“It is a premiss that National Széchényi Library is our most important collection” – interviews with Director-General Dávid Rózsa

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An interview with Dávid Rózsa was aired on the Hungarian Catholic Radio on May 20, 2020, while on May 21, an interview with the new Director-General of the Hungarian national library, appointed in March 2020, was published on the cultural portal entitled Hajónapló *(Logbook*).



An interview with Dávid Rózsa was aired on the Hungarian Catholic Radio on May 20, 2020, while on May 21, an interview with the new Director-General of the Hungarian national library, appointed in March 2020, was published on the cultural portal entitled Hajónapló *(Logbook*). In March, Hungarian portal Kultúra.hu also published a long interview with Dávid Rózsa on his plans as Director-General of National Széchényi Library.

In the interview aired on the ***Hungarian Catholic Radio*** [1], Dávid Rózsa focused on the responses NSZL gave to the pandemic situation, pointing out that currently the Hungarian national library operates as a “digital content factory”, serving as a “real IT center for the Hungarian libraries”, “which passed particularly well in the last two months” as regards the switch to telework. In the broadcast, which took approximately 30 minutes, he talked about the various blog series, including Trianon 100 [2] – the fate of Hungarian monuments in the Carpathian Basin, a highly popular film content entitled Dance around Hungary online! [3], he mentioned the publication of the 20,000th volume [4] of the Hungarian Electronic Library, the work related to the web archive [5] and the compilation entitled The Paths of Unfolding [6] (in Hungarian), providing a survey of the international pandemic situation.
The radio interview can be listened to at the Hungarian Catholic Radio, radio program under the title Kapcsolatban [1] (In Connection). It was on air on May 20, 2020, 11:04. The interview starts at 4:28.

In the interview published on the cultural portal entitled Hajónapló *(Logbook*), under the title The Libraries cannot Remain Islands ***[7]*** (in Hungarian), the issue of the current state of the Hungarian national library was raised, and Dávid Rózsa said, among others, the following:

“It is a premiss that National Széchényi Library is our most important collection, it is the memory of the nation, a gathering place of extraordinary values. This statement is also valid for the library staff, as the institution has accumulated exceptional intellectual capacity. At the same time, we have to be aware of the fact, that despite the exceptional endowments, the library does not operate as efficiently as it should. There are partly financial reasons for this. It is well-known that salaries are hurtfully low, so the retention capacity of the library is low. All these difficulties can be expressed in numbers. However, there is another group of problems that cannot be expressed in numbers. Behind performance that is less visible than desired or possible, there is the outdated operation of the organization.”

The interview **[8]**, which appeared on the portal entitled Kultúra.hu a few days after Dávid Rózsa’s appointment in March, focused on the issue of moving the Hungarian national library to a new location, an issue that has been on the agenda for years now.

“International examples show that a national library can be built in roughly five years. Five years must be enough for preparation to move into a location. The move-in may take another year when the new building is ready.”

Dávid Rózsa also pointed out that the major task ahead of him in connection with creating a vision of the new building is to represent the interests of NSZL, to display the needs of the national library and, together with his colleagues, to prepare the institution for moving to a new location. He also added that the issue of moving in a new building was closely related to the concept of the House of Hungarian Language, the essence of which is that

[…] ”several institutions with similar profiles would move under the same roof, so that they could operate in an integrated way, yet preserve their own profiles, in order to serve their users including readers, researchers and museum visitors as fully as possible.”

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Links:
[1] https://www.katolikusradio.hu/musoraink/adas/1/521971?fbclid=IwAR2NbdZMD0j7kjH76ZuiTmk0QCrUpKIFPKyKUzOt3OQ6j4n-b-X6u7Pi8_w
[2] https://nemzetikonyvtar.blog.hu/2020/05/05/het_videki_millenniumi_emlekmu
[3] http://www.oszk.hu/en/news/dance-around-hungary-online
[4] http://www.oszk.hu/hirek/mek-20000
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