

SUMMARY

In the introductory part of my study I outlined the considerations regarding the questions about the genre of funeral valedictions, as well as the observations revealing the relation between genre and the function of texts based on some representative texts of the Hungarian ethnographic literature. In my research I compiled and examined in detail the texts of the Hungarian funeral valedictions of Transylvania. During my analysis I focused on understanding the function and tradition of valedictions. Based on the structured or semi-structured biographical interviews I endeavored to reconstruct the context of the usage of funeral valedictions: who ordered the text, what information were shared with the author. I paid close attention to the author of the funeral valediction (biography, profession, prestige, environment, education, accepted tradition, creative habits), to the presentation of the funeral valediction (performance within the framework of the burial ceremony, handwritten or printed form, the way of preservation). As the closing act of the more extensive representative case analysis and also at the end of shorter chapters, I tried to summarize the conclusions based on the reference documents taken into consideration from given aspects.

Throughout its history lasting hundreds of years the funeral valedictions have got a special status, a special community image. Due to church interdictions this custom has been almost completely marginalized, so I became aware of them in their secondary context, in sources of family archives in Transylvania, when neither personal, nor community need could generate new texts, repertories. Those texts that were used during a funeral service as their primary context and that were popular and demanded at the second half of the 20th century, to some extent attracts just an ethnographic interest, in their secondary context, as a text object, as proof of folk literacy.

Archive sources and other written documents that mention the interdiction of funeral valedictions and the regulations regarding the genre report about the confrontation between the secular approach and that of the official church. At the beginning, valedictions were included in the funeral service right after the pastoral sermon, then due to general interdictions, they were taken out of the service. Interdictions from the 17th century confirm that the question of funeral valediction, community reactions to the usage of texts and conflicts that were their outcome (disagreements on the payment for writing and singing, theological excuses, the low quality of rhyming, excessive length, aesthetic expectations etc.) were important for both the Protestant and the Catholic decisions makers. *Anger* and *hatred* were recurrent motives, they were sources of conflict that arose from the content specific to the genre, so these served as arguments in case of church interdictions. Dispositions often referred to the loss of community balance, they declared the funeral valedictions to be a genre that breaks the order. It was a common argument that rhyming and versified praise had to be cancelled because they minimalized the effect of a good funeral sermon. Orders regarding the genre and attempts to regulate it reflect the need of the church to show its authority regarding valedictions that mentioned biographies and decent. Interdictions were evoked by the strong emotional effect of the poem. In the interviews made during field trips the communal force and cathartic function of valedictions either in the form of songs or poems were paralleled with the church service, often at the expense of the quality or the effect of the latter.

Attempts to reform the content and form of funeral valedictions, interdictions introduced by the church, breaking with this problematic genre, a certain condemnation of this type of text should

be interpreted within the context of the expectations of the audience, the community's affection and the provoked reactions. The extent of the "suffering" of the function of the text as an important part of the burial varies from place to place, when the network of family and relatives as well as the biography of the deceased represented either in a song or in a poem shrinks to an additional part of the pastoral sermon.

At the beginning, funeral valedictions were mentioned only in ethnographical descriptions about funeral customs. These sources and descriptions of customs reported mainly about how the valedictions were included within the context of the funeral service, how texts were created and performed. Data about valedictions in monographies state that these types of texts were usually present at the end of a funeral service, publishing these valedictions were illustrations of a practice belonging to the past and also to the present. Writing practice of specialists creating such texts and the community aspects of their poetic career were rarely mentioned in descriptions of customs focusing on events. The repertory of texts that I studied during my research, beyond the appearance of uniformity of form and content, bears witness to individual strategies of creating and using a text. They all reveal the effort of specialists to continue the tradition of funeral valedictions by complying with the criteria of content (biography, genealogy, narrative roles: usage of first or third person singular), of performance (reading, singing) fit in with the expectations of church and community. In some cases controversy against church expectations is part of the strategy of how to use a text, even if that means to confront the pastor. In such cases strong community will and adherence.

Dániel Kiss self-taught folk poet from Mezőkeszű started to write funeral valedictions and other occasional poems in the second half of the 1940's. His activity and writing practice that had a personal motivation, became an accepted and needed service in the community. This had influenced his creative identity, the further evolution of his self-image. When communities started to use texts much rarer, writing became the tool of recording everyday life and career. His creativity resulted in creating a poetic genre based on funeral preachings written in prose. Through his written texts the self-taught poet enlarged the scale of phrasing of the society of Mezőkeszű. As a result of his creativity he became a conscious innovator, so by his speeches held in public, he could transform the script of local speech events. The III.1. chapter presents the reader with the handwritten contents of a Mezőkeszű self-educated writer's notebooks. Kiss Dániel's texts are written down in 28 notebooks, the fruit of almost 65 years' work. Unfortunately, some texts the writer produced on special occasions for various persons have not been copied and therefore are missing from these notebooks. His writings are completed by the story of his life as related to the editor; this story is mostly made up of episodes related to the habit of writing, the writing of the funerary poems and the custom of bidding farewell to the dead.

Everyday writing enriched Ferenc Kalló from Inaktelke with a special identity. He worked intensively to preserve his memory in the last period of his life. Recording the story of his family he preserved and passed on a genealogical knowledge. His texts engraved in tombstones record not only the life career, the death circumstances of the dead from Inaktelke, but also their social environment. These signs on the tombs have become part of the cultural and material heritage of the community, they are the unique footprints of local history, community identity. The epitaphs functioning as funeral valedictions are biographical texts engraved in stones, they are stories about life careers that are part of the local community memory. The purpose of this chapter is to present funeral poems as *official documents* carved on tombstones in the village Inucu (Cluj county) by stonemason specialist Kalló Ferenc, and the list of deceased local people as a *personal document* compiled by the carver

between 1930 and 1975. This tradition functions as a form of cultural memory: the texts written and carved in stone capture the life of the deceased and his social environment. By the end of the 20th century this tradition became the heritage of the local community, a form of local history.

István Kurtucz's chorister valedictions from Kisiratos present a tradition of texts getting more and more prestige. After the death of the chorister, the legacy that was a source of subsequent funeral valedictions was included in the collection of local cultural values. As a representative tradition, it was enriched with symbolic value, with added meaning. Due to external interest, manuscripts get more value, and through the names, network of relatives, biographical allusions they become the footprints of the local history of a place, of the community identity of Kisiratos. Analyzing the life career and activity of the three specialists, the role of the individual is shown in passing on tradition.

In case of István Jaskó the starting point of my analysis was the health and illness image of funeral valedictions, the textual representation of dying, the body suffering a tragic accident. Creating a biography it was inevitable to present physical suffering, the physical act of the representation of illness was the act of putting the dead body into the grave. István Jaskó had recognized his poetic talent at an early age, and he realized that he could contribute to the communal experience of loss, to mourning by his writing. He was appreciated because of his knowledge, and even after funeral valedictions were becoming more and more rare, writing had a high value for him. His poetic activity, his texts constructing a special visual world illustrate how a writing person could influence the practice of local text usage.

The shorter, illustrative analysis consisting of five subchapters are about local writers that try to alter the image of the church's prohibition of funeral valedictions. Examples that vary according to denominations and regions prove that the differentiated study of text usage in particular places, or the ready for a compromise attitude of a church employee is better than discussing prohibitions in a simplistic manner. The role of the individual in preserving tradition becomes obvious by studying the life career of specialists using writing. Poetic and performative activities are not isolated phenomena: poets of a specific region, area knew about each other's work, they evaluated and paid attention to each other's writing and performative skills. There was a community consensus about who was the ideal speaker, performer. Several interviews and notes in manuscripts emphasize this (e.g. Körösfő, Zsobok, Inaktelke, Bogártelke).

Talking about the dead, about their personal life career, about family ties and relatives had a special significance. Valedictions as special moments of funeral services, as the imprint of the religious and remembering practice of the community could become a decisive component of collective identity when the dead are no longer greeted in the form of a song or poem (e.g. Kisiratos, Zsobok). Biography and genealogy are such basic editing structures, that could be the basis of a world of texts that are different in terms of content, length and form.