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Redactor șef: **dr. Sándor Kovács**

Redactor: **dr. Júlia Eszter Andorkó**

Îngrijirea textelor/corectură: **Gabriella Dénes, Rodger Matlage**

Tehnoredactor: **Péter Virág**

Colectivul de redacție: **dr. Juliane Brandt, dr. Szabolcs Czire, dr. Ildikó Horn,  
dr. Botond Koppándi, dr. Adél Csilla Lakatos, dr. Borbála Lovas, dr. Lehel Molnár**

Redactori onorifici: **dr. Mihály Balázs, dr. Elek Rezi**

Adresa redacției: B-dul 21 Decembrie 1989, nr. 9, 400105 Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
Tel: +40 264 593 236, +40 740 246 585; e-mail: keresztenymagveto@unitarius.org  
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# ABSTRACTS

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**János Pál**

***Primary Education in the Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely (1919–1931) II.***

This article continues the one from the previous issue in exploring the effectiveness of the Unitarian Church's school organizing activities in preserving ethnic and denominational identity in Romania after 1918, specifically in the Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc). It focuses on the 1920–1921 school year – a critical period after the Trianon treaty – and the following decade. The Unitarian Church's Representative Council determined the principles for organizing this school year, which proved pivotal for parish schools in the Székelyudvarhely Diocese. State obstacles, such as the repossession of school buildings and the requirement for teachers to pledge allegiance in summer 1920, greatly affected the fate of denominational schools. Despite efforts, many parishes hesitated to start school due to negotiations with state authorities. Financial unpredictability persisted, leading to the collapse of denominational education by December 1920, as the Church yielded to state decrees, leaving school-age children as direct victims of closures and conflicts.

In the Székelyudvarhely Diocese, three parishes were able to maintain denominational schools for some time: the Székelyderzs (Dârjiu), the Oklánd (Ocland) and the Vargyas (Vârghiș) parish. However, the Romanian state used all means to make these schools impossible. Inter-denominational cooperation has not been able to ensure the maintenance of denominational, mother-tongue schools [(Homoródszentmárton (Mărtiniș), Homoródkarácsonyfalva (Crăciunel), Homoródalmás (Merești)].

The minority fate in this period meant a harsh environment for the Hungarian community in Romania, in which the economic, spiritual and infrastructural decline of the community was a characteristic trend.

**Keywords:** 1918, 1920–1921 school year, archival documents, denominational school system, economic situation, ethnicity, Homoródalmás (Merești), Homoródkarácsonyfalva (Crăciunel), Homoródszentmárton (Mărtiniș), Székelyderzs (Dârjiu), Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc), Oklánd (Ocland),

Romania, school closures, state decrees, state schools, Trianon treaty, Unitarian Church, Unitarian Diocese of Székelyudvarhely, Vargyas (Vârghiş)

**Attila Márk**

***History of Denominational Education in the Unitarian Parish of Árkos***

Religious education in Árkos (Arcuş) has a centuries-old tradition and historical significance. This article traces the history of the school through the centuries.

In the early 1600s, the Árkos Unitarian Church was one of the strongest Unitarian communities in the area. The first documented source about Árkos' denominational school is in the bishop's minutes from his 1693 visitation, which mentions the salary of the schoolmaster of Árkos, but does not name him. The records of the bishop's 6<sup>th</sup> May 1732 visitation includes János Uzoni (?-?) as the schoolmaster. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the parish was required to educate both boys and girls.

The minutes of the bishop's 1789 visitation are the first to describe in detail the schoolmaster's property. There were 35 boys in school at that time.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a girls' classroom was built on the schoolmaster's plot. Over the centuries, the number of pupils attending school fluctuated, as not all the school aged children attended school.

In 1817, the first Church curriculum for all its village schools was established, so it is known what subjects were taught in the schools. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pupils of the other denominations began to attend the Unitarian school.

After the Compromise of 1867, Romanian Law 38 of 1868 dictated a radical reform of the education system. In the early 1870s, the Reformed and Unitarian schools were converted into public/state schools. The new school building had three classrooms and three teachers.

Some of the annual reports of the Árkos parish committee on religious education from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have survived.

After the 1920 Trianon Treaty, the parish re-established the denominational school, but was obstructed in every conceivable way by the Romanian state. The parish built a new school in 1925. The state attacked not only the institution, but also the students: according to the state, children whose names were Romanian could not be enrolled in the denominational school. Between the two world wars the school ran relatively smoothly. After World War II, Árkos had one state

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school and one denominational school with 3 teachers in each school. (The parish also owned the state school building.)

In 1948, the Romanian state took over the church school buildings, and denominational education was definitively abolished, not only in Árkos, but also in the whole country.

**Keywords:** 1867 Compromise, Árkos Unitarian Parish, curriculum, Compromise of 1867, denominational education, education committee of the Árkos Unitarian Parish, minutes of the bishop's visitations, Romanian state, Unitarian Parish of Árkos, Trianon Treaty; Uzoni, János (?-?)

### **Anna Szakál**

#### ***Mihály Kiss's Career and Missing Parts of His Legacy***

Mihály Kiss (1809, Torda/Turda – 1889, Árkos/Arcuş), was a Unitarian minister in Árkos and the Háromszék district's Dean. This article presents his life path and career, and his role in the collection of folk poetry based on reminiscences published in periodicals and his surviving personal papers. As a close friend of Unitarian priest and bishop János Kriza (1811–1875), Kiss participated in collecting folk poetry. As a result of his and other collectors' effective contributions, mainly those of Unitarian ministers and school teachers, the first regional folklore collection was published in 1863 under the title *Vadrózsák* (Wild Roses).

**Keywords:** Árkos/Arcuş, folk poetry, folklore, poetry collection, Torda/Turda, Unitarian minister, *Vadrózsák*; Kiss, Mihály (1809–1889); Kriza, János (1811–1875)

### **Béni L. Balogh**

#### ***The Friendship of Unitarian Bishop Elek Kiss and Petru Groza***

The paper explores the friendship between Unitarian Bishop Elek Kiss (1888–1971), and Romanian Prime Minister Petru Groza (1884–1958), which spanned over a decade and significantly influenced the Romanian Unitarian community in the post-war period. Despite their distinct career paths, both individuals attained the apex of their respective fields, with Kiss becoming the

leader of the Unitarian Church and Groza ascending to the highest public office in Romania. Both figures were deeply rooted in their religious convictions.

The precise inception of their friendship remains unclear; however, their first documented meeting occurred in 1946. The relationship strengthened following Kiss's election as bishop, with Groza frequently assisting the Unitarian Church in resolving various issues, thereby earning Kiss's profound respect and gratitude. Their relationship was characterized by both political and personal dimensions. Politically, their alliance was mutually beneficial: Kiss opted for cooperation and negotiation to protect his church from the Romanian communist regime, while Groza sought to reinforce the churches' loyalty.

Following Groza's death, both Elek Kiss and the Unitarian community experienced profound grief. Kiss often reminisced about his friend, underscoring Groza's substantial support for the church. Their friendship exemplifies how genuine and profound human relationships can transcend political interests within the political sphere.

**Keywords:** bishop, friendship, prime minister, politics, post-war era, Unitarian Church; Groza, Petru (1884–1958), Kiss, Elek (1888–1971)

## Árpád Furu

### *About the Paintings Exhibited in the House of Religious Freedom*

In 2018, the House of Religious Freedom, a new cultural institution of Cluj-Napoca, opened its doors in the former Unitarian bishop's residence, symbolically becoming the cultural embassy of the Hungarian Unitarian Church. This institution upholds a tradition of community arts engagement dating back to the Reformation. The restored building includes conference rooms, a religious studies center, and a museum of religious art, with a notable permanent exhibition of paintings.

This article offers a catalog of the 34 paintings displayed in three rooms, which represent a broader, prestigious collection held by the Bishop's Office. These works are categorized into three key periods: the interwar Nagybánya School of Painting, the interwar Cluj art scene, and the 19th and 20th-century academic style, and includes works by prominent artists such as Ferenc Ács (1876–1949), Péter Balázs (1919–2003), Ferenc Incze (1910–1988), János Gruzda (1881–1953), László Mednyánszky (1852–1919), István Nagy (1873–1937), Jenő

Szepesi Kuszka (1885–1948), János Thorma (1870–1937), and Zoltán Veress (1868–1935).

**Keywords:** Academic style, Conference rooms, House of Religious Freedom, Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Hungarian Unitarian Church, Interwar period, Museum of religious art, Nagybánya School of Painting, permanent exhibition, Reformation era, Religious studies center, Transylvanian art, Unitarian bishop's residence; Ács, Ferenc (1876–1949); Balázs, Péter (1919–2003); Gruzda, János (1881–1953); Incze, Ferenc (1910–1988); Mednyánszky, László (1852–1919); Nagy, István (1873–1937); Szepesi Kuszka, Jenő (1885–1948); Thorma, János (1870–1937); Veress, Zoltán (1868–1935)