

# Baron Pál Podmaniczky and the Norwegian Bible

Martinovitsné Kutas Ilona

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by Martinovitsné Kutas Ilona

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{editor: This is an English only excerpt from the original book. To  
view the entire range of 77 languages, stories behind each

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A short story about the 18 lingual grandfather in 77 languages and in runic script

Martinovitsné Kutas Ilona

The English text was supervised by Grace Tinnell

"First edition appeared in 1994 by the title The Norwegian Bible"

## PREFACE

My first, and until now, only short story has become a device with which I could make friends from all over the world and create new friendships. These old and new friends have translated my short story into 58 European, 13 Asian and 6 African languages.

Because of its lucidity, "The Norwegian Bible" short story has lended itself particularly well in representing the languages in Europe and some outside of Europe.

As a basis for qualification and description of languages I used the book "Lord's Prayer in 121 European Languages" in which the prayers were collected, compiled and the commentaries were written by Zsigmond Németh. All the translations are from a reliable source because they were written by persons who were writing in the language of their mother tongue. The only exceptions are the Esperanto and the other artificial languages and English, because the English was written by me, a Hungarian. The translation into Classical Greek, Latin, Turkish, Croatian and Gipsy was carried out by native speakers of Hungarian. Most friends speak English as a second language, so the language of our friendship was in many cases English. In some other cases the common language was Hungarian, Polish, German, Russian or Spanish.

To some extent I wrote this book for my friends. They can get to know each other's language from my book. If anyone wants to learn a language on the basis of the similarity and differences between grammatical structures and vocabulary of languages, they can use my book as a textbook. In addition I wrote this book for my 650 students in the secondary school where I work as librarian and English teacher. They can use it as a reference about languages of the world.

Originally, the book was published in 1994 in 50 languages. In the last 6 years, the short story was translated into an additional 27 languages.

During this time, the 50th year anniversary of the death of my grandfather was celebrated at a memorial session in Sopron and in Budapest Lutheran Theology. I got to know even more about my grandfather from these presentations and came to treasure him more than I had previously. I began to appreciate what a precious treasury of jewels he left for us. I met there many theologians and pastors who were once educated by him, love him still and carry on teaching his nuggets of precious truths.

I changed the theme of the "Appendix" of the first edition of my book and have placed therein an essay which presents the life and work of Baron Pál Podmaniczky, professor of Lutheran theology, lover of God and the World of God. I also included two of his beloved hymns which were translated by him from Finnish into Hungarian, and which are, even today, sung often in Hungarian Lutheran and Reformed Protestant churches. In the Appendix, I also submit an autobiography and a short sport story of mine. And hereby I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Zsigmond Németh for his kindly permission to quote the most peculiar features characterizing different languages described in his works published and forthcoming respectively The language collecting game continues and I ask you, the reader, once again, to translate the original short story into any language not present in this book, and send it to me. I would like to publish a new edition in the year 2005 with 100 languages in it. Thank you, dear reader, for your help.

Martinovitsné Kutas Ilona  
language collector

## RECEPTION OF THE SHORT STORY.

### AN ESSAY ON THE MANY LIVES OF "THE NORWEGIAN BIBLE"

I hadn't thought on that Christmas day, when I addressed the envelopes containing "The Norwegian Bible" to my friends, that it was only then that the great play would begin.

The small bilingual book began its own life. It became a mirror for me through which I could get to know my friends. They introduced themselves in the letters, telephone calls and private talks connected with my first "literary effort". Their reactions to my short story began to give birth to a larger story about my friend's characteristics, their way of thinking and about the ties that connected them to me.

So here follows the many lives of "The Norwegian Bible":

In the previous semester at the Teachers Training College we had a task of writing a short story in English. I wrote one about my experience while visiting Norway. The short story follows below:

## THE NORWEGIAN BIBLE

a short story by Ilona Kutas to my grandfather

The discovery of the marvellous world of languages is the great experience of my life. The motivation for this sprang from family roots. My maternal grandfather, a theological professor, had mastered eighteen languages. Language and religion were very important for him. He was not able to teach me German, Hebrew, Polish or English because I was only five when he died. I only feel somewhere in my genes that I should follow in his footsteps.

As a member of a librarian delegation I spent a week in Oslo. After the rich and interesting daily programmes I always ran back to my hotel room to spend the lonely evenings in the company of my new friend, an English-Norwegian bilingual Bible. I had found it on the night table on the first day when I entered the hotel room, my home for a week.

Perhaps it is common in the hotel rooms of Christian countries to have a Bible at the guest's disposal. I experienced this custom for the first time in my life there in Oslo. Finding that Bible brought to mind remembrances of my childhood as well. As a daughter of a protestant minister, living at the parsonage until the age of sixteen, I used to go to church and read the Bible. During the next thirty years of my life, however, I had not even held a Bible in my hand.

A great game began. I read the English column of the page, compared it with the Norwegian column and, with the help of my past knowledge about the Bible, I began to understand the text and the Norwegian words of mixed English and German origins at the same time.

Day by day the Bible and I became closer and closer friends. I began to fear my impending separation from it.

On the sixth day I felt a great desire to continue the game at home as well. I decided therefore to steal the Bible.

I packed it into my bag on the last evening after reading it. But after I switched off the lamp I could not fall asleep. In the darkness I watched the closed bag with my friend in it. A battle raged in my head.

This battle raised the following questions:

> How could I reconcile being the daughter of a minister and a thief at the same time?

> Moreover it was written in this Bible in two beautiful languages: "Thou shalt not steal!"?

> What would my grandfather say if he knew that his granddaughter had stolen a Bible?

I think you can imagine the end of the story!

In the morning I took the Bible out of my bag, placed it back on the night table and, with bag in hand and a great calmness in my heart, I left the room.

.....

I completed my work with a Hungarian translation later on when I decided to send my short story as a Christmas card to my friends. Though some of them spoke no English, I hoped they would be happy to get the small bilingual book.

After writing the short story in November, our next task was to analyse our own literary work. The first page of my self analysis as follows:

## THE NORWEGIAN BIBLE

an analysis

The writer begins her story--as classical authors of this genre--with an upbeat expression of the motivating power of the whole story in one sentence. "The discovery of the marvellous world of languages is the great experience of my life."

This idea runs through the story and motivates the climax of the story, an attempt to steal the bilingual Bible.

The plot is very simple, the writer (the story is written in the first person singular) finds a Bible, reads it, becomes attached to it, wants to steal it--but in the end she resists the temptation.

The story is only the superficial message of the story. The real message is hidden between the lines. The storyline is less important. What is important is the frame of mind of the writer, the way she narrates the story.

One of the characteristic features of the genre of the short story is that there must be a culminating point. The way to this point of this story is shown by explaining how important the bilingual Bible becomes for the writer. Although grandfather's hobbies, memories, religious childhood, and his love of languages are mirrored in the story, the description of all this foreshadows the climax.

.....

The next three or four pages of this analysis were lost. This loss too became a mirror. One of my professors at the Teacher's Training College was introduced in this mirror. But I will write about this event later on!

There was a big family meeting on the second day of Christmas in my mother's flat in Budapest. I gave my present to my mother, sister, four brothers, an uncle, my husband, my two daughters and my son.

Some of the reactions:

> My mother, daughter of a theology professor, wife of my minister father, mother of six children, grandmother of sixteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren, whose great aim, perhaps whose only task in her old age is to lead her relatives back to the church, to a religious life, to God. She organises religious summer camps for her grandchildren, summons everybody to church on Sunday mornings and always presents us with Protestant hymn books and psalms. Her opinion: "I liked your English, the theme was interesting, I liked meeting my father's--your grandfather's spirit in it. But if you confess you haven't learned the Bible in your last 30 years, please read it now and live on the basis of it in your next thirty years."

> Younger brother, a former speed skating trainer, who is now a businessman, living in Vienna with his third wife and third and fourth children. He is the small Benjamin of the family, the youngest child--who likes other brothers and sisters, our mother, his former wives and children, but does everything for his own good rather than that of others. Having read my short story very quickly--(he had not much time, he was running after his next business!),--he began to laugh at me, "Gee, Ilus (my nickname in the family), you are a fool, aren't you? Why did you leave the Bible there? I have got about fourteen or sixteen Bibles from different hotel rooms in the different countries that I visited when I took part in skating competitions, the Olympics, and the world championships. Not to read them but to possess them."

> Other brother, husband of a rich business-woman. She is full of ideas and plans and has got the money for her good deeds. She promotes a young Russian painter, an infant prodigy and helped to found an English theatre in Budapest. She has a chain of clothing shops. My brother asked me: "Don't you need a publisher? We have just founded a publishing house."

> My elder daughter, a student (her majors are: American Studies and Physical Education) happily showed everyone her copy with my dedication in it: "To my schoolmate with love--your mummy".

> A sixty-six year old uncle, a retired lawyer, very religious, who finished studying Protestant theology two years ago. "Now that you have met the Bible again won't you think of continuing this friendship at home in your life?" The same thought as my mother's. They are cousins and have a common great-grandfather, a bishop and psalm writer. An inherited way of thinking, perhaps?

Three or four weeks after mailing the forty or fifty bilingual "Norwegian Bibles" as my Christmas cards this year, my everyday post has grown. I got two or three letters weekly and a Bible every month.

> I begin with the last one. On the 11th March I got a postcard from a Japanese penfriend of mine, an otolaryngologist. He has written: "Thank you for your nice short story. I enjoyed 'The Norwegian Bible' very much. I now understand you have inherited your multilingual ability from your ancestors, your grandparents. Please write another version of this story. Suppose you steal the Bible. I am sure Christ will be pleased. Anyway, I think you have a great talent for story telling. Please continue to write!" Nice words, aren't they?

> A librarian colleague in the Hungarian National Library: "It's a new fresh librarian writer. Don't you want to join our new founded International Reading Association? Our first meeting will be on March 29th."

> An old English speaking uncle from the U.S.A. He emigrated there seventy years ago with his parents. After getting my Christmas card he posted an English Bible: a copy of the Revised English Bible (Oxford, 1989) immediately by courier post. I got it in three days time. I think he thought: "My poor niece, she has no Bible to read, that's why she has to steal one."

> Perhaps the same idea occurred to one of our Finnish friends, an otolaryngologist, because he sent me a tri-lingual (Finnish-Swedish-English) New Testament.

> Another otolaryngologist, an excellent professor, very intelligent, who has got a good sense of humour, sent a message. I like him very much. He falls too into the circle with whom I cultivate friendships through exchanging greeting cards on Feasts of Tabernacles. He operated on my ear: he did an ear drum transplant on my left ear. During my operation he sang a Protestant psalm for me that I could hear through the veil of the partial sedation of the anesthesia. He cured my ear, so it became waterproof again. I wrote him a grateful card after finishing the Lake Balaton cross-swimming competition where I could cover the five kilometer without a swimming cap and earplugs. His remark on my book was the following: "Why didn't you steal it? It is not a sin to steal flowers, kisses and books."

> An old country woman, our godson's grandmother. Her name is Pap Lászlóné Pap Emma. "Pap" means minister in Hungarian and both her maiden name and husband's name is "Pap". She wrote me: "Dear Iluska, although I am the daughter of a minister and the wife of a minister at the same time, I can not write such a nice short story. Congratulations."

> The last one in this list, another otolaryngologist, the fourth laryngologist, but the most important among them for me was my husband, a fifty-four year old marathon runner. He never praises me. The red bunch of roses, mentioned later, was the only one, the only time he presented me with flowers in my life. After eating my Sunday dinner, which I cooked first of all for his taste, he never says: "it was marvellous", but he says: "it was edible". But he inspires me with his negative approval. His opinion about the short story: "Don't believe yourself to be a writer. It is the second novel or short story which makes the writer a real writer, because the first book is on his or her life--and everyone has a life. To discover the second story is the art. So I am waiting for your second short story."

At the end of my essay I would like to write about a lost Norwegian Bible and one that was never sent.

As I mentioned before, it was our assignment in the second year Russian teacher's retraining course to write a short story then to write a literary analysis on our own work. It is nice, interesting homework, isn't it?

All of the students in our group wrote interesting stories, then we read them aloud during the next lesson. We had to hand in the



stories and the analyses to our professor who promised to correct them and give us a mark for them at the end of the semester. And besides all of these to give the stories to a jury consisting of teachers who were native speakers. The best three would be published in a library bulletin of the Teacher's Training College. At the last lesson of the semester she gave all of us the best marks and said, "Good bye". At that time we thought she had not even read our work and was not interested in our analyses and that nothing would come of the short-story-writing competition.

In February I found an essay-writing competition in England, so I thought I needed my analysis because I wanted to collect materials connected with "The Norwegian Bible". I admit I am very untidy and disorderly. I found only the first page of my manuscript among my papers in the drawer. So I went to this professor to ask for my analysis if she did not need it. She told me that she had needed it because she gave it to one of the foreign professors but she did not remember to whom. I asked her to get it back so that I would be able to copy it. The week after, she said perhaps she had not given my papers to anybody as they did not remember it. The next week after that, I asked her again, but she said she was very busy. Suddenly, it was clear to me that the journey of our short stories and analyses was very simple. After being collected in the classroom their final destination was the first waste-basket.

Yes, I could understand her. She was bored with our assignments. She was busy. But why did she promise? Why did she not tell the truth? Because it was her character? I believed the reflection I saw in the mirror.

And now the last story: something about an unposted "The Norwegian Bible". There was a young man in my life. We were classmates in an English course many years ago. After each lesson we went out of the school together and almost every time we met my then boyfriend--(today he is my husband). He attended a German course in the same school, just after our lesson. We greeted each other every time and everyone continued on his or her own way. My future husband went to his class, and we, my classmate and I walked along the street. We talked about the English lesson, about my studies, about family, about childhood, about religion. He was very religious. He was very curious about my being a daughter of a minister and living without the daily reading of the Bible. He gave me a Bible with a dedication note in it. This inscription was a nine line "poem", a clever introduction to me. The first letters of the lines read vertically formed my name ILONKÁNAK (to Ilona). The nine letters were written in different colours, the rest of the text in blue ink. I still have his present, this Bible. I preserved it in the same way Mrs. Morel preserved John Field's Bible in D.H. Lawrence's novel "Sons and Lovers". But it is not a relic for me: it is used by my younger daughter in her everyday life at the convent school she attends.

This classmate once invited me to ski and visit his family in a mountain village. I hesitated a little bit, but at last I refused the invitation. I had my boyfriend at that time whom I loved very much and did not want to give him up for another man. It was a little unpleasant for my boyfriend to meet me every Monday and Wednesday while I was chatting with this other man in a very friendly manner. I did not want to hurt my boyfriend nor did I want to lose him, so I refused the invitation, although I loved skiing. My

boyfriend felt my hesitation because he knew how much I liked to ski. One evening he came to me with a big bunch of red roses and asked me not to go skiing. So I remained with him and we are still together, in love and in harmony. I thought about sending my former classmate a copy of "The Norwegian Bible", but I do not want to disturb this harmony, so I have not sent him one.

So this is the story of the small short story up to now. And it will be going on I hope. Perhaps the other twenty or thirty friends will answer my Christmas card as well. I can say "thank you" to my absent-minded, unreliable professor, who gave us the assignment idea to write a short story.

## BIRTH OF A MULTI-LINGUAL SHORT STORY

The essay is finished, but the story continues.

In May my English pen-friend since 1964 corrected my essay grammatically and sent me a small white English New Testament.

There was a friendly smile that I have to mention. I got it as an appreciation for the essay from my son, a former water-polo player who is now a marathon runner and a folk dancer. He read the essay on the train to Budapest. He did not say anything but laughed at me. I think he enjoyed the stories of mine and his father's.

Instead of answering my Christmas card my half-Polish, half-Slovakian pen-friend since 1963 sent me a copy of an article. He published my "Norwegian Bible" in "Zivot", a newspaper of the Slovaks living in Poland and he wrote an article about our friendship, my grandfather of Slovakian origin and about the short story.

Now I have my "Norwegian Bible" in three languages: English, Hungarian and Slovakian. The next move will be to translate it into another fifteen or more languages. I think I will ask my friends to do it. I can not master eighteen languages like my grandfather, but I would like to have the "Norwegian Bible" translated into eighteen or more languages.

Until now the "Norwegian Bible" served as a mirror. From now on it works as a magnet. It attracts languages, and through it gathers my foreign friends, unknown to each other into a team working for me, and with me on a multi-lingual short story. The essay continues on its own.

> The half-Hungarian half-Jordanian son of my husband's colleague visited us in summer and translated the text into Arabic. He wrote it with very nice handwriting and later on, returning home he typed it as well.

> I sent the text to Subotica to our friend, a laryngologist. He is Hungarian, but speaks Serbo-Croatian as well. He told me it would be better to ask one of his friends, a Serbian by origin to make the translations.

> My niece and her Slovakian husband made the Czech translation.

> My husband ran the Venice Marathon with a Danish runner, so I asked this man to translate "The Norwegian Bible" into Danish.

I took my story and the essay with me to Canada where I took part in an English immersion course. I gave my work to some of our teachers and to some of my new friends. The responses were as follows:

> I gave it to our professor of Canadian literature, a writer. He corrected my essay, praised me and encouraged me to write more. I also had the pleasure of getting acquainted with his first novel "Winter Tulips" which had been recently published.

> The teacher of Linguistics was a Canadian of "visible minority", a young lady from East India, who married a white Canadian. I heard about the problems of being a visible minority first from her, a very authentic source. She promised to have my text translated into her mother language later on by her mother, because parents know the abandoned language better than the second generation. The same phenomenon occurred at other times during my quest for further languages. She sent me the translation, but she did not mention which language it was, and I could not identify it either. So it is the unknown member of my language company.

> Our teacher of Canadian history read my short story and presented me with his article which also, was about languages, the role of bilingualism in the family. He had also written a book about native Indians in Canada, so I asked him to ask somebody to translate my story into an ancient Indian language. He tried to organise it, sent my story to an Indian Cultural Centre to a man who seemed interested. Our teacher promised to make a small donation to the centre, sent the material and waited. And waited and waited. Finally he called them to be told that the man was ill and that nobody else was able to do the translation. He expressed some surprise but in explanation he was told that Indian (Native People) languages are mainly an oral tradition. So I do not have a Canadian Indian translation, but this story is also an interesting contribution to the language map of the world as I try to describe it in my final paper.

> There was a security guard in the College where we lived. He emigrated from Ceylon many years ago. He began to translate my short story into Tamil, but later on he asked his nephew to continue it. He told me he was a stationmaster at home and that his nephew was more educated, so the young man was able to make a better translation.

> I visited my relatives in Toronto. An international company was there at the party. I met a Latvian woman who was already born in Canada, but she promised me to ask her 83 year old father to translate the text into Latvian.

> A great surprise awaited me in Canada. I had a Polish penfriend thirty years ago. She had visited us in Budapest and I was with her on a student excursion in the Polish Carpathians. Later on our friendship was broken off and I knew only that she left Poland for America, but I did not have her address. During a sight-seeing trip to Toronto while waiting for my colleagues, I found a telephone box with a directory in it. A quick idea came to my mind: "Here I am in America, why not look for my friend. Perhaps she lives somewhere here!" And I happened to find her name in the directory. What a big surprise! I phoned her at once. She, too, was so very happy. We

met and had an all-day-long chat about our last 28 years. Naturally she became my Polish translator. Her friend helped her. For 20 years they had lived there in America and had been speaking English. Perhaps they could make a better Polish translation together. I asked them to send me the translation, but I waited and waited in vain. It is possible she will be lost to me for the next thirty years<sup>33</sup>? So I asked another friend, my first publisher, to translate the text into Polish, my beloved language. However instead of him, his friend did the translation.

After arriving home I continued to collect languages.

> My colleague at school translated the story into Latin.

> Our friend, a painter, who emigrated to Hungary from Sub-Carpahia, worked through the Ukrainian, Russian and Ruthenian translations.

> My husband's colleague, who is of Greek origin translated the text into Modern Greek and asked her friend's father to write it down. She told me she was born in Hungary, so her friend's father knew Modern Greek better than she. The same situation exists in the East Indian, the Latvian and the Spanish languages, that the elder generation speaks it better. It is remarkably opposite in Rumanian and Tamil, where the older generation thinks that the younger knows the language better.

> I know a math teacher at the Teacher's Training College whose hobby is speaking and teaching Esperanto. Let's ask her! I will have one translation in an artificial language as well.

> An other teacher at the College, a soloist of Korean origin translated my text into this Far East language.

> We had a Peace Corps volunteer in the secondary school one year, who came from Texas. His mother tongue was Spanish, but he asked his mother to translate my story into Spanish.

> We have a friend, a member of the Rumanian minority which have been living among Hungarians for 300 years. He told me that although his mother tongue was Rumanian, his daughter attended a Rumanian secondary school, so she translated the text into Rumanian and later on as a Christmas present, my friend sent me their newspaper with

"The Norwegian Bible" in it. I got 720 Fts for the publication as well.

> I asked one of our Finnish friends to look for a Lappish translator, and another, a woman, who is Finnish-Swedish bilingual, to translate the Bible into Swedish. Not she, but her daughter did the job for me.

> Another Finnish friend, a laryngologist translated the text into Finnish.

> A library director who hosted our librarian delegation in Norway completed the Norwegian translation.

> I asked my cousin, another granddaughter of our eighteen-lingual grandfather, to translate it into French. She did it and her 12 year old half-French half-Hungarian daughter and her French husband helped

her.

> My English penfriend since 1964, who sent me the white New Testament has a wife of Fijian origin. They promised me a translation into the language of that far away country.

> An Italian friend translated it into Italian,

> another friend into Croat,

> and one into Slovenian

> a friend of our friends into Hebrew,

> a librarian from Dublin into Irish, and

> the Japanese laryngologist into Japanese. He drew a sketch of me and my Bible to show that Japanese write and read vertically. He wrote a long letter as well in which he described his language for my final paper and in addition he sent me the Japanese Lord's Prayer.

> My daughter's 84 year old teacher of German, a nun translated my short story into German. She presented me with her book which has been recently published. She translated a German book into Hungarian. "Translating, playing with languages makes people young."--she told me and dedicated her book to me. If everybody follows through as promised, I will have my short story in 32 languages. It is almost twice as many as my grandfather's 18 spoken languages.

In May I handed in my final paper with 31 languages in it, took the state exam and got my degree as Teacher of English. But the collecting of languages didn't stop and by Christmas 1993 I had 14 more languages. I began to look for a publisher and when I found one, I promised him a book with 50 languages in it.

The story of the later 19 languages is as follows:

> The wife of one of our painter friends, a Bulgarian, who has been living in Hungary since the age of 11, translated "The Norwegian Bible" into Bulgarian.

> There had been a congress of Finno-Ugric writers in Eger in September 1993. "So many languages in my town", I thought, "Why not get acquaintance with some of them?" With the help of my somewhat forgotten but hastily refreshed Russian knowledge, I spoke with the representatives of our Hungarian language relatives. Some of them promised to send me a translation after returning home. From that congress I have the following languages translated: Karelian, Udmurt, Estonian, Komi and Nenets. At the congress, I met a Livonian student who is a representative of a small group of people whose language is spoken by only 20 people. He promised me the translation but has not sent it yet. He hasn't even answered my second and third letter either. In my last letter I asked him to translate the text into Lithuanian as well as Livonian. Since he lives in Riga, Lithuania, I assume he is bilingual. I hope he will eventually respond as did my Lappish translator after one and a half years.

> One of our Finnish friends had promised to look for a Lappish translator. Much time passed and I had given up all hope of ever

getting that translation but now I do have it.

> The next year Venice Marathon brought me two further languages. After my husband had run the marathon on Sunday, we took a trip to Verona on Monday. On our way there, a group of four happy, talkative young people entered our compartment. The three sisters and a brother spoke an interesting sounding language, unknown to me. I asked them if they were Swedish. Smiling, they said, "No", but that I wasn't the first to mistake their language for Swedish. They were speaking Swiss German. Later on they changed to formal German, so we could understand them. They promised to translate my short story into their mother tongue. I received it in one month's time. They wrote that at home they were sitting around the dinner table the same way that we sat in a round in the train compartment. And sentence by sentence they translated the text together.

> The next day, our friend the Italian translator took us on a trip into the Alps. We passed a region where, he said, a small group of people speak Friuli, a Rheto Romance language. He promised to ask one of his customers who lives there to make the Friulian translation.

> My eldest brother's Dutch art partner who organizes figure and medal exhibitions for him, translated the text into Dutch. I wrote to a Biology professor from Belgium who I met some years ago in Eger (my home town) and asked him to translate the text into Flemish. I sent him the list of languages and translators as well, asking him to fill in his data, also. Instead of the Flemish translation I got a short letter in which he said he felt it not to be important to write a Flemish translation since he saw I already had the text in Dutch. These two languages are, as he wrote, similar in written form, and only in pronunciation are there some differences.

> He did not make the translation, but some month later another Belgian couple visited us. Listening to my request they asked for a typing machine and immediately translated the short story into Flemish. They also promised me a Cashmirian translation because a Cashmirian man lives in their village, they ask him to do the work. Later on they wrote me it was told them that Cashmirian is a spoken language only, They use Hindi script while writing, but Hindi I already have. Instead of the Chasmirian they organised an African language: another friend in their village, couple from Zaire translated the short story into Luba language.

Later, my short story continued its role as a magnet and brought me two new friends; two language fans. As I had begun to think about publishing a book, I had to look for and ask permission for copying the language descriptions from the writer of the "Lord's Prayer in 121 European Languages". Looking for his name in the Budapest telephone book and finding four Németh Zsigmonds, I had the same good fortune as I did in my Toronto search. The first number I dialed was his. He was very friendly. We met in Budapest and went together to the Indian Embassy. I wanted to ask them about the herd of the Indian language for which I have translation. He asked about some language problems pertaining to the preparation of his next book entitled, "Asia's Languages Shown Through the Lord's Prayer in Different Languages." He directed me to a new language at this time because he sent my story to:

> a man who constructed a new artificial language, Vikto.

Mr. Németh brought me to a friend of his who became interested in me when she heard I had written about 31 languages with Hebrew among them. Kató Lomb studies Hebrew at the Budapest University. It is the 17th language she speaks. She is a synchron translator. She speaks in 16 languages, but as she said in an interview, the number of languages by which she has already earned money is about 30. She wrote four books about languages, her language learning method, other multilingual people, and her journeys around the world as a translator. She autographed one of her books and gave it to me. I had brought two others with me and she autographed those as well. The fourth title I bought the next week in a secondhand book shop. In a week's time I had read all four of the books with much enjoyment.

The next month I invited this lovely pair to our secondary school. I wanted our students to have the pleasure of getting acquainted with these two language fans. Mrs. Kató Lomb gave a lecture to the students about her language learning method, and another lecture for teachers about how language learning can make the retired person's everyday life more interesting. Mr. Németh delivered a lecture about his trip to a far land to find a people who speak a language distantly relative to Hungarian. He also showed a video film he made while visiting this Hanti group in Siberia.

> I found someone, my husband's patient, who studied and speaks Turkish.

> Somebody else translated the text into Hungarian Gipsy language.

> Father of my daughter's classmate translated the text into Classic Greek.

> My eldest brother organised some more languages for me. I went to the Netherlands and Germany with him to collect his bronze figures from galleries there. He needed them for his great exhibition in Budapest. We visited his friend, my Dutch translator Theo, the Hollander and his wife. They were astonished while I told them I had translations in 43 languages, they didn't think there were so many languages in Europe. But later on the wife took a book from the bookshelf in which we could read there were 2796 languages in the world and the number of dialects were 7000-8000. So the 50 languages I plan for my book is only a small slice of this rich world of languages.

> Theo wanted to enrich my collection so he promised to organise the West Frisian translation for me, a language spoken in the Netherlands by a minority group.

> At my brother's friend in Hamburg I met a bilingual Chinese man. He translated the short story into Chinese.

Now I must finish collecting languages. I have about 50 translations--the number I promised to my sponsor in publishing the book. Or maybe not. Perhaps I should leave this book open and ask my reader who may know any language not present here, to translate the short story into that language and send it to me, (address: 3300 Eger, Széchenyi u. 9. Hungary). In the second edition I would like to present the other 2746 languages.

## Story of the further 27 languages

The above appeal reached my readers and some of them joined into the game. With their help and suggestions from new and old friends, another 27 languages came together in the last 4 years.

Here you have the story of this collection:

A retired chief of ophthalmology phoned me to say he had read my book, enjoyed it, liked the idea and had a lot of pen-friends around the world. He collected 8 languages for me (Afrikaans, Chicheva, Saxon in Transylvania, Portuguese, Swahili, Welsh, Zulu and Manx).

We had a French guest and it came to light that he lived in Bretagne and his neighbour's mother-tongue is Breton, so after returning home he sent me the Breton translation.

The Hanti translation was promised me some years ago during the Ugro-Finn writer's meeting in Eger by a woman writer and she sent me the Hanti translation by manuscript which I could hardly read and transliterate. I asked her in a letter to type it but she did not answer. Later on I looked for somebody who knew Hanti in Budapest and Szombathely but I was not successful in finding one. In the end I put this hardly legible text into the second edition.

One of my dear library visitors in the school, Jutka Adorján liked my book and told me her cousin was of the Ibo mother-tongue and asked him, the agriculture student, to translate the short story into this African language.

I got to know fans of artificial languages as enthusiastic people. Thanks to Vilmos Bösz, the creator of the Vikto language for allowing me to use it in the first edition of my book. He has a rather large pen- and language friend circle and through his efforts I received additional translations in 4 more artificial languages. These languages (Interlingua, Volapük, Glosa and Unitario) came from Budapest, Germany and England. From Lithuania I received the Lithuanian translation which was interpreted by the wife and daughter of a man who wrote me an accompanying letter in Interlingua. My eldest brother, a sculptor has an Armenian sculptor friend who translated the Armenian text.

Another sculptor friend of my brother, Mihály Bohn has trouble with his kidney so he has to go for dialysis 3 times a week. There, in his hospital bed, pleaded with his nurse, a medical student, to translate the story into Persian, his mother tongue.

And again laryngologists. A colleague of my husband who knew about my language gathering enthusiasm discovered that a new laryngologist in the Szeged HNO Clinic speaks two languages not yet present in my book. He asked this young doctor to translate the text into his mother's and father's language respectively. I got the Azeri and the Persian translation from him and when later on I got acquainted with him personally, he said he liked the idea of gathering more languages and he would like to put The Norwegian Bible short story onto the internet. Perhaps then I would get more translations in additional languages. I already had the Persian, but the Azeri was new, so I put it happily into the second edition of my book.



> My colleague, a teacher of Latin who made the Latin translation, requested a Sardinian translation from his Sardinian friend.

> The Sinhalese translation also come from Canada as we spent one and a half months there on a scholarship trip. My colleague there visited his old family friend who is of Sinhalese nationality. The Sinhalese friend has finally sent me his translation after four years.

> Mongolian is also of HNO origin. My husband operated on a Mongolian young lady.

Dear my new translator!

This short story is already translated into 77 different languages. If you know of a language not presented in my list, would you please translate the short story into this language and send it to me. Please write me the name of numbers 1-10 and 100 in your language as well and please write me some words about your language in English. I kindly ask you to give me your name, job, town and country. Send your translation by mail to me please. E-mail is not good for languages written with diacritical marks or with non Latin letters. My address is: Martinovitsné Kutas Ilona, 3300 Eger, Széchenyi u. 9. Hungary.

If you have some questions, do not hesitate to write me on e-mail. My e-mail address is:

tenger@eszeg.sulinet.hu

I made a book with the first 50 languages in 1994. In February 2001 a new book has been issued with 77 languages in it. When I will have another 23 languages, I would like to publish the third edition with 100 languages in it in the year of 2004. Your translation can be involved in this book and naturally I will send you a complimentary copy in 2005.

Another request to you or to the readers of the E-book version of my book

([www.mek.iif.hu/porta/szint/human/szepirod/modern/martinov](http://www.mek.iif.hu/porta/szint/human/szepirod/modern/martinov)) :

If you have the possibility to send me a computer and a scanner, please do it. I have a computer in my workplace, in a secondary school library, I wrote my two books on this computer in weekends and in afternoons, but in the next 3-4 year I will retire and I need a computer at home to continue this language collecting game. My final aim is to collect translations of my short story in all the 2899 languages of the world.

My other problem is as follows: The second edition of my book was issued in private edition in February 2001. As I have promised my translators, I would like to send a copy to each of them, (to about 66-68 addresses) but posting of a book costs 1800 Forints. My husband does not give me more money (he paid the editing costs), so I need 120.000 Forints (USD 420) for the expenses of postage. My invoice number is as follows:

OTP EGER 1177339100604996

Here are the 77 languages into which my short story has already been translated:

1. Arikaans
2. Armenian
3. Arabic
4. Azeri
5. Breton
6. Bulgarian
7. Catalan
8. Chichewa
9. Chinese
10. Ancient Greek
11. Croatian
12. Czech
13. Danish
14. English
15. Esperanto
16. Estonian
17. Fijian
18. Finnish
19. Flemish
20. French
21. Frisian
22. Friuli
23. German
24. Gipsy
25. Glosa
26. Hanti
27. Hebrew
28. Hindi
29. Holland
30. Hungarian
31. Ibo
32. Interlingua
33. Irish
34. Italian
35. Japanese
36. Karelian
37. Komi-Permiak or Zyrian
38. Korean
39. Lapponic
40. Latin
41. Lettish
42. Lithuanian
43. Luba
44. Manx
45. Modern Greek
46. Mongol
47. Nenets or Jurak-Samoyedic
48. Norwegian
49. Persian
50. Polish
51. Portuguese
52. Romanian
53. Runic script
54. Russian

55. Ruthenian
56. Sard
57. Saxon in Transsylvania
58. Serbian
59. Sinhalez
60. Slovakian
61. Slovenian
62. Spanish
63. Swahili
64. Swedish
65. Swiss German
66. Tamil
67. Turkish
68. Ukrainian
69. Unitario
70. Vikto
71. Volapük
72. Votyak or Udmurt
73. Welsh
74. Zulu
75. Bengali
76. Malaj
77. Azerbajani

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