The booklet is beautifully illustrated with black and white and colour reproductions from the Grimaldi books and their imitations. The frontispiece is from a coloured proof copy of the third edition of The Toilet, a moveable flap showing a porcelain jar labelled “The Late King’s Eye Water” behind which is a picture of a glass jar labelled “Benevolence.” The captions for the illustrations exist as a list at the beginning but are not all reproduced under the pictures themselves which makes for a lot of flipping back and forth and some confusion given the various dates, editions, and imitations involved in the story. Nor does the layout always do justice to the text. In at least three cases more space and better-organised space would have improved appearance and clarity: the virtues listed on two variant title-pages; the list of flap-down and flap-up texts in The Toilet; and the list of plates in A Suit of Armour for Youth. It is perhaps one of those occasions common enough these days where the printer has been only too happy to take camera-ready copy from the author’s computer files instead of undertaking a professional typesetting job. The result is some tight, cramped pages. But these are minor quibbles and barely detract from this unique bibliographical study.


These two volumes are a catalogue and annotated bibliography in English of part of the author’s collection of Hungarian materials including Hungarian publications and foreign works on Hungary. Horvath came to Canada at the age of 37 after the 1956 uprising in Hungary. He began to rebuild the library he had been forced to leave behind, concentrating on Hungarian history. The catalogues are a monument to his scholarship. Horvath claims that they make accessible to an English-speaking audience material previously available only in Hungarian, German, and Latin and that they will be valuable to students and researchers working in Central European history, culture, and literature.

The first volume, Books 1494-1819, deals in detail with 266 selected works from Horvath’s collection. Materials are listed chronologically
and then labelled by topic including Religion, Literature, History, Atlases and Map Collections, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Geography, Topography, Law, Travel, and Science. Each entry includes a small reproduction of the title-page – valuable since Horvath’s title-page transcriptions do not follow any conventional transcription format – and occasional illustrations of bindings, frontispieces, and other decorations. There is a selected bibliography of reference works at the end. The author’s annotations to the entries are personal and often very informative, including historical contexts, biographical materials, and notes on language. The illustrations are similarly well-chosen and even entertaining. There is more than one set of engravings showing how to construct a thatched roof from straw dipped in clay slip along with details of the tools to be used; several showing national dress; a pair of elegantly statuesque Hungarian Siamese twins; and an unfortunately very grainy reproduction of what must be an impressive engraving showing the Emperor Leopold visiting the Imperial rare book library in Vienna, with ladders reaching twenty shelves and more above floor level.

The second volume, *Maps & City Views 1493-1817*, describes Horvath’s map and city panorama collection. He includes his own maps summarising a thousand years of changing Hungarian political borders, together with a list of the various ever-changing place names. It must, indeed, be an impressive collection to see although the literally dozens of reproductions here seem little better than photocopies and are in almost every case disappointingly impossible to read. Again the materials are arranged chronologically and with a selected bibliography of reference works at the end.

What is not clear is whether any of these materials are available for scholarly research. As a personal collection and a life’s work they are an impressive and no doubt satisfying achievement and cataloguing them has clearly been a labour of love. Their true value may well depend on how they are used in the future.


This so-called multimedia essay claims to provide a general introduction to the history of the book. It was produced by the