader's attention to his '*Sonnet'* which is written in the form of Shakespearean sonnets. (This may be found in the Appendix just like one of his translations of Shakespeare's sonnets (52)). But the critic of *The Times Literary Supplement (See Appendix p.65. No.19.)* thinks that this sonnet is 'a little too reminiscent of Donne's early manner.'

The most vivid part of Békássy's work is his aphorisms. As the list of books read by him is more than just a list, these aphorisms reveal his character, too. Békássy had a lot of plans and many essays could have been based on his thoughts in the notes to the reading and involved in his aphorisms, which are concerned mostly with poetic notions, abstract ideas, human relations and his life in Cambridge. Most of them was considered by him so important that he wrote them in both languages and later they were published in Hungarian and English as well. You may find some of them below:

Convention. - I tell my innermost feelings to my chance acquaintances - so many conventions can subsist in the closest intimacy, which I have to observe!

Good and Evil. - There always seems little meaning, at Cambridge, in the terms 'good man' and 'bad man': and yet in our third and fourth years we get our deserts and do not reap except as we have sown.

Human Relations. - It is not good to consider too much whether one is making people happy or unhappy. N. is not right when she is afraid of hurting my feelings. What matters is not, what I feel like; but, whether the relation we are having is a decent one.

When two people have been in love with each other, it is not right for either of them to try and stop all relations - in the natural course of things, *something* must always happen between them.

Insight. - A doctor for nervous diseases gains more and more insight into human character, yet the more he knows, the more wrong is his judgment of it, for the less he is able to consider anything in it that is not morbid. You Cambridge knowers of men! This is how you have insight.

Knowledge or Influence? - These Cambridge people have little to do with me: they merely know more or less what I am like.

On leaving England. - Once one breaks off relations, one can *never* return to take them up where one left them.

Poetic Thought. - Clothe your bare logical propositions' with the flesh of the psychological associations relating to them in your thoughts.

The Horror of Dying Young. - It is not actual life, but the prospect of variety, that makes me want to live. Everything in me is just beginning to develop its nature; my every future instant is to be different from this one. When all my qualities are static and my whole being determinate, even though I may be still quite active, I shall not prefer life to death, or only because I do not like breaking habits and putting a stop to old relations with people.

Portrait of the poet, late 1914 or early 1915

Epilogue

We can see that not all poems of Békássy's are perfect but we can also see that if he had lived longer, he would have been an outstanding and prominent figure of Hungarian and English literature. All these pieces of work would have been considered as the early works of a mature poet. This was indicated by the words of the critic of *The Times Literary Supplement (*See ibid…, Appendix p.65. No.19.): 'Mr. Békássy's poetry is full of loose ends, of vivid threads which later experience would have woven into a pattern. Yet we are confident that he had the ability to do so.'

Békássy said that it was only the artistic value and what the art fixes from human spirit that would live long. In his opinion the major aim of literature is to talk to the people of distant future and listen to the words of the past. (53)

Allow me to quote the words of one of his contemporaries, F. L. Lucas:

'His lovable qualities his friends will not forget; and they cannot matter to the world. Such traits are common - in obituaries at least. But the unique and fascinating thing about him, which the poems hardly show, though the aphorisms do in part reveal it, was his gift for being outside and inside himself almost at the same time. He lived in the moment, intensely; but he was bigger than the moment and saw at once beyond it, how it fitted into the exciting pattern of life, and what part of the past it would hereafter become. The intellectual east wind of Cambridge sharpened him, but never enslaved. He seemed to play his part in life so intelligently - without muddle, seeing through things, yet not casting them aside as therefore worthless. Only a pale shadow of him lingers here; but all who knew him, and some who did not will be glad to have this memorial.'

APPENDIX

Békássy's translations from Hungarian into English

Note: Since Békássy did not translate the titles of the poems in English, we are going to give the original Hungarian titles in brackets for the purpose of identification.

Ady-translations

(Egy párizsi hajnalon)

Radiance is on my head, my face.
Silence flies startled when I come,
I beat the sleeping Paris ways
Flooded with brilliance by the sun.

Who am I? whose victorious soul
Lo! waited for the Sun, his own.
And who in sun-rayed gloriole
Shines proudly by himself alone?

Who am I? for the death of Night
I, the Sun-God's priest, offer prayer.
An old bell rings the morning-tide
Ring on! a pagan priest is there!

Bells ring, the dawn begins to break,
I kindle flames beneath the pyre
And in my soul, and on the fire
The rays, the sunrays shake.

Hail, Sun-God, holy, oldest flame!
The motley wilderness sleeps still
I watch thy coming. Halt and lame
I am thy priest, thy fool, thy will.

How I grown pale? Red rays on me!
My ancestor had no such fears,
Thy ruddy priest that was, had he?
Oh, I've grown pale in thousand years.

I am the martyr of the East
For succour to the West I fled
The child of some accursed priest
Am I pale? Paint me, paint me red!

I hate my crooked Eastern race
Which, tired out, bore me who run
Towards the sunset with pale face
to worship thee my lord, the Sun?

The past? Let be! My blood is tired
Light, flames and warmth I worship, seek
Wonders and secrets, ever fired,
Or dreams - I know not what I seek.

This sluggish Eastern blood of mine
Thirstily drinks the West, I pray
O Sun-God, saddest priest of thine
Long cast off, thy most tired ray.

A song charms: sung, it may be, once
By some wild Asian girl, brown, thin;
A scent haunts: out of wonder-plants
Some ancestress has breathed it in.

An evil goes before me, old,
Primeval, I am still and wait
And bend my head. It is not gold
Not fame, not love that I await.

Why do I wait? A woman goes
With me and sometimes gives a kiss,
This Paris full of kisses knows
No sadder, frailer love than this.

I wait till a 1st shudder nears
I must come. They will try in vain
With tearful kisses, kiss-full tears,
Some sunset I'll not wake again.

The priest of the Sun-God shall die
The strangest, sickest he shall prove;
Tired before I lived was I,
Lived in Paris and did not love.

Hail, Sun-God, holy, oldest flame!
This fire dies down, Paris awakening cries,
Life arms for a new fight again,
Arms splendidly with luxuries and lies.

I too, heathen hero, roam wide:
New, poor Quixote, modern, mad knight
Who from my soul tear, cast aside
Dreams that could give me their delight.

Radiance is on my head, my face
Bells ring, I slowly pass, and rise:
Rich Paris! on thy stony ways
The poorest nomad has made sacrifice.

*

(Fölszállott a páva)

New winds shake the groaning old Hungarian trees,
New Hungarian wonders, now we wait for these.

Either we are madmen and will perish fast,
Or this our new faith will be fact at last!

New faiths and new forges, new goods and new flames.
Either you are - or you will be shadowy names!

Either our old words shall mean what's new and free
Or life here for ever the same sad life will be.

*

(Séta a bölcső-helyem körül)

And this, and this am I myself
The blackened ash of fiery rays;
Wind whistles round us like a fate,
Run from me, curse me, fly and hate
Stay and be proud, else, with loud praise.

Babits-translations

(Arany kísértetek) Golden Ghosts

They are beautiful flowers, the ice-flowers
And splendid light is the candlelight:
Praise you, if you will, the sad Spring hours
Winter, gay Winter, is my delight.
You know that in spring comes every desire
Daggered dwarfs are aboard, and fly,
Humming wasps (our souls hear and tire)
Stinged, unseen, killing when they die.
Spirits are teeming in every Spring;
The sunshine flashes, gold glittering ghost;
Of his heavenly bow Phoebus looses the string.
His shafts of light are a flying host;
All sadness of sin, pain, evil hours
Come to the earth from these alone,
From these soon the dry drought over the flowers,
And into life, love's passion.

I have seen the playing dolphins prance
I have seen the sweet sea still, the throes
Of lightnings at night, and their scattered glance
Tombs and ruins, wide plains and snows

The Fair and the Sad; now all are dear
Fair and Sad, they sink deep in me
In all the World Spring is my only fear
The sunshine is only enemy.

*

(Ballanda Irisz fátyoláról)

The Spring shall have its motleyness
Of red spots bright and whites faultless,
of springtime troubles, flowery trees,
And springtime graves with cypresses
Into brown mud the white flower falls
The evening sunset tells of squalls
The mournful Muses long for death
Her green cloak Iris broidereth.

The Summer has its motleyness
Red poppies rich with flaky flowers
And red knobbed poles in flower dress
Onto red roses silver showers -
Dry roads and dust where no things grow
White flowers fall where flowers blow;
Bending rye ripens for the scythes
When Iris opens her warm eyes.

The Autumn has its motleyness
Of gold-shot foliage, streaked red,
The ground a rustling emptiness
The branch with pale leaves withered
While vagrant winds both laugh and cry
Yellow's the rufled evening sky
Fruitful the orchards, loud the dales
When Iris tears her cloudy veils

Prince what if winter also comes?
Whiteness it shall have and brownness
Of crystal-flowers the motleyness
When her white mourning Iris dons.

*

(Fragments from the drama **Laodameia**)

The Helios comes with arrows
His murderous rays shoot far
The daytime's sunny again and
The bees wake humming a song.

Streams wake and seethe to the river
And the pines reach out from the blue
Creepers long for the sunshine
And the Queen longs oh for her lord.

'A fast ship is that of Menelaos, anger
urges it on and the heat of wrecked love. Sa-
vage pride urges the ship of Lord Agamemnon;
that of Odysseus his inventive wit speeds.
faster is Protesilaos' ship for it is driven by
desire of you, Glory!
Destiny, heavenly sword, Destiny bow of
sure aim. Destiny, slow mill-wheel, great spi-
der spinning to earth, huge net: binds us in
vain the splendid sin the splendid battles we
shall not in all eternity betray.'
Chorus: 'Alas Queen, in Hades is no love…
There are no kisses Queen, in Hades are no
embraces … the shades … have tasted the
water of Lethe, they have no more desires.'
Laodameia: 'O Maidens, true desire is immortal;
it is not killed by Lethe's dream-waters…'
Chorus: 'O Lady, be calmed! Fate stands unchanging
with the Gods. In the underworld all
daring ceases and from Cocytus' banks no one
returns.'
Laodameia: 'O maidens, true desire is unconque-
rable and conquers everything It is as hard
as Destiny … It conquers Death … and for
a moment laughs above Death and Destiny;
and like everlasting time, that moment is
unbounded.'
Iphiklos: '… why must I live to this? Why
did I not die young? How should my old
weak heart bear such a curse, bear so much
horror?'
Chorus: She has fought out the battle
And fallen under her fate.

Kosztolányi-translation

(Fragment from the poem titled

'A szegény kisgyermek panaszai')

As one who has fallen between the rails …
and feels his passing life while the hot wheels
roar and throb and many crooked images pass
and he sees as be never yet has seen. As one

who has fallen between the rails' 'And I
see him, the child ... At night he shyly sits
down beside me ... I wonder at him
as at a stranger and I weep for him who
is gone.'

Békássy's translations from English into Hungarian

Shakespeare's Sonnet No. XVIII

Sonnet

Let me not to the marriage of true minds ...

Hű testvérlelkek egybeforradása
Gátat ne ismerjen. A szerelem
Az, melynek változása,
Múlásra elmúlása nem terem.
Örök szilárd jel az, mely bár ha volna
Örök viharba, volna végtelen,
Csillagvezére réveteg hajónak,
Kimérne újra, ám értéke nem.
Nem esztendők bolondja az, s ha vannak
Rózsák, ajakak mit az idő arat,
Múltukkal nincsen változása annak,
A vég váltságon át örök marad.
Ha ez hazug, hazudd el éltemet:

Nem írtam, s ember még nem szeretett.

p.147.

W. B. Yeats: The Rose of the World

A világ rózsája

Nem múló álom minden ami szép!
E szomorú, e büszke ajakért
Trójában lángok ittak ennyi vért,
Ősrégi minden: Usna ifjai
Meghaltak - ezekért.

Mi elmúlnak, évek munkája elhal.
Habként szétfoszló lelkek közt, a harc
Között mely fodros víz felett viharz:

Örökké él ez arc.

Hajoljatok meg, égi angyalok!
Nem voltatok még, lét se lüktetett

S ő Isten mellett ült. Isten vetett
Gyengéd, bolyongó lábai elé
Virágos réteket.
p.142.

W. B. Yeats: The Madness of King Goll

Az őrült király

Vidraprémes volt trónusom,
Ith és Emén hódolt szavamra
S félt már Imár Amargin-on
A kalóz, hogy kevés hatalma.
Gyarapodott a lég lakója
Még azt is védtem kapzsi vadtól,
Aki vetett volt aratója
Termésének, menten a hadtól.
És haj, sok öreg Alara
Fejét lehajtva szólt: elűz
Benneteket is, hideg telek ...
Mért sugdostak egyre köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.
Édes bort ittam elmélázva,
Mikor a pásztor jött panaszra
Hogy vad kalózhad tört reája
S a sárkány-orrú csónakokba
Halmozva, sok sértést raboltak:
Összehívtam vitézeim,
És zörgő érc-szekereim
A szakadékból rohantak-
Sok volt az ellenség halottja.
A tenger tiszta éjein
Sok drága kincset hazahozattam
Az álmos mélybe taszítottam
Hányat, rablók, közületek.
Mért sugdosnak egyre köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.
De lassan, zaj és vér között,
Amint dühödten harcolánk
Titkon szivembe költözött
Egy bolygó, szédült láng.
Megálltam. Csillagok felettem
Ragyogtak, nagy ember-szemek-
És én hangosan felnevettem
És gondolám: most elmegyek.
Rohantam sziklás partokon,
S hol nád suhog a lápokon;
Nevettem: mert felhő rohant
Fű susogott, zúgtak vizek ... .

Most sugdosnak egyre köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.
Most jó az erdőn bolygani
Ha méhek méztől terhesek;
S ha nagy fák párduc-foltjai
Az őszi csendben fénylenek,
Vagy amikor téli szirteken
Fázik a baljós kormorán,
Bolyongok: hangos énekem,
Rázom nehéz, vizes hajam,
A farkas ismer, és reám
Simul az őz is gondtalan,
Nyúl alszik ahol pihenek...
És sugdosnak egyre köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.
Kis városka aludt a hold,
A nyári, fényes hold alatt,
Lábhegyen jártam halkan ott
Dúdoltam régi dalomat:
Hogyan követtem évekig
Egy óriási lábnyomot,
És addig-addig jártam, míg
Megleltem e tympanumot
Lakatlan ház lépcsőfokán
Az erdeimbe elhozám,
A hangunk együtt zenge itt,
Nem földi kín rezgéseit
Vitték vadul az énekek ...
Mit sugdosnak egyre köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.
Elzengtem, mikor jön az éj,
Orchil hogy' bontja szép haját,
Sok lenge illat, bűvös kéj
Hogy száll belőle légen át.
Amíg a húron járt kezem
Hűs hulló harmat nyomta el
A bolygó lángot csendesen.
De most a jajszó újra kel,
Szabad a hír - és útra kelve
Az erdők mélyit járom egyre
Tél, nyár legyen, hő vagy hideg ...
És nem hallgatnak el köröttem a bükkfa-levelek.

pp. 143-146.

*

Békássy's own works

SONNET

I am that bondsman whom an earthly grace
Has to your whims unquestionably knit;
Love clamoured in my earliest embrace
That I should perfect and accomplish it.
Do not despise me for the task is great;
I am not humbled in a lowly cause;
Love is no child, in ignorance elate,
Nor laughs and claps its hands without a cause;
Come therefore; if my love be like the sea
And cannot its own ecstasy contain,
Be you my gentle wind and let me be
Your origin and virtue once again;
And tears and kisses be the fountain whence
Shall flow a new world's perfect innocence.

Asheham House, April 24, 1914.

*

1914

He went without fears, went gaily, since go he must,
And drilled and sweated and sang, and rode in the heat and dust
Of the summer; his fellows were round him, as eager as he,
While over the world the gloomy days of the war dragged heavily.
He fell without a murmur in the noise of battle; found rest
'Midst the roar of hooves on the grass, a bullet struck through his breast.
Perhaps he drowsily lay; for him alone it was still,
And the blood fan out of his body, it had taken so little to kill.
So many thousand lay round him, it would need a poet, maybe,
Or a woman, or one of his kindred, to remember that none were as he;
I would need the mother he followed, or the girl he went beside
When he walked the paths of summer in the flush of his gladness and pride,
To know that he was not a unit, a pawn whose place can be filled;
Not blood, but the beautiful years of his coming life have been spilled,
The days that should have followed, a house and a home, maybe,
For a thousand may love and marry and nest, but so shall not he.
When the fires are alight in the meadow, the stars in the sky,
And the young moon drives its cattle, the clouds graze silently,
When the cowherds answer each other and their horns sound loud and clear,
A thousand will hear them, but he, who alone understood, will not hear.
His pale poor body is weak, his heart is still, and a dream
His longing, his hope, his sadness. He dies, his full years seem
Drooping palely around, they pass with his breath
Softly, as dreams have an end - it is not a violent death.
My days and the world's pass dully, our times are ill;
For men with labour are born, and men, without wishing it, kill.

Shadow and sunshine, twist a crown of thorns for my head!
Mourn, O my sisters! singly, for a hundred thousand dead.

*

INTO THY HANDS, O LOVE . . .

When I must die, a lonely man and grey,
And all my life lies open like a book,
Year after year close-written, I shall say:

How long is it, since I one day forsook
(Not yesterday! Long years and years ago)
My dearest of dear costly loves, and took

The uncertain journey all men had to go!
It was the time when men went out to war;
My way went north: I fought among the snow

Through sixty days of winter, while our star,
Our dreary little planet, rang again
With cries and wails and cannon. Now there are

No friends of mine who live; for some dies then,
But some died afterwards. What matters it?
That was a bad war, but a time for men.

Though I had loved them, I was young: thought fit
Never to think of her, whose eyes were day
And starry night to me: she used to sit

With her hands clasped sometimes in such a way,
For many nights I dreamt of what must lie
Asleep behind her eyelid: meadows, gay

With purple crocuses, or daffodils,
Where she would wander with the winds, that fly
And drive the pearly rain across the hills.

Or yet a road perhaps, and such a sky
With fast grey clouds that skirt across the sun,
That she unhappy there perhaps would cry.

Beside the reeds, where gurgling waters run.
Now I am all alone, and well I know
That all my days and all my deeds are done,

It, little matters that it happened so,
That - empty words to an on-speeding world-
She too is dead now many years ago.

I see the grains, that long ago have pearled
Through time's dim glass, and know them, tear by tear,
For vanity: but banner-like unfurled,

My love that was, is bright. My end is near.
Now all the rest is dust and emptiness.
I give myself to her - for she is here.

Pápa, December 9, 1914.

AMRITA MONDJA

Nem, nem szerettem' - Sokszor megcsodáltam
Lelkének fénybelobbanó tüzét,
S ha válni kellett tőle, sírva váltam,
És olyan jól esett ha megtaláltam
S olvastam egy-egy régi levelét.

És hogy szerettem sok, sok téli estét!
A kandallótűz lobbot ha vetett,
Rőt fény befonta szenvedélyes testét,
S fel-felvilágló szavaink keresték
Együtt a színigaz ítéletet.

De mit kívánt—hogy esetem lázba égjen,
Új tűzre szítva lelke mély tüzét,
Hogy szenvedély uralgjon szenvedélyen,
S a boldogságom űzve száz veszélyen,
És szép nyugalmam villám vesse szét...

Personal data

The historian of King's College, Dr. Saltmarsh provided Gál István with the data below from the Tutor's Book (See the Bibliography: Gál István: ibid.., p.244.):

Name:	Francis Békássy
Parent or Guardian:	Dr. Stephan Békássy, Szombathély,(sic!)
	County Vas, Hungary.
Born:	April 7, 1893.
School:	Bedales, 1905-11.
Entered:	October, 1911. Pensioner, History
College Examin^{ns}:	June 1912. History, May 2nd class div. 1.
Univ^{y} Examin^{ns}:	1913. Historical Tripos I 2nd class div. 2.
	1914. History II:
Subsequent career:	† killed in action in the Bukovina, 1915.

(The historian reports the following data, too: the other Christian names of Ferenc Békássy, namely: Ferenc István Dénes Gyula, and according to this record he was born in Rum, Vas County, which is a bit larger village in the neighbourhood than Zsennye.)

Data can also be found in the Register of King's College, Cambridge 1797-1925.

300-year-old Rákóczi tree in the former castle-park

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Szakdolgozat bírálata – Ajánlás pulikálásra

Angol nyelvtanári

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Szoule Rabl W

jeles

(számmal) (betűvel)

A dolgozat bírálata:

Gróf Békássy Ferenc (1893-1915) alakja a mindkét magyar olvasók számára is többnyire ismeretlen. A napjainkban magunkat, nyelvünk és magyarul is kitörő művekre alkotói, tragikus sorsú fiatalember indulásának hátterét, életének történetét, kapcsolatait, nemzedéki hátterét Kádár Ernő rendkívüli erőnek a hatalmas anyag felhasználásával írta meg, olyan kiemelkedő önállóságot mutatva, hogy a tanulmány kiadását minden valószínűség támogatni. Kádár Ernő munkája nemcsak teljesíti a szakdolgozatokkal általában elvárható követelményeket, s olyan önálló kutatómunkát tár az olvasó elé, amely önálló tudományos teljesítményként is kitűnő.