

Doctoral Dissertation

**Images of Distance and Closeness: The Ottomans in Sixteenth-Century Hungarian
Vernacular Poetry**

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Látom, hogy nagy sokan krónikákat írnak,
Hatalmas uraknak életekről szólnak,
Erős vitézeknek halálokról írnak,
Sok veszedelmekről, hadakról tanítanak.

Azoknak írások kedvesek uraknál,
Látom, gyönyörűség az írástudóknál,
Nemesnél, községnél és sok tanítóknál,
Az elmúlt időkről, hogy szép dolgokat hall.¹

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the current work is to offer a detailed analysis of the manners in which Ottomans were represented in sixteenth-century Hungarian literature, in particular in vernacular Hungarian literary discourses. The “Turks” often appeared in various forums of cultural discourse and public discussion in Hungary as the stereotypical enemy, which image was nourished by religious texts (both Protestant and Catholic) and historiographical sources. At the same time, descriptions of campaigns of the constantly expanding Ottoman Empire provided new kinds of information and experience. Further, under the Ottoman rule there were longer periods when the Ottomans and Hungarians lived together through necessity, not in an explicitly peaceful, but in a balanced relationship, creating a unique platform of cultural exchange between the occupiers and the occupied. In more or less peaceful periods – for instance, between the “fortress campaign” of Suleyman (1549–66) and the Long Turkish War (1593–1606) – the everyday interactions of Ottomans and Hungarians were determined by a peculiar mix of rivalry and curiosity towards each other in both military acts and cultural encounters.

This novel experience resulted in novel perceptions. The representations of the Ottomans varied

¹ “I see many chronicles written, / About the lives of great lords, / And deaths of strong soldiers, / Teaching about perils and armies. // These writings are enjoyed by the lords, / And they amuse literates, / Nobles, communes and teachers, / To hear about nice things about past times.” Lőrinc Vajdakamarási, *A jövődő rettenetes ítélet napjáról*, 1-8.

along several axes: they were dependent on the cultural and social context; on the author who created or mediated the image, and on the audience for whom the image was made; and on the depicted subject. The goal of this dissertation is to analyze the features, similarities and differences presented by different authors for different audiences: I aimed at collecting and analyzing depictions of Ottomans in poetically constructed texts in the vernacular Hungarian literature of the sixteenth century Hungary. Due to the spread of the printing press and Protestantism, transformations of language and literacy, and because of other developments that will be addressed later, the second half of the sixteenth century corresponds to the period in Hungarian cultural history when vernacular literature emerged and its specific forms and rules evolved. The analysis of the representational patterns of Ottomans and their contextualization has the potential to help reconstruct this process.

1. 1. Definitions and Limitations

To clarify the boundaries of the project, definitions and limitations can be applied through the terms of the title. The term “Ottoman” refers to groups of people or individuals who were, or were considered to be related to the Ottoman Empire by religious, ethnic, military, political, linguistic, or by other kinds of criteria by those who observed them. For contemporary authors, but also for today’s observers, “Turkishness was a multifaceted and changing identity,” as Norman Housley put it.² The terms “poetry” and “literature” are used in this work reflecting the transitional character of the concepts: in the sixteenth century vernacular literature just started to acquire its own forms and norms. The contemporary concept of literature was multifaceted: literature fulfilled various functions, such as education, memorization and entertainment, however, the function of aesthetic experience had not been yet formulated. Accordingly, every written source belongs to the wider concept of literature. One may narrow the corpus based on formal criteria: the distinction of prosaic and versified forms seems an adequate approach. However, as the clear differentiation of epic and

² Norman Housley, “The Three Turks,” in *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

lyric genres was a process that also had not been concluded yet, there is substantial overlapping of literary forms and functions. Taking into consideration these features, an articulate definition of the main source corpus for the research is based on form, function and subject: the corpus I study consists of versified texts with various subjects (narrative or religious content), all of which reflect on the Ottoman presence in Hungary. This corpus consists of approx. 160 items,³ a number that is sufficient to find representational patterns.

In the course of the sixteenth century, Hungary had been subject to constant changes along its borders, therefore, the geographical framework for the research reflects these shifting conditions. First of all, special attention is to be paid to the defense line and the border areas, which had a special cultural milieu as the result of constant military movements and diverse cultural influences. The frontier zone, being transitional between two or more states politically, was also transitional in the manners of interactions of its population.⁴ Trade, taxation, military encounters and cultural practices connected people in the border zone. In the case of the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, the actual demarcation line was only a theoretical construction, while in practice, the border was a wider zone, the limits of which were marked by fortifications. This is why fortress sieges characterized the profile of Ottoman expansion, and on occasion, defined the character of entire campaigns, such as in the case of the “fortress wars” between 1549 and 1566. Everyday interactions with the Turks created a unique type of cultural discourse based on different types of relations ranging from fighting to fraternities. At the same time, despite the division of the former kingdom into three parts, Hungarian cultural discourse did not cease to exist. Rather, each geographical unit developed its own patterns of representation and discourse. Therefore, texts from all of the parts of tripartite Hungary: Transylvania, Royal Hungary and the Ottoman Hungary will be considered.

The idea of Hungary as an entity also requires clarification. The kingdom had a heterogenous

³ A list of primary sources is presented in the bibliography.

⁴ Mark L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Fronts and Garrisons in Europe*. (London, New York: Tauris, 2007)., 5–6, 14. He also refers to the frontier thesis of Turner, according to what the frontier is the location of the process of expansion and social transformation.

profile with multiple ethnicities, languages and traditions even before the administrative division,⁵ and the decades after the Battle of Mohács (1526) brought substantial realignment in all territories. With the appearance of Ottoman administration and the *dhimmi* status⁶ of Hungary, various local legal structures remained, and allowed semi-autonomous governance.⁷ As a natural consequence of the multilingual, multiethnic, multiconfessional, socially and culturally layered population of Hungary, the contemporary notion of *patria* mirrored complex identities. The notion of nation and *patria* were based on estates (social order) and ethnicity, thus the concept reflected political, legal, and ethnic/confessional identities, while its utilization does not seem to have had a coherent, homogenous practice. Although the concepts of nation and of Hungary as an entity do not seem to have been disturbed by the Ottoman presence,⁸ discourses concerning the role of Hungary as the defender of Christendom resulted in the creation of a strong frontier ideology that defined processes of self-identification.

The temporal parameters of the work is also determined by multiple factors: on the one hand, one should take into consideration the particularities of the Ottoman presence in Hungary, and on the other, the set of sources that reflected this presence. The rule of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520–66) represents the era of the most important changes for the Hungarian Kingdom: the process of the division of the kingdom into three parts, the spread of diverse reformed confessions and the solidification of narrative literary traditions all belong to this time frame. The period also coincides with the peak of conquests of the Ottoman Empire, followed by the first signs of changes in the previously successful structures (e.g. the *timar* system⁹). We have relatively few vernacular

⁵ The Ottoman Empire was also heterogeneous culturally, having Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Armenian, Catholic and Protestant living traditions within its borders, having many overlaps between them at various areas, for instance, in language. Although each group had its own liturgical language, still, spoken language and oral traditions existed in multiple transitional forms, from social to the ethnic. See Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 8 and 81.

⁶ States conquered by Islamic state entities were entitled to obtain the *dhimmi*, a protected status. Citizens of *dhimmi* states were not obliged to take Islam and could keep their religions and parts of their legislative structures.

⁷ Pál Fodor, *A szultán és az aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 17 and Ferenc Szakály, *Mezőváros és reformáció (Oppidum and Reformation)* (Budapest: Balassi, 1995), 422.

⁸ Márton Zászkaliczky, lecture delivered at the conference on the future directions of Hungarian literary history, held at MTA ITI (Institute for Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 18 March 2015 (RefoRC event).

⁹ As a compensation for military service, certain layers of the Ottoman military organization were entitled to obtain land grants (*timar*) that provided them income.

sources from the first few decades of Suleyman's rule, but these will all be taken into consideration. The period, however, that has the most relevance for the research coincides with the "fortress wars"¹⁰ of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary (1549–66). Thus, focus falls on these decades, but on occasion, texts originating after this period will be included in the analysis from later decades of the sixteenth century as well.

Finally, a series of omissions must be discussed, concerning mostly groups of sources that would have been profitable to deal with, but their discussion goes beyond the limits of the current work: the analysis does not deal with Ottoman equivalents of representational practices, although a comparative approach would be inevitably valid and pertinent. Because of the focus of the research on vernacular literature, I will deal with Latin sources only on an occasional basis, mostly in discussions of the European context; pictorial representational practices, and the detailed discussion of the role of visual transmission are omitted from the research. Concerning genres, traditions that had a great role in forming discourses on the Ottomans, such as chronicles and travelogues, as the primary focus of the research is on versified, vernacular narratives, are also going to be more scarcely represented among the sources.

1. 2. Theory and Methodology

1. 2. 1. Traditions of Reflecting the "Other"

Representational practices of which Ottomans were subjects, have often been investigated within the framework of discourses on the "other." With regard to the relations of literature and representation, Stephen Riggins claimed that "any form of writing is considered to be a selection, an interpretation, and a dramatization of events. All representations of events are *polysemic*—that is, ambiguous and unstable in meaning – as well as a mix of 'truth' and 'fiction.'"¹¹ Representations of

¹⁰ Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century*, tr. Thomas J. DeKornfeld and Helen DeKornfeld (Boulder: Distributed by the Columbia University Press, 2009), 49.

¹¹ Stephen H. Riggins, "The Rhetoric of Othering," in *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse*, ed. Stephen H. Riggins (Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage, 1997), 2. In the use of the term "discourse," I rely on Riggins's survey of definitions, that include "traditional" ("statement or an utterance longer than a sentence"), intertextual (all statements are *intertextual* because they interpreted against a backdrop of other events") and sociolinguistic ("language used in interpreting a given social practice from a particular point of view") approaches.

actions and events dealing with “others” involve value judgments, social distance (physical and psychological) and knowledge of the other’s culture.¹² In many practices, “others” tend to be seen as a homogenous category, except for the few persons who were known personally to authors and their audiences – and often, these individuals did not represent attributed features of the whole group. All in all, the process of othering may be seen as a “myth-making” enterprise that tells more about the observer than the observed,¹³ as the party outside of the hegemonic power structures, the subaltern is not part of the discourse per se. Narratives describing “others” and “us,” often hold their specific linguistic features and language use, such as expressions revealing boundaries of self and other: inclusive and exclusive pronouns and possessives (we–they, us–them, ours–theirs), stereotypical imagery that has a repetitive and often contradictory nature, and an unconscious dimension functioning as an apparatus of power.

The approach had been applied to various historical contexts, from the classical beginnings of East–West clash of cultures.¹⁴ The founding work of the Orientalist approach, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* regards the Orient as a European invention,¹⁵ a false, tortured, romanticized image of the East that was created alongside the colonization processes of European powers. In this manner, his concept is mostly valid for the great colonization era of the 18th century; however, certain elements of the idea are traceable in previous eras. The concept of the Orient had been a tool in the self-identification of Europe (or the West) “as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience.”¹⁶ Orientalism, in Said’s definition, is a discourse in the Foucauldian sense, built on the concept of hegemony (i.e., power exerted by a dominant group) of Europe. Although the scope of Said’s investigations was restricted explicitly to the French, British and American experiences of the Orient¹⁷ (more narrowly, of the Islam and the Arab world), his concept had been applied to various other contexts too, leading to considerable criticism. While discussing the antecedents of

¹² Riggins, “The Rhetoric of Othering,” 5.

¹³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁴ Robert Irwin, “The Clash of Ancient Civilizations,” in *Dangerous Knowledge. Orientalism and Its Discontents* (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2008), 9.

¹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 16.

“classical” Orientalism, Said refers to Robert Southern stating that before the eighteenth century, Europe’s understanding of Islam was ignorant but complex, and was built on certain modes of discussion and thesaurus of topoi. Medieval discussions of Islam as a heresy echoes Western dominance of power according to Said, and discourse on it was characterized in terms of Christianity. The main difference of discourses about the Orient – meaning Arabs in the medieval and the Ottomans in the Renaissance context – was that in the latter, there were attempts to present Orient and Europe on the same stage.¹⁸

Critics of Said often claim that he neglected important periods and historical regions in the study of discourses about the Orient, resulting in misrepresentations of whole eras and their attitudes;¹⁹ and even when he had dealt with these eras, for instance, with medieval representational practices, he relied too heavily on a binary opposition, while the traditional medieval world image was tripartite, based on the tradition connected to Shem, Ham and Japheth that lost its importance only in the fourteenth century.²⁰ The integration of the medieval times into postcolonial theory had been approved by many scholars, based on the argument that postcolonialism is relevant in any time and space where one social group dominates another, therefore, the theory should be expanded to wider frames.²¹

1. 2 .2 Traditions of Presenting the Ottomans

Regarding the specific context of reactions to the Ottoman world, Said also received criticism for supposing a consistent body of thought and experience of the “other” instead of a mix of negative and positive ideas.²² The results of Said were questioned by many scholars from various

¹⁸ Ibid., 55, 61. See Robert W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

¹⁹ Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge*, 4.

²⁰ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation,” in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 19–21.

²¹ Cohen, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, introduction, 3–5. See also Daniel J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe,” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of the Other*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks, (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1999), 207–30.

²² Aslı Çırakman, *From the “Terror of the World” to the “Sick Man of Europe”. European Images of the Ottoman Empire, from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 8–10.

perspectives: Jonathan Burton demonstrated that early modern English drama had a more multifaceted representational palette of Ottomans on stage than it was previously supposed, “from others to brothers.”²³ Critics of Said, such as Robert Irwin and Asli Çırakman demonstrated on medieval and early modern source material that representational patterns were manifold, knowledge of the Orient was more complex than it had been supposed. This is particularly true for the Ottoman Empire and its representations, as the Ottomans were important cultural, economic and military allies of many powers in the West, such as France and England – exactly the same states that were claimed to have been the most ignorant by Said. Furthermore, according to Çırakman, Said regarded every representation a misrepresentation, when he claimed that the image is always being distorted by hegemonic discourse and Western superiority, the representations are always interwoven with traditions. Instead, in Çırakman’s view, one should suppose a possibility of an objective reality that can be traced from the sources, as in this context, many works are experience- and not tradition-based, with a lack of a unified (except Christianity) tradition and parlance.²⁴

Apart from the specific context of crusading traditions, Said claimed that Islam was often regarded with ignorance in the middle ages, lacking harsh opposing attitudes towards Muslims as “others,” and simply acknowledging them as heretics, such as the examples of Bede the Venerable, or representatives of “high” literature, e.g. Dante²⁵ testifies. Scientific interest in Arabic was institutionalized after the council of Vienne (1311–12 – Said regarded this point as the start of the formal existence of Orientalism), when Arabic was introduced in university curricula on the propagation of Roger Bacon. Later, descriptions of the lands of Islam, marvels and curiosities of the Orient (John Mandeville) reached wide audiences and enjoyed great popularity, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, travelogues into the Ottoman Empire had a great role in creating a new pattern of representing the Orient and organizing ethnographic knowledge, relying on empirical

²³ Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 12 and 15. Under previous works not acknowledging the more complex system of depictions, Burton implied, first and foremost, the works of Samuel Chew (*The Crescent and the Rose*, 1937).

²⁴ Daniel J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe,” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of the Other*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1999), 208.

²⁵ Irwin, “An Ancient Heresy or a New Paganism,” in *Dangerous Knowledge*, 42.

observations and focusing on social organization to a greater extent, obviously influenced by the society structures owned by the observer.²⁶ The change is hallmarked by the works of O. G. Busbecq, Nicolas de Nicolay, Guillaume Postel and also representatives of captives who wrote synthetic accounts on the Ottoman Empire – Georgius de Hungaria, Bartholomaeus Georgievits, and others. Fear of the Turks (Türkenfurcht) determined representational practices of Turcica literature of Western Europe²⁷ spread mostly in the new medium of prints. The image mediated in these narratives was developed in close relationship with landmark events, such as decisive battles and sieges²⁸ and it included references to extraordinary concentration of power and aggressiveness – giving rise to the concept of propugnaculum Christianitatis (“the shield of Christendom”) at clash territories (Hungary, Venice, Rhodes).

Representational practices of humanists to regard Turks as barbarians look back to a tradition rooted in antique discussions about the *barbaricum*. Turks had to be redefined in classical terms, and this process involved the stretching of ancient models to fit the contemporary framework.²⁹ In these discourses, Ottomans were paralleled with the invaders of Rome in late antiquity (e.g. by Leonardo Bruni³⁰), and the fall of Constantinople with the fall of Rome.

It may seem a truism, but reflections on the enemy tend to become more frequent after greater battles or other decisive encounters; accordingly, knowledge about the Turks came in waves. To give an example from early humanism, reactions after the battle of Kosovo polje gave space to speculations and interpretative attempts to identify and evaluate the Ottomans within the frames of

²⁶ Almut Höfert, “The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat: The Conceptualisation of Islam in the Rise of Occidental Anthropology in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space*, ed. Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore (Multiple Europe 14. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2005), 40–43.

²⁷ Yoko Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 17 (1993), 128.

²⁸ Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 132. See also Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, “Coexistence and Religion,” in *Archivum Ottomanicum*, ed. György Hazai (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1997), 119–120.

²⁹ Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 43–47. See also Nancy Bisaha, “‘New Barbarian’ or Worthy Adversary? Humanist Constructs of the Ottoman Turks in Fifteenth-Century Italy,” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of the Other*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1999), 188–91, and Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge*, 13–19.

³⁰ Leonardo Bruni, *Arratini Epistolarum*, 196. The use of “barbarian” with regard to Islam looks back a long tradition also in the middle ages, as Andrew Holt, “Crusading against Barbarians: Muslims as Barbarians in Crusades Era Sources,” in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013) claims.

existing traditions – and also to renew these traditions. The most decisive among these milestone-type events was inevitably the fall of Constantinople, an event that changed the course of humanist discussion: medieval topoi and concepts, such as brutality or crusade came to the light and were combined with classical traditions (for instance, Piccolomini wrote about the rape of royal maiden in the Hagia Sophia by Mehmed II, recalling the story of Aeneas deflorating Priam's daughter³¹) and laments over the loss of Greek culture.

The genealogy of Turks had also been a central issue in European humanist discourses: there were more interpretations of their origins, such as the concept that related them to the Trojans³² (hallmarked by Salutati), or the idea that they originate from Scythians (this concept became more popular after 1453, when the 'barbarity' of the Ottomans became more commonly referred to, marking also their nomadic origins with the concept; the idea was proclaimed by Piccolomini, Filelfo, Ficino and others). Distorted versions of these concepts also appeared in discourses with the change of attitudes, as the case of Cardinal Bessarion illustrates. He wrote that "they are not *teuceri* (Turks) but rather *truces* (butchers)."³³

The distinction of barbarians from the literate, humanist world can obviously be interpreted within the framework of postcolonial theory; many studies have emphasized the role of the Ottomans in the formation of the self-identity of Europe.³⁴ Also, in humanist discourses, multiple attempts can be interpreted within the given conceptual frames as actions to domesticate, unalienate the Turks, such as the letter written by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini to Mehmed II aiming to convert him to Christianity.³⁵

³¹ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 65.

³² Ibid., 56. See also Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008); Emőke Rita Szilágyi, "Teuceri sive Turci. Egy ideologikus elnevezés története a 15. századi latin nyelvű művekben (Teuceri Sive Turci. The History of an Ideologized Appellation in Latin Works of the 15th Century)," in *Identitás és kultúra a török hódoltság korában (Identity and Culture in Ottoman Hungary*, ed. Pál Ács and Júlia Székely, 283–98.

³³ *Expugnatio Constantinopolitana* (1455), ed. Sensi, 1971–72, 430.

³⁴ Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 84–86; Jack Goody, *Islam in Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 16; Çirakman, "From the 'Terror of the world' to the 'Sick man of Europe,'" 7.

³⁵ As a recent study revealed, the letter can be interpreted as a rhetorical contribution in the process of self-fashioning of the Pope and the creation of the self-image of Latin Christianity. See Özden F. Mercan, "Constructing a Self-Image in the Image of the Other: Pope Pius II's Letter to Sultan Mehmed II," in *Practicing Coexistence. Constructions of the Other in Early Modern Perception*, eds. Marianna Birnbaum and Marcell Sebők (Budapest: CEU Press, 2016).

After the emergence of reformed religious ideas that criticized the Catholic Church intensely, Islam had also often been used to call attention to misconducts of the Church, preeminently, to argue against the papacy, calling attention to the attributed violent and corrupted nature of both systems. Although these motives were extensively used by Protestant theologians (e.g. Luther),³⁶ the argument was not exclusively a Protestant one: Guillaume Postel³⁷ – although he cannot be considered a dogmatic Catholic – also built his arguments on the similarities of Islam and Protestantism.³⁸ A fundamental issue of discourses was the question of Christian unity in the fights against the Ottoman Empire: various factors, such as papal schisms and alliances with the Ottoman Empire put unified actions in hazard. As a counterexample, authors often praised particular features of the Ottomans, especially their discipline, unity, and governance, and treated the Ottoman Empire as a symbol of a strong state.

1. 3. The Hungarian Context

1. 3. 1. Possible Approaches

In order to research on Hungarian sources with regard to the representations of the Ottomans, one must take into consideration the particularities of the contemporary source material and its context, along with the current approaches of scholarship. The transitional character of sixteenth-century Hungarian literature had already been referenced in brief: hence, scholarship on early modern literature in Hungary appears to be in a similarly shifting phase, seeking for theoretical and methodological framework that would provide means for the creation of a new synthesis of early modern Hungarian history of literature.³⁹ Various approaches have been raised as a possible grounding for such a grand narrative, including anthropology focusing on scribal habits and the study of the book as a biographic object (Zsombor Tóth); taking the *oeuvre*, the literary work (not identical with its text), as the fundament (Péter Kőszeghy); focusing on usus and education (often

³⁶ Irwin, “An Ancient Heresy or a New Paganism,” 49.

³⁷ Alcorani seu legis Mahometi et Evangelistum concordiae liber, 1543.

³⁸ Irwin, “Renaissance Orientalism,” in *Dangerous Knowledge*, 70.

³⁹ “Az értelmezés hatalma I–III” (The Power of Interpretation I–III), conference series at the MTA ITI (Institute for Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 18 March 2015, 6 April 2016 (RefoRC event).

referred as the “Tarnai school” – Sándor Bene); hermeneutics, i.e., history of ideas (the last attempt for a methodological synthesis on Hungarian literary history a decade ago was built on this approach); cultural studies and New Historicism, focusing on the fragmentary nature of early modern literature; cultural history (Pál Ács); history of emotions, that is the role of literature as a mediator between social and psychical systems (Gyula Laczházi); literary theory and literary analysis; focusing on one idea as an organizing power of literature, such as humanism (Farkas Gábor Kiss) or formation of the concept of nation (Márton Zászkaliczky). The discourse is still ongoing, however, a suggestion by Gábor Kecskeméti proposes a multidisciplinary approach focusing on the literary nature of texts.⁴⁰

In connection with the Ottoman rule in Hungary in particular, the postcolonial approach, combined with the framework of New Historicism (focusing on the fragmentary nature of literature, reality *as* text, and narratives of power [and power of narratives]) was applied to the context of Hungary and the Ottoman campaigns by various scholarly works,⁴¹ referring to the hybridity of the culture that was formed in the era. However, many features of the vernacular Hungarian tradition (for instance, the oeuvre of great authors such as Bálint Balassi) do not seem to fit the approach.⁴² Another framework that strongly influenced historiography of the Ottoman Empire in the past decades was suggested first by Fernand Braudel, to study the history of the Ottomans integrated into the history of the Mediterranean as a unit.⁴³ This “Europeanisation” of the study of the Ottoman Empire and of the states related to it was opposed by a considerable number of scholars, who questioned the applicability of the framework for all structures that were connected with the Ottomans, and accused the approach of neglecting the specificities of certain contexts, for instance, the differences in the types of contacts between the Mediterranean regions (where contacts were

⁴⁰ Gábor Kecskeméti, “Az MTA BTK Irodalomtudományi Intézetében elkészítendő magyar irodalomtörténet megalapozása,” *ItK* 118 (2014): 747–783.

⁴¹ See Spiegel, “The Past as Text. The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography,” esp. 15–16.

⁴² Lecture of Sándor Bene at the conference on the future directions of Hungarian literary history, held at MTA ITI (Institute for Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), 18 March 2015 (RefoRC event)

⁴³ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et Le Monde Méditerranéen à L'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: A. Colin, 1949). A more recent example, Barbara Fuchs, “Imperium Studies: Theorizing Early Modern Expansion,” in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval through Modern*, ed. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michael R. Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

more continuous in nature) and of regions North of the Alps.⁴⁴

1. 3. 2. The Challenges of Orality and Literacy

Among the possible approaches that had been raised as possible groundings for a synthesis of Hungarian history of literature surveyed above, I detect an absence of a particular framework that cannot be excluded from the study of the early modern Hungarian context. As the first systematic recordings of literature in the vernacular are connected to this era, texts are connected to oral traditions by myriads of ties – irrespective of their actual manner of composition. It is self-evident that all that is left from the literature of the era exists only in writing,⁴⁵ and one can make only presumptions regarding the contemporary oral traditions, the structures of mediatory forms between solely oral and written texts, or preceding versions of sources that were finalized in a written form. Still, the investigation of the source material focusing on their oral and literate features offers insight not only into processes of formation and establishment of vernacular literary forms, but into the genealogy of concepts of reflecting the “other” and the literary formations of a massive military presence. The Ottoman expansion and events connected to it indeed marked an epic moment in the development of vernacular literature in both senses of the term.⁴⁶ The textualization of events had a foundation that relied on orality, but this form was actualized in manner that was shaped also by new media (printing) and new conceptual frameworks (reformed religious ideas).

Forms and functions of oral literature in folklore were investigated by multiple theoretical schools of literature, such as the Prague school or Russian formalism.⁴⁷ The basic distinction in the study of medialities is the one of orality and literacy, two different ways of conceptualizing reality

⁴⁴ Albrecht Classen, *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 16.

⁴⁵ Karl Reichl, “Plotting the map of medieval oral literature,” in *Medieval Oral Literature* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 3.

⁴⁶ Remnants of the Ottoman presence were preserved in orality for centuries: in the collective memory of the village of Berkifalu, the story of their fleeing from Bosnia and pillage by the Turks of Kanizsa was told to officials in 1762. István György Tóth, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), 87.

⁴⁷ John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition. History and Methodology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), ix.

and of structuring knowledge, both aiming to maintain cultural memory.⁴⁸ It was Milman Parry and his student Albert Lord who, originally for the purpose to identify the extent of orality in Homeric texts, established and developed oral-formulaic theory, a methodological tool for the study of oral cultures. Their central notion in identifying oral cultures is the formula, defined as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea,” “the offspring of the marriage of thought and sung verse.”⁴⁹ They describe the formula as a form capable of change and flexibility, and being the basic composing element of metrical lines of oral epic songs, that is, “narrative poetry [was] composed in a manner evolved over many generations by singers of tales who did not know how to write.”⁵⁰ Basically, formulas are linguistic repetitions, solidified forms of expressions, following the same basic patterns and syntax; by the same principle, the same concept on the level of events, scenes described in narratives are named themes in oral-formulaic theory.⁵¹ A similar compositional technique is preserved in folk tales, the structure of which is a result of the process of assembling a given set of elements, filling up a structural slot by a set of components.⁵² The set of formulas and themes builds up from the repositories of individual singers, however, particular elements of a repertoire may appear also in other repertoires of the tradition, thus, they may have smaller or bigger intersections. At the same time, certain groups have a distinctive set of formulas and themes, such as Christian and Muslim groups of Southern Slavic oral tradition (the oral tradition of South Slavic people was investigated

⁴⁸ Reichl, *Medieval Oral Literature*, 13 and 15. See also Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Routledge, 1982), and Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, tr. Henry Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Carlo Ginzburg, *Wooden Eyes: Nine Reflections on Distance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 4. and 31, developing the original definition of Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse. The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 272. The characteristics of oral cultures were identified by Walter J. Ong, *Interfaces of the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 102 as having formulaic expressions, standardized themes, identification through epithets, use of ceremonial characters, formulaic appropriation of history, cultivation of praise and copiousness. See also Tom Pettitt, “Textual to Oral: The Impact of Transmission on Narrative Word-Art,” in *Oral History of the Middle Ages. The Spoken Word in Context*, (Krems and Budapest: Medium Aevum Quotidianum and Department of Medieval Studies, CEU, 2001), 25–28.

⁵⁰ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 4.

⁵¹ Ibid., 47.

⁵² Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*, x. See also Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, tr. Laurence Scott (University of Texas Press, 1968), as a methodological founding.

by Parry and Lord in detail).⁵³

Because composition and performance in oral poetry occurs simultaneously, every single performance is a separate song.⁵⁴ Transplanting this concept to the context of early modern Hungarian literature and its written records, Iván Horváth and the *Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne* (RPHA) regards the encounter of a text and a book/manuscript as the basic record of the database.⁵⁵ In the corpus of the current research, there are cases of overlaps of oral and written traditions, as sources are definitely not clearly oral type – as Lord defined oral poetry, learning, composition and performance were all supposed to be oral⁵⁶ –, but transitional: texts were composed in writing, but especially in the case of popular works, they were based on oral traditions (using thematic and linguistic formulas, i.e., a string of identical building blocks, texts have multiple variations, they refer often to the audience), their transmission might have happened on the basis of aural reception, but also by silent reading, and it could also happen that the singer was able to provide a printed version of the text to the audience.⁵⁷ As Lord claimed, the appearance of written traditions might break formulas and formula patterns; and in the moment when this break occurs on intention, there is the creation of the “literary technique.”⁵⁸ When talking about literacy, one should always assess the given context of education and language to be able to apply theories about oral and written traditions, as the language of writing differs from the spoken; however, in most historical contexts, one has written records exclusively.⁵⁹ In medieval societies, many sectors of life were predominantly oral; still, traces of orality and formulaic diction can be investigated only

⁵³ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 49. See also John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 11–15.

⁵⁴ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 4, 13.

⁵⁵ Iván Horváth, “Egy műfaj halála (The Death of a Genre),” in *Az irodalomtörténet esélye: Irodalomelméleti tanulmányok (The Chances of Literary History: Studies in Literary Theory)*, ed. András Veres, Gábor Bezecsky, and László Varga, (Budapest: Gondolat, 2004).

⁵⁶ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 5.

⁵⁷ Reichl, “Plotting the map of medieval oral literature,” 17, Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 27, and Maria Craciun, Ovidiu Ghitta, and Graeme Murdock, eds., *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe*, 6–8.

⁵⁸ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 130.

⁵⁹ Michael Richter, “Beyond Goody and Grundmann,” in *Oral History of the Middle Ages. The Spoken Word in Context*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Michael Richter (Krems and Budapest: Medium Aevum Quotidianum and Department of Medieval Studies, CEU, 2001), 12.

through written sources.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the use of the verb “read” in this context is by no means self-evident, as the manner in which the reception of literature took place was not straightforward. For instance, one often observes the presence of indications of melody accompanying the texts, apparently providing evidence that the songs were composed to be sung, i. e., to be read aloud. Yet by the end of the sixteenth century this kind of indication had become conventional practice and did not necessarily imply that the poem was actually intended to be sung.

In the context of early modern Hungarian literature, there are certain features that point to the oral origins of written works. These include parallelisms on various levels, from ideas through phrasal expressions to alliterations – even in works that were translated from Latin.⁶¹ The formation of lay literacy may be taken to the thirteenth century in Hungary. This literate layer arose from clergy (as the word *diák* – diaconus gives evidence), but later the term referred to anyone who had some kind of Latin literacy. By the fourteenth century, *litteratus* denoted both clerical and lay (domestic, not university-level) schooling.⁶² In the middle ages, literacy was needed for nobility only for the assurance of their rights, everything else, like history of their families, accounts of important events, etc. existed orally. This attitude changed only after the Battle of Mohács, when all official genres appeared in the vernacular.⁶³

According to Tibor Klaniczay, the development of Hungarian as a vernacular literary language belongs to the type (together with Polish or Scandinavian traditions) where the seeds of vernacular literature are to be found in orality⁶⁴ – as opposed to traditions with a strong written vernacular basis or the type of culture with no vernacular traditions at all. The process of the spread of

⁶⁰ Reichl, “Plotting the map of medieval oral literature.” 8.

⁶¹ Andor Tarnai, *A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik. Irodalmi gondolkodás a középkori magyarországon (The Beginnings of Vernacular Hungarian in Writing. Literary Thinking in Medieval Hungary)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984), 233 and Tibor Klaniczay, “Az ősi magyar epika (The Old Hungarian Epic),” in *Hagyományok ébredése (Awakening Traditions)* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1976), 105.

⁶² Rabán Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei (The Beginnings of Hungarian Secular Lyric Poetry)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1962), 24.

⁶³ Erik Fügedi, “Verba volant... Középkori nemességünk szóbelisége és az írás (Verba Volant... The Orality of Medieval Nobility and Writing),” in *Kolduló barátok, polgárok, nemesek. Tanulmányok a középkorról (Mendicant Friars, Burghers, Nobles. Studies on the Middle Ages)* (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), 461.

⁶⁴ Tibor Klaniczay, “A reformáció szerepe az anyanyelvű irodalmak fejlődésében (The Role of Reformation in the Development of Vernacular Literatures),” in *Hagyományok ébredése (Awakening Traditions)* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1976), 299.

vernacular linguistic and stylistic toolkits was helped by the program of Protestant churches that propagated rituals, sermons, congregational singing and the study of the Bible on the vernacular, resulting also in the first systematic works on vernacular languages in the forms of grammars and orthographies (the first grammar of Hungarian was John Sylvester's *Grammatica Hungarolatina*, 1539; the first orthography was written by Mátyás Dévai Bíró: *Orthographia Vngarica*, 1549).⁶⁵

By the end of the sixteenth century, the quantity of publications in Hungarian had grown significantly, including secular works. This increase reflects the growth of a non-professional, lay readership that went hand in hand with a generally higher level of literacy. Among works addressing a wider audience, the rise of literary texts was significant.⁶⁶ Regarding the social status of the readers, it can be stated that the majority of the works under consideration here were not intended for an urban audience as most civic burghers were German-speaking. Publications in Hungarian were therefore aimed at other lay people, such as inhabitants of market towns or affluent farmers. However, after 1601 this flourishing of literature came to a sudden halt and the dissemination of literary works decreased, as authors addressed a smaller segment of the nobility thereafter instead of a wider public.⁶⁷

In everyday life, linguistic plurality also influenced the wide discrepancy between oral and written forms of communication: function and usage determined language choices.⁶⁸ On occasion, each language in circulation fulfilled a different role, that could also change with time: Latin was of the highest prestige, the language of offices and elite literature, but from the fourteenth century onwards, Latin became a mediatory language in urban space, while at the same time, vernacular appeared in literature, and in legal and political use.⁶⁹ Similarly, and also as a consequence, the use

⁶⁵ Ibid., 306–08.

⁶⁶ The number of published works doubled, with popular literary texts increasing fourteenfold between 1571 and 1600, whereas religious works decreased from 60% to 42% of the overall number of publications. Katalin Péter, “Romlás és szellemi műveltség állapotaiban a 17. század fordulóján (Decay and Intellectual Culture at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century).” *Történelmi Szemle* 27, no. 1–2 (1984), 88–9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 91–94.

⁶⁸ Szende, “Integration through Language: The Multilingual Character of Late Medieval Hungarian Towns,” esp. 209–11.

⁶⁹ In 1570, 54 % of works printed in Hungary were in Latin, but by 1580, this rate dropped to 20 %. Edit Madas and István Monok, *A könyvkultúra Magyarországon a kezdetektől 1800-ig (Book Culture in Hungary from the Beginnings to 1800)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2003), 198. See also Katalin Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás? (Reformation: to 1800)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2003), 198. See also Katalin Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás? (Reformation: to 1800)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2003), 198.

of a given language was not restricted to a given ethnic group and neither to only one medium: manners of communication determined choice (e.g., German had a role in commerce and crafts, activities that involved mainly oral communication).

1. 4. The Structure of the Thesis

In order to understand the processes of the particular discourses about the Ottomans in Hungary, certain aspects of the religious and military contexts have to be introduced in the further parts of the first chapter. The second chapter investigates the representational practices focusing on Ottoman rulers, putting emphasis on the most representative example of Ottoman rulers, Suleyman the Magnificent, who consciously created a strong political-artistic campaign mediating his claims for universal rule, by the means of artistic projects and patronage, explicit and implicit reinterpretations of Western modes of communicating power, involving also non-Islamic royal status symbols. At the same time, he was the leader of campaigns in Hungary resulting in decisive, grand-scale events such as the Battle of Mohács or the fortress campaign in the middle of the century. The role of the sultan as a protector of tributary states is also emphasized in Hungarian works and will be analyzed in the chapter.

The next chapter investigates issues connected to the various aspects of religion: the confessional layout of Hungary; reflections on Islam as a religion and the interpretative strategies of evaluating the presence and military successes of the Ottomans. The approach is similar to the one that had been applied in the previous chapter, that is, I make an attempt to map the role and ratio of existing, influential traditions such as the Wittenberg concept of history⁷⁰ and eschatological ideas, and to map the new patterns that were formed in vernacular narratives. The discourse on religion had been strongly interconnected with medieval and humanist discourses of the role of countries bordering the enemy. This discussion involves topoi of the “scourge of God” and “propugnaculum

A Force or a Choice?) (Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 2004), 23–24.

⁷⁰ The concept relies on the Bible, and it parallels Old Testament events with contemporary ones as a prefiguration of God’s relationship with the new Church. Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin. The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe’s Reformed Churches, C. 1540–1620* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 118.

Christianitatis,” which had a determining role in the early development of the concept of nationhood.

The last chapter focuses on military interactions. I analyze large-scale campaigns, sieges and battles as they are narrated in various genres, and most representatively, in event poetry. An important question concerns differences between eyewitness accounts and translated accounts of sieges, whether there are “translated attitudes” and traditions in creating representational practices. The apocalyptic imagery present in religious works is also influential in the presentation of military combats, however, although oeuvres of significant authors had been a subject to scholarly discussion,⁷¹ a bigger corpus of event poetry has not yet been investigated to map pattern systems present in battle descriptions or siege depictions. The course of the discussion follows the guideline of reflections from bigger-scale military events through decisive battles and sieges, to finish with narratives that deal with smaller raids that had no decisive role in campaigns and person-against-person combats. This discussion is followed with the analysis of differences in narrating success and defeat, representations of the protagonists of the two sides of military encounters, and the development of the concept of the ideal soldier.

In their structures, the chapter on religious issues and the one on military contacts follow a similar pattern: first, they focus on reflections either on Ottomans or on the consequences of their presence, and then they discuss cases of transfer, go-betweens in either religious or military sense: conversion, renegades, captivity, espionage and alliances are a few such cases.

To conclude, the research maps traditions followed and representational patterns created in sixteenth-century Hungarian poetry produced under the Ottoman rule. I hope to answer the question to what extent the literature of the era follows traditional European patterns of discussions of the Ottomans as “others” or creates new ones: I explore the way these discussions were connected to

⁷¹ For instance, József Jankovics, “Tinódi török-képe (The Image of Turks at Tinódi),” in *Nádasdy Tamás (1498–1562)*, ed. István Söptei (Sárvár: Nádasdy Ferenc Múzeum, 1999); Pál Fodor, “The View of the Turk in Hungary: The Apocalyptic Tradition and the Legend of the Red Apple in Ottoman-Hungarian Context,” in *Les Traditions Apocalyptiques Au Tournant de La Chute de Constantinople*, ed. Benjamin Lellouch and Stephane Yerasimos (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999).

European discourses regarding Muslims, employing the topoi created by this tradition; or whether, as a result of the unique situation of coexistence, Hungarian literature created a new, individual parlance and patterns. The investigation also concerns various social and cultural aspects of language, and the progress of transition from orality into written culture, that was both the result and the means of reflecting decisive events of the era.

Note on notes: if not noted in another way, references are to the critical editions of the sources. When quoting a source, I refer only to the short title of the quoted work, and provide full bibliographical data and basic information about the author and the work in the bibliography. The main text will contain the English version of quotes, originals are in the footnotes. If not indicated differently, the numbering provided in the footnotes refers to the line numbers of sources. Regarding names, I will use the Hungarian names of authors in English ordering, and not the Latinized version of names (although these were widely used in contemporary literature).

1. 5. THE CONTEXT

1. 5. 1. RELIGIOUS CONTEXT AND SETTINGS

In order to be able to discuss religious aspects that are connected to the Ottomans' presence in the territories of the Hungarian Kingdom, various possible aspects should be taken into consideration: the manner in which Islam was observed in practice; the way it was presented and reflected by their subjects in various genres; the reflections that the presence of Islam caused in "inner" Christian discourses and in self-reflections; and finally, modes and forms of mediatory utterances that reflect voluntary and forced go-betweens between the religions: texts produced by or reflecting on renegades and conversion.

In early modernity religion was the primary defining aspect of cultural identity, fundamental in determining paradigms and influential for later patterns of cultural/national/religious identities.⁷² Conflicting dimensions of unitedness and dividedness had been a subject of scholarship for a long time: the strong interference of the Ottoman expansion and the cause of Protestants⁷³ as well as fears emerging from their attributed political and religious similarities were present continuously along with attempts of the Catholic Church to mediate the self-image of *unitas christiana*.⁷⁴ The process of the formation of specific confessions (*Konfessionsbildung*) and their influence on culture and politics (*Konfessionalisierung*) were fundamental factors in building national identities.⁷⁵ Such a system of identity-formation was destined to be prejudiced, and as a consequence, cultural division and hostility, or competition, was more common than cultural exchange between the forming confessions. However, concerning the Ottomans, although official

⁷² William Monter, "Religion and Cultural Exchange, 1400–1700: Twenty-First Century Implications," in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe Vol 1. Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7.

⁷³ Stephen A. Fischer-Galati, *Ottoman Imperialism and German Protestantism, 1521–1555*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 117.

⁷⁴ Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat," 40 and 47.

⁷⁵ Antal Molnár, *Katolikus missziók a hódolt Magyarországon I. (1572–1647) (Catholic Missions in Ottoman Hungary I. 1572–1647)*. Humanizmus és Reformáció 26. (Budapest: Balassi, 2002), 35.

contacts with them were often hostile, connections in everyday life were often cordial,⁷⁶ or at least neutral. As we shall see, the narrative references on religious coexistence resulted in a vivid diversity of narratives.

Confessional Landscape

By the end of the sixteenth century, the new religious ideas were in the state of formation with no strict ritual boundaries.⁷⁷ The tripartite Kingdom of Hungary was divided into even more parts by religions, ethnicities, political entities and social groups, each retaining, or being in the process of creating their own traditions.⁷⁸ Individuals and smaller to bigger scale social groups – for example families, particular troops serving defense castles, or congregations – living in such a cultural-confessional landscape, often out of mere pragmatism, changed sides frequently and started to follow different social/religious practices. Although there is some correspondence between certain ethnicities and their confessions – for instance, the German population of urban communities were early adopters and promoters of the Lutheran confession, while many Hungarian nobles became Calvinists by the end of the sixteenth century – , preferences of particular groups are not self evident, especially not before the seventeenth century. The ethnic composition of the population of Hungary before the sixteenth century was complex on its own, but after the Ottomans advanced into the Balkans and the Southern borders of the Hungarian Kingdom, the population from those lands fled northwards, to Hungary in great numbers, bringing along their own confessional traditions and organizations.⁷⁹ As a consequence of this and of the quick advancement of the Reformation, the sixteenth century saw numerous transitions in religious aspects too, taking the presence of Catholicism (Roman and by the agency of the fleeing Southern Slavic population, Orthodox),

⁷⁶ Schilling and Tóth, “From Empires to Family Circles: Religious and Cultural Borderlines in the Age of Confessionalization,” in *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe Vol 1. Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31 and 39.

⁷⁷ Zoltán Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve (The Language of the Reformation)*. Humanizmus és Reformáció 34. (Budapest: Balassi, 2013.), 19–20. Catechisms became bases of the identification of particular confessions by the end of the century.

⁷⁸ György István Tóth, “Old and New Faith in Hungary, Turkish Hungary, and Transylvania,” in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004).

⁷⁹ Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, 13 and 105.

Lutheranism, Calvinism, Antitrinitarianism, Philippism, Sabbatarianism, Orthodoxy, Judaism, and others in the tripartite country, each developing or restructuring their institutional frameworks, rituals, doctrines and religious hierarchies.⁸⁰ In such a varied social/ethnic/religious situation, language and ethnicity are lacking clues concerning the confessional identification of a given social group.⁸¹ Even in the first half of the seventeenth century, after the establishment of confessional boundaries, commitment to a religion did not necessarily mean determination (for instance, the confession of spouses did not have to be necessarily the same); further, certain aspects of former connections within the society remained and worked with little interruption. With the stabilization of forms and traditions of given confessions and the rise of their exactly articulated confessional boundaries, their cohesion became more powerful and they could develop into religious and cultural systems that was able to be influential for centuries.⁸²

Concerning the origins of reformed religious ideas in Hungary, its roots could be found, as Valery Rees claims,⁸³ at the humanist court of Matthias, where awareness about the corruption of state and church was present and intentionally maintained by a variety of discourses. With the dissemination of Greek classical works in Europe after 1453 – lamented vastly by humanist writers – , scholars turned to Latin works with a more critical attitude, preparing the intellectual groundings

⁸⁰ For instance, appropriate burial and marital rituals, the way of taking the sacraments, fasting, the use of images and statues or the introduction of communion under both kinds were not clearly established in all confessions, and the practice of rituals showed great varieties by the different denominations. Tóth, “Old and New Faith in Hungary,” 208, and Katalin Péter, “A felekezetek felett álló Magyarország a reformáció után (Hungary above Confessions after the Reformation),” in *Felekezetek és identitás Közép-Európában az újkorban (Confessions and Identity in Modern Central Europe)*, ed. Pál Attila Illés (Budapest – Piliscsaba: PPKE–BTK, 1999), 12. On the complexity of the process, see István Keul, *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe: Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania (1526–1691)*. Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions: History, Culture, Religion, Ideas. (Leiden: Brill, 2009). See also Maria Craciun, Ovidiu Ghitta, and Graeme Murdock, “Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity,” in *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Krista Zach, “Protestant Vernacular Catechisms and Religious Reform in Sixteenth-Century East-Central Europe,” in *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe*, ed. Maria Craciun, Ovidiu Ghitta, and Graeme Murdock, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), Edit Szegedi, “A reformáció Kolozsváron (The Reformation in Cluj),” *Keresztény Magvető* 113, no. 1 (2007): 39–51.

⁸¹ Katalin Péter, “A reformáció Magyarországon (Reformation in Hungary),” in *Papok és nemesek. Magyar művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok a reformációval kezdődő másfél évszázadból (Priests and Nobles. Studies on Hungarian Cultural History from the One and a Half Centuries after the Beginning of the Reformation)* (Budapest: Ráday Gyűjtemény, 1995), 16.

⁸² Heinz Schilling, “Confessionalization and the Rise of Religious and Cultural Frontiers in Early Modern Europe,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Cultural Exchange in Europe*, ed. Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (Budapest: CEU – European Science Foundation, 2001), 21.

⁸³ Valery Rees, “Pre-Reformation Changes in Hungary at the End of the Fifteenth Century,” in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Karin Maag (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 19–21.

for greater transformations. The influence of Hussite movements was also crucial not only in preparing the intellectual scene for further religious reforms, but because of their literary activities on the vernacular: Hussites produced one of the first (now lost) vernacular Hungarian Bible translations in the first half of the fifteenth century.⁸⁴

Luther's ideas first spread due to the mediation of German teachers in Buda, and among German townspeople of the Saxon population in Transylvania and Upper Hungary. Luther's teachings were present in Hungary as early as 1520,⁸⁵ and found their way to the royal court by the mediation of German humanists even before the Battle of Mohács: Luther himself wrote a condolence letter to the young widow of Louis II (however, for the royal court, a total break with the papacy had never been an option, as the country heavily relied on financial and military support in anti-Ottoman fights⁸⁶). Because the court of Mary Habsburg favored the new, Evangelical confession, anti-Habsburg branches of nobles were against the new ideas.⁸⁷ This aversion is particularly intriguing as later, with the diffusion of reformed ideas, this tendency turned exactly into its opposite direction, making Protestantism an identifying symbol of anti-Habsburg national opposition.⁸⁸ In the long run, Lutheranism was the most successful in royal towns, and also among the nobles in Western Hungary and the Saxon burghers of Transylvania.⁸⁹

Recognition of the doctrines of Calvin appeared in the early 1550s,⁹⁰ and started to spread in the 1560s⁹¹ among nobility and towns. With time, these doctrines became popular in fortresses along the military frontier – which, considering their ethnic, social and conceptual heterogeneity, were

⁸⁴ Edit Madas, "Huszita Biblia (The Hussite Bible)," in *Magyar Művelődéstörténeti Lexikon (Encyclopaedia of Hungarian Cultural History)*, edited by Péter Kőszeghy (Budapest: Balassi, 2005); György Galamb, "A huszita Biblia és a ferencesek. Megjegyzések az első magyar bibliafordítás kérdéséhez (The Hussite Bible and the Franciscans. Notes to the Question of the First Hungarian Bible Translation)," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 10, no. 2 (2009).

⁸⁵ Keul, *Early Modern Religious Communities*, 47–51. See also Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás?* 61–66; Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve*, 56–101.

⁸⁶ Tóth, "Old and New Faith in Hungary," 211.

⁸⁷ The diet held at Pest in 1524 even created an anti-Lutheran law, ordering the persecution of its followers. Ibid., 206, and David P. Daniel, "Calvinism in Hungary: The Theological and Ecclesiastical Transition to the Reformed Faith," in *Calvinism in Europe*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 210.

⁸⁸ Schilling, "Confessionalization and the Rise of Religious and Cultural Frontiers," 26.

⁸⁹ Craciun, Ghitta and Murdock, "Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity," 19.

⁹⁰ Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve*, 286–297.

⁹¹ Péter Melius Juhász printed the first Reformed catechism based on the Geneve catechism of Calvin in 1562 (Debrecen).

strategically important scenes of Reformation⁹² – , where these ideas could maintain their strong positions for decades.⁹³ The reason for the success of the Calvinist branch of reformed ideas along the borders was probably that its doctrines did not demand confession and last rites before death, in addition, the demonized imagery of the Turks that was primary in the imagery of the religion was a great motivating power for the struggle.⁹⁴ These mentalities lead to the strengthening of the idea of the *propugnaculum/antemurale* role of the country, having a role also in protonationalist identity formation.

In the process of the formation of particular confessions, the branch of ideas tending to rise into Calvinism could counterpoint the rising influence of doctrines of Luther popular in towns, especially by the activities and the growing influence of Western European universities mediated by their alumni.⁹⁵ The radical nature of Zwingli's and Calvin's ideas as opposed to Luther's critiques of the Catholic Church, was its renewal of the forms of mass, of the church calendar and of the church building interiors.⁹⁶ With the appearance of ever newer reformed doctrines, an urgent need appeared for a clear articulation of their differences, and for the identification of doctrines to the smallest details.⁹⁷ This phenomenon designated a new era in the history of Protestantism in Hungary, identified with organizational matters (formation of church hierarchy and governance, the establishment of Protestant bishoprics) and vivid religious disputes in various forms.

The confession that came to be known as Unitarianism after the 1630s, and before was more

⁹² Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve*, 362–63. Important sources of regarding the confessions along the defense line are the biography of Szegedi Kis by Máté Skaricza and the Eger confession, issued in Debrecen 1562.

⁹³ Sándor Őze, “Felekezetváltás a 16. századi végvári katonanépességnél (Change of Confessions among Soldiers of the Defense Castles in the Sixteenth Century),” in *Felekezetek és identitás Közép-Európában az újkorban (Confessions and Identity in Modern Central Europe)*, ed. Pál Attila Illés (Budapest – Piliscsaba: PPKE–BTK, 1999), 26.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹⁵ Karin Maag and Andrew Pettegree, “The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe,” in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Karin Maag, 1–18. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 11. There were more than 1000 students, from Hungary in the Lutheran center of Wittenberg by the end of the sixteenth century, they even had a humanist-neoplatonist organization, called Hungarian Coetus. See Daniel, “Calvinism in Hungary,” 215 and Joachim Bahleke, “Calvinism and Estate Liberation Movements in Bohemia and Hungary (1570–1620),” in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, 72–91. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 81. Popular universities among Calvinists were Heidelberg, later Brandenburg, Bremen, Franeker, Leiden, Groningen and Utrecht. Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin. The Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches, C. 1540–1620*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 43.

⁹⁶ Alastair Duke, “Perspectives on European Calvinism,” in *Calvinism in Europe*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewis (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19.

⁹⁷ Péter, “A reformáció Magyarországon,” 19.

widely referred to as Antitrinitarianism, was established by the Calvinist bishop Ferenc Dávid⁹⁸ in the late 1560s and was acknowledged in 1568 by the edict of Torda as one of the *religio accepta*. The doctrines of Dávid were most widely acknowledged in and around Transylvania, and its representatives were frequent participants of religious debates, and engaged in intense publishing activity. The most essential doctrine connected to Antitrinitarianism was the denial of the threefold nature of God, thus its followers were often accused of being close to Islam not only in religious, but also in a political sense (for instance, preparing secret alliances with the Turks).

Protestant branches obtained an opportunity to gain more influence after the catastrophic losses both in numbers and in rank of the Catholic clergy at Mohács, the weakening of royal power and the rearrangement of the population.⁹⁹ Important mediators of the new doctrines were students returning home from foreign universities,¹⁰⁰ who also played a crucial role in the gradual institutionalization of new religious formations.¹⁰¹ Hungarian Protestants were in intense connections with Western leaders of reformed religious thinking: for instance, Melancton corresponded on several occasion with András Batizi about the status of Protestants under the Ottomans.¹⁰² However, while dealing with religious discussions of the sixteenth century on any issue, including references to the Ottomans, what should be kept in mind is that during the whole period in discussion, initial forms of confessions were rivals to each other.

After the Battle of Mohács, the organizational infrastructure of the Catholic Church was in an indisputable need of renewal, and in many cases, on the remainders of the previous church

⁹⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of Unitarianism, see Mihály Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism (1566–71): From Servet to Palaeologus*. Bibliotheca Dissidentium. Scripta et Studia 7. (Baden Baden: Éditions Valentin Koerner, 1996).

⁹⁹ Maag and Pettegree, “The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe,” 13.

¹⁰⁰ Sándor Őze, “A ‘kereszténység védőpajzsa’ vagy ‘üllő és verő közé szorult ország.’ A nemzettudat átfarmálódása a 16. század közepén a dél-dunántúli végvári katonaságnál (The ‘Shield of Christendom’ or ‘Country Stuck between Anvil and Hammer’. Transformation of National Identity of Soldiers of South-Transdanubian Defense Fortresses in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century),” in *Magyarok Kelet és Nyugat közt. A nemzettudat változó jelképei (Hungarians between East and West. Changing Symbols of National Identity)*, ed. Tamás Hofer (Budapest: Balassi, 1996), 99. The first center of Hungarian students were Krakow, Padua, Bologna and Wittenberg, and after the closing of the students’ organization Coetus Hungarica in Wittenberg, Heidelberg became the center of peregrinates. Bahlcke, “Calvinism and Estate Liberation Movements,” 81.

¹⁰¹ Madas and Monok, *A könyvkultúra Magyarországon*, 91.

¹⁰² The Hungarian preacher accounted in 1543 that Protestants about them being in peace with the Turks. Mihály Dobrovits and Sándor Őze, “Melancthon és a hódoltsági reformáció iszlámképe (Melancton and the View of Islam of the Reformation in Ottoman Hungary),” *Lelkipásztor* 73, no. 2 (1998), 46.

organization, reformed ideas started to be implemented. Many practitioners of the Catholic religion, both lay and religious, popularized the new ideas, using the vernacular language for preaching.¹⁰³ Despite the losses of the Church, there were considerable Catholic islands in Ottoman Hungary (for instance, in the County of Baranya).¹⁰⁴ From the last quarter of sixteenth century on, Rome made efforts to supply Catholics with religious service at territories exposed to the influence of the Ottoman Empire and organized missions to Ottoman Hungary.¹⁰⁵ Prominent in these missions were the Observant Franciscans from Bosnia,¹⁰⁶ who, aiming for the reestablishment of catholic institutions in Ottoman territories, extended a great influence on the spiritual and administrative structures of Catholicism in Hungary. As the Ottomans authorized their activities, they extended their sphere of influence towards Hungary in the sixteenth century, occupying abandoned parishes and monasteries – and were obliged to provide hospitality for travelling Ottomans in return.¹⁰⁷ They had a crucial role in military preaching in the crusading campaigns of 1456 and 1514, and also often participated in religious disputes, winning them in numerous cases against Protestant counterparts.¹⁰⁸

Despite losses at the Mohács battle, the hierarchy of the Roman Church has survived, and although Catholic literates and clergy were repositioning themselves in Upper Hungary,¹⁰⁹ the continuity of fundamental structures ensured later successes of the counter-Reformation. Tendencies of reform emerged within the framework of the Catholic Church too: by the 1560s, Jesuits already had a well-established institutional background with the foundation of the collegium

¹⁰³ Recently, the previously widely accepted, attributed role of Franciscans in the spread of reformed ideas had been questioned and generated scholarly debated regarding the role of the order in the promotion of Luther's ideas. See András Szabó, "A magyarországi reformáció kezdete és az átmeneti korszak a reformátorok életútjának tükrében (The Beginnings of Reformation in Hungary and the Era of Transition in the Mirror of Careers of Representatives of Reformed Ideas)," in *Szentírás, Hagyomány, Reformáció. Teológia-és Egyháztörténeti Tanulmányok (Scripture, Tradition, Reformation. Studies in the History of Theology and Church History)*, ed. Beatrix F. Romhányi and Gábor Kendeffy (Budapest: Gondolat, 2009) and Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve*, 219.

¹⁰⁴ Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, 102.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰⁶ Appointed by the Pope as local inquisitors and missionaries, Bosnian Franciscans gained influence at the Balkans from the thirteenth century onwards. Molnár, *Elfelejtett Végvidék*, 13, 54–75.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 425.

¹⁰⁸ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 117. For the disputes, a famous case is from Szeged, where Franciscans disputed with the Lutheran Benedek Abádi, the founder of the printing press at Sárvár-Újsziget.

¹⁰⁹ The archbishop of Esztergom moved to Nagyszombat, thus this town became the center of counter-reformation, esp. Nicolaus Olahus.

at Nagyszombat.¹¹⁰

After division of the country into three parts, the advancement of religious ideas and institutionalization was heavily dependent on geographic, ethnic, social and political factors. In Royal Hungary, after the initial spread of reformed religious ideas, Ferdinand made attempts to restrict reforms – for instance, he instructed the arrest of preachers propagating the new ideas –, however, the Ottoman expansion made impossible the implementation of effective anti-reform movements. However, gradually, identification with religious movements turned out to be a political commitment, and produced results such as the revolt lead by István Bocskai (the Prince of Transylvania) in 1604, that targeted the defense of aristocratic privileges and freedom of religion.¹¹¹ A tranquility in religious matters was reached with the 1606 peace of Vienna, that ensured the free exercise of religion for nobility, royal towns and military garrisons.¹¹²

Persisting in the ambivalent position of enjoying a more solid political status, but being also heavily dependent on the Porte and also on the Habsburgs, the Transylvanian Principality managed to obtain fundamental achievements in establishing its political-religious organization by the codification of the free practice of four accepted religions.¹¹³ As in Transylvania, ethnic and political groups were not in a necessary correspondence, after the settlement of legislation, the organization of Protestant bishoprics was accomplished in an national-territorial basis instead of a confessional one, meaning that religious authorities had to deal with multiple confessions per se.¹¹⁴

The position of Christians in Ottoman Hungary was determined by their *dhimmi* status. According to the religious law of Islam (*şeriat*), the legal status of non-Muslims was determined by the law of war that divided the world into two entities: the house of Islam (Dar al-Islam) and house

¹¹⁰ Pál Ács, “Katolikus irodalom és kultúra a reformáció századában (Catholic Literature and Culture in the Century of the Reformation),” *Vigilia* 64, no. 5 (1999): 368.

¹¹¹ Craciun, Ghitta and Murdock, “Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity,” 20–22.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹³ In Transylvania, Protestant churches were recognized by the diet since the late 1550s and in 1568, the Edict of Torda acknowledged four religions (Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unitarians), denoting an important milestone also in the institutionalization of the confessions. *Ibid.*, 211–212.

¹¹⁴ Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism*, 11–12, 190.

of war (Dar al-Harb), which should be conquered by means of jihad.¹¹⁵ Christians or Jews of conquered territories, as they were “people of the book” (ahl al-kitab), were entitled to *dhimmi* status, granting them protection. In practice, this meant that their everyday life was regulated to the extent to ensure that they did not bother Muslims.

The attitudes of Ottomans towards the old and new branches of Christianity were the subject to heated scholarly debates recently, discussing the impact of Islam on the success of Protestantism, and the actual conditions of religious coexistence under the administrative dominance of Islam. The question of religious tolerance had been discussed by two controversial sides in scholarship, emphasizing either the relative tolerance of the Ottomans or the role of the *dhimmi* status in the decay of existing religious frameworks.¹¹⁶ However, according to more balanced views, such as those of Antal Molnár, the Ottoman Empire targeted the *consolidation* of conquered states with the *dhimmi* status.¹¹⁷ Although the Ottomans obviously had a role in the spread of various reformed religious ideas – for instance, as it had been mentioned before, their expansion blocked considerable anti-reform movements for a while, and in the territories under Ottoman control, especially in the beginning of their rule, the spread of the new religious ideas was less regulated – the attributed preference of the Protestants was in fact a byproduct of a pragmatic policy for consolidating newly conquered territories.¹¹⁸ However, the moderate attitudes of Ottomans turned into less permissive within a few decades, and religious activities of Christians became more regulated and limited.¹¹⁹

Protestantism saw a great potential in the Ottoman territories, aiming to provide with vernacular

¹¹⁵ Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, 31–35. An intermediate third legal category was also formed, when protected status was granted by the *sulh* (contract) for a state of harbi status.

¹¹⁶ On the details of the debate, see Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, 34. To bring a peculiar example in the discourse, some scholars suggested that religious tolerance in Transylvania that resulted in the Edict of Torda was a consequence of the high level of “tolerance” of the Ottomans toward religions. Susan Ritchie, “The Pasha of Buda and the Edict of Torda: Transylvanian Unitarian/Islamic Ottoman Cultural Enmeshment and the Development of Religious Tolerance,” *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* 30 (2005). However, these arguments have been intensely criticised for anachronistic terminology, for attributing excessive tolerance and benevolence to the Ottomans and for reaching exaggerated conclusions. To mention an example, Gábor Kármán exposed a critique of Ritchie’s sources at the workshop “‘The Christian Turks.’ Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman–Habsburg Contact Zone,” CEU 23–24 May 2014.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹¹⁸ Molnár, *Katolikus missziók*, 108 and 112.

¹¹⁹ Fodor, Pál. “The Ottomans and their Christians in Hungary,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Cultural Exchange in Europe*, ed. Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (Budapest: CEU – European Science Foundation, 2001), 146–47.

Bibles not only Hungarians, but Slavs and Turks as well.¹²⁰ In order to spread their ideas successfully, propagators of various reformed ideas had to develop effective methods to transmit their ideas, remodel the clergy as a professional body of teachers, and build on local popular religious traditions and private beliefs.¹²¹ Reformers could also use printing to their benefits as an effective, cheap and quick form of transmitting their ideas. Prints created and reflected on religious discussions, becoming quickly comparable to oral disputes in popularity.¹²² By the middle of the sixteenth century, as a result of the successful handling of the new media, Protestantism achieved to establish a short and quickly spreadable, reflective form of discourses that allowed an effective propagation of ideas, opposed to the more disciplined and traditional forms of Catholicism.¹²³ At the same time, the emergence of the new medium resulted in a general demand for better, reliable texts and critical editions. The new form of communication changed the audience and the attitudes towards visual media as well as a result of synergy of word and image.¹²⁴

A further change in the modalities of the spread of doctrines resulted from the emergence and spread of the Calvinist branch of reformed ideas, where songs were of central importance.¹²⁵ Composing new lyrics to existing and widely known tunes (the genre of contrafactum) turned out to be the most effective means of reaching and teaching a broad, illiterate audience,¹²⁶ and communal singing had an important role in the memorization of the texts as well. Although the importance of singing was recognized officially by both Protestant (synod of Debrecen, 1567) and Catholic (order of Ferdinand II, 1564) communities, however, it was the former who produced the good part of song prints by the end of the sixteenth century. Among the characteristic pieces of song collections,

¹²⁰ Szakály, *Mezőváros és reformáció*, 72.

¹²¹ Craciun, Ghitta and Murdock, "Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity," 4–5.

¹²² Andrew Pettegree, "Books, Pamphlets and Polemic," in *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), 109.

¹²³ Craciun, Ghitta and Murdock, "Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity," 2 and 6–7. See also Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution on Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹²⁴ Craciun, Ghitta and Murdock, "Religious Reform, Printed Books and Confessional Identity," 8.

¹²⁵ Pettegree, "Books, Pamphlets and Polemic," 123. See also Judith Pollmann, "Singing for Reformation in the Sixteenth Century," in *Religion and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700*, ed. Heinz Schilling and István György Tóth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹²⁶ Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 5; Kálmán Csomasz Tóth, *A magyar református gyülekezeti éneklés vázlatos története (The Outlined History of Hungarian Congregation Singing)* (Budapest: Magyar Református Egyház, 1950), 130.

one may find translations (from the Bible or from foreign Protestant writers) and new compositions alike. Because of their regular, constant and revised republishings, these song books turned out to be the most influential texts produced in the sixteenth century.

By the end of the investigated period, Protestant ideas dominated religious discourses at all the three parts of the Hungarian Kingdom. Many of these discourses reflected the fall of the medieval state, and their viewpoints, reflecting particular sets of reformed ideas, also played a part in the formation of the contemporary idea of nationhood.¹²⁷ Although the depth of doctrinal comprehension cannot be considered to have been balanced, religious reform ideas became widely known in a variety of social groups from the royal court to citizens of towns and to serfs, in a likewise wide variety of oral and written platforms.

The Ottoman Administration of Religions

As the Ottomans took over the administration of occupied territories, it was necessary for them to get involved with certain religious matters of their subjects. However, due to various factors, such as the limited number of administrators actually present, or the military character of Ottoman society with only occasional contacts with their taxpayers show that in fact, the influence on religious life was limited. In everyday life, Ottomans expressed the superiority of Islam over religions of people with a *dhimmi* status by restricting certain practices (such as bell ringing), banning the construction of new and renovation of existing churches, resulting in great resistance from Christian subjects.¹²⁸ They could also easily manipulate connections between the religions by managing religious debates, or by raising extra taxes for certain confessions. Given the extremely complex ethnic and confessional situation in Ottoman Hungary, the administration treated different Christian branches individually. The Catholics were the least favored confession by the new Ottoman administration: higher Church dignitaries were expelled, and even though the losses of the

¹²⁷ Schilling and Tóth, "From Empires to Family Circles," 28.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 140. On the administration and the attitudes of the Ottomans towards their non-Muslim subjects, see Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Ottoman Ruling Group and the Religions of Its Subjects in the Early Modern Age: A Survey of Current Research," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 239–66.

Church at Mohács were implemented nominatively by the Habsburgs, newly appointed bishops never came to serve in Ottoman territories. With Eastern Orthodoxy, the Ottomans had more harmonious relations: the reason behind might have been that Ottoman administration serving in Hungary consisted mainly of newly converted Muslims with Orthodox Christian backgrounds.¹²⁹ In practice, there is even precedent for a permit to build churches, as the case of Grábóc makes evident. Although Orthodoxy was widespread in the Ottoman territories, it was not concerned deeply with the Reformation;¹³⁰ therefore, there were no disputes or other kinds of open religious discourses between them and other religious branches.

The Ottoman treatment of Protestant Churches, as Pál Fodor claims, was moderate in severity and went through a considerable change in the sixteenth century. In the beginning, during the establishment of Ottoman governance, sources attest to the Ottoman appreciation of the simplicity of Protestant church buildings, and the doctrine of obedience to the superiors.¹³¹ As Protestant preachers acknowledged the Ottoman as authorities, they were allowed to practice preaching, and religious disputes were organized as forum of various reformed concepts on a regular basis – although it was in the interest of Ottomans to maintain religious dividedness.¹³² Administering the debates was also beneficial for Ottoman authorities also because by granting the winner party free practice of preaching all over the sanjak, Protestant preachers could prevent their audience from abandoning their homelands and remain under the Ottoman rule.¹³³ Gál Huszár, a prominent Protestant author and publisher, wrote to Heinrich Bullinger in 1557 about the positive attitudes of Ottomans towards Protestants.¹³⁴ By the 1560s, although not many preachers dared to preach openly against the Ottomans, administration of the Empire was still well informed about contents of the sermons. Although the Ottomans took part in religious debates by managing them, interventions

¹²⁹ Ibid., 138, 141.

¹³⁰ Maag and Pettegree. “The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe,” 12.

¹³¹ Ibid., 141.

¹³² Dobrovits and Óze, “Melanchthon és a hódoltsági reformáció iszlámképe,” 46.

¹³³ As letters written by Zsigmond Gyalui Torda in 1546 and 1551, the pasha of Buda was explicitly seeking for Protestant preachers to argue for staying under his authority. Dobrovits and Óze, “Melanchthon és a hódoltsági reformáció iszlámképe,” 46.

¹³⁴ Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier*, 24.

were rare, with a few exceptions that depended on the local governance: for instance, after the dispute of Nagyharsány in 1574, the Antitrinitarian preacher, who lost the debate was hanged as he made derogatory remarks on the Qu'ran.¹³⁵ Still, Ottoman policy gradually lost interest in managing confessional debates, and started to judge religious matters by its own interests, and granted more harsh punishment for the losing party in disputes.¹³⁶ All in all, the tendency of attitudes seems to point in the direction of religious indifference, a less active religious policy from the Ottoman administration, focusing on the maintenance of the status quo and attempting to get as much financial advantage as possible from Christian religious conflicts.¹³⁷

1. 5. 2. The Military Context

After the battle of Mohács in 1526, the Ottoman army had an open access into the territories of the Hungarian Kingdom. When King Louis II died at the battle, the state had to endure inner political tensions, making it difficult to arrange the renewal of the defense system. Finally, constant pressure resulted in the division of the kingdom into three different states.

While the main aim of the Ottoman Empire was to take Vienna, it failed to achieve this goal several times in the sixteenth century (in 1529 and 1532¹³⁸). The Ottomans changed tactics and took Buda (1541) to gain control over the Danube. Their new aim was to build a strong base close to Vienna, and to organize a buffer state between the Habsburgs and their own empire.¹³⁹ Consequently, the profile of the Ottoman campaigns also changed, determining the nature of

¹³⁵ On the debate, see Ferenc Szakály, "Volt-e református-unitárius hitvita 1574-ben Nagyharsányban? (Was There a Calvinist-Protestant Debate in Nagyharsány in 1574?)," 14–31. (Ráday Gyűjtemény évkönyve 7., 1994.)

Tóth, "Old and New Faith in Hungary," 217, and Fodor, "The Ottomans and Their Christians in Hungary," 144.

¹³⁶ Fodor, "The Ottomans and Their Christians in Hungary," 143–4. According to Tijana Krstić, "A Muslim Unitarian Transylvanian? Exploring the Polemical Outlook and Religious Sensibility of Murad b. Abdullah," paper delivered at the workshop "'The Christian Turks.' Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman–Habsburg Contact Zone," CEU 23–24 May 2014, the death of Pasha Sokollu Mustapha might have also been the cause of decreased Ottoman interest in interreligious debates.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 146.

¹³⁸ It is a subject of scholarly debates whether the Ottomans did in fact intend to take Vienna: in this case, a retreat was a planned necessity. Yelçe, Zeynep Nevin, "Besieging Vienna: A comparative view on the sieges of 1529 and 1683," paper delivered at the 21st conference of CIÉPO (Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes), 8 October 2014, Budapest.

¹³⁹ Géza Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary: Mohács 1526 – Buda 1541*, tr. D. Márió Fenyő, War and Society in East Central Europe 26 (Boulder: Colorado and Atlantic Research and Publications, 1989), preface and 51.

military contacts until the death of Suleyman: a long campaign was launched, focusing on fortress sieges¹⁴⁰ and the establishment of a new, Ottoman defense line. After Suleyman's death, Selim II and Maximilian II signed a peace treaty in 1568. However, territories along the borders remained highly active militarily: the period was characterized by constant raids and fights, giving a chance for the development of a distinctive soldier identity with its own morals and literary values.

The Defense Line

The fifteenth-century southern defense line extended from the lower Danube to the Adriatic, and was served by private armies (*banderia*) of local landlords.¹⁴¹ This line was created under the rule of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1487), and was developed and extended by Matthias Corvinus after the acquisition of key fortresses in the area (such as Jajce and Sabac).¹⁴² The resulting defense system was a double, parallel fortress line consisting of fortifications of about 80–100 kilometers from each other, while the system was meshed with Venetian forts at its Western end. Although being extremely demanding financially and having considerable weaknesses (such as underdeveloped artillery, lack of a unified ordnance and guns of sufficient quality), the system was able to fulfill its purpose for more than six decades, until the 1520s.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, territorial realignment necessitated a complete restoration of the defense system. The renewal had to take into consideration the effects of new military inventions, especially gunpowder and firearms. The result was the spread of the new type of fortress, the *trace italienne*, which had lower walls and towers, deep ditches and strong walls.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 46. See also Stein, "The Fortresses," in *Guarding the Frontier*.

¹⁴¹ János M. Bak, "Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Norman Housley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 118.

¹⁴² Ferenc Szakály, "The Hungarian-Croatian Border Defense System and Its Collapse," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 142 and 147–9.

¹⁴³ To give a few prominent examples, Győr, Komárom or Szatmár were built according to the new program. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 3. For more details on the formation of the defense line and its precedents, consult Erik Fügedi, "Medieval Hungarian Castles in Existence at the Start of the Ottoman Advance," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982). See also Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 10.

After the reform of the fortress system, the number of forts doubled by the end of the century.¹⁴⁴

Border zones

The environs along the defense line, the limits of which were marked by fortifications, was a militarized area, also called the Marches.¹⁴⁵ After the Ottoman conquest of the inner parts of the kingdom, the former heartland also became a battle and border zone, a scene for power demonstration for both the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, interspersed with insurrections of the Hungarian nobles. There were social consequences to the extension of the war zone, too: lordship needed a new definition that involved protection and military leadership;¹⁴⁶ and a new social order of warriors (*vitézlő rend*) came to the scene, intermediary between serfdom and privileged estates.¹⁴⁷

Along the border zone, the military methods and tactics of the era necessitated practice in espionage from both sides. Mocking and raiding the enemy at their territories was a consistent part of daily life in this zone from the early phases of military contacts, even in official peace times,¹⁴⁸ as these type of assaults were one of the major possibilities to finance soldier life. For the Ottomans, raiding had a religious aspect as it was part of the *ghazi* concept of warriorship,¹⁴⁹ but apart from religious connotations, light cavalry raiders of the opposed armies were quite similar in their equipment and methods.¹⁵⁰ Hostage taking and living off what remained of the agriculture of the country constituted other sources of income. Dwellers remaining in the border zone had an important role in providing armies with food and occasionally, manpower. As a landscape, the

¹⁴⁴ Öze, "Felekezetváltás," 27. There were 43 castles in 1556 and 80 by the end of the century. See also Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 98.

¹⁴⁵ Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 14.

¹⁴⁶ Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144.

¹⁴⁷ Béla K. Király, "Society and War from Mounted Knights to the Standing Armies of Absolute Kings: Hungary and the West," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király, (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 24.

¹⁴⁸ Öze, "Felekezetváltás," 2 and 21. A treaty from 1483 (the reign of Matthias Corvinus) claims that raids involving less than 400 men are not considered a cause for war.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 18, and Pál Fodor, "Adatok a magyarországi török rabszedésről (Data about the Ottoman Practice of Taking Captives in Hungary)," in *A szultán és az aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 299–300.

¹⁵⁰ Gustav Bayerle, "One Hundred and Fifty Years of Frontier Life in Hungary," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 231.

border zone was mostly a marshy land with many streams, with deserted agricultural areas abandoned by most of their inhabitants.¹⁵¹ In order to have a better eye on the enemy, and to assure the traffic, many *palanka*, i.e. temporary wooden constructions were erected in the border zone, especially along rivers.¹⁵²

Armies and Equipment

It would be an unthoughtful simplification to suppose a binary military opposition consisting of two antagonistic armies, as the military context of the given period and era was an extremely complex system with numerous participants and many go-between activities, groups and individuals. The composition and tactics of armies on both sides was heavily dependent on the cardinal changes that took place in early modern warfare. The invention of gunpowder revolutionized the whole system of warfare, as it replaced standard arms, heavy cavalry, classical knighthood, and battle fights with infantry skilled in artillery and firearms.¹⁵³ Both armies had a multiethnic composition,¹⁵⁴ with a high number of soldiers of Southern Slavic origins on each side. In a broader sense of transfers, some scholars even use the phrase “military acculturation” to assess the considerable transition of military knowledge: for instance, both Ottoman and Hungarian weapon industry and artillery relied on Italian and German masters.¹⁵⁵

To give estimates of the Ottoman military presence in numbers, sources account that two thirds of the army of the Ottoman Empire was in the Balkans and Hungarian provinces in the 1570s, counting 25–40 000 soldiers.¹⁵⁶ They stood against 15–20 000 Hungarian soldiers serving the defense line. After the rule of Matthias Corvinus, the state could no longer afford a standing army;¹⁵⁷ instead, armed forces consisted of the armed peasants known as *militia portalis*,¹⁵⁸ local

¹⁵¹ Őze, “Felekezetváltás,” 27.

¹⁵² Ayşe Kayapınar, “Les Îles Ottomanes du Danube au XVIe siècle,” in *Insularités Ottomanes*, ed. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2004), 188.

¹⁵³ Király, “Society and War” 23–4.

¹⁵⁴ Ferenc Szakály, “The Hungarian-Croatian Border,” 144–5 and Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 18.

¹⁵⁵ Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan. Military Power and Weapon Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43 and 46.

¹⁵⁶ Őze, “Felekezetváltás,” 26. See also Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 40 for more general estimates.

¹⁵⁷ Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 61.

lords' armies, banderia, and since Matthias's professional army, mercenaries.¹⁵⁹ The flotilla stationed at the Sava and the Danube was also a fundamental part of the army, as the case of Belgrade gives evidence yet in the fifteenth century¹⁶⁰ – however, the navy was a weak point of the arms. Artillery also wasn't a mainstay of the troops: the main force of the army was cavalry. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Hungarian cavalry was roughly half-half lightly and heavily armed, with a gradual overtaking of light cavalry that ensured mobility and velocity in combat. The unification of economic and military powers of higher and lesser nobility, and the mobilization of the peasantry had been a major problem in the operation of the Hungarian defense system, succeeding only in unique cases, such at the defense of Belgrade in 1456.¹⁶¹ Satisfying supplies of equipment was essential to ensure military successes: lacking supplies are often reported in many of the sources.

The Ottoman army had both traditional (feudal and nomadic), and professional features. Their tactics heavily relied on light cavalry and mobility, however, this type of troops was useless for defense, especially against heavily armed horsemen that were still the major trend in Europe. The permanent standing army consisting mainly of janissaries and sipahis received uniform training.¹⁶² The Ottoman army was the first one that could not be surpassed with Western techniques improved against Asian nomadic tribes for a long time.¹⁶³ The well organized and disciplined armies of the Ottoman Empire combined with the same, or even superior level of military technology to

¹⁵⁸ The military obligations of nobles were fixed by a renewal of the Golden Bull in 1397 declaring that every twenty peasant porta has to provide one archer. The same document laid the foundations of war tax, ordering that clergy must dedicate half of their income for defense purposes. Bak, "Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century," 117. See also András Borosy, "The Militia Portalis in Hungary before 1526." in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982).

¹⁵⁹ Gyula Rázsó, "The Mercenary Army of King Matthias Corvinus." in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 126 and Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 61. The total number of the army in the Jagellonian period counted around 150 000 soldiers.

¹⁶⁰ Szakály, "The Hungarian-Croatian Border," 147 and Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 61.

¹⁶¹ János M. Bak, "Politics, Society and Defense in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary," in *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 1.

¹⁶² Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 23 and 55.

¹⁶³ Király, "Society and War", 29.

Europe¹⁶⁴ prognosticated a long period of war.

Conquest Ideologies

The Ottoman military expansion was based on multiple ideologies. Legitimacies of the conquests relied on the *ghazi* theory intertwined with the idea of *jihad*, and the *kızıl elma* concept.¹⁶⁵ As a Muslim state, the Ottomans identified their military structures with the terms of Islam, referring *ghazi* (religious warrior) status of leaders (beys and sultans) in their titles too.¹⁶⁶ *Jihad*, “the sixth pillar of Islam,” “a fight on the road to Allah” as a concept had pre-Islamic roots, and similarly to the idea of crusade, was modified according to the contemporary circumstances. The establishment of the supremacy of Islam had always been the core idea of the concept, but the agent and the means of fight were heterogeneous: personal moral improvement and military conquests equally belong to the theory, while the eventual aim of conquests had always been a combat with the greatest evil, that is, infidelity, let that be inner or outer in its substance. As the concept includes the idea that the duty to fight continues until Islam has spread all over the world, in theory, peace could only be temporary with the unfaithful.¹⁶⁷

The *kızıl elma*, or the red apple as a symbol of the consecutive major goal of conquests was also part of the religious thematization of expansion, playing a role in imperial representation of power.

¹⁶⁴ Szakály, “The Hungarian-Croatian Border,” 147 and Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 8. There is no accordance in scholarship about the successful acquirement of gunpowder production: opposed to Ágoston, Geoffrey Parker claims that the adoption of the Western technology had serious deficiencies: because of insufficient mass production, they relied on big artillery instead of a more mobile form of firearms; they had poor quality metals available; and all in all, they were rather copying than acquiring the system, being unable to adapt the technology to the given circumstances. Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 126–8.

¹⁶⁵ Pál Fodor, “A terjeszkedés ideológiái az Oszmán Birodalomban (Ideologies of Expansion in the Ottoman Empire),” in *A szultán és az aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 171. See also Orhan Saik Gökyay, “Ideology and Literature during the Expansion of the Ottoman Empire,” in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993). There is also evidence that Hungary was in the focus of a particular ideological program: the kingdom was subject of various Ottoman folklore narratives as an entity to conquer. Ibid., 175–6. A legend tells about a Byzantine sword found in the Danube by a fisherman, to be given as a gift to the envoy Bayezit II by a Hungarian king, symbolizing the Ottoman conquest of Hungary. Another tradition regards the crown seized in the 1529 campaign to be of Alexandrine heritage, reflecting the empires’ aspirations for world power.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History. Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 145. On the *ghaza* thesis and the surrounding debates around, see Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*. (B. Franklin, 1938), and Halil İnalcık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

¹⁶⁷ Michael Balard, “Jihad, Holy War, and Crusading,” *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 16 (Budapest: Archeolingua, 2010), 193–5.

The red apple as a symbol of world power and its center was based probably on the Byzantine tradition of the “apple of power.”¹⁶⁸ The concept was also known and referred to by multiple of the vernacular Hungarian sources – at this point, I would cite the most detailed one on this issue, the *Chronicle of Ottoman sultans* by János Baranyai Decsi, that refers to the concept in the context of apocalyptic prophecies, and also the relativeness of the object of the idea: “*Don’t you know the prophecy of the Turks, / The one they await their perish with, / Their decay told by their own prophets? // When, they say, we take the red apple, / Our empire is going to end that time, / If the Christians will be keen on beating us. (...) Whenever Turks take the red apple, / They will be demolished from the Earth by God, / As their own prophecy claims that. / What would be that red apple, nobody knows, / Either Győr, either Vienna, Rome or Cologne? / Only God and Time will show that.*”¹⁶⁹

Defense Ideologies

Processes of campaigns and sieges, and their results, successes and losses¹⁷⁰ created and shaped personal and various group identities, from smaller communities to national, and from temporal to historical scale. While observing these processes, one can witness the “from below” direction of the formation of national identity and patriotism: in the sixteenth century, one’s patria denoted a homeland on a smaller scale, a particular territory.¹⁷¹ Interpreting events as the punishment of God and as signs of the shortly coming Apocalypse, were central elements in all levels of discussions. The role of the defenders of the country as the saviours of the entire Christendom, i.e., the *antemurale* idea was present in narratives throughout the whole investigated period, however, it

¹⁶⁸ Kenneth Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam: And Prophecies of Turkish Doom*. (American Philosophical Society, 1992), 31–32. See also Orhan Saik Gökyay, “Ideology and Literature during the Expansion of the Ottoman Empire,” in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993).

¹⁶⁹ “Avagy nem tudod-e török jövődülését, / Mellyel önnön magok várják veszedelmeket, / Magok prófétájok beszélnek veszéseket? // Valamikor, úgymond, veres almát megvesszük, / Mi birodalmunknak ottan végét mi érzük, / Ha az keresztyének héven lesznek mirajtunk. (...) Valamikor török veres almát megveszi, / Menten Isten ötet az földről ott elveszti, / Az mint magok jövődömondása jelenti. // Mi légyen az vörös alma, senki nem tudja, / Győr-é, Bécs-é, Róma avagy Colonia? / Csak az Isten és az idő ezt megmutatja.” Baranyai Decsi: *Török császárok krónikája*, 505–510.

¹⁷⁰ Sándor Öze, *A határ és a határtalan. Identitáselemek vizsgálata a 16. századi magyar ütközőzóna népességénél. (With and without Borders. Analysis of Elements of Identity at the Population of the Hungarian Contact Zone in the 16th Century)*. (Budapest: METEM Könyvek, 2006), 14.

¹⁷¹ Bak, “Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century,” 123.

went through several changes. On the European humanist scene, the tradition was first present in pragmatic political genres (for instance, in a letter of Matthias Corvinus to the papal court¹⁷²), then found its ways into literary pieces as well (such as in the case of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini). In Hungary, the idea was founded on these humanist precedents, but rapidly it evolved its own forms, and was part not only of the Latin and humanist (i.e., elite), but of vernacular and more popular discourses as well. The earliest example from vernacular literature might be the line “*And you would be the good shield of Christendom*” from the song of László Geszti¹⁷³ from 1525. After the Battle of Mohács, the concept took a definite turn towards the glorious past¹⁷⁴ and referred to former great eras and rulers of defense, such as the massive work of Ambrus Görcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazakas illustrate. The work refers to the rule of Matthias stating “*He served Christianity well, / Being the shield after God to our lands, / And the destroyer of outraged pagan nation.*”¹⁷⁵ The tradition had also a role in adopting the humanist idea of virtue,¹⁷⁶ a notion forming the core value of the *vitész* morals. In the seventeenth century, the idea was expanded to a new direction, referring to Germania as a neglecter of Hungaria, resulting in an image of the country seized between two pagans.¹⁷⁷

1. 5. 3. The Literary Context

The role of Hungary as a defender of Christendom was expressed in all media in vernacular

¹⁷² Ibid., 125. See also Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41. See also László Szörényi, “Emlékbeszéd Mátyás Királyról (Memorial about King Matthias),” in *Harmóniára Teremtve. Tanulmányok Mátyás Királyról (Created for Harmony. Studies on King Matthias)*, 64–78.

¹⁷³ “Kereszténységnek jó vérti lennétek,” line. XXX. Lamenting about the lack of unity in the country and praising the rule of Matthias, the song was concerned with popular topics and was widely copied for decades.

¹⁷⁴ Mihály Imre, ‘Magyarország panasza’ – *A Querela Hungariae toposz a XVI–XVII. század irodalmában (“Laments of Hungary” – The Topos Querela Hungariae in Sixteenth-Seventeenth Century Literature)*. Vol. 5. Bibliotheca Studiorum Litterarium. (Debrecen: Kossuth, 1995), 145, 153.

¹⁷⁵ “Lám jámborul szolgál kereszténységnek, / Isten után pajzsa mi földünknek, / És rontója dühös pogány népnek.”

¹⁷⁶ Imre, ‘Magyarország Panasza,’ 161–7.

¹⁷⁷ Sándor Öze, “A keresztes hadjáratok ideológiája és a Magyar Királyság az oszmán veszély kezdetétől a Habsburg védelmi vonal felállításáig (1395–1556) (Ideologies of Crusading Campaigns and the Kingdom of Hungary from the Beginning of the Ottoman Threat to the Establishment of the Habsburg Defense Line (1395–1556)),” in *Ot Nikopol Do Viena 1396–1683. Nikápolytól Bécsig 1396–1683. (From Adrianople to Vienna 1396–1683)*, ed. Hristo Matanov and György Arató, 234–59. Bulgaro-Hungarica 5. (Sofia: Svjat. Nauka, 2008), 247.

literature.¹⁷⁸ Written records were produced from the viewpoint of soldiers, or for them as an audience.¹⁷⁹ Frontier ideology characterized parlances on campaigns, especially in narratives that were part of some of the existing literary traditions, such as chronicles or crusading literature. However, interactions in the borderland area were recorded in a literary form that was based on and supposedly continued to exist in oral traditions, allowing to elaborate the process of the construction of national and historical identity.

There are two major types of sources that are analyzed in this study, corresponding to the two major foci of the research. The first, a corpus with religious references, is of more diverse nature, as it includes texts of a wide variety of genres, the specificities of which are going to be addressed individually in the chapter about religious discourses. The second group is narrative poetry in the more strict sense, referring to current events – however, because of the particularity of notions concerning history typical in Protestant writings, many religious issues are discussed in a narrative form. Therefore, a more detailed introduction of narrative practices is the first step to a comprehensive consideration of particular narrative topics.

Terminology

In the practice of sixteenth-century authors, various terms were used to refer to epic poetry, such as *história* (history), *históriás ének* (historical song), *krónika* (chronicle), *ének* (song) and others. There were several attempts made in scholarship to differentiate between them and sketch a system of genres and subgenres of narrative poetry. However, before presenting a survey of literature, a note should be added on the English use of these terms.¹⁸⁰ For my analysis, I need a term that places emphasis on contemporaneity and on the narrative, event-telling nature of texts, and a term that also addresses their versified form. Therefore, I will tend to use *event poetry*, or *report song* in most of the cases, but narrative poetry and chronicle poetry may also occur during the discussion.

¹⁷⁸ On medieval antecedents of the *antemurale* idea, see Nóra Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and "Pagans" in Medieval Hungary, c.1000 – c.1300*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 270.

¹⁷⁹ Óze, *A határ és a határtalan*, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Several attempts had been made in scholarship to find a common term for narratives accounting contemporary events. For instance, Peter Burke uses term *epic* in his *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 1978), 118, but this term does not reflect properly the versified nature of the texts.

Generally, texts focusing on one specific event will be referred as event poetry or report songs, and narratives with a wider, historical perspective as chronicle poetry or chronicle epics.

There are numerous issues that had been addressed in scholarship concerning the features of the genres of early modern Hungarian epic poetry. The system of relations of relevant terminology had been in the focus of discourses as a central affair. There were attempts to make a distinction between the various terms based on their form, such as Béla Varjas did, who related chronicle to prose, and *historia* to versified texts;¹⁸¹ there were structuralist attempts to create a descriptive system of genres related to epic poetry, such as the RPHA did;¹⁸² Géza Orlovsky's notion was centered around the mode of transmission and the attitudes of printers, who intended to satisfy the expectations of supposed audiences;¹⁸³ István Vadai¹⁸⁴ made a distinction of terms based on the original and translated (mostly from Latin or German) profile of narratives in order to differentiate between *históriás ének* and report songs; and most recently, in his dissertation and monograph, Balázs Pap made a distinction of narratives based on fictionality and settled the two basic genres of narrative poetry of the song (*ének*) and *historia*: in this scheme, *ének* may contain an element of fictionality, while *historia* does not allow any kind of fictional element.¹⁸⁵

The origins of vernacular epic poetry

The origins of narrative epic poetry, and its relations to orality had been the subject of discourses on the genre for more than a century. Hints in written sources regarding the practices of performances and about a great national epic stimulated the imagination and fascination of scholars and non-scholars equally. There is a series of hints in historiography about the existence of a widely

¹⁸¹ Béla Varjas, *A magyar reneszánsz irodalom társadalmi gyökerei (Social Roots of Hungarian Renaissance Literature)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982) regards the *Cronica* of Tinódi and exception from the above rule.

¹⁸² Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne, ed. Iván Horváth and Gabriella H. Hubert, 1992–2001. <http://rpha.elte.hu/>

¹⁸³ Géza Orlovsky, "A *históriás ének*. 1574: megjelenik a *Cancionale* (The Epic Song. 1574: The *Cancionale* Is Published)," in *A magyar irodalom története I. (Histories of Hungarian Literature I.)*, ed. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007.)

¹⁸⁴ István Vadai, "A tudósító ének műfaja (The Genre of Report Songs)," in *A magyar irodalom története I. (Histories of Hungarian Literature I.)*, ed. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007) and István Vadai, "História és fabula (Historia and Fabula)," in *Tinódi Sebestyén és a régi magyar verses epika (Sebestyén Tinódi and Old Hungarian Epic Poetry)* (Kolozsvár/Cluj: Kriterion, 2008).

¹⁸⁵ Balázs Pap, *Históriák és énekek (Histories and Songs)* (Pécs: Pro Pannonia Kiadói Alapítvány, 2014), chapter 2.

practiced tradition of story-telling in the vernacular language before the earliest extant examples of event poetry. Supposedly, this type of performance of story-telling existed in various levels of society, from royal feasts to taverns. In the fifteenth century, Galeotto Marzio noted in considerable length the customs of entertainment at the king's table, attributing them to Roman origins, and referring to the role of contemporary songs reflecting fights with the Turks, and giving a hint concerning the possible thematic variations of narrative poetry:

*“Semper enim in eius convivio disputatur aut sermo de re honesta aut iocunda habetur aut carmen cantatur. Sunt enim ibi musici et citharoedi, qui fortium gesta in lingua patria ad mensam in lyra decantant. Mos enim Romanorum hic fuit et a nobis defluxit ad Hungaros. Cantatur autem semper aliquod egregium nec deest materia. Nam cum Hungaria in medio hostium diversarum linguarum sita sit, semper rei bellicae habet fomitem. Amatoria autem carmina raro ibi cantantur et, ut plurimum gesta in Turchos in medium veniunt, non sine sermone concinno.”*¹⁸⁶

A century later, Sir Philip Sidney who travelled in Hungary in 1573, also gave reference to Hungarian epic poetry in his *Defence of Poesie*, noting the topical and performative attributes of these epics: *“In Hungarie I have seene it the manner at all Feastes and other such like meetings, to have songs of their ancestors valure, which that right souldierlike nation, think one of the chieftest kindlers of brave courage.”*¹⁸⁷

The extent of the influence of Latin traditions on vernacular epic poetry, including its performative characteristics, had been a debated scholarly issue. The status and quality of Latin in late medieval Hungary had many layers, among them small circles of humanist court literates or a wider, more popular layer of Latin cultivated by monasteries and schools of various levels.¹⁸⁸ It had been argued that for vernacular narrative poetry, this latter, Latin culture has provided considerable

¹⁸⁶ “At the table of Matthias, there is always a debate, the subject of the discussion is serious or light, or there are songs. Because there are musicians playing the cither, and sing the heroic deeds in their own language at the feasts. This was like this at the Romans and went over to the Hungarians from them. They always sing about some heroic deed and there is always a supply of material, as Hungary is surrounded with enemies speaking different languages, so there is always a supply of war subjects. Love songs are rarely sung, but rather the deeds with Turks are on the fore, are performed with songs.” De egregerie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Mathiae ad ducem Johannem eius filium liber, ed. Ladislaus Juhasz Lipsiae 1934. 18.

¹⁸⁷ Ponsonby edition, 1595, see Levente Seláf, “Between Lyrics and Epics: The Great Turkish War in German, Italian and Hungarian ‘Ereignisliedern.’” *Manuscript*, n.d.

¹⁸⁸ Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 8.

influence. However, based on the above note of Marzio and a note by the chronicle of Thuróczy,¹⁸⁹ it seems certain that epic poetry also existed in the vernacular under Matthias. Combination of the popular Latin and vernacular narratives supposedly took place in an oral form, however, it is evident that the texts we know today were exclusively composed in a written form. Therefore, orality may be investigated in these narratives only in a form that had been critically transformed according to features of written traditions.

The literate background of authors producing event poetry in the sixteenth century was dependent on numerous factors: their education, religious orientations, and cultural relations. Latin as a cultural tradition was not uncommon of their language and cultural skills – some of them produced translations of Latin works¹⁹⁰ –, and their works also show a certain level of humanist background. However, the main cultural environment of these works is rooted in Biblical traditions, and this tradition characterizes most features of this poetry, let them be formal, poetical, ethical or historiographical.

Fictionality

Relations of genres of epic poetry to fictionality had always been a central point in defining attempts.¹⁹¹ Genette differentiated factual and fictional narrative based on the various roles of the author, the system of which had been introduced by Philippe Lejeune. According Lejeune's notion of the "autobiographical pact," the author guarantees the sameness of the narrator, the author and the hero of the text.¹⁹² Genette identifies factual narratives along these lines: when the author is the same as the narrator, no authority is granted to the narrator, and the author takes responsibility for the assertions of the narrative. Moreover, dissociation of author and narrator defines fiction.

¹⁸⁹ The story of Kont (a rebel noble from the end of the fourteenth century) in Thuróczy's chronicle (*Chronica Hungarorum* pars IV Cap VII, 1488) recounts that "the deeds of his bravery are widely recited and sung today." However, based on this reference, one may not draw the conclusion that the narrative was part of literature produced for a wider audience, as the epic seems to have been a piece of political propaganda aimed at a narrow, elite audience. Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 124.

¹⁹⁰ Tinódi's first work was an interpretation of the Trojan story of Jason and Medea, written in 1537–8. On his Latin literacy, see Vadai, "História és fabula," 18.

¹⁹¹ Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, chapter 1.

¹⁹² Philippe Lejeune, "The Autobiographical Pact," in *On Autobiography*, ed. Paul John Eakin, tr. Katherine M. Leary, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 4.

In the particular case of Hungarian epic poems, Antal Pirnát made a distinction based on the subjects of texts: they were either *res gesta*, or *res ficta*. This method had been subject to criticism for applying notions of seventeenth-century poetical theories to considerably earlier sources, therefore being invalid.¹⁹³ Lately, based on the proposal of István Vadaí, the discussion seems to have arrived at the consensus that fiction and reality do not exclude each other, but are deliberately mixed in the narratives. Further, various genres of the palette allow a diversity in their used rate of fiction: for instance, the *Story of Szilágyi and Hajmási*, although it has historical heroes, uses elements of numerous other known narratives voluntarily – perhaps as a consequence of the relation of the text to the Southern Slavic tradition that tends to allow a much greater scale of combination of heroes and events than the Hungarian one.¹⁹⁴

In general, early Hungarian narrative poems always referred to their sources, such as the Bible or an ancient Roman story, since it was crucial to demonstrate that there were no fictional elements in the works.¹⁹⁵ However, report songs discussing current events differ from other genres of epic poetry. They rely not primarily on written sources but on eyewitness reports, whether first- or secondhand. In the case of event poetry, as statements of sixteenth-century authors attest, it was their explicit aim to be accurate and to give a reliable account of the recounted events. The most well-known source is Tinódi's preface to his *Cronica* in this regard, which addresses in considerable length his sources and his attitude to write only the truth.¹⁹⁶ There are plentiful examples for referring to the source of information about the narrated events – to bring an example again from Tinódi, his story about Suleyman and Kazul refers to his sources as: “*This was told by a*

¹⁹³ Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, chapter 1. On fiction, see Antal Pirnát, “Fabula és História (Fabula and Historia),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 88, no. 2 (1984) and Vadaí, “História és fabula.”

¹⁹⁴ Ferenc Zemplényi, *Az európai udvari kultúra és a magyar irodalom (European Court Culture and Hungarian Literature)* (Budapest: Universitas, 1998), 52.

¹⁹⁵ István Vadaí, “Kolozsvárott kötetet komponálni” (Composing a Volume in Kolozsvár), in *Tinódi Sebestyén és a régi magyar verses epika. A 2006. évi budapesti és kolozsvári Tinódi-konferenciák előadásai* (Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos and Old Hungarian Narrative Poetry: Proceedings of the Tinódi Conferences Held in Budapest and Kolozsvár in 2006), ed. István Csörsz Rumen (Cluj: Kriterion, 2008), 81. For instance, in the case of the fifteenth-century *Szabács viadala*, the method of narration also gives evidence that the author was present at the siege, but at the same time, he refers to his other sources, e.g., “As Turkish people talk about this” (“ment arról immár török nép beszél”): *Szabács viadala*, 107.

¹⁹⁶ “Igazmondó jámbor vitézöktől, kik az dolgokban jelön voltak, értéközött.”

*gentleman who came from the emperor, / And told me this assertedly.*¹⁹⁷” Allegedly, paying extreme attention to provide firsthand information about events on the Hungarian scene, Tinódi felt extra urge to assure his readers that although he was not present at the narrated events on this occasion, he still wanted to serve his readers with the most reliable information available.

Performance

Songs of early Hungarian poetry reached their audience primarily through oral recitations. Poems indicate the first line or the name of a commonly known song in almost every case. These melodies had mnemotechnical significance in orally formulated texts, and singing persisted in the practice of performing and recording literature yet for a long time, even when texts were not sung anymore, but were read silently. As melody indications give evidence, music accompanied the texts during their performance.¹⁹⁸ References to oral performance were common in the title of works, causing misapprehension in scholarship: many works that had been entitled as a “song,” were regarded songs by their genres, while they were merely referring to the mode of intended performance – the term *históriás ének* itself was often subject to such misunderstandings too.¹⁹⁹ Performers and writers of melodies were often the authors themselves, such as Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, but there were also singers who used and referred productions of other authors. Inspiration for composing the melodies might have come from religious and lay music, but as a result of migrations of people, ideas, and traditions, from various musical folk cultures as well. People who lived off this profession were named by various terms (*hegedűs, lantos, igris*), references to which suggest a hierarchical structure with the *lantos* on the top. A revealing reference comes from Tinódi Sebestyén Lantos himself, who made derogatory comments on a Serbian violin player, Demeter Kármán: “*He is flattering around the bey in the fort of Lippa, / And attributes his richness to him. //*

¹⁹⁷ “Egy úrfiú császártól megjöttében, / Nagy bizonynal beszélé egy kedvében.” *Szulimán császár Kazul basával viadaljáról*, 277–78.

¹⁹⁸ There are very few melodies which are of indoubtably originate from Hungarian folk music, rather, songs in the Hofgreff collection and of the *Cronica* resemble more to Hussite and Polish collections (which do have origins in folk music). Kálmán Csomasz Tóth, *Régi magyar dallamok tára 16. század (RMDT) (Thesaurus of Ancient Hungarian Melodies, Sixteenth Century)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1958), 14.

¹⁹⁹ See Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, chapter 2.

*He drags his violin with his head nodded.”*²⁰⁰

According to Sándor Takáts, a prominent cultural historian of the Ottoman period in Hungary from the first half of the twentieth century, Turks and Hungarians had a very similar manner of life and culture, with the inclusion of similar musical instruments (*koboz*, violin, horn, lute), manners of performing music, and genres that recount military campaigns (*aşık* poetry).²⁰¹ The intended audience of works determined the performance arena²⁰² of wandering singers and included scenes like taverns, fortresses, and noble courts all over the country, with a special regard on courts of nobles who were on duty along the defense line, in the captivity of Ottomans, or fell during the fights.

Audience

When discussing the supposed audience of event poetry, one should keep in mind the twofold, oral and written nature of the works that was manifested in their modes of transmission as well: texts were circulated either orally – which was the more common medium – , or in writing. In the case of oral transmission, the supposed primary audience of historical or report songs consisted of two, in many aspects overlapping groups: lower nobility and soldiers – however, as Philip Sydney’s note give evidence, such songs were performed in front of higher aristocracy as well. Although the overall ability to read showed an increasing tendency in the sixteenth century among the upper and middle nobility, and some noble courts (for instance, the Nádasdy or the Batthyányi families) became artistic centers having significant role in the institutionalization of culture, the majority of

²⁰⁰ “Sokat csélcsep béknek az Lippa várában, Azt alítja, érte esék nagy gazdagságba.//Az ő hegedőjét főhajtván rángatja.” Tinódi, *Erdéli história*, part III, lines 1147–9.

²⁰¹ Sándor Takáts, “A török-magyar énekesek és muzsikások (Turkish-Hungarian Singers and Musicians),” in *Bajvívó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)* (Budapest: Móra, 1979), 166. The work mentions *koboz* and *töröksíp* adopted from the Ottomans as a proof of fruitful relations. For a more comprehensive introduction on the Ottoman music life in Hungary, see Balázs Sudár and István Csörsz Rumen, “*Trombita, Rézdob, Tárogató...*: A Török Hadizene és Magyarország (Trumpet, copper drums, horns. Turkish military music and Hungary) (Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén Református Zeneiskola, 1996.) and Balázs Sudár, “A ‘török Tinódik’ és az oszmán históriás énekek (Turkish ‘Tinódis’ and Ottoman Narrative Songs),” in *Tinódi Sebestyén és a Régi Magyar Verses Epika (Sebestyén Tinódi and Old Hungarian Versified Epics)* (Kolozsvár/Cluj: Kriterion, 2008).

²⁰² The term is used by John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 47 to designate the scene of performance.

lower nobility remained illiterate until the eighteenth century.²⁰³ For soldiers, the corpus represented by historical songs was the main source of literature they got access to.²⁰⁴

Narratives often address directly their audiences in their introductions, in strophes bridging various segments of the narratives, in their propositions,²⁰⁵ or more broadly, when they refer to general topics of narrative poetry.²⁰⁶ It is without question that intended and real audiences of texts were not the same. Hints regarding the readership of literary works towards the end of the sixteenth century can be gathered from dedications and prefaces of publications. In accordance with a long tradition, authors dedicated their works to a patron – often to noblemen, but on occasion, also to successful soldiers, aristocratic widows or, more generally, to “all good readers.”²⁰⁷

To illustrate the invocation of readership of the texts with a few examples, a piece from the early 1520s (a few years before the Battle of Mohács), the first satirical work written in Hungarian, probably by Pauline monks plays with its audience while “discouraging” them to act against the Turk: “*Great lords who are listening, please don’t take my words wrong, / Do not use your white silver ornated saber, / to cut down the pagans, I ask this from you, / You should never harm them.*”²⁰⁸ Tinódi claims that his volume, the *Cronica* (1554) was intended for “*fighting, jousting valiants combating against castles and towns, or stuck in castles.*” This dedication establishes the *ars poetica* and the didactic aim of the volume too, as the text says it is intended to be an advisory peace “*by what means to stand against and fight the pagan enemy.*”²⁰⁹

²⁰³ Madas and Monok, *A könyvkultúra Magyarországon*, 206 and 212.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 150.

²⁰⁵ “Im egy Krónikát mondok, meghalljátok, / Talám mássát soha nem hallottátok;/Magyarok végházban sem szolgáltatok, / Eger várát mint mast oltalmazátok.” Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról*, 5–8.

²⁰⁶ “Hallottatok régi és új hadakat, / Nagy, sok, erős váraknak véjvásokat, / De nem egyet azok közül nagyobb, / Csak értsétek a Szigetnek ő dolgát.” Tőke Ferenc, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 5–8.

²⁰⁷ Katalin Péter refers to the dedications of contemporary works, such as the dedication of a Hungarian New Testament to Anna Nádasdy, the widow of István Majláth (1561), by Gáspár Heltai; a work by Péter Melius Juhász dedicated to János Enyingi Török, the lord of Debrecen (1562), and others. Katalin Péter, “Romlás és szellemi műveltség állapotai a 17. század fordulóján (Decay and Intellectual Culture at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century),” *Történelmi Szemle* 27, no. 1–2 (1984), 86. See also Sándor Iván Kovács, “Dedikáció: szentelés, áldozás, ajánlás, dedikálás (Dedication: Consecration, Sacrifice, Offering, Dedication),” *Irodalomismeret*, no. 11 (2001): 72–73.

²⁰⁸ “Nagy urak kik vagytok, szólok, ne bánjátok, / fejr, szép, ezüstös, ékes tü szablyátok, / vele pogán népet – kérlek – ne vágjátok, / és tü ne bánjátok.” Apáti Ferenc Cantilenája, strophe 4.

²⁰⁹ Tinódi, preface of the *Cronica*, 1554. “Ez jelönvaló könyvecskét szőrezni nem egyébért gondolám, hanem hogy az hadakozó, bajjívó, várak-, városok-rontó és várban szorúlt magyar vitézőknek lenne tanúság, üdvességes, tisztességes megmaradásokra, az pogán ellenségnek mimódon ellene állhassanak és hadakozjanak”.

Another fully developed volume, from the period in discussion, the *Song Book*²¹⁰ of Ferenc Wathay, although it has remained in a manuscript that was compiled during the author's Ottoman captivity in Istanbul at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was intentionally produced to be read by a wider public. Its preface²¹¹ addresses its intended readership in quite a direct manner: "*My trusted friend, reader, do not think that I composed and wrote the songs and stories of this book in order to earn some earthly honor or fame...*"²¹² A different manifestation of writer's consciousness is present in later in Wathay's volume, when the audience is encouraged to take action and organize the ransom for captives: "*You rather do this, / Collect all the good soldiers to yourself, / Release all the poor captives, / In order to earn honor.*"²¹³ The writer's voice – actively attempting to prompt his audience into action – determines not only the understanding of the poem but also seeks to influence the social attitude towards people in Ottoman captivity. A similar note is present in Tinódi's story on Eger, that addresses a specific audience and encourages them to keep the heroes of the siege in good fame: "*Those of you who live this side of the Tisza, / Tell good words to the brave soldiers of Eger.*"²¹⁴ The similarities of the examples seem to mark a widely existing practice of talking directly to the audience. At the same time, intense referentiality to the public mirrors features of orally performed epics, understating the intermediary nature of narratives between orality and literacy.

Parallels in Other Literatures

Certain features of Hungarian narrative poetry – performance, subject elements, topoi, metrical and musical forms – have parallels in literatures of various origins and traditions.²¹⁵ However, despite the numerous shared formal and topical elements, there are fundamental differences (e.g. the

²¹⁰ The *Song Book* (Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, K 62).

²¹¹ "Az olvasó barátinak köszönetit ajánlja", 4r ["Offers his gratitude to the reader"].

²¹² "Bízott barátom annakokáért olvasó, ne véld, hogy én is ez könyvben lévő énekeket, néhány históriákat azvégre egyben szerezttem és írogattam, hogy én azokból valami ez világi dicsőségre való hírt, avagy nevet keresnék..." 5r.

²¹³ "Aztot de inkább ti cselekedjétek, / Jó vitézeket hozzátok gyűjtsétek, / Szegény rabokat megszabadítsátok, / Hogy tisztességet kikvel vallhassatok." (III/141.)

²¹⁴ "Jelösben Tiszán innen kik lakoztok, / Egri vitézeknek sok jót mondjatok." Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, 3–4.

²¹⁵ For instance, there are examples from Italian (*cantare*, popular folk poetry) and German (*Ereignisliedern* or *Zeitungs-gesang*) literatures. Seláf, "Between Lyrics and Epics."

generally shorter length of German narratives, regulated by their most common media, the broadsheet) in different literary traditions.²¹⁶ In scholarship, many of these parallels had been addressed and their original traditions were presumed to be literary models for Hungarian vernacular event poetry²¹⁷ – at the same time, a genealogical line from the written German popular epic to the orally composed Hungarian is does not seem to be a probable scenario.

Attempting to set up milestones in the development of this kind of literary production, obvious guesses do not always seem to fulfill our expectations. For example, it cannot be stated that the battle of Mohács²¹⁸ and its consequences, the immense transformation of the ethnic and cultural map of the former Hungarian Kingdom have had a great impact on the development of traditions. Rather, it seems that most of the major features of literary traditions were in existence already, although they were, evidently, shaped by the critical events. For literacy and book culture, however, 1526 may be regarded a borderline, as for instance, the book merchants of Buda have vanished, and the library of Matthias Corvinus, home to his famous Corvinas, went into diffusion. Oral traditions, being independent from the need of libraries, remained intact in a sense, and they found their ways into literate culture with the appearance and the rise of the influence of printing presses.

New systems and institutions of culture appeared after preceding structures and systematic literacy were tumbled. Historiographical traditions in Hungary were both the products and the promoters of early modern state building and confessionalization. Latin chronicles written in the first quarter of the sixteenth-century (such as the chronicle of Thuróczi) were more strongly related with medieval chronicle traditions, but around the middle of the century, reformed views manifested themselves in history-writing, both by the translations of Latin works to vernacular

²¹⁶ E.g., there is an Italian *cantare* about the siege of Belgrade, 1456 – *Istoria del Gran Turco quando fo roto a Belgrado in Ongaria*. However, these traditions were also results of inherited literary patterns – German warfare epic is claimed to rely on French and Latin traditions. See W. H. Jackson, “Warfare in the Works of Rudolf von Ems,” in *Writing War. Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare.*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Francoise Le Saux, and Neil Thomas (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 49.

²¹⁷ For instance, by Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, *Die Liedpublizistik Im Flugblatt Des 15. Bis 17. Jahrhunderts.* (Baden Baden: Körner, 1974). About the possible connections of German folk songs and hungarian epic poetry, see Zemplényi, *Az európai udvari kultúra*, 46 and its references.

²¹⁸ Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 5, Madas and Monok, *A könyvkultúra Magyarországon*, 11.

languages (for instance, Bonfini's *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*) and the emergence of the Wittenberg concept of history.

Contacts in the border zone gave opportunity also for cultural transfers, especially in times of military inactivity:²¹⁹ however, it would be superficial to suppose a flourishing and appreciative cultural environment. The population from the Balkans, seeking asylum in territories in less direct line of threat, brought news about the Ottomans.²²⁰ Presumably, this information was transmitted mostly in orality and to some extent, influenced stories retold in Hungarian communities. This assumption is supported by the above mentioned example of the *Story of Szilágyi and Hajmási*, that has Southern Slavic thematic elements and a high number of linguistic formulas that point to the strong oral tradition behind the of narrative.

Formal Features

Formal characteristics of event poetry also point out the transitional feature of narratives. Forms show strong influences by oral traditions, however, there are form signs of their adaptation to written culture, and they are also shaped by the actual audience and their expectations. The aim of the community listening to or reading narratives about military events was to learn the latest developments of campaigns, to commemorate protagonists of sieges and battles and their deeds, and also to be entertained. Their anticipations were fulfilled in a manner that was also convenient for the author/performer: during the composition of narratives, they relied on a structure that operated with a set of constant and variable elements. The former, less changeable, homogenous structures of narrative songs include rhyming (morphemic rhymes, aaaa rhyme scheme), rhythmical (dodecasyllable with caesura), strophic (four lines) and melodical forms,²²¹ while heterogeneity is characteristic in the subject spectrum of narrative poetry. The formation of texts occurred by a filling of a given structure – a script – with new, or “reused”, circulating elements. The audience

²¹⁹ Schilling and Tóth, “From Empires to Family Circles,” 39.

²²⁰ Bak, “Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century.”127.

²²¹ Iván Horváth, *Balassi költészete történeti poétikai megközelítésben (The Poetry of Balassi in a Historical Poetical Approach)*. (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 195 and Iván Horváth, *A vers, (The Poem)* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1991), 152. See also Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 131.

relied on and participated in the “game” that was played by the repetition of certain features of the script, corresponding to Jauss’s definition of the horizon of expectation: “*A literary work, even if it seems new, does not appear as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its readers to a very definite type of reception by textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics or implicit allusions.*”²²²

During the forthcoming discussion, the structural layout of texts filled up with constant and new elements will be referred as the *script* of narratives. As the main aim of the audience was to gather information, in the course the reception of the texts, there was a dual mechanism in operation: stress was put on a reliable structure that could be filled with elements containing the expected news pieces of information. However, this system was not entirely a constant one. Traditional Hungarian song poetry went through two major changes in the sixteenth century.²²³ One of them was the revival of oral communal practices after the battle of Mohács: previously, these techniques had started to fade away, as homogenous, isometric and isorhymic traditions were considered to be archaic. They did not constitute part of elite literary registers, but were mainly connected to the popular sphere of literature.²²⁴ By this time, the practitioners of the reemerging oral tradition were literate, and as a consequence, these oral techniques were of written origin; the greatest impetus to the circulation of oral literary works was the advent of book printing. The main medium of literature was still oral, however, and as the majority of the audience were illiterate, they therefore still preferred oral performance, which meant that the significance of oral techniques did not change. Thus, in an odd manner, the invention of a written technique facilitated the spread of oral genres.

The other “revolution” of the period was precisely the opposite of the revival of the oral communal techniques. The adherents of new literary trends rejected the use of self- and suffix rhymes (i.e., an isorhymic structure). This change was facilitated by the difference in the aesthetics

²²² Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, tr. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 23.

²²³ Csaba Szigeti, *A himfarkas bőre. A radikális archaizmus a mai magyar költészetben (The Skin of the Male Wolf. Radical Archaism in Present Day Hungarian Poetry)*. (Pécs: Jelenkor, 1993).

²²⁴ Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 5–10.

of audible and visible texts, as there is a considerable difference between auditory and visual literary reception. Oral poetry is organically tied to the aesthetics of auditory reception; its rhythm builds on a high degree of parallelism and repetition which strikes the reader as unintelligible and comic when appearing in written texts.²²⁵ At this period, instead of the audible manifestation of literature, the visual form of poems came to the fore. Thus, the most important effect of these transitions was the appearance of the written poem, which indicated further changes in the forms of poems.

The appearance of poems in writing generated the need for new poetic forms. Hierarchical, more closed and strictly structured genres gained a progressively larger role in Hungarian poetry; it is not an accident that the first antique, classical forms appeared during this period (the first distich in Hungarian was written by János Sylvester in 1541). At the same time, traditional, oral forms started to fade away, or changed registers: for example, some of these forms remained in certain types of folk poetry. These genres never completely disappeared, only their primary techniques have changed.

Transmission

Keeping in mind the characteristics of existing sources in the investigated period, one should be extremely cautious when trying to draw a transmission line of texts between various media. Today we are restricted to a corpus of written texts, and presumably, this corpus was created in writing.²²⁶

However, most written texts have transitional features, both oral and written ones. The decisive features of epics, such as repetitions on many levels, rhyming structures and formulas attest to their close relations to orality; they also had predominantly written features, such as the acrostic and the colophon. Narratives were composed in writing, but followed structures of oral narratives; they

²²⁵ The prominent evaluation of old techniques is from Albert Szenczi Molnár, who claimed that “in old Hungarian poems, it could happen that more than ten lines ended at the same word one after the other, so that in historical songs, there were way too many ‘vala vala.’” (“Az régi magyar énekekben pedig avagy tíz vers is egymásután mind egy igában ment ki, ahonnan az históriás énekekben számtalan az sok vala vala vala.”) *Psalterium ungaricum*, dedication to the 2nd edition, Hernborn 1607, RMNy 962. See Iván Horváth, “Számtalan az soc vala vala vala,” http://szelence.com/molnar/horvath_szenci.html.

²²⁶ Gerézi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 10.

were performed orally, but they were transmitted in writing.²²⁷ Printing rapidly became a common medium for the narratives. However, there is no evidence that pieces of epic poetry were published individually as broadsheets according to the German tradition. Rather, Hungarian sources were published in collections, such as the prevalent, but not typical²²⁸ example of Tinódi's *Cronica*. Printing also effected the medialities of texts not only because it provided a more uniform written form to narratives and a greater chance for them to survive, but also because publishing in print demanded an accurate, analytical editorial process by both the author and the publisher. Moreover, the printed volume – although prints were often read out loud to provide a more traditional performance – assumed a different kind of audience, while it eliminated social, cultural and linguistic context of (oral) performances.²²⁹

The Ottoman threat was a constantly present topic in early prints: the subject of the first surviving print from Gutenberg's workshop was the Turkish crisis (1455, *Eine Mahnung der Christenheit wider die Türken*).²³⁰ The most popular genre of early modern printed publicity, news sheets (*Newe Zeytungen*) also dealt with various aspects of the Ottoman threat in considerable detail, spreading propagandistic arguments and news about campaigns. In Hungary, the first printing house was established by Tamás Nádasdy in Újsziget, and by the end of the century, 30 workshops operated in the former territories of the Kingdom – all but one among them were Protestant presses.²³¹ In their general forms, the prints in Hungary followed the “German paradigm.”²³² the majority of prints were evangelical texts, they spread rapidly, illustrations were of central importance, and Latin dominated over the vernacular language.²³³ Popular prints appeared in large amounts in Hungary after the 1570s, thus one can suppose a wide layer of “common”

²²⁷ However, accuracy in copying texts was not as important for authors as in the case of humanist works, marking a difference between higher and lower literates. Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, 5.

²²⁸ Composition on a higher level remains occasional in the sixteenth century. Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 127.

²²⁹ Eric L. Montenyohl, “Strategies for the Presentation of Oral Traditions in Print,” *Oral Tradition* 8, no. 1 (1993), 164.

²³⁰ Stephan Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing*, tr. Martin Douglas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 27.

²³¹ Bahlcke, “Calvinism and Estate Liberation Movements”, 79.

²³² Phrase of Andrew Pettegree and Matthew Hall, “The Reformation and the Book: A Reconsideration,” *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 4 (2004), 788.

²³³ *Ibid.*, Table 6, 798: in Hungary, the ratio was 66 vs 34%.

audience, who were well known and addressed by authors.²³⁴

Formulas – Theory and Applications

In a tradition that is determined by oral features, a text is inseparable from its author/performer and its audience.²³⁵ Transmission of narratives ensures the survival of historical knowledge, which is always formulated to be relevant for the present. For ease of reproduction, a wide range of mnemonic techniques was involved in the narratives. Recurring elements that ensure the maintenance of this structure both for performer or author, and for the recipient of narratives, may be of two kinds: thematic (sujet) elements or linguistic structures, i.e., formulas. Formula and theme constitute the two key concepts of oral narratives.²³⁶ Albert Lord, who elaborated the concept of oral formulas of Milman Parry, identified formula as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea,” and as an “offspring of the marriage of thought and sung verse.”²³⁷ Theme was defined, also by Parry and Lord as “groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song;” or otherwise, content-type repetition. This definition had certain restrictions: as Lord put it, the presence of theme A might call the presence of theme B in a song, but not necessarily directly after A.²³⁸ His work also enumerates the possible variants of songs and themes: shortening, expansion, order changes, addition to and omission of material, and substitution of one theme for another, which may all occur during the composition of texts.²³⁹ To an extent, the notion of theme can be accorded with Vladimir Propp’s concept of functions, or morphemes of folk tales – although his system was had been developed to narratives with a climactic storyline.²⁴⁰

In order to grasp methods of transition from oral traditions to written culture and the modes of

²³⁴ Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás?*, 121–123.

²³⁵ Thomas A. Schmitz, *Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts. An Introduction* (Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell, 2007), 100–104.

²³⁶ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 68.

²³⁷ Ibid., 31, and John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition. History and Methodology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 41.

²³⁸ Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 97.

²³⁹ Ibid., 123.

²⁴⁰ Propp defined function as “an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action,” while regarding its functions, it serves as “stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled.” Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 21.

coexistence of the two types of traditions, various levels of repetitions and their corresponding formulas and themes are going to be in the focus of our attention. The purpose of forthcoming analyses is to trace repetitions on the basis to the above concepts, and if possible, sketch a script, a structure that has been filled with a set of elements involving various types of repetitions. Our sources usually do not operate with a climactic structure, rising tension and hierarchized plot: they have an episodic structure and are not arranged in a strict chronological order. The variability of elements in such a script in nonfictional. Historical narratives were also studied by Gerard Genette, who warned that fictional and factual features of a narrative cannot be distinguished by their usage of anachrony, as discrepancies from linearity are quite common in such narratives.²⁴¹ Meanwhile, there seems to be a settled ordering in the narrative script: according László Jankovits, who studied the order of elements of plot formulas in event poetry, claimed that at narrations of similar events, elements of the narration have a fixed order.²⁴²

Scholarship in Hungary attributed a considerable significance to the formulaic style of event poetry so far:²⁴³ it had been identified as a determining factor of formal and poetic features. Considerable attempts had been made to analyze linguistic formulas of Hungarian narrative poetry, especially in the case of pieces with a distinctively oral nature. Such a narrative is the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*,²⁴⁴ an account of a raid of Hungarian soldiers against Ottomans around 1560, that has plentiful oral features, repetitions and formulas.

As for the prosody of Hungarian vernacular narratives, the rhyming formula of stanzas were often built on repetitive self-rhymes. Traditionally, the conventions of early Hungarian song poetry were used both in epic and lyrical contexts, as lyrical and epic genres had not yet diverged in their forms and contents.²⁴⁵ Therefore, this metrical pattern was used for several genres: historical,

²⁴¹ Gerard Genette, "Fictional Narrative, Factual Narrative," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 4 (1990), 758.

²⁴² László Jankovits, "A szóbeli kultúra és a *Cantio de militibus pulchra* (Oral Culture and the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*)," in *Hazugok, Fecsegők, álmodozók: Tanulmányok a Régi Magyar Költészetéről* (Liars, Gossipers, Dreamers: Studies on Old Hungarian Poetry) (Budapest: Balassi, 2006), 40.

²⁴³ Amadeo di Francesco, "A históriás ének mint formulaköltészet (Narrative Poetry as Formula Poetry)," *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 93, no. 4 (1989).

²⁴⁴ *Cantio de militibus pulchra*, 175–180.

²⁴⁵ Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 129 and Klaniczay, ed. *A magyar irodalom története I.*, 342.

religious, erotic, moralizing, wedding, and biblical songs were all written according to this model.

Repetitions may be present in all linguistic and poetical levels of a given text. Distinctive features of orality on the textual level²⁴⁶ include repetitions at various levels of the text; primarily oral texts operate with syndetic coordination, less anaphoras and cataphoras. The use of special linguistic codes, such as archaisms, parallelisms, formulas, but also various speech styles (registers) associated with social groups are also means to serve the reception of oral literature.²⁴⁷ On the phraseological level, oral texts use less attributives, and most of them are recurring, “epitheton ornans” type of qualifiers. As the functioning of works is built on the repetition and the variations of known elements, formulas provided the aesthetic value of the works as well. In this manner, the use of formulas is becoming more than merely a set of techniques: it is becoming a style that determines the development of written culture.

²⁴⁶ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 20.

²⁴⁷ Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 11 and 15.

2. THE OTTOMAN RULERS IN HUNGARIAN VERNACULAR POETRY

Among the many layers of depicting Ottomans for Hungarian audiences, the investigation of representations of sultans seems an adequate starting point to demonstrate differences of narratives relying on literary and vernacular traditions. Evidently, the differentiation of these two categories is somewhat an oversimplification, and needs some clarification. The following analysis will make an attempt to grasp differences of narratives the representative practices of which rely mostly on written sources in Latin, and of narratives that were composed in the vernacular, which do not necessarily rely on written sources, but were composed on the basis of firsthand experiences or eyewitness accounts of events. I will attempt to demonstrate the differences between these two traditions by focusing on the references to the figures of sultans in the sources.

The Ottoman emperor was the head of legislative, executive, and judicial power within the Ottoman state, a power which was limited only by religious law (sharia).²⁴⁸ The image of sultans as the focus of this chapter is justified also by the tendency that in Europe, as Norman Housley states, the dominant image of the Turk was focused on the Ottomans as a political power. From the fifteenth century onwards, descriptions emphasized Ottoman capabilities of extraordinary power concentration, and often discussed this power “in personal terms, [focusing] on the ambitions of their sultans,”²⁴⁹. Although the overall image of the Ottomans took a turn after 1453 from presenting the Turks as the descendants of Trojans to depicting them as “new barbarians,”²⁵⁰ emphasizing their brutality and cruelty, some authors focused on the possibility of converting the Ottoman emperor. Such a rhetorical attempt was, for instance, the renowned letter of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini arguing for the conversion of Mehmed II to Christianity for the sake of the

²⁴⁸ Pál Fodor, “‘Hivatásos törökök’ – ‘Született törökök.’ Hatalmi elit és társadalom a 15–17. századi Oszmán Birodalomban” (‘Professional Turks’ – ‘Turks by Birth.’ Power Elite and Society in the Ottoman Empire in the 15–17th Centuries.” *Századok* 138, no. 4 (2004): 775–91, 775.

²⁴⁹ Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 131.

²⁵⁰ Humanist writers as Bruni and Ficino laid the pattern of these practices. Nancy Bisaha, “‘New Barbarian’ or Worthy Adversary? Humanist Constructs of the Ottoman Turks in Fifteenth-Century Italy,” *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Perception of the Other*, ed. Michael Frassetto and David R. Blanks, 185–205 (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1999), esp. 189–193.

unification of religions and world hegemony.²⁵¹ The struggles of empires for world rule – or more precisely, for the legacy of the Roman Empire – appeared at various fora of culture, and these claims had been discussed by a considerable branch of scholarship.²⁵² The “saviour of Christianity” as an imperial title appeared in numerous discourses and contexts in Hungary as well, and by the sixteenth century, it was Matthias Corvinus who rose to be the potent nominee for this role. The recognition of the Ottoman Empire’s aims at world hegemony resulted in the transformation of their overall image: yet during the lifetime of Matthias, as a reaction to the realization that Mehmed II was attempting to build a universal empire, considerable attempts were made to maintain “good neighborly relations” with the Turks – especially because the main aim of Matthias Corvinus was to build an empire independent from Western Europe.²⁵³ As we shall see, after the death of Matthias this general image was transformed again; the topos of barbarity became significant and characterized discourse even in those times when Hungarians were actually allied with the Turks.²⁵⁴ However, due to the lack of vernacular sources for the fifteenth century, one should keep in mind that the above discourses were present only in humanist Latin literature flourishing in Hungary in the period. Still, the existence of these topoi in elite literature had an inevitable influence on sixteenth-century authors with humanist background in the “second wave of Renaissance” in Hungary. For this reason, the investigation of these “elite tendencies,” the probabilities and conditions of their presence in vernacular writings is an indispensable objective of the present discussion.

When analyzing representational practices depicting the Ottoman ruler, the question of authenticity must also be discussed. In general, early Hungarian narrative poems always refer to

²⁵¹ Ibid., 196. See also Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 136 and Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 35–36, and Mercan, “Constructing the Self-Image.”

²⁵² Barbara Fuchs, “Imperium Studies: Theorizing Early Modern Expansion,” in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval through Modern*, ed. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michael R. Warren, 71–92 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 72. Fuchs suggests the use of a different vocabulary for the study of the particular context: instead of postcolonialism, she introduces the term *imperium studies*.

²⁵³ Pál Fodor, “The View of the Turk in Hungary: The Apocalyptic Tradition and the Legend of the Red Apple in Ottoman–Hungarian Context,” *Les Traditions Apocalyptiques Au Tournant de La Chute de Constantinople*, ed. Benjamin Lellouch and Stéphane Yerasimos, 99–131 (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999), 111 and 113.

²⁵⁴ Pál Fodor, “Állandóság és változás az oszmán történelemben” (Permanence and Change in Ottoman History) *A szultán és az aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)*, 11–24 (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 11.

their sources, such as the Bible or an antique Roman story, since it was of central importance to demonstrate that there were no fictional elements in the works.²⁵⁵ However, report songs discussing current events differ from other genres of epic poetry. They do not rely primarily on a written source, but on eyewitness report, first-, or secondhand, as it may be. Since most authors could not have had any personal experiences concerning the sultan, they had to “invent” the figure of the ruler, by relying on oral sources.

2. 1. Representations of the Ottoman Sultans before Suleyman

Although the expansion of the Ottoman Empire had been a realistic threat for Hungary already for centuries, it was not until the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent that the country suffered irreversible losses. This era corresponds with the emergence of vernacular narratives describing recent important events, and with the overall spread of the vernacular language and the formation of rules and structures of Hungarian literature. In this manner, narratives describing events before Suleyman are retrospective narratives reflecting on events of the past, relying partly on historiographical traditions, but taking elements likewise from oral sources and traditions. Because of these conditions, representations concerning the sultans before Mohács – corresponding to the sultans before Suleyman – are to be discussed in the current, distinct subchapter. To follow the approach of discussion based on chronological order, the in-depth investigation of the depicting practices of Suleyman will be followed by a short discussion of sultans who ruled after Suleyman in the sixteenth century.

The progression of the images of sultans were in a close relationship with decisive events²⁵⁶ – battles, sieges, campaigns – therefore, the main methodological approach in this chapter

²⁵⁵ Thus, historical songs are not direct interpretations of an event, but rather, almost by definition, translations of a source. István Vada, “Kolozsvárott kötetet komponálni” (Composing a volume in Kolozsvár) *Tinódi Sebestyén és a régi magyar verses epika. A 2006. évi budapesti és kolozsvári Tinódi-konferenciák előadásai* (Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos and old Hungarian narrative poetry. Proceedings of the Tinódi-conferences held in Budapest and Kolozsvár in 2006), ed. István Csörsz Rumen, (Kolozsvár: Kriterion, 2008), 81. For instance, in the case of the fifteenth-century *Szabács viadala*, the method of narration also gives evidence that he was present at the siege, but at the same time, he refers to his other sources too – e. g. “As Turkish people talk about this” (“ment arról immár török nép beszél”), *Szabács viadala*, 107.

²⁵⁶ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 131.

investigates representations of the sultan according to reflections of narratives on these landmark-type events. A parallel focus falls on differences of two major types of narratives of a moment of literary history when the rules of Hungarian vernacular literature were in a constitutive state: ones that were composed in some sort of “closeness” – temporal, geographical, linguistic – with the actual events, and the other type of narratives that are in a rather “distant” relations with their subjects according to one or more of the above aspects.

In the case of references to sultans before Suleyman, one comes across fragmentation on many levels: both contemporary vernacular sources and on many occasions, the power sequence within the Ottoman dynasty are both ruptured. Most narratives with references to sultans before Suleyman were composed during the sixteenth century, and they may be divided into two groups, differentiated by their *fontes*: the first group relies mostly on historiographical sources and includes works such as the Sigismund-chronicle of Sebestyén Tinódi, the Chronicle of Ottoman sultans by János Baranyai Decsi or the Matthias-chronicle of Ambrus Görcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazekas. Many works in this group are translations, and they are distinctly connected to humanist ideas and bear characteristics of literate traditions – however, many of these translations are adapted for their audiences and utilize features of vernacular traditions. The other group of sources is based mostly on firsthand observations or eyewitness accounts, and related more firmly to oral traditions – however, unfortunately, this former group has fewer representatives in the case of early sultans (such as the Siege of Szabács), but the extant examples may provide sufficient insight into predominant tendencies.

The earliest sultan who is referred to more extensively in the sources is Murad I (1362–1389), the opponent of the Christian army in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. With regard to the rule of the sultan and of others following him, the versified chronicle of Sebestyén Tinódi (based on the Latin chronicle of Thuróczi) offers a broader, historical perspective of the history of Ottoman campaigns, and it also encounters inner and outer conflicts of the Hungarian state, e.g., the conflicts with the Hussites and Bans of Croatia. Although this work does not put sultan Murad in the climax of events

connected with Hungary, his political operations are mentioned: he is explicitly asked by the Byzantine emperors Michael and Ioannes to help solve the inner conflicts of their empire: “*Then he asked for the sultan’s help. / Murad was very happy hearing this;/He went into Europe from Asia, / Assuming he could gain benefit.*”²⁵⁷ Parallels for this argument may be brought from a wide spectrum of historical narratives, from Roman imperial propaganda aiming for the ruling of various tribes in *De bello Gallico*, to a reverse argumentation of the Russian chronicle of Nestor claiming that the Scandinavians were called to rule and solve the inner conflicts of the Slavs. Tinódi’s work also mentions the rule of Bayezid I (1389–1402), the ruler who, according to scholarship, was one of the first sultans taking considerable steps towards building an empire.²⁵⁸ He appears in the *Sigismund chronicle* of Tinódi described as “*Fortunate and powerful*”²⁵⁹ – however, Tinódi does not provide details on the decisive defeat of Sigismund’s armies at the Battle of Nicopolis; he claims that the failure was not a result of the success or superior power of the Turks, but of the arrogance of the Christians, recalling the topos of the “scourge of God.”

Sources are quite scarce with regard to the era of interregnum after Bayezid. Mehmed I (1413–1421, referred as “Ciriscelebi”) and Murad II (1421–1444, 1446–1451) are present in the *Chronicle of the Turkish sultans*²⁶⁰ of János Baranyai Decsi. The fragmentary work (the beginning is lost; the poem starts with the era of Sigismund and Bayezid) from 1597 has two parts: the first recounts the history of the Ottoman Empire, the second is an adhortation in the spirit of Wittenberg against cooperation with the Turks. This narrative covers the rule of Ottoman sultans until the end of the sixteenth century, and in this manner, could be the most important source for references regarding early sultans as well, but unfortunately, the text is missing sections on early sultans. The remaining text begins with the discussion of events under the rule of Sigismund, thus the first mentioned

²⁵⁷ “Legottan az ő segítségét kéré. / Murát hallá, ezen igen örüle; / Ázsiából Európába bekele, / Az ő neki haszon lönne, azt vélé.” 557–560.

²⁵⁸ Fodor, “Állandóság és változás az oszmán történelemben,” 19.

²⁵⁹ Line 564.

²⁶⁰ János Baranyai Decsi, *Török császárok krónikája*. The author (also known as Joannes Decius Barovius) had a humanist background acquired in Wittenberg, and when returned home, had connections with the court of Zsigmond Báthory. Arguing against the war with the Ottomans was topical in this period in Transylvania, as promoters of alliance with the Ottomans came to the forefront in Transylvanian politics.

sultan in the narrative is Bayezid I, referred to in connection with the battle of Nicopolis and the sultan falling in captivity.²⁶¹ However, despite the fragmented nature of the text, certain representational tendencies might be observed, as sections presenting particular sultans seem to follow the same pattern. After enumerating the territories conquered by the ruler (e.g. the taking of Thessaloniki, Aetolia, Attica etc. by Murad II) his main enemies are presented (to stay with the same example, the conflicts of Murad II with Skanderbeg, Wladislaw and John Hunyadi), ending with descriptions of the ruler's campaigns, particular events and stories.

The first siege of Belgrade, a fortification that became a scene of constant clash between the Ottoman and Hungarian forces, was lead by Murad II in 1440. The siege is portrayed by Mátyás Nagybankai's work on John Hunyadi²⁶² (relying on Bonfini and Székely) as: "*Amurates occupied Nándorfehérvár with all his forces/For seven whole months he shot and besieged it night and day.*"²⁶³ Nagybankai's text narrates the sultan's coming back to consciousness after being wounded in a dramatized form, referring to the worries of the sultan first of all, about his men, and second, about his cannons. In the description of the reactions of the sultan after being defeated by János Hunyadi at Belgrade, the main motivation for continuing the siege is to avoid disgrace, and his defeat resulted in introducing a ban on talking about the siege: "*Then the emperor announced among all his people, / That no one should ever mentioned the name of Belgrade in front of him.*"²⁶⁴ In connection with the unsuccessful siege, the narration refers to the reactions of the sultan to the unfavorable news in more detail: "*When emperor Amurates saw the peril of his people, / The heart of the emperor was filled with sorrow and fear, with great dread, / Being dishonored, he turned his*

²⁶¹ "He was even caught alive, / And bound with golden chains, / Taken around in an iron cask." "Sőt, elevenen ő maga is megfogaték, / És aranyláncokkal ő megkötöztették, / És vaskalitikában ő hordoztaték." str. 23.

²⁶² *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról* (The story of the vailant voivod János Hunyadi 1574, Debrecen. Composed in 1560, Nagyszombat.

²⁶³ "Minden erejével Nándor-Fejérvárat Amurátes megszállá, / Hét egész holnapig éjjel nappal császár löteté, ostromlatá." Nagybankai, *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról...*, 63–64.

²⁶⁴ Akkor az császár hagyá minden népe között ez dolgot hirdetni, / Hogy soha előtte Nándor-Fejérvárat senki meg ne említse. 403–4. Disgrace: "Mert jobb itt meghalnom, hogy nem szégyenemre annákul haza mennem." (372.) Székely: 213 v. "Azonba pedig a nag Machumet az ő vízi ereiének veszedelmét hogy meg eerte, igen meg haraguuec raitta, es a szakalat meg foguan meg eskuuec raitta, hog tizen ötöd napig, avag feieer var alat meg halna, avag pedig meg venne feier varat."

people back to his lands, / For which the name of God was greatly praised in Belgrade.”²⁶⁵

Descriptions of the emotions of sultans is a frequently recurring component in vernacular accounts of sieges and battles. The role and functions of this feature are going to be discussed in depth at the analysis of the representational practices concerning Suleyman. What is important to keep in mind until then is that these emotional reactions are always depicted very schematically, and the mentioned emotions are always intended to avoid disgrace, which is the most terrible consequence of military actions according to the narratives. To bring yet another example concerning sultans of the earlier periods, the *Story of king Matthias*²⁶⁶ written by Ambrus Göröcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazakas portrays the fear and sadness of Murad as the most fundamental motivational forces in campaigns (e.g. “*He fears the good fortune of voivod John,*”²⁶⁷ or “*Good John Hunyadi beat the Turks on five occasions, / Which made emperor Amurates very sad when it came to his notice*”).²⁶⁸

This narrative presents events of the siege of Belgrade by following its sources strictly. The sultan is depicted as motivated in fights in order to avoid disgrace, he is shown to be afraid of Matthias,²⁶⁹ whose power claims are justified as he is feared by Mehmet II, and is presented as an able rival to the Ottoman and Habsburg forces: “*Two emperors, both possessing a great part of the world, were wondering about this, / That a young, smart king has emerged, / And in the first year of his reign with his army, / Beat both of them with his power.*”²⁷⁰

To return to the work of Baranyai Decsi on the Turkish sultans, his narrative depicts Murad as the leader of a force threatening Hungarian territories. At the same time, the text declares the

²⁶⁵ “Mikor látta volna Amurátes császár népének veszedelmét, / Bánat és félelem, csuda nagy rettegés foglalá császár szívét, / Szégyen vallására megtéríté azért esmét földébe népét, / kiért Feirvárban oly igen dicsérék az úristennek nevét.” Lines 69–73.

²⁶⁶ Ambrus Göröcsöni – Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, *Mátyás király históriája*, around 1567. Miklós Bogáti Fazakas corrected and continued the work of Ambrus Göröcsöni. The work relied on Johannes Thuróczi’s and Johannes Sambocus’s editions of Bonfini, and on one of Nagybankai’s other works on the father of Matthias, Johannes Hunyadi.

²⁶⁷ “Féli szerencsáját János vajdának” Pars I, strophe 103.

²⁶⁸ “Mind az ötször ízben jó Hunyadi János az töröket megveré, / Igen megbúsula Amurátes császár ez dolgot hogy megérté.” Nagybankai *História az vitéz Hunyadi János...* 141–142.

²⁶⁹ “They would not expect any help from Mehmed, / As they know well how afraid is he of king Matthias.” “Segítséget nem várnak Mahumettől, / Mert jól tudják, mint tart Mátyás királytól.” IV/54.

²⁷⁰ Ezön csodál világbiró két császár, / Hogy egy ifiú közöttök eszös király, / Első esztendejében ő hadával, / Mindkét császárt megverte hatalmával. IV/ 71.

superiority of the defense system of Hungary over the one of the Byzantine Empire and of Constantinople, as demonstrated in the cases of both Murad and Mehmed II – they could overtake Byzantine territories, but none of them could take Belgrade. In other respects, the work is quite brief in presenting the early events of the rule of Mehmed II (1444–46, 1451–1481) and the taking of Constantinople: “*Then he conquered Constantinople, / Besieged it with four hundred thousand men, / And subjugated the city after fifty-four days.*”²⁷¹ The siege of Belgrade in 1456 – a successful siege that became the symbol of the heroic defense capabilities of Hungarians – is referred to in a similarly short manner – “*Belgrade was invaded by him, / But John Hunyadi repulsed him from there, / And defended Hungary by his own death.*”²⁷²

While describing the rule of Mehmed II, the work implements a gentle critique of Matthias Corvinus’s politics. The main component of this criticism is that Matthias cared more about fighting with Christian states than developing an extensive defense system. That failure ensured successes for Mehmed: “*It is not in vain that when he [Matthias] died, / Mehmed said he was sad about his leaving this world, / As he was happy with his many wars.*”²⁷³ This idea also echoes the main argument of the whole narrative, which urges an alliance against the Turks. In this manner, Mehmed and the sultans get a role in the general concept of the text: the presentation of the Ottoman rulers as unreliable leaders argues for the necessity of an anti-Turkish alliance and emphasizes that any agreement with them bears a certain danger. This idea is highlighted with the case of Venetians as a negative example: “*The unreliability of the Turks, you should note their bad habit: / They made alliance with the Venetians, / And attacked them with three great armies from the other side.*”²⁷⁴

In connection with references to Mehmed II, we should not neglect the so-called *Song of Jajca*, a

²⁷¹ “Constantinapolt is azután ő megszállá, / Négyszázezer néppel erősen ostromlatá, / Ötvennégy nap után ugyan kezéhez hajtá.” Lines 94–96.

²⁷² “Nándorfejevárat azután ő megszállá, / De Hunyadi János onnan ötete elhajtá, / Halálával Magyarországot oltalmazá.” Lines 97–99.

²⁷³ “Nem hejában Mahumet császár ő halálán, / mondta, hogy bánkódék világból kimúlásán, / Mert ű örült volna az ő sok háborúján.” Lines 136–8.

²⁷⁴ “Török álnoksága, jegyezd meg, mi szokása! / Velencésekkel ő frigyét kötött vala, / Másfelől három nagy hadat indított vala.” str. 40.

fragment consisting of merely two lines – “*When he saw the flag of the Hungarian king, / He gave free rein to his good horse.*”²⁷⁵ As the context claims, sultan Mahumet, “*about whom even the little girls sing this popular song.*”²⁷⁶ The fragment is known to us from the work of Miklós Zrínyi from his seventeenth-century work about Matthias Corvinus – thus the provenance of the text is obviously uncertain. However, the sultan is mentioned in the fragment as Matthias’s opponent – thus the fragment may be regarded as a manifestation of an element of Matthias’s cult. The primary medium of the text is debated: according to Zrínyi’s note, the fragment is clearly part of the oral tradition; Hungarian scholar Rabán Gerézdi²⁷⁷ has suggested that the text can be related to contemporary chronicle, i.e., written traditions. At the same time, the short fragment is in clear affinity with certain formulas rooted in orality. As Amadeo di Francesco claims, formulaic style is a fundamental means of expression of event poetry, both from formal and poetical–compositional aspects,²⁷⁸ since the major organizational tool of event poetry is repetition, which is an element of identity creation and at the same time, it is an aesthetic statement as well. The aesthetic value of a work is the result of the repetition of the known, customary elements in a varied form. Accordingly, formula usage in event poetry is not merely a technique, but a style that is typical for all representatives of the genre, and at the same time, influences the development of written traditions as well.

With regard to the fragment of Jajca, apart from the parallel brought up by Lajos Dézsi in his biography of Sebestyén Tinódi,²⁷⁹ I may add four further examples from the sixteenth century to demonstrate the formula-like character of the fragment. One of them is a line from the song about the life of John II, written by Demeter Csanádi from 1571: “*He would not give free rein to his horse or his camp;*”²⁸⁰ the second is from the Anonym of Nikolsburg on the Battle of Kenyérmező: “*He*

²⁷⁵ “Mikor magyar király zászlóját látá, / Jó lovának száját futni bocsátá.” 23.

²⁷⁶ “még a kis leánzók is köz énekkel éneklik vala akkor Mahumet császárról” 23.

²⁷⁷ Rabán Gerézdi, “Az úgynevezett jajcai ének-töredék (The so-called Fragment of Jajce).” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 67, no. 6 (1963): 718–20.

²⁷⁸ Amadeo di Francesco, “A históriás ének mint formulaköltészet” (Event poetry as the poetry of formulas), *Kölcshatás, újírák, Formula a Magyar Irodalomban* (Budapest: Universitas, 2005), 147–155.

²⁷⁹ RMKT 8. Dézsi. 1930, refers to line 224 of *A szalkai mezőn...* by Tinódi: “He made run their good horses” (Az ő jó lovokat folni bocsáttata.)

²⁸⁰ Demeter Csanádi, Song about the life of John II, line 73: “*Lova száját, táborát addig nem téríté [...]*” *Vita Joannis*

gave his good horse free rein, and ran away;”²⁸¹ the third is from the narrative composed by András Valkai on Hariadenus (Barbarossa Hayreddin): “*Horuc, seeing the peril of his armies, / Wanted to get to another army instead, / Gave free rein to his good horse, / Ran away, and his people were cut down;*”²⁸² while the fourth is from the same author, from his work on the origins of Hungarian kings: “*They turned the heads of their horses elsewhere.*”²⁸³ These examples attest that representations of the sultans are connected with formulaic style and orality, and as later we shall see, representations of Ottoman rulers became important compositional elements in transitional narratives between oral and written traditions.

Turning back to the most momentous event of Mehmed II’s reign – the siege and conquest of Constantinople –, we find surprisingly few references in our vernacular sources. The above-mentioned versified chronicle of Nagybankai follows humanist sources such as Bonfini, Thuróczi and István Székely in the description of the events.²⁸⁴ Following his sources, the narrative refers to the figure of Alexander the Great in connection with Mehmed: “*He was so happy with his rich booty in Constantinople, / He became puffed up and became high-minded in his great power, / He thought he was the wise Alexander in military issues, / And started to turn over Belgrade in his mind frequently.*”²⁸⁵ Presenting the arrogant pride of Mehmed seems to be a topos, as Tinódi, in his

Secundi, 1571.

²⁸¹ Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején Keneszy Pálnak és Báthory Istvánnak az törökökkel szemben*, 1568, 403.

²⁸² “Horuc az ő hada veszését látván, / Más hadra magát tartani akarván, / Jó lova száját follnia bocsátván, / Megfutamék, népe lön levágtván.” András Valkai, *Hariadenus tengeri tolvaj históriája* (The story of sea thief Hariadenus), 137–140.

²⁸³ “Más fele lovok száját ők fordíták” (line 2303., on two Vlach voivods), Valkai, *Az magyar királyoknak eredetéről*, 1567.

²⁸⁴ “That year, great Mahumet arrived at Constaninople, / Neglecting the alliance, he conquered the city after many fights. // There he cut down the Greek emperor with the soldiers and lords, / Had the empress quartered, plundered the city, / Poor people were sold for money, and violated many virgins, / Chose the church of Saint Sophia as his own place of devotion.” “Azon esztendőben az nagy Mahumet Konstantinápolra jöve, / Frigyet hátra vete, sok viadal után az várast ő megvevé. // Ott az görög császárt az vitézlő néppel, urakkal levágtá, / A császárné asszont négygyé vágattatá, az várast megdúlátá, / A szegén községet pénzen eladatá, sok szüzeket megrontata, / Szent Zsófia asszon templomát magának áldozatra választá.” 303–308.

²⁸⁵ “Igen örül vala kazdag nyereségnek az Konstántinápolban, / Elbízá ű magát, el-felfúválnokodék nagy hatalmasságában, / Alítá ű magát bölcs Alexandernak hadakozás dolgában, / Nándor–Feirvárat kezdé forgatnia császár gyakran magában.” 309–312. His source István Székely writes “In the following year after taking Constantinople, the great Machumet became high-minded, thought himself being Alexander the Great, and made preparations to take Belgrade.” “Másod esztendőbe a nagy Machumet, hogy megvevé Constantinopolt, elbizá magát, és vélé magát lenni Nagy Sándornak, nagy készüllettel megszállá Nándorféhevár várát.” *Chronica ez világnak jeles dolgairól*, Székely István, Krakkó, 1559, 212v. Another example for the presence of the figure of Alexander in Hungarian literature is the *Historia Alexandri Magni* by Péter Ilosvai Selymes.

Chronicle of king Sigismund portrays the sultan to be high-minded aiming to build a world empire: “The new king wanted to earn a great name, / Started to collect his arms with great force, / Wanted to invade Banat, / Earn great success over the Hungarians.”²⁸⁶

The figure of Alexander the Great is not only a topos of humanist historiography and a reference point of contemporary European rulers, but a clear ideal in Ottoman historiography as well, particularly in the case of Suleyman the Magnificent.²⁸⁷ Thus the figure of Alexander may emerge in all contexts representing power struggles. A demonstrative example can be cited from the *Chronicle of Turkish sultans* by Baranyai Decsi that refers to the empire of Alexander among world powers, and his armies are presented as parallels to the forces of Hunyadi at Belgrade: “Alexander departed with thirty-six thousand soldiers, / And defeated the countless forces of Darius, / Subjugated lands of the East. // John Hunyadi also beat the Turks, / Defeated many people despite being fewer in number, / Chased away crowds from below Belgrade.”²⁸⁸

Leaving the presentation of narratives that were written based on chronicles and traditions, I now present a piece of event poetry relying more on oral traditions, and search for representational practices it operates with. The *Siege of Szabács*,²⁸⁹ one of the earliest siege accounts in Hungarian was written shortly after the siege it gives account of. Szabács, in Serbia, was taken by Mehmed II in 1473. The song recounts Matthias Corvinus’s attempt to retake it in 1476, and relies mostly on oral accounts about the siege. The narrative does not mention the sultan by name, and his figure is not present in the account in person, but he is an often-mentioned reference point. The status of a power figure raises the question if this status was mediated by Ottoman soldiers who were

²⁸⁶ “Az új király akar nevet keresni, / Nagy erővel hamar kezde gyűjtezni, / Temesközbe akara ő bójóni, / Magyarokon nagy diadalmat venni.” *Zsigmond király és császárnak krónikája*, 829–832.

²⁸⁷ Pál Fodor, “A Bécsbe vezető út” (The Road Leading to Vienna),” *A Szultán és Az Aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)*, 363–91 (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 382. and Tijana Krstić, “Of Translation and of Empire: Sixteenth-century Ottoman Imperial Interpreters as Renaissance Go-betweens,” *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead, (London: Routledge, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Harminchatezer magával Sándor indula / Darius szántalan hadát megverte vala / Napkeleti országokat meghajtott vala. // Sokszor az Hunyadi János is törököket, / Megvere kevés magával ő sok népeket, / Nándorfejérvár elől elűze népeket. Strophe 182–183.

²⁸⁹ RMKT 1. 496–497. The poem is fragmentary; because of its high-quality and rare rhyming structure, strange word usage and its differences from other sources, the originality of the text has been debated in scholarship, however, the paper of the manuscript, and linguistic arguments strengthen poem's originality. Péter Bognár Péter and Iván Horváth. “A Szabács Viadala” (The Siege of Szabács), “*Látjátok Feleim...*”. *Magyar Nyelvemlékek. Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Kiállítása (“Látjátok Feleim...” Linguistic Monuments. Exhibition in the National Széchényi Library)*, ed. Edit Madas, 151–55 (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2009).

interrogated by the composer after the siege. In the text, the sultan appears at the top of social hierarchy, as a distant power who is feared by all of his army, and this fear along with the will to execute his orders are the main motivations for the soldiers for combat. The text emphasizes this superior role, giving an opportunity for the narrative to present all the Turkish forces as incompetent and unable to make their own decisions. As we shall see in representations of Suleyman, this practice became determining in the heyday of event poetry during the siege campaigns in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Before Suleyman, the reigns of his two direct predecessors, Bayezid II (1481–1512) and Selim (1512–1520) are not dealt with in much detail in the sources. The *Chronicle of the Turkish sultans* by Baranyai Decsi focuses on the campaigns of Selim in Egypt and Croatian territories, while the *Matthias chronicle* of Göröcsöni and Bogáti Fazekas refers to the troubled takeover of power between Selim and Bayezid: “*Selim attacked his father, / The previous emperor Bayezid,*”²⁹⁰ then continues with a comment on the campaign plans of Selim being dependent on the political transformations after the death of Matthias Corvinus.²⁹¹

The investigated representations in the sources confirm the differentiation of narratives relying on oral and written (chronicle) traditions. Although there are very few contemporary vernacular sources from the era of the Ottoman sultans before Suleyman, the results of the investigations of the earliest poems referring to personalities and events of the Ottoman conquests, the elements that are typical in the poetry of the sixteenth century – such as the sultan as a distant pinnacle of the hierarchy, or his fixed scheme of emotions – , are already noticeable in these, mostly fragmentary texts.

²⁹⁰ Szelim ellene támada atyjának, / Az előbbi nagy Bajazet császárnak part VIII, str. 1.

²⁹¹ “Selim understood that Hungarians had weakened, / They hardly exist after the death of Matthias” “Szelim érti, magyarok ellágyultanak, / Mátyás holta után csak alig vannak.” Part VIII, str. 1. Thuróczi refers to the reactions of sultan Mehmed upon the death of John Hunyadi: “It is said that even Emperor Mehmed, upon hearing the news of his death, bowed his head in silence for over an hour, even though the count, just before his death, had forced him to flee the castle of Nándorfehérvár” (tr. PE) Vienna, 1746, I. 273. See Pál Engel, “János Hunyadi: The Decisive Years of His Career, 1440–1444,” *From Hunyadi to Rákóczi. War and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. János M. Bak and Béla K. Király, 103–23 (Brooklyn, 1982), 103.

2. 2. Suleyman the Magnificent

A central figure in the sixteenth century, both on the world stage and in the Ottoman campaigns against Hungary, Suleyman the Magnificent was the subject of various artistic and literary works throughout the Ottoman Empire and various parts of Europe as well. Ottoman conquests reached their peak under his reign, and on the global scene, he competed with European rulers in making new territorial claims as the known world expanded. These processes and his personal role in them were presented in Ottoman historiography in consciously constructed, uniform depictions and were reflected in all possible media. These images, with some alterations, found their way into European works about the sultan as well, and meanwhile, diverse depictions of him appeared in European historiography and literature. In the course of the Ottoman Empire's expansion in continental Europe and continuous campaigns, battles, and sieges across Hungary, the Hungarian Kingdom was divided into three parts.

The campaigns were reflected in numerous literary works that partly relied on chronicles, some translated from Latin, but many of them written and circulated in the areas affected by everyday struggles with the Turks. These works also reflect the presence and interpretations of Suleyman's role in the campaigns. Analyzing the images of Suleyman in the Hungarian context can answer fundamental questions regarding Hungarian attitudes toward a threatening Other and shed light on the early formation of national identity, along with the processes of formation of a literature written in the vernacular. Therefore, I shall investigate the main features of the practices presenting Suleyman in both the Ottoman and Western European discourses, and subsequently turn to the integration and possible adaptations of the images as they appear in Hungarian poetry. Furthermore, I shall discuss the changes and development of representational practices along with the factors (genre, audience) that could have influenced the image of the sultan, by presenting material from Hungarian literature. At the time, Hungarian literature was lacking cohesion, given its transitions from orality to literacy and because of the split between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

The main corpus of my research is vernacular Hungarian poetry produced before the end of the

sixteenth century — although what might be considered poetry depended on formal features in the particular context. The second half of the sixteenth century was the period in Hungarian cultural history when vernacular literature emerged and its own rules evolved. Literature was formed by the spread of the printing press; its rules, form, media, and audience had just started to take shape. Even though most works of poetry were written down, they were transmitted mainly in oral form; thus the majority of the works I have examined bear the characteristics of both oral and written literature. I shall also investigate the formation of the image of Suleyman in this specific political, cultural, and literary context, using vernacular Hungarian works that were either translated into or composed originally in Hungarian.

2. 2. 1. Suleyman in Ottoman and European Contexts

In the Ottoman discourse, the public image of Suleyman was consciously created by an intensive campaign aimed at communicating his claim of universal rule. When Suleyman took the throne, he was met with high expectations:²⁹² although all new rulers had to justify their power, Suleyman's reign was of special significance in the Ottoman context. A strong need for a new canon administrative law, coping with the expanding empire, was expressed in all levels of public discussions, centering on the concept of *adalet* (justice).²⁹³ Thus “just rule” became a topos characterizing Suleyman's reign in Ottoman historiography. From the very beginning of his reign, Suleyman's image as a righteous and just ruler was developed successfully and persisted long after his death. Another important feature of the period in the Ottoman context regarding Suleyman's rule was the spread of apocalyptic expectations, fueled by the nearing Islamic millennium²⁹⁴ that

²⁹² Cornell H. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” in *Soliman le Magnifique et Son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 166; Cemal Kafadar, “The Myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post-Süleymanic Era,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 45–57.

²⁹³ Christine Woodhead, “Perspectives on Suleyman,” in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, eds. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 165–166.

²⁹⁴ Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah,” 166; Barbara Flemming, “Public Opinion under Sultan Süleyman,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 59–67.

was combined with contemporary Ottoman aims of creating a universal Muslim empire.²⁹⁵ Moreover, the death of Sultan Selim and the reign of a new sultan were also eagerly awaited because of Selim's aggression against other Muslim states.²⁹⁶ Military uprisings in Egypt and Anatolia claiming the role of the *mahdi*, and the spread of religious heresies, also necessitated the strengthening of the sultan's religious/political legitimacy. The Ottoman dynasty was referred to in messianic terms, with a stress on the Islamic millennium.²⁹⁷ These expectations during the life of Suleyman rose even higher, because under his reign, Ottoman conquests reached their zenith. At the same time, as the timar system settled and frontier akinji-ghazis played a less significant role in the conquests, different features of the ghazi concept, such as a war against the sinful self, were accentuated, resulting in a more ascetic form of the ideal ghazi, which was more often applied to the figure of the sultan.²⁹⁸

The image of the sultan as a powerful ruler was propagated by various means: artistic projects and patronage, large-scale architectural programs, public festivities, and the operation of the administration.²⁹⁹ Support for literature, particularly divan poetry, was exceptionally important for Suleyman, who himself produced poetry. Writers played a central role in conveying the favored and expected imperial image. Ottoman works discussed the military and political events of Suleyman's rule in a moralistic framework, justifying his decisions and deeds, and ensuring that his image as a

²⁹⁵ Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 174; Cemal Kafadar, "The Myth of the Golden Age"; Flemming, "Public Opinion under Sultan Süleyman," 59; John Elliott, "Ottoman-Habsburg Rivalry: The European Perspective," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 165–174.

²⁹⁶ Pál Fodor, "A Bécsbe vezető út" (The Road Leading to Vienna), in Pál Fodor, *A szultán és az aranyalma* (The Sultan and the Golden Apple) (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 363.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 377–378. The ideas of Molla Kabiz and Oglan Sejh about the superiority of Jesus over Mohammed were especially hazardous for the Ottomans.

²⁹⁸ By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a change occurred in Ottoman historiography: A turn to the genre of the more comprehensive *tarih* instead of exemplary royal biography and annals (*tevarih*). With the birth of the new genre, it was not the legendary past anymore that was referred to as a golden age, but the achievements of a current, historically close period – in particular, the *kanun* (canon) that was introduced by Suleyman. Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 181–182. Suleyman's reign, at the same time, faced critiques in his life (by *selefi*s, "fundamentalists", who regarded the era of Mohammed the ultimate golden age) and later. After it was obvious that hopes for universal rule were lost, an increasing pessimism was present in the works. See Kafadar, "The Myth of the Golden Age," 48, Housley, "The Ottoman Threat," 96, and Pál Fodor, "A terjeszkedés ideológiai az Oszmán Birodalomban," (Ideologies of Expansion in the Ottoman Empire) *A Szultán és az aranyalma* (*The Sultan and the Golden Apple*), 170–78 (Budapest: Balassi, 2001).

²⁹⁹ Such an architectural project was the creation of the Süleymaniye complex and the water distribution system; other means of propagating the desired public image were coinage, festivities, and imperial processions. Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 169–170; Michael Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 287–323; Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State, A Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 195–216.

just ruler was never harmed.³⁰⁰ Works from that period also refer to the concept of *adalet*, praising the sultan for practicing it. The sultan was depicted as a protector of the empire and lauded for his military skills as *sahibkiran* (world conqueror); his rule was referred to as the manifestation of the Ottoman golden age.³⁰¹ A typical Ottoman work about Suleyman is the *Suleymanname*, composed by the historian Arifi in 1558, an example of the *sehnames* (“king’s books”) genre, where the ruler is presented as a brilliant statesman, commander, hunter, promoter of Islam, and cultural patron.³⁰²

The sultan’s physical appearance was fundamental because of the centrality of the concept of physiognomy (physical features expressing personality). Thus literary descriptions of him closely follow the traditions of mystical Sufi imagery, placing divine beauty—physical and ideal beauty intertwined—at the center.³⁰³ However, by focusing on the ideal leader, the Ottoman images of Suleyman were rarely concerned with his personality.³⁰⁴ Their aim was to demonstrate Suleyman’s competence in affairs of state, to uphold his personal authority, and to justify the power of the whole dynasty.³⁰⁵ It is important to note that the expression of these aims underwent a major change in the second half of Suleyman’s reign, when the expansion of the empire slowed down and territorial limits became more firmly established, resulting in a new state identity that focused on the creation of an orthodox Islamic society. This process required a new moral and aesthetic canon,

³⁰⁰ For example, Pasha Lutfi’s *Asafname* deals with the family relations of Suleyman and focuses on a sensitive topic in the life of the sultan: the death of his son Mustafa. Pasha Lutfi blames the death of the prince on Pasha Rüstem. Woodhead, “Perspectives on Suleyman,” 178.

³⁰¹ The central notion of the Ottoman concept of the golden age was *mizan*, meaning “balance” or “equilibrium.” The concept of the golden age in Islam praised simplicity, an existence without property or war, and an Arcadian way of life instead of the “iron age,” age of decay, that actually prevailed at the time. See Peter Burke, “Concepts of the ‘Golden Age’ in the Renaissance,” in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age*, 154–163.

³⁰² Another important Ottoman source on the desired image of Suleyman is Celalzade’s *Tabakatü’l-memalik ve derecatü’l-mesalik* (Levels of the Dominions and Grades of the Professions), a prime example of Ottoman royal biography. It lists events during Suleyman’s reign and praises the sultan’s virtues: his natural exercise of *adalet*, the sultan as a protector and benefactor of his people, and his military skills as *sahibkiran*. Woodhead, “Perspectives on Suleyman,” 172. See also Kaya Sahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³⁰³ A series of examples from the poet Bakî: “Your beauty’s rays illuminate the world like the sun, / Your love’s echoes fill the sphere of ‘Be and it was done’; [...] Upon your cheek in gnarly knots lie your curly strands, / Damascenes all girt to march upon the Holy Lands; [...] Your sapling-cypress swaying gait, let him but one time know / The gardener in his lawn would lay the graceful willow low // Before your cheek prostrate themselves, the jessamine in rows / The garden cypress stands erect before your upright pose.” Cited from Walter G. Andrews, “Literary Art of the Golden Age: The Age of Süleyman,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 391; 392; 396. Translation by Walter G. Andrews.

³⁰⁴ Arifi’s work contains some elements referring to the sultan’s personality, such as his sense of humor, love, and mourning, but these elements are minimized. Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State,” 212.

³⁰⁵ Woodhead, “Perspectives on Suleyman,” 169.

mediating a new, more pious public image of Suleyman.³⁰⁶ All in all, Suleyman's rule can be seen as constituting a transition in the governing styles of Ottoman sultanates: shifting from personal military leadership to a more formal role at the top of the hierarchy of a great empire as the guarantor of justice. The sultan became a more symbolic figure, less involved personally in military affairs.³⁰⁷

In addition to court historiography and poetry, artistic representations and politics of art were also key in constructing the desired image of the ruler. Miniatures displayed military achievements; Ottoman portraiture reflected claims for independent imperial power and the consolidation of the self-image of the empire.³⁰⁸ Artistic patronage and the collection of luxury items reflected aspirations of universal rule.³⁰⁹ The explicit and implicit reinterpretations of Western modes of communicating power, also involving non-Islamic royal status symbols such as Western-type regalia, became part of the same narrative, especially in the first half of Suleyman's reign, which was marked by the influence of Ibrahim Pasha and Alvise Gritti. The Ottoman court's intense patronage of European artists was aimed at communicating Ottoman imperial claims to a European audience. A telling example is the commissioning of a golden helmet from Venetian goldsmiths. The Venetian helmet was intended to be used according to the Western style in public display during imperial processions (such as in Vienna in 1532) that were modeled on contemporary Habsburg ceremonies, particularly the coronation of Charles V in Bologna as Holy Roman Emperor in 1529. The iconography of the helmet evoked representations of Alexander the Great and the papal tiara, reflecting universal imperial claims.³¹⁰

³⁰⁶ In this process, the first step to be taken was the execution of Pasha Ibrahim, as he was the propagator of the Western-style program. Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State," 195–196.

³⁰⁷ Woodhead, "Perspectives on Suleyman," 189.

³⁰⁸ The pictorial representations of Suleyman were determined by the traditions of Ottoman portraiture, according to which the placement of a figure intertwines with the surrounding text. In these images, the ruler is always placed in the center. Esin Atil, "The Image of Suleyman in Ottoman Art," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 363–377.

³⁰⁹ An example might be the sculpture of Hercules, or the Corvinas of Matthias Corvinus which were taken to Istanbul after the conquest of Buda on the advice of Pasha Ibrahim, Suleyman's main art—and military—advisor. Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent," 289; Andrews, "Literary Art of the Golden Age," 390.

³¹⁰ The helmet's iconography also evokes ancient Near Eastern monarchs' helmets. See Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman–Habsburg–Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401, 409.

Among the elements used to construct the image of a perfect world ruler, there are special ones that justify these claims by referring to famous ideals or predecessors. Among them there is Solomon—an evident parallel for Suleyman because of the etymology of their names—and Alexander, whose image emerges in a wide variety of works both among Ottomans and in the West. The idea of emphasizing parallels between Suleyman and Alexander came from Ibrahim Pasha³¹¹ and was manifested by increasing pomp and grand architectural projects throughout the empire.

The Habsburg dynasty expressed its aspirations for universal rule on various levels and through different media. Reactions to the Ottoman threat were also part of their propaganda, reawakening medieval images of Islam and the traditional response to them: crusade. Awaiting the Last Judgment and prophecies connected to this idea were also common discourses during that period.³¹² The West—meaning those parts of Europe that did not face a direct Ottoman threat—also assembled and created the image of the Ottoman sultan from various sources. The earliest descriptions of the sultan reflected the fact that European states expected a period of peace from Suleyman's rule.³¹³ Information on the Ottoman emperor arrived in the West primarily in the form of reports from envoys and later found its way into other genres reaching wider audiences.³¹⁴ These accounts had significant limitations: they followed strict norms in their forms and set of topoi, and most of them did not rely on personal experience, as the sultan could only be seen in person by a highly restricted group of diplomats. Most of the accounts repeat topoi used in Ottoman representational patterns. They depict the lavishness of the sultan's public appearances, or make

³¹¹ Fodor, "A Bécsbe vezető út," 382.

³¹² In reality, the two empires possessed roughly equal forces with respect to area, population, agricultural production, etc. Elliott, "Ottoman–Habsburg Rivalry," 166; Issawi, "The Ottoman–Habsburg Balance of Forces." On the level of the *histoire de longue durée*, based on the theory of Fernand Braudel, according to what they were part of the same geographical and cultural context of the Mediterranean. See also Aymard, "La Méditerranée ottomane de Fernand Braudel," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 69–85.

³¹³ Paolo Giovio wrote: "It seemed to all men that a gentle lamb had succeeded a fierce lion... since Suleiman himself was young and of no experience... and altogether given to rest and quietness. Pope Leo, when he "heard for a surety that Selimus was dead, he commanded that the Litany and common prayers be sung throughout all Rome, in which men should go on barefoot." Paolo Giovio, *A Shorte Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles*, trans. Peter Ashton (London, 1546), folio C, cited by Merriman, *Suleyman the Magnificent*, 37.

³¹⁴ Bartolomeo Contarini, Venetian envoy to Constantinople in 1519–1520, described Suleyman as "tall and slender... with a thin and bony face... friendly and in good humor... enjoys reading, is knowledgeable and shows good judgment." Cited by Alan Fisher, "The Life and Family of Suleyman I," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 10. See also Fodor, "A Bécsbe vezető út," 363: according to Contarini, the new ruler had the perfect features to bring an era of peace into the relations of the Ottoman Empire and the West.

references to King Solomon and Alexander the Great and to the ruler's justice and piety,³¹⁵ proving that the visible elements of the public image the sultan consciously cultivated had found their audiences.

Furthermore, any hints about the sultan's personality were considered noteworthy for the authors of these accounts—such as his public Friday prayers, the influence of his wife Hurrem in the palace, or Suleyman's relationship with his sons. This coverage, however, rapidly devolved into fiction, depicting the emperor of the Turks as a terrifying and exotic yet pathetic figure.³¹⁶ In Western literary works, the episode of the killing of his son Mustapha became the most popular story about Suleyman. This event, recorded by chroniclers and evoked by mourning poems, found its way to Western audiences and became the subject of plays and opera librettos as far abroad as France and England. Evidently, the farther the story of Mustapha traveled, the more it became the pliable “raw material” for plays in which the sultan appeared as the prototype of the cruel Turk.³¹⁷

2. 2. 2. Hungarian Representations – Images of the Universal Ruler

When investigating the Hungarian material, one of the main tasks is to identify the degree to which the aforementioned practices were repeated in the Hungarian representations. That, as well as the possible alterations of Suleyman's image, can reveal a great deal about the awareness, the functions, and the relevant intercultural discussions of universal rule. Furthermore, was there a parallel, idiosyncratic Hungarian image of the sultan that would have developed in the special circumstances of the tripartite kingdom, reflecting everyday interactions with the Ottomans? And if so, on what literary traditions could this alternate image have rested?

³¹⁵ E.g., Ogier Ghislen de Busbecq's *Turkish Letters*, outlining the history of the Turks, refers to Solomon and Alexander, demonstrating their popularity under the reign of Suleyman. *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople, 1554–1562*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 55.

³¹⁶ “The position of the sons of the Turkish Sultans is a most unhappy one.... The Turks tolerate no rival to the throne,” Busbecq reflects regarding the story of Suleyman and Mustafa (*Turkish Letters*, 30). In another context, the story was paralleled with the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Night. See Frank Lestringant, “La monarchie française au miroir ottoman: le portrait de Soliman le Magnifique, de Charles IX à Henri III,” in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 65.

³¹⁷ For instance, an English, sixteenth-century school play version of the plot involves classical elements of Shakespearean dramas, such as the appearance of a ghost – in this case, Selim, Suleyman's father. See the contribution of Seda Erkoç in this volume and her “Repercussions of a Murder: The Death of Sahzade Mustafa on the Early Modern English Stage.” See also Eve R. Meyer, “The Image of the Turk in European Performing Arts,” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 279–286, and Lestringant, “La monarchie française au miroir ottoman,” 51–68.

Based on the types of the related events, I shall discuss the literary images of Suleyman focusing on two main branches of event types: those that occurred outside Hungary, and those that took place inside the country. The first group will have more translations, texts that recount events that had happened in another cultural, geographical, or temporal context. For such works, patterns present in international discourse can be more readily found. The second group of events includes important turning points during the Ottoman campaigns in Hungary, momentous battles, sieges, and other events, such as the capture of Buda in 1541. It can be assumed that in works describing those occurrences, patterns specific to vernacular Hungarian literary discourse can be discerned more often.

Turning first to the issue of images of the sultan as a potential universal ruler present in the Ottoman and Western humanist historiography, the question is whether they were also present in Hungarian vernacular works, and if so, what type of modifications and alterations are displayed in them. The following fragments will demonstrate that discourses that were widespread in European and Ottoman cultures, were part of the Hungarian literary discourse as well.

András Valkai's *Story of Hariadenus* (Barbarossa Hayreddin),³¹⁸ describing the conquest of North Africa and the campaigns of Suleyman against Tunis, is an example of the “translated images” of Suleyman, as the work is based on Paolo Giovio's *Historianum suo temporis*. The text evidences the sultan's claims to world power: “*And his will is to go to the East, / Against nations of the East, / His other army he prepared against Christians, / Made great arrangements on the sea. // [His aim is] To conquer, to take many countries, / To conquer for himself all of the world.*”³¹⁹ The work also reflects ideas concerning the qualities of the ideal Muslim ruler and the “right” practice of faith that were emphasized continuously in Ottoman historiographies. These issues, which reflect on the sultan's dependence on his viziers, come into view when Barbarossa talks to Suleyman, advising the ruler not only on military issues but also on the correct practice of religion.

³¹⁸ Published in Kolozsvár in 1573 and translated from Paolo Giovio's *Historianum suo temporis*, book 33. RMKT XVI/ 9, ed. Béla Varjas (Budapest, Akadémiai, 1990), 117–150.

³¹⁹ “És vagy szándéka neki napkeletre, / Napkelet felé való nemzetekre, / Más hadát készíté Keresztyénekre, / Nagy készületet teszen az tengerre. [...] Elfoglalja, megvegyen sok országot, / Magának foglalja egész világot.” II/5–6.

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Furthermore, Barbarossa is not afraid of calling Suleyman's attention to the obligations of a pious ruler: *"I urge you to remember your ancestors, / The dynasty of Ottoman sultans, / Their empires and victories, / And the law of Mohammed. // Take care of the law of your faith, / Take harsh revenge on the enemies of the faith."*³²⁰

The Ottoman ruler is shown by a series of intertwined representations. In one scene, Barbarossa tries to convince the Tunisians to become Ottoman subjects. Suleyman is introduced from Barbarossa's perspective to be favorable to the Tunisians—in an interpretation of Giovio, and in the Hungarian translation by Valkai. The description puts the Ottoman emperor in a more favorable light than the Tunisian ruler and reflects the sultan's abilities concerning universal rule: *"They should get to know their present emperor, / Sultan Suleyman, their great lord. // They would be given such a ruler now, / Who sent him to them, / And who would pity their great burdens, / Which is the reason he went there. // Now you should stop your ravaging, / Now that you are fleeing from your cruel king, / A great lord is your ruler henceforth, / Under whose protection you will live calmly. // Be happy for your freedom, / For the sultan who shares your religion."*³²¹ Ending his arguments, Barbarossa summarizes the rights and obligations of tributary status and describes the process of becoming subjects of the sultan: *"My only wish of you is the following, / To keep your faith in the sultan, / And be obedient to him, / You will be calm in your freedom this way."*³²²

However, the initial answer of Tunisians to the offered opportunity is that they would not accept Suleyman, as they had their own rulers: *"From the will of God, since a long time, / We've had our rulers ever since, / As it is written in our chronicles, / Our nation is used to our own kings. // The origins of our rulers is so ancient (...)"*³²³ The quote demonstrates two arguments, both involving authority as their foundations, that seem more powerful than the offered protection or military

³²⁰ "Siess megemlékezni eleidről, / Az Otmán császárok nemzetségéről, / Birodalmokról és győzelmekről, / És az Mahometnek ő törvényéről. // Viselj gondot te hited törvényéről, / Erős bosszút állj hit ellenségéről." II/43–44.

³²¹ "Ismernék meg mostani császárokat, / Sultan Szolimánt, hatalmas urokat. // Oly fejedelmek most adatott volna, / kitől ő közükbe küldetett volna, / Rajtok való nagy terhőt bánta volna, / Mely oda menésének oka volna. // Dúlni, fűlni mostan tū meg szűnjetek, / Lám kegyetlen királytól menekedtek, / Hatalmas Úr immár fejedelmetek, / Kinek oltalmába megcsendesedtek. // Örüljete a tū szabadságtoknak, / Veletek egy hiten való császárnak." III/38–41.

³²² "Az én kívánságom csak ez töletek, / Császárnak tartsátok meg ti hitetek, / És legyetek neki engedelmesek, / Szabadságtokban így lesztek csendesek." III/46.

³²³ "Isten akaratjából régtől fogva, / Királyink voltak elejétől fogva, / Mint vannak Chronicainkba beírva, / Nemzetségünk királyinkhoz volt szokva. 51. Oly rég mi királyink eredete (...)" strophes 50–51.

strength of the Ottomans. One is the argument of authority of the ruling dynasty relying on their ancient origins, that had been providing justification for rulers since the known times; the second is the existence of the records of this justified genealogy, demonstrating the significance of written records and literacy in general. Communicating the importance of chronicles and written records to the Hungarian audience is an undoubted commitment by the author.

To return to the case of Tunisians, they finally accepted Suleyman as their ruler: “*They declare Suleyman their rightful ruler, / And regard him their saviour.*”³²⁴ In this manner, the affair of Tunisians serves as an exemplum for the Hungarian audience, an example of accepting disadvantageous decisions offered by the sultan. The narrative has a double didactic content, illustrating the consequences of dividedness among Christians from the one side, and for Hungarian audience in particular, the dangers of being divided between two kings are taught: “*Us, Hungarians, if we regard the peril of our country, / If we take in mind our dividedness (...) We are praised only in fighting, / We are famous for daring bravery.*”³²⁵

Although the text recounts distant events, the tributary status and its conditions and obligations were well-known issues for the Hungarian audience. In the last strophe, the author admonishes his Hungarian listeners to trust God, who will protect them and their king, in order to avoid the fate of the Tunisians. This addition to the original work parallels the Hungarian situation with that of other countries, creating a complex structure that demands a special manner of recognition and comprehension from the audience. The construction of the text identifies common mental processes, as well as modes of interpreting the tributary status by means of a distant example, and refers to extant ideas regarding universality. Hungarian listeners or readers of Valkai’s text could feel both distant from *and* very close to other subjects of the Ottoman Empire. This context-specific effect was unlikely to have been derived only from Valkai’s original source and was most probably an innovation of the translator reflecting Hungarian circumstances.

³²⁴ “Igaz úrnak Solimánt kiáltják, / Megszabadítójuknak ötet vallják” strophe 61.

³²⁵ “Magyarok is ha magunkat tekintjük, / Országunknak romlását ha megnézzük (...) Csak a hadakozásban dicsértetünk, / Vakmerő bátorság jó hírünk nekünk.” strophe 74, 82.

An indispensable author in the analysis of the images of Suleyman is Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, whose collection, the *Cronica*,³²⁶ is the first edited volume in the history of Hungarian literature. It is dedicated to Ferdinand of Habsburg, and thus, reference to the power relations is evident: Ferdinand is counterposed to the “pagan Turkish emperor.”³²⁷ The work consists of two main parts: the first is dedicated to descriptions of current sieges, and the second—as the title page states—consists of “events and stories from different countries or different ages,” placing the Hungarian events into a wider geographical and cultural context. This part of the volume is particularly important in the study of Hungarian reflections on the sultan as a universal ruler, because it contains translated works recalling Habsburg imperial narratives and discusses internal problems of the Habsburg realm. It introduces practices common to the European discourse concerning various imperial claims for universal rule. An example of this type of discourse is the *Story of the Fight between Emperor Suleyman and Pasha Kazul*.³²⁸ The song recounts the conflict between the Persian pasha and Suleyman, and the context of the killing of Ibrahim Pasha.³²⁹ The sultan’s first appearance in the narrative describes him as the son of Selim, and one of the three “Turkish rulers” – the one wearing a white turban (the other two are Kazul (Persian, red turban – in fact, the name of the ruler is a distorted version of the Kizilbas movement of the shiite Safavids, who were opponents of the sunni Ottomans) and Jesil pasha (blue turban)).³³⁰ As it is evident, the narrative uses “Turk” in the meaning of “Muslim.”³³¹ The text testifies to an awareness of Suleyman’s claims to universal rule: in addition to his occupation of Buda, he owns “other parts of the world”: “*I recount now the*

³²⁶ The volume was published in 1554 in Kolozsvár, in the Heltai Publishing House’s critical edition of his works.

³²⁷ Dedication to Ferdinand, RMKT XVI/3, 4–5.

³²⁸ *Szulimán császár Kazul basával viadaljáról*, RMKT XVI/3, 254–262. The name of the pasha (Kazul) is supposedly not a personal name, as the word means “Persian” in early modern Hungarian. The Persian shah at the time of Suleiman’s campaign was Tahmasp I.

³²⁹ The same topic appears in Hans Dernschwam’s account. Hans Dernschwam, “Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien,” in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* (Captives, Diplomats, and Merchants about the Ottoman Empire), ed. Lajos Tardy (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977), 227–414, esp. 345–347: Dernschwam claims that the Turks never went against anyone with less enthusiasm than Pasha Kazil.

³³⁰ *Szulimán császár Kazul basával viadaljáról*, “This one has a nice white turban, lives in Constantinople in Greece.” “Ennek nagyon szép fehér patyolatja, / Geregországban Konstantinápolyt lakja.” lines 13–14. Jesil – the name of the Pasha – means green, therefore mentioning it as blue must be an incorrect translation.

³³¹ The same topic is present in Hans Dernschwam’s account. Hans Dernschwam, *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* (Captives, diplomats and merchants about the Ottoman Empire), ed. Lajos Tardy, (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977), 227–414, esp. 345–47.): Dernschwam claims that the Turks never went with less enthusiasm to against anyone than pasha Kazil.

*deeds of Suleyman, / Who has his empire in Buda, / And has great parts of the world all over, / He is the scourge of God in many countries.*³³² This description not only presents Suleyman as a universal ruler, using the practices typical in Western European works; it also refers to ideas circulating in Europe and the Ottoman Empire evoking prophecies of the Book of Daniel. Moreover, mirroring Ottoman and Western European practices, the figure of Alexander is invoked in connection with Suleyman: *“In old times it had been prophesied, / That they would see many wonders in the end times, / Pagans would have great power, / Followers of true religion would lose their way. // The great power of Emperor Suleyman / Is not much less than the power of Alexander, / May the great Lord ruin his power, / Help to revive Christian people.”*³³³ Not unexpectedly, the author of the song applies a combination of “translated traditions” and a “translated imagery.”

The need for a strong ruler as a counterweight to the Ottomans was a ubiquitous motif in the European discourse. This demand was even more complicated in Hungary because of the tripartite structure of the kingdom and the power struggles over the newly created political structures. In many cases, a counterpoint to both Habsburgs and Ottomans was needed. Accordingly, this concept created a plethora of variants in Hungarian literature. Translated sources highlighted Habsburg universal imperial claims, such as in András Valkai’s *The Army of Emperor Charles in Africa*,³³⁴ which presents the Tunis campaign from the perspective of the armies of Charles V. As was clear to the audience, similarly to the Ottoman sultan, his Habsburg rival also sought universal rule. Accordingly, Charles V is presented in the work in opposition to Suleyman. For example, he participates in the military movements personally, unlike the Ottoman ruler, who is depicted as staying away from campaigns in the *Story of Hariadenus*.³³⁵ Charles appears as a great general, the embodiment of the perfect ruler—Valkai does not mention that the victory gave him only a

³³² “Én beszéllök Szulimán járásában, / Kinek birodalma vagyon Budában, / És nagy része vagyon mindez világban, / Isten ostora ő nagy sok országban.” Lines 5–8.

³³³ “Régi időben ezt megpróbálták, / Utóssó időben csudákat látnak, / nagy hatalmok lészen az pogánoknak, / Nagy bolygások igaz hitben valóknak. // Szultán Szulimán császár nagy hatalma, / Nem sok héján mint bölcs Sándor hatalma, / Az jó isten már hatalmat megrontsa, / Az keresztyén népet már feltámasztja.” Lines 269–278.

³³⁴ This work is also a translation from Giovio. *Károly császár hada Afrikában*, RMKT XVI/9, 151–186.

³³⁵ “Hope is great with Charles at all times, / Often he ventures forth with the guard, / Encouraging his people with great braveness, / He fears nothing, and is with complete confidence.” [Reménség mindenkor nagy az Károllyal, / Gyakran jár ki ő maga is strázsával, / Bízattja népeit nagy bátorsággal, / Semmit nem fél, teljes bizodalommal.] *The Army of Emperor Charles in Africa*, II/13.

temporary superiority. By contrast, in *Hariadenus*, Suleyman is shown as even more distanced from the actual military movements; he is merely appraising the looted goods,³³⁶ an image far from that of a perfect ruler. The work also emphasizes the religious affiliation of Charles's campaign³³⁷—providing a parallel to the *Story of Hariadenus* as it presents the religious motivation of the Ottomans, making Charles the archetypal perfect ruler, the embodiment of the flawless religious and military leader.

Another way in which a foil for the Ottoman sultans is created is by presenting Hungarian rulers as their able opponents. The figure of Matthias Corvinus was consciously introduced as a worthy opponent who symbolized the recently vanished glory and independence of the Kingdom of Hungary. His heroic image was successfully created by his humanist court writers Antonio Bonfini and Galeotto Marzio during his life,³³⁸ and Matthias's cult peaked during the Ottoman expansion of the sixteenth century. A very popular example from this period—which appeared in numerous printed versions and was referred to in many other works³³⁹—the *Story of King Matthias*³⁴⁰ was composed by two authors, Ambrus Görcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, who corrected and continued the work of Görcsöni. There are multiple reasons for the popularity of this work, which appeared eighty years after the death of Matthias. First, as Iván Horváth has noted, an important and

³³⁶ “The ship of Portundus was very beautiful, / In which they put the gifts, / They took it to Constantinople, / Showed them to the Turkish sultan. // Ships, gifts, flags there / were regarded by the sultan looked in his good mood, / He praised all of their deeds, / And gave gifts to envoys.” [Igen szép vala Portundus hajója, / Kibe ajándékokat rakták vala, / Konstantinápolyba hogy vitték vala, / Török császárnak bemutatták vala. // Ott hajót, ajándékokat, zászlókat, / Császár jó kedvvel látá mind azokat, / dicsére önekik minden dolgukat, / Követeknek oszta ajándékokat.] I/71–73.

³³⁷ The military campaign is presented as a war for the sake of Christendom: “He said that he came to Africa, / To take care of his own dignity, / And the protection of Christian countries, / And the great perdition of pagans.” [Sőt azért jött mostan ő Afrikába, / Hogy gondot viselne méltóságára, / Keresztyén országoknak oltalmára, / Pogányoknak lönne nagy romlásokra.] III/52.

³³⁸ His figure also became popular in Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Czech, German, and Slovakian folklore, which all contain elements of his cult. See Ildikó Kríza, *A Mátyás-hagyomány évszázadai* (The Centuries of the Cult of Matthias) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2007). An important source of the cult is the poem Néhai való jó Mátyás király... that was composed shortly after his death, that represents the king as a suitable opponent to the enemy – e.g. “You won gifts from the Turks, / Offered to avoid the ravage of their country, / So that you would not persecute their pasha, / And would not threat their emperor.” “Terekektől nyerél ajándokokat, / Ne pusztítanád országokat, / Ne kerengetné basájokat, / Ne fenyegetné ű császárokat.” (str. 5.) See also Rabán Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei* (The Beginnings of Hungarian Secular Lyric Poetry), 196–210, who claims that the reason behind the increasing cult of Matthias might have been the establishment of the Jagellonian rule in Hungary.

³³⁹ Béla Varjas, “Szombatos énekek” (Sabbatarian Songs), in RMKT XVII/5 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1970), 567.

³⁴⁰ Ambrus Görcsöni and Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, *Mátyás király históriája*, ca. 1567. The work relied on Johannes Thuróczi's and Johannes Sambocus's editions of Bonfini and on one of Nagybankai's other works on the father of Matthias, Johannes Hunyadi. According to Ildikó Kríza, besides the written works, the text also relies strongly on oral traditions, as it centers around a figure popular in oral tradition instead of concentrating on current events.

counterintuitive change in early modern Hungarian poetry was the revival of oral works and traditions caused by the spread of printing.³⁴¹ Second, the lack of a strong ruler engendered a strong desire for such figures—who had to be found in the past.

The story briefly recounts the history of Hungary and its most important rulers: Attila, St. Stephen, St. Ladislaus, and Sigismund. Matthias Corvinus's figure is constructed to fit into this line. The aim of the story is to belittle Mehmet II, who is depicted as fearing Matthias after being defeated by him: "*they [the Turks] do not expect help from Mehmet, as they know well how strongly he fears Matthias.*"³⁴² The message implies that Matthias Corvinus is the right person for universal rule. His victory at Jajce and the reactions of the Habsburgs and the Ottomans testify to his abilities as a valid rival to both of them.³⁴³ At the same time, the existence of a certain anti-cult of Matthias Corvinus is also traceable in the sources. To show the other side of the coin of the cult of Matthias, there are narratives exemplifying a denouncing attitude towards him, blaming his politics for the unfavorable current conditions. Such a text is the chronicle of Baranyai Decsi, which criticizes the king for caring more about Christian wars than with war against the pagans.³⁴⁴

This song presents Matthias as a capable opponent of the Ottoman sultans, as he is able to resist their aggression and build a dynasty and an empire. As a part of this process, the figure of Alexander as an idealized emperor is connected with the Hunyadi family in the *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*,³⁴⁵ where Johannes Hunyadi is compared to him: "*With thirty-six thousand, Alexander departed, / Beat the innumerable armies of Darius, / Subdued countries of the East.*"³⁴⁶

At the same time, the work draws a parallel between Alexander and Suleyman, a parallel that was

³⁴¹ Iván Horváth, *Balassi költészete történeti poétikai megközelítésben* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 197.

³⁴² "Segítségét nem várnak Mahumettől, / Mert jól tudják, mint tart Mátyás királytól." IV/54.

³⁴³ For relevant quotes from the narrative, see note 23 of this chapter.

³⁴⁴ "We could tell unpleasant things about good king Matthias, / About his many campaigns with Christians, (...) He argued with Germans and Czechs for such a long time, / That pagans could thrive with his rivalry, (...) We might indeed say, it would have been better, / If he had never been born, / Or if been born, he had never been died." "Mondhatnánk itt nem jót az jó Mátyás királyról, / Az keresztyénekkal való sok hadairól, (...) Addig veszekedék némettel és csehekkel, / Öregbedék az pogán ő versengésével. (...) Bizonytal mondhatjuk mi is, hogy jobb lőtt volna, / Avagy hogy soha ő bár ne született volna, / Avagy ha született, soha meg ne holt volna." Strophes 44–45, 47.

³⁴⁵ János Baranyai Decsi, *Török császárok krónikája*, RMKT XVI/12, ed. Géza Orlovsky, editor of the series Géza Szentmártoni Szabó (Budapest: Balassi, 2004), 505–529.

³⁴⁶ "Harminchatezer magával Sándor indula / Darius számtalan hadát megverte vala / Napkeleti országokat meghajtott vala." 182.

part of the Ottoman discourse communicating the public image of the sultan. Reflecting on world empires, the author recounts four great empires in history: the Assyrian, the Persian, the Roman, and the empire of Alexander. However, these world empires have all been surpassed by the Turks: “*The Turkish Empire exceeds all these four, / And even the time of their power is longer, / Almost longer than a thousand years.*”³⁴⁷

Another example of presenting a powerful opponent is *On the origins of Hungarian kings* by András Valkai.³⁴⁸ The purpose of the work is to argue that John II is a just ruler, the heir of the Arpadians, Attila and Adam – that is, his rule is legitimized both biblically and mythically. The work has a strong anti-German attitude, presenting the Habsburgs as incapable rulers, while referring to John Hunyadi as Hannibal and Scipio.³⁴⁹

The justification of the Ottoman dynasty’s power had been a central issue in the oeuvre of Ottoman historiographers and Western humanists and was discussed in Hungarian literary works as well. The genealogy of the Ottomans was a major topic in humanist historiographies; there were different ideas circulating about the origins of Ottomans, not lacking in confused notions regarding Turks and Ottomans, sometimes mingling the origins of Islam into the concept.³⁵⁰ Hungarian poets must have discussed the genealogy of the Ottoman sultans in various works. Traces survive of a separate genre, the sultans’ chronicles, discussing genealogies; however, there are no proven connections between Ottoman and humanist historiographies dealing with the same topic. Unfortunately, most examples of this genre have been lost. We know of a lost work of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, as he refers to it in another text, in his *Story of Sigismund*.³⁵¹ In the surviving

³⁴⁷ “Mind az négy birodalomnál töröké nagyobb, / Még az idei is ű hatalmának nagyobb, / Közel ezer esztendő forgásánál nagyobb.” 133.

³⁴⁸ *Az magyar királyoknak eredetéről*, 1567. The work relies on Thuróczy, Bonfini, Szerémi and Tinódi as sources.

³⁴⁹ On Albert Habsburg, the work states: “His other army went against Amurates, / That was useless against the Turks.” “Más hadat indíta Amurát ellen, / Kivel semmit nem használ török ellen.” (2139–40.), on Ferdinand: “He did not dare to go against the emperor, / The way other kings fought with the pagans” “Szembe nem mere víni az császárral, / Mint egyéb királyok vittak pogánnal” (3029–3030.) Hunyadi as Hannibal and Scipio: line 2491.

³⁵⁰ Without going into details about humanist ideas concerning the origins of Turks, the main branches were originating them from Trojans, or regarding them complete barbarians. See Anthony F. D’Elia, “Genealogy and the Limits of Panegyric: Turks and Huns in Fifteenth-Century Epithalamia” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, No. 4 (2003): 973–991, and Emőke Rita Szilágyi, “Teucrisive Turci.”

³⁵¹ “How the battle went there, I wrote about this, / In the chronicle of the Turkish sultans.” [Viadal ott mint lön böven megírtam, / A török császárok krónikájokban.] 609–610.

sources, there are merely a few hints about the genealogy of the sultans. One of them is János Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* from 1597.³⁵² The work is aimed at a wide audience and is part of a larger plan to promote the war against the Turks together with a chronicle and orations in Latin.³⁵³ The main idea is to show all Ottoman sultans as unreliable, cruel rulers.³⁵⁴ However, as the beginning of Baranyai Decsi's work is lost, there is no discussion available on the genealogies of the Ottoman dynasty. The commentaries of Péter Melius Juhász on the Revelations of St John offers a broader explanation on the genealogy of Turks: "*Thus we see, that they are mixed from all nations: This Turkish nation with the Mesek and the Moscovites go through all the way until the sea through Germany, Italy and Hispania.*"³⁵⁵

In the *Story of Pasha Ali*, the unknown author gives a short description of the genealogy of Suleyman: "*the son of the great Suleyman was Selim, / Sultan Azma was the daughter of this one.*"³⁵⁶ Although not a song, the Latin account of Georgius de Hungaria³⁵⁷ should also be mentioned; this was one of the most widely disseminated works in Europe that influenced later ideas about the Ottomans. Georgius was in Ottoman captivity between 1438 and 1458, and in his work he refers to the origins of the Ottomans, mentioning Othmanbeg as one of the rival leaders of the Saracens. He also gives an etymology of the name "Ottoman," arguing that it meant the sons of Othman (Osman). Although well known in Europe, the work has left no traceable influence on Hungarian authors in their ideas about the origins of the Ottomans. Generally, there is a gulf between authors with humanist education and writers describing current events. For the latter,

³⁵² See note 50 for bibliographical data. The work is a fragment (the beginning is lost; the poem starts with the era of Sigismund and Bayezid) and has two parts: the first recounts the history of the Ottoman Empire, while the second is an exhortation in the spirit of Wittenberg against cooperation with the Turks.

³⁵³ Opposition to war with the Ottomans was a common sentiment in Transylvania in this period, when promoters of alliance with the Ottomans came to the forefront in Transylvanian politics.

³⁵⁴ For instance, on Mehmet II, the text warns: "Note the custom of the treachery of the Turk! / He made alliance with the Venetians, / While from the other side he moved three campaigns." [Török álnoksága, jegyezd meg, mi szokása! / Velencésekkel ő frigyét kötött vala, / Másfelől három nagy hadat indított vala.] 40.

³⁵⁵ "Mert látjuk, hogy minden nemzetből elegyültek: Ez török nemzet a mesekel [Mejeckel] a moszkovitákkal öszve lészen az tengerig a Németországon, Olaszországon, Hispánián által megyen." Melius Juhász Péter (1536–1572), *Az Szent Jánosnak tölt jelenésnek igaz írás szerint való magyarázása*, 8r.

³⁵⁶ "Szultán Szulimán fia Zelin vala, / Azma szultán ez és leánya vala." *Ali pasa históriája*, strophe 11–12. In the margin is a note: "[Geneol]olia Im[perat]oris Tur[cicis]."

³⁵⁷ *Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum* (Urach, 1481).

genealogy seemed to be a minor issue, whereas for writers with a humanist background, genealogy was fundamental when discussing the Ottoman dynasty's justification of power.

2. 2. 3. Hungarian Representations – Images of the Conqueror

The images of Suleyman in Hungarian literary discourse depended on the actual political context and on the latest developments of campaigns. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to concentrate on the descriptions of the sultan at some of the milestone events of the Ottoman conquest—in particular, the Battle of Mohács, the capture of Buda, and the siege of Szigetvár. These events functioned as turning points in the literary discourse as well, reporting and reflecting the details of the campaigns.

The most important event at the beginning of Suleyman's reign was his capture of Belgrade in 1521. Suleyman achieved this goal after the failure of his legendary ancestors, earning him great fame and respect. Authors dealing with the event saw it as obvious that Suleyman was greater than his ancestors, as he was able to take Belgrade, a fortress of strategic importance. Thus the myth that the town was resistant to Ottoman siege, which even Constantinople believed, had to be dispelled, and authors had to express dismay over the unexpected defeat. Discarding the myth of Belgrade's invincibility created the context for Suleyman's future victories (and also for the future losses of the Kingdom of Hungary) and justified his reign as being superior to that of his predecessors. At the same time, we still lack contemporary vernacular accounts of the siege: the extant, most significant narrative is by Ferenc Zay, whose Hungarian account refers to the sultan as present in person in the siege, responsible personally for the success and reacting intensely to the results: *"During the siege, as they say, the emperor himself encouraged his people (...) he counted the losses of people on that day, and they found that five thousand were lost at the first attack, which made the emperor sad, and he started an even stronger breaking and bombarding both the town and the castle."*³⁵⁸ After the successful siege, he is said to visit the ruined town in person, and manage the reconstruction of

³⁵⁸ "Mely ostromra császárt ő magát mondják, hogy nógatta vóna a népet" "megszámláltatja császár, mennyi nép veszett vóna el aznap az ostromon, úgy találták vót, hogy ötezör embőre veszett vóna el az első ostromon, kin császár megbúsulván, annál inkább kezdi mind töretni és mind vítatni mindönfelől mind városát, mind várát." http://mek.oszk.hu/06100/06187/html/mei16_180010010001/mei16_180010010001.html, last accessed: 2/6/2016

the fortification.³⁵⁹ The defeat is described in Baranyai Decsi's *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, which recounts the battle very briefly: "Seven times Suleyman came to Hungary, / First he took Belgrade, / Into good Hungary he opened his way."³⁶⁰

Suleyman's next decisive move was to lead his armies to the battle at Mohács. The Hungarian army's catastrophic defeat became a national symbol of loss and was fundamental to the formation of the image of Suleyman, as well as to the self-image of Hungary, for centuries to come. To give a broader view of narrations of the battle, it is relevant to discuss it from the perspective of the Ottomans and of Western reactions. There are diverse sources describing the battle from the Ottoman point of view. One is the diary of Suleyman—written not by him but supposedly by an official, recorded in third-person singular. It evokes some of the topoi surrounding the traditional Ottoman image of the ruler. In a note written two days after the battle, according to the text, the sultan had a golden throne prepared for himself and sat on it like Solomon, echoing the comparison of the sultan to the famous biblical model.³⁶¹ Other Ottoman sources, such as reports of victory (*fethnames*) and historiographical works, echo topoi connected to the public image of Suleyman in a deeply symbolic language. These documents are composed in high Ottoman style and describe Suleyman as a world conqueror and protector of the faith.³⁶² The sources emphasize the importance of the battle for the sake of a war fought for religious ideals and portray Suleyman as he intended to present his public self.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ "During that time, the castle and the town was cleaned from disgust, carcasses, dead people for the arrival of the emperor, and when the emperor entered, walked around both the castle and the town, and started to build right away with strong and numerous stone walls, and stayed there for fifteen days, until the majority of the building was built." "Ezönközbe a várat és a várást es a sok rútságul, dügtül, holt néptől megtisztítják a császár bémentére, kibe oztán császár es bémegyen, és mind várat, várást megjárja, és mindjárt építeni kezdeti erős és temérdök kőfalakkal, és tizenötöd napig ott lakott vót, még az építésnek a dereka megkészőlt vót." http://mek.oszk.hu/06100/06187/html/mei16_180010010001/mei16_180010010001.html, last accessed: 2/6/2016

³⁶⁰ "Hét ízben Szulimán Magyarországra jöve, / Nándorfejevárat és elsőben megvevé, / Jó Magyarországnak utát nyitni ott kezdé." 64. See notes 50 and 57.

³⁶¹ The diary of Suleyman on 22 Zil-kade of the year 932 (29 August 1526), in *Mohács emlékezete* (The Memory of Mohács), ed. Tamás Katona, translation of József Thúry (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1976), 166.

³⁶² The most important Ottoman sources regarding the battle are Kemalpasazade's *Mohacname*, the works of Pasha Lutfi, Ferdi, and Mustafa Celalzade. See József Thúry, *Török történetírók* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1893); Tamás Katona, ed., *Mohács emlékezete* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1976).

³⁶³ According to Ferdi, the justification of the battle was clearly religious: "The main thought of his [Suleyman's] glorious mind had always been to demolish idolatry and evil, faithfulness, and heresy." Thúry, *Török történetírók*, vol. 2, 56–74.

In sources from Western Europe, news of the battle spread quickly in the form of printed and oral accounts, but most of them contained no detailed references to Suleyman. The work of Paolo Giovio, later widely known in Hungary, briefly recounts Suleyman's preparations for the battle and his surprise at the small size of the army the Hungarian king had assembled to face him. Describing events after the battle, Giovio tells of the visit of Suleyman to Buda, where, according to the text, he caused no damage and permitted people to keep their religion.³⁶⁴ Generally, Giovio's viewpoint reflects that branch of international historiography that held that Suleyman treated the conquered with benevolence.

Notes of envoys to Constantinople are equally important sources regarding the battle. Antonio Burgio, the papal envoy, reported that the Grand Turk discussed the campaign against Hungary intensely. The envoy also made reference to a Turkish custom in military preparations for the battle. He recounts that it was the habit of the Grand Turk to issue an order on December 1 calling on everyone to prepare for war. However, if a few weeks later, he issued an order to collect taxes, it was considered a sign that there would be no war that year.³⁶⁵

Contemporary Hungarian chronicles written in both Latin and Hungarian greatly influenced poetry written later about the battle and the events around it. For example, the description of István Brodarics,³⁶⁶ an eyewitness, is the same as that of Görcsöni and Bogáti Fazakas when it describes Suleyman crossing the Sava River and preparing against Hungary.³⁶⁷ In a later chronicle written by Miklós Istvánffy, the sultan is shown as preparing for battle: "*he himself will go to the camp in the early spring, according to the customs of his ancestors, to set a campaign against his enemies.*"³⁶⁸ At the beginning of the battle, the sultan is shown to have remained in camp, ignoring the drums and trumpets of the Hungarians that signaled the commencement of the battle. After his victory, as

³⁶⁴ Giovio, *Historiarum suo temporis*, 1531.

³⁶⁵ The letter of Antonio Giovanni da Burgio to the Pope, Buda, January 18, 1526. *Relationes oratorum pontificorum 1524–1526*. Monumenta Vaticana Historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia, II.1 (Budapest: METEM, 2001).

³⁶⁶ *De conflictu Hungarorum cum Turcis ad Mohatz verissima descriptio*, 1527, Krakow.

³⁶⁷ "He went against the Hungarians on land and water, / As he had a wide road [open] to the Hungarians. [...] The road is open over the Sava, great damage in Srem, / It would be difficult to stand against him." [Földen, vízen csak magyarra indulna, / Magyarokra mert tágas úta volna. (...) Száván szabad úta, sok kár Szerémbe, / Nehéz volna már állani ellene.] *Mátyás király históriája*, VIII/26–27.

³⁶⁸ *Historiarum de rebus Ungaricis libri XXXIV*, trans. László Juhász, Monumenta Hungarica VI (Budapest: M. Helikon, 1962), 95.

Istvánffy recounts, Suleyman visited the castle in Buda and had the statue of Hercules moved onto his galleys bound for Constantinople³⁶⁹ but did not lay waste to the city. Generally, these sources rely heavily on one another and repeat several episodes word for word.

The chronicles emphasized the Ottomans' religious motivation for the battle. For example, as György Szerémi reports: *"When the sultan of the Turks heard that Hungarians force their churches to pay taxes, he said: They made Jesus Christ, whom they believe to be god and man, their own enemy, and made him stand against them. [...] This is what the emperor of the Turks said: I want to take revenge for Jesus the prophet, because Hungarians caused great offense to Jesus, the son of Mary, whom they call Christ; our prophet Mohammed ordered us to respect him, as he is a prophet and there is no other prophet like him."*³⁷⁰ Suleyman is aware of his role as a scourge of God, and he is ready to fulfill it: this is a brilliant manifestation of the originally biblical argument employed thoroughly by both humanist and Protestant authors that the Ottomans were God's punishment for the sins of humanity. After the siege, as Szerémi continues, *"...The sultan went to Buda and remained there for sixteen days. Then, he asked his advisors whether he should burn down the castle. And his advisors told him not to, but that he should burn down the town, to let everyone remember that the Turkish sultan was here; and to leave the castle alone because of its central position."*³⁷¹

A different type of source concerning Mohács is the autobiographical account written by Bartolomej Georgijevic, who was captured after the battle. In his work, he commemorates the event and his capture in connection with his own fate extremely briefly: *"After a few years of the loss of Alba Regalis [Belgrade], when Suleyman crossed the Danube and had his battle with Lajos, the*

³⁶⁹ Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép. Szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon. (History – Image. Extracts from the Relations of the Past and Arts in Hungary)*, ed. Árpád Mikó and Katalin Sinkó (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2000) 34–47, esp. 42–46.

³⁷⁰ *Epistola de perditione Regni Hungarorum*, 1545–47, trans. László Erdélyi and László Juhász, Monumenta Hungarica V (Budapest: M. Helikon, 1961), 98–106. The citations are my translations from the Hungarian.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

king of Hungary, at the field of Mohács, and succeeded by trick rather than by his military power [...] I was one of the few captives taken.”³⁷²

In narrative poetry, Mohács very soon became a symbol of national loss. Surprisingly, authors did not use this event to create a negative image of Suleyman. His figure is neglected in references to the battle; instead, the accent is on the mourning and the tallying of losses of the kingdom. This attitude continued the traditions of complaint culture that were created by works about the Mongolian invasion and are present in literary texts concerning the Ottoman campaign. The perspective of the defeated was heavily stressed and more detailed, while the viewpoints and personae of the victorious side were neglected. Works report the death of the young Louis II. Contrary to the chronicles cited above, they relate the burning down of Buda after the battle but do not emphasize Suleyman’s role in the events. An example is Máté Skaricza’s *Story of the Castle of Kevi*,³⁷³ which briefly recounts the battle: “*The battle on the field of Mohács, / Caused confusion all over the land. // Everything nice dissolved to naught, / Because of the death of King Louis, / What remained were only the cries of the country, / And the ruins of the beautiful town of Buda.*”³⁷⁴

Poetry recounted the battle for political purposes. Baranyai Decsi’s *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* argued that the reason the battle was lost before it had begun was that the young king had thought about only dances and songs.³⁷⁵ In the work, the battle itself is not described in detail; only its results are given: “*But our ears were opened by the Turks, / Because our nation was defeated by them with a second strike, / Our land was lost together with our young king.*”³⁷⁶ Here again, the imperial visit to Buda records that Suleyman ordered the town to be pillaged and razed. The author reflects upon the losses and exaggerates as a rhetorical tool against the Turks.

³⁷² Bartul Giurgievits, *De ritibus et differentiis Graecorum et Armeniorum* (Leuven), trans. Lajos Tardy, in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* (Captives, Envoys, and Merchants about the Ottoman Empire) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977), 182.

³⁷³ 1581, RMKT XVI/11, ed. Pál Ács (Budapest: Akadémiai–Orex, 1999), 239–248.

³⁷⁴ “Az ütközet a Mohácsi mezőn, / Bódulást tőn mind az egész földön. // Bomlása lőn minden szép rakásnak, / Mert halála lőn Lajos királynak, / Csak helye lőn ország siralmának, / Pusztán álla vára is Budának.” Lines 259–265.

³⁷⁵ *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, str. 66.

³⁷⁶ “De az török által nyitá mi fülünket, / Mert másod csapással megveré mi népünket, / Ifjú királyunkkal elveszté mi földünket.” 67.

After Mohács, the Ottomans gradually took parts of the country by military campaigns. This period corresponds with the flourishing of various genres of narrative poetry, as the main means of spreading news was orally performed report songs and their printed versions. A significant step toward the total conquest of the Kingdom of Hungary was Suleyman's occupation of Buda in 1541, which was recounted with varying emphases in different literary works. The change in the town's status from a capital to a marginal part of the Ottoman Empire was seen as deeply regrettable, especially after the consolidation of Ottoman power in the former capital.³⁷⁷

The first and most extensive piece of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos's *Cronica*, the *Story of Transylvania*, recounts events after the Battle of Mohács and the advance of the Ottoman army towards Buda, focusing on the story of György Martinuzzi and his attempt to gain power by promising to protect the orphaned King Johannes and his mother Isabella. As is claimed, the queen herself wrote a letter to Suleyman asking for his protection.³⁷⁸ As a result, Suleyman sent a large army to Buda to protect the country and the infant king: "*A hundred thousand men were sent to Buda (...) / To liberate the son of king John.*"³⁷⁹ Protection was a central justification to the tributary status and was widely propagated by Ottoman historians. Tinódi refers to this function in several places,³⁸⁰ and other authors also employed the notion of protection in connection with Suleyman, but often in an ironic tone. Demeter Csanádi's work on the life of Johannes II of Hungary³⁸¹ cites the fall of Buda, evoking the fable of the wolf and the lamb: "*The sultan asked of the queen there, / To bring her son to the camp to see him, / He offered his protection like the wolf to the lamb, / He*

³⁷⁷ The event was referred to in Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos's *Cronica* as follows: "Buda had been the capital of Hungary, / That fell into the hands of the Turkish sultan, / Now it is a border castle of Turkey." [Buda vala feje Magyarországnak, / Ki kezében esék terek császárnak: / Most végháza ím az Terekországnak.] *Varkucs Tamás idejébe lött csaták Egerből* (Events in Eger in the Era of Captain Tamás Varkucs), lines 9–11.

³⁷⁸ "The queen annoyed him this way, / Wrote a letter to Emperor Suleyman." [Az királyné azzal háborítá / Szulimán császárnak nagy sirtában írata.] *Erdélyi história* (The Story of Transylvania), Lines I/55–56.

³⁷⁹ "Száz-ezer emberét Budára bocsátá, (...) János királ fiát hogy megszabadítaná." Lines 58 and 60.

³⁸⁰ "I kept peace and protected his land" [Békével tartottam, oltalmaztam országát], I/368; "You know how I swore to King Johannes, / Under the town of Buda, I swore to his son, / That I would save his country from all enemies, / I would protect him and keep him alive as my own son." [Az János királynak tudod min esködtem, / Fiának es Buda alatt úgy esködtem, / Minden ellenségtől országát megmentem, / Mint egy fiamat oltalmazom, éltetem.] Lines III/921–924.

³⁸¹ *Vita Joannis Secundi*, 1571, RMKT XVI/8, ed. Lajos Dézsi (Budapest: MTA, 1930), 213–219.

made this clear as he obtained Buda.”³⁸² In Göröcsöni’s and Bogáti Fazakas’s *Story of King Matthias*, Suleyman is again portrayed as claiming to be a protector of the country: “*He would strengthen his empire with those [countries of the Serbs and Hungarians], / No one would oppose him in this matter, / The prince of Hungarians was a child / Everything swirled in great disunity.*”³⁸³ János Baranyai Decsi, a keen collector of proverbs and sayings, applied the metaphor of the fowler, taken from a proverb, while describing the sultan’s protectorate over Buda: “*As the good fowler captures birds with his whistle, / This is the way Suleyman left Buda to Johannes, / He knows well that things might go, but would not pass away.*”³⁸⁴ His work employs another proverb while describing the situation of the country after being fragmented: “*Poor Hungary has waned by now, / Only its collar is left in our hands.*”³⁸⁵ The same imagery is used by various other works, that provides evidence of the proverb-formula feature of the expression.³⁸⁶ These fragments demonstrate that protection, the central notion in the justification of Ottoman expansion, was communicated by the Ottoman administration successfully and was used by authors of the tributary states to express their positive or negative opinion towards Ottoman power.

Further campaigns of Suleyman are often described by recurring, formulaic fragments³⁸⁷ in Hungarian event poetry. Although the sultan is implicitly a protagonist of many of the poems, references to him in these texts offer few personal features.³⁸⁸ Instead, he is presented as a person

³⁸² “Királnétül az császár ottan azt kíváná, / Fiát táborba hozza, kiküldené, látná, / Oltalmát, mint az farkas báránnak, ajánlá, / Megmutatá, mert Budát kezéhez kapcsolá.” Lines 69–72.

³⁸³ “Császárságát avval erősitené, / Ebben senki ellene nem tehetne, / Gyermekek volna magyarok fejedelme, / Kavarog mind nagy egyenletlenségbe.” VIII/20.

³⁸⁴ “Mint az jó madarász madarat síppal fogja, / Így Szulimán akkor Budát Jánosnál hagyja, / Azmi halad, nem szokott elmúlni, jól tudja.” *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*, 74.

³⁸⁵ “Szegény Magyarország immár elfogyatkozott, / Kezünkben galléra is csak alig akadott.” Strophe 216.

³⁸⁶ The same proverbial imagery is present in: Tőke Ferenc, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 1556: “Ez országot övének tartja vala, / Csak gallérát nyakunkba hatta vala.” “He regards this country as his own, / Has left its collar in our necks.” (14–15.) and Sebestyén Tinódi, A szalkai mezőn...: “Ez országnak hatta néktök fél gallérát” [He left half his collar for you as a country], line 8.

³⁸⁷ Oral presentation of the works involved the use of formulas, a set of which was part of the toolkit of oral culture and was available to authors and known to the audience. Walter J. Ong, “Oral Memory, the Story Line and Characterization,” in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World* (New York: Methuen & Co., 1982), 139–155. An example from Tinódi: “As the castle of Buda became the property of Sultan Suleyman, / He took many beautiful fortresses besides.” [Buda vára hogy lőn Szulimán császáré, / Sok szép kővárakat vétete az mellé.] *Szegedi veszedelem* (The Siege of Szeged), lines 9–10. In this text, see László Jankovits, “A szóbeli kultúra és a *Cantio de militibus pulchra*” (Oral Culture and the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*), in *Hazugok, fecsegők, álmodozók: tanulmányok a régi magyar költészetéről* (Liars, Gossipers, Dreamers: Studies on Old Hungarian Poetry) (Budapest: Balassi, 2006), 44.

³⁸⁸ A rare case where he is depicted more personally is while reacting to the letter of the French king that tells about the conspiracy of Martinuzzi: “The sultan heard this and nodded his head, / He was astonished while thinking about this.”

who applies effective strategy with political motivations. In Görcsöni's and Bogáti Fazakas's *Story of King Matthias*, he is referred to as a determined leader of military maneuvers, with profound religious convictions: "*He assumed that if he could conquer Hungarians, / He would build mosques in Buda and Rome, / He would order the practice of his Turkish religion everywhere.*"³⁸⁹ This presentation corresponds with the Ottoman and European writings on the first half of Suleyman's reign: his motivations for conquest were justified by religious reasons and aspirations toward universal rule.

In descriptions of Suleyman's campaigns, the sultan himself is rarely present on the battlefield. Nonetheless, his figure provides a frame: poems describing sieges are built from recurring, formulaic elements, each recounting an action or event during the siege. Consequently, in many cases the structure of these songs is parallel. The sultan was also part of this script, as his orders for the steps to be taken in the sieges were always part of the strict structure. One example appears in the *Story of Pasha Ali of Buda*: "*This was the order of the sultan: / While Ahmet was under Temesvár, / Pasha Ali would go against Upper Hungary.*"³⁹⁰ The sultan is forever part of the script, a symbolic figure, distanced from the military campaigns but forever present as an abstract authority.

There are certain other recurring elements that are used as topoi in siege descriptions, functioning consistently as parts of the script. Such a topos is the unreliability of the Ottomans and their sultan,³⁹¹ which was commonly referred to outside of poetry as well.³⁹² Forcing the country

[Császár hallá feje hajtogatásával, / Csak elálmélkodék sok gondolkodásával.] Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, *Erdélyi história*, lines I/351–352.

³⁸⁹ "Azt szánta, ha magyart hozzá hajthatja, / Budán, Rómában mecsetet rakatna, / Török hitet mindenütt vallattatna, / Jeruzsálemre szándoka azon volna." VIII/28.

³⁹⁰ "Ez parancsolása vala az császárnak: / Míg alatta lenne Ahmát Temesvárnak, / Addig Ali basa felföld tartománnak." Tinódi, *Budai Ali basa históriája* (The Story of Pasha Ali of Buda), lines 5–7. Another example from Tinódi: "The Turkish sultan heard of the strength of the Germans, / He ordered his own forces to get ready." [Terek császár hallá némötnek erejét, / Hamar készítetté az ő nagy erejét.] Tinódi, *Buda veszeséről és Török Bálint fogságáról* (On the Loss of Buda and the Capture of Bálint Török), lines 21–24.

³⁹¹ An example: "The sultan strictly ordered the pasha, / To write confident and nice words to the Hungarian lords, / First of all, to good Bálint Terek, / Recommend yourself to him by nice words and gifts." [Igen parancsolá császár az basának, / Hitöt, szép szót írta az magyar uraknak, / Jelösben mindennél jó Terek Bálintnak, / Szóval, ajándékval magad ajánd annak.] Tinódi, *Buda veszeséről és Török Bálint fogságáról*, lines 25–26.

³⁹² János Baranyai Decsi, in his history of Hungary (1592–1598, *Magyar história*, trans. Péter Kulcsár (Budapest: Helikon, 1982), refers to a Habsburg envoy who reported of Suleyman: "The sultan is lazy, wastes all his time on women, bargains with his provinces; fights his wars only for the plunder, and he has lost all his forces and money, and

under his protection, that is, the act of convincing states to become vassals is a commonly referred element in this respect. To cite an example, the *Story of Transylvania* by Tinódi applies the means of referring to this idea as of George Martinuzzi's: "*George Frater thought about the nature of the emperor, / His intrigues, viperish lies, / As he offered himself to protect the king's son, / But wanted to earn the country for himself in this guise.*"³⁹³

A recurring accusation was that the Ottomans made false promises that convinced the vanquished defenders to give up the fortresses. The figure of the sultan often turned up in these episodes, as in the *Story about the Siege of Eger*, where he is referred to in the claim: "*I also swear by my faith to you, / That I will gain all kinds of benefits for you from the emperor.*"³⁹⁴ The false promise is often followed by a threat in the script, also in the name of the sultan: "*Because in those castles that are besieged by the emperor, / If they are occupied, everyone is ordered to be cut down.*"³⁹⁵ Thus, as was shown, the figure of the sultan was of crucial importance in the structure of the script, even if in most cases he remained a symbolic figure, remote from the actual events.

References to the sultan's emotions serve to present him as the ultimate trope of abstract and symbolic power. Although the sultan often expresses his feelings, these are positive or negative emotions mainly connected with the results of military movements and have nothing to do with his personal sensibilities. After the siege of Szabács,³⁹⁶ the earliest, fifteenth-century example of event poetry, the often-recurring emotion of annoyance (*bosszúság*) is frequently mentioned in Hungarian literature referring to the sultans. The other reported emotion is the sultan's sorrow (*búsulás*), which seems to have had two meanings in early modern Hungarian. The first meaning of the word, sadness, is the one it still has today; the other meaning, anger, is no longer current. These two emotions are presented as motivating the sultan in his campaigns. A typical example from Tinódi's

his people hate him." Later in the same work, there is a generalization of this feature to all of the Ottomans: it is the habit of Turkic people to make false friendships and oaths; this is the way the Ottoman gained power—through aggression and tricks. Chapters II/6 and III/10.

³⁹³ Tinódi, Erdéli krónika. "Elgondolá Fráter György császár mivoltát, / Az ő ravaszságát, álnok hazugságát, / Mint királ fiának ajánlá ő magát, / E szün alatt magának kívánja országát." (225–8.)

³⁹⁴ "Én es hitemre fogadok ti néktök, / Az császártul minden jót nyerök néktök." Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, lines I/414–415.

³⁹⁵ "Mert császár mely várat megszállattat, / Azt megveszi, mindent ott levágattat." Lines 949–950.

³⁹⁶ "They all heard about this in the country of Turks / The Turkish sultan was greatly angered." [Ezt meghallák mind Törökországba / Török császár lön nagy bosszúságban.] 149–150.

Cronica reads: “Now I turn my speech to Turkey, / What the sultan’s deeds were there in his great sorrow.”³⁹⁷

When the sultan is depicted as angry, he is traditionally described as pulling his own facial hair.³⁹⁸ As the beard is a symbol of dignity, its loss denotes a lack of dignity in both the military and moral sense. Fear of disgrace is, in all cases, described as a motivating force of the Ottomans for military campaigns. Descriptions of the sultan’s anger and his fear of dishonor can be found in the works of Göröcsöni and Bogáti Fazakas on Matthias Corvinus: “*The sultan became very sad hearing this, / He had the fortress besieged night and day [...] Let me be more ashamed than my father / If I besiege this more than fifteen days.*”³⁹⁹ In his *Story of János Hunyadi*, Mátyás Nagybánkai also applies this topos, although in connection with Sultan Murat: “*When Sultan Amurates saw the menace of his people / Sorrow and fear, truly great dread inhabited his heart / Because of disgrace, he turned his people to his land / For which in Fehérvár, they praised the name of God.*”⁴⁰⁰ In both citations, the ruler’s emotions are depicted as reflections on the progress of the military maneuvers. The main driving force of the campaign is to avoid dishonor.

Positive emotions are also presented in the poems. They function as motivations for military movements: the aim of the campaigns is to please the sultan.⁴⁰¹ Depictions of the sultan’s positive

³⁹⁷ “Térítöm beszédöm az Terekországba, / Mit császár mívele ő nagy búsultában.” Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, lines II/898–899. The following lines, that is, the first lines of part III of the poem, repeat the meaning of the previously quoted text, creating coherence between the two parts of the work: “I will recount the great anger of Sultan Suleyman.” [Szolimán császárnak mondom nagy haragját.] Line III/901. This fragment helps to reconstruct the original meaning of the word *búsul*, as there is reference to anger in the second quote.

³⁹⁸ “They say he pulled out his own beautiful moustache.” [Az ő szép bajuszját mondják hogy szaggatta.] Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, line III/913. This motif is present in Mátyás Nagybánkai’s *Story of János Hunyadi*, at the description of Sultan Murat’s reactions after being defeated by János Hunyadi at Belgrade: “The sultan became sad, grabbed his own beard and made a strong oath, / And told the pashas: ‘I will not tolerate losses and damages, / In fifteen days I will either die here or take the fortress, / even if I lose all of my people, I will make it mine, / Because it is better for me to die here than than go home without it for my dishonor.’” [Császár megbúsula, szakálát megfogá, erősen megeskövék. // Szóla az basáknak: “Az kárt, kissebbséget bizon el nem szenvedem, / Tizenötöd napig vagy én itt meghalok, vagy az várat megveszem, / Ha minden népemet alatta elvesztem, mégis enyimé teszem, / Mert jobb itt meghalnom, hogy nem szégyenemre annákul haza mennem.”] *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról*, lines 368–372.

³⁹⁹ “Azon császár oly igen búsult vala, / Éjjel-nappal várat töreti vala [...] Valljak szégyent nagyobbát én atyámnál, / Ha ezt vívom tovább tizenöt napnál.” II/40–42.

⁴⁰⁰ “Mikor látta volna Amurates császár népének veszedelmét, / Bánat és félelem, csuda nagy rettegés foglalá császár szívét, / Szégyen vallására megtéríté azért esmét földébe népét, / kiért Fehérvárban oly igen dicsérék az úristennek nevét.” *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról*, lines 69–73.

⁴⁰¹ A few illustrations: “[Suleyman] Gave great thanks and made everyone shout ‘Allah,’ / He showed his joyful mood to the pashas.” [Nagy hálákat ada Allát kiáltata, / Az ő basáihoz víg kedvet mutata.] Tinódi, *On the Capture of Bálint Török*, lines 119–120. “The sultan regarded Barbarossa with a joyous mood, / Was grateful for all the gifts.” [Császár látá Barbarossát vig kedvvel, / Ajándékot vevé igen jó névvel.] Valkai, *The Story of Hariadenus*, II/22.

and negative emotions as they appear in event poetry are not connected with the persona presented during the campaigns. Instead, these depictions should be regarded as formulaic, denoting the sultan's changing moods as a symbolic need to be satisfied.⁴⁰² Suleyman appears in event poetry on the highest level of the military and social hierarchy, an ultimate will that governs the deeds of the Ottomans even in his absence. This was clear for Hungarian authors and also for the audience of narrative poetry, and this kind of representation might have served special aims in Hungarian texts. The recurring reference to the sultan as an ultimate will was consciously created to demonstrate the dependence of the Ottomans on their ruler, that they were not able to act without keeping the sultan in their minds. Furthermore, this construction might also have reminded the Hungarians of the Ottomans' belief that they were fulfilling both a religious and a worldly mission of conquest at the behest of their sultan.

The last episode in Suleyman's life was the siege of Szigetvár (1566), where the Ottoman ruler died. The sultan's old age and death had been discussed in all types of Ottoman literary⁴⁰³ and artistic⁴⁰⁴ works, and the last campaign of Suleyman was intensely reflected in the European public sphere as well.⁴⁰⁵ As in the case of Mohács, Hungarian chronicles about the Battle of Szigetvár became profoundly influential for the oeuvre of later authors. Miklós Istvánffy's⁴⁰⁶ work refers to the actions of Suleyman in a neutral manner, depicting him as leading the siege: there is no

⁴⁰² There seems to be a continuity in this tradition since the fifteenth century. One of the earliest vernacular narrative poems, the *Szabács viadala*, says: "Because they realized they could not obtain it / Moreover, they could not write it to the sultan." [Mert esmérék hogy meg nem bírhatják / Sőt császárnak azt meg sem írhatják.] *Szabács viadala*, lines 111–112.

⁴⁰³ In Ottoman literature, the death of Suleyman was mourned by court poets working under the patronage of the sultan. The best known example of a grief poem was composed by Bakı, involving traditional Sufi imagery (strong and rich symbolism, involving, e.g. floral symbols); accenting the sultan's elegance, beauty, and dignity, and drawing parallels between his rule and that of Alexander and Darius. Andrews, "Literary Art of the Golden Age," 390.

⁴⁰⁴ In Ottoman art, the most important artist towards the end of Suleyman's life was Osman, who illustrated the events at the siege of the Szigetvár campaign in the *Tarih-i Sultan Süleyman* (1579/80). In these images, Suleyman was depicted as an old and pious man (with a sallow complexion and lined face), praying in the mausoleum of Eyub Ensari in Istanbul before the Szigetvár campaign. Atil, "The Image of Suleyman in Ottoman Art," 376. Painter Nigari's portrait of Suleyman also shows him in his old age, strolling in the garden, lost in thought, reflecting the mystical nature of Suleyman and his closeness to dervishes and divan poetry. Ibid., 367.

⁴⁰⁵ For Western writers and envoys, it was obvious that the sultan was ill (see Fisher, "The Life and Family of Suleyman I," 15). However, some, such as Ghiselin Busbecq, reported him to be in good health: "He is beginning to feel the weight of years, but his dignity of demeanour and his general physical appearance are worthy of the ruler of so vast an empire. [...] He is a strict guardian of his religion and its ceremonies [...] For his age—he has almost reached his sixtieth year—he enjoys quite good health...." *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin Le Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 65.

⁴⁰⁶ Sándor Iván Kovács, "Szigetvár veszedelmei a magyar irodalomban" (The Sieges of Szigetvár in Hungarian Literature), *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 117, no. 2 (2004): 613–635.

reference to his age or illness. The sultan is depicted as active and in command.⁴⁰⁷ His illness and death are reported in one short sentence.⁴⁰⁸

In Hungarian poetry, the initially successful defense and the defenders' heroic last stand gradually became a point of reference and a national myth, comparable with the Battle of Mohács in its significance in collective memory. From the earliest sources onwards, the deaths of both Captain Miklós Zrínyi and Suleyman formed counterpoints and were used to emphasize the difference between the two leaders.

One of the earliest compositions about the siege, the anonymous *Story of the Loss of Szigetvár*,⁴⁰⁹ begins—ingeniously—by stating that Suleyman has died during the siege.⁴¹⁰ Suleyman's advanced age is emphasized repeatedly. It was his old age that inspired him to attack Sziget: "*The emperor had the thought / In his old age that he would show himself, / Earn fame for his country, / Spill the blood of many Christians.*"⁴¹¹ These lines also follow the pattern of presenting the Ottomans as eager to increase their own glory out of pride and selfishness.

During the description of the siege, other patterns of event poetry emerge concerning the sultan. Suleyman is "sorrowful" over the failure of repeated siege attempts: "*The Turkish sultan was very sad about this, / He pulled mightily on his old beard, / That he saw the innumerable loss of his people, / And regretted the death of pashas and beys.*"⁴¹² In this scene, Suleyman is presented as a pathetic figure, clearly inferior to Zrínyi, the heroic defender. Furthermore, after the sixth

⁴⁰⁷ Miklós Istvánffy's original Latin text was translated into Hungarian by Pál Tályai at the beginning of the seventeenth century and was published in 1622. Miklós Istvánffy, *Szigetvár ostroma* (The Siege of Szigetvár), in Pál Tályai's translation from the seventeenth century, ed. Péter Benits, *Irodalomismeret* 10, no. 1–2 (1999): 159–175, <http://www.c3.hu/~iris/99-1/benits.htm>.

⁴⁰⁸ "Ennek az viadalnak kimenetele alatt, Szulimán betegségtől s vénségtől is megnehezdedvén, s megveszett első szárcsontjának fájdalmához hasa folyása is rája érkezvén meghala." [As this stage of the siege proceeded, Suleyman died, encumbered by illness and old age, the pain in his shin bone compounded by the flux of his bowels.] XXIII/32.

⁴⁰⁹ RMKT XVI/7, ed. Áron Szilády (Budapest: MTA, 1912), 300–311. Although it is an important source, composed shortly after the siege (1566) the author is not correctly informed about all of the events: He claims that Zrínyi was not present at the final siege, and he is aware of only nine attempts, not ten—he probably fled before the last one. See also Kovács, "Szigetvár veszedelmei a magyar irodalomban," 619.

⁴¹⁰ "Let us remember now our great menace, / Things that occurred in our country not long ago, / The destruction and taking of Sziget, / The death of Sultan Suleyman." [Emléközzünk mi nagy veszedelmünkről, / Országunkban nem régen lőtt dolgokról, / Sziget romlásáról és vevésséről, / Szoltán Szolimán császárnak haláláról.] 1.

⁴¹¹ "Vala császárnak ilyen gondolátja, / Vénségére hogy magát megmutassa, / Az ő országát hogy megöregbitse, / Sok keresztyéneknek vérét kiontsa." 3.

⁴¹² "Ezen török császár megbúsula, / Vén szakálát erőssen vonogatja, / Népének szántalan kárát hogy látja, / Basáknak, békőknek halálát szánja." 18.

unsuccessful attempt to take Sziget, the Ottoman army was under great pressure because of the fear of failure: “*The sadness of the whole camp was great, / As the sultan had been dishonored.*”⁴¹³ The illness of Suleyman is also explained by the misfortune: “*The vezier pasha died at the seventh siege, / That the sultan regretted more than all those before, / So deeply that he fell ill.*”⁴¹⁴ The text’s dramatic power builds by increasing the tension generated by the Ottomans’ failed siege attempts. After the seventh unsuccessful attempt, the tensions reach their peak and Suleyman dies of “sorrow” (or fury): “*The emperor grew so sad about this, / That he saw countless losses of his army, / That he offered himself to Allah, / And on the third day, Suleyman died. // They say he died in his sorrow, / He did not let anyone in to see him.*”⁴¹⁵ The narration of the events shows parallels with the chronicle of Istvánffy: the Ottoman elite tried to keep the news about the sultan secret, but two days later, when the pashas also saw him dead, his passing became widely known. Suleyman is not mentioned anymore in the story; the narration focuses on the heroism of the defenders.

In this text, the death of Suleyman is used as a literary tool to increase tension. The work mirrors several practices discussed previously in depicting the sultan. Suleyman’s fear of dishonor and his annoyance are commonly mentioned in narrative poetry. In other works, the death of Suleyman is recounted briefly, but it is always emphasized that he died in the siege of Sziget, contributing significantly to that event’s development into a national symbol of heroism. In an anonymous 1571 work on the death of György Turi,⁴¹⁶ the siege is summarized in a neutral manner; the death of the sultan is reported as a smaller detail in a larger narrative focusing on other fights and raids in the county of Zala.⁴¹⁷ János Baranyai Decsi’s *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans* also reports Suleyman’s

⁴¹³ “Vala bánatja az egész tábornak, / Hogy szégyönvallása lőn az császárnak.” 27.

⁴¹⁴ “Vezérbasa heted ustromon hala, / Kit az császár möntül inkább bán vala. // Ugy annyira hogy megbetegült vala.” 29–30.

⁴¹⁵ “Ezön az császár igön megbúsula, / Számtalan kárát hadának hogy látja, / Az Allának önnön magát ajánlja, / Harmad napra Szulimán császár meghala. // Mondják, hogy bánatjában megholt vala, / Sönkit hozzá be nem bocsátott vala.” 36–37.

⁴¹⁶ RMKT XVI/8, 200–212.

⁴¹⁷ “Meanwhile, the armies of the Turkish sultan, / Went against good Zrínyi at Szigetvár, / He fought and besieged it night and day, / Until he got it into his power. // The sultan died under the fortress, / And Sziget was now in pagan hands, / The beylerbey let his men take booty, / Many pagans, whose number was countless.” [Ezenközben török császár nagy hada / Jó Zrínyire Szigetváratt rászállta; / Éjjel-nappal vitatá, ostromlatá, / Mindaddig míg hatalmába nem hajtá. // Az vár alatt császár hogy meghalt vala / És immár Sziget pogánykézbe vala, / Beglerbék rablani bocsátott vala / Nagy sok pogányt, kinek száma nem vala.] Lines 361–368.

death very briefly: “*It was the seventh time the sultan came to Sziget, / He took Sziget, and also took Gyula, / He plundered our land, himself was taken by God there.*”⁴¹⁸ Thus the death of Suleyman in the siege was certain to have been a major reason for contemporaries’ increased interest. Singers and authors of report songs played an important role in the spread of the cult not only in Hungarian but in a number of other languages and literatures.⁴¹⁹

To conclude, the consciously created and managed public image of Suleyman the Magnificent as a universal ruler that was constructed for Ottoman and European audiences via intensive programs (artistic patronage, historiography, and public events) and military campaigns has left a clear trace in Hungarian literature of the period. Different roles were connected to the figure of the sultan in different contexts. In the Ottoman context, his programs and campaigns reflected changes of governance along with the desired image. The first period of personal leadership, with the sultan’s active military involvement, was followed by an era with a more abstract image of the sultan as a balance of forces. In a Europe-wide context, his ambitions for universal rule were emphasized, as he was a rival of other, European dynasties. In religious discourses, he was depicted as the scourge of God; his figure was often referred to in connection with biblical prophecies about the end times. These discourses also appeared in contemporary Hungarian literary production: in the Hungarian context, translated works reflected the above discourses more intensely, but they added their own views while adapting the original works for a Hungarian audience.

At the same time, there was a new practice evolving in Hungary: works narrating ongoing Ottoman campaigns mediated a novel symbolic public image of Suleyman. In descriptions of decisive sieges and battles, his emotions and orders were part of a script. Topoi connected to the representations of Ottomans in general, such as unreliability, were also reflected in connection with

⁴¹⁸ “Heted ízben török császár Szigetre jöve, / Szigetet megvevé, Gyulát is megvéteté, / Földünket rablatá, magát Isten ott veszté.” *Török császárok krónikája*, 85.

⁴¹⁹ Ottoman, German, Croatian, French, Spanish, and English publications dealt with the event. Tibor Klaniczay, *Zrínyi Miklós* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1964), 59–60. The most important non-Hungarian texts that deal with the event are other sources: Franjo Crnko’s 1568 account of the siege (trans. into Latin by Sámuel Budina); the work known as the “Zrínyi album” (*De Zigaret, Hungariae propugnaculo*) (Wittenberg, 1587) in Latin, which was compiled by Imre Forgách; an epic poem by Christian Schesaeus; Brno Karnarutic’s *Vazetje Sigetta grada* (Venice, 1584); and Miklós Zrínyi’s *Obsidio Szigetiana* (Vienna, 1651) and its Croatian version by Petar Zrinski (Venice, 1660). See Kovács, “Szigetvár veszedelmei.”

the sultan. The role of the sultan as a protector of tributary states was also emphasized in Hungarian works, drawing parallels between Hungary and other countries with the similar fates. The works paid little attention to the personality of the sultan, and conveyed the image of a distant ruler, who was presented as the source of events, the ultimate will, the highest level of military and social hierarchy. The recurring reference to the sultan as an ultimate will was consciously created to demonstrate the dependence of the Ottomans on their ruler; that they were not able to act without keeping the sultan in their minds. Further, this construction might also have reminded the Hungarians of the awareness of the Ottomans that they were fulfilling both a religious and a worldly mission of conquest at the behest of their sultan. These depictions determined later practices of presenting the Ottomans and their sultan in Hungarian literature.

2. 3. Ottoman sultans of the sixteenth century after Suleyman

Yet during the reign of Suleyman, comments concerning the decline of certain elements of the Ottoman state system appeared in the Ottoman Empire and outside of it.⁴²⁰ The expansion seemed to arrive to a less intense phase, and instead of the articulated emphasis on universal imperial power claims, the sultans following Suleyman inherited an empire that was only stable on the surface – although at the same time, they achieved considerable military successes, such as the taking of Cyprus in 1571 and Tunis in 1574.

The transfer of royal power itself after the death of Suleyman to Selim was recounted by Stephan Gerlach, a member of the Habsburg delegation to Istanbul in 1573. His narrative gives account of a weak Selim getting into power and also the Ottoman succeeds in taking Sziget; he also reports that until the arrival of Selim pasha, Mehmet kept Suleyman's death a secret.⁴²¹ Among Hungarian works, our most valuable source is the *Hungarian Chronicle*⁴²² – written in Latin, not in Hungarian – by János Baranyai Decsi, a piece of work that remained unfinished due to the death of its author. The chronicle is dedicated to Zsigmond Báthory – who is compared to antique heroes

⁴²⁰ Fodor, “Állandóság és változás,” 21.

⁴²¹ Stephan Gerlach, *Des Alteren Tagebuch*, Frankfurt, 1674.

⁴²² *Magyar krónika*, tr. Péter Kulcsár, Helikon, 1982.

such as Hercules, Cicero and Alexander –, and focuses on the Transylvanian aspects of current political events, especially the role of Sinan and the aunt of the new sultan, his most influential advisors. His aunt, arguing for starting a war with Maximilian, refers to his father as an ideal: *“Follow, emperor, your ancestors, first of all your great father, Suleyman, during whose reign, the empire of the Turks grew so strong, that it filled the whole world with fear.”*⁴²³ Sinan gets a leading role in the war, as *“he [the sultan] was not used to efforts of war, and was weak in body by nature, so he immediately appointed Sinan to be general of war...”*⁴²⁴ As it is obvious, the sultan is depicted as a weak ruler, not able in war and in general governance.

Other signs of decline are also mentioned in the narrative, starting with describing Suleyman as an emperor who is *“lazy, wastes all his time on women, bargains with his provinces, fights his wars only for the booty, he has lost all his forces and money, and his people hate him,”* referred in a letter of a Habsburg envoy and the narration asserts a general decline: *“before, it was the habit of Turkish rulers to participate in wars, to give the military and civil rights for the most worthy, to grant reward for the diligent, and punishment for the slackers, to accept the experienced in the advisory board, to defend rights, respect military discipline, and keep everyone away from aggression with strict orders. And now? They make war via representatives, via evil and vile people...”*⁴²⁵ The conditions seem to worsen more with the rule of Murad III, who *“gave over his vile soul to hell”*⁴²⁶ and Mehmed III who massacred all his eighteen brothers. All in all, the role of the sultans in vernacular narrative poetry seem to lose its previously gained functions and status.

Conclusion

By the end of the sixteenth century, the available vernacular narratives lack detailed references on sultans in such a depth as it had been presented in the case of Suleyman. This might be due to the change of the main focus of the works, focusing rather on the parts of narratives that address “us”

⁴²³ Ibid., II/2.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., II/4.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., III/10.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., VII/8.

and not the Ottomans, and on the appearance of a new soldier ideal, which shall be presented thoroughly in the chapter on military encounters. Based on the observations of source types, representational patterns seem to form tendencies according to their contexts. The results are diverse types of main features of representing the sultan in European–Ottoman, Hungarian–European and Hungarian–Ottoman settings, each having their distinct tradition basis and poetical toolkit.

The role of orality is indispensable in the formation of the specific Hungarian vernacular practice in representing the sultan. The form and content of oral texts and traditions, such as repetitiveness, are greatly varied, adopted and reused in these works on several levels. The means of depicting the sultan, such as formulas, topoi and script, bear characteristics of oral traditions. The effects of literature on the audience and their expectations also operate in these texts on the basis of features of oral literatures: the audience relies on and expects a known and repetitive structure during the reception of the texts. Vice versa, the expectations of the audience that constantly influence literary production also provide insight to the mechanisms of oral cultures.

At the same time, patterns of presenting the sultan shed light on the practices of the formation and uses of a literature that is developing its own rules in writing. The presented texts are not merely oral in character any more. They have features that inevitably make them part of literate traditions, such as their synthetic constructional elements or their placement in an edited volume with various other texts. These new features required a new type of reception that could be realized in individual, silent reading. Thus, the very same work could be received in two ways: loud reading or performance, or read alone in an edited volume. Both ways of reception required completely different skills and practices from the reader. Furthermore, the resulting, mixed oral–literate parlance became influential for the development of vernacular literature. The practices sketched above had a canon creating value, they became influential for later representations and they formed the basis of the later development of Hungarian literate tradition.

The most important results of the investigation of references concerning the Ottoman sultans show that under the four-decade-long rule of Suleyman and his intense military presence in Hungary, a literary structure came into being that was based on both oral and written traditions. This structure applied various formulas to express knowledge for its audience in a satisfying and comprehensive manner that was suitable to mediate recent and far events alike. The source material consisting majorly of vernacular Hungarian narratives offers a wide spectrum of topics and forms to investigate the presence of the above structure. The three main source groups containing references to the sultans include narrative poetry reporting about the current military events (event poetry), translated narratives from Latin, and a certain subgenre of biographies. The discussion had centered on the descriptions of landmark events and the designated roles of the sultans in these situations, and demonstrated that in addition to the image of the sultan as a distant, powerful ruler, his personal emotions and reactions likewise play a determining role in the development of decisions. The complex image, at the same time, included also elements that are present in references regarding the Turks in general – such as unreliability, arrogant pride and selfishness, and the “scourge of God” imagery. Event poetry as a genre focuses on affairs that are based on first- or secondhand eyewitness observations, thus in an obvious manner, these narratives lack a personal image of the sultan. He is depicted as a distant figure, although he is positioned to determine ongoing events in the vast majority of sources, taking an established place in the plot. This system of representations has strong ties with oral traditions, applying numerous elements of its apparatus such as formula-type expressions and various *topoi*. The system often lacked in-depth information about inner political mechanisms of the Ottoman Empire, and focused mostly on attempts to explain the Ottoman presence and the losses of the Hungarian Kingdom, involving discourses from religious literature. Therefore, the next context of Ottoman representations to be addressed is their presence in the religious discursive arenas.

3. THE OTTOMANS IN RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

The presence of the Ottomans generated a great variety of religious reflections. These reflections have two fundamental perspectives: one is directed towards the subjects of the Ottomans and reflections concerning their own situations, while the other dimension involves reflections of the Turks themselves and the discussions of their perceived or supposed religious affairs. Apparently, there are various examples of religious transitions: reflections concerning or produced by go-betweens will be addressed in this chapter as well. The Ottoman threat and presence effected Hungarians on the individual and community level: possible causes and solutions for their situation, and the manners of the propagation of these ideas will also be analyzed, along with the interpretative strategies of contemporary events within the course of history.

3. 1. Self-Oriented Reflections

3. 1. 1. Apocalypticism

Apocalyptic ideologies were core concepts characterizing not only theological, but political and military discourses of vernacular sixteenth-century narratives. The basic context of ideas and concepts about the forthcoming Apocalypse relied on Biblical passages, especially on the Book of Daniel and the Revelations of St John. Medieval comments and interpretations on these passages constituted a likewise important foundation of circulation of concepts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among them, traditions established by Pseudo-Methodius and Joachim of Fiore⁴²⁷ were particularly influential, which depicted Muslims as the manifestation of the Antichrist and the four beasts of the Apocalypse, respectively. Concepts established by these works determined Christian

⁴²⁷ Yoko Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies on Views of the Turks," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 17 (1993), 127. The circulation of ideas about the apocalyptic nature of Islam can be dated to the first contacts of Christians with the Muslims, i.e., the 7th century when Pseudo-Methodius's work was created (Pseudo-Methodius's Apocalypse, the Syriac version is probably from 691–2, the Latin end of 7th–early 8th c. See David Thomas and Barbara Rogemma, eds, *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 164–5. This narrative associates the Arab-Muslim rule (identified as the "sons of Ishmael") with the rule of the Midianites over Israel (Judges 6–8). Joachim of Fiore's *Expositio in Apocalypsim* has plentiful references on Islam and the Third Crusade; on the reception of Joachim de Fiore's works and Joachimism, see Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (Harper Torchbooks. Harper & Row, 1977).

views of Islam in the course of the Middle Ages and beyond; their ideas and topoi circulated in almost any narrative that Muslims were subjects to, such as in the works of Hugh of Fleury, William of Tyre, or later, Mario Filelfo. The same traditions were combined with eschatologies of various Protestant authorities (e.g. Luther, Müntzer, Calvin, or Zwingli) and became determining in all levels of religious, literate, historiographical, crusading, military discourses and also in sermons, correspondence and in everyday, oral vocalization of current events.

In Hungary, quantitative and qualitative changes of attitudes regarding the Turks appeared after the battle of Nicopolis in 1396: from this time on, Ottomans were regarded not only a branch of heretics, but as chief enemy both in religious and military sense,⁴²⁸ and from the second half of the fifteenth century, narratives (such as the account of Georgius de Hungaria) applied more and more eschatological-theological elements in their reflections about them. However, the first, (still Latin) apocalyptic era of representations took a turn under Matthias Corvinus, with even such implications that Ottomans might fulfill the role of saviours of Christendom.⁴²⁹ However, these elite, narrow discourses were completely transformed after the lost battle at Mohács to return to an older course of reflections. With the help of various novel platforms (for instance, by the medium of print and by public disputes), representational practices of reformed religious concepts could reach wider audiences.

During the process of self-identification of the Reformation's various branches, among other points (such as the corrupted nature of the papacy and the Catholic church), a wide variety of reflections were made on the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Physical and spiritual fears, both on the universal and personal level, relied on the massive tradition of apocalyptic ideas. The Last Judgment occupied a central place in the imagination of people, and was reflected by various means, from meditations on death combined with the Passion of Christ⁴³⁰ through homilies to allegorical representations. There are certain genres that bear witness of the morale and apocalyptic

⁴²⁸ Pál Fodor, "The View of the Turk in Hungary: The Apocalyptic Tradition and the Legend of the Red Apple in Ottoman-Hungarian Context," in *Les Traditions Apocalyptiques Au Tournant de La Chute de Constantinople*, edited by Benjamin Lellouch and Stephane Yerasimos (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999), 100.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 111.

⁴³⁰ Christine Göttler, *Last Things. Art and the Religious Imagination in the Age of Reform* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 1.

spirit in the era by their mere existence, such as András Batizi's *Az halálra való emlékeztetés*,⁴³¹ that actualizes the medieval genre *memento mori* for the period.

The most often-referred-to scriptural places in works with apocalyptic references are the Second and Seventh Books of Daniel, which formed also the basis of Protestant periodization of history. In Daniel 2, prophet Daniel interprets a dream of the Assyrian king Nabuchodonosor of a large statue made of various metals (gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay), each representing a worldly power. Daniel 7 describes a similar dream, this time a dream of Daniel, where the four beasts (a winged lion, a bear, a leopard, and an iron-toothed beast with one little and ten big horns) represent four empires. Evidently, throughout various scriptural traditions, each of the prophecies were interpreted with respect to contemporary conditions: e.g., Joachim of Fiore identified them as Jews, pagans, Arians, Saracens⁴³² (his beasts are also mentioned by Georgius de Hungaria's *Tractatus*); for Protestants, after Carion, Calvin and Melanchton,⁴³³ the empires were Babylon, Persia, Greece/Alexander, and the Roman Empire, each representing a two thousand year cycle, corresponding to the core historiographical concept of Protestantism. The exact scheme appears, for instance, in András Dézsi's world chronicle from 1549: "*The first one came from Babylonia, / The other monarchy from Persia, / Third is Alexander, from Macedonia, / Fourth monarchy is from Rome.*"⁴³⁴ The *Chronicle of the Ottoman sultans* by János Baranyai Decsi from 1597 recounts the same world powers, however, in his interpretation, these empires have all been surpassed by the Turks: "*The Turkish empire exceeds all these four, / And even the time of their power is longer, / Almost longer than a thousand years.*"⁴³⁵ This statement also exposes an element of central importance concerning the notion of the Turk, characteristic universally in textual traditions: the identification of Islam with the Ottoman Empire, thus of a religious entity with a political one. On

⁴³¹ The work was written before 1546. RMKT XVI/2., 70.

⁴³² Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies," 130.

⁴³³ Graeme Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), and Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 121. The referred work is *Chronicon Carionis... a Philippo Melanchthonis et Casparo Peucero*, Wittenberg, 1580.

⁴³⁴ "Támadá első Babylóniából, / Másik monárkhia a Persiából, / Harmadik Sándor, Macedóniából, / Negyedik monárkhia Rómaságból." András Dézsi, *Világ kezdetitől lött dolgokról*, 161–4.

⁴³⁵ "Mind az négy birodalomnál töröké nagyobb, / Még az idei is ű hatalmának nagyobb, / Közel ezer esztendő forgásánál nagyobb." János Baranyai Decsi, *Török császárok krónikája*, strophe 133.

these grounds, the later argumentation of Baranyai Decsi is not any more political, but religious, too: “*Let God give that their empire would not grow any bigger, / Would not expand from the East to the West, / And they would not conquer the empire of Rome.*”⁴³⁶

Péter Melius Juhász’s commentaries to St John’s revelations is an emblematic example of Biblical exegesis.⁴³⁷ Melius was a superintendent of Nagyvárad (Oradea) in Transylvania, and this work appeared in the years (1566–7) of his heated debates on the Holy Trinity and the divinity of Christ with Ferenc Dávid, bishop of Transylvania, the most important figure of Antitrinitarianism. The work discusses the emergence of the Turks in the context of the story of Gog and Magog, and at the same place, reflects on the prophecies of Daniel while characterizing the Ottomans in the context of ‘all pagan nations’: “*These nations are similar to pagans, who add themselves to the horn that has grown from among the ten horns that is described by Daniel 7.8.9. Gog means the pagans who live in tents: Thiras, the Turkish nation. Magog means pagans who were Christians and added themselves to the Turks: Because as we can see, they are mixed from all kinds of nations.*”⁴³⁸

András Batizi’s chronicle from 1544⁴³⁹ is an example of a different interpretation of the Book of Daniel. The work is a perfect representative of the concepts present in Hungarian vernacular Protestant historiography about the nature of Islam as a false and heretical religion. As a source of the historia, Methodius is referenced by Batizi: “[Mohammed] *He was then followed by the Turks, / Whom St Methodius calls / Jews in blood, circumcised, / Or ones closed between the mountains.*”⁴⁴⁰

This passage does not only recall the legendary nations behind the Caspian gates, but identifies the

⁴³⁶ “Adná Isten, birodalmok nagyobb ne lenne, / Napkeletről napnyugatra ki ne terjedne, / Róma császárságát magáévé ne tenné.” str. 133–134.

⁴³⁷ *Az Szent Iánosnak tölt jelenesnek igaz es iras szerint valo magyarazasa prédikatioc szerint a iambor bölcz es tudos emberek irasabol szereztetett* (True Commentaries to the Revelations of Saint John, based on the scriptures, organized as sermons, on the foundations of writings of pious and wise scholars). Várad, 1566–7. National Széchenyi Library RMK 69/1. Melius was a Calvinist bishop in Transylvania.

⁴³⁸ “Pogányhoz hasonló népeket, akik adják magokat amaz tíz szarvak közül kinőtt szarvacskához, mint Dániel 7.8.9. írva vagy: A Góg sátoros pogányság: a Tiras, török nemzet: A Magóg ezekhez egyesült, keresztyénből lett pogányok: akik minden nemzetből adják magokat a törökhöz: Mert látjuk, hogy minden nemzetből elegyültek.” Péter Melius Juhász, *Az Szent Jánosnak tölt jelenésnek igaz írás szerint való magyarázása*, 8r.

⁴³⁹ *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak teremtestől fogva az itéletig való historia*, 95–113.

⁴⁴⁰ “Őtet az törökök azután követék, / Szent Methodiustul hogy kik nevezetnek / Az véres zsidóknak, környülmetélteknek, / Avagy hegy közibe bérekesztetteknek.” *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak teremtestől fogva az itéletig való historia*, 316–320.

Turks – as the followers of Mohammed – as related to the “red Jews”, that is, the biblical people of Edom. This genealogy also originates from Pseudo-Methodius, and is mentioned by Melanchthon in his work on prophet Daniel.⁴⁴¹

The text also has a reference on the fourth beast of Daniel 7, identified as Mohammed: “Therefore that horn was Mohammed, / and the pagan emperor is his servant, / His eyes, his mouth and his message, / Which is the denial of the saint prophets.”⁴⁴² The same idea is present in the chronicle of István Benczédi Székely (*Chronica ez világnak jeles dolgairól*, Krakko, 1559), which describes the empire of the Turks as an heir of the Roman Empire: “The fourth [beast] is of the Romans, under which arose a small horn, the empire of the Turk, that occupied many countries and provinces of the Romans. Furthermore, it corrupted many Christian countries in Asia and Europe, and made them idolaters, and made many declarations against Christ, and when their power will be broken, that will be the time of judgment. But this all is the will of God, as it is proclaimed in the scriptures, so that all Christian countries should be corrupted for their idolatry before the coming of the Turks, by them.”⁴⁴³ The passage involves the concept of predestination, claiming that the rise of the Turks is God’s will and constitutes part of the events of the Last Times. Székely’s chronicle deals also with the Daniel 2, giving an interpretation of the metal statue parallel with the above one: “Therefore the the last part of the Roman Empire is of iron, this is the Turk, its other half is of clay, this is the Germans, but iron always corrupts things made of clay.”⁴⁴⁴

In Székely’s chronicle a concept of predestination appears that claims that the presence of the

⁴⁴¹ The work, *Das siebend Capitel Danielis* (1529) was written together with Justus Jonas. Sándor Őze, “Török fenyegetettség és protestáns apokaliptika a 16. század végi Európában és Magyarországon, különös tekintettel Bornemisza Péter kései prédikációira (Turkish Threat and Protestant Apocalypticism in Europe and Hungary at the End of the Sixteenth Century, with a Special Regard on the Late Sermons of Péter Bornemisza),” in *A Kelet ritka nyugalma : VII. Nemzetközi Vámbéry konferencia (The Rare Tranquility of the East. 7th Vámbéry International Conference*, ed. Mihály Dobrovits (Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 2010), 406.

⁴⁴² “Azért az nagy szaru az Mahumet vala, / És az pogán császár Mahumet szolgálja, / Az ő szeme, szája, tudománya, / A szent prófétákat melyvel megtagadja.” 329–32.

⁴⁴³ “A negyedik a rómaiaké, ki alatt a kis szarv, a török birodalma felnevekedék, ki a rómaiaknak nagy sok országokat és tartományokat elfoglala. Továbbá a keresztyén országokat Ázsiába és Európába igen megrontá, és bálványozóvá tevő, és sok káromló beszédek a Krisztus ellen tön, és most is teszen, kinek az ő hatalma mikort megtöretik, ottan következik az ítélet. De Istennek ez az ő akaratja, amint az írásban ki vagyon jelentvén, hogy e török által annak előtte a bálványozásért minden keresztyén országokat megrontson.” István Székely, *Chronica ez világnak jeles dolgairól*, Krakko, 1559, 47r.

⁴⁴⁴ “Azért immár a Római birodalomnak az utolja fele vas, ez a török, fele pedig ágyakból csinált, ez a német, de a vas mindenkort megrontja az ágyakból csinált állatot.” Székely, *Chronica*, 44v.

Ottomans is part of God's plan to fulfill the scriptures. The sermons of the Antitrinitarian György Enyedi⁴⁴⁵ reflect the presence of the Ottomans the same way, but these texts are more realistic about the duration of this situation, making a parallel of Old Testament and current Hungarian histories: *"Then Suleyman defeated Hungarians at Mohács, took people into captivity and cut down many of them. But he did not remove the king from Hungary and John Szapolyai from Transylvania. Nabuchodonosor was sent away from Babylon, and Joachim was taken away with all the treasures of Jerusalem and with main dignities. Sedechias became the king and he had to take an oath of loyalty and swear the he would never be allies with his enemy, the Egyptian king. Almost the same manner: when John died, forces of the Turkish emperor came from Constantinople and took Hungary and Buda, and took Bálint Török as a captive. But he left a king with us with whom he made an alliance, and ordered him not to become allies with his enemies."*⁴⁴⁶

Making parallels of Jewish and Hungarian histories had been part of the so-called Wittenberg tradition that was formed around Luther and Melancthon, and spread by the numerous Hungarian alumni of the university of Wittenberg. The concept has scriptural roots, and regards the Bible as a source of collective identity, a prefiguration of God's relationship with His people.⁴⁴⁷ There are many examples for Old Testament and current comparisons across Europe, referring to important centers, for instance, Geneva, as the new Jerusalem.⁴⁴⁸ A well known example from vernacular Hungarian histories is András Farkas's *On the Jewish and Hungarian nations*, that similarly to the previous example by Székely, also identifies Nabuchodonosor as the means of God to punish the

⁴⁴⁵ On the Old Testament – Hungarian parallels of Enyedi, see Borbála Lovas, "Erkölc és identitás. Pogányság és kiválasztottság Enyedi György prédikációiban (Morals and identity. Paganism and electedness in the sermons of György Enyedi)," in *Identitás és kultúra a török hódoltság korában (Identity and culture in Ottoman Hungary)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2012).

⁴⁴⁶ "Addig Szolimán megveré a Mohács mezején a magyarokat, elvivé rabságra a föld népét és sokakat le is vágata bennük. De azért engedelemből királyt hagyta Magyarországbán s Erdélyben, Szapolyai Jánost. Nabukodonozort ismét elküldé Babilóniából és Joachimot elvivé a jeruzsálembeli kincessel és fő-fő emberekkel együtt. Sedechiást tevő királlyá és megesketé, hogy neki hű lenne és az egyiptombeli királlyal - ki neki ellensége vala - ne cimboráljon. Szinte így: Mikor János király meghala, ismét eljőve Konstantinápolyból török császár ereje és Magyarországot, Budát elfoglalá, Török Bálintot rabságra vivé. De azért hagyta ismét királyt közöttünk, kivel frigyet köte, hogy az ő ellenségével ne barátkoznék, erősen meghagyá." *Az Első tanulásról*, in *Enyedi György válogatott művei*, ed. Mihály Balázs and János Káldos (Bukarest: Kriterion, 1997), <http://mek.oszk.hu/08700/08787/08787.htm>, last accessed: 26/04/16.

⁴⁴⁷ Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 118.

⁴⁴⁸ Comparisons also manifested in grammatical works and literature – e.g., in Hebrew dedications of works. Graeme Murdock, "A Militant and Expectant Faith," in *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 261, 264.

Jews for their sins. The explicit parallel is present in the fifth part of the work: *“Finally he took on us / the unfaithful Turkish emperor with his pashas, / As to the Jewish people and Jerusalem / He took Nadugodonozor before: / We are beaten and our country / Is burnt, demolished, plundered.”*⁴⁴⁹

At the same time, similarly to György Enyedi, Farkas does not believe that the acceptance of the situation would be against the will of God: the Turk is not the devil himself, the devil is the evilness of Hungarians.⁴⁵⁰ The work strongly involves the idea of consolation too, both on personal and national level,⁴⁵¹ and attributes losses of the clergy to the unfaithful Christian practices, drawing again an Old Testament parallel: *“There were songs in our chapels, / But no proper preaching of the holy writings, / Therefore he made lost our plentiful monasteries, / As the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.”*⁴⁵²

The idea that prophecies are part of history, and their fulfillment is inevitable because parts of the prophecy have been fulfilled already,⁴⁵³ is clearly visible in the following sermon excerpt from Péter Bornemisza, in which he draws a parallel between the death of Christ and the taking of Buda on the basis that both events were accompanied by irregular natural phenomena: *“And there will be trembling at certain places. This had happened when our Lord Jesus yielded his soul, and also after when he resurrected. In our times, the sun had lost its light before the loss of Buda in such a manner that people could see stars at noon, and such a quake occurred that pots fell from the shelves, and towers fell down, also in Buda and Pest, in my own house.”*⁴⁵⁴ The parallel also results in an intriguing observation in the references of authority. The first part of the parallel refers to the

⁴⁴⁹ Végezetre oztán miréjánk kihozá/Basáival az hitetlen török császárt, / Mint ah zsidó népre és Jeruzsálemre / Régen vitte vala az Nabogodonozort: / Minket es megvere és mi országunkat/Mind elégetteté, dúlatá, raboltatá. András Farkas, *Az zsidó es magyar nemzetről*, 217–222.

⁴⁵⁰ “God sent these things upon us, / Because of our sins and our evilness, / He beat us with pagan Turks from one side, / From the other, he beat us with Germans and their allies” (“Mindezek szállának istentől mireánk, / Bűnünk szerint és gonoszságunk miatt, / Egyfelől verete pogán törökökkel, / Másfelől némettel és ah sok pártolókkal.” 247–250.

⁴⁵¹ Dénes Dienes, “Farkas András A zsidó és magyar nemzetről című műve teológiája és kortársi párhuzamai (The Theology and Contemporary Parallels of On the Jewish and Hungarian Nations by András Farkas)” *Limes* 14, no. 3 (2001).

⁴⁵² “Mi kápolnáinkban voltak éneklések, / De ah szent írásnak nem volt predikálása, / Azért elveszteté sok monostorinkat, / Mint Jeruzsálemben ah Salamon templomát.” 225–228.

⁴⁵³ Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, chapter 5.

⁴⁵⁴ “És lesznek földindulások bizonyos helyeken. Ez akkor is meglelt, midőn Krisztus Urunk lelkét kibocsátta, és halottaiból feltámadott, és azután is. Mi időnkben is Buda veszedelme előtt az nap annyira elvesztette fényét, hogy délbe az csillagokat látnak, és oly földindulás lett, hogy az polcról az fazokak lehullnának, és az tornyok is romlanak, ott is Budán és Pesten az én házamba.” Péter Bornemisza, *Predikatioc (Posztillák)*, Detrekő, 1584, DCCVI r. 25. Úrnapi evangéliom Szentháromság nap után (25. Gospel of the Lord’s Day, after the day of Trinity)

Bible, while the second to the firsthand experience of the author, making both references adequate for readership to be accepted as true.

Another sermon of Bornemisza, accompanying the Lord's Day Gospel, describes in detail the witnesses of the Apocalypse, among them the Turks: "*And that day would come with such glory and power, together with all the saint angels, that all this world would fall into wonders looking at it, they would shut their mouths, everyone, Jews, Turks, Christians, all languages, every nation, even the devils, and the saint angels would bow and bend in front of him.*"⁴⁵⁵ The Last Judgment is a recurring topic in vernacular song literature as well. Relying on medieval origins, the *dies irae* literature has a scriptural basis, and is of central importance in Protestant historiography. The historicity of apocalyptic events, in accordance with the most fundamental ideas of the Reformed churches, relies on the Bible, as the source of history, therefore its authenticity is unquestionable. A vivid description of the day is from Lőrinc Vajdakamarási – known for his radical chiliasm even within Antitrinitarianism⁴⁵⁶: "*The dreadful punishment of God, / Will be seen then by cruel nations, / When they arise from the ashes of the ground, / And go to eternal tortures with the unfaithful.*"⁴⁵⁷ Similarly to many religious texts, the work mentions unidentified enemies, not highlighting the Turks explicitly.

The interpretation of the presence of the Ottomans, seeking for the reasons of their emergence and success was a vital issue for religious narratives. The most obvious argument known from historiographical sources – and the most important of them, the Bible⁴⁵⁸ – is that God is punishing people for their committed sins. In the interpretation of Protestant writers, if the Turkish emperor is

⁴⁵⁵ "És úgy jő el nagy dicsőségvel, nagy hatalommal, minden szent angyalokkal egyetembe, hogy mind ez világ elálmélkodik reá nézve, száját minden befogja előtte, mindenek, zsidó, török, keresztyén, minden nyelv, minden nemzet, még az ördögök is, a szent angyalok is, leborulnak, meghajolnak előtte." Bornemisza, *Posztillák*, DCCIX v. 26. Gospel of the Lord's Day, after the day of Trinity.

⁴⁵⁶ Discussed by Gizella Keserü in her presentation "The use of Turkish in Transylvanian Unitarian literacy at the turn of the 16–17th century" at the workshop "The Christian Turks." Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman–Habsburg Contact Zone, CEU 23–24 May 2014.

⁴⁵⁷ "Szörnyű büntetését az nagy Úristennek, / Akkoron meglátják az kegyetlen népek, / Az földnek porából mikoron felkelnek, / Az hitetlenekkel örök kínra mennek." Vajdakamarási Lőrinc, *A jövődő rettenetes ítélet napjáról*, 36–40.

⁴⁵⁸ The "scourge of God" concept originates from the Book of Isaiah 10, where God punishes Israel with the Assyrians. Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies," 138.

the punishment of God, the renewal of the church is indispensable.⁴⁵⁹ After the establishment of this argumentative tradition, the idea was reflected more or less in a unified manner. To give a few examples that demonstrate the collective nature of the concept by diverse texts and discourses, I would cite first Gáspár Károli, the translator of the Bible into Hungarian, who explicated divine punishment in the following: *“Therefore as Hungary too, with all of its kings had been and is in such a great misadventure that the Turks took away and demolished our good towns and castles, and they openly raided our country, and we are ill-named and hated among all nations, which all is not a result of history and bad fate, but of this. Because as against the Jews, the same manner God took arms against us, raised his arms against us, and put against us his weapon, he called on us the Turkish emperor of Constantinople. Because as Jeremy says, as Nabogodonor is the servant of God to punish the Jews, the same manner, the Turkish emperor is the servant of God to punish the Hungarian nation.”*⁴⁶⁰

One may encounter a diverse pattern of the “scourge of God” idea while surveying reference and representational patterns of the Turk as the mean of God’s will. The basic concept was that the arms of the Turks are identical with God’s scourge: *“The arms of the Turk grew so great, / So that God would scourge with that rightly.”*⁴⁶¹ In Bornemisza’s sermons, a historical perspective of the idea is introduced, and is connected with the ‘pagans’: *“Against the whole world, Alexander, Attila, Tamerlanes, the people of the Turkish sultan, and others, as these called themselves the scourge of God, although they were pagans.”*⁴⁶² In another sermon, Bornemisza adds the idea of predestination to the concept: *“God let his chosen captains do their jobs that He predestined them to do, such as*

⁴⁵⁹ Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 119.

⁴⁶⁰ “Hogy azért immár az Magyarország is mind az királyokkal egyetembe ilyen nagy szerencsétlenség alatt volt és vagyon, hogy országunkat az törökök elvették, jó városinkat, várainkat elvették és elrontották, hogy országunkat szabadon rabolják, hogy immár minden népek közt nevezetese és utálatosok vagyunk, ez bizony történetből és az szerencse forgásából nincsen, hanem innét vagyon. Mert mint az zsidók ellen, azonképpen miellenünk az Isten fegyverközzel fel és vonta reánk az ő kezívét, ő eresztette reánk az ő fegyverét, ő támasztotta reánk az konstantinápolybéli török császárt. Mert miképpen Jeremiás mondja, hogy az Nabukodonozor Isten szolgája az zsidóknak büntetésekre, azonképpen bizony az török császár Isten szolgája az magyar nemzetségnek büntetésére.” Károli, Gáspár, *Két könyv...*, Debrecen, 1563, f6. See also Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier*, 266.

⁴⁶¹ “Török fegyvere lön ilyen hatalmassá, / Isten azzal méltán is ostorozá.” Ambrus Göröcsöni - Miklós Bogáti Fazakas, *Mátyás király históriája*, strophe 131.

⁴⁶² “Ez egész világ ellen, Alexander, Attila, Tamerlanes, török császár népe, és többek, az mint ezek magokat Isten ostorának nevezték, noha pogányok voltak.” Bornemisza, Posztillák, 20. Úrnapi evangéliom Szentháromság nap után, 20. Gospel of the Lord’s Day, after the day of Trinity, DCXXX r.

He chose the Turkish sultan to scourge us.”⁴⁶³ Further reasoning interpretations of the punishment of God show a great diversity, even within the frames of one work. The work entitled *On the causes of sufferings of Hungary* from Gergely Szegedi was a popular piece that was published multiple times, it was present in most of the sixteenth century Protestant song book editions. Among the possible causes of God’s trial, there might be the submission of people: “*They submitted themselves to the pagans;*”⁴⁶⁴ in connection with the prophets, the reason for punishment might be the love of God to his own people: “*They wrote that he scourges those whom he loves;*”⁴⁶⁵ and it may be means to find out who the true believers are: “*He puts us to the trial of our faith.*”⁴⁶⁶

As argued by the narratives, possible solutions to stop the scourge may be realized by various means: God can turn it away, to turn it against the pagans: “*Turn your anger to them, / So that they could not corrupt your church;*”⁴⁶⁷ God might turn benevolent towards his subjects after being convinced that they are going to keep strong against heresies.⁴⁶⁸ At the other hand, early reformed traditions required a rather passive attitude from believers: as God is the shield and refuge of the faithful, there is less need for active demonstrations of faith and participation of fights. This desired behavior is based on the early works of Luther and is present in Calvin’s *Institutiones*, too.⁴⁶⁹ The model relies also on the idea of predestination: “*if we were under Turks, under tyrants and under the deadly enemies of the Gospel, yet it is commanded us to submit ourselves unto them. Why so? Even because it pleaseth God.*”⁴⁷⁰ This idea, as it is going to be demonstrated, resulted in a wide variety of literary traditions that were built on self-reflections of sufferers.

⁴⁶³“Mind az Isten ő tüle választott hadnagyokat bírta azban az tisztben, azkire őket rendelte volt, az mint most török császárt is az mi ostorozásunkra.” Bornemisza, *Posztillák*, 23. Gospel of the Lord’s Day, after the day of Trinity. 23. Úrnap evangéliom Szentháromság nap után, DCLXXXIV v.

⁴⁶⁴ “Maga az pogánnak ők béholdultak vala;” Gergely Szegedi, *Magyarország veszedelmeinek oka*, 89.

⁴⁶⁵ “Hogy szereti, az kit megver, azt írták” Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶⁶ “Ő próbálni akar ezzel hitünkben,” Ibid., 29.

⁴⁶⁷ “Fordítsad rejájok te haragodat, / Hogy ne rontsák te szent egyházadat.” The Anonyms of the song book of Várad, *Cantio pulchra*, 27–8.

⁴⁶⁸ “Vess el rólunk ostorodat, mutasd pogánokon.” “Take your scourge from us and put it on the pagans.” János Petki, 307–8, 64; “Jól esmérjük bűneinket, minden tévelgésünket, / Kikért reánk erőstöttél minden veszedelmeket” Balázs Radán, *Háborúságnak idején való könyörgés*, 13–14.

⁴⁶⁹ Imre, “*Magyarország panasza*,” 167, and Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 57 refers to Calvin’s *Institutes*: “...if we were under Turks, under tyrants and under the deadly enemies of the Gospel, yet it is commanded us to submit ourselves unto them. Why so? Even because it pleaseth God.”

⁴⁷⁰ Murdock, *Beyond Calvin*, 57.

3. 1. 2. Lamentation Traditions

Survival strategies offered by religious texts involve Biblical figures as models. The formation of these ideals was also based on the Wittenbergian idea that sought clues in the past for the interpretation of the present, and encouraged endurance of the present and reliance in the future. Such Biblical figures were Gideon⁴⁷¹ from the Book of Judges, Jonah,⁴⁷² Judith and Susannah, to mention only the most illustrious. The practice of putting ideals for the audience with time developed into a sovereign subgenre of historical songs in Hungarian literature, the genre of Biblical songs. The first examples of this type appeared in the first years of the 1540s, probably without a direct connection between them.⁴⁷³

One of the the most frequently referred-to characters in these works is Gideon, whose figure places Muslims on the scene of Biblical world history, as he is the one who saved the Israelites from the sons of Ishmael, son of Hagar, the forefather of Muslims (Midianites and Ishmaelites seem to designate the same people, according to Judges 8.22 and 24).⁴⁷⁴ Gideon chased Ishmaelites into the desert, but they are prophesied to come forth again as God's punishment. András Batizi's *Az drága és istenfélő vitéz Gedeonról szép história* (1540) is one of the first examples of biblical histories. Argumentation of the work relies on the parallels of Old Testament Jews and present-day Protestants, while the didactic part of the work mentions other biblical figures: God will save true believers such as Jonah (and because of his mediation, the whole city of Niniveh) or Susannah.⁴⁷⁵ By the end of the sixteenth century, the solidification of the tradition of referring to Biblical ideals and the emergence of works of more personal character allowed the utilization of figures to express parallels between positions of authors and ideals. Ferenc Wathay, who was in captivity in Istanbul

⁴⁷¹ András Batizi, *Az drága és istenfélő vitéz Gedeonról szép história*, 1540.

⁴⁷² András Batizi, *Jónás prófétának históriája*, 1541; Ferenc Wathay, *Song (IX/12)*.

⁴⁷³ The first such songs were Batizi's Vitéz Gedeon and the Judith story of Tinódi. Tibor Klaniczay, ed. *A magyar Irodalom Története I.*, (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1964), 344.

⁴⁷⁴ Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies," 126.

⁴⁷⁵ Batizi, *Az istenfélő Zsuzsanna asszonnak históriája*, 1541, 237–240: "Ezt az nagy úristen nekünk megíratá, / Hogy ő az igazat soha el nem hagyja, / Ő benne bizóknak megszabadítója, / Minden szükségben őket őtalmazza." Batizi, *Jónás prófétának históriája*, 1541, 189–192: "Ninive városát az isten megtartá, / Hittel, jámborsággal mert ő hozzá hajla, / Ha mi is hiendünk a Krisztus (Jézus)ban, / Ő nagy hatalmában megtart mi hazánkban."

in the first decade of the seventeenth century, compared his situation to prophet Jonah.⁴⁷⁶

Jeremy, being both a Biblical hero and the founder of the genre of lamenting songs, was a central character in our sources. Lamentation seems have a central position in vernacular Hungarian song poetry. Distinctively, the persecutor of God's punishment is the "enemy" in these texts, with few examples of more concrete categorization: "pagans" are mentioned as villains only a few times.⁴⁷⁷ A central feature of lamenting songs was that focus of the narration is on the speaker and his audience: the most comprehensively articulated elements even of the greatest hardship are manners and effects of divine punishment. Formally, taking into consideration the iso-nature of the poems, that is, repetition and frequent use of formulas, one notices the excessive use of the expression "scourge of God," in all conjugational forms of the word.⁴⁷⁸

In the vernacular Hungarian, one of the earliest literary compositions, the song of András Vásárhelyi about the Virgin Mary from 1508 involves lamenting and prays for forgiveness and divine presence: "*Our life is woeful, / Our sins are horrendous, / Our faults are dreadful, / If you will not come to be our saviour.*" The text also denominates Mary as the "bane of Turks."⁴⁷⁹ As we see, despite the fact that the text is obviously Catholic, it uses the same argumentative structures that was developed by Protestants decades later – giving evidence of the similarities of arguments and the circulation of topoi between diverse eras, traditions and confessions.

Jeremiad, the most essential form of lamentative literature, constitutes an integral part of congregational song books,⁴⁸⁰ the most widespread form of Protestant song collections and

⁴⁷⁶ "Please God, make this whale disgorge me." "Isten, ez cethallal, okádtass ki, kérlek." (IX/12).

⁴⁷⁷ According to Péter, "A felekezetek felett álló Magyarország," 18, 79% of popular songs had a lamenting topic.

⁴⁷⁸ "Az te népeidet uram immár szánd meg, / Az te ostorodat tőlünk immár vond meg." "Pity your own people, Lord, / And take away your scourge from us," István Barát, *LXIX. Psalmus*, 41–42.; "Sok ostorral ver minket az isten, de semmit nem félünk, / Sáska, döghalál, török, vendég nép uralkodik rajtunk." "God scourges us by various means, but we are not afraid, / Locusts, plague, Turk, foreign nations rule over us." András Szkhárosi, *Az istennek irgalmasságáról*, 1546, 23–26.) In this case, the Turks are equalled with the biblical plagues.

⁴⁷⁹ "Siradalmas nekünk mi életünk, / Iszamandó mi sok vétkezetünk, / Rettenetes nekünk sok eszetünk, / Ha te nem lész mi nagy segedelmünk," "Terekeknek megnyomorojtója" András Vásárhelyi *Éneke Szűz Máriához*, (Song to Virgin Mary), 1508, 36–40 and 60.

⁴⁸⁰ The most prominent example of song book compilations is the one published in Várad in 1566. The collection has ties with the vernacular versions of Catholic ritual books (graduals), which influenced later Protestant song books, and although the book itself was made for literates and clergy (thus, for a limited readership), it contained works for a wider audience, too. Fekete, "... vyonnán oregbitetek, es emendaltattatak...", esp. 261–2. See also Csomasz Tóth, *A magyar református gyülekezeti éneklés*, 139.

accordingly, which express sufferings and lamentation directed towards the church and its members. István Szegedi Kis's work, as its title states (*The woesome lament of the church*)⁴⁸¹ is focused on the miseries of the church. The song was present in numerous Protestant song books from 1569 until 1808, and focuses on the position of the Protestant church stuck between Catholics and Islam, complaining about enemies of the Church who cannot tolerate Christ: "*From one side, saintful virtuous people surround us, / From the other side, we are surrounded by a foreign nation, / Who ridicule the service of Christ.*"⁴⁸² As we see, the critique of the church's enemies focuses on their unfaithful, untrue nature. Quite antagonistically, from the one side, it complains about mocking, but on the other, the narrative uses the very same technique to ridicule the enemies. Ridicule is used as a tool to criticize Catholics in the work of András Szkhárosi, entitled "*On two kinds of faith*," which presents Catholic "idolatry" so mockable that it is a subject of laughter even of the pagans: "*Oh, what a shame it is for Christians, / That they cannot wake from such a blindness, / Alas, even the pagan Turks laugh at / That the God of Christians is a trunk.*"⁴⁸³ The narrative also operates with the topos of shamefulness as an argumentative tool.

Miseries of the church may be interpreted as the most abstract level of miseries. The next level is "querela Hungariae," the miseries of the whole country as a religious community. The *querela* tradition was born in Latin humanist circles after the Battle of Mohács, nurtured in Wittenberg under Melancthon and his disciples,⁴⁸⁴ and flourished in Hungary in various forms, finding its way into all genres (epics describing the losses of castles; epitaphs) of vernacular literature as well. The concept was strongly connected to the self-identification of the country as *antemurale*, i.e., the shield of Christendom, that was based on antique and medieval religious paradigms, and was a central notion of humanist discourses about the advancing of the Ottoman Empire towards Europe. Protestantism took a turn in this discourse and added the element of "scourge of God" for the sins of

⁴⁸¹ István Szegedi Kis, *Az anyaszentegyháznak siralmas panaszkodása*, 4.

⁴⁸² "Egyfelől környölünk a szent érdemesek, / Másfelől környölünk idegen nemzetség, / Kiknek a Krisztusnak szolgálni nevetség." 7–9.

⁴⁸³ "Oh mely szemérem ez az keresztyéneknek, / Hogy ily nagy vakságból fel nem ébrülhetnek, / Lám pogán törökök mind azzal mevetnek, / Hogy istenek tőke az keresztyéneknek." *Kétféle hitről*, 1544, 265–68. See Csepregi, *A reformáció nyelve*, 257–59.

⁴⁸⁴ Imre, "Magyarország Panasza," 7–9.

the community to the idea. In Hungary, according to Mihály Imre, Mohács signifies a turn also in the sense that the battle indicated a turn towards the glorious past in the propugnaculum concept – *fertilitas Hungariae* – to oppose the current, miserable situation in a more dramatic manner.⁴⁸⁵

A great part of lamenting songs in congregational song books focus on the descriptions of Ottoman campaigns and wars. These representations involve a wide range of recurring topoi, such as the killing of infants and abduction of virgins. These topoi, which had also been present in crusading literature,⁴⁸⁶ recur at descriptions about the siege of Constantinople, and found their ways into humanist, Protestant and vernacular literature. To bring up the probably most influential source of Hungarian authors, Luther claimed that the Turks were violent torturers of women and children.⁴⁸⁷ Although one cannot deny factual losses, injuries, murder and torture, from the literary point of view, these narrations are rather generalistic: “*Pagans caused a great peril in our country, / Many of us were killed and countless were taken, / We are chased out from our country, they caused us misery. // Great lord, you did not send anyone to save us, / That would succeed to take power on the pagans, / You set on us enormous indigence from all over,*”⁴⁸⁸ wrote Balázs Radán in his versified wartime prayer. The same reasoning is present in Miklós Egri’s poem from 1594, but the “scourge of God” topos here was completed with the merits of the enemy (in this case, the Tatars): “*My lord, merciful father, look at your great disgrace, / As the enemy dishonours your country with great prideful words, / and will make fun of your losses easily. // They ride their prompt, quick horses all around, demolish all with their feet, / As a flaming thunderbolt suddenly descends from the lightning, / So suddenly they murder and demolish your believers.*”⁴⁸⁹

The next level of calamities focuses on the miseries of particular members of the congregation.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁸⁶ Norman Daniel, *The Islam and the West. The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1993), 154. refers to Riccoldo.

⁴⁸⁷ WA 30/II:162, cited by Miller, “Luther on the Turks and Islam,” 191.

⁴⁸⁸ “Veszedelmet az pogányok országunkban tévének, / Sokat bennünk megölének és szántalant elvivének, / Országunkból kiűzének, nyomorúságot rajtunk tévének. // Senkit nekünk ótalmunkra hatalmas úr nem támasztál, / Hogy ki venne győzödelmet, pogányokon hatalmat, / Keménységes nagy inséget mindenfelől reánk támasztál.” Radán Balázs, *Háborúságnak idején való könyörgés*, 16–21.

⁴⁸⁹ “Uram kegyelmes Atyánk tekints meg nagy gyalázatotat, / Mert az pogánság nagy kevély szóval csúfolja hazádat, / És nagy édesen majd megtréfálja hatalmas károdát. // Serény, gyors lován tétova nyargal, lábaival minden ront, / Mint villámlásból hirtelen leszáll tüzes mennyütő kű, / Így nagy hirtelen véletlen rontja, öli híveidet.” Miklós Egri, *Az magyarországi eklézsiának keserves panasza*, 1594.

Although this level is more earthly and physical, these sufferings are still part of the religious discourse. The faithful turn to God and pray to him to be merciful, however, narration involves particular historical and individual references: “*Lord, be merciful in my miseries, / As you know well our position in our lands, / In our heritage from our fathers. // Fleeing is our fate in this world, / Running from one place to the other, / Mockery from our friends. // Rightly they say that God scourges us, / Our valuables were given to the Turks, / They force us to flee aimlessly.*”⁴⁹⁰ In this case, the tone of the narration is more personal, referring to personal miseries and losses of the community.

A close relative to the Jeremiads, the song of Gergely Szegedi⁴⁹¹ describing the devastation of the Tatars in Hungary (who were supporting the great campaign of Suleyman⁴⁹²) paraphrases the thirteenth-century Latin memoir of Rogerius about the Mongols.⁴⁹³ As the first line testifies (“*God regrets the devastation of his faithful*”⁴⁹⁴), the narration is directed towards God from the believers as a group, who are all affected by the miseries, from young to the elderly: “*One misery is followed by the other, / reaching big and small evenly (...) They do not respect the pious elderly, / Do not pity the infants at all (...) They do not have mercy on child bearers (...) They seduce and slaughter beautiful young virgins.*”⁴⁹⁵ Infanticide and defloration are recurring topoi at descriptions of warful times, and have roots in Biblical (most importantly, the Psalms and the Gospel of Matthew), classical (Herodotos), and patristic traditions (Pseudo-Methodius).⁴⁹⁶ Giving evidence about this

⁴⁹⁰ “Uram, légy te kegyelmes veszedelmemben, / Nám jól tudod mint voltunk mi földünkben, / Mi atyánktól maradott örökségben. // Reánk szállott ez világon az bujdosás, / Egyik helről másik helre nagy futosás, / Barátinktól éktelen hurrogatás. // Bátron mondják az Isten hogy ostoroz, / Jóságinkat törököknek elosztotta, / Ómagokat téstova búdosztatja.” Orbán Battyáni, *A háborúságnak szenvedéséről való ének*, 1547, 22–30.

⁴⁹¹ Gergely Szegedi, *A magyaroknak siralmas éneke a tatár rablásról*, 1566, 8–14.

⁴⁹² Crimean Tatars covered the camp of besiegers, helping the Ottoman troops to be able to remain united. Also, often it was the Tatars who were sent to destroy and sack the countryside (Montecuccoli, *Opere*, 508.) Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 38. See also Gábor Petneházi, “Kovacsóczy Farkas Feljegyzései (1563–1567) és a magyarországi kortörténetírás a 16. század derekán (Notes of Farkas Kovacsóczy (1563–1567) and Hungarian Historiography in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 118, no. 3 (2014).

⁴⁹³ Balázs Trencsényi, “Patriotism and Early Nationhood in Early Modern Hungarian Political Discourse,” in *Whose Love of Which Country?: Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses In Early Modern East Central Europe*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 507.

⁴⁹⁴ “Szánja az úristen híveinek romlását”

⁴⁹⁵ “Egyik veszedelem a másikat ott éri, / Hogy mind nagyot kicsint ily kíméletlen üti (...) Jámor vén népeket ők tisztelni nem tudják: / Az csecsemőket is egy szállyra sem szánják (...) / Az gyermekszülőkön semmit nem könyörülnek (...) / Gyenge szép szűzeket rontanak és vesztenek” (13–14, 37–38, 42, 49).

⁴⁹⁶ Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies,” 139.

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tradition, the text of Gergely Szegedi mentions Herod himself, among other negative Biblical protagonists (Nabuchodonosor; Holofernes; Antiochius; the pharaoh), creating a parallel again of Biblical and current Hungarian figures.

The Evangelical preacher András Szkhárosi Horvát incorporated this topos into his work about damnation (*Az átokról*, 1547) that has been identified as an early representative of emblematic poetry. The title refers to Deut. 28, encountering all possible bodily and spiritual sufferings of all social groups, detailing losses of valuables and properties, describing fleeing of people and their being ridiculed by other nations. This part is worthy to cite in more length, as it provides the most elaborate summary of topoi-like, scriptural-based imagery and ideas about the activities of Ottomans and their allies: *“God leads on you a nation from faraway lands, / Whose language you won’t understand, a greatly cruel nation, / Who would not respect the elderly, / And will not pity the loss of infants. // Their people will eat up all the fat of your cattle, / All the fruits and crops of your land, / Will not leave you any wheat or wine, nor any cattle, / Cut down your oxen, flock of sheep. // Occupy your towns and strong castles, / Destroy your towers and strong bastions, / Take away your power and empire, / Make you eat your own sweet children.”*⁴⁹⁷ The work, as part of the Wittenberg tradition, makes parallels with Old Testament events in an explicit manner (“Hungary falls into the captivity of Egypt”⁴⁹⁸), and elaborates while accounting the ten strikes of God in Egypt as a metaphor of Turks: *“The Turks are busy preaching from Buda, / With a load chattering they shout at us, like locusts.”*⁴⁹⁹

The topos of the miseries of young, elderly and virgins is present in two other Jeremiads that are published together from 1566, but probably were written shortly after the Battle of Mohács. They also compare Jewish and Hungarian histories. The topos is elaborated focusing on the tortures of

⁴⁹⁷ “Messze földről az úristen hoz tereád népet, / Kinek nyelvét meg nem érted, nagy kegyetlen népet, / Ki nem teszen tisztességet öreg embereknek, / Meg sem szánja veszedelmét a kis gyermekeknek. // Megemészti te barmodnak a nép minden zsíkját, / Te földednek ő gyümölcsit, mindenféle hasznát, / Nem hagy neked búzát, sem bort, semminemű marhát, / Levágatja ökreidet, juhodnak nagy nyáját. // Rejád szállja várasidat, erős váraidat, / Öszverontja tornyaidat, erős bástyáidat, / Ott elveszi hatalmadat és birodalmadat, / Megéti ott teveled édes magzatidat.” Szkhárosi, *Az átokról*, 1547. 77–92.

⁴⁹⁸ “Egyiptomnak rabságában esik Magyarország”, line 144.

⁴⁹⁹ “Am Budáról az törökök igen predikálnak, / Nagy zengéssel mint az sáskák mirejánk kiáltnak.” Szkhárosi, *Az átokról*, 177–178.

women (*“Our women are abducted, / Many virgins are seduced by pagans, / As we resisted the will of God, / So he sent the pagans on us”*⁵⁰⁰), and extended with the image of fornication.⁵⁰¹ The topos emerges in connection with tortures of others than the Turks, such the song of a certain Lőrinc, which was written in 1602, after the massacre of György Basti in Transylvania: *“They did not pity the elderly, / Cut down children, / Recently sprung youngsters, / Abducted beautiful virgins.”*⁵⁰² Furthermore, to refer to the more recognized form of tradition, the narrator claims that they are even worse than the “pagans”: *“They were so horrific, / Such that nobody have ever heard of, / Not even from pagans / How great were their sufferings.”*⁵⁰³

A close scriptural relative to Jeremiads, the Psalms, occupied a central role in Protestant poetry, taking their emphasized importance on congregation songs as a suitable genre for practicing personal devotion within communal frames. David’s Psalms were extremely frequently paraphrased and published in song compilations. These texts were centered around the notion of the enemy, drawing a parallel between the biblical David and the lyrical subject of the present. Members of the audience could easily associate themselves with the figure, and interpret the texts applied to their own situation. Usually, the “enemy” remains unnamed in these works, so that it could be applied universally to Turks, Catholics and whoever else. To mention a few representatives, Gergely Szegedi and Mihály Sztárai had many psalter translations, but confessional debates also addressed issues concerning the psalters, for instance, if they should be taken literally or metaphorically.⁵⁰⁴

Above I presented the diverse range of narratives that reflect on the presence of the Ottomans in religious contexts, each trying to explain the successes of the ‘pagan’ empire, and provide strategies for survival under the changed circumstances. In order to fulfill these concerns, one may say that religious texts relied strongly on apocalyptic traditions that were established on a scriptural basis,

⁵⁰⁰ “Az mű asszon népeink megaláztattanak, / Nagy sok szűzek pogánoktól megrontattanak, / Mert nem engedénk isteni parancsolatnak, / Azért Isten küldé rejénk az pogánokat.” Anonym: *Jeremiad*, 41–44.

⁵⁰¹ “Pagans cohabit with youngsters in an unnatural way,” “Természet kívöl élnek pogánok ifjakval,” line 53.

⁵⁰² “Nem szánák ők az véneket, / Levágák az gyermekeket, / Mostan cserdült szép ifjakot, / Megrútéták szép szűzeket.” Lőrinc, *Cantio ali az erdeli veszedelemről*, 21–4.

⁵⁰³ “Tőnek nagy iszonyúságot, / Kit emberi fül nem hallott, / Pogántul is nem hallottunk, / Kit szegények szenvedtenek.” 25–28.

⁵⁰⁴ Pál Ács, “‘Én fiam vagy, Dávid...’ A historikus értelmezés korlátai a 2. zsoltár unitárius fordításában (‘You Are My Son, David...’ Barriers of Historical Interpretation in the Unitarian Translation of Psalter 2.),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 112, no. 5–6 (2008), 633.

and the strategies they offered were modeled on the Bible, too, making Hungary an experimental scenery to apply the historiographical concepts that were worked out in Wittenberg.

3. 1. 3. Crusading

Concepts about the crusade formed a core element of all discourses about the Ottomans, especially after 1430, when the threat became obvious in Europe. Although the term was used in the same meaning as in the cases of earlier crusades, involving the same mentalities, symbols and rhetorics as in the case of campaigns in the Holy Land,⁵⁰⁵ the crusading message seemed to be more formulaic than intensely alive. In the Renaissance, as Norman Housley put it, “Religious warfare and *convivencia*, rejection and assimilation, were woven together into a composite social and cultural pattern.”⁵⁰⁶

All religious discourses, reformed or conservative, sought a religious justification for a military response to the Ottoman threat. Among them, it was the papacy that relied most intensely on crusading rhetoric, while after the disastrous defeat of a crusading attempt at Varna and harsh critiques of the papacy, humanists became also seriously involved in crusading argumentation.⁵⁰⁷ Reformers also contributed to the discourse of justification of religious warfare: Luther (in *Vom Kriege wider die Türken*, 1529) was making attempts to establish the legal and moral framework of making war and developed his critique of the papacy for the misuse of money raised for the crusades.⁵⁰⁸ In most reformed argumentations, the religious-historical justification for crusade came, evidently, from the Bible: in Exodus 32:26-8: Moses calls the sons of Levi to war, to commit a series of executions in the name of God.⁵⁰⁹ The passage was in circulation throughout the Middle

⁵⁰⁵ The stretch of the crusading terminology to the early modern era may be regarded as a “deconstructive” approach, however, as Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12 argues, crusades had a much longer impact than previously thought and its elements may be used in a wider historical context.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 14. See also Housley, ed. *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.)

⁵⁰⁷ James Hankins, “Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995), 115 and Norman Housley, “The Ottoman Threat,” in *The Later Crusades. From Lyons to Alcazar, 1274–1580*. (80–117. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 99.

⁵⁰⁸ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 85, and Housley, “The Ottoman Threat”, 88.

⁵⁰⁹ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 4 and 101.

Ages and preoccupied Calvin, too, who saw the forerunners of Protestants in the Levites.⁵¹⁰

For Hungary, the major continental military contact zone with the Ottomans and a stage of campaigns, was in the center of crusading concepts. In the Hungarian context, the idea of the crusade was connected organically to the concept of *antemurale*, and discourses about the “holy war” were present in narratives of various genres. The main difference, however, from earlier and contemporary Western crusading narratives that involved the idea of invasive crusading, was that Hungary had to accustom to a defensive crusade.⁵¹¹ In this manner, and also because for the papacy it was more advantageous to support a strong Central European power instead of organizing a crusade – these plans came the closest to be realized under Matthias, however, they failed eventually. The idea became anachronistic by the second half of the fifteenth century,⁵¹² and was certainly not a fundamental referential point of sixteenth-century vernacular discourses; however, some momentous events connected to the idea of crusade should be discussed briefly because of their influence on the forthcoming narratives. There were three major events that were actually called crusades before the Battle of Mohács⁵¹³ (although there had been Hungarian participation in the crusades against the Hussites in 1420–21): the 1444 battle at Varna that resulted in a defeat of John Hunyadi by Murad II; the defense of Belgrade in 1456, and the crusade of 1514.⁵¹⁴ The 1444 Varna battle became part of the tradition of creating a savior public image of the Habsburgs against the Ottomans.⁵¹⁵ Beyond other genres, the event was discussed widely in religious polemic literature: Luther discussed the battle to argue that crusading was an illicit form of fighting the

⁵¹⁰ Michael Walzer, “Exodus 32 and the Theory of Holy War: The History of a Citation,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 61, no. 1 (1968), 11.

⁵¹¹ Bak, “Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century,” 123.

⁵¹² Tibor Klaniczay, “A kereszteshad eszméje és a Mátyás-mítosz (Crusading Ideology and the Myth of Matthias),” in *Hagyományok ébresztése (Awakening Traditions)* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1976), 170–174, 181–185.

⁵¹³ Bak, “Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century,” 120–21.

⁵¹⁴ The holy army organized in 1570 by György Karácsony should also be mentioned in the context of crusading in Hungary. The endeavour resulted in a catastrophic defeat by an Ottoman garrison near Törökszentmiklós. Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier*, 13. On the role of humanists in the fights against Hussites, see Klára Pajorin, “Keresztes hadjáratok és a humanizmus megjelenése magyarországon (Crusades and the Emergence of Humanism in Hungary),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 110, no. 1–2 (2006).

⁵¹⁵ Sándor Öze, “A kereszties hadjáratok ideológiája és a Magyar Királyság az oszmán veszély kezdetétől a Habsburg védelmi vonal felállításáig (1395–1556) (Ideologies of Crusading Campaigns and the Kingdom of Hungary from the Beginning of the Ottoman Threat to the Establishment of the Habsburg Defense Line (1395–1556)),” in *Ot Nikopol Do Viena 1396–1683. Nikápolytól Bécsig 1396–1683. (From Adrianople to Vienna 1396–1683)*, ed. Hristo Matanov and György Arató, *Bulgaro-Hungarica* 5. (Sofia: Svjat. Nauka, 2008), 235.

Turks.⁵¹⁶

The successful defense of Belgrade in 1456, with the leadership of János Hunyadi and Giovanni da Capistrano, was a great achievement that allowed the crusading discourse self-justification, especially leading to victory against Ottoman forces (superior both in quality and quantity, for instance, heavy siege guns) lead by the sultan himself⁵¹⁷ an ad hoc army of defenders. The success was related to, apart from an unusual willingness from the *militia portalis* to participate in the combat, the effective interiorization of the crusading message of Capistrano by the fighters. Capistrano's preaching was imbued with previously known topics and stereotypes about the enemy – calling Mehmet a dog, or mentioning the day of Salvation, for instance⁵¹⁸ –, and the victory was also explained by requisite miraculous features. The fame of the defense was popularized in all possible manners to propagate further military alliance. As a consequence, for instance, in 1463, Pius II sent Matthias Corvinus the ceremonial sword that was given each Christmas to a Christian ruler who was expected to perform a successful campaign against the infidel.⁵¹⁹ The gesture was also an opportunity to remind rulers about the plans to form a new crusade with the participation of Matthias Corvinus, Burgundy and Venice.⁵²⁰

Another prominent example of a “transformed crusade” in Hungary was the Dózsa rebellion, when crusading terminology and ideology was turned against the nobles⁵²¹ by the army consisting of mainly militia portalis, i.e., peasants obliged to participate in campaigns. In this case, the nobles were identified with the traditional enemy, the *infideles*, i.e., the Turks⁵²² or yet in other words, the

⁵¹⁶ Housley, “The Ottoman Threat,” 88.

⁵¹⁷ Norman Housley, “Giovanni Da Capistrano and the Crusade of 1456,” in Norman Housley, *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.), 94.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁵¹⁹ As Pius II died the next year, the crusade was never realized. Housley, “The Ottoman Threat”, 108.

⁵²⁰ Housley, *The Ottoman Threat*, 108.

⁵²¹ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 69 and Norman Housley, “Crusading as a Social Revolt: Hungarian Peasant Uprising in 1514,” in *Crusading and Warfare in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 5 and 6., gives morefold reasons for the turn of the crusade, among them that the high taxes introduced from Matthias Corvinus was taken over by the magnates, but since his death, the role of oppida increased. On the ideological background of the revolt and the influence of Franciscan preachers, see Jenő Szűcs, “Ferences ellenzéki áramlat a magyar parasztháború és reformáció háttérében (A Wave of Franciscan Opposition in the Background of Hungarian Peasant Wars and Reformation),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 78, no. 4 (1974).

⁵²² Gabriella Erdélyi, “The Memory War of the Dózsa Revolt in Hungary,” in *Armed Memory. Peasant Revolts in Central and Southern Europe 1450–1700.*, ed. Gabriella Erdélyi (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 202, 206; Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 26.

lords were “turkified,” signifying a breakdown of functional lordship and putting crusade on a political level from the military one.⁵²³ One can also observe a disintegration of the crusading message.⁵²⁴ Similarly to the case of the defense of Belgrade, miraculous elements surrounded the interpretations of the crusade, providing divine approval to the crusade and messianic role of the leaders:⁵²⁵ for instance, a crucifix appeared in the crusaders’ camp, encouraging the fighters to hold on.⁵²⁶ At the same time, less than half a century later, the Dózsa crusade in Protestant historiography was depicted as an event of selfishness, a proof of corruption of everything that is connected to the Catholic church: “*forthwith, they left their campaign against the Turk and wanted to make their own country*” – wrote István Székely in his world chronicle.⁵²⁷ Negative value attribution and disappointment is present in Péter Bornemisza’s evaluation of contemporary crusades, too: “*Hence, who saw such a thing and where, that a holy army or a serving man would ever been truly an angel? ... Those old generals and nobles saw such a thing, who were accompanied by God in all their needs, according to His promise, and when they fought with their enemies, did not lose so many of their people and cattle, as Christian generals and captains of present times, whose fights caused the bitter loss of so many great countries, provinces, towns and borderlands, and the thrive of pagans in their empires day by day.*”⁵²⁸

3. 2. 1. The Ottomans as Muslims – Reflections

Attempting to grasp the actual knowledge and awareness of Islam in sixteenth-century Hungary, one comes across conflicting finds. Literary sources tell a lot about the presence of the Turks, but

⁵²³ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 145., and Bak, “Hungary and Crusading in the Fifteenth Century,” 116.

⁵²⁴ Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás?*, 45–8., and *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Housley, 11.

⁵²⁵ Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 100, 111.

⁵²⁶ ‘A great miracle which took place through the cross which a cardinal handed throughout the Land of Hungary against the Turks.’ A pamphlet from Antal Fekete Nagy, Victor Kenéz, and László Solymosi, *Monumenta rusticorum in Hungaria rebellium anno MDXIV* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1979) No. 227, cited by Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 99.

⁵²⁷ “...azonhelt elhagyják a törökre való igyeközetökököt, és országot akarának magoknak venni.” István Székely, *Chronica*, 1559, 225v.

⁵²⁸ “Avagy hol, ki látott valamikor Szent hadat, avagy oly szolgáló embert, ki teljességgel angyal volt volna? ... Láttak azok a régi szent hadnagyok és fő népek, kiket Isten az ő ígéreti szerént minden szükségben velek volt és mikor ellenségekkel meg vívtanak népeket és jószágokat nem ilyen gyakorta veztöttek, mint a mostani időkben való keresztény hadnagyok és kapitányok, kiknek hadakozások miatt ennyi sok szép országok tartományok, városok és határok veztent vesznek és a pogánok az ő birodalmakban napról napra öregbülnek.” Bornemisza, *Posztillák*, V. 476, referred by Óze, “A ‘kereszténység védőpajzsa,’” 108.

there are very few references concerning actual knowledge about the religion of the Turks, Islam itself. If we separate knowledge about doctrines from practice, we might find a bit more to discuss: there are some reflections concerning customs, and although sources are very scarce regarding theoretical knowledge, we find a few, and very specific, atypical texts. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate into the discussion a broader range of sources to be able to discuss these representative practices.

Medieval texts, as discussed above, detail apocalyptic expectations connected to various threats to Christendom. However, Islam in these narratives was described in terms of Christian theological knowledge, and typically, was presented as a *doctrina falsa et diabolica*;⁵²⁹ Mohammed as the root of the erroneous nature of Saracens, a trickster, a pseudo-prophet and a false idol, and eventually, the Antichrist, claiming himself to be a messiah; the Qu'ran as the corroboration of the Gospels;⁵³⁰ and Muslims, since the *Liber de haeresibus* of John of Damascus, were depicted as idolaters venerating the Ka'aba,⁵³¹ and were often associated with pigs and dogs because of their attributed uncleanness. Some aspects about the religious practice, in particular the dietary regulations of Islam, were discussed by Vincent of Beauvais, writing about the prohibition of eating pork and fasting.⁵³² These categories were used repeatedly, often in an overlap, and were applied also to figures of different contexts. Foci of images might have variations depending on the genre of the

⁵²⁹The expression is from Vincent of Beauvais, see Almut Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat: The Conceptualisation of Islam in the Rise of Occidental Anthropology in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space*, ed. Almut Höfert and Armando Salvatore (Multiple Europe 14. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2005), 44.

⁵³⁰Daniel, *The Islam and the West*, 303.

⁵³¹The Ka'aba was identified with the head of Aphrodite by John of Damascus (*Liber de haeresibus*, chapter 100), thus Muslims were not only heretics, but pagans, too. Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East. European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 224 and 236. The idea of Mohammed being a trickster and a false prophet originated from St John of Damascus, elaborated by works such as the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacques de Voragine, *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, or the *Vita Mahumeti* by Embrico de Mainz; Dante also presents Mohammed being a heretic in canto XXVIII of the *Divine Comedy* – however, Dante being one-sidedly negative towards Islam had been questioned and Dante's extensive use of the hadith and the motif of Mohammed's nocturnal journey was discussed in detail by M.A. Palacios and H. Sunderland, *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (Islam and the Muslim World. Cass, 1968.)

⁵³²*Speculum Historiale*, liber 23., cited by Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat", 44.

given text, emphasizing the “pseudo-historical,” “legendary” or “god” side of Mohammed and his believers.⁵³³

Hungary has had Muslim inhabitants since the foundation of the state,⁵³⁴ and although both written and material evidence about them are scarce, the existing records show a heterogeneous Muslim population, who migrated from different places in different times. These Muslims, as they were newcomers after the settlement of the borders and consolidation of the state, were settled along the borders and were in charge of defending the borderline; later, they were involved in trade and military service.⁵³⁵ Altogether, interactions of Hungarians with Muslims were restricted geographically and chronologically, and mostly occurred at the Eastern frontiers of the country, where immigrants entered the Kingdom and then settled. Muslims mostly had military and economic occupations, and are to be found often in royal service, thus they possessed special privileges and rights. However, although there is a lack of documentation of popular attitudes towards Muslims, according to existing records, they were often distrusted and were suspected of starting revolts. All in all, coexistence was both peaceful and inimical in the middle ages, and views about Muslims were based on, as a consequence of scarce actual contacts, imagined characteristics and long-existing topoi.

Hungarian sources are similarly fragmentary about Muslims before the Ottoman era – as Nóra Berend states: “Apart from real contacts with Muslims through a limited scientific interest, translations and the crusades, imagined characteristics played an important role in the formation of Christian views on Muslims.”⁵³⁶ Still, stereotypes that were sketched above became settled by the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, intertwined with the topos of the East being rich and luxurious, as many Muslims in Hungary were involved in the trade of salt and other goods. What concern the visibility

⁵³³ Theological treatises emphasized the pseudo-prophetic and apocalyptic nature, literature produced for entertainment introduced a “folklorized” version of the life events, focusing on the image of the trickster, and crusading literature addressed the “idol” nature of the prophet worshipped by Saracens. Micheline Di Cesare, “The Prophet in the Book. Images of Muhammad in Western Medieval Book Culture,” in *Constructing the Image of Muhammad in Europe*, ed. Avinoam Shalem (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013).

⁵³⁴ Muslims in Hungary may have come from the Khazar Empire, Volga Bulgaria, or the Balkans. Anonymus’s chronicle mentions that Muslims arrived during the reign of Taksony. Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 65.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 110.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 46.

of Islam, in everyday life in medieval Hungary, Muslims were not in a position to practice openly the rituals, customs and holidays connected to their religion. As a consequence, many regulations were not strictly observed (such as Arabic as a language of religious practice, dietary regulations, or Friday as a holy day), wrote Abu Hamid⁵³⁷ in the twelfth century.

In Western Europe, from the fifteenth century onwards, we can observe a two-layered knowledge of Islam. On the one hand, humanist histories strictly relied on medieval discourses and often propagated the prophet's arrogance. The extant humanist discussions on the religion of the Turks were based on medieval theological writings, and were often established after hearsay elements of the life of Mohammed; their aim was to present Islam as a heresy⁵³⁸ and to prove that it is based on trickery. On the other hand, one can detect a shift in the approach of narratives, with a gradual engagement into refutations, but the main objections of writings was political and not theological;⁵³⁹ theological dogma was substituted by other categories such as law, state, geography or life customs, and "religion" was used as a linguistic, national and moral term. As more directly observed knowledge became part of the discourses, more shaded opinions became circulated about the faith of the Ottomans: for instance, Salutati marked that "*they consider it a certainty that fighters for the Lord or his perpetual law are received into glory. To the extent they believe more firmly, they live more simply and less learnedly.*"⁵⁴⁰ A direct linking of Ottomans and Mohammed had turned up at the end of the sixteenth century, in an image by Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry, where the prophet is depicted in a distinctively Ottoman dress.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁷ Abu Hamid, 12th century, cited by Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 238.

⁵³⁸ Works were based, among others, on Hugh of Fleury, Guibert of Nogent and Sigebert of Gembloux. Ibid., 158 and 191. Such a work is Francesco Filelfo's letter to Charles VII of France from 1451.

⁵³⁹ Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, 5.; Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat," 55–7 and John V. Tolan, "European Accounts of Muhammad's Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, ed. Jonathan E. Brockopp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 232.

⁵⁴⁰ Epistolario, 3:209, written in 1397. Referred by Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, 57.

⁵⁴¹ *Acta Mechmeti I. Saracenorum Principis*, by Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry, 1597, Frankfurt, is a history of the Islamic dynasties, from Mohammed to the prophecies of the future downfall of the Ottoman Empire, cited from Alberto Saviello, "Muhammad's Multiple Faces. Printed Images of the Prophet in Western Europe," in *Constructing the Image of Muhammad in Europe*, ed. Avinoam Shalem (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 108.



Acta Mechmeti I. Saracenorum Principis, by Johann Theodor and Johann Israel de Bry, 1597, Frankfurt

Within the framework of the attempts to publish theological works in the vernacular, severe comments were made on the Qu'ran with the aim to refute its doctrines and to convert Muslims. To be able to study the primary text, several translations appeared by the 1540s:⁵⁴² among these, Guillaume Postel's⁵⁴³ partial translation imbedded in a larger commentary is the most neutral one, aiming for a compromise among religions; the narrative regards Muslims close to Christians. Protestant works, such as Bibliander's *Machumetis Saracenorum principis eiusque successorum vitae ac doctrina ipseque Alcoran* (1543, Basel), the most influential work for later scholars, relies more on the apocalyptic and apocrypha traditions of Ricoldo de Monte Croce (*Confutatio Alcorani*, around 1320) and regards the Turks and their religion dangerous. Bibliander's enterprise of publishing the holy book of Islam was regarded a suspicious and hazardous act for Christianity by

⁵⁴² Paganini published a version of the Qu'ran in Venice, 1530, but this one was burnt publicly by Pope Paul III. Mihály Dobrovits and Sándor Óze, "A Korán-cáfolat műfaja a közép-európai reformáció és katolikus reform eszmei fegyvertárában (The Genre of Quran Refutation in the Armory of Ideas of Central European Reformation and Catholic Reforms)," *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 10, no. 2 (2009). <http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/~egyhtort/cikkek/dobrovits-oze.htm>, last accessed: 26/04/16.

⁵⁴³ Book II of *De orbis terrae concordia libri IV*. Johann Albrecht van Windmannstatter's *Mahometis Abdallae filii theologia dialogo explicata* investigates similarities of Judaism and Islam, relies on secondary sources about the Qu'ran (probably Robert of Ketton). Ibid.

the council of Basel and the clergy, and its publication caused a scandal among theoreticians of religion. At the end, it got permission for publication from the city council only after the intervention of Luther himself. Still, reading the text itself was denied and condemned by most of the city council members.⁵⁴⁴ However, as the text indeed was the first primary source about Islam as opposed to the secondary, medieval literature and captive or diplomatic reports that had been available before,⁵⁴⁵ the denial of town and clergy prominents did not prevent the text from becoming popular in later centuries and form a basis of refutations of Islam even for Catholic scholars.

In their works, Protestant writers made attempts to eliminate presuppositions and superstitious knowledge about Islam. However, some of them still regarded Mohammed the Antichrist (e.g. Bibliander himself) because of his revolt against God and the orthodoxy of the Bible. Luther denied this identification,⁵⁴⁶ but nevertheless deemed Islam a false religion because of the denial of the divinity of Christ, and regarded the Qu'ran a weapon against Islam itself as it makes apparent the foolishness and shamefulness of Islamic laws.⁵⁴⁷ The main idea in critiques explicated by theologians was that there could be only one true religion, and all other religions stand in the way of the triumph of the true faith.

3. 2. 2. Religious Practices and Doctrines

In the Hungarian context, the term *musulmanus* had only appeared for the first time in the report of Georgius de Hungaria⁵⁴⁸ about the Ottoman Empire. Reports of captives and diplomats broke ground for knowledge not only about practices of daily life, but about religion, too; however, while dealing with these texts, it is indispensable to keep in mind that the authors of these narratives

⁵⁴⁴ Harry Clark, "The Publication of the Koran in Latin a Reformation Dilemma," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 1 (1984), 3–12.

⁵⁴⁵ On the Protestant interpretations of the Qu'ran, see Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation. Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa* (Beirut, 1995).

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 65–6.

⁵⁴⁷ Gregory J. Miller, "Luther on the Turks and Islam," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 189.

⁵⁴⁸ "Musulmanus, id est, Turcarum religione initiatus", and "Musulmanus, id est Circumciscus" – referred by Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat", 57.

described customs and rituals using their own religious categories.⁵⁴⁹ While describing doctrines and practices of Islam, the *Tractatus* of George of Hungary gave an unusually positive assessment, but according to the final remarks of the text, the value attributions take a turn to illustrate Islam is as a religion of trickery that uses its virtues to mislead and demolish true Christian believers; therefore, George emphasizes the role of internal faith as opposed to external rites.⁵⁵⁰ In accordance with Luther's foreword to the *Tractatus* that accentuates the common features of the papacy and the Turks, both of them are good only at their appearance.

György Szerémi's memoir from the middle of the sixteenth century recounts the attributed relationship of the Ottoman court to Jesus and Mary, using the figures to justify Ottoman campaigns to Hungary: "*When the emperor of the Turks heard that Hungarians force their churches to pay taxes, he said: They made Jesus Christ, whom they believe to be god and man, their own enemy, and made him stand against them. (...) This is what the emperor of the Turks said: I want to take revenge for Jesus the prophet, because Hungarians made a great offense on Jesus, the son of Mary, whom they call Christ; our prophet Mohammed ordered us to respect him, as he is a prophet and there is no other prophet like him.*"⁵⁵¹ These excerpts depict the sultan being clearly aware of his role as the "scourge of God," which is quite an innovative narrative turn.

Protestant traditions of reflecting on the vain nature of Islamic rites⁵⁵² (such as prohibition of eating pork, circumcision and washing) were based on Luther, who condemned also other elements of Muslim religious practice, as the *shahada*, which was regarded by him a device of the devil. Luther connected the practice of fasting with the heretical nature of Islam, and declared fasting untruthful and unnecessary, since its practitioners do not follow the true religion anyway: "*You can be sure that God prefers if you eat and drink as a faithful man, and not those who fast without faith;*

⁵⁴⁹ Orsolya Varsányi, "Pázmány Péter: A Mahomet vallása hamisságául (Péter Pázmány: On the Falseness of the Religion of Mohammed)," *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 112 (2008), 670 refers to Erik Fügedi, *Kimondhatatlan nyomorúság. Két Emlékirat a 15–16.sz. oszmán fogságról (Unspeakable Misery. Two Memoirs from Ottoman Captivity in the 15–16th Centuries)* (Budapest: Európa, 1976), 222–3, on Georgius de Hungaria: the vocabulary is from the Ottoman, but the concepts behind are European/Christian.

⁵⁵⁰ Miyamoto, "The Influence of Medieval Prophecies", 134; Nóra Berend (Cambridge University) "George of Hungary and Islam," read at the workshop "The Christian Turks." Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman-Habsburg Contact Zone. CEU 23–24 May 2014.

⁵⁵¹ *Epistola de perditione regni Hungarorum*, 1545–47.

⁵⁵² Miller, "Luther on the Turks and Islam," 187 refers to WATR 5:221 (no.5536)

he prefers the less disciplined behavior of the faithful as opposed to the many nice gestures of the unfaithful, and less prayers from the faithful than many prayers from the unfaithful.”⁵⁵³

A similar idea is present in Péter Bornemisza’s sermon collection, judging the unfaithful nature of certain practices: “*They also fast now and then, but then guttle, get drunk, overeat, get tipsy, they also give alms, but from their love of Christ, not for the faith in him, but for foolish heresy.*”⁵⁵⁴

Another rare reference about Muslim religious practices is Tinódi’s story about the siege of Eger, making satirical remarks: “*At dawn, they are whining, / Shout ‘Allah’ aloud.*”⁵⁵⁵ As the previous example of Bornemisza also demonstrates, unlike the more schematic notes about Islam in congregation songs that focus on the apocalyptic aspects of the Turks and their religion, there are more frequent comments on Islam in sermon collections and Biblical commentaries. In these works, one can observe a frequent association of Judaism and Islam not only because both are great enemies of Christians, but also on the basis of their similarities of dietary customs and other practical, more visible characteristics, for instance, the ban on certain representations.⁵⁵⁶

Accordingly, Péter Bornemisza’s sermon collection treats the major enemies of Christendom – Jews, Turks, Papists – under the same category, but among them, it is inevitable that it is the Catholics who are the worst. In an enumeration of greatest sins and enemies of a true Christian, Turkishness is mentioned as “crime,” illustrating the enmeshment of diverse substantial categories: “*Thief, Turk, Tartar, marauder, Gypsy, mugger, lustful, drunkard, offender, wrathful, perjurer, unjust ruler, idolater and all kinds of other wickedness.*”⁵⁵⁷ The work undoubtedly uses “Turk” both as a religious and political category. Bornemisza joins the argumentative practices of humanists of lamenting the losses that were caused by the advance of the Turks; however, he is annoyed about

⁵⁵³ “So bistu gewist, das Gott lieber hat Essen und Trincken ym Glauben, den Fasten on Galuben; lieber wenig ordenlich Geberde ym Glauben, denn viel schöner Geberd on Glauben, lieber venig Gebet ym Glauben, denn viel Gebet on Glauben” Luther, *Heerpredigt*, 187.

⁵⁵⁴ “Ők is böjtölnek néha, de azután barom módra zabálnak, isznak, torkoskodnak, és részegeskednek, ők is alamizsnát osztanak, de nem az Úr Jézus Krisztushoz való szerelmekből, nem ő benne való hitből, nem az ő nevébe, hanem azt is sok bolond tévelygésből.” Bornemisza, *Posztillák*, DCCXII r.

⁵⁵⁵ “Sivalkodással reggel hajnalba, / Felszóval vannak Allah kiáltásba!” Tinódi, *Egri históriának summája*, 245–246

⁵⁵⁶ “Monter, “Religion and cultural exchange, 1400–1700: twenty-first century implications,” 16.

⁵⁵⁷ “tolvaj, török, tatár, martalóc, cigány, lopó, parázna, részeges, szitkos, bosszonkodó, hamis törvénytevő, hamisan uralkodó, bálványozó, és akármilyen egyéb gonoszság” DCLXIII r. 23. Úrnapi evangéliom Szentháromság nap után (23. Gospel of the Lord’s Day, after the day of Trinity)

the losses of Christian towns, places of Christian teachings to idolatry, connecting Hungary with humanist traditions: *“What a huge spiritual and bodily harm was caused by only the Turkish sultan alone in this world: in such illustrious major towns where many were taught by the apostles, who were addressed by St Paul in plentiful gorgeous letters, are now under the darkness and demolition of the Turks. Constantinople had been a major seat of Christian rulers, where numerous, excellent, wise masters were found, and now there is devilish blindness. Hungary is also an example, where some servants of the Lord were killed by the idolaters, who were chased from Buda, Pest, Esztergom, Vác and Várad by the Lord God.”*⁵⁵⁸

Paying attention to demonstrate that he took his knowledge from firsthand experience about Islam, thus that his information is reliable, Bornemisza identifies his sources while discussing concept of “good shepherd” among the Turks: *“I heard some of the Turks speaking like this: Why would God need to be given a human pastor and shelter, when God himself is the shelter.”*⁵⁵⁹ To demonstrate that the rituals of Jews and Turks are false, the narrative argues that these rites were invented by the devil, and those who practice them are mocking God; and the devil’s deed that they persecute Christians. The text also criticizes Turks for not accepting the Son, and all in all, for rejecting the word of God. This passage is worth citing in length:

“The Turk circumcises himself, and prays, but not by the merits of Lord Jesus, neither because they are devoted to the true God, because those who deny the Son, also deny the existence of the Father. (Ioan:2) These foolish false believers, fallen from the word of God are numerous all over the world, because the Jews, the Turks, the Papists, by diverse and diverse means, are guided by human and devilish inventions, but being outside the word of God, they are all beyond reason and faith (Roman:10). Therefore, God is mocked and irritated by them even more. Beyond all this

⁵⁵⁸ “Ez egész világ szerte csak az török császár is mennyi lelki-testi romlást szerzett: az mely jeles fő fő városokban régen az apostolok sokakat tanítottak, kiknek Szent Pál sok szép levelt írt, most immár az töröknek setéségében és ostromlásában lakoznak. Konstantinápoly egyik fő lakóhelye vala az keresztyén fejedelemnek, holott jeles bölc tanítók lakoztak, most immár ördögi vakság benne. Példa Magyarország is, holott az Úrnak szolgálában egynéhányat a bálványimádók megölettek, kiket megint minden méltóságokkal egyetembe kiprerengéreztetete az Úr Isten, mind Budáról, Pestről, Esztergamról, Vácról, Váradról.” DCXXXI r. 20. Úrnapi evangéliom Szentháromság nap után (20. Gospel of the Lord’s Day, after the day of Trinity)

⁵⁵⁹ Az Úr Krisztusnak jó pásztorságáról (On Lord as the good shepherd): “Némely töröktől hallottam, hogy így szólt: Mi szükség ezféle emberi pásztort és oltalmat adni Istennek, ha csak ő maga az Isten az oltalmazó” CCLXXXI v.

blindness, the devil even made them to persecute the subjects of Christ (Ioan: 16), and even to kill them, because they think they can honour God in this manner.”⁵⁶⁰

According to Bornemisza’s conceptualization of rites of other religions, all rituals are means to disobey God, which are consciously practiced to mock him and his subjects: *“Not that they would respect, but they dishonour the merit of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, when they despise it, and put in front of God their infidel alms, circumcision, cleansing and other deeds for the remission their of sins.”*⁵⁶¹

The refusal of the divinity of Jesus is a crucial point in polemical writings and other narratives that deal with doctrines of Islam. András Batizi’s versified world chronicle criticizes Islam for denying Jesus and also for the violent spread of religion: *“These all tell words of blasphemy against God, / As they regard Jesus Christ only a human, / And they deny openly his divinity, / As they regard his salvation worthless. // And they fight against saints, / As we see it well, Christians fight, / And they are successful in every place, / As they demolish Christians everywhere.”*⁵⁶² The spread of Islam by sword, that is, jihad was discussed both by Bibliander and Luther,⁵⁶³ however, apart from the above passage, there are rare references to the issue in vernacular Hungarian sources.

Péter Melius’s commentaries to the Revelations of St. John regard Islam one of the three corrupted religions, with clear references to the Book of Daniel as well: *“Because there are three main divisions, three faiths, corrupted religions. The first one is the faith of the lions: that is, the faith of Chaldeans, Arabs, Turks, Chananeus, circumcised, together with the present Jews. This is the crown, kingdom, and empire of the Antichrist, such as the lion is referred by Daniel to be the*

⁵⁶⁰ “...török kimetéli magát, kik is imádkoznak, de nem az Úr Krisztus érdeme által, sem nem az igaz Istent imádgják, mert az ki tagadja az Fiút, annak Atya sincs. (Ioan:2) ezféle Isten igéjétől elszakadott bolond ájtatosok sokfélék ez világnak szerte, mert az zsidó, török, pápás külömb külömb móddal, de ördög, és emberi találmánnyal cselekesznek, de Isten igéje kívül lévén, értelem és hit nélkül valók (Roman: 10). Azért ezekből az Isten még inkább megcsúfoltatik, és bosszontatik. Mind ez vakságok felött az ördög erre is vitte őket, hogy az Krisztus szolgáit (Ioan: 16) kergessék is, és meg is öljék, az vélekedések alatt, hogy az Istent tisztelnék vele. DCCXII r.

⁵⁶¹ “Nem hogy tisztelné, de sőt gyalázza az Úr Krisztus áldozatjának érdemét, midőn azt megveti, és az helyett az ő hitetlen alamizsnáját, metélését, mosodását, és egyéb cselekedetét tossza Isten eleibe az ő bűnének bocsánatjára. DCCXVI v.

⁵⁶² “Ezek isten (ellen) káromlást mind szólnak, / Mert az Krisztus Jézust csak embernek mondják, / Az ő istenségét nyilván megtagadják, / Az ő megváltását semminek alítják. // És a szentek ellen ezek hadakoznak, / Mert im így jól látjuk keresztyének vínak, / Nagy jó szerencsével mindenütt ők járnak, / Az keresztyénséget mindenfelé rontják.” *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak tereméstől fogva az ítéletig való historia*, 333–340.

⁵⁶³ Viktor Segesváry, *Az iszlám és a reformáció (Islam and the Reformation)* (The Hague: Mikes International, 2005), 90 refers to the Concilium of Bibliander, 412. and *Vom Kriege* of Luther, 123.

Babylonians.”⁵⁶⁴ Regarding the genealogy of Turks, the text gives an intriguing ancestry line according to which Hungarians and Turks are related. In the same paragraph, Melius also recalls recurring topoi that are related to both of the nations, such as skills of horse riding and arrowing: “*This goy*⁵⁶⁵ *therefore is the Turkish empire emerging from Scythia. This one is the army of the Antichrist, all of them are bodily and spiritual enemies of the congregation. (...) Do not mean by that, therefore the priests of the Antichrist, the heretics, but the empire of the Turks, the sultans, that is, the goy, pagan emperor (...) as the Turks came from Scythia, from Magog. They came and descended from Thiras. Thiras was the son of Japhet. Magog is the father of the Hungarians, who is the second son of Japhet. Turks and Hungarians are children of the same ancient man. Gen. 10.1. Paral. 1. He says that the people of Gog have shields, horses, and arrows.*”⁵⁶⁶ The association of the ancestors of Turks and Hungarians is quite uncommon: there are examples on the relations of both Hungarians and of the Turks to Gog and Magog separately, but explicit kinship is an exceptional statement. The association of the two nations probably aims to propagate the idea that both Hungarians and Turks were the scourge of God,⁵⁶⁷ – thus, they should not be in an inimical relation, but be regarded as instruments in the final fight between good and evil. The Scythian origins of Hungarians and associations with the people of Gog and Magog were often recounted topoi in medieval chronicle traditions since the thirteenth century (as early as the *Gesta Hungarorum* of the Anonymous scribe of Béla III), present in the works of the humanist Antonio Bonfini, Matthias Corvinus’s court historian, and widely alluded in Protestant historiography as well. The genealogy is also present in András Farkas’s poem about the Jewish and Hungarian

⁵⁶⁴ “Mert főképpen ez három részre oszlott, három hit, hamis religio vagyon: Első az oroszlanok hiti: azaz az káldeusok, arabesek, törökök, Chananeusok, környülmételkedtek hiti, az mostani zsidókkal együtt: Az Antichristusnak ezeken vagyon koronája, királysága és birodalma, mint Dániel az oroszánt az babilóniaiakra érti.” 171 r–v.

⁵⁶⁵ Melius uses the word in the sense of ‘pagan nation’ (gój ethnos, azaz pogány nemzet) taken from the Jewish tradition, in the introduction, 8r.

⁵⁶⁶ “E Goy azért a Scithiából támadt török birodalom: E melyik az Antichristus serege, minden testi és lelki ellensége az eklézsiának. (...) Ne érts hát az sok Antichristus papjaira, eretnekekre: De ugyan az török birodalomra: A szultánokra azaz Goy, pogány az török császár: (...) mert az Magógból, Scithiából jöttek az törökök: A Thirastul jöttek és származtak: A Thiras volt az Jáfet fia: A Magóg a magyarok atyja, második fia Jáfetnek: Az törökkel az magyarok ősi egy ember gyermek: Gen. 10.1. Paral. 1. Azt mondja, hogy pajzsok, lovok, nyílok vagyon a Góg népének.” 263r–v.

⁵⁶⁷ Pál Ács, “Nagy Sándor kaukázusi kapuja. Góg és Magóg legendája a magyar történeti irodalomban (Gates of Alexander in the Caucasus. The Legend of Gog and Magog in the Hungarian Historiography),” in *Magyarország és Azerbajdzsán: Kultúrák párbeszéde. IV. nemzetközi tudományos konferencia II. Történelem, néprajz, folklór, irodalom, nyelvészet (Hungary and Azerbaijan: Dialogue of Cultures. IVth International Conference II. History Ethnography, Folklore, Literature, Linguistics)* (Budapest: Azerbajdzsáni Tudományos Akadémia – MTA, 2010), 28.

nations: the work originates Hungarians from the Scythians and describes them as pagans: “*Like animals, in blind paganism / They were living, adoring idols.*”⁵⁶⁸

On the other hand, figures of Gog and Magog were connected to the tradition of Alexander by Josephus Flavius, who was the first to present the legendary Macedonian ruler releasing the barbarian rulers from behind the Caspian gates, so that they could start their conquests. These figures were popular in all eras when people had more frequent contacts with groups whom they regarded “barbarians,” or in times when Europe was endangered by aggressive expansion.⁵⁶⁹ The tradition came forth in Europe at various instances: St Ambrosius identified the Gog and Magog with the Goths; the Mongols literally broke through the Caspian gates in 1236 and attacked Georgia, causing enormous and well-founded fears in the West.⁵⁷⁰ The Ottoman Turks were also often identified with Gog and Magog, especially after they occupied Constantinople.⁵⁷¹ From this time on, eschatological readings of the Ottoman campaigns dominated humanist and religious discussions in Europe, producing also images associated with the Turks and the figures of Gog and Magog. To provide an example, this image from the Lübeck Bible shows the destruction of Gog and Magog with evil forces dressed as Turks in the foreground (the besieged city had been interpreted as Vienna).⁵⁷²

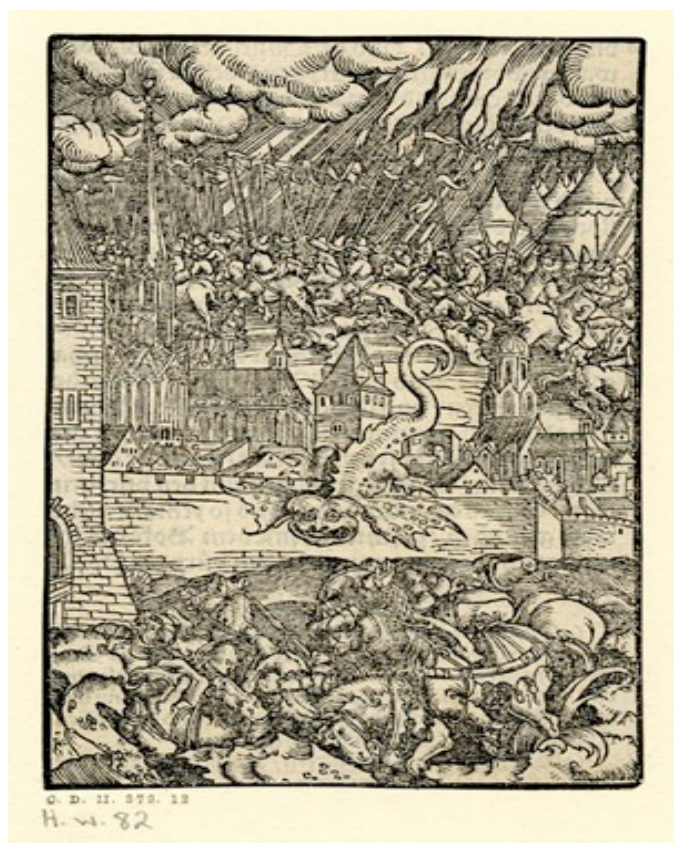
⁵⁶⁸ Farkas András, *Az zsidó és magyar nemzetről*, 1538, Pars III, 101–102.

⁵⁶⁹ Ács, “Nagy Sándor kaukázusi kapuja,” 13–20. Interestingly, the tradition is part of Islamic culture as well. See also van Bladel, *The Alexander Legend in the Qur’ān* 18:83–102.

⁵⁷⁰ Charles Burnett and Patrick Gautier Dalché, “Attitudes towards the Mongols in Medieval Literature: The XXII Kings of Gog and Magog from the Court of Frederick II to Jean de Mandeville,” *Viator* 22 (1991), 159–60.

⁵⁷¹ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 134.

⁵⁷² The destruction of Gog and Magog. Clipping from the Lübeck Bible. c.1530, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1423276&partId=1



Gog and Magog. Clipping from the Lübeck Bible. c.1530

Turks had been identified as descendants of Gog and Magog in Hungarian vernacular historiography as well. András Batizi's *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak tereméstől fogva az ítéletig való historia*⁵⁷³ identifies Ezekhiel as its source, and gives etymologies of the names Gog and Magog, emphasizing the similar customs of Turks with them, while the narrative also regards them an instrument executing God's will.⁵⁷⁴ To return once again to Péter Melius Juhász's commentaries to the Revelations of St John, in the introduction of the work, he identifies all pagan nations with people of Gog and Magog, recalling the prophecies of Daniel;⁵⁷⁵ in a later passage, he expands the field of meanings to all unreliable, untrue people – even to fellow Hungarian Catholics

⁵⁷³ *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak tereméstől fogva az ítéletig való historia*

⁵⁷⁴ "Szent Ezekhiel is ő rólok ezt mondja, / Gógnak és Mágógnak ő neveket mondja, / Az Góg annyit teszen mint sátorban lakó, / Az Mágóg peniglen sátor kívül lakó." "St Ezekhiel writes about them this, / He calls them Gog and Magog, / Gog meaning the one living in a tent, / Magog meaning the one living outside the tent." 341-344. "Azért az úristen ezt mondja felőlek: / Oh te Góg és Mágóg téged felkészítlek, / Én tégedet széllyel környül kerengtetlek, / De az te álladra én zabolát vetek." "Therefore God tells this about them: / Oh, Gog and Magog, I prepare you, / I chase you around all over, / But I put a snaffle to your cheek." 349-352.

⁵⁷⁵ "A Gógot és Magógot, azaz a török nemzetöt és minden pogányokat, mert zsidóul a gój ethnos, azaz pogány nemzet, a Magóg, id est, quasi gentilis." "Gog and Magog, that is, the Turkish nation and all pagans, as goy means ethnos in Jewish, that is, pagan nation, is the Magog, id est, quasi gentilis." 8r.

who lost their lives at the Battle of Mohács.⁵⁷⁶ As this passage attests, no matter how strongly Ottomans and Gog and Magog were associated, the association was not exclusive in the era. To give another example, András Dudith, an agent of the Habsburgs wrote about the armament of John Sigismund to Habsburg emperor Maximilian II: “*They say that Gog and Magog are going to attack your majesty,*”⁵⁷⁷ applying the symbol of devilish force to his own compatriot.

3. 2. 3. Turks as Beasts

Inhuman depictions of the Ottomans was also part of the discussions of regarding them as heretics. Animal symbolism of sixteenth-century narratives was partly inherited from medieval bestiary traditions, and after the Renaissance rediscovery and recognition of the antique symbol systems, the use of topoi connected to animal imagery played a distinctive role in the application and attribution of values and morals to certain groups. Medieval bestiaries were based on scriptural passages, very often on the Psalms⁵⁷⁸ – which constituted a fundamental source of imagery of the Reformation as well. The most often referred animals in connection with the Turks were foxes, dogs, wolves, and lions, but imagery creations, such as dragons were also part of the tableau.⁵⁷⁹

The symbol of the lion, is clearly of Biblical origin: in the Psalters, a lion is attacking from a hideout (Ps. 10,9; 17,12) and described to be cruel if hungry (Ps 22,14; 57,5). The same idea is present in a psalm translation of Mihály Siklósi: “*As the pagan nations, / Who are the enemies of your Word, / They surrounded us as lions, / They circumscribed your holy church.*”⁵⁸⁰ The

⁵⁷⁶ “Az hitlen és kegyetlen királyokat, urakat az Góg és Magóg népét, azaz minden hamis, kborló, dúló, parázna, sok kurvafi hadat az Isten levágtat: Mint Mohácsra, az koczcza hadat az Szent Gellért hegyen Budánál.” “Those infidel and cruel kings and lords, people of Gog and Magog, that is, all the false, wandering, preying, adulterer, numerous bastard crowds who were taken down by God: Such as in Mohács, or the army of Katziener [Hans von Katziener, Habsburg general, 1491–1539] at the foot of hill of St Gellert at Buda.” 253r.

⁵⁷⁷ “Azt mondják, hogy Góg és Magóg készülődik megtámadni felségedet” Ács, “Nagy Sándor kaukázusi kapuja”, 13–20.

⁵⁷⁸ Robin Raybould, *The Symbolic Literature of the Renaissance* (Victoria, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 180.

⁵⁷⁹ In the context of arguing that Christians are succeeded by the Turks because of their own dividedness, János Baranyai Decsi applied the image of a dragon to draw an expressive parallel: “Pagandom is strong, because it is united, / It is a one-headed dragon, who is feared by everyone, / It has many tails, as many countries follow it. // But this all is the reason of the weakness of Christians, / They have many heads, many rulers, / But have only one tail, with different pouches.” “Erős az pogánság, mert egyezséget követ, / Egyfejű sárkány ő, mindenek félük őtet, / Sok farkú, mert sok országok követik őtet. // De az körösztyének ezekért erőtlének, / Sok fejek önékik vagy, sok fejedelmek, / De csak egy az farkok, külömb-külobb erszények.” 178–79.

⁵⁸⁰ “Ime most minket az pogán népek, / Kik ellenségi az te szent ígédnek, / Mint oroszlanok környül vötenek, / Te

association is even more telling in the text of Péter Melius Juhász, who makes an explicit parallel between the Antichrist and the “sect of Mohammed”, involving also the image of the lion, while describing the 1566 campaign (that occurred only a year before the publication of his book):⁵⁸¹ *“As recently as 1566 the Tatars and the Turks invaded the land: Gyula, Sziget was taken by them: (...) As the Antichrist fights with a false spiritual weapon and teaching, and the camp of God, the congregation is surrounded, tricked and cheated by the pope, the sect of Mohammed the Antichrist, his hojas, dervishes, want to swallow it like the starving lion.”*

Dogs represent uncleanness and are often put as parallels to Muslims: the expression “Bluthund” frequently occurs in German *Neue Zeitung* / *Turcica* prints,⁵⁸² had been applied to sultan Mehmet by Giovanni da Capistrano,⁵⁸³ and was used by Georgius de Hungaria and Bartul Giurgievich as well.⁵⁸⁴ Wolves, implying the reknown story of the animal and the lamb, also frequently occurs in the sources. Around 1605, authors produced a considerable body of argumentative poetry in Transylvania, to discourage a possible alliance with the Ottomans. In a poem of this type, the fable-like imagery of the lamb and the wolf is used to illustrate the opposition of Ottomans and Christians (as an example also of the mixing of religious and political categories): *“The wolf with the lamb, the factious with sheep, alas, graze together now, / Turks with Christians, Tartars with Hungarians lie in the same camp, / It would be good, lambs, if hungry wolves would not had eaten you up!”*⁵⁸⁵ The same argumentation is used by Márton (family name unknown), with a more detailed reference to the current events and the deceitful nature of the Turks in the view of a

szentegyházad ők megkörnyékezték.” Mihály Siklósi, *Psalmus LIII.*, 5–8.

⁵⁸¹ “Noha most is az török, tatár anno 1566. belepte az földet: Gyulát, Szigetet egyszersmind megszállotta: (...) Miként az Antichristus lelki hamis fegyverrel, tudománnyal az Isten táborát, az eklézsiát, pápa, Antichristus az Mahomet szektája, hodzsái, dervisi, környülveszik, megcsalják, elhitetik mint sívó oroszlán be akarnák nyelni.” Péter Melius Juhász, *Az Szent Jánosnak tött jelenésnek igaz írás szerint való magyarázása*, 1567, 222v.

⁵⁸² Magda Horváth, *A törökveszedelem a német közvéleményben (The Turkish Menace in German Public Opinion)* (Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1937), 18.

⁵⁸³ Tagliacozzo, “Relatio”, 768. in J. M. Fonseca, ed. *Annales Minorum*, 3rd ed, 1931, 12.750–96, cited by Housley, “Giovanni Da Capistrano and the Crusade of 1456,” 103.

⁵⁸⁴ Miyamoto, “The Influence of Medieval Prophecies”, 127. See also Nóra Berend, “Violence as Identity: Christians and Muslims in Hungary in the Medieval and Early Modern Period,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 44, no. April (2013), 1–13.

⁵⁸⁵ “Az farkas báránnyal, pártütők juhokkal ím lásd, mostan legelnek, / Török keresztyénnel, tatár magyar néppel egy táborban feküsznek, / Jól volna, bárányok, ha az éh farkasok meg végre nem önnének!” *Az Erdelinek siralmas éneke*, 25–27.

possible political cooperation. The arguments of the text apply a great amount of animal examples:

*“Old cunning fox knows since a long time, how to deal with his fellow, / He wheedles, hides his nails, coaxing with his tail, / But on occasion, he declares the reason he is playing with geese. (...) You should see, what is the use of Turkish tutorship, / who played with your father as cat with the mouse, / You will see the results if you don’t care about the company of the Turk. // It’s an ugly thing if Christians and pagans are in the same camp, / Because the adherents of Christ and the dogs of Mohammed do not fit in the same sheepfold.”*⁵⁸⁶

Among the basic, topos-like features attributed to Turks, cunning is the most frequently noted one, emerging in a variety of contexts. Because of its red coat, suggesting that it is the follower of the devil, the most commonly associated animal with cheating is fox: in the Bible, they represent trickery and malice (Jesus calls Herod a fox, in the Gospel of Luke 13, 32.), and in medieval bestiaries, the animal is often described as faking death to attract birds⁵⁸⁷ and catch them. Foxes are also depicted dressed as a monk preaching to unaware geese, representing lavishness – the above text of Márton may recall this tradition.⁵⁸⁸ There are plentiful other examples in vernacular texts that involve the same association. Not only biblical, but proverbial origin can also be traced in relating Turks and foxes: András Valkai’s *Hariadenus tengeri tolvaj históriája* uses an ironic tone when praising Barbarossa Hayreddin: *“The speed of Barbarossa is miraculous, / He has numerous crafts, / When skin of the lion is not enough for a coat, / He patches up fox skin as a collar.”*⁵⁸⁹

Among our sources, two anonymous jeremiads invoke the passage from Lamentations 5,18 (*“Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it”*) that had been

⁵⁸⁶ “Régi ravasz róka régen megtanulta, mint kell bánni komiával, / Magát leterjeszti, körmeit elrejt, hízelkedik farkával, / De ha módját érti, ottan kijelenti, mért játszik az ludakkal. / (...) Jól meglássátok ti, mit használhattok ti török tutorságával, / Ki oly mesterséggel mint macska egérrel játszott ti atyátokkal, / Ti is azt nyertek, ha rá nem gondoltok török társaságával. // Utálatos dolog, hogy keresztyén forog pogánnyal az táborban, / Mert Christus hívei, Mahumet ebei nem férnek egy akolban.” (Márton, 7–9 and 28–32.)

⁵⁸⁷ Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism*, tr. James Hulbert (New York: Meridian, 1994), article *Fox*. The fox is also the attribute of certain saints, such as St Boniface and St Genou.

⁵⁸⁸ The tradition appears on the 15th century painting in the parish house of Zólyom (Zvolen, Slovakia) and in the St Jacob church in Lőcse (Levoca, Slovakia). Péter Kőszeghy ed., *Magyar Művelődéstörténeti Lexikon (Encyclopedia of Hungarian Cultural History)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2007), article *Róka (Fox)*.

⁵⁸⁹ “Csoda gyorsasága Barbarossának, / Sok mesterségei öneki vannak, / Oroszlánbőr hol nem elég subának, / Rókabőrt foldoz ő akkor gallérnak.” András Valkai, *Hariadenus tengeri tolvaj históriája*, strophe 52.

identified as the origin of the association of foxes and false teachings.⁵⁹⁰ The dedication to Kristóf Ugnót of Péter Melius's *Igaz Szentírásból kiszedetett ének*⁵⁹¹ praises the Lord for chasing the foxes and boars and refers to Judges 15,4 (*“And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails”*), implying the persecution of idolatry – in this case, it is not evident if he argues against the Turks; the connection of foxes with cheating, however, is clear.

Being of Biblical origin, the image of the fox often accompanies the genealogical and religious introduction of the Turks. The association of Muslims with foxes goes back to the Alexandrian tradition, according to which in the time of the Antichrist, a fox shall make a hole through Alexander's gates to let out the people of Gog and Magog.⁵⁹² The idea was articulated by András Batizi's *historia*, which is a combination of various traditions, including the Alexandrine tradition, the identification of Mohammed with a fox, and the tradition of making parallels between Jews and Muslims, judging their religious customs. While discussing genealogies of the Turks, the narrative provides a “popular” etymology of the name of the Turks relying on the homonymy of the stem of the words *török* and *tör* (“break”). *“They are called Turks as they break everything, / But they are called Jews in blood too, as / They are circumcised according to Jewish customs, / And get blood on their hands with murders. // They are also called Jews stuck in the mountains, / As they lived behind the Caucasus mountain, / And followed a fox lead to escape, / When they followed Mohammed the fox.”*⁵⁹³

⁵⁹⁰ “Beasts and foxes stroll in our lands” (“Vadak, rókák széllal járják mű telekinket”); “The homes of Christians that were destroyed/Is dwelled by beasts and foxes” (“Keresztyéneknek lakóhelyeket, kit elpusztítának, / Vadak és rókák, hamis tanítók most immáran lakják.”) Anonyms: *Jeremiads*, 64, 35–6.

⁵⁹¹ “Isten éltesse ő nagy: Ugnót Cristoph uramat, az egri kapitánt, hogy a rókákat, kanokat kergeti. Ti nagyságotokat is kérem, valahol vattok, a Sámson rókáit kergessétek, a megért búzát ne hagyjátok felgyújtani.” “Let God lived long my lord Kristof Ugnót, the captain of Eger, for he is chasing the foxes and boars. I also ask your grace, let you be anywhere, to chase the foxes of Samson, and do not let the ripe wheat burnt.” 1570.

⁵⁹² The story of the fox in an apocryphal letter from Al-Kindi to Theodore, Frederick II's astrologer is referred by Burnett and Dalché. “Attitudes towards the Mongols in Medieval Literature,” 162. (Epistola prudenti viro, publ. (the fox: 91–6.)). The story is also present at Jean de Mandeville's *Travels*.

⁵⁹³ “Törököknek mondatnak, mert ők mindent törnek, / De véres zsidóknak azért neveztetnek, / Mert ők zsidó módra környülmétélkeznek, / És sok gyolkossággal megvéresülhettek. // Hegybe bérekesztett zsidóknak mondatnak, / Mert ők az Kaukasus hegy megett lakának, / Egy róka ösvényen el kieredének, / Mikor Mahmetet az rókát követék.” Batizi, *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak tereméstől fogva az itéletig való historia*, 321–328. Another example is present in Gyulai Márton, *Epinicia*, 1599, as the epitheton of the two Christian heroes: “törököknek törői” (line 107).

Commentary concerning the origins of Islam relied on multiple pillars in religious narratives. Apart from the introduced associations with the nations of Gog and Magog, authors related the ideological foundations of the religion to the heretical Nestorians, based on the tradition that Mohammed's master was Sergius, a Nestorian monk. This tradition is represented in Hungarian Protestant pious literature by István Benczédi Székely and Péter Melius.⁵⁹⁴ The former work, the world chronicle of István Székely is very traditional in its format, providing a list of the important events to each year, from the creation to the present, in two-thousand-year cycles of history. The narrative accuses Mohammed of being heretical because he relies on the teachings of Sergius, and for his efforts to construct a single religion by mixing the teachings of various other religions for mere political purposes.⁵⁹⁵ Further, Mohammed is seen as having failed as a man as well, for being restless and pretentious after being chosen to rule by the Agareni.⁵⁹⁶ Székely introduces the Turks as an ethnic group of Scythian origin, different from the Agareni (Saracens), who were unified under the name of the Turks: *"Meanwhile, from Scythia the Turks had risen like a swarm (...) After this the Turks subjected themselves to the rule and the religion of Mohammed. The Agareni nation, in turn, subjected itself to the name of the Turk. Therefore from that time, Agareni are not called Agareni, or Saraceni, but Turks, from the Turkish nation. Thus, the rule and religion of Mohammed stayed in its place, but the name of its nation was changed. Therefore, the two nations were unified, and arose to be a great nation that conquered powerful countries, and their ruler is called a sultan, that is, a prince."*⁵⁹⁷ In Székely's argumentation, the Turks mixed up with the Agareni to confuse

⁵⁹⁴ "Ha nem mered mondani a Mahumetet, az Sergius(t) mondd, az Sergiuson érts az török hitet." "If you are afraid to say Mohammed, say Sergius, and under Sergius mean the religion of the Turks." Méliusz, *Az Szent Jánosnak tölt jelenésnek igaz írás szerint való magyarázása*, 1567, 180v.

⁵⁹⁵ "In order to achieve this, he made one religion from three, to keep his subjects under one will, and he compiled it diligently into a book and named it Alkoran." "Ennek okáért a Machumet ez három hitből egyet csinála, hogy evvel az ő alatta való népet egy akaratra megtarthatná, kit szorgalmasan megira, és Alkoránnak nevezé" Székely, *Chronica*, 132r.

⁵⁹⁶ "But as Mohammed was restless, and wanted to achieve more and more, and above that, to be greater and greater, he started to refer himself as a prophet." "De hogy a Machumet nyughatatlan vala, és többről többre igyekszik vala, továbbá nagyobbról nagyobbra, magát prófétának is mondá lenni" 131v.

⁵⁹⁷ "Ezenközben pedig Scythiából felkele a török nemzet, mint egy raj"... "Innet immár a török nemzet adá magát a Machumetnek hiti alá, és törvénye alá. Az Agarénos nemzet pedig adá magát a török neve alá. Azért immár az időtől fogva az Agarénosok nem hívattatnak Agarénosoknak, avagy Szaracénosoknak, hanem a török nemzetről töröknek. Holott Machumetnek törvénye és hite helyén marada, de neve nemzetének elváltoztaték. Azért ilyen módon e két nemzetség eggyé lön, és nagy néppé neveződék, kik hatalmas országokat megvevének, kiknek az ő fejedelmek szultánnak hívatattik, azaz fejedelmeknek" 132 r-v.

people and use their confusion to gain power.

Knowledge about Islam in Hungary arrived at a new phase with the intensification of Jesuit activities. The *Confutatio Alcorani* was written in 1611 István Arator (Szántó), a student of the leader of the counter-Reformation movements, cardinal Péter Pázmány, who himself also produced a refutation of Islam, built on the same arguments he used originally against Protestants, according to which Protestantism was an important step leading to Islam, and Protestants aim to form religious alliance with Turks to weaken the Catholics in Hungary.⁵⁹⁸ The analysis of the text of the refutations suggests that none of the authors studied the original (Arabic) Qu’ran, but relied on medieval, especially Iberian⁵⁹⁹ traditions, and are not concerned with everyday observations of Islam. The version of the Qu’ran they used contained 125 suras (instead of the original 114, as Latin tradition divides the first 4 suras into 13 parts) and some parts of the broader tradition of the sunna. As Orsolya Varsányi had shown, terms *török* and *musulmanus* are used interchangeably in Pázmány’s writings,⁶⁰⁰ resulting in the mixing of political and religious categories. This is also the case when Pázmány discusses the aggressive nature of the spread of Islam.

3. 3. Cases of Transition

3. 3. 1 .Turcification

In the context of Christian-Christian discourses, accusing certain individuals, smaller-larger groups from the scale of a family to a whole confession or political entity of cooperating with the Ottomans became a frequent practice by the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Apart from the image that was created and circulated about the Ottomans themselves, a new, more abstract imagery was formed from elements of narrative traditions of representing the Turks. Emphasizing the

⁵⁹⁸ Varsányi, “Pázmány Péter: A Mahomet vallása hamisságáru” refers to book 96 and 163. Pázmány’s confutation is an appendix to his work *Az mostan támadt új tudományok hamisságának tíz nyilvánvaló bizonyága és rövid intése a török birodalomról és vallásról* (*Ten obviousness false features of the newly emerged concepts, and a small treatise about the Turkish Empire and religion*), 1605. Critical edition, ed. Alinka Ajkay and Emil Hargittay (Budapest, 2001); See Dobrovits and Óze, “A Korán-cáfolat műfaja,” and István Bitskey, “Pázmány vitairatai a keresztény egységről és az iszlámról (Pázmány’s Polemic Writings about Christian Unity and Islam),” *Vigilia*, no. 7 (1999).

⁵⁹⁹ Petrus Venerabilis’s Qu’ran-translation, Herman of Carinthia’s *Corpus Toletanum*, works of Robertus Retenensis, Marcus of Toledo and Nicolaus of Cusa. For a full list of Pázmány’s sources, see Varsányi, “Pázmány Péter: A Mahomet vallása hamisságáru,” esp. 649–54.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 671.

“turkishness” of certain personalities, from rulers through feudal lords to religious enemies, and the “turcification”⁶⁰¹ of their behaviour became a prevailing representational practice all over Europe, and was used in various contexts apart from the religious, e.g., in political and legal understanding.⁶⁰² The most common method of “turcification” was the application of an element of the common imagery attributed to Turks to a Christian enemy, and more particularly, accusing enemies of acting like Turks – making them part of the group of “others.”

Accusations of “turkishness” became a common phenomenon in the Christian-Christian religious setting, especially in Protestant religious narratives. The ideological source of the notion of the “interior Turk” was Erasmus’s *Enchiridion militis christiani*, which introduced the concept that the real enemy of Christians is the Turk in an abstract “brutal, wicked” sense, and that what should be eliminated is “Turkish” behavior, not the men of flesh and blood, the “real” Turks. At the same time, this inner enemy can also be found in Christians who oppose the philosophy of Christ. The idea of the “interior Turk,” on the other hand, had been connected with humanism as it was based on the assumption of a homogenous human nature, a central idea of humanism that influenced also ethnographic descriptions of foreign people.⁶⁰³ The notion was manifested in the Hungarian context in a letter of Erasmus to Mary of Hungary, two years after the Battle of Mohács, when he warned the widow: “*Nor does it show Christian clemency to kill a Turk for no other reason but that he is a*

⁶⁰¹ On the concept, see Nicolette M. E. H. Mout, “Calvinoturcismus und Chiliasmus im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 14 (1988): 72–84; See also Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505*, 26 Gábor Kármán, “Turks Reconsidered. Jakab Harsányi Nagy’s Changing Image of the Ottoman,” in *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 127, and Joachim Bahlcke, “Calvinism and Estate Liberation Movements in Bohemia and Hungary (1570–1620),” in *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Karin Maag (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 82.

⁶⁰² In the legal sense, *turcism* was applied to someone who brought a case to the Ottoman kadi instead of a Hungarian judge (supposing that both systems existed at the same time within the frames of *condominium*. See Fodor, “The Ottomans and Their Christians in Hungary,” 138. In the political sense, there was a constant fear present in Europe about an anti-Catholic alliance of the Porte. Jack Goody, Goody, *Islam in Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 87. In Hungary in particular, various political figures, e.g., Gábor Bethlen were accused with unreliability and aiming for alliance with the Ottomans. See Gábor Almási, *A Secretissima Instructio (1620). A kora újkori paradigmaváltás egy Bethlen-kori röpirat tükrében (The Secretissima Instructio (1620). Early Modern Change of Paradigms in the Light of a Pamphlet from the Age of Bethlen)* (Budapest: ELTE BTK – TETE, 2014), 38.

Calvinoturcism had an anti-Habsburg interpretation as well in Ottoman Hungary, as by the beginning of the seventeenth century, Calvinism became a form of identity in opposition with the Habsburg Empire. Mout, “Calvinoturcismus und Chiliasmus,” 73.

⁶⁰³ Höfert, “The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat”, 42.

Turk.”⁶⁰⁴ Luther also used the term in a the sense of “brutality” when he accused lords of failing to defend their subjects.⁶⁰⁵ Still, the most common use of “turkishness” as a metaphor occurred in the context of Protestant – Catholic polemical narratives, from both sides. Protestants often accused Catholics of being similar to Turks both in religious (identifying them with the Antichrist) and political contexts (forming secret or open alliances with the Ottomans and claiming that the corruptness of the papacy gave rise to Islam).⁶⁰⁶ The accusations were also made in the opposite direction, Luther was identified as the Antichrist and his obvious earthly representative, the Turkish nation. Turcification was present in debates between reformed religions: Lutherans, referring to the more intense iconoclastic attitudes of Calvinists, compared them to Muslims.⁶⁰⁷



Caricature of Luther with seven heads; titlepage to Cochlaeus, ‘Septiceps Lutherus’, Leipzig: Valentin Schumann, 1529. Woodcut and letterpress.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁴ *De vidua christiana*, tr. J. T. Roberts, in CWE lxvi. 177–257, 234, cited by Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 151. On more the more detailed views of Erasmus to the Turks, see Norman Housley, “A Necessary Evil? Erasmus, the Crusade, and War against the Turks,” in *The Crusades and Their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. John France and William G. Zajac (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

⁶⁰⁵ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 141, 146: Luther, On the war against the Turks, 1529: “you are steadily becoming Turks to your own subjects.” Göllner, *Turcica*, iii. 188–9.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 147. As early as 1520, Luther wrote in “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation:” “If we want to fight against the Turks, let us begin here where they are worst of all.”

⁶⁰⁷ Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 195.

⁶⁰⁸ Identifying Luther as a doctor, a monk, a Turk, a preacher, a fanatic, a church visitor and a wild man with a club. http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1434835&partId=1

Accusing other confessions of being responsible for the rise of Islam was an accusation often levied in debates between religions. This issue appears in the account of the Habsburg envoy Hans Dernschwam from 1555, based on his conversation with István Szegedi Kis in Lasko (Srem): “*It is the sin of the ignorant preachers if many naive people will become Turks,*”⁶⁰⁹ he wrote. Two decades later, Stephan Gerlach observed that “*The Lutherans are more liked by the Ottomans than the papists, since they condemn the adoration of images, and thus they think that they might much more easily become Ottoman than the Italians.*”⁶¹⁰

The most commonly expressed relevance of the concept by Protestants was a double, paralleled criticism of Catholics and Turks. In Hungarian vernacular Protestant song collections, explicit mention of the Turks is relatively rare: in general, texts mention them as “pagans,” and narratives mediate the danger and sufferings caused by the Turks on a more abstract level, allowing a universal applicability of songs in space and time. At the same time, the imagery of the double Antichrist has an extensive presence in vernacular Protestant literature in Hungary. András Batizi’s world chronicle expresses the idea in its succinct essence: “*We all know well who the bodily Antichrist would be, / As it is obviously Mohammed and the pagan emperor, / The spiritual Antichrist is the pope, / As it is written in St Paul and Daniel.*”⁶¹¹ The same formulation is present in Péter Melius Juhász’s St John commentaries, which points out the equality of the Antichrist, the pope, Mohammed, and the unfaithful in the general sense: “*Do not think that Satan, that is, the first beast, the Antichrist, pope, Mohammed, with their unfaithful heads and horns, will ever be caught by kings, lords, or hangmen...*”⁶¹²

Catholics are the addressants of the song of András Szkhárosi Horvát, which blames the Catholic

⁶⁰⁹ Szakály, *Mezőváros*, 97. For Dernschwam’s text, see Lajos Tardy, ed., *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* (Captives, diplomats and merchants about the Ottoman Empire) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977), 500–501.

⁶¹⁰ Stephan Gerlach, *Des Alteren Tagebuch*, Frankfurt, 1674, 89. See Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts*, 195.

⁶¹¹ Batizi, *Meglőtt és megleendő dolgoknak teremtetéstől fogva az itéletig való historia*: “*Testi Ántikrisztus ki légyen jól tudjuk, / Mert nyilván Mahumet és a pogán császár, / Lelki Ántikrisztus hogy az pápa légyen, / Szent Pál és Dániel szöréről megírják.*” 425–428.

⁶¹² Melius Juhász Péter, *Szent Janos...* 177v: “*Ne véljétek, hogy a sátán, amaz első bestia az Antichristus, pápa, Machumet, az hitlen fejekkel és szarvakkal, az királyokkal, urakkal, hóhérokkal hogy megfogatnak...*”

clergy for persecuting Protestants and leaving important problems out of view: “*Why do you chase the pious ones, who teach good things. // While you leave gypsies in peace, who continuously steal, / You are making friends with Turks who rob us.*”⁶¹³ From one side, this reference should be interpreted in the context of religious debates, expressing critique of the Catholic clergy for its inimical attitudes towards Protestant preachers, but on the other side, the passage also raises questions about interrelations of ethnicity and social groups in the era.

In discussion about the doctrinal foundations of Protestant branches, here were constant claims against the Antitrinitarians to be close to Islam by denying the Trinity. In the lost *Antithesis veri et Turcici Christi*, Ferenc Dávid is accused⁶¹⁴ of being close to Islam, as Dávid regarded Christ a prophet the same way as Muslims do, and according to Melius, Dávid claimed that Christians were polytheists who worship multiple gods. Thus, “turcification” was present in discourses and debates in Protestant-Protestant settings as well.

3. 3. 2. Religious Mediation: The *Hymnus* by Dragoman Murad

The *Hymnus* of dragoman Murad, written 1580–82, is a unique example of religious works produced in Ottoman Hungary: written by a convert to Islam, an author of Hungarian origin, it records the discourses about the most relevant religious issues of the second half of the sixteenth century and propagates interreligious discourses and understanding.

A short note in the manuscript tells about its author that his name was Murad, an interpreter in the sultan’s court, a Hungarian and Latin translator. He fell into captivity in the kingdom of Hungary between 1551–1553, and spent thirty months in prison, until Rustem Pasha, the Grand Vizier, paid the ransom for him. Other sources give evidence that Murad’s original name was

⁶¹³ “Mit üldözik az jámborokat, kik jóra tanyítanak. // Az cigánoknak lám békét hagytok, kik mindenkor lopnak, / Az törökökkel lám pártolkodtok, kik rajtonk rabolnak.” Szkhárosi, *Az istennek irgalmasságáról*, 1546, 222–224.

⁶¹⁴ Although the work of Péter Károlyi is lost, its contents may be partly reconstructed by the correspondence of Melius. Balázs, *Early Transylvanian Antitrinitarianism*, 147. Sándor Unghváry, *A magyar reformáció az ottomán hódoltság alatt a 16. században (Hungarian Reformation in Ottoman Hungary in the Sixteenth Century)*, tr. László Dósa (Budapest: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem Hittudományi Karának Egyháztörténeti Intézete, 1994), 272 and 282.

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Balázs Somlyai,⁶¹⁵ who was born into a Christian family, and fell into the captivity of the Ottomans after the Battle of Mohács in 1526 at the age of seventeen. He converted to Islam – and refused to reconvert to Christianity when he had the possibility during his debates with Christian theologians.⁶¹⁶ There is no record of the schooling of Murad in the sultan's court: however, his text gives evidence about his literacy. Besides popular Sufi works, he knew the Torah, the Gospels and the Psalters as well as the Qu'ran. He wrote the *Hymnus* after a series of consultations with Christian theologians⁶¹⁷ who ridiculed Islam, thus the poem might be a rejoinder in their discourse.

Somlyai had relations with some of the most prominent people of the era: he corresponded with István Báthory, prince of Transylvania; he knew in person Stephan Gerlach, the Lutheran priest, who – together with ambassador Ungnád, travelled to the Turkish capital; Mahmud, the leader of diplomacy of the Porta, the author of *Tarih-i Ungurus* (the chronicle about Alexander the Great and Hungary in Turkish), also a convert; and various diplomats (e.g. Johannes Löwenklau, legate of Habsburgs). In the last years of his life, already in his seventies, he fell from grace in the sultan's court, and had to resort to make a living from translations. His Christian polemical partners often regarded him a “dervish” – the basis of this title is that most probably, he had some connections with the Islamic Sufi order of Bektashi dervishes. The Bektashi order often internalized and mixed ideas of Islam and Christianity in the territories where the two religions met.⁶¹⁸ In the *Hymnus*, there are several citations from the scriptures of Islam and Christianity both – this feature may also connect Murad to the order. In his writings he recalls his conversations with Christian theologians – probably, these were attempts to convert him back to Christianity.

There are several literary texts attributed to him: one of them is the *Hymnus*, and the other is a catechism in prose between Islam and Christian religions, written in Ottoman and was subsequently translated into Latin. The catechism has been preserved in two manuscripts; one of them also contains the *Hymnus*. The three versions of the text: Hungarian, Ottoman and Latin are arranged in

⁶¹⁵ According to an inscription in the *album amicorum* of Arnold Manlius. RMKT XVI/11, 425.

⁶¹⁶ Daniel, *The Islam and the West*, 308.

⁶¹⁷ Krstić, “A Muslim Unitarian Transylvanian?” See also RMKT XVI/11, 424.

⁶¹⁸ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, article *Bekhtassiyya*, 1162.

three columns in the manuscript; each version is written both by Latin and Arabic script, making altogether six versions. The text was written between 1580 and 1582, in the most popular form of old Hungarian poetry (a11, a11, a11, a11). It is a question, however, if the form had any Ottoman or Arabic equivalents: according to Pál Ács,⁶¹⁹ it may be associated with the form of asik poetry,⁶²⁰ which was strongly connected to the mystically oriented order of Bektashi dervishes. Regarding its Hungarian terminology, according to Iván Horváth,⁶²¹ many expressions of the *Hymnus* correspond to the vocabulary of Protestant song-poetry.

Murad gives evidence of deep knowledge of both Christianity and Islam, and he makes a good use of this knowledge in his argumentation, being able to speak the theological language of Christians from a Muslim perspective. The general aim of the poem is to convince readers about the necessity of leaving behind one's evil deeds as death is equal for all. The text also bears an attitude aiming for peace between religions: in various *loci* one can observe explicit exhortation for the conversation of different religions: “*One does not hurt the other, / Thus He may answer for all, / From wherever a prayer He may receive.*”⁶²²

Later, the text recites the necessity of tolerance, stating that neither language, nor nationality should be a basis for making distinctions among people, only their righteous deeds: “*And we should not look upon any person, / Neither his language, nor his nationality, / Rather consider and judge what he says, / And if what he says is right, we should accept it.*”⁶²³

The source of the desired peace is God, who is equal for all who believe in Him: “*And the one who believes in His sacred deity, / Because he does not make distinction between people.*”⁶²⁴ The notion of God as the source of all good is crucial for Murad in the getting diverse religions on the

⁶¹⁹ Pál Ács, “Bécsi és magyar renegátok mint szultáni tolmácsok: Mahmud és Murád (Viennese and Hungarian Renegades as the Sultan's Interpreters: Mahmud and Murad),” in *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére (Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Ferenc Szakály)*, ed Pál Fodor, Géza Pálffy, and István György Tóth (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2002), http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/10_szam/05.htm.

⁶²⁰ On asik poetry in Hungary, see Gábor Ágoston and Balázs Sudár, *Gül Baba és a Magyarországi Bektasi Dervisek (Gül Baba and the Bektashi Dervishes in Hungary)* (Budapest: Terebess, 2002) <http://terebess.hu/keletkultinfo/gul.html>.

⁶²¹ Horváth, “Egy kiaknázatlan műfaj történeti forráscsoport,” 80.

⁶²² “Nem árt egyik szólása az másiknak, / Felelhet azért ő mindenfélinek, / Akárhonnan neki könyöregjenek.” 105–107.

⁶²³ “És senki személyre ne tekintsünk, / Se nyelvire, se nemzetre ne nizzünk, / Hanem, amit szól, abba válogassunk. / Ha jónak tetszik, azt meg kell fogadnunk.” 337–340.

⁶²⁴ “És ki ő szent istenségibe hiszen, / Mert ő személyválogatást nem tíszen.” 139–140.

same basis. The ideas which are represented by Murad here, are more similar to the ones of Al-Tabari, stating that people were a single *umma*.⁶²⁵ Murad writes about the substance of God: “*We may know Him by these things [of creation], / That He would be the one and only God.*”⁶²⁶

On the eternity of God, Murad relies on the notion of Al-Ikhlās (God’s unity). These lines may bear resemblance to the lines of the Qu’rān (“*He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.*”⁶²⁷): “*Space and time have their beginnings, / But He has neither beginning, nor end, / Because He is the first, had no beginning, / And He is the last, will have no end.*”⁶²⁸ Mentioning God’s substance as a non-created substance also recalls the Muslim tradition that bans depictions of God, and leads to the idea of God’s unity, a deity without Christ and the Holy Spirit: “*Do not compare Him to anything / That has been created.*”⁶²⁹

By stating that one may find God in himself, leads to the idea of the rejection of pilgrimage. This may contradict the general ideas on the significance of pilgrimage in Islam, but since the text was written for Christian audience, it should rather be understood as a criticism of Christian pilgrimage: “*If you want to find Him, / You do not have to go far, / You can find Him in yourself, / This is the writing, you should understand it like this.*”⁶³⁰

The text claims that there are three kinds of people: the one who is close to God, and keeps all the commandments; the one who loves this world, who is condemned to go to hell for being far from God. The third kind of man is the one who desires neither this world, nor the otherworld, but desires only God; the most perfect embodiment of this type was Adam: “*In the times He created Adam, / You may find this one, if you wish, in him.*”⁶³¹ This figure of the ideal man and believer is

⁶²⁵ Helmut Gätje, *The Qurān and Its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Muslim Interpretations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 95: “The people were a single *umma* with a single religion (...)”

⁶²⁶ “Esmérhetjük ezekről ötet nyilván, [teremtett dolgokról]/Hogy nem más, csak ő volna az egy Isten.” 57–58.

⁶²⁷ Translation from <http://www.alquran-english.com/>.

⁶²⁸ “Helynek es időnek vagyon kezdeti, / Neki sem kezdeti, sem végezeti, / Mert ő első, nem volt soha kezdeti, / És utolsó, nem lészen végezeti.” 69–73.

⁶²⁹ “Ne hasonlítsuk ötet semmiképpen, / Teremtethez ki volt valamiképpen.” 43–44.

⁶³⁰ “Ötet azért ha kívánod keresni, / Nem kell messze más helekre elmenni, / Esmég tenmagadba lehet találni, / Ez az írás, ezt így kell érteni.” 129–133.

⁶³¹ “Még mikor teremté az Ádámot, / Megleled ennél, ha akarod, ötet.” 187–188.

very close to the Sufi ideas about Divine love.

In connection with the commandments, according to the text's testimony, it is evident for Murad that the common foundations of Islam and Christianity are the laws and commandments of God: *"It is written in God's books, / Which He gave in commandments."*⁶³² However, he also constitutes that there is an hierarchical order of the holy books, with the Qu'ran as the primary scripture: *"He said: 'Use the Scriptures, / And choose the right ones, he ordered.'"*⁶³³ Still, the receptive attitude of the narrative is clear in this issue as well, since it refers to numerous passages from both the Bible – mainly from the Gospel of Matthew – and the Qu'ran in his argumentation. For example, he operates with the widespread Christian image of the mote and the beam:⁶³⁴ *"First you should take out your beam, / Before caring about the mote in others' eyes."*⁶³⁵ Further, on the issue of love, Murad also quotes the Gospel of Matthew: *"There are only two things to follow, / That we praise Him with honour, / And that we love others just as ourselves."*⁶³⁶ The topics of eternal damnation and of seeking God are also depicted with the well-known Christian images of Matthew's Gospel: *"There will be everlasting crying and weeping, / And gnashing of teeth because of the great pain,"*⁶³⁷ *"He said, ask and you shall be given, / Ring the door and it shall be opened."*⁶³⁸

The course of arguments are determined by the Qu'ran in the narration, and there are also explicit quotations, for instance, at the discussion of prophets and authority: *"Small pieces of dust in the glittering light."*⁶³⁹ In the question of prophets, the text argues that a good believer, has to get close to God in this world, and the prophets are the people of God who show the way to look at Him, who open up the eyes of the blind: *"Every time has its own prophets, / the apostles of the true*

⁶³² "Meg vagyon irva isteni könyvekben, / Kiket kiadott parancsolatokban." 9–10.

⁶³³ "Írásokat forgassatok, mondotta, / Válogassátok az jobbat, meghagyta." 13–14.

⁶³⁴ Matthew 7, 3: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

⁶³⁵ "Előbb az te gerendádott ki vennéd, / Mások szemiből ki szálkát őriznéd." 315–316.

⁶³⁶ "Csak két dologba vagyon, hogy járjatok, / Őtet hogy tiszteletvel magasztaljuk, / Másunkat is, mint magunkat szeressük." 206–208. The referred verse is Matthew 19, 19: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

⁶³⁷ "Ott líszen örökre nagy sírás-rívás / Az nagy kín miatt fogakcsikorgás." 157–158. Mt 8,12: "...there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

⁶³⁸ "Mondotta, hogy kírjítek, megadatik, / Csengessétek az ajtót, megnyílatik." 125–126. Mt 7,7: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

⁶³⁹ "Verőfínybe tetsző kicsiny porokot" 93. Quran 10,61: "Nor is hidden from thy Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven."

faith of God, / The one who leads his people to God, / The master of inner and outer law.”⁶⁴⁰ This passage raises one of the central problems of Islamic law: inner and outer law. The latter, i.e., *shari’a*, means religious law that govern the lives of Muslims;⁶⁴¹ the inner law, *Tarika* denotes the internalization of these laws, a manner of behaving.⁶⁴² Such a distinction one may find in the concept of *jihad* as well, making a distinction between inner and outer struggle for faith. *Tarika* had a central role in Sufi thought, and also in the *Hymnus*: “*Right separates from the evil, / Inner and outer law becomes visible.*”⁶⁴³

Discussing the issue of prophecy, it is clear that for Murad that the last and most righteous prophet of God is Mohammed, the one with the clearest soul: “*The first soul is the father of all souls, / The pure soul of our Mohammed.*”⁶⁴⁴ The primacy of Mohammad is confirmed also by arguments of authority: his coming was promised by other older prophets, including Jesus. The argumentation is affirmed by quotes from the Qu’ran: “*In his body, he came the last among all, / But in his spirit he is before all the others, / And he became the reason of all, / He was promised by the old prophets;*”⁶⁴⁵ “*This was the last follower of God, / Our Lord Jesus also told about him, / The Bible, the Gospels, and the book of the Psalters / Confirm his coming.*”⁶⁴⁶ The strophe recalls the Islamic tradition of the 104 books that have been revealed by God, among which four – the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms and the Quran – contain everything the other hundred does.⁶⁴⁷ This idea also may point to the connections of Murad to Sufi mysticism. The discussion of the

⁶⁴⁰ “Menden üdönék vagyon profétája, / Igaz isteni hitnek hirdetője, / Ő nípít Istenhez igazgatója, / Külső, belső tudomány tanítója.” 241–244.

⁶⁴¹ Bearman, P., Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs, eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), *Shari’a*, 321.

⁶⁴² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Tarika*, 243.

⁶⁴³ “Igaz hamistúl elválosztatik, / Külső, belső törvény úta tudatik.” 285–286.

⁶⁴⁴ “Első lélek atyja minden lelkeknek, / Tiszta lelke a mi Muhammedünknek.” 249–250. Qu’ran, 33,40: “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things.”

⁶⁴⁵ “Test szerint utolsóbb jött mendeneknél, / De lélek szerint az elsőbb mendennél, / Ő lön oka mendennek lítelivel, / Róla ígíret vagyon profétáktul.” 253–256.

⁶⁴⁶ “Ez az utolsó az Isten követje, / Jézus urunk is hirdetett felőle, / Biblia, evangélium, zsoltár könyve/Bizonyosok az ő eljöttelire.” 261–264. Quran, 3,3: “It is He Who sent down to thee [step by step], in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it;” “He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel [of Jesus] before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion [of judgment between right and wrong];” 7,157: “Those who follow the messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], – in the law and the Gospel; – for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil.”

⁶⁴⁷ Ibn al-Arabí quoted by RMKT XVI/11, 427.

prophethood of Mohammed gives an opportunity to raise the claim of *tahrif*, the falsification of sacred scriptures by non-Muslims, strengthening the argumentative tone of the narration: “*Envious people took [him] out as a whole/From the books of the old prophets, / They erased his name from the scriptures.*”⁶⁴⁸

The *Hymnus* of dragoman Murad is a remarkable source of interreligious discourses from the end of the sixteenth century. The narrative, relying on scriptural sources of both Christianity and Islam, is evidence that Turks were active participants of confessional debates of the era. Accordingly, the intended audience of the narrative was also complex in the religious sense, as both Christians and Muslims are addressed by the narrative. Moreover, taking the Sufi features of the *Hymnus*, the text is a deflection from classical polemical Islamic literature as well,⁶⁴⁹ thus it is also a contribution to internal Muslim theological debates.

3.3.3. Conversion in practice and its reflections

Conversion, and people who crossed religious boundaries were frequently commented on in the analyzed sources. Although both worldly and spiritual arguments were brought up in discourses around changing faith, conversion was a highly public act signifying not only religious, but political statement. In Hungary, social tensions determined the judgment of conversion too, as Hungarian nobles had a reason to fear that converted peasants might side with the Ottomans and revolt.⁶⁵⁰

In early modern Europe, there was a constant fear of voluntary mass conversions to Islam which had been present before the spread of various Reformed church ideas. For instance, Nóra Berend⁶⁵¹ emphasized the importance of refutative works concerning Islam, which reached their audiences in the form of newly popularized travel accounts. A prevalent example is the account of George of Hungary, which expressed admiration towards the piety of Muslims and several other features of

⁶⁴⁸ “Kivivék az irigyek mendenestül / Az régi prófétáknak könyveibül, / Kivakarák ő nevit írásokbul.” 266–268.

⁶⁴⁹ Krstić, “A Muslim Unitarian Transylvanian?”

⁶⁵⁰ Fodor, “The View of the Turk in Hungary,” 116 refers to the letter of Ákos Csányi, the palatine of Tamás Nádasdy to his lord from 1562.

⁶⁵¹ Nóra Berend at “The Christian Turks.” Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman- Habsburg Contact Zone. CEU 23–24 May 2014.

Islam (moral and bodily purity, simplicity etc.), to turn them down and regard them as a trick all aiming to mislead Christians. Another famous example from a later period is the one of Adam Neuser's, who, after converting to Islam from Antitrinitarianism,⁶⁵² made a career in the Sultan's court. The life of the newly converted was met with suspicion not only from their former communities, but also from their new culture, and they were often treated with suspicion their entire life.⁶⁵³ Diplomats, translators, and also people with religious profession, such as friars, often took Islam as their new religion. At the same time, theoretical and practical features of the newly taken religion depended strongly on the context in which these people lived their lives, and as such, in more remote locations in the cultural sense, a very curious combinations of religious elements came into existence. Many converts preserved elements of Christianity, such as the veneration of certain saints, holy places, or celebrating certain rituals.⁶⁵⁴ Heavy dependence on the geographic location determined the possible development of these practices: for instance, Transylvania, which lacked a considerable Muslim population in the investigated period, had much fewer converts and thus less opportunities for the entanglement of the elements of each religions.

From the point of view of Islam, Christianity and Judaism were accepted as pre-religions of Islam, but they are not regarded pure religions as they do not accept Mohammed. Concerning the practical side of religious coexistence, once other religions accepted Islam – thus became part of Dar al-Islam – and kept certain restrictions (such as ban of building churches), generally were not bothered.⁶⁵⁵ However, Jews and Christians within the Dar al-Islam had a *dhimmi* status, thus they had to be represented by Muslim authorities in cases under Islamic law.

The issue of conversions and renegades had been intensively present in recent scholarship.⁶⁵⁶ In traditional history writing, authors often discussed forced mass conversion of the non-Muslim

⁶⁵² Lutherans often referred to Neuser as an example that Unitarians pave the way of Islam. Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 195.

⁶⁵³ Noel Malcolm, "Adam Neuser among the Renegades," at "The Christian Turks." Religious and Cultural Encounters in the Ottoman- Habsburg Contact Zone. CEU 23–24 May 2014.

⁶⁵⁴ György István Tóth, "Between Islam and Catholicism: Bosnian Franciscan Missionaries in Hungary, 1584–1716," *The Catholic Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2003): 426.

⁶⁵⁵ Dobrovits and Öze, "Melanchthon és a hódoltság reformáció iszlámképe," 47.

⁶⁵⁶ See esp. the work of Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011) and Anton Minkov, "Forms, Factors and Motives of Conversion to Islam in the Balkans," in *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

population by the Ottomans; however, available sources and data suggests a different landscape. The system of *devshirme*, that is the taking of young male Christian subjects from rural areas to train them as soldiers and supply the Janissary corps was also often regarded as an evidence of mass conversion; however, the system was mostly a political one serving military purposes, although the boys were indeed circumcised and given Muslim names. All in all, their education may be regarded as an outstanding opportunity to get into the ruling elite.⁶⁵⁷ A hint regarding the dimensions of converts might be data concerning practices of name-giving, as the patronymic name Abdullah was most often used in the case of new converts to Islam. As current research claims, in the rural areas only 1–2% of the population was converted, probably to produce a certain social layer that could act as a supply of Ottoman dignitaries.⁶⁵⁸ At the same time, voluntary conversion to Islam had certain benefits – thus there are examples of conversion at Hungarian territories outside Ottoman Hungary. First of all, one could gain economic advantages, as Muslims were free from the obligation to pay certain types of taxes.⁶⁵⁹ Ottoman rule put merchants from Royal Hungary in an advantageous position, as both exported goods produced in Ottoman territories to the West, and the goods imported to the Ottoman Empire from Europe crossed the state. Their positions were even more favorable because Western merchants did not favor travels to the Ottoman Empire and Habsburgs had aversions to Ottoman merchants: therefore, most merchants were Hungarians from Ottoman territories who could move with less restrictions between the states.⁶⁶⁰

Conversions in the other direction, from Islam to Christianity, were also commented on. The possibility of missions among the Turks had been a central issue for the whole period of Ottoman presence in Europe and beyond. To mention only a few prominent authors who addressed this issue, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini wrote an epistola to Mehmed II to convince him about

⁶⁵⁷ See Pál Fodor, “‘Hivatásos törökök’ – ‘Született törökök.’ Hatalmi elit és társadalom a 15–17. századi Oszmán Birodalomban (‘Professional Turks’ – ‘Turks by Birth.’ Power Elite and Society in the Ottoman Empire in the 15–17th Centuries.” *Századok* 138, no. 4 (2004); Tijana Krstić, “Rethinking “Syncretism” in the Ottoman Context—Politics of Religious Synthesis and Conversion in the Fifteenth-Century Narratives,” in *Contested Conversions to Islam* (book manuscript), 78–121; Minkov, “Forms, Factors and Motives of Conversion,” 65 and on the *devshirme* system, 67–77.

⁶⁵⁸ Géza Dávid, “Limitation of Conversion: Muslims and Christians in the Balkans in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Cultural Exchange in Europe*, ed. Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (Budapest: CEU – European Science Foundation, 2001), 150.

⁶⁵⁹ Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 90 and Dobrovits and Öze, “Melanchthon és a hódoltság reformáció iszlámképe,” 48.

⁶⁶⁰ Szakály, *Mezőváros és reformáció*, 419.

converting (although the work was intended for a European audience⁶⁶¹); Martin Luther likewise considered converting the Turks and also argued for missions among them.⁶⁶² The process had a long expanse in temporal and geographical sense: yet in the middle of the seventeenth century, Comenius wanted to convince Zsuzsanna Lórántffy to sponsor the translation of the Bible into Turkish, arguing that Christians must not be hostile to Muslims. He argues that given their appreciation of Christ, if they were provided a Bible, Muslims could be converted.⁶⁶³ However, when it came to Muslims taking Christian faith, the topos of unreliability that was common in medieval traditions of depicting Islam, was often invoked, and their conversion was often regarded as a pretend act,⁶⁶⁴ and an even greater sin than remaining a Muslim.

Circumstances of soldiers serving in the frontier fortresses were special with regard to conversion as well. On the one hand, they were strongly positioned in a discourse that treated the Turks as their main military counterpart and especially after masses of educated people returned from Wittenberg after the 1550's and started their intellectual career in Hungary, the idea of representing the Turks as the "scourge of God" became more popular. At the same time, they knew the possible advantages of conversion more than anyone else, and being in a daily connection with the Ottomans, they had to distance themselves from them more intensely.⁶⁶⁵

Concerning conversions and the relation of the Ottoman authorities to various Protestant branches, a significant source is the letter of Pál Thuri Farkas from 1559 written to his friends in Upper Hungary about the circumstances of Christians in the Ottoman territories.⁶⁶⁶ The letter recounts the changed relations of Islamic authorities with Protestants, claiming that their supportive

⁶⁶¹ Mercan, "Constructing a Self-Image."

⁶⁶² Öze, "A keresztes hadjáratok ideológiája," 254.

⁶⁶³ Murdock, *Calvinism in the Frontier*, 141 refers to Comenius, *Panorthosia*, ed. Dobbie, 119, 246–7.

⁶⁶⁴ Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, 211. The synod of Szabolcs in 1092 put on a trial fresh converts: people who were accused with practicing their old faith in secret had to prove their innocence or they faced expulsion. "De negotiatoribus, quos appellant ismahelitas, si post baptismum ad legem suam antequam per circumcisionem rediisse inventi fuerint, a sedibus suis separati ad alias villas removeantur. Illi vero, qui inculpabiles per iudicium apparuerint, in propriis sedibus remaneant." Bak, *Laws*, p 57.

⁶⁶⁵ Dobrovits and Öze, "Melanchthon és a hódoltsági reformáció iszlámképe," 49. Pál Thuri Farkas was a graduate from Wittenberg.

⁶⁶⁶ The letter "Idea Christianorum Hungarorum" was published in 1613 by Bocatius and in 1616 by Albert Szenci Molnár. Géza Kathona, *Fejezetek a török hódoltsági reformáció történetéből (Chapters from the History of the Reformation in Ottoman Hungary)* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1974), 58.

attitude has transformed into a more aggressive one, realized in forced conversions performed on a regular basis.⁶⁶⁷ In the letter, Thuri differentiated four stages of interventions into the lives of Christians. According to the first, once taxes are paid, everyone may practice their religions undisturbed. The next step in taking over the religious scene is to put Ottoman administrators as leaders of settlements; then, they bring Muslim immigrants giving them legal and economic privileges. The final step is the introduction of the *devshirme* system and the deprivation of the rights of Christians. As Thuri states, this last phase is present currently only at territories around the Drava river, but is a threatening prospect to appear soon in Tolna, the residence of Thuri. The situation is even more alarming as “Turkish” customs appear to take over the Christian ones. To underline this claim, Thuri wrote: *“Here, everything has a Turkish smell, customs, clothes, strange things seem to emerge. More than half of the people’s language is Turkish. If a woman is making an oath, she says: Vallaha, I swear to God, I will not give it to you otherwise, ottura kardos, sit down my friend, effendi, you should eat etc.”*⁶⁶⁸

The letter also recounts a few stories concerning the manners of conversion, evaluating the act as a widespread practice. For instance, the letter recounts that a commonly practiced “trick” of the Turks is to put a turban on one’s head, as if it was only for making fun: and once the turban is there, a “forced circumcision” follows. He recalls that the regular greeting of the Turks is: “Paturxica kardos”, meaning “let you be Turk.”⁶⁶⁹ The narrative also claims that the process of conversion includes the act of throwing stones on a Christian church. Another trick is to begin a conversion with someone and ask them the following question: “Is Mohammed’s teaching and his followers’ knowledge true?” If the subject answers with “yes,” he is forced to convert; however, in the case of a negative answer, he still might be circumcised. Thuri also gives practical advice for a situation of forced conversion: he suggests to give the following answer to the above question: “We cannot read

⁶⁶⁷ Dobrovits and Őze, “Melanchthon és a hódoltsági reformáció iszlámképe,” 48.

⁶⁶⁸ “Omnia hic Turcismum redolent, mores, habitus, peregrina omnia novitio videntur. Sermo nativus plus dimidia parte Turcicus est: Mulier iurans ait: Vallaha, Istenre mondom nem adom különben, ottura kardos, ülyle atyamfia, Effendi, kmed egyéc, etc.” Kathona, *Fejezetek a török hódoltsági reformáció történetéből*, 60.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 60: “Consuetudo Turcica, est, obvium quemque hoc modo compellare: Paturxica Kardos: hoc est, sis Turca, frater.” The quote of the oral form by Thuri is actually in Slavic, demonstrating the multiplicity of used languages and their functions.

your book, we read ours, and we believe in it.” He also notes that they do not have to know that there is an extant Latin Alkoran.⁶⁷⁰

Forced conversions appeared also in the light of apocalyptic traditions in Péter Melius Juhász’s work on the Revelations of St John. Connecting the Turks and the Last Times, as it had been presented, was a common practice in religious literature and other platforms of discourses. As Melius wrote, forced conversion was a sign of the Last Times: the Turks will be punished for forcing people to take Islam: “*As the Turks begins to convert them, they are going to lose their empires, as God is going to defeat the Turks for seven years before the Last Times, that is, for a short period of time there is going to be peace and there will be no enemies around. Then they are going to lose all their arms.*”⁶⁷¹ Thus, successes of the pagans in religious terms were interpreted to their disadvantage, the argument resulting in forecasting the success of Christianity and true believers.

The topic of conversion had been interpreted in the same work in the framework of criticising Catholics. Taking the Roman Church and the Pope, under the same umbrella with the “religion of Mohammed” had been an extremely common practice, a point of reference in a wide variety of religious argumentation. At this occasion, Melius evaluated converting attempts both by the Catholics and Islam as an evidence of their untruthfulness: “*These two emperors believe that they serve the Lamb and God in this manner, that they force people to take the religion of Rome and of Mohammed, however, they serve the devil instead, and take the voice of dragons.*”⁶⁷²

References to conversion, although scarce, are also present in epic poems about the Ottoman military campaigns. To cite an example, renegades depicted in the *Story of Sásvár Bey* (Sásvár bég históriája) appear to take not only religion by conversion, but all topoi connected to it, including

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., refers to Thuri, “Idea Christianorum Hungarorum” 230. On the Latin Alkoran: “Quod si scirent, nos habere exemplar sui Alcorani latinum, Deus bone, capitale esse toti Christianismo periculum.” See also Murdock, *Calvinism on the Frontier*, 24.

⁶⁷¹ Mihent az török az ű hitire kezdi hajtani azontúl elvész birodalma, mihent Isten megveri az törököket az ítélet előtt hét esztendeig, azaz egy kevés ideig nagy békesség leszen, semmi ellenség soholt nem leszen. Akkor minden fegyvert elvesztnek. Melius, *Szent János*, 264 r.

⁶⁷² Ez két császár azt véli, hogy az báránynak szolgál és Istennek ezzel, hogy az római és a Machumet hitire kényszeríti a népet, maga ördögnek szolgál, az sárkánytul hallgat. Melius, *Szent János*, 179v.

cruelty and barbarity: *“Those who leave us, / And take the religion of Mohammed, / Raided and ravaged our goods, / Cut down and killed our children.”*⁶⁷³

In the majority of the cases, references concern converted figures having roles in the course of sieges or battles. A translated source on the campaigns of Habsburg Charles in Africa also brings up the issue of converts in brief, with the exact opposite value attribution than the previous example. It tells of two converts helping their former co-believers to escape from captivity: *“Poor captives were given a great joy, / As two chief Turks agreed between one another, / To set free the prisoners, / And capture the castle for emperor Charles. // They wanted to perform a remarkable deed, / And leave their pagan-ness behind, / And remember their old faiths, / Believe in God and Jesus Christ. // One of them was of Spanish nationality, / His name was Francis of Medeliom, / Being called Memim as his Turkish name, / He pitied the company of prisoners from all his heart. // The other one’s name was Vincent of Catareus, / A Dalmatian, but had a different Turkish name, / This one was castrated, called Dyaffier aga, / Their names are worth of remembrance.”*⁶⁷⁴ The narrative attributes their generosity to the remains of Christian values in their souls.

Conclusions

Tripartite Hungary had a very complex system of religions, a religious diversity that reflected the presence of the Ottomans in a wide range of discourses. However, references in religious texts, and particularly, in songs about the Turks focused mostly on the enumeration of losses on “our” part, lamenting miseries of the congregation, and they mentioned the enemy considerably less frequently, and even then, Islam was commented on mostly with generic topoi and terms. Altogether, as “pagans” were referred to so frequently in the narratives, it is not easy to distinguish elements that

⁶⁷³ Így valakik mitőlünk elszakadtak, / Mahometnek vallására állottak, / Marháinkat inkább dúlták, fosztották, / Gyermeinket inkább ölték, vagdalták. *Sásvár bég históriája*, 45–48.

⁶⁷⁴ Nagy örem ádatéc szegény raboknac, / Két fő Törökec szolánac egymásnac, / Szabadioiti lönnénec raboknac, / Az várat meg vennéc Károly Czászárnac. // Ieles dolgot akarnac czeleködni, / Poganságot akarnac hátra hadni, / Régi vallásokrol még emléközni, / Istenben, s Iésus Christusban öc hinni. / Vala egyic Spaniol nemzetségéből, / Neue Ferentz neki Medeliomból, / Memim neue á Töröc neuezetből, / Rab nemzetséget ki meg szána szüwből. // A másic neue Catareus Vintze, / Dalmata ö, de Törökül más neue, / Ez herelt vala, Gyaffier Aga neue, / Méltó nekic neuec emléközetre. *Valkai, Károly császár hada Afrikában*, strophies 59–62.

were clearly attributed to Islam. A somewhat more detailed note on Islam is, for instance, Gergely Szegedi's song about the devastation of the Tatars, which operates with traditional categories of Mohammed being a trickster, and claims that Muslims reject to hear the true word.⁶⁷⁵

The reasons behind the less changeable nature of religious songs might be that they reached wider audiences, therefore their argumentations, topoi and images relied on Biblical traditions, which were more general and universal a priori. Medieval stereotypes about Islam are also present in the works, such as followers of Islam being heretics. Thus, the overall vernacular discourse on religion was strongly interconnected with earlier, medieval and then humanist discourses about the role of countries bordering the enemy; involving topoi of "scourge of God" and "propugnaculum Christianitatis." These topoi were widespread in all of Central Europe and beyond,⁶⁷⁶ helping the development of national identities.

⁶⁷⁵ "Ezek éjjel-nappal szolgának az bálványnak, / Tisztességet tesznek az csalárd Makhumetnek, / Jó szerencséjüket nem tulajdonítják / Néked, igaz Istennek. // Csak hallania is nevedet nem akarják." "These adore the idol night and day, / Worship tricky Mohammed, / Don't attribute their good fate / To You, the true God. // They would not even stand to hear your name." Gergely Szegedi, *A magyaroknak siralmas éneke a tatár rablásról*, 29–33.

⁶⁷⁶ See Lovro Kunčević, "Civic And Ethnic Discourses Of Identity In A City-State Context: The Case Of Renaissance Ragusa," in *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky, 149–77. (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

4. LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF MILITARY INTERACTIONS

As a conflict zone throughout the sixteenth century, Hungary had to continually defend its shifting borders: the era had been interspersed with waves of intense campaigns and peaceful periods. Constant ethnic and military rearrangement necessitated constant adaptation to new circumstances, and even to change as a condition itself. Literary traditions were also undergoing a rapid evolution in the century, developing new forms of literary activities while reflecting on events on the military, political and religious scene.

This chapter investigates the representational practices of active and less active phases of military interactions between Ottomans and Hungarians. The focus of the discussion falls on the features of existing literary practices that highly influenced methods of narrating military events, addressing formulaity and its functioning in event poetry. The application of this approach will manifest in the analysis of various types of military events and the exposition of their protagonists. Finally, the chapter discusses the toolkit of reactions and reflections that concerned activities and persons who crossed the military borderlines.

4. 1. Military Themes and Formulas

In order to grasp methods of transition from oral traditions to written culture and the modes of coexistence of the two types of traditions, various levels of repetitions and their corresponding formulas and themes are going to be in the focus of our attention. The purpose of forthcoming analyses is to trace repetitions, and if possible, sketch a script, a recurring structure that is filled with a set of elements during processes of composition and performance, involving various types of repetitions. Our sources usually do not operate with a climactic structure, rising tension and hierarchized plot: they have an episodic structure and are not arranged in a strict chronological order. In siege accounts, there is a certain range of descriptive parts that take a more or less fixed position in the narrations. For instance, the geographical layout and the architectural features of the fortresses are usually described before immersing into details of the actions of the siege. To cite a

prominent example, Tinódi's narrative of the siege of Eger⁶⁷⁷ describes the layout, conditions, and equipment of the castle in the most accurate manner, including architectural components of the fortification (arrangement of bastions, gates, walls), the distribution of defense weapons, the origins, assigned roles, arms and positions of military leaders, and the size and composition of their troops.

A similarly recurring element of narratives is the *oratio* of captains before the outbreak of the siege. Such speeches are present in a considerable number of sources, and are often employed to express the didactic teaching of the narration. In this manner, the didaxis might be directed towards two kinds of audiences: the depicted and the intended ones. In their contents, orations encourage the soldiers before the combat, and refer to ethical values such as bravery, good reputation and honour; they give practical advice regarding the attacks, and eventually, they refer to martyrdom as the fulfillment of the role of *athleta Christi*. Prominent examples of orations may be cited from the works of Sebestyén Tinódi in this case as well, e.g. from the story of Eger, or his work on the death of István Losonczi. His volume, the *Cronica* also has a poem that is an explicit model speech for captains in a versified form (*Hadnagyoknak tanúság*).⁶⁷⁸ The piece has a consciously planned place in the volume, as its references to the preceding Biblical stories of Judith and David demonstrate. The orations has further references that soldiers should put their trust in God's will in order to earn eternal salvation, recalling well-known Protestant topoi ("*Soldiers, you should trust in God, / As he is going to be your weapon and shield*"⁶⁷⁹) and applying the recently formulating moral system of the ideal soldier ("*If some of us will be killed, / those will be taken to Heaven by the angels / (...) Those of us who remain alive, / Will be joyful over the rich prizes, / and over the demolishment and peril of the pagans*"⁶⁸⁰). Representations of the Ottomans are also part of the soldiers' confidence's

⁶⁷⁷ *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, part I. Another example would be *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején*, 1568.

⁶⁷⁸ On the arguments in the speeches of Tinódi, see László Szilasi, "Argumenta mortis. Érvék és ellenérvék a hősi halálra: Becsület és méltóság a régi magyar elbeszélő költészetben és emlékiratokban. (Arguments and Counter-Arguments for Heroic Death: Honour and Dignity in Old Hungarian Narrative Poetry and Memoirs.)," *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 101, no. 3–4 (1997): 218–22.

⁶⁷⁹ "Csak Istenben vitézők bízzatok, / Mert ű lészön fegyvertök, paizstok." 15–6.

⁶⁸⁰ "Itt valaki közzülünk elesik, / Az angyalok mennyországba viszik / (...) Az kik köztünk ott megmaradandnak, / Mind örülnek nagy gazdag prédának, / És romlásán, veszésén pogánnak." 25–6, 29–31.

intensification process, the descriptions of their deeds is supposed to raise bellicosity: “*Long since have the Pagan Turks / Imprisoned and killed your people, / Destroyed and plundered your land.*”⁶⁸¹

As other narratives also give evidence, the Turks had been often referred in captain’s orations. The speech of Zsigmond Báthory from the work of István Szölösi⁶⁸² is addressed not to the fighting soldiers, but to the lords who were expected to finance them. The narrative warns about the danger of the campaigns: “*Valiant lords, did you hear the news / That our beautiful country is full of Turks? // Our noble land will be shared with the pagans, / If God will not be merciful with us.*”⁶⁸³ Topoi from religious discourses, such as the Turks being the Antichrist were also often involved in the speeches. The next example, from the chronicle of István Székely, accounts the speech of Johannes Hunyadi is described at the defense of Belgrade: “*My dear sons, why are you frightened by these, who were even attacked by you under my leadership, and against whom your weapons were never unfortunate. Therefore now too, my loving sons, trust Christ (...) against the Turkish nation, who is also the enemy of Christ, and of us, thus you should not fear them.*”⁶⁸⁴

Crusading rhetoric were also often involved in the speeches, helping the establishment of the ideal of *athleta Christi*, and leading to the development of a particular moral system of the fighters. An example from the Story of Kenyérmező, the speech of István Báthor sheds light on this concept: “*We are all holy soldiers, / Because we fight for Jesus Christ, / We fight for our faith and homes against the pagans (...) We fight against the unfaithful Turks, / Who condemn our God all the time.*”⁶⁸⁵

Reference to the fear of soldiers is an often recurring rhetorical procedure in event poetry. As for

⁶⁸¹ “Régtől fogván ez pogán terekök / Elhordották, levágták nemzettök, / Pusztították, rablották földetök.” 22–4.

⁶⁸² *Historia on Zsigmond Báthory*, 1595. The work relies on Johannes Jacobinus, the scribe of the prince.

⁶⁸³ Vitéz urak, vagyon-é híretekkel, / Hogy szép hazánk majd elborul törökökkel? / Az pogán osztozik nemes földünkkel, / Ha az Isten nem néz ránk kegyelemmel. (21–4.)

⁶⁸⁴ “Szerető fiaim, miért ijedtetek meg ezek előtt, kiknek ennek előtte az én fejedelemségem alatt a nyakokon jártatok, és soholt a tü fegyvertök ezek ellen szerencsétlen nem volt. Ennek okáért most is, most is szerető fiaim, bízzatok a Krisztusba...török nép ellen, ki a Krisztusnak olyan ellensége, mint minekönk, azért nem illik ezektől félmetek.” *Chronica*, Székely István, Krakkó, 1559, 213 r.

⁶⁸⁵ “Mi pedég mindnyájan szent vitézek vagyunk, / Az Jézus Krisztusért azkik viaskodunk; / Hitünkért, házunkért pogánokkal víjonk (106–8.) És szemben megvéjük hitlen törököket, / Akik csak káromlják mindenkor Istenünket.” Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején...*, 1568, 106–08 and 134–35.

the long-term development of the topos, it seems that by the end of the sixteenth century, more emphasis was placed on personal heroic values, resulting in references to personal fears and personal honour, as the example by Szölösi from the turn of the century attests: “*If one considers honour, / He will not be threatened by fear, / But the one who disregards his own honour, / Will be the prisoner of Turks forever. // It is better if all of us are killed by arms, / Than to rattle irons over the sea.*”⁶⁸⁶

An emblematic example of formula-type elements in the narratives is the battle cry, that is, the act of shouting the names of Jesus and Allah by the counterparts of sieges. The formula has relevance both as a narrative component, i.e., a sujet element, and as an expression that is obviously oral in its form. As battle cries are referred in the sources, they are very simple in their forms (“Jesus” and “Allah”), and do not appear in many variations, attesting their formulaic character in the narratives. Although the origins of the battle cry as a formula had not been yet identified, they are present in medieval Spanish epics – a tradition that is a prominent example of having a transitional character, with a coexistence of oral and written vernacular traditions, and further, a culture that has a wide range of subjects describing fights between Christians and Muslims.⁶⁸⁷

The earliest examples of battle cries in the Ottoman-Hungarian context are from 1456, when Capistrano and his crusaders are noted to use *nomen Jesu* as a cry, terrifying and killing Turks merely with the outcry, who shouted the name of Mohammed in response in vain. The account of Tagliacozzo, telling the story of the defense of Belgrade, describes Capistrano referring to the Biblical example of Joshua (foreshadowing the historiographical approaches of Protestants of referring to this figure) to encourage his army: “*I had repeatedly encouraged and exhorted our army, acting like Joshua at the ruins of Jericho, so when I acclaimed and invoked the most holy name, they were all to shout ‘Jesus’ as loud as they could. And so they did.*”⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁶ “Az ki az tisztességet meggondolja, / Annak szívét félelem le nem nyomja, / Ha ki pedig böcsületit elhagyja, / Töröknek leszen az örökös rabja. // Jobb egy lábíg fegyver között elesnünk, / Hogy sem tengeren túl vasat zörgetnünk.” Historia on Zsigmond Báthory, 297–302.

⁶⁸⁷ Matthew Bailey, “Oral Composition in the Medieval Spanish Epic,” *PMLA* 118, no. 2 (2003), 259.

⁶⁸⁸ Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 116–7 refers to the account of Giovanni da Tagliacozzo on the campaign, (Relatio, 765, 786, 797.)

The sources demonstrate a frequent presence of battle cries: altogether, I counted 28 examples in sixteenth-century event poetry. Nine of them⁶⁸⁹ mention both Allah and Jesus, operating with a balanced structure. Calling ‘Jesus’ seems to be exclusive for Christians: only one source mentions another Christian protector of the armies, Mary, who is referred to as the Christian bulwark (in particular, of the hayduks⁶⁹⁰) in the narrative of the Calvinist Menyhárt Bornemisza Váczi about István Bocskay from 1607. Although the text is fragmentary in the concerned strophe, the line endings are legible: “(...) [the Turks] *shouted Allah*, / (...) [the grammatical subject is not clear] *were surprised*, / (...) [the hayduks] *shouted Mary*.”⁶⁹¹

Within the script of epics, battle cries are commonly positioned at the beginnings of attacks, or at moments of gratitude. The typical scenes of crying Jesus and Allah determines the functions of these cries, too: they express awareness, readiness for combat, camaraderie⁶⁹² in attack scenes, joy⁶⁹³ or despair⁶⁹⁴ as reactions to the results of combats – in this latter case, they function as prayers.⁶⁹⁵ At parts of the plot when battle cries sign the start of the combat, shouting Jesus and

⁶⁸⁹ Six of the nine references are from Tinódi, e.g. *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, “Early in the morning, there were screamings, / Shouting the name of Allah from many directions, / Charging out first from the castles, / Starting the siege with twenty-seven flags. // Turks climbed up to the broken parts, / But their attempt was in vain, / As the soldiers inside were alert, / And shouted Jesus, Jesus.” “Lőn jó reggel hajnalban sivalkodás, / Nagy sok felől oly nagy Allah-kiáltás/Először paloták felől indulás, / Huszonhét zászlóval ostromnak rohanás. // Az terek az törésre felmászna, / De az ostromval semmit használnak, / Mert vitézők ott benn ébren valának, / Jézust, Jézust felszóval kiáltának.” (826–33.); *Szegedi veszedelem*: “They shouted Jesus and Allah from the two sides.” “Mind kétfelől Jézust és Alláht kiáltanak.” (196.); References from other writers: *Cantio de militibus pulchra*: “The two sides went against each other strongly, / The Turks all shouted “Allah”, / Hungarians all shouted “Jesus;” “Két fél öszve erősen roppanának, / Az törökök mind “Allát” kiáltának, / Az magyarok mind “Jézust” kiáltának.” (115–7.); Bornemisza Váczi Menyhárt, *Históriás ének Bocskay Istvánról*: “Turks, Hungarians shoued Jesus, Allah, / Török, magyar Jézust, Allát ivölte, / Rettenetesképpen meg nekimene. (1087–8.).

⁶⁹⁰ The hayduks were originally armed peasants, who joined prince Bocskay in his uprising against the Habsburgs in 1604.

⁶⁹¹ Bornemisza Váczi Menyhárt, *Históriás ének Bocskay Istvánról*, 1607.

⁶⁹² Tőke Ferenc, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 1556, “They prepared every man to start the attack, / They made a great, cruel shouting of Allah, / And started to go for the siege to all directions.” “Minden népet ostromhoz készétének, / Nagy kegyetlen Allah-kiáltást tének, / Mindenfelül ostromnak ők menének.” (129–131.)

⁶⁹³ Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, (at a scene when the gunpowder explodes spontaneously, killing many Hungarians): “This became a huge joy of the pagans, / They shouted loudly Allah altogether.” “Lőn ezön örömk az pogánoknak, / Nagy felszóval mind Alláht kiáltnak.” (1007–8.)

⁶⁹⁴ *Ali pasa históriája*: “They sent a message from Buda, / That sultan Azma had died, / Hojas started to pray, / Every dervish shouted ‘Allah.’” “Megizenék onnét belől Budára, / Azma szultánnak hogy történt halála, / Hoccsák adják magokat imádságra, / Minden dervis “Illá”-t kiáltana.” strophe 31; Temesvári István, *Historia about Bathory Zsigmond*: “Hungarians with their great booty, / Returned to the camp, and were in great joy, / Lords shouted Jesus together with the soldiers, / Were grateful to God with nice praises.” “Magyarok peniglen szép nyereségekkel, / Térének táborban, vadnak nagy örömmel, / Mind Jézust kiáltnak urak vitézekkel, / Nagy hálákat adnak szép dicséretekkel.” (281–4.)

⁶⁹⁵ *Oh én két szemeim nótájára*, probably 1594 or 96: “Those in captivity cry for you, / Come to your fore with their hearts in misery, / Bow to the ground, and shout Jesus Jesus together with us.” “Kiáltnak tehozzád kik fogságban tartatnak, / Nagy keserves szívvel te elődben járulnak, / Földre leburulván velünk egyetemben Jézust Jézust kiáltnak.”

Allah is often accompanied with references to other, loud sound effects, such as the beating of drums and blowing of trumpets;⁶⁹⁶ or, in a case noted by Tinódi, the shout is accompanied with the metaphor of thunder.⁶⁹⁷ There are two formal features of the cries that might be related with the oral character of narratives. The form of ‘Allah’ in writing often appears (altogether, I counted 6 examples) as *Alla*, or *Allát* in the accusative, implying the oral recitation of the text. The second trait is the repeated cry of the names of Jesus or Allah,⁶⁹⁸ indicating the orality of the cry from one side, but fitting perfectly into the system of repetitions of the narrative as well.

Mourning of the deceased defenders also constitutes a constant part of scripts. Formal variations of sections describing grief in narrative songs include catalogs of the deceased and their deeds, and mourning formulas (for instance, Tinódi’s *Buda veszéséről és Terek Bálint fogságáról* describes the wife of the title hero as “... praying and crying heavily,⁶⁹⁹” similar to the epic about the siege of Szabács: “*Whose mother is crying at home night and day.*⁷⁰⁰” The works of Tinódi often incorporate pieces of laments (*sirató*) into the narratives in a way that they constitute a semi-independent part of the epic within the complete structure (introduction-main part-mourning/farewell formula-prayer-closing), such as *Az vég Temesvárbán Losonczi Istvánnak haláláról.*⁷⁰¹ The employment of the genre independently, or as a literary supplement, may be observed in other cases too, such as in the anonymous story of György Turi, that is an example for the former, more independent case of lamenting, when all the town and the entirety of the county mourns the captain of Várpalota. Obviously, laments in event poetry are presumed to be in connection with the querela-tradition

(16–18.)

⁶⁹⁶ Sárközi Máté, *Cantio de millitibus*: “Many nice troops go for the attack, / With beautiful flags flying among them, / Drums and trumpets are blown, / When they shout Jesus.” “Sok szép hadak majd indulnak, / Köztek szép zászlók lobognak, / Dobok, trombiták harsognak, / Mikor Jézust kiáltanak.” (1–4.); or Debreceni S. János, *Militaris congratulatio*: Dobunkat perdítvén, trombitát zendítvén, Jézust Jézust kiáltunk (13.). Altogether, I counted 8 examples for the theme of drumbeat. The episode is present in other literatures too: W. H. Jackson, “Warfare in the Works of Rudolf von Ems,” in *Writing War. Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare.*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Francoise Le Saux, and Neil Thomas, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 52 brings up the example of *Willehalm von Orlens*. See also Sándor Takáts, “A török-magyar énekesek és muzsikások (Turkish-Hungarian Singers and Musicians),” in *Bajvívó magyarok (Combating Hungarians)*, 178.

⁶⁹⁷ “The sky is roaring at Lippa from the great shouting, / From shouting Jesus, Allah loudly” “Zönög az ég Lippán nagy sivalkodástul, / Jézust, Alláht nagy fennszóval kiáltástul,” *Erdéli história*, 1269–70.

⁶⁹⁸ *Budai Ali basa históriája*: “They shouted Allah, Allah in their joy” “Örömkben Alláht, Alláht, kiáltának” (448.); Debreceni S. János, *Militaris congratulatio*: “Let us shout Jesus Jesus” “Jézust Jézust kiáltunk” (13.)

⁶⁹⁹ “Fohászodik vala és igen sír vala”, line 177.

⁷⁰⁰ “Kinek anyja é-naponkéd sírhon,” (Szabács viadala, line 31–32.)

⁷⁰¹ On the wailing songs in Tinódi’s works, see Sápy, “Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén vitézi siratói.”

prominent in religious discourses.

Traditionally, narrated manners of expressing grief are gender-determined in many cases: mourning by men is often expressed by extreme reactions, by acts of violence and anger.⁷⁰² There are topos-like expressions of depicting the sorrow and grief of Muslims, such as in the epic about the Christian reconquista of Alhama in 1482, where they are described plucking their beards⁷⁰³ as a sign of mourning. At this point, I should recall the practice of depicting the sultan as tearing out his beard and note the coincidence of the two images, and make a further reference to the “anger of the sultan” representational practice, which is also a frequent sign of mourning in the narratives. There are examples of beard-plucking in the case of other figures too: these typically are Turks, but in one particular case from the end of the sixteenth century, the image is being used in a song of a Christian captive, who prays before his execution: “*My soul is relieved now in God, / Now that I am not tortured by the hands of the hangman, / My beard and hair is not being plucked.*”⁷⁰⁴

To continue the line of formula-type motives of the narratives, defeating the enemy who has enormous numerical advantage is a plot formula present in many descriptions of combats. The topos is of Biblical origin,⁷⁰⁵ although it is also part of crusading and humanist traditions.⁷⁰⁶ It might also have strong ties with orality in the case of Hungarian narratives, taking the abundant examples in folk tales and the fact that the examples we have in the vernacular are from narratives that have distinctive oral features. Although attempts were made in scholarship to connect the topos with widespread practices of diffusing false information deliberately about the size of the enemy,⁷⁰⁷ the examples present in narratives underline the formulaic nature of the topos. To give an example,

⁷⁰² Callahan, “The Widow’s Tears,” in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity*, ed. Carlson and Weisl, 253.

⁷⁰³ Gilbert, “The Lamentable Loss of Alhama,” 1002–3. References to the practice are present in the Bible, prohibiting the self-mutilation in grief (Leviticus 19.27–28, 21.5, and Deuteronomy 14.1). However, by the Renaissance, the image seems to be frequent in narratives about Muslims.

⁷⁰⁴ “Lölköm Istenben mostan csak nyugodnék, / Hóhír kezétől mostan nem kíznatnék, / Szakállom, hajam így nem szaggatatnék.” Lakatos Péter, 1595, 70–72.

⁷⁰⁵ Leviticus 26:8: “Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.”

⁷⁰⁶ For instance, it is present in Johannes Bocatius’s XX (in *Janus Pannonius - Magyarországi humanisták*)

⁷⁰⁷ Sándor Takáts, “Lesvetés (Trap Raids),” in *Bajvivó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)*, (Budapest: Móra, 1979), 195.

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the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*⁷⁰⁸ applies this topos as a method to refer to the miraculous success over the Turks: “*These [Turks] count five or six hundred, / We are only one and half hundred.*”⁷⁰⁹ Miraculous elements are often connected to descriptions of superiority of the enemy, such as in the epic of Sásvár Bey: “*But this was the miraculous deed of God, / Beating three thousand pagans, / From the twelve hundred Hungarians who were in the army, / Not even one had vanished, they were in great joy.*”⁷¹⁰ Variations of the topos in narratives attest that by the end of the century, miracles attributed exclusively to God were joined with the heroic morals of Hungarians, helping them in surpassing the outnumbered enemy: “*The Turks went into fight with a plentiful troops, / Hungarians with heroic bravery.*”⁷¹¹

Enumerations are also recurring elements of the narratives, present typically right before or after the descriptions of the siege combats. Catalogs, lists and genealogies are claimed to be typical in oral narratives,⁷¹² but while in orality the number of elements appear to be more important than their accurateness, with the advancement of literacy, reliability of listing becomes more determining. This statement may be supported by the exploration of the differences of Tinódi’s and the *Cantio de militibus pulchra*’s catalogues: the former sacrifices metrum for the sake of accuracy of listed names, while the latter regards metrum more important.⁷¹³ The main functions of catalogs also differ in oral and written type of works: in the former ones, they serve as mnemotechnical tools, while in the latter, they explicitly function as memorials for the heroes, as Tinódi’s note attests: “*I let God count those, / Who were trapped in the fort of Temesvár, / But I name many soldiers, / Who deserve to be praised for ever.*”⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁸ Orlovsky, “A históriás ének.”

⁷⁰⁹ “Ezek vadnak ötszázan vagy hatszázan, / Mi peniglen vagyunk csak másfélszázan” lines 85–86.

⁷¹⁰ Sásvár bég, “De ez vala csuda Isten dolgában, / Háromezer pogánnak verésében, / Tizenkét száz magyar közül ez hadban / El nem vesze, valának nagy örömben. (517–20.) An other example: Tőke Ferenc, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 1556.: Azt nem tudjuk benne mennyi ott megholt, / De bizonynyal benne mindennap sok megholt, / Magyarokban csak Kis héres (?) János megholt, / Mind az öt nap ilyen szerencséjek volt. (465–8.)

⁷¹¹ Szölösi István, rövid história (on the campaigns of Zsigmond Báthory): “Az törökök harcolnak sokasággal, / Az magyarok vitézi bátorsággal.” (309–10.)

⁷¹² Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, no. 3 (1963), 309. Catalogs can be found in: Sásvár bég históriája, Bornemisza Váczi Menyhárt (Históriás ének Bocskay Istvánról), Anonym, *Az vitéz Turi György haláláról* and others.

⁷¹³ Jankovits, “A szóbeli kultúra,” 41.

⁷¹⁴ “Megszámlálásra hagyom úristennek, / Vég Temesvárba kik ott rekkenének, / De vitézökben számost megnevezek, /

4. 2. Narrating Military Events

The present subchapter discusses representational practices of military actions that lead narratives from large-scale events to smaller ones. First, reflections on greater political events such as campaigns, alliances and the vassal status will be addressed; then, after turning to determining battles, sieges, smaller defense sieges will be taken into account, attempting to examine personal combat and neck-to-neck fight; finally, the study of smaller raids, and of other kind of military interactions that did not have a determining role in campaigns will follow.

4. 2 .1. Campaigns

Reflections on campaigns, the largest scale events among Ottoman–Hungarian military interactions on the military scene, are characterized by multiple traditions of referring to the enemy, from chronicle traditions – both in the original Latin and their translated, vernacular versions – to historiographical traditions that were developed along the Wittenberg concept, and the traditions of congregational songs. References to military events written by Protestant writers involve the same imagery presented in religious texts: the Antichrist and Biblical figures of religious song poetry are also present in discourses on military campaigns. Péter Meliusz Juhász’s *Revelations of St. John* describes the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, a current event in terms of religious texts, attributing events to God’s will: *“But until the Last Judgment, there will be armies, as this year God, by the means of Satan and the Antichrist, brought two emperors, invaded Gyula by pasha Pertal, by the Turks Tatars, and Wlachs”* (...) *“Overrunning the land: As nowadays the Turks and Tatars, anno 1566 overran the land: Gyula, Sziget was invaded: (...) As the Antichrist surrounds and tricks the camp of God, the congregation with a false spiritual weapon, false knowledge; the same manner, the pope, the Antichrist, the sect of Mohammed, his hojas and dervishes surround, trick, deceive them and as a roaring lion, they want to swallow them (...) This manner, the Turkish Empire may grow greater by the means of a bodily weapon, and wants to subjugate and convert*

Christians, as Nabuchodonosor, Darius, and the Medus [did].⁷¹⁵”

The case is slightly different with practices of event poetry. András Szkhárosi Horvát’s narrative on rulers (1545) refers to the Ottoman campaigns using the imagery of religious narratives, applying, for instance, the topos of “scourge of God,” however, with a reference on the differences of the Turks’ language, the work’s argumentation becomes exceptional in the whole studied corpus: “*Alas, I bring an ancient, dense nation upon you, / The language of whom you will not ever understand, / Who will break your strong towns. // You may see it well, and cannot deny, / That you are oppressed by pagan Turks, / You pay them a lot, but you don’t know their language.*”⁷¹⁶ His other, emblem-type work is also a distinct example in a sense that the text is addressed to the personified greediness, nonetheless the text utilizes similar narrative elements to the above ones: “*This whole world is overrun by you, greediness, / Alas, you destroyed all of Greece, / You brought a great shame on Hungary, / Made it raided by various parties, / Until you gave castle of Buda into pagan hands.*”⁷¹⁷”

A closer observation of the most prominent collection of event poetry, the *Cronica* of Tinódi, leaves us with curiously few references to grand campaigns. The underlying reason might be that texts of the volume focus instead on individual siege descriptions, and observations of larger-scale events are restricted mostly to the particular text with the widest perspective to events, the introductory, extensive work on Transylvania (*Erdéli história*). This narrative, at least parts of it, was one of the songs that were composed among the last in the volume. Although Tinódi participated in diets discussing peace negotiations with the Ottomans (for instance, in Nagyszombat, 1545), he never dealt with these in his works. Instead, around these years, he worked on accounts describing Ottoman campaigns outside of Hungary – for instance, about the fights of Suleyman

⁷¹⁵ Péter Melius Juhász, *Az Szent Jánosnak tölti jelenésnek igaz írás szerint való magyarázása*, Várad, 1567, 209r and 263v.

⁷¹⁶ “Im hozok tereád régi vastag népet, / Az kinek te nyelvét ingyen meg sem érted, / Erős városodat öszvetöri néked. // Im jól látjátok, nem tagadhatjátok, / Az pogán töröknek inségében vagytok, / Nagy sokat fizettek, de nyelvén nem tudtok” Szkhárosi, *Az fejedelemségről*, 1545, 226–231.

⁷¹⁷ “Mind ez világot fősvénység elfutád, / Görögországot lám mind elpusztítád, / Jó Magyarországot nagy szégyenben hozád, / Az sok pártolókkal mindaddig dúlatád, / Mígnem Buda várát pogán kézben adád.” Szkhárosi, *A fősvénységről*, (211–215.)

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with pasha Kazul. In this work, he refers shortly to the imperial claims of the sultan, repeating some topoi regarding rulership in the beginning of the work (*“He has a great part of this world, / He is the scourge of God in many countries”*⁷¹⁸) but quickly turns to episode-type descriptions of the events. In other narratives, references to larger scale events also remain in the introductory parts (e.g. *“Buda was the capital of Hungary, / That had fallen into the arms of the Turkish emperor, / Now it is the defense castle of the Turks, / Where they shout ‘nabat’ instead of ‘Herdo.”*⁷¹⁹), with one possible exception, the Story of King Sigismund (although the work discusses much earlier events). In another work, Tinódi reflects on the conditions of the subjects of the Ottomans, commenting on the vassal status of the country: *“Hungarians under the rule of Turks, / Are under great poverty and slavery, / I wonder who would want to live under the same conditions, / Or to rule the sanjak and pashas?”*⁷²⁰

Epigons of Tinódi followed his pattern in being silent about campaigns and deal with them mostly in the propositions of works, or in some cases, references to the sultan, as it had been demonstrated in Chapter 2. The narrative of the story on the siege of Szigetvár follows this pattern: *“The sultan had such a thought, / To show off himself for his old days, / Grow his own country, / And spill the blood of many Christians.”*⁷²¹ These lines also follow a practice that started to form a tendency in the literary representation of Ottomans by the time of the composition of the work: the Ottomans are all eager to earn merits for their own glory, motivated by pride and selfishness. On the other hand, these patterns also emphasize the religious, but very one-sided motivation of the military movements.

A lengthy reflection on campaigns from a much later work (1581), the *Story of Sásvár*, comments on the vassal status of the country. The passage is part of the tradition relying on the Book of Daniel, and is a representative of narratives that disapprove the behaviour of soldiers and

⁷¹⁸ “És nagy része vagyon mindez világban, / Isten ostora ő nagy sok országban.” *Szulimán császár...*, 7–8.

⁷¹⁹ “Buda vala feje Magyarországnak, / Ki kezében esék terek császárnak: / Most végháza ím az Terekországnak, / Herdo helyött ott nabatot kiáltnak.” *Varkucs Tamás idejébe lött csaták Egőrből*, 9–12.

⁷²⁰ “Magyarok kik vannak terek kéz alatt, / Azok vannak nagy inség, rabság alatt; / Vajjon s ki kívánna lakni az alatt, / Vagy uralnia szancsákat és basát?” *Varkucs Tamás*, 315–16.

⁷²¹ “Vala császárnak ilyen gondolatja, / Véniségére hogy magát megmutassa, / Az ő országát hogy megöregbítse, / Sok keresztyéneknek vérét kiontsa.” *História az Szigetvárnak veszéséről*, 1566, strophe 3.

their greediness: “*We hardly ever heard about such a nation, / Neither have we read about such in histories, / Have never seen such a cruel one, / It is worthy thus to condemn them forever. // Oh you hound, godless nation, / As for soldiers, you have such a community, / You think that heroism lies in / Chasing away the people of the land? // Let us think about all the monarchies, / Syrians and Persians, / Alexander of Macedonia, / Or the Roman Empire. // It does not resemble any of these, / As the Turk has neither word, nor faith, / It is worthless to pay for them, / They collect taxes constantly, and destroy those who do not pay.*”⁷²²

At the end of the century, the number of reflections on the Ottoman presence shows a growing tendency, usually interconnected with the concept of *querela Hungariae*. Most of these works follow a settled pattern, starting with a general lamentation of the devastation caused by Turks and Tatars; they encounter losses of goods and the necessity of fleeing; they refer to the mocking of God by enemies; and they are finished with a prayer. The widely known lament written by Péter Bornemisza as a refugee in Huszt, is an early example, which refers to prosecution on all levels: “*Upper Hungary is owned by arrogant Germans, / Srem is owned by bloody Turks. / When, if ever, will I stay in good Buda! // I am persecuted by the arrogant Germans, / I am surrounded by the bloody Turks, / When, if ever, will I stay in good Buda!*”⁷²³ An example from the very end of the sixteenth century shows the directions of representational practices that were fully developed later by mannerism and baroque. The topic of the work is the retaking of Győr in 1598, and differently from the tradition relying on Biblical parallels, this one uses mythological references to describe a

⁷²² “Ilyen nemzetséget mi nem hallottunk, / Históriákban mi alig olvastunk, / Hozzá hasonló kegyetlent nem láttunk, / Azért méltó, hogy mindenkor átkozzunk. // Oh, te hitvány, istentelen nemzetség, / Mint katona, lám nálad oly az község, / Abban áll volt-é az vitézség, / Hogy előtted megfutamik az község? // Gondolkodjunk mind az monarchiákról, / Siria, és Perzsiabeliekről, / Macedonai Alexanderről, / Avagy az Római birodalomról. // Csak egyikhez sem hasonló ezeknek, / Mert sem szava, sem hiti nincs töröknek, / Semmi haszna nincsen az fizetésnek, / Mind hódoltat, ‘s hódolatlant elvesztnek.” *Sásvár bég históriája*, 249–264.

⁷²³ “Az Fölföldet bírják az kevély nímötök, / Szerémséget bírják az fene törökök. / Valljon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom! // Engömet kergetnek az kevély némötök, / Engöm környülvettek az pogán törökök. / Valljon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!” *Cantio optima*, 1556, 4–9.

Later examples: Minden felől reánk ellenség jöve, / Egyfelől röttente az török híre, / Másfelől tatárnak tüze elveszte. (7–9.) Drága örökségünk mind elpusztula, / Híres nemzetségünk mint gyaláztaték, / Minden drága marha tőlünk távozzék. (...) Hatalmas erődeél veszed el őket, / Add meg koronánkot és királyunkat, / Add meg győzedelmes fejedelmünket. *Cantio optima*, 77–8. probably from before 1596, 22–4, 28–30.) Isten kit reá az bünért bocsáta, / Fertelmes néppel megostoroztata (...) Rettenetesen nagy véres ostorát, / Isten szállát az ő táborát, / Az havasokon által hozá hadát, / Ki által szintén megállja bosszúját.” Imre Gyarmati, *Cantio pulchra*, 5–6; 9–12.

siege, involving also the Turks as part of this practice, recalling topoi of humanist discourses about the taking of Constantinople: “*Eyes of Polyphemus and the mind of Turks was blinded by charred wood;*” “*Minotaurus was kept well in the nice labyrinth of Crete for a long time, / As the sultan nowadays feasts on human blood in Constantinople.*”⁷²⁴

Another example from the turn of the century sheds light on one more possible direction of the later development of discourses. The text of István Szőlősi describes the situation of the country referring to lost fortresses in a similar manner like an author from two decades earlier would do. However, if we take a closer look at the imagery and the symbols, we can detect signs of a new pattern, which will fully culminate later in baroque: “*The heart of Turks has inflamed against us, / Their fists are full with sabers to crush us, / To take away the people of our homes in ropes, / And he would not pity breaking their nails until this will happen. // They wandered around on our borders violently, / The Turks live now in Lippa, Gyula, Csanád, / They seized the Várad of Tór and Facsát, / Tricked us from our many strong castles. // Our ancestors earned these by blood, / Our noble forefathers defended them with blood, / Let us rise, our good soldiers, / Let our shirts soak with Turkish blood.*”⁷²⁵

The possibility of alliance with the Ottomans is communicated with great opposition in the narratives. Perhaps, the strong anti-Turk attitude of Tinódi was trendsetting in this issue as well: his views were explicated in an intense tone in his works, along with those about the son of his imprisoned patron, Bálint Török. In the narrative, János, who is reported to have become the enemy of the Turks for life, answers Isabella (the widow of Louis II) when she asks him to take up arms on the side of the Ottomans: “*He said this to the lady queen, / That he would be her servant on that condition, / That he would never bear arms together with the Turk, / But for his father he would be*

⁷²⁴ “Polyphemus szeme törökök elméje üszöggel vakították;” “Sokáig Krétába szép labirintusba az Minotaurus hízék, / Mint császár mostanba Konstantinápolyba ember vérével lakik” (27; 139–40.) Márton Gyulai, *Epinicia*, 104–8.

⁷²⁵ “Töröknek ellenünk fellobbant szíve, / Romlásunkra szablyával marka tele, / Hogy házunk népét elvigye kötve, / Míg az lészen, megtörjék addig körme. // Határinkon erőszakkal kóborlott, / Török lakja Lippát, Gyulát, Csenádot, / Elfoglalta Tór Váradját s Facsátot, / Sok erős váratot tőlünk elcsalott. // Vérel keresték volt régi őseink, / Vérel oltalmazták nemes eleink, / Serkenjünk fel, mi édes vitézink, / Török vérel megázzék rajtunk az ing.” István Szőlősi, *Rövid história* (Short story of the campaigns of Zsigmond Báthory, 1595, 29–40.

against them until his own death.⁷²⁶”

The alliance of John Szapolyai and Suleyman that resulted in the fall of Buda in 1541 became a frequent topic in narratives. The one written by Márton at the end of the sixteenth century dramatizes the scene with an inner monologue of Suleyman, utilizing the topos of lamb and wolf as a symbol of the Ottoman “protection:” *“You, Hungarians, should subject yourselves to sultan Suleyman against the Germans, / So that he could provide a strong shelter for prince John and the other lords, / As happily as the wolf would be a shelter of lambs, the sultan would be their pastor. // Unprotected people, who now regard me to be, and even ask me to be your shelter, / As the things I wished came to be true, and I praise Allah for that, / If I ever get to Buda, that would be a nice nest to guide the country from within.”*⁷²⁷”

At the end of the century, a great number of poems were written against a planned Turkish alliance in Transylvania. János Baranyai Decsi wrote a lengthy history of the Ottoman sultans that argued against the alliance by referring to the unreliable nature of Turks (*“Haven’t you heard about the faith of the Turk, / The unfaithfulness of his promises? // He took many countries faking an alliance, / But as soon as he owned them, / He captured them against his promises.”*⁷²⁸), and warned his readership about the slaughters that awaits Transylvanians, from the nobility to the serfdom (*“The foolish serfs wish for the Turks as well, / They pray to God to see the Turks, / And the peril of their lord.”*⁷²⁹) Other works also operate with the unreliability topos, applying it with a wide variety of techniques, for instance, combined with bitter irony: *“The great sultan will spare no treasure, / And provide support by his people for you, / Because he loves the Hungarian nation so much, / But he would demand your loyalty.”*⁷³⁰”

⁷²⁶ “Ezt királné asszonnak megjelenté, / Hogy ő felsége szolgája úgy lenne, / Az terekkel együtt hadban nem lenne, / Sőt atyjáért holtig ellenök lenne.” Tinódi, *Enyingi Terek János vitézsége*, 41–4.

⁷²⁷ Szulimán császárnak hogy supplicálnátok német ellen magyarok, / Hogy János vajdának és az több uraknak lenne erős oltalmok, / Örömet azok is, mint farkas juhoknak, lenne olyan pásztorok. // ”Gyámoltalan népek, kik most reám néznek – mondván – leszek oltalmok, / Mert az mit kívántam, most ahhoz jutottam, Allának hálát adok, / Budában ha leszek, ott vagyon jó fészek, onnét országot bírok.” Márton, RMKT XVII/1, 361–2, 22–27.

⁷²⁸ “Avagy nem hallottál-é az töröknek hitirül, / Ű fogadásinak nagy hitetlenségérül? // Sok országot frigynek színe alatt megvött, / De mihelt valóban azokkal ő bírhatott, / Erős rabsága alá hiti ellen ő vetett.” Strophe 222–223.

⁷²⁹ “Az bolond paraszt is az töröket kívánja, / Úgyan Istent kéri, az töröket láthassa, / Ű földesurának veszését hogy láthassa.” Strophe 239.

⁷³⁰ Kéncset hatalmas császár nem kéméli, / Népe segítségét melléd vési, / Mert az magyar nemzetet igen szereti, /

All in all, grand campaigns were not reflected in considerable detail in vernacular event poetry. In order to grasp more detailed reflections, accounts commenting on particular battles and sieges have to be considered.

4. 2. 2. Decisive Battles and Sieges

The battle at Mohács in the August of 1526 is the origin of the Ottoman military presence at Hungary, the starting point of a completely new era in the Turkish-Hungarian relations. Discussion of the reasons of defeat has generated lengthy debates in scholarship, and among the most obvious causes of the defeat, unrealistic measurement of the Ottoman powers and unpreparedness for Ottoman military tactics (quick light cavalry, mobility, solidity of leadership) had been raised.⁷³¹ In contemporary literary discourses, the image formation of Mohács as a national catastrophe had been interrelated with the creation of the *hungarus* identity.⁷³²

Concerning the corpus of sources that had reflected on the battle, the most influential chronicles about Mohács were written in Latin, such as the work of Brodarics, influencing later historiographers, for instance, Istvánffy.⁷³³ There is evidence about the existence of popular songs about the battle in German⁷³⁴ and Latin. Latin tradition is a possible source of the topos of “querela Hungariae,” that later found its way into vernacular literary practice too, and was in its fullest bloom by the eighties of the century. Another topos originating from humanist Latin literature also came to the forefront: blaming the defeat to the lack of unity among Hungarians had been present in a wide scale of sources, from the correspondence of Louis II before the battle that claimed that the king was more afraid of the Turks of Hungary than of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire⁷³⁵ to the account of Joannes Ludovicus Vives, a convert (marrano), that attributed the presence of the Turks

Hűségedet tüled jó néven veszi. Bornemisza Váczi Menyhárt, *Históriás ének Bocskay Istvánról*, 1607, 625–8.

⁷³¹ On the battle itself in military context, see Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*. See also Klaniczay, “Mi és miért veszett Mohácsnál?”

⁷³² Tóth, ““The Making of...” 11.

⁷³³ Stephanus Brodaricus, *De conflictu Hungarorum cum Turcis ad Mohacz verissima historia*, Krakow, 1527; Nicolai Isthuanfl Pannoni *Historiarum de rebus Vngaricis libri 34*, Antoni Hierati, 1622.

⁷³⁴ Béla Pukánszky, “Mohács és az egykorú német közvélemény (Mohács and Contemporary German Publicity),” in *Mohácsi Emlékkönyv 1526 (Mohács Album 1526)*, ed. Imre Lukinich, 277–94. (Budapest, 1926).

⁷³⁵ Brewer et al eds, *Letters and Papers*, iv. 925, no. 2056.

to the lack of unity that was caused by Pius II.⁷³⁶

The investigation of vernacular Hungarian sources, however, results in very few references to the event. The complete Tinódi corpus contains only one reference to Mohács, in the first part of the *Erdéli história*: “(...) *good King Louis, / Who was lost for his country at Mohács.*”⁷³⁷ Other references to Mohács are also scarce: András Valkai’s work on the origins of Hungarian kings refers briefly to the battle, blaming the king for not waiting for the supporting armies of János Szapolyai, but hurrying to fight with an insufficient number of men: “[the king] *fought with the sultan, / And was beaten by him.*”⁷³⁸ The most detailed narrative in this respect is the work of Máté Skaricza on the history of the town of Ráckeve.⁷³⁹ The narrative refers to the battle in the context of ethnic transformations, as many Southern Slavic refugees were seeking asylum and a new place to live after fleeing to the North after the battle: “*But the Turk could be heard along the borders, / The battle on the fields of Mohács, / Caused chaos all over the land, // All that was built went into ruins, / As king Louis has passed away, / What remained were only the laments of the country, / The castle of Buda was also demolished.*”⁷⁴⁰ The work also reflects the preceding, growing threat of the Ottomans under the rule of Sigismund, that became obvious by way of Serbian refugees who appeared in the royal court: “*Hear the thing about the Serbs, / As they fled from their own country, / From the ruins of many lost castles, / And reached Buda from their common will. (...) We have had enough of the poverty under the Turks, / We have lost the better part of our country, / We tempered its heat and cold, / But we reached finally your majesty in person.*”⁷⁴¹

In contrast to the battle of Mohács, Suleyman the Magnificent’s fortress campaign in the middle of the sixteenth century was a series of military encounters that were recounted in great detail in

⁷³⁶ Mária H. Kakucska, “Joannes Ludovicus Vives Mohács-recepciója (The Mohács-Reception of Joannes Ludovicus Vives),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 111 (2007), 8.

⁷³⁷ “(...) az jó Lajos királ, / Ki Mohácson vesze ez orszáért az királ.” 31–2.

⁷³⁸ “De kevés néppel császárral megvíva, / Megvereték császár mia ő hada.” Valkai, *Az magyar királyoknak eredetéről*, 1567, 2923–2924.

⁷³⁹ Skaricza Máté, *Kevi városáról való széphistória*, 1581. RMKT 11, 239–248.

⁷⁴⁰ “De az török hallatik csak végen, / Az ütközet a Mohácsi mezőn, / Bódulást tön mind az egész földön. // Bomlása lön minden szép rakásnak, / Mert halála lön Lajos királynak, / Csak helye lön ország siralmának, / Pusztán állá vára is Budának. Skaricza, *Kevi városáról való széphistória*, 258–263.

⁷⁴¹ “Hallj szép dolgot immár az rácokról, / Mert fölkelvén önnön hazájokból, / Az sok megvett várnak romlásából, / Budát érték mind egy akarathúl. (...) Az töröknek eluntuk inségét, / El vesztöttük hazánknak jobb részét, / Türtük eddig mind hevét, hidegét, / Felségednek most értük személyét. (177–81, 185–188.)

event poetry. Events related to the campaign constitute episodes in the greater discourse presented by the complex of particular narratives. Sieges are the most important type of military events that can be traced in the formation of literary practices of vernacular forms, reflecting multiple traditions: orality, humanist discourses, and observations of the particular encounters are combined into a newly establishing form.

As a generality, because fortresses remaining in the hands of the enemy left an advancing army exposed to attacks on its rear, taking fortresses gained a central role in early modern military campaigns. After the renewal of fortification designs during the century forts became stronger, it took more time to take them. Thus, sieges could last for weeks, and not rarely, for months. The most convenient part of the day to initiate a siege was during the night, when attackers could surround the fortress unnoticed. It was of central importance not to let defenders charge out and mount a surprise attack. The lower walls that were characteristic of the new type of fortresses did not allow the defenders to look directly at the ground below, thus they had to be prepared for surprise attacks.⁷⁴² In order to economize their power in the siege campaigns, the aim of the Ottomans was to reduce the number of forts along the defense line instead of attacking them one by one.⁷⁴³ However, they had to consider in all cases the radius of effective action, as the army had to withdraw for the winter. The Ottoman Empire needed to plan campaigns accordingly: the further they advanced, the sooner they had to retreat.⁷⁴⁴ Ottomans were highly competent besiegers thanks to their organizational skills, highly trained troops and auxiliary workers, quality raw materials and technologies. They were also skillful in finding weak points of the fortifications. In the sixteenth century, the core of the besieging troops were the janissaries, who were joined by irregular troops, especially in campaigns of the seventeenth century. In general, the great Ottoman campaign between 1521-66 against fortresses resulted in a great success: altogether, only four forts were able to repel Ottoman sieges (Kőszeg in 1532, Temesvár in 1551, Eger in 1552, Szigetvár in 1556), and these were all temporary defense successes, as three of them, with the exception of Kőszeg, were

⁷⁴² Parker, *The Military Revolution*, 10–3.

⁷⁴³ Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 31–9.

⁷⁴⁴ Szakály, “The Hungarian-Croatian Border Defense System”, 153.

eventually captured.⁷⁴⁵

Narratives describing sieges reflect on the military context at diverse levels. Similar to the above attempt at tracing reflections on campaigns, the narratives contain considerably rare general observations: in fact, accounts of particular sieges tell about the campaign only in their introductory parts, or, works with a wider perspective mention the military movement. Such an example is András Valkai's work on the Origins of Hungarian kings, a quite early piece written in 1543, that has a general observation of the campaign launched by Suleyman: "*Three years after this, Suleyman, / Prepared against the country of the Hungarians, / To increase his Empire with its many defense castles, / As he was aware about the negligence of Germans.*"⁷⁴⁶ This reference mirrors the concept of Hungary being a buffer zone between the Ottomans and Habsburgs.⁷⁴⁷

The earliest siege narrative formed as a piece of event poetry is describing the siege of Szabács, a fortification along the southern border built by the Ottomans. On this occasion, the besiegers were Hungarians: the fort had been a constant threat for Belgrade in the fifteenth century, as it became a center of constant raids, so Matthias Corvinus decided to attack it in 1476.⁷⁴⁸ Although the originality of the work on the siege had been at the center of scholarly debates for a long time because of its outstanding formal and literary qualities, the consensus is that the work had been indeed written in the fifteenth century.⁷⁴⁹ The text operates with an extended military vocabulary, and gives evidence of a wide military knowledge, both in a general and a particular sense. The text describes the attacks in such a detailed manner that is rare even a century later: "*They attacked from the ditches, / But could not hurt Szabács even in this manner, / As they shot with incredible hackbuts, / Many arrows, more than many, / Handguns, great cannons, / And all other types of*

⁷⁴⁵ Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan*, 35.

⁷⁴⁶ "Lőn harmad esztendőben az Szulimán, / Készülésbe hogy magyarok országán, / Birodalmat végyen ő sok végvárán, / Németek hasznatlan voltakát látván." András Valkai, *Az magyar királyoknak eredetéről*, 3105–08.

⁷⁴⁷ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 3; Perjés, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, 4.

⁷⁴⁸ Ferenc Sebők, "A 'Szabács viadala.' Egy XV. századi verses krónika mint hadtörténeti forrás (The 'Siege of Szabács'. A Fifteenth-Century Versified Chronicle as Source of Military History)," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 122, no. 1 (2009), 203. See also László Veszprémy, "Szabács Ostroma (1475–1476) (The Siege of Szabács (1475–1476))," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 122, no. 1 (2009).

⁷⁴⁹ Péter Bognár and Iván Horváth, "A Szabács viadala (The Siege of Szabács)," in "*Látjátok feleim...*". *Magyar nyelvemlékek. Az Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár kiállítása ("Látjátok Feleim..." Linguistic Monuments. Exhibition in the National Széchenyi Library)*, ed. Edit Madas (Budapest: Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, 2009).

cannons, / *They shot them hastily and continuously, / And were on us with all their forces.*”⁷⁵⁰ The text demonstrates a considerable level of objectivity in the evaluation of the two forces, it even praises the Ottomans for their equipment – however, the episodic scenes of the second half of the poem, featuring Ali Bey and his deeds, are reflected in a ridiculing tone. In a peculiar manner, the Ottoman soldiers are referred to as disobeying their sultan and showing signs of loyalty to the Hungarian king at Buda (“*In the court of the current king, / They saw Turkish people in rich clothes, / Paying tribute to the king, / And standing around at marketplaces and over the castle. // As they heard this in Turkey, / The Turkish sultan was in great anger.*”⁷⁵¹), leaving the sultan in “anger,” a widely referred, formula-type device in the tradition. The text uses other themes as well, such as references to the sorrow of mothers, implying its connections to oral traditions.

To grasp a moment of the campaign when the vernacular epic tradition had already been established, it is worth looking in more detail at the narratives about the siege Szigetvár. The siege was the last stage in the siege campaign of Süleyman in 1566, and the fact that the sultan died in the battle, complemented with the heroic charge of the defenders who died instead of surrendering the fort, prepared the discourse for the birth of the peak of early modern Hungarian epic, written by Miklós Zrínyi in the middle of the seventeenth century (*The Peril of Sziget – Szigeti veszedelem*). There was a considerable corpus preceding this climate; and there were also preludes to the famous, 1566 siege. The fort of Sziget suffered several sieges (in 1530, it was defended by Bálint Török; in 1543 by Ferdinand; and there were two more sieges in 1555 and 1556), and many of them were narrated in versified (Ferenc Töke, 1556: *Historia obsidionis insulae Antemi [...] per rythmos Hungaricos*) or chronicle (Zsámboky, Istvánffy, Forgách) forms.⁷⁵² Among these, the account of Töke, a follower of Tinódi in style (for instance, he describes the geographical layout of the fortification, referring to the legend connected to the builder, Antemus, who, referring to Turks,

⁷⁵⁰ “Vízárokból viadalt es tartottak, / Azzal Szabácsnak ígyen sem árthattak, / Mert mondhatatlan szakálosokval, / Sok nyilakval, sőt számtalan sokval, / Kézi puskákval, nagy pattantyúkval, / És külömb-külobb álgýúkval, / Sebes és úgyan szűnetlen löttek, / Sőt minden erejekvel rajtonk löttek.” *Szabács viadala*, lines 17–24.

⁷⁵¹ “Jelennen királnak odvarában / Láttýák török népet kazdag ruhában / Királnak ékessen odvarlani, / Ment kel piacon várban állani. / Ezt meghallák mind Törökországba, / Török császár lön nagy bosszóságban.” (145–150.)

⁷⁵² Kovács, “Szigetvár veszedelmei.” There were also accounts of the 1566 siege in other languages, e.g. by Ferenc Crnko (1568) or Brne Karnatutic (1584).

claimed that “[their] *Fortune will turn at this island*.⁷⁵³”), is the closest to orality, using many formulaic expressions.⁷⁵⁴

The account of the decisive siege of 1566 had an anonymous narrator, who was present during the fighting, however, as he commits factual mistakes at the end of the description of the final events of the operations, he is supposed to have fled the fort before the final charge.⁷⁵⁵ He demonstrates his knowledge of strategic movements, provides details concerning the losses: his overall narrative perspective is from inside the castle. He employs various oral-type themes, e.g., he reports the sultan being sorrowful (“*The emperor was very sad about this, / That so many Turks were lost at the siege, / That so many beys and sanjaks were dead, / And that Szigetvár was so strong*.”⁷⁵⁶) The account also utilizes episodic stories to report details of the siege, such as of the Janissary, who saw Zrínyi being seriously injured, and reports the death of the captain for the pashas; when his claims turned out to be false, he was beheaded.⁷⁵⁷ The global failure of Ottoman siege attempts is attributed to the heroic, “*vitéz*” values of Hungarians in the work, and to their loyalty – demonstrating the establishment of a new type of moral system based on the self-identification of soldiers as a group: “*Turks could win there nothing, / As Hungarian soldiers were good fighters, / And obeyed Miklós Zrínyi, / And made an oath that they would die*.”⁷⁵⁸ Ottomans, on the contrary, are motivated by fear of shame – and of their sultan: even if they are “bored” by the continuous sieges, in order to avoid the emperor’s anger, they continue the charges.

Attempting to reveal recurring practices in the narration of siege attempts, charges, and military fights in the sources, it turns out that actual comments concerning these interactions are usually

⁷⁵³ “Szerencsések megfordul e szigetben.” Tőke Ferenc, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 1556, 48.

⁷⁵⁴ An example: “[Ali] Besieged Sziget for forty days, / Besieged it strongly day and night, / He made lots of effort and caution, / But God was holding Sziget.” *Negyven napig Szigetet véjta vala, / Éjjel nappal igen véjtatta vala, / Nagy sok munkát, vigyázást tett vala, / De az Isten Szigetet tartja vala.* (345–8.) *História az Szigetvárnak veszéséről, melyet Zolimán török császár megvénén kezéhez kapcsola*, 1566, 300–311.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 619.

⁷⁵⁶ Császár ezen erőssen bántódik vala, / Sok törökök az ostromon hullának, / Békőknek és szancsákoknak halálán, / Szigetvárának sok erős voltán. Strophe 12.

⁷⁵⁷ Vég ustrumon Zrini Miklós nem vala, / Mert halálos ágyában fekszik vala, / Nyolcadik ustromon sebösült vala; / Egy jancsár, ágyához akadott vala. // Harmadnapig az jancsár eltitkolá, / Hogy meghalna, eszében vőtte vala, / Az basáknak meglelőntötte vala, / Fejét az vitéznek elvőtték vala. 289–296

⁷⁵⁸ “Semmit az törökek ott nem nyerének, / Mert magyar vitézek emberködének, / Zrini Miklósnak szavához hallgatnak, / Megesküdtek hogy minnyájan meghalnak.” strophe 17.

brief and schematic, with less detailed descriptions of combat. Typically, the beginning of charges, as it had been presented before, is initiated with a battle cry and the beating of drums; it is followed by the description of the fight itself; and ends with the enumeration of losses, including fallen heroes. As it is apparent, the most intense events of the siege are framed with theme-type elements. Passages describing smaller-scale actions are relatively rare: these type of descriptions are restricted mostly to pieces of “classical” event poetry, i.e., for Tinódi’s and his followers’ works. Tinódi indeed has some notes concerning the military operations, for instance, in his long work on Transylvania, describing smaller Hungarian successes in Csálya: “*The soldiers got there by dawn, / Placed ladders to the sides of Csálya, / The soldiers entered quickly into the castle, / Cut down many Turks in there suddenly;*”⁷⁵⁹ or a lengthier passage from the peril of Szeged, narrating the beginning and dynamics of the attack: “*The wings of both sides crashed against each other, / They held a heavy combat with each other, / Many Turkish leaders died there. // Many drums, trumpets were making a loud noise, / Many people were shouting and roaring horrendously, / Numerous painted horses rode around on the field, / From their backs Turkish leaders fell and died. // Then the combat slowed between them, / Both armies returned to the standing troops, / Shouting Jesus and Allah for the second time, / They started to shoot from barrels suddenly.*”⁷⁶⁰

Attributed intentions and reactions of Turks and their strategic discussions are occasionally presented in a dramatized form. Altogether, descriptions of Ottoman strategic movements are very similar to the representation of Hungarian ones. An example from the *Peril of Szeged* of Tinódi: “*Alas, pasha Ali made the camp move around, / Made civil people stand among the standing troops, / In the back, he ordered two line of coaches move around, / And made janissaries with guns stand among them. // Soldiers were fielded as a supporting wings from the two sides, / Three flags of the emperor were flown, / Twelve cannons were dragged to the front, / Everyone was told what to do*

⁷⁵⁹ Az vitézek szintén hajnalban jutának, / Csálya oldalára lajtrákat rakának, / Az vitézek gyorsan várba béhágának, / Nagy sok tereket ők ott hamar levágának. (Erdéli história, 1061–4.)

⁷⁶⁰ “Az szárnya mind két fél özveroppanának, / Nagy erős viadalt akkoron tartának, / Ott jelős terek nagy sokan elhullának. // Nagy sok dob, trombiták oly igen harsagnak, / Nagy rettenetösen üvöltnek, kiáltnak, / Nagy szép festett lovak az mezőn jargalnak, / Kikről fő terek elestek, megholtanak. // Az viadal köztök ám ott meglassódék, / Álló seregekhez két fél takarodék, / Jézust, Alláht meg másodszor üvöltének, / Mind kétfelől hamar taraszkokból lüvének.” Tinódi, *Szegedi veszedelem*, 202–212.

and were encouraged.”⁷⁶¹ In this passage, the leader qualities of Ali are fully recognized, and Ottoman soldiers are named as “vitéz” – a term that applies only to good, qualified fighters.

In the context of a constant feature connected to stereotypical representation of Turks, that is, their unreliable, cheating nature, a certain action is referred to constantly: their attempts to seduce defenders to surrender. This factor is present already in the *Siege of Szabács* (1476), and is fully developed by Tinódi, who describes at least five cases of Turks attempting to convince defenders to give up the castle.⁷⁶² (In a curious case in the story of Eger, he accuses a “violinist” (hegedős), a musician lower in the hierarchy, for cooperating with the Turks, thus being a Turk-type cheater: “*What a great damage, peril could have happened, / If Eger would have been lost because of a violinist.*”⁷⁶³)

Personal, hand-to-hand combat is also often described with recurring, formulaic expressions combined with a range of expressions highlighting the realistic experience of encounters, such as the following examples demonstrate: “[Tamás Nádasdy] *started to set an example, / And fought the Turks strongly, / After this, many Turks were cut down;*” “*Those who climbed up the strong stones, / Were pulled down by their legs, / And cut them down with sabers, / Those who ran up to the mountains, / Were hunted and cut down by peasants the next day.*”⁷⁶⁴ The most detailed description of a person to person fight may be cited from Tinódi’s *Erdéli história*, which details the combat of János Török (his patron’s son) at the battle of Lippa with an Ottoman soldier of higher, but unspecified military rank: “*Thus good János Terek found on his way, / A senior Turkish soldier, and he stood against him, / The horse of János Terek had seven wounds already, / Against the Turk he fought so strongly. // He was served well by fortune, / As he could knock down the Turk from his legs, / Stabbed him with a pointed dagger on the ground, / But the Turk was also attempting to cut*

⁷⁶¹ Imé, Ali basa, táborát járatá, / Az álló seregbe köznépet állata, / Hátul szekereket két renddel járata, / Puskás jancsárokat azok közé állata. // Vitézőket szárnyul két felől állata, / Császárnak három zászlóját lobogtatá / Tizenkét taraszkját eleibe vonyató, / Mindent megtaníta, és igen bátoríta.” *Szegedi veszedelem*, 173–180.

⁷⁶² Eger vár viadaljáról, 373–428; Budai Ali basa, 141–51; Az vég Temesvárbán Losonczi Istvánnak haláláról, 323–28. *Szitnya, Léva, Csábrág és Muran váraknak megvevése*, 365–8; *Erdéli história*, 961–2.

⁷⁶³ Im mely nagy kár, vesződelöm lesz vala, / Egy hegedős miát Egör vész vala. 987–88.

⁷⁶⁴ “Kezde mindeneknek ő jó példát adni, / Szömben Terekekkel kezde igen vinni, / Ki miatt sok terek kezde igen hullani.” Tinódi, *Erdéli história*, 1258–60.; “Az erős köveken kik felhágnak vala, / Az láboknál fogva alárántják vala, / Gyorsan mind szabljára őket hányják vala, / Azkik az hegyekre felszaladtanak vala, / Másnap az parasztság vadászván vágják vala.” Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején...* 386–90.

him from the ground. // He managed to cut the right leg of the noble son, / Cut in half his stirrup-iron, / Harmed his boots and footcloth, / Finally, János Törek killed the pagan.⁷⁶⁵” The passage operates with the duplicity of tradition- and experience-based elements, involving symbolic utilization of numbers, striking details of injuries, military vocabulary and references to *fatum* as a governor of military encounters.

A further symbol joins the already presented ones in combat descriptions. The flag as military insignia occurs regularly in narratives, marking also the size of garrisons (e.g. “*They attacked them with twenty-eight flags.*”⁷⁶⁶) A detailed descriptions of a siege attack, reflecting in detail the religious significance of the flag for Ottomans, can be cited from the work of Menyhárt Bornemisza Váczi: “*They cut the fleeing Turks harshly, / Cut down many senior Turks to the ground, / They leave their cannons and flags to Hungarians, / The flag of fortune came to Hungarians at this occasion. // This flag was a clear green one, / It was the flag of the great prophet Mohammed, / That is held in Jerusalem by the emperor, / And is considered sacred by the Turks. // This is a good sign for them at all times, / If they take it to arms with them, / Then they will succeed over their enemies. / But this time, the flag did not turn out to be fortunate.*”⁷⁶⁷” The excerpt reflects rudimentary knowledge of the religious and military significance of the green flag, a colour that was often associated with Mohammed in Islamic traditions.

Taking a further step down in the hierarchy of military interactions, one arrives at the semi-legal activities of raids, which often occupied soldiers in the borderland as an economic opportunity in times of shortage of payment. In scholarship it had been suggested that raids were part of the essential expansion methods of the Turkish tribes, and by the *akinji* conquest ideology intertwined

⁷⁶⁵ Söt jó Terek János igyében találá / Az egy fő terekre, kivel szemben álla, / Terek János lován immár hét seb vala. / Szömben az terekkel ott oly igen vív vala. // Az szerencse néki bizon jól szolgálá, / Tereket lábáról mert ő letaszítá, / Hegyös törrel földön oly igen gyakdosá, / Az terek az földről hozzá igen vág vala. // Találá az terek úrfinak jobb lábát, / Félig ketté vágá az ő kengyelvasát, / És megsebesíté csizmáját, kapcáját, / Végre ott megölé Törek János az pogánt. *Erdéli história*, 1293–1304.

⁷⁶⁶ “Huszonnyolc zászlóval rohanának rá,” Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaljáról való ének*, 1398.

⁷⁶⁷ “Futásban törököt kegyetlenül vágják, / Sok fő törököt földre lehullatnak, / Ágyúkat, zászlókat, magyaroknak hadnak, / Az szerencsezászló itt juta magyarnak. // Ez zászló peniglen, tiszta szép zöld vala, / A nagy prófétáé, Mahometé vala, / Kit Jeruzsálemben császár tartat vala, / Törökök ez zászlót szentnek tartják vala. // Ez mindenkor jó jel önékiek vala, / Valamikor hadban ott hordozzák vala / Akkor ellenségen erőt vesznek vala, / De szerencse néki mostan nem szolgálá.” *Históriás ének Bocskay Istvánról*, 265–76.

with a religious aspect, the practice had been absorbed into Ottoman military expansive methods. However, by the second half of the sixteenth century, this kind of combat was commonly used by Hungarians as well, thus one may claim that the practice of raids were common manners of interaction of populations of border zones in more broad perspectives as well. As for the particularities of Ottoman-Hungarian Habsburg borders, the demarcation lines were more defined than in the case of the Byzantine Empire and its Ottoman conquer, offering more opportunities for economic activities such as booty raids and captive taking, from the earliest phases of military interactions. As a treaty in 1483 declared that raids involving less than 400 men should not be regarded as *casus belli*, one might suppose that raids were quite frequent by that time.⁷⁶⁸ Raids, involving predominantly swords and other hand weapons, remained common exercised until the seventeenth century, when the more extensive use of guns and firearms resulted in a combat manner that involved less person-to-person fights. Raids had often been referred to ironically as “fieldwork,” were dependent on the seasons of the year: in general, there was a lower raiding activity in harvest times, but they were much more common when harvest was finished, and collected stocks – grains, but also cattle and horses – could be targeted,⁷⁶⁹ or in other cases, raids were aimed at captive taking and weapon seizing. Apart from attacking inimical troops and their equipment, raids could occur at various other venues that could offer a possible booty. A quite common scene of raids were fairs, which were most commonly attacked on the last day of the trade, where there were more commodities and money piled up.⁷⁷⁰ Raids could take place any time of the day: “hidden raids” had their own names (*lesvetés* – hidden trap) and they usually occurred in the night, along roads often used by the enemy.⁷⁷¹

Fortress troops created a series of linkages along the borderline, and developed the rules of

⁷⁶⁸ Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 18–22.

⁷⁶⁹ Sándor Takáts, “A török portya és a magyar portya (Turkish Raid and Hungarian Raid),” in *Bajvívó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)*, (Budapest: Móra, 1979.), 75–76.

⁷⁷⁰ Sándor Takáts, “Vásárütés (Fair Raids),” in *Bajvívó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)*, (Budapest: Móra, 1979), 128.

⁷⁷¹ Sándor Takáts, “Lesvetés (Trap Raids),” in *Bajvívó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)*, (Budapest: Móra, 1979.), 195.

small-scale military interactions, such as taking captures or raiding.⁷⁷² These practices were commonly referred in narratives: they tell about the customs of “taking a voice”⁷⁷³ or organizing the distribution of the plundered goods.⁷⁷⁴ Raiding could even become an identification tool of certain personalities, who were referred as positive or negative examples;⁷⁷⁵ in certain cases, military rivalry had even been addressed in prayers as a desired objective.⁷⁷⁶

According to the sources, raids constituted a part of soldier’s life since the earliest regular contacts with the Ottomans. The practice of taking booty after the sieges is present in vernacular narratives since fifteenth-century *Siege of Szabács*: “The treasure that belongs to the emperor / No one’s hand could even touch it.”⁷⁷⁷ This knowledge, in a broader sense, supposes that the author, who, probably, participated in the siege, had perfect knowledge concerning the military customs of the Ottomans. A reference on raids is present in the *Story of King Matthias* from Mátyás Nagybankai, describing booty taking after the successful defense of Belgrade: “*After the siege, the joy of János Hunyadi was great, / Soldiers hurried for attacks on horseback, and to unbind captives, / They all praised the mercy of God in the Heavens, / They loaded up with great plunders, and headed to their homes.*”⁷⁷⁸

Tinódi’s *Cronica* also has frequent references on raids, highlighting its various aspects, and the volume’s narrator provides diverse evaluations of these actions, depending on the partakers and the narrator’s sympathy towards them. The *Summary of the Siege of Eger* has neutral estimation of raids (“*They charged out again for a second occasion, / Were in a struggle with the Turks, / Gained*

⁷⁷² Mária Dobozy, “Two Cultural Perspectives on the Battle of Lippa, Transylvania, 1551: Whose Victory Is It?” *Fifteenth Century Studies* 38 (2013): 22.

⁷⁷³ “Nyelvet venni, literally: “take a tongue.” An example: “The Turks from Fehérvár couldn’t stay still, / They run out for small fights very often, / They head towards the camp of the king, / For no other reason, but to get a voice.” “Fejérvári törökök nem nyughatnak, / Nagy gyakorta csatázni kiszaladnak, / Az király tábora felé tartanak/Nem egyébért, hogy nyelvet kaphassanak.” *História az Szigetvárnak veszéséről*, 320–324.

⁷⁷⁴ “They held a swap right after [the raid]” “Kótyavetyét mindjárást hántak vala” *Sásvár bég históriája*, 143.

⁷⁷⁵ “You may take László Móré as an example, / Who was famous for being a great raider, / Already the great plunderer is in Turkish hands, / All of his plundered goods are in vain.” “Példátok vala nektek Móré László, / Ki nagy híres vala, mert vala kóborló, / Immár török kézben az kegyetlen dúló, / Hol mit használ néki az kóborlott sok jó. Szkhárosi, *Az fejedelemségről*, 1545, lines 221–224.

⁷⁷⁶ “Take his courage, give them to our hands one by one, so that we could plunder them.” “Vedd el bátorságát, add kézben fejenként, hogy rabolhassuk őket.” István Homonnay Drugeth, *Vitézi éneke és könyörgése*, 24.

⁷⁷⁷ “Az kenchet ky oth Chazarth illethne / Sem egh kez kwztkw azt ne illethne” *Szabács viadala*, 117–118.

⁷⁷⁸ “Az viadal után vala nagy öröme jó Hunyadi Jánosnak, / Sietnek vitézek lovokról szökdesni, az rabokat ódozzák, / Menbéli Istennek kegyelmességéről mindnyájan hálát adnak, / Sok jó nyereséggel úk felrakodának, el haza indulának.” Nagybankai Mátyás, *História az vitéz Hunyadi János vajdáról*, 97–112.

wounds, but nothing else, / Another time, they gained horses and mules”⁷⁷⁹), while the *Story of Transylvania* gives a definitely positive evaluation regarding the raids around Temesvár (“They went out to fight with great courage, / Took many heads, returned with great joy, / Many Turks were lost in a short while. // Great warrior Losonczi was out every day, / His spear had never remained undamaged.”⁷⁸⁰); the *Peril of Szeged* condemns the raiding hajduks (“Many corpses were lying around, / They raised two huge piled from the bodies, / Lots of treasures were covered all over.”⁷⁸¹)

4. 2. 3. Success and Defeat

An approach for the distinction of siege narratives can be based on the outcomes of the combat: success or defeat. Attempts for the interpretation of military failure involves widespread concepts of the era such as apocalyptic ideas and the *querela* tradition,⁷⁸² for instance, in the case of the song of Péter Beriszló, or the *Szegedi veszedelem* of Tinódi. A characteristic genre in this respect is often referred as the “veszedelem” (peril) subgenre of event poetry. Works belonging to this group often address the captured, injured, or killed patron of authors. The main novel element of these songs is that they contain a shorter or lengthier mourning section,⁷⁸³ thus they have a novel type of formulaic script part. The earliest example of this song type was written by a certain Gergely on the loss of Demeter Jaksics from the years after the death of Matthias Corvinus.⁷⁸⁴ The hero of the poem had been slaughtered by the Ottomans as a member of the delegation who failed to negotiate peace with the Ottoman Empire in the last years of the reign of Matthias. Demeter Jaksics – also a popular hero

⁷⁷⁹ “Esmég másodszor ők kiötének / Az törökökvel igyeközének, / Sebösödének, semmit nyerének, / Másszor lovakat, öszvéröket nyerének.” *Egri históriának summája*, 201–4.

⁷⁸⁰ “Harcolni kimennek minden bátorsággal; / Sok fejeket vesznek, térnek vígassággal, / Terek nagy sokan veszének hamarsággal. // Az vitéz Losonczi minden nap kinn vala, / Épen ő kopjája soha nem marad vala.” (Erdéli história, 1086–90.)

⁷⁸¹ “Az sok holttest széllel ott feköszik vala, / Két halmot az testben nagyot raktak vala, / Az sok drága kincsöt széllel takarják vala.” *Szegedi veszedelem*, 90–92.

⁷⁸² Öze, *A határ és a határtalan*, 26.

⁷⁸³ Szilvia Sáy, “Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén vitézi siratói (The Valiant Mourning Songs of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos),” *Valóság* 51, no. 11 (2008), 36.

⁷⁸⁴ *Gergely éneke Jaksics Demeter veszedelméről*, 28–9. The poem is considered a fragment, as its acrostic is not full. The orthography suggests that the copy is from around 1526, but more probably, was created in the years directly after 1490. Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 38–59.

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of Serbian epic songs –, found refuge in the court of Matthias after the fall of Smederevo (1459) and became appointed an envoy to the Ottoman court. He was killed by one of his former, cruelly treated prisoners on his way back from Constantinople in 1487. Matthias decided not to take revenge of the death of his legate, but to keep the peace with the sultan. The topos of unreliability is present in the very first reference to the Turks in the poem, explaining the mission of the lord: “*My lord was chosen to a great mission, / Was sent as an envoy to the country of the Turks, / King Matthias trusted the Turkish sultan.*”⁷⁸⁵ This is probably the earliest manifestation of the topos in vernacular literature, and is strongly interconnected with the false, unreliable nature of the sultan and the feature is reflected by Jaksics: “*He himself knew he would find many enemies there.*”⁷⁸⁶ The lord of the author is characterized as having more reliable image of the treacherous nature of his enemies, the Ottomans – unlike king Matthias, who accredited a false message regarding the intentions of the sultan from a previous messenger, János Both: “*Oh, the king trusted what a false statement, / That was taken from the sultan by János Both, / And believing it, my lord is dead at once.*”⁷⁸⁷

The subgenre of perils has further examples from the era before Mohács: the *Cantio Petri Berizlo* (1515, Mihály Szabadkai)⁷⁸⁸ applies an uncommon method of characterizing its protagonist described by his imprisoned enemy, sanjak bey Bali.⁷⁸⁹ The work, composed in the southern border zone, idealizes the soldier’s manner of life by introducing Péter Beriszló (Petar Berislavić), the bishop of Veszprém and the ban of Croatia as an ideal. He is referred to be dead in the work – it is not certain, however, if the author indeed believed him dead or it is part of the propagandistic nature of the text to tarnish Beriszló’s fame after his failures in the Srem region in late 1514. The work

⁷⁸⁵ “Elválaszták én uramat az nagy szolgálatra, / Kevetségen el-beküldték terek országba, / Bízik vala Mátyás királ terek császárbán.” 7–9.

⁷⁸⁶ “maga jól tudá, hogy ott talál sok ellenséget.” 18.

⁷⁸⁷ “Ő, mely igen hamis hitnek az királ hitt volt, / kit Both János az császártól neki hozott volt, / ki hit mellett az én uram immáran megholt.” 13–15.

⁷⁸⁸ The song was written in 1515, but he bishop died in 1520 – there may have been false news about his death that inspired the author. The existing copy is of Antonius Verantius’s hand, from the 1560s, Eger. Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 60–92.

⁷⁸⁹ Malkoçoğlu Bali bey was an heir of an akinci family, who had a battle with ban Beriszló at Dubica, in the August of 1513, where the bey was taken captive.

comments on the bishop's unselfishness, independence, and his successes over the Turks.⁷⁹⁰ The laudatio itself consists of topoi of the Christian soldier's way of life and morals,⁷⁹¹ followed by the self-humiliation of the captive. The sanjak bey refers not only to being ashamed himself: "*I lost a great part of my bravery, and I am ashamed, / My voyvodship is harmed because of a priest;*"⁷⁹² but tells an episode of one of his soldiers, who was ashamed while booty-taking after the fights: "*Lately, they measured rich fabrics by lances, / Some Turks were watching this in secret from the top of a tree, / They were afraid to come down, as they were ashamed.*"⁷⁹³ Finally, as an ultimate level of humiliation, the sanjak bey refers to great the Turkish losses: "*Twice as many Turks had died there, / Their songs in the country of Turks are sorrowful.*"⁷⁹⁴

Similarly to practices of other captivity narratives, the Ottoman speaker of the narrative uses the topos that is often referred to by Christian slaves of asking God to help him out of prison: "*There is no one else who could free me now, / God could only save me, if he knew about me, / and could turn his eyes towards me;*"⁷⁹⁵ however, the speech turns to a different direction from the known topoi, as he raises the possibility of turning away from God, committing blasphemy ("*But if God would not help me out in this case, / And would not take me out of this captivity, / I would not believe in him any more, if he would forget me here.*"⁷⁹⁶) In this manner, the religiosity of the Ottoman captive is qualified as false. He also evaluates the possibility of choosing martyrdom instead of captivity: "*I would prefer if Hungarians would not see me, / But rather they would cut me down in this prison, /*

⁷⁹⁰ "Ím látjátok, ellenségit sok helyen meggyőzte, / terekeknek sokaságát rólatok elizte, / mellettetek megholtát ingyen ű nem nézte." ("As you see, he succeeded over his enemies at many places, / chased away crowds of Turks from you, / Not regarding his death for you.") (4–6.)

⁷⁹¹ To give a few examples: "Sokat dúltam mindenfelé az én lovam hátán (I made many raids on the back of my horse, in strophe 9); "Bátorsággal űk segílik és nagy nyereséggel, / tisztességgel, vitézséggel, pénzzel és búséggel, / avagy peniglen terek vajdáknak az ünnen fejekkel. // Ahol vának ű huszári, ott vígan osztóznak / ű szolgálai, az morháért csak meg sem bántatnak, / gyakran helen vígan laknak, mind magyaról szólnak." ("They help him with courage and with great gains, / Morals, valor, money and wealth, / or with their own heads to the Turkish voyds. // Where his glad soldiers fight, they divide the booty, / His soldiers would never be harmed for their gains, / They live their lives all around gladly, and all speak Hungarian." Strophes 12–13.) See also Balassi and Tinódi, eg. *Varkucs Tamás*, 306.; 71.; 313.

⁷⁹² "Jaj, hogy veszek, szégyent vallék én bátorságomban, / egy pap miatt nagy kárt vallék én vajdaságomban." Strophe 5.

⁷⁹³ "Tegetlen ím az patyolatot mind kopjával mérék, / némel terekek fa tetejéről azt orozva nízék, / nem merínek leszállani, mert űk azt restellék." Strophe 14.

⁷⁹⁴ "...meghalának immár kétszer oly nagy sok terekek, / siralmas mast Terekországban az ű énekek." Strophe 15.

⁷⁹⁵ "Lám nincsen mast, ki engemet megszabadítana, / menthet Isten, ha mikoron ezt megtudhatnája, / és énreám ű szemeit vajha fordétanája," Strophe 7.

⁷⁹⁶ "De ha engem ű ezúttal itt meg nem segíliend, / és innejten ez fogságból engem ki nem viend, / többé neki én nem hiszek, ha itt elfeledend." Strophe 8.

And angels would carry me up to Heaven.”⁷⁹⁷ This idea, although common in Muslim religious sources, may not be regarded as referring indeed to angels of Islam: the phrase appears also in connection with Christian martyrdom in Hungarian texts,⁷⁹⁸ evolving eventually into a “classical” feature of epic in seventeenth century literature. It should be noted that according to Gerézdi, this song has the first manifestation of “sors bona” idea in Hungarian literature, a central notion in the evaluation and description of military events.⁷⁹⁹ Otherwise, the text operates with a basic kit of poetical tools, taken mostly from oral tradition (repetitions) – however, seeds of the toolkit of “miles aesthetics,” that was going to be developed by Tinódi and Balassi to a higher level, are also present in the work.

Numerous narratives belonging to the “peril” tradition have a strong personal aspect, which is emphasized by various tools in the works: personal complaints and mourning of the speaking self, of the hero, of wives and children are all part of creating this particular type of practice. Also, songs reflect intensely upon the connection between the author and his patron (*familiaritas*), expressing loyalty to the lord in the text. Therefore, the intended audience of these narratives was quite a narrow one, most probably consisting of soldiers and lower nobility concerned in local politics. At the same time, these works can be differentiated from “clearly” propagandistic works, although their distinction is not obvious in all cases – for instance, the *Cantio Petri Berizlo* may be regarded a “veszedelem” type, but to be recognized as such, it should have a more epic character.⁸⁰⁰ Contrarily, the fragmentary song of László Geszti (1525) is closer to clear propagandistic songs. The author, probably by the commission of a higher clergy member, represents the views of the archbishop, the major voice of the royal court’s advocates at the diet of Hatvan,⁸⁰¹ urging lower nobility to take sides with Louis II, and to put faith in the unity of the nobility and the king against

⁷⁹⁷ “Szeretném azt, ha engemet magyarok nem látnának, / bátor inkább ez fogságban itten levágnának, / az angyalok Mennnyországban ottan ragadnának.” Strophe 10.

⁷⁹⁸ eg. Tinódi, RMKT XVI, 252.

⁷⁹⁹ Tibor Klaniczay, *A fátum és a szerencse Zrínyi műveiben (Fatum and Fortune in the Works of Zrínyi)* (Budapest: Pázmány Péter Tud. Egy. BTK, 1947), 3–13.

⁸⁰⁰ In the narrative, epic features are provided mostly by the monologue of the imprisoned bey. Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 88.

⁸⁰¹ The diet was the continuation of the meeting of nobles at Rákos a month earlier, in May 1525, where the nobles excluded the king along with German and Venetian nobles from decisions, lowering the chances of the possibility of allying with them against the Ottomans – although the southern parts of the kingdom were under great pressure.

the Ottomans. Being part of the royal court's anti-Ottoman propaganda, the poem has one of the earliest examples of the "antemurale" idea that characterized proto-national self-identification in narratives for later decades and even further. The particular phrases which are used to express the antemurale concept – *az keresztyénségnek jó vérti* and *régi jó név*⁸⁰² – are both known from contemporary Latin orations and from the humanist rhetorical genre *carmen cohortatorium*, which became popular after the fall of Constantinople, urging for actions against the Ottomans.⁸⁰³ The argumentation of László Geszti's song also refers to the rule of Matthias as an era of ideal kingship, when the relations of the royal court and the nobility were harmonious.⁸⁰⁴ The colophon, apart from giving readers the author's name and the year of composition, also refers to the desperate situation ("*Hungary was in great need, / The borderlines were in the risk of downfall.*"⁸⁰⁵) of the country to emphasize the urges of cooperation of the king and the nobles.

During the fortress campaign, at the works of Tinódi and his followers, defeat is narrated in a more objective manner, implying the involvement of good and bad military fortune, i.e., *fatum* in the results. In these narratives, one may observe a certain balance, an equivalent chance for either victory or defeat: "*Soldiers were fighting the unfaithful Turks, / Finally all Hungarians died by their arms.*"⁸⁰⁶ Loss is harmful for each side in the case of the siege of Szeged too: "*This became the great peril of the Hungarians, / But likewise, was a great loss for Turks too, / As might be, more Hungarians were lost there in numbers, / But many more Turkish leaders died there.*"⁸⁰⁷ Similarly, while recounting the Ottoman participation in the siege, the presentation of the defender bey of the fort of Lippha is rather objective and free from negative judgment: "*Uluman is very silent inside, / He is waiting ready for the attack, / Orders to dig ditches inside the broken parts, / He is busy*

⁸⁰² *Fine shield of Christendom and old reputation*, strophe 1.

⁸⁰³ Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 115. To give a Latin example from Hungary, Márton Nagyszombati wrote in dystichons his *Cohortatio ad regni Hungariae proceres contra Turcos* in 1523.

⁸⁰⁴ "Szegén Mátyás király vala békességben, / mert országa vala... egyességben, / vitézek valának nála tisztességben, / az urak valának nagy egyenességben." "Poor king Matthias was in peace, / as his country was ... in unity, / Soldiers were in appreciation, / Nobles were in agreement." Strophe 2. This idea, again, is in accordance with Nagyszombati's referred *Cohortatio*.

⁸⁰⁵ "Magyarország vala nagy fő szükségében, / az végek valának mind elveszendőben." Strophe 16.

⁸⁰⁶ "Hitlen terekkel vitézők vívának, / Végre mind kezökön magyarok halának." Tinódi, *Erdéli história*, 965–66.

⁸⁰⁷ "Ez lőn magyar népnek jelős veszedelme, / Az terőknek es egyenlő veszödelme, / Jóllehet szám szerént ott több magyar vesze, / De fő nép terekben nagy sokkal ott több vesze." *Szegedi veszedelem*, 293–6.

*fighting and encouraging everyone.*⁸⁰⁸”

The keys to the successes of the Hungarians, especially in the works of Tinódi and his followers, were their loyalty, unity, and obedience to God, while discordance had been appointed as the primary reason for failures. Good and bad fortune are central categories in evaluations of the results of combats. At the time of Tinódi, fortune had yet been strongly dependent on God’s will: “*Turn our fortune against the pagans, / Demolish and eliminate the cursed Turks, // So that we could praise you at all times,*”⁸⁰⁹ however, later in the century, a new category appeared besides obedience to God and to the captain: the notion of *fatum* became intertwined with the concept of the “*vitéz*” as a new type of fighter. The importance of personal merits increased, and as we shall see later, a new lifestyle and aesthetic system developed by the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Narrating victory also has its own particular structural positioning in the texts: success is often intertwined with the didaxis and/or prayer. Predestination is present in epic genres as a constant concept of evaluating victory: the idea is clearly expressed in András Batizi’s *Story of Gideon*: “*This had been predicted by the word of God, / Because victory comes by the power of God only, / Not by the armed crowds, / Neither by the strength of heroic soldiers. // All victory is given by the heavens, / God might give it, but might scourge the army too, / But he awaits and requires from us, / To be faithful and pray only to him.*”⁸¹⁰ This passage might also demonstrate the differences of arguments in early and later texts in the century: Batizi’s narrative, being one of the earliest epic poems, attributes all merits of success to God. A good decade later, in 1556, Ferenc Tőke’s teaching about success is similar: “*Because the pagan is not glorious by himself, / It is our fault that he is so powerful, / As we do not believe the greatness of God, / And that he is merciful to all his believers.*” However, at the end of the narrative, Tőke adds the heroism of soldiers to his argumentation: “*All of*

⁸⁰⁸ “*Ulumán népével belől igen hallgat, / Készön ő népével mind ostromot várat, / Az törésen belől árkot igen ásat, / Ő igen forgolódik, ott mindent igen bízta.*” 1229–32.

⁸⁰⁹ “*Térítsed meg pogán ellen szerencsénket, / Ronts meg és elveszessed fene terekeket. // Sok dicséretöt hogy tenéköd mondhasunk.*” *Budai Ali basa históriája*, 279–81. Another example from Ferenc Tőke: “*Jó tisztartó Szigetet bírja vala, / Isteni félelem a vitézekkel vala, / Egyességben minden népével vala, / Igaz hittel Istent kiáltják vala.*” 49–52.

⁸¹⁰ “*Ezt az úristen nekünk megíratta, / Mert a győzelem csak az isten hatalma, / Sem fegyverőseknek nagy sokaságában, / Sem vitézeknek ő nagy erejökben. // Mennyből adatik minden győzelem, / Kinek isten adja a hadat csak a veri / De ő azt kívánja és tőlünk azt várja, / Hogy mi megtérjünk, csak ő hozzá kiáltunk.*” *Az drága és istenfélő vitéz Gedeonról szép história*, 1540, 181–188.

*you who live at this side of the Danube, / Are rescued by them [soldiers].*⁸¹¹

A ritual celebration of victory, though was part of the life of soldiers,⁸¹² is rarely referred in the narratives. Two examples are present in the works of István Temesvári and the anonymous work about the battle of Kenyérmező, both describing a celebratory feast in a similar manner, probably as both texts rely on Bonfini.⁸¹³ These passages coincide with the passages of Bonfini discussing the customs of singing about the deeds of soldiers and events of the sieges that helped the commemoration the events. The connection with the Latin humanist work and the vernacular narratives is even more evident at the description of the victorious captain, Pál Kinizsi, who dances ritually with a dead Turk as Hercules: *“He took a dead Turk from the ground with his teeth, / Took him without hands from the ground, / Danced with him like that in front of the soldiers, / No one dared to laugh, but they were in admiration, / They regarded him a Hercules for that.”*⁸¹⁴ The *Cronica* of Tinódi also commemorates a ritual celebratory feast, however, in his narrative, it is the Turks who are feasting – with a bad ending: *“In the evening, Turks were celebrating, / As the bey arrived among them, / They were drinking until dawn, / Many of them were beheaded in their beds.”*⁸¹⁵

As it had been discussed in some detail, the *Cronica* (1553, Kolozsvár/Cluj) of Tinódi, the first complete printed book in Hungarian is an outstanding and tradition-determining volume in the representation of military events, therefore, the current analysis has to engage with characteristics of the volume and its representational practices in a more thorough manner. Scholarship has been concerned with an extensive analysis of the volume, its groundbreaking profile as a consciously edited book, its compositional concept and realization, and its possible relations to event poetry in

⁸¹¹ “Mert a pogány nem magától hatalmas, / Mi tettük azt hogy eddig hatalmas, / Mert nem hisszük, hogy az Isten hatalmas, / És hogy az ő híveihez irgalmas. (...) Valahul kik Dunán innen élhettek, / Ő általok most megmenekedtetek.” Ferenc Tőke, *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 533–6, 619–20.

⁸¹² Sándor Takáts, “Magyar-török szokások a végekben (Hungarian-Turkish Customs along the Borders),” in *Bajvívó magyarok (Combating Hungarians)* (Budapest: Móra, 1979), 27.

⁸¹³ “Vitézek jó kedvet jó bortul vevének / És az hadnagyokrul krónikát éneklének.” Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején...*, 429–30; “Öremekben hősök isznak az jó borban, / Nagy szép énekeket ő lakodalmokban / Mondnak és beszélnek eleünk az hadban / Miként ellenséggel vittak viadalban.” Temesvári István deák, 422–5.

⁸¹⁴ “Egy megholt törököt földről fölfalt vala, / Kéz neköl az földről felragadta vala, / Az vitézek előtt és úgy táncol vala, / Senki nem neveti, de csudálja vala, / Őtet Herculesnek azért jelentik vala.” Temesvári István deák, 440–445.

⁸¹⁵ “Sőt estve terek vígan laktak vala, / Mert közikbe az bék akkor jutott vala, / Örömeiben mind hajnalig ittak vala, / Sokan ő ágyokban itt nyakaztatnak vala.” *Erdéli história*, 1065–8.

other languages,⁸¹⁶ however, some thoughts and observations may be added to these observations.

The volume is divided into two greater parts: the first consists of works considered to belong more closely to the genre of “event poetry,” that is, narratives which were composed shortly after the events they describe; the other part is dedicated to topics that had happened in other countries or eras, putting the first part, the description of the events from Hungary, in a wider, universal context. However, there are exceptions from these rules: the first, lengthiest, introductory work, the *Story of Transylvania* was written after the others, and gives a broader context of events that will follow. As this work was composed later than the others, and was intended to be an introductory piece synthesizing events that occurred after the death of Louis II and the second Vienna campaign of Suleyman (1530–35). Many episodes of this lengthy work are present later narratives in the volume as an individual account (for instance, *The Fights in Eger in the times of Tamás Varkucs* or *The Death of István Losonczy*). The work depicts the figure of János Török, the son of Tinódi’s patron Bálint Török, who expresses his personal loathing towards the Ottomans, represented by a dialogue between János and Isabella, the widowed queen. His perspective, supposedly, corresponds with the one of Tinódi, too: “*I have no will to go into arms with them together, / Rather I want to stand against them at all times, / And if I may, I think about that, / I want to die fighting against them for the death of my father.*”⁸¹⁷ János is accounted to be successful in these plans later in the volume, described to have killed two hundred Turks, and a major aga.⁸¹⁸

The perspective of narratives describing siege accounts in the *Cronica* is always the one of soldiers, and although the view of Tinódi about the Turks had strongly been inimical,⁸¹⁹ he rarely repeated apocalyptic and other religious connotations. He refers to the “pagans” in the dedication of his volume to Ferdinand Habsburg: “*I thought this to myself that I would write in this Cronica*

⁸¹⁶ Vadai, “Kolozsvárott kötetet komponálni;” Bitskey, “‘Én mast szóllok csak vitézlő dolgokról...’” On relations to other literatures: Dobozy, “Two Cultural Perspectives on the Battle of Lippa, Transylvania, 1551: Whose Victory Is It?”; Seláf, “Between Lyrics and Epics: The Great Turkish War in German, Italian and Hungarian ‘Ereignisliedern.’”

⁸¹⁷ “Nám felségöd tudja, terek elveszték / Én vitéz atyámat, megrágák, megevék, / Jó Terek Bálintot hamis hittel veszték, / Én szegűn fejemet öcsémmel árvává tevék. // Én vélök egy hadban nem akarok járnom, / Inkább mindenkoron ellenök állanom, / És ha lehet tőlem, azon gondolkodom, / Atyám halálájért rajtok akarok hálnom.” 601–8.

⁸¹⁸ “Tisztességgel nagy nyereségöt ott nyere, / Az kétszáz tereket mert ő ám megveré, / Az fő agájokat ám ő ott megöleté.” 618–20.

⁸¹⁹ Jankovics, “Tinódi török-képe,” 131–139.

*about the perils caused by the pagan Turkish emperor in poor Hungary, and about the losses, heroism, and successes of the soldiers of your majesty.*⁸²⁰” Thus, the preface of the volume places Ferdinand with the Ottoman emperor in a juxtaposition, reflecting the imperial discourses aiming to build absolute authorities.

Perhaps the most well known piece by Tinódi is his account on the siege of Eger, the “key to Upper Hungary.”⁸²¹ The fort was besieged by the armies of Suleyman in 1552, and the castle could stand against for a long time, until finally the imperial armies ran short of time and returned to their winter bases. It is evident from certain passages of the work that Tinódi participated in the events in person, and he composed two, a lengthier and a summarizing version describing the siege. The elements of the plot are not so much different in the two versions, each contain the same set of elements – however, the long version has more dramatized scenes, more detailed catalogs and a more detailed discussion of the geographical layout of the fortress. The works also fit well in the literary practices that had been discussed above: they rely strongly on the contents of other songs of the *Cronica* (e.g., captain Dobó and his vice captain, Mecskei hear about the news at Lippa and Csanád). Military movements are discussed in a very elaborate, detailed manner (“*Alas, the outer castle was attacked, too, / Shot at the outer tower from the North, / Before that, was shot until the bastion of Bebek, / The narrow wall, until the bastion of the old gate.*”⁸²²) Military objectivism results in a characterizing difference from other siege accounts: there are very few derogative attributes in the representation of Turks.⁸²³ Although on the level of military actions, forces are presented objectively, on a more abstract level, fights are presented as combats between a power who is supported by God and of a force that aims only for worldly rule: “*This was not a result of a*

⁸²⁰ “ezt gondolám magamba, hogy ez szegin Magyarországra az pogán terek császár miatt lőtt sok veszödelmekbe, és az felségöd vitézinek elesésökbe és vitézségökbe, nyereségökbe Cronikába beírnék.” *Cronica*, preface

⁸²¹ “felföld kapuja,” line 231.

⁸²² “Lám az kilső várat is terettetik, / Kilső toronnál észak felől lövik, / Azon elő Bebek bátyáig lövik / Vékon kőfalt, ó kapu bátyájáig.” 762–5.

⁸²³ Negative judgments follow widespread topoi: unreliability, “The soldiers saw well the unreliability of Turks,” “Terek álnokságát vitézők láták” 1147; or their “shameful” “sorrow.” “Many have lost there the skin of their palms, / They were cursing there with ugly words, / Turks were ashamed, and in sorrow.” “Tenere bőre soknak ott maradának, / Rút szitkokkal rájuk átkozódának. // Terekek szégyenlik, búsultak vala.” 1197–9. Other: “Basák, szancsákok vannak nagy búokban, / Anne fő nép nem veszett egy útokban, / Nagyobb szégyönt ez jó Magyarországra / Nem vallottak, mint Egör ostromában.” 1648–51; closing of pars III: “Az terekek vadnak dobjok fakadva.” 1274.

manly power, / But signifies the power of God, / Demolishing worldly forces, / Shaming the strength of the Turkish sultan.”⁸²⁴ The Turks aim to succeed in order to glorify the name of their sultan (“*‘Eger is the emperor’s!’ – they told to each other*”⁸²⁵), not the name of God, as Hungarians do (“[the king] *Was praying for God night and day, / To be merciful for the soldiers of Eger*” (...)
Many were praying for the fort of Eger to hold, / Good spouses, widows, many orphans, / Many good preachers were praying.”⁸²⁶) The final defeat of Ottomans is that they admit that God is taking sides with the defenders. This idea is developed gradually throughout the narrative: the episode of the attack of Gergely Bornemisza by a burning barrel is referred to be the first moment of the recognition of the defeat: “*Many Turks collapsed to the ground, / They took it to be the anger of God in wonder, / They attributed it to His wisdom and power;*”⁸²⁷ while the final flight of the Ottomans is also attributed to their fear of God, which surpasses their fear of worldly forces: “*Not from their great fear of man, / But because of their dread of great God, / They left the standing tents at the camp, / And their other valuables because of their fear.*”⁸²⁸ The idea is present in the short version of the siege account as well: “*Plentiful cannons were not very useful for the Turks, / Neither their wise knowledge, / Only their vain revenge remained for them at the end.*”⁸²⁹

4. 3. Protagonists of Military Events

4. 3. 1. Heroes

After the significant changes in social and ethnic structures after the battle of Mohács, a new type of estate, often referred as the “warrior estate”⁸³⁰ (*vitézi rend*) emerged and established in the social system. The fall of the Southern defense line of the Kingdom resulted in the dispersion and transformation of military units, while the country needed a constant supply of military resources.

⁸²⁴ “Nem emberi hatalom ezt mivelé, / Mert csak úristen hatalmát jelönté, / Ez világ hatalmát semmijé tevé, / Terek császár erejét szégyönité.” 9–12.

⁸²⁵ “‘Egőr császáré!’ mondának egymásnak.” 1010.

⁸²⁶ “Éjjel nappal könyörög úr istennek / Lenne kegyelmes egri vitézinek (...), Egőr maradtáért sokan imádnak, / Jámbor házások, özvegyök, sok árvák, / Sok jámbor prédikátorok imádnak.” 1368–9; 1371–3.

⁸²⁷ “Sokan az terek földre burúlnak, / Csudálkoznak, mondják Isten haragjának, / Csak ő bölcsességének, hatalmának.” 1184–6.

⁸²⁸ “Nem embertől való ő nagy féltőkben, / Csak hatalmas istentől rettenésben, / Felvont sátorokat az tábor helyben / Ott hagyának egyéb morhát féltőkben.” 1584–7.

⁸²⁹ “Az tereköknek sok ányúságok / Semmit használa bölcs tudományok, / Marada nekik hiú bosszújok / Mert isten vala magyarok paizsok.” 345–8.

⁸³⁰ Béla K. Király, “Society and War,” 26.

The demand for soldiers resulted in an increase in the number of members of the lower social estates who were joining military service, also in order to gain some of the particular rights and privileges that were owned by the estate. Freedom of choosing one's religion, an independent court designated a special legal status for the warrior estate,⁸³¹ and they also enjoyed certain further privileges such as full or partial liberty from paying taxes, favorable conditions for trade and usage of mines, meadows or forests, and financial opportunities from assuring armed attendance for nobles – however, these privileges were not entitled to each soldier community. As wages of the troops were issued on a random basis, late and locked payments were common, in particular in official peace periods.⁸³² Numerous narratives comment on this situation: to bring a representative example, the anonymous narrative about the death of György Turi⁸³³ from 1571 builds its course of argumentation around the motif of the lack of insufficient payment, intending to raise funds from the implied audience – noblemen – of the narrative. The song's proposition states that contemporary calamities are the result of the lack of sufficient supplies for the soldiers: *“You see well the anger of the Turks, / You have heard the poor are being robbed, / But you still do not will to pay for the soldiers, / With whom you would defend the country dwellers.”*⁸³⁴ The narrative also brings to reason a contrast with the Turks, resulting in a praising of their equipment and supplies: *“They are prosperous at all times, / As they are given their salaries, / They serve loyally the Turkish sultan, / And anywhere they go, ride their horses vigorously.”*⁸³⁵ Under these circumstances, soldiers had to look for opportunities to support themselves. Some of their methods were semi-legal or illegal, as such activities included raiding for booty, espionage and captive taking.

Given their status, mobility, large number (12–15 000 soldiers serving the fortresses⁸³⁶), role in

⁸³¹ Gábor Vatai, “‘Csak az menjen katonának...’ A vitézlő rend életkörülményei és motivációja a 17. század második felében (‘Only Those Enter the Army...’ The Living Conditions and the Motivation of the Warrior Estate in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century),” *Aetas* 26, no. 2 (2011): 33.

⁸³² Stein, “Frontier administration,” in *Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Fronts and Garrisons in Europe*. (London, New York: Tauris, 2007), 126.

⁸³³ Anonym, *Az vitéz Turi György haláláról*, 1571, RMKT 8, 200–212.

⁸³⁴ “Törököknek dühösségét látjátok, / Szegén népet rabolni jól halljátok, / Vitézeknek fizetni nem akartok, / Kikből az föld népét oltalmaznátok.” (13–16.)

⁸³⁵ “Ezek mindenkoron szép szörrel vadnak, / Mert fizetésök nekik megadatnak, / Az török császárnak híven szolgálnak, / És ahova mennek, vígan nyargálnak.” (21–24.)

⁸³⁶ Béla K. Király, “Society and War,” 35.

the Ottoman campaigns and their privilege to choose religion, members of the warrior estates constitute a significant group in the study of literary history as well. News about the ongoing sieges, telling about and performed for soldiers, were spread via event poetry. Narratives were tools to frame war experiences in a form that helped to mediate moral values as well, associated with places, dates or persons, that made moral teachings available for the audience in a more consumable form.⁸³⁷ The role of warriors in the military interactions had been a central element of the narratives, determining the didactic contents and the moral values mediated by the texts. Similarly to other, already presented issues, the establishment of the didactic-moral system can be linked to the oeuvre of Tinódi. His works mediate a consistent order of ethical values, and authors of the last quarter of the sixteenth century also relies on this grounding and developed it further. Morals strongly relied on the idea of *athleta Christi*, rooted in crusading traditions⁸³⁸ it proclaimed that being killed in battle is a glorious act, and participation in a campaign against the infidel is rewarded with complete absolution from ones sins. The ethical system also has ties with the chivalric values, which regard war a beautiful affair, both in moral and physical sense, attributing credit to courage and the determination of warriors.⁸³⁹ In the Hungarian cultural context, elements of prevailing traditions contributed to the emergence of a particular moral-aesthetic system of representing soldiers. Such a tradition was the cult of “Champion of the Christian faith,” which was manifested in Hungary predominantly by the cult of St. Ladislaus⁸⁴⁰ – who was also referred in a vernacular hymn from around 1470 as the “threat for the Turkish pashas.”⁸⁴¹ Traces of chevalier culture also played a significant role in the emergence of “soldier’s culture” in vernacular

⁸³⁷ Judith Pollmann, “Of Living Legends and Authentic Tales: How to Get Remembered in Early Modern Europe.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (2013), 106.

⁸³⁸ See Jerold C. Frakes, *Vernacular and Latin Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other in Medieval Germany* (The New Middle Ages. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 105.

⁸³⁹ George Le Brusque, “Chronicling the Hundred Years War in Burgundy and France,” in *Writing War. Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare.*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Francoise Le Saux, and Neil Thomas (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 80.

⁸⁴⁰ Gábor Klaniczay, “A Szent László-kultusz kialakulása (The Formation of the Cult of St. Ladislaus),” in *Nagyvárad és Bihar a korai középkorban (Bihar and Nagyvárad/Oradea in the Early Middle Ages)*, ed. Attila Zsoldos (Nagyvárad/Oradea: Varadinum Kulturális Alapítvány, 2014), 10.

⁸⁴¹ According to Gerézdi, the expression “török basák retteneti” is not an anachronism, but a misreading of the translator of the text from Latin into Hungarian: the original Latin referred to the Pechenegs (bessorum/bessonorum) which had been read as “bassorum.” Gerézdi, *A magyar világi líra kezdetei*, 156.

Hungarian, however, due to the lack of considerable court culture, the adaptation of chevalier value system in Hungary was limited to military virtues, and in contrast with Western Europe, elements of chivalry were of clerical origin.⁸⁴² In the sixteenth century, these traditions were joined with elements of Protestant moral teachings into a particular moral system; as a result, narrative formats of war experiences were focused on morality (didaxis), resulting in a particular ethic and aesthetic hierarchical order of ideals. The dependence of morals on Christian ethics had been concisely articulated in the Preface of the *Cronica* of Tinódi, which states that “*it is befitting for a good Christian to fight in spirit with the devil, the body and this world: in the same manner, it is befitting in this world to fight the pagan enemy, resist and eternal life in this world.*”⁸⁴³ The volume also elaborates on the concept of morals in the didactic parts of narrative poems, including occasional idealized descriptions of everyday practices as well, such as in this example from the *Siege of Eger*: “*They [the soldiers] pray humbly regularly, / They don’t have a preacher, but they long for one, / It is only the good captains who preach for them, / Encourage them with the words of God.*”⁸⁴⁴ The passage gives a clear idea of the Reformed doctrines that God is the leader of the army, and worldly leaders fulfill the role of the “good shepherd.”⁸⁴⁵

Being an ideal soldier of Christ is often reflected in the narratives throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. As part of the process of idealization of the soldiers, the designated roles of warriors were also expressed in the narratives: the main such role of the perfect soldier is clearly modeled after the “warrior of Christ” ideal. This idea had been present in works for decades, and was expressed in various forms. To give a few examples, the *athleta Christi* ideal is articulated by

⁸⁴² A cornerstone of chivalric culture in Hungary is the so-called Toldi-legend, a narrative that has many parallels with chansons de gestes, however, there is no evidence on direct connection of the narrative with Western European traditions. Ferenc Zemplényi, *Az európai udvari kultúra és a magyar irodalom (European Court Culture and Hungarian Literature)* (Budapest: Universitas, 1998), 28–35.

⁸⁴³ “mert mint illik lélők szerént az ördöggel, testtel és ez világgal korosként az jó körösztýennek hadakozni: úgyan ez világ szerént es az pogán ellenséggel illik tusakodni, ellen állani, örök életöt nyerni.” Sebestýén Tinódi, *Cronica*, Preface, 1554.

⁸⁴⁴ “Gyakran alázatosan imádkoznak, / Predikátorok nincs, igen óhajtnak, / Az jámbor hadnagyok csak predikálnak, / Isten ígétével ők bátorítanak.” Tinódi, *Eger viadaljáról*, part IV, 1284–87.

⁸⁴⁵ Sándor Óze, “A ‘kereszténység védőpajzsa,’” 109. See also István Bitskey “‘Én mast szóllok csak vitézlő dolgokról...’ A nemzeti sors toposzai Tinódi históriás énekeiben (‘Now I Only Tell about Valliant Issues ...’ Topoi of National Fate in the Epic Songs of Tinódi),” in *Tanulmányok a régi magyar irodalomról (Studies on Ancient Hungarian Literature)*, ed. István Bitskey and László Imre (Debrecen: KLTE, 1998), 12–13.

the oration of the captain, István Báthory in the *Song about the Battle of Kenyérmező*: “We are all holy warriors, / Who fight for Jesus Christ, / Fight for our faith, for our country, with the pagans.”⁸⁴⁶ The same idea is present in the speech of János Hunyadi at the siege of Belgrade in the *Story of King Matthias*: “Today one may have lunch with me or someone else, / But if one dies, he may have dinner with Christ.”⁸⁴⁷ By the end of the century, the interpretation of the idea became complete with a compound imagery that clearly points in the direction of baroque stylistically: “I will be the faithful soldier of Christ to earn my crown, / And become inheritor of the Heavens, / I will be not afraid at the place where I will arrive, as I will be a lord. // I dress into shining light, / My clothing is eternal glory, / I will earn this prize from Christ in combat, / And arrive to an unspeakably beautiful land.”⁸⁴⁸

The enemy is often in the focus of references to ideals soldiers as Christ’s warriors. Tinódi was among the first to put the ideal explicit, in his work about the *Combat of György Kapitány*, where he described soldiers as: “Their hearts are brave in warriorship, / They get joyful if they hear about their enemies, / Get on their good horses quickly, / Face their enemies hastily, / Combat strongly, tempt their fortunes. (...) If they manage to win over the Turks, / Give great praises to God, / Being happy and joyful over the booty, / And even more over its fairness. / Good young men, soldiers in defense forts, / Are in often fights with Turks, / In often fights for Christian faith, / And for good reputation and fame in many countries.”⁸⁴⁹ This song is claimed by István Vadaí and others,⁸⁵⁰ to be an exhortative oratio addressed for soldiers, and a precedent of the poetics of Bálint Balassi, the meridian of the soldier’s ideal. The following examples, both from the turn of the sixteenth-

⁸⁴⁶ “Mi pedég mindnyájan szent vitézek vagyunk, / Az Jézus Krisztusért azkik viaskodunk; / Hitünkért, házunkért pogánokkal víjont.” Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején Kenesy Pálnak és Báthory Istvánnak az törökökkel szemben*, 106–8.

⁸⁴⁷ “Ma velem vagy mással légyen ebéden, / Ha meghal, Krisztussal vacsorán légyen.” Görcsöni Ambrus - Bogáti Fazakas Miklós, *Mátyás király históriája*, 783–84.

⁸⁴⁸ “Koronámért az Christusnak hű vitéze leszek, / Meny országnak örököse leszek, / Hol leszek ur leszek nem félek. // Ragyogó fényesség kiben öltöztem, / Örökös dicsőség kit rám ruháztam, / Ily jutalmat az Christustul bajvívásban vöttem, / Mondhatatlanul szép országban értem.” *Cantio prima funebris et optima*, 51–57.

⁸⁴⁹ “Bátor szível az vitézséghez vannak, / Ha ellenségöt hallnak, megvidulnak, / Gyorson ő jó lovokra felfordulnak, / Az ellenségnek hamar arcul állnak. / Erősen vívnak, szerencsát késértnek, (...) Terekeken ha diadalmat vesznek, / Nagy hálákat adnak ők az Istennek, / Örülnek, vigadnak az nyereségnek, / Mentől inkább annak tisztosságának. / Jó legényök vitézők végházakba, / Vannak gyakran terekkel bajvívásba, / Az körösztýén hitért gyakor harcokban, / És jó hírért, névért sok országokba.” Tinódi, *Kapitán György bajviadaljáról*, 1550, 9–13, 21–28.

⁸⁵⁰ István Vadaí, “A tudósító ének műfaja (The Genre of Report Songs),” in *A magyar irodalom története I. (Histories of Hungarian Literature I)*, ed. Mihály Szegedy-Maszák (Budapest: Gondolat, 2007).

seventeenth centuries, involve argumentation against the pagans in the form of a war prayer: “*We raise our flags against them in your holy name, / Let Lord Jesus be the general of our armies, / And guide our hands in the fight against the infidel nation. (...) Regard the power of this disgusting nation, / Their impurity, the ugliness of their lives, / Take into the edge of your view the shed of unguilty blood among us.*”⁸⁵¹ The other poem, by Máté Sárközi, prays for destruction and disarmament of the enemy, mainly in the spiritual sense: “*Tame the pagans, / Take away their courage, / Don’t save their army, / Beat, Lord, their power.*”⁸⁵² Fighting the infidel participated in the creation of aesthetic values as well, as Valkai’s narrative on Charles V gives evidence: “*The rise of the army was beautiful, / As they were on the move against the pagans*”⁸⁵³ – in this case, ethical categories form categories of aesthetics. As the examples give an idea, references regarding to “pagans” seem to become common by the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the idealized concept of the soldiers was already settled. However, in the poetry of Balassi, who was a trendsetter in the development of the moral-aesthetic system of representing the ideal soldier and their lives, “pagans” occur much more infrequently. The reason behind this might be that his poetry makes a more definite distinction of military and religious life, with a focus on personal faith and less involvement of the soldiers as a religious community.

In a detailed analysis of representative practices concerning the Ottomans in epic poetry, it is inevitable to discuss the poetry of Bálint Balassi, the first poet who cultivated lyric poetry in the Hungarian language. Apart from being known as an active participant of raids against the Ottomans – one such occasion is even mentioned in the *Story of Bey Sásvár*⁸⁵⁴ – he is considered to be the first author writing in the vernacular having an individual tone and a systematically composed volume

⁸⁵¹ Ellenek zászlónkat emeljük szent nevedbe, / Az Úr Jézus legyen hadunknak fővezére, / És az mi kezünket az hitlen nép ellen az harcon vezérelje. (...) Ez fertelmes népnek tekintsed meg hatalmát, / Tisztátalanságát, életének rúttságát, / Vedd szemed éliben sok ártatlan vérnek közöttünk kiontását. Oh én két szemeim nótájára, probably 1594 or 96, lines 7–9, 13–15.

⁸⁵² “Zabolázd meg pogányokat, / Vedd el ő bátorságokat, / Ne mentsed meg ő hadokat, / Verd meg, uram, hatalmokat.” Sárközi Máté, RMKT XVII/1, 83–4, lines 25–8.

⁸⁵³ “Olly szép vala az hadnac indulattya [indulása], / Mert Pogán ellen vala mozdulatya” András Valkai, Károly császár hada Afrikában, strophe 10.

⁸⁵⁴ “With horsemen and foot troops, valiant Balassa, / Broke houses and shops with money, / Imprisoned children and women, / Many Turks he bounded by the neck. “ “Lovaggal, gyaloggal vitéz Balassa / Házakat, pénzes boltokat tört vala, / Gyermeket, bulyákat fogott vala, / Sok törököt nyakon kötött vala. Sásvár bég históriája, lines 105–8.

consisting of poetical cycles. The concept of his volume is known from a seventeenth century copy, and had raised many questions among literary historians concerning the original poetical concept.⁸⁵⁵

The originality of the composition stands in its personal and individual tone, however, this voice strongly relies on communal traditions, in particular, on congregational song poetry, and the genres of psalters and exile poetry.⁸⁵⁶ Balassi also relied firmly on the didactic-moral traditions that had been developed by event poetry, moreover, he advanced this system to an abstract level, and created a system of ideals that raised a military ideal into the sphere of aesthetics. The system included all elements of the above presented toolkit connected to the idealized life of soldiers and to the defense line as an idealized construction, along with fundamental moral categories and ethical ideals. These concepts – expressed succinctly as “*They [soldiers] abandon everything for the sake of honor and dignity*”⁸⁵⁷ – include *propugnaculum*, *flagellum Dei* and *miles Christi*,⁸⁵⁸ idealized landscape and season,⁸⁵⁹ and customs connected to soldiers’ lifestyle such as head-taking or distributing the booty.⁸⁶⁰ Poetical formulations of these elements are represented in the poems in a new context, assisting the creation of the concept of the volume to draw a dramatic line of a love story.⁸⁶¹ Concerning the formal elements of the poetical toolkit, Balassi had an extensive use of formulas, some of which shows parallels with spring songs of Western European poetry, however, their direct

⁸⁵⁵ For the most important contributions in this issue, see Iván Horváth, “Az eszményítő Balassi-kiadások ellen (Against the Idealising Editions of Balassi),” in *Magyarok Bábelben (Hungarians in Babel)*, (Szeged: JATEPress, 2000).

⁸⁵⁶ On Balassi’s congregational tone, see Balázs Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, 170–188. On the tradition on late medieval prison literature, see Joanna Summers, *Late Medieval Prison Writing and the Politics of Autobiography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

⁸⁵⁷ “A’ jó hírért, névért, a’ szép tisztességért ők mindent hátra hagynak” Bálint Balassi, *In laudem confiniourum*, 1589, line 13. Online Critical Edition of the Complete Works of Bálint Balassi, <http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/~balassi/versek.html>

Because of its extant variants in Latin, e. g. in the *Gesta of Anonymus* (*nomen bonum accipiebant* - *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricum* I., 65.) and also in the Hungarian (*Szabács viadala* - “Hungarians earned good fame by that” “Azzal magyarok jó nevet vőnek”), and Tinódi’s *Károl császárnak hada Saxoniába* “Earned fame and good reputation for Hungarians” “Magyaroknak hírt, nevet jót hozának.”) The expression seems to be a universal formula. Ferenc A. Molnár, *Balassi-kommentárok (Balassi-Comments)*, Nyelvi és Művelődéstörténeti Adattár 6. (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem Magyar Nyelvtudományi Tanszék, 2005), 28–29.

⁸⁵⁸ See, for instance, poems 61+I, or 61+VI. *Hymnus secundus ad Deum Filium pro impetranda militari virtute*.

⁸⁵⁹ E.g. “As good falcons, they ramble around at the meadow, fighting and running their horses” “Midőn mint jó sólymok, mezőn széjjel járnak, vagdalkoznak, futtatnak.” *Ibid.*, line 15. Other prominent examples displaying the arsenal of the idealised life of soldiers are *In laudem verni temporis* / For wine drinkers (Borivóknak való) and Poem 66, *Valedicit patriae, amicis, iisque omnibus, quae habuit carissima*.

⁸⁶⁰ “They are merry to have their sharp sabers, as they can take heads with them” “Az éles szabályokban örvendeznek méltán, mert ők fejeket szednek” *Ibid.*, line 22; “This gracious should have my head along with my soul as her own swap-trade” “E kegyesnek legyen mind fejem s mind lelkem maga kottyavetyéje” Poem 48., line 10.

⁸⁶¹ See Tünde Tóth, “Balassi és a neolatin szerelmi költészet (Balassi and Neo-Latin Love Poetry),” <http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/gepesk/bbom/tanulm/tunde0.htm>.

connection cannot be firmly established.⁸⁶²

The connection of Balassi with the Turks relied on ambivalence: his father had good connections with the Porte (however, although his offered services were not accepted by the sultan, probably because of the raids of his son), Balassi himself knew the Turkish language at a level that he was able to make literary contributions on multiple registers of Ottoman literature (aşık and divan poetry). He translated a poetical cycle of beyts (rhyming pair of lines), and apart from that, he has three other poems which are based on Turkish poetry.⁸⁶³ The translation of his poetic cycle of beyts relied on a poem collection of Ottoman elite poetry (mejume) based on Sufi imagery and symbolism, demonstrating his deep and systematic knowledge of Ottoman poetry.⁸⁶⁴ Balassi probably established such profound contacts with Ottoman poetry in the court of the Bey of Szécsény, where he had been referred to go often for a “fun pass of time.”⁸⁶⁵ At the same time, he was a constant participant of raids and eventually lost his life at the siege of Esztergom by an Ottoman cannon shot.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a complex system of the soldier’s ideal way of life came into existence. The full imagery also included idealized activities, such as raiding or other forms of military rivalry, and also involved perfection in outer circumstances, such as ideal weather (springtime), or the ideal landscape. The *Soldier’s song* – as the title in itself demonstrates, the concept had been solidified by the formation of an independent genre by the 1590s – by Zsigmond Rákóczy, the Prince of Transylvania, gives an idea of the idealized imagery in its full bloom: “*The great spacious plain meadow, / Grove, woods, boscase forest / Will turn green, along with all the nice grass, / Soon, quick horses will be needed. // Beautiful shiny weapons / Will be the strength of our eyes, / The means of granting our joy, / Being with many good warriors on campaign. (...) He*

⁸⁶² A. Molnár, *Balassi-kommentárok*, 21–25. See also Iván Horváth, *Balassi költészete történeti poétikai megközelítésben (The Poetry of Balassi in a Historical Poetical Approach)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 276–279.

⁸⁶³ These three works are Minap mulatni mentemben... Ez világ sem kell már nekem... Kegyes vidám szemű... . See Balázs Sudár, “Balassi Bálint és a török költészet (Bálint Balassi and Turkish Poetry),” *Török Füzetek* 12, no. 4 (2004): 3–4, and Balázs Sudár, “A műfordító Balassi Bálint és a török bejtek (Bálint Balassi, the Literary Translator and the Turkish Beyts)” *Kalligram* 14 (2005): 77–84.

⁸⁶⁴ László Szörényi, “‘Valahány török bejt’ (‘Some Turkish Beyts’),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 80, no. 5–6 (1976): 708–09.

⁸⁶⁵ Sudár, “A műfordító Balassi Bálint,” 79.

*[God] plunders them by us, / Disgrace all the infidels, / As tiles between our hands, / They will be all crashed and broken by Him. (...) If we remember all this, / Our reputation and fame will remain, / Our honour and decency, / Will remain, if our faith is solid.”*⁸⁶⁶

The moral summit of the ideal warriors had been embodied in the figures of heroes. Idealized figures of the combats represented a wide scale of the social-military hierarchy, as recent and historic leaders, but in a parallel manner, soldiers of lower ranks could also be elevated to the level of ideals in the narratives. As events of narrative accounts had to be associated with a place, date, object or person to be believed and transmitted, the process of heroization helped both short- and long-term memorization and constituted part of mythmaking. Myths being productions of social memory, heroization of certain figures, or of a whole social estate, had didactic aims and was a tool in memorization.⁸⁶⁷ In Hungarian narratives, the ideology present in the representation of heroes fostered the development of *hungarus* identity as well.⁸⁶⁸ In event poetry, it seems to be a tendency that soldiers of higher ranks are presented in more detail,⁸⁶⁹ depending on their real-life connections with the authors of the texts. Such was the case, for instance, of Sebestyén Tinódi, who in his work on the siege of Eger, presented Gergely Bornemisza – who was only a “deák”, i.e., a “literate person” – in an oddly detailed manner, perhaps because by the time of the composition and edition of the narrative in the volume, Bornemisza was already the captain of the castle.⁸⁷⁰

A different case of heroization, idealizing not only a person, but an entire family of multiple generations can be presented with the example of Sebestyén Tinódi, who created a heroic image of his patrons, the Török family. The process is developed in the course of various narratives and

⁸⁶⁶ “Az nagy kiterjesztett sík mező, / Ligetes, fás, cseres erdő/Majd megzöldül minden szép fű, / Majd kelletik az hamar ló. // Az szép fényes fegyverekre/Lesz majd szemek látó ere, / Kedvünk megadó eszköze, / Sok jó vitéz hadban léte. (...) Raboltatja velünk őket, / Gyalázza mind hitleneket, / Kezünk közt mint cserepeket / Mind elrontja, tőri őket. (...) Kiről ha megemlékezünk, / Megmarad jó hírünk, nevünk, / Becsületünk, tisztességünk, / Lesz, ha megmarad mi hitünk.” Rákóczi Zsigmond, *Vitézi ének*, 5–12, 16–20, 29–32.

⁸⁶⁷ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 70 and 151.

⁸⁶⁸ Dobozy, “Two Cultural Perspectives,” 36.

⁸⁶⁹ To bring a relatively early example, the *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi* by Ferenc Tőke from 1556, presents the captain as the ideal of self-sacrifice: “This bailiff was Márkó Horváth, / Who did all this by himself, / He was ready to sacrifice his life, / Regarded only salvation and dignity.” “Horvát Márkó ez a tisztartó vala, / Ki magában ezt elvégezte vala, / Ott áldozni halálával kész vala, / Üdvösségre, tisztességre, néz vala. (53–56.)

⁸⁷⁰ Pál Ács, “Tinódi Sebestyén és Bornemisza Gergely (Sebestyén Tinódi and Gergely Bornemisza),” in *Tinódi Sebestyén és a régi magyar verses epika (Sebestyén Tinódi and Old Hungarian Epic Poetry)* (Kolozsvár/Cluj: Kriterion, 2008), 46.

eventually, emerges as an organizational principle of the *Cronica* as a volume. The Ottoman captivity of the patriarch, Bálint Török, and the strong anti-Turk attitude of his son, János Török had a significant influence on representational practices of other warrior figures too. The intense opposition with the Turks is expressed at assorted levels of the narration on the son of Bálint Török: János tells queen Isabella that he is not a friend of Turks⁸⁷¹ because they captured his father, left his mother widowed and himself and his brother orphaned; further, the didaxis of the narrative, directed towards members of the noble estate as an intended audience, also focuses on the praise of the anti-Turkish advocacy of János: “*Because I see very few young lords, / Who would fight with you against the Turks. // It is a pity that you don’t promote this young lord, / To appreciate him by granting him some rank.*”⁸⁷² In this case, the didaxis functions as a “letter of reference” of a great soldier against the Turks, and stands as a clear example of propaganda combined with personal motivation from the author’s side.

4. 3. 2. Female Heroes

Women, although traditionally part of the hinterland in wars, and of the “private world” in medieval and early modern cultures, were presented typically in connection with two aspects in siege narratives. These two areas are connected to the two extremities of literary presentations of women: heroines and widows/virgins, and may be traced back to the legends of the Amazons and the widows of the Iliad.⁸⁷³ Assigned roles of women are also connected to traditional topoi: the violation of women, as a traditional component of descriptions of warful times, constitutes a part of crusading literature to detail the military dominance, evilness and corruptedness of Saracens.⁸⁷⁴

Virgins and widows are recurring figures of war narratives, as they embody the vulnerable

⁸⁷¹ “You should know it well that the Turk is not my friend” “Az terek nem barátom, azt jól tudjad,” Tinódi, *Enyingi Terek János vitézsége*, 64.

⁸⁷² “Mert bizon kevés úrfiakat látok, / Kikkel együtt terekkel vínátok. // Kár hogy ez úrfit elő nem veszítök, / Hogy valami tiszttel nem szeretitök.” Ibid., lines 323–6.

⁸⁷³ Corinne Saunders, “Women and Warfare in Medieval English Writing,” in *Writing War. Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare.*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Francoise Le Saux, and Neil Thomas (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 188 and 193.

⁸⁷⁴ *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl, 2.

nature of the whole of the community. Traditionally, these two groups of women are also close to God, being beyond fornication and in the possession of self-control. Literary representations of widowhood as a conventional female role relied on two main models: the “good, heroic” and the “bad, loose” widow were connected to Judith and Petronius’s widow as models, respectively.⁸⁷⁵ Widows were also represented on the literary scene by a subgenre of female songs (*chansons de femme*⁸⁷⁶). A representative of the genre in Hungarian literature is the *Cantio Jucunda de Helena Horvat*, a widow’s panegyric. The mourning of widows is an element of narratives that can be regarded as a formula of the script. Gestures involved in the process of grief are crying (tears being traditional female attributes), tearing clothing or pulling hair are also part of the traditional image, and function as a living memorial for the deceased.⁸⁷⁷ Similar gestures are perceivable in Hungarian sources, such as the willingness of the wife to die after her husband, or the grief of a mother.⁸⁷⁸ The classical imagery of widowhood is invoked also in some examples of captivity or refuge (*bujdosó*) poetry. To cite an example, the poem of Péter Lakatos from 1595 relies on the conventional image of widows and orphans, using their figures as poetical tools to express the unfairness of his situation: “*I have never injured widows and orphans (...) My sweet children are desperate, / My poor orphans with their widowed mother.*”⁸⁷⁹ The investigations of the dedications of sources and various aspects of the context of the creation and performance of literary works display a new type of widows’ role. It is known that the court of Bálint Török, the main patron of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos was a center of musicians, poets, and prominent propagators of the reformed religions.⁸⁸⁰ This remained so after the captivity of the lord as well: Kata Pemflinger continued Tinódi’s

⁸⁷⁵ Leslie Abend Callahan, “The Widow’s Tears: The Pedagogy of Grief in Medieval France and the Image of the Grieving Widow,” in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity*, 245.

⁸⁷⁶ Zsuzsanna Földes, “A női dal a magyar irodalomban - műfaj történeti vázlat (The Female Song in Hungarian Literature - an Outline of a Genre),” *Palimpszeszt* 16, no. 1 (2002). http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/palimpszeszt/16_szam/02.htm.

⁸⁷⁷ Margaret Hallissy, *Clean Maids, True Wives, Steadfast Widows: Chaucer’s Women and Medieval Codes of Conduct* (London: Greenwood Press, 1993), 136.

⁸⁷⁸ “Ha lehetne, ő is kész volna halni”, line 226 of Anonym: *Az vitéz Turi György haláláról*, 1571; “Elő egy ifju, Várdai Simon, / Kinek anyja é- naponkéd sírjon!” “There is a young man, Simon Várdai, / Whose mother is crying at home night and day” *Szabács viadala*, 31–32.

⁸⁷⁹ “Özvegyet, árvát meg nem nyomorgattam (...) Reméltelenek én édes magzatim, / Özvegy anyjokkal nyavalyás árváim.” Lakatos Péter, RMKT XVII/1, 38, 52–53.

⁸⁸⁰ Sándor Takáts, “Enyinghi Török Bálintné, a ‘keserves asszony’ (The Widow of Bálint Enyinghi Török, ‘the Miserable Woman’),” in *Bajvivó Magyarok (Combating Hungarians)* (Budapest: Móra, 1979), 62.

patronage, and the court remained an important cultural center under her management.

The long epic of Tinódi on the *Siege of Eger* also mediates a multifarious imagery of women, giving examples for both female roles. The sorrow of wives is present in the text as a topos, an obligatory part of the script (“*Beautiful wife-women are lamenting*”⁸⁸¹), but the text also describes the braveness of women in the besieged fortress: “*Dobó runs to the bastion hurriedly, / There he encouraged all his people, / Makes the women carry the stones (...) Hastily, heroic women are throwing them.*”⁸⁸² Heroic women are present in other sieges narratives too. The anonymous account of the 1566 siege of Szigetvár describes the scene of defenders killing their own or their fellows’ wives before the final, fatal siege attempt of the Ottomans, in order to avoid their capture by the Ottomans.⁸⁸³ During this horrifying scene, an episode of a heroic woman is incorporated into the narrative, who is asking for a horse and armor and not to be killed by his own husband: “*My lord! please don’t be my enemy, / It is better for me to be killed by a pagan, / If I don’t fight, let me be murdered, / And not ever to be told to be your wife.*”⁸⁸⁴ Other stories of heroic Hungarian women found their ways into Latin biographic collections, such as the one by Francesco Serdonati⁸⁸⁵ that describes the heroism of the women of Eger and Székesfehérvár, probably based on Istvánffy’s chronicle. A similar collection was made in 1628 by András Prágai, who also recalls the heroism of the Eger women, and marking Giovio as his source, mentions the story of a woman who cut the head of two Turks with a scythe.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸¹ “Szép asszon-feleségök kesergenek,” 1379.

⁸⁸² “Dobó futamék bástyába hertelen, / Ott minden népét erősen biztatja, / Az köveket asszonnépvel hordatja, [...] Gyorsak, vitéz asszonyok hagyigálnak” (Eger vár IV, 1495–1500.)

⁸⁸³ História az Szigetvárnak veszésséről, lines 181–200.

⁸⁸⁴ “Kérlek uram! hogy ne légy ellenségöm, / Jobb az pogány legyön neköm gyilkosom, / Ha nem vívok, bátor megölettessem, / Feleségödnék soha ne mondassam.” 237–40.

⁸⁸⁵ The collection is an elaboration of Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* (1374). Júlia Papp, “Donne Vngare. A magyar női vitézség toposzának 16. századi forrásaihoz (Donne Vngare. To the Sixteenth-Century Sources of the Topos of Gallantry of Hungarian Women),” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 118, no. 3 (2014), 385.

⁸⁸⁶ András Prágai, *Fejedelmeknek serkentő oraiá*, 1628. “az Magyar Aßbonyoknak férfiui vitézségeket mely nagy emlékezzettel meg irtác. Mikor az Törökök Békes Fejérvárat ostromlanác, azt írja Jovius in Suplemen. Sabell. Lib.26. Hogy egy Magyar Aßbony, egy kabával két Töröknek egy csapással fejeket vette. Mikor Memhet Budai Bassa Egret ostromlotta Anno Domini, 1552. Azt írja Ascanius Centorius lib. 5. Belli Transylv. Hogy egy menyecske az annyával együtt az bástyán forgolodván Vra körül, ki mikor el talált esni, mond az annya az menyecskének: Jer leányom temessüc el az Vradot; kinec mond az menyecske; nincs most ideje az temtésnek, hanem Vránac fegyverét ragadván Vra halálát három Töröknek megh ölésevel torolta meg. Arrepto Mariti gladio, trium Turcarum morte marito parentavit, maritumq[ue] humeris ablatum terrae mandavit.” See also Kovács, “Szigetvár veszedelmei,” 619.

4. 3. 3. Anti-heroes

Similarly to those who crossed religious boundaries and became Muslims, those who crossed frontiers in the military/political sense and provided services to the Ottomans by gathering and supplying them with information, had been appraised with contempt. Spying for the Turks, or even cooperating with them was undoubtedly taken as betrayal. Betrayal is the central topic of one of the earliest vernacular plays, the *Comedy about the Betrayal of Menyhárt Balassi*, a satirical piece that caricatures the frequent side-changes of Hungarian nobles in the decades after the division of the Kingdom into three parts. During his fluctuation between patrons, the main figure, Menyhárt Balassi contemplates becoming a spy for the sultan out of financial interests: “*As I am too short of Turkish golds, I should carry out a couple of things so that I can collect more of them.*”⁸⁸⁷ A parallel accusation is present in the *Story about betrayer lords of Transylvania* by Mihály Szerdahelyi from the last decade of the sixteenth century, which argues against the political alliance with the Turks by presenting the cases of Boldizsár Báthory and Sándor Kendi, who, as opponents of the Habsburgs, were associated to form an alliance with the Turks. Eventually, they became opposed also with the cousin of Boldizsár, Zsigmond Báthory, the Prince of Transylvania in 1594. The narrative declares that Boldizsár Báthory and Sándor Kendi “*Betrayed their Prince, / And took sides with the pagan Turks,*”⁸⁸⁸ and accuses Kendi of having close ties with the Porte: “*Sándor had a house made, / A nice palace in Constantinople, / That he made to be built by the Turkish sultan, / So that he could live there at a given time. // He offered himself at any occasion, / Made an oath to the Turkish emperor, / That he would give him Transylvania by the day of St Michael, / And kill everyone there.*”⁸⁸⁹

Unreliability is the most often raised topos in all contexts against the Turks. As it had been demonstrated, it is a core element of representations of Ottoman sultans; it often recurs at the

⁸⁸⁷ “Török aranyam még kevés vagy, mident kellene mívelnem, hogy gyűjthetnék benne.” *Comoedia Balassi Menyhárt árultatásáról*, 1569, 266.

⁸⁸⁸ “Fejedelmüket ők elárulták vala, / Pogány törökökkel ők tartják vala.” Mihály Szerdahelyi, *Igön szép história, miképpen az áruló urak el akarták az erdéli vajdát árulni...* 1594, 387–88.

⁸⁸⁹ “Vala az Sándornak készített háza, / Konstantinápolyban szép palotája, / Kit török császárral csináltatott vala, / Hogy időben abban ő lakos volna. // Mindönképpen ő magát beadá, / Török császárnak hittel azt fogadá, / Szent Mihály napjára Erdélyt megadná, / Az benne valókat mind levágatná.” 389–96.

presentation of religion of the Turks; likewise, it is often addressed in the military context. The topos is attached to references on the Ottomans throughout the entire period considered, however, there are periodic peaks in the frequency of its occurrence. References to the unreliability of Turks, and more closely, the theme-type episode of making false promises to the defenders to persuade them to give up the fight takes a constant position in siege narratives accounting episodes of the fortress wars, fitting well into the system of plot formulas, and playing a determining role in representing the Ottoman besiegers.⁸⁹⁰ This component is present in numerous works of Tinódi – in the *Story of Transylvania*, or in the *Siege of Eger*⁸⁹¹ –, and of his followers.⁸⁹²

Another climax of the topos is present in Transylvania at the end of the sixteenth century, when there is a notable increase in narratives arguing against an alliance with the Ottomans.⁸⁹³ The following excerpt may enlighten the complexity of the idea, demonstrating the mixing of religious and historical categories and the didactic style of the text: “*There is no chance that a Turk would be benevolent against his nature, / As a Saracen cannot be washed white with soap in the baths, / Therefore, those who believe him in the future will be surely ashamed. // Instead of a good act, look at his deeds he had done in many countries, / Those who could not be conquered by weapon, he corrupted with trickery.*”⁸⁹⁴

The crossings of military-political boundaries are recurring affairs in depictions of complex

⁸⁹⁰ The topos had Biblical origins: “When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city.” Deuteronomy 20, 10–12. The same passages make a disposal concerning taking booty after a successful siege: “When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies.” Deuteronomy 20, 13–14.

⁸⁹¹ Erdéli história: lines 1325–32.

⁸⁹² E.g. Ferenc Töke: “The Turks asked for the castle, / And made frequent promises (...) The Turks had written a letter, / And shot it into the castle with an arrow.” *Historia obsidionis insulae antemi*, 1556. rkmt 6, 131–150, lines 261–262, 281–282. The episode is parallel with Tinódi’s long narrative on the siege of Eger, esp. in the lines 373–384, 794–801, 923–950.

⁸⁹³ On the characteristics of seventeenth-century Transylvanian references on the Ottomans, see Gábor Kármán, “‘Átkozott Konstantinápoly’: Törökkép Erdély 17. századi portai követségén (‘Damned Constantinople’: The Image of Turks at the Embassy of Transylvania at the Porte in the 17th Century),” in *Portré és imázs. Politikai propaganda és reprezentáció a kora újkorban (Portrait and Image. Political Propaganda and Representation in the Early Modern Age)*, ed. Nóra G. Etényi and Ildikó Horn (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2008), 32–34 and 37.

⁸⁹⁴ “Természeti ellen soha semmiképpen egy török sem szelidül, / Miképpen szerezsen hogy az feredőben szappannal nem fejeződik, / Azért jövődében az ki neki hiszen, bizonynal megszégyenül. // Jótétemény helyett lásd mit cselekedett egyéb sok országokkal, / Az kiket fegyverrel meg nem bírt erővel, megrontja csalárdsággal.” Márton, rkmt XVII/1, 84, 10–13.

military events. Inevitably, narrating episodic events of side-changing activities aroused special dramatic tensions, and could grab the audience's attention. Considering the formal features of the narrations of episodes describing alterations in the course of military events, we find an increased presence of formulaic expressions. A case to demonstrate this phenomenon is the escape of Bey Ali after the battle of Kenyérmező, described in two separate narratives about the battle, by the Anonymous author of Nikolsburg and István Temesvári. Although both works are based on Bonfini,⁸⁹⁵ they apply a wide spectrum of formulas that obviously constitute part of the formal toolkit of oral traditions. The following passages demonstrate these claims representatively: "*Bey Ali changed his clothes and language, / As if he was a Hungarian, he acted like that (...) He turned his good horse, and ran away, / And as soon as it was possible, he pulled out hurriedly*,"⁸⁹⁶ the same scene in the other source: "*Bey Ali changed his clothing (...) Turned on the back of his good horse in the morning (...) There Bey Ali dashed off from there, / To escape from death and captivity, / Himself ran into Turkey, / Rushed there running unclothed*."⁸⁹⁷ The narrative of the Anonymous author of Nikolsburg appears to draw more extensively on these traditions; also, the differences of the two narratives makes the direct connection of the two texts improbable.

The process of heroization involved the creation of anti-heroic figures, who functioned in the narratives as antitheses of "our" heroes. Their representations were accommodated into the topoi- and formula-system of event poetry. In certain cases, the heroic images of patrons of particular works and authors were created with the help of a process of inverse direction: creating counter poles, anti-heroes from enemies. A representative work in this regard is the *Story of Bey Sásvár*⁸⁹⁸ by György Szepesi from 1581, which presents a smaller-scale military affair, the battle of Nádudvar. The work is dedicated to Ferenc Geszthy, a noble participating in the defense of the

⁸⁹⁵ Tibor Klaniczay, ed. *A magyar irodalom története I. (The History of Hungarian Literature I.)* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1964), 397. The two sources: Temesvári István deák, *On the battle of Kenyérmező*, 1569 and the Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép história az Kenyér mezején Kenesy Pálnak és Báthory Istvánnak az törökökkel szemben*, 1568.

⁸⁹⁶ "Ali bék ruháját, nyelvét változtatá, / Mintha magyar volna, magát úgy mutatá (...) Azonban jó lovát fordítá, futamék, / És azmint leheté, nagyhamar ellépék" Lines 396–398, 403–404. Regarding the particular formula, see chapter 2.1.

⁸⁹⁷ Alibék ruháját változtatja vala (...) Reggel jó lovára ő felfordult vala. (...) Ottan az Alibék onnét elszágólda, / Haláltól, fogságtól ő megszabadula, / A Törökországban őmaga beszágulda, / Meztelen elszaladván befuta." Temesvári István deák, also on the battle of Kenyérmező, 1569, 385, 388, 393–396.

⁸⁹⁸ *Sásvár bég históriája*, 157–172. 1580.

southern borders, who is represented in the narrative as an opponent of Bey Sásvár. The Bey was a widely known and detested figure, who provoked many official complaints because of his raids and neglecting the peace pact in effect at the time. His antagonistic character is formed at multiple levels of the narrative: his animosity towards Hungarians is referred to be his main inspiration for opting for beyship: “*He became a Bey from his anger on us,*”⁸⁹⁹ while various aspects connected to his figure, such as his origins, or conversion are used consciously to ridicule and condemn him (“*Sásvár was of peasant origin, / From a Christian he became a cruel pagan*”⁹⁰⁰). The mechanism involves references to classical examples of negative heroes (Menelaus, Jason) and finally, Bey Sásvár is being ridiculed by the description of his failed raid attempts and failure as a horseman (“*I was told by those who saw it with their own eyes / That he was covered in mud along with his clothing and horse.*”⁹⁰¹) The narrative presents Sásvár’s arrogance and hubris (“*He thought no one is comparable to him, / Tempted his fortune again and again, / Recounted his many combats, / He bragged among Turks in this manner*”), who is detested even by the sultan (“*The only reason he was favored by the sultan (...) So that Hungarians would be more horrified in this land.*”⁹⁰²)

The *Story of Pasha Ali*, recounting the marriage and death of Ali, the Pasha of Buda (1580–83 and 1586–87⁹⁰³) is a unique piece focusing on a widely known Ottoman figure. The author was probably a member of the envoyship to the Pasha – he gives a uniquely favorable description of him⁹⁰⁴ –, and his work demonstrates the transitional character of the literacy of the author by its prevalent oral features (relatively short text, frequent summary of the plot, simple rhyming forms, frequent references to sources intending to ensure readership about authenticity). Probably because of the interesting topic of the narrative, the work was published in print as well. The marriage of the

⁸⁹⁹ “Rajtunk való dühösségért úrrá lött,” line 15.

⁹⁰⁰ “Paraszt nemzetségből Sásvár származott, / Keresztyénből kegyetlen pogánnyá lött” (13–14.)

⁹⁰¹ Azok mondták, kik jól látták szemekkel, / Hogy sáros volt mind ruhástól, lovastól (501–2.)

⁹⁰² “Kit csak azért szeret vala a császár (...) / Hogy ez földön inkább félne az magyar” (lines 50, 52.)

⁹⁰³ *Ali pasa históriája*, 47–55. See Pál Fodor and Balázs Sudár, “Ali pasa házassági históriájának történeti háttere és török vonatkozásai (The Historical Background and Turkish Relevances of the Marriage Story of Pasha Ali),” in *Ámor, álom és mámor. A szerelem a régi magyar irodalomban és a szerelem ezredéves hazai kultúrtörténete. (Amor, Dream and Rapture. Love in Old Hungarian Literature and the Millennial Cultural History of Love in Hungary)*, ed. Géza Szentmártoni Szabó (Budapest: Universitas, 2002), 325–58.

⁹⁰⁴ “Pasha Ali was very candid, / He had a large beautiful red beard, / He was a good bowman and horserunner” “Az Ali pasa igen jámbor vala, /Szép temérdek vörös szakállá vala, / Jó nyilas és pályafutató vala, /Szép játékja hozzá illendő vala.” (lines 25–27.)

Pasha Ali attracted wide attention as he married a member of the sultan's family, thus the story allowed for the introduction of the particular customs connected to imperial weddings at the Porte. All in all, this literary attitude and topic choice was not common in vernacular narratives. The work emphasizes as a curiosity the attributed opportunity of the female members of the imperial family to have a word in their partner choices. The author has a clearly judgmental attitude towards this custom (*"This Turkish custom is ungodly, / Daughter branches of the emperor's nation / May choose their husbands deliberately / And leave her spouse and children behind"*⁹⁰⁵), and gives a detailed account of the implementation of the tradition: Ali was forced to leave his family and take the emperor's sister as his wife, his son had to be circumcised at the wedding (*"To the great joy of the sultan, his son is there / Was circumcised with the baptism of the Turks."*⁹⁰⁶); the account also refers to the rise of Ali's career as a consequence (*"Ali begged his wife / To let him become the Pasha of Buda."*⁹⁰⁷). However, the reversed role of Ali in the tradition and his career achievements is overly emphasized,⁹⁰⁸ dispossessing him of fundamental masculine attributions. Presenting his ambivalent situation and restricted options, this representational method allows for a complex presentation of the Pasha of Buda as a political figure as well – providing the author with opportunities to judge Ottoman leadership for his audience. However, this practice was not widely spread: apart from the above presented narratives on Bey Sásvár and Pasha Ali, our source corpus lacks complete works dedicated particularly to Ottoman figures, or even remarkably detailed representations of individual figures.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁵ "Istentelen szerzet törökök dolga, / Császár nemzetből való leány ága, / Urat választ magának, kit akarna, / Feleségét, gyermekeit elhagyatja." Strophe 22.

⁹⁰⁶ "Az fiát is császár ott nagy örömmel, / Megmetszeti török keresztségével." Strophe 25.

⁹⁰⁷ "Úgy könyörög Ali feleségének, / Hogy budai pasa legyen, engedjék." Strophe 28.

⁹⁰⁸ "This was the habit of the princes, / That at the first consumption of a marriage, a husband / Should fulfill the wish he is asked to fulfill, / But as he [Ali] is reversed with his wife, / As his wife is greater than the Pasha, / Because his wife is equal with the sultan." "Ez szokás vagyon az fejedelmeknél, / Első háláskor kér az ő urától, / Meg kell adni, valamit kér, férjétül, / Vissza vagyon dolga feleségével. // Mert az felesége nagyobb pasánál, / Mert az felesége egy az császárral." Str. 27–28.

⁹⁰⁹ Even pure ridicule is quite rare – an atypical example can be presented, however, from Ferenc Tőke's account of Szigetvár, which enumerates the deeds of Ottoman figures during the attacks, and belittles a leader of the enemy with this story inserted in the listing: "The Janissary aga was whining in fear, / Sitting on the privy against his will, / Hungarians dragged him out from there anyway." "Jancsár-aga féltiben szűkölt vala, / Árnyékszékben kedve ellen ükt vala, / A magyarok onné is kivonják vala." (161–163.)

4. 3. 4. Captives

The fortress campaigns of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary in the second half of the sixteenth century resulted in a vast number of hostages and captives being taken. Becoming a prisoner and imprisonment itself were commented on by either the captives themselves, or by other authors reflecting on the ongoing military events, and the resulting narratives played an imminent role in the formation and solidification of the traditions of written vernacular Hungarian literature.

Captivity, being an extraordinary atmosphere with extreme circumstances for both the body and the mind of the imprisoned person, creates a special space for literature. From the fifteenth century onwards, a wide variety of texts reflected on circumstances of Ottoman captivity (e.g., the works of Georgius Hungaricus and Bartul Giurgievich).⁹¹⁰ Several of them follow a recurring scheme, describing the circumstances of falling into captivity, the route to the Ottoman Empire, the life of captives as slaves, and the possible means of release. These sources, particularly the earliest, the account of Georgius Hungaricus,⁹¹¹ recount that captives were treated humanely; in many cases, for example, they could practice their own religions, and although their masters tried to persuade them to convert to Islam, captives had the opportunity to stay Christians.

Because of their value in trade and role in agriculture and in the army, slaves constituted a fundamental element of the Ottoman economy. In principle, according to Islam, Muslim persons or people in a protected status could not be enslaved by other Muslims – however, with the establishment of the conquered territories under the protection of the Ottoman Empire, that is, the *dhimmi* status, this rule had to be reconsidered. The constant need for slaves resulted in the introduction of the *devshirme* system – in fact, a human resource charge from the own subjects of the Empire – , and also in the creation of external slave markets. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, extended slave trade necessitated the regulation of slave trading activities, most of all, the activities of the *akinjis*, who were originally operated as forerunners in military conquests on the basis of *ghazi* ideology, but became gradually interested in slave taking along settlements of the

⁹¹⁰ Sources on the life of captives can be found in the anthology *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* (Captives, diplomats and merchants about the Ottoman Empire) ed. Lajos Tardy (Budapest: Gondolat, 1977).

⁹¹¹ *Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum*, (Urach, 1481).

border regions.⁹¹²

As it provided opportunities for rapid and substantive financial gain, similarly to raids aiming for booty, slave-taking was an activity that had been pursued by participants of both sides of military conflicts. According to Hungarian and Habsburg documents,⁹¹³ taking prisoners was a frequent goal of military frays, however, as most raids aiming to get captives were of smaller scale, such attempts might not have gotten into records in all cases. Taking captives and holding them for ransom was commonly practiced both by Hungarians and Ottomans. Although the practices were parallel, there were differences in the terminology: For Hungarians it was illegal to have slaves, therefore they referred to their prisoners as captives,⁹¹⁴ whom they set free after they received the ransom. The amount of the ransom was dependent on the social-military rank and the attributed value of the prisoner, the two not always corresponding to each other: typically, captives of lower rank were more valuable for ransom trade, as higher officials had to be sent to Vienna to be traded officially by the court.⁹¹⁵ Also, there were “professional prisoners” who substituted in prisons the captives who were engaged in collecting the ransom for themselves.⁹¹⁶ The treatment of captives did not depend on the crimes they had committed, but on their social rank.⁹¹⁷ Accordingly, captives were kept under different kinds of constraints and their conditions of imprisonment also varied.

References to captivity and imprisonment are quite frequent in sixteenth-century narrative poetry. In their poetical forms and traditions, these reference bear common features of epic poetry: there are constant Biblical figures referred as role models in captivity, such as David, who escaped from the captivity of Saul⁹¹⁸ (Samuel 21, 11–16), Jonah or Joseph.⁹¹⁹ The moral value system

⁹¹² Pál Fodor, “Adatok a magyarországi török rabszedésről (Data about the Ottoman Practice of Taking Captives in Hungary),” in *A szultán és az aranyalma (The Sultan and the Golden Apple)* (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 297–99.

⁹¹³ Ibid., 303–04.

⁹¹⁴ Bayerle, “One Hundred and Fifty Years of Frontier Life in Hungary,” 239.

⁹¹⁵ Vatai, “‘Csak az menjen katonának...’”, 41.

⁹¹⁶ Stein, *Guarding the Frontier*, 23–24.

⁹¹⁷ Jean Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000–1300* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 17.

⁹¹⁸ Gergely Szegedi recalls this episode in connection with the escape of Gáspár Mágócsy from the Ottomans. Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, 151.

⁹¹⁹ “Joseph was kept in a well, later in the prison, Jonah was swallowed by a whale at the bottom of the sea.” “Az József kútban, es mind tömlőcben, lám tartatott vala, / Jónást is cethal, tengör fenekén el-benyelte vala.” Ferenc Wathay, XVIII/24.

developed in epic poetry is also often addressed, indicating that fame and glorious death is more desirable than captivity (“*Our death would be even better than us being captured;*”⁹²⁰ “*He [Ferenc Geszthy, the opponent of Bey Sásvár] would taste death more readily, / Than to see poor captives in front of his eyes / be taken away captured by the pagans.*”⁹²¹

Representations often operate with formulaic expressions while describing the positions of captives. Mihály Cserényi’s *Story on the Persian rulers* describes a slave market: “*He is sitting on the market under a wall with others / Huge iron chains squeeze the neck of the poor man, / The king made him get off his precious dress, / Made his hair to be cut short like a prisoner.*”⁹²² Gergely Szegedi’s work on the devastation of the ravage of the Tatars operates with a similar imagery, expressed by a similar grammatical formula: “*Their dressed were taken off in a cruel manner, / Poor captives are left naked, / As a herd, the Tatars with scourges / chase them in front.*”⁹²³ The passage also recalls the poem of Ferenc Wathay on the devastation of the Tatars, which is joined with an illustration in his volume, the *Song Book*.



The devastation of the Tartars. *Song Book*, 44b-45a.

⁹²⁰ “Jobb lenne halálunk, hogy nem mint rabságunk” Anonym of Nikolsburg, *Igen szép...*, 209.

⁹²¹ “Még az halált is inkább megkóstolná.//Hogy sem szegény rabokat látására, / Az pogányok elvinnék az fogságra.” Sásvár bég históriája, 396–98.

⁹²² “Az piacon többel ül egy fal alatt, / Nagy vaslánc lenyomta szegénnek nyakát, / Király levonatta drága ruháját, / Rab módra nyírette fel az ő haját.” Mihály Cserényi, *História az perzsiai fejedelmekről*, 605–608.

⁹²³ “Ruhájokat rólok éktelen levonják, / Az szegény rabokat mezítelenül hagyják, / Mint egy sereg csordát, az tatár ostorral / Előttök hajdogálják.” Gergely Szegedi, *A magyaroknak siralmas éneke a tatár rablásról*, 53–56.

Ferenc Wathay fell into Ottoman captivity as the captain of Székesfehérvár, during the siege of the town in 1602. During his imprisonment he became a poet, and produced a volume of songs with illustrations and an autobiography. As a captive of high rank, he spent his days in captivity in special prisons – first in the Csonkatorony of Buda, later in the Black Tower of Istanbul (the Galata Tower)⁹²⁴ – and was kept together with other valuable captives. While he was in Buda, the Ottomans wanted to exchange him for the bey of Szekszárd.⁹²⁵ Possibilities of release were different in the case of captives of higher social status. They were too valuable to be sold to slave traders, but were instead kept in special prisons and could be released after their families paid a certain ransom.⁹²⁶ Not every captive could count on the payment, and even if the ransom was eventually collected, some had to wait years to be set free: Wathay spent altogether four years in prison. He tried to organize his release and was constantly looking for the goodwill of Hungarian nobles⁹²⁷ of high rank to help him collect the ransom. The autobiography of Ferenc Wathay describes that he was kept well; he mentions that he received enough food and drink.⁹²⁸ As he wrote his *Song Book* in prison, one can assume that he had access to paper and ink as well. The texts and the images of the source, however, do depict the author crying as in his cell, with heavy irons around his ankles, recalling the complex topoi system of prison writing, which, together with exile literature, looks back to a long tradition since Ovid, Seneca, St. Paul and Boethius.⁹²⁹

⁹²⁴ Later he was taken back to Buda and was released from there. *Veszprém a török korban*, 172.

⁹²⁵ On this, see the colophon of poem XXVIII: “Mikoron az szekszárdi Ali bég felől oly hírem jött vala, hogy nem akarná értem adni római császár öccse, Mátyás herceg, akkorbeli bánatomról írtam vala ezt (...)” (“I wrote this in my sorrow when I heard the news that brother of the Roman Emperor, Prince Matthias would not give the bey of Szekszárd, Ali for me.”) 105b.

⁹²⁶ In order to collect the money, many families were completely bankrupted; for instance, after the battle of Nicopolis the sultan demanded 200,000 pieces of gold for the release of the crown prince of Burgundy. Tardy, ed., *Rabok, követek, kalmárok* 67.

⁹²⁷ For example, he wrote to Ferenc Batthyány (1605. Sept. 29.); his wife wrote to Erzsébet Báthori. *Wathay Ferenc énekeskönyve* (The *Song Book* of Ferenc Wathay), ed. Lajos Nagy and György Belia, 164. (Budapest: Helikon, 1976.)

⁹²⁸ “Éf Innünk io modgiauall elegendendött attanak uolna (...)” “and they gave enough drinks (...)” 126b.

⁹²⁹ Summers, *Late Medieval Prison Writing*, 3. In his article on Ottoman first-person narratives composed in Christian captivity, Cemal Kafadar warned that captivity memoirs should be treated with caution for the potential risks that “they may be reflections of literary device rather than actually lived experiences.” Cemal Kafadar, “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature,” *Studia Islamica*, No. 69. (1989), 132.



Ferenc Wathay crying in his cell. *Song Book*, 83b.

In the autobiography of Wathay in the *Song Book*, the most elaborate episodes are his four failed escape attempts, which have such a central role in the structure of the volume that each episode got an own illustration.⁹³⁰ Perhaps the most vivid among these stories is the one when he made his escape in Turkish clothes in Belgrade. Wathay gives a description of the idyllic vineyards above the city, placing himself in this idyllic frame as a runaway: he says that “he had to hide like a rabbit” from the people. During this escape attempt he changed his clothes, during his next he changed another, even more important element of his identity: when he was caught, for the sake of being unrecognizable for the capturers, he changed his name to András Nagy. In the inscription of the illustration of being beaten after the failed attempt, he used the help of his changed identity to avoid disgrace: “[aga Mankuc] beat – poor András Nagy, but not Wathay – in the ugliest manner...”⁹³¹

⁹³⁰ 27a; 31b; 32b; 33b.

⁹³¹ “[Mankuc aga] bi2onial ug’ meg uere Nagj Andraft zegint, de Wathaitt nem, hoga foha undok Verel’ alig lehet egi...” 129b.

As a manifestation of author's consciousness in Wathay's volume, at the end of the account about the siege of Fehérvár, after lauding the defenders, he encourages his audience to act for the sake of captives: "*Rather you do this, / Collect all the good soldiers to yourself, release all the poor captives, / in order to earn honour.*"⁹³² This attitude ensures that the relation of the poet and his readers is alive and active, and further, the passage is meant to influence social attitudes towards Ottoman captives. The targeted behavior seems to form a recurring topos in event poetry: it is referred in István Homonnay Drugeth's poem addressed to soldiers a noble as a desired endeavor: "You should free those many good soldiers who are in captivity."⁹³³ Being empathetic with captives and aiding their escape seems to form a fundamental feature of the ideal person who is involved in military actions. The anonymous narrative *On the death of valiant György Turi* operates with this function, and the text describes the prayers of the captain for his captured fellows ("*I would not regret my life for them, / Spill my blood on this very day*"⁹³⁴) and he is depicted to resist to be captured until the final moments of his life ("*Dogs, you will not ever lead me on a leash, / Taking me from one place to the other, / You must not even think about that, / Dogs, who do you think I am?*"⁹³⁵).

Captivity was used as an identity-creating tool in Wathay's volume, and it is applied to create identity on a larger scale in another volume concept, Tinódi's *Cronica*. The narratives in the volume refer to captivity of Tinódi's patron, Bálint Török, to create a glorified image of the Török family. The motif of imprisonment is a fundamental organizational principle in the volume: the captivity of the patriarch of the family, noble Bálint Török and the survival strategies of the family he left behind are referred at various levels of the narratives, and also determines the strong anti-Turkish tonality of the volume as a unit. Right in the Preface of the volume, Bálint Török is presented as an

⁹³² "Aztot de inkább ti cselekedjétek, / Jó vitézeket hozzátok gyűjtsétek, / Szegény rabokat megszabadítsátok, / Hogy tisztességet kikvel vallhassatok." *Song Book*, III/141.

⁹³³ "Sok jámbor vitézek, kik rabságban vadnak, szabadíts meg azokat." István Homonnay Drugeth's *Vitézi éneke és könyörgése*, 28.

⁹³⁴ "En éröttök nem szánom életemet, / Kiontani mai napon véretem" Anonym, *Az vitéz Turi György haláláról*, 1571, 92–93.

⁹³⁵ "Ebek, engem pórázon nem hordoztok, / Egyik helyről másikra nem hurcoltok, / Azt ti soha még csak se gondoljátok, / Ebek, engem vagy kinek alítottok?" *Ibid.*, 137–140.

ideal warrior, respected even by his enemies: “*Even the pashas do not tell of a greater warrior than him;*” “*not even Pasha Mehmet could find a more beautiful man than him.*”⁹³⁶ Bálint Török was imprisoned as a member of the guard of the infant King John Sigismund in 1541, after the taking of Buda by Suleyman – who invited the Hungarian nobles to a reception in his imperial tent – , and was taken to Istanbul in 1550, where he later died. Two individual poems are dedicated in the *Cronica* to the story of his capture. One of them, *On the peril of Buda and the capture of Bálint Török* involves traditional topoi to describe the event, such as the unreliability of the sultan: “*The emperor gave a strict order to the Pasha, / To write trustful, nice words to the Hungarian lords, / First of all, to good Bálint Terek, / Offer yourself to him with nice words and presents.*”⁹³⁷ The narrative also operates with the motif of joyfulness/anger of the sultan (“*When they [the lords] got in front of the emperor, / He emperor was in a joyful mood seeing them.*”⁹³⁸), which is, as it had been demonstrated in chapter 2, often referred in connection with the ruler. The didaxis of the narrative is directed towards the active partaking of the audience to help Ottoman captives out of captivity, also a typical feature of captivity narratives.

The other work of Tinódi dedicated entirely to the topic of the captivity of his patron (*On the captivities of Péter Príni, István Majláth and Bálint Terek*⁹³⁹) operates with the above poetical toolkit, however, with the introduction of an exceptionally powerful metaphor, is ascended finally to an allegorical level. The metaphor is of the fisherman who catches the fish with his net is combined organically with more traditional, topos-type features: “*Alas, the Turkish emperor was so joyful about this, / That his deceitful net was spread, / And it enclosed remarkable major fish (...) Thus you should hear the unfaithful nature of the emperor, / So that you could protect yourself better, / How the emperor spread his net under Buda, / And caught with it good renowned fish.*”⁹⁴⁰

⁹³⁶ “Az basák is mind az két párton jobb vitézt nem mondnak;” “Szebben termött embört soholt még Mehmet basa sem lele.” *Cronica*, Preface, page x.

⁹³⁷ “Igen parancsolá császár az basának, / Hitöt, szép szót írta az magyar uraknak, / Jelösben mindennél jó Terek Bálintnak, / Szóval, ajándékval magad ajáld annak.” Buda veszéséről és Terek Bálint fogságáról, 25–28.

⁹³⁸ “Mikoron jutának császár eleiben, / Császár látá őket, vala víg kedvében.” 131–133.

⁹³⁹ Príni Péternek, Majlát Istvánnak és Terek Bálintnak fogságokról

⁹⁴⁰ “Ím az terek császár mind ezön öröle, / Ó álnok hálója ottan elteröle, / Jelös fő halakat véle megkeröle (...) Sőt mégis halljátok császár hamis voltát, / Hogy jobban tudjátok őni magatokat, / Hogy hálóját veté császár Buda alatt, / Ott benne fogata jó jelös halakat.” 25–27, 77–80.

By integrating the next generation of the Török family into the structure, the volume transfers the concept of captivity intertwined with the idealization of the family. A telling example of this poetical attitude can be detected at a scene of *The Valiant János Török of Enying* (Enyingi Terek János vitézsége), when the son of Bálint Török leaves queen Isabella as learns that the queen was asking help from the Turks: “*I say goodbye, please don’t be displeased, / The Turk is not my friend, you should know it well. // Your Majesty know well how did they snare / My valiant father, he was chewed on and eaten, / Bálint Török was trapped by a false faith, / My own and my brother’s head is orphaned.*”⁹⁴¹

Captivity, as shown, played a leading role in literary self-fashioning of authors and in literary processes of creating an idealized image of an individual (e.g. Ferenc Wathay in his *Song Book*), a family (the Török family in Tinódi’s *Cronica*) or a whole social order, while references to captivity could target desired social behavior of the intended audiences of the works. Regarding the representation of military interaction with the Ottomans, taking into consideration the limitations of the notion of literature in the era, we can conclude that narrative practices addressed the new moral and aesthetic ideal of the soldier serving in the frontier fortresses (*vitéz*), which was born in the context of fights with the Turks. Representative practices concerning the Ottomans were partly inherited from medieval and humanist traditions, however, oral techniques and traditions also determined forms and contents of the narratives. In texts giving account of events in Hungary, there are elements of a recurring script, which could be filled with actual new information about the latest military developments. The audience of literature relied on and participated in the mechanism that had been provided by the repetition of the script. Frequent contacts in the border zone resulted in differentiated representational practices of the topoi related to the Ottomans, corresponding to the social and ethnic diversity of armed forces that made the military scene and its narration likewise manifold.

⁹⁴¹ “Én bulcsúmat veszöm, kérlek ne bánjad, / Az terek nem barátom, azt jól tudjad. // Sőt lám tudja felségöd mint elveszték/Én vitéz atyámat megrágák, evék, / Terek Bálintot hamis hittel veszték, / Fejemet öcsémekkel árvaságba veték.” *Enyingi Terek János vitézsége*, 63–8.

Conclusion

Frequent contacts in the border zone resulted in differentiated illustrational practices of most of the topoi inherited from medieval and humanist traditions (for instance, brutality) that were related to the Ottomans, especially as people of the war regions could compare the Turks to Christian lords – and it was not the Ottomans who came out badly.⁹⁴² One should again emphasize the social and ethnic diversity of armed forces that made the military scene and its narration likewise manifold. In texts that give account of events in Hungary, there is a recurring script that describes a siege; this form is often parallel in many examples of event poetry, and also of chronicles. Elements of the script are enumeration of the armies; speeches of military leaders; shouting Jesus and Allah; numbering losses etc. The audience of literature expected and participated in the “game” that was played by the repetition of the script. Furthermore, this script invoked the characteristics of oral cultures, where not the novelty of structure is important, but a reliable structure that can be filled with elements, information concerning the campaigns.

⁹⁴² Housley, Norman. *Religious Warfare in Europe*, 144.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation investigates two issues: its primary aim is to examine how the Ottoman Turks were depicted in sixteenth-century Hungarian vernacular literature, while the second problem concerned identifying the methods necessary to answer this question. The analysis of narratives that reflected on the presence of Turks was performed in manner that attempted to grasp the relationship of the sources to oral and written traditions, raising questions concerning the process of organizing content into adequate forms. The sixteenth century was the period when the newly formed, written vernacular literature began to develop its own rules, which for the period examined remained in a state of flux and did not have strict boundaries of genres or transmission. Oral performance determined the principal formal characteristics of texts: they were composed to be suitable for reading aloud, they had simple, rhyming strophes, with little possibility for formal variations, even though the same poetic form could contain a wide range of contents, from siege descriptions to love stories. The spread of print helped the distribution of this fixed form, and at the same time, made possible the silent, individual process of reading.

The analysis of this literature demonstrated that the occurrence of certain plot formulas, or themes, is a frequent phenomenon in event poetry narratives. Although the exclusively oral origins of these grammatical and plot formulas cannot be confirmed – certain elements may be connected to humanist accounts, that is, they are evidently taken from written traditions –, these constructions organize knowledge to suit the horizon of expectation of an audience with a predominantly oral background.⁹⁴³ The study of the organization and functions of formulas and themes led closer to the understanding of literary discourses in practice. Repetitive and recurring elements may be present at any grammatical level of the narratives – alliterations, proverbs, stylistic parallelisms, behavior of

⁹⁴³ This auctorial aim is explicated distinctly in the following strophe: “I am going to recount some of them, / So that you can learn by hearing ancient things, / Those of you as well who haven’t learnt Latin, / Or if you have learnt, but you did not read this.” “Bennek egy néhányat most előhozok, / Régi dolgot hallván hogy tanuljatok, / Akik deák írást nem tanultatok, / Ha tanultátok is, nem olvastátok.” Mihály Cserényi, *História az perzsiai fejedelmekről*, str. 2.

figures, catalogues, quantity and quality of manpower; orations of captains etc. –, forming a basis for thematic or grammatical formulas. Their sequence, a script provides the framework that is responsible for the working mechanism of the texts. This script invoked certain characteristics of oral cultures, attributing importance to structural stability instead of a formal variability. However, the presence of each and every formulaic element is not obligatory for all the narratives, and these elements could be varied to a considerably high degree.

With regard to the primary concern of this work, the practices of representing the Ottomans in vernacular literature, the narratives confirm a certain kind of peaceful coexistence between the Ottomans and Hungarians in the era, based on a complex synchronism of religious and confessional, military and political affairs. The sources also attest that literary discourses used appropriate forms and formulae to present the varieties of interconnected forms of these two attitudes. However, representations of the Ottomans were heavily dominated by the perspective of self-references in the narratives: the searching process to answer essential questions of the period, such as the political takeover and military successes of the Ottoman Empire and the disintegration of the Hungarian Kingdom, resulted in self-accusation, or in blaming of other Christians or compatriots for the current situation. In these narratives, “pagans” – as the Ottomans are widely referred to – seemed to refer to a concept that could cover religious, political and legal categories alike. Actual dialogues with Ottomans, both religious and political, were rare. A unique exception is the *Hymnus* of dragoman Murad, a polemical narrative written by a go-between between two cultures. Instead, dialogues often took other forms than actual discourses. Raids, captive taking and other forms of military rivalry were common methods of interactions – which, subsequently, found their ways into religious and military narratives.

In vernacular literature, several strategies were developed that provided patterns to answer fundamental questions of the era. Such strategies included the Wittenberg method of interpreting history that offered Biblical parallels and Biblical consolation for concerns; a model strongly related with the Wittenberg tradition was the introduction of Biblical, and “contemporary” ideals and

heroes, allowing for the presentation of desired military and moral values; the method of anti-heroization of inimical figures; a sub-type of the latter approach, the dehumanization of inimical figures and presenting them as beasts. These methods offered manifest the above claimed general approach that discourses about the Ottomans were oriented towards “us” instead of “them.” These results correspond well with theoretical presumptions about the existence of a proto-Orientalist attitudes in European discourses, no matter what tradition they relied on: literary traditions looking back to traditions that were in the course since the emergence of Islam, or popular literary practices that demonstrate the coexistence of oral and literate elements in the sources all played a role in the self-identification and self-fashioning processes of authors and their intended audiences. Event poetry and religious narratives show parallel features in concentrating more thoroughly on self-oriented perspectives, and neglecting detailed descriptions of the actual experiences about the Turks. The type of narratives that seem to be exception from this tendency is event poetry which discusses smaller scale events such as minor sieges and raids.

As a consequence of the self-oriented perspective of literature, a complex system of lamentations was developed that reflected miseries from the personal to congregational level. The system was designed to aid the expression of experienced and awaited calamities, and relied on a millennial tradition of lamentation with a highly developed system of topoi. Lamentation was used both in religious and military contexts: jeremiads, psalms, the subgenre of event narratives focusing on perils, and captivity literature all reflected miseries, and these literary forms also played a significant role the establishment of new patterns that allowed for the expression of more individual and lyrical contents, while the first examples of literary self-fashioning in vernacular Hungarian literature also relied on lamentation traditions.

Despite the coexistence of Christians and Muslims since the foundation of the state, there were no nuanced reflections on Islam in religious narratives. Discussions of religious affairs did not differentiate between “new” and “old” Muslims, nor did they reflect confessional transitions within the Ottoman Empire. Extant religious discussions relied on medieval traditions, declaring Islam

heretical, Mohammed the Antichrist and Muslims unfaithful. These traditions influenced references on the Ottoman Turks, who were often represented as punishment sent by God, and appeared in the context of Christian apocalyptic imagery. This attitude also articulated the idea that religious categories exist only in the light of one's own terms, in the relation system of the "us–them" dichotomy.

On the grounds of the above discussed features, there are two basic types of narratives that contain references to the Ottomans in Hungarian vernacular texts: one of them relies more closely on medieval and humanist traditions, while the other type draws to a more extent on personal experiences and eyewitness accounts. In general, translated works recounting events that took place in another context (cultural, geographical, temporal) reflect more strongly European and Ottoman discussions regarding claims of emperors for universal rule, but at the same time, these narratives added their own views while accommodating the original works to Hungarian audience. The other type of narratives are works reporting events that occurred in a close context: these texts tend to have more differentiated representations of the Ottomans, for instance, while describing military success or defeat. All in all, the investigation of representational strategies necessitates the consideration of the multiple dimensions of European–Ottoman, Hungarian–European and Hungarian–Ottoman settings.

The results also raise a series of questions concerning forthcoming, seventeenth-century representational practices, a period when despite a longer peace, continuous psychological preparations for expelling the Turks resulted in such literary achievements as the *Szigeti veszedelem* (Peril of Sziget) of Miklós Zrínyi, written in 1645–46.⁹⁴⁴ The withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from its European territories inevitably created different types of discussion from the ones that reflected its expansion. These processes were reflected in literary production and discourses, and

⁹⁴⁴ The Peril of Sziget is the greatest achievement of Early Modern literary production, relies on the ideals, hero types and moral system settings that were created in the course of the sixteenth century. See László Szörényi, "Panegyricus és eposz. A barokk hősi ideál a XVII. századi olasz, magyar és közép-európai eposzban (Panegyric and Epic. The Baroque Heroic Ideal in 17th-Century Italian, Hungarian and Central European Epics)," in *Hunok és Jesiutak. Fejezetek a Magyarországi Latin Hősepika Történetéből (Huns and Jesuits. Chapters from the History of the Latin Heroic Epic in Hungary)*, 11–43. (Budapest: AmfipressZ, 1993).

demonstrated a considerably higher level of self-awareness and establishment of identification processes, expressed by a highly elaborate and ornate literary toolkit.⁹⁴⁵

To conclude, early Hungarian literature in the sixteenth century had to create its own representational conventions and patterns relying on medieval, humanist and oral traditions, and firsthand experiences. This literary practice created such representational patterns of the Ottomans that reflected Ottoman and European representational patterns, but at the same time, a particular representational practice evolved that facilitated the creation of proto-nationalist identities and discourses, and the development of a new literary language.

⁹⁴⁵ As a foundation of the scholarly discussion of baroque in Hungary, see Tibor Klaniczay, “A magyar barokk kialakulása (The Formation of Hungarian Baroque),” in *Reneszánsz és barokk (Renaissance and Baroque)*, 361–436. (Szeged: Szukits, 1961).

PRIMARY SOURCES

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Abbreviation: RMKT – Régi magyar költők tára (Thesaurus of Old Hungarian Poetry)

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