

## Farewell poems among Hungarian university students in the second part of the sixteenth century

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**Abstract** | Early modern occasional poetry is linked to the praise of famous people, widely practiced during the Renaissance, in several ways. However, while the authors of the early Renaissance were humanist scholars, the creation of occasional texts became part of school education during the sixteenth century. The present study examines this phenomenon by analyzing the Latin-language propemptikons written by Hungarian students studying in Wittenberg during the second part of the sixteenth century. The analysis explores the precursors of the genre and looks at how saying farewell is depicted by surveying the (similar) poetic tools linked to returning home and mourning.

**Keywords** | sixteenth-century Wittenberg, travel literature, farewell poems

Early modern occasional poetry is linked to the praise of famous people, which was a widespread practice during the Renaissance, in several ways.<sup>1</sup> However, while the authors of the early Renaissance were humanist scholars, the creation of occasional texts became part of school education during the sixteenth century. Another change was that commoners also appeared among the addressees beside the nobility. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, a growing number of these texts were printed, which made it possible for them to become an increasingly accepted tool of representation. The valedictory poem (propemptikon) can rarely be found in contemporary handbooks on poetry and rhetoric, and if it does appear, it is typically placed within the category of *silvae*. The thematically defined *silvae* were replaced by the concept of *Gelegenheitsgedicht* in German literature during the eighteenth century. This prompted a similar change in the Hungarian discourse as well, and this is when texts linked to some specific life event and serving representational rather than aesthetic purposes were started to be called occasional poems. The *Gelegenheitsgedicht* expression was first used in Johann Cristoph Gottsched's polemic published in 1746. The meaning of the concept evolved during the subsequent debate, splitting into two during the eighteenth century: commissioned and social poems.<sup>2</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe's oft-cited statement comes from the 1820s, according to which he himself was also writing occasional poems, and he believed that "[a]ll my poems are occasional poems, suggested by real life, and having therein a firm foundation."<sup>3</sup> During the nineteenth century, the appreciation of occasional poetry gradually underwent change, receiving far less attention than before due to the transformation of social representation.<sup>4</sup>

During the sixteenth century, which is the period of late humanism, the community of *respublica litteraria* consisted of university professors, their families, and their students. This was a relatively closed circle, and the publications printed to accompany various life events typically followed the turning points of the academic career. For example, the propemptikon was not a particularly popular type of publication, in contrast with the occasions of weddings, book publications, and doctoral ceremonies. This

1 KLANICZAY Tibor, "A nagy személyiségek humanista kultusza a XV. században" [The humanist cult of great personalities in the fifteenth century], in KLANICZAY Tibor, *Pallas magyar ivadéka*, 41–58 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985).

2 HÁSZ-FEHÉR Katalin, *Elkülönülő és közösségi irodalmi programok a 19. század első felében (Fáy András irodalomtörténeti helye)* [Isolating and communal literary events during the first part of the nineteenth century. Placing András Fáy in literary history], Csokonai Könyvtár. Bibliotheca Studiorum Librorum 21 (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2000), 167–194.

3 Johann Peter ECKERMANN, *Beszélgetések Goethével* [Conversations of Goethe], trans. GYÖRFFY Miklós, stud. SZONDI Béla (Budapest: Európa Kiadó, 1989).

4 VADERNA Gábor, *A költészet születése. A magyarországi költészet társadalomtörténete a 19. század első felében* [The birth of poetry. A social history of Hungarian poetry in the first part of the nineteenth century] (Budapest: Universitas Kiadó, 2017), 48–92. Also discussing occasional poetry: DÁVIDHÁZI Péter, "»A magyarok istenére esküszünk«. A *Nemzeti dal* történelmi beszédaktusa és a toborzó vers poétikája" [»By God, our God, Hungarians, we shall vow«. The historical speech act of *National Song* and the poetics of the recruiting poem], in DÁVIDHÁZI Péter, "Vagy jóni fog." *Bibliai minták nemzetiségítése a magyar költészetben*, 163–226 (Budapest: Ráció Kiadó, 2017), 221–225.

practice indicates that the presence, frequency, or even disappearance of the text types categorized as occasional poetry mostly reflect the characteristics and main social patterns of the community linked to it.

Hungarian students traveled to Wittenberg because there was no permanent university in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. Here they could choose to enter their name in the register, and if they wanted to and had a thaler to spare, they could also join the fraternity that was created after 1555.<sup>5</sup> We know from the available data that many students, typically those of the Lutheran denomination, only travelled to Wittenberg to be ordained. They mostly arrived from the Saxon cities, and so they had no connection to the *natio ungarica*. It is also clear that the Hungarian students rarely obtained a degree, they did not typically get married here, and there were only a few students who never returned home from Wittenberg. All these circumstances contributed to the fact that the event of returning home became the unavoidable event in students' lives that occurred sooner or later but was worth documenting, and which also commemorated the end of the fundamentally liminal, transgressive experience of travel. The following presents the poetic characteristics of saying farewell through an analysis of sixteenth-century occasional prints of Hungarian relevance, focusing on the correspondences and differences that exist within the text types associated with farewell.

The sixteenth-century Hungarian students encountered a continuously expanding textual universe in Wittenberg, which kept creating new variants and was based on the imitation of ancient authors at multiple levels. This was clear in examples where the works of Virgil, Horace, or Ovid that were known at the time or were attributed to them were not only followed in a way that particular textual locations could be recognised, but the authors also arranged the description of their own career and life along ancient authors' biographies. This is quite visible and traceable in the title of the volumes and the dedications, as well as other paratexts. This practice was part of a process characterized by the topos of "translatio Musarum/artium/linguarum".<sup>6</sup> The ancient roots of Italian erudition and culture and its related primacy were namely not limited to the Italian peninsula any more, and the northern territories could not only compete with them, they could even claim the arts and sciences represented by the Muses for themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The propemptikon can be found among the text types that document students returning home, in which the peers of a student leaving for home say farewell to him, as well as the epibaterion and the apobaterion, which enable the departing person to say

5 András SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica. Die Mitglieder der ungarischen Studenten-gemeinschaft in Wittenberg 1555–1613*. Refo500 Academic Studies 79 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 21–59.

6 On its origin see: BARTÓK István, "Nem egyéb, hanem magyar poézis." *Sylvester János nyelv- és irodalomszemlélete európai és magyar összefüggésekben* ["Nothing but Hungarian poetry." János Sylvester's approach to language and literature in the European and Hungarian context], *Irodalomtudomány és Kritika. Klasszikusok* (Budapest: Universitas Kiadó, 2007), 24–25.

7 IMRE Mihály, "Melanchthon retorikájától Buzinkai Mihályig" [From Melanchthon's rhetoric to Mihály Buzinkai], in *Retorikák a reformáció korából*, ed. IMRE Mihály, Csokonai Könyvtár. Források. Régi Kortársaink 5, 399–452 (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2003), 400–402.

goodbye. In some cases, these are also discussed in separate entries in the contemporary praeceptum literature, although they are frequently omitted, or their characteristics may be presented briefly within the *silvae* entry.

The most detailed poetic overview of the era was Julius Caesar Scaliger's seven-volume work published posthumously, whose wide-ranging, meticulous categorization few attempted to imitate during the subsequent centuries. Scaliger dedicates a separate chapter to the propemptikon, but he also lists *apopempticon* and *hodoeporicon* as its synonyms. "Propempticon quoque in genere proseutici continetur. Est enim poema, quo prosequimur abeuntes, vel votis, vel bonis ominibus."<sup>8</sup> Philippus Ludovicus Piscator, a professor in seventeenth-century Transylvania, published these two sentences in close translation in his 1642 poetics, which was intended for school use: "Propempticum, a poem in which we accompany those who are leaving with vows and well-wishes."<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Piscator makes a clear difference between propemptikon and hodoeporicon, since he categorizes the latter under didascalium and calls it a historical poem, according to his explanation because it depicts things that have happened. In contrast, propemptikon is part of genus deliberativum, gratulationes (felicitations) in particular, along with genethliacum, epibaterium, epithalamium, and epinicium.<sup>10</sup>

To be able to write an appropriate poem on returning home, it is worth gathering arguments related to nature, the location, and virtues. The author may talk about the mode of travel, and it is a good idea to pray for a safe journey home. Scaliger's instructions include further classifications as well, which are based on what roles the person saying goodbye and the departing person play in each other's life. According to this, a farewell between two equal friends (ερωτικόν) and one between people of different ranks (συμβουλευτικόν) necessitates different approaches.<sup>11</sup>

In *Institutio poetica*, an amended and extended edition from 1612, which was partly compiled from the work of the Jesuit Jacobus Pontanus, the propemptikon can be found among the subtypes of the *panegyricus*, among several other laudatory text types. "Propempticon, poema est, quo prosequimur abeuntes, vel votis, vel omnibus bonis. Sumemus autem argumentum a tempore, loco, officio, comitatu."<sup>12</sup> This brief characterization matches Scaliger's presentation. However, Pontanus defines the symboleuticon as a separate type: "in deliberatione consistit, ut si bellum suscipiendum sit, dubitetur quae faciendum sit."<sup>13</sup>

8 Julius Caesar SCALIGER, *Poetices libri septem ad Sylvium filium* (Geneva: Antoine Vincent, 1561), III. 103.

9 BÁN Imre, *Irodalomelméleti kézikönyvek Magyarországon a XVI-XVIII. században* [Handbooks of literary theory in Hungary in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries], *Irodalomtörténeti Füzetek* 72 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), 32.

10 Ibidem, 31-32.

11 When creating a definition for the propemptikon, Scaliger used Menander Rhetor's fourth-century treatise, *Peri epideiktikon*, discussing it in detail: Pernille HARSTING, "Latin valedictory poems of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Tradition and topicality of a classical genre," in *A history of Nordic-Neo Latin Literature*, ed. Minna SKAFTE JENSEN, 203-218 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1995).

12 *Institutio poetica ex R. P. Iacobi Pontani e Societ. Iesu potissimum libris concinnata*, 6 (Köln: Bernard Gualter, 1612), cap. 108.

13 [It is part of the advisory type, since if we embark on a war, we must consider if it is necessary] Ibid.

It is clear from these examples that the propemptikon was not always described separately within the praeceptum literature, although this text type was still known and used. It can also be seen in the handbooks prepared for rhetorical exercises at the end of the fifteenth century, among the progymnasmata. The valedictory poem also appears in the works of Conrad Celtis<sup>14</sup> and Laurentius Corvinus<sup>15</sup> in the form of sample texts, although it is to be noted that even though the two authors do not use the *propemptikon* expression, they still use all the substantive characteristics in the two texts that Menander had already mentioned. Kristi Viiding reports about a similar phenomenon: the volumes of the *Delitiae Poetarum* series, which was launched in the seventeenth century, published selections from the Neo-Latin poetry of various peoples, and Viiding's study examines the first, Italian volume of the series.<sup>16</sup> The word "propemptikon" appears in a small minority of titles in the poems that bid farewell to someone returning home, i.e. the texts that set out to document a departure were certainly not always labelled as propemptikons.

The communicative situation of propemptikons also includes the social rank of the authors and addressees. Propemptikons were namely not only written by friends or peregrine peers but even humanists and professors of a higher rank. The cover of the publications typically includes the formula "ab amicis et popularibus" (or a variant thereof), i.e. recording the farewell in writing was connected to expressing friendship. The concept of friendship among early modern educated people usually involved institutionalized gestures and customs. The person bidding farewell must be appropriately sad due to the departure and enthusiastically praise the abilities of the departing person at the same time.

Propemptikons, as well as occasional poetry in general, typically use quite similar, even identical poetic imagery and sets of topoi. The ancient authors used as models were most frequently known from school: Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. The person saying goodbye typically speaks for the community in the poems. However, there are also many differences, since the social level, the circumstances of writing the poem, and the purpose of the poem may differ. The number of propemptikons written by Hungarian students are dwarfed by the total number of Wittenberg prints. With a few exceptions, they were written in the same verse form (distich elegy), and most of them contain the thematic elements of the propemptikon. In terms of denomination, the propemptikons linked to Hungarian authors do not include a Catholic author from the sixteenth century. This does not mean that writing a poem on an important life event is a particularly Protestant characteristic, it may rather be due to the crisis of the Catholic church and

14 Conrad CELTIS, *Ars versificandi et carminum Conradi Celtis protucii poete laureati* (Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, 1494), C<sub>iiii</sub><sup>5r</sup>.

15 Laurentius CORVINUS, *Carminum structura magistri Laurentii Corvini Novoforensis cum exemplari positione, brevissimoque facili et certissimo modo veniendi in omnium sillabarum quantitatem* (Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, 1496), D<sup>r</sup>.

16 Kristi VIIDING, "Farewell Poems of Italian Humanists in *Delitiae CC. Poetarum Italorum*," *Studi Umanistici Piceni* 27 (2007): 313-324.

Catholic education that so far no Hungarian author has surfaced from the sixteenth century who was a Catholic and can be linked to a published propemptikon.

Two prominent periods emerge based on the printed sources. Balázs Szikszai Fabricius, who lived in Wittenberg in the 1560s and later played an important role as a teacher at the college of Sárospatak, published several propemptikon publications along with his students. A similar tendency can be observed at the end of the 1580s: beside the increasing patronage (be it from the nobility or the city), we know of several prints, such as funeral publications, that were published at the initiative of students who had studied in Wittenberg. These were also the years when the relationship between students and their professors and better-known humanists manifested itself in the form of poems: these are hallmarked by Nicodemus Frischlin, Matthäus Dresser, Wolfgang Franz, or the letters addressed to Johann Jacob Grynaeus, or even Justus Lipsius.

Beside the topic of friendship, the texts also praise the students' virtues and describe sadness over their departure and the acquiescence that all this is God's will. Elements, characters, and stories from the Greco-Roman mythology and the Bible typically join these thematic elements. The topic of recollection does not usually become a text organizing element in propemptikons, it can rather be traced in minor references. The authors connected the formulas referring to recollection and not forgetting (*memori mente, memori pectore*) with an emphasis on friendship. The students typically placed mythological inserts of various lengths into the poems, which were connected to the dynasties of the Greco-Roman mythology, and the myths of Athens also appears beside those from Mycenae and Troy. Thus, Aeneas and Achates, Orestes and Pylades, as well as Theseus and Peirithoos could become models of the friendship between the person saying goodbye and the one departing. The poems had to include both a praise of the departing person and the sadness of the person saying farewell, which was typically depicted by describing a sea of tears and a heavy heart. In addition, profound sadness was also depicted by the image of the nightingale in some propemptikons.

Scilicet ut duras auget philomela querelas  
Pendula qua ramis arbor obumbrat humum:  
Sic mihi tristiam cerno lacrymasque perennes  
Crescere per ripas, Albi nivose, tuas.<sup>17</sup>

17 [As the nightingale sings at length, complaining hard, where the branches of the willow cast a shadow on the earth: that is how I too watch, oh, Elbe, your snow-covered shores, with increasing sadness and boundless tears.] VARSÁNYI János, "Aliud," in *Carmina propemptica in honorem eximia pietate, singulari eruditione, modestia, humanitate, omniumque virtutum dotibus ornatissimi viri, D. Iohannis Danoczi, post felicem in studiis Theologicis ac Philosophicis profectum ex inclitya Witebergensium Academia in patriam Ungariam redituri: scripta amoris et benevolentiae ergo ab amicis et popularibus*, 6. Calend. Decemb. Anno novissimi seculi M. D: LXXXVI, A<sub>4</sub><sup>v</sup>-B<sup>r</sup> (Wittenberg: Simon Grönenberg, 1586), A<sub>3</sub><sup>v</sup>. For more detail on János Varsányi's stay in Wittenberg and his career see: SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 356–357. The Latin poems were translated by Gábor Petneházi.

Ovid's version is the one that is best known out of the numerous versions of the nightingale's aetiological story, according to which Thracian king Tereus brings his wife's younger sister, Philomela for a visit. During the journey, he covets his sister-in-law and rapes her in a forest hut. To keep what he did a secret, he cuts out Philomela's tongue and leaves her deep in the forest, and he tells his wife that her sister had died. During her captivity, Philomela weaves her story into a gown, from which the queen learns what her husband had done. In revenge she serves their son to Tereus as dinner, who wants to kill the sisters when he learns what had been served up at the feast. In the end, the gods turn all three of them into birds, Tereus becomes a hoopoe, Procne becomes a swallow, and Philomela becomes a nightingale.

The story has two defining moments: the sexual violence, which is a recurring narrative element in the stories of the *Metamorphoses*, and releasing the silenced female voice. The idea that the nightingale's song is mournful also occurs elsewhere: Penelope mentions this characteristic in the *Odyssey*.<sup>18</sup> Beside mourning, Neo-Latin literature also used the nightingale as a symbol of artistic expression and poets during the Renaissance: at some point a version of Philomela, Tereus, and Procne's tragic mythological story emerged that revised the narrative of revenge and linked the song and sound of the nightingale to mourning and mourners, without the bloody interludes. The character of the nightingale is often linked to sadness, but there are also other uses compared to the valedictory poems, for instance, one text in the valedictory publication prepared for Philipp Melanchthon's death draws a parallel between Melanchthon's person and the nightingale:

Moestaque vicina residens Philomela sub umbra,  
Flebile moerentes concinit inter aves.  
Aemula facundi Philomela Melanthonis ales,  
Par honor, et linguae candor utrisque fuit.<sup>19</sup>

The text uses the mythological and artistic symbolism of the nightingale when it draws a parallel between the Wittenberg humanist and the bird based on their character and language use.

However, the propemptikon was not fundamentally a genre of mourning, since it met two needs simultaneously: beside the farewell, it also functioned as praise. The author of the poem, who laments as a friend, also praises his surroundings and the virtues of the departing fellow student while saying goodbye. The compliments typically used arguments related to the person, i.e. they applauded the erudition, knowledge,

<sup>18</sup> Hom., *Od.*, XIX. 519–524.

<sup>19</sup> [Settling down beside me under the greenery the nightingale sang sadly among the mourning birds. Melanchthon's bird is the nightingale, his competitor in eloquence, because he was so dignified and speaking so brilliantly.] *Orationes, epitaphia et scripta, quae edita sunt de morte Philippe Melanthonis omnia, cum narratione exponente, quo fine vitam in terris suam clausurit, una cum praecedentium proxime dierum, et totius morbi, quo confectus est, brevi descriptione, edita a Professoribus Academiae Witebergensis, qui omnibus quae exponuntur interfuerunt*, (Wittenberg: n.a., 1561.), VI1r.



and diligence of the departing person. What is somewhat different about Hungarian peregrines' farewell compared to the German versions is that they placed more emphasis on the elements related to the future, primarily long-lasting fame. Beside praising the departing fellow student, the laudations also talked about using the erudition they had acquired in Wittenberg to the glory of God and church once they returned home. The texts depict this behaviour partly as learning being part of the road to salvation and partly as a custodian of eternal fame. The propemptikons make the students part of written, collective memory, thus ensuring that the travellers will not be forgotten.

Depicting nature and the symbols related to it appears in the texts for instance when Virgil's oeuvre is being imitated. The Hungarian students studying in Wittenberg also tried to use the eclogue form, for example, the text prepared for Mihály Forgách's farewell was also presented in a dialogue version.<sup>20</sup> In this text, the two shepherds are called Lycidas and Corydon. Both names are well-known from the ancient eclogue tradition, and they appear both in Virgil and in Theocritus' idylls. The shepherds play the role of the person saying farewell, and the third, departing person, who is not present, is called Daphnis. The main topic of the introduction is the poem and writing poetry, and according to Corydon, songs and singing bring on the light that revives nature. The flourishing lands can also be interpreted as a symbol of true religion, while the chaff mixed in with them may represent Catholic teachings, thus also invoking the parable of the sower in the reader. Lycidas continues with a praise of Wittenberg, which appears as the place where the Muses reside. The poem describes the college town as a garden, depicting it with the tools of the pastoral environment.<sup>21</sup> The author of the poem, Georg Helt, uses the Arcadian shepherds' figures to praise Wittenberg, and the propemptikon also mentions Tityrus, Daphnis, Damon, Alpheisibaeus, and Alcimedon. At the same time, natural beauty is not only linked to Wittenberg in the poem, since Lycidas mentions the beauty of Gimes (a municipality located in Slovakia today). This element is obviously motivated in the propemptikon by the departing student's person, since this settlement came into the possession of the ancestors of the Forgách family during the thirteenth century (at the end of the fifteenth century, the

20 Georgius HELT, *Eccloga ΠΡΟΠΕΜΠΤΙΚΗ in discessum, inclyti ac generosi domini, domini Michaelis Forgach liberi baronis in Gymes, ex inclyta Academia Witebergensi proficiscentis Domini sui clementissimi debita gratitudinis et observantiae ergo scripta a Georgio Helt Sorano Anno 1589. Mense Februario die 2.* (Wittenberg: Zacharias Crato, 1589). On Mihály Forgách and the role the Forgách family played in the second part of the sixteenth century see: András SZABÓ, "Das Zrínyi-Album (Wittenberg 1587) im Lichte der neueren Forschung," in *Militia et Litterae. Die beiden Nikolaus Zrínyi und Europa*, eds. Wilhelm KÜHLMANN, Gábor TÜSKÉS, and Sándor BENE, *Frühe Neuzeit* 141, 151–158 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2009); SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 175–177.

21 „Innumera hic vernant distinctae floribus herbae:/ Lilia cum violis, et flos bene olentis anethi,/ Cecropiumque thymum, et grave olentia centaurea/ Non lolium infelix, neglectaque crecit avena:/ Nec Cacus Latiis ignem qui spirat ab antris,/ Obscuro involvens fumo terramque polumque,/ Floribus hic nocuit, quamvis nocuisse paravit.” [Countless different flowers are blooming: the lilies are violet, and the dill is fragrant; Attic thyme and cornflower with a heady scent. Chaff and ergot do not flourish here, and even Cacus, breathing fire from the depth of the cave of Latium and covering earth and sky with smoke cannot hurt these flowers, no matter how much he had planned to.] *Ibid.*, A<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup>.



family split into two: the Gímes and the Gács branches). However, mentioning *fertilitas* only applies to Gímes, and the author does not extend it to all of Pannonia, instead it serves as a short transition that enables him to praise the Forgách family, talking about their piety, devoutness, and devoted engagement in the fight against the Ottoman.

The trees, the quiet Elbe, and the chorus of the Muses play an additional role in the propemptikons beyond the ones described above: water and its variations (spring, stream, etc.) not only keep emerging as idyllic, atmospheric elements, but the authors also depict the source and richness of knowledge through this metaphor. Associated with Athena or Apollon, the chorus of the Muses regularly appears as a custodian of humanist knowledge, although God and Jesus Christ constitute its other pillar in the texts.

According to the Greek mythological stories, the Muses were born from Zeus and Mnemosyne's courtship. In one version, Zeus asked those present what they needed, and when they answered that they needed someone to praise them, the ruler of the Olympus created the Muses, who are traditionally considered the goddesses and representatives of poetry, as well as art in a wider sense. Two sacred locations were attributed to them, the Helicon and Mount Pieria, where both shrines and springs were dedicated to them. Their task was to help people forget about their pain and worries.

Luther and Melanchthon play the role of the sower in the poem, and the author also uses another simile from *Georgics* through the line "ambo clarissima lumina mundi". Virgil characterizes the Sun and the Moon with this line when enumerating the gods,<sup>22</sup> with Luther and Melanchthon replacing the celestial bodies in the propemptikon. The poets use the metaphor of light sporadically, although it is also present in other publications, and not only in this form. For example, the authors also link the image of light to God. In Zsigmond Máriássy's poem, the association starts from the lantern that shows the way:

Ergo velut quondam Memphitidos orbe reversis,  
Lucida praeluxit nocte columna Dei:  
Christus ab aeterno lux splendida nata Parente,  
Luceat ante tuam, sic quoque rite viam.  
Haec eademque tibi mentem animumque gubernet,  
Ut tua lux populum splendeat ante Dei.<sup>23</sup>

God's guiding light illuminates the night in the text, and this physical sight is associated with Jesus Christ, he will be the light that will guide the peregrinating student

<sup>22</sup> Verg., *Aen.*, I.5–25.

<sup>23</sup> [As God's pillar of light shone for those returning from Egyptian land at night: that is how Christ, the brilliant light born to the eternal Father, illuminates the right way in front of you. The same should guide your mind and soul, so that your light illuminates in front of God's people.] MÁRIÁSSY Zsigmond, "Aliud," in *Propemptica viro integerrimo et politioris doctrinae laudibus ornatissimo, Dn. Joanni Czana-dio, seniori Coetus Ungarici Viteberga studiorum caussa collecti, et in patriam Ungariam redituro, Anno MDLXXXVIII. XXII. Januarii. Scripta ab amicis et popularibus*, B<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup>–B<sub>3</sub><sup>v</sup> (Wittenberg: Clemens Schleich, 1588), B<sub>3</sub><sup>r</sup>. For more on Zsigmond Máriássy's career see: SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 235–236.

on the right path leading home. Interpreting the metaphor in this manner is also supported by the fact that Christ's light guides the departing fellow student's mind and soul. Máriássy exploits the intricate, many-sided metaphor of light and travel, since God and Jesus Christ are the ones to enlighten the mind and the soul, through which homecoming is interpreted in a sense that also considers human life itself a journey. This receives a tinge of the history of salvation in the quotation, since the last element in Máriássy's series of imagery is that the light of the departing person shines in front of God's people.

In the valedictory poems, the goddesses and gods of the antiquity are part of the narrative according to which peregrination is prompted by a divine calling, followed by a desire for erudition, during the completion of which the student can reach the spring of the Muses. Then, once he has completed his studies, it is again prompted by a divine command that he returns home, now equipped with knowledge. According to this concept, there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the poetic utterance and the Muses, it is God who offers this opportunity to the peregrinating students, and in order to be able to use the knowledge they had gained, the virtues gained during the journey must prevail.

Beside depicting humanist erudition, the poets did not forget to indicate what dangers and difficulties awaited the peregrinating students, not necessarily during their journey, but after their arrival home. By dangers and difficulties they meant external threats and wars, thus it is important to examine what influence the Wittenberg perception of history had on the students who studied there and their works. As the Ottoman Empire gained a permanent foothold in the European territories, threats and how to avert them became a rhetorical topic. This is how the Kingdom of Hungary found itself in the western European discursive space through its geographical and political circumstances, and this is how topoi emerged that were used as permanent attributes, such as the above-mentioned *propugnaculum Christianitatis* or *fertilitas Pannoniae*. Both were part of the laudatory introduction of Hungary, with the topos of the bulwark being particularly suitable for authors adjusting it to current events. Although this topos was widely used even in the decades preceding the reformation, Luther's interpretation changed it in that the Ottoman conquests were embedded in how history was perceived during the reformation.<sup>24</sup> Based on this, Europe was constantly under threat from the enemy, the depiction of which was accompanied by a dual Antichristology and an apocalyptic world view. The idea of a dual Antichrist identified the pope and the Turks as the main enemies; based on the Book of Daniel, people placed themselves in the fourth epoch, which referred to the last, most wretched period before the apocalypse. The Wittenberg perception of history is demonstrated by numerous examples

24 The issue of *Türkenliteratur* was analyzed in detail by Mihály Imre, taking the German context into account. IMRE Mihály, "Magyarország Panaszja." A *Querela Hungariae* toposz a XVI-XVII. század irodalmában ["The Lament of Hungary." The topos of *Querela Hungariae* in sixteenth-seventeenth-century literature], Csokonai Könyvtár. Bibliotheca Studiorum Litterarum 5 (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 1995), 98-143. On the role of antiturcica in Melanchthon's rhetorical system see IMRE, "Melanchthon retorikájától Buzinkai..." 415-417.

in the texts of Hungarian authors who studied in Wittenberg, for instance in Balázs Szikszai Fabricius' preface to Gáspár Heltai's 1565 Bonfini edition.<sup>25</sup> The valedictory poems do not fully convey this approach, and the two examples presented below diverge somewhat from the conventional use of the topoi.

Instead of the threat of the Ottoman conquest, some authors preferred to use the persecution of the Huguenots as a parallel. The Protestant wave of persecution that encompassed all of France following the 1572 night of Saint Bartholomew in Paris was not commonly used in Hungarian authors' occasional texts. The primary source of danger for the Huguenots was the pope rather than the Turks, since it was Rome who declared the followers of the new religion heretics.

Perge igitur pia dona tuis Patriae referre,  
Hac itur docta semper ad astra via.  
Et sic Romani deludes Praesulis artes  
Dum furit et coeco demetit ense pios.  
Gallia iam vires huiusque Britannia sentit,  
Anglia dum victrix laeta trophaea gerit.  
Borbonium nuper deflet sua turba peremptum,  
Unica gens contra, bella, Navarra gerit.  
Huius ab insidiis ergo Pater optime serva,  
Pro grege qui sumunt armaque rite gerunt.<sup>26</sup>

In Demeter Liszkai's poem, mentioning the French religious war serves the purpose of recalling that a war may also happen with God's approval, when armed combat is necessary to protect true faith. French ruler Henry IV (King of Navarre) becomes the victim in the text, but Liszkai mixes up the rulers: Henry IV was still alive when the poem was written, it was his Catholic predecessor who had been assassinated. There is no mention of a bulwark in this case, and by recounting the war and its ending, the author emphasizes fulfilling the duties assigned by God. In the following six lines (which are

25 SZIKSZAI FABRICIUS Vazul, "Előszó" [Preface], in *Humanista történetírók*, ed. KULCSÁR Péter, Magyar Remekírók, 14–28 (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1977).

26 [Go on then, and what you have received, reciprocate it to your homeland and your own people: this path of erudition always takes you to heaven. This is how you can also thwart the Roman pontiff's machinations while he wildly slaughters righteous people with his frenzied sword. Gaul and Scotland also feel his power, but a victorious England celebrates triumphantly. Its people mourn Bourbon, lost the other day, and only the Navarre nation is fighting a vengeful battle. Safeguard, our benevolent father, from his intrigues all who take up arms for their people and fight a just war.] LISZKAI B. Demeter, "Aliud," in *Propemptica, in discessum orthodoxae pietatis, insignis doctrinae, humanitatis, morum suavitatis, et aliarum virtutum laude praestantissimi viri, Dn. Alexandri R. Szamoskozii, post exhaustos Philosophicos et Theologicos labores, ex inclita Vitebergensium Academia in patriam Ungariam redeuntis, Anno 1589. 3. die Septembris: Scripta ab amicis et Popularibus*, A<sub>3</sub>'–B' (Wittenberg: Matthäus Welack, 1589), B<sub>1</sub>'. For more on the life of Demeter B. Liszkai see: SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 231–233. The author mixed up the French kings: it was Henry III from the House of Valois who was assassinated in 1589. His successor, Henry IV (King of Navarre, from the House of Bourbon) was also assassinated, but in 1610.

also the closing lines of the poem), he calls upon the traveller to complete his tasks at home, which include the teaching and spreading of true faith.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly to the previous example, János Baranyai Decsi's poem, published in 1589, incorporates the wartime victories of England in the text.<sup>28</sup> He interprets wars as a sign of the end times and primarily portrays the campaigns against Protestant (in János Baranyai Decsi's interpretation, true) faith in this light:

Ultima iam venit praedicti temporis aetas,  
Qua Mars bella solo sanguinolenta serit,  
Aspice labentis tristissima climata mundi,  
Quantus ubique furor, quantus ubique tremor.  
Oppugnat fidos Hispania saeva Britannos:  
Gallia civili sanguine tincta rubet:  
Papa premit coetum Christi de nomine dictum:  
Et vexant Turcae vique doloque pios.  
Nam quid ego Persas, Indos, Maurosque recantem  
Qui miscent bellis fasque nefasque suis.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast with the previous citation, here war is not an obstacle that can be overcome with God's help, but the first sign of a predestined series of events. The author does not interpret the Ottoman conquests within the framework of *flagellum Dei*, *propugnaculum Christianitatis*, or *querela Hungariae*, he instead creates a broader horizon of interpretation when he includes a series of images depicting armed threats in the text. This primarily supports what is stated in the first few lines, according to which these are unavoidable events, and so they should be considered omens if these wars are to be in-

27 "Nunc igitur Iuvenis praeclara Pallade tincte,/ I Pede felici dum licet, atque redi./ Et procures qui nos, populumque per oppida Christi/ Tutantur vera in religione, vide/ Interea pro te munus faciemus amici./ Ut Patriae possis tecta, videre, vale." [Go on then, lad, anointed by the famous Pallas, go with fortune, as long as you can, and return home. Look in Christ's cities for those lords who protect us and the people in true faith. We, your friends, will pray in the meantime so you can see your homeland. Vale.] Ibid.

28 BARANYAI DECSI János, "Aliud," in *Propemptica in discessum doctissimi viri, pia eruditione, erudita pietate, ac morum integritate praestantissimi, Domini Demetrii Ezlarini, post felicem studiorum profectum, in Patriam Hungariam redeuntis Calend. Spetembris, Anno Domini 1589, scripta ab amicis et popularibus, amoris et benevolentiae ergo*, A<sub>4</sub><sup>r-v</sup> (Wittenberg: Simon Grönenberg, 1589). For more on Baranyai Decsi's life see: SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 112–115.

29 [The last period of prophesied time, when Mars sows bloody wars into the earth, is now here: look at the ghastly countenance of the collapsing world, how much fury and dread is everywhere. Hispania maliciously raids the god-fearing Brits; Gaul is painted red, tarnished by citizens' blood; the congregation named after Christ is clutched by the pope; and the Turks torment the righteous with violence and duplicity. I do not even mention the Persians, Indians, and Moor, in whose wars even that which cannot happen happens.] Ibid., A<sub>4</sub><sup>r</sup>.

terpreted correctly. The departing person must fulfil the duty for which he prepared in Wittenberg (i.e. returning home) despite the ominous signs.<sup>30</sup>

The propemptikon of poet laureate Nicodemus Frischlin, who by 1589 was considered quite a controversial scholar, adorns the cover of the publication created for the departure of János Csanádi<sup>31</sup>. Hungarian researchers have analysed Frischlin's activities from several perspectives. From the Hungarian researchers, Gábor Kecskeméti has reviewed Frischlin's oeuvre in detail and summarized the conclusions of previous literature, thus creating a complex picture of Frischlin's embeddedness based on his sporadic connections to the peregrines. He also analyses the impact of Frischlin's rhetorical views through the Hungarian peregrines' perspective.<sup>32</sup>

Frischlin organizes the poem around the fight against the Turks. He mentions two peers in the text who played a significant role in the fight against the Turks during the second part of the century.<sup>33</sup> He identifies Boldizsár Batthyány in a metaphorical sense as one version of the topos of the bulwark of Hungary:

Vivit ibi, atque utinam sit eidem vita superstes  
Balthasar, heroi lux et imago ducis:  
Balthasar illustri Bathyanum sanguine cretus:  
Balthasar, Hungarici murus, et arma, soli.<sup>34</sup>

Ferenc Nádasdy appears with a wreath on his head, his attributes prompting fear in the enemy but love among his own people:

(Tempora civili redimitus fronde, Nadasdus:  
Quem Turcus metuit, quem suus Hunnus amat).<sup>35</sup>

30 "Interea fidei, docte Eztlarine, recumbens/ Officii peragas munia cuncta tui./ Quaeque tibi Deus ipse dedit, iam reddere laetus/ Ne dubites patriae, civibus atque tuis." [Until then, learned Eszlári, preserve your faith and see to all the tasks of your office, and do not hesitate, and even happily give back to your homeland and countrymen all that God himself has given you.] BARANYAI DECSI, "Aliud...", A<sub>4</sub><sup>v</sup>.

31 On János Csanádi's activities see: SZABÓ, *Natio Ungarica...*, 137–139.

32 KECSKEMÉTI Gábor, "Hungarian Connections of Nicodemus Frischlin," *Camænæ Hungaricæ* 2 (2005): 93–110.

33 On Boldizsár Batthyány and Ferenc Nádasdy see: BOBORY Dóra, *The Sword and the Crucible. Count Boldizsár Batthyány and Natural Philosophy in Sixteenth-Century Hungary* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 9–38.

34 [He lives here, and may Boldizsár live here for a long time, paragon of heroes and generals: Boldizsár, born to the illustrious Batthyány family; Boldizsár, sword and shield of Hungarian land.] Nicodemus FRISCHLIN, "Nicodemus Frischlinus, Poeta Laureatus et Comes Palatinus, suo Joanni Czanadio Hungaro, redituro in patriam," in *Propemptica viro integerrimo et politioris doctrinae laudibus ornatissimo, Dn. Joanni Czanadio, seniori Coetus Ungarici Viteberga studiorum caussa collecti, et in patriam Ungariam redituro, Anno MDLXXXVIII. XXII. Januarii. Scripta ab amicis et popularibus*, A<sub>2</sub><sup>r</sup>–A<sub>3</sub><sup>r</sup> (Wittenberg: Clemens Schleich, 1587), A<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup>.

35 [Your forehead is girded by a patriotic wreath, Nádasdy: the Turks dread you, the Hun love you.] Ibid.

The text furnishes the Turkish enemy with attributes that present it as a vicious, almost invincible opponent. Frischlin does not rule it out either that other countries may also be exposed to this threat.

Non erit Hungaria felicior Itala tellus:  
Gallica non regio, Teutoniaeve solum.  
Turcus atrox hostis: qui quicquid subiugat orae,  
Vastat: et in flammis ire, rogumque iubet.<sup>36</sup>

This is not a new idea, what made these references relevant was that the fights flared up again around the border castles in 1588, but by the beginning of the Fifteen Years' War (1591) it had become clear that the Ottoman armed forces would not make it beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary. Of course, probability did not have to be considered when depicting the Turks in what had already become a rhetorical commonplace. Frischlin also uses the opportunity to depict divine help as the only way to escape the Turks. This is why the teachings must be followed, and why the text illustrates the power relations through the metaphor of lamb – shepherd – wolf. In the closing of the poem, the person bidding farewell defines Csanádi's role through a direct command: he should nourish the herd with all the knowledge he had acquired during his peregrination. A resolution of the bucolic metaphor is not missing either, since Frischlin makes it clear that interpreting and transmitting God's teachings appropriately is what Csanádi is capable of, and this is how he can keep his homeland safe from the enemy.

Eia age Czanadi, cui iam commissa docendi  
Munia, Pannonium pasce, sed arte gregem.  
Arte gregem pasces, ubi noxia pabula tolles:  
Et trades verbo consona sacra Dei.  
Agnina sub pelle lupos age pelle latentes:  
Sic erit a reliquis Hunnia tuta lupis.<sup>37</sup>

The text, however, is not clear at all, and the indispensability of Christ's help, Csanádi's task, and its outcome are blurred together in the shepherd metaphor, obscuring whether the addressee was transubstantiated into a figure of Christ by Frischlin or not.

36 [Nor will the land of Italy or the Gallic land or the soil of Teutonia be more fortunate than Hungary. The Turk is a ruthless enemy: whichever land he subdues, he plunders it and orders it to be burned to the ground.] Ibid.

37 [Go on, Csanádi, teaching is your task now; take the herd of the Hungarians to pasture wisely. You take them to pasture wisely if you eradicate harmful grasses and deliver the sacrament according to God's word. Chase the wolf hiding under sheep's clothing: this is how Hunnia will be protected from the rest of the wolves.] FRISCHLIN, "Nicodemus Frischlinus, Poeta...", A<sub>2</sub><sup>v</sup>-A<sub>3</sub><sup>r</sup>.

The propemptikons exemplify how the practice of traveling and documenting it in various texts created a framework of interpretation, which was adjusted to the needs of the community and allocated topoi that were relevant to the topic. The valedictory poem primarily captures the loss of the person saying goodbye and his community, while the laudation illustrates the magnitude of this loss. In addition, the texts never fail to weave a narrative linked to travel into the farewell: the goal of the journey is to expand the glory of God, which can be attained by learning as much as possible, then spreading these teachings upon returning home. A connection between travel and salvation could already be observed in early Christianity, and it can be linked to the interpretation that human life is nothing but a spiritual journey. The students grow their virtues through their journey and studies, which will inevitably be rewarded by fame and salvation.

The poems may thus confront us with an impression of the ideal journey, and their linguistic forms and poetic characteristics also serve as arguments for successfully graduating from university. This may explain the excessive and meticulous structure of most of the texts, building upon a series of repetitions and rhythms of thought. Another typical characteristic of their text creation technique is imitation, which ranges from adding quotations from ancient and contemporary Neo-Latin authors to using characteristic expressions and images, demonstrating the poet's proficiency and technical knowledge and challenging the receiver's reading accomplishment at the same time.