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Lőrincz Gábor, Lőrincz Julianna, Tóth Szilárd Tibor

**ARCHAISMS OF JÁNOS ARANY,
THE HUNGARIAN POET,
AND THEIR TEACHABILITY**



With the vocabulary and individual style of János Arany's folk and historical verses and poems, the author contributed to the reform of the Hungarian literary language and style, and by doing so also to the codification of the Hungarian language. In the paper, the authors briefly describe archaisms, their typology, their function in the literary language, and take their examples from the works of János Arany. Within archaisms, the study also describes a group of archaic concepts, historicisms, and their types. The authors also introduce a dictionary of the poetic language of Arany, which was published on the bicentenary of the poet's birth, and also briefly allude to a few previous attempts to process Arany's vocabulary. They use the AranySz. (Arany Dictionary) published in 2017 to study archaisms and expressions with important stylistic functions and the educational aspects thereof, mainly in the language of the ballads "A walesi bárdok" ('The Bards of Wales') and "Szondi két apródja" ('The two varlets of Szondi').

Keywords: archaisms, historicisms, folk elements, poetic vocabulary, poetic dictionary

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1. The role of János Arany in the reform of the Hungarian literary style

When analyzing the function of János Arany's poetic vocabulary and linguistic expressions, the reform of the poetic style should not go unaddressed. It is well known among Hungarian readers that the language of the works of János Arany and Sándor Petőfi contributed greatly to the development of the codified Hungarian language.

The beginning of the struggle for the reform of the Hungarian literary language and style is associated – mainly under the influence of school textbooks – with the year 1778, the publication of György Bessenyei's pamphlet entitled "Magyarság" ('To be Hungarian'), and as a continuation of this, with the language reform movement marked by the name of Ferenc Kazinczy. However, this process began much earlier, in the language and style reform works of writers and poets. Undoubtedly, János Arany and Sándor Petőfi were very important participants in the process.

In Arany's works, the following ways of reforming vocabulary are found:

1. expanding the meanings of old words (archaisms),
2. the incorporation of certain elements of folk vocabulary into the common language lexicon and poetic language,
3. the use of Hungarian words created via loan translation,
4. the creation of new Hungarian words [Lőrincz J. 2018, 429; see also Szabó 1998, 135–136].



In the poetry of János Arany, archaisms and vernacular elements are tools of consciously undertaken style reform. András Martinkó also states that archaizing had already been known in Hungarian literature before Arany, and it was identified with the folk style. Identifying folk with old is known as a tool for archaizing since Dugonics. The unusualness of the dialectic forms, their obvious difference from the common language, from the language used nowadays suggests a different form of thinking, which undoubtedly points towards the past [Martinkó 1954, 371; see also Tompa 1972, 57]. Some writers have often used archaisms both when necessary and when unnecessary [cf. Minya 2017]. The use of archaisms without function is unnecessary, but their use with a function is necessary if it is used to evoke the linguistic elements of older ages for the purpose of creating an atmosphere [cf. Szikszainé Nagy 2007, 190; Minya 2011, 217].

2. Archaisms

Linguistic archaisms can be judged relatively: the traditional lexicological literature classifies as such words and expressions that refer to an older state of the language [cf. e.g. Fábrián – Szathmári – Terestyéni 1958, 43; Szathmári ed. 1961, 421; Zsemlyei 1996, 22]. Erzsébet Heltainé Nagy summarizes the concept and function of archaisms in her study. She describes an archaism as a linguistic antiquity used naturally or consciously: obsolete or nearly obsolete words, structures, grammatical elements, senses and/or other stylistic tools to imitate antiquity in order to evoke the language state of older ages or regional versions today: spelling, poetry, editing, tone, genre etc. [Heltainé Nagy 2008, 127].

According to Nádasy [2004], an archaism is a relative concept: older than the usual word, linguistic expression well-known in the given age, i.e. the one labelled as belonging to the neutral style.

There are several different considerations used to classify archaisms into groups. One of these is classification based on linguistic level:

- phonological: *nékem / nekem* ‘to me’;
- morphological: *adnók / adnánk* ‘we would give’;
- spelling: *Kovács / Kováts* ‘surname Smith’.

In the literature of Hungarian lexicography, the following classification was traditionally used:

- conceptual archaisms – archaisms denoting concepts or objects that are not used anymore, e.g. *kelevéz* ‘a spearlike stabbing weapon of riders’;
- semantic archaisms – when the word itself is still used but not in some old sense, e.g. *marha* ‘treasure, property item’;
- formal archaisms – when the given word has a more modern form than the one currently used, e.g. *leend* whose modern form is *lesz* ‘will be’ [cf. Bokor 2007, 191].

Among the archaisms one can distinguish historisms [cf. Lanstyák 2014; Tóth 2012, 19; 2013, 20], i.e. words whose referent is no longer known to the contemporary language user, or if certain meanings of a polysemic word are known in the language but its concrete meaning denoting the obsolete referent is not. So traditionally, these are the archaic concepts that are called historisms. Examples of such kind in the ballad “Szondi két apródja” (‘The two varlets of Szondi’) are the words *kaftán* ‘long men’s jacket’ or *sörben* ‘sweet juice’ [cf. Szathmári 2004, 14].

When analyzing Hungarian Bible translations, István Lanstyák also partly follows the traditional lexicographical classification of archaisms. A historism is a lexeme whose denotation is an outdated thing or concept, and therefore occurs in today’s discourses only when it comes to things of the past [Lanstyák 2014, 30]. István Lanstyák distinguishes (1) archaisms in the narrower sense, he calls them linguistic archaisms. Linguistic archaisms are words labelled as obsolete or archaic by the explanatory dictionaries [Lanstyák 2014, 14]. 2. The author classifies historisms into the other type, which are archaic concepts and objects that in the specific period under study are present (only) in the passive vocabulary of the speakers, or not even there.

Lanstyák divides historisms (conceptual archaisms) into the following subgroups: 1. full historism (the concept denoted by the word is no longer in use), e.g. *batka* as an ‘old currency’, *kelevéz* as a ‘spearlike weapon’; 2. formal-semantic historism where a modified variant of the lexeme lives on in the language to refer to a common concept, e.g. *dénár* or *denár* ‘an old currency’ in Hungarian but the name of the traditional currencies of several countries is derived from a variant of Latin origin: *dinar*, e.g. Serbia; 3. semantic historism where the lexeme is unchanged, but only used to denote today’s concept, e.g. *basa* ‘Pasha, Ottoman-Turkish provincial governor’, *könyök* ‘a kind of unit of length’ [Lanstyák 2014, 14].

There is generally no distinction made between archaic concepts and historisms in the traditional lexicographic literature. The meaning of the word historism is strongly tied to changes in the life of society and, consequently, in language. For example, if a trade is no longer known to those of a given age, or lives only in the minds of older generations, its objects are not used any more, then the words describing the given trade are also taken out of the public consciousness, and younger generations are no longer or less familiar with them: e.g. *kopja* ‘spearlike stabbing weapon of riders’, *kelevéz* ‘spearlike long stabbing weapon’.

As a result of the change in the use of a word, a difference emerges between archaic concepts and historisms in their relation to different semantic meanings, e.g. in synonymy. Historisms do not have a well-known synonym, but other types of archaisms, especially archaic forms, have a colloquial, standard synonym, although their old-fashioned character is sensed in use: e.g. *állá* vs. *állt* ‘stood (3 sg.)’, *hulla* vs. *hullt* ‘fell (3 sg.)’ etc.

The function of archaisms also depends to a large extent on the type of text and the attribution of style and the effect intended by the author of the text [cf. Heltainé Nagy 2008, Lanstyák 2014, Szikszainé Nagy 2007]. Antiquity of style in artistic texts can be expressed using in many linguistic elements:

- spelling,
- word-usage,
- word form and sentence structure variants etc. [cf. Szikszainé Nagy 2007, 642–645].

In “Toldi” and historical ballads, Arany particularly likes the use of archaic words: concepts, forms and senses alike. János Arany’s poetic language often seems archaic not only because of the language changes of the past good century and a half, but also because of the fact that in his historical works, the poet deliberately archaizes, evokes the linguistic world of the past by the use of archaic and dialectal expressions [Beke 2017a, 44].

3. The Arany Dictionary (AranySz.)

As antecedents of the AranySz. (Arany Dictionary) the previous dictionaries by József Beke, e.g. BánkBSz. (Bánk Bán Dictionary) can be considered, but also a Toldi commentary by Albert Lehr [Arany 1880] created for school use and Emil Pásztor’s ToldiSz. (Toldi Dictionary) which contains 2873 headwords and deals with the vocabulary of the first part of the trilogy.

Two other works should also be mentioned as antecedents: The ethnographer Károly Viski created a specimen for the AranySz., and he also published it in 1948 in the journal called Magyar Nyelvőr. Viski mainly included Arany’s dialectal formations in his dictionary. However, the full dictionary has not been completed. The manuscript made in 1951 by Lajos Ambrus entitled “Arany költészetének szóstatistikája” (‘Words’ Statistics in Arany’s poetry’) [Balázs 2017a] is also known.

Thus, there was a demand for the processing of Arany’s poetic vocabulary formulated much earlier, but its implementation was still yet to come. Until 2017, until József Beke’s dictionary, no work was published that included Arany’s complete vocabulary. It took József Beke 7 years of work to complete the three-volume work as a one-person enterprise the exact title of which is: Arany Dictionary. The vocabulary of János Arany’s poetic language I–III. The dictionary was published for the bicentenary of the birth of János Arany.

During the compilation of the dictionary, several problems were raised, of which only three are highlighted here:



1. Selection of headwords – on the one hand, a spelling-related problem had occurred (e.g. if the same formation appears in Arany's works written both together and apart) and on the other hand the indication of the different tenses of the substantive verb (e.g. *van*, *volt*, *lesz* 'is, was, will be') also posed a problem. During the compilation of the dictionary, the author used the headword stock of the ÉrtSz. (Explanatory Dictionary of the Hungarian Language) as a starting point [Balázs 2017 b].

2. The definition of usage labels for the headwords – when it comes to usage labels, the AranySz. conforms mostly to the ÉrtSz., but also utilizes the comments in the TESz. (Historical-Etymological Dictionary of the Hungarian Language) and the ÚMTsz. (New Hungarian Dialectal Dictionary) and thus, it does not reflect the poet's contemporary, but a later or present-day view. This is especially noticeable in the case of expressions marked as archaic by the label (arch). Some words from the language reform period (e.g. *emlény* 'souvenir', *eszélyes* 'smart') were new in the age of the poet, but they did not pass into everyday language, so they are considered old nowadays [AranySz.: 32].

So words that seem archaic at present day were not necessarily archaic in Arany's time, and what we consider to be archaic in his works does not necessarily reflect the contemporary use of language, but may stylistic tools used deliberately. In this regard, Füredi also notes that without proper preliminary work and theoretical background, such remarks (word classifications) are only sporadic in nature and therefore of dubious value: overall they give a distorted picture of the role of the poet in the given age and the style of his language use [Füredi 1982, 496]. András Martinkó [1975, 95] writes that in a scientific sense, the writer's dictionary assesses the writer's vocabulary, examines its morphological and semantic stratification, origin, nature, its relation to contemporary common and literary language and gives some stylistic classification, but it can't accomplish more.

3. The inclusion of various archaic form variants also caused problems in the editing of the dictionary: e.g. *főnix* / *phőnix* / *fénix* / *féniksz* 'phoenix'. Such headwords in the dictionary are also found (the introductory information in the publication does not provide any information about these), the variants of which do not appear in separate entries: e.g. *áldoz* / *áldozik*. The reason for this is that although the verbs *áldoz* / *áldozik* have acquired partially different meanings over time, the difference in form is also accompanied by a difference in meaning, but not in the full range of word senses: *áldoz* / *áldozik a múzsáknak* ('sacrifices to the Muses'), but *pénzt áldoz a művészetre* ('spends money on art'). There are also cases where the variants appear as headwords in two full separate entries that refer to each other: e.g. *padló* 'a floor covering in a room' / *palló* 'wooden bridge over a narrow stream or ditch, without railings' and 'long plank'. Here too, the forms are only separate with regard to certain senses, so that one of the members of the pair is both a vernacular variant and a separate lexeme at the same time.

4. The archaisms in the ballad entitled "A walesi bárdok" ("The Bards of Wales") and their teachability using the AranySz.

József Beke's writing of his dictionary was mainly driven by his own school experiences and his students' experiences similar to that of his own, that is, they attributed to certain words a meaning completely different from their actual meaning [Balázs 2017c]. This holds even truer of today's students since they are completely unfamiliar with the meaning of the words like *kopár* 'barren', *szik* 'salty soil', *sarj* 'second growth' or *ösztövér* 'skinny', *kútágas* 'well-sweep', *hórihorgas* 'skinny and high', *gém* 'sweep' in "Toldi" since traditional peasant farming has mostly disappeared from the villages too and shadoofs can seldom be seen by modern man.

Below some of the archaisms found in "A walesi bárdok" (one of Arany's ballads the teaching of which is compulsory in both Hungary and Slovakia) are presented, the interpretation of which may be a problem not only for today's students but also for today's adults. This particular work by Arany was chosen for analysis since it contains a significant number of archaisms, so it requires a relatively large amount of help from the teacher to make students understand it. The lexemes studied

are difficult to understand because they are related to specific age and culture. Moreover, the words examined are in a homonymic relationship with the lexemes, which causes difficulties, too. All the above expressions can be found in the AranySz., so the use of the dictionary greatly facilitates the teacher's work.

In the following, the conceptual archaisms of the ballad “A walesi bárdok” are demonstrated:

bárd² 8 noun

(arch) ‘Celtic singer, reciter, folk poet’

Based on the entry *bárd²* it must be mentioned that its Hungarian translation is in a homonymic relationship with the lexeme *bárd¹* ‘executioner’s axe, execution device’, the meaning of which is probably more familiar to students in comparison with that of the former lexeme. The following archaism is also in a homonymic relationship with another lexeme:

koboz 15 noun

1 (arch) ‘plucked instrument, similar to a lyre’

2 (transf) ‘a symbol of the poet’s trade, or poetry itself’

However, this example is somewhat different from the previous one, since while in that case the homophones were of the same word class, in this case, the homonyms constitute a noun and a verb. Another difference in comparison with the previous example is the fact that the AranySz. only includes one entry for *koboz*, which implies that Arany had never used *koboz* as a verb, in its meaning of ‘takes’. In relation to this question the teacher may bring up that the verbal materials included in various vocabularies do not have to be consistent, since ÉrtSz., which is considered to be a basis for József Beke, includes both entries for *koboz*.

In a previous paper the archaisms of “Szondi két apródja” [cf. Lőrincz G. 2018] were narrowly studied, but with the aim of comparison some of them are referred to again.

The lexeme *kopja* in the ballad mentioned is interesting, because its usage labels are not always completely consistent and understandable, so they may raise doubts for the students to which the teacher must respond:

kopja 37 noun (kopia 7, arch)

1 (arch) ‘spearlike stabbing weapon of riders’

*2 ‘the same, occasionally, as a unit of length’

*3 ‘the same, as a (theatrical) prop’

In the head of the entry for *kopja*, there are two variants, only one of which shows the usage label (arch) despite the fact that both versions are labelled as archaic in the ÉrtSz. The first sense of the lexeme also received the same label, although it would have been sufficient to indicate the usage value only once. The *kopja* / *kopia* form variants are also remarkable because in the work they evoke the notion of duality on a phonetic level [Horváth 2009, 193–194]. Just like in the ÉrtSz., ‘tombstone’ is not one of the interpretations of the word *kopja* in the AranySz. despite the fact, that this sense clearly appears in the ballad, but in point 3 a definition is found, that in the authors’ point of view should not have been separately included. The interpretation of *kopja* as a ‘theatrical prop’ is like including a ‘toy car’ interpretation for the lexeme *car*: it is the basic sense of the word *kopja* that is activated even if we think of it as a toy.

Change in meaning is a natural linguistic process, but cannot really be observed in synchrony. A good example is the word *marha*, which is used in its archaic sense by Arany too, but today it lives almost exclusively in the sense of ‘cattle’ or the pejorative ‘stupid’, but in the ballad “Szondi két apródja”, its sense ‘movable property’ is evoked, which counted as archaic even in Arany’s time. The same is true



of the word *máglya* ‘bonfire’, the ‘regular stack’ the meaning of which is nowadays little known. The interpretation of the verse „*A vár piacára ezüstöt, aranyt, / Sok nagybecsü marhát máglyába kihordat*” is very important because without an explanation, for most students today, it would probably mean that animals are prepared to burn in the castle market, but the real meaning of the verse is that the treasures are layed up. The following lexeme also belongs to the category of semantic archaisms:

ige¹ 21 noun (Ige 1; íge 3)

- 1 ‘a word expressing action, a happening, existence’
- 2 (arch) ‘a word, an expression’
- 3 ‘a statement from divine inspiration’
- 4 ‘prophecy’
- 5 ‘Jesus Christ’

The heading of this entry includes three formal variations, among which the one spelled with a capital letter stands for the name of Christ. It is also interesting that this keyword is in a homonymic relationship with another conceptual archaism, specifically with the *ige* standing for ‘three threads on a windlass’, which is also included in the vocabulary. It is important to mention in relation to this entry, that out of the polysemic definitions the only one to receive a stylistic evaluation is the one from “A walesi bárdok”, thus being the only archaic definition in contrast with the others. It is important to draw students’ attention to these phenomena so that linguistic competencies can be developed parallel to literary education.

In addition to the above words, it is worth paying attention to the words of the ballad, which, although having archaic forms, are largely understandable to today’s students; therefore formal archaisms have different stylistic values. Three of them can be found in the ballad “A walesi bárdok” as well. One of these is *tereh*, which is a metathesis of the Hungarian word *teher* ‘burden’. This is a word from the Nagyszalonta dialect (which was Arany’s native language variant), the meaning of which is identical with that of its standard variation, and Arany used it for the sake of the rhyme. Another example is the lexeme, postposition *megől* ‘from behind of’, which is interesting since the standard variation *megől* spelled with a short vowel is in a homonymic relationship with the verb *megöl* ‘takes somebody’s life’. In this case, it is worthwhile to draw students’ attention to the difference in the two words’ morphological structure, since the postposition consists of one morpheme, while the verb consists of two, thus they are grammatical homonyms. The third one is the shortened variation *körötte*, the meaning of which also has the same meaning as the standard linguistic variation *körülötte* ‘around it’.

Formal archaisms in “Szondi két apródja” are e.g. *ifju* ‘young boy’, *kezökben* ‘in their hands’, *alant* ‘down’, *sírván* ‘cryly’, *ledűl* ‘falls down’, *haragunni* ‘to be angry’, *jertek* ‘come on’, *álgyu* ‘cannon’, *aranyt* ‘gold’. There are several interesting phenomena that can be brought to the attention of children in connection with these forms: 1. the exclusivity of the archaic version of the transgressive suffix (-*ván*); 2. *ifju* being a compound word (*i+fiú*) which can no longer be deduced from today’s *ifjú* variant; 3. morphological issues different from those of today, etc.

Also worth mentioning are the forms that, although not yet completely obsolete, students are no longer necessarily familiar with their meaning: *tusa* ‘butt’, *lant* ‘lute’ *orca* ‘cheek’. At this point, e.g. the ÉrtSz. – about which József Beke [cf. 2017b] made a comment with reference to the poem “Családi kör” (‘The Family Circle’) that the meaning of some of its words is inaccurately defined in the explanatory dictionary – can also be used in the process of interpretation. Such is the noun *nyugalom*, whose meaning in the poem is not ‘night’s rest, sleep’ as given in the dictionary, but the rest that follows completing the daily tasks. Interpretation problems also arise with relation to the verbs *kitesz* (which in the poem does not mean ‘puts something outside’ but ‘moves’), *zörget* (which in the poem means ‘creates’ a rattling sound by hitting objects together’ rather than ‘knocks’) or with *kinéz* (which in this case means ‘goes out and looks around’). These findings are very important because

they illustrate well that even words that are considered to have ordinary meanings can often only be interpreted with careful caution only, i.e., it is not just expressions that are incomprehensible at first reading that can be challenging for learners.

It is worthwhile to compare the past tense verbs of the two ballads as well, given that the change, simplification in the grammar used for past tense also poses difficulties in education. The “A walesi bárdok” only contains past tense forms – *ment* ‘went (3 sg.)’, *szállt* ‘flew (3 sg.)’, *tetted* ‘put (2 sg.)’ – with the affix *-t* which is also in use today, however, the “Szondi két apródja” shows examples of verbs in past tense that can be considered formal archaisms: *feljöve* ‘came up (3 sg.)’, *vítt* ‘fought (3 sg.)’, *harcola* ‘fought (3 sg.)’, *állta* ‘stood (3 sg.)’, *vevé* ‘took (3 sg.)’, *ragyog vala* ‘shone (3 sg.)’. An elaborating on the details of the function of the different past tense forms should be refrained from here, but some morphological phenomena that are important for students need to be pointed out: 1. in the case of the verbs *feljöve* and *vevé*, not only is the suffix marking tense, but also the verb stem variant (*jöv-*, *vev-*) archaic; 2. in the case of *vevé*, *-é* not only marks the tense but also the definite conjugation; 3. the past tense of the *vítt* form does not differ from the version used today, but the root – *ví-* – does. These phenomena are closely related, but while in the first two cases the *-v* stem has now been pushed out of language use, in the third case it is precisely the one that has become widespread. Discussing these morphological issues is important, because they can be used to expand students’ literary and grammatical knowledge at the same time.

It is important that the students independently find the archaisms along with the words unknown to them in the analyzed writings and then determine their meanings with the help of the AranySz. On the one hand, this develops their dictionary skills (which are very different in nature from searching the Internet), and on the other hand, expands their vocabulary and their knowledge about vocabulary changes.

5. Summary

In the first part of the study, the authors dealt with the style-reforming work by János Arany while in the second part the typology and stylistic function of archaisms and historicisms took place. The third part briefly introduced the antecedents of the AranySz. and then described in detail the dictionary written by József Beke himself. In the fourth part, the use of the AranySz. in education was presented by the authors with the help of some conceptual (*bárd*, *koboz*), semantic (*ige*) and formal archaisms (*tereh*, *megől*, *körötte*) used in the ballad “A walesi bárdok” compared to the conceptual (*kopja*), semantic (*marha*, *máglya*) and formal archaisms (*feljöve*, *vítt*, *harcola*, *állta* etc.) of “Szondi két apródja”.

The present study is the first part of a greater work, in which the authors will use the methods of contrastive stylistics to analyze the archaisms, historicisms and vernacular expressions in a few of János Arany’s historical ballads and their Estonian, Slovak and Russian literary translations.

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Lőrincz Gábor,

PhD in Linguistics, Assistant professor,
Department of Hungarian Language and Literature J. Selye University
3322, Bratislavská cesta, Komárno, 94501, Slovakia
e-mail: lorinczg@ujvs.sk

Lőrincz Julianna,

Habil., PhD in Linguistics, Associate professor,
Department of Hungarian Language and Literature J. Selye University
3322, Bratislavská cesta, Komárno, 94501, Slovakia
e-mail: jel2ster@gmail.com

Tóth Szilárd Tibor,

PhD in Linguistics, Estonian Lecturer,
University of Tartu Narva College,
2, Raekoja plats, Narva, 20307, Estonia,
e-mail: szilard.toth@ut.ee, tothsz@t-online.hu

Габор Леринц, Юлианна Леринц, Силард Тот

АРХАИЗМЫ ВЕНГЕРСКОГО ПОЭТА ЯНОША АРАНЯ И ТРУДНОСТИ ИХ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ

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Великий венгерский поэт Янош Арань (1817–1882), автор народных и исторических стихотворений и поэм, сыграл важную роль в развитии венгерского литературного языка и стиля и одновременно – в кодификации венгерского языка.

В первой части статьи предложено толкование и типология архаизмов и историзмов, а также рассмотрена стилистическая функция архаизмов и историзмов в литературе на примере произведений Яноша Араня.

Во второй части представлены издания, предшествующие словарю Араня, и словарь *Arany-szótár. Arany János költői nyelvének szókészlete* (Словарь Араня. Словарный состав поэтического языка Яноша Араня), составленный Йожефом Беке. Словарь был опубликован в 2017 г. в честь 200-летия со дня рождения поэта. В этой же части авторы, опираясь на словарь Араня, рассмотрели важнейшие архаические слова и выражения в балладе *Пажи Сонди* и *Уэльские барды*. Например, выявлены понятийные архаизмы в балладе *Пажи Сонди kelevéz* 'копье, пика', *korja* 'копье'; формальные архаизмы *állá* 'стоял', *feljőve* 'поднялся', *vitt* 'бился', *harcola* 'боролся', *hulla* 'упал' (в бою); семантические архаизмы *tarha* 'скот', *máglya* 'костер'.

В балладе *Уэльские барды* рассмотрены формальные архаизмы *tereh* 'груз, тяжесть', *megöl* 'убивает', *körötte* 'вокруг него'; понятийные архаизмы, т.е. историзмы *bárd* 'бард', *koboz* 'кобза'. Авторы указали и на трудности, возникающие у учащихся при анализе художественного языка произведений Араня, именно из-за его архаичности.



Статья является первой частью большой работы. Во второй статье предполагается сопоставить архаизмы и историзмы в оригинальных исторических балладах Араня и в их русских, словацких и эстонских художественных переводах с применением метода контрастивной стилистики.

Ключевые слова: архаизмы, понятийные, семантические и формальные архаизмы, историзмы, поэтический словарь.

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Леринц Габор,
доктор философии (PhD), языковедение,
старший преподаватель, кафедра венгерского языка и литературы,
Университет им. Яноша Шейе,
94501, Словакия, Комарно, Братиславская цеста, 3322
e-mail: loginczg@ujjs.sk

Леринц Юлианна,
хабил. доктор (PhD), языковедение,
доцент, кафедра венгерского языка и литературы,
Университет им. Яноша Шейе,
94501, Словакия, Комарно, Братиславская цеста, 3322
e-mail: jel2ster@gmail.com

Тот Силард Тибор,
доктор философии (PhD), языковедение
преподаватель эстонского языка,
Нарвский колледж, филиал Тартуского университета,
20307, Эстония, Нарва, Ратушная площадь, 2
e-mail: szilard.toth@ut.ee, tothsz@t-online.hu