

## Foreword

The Szekler-Magyar (Hungarian) Rovás script is part of the universal cultural heritage of humanity. It is the intellectual product of an ancient civilization, produced by the Magyars (Hungarians) and their ancestors in ancient times. Its origin, development and relation to other forms of writing is still the subject of scientific research; a multitude of theories exist among researchers and users of the Rovás script. It is, however, backed by hard evidence that the 9<sup>th</sup> century Magyars used Rovás script extensively in their language, which permits the supposition of a usage stretching back for several centuries before that.

As in most of the countries in Europe, the Latin language and characters also predominated in official government and church written communications within the Kingdom of Hungary, beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, since then the use of Rovás script has remained in continuous use in parts of the Magyar-speaking areas. It was used by simple shepherds, so called Szekler woodcutters, through to the nobility and clergy; moreover, during some periods of history, it served as the basis for secret writing. Rovás writing has not only weathered the storms of the Middle Ages and subsequent historical periods but, during all that time, it developed continuously. In the past few decades of recent history, having reached unprecedented levels of popularity, it has even been adapted to the needs of our time. Today books, periodicals and web pages appear with text in Szekler-Magyar Rovás script; works of art, public signs and industrial designs make use of it; tens of thousands of students are learning this national form of writing, thanks to dedicated teachers.

The growing numbers of those who understand and appreciate this ancient art has grown above a hundred thousand, which has necessitated the creation of modern rules of usage. Parts of this process are concerned with the consistency of character forms, modernization of the precepts of writing and technical standardization - carried out by the users of the Rovás script, as a group in much the same manner as their ancestors, simultaneously both guarding and developing this form of writing. This book represents a chapter in that dedicated tradition-guarding vocation: the Community of Szekler-Magyar Rovás Writers gathered in Gödöllő, Hungary on October 4, 2008 at the 'Alive Rovás' conference to bring this national writing of Magyar-speakers into the computer age.

Of all the written forms of language in Europe, living and in actual use, only the Szekler-Magyar Rovás form is not part of the UNICODE standard, which would make its general use possible in information technology. Hence, the Community of Szekler-Magyar Rovás Writers, organized in groups and over the Internet, under the leadership of Dr. Gábor Hosszú, has officially presented the standard proposal N3527, detailed in the book. It is the firm goal of the community to get this ancient writing form accepted into the standards with universal concurrence as quickly as possible. To this end, your support, dear reader, is solicited.

The authors of the book feel that the Szekler-Magyar Rovás writing is a magical gift from the ancestors, a mystical heritage for subsequent generations, which carries with it the responsibility to treat it with respect and veneration, and to pass it on with suitable modifications as required by the age. This is especially timely today, as the range of concepts and ideas encapsulated in this ancient communication form, so closely intertwined with every area of Magyar language and culture, may well be the path to the yearned-for Magyar intellectual rebirth.