

From the Nyírvíz Palace to the Kállay House – The Kállay Collection

Zoltán Holmár

Kállay Collection

holmar.zoltan@gmail.com

The Kállay Collection celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018, and next year we can celebrate the 30th anniversary of our founding. It was opened on 10 March 1993, at Széchenyi Street 1, on the second floor of the Nyírvíz Palace. The collection was founded by Kristóf Kállay (1916–2006), the firstborn son of the Hungarian Royal Prime Minister Miklós Kállay (1887–1967). Kristóf Kállay served as the ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to the Holy See in Rome. In 1989–1990, he donated his private collection to Nyíregyháza including a library of 10,000 volumes, many historical photographs, personal items of the Kállay descendants, among them the correspondence of former Prime Minister Miklós Kállay, the manuscripts of Ferenc Ilosvay (1914–1990) and the award collection of Baron Gábor Apor (1889–1969). In recent years, due to the growing number of donators and continual new donations, the Kállay Collection was expanded with a museum unit including several sub-collections and it became a museum institute in November 2007. The Kállay Collection, situated at Bessenyei Square 15, expects visitors with new and spectacular exhibitions. (HOLMÁR 2019, 246). At the beginning, the Kállay Collection operated on only 140 square meters, but today the museum operates on 1200 square meters. We can present our exhibitions to the visitors in a tasteful and worthy place. (Fig. 1).

The Kállay family is one of the oldest noble families in Hungarian history. The best known member of the family was Miklós Kállay, who was the last Hungarian Royal Prime Minister during the Second World War. Since 21 July 2020, the new home of the Kállay Collection has been the Kállay House

- **Fig. 1.**
The building
of the Kállay House at
Bessenyei Square 15.



at Bessenyei Square 15. This house was built in 1903–1904, the builder of the house was Rudolf Kállay M. D. (1853–1920), who was the Prime Minister's father-in-law. He lived in Nagykálló and was the director of Nagykálló Hospital from 1887 to 1899, but after the Hospital of Nyíregyháza had been built in 1899, he moved to Nyíregyháza and became the first director of the County Hospital for 16 years. He had four children: Tibor Kállay (1881–1964), Iván Kállay (1887–1915), Rudolf Kállay (1889–1958) and Helén

Kállay (1894–1945). His daughter, Helén Kállay was married to Miklós Kállay in 1914, then they lived in the House for thirteen years. They were distant relatives to each other – they were fifth-generation cousins. They had three sons: Kristóf Kállay (1916–2006), Miklós Kállay (1918–1996) and András Kállay (1919–1995). The first two of them were born in the house at Bessenyei Square. Later, Kristóf became the founder of the Kállay Collection. In 1927, the family sold the house to the Royal Hungarian Army, so then this House functioned as a military institution for 90 years. In 2012, Nyíregyháza City Council purchased the property from the Hungarian Army, then the renovation of the building began in 2015 and was completed in two phases in 2020, then it was allocated to the Kállay Collection. (HOLMÁR 2021, 3–12). The building has two wings, namely the main building and the back wing. On the ground floor of the main building we can see the reception and the permanent exhibition of the Kállay Collection, whereas the library can be found upstairs.

On the ground floor of the back wing, we can find the city history exhibition, while on the first floor there is a multifunctional room. We usually hold our conferences and temporary exhibitions here.

The permanent exhibition of the Kállay Collection consists of three thematic units. The first room is the hall of decorations and awards. (Fig. 2). Here, we can find thirty-eight kinds of orders and decorations, which are from thirteen European and four Central and South American countries. Twelve



• Fig. 2. • The hall of decorations

of them are of Hungarian origin and date back to the Habsburg Empire. Not a single one of them can be found elsewhere in Hungarian public collections. Most of the decorations were owned by Baron Gábor Apor, former Hungarian ambassador to the Vatican and Great Chancellor of the Sovereign Order of Malta. Among others, there are the Badge of the Order of the Golden Fleece from 1951, the Star of the Grand Cross of the Croatian Order of the Crown of King Zvonimir from 1942, and the Star of the Grand Cross of the Hungarian Order from 1942. In 1911, Emperor Francis Joseph decorated Archbishop Gennaro Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte, former apostolic nuncio, with the Star of the Grand Cross of the Royal Hungarian Order of St. Stephen. This is the rarest decoration in Hungary. (LAKATOS 1994, 76). In addition to these, we can find the orders and decorations of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay – including the French National Order of the Legion of Honour and the Royal and Distinguished Spanish Order of Charles III – and the decorations of his son, Kristóf Kállay. This collection is complemented by the collection of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary which was founded in 1991. In this room, with the help of an interactive table, we can find more information about the orders and decorations. Furthermore, we can get a narration of each decoration, and with the help of the magnifying function, we can take a closer look at the awards, while with the 360-degree function, we get a 3D image of the award, which can be virtually rotated in its box.

The middle room of the permanent exhibition, the history of the Kállay family is presented, by means of photographs, paintings and personal objects. (Fig. 3). In this room, a video is continuously shown on the family's history and the history of the Castle of Nagykálló. Here, the Hungarian Fashion



• Fig. 3. • The history of the Kállay family

Gala Dress of Tamás Kállay is showcased, who was a member of the Hungarian Parliament. He was the elder brother of Prime Minister Miklós Kállay. (HOLMÁR 2018, 294) This dress and its owner can also be seen in a beautiful painting, made in 1941. Next to these we can find the dolman and the decorative buttons and belts to the dress. Our oldest exhibit is a family tree from 1796, which presents the descendants through 13 generations of the family from the first known ancestor, Ubul Kállay. On the other side of the room,

the Prime Minister's personal belongings are found, including his cigar wallet, pen and inkwell.

The third room is the Maltese Room, which is connected to the person and work of Kristóf Kállay, the founder of the Collection. (Fig. 4). He was his father's secretary from 1942 to 1944, then in 1943, he became member in Sovereign Military Order of Malta. After the Second World War, he left Hungary and in 1954 he became the Secretary General of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. In 1978, he was appointed Ambassador to the Holy See in the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Kristóf Kállay served in the order for 54 years, thus, in this exhibition room we can find his Maltese orders, and the costumes of the Order. The Kállay Collection also includes two English diplomatic uniforms, which are rare in Hungarian museums and public collections.



• Fig. 4. • The Maltese exhibition room

The first floor of the main building is the library counting almost 16,000 volumes. (Fig. 5). It is based on the pieces collected by Kristóf Kállay in Rome and his private library. New acquisitions are made only through donations. It is the donators' individual interest that determines the topics of the documents among which there are real rarities. The value of the library is enhanced by dedicated volumes and other ones with *ex libris*. Besides Hungarian books and journals, we have issues published in English, French, Italian and German. The library is constantly growing due to new donators. (RÍCZU 2019, 294).

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The other permanent exhibition of the institute is called History of Nyíregyháza from the city foundation to the end of socialism in Hungary, which is found on the ground floor of the back wing. Here, we can see a picture that shows the founding of Nyíregyháza in 1753. The two main characters



• Fig. 5. • The Library of the Kállay Collection

stored documents, seals and money. We can also find costumes and a Hussar uniform from the early 20th century. We can see the development of Nyíregyháza through the exhibited objects. Nyíregyháza became more and more urbanized and in 1876, the city became the seat of Szabolcs County.

There are many interactive games in this room. These include the city history quiz, to be found on the ground floor. Nine questions alternate continuously and there are six possible answers to each question, of which only one is correct. Once an answer is selected, the person should step on the selected answer. If the answer is correct there will be a storm of applause, while a wrong answer will be accompanied by laughter from the speaker.



• Fig. 6. • The multifunctional room of the Kállay House

The other interactive game is called “Time Machine”, which allows anyone to sit in front of a monitor, insert their face into an oval shape on the display, and then choose a male or female outfit from around 1900 and this figure will appear with our face in a picture of Nyíregyháza taken in the fin-de-siècle period. This image can be saved or sent to friends after reading a QR code.

With the help of our third interactive game, one can choose from postcards and photos from the last 120 years of Nyíregyháza. We have to put our hands over a sensor and we can move in chronological order between the pictures of the city.

The fourth interactive game are the VR glasses and the virtual sphere that anyone can sit in. After picking up the glasses, we can visit five locations in Nyíregyháza, where we can find information points.

These info points contain a description of each attraction (statue, building), through which you can easily get to know the past of our city. This is one of the museum visitors' favourite interactive games.

There is a multifunctional room on the first floor of the back wing. We usually hold our conferences and temporary exhibitions here. (Fig. 6). And there is also a large garden of the Kállay House. The place serves as a parking lot every day, but outdoor events, concerts and summer programs are usually held here, too. (Fig. 7).

• **Fig. 7.**
The Garden
of the Kállay House



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