



Mécs László: Magyar Madonna

Ki nekünk nem voltál lovagkori dáma:
 eszmény, kit falhoz köt a csúcsíves ráma;
 kit sosem néztünk mint boldog barokk tündért:
 – Boldogasszony Anyánk, könyörögj népünkért!

Ki nem hordtál merev infánsnő-brokátot,
 de élő palástod adták a Kárpátok
 s Tisza, Duna, Hernád, Maros volt a zöldön
 ezüst paszomántod: – könyörülj e földön!

Ki közöttünk élő Nagyasszonyunk voltál,
 mert nem fog le ráma, aranyruha, oltár
 s elsőáldozóink csöpp zászlóin lengtél:
 – könyörögj e sok kis nevetgélő szentér!

Ki búcsús zászlóinkról nézted földeinket
 búzaszenteléskor s szíved áldást hintett;
 aki Istent szülvén szülni meg nem szüntél:
 – malaszt anyja, imádj magyar vetésünkér!

Mécs László, O. Praem., was a Norbertine priest from Upper Hungary. After the Czechoslovak takeover following the Trianon Dictate, Hungarian books, papers and magazines were not allowed to be brought into the region. Mécs László was the most prominent of those rushing to fill this literary vacuum. His poems carried the message of reconciliation and love of one's fellowman. His poetry readings led him to Hungary and abroad. An obviously anti-Hitler piece caused the Germans to demand his extradition (obviously refused by the Hungarian government). When the Russians overran Hungary in 1945, Mécs went into hiding. But he was found, accused of "falsification of documents" and sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

This poem was part of a manuscript he gave into safekeeping to someone before his imprisonment, which was then published posthumously in 1991 as *Magyarok misekönyve* - Hungarians' Mass Book. It asks Mary for her intercession on her Hungarian people.

Kihez szentek, hősök szent tébolya illet,
 mikor ott lebegtél mint győzelmi lhlet
 pápista, protestáns kuruc lobogókon:
 – könyörülj mirajtunk, kuruc-utódokon!

Ki ott lebegtél, hol sem élőt, sem holtat
 nem szántak, szüzeket megerőszakoltak,
 falvakat, kriptákat gyújtottak, gyilkoltak:
 – szánj meg minden testi-lelki megraboltat!

Trianon-szabdalta ruhád még hiányos:
 fohással foltozza szegény Magyar János.
 Fertálynyi palástod könnyekkel gyöngyözött:
 – Boldogasszony Anyánk, varrd össze köntösöd!

S kinek szép szemében láttuk a szent tébolyt
 sok szabadságharcban, – most remény-kék égbolt
 kéküljön szemedben s béküljön felettünk:
 – Boldogasszony Anyánk, könyörögj érettünk!

The Trianon Museum

EPF

Located in Várpalota, Veszprém County, this unique institution preserves documents and objects related to the fateful so-called „Treaty” of Trianon, which ended World War I for Hungary and deprived it of 71.5 percent of its territory. Housed in the Zichy Castle, its 18 permanent exhibits preserve the memory of the greatest national catastrophe that befell Hungary in its thousand-year history. Its slogan: “No revolt! But concede nothing!” Visitors from the areas cut off from Hungary by the Trianon Dictate are admitted free of charge. Right now, however, the Museum is temporarily closed due to renovation of the Castle.

Originally built in 1725, the Zichy Castle at Várpalota burnt down in 1860, but was rebuilt following the designs of the renowned architect Ybl Miklós. That is when it acquired an oval-shaped, wood-paneled library, decorated with frescoes. The oval truncated tower above it was designed only for decoration.

The Castle was seriously damaged by bombs during World War II, but was restored in 1954 according to Ybl’s plans.

The original chapel was transformed into the entrance hall from which open the exhibition halls and the main staircase. Some 30 collections may be viewed in the upstairs and downstairs halls. There are 18 permanent exhibits, starting with the signing of the Trianon Dictate. This is followed by a Black Portrait Gallery, displaying those politically responsible for tearing apart Hungary and destroying the political balance of Central Europe.

Entitled “A Nation Shut into Freight Cars”, the occupation and looting of the Hungarian Railway system is documented, together with the Hungarian exodus of 1918-20.

“From the Collapse until the Restoration – 1918-1921” is the title of the next exhibit, also covering the revolt in western Hungary which brought about the only plebiscite held following the Tri-



Similarly, another exhibit deals with the defensive battles of the Székely Division against the illegal



anon Dictate. (See Magyar News Online, June 2018)

A whole exhibit is dedicated to the city of Balassagyarmat, whose populace successfully beat back the intruding Czech troops who had illegally crossed the demarcation line into northern Hungary in January of 1919. Since then, the city has been known as “Civitas fortissima” – the strongest city.

occupation of Transylvanian areas by Romanians in 1919.

Additional exhibits are devoted to the Irredenta movement and songs, to the fate of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948, to *turul* monuments in the Carpathian Basin, etc. There is also a Reményik Sándor Memorial

exhibit in honor of that poet whom we remembered in our November 2020 issue. There are also a number of traveling exhibits.

According to the description on Wikipedia, it is hoped that presentation of the bare facts by the Trianon Museum "will give rise to those collective spiritual mechanisms which will lead to the processing of the 20th

century Hungarian tragedy, and to the healing of the nation's wounds".

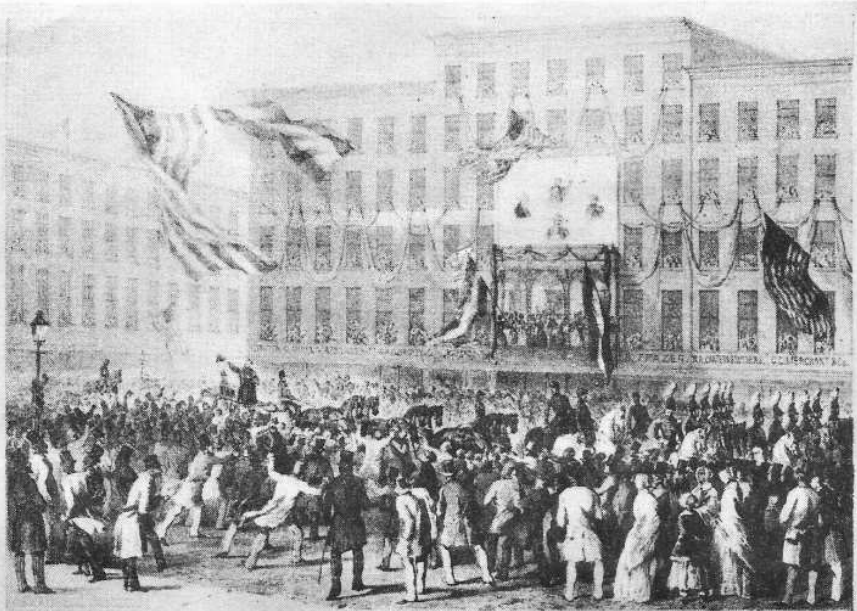
May it be so!

Kossuth's Reception in New York, December 1851

After the Revolution of 1848-49 against Austrian oppression was crushed with the help of Russian troops, Kossuth took refuge in Turkey. He was later invited by the US government, which sent a frigate for him. He arrived in New York on December 6th, 1851.

Here is a report about the event in the daily newspaper, The Sun. "Thus immediately previous to the Christmas of 1851 New York city underwent a period of Kossuth mania, and it affected the holiday presents. Every New Year's gift associated itself in some designation with Kossuth and Hungary. Restaurants abounded with Hungarian goulash, a savory dish of boiled beef and vegetables, strongly infused with red peppers; and there were Kossuth cravats (formidable bands of satin or silk wound around the neck, with ends liberally folded over the shirt front), Kossuth pipes, Kossuth umbrellas, Kossuth belts and buckles, Kossuth purses, Kossuth jackets, and Kossuth braid and tassels for wearing apparel.....The American Museum on Broadway was literally covered with paintings and flags. One, a portrait of Kossuth, in the folds of

Contemporary Lithograph of LOUIS KOSSUTH's official reception in New York City on December 6, 1851



Hungarian and American flags, with the words at the bottom: 'Kossuth, the Washington of Hungary.'

as reported in the daily paper, The Sun

Christmas Cookies / Karácsonyi sütemény

Karolina Szabo

In my youth, when purchasing Christmas decorations for the Christmas tree was almost impossible, my Mother, as many other mothers in Hungary, had to improvise. We decorated the tree with walnuts wrapped in silver and gold color foil, apples and homemade "szaloncukor". My mother also baked Christmas cookies, which we decorated and hung on the tree. We had a special attachment to the meat grinder, through which we pressed the dough and formed into different shapes. This time, I am enclosing my Mom's recipe. Be artistic to decorate, and enjoy.

Ingredients:

4 ½ cups flour
1 ½ stick butter
2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 eggs

Directions:

Mix butter with flour until crumbly. Add all the other ingredients. Work dough until smooth. Use a cookie press and make desired shapes, such as wreaths, or candles. (If you have no cookie press, roll out the dough half an inch thick, and use cookie cutters.) Cookies can be decorated with sprinkles before or after baking, as shown on photo. Place cookies on baking sheet and bake on 350° F for 15 minutes. When cookies have cooled, decorate as desired.



Waves of History

Olga Vállay Szokolay

Do you ever fantasize about reversing events or history? "What if...?"

One of those "What-ifs" in my mind, as well as perhaps in some others', is the hypothetical question about the start of World War I.

The Sarajevo assassination of heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28th, 1914, was undoubtedly the result of some unsatisfactory conditions. But it certainly engulfed the world in fire, not just for the duration of the long and unfortunate war it triggered, but defined history for decades and even centuries, to the present day as well as for the future.

As expected, the five-member Austro-Hungarian Ministerial Council (also known as the Crown Council) voted for retaliation, specifically 4:1 for war against Serbia. *The only vote against war came from the visionary Prime Minister of Hungary, Count Tisza István.* (See magyarnews.org, February 2020), who was later assassinated at his home in 1918.

"What if..." they had listened to him and had opted for diplomatic solutions in lieu of the irrevocably belligerent choice?

"I still have the rug with my grandfather's blood on it." These were the words of our dear friend, *gróf Tisza Kálmán*, in the early 1970s, referring to the assassination of the erstwhile Prime Minister during World War I.

Kálmán used to be my husband's high school classmate and, once



Count Tisza István

they reconnected in the United States, was often our weekend guest in Stamford, Connecticut. With the above quote, he became my personal connection to history.

New York was the last station of the family's long and circuitous wandering on three continents after leaving the Clan's famous estate at Geszt, Békés County (see *Snapshots*, this issue) on the southeast edge of Hungary, as per the arbitrary borders defined by the Trianon Dictate.

Kálmán was a firm believer of the importance of education. Based on "peace-time" conditions of owning thousands of acres of land, he could have enjoyed a carefree life without lifting a finger. But his love of animals coupled with his desire to learn, and a sense of the future's insecurity drove him to get a degree in *agronomy and veterinary science*. This proved to be useful in his and his family's later life.

After an unsuccessful first marriage, Kálmán met and fell in love

with the lovely and charming *Grete Brenner* from Estonia, as testified by scores of truly romantic love letters now cherished by their children. They married and lived merrily at the *Geszt castle*. Grete learned to speak fluent Hungarian.

Their first child, *László* was born in June 1943. Even though the first bombs (by Soviet planes) fell on Budapest in September 1942, prompting several months of random air-raid practices and mandatory blackouts, the war was fairly removed from Hungary for nearly two years. But the German occupation in March 1944 meant progressive oppression.

By fall 1944, the Soviets were gradually approaching from the East and Kálmán and Grete had to move with their firstborn from Geszt to their hunting estate at *Nagykovácsi*, in the Buda Hills. It was from there that, at the imminent birth of their second child, he was driving Grete to the hospital. Their car was stopped by the "greeting" of a German soldier: "Heil Hitler!" and without much ado he confiscated the car. Though Kálmán protested with the argument that they were on their way to the hospital for his wife's childbirth, the answer of the SS was that "Walking would do her good"; gave her a cushion from the car and drove the vehicle away. Against all odds, *István* was born in early December, 1944.

As the Soviets occupied most of the country, Kálmán was arrested and imprisoned twice by the Russians but managed to escape a trip to Siberia. It was obvious then, that before anything worse happened, they had to get away with the last train to Austria. They lived in Innsbruck for a year and a half. Like so many others, after realizing that the situation in Hun-



Top: Geszt Castle; Bottom: Tisza Kálmán with Grete; standing: György and József; sitting: Ilona (with László's picture), Grete on her 100th birthday, and István

gary would not change in the foreseeable future, they applied for a more permanent settlement.

When all papers had been completed for their immigration to the United States and even the date of their travel established, an unexpected event prevented them from leaving. Little László had an awfully bad accident and needed to be hospitalized, forfeiting not only their scheduled departure but their entire application as well.

Subsequent attempts to get the Tisza family accepted included Australia, Afghanistan and Argentina. They opted for the latter and managed to establish a new life. Upon entry into that country, *due to a clerical error, the "gróf Tisza" family name became a double name: Grof Tisza, later hyphenated.* They lived in Buenos Aires for about a year, then moved to Salta, one of Argentina's northern provinces. Kalman worked there as the manager of a very large estate, where he utilized his skills in agronomy and veterinary medicine. Their only daughter *Ilona* (Helen), as well as their other two sons *Joseph* and *George* were born in Argentina in 1949, 1952 and 1954, respectively. The family language was always Hungarian, since Grete had mastered it over the years. All five offspring became college graduates.

In 1961, the family left Argentina for another significant station of the family: Colombia, where Kálmán taught zoology and agronomy at the University of Santa Marta.

Grete sometimes accompanied Kálmán to our house in Connecticut. Ilona and I also became friends and we periodically socialized. Ilona is the current guardian of the *rug with her great-grandfather's bloodstains*, which

they will donate, along with correspondence and other relics, to the National Museum and the Geszt Memorial (see Snapshots, this issue).

During one of his visits with us in the summer of 1974 Kálmán, who had multiple serious pre-existing health problems, started feeling unwell. His cousin Margit and her husband Otto Hamos drove him to New York City, straight to the hospital. After weeks of slipping in and out of strokes and comas, Kálmán finally took his last breath on August 23rd, two weeks before his 60th birthday.

Following the 2001 renovation of the family crypt at Geszt, his remains were placed there.

After Kálmán's death, Grete lived with her various children. This may have contributed to her longevity; she passed away at age 101 in 2016.

Fast forward >>> to 2020!

Spending some time with my daughter, Sylvia, last summer in Colorado, I encountered the name *Creighton Grof-Tisza*, AKA "Mr. GT" to his students at the high school where he teaches English. The uniqueness of the name prompted me to "investigate". His wife, Shelby, happens to be friends with Sylvia, thus I had a direct hotline to her father-in-law, *Dr. George Grof-Tisza*, whom I last saw in 1974, when he was 20.

In early September we had a reunion meeting at my daughter's and George was genuinely glad to reconnect and be able to chat with me about his parents and their lives, filling in some details for me.

In 1974, while his older brothers had already been married, George

was left without a father and any financial help for attending medical school. Yet within a few years he became an MD and practiced as an emergency room physician. At age 21 he married Kitt, an artist and, besides Mr. GT, they have a daughter and another son.

Although the Tisza family had once been the third richest in Hungary, Kálmán was left land-rich and cash-poor, amid complex conditions. They escaped from Hungary in 1945, penniless. Later they kept struggling with medical bills and the education of five children. Friends smuggled some belongings out for them. Lately, their four surviving children decided that to honor the memory of their family history, they would donate the few items such as the rug and the correspondence of their parents to the National Museum in Budapest for the public to appreciate. Supposedly blood does not turn into water, but the youngest generation, born in the U.S., some of whom have never been to Hungary, seem to be indifferent to their great heritage.

Getting back to a "*What If they listened to gróf Tisza István and there would have been no World War I?*"— well, there would have been no Trianon, no WW II, no Cold War, no USSR and no mass migration of the 20th century. It would also mean that all of us could have stayed and be living in peace in Hungary, as would the treasures that will be returned to their origins.

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.

Magyar Treasures: The Vizsoly / Károlyi Bible

Judit Vasmatatics Paolini

The Vizsoly Bible, also known as the Károlyi Bible, may be one with which some readers may not be familiar (neither was I, since I barely read text written in Hungarian). However, I recently discovered its significance in Hungarian history as being the first surviving Bible written in Hungarian. (As mentioned in our November issue, "The first entirely Hungarian translation of the Bible (1456) is attributed to the Pauline monk Bátori László (1420-1456). It was numbered among the Corvinas of King Mátyás, but unfortunately disappeared in the turbulent Turkish times that followed").

Pastor Károlyi Gáspár, working with other Calvinists during the latter part of the sixteenth century, is the one credited with translating the Bible into the Hungarian language, which was originally printed in 1590 in the village of Vizsoly. A visit there today would certainly allow a tourist to view one of the original copies.

It was in the village of Gönc where pastor Károlyi commenced his labor in translating the Bible in 1586, which he completed in just three years! It is most likely that he had help in completing this great task in such a brief period. As we examine the complete translation of the Vizsoly Bible, we find that its writing is not characteristic of one voice. In studying the vocabulary and phrases, it is unlikely that Károlyi worked alone. Rather, it is prob-

able that he had the help of three others in writing the translation. However, Károlyi is credited in translating the New Testament by himself without any help from others.

Printing the Bible began in February, 1589; however, it was not completed until March, 1590. Mantskovit Bálint is credited with the printing of this Bible. Aware of the arduous task involved in this process, he transported his printing press from Galgóc to Vizsoly. The type (letters) for the press was obtained from the Netherlands, and the paper was imported from Poland. It is worth noting that Mantskovit was originally from Poland, and he included a brief note requesting readers to excuse errors he may have missed in the text. To expedite its completion, printing commenced without the Bible's translation being totally achieved. Thus, as Károlyi continued his work, students brought the translated manuscript, often a page at a time, from Gönc to Mantskovit; among these helpful aides we find Szenczi Molnár Albert.

In March 1589, Archduke Ernest, of the House of Habsburg, along with the royal secretary Faustus Verantius, almost succeeded in bringing a complete halt to the printing of what in time became known as the Vizsoly Bible. The two charged Mantskovit with producing books which at the time were forbidden (today one finds it interesting that calendars were listed among such books). They requested the confiscation of the printing press. However, Mantskovit belonged to the estate of Rákóczi Zsigmond. In turn, Rákóczi, the future Prince of Transylvania, rebuffed such denunciations and requested permission to allow the printing to resume. Thus, it was with the help of Rákóczi and other influential nobles giving their support which enabled the printing to be com-

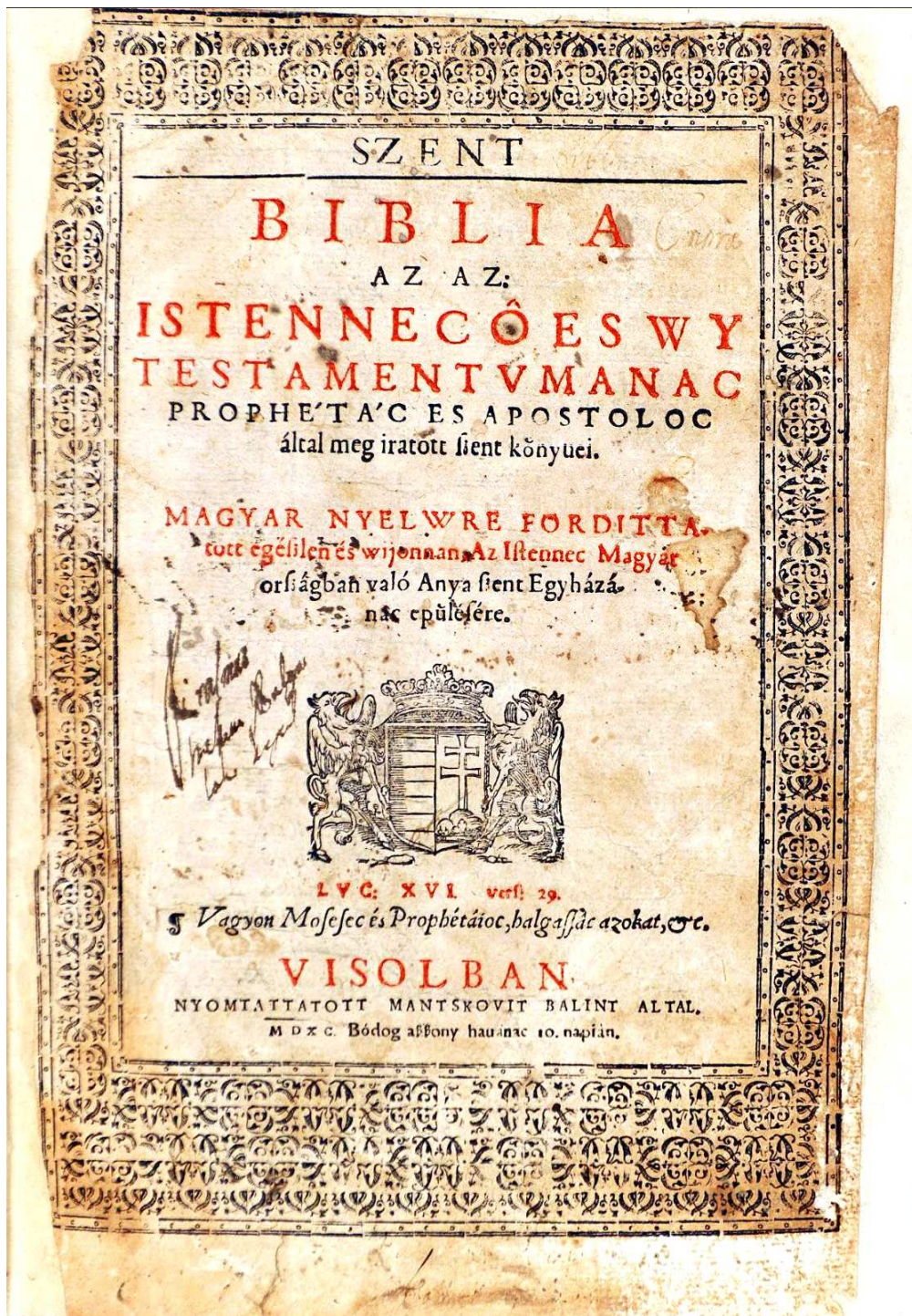
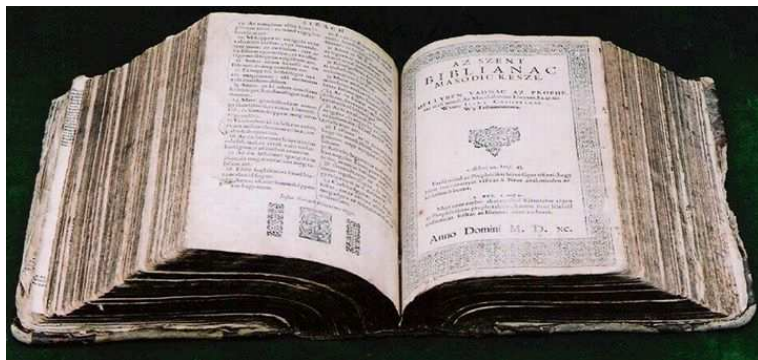
pleted in July 1590.

As we look at the book itself, we find that Károlyi credits his sources, which may be viewed in the foreword. We note that he utilized the Hebrew and Greek texts. While it is unclear to what degree he employed earlier, partially written Hungarian translations in the process of his work, he does give credit to Heltai Gáspár as well as Méliusz Juhász Péter. Also, we do note the presence of the Hungarian translation of Psalm 74 which had been translated by Székely István.

The Vizsoly Bible is comprised of three volumes and contains 2,412 pages; its weight is about 6kg (about 13 pounds). As we view the first volume, we come across the Hungarian coat of arms on the front cover. This volume is dated 1589 and contains the initial 28 books from the Old Testament. The book contains a rather drawn-out foreword in which Károlyi addressed the lords and nobles; he also speaks to God-fearing people and the clergy, both in Hungary and in Transylvania. The middle volume continues with writings from the Old Testament, while the last volume is comprised of the New Testament. In addition, here we also find a page containing Jesus' genealogy!

Further, in the foreword Károlyi acknowledges that readers may find some errors in the translation, and asks that such findings should be brought to his attention so that he may address them. However, he died shortly after the first publication and such work was left to others. It was Szenczi Molnár Albert, one of his former students, who made the necessary corrections. Thus, the Hanau Bible containing needed revisions was published in 1608.

There are only 51 of the original Vizsoly Bibles in existence today



SZENT

BIBLIA *Curia*

A Z A Z:

ISTENNECÔESWY
TESTAMENTVMANAC

PROPHE'TA'C ES APOSTOLOC

által meg iratott sient könyuei.

MAGYAR NYELWRE FORDITTA

tott egésilen és wjonnaan. Az Istennec Magyar

orsiógbah való Anya sient Egyháza.

nac épülesére.



LVC: XVI vers: 29.

Vagyon Mosefec és Prophétaioc, halg assác azokat, etc.

VISOLBAN

NYOMTATTOTT MANTSKOVIT BALINT ALTAL.

M D X C. Bódog asszony hauának 10. napján.

Of these, 21 are located in Hungary. The following countries with the next highest numbers are Romania, which has 14, and Slovakia has 13; this is not a surprise to our readers, for both of these countries have regions which prior to WWI belonged Hungary. Countries which have one or two copies include Austria, the Czech Republic, and Denmark.

Original copies of the Vizsoly Bible are quite valuable. In 2008, an auction attained 2.2 million forints (around \$7,000 US dollars) for a copy of the Old Testament, which we must note was in good shape, of course. In 2003, a Vizsoly Bible which was primarily intact was auctioned for 12 million forints (around \$53,571 US dollars) in Budapest.

We have already noted that there is a copy of this Bible in the town of Vizsoly located in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County in Hungary. A visitor can view one on display at the Protestant church. It has been on exhibit here since 1940. At one time, someone stole several pages from it, after which it was secured under glass. Nevertheless, the Bible was purloined in February 2002 and retrieved in September 2003, when it was found in an abandoned building, surprisingly not in Hungary but in Komárno, Slovakia (known as Komárom before the "Treaty" of Trianon!) Sometimes, upon request, the Bible is lent out for exhibitions.

Without listing the numerous locations in Hungary where copies of the Vizsoly Bible may be found, we want to mention that there are copies in three libraries in Budapest, including the National Széchenyi Library. In the city of Debrecen, there are two located at the Library of the Tisztántúl Protestant Diocese.

Locations where this Bible may be found outside of Hungary include three in Bratislava, Slovakia

(formerly Pozsony). One of them is at the Central Library of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which has a single copy of the Old Testament alone. Also, Romania has five different locations – two being in the city of Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár). Other cities include Targu Mures (Marosvásárhely). Both of these cities are in the historical region of Transylvania.

In 2015, the Vizsoly/Károlyi Bible was added to the list of *Hungarikums* (specialties of Hungary not found anywhere else). A facsimile version of the Vizsoly Bible was published earlier this year, for the 430th anniversary of the original publication.

Judit Vasmatatics Paolini is a former member of the Southern Connecticut State University Alumni Association Board of Directors, former lecturer at Tunxis Community College, and a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.

Did you know...

... **that** Hungary qualified for the 2020 European Soccer Championships in a thrilling game against Iceland in Budapest on November 12th? The opponents scored the first goal at the 11th minute of the game and they were able to keep it until almost to the end, when Noic Lego, a substitute who was very quick to a ball that bounced between defenders in the area, scored a goal and tied the game (1:1). The match went to overtime and Dominik Szoboszlai beautifully scored and the game ended in the 96th minute.

Hungary is in group F with Portugal, France, and Germany and will play Portugal on June 15th at home in Puskás Arena.

Euro 2020 has been postponed to

June-July of 2021 due to COVID-19.

István Arato

...**that** 46-year-old Kapus Krisztián, father of three, is studying for his 21st and 22nd diploma? He is currently studying for certification as a school mental hygienist instructor at the Gál Ferenc University of Szeged, and is doing research for a doctorate in internet dependence at Pécs University.

His twenty diplomas of higher education include those qualifying him to be a Hungarian language instructor, specializing in library science; a masters' degree in teaching Catholic religion; a legal instructor; and more.

Since he was young, he felt at home in the library. Kapus didn't even finish one subject when his mind was already on the next one. He spends his spare time with youth, organizing youth camps.

Congratulations to Kapus Krisztián for his achievements!

Karolina Tima Szabo



Kapus Krisztián

The Carpathians are Lost!

Ft. Regőczi István

The following is taken from Az Isten vándora, the autobiography of Ft. Regőczi István (1915-2013). His father was a soldier in the first World War, and Father Regőczi didn't get to meet him until he was 6 years old, when his father returned from the war.

We thought this piece would be an appropriate one for Christmas, and a good ending to the articles dealing with World War I and its effects on Hungary.

The climax of our Christmas Eve was when, over a steaming cup of tea, Father related his great Christmas experience from the front:

This was already my third Christmas at the front. Our foxhole was among the snow-covered peaks of the Carpathians that reached to the sky. We had to defend a small ford. The gigantic green pines were glittering in Christmas finery. Christmas was approaching, but there was little of the holiday spirit. We were prepared day and night for an attack, and our provisions were scanty. I had been able to save only a teaspoonful of butter for the holiday supper. We decorated a lonely Christmas tree with little colored paper chains, one or two small candles, which we would sit around and hum a few Christmas carols. But it never came to that. Early in the afternoon we were overwhelmed by a heavy attack. The barrage was lightning and thundering around us. The order came to prepare for a charge. I remember only that there was a mighty detonation near me, a mighty impact, and I was falling, falling, headlong. I felt a tremendous pain in my head, everything went dark around me.

I came to myself, hearing some lovely, angelic song, like a Christmas carol. This is heaven – was my first thought. And when I carefully opened my eyes, the bright glitter of a large Christmas tree almost blinded me. Around it were singing figures, like snow-white angels. When my eyes got better used to the light, I tried to move, but couldn't. I paid more attention, and saw a lot of white beds, and with painful disappointment realized this was not heaven, but a hospital ward.

Now a white figure, seeing my attempts to sit up, hurried over from the Christmas tree. This is a religious sister – I recognized her by her large white veil, by her rosary beads hanging from her waist.

"Oh no, you mustn't," she said quietly, and carefully laid me back. "Thank God you've come around. You've been lying here, unconscious, for days." She caressed my sweaty forehead.

"What happened to me?" I asked.

"All I know is that they almost had to dig you out of the earth. The trench totally collapsed from a cannon shot."

"Was I wounded?" I asked.

"In several places, that's why there are all these bandages, but you have to be very careful, especially because of your head injury. Don't move, just rest. As it is, it's a miracle that you escaped. With God's help, we'll bring about your recovery."

I thought for a long time.

"What about my little family?" I asked the sister.

"Don't concern yourself about that now."

"What happened to my comrades?"

"I believe only a few were left", the sister whispered sadly.

“What happened to our military position?”

“I don’t know!” was the answer, “but you only have to rest now. We are praying here, that our soldiers may be able to hold their own. That is why we’re praying the rosary around the Christmas tree now.”

As I fell silent, I heard the whispering murmur of the Hail Marys, and that calmed me down. Now I too was praying with them, quietly, in a fragmented fashion.

The days came and went, I felt ever stronger. The doctors, and especially the sisters cared for me with great love, although they seemed to be ever more anxious. One evening, a new transport of wounded from the front arrived. There were no more empty beds. They placed the stretchers between the beds. When they pushed in a young soldier next to me, my heart gave a leap. I recognized one of my corporals.

“Ákos, sir!” he whispered. “You are here? We thought you had died. We mourned for you too.”

“Feri, my son, what’s with you all? I see you’re wounded too.”

The little corporal whispered sadly: “We couldn’t hold out against the overwhelming force. The enemy almost swept us away. They forced us out. They occupied the Carpathians.”

Something cut me to the heart... So was all the sacrifice of blood in vain? I almost jumped out of my bed. “That’s impossible, my son. Then it’s all over for us!”

I felt that, from the sudden movement, the bandage on my head loosened, and I was covered with blood. The sister ran to me, scared.

“Didn’t I always tell you that you must not excite yourself! Oh, what will the head surgeon say!” With another sister she quickly pushed me back.

The head surgeon came. He looked at my wound, shaking his head. “This will cause a long relapse,” he said sternly.

I just kept whispering, “Everything is in vain, if the Carpathians are lost!”

Father fell silent. He stared ahead for a long time. I looked at his wound, which cut, from his forehead, almost across the top of his whole head,... I would have liked to kiss him. Now I understood everything, why my Father was so morose, so sad, and could never completely recover. He bore the sad wounds of the war on his body as well as on his soul.

translated by EPF

*Ft. Regőczi István (1915-2013), the youngest of 3 boys, studied for the priesthood in Belgium and was ordained in 1943. Returning to Hungary, he began to care for war orphans, and established an orphanage for several hundred children in Vác. In 1949, the Communist government closed the orphanage and jailed Ft. Regőczi for the first time. He was imprisoned two more times, on trumped up charges, for a total of 6 years. He wrote a number of books about his “eagle nestlings” (*sasfiókák*), both in Flemish and in Hungarian, which were best-sellers. He built 7 churches and chapels, for which he obtained considerable support from Belgium. Perhaps the best-known of these is the Hungarian Chapel of Atonement at Kútvolgy on the Svábhegy in Buda. From his own resources, Ft. Regőczi paid for the the education of 10 seminarians.*

Karácsony esténk csúcspontja az volt, amikor édesapa a gőzölgő teáscsésze mellett elmesélte az ő nagy karácsonyi élményét a frontról.

Ez már a harmadik karácsonyom volt a fronton. A Kárpátok égbe nyúló, hóval borított bércei között volt a fedezékünk. Egy kis átkelőhelyet kellett védelmezni. A hatalmas zöld fenyők karácsonyi díszben pompáztak. Közelgett a szent karácsony, de az ünnepi hangulatból kevés volt. Éjjel-nappal támadásra készületben,

hiányos volt az ellátásunk. Csak egy kanálnyi vajacska tudtam kispórolni az ünnepi vacsorához. Egy magányos karácsonyfát díszítettünk fel, színes kis papírláncokkal, egy-két gyertyácskával, hogy majd azt körbeüljük, eldúdolunk egy pár karácsonyi dalt. De már erre nem kerülhetett sor. Kora délután heves támadás zúdult ránk. Villámlott, dörgött körülöttünk a pergőtűz. Jött a parancs: rohamra felkészülni. Már csak arra emlékszem, hogy közvetlen közelemben hatalmas dördülés, becsapódás, és én zuhantam, zuhantam. Iszonyú fájdalmat éreztem fejemben, minden elsötétedett körülöttem. Arra tértem mahamhoz, hogy valami kedves angyali éneket hallok, mint egy karácsonyi dalt. Ez a mennyország – volt első gondolatom. S ahogy óvatosan szememet kinyitom, egy csillogó nagy karácsonyfa ragyogó fénye szinte elvakított. Körülötte mint hófehér angyalok, éneklő alakok.

Mikor szemem jobban megszokta a világosságot, próbálok megmozdulni, de ez nem megy. Jobban odafigyelek, hát megannyi fehér ág, s rádöbbenem fájó csalódással, hogy ez nem a mennyország, hanem kórházterem. Most egy fehér alak, látva erőlködésemet, hogy felüljek, sietett felém a karácsonyfától. Ez egy kedvesnővér – ismertem fel nagy fehér fátyláról, rózsafüzérjéről, mely derekán lógott.

- Jaj, nem szabad – mondta csendesen, és vigyázva visszafektetett. – Hála Istennek – fűzte hozzá –, csak-hogy feleszmélt. Már napok óta eszméletlenül fekszik. Megsimogatta izzadt homlokom.

– Mi történt velem? – kérdeztem.

Annyit tudok, - mondta a kedvesnővér –, hogy szinte úgy kellett kiásni a földből. A futóárok teljesen beomlott egy agyúlövedék becsapódásától.

– Megsebesültem? – kérdeztem.

– Több helyen is, azért ez a sok kötés, de főképpen a fejsérülése miatt nagyon kell vigyázni. Ne mozogjon, csak pihenjen. Így is csoda, hogy megmenekült. Isten segítségével mi rendbehozzuk.

Hosszan elgondolkodtam.

– Mi lehet a kis családommal? – kérdeztem a kedvesnővért.

– Az most ne foglalkoztassa.

– Mi van a bajtársaimmal?

– Azt hiszem, kevesen maradtak – suttogta a nővér szomorúan.

– Mi van az állásunkkal?

– Nem tudom! – volt a válasz –, de önnek most csak pihenni kell. Mi itt imádkozunk, hogy katonáink helyt tudjanak állni. A rózsafüzért most ezért mondjuk a karácsonyfa körül.

Ahogy elhallgatok, hallottam is az üdvözlégyek suttogó moráját, s ez megnyugtató. Most már én is töredezve, halkán imádkoztam velük.

Teltek, múltak a napok, egyre erősebbnek éreztem magam. Az orvosok, de főként a kedvesnővérek, nagy szeretettel gondoztak, bár egyre gondterheltebbnek látszottak. Egyik este újabb betegszállítmány érkezett a frontról. Üres ágyak már nem voltak. A hordágyakat az ágyak közé helyezték. Mikor betoltak mellém egy fiatal katonát, megdobbant a szívem. Megismertem az egyik tizedesemet. Neki is felcsillant a szeme.

– Ákos bátyám! – suttogta. – Hát te itt? Mi azt hittük, hogy meghaltál. El is sirattunk.

– Feri fiam, hát veletek mi van? Látom, te is megsebesültél.

A kis tizedes szomorúan suttogta:

– Túlerővel szemben nem tudtunk helytállni. Szinte elsodort az ellenség. Kiszorítottak bennünket. Elfoglalták a Kárpátokat.

Valami úgy a szívembe markolt... Hát hiába volt a sok véráldozat? Majd kiugrottam az ágyamból.

– Ez lehetetlen, fiam. Hiszen akkor végünk van! A hirtelen mozdulattól éreztem, hogy a kötés a fejemen meglazult, elöntött a vér. A kedvesnővér ijedten rohant oda.

– Ugye mondtam mindig, hogy semmi izgalom. Jaj, mit szól majd a főorvos úr. – S egy másik nővérrel gyorsan visszanyomtak. Jött a főorvos. Fejcsóválva nézte a sebemet.

– Ez hosszú visszaesést okoz – mondta szigorúan.

Én csak suttogtam:

– Hiába minden, ha a Kárpátok elveszett!

Édesapa elhallgatott. Hosszan nézett maga elé. Én meg sebére néztem, mely homlokától szinte az egész fejét átszelte. Szerettem, volna megcsókolni. Most már mindent megértettem, hogy miért olyan komor, szomorú az én édesapám, aki már soha teljesen fel nem épülhetett. A háború szomorú sebeit testén, lelkén egyaránt viselte.



Ft. Regőczy István, 2011

(photo EPF)



used by permission from www.erdely-szep.hu/
[Madarasi-Hargita](#)

Kicsi a világ!

EPF
This "Small World" episode is different, in that it does not relate a meeting of Hungarians in unexpected places, although the main character WAS Hungarian. But the Board of Editors decided that it was a funny story, and that we need something less serious during these hard times.

So with your indulgence, here is a "Small World!" story, but an encounter that was not a pleasant one, as my brother Remy could have testified.

After World War II, we lived in Hannover for two years, in two rooms in someone's apartment allocated to us

by the housing authority. This someone, a Frau B., made life quite unpleasant, especially for my Mother. Among ourselves, we called Frau B. a witch.

After those two years, we were able to move to Essen, into ONE room allocated to us (that's another story!). Essen is where my brother Remy met Agnes, his wife-to-be. Then we emigrated to America, and they corresponded for 6 years, before Remy finished his engineering degree and was able to think of marriage.

In 1955, he booked passage on a liner to Bremen, to marry Agnes. In Bremen, Agnes was dockside, among a crowd of people who had come to meet family and

friends. She noticed a very unpleasant old woman in the crowd near her, who loudly commented on the people disembarking. As Remy came down the ramp, scanning the people for Agnes, this woman – you guessed it, Frau B.! – loudly yelled, "Herr Papp!" and threw her arms around his neck. Agnes was flabbergasted! Who was this woman???

Remy had to explain ... and to this day, we believe she really WAS a witch! How else did she know where to go (Bremen is not near Hannover!), which boat to meet, and where to stand as Remy disembarked?

Yes, it was a meeting to remember – but not with a smile!

Snapshots: Geszt, Home of the Tisza Family

Karolina Tima Szabo

Geszt, the small village (population 821), is located in the northeastern corner of Békés County, called the “*Viharsarok*” (Stormy Corner).

The town’s origin goes back to the Árpád age, to 1213. At that time, four or five small homesteads (*tanya*) were there, most likely a donation to some noble families. In 1590, Báthory István, Prince of Transylvania donated two small farms at this location to the Tisza family. They lost them during the Turkish invasion. In 1759, they received, not the original farms, but some others, including Geszt.

The family later purchased surrounding land; the total grew to about 1,500 acres. In the pre-Trianon era, the town was in the middle of Hungary; now it borders Romania.

Not many people know that this town gave two prime ministers to Hungary, three times. Tisza Kálmán, Prime Minister of Hungary from 1875 -1890, and Tisza István, Prime Minister 1903-1905, and 1913-1917.

There are a few treasures to see in Geszt: the Tisza castle, the Tisza family crypt, the Reformed church and the Arany János Literary Memorial House.

The castle was built around 1760 in the Baroque style, with some French influence, and saw many additions and changes over the years. It is approximately 10,000 square feet, has 32 rooms and was originally surrounded by a 67-acre park. After the family left Hungary during WW II, the castle and park drastically deteriorated. It all came under the jurisdiction of Debrecen University, later of the Zsadány state farm.

The furnishings of the castle were destroyed, some buildings were torn down. Today, the park consists of about 13 acres; the rest belongs to the Körös-Maros National Park. Property further away from the castle reverted



Top: This is what the Tisza castle will look like after renovation; bottom: Tisza family crypt; Arany János Literary Memorial House; Reformed Church

to nature.

A coworker and friend of mine, Laszlo Grof-Tisza, great-grandson of Tisza István, told me at one time that the government offered to give the castle back to the family, but it was in such bad condition that the family did not have the resources to restore it; therefore, it was left with the government. More recently, the current Hungarian government entrusted Commissioner Lázár János with overseeing a 6 billion FT renovation of the castle and surrounding area. The work has already started, and will be completed in 2022. It will be a National Memorial to honor the Tisza family. (At the same time, the Széchenyi castle in Nagycenk will be renovated to create a national shrine in the western part of the country.)

The renovation will include a small house, which was located in the English garden. This is where our famous poet, Arany János lived in 1851-1852; he was teaching Domokos, the son of Tisza I. Lajos. (The original building had been torn down in 1944.) Currently, it is the Arany János Literary Memorial House, where the library is located.

The Tisza family crypt was built in the early 1770’s. In 1902, the remains of other family members were also moved here. Currently 33 of them rest here, including Prime Ministers Tisza Kálmán and Tisza István. The crypt was renovated in 2001.

Documents from 1721 relate that the village had a small Reformed church, enlarged in 1817, but not much more information is available about it. The last previous renovation occurred in 1982. The current renovation project includes 400 million Ft for the church.

The Hungarian Government and the Parliament decided to give the castle and its surrounding area to the Reformed Church, in hopes that it will be a responsible owner, making it in the future not just a National Memorial, but also a spiritual and physical meeting center for Hungarians and Calvinists in the Carpathian Basin.

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.