

## Hungarian Rhythm, Humanist Poetry

### Encounter of Ancient Ode Poetry and Antitrinitarian Biblical Criticism in the Psalm Translation of Miklós Bogáti Fazakas

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#### ABSTRACT

*Psalterium Davidis* by Miklós Bogáti Fazakas is the first complete rhymed Hungarian translation of the Book of Psalms. It has been studied mainly from the aspect of congregational singing and antitrinitarian theology. Although its melodies and metres are also related to the popular register of vernacular poetry, the metrical variety makes it akin to humanist psalm translations. The paper demonstrates this humanist layer through the translation of Psalm 66 that paraphrases George Buchanan's humanist Latin translation. Buchanan shaped the sacred text using the metres and language of secular ode poetry. Comparative and metrical analysis shows that Bogáti kept the humanist allusions (in a very subtle form) adopting the metre, thus the humanist and popular layers of the text enter into dialogue. Bogáti turned the secularised poetic imagery back into religious context, and used it for a historical interpretation of the psalm, reinforcing the antitrinitarian position of his own Hungarian-speaking audience.

**Keywords:** Miklós Bogáti Fazakas (1548–1592?), George Buchanan (1506–1582), Book of Psalms, humanism, 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian literature, Transylvanian antitrinitarianism

The encounter with the Word became a focal point of Reformation theology. The proclamation of the Word and its discerning reception gave rise to various literary genres, making verse translations of the psalms one of the most influential text types of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of the century, numerous Latin and vernacular verse translations of the Psalms had appeared in Europe. The Latin translations offered a synthesis of psalm poetry and the humanist ode. The texts of the Book of Psalms had been translated into Latin in the higher stylistic idioms and with the greatest possible metrical variety. Such an encyclopaedic

use of verse forms resulted in the natural manifestation of the humanist ideal of *varietas*. Thus, the psalms were incorporated into the humanist corpus of texts, and could now engage in rivalry with the works of the ancient poetic canon in terms of both formal variety and poetic sophistication (Posta 2022, 39–75).

Texts written in the vernacular were included in congregational hymn-books and other publications with a popular devotional purpose (the best known 16<sup>th</sup>-century examples in Hungarian being the Psalm paraphrases of Gergely Szegedi, Mihály Sztárai, and Máté Skarica). Singing the Psalms became a part of daily life and thus had a great influence on the development of national literatures. And while the primary concern in translations for a liturgical use was that they are dogmatically accurate and easy to sing, even vernacular translations were shaped by other factors as well. For most authors, a Protestant and a humanist literary agenda reinforced each other (Imre 2005, 253; Ács–Louthan 2015, 405–406).

In Hungary, the combination of these two agendas has been primarily demonstrated in the psalm translations of Bálint Balassi and Albert Szenci Molnár. In 1607, Albert Szenci Molnár published his *Psalterium Ungaricum*, a complete translation of the Psalter in Hungarian verse, in Hernborn. Like most of his contemporaries, Szenci Molnár was unaware that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Miklós Bogáti Fazakas had already completed a translation of the entire Psalter into Hungarian verse, so he considered his own work to be the first of its kind (Szenci Molnár 2017, fol. ): (11r). The *Psalterium Ungaricum* was based on the Genevan Psalter and its tunes, but Szenci Molnár's direct source was Ambrosius Lobwasser's German translation of the Genevan Psalter (P. Vásárhelyi 2017, 27–28).

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the various editions and translations of the Genevan Psalter (or Huguenot Psalter) had spread throughout the regions of Europe committed to the Helvetic type of Reformation, and it became the foundation of congregational singing. The Genevan editions starting to appear in 1539 were initially dominated by the psalm translations of Clément Marot, a representative of the modern and sophisticated French Renaissance style, the style which served as the basis of Marot's metrical psalms. In the preface to the 1543 publication Jean Calvin argued for the use of the French type of metrical verse. As he wrote: "to carry weight and majesty suitable to the subject, and even fit to be sung in church as has been said." (MacMeeken 1872, 100) This sentence invoked the rhetorical argument that a sublime and excellent object required a high style (*genus grande*) and an extensive use of *elocution*, and psalms to or about God obviously fell into this category. On the other hand, Calvin believed that this kind of poetry was a good way to involve the congregation in the singing of the psalms. The French translation of the Psalms was continued by Théodore de Bèze, who had previously published Latin humanist poems, and later also produced Latin paraphrases of the Psalms, a printed selection of

which he dedicated to the Hungarian humanist bishop and diplomat András (Andreas) Dudith (Csomasz Tóth 1967, 51). Besides its obvious liturgical significance, this already shows the affinity between the Genevan Psalter and humanism.

Albert Szenci Molnár joined the same tradition when he composed his Hungarian texts according to the verse forms and tunes of the French psalms, which first felt unfamiliar in the context of Hungarian congregational singing, but by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they had become generally used (H. Hubert 2004, 61). The first edition of Szenci Molnár's *Psalterium Ungaricum* imitated the Latin edition of the Genevan Psalter by Andreas Spethe in that the translation was dedicated to Frederick IV, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel (P. Vásárhelyi 2017, 26–27).<sup>1</sup> In other words, with his translation, Szenci Molnár wanted both to give a singable psalm translation to the Hungarian Calvinist congregations and to join the international humanist community of the *res publica litteraria* (Republic of Letters).

Bálint Balassi is associated with six psalm paraphrases. His sources include Latin texts by Bèze and, in one case, a Latin paraphrase by the Scottish humanist George Buchanan. It has been previously shown that Balassi may have used the 1581 Genevan edition in which the texts of Bèze and Buchanan appeared together (Balázs 2022, 565–566; Ács–Louthan 2015, 404–405). The present study does not aim to present a comprehensive survey of the vast literature of early modern vernacular and humanist psalm translations, and the above overview was only meant to provide a taste of the most important connections that have had a significant impact in Hungary.<sup>2</sup>

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In what follows, I focus on the humanist connections of the first Hungarian verse psalter, Miklós Bogáti Fazakas's *Psalterium Davidis*. Bogáti began translating the psalms around 1580 and worked on them until the end of his life (he probably died in 1592). (Bogáti Fazakas 2018, 452) *Psalterium Davidis* has been previously studied primarily from the perspective of congregational singing and antitrinitarian theology (Dán 1973; Szabó 1982; Etlinger–Szatmári 2022). It has been pointed out that Bogáti primarily relied on popular tunes and verse forms known from congregational hymn-books or historical songs, so his work was more influenced by Hungarian popular song culture than the poetry of Szenci Molnár and Balassi. Even so, *Psalterium Davidis* was never printed and was thus not a part of the public sphere, which is usually explained by critics with reasons of ecclesiastical policy. Bogáti was an antitrinitarian closely associated with the nonadorantism, a movement of unparalleled intellectual achievement (Balázs 1996), and

1 The *Dedicatio*: Szenci Molnár 2017, fol. )( 1v–8r.

2 Two recent paper on the topic: Hajdu 2023; Posta 2023.

remained committed to it even after the imprisonment and death of its spiritual leader, Ferenc Dávid (Dán 1973, 151–153).<sup>3</sup> Thus, along with other antitrinitarian works, the *Psalterium Davidis* could not be printed either during Bogáti's lifetime or later, and his psalms survive in 17<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript copies (Szatmári 2018, 52–56; Etlinger–Szatmári 2022, 135–138). Therefore, at first glance, Bogáti's translation seems to have little in common with the programme of humanist literature. The translation's use of sources shows a scholarly claim to biblical criticism. Bogáti made use of multilingual psalter editions and biblical commentaries (for example, Agostino Giustiniani's five-language psalter edition and Sebastian Münster's Hebrew-Latin Bible: Dán 1973, 159–160; Dán 1979, 249–252; Bogáti Fazakas 2018, 452–453). He also incorporated commentaries from these sources into his interpretation.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, the influence of humanist criticism can be detected in his work. However, an analysis of his verse forms, tunes and language use reveals that he was indeed closer to the canon of congregational hymns, and a significant distance separates him from the higher registers of poetry.

In his historical-poetic analysis of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poetry, Iván Horváth often spoke of *metrumszociológia* (metrosociology, or sociology of metre), referring to the phenomenon that the separation of the medial and social use of writing, and the division of genres, registers, modes of expression and strategies of writing manifested themselves in the metre of poems (Horváth 2000). According to Horváth, the world of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian metre can be divided into two, medially and socially distinct canons. The natural medium of the aristocratic register was manuscript, and the poetry that could be classified as such (the love poetry associated primarily with Bálint Balassi) followed quite different metrical conventions from the popular-official register that appeared in print, and there was hardly any contact between the two. The characteristic verse form of Balassi's poetry is a more complex, hierarchical stanzaic and lyrical composition that moves towards closure. To quote Iván Horváth, "how little of the poetry that appeared in print, not only popular but also official [...] had a metrical influence on Balassi [...]. The negative selection, the rejection, was mutual: among the poets of the 16<sup>th</sup> century who were verse-rich, that is, who were not only occasionally engaged in poetry, Balassi was the

3 The biography of Bogáti by Géza Szentmártoni Szabó: Bogáti Fazakas 2018, 433–470.

4 Two Hungarian prose translations of the entire Psalter had already been published before Bogáti. István Bencédi Székely's work was printed in 1548, and Gáspár Heltai's in 1560, but the influence of these prose translations had not yet been discussed in the literature. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to compare Bogáti's translation with Bencédi Székely's, as the latter also used Münster's edition.

only one whose poems were not published in his century.”<sup>5</sup> (Horváth 2000, 14)

The antitrinitarian Miklós Bogáti Fazakas was the other “poets of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century who were verse-rich and not only occasionally engaged in poetry,” but most of his poems were not published. His poetry, however, is bound precisely to the formal-popular register: his poetic oeuvre consists of paraphrases of psalms and historical songs. These genres are representative of 16<sup>th</sup> century printed poetry. Bogáti’s metrical canon lacks the stanza types typical of Bálint Balassi’s love poetry. His psalm translation, the *Psalterium Davidis* follows the metrical convention of the printed-popular register, a metrical ideal dominated by identical rhymes, isometric stanzas, narrative, or “non-lyrique” formulas (Szigeti 2005, 83).

This distinction was already felt by contemporaries. The preface to Albert Szenci Molnár’s *Psalterium Ungaricum* contains a short poetic commentary on 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poetry. Here Szenci Molnár distinguishes three modes, to which he associates examples in different verse forms. For him, the three modes refer specifically to the rhyming of the poem, but the whole discussion is also related to the triple division of rhetorical styles (*stylus humilis*, *mediocris* and *sublimis*), on one side of which are the rustic (simple, unadorned) poems, on the other the eloquent ones (which employ *elocutio* extensively). The different ways of rhyming correspond to this classification. The most sophisticated example is Bálint Balassi’s poem beginning *Bocsásd meg, Úristen...* [Bless me with forgiveness, Lord...]. On the other end of the spectrum, there is the “common mode”: the stanzaic form of lines of the same length, ending in identical rhymes (Szenci Molnár 2017, fol. ): (11v), as frequently used by Miklós Bogáti Fazakas.

Verse technique, and rhyming in particular, was not only important for Albert Szenci Molnár. He clearly regarded the modern French versification of Marot and Bèze as the model to follow. There was no precedent for this type of versification in Hungary, even the quoted Balassi stanza was the product of a simpler verse type. The importance of verse form was also brought to Szenci Molnár’s attention by Latin translations of the psalms—for example, the works of George Buchanan and Andreas Spethe—which were published with metrical indexes. These were later added to the school curricula, becoming a part of musical and literary education (Csomasz Tóth 1967, 44).

Admittedly, Bogáti’s translation of the Psalms is characterized by the kind of versification Szenci Molnár finds too simple. His stanzas are usually constructed of lines making use of the same number of syllables and the same rhyme scheme. At the same time, he sought the

5 “[...] a nyomtatásban is megjelent, nemcsak népszerű, hanem hivatalosnak is mondható versanyagból [...] mily kevés volt metrikai hatással Balassira [...] a kontraszelekció, az elutasítás kölcsönös volt: a sokversű, tehát a költészettel nemcsak alkalmilag foglalkozó 16. századi költők közül Balassi volt az egyetlen, akinek nem jelent meg verse századában.”

greatest variety within these metrical relations: he used ninety different verse forms and almost one hundred and fifty different tunes (Bogáti Fazakas 1979, 262; Szatmári 2022, 141–142; Szatmári 2023, 209). In other words, in the choice of verse forms, the kind of *varietas* that is characteristic of humanist psalm translations was still achieved, if not at the level of the individual poems, then at the level of the collection as a whole. Bogáti did want to provide a collection or repository of metrics, just like the publications of Bèze, Spethe or Buchanan, but instead of humanist metrical forms he aimed for a survey of the metres used in popular poetry.

Even the *Psalterium Davidis* draws attention to the ideal of *varietas*. The front page of Bogáti's translation contains the following title:

*Psalterium Davidis,*  
azaz Magyar Zsoltár, kit az időkbeli históriák értelme szerint, *különb-  
különb magyar ékes nótákra [...] fordított*  
Bogáti Fazakas Miklós<sup>6</sup>

The wording is similar to the title page of Szenci Molnár's translation from a few decades later:

*Psalterium Ungaricum*  
Szent Dávid királynak és prófétának százötven zsoltári az *franciai*  
*nótáknak* és verseknek módjukra most újonnan *magyar* versekre  
*fordítottak* és rendeltettek,  
az Szenci Molnár Albert által<sup>7</sup>

Also similar to his preface: “*ékesb* verseket”, “*különb* formán”, “az zsoltárok százharminc *különböző nótákra* vadnak”<sup>8</sup> (Szenci Molnár 2017, fol. ): (11r–v).<sup>9</sup> Both paratexts emphasize the diversity of the tunes (“sundry”). However, while Szenci Molnár emphasized the adoption, the foreign pattern, Bogáti emphasized the Hungarian tradition. The word “eloquent” in Bogáti's title seems to indicate the presence of a literary programme that emphasises the use of *elocutio* in vernacular congregational composition. After all, the programme of Bogáti's translation is not that far from Szenci Molnár's *Psalterium Ungaricum* inspired by humanist models, although there is little overlap between these two strains of poetry in terms of the metrical canon, the utilised verse forms, and the literary patterns.

Let us assume that Bogáti's choice of the metrical-poetic register was following a program. On the one hand, the title itself hints at the theological background to Bogáti's psalm translation: “according to the

6 *David's Psalter*, i.e. *Hungarian Psalter*, which, according to the sense of the histories of the time, was *translated* into *sundry Hungarian eloquent tunes* [...] by Miklós Bogáti Fazakas. (*Szenterzsébeti Bogáthi-kódex*, fol. 35v; *Péchi Simon-énekeskönyv*, p. 13; Stoll 2002, no. 22, no. 33.)

7 *Hungarian Psalter*, King Saint David's 150 psalms, which have now been newly *translated* and assigned to *Hungarian* verses in the manner of *French tunes* and verses by Albert Molnár of Szenc

8 “*more eloquent verses*”, “in *sundry forms*”, “the psalms are in a hundred and thirty *sundry tunes*”

9 Matching terms are marked by italics. Emphasis added.

sense of the histories” means that Bogáti intends to explore the *sensus historicus* in his interpretation of the biblical text. *Psalterium Davidis* explores the historical relevance of the Old Testament. He places even those psalms in an epic narrative where the Bible does not suggest this, and the psalms are often supplemented by descriptions of historical events. The historical context gains prominence throughout the volume, rendering the discussion of *sensus allegoricus* or *sensus anagogicus* impossible. This may be the reason why Bogáti wrote so many of his psalms (one third of the entire Psalter) to the tune of popular historical songs (Szatmári 2022, 152–153). As if he wanted the psalms to be sung as a history. On the other hand, the antitrinitarian theologian-poet probably saw the application of the popular register and popular metres as a means to make his translation (which reflected a scholarly attitude and a claim for biblical criticism) suitable for liturgical or other devotional functions, and, by reaching a wider readership, possibly even to make his translation *the* “Hungarian Psalter”.

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The translation of Psalm 66 may serve to illustrate how the need for liturgical-popular poetry engages in dialogue with the ideals of humanist poetry in Miklós Bogáti Fazakas’s *Psalterium Davidis*, and it also shows the metrical consequences of this dialogue. The tune reference of the psalm consists of two parts: “Trochaicum. Úristen néz most mireánk” [Lord God is looking at us now]. The second half refers to a now unknown religious hymn, but the first word is easy to decode. The metrical pattern of the poem is some kind of trochaic tunes or text. There are poems in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian literature that are based on humanist metrical tunes. Their sources were collections for school use. Johannes Honterus’s *Odae cum Harmoniis* [Odes with Harmonies], a publication of metrical tunes, contains an item called “Trochaicum Dicolon.” (Csomasz Tóth 1979, 231, no. 19) At first glance, the fifteen syllables of Psalm 66 seem to correspond to this, which means that Honterus’s publication could have been Bogáti’s source.

Of course, 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poems written to humanistic metrical tunes do not usually retain the measure of the original quantitative metre, but are transformed into syllable-counting, rhyming poems. Thus the Asclepiad became a line of twelve syllables with a caesura dividing the line into two six-syllable hemistichs (similar to alexandrine). The Sapphic line was transformed into a line of eleven syllables with a division of 5+6 syllables, while the various iambic and trochaic formulas were also turned into some syllable-counting line form that was divided in a regular, pedantic manner. All this was mostly complemented by isorhyming. In other words, they were similar to the verse style widespread then in Hungarian literature, which borrowed its models from Middle Latin ecclesiastical song poetry and Goliard poetry. Bogáti also made use of humanist metrical tunes, and he also

always turned them into stanzaic poems without measure that counted syllables and used rhymes.

Psalm 66 is an exception in this respect, because it happens to be a poem with true quantitative metre used in ancient Greek and Latin poetry, not a syllable-counting reinterpretation of it. There are not many examples of this kind in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poetry. Its stanza consists of three lines with the metre of trochaic tetrameter catalectic, or trochaic septenarius:

— U | — U | — U | — U | — U | — U | U  
 — U | — U | — U | — U | — U | — U | U  
 — U | — U | — U | — U | — U | — U | U

But there is more to the metrical analysis of Bogáti's poem. Catalectic tetrameter creates lines of fifteen syllables, which can be interpreted as a syllable-counting poem. This is confirmed by the rhymes used by Bogáti. In addition, both trochaic septenarius and syllable-counting lines of a Goliard nature tend to appear with a caesura. In Psalm 66, the eighth syllable of each verse is always followed by a caesura, and they sometimes rhyme as well. This means that the fifteen-syllable long lines are divided into eight- and seven-syllable shorter lines. In the language of quantitative metre, this can be expressed by the alternation of two kinds of colon in the poem: an acatalectic (complete) and a catalectic (incomplete) trochaic dimeter. The stanzas consisting of six short lines mostly alternate between *a* and *b* rhymes, which is also unparalleled in Bogáti's oeuvre. Thus, the translation of Psalm 66, while fully conforming to the textbook formula of trochaic metre, with the added rhymes appears to be a syllable-counting, rhyming, stanzaic Hungarian poem. The figure below shows two different interpretations of the metre of the poem. On the left is the quantitative interpretation with the alternating two colons, on the right the syllable-counting, rhyming stanzaic structure consisting of alternating eight- and seven-syllable lines.

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| — U — U — U — U | 8a |
| — U — U — U U   | 7b |
| — U — U — U — U | 8a |
| — U — U — U U   | 7b |
| — U — U — U — U | 8a |
| — U — U — U U   | 7b |

From one vantage point, it appears as a poem using quantitative metre, from another it seems to be a syllable-counting, rhyming poem using accents. The essence of the metre is its dual nature, reinforced by the double tune reference. "Trochaicum" refers to the humanist metric tune, and "Úristen néz most mireánk" is probably the opening line of a contemporary congregational hymn. Bogáti wrote a poem

with quantitative metre but left the possibility for the contemporary Hungarian reader to read it according to the metrical ideal of the popular-official register, the isometric and strophic poem, i.e. the “common mode.”

This meter allows Bogáti to translate the psalm using significantly more words than are found in the Bible. Psalm 66 consists of 20 verses, which Bogáti translated into 18 stanzas. In other words, each verse corresponds to one stanza. However, the stanzas consisting of three pairs of lines almost tripled the length of the text. This expansion and verbosity (*amplificatio*) is typical feature of Protestant psalm translations (both Latin and vernacular, see Hajdu 2023; Oláh 2000, 209–214). But here Bogáti has much more space to work with. The alternation of long and short lines (as well as the *a* and *b* rhymes) also structures the stanza in depth (which will be discussed later).

Characteristically, the copyists of Bogáti’s psalms were deaf to such a sophisticated metre. Most copyists accustomed to identical rhymes and identical lines have written the first stanza with metrical errors. They also failed to recognise the *a-b* rhyme opening, which is alien to the world of the *Psalterium Davidis*, so they took the most obvious approach by trying to compile lines running out to the same rhyme. Only one manuscript contains a version that is correct in terms of both metre and sense (*Mátéfi János kódexe*, fol. 145r):<sup>10</sup>

Szentek ez földön ha vagytok,  
napkeletre, nagy mezőn,  
vagy napesti földre laktok,  
innen és túl a’ vízen,  
valahol országba[n] laktok,  
Úrnak hálát adjatok!<sup>11</sup>

The first stanza also significantly expands on the text of the Bible, which only reads: “Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands” (KJV, Ps 66:1).<sup>12</sup> It must be added that the image in Bogáti is not his own poetic invention, but that of George Buchanan. Buchanan’s highly successful Latin metrical paraphrases with an antique tone were also known in Hungary (Berg 1944; P. Vásárhelyi 2000, 415–416), and everything points to the idea that Miklós Bogáti Fazakas’s metred translation of the Psalm 66 is a Buchanan paraphrase at the same time. For the translation of the psalm, he borrows several phrases from Buchanan’s paraphrase of Psalm 66. In what follows, this will be illustrated with a few examples.

10 On this manuscript: Stoll 2002, no. 39; Varga 2014.

11 “Saints, who are on this land / in the east, in a great field, / or who live in the west / on this side of the water, and beyond it, / wherever you live in the country, / give thanks to the Lord!”

12 Vulgata: „iubilare Deo omnis terra” (Ps 65:1). The different translations of the Bible are quoted from here: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, <https://www.die-bibel.de/en>.

In Bogáti's translation, God tries the Jews like gold (line 67), whereas the biblical text uses silver in this place (Ps 66:10). The parallel passage in Buchanan's Psalm 66, on the other hand, is also about gold. A line later, Buchanan's verse uses the word "periclis" to describe God's test, the obvious translation of which is "veszély" ['peril, danger'], the equivalent of which is missing from the biblical text.

igne, ut *aurum*, examinasti  
nos *periclis*; illigasti  
hostium nos cassibus. (Buchanan 66,43–45)<sup>13</sup>

Próbatúz mint *sáraranyat*,  
sok *veszélybe* minket úgy,  
próbakőre tőd zsidókat,  
vasba koptatád nyakunk, (Bogáti 66,67–70)<sup>14</sup>

Stanza 15 of Bogáti contains the word "incense," also found in Buchanan:

bos et hircus sanguine aras  
imbuent, nec *tura* derunt  
de Sabaeo stipite. (Buchanan 66,58–60)<sup>15</sup>

The biblical text only lists the sacrificial animals. It is known from the laws that incense had to be added to the meal offering (Lev 2:1), which might be the source of Buchanan's addition, adopted by Bogáti in the same place. As far as one can tell, these terms are Buchanan's invention, and no equivalents have been found elsewhere. And if this is so, then Bogáti might have also made use of Buchanan's rendition of Psalm 66 while translating the same psalm, explaining the similarity between the two versions.

But not only the demonstrated instances of textual borrowing, but the choice of metre also confirms the intention of imitating Buchanan. Like Bogáti's, Buchanan's Psalm 66 is also composed of trochaic dimeters, and both authors employ two types of colons. The only difference is that Buchanan combines two complete (acatalectic) dimeters with a catalectic dimeter, so that his units of three lines are joined (on the left).

13 "You have tested us through *dangers*, as if assaying *gold* by fire; you have bound us in the enemy's nets." The critical edition (Buchanan 2011) is henceforth referred to by the number of the psalm and the quoted lines. Bogáti's translation is also referred by the number of the psalm and its lines. The quoted text is based on the referred manuscripts. In the poetic texts, the highlights in italics are always mine.

14 "As testing fire (assaying) *gold*, / in much *dangers* (you have put) us, / you have put the Jews on touchstone, / you have worn our necks in iron."

15 "an ox, a goat will stain your altars with their blood; nor will *incense* from trees of Sheba be forgotten"

|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> | — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> |
| — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> | — U — <u>U</u> — U <u>U</u>   |
| — U — <u>U</u> — U <u>U</u>   | — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> |
| — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> | — U — <u>U</u> — U <u>U</u>   |
| — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> | — U — <u>U</u> — U — <u>U</u> |
| — U — <u>U</u> — U <u>U</u>   | — U — <u>U</u> — U <u>U</u>   |

In line with this, the critical edition of Buchanan’s paraphrase emphasises how this metre particularly “encourages a riot of word-play, assonance, rhyme and other kinds of jingle.” (Buchanan 2011, 570) The verse form, otherwise not characterised by rhymes, creates many harmonies, even if only by using grammatical parallels. This might have inspired Bogáti, who uses a poetic system where rhymes are the essential building blocks of the cohesion of the lines. In his poem, too, we see internal rhymes and assonances, which give his poem a similar ring to Buchanan’s.

However, there are significant differences between the two verse forms. In Buchanan, two equally long lines are always followed by a shorter one, while in Bogáti there is a regular alternation of long and short lines. Therefore, while in Buchanan the rhymes and consonants are usually found in consecutive lines, in Bogáti there is more distance between them. In the fifth stanza, Bogáti adopts not only Buchanan’s vocabulary, but also the grammatical parallel and the resulting rhyme and anaphora (the latter I have highlighted in bold).

**te** *parentem* laeta honoret,  
**te** *potentem* prona adoret  
tota rerum machina. (Buchanan 66,13–15)<sup>16</sup>

**mint** kegyes *atyját* tiszteljen,  
mert szabad s nemes néped,  
**mint** *hatalmast*, úgy böcsüljen,  
mert nagyot tött szent kezed! (Bogáti 66,27–30)<sup>17</sup>

The terms set in italics have no counterparts in the biblical text (Ps 66:4), they are Buchanan’s interpretive additions. Bogáti adopts Buchanan’s lines almost word for word, and also retains the grammatical link between them (“mint..., mint...” [‘as..., as...’]). But since his rhyming lines of equal length do not follow each other, he adds his own lines (28 and 30) to those borrowed from Buchanan. These create another grammatical parallel, which seems to be a response to Buchanan’s text (“mert..., mert...” [‘because..., because...’]). The slight difference between the two types of metre provides more opportunity

16 “Let the whole fabric of the world joyfully **honour you** as its *parent*, let it reverently **adore you** as its *master*.”

17 “**as** its gracious *father*, let it **adore** you, / because your people are free and noble, / **as** a *potent*, let it **honour** you / because your holy hand has done a great thing”

for Bogáti. It allows him to imitate Buchanan's paraphrase, but also to add his own inventions to the translation (Csörsz 2004, 19; Szatmári 2022, 213).

The first stanza contains a similar inlaid expansion. According to the biblical text, the speaker is calling the whole earth ("omnis terra" 'all land') to praise. Buchanan makes this more tangible with the cardinal points:

Incolae terrarum, ab ortu  
solis ultimum ad cubile,  
eia domino psallite. (Buchanan 66,1–3)<sup>18</sup>

Buchanan adapts here a Horatian textual strategy (Buchanan 2011, 570). The original passage in Horace reads:

porrecta maiestas ad ortus  
solis ab Hesperio cubili. (Horace, *Carm.* IV.15.15–16)<sup>19</sup>

Such antique vocabulary appears in several places in Buchanan's psalms,<sup>20</sup> usually as an expansion of the biblical terms "omnes gentes," "omnes populi," "omnis terra". But there are even more direct borrowings of the Horatian lines:

patravit in terris ab ortu  
solis ad Hesperium cubile. (Buchanan 46,31–32)<sup>21</sup>  
vocabit in ius orbem ab ortu  
solis ad Hesperium cubile. (Buchanan 50,3–4)<sup>22</sup>

The paraphrase of Psalm 46 even uses the same verse form as the quoted ode of Horace, both written in the Alcaic stanza. Remarkably, in Psalm 50 the *Vulgate* uses a similar phrase: "et vocavit terram ab ortu solis usque ad occasum eius." (Ps [Hebr.] 49:1)<sup>23</sup> Thus, the phrase "ab ortu solis" might even bear some biblical connotation, but the Horatian allusion is still clear, especially with the use of the term *Hesperius*.

18 "Inhabitants of the earth, from the rising of the sun to its most distant bed, O praise the Lord."

19 "To where the sun illumines the east / From where he seeks his western bed." John Conington's translation (Horace 1882) is quoted from here: *Perseus Digital Library*, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

20 "a sole Eoo ad Hesperum" ("From dawn to dusk," Buchanan 59,21); "Orbis omnes incolae, / a sole Eoo ad Hesperum," („all inhabitants of the world, from the rising to the setting sun," Buchanan 100,1–2)

21 "[...which God has] performed on earth, from the rising of the sun to its Hesperian bed."

22 "The judge [who with just laws reins in the proud necks of threatening kings] will arraign the world from the rising of the sun to its Hesperian bed."

23 Iuxta LXX: "et vocavit terram a solis ortu usque ad occasum"; KJV (50:1): "And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof."

Buchanan is not just using an established topos when he describes the whole earth with an arc from east to west. He uses a passaged borrowed specifically from Horace. Of course, many other examples could be given of the antique expressions that appear in Buchanan's psalms, since such a translation/transformation is the fundamental linguistic strategy of Buchanan's humanist translation (Buchanan 2011, 60–66).

But what is more interesting for the present purposes is how Bogáti makes use of this strategy of using antique sources. Buchanan only introduces an East-West opposition, as mentioned, in a place where the biblical text does not contain it textually. However, Bogáti complemented this version with his characteristic verbosity that was, however, also demanded by the Hungarian poetic form.

Szentek ez földön ha vagytok,  
*napkeletre*, nagy **mező**n,  
 vagy *nape*sti földre laktok,  
 innen és túl a' **víz**en,  
 valahol országba[n] laktok,  
 Úrnak hálát adjatok!<sup>24</sup>

The East-West opposition (marked by italics) is complemented by a geographical contrast between the field and the water in lines 2 and 4 (marked by bold). Furthermore, this solution makes the landscape imaginable in cartographic terms as well: the vast field is in the east and the water in the west. This does not necessarily mean that Bogáti's text would describe the actual geography of Old Testament Israel, although there are vast plains to the east of Israel and the Mediterranean (and the Red Sea) to the west. Bogáti is no stranger to this kind of realism, he is inclined to make the psalms historically and geographically concrete. This is what he performs in this psalm, too. At the end of seventh stanza, the opposites from the first stanza return with the same words ("field", "water"), but now—due to the miracle of God—in relation to the same being (water = field):

mint *mező*n, úgy vivé népét,  
 elfogá tenger *vízét*. (Bogáti 66,41–42)<sup>25</sup>

This is a clear reference to one of the most important episodes of the *Exodus*, the crossing of the sea (Ex 14:21), which is repeated in the *Book of Joshua* (Josh 3:14–17). The original biblical text also refers to this, but again, it only speaks of the sea in general terms, not making any more specific references: "He turned the sea into dry land: / They went through the flood on foot: There did we rejoice in him" (KJV: Ps 66,6).

24 "Saints, who are on this land / in the *east*, in a great **field**, / or who live in the *west* / on this side of the **water**, and beyond it, / wherever you live in the country, / give thanks to the Lord!"

25 "as in the *field*, so he led his people / captured the *waters* of the sea"

Bogáti, however, provides the location of both crossings in the eighth stanza:

Rajta népét általvivé,  
 az Veres-tengert veré,  
 félfelé Jordánt felűzé,  
 minket úgy költöztete, (Bogáti 66,43–46)<sup>26</sup>

The mention of the Red Sea and the Jordan lends a historical meaning to Bogáti's version of the psalm. Taking this into account, it seems more likely that the insertion in the first stanza already foreshadows this dichotomy. Admittedly, the historical significance of the geographic counterpart only becomes apparent later.

It is also striking how Bogáti exploits the difference in verse form in the first stanza. Buchanan turns a simple expression from the Bible text into a pair of opposites, using Horace's ode. The pair of opposites is placed in two lines of equal length, closed by the conclusion of the third, shorter line ("eia domino psallite"). Bogáti makes use of the Horatian image offered by Buchanan's paraphrase, but also weaves in his own Old Testament landscape. The dynamism of the Hungarian text derives from the combination of geographical and logical movement. The stanza starts on a general level ("on this land"), then moves on to a specific, pictorial description of the landscape. Bogáti's poem reveals not only linguistic but also topographic subtlety (east = field || west = water). Bogáti's additions (the field and the water) are once again placed in the shorter lines (2 and 4). Then in the fifth line we come back to the general ("wherever in the country"), followed by the same conclusion as Buchanan's ("give thanks to the Lord"). Bogáti's psalm may not reach the level of Albert Szenci Molnár and Bálint Balassi in its rhyme technique, but it is certainly quite finely crafted from a poetic perspective.

The above examples reveal the true poetic purpose of Bogáti's choice of metre. Bogáti chose a form that consists of the same trochaic colons as Buchanan's. He often takes whole lines, or even pairs of lines, from Buchanan's poem. He can do this while also retaining the metre of the Latin lines, and also the potential grammatical parallels, that is, he makes the borrowing marked. His slightly different proprietary system, however, demands the insertion of shorter lines between the adopted uniform lines. In most cases he uses this expansion to add his own, explicitly historicising interpretation of the psalm, emphasizing its biblical context. The metrical system offers a poetic opportunity for Bogáti's historicising translation to engage in a dialogue with Buchanan's antique-like text. The Hungarian rendition of the sophisticated antique-sounding paraphrase becomes the pretext for an antitrinitarian interpretation of the Bible. Thus, it is not only the choice

26 "Carried his people through it, / beat the Red Sea, / chased Jordan upwards, / so as to help us move."

of metre that seems conscious, but also the deviation from the metre. In the sophisticated, humanist form of imitation, the borrowing merely alludes to the poet's predecessor, leaving some room for individual invention as well.

This is, however, only one aspect of the metre of Psalm 66. Bogáti chose a form that could be interpreted in the context of congregational singing, as a syllabic and strophic poem with rhymes. The Hungarian paraphrase thus remained open towards both metrical and poetic worlds. Even so, it has pushed the limits, as shown by the clumsiness of the copyists. When Miklós Bogáti Fazakas was adventuring in the humanist milieu, which might have been noticed by Albert Szenci Molnár, the later readers of the Psalter (the *populus*) would have found the text and the verse form difficult to understand.

\*

The segment of the poetry of Miklós Bogáti Fazakas that has been explored so far has already suggested the image of a highly educated poet who knew and read many languages. The already completed volume of the critical edition revealed his readings in Greek and Latin, as well as his inspirations from theology and biblical criticism (Bogáti Fazakas 2018, 471–478). It was already clear that he set in motion a very broad canon of the melodic and formal canon of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian poetry, and usually based his translations on several sources. Research on the psalms has so far been less concerned with the possible connections with humanist culture. The above analysis of Psalm 66 was an attempt at such an inquiry. Perhaps it is not entirely indifferent from the perspective of the present-day image of the Hungarian literary canon that another early modern Hungarian poem using classical quantitative metre has been identified, which not only relies on Buchanan, but to a limited extent on Horace as well.

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