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**ARTISTIC PATRONAGE OF THE KÁROLYI FAMILY IN CAREI AND IN ITS
SURROUNDINGS IN THE 18TH CENTURY**

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– Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis –

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Keywords:

architecture, construction, baroque, artistic patronage, aristocracy, iconography, Piarist, castle, English garden, ancestral gallery, portrait, parish church, chapel, crypt, Antal Károlyi, József Károlyi, Franz Sebastian Rosenstingl, Josef Bittheuser, Franz Sieber, Johann Ignaz Cimbäl, Martin Stromfidel, Miklós Ybl, Miklós Révai, Flórián Dom, Franz Anton Hillebrandt, Jean-Baptiste D'Avrange, Carei, Satu Mare, Căpleni, Foieni, Pertrești, Șandra, Moftinu Mare

Summary

This paper is devoted to the artistic patronage of the Károlyi family in Carei and in its neighboring localities and is dealing primarily with their constructions in the second half of the 18th century, initiated by Count Antal Károlyi (1732–1791) and his son, Count József Károlyi (1768–1803).

An intense construction activity started in the manorial estate of the Károlyi family of Carei in the period after the Treaty of Szatmár, in the time of Sándor Károlyi. He focused mainly on economically strengthening and on repopulating his estate. Thus his artistic patronage manifested mostly in the rebuilding of the old and ruined buildings rather than in new constructions.

The high Baroque developed in this area only in the early decades of the second half of the 18th century through the works of renowned architects such as Giovanni Battista Ricca, Franz Sebastian Rosenstingl, Franz Anton Hillebrandt and other foreign masters. By then, the Károlyi family became one of the most important and wealthiest Hungarian aristocratic families. Their social position facilitated the residential constructions, the modernization and the radical architectural transformation of the city of Carei, which city served not only as the permanent residence for the family, but it was the center of Satu Mare County as well.

The increase of the constructions was associated with high artistic ambitions and need of artistic representation. In the family archives from the National Archives of Hungary from Budapest a series of projects, drawn by several renowned architects of the period can be found. Some of them are for monumental buildings, of different functions and types – civil, ecclesiastical, administrative or domestic – others were not carried out and some buildings were transformed or destroyed in the following centuries.

Since the 1780s, the neighboring villages of the domain centre and the Protestant communities on the Károlyi family's estates contributed to this building boom and expansion. In this period the number of constructions increased, and the design and the execution of buildings was performed by a permanent building organization, a teamwork composed of various qualified masters, craftsmen, stoneworkers, joiners, carpenters, painters, topographers, engineers, led by a German architect named Josef Bittheuser, who emigrated from Würzburg. He made plans for the different construction or renovation works, and at the same time he held the role of the director of the construction (*Baudirektor*), being responsible for the organization and the supervision of the complex cycle of constructions.

Due to the lack of models, of foreign architects and craftsmen as well as the decrease of the pretence of artistic representation, in the last decade of the 18th century constructions on the Károlyi family's estate had entered a period of decline. The buildings erected in this period were less spectacular and we can notice the subordination of the artistic qualities to functionality. By the early nineteenth century the number of manorial construction decreased significantly and its place was gradually taken over by civil architecture.

Sources

The manorial estate of the Károlyi family was located in the northwestern part of Partium / Romania, and the former center of the estate is only 8 kilometers far from the border between Romania and Hungary. Due to its peripheral location, the subject of the art patronage and constructions of the Károlyi family did not attract the attention of neither Romanian nor Hungarian art historians yet. It is also noteworthy that despite the fact that the buildings constructed at the initiative and with the financial support of the family are situated in Romania, most of the related archival material can be found in archives and collections in Budapest, Hungary.

This paper is based primarily on the analysis and interpretation of archival sources. The research about the art patronage of the family began in 2006, with the analysis and the interpretation of archival sources related to the history of the construction and the interior arrangement of the Piarist church in Carei. Later it was extended with other archival and field research in Căpleni, Petrești, Foieni, Șandra, Moftinu Mare and Satu Mare. The relevant documents were investigated at various locations and institutions: archives of the former Piarists monastery in Carei (now parish archive), Roman Catholic Diocese Archives of Satu Mare,

National Archives of Satu Mare County, the Archives of Károlyi family (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest), Central Archives of the Hungarian Province of the Piarist Order (Budapest) and Budapest City Archives. In these archives we had the opportunity to study a series of documents of particular importance, unknown and unedited until now.

The archival investigation was completed with research in the collection the Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest). Some of the portraits that belonged to the ancestor's gallery of the Károlyi family inside the castle of Carei – that was reconstructed by contemporary inventories and invoices – had been identified and studied in the Hungarian Historical Gallery of the Hungarian National Museum and in the former palace of the Károlyi family in Budapest, today Petőfi Literary Museum.

Among the documents of the Károlyi Family Archives (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest) the rich collection of architectural plans (T 20) and correspondence (P 398), the documents recorded and entered into the inventories and indexes in the eighteenth century (P 392) have special importance. Also, the personal documents of Ferenc, Antal and József Károlyi (P 1501–1503), protocols and financial documents of the Inspectorate of Carei (P 397), the legacy of Éble Gábor (P 417) and the documents of family Bittheuser (P 1511) contained valuable information for the research project.

The structure of the dissertation

The paper is built up by six chapters, divided into subsections, illustrated with 81 tables of images, followed by conclusions, appendices, bibliography, and list of archival documents, of abbreviations and of illustration, finishing with the Annexes.

The introduction (chapter 1) of the thesis outlines the organization of the construction works in the Baroque era and the construction practices in the manorial estates of the Hungarian aristocracy, followed by the presentation of previous researches on the history and on the artistic patronage of the Károlyi family. This section also enumerates the most important types of bibliographical and archival sources used as well. Two chapters follows the introduction (chapter 2, 3.) in which we tried to present the circumstances of the manorial constructions, the history of family and of the familial estate, concentrating on the central estate of the family, formed around the town Carei (Hung. “nagykárolyi uradalom”).

In chapter 3 we give a short presentation of the constructions sponsored by Sándor Károlyi and we reviewed some events – like the colonization of the Swabians, the foundation of

the Piarist monastery in Carei, the re-establishment and restoration of some parish churches – that had effect on the development of the estate and subsequently led to the expansion of the manorial constructions.

In chapter 4 we intended to provide a brief overview of the life and work of Count Ferenc Károlyi, who although did not support significant architectural projects, was the first who decided about the transformation of the castle into a modern residence, fulfilling both comfort and aesthetic requirements.

The next two chapters focus on the problem of artistic patronage of Count Antal and József Károlyi in the territory of the estate of Carei, being structured around the activity of architect Franz Sebastian Rosenstingl from Vienna and Josef Bittheuser. In addition to the presentation of their work and significance of these two architects, we focused on a number of issues: their contribution to the execution of the buildings, the analysis of the architectural plans and of the existing buildings, the establishment of the construction chronology and the identification of the different masters and craftsmen. Furthermore, in some cases, we established analogies, analyzed the decor and interior arrangements of the buildings, highlighted some further modifications or constructions, and investigated the relationship between architects and the commissioner as well. Among the most important buildings constructed in this period is the "Saint Joseph of Calasanz" church, the Károlyi castle, the County Hall of Satu Mare county, the national (Nationalschule) and elementary school, the Reformed Church, the Holy Trinity Chapel and the Stag Inn in Carei, the parish church of Foieni, Șandra, Petrești and Moftinu Mare.

We should note several chapters of particular importance.

Section 6. 1. 6. presents a number of unrealized projects of a castle in the vineyards of Carei, made by Franz Sebastian Rosenstingl, Franz Anton Hillebrandt, Florian Dom, Jean-Baptiste D'Avrange. Of particular importance in the history of the castle of Carei are the constructions taking place between 1792 and 1794 after the projects and under the supervision of Josef Bittheuser – listed in section 6. 2. 7. This is when the old castle was transformed into a late Baroque building and was surrounded with an English park.

One chapter was devoted to the reconstruction of the interior equipment of the castle and one to the arrangement of the park in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

In the Annexes we inserted 26 written sources which we considered the most important and representative on the issues discussed in the dissertation.

This research does not aim to achieve a complete history of all construction that took place in the second half of the eighteenth century in the manorial estate from Carei, patronized by the Károlyi family. Instead, our goal was to provide a synthesis of a large amount of information parts of which are unpublished and unknown in the specialized literature. A further aim was to make these available to future researchers in the form of a solid case study. Further research can complement and clarify the picture of the artistic patronage of the Károlyi family in Carei and surroundings.