

# The *hungarica* of the Ambrosiana Library of Milan

## Documents related to Mátyás Hunyadi and his family

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### ABSTRACT

The article investigates the cultural and historical relations established between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Italian states during the reign of Matthias Corvinus. The first part of the article briefly reconstructs the most important artistic, scientific, and intellectual exchanges between Italy and Hungary during that period. The second part analyzes 13 documents preserved in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan which may serve as additional sources on Matthias' era. The documents are divided into three categories: texts specifically dedicated to Matthias; letters or instructions concerning his reign, particularly his relations with the Republic of Venice and his wars against the Turks and the Bohemian Hussites; and historiographical texts centered on Matthias and his family. The list of documents is accompanied by transcriptions of their *incipits* and *explicits*, brief summaries, and relevant bibliography.

**KEYWORDS:** Italian-Hungarian relations; Medieval and Early Modern Hungarian history; Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana; Mátyás Hunyadi

During the late Middle Ages and the Modern Age, deep historical and cultural relations were established between Hungary and Italy. Although there had been previous exchanges, these relations began to intensify during the reign of the Emperor and Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1361–1437), but they reached their peak during the reign of Matthias Corv-

inus, who promoted numerous and well-known artistic and scientific initiatives, involving a large number of Italian personalities.<sup>1</sup> I will summarise them briefly.

First, at the suggestion of his tutor, János Vitéz, Archbishop of Esztergom and Grand Chancellor Matthias founded the University of Pozsony in 1465, replacing the University of Óbuda, where he invited renowned foreign scholars, such as Regiomontano and the Italian theologian Giovanni Gatti to teach.

Thanks to the renovation and expansion of the royal palace in Buda, the King also attracted Italian architects and workers to the Hungarian capital; as we know from the rich bibliography available, he invited famous Italian engineers to work on the fortification of the Buda Castle, such as Aristotle Fioravanti of Bologna, who directed the works for six months in 1467, and, subsequently, Clemente Camicia, also known as Chimenti, of Florence, who stayed in Hungary from about 1479 to 1505. In particular, he employed a group of Florentine carpenters and carvers for the interior decorations and set up a workshop for the manufacture of artistic multi-coloured majolica tiles for floors and stoves. Then, according to Vasari's testimony, the carvers Baccio and Francesco Cellini, uncles of the famous Benvenuto, arrived in Buda, as well as the painters Ercole de' Roberti and the Florentine Visino.<sup>2</sup>

The main pride of the court of Buda was certainly the famous "Bibliotheca Corviniana", unfortunately dismembered over the centuries, in which Matthias collected around 2,000-2,500 magnificently illuminated volumes.<sup>3</sup> The first document attesting Matthias' systematic collection of valuable texts is a letter that the king himself sent to Pomponius Laetus, founder of the Academy of Rome, on September 13, 1471 to thank him for having sent a copy of the edition of Silius Italicus, edited by Pomponius himself. From the same document we learn that Matthias sent his own agent, an illuminator named Blandius, to Rome, to obtain

1 First of all, cf. Fraknói 1901–1902, which is still fundamental on this topic; in particular, in the first volume, the author investigates the relationships between the Hungarian kingdom and the Holy See from the year 1000 to 1417: 1000–1290, from the constitution of the Hungarian catholic church until the death of King László IV; 1290–1378, the age of the Angevins; 1378–1417, Hungary during the Great Schism of the Church. The second volume of the book is then dedicated to the age of Matthias Corvinus: 1418–1458, after the Council of Constance; 1458–1490, King Matthias and the Holy See; 1490–1526: the age of Vladislaus II and Louis II. On the relations between Hungary and Italy during the late Middle Ages and the Modern Age, cf. also, for example, in Italian: Várady 1933–1934; Horányi–Klaniczay 1967; Branca 1973; Klaniczay 1975; Graciotti–Vasoli 1994; Rovetta–Hajnóczy 2003; Di Francesco–Fiorato 2004; Farbaky–Waldman 2011.

2 Jászay 2003, 158.

3 The Corvinian library is very famous and numerous studies have been written about its formation, its contents and its unfortunate dispersal. An exhaustive bibliography is available at the site: <https://corvina.hu/en/osszes/all/>. This is certainly not the right place to offer a reconstruction of these studies, but at least an essential bibliography is offered: Csapodi 1969; Csapodi 1973; Csapodi–Csapodi–Gárdonyi 1990; Bono et al. (eds.) 2002; Danieloni 2013, 186–205; Brunori 2013, 262–299. As for the most recent Hungarian bibliography, see in particular the numerous studies by Mikó Árpád, Zsupán Edina and Pócs Dániel, among which I mention at least: Pócs 1999/2000; Farbaky et al. 2013; Mikó 2002; Mikó 2008; Mikó 2013, 308–321.; Zsupán 2017; Zsupán 2020; Zsupán 2020/2; Zsupán 2023.

some *codices*.<sup>4</sup> From 1485 onwards, the collection of precious volumes became a systematic activity: Matthias sent envoys to Italy, Germany, and Greece and spent approximately 33,000 florins a year on copies, which were made in Vespasiano da Bisticci's Florentine laboratory and in Buda, where thirty copyists – mostly of Italian origin – worked under the direction of Felice Ragusino. The illuminations were also entrusted to Florentine masters: the works of Attavante degli Attavanti appear in thirty-one surviving codices; many illuminators moved to Buda to work for the Library, such as Giovanni Antonio Cattaneo. The Library, created “to delight the spirit”, was entrusted to the management of the Greek scholar Taddeo Ugoletto, tutor of Matthias' son, as the Latin inscription placed above the entrance door proclaimed.<sup>5</sup>

Cultural relations between Matthias' court and the Italian states intensified from 1476, when Matthias married Beatrix of Aragon (1457–1508), daughter of King Ferdinand I of Naples. From then on, a number of intellectuals visited the Hungarian capital, including Filippo Bonaccorsi, Galeotto Marzio de' Narni and Antonio Bonfini. Known as Callimaco Esperiente, Bonaccorsi, secretary and chancellor of King Casimir IV of Poland, spent an unspecified period at the Magyar court and composed his *Life of Attila* (1488–1489) inspired by Matthias.<sup>6</sup> During his stay in Hungary, Galeotto Marzio de' Narni composed a biography of King Matthias (*De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis Regis Mathiae* – modelled on the Neapolitan tradition of praises for Alfonso of Aragon culminating in Beccadelli's *De dictis et factis Alphonsi Regis* – in which he praises not only Matthias' love for knowledge, but also the protection he granted to all men of knowledge –, and the philosophical treatise *De homine*, dedicated to Archbishop János Vitéz since «si potevano [emphasis mine] individuare tanti e così grandi ornamenti della virtù che sarebbero atti ad illustrare non solamente un uomo singolo, ma tutto il genere umano insieme» (i.e.: “so many and so great ornaments of virtue could be identified in him that they would be suitable to give prestige not only to a single man, but the whole mankind”). Marzio also attributed to the archbishop the merit of being the first «che in questi tempi turbolenti ha chiamato presso di sé le muse esiliate da tutto l'orbe terrestre ed ha fatto dell'Ungheria una nuova dimora delle Muse, sicché gli studiosi dispersi si sono affollati intorno a lui, padre delle scienze» (i.e.: “who in these turbulent times has called to himself the Muses exiled from all over the world, and has made Hungary a new home for the Muses, so that all the dispersed scholars have flocked to him, the father of science”).<sup>7</sup>

4 Csapodi 1973, 40.

5 Jászay 2003, 161–162. For Taddeo Ugoletto and his role at the court of Matthias Corvin, cf. at least: Ciavarella 1957, 133–173.

6 On the humanist Filippo Bonaccorsi (1437–1496), secretary and chancellor of King Casimir IV of Poland, who was in Buda on an embassy in 1483–84 and who composed the *pamphlet* entitled *Attila* in 1489, cf. at least: Caccamo 1972, 78–83. and the rich bibliography mentioned there; Garfagnini 1987; Jászay 1994, 151–164.; Békés 2005, 51–97., especially 82–84. boxes a composer Philippe de Mon F w w

7 Jászay 2003, 181.

A prominent figure at the court of Buda was also the historian Antonio Bonfini;<sup>8</sup> he established relations with the royal house of Naples in 1476, when he first met Beatrix of Aragon in Loreto, who was about to join her husband in Hungary. Bonfini had been teaching for many years in Recanati, when Matthias invited him to Buda for his first three-month stay in 1486. He procured for Corvinus the rhetorical writings of Hermogenes, the Latin translation of Aphthonius' *Preliminary exercises* and the *History* of Herod, but, above all, he dedicated to Matthias the *Libellus de Corvinianae domus origine*, in which he reconstructed the genealogy of the Corvin family, tracing its origin to a Romanian Transylvanian family descendant of the Roman Corvini.<sup>9</sup> Bonfini became the Queen's official lecturer, but his relationship with Beatrix soon soured, probably due to his support for Matthias over the recognition of John Hunyadi as the king's legitimate heir. So, Bonfini returned to Recanati after three months, but in 1488 he went back to Buda at the invitation of Matthias.<sup>10</sup>

Bonfini was then commissioned to translate the *Trattato di architettura* by Filarete, which had arrived in Hungary from Rome thanks to Francesco Bandini; Matthias probably wanted to enrich his prestigious library, which included a large number of architectural books, such as two *codices* of Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* and a *codex* of Vitruvius's *De architectura*.<sup>11</sup> In 1488, Matthias finally entrusted him with the onerous task of composing the *Rerum Ungaricum Decades*, a great historiographical work inspired by the Livian model; by 1490 Antonio completed the first four decades, devoted respectively to the origins of the Hungarians (1st decas) and to the Hungarian history from 1001 to 1382 (2nd decas), from 1382 to 1463 (3rd decas) and from 1463 to 1490 (4th decas).

After Matthias' death, Ladislaus II reconfirmed Bonfini as court historian and commissioned him to write the fifth and last decas, which had to summarize the events that occurred in the first six years of Ladislaus' reign (1490–1496). In the *Decades*, Antonio used a large number of sources: citing Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny among the ancients, and Flavio Biondo, Andrea Dandolo, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Sabellico, and Marino Sanuto among the Italians. From a strictly historiographical point of view, the primary source of the text was instead the *Chronica Hungarorum* by Thuróczy János, published in 1488.<sup>12</sup>

It was during the reign of Matthias Corvinus that diplomatic and military relations between Italy and Hungary also began to consolidate; in fact, the Hungarian ruler received military and economic subsidies from the Republic of Venice and the Papacy in an attempt to stop the Turkish advance from March 1462, when Venice expressed its intention to take

8 For this famous humanist, cf. at least, in Italian: Amadio 1930; Rill 1970, 28–30.; Martellini 2007; Pavoni 2018, 145–160.

9 Köpeczi 1994, 51–52.

10 Lázár 2003, 13.

11 Lázár 2003, 13.

12 Rill 1970, 29. The Ambrosiana Library keeps a copy of the edition: Ratdolt, Augsburg, [3 VI] 1488 (Milan, Ambrosiana Library, from now BAMi, INC. 1487).

part in the crusade called by Pius II. On 12 September 1463, Matthias concluded a formal treaty of alliance with the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Emo: the Republic undertook to conduct a campaign by sea and land in Morea and Dalmatia; the King of Hungary, for his part, committed himself to fighting the Ottomans along the Hungarian borders. This first campaign was interrupted in 1464, following the death of the Pope.<sup>13</sup> From that year onwards, relations with Venice weakened, and the two countries began to compete with each other in 1469, following the Hungarian occupation of Segna, a fief of the Frangipane counts on the Croatian coast.<sup>14</sup>

In 1471, following the death of the Bohemian king George Poděbrady, Corvinus, supported by the Pope, fought against the new king, Ladislaus II Jagellon, recognised by Poděbrady as his legitimate heir. In 1466, Pope Paul II declared George a pro-Hussite and a heretic, and Matthias was elected king of Bohemia in his place, even though he never took possession of the crown and of the *regalia*. In 1478, peace was negotiated: Ladislaus kept the Bohemian crown, and Matthias the crown of Moravia and Silesia.<sup>15</sup>

Following his marriage with Beatrix of Aragon, daughter of King Ferdinand, in 1476, diplomatic and financial relations with the Kingdom of Naples – and the Papacy, his ally – also became intense. The legacy of the Elector of Saxony, who attended the wedding, openly wrote that the marriage was celebrated thanks to the papal ambassador.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Beatrix was the sister-in-law of the Duke of Ferrara Ercole d'Este and she was also related to the Milanese Sforza family. When the conflict between Sixtus IV and Florence erupted in 1478 following the Pazzi conspiracy, the Italian states were divided into two factions: the Florence-Milan-Venice league against the king of Naples and the Pope; Matthias, who had been asked by his father-in-law to intervene, merely urged the warring parties to make peace. Matthias also tried to maintain a neutral position in the war of Venice against Ferrara (1482); King Ferrante, Gian Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Duke Ercole d'Este put Corvinus under pressure to intervene and Queen Beatrix herself joined in the solicitations. On this occasion, Matthias promised to send a modest expeditionary force, but on terms that were impossible to maintain.<sup>17</sup>

Numerous archival-documentary sources have made possible to reconstruct the Medieval and Early Modern Magyar history and the relations between Italy and Hungary in this period; but in order to increase this *corpus*, the Vestigia project (OTKA n. 81430 and n. 12879), directed by Prof. Domokos, has facilitated the investigation of some Italian archives and libraries to find and register all the documents, in Italian or in Latin, that could serve as further valid evidence, sometimes already known, but more often still unpublished. As far as I'm concerned, I conducted an in-depth study of the manuscript collection of the Am-

13 Hanák 1996, 29.

14 Jászay 1994, 10–11.

15 Bak 1998, 723–726.

16 Teke 1994, 27.

17 Teke 1994, 30–31.

brosiana Library in Milan. The results were very interesting: I found about 120 *hungarica* related to 1400–1550 and at least 13 of them showed a direct link with Matthias Corvinus.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the Ambrosiana *hungarica* previously belonged to the Gian Vincenzo Pinelli's collection; Pinelli (1535–1601), a Paduan scholar and bibliophile, who during his lifetime built up a library famous throughout Europe for its extraordinary wealth (it included more than 750 manuscripts and 9,000 printed volumes, as well as scientific instruments, art objects, globes, geographical and hydrographic maps, minerals, fossils, medals and ancient coins, etc.).<sup>19</sup> When Pinelli died, following complex inheritance issues and disasters that partially curtailed his library,<sup>20</sup> the most precious manuscripts, the printed editions in Greek and a selection of other valuable editions were purchased by Cardinal Federico Borromeo to enrich the nascent Ambrosiana Library (the volumes arrived in Milan in November 1609 and the institution was officially inaugurated on December 8 1609).

The Pinellian collection contained literary, historical-geographical and scientific works, as well as the correspondence of Gian Vincenzo with eminent European writers (such as, for example, the Florentine humanist Jacopo Corbinelli; the French jurist and humanist Claude Dupuy; the famous composer Philippe de Monte, who was the tutor of the young Gian Vincenzo and Keppelmaister at the court of the Habsburgs; etc.), and reports, both official and unofficial, on the political, historical and social current affairs of Italy and Europe of the 16th century that agents and informants scattered throughout the territory sent to Pinelli.

The Ambrosiana Library conserves the catalogue (marked BAMi, B 311 suss.), which was prepared at the beginning of 1609 on the initiative of Cardinal Borromeo by Costantino de Notari da Nola, a monk of the Benedictine monastery of San Severino in Naples, where the Borromeo emissaries had deposited the collection awaiting its shipment by sea to Milan.

18 Cf. Carpentieri 2008/2009, *ad indicem*; all these documents are also included in the database promoted by the Vestigia Project *Hungarian historical and literary sources of the 14th–16th centuries in Italian archives and libraries* (OTKA, no. 12879): <http://vestigia.hu/kutatas.php>. In collaboration with the Ambrosiana Library of Milan, the Vestigia database has then been transferred to the Hungarian National Archive website, including the *hungarica* dating from 1551 to 1600 and the digital scans of each texts.

19 For Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, his library and the collection's purchase by Cardinal Federico Borromeo, cf. at least: Gualdo 1607; Rivolta 1914; Rodella 2003, 87–125.; Nuovo 2005, 43–54.; Nuovo 2007, 57–78.; Nuovo 2007/2, 1175–1195.; Nuovo 2008, 39–68.; Ferro 2008, 255–288.; Nuovo 2011, 193–205.; Callegari 2015, 727–732.; Raugi 2018; Carpentieri 2023.

20 First of all, the Republic of Venice confiscated about 200 documents containing internal management calculations, diplomatic instructions, writings on water management, etc.; today they are kept in two volumes in the *Secreta* (Venice, State Archive, *Secreta, Archivio proprio Pinelli*, 2). In addition, off the coast of Marche, one of the ships transporting the fund from Venice to Naples – where Gian Vincenzo's heir, his grandson Cosmo, was living – was attacked by Turkish pirates, who threw numerous books, scientific objects and works of art into the sea. Although the recovery operations succeeded to recover the contents of at least 22 boxes, it is estimated that 11 boxes were lost (8 of which contained books, 2 paintings and the last musical instruments and scientific objects); the loss must therefore have amounted to around the 8% of the Padua collection. Cf. at least: Ferro 2008, 272–274.; Carpentieri 2023, 13–14. Finally, part of the printed collection was sold by Borromeo's agents to some interested booksellers in Naples in a peculiar “candle sale”, the first of its kind in Italy on this occasion. (cf. Hobson 1971, 222–224.; Rodella 2003, 106–110.).

The monk inventoried 770 manuscripts and 5,400 printed books, describing in detail the contents of the 61 boxes in which all the volumes had been stored, distinguishing the printed editions (boxes no. 1–45, BAMi, B 311 sqq, fols. 1r–142r), the manuscripts (boxes no. 46–60, BAMi, B 311 sqq, fols. 142r–177r), and the content of the sixty-first box (BAMi, B 311 sqq, fols. 177r–179r), with many handwritten quires marked with capital letters from A to Z (and, subsequently, from AA to ZZ and, again, by AAA alla ZZZ), accompanied by a brief description of the subjects of each series.<sup>21</sup>

According to the monk Constantine, the “ZZ” quire was specifically intended to collect all the documents relating to the «cose di Ungaria» (i.e. “Magyar things”). However, the large number of Pinelli’s *hungarica* does not end with the documents formerly kept in the “ZZ” quire; many of them are in fact kept in other quires (e.g. in the “H” quire, which contained “Speeches and reports from Poland and other similar writings”; in the “X” quire, which collected “Various speeches on different subjects, in particular on fortification”; or, again, in the “Q part 1” quire, related to “Actions against the Turks”; and in the “Y p. 2” quire, entitled “Mathematical things”), as well as among some Pinelli documents that are no longer provided with their original shelf marks, but which retain marginalia, annotations and rubrics by Gian Vincenzo’s hand.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the collection of sixteenth-century dispatches, reports, ordinances, and notices sent to the scholar from the most important Italian and European cities is also very interesting for our purpose, and constitutes a wealth of information relating to that period.<sup>23</sup>

But let us return to the documents specifically related to Matthias Corvinus. They fall into three different categories: texts dedicated to the Hungarian king; letters or instructions that offer interesting insights into the events of the period (and in particular into Matthias’

21 The documents of these quires mainly consist of short political writings, letters sent by a specific interlocutor and notes on various erudite topics, characterized by different dates and formats. In contrast to manuscripts of a certain extent, in the Pinelli library these texts did not enjoy autonomy and they were first grouped by subject and literary genre; from the mid-1570s, when their number increased, they were collected in unbound quires, called «mazzi», according to their subjects. Each subject was hence identified by a capital letter from A to Z and, subsequently, from AA to ZZ and, again, from AAA to ZZZ. Within each quire, the writings were separated by a sheet with Arabic numbering: each document, therefore, had a shelf mark, which distinguished first the subject (capital letter) and, then, its position within the quire (Arabic numeral). The absence of bindings allowed the scholars to modify the order of the texts when new documents were added. In any case, once they arrived in the Ambrosiana, these quires were unfortunately only partially bound to respect their original composition: they were in fact bounded in a fragmented manner within different factitious *codices*. Cf. Gualdo 1607, 27–29.; Barbero 2007, 16–19.; Ferro 2008, 167–169.; Nuovo 2011, 203–204.; Raugei 2018, 61–62.

22 On the basis of their format, the Pinelli manuscripts were placed in the Ambrosiana shelves together with other *codices*; at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the unbounded documents were then assembled in factitious *codices* together with documents of different origin.

23 Pinelli systematically collected and grouped these writings in volumes according to chronological criteria, starting from 1566 and up to 1600; today they are kept in the Ambrosiana in 12 different units. Cf. Nuovo 2011, 198–201., where their inventory is offered.

relations with the Venetian Republic and his fights with the Turks and the Bohemian Hus-sites); and, finally, historiographical texts, sometimes with literary ambitions, centred on Matthias or his family. The complete list of the documents – each accompanied by the transcription of its *incipit* and *explicit* and by a brief summary – is now offered, focusing on some specific texts.

## TEXT DEDICATED TO MATTHIAS CORVINUS

- 1) A. ARQUATO, *Prognosticon magistri Antonii Torquati, artium et medicinae doctoris Ferrariensem clarissimique astrologi De eversione Europae quod serenissimo Matthias Ungariae regi anno salutis MCCCCLXXX direxit, 1480, copy.*

BAMi, Q 123 sup., codicological unit no. 13, fols. 117r–122v.

*Incipit:* «Multa sunt, serenissime rex, quae divinos homines efficiunt. Primo quidem virtutis excellentia, ut testatur Aristoteles...».

*Explicit:* «... benigne accipias et Torquati tui semper in bonum sis memor».

Copy (from the Pinelli collection, no original pressmark) of the dire prophecy of the Ferrarese physician and astrologer Antonio Arquato on the effects of the astral conjunctions in 1504–1507, dedicated to the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus in 1480. Based on: *De eversione Europae prognosticon D. Magistri Antonii Torquati Artium et edicinae Doctoris Ferrariensis, Clarissimique astrologi, ad serenissimum Mathiam regem Ungarorum anno Christi 1480 conscriptum, ab eodem anno usque ad 1538 durans*, [n.p.], 1534.

Very little reliable information is available on Antonio Arquato. He claimed to have come from Ferrara in his predictions published for the years 1491–1495. Physician and astrologer, his main activity must have been medicine. In the dedication of the prophecy *De eversione Europae* itself, he himself stated that he was “a doctor of medicine and the most perfect astrologer” to King Matthias in 1480, with whom he stayed until 1490. After the king’s death, he returned to Italy to enter the service of Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria, to whom he offered his prediction for 1491. However, according to Eugenio Garin,<sup>24</sup> all his five predictions originated from Ferrara and they seem to have been composed in that city; moreover, in the fall of 1490, when he wrote the first prophecy, the author did not speak of himself as a teacher or doctor, but as a “scholar” of medical and astrological studies; finally, not all the predictions are dedicated to Alfonso: some have no dedication, and the Latin one for 1494 is dedicated to “Ferdinand King of Spain and Castile, and his only lord”. For Garin, neither

24 Garin 1962, 299–301.



the dedications to the Aragonese, nor that to Matthias Corvinus, therefore prove his actual presence as an astrologer in these courts.

This prediction is undoubtedly one of the most famous oracles of the 16th century. The editions were late: following the Antwerp edition of 1534, the text was widely circulated both in manuscripts and in printed copies throughout Europe. The accuracy of the predictions was almost disconcerting: for 1507, Arquato prophesied several European wars, the advent of a heresiarch from the North who would overthrow the Church (Luther?), the Sack of Rome, famine, pestilence, earthquakes and floods, as well as the advent of a strong prince from the North with powerful armies. In any case, the timeliness of the text is suspicious and not credible and it suggests a *post eventum* composition. Certainly, later editions were evidently manipulated, with a series of incremental updates that adapted the text to the historical events of the period. In any case, the original authentic core of the prophecy was submitted to the judgement of three astrologers Carolus Drusianus, Odoardus Famiensis, and Americus Polonus, who are supposed to have been in the service of Matthias Corvinus; the three astrologers then published a *Iudicium eversionis Europae* (Bologna, Ercole Nani, 1493), in which Drusianus confirmed that the catastrophic prophecy was soundly based on the astrological science of the period.<sup>25</sup>

*Editions:* Anversa 1522 (princeps). Followed: *De eversione Europae prognosticon D. Magistri Antonii Torquati Artium et edicinae Doctoris Ferrariensis, Clarissimique astrologi, ad serenissimum Mathiam regem Ungarorum anno Christi 1480 conscriptum, ab eodem anno usque ad 1538 durans*, [s. l., s. t.], 1534 and other editions in 1535, 1536, 1544, and 1552. The prediction was then included in: Freher 1602, 167–173. (ed. 1637, II, 169–175.; ed. 1717, II, 387–394.).

Bibliography on the codex: Revelli 1929, no. 329; Rivolta 1933, no. 121; Ceruti 1973–1979, IV, 621–623.

2) FILARETE, *Prima capita “De architectura”*, translation and preface by Antonio Bonfini, Buda, 1487–88 ca., copy.

BAMi, A 71 inf., codicological unit no. 6, fols. 37r–51r.

Incipit, fol. 38r: «Credebam dive Matthias...».

Explicit, fol. 38r: «... et audaciam confirmare perversa. Finis».

Partial Latin translation (from the Pinelli collection, original pressmark «Y-30») of Filarete’s treatise *De Architectura* by the Ascolan historian Antonio Bonfini and dedicated to Matthias Corvinus (1487). It contains:

f. 38r: «Antonii Bonfini in paraphrasin Antonii Averulani De re Architectoria lingua vernacula edita ad Matthiam Pannoniae et Bohemiae regem prefatio», incomplete.

Fols. 38r–43v: «Antonii Averulani De re Architectoria lingua vernacula edita Antonio

25 For more in-depth information on Arquato and his prediction, cf. at least: Thorndike 1934, 467–473.; Garin 1962, 299–301.; Cantimori 1975, 164. sqq; Garin 1976; Capp 1979; Zambelli 1995, 47.; Ernst 2005, 635–646.; Barillà 2002, 39–48.

Bonfinio interprete paraphrasis liber primus» (f. 40v: «De mensuris»; fol. 41r: «Nomina mensurarum»; fol. 42r: «De origine et necessitate aedificii»).

Fols. 43v–45v: «Antonii Averulani De re Architectoria lingua vernacula edita Antonio Bonfinio interprete paraphrasis liber 25» («Caput ultimum De edificiis Cosmi Medicis»), with a list of all the buildings commissioned by Francesco Sforza in Milan and by the Medici family in Florence.

Fols. 46r–51r: «Tabula totius libri De Architectura».

According to M. Beltramini,<sup>26</sup> who published the critical edition of Bonfini's Latinization of the treatise, the Pinelli fragment under examination is *descriptus* from the *codex* Petersburg, Library of the Academy of Sciences, F N. 114, in turn copied from the original Venice, Marcian Latin VIII. 2 = 2796, purchased by the Dominican Gioacchino Torriani of the Monastery of Saints John and Paul in Venice after Matthias' death. It seems that the Petersburg volume itself was originally part of the Pinelli collection and, from 1609 to the end of the 18th century, it belonged to the Ambrosiana Library. Under unclear circumstances, the *codex* later became part of the private library of the famous writer Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, and in 1830 it was donated to the Russian Library where it is still kept today.

Editions: Von Oettingen 1896, incomplete; Beltramini 2000 (on Venice, Marciano Latino VIII. 2 = 2796).

Bibliography on the *codex*: Revelli 1929, no. 6; Rivolta 1933, no. 190; Kristeller 1963–1992, I 317.; Ceruti 1973–1979, I 41–42.

3) A. BONFINI, Excerptum ex Historia.

BAMi, I 245 inf., codicological unit no. 22, fol. 69r–v

*Incipit*: «Assirii, qui se primum regnasse gloriantur, exiguam Asiae partem tenuerunt...».

*Explicit*: «... scriptoribus accepimus».

*Excerpt* (from the Pinelli collection, no original pressmark) from the dedicatory epistle of the *Rerum Ungaricarum decades* (1488 ca.–1496) to the King of Hungary Ladislaus II Jagellon, in which Antonio Bonfini lists all the peoples who ruled in Asia and Eastern Europe, from the Assyrians to the Huns («Ungarorum progenitores, qui adhuc late dominantur, non modo Pannonia et Illyricum, sed cum magna Italiae parte, Germaniam Galliamque everterunt»). At the end of the *excerpt*: «Haec Antonii Bonfinis historiam ex historiis Rerum Hungaricarum in epistola nuncupatoria ad Dominum Vladislaum Regem Ungariae et Boemiae».

Editions: Brenner, Basel, 1543 (*princeps*, first three *Decades*). First complete edition: Sambucus, Basel, 1568. The most recent edition is: Bonfini 1936–1976 (for the *excerptum*, cf. p. 3.).

Bibliography on the *codex*: Revelli 1929, no. 149; Ceruti 1973–1979, II 563–565.

4) T. V. STROZZI, *Epitaphium Matthiae Corvini*, post 1490.

BAMi, P 83 sup., fol. 42v.

<sup>26</sup> Beltramini 2000.

*Incipit:* «Quas tua non adiit, rex invictissime, gentes gloria? Matthias, quae tacitura dies?».

*Explicit:* «... Ut coelum ornarent animo maiore parantem fatales terris te rapuere deae?».

Epitaph in honour of Corvinus by the famous humanist Tito Vespasiano Strozzi from Ferrara (1424–1505), an intimate of Pannonius and devoted to Latin poetry. The *epitaphium* celebrates Matthias as born “faventibus astris”, predestined to become “invictissimus”. Nature gave him to the world as a “novum decus”. Matthias is characterised as a perfect man in this world and one of its possible saviours; perfect son of Mars, he seemed to be even more powerful than Jupiter. He was so revered that he was removed from the list of living beings to be raised to the rank of Gods.

Editions: *Strozii poetae pater et filius*, [Manuzio–Torresano, Venice, 1513], fol. 148r; *Strozii poetae pater et filius*, de Colines Paris, 1530, fols. 249v–250r; *Strozii poetae pater et filius*, [Basel, 1545 ca.], fols. 249v–250r. And then in: Bottari 1719–1726, vol. IX, 168–169.; Pannonius 1784, 688.

Bibliography on the *codex*: on the *codex*, Kristeller 1963–1992, I 338.; Ceruti 1973–1979, IV 436–437. On the *Epitaphium*: Bertalot 1985, no. 4741.

5) Matthiae Corvini regis Ungariae epitaphium, post 1490.

BAMi, H 191 inf., codicological unit no. 1, fol. 20r

*Incipit:* «Matthias, regum specimen et gloria Martis, hic iaceo...».

*Explicit:* «... saecula narrabunt, quem tulit hora brevis».

Matthias Corvinus’ epitaph.

Edition: Budai 1866, p. 186.

Bibliography on the *codex*: Kristeller 1963–1992, I 325.; Ceruti 1973–1979, II 365–367.

For the *Epitaphium*: Bertalot 1985, no. 3241.

## LETTERS AND INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO MATTHIAS CORVINUS’ REIGN

6) A. ROSSI, *Lettera al duca di Milano Francesco Sforza*, Rome, February 20, 1465, draft or copy?

BAMi, Z 219 sup., Perg. 9410, Iemale 302.

Letter in Italian, from the Milanese envoy Agostino Rossi, informing Duke Francesco Sforza about the arrival of a Turkish embassy at the court of the King of Naples, Ferdinand I of Aragon. Bad news has arrived from Hungary: King Matthias has abandoned the siege of a fortress in Turkish hands, also leaving his cannons behind, because it seemed that the Sultan himself would soon arrive with his entire army. In view of the gravity of the situation, Pope Paul II is awaiting a response from the Italian Christian princes to send the promised help against the Turks to Hungary.

7) F. SFORZA, *Lettera ad Agostino Rossi*, Milan, October 12, 1465, draft.

BAMi, Z 219 sup., Perg. 9544, Iemale 302.

Letter (with numerous corrections in the margins and between the lines) in Italian, from Francesco Sforza to his envoy in Rome, Agostino Rossi. The Republic of Venice, allied with King Matthias, seems to be considering a truce with the Turks in Dubrovnik; the Duke of Milan, foreseeing the bitterness of the Holy See, should such an event occur, renews his own and the Italian princes' commitment to support the war against the Turks.

8) SIXTUS IV, *Instructiones denuo mittendae ad Ursum episcopum Theanensem apostolicum nuntium et oratorem ad Caesarem pro concordia cum rege Hungariae*, Rome, December 19, 1481, copy.

BAMi, S 92 sup., fol. 216r–v.

*Incipit*: «Lectis ac bene consideratis copiis brevium, quae nunc mittuntur ad imperatorem regem et principes...».

*Explicit*: «... cordi esse Suae S.ti et saevo collegio».

Copy (from the Pinelli collection, no original pressmark) of Pope Sixtus IV's instructions to Orso Orsini, Bishop of Teano from 1474 to 1495, who was entrusted with the task of resolving the dispute between Emperor Frederick III and King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. Sixtus IV expresses his displeasure at the disagreement and controversy between the Emperor and the King; the nuncio must persuade the contenders to entrust themselves to the Apostolic See as “matrem et magistram” to resolve their long-standing dispute: «Quanto dolore animi afficitur quod dissidium et controversiam inter Imperialem Maiestatem et Regem Hungariae componi et sedari non possint. [...] nullas orationes, suasiones, nullas partes, nulla mandata, nullas literas, nullos nunthios aut legatos valere aut potuisse efficere, ut tanta discordia [...] tolli possit, cogitasse unicum esse huic gessi remedium, unicum salutis viam: si causa haec integra remittatur ad suam sancitatem et santam sedem apostolicam».

Bibliography on the *codex*: Rivolta 1933, no. 169; Kristeller 1963–1992, I 343.; Cerutti 1973–1979, V 68–72.

9) B. MARASCHI, *Epistula B. episcopi Castelli ad Sixtum IV, Buda*, October 24, 1483, copy.

BAMi, S 92 sup., fols. 238v–239v.

*Incipit*: «B.me pater etc. Viam quam rex Hungariae ad expugnandum Turcas certam et secretissimam habere dicit...».

*Explicit*: «... Felix et incolumis sit Beatitudo Vestra, cuius sanctissimis pedibus me commendo».

Copy (from the Pinelli collection, no original pressmark) of an update by Bartolomeo Maraschi, Bishop of Città di Castello, to Pope Sixtus IV on the war between the King of Hungary and the Turks. Prince Cem, brother of Sultan Bayezid II, is being held prisoner by the Knights of Rhodes: «Viam quam rex Hungariae ad expugnandum Turcas certam et secretissimam habere dicit [*in the margin*: *Ing. tractatu movendi arma contra Turcum si in manibus regis Hungariae detur Zizimus*] et secretissime teneri cupit. Devictus Turcae frater, qui a Rhodiensibus detinet quidam Bassa illi charus et primus captus fuit bello illo contra statutum ordinem infeliciter gesto. [...] Rex Hungariae ad sanctitatem vestram comitet, ad quam istum bassam destinare intendit rex ipse».

Bibliography on the *codex*: Rivolta 1933, no. 169; Kristeller 1963–1992, I 343.; Ceruti 1973–1979, V 68–72.

10) ANGELUS, *Litterae ad Innocentium contra regem Bohemiae, Buda*, June 25, 1489, copy.

BAMi, S 92 sup., fols. 268r–277r.

*Incipit* of the first letter, fol. 268r: «Superioribus diebus Benedictum cursorem meum ad Sanctitatem Vestram destinavi, cui ut accuratius demandatam sibi provinciam absolveret partem salarii ex pecuniis...».

*Explicit* of the first letter, fol. 272v: «... humilissime me commendo. Ex Buda, prima iunii MCCCCLXXXIX».

*Incipit* of the second letter, fol. 272v: «Sed ecce dum has literas claudio, venit nuncius qui S.tis V.rae brevia defert ...».

*Explicit* of the second letter, fol. 277r: «... rex gubernatoris regni Hungariae titulum huic filio suo dabit atque iurari in regem, ut post eius obitum in regno succedat, efficiet. Optime ac felicissime valeat S. V. cuius sanctissimis pedibus humilissime me commendo».

Letters (copies from the Pinelli collection, no original pressmark) sent by Angelus, Bishop of Orte and Civita Castellana, to Pope Innocent VIII, with updates on the Hungarian historical and political situation (internal matters; references to past conflicts with the heretical King of Bohemia, George Poděbrady, and with the King of Poland, Casimir IV; war against the Turks).

Edition: Weiss 1841, 24–45.

Bibliography on the *codex*: Rivolta 1933, no. 169; Kristeller 1963–1992, I 343.; Ceruti 1973–1979, V 68–72.

## HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS

11) A. and S. CORONA, *Beatrice d'Aragona. Successo VII, in ID., Successi diversi tragici ed amorosi occorsi in Napoli ed altrove a' Napoletani*,<sup>27</sup> second half of the 17th century.

27 In the transcriptions of titles, *incipit*, *explicit* and portions of text in Italian the following criteria have been adopted: 1. division of words in *scriptio continua* according to the current usage; 2. introduction of punctuation according to modern usage; 3. introduction of diacritics; 4. normalization of upper and lower case letters according to modern usage; 5. elimination of the etymological and para-etymological *h* and in the entries of the verb “to have”; 6. normalization of *u/v* allographs; 7. normalization of the allographs *i/j/y* (they have been instead kept in Hungarian or Slavic toponyms or in personal names with results in *-ye -y-*, because the ancient writers might have known their correct forms); 8. maintenance of the conjunction *et* before vowel and normalization in *e* before consonant; 9. normalization of the voiced palatal affricate; 10. Latin scripts: considered the age of these texts, they are just graphic residues; when they have no phonological value, they have been therefore eliminated.

BAMi, Z 144 sup., fols. 39r–40v.

*Incipit*: «Beatrice, l'altra figliola di Fernando e d'Isabella di Chiaramonte, nacque nell'anno 1453 e, benché fusse stata di ingegno mirabile sopra il suo sesso et età e fosse divenuta col tempo donna d'ecc.me lettere, magnanima, liberale e d'ogn'altra qualità che a donna reale s'appartiene, con tutto ciò non fu donzella né maritata...».

*Explicit*: «... Non si è possuto sapere, per molte diligenze fatte da me o da altro, particolare della dissolutezza di questa regina e perciò non si è possuto passare innanzi ad altro».

Life of Beatrix of Aragon, wife of the Hungarian kings Matthias Corvinus and Ladislaus II Jagellon. Born in 1455 (actually 1457), she was «d'ingegno mirabile sopra il suo sesso et età e [...] donna d'eccellentissime lettere, magnanima, liberale e d'ogne altra qualità che a donna reale s'appartiene», i.e.: “of admirable intellect beyond her sex and age and [...] most excellent woman of letters, magnanimous, liberal and with all the qualities that belong to a woman of royal lineage”. In her youth, she was involved in an illicit passion for the page of honour Don Ramiro Villaracuta: «bello e leggiadro a meraviglia, [...] senza perder tempo se li diede in preda, facendoli favori tali che diede materia a' corteggiani di sospettare che fra di loro passasse prattica inonesta» (i.e.: “beautiful and graceful in a marvellous way, [...] without wasting any time, she offered herself to him and she did him such favours that the courtiers suspected a dishonest relationship between them”). Ramiro was then found strangled in his own bed in 1475 (for the author, Beatrix's sister Eleonor, on the other hand, knew how to govern herself in love affairs, even though she “took pleasure in his dear d. Diego Cavaniglia” for three years). Beatrix was then asked in marriage by Matthias Corvinus; she left for Hungary accompanied by her 14-year-old brother Francis. After Matthias's death, she married Ladislaus II, former king of Bohemia, but was soon repudiated, officially because of her infertility, but, for the author, because of her “too dishonest life”. In 1501, she returned to Naples; her brother, King Frederick, allowed her to reside at Capuana Castle; she was then forced to move to Ischia because of the French invasion. When the danger ceased, she was treated with great respect and reverence by the great captain Consalvo de Cordoba. She died on November 13, 1508 of a strong fever.

The collection of Neapolitan stories can be identified with the one generally known as *La verità svelata a' principi, ovvero Successi diversi tragici ed amorosi occorsi in Napoli ed altrove a' Napoletani*, or as the “Corona manuscripts”, from the name of the presumed authors, Silvio and Ascanio Corona, sometimes unified under the name of “Silvio Ascanio”, who no one has yet been able to identify. It has also been suggested that “Corona” was nothing more than a pseudonym used by the author(s) because of the defamatory nature of these stories. The text, which has never been published but circulated in numerous manuscript copies, was in fact probably composed at different times by several authors (Giacomo Galeota, Domenico Confuorto, Antonio Severino, Nicola Donzelli and others have been suggested). The *Successi* are made up of a primitive core, probably dating back to the middle of the seventeenth century and of updates which, over the course of about fifty years, were added

until the beginning of the following century (in 1713, they were continued by a certain Doctor Giovanni Antonio D'Alessandro). The number of stories varies from manuscript to manuscript; to date, 220 different ones have been counted. The Ambrosiana manuscript is an *excerptum* from the private history compilation; moreover, it originally included 37 biographies, but fols. 1–20 – which contained the lives of three illustrious persons – are missing (the codex, in effect, begins on fol. 21r with the life of “D. Alfonso and D. Sancia of Aragon, Duke of Valentine and others”, marked as “Success IV”).

Edition: Kovács 2015, 197–214.

Bibliography: on the *codex*, Ceruti 1973–1979, V 420. Regarding the complicated editorial phases of the *Successi* and their mysterious authors, cf. at least: Parenti 1983, 281–283. and the rich bibliography reported there. In Borzelli 1908, it is possible to find a list of the testimonies (in which the Ambrosiana manuscript is not mentioned), as well as a summary of 199 *Successi* (cf. p. 39. for that relating to Beatrix) and the complete transcription of some biographies (that of the Hungarian Queen is unfortunately absent).

12) H. LANDUS?, *Relazion del regno d'Ungaria al tempo di re Matia*, before July 1463. 2 exemplars, copies.

BAMi, R 94 sup., codicological unit no. 22, fols. 297r–305v.

*Incipit*, fol. 298r: «Il corpo principal d'Ungaria confina da parte di levante verso siroco co' la Valachia, Servia e Schiavonia. Da siroco in austro confina parte con la Schiavonia e parte con la Bossena...».

*Explicit*, fol. 305v: «... bisogna far general concilio e convoran tutti li baroni ecc.ci secolari e gentiluomi e province del regno e molte congregazioni; ottenere la libertà di poter imponere gravetze al detto regno e, secondo che si delibera nella detta convocazione, così il re delibera e non più».

From the Pinelli collection (with original pressmark: «ZZ-2»).

Bibliography on the *codex*: Rivolta 1914, 25–26.; Revelli 1929, no. 333; Rivolta 1933, no. 125; Ceruti 1973–1979, IV 673–676.; Ceruti–Cogliati 1998, no. 654.

BAMi, S 86 sup., codicological unit no. 17, fols. 184r–195r

*Incipit*, fol. 185r: «Il corpo principal d'Ungaria confina da parte di levante verso siroco co' la Valachia, Servia e Schiavonia. Da siroco in austro confina parte co' la Schiavonia e parte co' la Bossena...».

*Explicit*, fol. 195r: «... bisogna far general concilio, e convocar tutti li baroni ecc.ci secolari e gentiluomini e province del regno. Et in dette congregazioni ottenere la libertà di poter imponeri gravetza al detto regno e, secondo che si delibera nella detta convocazione, così il re delibera e non più».

From the Pinellian collection (no original pressmark).

Bibliography on the *codex*: Revelli 1929, no. 364; Rivolta 1933, no. 166; Ceruti 1973–1979, V 59–60. Cf. in addition: Bascapé 1931, 197.; Carpentieri–Nuzzo 2011, 53–83.; Carpentieri–Nuzzo 2013, 130–132.

In-depth geographical, ethnographic, economic and political description of the 15th-century Hungary. In its first part, rich geographical and social information is offered (topics: geographical boundaries; social structure: barons, nobles, citizens and peasants, but also ethnic minorities such as Germans, Jews, and Gypsies. Geographical description: fertile low-lying mountains; plains where, due to the harsh climate, only subsistence farming is possible; rich deposits of salt, gold and silver located in Transylvania. Description of the Hungarian people: virile and combative, constantly fighting with the Turks; list of fortified castles defending the borders; hydrography: the Danube is “greater than the Po River in Lombardy” and it marks the Hungarian boundary with Serbia and Bulgaria).

After this introduction, an *excursus* on the political history of Hungary from 1380 until April 3, 1462 (the date on which Matthias Corvinus and Emperor Frederick III agreed on the return of the Holy Crown to Magyar territory; this agreement was not actually ratified until July in the following year) is given. After narrating the death of Ludwig the Great, the reign of Sigismund I (1387–1437) is described, although with an omission of more than thirty years; an accurate description of Matthias’ reign follows, also providing the amount of his income and the list of his most important officers.

The work is attributed, with many doubts, to the Venetian Papal Nuncio and Bishop of Crete, Girolamo Lando (d. 1497). The *editio princeps* is due to Johann Christian von Engel. In 1798, he in effect published the report and attributed it to a papal nuncio, dating the text to 1480.<sup>28</sup> In the same year, Martinus Georgius Kovachich published a Latin version, the date of which, however, was 1463.<sup>29</sup> He agreed with Engel on the authorship, as did István Szamota, who published an *excerptum* of the text translated into Hungarian using Engel’s transcription in 1891. Another excerpt was published in the 19th century in an anthology of geographical descriptions of Hungary in the 15th and 16th centuries, attributing the text to a Venetian ambassador, without mentioning its date.<sup>30</sup> The various editions differ not only in the question of authorship, but also in the manuscripts used for publication. While Engel and Kovachich mention the Ambrosia manuscripts (BAMi, R 94 sup. and S 86 sup.), the editor of the geographical anthology refers to a codex in the Marciana Library of Venice, without specifying its pressmark (this is the Marciana It. VI. 276.11). In addition, two other testimonies have never been published: Rome, Vatican Library, Codex Urbinas Latinus 728 and Milano, Trivulziana Library, Codex no. 1458. A common feature of the testimonies is that the author is never identified. It is not clear what prompted Engel to attribute the report to a papal nuncio, since in none of the witnesses explicitly mention the author. The question of authorship therefore still needs further verification.<sup>31</sup>

28 von Engel 1798, II, 6–17.

29 Kovachich 1798, II, 13–22.

30 *Descrizione dell’Ungheria* 1881, 29–34.

31 For more detailed information on the text, on its authorship and on its editions, cf.: Tóth 2008, Tóth 2010 and the bibliography mentioned there.



Specifically, both the Ambrosiana witnesses are partially foreshortened: on the one hand, the short introduction in which the author summarises the content of his writing is missing; and on the other hand, the historical reconstruction ends with the account of the events of 3 April 1462, the day in which János Vitéz and Frederick III reached an agreement according to which Matthias could recover the Holy Crown by paying 80,000 forints (since the author knows about the agreement, but the Holy Crown is not yet in Hungary, the *terminus ante quem* is July 24, 1463, when the Holy Crown returned to Hungary). However, all the witnesses differ in many features and contents (omission of whole sentences and paragraphs; insertion of new elements, such as, for example, the events of the years 1490 and 1491, after Matthias' death, narrated in the Trivulziana and in the Marciana manuscripts).

The narration of Matthias kingdom starts with his imprisonment, release and proclamation as king; then follows with his battles with Frederick III and the Bohemian Hussites, their incursions into Upper Hungary: «e così fu francata quella patria, che fu gran sicurtà del reame, perché ogni volta che Ongari facevano esercito contra ' Turchi, bisognava ne facessero anche un altro contra questi Boemi» (from BAMi, S 86 sup., fol. 192v), i.e. “and so that country was freed, and this was a great relief for the realm, because every time that the Hungarians hired an army against the Turks, they had to hire another one army against these Bohemians”. Then, Matthias' agreement with Frederick III is described: he can recover the Holy Crown by paying 80,000 florins.

Although Matthias is the king of all of Hungary, for the author he is constantly in danger of losing his kingdom through many «contrari», i.e. “adversities” (from BAMi, S 86 sup., fol. 193r–v):

- «essendo lui disceso da Janos, il qual non era ongaro nobile, ma vallacco, non di troppo gentil parentella, li baroni, sdegnandosi di sottomettersi al detto re di strana parentella, cercano ogni giorno modo e via di cacciarlo del reame» (i.e.: “since he was descended from János, who was not a Hungarian but a Wallachian noble man, and not from a noble family, the barons, disdaining to submit to such a foreign-born king, seek every day ways and means to depose him from the throne”); a long list of Matthias' enemies follow;
- the crown is kept by Frederick III, who hopes to regain possession of Hungary;
- «il re è solo, senza parenti [...] bisogna che, se 'l vuol far grandi uomini, bisogna che li faccia de sì vil condizione, che quelli che son gentili [...] si sdegnano ad esserli soggetti» (i.e.: “the king is alone, without relatives [...] when he wants to elect ‘great men’, he therefore has to choose men of a such vile condition, that those who are noble [...] disdain to be subjected”);
- «tutto che ha fatto, ha fatto con forza di danari, onde tutto il suo tesoro è speso e il regno impoverito [...]» (i.e.: “everything he has done, he did thanks to money, so that all his treasure is spent and the kingdom is impoverished [...]).”

However, for the author Matthias also enjoys important advantages (from BAMi, S 86 sup., fol. 193v):

- «la buona fama e riputazione di Janos suo padre, il quale fece molte cose per il reame contra ' Turchi [...]» (i.e.: “the good fame and reputation of his father János, who

- did many things for the kingdom against the Turks [...]”);
- «è molto giovane e in questa età giovanile ha fatto con fortuna prospera di molte fatiche per il regno contra’ Turchi, contra Federico imperatore e ha liberato il reame della persecuzione dei Boemi» (i.e.: “he is very young and in this youthful age he has successfully won numerous battles against the Turks and against Emperor Frederick, and he has also freed the kingdom from the Bohemians’ persecution”);
  - «tutti li populi, essendo lui nato in Ungheria, lo stimano esser de’ suoi e si sforza con tutto suo potere di mantener giustizia e si tiene una vita onestissima» (i.e.: “all the people, since he was born in Hungary, esteem him as one of their own, and he strives to maintain justice and leads a truly honest life”);
  - «la madre, la quale è una santissima e sapientissima donna, li dà grande riputazione, perché è molto riverita e amata da tutti» (i.e.: “his mother, who is a holy and wise woman, gives him great respect, because she is much revered and loved by all”);
  - «ha in sua potestà tutte le castella e fortezza del regno, le quali li danno grande favore» (i.e.: “he has in his power all the castles and fortresses of the kingdom, which give him great favour”);
  - «si sforza di esaltare tutti li suoi amici e farli grandi e di questi sono prima delli prelati eccellentissimi [...]. Delli signori secolari [...]» (i.e.: “he endeavours to exalt all his friends and make them great, and among these there are some excellent prelates [...]. From the secular lords [...]”, with a long list of officers).

Finally (BAMi, S 86 sup., fols. 194v–195r), the author describes the ordinary revenues of the kingdom, which are divided between income from:

- salt mines in Transylvania;
- ordinary and extraordinary “diche” (*dica*) «per le spese molte straordinarie che bisognano contra’ Turchi e Boemi» (i.e.: “for the many extraordinary expenses that are necessary against the Turks and Bohemians”);
- “ceche” («sono quattro luoghi dove principalmente si lavora oro, argento e rame in moneta», i.e.: “four places where gold, silver and copper are mainly melted to make coins”);
- “trentesime” (thirtieth customs duty: «è un dazio consueto e generale che tutte le mercanzie d’entrata e d’uscita del regno pagano al re cinque per cento», i.e.: “it is a customary and general duty of five per cent that all goods entering and leaving the kingdom pay to the king”).

13) M. RICCIO, *De re di Vngaria, libri II*, from ID., *Di Michele Riccio napolitano, De re di Francia libri III. De re d’Ispagna, libri III. De re di Gierusalem, lib. I. De re di Napoli, et di Sicilia, lib. III. De re di Vngaria, libri II*, about 1605–1606, copy.

BAMi, G 289 inf., fols. 227r–248r.

*Incipit*: «De’ re d’Ongheria. Valente era imperatore di Roma e Damaso primo papa; altri dicono che imperava Flavio Iustino, il quale successe a Giustiniano l’anno 373...».

*Explicit*: «... la figliuola del signor di Gandala Guascone, il quale finì i giorni suoi con poco contento».

Chronology of the Hungarian kings from 373 AD to the time of Ladislaus II Jagellon (1456–1516) from the section *De re di Vngaria, libri II* of *De re di Francia...* by the Neapolitan lawyer Michele Riccio (1445–1508). The first Latin edition of the book appeared in Milan in 1506; its title was *De regibus Francice, Hispanice, Hieroslimarum (sic!), Sicilice, Neapolis et Ungaria*. Editions followed throughout Europe: Paris, 1507; Basel, 1517; Basel, 1543 and Tübingen, 1630. The book was translated into Italian by G. Tatti and published in Venice by Vincenzo Valgrisi in 1543. The last edition was published in Naples in 1645.

The history of the Hungarian kings is divided into two books: the first starts with Attila and ends with Géza, while the second deals with the Christian kings; the main source of Ricci's work seems to be Peter Ransan's *Epitome*.<sup>32</sup> The Ambrosiana manuscript is a copy by Giovanni Pietro Italiano, of the Milanese secret Chancellery.

A prominent place in the narration is reserved for Matthias Corvinus, probably also due to Matthias' marriage to Beatrix of Aragon (BAMi, G 289 inf., fols. 246r–248r): first his imprisonment, liberation and acclamation as king; then a brief but passionate narration of his war campaigns; finally, the main events following his death are outlined (in particular, the fate of Beatrix of Aragon: her unhappy marriage to Ladislaus, which ended in divorce, is discussed at length). The author also notes that Ladislaus spent an exorbitant amount of money to have his childless marriage annulled by the Pope so that he could remarry). The events are discussed with the conciseness of a *compendium*, in accordance with the defined aims of the text, giving preference to war campaigns and conquests. No space is in effect devoted to the patronage and cultural activities of Matthias.

The author passionately summarises Matthias' war campaigns as follows; fol. 247r–v: «[...] il sesto anno del suo regno prese la corona in Alba; liberò Jaicza castello dall'assedio de' Turchi e il contado di Sirmi dalle loro scorrerie; superò Suuilla boem, uomo bellicoso, e Federico imperatore de' Romani; sottomesse i Transilvani, i quali, ribellatosi, avevano creato un nuovo re. Diede una rotta a Stefano vaivoda, che gli veniva contra; prese la guerra contra a' Boemi, che, in termine di sette anni che durò la guerra, gli tolse gran parte del paese e fu chiamato re di Boemia e si coronò in Clomuccse» (i.e.: "In the sixth year of his reign he was crowned in Székesfehérvár; he freed the castle of Jajce from the siege of the Turks and the Sirmium country from their raids; he defeated Suuilla Boem [?], a warlike man, and Frederick, the Roman Emperor; he subdued the Transylvanians, who had rebelled and elected a new king. He defeated the Voivode Stephen [*the Moldavian Prince Stephen III*], who had attacked him; he waged war against the Bohemians and in seven years he took possession of a large part of their territory and was elected king of Bohemia and crowned in Olomouc").

Fol. 247v: «Intanto l'arcivescovo di Strigonia e il vescovo di Cinquechiese chiamarono al regno d'Ungaria Casimiro re di Pollonia, il quale, assediato nella fortezza di Nitri da Mattia, appena poté fuggire in Pollonia e Mattia, non contento, mandò l'essercito in Pollonia e, messa

32 For background information on the text, see at least: Szörényi 1994.

ogni cosa a ferro e fuoco, e Casimiro gli andò incontro e, innanzi che venissero alle mani, s'incominciò a trattare la pace e, fatta, posarono le armi. E Mattia, ritornando con l'essercito indietro, assediò Sabazt de' Turchi e lo prese per forza; fece guerra con Federico imperatore un'altra volta e gli prese molte città e tra queste Vienna in Austria» (i.e.: "In the meantime, the Archbishop of Esztergom and the Bishop of Pécs summoned Casimir, king of Poland, to the kingdom of Hungary; Casimir was besieged by Matthias in the fortress of Nitra and he barely succeeded in escaping to Poland. Matthias, not content with this, sent his army to Poland and, having put everything to the sword and fire, Casimir went before him. And Matthias, returning with his army, besieged Šabac, which was under the rule of the Turks and took it by force; he fought again with Emperor Frederick and took many cities from him, including Vienna in Austria").

The author also includes a short note on Matthias' private biography; fols. 247v–248r: «Ebbe Mattia per donna nel secondo matrimonio Beatrice d'Aragona, figliuola minore di Ferdinando re di Sicilia, al quale Mattia mandò aiuto avendo i Turchi occupato i luoghi della Puglia. Morì senza figliuoli l'anno 37 del suo regno» (i.e.: "Matthias had as his second wife Beatrix of Aragon, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand, King of Sicily, to whom Matthias sent help when the Turks occupied numerous territories in Apulia. He died childless in the thirty-seventh year of his reign.").

Editions: Froben, Basel, 1534; in Italian (translated by Tatti G.): Vincenzo Valgrisi, Venice, 1543.

Bibliography on the *codex*: Revelli 1929, no. 112; Ceruti 1973–1979, III 208–220.; Ceruti–Cogliati 1998, no. 652; Gomarasca 2002, 281–315.

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<https://corvina.hu/en/osszes/all/>

## A milánói Biblioteca Ambrosiana hungaricái. Hunyadi Mátyásra és családjára vonatkozó iratok

A tanulmány a Mátyás király idején a Magyar Királyság és az itáliai államok közt létrejött kulturális és történeti kapcsolatokat vizsgálja. Az első rész röviden bemutatja a Magyarország és Itália közti legfontosabb művészeti, tudományos, szellemi érintkezéseket. A második rész 13 dokumentumot elemez, amelyeket a milánói Biblioteca Ambrosianában őriznek és járulékos források lehetnek Mátyás korához. Ezek az iratok három kategóriára oszthatók: kifejezetten Mátyás királynak ajánlott szövegek; uralkodását érintő levelek és utasítások, különösen a Velencei Köztársasággal való kap-

csolatait és a törökökkel, valamint a cseh huszitákkal vívott harcait illetőleg; végül Mátyásra és családjára összpontosító történetírói szövegek. Az iratok listája tartalmazza incipitjüket és explicitjüket átíratát, rövid kivonatukat, és a releváns irodalmat.

**KULCSSZAVAK:** olasz–magyar kapcsolatok, középkori és korai újkor magyar történelem, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Hunyadi Mátyás