



MAGYAR STUDIES OF AMERICA

# Magyar News Online

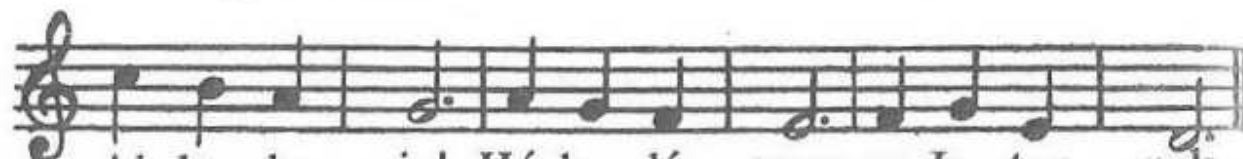
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April 2021 Issue 153

## Krisztus e napon feltámadott



1. Föl - tá - madt Krisz - tus e na - pon,  
2. Hogy min - den em - ber vi - gad - jon.



Al - le - lu - ja! Há - la lé - gyen az Is - ten - nek.  
Al - le - lu - ja! Há - la lé - gyen az Is - ten - nek.

Föltámadt Krisztus e napon,  
Hogy minden ember vigadjon.  
Értünk halált ki szenvedett,  
S megváltott minden lelkeket.  
Mennek a szent nők sírjához,  
Kenetet visznek Krisztushoz,  
Fényes szép angyalt látnak ott,  
S hallanak boldog szózatot.  
Ti félénk asszony-emberek,  
Galileába menjeteek.  
Tudják meg az apostolok,  
Hogy az Úr él s feltámadott.  
Megjelent ő szent Anyjának,  
Kesergő szent Magdolnának.  
Megjelent aztán Péternek,  
Megjelent majd a híveknek.  
Húsvéti boldog lélekkel,  
Dicsérvük Istent énekkel.  
Dicsőség Szentháromságnak,  
Adjunk ma hálát Urunknak.

Alleluja! Hála légyen az Istennek.  
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## March 15th in Wallingford, CT

EPF

*Commemoration of March 15th, 1848 took place on Sunday, the 14th.*

Heavy snow was falling as I approached the Wallingford exit, and I was glad I had an umbrella in the car. Fortunately, there was a parking spot on the street, not too far from the hall, and I gladly pulled in.

The Reverend Attila Tóbiás opened the program with a prayer. Following the American National Anthem, and words of welcome by the President of the Club, Ákos Horváth, Rev. Tóbiás recited Petőfi's *Nemzeti dal*.

Next on the program was a surprise: two musical segments were presented by Hungarian actress Athina Papadimitriou, recipient of the Jászai Mari Prize (2019), who was visiting from Budapest. She has performed at various theaters in Budapest and is currently affiliated with the Budapest Operetta Theater. In addition, she has been seen in numerous films, TV films and has several CD's and a DVD to her credit. Her presentations were warmly received.

Barbara Kapi and Kenneth Wargo of the Club's Board of Directors offered a remembrance of Miklós Janitsáry, a humanitarian adventurer and Vietnam veteran related to Kenneth. Barbara encouraged people to support the almost 103-year old Club which, she said

"had always been a home away from home ... The major focuses ... have always been family, faith, food, and especially education."

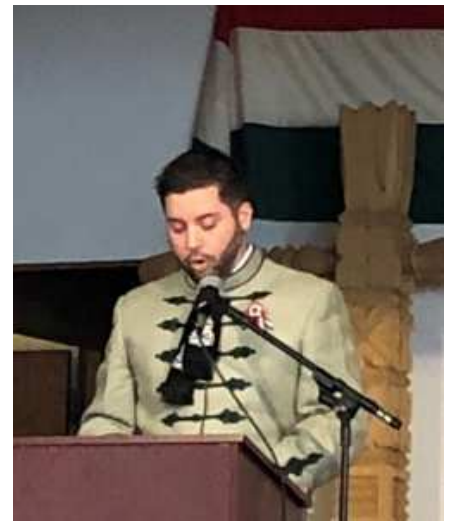
The main speech was offered by Peter B. Nagy, Counselor of National Cohesion from New York, who emphasized that respect for freedom, responsibility for, and defense of our thousand-year old culture are the main goals of the Hungarian government. Despite historic losses, we were always victorious, because we always survived. In Hungary, the seeds of freedom find fertile soil, and we are happy only when we are free and independent.

Irén Fehér, well-known among Hungarian communities in Connecticut for her wonderful poetry recitals at various commemorative events, recited Petőfi's poem "*Magyar vagyok*".

The program closed with the Hungarian National Anthem.

In the name of Consul General István Pásztor, Counselor Peter B. Nagy then presented Board Member Dr. Balázs Somogyi with a Certificate of Honor, in recognition of his dedication and commitment to the preservation and nurture "of the values of Hungarian cultural heritage in the United States of America." It was presented "in remembrance of the famous Hungarian Nobel Prize winner biochemist Albert Szent-Györgyi on the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death."

Refreshments were available afterwards.



B. Nagy Péter;  
Athina Papadimitriou,  
Certificate of Honor for  
Balázs Somogyi

# A Date in Hungarian History: April 30th 1901

István Arato

*The first Hungarian film, "A táncz" (The Dance), a black-and-white silent film made in 1901, will have its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary on April 30, 2021. (In those days, the letter "c" was spelled "cz".)*



*Scene from the third version of the csárdás*

The beginning of Hungarian cinema dates back to 1896, when a work of the Lumière brothers was shown in Budapest on May 10<sup>th</sup>. A month later, the first Hungarian theater opened on Andrassy út. This first site did not become very popular, and unfortunately closed shortly. The first film shooting was also in 1896, commemorating the Millennium Celebration, the march at Buda Castle. But the first deliberately produced Hungarian film, containing dramatized scenes, did not come along until 1901. It was called "A táncz" ("The Dance").

The movie, directed by Zsitkovszky Béla, a projectionist, is based on the idea of the writer Pekár Gyula. He had just returned from a trip to Spain, had written about his trip and presented his experiences with a series of moving pictures. Based on this, the Minister of Education, Molnár Viktor, who also happened to be the Director of the recently established *Uránia Tudományos Színház* (Uránia Scientific Theater), asked him to develop educational programs with projected pictures.

Pekár's presentation on Spain was a huge success. It was followed by a series of 10 programs, of which "A táncz" became the third, describing the history of dance.

According to the National Film Institute, "Pekár Gyula decided to illustrate his lecture on the history of dance from Antiquity to the 20th century with his film. He converted a projector into a camera and used this to take the first moving images on the roof terrace of Uránia. Those involved in this film shoot were leading actors of the age, including Blaha Lujza, Márkus Emilia, Hegedüs Gyula, and ballerinas of the Opera House."

Members of the *Nemzeti Színház* (National Theater) enthusiastically participated in the shooting. The Opera's ballet master rehearsed the dances with the 36-member ballet corps lent for the occasion, to the music provided by the orchestra of the *Uránia Színház* and the Radics Béla orchestra.

The film is around twenty minutes long; Zsitkovszky made twenty-four 1-2 minute cinematographs.

Divided into three acts, the movie relates many different dance variations, beginning with ancient Greek mythology and Salome's dance, the latter being danced by Márkus Emilia. The second act presented 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century Italian, Spanish and French dances.

The third act began with a Japanese dance, since Fedák Sári was, at the time, acting a *geisha* in a theater production. Her three-minute performance was added to the film only later, in May of 1901.

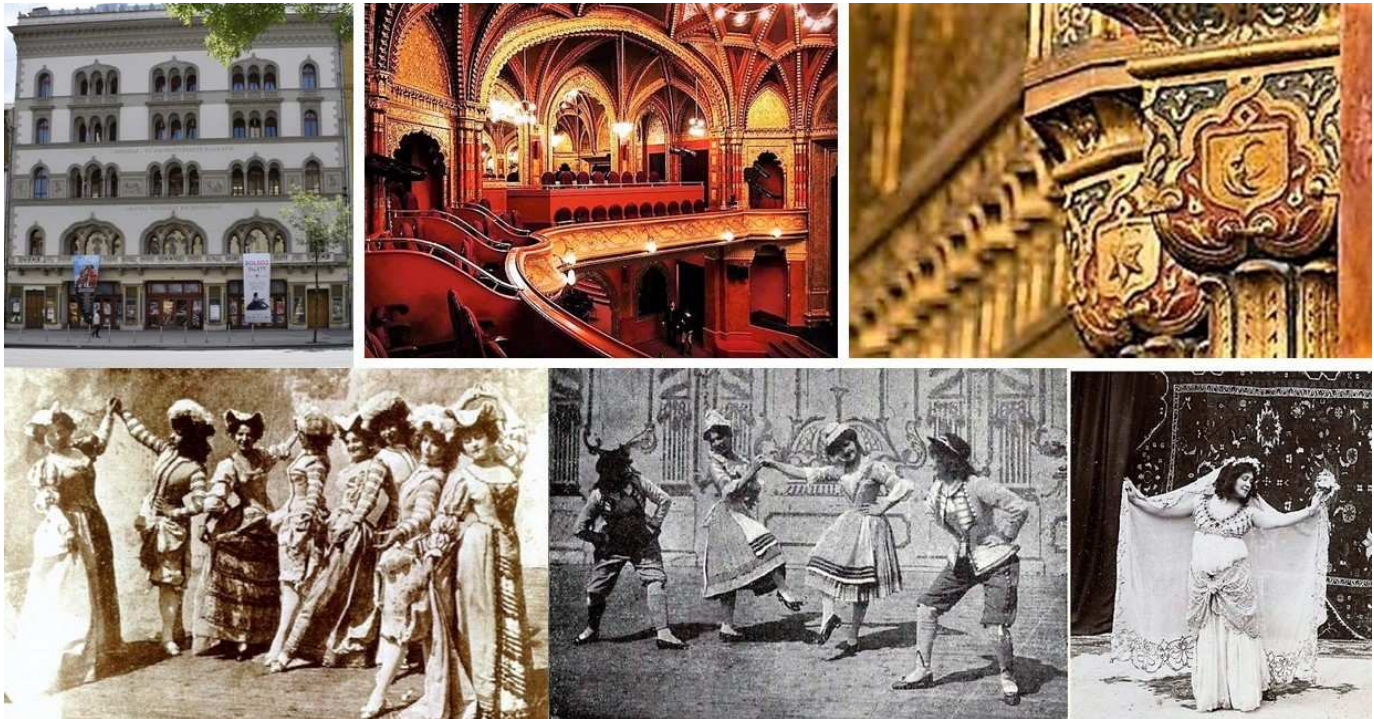
The rest of the third act showed 19<sup>th</sup> century (contemporary at the time!) dances from an assortment of foreign ethnic groups, with three foreign film inserts, and presented a group of Hungarian dances.

The end, most interestingly, presents three variations of the famous Hungarian *csárdás*: The first was a "cabbage-treading" satirical form, as danced at upper class balls. The second version was a fiery Hungarian *csárdás* and finally, the real one, a dance performed by the village people, in contrast to the first version.

An accident that happened on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1901 destroyed all Pekár's work, jeopardizing the first Hungarian movie. A fundraiser was undertaken to collect money with public help. All the recordings were remade, and despite the accident, the film opened as planned on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

According to Director György Ráduly, the Hungarian National





Top: Uránia Színház, street view; interior; detail; Bottom: scenes from the different sections of the film.

Film Institute would be able to find a lost movies commemorates its annual Hungarian Film Day on that date. This year, the Institute will also introduce the research program for recapturing Hungarian film history. Approximately one-third of all Hungarian films produced in the last 120 years were lost or vanished. Unfortunately, the film "A táncz" is one of the many films that have been lost or are missing, and the program will be an excellent help to research them; so far, only some pictures and posters of the famous Hungarian first movie have been found.

The National Film Institute Director, György Ráduly, said that it would be able to find lost movies, through a new research program which will store recaptured Hungarian film history in digital archives.

Not many years after the debut of the movie "The Dance", film screenings became very enjoyable in coffee shops around Budapest, and

lots of movie theaters were available by 1911.

*István Arato, son of Hungarian immigrant parents, was born in São Paulo, Brazil where he was a journalist. He came to the US in 1996 and attends the Hungarian School sponsored by Magyar Studies of America in Fairfield, CT. He is a member of the Magyar News Editorial Board.*

## Úr – Asszony – Katona

Dr. Bobula Ida

*Dr. Bobula Ida was one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneers who devoted her life to researching Hungarian-Sumerian relations. She found that over 4,000 Hungarian words can be traced back to their Sumerian origins. This is the text of one of her articles. EPF*

A dear old friend has written me that of my themes, the public is mostly interested in the language

similarities between Sumerian and Hungarian. Let me publish one or two of the several thousand I keep in my boxes.

I have chosen three such Hungarian words of ancient origin. Why these? Because I like them, and feel that behind them lies the most distinguished world outlook, the highest art of living. Its late descendant is the Western spirit of knight-hood. I believe there will be among my readers those who will also regard these three words in the same way.

Let us take first the name of **katona**. It sounds peculiar, entirely different from the English **soldier**, the French **soldat**, and their relatives in other European languages. But why? The words **katona** and **katonaság** appear quite early in ancient handwritten (Hungarian) literary records. According to Bárczi Géza (who represents the official viewpoint of Hungarian linguistics), the origin of the first word is unknown, and the sec-



A row of warriors on the Standard of Ur

ond is unexplained. Bárczi does note the possibility of these Hungarian words having been derived from the Old Church Slavonic **katund** – “camp” – or the Byzantine **katuna** – “baggage” – (Magyar Szófejtő Szótár, Bp. 1941, Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda).

I leave it to the reader, who knows Hungarian history, to weigh what the chances are of the name of **katona** to have been borrowed from the disintegrating Byzantine empire, or especiall from Old Church Slavonic...

If the Hungarian ancestors had taken over anything, they would have taken over one of the variants of the word **soldato** that was known throughout all of Europe. They did too, in the form of **zsoldos**, except that our language expresses the vast difference between a **zsoldos** and a **katona**: the **zsoldos** fights for money, the **katona** does not.

So where shall we search for the origin of the word **katona**? There where, for the first time in the world, they depicted the regular fighting troops in a **kötelék** (an army formation). On the mosaic work, the Standard of Ur – currently in the British Museum – which came to light from the royal tomb of the city of Ur, may be seen Sumerian soldiers marching in closed ranks, wearing leopardskin capes and with such blue eyes and hawk-noses as may sometimes still be found in Transylvania, and among more or less pure-blooded Hungarian families. They fought in army formation, for God and country, and did not loot individually, like rob-

bers.

The exact equivalent of the Hungarian verb **köt** is the Sumerian verb **kad**. Their meaning is identical. The verb also has the form **kat** (A. Deimel, Sumerisch Akkadisches Glossar, Rome, the Papal Institute for Biblical Research, 1934, pp. 140 and 143): “*Binden, festfügen*” (to bind, to attach tightly). In the Sumerian language, the same symbol frequently expresses the verb as well as the related noun. For example, the Hungarian equivalent of the **lib** symbol is not only **lép** (takes a step), but also **láb** (foot or leg). So it is probable that the Sumerian **kat** also meant army unit. To this may have been added the Sumerian word **unu**, which according to Gadd’s transliteration meant “dwelling” (A Sumerian Reading Book, Oxford, 1924), so that **katona** may have derived from **kat+unu**, meaning “abiding in army formation”. Not a **zsoldos**, and not a robber! A Hungarian **katona**.

We can believe that the Byzantines and Slavs borrowed words from the Sumerian, with many metatheses. But the Hungarians did not learn from these; they received their concepts and words from the source, from the Sumerian, the world’s first known civilization.

Of our word **asszony**, Bárczi writes that we borrowed it from the Alans, and quotes the Caucasian relatives of the Alans, the Ossetians, among whom **achsín** means “lady”. But from where did the Ossetians get this honorific title? They probably learned it from an older cultured

people. The linguistic heritage of two great people may be involved here: the Sumerians and the Elamites who were neighbors and influenced each other for a long time. Among them we find two words that sound similar: the Sumerian “*gasaan*”, meaning “queen”, and the Elamite “*usan*”, meaning “goddess”.

We need to mention that matriarchal traditions still survived among the Elamites in historic times: the throne was handed down through the female line. It is certain that our word “**asszony**” started out toward the West with great prestige and its meaning lost from its rank and narrowed in meaning due to local influence slowly, over the course of difficult centuries, until by our times it merely means a married woman. That this is not the essence at all may be seen from the fact that Hungarian convents had “*fejedelemasszonyok*” (lady superiors), and in the St. Margit (of Hungary) legend a “Holy Virgin Asszony Margit”. The word “*kisasszony*” never meant “a small, married woman”, but a “young domina”.

Even our word **úr**, this many-layered, many-colored word of many meanings has also diminished, and been bequeathed to us with narrowed meaning and prestige.

**Úr** is a very ancient root word of ours. It carries with it the concept of height, greatness, strength. The older name of the large Mount Ararat was **Urartu**. It meant a huge man, one who uses his strength for good. The exact equivalent of the



Sumerian **ur** is the Hungarian word **őr** (guard).

This is made indisputable by the fact that the word was written in the earliest times with the dog's head pictograph. The dog was the faithful "little guard". The lion too was an **úr**, "the large guard".

Royal palaces of ancient times were guarded by tamed lions, later by stone lions. This is why the lion is a royal symbol: it is the great guard of the king and of the country. The city of Ur, the great, ancient Mesopotamian center was also a guard post. Its name was always written with the hieroglyph of the stylized dog's head.

What does the **úr** guard? Everything that is beautiful, good and holy, but is in need of protection. First of all, the goddess, her picture, her sanctuary, her temple, her city. Ancient Sumerian kings names were: Ur-Bau, Ur-Gula, Ur-Nanan, Ur-Nanshe. Bau and the others were goddesses. By his chosen name, the king did not want to indicate that he wished to rule over the goddess, but that he was the protector of the goddess, her guardian, her army, her military strength. To be this, he had to be strong, powerful, he had to be an **úr**. "Baba-mu," this is how king Ur-Baba addresses his goddess in the memorial inscription in her temple, "My Baba, I have built up your sanctuary."

We hear a late echo of the ancient concept in the ancient Hungarian hymn about Szt. László: "Chosen warrior of the Virgin Mary". We have to understand the ancient Sumerian way of thinking, so the many different, even contradictory concepts the word **úr** can express do not cause us difficulties. It can



*The so-called "Standard of Ur", in the British Museum*

mean something lofty, the top of something – which is where the Hungarian word **orom** comes from. At the same time, it can mean pedestal, foundation – the strength on which one can build.

The meaning of words is modified, changed over centuries. In ancient Hungarian texts we can read about "a király urai" – the lords of the king. These did not rule over the king, they were the king's guards. No one likes being deprived of freedom and having someone rule over him/her. Nevertheless in Hungary, a country beaten by many storms, very often the *zsoldos* (mercenaries), *condottieres* and other unworthies lorded it over the people for a long time.

The slowly distorted concepts led people's thinking astray, and disturbed even the pure beauty of the ancient custom when a Hungarian *asszony* would call her husband **uram**. He is not her tyrant, and commander, but her life-long **őr** (guard), whom she respects and honors like the queen respects her general. And he calls her *Babám* (my Baba), *Asszonyom* (my asszony), goddess, queen. This is what makes earthly life beautiful, this is that high art of living which the Hungarians

brought from very far, perhaps from the city of Ur, and preserved for a long time. It is not entirely lost, there will be those who carry it forward: **katonák**, **urak** and **asszonyok**.

*(Originally published in the October 1979 issue of KRÓNKA, Toronto, Canada)*

*Dr. Bobula Ida (1900-1981) was born in Budapest and obtained a doctorate in History, summa cum laude, from the Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetem in 1923. She then came to America for post-graduate work at Bryn Mawr College and Western Reserve University. She returned to Budapest in 1929, becoming the first woman officer at the Ministry of Education, then first lady professor at Debrecen University, Director of Sarolta College, and Chief Librarian at the USIS Library in Budapest. In 1947, she returned to the US., and soon worked at the Library of Congress. She then taught at a college in Maine, and finally in Gaffney, S.C. Dr. Bobula published numerous articles in Hungarian, French and English, as well as nine books on the Sumerian-Hungarian connection.*

## Fedák Sári

Olga Vállay Szokolay

*Unlike the names of persons in science, literature and history, performers' fame is not necessarily remembered from the pre-motion-picture world of drama. Only the limited stratum of privileged ones had access and a chance to frequent theaters. And only the most outstanding talents' names survived oblivion.*

*For baby boomers and their successors, it is almost inconceivable that motion pictures were once only black-and-white, and silent. Until 1927, a piano player provided sound for movies. Color entered the screen only in the late 1930's.*

*The first Hungarian motion picture, "A táncz" ("The Dance", see elsewhere in this issue) was made at the turn of the century and came out in 1901.*

*Our heroine, born in 1879, followed in the footsteps of two memorable giants, Jászai Mari and Blaha Lujza, nicknamed "the nation's nightingale" by the writer Jókai Mór. They all straddled the advent of the movies, but their fame was established by their live performances.*

*Yet, a name that echoes in the memory of most Hungarians who lived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is indisputably that of **Fedák Sári**, known by a familial and familiar moniker, **Zsazsa** (obvious precursor of the similarly risqué Gábor variety a generation or two later).*

She was born at Beregszász (now Berehove, Ukraine) in



Fedák Sári

1879. Her mother was Kókey Emilia, her father a chief medical officer, Fedák István. A conservative gentleman, he initially objected to his daughter's theatrical plans but ultimately agreed to Sári's enrollment in Rákosi Szidi's drama school in Budapest, from where she graduated in 1899. After 1900, she played at Pozsony, as well as in various theaters in Budapest.

In 1901, wearing Japanese clogs, she performed in the first Hungarian silent movie, "A táncz" ("The Dance"), whose copy was destroyed.

She enjoyed her first successes at the Népszínház. Nobody seems to know why, but bizarrely juxtaposed to Elizabethan theatre where men played female roles, an important point of Fedák's career was the title role of Huszka Jenő's "Bob herceg" (Prince Bob). She was a huge sensation in playing a man's role. We should remember that in those days, women did not wear pants; only the most courageous women wore culotte-like bloomers, mostly for hiking. And cross-dressing was not in vogue.

Encouraged by the great triumph of "Bob herceg", in 1904 Zsazsa

was again cast, and enjoyed perhaps her greatest success ever: playing another man in the title role of the musical drama "János Vitéz" (John the Hero) by Kacsóh Pongrác, produced at the Király Színház.

By her own account: "The Király theatre was in bad shape those days. I lived at Rákosi Szidi's, the mother of the theater's owner, Beőthy László. She worried constantly about the finances of her son's theater. Whenever I came home from rehearsals, she badgered me: 'Will this be a success? Wouldn't it be nice if it could run for 25 shows?'. I could not appease her. Then, at the first rehearsal with costumes and orchestra, Aunt Szidi came down to the theater. There were about 30 others in the audience. Then I sang the theme song, and the fate of the show was decided. Everyone in the audience cried, and I cried with them. Beőthy came up the stage and said: 'This piece will run 100 times!' Mama Szidi doubled it: '200 times!' They were both wrong. I alone played it 574 times!"

For whatever reason, the audience loved seeing the two women, Fedák and Medgyaszay Vilma, as a couple in János Vitéz.

In the same year, an obviously impressed judge bought Zsazsa a mansion in the country, which even today is open to the public.

To escape being blamed for driving her manager into suicide by pressing him for an unduly high salary, Fedák fled abroad in 1907. Having a command of six languages, she traveled to and played in Berlin, Vienna and Prague, and returned to Budapest



*Top: Fedák as "János Vitéz"; Molnár Ferenc; Fedák Sári the diva. Bottom: Zsazsa with*

singing voice was far from top quality, her *personal magic* rendered her a gigantic star on the operetta stage, starring in works of Lehár, Jacobi, Fényes Szabolcs and others. *Fedák Sári became a household name*, to the extent of being entered into

the bidding of a popular card game *ulti*: double, redouble, re-redouble, Fedák Sári ...

She painfully needed to be the center of the stage, of attention, of activity. As an outstanding raconteuse with a great sense of

humor, she always earned that. Yet, in the token of extremes – a classic characteristic of thespians – when she was alone at home, she often cried. While she was her own most severe critic, she resented negative comments by others.

only in May of 1910. Although by professional standards, her



After the start of World War I, Sári volunteered as a nurse. As a deviation from the horrors of the war, she made her home the venue of weekly meetings of artists. One of the regulars was the playwright Molnár Ferenc (see MNO, Dec. 2017). They had known each other for years in a rather public, loud, and stormy liaison.

During the war, Fedák incited against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, then, during the *Tanácsköztársaság* (Hungarian Soviet Republic), she campaigned to recruit for the Red Army. After the crushing of that regime, she fled to Vienna where she was recognized and briefly imprisoned. Due to her involvement in that infamous reign, in 1920 and 1921 she could only play abroad, albeit with great success. By then her flame with Molnár Ferenc faded, especially since he met and fell in love with the decades-younger actress, Darvas Lili. However, Zsazsa requested that Molnár marry *her* (not Darvas!) in a “farewell wedding” – as their contemporaries characterized the event. In October 1922, Molnár and Fedák tied the knot.

After the happy event, Molnár almost instantly moved in with Darvas Lili (!!!) but, in the strangest “ménage-à-trois” form, he always appeared at public occasions with his now legal wife, Fedák. Their marriage lasted four years. They divorced in 1926 so that he could now marry Darvas. And all this was happening in the public eye, in the style of today’s tabloids.

During the 1920’s and 1930’s, Zsazsa even played in the United States, in cities with large Hungarian populations. Her memoirs were published in 1928. In the late 1930’s and the pre-World War II years, she played in some motion pictures, such as “*Mámi*” (1937), “*Hazafelé*” (“Homebound”, 1940) and “*Tokaji aszú*” (1941). By then

she was in her 60’s, which used to signal the end of divas’ careers. She could and would have survived that, but her windmill political attitudes backfired for her.

As a correspondent of the Nazi German radio station *Donausender* of Vienna, she took the position, in 1944, that the war should be continued. Thus, after WW II, the Hungarian People’s Tribunal condemned the formerly “Red” actress as a Nazi enthusiast and glorifier of the Arrow Cross leader Szálasi. She was sentenced to two years in prison, which was reduced to eight months. After that, Fedák was not allowed to return to the theater for three years. She purchased a house at the village of Nyáregyháza, where she moved with her maid. Yet, the farmers’ cooperative soon requisitioned the nicely restored house; they were evicted and had to move to a run-down, one-room house at the end of town.

Once again, in 1954, the director of the Déryné Theatre invited her to play the title role of the comedy “*Nagymama*” (“Grandmother”). Fedák fervently planned on returning to the stage, but she was prevented by a stroke before the opening. She passed away in May 1955, in Budapest. Her grave is at the Farkasrét cemetery.

We could say “*Sic transit gloria mundi*” (Thus passes worldly glory). But while other mortals die without a trace, the memorable ones keep making you laugh and cry, perhaps forever.

*Olga Vállay Szokolay is an architect and Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College, CT after three decades of teaching. She is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.*

## French Salad / *Francia saláta*

*This is a refreshing salad to go with the Easter ham. Using fresh ingredients, it is popular in Hungary.*

### Ingredients:

1 lb frozen mixed vegetables  
3 Tbs mayonnaise  
1 Tbs mustard  
4 Tbs sour cream, salt, white pepper  
1 apple cut into small pieces  
1 pickle cut into small pieces

Put the vegetables into salted boiling water, and cook about 10-12 minutes.

Let them cool. Then add the apple and pickle.

In the meantime, mix together the rest of the ingredient, and mix it with the vegetables.



### Magyar News Online

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## Magyar Treasures: Written Embroidery/ Írásos hímzés

Karolina Tima Szabó

*If you are a first-time visitor of a church in Transylvania, you will be amazed to see the embroidered cloths on the Lord's Table, Christening fountain and the pulpit. Most of those are what we call **írásos** – “written” – embroidery, or **zsinóros** – “corded”, or **kalotaszegi varrottas**.*

The *írásos* style of embroidery originated from the area of Kalotaszeg, Transylvania, south of Kolozsvár, surrounded by the Gyalui and Vlegyasza Havasok (“snow covered mountains” or alps), and the Meszes Mountains. Some 34 villages located near the joining of the the Kalota and the Kőrös Rivers comprise the Kalotaszeg area. That is where you find the most beautiful embroidery. The land is extremely rich in folk art – not only embroidery, but also woodcarving, ceramics and the art of making *szűr* (the “shepherd’s cloak”).

The embroidery is called *írásos* (“written”) because the women who designed the patterns used a pen made out of goose feathers, dipped in soot that had been dissolved in water or *kékítő* (“blue dye”), and “wrote” their designs on the fabrics, whether on home-spun linen or canvas made out of hemp. They wrote the pattern on the fabric with one line, and left enough space for the stitches.

The techniques are similar to the *mezősegi*, *torockói* and *udvarhelyi* designs; similar but still different. Some are even similar to techniques used in Asia. The *írásos* stitches are like the chain stitch, where the thread is under the needle, not just at the



Wall hanging with *írásos* embroidery

bottom, but also on the top. The drawn line is expanded to the left and right. Some stitches are called “*nagy írásos*” – large written – and others “*kis írásos*” – small written – depending on the width of the stitches. In both, there is one drawn line, and with a chain stitch, the stitch goes to left and right, narrower or wider, as required by the design. Width of the *nagy írásos* can spread to 6-9 mm. This stitch looks like a flat “*zsinór*” – cord – the reason why it is also called the *zsinóros* or corded. The stitches have to lie tightly next to each other so as to cover the fabric. *Kis írásos* techniques are the same, only narrower, spreading 2-3 mm, and are rarely used now. On the back, the stitches show as diagonal lines.

To make it easier for beginners, the writer sometimes draws double lines. The space between the top and bottom line is usually filled in with satin stitch first, then “written” around the design on both sides with chain stitch. The small round forms are called *tyúkszemek* (“hen’s eyes”); they start at the middle and go around with a very tight *írásos* stitch until

the space is filled in.

Motifs used are flowers (roses, tulips, lilies of the valley, ferns, acorns), objects (baskets, stars, coat of arms), or animals (birds, butterflies).

Shades of red, from orange to burgundy, are the favorite thread colors. If using blue, only the darker shade is used. Secondary colors are black and white, but in modern times other colors have also been used, according to the décor of the home or room. Colors are never mixed; only one color is used in one project.

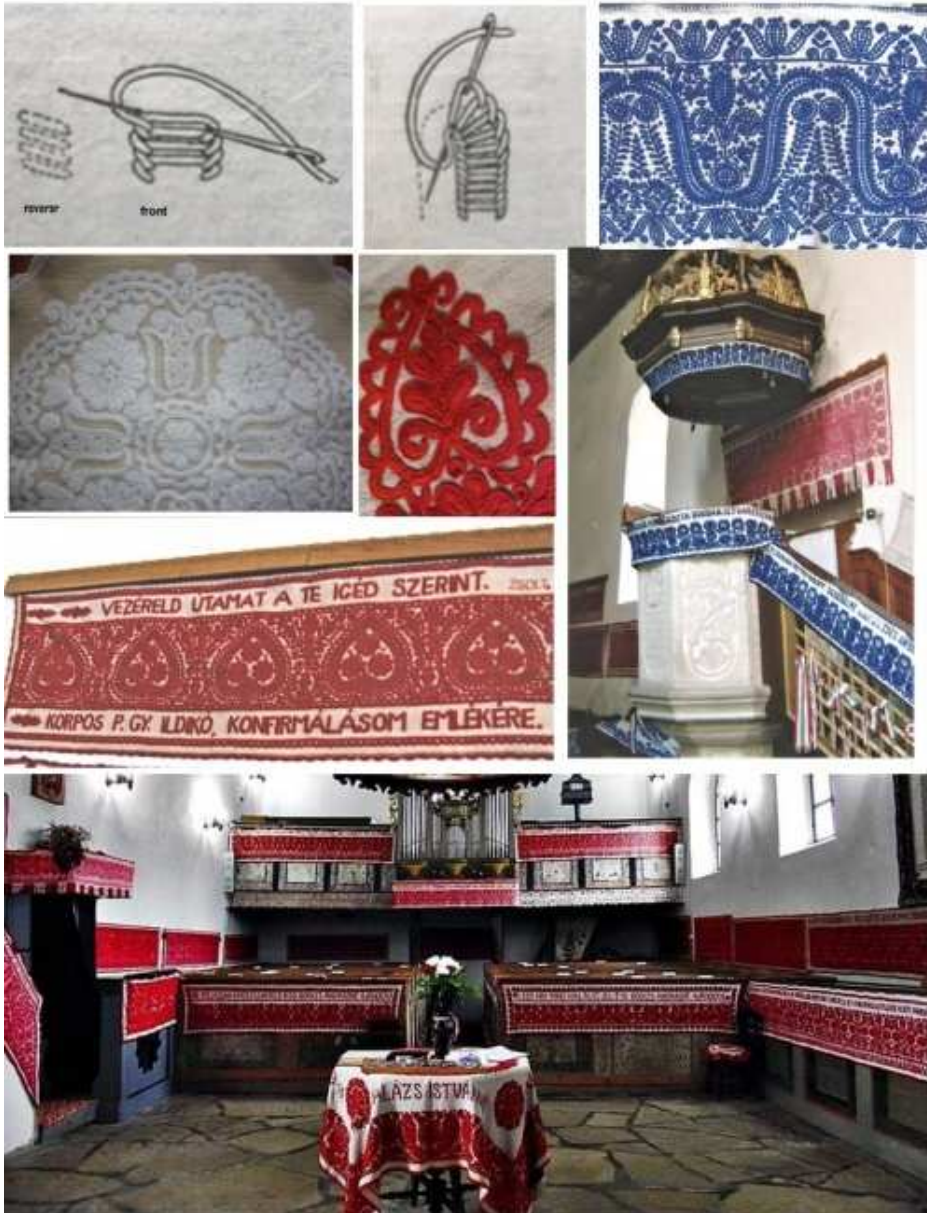
In former times, home-made thread made from linen or hemp, or lamb’s or goat’s wool was used. Nowadays, commercially made cotton or synthetic fiber is used.

Originally, this type of embroidery adorned the girl’s confirmation blouses (*vállfűs ingek*). After WW II, these blouses were no longer used, and the women started to use the embroidery for decorative pillows, tablecloths, sheets, bedspreads, wall hangings, and scarves. In tablecloths and bedspreads, the design can spread to 40-50 cm, in some cases even larger. But it is still used for decorating clothing. The women made the prettiest clothing for themselves as well as for their husband and children.

The Kalotaszeg Calvinist noble ladies embroidered many altar-cloths and wall hangings for their churches. These were on silk, and silver or gold color thread was used. The selection of motifs was also wider. This type of *írásos* embroidery is called *úri hímzés* (“noble embroidery”).

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the women of Kalotaszeg usually embroidered their names and the year they





Top: Illustrations for *írásos* stitch; pillow case with *írásos* embroidery; Center (photos by EPF): wall hanging in Bánffyhunyard church, commemorating a girl's Confirmation; Bánffyhunyard pulpit.

completed it on their work piece. With this they contributed to the cultural history of the Kalotaszeg area. Discovery of the folk arts of Kalotaszeg led to discovery of the broader spectrum of the riches of Hungarian folk arts in the 1880s.

*Karolina Tima Szabo is a retired Systems Analyst of the Connecticut Post newspaper and Webmaster of Magyar News Online. She is the proud grandmother of two .*

## It's a Small World!

EPF

Does finding a tangible reminder of your childhood, thousands of miles away, and some 65 years later, qualify for a **Kicsi a világ** story? You decide ...

In 2011, our Associate Webmaster Zsuzsa Lengyel and I visited Hungary and also took a bus tour Transylvania. Among many other places, we visited Gyimesbükk

(see the Snapshot story elsewhere in this issue). There is now an exhibit of railroad memorabilia in the "watchman's shanty". Among the exhibits is one with metal identification tags taken from different old-time locomotives. And there, outstanding by its size, was one with the inscription "Hanomag, Hannover Linden". I simply gaped!

Those of you who have read my family's story "With God's Little Finger Over Us" may remember that we lived in Hannover Linden between 1945 and the end of 1947. And as my Dad described in his Family News, we had been to see several operetta productions in the great Hanomag hall which had been transformed into a theater. I still remember "The Merry Widow" and "Das Dreimäderlhaus" (Lilac Time in English).

That plaque was the last thing I would have expected to find on the old Romanian border! Isn't it a Small World???



Display of plaques in Gyimesbükk railroad museum ; Plaque from Hanomag machine works in Hannover-Linden



# Prince II Rákóczi Ferenc & his War of Independence (1703-1711)

Charles Bálintt Jr.

*The month of April marks the end of both the first major uprising by Hungarians against Habsburg rule (4/29/1711) and the death of its leader II Rákóczi Ferenc (4/8/1735).*

After the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the Turks slowly took over a large portion of the territory that had been the Kingdom of Hungary. This officially lasted from 1541 until 1699. At the same time, the northwestern area was controlled by the Habsburgs. As the Ottomans pulled out, the Habsburg took over the rest of the Hungarian territories. For some this turned out to be worse than Turkish rule.

As many areas transitioned to Habsburg control, aristocrats who wanted to regain their property had to provide written proof of ownership and pay 10% of the value of their land to the Habsburg monarchy in order to get their property back. So many aristocrats were unhappy, while the peasants experienced continued hardships and many even longed for a return of the Ottomans. This led to some peasant uprisings against the Habsburgs. These were not too successful, so eventually in 1703 a group of peasant leaders asked II Rákóczi Ferenc to lead the rebellion against Habsburg rule, which became known as Rákóczi's War of Independence. This Hungarian army and some previous rebels were also referred to as "Kuruc" (a term applied to the crusaders led by Dózsa György in 1514, who started the first peasant revolt, but is more probably derived from the



*Painting of a battle between kuruc and labanc troops, by an unknown contemporary artist, 1718.*

*(Photo: landesarchiv-bw-de/51040)*

Turkish word for rebel or insurgent). The Austrian fighters were called "Labanc" (from the Hungarian word for long hair aka "lobonc" because of the wigs they wore).

His father, Prince I Rákóczi Ferenc, also helped lead a plot against the Habsburgs in the 1660's, known as the Wesselényi Conspiracy. This was headed by Zrinyi Péter, Bán of Croatia and father-in-law of I Rákóczi Ferenc; Count Wesselényi Ferenc, Palatine of Royal Hungary; Count III Nádasdy Ferenc, CVhief Judge and General of Hungary; and Frangepán Ferenc Kristóf, a Croatian nobleman. This ended with a trial and the execution of Zrinyi, Nádasdy and Frangepán in 1671. Wesselényi had died before the conspiracy was uncovered and Rákóczi was spared because of the intervention of his mother and the payment of a substantial ransom, although he died at the young age of 31, five years later.

II Rákóczi Ferenc's stepfather, Thököly Imre, also went against the Habsburgs by joining the Ottomans in the Battle of Vienna in 1683. This followed from the Ottoman recognition of Thököly as king

Northern Hungary in 1681, but the defeat of the Ottomans ruined his plans. After the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, the Ottomans left and handed over their conquered Hungarian territory to the Habsburgs. As result of this, Thököly Imre had to go into exile. Also, his earlier alliance with the Ottomans changed Western Europe's, and especially Austria's, previous positive attitude to a negative one towards Hungary. This may be the most significant contributing factor to the treatment of Hungary by the Habsburgs after they took full control.

While working on his ambitions of power, Thököly Imre had little time to deal with raising his stepson. Therefore, II Rákóczi Ferenc, came under the guardianship of the Holy Roman Emperor, the Austrian Leopold I, which was a request made in his father's will. His youth was split between staying with his mother and at the royal court in Vienna, since his father died when he was only 3 months old.

France, under Louis XIV, had been sympathetic to Hungary's position



*Top: Painting of II Rákóczi Ferenc, by Mányoki Ádám;  
Rákóczi coat of arms, with motto: If God is for us, who is against us?  
Bottom: Rákóczi's motto: With God for Homeland and  
Liberty (at Gyimesbükk)*

vis-à-vis the Habsburgs to diminish Habsburg power in Europe and had previously given aid to Thököly. In the late 1690's, France contacted Rákóczi, offering him support if he took up the

fight against Austria. The correspondence between them was intercepted by an Austrian spy who had gained Rákóczi's trust. After reviewing numerous letters over the period of a year or two,

Rákóczi was arrested on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1700 and imprisoned at Wiener Neustadt. He would have been sentenced to death, as was his grandfather, but he managed to escape. He then

went to Poland, where he met with Count Bercsényi Miklós, whose estate was next to his, and they once again began corresponding with France.

After earlier declining to lead a peasant uprising against the Habsburgs, he changed his mind, and became the leader of the rebellion in 1703. The opportunity to have a chance with their relatively small and under-armed forces, compared to the Austrians, came because the Austrians reallocated most of their occupying troops to Western Europe and the War of the Spanish Succession. This was a result of the death of Spain's Habsburg King Charles II on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1700, who left no direct heirs.

In 1704, Il Rákóczi Ferenc, was named Prince of Transylvania. He did gain a large portion of territory in Hungary in the beginning, but ultimately failed in his efforts to seize control from the Habsburgs. Many Hungarian nobles did not support Rákóczi because they thought of this as a peasant rebellion. At the same time France became more occupied with Spain and America. They did, however, send troops to help Hungary, but the combined French and Bavarian forces were defeated by the combined Austrians and English forces at the Battle of Blenheim on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1704. (Of course, the English helped the Austrians because they were also at war with France in what was known as Queen Anne's War or the Third Indian War in America.)

There were many battles between the Austrians and the Hungarians and some attempts at peace negotiations over the years of this conflict. In September of 1705, Rákóczi was elected Prince of the Kingdom of Hungary and, along with a 24-member Senate, was

responsible for foreign affairs. Peace talks began on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1705 with the Austrian Emperor, but the fighting also continued. The main issue that caused the failure of this effort at reconciliation was the fate of Transylvania. The Austrians wanted control over Transylvania, while the Hungarians wanted it to remain independent or at least semi-autonomous. After another meeting of Hungarian leaders, a declaration was made, removing the House of Habsburg from the Hungarian throne on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1707.

As Professor Lukács János has said, Hungary's greatest failure was the inability to populate the country with enough Hungarians. In this case, Rákóczi did not have enough outside support, nor enough of his own troops to occupy all the territory that he had gained. He also had trouble raising the funds to support his troops. Another severe blow came at the Battle of Trencsén on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1708, where Rákóczi fell from his horse and was knocked unconscious. This caused his forces to lose the battle, because fearing that he was dead, they all fled. As a result, a significant group of military leaders switched their allegiance to the Emperor in hopes of leniency. With diminished support and loss of territory the uprising was now doomed to defeat.

In 1711, the Emperor sent Pálffy János to negotiate a settlement, but Rákóczi did not trust him and went to Poland on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1711. The uprising officially ended on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1711 with the Treaty of Szatmár. This was signed on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1711 by Count Pálffy János, on behalf of the Emperor, and Count Károlyi Sándor, on behalf of the Hungarians. Rákóczi showed up during the talks in opposition to the agreement but did not prevail and re-

turned to Poland.

Il Rákóczi Ferenc was offered the Polish crown twice but turned it down. He left Poland at the end of 1712 for a short stay in England and then moved to France for a few years. After the death of Louis XIV on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1715, he decided to accept the invitation of Ahmed III to move to the Ottoman Empire, which was still at war with Austria. His entourage of some 40 people arrived in Gallipoli on October 10, 1717. His group settled in the town of Tekirdağ (called Rodostó in Hungarian) on the coast of the Sea of Marmara and built a nice Hungarian community. This is where he lived out his life with his close friends and supporters, among them Counts Forgách Simon, Esterházy Antal, Csáky Mihály and Bercsényi Miklós. He died there on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1735 at the age of 59. Included in the Peace Treaty of Passarowitz with Austria in 1718 was the Turkish refusal to extradite any of the Hungarian exiles back to Austria.

Prince Rákóczi is considered a Hungarian national hero. One of numerous statues throughout Hungary can be found in front of the Hungarian Parliament Building. He is on horseback with the inscription of his famous motto "*Cum Deo Pro Patria et Libertate*" (With God for Fatherland and Liberty). A couple of villages in Hungary as well as in the Ukraine are named after him, along with streets, squares or buildings all over Hungary. His portrait appears on the 500-forint banknote and his image has appeared on several stamps.

*Charles Bálintitt Jr. is a working Customs Broker in Lawrence, NY and a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.*



## Csángók – Magyars Outside the Carpathians

EPF

*The term "Csángók" refers to native Hungarians, mostly in Moldavia, a region between the Eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River. Before the fateful battle of 1526, when King II Lajos and most of the country's leaders fell in the Turkish onslaught, the Csángók of Moldavia had enjoyed the protection of the Hungarian Kings, who sent them clergy from Hungary. But after the defeat, the country was divided into three sections – with the Austrians in the North and West, the Turks in the middle, and Transylvania still independent – and the Catholic Csángók were left to fend for themselves, amidst their foreign neighbors who followed the Orthodox religion. Between 1622 to 1885, Rome sent Italian missionaries to serve them, yet not one of those missionaries spoke the language of the people (as lamented in the third stanza of their anthem). They rather learned Romanian, which was easier for them.*

*Because of the isolation of the Csángók, their ancient folk arts have been preserved, and some have retained a very old form of the Hungarian language.*

It is estimated that the Csángók living in various regions inside and outside the Carpathians number 320,000, with the largest concentration of 180,000 living in Moldavia, of whom only 40,000 still speak Hungarian. (Statistics vary: According to another source, the Csángók in Moldavia number approximately 240,000, with Hungarian-speakers numbering 62,000).

The core of the ethnic group of Csángók was presumably left to

## The Csángó Anthem

Csángó Magyar, Csángó Magyar,  
What have you become, Csángó Magyar?  
You're a down-and-out bird,  
Rejected, forgotten.

You settled in a wasteland,  
Which you called a country.  
But you have neither country, nor homeland,  
Only the Lord God thinks of you.

A foreign language covers you, oppresses you,  
Italian priestlings pester you.  
You can't sing, or go to confession,  
Nor pray in your mother's language.

My God, what will become of us?  
Our children and we will be lost!  
They are destroying our beautiful language  
Which our fathers had guarded.

We hear that Hungary still stands.  
Lord our God, please bless it too!  
That they might have mercy on us,  
And not allow us to be lost!

Because we too are Magyar,  
Having come from Asia.  
Lord God, help our lot,  
Don't let Csángó Magyars be lost!

## Csángó Himnusz

Csángó magyar, csángó magyar,  
Mivé lettél, csángó magyar?  
Ágról szakadt madár vagy te,  
Elvettette, elfeledve.

Egy pusztába telepedtél,  
Melyet országnak nevezté.  
De se, országod se hazád,  
Csak az Úristen gondol rád.

Idegen nyelv beborít, nyom,  
Olasz papocskák nyakadon.  
Nem tudsz énekelni, gyónni,  
Anyád nyelvén imádkozni.

Én Istenem, mi lesz velünk?,  
Gyermekeink, s mi elveszünk!  
Melyet apáink őriztek,  
Elpusztítják szép nyelvünket!

Halljuk, áll még Magyarország,  
Úristenünk, Te is megáld!  
Hogy rajtunk könyörüljenek,  
Elveszni ne engedjenek!

Mert mi is magyarok vagyunk,  
Még Ázsiából szakadtunk.  
Úristen, sorsunkon segíts,  
Csángó magyart el ne veszítsd!

This is the Csángó anthem (put into modern Hungarian), the lament of a forgotten people.



*Petrás Mária*

serve as border guards at the time of the Conquest in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. In the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, various kings settled Hungarians from Transylvania and the Upper Tisza area beside them. In the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, groups of Hungarian Hussites and refugees from Transylvania joined them. The 1764 massacre of Madéfalva by the Austrian Habsburgs sent many *Székelys* fleeing across the Carpathians. It is their descendants who today form the majority of the Hungarian-speaking *Csángók* of Moldavia. Most of them speak Hungarian closer to today's *Székely* dialect, with some archaic words. In the northern part of Moldavia, a smaller group speaks the Hungarian of the Middle Ages, which is hard to understand by today's Hungarian-speakers.

In addition to Moldavia, *Csángók* live also in the Gyimes area of Transylvania, along the old 1000-year border, around the Tattos River. They raise and breed livestock and work at logging. They are descendants of *Székelys* as well as of *Csángók* from Moldavia who settled there at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when

the line of defense was pushed forward to the entrance of Gyimes Pass.

The word *Csángó* was first mentioned as a personal name in a Latin document dated 1400. (It was mentioned in several others later.) As designating a people, it was first mentioned in a Romanian-language chronicle in 1675. A marriage lawsuit, brought before the bishop of Gyulafehérvár in 1762, mentions the bride having been a *Csángó*.

Origin of the name "*Csángó*" has been a matter of debate. Some derive it from the word "*csángál*", singing off-key, or speaking in a jarring manner, based on the fact that the *Csángó* dialect is sibilant, or hissing; others apply the word "*csángál*" to mean "roaming, drifting", referring to the *Székelys* who fled from Transylvania at the time of the Madéfalva massacre.

The *Csángó* folk costume is distinctive. Groups of *Csángók* always attend the annual Csík-somlyó pilgrimage, walking as many as four days each way.

An internationally known *Csángó* artist today is Petrás Mária. She is a prize-winning ceramicist and *csángó* folksong singer, whose work we described in the December 2015 issue of Magyar News Online, using one of her ceramics in the header as well. In addition to Hungary, she has had exhibits in Italy, France and Canada. She has given folk song concerts with the Muzsikás Ensemble of Hungary, as well as the world-famous Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and at Carnegie Hall in New York. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Prima Primissima Prize (2013) and the *Magyar Érdemrend tisztikeresztje* (2019).



*Csángó performers; Petrás Mária.*





*Gyimesbükk: Csángó musicians Timár Viktor (violin) and Antal Tibor (double bass); Csángó pilgrims at Csíksomlyó (photos EPF)*



*One of the original rocks marking the 1000-year border*

## Snapshot: Gyimesbükk

*Erika Papp Faber*

*A visit, in 2011, to one of the spots where the 1000-year Hungarian border may still be seen made a lasting impression on me. In addition to the natural beauty of the countryside, the history of the area is fascinating. Take a look!*

Gyimesbükk, located 32 km northeast of Csíkszereda, is the easternmost of three settlements in the Tatros Valley, approximately 3,000 feet above sea level. For a thousand years, the border of Hungary ran through here. Round stones, placed about one kilometer apart, marked the border itself until 1920, when the so-called “Treaty” of Trianon gave Transylvania to Romania. Most of these have been destroyed, but several still exist. One is shown in the lead.

Gyimes Fortress (later renamed Rákóczi Fortress), testifies to the importance of the locality. It was built by Bethlen Gábor, Prince of Transylvania, in 1626. There was no road leading up to the fortress, only a triple flight of stairs, numbering a total of 134 steps. Today, these steps are all that remain.

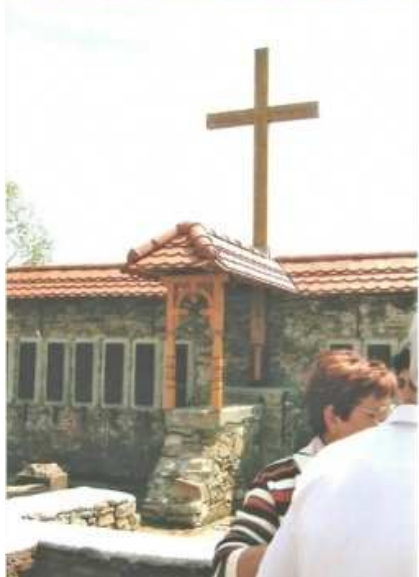
This was also one of those places where *lármafák* were erected on the heights – poles, approximately 25 feet in length, to the top of which bundles of straw saturated with tar were affixed. The assigned watchman would light the straw rope that hung down to the ground when he noticed the approach of an enemy. These poles were placed within sight of each other, so the alarm could be spread quickly to the local population.

As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the *Csángók* were originally border guards. This meant not only that they were the first line of defense against an enemy, but that they would also have to act as customs officers to screen the merchants and the animals they brought into the country, to make sure they did not bring in any infectious diseases. For this purpose, there was a complex of quarantine buildings and quarantine stables. In addition, there was a doctor’s apartment and even a school. The ruined buildings have now been covered with tiles for preservation.

One part, next to the chapel, has been converted into a memorial for the Hungarian soldiers who fell in defense of Gyimes Pass during World War II.

The Latin term for quarantine is *contumacia*, which explains the name of the little chapel adjacent to the quarantine building: it is called the *Kontumáci*





*Left: Steps leading to ruins of Rákóczi fortress; front of quarantine quarters; Right: photo from the 1940s, and the "watchman's shanty" before restoration; ruins of the quarantine quarters; restored "watchman's shanty"; Kontumáci Chapel*

*kápolna*. According to documents, it was built in 1782, with a small bell tower. However, an inscription on its northern wall, in Armenian script, seems to indicate that its core may be older, and may only have been altered to serve as a chapel: "In the month of September 1712, I was here for (health) inspection. Karanteria-Karanta brook. Kontumacia." The date is MDCCXII. The "new" chapel was dedicated in 1783 for the Catholics living in the Gyimes Valley.

A "watchman's shanty", as it is

officially called – number 30 in the Royal Hungarian Railway register – located next to the railroad tracks at the former border itself – has been restored and now serves as a small railway museum. In 2008, the first annual Csíksomlyó Pentecost pilgrimage train, which started from Budapest, continued on to Gyimesbükk, bringing thousands of people to this historic spot.

If you have a chance, do visit Gyimesbükk, a scenic and historic area in Transylvania! Just bring your walking shoes!

## Addendum to "A Different Kind of Anniversary"

EPF

*We have to amend our original total to make it NINE martyred Hungarian Bishops in the 20<sup>th</sup> century! At least these are the ones about whom we know.*

Last month, we wrote about **Bishop Meszlényi Zoltán**. We regretfully neglected to mention that he was beatified in 2009, one of "6 Hungarian bishops martyred in the 20th century".

We also need to mention that the cause for beatification of Byzantine rite **Bishop Chira Sándor** of Munkács (1897-1983), has been started. He had been consecrated in secret, but was found out soon thereafter, was then sentenced to 25 years at forced labor in Siberia. While he was allowed to make a couple of brief visits home, he was forbidden to return for good. He spent the rest of his life in exile, ministering to Germans in the Volga region, and died in Karaganda, another of those "dry martyrs" mentioned by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

The first person to whom Archbishop Sheen applied that term was **Cardinal Mindszenty József** (1892-1975). He was arrested by the Communist Secret Police in December 1948 and treated with drugs (brainwashed) so he would admit to the trumped-up charges of crimes against the state. His show trial in early 1949 sent shock waves around the world. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but was freed by the Freedom Fighters in 1956. When the Russians beat down the Hungarian Revolution, the Cardinal fled to the American Embassy in Budapest, where he stayed for 15 years. He left only at the express command of the Pope in

1971, and died in exile in Austria.

Although not dying for the faith, he was still a shining witness, and his beatification was expected at the International Eucharistic Congress scheduled for Budapest last fall. That was postponed because of the Covid pandemic, and so was the beatification.

There are two additional Hungarian bishops who we know gave their lives for the faith:

**Bishop Gojdics Péter Pál** (1888-1960), of Eperjes, who after the "Treaty" of Trianon (1920) became the Bishop of all Byzantine Catholics in Czechoslovakia. When the Communists took over, he was arrested, together with his Auxiliary Bishop, Hopkó Bazil (see below) on trumped-up charges and sentenced to life in prison. He died in a prison near Pozsony (since 1920 called Bratislava), in 1960. He was beatified in 2001.

The other was Byzantine rite **Bishop Hopkó Bazil**, Bishop Gojdics' Auxiliary (1904-1976). He survived Communist persecution and prisons for 26 years. Traces of arsenic were found in his remains, showing that he was poisoned over a period of time. He was beatified in September 2003

## Did you know ...

...that two Hungarian biochemists have come up with a method for combatting the pollution caused by disposable plastic waste?

After some two years of research in their own Budapest laboratory, Madaras Liz, in charge of management, and Lévay Krisztina who directs technological development, have developed a bacterial cocktail that can break down any single-use disposable plastic in 7 weeks! They call their biotech startup Poliloop, and are beginning

to start industrial testing. As they explain on their website:

"We created a bacterial cocktail that together consumes plastic packaging waste. They can use the carbon in plastic as a sole carbon source, integrating it into their metabolism. The process is akin to the way organic waste is consumed in composting piles, but the raw materials here are fossil-based. What our bacteria have achieved is turning what was once a fossil-based product (plastic packaging) into what it originally was, millions of years ago, part of the natural ecosystem of Earth."

The process does not require any prior chemical treatment, processing or major cleaning, and no harmful substances are released. The final product is recyclable organic sludge and compost, which can be used to produce bioplastics again.

... that seven-year-old Jagnesák Benett from Budapest (Pest-szentlőrinc) is the first Hungarian to become an international mental arithmetic champion in Dubai? Benett was only two years old when, instead of asking for storybooks, he asked his father to teach him numbers.

Currently, he is taking private lessons and attends study groups. His special talent is further developing with Brainobrain educational network.

Brainobrain is a skill developing program based on Abacus calculation methods. The program was developed 17 years ago in India; now it is used in 42 countries worldwide. Since its beginning, the Abacus has helped develop the skills of over 400,000 children. The origin of the Abacus is unknown, but it has been around for thousands of years. It is an oblong frame that has rows of wires on which different color



*Madaras Liz, Lévay Krisztina ;  
Jagnesák Bennett*

beads slide. It can be used for addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square root, and cube root.

Brainobrain's site explains, "By using abacus, the learning becomes faster, and more effective and the concentration, focus, memory, visualization, and imagination are increased."

Benett was the first student from Hungary to enter the highest-level champion category.

Congratulations to Jagnesák Benett for his great success.