

Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest
Faculty of Humanities

DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION
ABSTRACT

DR. KATALIN HÁMORI

GEORG RAPHAEL DONNER'S INFLUENCE ON THE HUNGARIAN SCULPTURE

Art Historical and Cultural Historical Sciences

Doctoral (PhD) School for the History of Art

Head of the Doctoral (PhD) School: Dr. György Kelényi DSc, professor emeritus

Members of the Examination Committee:

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Further Members of the Examination Committee:

Dr. Katalin Keserű PhD, professor emerita

Dr. Krisztina Passuth DSc, professor emerita

Dr. Gábor Pataki PhD, scientific principal contributor

Consultant: Dr. György Kelényi DSc, professor emeritus

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I. Purpose and research methods of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation:

Georg Raphael Donner (Ebling/22nd district of Vienna, baptized, 25 May 1693-Vienna, 15 February 1741), one of the outstanding personalities of the late neoclassic Baroque art, had a great influence on the Hungarian sculpture over several generations. The main objective of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation titled *Georg Raphael Donner's Influence on the Hungarian Sculpture* is the structuring and completing of the research results on the subject. Out of the excellent quality and relatively large amount of surviving works of art, only those are examined which significantly determined the style development of the Hungarian Baroque sculpture. The research method of the dissertation endeavours to collect archive photos and written sources related to works of art, and to give an evaluative review of the research methods with a historical approach. The catalogue-like compilation of notes contains the latest literature and data relating to the individual works of art.

II. Results of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation:

The chapter titled *Introducion* presents my professional relationship with the researchers of the European Baroque sculpture, and my works that led to writing this dissertation. The specialist literature published since the 1929 publication of Andor Pigler's monograph titled *Georg Raphael Donner*, and the exhibitions organized on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the sculptor's birth are presented in the chapter titled *Research History*.

The activities of the Austrian, mostly Viennese, Baroque sculptors who worked in Hungary before Georg Raphael Donner, are summarized in the chapter titled *Viennese Baroque Sculptors in Hungary between 1630 and 1730*. Since the 1630s, the Viennese sculptors increasingly played an important guiding role, and gradually replaced the earlier employed and favoured Italian artists. The employment of the Viennese Baroque sculptors can be observed among the Italian-born Viennese architects. The earliest examples for that are the wooden sculptures (1637-1640) and the facade stone sculptures (c. 1670-1680) of the Jesuit church in Nagyszombat (Trnava, Slovakia). Certain busts (the works of secular sculpture) carved from sandstone by sculptors from Bécsújhely (Wiener Neustadt, Austria) survived in the Pálffy family's Castle in Vöröskő (Červený Kameň, Slovakia) by sculptor David Weiss (1654), and in the Esterházy family's castle in Kismarton (Eisenstadt, Austria) by sculptor Hans Matthias Mayr (1667). In relation to the propagation of St. Mary's cult, the Marian columns, possibly made by Viennese sculptors in Pozsony (Bratislava, Slovakia)

(1675) and Győr (1686), began to spread on the basis of the Viennese patterns. Modelled on the Holy Trinity column in the Viennese Graben, other Holy Trinity columns were made in the memory of the plague epidemics in Buda by Philipp Ungleich and Franz Anton Hörger (1713), and in Pest by Andreas Rieder (1723). Several items of Paul Strudel's portrait reliefs depicting Habsburg Emperors were got into Hungarian collections. One of the results of this dissertation is the identification of the facade stone sculptures (made in the 1710s) of the Savoy Castle in Ráckeve as the common work of Tobias Kracker and Josef Kracker, who were both worked with architect Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt. The power of Emperor Charles VI was represented by the architectural and sculptural works that were ordered by the court. These works include the sculptures on the triumphal arch by Johannes König (1715, 1722-1738) in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, Romania), the sculptures of the Buda Army Depot (Zeughaus) made by a Viennese sculptor (1730) who belonged to the circle of Lorenzo Mattielli, the Ark of the Covenant monument in Győr by a Viennese sculptor (1731) who used a mark that reads STERF, and the sculptural decorations (1731-1737) of the House of Invalides in Pest made by Johann Christoph Mader and Johann Thenny. One of the results of this dissertation is the identification of the reliefs on the facade of the House of Invalides as the works of Johann Christoph Mader. The influence of Georg Raphael Donner in Hungary, mostly established by Viennese sculptors, is traceable in the period between 1630 and 1730.

The chapter titled *Georg Raphael Donner and the First Generation of his Followers in Hungary* gives an overview about the sculptor's oeuvre, associates and students. Between 1729 and 1739, Georg Raphael Donner worked for Imre Esterházy, Prince Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom, as a court sculptor and construction director (Baudirektor) in Pozsony, capital of the Hungarian Kingdom (Preßburg, Bratislava, Szlovákia). His most important works include the decorations (1732) of the St. John the Almsgiver's Chapel together with the former St. Martin high altar (1735) in the St. Martin's Cathedral in Pozsony, and the Providence Fountain (1739) in Vienna. The dissertation identifies that apart from the papal altar with its canopy in the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the canopied castrum doloris (1713) of Prince Pál Esterházy, the Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary, could also served as a model to Imre Esterházy, Prince Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom, when he ordered the construction of the main altar in the St. Martin's Cathedral. Georg Raphael Donner's style was widely spread in Central Europe in the second half of the 18th century by his associates and students. One of the results of the dissertation is the structuring of the followings into two generations. The first generation of Georg Raphael Donner's followers includes those sculptors who made canopy altars in Hungary modelled on the St. Martin high altar in

Pozsony, for example in the Cathedral of Pécs (1748), in the Pauline Church of Pest (1748), in the chapel of the Grassalkovich Castle of Gödöllő (1751), and the Cathedral of Gyulafehérvár (1755). The dissertation identifies that until the end of the 18th century, the architecture of the canopy altars in Hungary was similar to the structure of the contemporaneous castra doloris and catafalques. The first generation of Georg Raphael Donner's followers also includes those associates and students who worked in the workshop the famous sculptor and later started to work individually, for example Jakob Christoph Schletterer, Johann Nikolaus Moll and his brother Balthasar Ferdinand Moll, and Ludwig Gode, who all worked in Hungary. The dissertation also presents two previously unpublished 18th century sculptures which were made in the circle of Georg Raphael Donner.

The second generation includes the students of those artists who trained in the workshop of Georg Raphael Donner. As a teacher of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, it was his brother, Matthäus Donner, and the sculptors Jakob Christoph Schletterer and Balthasar Ferdinand Moll, who, in the first place, introduced Georg Raphael Donner's sculpture to the second generation. The chapter titled *Georg Raphael Donner and the Second Generation of his Followers in Hungary* introduces the Hungarian aspects of the sculptural works of Johann Georg Leithner, Johann Georg Dorfmeister, Anton Tabotta, Johann Martin Fischer, Philipp Jakob Prokop and Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, among others. In Hungary, the second generation of Georg Raphael Donner's followers can be traced from the 1760s on the royal constructions in Buda, and on the ecclesiastical constructions in Pozsony, Eger, Győr, Pécs, Pápa and Szombathely. The sculptors belonging to the second generation of Georg Raphael Donner's followers received significant orders in relation to the works of leading architects, especially those of Franz Anton Hillebrandt and Melchior Hefele. One of the results of the dissertation is the reconstruction of the high altar and sculptural decoration (1767–1768) which was designed for the former St. Sigismund Chapel made by Johann Georg Dorfmeister. The author of the dissertation determined the carved inscription *PRAEVIDE ET PROVIDE, COGNOSCE ET DIGNOSCE* on the bust of Márton György Kovachich (1782), made by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, as the motto of Kovachich.

The chapter titled *The Influence of Georg Raphael Donner and Followers on the Hungarian Neo-Baroque Sculpture* analyses a raw topic that reviews the classical revival of the late neoclassic Baroque style in the age of dualism (1867-1918). Leading sculptors of the Hungarian Historicism learned at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna as the students of Victor Tilgner, Edmund Hellmer and Caspar Zumbusch. The late neoclassic Baroque style of Georg Raphael Donner and his followers can be identified on the monuments relating to the history

of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, including the sculpture of Maria Theresa by György Zala (1911) and the sculpture of Charles III of Hungary by Ede Telcs (1912) on the Millenary Monument in Budapest, the former monument of Maria Theresa in Pozsony by János Fadrusz (1896), and the equestrian statue of Prince Eugene of Savoy in Budapest by József Róna. From the 1890s through to the 1910s, the Hungarian neo-Baroque sculptors revived the style of Georg Raphael Donner, Matthäus Donner, Balthasar Ferdinand Moll and Franz Xaver Messerschmidt by making monuments which were ordered by the state. They paid careful attention to the authentic representation of historical events figures. The adoption of late neoclassic Baroque patterns also concerned the imitation of stylistic elements, the representative choice of subject and the formal design.

The chapter titled *Donators, Customers and Collectors* introduces the Maecenases of the Austrian Baroque sculptors who worked in Hungary, and the Hungarian collectors of the Austrian Baroque sculpture. In the first half of the 17th century, the Esterházy family played a leading role in the introduction of Baroque art. Count Miklós Esterházy, the Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary, and later his son, Prince Pál Esterházy, the Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary began to employ Viennese artists, including sculptors. Péter Pázmány, the Archbishop of Esztergom, was not just a Maecenas and a collector, but he also restored the appreciation of works of art and artists after the protestant iconoclasm.

In addition to the representative royal constructions that were richly decorated with statues, the Hungarian prelacy also engaged in a Maecenas activity in the first half of the 18th century. They paid highlighted attention to the rebuilding and enlarging of ecclesiastic centres. Imre Esterházy, Prince Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom provided direction to the Hungarian prelacy. He employed Georg Raphael Donner as a court sculptor and construction director for ten years in Pozsony to build a chapel and a reliquary altar dedicated to St. John the Almsgiver, and a high altar dedicated to St. Martin in the St. Martin's Cathedral in Pozsony. His Maecenas activity was followed by the ecclesiastic leaders of Pécs, Gyulafehérvár, Kalocsa, Eger, Győr and Szombathely. The higher nobility, especially the Esterházy, the Pálffy, the Batthyány and the Zichy family represented the secular elite of patrons in the first half of the 18th century. One of the most successful personalities of the rising smaller nobility was Count Antal Grassalkovich, who, as the president of Hungarian Royal Chamber, directed the reconstruction of the Buda Castle from 1748. He employed sculptors Johann Georg Leithner and Johann Georg Dorfmeister, the followers of Georg Raphael Donner, and he also ordered the construction of a canopied high altar in the Chapel of the Royal Palace of Gödöllő, modelled after the high altar in the St. Martin's Cathedral in Pozsony.

At the end of the 18th century, the sculptors began to make themselves independent from the architects which was unusual at that time; for example, Philipp Jakob Prokop signed the sculptural contracts with János Szily, the bishop of Szombathely, independently from the 1790s. The leading artists did not work in typical feudal guilds, since they mostly were independent artists with academic membership. As a result of the Enlightenment, more customers from civil and intellectual circles appeared. Such a customer was the historian György Márton Kovachich, who ordered his own portrait bust from Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, and wrote a friendly thank you letter to the sculptor. The transformation of relationships between customers and artists led to a more free creative activity and to the development of new trends.

In the first half of the 19th century, the sculptor István Ferenczy had the largest collection of European sculpture, including Georg Raphael Donner's surviving reliefs, the Judgement of Paris and Venus in Vulcan's Forge. At the end of the 19th century, in relation to the spreading of neo-Baroque, the popularity of Georg Raphael Donner and his followers was revived; their works were collected by mainly the higher nobility, for example the Zich and the Bánffy family. The significant civil collections were created between the two world wars, for example the Emil Delmár collection that preserved a number of Austrian Baroque sculpture artworks.

The largest state-owned European sculpture collection of Hungary, the Old Sculpture Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, was not assembled from the collections of noblemen and prelates. It was put together from the beginning of the 20th century as a result of a museum assembling for scientific purposes. The European sculpture collection of the Museum of Fine Arts was enriched under the leadership of Simon Meller, Jolán Balogh and Mária Aggházy, by receiving donations, by purchasing from art dealers and private collectors, and by taking over European sculptural works of art from the museums in Budapest, mainly from the Antiquities Department of the Hungarian National Museum and from the different collections of the Museum of Applied Arts.

Regarding the followers of Georg Raphael Donner, three documents are published in the *appendix*. The *bibliography* includes the most important literature on the Austrian Baroque sculpture between the 17th and the 18th century, together with the list of abbreviations. The most significant works analyzed in the dissertation are illustrated by coloured and black-and-white *photos*.

The author of the dissertation organized *The Baroque Sculpture Collection* exhibition in 1994 in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest at the newly built deep ground floor, in the hall

called the Doric Pyramid. The permanent exhibition was open between 1994 and 1998, and was supported by a guide that was published in Hungarian and English (*Collection of Baroque Sculptures, Guide, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest*), which presented the period between 1600 and 1800 with help of the European sculptural collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, using the latest research results, and grouped by geographical and chronological order. One third of the displayed artwork (nearly one hundred items) represented the Austrian Baroque sculpture. The doctoral (PhD) dissertation titled *Georg Raphael Donner's influence on the Hungarian sculpture*, assembled in the Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities with the help of the Doctoral School of Art History state scholarship, undertakes to systematize the scientific results accumulated in the past twenty years and during the exhibition.

III. Scientific works and publications by Dr. Katalin Hámori in the topic of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation:

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