

# THREE FAREWELL POEMS FROM RENAISSANCE HUNGARY

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## I

Comparisons are always tricky: they detract from the unique testimony of the individual text. Yet, a common thematic core necessarily determines some of the motifs in a piece of art, which we may even conceive of as "prefabricated units". These are also the signals for an average reading of the text, while the multiple and alternative reading possibilities are revealed by the "ad hoc" material of the discourse. Thus I am here in pursuit of what S. Frisch calls the rehabilitation of elementary reaction. I am tempted to believe that our primary reactions to a piece of art will be more or less uniform, shared by a set of common assumptions, common conventions, many of which are crosscultural, and when it comes to ontological problems, even universal. I agree with those who believe that we tend to overestimate the role of individual taste and even education.

In addition to identifying what each text does to the "average" reader, I shall also attempt to identify each poet's intentions. What did he want his text to do to each reader? What did the poet think about his audience?

Two of the poems analyzed are written in Hungarian, the third in Latin. There is a tendency to conceive of Latin as esoteric and of the vernacular as available to everyone. But there is actually no proof that during the Renaissance the switching from Latin to Hungarian increased the readership of any one poet. How many "contemporaries" truly participated in what we refer to as the Renaissance? Thus not the language but the language of the poems has to be investigated in order to establish whether they addressed an informed audience.

The paradigm of farewell poems must include references to present, past and future. The present of the discourse reflects the immediate feelings of the speaker. The past is conjured up in order to explain his "present" feelings and to give shape and reason to them. The future too must be addressed in order to further illuminate the present level (namely,

the only level) of the poem. Depending on the author's purpose, the speaker's attitude to the present and to the future may differ. The past, however, must always be viewed with nostalgia. The discourse may refer to personal fate, in which the feelings are private — *ad personam* — like Ovid's mourning his impending exile (*Tristia*). It may however respond to much larger upheavels that touched the poet's life (see Dante). But even if the experience is shared by many, the poetic response will always be individual: the loss is reduced to the feelings of the speaker who, in turn, offers his thoughts for the reader's consideration. By completing his message, the author transforms the text from *ad personam* to *ad omnia*.

While the "present" level may include any number of situations, it still refers to a moment during which something comes to an end, thus it is on the border. The future will offer dichotomy: it will either bring order or anarchy.

My three poems are primarily about feelings, and I am hoping to identify not just what the poets say, but also what they mean when they say it. Saying farewell is a literary topos and the poems must have common properties whether the subject is separation from the beloved, from an intimate region, or cherished friends. Therefore it is important to reconstruct the situation in which the individual poems were composed, and to decipher and interpret the emotions they express.

Of the three authors Janus Pannonius lived in the fifteenth century, Péter Bornemissza and Bálint Balassi in the sixteenth. Each spent several years of his life away from his homeland, and all three belonged to the educated humanist segment of society. Their poems should therefore also shed light on the ideologies they represented and on the social context within which they operated.

Within Hungarian tradition the concept of the "patria" is contemporaneous with the collapse and disintegration of Matthias's famous Renaissance kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The country, torn into three parts, the spread of the Reformation and the destruction of the great courts of the nobility, polarized the humanists after Mohács (1526). Owing to the confusing political situation and the permanent armed conflicts, there was great mobility in the entire region. Some humanists moved to the West in order to escape the Turks or transferred to the courts of the simultaneously elected, competing monarchs (Habsburg Ferdinand and John [Szapolyai] I), often switching their loyalties from one to the other. Others left the Roman Church and embraced one of the contending Protestant creeds. Thus the humanist conception of life changed a great deal in the 16th century.

In the 15th century the Hungarian kings feudalized their humanists. In the 16th, the impoverished lesser nobility often had to serve abroad, at times as soldiers, frequently without permanent home, their fortunes lost to the changes of war zones or to the whims of a ruler.

## II

Janus Pannonius (1434–72) the most important representative of neo-Latin poetry in Hungary studied in Ferrara and Padua. In 1458 he returned to Hungary and began his career at the court of the young king, Matthias Corvinus. The poem discussed below was written during a journey which took Janus from his uncle's episcopal see of Várad to Buda where he was to embark on his new career.<sup>2</sup>

### *Abiens valere jubet sanctos reges, Waradini*<sup>3</sup>

Omnis sub nive dum latet profunda  
Tellus, et foliis modo superbum  
Canae dum nemus ingravant pruinae,  
Pulchrum linguere Chrysium jubemur,  
Ac longe dominum volare ad Istrum.  
Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

Non nos flumina, nec tenent paludes,  
Totis stat gelidum gelu lacunis.  
Qua nuper timidam subegit alnum,  
Nunc audax pede contumelioso,  
Insultat rigidis colonus undis.  
Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

Non tam gurgite molliter secundo,  
Lembus remigio fugit volucris,  
Nec quando Zephyrus levi suburgens,  
Crispum flamine purpuravit aequor,  
Quam manni rapiunt traham volentem,  
Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

Ergo vos calidi, valetate fontes.  
Quos non sulfurei gravant odores,  
Sed mixtum nitidis alumen undis,  
Visum luminibus salubriorem,  
Offensa sine narium ministrat.  
Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

Ac tu, bibliotheca, jam valetō,  
 Tot claris veterum referta libris,  
 Quam Phoebus Patara colit relictā,  
 Nec plus Castalios amant recessus,  
 Vatum Numina, Mnemonis puellae.  
 Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

Aurati pariter valete reges,  
 Quos nec sacrilegus perussit ignis,  
 Dirae nec tetigit fragor ruinae,  
 Flammis cum dominantibus per arcem,  
 Obscura latuit polus favilla;  
 Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

At tu, qui rutilus eques sub armis  
 Dextra belligeram levas securim,  
 Cujus splendida marmorum columnis,  
 Sudarunt liquidum sepulcra nectar,  
 Nostrum rite favens iter secunda.  
 Quam primum, o comites, viam voremus.

#### Farewell to Várád<sup>4</sup>

Deep snow of winter covers the endless fields  
 And woods, earlier boasting of foliage.  
 Grey fog sits on the branches, heavy with hoar.  
 We'd like to stay at the lovely Chrysiūm  
 But further awaits us the lordly Ister.  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

Rivers and marshes cannot stand against us,  
 Solid ice guards the water's cold depth below.  
 Where lately the farmer rowed in his dinghy.  
 And fearfully regarded the frightening waves,  
 He can carelessly kick at the frozen foam.  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

Even if nimble oars beat on the water,  
 Or playful Zephyrus ruffled its surface,  
 And turned the lazy colors into crimson,  
 Never could a flimsy vessel reach this speed,  
 With which our good horses draw the sledge onward,  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

Now we bid your farewell, you famous hot springs,  
 Where no odorous sulphur ruins the air,

But there curing salt mixed in with fresh water  
 Clears the weary sight, and heals the aching eyes,  
 Not insulting your nose with its putrid smell.  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

We bid you farewell, famous old library,  
 Endowed with the works of long-dead great authors.  
 Phoebus has moved here from his home, Patara,  
 and patrons of poets, the divine Muses,  
 Have come to prefer it to Castalia.  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

We bid you farewell, gilded royal statues,  
 Whom tongues of fierce fire, and debris of ramparts  
 Tumbling down left miraculously untouched,  
 When flames of destruction raged throughout the town  
 And flying ashes and soot blackened the skies.  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

And our king on horseback, in heavy armor,  
 Giant battle-ax soaring in his right hand,  
 Whose embalmed body rests upon fine marble,  
 Nectar pouring forth from his fames sepulchre,  
 You, noble knight, protect us on our journey!  
 Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road.

The reader is immediately impressed by the harmoniousness of the piece and its sophisticated organization. The balanced message is emphasized by the consolidation of the stanzas: the firm hand with which the poet handles his discourse.<sup>5</sup> Since life for Janus then was primarily an orderly experience, this neatness and purposefulness is recorded in each stanza. Winter is as it should be: a reliable winter landscape with reliable coloring is depicted, as predictable as the canvasses from the Low Countries a century or so later. Life's daily pleasures are securely granted: the hot-springs and the libraries which had served him before will remain untouched, to be found again, at future visits. Even the city-scape, including the royal statues radiates this splendid safety and immunity from evil. The poet's nostalgia is not for a past disappeared forever, but for his carefree youth. At this juncture, he prepares himself for the important and mature tasks of a statesman. Thus the poem describes a journey from the old to something new which is promising and exciting.

It sustains the feeling of forward motion by the repetition of the lines, "Let's drive on, my comrades, and devour the road". In terms of movement,

the dynamic advance ceases after the third stanza, and the poet's mind turns back to all that he is leaving behind. The second set of three stanzas is devoted to the poet's memories, creating a perfect balance between the present and past. The seventh is a standstill in which time stops for an instant, as the future bishop asks for the protection of the town's royal patron.

In addition to the refrain, progressive motion is felt by the rapidly changing scenery. The fast-moving sledge passes fields and forest, hills and the river which it leaves behind. No totality is presented, only a fine selection to create the local color. One should note that Janus presents a view of nature close to that of the *Georgics*, namely, nature impregnated by civilization. The spontaneous joy expressed by the speed of movement and the prospects of the future is suddenly clouded by the realization of what he has given up. The masterly switch from the present to the past is made believable by imagining that the speeding sledge has just passed the hot springs outside of town, and that seeing them has triggered the memories of cherished places. Already, the healing water has telling intellectual references. The aching eyes, weary from too much reading, had been assuaged at the spa there. Then follows naturally another slice of memory, the beloved library of his uncle, Vitéz, unmatched by any collection in Hungary.

From these private recollections the image broadens to encompass the whole of Várad, as if the entire town with its past, present, and folklore appeared before him for the last good-bye. The backward motion stops at the final leavetaking, and his eyes remain fixed on one figure: the mounted statue of King Ladislas, the patron saint of the town. The young poet is full of good intentions to take his new office seriously.

There is a feeling of security permeating from Janus' poem which is clearly missing from the two others. The author knows his role in society. Life, his own, and that of his surroundings, follows a predicable course. Nature and society are equally tamed. The tranquility of the winter landscape is repeated in the tranquil vocabulary and turns of speech. The reliability of an entire system is reflected in the refrain which, in addition to framing each stanza, adds to feeling of safety and protectedness. There is dignity in the life depicted here, and it is full of promise and achievements. The past recalled, reaffirms this stability: the heroic kings *always* protected their people from the enemy, and their sacred memory also insured God's support. His confidence in his future is stressed by the urging tone of the refrain: "... o comites, viam voremus".

Janus' poem ends with a brief supplication: "You, noble knight, protect us on our journey". The phrase seems to be added *pro forma*: the young man does not believe that any misfortune could ever befall him. The elemental need for prayer disappears from much of Renaissance poetry. Janus, while sharing Manetti's views regarding the dignity of man, as opposed to Manetti and Ficino, sustains that conviction without sacrificing his belief in the importance and autonomy of the physical world. He is in a beneficial contract with the universe which is quite different from man's new contract with God soon to be offered by Lutheran Protestantism. Even if in 1472 Janus dies in exile, the 1459 poem above does not reveal this future.

In this optimistic farewell poem the expected happens: the frame of reference is not challenged. In the poems of Bornemisza and Balassi however the reader knows that the unexpected is happening, the frame of reference is forcefully challenged — anything may happen.

### III

The author of the next poem Péter Bornemisza (1535–84), a Lutheran preacher and writer, was the son of a wealthy Pest family, a member of the burgeoning Hungarian middle class. He lost his parents in the Turkish occupation of Pest in 1541, and was thereafter educated in north-western Hungary. As a young student he was imprisoned by the inquisition but escaped from jail. By 1556–57 he decided to leave the fort of Huszt and his country. *Cantio optima* is his farewell poem:

#### CANTIO OPTIMA<sup>6</sup>

Siralmas énnéköm...

Siralmas énnéköm tetűled megváltom,  
Áldott Magyarország, tőled eltávoznom.  
Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

Az Felföldet bírják az kevély nímötök.  
Szerémségöt bírják az fene törökök.  
Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

Engömet kergetnek az kevély németök,  
Engöm környülvettek az pogány törökök.  
Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

Engöm elúntattak az magyar urak,  
 Kiűzték közlők az egy igaz istent.  
 Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

Legyön isten hozzád, áldott Magyarország,  
 Mert nincsen tebenned semmi nagy uraság.  
 Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

Ez éneköt szörzék jó Husztnak várában,  
 Bornemisza Pétör az ő víg kedvében.  
 Vajjon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom!

### CANTIO OPTIMA<sup>7</sup>

My departure causes me a heartfelt grieving,  
 Pretty, blessed Magyar country, I am leaving:  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

Cocky Germans govern all the northern highlands,  
 Turkish devils conquered all our southern tidelands.  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

While the brazen Germans always seek to hound me  
 All those heathen Turks are eager to surround me.  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

Magyar magnates caused my spirit to be vanquished,  
 From this Magyar country even God is banished.  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

God shall bless you, my dear Magyar country, ever,  
 For your grandeur is already lost forever.  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

Peter Bornemisza, in his cheerful notion,  
 Wrote this poem in Fort-Huszt with deep emotion.  
 Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?

Bornemisza's message is plain: the patriot has to leave his country and go into exile. An ardent Protestant, the poet holds the Hungarian Papists as responsible for the downfall of Hungary as the Turks and the Germans. "Magyar magnates caused my spirit to be vanquished, / From this Magyar country even God is banished" — he writes in fury and despair. In his poem

the refrain has the most important function: the entire poetic strategy rests on it.

The refrain is formulated as a question and as such, it extends beyond the poem and reaches out, directly addressing the reader. While the piece displays the poet's anxiety about his uncertain future, the same uncertainty permits a possible optimistic reading. The separations might not turn out to be final the poet is hoping — the poet is hoping for a reassuring outside voice. This strategy — which leaves the completing thought for the reader — at the end of each stanza — transforms the poem into a dialogue. Spanning centuries, it still speaks to everyone who has chosen the road of exile.

The text of the refrain, "Will I ever have a home in ancient Buda?" is a synecdoche for the entire poem and for Hungary's fate described here in six short stanzas. It functions as a metaphor, or even as a synonym, in the singularity of the moment, adding a new charge to the traditional meaning of a question of such kind. Thus depending on the idiosyncratic historical context the metaphor here is not — as normally — bifunctional, but polifunctional.

The role of refrain in Bornemisza's poem is to remind the reader that the author of the lines lives in uncertainty. The unity and security of civilian life are shattered. The Hungarian patriot has no choice but to leave his own land. The fact that he does not distinguish between the two enemies, the Turks and the Germans, reveals that he belongs to the so-called national faction, which was indeed the case. The epithet 'áldott' (blessed) refers to the past; it is the historical glory of Matthias' realm. The same applies to the adjective 'jó' (good). The poet is yearning and mourning for the time when it was good to live in Buda, and while 'ancient' used by the translator is not the most fortunate solution, it registers that in Bornemisza's days in Buda only the past was praiseworthy.

#### IV

Bálint Balassi (1554–94) was a student of Péter Bornemisza. He lived a life of adventure and turmoil, frequently embroiled in litigations about his property. He followed István Báthory to Poland but also lived in Vienna and fought and died at Esztergom, wounded in a battle against the Turks.

**HATVANHATODIK**

**Valedicit patriae, amicis iisque omnibus quae habuit  
carissima<sup>8</sup>**

- 1 Óh, én édes hazám, te jó Magyarország  
Ki keresztyénségnek viseled paizsát,  
Viselsz pogány vérrel festett éles szablyát,  
Vitézlő oskola, immár Isten hozzád!<sup>9</sup>
- 2 Egriek, vitézek, végeknek tüköri,  
Kiknek vitézségét minden föld beszéli,  
Régi vitézséghez dolgokat veti,  
Istennek ajánlva légyetek immár ti!
- 3 Ti is, rárószárnyon járó hamar lovak,  
Azkiknek hátokon az jó vitéz ifjak  
Gyakorta kergetnek, s hol penig szaladnak,  
Adassék egészség már mindnyájatoknak!
- 4 Fényes sok szép szerszám, vitézlő nagy szépség,  
Katonatalálmány, újforma ékesség,  
Seregben tündöklő és fénlő frissesség,  
Éntülem s Istentül légyen már békesség!
- 5 Sok jó vitéz legény, kiket felemeltem,  
S kikkel sok jót tettem, tartottam, neveltem,  
Maradjon nálatok jó emlékezetem,  
Jusson eszetekbe jótétemről nevem!
- 6 Vitéz próba helye, kiterjedt sík mező  
S fákkal, kősziklával bővös hegy, völgy, erdő,  
Kit az sok csata jár, s jószerencse leső,  
Légyen Isten hozzád, sok vitézt legelő!
- 7 Igaz atyámfia s meghitt jó barátim,  
Kiknél nyilván vadnak keserves bánatom,  
Ti jutván eszembe hullnak sok könyveim,  
Már Isten hozzátok, jó vitéz rokonim!
- 8 Ti is, angyalképet mutató szép szüzek  
És szemmel öldöklő örvendetes menyek,  
Kik hol vesztettetek, s hol élesztettetek,  
Isten s jó szerelem maradjon véletek!

9 Sőt, te is, óh, én szerelmes ellenségem,  
Hozzám háládatlan, kegyetlen szerelmem,  
Ki érdemem.....  
.....

[10] Ti pedig, szerzettem átkozott sok versek,  
Búnál kik egyebet nékem nem nyertetek,  
Tűzben mind fejenként égjétek, vesszettek,  
Mert haszontalanok, jót nem érdemletek.

### SIXTY SIXTH

**He says farewell to his homeland to his friends  
and all whom he has held dearest<sup>10</sup>**

- 1 O, my dearest homeland, you good Magyar country  
Bearing the great shield of all Christianity,  
With it the sharp sabre, colored by pagan blood,  
School for heroism, I command you to God.<sup>11</sup>
- 2 Eger and its fighters, bright stars of the outposts  
Whose heroic deeds gained everywhere great fame,  
Compared are they, rightly, to the ancient heroes,  
God be with all of you, His grace should protect you!
- 3 You too, fast stallions, speedy as if on wings  
On whose back often those valiant young soldiers,  
Who chase the foe or are forced into fake retreat,  
Good health should be the share of every one of you!
- 4 All the shining weapons, all the pomp of warring,  
All the new inventions, new style decorations,  
Military ardor, brilliant new armor,  
The Lord and I should grant them henceforth peace.
- 5 You fisty, young soldiers, whom I have taught so much,  
Whom I have oft aided, reared and educated,  
Keep me in your bosoms and think of me kindly,  
Let me be remembered by my good deeds, rightly!
- 6 Where heroes are tested, broad and mighty meadows,  
Mountains, hills, and valleys, rich of rock and foliage,  
Visited by battle, waiting for good fortune,  
Farewell to you all, my many good relations.

- 8        You, pretty maidens, pretending to be angels,  
           While cheerfully killing me with a single glance,  
           Who, depending on whim, murdered or revived me,  
           My God and joyous love remain with you always.
- 9        Even you, my love, you adored adversary,  
           To me ungrateful, and cruel without mercy,  
           My merits she.....  
           .....
- [10]    And you, my poems, my cursed compositions  
           Who have gained me nothing, except for endless grief,  
           Each and every of you should perish by fire,  
           Having been so useless, you deserve no better!

Here Balassi says farewell to everything he had ever cherished: his country, a way of life, family, friends, and the women he had loved. Love and heroism were all in vain, the poet stands alone at this juncture in his life. No one and nothing can ease the pain of separation from his country — from his entire past. There is finality in his farewell; only his memory will remain with his friends. But his own memories are mixed: the beauty of nature is overshadowed by bloodshed, the angelic faces of the girls hide their cruelty and calculating nature. Thus when the poet believes that he will not return, there are only a few trusted friends for whom his heart aches. And, above all, there is no consolation he can derive from his art: his poetry only adds to his pain. This bitter confession is the crescendo of the poem. By wishing his works on the pyre, with a sweeping gesture, Balassi destroys his entire past.

The poem below is the closing poem of a cycle. Already Rimay<sup>12</sup> noticed its affinity to mourning songs, written in the first person. In his fictitious *epicedium* the dying Balassi says farewell to his patria and family in a similar manner.<sup>13</sup>

While Bornemisza is a disappointed patriot, Balassi is a disillusioned human being: neither friendship, nor love, neither Mars, nor Apollo can bring him happiness. In Balassi's poem both history and Nature become victims. In its emblematic role Hungary appears as the suffering shield of Christianity, and the hills and meadows wear the scars of the fighting armies.

Among these renaissance *topoi*, another contemporary theme emerges, that of *amitia*. While Janus — a century earlier — talked about his friends, with whom he shared the pleasures of reading and discussing, friendship in

Balassi's poem refers to the comradeship of the outposts, sharing its dangers and fortunes. But the topos is essentially the same: friendship means solace in grief, saying farewell to friends equals leaving those who have come to replace home, wealth and stability in life.

Balassi's description of the life he had shared with his comrades shows, however, the hopelessness of their sacrifice. There is no promise of victory, there is not even a plan for the future, or for a change of the *status quo*. Balassi cannot hope for tranquility or stability. While some of his poems display his desire for love and genteel domesticity, this one lacks any allusion to a harmonious life. His contemporaries could readily identify with his predicament, and by "shedding" his poems, Balassi truly became just one of the many homeless soldiers of fortune about whom they all sang together around the campfire.

Janus' intended reader was a person of his class: a humanist who shared his value-system, who understood the elegance of his stanzas, the fine alternations between the descriptive and the contemplative passages. Bornemisza's ideal reader could have come from any class: each would have understood the grief over the loss of the nation's capital. Yet, in order to generate sympathy toward the poet's plight, his intended reader had to share the poet's ideology and Protestant convictions. In turn, Balassi's poem does not require either intellectual commitment or shared experience. Although directed to his comrades, the poem affects also the uninitiated. The imaginative awareness and the language chosen to reflect the emotional state of the poet stirs the reader from any walk of life. It is also the most spontaneous of the three, although all strive for completeness of message which is, necessarily, confining.

Comparing these farewell poems enables the reader to identify a number of significant differences. The stability that characterised the late 1450s is but a vague memory by the mid sixteenth century. With peace and rootedness gone the secure self-image of the humanists also vanished. Bornemisza and Balassi were children of a cruel age, living in a world where they cannot find a place for themselves. Juxtaposed with Janus' poem, Balassi's vibrant, passionate message represents an entirely different discourse, couched in a personal language. The voice of each poem is first person singular. However, Janus still follows the classical rhetorical traditions, while Bornemisza's style is that of the preacher who speaks for many. Balassi alone breaks the bounds of the genre of farewell (or secret lament). The structure has to give way to the excess of emotions with which the poet struggles. From power and serenity to fury and frustration: the three poems

can render us a capsulized reading of a hundred and fifty years of Hungarian history.

### Notes

1. It is outside the scope of this contribution to discuss the reasons for, and the events which had led to the disintegration of Hungary after 1526.
2. In my monograph on Janus Pannonius (*Janus Pannonius: Poet and Politician*, Zagreb, 1981) I rejected the dating of this poem to 1451. Its maturity and elegance sets it apart from all of Janus' Ferrara poems.
3. Quoted from Sámuel Teleki's edition (*Traiecti ad Rhenum*, 1784, Ep. II,5).
4. The translation is my own. It was published in *Janus Pannonius*, 112.
5. In the poem the hendecasyllabic lines are closed by a duodecasyllabic refrain. Thus the forty-two lines make up six stanzas. This is reflected in my English rendering.
6. Péter Bornemisza. *Válogatott írások, 1553–1584*. Budapest, 1955, 7–8.
7. *Hungarian Anthology, A Collection of Poems*. Tr. by J. Grosz and W. A. Boggs. 2nd rev. and enlarged ed. Toronto, 1966, 11.
8. In *Balassi Bálint versei*, ed. by Péter Kőszeghy & Géza Szentmártoni Szabó, Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 1994, p. 137-8.
9. As we can see, the refrain plays an important role in the three poets' strategies. Even Balassi, who uses a truncated variant, relies on it.
10. The tune is a paraphrasis of Psalm 144. For more on this see Balassi, *op. cit.*, 156 and 296, respectively.
11. My translation does not reproduce the rhyme pattern (aaaa bbbb etc.). I was more eager to retain the duodecasyllabic lines, since this is crucial for singing the poem. I did not use K. Bosley's and P. Sherwood's translation (*Old Hungarian Literary Reader*, Budapest, 1985, 176–7). There the translators decided in favor of rhyme at the expense of rhythm. They also misunderstood some of the vocabulary as pertaining to sixteenth-century usage.
12. János Rimay (1570–1631), poet and friend of Balassi; collector and editor of his work.
13. Bálint Gyarmati Balassi, *Énekei*. Budapest, 1986. In *Notes* by P. Kőszeghy and G. Szabó, 296. See also Rimay's poem, entitled: "Az Nagyságos Gyarmathi Balassa Bálintnak Esztergom alá való készületi", III, 6–7.