

RÁKÓCZI YEAR



“Iustam causam Deus non derelinquet”
(God never abandons a just cause)

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of signing the Szatmár Peace Agreement, 2011 was declared Rákóczi Year. NSZL contributed three chamber exhibitions to the commemorations by recalling the events between 1703 and 1711, the written documents of the cult and the return of the ashes, and by introducing the Rákóczi March through a display of its scores and musical transcriptions.

“We have fought our fight”
(The memory of the Rákóczi War of Independence)

The chamber exhibition in the space outside the NSZL Collection of Posters and Small Prints entitled “We have Fought our Fight” (*The Memory of the Rákóczi War of Independence*) from 20th September 2011 to 30th March 2012 forms part of the national events held in various locations on the 300th anniversary of the defeat of the Rákóczi War of Independence. It concentrates on the sites of remembrance and personalities involved through presenting the materials of the Collection of Posters and Small Prints concerning the period. A wide range of documents are applied, including cuts, lithography, postcards, pulp, posters, ex-libris and other small prints. In addition to the historical level, a rich network of literary references enables the display to represent several voices through using quotations from Kuruc poetry and literary works about the Kuruc age. “We have fought our fight” selected as the overall motto comes from the title of Endre Ady’s first Kuruc poem.

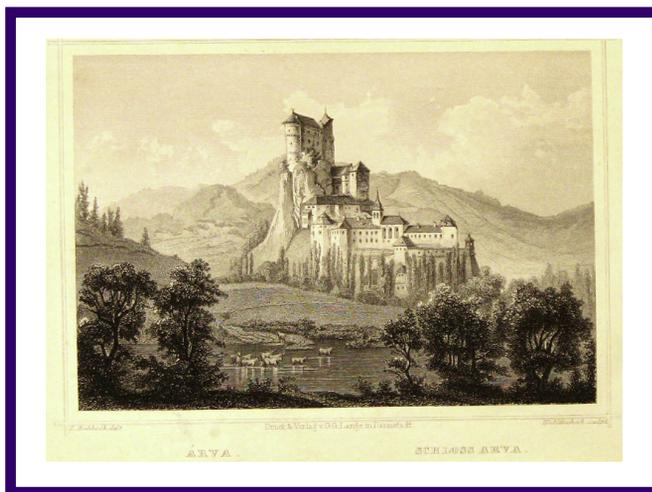
Chronologically, the material starts with the out-

break of the War of Independence, moving to the time of inviting Rákóczi to return from Poland (1703), presenting the main sites of battles, the Kuruc-Labanc clashes between supporters of Hungarians and Austrians, introducing parliamentary sessions and the privileged settlements, and finally the Szatmár Peace Agreement (1711) and the subsequent years of exile. Portraits of outstanding generals and other emblematic figures include Ferenc Rákóczi II, Miklós Bercsényi, János Bottyán, Tamás Esze and Ádám Vay. A masterpiece of pulp fiction called *Rákóczi’s Homecoming* is József Rudits’s work. In the eyes of subsequent generations, Rákóczi became a cult figure. Petőfi, one of the leaders of the 1848 Revolution recalls him in a poem whose words roughly translate as “A saint of our homeland, leader of liberty, a guiding star in the dark night, Rákóczi, in whose memory we burn and cry!” (Sándor Petőfi: *Rákóczi* written on 21st April 1848)

The eminent castles (Árva, Huszt, Sümeg, Esztergom, Kassa, Marosvásárhely etc.) of the Kuruc Age come to life in the graphic cuts of the German painter L. Rohbock (1820–1880). Most of these castles were taken by the Kuruc troops already in the first years of the War of Independence, thus serving as bases for years, while there was heavy fighting with mixed results for the possession of such places as

Kassa (today: Košice) and Marosvásárhely (today: Tîrgu Mureş).

During the War of Independence, Eger was the centre of the liberated section of the country with Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II having his headquarters there. Although in 1702 the destruction of the castle was ordered, only the outer parts were taken down, and Rákóczi gave instructions for actually strengthening the fort.

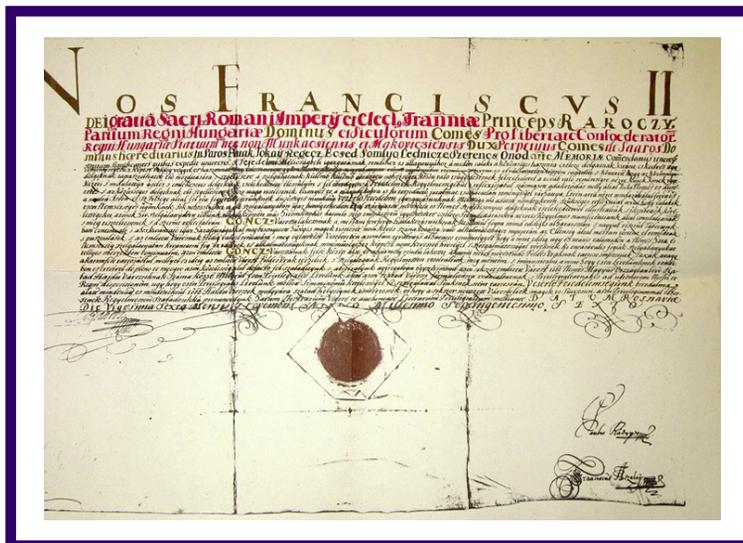


Árva Castle: L. Rohbock’s cut

The view of the Castle of Eger on display is attributed to Georgius Houfnaglius but, according to an inscription in the right corner of the picture, he was only its publisher rather than its master. Whoever made the

drawing must have been working on site, as the view is rich in detail, accurate, and comparable with the digital reconstruction of the Castle. Underneath it, there is a part of the town with the Eger Stream. The copper engraving is dated 1617, but in fact, the picture must be older, as it reflects the 1588 state of reconstruction with bastions on the fort.

There are picture postcards of the scene of the first lost battle of Dolha (7th June 1703) and of the Tiszaújlak monument with the mythical bird, the *turul*, celebrating the first victory (14th July 1703) of the war, as well as of the sites of the main national assemblies (Gyulafehérvár, Szécsény, Huszt, Marosvásárhely, Ónod, Sárospatak, Szerencs and Salánk). The 1707 Ónod assembly stands out, which in fact happened in the field of Köröm, because this is where the deposition of the *House of Habsburg* from the Hungarian throne was declared. Rozsnyó (today: Rožňava) with the Rákóczi watchtower is depicted in a cut by Kálmán Tichy. For a long time, this town was the centre of military production for the War of Liberty, giving infantry soldiers, called *hajdú*, and their settlements privileges for their services, namely



The Charter of Gönc and its *hajdú* privileges

led to the loss of Transylvania for the Kuruc party. The Trencsén defeat on 3rd August 1708 already foreshadowed the ultimate fall. "Never has a defeat been more shameful and pathetic, never has a lost battle had more unfortunate consequences," Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II moaned in his memoirs. Ocskay's treachery happened after this, as well as his subsequent execution in the main square of Érsekújvár. (These events are recorded in the pulp novel entitled the *Traitor's Atonement*.) There are also pictures of the losing battle of Romhány in 1710 and visitors get an insight into the points of the Szatmár Peace Agreement concluded on 30th April 1711, as well as into the text of the loyalty oath. Describing the years of exile, in addition to Rákóczi himself, Kelemen Mikes is given special emphasis, as well as the Turkish town of Rodostó (today: Tekirdağ), where a whole street was given over to the outcasts.

In a separate case, small prints, cards, ex libris and other miscellaneous items reflect the cult of the War of Liberty and the main years of remembrance (1903, 1906, 1935, 1953, 1976, 1985), with special emphasis on the 1906 reburial of the remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II and his fellow exiles in the crypt of the Kassa (today: Košice) cathedral.

A separate unit is formed of such memorial documents as the ex librises evoking Rákóczi and his age, most of which were made for the 300th anniversary in 2011 by the well-known contemporary artists Mihály Csiby, László Imets, László Kerékgyártó, Gyula Kőhegyi, Péter Ürmös, Edit Varga and Zsolt Vecserka (the ex librises were commissioned by Kornélia Tóth-Vas).



Ex libris for Kornélia Tóth-Vas, designed by Péter Ürmös

distinguishing Gönc (1706), Simontornya (1707) and Tarpa (1708). Displayed at the exhibition, the Charter granted to Gönc as a *hajdú* town clearly lays down the town's rights and obligations.

Several scenes of lost battles are also seen in picture cards. Negotiations with foreign powers did not yield much success, the camp of supporters of the War of Liberty was thinning out, and there was gradually more and more treason and defeat. The 1705 defeat

A number of posters in the exhibition advertise the film *Rákóczi's Lieutenant*, its actors and scenes, while others represent various 20th century Rákóczi exhibitions and the program of the Sárospatak Rákóczi Museum or the Rákóczi memorial book. The poster featuring the title of the present exhibition replicates the poster of the 1903 Rákóczi relic exhibit at Kassa, which is also on display here.

By conjuring up the scenes of remembrance and emblematic figures of a past age, the present undertaking tries to contribute to cherishing the remembrance of the War of Independence and the national image of the Kuruc age through the perspective of present evaluations. The Rákóczi War of Independence formulated the actual questions of a Hungary falling prey to the absolutistic attempts of the Habsburgs, of which the most burning issue was the country's independence. Closing down the war by common assent, the Szatmár Peace Agreement was born out of a compromise between the Habsburg absolutistic dynasty in Vienna and the Hungarian feudal constitutional order. The Hungarian estates of the realm gave up the fight for independence in exchange for the court in Vienna giving up absolutistic governance in the territory of Hungary, thus acknowledging the country's independence of estates within the Habsburg Empire. Echoing the title of the exhibition, we may rightly claim, in Ady's words that "We have fought our fight..."

Kornélia Tóth-Vas

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**"We are willing to pay
a pilgrimage to
get your ashes back"**

(documents about the return of
the remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II
and his fellow exiles)

On the national library's seventh floor, outside the central information space of the catalogue area, a new exhibition area was launched on 23th September 2011. The goal is to have a permanent chamber exhibition drawing visitors' and colleagues' attention to marked days, memorable events and significant anniversaries. The theme of the first of these events was related to the closing program of the Rákóczi Year: the highly decorated train bringing home the remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II and his fellow exiles crossed the Hungarian border at Orsova 105 years ago, on 27th October 1906. Majestic mourning processions

were held in Budapest and Kassa (today: Košice). These outstanding milestones in history are recalled by contemporary prints, photos and film snippets. As the closing accord of the Millennium celebrations, the return of the ashes was the climax of the Rákóczi cult. In this context, it is worth observing the development of the cult.

During Habsburg absolutism it was forbidden to utter Rákóczi's name or to remember him in any way. In Act 49 of the 1715 Hungarian Diet, the *Kuruc* leader and his fellows were declared traitors. Thus, in the last years of the 18th century when the country was gradually freed from the Germanizing politics of Joseph II, the Great Prince's cult developed as a manifestation of the national consciousness. Later the enthusiasm permeating Hungarian public life diminished, only to return in the Reform Age's fine literature. Warning against forgetfulness and followed by keen censorship, in rough translation this is what Vörösmarty wrote in his poem *Mikes's sorrow*:

*Your poor country is not allowed to resound your
forbidden name any more,*

*I wonder if you feel this underneath the heavy
ground,*

*You shouldn't think that your princely ashes are
not remembered:*

Here I am as a live reminder, writing in sorrow.

*If any Hungarian should ever be thrown to this
mournful land,*

*I am telling him: "This is where your homeland's
prince lies, an outcast, because was no liberty
there."*

In the days of the 1848 Revolution Petőfi was already free to invoke the Prince's memory in his poem entitled *Rákóczi*, in which he moans the fact that Rákóczi's grave is unknown; nevertheless the poet looks optimistically into a freer future.

The cause of which you was a soldier,

In a little while will celebrate its victory,

But you will not be here as a triumphant,

You cannot come from your abysmal tomb.

We are willing to pay a pilgrimage

To retrieve your ashes back to us,

But where you was buried in the earth,

Where is your long home? nobody knows.

The title of the exhibition also comes from this Petőfi poem, hinting at the process from the wish to have the remains brought home to the actual realization of the plan. The period of easing tensions that led to the Compromise gave scholars the courage to venture to the graves in Turkey. In 1862, the first to travel to Turkey on behalf of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences were Ferenc Kubinyi, Imre Henszlmann

and Arnold Ipolyi, whose main goal was to find King Matthias's Corvinas that had been taken from Hungary. (The sultan gave a few of those copies back as presents in 1869 and 1877.) Encouraged by the Viennese consul, and interpreting the offer as official permission, Kubinyi and his colleagues made a one day trip from Constantinople to Rodostó, where because of strict time limitations, they made no more than exploratory research.

Following in the footsteps of these three scholars and building on their accounts and descriptions, in 1888 Kálmán Thaly set out to map out the scenes. In the Rodostó Greek church he described the tombstones of the noblemen Miklós Bercsényi, Antal Eszterházy and Miklós Sibrik. In Nicomedia (today: Izmit) he managed to identify Imre Thököly's grave in the Armenian cemetery. In 1889 Thaly returned to Constantinople at the head of a five-member Corvina research committee. Having obtained the permits, he and Vilmos Fraknói opened the graves of Ferenc Rákóczi II, Ilona Zrínyi, József Rákóczi and Krisztina Csáky Bercsényi in Constantinople's Saint Benedict Church of the Lazaristes. However, Thaly did not identify the remains in Rodostó and Nicomedia, but on his return to Hungary, he did everything in his power as a politician and a scholar to have the ashes brought home.

In 1903 Lajos Szádeczky managed to have Miklós Bercsényi's grave in Rodostó opened without any official permission.

In 1904 Franz Joseph gave the go-ahead for bringing home the remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II and his fellow exiles. Commissioned by Prime Minister István Tisza, Lajos Thallóczy went to Turkey to make the necessary preparations. He was joined by his private secretary Jenő Forster and Aladár Edvi Illés, an art teacher at the Academy. In the course of the preparatory work, they took the remains and tombstones from Rodostó and Nicomedia to the Lazaristes' Church in Constantinople.

On 17th–18th October 1906, members of the Hungarian delegation, Kálmán Thaly, Gyula Forster, Vilmos Fraknói, Lajos Thallóczy, Aurél Török, Jenő Forster and Ferenc Kolossa took over the ashes in a ceremony from Provost Francois Lobry in the Saint Benedict Church in Constantinople.

On 23rd October the Hungarian parliament annulled the sections of Act 49 of 1715 condemning Rákóczi and his followers, and the following day the monarch stamped the resolution. The ship set sail from Constantinople the same day, with the ashes of **Ferenc Rákóczi II, Ilona Zrínyi, Imre Thököly, József Rákóczi, Miklós Bercsényi and his wife Krisztina Csáky Bercsényi, Antal Eszterházy and Miklós Sibrik** on board. On 25th October the ship arrived in the port of

Constanta, where the coffins and tombstones were placed onto a highly decorated special train.

At 8.20 on the morning of 27th October the train reached Hungarian soil at Orsova, where members of the government, headed by Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle, took over the remains in a solemn ceremony. The train pulled into the Eastern Railway Station in Budapest at 8.34 the following morning and was received by Mayor István Bárczy. The coffins were placed on decorated carriages and the mourning procession walked down the Kerepesi Road (which has been called Rákóczi Road ever since) to reach Saint Stephen Basilica, while Imre Thököly's ashes were taken separately to the Lutheran Church in Deák Square. The train left for Kassa at 8 in the evening and arrived in the early hours of 29th October. The remains of Ferenc Rákóczi II, Ilona Zrínyi, József Rákóczi, Miklós Bercsényi and his wife Krisztina Csáky Bercsényi, Antal Eszterházy and Miklós Sibrik were then buried in the Saint Elisabeth Cathedral of Kassa. In accordance with his will, on 30th October Imre Thököly's ashes were taken to Késmárk (today: Kežmarok) and buried in the new Lutheran church.

There are some genuinely rare pieces among the documents in the four cases. There are two of the works of Kálmán Thaly, who had a lion's share in promoting the return of the remains. He dedicated to Lajos Kossuth *The Youth of Prince Rákóczi II*, published in 1881 in a decorative red cover with a gold frame. The dedication starts with a four-line verse in which the author draws a parallel between the two statesmen's careers:

*How grim the power of ill fortune,
It is painful to know and torture to feel
That the reward for your glorious career
Was once Rodostó and is Turin today!*

The national library owns a copy of the 1983 *Rákóczi Relics in Turkey and the Discovery of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II's Remains, in which there is the following note by Lajos Thallóczy, the man the government officially entrusted with bringing the ashes home: This is the copy I had with me on my journey to Constantinople from 4 Oct to 29 Dec. and this is what Archbishop Stepan Hovagnimian asked me to put before the ashes of Imre Thököly in the Ismidt Armenian church on the night of 22-23 Dec. 1904. Thallóczy.* Also on display is the galley of the travel diary he kept between 5th October and 7th November 1906, with the author's own corrections and signature.

A monograph about the Kassa Saint Elisabeth Cathedral, where the exiles' remains lie was published by Béla Wick. The cover page of the copy on display has the following dedication: *To the Mayor of Budapest, the*

Right Honorable Károly Szendy with a grateful heart and warm feelings from the mayor of the municipal borough of Kassa, annexed to the motherland, dated on 21st January 1939. Thus, in the turmoil of history, Rákóczi's ashes were returned to the homeland for a short time.

We owe the 1906 films of the Budapest and Kassa processions to the NSZL Collection of Historical Interviews.

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The Rákóczi March

It is an NSZL tradition that every year the Music Collection holds a chamber exhibition to remember the year's main anniversaries, thus in 2011 the bicentenary of Ferenc Liszt's birth. However, as the national library was a co-organiser of the year's main Liszt event (see the report in our *Liszt and the Associated Arts*), we felt that the exhibition in the Music Collection's corridor would be self-repetition. Therefore, on the occasion of the Rákóczi Year the exhibition gives an overview of the history of the Rákóczi March, which is strongly related to Liszt himself. The development of the tune that can be traced back to the mid-17th century is in the focus, with special regard for the role of the military conductor Nikolaus Scholl, who probably noted down the famous Gypsy violinist János Bihari's performance and went on modifying it to produce the present melody of the march. Published in print as early as the 1820s, the "Rakoczy-Marsch" was also close to Erkel's heart, who was a pianist as a young musician: in the 30s he repeatedly played variations on the tune, and one of his adaptations was published by József Wagner in January 1840. The cover page of the latter print says *In memory of Ferencz Liszt*, as after the famous concert given in the Hungarian Theatre on 4th January, the censor prevented the publication of Liszt's own adaptation. Thus Erkel's work, partly imitating his virtuoso colleague's style, attempted to

"make up for" the former. The variation Liszt played in 1840 stayed in manuscript for ever (its autograph is a gem of our exhibition), but the composer made a number of further Rákóczi adaptations over the coming decades, of which in the cabinets we display the 1851 Leipzig "popular edition," known as the 15th piece in the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* series, as well as the symphonic transcript presented in Pest in August 1865. In fact, only in 1871, after Berlioz's death did Liszt publish the latter, as he considered it rude to compete with his friend's widely known symphonic transcript dedicated to no other than Liszt himself. (Our visitors can study the original Berlioz manuscript as well, as at the beginning of the 20th century this precious document went from Erkel's bequest to the National Széchényi Library. It needs to be added that Berlioz's still popular adaptation was banned in Hungary for a decade after the fall of the War of Liberty, and following the Austrian troops' defeats in Italy, when in the easing political tension the Philharmonic Association was again allowed to put it on its program in 1859, first it featured on posters with the deliberately misleading *Memories of Pest* title.

From the 1860s there was a chaotic abundance of adaptations of the Rákóczi March. Therefore in the two show cases in the reading room we concentrated on a single aspect of its later reception: the various lyrics later set to the tune (as a type of "encore" added to the exhibition). While the words dating back to the 1860s and 70s emphasize the ideal love of the homeland ("*Welcome, celestial light on our country, guard of nation, pure earthling.*"), the tone is more militant in the early 20th century ("*Come on Hungarians, the enemy is coming, defend the country and its eternal cause.*"), while the wish to seek revenge transpires strongly in the text born after Trianon: "*Hungarians' God, do harm the Labanc troops! The hour of the battle call is nearing so that the Hungarian will, iron and fight should save the sad homeland! Come on, Hungarians!*"

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