“The most beautiful anthem of life by Ady” – exhibition

2015/06/20 - 2015/07/12



NSZL was presented a precious, until now unknown manuscript of a poem by Hungarian poet Endre Ady. The original manuscript of After a May Shower emerged after nearly 90 years: one of Ady’s descendants donated it to NSZL’s Manuscript Collection. The exhibition presenting the autograph will be opened on the Night of Museums and can be visited until July 12, 2015.


Ady ismeretlen váradi fényképe 1908-ból. (Lembert felvétel)

[1]NSZL was presented a precious, until now unknown manuscript of a poem by Hungarian poet Ady. The original manuscript of After a May Shower (Májusi zápor után) emerged after nearly 90 years: one of Ady’s descendants donated it to NSZL’s Manuscript Collection.

“The most beautiful anthem of life by Ady”, wrote Erzsébet Vezér, a renowned researcher of Endre Ady in her monograph published in 1977. The poem, written in 1908, was published in the June 1 issue of Nyugat [2] (West), a journal that had been kicked off in the very same year. After a May Shower was published together with two other poems by Ady.

The value of the long lost manuscript is shown by the fact that the manuscript of another poem, published together with this one, Between Léda’s Lips (Léda ajkai között) was sold at the 2001 auction of Hungary’s Central Antique Store for HUF 5 million (the equivalent of approximately 17,500 US dollars at current exchange rate).

The autograph of Ady’s poem took an adventurous path until it arrived in National Széchényi Library from Canada. Living in Canada, Levente Diósady, grandson of Mariska Ady, niece of the poet, asked the Hungarian ambassador to Ottawa to return this precious relic kept by the family to the motherland, so that it could find a worthy place to rest. (Levente Diósady’s father was Pál Diósady, to whom Endre Ady became godfather so gladly in 1913, and who left Hungary in 1956 to finally settle in Canada.) Dr. László Pordány, serving as Hungary’s ambassador to Ottawa until fall 2014, has chosen National Széchényi Library to be the keeper of the manuscript of After a May Shower. It was him who sent the valuable manuscript to Budapest.

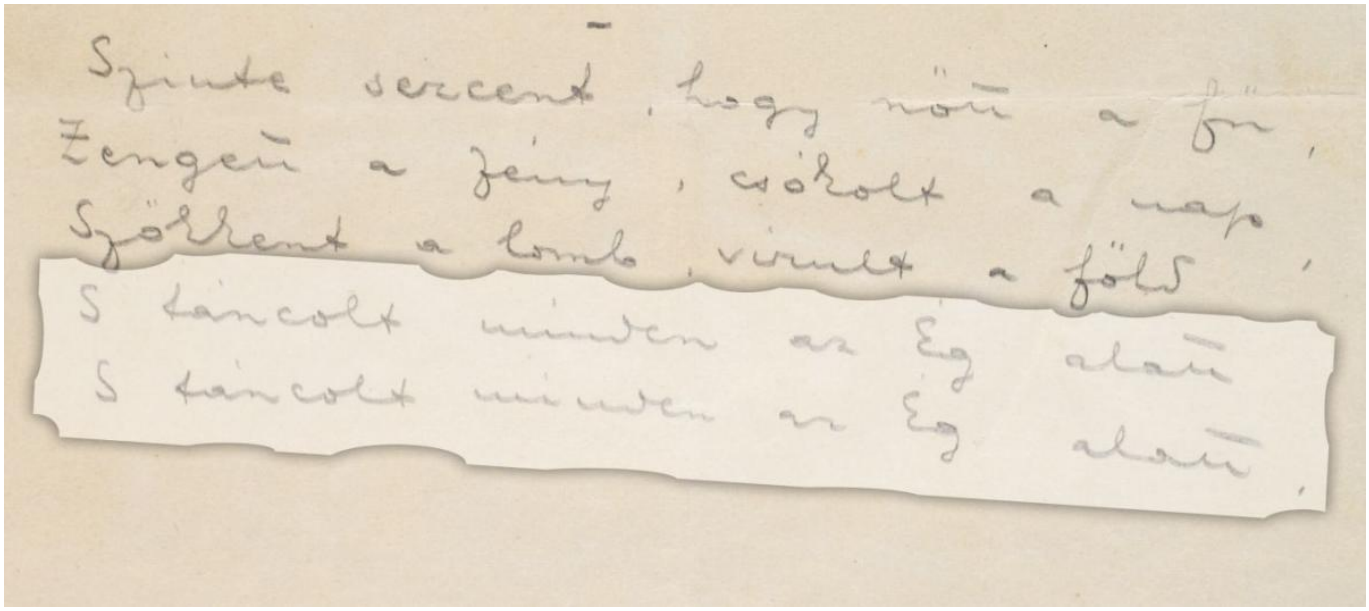


[3]National Széchényi Library will organize a major exhibition around this significant manuscript. The opening ceremony will be included in the series of NSZL’s programs on the Night of Museums [4]. It will take place on June 20, 2015, at 6.30 p.m. and the exhibition will be open until July 12, 2015.

The manuscript, which took such a long journey, will be displayed together with the manuscript of another poem by Ady entitled Where Are You, Adam? (Ádám, hol vagy?), the original title of which was Here Comes God [5] (Jön az Isten). Also displayed will be several original letters, important from the point of view of how the poem was written and accepted, and photos signed by Ady as well as signed copies of On Elijah's Chariot (Az Illés szekerén), in which the poem appeared (including a copy recommended to Léda). The exhibition will also deal with the relationship between Endre Ady and Mariska Ady. Apart from the poet genius of the first half of the 20th century, Mariska Ady was the only one in the entire Ady family who tried herself in the literary profession. She had a couple of volumes published and her poems appeared first in local (Szilágy-county) and later in national journals.

The emergence of After a May Shower served as an opportunity to start philological research as regards the place where the text had been written. Early literature on Endre Ady (following mainly György Bölöni) looked upon the poem as a text written by Ady in Paris, at end of May, 1908. The poem had been regarded as one depicting the world of Érdminszent and the innocence of its local rural world. Later, however, Miklós Kovalovszky raised the possibility that the poem might have been written in Érmindszent and, if it was really so, Ady might have relied on his real-life experience when describing the landscape and nature in May. This may change the entire interpretation of the poem.

What is it that suggests that the poem had been written in Érdmindszent and what refers to it that it had been written in Paris?



[6] The exhibition entitled “And kissed all under the sky” raises both questions and, approaching from telltale signs on the autograph and reconstructing the May 1908 chronology of Ady’s life, it tries to find an answer with proofs.

The lines selected as a motto of the exhibition surely prove the authenticity of the manuscript. As compared to the version known from Nyugat, Ady made only a few alterations to the text. In the last two lines of the third stanza, however, he had changed the word “danced” to “kissed”, so the poem was published in this version in 1908, in the volume entitled On Elijah's Chariot (Az Illés szekerén). This suggests that the autograph is definitely not a later version of the poem. It is interesting to note, and it also shows the genius and poetic consciousness of Endre Ady, that such a minor alteration to the text resulted in perhaps the strongest lines of the text.

The first page of the manuscript [7]

The second page of the manuscript [8]

Venue: National Széchényi Library, Buda Castle, Building “F”, Corvina showroom on Floor 6
The exhibition will be open between June 20 and July 12, 2015.

Other chamber exhibitions of NSZL can also be visited for a flat fee of HUF 400!
2015/06/10 - 14:03

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