Thoughts on dying and suicide at the turn of the 18th-19th century: a Transylvanian girl of Capulet-destiny

Abstract:

Dying and suicide in 18th Century, ideas regarding death, funeral ceremonies and their representations, funeral oration, farewell poem, 18th Century readings, education and marriage views at the time, the Radáks, Transylvania. The young aristocrat committed suicide at the early age of 17, presumably because of a broken heart. The poem which we have found among funeral orations is telling a part of her story and must have been a very popular one since in the first year it was published four times in Cluj only. However, we can be sure that the poem was not ordered by the family as it is not a funeral oration and there is no author indicated on it (though his identity is speculated on based on fragmented descriptions), instead it is a poem which tackles the protestant views on education, motherhood and marriage in a liberal manner. Since the family of the girl (the Radáks) was a learned protestant family they were most probably familiar with the representations of a funeral ceremony, albeit they have organized it only for the girl's father but not for the girl. They have probably known the prayer- and advisory books and the rules of conduct in this matter, since the father attended the University of Göttingen, the mother wrote poems, the brothers and their descendants all patronized the fine arts in Transylvania.

Keywords: *death, suicide, Transylvania, attitudes.*