

***HSR*: A History of New Beginnings and a Tribute to Founding Editor Nándor F. Dreisziger**

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The publication of this combined 2019–20 issue marks the beginning of a new chapter for *Hungarian Studies Review* (*HSR*). Founded in 1974 as the *Canadian-American Review of Hungarian Studies* (*CARHS*), the journal has had its share of challenges and triumphs over the last five decades, and not a few “new beginnings” along the way. What makes this particular new beginning markedly different, however, is that for the first time in its history, *HSR* will be moving forward without Nándor F. Dreisziger at its helm. To say that *HSR* has been a lifelong labour of love for Nándor would be an understatement. Recruited by the journal’s co-founder, Ferenc Harcsár, in the early 1970s, Nándor has been the heart and soul of *HSR* from the outset, and can be credited not only for the journal’s many successes, but also its longevity. Nándor helped steer the journal to new heights in the 1980s, when *HSR* became attached to the newly-founded Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto, and was key to finding new and often innovative ways to continue publishing the journal after support from the University of Toronto diminished in the late 1980s and early 1990s. From the traditional typesetting of the 1970s, to the advent of desktop editing in the 1990s, to the current digital age, Nándor did more than simply roll with the punches over the years. He adapted the journal in response to often abrupt financial, political, and technological changes, and built a solid foundation for a future generation of editors to build upon. It is an impressive achievement, and as the new editors of *HSR*, we hope we can live up to—and continue—the legacy that Nándor has left to us.

Nándor’s story as editor is in many ways remarkable. Few editors of academic journals can say they have served in the position for forty-five years, and even fewer have been bold enough to assume their editorial duties at the very beginning of their careers. But this is precisely what Nándor did, though as he noted in an email interview in

October 2019, his role as editor of *HSR* was not something he had ever dreamed would be permanent, let alone career-defining. As Nándor told us, he was first approached by the Hungarian-Canadian émigré leader Harcsár at the beginning of the 1970s.¹ Harcsár had read a prize-winning essay that Nándor had written as a graduate student at the University of Toronto, and felt that the up-and-coming scholar would make a fine editor for the serious academic journal he envisioned. Though Nándor had only just started his career as Assistant Professor of History at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, he agreed to accept the editorial position, albeit not without some understandable hesitation. Reflecting on his early interaction with Harcsár, Nándor wrote, “When Harcsar asked me to become the editor I recall telling him that I would edit the journal until he found an experienced editor. He never did.”² Given Nándor’s dedication to *HSR* and his tireless work for the journal, it is perhaps fortunate that Harcsár was unable to find someone to replace him as promised.

As co-founder of *CARHS*, Nándor worked closely with Harcsár, whose Ottawa-based organization, the Hungarian Readers’ Service, was the original publisher of the journal. Harcsár’s death in 1979 posed a significant challenge for the new journal. As Nándor indicated, the journal had close to five hundred subscribers by the end of the 1970s. Most of these were Harcsár’s friends, however, and according to Nándor, this early support for the journal gradually evaporated after Harcsár died.³ Declining subscriptions were not the only challenge. Reflecting on the first few years of the journal’s existence in its original incarnation as *CARHS*, Nándor recalled how difficult it was to attract the attention of senior scholars in the field. Most of his early letters to leading Hungarianists in the diaspora went “unanswered,” and even the most prolific scholars working in Hungarian studies in North America declined to submit their work, or else promised to do so, but never delivered on that promise. Though the circle of contributors “expanded slowly,” and though some scholars like Stephen Béla Várdy became regular contributors, according to Nándor, the journal’s early reception in Canada and the United States “might best be described as mixed.”⁴

At the beginning of the 1980s the journal received a new lease on life when it found a home at the University of Toronto, where it was supported by funding from the university, and by the newly-created Hungarian Chair. Relaunched as *Hungarian Studies Review* in 1981,⁵ the journal flourished throughout the 1980s, publishing two issues a year⁶ with the University of Toronto Press under the joint editorial

leadership of Nándor and George Bisztray, Hungarian Chair and co-editor of the journal from 1981 to 2003. With the journal's editorial office under the umbrella of the Hungarian Chair, *HSR* was able to assemble a small but impressive editorial team, and at the beginning of the 1980s could list no fewer than twenty-five scholars and community members on its editorial advisory board. Moreover, in addition to the two co-editors, Michael F. Böröczki, who was based in Ottawa with the Hungarian Readers' Service, continued to serve as Executive Manager from 1981 to 1983, while between 1981 and 1985 Susan M. Papp served as Assistant Editor, a position that was paid for by the Hungarian Chair.⁷

The results of *HSR*'s transition to the University of Toronto and its press were substantial, and did not go unnoticed within scholarly communities on both sides of the Atlantic. According to Nándor, *HSR* was surprisingly well received "in some circles in Communist Hungary," for example.⁸ The journal even attracted the attention of Hungary's National Széchényi Library, which would prove to be vital to *HSR*'s survival in the 1990s and early 2000s. In North America, *HSR*'s reputation began to grow as well. Reviewing the journal in 1987 for the periodical *Hungarian Studies* (which had been established at Indiana University by Denis Sinor), Richard L. Aczel wrote, "over the . . . years of its existence [*HSR*] has produced a highly impressive body of scholarly work unparalleled in range, depth, and consistency by any other contemporary venture of its kind in the Anglophone world . . . The most impressive achievement of the *Review* . . . [has] been its publication of five special issues on themes of considerable importance . . . To all those with an interest in Hungarian studies in the Anglophone world . . . [*HSR*] continues to provide a rare and invaluable service."⁹

For a Canadian-based scholarly journal with comparably modest resources, this praise was significant, and certainly left a mark on Nándor, who made a point of highlighting Aczel's positive review in our email interview with him.¹⁰ However, despite the journal's growing reputation, the University of Toronto unexpectedly stopped contributing to *HSR*'s editorial expenses in 1988, and by 1990 the journal itself had been dropped by University of Toronto Press (the last issue printed by the press was volume 17, number 2 in Fall 1990). In light of the university's waning support, Éva Tömöry took on the newly-created Subscriptions Manager position in 1990 (a role she would continue to play with *HSR* until 2003–04¹¹), while the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada (HSAC), which had been founded in 1985, began co-sponsoring the journal in 1991. The other vital co-sponsor of *HSR* was the National

Széchenyi Library (NSL) in Hungary. Like HSAC, the library began supporting *HSR* in 1991, but whereas HSAC's role was primarily to offer financial and editorial support, NSL was responsible for the printing and distribution of the journal.

The partnership with HSAC and NSL marked the beginning of a new chapter for *HSR*, and for Nándor in particular. The loss of editorial support from the University of Toronto had a profound impact on Nándor's editorial workload, especially after the university's Humanities Publishing Services (HPS) came "to an abrupt end" in 1993.¹² Established in the 1980s by the Centre for Computing in the Humanities, HPS had provided an affordable typesetting service to journals affiliated with the University of Toronto. Because *HSR* was still attached to the Hungarian Chair, its editors could make use of these cost-effective services. The closure of HPS posed a significant problem for the journal, as *HSR* could not afford the prohibitive typesetting rates being charged by commercial presses. Recognizing that they had "no alternative but to try accomplishing this task on their own," the editors began exploring the possibility of personal computer-based desktop publishing. The transition proved successful, though the learning curve was steep. As the co-editors lamented in a 1993 editorial note, "advances in computer electronics—in particular, in desktop publishing—have made our task easier. Nevertheless, the switch required that the member of the editorial team in charge of production (Dreisziger) learn a new word-processing program and purchase a suitable laserjet printer."¹³

Though the switch to desktop publishing in 1993 may have rendered the journal's operation "less expensive," it ended up imposing "even more work on one of [the] editors," and did not solve a host of other problems *HSR* was facing. These issues included "the shrinking of [*HSR*'s] subscription base, the unpredictable flow of articles, and the lack of help with the translation of good manuscripts from Hungarian to English."¹⁴ Daunting as they may have been, these challenges did not prove insurmountable. Bolstered by the new collaboration with both NSL and HSAC, Nándor was also able to count on the support of *HSR*'s editorial advisers, a number of whom remain active members of the journal's editorial board today. In 1994, for example, Oliver Botar (University of Manitoba) guest-edited a special issue on Hungarian artists in the Americas.¹⁵ Botar had already served as guest editor for the Spring issue in 1988,¹⁶ and would guest-edit a third issue in 2004, and a fourth in 2010 together with Hattula Moholy-Nagy.¹⁷ In addition to a special issue titled "Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought,"

edited by Bisztray in 2000,¹⁸ *HSR* also saw special guest-edited volumes by Agatha Schwartz (University of Ottawa), who teamed up with Marlene Kadar (York University) in 1999 to publish the first of two thematic issues on Women and Hungary (Part Two was guest-edited by Schwartz in 2002).¹⁹ In 2014, Judith Szapor (McGill University) co-edited the special issue “Gender and Nation in Hungary since 1919” with Schwartz.²⁰ This was the last special issue published by *HSR* under Nándor’s leadership as editor. Nándor was clearly grateful for these contributions, and noted that the guest-edited volumes were crucial to the continuation of *HSR*’s tradition of publishing special issues on topics of interest and importance to scholars working both within and outside the field of Hungarian studies.²¹

After Bisztray’s retirement as Hungarian Chair, Nándor became the sole editor of *HSR* in 2004. This editorial shift was followed by Nándor’s own retirement from the Royal Military College of Canada in 2005, and also by new developments in the way that *HSR* was supported, printed, and distributed. Beginning with the publication of volume 32 in 2005, the United States-based Hungarian Studies Association (HSA) became a co-sponsor alongside NSL and HSAC. Formed in 1970 as The American Association for the Study of Hungarian History, HSA adopted its current name in 2004, and continues to be an important supporter of *HSR*. HSA’s involvement with *HSR* came at a crucial moment, as support from NSL began to drop off by the end of the decade. The last issue of *HSR* printed by NSL came out in 2008 (volume 35, numbers 1–2), and though NSL officially continued to distribute the journal, this service in actuality also ceased after 2011. Starting in 2009, *HSR* was printed by Allan Graphics in Kingston, Ontario, though all issues of *HSR* from 1981 to 2018 are also currently available in electronic format on the NSL website.

In autumn 2018, Nándor retired fully as editor of *HSR*. As he wrote in an editorial note in the 2018 volume, “after editing this journal for four and a half decades, advanced age and the diagnosis of a progressive neurological disease prompt me to resign as editor and producer of this journal.”²² As presidents of HSA and HSAC respectively, Árpád and I agreed in November 2018 to serve as co-editors for this transitional 2019–20 issue, and to help negotiate a shift to a new publisher, one that would provide professional editorial support, and that would help us establish a presence in online databases like JSTOR and Project MUSE. In this task we have been assisted by Emily Gioielli (Pasts, Inc. Center for Historical Studies, Central European

University), Leslie Waters (University of Texas at El Paso), and Richard S. Esbenshade (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign). As a team of five, it has taken us over a year to assemble this current issue. Even though each of us has previous editorial experience, it proved to be a significant undertaking. Our collective respect for Nándor's achievements has only grown since we took up the editorial reins, and I think the two of us speak for the entire editorial team when we say we are in awe of what Nándor was able to accomplish in four and a half decades. His dedication to *HSR* is admirable, and his accomplishments humbling. As already noted, we can only hope that we will be worthy of the legacy he has left to us, and to generations of scholars yet to come.

Inspired by the journal's nearly half-century history, we look forward to *HSR*'s next "new beginning," and are excited about our new partnership with Pennsylvania State University Press, which officially begins in January 2021. Our colleagues at PSU Press have been very supportive and helpful with our transition, and have been instrumental in the publication of this transitional issue. Based on our interactions and experiences so far, we are confident that we made the right choice to partner with them for the journal's next chapter. Though much has obviously changed in terms of editorial structure and the production of the journal, we remain committed as an editorial team to *HSR*'s traditions, and are thankful for the continued support of HSAC and HSA, as well as the guidance of our editorial advisers. As editors we have much to learn, but as we hope this issue illustrates, we are firm in our commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to Hungarian studies, and will continue to offer a rigorous, non-partisan forum for scholarly discussion and debate. We also hope to introduce new features to *HSR*, and are looking forward to working with our editorial board, contributors, supporting associations, and readers to develop and further refine the project Nándor has handed over to us, and to continue to create dynamic, relevant, and critical content well into the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Nándor F. Dreisziger, email interview with the authors, October 18, 2019. As R. L. Aczel wrote in his 1987 review of *HSR*, early discussions for the establishment of a North American periodical dedicated entirely to Hungarian studies began in earnest in 1971. See R. L. Aczel's review of *HSR* in *Hungarian Studies* 3 (1987): 260. On the role played by Ferenc

- Harcászár, see Nándor F. Dreisziger, “Contributions to Ontario’s Culture,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 68–69. Dreisziger notes that Harcsászár began his campaign to launch a serious journal “in tune with the aspirations of the Hungarian community” in 1970. He adds that, at the time, ideas like Harcsászár’s “were gaining popularity with many Hungarian émigré leaders both in Canada and the United States.”
2. Dreisziger, email interview, October 18, 2019.
 3. Dreisziger, email interview, October 28, 2019.
 4. Dreisziger, email interview, October 28, 2019.
 5. As Dreisziger and Bisztray wrote in their first-ever editorial note in *Hungarian Studies Review*, the new title was “meant to eliminate the awkwardness of our original masthead. It also signifies our belief that we are now ready to shed our geographic limitations and assume the task of serving the interest of Hungarian studies wherever English is a recognized language of scholarly communication.” George Bisztray and Nándor F. Dreisziger, “Preface,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 5.
 6. 1989 was the only exception to this, when one 151-page double issue was published, instead of two separate issues. The publication of lengthy double issues would continue into the 1990s and 2000s. The special issue co-edited by Oliver A. I. Botar and Hattula Moholy-Nagy in 2010, for example, was 221 pages in length. See note 17 below.
 7. See George Bisztray and Nándor F. Dreisziger, “Preface,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 6.
 8. Dreisziger, email interview, October 28, 2019.
 9. R. L. Aczel’s review of *HSR*, quoted in George Bisztray, “Hungarian Chair at the University of Toronto: A Decennial Report,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 28.
 10. Nándor F. Dreisziger, email interview, October 30, 2019.
 11. The Budapest-based Tímea Király took over this position in 2004, and served as the subscriptions manager until 2008, when the position was phased out.
 12. Nándor Dreisziger and George Bisztray, “A Brief Note from the Editors,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 20, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1993): 127.
 13. *Ibid.* As Nándor indicated, the very first paper submitted to *HSR* in electronic form came from Hungary. It was submitted by Géza Jeszenszky, professor at Corvinus University, and still an active member of *HSR*’s editorial board. Dreisziger, email interview, October 28, 2019.
 14. Nándor Dreisziger and George Bisztray, “A Brief Note from the Editors,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 20, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1993): 128.

15. Oliver A. I. Botar, ed., “Hungarian Artists in the Americas,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 21, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1994).
16. Oliver A. I. Botar, ed., “The Early Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1988).
17. Oliver A. I. Botar, ed., “Twentieth-Century Hungarian Art at Home and Abroad,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 31, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2004); and Oliver A. I. Botar and Hattula Moholy-Nagy, eds., “Proceedings of the Symposium ‘László Moholy-Nagy: Translating Utopia into Action’,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 37, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2010).
18. George Bisztray, ed., “Thousand Years of Hungarian Thought,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 27, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2000).
19. Marlene Kadar and Agatha Schwartz, eds., “Women and Hungary: Reclaiming Images and Histories,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 26, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1999); Agatha Schwartz, ed., “Women and Hungary, Part II: Studies in Twentieth-Century Politics, Education, History, and Literature,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 29, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2002).
20. Judith Sapor and Agatha Schwartz, eds., “Gender and Nation in Hungary since 1919,” special issue, *Hungarian Studies Review* 41, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2014).
21. Dreisziger, email interview, October 30, 2019.
22. Nándor F. Dreisziger, “A Note from the Editor,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 45, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 2018): 2.