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Ungvár coat of arms

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Love? Szerelem?

In consideration of Valentine's Day, we are publishing a poem on love by Juhász Gyula. His surprise at, and questioning of his emotion is not surprising, given his melancholy character.

Juhász Gyula: Szerelem?

*Én nem tudom, mi ez, de jó nagyon,
Elrévedezni némely szavadon,
Mint alkonyég felhőjén, mely ragyog
És rajta túl derengő csillagok.*

*Én nem tudom, mi ez, de édes ez,
Egy pillantásod hogyha megkeres,
Mint napsugár ha villan a tetőn,
Holott borongón már az este jön.*

*Én nem tudom, mi ez, de érzem,
Hogy megszépült megint az életem,
Szavaid selyme szíven símogat,
Mint márciusi szél a sírokat!*

*Én nem tudom, mi ez, de jó nagyon,
Fájása édes, hadd fájjon, hagyom.
Ha balgaság, ha tévedés, legyen,
Ha szerelem, bocsásd ezt meg nekem!*

Juhász Gyula (1883 – 1937) was born in Szeged, and thought of becoming a priest, but became a teacher instead. He had great empathy for the Hungarian peasant and loved the countryside. He suffered from a serious neurosis, and became increasingly reclusive. Severe migraines finally drove him to commit suicide.



Szinyei Merse Pál: Szerelem

Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén, Minstrel of Turkish Times

EPF

The Turks invaded Hungary at the beginning of the 16th century, and many battles were fought before they had subdued the center of the country.

Traveling around the battlefields, the wandering minstrel Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén collected information about each encounter, incorporating every detail into his songs. His life's work amounted to 12,000 lines of verse!

The one thing certain about his birthplace is that it was called Tinód – but whether it was lo-

cated in Fejér County, near Sárbogárd, or in Baranya County, is debated. He was born around 1510, and came from what we would call a middle-class family. He studied at Pécs, spoke Latin and was also familiar with musical notation. Until 1541, he was at Szigetvár, in the service of Török Bálint, a nobleman and large landowner, who became one of the chief military commanders in the fight against the Turks. Invited to a

banquet in Buda that year by Sultan Suleyman, during which the Turkish janissaries entered Buda without resistance, Török Bálint was taken captive and carried off to Istanbul, where he died in 1550.

Tinódi's first surviving work seems to indicate that he was also among the knights fighting the Turks, but was wounded in battle, making him unfit for further military service. After the capture of his master, Török, he became a political poet emphasizing, from then on, unity and the necessity of determined fighting against the Turks. To escape the ever-spreading Turkish rule, he moved to Kassa, in Upper Hungary, where he settled and started a family. It was from there that he visited the various sessions of the national assembly and the battlefields.

Incorporating into poems the information he gathered, he also composed the lute accompaniment, and performed these songs when the occasion arose. Often, though brave, many of these soldiers were illiterate but would gladly listen to a sung performance. They often learned about events elsewhere in the country only through his songs, which acquired the status of historical sources.

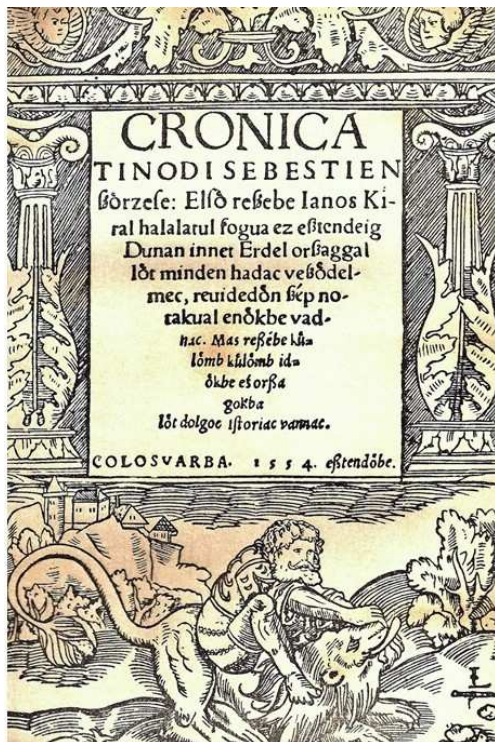
Tinódi's works have much greater historic than literary value. He described his purpose in the preface to his *Cronica* (possibly his first rhymed chronicle) dealing with the battle

fought by Werbőczy Imre against the army of Kászón on the field of Kozár on March 25th, 1542. He said he intended to "provide a lesson for the fighting Hungarian defenders forced into fortresses, on how to withstand, survive honestly and fight the pagan enemy".

He covered Hungary's history between 1541 and 1552, and all that he wrote and that could be verified has proven to be accurate. His objectivity and accuracy make Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén – Sebastian the Lutanist from Tinód – the first significant historian in the Hungarian language.

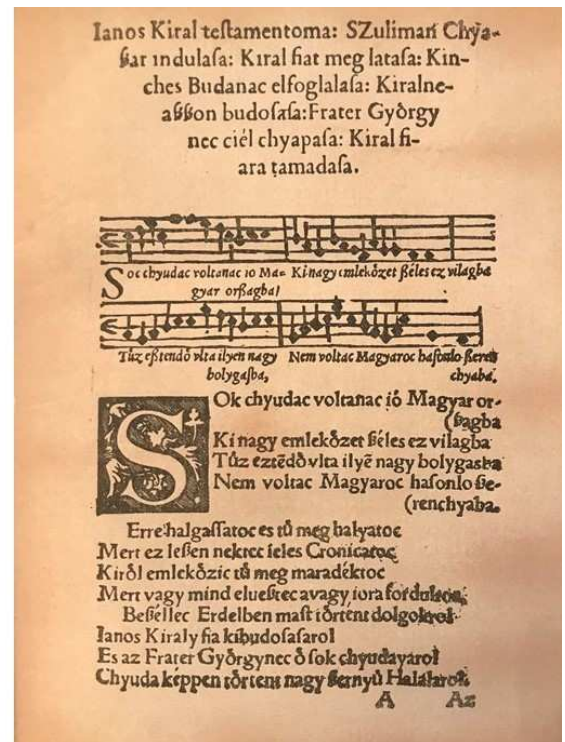


Statue of Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén in Eger



Cover of Tinódi's first song, published in Kolozsvár in 1554. The old-fashioned text reads: "Chronicle authored by Tinódi Sebestyén. In the first part, all battles and perils on this side of the Danube with Transylvania, since the death of King János until this year, have been gathered in brief with music into beautiful songs. The other part has stories from other times and other countries."

Right-hand page: The beginning of one of Tinódi's songs, which he details thus: "Testament of King János; Emperor Suleiman's setting out; His seeing the king's son; Occupation of Buda, rich in treasure; The flight and hiding of the Queen; The fickleness of Frater György; His attack on the king's son." This is followed by musical notation and the beginning of the words to his song.



The Mother of the COVID-19 Vaccine

Olga Vállay Szokolay

There is an abundance of controversy about the COVID vaccine. The public is understandably suspicious and reserved about the new “drug” that seemed to be developed and produced – if not overnight – but in a few short months. The fact not commonly realized is that scientists had worked on the principle of the vaccine, the underlying “enabling technology”, for decades in the laboratories. And one of its innovative scientific researchers most closely affiliated with its development is none other than a headstrong Hungarian biochemist, Dr.Katalin Karikó.

Katalin was born in January 1955 at Szolnok, Hungary. She grew up in the nearby town, Kisújszállás, where her father was a butcher. Ever since childhood she had been interested in science. Thus, upon graduating from high school, she enrolled in the famous University of Szeged, *alma mater* also of Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Györgyi. It was there that she first developed her interest in RNA (ribonucleic acid). She began her career at age 23 at the University’s Biological Research Center, where she obtained her PhD. But the laboratories in Communist Hungary lacked resources and in 1985 *she was let go.*

That was the push Katalin needed to look for work abroad. Although they were happy, just having moved to a new apartment with her husband and two-year old daughter, upon receiving an invitation to a post-doctoral position from *Temple University* in Philadelphia, they decided to leave the country. They sold their car and, since there was a ban on taking money out of the country, she



Dr.Katalin Karikó

sewed the proceeds (about \$1,200) into her daughter’s teddy bear. Then they purchased one-way airline tickets and left Hungary.

She continued her research at Temple, and then later at the *University of Pennsylvania’s School of Medicine*. But, similarly to the fashion world, trends of science come and go. At the end of the 1980s, science’s focus was on DNA, the carrier of genetic information, which was then seen as the key to developing treatments for diseases such as cancer. By the 1990s, Karikó’s idea was that *mRNA (“messenger RNA”)* – a molecule that kickstarts the production of proteins could be created synthetically, injected into subjects, and would direct the body to create antibodies to disease. The trick would be to slip the foreign mRNA past the body’s natural defenses and allow it to fight disease. But it was deemed too radical, too financially risky to fund. All her applications for grants were rejected and in 1995, when she was about to be promoted to full professor, she was demoted to the rank of researcher at UPenn.

Around the same time, she was diagnosed with cancer. In an interview she recalled those days: “...at that point, people just say

goodbye and leave...I thought of going somewhere else or doing something else. I also thought maybe I’m not good enough, not smart enough.”

She was also often on the receiving end of sexism, with colleagues verifying legitimacy of her work by asking her the name of her supervisor when she was running her own lab. Yet, that was where she was happy and that made her *persist in face of difficulties.*

Not unlike water fountains, photocopiers are great meeting places. Katalin had a serendipitous meeting in front of one in 1997 that turbocharged her career. She met *immunologist Drew Weissman, MD, PhD*, who at that time was working on an HIV vaccine. They decided to collaborate to “develop a way of allowing synthetic RNA to go unrecognized by the body’s immune system.”

Together they continued their research and “succeeded in *placing RNA in lipid nanoparticles*, a coating that prevents them from degrading too quickly and facilitates their entry into cells.” It is impossible to deal with the esoteric nature and vocabulary of this duo’s scientific focus and subsequent failures and successes without possessing the necessary background and information in molecular biology. I shall attempt to translate it into more comprehensible concepts for the reader who may be lacking pertinent education. Kindly bear with me.

Beginning in 2005, in a series of articles, Karikó and Weissman described how specific modifications in mRNA led to a reduced immune response. They founded a small company and in subsequent years received patents “for the use of several modified nucleosides to reduce the antiviral

immune response to mRNA”.

After a multitude of patent dealings involving Moderna and Astra-Zeneca, in 2013 Karikó realized she would not get a chance to apply her experience with mRNA at UPenn, so she gave up her position and took a role as senior vice president at the German firm BioNTech RNA Pharmaceuticals.

Dr. Katalin Karikó's research and specializations include mRNA-based gene therapy, RNA-induced immune reactions, molecular bases of ischemic tolerance, and treatment of brain ischemia. Her work contributed to BioNTech's effort to create immune cells that produce vaccine antigens. It also revealed that the antiviral response from mRNA gave their cancer vaccines extra boost in defense against tumors. *This technology was used within a vaccine for COVID-19 that was produced jointly by Pfizer and BioNTech.*

Unlike more traditional shots, mRNA vaccines stimulate the production of killer T cells, which stop the coronavirus from replicating. The vaccines are also relatively easy and quick to produce, since they are made in test tubes or tanks rather than cultivated in cells. *They do not contain live virus, so there is no risk of COVID-19 infection after taking the vaccination.*

On December 18th, 2020 both Karikó and Weissman personally received their first dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine together, more than 20 years after they began their basic science collaboration.

During the ups and downs of research, Katalin's workdays usually started at 6 a.m., and she worked some weekends and holidays. Occasionally she even slept at the office. But, as her husband

said it, for her it was a form of “entertainment”.

It was not work; it was play. She is now hopeful that there is so much interest and excitement for this research, that it will be possible to develop and test this mRNA vaccine technology for prevention and treatment of other diseases too. That could, and probably will lead to new strategies targeting other infectious diseases as well as new therapeutics and products for protein replacement, immunotherapy and personalized cancer vaccines.

As fringe benefits – and consolation – while Katalin was still working at the Ivy-league UPenn, her talented daughter Susan Francia was able to enroll there for a fraction of the tuition costs. Susan received both her bachelor's and master's degree there. She was also a strong rower – first at the collegiate level at UPenn, and then she won gold medals on the US rowing team in both the 2008 and 2012 Olympics. Who knew there was a Hungarian presence in that team at those events? A winner DNA!

The Karikó-Weissman duo's name is being men-

tioned nowadays as potential candidates for a joint *Nobel Prize*. We wish them all the best, whether they win or not. For the time being *Katalin, the Mother of the COVID-19 Vaccine*, did not pop the bubbly just yet. She only had a little private celebration with a bagful of her favorite candy: chocolate covered peanuts.

Go for it, Kati! Congratulations from the Hungarian community in the U.S.!

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.



Dr. Katalin Karikó receiving the vaccine, with Dr. Weissman waiting for his; Susan Francia with her parents.

Mini Sculptures of Kolodko Mihály

István Arato

Kolodko Mihály, a Hungarian-Ukrainian sculptor, was born in 1978 in Uzhhorod (formerly Ungvár in Kárpátalja). He is Hungarian on his mother's side and is a member and representative of the Pannónia Civil Szervezet in Kárpátalja (Pannónia Civic Association of Subcarpathia, now in the Ukraine). He graduated from Lviv (largest city in western Ukraine) Academy of Arts in 2002. The artist creates miniature bronze sculptures that could fit into one hand, that are displayed around Budapest. He now resides at Vác.

Kolodko is well known for his so-called guerrilla art – a street art movement, for which the environment where the piece is placed is essential to the piece's significance. He started shaping his works in 2010, and got the idea of originating mini sculptures because “artists always make a small one before sculpting the large final version of it.”

“I look for places which are a little hidden but still easy to find if you know where to look”, Kolodko told in an interview in his workshop north of Budapest, when asked how he chooses the spot for his art. He does not announce when he places a new one (usually at night), waiting for people to discover it.

When he moved to Budapest in 2016, his first work was a 15 cm (about six inches) statuette of *Fökukac* (Chief Worm), the character from the Hungarian cartoon called “A nagy ho-ho-ho

Horgász” (The great Angler) that is displayed across from the Parliament at Halász Street, on the bank of the Danube in Buda.

Fökukac was the artist's favorite children's story character when he was a kid.

The little statues are shown on the streets in Budapest. There is one representing the legend about the New York Café, where the fable is that Molnár Ferenc, a very prominent Hungarian playwright, threw the key of the restaurant into the river so that the place would always stay open. The little statue is of a diver on the top of a hydrant, with a key in his hand. The hydrant represents the Danube's water.

Another well-known miniature work represents Seress Rezső, composer of *Szomorú vasárnap* (Gloomy Sunday), the famous song that has been sung by singers all over the world, including Billy Holiday. The statue is in the Jewish quarter in Akácfa Street, near the Kispipa restaurant, where Rezső used to be a musician.

Furthermore, there is a significant little tank near the riverbank, representing Hungary's 1956 revolution, with the words “*Ruszkik Haza*” (Russians go home) written on the side of the sculpture. (We used it on our header in October 2018).

The Hungarian poet Hanna Szenes also has her little bronze statue erected on Széna Square. The sculpture was made to commemorate International Women's Day in 2020. Szenes was a Jewish war hero, who was parachuted into Yugoslavia by the British during the Second World War to help anti-Nazi forces, and eventually rescuing Hungarian Jews. When



she got to the Hungarian border, she was arrested, imprisoned, tortured and executed, without exposing details of her assignment.

There are so many of Kolodko's little sculptures all over the city, including Lisa Simpson, a character from “The Simpsons” that is displayed near Jászai Mari tér; and of course, it is likewise necessary to mention the famous and most well-known Hungarian toy, Rubik's Cube, that is located on Bem Quay. Liszt Ferenc also has his mini bronze statue at the Budapest airport.

The little statues are so enjoyable that some of them have been taken by the public. Nowadays Kolodko takes measures to avert the possibility for them to be stolen.

Recently, Alfred Nobel became the artist's first sculpture in Stockholm, where Nobel was born. Kolodko also has some other works displayed in other countries.

As Kolodko Mihály says, “A sculpture - is the loudest art of silent expression for me.”

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.



Some of Kolodko's creations: Left: Diver with key; Chief Worm; Rubik's Cube. Right: Seress Rezső sitting in a pipe, a reference to the "Kispipa" where he played the piano.

Snapshots: Ungvár/ Uzhhorod¹

Erika Papp Faber

Chief city of Kárpátalja (Subcarpathia), the northeastern section of historic Hungary that is located right at the feet of the Carpathian Mountains. Ungvár is now under Ukrainian jurisdiction. It lies on the Ung River (in today's Ukraine: the River Uzh) which is a tributary of the Latorca (today: Latorica) River. Present population is

about 115,000.

The Hungarian tribes, entering the Carpathian Basin by way of Verecke Pass in the year 894, captured Ungvár from a leader named Laborc (whom I could not trace). According to the *Gesta Hungarorum*, the chronicle authored by King Béla III's scribe Anonymus, it was at Ungvár that the chieftain Álmos handed over leadership of the Hungarians to his son Árpád.

A fortress stood on the site in the 9th-10th centuries, which some

say was built by the Slavs, but others claim was established by the Hungarian settlers. At any rate, it became one of the important Hungarian border fortresses during the Árpád dynasty's rule.

The Mongolian invasion of 1241 brought serious damage to Ungvár fortress as it devastated the rest of the nation. In 1248, King Béla IV endowed Ungvár with city rank and rights, making it a part of Ung County.

Around the year 1320, Ungvár came into possession of the



Left: Map of Subcarpathia; Ungvár fortress (Wikimedia Commons); Right: Lamplighter (photo: Anzhelika Gladkaia); Bottom: Byzantine cathedral (photo: Thaler Tamás).

Drugeths, a family with Italian origins. They were the ones who began to rebuild the fortress. A new bridge was built, spanning the Ung River, and commerce flourished.

It was also about this time that German, Flemish and Italian settlers arrived in the city, probably as part of royal efforts to repopulate the country which had not yet recovered from the Mongolian onslaught. (According to credible historic sources, in the one year they were ravaging the country, 40%-50% of the population of Hungary had been exterminated by the Mongolians!)

King Károly Róbert elevated Ungvár to the privileged rank of free royal city, which brought about the development of a middle class. In the 16th-17th centuries, various factories opened in the city.

During the Reformation, Ungvár became an important Protestant center, but due to the efforts of the Jesuit Pázmány Péter, Drugeth György returned to the Catholic faith, and the widow of another Drugeth brought the Jesuit monastery from Homonna to Ungvár. Consequently, religious battles broke out between the Protestant German settlers and the Jesuits.

It was in the chapel of Ungvár fortress that the agreement now known as the Union of Ungvár was finalized on April 24th, 1646. According to its terms, the Rusyn² clergy, which had been part of the Orthodox Church³, agreed to rejoin the Roman Catholic Church. The agreement stipulated that they would retain the Eastern liturgy in its entirety; that bishops were to be chosen by a synod of the clergy and confirmed by the Apostolic See; and that the united clergy were to receive all the ecclesiastic and civil privileges accorded to the Roman Catholic clergy.⁴ This

meant the beginning of a new denomination, that of the Byzantine, or Greek Catholics.

After the defeat of the Rákóczi freedom fight against the Habsburgs in 1711, Ungvár gradually lost its privileges, although it eventually became the County seat (1769). Following Emperor Joseph II's edict of toleration, Jewish settlers swarmed into Ungvár, mostly from Galicia, taking over much of the commerce previously handled by Greeks.

After the Freedom Fight of 1848-49, Ungvár began to develop, with the paving of streets, installation of a sewer system, reconfiguration of fire-prone roofing structures. Incorporating of the railroad line into the Hungarian rail network brought a great upswing of the cultural and economic life of the city, with the establishment of financial and other public institutions.

The Trianon "Treaty" (1920) gave Ungvár to Czechoslovakia, until 1938. Then the First Vienna Award returned it to Hungary, until 1944, when Russian troops took over. In 1945, Ungvár, as all of Subcarpathia, came under Ukrainian, and as such, Soviet jurisdiction. In 1991, Ukraine became independent, and so Ungvár is now Uzhhorod and is under Ukrainian jurisdiction.

In addition to *Kolodko Mihály* (see article about his mini statues elsewhere in this issue), other famous people born in Ungvár include *Lipschütz Salomon/Samuel*, born on July 4th, 1863. He emigrated to New York in 1880, and was a US Chess champion between 1892



Aerial view of Ungvár

and 1894. He wrote a 122-page American Appendix to George H.D. Gossip's *"The Chess-Player's Manual"*, which, according to the *Oxford Companion to Chess*, "helped make this one of the standard opening books of the time." Another famous son of Ungvár is *Bodnár András*, born April 9, 1942, an Olympic water polo champion at the Tokyo Games in 1964. He was also seven-time Hungarian water polo champion and twice European champion. Sources: *Wikipedia*

¹*Uzhhorod in Ukrainian means "City on the Uzh"*

²*Rusyns are the local ethnic group originating in the Carpathian Mountains.*

³*The Orthodox Church broke away from the Western (Roman) Catholic Church in 1054.*

⁴*While the Roman Catholic clergy is not allowed to marry, the Byzantine, or Greek Catholics may marry. Bishops, however, are elected only from among the unmarried priests.*

Keleti Ágnes – Queen of Gymnastics

Karolina Tima Szabo

I always admired the beauty and grace of gymnastics over the years when watching the summer Olympics or World Championships. I am honored that I know personally a four Olympic-gold medalist, gymnast Kati Szabo (no relation). This time I will write about another multiple gold medalist, Keleti Ágnes.



How proud we are to call her our own, and we just celebrated her 100th birthday!

Keleti Ágnes was born on January 9, 1921 in Budapest. She started her gymnastics at the age of 4. At 16, she was already the Hungarian National Champion.

She was getting ready for the 1940 Tokyo Olympic Games, when unfortunately: both the 1940 and 1944 games were cancelled due to WW II. She was expelled from her club in 1941 for being Jewish. Her mother and sister went into hiding, and thanks to Raul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat, they were saved. Her father was exterminated in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. She heard that married women were not taken to work camps (of course, that wasn't true!), so she married Sárkány István, a fellow gymnast in 1944. Divorced in 1950. Ágnes survived by hiding in the countryside where, with fake papers, she worked as a maid.

After the war ended, she continued her training. In 1947, she won the Hungarian Championship, and was qualified for the summer Olympics

of 1948. But she missed the Olympics due to an ankle injury.

Under the name of Sárkány Ágnes, she won four gold, one silver, and one bronze medal at the 1949 World University Games.

By the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Ágnes was 31 years old. She won a gold in floor exercise, a silver in team competition, and a bronze on the uneven bars.

Before her next Olympics, she became World Champion in 1954. She was getting ready for the 1956 Summer Games in Melbourne, Australia, when the Hungarian Uprising occurred. At the time, we didn't hear much about what really happened on the way to Melbourne, or being there. Many years later, I saw a film by Andrew G. Vajna - *Szabadság, Szerelem* ("Freedom and Love", also known as "Children of Glory"). It related how the Hungarian athletes traveled from Europe on the same ship as the Russian team. The fighting already started aboard the ship, and continued at the Games in the water polo pool in the quarter-finals, when the Soviet and Hun-

garian teams met. The pool water was red from the blood of an injured Hungarian player. The bloodthirsty Soviets should have been disqualified for their unprofessional behavior! By the way, Hungary won, 4-0.

Ágnes won three gold medals, floor, bars and balance beams, and silver in the all-around. Her team was first in the portable apparatus event, and was awarded a silver medal in the team competition. Ágnes was 35 years old; she was the oldest athlete to win gold, and the most successful athlete at the Melbourne Olympics.

She won a total of four gold and two silver medals.

During the Olympics, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary. Of the Hungarian athletes, 44 of them, including Ágnes, asked for and received political asylum. She became a coach for the Australian athletes.

Keleti Ágnes emigrated to Israel in 1957, where she was a physical education instructor at Tel Aviv University, and the Wingate Institute for Sports in Netanya.

In 1959, Ágnes married Robert Biro, a physical education teacher; they had two sons. She moved back to Hungary in 2015.

In addition to the medals she earned, Ágnes was honored in many other ways. She was inducted in 1981 – into the International Jewish Sport Hall of Fame, in 1991 – into the Hungarian Sports Hall of Fame, in 2001 – into the International Women's Sport Hall of Fame, in 2002 – into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame. In 2004 - she was named one of Hungary's "Athletes of the Nation". In 2005 - the asteroid 265594 was named Keletiágnés in her honor.

In 2017 - she was announced Laureate of the Israel Prize in the field of sports.

Ágnes currently lives in Budapest; she is the oldest living Olympic gold medalist, and is also an accomplished cello player. While she stopped doing full leg splits on the floor not long ago, she is still exercising.

Happy 100th birthday to a great athlete!

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.

The Year "...21" in Hungarian History

Erika Papp Faber

*Now that we're into 2021, let's go back and see how the various "...21"s (or years thereabouts) provide a bird's eye view of the history of the nation. For suggestions, I am indebted to **Encyclopaedia Hungarica**.*

1021 – According to legend, this was the year the Venetian Benedictine monk Gilbert (Gellért in Hungarian) arrived in Hungary, although most sources give the year as 1015. His destination had been the Holy Land, but his ship was blown off course, and he landed on the Island of St. Andrew in the Mediterranean. There he met the Abbot Gaudentius of the recently founded Benedictine abbey of Pannonhalma. Gaudentius prevailed on him to take his route through Hungary. Introduced to Stephen, the first King of Hungary, Stephen engaged him as tutor to his 8-year-old son Imre, a position Gellért held for 8 years.

King Stephen named Gellért Bishop of Csanád, where he worked at converting the people to Christianity. He lived an ascetic life, and in addition to organizing his diocese, also wrote a meditation, on 166 folios, on the hymn of the Three Young Men of the Old Testament. This document is the longest literary source we have from the 11th century Árpád dynasty's era.

Although King St. Stephen is credited with the conversion of the Hungarian people to Christianity, some pagan holdouts still remained. Following his death, a group of them revolted, and hurled Gellért down the hill that today bears his name, into the Danube.

1121 – Hungarian Empress of Byzantium, Piroska, daughter of King St. László, was building the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople, the chief Byzantine monastery at the time. Part of the complex was a hospital renowned for its treatment of eye diseases! (Known as Irene, she was eventually canonized by the Orthodox Church.)

The following year, her husband, the Emperor John Komnenos, defeated the *besenyős* (Pechenegs) in Thracia (the area known today as the southeastern Balkan region). Some of the defeated escaped to Hungary, where they entered the service of King István II.

1221 – Dominican Paulus Hungarus returned from his Italian studies to organize the Hungarian Dominican province. He sent missionaries to *Szörénység* (at the time considered borderlands near the Iron Gates on the Danube), and later to the Cumanians (*kunok*).

1321 – Nándorfehérvár had been given as an engagement present for the wedding of Hungarian royal princess Katalin to Dragutin István IV, King of Serbia, in 1284. After the death of Dragutin, three years before 1321, it was retaken from the Serbs by King Károly I.

1421 – Turkish invaders into Transylvania ransacked the city of Brassó and the area of Barcaság.

1521 – Five years before the Turkish armies started out from Istanbul to conquer Hungary, Turkish troops captured the fortresses of Szabács, Zimony and Nándorfehérvár.

1621 – End of the first war against the Habsburgs, led by Bethlen Gábor, Prince of Transylvania. At this time, Hungary was divided into three areas – with Habsburg rule in the West and North, Turkish rule in the main part of Hungary, and Transylvania still independent. Bethlen, a Calvinist, strongly opposed the Habsburg persecution of Protestants, and their alliances with the Ottomans. He therefore invaded Habsburg-controlled Hungary, and took Pozsony, the seat of government at the time, where the Palatine ceded him the Hungarian crown. He was elected King of Hungary at the Diet of Besztercebánya in September 1620. But he was much shrewder politically than to accept this honor. He fully realized that allowing himself to be crowned would bring him into conflict not only with the Austrian Emperor, but also with the Turkish Sultan - more than his troops could handle successfully.

The Peace of Nikolsburg was signed on December 31st, 1621. Bethlen Gábor officially renounced the title of king, and handed over the crown to the Habsburgs. However, this did not

end Bethlen's opposition, and he led two more campaigns against the Habsburgs, with further peace treaties in 1624 and 1626.

1721 – Publication began of the second regularly published newspaper in Hungary, by the name of *Novo Posoniensa*. It was published in Latin, by Bél Mátyás (1684 – 1749), a Lutheran minister, historian and geographer. He spoke Slovak (his native tongue), Hungarian and German equally well, but wrote his works in Latin. He received a scholarship from the Besztercebánya Reformed congregation to study in Halle, Germany, where he spent three years taking courses in Theology, Medicine and Zoology. Returning to Hungary, he taught at the *gimnázium* at Besztercebánya, eventually becoming its Rector (the University of that city is now named after him). In 1714, he was invited to become Director of the famed Lutheran *líceum* at Pozsony. In addition to emphasizing the importance of history and geography, he also raised the instructional level of modern languages, and oversaw the work of the teachers. His house became a cultural center; he fostered good relations with the Court, and often interceded in matters of religion. He was invited to become the first minister of the Pozsony Lutheran church, a position he held for 30 years. He married Herrmann Zsuzsanna in 1710, and they had 8 children.

The most important work of Bél Mátyás was the *“Introduction to the History and Geography of Modern Hungary”*, for which he received the financial backing of King Károly III, who also raised him to the ranks of the nobility. Four volumes of the *“Introduction”* were published before he had a stroke, the rest (some 10,000 pages!) remained in manuscript form until 2011, when editing and publication of these pages was begun.

In 1713, he wrote an outline of Hungarian linguistic and literary history, then wrote a German grammar for Hungarian-speakers, and a Hungarian grammar for German-speakers. He also wrote a Latin grammar, published in Lőcse and in Nürnberg. He was the first to study Székely-Hungarian *rovás* script on a scientific level, and wrote the first printed book about it.

1821 – The first Hungarian opera, of which both music and libretto are still in existence, premiered in Kolozsvár in the following year. Titled *Béla futása* (Béla's Escape), it was written by Ruzitska József (1775-1823). The one-act opera was set in 1241, when the Mongolian invasion prompted King Béla IV and his pregnant wife to flee to Dalmatia. The Mongols brought such extreme devastation to the country that he had to bring in foreign settlers to repopulate the country.

The plot was the following: After Béla IV's coming to the throne, the son of Hungarian noble Kálmán is imprisoned for conspiring against the king. Kálmán appeals to Béla to punish the boy if he is truly guilty, but first to examine the case. But the king turns his back on his faithful follower, who soon thereafter is informed of his son's death. The father, totally crushed, harbors revenge against Béla, and goes into hiding in the woods of Dalmatia.

The king had been wounded in the Battle of Muhi, and not recognizing Kálmán, has taken refuge in his castle. But Kálmán postpones his vengeance, not taking advantage of the situation, but honoring the guest's right to hospitality. The queen and her two children are also being pursued by the Mongolians, and rescued by Kálmán and his men, are brought to Kálmán's castle as well.

Kálmán is torn between duty and revenge. Then Béla enters, to thank Kálmán for giving him refuge, and to reveal his identity. Kálmán pours out his bitterness over the murder of his son. Béla, abashed, recognizes Kálmán, and explains he was ready to listen to his plea, but the boy had committed suicide in prison.

An envoy arrives from the Mongolian khan, stating they have heard Kálmán is harboring the king, and unless he hands him over immediately, they will attack the castle. Kálmán is unwilling to betray the king, and so the delegate threatens to kill the queen and her children whom they have captured. Kálmán refutes the lie by bringing in the queen and the children. As a gesture of gratitude, the king entrusts his children to Kálmán's care to be his support and console him for the loss of his son.

It is alleged that this opera inspired Erkel Ferenc (1810-1893) to compose historical operas.

1921 – Following the end of World War I and the dictated “Treaty” of Trianon by which Hungary was deprived of 71.5% of its territory, Habsburg King Charles IV attempted a coup in March, to which the Entente powers strongly objected, so that he left a couple of days later.

Hungarian officers, held hostage by the Russians and Ukrainians, were returned in exchange for the convicted Communist leaders, at the end of July.

During the summer, there was an armed uprising in western Hungary in opposition to the Austrian occupation of that area.

At the end of August, the United States, which did not sign the dictated “Treaty” of Trianon, signed a separate peace treaty with Hungary.

On October 23rd, Charles IV made his second coup attempt. At the Battle of Budaörs, 60 were killed and many wounded.

On November 6th, the Habsburgs were dethroned, for the fourth time! But Charles never abdicated!

On December 16th, a plebiscite (the only one held in all of the territories given away by the so-called "Treaty" of Trianon) was held in Sopron and its vicinity. That city and a few other settlements opted for staying with Hungary.

* * *

That was quite a ride, wasn't it?

It's a Small World!

Olga Vállay Szokolay

Cyber technology opens up the whole globe and yonder to anyone who cares to look. One can find fascinating information on arts, history, sciences, medicine, geography, astronomy, as well as missing lines from favorite poems and even old Hungarian popular songs. The easy availability of the abundance of it all can fill one's days even in the isolation of COVID. Yet, it eventually precludes reaching out to local happenings and people. Perhaps lately I learned a useful lesson.

Being a rather private person, the voluntary quarantine is no significant change from my retired life. Having lived in my house for 40 years had acquainted me with no more than a handful of people on my street. Nevertheless, my daughter Sylvia is one of the most gregarious persons. During her last visit from Colorado, in her walks she met and befriended my next-door neighbor whose identity I had no idea about, even though – as it turned out – they had moved in there five years ago. Their little girl, almost four-year old Sienna,

must be the best-behaved child since I haven't even realized her existence all this time.

Her parents are friendly and easy-going. He is manager at a Trader Joe's store and immediately offered to do shopping for me and bring it to my door. I took him up on that kind offer. When he delivered, we chatted a while at the door. It turned out that while his wife is of all Italian stock, on his father's side he is Italian, but his mother is – lo and behold – Hungarian! He is even familiar with chicken paprikash...

When weather will allow outdoor sitting, I hope we can develop closer contacts, with some Hungarian delicacies!

Did you know...

... **that** a Hungarian is on the list of those honored by the Queen of



England?

Szakmány Tamás obtained his diploma in anesthesia at the Tudományegyetem in Pécs. In 2004 he went to the United Kingdom to study and acquire more experi-



ence. After he decided to stay, he became a doctor, later director of the critical illness department in Gwent Hospital in Wales.

He was invited to Cardiff University to lead the intensive care research.

Together with other scientists, he worked on a multi-center clinical trial in infection and immunity, and how to prevent and treat infections.

Szakmány Tamás is being knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. for his work during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Congratulations to Professor Szakmány Tamás!

Source:
Szeretlekmagyarorszag.hu

Rákóczy túrós sütemény / Rákóczy cottage cheese cake

*The following recipe is a variation of a so-called **Rákóczy túrós torta**. I selected this recipe where the measuring is with cups.*

The original recipe is from Rákóczy János, master confectioner. His recipe was internationally noticed at the 1958 World Exhibit in Brussels.

Ingredients:

for the pastry:

1 ½ cup flour
1 ¼ stick butter
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ cup sugar
2 egg yolks
½ sour cream
pinch of salt
3 Tbsp apricot preserves

for the cream

1 lb. cottage cheese
½ cup sour cream
zest of one lemon
½ cup raisins
¾ cup sugar
3 Tbsp. cream of wheat
2 egg yolks

for the topping

4 egg whites
½ cups granulated sugar
¾ tbs cream of tartar
½ jar apricot preserves (about ½ lb.)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 ° F.

Pastry:

Mix the ingredients of the pastry together with your hands, roll it out and put it into a greased and floured 8"x11" cookie sheet. Prebake for 15-20 minutes. Remove from oven and spread 3 Tbsp. apricot jam on top.

Cream:

Mix the egg yolks with the sugar until the mixture whitens, then add the cottage cheese, sour cream, raisins, lemon zest and cream of wheat, and combine well.

Spread cream onto the prebaked pastry, put it back into the oven and bake for 25 more minutes at 350° F. Remove from oven.

Topping:

Beat egg whites with an electric mixer until frothy. Add cream of tartar and beat until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 tbs at a time, until sugar is dissolved and stiff, glossy peaks form.

Put meringue into a piping bag and draw bars on top of the cream. Lower the temperature to 285° F. Leave cake in the oven until the heat slowly dries out the meringue and just starts to change color. Remove from oven.

Warm apricot preserves. With a piping bag, or a small spoon, fill in the gaps between the meringue with the apricot preserves.

Cool cake completely on a rack before serving.

Please note:

Prepare the cream before the pastry dough is made.

While the cake is in the oven the second time, make the meringue.



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