



MAGYAR STUDIES OF AMERICA

Magyar News Online

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FINAL
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**Boldog Anyák Napját kívánunk minden Édesanyának!
Happy Mothers' Day!**

Anyának / For Mom

Móra Ferenc

Álmomban az éjszaka
aranykertben jártam.
Aranykertben aranyfán
aranyrigót láttam.
Aranyrigó énekét
a szívembe zártam.
Ahány levél lengedez
szél ringatta ágon,
ahány harmatcsepp ragyog
fűszálon, virágon
Édesanyám, fejedre
annyi áldás szálljon.



A simple little poem for Mothers' Day. The author describes a dream in which he saw a golden garden, with a golden bird sitting on a golden branch. He wishes his Mom as many blessings as there are leaves on a branch, drops of dew on grass and flowers.

Móra Ferenc (1879-1934) was a journalist and writer of novels. He was a prominent figure in youth literature. In 1917, he was appointed Director of the combined library and museum of Szeged and Csongrád County, a position he held until his death. The Museum of Szeged is now named after him.



MNO Swan Song

Erika Papp Faber

*After 14 years on the Internet,
it's time to say good-bye!*

According to an old Hungarian song,
„Minden elmúlik egyszer,
minden végéhez ér ...”

“Everything passes away,
everything comes to an end...”

After 14 years, it's our turn. Magyar News Online, successor to Joseph Balogh's printed Magyar News, is shutting down with this issue.

We've had a wonderful run! We learned a lot, as we delved into

Hungarian history and customs, into folk songs and heroes – famous and not so famous – and explored the roots we all have in common.

But now it's time to close up shop. None of us is getting any younger, and we're running out of steam.

The MNO team has become a close-knit group, and we will greatly miss the camaraderie of our monthly planning meetings (even if via zoom in this last year). But as much fun as all the research has been, it doesn't get any easier with time, nor does the putting together of each issue. While members of the team will keep in touch with each other, we need to move on ...

We all thank you for looking us up every month, and for your donations that allowed us to be on the internet all these years. We hope that through our efforts you too have come to a greater appreciation of our common millennial heritage, and have become even prouder of having Magyar blood!

So it's time to say good-bye – and may God bless you and us and all Hungarians, wherever they may be!

Isten, áldd meg a magyart!

P.S. The website will be up until the end of June.

Joseph F. Balogh

(April 27, 1922 – November 17, 2017)

**Founder, Editor and Publisher
of the Magyar News
(1990-2007)**

Claudia E. Margitay-Balogh

It has been stated that one can do anything as long as one has the passion, the drive, the focus, and the support. These words certainly ring true for the dedicated staff who created the **Magyar News** – first in printed newsletter format and then on the internet.

From November 1990 to January 2007, Joseph F. Balogh (Balogh József) of Stratford, CT was the Editor and Publisher of the monthly newsletter the **Magyar News**. For seventeen years, Joseph Balogh informed, motivated, and educated the American-Hungarian community. In doing so, he performed a great service to all who made claim to Hungar-

ian origins.

Mr. Balogh kept his readers in touch with their Hungarian roots by including in each issue interesting and challenging articles on such topics as Hungarian history, politics, the arts, and current topics of interest both in America and in Hungary. He also highlighted and covered events that were happening in the Hungarian communities in CT. By inviting many others to write about their ancestry, their experiences growing up in a Hungarian family, or their trips to the Motherland, Joseph Balogh allowed the writers to show their pride and joy to others. Since Joseph was a photo-journalist in Hungary, the numerous photographs and illustrations that accompanied his articles enhanced the reader's experience.

Creating the **Magyar News** was truly a labor of love for Mr. Balogh. He never received any money for his efforts – on the contrary, there were times when the gap between expenses and income was covered from his own pocket. It was the advertisers' fees that covered the cost of printing. The **Magyar News** was distributed to Hungarian churches and Hungarian businesses free of charge. As time went on, many people living outside of Bridgeport, Fairfield, Norwalk, CT learned of this publication and wanted it to be sent to them on a monthly basis. At one point, **Magyar News** was being sent out to 35 states in the United States.

Mr. Balogh's reward came from his subscribers' notes saying how much they enjoyed reading the **Magyar News**, how much they learned from it, and how, from time to time, their children and grandchildren were able to find out something about their



Joseph F. Balogh

own ancestry.

In 2007, Mr. Balogh who was then 85 years old, realized that researching and writing articles, taking photographs, corresponding with other writers, creating the ten-page format, soliciting for ads, and meeting deadlines was becoming overwhelming. Hence, he realized that that it was time to step away. In his January 2007 issue, the front-page headline read "...with a broken heart..."

In this heartfelt piece of writing, Balogh József, my dear beloved husband, thanked the many people who had helped him in so many different capacities throughout the years. He was always so grateful for their dedication and their support.

The last line of Joseph's swan song reads, "I thank everybody, including our readers for being with us, and hope someone will find a way." That someone, who has been the editor of **Magyar News Online** for the last 12 years, is Erika Papp Faber. Needless to say, Joseph was thrilled that Erika took the baton and has successfully run her journey with the online ver-

sion of the **Magyar News**. She and her staff have dedicated themselves to the Hungarian community. Each issue has always been created with integrity, professionalism, and reader appeal. Thank you, dear Erika for being that someone who found the way.

Editor's note: **It was originally Bob Kranyik who "took the baton" and got Magyar News Online started in 2007. He handed it on to me only a year and a half later.** EP



Joseph and Claudia Balogh, on Joseph's 85th birthday

First Editor of MNO, Robert Donald Kranyik

Olga Vallay Szokolay

As we say good-bye to our kind Readers, we think it appropriate to pay tribute to the man who launched Magyar News Online 14 years ago.

When, after 17 years, Joseph Balogh had to stop publishing the printed Magyar News, Bob Kranyik insisted that we could not allow Joseph's initiative to fade away, but that we should try to keep it alive in some form. That is when we decided to continue the publication online.

Bob became our first Editor, and guided us in the beginning. Then, as a member of the Editorial Board, he contributed greatly to the webpage's scope. He wrote numerous articles, most of them on the Hungarian history of the Bridgeport-Fairfield area, with which he was intimately familiar, since he grew up there. He was extremely proud of his Hungarian heritage, and was always "working on something for the next issue". As Joe Ull, a good friend and another member of the Editorial Board said, "Bob was a sparkplug for MNO".

In addition to his contributions to Magyar News Online, Bob was also instrumental in organizing and coordinating a very well-attended six-week course on Hungarian history and culture at the Fairfield Senior Center in the fall of 2008, entitled "Hungary from the Urals to Fairfield", in which some of the MNO staff participated as presenters. And he was very active in the establishment of a Hungarian Archive at the Fairfield Museum.

Who was Bob Kranyik? He was born at Fairfield, CT on September 19, 1931. He received both undergraduate and graduate degrees from Fairfield University, a Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut, and

did advanced graduate work at New York University, Teachers College of Columbia University, and the New School for Social Research.

After serving in the Fairfield Public Schools for seven years as a teacher and administrator, Professor Kranyik joined the faculty of the University of Bridgeport, where he rose to become Dean of the College of Education, and was awarded the Charles A. Dana Professorship in Educational Management. At the University of Bridgeport, he led the development of a national award-winning master's degree program in elementary education, and the creation of the University's Doctoral Program in Educational Management.

In addition to his contributions to MNO, Bob was also the author of numerous professional articles in the fields of curriculum, teaching, and educational administration, as well as five books in the same fields. Upon retirement from the University, he was awarded emeritus rank, and went on to spend five years working with School Development Program at the Yale Child Study Center.

Bob served in the United States Navy Reserve, and was discharged as a Petty Officer First Class. He spoke four languages, and also wrote a number of columns in local newspapers about Fairfield and Easton issues and environmental concerns.

He was especially proud of his role in the preservation of Trout Brook Valley, and more than 16,000 acres of water company land in Western Connecticut.

He was a life member of Fayerweather Yacht Club, where he served as a member of the Board of Governors and president of the FYC Holding Corporation. He loved sailing on his sloop, "Silver Heels", and participated in both racing and cruising to faraway places. His special interest was sailing in the Virgin Islands with family and friends.

Bob and his wife Louise were happily married for more than 59 years, had two daughters and two grandchildren.

Robert D. Kranyik departed this life at age 80, on August 24, 2012.



MNO staff at St. Ladislaus Church pig roast. Bob is second from right.

Msgr. Charles Boehm, First Hungarian Priest in America



EPF

Memorial Hall is located on the crypt level of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. Among the multitude of tablets and plaques is one commemorating Msgr. Charles Boehm, "First Hungar-

ian immigrant priest in North America". Fortuitously, it is located near the Hungarian Chapel, dedicated in 2015 (see our September 2015 issue).

Towards the end of the 19th century, Cleveland, OH offered immigrants the opportunity to work, so that many Hungarians settled there. But they had no Hungarian-speaking clergy to minister to their spiritual needs, and many fell away from the Church, since they could not understand the sermons in the existing churches nor go to confession in their own language.

At the request of the local American bishop, a Hungarian priest, Rev. Boehm Károly, Pastor of Márianosztra, was sent by the Hungarian Prince Primate, Vaszary Kolos. Fr. Boehm arrived in Cleveland on December 1st, 1892. The bishop entrusted him with the organization of a new Hungarian parish, and on December 11th, he founded the first Hungarian parish in America under the patronage of St.

Elizabeth of Hungary.

After buying four plots of land, the church was built in three months, and Fr. Boehm celebrated the first Hungarian Mass in the first Hungarian church in America on September 8th, 1893. The following month, the parishioners built a wooden school, where a single lay person began teaching the children. In 1896, they erected another building, which served both as a rectory and had two more school rooms on the first floor. Two Ursuline Sisters came to teach religion to the children, while Fr. Boehm himself taught them Hungarian. In 1900, a two-story, brick school was built, with 10 classrooms.

In 1894, Fr. Boehm began publishing his weekly *Szent Erzsébet Amerikai Hírnöke* containing parish news and later, news of his planned mission trips to Hungarian immigrants in other parts of the US. In 1901, his bulletin joined the weekly



the increased congregation. It was blessed by Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland in February of 1922.

Fr. Boehm returned to Cleveland in 1923, and in 1925 was named Monsignor by Pope Pius XI. In 1926, the new rectory was blessed by Csernoch János, Hungary's Prince Primate at the time, who was visiting the US to take part in the Chicago Eucharistic Congress. This was also the year Msgr. Boehm celebrated the golden jubilee of

Left: Msgr. Boehm in his office; cupola of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church; plaque in Washington, DC Basilica; Right: New church of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Cleveland, OH, dedicated in 1922.

Katolikus Magyarok Vasárnapja (Catholic Hungarians' Sunday), and appeared as part of that paper for the next five years.

Not content to minister to Hungarians in Cleveland, Fr. Boehm sought out Hungarians from San Francisco to Bridgeport, CT, from Rockspring, TX to Trenton, NJ, from Chicago to Omaha, traveling by train, horse-drawn cart and on foot to bring the Sacraments to the flock scattered from sea to shining sea. Slovaks would also flock to him wherever he appeared.

People would gather in some-

one's house, where he would baptize children, hear confessions (often into the wee hours, to accommodate shift workers), hold prayer services and preach, and say Mass for people who had been away from the Church for years. It is said that 19 other Hungarian parishes across America owed their existence to the work of Fr. Boehm.

In 1907, Fr. Boehm received his bishop's permission to relocate to St. Louis, MO, to continue mission work among the Hungarian immigrants there. While he was away, a new, larger church had to be built to accommodate

his ordination.

He had been born in Selmezbánya in 1853, studied in Vienna, and had been ordained in Esztergom.

In June of 1927, at the age of 74, Msgr. Boehm resigned from his post as Pastor, but continued to reside in the rectory until his death in 1932.

The plaque in the Basilica calls him "A zealous missionary, faithful shepherd, pioneer Hungarian apostle." And the Cleveland parish he founded still flourishes to this day.



Top row: Gyula Egervári (1927-2008), Founder of Magyar Studies of America, sponsor of Magyar News Online; Bob Kranyik (1931-2012); Joe Ull; Stephen Jakob; 2nd row: Olga Vállay Szokolay; Erika Papp Faber; Judit Vasmatics Paolini; Eva Wajda; 3rd row: Karolina Tima Szabo; Zsuzsa Lengyel; Charlie Bálintitt Jr.; Zita Balogh; 4th row: István Arato; Paul Soos; Eliz Kakas; Martha Schipul.

Parting Words from the MNO Team

Stephen Jakab

Steve obtained a degree from Fairfield University, and eventually became Associate Vice President of Administration at the same institution. He was a member of the MNO team for a while.

I felt so sad when you informed me about the about end of the MAGYAR NEWS ONLINE. I know firsthand how hard you all worked to make it so popular with the Hungarian community and others. I was thrilled to be invited to work with you all for a short time.

Since both my parents were born in Tiszalök, Hungary, I was a first generation American. However, I was and still am so thankful and proud of my Magyar heritage. I had to learn English when I went to school since all we spoke at home was Hungarian and I was brought up in the West End of Bridgeport. Later lived in Black Rock, which in those days was also very Hungarian.

MAGYAR NEWS ONLINE gave me the opportunity to meet wonderful people and revisit so much of the Hungarian "world" that I missed very much.

Thank you Erika. It was a joy and privilege to work with you all.

Olga Vállay Szokolay

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.

About a decade ago Erika asked me if I would write an article for MNO on the passing of my colleague and friend, architect Makovecz Imre. Upon obliging she invited me to serve on the Board. I accepted and have been happily part of that delightful group ever since.

Over those years I wrote several dozen articles about arts, people, places, customs, happenings, family, as well as memories from my long and eventful life. The commitment gave me purpose, focus and great satisfaction. My writings did not spare occasional juicy details or off-the-wall humor. I had fun.

Our Board meetings before COVID were never limited to business only. We celebrated birthdays – always with bubbly and delicious baked goods by our ambitious members – and had great little socials: something we looked forward to.

Closing the doors behind us will end an era but not the friendships. My many heartfelt thanks to Erika for having included me in this matchless experience!

Erika Papp Faber (EPF)

Born in Hungary before the outbreak of WWII, Erika came to the US with her parents at age 11. She attended Georgetown University on a partial scholarship, majoring in International Affairs. She worked at the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for 14 years, editing a

quarterly magazine. At the time of Cardinal Mindszenty's visit to NY, she acted as a freelance reporter, even having an exclusive interview with him. She married Oscar Faber, and moved to CT in 1989.

I had been a fairly regular contributor to Joseph Balogh's *Magyar News*, and was on board when Bob Kranyik took the helm as *Magyar News Online* was launched in June of 2007. He set the course for the new internet version (see special article about Bob elsewhere in this issue), and a year and a half later handed the helm of editorship to me. It has been an exciting voyage of discovery!

I thank the Lord Who inspired and sustained us, and will miss not only our monthly meetings, but especially the joy and camaraderie as we researched and put together 154 issues over the years. I would like to thank every member of the wonderful MNO team for pulling together in our common endeavor! Without your enthusiasm, the web page would not have been possible! I have appreciated your hard work and support over the years – and the fun we had! – more than I can express! *Isten áldjon meg mindegyikünket, és tartson meg még sokáig egészségben és barátságban!*

Úgy legyen!

viola vonfi

Now that MNO is closing, I will uncover a little secret: viola vonfi was the *alter ego* of EPF! She was a figment of my imagination, and I greatly enjoyed creating a *persona* for her. She was called upon mostly

when the topic called for a lighter touch. She actually got some positive feedback, which was cause of no little merriment to us, and I had to do some fancy footwork to avoid letting the cat out of the bag! Thank you for accepting her as one of our team! Please forgive us for this "pious fiction"!

Judit Vasmatics Paolini

Judit Vasmatics 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.

I enjoyed writing for Magyar News under Joseph Balogh. My first essay appeared in October, 1995! New Haven hosted the Special Olympic World Games; and I served as Delegation Host Leader to Team Hungary. My essay expressed the exhilarating feeling I experienced at the Opening Ceremonies at the Yale Bowl. I stood proudly with Team Hungary as a Hungarian. I enjoyed life in CT as an American citizen. At the Opening Ceremonies I was especially delighted as my two worlds came together!

Joe periodically asked me to write something. I recall one time expressing that I had nothing new to offer. He then expressed that I surely had something in my treasure trove of experiences! *Treasure trove* of experiences! Yes! I did have delightful ink spots to dab on a page!

Serving on the Magyar News Online Editorial Board, I was not the one at the monthly meetings

nor the one who contributed every month. However, when called upon, I always embraced the challenge. The articles which were the most challenging to write were the ones which offered the greatest discoveries about Hungarian history, its people, etc...

And then...I received an unexpected plum when I incorporated one of my essays in a class lesson! In this particular piece I wrote about Dad being a hero. In 1956, Dad – along with his wife and five young children – attempted crossing the border from Communist Hungary into Austria. During our attempt we were held at gunpoint! Nonetheless, Dad called the soldiers *taknyos gyerekek*, snott-nosed kids. The conversation went back and forth. Dad had a three-year old fast asleep in his arms; yet, he engaged in this conversation, unwaveringly telling the soldiers to let us pass! Fortunately, they did and we managed to make our way to freedom.

This essay was especially well received by my class. The students' journal entries were truly exceptional; the class discussion was the best ever – it was a time of great discovery for everyone, including the teacher!

I am humbled that my writings have touched lives! My great appreciation goes to Erika and the exceptional members of the MNO Editorial Board.

Éva Wajda

Eva Wajda is a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.

It was an awesome learning experience for me to be part of the MNO dedicated team who, under the editorial leadership of Erika, made it the success that it was. It will be missed.

Karolina Tima Szabo

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.

I had been reading the Magyar News print edition since the beginning and started to make my own collection. To me, Jóska bácsi was always a special person; I admired his gentle manners and endless talents. When he decided to stop publishing the paper, I had no question in my mind that it should be continued.

MNO, as we call it, was born, thanks to Bob Kranyik, Erika Papp Faber, Gyula Egervari, and Andy McCallihan. I was a system analyst for the local newspaper, so it made sense that I would take on the systems part. Soon after, I wrote my first article about the city of Celldömök, where two of my sisters lived. It was in October, grape harvest time. There were festivities, a parade, music, dancing, crafts and food were sold. It was so awesome that I felt I had to share it with people. From then on, here and there I wrote articles for MNO. Leaving the country many years before, it was a challenge for me to bring back memories from my school years, and search in books and Google for information.

In 2003 and 2004, my granddaughters were born. After that,

my thinking changed completely. I wanted to share my love of my birth country with Ally and Livvy. I wanted them to learn about the beauty of the land, the tragic history, the culture and arts. I prayed that I would achieve that. They both came "home" with me to visit in 2016, and they both wrote articles of their experiences for MNO.

Now I wish they would learn the ancient, unique, and beautiful language of, as Ally once wrote, "my people, the Magyars".

Zsuzsa Lengyel

Zsuzsa Lengyel is Assistant Webmaster of Magyar News Online.

I helped to establish MNO under Magyar Studies of America, which is an existing organization. I want to thank everybody for their hard work over the years. It was very nice working together with my friends.

Charles Bálintitt Jr.

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

I would like to thank all my fellow members of the Magyar News family. About seven years ago, Erika Papp Faber asked me to join the Editorial Board of Magyar News and since then I have written over three dozen articles. It has been a true privilege and I will always be grateful to Erika for including me in this group. Unfortunately, a magazine, just

as the human body, cannot function without a heart and soul; so, without Erika's leadership, this wonderful chapter of our lives must come to an end.

Zita Balogh

Zita Balogh comes from Zágon, Transylvania, where she studied hotel management. She is currently receptionist at "The Inn at Fairfield Beach", and is Treasurer of Magyar News Online.

I tried to bring the figures together with love and attention over the long period of years, since I was Treasurer from the time of Balogh Jóska *bácsi* until now.

We certainly never had a lot of money, but the good Lord directed many good-hearted donors to us. That is how we could pay our expenses.

I take this opportunity to thank the generosity of the donors, the support of our sponsors and the contributions of our members. It is with a sad heart that I note that we are closing the doors of MNO. I will miss the time we spent together as well as every member of the team. May God help everyone!

István Arato

István Arato, son of Hungarian immigrant parents, was born in São Paolo, 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.

Collaborating for Magyar News Online for the last couple of years was such a pleasure. It gave me back the opportunity of writing again and acquiring more knowledge about Hungary!!

Paul Soos

Paul Soos is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online, a lay reader) at St. Ladislaus R.C. Church in South Norwalk, CT, and a student at the Magyar Studies Hungarian School in Fairfield. He is a former U.S. Air Force Officer.

Sadly, all good things come to an end. MNO had a great run and I am thankful and proud that I had a small part in it. Many thanks to the creator of Magyar News, Joseph Balogh and the inspiration for Magyar News Online, Robert Kranyik. A special thank you to our MNO editor, Erika Faber, for keeping the online version going after the print version ended in 2007. Finally, thank you to all the staff and contributors for all your hard and professional work. It was and is an honor and privilege to have known all of you.

Eliz Kakas

Eliz Kakas is an Editorial Board member of Magyar News Online, and writes from Florida.

I was not very active, but I want to emphasize that the MNO team is a wonderful group of people. I learned so much from the articles. May God bless you all!

Farewell to Count Paul Benyovszky de Benyó et Urbanó

(2/8/1926 - 4/16/2021)

Charles Bálintitt Jr.

Benyovszky Pali was born in Budapest, Hungary on February 8th, 1926 and was educated by the Piarists. He went on to receive a degree in electrical engineering, but in the 1950s he worked as an electrician. Under Communism, all had to do what they could to survive. He was already a friend of my father's, who was basically a window repairman; while another friend of theirs, Polányi László, was a chimney sweep, later becoming a respected historian in Vienna.

A week or so after my recently married parents escaped from Hungary, Pali followed with his fiancée, Dóry de Jobaháza Katalin and reached Austria and freedom, on December 1, 1956. They were married in Vienna on December 13, 1956, in the first of 3 wedding ceremonies. The next one would take place in their new adopted country of America on January 6, 1957.

Pali went on to begin a career as an electrical engineer with IBM in Kingston, NY. But as is often the case at IBM, he had to move to Kentucky. This is where I first met them, when my parents drove there for a visit when I was 2 years old. This is where they also met up with their friends Vámos István and Lili. Kati and Lili were not only best friends since elementary school; but were also born on the same day (11/26/1934). My mother was also a good friend of both from childhood, as well as of Pali.

After some years and moves to Indiana and Wisconsin, Vámos István was offered a good position with a company in Pennsylvania



and persuaded Pali and Kati (which was not too difficult) to go there as well. This is where they have lived ever since, in Doylestown, PA. And this is where I met them again about 50 years ago. By then the Benyovszkys had two daughters and two sons and the Vámos' had four daughters.

Some of Pali's life choices may have been influenced by his Piarist upbringing. The motto of the Piarists is: "*Pietas et Litterae*" (Piety and Learning), but more so their *raison d'être* is "For the Glory of God and the Service of our Neighbor", and this is what Pali exemplified throughout his life. He had a strong belief in God, an unshakeable faith and a willingness always to help others.

I will never forget his smile, the sincerity in his eyes and his unique handshake. He would shake my hand for what sometimes seemed like minutes, but may have been only 30 or 40 seconds, while asking how I was doing and how my family was doing and keenly intent on the responses I would give because he was such a caring and compassionate man.

On August 7th, 2020, a tornado touched down in Doylestown, PA with the worst devastation in the area surrounding the Benyovszky's home. While their immediate neighbor's home was utterly devastated, and there was much de-

struction all around them, their property was miraculously untouched. It was as if God had sent his angels to protect his home, while saying: "Do not even let a hair on My servant Pali's head be touched, as I will be calling him home soon enough."

Pali was deeply religious and a devout Catholic. At his funeral, the priest told the story of how he had been asked to come to the house and hear his confession and give him Communion, knowing that he did not have much time left. Unfortunately, the priest was terribly busy and could not get there for over a week. He finally had some time, late Thursday afternoon and went to the Benyovszky home and heard Pali's confession and gave him Communion. Pali died peacefully less than 24 hours later, as if he had just held on for these final Catholic sacraments. He returned to his heavenly Father on the afternoon of April 16th, 2021, which also would have been my mother's 86th birthday.

Pali's legacy is not only the wonderful family he leaves behind, including Kati (after 64 years of marriage), their four children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, but the love that he leaves in all our hearts, who knew him well.

Rarely in your life will you be lucky enough to meet someone like Benyovszky Pali, but for myself to have also been able to consider him a close family friend has been one of the true honors of my life.

Requiescat in pacem! You have just made heaven a little more elegant!

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

Magyar Treasures: Hungarian Paneled Ceilings, in a Nutshell¹

Horváth Zoltán György

Painted paneled church ceilings, unique to Hungary, are found in significant numbers throughout the Carpathian Basin. As artistic ensembles, they are not found elsewhere, or only in insignificant numbers. Despite all destruction and devastation, hundreds of churches with such ceilings may be found in historic Hungary. The number of panels per church ceiling is around one hundred, so all in all, this represents a treasure amounting to tens of thousands. There are, of course, some similarities in depiction, but each panel may be considered a unique work of art, which in its totality is a stunning variety.

Plant motifs are the most prevalent, and they are similar, as were the painted or carved tendrils during the Renaissance. Some scholars prefer to regard these as copies from Italian pattern books, despite the fact that our panel paintings are bursting with original artistic passion, dynamism, and there is no question of any dilettante dabbling.

With the spread of Protestantism in the 16th century, there appeared the slogan "Let us return to the uncorrupted faith of our ancestors". This was understood across Europe as a return to biblical foundations; but in Hungary, people looked at each other and

asked, "Really? May we?" And all that had been preserved as an inherited store of knowledge suddenly burst into flower – at the same time and everywhere in the Carpathian Basin, proving its existence everywhere. And the churches truly "blossomed"! Our oldest ceilings date back to the 16th century. There are many more from the 17th century.

The 18th century is still part of the flowering period, followed by the decline caused by the Enlightenment and rationalism, by the spread of literacy, so that by the 19th century, there would be only repetitions. This was pictography at its best, one only had to understand the message.

Painted paneled ceilings are found in great numbers primarily in Reformed (Presbyterian) churches; nevertheless they may not be considered "church-specific" art, since they are also found in countless Unitarian churches in Székelyland, and (although in much smaller numbers) in churches such as Csíkdelne and Gelence which, throughout their history, had always been and remained Roman Catholic. Because the treasure of paneled ceilings is "ethnic specific", or more simply put: it is Hungarian.

Then where did the pictographic message originate? From that variation of Christianity which existed already before Szt. István accepted Latin Christianity, and which lived on, having been passed on



Church in Bánffyhunyard, with paneled ceiling (photo by EPF)

over the centuries, so that it would "explode" at the impact of the above-mentioned "slogan". This Christianity is Eastern, but it has nothing to do with Orthodoxy; let us call it "Scythian" Christianity (the Apostles themselves had been missionaries to the Scythians!), related to the "bowmen" (based on the continuity of Scythian-Hun-Avar-Hungarian as laid out in the works of László Gyula and Pap Gábor).²

That the "explosion" was simultaneous in the Carpathian Basin is proven by the numerous still existing focal points, in very disparate areas. Today, the largest number of painted panels may be found in Transylvania's Székelyland, Kálotszeg, Mezőség and Szilágyság; in the tiny villages of the Upper Tisza region, including numerous settlements in Subcarpathia; in the north-eastern mountains; as well as in the churches of Ormánság

in the southern Dunántúl area.

The term "panels" needs to be defined more precisely: what we can see from below are "panels", but the ceilings are technically planked ceilings, which were often divided, by laths, into square, or rectangular "panels". Which means that these ceilings were made on site, with hard labor, painted up high, not comfortably created by painters somewhere else and then placed up there piece by piece. The ceiling painters created a system from unique concepts. And the ceilings (*mennyezet* in Hungarian is derived from the word *menny*, meaning heaven) truly depicted the sky, "*mennyország*" (or heaven) – represent Christian salvation history. It is not happenstance that the two Hungarian words have similar meanings...

A little astrology is necessary to explain the four most often used basic motifs. To prove that astrology is very much compatible with Christianity, let us consider that in many large European cathedrals, the Zodiac, with its 12 animal signs, is a regularly recurring theme among the carvings, and generally not just anywhere, but encircling the entrance portal, where everyone is emphatically confronted with it.

The first basic motif of the yearly cycle is the "two-headed bird", the astrological sign of Aries (the Ram), pictograph of the vernal equinox (picture 2, Csengersima, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, 1761). It is not the Habsburgs' "two-headed eagle" from their coat of arms. It is a pictograph of the explosive new birth, of nature's spring renewal, which everyone can experience in nature in the sign of Aries, at the end of March and in April. Oh and Easter, the greatest holyday of

Christianity also falls during the same time, the resurrection of Christ after His death? Of course...

The two heads represent two phases of the upward flying bird, as it flutters with great dynamism. If we also note that the tail piece forms a pitcher, which is the pictograph of Aquarius (the Water Carrier), and instead of feathers, the animal's body is covered with scales – an obvious reference to the sign of Pisces (Fishes) – then we also get the sequence of the Zodiac: the winter sign of Aquarius is followed by Pisces, from which comes rebirth brought by Aries.

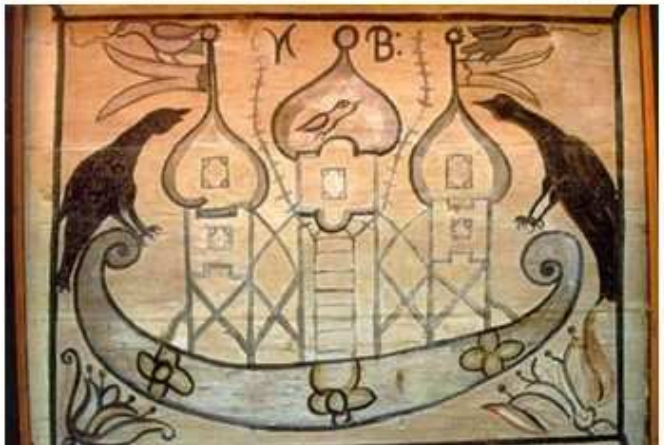
According to the yearly cycle, the second basic motif is "the self-wounding bird, which feeds its young with its own blood", the astrological sign of Cancer (the Crab), pictograph of the summer solstice – picture 3, Rudabánya, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, 1758, by Contra András and Mátyás. We purposely did not use the term "pelican", since our bird does not have the form of a pelican. All the more does the rendering speak of self-sacrificing love, which is so great that it gives of itself. It is during the summer solstice that the greatest amount of light, energy, is identified with love, goodness, "free grace", and this gushes forth in a self sacrificing way. The depiction is naturally and obviously a symbol of Christ, so it is not by chance that the Reformed churches used this as the closing motif of their splendid pulpit canopies. For the pulpit is of major importance in the Reformed liturgy, as the word of Christ speaks to the congregation from there through the mediation of the minister.

At the same time, Christ is also "the Sun of Justice", so the rising

sun is also an ancient symbol of Christ, which is why, during the Middle Ages, churches had to be situated so that He could enter the church at sunrise through the eastern window. A wonderful pictorial proof of this is the fresco of Aquila János (14th century) at Velemér, where the Archangel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin Mary may be seen on the two sides of the eastern window, as part of the Annunciation. What happened at the Annunciation? Christ came into the world!

The third basic motif, according to the yearly cycle, is the "ark", pictograph of Libra (the Scales), of the autumn solstice (picture 4, Csengersima, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, 1761). The term "Noah's ark", to which the "N B" signage refers, indicates the same thing: to save what can be saved, for whatever does not take shelter during the time of Libra, will be irretrievably lost, since it is followed by six months of frost, darkness and cold. The four-petaled pictograph of light kernels may be seen in the body of our ark, which had been protected.

Finally, the fourth basic motif of the annual cycle is the "dragon with curly tail", the astrological sign of Capricorn (the Goat), pictograph of the winter solstice (picture 5, Csengersima). This is the most natural, roughest reference to death, with its noose reminiscent of the hangman's rope. This is when there is the least amount of light, life is merely flickering, the reign of darkness is at its maximum, frost and cold rule. The noose threatens life itself, so Life has to have such a jolt here, that everything may continue to live. In other words, the annual cycle continues. And what is this jolt? Christians know that the Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ, was born on Earth in the darkest



Left side: Plant motif from Tákos, 1766, work of Asztalos Leánder; "self-wounding bird"; the "ark"; Right side: "two-headed bird"; "dragon with curly tail"

moment, and this changes the darkest day into the Christmas feast of joy. We might also say that Christ had to be born at the most inauspicious point, lest the

inhabitants of the earth who might have been in even more inauspicious circumstances remain unredeemed. And in truth: Christ is the Redeemer of

every person!

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¹ Based on the writings and presentations of Pap Gábor, art historian. Basic source: *Az ég mennyezeti – festett kazetás mennyezeteinkről*, by Pap

Gábor. Uropath Kiadó-Fabi Digitally Kft., Debrecen, 2012

² Numerous examples of material proof for the relationship of first-millennium Christian architecture in the Caucasus area with the earliest 10th-11th century Hungarian Christian architecture in the following: *Ani, az ősi örmény főváros és magyar*

vonatkozásai (Ani, the Ancient Armenian Capital and its Hunga-

rian Connections, by Horváth Zoltán György and Gondos Béla, Romanika Kiadó, Budapest 2003. Also in: *Tbiliszi magyar emlékei* (Hungarian Memorials of Tbilisi), by Horváth Zoltán György and Gondos Béla, Romanika Kiadó, Budapest. 2020.

Foreign Observations About Hungary and Its Language

Over the years, we tried to present to you some of the unique history of Hungary, its customs, its culture, its language. So we could not leave you without some quotes by famous foreign personalities who have commented about us and our language. Here is a small sampling.

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

"There is no more illustrious history than the history of the Magyar nation... The whole world is indebted to Magyarland for its historic deeds."

Marzio Galeotto and Antonio Bonfini, 15th c. Italian humanists

"All peoples of Europe envy Hungarians the territory of the Carpathian Basin, the riches that are here, therefore they are surrounded by hatred. In Hungary the soil is the richest, the blessing of fish plentiful, there are great quantities of bread-grain, and the wine is outstanding."

Giuseppe Mezzofanti, Italian linguist (1774-1849)

"Do you know which language I place before all the others, in the same category as Latin and Greek, due to its constructive ability and rhythmic harmony? Hungarian..."

George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright, critic, polemicist, political activist (1856-1950)

"After studying the Hungarian language for years, I can confidently conclude that had Hungarian been my mother tongue, it would have been more precious. Simply because through this extraordinary, ancient and powerful language it is possible to describe the tiniest differences and the most secretive tremors of emotions."

St. Padre Pio, Italian Capuchin priest, stigmatist, born Francesco Forgione (1887-1958)

"Hungary is a birdcage from which a gorgeous bird will take wing. Much suffering still awaits them, but in all of Europe they will have unparalleled glory. I envy the Hungarians, because through them great happiness will spread over humanity. Few nations have such a powerful guardian angel as do the Hungarians, and it would certainly behoove them to ask him more intently for his effective protection over their country."

Prince Csaba, a Legend for Sure!

Judit Vasmatics Paolini

Although he was a legendary figure, Csaba had a feast day that was observed on May 30th – which is our excuse for bringing you his legend this month.

The Huns were a nomadic, tribal people who headed from the East and migrated West. Attila (406-453) was a great warrior and a powerful ruler of the Huns who further advanced their migration and conquered lands as they progressed. He was born in Pannonia, which at the time was one of the provinces of the Roman Empire. This province greatly exceeded the land that is within Hungary's current borders. Nonetheless, Pannonia included land which is located in western Hungary today and what the Hungarians call "*Dunántúl*" (Transdanubia). In 433, upon the death of Ruglia, Attila and his older brother, Bleda, jointly succeeded their uncle as rulers. By this time, the Hun tribes had been united and the brothers governed over the unified Hunnic tribes. However, Bleda the older brother died in 445 (some believe that Attila had murdered him). In turn, Attila established himself as the great leader of the Huns and emerged as the 5th century King of the Hunnic Empire which he shaped so masterfully.

Attila was a superb horseman and an exceptional military leader who was a master tactician; he was respected by his warriors, including those he attained through his conquests which included numerous German tribes. Though he was per-

ceived as a fair ruler by his people, his enemies thought differently and believed he was utterly ruthless. Under his rule, the Huns were powerful, fighting warriors with tremendous and crushing, fighting capabilities. Attila led the Huns on numerous, successful conquests and amassed many lands. Under his effective rule, the Hunnic Empire reached its pinnacle and extended from central Asia heading West and touched what today is Orleans in France; it also included lands along the Danube Valley and reached the Black Sea. However, in 451, Attila's conquest(s) was arrested in the *Battle of the Chalons* in Northeastern France.

Attila died in 453. Moving forward, the Huns needed a strong leader; as we look to discover who that person might have been, we come across the legend of Prince Csaba who was one of the many sons Attila fathered. Hungarians know that the meaning of the name *Csaba* is "*a gift from the heavens*" or "*a gift from the sky*" or simply "*a gift*", and that this meaning commenced with the fabled warrior called Prince Csaba. Legends have several versions, as does this one, in which we discover how Prince Csaba became to be viewed as a gift from the sky.

Upon Attila's death the Huns were challenged by the German tribes and numerous battles erupted. Without a strong leader to unify the tribes, the clashes continued. Two sons of Attila emerged and presumed themselves as the rightful heirs and each began to rule. One was Aladár whose mother, Krimhilda, had been a princess from an influential German tribe. The other

was Csaba, whose mother was Greek and who was the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor.

Aladár and Csaba did not work toward unifying the tribes; instead, brother fought against brother, with tribes choosing to side with one or the other. The German tribes gave their support to Aladár; and he had the German army on his side. The Huns committed themselves to Csaba; in addition, he had the support of the Greek army.

Csaba was victorious in the first battle. However, Aladár regrouped and successfully gathered a powerful army. The two brothers fought once again in the *Battle of Krimhilda*. It has been said that this bloody and gruesome conflict lasted two weeks, with both sides having lost a great number of warriors and having suffered excessive casualties.

Many of Attila's sons died in this battle with only a few surviving. The lives lost by the Hun warriors were insurmountable; ultimately, Csaba's army was shattered and defeated, which resulted with him losing the empire. This forced him to retreat, fleeing to Greece with merely 15,000 Huns, knowing he would be welcomed there and receive the care his warriors needed. However, he did not remain there; instead, after a period of rest, he departed and traveled to Scythia, the land of his father.

Though they barely survived the brutal encounter with the German tribes, 3,000 Huns stayed in Pannonia. Aware of their great peril and fearful of revenge from their adversaries, this group headed for the Carpathian Basin and settled in Transylvania. After

that, they no longer called themselves Huns; instead they established themselves as *Székely*.

According to our legend, Csaba became the leader of the *Székelys*; he stayed until this group had a chance to multiply and grow stronger in order to support and defend their new homeland. Then it was time for the Prince to leave; but he promised that, when they were in danger, they could send him word by fire, air or water, or even by Mother Earth, and he would come back to assist them.

Csaba and his troops had not gone far when a mighty wind swirled around them, bringing the message: "Return Csaba, the *Székelys* are in trouble!" So they turned around immediately, and destroyed the enemy. Once again, they set out for Scythia.

This time, a swollen river blocked their path, bringing the same message. They returned again.

The third time, they were far away already, when a terrible storm, with thunder, lightning and hail enveloped them. Once more they saved their *Székely* kin from their enemies. Afterwards, they were finally able to reach Scythia.

Time passed, and Csaba and his troops died. Generations passed, and the *Székelys* were once more in great danger, unable to defend their land. Consequently, the Frankish people attacked and the onslaught commenced. Oh, the young *Székelys* were valiant; despite having to face an army in which they were greatly outnumbered, they stood their ground!

The battle ensued for days; but the defeat of the brave, young fighters was imminent. Thus, their enemy taunted them, asking who would protect them now in Csaba's absence!

But the message beaten by their horses' hoofs had been transmitted by Mother Earth! Suddenly, Prince Csaba appeared, descending from the heavens, mounted on his horse, and riding down a shiny trail with his powerful warriors following – so, he and his men arrived

by the way of the Milky Way (which we know is a constellation in the sky)! They promptly attacked the Frankish intruders and routed them.

Csaba had returned with his troops as he had promised, and the road trampled by his horses has remained in the sky until today. We call it the Milky Way – but the *Székelys* call it the Way of the Troops – *a Hadak útja!*



Top: The Milky Way, known in Hungarian as Hadak útja (source: 24hu); Bottom: Csaba's troops coming by way of the Milky Way (source: vilagfigyelo.com)

So, it is not surprising that the name Csaba means "gift from the sky" or more simply "gift"! This legend explains it all! Furthermore, we also know that legends contain an element of truth, for they are connected to a historical incident or place. In this legend, the one thing that is certain and can be accepted is that the Huns are ancestors of the *Székelys*!

Görgei Artúr – Was He Really a Traitor?

Erika Papp Faber

It's been 105 years since the leading General of the 1848-49 Hungarian Fight for Freedom passed on to a better life, on May 21st, 1916. In this anniversary year, we would like to take another look at the commander who surrendered to the leader of the 200,000 Russian troops who were facing him.

Görgői és toporci Görgey Artúr was born of an impoverished family of nobles in Toporc, Upper Hungary, on January 30th, 1818. As the “y” at the end of his name indicated nobility, he later changed it to the more democratic “i”.

He wanted to become a teacher, but his father insisted that he attend a military academy. He therefore studied at the Tulln Combat Engineering Academy in Austria, and then served in the Austrian army. By 1837, he was a Lieutenant with the Hungarian Guards. But he did not like military life, and was discharged in 1845.

After his father's death, Görgei went to Prague to study Chemistry. In 1847, he discovered lauric acid, and was the first to demonstrate its presence in coconut oil. But news of his chemical accomplishments did not reach Budapest, and his application for a professorship at Budapest Technical University's Chemistry department was turned down.

Then the Revolution of 1848 against Austrian despotism broke out, and Görgei volun-



teered his services to the first free Hungarian government, joining the national defense army (*honvédség*). He took part in organizing the mobile units of the volunteer National Guard (*nemzetőrség*).

Bán Josip Jellasics of Croatia had joined forces with Austria, and invaded Hungary. Görgei played a leading role in bringing about the capitulation of Jellasics' reserve division. He attracted everyone's attention in September of 1848, when he ordered the arrest and immediate execution of Count Zichy Ödön on a charge of treason – he had been caught in the act of conspiring with Jellasics.

Another feather in Görgei's cap was when, together with Commander Perczel Mór, he captured a five times larger group of Austrian soldiers with his raw recruits in October of that year. Kossuth Lajos proposed his advancement to General and named him the leader of

the army of the Upper Danube, based on Görgei's resolute conduct, exceptional military capability, quick maneuvering, outstanding personal bravery and composure. His task was to hold up the imperial army. He trained the raw recruits for weeks by avoiding confrontation with the well-equipped Austrian troops who outnumbered his forces, by planned and disciplined withdrawals, counterattacks and post-battle skirmishes.

By the spring of 1849, he was ready to counterattack. Inside of a few short weeks, he chased the imperial army from Miskolc to Pozsony. He achieved a number of victories along the way, such as the Battles of Hatvan, Isaszeg (see "Victory is Ours!" in the March 2012 issue of MNO), and Vác, always against superior forces. After taking back Komárom, he turned to free Buda, which he was able to recapture from the Austrians on May 21st.

Kossuth published a Declaration of Independence on April 14th, 1849, which Görgei opposed. For politically, Görgei was ready to compromise with the Austrians, and together with the peace party, he thus turned against Kossuth and the radicals. Nevertheless, he did accept his appointment as Minister of War for two months, between May and July of 1849.

Once the 200,000 strong Russian forces attacked, at the invitation of the Austrians (for which Görgei blamed Kossuth's Declaration of Independence), Görgei carried on discussions with the Russian military command, with the consent of the Hungar-

ian government. In the Battle of Komárom, Görgei beat back the troops of Baron Julius von Haynau, Chief Commander of the Austrian army which outnumbered the Hungarian forces two to one, but he was seriously injured, and for a few days hung between life and death. He then resigned his post as Minister of War.

It was at that point that he performed his most daring and brilliantly executed military maneuver: he turned North at Vác, to by-pass the Austro-Russian military forces, and for a whole month prevented the enemy (which outnumbered his own troops four to one) from joining the forces of Haynau who was fighting the southern Hungarian army.

By strenuous forced marches, he left behind the Russian troops, and reached Arad at the beginning of August, to join the Hungarian troops there. But the Hungarians were no match for the overwhelming numbers of the combined Austro-Russian armies. They suffered a decisive defeat at Temesvár on August 11th. Kossuth resigned from his office as Governor and invested Görgei with dictatorial powers.

Görgei saw no other option, following the decision of his military staff, than to lay down his arms before the Russian commander at Világos. When he rode by his troops for a final salute on August 13th, his nerves of steel gave way, and he fell on his horse's neck in tears.

The Russian chief commander had assured Görgei that the chief Hungarian officers would not be

harmed. The Czar advised the young Franz Josef to grant general amnesty, but the Austrian head of state did not take his advice. Then the Czar gave orders that should Görgei not be granted amnesty, he should be escorted to Russia. Consequently, while 13 of the Hungarian commanding officers were executed at Arad on October 6th, 1849 (see the October 2017 issue of MNO, "Final Words of the Martyrs of Arad"), Görgei was spared. He was interned at Klagenfurt, Austria where he was held until 1867, when the Compromise was signed, creating the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

At that point, Görgei Artúr was permitted to return to Hungary. He settled at Visegrád along the Danube.

But the label hot-blooded Kossuth attached to this brilliant military commander – that of "Traitor" – stuck with him all his life. He died in Budapest on May 16, 1916. Later on, the Transylvanian poet Áprily Lajos, who moved to Hungary after the "Treaty" of Trianon because he could not make a living in his home country under Romanian rule, would also settle in Visegrád. In one of his poems (*Királyasszony kertje*) he tells his wife, "it will be good for us here on Traitor's Row".

Was Görgei really a traitor? Or a responsible military commander who did not see that he had any other choice but to surrender in the face of such overwhelming numbers? The writer Móricz Zsigmond called him "a living martyr".

What do you think?



Statue of Görgei Artúr in the Vár district, Budapest (photo by EPF); portrait from Wikipedia

Fráter György, O.S.P.
(aka Juraj Utješenić
and George
Martinuzzi)
(6/18/1482 – 12/17/1551)
Charles Balintitt Jr.

Because of my deep feelings for Transylvania, it is fitting that my final article for Magyar News Online is about a key figure in the history of Transylvania.

Fráter György was born in Kamičak Castle near the Croatian town of Skradin about 10 miles from the Adriatic coast. His father was from a Croatian and Hungarian noble family and his mother was from a Venetian family. His birth name was Juraj Utješenić, but he was also known as George Martinuzzi, after his mother's maiden name.

His father and older brothers died when he was a child, and the Ottomans took over the family estate. From the age of 8 he was taken in by Corvin János, the illegitimate son of King Matthias I, at his estate in Vajdahunyad, Transylvania (present day Hunedoara, Romania). Corvin Castle was one of the largest castles in Europe and the place where Vlad the Impaler had been held prisoner several years earlier. He had a difficult upbringing there, or in other words, extensive training and education to be a nobleman.

In 1503, he went on to Szepes Castle, which is in present-day Slovakia. He served as a page and then Guard of the Palace under Hedwig of Cieszyn, the widow of Count Zápolya Ist-



Cardinal Martinuzzi, known as Fráter György - 18th c. painting (from Wikimedia Commons)

ván. A few years later, he decided against a military career and joined the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit (see my article in the November 2020 issue) at the age of 24. He went on to further his studies at Jasna Góra Monastery in Częstochowa, Poland.

After the Hungarian defeat at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, and the death of young King Louis II, there was a struggle for control of Hungary between Zápolya János, son of Fráter György's patroness, Hedwig, and Ferdinand I Habsburg. After losing the Battle of Szina (aka Abaújszina, present day Seňa, Slovakia) to Ferdinand, Zápolya fled to Poland. There he met up with Fráter György, who made three visits to Hungary on his behalf to unite his supporters behind him. After this, Suleiman the Magnificent recognized Zápolya as king and he was able to return to Hungary and take control of the central and eastern parts of the kingdom by 1529.

By 1534, Fráter György was made the Royal Treasurer and the king also appointed him Bishop of Várad (or Nagyvárad), which also made him the administrative head (főispán) of Bihar County in Transylvania. He began making enemies at this time, as he tried to consolidate the collection of state revenues and oversee the efforts of tax collectors.

After this he became a key figure in secret negotiations between the Hungarian King and Ferdinand I. The resulting Treaty of Várad, in February of 1538, accepted the division of Hungary between János and Ferdinand, but also stated that the Kingdom of Hungary should be reunited upon the death of either monarch. Although both kings signed the treaty, it remained secret. Shortly thereafter, when János recognized that Ferdinand could not give him aid against the Ottomans, he was no longer interested in following the terms of the treaty. Fráter György advised him that the treaty would not be valid until approved by the Diet. He also strongly proposed that János should marry Isabella Jagiellon, daughter of King Sigismund I of Poland. This took place in the beginning of the following year, and she was crowned queen on March 2, 1539.

In December of 1539, two voivodes (*Vajda* or royal governors) of Transylvania, Balassa Imre and Majláth István, along with a group of the top nobles in Transylvania met and signed a letter addressed to the king about their complaints against Fráter György in his collection and use of tax revenues. They



Ancient carving of Fráter György's assassination; "All are mortal" - memorial plaque in Gyulafehérvár cathedral (photo EPF)

wanted him punished, but instead the king backed György and as a result, Majláth had to flee to avoid a death sentence.

Zápolya Zsigmond, the son of King János and Queen Isabella, was born on July 7, 1540, just 15 days before the death of his father. Ironically, the king fell ill because of the excessive celebrations after the birth of his son. However, before his death he appointed Fráter György as the chief guardian of his son and urged his loyalists to accept his son as the next king, ignoring the secret treaty he had signed 2 ½ years earlier.

A group of leading Hungarians and enemies of Fráter György turned to Charles V and asked for his support against the Ottomans in return for their support of reuniting Hungary under the rule of his brother, Ferdinand I. In Transylvania, Balassa Imre and Majláth István, were again elected as voivodes of Transylvania, in opposition to Fráter

György's appointment of Bornemissza Boldizsár. György had left Transylvania for Buda with 2,000 troops. He called together the Diet in Pest in September of 1540, which confirmed Zápolya Zsigmond as king and appointed him and Queen Isabella as his guardians.

In 1541, both the Austrians and the Ottomans tried to seize Buda. The Austrians attacked because the secret Treaty of Várad was not followed, so György and Isabella went to the Ottoman Sultan for help, but then the Ottomans not only helped fight off the Austrians, but also laid siege to Buda, so he realized that he had to walk a fine line between the two powers. On December 29, 1541, the treaty of Gyalu was signed. This left Western Hungary under Ferdinand's control and Eastern Hungary under Zápolya Zsigmond's control through his regents, and as an Ottoman vassal state.

Fráter György managed to maintain the delicate balance between the Austrians and the Ottomans through the rest of the decade. However, he made additional enemies along the way, many of them because they felt that he had too much power. Among them was Queen Isabella. When, in 1550, she went to Suleiman to complain about him, the sultan took her side and turned against György. As a result of the Queen's betrayal, György had her imprisoned. He also went against her Moldavian and Wallachian allies and drove them out of Transylvania. He also defeated the Turks at Déva, Transylvania (Deva, Romania).

In 1551, he was at the height of his power and prominence. He had been ordained Archbishop of Esztergom in August and was made a Cardinal by Pope Julius III on October 12th, while remaining Governor of Transylvania. However, his downfall also came at the end of that year. This resulted from that fine line he tried

to walk between the Austrians and the Ottomans. The Ottomans had captured Csanád (Cenad, Romania) and he received aid from two generals in the service of Charles V, Giambattista Castaldo and Sforza Pallavicini. When he tried to meet privately to make a deal for the Hungarians with the Ottomans, Castaldo reported back to Ferdinand I, who agreed that this was treason and ordered him to have Fráter György killed. This was

carried out on December 16, 1551 at Alvinc Castle (aka Martinuzzi Castle) in Transylvania, by his secretary, Marco Aurelio Ferrari, who initially stabbed him in the back while he was reading a letter. After a struggle, he was finished off by Pallavicini and a group of assassins.

Through his maneuverings, Fráter György was able to maintain the relative independence of Transylvania from Habsburg and

Ottoman control. He was born in Croatia, but appeared to hold a great love for Transylvania, which most of us do whose families originated from there and have had the pleasure of visiting this beautiful part of the planet.

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Did You Know...



Budapest, view from the Citadella (photo by EPF)

... **that** Városliget (City Park) in Budapest is the first *public* park in the world? It has 302 acres, and its main entrance is the famous *Hősök tere* (Heroes' Square), one of Hungary's World Heritage sites.

The area was originally called *Ökördűlő* "Oxmeadow". The site used to be marshy; it was drained and filled and transformed into a park in the 18th century.

The first trees and walkways were created in 1751, and after it became a public park at the beginning of the 19th century, it was named City Park. The site was also one of the spots for the celebration of the Millennium of Hungary in 1896.

Today, the green area is home to the zoo, a thermal bath, a castle (a smaller version of Vajdahunyad Castle in Transylvania), a museum of fine arts, a lake, and lots of places to walk. In the winter, it has the largest outdoor skating rink in Budapest.

Nowadays it is the most important and most visited park in Budapest.

...**that** beneath the city of Budapest lies a subterranean world? The city is known to have 123 geothermal springs and around 200 caves. It is the world's most extensive geothermal cave system, and the location is on the Buda side of the city.

Some of the caves offer an excellent opportunity for an adventurous and certified diver to have lots of fun and a great time in Budapest. The caves were discovered in the late 19th century.

A trendy cave is the Szemlőhegyi, considered one of the most natural treasures of Budapest. On this site, it is possible to walk along the trail.

Pál-völgyi Cave was discovered in 1904; it is well known for its dripstones and narrow corridors. It has a 500-meter long route providing marvelous views during the walk.

Mátyás-hegyi Cave is a fantastic underground adventure, navigat-

ing through dark chambers, accompanied by professional guides. Helmet-mounted lamps are the only source of light.

Molnár János Cave is a big hit for diving, with its entrance in the vicinity of the Lukács thermal bath; it is considered one of the most beautiful dive sites in Europe. The cave passageways could go deeper than 300 feet in different directions.

...**that** the name Budapest is the composition of the city name Buda and Pest? Buda was the

name of King Attila's brother. (Another theory suggests that it means water.) Pest in the Slavic language means cave or rock cavity; in old Hungarian it referred to an oven or furnace.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Count István Széchenyi, the nobleman responsible for the Chain Bridge, and a strong proponent of the unifying of the capital, objected to using the word Pest in the name of the capital, because it reminded him of its German reference to the plague. Instead, he suggested

several other possibilities, such as *Dunagyöngye* (Pearl of the Danube – which would be totally unpronounceable for non-Hungarians!), *Etelvár*, or *Honderű*.

Unification of the city happened only after his death, when in 1873, Pest, Buda and Óbuda were combined into one capital (fortunately!) called Budapest.

István Arato



Top left: Molnár János Cave; top right and bottom: Városliget (City Park)