After waiting expectantly, at last we can read the first and second volume of Sigmund Freud's and Sándor Ferenczi's Correspondence in French, English and German. The first volume appeared in French in 1992 and was soon translated into English, German, Italian, and Portuguese in Brazil. The second volume was published in French, German and English in 1996. The third and last volume of the Correspondence is slated to appear in French in 1998, and with a bit a luck, we can also read the whole Correspondence in Hungarian sometime in the next century.

Ferenczi and Freud exchanged more than twelve hundred letters between 1908 and 1933. Freud, as we know, was a well-nigh compulsive letter writer, and, next to Goethe, Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka, one of the most prolific of the great epistolers writing in German. Freud scholars have identified over ten thousand letters of Freud's. A considerable number of these were published some time ago, for instance, the letters he wrote to his friend Wilhelm Flies as a young man, and those to his colleague and later rival, C. G. Jung. His letters to Ferenczi remained largely unpublished until now, though Ernest Jones made use of them in his celebrated biography of Freud, albeit somewhat tendentiously.

Ferenczi too, was an avid letter writer. His correspondence with the German physician and psychoanalyst, Georg Groddeck, has been published,
as have the letters he exchanged with the American psychoanalyst James Putnam. The vast majority of the letters Ferenczi wrote, however, were addressed to Freud, and, with a few exceptions, appear for the first time.

Volume 1 contains 483 letters that the two men exchanged between 1908 and 1914. Volume 2 contains 828 letters written between 1914 and 1924; while Volume 3 will embrace the period from 1924 to 1933, the year of Ferenczi’s death. Volume 1 starts out with a letter of Ferenczi’s dated January 18, 1908, thanking Freud for agreeing to receive him, unknown as he was, during Ferenczi’s imminent trip to Vienna. The volume ends with a letter of Freud’s of June 28, 1914, in which he discusses a number of professional issues after commenting on the news event of the day, the assassination in Sarajevo, which he notes, is likely to have consequences that are “utterly unpredictable.” Between the two dates, the two men generally exchanged letters once a week. At times, of course, they corresponded less frequently; at other times, they wrote each other on a daily basis, each replying to the other’s letter immediately. (Today’s postal service would hard-ly be partner to exchanges of such clockwork regularity; in those days, how-ever, letters got from one capital of the Monarchy to the other in a day.)

Publishing a correspondence of such magnitude is in any case a monu-mental undertaking. The story of this particular edition, as told by André Haynal in the Introduction to Volume 1, goes back six decades, to the year Ferenczi died, and involves a multitude of participants. In 1939, Gizella Ferenczi, his widow — and a central figure of the letters published in Volumes 1 and 2 — entrusted Ferenczi’s papers (including the letters received from Freud, and the manuscript of The Clinical Diary 1932) to Michael Balint, Ferenczi’s pupil, who was emigrating to England. She enjoined him to safeguard the documents until it would be possible to publish them. Shortly afterwards, Gizella Ferenczi herself had to flee Hungary. Abroad, she con-tacted Anna Freud, Freud’s daughter and heir, asking her to give herself and her daughters, Elma and Magda, the rights to the Ferenczi letters in her possession. Anna Freud agreed to do so, on condition that Balint get custody of those letters as well. Though in theory everyone involved agreed that the Correspondence should be published, Balint, Anna Freud and Fe-

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7 For Michael Balint and his work, see Márta Fülöp, “The Miracle of Healing,” Budapest Review of Books, 2, no.4 (1992), 149-55.