

## ABSTRACT

### The Cult of Mayor George Bernády in Târgu-Mureș. Local History as Narrative Identity

The present volume analyzes the manifestation of an urban public identity focusing on the outstanding era of the local history, the time of urbanization with his city-building Mayor, Bernády György. In the course of the research of the cult and remembrance it was highlighted the measure of the activation of these phenomena in this era, what was their function, to what extent can they be considered public, and what kind of narratives did they display. The written sources of this work was the press releases of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, George Bernády's papers, contemporary publications and the press materials, publications of the different political systems that occurred by 1990, sources that were selected by the author of the present thesis in order to fit/(suitable for) the research. Furthermore, other source materials for the analysis were the articles published in the period after 1990, web sites, local publications; interviews with a few members of the reminiscent community and the information gathered in the course of my participant observation. The collected materials were processed by the means of the methods of the speaking ethnography, discourse analysis, content analysis, the biographical method, the analysis of the formation and functioning of the mental space, the life story of the objects, the object-population theory and the custom-research methods. The analysis proceeded along the following terms: memory, local history, urbanization, hero, cult, modern myth, narratives, narrative identity.

The work elaborates the course of the analysis in every era of the myth-versions and the narratives based on the opportunities offered by the resources. On this basis, it is possible to distinguish four eras: the first one is the time of the primary urbanization from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; during the research of this age the image distributed in the media about George Bernády and the urbanization, the expectations of the media were outlined; the second is the period between the completion of George Bernády's first mayoralty and the date of his death, in which the way the historic events influenced the image of the cult hero and his activity was revealed; in the third period I have discussed both the time of the Hungarian authority between 1940 and 1944 and the long period of the subsequent Communist regime, during which time, due to the restriction of the experiencing the national identity, only a moderate degree of display of the local history took place; respectively the fourth period, the real time of the cult of

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George Bernády, the period that lasts since 1989 up to this date, which is characterized by the cult-generation by the political elite according to their purposes.

The result of the research revealed that George Bernády and the urban development from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are episodes of the local history recalled with predilection in every examined period, but it doesn't always stand out among the other historical events as a key element of the local identity. However, every time it fits into some kind of narrative of the public discourse that attempts to tinge the narrative identity. These narratives, in different periods, take their bearings toward the city building, modernization, primary urbanization, the achievement of the middle-class status, the building of the new world, the survival of the Transylvanian Hungarians, the Transylvaniam, the survival as a nation, the adapting to the new government framework, the unity of the community and human values. The narrative identity organized along the mentioned topoi is the construction of the political set. The memory community that adumbrated in the examination of the sources belongs to the local intellectual gremium. In each era this stratum is the one that brings to the surface the narratives, and, according to the possibilities, propagates them. The simple townsfolk are the consumers of the discourses appearing in the media attention, they constitute the so-called audience of the identity-representations.

The aim of the present research was to answer the question where George Bernády's memory and cult belong to: the ranks of the personality cults, political cults, or secular cults? It is definitely the artificial creation of the intellectuals, which approaches in certain elements the cult of the totalitarian systems, national hero cults or star cults. As such, it is also the local representation of the myth of the community. If we consider the appearance of the myth of the community, a wide palette opens up in front of us considering the items around which the myth can be built. Most often, the expression of the myth will be the cult formed around the person of a celebrity born on the settlement. There are very few instances where this person is a town politician; most of the time an illustrious representative of the literary life or a historical personality or memory of an event that is revered on a national scale brings up the same manifestation than that of the memory of George Bernády in Târgu-Mureș. The research of the cult of city politicians is still evolving. This is the reason why the subject of this research is a particular phenomenon in its character, since, in local dimensions, we speak about the respect for a person whose cult is able to satisfy the demands for the previously listed narratives.

The present work wishes to set an example for the analysis of the remembrance of such local historical heroes.