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DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LITERATURE

György Palotás

- Under the Shadow of Brother and Son -Life and Literary Activity of Mihály Verancsics (1514–1571?)

THESES

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SUPERVISOR: Péter Kasza

associate professor

SZEGED

I. THE SUBJECT AND AIMS OF THE DISSERTATION

The literary life of the 16th century, the significant humanist authors and their prominent work of art enriched the history of literature in Hungary. In the middle of the era, the cataclysmic political events – the 1526 battle of Mohács, a subsequent double election of the king of Hungary or the Turkish occupation of Buda in 1541 – still could not prevent the culture of the men being active. The growing trend of the intellectual life of the boom-years can be put around 1540, which effloresced entirely only by the end of the century.

The subject of this thesis is the detailed description and biography of one of the forgotten 16th century humanist, Mihály Verancsics, and the analysis of his preserved literary works. In a wider sense, an attempt is being made to outline a segment of literary life after the battle of Mohács in 1526. Several researchers consider the year of 1526 to be a kind of closure of renaissance culture of Mátyás Hunyadi and the Jagiellonian councillor humanist era. ¹ However, even a major political event like this cannot have such a significant impact on culture and history of ideas. The aim of the thesis is to prove this supposed continuity by showing the lifework of Verancsics who wrote poems in Cracow from 1528 and later in the royal courtyard of János Szapolyai. Furthermore, our goal is to show that during the era in question it was not only the courtyard of Ferdinand in Vienna that humanistic poetry was written, but also in the court of the Hungarian King, significant authors worked. Mihály Verancsics deserves particular attention, as no author has been known in King John's court so far who wrote such humanistic poetry.

The narrower scope of the dissertation is, therefore, understanding and present the works of Mihály Verancsics. On the course of analysis, we try to consider the political and theoretical history while making the attempt to insert the works in question into the genre and literature history as well as linguistic and stylistic analyses will be involved. Applying the method of comparative analysis, we try to collate and examine the work of Verancsics with the supposed ancient as well as the medieval and 16th century contemporary art. That is why, one of the objectives of the thesis is to provide a comprehensive picture of János Szapolyai-aligned author's writing activities. Some of material of the research is in manuscript while a smaller part is printed and published.

The thesis tries to complement not only the existing deficit not only the Hungarian but also of the surrounding peoples research with the use of primarily Mihály Verancsics's

¹ JANKOVITS László, *A Mohács előtti humanista költészet szakaszai = A magyar irodalom történetei. A kezdetektől 1800-ig*, főszerk. SZEGEDY-MASZÁK Mihály, Bp., 2007, 146–152.

published works, manuscripts as well as the Hungarian and international (mainly Croatian, Polish, and Italian) published research, articles, monographs and studies.² In our research, we use earlier published work, in which Antal Verancsics, Faustus Verancsics and János Statileo's or other member of the family, Mihály Verancsics's life was discussed.

The aim of the thesis is, above all, to describe and show a humanist of Southern Slavic origin who predominantly worked in the courtyard of János Szapolyai. Not only the disclosure of data relating to Mihály Verancsics's biographical details are revealed but also his surviving works (18 lyric, 3 epic and 1 historical work) are published in philological claim. Through thorough analysis, we reveal his humanistic poetry and his work as a historian.

II. STRUCTURE AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DISSERTATION

The <u>chapter one</u> of the thesis provides the most considerable and relevant data as well as information fragments from the extensive literature. Although a number of research partial results may be involved, the subject is mostly neglected not only on Hungarian but also the international level. Having examined them thoroughly and in the light of the newly found data, the previous claims must be subjected to corrections and clarifications.

In the <u>chapter two</u>, the most important events of Mihály Verancsics's life are presented. During the review of the biography data, emphasized attention is paid to the previously published information known and to the examination of their truth value, and to the correction of the potential mistakes and the misunderstandings. The systematization of Mihály Verancsics's biographical data with a positivist view is done. We make many new statements: the accurate definition of Verancsics's date of birth (1514), the beginning of his studies in Cracow (1527), the time of his return to Dalmatia (1544), the year of his marriage with Katarina Dobrojević (1545) as well as the approximate date of his decease (at the end of 1570 or at the beginning of 1571). Furthermore, more detailed picture is given about his studies in Cracow then Vienna as well as his cultural connections in Cracow. The relationship with his family members is presented more plastically and realistically. Verancsics was attached unconditionally to his brother, Antal Verancsics; to his father, Ferenc Verancsics and to his wife as well as his children, while he had permanent conflicts with his uncle, János

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² For example: Abate Alberto FORTIS, *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, vol. I, in Venezia, presso Alvise Milocco, all' Apolline, 1774, 137–146; Maria CYTOWSKA, *Tworczosćpoetycka Michala Vrančiča*, Most: časopis za međunarodne književne veze, (1991), 1–2. sz., 226–236; Wacław URBAN, *Związki Dalmatyńczyków braci Vrančiciów z Polską I Polakami (XVI w.)*, Przegląd Historyczny, 78(1987), no. 2, 157–165 etc.

Statileo, with his stepmother, Angelica Ferro and with his stepbrother, Péter Verancsics. We make an effort to introduce these family disagreements impartially – particularly his breakup with the Transylvanian bishop. In spite of his studies in Cracow and Vienna, his excellent family circumstances and his literary results achieved in the court of Szapolyai, he did not become an acknowledged poet neither a prestigious nobleman in the court in Buda. This may be surprising since the nepotism, supporting relatives was a common form of support in this century. This happened in the case of János Vitéz and Janus Pannonius in the 15th century, but there were many examples in the family of Verancsics in the 16th century (e.g. the patron relation of Péter Beriszló and János Statileo; János Statileo and Antal Verancsics, then Antal Verancsics and Faustus Verancsics). However, this did not happen in the case of Mihály Verancsics and therefore this apparent contradiction is sought in this section of the dissertation, among other things. In this biographical chapter, we finally attempt to count on the relatives of Mihály Verancsics, his close friends, poets and authors as well as his relationship with the great people of the era. Our aim primarily is to design a more detailed network of contacts around Mihály Verancsics's personality.

The aim of <u>chapter three</u> is to take the basic texts of the research into account and to describe their manuscript tradition. Based on the preliminary assumption, namely that not only Antal Verancsics's works can be found in the so-called legacy of Verancsics, but other authors' as well, some of his brother's works could be identified in this collection.³ After examining the material of other public collections in Hungary (Budapest) and abroad (e.g. Cracow, Warsaw, Zagreb and Vienna), it became certain that additional works will be also associated with them. The third chapter describes the location and the exact formal peculiarities of these sources. The remaining works of Mihály Verancsics are grouped according to chronological and genre-based considerations, and then the results are presented in a table. Finally, we attach an abbreviation register with the help of which we refer to the concrete works in the later part of the dissertation.

In accordance with the importance of the problem, we dedicate separate chapters to the question whether Mihály Verancsics, in the classical sense, can be considered a humanist poet and historian. In the former case, the *imitatio* and the potential *aemulatio* of antique works are at the centre of our discussion. It can be clearly seen that Mihály Verancsics imitated the Roman authors' work in the 1th century BC and 1th century AD (primarily Vergil, Horace

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³ Our most considerable source is the voluminous collection titled *Praeludia Michaelis Verantii* which contains 12 works. – Manuscripts of National Széchényi Library, *sign*. Quart. Lat. 776, his extent 30 folios, in 275×205 mm size.

and Ovid) remarkably frequently and consciously both with literal texts and content parallels as well as with the assumption of genres and style. One of the most important aims of the dissertation is to provide a comprehensive picture about this sample imitation in each work. In addition, it also seeks to prove the other fundamental characteristic of humanist poets, namely the ambition of overcoming ancient authors in the poetry of Verancsics. In this section of the dissertation, we strive for the completeness, consequently Verancsics's all the poetical works, currently available, appear in our investigation.

Thus, in the subsections of <u>chapter four</u>, the presentation and analysis of the poetic works of Mihály Verancsics focus mainly on the following major topics.

(IV. 1) His elegies titled *Querela Ungariae de Austria* and *Alia querela Hungariae contra Austriam* written in the spring of 1528 enrich further quite abundant knowledge of the 16th century complaint literature. The *querela Hungariae* and the *fertilitas Pannoniae* topos as well as the idea of *propugnaculum Christianitatis* appear emphatically in his elegies. Comparing the literary motives with the earlier and the contemporary historical situation, this dissertation presents some of the unique elements in Verancsics's works. Beside these, although Verancsics undoubtedly considered the work of Ovid (namely *Heroides*) the origin of the genre in the expression of Pannonia's embittered complaint given to Austria but renewing the allegorical heroides genre at the same time, he created unique poems related to the Hungarian situation. Verancsics also provided a literary example how to put a literary genre (rhetorical invective) into the service of political and pamphleteering literature or even more of propaganda literature. He provided an important insight into János Szapolyai's difficult path in foreign politics, the ideological background of the Turkish–Hungarian alliance in 1528 and internal Hungarian political dissensions in these elegies.

(IV. 2) Verancsics was associated with cultural life in Poland through the court of Piotr Tomicki. The political direction and intellectual impression of Tomicki exercised mostly influence on his works written here. During the 1530 and 1540 years, he was undoubtedly acknowledged and often employed as a writer and poet in Cracow. This appreciation was proved by the publishing of ancient authors (Juvenal and Cicero) and his own printed works (his epithalamium in 1539, then his epicedium in 1540) in the 1540s. Based on the contemporary sources, his own correspondence, the content of his works and his recommendations, he got in contact with several considerable politicians and humanist authors of this time. Among others, he enjoyed a good contact with Piotr Tomicki, Stanisław Hosius, Andrzej Krzycki, Jusztusz Decjusz, Andrzej Zebrzydowski, Simon Aretophylus,

Valentinus Polidamus, Hieronymus Vietor because of his printing house, and Sigismund I of Poland.

(IV. 3) During the research of In Valentinum Polydamum, historiae Hungaricae scriptorem ineptissimum, not only a less-researched historical work is at the forefront of our investigation but also views of Mihály Verancsics about poetry and historiography can be analysed thoroughly. Verancsics emphasized the responsible nature of the poetic role in accordance with ideas of Horace and Catullus. It was also his own opinion that an author has to avoid the explicit servility since he should not be controlled by financial interest in the course of his activity. All the time, poets must be guided by the good repute, even more the higher aims of literature and arts. This may have primarily been the final goals of the Muses' appearing. We may observe that Verancsics followed presumably the advice of Horace and Lucian of Samosata as well as the practice of the contemporary theorists (trattatisti) relating to the theory and practice of his own historiography. He has also made an effort by the regulations of the rhetorical historiography that he explored, revealed and described not only the events of the past but also the happenings of his own age. In fact, Valentinus Polidamus did not write a historical work of permanent value in 1536 but Verancsics formed an excessively unfair judgement of the Polidamus' historian activity and the merits of the De origine ac rebus gestis Hungarorum because of his personal interests. Verancsics criticized particularly the activity of Polidamus in the protection of the poetry emphasizing the role of the Muses. However, if the work of Polidamus is appreciated objectively, it is remarkable and considerable after all. Namely, he was the first 16th century author, who first used the chronicle of János Thuróczy consciously and exhaustively not to mention that his work in his history of reception whose work could be printed. (Though Ransanus and Bonfini also used the work of Thuróczy, their historical works were not published then, then only in 1558 and 1568.) Thus, the historical works of his predecessor', János Thuróczy was able to appear in front of wider reading public by the work of Valentinus Polidamus.

(IV. 4) In connection with Mihály Verancsics's epithalamium (*Ioannis Hungariae regis nuptiae*) in 1539, we describe the details of the marriage of János Szapolyai and Isabella Jagiellon. The course of the events is not only followed in the court of Cracow, but tells the journey to Hungary and the arrival in Buda and the subsequent wedding are also described in detail. Discussing of the events, we use not only the work of Verancsics, but also the Polish (Łukasz Górnicki) and Hungarian sources (Farkas Bethlen, Miklós Istvánffy) are involved in our investigation. Therefore, this chapter has a history significance, too. From the political-

historical point of view, we see his other work on how it is possible for a poet to support and to propagate the Hungarian kingdom of János Szapolyai and his dynastic plans as well as the Polish-Hungarian unification. The agreement with the Habsburgs is also mentioned in Verancsics's wedding song. From the viewpoint of genre history, we also examine and establish that on the one hand Verancsics imitated consciously the ancient rhetorical treatises and Roman poets' works (mainly Catullus), and on the other hand he knew the other epithalamiums of Polish poets written to the Cracovian wedding ceremony. Verancsics has clearly used these works in his own wedding song. According to our hopes, the analysis of (remained) wedding songs of other authors will include the opportunities for further research which would be valuable part of the history of wedding literature related to the noble courts in the 16th century.

(IV. 5) Mihály Verancsics's relationship with his uncle, János Statileo was never unclouded. Their personal connection became entirely estranged in 1540s. It is confirmed by the correspondence of Verancsics brothers as well as a contemporary verse epistle (or elegy) of Mihály Verancsics in 1540. Statileo did not presumably receive the epistle of Verancsics entitled Ad reverendissimum dominum Ioannem Statilium episcopum Transsylvanum, dominum et avunculum suum, durum et implacabilem: epistola in sui commiserationem. However, these biographical aspects and the connection of the genre-history may be considered notable. There are several biographical data in this work which have not been known by the actual research. On the other hand, the source value of these information is indisputable because of the author's personal report. Besides, he had to assume that a certain poetical model had an effect to Verancsics. In this case, probably this example to be followed was similarly Ovid and his elegies entitled the *Epistolae heroidum*. The formal feature of Verancsics's work (elegiac couplet) and its size (two hundred and eighteen lines) definitely approach his work to Ovid's poem. Both restless emotions of the abandoned letter-writer who counts on nobody as well as the uncompromising nature of the cruel receiver remind us of the communication situation of the *Heroides*. Verancsics experienced his uncle's estrangement as a kind of exile. Fleeing from his wrath, he decided to travel rather to the foreign countries. He felt this situation of his disfavour as a real exile. Thus, the feeling of the exile and the preterition clearly follows the pattern of Ovid' relegation using the works of Tristia and Epistulae ex Ponto.

(IV. 6) Mihály Verancsics took up primarily the role of court poet in the poems related to the life of Szapolyai family in 1540. Besides, tight literary contact between the siblings of

Verancsics serve as a model that both have written similar greeting poem to the János Zsigmon's birth. And in the epicede of Mihály Verancsics (*In obitum Ioannis Hungariae regis. Lacrimae 1540*), he mixed the idea of deification (*apotheosis*), well-known in the Hellenistic and Latin literature, with the popular elements (*laudatio, consolatio*, and *comploratio*) of the consolation literature of 16th century. The divinization of a deceased monarch had abundant tradition in the classical literature. It seems most likely that poetic predecessors of Verancsics might have been the authors of the Golden Age literature, primarily Vergil and Ovid (maybe the book XV of *Metamorphoses* of Ovid). In addition of the detailed analysis of these poems, we provide new evidence for the political poetry of Verancsics (e. g. the insistence of János Zsigmond's throne claim). Finally, we also make some complements from the point of view of annals history (e. g. the problem of the earthquake in 1540) as well as we direct the attention to the special character (pseudoepicureanism) of philosophical thinking of Verancsics.

(IV. 7) The collection of elegies titled *Ruthenae virginis error* can be considered as one of the most successful poetical works of Mihály Verancsics whose first version may have been written between 1543 and 1545. However, these elegies are not attached to the political happenings and the Szapolyai family. New topics appear in Verancsics's poetry in consequence: love and presentation of illness. Most of his printed works were published in Cracow but the first elegy of this collection was published in Vienna after his death, in 1591. The intonation and the form of the poems are traditional as opposed to earlier works. In the first elegy, the intention to follow sample is strongly perceived (especially Vergil and Ovid), but in the rest of his works, the claim of *aemulatio* can be also observed. However, the content of the three elegies are presented in this dissertation which has not been known until now. Their generic traits and stylistics analysis are considered to be the task of future researches. Finally, it proves that he was able to versify topics related to medical science quite accurately and professionally.

The <u>chapter five</u> of the dissertation deals with the presentation and interpretation of Verancsics's four prose works. In this case, we do not aim for completeness. The examination of these works primarily seems to be indispensable because of three reasons. Firstly, they tincture the literary activity of Verancsics and give evidence that his personality would be wrong to limit the image of the humanistic poet.

(V. 1) Secondly, we draw the attention in the connection with his work titled *Liber de rebus Hungaricis anni M. D. 36* that Mihály Verancsics may have played a great part in the

unfinished historical work of Antal Verancsics. It seems certain that some historical works in legacy of Antal Verancsics were written by Mihály Verancsics. We point out that closer literary contact can be assumed to be with his brother in the case of the historical works. During the tangential analysis of the De apparatu Ioannis regis... and the Dialogus Verancii..., we attempt to introduce that the statements of previous researchers (Acsády, Bartoniek, Gyulai and Gőzsy) are not consistent. By analysing Verancsics's historical work, a newer source is added to history researches in connection with the foreign and home affairs policy in 1536. Since we wrote about the foreign policy of King John I, namely the unsuccessful negotiations in Vienna: the sending of envoys to the court of Charles V in Naples, and the arrival of Johann Wese, Archbishop of Lund in Nagyvárad. In the second half of this historical work, the author concentrated on his home affairs policy. Verancsics mentions the attack of Kristóf Kávássy and Mátyás Horváth against Szatmárnémeti, the failed attack attempt of Moldavian voivode against Transylvania, the betrayal of Ferenc Lázár, the treachery of Bálint Török and Ferenc Bebek and the occupation of Kassa (present-day Košice) by deception. Valuing from a literary point of view, his work serves new facts and data that not only the *imitatio* of classical ancient works, but mainly theirs *aemulatio* define the literary activity of Verancsics. The influence of the historical works of Julius Caesar can be primarily manifested in this work. The usage of Commentarii de bello Gallico is presupposed by the receipts of text and the appearance of parallel thoughts, while the confrontation between János Szapolyai and Ferdinánd as well as the evaluation of theirs fight can be compared with the hostility of Caesar and Pompey from his work titled Commentarii de bello civili.

(V.2) Thirdly, we try to point out that the investigation of his smaller prosaic works may be indispensable in the judgement of literary activity of Mihály Verancsics. His works entitled *Dalmatiae encomii principium* may be particularly interesting because of the unconditional love he felt for homeland and patriotism of Verancsics. In addition, the *fertilitas* topos, which has already appeared in the elegies in 1528, is used for other occurrence as a sample in this work. The interpretation of the topos related to the Dalmatian coast is unique in the history of this motif in any case. Another his work titled *Confessio* dressed in a religious gown gives primarily evidence of the emotional world of Verancsics in 1550s, namely his guilty conscience and his torturing spiritual state. Finally, in the analysis of the *Moderni temporis oratio ad Deum*, we can see that Verancsics regarded not only the products of the literature of antiquity but also the medieval pieces as his imitation basis. Numerous biblical references, their paraphrases and the verbatim quoting could have exerted

an influenced on his work in 1566. Beside these, papal bulls against the Turks (presumably the *Bulla orationum* in 1456) had an effect on the work of Verancsics. In the political concern, we point out a fact in the interpretation of the prayer that there is no more serious moral conviction behind his antipathy of Habsburg experienced in the early years. Since he hoped the victory of Maximilian II over the Turks.

III. THE RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The significance of the thesis can be found in the attempt of trying to include a lesser-known humanist author in the field of research of the history of Hungarian Literature. At the end of the thesis, a photo file is provided making the analysis of the individual pieces of work easier. However, the significance of this work for future studies is that in order to facilitate further philological analysis, all the pieces of work discussed and all resources related to Verancsics, as well as all the letters of his correspondence are summarised in table **in an appendix**. It is in accordance with the principles of the critical scientific publishing of Verancsics's works found so far. The notes of the textual criticism, *apparatus fontium* and annotations enhance the interpretation of the pieces. In any case, this part of the dissertation can be considered as a gap-stop as it provides a new collection of resources for further studies which were scattered in manuscripts and available only (if at all) by professionals.

In addition, there are two points in this thesis, we intend to highlight in conclusion. An unknown Hungarian humanist's life is to be shown as detailed as possible. In the context of his life and work as a writer, it is proved that in the middle of the 16th century, the previous stages of the Renaissance and humanist literature were not over, but very influential works were born at this time. Besides, a considerable literary life existed not only in the royal courtyard in Vienna, but also in the court of King Szapolyai. Due to our research, Mihály Verancsics is added to the so far known Southern Slavic authors whose lives and works were subjected to (more) detailed discussion (e.g. István Brodarics, Antal Verancsics and Tranquillus Andronicus). In addition, one of the most important part of the thesis is the appendix, in which one can find all the revealed works written by Verancsics in Latin.

Finally, word limitations of the thesis did not allow some of the issues to be discussed in such details that it could be. After finishing this work, the question of the new fields of future research, connected to the issues aroused. It is concluded that scope of this thesis could be widened both in space and time. For further research one can consider to study the material

of the central European public libraries to make more certain that there are no more texts by Mihály Verancsics exist. In some works of Verancsics, the author is proved to have imitative intentions, so one can surely find his patterns not only in ancient and medieval but also in modern literature. In conclusion, there are two more possible directions of further studies: On the one hand, examining the role of Verancsics as a historian cannot be considered to be finished because the literary interaction between him and his brother was surely more influential than we thought before. Therefore, opposing the accepted claims in earlier studies, one should doubt the author of some other works in the Antal Verancsics' collection. On the other hand, the new direction of research could be a more thorough study of Verancsics's correspondence. It not only would mean to analyse and evaluate his letters on the basis of the humanist epistle literature, but also to attempt to track down other letters in other collections which were not subjected to earlier research.

IV. THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE TOPIC

a) In English

- 1. Birth and Death in Michael Verancius' Poems Written to the Szapolyai Family in 1540 = Sapiens Ubique Civis. Proceedings of International Conference on Classical Studies, eds. János NAGYILLÉS, Attila HAJDÚ, Gergő GELLÉRFI et al., Bp., ELTE Eötvös József Collegium, 2015 (Antiquitas-Byzantium-Renascentia XIII sorozat), 407–424.
- 2. The Role of Volusius, Choerilus, and the Muses in a Poem of Michael Verancius (1536), Acta Ant. Hung., 54(2014), 259–275.
- 3. Politics and Literature in the Elegies of Michael Verancius in 1528 = Colloquia Maruliana, ed. Neven Jovanović et al., vol. 23, no. 23, Split, 2014, 55–83.
- 4. 'The Scythian-Sarmatian Wedding' and the Epithalamion of Michael Verancius (1539) = Colloquia Maruliana, ed. Neven JOVANOVIĆ et al., vol. 23, no. 23, Split, 2014, 99–118.

b) In Hungarian

- 1. Moderni temporis oratio ad Deum. *Verancsics Mihály 1566-os (?) törökellenes imádsága = Lymbus Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények 2016*, szerk. UJVÁRY Gábor, LENGYEL Réka, Bp., 2016, 77–85.
- 2. *Verancsics Mihály és a* Liber de rebus Hungaricis 1536 = *Szóra bírni az újkort: A III. KoraújkorÁSZ doktorandusz konferencia tanulmányai*, szerk. BODNÁR-KIRÁLY Tibor, HENDE Fanni, PATAKI Katalin, Bp., ELTE-BTK Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, 2016, 116–138.
- 3. Egy 16. századi "volusiusi Annales" ellen: hogyan ne írjunk történelmet = Humanista történetírás és neolatin irodalom a 15–16. századi Magyarországon, szerk. BÉKÉS Enikő, KASZA Péter, LENGYEL Réka, Bp., MTA Bölcsészettudományi Intézet, 2015, 109–118.
- 4. Apoteózis-motívumok Verancsics Mihály 1540-es epicediumában = Corollarium, főszerk. TAR Ibolya, tom. II, Szeged, 2015, 18–29.
- 5. Verancsics Mihály nászdala Szapolyai János és Jagelló Izabella esküvőjére (1539) = Lymbus Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények 2012–2013, szerk. UJVÁRY Gábor, LENGYEL Réka, Bp., 2014, 25–44.
- 6. *Az 1539-es krakkói "nászdalverseny" = Corollarium*, főszerk. TAR Ibolya, tom. I, Szeged, 2013, 6–19.
- 7. "Őt sarjam, őt emeld magatokhoz királynak!" Szapolyai Jánost dicsőítő querelák a 16. század első feléből, ItK, 117(2013) 4. sz., 432–463.