

**„BABEŞ–BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LETTERS
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HUNGAROLOGY**

DOCTORAL THESIS

– SUMMARY –

**FICTION, LANGUAGE, POLITICS –
INTERPRETING THE *NÁDASDY-MAUSOLEUM*
AND ITS RECEPTION**

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Abstract:

The subject of my thesis is the interdisciplinary interpretation (animating approaches of literary history, of anthropology, of the history of ideas, and of the history of political thought) of a well-known but less read work, the *Mausoleum Potentissimorum ac Gloriosissimorum Regni Apostolici Regum et Primorum Militantis Ungariae Ducum*, commissioned by and named after Ferenc Nádasdy, and issued in 1664 in Nuremberg. Misleadingly, the text of the *Nádasdy-Mausoleum* does not concern the Nádasdy family's burial, but it features, what might be called, a sepulchre of Hungarian leaders and kings enclosed in a book, with portraits and epigraphs of 59 Hungarian rulers, prefaced by Ferenc Nádasdy, the country's chief justice. To briefly present the *Mausoleum* would be a great challenge, for its short presentations abound in recurrent turns, of which Noémi Viskolcz provides an excellent summary, when she refers to it as "a very elegant, representative work radiating the glorious Hungarian past." It is precisely because of this "fame" that, despite its numerous short references, it is distant from the focus of the majority of fields in cultural research. This thesis positions this work and its reception at the centre. Below I summarize the main results of the thesis.

In the *Nádasdy-Mausoleum*, image and text forms a unity, where full-length portrait engravings of rulers are complemented by Latin and German elogiums which function as fictive epigraphs, and are visually laid out according to their functions. Thus, the *Mausoleum* can be interpreted as a political reburial, as a fictive/imaginary version of reburial, by which all the rulers of the Hungarian Kingdom can rest in one place, and be remembered. This is supported by the use funereal diction (in the title, the preface and the texts of the eulogies too we find allusions to the funeral march, to sepulchres, to the remembering of the dead, etc.), the vicissitudes involved in the early modern situation of royal burial sites, and Ferenc Nádasdy's efforts that his dead family members should rest in a rightful place.

The view of history of the *Mausoleum* derives from Illés Berger, an early 17th-century court historian, whose commissioned but unfinished and at that time unpublished work could be seen as the *Mausoleum*'s source; moreover, the engravings of rulers were made for this work, together with some battle pictures which Nádasdy did not take. This also shows that Nádasdy's publication follows Hungarian history through the perspective of leaders and kings, not through events. The *Mausoleum*'s view of history is unique and ambitious: ranging from the Hun chieftains only collectively mentioned elsewhere, through the conquering Hungarian chieftains, then the kings to the actual reigning dynasty, the Habsburg kings. A normative ruler ideal unfolds from the eulogies, and because of the desirable virtues and the authorial contemplations attached to them the work can be read as a "mirror for princes." The numerous biblical and antique quotations and allusions inscribe Hungarian history into the topoi of the universal European culture, also making it accessible for an international audience.

The eulogies are expressed through the language of early modern republicanism, in the spirit of patriotism's value system. Throughout the book, the genuine ruler of the Hungarian Kingdom, who is independent of foreign polities, is elected by the Hungarian Estates, and sanctified by the Holy Crown, which the monarch will have to earn through serving the common good. The Hungarian translations are inconsistent and struggle with shortcomings of the Hungarian language, but they do adopt and create Republicanism's highly elaborated language in Latin sensibly, in accordance with their contemporaneous concepts. More so because the *Mausoleum*'s translation is at all times correlated to the political movements and efforts of the respective epoch (for example the kuruc uprising, the plan of the Hazafiúi Magyar Társaság, etc.).

In the reception history of the *Mausoleum* the fate of images and texts diverges right after the first edition. The pictures appear predominantly in aristocratic ancestral galleries (the most renown among these is that of Pál Esterházy), in cheap history themed prints, and Habsburg propaganda prints (e.g. Johann Adam Schad's royal lineage traced back from Lipót)

The text, however, circulates in manuscript translations through the 17th century aimed at local (primarily church and school) communities, where these translations disregard the original conception, and fit into a Hungarian tradition in terms of formal and creative methods and mediality. In the 17th century, the translation works as a recontextualizing communicative

practice, as a cultural transfer, and the translators (Miklós Csernátoni and György Felvinczi), in the tradition of Hungarian epic poems, dilute concise Latin wording, by inserting article parts, rhyming, and moulding the Latin text's use of internal rhymes, parallel construction and visual format into almost infinitely continuable isometric stanzas. At the end of the 18th century, Elek Horányi approaches the text with a scholarly attitude of consciously following the original form, and through these differences we could also spot the changes in the translation philosophy of the two epochs.

We have found several philological uncertainties mainly in relation to the manuscript translations, a part of which we managed to clarify. For example, in the Régi Magyar Költők Tára, the name of a translator appearing as Márton Csernátoni, according to the manuscripts at Pannonhalma, is correctly Miklós Csernátoni, but the most important result of the philological research is that a collection of poems in manuscript attributed to László Listius, proved to also be a *Mausoleum*-translation by collation, which result suggests that the corpus of known translations is not complete, new pieces might appear in the future.

Besides the translations, by exploring the copies and reissues, we managed to delineate a few periods in which the *Mausoleum* had been intensely used. These are, after the years around its publication, the years introducing the Diploma Leopoldinum, the kuruc uprising, the reign of Maria Theresa and then Joseph II. After this, the *Mausoleum*'s text almost fades from usage, because new sources appear (Anonymus's *Gesta*), and historical works are written with more up-to-date views of history. Jesuits, Benedictines, Piarists, Transylvanian Unitarians, and Calvinists, upland multicultural evangelists, aristocrats, townspeople, pupils, thus, as it had been found, a variety of denominations, ecclesiastical and secular individuals and groups used, known, and circulated the *Mausoleum*. The secret of its popularity might have been that it incorporates the dichotomous situation experienced by the Hungarian Estates in the 17th -18th centuries: they had to conform and speak to two state polities at the same time; represent themselves (through their past) and adapt to the Habsburg Court and to the nobility's value system entrenched in ancestral traditions. The *Mausoleum* had been a perfect educational resource for this "double life," this is evidenced by the fact that in (especially Piarist) schools it served as an example of *liber gradualis*; in the individual writing practice of the nobility it served as a collection of examples; and it also proved open to continuation, variability and selection.

We also compared the *Mausoleum* with another contemporaneous royal portrait gallery, Johann Joachim Rusdorf's work published in 1663, which presents the rulers of countries involved in the Thirty Years' War. Besides their similar structures (Rusdorf's contains engraved portraits and introductory epigrams attributed to rulers), this work's afterlife in Hungarian is also similar to that of the *Mausoleum*: we attribute to András Prágai its manuscript translation, written in Balassi-stanzas, and significant extensions in terms of Hungarian bearings. The *Mausoleum*'s embeddedness into the political thought emerging from the interpretational frames of the Kingdom of Hungary, and its necessary similarities and differences with the frames of Transylvanian principality, had become truly visible through this comparison. This also demonstrates that the *Mausoleum* is an important source in revealing the thought patterns of the early modern Hungarian Estates; moreover, through its translations, copies, and renewed publications it also signals the continuity of this political thought in the 17th and 18th centuries.