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# Ambassadors' Welcome



**Zsolt Mészáros**

Embassy of Hungary in Nairobi,  
Ambassador

## Dear Reader,

Welcome to wonderful East Africa: the savannas are alive with wildlife, the rainforests are home to giant lakes and rivers, the deserts are inhabited by mysterious tribes, and the snow-capped mountain peaks rising in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia have for centuries filled the European mind with the inexpressible desire to explore the unknown. This yearning to discover and understand unfamiliar worlds has brought many Hungarian travellers to the region over the past 150 years. Some travelled for the sake of making scientific discoveries, others went to save lives with their medical expertise, and some fled European wars to find a new home in Africa. Nearly a dozen Hungarian physicians, hunters, and travellers made their mark and increased Hungary's reputation in this

exotic region with their outstanding work. Their memories are preserved in geographical names (Sámuel Teleki), remembered by architects (Tibor Gaál) and physicians (Imre Löffler and László Sáská), and immortalized in hunting myths (Zsigmond Széchenyi and Kálmán Kittenberger).

In cooperation with the Africa Research Centre of the University of Pécs, the Hungarian Government recently decided to commemorate those prominent Hungarians who significantly contributed to developing the region and expanding general Hungarian knowledge about Africa. First, we will introduce ten famous Hungarians on our website. The Hungarian Embassies of Kenya and Ethiopia will also construct ten historical monuments honouring the Hungarians for locals and international travellers alike to learn more about their important work.

Secondly, our goal is to create a travel itinerary for Hungarian tourists visiting the region, which we hope will become a "pilgrim path" over time. There is no greater pride for me than finding



memorials in a foreign country that pay homage to my fellow Hungarians and contribute to advancing humanity with their hard work. I recommend taking a short detour to visit these sites if you are ever in the region while discovering the many local wonders, safaris and beaches.

Enjoy reading this book, and I hope to meet you soon at one of the memorial sites.



**Attila Koppány**

Embassy of Hungary in  
Addis Ababa, Ambassador

### **Dear Reader,**

Africa traditionally receives less attention from the Hungarian scientific community than other continents. However, this does not mean that there have not been significant Hungarian developments in African studies. The work and research of Móric Benyovszky, Emil Torday, László Magyar, and Dr. László Sáska are internationally recognized, serving as useful source materials and achievements ahead of their time.

Etiópiában kétségtelenül Dr. Sáska László az, akit elsőként kln Ethiopia, Dr. László Sáska made various breakthroughs in medical anthropology, botany and ethnography. His memoirs about the Italian occupation often serve as invaluable source material for papers and books even to this day.

The building where his clinic was located still stands in Addis Ababa. The Hungarian Embassy in Addis Ababa took the initiative to install an informative plaque in his honour to grab the attention of younger generations in Ethiopia.

It is long overdue for Dr. László Sáska and other Hungarian scientists who worked in Africa to receive their well-deserved place in the history of modern science. We intend to pay homage to them at the respective venues where they worked.

On behalf of the Hungarian Embassy in Addis Ababa and its staff, I extend my gratitude to the editors and all participants of this project spanning across the borders of multiple African countries.



## Walking in Hungarian Footprints in East Africa – An Editorial Preface

We were deeply moved at the Africa Research Centre of the University of Pécs when the Embassy of Hungary in Nairobi invited us to participate in the “Hungarian Memorials in East Africa” project. This created an opportunity for fruitful cooperation once again with colleagues participating in (and often leading) Hungarian academic and field research, education, and awareness-raising in connection with Africa. We are incredibly grateful to Ambassadors Zsolt Mészáros and Attila Koppány, as well as former Kenyan Ambassador László Máthé, who played a crucial role in launching the project.

This book is published as a special issue of the Hungarian Journal of African Studies. Though it is quite different in its size and appearance from our usual scientific papers, this is precisely what we had in mind. We intend this volume to be a light, lucid and scientifically-sound read. It serves as a detailed guide showcasing the routes or “footprints” that connect famous Hungarians in Africa with their accomplishments. We hope that this publication will encourage Hungarian tourists traveling in this region to visit these memorials. We would also like to invite tourists of other nationalities to explore these sites, which is why we have published this book in English as well.

As you read, you will see that many Hungarians left their mark in East Africa. The work they did expands on our universal understanding of Africa, and it is vital that we write about their accomplishments in Hungarian and other languages to share with the world. This undertaking means progress, an opportunity to move forward, and perhaps an inspiration for individuals and communities. Many Africans still remember these Hungarians and their legacies, and



they are certainly part of Hungarian cultural heritage and national pride. They are positive reference points for fostering a pragmatic foreign policy, and hopefully they can also help in developing and enriching bilateral Hungarian-African relations.

All this becomes even more meaningful and important considering that in April 2019 Hungary announced its "Africa Strategy" in conjunction with the "Southern Opening" policy. As devoted Africanists, we are always open to supporting Hungarian strategic policies. Nonetheless, our primary goal is to transfer knowledge to a wider audience, especially future generations. We developed this book with educational purposes in mind because we believe that these stories and biographies can engage young people at all levels of schooling. We also have a not-so-secret desire that many students will visit and explore East Africa.

In the first part of this special issue, Gábor Búr provides an historical overview of the Hungarians who visited East Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His article is followed by Gabriella Pusztai's writing on Hungarian doctors, and Attila T. Horváth's essay on Hungarian architects. Dániel Solymári's first article is about Hungarian missionaries. He summarises Hungarian development cooperation in the region from the decades following the First World War to recent projects in his second paper. The second major section of the book is a tourist guide written by Ildikó Szilasi.

At the very end of the special issue, we list notes and resources for our writings. These serve as great source materials for further in-depth research, or just for your reading enjoyment.

My fellow authors and I wish you an instructive and relaxing time with this book. We also encourage you to book one of our tour offers. Enjoy.

*Dr. István Tarrósy*  
Editor of the special issue



# Hungarians in East Africa: An Historical Perspective

Gábor Búr

Lions hunting zebras, giraffes munching on acacia leaves, elephants bathing in a pond with the snow-covered, mighty Kilimanjaro in the background – most people associate East Africa with such “exotic fantasies”. These romantic images are not far from the truth, but East Africa has much more to offer. This continent has abundant natural and man-made heritage, and it is a melting pot of diverse cultures. Travellers have come from far and wide in the past to discover, study, and understand these wonders, and to share what they experienced here. But due to the geographical conditions, the journey here was certainly difficult and uncomfortable. For most of Hungarian history, this region could only be approached by the sea. Hungarians were never a maritime nation. We assume that the first Hungarians (who fled the Ottoman Wars) may have arrived on Portuguese ships, arriving long after other groups (such as the Phoenicians, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese) that had already visited this region.<sup>1</sup>

It is just as uncertain if any East Africans were brought to Hungary in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was not uncommon among the aristocrats to have black butlers to impress puzzled guests. Still, we have no records of their nationalities. However, we have clear pieces of evidence from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With scientific advancements in geography, explorers were eager to discover Africa's inner lands after centuries of being limited to circumnavigating the continent. Many took off to discover the secrets of the Nile. The opening of the Suez Canal and relatively cheap travel with steamers brought East Africa closer to us. Tourism to Africa, primarily to Egypt, began in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1842, Count Iván Forray sailed on the Nile and visited the Libyan deserts. Lajos Batthyány, first independent prime minister of Hungary, also travelled to the pharaohs' country. By this time, the curiosity to explore more extensive parts of East Africa along the Nile was present among visitors. For example, Count György Károlyi and Count Zichy Edmund travelled there to explore the region. Zichy was portrayed in Jókai's *A Kőszívű ember fiai* (The Baron's Sons) as Ödön Baradlay. His brother, Jenő, was court-martialled and executed after the 1848 Revolution due to the fatal mix-up of their first names. Unfortunately, they only made it to Semna (Nubia).<sup>2</sup> János Kovács, the Tisza family's private tutor, who is considered the first Hungarian Africanist, took a long journey on the Nile. Still, he could not fulfil his bigger plans. We should also mention Alfréd Zichy, the eldest stepson of István Széchenyi, who tragically ended his life in a hotel room in Cairo.<sup>3</sup>





Flóra Sass and her husband

The plan of many Hungarian "hodophiles" was finally realized in a rather unusual way (at least in international comparison) by a woman, Flóra Sass. She was rescued from the Vidin slave market by her husband, Samuel Baker. They set out from Cairo on the Nile in 1861. Their mission was to find the source of the White Nile. Along the way, Baker fell ill, while Flóra Sass took on all the expedition's burdens. After many struggles, they discovered Lake Albert (Albert Nyanza) in March 1864, which they believed to be the White Nile's source. They named it after Queen Victoria's husband, who had died during the time their expedition. The Bakers never met Prince Albert, unlike Zichy Edmund who was photographed with the Prince in 1860. Baker and Flóra Sass were celebrated as heroes back in England, although it later turned out that their discovery was not complete. The thousand-year-old Nile mystery was finally clarified only in 1934, but this does not make their extraordinary scientific achievements any less valuable.<sup>4</sup> In 1884, Béla Rakovszky, an Austro-Hungarian Consulate employee in Port Said, also travelled through the Nile Valley from Egypt. After reaching the Indian Ocean, he spent two years in the Sultanate of Zanzibar. He returned to Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1887, carrying an invaluable collection.<sup>5</sup> His performance is quite significant. It was not until 1903 (half a century after the Sass and Baker's expedition) when the most prestigious travel agency of the time, the Thomas Cook, began to offer the first East African tours for their adventurous clients. To return after travelling through the Nile Valley, passengers could use the Uganda



railway from Lake Victoria to Mombasa by that time. The British had the railroad built with the labour of thousands of Indian workers.

Hunters followed the explorers. They took steamers to get from Suez to East Africa. (Previously, sailing in the Red Sea was problematic due to low winds.) Among the Hungarian "globe-trotters", Count Vilmos Zichy was the first to make the news. This was the last piece of information about him: *"Starting from Mashaua, Zichy visited the land of the Bogos people. He climbed the Rora-az-Geret Mountains and went to Barka in the Zad Amba Mountains. Later, he explored the saline planes of Assal in the Danakil Depression. He wrote his book in German, providing the first reliable data on the geography of those lands. Count Zichy fell victim to his travels and was killed in a battle."* The deadly battle took place in 1875. After it was over, Ethiopian ruler Yohannes IV properly buried the Hungarian aristocrat. János Jankó mentions other travellers in his book *Afrika és a magyarok* (Africa and the Hungarians) published in 1888. One passage from the book reads as follows: *"Cirer travelled through the shores of the Red Sea and sent reports of his journey from Suakin on 12 October 1884, which were published in the journal Fiume but did not have any valuable scientific interest"*. The first Hungarian hunter on East Africa's shores was István Kégl, son of a landowner in Fejér County. He travelled through Zanzibar and some parts of the mainland and brought back many exciting items to Hungary. He planned to write a book about his journeys. Due to his unfortunate early death at age 30, he could only finish a few newspaper articles.

The East African travels of Count Sámuel Teleki and Lajos Höhnél (born in Bratislava but usually considered Austrian) between 1887-1889 began as a hunting trip.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, they resulted in unprecedented, internationally recognized scientific value. Teleki financed the tour, spending funds from the sale of a larger piece of land.<sup>7</sup> They started from Zanzibar, and they were the first to map the Great Rift Valley. Teleki climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya to the snow line, higher than anyone before him. The expedition's capstones were the discoveries of Lake Rudolf (Lake Turkana), Lake Stefanie (Lake Chew Bahir) and an active volcano. Höhnél named the volcano after Teleki. This is the most important geographical name of Hungarian relevance on the entire African continent.<sup>8</sup> On their way back in 1899, they visited Harar (Ethiopia) where they met the poet Arthur Rimbaud, who had settled there. A memorial plaque on the side of Kilimanjaro commemorates their expedition covering about 3,000 kilometers. This journey revealed one of the last regions unexplored by Europeans on



Sámuel Teleki



the map of East Africa. Upon returning to Hungary, the world-famous hunter and explorer donated 338 East African items to the Hungarian National Museum. The results of the expedition were published by Lajos Höhnél, mostly in German. However, his most important work was published in Hungarian in 1892 under the title *Teleki Sámuel gróf felfedező útja Kelet-Afrika egyenlítői vidékén 1887–1888* (Count Sámuel Teleki's Expedition in the Equatorial Region of East Africa 1887–1888). Teleki returned to Africa in 1895, attempting to climb Kilimanjaro again, but once again failing to reach the summit.

Baron Pál Bornemisza, one of the greatest African collectors of his time, visited East Africa several times and spent one and a half decades on the continent from the 1880s. He collected many ethnographic and zoological items from the southern slopes of Kilimanjaro, including



ritual idols known as the “nungus”. Hungarian museums were the first in the world to exhibit these idols. He kept detailed records, so his collection is scientifically authentic. He sent about 2,600 ethnographic items, including 19 African (Teita, Masai, Chaga and contemporary) skulls to the Hungarian National Museum and a few to the British Museum. The Hungarian National Museum opened an exhibition showcasing the Bornemissza collection in 1904. The exhibition featured hunting trophies, elephant legs, panther and leopard skins, and ostrich and marabou feathers. They also showed various works of art, carvings, utensils, utility items, idols, and weapons. A separate room served to present the ethnography and anthropology of Africa.

Arzén Damaszkín, a landowner from Bácska County, was good friends with Sámuel Teleki. The renowned explorer motivated Damaszkín to take a trip to East Africa in 1903. He “only” killed 250 game by the time he had returned home. In 1904, his book *A maszáj fennsíkon* (On the Masai Plateau) was published in Budapest. His name might have been forgotten if he had not taken the taxidermist Kálmán Kittenberger with him. Kittenberger otherwise could not have reached Africa due to his financial situation. Damaszkín soon returned to Hungary but left all the equipment with Kittenberger, who also worked for Bornemissza and began a zoological collection at the National Museum’s request. His collection contained nearly 300 new species of animals, 300 of which were named after him. He visited East Africa a total of six times, spending more than 16 years in the wilderness of present-day Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. He played a crucial role in the scientific exploration of the region, which brought him international recognition. His books written about his travels are classics in Hungarian hunting literature.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first Hungarian travelogues about East Africa were published in addition to summaries of the expeditions and hunting adventures. Of these, the six-volume work of Dr. Ferenc Gáspár titled *A Föld körül* (Around the Earth) was on the bookshelves of most bourgeois families. After finishing his medical studies, he served in the Navy of the Monarchy from 1886 to 1892 as a naval physician, then continued to work on merchant ships for more than a decade. During this time, he travelled to the shores of East Africa several times. He reported his experiences to his readers in an excellent scientifically based, informative, yet easy-to-read style. The contemporary press often reported on “our bold apostles in the heart of Africa”. Every new book and every single page written about Africa was “a drop of fresh oil in the lamp that illuminated a hitherto inaccessible and unknown part of the world”. Thanks to



this enthusiasm, the continent became studied more and more in Hungary. This is proved by the fact that at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hungarian high school students learned quite a bit about African geography. The Nile Delta, Nubia, Ethiopia, the "Somalis", the coast of Zanzibar, the African Great Lakes, Mozambique's coast, and the "Coast of Sofala" were included in the textbooks. The students also indulged in many new books that were published at the time. Such was the East African hunting diary of Count Kázmér Zichy, which he wrote about his journey from 1907 to 1908. It was first published as a book in 1910, titled *A Guaso Nyiro mentén a Natron-tóig* (Along the Ewaso Ng'iro to Lake Natron).



Kálmán Kittenberger's tent in an exhibition



Although East Africa became a popular hunting ground for the Hungarian aristocracy, other grandiose plans could not be made with the British and German colonization efforts already underway. However, independent Ethiopia offered some exciting opportunities. Count Gyula Andrásy, imperial and royal foreign minister, received an Ethiopian delegation in 1872. Many citizens from the Monarchy tried their luck in the country. For example, Arnold Szél, a Viennese businessman of Hungarian origins, opened stores in Djibouti, Dire Dawa, and Addis Ababa in 1903. Among other things, copper and enamelled utensils and umbrellas were exported from Hungary to Ethiopia.<sup>10</sup> Menelik II was interested in building multifaceted European relations to preserve his country's independence. Recognizing this, a sizeable Austro-Hungarian delegation led by Lajos Höhnelt visited Ethiopia in 1904. The delegation had two Hungarian members: Count László Széchenyi, who financed his journey himself and probably went to East Africa for the sake of hunting, and Pál Szántó, the nephew and business agent of Arnold Szél. This visit ended with a free trade agreement of sorts, signed in 1905 but ratified only in 1909. This also provided an opportunity to set up consulates. The Monarchy exercised this right only in 1912, when a Hungarian, Károly Schwimmer (born in Novi Sad) was appointed to the post. Many protested his appointment, citing his Jewish origins, including Hungarians such as Count Jenő Mirbach who spent much time in Ethiopia and applied for the post himself. An excellent example for the not-so-transparent local conditions is the story of Major Lajos Königsegg, a traveller and writer who was born in Arad County. He claimed that Emperor Menelik II made him an "adviser to the court" in 1910. Some people took this information for granted, although no other sources confirmed it. However, many questioned whether he had visited Ethiopia at all. Nonetheless, in the novels that recorded his travels (*Menelik császár birodalma* [Emperor Menelik's Empire], 1918; *Soliman ben Darja. Miért nem lett Magyar gyarmat Afrikában?* [Soliman ben Darja. Why does Hungary not have a colony in Africa?] 1926; *A fehér orrszarvú* [The White Rhinoceros, 1928]), the details seem to be based on real experiences. Therefore, they can be considered as the first authentic travelogues of Ethiopia by a Hungarian author. Károly Inger, who also visited Ethiopia and Somalia and was mentioned by Königsegg, wanted to find "markets for Hungary" in East Africa. He named himself King of Somaliland, and he even recruited people to his court in newspaper advertisements. He even wrote a book to prove his beliefs, titled *Magyarország gyarmata Szomáliföldön – hivatalos és eredeti levelezések* (Hungary's Colony in Somaliland – an Official and Authentic Correspondence).<sup>11</sup>

The First World War was a sad interruption. Hungarians in East Africa were interned by the British. Kálmán Kittenberger was forced to spend five years in British India, and his collection



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was lost. After the war, it took years for things to settle down and hunting trips to restart. A new element was that due to Hungary's increasingly turbulent conditions, not only aristocrats and hunters arrived. Doctors, engineers and others were coming to the region in the hope of making a living. However, their activities were not covered by the contemporary press, unlike the prestigious travellers. In the spring of 1929, the Tolna Világlapja newspaper reported that *"in October last year, two Hungarian hunting companies set out in the African wilderness to confront the forces of nature and dominate the big game of the African rainforests. The companies included Jenő Horthy, the famous hunter and sportsman, István Horthy Sr., son of Governor Miklós Horthy, and Kálmán Kittenberger, the famous hunter respected throughout Europe. The other group consisted of two Hungarian magnates: Zsigmond Széchenyi and Count István Károlyi."*<sup>12</sup> Zsigmond Széchenyi participated in several other hunting expeditions in East Africa, the last in 1963-1964. In the 1920s, Géza Demeter from Miskolc visited Africa several times. He published his book about his Ethiopian hunting adventures titled *Felfedező úton – Magyar Zászló alatt* (On the Way of Discovery – Under the Hungarian Flag) in 1928. He also published an introductory study on the Ethiopian justice system. The famous geographer, László Bendefy-Benda, was the central figure of the Hungarian Scientific Expedition to Africa planned for 1934–1935. This expedition could not occur due to the escalating Italian-Ethiopian conflict.<sup>13</sup> The book of the military historian László Faragó, *Abyssinia on the Eve* (1936), was published in English in New York and it was cited frequently for a long time.<sup>14</sup> In his book, the only Hungarian mentioned by Faragó is Ferenc Pádár, a doctor working in the hospital of the Swedish mission in Harari.<sup>15</sup> However, Kálmán Mészáros, a Hungarian physician, also worked in the Ethiopian capital, caring for patients from the local elite. Based on his diary there, he also published a book in 1938 titled *"Abyssinia: Paradise of Hunters."* Mészáros was in contact with Sándor Dörflinger, who took many photographs of the country and its inhabitants while living in Ethiopia. Unfortunately, these photographs were lost and have not yet been recovered.<sup>16</sup> A Hungarian magazine, *Századunk*, published an article titled *Az igazság a négusról és Etiópiáról* (The Truth About the Negus and Ethiopia), which was about Béla Menczer, who lived in the court of the Ethiopian ruler in the 1930s. Mátyás Gajdács, a renowned ornithologist, was the wealthiest Hungarian in Ethiopia between the two world wars. He got stuck in the country in 1914, then became a successful entrepreneur in Addis Ababa; he helped many Hungarians who came to the country later.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. László Sáska, born in Nagyenyed, decided to emigrate to Africa with his wife in 1932.<sup>18</sup> They first tried to make a living in Mogadishu, which was Italian Somalia's capital and the



centre of the Italian occupation in the region. Still, the climate here forced them to move to Ethiopia. After a short detour to Addis Ababa, they moved to Yrga Alem, the capital of Sidamo Province, where he was the imperial family's physician and the only doctor for about four million people. That is why he was labelled the "Albert Schweitzer of Ethiopia". After the Italians occupied Ethiopia, he moved to the Arusha (Tanganyika) where he lived and treated the locals until he died in 1978. In his spare time, Sáska went on many trips and hunting expeditions. He studied the natural environment and the ethnography of the region. Many plants and animals that he discovered are named after him.<sup>19</sup> The events of the war in East Africa and the changes in Hungary once again shook the small Hungarian communities in the region. These communities could never recover, not even during the exoduses in the 1940s or after the 1956 revolution.

From the 1960s onwards, a new era began. Hungary maintained embassies in the region, Hungarian professionals arrived to work and teach, and many students came to Hungary to study.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, much time had to pass for Hungarian tourists to rediscover one of Earth's most beautiful regions.



László Sáska at work



# Hungarian Physicians in East Africa

Gabriella Pusztai

## Looking for a better life

Research expeditions to Africa, followed by the establishment of colonies and their increasing economic exploitation, significantly boosted health care development projects. It was not only essential to preserve the health of white people coming here from Europe, but the local population as a labour force and taxpayers could not be lost to the colonists either. All of this motivated the medical research on the most dangerous diseases and the healthcare systems' organisation. The Portuguese established a chain of hospitals to secure the route to India on the east coast in Mozambique and then in Melinde (Malindi, now Kenya). In the German East African colonies, the state established some hospitals, smaller clinics, and pharmacies in the late 19th century, including Dar es Salaam and Tanga. During World War I, the African Native Medical Corps was formed, which was the first step in establishing medical personnel in the continent's eastern region. The English government began establishing a health service after the war.<sup>1</sup> The situation was different in independent Ethiopia, where the reforms of Tafari Makonnen and Haile Selassie I encouraged the employment of "real" European doctors.<sup>2</sup>

The representatives of Hungarian medicine arrived to the African coasts in the middle of the 19th century. Only after the turn of the century did they embark on more extended missions on this continent. They could have been motivated to settle down here for several reasons, such as the hope of making a fortune or at least a better life, the will to help those in need, scientific curiosity, or just the love of nature, hunting and adventure. Some packed their medical equipment and left voluntarily. Others were forced to try their luck due to the circumstances. Among them were missionaries, soldiers, employees of the state, and companies. They healed the rulers of distant lands, as well as the wealthy and the poor. They searched for cures for terrible diseases, organized patient care, and built their reputation with scientific discoveries, descriptions of their hunting adventures, and collections of their writing.



Hungarian doctors' appearance in local, colonial or anti-colonial societies also meant a new approach and value system. Coming from a non-colonialist country, they had a different attitude towards their host country and its people. Therefore, they opposed the discrimination between whites and blacks with unprecedented humanity and enlightened thinking. Among other things, they treated patients from all parts of society in their clinics and hospitals. The rudimentary health care systems and the practically non-existent competition granted them a carrier opportunity that we cannot even imagine today.

However, their working conditions proved to be much more unfavourable. There were hardly any qualified support staff, proper equipment and medicines were not always available, and procedures were often performed without anaesthesia or sanitization. Unfamiliar languages, ruthless wars, and regular epidemics such as yellow fever, dysentery, typhoid fever, plague, and generally poor hygiene were much more challenging than problems in Europe. Often, they had to treat whole provinces and thousands of people with inadequate transportation infrastructure. They could not get everywhere, so if a doctor could not make it to a patient "the plant supervisor examined the patients with his stethoscope and then made a diagnosis on his own."<sup>3</sup> Different cultural and medical traditions were challenging too. They had to work together with traditional healers while confronting their harmful practices.

Ethiopia had a special place in Hungary's East Africa relations regarding Hungarian doctors' role in several historical periods. Between the two world wars (although there were no official diplomatic relations), many Hungarians settled in the country.<sup>4</sup> Among them were doctors such as Kálmán Mészáros, László Sáská and Ferenc Pádár, who stood out heroically both in their poorly equipped clinics and on the battlefields.



## The Chief Medic of the Imperial Army

The extraordinary life of Kálmán Mészáros (1894–1971), which would make a good a novel, began in a small thatched house in Gyula that led to the Ethiopian imperial court. The excellent hunter and the talented doctor travelled throughout Africa for fifteen years. Years of practice in the military hospitals during World War I trained him to be a heavy-duty, persistent, tough man. It made him fit for the medical challenges of later Ethiopian military campaigns. The Great Depression of the 1920s made him unemployed, and after his eighteenth job application was rejected, he decided to emigrate. He arrived at the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, through Djibouti in 1924. He soon became friends with his compatriots living there like the taxidermist, zoological and ethnographic collector Mátyás Gajdács. The Hungarians' cheerful company comes to life in his photographs left behind, as Dr. Mészáros plays his violin to entertain his audience.



Kálmán Mészáros with his friends in Addis Ababa



His reports sent home after his arrival painted a picture of the country's staggering health care system. In the countryside, there was no patient care other than missionaries and traditional healers. The Ethiopians hoped for remedies by famous native and Arab witch doctors. In the capital, the most common diseases were haemorrhoids and intestinal worms. He also considered the prevalence of tuberculosis, typhoid, malaria, and trachoma to be severe, writing, "You can often see mad natives on the streets as they are running around the city dressed up in flowers, pieces of paper, and rags."<sup>5</sup> People with leprosy were not isolated, and he also encountered rabies frequently. Of the three hospitals in Addis Ababa, only two were working. The streets were covered with dirt and stinking animal carcasses, making them hotbeds for typhoid. Flies covered everything – the animals, the bugs, the butchers. Changes were only brought about by Haile Selassie's reforms in the 1930s. The state and various church missions began developing the health care system, and provincial lords also started to hire physicians.

Kálmán Mészáros was soon hired by the *Ras* of Godjam, Ras Hailu, as his court physician. However, the *Ras* did not keep the terms of their contract. Therefore, he fled the province in 1925, returned to the capital, and opened a clinic. He devoted most of his time to the medical treatment of the royal family. Still, his humanity is shown by the fact that he also received ordinary people who could not pay for their treatment. Visiting royal family members living in different provinces of Ethiopia proved tiring in the absence of roads and railways. They were not very safe without an armed escort, and he had to ride for a week with 30 armed guards to the godfather and close friend of Haile Selassie to Kembata province's capital. He helped giving birth to the child of the emperor's "beautiful daughter" in December 1932 in Sidamo. László Sáska, who arrived in Africa the following year, later became the doctor for the provincial lord Ras Desta. Hirut Desta, the child Mészáros helped deliver during birth, visited Hungary in 1964 with his grandfather, the Emperor of Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup> The ruler asked Kálmán Mészáros to help him find a location for the new provincial seat. In this sense, the Ethiopian settlement of Yrga Alem owes its present location to our Hungarian compatriot. He also reached the rural settlements during his long journeys where he always attended to the most urgent cases. In his writings about his cruises and hikes, the magically beautiful landscapes, untouched forests, waters and deserts of Ethiopia come to life. His reports are so realistic that we can almost experience the smells of his Godjami clinic as well as the thick, smoky air of the village huts where tough, determined people lived.



Doctor Mészáros became more and more recognized and popular in the court of reigning Prince Tafari Makonnen. In 1930, he was appointed chief physician of the Ethiopian army. However, during military campaigns, healing the severe wounds caused by conventional weapons' destructive power, like front-loading rifles or spears, posed quite a challenge. In the Battle of Anchem in 1830, he was the only doctor (supported by eight paramedics) for the army of 30,000. He was awarded membership to the Order of the Star of Ethiopia for his determination and perseverance. He rode alongside the commander-in-chief of the military at the parade of the victorious soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

A period of a few peaceful years was interrupted by the aggression of Italian colonizers in December 1934. The Ethiopian soldiers wounded in the battles were treated in the Harari hospital by the Hungarian Ferenc Pádár. The exceptionally talented physician studied in the Rockefeller Institute in New York. During the Ethiopian-Italian War in 1934-1935, he lived in Hara, and then he moved to Tanganyika (now Tanzania).<sup>8</sup> In addition to Mészáros and Sáska, he was the third Hungarian doctor who did not flee at the news of an impending war. He decided to stay, and he treated the wounded and all those in need with death-defying courage and diligence.

On 3 October 1935, the Italians launched an attack on Ethiopia. Kálmán Mészáros followed the imperial formations with his own Red Cross caravan, even when the European doctors had all left the front line. Haile Selassie lost a decisive battle and the war on 4 April 1936, and Mészáros returned to Addis Ababa, which was razed by the remaining forces of the army and the native population. Mészáros, with the legendary doctor John M. Kelly and some European and Swahili assistants, rescued the wounded from the streets that had turned into battlefields. Their base was the English Red Cross Hospital, which was set up in an evacuated school.<sup>9</sup>







Kálmán Mészáros in a Great Chief's Garment

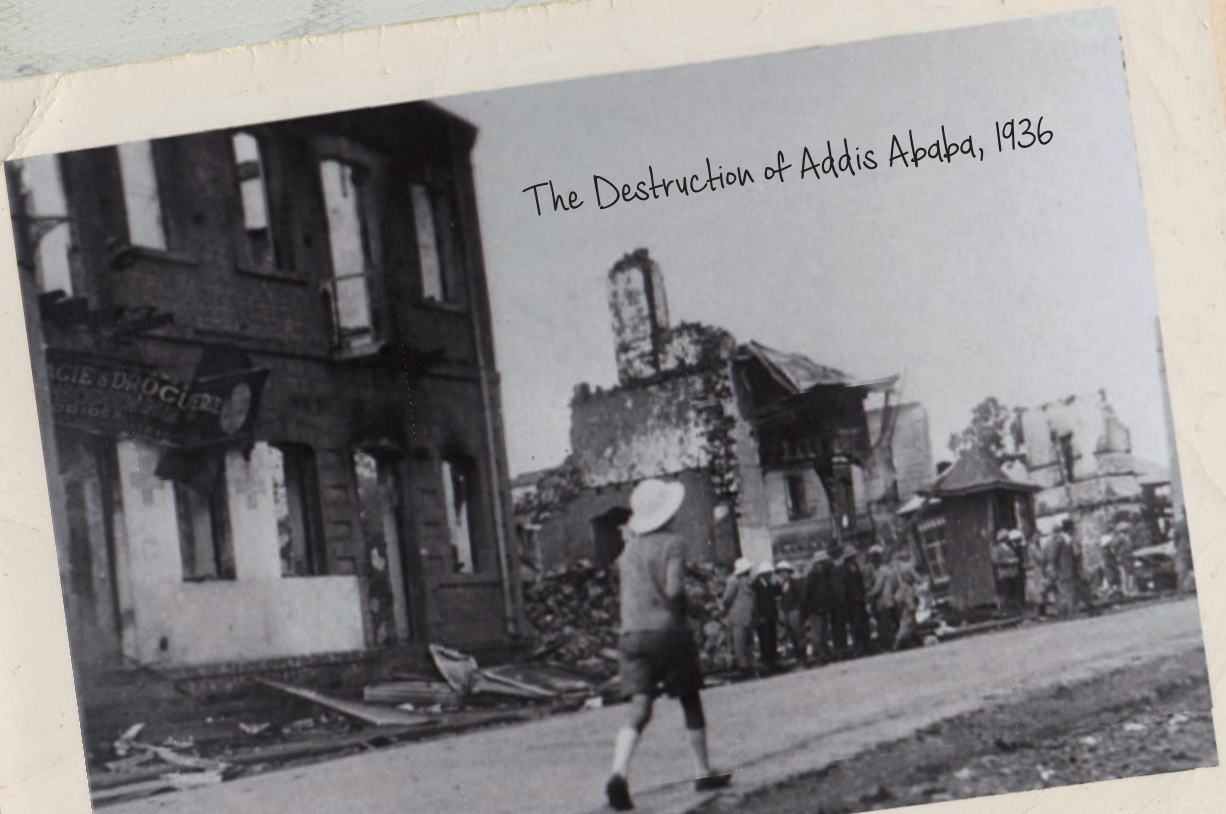




Addis Ababa  
in the 1930s



The Destruction of Addis Ababa, 1936





The new lords of the capital were hostile to everyone, including the Hungarians living here. Mészáros was soon stripped of his clinic, so in late 1936 he left Ethiopia in frustration and moved to Tanganyika, which was under British rule. He lived in Chunya for a few months, organizing hunting expeditions and joining safaris as a medic. He first met the American writer and documentarist couple Martin and Osa Johnson in Ethiopia. A few years later, in 1938, he saw Osa again in Arusha. She had lost her husband in a tragic plane crash the previous year. During his visits to the filming locations, he befriended American actor Spencer Tracy.<sup>10</sup> However, the growing preparations of war and news from Europe soon led him to return home.

He wrote a memoir of his African adventures titled *Abesszínia a vadászok paradicsoma* (Abyssinia: A Hunters' Paradise). His trophies, animal skins, and other items are preserved in Hungarian museums. He died on 25 September 1971 at the hospital in Miskolc. His love for the people, and his selflessness and willingness to sacrifice rightfully make him an outstanding individual of the Hungarian medical society.

The First Mansion of Kálmán Mészáros in Addis Ababa





## In Love with Africa

László Sáska (1890–1978) spent 45 years on the continent among Hungarian doctors, and his medical reputation stems from his work in Sidamo (Ethiopia) and then in Arusha (Tanzania). He was born in Nagyenyed, a city with a rich history in Transylvania, and he studied in the Bethlen College, a historical school of great explorers and scientists, which would define his career in the future. In addition to protecting human health and life, the scientist's curiosity and adventurous personality encouraged him to emigrate in 1933. He set out for Italian Somalia with his dauntless wife, Mária Mojzsis. However, the unpleasant climate and the barren sand desert forced them to travel to Ethiopia, which had a diverse population and rich flora and

fauna. He did not have to wait much for a lucrative position because the emperor's son-in-law, Desta Damtew, invited him to his court in Sidamo. He was working as the only doctor in the province of four million. The importance of his role was illustrated by the fact that twenty-five armed guards usually accompanied him. Wherever he travelled, a courier announced his presence in a resounding voice: "Beware, for the royal wanna achim (chief physician) is coming." Accompanying the prince's expeditionary army, he travelled throughout the province in 1934. During the expedition, he assessed the shocking health conditions of village populations which drove him



László Sáska with his wife

Mária Mojzsis, 1956



to undertake the enormous task of establishing a proper health care system. The South Ethiopian army's medical service organisation was a remarkable result of his three years in Sidamo. His wife sewed the war flag of the Sidamo army and gifted it to Ras Desta.<sup>11</sup>

At the beginning of the Ethiopian-Italian War, in early October 1935 he fled to the capital with his wife. As a doctor in Addis Ababa, he met with Italian military officers, Ethiopian soldiers, and civilians. As a third-country citizen, he could form an unbiased opinion about the country's situation. His reports remain irreplaceable historical sources about the Italian occupation forces' shocking deeds, including the atrocities against the civilian population, the Italian yperite (mustard gas) attacks, and their horrific consequences. The things he saw made him a committed anti-fascist.<sup>12</sup> In 1937, the Italians expropriated his clinic, and after he was expelled, the Italian fascist party's headquarters was established in its place. The building still stands in the Atkilt Tea district of the capital.<sup>13</sup> After careful consideration, Dr. Sáska was forced to leave the country and moved with his wife to Tanganyika. He settled in Arusha, which he thought had a pleasant climate, and lived at the foot of Mount Meru for more than forty years. Their garden was famous for the vivid birdlife and one of the richest rose collections in East Africa.

He opened a small clinic with eight beds in Arusha, located on the road leading to Moshi. After the proclamation of Tanzanian independence, he was among the first to abolish the separation of the white and black patients, which was still common and customary then. He healed the inhabitants of the Arusha district, and he provided free care to the indigenous Maasais and Kikuyus people as needed. He spoke five languages, including Swahili. To cover his expenses, he charged the Europeans (mostly hunters) for their treatment. In recognition of his work, he was not interned in a detention camp during World War II despite being a citizen of a hostile country.<sup>14</sup>

He spent a considerable amount of his Arusha clinic's income on malaria and cancer research. As a sign of recognition, he was elected to become Corresponding Member of the English Cancer Research Institute. His scientific reputation also boosted his medical practice. Many patients with malaria or cancer visited his clinic from afar, including Nairobi and Eldoret in Kenya. Semmelweis University gave a Golden Certificate of Achievement to the eighty-year-old doctor in Arusha. He was also elected to be a member of the Romanian Academy of Medicine.<sup>15</sup>



László Sáska was a versatile scientist with extraordinary curiosity. He made ethnographic, zoological, and botanical observations in Ethiopia and Tanganyika. He made detailed descriptions about the different areas of the lives of the people around him such as the women warriors and the phallus cult. His notes on the people's beliefs, traditional medicine, magic inscriptions, and the magical effects of onions and bats are rather intriguing and exciting to read. He continued his scientific research trips in Arusha. He hunted and collected in the Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara, Uganda, Kenya and the Congo Basin. His documentation of rare tropical orchids and discovery of two unknown orchid species are just two examples of his numerous accomplishments.

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László Sáska and  
his wife in Somalia



Not only did he share his scientific successes with the world, but he wanted to pass on his experiences to people back in Hungary through his writings, documentaries and photographs. He donated many items of his collections and trophies to Hungarian museums. He was laid to rest in the Arusha cemetery at the foot of Mount Meru.



The Flag Made for Ras Desta's Army -  
Sewn and Embroidered by Mrs. Sáska



## Closer to Africa

After World War II, the emerging great powers sought to extend their spheres of influence to (ex)colonies fighting for their independence. Following the rise of left-wing governments, many cooperation agreements were reached, including the decision to deploy health experts. As part of the socialist bloc, Hungary also had an increasing presence on the continent starting in the 1960s. The “shrinking world” brought Africa closer to Hungary along with the threat of tropical diseases. There were several ways for Hungarian professionals to reach the African continent. The World Health Organization, UNESCO and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly sent experts. TESCO Ltd. (Technical and Scientific Cooperation Office Ltd.) contracted healthcare workers beginning in 1968, sending them to Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda.<sup>17</sup>

Most of these experts left for Ethiopia, where the Hungarian embassy had already helped to deepen relations. In the 1970s, a few Hungarians went to the hospital in Dessie. They fixed and reorganized the health care system, and they trained nurses. Miklós Poczik was the first Hungarian doctor to take a job in rural Ethiopia after World War II. He spent three years with his family in Dessie and established his practice in the regional hospital as the only surgeon in the province of Wollo, with a population of 3,500,000. He was devastated to witness the famine and cholera epidemic of 1973 when people starved to death on the streets while shops and bakeries were stocked with food. It was during this period that the first Hungarian female doctors arrived in the country. For example, a high-quality clinic for obstetrics and gynaecology was established under the leadership of Elvira Klung in Dessie.<sup>18</sup>

István Hulin also began his work in Wollo province, but soon became known as the only neurosurgeon in Addis Ababa. The Hungarian wife of the Ethiopian Minister of Commerce helped him get a job at the well-equipped Saint Paul’s Hospital in the capital. He knew Péter Takács well, who was the Emperor’s anaesthesiologist during his surgeries. After the emperor was deposed in 1974, a period of turmoil started. Dr. Hulin treated, among others, the deputy of the country’s new leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, who collided with a tank while driving his car and suffered a brain injury. It was just as demanding to work as a surgeon in the country as when Kálmán Mészáros did. Many wounded from the clashes of the Eritrean war of independence were coming in from Massawa by plane. Seeing and treating people’s burns from napalm attacks by the Soviet-backed Ethiopian forces was brutal. There were also many wounded during the Ethiop-Somali war, in which the goal was to annex Ogaden Province (1977-78). Mengistu killed thousands of his opponents in an attempt to stabilize his socialist





dictatorship and many injured of these clashes ended up in the hands of the Hungarian surgeon. Street battles and shootings posed permanent threats for the Hungarians living there. His job was not made any easier by the fact that the resistance often stole ambulances, which were then used to transport their weapons. Dr. Hulin was as talented a musician like a few of his fellow doctors, and he gave concerts as a jazz pianist in Addis Ababa.<sup>19</sup>

József Heidl had an extraordinary journey to Africa. He packed his fishing equipment and his guitar in his car trunk, then drove all the way down from Budapest to Ethiopia with his son. He navigated through the tanks stationed on the closed Sudanese border, then was allowed safe passage into Ethiopia in exchange for the fish he caught on the road.<sup>20</sup> József F. Füsi opened his surgery clinic in one of the hottest cities, Massawa (which was then part of Ethiopia and today Eritrea). After a hard day's work, he and his family enjoyed the sight of palm trees and the Red Sea's sunny beaches. The war in Eritrea interrupted their idyllic life in 1974. They evacuated the Asmara hospital staff, and he remained the sole surgeon in the whole province for half a year. After more significant clashes, more than 200 people required surgery.<sup>21</sup>



Dr. György Demeter, a leprosy expert, arrived in the country at the end of the 1970s on behalf of the WHO with his wife, Katalin Fekete. Besides working in the leprosy hospital, he roamed the countryside with his jeep and treated village folks in his improvised tent-clinics.<sup>22</sup>

Éva Mária Czére and Endre Mérő, a physician couple also employed by the WHO, lived in Mogadishu for five years from 1973. They spent the best years of their lives on the Horn of Africa.<sup>23</sup> They could see the country still torn by internal conflict in a more fortunate period, during the modernization efforts of Siad Barre and before the economic crisis resulting from the Ogaden War. As a result of a series of agreements between Hungary and Mozambique, Hungarian doctors could work and live in Mozambique as well. Dr. Endre Holvay lived on the former Portuguese colony for six years.<sup>24</sup>

Der Marabout.



Marabou



## Recent Missions

After the end of socialism in Hungary, the new government determined that Hungary's presence in Africa and the aid it provided to developing countries took up too many resources, so they terminated these connections. Rebuilding was a lengthy and costly process, in which the representatives of Hungarian medicine had considerable leeway. Because medical care in East Africa was predominantly low in quality, doctors could go where and when they were needed. Organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors for Developing Countries, and Baptist Aid sent volunteers to help those in need. The projects of the African-Hungarian Union were other good examples of benevolent engagement in Africa. They launched programs in more than ten countries, and their medical missions have served thousands of patients since 2009. From their base in Kapeeka, they go on missions to Malawi and Uganda.<sup>25</sup> Since 2017, two Hungarian medical teams have worked in the foster house in Bura, Kenya supported by the Taita Foundation.<sup>26</sup> Erika Bálint, the daughter of Dr. Sáska's friend Gábor Bálint, lived with her father in Uganda and practised surgery at a paramilitary hospital in Addis Ababa. She went to Kenya as a volunteer with the help of an American organization.<sup>27</sup> These examples show that selflessness and the will to help remain governing principles of Hungarian doctors. Besides, one will always want to come back to Africa after having a taste of the wonders this continent has to offer.

The African missions of Hungarian doctors searching for cures of tropical diseases go beyond the daily process of healing and research. Gábor Ternák, a medicine professor in Pécs, spent his first extended tropical mission in Kafanchan, Nigeria. He established a collaboration with the university hospital in Eldoret, Kenya in 2009 so that Hungarian doctors and medical students could study in Africa. It was his idea in 2013 to open an educational hospital in Eldoret in cooperation with the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, in which Hungarians could also work and do their research.<sup>28</sup> Our internationally recognized researcher and lecturer, Director of Trop-Med Hungary, Dr. Ágnes Axmann, worked in Ethiopia and other African countries. During her scientific work, she had outstanding success in inventing an anti-malarial drug. In 2000, she was selected as one of the top 2,000 scientists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup>



The Hungarian government's strategic development plans are essential in terms of building connections in Africa. In the framework of the "Southern Opening", the idea of reopening various embassies came up in 2015. The government launched a humanitarian aid program in Ethiopia and Tanzania in 2017, then supported health care service projects in Kenya.<sup>30</sup> In the framework of a fixed-loan programme, Hungarian companies began building hospitals in Kenya.<sup>31</sup> In 2019, Hungary and Uganda signed Hungary's largest ever bilateral development assistance programme, worth 20 million USD, in the fields of water treatment, health care, tourism, governance and cybersecurity.<sup>32</sup>

Being a talented doctor in the tropics is still not good enough. It requires a strong physique, patience, and compassion. Those travelling to Africa should expect to face multifaceted challenges. They have to fight a wide range of diseases, including many that we are not familiar with here in Europe. They also need to be prepared for the less advanced medical infrastructure. However, Hungarian physicians have proved that they can do their jobs on an outstanding level, despite all the difficulties. Facing unknown challenges and dangers demonstrates of their courage. We should be proud of our Hungarian doctors for their achievements in Africa.



Gábor Ternák



The University  
Hospital in Eldoret





# Hungarian Architects in East Africa

Attila T. Horváth

Africa is a diverse continent in terms of its architecture. The past few hundred years of traditional architecture is filled with variety based on geography, climate and culture. We can observe a uniquely built environment based on locally available raw materials, such as stones, wood, clay, palm leaves and even grass.

The colonial and post-colonial architecture introduced new layers on top of these old layers by applying European standards and technology to local conditions more or less efficiently and successfully. We can observe two distinct tendencies recently. On the one hand, the dynamically increasing investments in the "second race for Africa" has resulted in new buildings, districts and cities rising from the ground. On the other hand, contemporary "starchitects" appeared in Africa (such as Diébédo Francis Kéré and David Adjaye) who have drawn from their cultural heritage to create their internationally recognized works.

There are several links between East African and Hungarian architecture. There are architects born and working in Hungary who also worked in Africa, professionals with Hungarian origins who work on international projects, and East African architects who studied in Hungary. The Hungarian Jews who fled persecution before World War II, including a few outstanding architects, made up a considerable portion of foreign diasporas in Kenya. Still, their life stories and works remain relatively unknown to the Hungarian public.



A recent photo of Meskel square, which was expanded based on the plans of Károly Polónyi.



Centrally coordinated cooperation between leaders in African countries and Hungarian architects began with the decolonization movements in the 1960s. The new governments of the newly independent states envisioned an optimistic future and undertook massive modernization projects. Therefore, they were looking for qualified, well-trained architects, designers, construction experts and teachers. With decolonization in mind, professionals from non-colonialist countries had better opportunities.

Hungary had a goal to build amicable relations with socialist and non-aligned countries. TESCO Ltd., a company founded by the Hungarian state in 1962, managed Hungarian technical and scientific development and trade projects in the developing world. The company prepared and executed agreements on technical and scientific topics (TSC) with 57 developing countries. It had permanent TSC offices in Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania until 1990.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these agreements, several projects awaited Hungarian architects in these countries. Károly Polónyi's (1928–2002) designs and urban architecture are outstanding examples.





Károly Polónyi graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Budapest University of Technology in 1950 and then became an assistant lecturer at the Department of Public Building Design. After gaining experience at the Urban Planning Office (VÁTERV) and the Industrial Building Design Company (IPARTERV), he worked as the Lake Balaton Management Committee's chief engineer. The zoning plan developed at that time brought him several professional awards, including the prestigious Hungarian Ybl award for architecture in 1961.

The Hungarian architect attended the last congress of the CIAM (Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) and then became a member of the prestigious Team 10 modernist architecture group, which offered him a valuable network of international contacts. Later, he used his vast network of contacts built over the decades to develop and teach English language courses at the Budapest University of Technology.<sup>2</sup>

Károly Polónyi arrived on the continent driven by his passion for seeking out new challenges, and fleeing the political climate in Hungary, which often stood in the way of his creative spirit. As an internationally renowned expert in urban architecture, he worked on large-scale plans as a building and urban designer in Ghana, Nigeria, Algeria and Ethiopia for about twenty years starting in 1963. His career in Africa began in Ghana. He expanded the Faculty of Architecture at Kumasi City Technical University and became an organizer of the first postgraduate architect program in West Africa. He also took part in designing low-cost and efficient model farms and housing estates. He worked on a regional development project on River Volta with his multinational team involving Hungarian professionals and local students. He and his students received the Perret Award from the International Association of Architects for their work on the "Tongo Development Project".<sup>3</sup>





The Meskel square

From 1969 he was the deputy chief architect of the Budapest Metropolitan Council. Meanwhile, he had assignments in Africa simultaneously as the chief of the Public Building Design Company's (KÖZTI) design team. He prepared the development plans for Calabar in Nigeria and three Algerian cities.<sup>4</sup>

Károly Polónyi began his work in Ethiopia in 1977 as a consultant to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, which would last for three years. In 1974, the two states signed a bilateral agreement when the Marxist military junta (Derg) came to power in Ethiopia after removing emperor Haile Selassie. In addition to the bloody fights to secure their rule, the Derg also articulated several development ideas. Polónyi's first assignment was to create a development strategy for the agglomeration of Addis Ababa. This metropolis which had an estimated 143,000 inhabitants in 1938, and today there are more than 4,500,000. Therefore, several development plans were created for this city during the Italian occupation (1936-1941) due to the ever-increasing speed of urbanization in the area. Around 1955, the population was about 500,000 and the airport that opened in 1959 resulted in another population boom. Several organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) founded in 1993, had their headquarters in the city, which also affected population growth.<sup>5</sup>

Polónyi and his colleagues envisioned a decentralized solution for the crowded area: they planned to develop six or seven regional centres at least 200 kilometers away from the capital. An essential condition for the decentralized settlement network concept was constructing an appropriate road network or developing existing trails and paths. When designating the locations of smaller settlements, they did not go with the traditional principle of not occupying potentially valuable production areas because the settler families wanted to continue gardening



on the estates planned to be 800-1200 squared meters. They intended that the settlements' permanent centre buildings would be built by locally available materials. They designed the buildings to have two chambers and two terraces with roofs. Public offices, post offices, first aid stations, meeting rooms, and schools would have a place in the centres. According to their plans, 50-60 families would make up a village community with 20 acres of land. Approximately 6-8 of these would constitute a collective, and these collectives would be managed from the local centres and towns with a planned population of around 2,000 inhabitants. Unfortunately, most of these plans never came to life.<sup>6</sup>

Formulating a plan for the development of Addis Ababa city centre also presented a creative challenge. The Hungarian architect and his colleagues had three aspects to consider: developing built-in areas, demolishing existing buildings and constructing new buildings on empty estates. They recommended expanding the settlements along the highway and railroad connecting Djibouti to Addis Ababa. Additionally, they set out plans on more efficient use of the neighbourhoods around Churchill Road and Menelik II Avenue. However, an urgent problem had an impact on construction as well, which was the expansion of the Revolution (Abiyot) Square (today Meskel Square). This square was located next to the city stadium, the Imperial Palace, the Ghion Hotel and the Filwoha Healing Spring. It was a former starting point for urban planning and had long been an important site for church holidays.<sup>7</sup>

According to the plans of the communist junta, nearly half a million people in the square could have, in the ironic words of Károly Polónyi, "exercised their right and duty to express their solidarity with the government through disciplined marches."

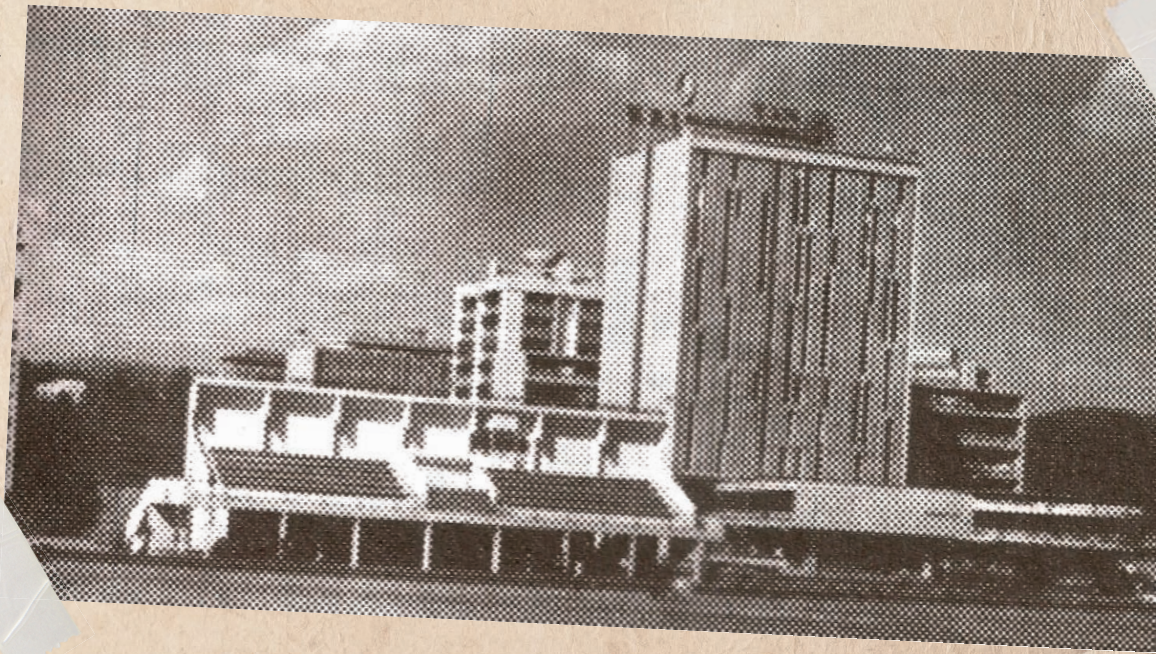
The construction of the square had already begun based on the plans of a Finnish architect. In March 1978 (simultaneously with the elaboration of the agglomeration development strategy), Polónyi was commissioned for the second phase of the square's construction. The architects intended to connect the square to the city's infrastructure to allow continuous and diverse utilization of the square throughout the year. They were hoping that in addition to political rallies, they could develop the oval-shaped square into the capital's heart, which would host church ceremonies, cultural festivals, sports events, fairs and exhibitions. By 12 September 1978 (the revolution's anniversary), they had finished building stands on the square to host



an audience of up to 300 people. He recalls his experiences about this job in his book *An Architect-Planner on the Peripheries*, published in 1992 and translated into Hungarian in 2000:

*"I intended to create the triumphal arch with six reinforced concrete columns shaped like elephant tusks. On its inner surface, mosaics depicting scenes from 3,000 years of Ethiopian history would have been featured. And the zero-mile marker placed under the "theatre of remembrance" would have symbolized the continuity of history. We visited the site at 1:00 p.m. every Saturday with Addis Ababa's mayor and the ministers or deputy ministers responsible for building the square. They made decisions on the spot, which made the construction go faster. In my opinion, we could not start building the triumphal arch for two reasons: one is that the Ogaden war was still going on and the other was that it would increase the cost of building the Revolution Square by 2 million DMs...But the mayor interrupted me: "That's excellent news. The gentlemen will end the war two days earlier, and we already have the two million deutsche marks."<sup>8</sup>*

The Meskel square





Polónyi's vision of the square operating regardless of the ruling political parties and ideologies came true. The square got back its old name in 1992 after the fall of the communist regime, and now it hosts many community events, including the spectacular Christian Meskel festival.

Polónyi had a unique carrier, unlike any of his colleagues living in Hungary or abroad. Perhaps he was the only one who was aware of the latest international and Hungarian trends, while also combining his European perspectives with his African experiences in his works.





There is another notable figure in development projects to mention here. László Mester Parajdi (Laszlo Mester de Parajd), the Hungarian-born architect who moved to France with his family at the age of eight. He designed numerous hospitals, schools, and other buildings as the architect of several French development projects. He lived and worked in Africa for decades. His best-known work on the continent is the building of ONERSOL (Office nigérien de l'énergie solaire – Niger's solar power agency), which he designed in 1979 and received several awards. His two-year mission to East Africa was partly related to crisis management. After the 1994 crisis in Rwanda, he planned five refugee camps for the masses arriving in Burundi under the coordination of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was a difficult undertaking because in 10 days they had to create a camp that could accommodate 25,000 people.<sup>10</sup>

However, Hungarian ingenuity helped the developing world, including African countries and other areas as well. In the socialist era, bilateral educational agreements provided young African people opportunities to study and graduate in Hungary, mainly in the applied sciences. Among them is Solomon Obedie Kimaro, the current Honorary Consul of Hungary in Tanzania, who began his civil engineering studies at the Budapest University of Technology in 1977 with a Hungarian state scholarship. After graduating and gaining some corporate experience, he returned to his homeland. With his partner he then founded a company called Mac Contractors, one of Tanzania's largest design and construction companies. The company, which employs hundreds of people, designs and builds public buildings, roads and schools, often in collaboration with foreign companies. In addition to a number of professional recognitions, the Contractors Association of Tanzania awarded them a prize for being the largest domestic company in 2005.<sup>11</sup>

Another group of Hungarian architects in East Africa is made up of designers who found their new home in Kenya. They fled from Hungary because of Jewish persecution before and during World War II. Their life stories and careers are mostly unknown to the Hungarian architectural profession and the general public.



György Vámos was born in Budapest in 1910. He graduated from the Zsigmond Kemény High School of Sciences and studied architecture in Vienna. Due to the advancement of Nazism, he joined the British government and got a job in Iraq. He later joined the British Army. However, as he was a Hungarian citizen, he fell into the “foreign” category and was interned to Uganda with many others. A newspaper article published in Hungary in July 1943 covered this story about the internment of Hungarians in Iraq, including Imre Rózsa and his wife who are introduced below.<sup>12</sup>

When he was released from the internment camp, he rejoined the ranks of the British Army, but his time in Uganda left a deep impression on him. He was impressed by the beauty of Africa’s natural environment and the coexistence of cultures. After he resigned in 1946, he did not return to Europe but settled in Nairobi, where he opened an architect firm with Heini Lustmann.

György Vámos designed several significant buildings in Kenya and neighbouring countries. In a 1969 interview, he said the following about his work: “Today, it is not yet possible or necessary in Kenya to have specialized jobs as much as in Europe. So here, being an architect (in terms of social status) means more than the European understanding of the expression. During my more than two decades of living in Nairobi, my company has designed and built hundreds of facilities in East African countries including Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Our buildings include residential buildings, churches, schools, industrial plants and hospitals.”<sup>13</sup>

His works conceived in the spirit of international modernism include, among others, the Kenya Commercial Bank building and the headquarters of the country’s most prestigious multi-ethnic association, the United Kenya Club, founded in 1946. He has held various positions at this club, and he also had two significant church assignments. One is the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh temple (gurdwara), built in 1963. Its 25-metre dome offers a spectacular view from the top. He planned the dome to eliminate echoes, which provides extremely clear acoustics during ceremonies. Numerous consultations with the Sikh community preceded the elaboration of the final plans. “When an architect faces the problem of designing a religious building today, conflicts can arise that are difficult to overcome – this is an ancient debate between traditional and modern architectural notions,” he later said when recalling the challenges of this project during an interview.<sup>14</sup>



The Kenya Commercial  
Bank building



The Siri Guru Singh  
Sabha Sikh temple





The cathedral he designed in Bukoba, Tanzania opened in 1968.

On 22 August 1978, Jomo Kenyatta, the legendary figure of the African independence movements and the first president of independent Kenya died. György Vámos had the honour of designing the mausoleum of the world-famous president, whose final resting place was designated to be next to the Parliament. The funeral ceremony was scheduled for August 31, leaving a hundred workers to build the 34-square-meter building in just a few days.<sup>15</sup>

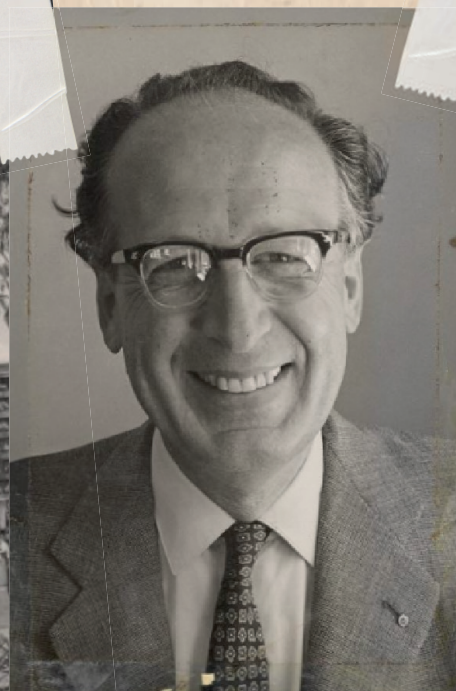
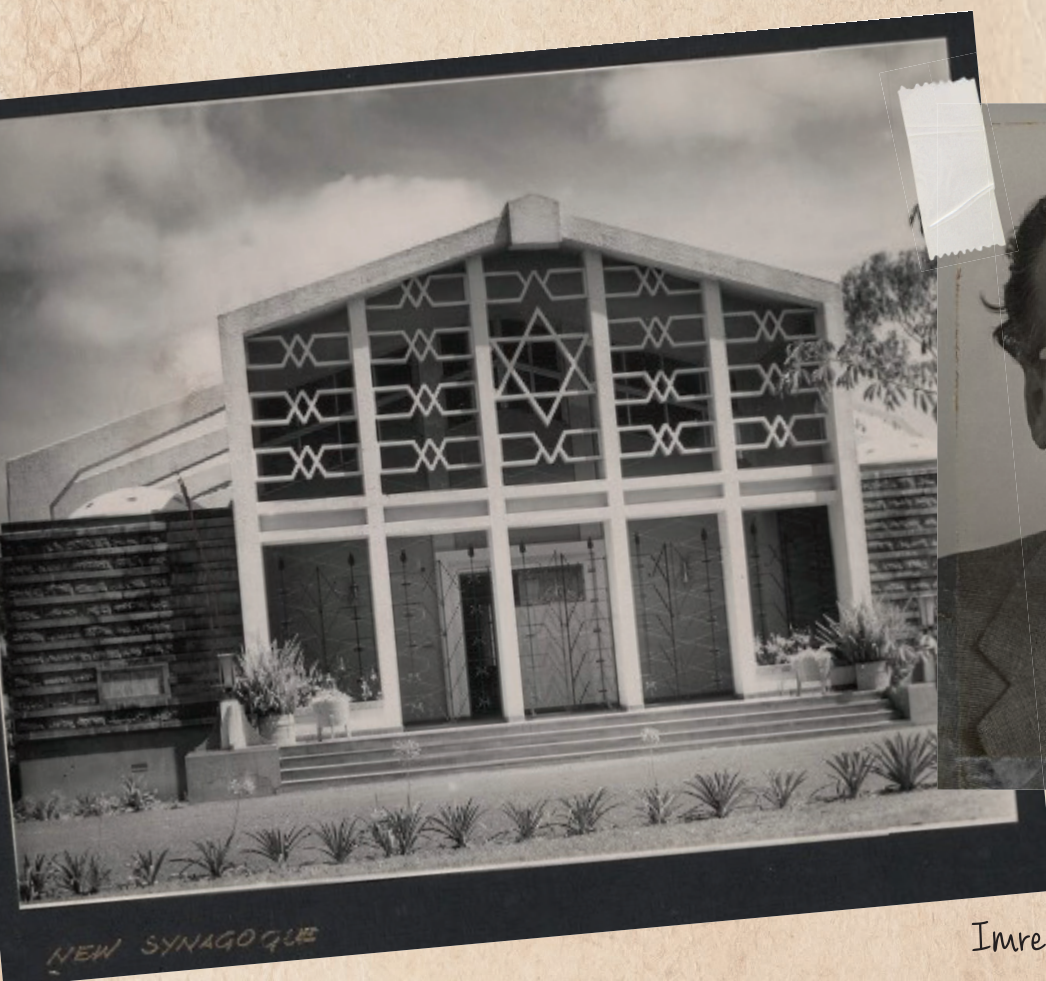
György Vámos was a well-known figure among Nairobi intellectuals. He spoke several languages and was active in public life. He loved to travel, which he often connected to his other passions of painting and drawing, though he considered himself above all else an architect. At the end of his career, he received an award from the Architectural Association of Kenya for his outstanding contribution to the country's architecture. He moved to Vancouver with his family in his senior years, where he died in 1999.



The Maendeleo House



Imre Rózsa, another architect based in Nairobi, had a similarly adventurous life. He was born in Nagyvárad in 1911. He studied architecture but took a job in Baghdad due to anti-Jewish laws in Hungary. His fiancé moved with him, and they eventually married in 1939. The couple left Iraq in 1942 and moved to Palestine and then Mombasa, Kenya. After that, they lived in Entebbe, Uganda for some time. Imre Rózsa joined the British Army, and then he settled in Nairobi and founded an architectural firm. His three children were born in Kenya. He and his wife and kids were active members of the Jewish community. Imre Rózsa designed the new synagogue in Nairobi, which still stands, and later he became the head of the congregation.



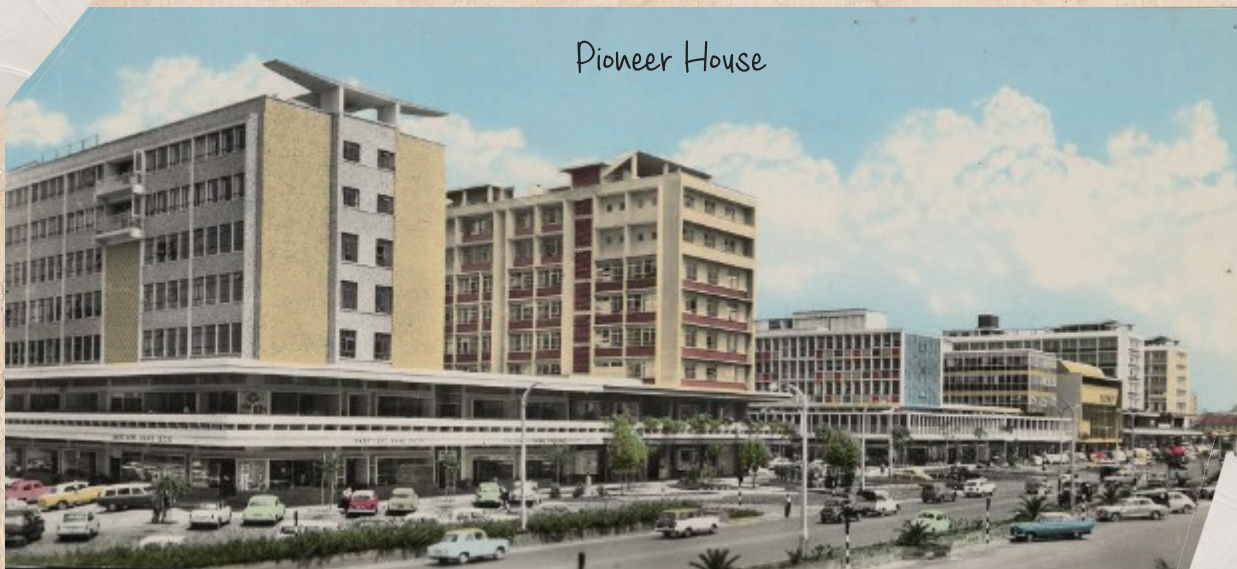
Imre Rózsa and the synagogue



The first synagogue in Nairobi was built in 1913. After World War II, a new and larger building was needed due to the Jewish community's growth. The old synagogue was demolished and replaced in 1955 with a building designed by the Hungarian architect.<sup>16</sup>

Rózsa designed many public buildings, such as offices or department stores. He designed the building which used to house the Hungarian embassy in Dar es Salaam.

The architect and his family left Kenya in 1978 and moved to California, where two of his children were living. He died there in 1991. The family's documents are uploaded to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum database. (<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/>)





Gaál Tibor (1938-2019), mentored by Rózsa, fled to Wien after 1956, where he finished his high school studies. He graduated as an architect in 1965, and then he set out to make his fortune in the world. After a short detour to South Africa, he moved to Mombasa, where he joined the Bamburi cement company's design team. There he designed low-maintenance concrete buildings. (One of the largest construction companies in East Africa was founded in 1951 by Felix Mandl, member of an adventurous Croatian-Jewish cement dynasty.)

Tibor Gaál met with Sbish Trzebinski, a Polish architect in the design studio of Imre Rózsa, with whom he had a fruitful working relationship for about forty years. Their architectural activity contributed significantly to the boom in tourism, accounting for much of Kenya's and Tanzania's revenues.

Flamingo Beach  
Resort Spa,  
Mombasa





One of their first significant works is the building known today as Serena Mountain Lodge Hotel in Mount Kenya National Park, which they designed together with Rózsa. From the elevated structure, guests can view animals that come for water. At the same time, they built underground tunnels to give tourists access to the pond from their accommodation, where they could safely photograph animals up close. This building was the first of its kind.



Serena Mountain Lodge



They designed and built many hotels for their clients on the shores of the Indian Ocean with their "trademark" swimming pools that began from the reception desks through the garden to the sandy beaches.<sup>17</sup>

Typical characteristics of their style can be seen in the Tamarind Restaurant and Village Complex (Tamarind Village) in Mombasa and the Flamingo Beach Hotel. They even built an excellent water amphitheatre on a hectare of coral reef.



Tamarind Village Hotel



Their assignments in Kenya included the Severin Sea Lodge, Traveller's Beach, Two Fishes, Jadini, Saki Beach Hotel, Kaskazi, Swahili Beach Resorts, and the Blue Bay Resort in Zanzibar.

The two architects often used local materials such as traditional Swahili makut roofing. In this roofing method, they use palm leaves to cover the roof. They creatively combined this traditional coastal architecture with modern motifs.

Severin Sea Lodge





The Kunduchi Beach Hotel in Tanzania features a Swahili style that combines African and Arab architectural traditions. This building was selected as one of the top 300 hotels in the world.<sup>18</sup>

Gaál served as the honorary consul of Austria in Kenya for many years.

Kunduchi Beach Hotel





# The Deeds of Hungarian Missionaries

Dániel Solymári

Africa's past and present are undoubtedly linked to European explorers and colonizers in the 18th and predominantly 19th centuries. They aimed to explore unknown territories and promote the "enlightenment" of the local populations found there. The Catholic and Protestant churches also joined in on the "Race for Africa". In the terminology of the age, they wanted to provide "civilizational support" to "indigenous" people who lagged behind according to their worldviews.<sup>1</sup> Today we can see that these relations were often one-sided and did not serve the local people's real needs. They often manifested themselves as a destructive Western force that pushed cultures, ancient beliefs, and worldviews into the background and disrespected others' freedoms and traditions.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, many missionaries were selfless and benevolent priests and pastors who had commendable achievements. In the following section, we give a brief introduction to the Hungarian aspects of Christian missions in Africa, which were in line with the latter, value-creating approach that respects other people's dignity.

The universal mission in Africa was the goal of spreading Christianity very early on, harking back to the first centuries.<sup>3</sup> The church thought it was their duty to communicate their mission to the world, so they wanted to make their teachings and ideas about the world available to everyone. It had a scriptural purpose, using terminology based on monotheism to introduce Christian principles to pagan peoples. Nevertheless, the mission's spiritual dimension stemmed from a sincere sense of purpose that still defines its character. I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish (Romans 1:14), said the Apostle Paul about the genuinely devoted and selfless missionary work. All this appeared in a new spiritual trend in the churches the 19th century linked to the colonisers' aspirations. It became a vital program point of the European Protestant missionaries, as well as the Jesuits (Society of Jesus).<sup>4</sup> In the Catholic Church, the idea of going on missions on distant continents became popular mostly among the monks.<sup>5</sup>



The life and fate of remote missionaries became such a popular topic around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Hungary that many monthly newspapers, booklets and educational publications frequently included stories and reports this issue.<sup>6</sup> A lively, information-rich "Africanist" atmosphere was created in Hungarian society at that time, connected, of course, with Western aspirations. Interestingly, today the overall awareness and media coverage on African issues – in terms of the sheer number and types of publications – lag far behind the period between 1850 and 1950.

One of the first such papers was the illustrated monthly magazine known as the *Kath. Hitterjesztés Lapjai* (The Magazine of Catholic Missionaries), published by István Nogely in 1881. This Catholic magazine was inspired by the Africanist László Magyar's letters and articles published in the *Pesti Napló* and *Magyar Hírlap* between 1852 and 1854. Its objective was to introduce Africa to a broader audience. In addition to the "*Lapok*", starting in 1885 a magazine called the *Képes Missió-Könyvtár* (Illustrated Missions' Library) was, and it was filled with rich, insightful content. It covered other regions besides Africa. Nogely also launched a new series of books titled *Afrikai élet* (African Life) in 1891, but eventually, it only had one volume.

In 1908, a new, independent Hungarian newspaper was published by the Kláver Szent Péter Társulat (Claver St. Peter's Society). *Visszhang Afrikából* (Echo from Africa), which exclusively covered African missions from a Hungarian perspective, reported on Christian movements in sub-Saharan Africa with illustrated articles. Its objective was to show the Hungarian audience what life looked like in Africa. After 1919, the magazine was published under the title *Afrikai Visszhang* (African Echo) until 1943.

Its "successor", the *Félhold szerelmesei* (Lovers of the Crescent Moon) edited by Franciscan Mór Majsai, only had one issue in 1934. This magazine illustrated the Franciscan missions in Africa with maps and detailed natural, geographical, and ethnographic descriptions, but it was soon discontinued.

Mátyás Pál, a priest from the Archdiocese of Kalocsa, joined the European mission in the 1920s. In 1925, he created the illustrated magazine *Katolikus Világmisszió* (Catholic World Mission), which focused on Africa and was published quarterly until 1938. Mátyás also supported the



African and Asian expeditions from his income. He also published a series of other works: *Magyar Missziós Füzetek* (Hungarian Mission Booklets) and *Afrika kiáltott* (Africa Calls). After his death, his beatification process started, but it was interrupted for unknown reasons. The Pál Mátyás Mission Center was established and operated until 1960.

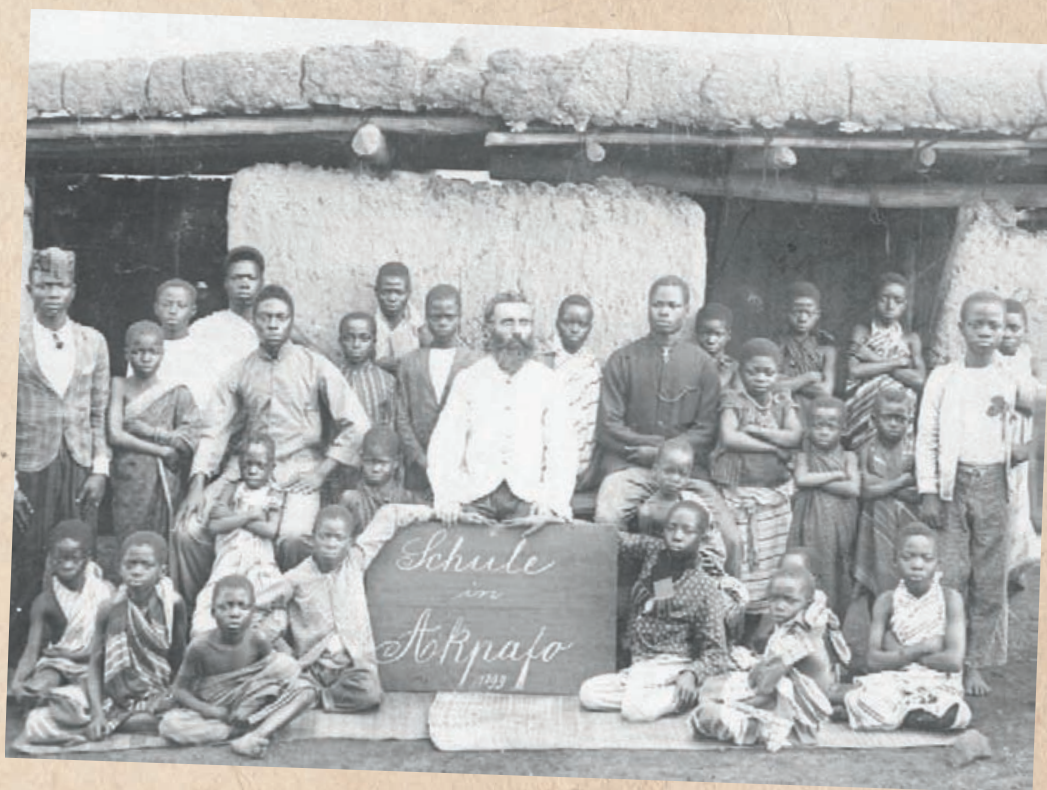
The Hungarian Reformed Foreign Mission (and its divisions, the Hungarian Reformed Evangelical Missionary Association, the Reformed Women's Missionary Committee, and the Hungarian Reformed Foreign Missionary Association) had an active international community too.<sup>7</sup> The *Missziói Füzetek* (Missionary Booklets) reported on Hungarian protestant missions from the 1920s, and in the 1930s the magazine was renamed to *Új Missziói Füzetek* (New Missionary Booklets). They published the magazine until the 1950s when the Foreign Missions Service of the Universal Reformed Convention took over foreign missions.

The *Ferences Világmissziók* (Franciscan World Missions) series was published between 1941 and 1944, though it contained very little African content. The focus was primarily on Hungarian and international Franciscan missions in Asia, with a focus on China.

As a result of these magazines, and the adventurous atmosphere of the age, many Hungarian priests and pastors joined African missions. Ostensibly, the predominant presence of colonial powers had an influence on many church-based missions (for example, Hungarian Benedictines did not take part in any missions at all). In addition to the "zeitgeist", it is also true that in many cases the extremely stressful climatic, natural, and medical conditions led missions to be well-organized because many lost their lives or suffered martyrdom, so constant recruitment was needed. The Jesuit monks were at the forefront of this work, and travelling the world to spread their faith was their essential task. They also had a strong network of European recruiters. Among the Order's Hungarian members, István Zimmermann (born in 1849) stands out as one of the most significant "Christian Africanists" of the era.<sup>8</sup> He joined the Portuguese Mission in South-East Africa in 1885, beginning his work in Mboroma (Zambia) where he soon distinguished himself with his talent and affection for Africans. He became head of the mission a year after his arrival. Because the school they founded had few local students, he bought and raised the slave children with his associates. Being personally involved in the mission's success, he embarked on a European tour to recruit missionaries in 1889. He returned to Mboroma with eleven priests and eight nuns, along with László Menyhárth, a fellow Hungarian born



in Szarvas. Shortly afterwards, they moved to Mozambique and founded the community of Zumbo, which has remained active ever since.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, Czimmermann had many significant achievements during the Zambian mission: he learned several local languages, and he produced the first Nyungwe (Zambian) catechism (a question-and-answer based, clear, simple theological summary that was clear and simple) and a prayer book (according to some sources, it had references to the entire Bible). He replaced missing expressions in the local languages with Hungarian words, and the locals used these new words to express their faith. He even compiled a dictionary and a grammar guide, making him the pioneer of the written Nyungwe language. István Czimmermann died of poisoning in South Africa in 1894.



A school in Ghana established by missionaries



His partner, László Menyhárth, also became one of the key figures in the Zambezi mission, where in addition to his teaching and social work, he established the first meteorological station. Astronomer Gyula Fényi published his observations and scientific results in Hungary. Menyhárth was an active botanist as well: twenty plants he discovered are named after him. He also carried out soil experiments and, with his pioneering phytopathology studies, was able to develop several edible plants that required little work to mass-produce and withstand the climate of the Zambezi region well. In addition to the production of new plants, Menyhárth changed the locals' production and farming habits, which had been inadequate for centuries, thus providing a solution to the food shortages in the region. Besides his pastoral ministry, his scientific work was also outstanding.<sup>10</sup> He made a climate map of the Mboroma region and an herb book of the Zambezi region based on seven years of observations. The latter, titled *Plantae Menyharthianae*, was published in 1906 in Vienna. He sent thousands of plants and seeds back to Europe for museums in Vienna and Budapest. Menyhárth had enrolled in a medical university in Budapest before he went on the missions, which illustrates his ambitious personality and determined mentality. In addition to spiritual guidance, he could also heal bodily ailments. In 1897, at the age of forty-eight, he died of malaria in Zumbo (Mozambique). Czimmermann and Menyhárth are among the most significant pioneering Africanists of the era.<sup>11</sup>

Born in 1856, Brother Jakab Longa also served in the Mboroma mission. He worked in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) as a helmsman, locksmith, breeder and gardener. From 1901 to 1910, he served as captain of a cargo ship called San Salvador, which carried goods for coastal missions. Along with Jakab Longa, Sándor Rodenbücher was also a handyman for the Mozambican mission. In 1910, after the Portuguese Revolution, they were both expelled from Mozambique. Later, after a European detour, they returned to Africa to build villages and temples, and to help locals in their everyday lives.

Among the early Hungarian missionaries, Count Péter Vay stands out. He spent almost two years in 1901 and 1902 in central and eastern Africa. Peter Vay, who later served in the Holy See's diplomatic service as a bishop, studied issues related to African refugees. Bishop Vay later pioneered in helping European and American refugees using his experiences in Africa.<sup>12</sup>



Christian and monastic missionary work steadily declined along with vanishing colonial powers in the African countries gaining independence. Their presence and work today are part of the local pastoral ministry in the church communities. Their educational and charity programs are filling in critical gaps across Africa. The mission's concept has also changed: today we use it much more for medical and other humanitarian activities that Hungarian experts also participate in. For example, ophthalmologist Richárd Hardi has been running a hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1995 as a secular member of the Community of the Beatitudes.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, hundreds of Hungarian doctors, nurses and health care volunteers have worked for secular or church organizations in sub-Saharan Africa in recent decades to help vulnerable local populations. Their work and achievements symbolically represent Hungarian humanitarian efforts.





# Hungarian Development Cooperation in the Region

Dániel Solymári

## **Hungarian private ventures in East Africa**

Hungary's foreign trade with African countries began in the early 1920s, along with economic, cultural and educational cooperation based on bilateral relations.<sup>1</sup> Due to geographical proximity and the Hungarian seaport in Fiume (Rijeka), diplomatic and business negotiations were first established with Egypt.<sup>2</sup> We can only discuss independent Hungarian foreign policy starting in 1918.<sup>3</sup> Before that, Hungary was part of the Habsburg Empire after the Ottoman occupation. Although the country did not fully integrate into the Empire, it had some political autonomy even though it could not pursue an independent foreign policy. Hungary did not have a foreign ministry: diplomacy was governed by the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Austrian dominance. By 1918, the Monarchy had disintegrated, and Hungary gained its sovereignty. The independent Hungarian foreign service was established, which saw to "all foreign affairs of the country independently"<sup>4</sup>, according to Act V of 1918. The independent Hungarian diplomacy reorganized a foreign affairs administration (a new ministry of foreign affairs was established) and training program. A vast network of European embassies was set up with representations outside Europe.

The first Hungarian foreign mission in Africa was established in Egypt on 7 January 1924. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an honorary consulate general in Alexandria to strengthen independent Hungarian diplomatic relations with the country. A few years later, on 20 February 1928, an embassy was established in Cairo, formalising the relationship between the two countries and giving new impetus to economic cooperation. The parties also signed a bilateral trade agreement. Shortly afterwards, the Egyptian subsidiary of the Hungarian Ganz Ltd. was established, and the export of sugar, horses, yarn and textiles commenced. Other



products were later added to the portfolio.<sup>5</sup> In 1929, the Royal Hungarian Mint (RHM) was commissioned to mint Egyptian silver coins. Following this success, the RHM was commissioned by the Bank of Abyssinia in Ethiopia to mint Maria Theresia thaler, which was used as a trade coinage in world trade. In July 1935, the Hungarian World News reported on how Ethiopian soldiers were being paid with this currency. The Hungarian-Egyptian Commercial Company boosted further economic cooperation. A Hungarian shop and travel agency opened in Cairo. Sports and archaeological relations were also vital.<sup>6</sup>

Diplomatic and economic relations with African countries were interrupted by World War II, and the Egyptian ambassador was recalled in 1941. Restoration could only take place after the end of the war.

The golden age of Hungarian foreign policy concerning Africa began in the 1950s. With Stalin's death in 1953, a more open, rational Soviet foreign policy mindset emerged. With the new socialist leadership by János Kádár, Hungarian politics in the 1960s began to change. A soft dictatorship known as "goulash communism" emerged and a period of relative prosperity began. In a matter of years, Hungarian foreign policy was transformed as the only rational course of action. In his speech at the 1967 Conference of the HSWP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), Kádár described the development of foreign relations with African countries as a primary goal.<sup>7</sup>

Hungarian consulates and embassies were opening up with lights speed throughout Africa from the 1960s. Hungarian chief foreign officers regularly visited Sub-Saharan Africa, and governmental representatives of the newly independent countries returned the gesture by visiting Hungary. News about the "developing world" became recurring topics with Hungarian newspapers like the Szabad Nép, Népszabadság, Pesti Hírlap, Esti Hírlap, and Az Est all reporting on domestic and international affairs of Arab and African countries.<sup>8</sup>

The new Hungarian foreign policy was still in its infancy stage, but it focused on increasing exports and maintaining steady economic growth. Many Hungarian companies and brands became popular on the African continent. Starting in the 1960s, Hungarian experts and corporations began working in African countries and cooperating with TESCO.<sup>9</sup> They built roads, railways, and hospitals in Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Angola, Ethiopia and Kenya. Hungary was a leading figure in providing technical assistance to African countries, although it was motivated by ideological and political reasons. The most famous Hungarian brands in Africa



were Ganz and Ikarus. The latter's iconic buses were trendy, and thousands of the Model 200s could be seen in the streets of North and East Africa.<sup>10</sup> Elzett Metal Works, a major mass-production corporation in Hungary, became an essential player in Africa by the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> The padlocks, locks and other metal products the company manufactured were so popular and well-known in Sub-Saharan Africa that in Kenya and Tanzania these items were often referred to by Africans with company name "elzett". Similarly, petrol cans are still referred to in several places as the "Elzett Can". Medicor Electronics, which manufactured medical equipment and is still operating, had strong trade relations with some African countries. By the 1970s, Medicor had become the most important company in the Hungarian medical technology industry. It played an essential role in providing primary health care equipment for local hospitals in Africa, especially in Nigeria. Their x-ray machines were used in African hospitals until the 1990s. Hajdu (Hajdúsági Iparművek) household appliances, Globus canned

An Ikarus in Kenya





and convenience foods, and Bábolna State Farm were all equally important products that experienced significant success.

As a result, trade between Hungary and countries in Africa skyrocketed in the 1960s and 1970s. There was a period when Hungary was in the overall top ten countries in providing technical assistance to Africa. These vital relationships decreased and almost entirely ceased by the 1990s. The decades after the fall of communism brought Hungary's accession to NATO and the European Union. Hungary's foreign policy had other priorities. From the 1990s, Hungarian foreign policy focused on the Western integration (NATO and EU), thus neglecting African relations. Diplomatic priorities shifted from Africa (and other developing countries) to the West. However, a new era of redefined African relations began in 2015 with the "Southern Opening" strategy.<sup>12</sup>

### **Development Assistance and Humanitarian Aid**

One crucial area of the international development and cooperation is providing foreign aid, and over the years Hungarian civil and church organizations have had a lasting impact with projects meeting international standards. Although Hungarian economic and diplomatic relations with Africa slowed down or disappeared in the 1990s and 2000s, domestic NGOs eventually rediscovered Africa. New NGOs emerged with the mission of developing African aid programs. Following the initial steps, many successful health care and humanitarian missions were organized in Uganda, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other West African countries by 2010. Hungarian experts built orphanages, hospitals and schools, and they launched several water safety and hygiene initiatives in slums. They had outstanding achievements in education, vocational training, and bilateral connections primarily with East African countries. Cooperation in higher education also intensified through the Africa Research Centre of the University of Pécs, which was established in 2009.

Joining the OECD and the EU had a positive effect on aid programs. Like all other member states, Hungary undertook to allocate a certain proportion of its GDP to international assistance programs. This is referred to as ODA (Official Development Assistance), which is a compulsory contribution. In 2003, this amount was 4,761,830,000 HUF (ca. 13,700,000 EUR). By 2013, it reached 28,665,240,888 HUF (ca. 82,400,00 EUR).<sup>13</sup> The Hungarian Parliament passed Act XC in 2014 on international development cooperation and international humanitarian aid.



A separate department was set up within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to coordinate the endeavour and launch new initiatives and projects. With these decisions, the Hungarian government has put the issue of international assistance, which had been neglected for decades, back in its rightful place and established an appropriate regulatory framework.<sup>14</sup>

Civilian initiatives are torchbearers of Hungarian ingenuity and assistance in Africa. Key figures are the Foundation for Africa and the African-Hungarian Union (AHU), both operating in Sub-Saharan Africa since the early 2000s. The Taita Foundation also formed at this time (named after the Taita Hills), and the organization built an orphanage in Kenya. The ophthalmologist Richárd Hardi has been working in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1995 as the secular member of the Community of the Beatitudes', and he runs a hospital there with his colleagues.<sup>15</sup> The Hungarian Charity Service of the Maltese Order has also been present in East Africa since the mid-2000s with its pioneering initiatives in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, creating intervention programs in poor metropolitan areas and schools to provide clean water and accessible hygiene.<sup>16</sup> Other smaller initiatives such as Védegylet Association, the Hungarian Baptist Aid and Caritas Hungary have also contributed to improving the lives of many African citizens. As a result of the important work of Hungarian charitable organizations and higher education institutions, Hungary has a well-respected reputation in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>17</sup>

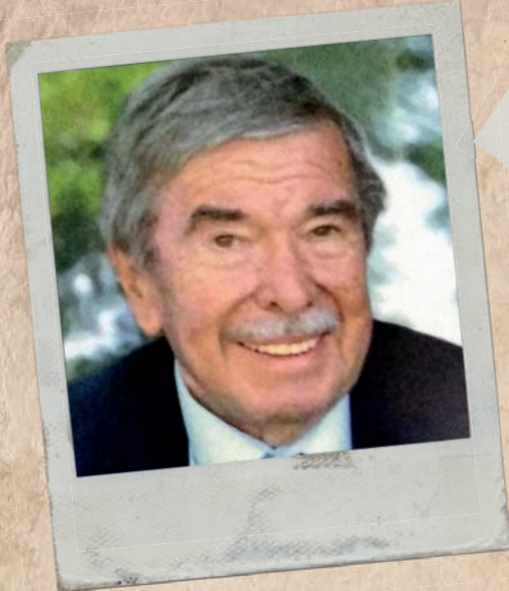




Sanitation facilities  
in Kibera (Nairobi)  
and Mombasa







## A Brief Biography of Prominent Hungarians in East Africa

Tibor Gaál

(1938-2019)

Tibor Gaál emigrated to Wien in 1956, where he finished his high school studies. He graduated as an architect in 1965. After a short detour to South Africa, he moved to Mombasa, where he joined the Bamburi cement company's design team to design low-maintenance concrete buildings.

Tibor Gaál met with Sbish Trzebinski, a Polish architect, in the design studio of Imre Rózsa, with whom he had already had a fruitful working relationship for about forty years. Their architectural activity contributed significantly to a boom in tourism, accounting for much of Kenya's and Tanzania's revenues.

One of their first significant accomplishments is the building known today as Serena Mountain Lodge Hotel in Mount Kenya National Park, which they designed together with Rózsa. From the elevated structure, guests can view the animals that come for the water. They built an underground tunnel to give tourists access to the pond from their accommodation, and from this location they could safely photograph the animals up close. This design was the first of its kind. They designed and built many hotels for their clients on the shores of the Indian Ocean with their "trademark" swimming pools that lead from the reception desks through the garden to the sandy beaches.



## Serena Mountain Lodge



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The Kunduchi Beach Hotel in Tanzania incorporates a Swahili style combining African and Arab architectural and cultural traditions. This building was selected as one of the top 300 hotels in the world.

Gaál was the honorary consul of Austria in Kenya for a long time.





## Kálmán Kittenberger

(1881-1958)

Born in 1881 to a poor working-class family, Kálmán Kittenberger's childhood dream came true when in 1903 he travelled to Mombasa, the former capital of Kenya, as a taxidermist for a private expedition led by Africanist Arzén Damaszkín. The "African madness" (*Furor Africanus*) immediately captivated the young scientist, who turned to East Africa with scientific curiosity unlike hunters who just wanted trophies to decorate their homes.

Kittenberger, though he was a devoted hunter, considered his scientific work to be his greatest passion. Instead of collecting trophies, he often walked for days tracking rare animals, hoping that he would be able to showcase them to Hungarians in the future. Although his achievements speak for themselves, it took time for his peers to recognize his work: during his time in Africa, he barely received any salary and he lost donors early on. To sustain himself, he often had to sell pieces of his collection on site even though he wanted to showcase his work in Hungary. His poor financial status almost cost him his life once: he could only buy low-quality supplies and ammunition. On one of his hunts, his firearm malfunctioned and put him in grave danger. Kittenberger often found himself in adrenaline-fueled situations. Once a lion attacked him, and he lost one of his fingers in close combat with the animal. His biographer, István Fekete, recalled this story in a quote from Kittenberger: "A lion struck me down at daybreak on June 11th. This would not have happened if my rifle had not jammed before my second attempt to shoot the lion. The wounded animal was running towards me, and I had to let it come close because I couldn't see it in the tall grass. It was a dire situation, and not a soul was in sight to assist me. Eventually, I grabbed its tongue with my left hand and pulled it hard. This puzzled the beast, so I had a moment to pull out the jammed ammunition, reload, and shoot my opponent in the eye."



The scientist was called "Mr. Kitty" by the locals, and he spent ten and a half years in Africa during the six times he visited. He contributed to the collection of the Hungarian National Museum with almost 60,000 items. He discovered nearly three hundred new species of animals, and approximately forty were named after him. "He could break through elephant grass, bamboo jungles, the snow-capped mountaintops of Kilimanjaro, and the white spots on the black continent, where no white man had gone before", his biographer Fekete wrote about him. He worked in Tanzania and Ethiopia, as well as in the Danakil Depression located on the present-day borders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, which was uncharted territory for Europeans back then.

Despite holding on to his scientific curiosity amidst all sorts of difficulties, he had to wait a long time for well-deserved personal and professional peace. After World War I, he was deported to India by the British as a citizen from a hostile country. Nonetheless, after returning from five years of captivity, the "impoverished Hungarian scientist" continued his work with renewed energy. He became editor-in-chief of the hunting magazine *Nimród*, which he managed for 30 years and transformed into a popular publication for the hunting community. His work laid the foundations for the Africa collection exhibited in the Hungarian National Museum. However, in the wake of the guerrilla fighting during the 1956 revolution in Budapest, a fire broke out in the building, destroying most of the items preserved there along with Kittenberger's trophy collection.







## Imre Löffler

(1929–2007)

Imre Löffler is one of those Hungarians who is better known abroad than in Hungary. One of the main reasons for this (besides selective historical memory) is that despite having led an adventurous life with significant professional achievements and ground-breaking initiatives, the bibliographic information available for him is relatively scarce. Löffler was born in Budapest in 1929. Although he grew up in a religious family and began his studies at a church school, he but later became more attracted to the prospect of a military career. He left high school and continued his studies in the Hungarian army, which we know from his friend, Yusuf Kodwawala (the former president of the Pan-African Surgeons Association). The Germans occupied his military school during Budapest's occupation in 1944 and sent Löffler to the Polish front, where he escaped by cutting ties with war-torn Hungary. He fled to Germany and American soldiers captured him. Thanks to his Austrian and Bavarian ancestry, he spoke excellent German, so he was soon offered a military hospital job as an assistant and handyman. He excelled in his work with his talent and diligence. He returned to Budapest for a short time, but due to his "anti-class" background, he did not get a job and he did not have the opportunity to study. He fled to Austria, and then again to Germany. In 1948 he was admitted to the Medical University of Regensburg with a German state scholarship to study philosophy and medicine. Later, he married another doctor and they had three children. To cover his studies and family expenses, he worked nightshifts as a taxi driver and caretaker in



a nursing home. He completed his graduate studies in the United States with the assistance of American scholarships and aid. They settled in Cincinnati, Ohio and began working at the Samaritans Hospital. He soon became interested in remote, exotic lands and decided to embark on missionary medical work in Uganda.

The couple divorced in 1969, and he moved to Zambia to begin teaching medicine at Lusaka University Teaching Hospital. His interest then turned to wildlife, animals and natural habitats. He married again and started farming and fighting poachers with his wife. He was expelled from Zambia after the one-party dictatorship rose to power in the early 1970s.

Löffler was compelled to move to Kenya in 1975. He worked at the Nairobi Hospital from 1986 to 1992 as a medical advisory board member and then in the hospital's management. Although he was a general surgeon, he specialized in specific gynaecological interventions (such as a hysterectomy), skin grafting, and cleft lip and palate repair. In addition to his medical work, he was involved in scientific and theoretical problems such as research into drugs against multi-resistant bacteria. His focus was on fighting fatal pathogens with drugs like penicillin and chloroquine. His rule of thumb was to administer adequate doses of antibiotics to avoid both overdosing and underdosing, and he frequently shared this conviction with his colleagues. This was pioneering work in East Africa at the time. He published his results in professional journals, and he founded a library and a journal (titled *The Proceedings of Nairobi Hospital*) at the hospital.

In 1983, he remarried and dedicated his life with his new wife to nature and animal conservation. In 1998, he became president of the East African Wildlife Society, a position he held until 2005. During his presidency, Kenyan wildlife protection programs were reorganized and improved, and with his leadership respect for human and animal coexistence reached new heights. Löffler regularly reflected on public issues in his philosophical and provocative writings, which frequently appeared in the *East African Standard* magazine.

As a result of his conservation efforts and a vocal campaign against governmental plans to clear natural areas, Löffler helped save Nairobi's Ngong forest from many construction and development projects in the growing city. After a long struggle, he achieved his goal and the forest was declared a nature reserve. The education centre named after him still stands today.

Löffler died in 2007 of a terminal illness in Nairobi.





## Kálmán Mészáros

(1894–1971)

He was born on 8 May 1894 in Gyula, a peaceful small town full of green parks in the Great Hungarian Plain. He obtained his medical degree with honours in Budapest. In the meantime, he married Erzsébet Bertalan Vilma and they had a daughter together. However, in the crisis following the Treaty of Trianon, he could not find a job and so they decided to emigrate.

He arrived in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, in 1924. He became court physician to Ras Hailu, the ruler of Godjam. The Ras, lord of life and death, did not abide by the terms of their contract and was in no hurry to pay his salary either. Therefore, in the fall of 1925, he escaped from Godjam without a passport and permit and returned to Addis Ababa to open a clinic. He was a humane and generous person, which could be seen by the way he treated ordinary people. Nonetheless, much of his time was devoted to the medical treatment of the royal family. The imperial relatives invited Mészáros to visit distant provinces. He healed the emperor's son, the lord of Wollo Province and his godfather, and the prince of Gamo. Mészáros also helped with the birth of Haile Selassie's daughter in Sidamo. During his travels, he treated inhabitants in countryside villages while exploring the area as a passionate hunter. He shot four lions in one minute at the Shebelle River in 1931.

Kálmán Mészáros witnessed one of the most turbulent times in Ethiopian history. Often visiting the imperial court, he experienced the stormy struggle for power between Tafari Makonnen and Emperor Haile Selassie I, followed by Selassie's reform attempts and the Italo-Ethiopian wars. Mészáros became very popular in the imperial court and was appointed chief medic of the Ethiopian army in 1930.



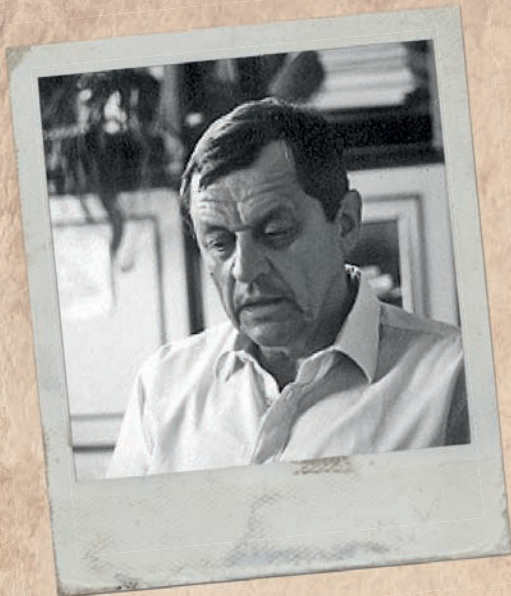


Kálmán Mészáros with his friends in Addis Ababa

Mészáros was awarded membership to the Order of the Star of Ethiopia for his role in the battle of Anchem. On 3 October 1935, the Italians launched an attack on Ethiopia. Mészáros followed the imperial formations with his Red Cross caravan and tended to the wounded. He returned to Addis Ababa by the end of April 1936 to work at the English Red Cross Hospital, treating victims of street fights or other patients requiring medical care. The Italians, the new lords of the capital, were not friendly with the Hungarians at all, and they soon began intervening with his clinic. Finally, in December 1936, he left Ethiopia in frustration and impoverishment and moved to Tanganyika. He lived in Chunya for a short time, organized hunting expeditions, and joined safaris as a doctor. He fell seriously ill with black fever at Lake Rukwa. Troubling news from Europe prompted him to return home in March 1938. During the troubling years of World War II, he slowly recovered from his illness in several locations, and from November 1944 he served at the hospital in Sopron, Hungary. He remarried in Mezőcsát in September 1948 but could only enjoy the peace that his home and wife Zsuzsanna Nagy provided for a short time. One of his patients accused him of anti-Semitism, and although there was no evidence to support this claim, he was sentenced to five years in prison. After his release, he got a job as a district GP in Kiskunfélegyháza, and then in Ároktő in 1954. He retired from in 1965 and moved to Mezőcsát. He wrote a memoir of his African adventures titled *Abesszínia a vadászok paradicsomá* (Abyssinia: A Hunters' Paradise). He devoted all his time to his patients, not caring about his illness. He died on 25 September 1971 at the Miskolc Hospital. He was laid to rest in the cemetery of Mezőcsát.

Kálmán Mészáros was a very talented, resilient doctor. He was an incredibly successful surgeon, and he also received praise for his dermatological treatment. His writings are good reads for those who love travelling, hunting and adventures. His notes on Ethiopians' health are a valuable source on medical history. His personal experiences of Ethiopian society, power struggles, and Italian colonization may be relevant to historians. His love for people, selflessness, and willingness to sacrifice undoubtedly make him an outstanding figure of the Hungarian medical community.





Károly Polónyi  
(1928–2002)

Károly Polónyi graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Budapest University of Technology in 1950, and he then became an assistant lecturer at the Department of Public Building Design. After his experience at the Urban Planning Office (VÁTERV) and the Industrial Building Design Company (IPARTERV), he worked as the chief engineer of the Lake Balaton Management Committee. A zoning plan he developed at that time brought him several professional awards, including the Ybl architecture award in 1961.

The Hungarian architect attended the last congress of the CIAM (Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) and became a member of the prestigious Team 10 modernist architecture group, which also offered him a valuable network of international contacts. Later, he used his vast network of contacts built over the decades to develop the English language courses at the Budapest University of Technology.

As an internationally renowned expert in urban architecture, he worked on large-scale plans from 1963 for about twenty years as a building and urban designer in Ghana, Nigeria, Algeria and Ethiopia.

His career in Africa began in Ghana. He expanded the Faculty of Architecture at Kumasi City Technical University and became an organizer of the first postgraduate architect program in West Africa. He also took part in designing low-cost and efficient model farms and housing estates. He worked on the Volta River's regional development project with a multinational team involving Hungarian professionals and local students. He and his students received the



Perret Award from the International Association of Architects for their work on the "Tongo Development Project".

From 1969 he was the deputy chief architect of the Budapest Metropolitan Council. At the same time he worked in Africa as the chief of the Public Building Design Company's (KÖZTI) design team. He prepared the development plans for Calabar in Nigeria and three Algerian cities.

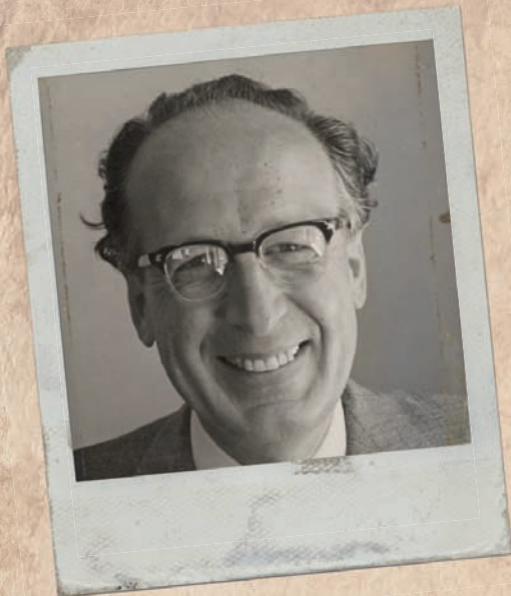
Károly Polónyi began his work in Ethiopia in 1977 as a consultant to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, which would last for three years. Polónyi's first assignment was to create a development strategy for Addis Ababa. Polónyi and his colleagues envisioned a decentralized solution for the crowded area: they planned to develop six or seven regional centres at least 200 kilometers away from the capital. Formulating a plan for the development of the Addis Ababa city centre also presented a creative challenge.

He was also assigned a significant construction project – the expansion of the Revolution (Abiyot) Square (today Meskel Square). This square is located next to the city stadium, the Imperial Palace, the Ghion Hotel and the Filwoha Healing Spring. It was a starting point for urban planning and had long been the site of church holidays. According to the plans of the communist regime, nearly half a million people in the square could have, in the ironic words of Károly Polónyi, "exercised their right and duty to express their solidarity with the government through disciplined marches."

The construction of the square had already begun based on the plans of a Finnish architect. The architects intended to connect the square to the city's infrastructure to allow continuous and diverse utilization of the square throughout the year. They were hoping that in addition to political rallies, they could develop the oval-shaped square into the capital's heart, which would host church ceremonies, cultural festivals, sports events, fairs and exhibitions. Polónyi's vision of the square operating regardless of the ruling political parties and ideologies came true. The square got back its old name in 1992 after the fall of the communist regime, and now it hosts huge community events, including the spectacular Christian Meskel festival.

Polónyi had a unique carrier, unlike any of his colleagues living in Hungary or abroad. Perhaps he was the only one who was aware of the latest international and Hungarian trends, while also combining his European perspectives with his African experiences in his works.





## Imre Rózsa

(1911-1991)

Imre Rózsa was born in Nagyvárad in 1911. He studied architecture but took a job in Baghdad due to the anti-Jewish laws in Hungary. His fiancé moved with him, and they eventually married in 1939. The couple left Iraq in 1942 and moved to Palestine, followed by Mombasa, Kenya and Entebbe, Uganda for a while. Imre Rózsa joined the British Army and settled in Nairobi, where he founded an architectural firm. His three children were born in Kenya. The family played an active role in the Jewish Community. Imre Rózsa designed a new synagogue in Nairobi, which still stands to this day, and later he became the head of the congregation.

The first synagogue in Nairobi was built in 1913. After World War II, a new and larger building was needed due to growth in the Jewish community. The old synagogue was demolished and replaced in 1955 with a building designed by the Hungarian architect.

Rózsa designed many public buildings, such as offices or department stores. He even designed the building which used to house the Hungarian embassy in Dar es Salaam.

The architect and his family left Kenya in 1978 and moved to California, where two of his children were living. He died there in 1991.





Pioneer House



NEW SYNAGOGUE

The new synagogue





## Flóra Sass

(?1841/45 – 1916)

*Lady of Mystery*

We have no certain data about her birth. She may have been born in Nagyenyed sometime between 1841 and 1845. Insurgents killed her parents and brother in January 1849. Her nanny took her as her own so that the little girl could escape. An Armenian family adopted her from Transylvania. After the fall of the Hungarian War of Independence, they moved to the Ottoman Empire. She was probably abducted - and from this point, her life became a bit more well-documented. At the end of January 1869, she was bid on at the Vidin slave market and nearly sold. Samuel White Baker, an English aristocrat in transit, rescued her. It is also possible that he bought the attractive girl (who he thought was around 20 years old) because British law did not allow the purchase of slaves, or even to free them. So, it is understandable that this had to be kept a secret. This is probably why she took up the name Florence (Flóra) Sass then. According to our knowledge, her original name was Barbara.

Baker and Sass went straight to Africa. They arrived at Cairo in March 1861. While sailing up the Nile, they learned that the Royal Geographical Society of London had failed in its latest expedition to find the "Holy Grail" of African explorers, the White Nile source. Seizing the opportunity, Baker and Sass set out on a self-funded expedition to solve one of the last African mysteries. They left Khartoum in December 1862, and they reached Gondokoro, an abandoned Austrian missionary settlement in South Sudan. On 14 March 1864, they mapped Lake Albert (Albert Nyanza), and three weeks later they mapped Murchison Falls and a large section of the upper White Nile. Along the way, they went through many ordeals. Baker fell



Flóra Sass and her husband



ill, and during this time Flora Sass had to stand her ground alone, gaining the recognition of all the male members of the expedition. This along with her blonde hair is how she got the name Morning Star (Myadue) from the locals. They finished their expedition, believing that they had solved the mystery of the White Nile. Although this only happened decades later, their discovery was a huge scientific achievement. They were celebrated as heroes in England. They were married with special permission, and Baker was given the rank of knight. However, Queen Victoria was unwilling to meet Lady Baker because of her uncertain origins. On the other hand, his son, the Prince of Wales, befriended the couple, and they set out on another trip to Africa together. The Viceroy of Egypt made Baker Governor General of the Equatorial Nile, with his wife accompanying him. They spent three years there, but the circumstances did not allow for further explorations. They returned to England in 1874 and settled in Devon County. Flóra Sass, known as Lady Baker, outlived her husband by more than two decades, passing away on 11 March 1916. Following her will, her documents were burned after her death. Only her diary written on their second journey was found in 1965, which is why we know so little about the Lady of Mystery.





## László Sáska

(1890–1978)

László Sáska was born on 26 September 1890 in Nagyenyed, a city with a rich history in Transylvania. He was raised in a protestant family. He studied in the Bethlen College, where he developed an interest in zoology. He graduated in medicine at the University of Budapest in 1920. In 1933, he and his brave and adventurous wife, Mária Mojzsis, seriously considered emigrating to Africa. The tragic health problems of East Africa, the possibility of medical research, and his love of hunting and nature all helped him make up his mind.

They decided to travel to Somalia and then to the capital of Ethiopia, where Sáska opened a clinic. After experiencing many difficulties during the first months, the lord of the southern province Sidamo offered him a lucrative job in his court. Twice the size of Hungary, Sidamo had a population of four million at the time. Sáska began as the only doctor in the province to set up health care and organize the South Ethiopian army's medical service.

The Italian attack disrupted his work, and after the war broke out in the autumn of 1935, he and his wife fled to the capital. He continued to work in his clinic, but also treated patients at the Addis Ababa Imperial Hospital. He wrote about the events of the Italo-Ethiopian war under the pen name Dr. Ladislav Sava, exposing the atrocities committed by the conquerors. However, the Italians made it impossible for him to work in his clinic, his situation became unsustainable, and he was forced to move to the English-ruled Tanganyika.

He arrived at Dar es Salaam in July 1937, and for a short time he managed the operation of a clinic in Iringa. He settled permanently in Arusha, which had a more favourable climate, and opened a clinic on the road leading to Moshi. He treated the Arusha district residents and



provided free care to poor indigenous people such as the Maasai and Kikuyu. His scientific reputation also boosted his medical practice. Lots of patients with malaria or cancer visited his clinic from afar. To cover his expenses, he charged Europeans for their treatment, which mostly included hunters. In exchange for his hard work in the Arusha region, he was not deported in World War II despite being a citizen from a hostile country. As a sign of recognition, he was elected to serve as a Corresponding Member of the English Cancer Research Institute. Semmelweis University awarded him a Golden Certificate of Achievement in 1970. He was also elected to be a member of the Romanian Academy of Medicine in 1972.

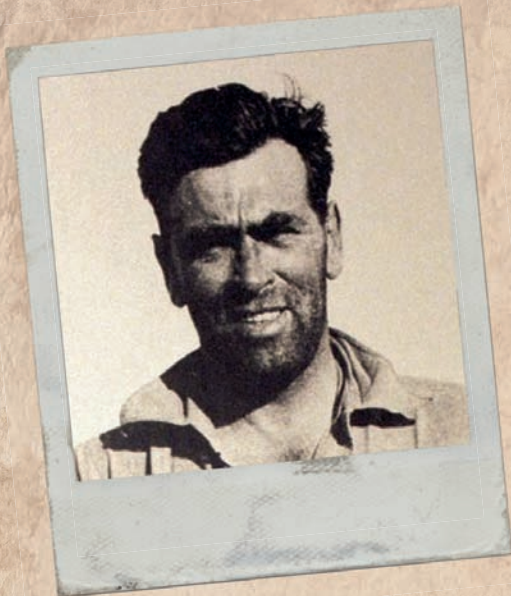
As a renowned physician and a caring friend, he was on good terms with many famous figures visiting or living in Africa. This included Ernest Hemingway, a famous American writer; Dr. Bernhard Grzimek, a renowned zoologist; and Albert Schweitzer, a well-known doctor, writer, and musician. Zsigmond Széchenyi, János Szunyoghy, Endre Nagy, and many Hungarian hunters and collectors could also count on Sáska's sincere support.

László Sáska was a versatile scientist with extraordinary curiosity. He made ethnographic, zoological, and botanical observations in Ethiopia, Tanganyika and the Congo Basin. He described rare and unknown orchid species. Two species of African mites and a plant were named after him. He studied the people surrounding him and their traditional medicine. His writings, documentaries and photographs of Africa are invaluable. He participated in the nature conservation festival of the Budapest Hunting Exhibition in 1971 with his film *Afrikai reggel* (African Morning). He donated most of his collections to Hungarian museums. His collection can be found in the Hungarian Geographical Museum.

He was passionate about Africa and an admirer of the continent's flora and fauna. His writings published in Hungarian magazines and his book *Életem Afrika* (My Life, Africa) are exciting reads, and his research results are treasures for medical history and botany. His reports as a witness of Ethiopia's historical events are essential sources for learning about the era.

His many years of devoted work made Sáska the most famous doctor in Tanzania. He liked the African climate, and he remained healthy and worked even in his later years. He died on 8 November 1978, at the age of 88. He rests in the Arusha Cemetery at the foot of Mount Meru.





## Zsigmond Széchenyi

(1898–1967)

He was born in Nagyvárad on 23 January 1899 into a family of counts. He was the great-great-grandson of Ferenc Széchenyi (founder of the National Széchenyi Library and Hungarian National Museum), and great-grandson of Széchenyi István's (considered the Greatest Hungarian) brother. He spent his childhood in Sárpentele (Fejér County). After graduating from high school, he attended universities in Munich, Stuttgart and Cambridge between 1919 and 1923. He developed his passion for hunting in his childhood, but his first real hunt took place only after graduation because his father only allowed him to shoot deer when he was young.

He set out on his first trip to Africa with László Almásy, "The English Patient", in the spring of 1927 to hunt in eastern Sudan, in the Fung province at the Ethiopian border. He fell in love with Africa on this trip. In November 1928, he visited the Ewaso Ng'iro River, the Maasai Mara Reserve and Kitui County with Count István Károlyi. The press reported on this expedition as follows: "The many adversities, the many deprivations, the many efforts that accompanied the six-month African hunting expedition of the two Hungarian counts were not in vain. They put down an entire army of African big games: lions, panthers, rhinos, wild buffalo. István Károlyi even managed to shoot a beautiful adult elephant." After returning home, they interviewed Széchenyi. "We are astonished by the sense of freedom one has in the wild," he said after participating in an exciting African hunting trip for the second time. The young count, who had become thoroughly acquainted with all the adversities and dangers of the African wilderness, said with a gleeful smile on his face, "I hope I will see Africa again."



Zsigmond Széchenyi  
in Africa



He did see it again, not only once. He returned to Kenya in 1932, hunting mostly big boars, elephants and lions. He took part in another Kenyan safari from December 1933 to March 1934. He participated in an expedition in Sudan with László Almásy in 1935, where he shot the largest addax antelope ever and broke a world record. Out of Africa's 130 big games, he managed to collect 80 trophies. Meanwhile, his books on his hunting adventures were published, the first in 1930 being *Csui! Afrikai vadásznapló 1928. október – 1929. április* (Chui! African Hunting Log October 1928 - April 1929), and the second titled *Elefántország* (Elephant Country) in 1934. Not only did World War II make hunting in Africa impossible, but his unique collection was destroyed during the siege of Budapest. After the communists came to power, his properties were confiscated, and he was deported and imprisoned. He could only publish his new book *Afrikai tábortüzek* (African Campfires) in 1959. Once again, he was able to visit his beloved continent again in December 1963 when the National Museum sent him on a mission to acquire items for its incomplete collection. He wrote his last book about this journey, titled *Denaturált Afrika* (Denatured Africa). He died in Budapest on 24 April 1967, a few days after he submitted his book's manuscript. He was one of the few Hungarians who was not merely in love with Africa but also called it his home.





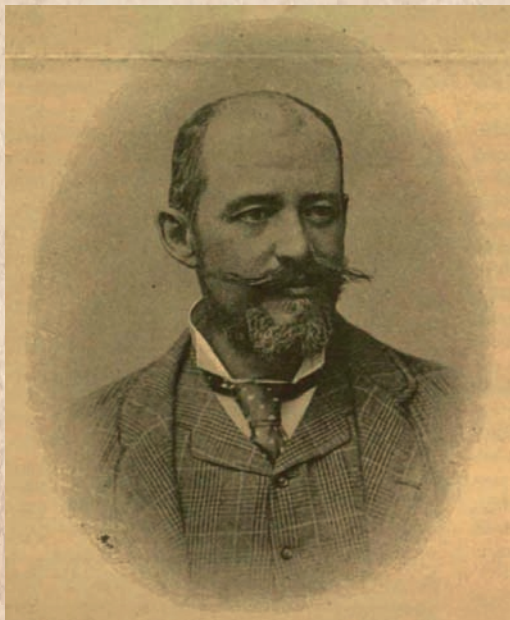
## Sámuel Teleki

(1845-1916)

Born in 1845 into a Transylvanian aristocratic family, Sámuel Teleki is one of the three most significant Hungarian Africanists, next to László Magyar and Emil Torday. As usual in the era, he studied at prestigious European universities. He studied geology and astronomy in Göttingen and Berlin, but he was also interested in political and economic studies. Perhaps this is also why, after his military service, he joined the Hungarian political public life as a Member of Parliament. Here he befriended Rudolf, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. Due to his father, Emperor Franz Joseph, Rudolf could not play a serious political role, so his attention turned to geographical discoveries, travel and natural sciences. Moreover, he became the president of the Hungarian Geographical Society. He met Teleki during this work, and together they planned exotic expeditions and Transylvanian hunts. This is how Teleki has the idea to connect his previously planned African hunting trip to explore the unmapped regions of East Africa, especially the area north of Lake Baringo in the Great Rift Valley.

Accompanied by his entourage, he arrived on the island of Zanzibar on 29 November 1886, where he began to organize the exploration of areas of Africa that were uncharted by Europeans. In June 1887, they reached the base of Kilimanjaro, a vast savannah region on the border of present-day Kenya and Tanzania that the Maasai call the "Infinite Land". Teleki, surpassing all previous attempts, reached the snow line at a height of 5,310 metres on the 5,895-meter mountain, which is the highest point on the African continent and the highest standalone mountain in the world. This was a significant achievement, as acclimatization and





high-altitude diseases were not yet fully understood at this time. Presumably, Teleki did not get any higher for objective and health-related reasons. After he attempted to conquer Kilimanjaro, he also climbed Mount Kenya. Although he did not reach the peak of 5,199 metres, he got to the snow line at an altitude of 4,500 metres. Reaching the peak would have required rock climbing skills and proper equipment. However, using rock samples collected on the mountain, he proved its volcanic origin and discovered significant geological findings. After climbing Mount Kenya, he reached a lake on 6 March 1888 known to the Turkana people living here as Nagira Mwaiten, which Teleki named Lake Rudolf (now called Lake Turkana) in honour of the Archduke. He continued the expedition and was the first European to reach the "top" of a volcano located there, which was unknown to Western researchers.

This mountain still holds his name. Continuing his journey, he discovered a huge saltwater lake, which he named Lake Stefania (now Lake Chew Bahir) after Rudolf's wife. Next, they reached Mombasa's port, their expedition's final destination on a long and challenging journey.

Teleki's journey was one of the most significant endeavours of the era, granting him a place among the great geographical explorers. Although his findings were published by his expedition companion, the Austrian sailor Ludwig von Höhnelt, this does not detract from Teleki's accomplishments. This work was published in Hungarian in 1892 in a book titled *Teleki Sámuel gróf felfedező útja Kelet-Afrika egyenlítői vidékén 1887–1888* (Count Sámuel Teleki's Expedition in the Equatorial Region of East Africa, 1887–1888). After Teleki's return home and following his expeditions to Asia and Oceania, he visited Africa several more times. His scientific observations greatly enriched our geographical knowledge. He refuted the view that volcanic activity was caused by the intrusion of seawater since the Teleki volcano is located on the mainland. He also proved that the Moon Mountains, which were assumed to be between the Great Lakes and Ethiopia at the time, did not exist. Several plant and animal species bear his name. It is also significant that Kenya's first independent government named a shelter house on Mount Kenya (at an altitude of 4,300 metres) after this outstanding Hungarian researcher. He was also awarded and elected as a member by several geographical and academic societies in recognition of his scholarly work.





## György Vámos

(1910–1999)

György Vámos was born in Budapest in 1910. He finished high school in Budapest and studied architecture in Vienna. Due to the advancement of Nazism, he joined the British government and got a job in Iraq. He later joined the British Army as he was a Hungarian citizen, but he was interned to Uganda along with many others because of his "foreign" status. When he was released from the internment camp, he rejoined the ranks of the British Army, but his time in Uganda left a deep impression on him. He was impressed by the beauty of Africa's natural environment and the coexistence of cultures. After he resigned in 1946, he did not return to Europe but settled in Nairobi, where he opened an architect firm with Heini Lustmann.

György Vámos designed several significant buildings in Kenya and the neighbouring countries. Residential and public buildings, schools, and churches were built using his designs. His work includes the Kenya Commercial Bank building and the headquarters of the country's most prestigious multi-ethnic association, the United Kenya Club, founded in 1946. Vámos held various positions at this club. He also had two significant church assignments. One was the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh temple (gurdwara), built in 1963. Its 25-metre high dome features a spectacular view from above. He planned the dome to eliminate echoes and provide clear sound during ceremonies. In 1968, a cathedral in Bukoba, Tanzania was also built based on his design and plans.





The Siri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh temple

On 22 August 1978, Jomo Kenyatta, the legendary figure in the African independence movement and the first president of independent Kenya, died. György Vámos had the honour of designing the mausoleum of the world-famous and well-known late president, whose final resting place was designated to be next to the Parliament. The funeral ceremony was scheduled for August 31, leaving a hundred workers to build the 34-square-foot building in just a few days.

György Vámos was a well-known figure of Nairobi intellectuals. He spoke several languages and was active in public life. He loved to travel, which he often linked with his other passions of painting and drawing, though he was above all else an architect. At the end of his career, he received an award from the Architectural Association of Kenya for his outstanding contribution to the country's architecture.

He moved to Vancouver with his family in his senior years, where he died in 1999.



## Following our Forebearers in Ethiopia

The word Ethiop means "sunburnt". Travellers in Ethiopia can find unparalleled cultural and linguistic diversity, historical and religious sites and celebrations in this East African country. For example, Sámuel Teleki visited Harar and he found the Lake Chew Bahir (formerly known as Lake Stefania) in April 1888. Around 1906-1907, Kálmán Kittenberger completed research in the Danakil Depression in his breakthrough scientific exploration. He described this region's land as lunar-like. Between 1924 and 1935, Kálmán Mészáros worked as a doctor in the former Ethiopian Empire, and he then became the chief physician of the Ethiopian army and Emperor Haile Selassie. Dr. László Sáska was the court physician of Haile Selassie's son-in-law and was considered by many to be the "Albert Schweitzer of Ethiopia". In 1934, he organized a 4,000-kilometer expedition to roam the vastness of the Ethiopian highlands and the region of the southern Ethiopian great lakes. You can get to Ethiopia from Budapest with one transfer in 8-10 hours or from Vienna with a direct flight. Vaccinations are not compulsory.

***The following are most important sights and attractions recommended by the Utazz Afrikába Utazási Iroda (Travel to Africa Travel Agency):***

**Addis Ababa** is the headquarters of the African Union, the capital located the highest above sea level at 2,500 meters, and home to 84 different language groups. Its name means "New Flower". Emperor Menelik II founded the city in 1887. His wife, Empress Taitu, chose the location for the new capital. Its main attractions are the Mercato (Market), the palace of Emperor Haile Selassie I and the National Museum, where the 3.2-million-year-old remains of Lucy can be found. The Menelik Mausoleum, the coronation site of Emperor Haile Selassie, St. George's Cathedral and the Holy Trinity (Selassie) Cathedral are other must-see attractions for any visitor.





**Lake Tana area is the source of the Blue Nile.** The country's fourth-largest city, Bahir Dar lies at the banks of the Nile behind a large dam. There are 37 islands in the lake with monasteries on 19 of them. Both the rulers of ancient times and the church hid their treasures on these islands. Fun fact: the most well-known island is Tana Quirgos, which is claimed by some to be a possible secret location of the Lost Ark.

**The Blue Nile Falls is near Bahir Dar.** The nearly 1,600-kilometer Blue Nile, running through Ethiopia and Sudan, is the most crucial source of the Nile (they merges at Khartoum in Sudan) along with the White Nile. It got its name from the alluvium it carries, which often turns the water black. In the Sudanese dialect spoken in the region at the river's mouth, the same word was used for black and blue. The Blue Nile, emerging from the southern side of Lake Tana, carved a 400-kilometer fissure which is 1,500 meters deep at certain points. Here, you can find the 45-meter high Blue Nile Waterfall (Tis Isat, the "smoking water"), which is the most significant tourist attraction in the area.







**Lalibela is known for its rock-hewn churches, which are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.** It is an Ethiopian place of Christian pilgrimage, a holy city also known as New Jerusalem. It lies at an altitude of 2,500 meters and it is inhabited by members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Lalibela is famous for its 11 monolithic churches carved from red tuff rocks. They began to build the churches in the 12th century, during the reign of Emperor St. Lalibela and the heyday of Christian ideas. Constructions lasted for 100 years. The community's most famous celebration is Timket (Epiphany).





**The Omo Valley.** The Omo River in southern Ethiopia, which flows into Lake Turkana (Rudolf), is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 760-kilometer river originates in the Ethiopian Highlands and flows into Lake Turkana with a delta estuary. Due to its large waterfalls, it is a swift river characterized by many cascades and rapids as it flows through the Mago and Omo National Parks, famous for their wildlife. Its lower section is home to several nomadic peoples (e.g. the Mursi known for the plates in their lips, the Aari, the Hamar, the Karo, etc.).

*Contact the editors for more  
details on travel arrangements at  
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The Omo Valley



**The Danakil Depression.** The Danakil Depression is the driest and warmest region on Earth, often referred to as "Earth's cruellest place" or the "Gates of Hell". This area is located in north-eastern Ethiopia and southern Eritrea. It is a desert basin (a crypto depression) that is home to approximately 100,000 ethnic Afar people. Due to its stunning array of shade and the active volcanoes, hundreds of tourists visit the area every year. Several brightly coloured acidic lakes and geysers make it look like an alien planet. The landscape's unique feature is that the nearby coastline's seawater reacts with the magmatic rocks, resulting in salt residue. Its deepest point is 100 meters below sea level, and there are two active volcanoes in the area. Erta Ale has been continuously active since 1967, and the lava in it sometimes overflows the edge of the crater. The place is also notable for the archaeological remains of Lucy, our 3.2-million-year-old human ancestor.



The Danakil Depression



## Following Our Forebearers in Kenya

Many will fall forever in love with Africa if they visit Kenya. The stunning volcanoes of the Great Rift Valley seem to come to life from our childhood stories. Kenya has everything to offer from our romantic dreams about Africa: curious monkeys follow us down the slopes as giraffes, zebras, ostriches and immense elephant herds graze across the savannahs. Today, following the paths of great hunters, scientists, and explorers such as Sámuel Teleki, Zsigmond Széchenyi, and Kálmán Kittenberger, we can also experience the distant, timeless wildlife and the buzzing city life that they experienced. We are proud of Sámuel Teleki, who has a volcano named after him. This is the only geographical site bearing a Hungarian's name in Africa. Visitors do not need a compulsory vaccination for travel to Kenya, and single-entry visas are available electronically and at airports for 50 dollars.

### **Day 1: Destination Kenya, the Ngong Forest**

We arrive in Nairobi in the early morning. After a short rest and breakfast, we depart to the Maasai Mara National Park. On our way there, we take a short walk in the Ngong Forest. The forest was saved from sprawling constructions by Hungarian Dr. Imre Löffler, a brain surgeon and conservationist, who lived in Nairobi. The forest, now a nature reserve, is home to 35 mammals and hundreds of bird species.

Accommodation: AA Lodge Mara / <https://aalodges.com/aa-lodges/aa-mara/>



- *Nairobi*
- *Maasai Mara National Park*
- *Lake Turkana and Teleki Volcano*
- *Naro Moru*
- *Kilimanjaro*
- *Tsavo West National Park*
- *Mombasa*



## **Day 2: Safari in the Maasai Mara National Park**

We go on a full day safari in Maasai Mara National Park. The park, located in the southwestern region of the country, is a vast, scenic African savannah covering 1,510 square kilometers. It borders the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The Maasai Mara National Park is a unique wildlife refuge, famous for its natural diversity. It is one of the most popular safari sites in East Africa. Large numbers of lions, cheetahs, elephants, rhinos, African buffalos, wildebeests, giraffes, zebras and many more animals live here. Zsigmond Széchenyi visited the area on several occasions when it was still a hunting ground. On his 100th birthday, a trilingual brass plate was erected in the park at Keekorok Lodge. In honour of Zsigmond Széchenyi.

Accommodation: AA Lodge Mara

## **Day 3: Nairobi – The exciting capital of Kenya from a different perspective**

We travel back to Nairobi in the morning. There, we visit some of the landmark buildings, including the post office and the mausoleum of one of Kenya's most important historical figures, Jomo Kenyatta. Both are the work of the Hungarian architect György Vámos.

Accommodation: Ibis Styles Westlands / <https://www.ibisstylesnairobi.com/>



#### **Day 4: Lake Turkana – Eliye Springs**

Flight to Lodwar with a domestic airline. Upon arrival, we will visit Eliye Springs village's surroundings, which is famous for the prehistoric artefacts discovered here.

Accommodation: Sanfields Lodwar Camp / <http://sandfieldslodwar.net/lodwar-camp>

#### **Day 5: Teleki Volcano, then flight back to Nairobi**

In the morning, we take a trip to the 646-meter volcano named after Teleki Sámuel. In 1887, the explorer discovered the unknown and active volcano. This discovery was of great significance as Teleki saw the volcano as it was erupting. At the time, geographers thought that volcanoes could only form on seashores. This theory was refuted by Teleki's discovery, but there were many sceptics for a long time. The Hungarian Scientific Africa Expedition organized for the discovery's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary proved that the volcano was indeed active at the time Teleki discovered it.

Flight from Lodwar to Nairobi: 3:20 pm – 5 pm

Accommodation: Wildebeest Eco Camp / <http://www.wildebeestecocamp.com/>





## **Day 6: Nairobi Giraffe Centre – Travelling to the Equator**

We visit the Giraffe Centre in the morning to feed the giraffes. Next, we head north to the Equator  
Accommodation: Jaqanaz Resort / <https://jaqanazresortnaromoru.business.site/>

## **Day 7: A Trip on Mount Kenya**

Mount Kenya is the highest mountain in Kenya and the second highest in Africa. It is a volcano that has been dormant for 2.6 – 3.1 million years. Its highest peaks are the Batian, Nelion and Lenana summits. Samuel Teleki was the first to reach the snow line at an altitude of 4,680 metres in October 1887. With this he proved that, contrary to the popular belief of the time, there could be permanent snow in the Equatorial region. We leave the accommodation at 8 am and head by car towards the Naro Moru trail at an altitude of 3,000 meters. From there, we climb to 3,600 meters and after a picnic lunch we continue our ascent to the top of the ridge at 4,000 meters. From here we can see the prominent peaks and the glacial valley on the west side of the mountain, also named after Teleki. Next, a quick descent to the Met Station, then back to the accommodation for dinner.

Accommodation: Jaqanaz Resort



*Lion cubs by the lake*



### **Day 8: Nairobi National Museum – Snake Park**

We return to Nairobi, where we visit the Nairobi National Museum and Snake Park. The National Museum, built in 1929, showcases Kenya's history, natural features and culture. The Snake Park near the museum features some stunning snake species, including the puff adder, the black mamba, the Egyptian cobra, the African rock python and the Gabonese viper. The latter's exciting feature is that it has the longest (4 centimetres) fang in the world.

Accommodation: Ibis Styles Westlands



*A ship about to reach the shore*



### **Day 9: On to Kilimanjaro - Trip to the Amboseli National Park**

We embark on a safari following Ernest Hemingway's and Robert Ruark's footsteps. They both drew inspiration for their adventurous hunting stories from Amboseli National Park and other places. Hemingway lived in Kenya and Tanzania in the 1930s, and Ruark made his dream come true when he participated in an African safari. Sámuel Teleki (the first to reach the snowline of Mount Kilimanjaro), Kálmán Kittenberger and Zsigmond Széchenyi also visited the mountain in the 1880s. Amboseli National Park is a real photographer's paradise. This park offers the most beautiful views of the highest peak in Africa, the legendary Kilimanjaro (5,895 meters), with elephants and giraffes walking on the savannas at the base of the mountain.

Accommodation: Kibo Lodge / <https://kibosafaricamp.com/>

### **Day 10: Safari in the Tsavo West National Park**

Tsavo West National Park was famous in the 19th century for its man-eating lions and intensive poaching. We will have lunch at the Mzima spring, which rises from the lava rocks and produces 50 million gallons of crystal-clear drinking water a year for the locals. Part of the park is an active volcanic area. The locals once believed that the "fiery rage" erupting from the ground could only come from the devil. Lake Jipe is rich in birdlife: there are about 600 colourful bird species in the area.

Accommodation: Ngulia Safari Camp / <https://safari-hotels.com/ngulia-safari-lodge/>

### **Day 11: Visiting the Indian Ocean**

After breakfast, we leave the park and then head to the Indian Ocean. These shores were dominated by the Omani court for centuries, followed by the Portuguese conquerors. We can witness an exciting mix of traditional African, Swahili-Arab and Portuguese culture here. On the white sandy shores of the Indian Ocean, beaches, palm trees, relaxation and water sports await us.

Szállás: Leopard Beach Resort & Spa (4-star, superior, half board) / <https://www.leopardbeachresort.com/>



### **Day 12: Relaxing by the Ocean**

Free time without any planned activities.

Accommodation: Leopard Beach Resort & Spa (4-star, superior, half board)

### **Day 13: Relaxing by the Ocean**

Free time without any planned activities.

Accommodation: Leopard Beach Resort & Spa (4-star, superior, half board)



*An alert Zebra in the herd*



### **Day 14: Sightseeing in Mombasa and visiting Fort Jesus**

We say goodbye to Diani Beach and visit Mombasa in the morning. We visit the main sights of the city including Fort Jesus, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We also visit the old town, the spice market, the triumphal arch erected to celebrate Elisabeth II's coronation, and the busy harbour. We have lunch in the old town at the Swahili restaurant and taste local traditional dishes on a "Swahili plate". Lastly, we go souvenir shopping in the afternoon and get on the shuttle to the airport to travel home.

*Contact the editors for more details on travel arrangements at [ildikoszilasi@yahoo.com](mailto:ildikoszilasi@yahoo.com)*

Elephant cow with its calf





## Following Our Forebearers in Tanzania with a Safari in Zanzibar

The East African country, with an area ten times larger than Hungary and a population of 60 million, also played an essential role in the lives of many of our forebearers, including Sámuel Teleki, Zsigmond Széchenyi, Kálmán Kittenberger and Dr. László Sáska. Tanzania is an unparalleled travel destination for wildlife lovers. Nowhere else on Earth are there as many wildebeests, zebras and antelopes as Tanzania. It is a great destination for family trips with its well-established and well-equipped infrastructure. There is no compulsory vaccination required for entry and a single-entry visa is 50 dollars.

*This trip package is recommended to be booked with the Utazz Afrikába Utazási Iroda (Travel to Africa Travel Agency).*

### **Day 1: Arriving in Tanzania and sightseeing in Arusha**

We arrive in the morning. After a short rest and breakfast, we go on a sightseeing tour in Arusha. We visit the city's main attractions, such as the Clock Tower that marks the halfway point between Cairo and Cape Town. The hotel where Zsigmond Széchenyi once lived during his hunting trip still stands. At the Arusha Cultural Heritage Centre, we can learn about the past and present of Tanzania's 120 different ethnicities in one place. We visit the tomb of Dr. László Sáska, a famous Hungarian doctor who moved to Arusha in 1937 and spent almost half a century here. Finally, after seeing a local market and the Maasai Bazaar, we head to Lake Manyara, a two-hour drive away. Our trip leads through local villages and the savannah. The accommodation is located where the Great Rift Valley and Lake Manyara meet. Accommodation: Twiga Lodge / <http://www.twigalodgecampsite.com/>

### **Day 2: Meeting with the Maasai – Mto wa Mbu**

We visit a Maasai village on bike or by dala dala, which are minibus share taxis in Tanzania. Due to its good yielding fields, many different kinds of people have settled in this region. Many ethnic groups live together in a relatively small area, respecting each other's traditions. In the small town where we have lunch at a local restaurant, the Chagas make banana beer and the Makonde make wood carvings. Many Maasai families live in traditional huts in the region, and Maasai men herd their flocks. We return to the accommodation in the evening.

Accommodation: Twiga Lodge



- Arusha
- Mto wa Mbu
- Serengeti National Park
- Ngorongoro
- Lake Manyara
- Kilimanjaro
- Pangani
- Zanzibar



### Day 3: Travelling to the Infinite Land, the Serengeti National Park

The Serengeti National Park is one of the world's largest wildlife reserves, and it is also the first national park in Africa. The area, which is now strictly controlled, was a popular hunting location before the 1950s. For example, Kálmán Kittenberger spent a lot of time here. The 15,000-square-meter national park is situated along the Kenyan border next to Lake Victoria and stretches about 150 kilometers to the east. The word "Serengeti" comes from the Maasai language, meaning "infinite land". The vast plain is full of wildebeests, Thomson gazelles and Grant's gazelles, African buffalos, giraffes, impalas and elephants. The lion herds are magnificent, and we can see leopards and cheetahs too. The Serengeti is home to more than 500 species of birds, such as giant bustards, ostriches and vultures.

Accommodation: Serengeti Heritage Luxury Camp / <http://serengetiheritagecamp.com/>





Serengeti



#### **Day 4: Safari and a trip to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (UNESCO World Heritage Site)**

We eat breakfast and take a short trip again to the Serengeti National Park, followed by a trip to the crater in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Accommodation: Rhino Lodge / <https://rhino.co.tz/>

#### **Day 5: “Big Five” safari in the volcanic crater of Ngorongoro**

Ngorongoro Crater is one of the greatest natural wonders on Earth. The crater was formed after the eruption and collapse of a colossal volcano about 2-3 million years ago. The caldera is 610 meters deep, about 20 kilometers in diameter, and 260 square kilometer in area. It is currently the most immense volcanic cauldron on Earth with an intact rim, home to more than 25,000 mammals. We descend the crater to the savannah formed inside, where we have an excellent chance to see the famous “Big Five” (i.e. the leopard, the lion, the African elephant, the African buffalo and the endangered black rhinoceros).

Accommodation: Twiga Lodge

#### **Day 6: Safari at Lake Manyara National Park**

The park is located between Lake Manyara’s shores and the steep wall of the East African Rift Valley. Its unique feature is the tree-climbing lions that rest on the branches of the umbrella thorns. The grassy lakeshore is home to a large number of buffalos and elephant herds, flamingos and hippos. In the afternoon, we return to the area of Arusha, where we stay at the fabulous estate of an adventurous Hungarian hunter, Dr. Endre Nagy.

Accommodation: Mt. Meru Game Lodge / <http://www.mtmerugamelodge.co.tz/>

#### **Day 7: Excursion to the lower section of Kilimanjaro**

We can watch the tranquil lives of zebras, peacocks and marabouts a few meters from our table during breakfast, while black-and-white colobuses gaze at us curiously. The walls are lined with photographs of celebrities. The furniture and other memories evoke the wonderful world of a by-gone age. We depart to the village of Marangu at the foot of Kilimanjaro. Along the way, at the foot of Meru Hill, we cross the route of the expedition led by Samuel Teleki in 1887 and 1888, as well as the town of Moshi, where Kálmán Kittenberger was treated in 1904 after a lion attack.

Our all-day trip starts from Marangu to the Mandara hut at 2,700 meters, which is located along the Marangu trail leading to the summit of Kilimanjaro. We have lunch on the hiking trail. From here, we have a steep climb to reach the Maundi Crater at 2,760 meters. The view from the peak is breath-taking. Although we do not ascend all the way to 5,310 meters, which was first reached by Samuel Teleki in 1887, we will still have a great adventure.

Accommodation: Babylon Lodge / <https://babylonlodge.com/home>



### **Day 8: The Swahili Coast and a night in Pangani**

A long drive takes us to Pangani, the starting point of Samuel Teleki's expedition on 4 February 1887. Along the way we will have the opportunity to see the Usambara Mountains with their unique eco-system, just as Samuel Teleki saw them many years ago.

Accommodation: Pangani Cliffs Lodge / <http://panganicliffs.com/>

### **Day 9: Historical tour in Pangani and a boat trip**

We take a guided walk in Pangani in the morning, where we can see buildings with slightly worn patina boasting Arabic, Swahili and colonial-style features. The tour begins in the western part of the city. The British Overseas Management Administration (BOMA) building was built in 1810 by the Arabs, who according to a myth buried living people in the columns so that it would have a strong foundation. Our tour continues with the slave market, Muslim and German tombs, ancient mosques, and traditional houses. We learn about the history and culture of Pangani city in the 15th and 16th centuries. We take a three-hour boat trip on the Pangani River in the afternoon, which has its source at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. We can see colourful birds and colobuses along the river. We pass by coconut plantations and mangroves, and with a little luck, crocodiles or hippopotamuses.

The trip ends with a beautiful sunset over the river, and we can enjoy the romantic sight while sipping fresh coconut juice.

Accommodation: Pangani Cliffs Lodge

Maasai women  
chatting in the market





## Day 10: Crossing to Zanzibar

In the morning, we travel to Zanzibar. We check-in to our beachside accommodation, designed by the famous Hungarian architect Tibor Gaál. Optional program in the afternoon: relaxing on the shores of the Indian Ocean.

Accommodation: BlueBay Beach Resort & Spa\*\*\*\*\* / <https://www.bluebayzanzibar.com/>



Stone Town, Zanzibar  
Saint Joseph's Cathedral

The seaside in  
Stone Town





## Day 11: Zanzibar Island Tour – Spice Tasting, Prison Island and Stone Town

In the morning, we visit Prison Island with a 30-minute boat trip from Stone Town. The island is named after a 100-year-old prison, and it is known for the abundance of Aldabra giant tortoises. We test our senses with the smell and taste of different spices, from vanilla to refreshingly juicy coconut. Our local lunch consists of vegetables, fruits and spices grown here. In the afternoon, we go sightseeing in the historical part of Zanzibar called Stone Town. In the wind-blown narrow alleys, we stumble upon shops selling local folk art products, antiques, textiles and fragrant spices. We visit the district's historical sights, the constantly bustling market of the city, the artfully carved gates of the alleys, and two cathedrals. We also visit Freddy Mercury's birthplace.

Accommodation: BlueBay Beach Resort & Spa\*\*\*\*\*



The African buffalo



### **Day 12: Relaxing in Zanzibar with optional programmes**

Accommodation: BlueBay Beach Resort & Spa\*\*\*\*\*

### **Day 13: Relaxing in Zanzibar with optional programmes**

Accommodation: BlueBay Beach Resort & Spa\*\*\*\*\*

### **Day 14: Farewell to Zanzibar and return home**

We take the airport shuttle in the morning to Zanzibar Airport for our flight home.

*Contact the editors for more details on travel arrangements.  
ildikoszilasi@yahoo.com*

Cheerful cheetahs





## Following Our Forebearers in Uganda, the Land of the Mountain Gorillas

This East African country twice the size of Hungary with a population of 46 million people is undoubtedly famous for its incredible national parks, mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. However, Hungarian travellers may also be interested in some historical connections, such as the story of Flóra Sass and Samuel Baker discussed earlier in this book. On 4 March 2019, the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, László Kövér, inaugurated a plaque in memory of Flóra Sass, called the "Morning Star" by the locals at the initiative of the African-Hungarian Union. Kálmán Kittenberger visited the country three times (in 1912–14, 1925–26, and 1928–29). His trips included hunting expeditions in the forests around the Ruwenzori Mountains to collect items for the Hungarian National Museum. Zsigmond Széchenyi led several hunting expeditions to the area between 1932 and 1934. We can learn about his adventures in Uganda from his book, "Elephant Country". At the Mihingo Lodge at Lake Mburo, we can find the memorial plaque of architect Tibor Gaál and the Lodge's co-owner, Suni Magyar.

We can reach Uganda in 10-12 hours by plane from Budapest, with one transfer. Its national parks provide a pleasant climate all year round for wildlife and bird watching, yet the best time to travel is either January-February or June-August. A single-entry visa is \$ 50, the yellow fever vaccination is mandatory, and a malaria prevention medication is recommended. It is advisable to purchase limited gorilla and chimpanzee permits at least half a year before the trip.

***This trip package is recommended to be booked with the Utazz Afrikába Utazási Iroda (Travel to Africa Travel Agency)***



- Entebbe
- Murchison Falls
- Hoima
- Kibale National Park
- Queen Elisabeth National Park
- Bwindi National Park
- Lake Mburo
- Entebbe



### **Day 1: Arrival in Uganda, Ziwa Rhinoceros Shelter, Murchison Falls National Park**

We arrive at Entebbe Airport around dawn.

We take a shuttle to 2 Friends Resort Hotel / <https://www.2friendshotel.com/>

After breakfast, we depart to Murchison Falls National Park. Along the way, we will visit the Ziwa Rhinoceros Shelter, established in 1998. Its special feature is that it is the only place where we can see free rhinos in Uganda. There are 20 to 30 specimens of the endangered southern wide-mouthed rhinoceros living on a protected area of 7,000 acres. The southern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium Simum Simum*) is the largest rhino in the world. The males can weigh up to 2,300 kilograms and the females up to 1,700 kilograms.

Accommodation: Pakuba Safari Lodge / <http://www.pakubasafarilodge.com/>



## **Day 2: Animals watching at Murchison Falls National Park and a boat trip on the Nile**

In the morning, we will watch animals in Uganda's largest national park, founded in 1952. It is a habitat of many species: buffalos, giraffes, elephants, lions, leopards, hyenas, red hartebeests, bush antelopes, marsh antelopes and waterbucks. We go on a boat trip on the Nile in the afternoon to the bottom of the 7-meter-wide and 43-meter-high Murchison Falls, named after geologist Sir Roderick Murchison by Samuel Baker and Flóra Sass. Hippos and Nile crocodiles can often be seen on the river, and we can witness entire herds of elephants on its banks.

Accommodation: Pakuba Safari Lodge

## **Day 3: Excursion to the Albert Lake Delta and a night in Hoima**

We go on a boat trip on the Nile to the delta region of Lake Albert, in the footsteps of Flora Sass and Samuel Baker. This region is a paradise for birdwatchers, with 460 different bird species living here, including egrets, cormorants, bee-eaters, ospreys, kingfishers and the extremely rare flippered stork. We travel to Hoima.

Accommodation: Hoima Cultural Lodge / <http://www.hoimaculturalsafarilodge.com/>

*Giraffes and the Murchison falls*





#### **Day 4: Bigodi Swamp, the “Top of the World” and a night in Kibale National Park**

After breakfast, we depart to the 766-square-meter Kibale National Park, located at an altitude of 1,100-1,600 meters above sea level, and famous for its 351 tree species and 70 mammal and 13 primate species. It is also home to common chimpanzees, red colobuses and the rare guenons. The Bigodi Swamp is home to about 200 bird species, such as the great blue turaco. We can also see grey-cheeked mangabey if we're lucky. The high point, known as the “Top of the World,” offers lovely views of the area.

Accommodation: Turaco Tree Tops / <https://www.turacotreetops.com/>

#### **Day 5: In search of chimpanzees in Kibale National Park and a trip to Queen Elizabeth National Park**

In the past, more than a million of chimpanzees lived in 25 countries in Africa, but today the number in the 15 countries comprising southern Africa is somewhere between 170,000 and 300,000. The largest population lives in the Kibale National Park in Uganda. After getting up early, we can follow the chimpanzees from leaving their resting place in the morning. These chimpanzees live in communities of 30-200 members. In the afternoon, we will travel to Queen Elizabeth National Park, which is one of Earth's most diverse ecosystems together with the Kyambura and Kigezi Wildlife Reserves. During our trip, we take an awe-inspiring look at the peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains, which Zsigmond Széchenyi and Kálmán Kittenberger visited too.

Accommodation: Park View Safari Lodge / <https://parkviewsafarilodge.com/>

#### **Day 6: Animal watching in Queen Elizabeth National Park and sailing on the Kazinga Canal**

Early in the morning, we can observe animals living in the park in a 200-kilometer area. Visitors may often see hunting lions, forest pigs, ringwaterbuck herds and elephant herds. In the afternoon, we sail on the Kazinga Canal teeming with hippos.

Accommodation: Park View Safari Lodge



### **Day 7: Animal watching in the Inshasa sector and trip to Bwindi National Park**

We take our last animal watching tour in Queen Elizabeth National Park in the Ishasa sector, where we search for tree-climbing lions. Next, we head for Bwindi National Park, located in southwestern Uganda, on the edge of the Western Rift Valley (Albertine Rift), which is home to nearly half of the total mountain gorilla population. There are also 346 species of birds and more than 200 species of butterflies in the area.

Accommodation: Mahogany Springs Lodge / <http://www.mahoganysprings.com/>

### **Day 8: Observing with mountain gorillas**

This day will be an unforgettable experience and highlight of this expedition. We can observe a group of endangered mountain gorillas from a few meters away, and if we are lucky, we can also see a silver-backed male gorilla. Half of the species, estimated at 880 gorillas, live in Uganda while the other half are located in Rwanda and Congo's eastern forests. As families change their settlements daily, we have to walk for 2-7 hours until we find them, accompanied by an armed gamekeeper. We can stay near the gorillas for 60 minutes, and we are required to follow several rules that we will be informed about the day before the tour.

Accommodation: Mahogany Springs Lodge

Gorilla in Bwindi National Park





## Day 9: A cruise with herds of hippos and elephants at Lake Mburo

After breakfast, we depart to Uganda's smallest national park, which is only 370 square kilometers. We stop and take photos at the equator on the way. We reach Ankole Plateau through swamps and tropical rainforests, and continue to Lake Mburo National Park. In the afternoon, we go on a cruise on the lake, where we can see crocodiles, hippopotamuses, pelicans, black cranes and African fish eagles. Our accommodation is the Mihingo Lodge, designed by architect Tibor Gaál and co-owned by Suni Magyar. A plaque commemorating the two renowned individuals is located in the Lodge.

Accommodation: Mihingo Lodge / <https://mihingo-lodge.com/>



An African buffalo and a hippo in Lake Mburo



## **Day 10: A walk in the footsteps of impalas and zebras in Lake Mbuho National Park, return to Entebbe, travel home**

Early in the morning, we go on our last animal watching tour in the Lake Mbuho National Park, which is brimming with impalas, water buffalos, warthogs, common tsessebes and zebras. After lunch, we return to Entebbe for the evening. The next morning, we take a shuttle to the airport and return home.

*Contact the editors for more details on travel arrangements.*  
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A rhinoceros





A gorilla





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### Hungarians in East Africa from a historical perspective

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