

Katalin LUFFY, “Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni”: prédikátori szerepek és alkalmi beszédek az Erdélyi Fejedelemség válsága idején (Preacher’s Roles and Occasional Speeches during the Crisis of the Principality of Transylvania) (Debrecen: University of Debrecen Press, 2015), 356 p.

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Katalin Luffy’s monograph,¹ a developed version of her PhD thesis, has a double subject. Firstly, she offers a thorough analysis of three printed volumes of sermons of the volume’s protagonist, Pál Medgyesi (*Hármas Jajj [Three woes]*, 1653; *Sok jajjok [Many woes]*, 1658; *Magyarok hatodik jajja [The sixth woe of Hungarians]*, 1660), court priest of György Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania. This period, the second half of the 17th century, was a critical time for the Principality of Transylvania; Prince Rákóczi’s unsuccessful campaign in Poland was followed by a retaliating attack of the Turks, his army was destroyed, and the Prince himself was deadly wounded in the battle at Gilău (Gyalu) and Florești (Fenes). The title of the monograph is a quotation from Medgyesi (“Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni” [Their name will be builders of destruction]), in reference to the fact that he can address those who are capable of restoration even in times of destruction and peril because there is hope for change. Secondly, she treats Puritanism as another major subject of the book, introducing several representatives of this religious movement by analyzing their sermon books. Katalin Luffy’s primary interest in Puritanism is not church history, church government or the history of ideas, but its literary historical and cultural anthropological aspects.

The preachers of Puritanism rejected the pericope system and introduced the free choice of biblical text as starting point of a sermon. This practice has had far-reaching consequences. Any part of the Scriptures could become thus the basis for a sermon, which led to the transformation of both the content and the rhetorical composition of a religious speech. Through two case studies (Ferenc Veréczi and János Miskolczi Szenczi) at the end of the second chapter, the author proves that the preacher’s role that Medgyesi also undertook – a mediator between the community and God, and interpreter of God’s message – and the popular discourse that the Puritans

¹ Katalin Luffy, “Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni”: prédikátori szerepek és alkalmi beszédek az Erdélyi Fejedelemség válsága idején (Preacher’s Roles and Occasional Speeches during the Crisis of the Principality of Transylvania) (Debrecen: University of Debrecen Press, 2015), 356 p. ISBN 978-963-318-467-7

also favoured were widely spread even among those who opposed the church governing principles of Puritanism.

The third chapter deals with the sermons of Medgyesi and his contemporary, Mihály Báthori. Their common feature is the concern for the composition of their volumes: they rewrote their previously delivered or printed speeches, and signalled new relationships between the sermons organized in book-form. The ravaging of the Turks added a new apocalyptic perspective to the previous sermons; indeed, the title of Báthori's volume ("Hangos trombita" [Loud trumpet]) is a reference to the Apocalypse.

The fourth chapter examines Medgyesi's ability to create language – and by this, community identity. Luffy accepts and enforces the statement that the concept of nation existed already in the 17th century, it is not a 19th-century product. Older scholarship also emphasized the social sensitivity of Puritanism. Luffy extracts all Hungarian equivalents of the words *natio*, *populous*, *gens*, *tribus* from Medgyesi's texts and proves that the concept of country/homeland did not only include the members of the nobility or the Estates.

The fifth and last chapter analyzes the sermons and orations prepared for funerals of members of the aristocracy, and presents their representational function within the funeral. Ferenc Rhédey and István Bocskai were Calvinists, Ferenc Rákóczi I and his mother, Zsófia Báthory, were Catholics. This way the comparison also shows that the major task of a Catholic orator at a funeral is *movere* (moving), which lends a higher value to *delectare* (delectation), while the *docere* (teaching) is a function hardly present in a funeral oration. Sermons and orations were delivered in two languages (Latin and Hungarian), making the author state: "one may say different things in different ways in Latin, than in Hungarian". The Latin text merges the elements of biblical and classical education, which is not a characteristic of Hungarian speeches. The speeches of the three priests preaching at Ferenc Rhédey's funeral (István Czeglédi, István Szántai Pócs and Pál Görgei) are examples for the transfer between genres: each sermon is different from the other two, the first is related to meditation, the second to political journalism, the third – with its subject on good fame – with oration. The author argues that, contrary to the claims of Hungarian scholarship, the Baroque style, the images of the sublime and the terrible are also present in protestant prose.

In summary, it can be said that Katalin Luffy's monograph is a pioneering work. Although similar works about church literature in Hungarian have been written before, this is the first comprehensive literary historical discussion of the occasional speeches in Transylvania in the second half of the 17th century. The value of the book is also enhanced by the analysis of a previously unexamined work (János Miskolczi Szenczi), and publishes and uses the manuscript oration (János Pósa-házi: Hungarian funeral oration) preserved at the author's workplace, the Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca.

Translated from the Hungarian by Emese Czintos