

Veronika Czikos

**Styling the Dead: Tradition(s) of Making the Pontifical Tombstone in Angevin Hungary**

This paper investigates the fourteenth-century episcopal tombstone of Andrew Szécsi, Bishop of Transylvania (1320-1356). This work of art is significant for the discussion of Central European stone carving from two points of view. First, it has proven to be the earliest surviving representative of the spread of the figural tombstone among clerics in Central Europe. Second, it is not only a fortunately survived, but also a spectacularly qualitative piece of that artistic phenomenon, which makes its investigation undoubtedly challenging. The paper aims, first, to answer the question how the local historical context: the church historical circumstances of the bishopric, Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, RO) and life of the bishop concerned could influence the making of several unusual characteristics of the tombstone. Second, it inquires how the tombstone itself was influential in the local tradition of tombstone making in Gyulafehérvár in the second half of the fourteenth century.

The tombstone was made for a from many aspects special bishop of Transylvania. Around the year 1320 the canons of the Transylvanian bishopric elected Andrew Szecsi as their bishop even though he took only the four minor ecclesiastical orders and was very young. This rather peculiar decision reflected their strategy to prevent the diocese from attacks similar that it has suffered in the previous decades mainly because its previous bishop acted against the new ruler dynasty of the kingdom. In 1320, Andrew's election as bishop was a vote for a rich noble man and also for a member of a family that was strongly supported by the new ruling dynasty of the Neapolitan Angevins. Although he was believed to bring peace for the diocese, Andrew Szecsi brought only scandals – including the papal interdiction of the diocese – to the Transylvanian church and died as one of the most controversial (church) political figures of fourteenth century Hungary in 1356.

His tombstone is not lesser spectacular. It is the earliest example of the figural type of tombstone that became widespread in Central-Europe during the second half of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, as its in-depth analysis shows, it was also a well-created image of the dead that not only took the (for clerics') new type of tombstone as a basis, but also improved it with several inventive artistic motives and became an impressive "image of the episcopal dead". This image has proven an outmost influential pattern for the episcopal tombstones in the next half century in Gyulafehérvár. Andrew's successors took it over variously: either with changes of motifs (e.g. on the tombstone of Dominic Szecsi, 1356-68), or by following a different stylistic tradition (e.g. on the tombstone of Emerich Ónodi Czudar, 1368-89). Together with earlier tombstones of Andrew's predecessors, the present investigation offers a possibility to follow the various ways of how local tradition of the iconography and style of the dead was created in a fairly wealthy (in Hungary the third richest) bishopric of Central Europe during the course of the fourteenth century.