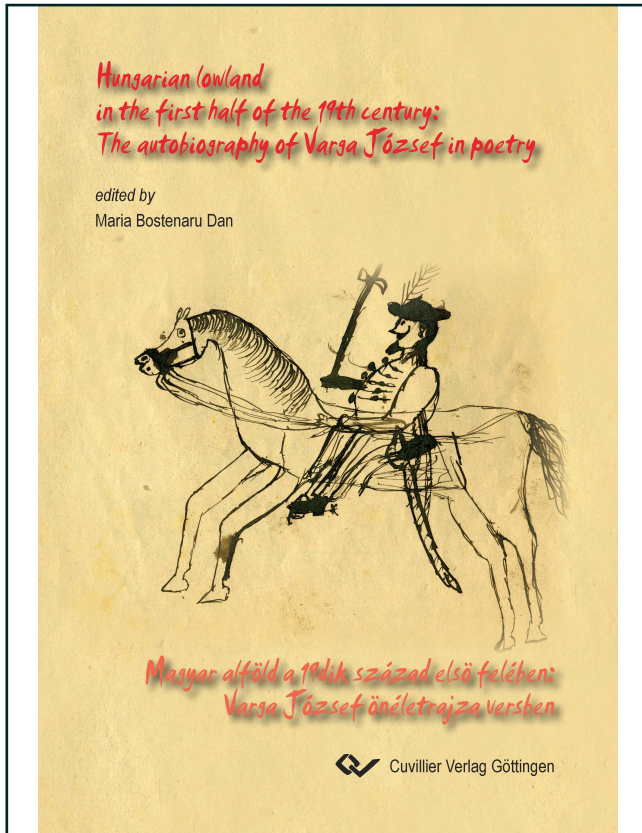




Maria Bostenaru Dan (Herausgeber)

**Hungarian lowland in the first half of the 19th century:
The autobiography of Varga József in poetry**

Magyar alföld a 19dik század első felében: Varga József
önéletrajza versben



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Introduction

by the editor Maria Bostenaru Dan

There is no previous example of the research in the book which we would know of. We know of edited volumes of manuscripts discovered in archives, for example Middle Ages poetry (chivalry) or of working with manuscripts in the frame of the NeDiMAH (Network for Digital Methods in Arts and Humanities). Such one is working with manuscripts of the Bible in a digital way, in order to discover the links and the different layers in it. But this is a step for further research with our manuscript. In frame of the current editorial project we edited the printed version of the edited manuscript. There are a couple of predecessors, for example working with archive letters, as we will see.

We found a book which was published in a similar way at the publisher: the publication of letters by the grandson, also about the time of an armed conflict like the 1848 revolution talked here about („Briefe aus Galizien 1913“, geschrieben von Karl Hinrichsen, Autor: Hinrichsen, Georg, Cuvillier Verlag, Göttingen, 24. Oktober 2005, <http://www.cuvillier.de/flycms/de/html/30/-UickI3zKPSj0fkk=/Buchdetails.html>).

With this book we make public in an edited way a 19th century manuscript. The manuscript is a piece of poetry, about 90 pages. The poetry is autobiographical, it tells the life of an ancestor of mine (great-grandfather of my grandmother) over more than 50 years. My grandmother's family was originally from Kiskunfélegyháza and my grandmother came to Transylvania during the Second World War, where she married, and remained there, after the frontiers changed twice.

Since my grandmother's younger brother emigrated in 1956 after another revolution he took part at, the relatives are living in Canada and the US and the grandchildren do not speak all Hungarian. This is the reason of publishing in English, apart of chosing an international publisher. It is believed that this way the manuscript will reach the diaspora.

From this point of view the manuscript has a special position: it does not belong to the heritage of ethnic minorities as the author was living in his own country, even if not souverane at that time (Hungary got equal rights to Austria in the Habsburg empire later than the story started). Myself as editor am living in Romania as ethnic minority, and the other relatives as diaspora, but this was not enough to get funding dedicated to the heritage of minorities from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences as scholarship to be performed from home. Hence the work has been done as sentimental link to the history of the family.

The manuscript described mainly peasant life. In this context we related best with the history of the town, where, as we will see, there were some development changes in the life of peasants that time (division of the puszta and giving it in property, the first school etc.). At the end of each part there are so-called „nóták“ (popular songs) which were sung by the ancestor. From this point of view the manuscript belongs to immaterial heritage describing the agricultural landscape. Because landscape has three components: the natural (green) landscape, the cultural (built) landscape and the immaterial landscape of traditions. In the case of this manuscript this immaterial landscape is built by the

agricultural landscape of the time, since the piece of poetry describes countryside rural life and agricultural life earning activities.

We followed a row of steps of making the manuscript available, this being the latest. The printed version addresses another publicum than the digital version.

Using knowledge in working with multimedia we did a version on YouTube. Outgoing point was the so-called „rediscovered space“ in which we used the sound as way to address one of the senses to rediscover what is in memory, an installation done more than 10 years ago at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe, Germany. The YouTube version makes it possible to look at the manuscript, but instead of reading it, to listen to it like in an e-book. So we made a first digital version, which is also original, but is very different from the visual version in this work. This is a quite original form of digital storytelling of the immaterial landscape of traditions in the 19th century. Further developments can be done employing multimedia software such as Adobe Director to also move the text as the reading advances – a real scenography for the poetry piece.

The work on the digital version is not closed from another points of view also. In frame of the EEA grants „Promoting diversity in culture and arts“ we are in discussion with musicians to rediscover or even to reinvent the immaterial heritage of the „nóták“, the songs at the end of each part of the manuscript. For this we might look into music heritage collected for symphonic music which may have links to the time around 1848. Hungarian composer Béla Bartok for example collected the heritage in Transsylvania. But also the tact, with shorter verses, may give a hint to the suitable melody. Music would give another enhancement to the auditive memory than the sound of the foreign language in the reading, and the necessity of the digital compared to the printed. In the visual however we have the original manuscript and the hand writing which gives the historical note. Valuable for the visual reproduction are also the hand drawings at the end of the life times, along with the „noták“. But also cooperation as NeDiMAH grant with the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe and or/ZKM Music Institute connected to it might lead to such a work.

Also the digital storytelling, in this case historical digital storytelling, has to be promoted in the frame of the contemporary fashion on this subject. The youtube pages shall be linked in webportals from the field.

The manuscript is family heritage and does not belong to any archive. It could be better classified as history than as poetry, because the poetry in it is no fiction, but autobiographical. It is important to highlight the role of the 1848 revolution. The description of participation to the 1848 revolution on horseback is a characteristic of the manuscript.

Varga József, the ancestor who wrote the manuscript, was born 1813, so it is timely to publish it this year, at the 200th anniversary.

The manuscript was taken care of by my grandmother's younger sister, Dr. Nagy Mária, whose name we bear, and given over to future generation. She was a non (included in the Hungarian Catholic Lexicon), and following the tradition for manuscript transcription in closters, the first machine written transcription of this manuscript was done in the Regina Mundi closter where she belonged to. She was also one of the first female medical doctor students and in this context we are member of a network



promoting the contribution of women to science, COST action genderSTE, and observer to its management committee on behalf of the „Marie Curie Fellows Association”, which work is focused, among others, on the promotion of women role models in mobility. Dr. Nagy Mária was mobile to Belgium in her youth in order to learn French. Research on this issue will belong to the future of the family we are addressing further on.

Production steps

The steps followed in editing this work were the following:

1. The representation of the manuscript

First the manuscript had been scanned. The next step was to transcribe the manuscript in the contemporary grammar which was written by the author, a peasant, following oral talk. The basis for this was the monotypic transcription. Then it was transcribed in today's grammar. A further important step is the English translation. In this step we made decisions about how to layout the book. We decided that on one page is the scanned manuscript, which is wider, and on the opposite page with Arial Narrow we put the two transcriptions. The English translation builds a following chapter for each of the 9 parts of the manuscript.

2. Editing the manuscript

The history, about which it is, happened close to the town of Kiskunfélegyháza, on Galambos farm and on Ferenczszállás farm, where the author lived most of his life. In order to get the wider picture we used the book „Olvasókönyv Kiskunfélegyháza történetéhez” [Manual to the history of Kiskunfélegyháza], Editor Iványosi-Szabó Tibor, Kecskemét, 1985, published by the city council of Kiskunfélegyháza, Petőfi press, ISBN 961 03 2128 9

Apart of this we used data about the history of the family, for example reproducing here the family tree with different nationalities (Hungarian, German, Romanian), the reflection of the family tree in the family grave in the cemetery of Kiskunfélegyháza, including those who emigrated to Canada and to Romania, as well as the Townhall, where Dóczy Pál, nephew of the husband of the daughter Varga Borbála of Varga József, was town architect and being an architect ourselves it is a reason of pride and of family connection, especially since our research focus is about the early 19th century and the heritage of Ödön Lechner and the national style in which also the townhall, for which the contest, the jury being lead by Ödön Lechner, was organised by Dóczy Pál.

3. The digital edition

Partially it is already available on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/mbostenaru>) read by the editor (myself). Future research will involve a CD including the sound and the XML of the visually transcribed manuscript, with links to the identified places, historical events (revolution, cholera) and persons in cooperation with NeDiMAH. For this reason we made connections with specialists in English and Hungarian literature and we are planning a short grant. The later is important in the context of the Digital Agenda for Europe.



The presence on YouTube makes it possible to link to another pieces of poetry we've put there, the known piece by Petőfi about his native land, Kiskunfélegyháza, about which this manuscript also is. Petőfi, the Hungarian national poet, lived at the same time as the peasant author of this manuscript and hence this link and comparison is important.

A further step would be translation to Italian, since the relatives first emigrated to Italy, and since our research also links to developments in Italy, where for example József Vágo, and architect of the time of Ödön Lechner, emigrated.

Positioning in history

Kiskunfélegyháza is mentioned since 1389, when in a document from the 9th of April King Sigismund calls it Felegyhaz. Then in 1420 a document mentions that Félegyháza is property of Queen Barbara. It is assumed that the kuns came afterwards to Félegyháza.

Kiskunfélegyháza was destroyed by the Turks in September 1526 and remains deserted. Till 1577 farmers and peasants are only noted for Ferencszállás, Pálka and Kisszállás (Gáter). Ferencszállás is the place Varga József lived when he wrote his poetry. Félegyháza remains empty even in 1699, as a "puszta" and is rented by those from neighbouring Kecskemét. It was Maria Terezia who, coming to power on the 20th of October 1740, took care of the repopulation of Kiskunfélegyháza, starting 1743.

Ferencszállás, today Petőfiszállás, is a place of pilgrimage today, because of the "holy fountain", a place where during these times the remains from the church altar were buried from the turks.

Another key year in the history of Kiskunfélegyháza is the so-called "redempció". In the Jászkun region it took place 1745.

Redempció (redemption)

In 1745 Maria Teresia allowed the redemption of previously unlawfully sold jász and kun territories. On this occasion she enforced the exceptions for jász and kun and partially gave them new privileges. The redemption put the Jászkunság in a special law situation, making them free from the serf (jobbágy) status. In Kiskunfélegyháza the situation was like in other places until 1848, and the land of the city 12 100 Ft was paid, for Ferencszállás 7 000 and for half Galambos 5 000. Those who with the occasion of redemption could pay everything assured for themselves and their successors land, and became redeemed (redemptus). They enjoyed full rights. The redemptus land ownership was from the begin on a separate juridical person, similar to the political community. The rights wrote in the privileges letter were only usable by redemptus, who were the only ones with the right to vote and to be voted. Also on economic field they had privileges, such as they could use for free the pastures, they had the right to give wine, they had hunting rights, did not pay tax on the market, or on the frontier. They had first right for buying new property. Our ancestor was such a redemptus.

On February the 4th 1774 Kiskunfélegyháza got the privilege of being a town from Maria Terezia. In the meantime around 1780/81 a hole starts to be seen as holy fountain in Ferencszállás, where today a monastery is build on the place. Following the award of the town privilege the number of inhabitants rose to 10 000 in more than 1000 dwellings.



Other historic events close to the birth of Varga József are the Battle of Győr on May 21-22 1809 and the peace of Vienna on the 14th of October 1809. In the same year teaching starts in Félegyháza.

Varga József's life is spanning two periods in the history of Kiskunfélegyháza as seen in the "manual". 1743-1848 is called the age of late feudalism (Bánkiné Molnár Erzsébet).

Documents from 1812-1815 present the economic situation of the city.

Around 1825 there were 817 families with property, 54 edle families and 1372 families without property.

1831 there was a cholera epidemic in Félegyháza, about which Varga József writes in his poetry.

1834 February 3rd a key document is published: the public meeting of the jászkun administration makes rules for living on the farm.

1846 13th of March 61 farmer makes a request for planting grapes to the council.

The second time span to which Varga József's life is connected is 1848-1944, called by the book the time of bourgeois development.

The news on the 1848 revolution in Budapest reached Félegyháza on the 26th of March. Mid-June the town council announced the general rise of the population after 21st of May the independence declaration of the Hungarian nation was distributed among the inhabitants.

Following the revolution imperial and tsarist teams occupy Félegyháza 1849 July 28-29.

26th of March 1848 a document is released which is the statement of the town council position related to the March revolution and the public order.

1848 June 1st the town council takes position about the organization of a local national army of guards. Varga József will join this. June 10th Szentkirályi Móric jászkun main captain gives a declaration about the creation of this army. Following this June 13th 1848 he gives indications about what army members should be equipped with. June 18th and respectively August 28th 1848 the council makes a declaration to the ministry of war about the registration of the national guards and their inclusion in the army. December 4th 1848 the jászkun main captain calls the population to support the national guards with clothes. 1848 November 10th the representative of the government orders in a camp the national guards on horseback from Félegyháza. Varga József was one of those on horseback. 1849 February 19th the national Country Protection Board recognizes that the town council in Kiskunfélegyháza acted well. Cibakháza, on 1849. March 17th the national Country Protection Board writes a talk to citizens of more cities, among which also Félegyháza.

1848 June 6-8 is the time of birth of a known Petőfi poetry piece.

Inhabitants from Félegyháza are proud that Petőfi Sándor was original from here. In fact, he was born in Kiskunfélegyháza but is not registered in the city because he wasn't Roman Catholic and was baptized elsewhere. That time there were no birth, just baptism certificates. However, he wrote a poem called Szülőföldemen (On my birth earth) in Félegyháza. The connection of Petőfi Sándor with



Kiskunfélegyháza makes the connection of Varga József with the 1848 revolution in which the national poet died even more interesting.

Despite the Austrian threatening the town of Kiskunfélegyháza remains loyal to the national government. Still, in July the revolution failed with the arrival of the Russian army.

1853 september 3 the first train line comes to Félegyháza, leading to Budapest over Cegléd, followed by the line to Szeged on 1854 4th of March.

May 1855 is another date connected to Varga József. The first farm school is organized on Kúlsőgalambos where he went to school two classes as a child.

Then 1855 July to August is the big cholera epidemics in Félegyháza, of which also Varga József and his family suffered. 937 died in Félegyháza, on some days even 50.

1855 30th of October a document is issued about the use of the areal of the city before the common pastures were divided.

1855 november 17th the divided Ferencszállás puszta was given into individual property, not without complaines on april 23rd.

Another key date of 1855 is November 17. The puszta in Ferencszállás is distributed in separate properties. This is presumably how Varga József came from Kúlsőgalambos to Ferencszállás in his late years.

1860 november 18 Reményi Ede organizes a concert for a Petőfi memorial plate.

An interesting document is issues 1863 august 27th. Inhabitants of Félegyháza ask for information from the Bucharest city council for immigration. It was years later when an successor of Varga József, myself, was born in Bucharest.

1865 october 4th the first permanent farm school is opened on Galambos.

1867 october 13th takes place the first national Petőfi celebration with the award of the memorial plate on the façade of the Petőfi house.

In fact, Ferencszállás is called today Petőfiszállás because the father of the poet owned a pub there.

On December 10th 1867 following the suggestion of Reményi Ede a place is named after Petőfi in Félegyháza.

1868 there is a peasant revolt called for by Asztalos János of which there is no mention in the poetry.

1872 august 26th Félegyháza becomes a town with a council. Later on, Dóczy Pál, the nephew of the son in law of Varga József, will be member of it.

1876 september 4th is another key date in the history of the city. The administrative independence of Kiskunság ceased to exist in the favour of the county Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun.



1882 a monography on Kiskunfélegyháza, written by Szerelemhegyi Tivadar, is published. It would be interesting to compare life in Félegyháza in this book with our published poetry.

Memories of 1848 persist. In 1890 17th of January the deputies of Félegyháza make a request to the parliament that the citizenship law should be changed, and Kossuth Lajos, as honorary citizen of the city, does not look his Hungarian citizenship.

In 1891 the population of Kiskunfélegyháza is 30 000, in rapid raise. So it is the 19th town in the country, 10 years ago it was 23rd. Even today the population is not much bigger.

1898 15th of March, on the 50th anniversary of the Revolution old defenders took place on the celebration. Varga József wasn't anymore one of these, he would have been 85 years old.

1899 december 8th the portrait of Kossuth Lajos, painted by Holló Lajos, is presented in a honorary ceremony, occasion of visit for Kossuth Ferenc.

The name of Kiskunfélegyháza is so instead of Félegyháza only since August 15th 1900.

1910 Kiskunfélegyháza is presented in a monography of the county.

Starting 1918 Dóczy Pál, who was council member (as also mentioned on the grave of which we attach a photo) since 1903 is present in some documents (1922, 1924).

1937 Kiskunfélegyháza was presented in the sociography of Erdei Ferenc with the title Futóhomoc (Running sand).

Future of the family

We would like to come back to the figure of Dóczy Pál, the nephew of the husband of a child of the author of this poetry piece, Varga Borbála. Dóczy Pál had been the chief engineer (városi mérnök), with the functions of the chief architect today of the town of Kiskunfélegyháza over a respectable number of years, with a break along WWI. He organized, as already mentioned, the competition for the town hall, an image of which we include, with a jury presided by Ödön Lechner, the architect of the national style whose works have been proposed to be included in UNESCO heritage. The town hall itself displays the national style. Art historian Brunner Attila (see the blog or the academia.edu page for links), with whom we are in contact, originally from Kiskunfélegyháza, dedicates research to his native city around these times, particularly for the town hall, and in future to the historical network of Ödön Lechner, the personal links which influenced architecture, possibly using the method of historical network research. In this context the Dóczy family as inheritant of the author of this manuscript gains importance. For example a next chief architect of the town was Szarvas, whose wife was also born Dóczy. But research does not stop at the town hall, it includes the Art Nouveau development of the city – buildings from that time but also urban works (ex. fountains), including original drawings of Dóczy Pál. During the time of Dóczy Pál, to further connect with landscape, the main avenue of Kiskunfélegyháza was done, the trees of which recently became 100 years old. We hope to get the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on performing research as visiting scholar in Hungary on this later step of family history, and to investigate, as we are an architect working in landscape architecture the history of the architecture, urban planning and landscape architecture of the city we originate from – not only the immaterial, but also the natural



and the built heritage. And of course we are hoping for further exchange with the local specialists working in the field.

A book connected to this time is the one by Bánkiné Molnár Erzsébet (author) and Ujvári Zoltán (editor) "Polgárok Kiskunfélegyházán 1890-1913", Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem, Debrecen, 1996, Studia Folkloristica et Ethnographica, ISBN: 963-472-075-7. The NeDiMAH representative for Hungary works at this university, so we hope in further exchange.

Bucharest, 1. December 2013



The street with platans in Kiskunfélegyháza, more than 100 years old



The Nagy family house in Kiskunfélegyháza (of Dóczy Erzsébet, the granddaughter of Varga József), and of the grand-grandparents of the editor



The town hall in Kiskunfélegyháza (1909-1911), architects Vas József, Morbitzer Nándor
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Family grave of the Nagy and Dóczy family in the cemetery of Kiskunfélegyháza, including Varga Borbála, the daughter of Varga József



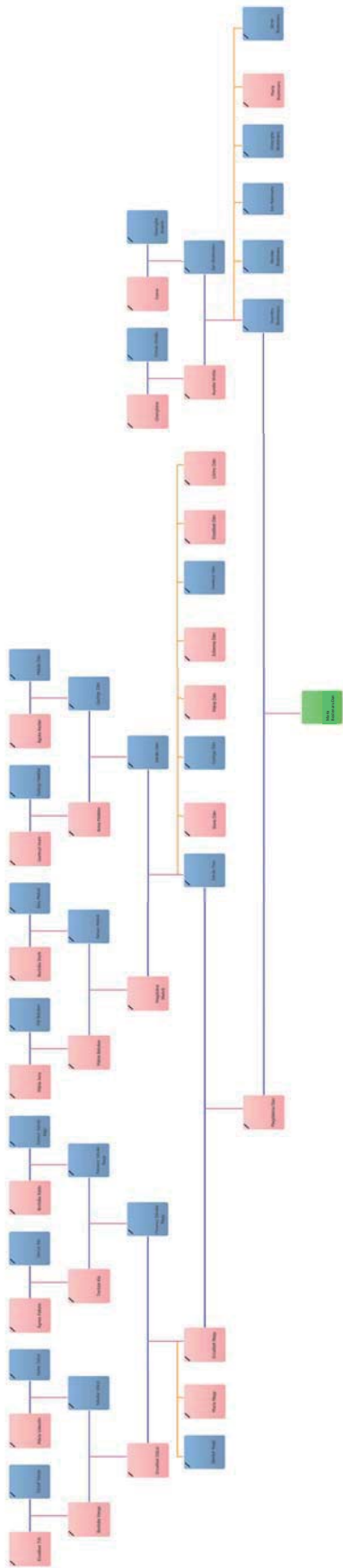
Part of the family grave including my grandmother (Dr. Dán Istvánné – born Nagy Erzsébet), Dr. Nagy Mária and their parents



Dóczy part of the grave: The daughter of Varga József – Varga Borbála and her husband Dóczy Sándor, as well as Dóczy Pál, the town architect and council member, as member of the family



View of the Dóczy grave including the parents of our grandmother on the side (as repeated on the other stone, of our family branch)



Family tree from Varga József till us (the editor). The following pages present details.