

KÁROLY JANZSÓ

FROM THE CLUJ UNIVERSITY PULPIT TO
THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN SZEGED

(The Journey of Two Professors at the Beginning of the 1920s
in the Light of Newspapers and Memoirs)

ABSTRACT

The study follows the life path of the two professors, László Erdélyi OSB and Sándor Márki from Cluj-Napoca, who started their journey of academic exile on June 26, 1921 through mid-October 1921 from their home university in Cluj to Szeged. The article is also presenting the context of the city of Szeged, which was preparing for the opening ceremony of the local university after the treaty of Trianon. The article's main sources include the Pannonhalma correspondence of Erdélyi and the diary of Márki, written in Gyula, along the national and Szeged-based local press outlets and university documents of the period. Furthermore, the research covers issues of the city's management, the foundation of the university and the work of the government, together with the organization of the academic year's opening ceremony. It also discusses topics related to the professors' new homes, the renovation of the city's buildings designated for the university units, and the governor's visit to Szeged on 8th and 9th October, 1921. Overall, the article is focusing on the professorial legacy of Erdélyi and Márki, which complements the history of the university transposed from Cluj to Szeged in October 1921.

KEYWORDS: László Erdélyi, Sándor Márki, history of the University of Szeged, media history, 20th century Hungarian history

REZÜMÉ

A kolozsvári katedrától a szegedi egyetemi tanévnyitó ünnepélyig – Két professzor útja és életútja napilapok és a visszaemlékezések tükrében

A tanulmány Erdélyi László és Márki Sándor 1919 és 1921 közötti életútját követi. A két történészprofesszor 1921-ben, a trianoni békeszerződést követően szinte utolsóként hagyta el Kolozsvárt. Az út viszontagságait nemcsak Márki Sándor naplója örökíti meg, hanem a napilapok is beszámolnak róla. A sajtóanyagból, amely Márki és Erdélyi levelezését, valamint az egyetem történetének levéltári forrásait is jól kiegészíti, megismerhetjük a szegedi megérkezés és az azt követő hónapok eseményeit. Az országos és helyi sajtó alapján végzett kutatás külön figyelmet fordított a kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudományegyetem 1921. október 9-én, Szegeden történt újrainyítására, illetve az azt megelőző napok eseményeire is.

KULCSSZAVAK: Erdélyi László, Márki Sándor, a Szegedi Egyetem története, sajtótörténet, 20. századi magyar történelem

The year 2021 signals the 100th anniversary of the Royal Hungarian Ferenc József University's move from Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca to Szeged. The higher education institution then named Ferenc József University of Sciences, was developed in Kolozsvár at the end of 18th century. Several volumes and studies on the history of the university, especially between 1919 and 1921, have been published in recent years¹ with more series of books forthcoming. In my study, I would like to focus on a few crucial moments of the transitional period between 1919 and 1921 often referred to as the "hiding years," a study which is mostly based on the legacies of two professors, Sándor Márki and László Erdélyi OSB. The relationship between the two academicians was more than collegial and rather fraternal since both of them were raised by monks – Márki by Premonstratensians, Erdélyi by Benedictines. Moreover, both graduated in history and geography from the Budapest University of Sciences: Márki in 1877 and Erdélyi in 1892. Márki became university professor in 1890 in the Hungarian capital where Erdélyi was his student. Then in 1892, Márki became professor at the University of Kolozsvár where he taught general history and geography but as nationally renowned university professor, Márki was also a prolific writer, publishing secondary school textbooks and several history textbooks. He also kept a diary starting in 1872, which contains entries on particular events.² In this diary, Márki also wrote about Erdélyi alongside the fateful events of the university in the period between 1919 and 1921.

The Exile of the University of Cluj

After the occupation by Romanian military forces³ of Cluj on 12 May 1919, the staff of the Ferenc József University was forced into exile. The university center in Kolozsvár, which was functioning as of 1872, offered

¹ See Gábor UJVÁRY ed., *Trianon és a magyar felsőoktatás I*, Magyar Napló Kiadó, Budapest, 2019 (Veritas Könyvek); Tamás VAJDA, *1919 – a magyar egyetem elűzése Kolozsvárról = Per Aspera Ad Astra*, A Pécsi Tudományegyetem Művelődés- és Egyetemtörténeti Közleményei 6, 2019, 7–29; Tamás VAJDA, *A kolozsvári magyar egyetem 1919-es megpróbáltatásai és erőszakos elvétele* 1–6, Szeged: A Város Folyóirata: Várostörténeti és Kulturális Magazin 31(2019)/5, 24–29; 31(2019)/6, 18–24; 31(2019)/7–8, 44–50; 31(2019)/9, 9–14; 31(2019)/10, 19–24; 31(2019)/11, 20–26; Tamás VAJDA, *Az erdélyi magyar egyetem utolsó tanéve (1918/19) = Gerundium*, Egyetemtörténeti Közlemények 10, 2019, 32–61.

² Sándor Márki's diary is in private ownership, a complete copy of the material is kept by the Békés County Archives.

³ Professors who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Romanian state were expelled from the university building the same day by the Romanian authorities. Records show that it was impossible to take out anything from the building. See György GAAL, *A Ferenc József Tudományegyetem és előzményei = Sándor BALÁZS et al., Fehér könyv az erdélyi magyar felsőoktatás kálváriájáról*, Bolyai Egyetem Barátainak Egyesülete, Kolozsvár, 2019, 33–34; Zsombor BARTOS- ELEKES, *A kolozsvári Cholnoky Jenő térképtár = Enikő BATIZ–László NAGY–Anna SOÓS, 140 éves a kolozsvári magyar nyelvű egyetemi oktatás*, Kolozsvári Egyetemi Kiadó, Kolozsvár, 2013, 111.

a sense of security in carrying out scientific work and teaching due to its libraries, lecture halls, dormitories and teachers' apartments and no one had any idea what would happen if these safe circumstances changed. The lucrative but arduous teaching work that made Kolozsvár the intellectual center of the eastern half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was simply interrupted in 1919 and the teaching staff soon started to disperse. Between 1919 and 1921, the university professors either fled to Budapest or continued teaching their students at the "interdenominational university" in Kolozsvár.⁴ However, the date of 26 July 1921 was a turning point in the life of the university staff. The "inter-denominational university"⁵ was finally abandoned (by exercise of the right of option⁶) due to the attacks of the Romanian press⁷ and because of the entry into force of the Trianon peace treaty. But leaving the so-called 'Athens-on-the-Szamos' and living as a repatriate was not an easy task for none of the university professors. Therefore, the last days of their stay at the Cluj left a deep impression on them. For example, on 25 June 1921, Márki wrote in his diary on the death of Lajos Farkas, the retired law professor, who passed away⁸ and was buried in the Házsongárd cemetery on 27 June. On behalf of the University and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Erdélyi and Márki bid farewell to their former colleague. Farkas had been a member of the university's professorial faculty since

⁴ Béla PUKÁNSZKY, *Tanárképző vagy egyetem? A kolozsvári egyetem Szegedre költözésének körülményei 1919–1921*, Magyar Pedagógia 1987/4, 424–433; Ádám ERDÉSZ, *A kolozsvári felekezeti magyar egyetem 1920–1921*, Történelmi Szemle 1998/3–4, 257–276; Gábor VINCZE, *A száműzött egyetem*, JATE Press, Szeged, 2006, 36–38; György GAAL, *Egyetem a Farkas utcában A kolozsvári Ferenc József Tudományegyetem előzményei, korszakai és vonzatai*, Scientia, Kolozsvár, 2012, 82–85.

⁵ Some of the university professors waited for the peace treaty in Kolozsvár. It was the will of this community to act this way and the responsible attitude of the leaders of Transylvanian religious denominations (Roman Catholic Károly Majláth Gusztáv, Reformed Károly Nagy and Unitarian Bishop József Ferencz) led to the creation of the so-called interdenominational university for the education of the remaining two million Hungarians. The well-developed plan would have been a solution for the Hungarian minority of Transylvania, but the circumstances – an even more hostile public opinion due to harsh press coverages along with many unanswered requests to the authorities – forced the already small number of university teachers assigned to the described organisational structure to finally leave the city. More on the planned university in József Mihály KISS, *Párhuzamos utak. A kolozsvári és a pozsonyi egyetem válságos időszakának történetéhez* = József Mihály KISS ed., *Tanulmányok a magyar felsőoktatás XIX–XX. századi történetéből*, ELTE, Budapest, 1991 (Fejezetek az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem történetéből 14), 139–141; György GAAL, 2012; Gábor VINCZE, 2006.

⁶ In his diary, Márki notes that the Hungarian newspapers available in Kolozsvár are banned. These included Keleti Újság, Ellenzék, Újság, Hétfői Újság.

⁷ "A trianoni béke 1921. évi XXXIII. törvénycikk 61–66§ alapján." István DÉKÁNY, *Trianoni árvák*, Noran Libro, Budapest, 2018; István Gergely SZÜTS, *Optálási jegyzőkönyvek mint a trianoni menekültkérdés forrásai*, Századok 152(2018)/6, 1237–1260; Csaba CSÓTI, *A menekült köztisztviselők társadalmi integrációjának keretei 1918–1924*, Limes – Tudományos szemle, 2002/2, 25–39.

⁸ S. Márki's diary, 1921. June 25. Békés County Archives, xerox collection.

its foundation in 1872 and, in Márki's thoughts, the loss of their colleague had been linked forever with the loss of the university.

This problematic period made both professors fate-turners. Bishop Majláth invited Erdélyi to teach at Marianum in Transylvania,⁹ but instead, he spent the period between 1920 and 1921 in Iklod, where he taught the children of a local landowner.¹⁰ This is how Vencel Bíró writes about the above-mentioned period:

During post-WWI changes he lost his job and remained in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca until the summer of 1921. In the intervening years, he continued to learn Romanian to the point where he could read Romanian newspapers with ease. He practiced his French, translated Latin and Greek to help his grandchildren, translated for [Nicolae] Iorga the texts about Ferenc Rákóczi II at the Romanian Academy, copied his unpublished occasional poems (83) from various paper fragments, translated for Xenopol¹¹ the history of Romania from French; ordered the historical papers on Ferenc Rákóczi's uprising, while directing and teaching at the teacher training college of the Reformed theological institute, but he was in no mood for deep work in those hectic days.¹²

The two professors, who persevered in their work and teaching almost to the end of the university change, left the city on 2 July, 1921. Márki was forced to take his family with him into limbo. This is almost palpable in his entries dated on the day of departure (dated July 2): "May God grant that Cluj may become Kolozsvár again."¹³ Then, according to the diary, they moved further and further away from Kolozsvár. The entry of the 3rd of July was already written in Nagyvárad/Oradea, where they met János Karácsonyi. Then the entry of 4th of July in Biharpüspök, the entry of the 5th of July in Püspök, and so on, until the 20th of July. The reason for the two-week wait for the last repatriation train was that the "management belonging to the Romanian railway company had given the repatriates' train wagons which, according to the existing agreement, could not go through to Hungary and their replacement was delayed. In any case, the management should have paid more attention to the allocation of wagons to the repatriates" – according to the *Ellenzék*, an independent

⁹ Főapátsági Könyvtár/Archabbey Library, Pannonhalma, Benedictina, BK 493/ I-XVII, Letter from Majláth to dr. László Erdélyi, 1920. August 11.

¹⁰ Hungarian Academy of Sciences Manuscript Archives, Letter from László Erdélyi to Béla Iványi, MS 5300/107–108.

¹¹ Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol (23 March 1847, Iasi–27 February 1920, Bucharest) was a Romanian historian, philosopher, economist and sociologist. He occupies a prominent place in Romanian historiography and is considered the consolidator of the Dacian continuity and important figure of the "Transylvanian School," who raised Romanian historiography to an internationally accepted level. For more information, see Ildikó LIPCSEY: Alexandru Dimitrie XENOPOL (1847–1920), *World History* 1979/ 4, 115–131.

¹² Dr. Vencel BÍRÓ, *Márki Sándor = Márki emlékkönyve*, Írták: Tanítványai, szerkesztette Dr. György Lajos (Márki Sándor halálának második évfordulójára) kiadja az Erdélyi Irodalmi Szemle, Minerva Irodalmi és nyomdai műintézet rt., Cluj-Kolozsvár, 1927, 25–26. Written by the Piarist scholar, Vencel Bíró, himself a student of Márki.

¹³ S. Márki's diary, 1921. July 2, Békés County Archives xerox collection.

political daily of Kolozsvár in 1921. The article also reports about 300 passengers crammed in 78 wagons, who were going to Nagyvárad to get food.

As mentioned before, these events were reported in the columns of *Ellenzék* on Friday 22nd of July, which informed both Kolozsvár's and the more general Transylvanian public opinion about the events. Nevertheless, the train carrying repatriates was stuck at Biharkeresztes but the situation was helped by the arrival of a Hungarian train with 42 wagons at dawn on Tuesday July 19th to help those in need. The newspaper mentions that another train of 85 wagons arrived on Romanian territory on the same day, writing that "Dr. Sándor Márki, a historian of European fame, who continue his lectures at the University of Szeged, was also on this train". Professor Márki's diary entry of 21 July was already written in *Szolnok*, with the text stating that, according to the instructions of the labour office from Budapest, he and his Transylvanian colleagues had to go on to Szeged.¹⁴

Szeged Offers Refuge

The period between 1919 and 1921 was long enough for both the Erzsébet University in Pozsony/Bratislava and the Ferenc József University in Kolozsvár/Cluj that had been equally forced to flee their location in Slovakia and Romania, respectively, to find a permanent location. The faculties of the two university faculties, which had jointly held the academic year 1920/21, had to finally split up. According to the Act XXV of 1921, the Erzsébet University was transferred to Pécs, while the University of Kolozsvár was transferred to Szeged. However, opinions on the government's decision were divided, as the article in the *Budapesti Hírlap* (1921) shows. This article expressed doubt on Kolozsvár University becoming indeed a Szeged-based University, since it was assumed that the academic institution should remain essentially a "University of Kolozsvár", an idea referring to the debate that had been calling for a transformation of the university world since 1893, including the plan to create a third university.¹⁵ This plan aimed to reduce the overcrowding of the two existing universities (Kolozsvár and Budapest) by offering the country's diverse cultural and religious areas the opportunity to step into the mainstream of the academic life. The proposal thus had for the location the cities of Pozsony, Szeged, Kassa/Košice and Debrecen as possible seats of universities.¹⁶ Moreover, the forementioned article questioned whether Szeged was ready for its new academic role. A city of 85,000 people, Szeged had a substantial municipal library – the legacy of Ká-

¹⁴ S. Márki's diary, 1921. July 21, Békés County Archives xerox collection.

¹⁵ Albert BERCZEVICZY, *Közművelődésünk és a harmadik egyetem*, Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1894.

¹⁶ Máté GALI, *Berczeviczy Albert. A márványarcú miniszter*, Athenaeum, Budapest, 2017, 140.

roly Somogyi, who was canon of Esztergom –, which could be converted into a university library. The journalist of Budapesti Hírlap, however, senses that the realities of 1921, with the redrawing of Trianon borders, makes one of the largest rural towns no longer having the economic strength it once had.

Everydays in Szeged

In the series of articles on Hungarian domestic political events, the most prominent news on the front pages in the spring of 1921 was the government crisis and the changes after the king's unsuccessful attempt to return to power, followed by the formation of the Bethlen government and the new government's programme. Some articles were also about the István Tisza murder trial. Nevertheless, the public of Szeged was greeted by an advertisement on the front page of the Szegedi Napló at the end of April 1921 which said that the faculty of the University of Kolozsvár required "sixty-nine apartments for academic staff" and announcing that "the council had already reserved some apartments in agreement with the president of the housing office, Béla Bárdos" and that "the rector is in charge of the housing affairs, who asked Professor Pál Szandtner to help."¹⁷

Anyone who read the Szeged daily newspaper could gain a lot of information on the matter. "How Many Flats Do University Teachers Need?" was an article that described the demand for flats by faculty, based on a detailed statement received from the Office of the Rector on 23rd of April, stressing that there were "enormous obstacles the university faces in accommodating the mere housing part of the university's accommodation needs, let alone teachers' demands". The claims made in the humanities, linguistics and history departments were quoted by the newspaper enlisting names such as

István Schneller dr. 3, Szádeczky K. Lajos dr. 4, Csengery János dr. 4, Dézsi Lajos 3, Schmidt Henrik 3, Horányszky Gyula dr. 3 rooms are applied for. Dr. Sándor Márki and Dr. László Erdélyi have not applied for a flat (sic!). Four departments in this faculty are to be filled.

The article also drew attention to the difficult situation in which Béla Bárdos, the president of the Szeged housing office, was in this context. A letter from Márki to Endre Veress reveals the situation around his and his family's accommodation:

[...] Now that we are going to be homeless and I am still going to serve at the University of Kolozsvár, I beg you, whatever the shortage of housing is, please find us a flat with 2-3-4 rooms and a kitchen on the Buda side of the capital, where the two of us can stay from mid-September, and where my daughter and her family can also be housed from mid-October. I can easily accommodate my library at Singer and Wolfner. You can imagine the amount of emotion with which I move

¹⁷ Pál Szandtner (born in Dunaföldvár, Tolna on December 4, 1884, and died in Budapest on November 10, 1963). Lawyer, university professor.

out of our house, built for our own comfort – and continues, saying – if you cannot help us, we shall spend the winter in some rickety wagon in our old age.

Three months later, the *Délmagyar*, the Szeged daily newspaper published an article entitled “University Teachers Are Coming,” which stated that

Dr. Sándor Márky and Dr. László Erdélyi, university professors, have just arrived in Szeged yesterday with 8 wagons of furniture and other belongings from Kolozsvár. Dr. Sándor Márky, a professor of world history, brought with him his library of 17,000 books, the disposition of which has not yet been thought of. Dr. Erdélyi will teach the history of culture at the University of Szeged, but he does not yet have an apartment. It is worth mentioning here that Dr. Lajos Tóth, State Secretary, will arrive in Szeged on Wednesday or Thursday to check on the university-related works.

The joint journey of the two colleagues travelling together from Kolozsvár ended in Szeged. Vencel Biró writes about the situation in the following:

As in larger cities in general, there were few good apartments to rent in Szeged at the time. Márki had a place to live where but he had no separate room for work and where he could accommodate his large library. The books were stored in the Piarist gymnasium for a while, and later he placed them in the university’s history seminar. The books are still there awaiting the promised purchase from the Hungarian state.¹⁸

The University

At the XVIth ordinary university council meeting held on 29th of April 1921¹⁹ in Budapest, Gáspár Menyhárth was entrusted with the rector’s duties. The proposal of Frigyes Reisz, vice-dean of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, for the person of the rector was supported by the faculties, because the University’s Regulations on the Organisation of Authority and the Rules of Procedure did not regulate the vacancy of the rector or vice rector during the academic year. Menyhárth, then the dean of the Faculty of Law was in charge of the affairs and announced that Flóris Korb’s plans were exposed in the Rector’s Office. These plans showed the location of the university in the buildings of the Szeged Charity, the Szeged Court and the industrial school by pointing also to the forthcoming central building and the future hospitals. Menyhárth also asked the medical faculty for their opinions on the latter.

At the end of the meeting, the “President proposed that on the second anniversary of the seizure of the university by Romanians on 12 May 1921, a mourning ceremony be held, as in the previous year, having then possibly a rector’s holiday”. The university council rejected the mourning ceremony, but “asked the rector to find a way to commemo-

¹⁸ He received a three-room apartment on the first floor of house number 9, Honvéd square. Márki’s diary 1921. June 23.

¹⁹ Documents of the Rector of Ferenc József University, 1269/1920/21.

rate this sad day in the history of the university". The last meeting of the University Council, held in Budapest on the 16th of September 1921, was the first extraordinary meeting of the new academic year.²⁰ The council also decided that teachers should be at their workplace in Szeged by 20th of September, 1921 and, as such, they will be traveling together to Szeged on the 22th of September by the 15:50 express train.

Preparations for a Festive Opening

The University Council held its first ordinary meeting in Szeged on 27 September 1921.²¹ Rector Menyhárth welcomed the Board and described the circumstances; his talk was followed by an opening remark of the doyen of the Board, Sándor Márki.²² The latter thanked and expressed his gratitude to all those who had worked for finding a new location for the Kolozsvár University, pledging for the support of the University Council for the success of the rector's work, which was seen as a "happy understanding" of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the University. Károly Tóth, dean of Law and Political Sciences, proposed a motion after Agenda VI to make the opening ceremony of the university a national one. The ceremony should raise the University's prestige, he said thus asking for "ceremonial robes and all other insignia be procured for the members of the Council" with a committee entrusted to carry out these tasks. Károly Tóth, László Erdélyi and Sándor Márki, in addition to the rector, were the committee members. They also could decide by majority vote on the ceremonial use of the robes. Another committee for the management of the boarding school and canteen was established also before the formation of the Students' Supervisory Committee. The members of this latter committee were László Erdélyi, Pál Kubinyi and Pál Szandtner.

The rector had to hold an extraordinary university council meeting on the 30th of September, 1921, because he spoke by telephone "with Dr. Lajos Tóth, Deputy Secretary of State, and was informed by him that His Excellency Nicholas [Miklós] Horthy Ritter von Nagybánya, the governor-regent, had announced that on the 9th of October, 1921 will be in Szeged and wishes to attend the opening ceremony of our University". The meeting was attended by the deans of the Faculty of Law, Károly Tóth, Dezső Veszprémi, István Apáthy, the Faculty of Mathematics and the Faculty of Natural Sciences, László Erdélyi, as deputy dean of the Faculty of Humanities, and Pál Szandtner. Regarding the location of the ceremony, Pál Szandtner notes that "the lobby [i.e. the Rector's Office lobby] will be renovated by then but not the other parts of the build-

²⁰ Documents of the Rector of Ferenc József University, Budapest, 137-1921/22.

²¹ Documents of the Rector of Ferenc József University, Szeged, 188-1921/22.

²² The dean of Humanities, Languages and History, János Csengery, who was on a study trip abroad, was replaced by Sándor Márki as provost.

ing”.²³ The Council decided to hold the 9th of October celebrations and instructed the Preparatory Committee to do the same.

Miklós Horthy and Szeged

Pesti Hírlap’s “The Governor’s Tour of the Southern Region” wrote that the governor left the capital with a large entourage with the aim to tour the southern border of the country.²⁴ Then, the daily newspaper of Szeged, dated Thursday, 6th of October 1921, mentioned for the first time that the Governor was visiting the southern town also mentioning that on the 4th of October, Horthy travelled from Budapest for a four-day visit to Baranya County to visit the areas liberated from Serbian occupation. After this trip, the governor arrived in Csongrád County, where he visited the so-called “Újszeged Triangle”. On the afternoon of the 8th of October, Horthy took part in a sports competition. According to the local newspaper, he received the university delegation at his quarters in the law court building and attended the opening ceremony of the university the next day. On the morning of the 9th of October, the governor also watched a sports tournament and attended a banquet at the Mars Square Barracks. The Szeged daily newspaper also mentions the local aspect of the national day of mourning with a mourning service held in the Rókusi church [St. Rock Church]. At the mass, celebrated by provost József Vásárhelyi, the government was represented by chief bailiff Dr. Károly Aigner, Dr. István Kószó in the name of the National Assembly, and member of parliament Dániel Pálffy, alongside many other representatives of the university and the army. There was also news of an 11 a.m. commemoration on Gizella Square, where the commemorators (among them university professors Dr. János Csengery and Dr. László Erdélyi, mayor Dr. Szilveszter Somogyi, the chief captain and other local leaders) gathered around the Honvéd statue.

On October 8, 1921, Horthy was met in Szeged by district commander Kocsárd Janky²⁵ and colonel Kálmán Shvoy.²⁶ According to the schedule, the special train “Turán” was to arrive at the station at 8:30 in the morning. The governor appeared on the platform after aide-de-camp Major László Magasházy. At the station, the head of state responded to the welcoming words of the mayor of the town, Dr. Szilveszter Somogyi, with the following statements:

Now that joy is banishing the bitter memories of suffering, I ask you not to forget the lessons of suffering, the patriotism, which is the great elemental force that inspires enthusiasm. Cherish it and carefully cultivate it in your hearts, so that it

²³ Documents of the Rector of Ferenc József University, Szeged, 352-1921/22.

²⁴ Pesti Hírlap October 6, 1921, 4; October 8, 1921, 5.

²⁵ From 1920 Janky was the brigade commander of the National Army in Szeged, his deputy was Kálmán Shvoy until November 4, 1920.

²⁶ Unfortunately, Kálmán Shvoy’s diary contains only one line about the day.

may be constantly manifested as a loyal, selfless devotion of the love of our country.

The same day an extraordinary meeting of the university council was also called, because the previously agreed programme with the governor's Sunday engagement had changed in the meantime. This meant that the "banquet after the opening ceremony should be held on Saturday evening" and "another banquet should be held on Sunday evening for those who cannot attend because of their late arrival." The cost of the change, as the rector saw, it was feasible from the funds raised by the cooperation with the University of Pozsony. Dean Károly Tóth proposed that the rector acceded to this request. Finally, the Council supported the proposal and authorised the rector to implement the amended programme. The governor was accompanied to this events by mayor Somogyi, bailiff Aigner, deputies Kószó and Pálffy, captains Szalay and Bottka and marched in front of the military units on the Temesvár road, followed by a military parade".²⁷

Two hours after the governor arrived, he was already in Szőreg. After a short stay, he visited Deszk and then Kiszombor, arriving back in Szeged at "a quarter past three in the afternoon" and his afternoon program continued at 3 p.m. with the horse-racing sports festival, where he watched the autumn sports competition of the district. Part of the governor's evening program was spent in the suite prepared for him on the first floor of the courthouse.²⁸ A delegation of the university's faculty, led by Gáspár Menyhárth and the rector, visited him later on, at 7:30 p.m.²⁹ In his welcoming words, Menyhárth expressed his gratitude for allowing the expelled Ferenc József University to continue in Szeged and thanked the governor for his presence, emphasizing that with this Horthy was "making the inauguration of the new university home a celebration."³⁰ In his reply, the governor expressed the fact that "it is sad that the University of Kolozsvár had to leave its old seat and look for a new home. Yet there is something comforting in this. It is strong proof that, although it is possible to take parts of a country by force, it is not possible to take away moral values, cultural superiority, cultural institutions, these strong pillars of Hungarian truth, by force".³¹

Nevertheless, the most important day for the University of Szeged was the 9th of October, 1921 with the events of the day described by Sándor Márki:

²⁷ Pesti Hírlap October 9, 1921, 5.

²⁸ In the 9th October, 1921 issue of Szeged, the journalist reports that after the banquet given to the governor, Horthy drove to the railway and spent the night in the special train. The latter is confirmed by the Szegedi Napló. October 9, 1920, 3.

²⁹ According to the Szegedi Napló, Horthy received the members of the Szeged military chair at 7:00 p.m., because it was 7:30 p.m. Szegedi Napló October 1921/454, 1.

³⁰ Pesti Hírlap 9. October 1921/225, 5.

³¹ Pesti Hírlap 9. October 1921/225, 5.

As representative of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, I participated in the celebration not as a teacher but as a delegate, in my *díszmagyar* [nobility ceremonial dress] outfit; the celebration began at 8 a.m. with the *Veni Sancte* in the church of Rókus, with a mass held by the Papal Prelate József Várhelyi.³²

At 8.20 a.m., celebrants were driven in carriages to the main building of Dugonics square along the route of Kossuth Lajos avenue, Széchenyi square and Kárász street. Those arriving at quarter to nine were greeted by Pál Szandtner, the organiser of the university celebrations, by count Pál Teleki and József Vass, minister of religion and public education, and by Lajos Tóth and Sándor Imre, state secretaries.³³ The governor, arrived after nine o'clock while "the rector magnificus stood on the main staircase with the university council, beside him four university servants in traditional costume with maces".³⁴

The ceremony continued in the Banquet Hall, a "huge, five-bay room, already half full with invited guests, barely able to accommodate the audience in the foyer. On its right wall was a large oil painting of Emperor Franz Joseph I, opposite which was the white silk banner of the University's Circle of St. Imre, extended across the wall, with the words embroidered in gold: 'God, Country, Science'. The walls were flanked by palm trees, and opposite the winged door was a simple throne for the governor. A part of the university council divided the hall into two parts, on the dais five armchairs lined with two-coloured velvet, in front of the dais a table with an enlarged copy of the Hungarian holy crown".³⁵ After the governor took his seat, the rector and the four deans appeared on the Council platform. According to the local newspaper *Szegedi Napló*, "they were dressed in robes and ceremonial gowns of the same colour as their arms, and robes ending in high, folded Bockskay collars, with a wide silver chain on their breasts to show their rank and afterwards they placed their cloaks on the table in front of them". The ceremony continued with more speeches. After a short talk given by the governor, vice-rector Schneller, Gáspár Menyhárh, the new rector on behalf of Bálint Kolozsváry talked followed by professor Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss, Member of the National Assembly, and Szilveszter Somogyi, Mayor of Szeged. Speeches were also presented by Sándor Márki, professor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, János Kiss, professor of Szent István Academy, Lajos Tóth, professor of the Tisza István University of Debrecen, Pál Heim, professor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Professor Andor Kovács, director of the Kecskemét Law Academy, welcomed the university on behalf of the law academies. The audience was then addressed by Béla Kanyó, a medical doctor, on behalf of the refugee students, by Ágost Jankó on behalf of

³² VINCZE 2006, 259–260.

³³ VINCZE 2006, 259–260.

³⁴ The time is exactly 9 o'clock, according to *Szegedi Napló* (10 October 1921, 2), "A little before 9 o'clock the report arrives to those waiting: the governor has left with his entourage", and "At 9:10 a.m., the street cheers the arrival of the governor."

³⁵ *Szegedi Napló* 10 October 1921, 2. László Erdélyi brought it from Cluj-Napoca.

the law authorities, by József Szalay on behalf of the Dugonics Society of Szeged, and by Benedek Jancsó on behalf of the popular literary societies.

After the greetings, the governor and his entourage, including count Teleki and minister Vass, left the banquet hall, accompanied by the University Council, his programme continuing on the sports field of the Szeged Military District until noon. Horthy arrived at 1 p.m.³⁶ at the Mars Square Barracks,³⁷ where general Janky praised in his toast before the festive lunch the guest for his military deeds in the First World War, mentioning the governor as the supreme military leader.³⁸ According to Márki, the rector and the deans of the university were also invited to the lunch. Horthy was in town until 3 p.m., and was accompanied at his departure at the railway station by general Janky, chief deputy Aigner and colonels Shvoy and Koós, who were involved in organising the day, and police chief Sándor Bottka.

Márki stayed all the time at the university ceremonies because he represented there the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.³⁹ In his speech, Márki recalled the memories of “persecution and hiding” in the history of the university, but stressed that “violence has always only broken schools, but never their academic spirit”. Márki also gave a sign of the way forward saying that from then on faculty and students “are preparing for their academic tasks with renewed vigour within the walls of the hospitable city of Szeged, while never losing sight of the motto of the last Prince of Transylvania, Ferenc Rákóczi, in that they must work with God for the motherland and for freedom”.⁴⁰ Moreover, Márki also recalled other important events about the opening day:

³⁶ Horthy paid a tribute visit to General Janky's mother. The visit was not only a protocol salute, but also a tribute to the good relationship between the two soldiers before 1918.

³⁷ The building on Mars Square was built after 1883 to house the joint army and garrison. Today it houses the Szeged Vocational Training Centre, Gábor Dénes Technical and Vocational High School and private apartments. Sándor BÁLINT, *A régi szegedi katonaelet: népi emlékezet és helyi hagyományok*, Budapest, 1979. Print version of *Ethnographia* 1979/1; Zoltán NAGY, *A rekonstrukció építkezései. A polgári lakóház építkezés. Az eklektika korának építészeti és kommunális fejlődése = Szeged története* 3. I, 1849–1919, ed. Endre GAÁL, Somogyi-könyvtár, Szeged, 1991, 17; Ferenc SOMORJAI, *Szeged*, Third, revised and enlarged edition, Panoráma, Szeged, 2002 (*Magyar városok*), 159; *Magyar várostörténeti atlasz 3 – Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns No. 3, Szeged II, Adattár*, Edited by László BLAZOVICH, Szeged, 2014, 86.

³⁸ 1920, I. law article.

³⁹ Among the invited guests were several members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, including Count Pál Teleki, János Csengery, István Ereky, László Erdélyi, Ferenc Finkey, Antal Horger, Gyula Hornyánszky, Bálint Kolosváry, Sándor Márki, Frigyes Riesz, Dr. Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss.

⁴⁰ *Acta Universitatis Litterarum Regie Hungaricae Francisco Josephine Anni MCMXI–MCMXII, Ünnepek, amelyek a M. Kir. Ferencz József-Tudományegyetemen a tanév megnyitása és az Egyetem ötvenesztendő fennállása alkalmával 1921. évi október hó 9.-én és 1922. évi június hó 29.-én tartattak*, Városi Nyomda és Könyvkiadó Rt, Szeged, 1923, 36–37.

The rector [...] inaugurated 12 candidates as doctors (including the autumn parish priest Ferenc Kovács),⁴¹ the first of their kind in Szeged. [...] At half past eleven, the ceremony ended, I returned home with Benedek Jancsó and Lajos Szádeczky, and after an hour's conversation we went to the Kass hostel, where we had a very pleasant lunch with the guests and teachers of the university [...] At about 5 p.m. we went upstairs to the town assembly, which the enthusiastic mayor Somogyi had announced in order to make the members of the town council and the university get to know and like each other.⁴²

The General Assembly was attended by the University Council and the university teachers, as well as Lajos Tóth, state secretary for public education and István Zadravec, bishop of the general education. The rector responded to the city mayor's words of celebration by thanking the city for its efforts to host the university. Furthermore, other speakers in the ceremony spoke of the plans that the university teachers already knew should be in place to ensure a smooth education. Councillor Gaál reported on the action to help students, which "the Szeged and Ujszeged hemp factories, Back Bernát, Ignác Hoffmann, the Christian Economic Bank, the Southern Association, György Kendercsi and the SzAK offered greater financial assistance to support needy university students" (*Szeged* 1921.) He also pointed out that the city had already worked out a plan to become a university town, by "referring to their memorial of 1907" and by saying "that they certainly did not want to become a university at the expense of Kolozsvár".⁴³

Afterwards Gábor Kovács spoke on behalf of the Association of Szekler University and College Students emphasizing "how much unloving they felt during their hiding times" and shed tears when he mentioned their mothers, who were grieving for them, and who were then being replaced "by the maternal care of the women of Szeged." Benedek Jancsó also made a great impression when he announced that the Popular Literary Society "had bought a Jewish boarding school for 2 and a half million crowns." Márki, referring to these speeches remarked that "the emotional parts of the speech were very beautiful"⁴⁴. However, his diary does not mention the speeches of István Kószó and Imre Tóth,⁴⁵ after which mayor Somogyi closed the ceremonial assembly session at 6.30 p.m.

The programme of the evening was the University's dinner offered at Hotel Kass. At the banquet, which had 231 tables, rector Gáspár Menyhárdh made the first toast to the governor, followed by "István Schneller to the government, János Csengery to the city and its mayor, Károly Tóth to the national army, Gyula Hornyánszky to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, József Imre to the sister universities and academies, and

⁴¹ The Szeged daily does not mention his name.

⁴² VINCZE, 2006, 260.

⁴³ VINCZE, 2006, 260.

⁴⁴ VINCZE, 2006, 260.

⁴⁵ "After the enthusiastic speech of Dr. István Kószó, the meeting was closed by the words of Mayor Somogyi." Szeged 11 October, 1921, 2.

Sándor Márky to the law authorities. László Erdélyi toasted on literary societies, associations and bodies".⁴⁶ On behalf of the government, Lajos Tóth and Sándor Imre State Secretaries,⁴⁷ were also present at the event.

Conclusion

Szeged, a county seat which became the scientific and cultural centre of Southern Hungary in the 1920s, has preserved one of the cornerstones of old Transylvanian Hungarian. The city's context has helped many outstanding Hungarians to ascend to the peak of their career here or to start here their scientific careers. Over the years, names such as Attila József, Miklós Radnóti and Albert Szent-Györgyi have made the name of the university known on the national and international level.

Regarding the university in exile, the University's 1921 celebrations were organised and hosted as the occasion demanded. The academic institution invited representatives of the Hungarian universities and other national organisations involved in the teaching and educational work, as well the head of state and a number of other persons responsible for the educational and political direction of the country. Kálmán Shvoy, who was also present at the festivities, mentions in his diary an important line regarding the 8th of October, 1921 when he claims that this day was "the governor's visit to the liberated Újszeged".⁴⁸

Sándor Márki records that he started teaching in Szeged on the 12th of October, 1921. He was involved, together with Erdélyi, in the committee procedure certifying the transition period at the end of 1921. In Szeged, Márki wrote, among many others, also about the 50-year history of the university⁴⁹ while Erdélyi published a volume on the Szekler claims,⁵⁰ followed by a theological work⁵¹ on the Árpád era.⁵² Márki died in Gödöllő in 1925, when his former student, Erdélyi, became dean of the Faculty of Humanities. Later on, Erdélyi reached the peak of his career in the academic year 1936–1937 as rector of the University.

⁴⁶ Szegedi Napló 10 October 1921, 2.

⁴⁷ Lajos TÓTH, Secretary of State, was thanked for his toast to the city by Endre Gaál, Councillor.

⁴⁸ *Kálmán Shvoy titkos naplója és emlékirata 1918–1945*, ed. by Mihály PERNEKI, Kossuth Kiadó, Budapest, 1983, 75.

⁴⁹ Sándor MÁRKI, *A m. kir. Ferencz József-tudományegyetem története 1872–1922*, Szeged Városi Nyomda és Könyvkiadó Rt., Szeged, 1922.

⁵⁰ László ERDÉLYI, *A székelyek története*, reprinted from the 1921 Erdélyi Naptár, Gött János és Fia, Brassó, 1921; László ERDÉLYI, *A székely eredetkérdés megoldásának sarkpontjai*, Akadémiai Értesítő, XXXIII, 1922, 205–214.

⁵¹ László ERDÉLYI, *A legszebb tudomány*, Szegedi Egyetemi Szent Imre-kör, Szeged, 1922; 2nd Edition: 1924.

⁵² László ERDÉLYI, *Árpádkor*, Pallas Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársaság, Budapest, 1922.