

Treasures were exchanged in National Széchényi Library

2018/06/12



Two unique books returned to their worthy place on June 11, 2018. One of them is a work by Kelemen Mikes, that had been saved from fire during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and which is now returned from the United States. The other one is a long forgotten publication, emerging after several decades and rightfully belonging to the Franciscans of Buda.



[1]

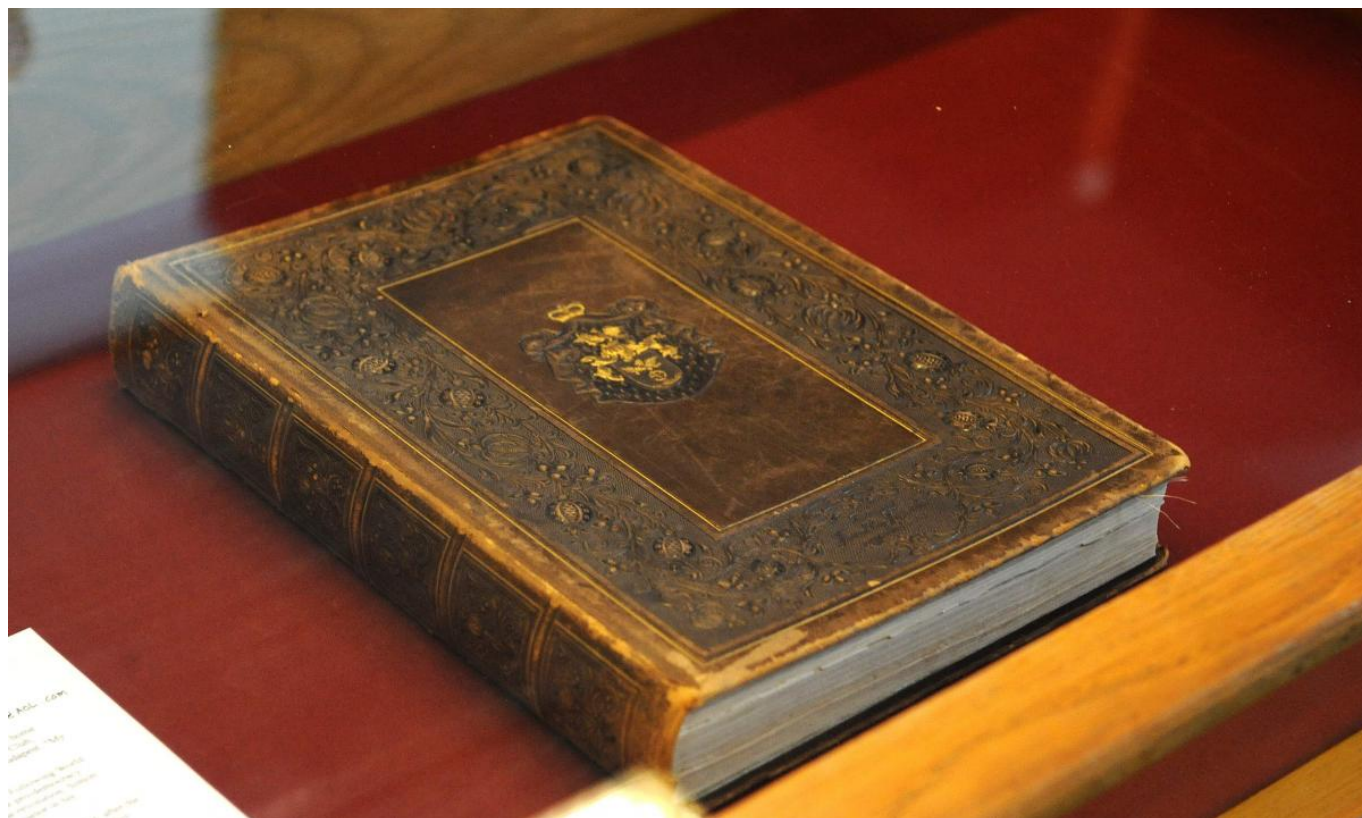
A decorative, leather-bound edition (1895) of *Letters from Turkey* by Kelemen Mikes, kept by the Hungarian National Museum since the 1950s, got into Kázmér Simon's possession during the days of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

The luxury edition commemorated the return of Ferenc Rákóczi's relics to Hungary. Between the two Crimean Wars, Hungarian researchers arrived in Constantinople in order to carry out corvina research, and they initiated to return the relics of those who had deceased in exile in Rodosto to Hungary. These relics had been found on the basis of Kelemen Mikes' records. Since Mikes remained the last living of all captives, there was no one to record where his relics lay, so the whereabouts of Kelemen Mikes' grave have never been found out.



[2]The book is said to have been saved from fire, and so it came into the possession of Simon. The man and his family moved to the United States after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. However, this spring he contacted the local Lions Club, seeking help to return the book to Hungary and to place it in a public collection. The book was received by Péter Koleszár, Governor of the [Lions Clubs Association of Hungary](#) [3] in Chicago, and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has undertaken to repatriate the volume.

The book was received by National Széchényi Library on June 11, 2018.



[4]An incunabulum colligation, printed in Venice sometime after 1494, was found in the depths of a security cabinet in spring 2015. According to its stamp, the volume hiding in the 19th-century paper binding was kept by the Franciscans of Buda up until the 1950s. Tertullian's *Apologeticus* defending Christianity and an attached print, Eusebius' work supporting Jewish philosophy, then got into National Széchényi Library. From here, it was planned to be returned to the Library of the Buda Franciscan Order in 1984, but for some reason this never happened. The book was put into a security cabinet at that time, and later it moved from Múzeum Boulevard to Buda Royal Palace together with the Library. For three decades, it has been waiting in the safe to draw attention once again. National Széchényi Library returned the hidden treasures to their rightful owner, the Library of the Buda Franciscan Order on June 11, 2018. The book restored by NSZL staff was received by Benedek Dobszay, Principal of the Franciscan Order, who in his speech thanked for the return of the book, and also expressed his hope that in the future a whole lot of major works will get back to the place where they rightfully belong. Back in 2013, [Mikes Kelemen Program](#) [5] was launched along the same principles, aiming at returning written documents of the Hungarian culture from overseas diasporas.

2018/06/12 - 12:01

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Links:

- [1] <https://oszk.hu/sites/default/files/atadas01.JPG>
- [2] https://oszk.hu/sites/default/files/20180611_019_KL.JPG
- [3] <http://www.lions.hu/about-the-association.html>
- [4] https://oszk.hu/sites/default/files/20180611_023_KL.JPG
- [5] <http://www.oszk.hu/en/news/mikes-kelemen-program>
- [6] <https://oszk.hu/en/category/foszotar-es-pozicionalo/hirek>