

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

Vera Szádoczki

Neo-Latin Elegy Poetry in 18th-century Hungary

**Teaching of Poetics in Jesuit Schools
and the Works of Pál Makó**

Supervisor: László Nagy, DSc

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Doctoral School of Literary Studies
Textology and Early Literature Program
Budapest, 2020

1. Preliminaries to the research

My dissertation examines a special field of Hungarian literature: elegy poetry in 18th-century Hungary. I met the topic in the second year of my university studies, when I started the Early Hungarian Literature Specialization. I wanted to deal with something connected to both of my majors, Hungarian and Latin. Professor László Nagy suggested a topic not only fitting my idea but also having some links to the place I come from. He remembered that there was a manuscript collection of Pál Makó's Latin poems in the Diocese Library of Vác. My first task was to find this volume and become acquainted with it as well as with Makó's life and work. Then I found Makó's printed works one after the other: volumes of poetry, of mathematics and physics, and also several manuscripts. Soon I realized that different editions contain different versions of the same elegy. From this recognition, first I composed a study for the National Conference of Student Research Societies, which contained a thorough, critical examination of one poem, then I wrote my thesis on the same subject. Makó recommended reading a number of earlier and contemporary poets, several Jesuits of Dutch origin among them, whose works I had the opportunity to research in Groningen, the Netherlands, where I spent a semester with an Erasmus scholarship.

I chose Makó's poetry as topic of my dissertation, placed in a broader context. I became interested not only in his elegies, but also in the environment where they were born. I was interested in the place of Makó and his poetry in 18th-century literary and cultural processes, whether he was a unique phenomenon or acted in accordance with the spirit of his age. If the latter, how this spirit of the age can be defined, what were the specific features, main directions, aspirations of it. For this I had to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the literature, language, authors and everything called Neo-Latin in that age. However, 'Neo-Latin elegy poetry', the topic indicated in the title, proved to be too broad.

I started from Makó's studies as a Jesuit pupil, novice, then member of the order. I examined the stations of his life to see what of these could influence his works, especially his elegies, and how. I became acquainted with the history and institutions of the Jesuit order in the 18th century, paying special attention to the teaching of poetics and the so-called *repetens* training. I found material to this in Hungarian archives and church libraries, the most important of which were the *repetens* manuscripts kept in Pannonhalma. This is why the dissertation was given a subtitle referring to Pál Makó and the Jesuits' teaching of poetics.

2. Methodological remarks

In the first part of my dissertation I counted what can be read about this topic in secondary literature. I examined what the critics of different ages thought of 18th-century literature, and in particular of Latin poetry, as well as what the significance of the Latin language was in this period. I explored the operation of the Jesuit education system, focusing primarily on the teaching of poetics: the classes, the material they taught, theoretical and practical lecture notes, school-related occasional publications. The next section deals with the genre of elegy more thoroughly, focusing on genre theory, genre history and definition of subgenres.

The aim of the first three units is that Pál Makó's work and the elegies written in Jesuit schools be not looked at in themselves, but they could be inserted in literary and cultural processes, so that the genres indicated in titles would make sense, and so that the themes, images, motifs in the poems that are the results of what was learned in school can be separated from the manifestations of poetic individuality.

In the second half of the dissertation, after examining the life of Pál Makó, it seemed the most effective to choose typical themes that appear both in Makó's works and school poems and to examine these in parallel, side by side, what the common points are and

where they differ from each other. Thus, I counted the famous poet predecessors, whom both Makó and the *repetentes* consider worthy of following and imitating. Birthday and name day greetings, illness, death, the Moon Goddess, the figure of rulers and landscape poems were the common points that were included in both the school materials and Makó's poems, I discussed each of them in a separate chapter.

The first part of the appendix contains the list of poems written by pupils of the *poeta* class in Cluj noble convict and by *repetentes* in Győr. The description includes the author, the title, the length of the poem, the genre, the date of composing, and any other information relevant to the topic, provided by the volumes. These lists are important because I refer to these volumes and the poems in them countless times in the dissertation. The appendix also includes a table summarizing the data of promotional publications, as well as transcripts of poems by *repetentes* in which famous poets are named and recommended for follow-up.

3. New results of the dissertation

The aim of the dissertation was to examine the poems written within the frames of Jesuit teaching of poetics and

the elegiac volumes of Pál Makó. The examination of the school curricula, the manuscripts of poems written by *poeta* class pupils and *repetentes*, and the works of Pál Makó yielded many results. A lot of new information was revealed about the institution of *repetens* training, the habits of composing poetry and the choice of topic, as well as about Pál Makó himself, which in some cases nuances the position of the literature so far.

The Jesuit education system, including the operation and curriculum of the *poeta* class and *repetens* training, is not unknown in the secondary literature, but a thorough examination of the theoretical and practical notes and publications of the above institutions complements our knowledge in many respects. We get an answer to the questions who the teachers of the institutions were, how long they had held this office, what writings can be linked to their name. Secondary literature has already revealed what curriculum students needed to master in these classes, however, so far it has not examined how students implemented what they learned in school. The manuscript volumes I examined provide much evidence in this regard.

The so-called promotional publications can be linked to the *repetens* training, they were published on occasion of exams. So far, it has not been fully clarified who the author of these anonymous publications is. In many cases, the literature also links the poems in them to the name of the promoter on the title page, but a number of such publications have survived which have the author's

name inscribed by a contemporary hand. Based on these, in most cases we need to separate the author and the promoter. In the dissertation, I outline a theory that can determine the author of the anonymous publications, and I attempt to clarify what role students played in the creation of these volumes.

Most of the poems surviving in the manuscripts of Cluj and Győr are elegy, so it seemed expedient to examine elegy as a genre thoroughly. Secondary literature has already revealed the history, subgenres and themes of this genre. What is new here is how all this is realized in the above manuscripts, what they mean by the concept of elegy in school, what subgenres are associated with it and for what topics they choose this form. To illustrate these, the dissertation contains several summary tables. Several poems were written by both the *repetentes* and Pál Makó, the subject of which is actually genre theory, arguing for and against elegy writing. These are good summaries of what has been learned, we can also look at them as putting the official curriculum into a poem.

Examining the genre of the epistle, it was possible to clarify the view of the secondary literature that from the beginning of the 19th century, with the rise of the Horatian poetic letter, the epistle was addressed to a larger audience and not to the person written above the poem. Taking into account Latin poetry as well, this can be dated at least 50 to 100 years earlier.

In the second half of the dissertation, I examine different topics and compare the school material with the poems of Pál Makó. This method also seemed effective, providing novelty for all topics. The enumeration of poetic patterns proved to be a relatively simple task, as several poems were written on the subject. Both the *repetentes* and Makó refer to many ancient, 16th- and 17th-century as well as contemporary poets, who they consider worthy of following. They are listed in the poems like in a catalogue. Examining the motif of sickness, death, and the Moon Goddess, I inserted Makó into a process that began with Tibullus and then continued with Janus Pannonius and Petrus Lotichius Secundus. Makó can be well connected to the tradition they have formed in many respects, but we can also observe differences and innovations. In landscape poems, poets repeatedly project their state of mind onto the landscape, depicting it in light of it. According to the secondary literature, there was no real landscape lyric in Hungary before Petőfi. However, if we consider Latin poems as well, this statement does not hold true, because here we can read landscape poetry in a modern sense well a hundred years before Petőfi. Examining the divine poems, great differences could be discovered in the works of the *poeta* class pupils, the *repetentes*, and Makó on this subject. While we can read several elegies on this subject in the *poeta* class, it was not really typical of the *repetentes* and Makó, and in several cases it turned out that poems

which, on the basis of their title, seemed divine, could be classified rather as occasional poems.

Both Makó's poetry and the volumes in Cluj and Győr could be examined from a number of more aspects, and this dissertation could be continued in several strands. It would be worthwhile to compare Makó with the elegies of other poet predecessors (e. g. Hosschius, Wallius, Becanus). The volumes of the *repentes* also contain untapped parts, e. g. topics that were not covered by Makó, so they were not discussed here at all or were only mentioned. It would be good to examine these poems in a broader context, to compare them not only with Makó's elegies, but also with the works of other poets and the exercises of other denominations. The description of an event could be compared in texts of different genres and forms: orations, newspaper articles, other lyrical genres. The survival of some themes could be traced. For all this, it might be advisable to make these manuscript texts available, with notes and indices. One step in this is the list of the volumes in the appendix but making indices to them is a later task.

4. Publications related to the dissertation

Makó Pál költői mintái és versalkotási módszere az Ad Amicum című elégiája alapján [Pál Makó's poetic models and method of writing poetry, based on his elegy 'Ad Amicum'], *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, 2010, 33–58.

Neolatin elégiaköltészet a 18. századi magyar jezsuita oktatásban [Neo-Latin elegy poetry in 18th-century Hungarian Jesuit schools] = *VERS: Verstan, poétika, trópusok a 15–17. századi Európában*, eds. BARTÓK Zsófia Ágnes, FAJT Anita, GÖRÖG Dániel, HEVESI Andrea, MARÓTHY Szilvia, Budapest, Reciti, 2014, 105–110.

A rendi élet ábrázolása a jezsuita költészetoktatásban [Order life as mirrored in Jesuit teaching of poetry] = *Egyház és reprezentáció a régi Magyarországon*, eds. BÁTHORY Orsolya, KÓNYA Franciska, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2016 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely: Lelkiségtörténeti tanulmányok, 12), 333–341.

Makó Pál Szűz Máriához címzett versei [Pál Makó's poems to the Virgin Mary] = *Lelkiség és irodalom: Tanulmányok Szelestei N. László tiszteletére*, eds. BAJÁKI Rita, BÁTHORY Orsolya, BOGÁR Judit, DÉRI Eszter, KÓNYA Franciska, MACZÁK Ibolya, SZÁDOCZKI Vera, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség

Kutatócsoport, 2017 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely: Lelkiségtörténeti tanulmányok, 17), 381–385.

Makó Pál és az 1777-es Ratio Educationis [Pál Makó and the Ratio Educationis, 1777] = *Scientiarum miscellanea: Latin nyelvű tudományos irodalom Magyarországon a 15–18. században*, eds. KASZA Péter, KISS Farkas Gábor, MOLNÁR Dávid, Szeged, Lazi Könyvkiadó, 2017 (Convivia Neolatina Hungarica, 2), 229–241.

Makó Pál levelei [Pál Makó's letters], Jászkunsági Évkönyv, 2018, 143–160.

Vallásra nevelés a jezsuita poétikaoktatásban [Education for religion in Jesuit teaching of poetics] = *Lelkiség és oktatás a régi Magyarországon*, eds. BAJÁKI Rita, BÁTHORY Orsolya, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2018 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely: Lelkiségtörténeti tanulmányok, 17) 201–208.

Makó Pál költői munkái [Pál Makó's poetic works], ed., introduction and notes by SZÁDOCZKI Vera, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2018 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely: Lelkiségtörténeti források, 6).

Mária Terézia és az uralkodói család képe latin nyelvű költemények tükrében [The image of Maria Theresia and the royal family as mirrored in Latin poems] = *Második Mária*, ed. MACZÁK Ibolya, Budapest, MTA–PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport, 2019 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely: Lelkiségtörténeti tanulmányok, 19), 143–160.