

The Poetics of
Multilingualism –
*La Poétique du
plurilinguisme*

The Poetics of Multilingualism – *La Poétique du plurilinguisme*

Edited by

Patrizia Noel Aziz Hanna
and Levente Seláf

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The Poetics of Multilingualism – *La Poétique du plurilinguisme*

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PREFACE

The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme is the third volume in the series “Ars Metrica et poetica”, dedicated to the typology of poetical systems.

We would like to thank all participants of the International Colloquium “The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme”, held at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest in April 2013.

We are grateful to those who made the conference possible, especially Iván Horváth (University of Budapest), and those who helped prepare the index: Csilla Virág, Máté Vrabély, Eszter Nagy (ELTE, Budapest), and Hanna Christ (University of Bamberg). We would also like to thank those who assisted us in formatting this volume: Justin Zhi Jie Loke, Daniel Klenovšak, and Helga Münch (University of Bamberg).

Bamberg and Budapest in December 2015

Patrizia Noel Aziz Hanna and Levente Seláf

INTRODUCTION

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The poetics of multilingualism plays a central role in literary and cultural history. In *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme*, this issue is approached from an ontological perspective, with emphasis on the emergence of genres, styles and vernacular literatures, as well as on the influence of cultural factors.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the poetics of multilingualism is that it reveals national literatures to be an outcome of transcultural reflection. This kind of reflection can surface in lexical borrowings and inventions, in attempts to imitate foreign language features, and in combining and improvising stylistic and linguistic devices. The poetic experiments presented in this book range all the way from idiosyncratic solutions to the partly unconscious creation of new genres from situations of cultural contact; multilingualism turns out to be fundamental to the emergence of vernacular literatures.

While research on the poetics of multilingualism is frequently restricted to specific authors, languages, genres, or epochs, *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme* reflects the diversity of the phenomenon. It provides facets from the poetics of individual authors to conventionalized features, from written to oral and sung products of multilingual creation, from past to contemporary performances. By focusing on the topic's ontology and its basic categories and relations, this volume demonstrates the fundamental importance of multilingualism for literary and linguistic theory with studies from the following countries and regions: Alsace, the Basque Country, the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia, Sardinia, and Spain. It reveals the complexity of the topic by bringing together approaches from various disciplines and subdisciplines in order to paint a more detailed picture of literature as a result of present and past cultural contact.

Despite the different methods employed and objectives set in the articles of this volume, a common research question surfaced: the aesthetic stylization of both foreign language patterns and cultural patterns. This question is directly tied to the cognitive status of language itself. Aesthetic stylisation may be the most reflected and thus most approachable representation of the perception and adoption of non-native patterns. It surfaces either in poetics as explicit theoretical treatises or, more implicitly, in the performance of poetics. Multilayered aspects of medieval, Renaissance, modern, and contemporary multiculturalism are therefore mirrored in this volume's analyses of transcultural text corpora. A great range of literary texts which were composed based on the poetics of at least two languages is presented – multilingualism turns out to be both poetical intention and poetical need.

The structure of this volume reflects the ontological approach to the poetics of multilingualism. **Chapter 1** deals with multilingualism in medieval times and is dedicated to the questions of multilingualism in a period when Latin written culture dominated the literary and intellectual scene of all Western Europe. BOGNÁR AND BARTÓK, CERQUIGLINI-TOULET, DRASKÓCZY, GUTIÉRREZ GARCÍA, HORVÁTH, RODRÍGUEZ VÁZQUEZ, SELÁF, and WOLFF discuss the bilingualism of Latin and the vernacular – from the emergence of vernacular literatures and their zenith in courtly culture to the appearance of the new system of Humanist values.

Chapter 2 focuses on the poetics of multilingualism in poetry. CHEVRIER and SCIARRINO provide accurate overviews of national literary traditions; BORIES explores the performance and range of individual interpretations of multilingualism. The imitation of foreign features in these poems does not stop at lexical borrowings, figures of speech, or imitation of style, but also reflects the perceived features of non-native systems. EYMAR, MANZARI, and NOEL AZIZ HANNA demonstrate that the structure of poetic genre can be traced back to multilingual contexts.

Prose texts in multilingual contexts display a use of multilingualism quite different from multilingual influences on poetry. **Chapter 3** provides evidence that the immersion in the 'other' language is generally less structural in prose texts, but at the same time more explicit, and thus often sophisticated, as the contributions of NIEDDU CRIX, ROUBAUD, VICHNAR, and WEISSMANN illustrate. ANOKHINA, BENERT, and PADILLA-MOYANO illustrate the central issue of code-switching in prose texts, with its many implications tied to language choice and its various connotations, including playful distance on the one side and language-based social discrimination on the other.

Multilingual literature is linguistic and cultural knowledge in practice. From diachronic, linguistic, and structural perspectives, *The Poetics of Multilingualism – La Poétique du plurilinguisme* treats the question of how the imitation and stylization of the ‘other(ness)’, its language and culture, is achieved in order to function effectively.

1. POETICS OF MULTILINGUALISM IN
MEDIEVAL TIMES /
POÉTIQUE DU MULTILINGUISME AU MOYEN ÂGE

DE SANCTO LADISLAO – THE GENRES OF THE TWO VARIANTS¹

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Most researchers agree that *De Sancto Ladislao*, the song written to praise St Ladislaus, must have had a propagandistic interpretation at the time of its creation. In all probability, some actions of the saint king described in the poem were read as the acts of King Matthias. This was possible not only because St Ladislaus was the symbol of the Hungarian Kingdom, but also because of some allusions of the poem which refer to the politics of King Matthias. There certainly exists a religious interpretation alongside this political one. Studies to date have ignored that the text remaining in the Codex Peer is much more linked to the religious interpretation while the variant in the Codex Gyöngyösi contains almost all of the political references. We argue in this paper that there are two poems: one paraliturgical and one political.

This paper deals with the poem titled *De Sancto Ladislao*, which has been claimed to be the first written record of Hungarian secular poetry. For a long time, the special literature treated it as if it were two poems: one in Latin and the other in Hungarian. In most cases, the aim of the research studies was to determine whether the Latin or the Hungarian variant was the original one.²

Iván Horváth (2009, 2013), following the footsteps of József Vekkerdi (1972), has recently demonstrated that it is actually one bilingual poem. His main argument is based on the appearance of the two texts surviving in the Codex Peer and in the Codex Gyöngyösi. Typographically and structurally, both sources support the hypothesis that the Latin and the Hungarian stanzas

¹ The contribution is part of the OTKA (Hungarian Scientific Research Fund) project “The Beginnings of Hungarian Secular Poetry”; identification number: K 109127.

² For a comprehensive bibliography see Horváth (2009: 144).

are in fact bilingual pairs of strophes in which the two languages alternate with each other.

In agreement with Horváth (2009), our paper examines the two variants of the text. We will attempt to show that the differences between the textual traditions of the variants are so important that they attest different conceptions of the text's literary genre.

1. The two variants

The first part of the study describes the two variants. We are interested in three aspects: 1) the environment of the variant; 2) the characteristics of the king's portrait; 3) and the relationship between the Latin and the Hungarian parts of the text.

1.1. The Peer variant

1.1.1. The textual environment

This variant consists of fifteen pairs of Latin and Hungarian strophes. It was copied into a private prayer book called *Codex Peer* shortly before the year 1526. The codex is kept in the National Széchényi Library of Hungary under the reference number MNy 12.³

The body of the codex (1r–165v) was compiled by two hands. In addition to the legends of St Alexius (1r–18r) and Paul of Thebes (18v–58r), it contains forty-five mixed prayers and religious songs (58r–165v). In this part of the codex, the copyists collected important texts for private devotion. The owner could have found in his or her book translations of the main prayers (e.g. *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, *Magnificat*), the most important hymns (e.g. *Salve Regina*, *Te Deum*) and many other orisons and songs (even a Latin-Hungarian text of a magic prayer against fever). The other part of the codex (171v–185r) was copied later by more hands. It contains mostly liturgical texts, but also Andreas de Vasarhely's *Cantilena* about the Virgin Mary and the *Cantilena* of Ferenc Apáti (169r–171r), the first Hungarian satirical poem (Kacskovics-Reményi, Kozocsa, and Oszkó 2000: 18–34).⁴

³ For the facsimile and the literal edition of the codex see Kacskovics-Reményi, Kozocsa, and Oszkó (2000).

⁴ According to Rabán Gerézdi (Gerézdi 1962: 214), these two poems were copied later (around the mid sixteenth century) into the codex.

The hymn about Saint Ladislaus was copied together with the main part of the codex. It can be read under the title *De Sancto Ladislao* on leaves 154v–163r as the penultimate record of the first part. The odd stanzas are written in Latin and their content is repeated by the even ones in Hungarian. There is no trace of missing passages: The text has a title, the first and the last verses of the poem are identical to each other and the pairs of strophes follow each other without any semantic gap. As Iván Horváth noticed recently, the initial strophes of the Latin stanzas are characteristically larger and more wrought (Horváth 2009: 144). The first pair of strophes reads:

Salve benigne rex Ladislāē,
Hunnicae plebis dulcis patrone,
regis regum gemma praeclara,
siderum caeli praefulgidum sidus.

Üdvözlégy, kegyelmes Szent Laszló király,
Magyarországnak édes oltalma,
szent királyok közt drágálátos gyöngy,
csillagok között fényességes csillag.⁵

The immediate environment of the text is also noteworthy. Before the *De Sancto Ladislao* there is a translation of the hymn *Te Deum* (the Hungarian incipit: *Isten, téged dicsérünk*) which is one of the first songs of the Catholic Church. The other neighbour of the variant is a sequence, the *Imperatrix gloriosa*, under the title *De Beata Virgine oratio* (the Hungarian incipit: *Dicsőséges Szűz Mária, dicsérettel vagy teljes*, Horváth et al. 1989: No. 286). The interesting thing from our point of view is that the *Imperatrix gloriosa* is a bilingual prayer for the Holy Virgin, and it has the same arrangement of strophes seen in *De Sancto Ladislao*. The first pair of strophes reads:

Imperatrix gloriosa
Plena laudum titulis,
Potens et imperiosa,
Canticis angelicis
Iure commendaris
Mater et regina,
Prole nunc gravaris

⁵ For the facsimile and the literal copy see Kacs Kovics-Reményi, Kozocsa, and Oszkó (2000: 662–665).

Tuo nos consigna
Virgo mater Deo digna.

Dicsőséges Szűz Mária,
dicsérettel vagy teljes,
hatalmas vagy és felséges
angyali tisztességgel
méltán dicsértessék
menyországnak asszonya,
ajándékozz minket
a te szent fiaddal,
kegyes Krisztusnak szent anyja.⁶

1.1.2. The king's portrait in the variant

The variant of the Codex Peer characterizes the king as a pious person and emphasizes his sanctity. It makes sense to enumerate the statements of the consecutive pairs of strophes in order to demonstrate the particular meaning of the Peer variant: 1) Ladislaus is a merciful king, a precious pearl even amongst the saint kings; 2) he is the servant of the Holy Trinity, follower of Jesus, clear vessel of the Holy Spirit and knight of the Holy Virgin; 3) he is the shiny mirror of the saint kings and he is a pious king; 4) he was given from heaven, he was born, a second time through holy baptismal water; 5) he owns two countries, Hungary (Hung.) or Hunnia (Lat.) and the heavenly home; 6) he settled down in Várad, established a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary and he was the sweet protection of the city; 7) he is buried in that church surrounded by emperors, bishops, kings and landlords and oil flows from his coffin (an allusion to one of his miracles); 8) he is praised with hymns by priests, students, citizens, the whole world and the angels of God; 9) his statue was erected in front of the minster of Várad; 10) his face is rich, nice and red, his looks are desirable (Lat.), he looks nicer than any human being (Hung.), he is eloquent and he overthrows those who struggle with him; 11) he is handsome and tall, he is even worthy to be an emperor because of his beauty; 12) his body is clean, his soul is shiny, he is lion-hearted; 13) he was chosen by the Virgin Mary in order to protect the country; 14) he was fortified by the Holy Spirit and he watted a crown from the roses of virtues; 15) he deserves our praise.

⁶ For the facsimile and the literal copy see Kacs Kovics-Reményi, Kozocsa, and Oszkó (2000: 698–703).

This variant describes the “pious king”; the mentions of his political acts are incidental. According to the sixth pair of strophes, he settled down in Várád to be the sweet protection of the city, and the thirteenth one says that he was chosen by the Virgin Mary in order to protect the country. He is lion-hearted, he is valorous, he is worthy to be an emperor and he overthrows those who struggle with him, but these attributes are connected with his role as a king and remain on the level of generalities. One can find no factual political events in this variant.

1.1.3. The Latin and the Hungarian parts of the variant

If there is discussion of politics in the Peer variant, it appears as an abstract reference.

The Latin part of the variant presents a more complex and more sophisticated historical conception: the historical conception of the Hun-Hungarian identity, which says that the Hungarian nation is the descendant of the Huns, and the king in power is the successor of King Attila the Hun. This conception can be found even in the earliest Hungarian historical works (Anonymus, *Gesta Hungarorum*; Simon Kézai, *Gesta Hungarorum et Hunnorum*), but the idea of the Hun-Hungarian identity became popular only in the age of Matthias (i.e. 1458–1590).

The conception appears in the Latin part of this variant in a terminological way: there are five stanzas – the first, the third, the fifth, the thirteenth and the nineteenth – which identify the Hungarian nation with the Huns. The first and the third stanzas name Saint Ladislaus as the king of the Hun folk (“Salve benigne rex Ladislai, / Hunnicæ plebis dulcis patrone”, “Tu nam Hunnorum regia proles”), the fifth and the thirteenth call him the king of Hunnia (“Ut te laudarent patria regna, / Hunnicum scilicet atque coelicum”, “Ut custodires et gubernares / Legatum sibi Hunnicum regnum”), while the nineteenth uses the “Hun” term to name the audience (“Hunni Laudate sanctum Ladislaum”). It is true that in the fifth stanza the Roman name of Hungary appears as well (“Pannonia”), but the appearance of this expression can be explained as the effort to avoid the repetition of the similar sounding figures (“Hunnia – Hunnicum”).

The Hungarian part uses a simpler argument: it does emphasize the conception of a Hun-Hungarian identification. Saint Ladislaus is the king of Hungary; the identification of the Hun and the Hungarian nations does not appear. The Hungarian text calls the country “Magyarország”, a name which does not contain any allusion to the Hun nation. While the last stanza of the

Latin text calls on the Hun people to praise the king, the Hungarian one uses a general invocation, saying that “we” should praise him.

1.2. The Gyöngyösi variant

1.2.1. *The environment of the variant*

This variant consists of eighteen pairs of Latin and Hungarian strophes, but the scrivener took down only the Latin part of the composition entirely. After the first Latin stanza, he wrote down only the first three words of the corresponding Hungarian strophe (in order to signify that the Latin and the Hungarian text belong together) then, up to the sixteenth, took down only the Latin stanzas of the poem. From the sixteenth Latin stanza onwards, the Hungarian text is included.

The Gyöngyösi variant was copied onto the first blank leaf of a composite volume around the 1520s (Gerézdi 1962: 147–148). Since the nineteenth century, it has been contained in the Codex Gyöngyösi. The codex is kept in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences under the reference number K 39; the variant is found on the first leaf of the book.⁷

In the composite volume, which preserved the variant, the immediate environment of the text was a memorial poem for king Matthias copied by the same hand onto the second blank leaf (now: Codex Gyöngyösi, 2v). This epitaph, named after its first line *Néhai való jó Mátyás király* (‘Late and good king Matthias’) (Horváth et al. 1989: No. 1060), is political propaganda: it describes king Matthias as a fearsome king and a great conqueror and it enumerates the merits of King Matthias in order to confirm the cult of the king: 2) he occupied Vienna and 3) Germany, 4) he was invited to Prague to own the Czech crown, 5) he received gifts from the Turks so that he would not destroy their country, 6) he tried to occupy Venice, 7) he was a terrifying hero, 8) he was terrible to the Poles, and 9) he was powerful among the other kings.

1.2.2. *The king's portrait in the variant*

The first fourteen pairs of strophes of the Gyöngyösi variant are essentially identical to the first fourteen pairs of strophes of the Peer variant. The important differences between the two variants are constrained in the fifteenth Latin stanza and the subsequent three pairs in strophes of the Codex Gyöngyösi.

⁷ For the facsimile and the literal edition of the codex see Dömötör (2001).

The statements about the king in the last four stanzas are as follows: XV) he protected the holy Catholic faith with heart, mouth and sword; XVI) he is the fear (Lat.) or the defeater (Hung.) of the Tartars, having exterminated them in the Alps; he is the dread of the pagans; the Turks called him the “fear of the world”; XVII) he exterminated the Hussites; there was no evil-doer under his reign because even his fame was dreaded by everyone; XVIII) he was the judge of the justice; he was the crown of virginity (Lat.) or the virgins (Hung.), the spotless protector of purity and the follower of clemency.

The Gyöngyösi variant paints a somewhat different royal portrait than the Peer variant. Since the first fourteen pairs of stanzas are identical to those in the Peer variant, the conception of the “pious king” appears in this one as well. But the four pairs of stanza found only in the Gyöngyösi variant present a different king. In this part of the text, Saint Ladislaus is described as the “fear of the world” whose name was dreaded by all. It is true that the two portraits do not preclude each other (the violent attributes of the king described in the Gyöngyösi variant are also connected with the task of the defence: he is the protector of the Catholic faith), but the political acts of this character do not remain on the level of generalities. There are references to four different political acts in the sixteenth and the seventeenth pairs of strophes (he exterminated the Tartars and the Hussites and he struggled against the pagans and the Turks). Among these references there are two which are factual. Saint Ladislaus never fought against the Turks or the Hussite heretics.⁸ According to Rabán Gerézdi, these statements might be understood as allusions to Saint Ladislaus’ wars against the Saracens and the Czechs, but even if it were true, these allusions are quite strange. As he notes, these political events must have referred primarily to the politics of King Matthias for the contemporary audience (Gerézdi 1962: 158–161).

1.2.3. The Latin and the Hungarian parts of the variant

Since the first fourteen Latin strophes in this variant are identical to the first fourteen Latin stanzas of the Peer variant, our statements about that variant apply to this one as well: the variant presents a complex and sophisticated historical conception of the Hun-Hungarian identity.

⁸ It should be noted, however, that the mention of Saint Ladislaus as a defender who fought against the Turks and other pagans is not unprecedented in the literary tradition. A sermon written down in the fifteenth century (Bathyanéum Library Gyulafehérvár, Codex R. I. 113, ff. 116r–119r) says that Saint Ladislaus often fought against the Turks and other non-Christians, trying to create peace (the Latin-Hungarian edition of the sermon: Madas 2004: 120–125).

The fifteenth Latin stanza and the sixteenth to eighteenth Latin-Hungarian pairs of strophes of the variant carry on and complete the conception of the previous Latin stanzas. No allusion to the Hun folk can be found in these stanzas, but in the sixteenth Latin stanza, the poet refers to the Hun king, Attila. According to the fourth verse of the stanza, the king is named “fear of the world” by the Turks (“Tu metus orbis Theucris vocabaris”).⁹ In the Latin tradition, this attribute was the epithet of Attila since the *Gesta* of Simon Kézai (*Gesta Hungarorum et Hunnorum*); this attribute identifies the king (Saint Ladislaus) with the Hun conqueror Attila (Gerézdi 1962: 167). The factual political events described in the sixteenth and the seventeenth stanzas agree with this identification. The king defeated the enemy – the Tartars, the Turks and the Bohemian heresy – implying that he is a worthy successor of Attila, the “fear of the world”.

The Hungarian part of the Gyöngyösi variant (i.e. the Hungarian stanzas of the sixteenth to eighteenth pairs of strophes) follows the same conception. It repeats the epithet of Attila (“Törökök mondottak földfélelmének” [“Turks called you *fear of the world*”]), then enumerates factual political events in order to justify that the king in question is worthy of the title of “second Attila”. This is the only allusion to the conception of the Hungarian nation as successor to the Huns in the Hungarian text of either variant.

2. The comparison of the two variants

Let us summarize the most important characteristics of the two variants.

The Peer variant was copied into a private prayer book which contained solely religious texts. There is no trace of missing passages: the variant has a title, the first and the last verses of the poem are identical to each other and the pairs of strophes follow each other without any semantic gap. One of its immediate neighbours is a bilingual paraliturgical hymn. The text characterizes Saint Ladislaus as a pious king and emphasizes his sanctity. There is no mention about political events in this text: the attributes of the king are, almost without exception, religious; if not, they are connected with the king’s defensive duties and remain on the level of generalities. Based on these attributes of the text, the Peer variant can be read as a bilingual paraliturgical hymn about the holy king Ladislaus.

The Gyöngyösi variant was copied next to a secular epitaph about King Matthias. The two poems were copied by the same hand. One Latin and three

⁹ For the identification of the Turks and the Trojans see Gerézdi (1962: 158–159) and Szilágyi (2009).

Latin-Hungarian pairs of stanzas, missing from the Peer variant, characterize the king as the “fear of the world”. The Gyöngyösi variant mentions more factual political events. Among these there are two allusions which are not true of Saint Ladislaus: he never fought against the Turks or the Hussite heretics. Based on these attributes of the text, the Gyöngyösi variant can be read as a political poem which uses the name of Saint Ladislaus but concerns another king.

2.1. The two royal images

Before we go any further, it seems useful to formulate a combined table listing the appearance of the two royal portraits:

VP	VGy	“Pious king”	“Fear of the world”
1.	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> merciful king precious pearl even amongst the saint kings 	
2.	2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> servant of the Holy Trinity follower of Jesus clear vessel of the Holy Spirit knight of the Holy Virgin 	
3.	3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shiny mirror of the saint kings pious king 	
4.	4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he was given from heaven he was born, secondly, by the holy baptismal water 	
5.	5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he owns two countries, Hungary and the heavenly home 	
6.	6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he established a church to the Virgin Mary he was the sweet protection of Várad 	

7.	7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> oil flows from his coffin (an allusion to one of his miracles) 	
8.	8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he is praised with hymn by priests, students, citizens, the whole world and the angels of God 	
9.	9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> his statue was erected in Várad 	
10.	10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he is kinder than normal men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he overthrows those who struggle with him
11.	12.		
12.	11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> his soul is shiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he is lion-hearted
13.	13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he was chosen by the Virgin Mary to protect the country 	
14.	14.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he was fortified by the Holy Spirit and he watted a crone from the roses of virtues 	
15.	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> let us praise him with the angels he is a merciful king 	
–	XV.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he protected the holy catholic faith with heart and mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he protected the holy catholic faith with the sword
–	XVI.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> he is the fear/defeater of the Tartars, he exterminated them in the Alps he is the dread of the pagans the Turks called him the “fear of the world”

–	XVII.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he exterminated the Hussites • even his name was dreaded by everyone
–	XVIII.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he was the judge of justice • he was the crown of virginity/virgins • he was the spotless protector of purity • he was the follower of clemency 	

Table 1. Comparison of the two royal images.¹⁰

2.1.1. The “pious king”

As we have seen, Saint Ladislaus is described by the Peer variant as a pious king. This portrait agrees with the literary character of Saint Ladislaus set out by his legend written after the year 1192. The whole text of this legend is composed around the conception of godliness. It emphasizes that “the rigor of justice was tempered by the king with the gentleness of mercy”, and that “his subjects liked him rather than were afraid of him”, whereupon “he was called pious king by his people” (Szentpétery 1938: 515–527).

The portrait painted by this legend appears also in late medieval sermons. Edit Madas, the publisher of the medieval sermons of Saint Ladislaus, composed a table on the attributes of the holy king. According to this, he is either the defender or the governor of the country. The governor appears either as a judge or as a pious king, a benefactor (Madas 2004: 287–290). These attributes are repeated throughout all of the Middle Ages. As previously observed by Rabán Gerézdi, the epithet “fear of the world” in connection with

¹⁰ Factual political events: **bold**.

VP/VGy: the sequential number of the Peer variant’s/Gyöngyösi’s pairs of strophes.

The sequential numbers written with Arabic numerals mark the pairs of strophes of the Peer variant and, if there is one, the equivalent pairs of strophes of the Gyöngyösi variant (the enumeration of the attributes here follows the Peer variant). The sequential numbers written with Roman numerals mark the pairs of strophes which were preserved only in the Codex Gyöngyösi (the enumeration of the attributes here follows the Gyöngyösi variant).

Saint Ladislaus did not appear before the variant of the Codex Gyöngyösi (Gerézdi 1962: 175).

The pious king of the Peer variant (and in the first fourteen pairs of strophes of the Gyöngyösi variant) is embedded in this tradition. He is a saint of the Catholic Church. It is true that Saint Ladislaus is regarded as the successor of Hun king Attila by the Latin part of the Peer variant, but this fact does not alter the royal image in this variant: King Ladislaus, unlike his ancestor, is a pious person.

According to Sándor Lázs, some paraliturgical hymns were performed in bilingual form in certain cases, for example during processions. The clerics sang in Latin while the faithful responded in their vernacular. This may have been the case with the Peer variant and the other bilingual poem of the codex: they were used, perhaps, during processions (Lázs 2011: 438–443).

2.1.2. The “fear of the world”

Since Saint Ladislaus was never named “fear of the world” in the literary tradition, it is interesting to trace who used this epithet of the Hun king Attila. The special literature agrees that this epithet was used by King Matthias in the Hungarian Middle Ages. Rabán Gerézdi collected several examples from the Latin literature of the Matthias age to confirm the fact that Matthias wanted to become the “Second Attila”. The *Chronica Hungarorum* (finished 1487) written by János Thuróczy, the prothonotary of king Matthias, names him “secundus Athila” and it is stated in the annals that the neighbouring regions – even the Turks – were afraid of his sword (“Prefulgida rege de hoc p[er] orbe[m] fama volat et ensis illius vicinis regionibus terrori est, nec aliqua[n]do machumetes ille magnus, cui[us] framea pep[er]cit nulli, vires regis hui[us] ca[m]pestrali certami[n]e te[n]tare ausus fuit” [de Thurocz 1488: 125v]). As Thuróczy says, Matthias restored the old-world glory of the Hun folk. This message is typical; it also appears next to a historical record of the king (*Chronicon rerum sub Mathia Corvino rege*) in the Codex Magyi (1476–1493):

Sorte nova rediit hunoru[m] clarissima quonda[m]
Tempore que fuit atile victoria regis.¹¹

¹¹ de Thurocz (1488: 125v).

Similarly, an epitaph (*Epitaphium Mathiae Corvini Regis*) of the Codex Magyi says that Matthias was the *timor orbis* ('fear of the world') (Gerézdi 1962: 167–173).¹²

3. Conclusion

The two variants differ from each other in two significant respects. The Peer variant was copied into a private prayer book and its text describes the king as a pious person, while the Gyöngyösi variant was preserved next to a secular epitaph written about King Matthias and it depicts a fearsome king. Based on these attributes, it seems that the two variants belong to different genres. While the Peer variant is primarily a paraliturgical hymn about the holy king Ladislaus, the Gyöngyösi variant behaves as a political poem as it tries to propagate the political interests of King Matthias.

This raises a question: Where did the change in meaning come from? The most obvious answer is that there was first a political poem which propagated the policy of King Matthias using the elements of the cult of Saint Ladislaus', but after losing its actualizing references it became a shorter, religious hymn. As we have attempted to show, the political significance built up onto the bilingual structure of the longer variant is so complex and consistent that it seems very unlikely to be a later rewriting. The critics – without recognizing that two independent textual traditions – agree with this conception (Gerézdi 1962: 176–177; Vekerdi 1972: 143; Lázs 2011: 441). According to our paper, the first poem was copied into the Codex Gyöngyösi, the later, ecclesiastical rewriting of the poem is preserved by the Codex Peer.

This conception resolves an anomaly. The few Hungarian laic poems written until the end of the fifteenth century have survived in single copies. The readership was so small that secular poems would have existed in very few manuscripts. The only exception to the rule was the discussed text, considered by previous critics as a rather popular poem. As demonstrated previously, the two codices preserved different textual traditions from which only the Gyöngyösi variant seems to be secular. The simplified, later, religious variant is the one which survived in the Codex Peer. We are lucky to have two copies of the text conserving two different redactions, the later being adapted to the needs of a new, different public, after the end of the glorious reign of king Matthias.

¹² For the historical conception of the age of king Matthias, see Szabados (2009: 55–62).

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