

POLITICS AND LITERATURE IN THE ELEGIES OF MICHAEL VERANCIUS IN 1528*

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This paper examines the interaction of the *querela Hungariae* topos and certain political commonplaces with the two less widely known elegies (*Querela Hungariae de Austria* and *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam*) of Michael Verancius, written in 1528. Mihály Imre in particular has tried to attend properly to this topos in his monograph (*»Magyarország panasza«: A Querela Hungariae toposz a XVI–XVII. század irodalmában*, Debrecen, 1995). In order to explain the context of Verancius' poems, a survey of their classical antecedents (Ovid's *Heroides*) and generic traits and metaphors (e.g. *propugnaculum Christianitatis*) is provided. However, the question arises: how could the genre of *querela* have been pressed into the service of politics? The second part of the paper offers an answer. Michael Verancius' elegies provide an important insight into János Szapolyai's difficult path in foreign politics, the ideological background of the Turkish–Hungarian alliance in 1528 and internal Hungarian political dissensions. This paper also highlights the importance of the genre of *querela* for Hungarian history in sixteenth century.

Key words: Michael Verancius, János Szapolyai/Zápolya (King John I), *querela Hungariae* topos, elegy, propaganda literature, Turks, Cracow

1. The problem of the source and authorship

1.1. The eighteen-volume Polish collection *Acta Tomiciana* includes several contemporary Latin source texts referring to the Kingdom of Hungary at the

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beginning of the sixteenth century. The compiler of the collection was Stanislaus Gorski (1497–1572), secretary of Petrus Tomicius, the Archbishop of Cracow. Gorski collected legal decrees, letters, documents concerning foreign affairs and other chancellery memoranda.¹ The eleventh volume of *Acta* contains two poems from the huge corpus of unpublished manuscripts.² The title of the first poem is *Querela Hungariae de Austria*, while the second is entitled *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam*.

1.2. According to the short foreword, written in the marginalia by Gorski, the poems were composed by a certain Michaël Wrantius Dalmata.³ He can be identified as the Šibenik-born Croatian humanist Michael Verancius, of Bosnian origin⁴ (Mihovil Vrančić, Mihály Verancsics, 1513/14?–1571),⁵ who was also active in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁶ Michael was related to Ioannes Statilius (Ivan

¹ Noémi P e t n e k i, »Acta Tomiciana - A kéziratok és a nyomtatott szövegkiadás története és sajátosságai«, *Levéltári Közlemények*, 74 (2003), 1–2, 301–305.

² *Acta Tomiciana* (AT), I–XVIII, edidit Stanislaus G o r s k i, t. XI², Poznań - Wrocław, 1852–1999, 199–203. For the other manuscripts and publications of the poems, see Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cracow, *sign.* 6551 III, fol. 890–897; Biblioteka Czartoryska (BCZart) *sign.* 284, fol. 59–71; *Kod. Sap.* VII (2), fol. 176–177; *Kod. Wojcz.* nr. 447–448.

³ AT t. XI², p. 199: *Per Michaëlem Wrantium Dalmatam, adolescentem annos XV.natum, Stanislai Hosii discipulum, Cracoviae anno domini 1529 scripta ante Turcorum in Austria adventum. Erat is Michaël nepos ex sorore Statilii, episcopi Transsilvanensis, hominis in dicendo acuti ac mordacissimi; idem Stanislai Hosii discipulus inter pueros filios procerum, quos Tomicius in curia sua alebat, literis operam dabat.* The Croatian poet used to sign his autograph Latin letters as Michael Verancius, the version that will be used in this paper.

⁴ His father Franciscus Verancius came from a Bosnian family and his mother Margaret Statilius was of Dalmatian ancestry. The family name first appeared in Dalmatian documents as early as thirteenth century. See Marianna D. B i r n b a u m, *Humanists in a Shattered World: Croatian and Hungarian Latinity in the Sixteenth Century*, Slavica Publishers, Columbus, Ohio, 1986, 213.

⁵ Cf. Maria C y t o w s k a, »Twórczość poetycka Michała Vrančića«, *Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum*, 57 (1967–1968), 1, 171–179. Šime J u r i ć, *Iugoslaviae scriptores Latini recentioris aetatis*, Typ. Acad, Zagreb, 1971; Maria C y t o w s k a, »Les humanistes slaves en Pologne au XVI^e siècle. La poésie de Michel Vrančić«, *Živa Antika*, 25 (1975), 164–173; M. B i r n b a u m, *op. cit.* (4), 213–240; Wacław U r b a n, »Związki Dalmatyńczyków braci Vrančićów z Polską i Polakami (XVI w.)«, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 78 (1987), 2, 157–165; Dunja F a l i š e v a c, Darko N o v a k o v i ć, »Mihovil Vrančić«, *Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca*, eds. Dunja Fališevac, Krešimir Nemeč, Darko Novaković, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2000, 780–781; József B e s s e n y e i, »Verancsics Mihály«, *Magyar művelődéstörténeti lexikon (középkor és kora újkor)*, szerk. Péter Kőszeghy, t. XII, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 2011, 401–402. The first work which reviewed the biography of Verancius in detail was the university thesis (entitled *De vita et operibus Michaelis Verantii*) of Elemér Mályusz in 1919. Unfortunately, this work has been lost; see István S o ó s, »Az újkortörténész Mályusz Elemér«, *Levéltári Közlemények*, 70 (1999), 1–2, 188.

⁶ I did not aim for completeness in the course of presenting the author's biography. I review the life of Michael Verancius until the death of his most considerable supporter, János Szapolyai.

Statilić, ?–1542), a famous diplomat of King John I and bishop of Transylvania from 1528. Michael's brother Antonius (Antun Vrančić, 1504–1573) was an outstanding humanist, a Latin writer, a diplomat, the Archbishop of Esztergom as well as the governor of Hungary.⁷ The siblings were first educated in Trogir and Šibenik. Their schoolmaster was the classically educated Aelius Tolimerius (Ilija Tolimerić, Elio Tolimero).⁸ Later they studied at the University of Padua thanks to their uncle's efficacious help.⁹ Michael also studied in Vienna after 1526.¹⁰ After his short studies he arrived at the court of Szapolyai. After King John I had fled abroad, the young Michael went to Cracow, where he entered the service of the bishop Petrus Tomicius (Piotr Tomicki, 1464–1535)¹¹ and studied under Stanislaus Hosius (1504–1579).¹² Undoubtedly, the members of the Statilius and the Verancius family were learned men who were loyal to King John I. This is evinced in several works of Verancius, for example in the two poems reviewed in this paper, in the wedding poem (*epithalamion*) written for John and Isabella Jagiełło's wedding in 1539 (*Epithalamion Serenissimi Ioannis Hungariae regis et Isabellae reginae...*)¹³ or in the epicedion for King John in 1540 (*Divi regis Hungariae Ioannis I epicedion*).¹⁴ After King John's death, Michael Verancius was a member of Queen Isabella's court. He went home to Dalmatia in 1544.

⁷ For details about Statilius' life, see Pongrác S ö r ö s, »Statileo János életéze«, *A pannonhalmi főapátsági főiskola évkönyve az 1915–1916-iki tanévre*, szerk. Irén Zoltvány, Stephaneum, Pannonhalma, 1916, 1–56, and for Antonius Verancius' life, see P. S ö r ö s, *Verancsics Antal élete*, Buzárovits Nyomda, Esztergom, 1898.

⁸ Johann C. E n g e l, *Staatskunde und Geschichte von Dalmatien, Croatien und Slavonien*, Johann Jacob Hebauer, Halle, 1798, 158; Othon, baron de R e i n s b e r g – D u r i n g s f e l d, »Les auteurs dalmates et leurs ouvrages. Esquisse bibliographique«, *Bulletin du Bibliophile Belge*, sd. August Scheler, t. XII, Bruxelles, 1856; 206–207, M. B i r n b a u m, *op. cit.* (4), 214.

⁹ It was a tradition for Dalmatian and Ragusan patricians to send their sons to Italian universities, especially Padua, for their higher education, see Michael B. P e t r o v i c h, »Croatian Humanists and the Writing of History in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries«, *Slavic Review*, 37 (1978), 4, 625, cf. M. B i r n b a u m, *op. cit.* (4), 213–214. Antonius Verancius (and presumably his younger brother Michael) dwelled in Italy, see *Monumenta Hungariae Historica, Scriptores*, series II, t. IX; Antal V e r a n c s i c s, *Összes munkái*, t. VIII, eds. László Szalay, G. Wenzel, Pest, 1860, nr. XXXIV (hereafter MHHS): *Gessit nostrae curam Reverendissimus felicitis memoriae Ioannes Statilius, avunculus meus, Episcopus Transilvaniensis, dum in Patavino gymnasio studuimus*. Cf. MHHS (9), t. VI, nr. XLVI: *Illinc in Italiam misit et in Patavino gymnasio fovit*.

¹⁰ MHHS (9), t. VI, nr. XLVI: *regiis Cracoviae et Viennae Pannoniae civitatibus litteraria eruditione imbuendum tradidit [sc. Statilius] et de suo suppeditavit*. Cf. J. B e s s e n y e i, *op. cit.* (5), 401.

¹¹ M. C y t o w s k a, *op. cit.* (5), 1967–1968, 171; W. U r b a n, *op. cit.* (5), 158; J. B e s s e n y e i, *op. cit.* (5), 401.

¹² He matriculated at the Academy of Cracow (most often referred to as Jagiellonian University) in August 1527, see *Album studiosorum Universitatis Cracoviensis*, ed. Adam Chmiel, t. II, Kraków, 1892, 238.

¹³ Š. J u r i ć, *op. cit.* (5), nr. 3888.

¹⁴ Š. J u r i ć, *op. cit.* (5), nr. 3886.

2. The contents of the *Querela Hungariae de Austria*¹⁵

The author commences the first elegy with a vigorous and emotion-filled rhetorical question. Generic conventions require a complaint to be formulated in the form of a question,¹⁶ but this complaint continues with an offensive intonation. The female character personifying Hungaria calls the merciless (*crudelis*) Austria to account for her offensive action in 1527 (*Quer1*, 1–4).¹⁷ She describes her kingdom, which was robbed and destroyed by external and internal wars (*Quer1*, 13–22). It seems that the neighbouring people is preparing shackles for despoiled Hungary (*Quer1*, 23–24). Austria did nothing for the protection of Christianity. Although she enjoyed the natural treasures of Hungary (*metallis pinguibus et bobus*), she went to war against a friendly and Christian country (*Quer1*, 57–62). Stealing from Hungary the Kingdom of Bohemia, which King Matthias I had previously conquered, was not enough for her (*Quer1*, 63–64).¹⁸ Still, the gravest suffering for Hungaria was not caused by these misfortunes but by her children's disloyal betrayal (*Quer1*, 25–32). Here Verancius alludes to the Hungarian civil war and the factionalism of the aristocracy. So if Hungaria lacks support and help from the Christian states, she will be compelled to ask for the help of her earlier enemy: 'who was [my] enemy once, will be [my] most important friend' (*hostis qui fuerat, summus amicus erit, Quer1*, 39–42).¹⁹ Hungaria reminds the aggressor

¹⁵ The text of the poem stems from the collection of the earlier Cracovian manuscripts, not from the printed version of *Acta Tomiciana*, see Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cracow, *sign.* 6551 III, fol. 890–892 (**Fig. 1**).

¹⁶ Mihály I m r e, »Magyarország panasza«: *A Querela Hungariae toposz a XVI–XVII. század irodalmában*, Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 1995, 7–8. For further comprehensive works on the history and attributes of this topos, see János G y ő r y, *A kereszténység védőbástyája*, Minerva, Budapest, 1933; Kálmán B e n d a, *A magyar nemzeti hivatástudat története: a 15-16. században*, Bethlen Nyomda, Budapest, 1937; Maria C y t o w s k a, »Kwerela i heroida alegoryczna«, *Meander*, 18 (1963), 486–503; Andor T a r n a i, *Extra Hungariam non est vita...: egy szállóige történetéhez*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1969; Lajos H o p p, *Az »antemurale« és »conformitas« humanista eszméje a magyar–lengyel hagyományban*, Balassi, Budapest, 1992; István B i t s k e y, *A nemzet-sors toposzai a 17. századi magyar irodalomban*, Budapest, on 11 October 2004, 1–11. (see <http://mta.hu/fileadmin/szekfoglalok/000074.pdf>)

¹⁷ Hereafter I refer to the first poem with the mark of *Quer1* and refer to its revised version with the mark of *Quer2*.

¹⁸ Here Verancius may (unfairly) refer to the violent and unlawful occupation of Moravia, Lusatia and Silesia by Ferdinand I in October 1526. Since Ferdinand I was elected king of Bohemia on 26 October 1526, his action was legal. See Gábor B a r t a, »Illúziók esztendeje. (Megjegyzések a Mohács utáni kettős királyválasztás történetéhez)«, *Történelmi Szemle*, 20 (1977), 1, 7–8.

¹⁹ A similar thought appears in the letter of Ákos Csányi, the military bailiff of Tamás Nádasy. He wrote that the Hungarians fled to the vulture (viz. the Holy Roman Empire) from the maw of the lion (viz. the Ottoman Empire). Finally, protection was found with the lion against the vulture. Őze cites Csányi, see Sándor Ő z e, »A kereszténység védőpajzsa»

Querela Vngarie de Austria

Autore Michaeli Verancio Dalmata
Discipulo Stanislai Hosii. Quam
scripsit annos xv natus: scripsit
autem anno vno ante adventum
Turcorum in Austriam.

Dat age crudelis, cui optas Austria, toto
pectore, nostra hic subdere colla iugo?
Quis deus hoc fecerit? quæ reli tanta fuisset
impietas? tantum dii prohibere nefas.
Scis bene, quæ nunquam dominus sum passa superbo
impetuum: scis te sepe fuisse meam.
Tempore Corvini scis quando leta triumphum
Egi franta meo cum fueras populo:
Mæsta triumphales tunc cum procedere cunctis
missa tibi toto ludibrio fueras.
Tempore Joannis longe peiora videbis,
iam penas fratris iam scelera dabis.
Improba captivum speras me reddere posse,
indigne desertum cum modo me esse vides.
Cum immemum frantæ vires, qui sanguine pro te
complexerunt campos præterque ubique mea:
Cumque vides segetes contestas (vota columæ)
ortos præter, magnanimosque duces:
Inmensas vires: direptasque fama decorum
desertas villas; nobilissimæ domos:
Tot viduas: orbosque senes: totasque obæ parente
pignora, totasque pati barbara vincula simul:
Hæc hi cuncta videris, facile iam posse putabas
indigne vinculisnectere colla mea.
Nec satis hoc fuerat, nisi et atrox gravine Ceres
Bellitrex ad te pignora obæ mea.

Fig. 1. The first lines of the poem of Verancius from the collection of Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Cracow (BJ sign. 6551 III, fol. 890)

that even if she enjoys the military and financial assistance of the lion, Austria will not be able to conquer Hungaria, but the wolf will overcome both:

sed nobis etiam minitaris freta leone,
 quoque greges nostros spargere posse putas.
 Est lupus, est nostris in ovilibus, impia, qui iam
 teque gregesque tuos cumque leone feret.²⁰

The lion (*leo*) obviously symbolizes the Austrian archduke, Ferdinand I, who was also the Bohemian king from 26 October 1526. The lion rampant is visible in the centre of the Kingdom of Bohemia's coat of arms. The other animal, the wolf (*lupus*), may indicate János Szapolyai since a wolf is depicted in his family's coat of arms. The conquests of the distant lands (*longinquos possem vel tendere ad Indos*) and the triumph after Austria's defeat straddle the central thought of the poem already mentioned, that is to say, the potential reconciliation with the earlier enemy (*QuerI*, 69–74). This is the consequence and not the cause of Ferdinand's attack. The same concept appears again with lesser changes (*quos hostes habui, nunc utor amicis, QuerI*, 71) to close the elegy.

3. The contents of the *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam*²¹

The second poem is written in a milder tone. The offensive style is felt less. Gorski explains the reason for this in a note: *Cum autem idem Michael Wrantius a magistro suo Hosio reprehensus esset, quod suprascriptam querelam parum pie scripserit, idem se corrigens, hanc alteram sequentem querelam scripsit.*²² Verancius had to soften the tone according to the advice of Hosius on a previous

vagy 'üllő és verő közé szorult ország'«, *Magyarok Kelet és Nyugat közt, A nemzettudat változó képei*, szerk. Tamás Hofer, Néprajzi Múzeum–Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 1996, 105.

²⁰ M. V e r a n c i u s, *QuerI*, 65–68: 'By trusting in the lion you threaten us, / you think that you can scatter our flock. / 'O villain, there is a wolf in our sheepfold, a wolf who will indeed / take away you and your flock, together with the lion.'

²¹ The text of the *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam* also comes from Cracow; see Biblioteka Jagiellońska (BJ), Cracow, *sign.* 6551 III, fol. 893–897 (**Fig. 2**).

²² The comment between the two poems comes from Gorski too, see BJ *sign.* 6551 III, fol. 892: 'When the same Michael Verancius was blamed by Hosius, his teacher, since he wrote less respectfully the above-mentioned *querela*, correcting himself, he wrote this forthcoming *querela*.' The *Acta Tomiciana* announces this in another way: *Cum autem Hosius praeceptor discipulum Michaëlem durae ac impiae scriptionis argueret, hortatusque eum esset, ut mitiore stilo idem argumentum tractaret, Michaël fecit, ut sequitur*, see AT XI², p. 200 (Dopisek Górskiego). The comment of Gorski also reveals the reason of this correction of the first poem which can be found in the edition of Stanislaus Hosius' correspondance: *...Hosius praeceptor discipulum argueret durae ac impiae scriptionis in Germanos...* (highlighting from me – Gy. P.). See *Stanislai H o s i i, [...] et quae ad eum scriptae sunt Epistolae, tum etiam ejus orationes, legationes*, eds. Dr. Franciscus Hipler, [...] et Dr. Vincentius Zakrzewski, Kraków, 1879–1888, 224.

Querela Hungaria ad Austriae po Michaelm
 salmatam, adolefcente xv am

Dic age condolis, cur optas Austria, toto
 pectore, nostra tuo subdere colla iugo?
 Quid deus hoc ferret l' que' celi tanta fristet
 Impietas: tantum vj prohibete nefas.
 Scis bene, q; magnam domine sum passa superbe
 Imperium: scis te sepe fuisse meam.
 Tempore Coruim scis quando Latina triumphum
 egi, fracta meo cum fueras populo:
 Mesta triumphales tunc cum proceres merus
 iussa, orbi toto ~~f~~ ludibrio fueras.

Tempore Joannis longe pciora videbis,
 Jam penas sceleris iam scelerata dabis.
 Improba captivam speras me reddere posse,
 Undiq; desertam cum modo me esse vides:
 Cum iuenumi vices fractas, qui sanguine pro te
 complexunt campos pratasq; vibiq; mea:
 Cum q; vides segetes contritas (vota colomu):
 Occisos proceres, magnanimos q; duces:
 Incensas urbes: direpta q; fana decorum,
 Desertas villas: nobiliumq; domos:

et impolita
 Hosi
 facta ad
 huc aduo
 ni Austri.
 Crano
 Coarctat
 Mps
 Opus
 Semina
 ar mor
 Hosi
 filios
 = Quid
 Mps



Fig. 2. The other variant of Verancius' poem in 1528 from the collection of Biblioteka Czartoryska in Cracow (BCzart. sign. 284, fol. 59)

poem. I am inclined to think that these elegies were originally composed as a school exercise. Michael most likely overstepped the bounds of his task and added political innuendo, contrary to the conventions of the genre.

The abandoned Hungaria, lacerated and plundered, is complaining again to the celestial gods. She, as narrator, emphasizes the insurrections which have devastated her country (*oppressum seditione sinum*). She cries that not only the foreigners (*advena*), but her own children (*mea viscera*) have already consumed her in the cruel blows (*Quer2*, 1–12). The personified homeland fought alone against the Turks without any support from outside and suffered the blows of their weapons, as Atlas bore the whole sky on his shoulders. She was determined for a historical role which was ordered for her by destiny (*Quer2*, 63–64). Beside the idea of ‘the stronghold of Christianity’,²³ Michael emphasizes the inner disharmony. He scourges the discord and disloyalty of nobility:

Vestra meos manibus lacerat discordia voltus,
et mihi iam toties vestra soluta fides.
Huc dudum, proceres, video vos tendere cunctos,
una ut vobiscum funditus inteream.²⁴

These defiant accusations show a great similarity to the work of Martinus Thyrnavius (?–1524) entitled *Opusculum ad regni Hungariae proceres* which appeared in the autumn of 1523.²⁵ The outspoken Benedictine abbot severely reprimands the nobility. He reminds them of the magnificent heroes’ martial virtues as well as the glorious victories of John Hunyadi and King Matthias I.²⁶

Michael Verancius explains this image in his second poem. He emphasizes the Hungarian nobility’s sense of vocation by contrasting the idealized glorious past and the present, and by making several classical allusions. The discord and the dissension may be the reason for the country’s fall. To defeat the double menace – the Ottomans in the South and the Habsburgs in the West – concord is required among the children of the country. Hungarian noblemen should not fight

²³ The self-sacrificing fight to defend Christianity may have appeared in the form of several metaphors in the contemporary humanistic literature: bulwark (*propugnaculum*, *presidium*), shield (*scutum*, *clipeus*), protecting wall (*antemurale*), etc. Cf. Lajos T e r b e, »Egy európai szállóige életreajza«, *Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny*, 60 (1936), 297–350.

²⁴ M. V e r a n c i u s, *Quer2*, 83–86: ‘Your discord lacerates my face with your hands, / and my faith in your loyalty was destroyed so many times. / I have seen long since you, nobles, directing everyone’s course in such wise / that I will be ruined together with you.’

²⁵ Martinus T h y r n a v i u s, »Opusculum ad regni Hungariae proceres, quod in Thurcam bella movere negligunt«, *Analecta Nova ad historiam renascentium in Hungaria litterarum spectantia*, ed. Eugenius Abel, (...) auxit Stephanus Hegedüs, Typis Victoris Hornyánszky, Budapest, 1903, 217–270. The work of Thyrnavius appeared without the indication of the year and the place.

²⁶ T h y r n a v i u s, *op. cit.* (24), 217: *Magnanimi o proceres dubiis succurrite rebus, / Inque salutare tempore ferre manus. / Dormitum satis est, gelidos ex pectore somnos / Excutate, et fortes iam vigilate viri.* Cf. L. H o p p, *op. cit.* (16), 67.

against each other. Everybody has to take the side of King John I. The former greatness of the country, particularly as seen in the glorious reign of Matthias I, can only be brought back by Szapolyai. King John has been blessed by fortune, thus he will be able to restore the former power of the country (*Quer2*, 111–120). The allegorized Pannonia is also hoping for this. This kindly king (*rex est hic mitis*) will certainly pardon the nobility for their former sins (*Quer2*, 129–132). The tormented country instructs her children to accept King John I: *Hunc, mea progenies, hunc vobis sumito regem!*²⁷ She asks them to take sides with him in the civil war and warns them not to seek the neighbouring duke's (*vicini tecta cruenta ducis*) favour (*Quer2*, 121–124).

4. The genesis of the elegies

The editor claims that the elegies must have been written in the year 1529, just before the Turkish assault upon Vienna (**Fig. 3**). It is necessary to reconsider

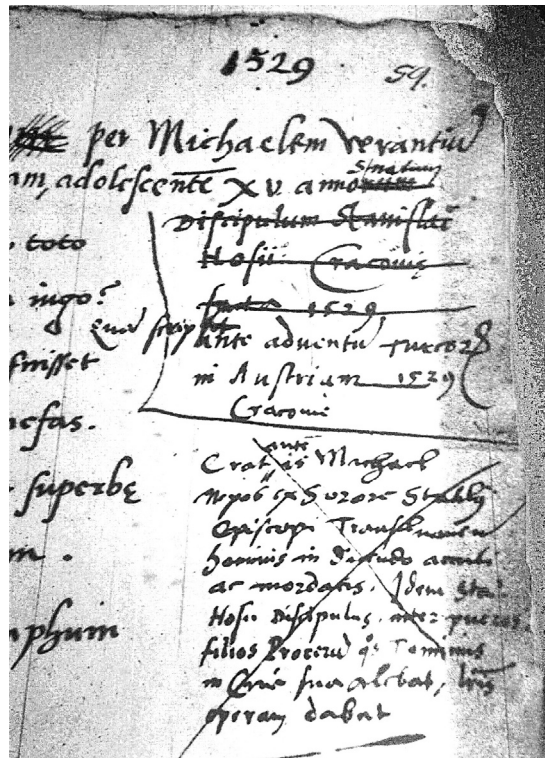


Fig. 3.
 The (probably autograph?)
 foreword
 of Stanislaus Gorski
 at the beginning
 of Verancius' poem.
 (BCzart. sign. 284, fol. 59)

²⁷ M. Verancius, *Quer2*, 123: 'Him, elect him, my progenies, so that you have a king!'

this dating by the intrinsic arguments of the poems, and by the statements of an earlier and more reliable Cracovian manuscript.²⁸ There we may read in the preface that the poet *scripsit autem anno uno ante adventum Turcorum in Austriam*.²⁹ The elegies may have been composed in 1528. The allusions in these works present the agreement with the former enemy as an opportunity rather than as an actual fact. Accordingly, the *terminus ante quem* for the text is probably 29 February 1528; that is, the date the Turkish–Hungarian alliance was contracted.³⁰ The *terminus post quem* is obviously the attack of Ferdinand I on 8 July 1527, as demonstrated by *iam [...] vinculis nectere colla mea (Quer1, 23–24)*.³¹ It is also necessary to take another look at the notes of the copyist in the manuscript. According to these, Verancius was a 15-year-old boy (*scripsit annos XV natus*). As it appears to me, the number fifteen has correctly defined the age of Michael Verancius in the manuscript. We read in the verse epistle of Verancius written to Statilius in 1540: *Vix mea tunc aetas bis sex numeraverat annos, / [...] Nam postquam maduit Ludovici sanguine tellus, civile exarsit Turcaicumque nefas (Fig. 4)*.³² Thus he was twice six, namely twelve years old at the death of King Louis II in 1526. Therefore, the alleged date of Michael Verancius' birth in 1507 has to be corrected to the more acceptable 1513 or 1514.³³

²⁸ The printed version is primarily based on the collection of Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw (named Teki Górskiego). However, there are also earlier documents in the collection. Today this series is the property of Biblioteka Jagiellońska, see N. P e t n e k i, *op. cit.* (1), 301–302.

²⁹ BJ *sign.* 6551 III, fol. 890.

³⁰ Gábor B a r t a, »A Sztambulba vezető út 1526–1528 (A török–magyar szövetség és előzményei)«, *Századok*, 115 (1981), 1, 195.

³¹ In fact, informal negotiations were proceeding between diplomats of Szapolyai and the Turks in Buda during May of 1527, see G. B a r t a, *op. cit.* (31), 190–191. Ioannes Statilius asked Sigismund I of Poland what he would think if Hungarians received help from the Turkish sultan, see AT XI², p. 55. The report of Pietro Zen from Istanbul on 22 July also confirms this. He informed the Signoria that 'the sultan wants to send help to the voivode against the archduke and he has sent troops to him', see Piero Z e n, *I Diarii di Marino Sanudo*, ed. Frederico Stefani etc, t. XLVI, Venezia, 1890–1897, 511. Barta cites Pietro Zen, see G. B a r t a, *op. cit.* (31), 191.

³² M. V e r a n c i u s, *Ad Reverendissimum Dominum Statilium Episcopum Transsilvanum*, 1540, lines 45–47: 'My age was hardly twice six years at that time, / [...] Because after the land was wet by the blood of Louis, civil war and Turkish calamity erupted.' The epistle can be found in the collection of the National Széchényi Library in Budapest, see OSZK *sign.* Quart. Lat. 776, fol. 13r–19r.

³³ Cf. W. U r b a n, *op. cit.* (5), 158: 'Młodszy o jakieś dziesięć lat Michał utrzymywał stałe kontakty z bratem'. Cytowska also claims this, see M. C y t o w s k a, *op. cit.* (5), 1975, 164–173.

S ciliat a temeris, ideo formaveris annis,
Mia, aut placuit, condidit esse bonas,
Vt te mi havi iam tudeat, ut tua p'ctis
In me damnaret, tot benefacta tui.
B albuti' primi, cepit ducere nostra,
Auspitijs presul, docta Vienna tuis.
Vt nra tunc erat, bis sit numeravit annos,
Sed data sui studijs, tempora parva meis.
Nam postq' maduit Ludovici sanguine bellus,
Civilis et avsis, tunc coeque misis.
Et me profugis posthac, praetera Cracovia cepis,
Et calui dactas, mureto fuvite deus.
N re puto tuis isthic, frustra consumpsim annos,
Plur mihi tuis, alijs qua p'p'erece ducem.
E t sut ingenio, qui delictantur in isto,
Nec stant postremo, commissa nostra loco.
Et er tua su fatior, aut nec no parva putamus,
Et qui su gemis, vtiliora rubris.
E t si respiciat, te niqua fata benigni

Fig. 4. An extract from the verse epistle of Michael Verancius sent to his uncle in 1540. (OSZK sign. Quart. Lat. 776, fol. 14v) According to this epistle, Verancius may have been born between 1513 and 1514.

5. The generic traits of *querela Hungariae*

5.1. The poems belong to the genre of allegorical letters of heroines (*heroides*).³⁴ The main characteristic of this genre is that it is a complaint in the form of a verse epistle. Usually the 'complaint' is considered a direct descendant of the Latin *planctus* and the Provençal *planh*, but evidence suggests that the *planctus* is not the origin of all 'complaints.'³⁵ The lament of a heroine abandoned by her lover had had a long history in Greek and Latin literature. The precursor of the public lament and the personal love lament may be found in Ovid's *Epistulae heroidum*, those individual letters of complaint by miserable heroines.³⁶ The epistolary nature of the text exerts an equally strong generic influence. Not only are the *Heroides* elegies, they are also letters. The dynamism of this tradition is obvious in the close imitations of its verse epistle form and heroines as fictive authors. Both conventions were often adapted to non-classical themes (e.g. Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles* or Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*). The *Heroides* were imitated in both Latin and vernacular languages. The genre was made popular in Italian literature by Petrarch, but later it received political and pamphleteering overtones, especially in the German Reformation: the allegorical Germania appears numerous times, fighting with Catholicism and reminding Christendom of the importance of struggle against the Turks.³⁷

Michael Verancius also imitated this Ovidian genre. His poems are fictional epistles in which Hungaria appears as a female figure, directing her complaints not against her elder sister, Germania, but against Austria. The losses and devastation play a prominent part in the poems.

The motif of the fight against Muslims was widespread in sixteenth-century Hungarian or rather European literature. In the humanist public opinion Hungaria is still the stronghold of Europe (*propugnaculum Christianitatis, murus Christianae Fidei et antemurale*), defending christianity against Islam with the other states of the region.³⁸ I would mention a most expressive and famous work of art related to the interpretation of the *querela Hungariae* topos. This is a famous

³⁴ Mihály Imre has analysed the specialities of the genre in detail, see M. I m r e, *op. cit.* (16), 13–237. Cf. Heinrich D ö r r i e, *Der heroische Brief, Bestandsaufnahme, Geschichte...*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1968.

³⁵ Nancy D e a n, »Chaucer's Complaint, a Genre Descended from the *Heroides*«, *Comparative Literature*, 19 (1967), 1, 1–2.

³⁶ Cf. Joseph F a r r e l l, »Reading and Writing the *Heroides*«, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 98 (1998), 307–338; Duncan F. K e n n e d y, »Epistolarity: The *Heroides*«, *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip R. Hardie, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, 217–232; Sarah H. L i n d h e i m, *Mail and Female: Epistolary Narrative and Desire in Ovid's Heroides*, Madison, Wisconsin, 2003.

³⁷ M. I m r e, *op. cit.* (16), 8–9.

³⁸ As Cuspinianus expressed it in his *oratio* in 1526. See Iohannes C u s p i n i a - n u s, »De Capta Constantinopoli, et bello adversus Turcas suscipiendo... commonefactio«, *Selectissimarum orationum et consultationum de bello Turcico variorum et diversorum auctorum volumina quatuor*, edidit Nicolaus Reusner, Lipsiae, 1596, nr. II, 176: *Hungari, quorum regnum antemurale, et Christianitatis clypeus vulgo appellatur.*

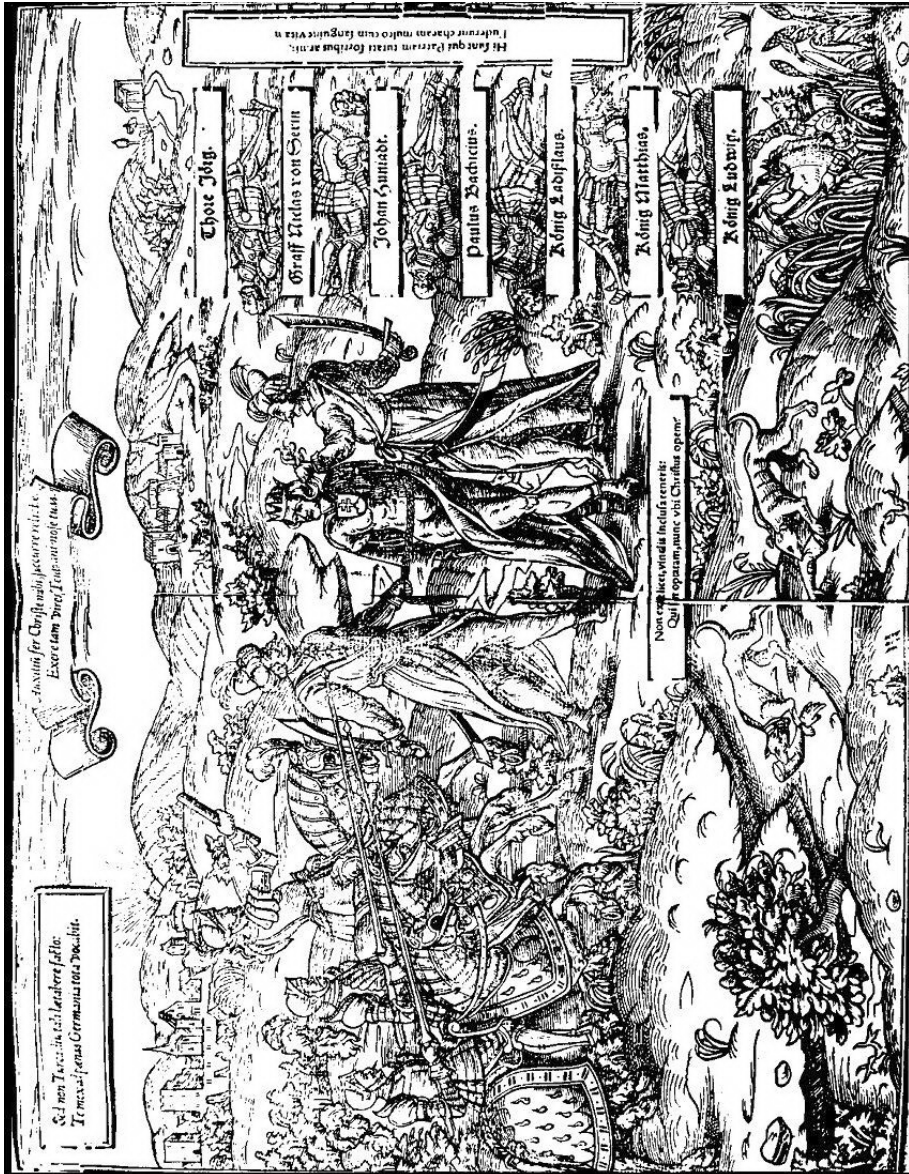


Fig. 5. Johann Nel's woodcut of 1582. (*Wappenbuch des Heiligen Römischen Reichs...*) National Széchényi Library (OSZK), photographic service.

folio-sized woodcut by Johann Nel (**Fig. 5**) which was published in print alongside Martin Schrott's Latin and German couplets (*Lachrimabilis miserandae, et multis modis afflictae Hungariae ad Germaniam, Querela*, in 1582).³⁹ We can see the crowned queenly figure, Hungaria, in the middle of picture. Manacled and chained, she is suffering in the captivity of Turkish marauders, carrying the coat of arms of the country on her chest. One of the Turks is tearing the sufferer's hair, another is wrapping chains around her body. Her arms have been cut off and are now lying at her feet and being mauled by dogs. The heroes of the combat against the Turks are also present on the right side of the composition. In the middle and on the right, a war-ravaged landscape can be seen. On the left we see a rich countryside and a peaceful city: this is Germania. From that direction some knights are approaching to rescue the prisoner.⁴⁰ Stephanus de Werbőcz (1458–1541), who studied at the University of Cracow, expressed the same thing in this humanistic form:

Nec gens aliqua postmodum aut natio (absit invidia verbo) pro rei publicae Christianae tutela et propagatione acrius aut constantius ipsis Hungaris excubuit. Qui cum omni Mahometicae foeditatis barbarie in variis ancipitibusque praeliis diu ac multum cum ingenti sua laude versati, et (ut vetustiora praeteream) annos circiter centum supra quadraginta nunc oppugnantes, nunc repugnantes cum immanibus Turcis cruentissima bella gessere. Et per eorum sanguinem, caedes ac vulnera reliquam Christianitatem (ne hostilis rabies velut fractis obicibus remotius sese effunderet) tutam incolumemque reddiderunt, ea fortitudine roboraque naturae ut plerumque in armis vitam degerent.⁴¹

³⁹ Mihály Imre cites this poem, see M. I m r e, *op. cit.* (16), 190; Kálmán B e n d a, *A törökör német újságiróadalma, A XV–XVII. századi német hírlapok magyar vonatkozásainak forráskritikájához*, Athenaeum, Budapest, 1942, 54; Sándor A p p o n y i, *Hungarica, Magyar vonatkozású külföldi nyomtatványok*, t. I, OSZK, Budapest, 1900, nr. 487; cf. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Band 32, Leipzig, 1891, 556–558. Géza Galavics described this picture first, see Géza G a l a v i c s, *Kössünk kardot az pogány ellen*, Képzőművészeti Kiadó, Budapest, 1986, 18–22.

⁴⁰ I follow the interpretation of Mihály Imre and Géza Galavics, see M. I m r e, *op. cit.* (16), 190–191.

⁴¹ Stephanus de W e r b ő c z, *Decretum tripartitum juris consuetudinarii inclityi regni Hungariae*, Johann Singriener, Vienna, 1517; see in the testimonial written to King Vladislaus II: '[...] Thereafter no country or people (I say ungrudgingly) guarded more determinedly or more constantly the protection and expansion of the Christian commonwealth than the Hungarians. Being well trained through many hard-fought battles against the barbarous Mohammedan pest, they have for more than a hundred and forty years (not counting earlier times) time and time again in attack and counterattack waged to their enormous credit the most bloody wars against the savage Turks. They kept the rest of Christendom safe and unharmed at the cost of their blood, life and wounds (lest the enemy's rage flood further as across broken embankments), with such courage and natural vigor that they virtually lived under arms.' (trans. János M. Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martyn Rady)

This is the common view of the fight against the Turks. As we will see, however, in Verancius' poems the lament is accompanied by an offensive intonation and the words of embittered accusations. The typical elements of the rhetorical invective can be discovered in the lines 81-112 and 135-138 of Verancius' second poem. The Ovidian tradition, the conception of *antemurale* in the fifteenth–sixteenth century, and the characteristic motives of the complaint literature provided material for the poems. However, Verancius reshaped these motives radically.

5.2. Several special features of the *querela Hungariae* topos and the Ovidian tradition appear in the works of Verancius. There is a salutation of the addressee of the imaginary letter: in the first poem it is the cruel *Austria* (*Quer1*, 1–2), in the second various natural elements (*Quer2*, 1–2). The invocation of the gods appears: in the first poem the Christian God (*Quer1*, 75–76), in the second principally *Fortuna* (*Quer2*, 73–76). The position of the abused and abandoned country is described: in the first poem *undique desertam* (*Quer1*, 14), in the second *Sola repugnabam [...] sola cadam* (*Quer2*, 67–68). Both elegies provide a detailed list of the losses and the subsequent mourning. *Hungaria* makes mention of damage to property: in the first poem *incensas urbes* (*Quer1*, 19), in the second *direpta [...] templa* (*Quer2*, 26). She mentions the human losses: in the first poem *occisos proceres* (*Quer1*, 18), in the second *funera [...] strata meorum* (*Quer2*, 25). Finally, her complaint about the moral damage is more pronounced in the second work: in the first poem her children tear the mother's body (*Quer1*, 26), while in the second she gives more details: *consumunt heu me mea viscera*, (*Quer2*, 11) and she refers to the state of civil war (*Quer2*, 27–28). The idea of 'the stronghold of Christianity' appears in many sixteenth-century *querelae Hungariae* (for example in the works of Piccolomini and Cuspinianus);⁴² it is the case in Verancius' poems as well. In the first poem, Michael states that Pannonia with her bronze shield (*aereus umbo*) protects not only Austria but the whole Christianity (*Quer1*, 45–46). In the second the idea is expressed by the simile of Atlas (*Quer2*, 63–64), and the homeland complains that she endures such great blows from the Turks for the name of Christ (*Quer2*, 53–54). The idea of 'fertile Pannonia' (*fertilitas Pannoniae*) belongs to this topos. This motif principally depicts the image of a rich country which is abundant with natural resources.⁴³ In the first poem, *Hungaria* emphasizes the abundance of metals and livestock, or cattle (*Quer1*, 59–60). In the second, this motif is explicated in more detail with the mention of abundance of heroic warriors, weapons, precious metals, fertile land, animals, and natural resources (*Quer2*, 100–106). The poems follow the common archetype. But, what was the new feature which did

⁴² József Marton, »Magyarország képe és megítélése Enea Silvio Piccolomini életművében«, *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények*, 110 (2006), 5, 469–476. See István Kátóna, *Historia critica Regum Hungariae stirpis mixtae*, t. VI, 13, Pestini, 1790, 26. Cf. L. Tereb, *op. cit.* (24), 301–302; K. Benda, *op. cit.* (16), 25–26.

⁴³ M. Imre, *op. cit.* (16), 223–233. The first lengthy emergence of the *fertilitas Pannoniae* topos is attributable to works of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405–1464).

not belong closely to the specialities of the genre of complaint literature? What novelty did the author bring to the model?

6. Apologetic passages and different generic traits in the elegies

Features that do not adhere to the common model of the *querela Hungariae* can be grouped around three themes. First of all, the character of János Szapolyai and the condemnation of Ferdinand's violent attack are in the centre. Then the problem of the alliance with the Turks plays a considerable role. And finally, the complaint of the internal dissension and the nobility's unworthy political activities appear powerfully.

6.1. The topoi of rulers' glorification and its methods have already been classified by the manuals on rhetoric into the *laudatio* of *genus demonstrativum*. The classical biographies, the *encomia*, the *elogia*, the *panegyrici*, and the historians' works offered literary models for this genre.⁴⁴ Military achievements and virtues were the pre-eminent source of *laus* and *gloria*. János Szapolyai will stop the attack of Austria. He will also be victorious exactly like King Matthias I (*Quer1*, 11–12); the parallelism appears more powerfully in the second poem: 'Look for someone similar to Matthias' (*Quer2*, 113). John has many positive qualities, while Austria has only got negative attributes (*crudelis, superba, improba, venefica, impia*). The Hungarian king is presented as a wolf (*lupus*) in the first elegy.⁴⁵ *Hungaria* reminds her perfidious aggressor that even if the lion helps her, Austria will not be able to conquer her country. She calls upon her children in the second poem to aid the kingdom of John (*Quer2*, 122–123).

Poems of such tone were needed on the side of the Hungarian king since at the beginning of 1527, the court of Ferdinand was still engaged in the publicity campaign launched for the destruction of Szapolyai's reputation. This hostile campaign was started in two types of literary work: partly in the German pamphlet literature (*Türkenbüchlein*)⁴⁶ that flourished under the stimulus of the approaching Turkish threat and partly in Latin humanist literature. The imperial newspapers and pamphlets presented all Hungarians as timid and treacherous oath-breakers. Hungar-

⁴⁴ Sándor B e n e, *Theatrum politicum, Nyilvánosság, közvélemény és irodalom a kora újkorban*, Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 1999, 67–68.

⁴⁵ Viz. János Szapolyai: a wolf was depicted in the Szapolyai family's coat of arms. Cf. Éva G y u l a i, »Farkas vagy egyszarvú? Politika és presztízs megjelenése a Szapolyai-címer változataiban«, *Tanulmányok Szapolyai Jánosról és a kora újkori Erdélyről*, szerk. József Bessenyei, Miskolci Egyetem, Miskolc, 2004, 91–124. The wolf has a rather negative signification in the European literature, cf. Verg. *Aen.* IX, 59–61; Verg. *Georg.* III, 537; Ov. *Trist.* IV, 1, 79; Dante A l i g h i e r i, *Inferno*, I, 49–51, etc.

⁴⁶ John W. B o h n s t e d t, »The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era«, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 58 (1986), 9, 1–58.

ians are a greater enemy of the German soldiers than the Turks and they fraternize with the pagans!⁴⁷ This concept is also reflected in the work of Conrad Cordatus in 1529. The Hungarians, this indomitable people, ally even with the Turks so as to take their anger out on Germans.⁴⁸ In the disfiguring mirror of German rancour Hungarians appear as antichristian and disloyal.⁴⁹ Some humanist authors also described the Hungarians and János Szapolyai negatively. The pro-Habsburg poets (e.g. Georgius Logus and Valentinus Ecchius) violently attacked King John in their verses, and, as the analysis of Péter Kasza proved, all of them referred to Szapolyai as a wild and bloodthirsty wolf.⁵⁰ The Latin pamphlet of Georgius Logus (1495–1553), for example, commemorates King John I unfavourably.⁵¹ His presentation is not at all flattering: the king is referred to as a robber (*latro*) and an impious traitor (*nefandus proditor*), etc. Recently, an unknown author's poem – who was probably Valentinus Ecchius – with a satirical tone turned up in the collection of Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw.⁵² In this poem, the Szapolyai wolf (*lupus [...] Zapolitanus*) scourges the fields since the neighbouring Poland has sent this cruel beast (*illum crudelem*) back into the land of Hungary.⁵³ Verancius probably wanted to respond to these works in his own poems.

6.2. The thought of the possible agreement with the former enemy is emphasized in the first elegy. The alliance with the Turks meant a new turn for Christian

⁴⁷ *Ein new lied vom nehsten zug ins Ungerland ...*, sine loco, 1542, see S. A p o n y i, *op. cit.* (40), t. I, nr. 288; cf. Magda H o r v á t h, *A törökveszedelem a német közvéleményben*, Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest, 1937, 78–80.

⁴⁸ Conrad C o r d a t u s, *Ursach, warum Ungern verstöret ist u. ytzt Osterreich bekriegeret wird*, Zwickau, 1529. The reason of all these: 'dass sie [viz. the Hungarians] den Deutschen an vrsach von hertzen feind sein.'

⁴⁹ Cf. Sebastian F r a n c k, *Weltbuch. Spiegel vnd bildtnis des ganzen Erdtbodens*, 2. Aufl, Augsburg, 1542, p. 81: 'Das volck diß lands ist habhafftig und mächtig an vihe, aber ein treulos galub brüchig vnbständig volck, wie man täglich erfert.' Horváth cites it, see M. H o r v á t h, *op. cit.* (48), 80.

⁵⁰ For the pro-Habsburg poets, as well as the wolf as symbol of Szapolyai at that time, see the study of Péter Kasza in this volume.

⁵¹ Péter K a s z a, »'Összeillik e két parázna szépen.' Néhány észrevétel egy Szapolyai János ellen írt gúnyvers kapcsán«, *Szolgálatomat ajánlom a 60 éves Jankovics Józsefnek*, szerk. Tünde Császtvay, Judit Nyerges, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 2009, 169–178. To the text of the pamphlet, see Henrik K r e t s c h m a y r, »Adalékok Szapolyai János király történetéhez«, *Történelmi Tár*, (1903), 229–230. There are other satirical verses of Logus, see *Analecta recentiora ad historiam renascentium in Hungaria litterarum spectantia*, ed. Stephanus H e g e d ü s, Typis V. Hornyánszky, Budapest, 1906, 260–261.

⁵² *Carmen – satyricum in Ioannem Zapolyam regem Hungariae*, Hieronymus Wietor, Kraków, 1528. See BJ sign. Cim. 5479 (frg: 2 karty B₁ 1B₂?).

⁵³ *Carmen – satyricum...*, *op. cit.* (52), lines 24–26: [...] *quod lupus his miscet Zapolitanus agris. / Illum crudelem nobis Arctoa remisit / Sarmatia, Hungarico proxima terra solo.* ('[...] since the Szapolyai wolf confounds these fields. / Northern Sarmatia [viz. Poland], the neighbouring country of the Hungarian land, sent back / this cruel [animal] to us.')

Europe.⁵⁴ Although the Christian unity and the idea of the holy war against the ‘faithless’ Muslims went back to the Crusades, the idea of alliance with the Turks was used in diplomacy and propaganda at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In January 1527, Mary of Hungary (1505–1558) let Ferdinand know that Szapolyai was trying to fall in with the Turks and starting secret negotiations with the Sublime Porte.⁵⁵ King Sigismund I became aware of Szapolyai’s readiness to come to an understanding with the Turks in the spring of 1528. This serious act and its rhetorical justification compose the central part of the first elegy. Austria is wicked (*impia*) and shameless (*improba*); although the Hungarians are the ones *qui sanguine pro te / compleverunt campos prataque ubique mea*,⁵⁶ Austria has betrayed Hungary.⁵⁷ Who may give assistance to the solitary sufferer? This question also arose on the woodcut of Nel in 1582: *Qui fert optatam, nunc ubi Christus, opem?*⁵⁸ There, help is expected from the Holy Roman Empire; in 1528, it was sought from somebody else. There is only one choice: compromise with the former enemy is necessary. This appears at three central points in the first poem: *Hostes magna tamen tanget miseratio nostri / et caput hoc mergi non patientur aquis* (*QuerI*, 37–38), *hostis qui fuerat, summus amicus erit* (*QuerI*, 42), and *quos hostes habui, nunc utor amicis* (*QuerI*, 71).⁵⁹ Here the author proceeds as a humanist, using an ancient metaphor. He describes the history of Telephus, the king of Mysia (*QuerI*, 39–40).⁶⁰ The Christian world was certainly shocked

⁵⁴ To the opportunities of Szapolyai on foreign affairs and the diplomatic actions, see László B á r d o s s y, *Magyar politika a mohácsi vész után*, Holnap, Budapest, 1992²; László S z a l a y, »János király és a diplomácia«, *Budapesti Szemle*, szerk. Antal Csengery, vol. II, közlemény 4–6, Herz János, Pest, 1858, 3–32, 145–169, 340–356.

⁵⁵ See *Die Korrespondenz Ferdinands I*; hrsg. von Robert Lacroix, Wilhelm Bauer, Vol. II, Part 1, Wien, 1912, 9–10. Cf. Gyula R á z s ó, »A Habsburg-birodalom politikai és katonai törekvései Magyarországon Mohács időszakában«, *Mohács. Tanulmányok*, szerk. Lajos Ruzsás, Ferenc Szakály, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1986, 148; L. H o p p, *op. cit.* (16), 88.

⁵⁶ M. V e r a n c i u s, *QuerI*, 15–16: ‘who shed blood for you / everywhere over my fields and lands.’

⁵⁷ Hungary was called the bastion of Germania (‘Die nächste Vormauer der deutschen Nation’) in the imperial documents, see Bálint H ó m a n, Gyula S z e k f ú, *Magyar Történet*, t. III, Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest, 1935, 144–148; M. H o r v á t h, *op. cit.* (48), 54–63; L. H o p p, *op. cit.* (16), 86–101. Cf. Paulus R u b i g a l l u s, »Epistola Pannoniae ad Germaniam recens scripta«, Wittenberg, 1545, 43–44, critical edition: *Pauli Rubigalli Pannonii Carmina*, ed. Miloslaus Okál, Teubner, Leipzig, 1980: *ipsa ego ceu scutum certe me saepius hosti / obici pro te tristia bella gerens*.

⁵⁸ ‘Who brings the desired help, where is Christ now?’

⁵⁹ M. V e r a n c i u s, *QuerI*, 37–38: ‘Our enemies will nevertheless be touched by a great pity for us, and they will not allow this head to be submerged’ *QuerI*, 42: ‘who was [my] enemy once, will be [my] most important friend’ and *QuerI*, 71: ‘who were my enemy, now I enjoy their friendship.’

⁶⁰ The inspiration for the insertion of this simile may have been supplied by a historical event. Antonius Verancius writes this in connection with crossing the Tisza in 1527, see MHHS (9), t. II, p. 28: ‘János király az evangeliomból meglátatá, hogy ha az tereket segít-

by this turn in foreign policy; however, there were works which recognised the inevitability of this action. Guillaume du Bellay approved of the decision of King John in his speech delivered at the Imperial Diet of Nuremberg in 1532.⁶¹ In his opinion, since John did not find friends in the Christian states, divine Providence gave him the friendship of the ‘faithless’ Turks.

6.3. And finally, the implicit question arises in both poems (in the first only fleetingly): who is responsible for the present misery after all? Verancius explains it in the second poem in the words of Hungaria. The mighty Fortune is not the only one to be blamed for the blows, other factors may also be the real causes. The opening idea of the second poem, namely the *dolour* felt over the internal dissension, comes back almost exactly in the centre of the elegy: *Vos, o vos, proceres (nequeo iam vera tacere), / huius vos estis causa caputque mali.*⁶² The main accusation is delivered at the end of the poem: *Nam quae tanta fuit vobis heu dira cupido / nostra peregrino subdere colla duci?*⁶³ Only the former voivode of Transylvania can bring back the glorious times and, especially, the splendid reign and victorious wars of King Matthias I. A king of Hungarian blood may be the only correct choice because after the reign of Matthias, the foreign kings wasted all of his earlier achievements and military successes. Only John is able to restore the former greatness of the country (*Quer2*, 111–120). The persuasive character of the second poem makes the work of Verancius similar to the ‘*adhortatio*’ of *genus deliberativum*, the rhetorical persuasion (*oratio suasoria*).

7. Conclusion

Scholarly consideration of the humanist circle organized first around János Szapolyai (1487–1540) and after his death around Isabella Jagiełło (1519–1559) is often neglected in Hungarian and the international research. This is a consequence of the lack of relevant sources or their inaccessibility. Until now, the examination of Stephanus Brodericus’ and Antonius Verancius’ literary activities took priori-

ségül híhatja. A cseri barátok ezt lelik az evangeliomba: hogy az ki vele jót tíszen, az az ő atyjafia.’ (‘King John saw in the gospel that he can call the Turks to help. The Observant friars [viz. monks Tamás and Gellért] discovered in the gospel that the kinsman is the one who is beneficial to somebody.’). Cf. L. Szalay, *op. cit.* (54), 58–59.

⁶¹ Guillaume du Bellay, »Oraison faite en la faveur du Roi Jean de Hongrie de la guerre contre les Turcs«, Guillaume du Bellay, *Epitome de l’antiquité des Gaules et de France*, Paris, 1556, 59–60. Györy cites Bellay, see J. Györy, *op. cit.* (16), 39–41.

⁶² M. Verancius, *Quer2*, 81–82: ‘You, oh, you, noblemen (I can not conceal the truth any more), / you are the cause and source of this misfortune.’

⁶³ M. Verancius, *Quer2*, 109–110: ‘Alas, by what dire passion were you driven / to submit our necks to a foreign prince?’

ty.⁶⁴ In my paper, I have presented two poems of Antonius' lesser-known brother, Michael (1513/14?–1571). His elegies and their tone may have relied on several existing traditions. The poems belong to the genre of the allegorical heroïdes in the Ovidian (classical) vein. The generic characteristics of the complaint literature and the idea of 'the stronghold of Christianity' have their basis in Christian culture. However, for the more accurate 'genre' classification of the poems, it is necessary to take into consideration their specific tones, the political and foreign policy thoughts. The author uses many strategies of the rhetoric of the *laudatio* and the *adhortatio*.⁶⁵ I would emphasize again that these 'speeches of denunciation' (*dellationes*) in polemical tone were delivered in favour of János Szapolyai and against Ferdinand I. In my opinion, this orientation of the poems makes them unique in the history of the *querela Hungariae* topos in the sixteenth century. In fact, their author put the most representative genre of the complaint literature into the service of political and pamphleteering literature or even more of propaganda literature.

8. Principles of this edition

Both poems of Michael Verancius are published using the standard orthography of classical Latin. The letters *u* and *v* are considered as separate letters, *i* is used for both *i* and *j*. Characteristics of humanistic orthography are ignored: *e* (ē) is replaced with the diphthong (*ae*), *ci* is replaced with *ti* (*etiam* for *eciam*), etc. All abbreviations are resolved without indication.

⁶⁴ Gábor B a r t a, »Humanisták I. János király udvarában«, *Magyar reneszánsz udvari kultúra*, szerk. Ágnes R. Várkonyi, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 1987, 193–216. For the events after the defeat of Mohács and the period of the double election for the royal throne of Hungary, cf. Pál J á s z a y, *A magyar nemzet napjai a mohácsi vész után*, t. I, Hartleben Konrád Adolf tulajdona, Pest, 1846; László S z a l a y, *Adalékok a magyar nemzet történetéhez a XVI. században*, Ráth Mór, Pest, 1861²; G. B a r t a, *op. cit.* (18), 1–31; G. B a r t a, *op. cit.* (31), 152–205.

⁶⁵ Cf. Mihály I m r e, »A Querela Hungariae toposz retorikai gyökerei«, *Toposzok és exemplumok régi irodalmunkban*, szerk. István Bitskey, Attila Tamás, Studia Litteraria, Debrecen, 1994, 7–23.

9. Texts

9.1. Michael Verancius, *Querela Hungariae de Austria*

Cracow, in the spring of 1528

Manuscript: Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cracow, sign. 6551 III, folio 890–892.

Edition: *Acta Tomiciana* XI, p. 199–200.

The lady personifying Hungaria desperately calls the merciless Austria to account for her offensive action in 1527 and she asks the gods for help in her unfair situation. She describes her kingdom as being despoiled and destroyed by external and internal wars. If Hungaria finds no support and help from the Christian states, she will be compelled to ask for the help of her earlier enemy: who was her enemy once, will be her most important friend. Hungaria reminds the aggressor that even if she is in favour of the military and financial assistance of the lion (the Bohemian king, namely Ferdinand I), she will not be able to conquer her, indeed King John I will overcome both in the struggle.

Autore Michaelae Wrantio Dalmata discipulo Stanislai Hosii... Quam scripsit annos XV natus, scripsit autem anno uno ante adventum Turcorum in Austriam.⁶⁶

Dic age, crudelis, cur optas, Austria, toto
pectore nostra tuo subdere colla iugo?
Quis deus hoc ferret? quae coeli tanta fuisset
impietas? tantum, dii, prohibete nefas.
Scis bene quod nunquam dominae sum passa superbae 5
imperium; scis te saepe fuisse meam.
Tempore Corvini,⁶⁷ scis, quando laeta triumphum
egi, fracta meo cum fueras populo.
Maesta triumphales tunc cum procedere currus
iussa, orbi toto ludibrio fueras. 10
Tempore Ioannis⁶⁸ longe peiora videbis,
iam poenas sceleris, iam, scelerata, dabis.
Improba captivam speras me reddere posse,
undique desertam cum modo me esse vides,

⁶⁶ The short foreword of the elegies is published on the basis of the note written on the margins of the MS by Stanislaus Gorski.

⁶⁷ Matthias Corvinus (in Hungarian: Hunyadi Mátyás, 1443–1490), was king of Hungary and Croatia from 1458 until his death. He occupied Vienna in 1485. The heroic fights of John Hunyadi and King Matthias I had a considerable effect on the development of the idea of bastion, see M. Horváth, *op. cit.* (48), 66; L. Hopp, *op. cit.* (16), 31–43.

⁶⁸ János Szapolyai (1487–1540) was king of Hungary (as John I) from 1526 to 1541.

cum iuvenum fractas vires, qui sanguine pro te complerunt campos prataque ubique mea, cumque vides segetes contritas (vota colonum), occisos proceres magnanimosque duces, incensas urbes direptaque fana deorum, desertas villas nobiliumque domos,	15 20
tot viduas orbosque senes totque orba parente pignora, totque pati barbara vincla simul. Haec tu cuncta videns facile iam posse putabas indigne vinclis nectere colla mea. Nec satis hoc fuerat, nisi et atro gramine Circes pelliceres ad te pignora cara mea, pellecta et matris lacerarier usque iubereres viscera; vae, miseram nunc peperisse pudet. O utinam matris gravidae cum ventre iacerent clausa, potens uteri diva necasset ea. ⁶⁹	25 30
Nam mihi (parva licet) natorum plus doluere vulnera, quam Turcae plurima facta manu. Sed iam poenas, scelerata venefica, sumam de te, quae Circen, Colchida ⁷⁰ quae ⁷¹ superas. Nam si nulla mei miseratio tanget amicos nec mihi suppetias, qui daret, ullus erit, hostes magna tamen tanget miseratio nostri et caput hoc mergi non patientur aquis. Thelephus et vulnus suscepit cuspide Achillis, ⁷² eiusdem posthac sensit et auxilium.	35 40
Sic mihi qui nocuit, nunc idem proteget ipse; hostis qui fuerat, summus amicus erit. Oblita es, quantos ego sum perpessa labores, improba, iam a longo tempore, vel simulas? Cum daret assiduus ictus meus aereus umbo, tam te quam Christi populum dum tueor, ⁷³	45

⁶⁹ *Versus claudicat*. Pannonia wishes the mighty goddess (probably Diana / Lucina) may have murdered the unborn progeny (*ea*). Cf. *Ov. Amores*, II, 14, 5sq. For *potens uteri diva* cf. *Ov. Met.* IX, 315 *diva potens uteri*.

⁷⁰ *Viz.* Medea. In the Greek mythology, she was the daughter of King Aeetes of Colchis, the niece of Circe and later the wife of the hero Jason. She was reputed to be a poisoner and an enchantress.

⁷¹ Colchida quae: Colchidaque *Act. Tom. XI*.

⁷² In the battle Achilles, the Greek hero, wounded Telephus, the king of Mysia. The wound would not heal, so and Telephus consulted the oracle of Delphi about it. The oracle responded in a mysterious way that 'he that wounded shall heal'. Telephus convinced Achilles to heal his wound. Cf. Apollodorus, *Epitome*, III, 17–20.

⁷³ *Versus claudicat*. *Coniecerim*: tam te quam Christi dum tueor populum,

tu laetas choreas ducebas iuncta puellis,
 ast ego ducebam corpora ad arma mea;
 te curis vacuum securus somnus habebat,
 tradentem molli pinguis membra toro, 50
 ipsa sed insomnes ducebam languida noctes
 intenta excubiis, non nisi strata solo;
 tu instructas epulis mensas celebrare solebas
 curabasque cutim dulcia vina bibens,
 corpore pascebam volucres ego sanguine nostro, 55
 in mare purpureas Hister⁷⁴ agebat aquas.
 Quid verbis opus est? Tu nullo fracta labore,
 contra ego non parvis obruta semper eram.
 Interea⁷⁵ nostris tu dives facta metallis,
 pinguis et bobus iam saturata meis 60
 attollis cristas fastuque inflata superbis,
 improba, quod vix te iam tua terra capit.
 Non satis est gurges, quod nostra Bohemia quondam
 accessit titulis paene coacta tuis,
 sed nobis etiam minitaris freta leone, 65
 quoque greges nostros spargere posse putas.
 Est lupus, est nostris in ovilibus, impia, qui iam
 teque gregesque tuos cumque leone feret.
 Quo duce longinquos possem vel tendere ad Indos
 indomitosque Scythas Aethiopesque nigros, 70
 hoc duce, quos hostes habui, nunc utor amicis,
 iuncta quibus, nemo est⁷⁶ qui mea regna petat;
 hoc duce tu nostrum decorabis maesta triumphum,
 nam nullo pacto potes iam effugere.⁷⁷
 Tu modo, qui nutu terrarum concutis orbem, 75
 ut mea fortunes haec bene coepta, precor.

Cum autem idem Michael Wrantius a magistro suo Hosio reprehensus esset, quod suprascriptam querelam parum pie scripserit, idem se corrigens hanc alteram sequentem querelam scripsit.

⁷⁴ Viz. the River Danube

⁷⁵ interea: intererea *Act. Tom. XI.*

⁷⁶ nemo est: memo est *Act. Tom. XI.*

⁷⁷ *Versus claudicat.*

9.2. Michael Verancius, *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam*

Cracow, in the spring of 1528

Manuscript: Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Cracow, *sign.* 6551 III, folio 893–897.

Edition: *Acta Tomiciana* XI, p. 201–203.

The abandoned Hungaria, lacerated and plundered by calamities, is complaining again to the celestial gods. She, as the narrator of the poem, laments the insurrections which devastate her country. She says that not only foreigners, but also her own children have already consumed her in their cruel blows. The lady fought alone against the Turks without any exterior support and she suffered their blows of weapons as Atlas bore the whole sky on his shoulders. She was determined for the historical role ordained for her by destiny. The tormented country instructs her children to confirm King John I in his kingdom.

O caelum, o terra, o fulgentia lumina solis,
 o Phoebe, o celsi sidera clara poli,
 cum vestrae tot iam ducuntur saecula vitae
 a nati mundi principio atque chao,
 ecquem vidistis tam longo tempore, tantis 5
 cladibus oppressum seditione sinum?
 Ecquem tot quondam populis opibusque superbum
 (hei mihi) vidistis tam subito ruere?
 Si mihi causa mali tanti foret advena quisquam,
 leniri posset forsitan iste dolor. 10
 Nunc cum consumunt, heu, me mea viscera, quaenam,
 quae lacrimis nostris esse medella⁷⁸ potest?
 Nam quod, quaeso, malum, quod non sum experta? Bonum quod
 ex tantis quod non perdiderim, superi?
 Clara viris armisque potens opibusque beata 15
 consiliisque fui tuta feraxque solo.
 Nunc horum iam ne ipsa quidem vestigia restant,
 omnia perdidimus, sorte novante fidem,
 quoque magis doleam, iam vulgi fabula dicor,
 exemplum cunctis iam mea vita dedit. 20
 Ad quae me, fortuna potens, maiora reservas?
 Cuive foves tandem me miseram exitio?
 Non semel hostiles acies vidi ignibus atque
 bacchatas ferro⁷⁹ per mea regna truci,

⁷⁸ medella: medela *Act. Tom. XI.*

⁷⁹ ferro: fero *Act. Tom. XI.*

funera tot vidi campis, heu, strata meorum, direpta et vidi templa domosque deum.	25
Visa (nefas) etiam mihi sunt mea signa per agros inter se nostros Marte coire gravi et toties nostros nostro quoque sanguine vultus conspersos vidi; quicquid erat miserum,	30
nil grave tam posset fieri, nil denique triste, cui non succubuit iam mea vita malo. Sed quae tanta fuit tantae mihi causa ruinae, o superi? Tantum cur merui exitium?	35
Quo tandem vestras laesi pia numina mentes? Quod nostrum offendit pectora vestra scelus? Sexcenta in nostris regnis immania templa exstant, quae vestris laudibus usque tonant.	40
Non ego vos templis pepuli, vestrasve figuras direptas aris ignibus imposui.	40
Connubia in nostris nullus scelerata sacerdos exercet regnis nullaque virgo sacra. Non pietas in vos vel honor, reverentia nulla, Religio aut pulsa est finibus ulla meis.	45
Non ego vicinis indicere bella cupivi, oppressis magnis cladibus ante satis.	45
Non ego vicinum regem detrudere regnis optavi contra fasque nefasque suis.	
Non ego germanos armavi in proelia fratres, non suasi ut bellet cum genero ipse socer.	50
Haec nunc pro tali pietate reponitis? Hisne immeritam placuit fluctibus obruere?	
Quis me pro Christo est maiora pericula passus, aut cuius toties imbuit arva cruor?	
Thurcicus ille furor, cum iam sua sub iuga tantos misisset populos, servitio et premeret, in me, quae tantum ⁸⁰ restabam sola, ruebat faucibus et nostris ponere frena volens.	55
Obstiti et opposui tanquam mea tergora murum nec sivi rabiem longius ire suam,	60
a qua tot iam sum misere vexata per annos, nec data pax ulla est, nec mora, nec requies, utque Atlas caelum valida cervice ferebat, sic ego perpetuo barbara tela tuli.	

⁸⁰ quae tantum: quae quantum *Act. Tom. XI.*

Nec fuit inventus, qui pro me hoc munus obiret Alcides, ⁸¹ nec qui fasce levaret eo.	65
Sola repugnabam, traxi tot sola labores, sed non victa (mihi credite) sola cadam.	
Pascere, crudelis, parto fortuna triumpho, pascere, nec telis, perfida, parce tuis.	70
Vicisti (fateor), vicisti, quid mea cessat tertia Parcarum rumpere fila soror?	
Vel potius, si rursus habes, o diva, ⁸² regressus (ut perhibent), ⁸³ si nec perpetuo una manes, respice nos alacri vultu risuque benigno, omnipotens, mersae porrige, quaeso, manum.	75
Sola homines summo deturbas culmine rerum, in solio rursus sola locare potes.	
Sed quid ego incassum Fortunae accepta potenti haec refero, vel quo denique vana feror?	80
Vos, o vos, proceres (nequeo iam vera tacere), huius vos estis causa caputque mali, Vestra meos manibus lacerat discordia voltus, et mihi iam toties vestra soluta fides.	
Huc dudum, proceres, video vos tendere cunctos, una ut vobiscum funditus inteream.	85
Nec vos clara movent maiorum facta parentum, nec vos nobilitas, nec movet ipse pudor.	
Iam vos nec superos ullos, credo, esse putatis, infera nec Ditis credere regna fore.	90
O divum decorisque sui decorisque suorum obliti, o famae gens inimica suae, quae Furiae tanto, vel quae vos turbine Dirae transversos agunt in mea damna duces?	
Quo pietas in nos, quo nostri cura recessit? Quis per vos linquor praeda cibusque feris?	95
Quae mea vel mi vos iniuria fecit iniquos, cur tantis vestris distrahor aut odiis?	
In quo me tandem sensistis, dicite, avaram, aut potius quid non largiter exhibui?	100

⁸¹ Viz. Heracles who was born to Alcaeus or Alcides and was a divine hero in Greek mythology.

⁸² Fortuna, the Roman goddess of fortune who has already been addressed repeatedly.

⁸³ prohibent: perhibent *Act. Tom. XI.*

Non vobis auri, non vobis copia deerat
 argenti, pinguis fertilitasque soli;
 vos nec equos estis peregrinis ducere regnis
 assueti, aut validos vestra ad aratra boves;
 vos fontes gelidos habuistis, flumina, montes, 105
 planities, silvas, oppida, castra, lacus.
 Cum vobis nil deest, vos vobis (hei mihi) deestis,
 vos vestri gladii vestraque dextra necat.
 Nam quae tanta fuit vobis, heu, dira cupido
 nostra peregrino subdere colla duci? 110
 Matthias quicquid magno sudore recepit,
 externos vidi perdere id omne duces.⁸⁴
 Matthiae⁸⁵ similem Matthiam reddere qui scit
 quaerite vel bello consiliove gravi.
 Quaerere non opus est longe. Rex ipse Ioannes, 115
 quem vos deseritis, credite, talis erit.
 Cui si depones nomen venerabile Iani,
 Matthias⁸⁶ proles ipse erit Uniadis.⁸⁷
 Et bene si memini, talis fortuna secuta est
 illum, ut post magnum referat imperium. 120
 Sic spero exhaustis post tandem mille periclis,
 hostibus hic victis, Hungara scepra reget.
 Hunc, mea progenies, hunc vobis sumito regem,
 desere vicini tecta cruenta ducis!
 Hic libertati vos optat reddere, at ille 125
 vestra in servili ponere colla iugo;
 hic vobis parcens externo milite bellat,
 vos ille inter vos stringere tela iubet.
 Ne vestras in vos assuescite vertere vires:
 proice tela manu mox, mea progenies, 130
 et venias veniam peccati exposcere tanti
 (rex est hic mitis), ne dubita, dabitur.

⁸⁴ Here Michael Verancius may have thought of the unproductive reign of the kings of the Jagiellonian dynasty (Vladislaus I and II, and Louis II) in internal affairs and foreign policy.

⁸⁵ Matthiae: Mathiae *Act. Tom. XI*.

⁸⁶ Matthias: Mathias *Act. Tom. XI*.

⁸⁷ Ioannes Corvinus or de Hunyad (Hungarian Hunyadi János) (c. 1407–1456) was a leading Hungarian military and political figure in Central and Southeastern Europe during the fifteenth century. Pope Pius II referred to him as *Athleta Christi*. His son was Matthias Corvinus, see footnote 67. Szapolyai will be worthy of the Hunyadis if he wins the royal title (*nomen venerabile*).

Mitte meos ad me, Fernande,⁸⁸ remitte volentes.

Cur retines nugis viscera nostra tuis?

Nil agis, invite qui frena imponere tentas,

altera iam quaeras, altera regna tibi.

135

Desine iam tandem, iam desine velle, quod optas,

Nil agis; invite quod petis, alter habet.

⁸⁸ Ferdinand I (1503–1564) was Holy Roman Emperor from 1556, king of Bohemia and Hungary from 1526, and king of Croatia from 1527 until his death.

György Palotás

POLITIKA I KNJIŽEVNOST
U ELEGIJAMA MIHOVILA VRANČIĆA IZ 1528.

Književnopovijesno proučavanje humanističkoga kruga koji je djelovao oko Ivana Zapolje (1487–1540) i, nakon njegove smrti, oko Izabele Jagelović (1519–1559) često se i u mađarskom i u međunarodnom obzoru zanemaruje zbog nedostatka relevantnih izvora ili zbog njihove slabe dostupnosti. Pozornost struke usmjerena je ponajvećma na književni rad Stjepana Brodarića i Antuna Vrančića.

U ovom radu analiziraju se i objavljuju dvije malo poznate elegije Mihovila Vrančića (1513/14?–1571) *Querela Hungariae de Austria* i *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam*. Napisane su u Krakovu 1528, kada je pjesniku bilo samo petnaest godina, pa ih možemo smatrati svojevrsnom školskom vježbom. Druga elegija zapravo je dotjerana inačica prve: po želji svojega učitelja Stanisława Hozjusza (*Stanislaus Hosius*, 1504–1579) mladi je Vrančić ublažio žestoki ton prvoga sastavka. No opseg svoje zadaće vjerojatno je prekoračio već samim tim što je, unatoč žanrovskim konvencijama, u pjesme unio snažne političke aluzije.

Poglavita je svrha ove studije ispitati načine na koje se u Mihovilovim elegijama prožimaju topos *querela Hungariae* i neka opća mjesta onodobne političke literature. Da bi se objasnio književni kontekst Vrančićevih elegija, u prvom dijelu rada daje se pregled antičkih uzora (to su ponajprije Ovidijeve *Heroide*) i značajki žanra te tadašnjih političkih metafora (npr. *propugnaculum Christianitatis*). U drugom dijelu rada objašnjava se kako je žanr *querela* uporabljen u političke svrhe. Mihovilove elegije sadrže brojne retoričke postupke pohvale i laskanja (*laudatio* i *adulatio*), no isto tako i govor optužbe (*delatio*), čiji je polemički ton zacijelo usmjeren u obranu Ivana Zapolje, a protiv njegova suparnika Ferdinanda I. Habsburgovca. Najrašireniju vrstu tužaljke pjesnik je tako pretvorio u političku i pamfletističku, štoviše u propagandnu književnost.

Elegije nude važan uvid u teškoće s kojima se Ivan Zapolja susretao u vanjskoj politici, u ideološku pozadinu tursko-ugarskog saveza iz 1528. i u nutarnje ugarske razmirice. Njihova osobita narav čini ih jedinstvenom pojavom u povijesti toposa *querela Hungariae* u 16. st.

Ključne riječi: Mihovil Vrančić. Ivan Zapolja, topos *querela Hungariae*, elegija, propagandna književnost, Turci, Krakov

