



On a Volume of Greek Wise Sayings¹

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The volume ‘Teach and Learn the Better’ by Terézia Dér and Tamás Nótári contains a selection of the wise thoughts of several creators of ancient Greek literature with translation into Latin and Hungarian. A former work of the same authors/editors entitled ‘Exemplaria Graeca’,² published by Belvedere Meridionale, appeared in 1999. The two classical scholars Terézia Dér and Tamás Nótári were urged to compile this former selection by the fact that in the previous one hundred years no collection of Greek/Latin/Hungarian sayings had been published in Hungary.

The volume of Terézia Dér and Tamás Nótári ‘Teach and Learn the Better’ was published by Lectum Kiadó first in 2005.³ The title of the volume is an allusion to the saying by Thales: ‘Didaske kai manthane to ameinon (Doce ac discemeliora)’. In addition to the sayings that can be read in the selection of 1999, this volume contained several further wise old sayings in a structure that justifies their publication in a completely different, independent volume. (Terézia Dér and Tamás Nótári also published a volume of Greek quotations and proverbs with Latin translation in 2008, which was published by Societas Latina in Saarbrücken.)⁴ The volume of 2005 was published for the second time by Lectum Kiadó (Szeged) in 2016.

When compiling the collection, it was kept in view that the translation of the selected Greek sayings into Latin and Hungarian should be possibly available. Thereby, on the one hand, they tried to enable a comparison of the two classical

- 1 Dér, Terézia–Nótári, Tamás: *Tanítsd és tanuld a jobbat! Görög bölcsességek latin és magyar fordítással* (Teach and Learn the Better. Greek Wise Sayings with Translation into Latin and Hungarian). 2nd edition, Szeged, Lectum Kiadó, 2016.
- 2 Dér, Terézia–Nótári, Tamás: *Exemplari Graeca – Görög bölcsességek latin és magyar fordítással* (Exemplaria Graeca – Greek Wise Sayings with Translation into Latin and Hungarian). Szeged, Belvedere Meridionale, 1999.
- 3 Dér, Terézia–Nótári, Tamás: *Tanítsd és tanuld a jobbat! Görög bölcsességek latin és magyar fordítással* (Teach and Learn the Better. Greek Wise Sayings with Translation into Latin and Hungarian). Szeged, Lectum Kiadó, 2005.
- 4 Dér, Teresia–Nótári, Thomas: *Sapientia liberatanimum*. Composuerunt. Saarbrücken, Societas Latina, 2008.

languages, and, on the other hand, they wanted to please the readers who want to get familiar more profoundly with the antique sources containing those sayings. They indicated the data of the works the translations of which they took over concerning specific sayings, under the heading 'Bibliography'. At several points – for example, for the works of Galen and Marcus Aurelius –, they publish the Latin and Hungarian versions in their own translation.

The volume is introduced by a preface in Hungarian and Latin; it is followed by sayings grouped around five large topics (*human attributes, characteristics, activities; human relations; man and fate – relation of man and gods; general worldly wisdom; famous sayings*), quoted in Greek, Latin, and Hungarian. Within each topic, the order of the sayings follows the alphabetical order according to the Greek original. The 'Bibliography' lists the volumes of editions of the used Greek texts, translations into Latin and Hungarian – this also shows the double, educational and academic character of the work. The 'Appendix' contains the transcription of the Greek alphabet by Latin letters and a short summary of key pronunciation rules. This is followed by the 'List of Abbreviations' and short biographies of the authors that appear in the volume.

The creators of the volume made effort to demonstrate the diversity of ancient Hellenic culture and literary genres: so, they quoted not only from works of poets, playwrights, historians, and philosophers – i.e. of authors in the field called humanities – but endeavoured to redirect the reader's attention to the field of natural sciences too. From among several branches of science, they emphasized medicine, selecting wise thoughts from the works of Hippocrates and Galen.

For their work, they chose Xenophon's words as a guiding principle: 'I research into... the treasures of old wise men that they left to us written down in their books, and if we come across some wonderful thought, we take them out' (Mem. I, 6, 14).⁵ The classical authors quoted in the volume are of a very wide scope: epic is represented by Homer and Hesiod, drama by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the genre of the novel by Heliodorus and Longus, historiography by Herodotus and Thucydides, the genre of fable by Aesop. Philosophy is represented by Plato, Aristotle, Democritus, Heraclitus, Marcus Aurelius, and the so-called Seven Wise Men (Bias, Chilon, Cleobulus, Periander, Pittacus, Solon, and Thales).

As they expound it in the preface, Terézia Dér and Tamás Nótári compiled their work with the intention to give into the hands of students and lecturers a kind of handbook that makes them think and offers them a basic training in the Greek and Latin languages in an entertaining manner. The edition can be read with benefit also by college and university students of history, Hungarian, and philosophy. The demanding quality of the work is again an example of the books with aesthetic appearance of Lectum Kiadó in Szeged.

5 Dér–Nótári 2016. 6.