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The Reutilisation of Roman Gravestones in Medieval Hungary

Pál Lővei

Znovuvyužití římských náhrobků ve středověkých Uhrách. Na území středověkých Uher, stejně jako v jiných částech Evropy, se vyskytuje bezpočet římských a raně středověkých staveb, které sloužily jako „kamenné doly“. Starověké kamenné skulptury z území římských provincií Pannonie a Dácie, byly ve středověkých Uhrách znovu využívány jako náhrobní kameny a pomníky, neřídka sochařsky přepracované. Spolu s rozebraným kamenným zdivem byly do značných vzdáleností převáženy také sochařsky zpracované prvky, které sloužily jako stavební materiál či jako surovina pro zpracování nové sochařské výzdoby. Nové využití římských náhrobních kamenů a kamenných skulptur byla někdy zcela odlišná od jejich původního účelu, i když byly kdysi využity k označení hrobů, zatímco v jiných případech byly využity opětovně ve stejném duchu jako v době římské.

Keywords: Roman-era stone carvings, sepulchral monuments, repurposing, Hungary, 11th–14th centuries

Countless examples are known in Hungary – and throughout Europe – of Roman ruins and earlier medieval buildings being used as “stone mines”. Similarly to stones quarried in actual mines, the old carvings were often transported substantial distances, and were used as building materials, or as the raw materials for new building elements or sculptural decorations.

Roman gravestones and stone carvings were not only used in the Middle Ages as building materials, but also in connection with funerals. Sometimes their new function was completely independent of their original purpose even if they were originally used as grave markers, while in other cases they were reutilised in compliance with their Roman-era use.

Several examples of the simpler use can be found within the territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, both in Transdanubia (the territory of the Roman provincia *Pannonia*) and in Transylvania (the territory of *Dacia*). In the cemetery excavated on Sibrik Hill in Visegrád, once part of a building identified as a diaconal church built in the second half of the eleventh century, but destroyed by the second half of the twelfth, one of the most opulent graves was covered with part of a Roman column that had been cut in two lengthwise and placed over the top as a gravestone [Fig. 1].¹ This was not a unique idea: in Toledo, a Roman column drum was unearthed that had been repurposed as a gravestone in the eleventh-twelfth century, as proven by the two lines of Hebrew text inscribed along its length.² In Visegrád, next to the lord lieutenant's castle, was once a settlement later destroyed during the Mongol Invasion. According to the archaeologist who excavated the cemetery beside the settlement's small church, "the two Roman-era stone carvings – a fragment of a gravestone and an almost entirely intact altar stone – which we also found lying on the graves, were probably used as grave markers."³ In the courtyard of a monastery on the so-called Alsósziget (Lower Island) of Esztergom, which can be dated from its remains to the eleventh century, many densely dug graves were unearthed, several of which were covered with reutilised Roman carvings. The intact top of a Roman children's sarcophagus, carved with masks and a wreath, was discovered beside one grave, and from the same location, the lower shell of a sarcophagus, largely without its side walls and used for a medieval burial, is now held at the Balassa Bálint Museum in Esztergom.⁴ Radu Heitel, who led the excavation of the Calvinist church in Boroskrakkó

¹ SZÓKE, Mátyás, *Visegrád – Várkert*. Régészeti Füzetek 32, 1979, pp. 105–106 (here p. 105); RITOÓK, Ágnes, *Templom körüli temetők Árpád-kori sírjelei Magyarországon*. Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae, 1997, pp. 205–213 (here p. 205, 206).

² Loaned by the Museo de Santa Cruz in Toledo to the Sinagoga de El Tránsito Exhibition in Toledo.

³ KOVALOVSKY, Júlia, *Az Árpád-kori Visegrád. Ásatások a Várkertben*. Műemlékvédelem XXXIX, 1995, pp. 69–74 (here p. 74).

⁴ LOVAG, Zsuzsa, *Beszámoló az Esztergom-szigeti apácakolostor 1979–1983 között végzett feltárájáról*. In: Fodor, István–Selmeczi, László (eds), *Középkori régészetiünk újabb eredményei és időszzerű feladatai*. Budapest 1985, pp. 343–352 (here p. 345); LOVAG, Zsuzsa: *Az Esztergom-szigeti bencés apácakolostor*. In: Imre Takács (ed.), *Paradisum plantavit. Bencés monostorok a középkori Magyarországon* (exhibition catalogue). Pannonhalma 2001, pp. 347–349 (here p. 349); LOVAG, Zsuzsa, *Az Esztergom-szigeti apácakolostor temetőjének kutatása*. In: Ágnes Ritoók – Erika Simonyi (eds), *A középkori templom körüli temetők kutatása*. Budapest 2005 (Opuscula Hungarica VI), pp. 127–130 (here p. 127).



III.1. Roman column used as a gravestone, Visegrád.



III.2. Medieval tombstone carved of Roman marble, used later as a lintel above the entrance, Densuş, Orthodox Church.



III.3. Tombstone of King Andrew I (†1060), Tihany Abbey.

(Cricău, Romania), mentioned two Roman gravestones from the second or third century, which had been reused as “sepulchres” in the second half of the thirteenth and in the fourteenth centuries.⁵

Roman carvings were also reemployed more creatively when they were recarved into gravestones. At the church in Densuș (Hung.: Demsus, Romania), constructed from Roman stones, on a panel with bevelled longitudinal edges that was added as a lintel above the entrance, a cross was carved in bas relief with a circle around it; the arms of the cross were later carved away, and only a disc remained where the arms were attached [Fig. 2]. The hard, marble-like limestone, with greyish veins, clearly points to a Roman origin, while the inscribed cross and the dimensions indicate it was used in the twelfth or thirteenth century as a gravestone. The stone was found intact on the ground in 1767, and only later built into the church walls, as a tertiary utilisation, with the arms removed from the cross.⁶ The gravestone of Father Ghenadie (†1505), found at the Orthodox church in Râu de Mori (Hung. Malomvíz, Romania) near Colt (Hung. Kolcvár, Romania), was made of Roman-era marble.⁷ In the episcopal palace of Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár, Romania), a fragment of a medieval bishop's gravestone – perhaps that of Domokos Szécsi (†1368) – was discovered built into an eighteenth-century wall. Judging from the chisel marks on the back of the stone, it was made by reworking a Roman-era carving.⁸

The grave slab in the crypt at Tihany Abbey, depicting a processional cross, is almost unanimously recognised in the literature as originating

from the eleventh century, and the carving, without inscription, is widely associated with the grave of the founder of the abbey, King Andrew I (1046–1060) [Fig. 3].⁹ A photograph of the back of the gravestone, taken in 1953, raised the possibility that it could be a recarved part of a Roman sarcophagus, and the technical investigations planned as part of the new research, begun in 2021, may help to either confirm or refute this idea.

In the Carpathian Basin, the best-known grave monument made by recarving a Roman-era stone is the so-called sarcophagus of Saint Stephen [Figs 4–5]. The history of the research into the sarcophagus dates back more than two hundred years, and encapsulates everything that is beautiful, challenging and potentially hazardous in investigating stone carvings.¹⁰ In 1814, the sarcophagus was transferred from Székesfehérvár to the Hungarian National Museum, where its place of origin became largely overlooked. Even when the stone was still in Székesfehérvár, it was associated with an inscribed Roman gravestone, which had been unearthed in 1784 from the ruins of the Provostry of the Virgin Mary, founded by Saint Stephen (King Stephen I, 997/1000–1038); the carving was regarded as the inscribed lid of an uninscribed sarcophagus.¹¹ Imre Henszlmann believed the sarcophagus to be a Roman work originating from Óbuda (today part of Budapest), and he emphasised its connection with the carvings known from Zalavár.¹² In an unsigned report, probably written by Flóris Rómer, the sarcophagus is defined as Early Christian; Rómer was aware that the piece held in the Hungarian National Museum originated from Székesfehérvár.¹³ József Hampel associated it with the Lombard style, related to Byzantine art, which was also around in the eleventh century.¹⁴ The circumstances under which the stone was brought from its place of discovery in Székesfehérvár and taken to the Hungarian National Museum were uncovered by Elemér Varjú in 1930, who connected the sarcophagus to King Saint Stephen and attributed the commissioning of the stone coffin to his successor, King Peter

⁵ I thank Radu Lupescu for this information.

⁶ HOHENHAUSEN, Sylvester Joseph von, *Die Alterthümer Daciens in dem heutigen Siebenbürgen*. Wien 1775. p. 85; LUPESCU, Radu, *Un monument funerar inedit în biserica Densuș (Jud. Hunedoara)*. *Arheologia Medievala I*. Reșița 1996, pp. 180–185; RUSU, Andrei Adrian, *Ctitori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700*. Satu Mare 1997, p. 201, Pl. 8.

⁷ MOLDOVAN, Ștefan, *Annotatiuni despre tiéra Hatiegului*. Foaia pentru minte, inimă și literatură, nr. 38 din 23 sept. 1853, p. 284; RUSU, Andrei Adrian, *Biserica medievală românească de sub cetatea Colți. Observații privind funcția și evoluția monumentului*. *Revista muzeelor și monumentelor*. Monumente istorice și de artă XX, 1989, nr. 2, pp. 22–29 (here p. 27, Fig. 9); RUSU, Andrei Adrian, *Ctitori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700*. Satu Mare 1997, pp. 113–114, 117, Fig. 22, Pl. 13; RUSU, Andrei Adrian – BURNICHIOIU, Ileana, *Monumente medievale din Țara Hațegului / Medieval monuments from Hațeg District*. Cluj-Napoca 2008, [p. 57].

⁸ SARKADI, Márton, *A gyulafehérvári székesegyház és érseki palota 1999–2002 között végzett helyreállítási munkáinak tanulságai*. Műemlékvédelmi Szemle XIII, 2003, nr. 1, pp. 43–87 (here p. 59, Fig. 19); LÖVEI, Pál, *Püspöki sírkő töredéke*. In: Márton Sarkadi, „s folytatva magát a régi művet”. *Tanulmányok a gyulafehérvári székesegyház és püspöki palota történetéről*. Budapest 2010, pp. 184–185.

⁹ UZSOKI, András, *I. András király sírja Tihanyban és a sírlap ikonográfiai vonatkozásai*. *A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei* 17, 1984, pp. 145–188; MIKÓ, Gábor, *I. András király sírkövének legkorábbi említése*. *Turul* 86, 2013, pp. 150–152.

¹⁰ TÓTH, Sándor, *Szent István-szarkofág – sírláda és két fedéltöredék*. *Ars Hungarica* 35, 2007, pp. 29–50.

¹¹ BUBRYÁK, Orsolya, „E mediterraneo basilicae erutum”? *Megjegyzések a Szent István-szarkofág provenienciájához*. *Ars Hungarica* 35, 2007, pp. 5–28.

¹² HENSZLMANN, Imre, *A székes-fehérvári ásatások eredménye*. Pest 1864, p. 123.

¹³ [RÓMER, Flóris?], *Egyveleg*. *Archaeologiai Közlemények* IX, 1873, p. 68.

¹⁴ HAMPEL, József, *Keresztény emlékek a régibb középkorból*. *Archaeologiai Értesítő* XIV, 1894, pp. 23–53 (here pp. 49–53).

(1038–1041, 1044–1046).¹⁵ This identification was so well accepted by the archaeological community and public opinion in general that the sarcophagus was returned to Székesfehérvár in 1936 and installed in the middle of the Mausoleum of Saint Stephen, constructed to mark the 900th anniversary of the ruler's death in 1938. The mausoleum was built in the garden of ruins that was once the site of the Royal Basilica of Székesfehérvár Provostry, and decorated with murals by Vilmos Aba-Novák (1894–1941). The sarcophagus is still there today [Fig. 6].¹⁶ As a kind of synthesis of all earlier opinions, the idea that the sarcophagus was Roman in origin and recarved in the Middle Ages was convincingly promulgated by Emese Nagy, based on an analysis of three main factors: the lower edge, the upper rim and the interior of the sarcophagus being worked using a Roman technology that was alien to the Middle Ages. The carved surfaces used solutions that are transitional between the Roman and the medieval practices; and the longitudinal side, the only decorated side in its original Roman form, was carved in the Middle Ages with depictions of the tree of life.¹⁷ Later, the sarcophagus was also associated with King Saint Stephen's father, Prince Géza (†997),¹⁸ and with his son, Prince (Saint) Imre (Emeric), who died in his youth (†1031).¹⁹ More recently, even the eleventh-century dating has been questioned, and the carving connected with a royal burial in the twelfth century.²⁰ Two fragments from the top of the sarcophagus, featuring a pitched roof and corner acroteria, which were already known²¹ but not previously connected with

¹⁵ VARJU, Elemér, *Szent István király koporsója*. Magyar Művészet 6, 1930, pp. 372–379.

¹⁶ DERCSÉNYI, Dezső, *A székesfehérvári királyi bazilika*. Budapest 1943, pp. 106–110., Figs 50–53; LŐVEI, Pál, *Székesfehérvár, Romkert – 1936–1938*. Építés – Építészettudomány XXIX, 2001, pp. 379–388; GÄRTNER, Petra (ed.), *Szent István király bazilikájának utóélete. A Középkori Romert 1938-tól napjainkig*. Székesfehérvár 2016.

¹⁷ NAGY, Emese, *A székesfehérvári István-koporsó keletkezése*. Művészettörténeti Értesítő III., 1954, pp. 101–106.

¹⁸ KRALOVÁNSZKY, Alán, *Contribution à la question du sarcophage de Székesfehérvár dit de Saint Étienne*. Alba Regia. Az István Király Múzeum Évkönyve 8–9, 1967, pp. 85–91 (here p. 90).

¹⁹ NAGY, Árpád, *A székesfehérvári XI. századi szarkofág eredete és ikonográfiája*. Művészettörténeti Értesítő XXI, 1972, pp. 165–176.

²⁰ TÓTH, Endre, *In paradisum deducant te angeli ... (A székesfehérvári szarkofágról) / (Über den Sarkophag in Székesfehérvár)*. Alba Regia. Az István Király Múzeum Évkönyve 36, 2007, pp. 107–164.

²¹ DERCSÉNYI, Dezső, 1943 (as in note 16), p. 112 (nr. 14), p. 124 (nr. 93), Fig. 78.

the sarcophagus, were identified in the Székesfehérvár lapidary by Ernő Szakál and Géza Entz [Figs 7–8].²²

The hitherto most commonly accepted date for the recarving of the sarcophagus of Saint Stephen and its installation in Székesfehérvár, namely the years close to the burial of King Stephen I in 1038, was altered by Sándor Tóth to the date of his canonisation in 1083 (based on a re-evaluation of the chronology of the Zalavár carvings, with which the sarcophagus shares similarities).²³ Tóth's opinion was positively received in terms of history, functionality and style,²⁴ although it was not so much Tóth's style criticism than the idea of a "relic sarcophagus" that earned the support of such eminences as Ernő Marosi.²⁵ One of the fragments of the sarcophagus lid was found on the floor of the basilica, the other in the city wall,²⁶ while

²² ENTZ, Géza – SZAKÁL, Ernő, *Le reconstitution du sarcophage du roi Étienne*. Acta Historiae Artium X, 1964, pp. 205–228.

²³ TÓTH, Sándor, *A székesfehérvári szarkofág és köre*. In: Árpád Mikó – Imre Takács (eds), *Pannonia Regia. Művészet a Dunántúlon 1000–1541* (exhibition catalogue). Budapest 1994, pp. 82–86; TÓTH, Sándor, 2007 (as in note 10). About the fragments from around 1070–1080 of the decoration of the Benedictine Abbey of Zalavár, see: ENTZ, Géza, *Un chantier du XIe siècle a Zalavár*. Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts 24, 1964, pp. 17–64; HAVASI, Krisztina, *Romanesque Sculpture in Medieval Hungary*. In: Xavier Barral i Altet – Pál Lővei – Vinni Luccherini – Imre Takács (eds), *The Art of Medieval Hungary*. Roma 2018 (Bibliotheca Academiae Hungariae – Roma. Studia 7), pp. 145–163 (here p. 150).

²⁴ SZAKÁCS, Béla Zsolt, *Középkor*. In: Gábor Bellák – János Jernyei Kiss – Katalin Keserü – Árpád Mikó – Béla Zsolt Szakács, *Magyar művészet*. Budapest 2009, pp. 15–99 (here p. 46); TAKÁCS, Imre, *István király és a művészet*. Vigília 75, 2010, pp. 576–581 (here p. 579); KERNY, Terézia – SMOHAY, András (eds), *István a szent király. Tanulmánykötet és kiállítási katalógus Szent István tiszteletéről halálának 975. évfordulóján* (Magyar királyok és Székesfehérvár IV; A Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum kiadványai 9). Székesfehérvár 2013, p. 299 (cat. 15, BARTOS, György); HAVASI, Krisztina, 2018 (as in note 23), pp. 149–151; SZAKÁCS, Béla Zsolt, *Szentté avatás és kultusz helye Szent László korában*. In: Terézia Kerny – Árpád Mikó – András Smohay (eds), *Szent László és kultusza. Tanulmánykötet Szent László tiszteletére*. Székesfehérvár 2019 (Magyar királyok és Székesfehérvár V; A Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum kiadványai 13), pp. 50–59 (here pp. 52–55, Figs 3–5).

²⁵ MAROSI, Ernő, *Művészet Székesfehérváron Szent László korában*. In: Terézia Kerny – Árpád Mikó – András Smohay (eds), *Szent László és kultusza. Tanulmánykötet Szent László tiszteletére*. Székesfehérvár 2019 (Magyar királyok és Székesfehérvár V; A Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum kiadványai 13), pp. 34–49 (here pp. 35–36, 38).

²⁶ DERCSÉNYI, Dezső, 1943 (as in note 16), p. 112 (nr. 14), p. 124 (nr. 93); MENTÉNYI, Klára, *Romanische Steinmetzarbeiten der Stiftskirche der Jungfrau Maria in Székesfehérvár (Die Geschichte der Skulpturen im 19. Jahrhundert)*. Acta Historiae Artium LII, 2011, pp. 31–148 (here pp. 57–58, Abb. 27, 29).

the actual site of the sarcophagus is unknown. At the time it was first recorded, in the early nineteenth century, it was in the garden of the episcopal palace. The undecorated short side of the sarcophagus was later pierced with a hole, which suggests it was used locally in the Modern Era as a well basin or drinking trough [Fig. 9]. If this is the case, this weakens the argument that the sarcophagus must have been unearthed in the grounds of the basilica²⁷ – if the sarcophagus was not used as a basin or trough, it would highly likely have been broken up into building stones, like the lid, or the fourteenth-century Anjou sarcophagus in the abbey.²⁸ The regal connections in its iconography and the high quality of the stone working indicate that, following its medieval recarving, the sarcophagus was most likely installed in the abbey church. The location of the grave and centre of the cult of Saint Imre, who was also canonised in 1083, has been identified, with a high degree of certainty, as being in the second bay from the east in the southern row of pillars along the church nave,²⁹ where it would have been senseless to place the sarcophagus, because of the bas relief on one of its short sides. It is therefore hard to imagine that the sarcophagus of Saint Stephen was placed anywhere but in the structure erected as a place of cult worship, with ornamental flooring, excavated

²⁷ BUBRYÁK, Orsolya, 2007 (as in note 11), pp. 16–20.

²⁸ LÖVEL, Pál, *Über neu entdeckte Fragmente der Anjou-Grabmäler in Székesfehérvár/Stuhlweissenburg*. In: Markéta Jarošová – Jiří Kuthan – Stefan Scholz (eds), *Prag und die grossen Kulturzentren Europas in der Zeit der Luxemburger (1310–1437). Prague and Great Cultural Centres of Europe in the Luxembourgian Era (1310–1437)*. Internationale Konferenz aus Anlaß des 660. Jubiläums der Gründung der Karlsuniversität in Prag, 31. März – 5. April 2008. Praha 2008 (Opera Facultatis Theologiae catholicae Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis. Historia et historia artium vol. VIII), pp. 585–600; LÖVEL, Pál, *Über neu entdeckte Fragmente der Anjou-Grabmäler in Székesfehérvár*. *Acta Historiae Artium* LII, 2011, pp. 149–173 (here pp. 150, 161).

²⁹ SZABÓ, Zoltán, *A szentté avatott Imre herceg kultuszhelyének kérdése a székesfehérvári prépostság Nagyboldogasszony templomában*. *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle* VI, 1996, 2, pp. 5–52; BICZÓ, Piroska, *Das Marienstift Stuhlweissenburg (Székesfehérvár)*. In: Alfried Wiczorek – Hans-Martin Hinz (eds), *Europas Mitte um 1000. Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*. Handbuch zur Ausstellung. Stuttgart 2000, 2, pp. 621–624 (here p. 623, Abb. 404/2); BICZÓ, Piroska, *Archäologische Beobachtungen zur Baugeschichte der Stiftskirche unserer Lieben Frau zu Székesfehérvár*. *Acta Historiae Artium* XLII, 2001, pp. 283–295 (here pp. 284–285).



III. 4 Roman sarcophagus recarved around 1083 for King I. (Saint) Stephen (11038), the recarved Roman side, Székesfehérvár.



III. 5 Front of Saint Steven's sarcophagus, depicting an angel with the soul of the deceased, around 1083, Székesfehérvár.

in medio ecclesiae – along the central axis of the building.³⁰ In the legend of Saint Stephen written by Hartvik, Bishop of Győr, in the last years of the eleventh century, the description of the funeral may pertain to the conversion of the ruler's grave into a relic grave after his canonisation in 1083: the ruler's "holy body was placed in a sarcophagus carved of white marble in the middle of the building".³¹ The stone for the Székesfehérvár sarcophagus was quarried from Gellért Hill, close to the erstwhile Roman provincial capital of Aquincum; it is a type of Buda limestone that can be easily polished,³² and would commonly have been known as marble. In general, the terms used for different stones in medieval sources cannot be relied upon as being geologically accurate and what is more, the situation is no different in Modern-Era usage today. The best example of this is the red limestone quarried in Hungary and near Salzburg, which is still commonly called "red marble".³³

In 1868, when the foundations of a new Roman Catholic church were being laid in Cenad (Hung. Csanád, Romania), a stone sarcophagus was unearthed that had been carved from soft limestone, while its horizontal lid had been carved from freshwater limestone. The front was decorated with a bas relief showing a cross placed on top of a pile of stones [Fig. 10]. The find was erected in the aisle of the new church, and Imre Henszlmann immediately connected it with the grave of Saint Gellért (†1046), a bishop martyred during the pagan rebellion, who was buried first in Pest, and later reburied in Csanád around 1053.³⁴ In 2000 the sarcophagus was opened and replaced in the sanctuary of the church, as the mensa of the new high altar. At this time it was discovered that, like the front, the back was also

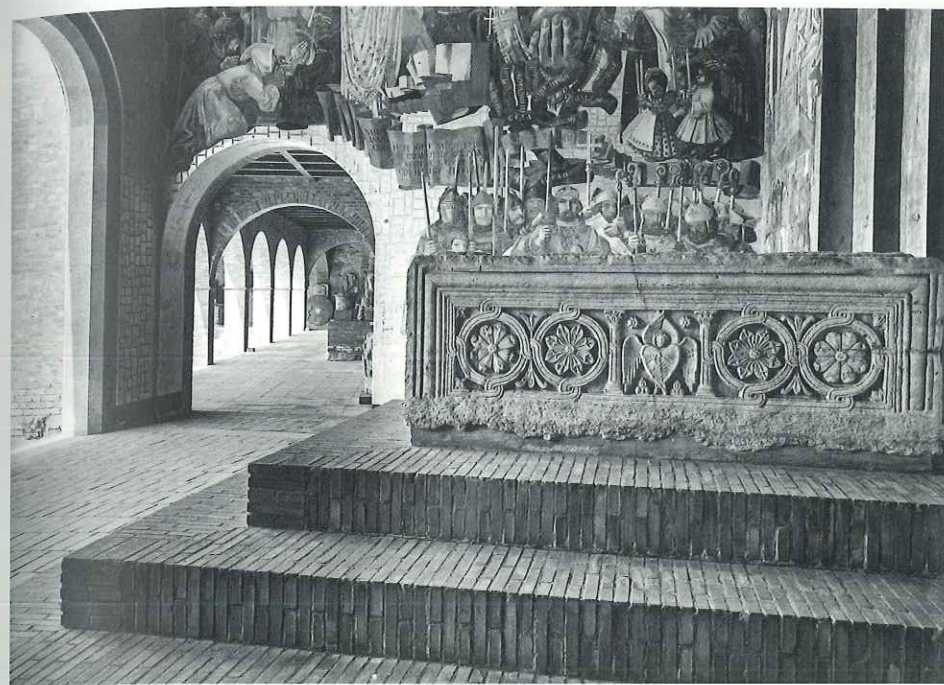
³⁰ KRALOVÁNSZKY, Alán, *Szent István király székesfehérvári sírjának és kultuszhelyének kérdése*. In: Ferenc Glatz – József Kardos (eds), *Szent István és kora*. Budapest 1988, pp. 166–172, Figs 28–33; KRALOVÁNSZKY, Alán, *Szent István király székesfehérvári sírja és kultuszhelye*. *Folia Archaeologica* XI, 1989, pp. 155–173; BICZÓ, Piroska, 2000 (as in note 29), p. 623, Abb. 404/1; BICZÓ, Piroska, 2001 (as in note 29), p. 287; MAROSI, Ernő, 2019 (as in note 25), p. 38.

³¹ "corpus sanctum in medio domus sarcofago candidi marmoris imponitur" – *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum*. (ed. Emericus Szentpétery). I–II. Budapestini 1937–1938, II, p. 433.

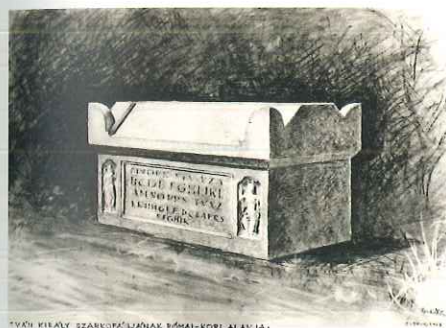
³² PAPP, Ferenc, *Szent István-korabeli építőkövek a Dunántúlon*. *Technika* XIX, 1938, pp. 359–363 (here p. 362); KERTÉSZ, Pál, *Neogene Ornamental and Building Stones in Hungary*. In: József Hála (ed.), *Neogene Mineral Resources in the Carpathian Basin*. Budapest 1985, pp. 397–425 (here p. 411).

³³ LŐVEI, Pál, *A tömött vörös mészkő – „vörös márvány” – a középkori magyarországi művészetben*. *Ars Hungarica* XX, 1992, nr. 2, pp. 3–28 (here pp. 3–4).

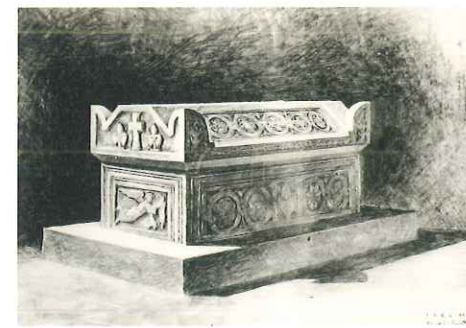
³⁴ HENSZLMANN, Imre, *Archaeologiai kirándulás Csanádra*. *Archaeologiai Közlemények* VIII, 1871, pp. 1–49 (here pp. 31–34, Fig. 9).



III. 6. Mausoleum constructed in 1938 for Saint Stephen's sarcophagus, Székesfehérvár.



III. 7. Ernő Szakál: Reconstruction of the Roman sarcophagus before recarving (1963).



III. 8. Ernő Szakál: Reconstruction of the Roman sarcophagus recarved for King I. (Saint) Steven around 1083 (1962).

decorated with a cross, albeit an unfinished one [Fig. 11]. According to the investigations of Elek Benkő, the originally undecorated Roman sarcophagus was later adorned with the carved crosses, while on the interior of the sarcophagus, bearing the distinguishing technical features of Roman stone carving, the typical “stone pillow” found in Roman sarcophagi had been partly carved away.³⁵ Roman bricks were often unearthed in Cenad, and Flóris Rómer described a pavement in the rectory courtyard made of legionary bricks, while he also reported seeing a stone fragment with a Roman inscription,³⁶ but during later excavations, no trace of any kind of Roman settlement has been found on the site. The bricks bear the stamp of the legion stationed in Apulum, on the site of the later city of Gyulafehérvár, today’s Alba Iulia, and they may have been transported to Csanád as building materials along the valley of the river Maros. The same assumption can also be made for the sarcophagus. It is entirely possible that the lid covered the first grave of Saint Gellért, in Pest (part of today’s Budapest), and was later transported to Csanád together with his body. The stone may perhaps have originated from the Roman province of Pannonia, but there are no traces of this on the stone itself. It could be that Gellért was interred in Csanád beneath this stone lid, while the recarved Roman sarcophagus may have been made after the saint’s remains were exhumed in connection with his canonisation in 1083.³⁷ The fourteenth-century supplement to the greatest legend about Saint Gellért describes how Elisabeth, the Queen Mother, placed a variety of objects on the marble grave in 1361.³⁸ In this case too, as with the sarcophagus of Saint Stephen, the “marble” of the gravestone is probably a geologically inaccurate description, albeit one that befits the status of the saint.

The Roman sarcophagus found during excavations of the former Franciscan church in Buda Castle may also be evidence of medieval reutilisation [Fig. 12]. However, as the original archaeological layers in the interior are missing (having later been filled with rubble), and there are no traces of recarving, nothing about how it was repurposed can be ascertained for

³⁵ BENKŐ, Elek, *Der Sarkophag des heiligen Gerhards aus Großtschanad (Nagy-csanád, Cenadu, Rumänien)*. *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 56, 2005, pp. 251–277; SZAKÁCS, Béla Zsolt, 2019 (as in note 24), pp. 56–57, Fig. 10.

³⁶ RÓMER, Flóris, *Magyar régészeti krónika*. *Archaeologiai Közlemények* VII, 1868, pp. 181–212 (here p. 191); BENKŐ, Elek, 2005 (as in note 35), p. 261.

³⁷ BENKŐ, Elek, 2005 (as in note 35), p. 275.

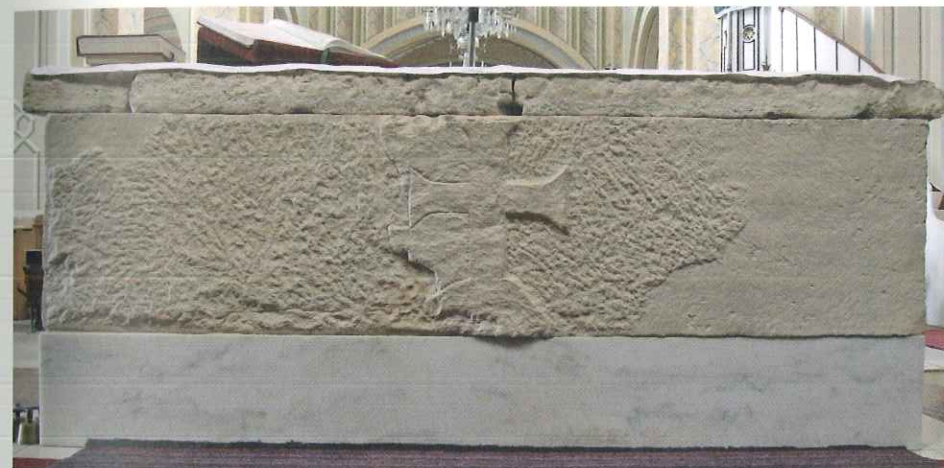
³⁸ *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum* (as in note 31), II, p. 506: “... *domina regina Elizabeth [...] minora ossa cum cilicio, flagello et cappa [...] locari fecit ad tumbam marmoream*.”; BENKŐ, Elek, 2005 (as in note 35), p. 262.



III. 9. Undecorated short side of Saint Stephen's sarcophagus.



III. 10. Front of the sarcophagus of Saint Gellért (†1046), Cenad, Parish Church.



III. 11. The unfinished back of the sarcophagus of Saint Gellért (†1046).

sure. It cannot be determined if the sarcophagus was connected to King Andrew III (1290–1301), who was buried in the church, or even if it was originally installed above or beneath the floor level inside the church, although due to the complete absence of any recarving or secondary markings, it seems more likely that it was used as a coffin beneath the ground.³⁹ Also on Buda Castle Hill is the Church of Our Lady (popularly known as the Matthias Church); in 1876, when the level beneath the floor was cleared of earth, an intact Roman sarcophagus was found directly on the surface of the bedrock, filled with rubble and a pile of bones, proving that it had been used as a coffin in the Middle Ages.⁴⁰ North of the Danube, beyond the erstwhile border of the province of Pannonia, in St. James's Church in the village of Želiezovce (Hung. Zseliz, Slovakia), the mensa of the altar is made of a Roman sarcophagus originating from Aquincum. The stone was found "buried" in the church in the eighteenth century, but it is hard to determine if it was used in the fourteenth century as an underground coffin or as part of a grave monument. These finds show that even as late as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there were still a number of intact, re-utilisable sarcophagi available in the former Roman cemeteries of Aquincum.

Examples of the reutilisation of Roman sarcophagi for representational purposes are known throughout Europe. This practice was not at all rare among rulers and even less so among prelates. Of the 120 examples of sarcophagi being reused in the Middle Ages and in the Early Renaissance as grave monuments installed in visible places, 105 are in Italy, and the majority of the other 15 examples are from before the eleventh century (such as the imperial grave monuments in Aachen and Metz).⁴¹ The authors of the associated publications were not aware of the Székesfehérvár sarcophagus, nor of the more recently identified Csanád sarcophagus. To the best of my knowledge, there is as yet no literature on Roman sarcophagi reused for coffins buried beneath the ground in the Middle Ages.

³⁹ ALTMANN, Júlia, *Előzetes jelentés a budavári ferences templom kutatásáról*. *Archaeologiai Értesítő* 100, 1973, pp. 82–87 (here p. 82, Figs 3, 5).

⁴⁰ VÉGH, András, *A budavári Nagyboldogasszony-templom középkori kőfaragványainak sorsa közgyűjteményeinkben. Gyűjteménytörténeti vázlat*. Budapest Régiségei XLI, 2007, Budapest 2008, pp. 323–338 (here p. 325 with note 13, p. 330); FARBAKY, Péter – FARBAKYNÉ DEKLAVA, Lilla – MÁTÉFY, Balázs – RÓKA, Enikő – VÉGH, András (eds.), *Mátyás-templom. A budavári Nagyboldogasszony-templom évszázadai (1246–2013)*, exhibition catalogue. Budapest 2015, p. 121 (cat. 3.32, VÉGH, András).

⁴¹ RAGUSA, Isa, *The Re-Use and Public Exhibition of Roman Sarcophagi during the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance*. Dissertation [Typescript]. New York 1951; KÖRNER, Hans, *Grabmonumente des Mittelalters*. Darmstadt 1997. p. 84.



III. 12. Roman sarcophagus found in the former Franciscan church in Buda Castle (Budapest).



III. 13. Roman sarcophagus secondarily used for the monument of Constance of Aragon (†1222), queen consort of King Imre of Hungary (1196–1204), later wife of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II), Palermo Cathedral.



III. 14. Authentica plate from the sarcophagus of Constance of Aragon, Palermo Cathedral.

Because of her connection with Hungary, it is also worth mentioning that Constance of Aragon (†1222), queen consort of King Imre (Emeric) of Hungary (1196–1204) and, after widowhood, wife of King Frederick I of Sicily (who became Holy Roman Emperor in 1215 as Frederick II), was buried by her second husband in the burial place of the rulers of Sicily, Palermo Cathedral. She was laid to rest in a white marble Roman sarcophagus, decorated with a bas relief depicting a hunting scene [Fig. 13]. The inscription, carved at a later date in Renaissance-style capital letters, was presumably based on the information found on the so-called authentica plate, the small silver disc discovered when the grave was opened in 1491, on which was carved a long inscription about the deceased [Fig. 14].⁴² Incidentally, the unusually personal tone of the sarcophagus' text seems to imply that it was written in the spirit of the Renaissance.⁴³

⁴² WEHLI, Tünde, *Konstancia királyné a palermói dómban*. *Ars Hungarica* XXVI, 1998, pp. 10–17 (here 11–12, Figs 2–3); MEIER, Thomas, *Die Archäologie des mittelalterlichen Königsgrabes in christlichen Europa*. Stuttgart 2002 (*Mittelalter-Forschungen* 8), Abb. 155; GLADIŠ, Almut von, *Die Grabbeigaben der Konstanze von Aragon, der ersten Gattin Friedrichs II. Palermo, Tesoro della Cattedrale*. In: Mamoun Fansa – Karen Ermete (eds), *Kaiser Friedrich II. (1194–1250). Welt und Kultur des Mittelmeerraums* (exhibition catalogue). Mainz am Rhein 2008, pp. 355–357, (cat. IV.3).

⁴³ Translated from Hungarian by Steve Kane.

Memoria digni: On the Epigraphic Formulary of Funerary Monuments in Medieval Hungary, Wallachia, and Moldavia

Ioan Albu

Memoria digni. K epigrafickým formulářům funerálních památek ve středověkých Uhrách, Valašsku a Moldávii. Sledování původu, textové koncepce a funkce funerálních nápisů na památkách souvisejících s osobami z řad králů, vojvodů, knížat a dalších vládců ve střední a východní Evropě se zvláštním zaměřením na středověké Uhry, Valašsko a Moldávii, ukazuje, že typ památky si důsledně vynucuje zúžený výběr striktně vymezených a obsahově zhuštěných formulářů. V důsledku takto vymezené epigrafické oblasti obsahují pohřební desky lapidární výrazy s často strohými zkratkami, tak, jak se v průběhu času vyvinuly a ustálily. V tomto směru je zvláště zajímavé zaměření na úvodní fráze, označující památku, odkazující na hrob či pohřební místo a jeho funkci, dále na jména a tituly králů, knížat a vojvodů a také epiteta panovníků. Epigrafické formuláře se nekoncentrují jen na pohřebních památkách bosenských králů a vévodů, transylvánských vojvodů a chorvatských bánů a palatinů, ale také na pomnicích královen, princezen a vojvodkyň. Z tohoto důvodu je zvláštní pozornost věnována problematice příbuzenství a vzájemných kontaktů.

Keywords: epigraphic formulary, medieval funerary monuments, Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, 10th–16th centuries

Funerary monuments are a subtle fusion of text and image. Both words and visual representation are sought for remembrance. In some cases, we are confronted by text alone, image alone, heraldry and portrait, or most often with a combination of these memorial resources. The delimitation between text, with its variety of script and content, and image, the