

Many thanks for this kind invitation which allows me to say a couple of words about Ferenc Kiefer, a great scholar, a great man.

I have many nice memories of my relationship with Ferenc, but, due to the five minute time limit I have, I will remember just a couple of them.

Many years ago, there was an agreement between the University of Venice and the University of Budapest that included an exchange of scholars. Irene Vogel (working at the time in Venice) and I applied, and we were selected. So, one day we boarded a train in Venice, went through extensive border controls, and eventually arrived in Budapest - a city unknown to both of us at that time. There was nobody at the station to greet us. In fact, there seemed to be nobody at the station at all. After an understandable moment of disorientation, we started to look for someplace to stay. We did not have a telephone number for our counterpart in Budapest, and there were no smartphones at the time. I do not remember how, but we finally found accommodations in the locker rooms of a stadium! And I also do not remember how we managed to find the telephone number of Kiefer's, who since neither of us actually knew him personally - but just for his reputation and work, especially on generative morphology. But somehow, we managed to call Kiefer, and we explained the embarrassing situation. In a very short time, Ferenc arrived, and everything changed. He took us at the Academy, where we met very interesting people, including Istvan Kenesei (a linguist we both still have contact with). Ferenc invited us to give talks, which we did gladly (I spoke about morphology and Irene about phonology). And... we even got payed. We were amazed, especially after the questionable situation at our arrival. Anyway, we

stayed, I do not remember how many days, in Budapest (enough anyway to appreciate Vörösmarty tér and Gerbaud!), and then we left without meeting anybody from the inviting university. No one!

So, it was thanks to Kiefer that a serious diplomatic crisis between Venice and Budapest was avoided!...

We have been very lucky, however, because from that moment on, we all remained in contact for work, including invitations to various linguistics meetings in Budapest, and for friendship, recalling the unforgettable house from which one was able to see “il bel Danubio blu”. The kindness Ferenc offered as a host was moving. And I always sensed a special feeling, a hidden but deep and mutual connection and respect between us.

To conclude, I highly appreciated Ferenc both as a person and as a scholar. His work has been substantial for Hungarian and general linguistics. We all, scholars and friends, miss him a lot.

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