

*Vinum facit rusticum optimum latinum*

Latin Convivial Songs in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-  
Century Hungarian Popular Poetry

RUMEN ISTVÁN CSÖRSZ (Budapest)



Fig. 1: Portrait of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz.  
Csokonai Mihály Minden munkái. Ed. Ferenc Schedel. Pest: Hartleben 1844  
(Private collection)

The international element of Hungarian popular poetry mainly comprises songs and poems rooted in student culture. It was not only by way of Hungarian students studying abroad, but also due to domestic linguistic and literacy conditions that Latin-language student songs played a key role in the introduction of genres into literary circulation that either did not yet exist in Hungarian or had just begun to appear<sup>1</sup>. This included songs praising the drinking of wine, which flooded manuscript collections of poems and prints in surprising abundance during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although this can be explained in part by the increased probability of preservation of the respective sources, we do not know of any such texts from earlier times. And although Imola Küllős and I sketched the development of Hungarian-language drinking songs in Volume II of the sub-series *Közköltészet* (“Popular Poetry”) of the eighteenth-century series *Régi Magyar Költők Tára* (“Corpus of Early Hungarian Poetry”)<sup>2</sup>, we did not actually have the opportunity to introduce Hungarian songs of Latin origin. In the following, a few such texts will be discussed using the findings of Attila Szabó Törpényi and József Turóczi Trostler. It is high time for researchers of Neo-Latin literature to begin examining popular poetry and preparing critical editions of such texts.

\* \* \*

Moderate consumption of wine was viewed by people in antiquity, the Middle Ages and early modern times as a basic need in some sense, and the social code of such consumption also differed from that of later times. It was

<sup>1</sup> For the first part of this paper cf. Rumen István CsÖRSZ, *Vinum facit rusticum optimum latinum. Latin bordalok a 18–19. századi magyar közköltészetben* [Latin Convivial Songs in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Hungarian Popular Poetry]. In: József JANKOVICS, Tünde CSÁSZTVAY (eds.), “Nem süllyed az emberiség!”... *Album amicorum Szörényi László LX. születésnapjára* [“Humanity is not Sinking [Anymore]!...” Album Amicorum for László Szörényi’s 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday]. Budapest 2007, 349–358; <[www.iti.mta.hu/szorenyii60.html](http://www.iti.mta.hu/szorenyii60.html)>.

<sup>2</sup> Rumen István CsÖRSZ, Imola KÜLLŐS (eds.), *Közköltészet 2. Társasági és lakodalmi költészet* [Popular Poetry 2: Social and Wedding Poetry]. Budapest 2006 (*Régi Magyar Költők Tára: XVIII. század* [Corpus of Early Hungarian Poetry, 18<sup>th</sup> Century] 8 = RMKT XVIII/8).

not typically a luxury item, instead serving as a drink protecting people's health. Indeed, health preservation is among the main purposes found in texts of the "debate between wine and water" kind, and the ecstasy and loss of consciousness brought on by wine were apparently considered a lesser risk than consuming potentially life-threatening water that transmitted diseases. Therefore, the image of a 'clear fount' was often replaced with wine as a form of 'clarified' water.

In the biblical world view that served as a foundation of medieval thinking, however, wine was still often an implement of sin and debauchery of the kind already found in the story of Noah. This is why Melchizedek, who offers Abraham wine and bread (a Christ metaphor!), is easily distinguishable from this series of scenes, as are the marriage at Cana and the story of the Last Supper in the New Testament; still, these are exceptions because they *consecrate* wine, elevating the spirit from material water to spiritual heights. What is more, the Last Supper with its universal animism (disregarding the communion aspect) probably also reflects the influence of Hellenistic rituals. Therefore, this way of thinking in the New Testament differs somewhat from the "vulgar" or profane depiction of wine culture in the Old Testament. In other cases, indulgence in wine mostly refers to paganism, immorality, being lost, or even to vulnerability (cf. the figure of drunk Holofernes, for example, who falls victim to his own desires).

Medieval goliardic poetry played an important intermediary and restructuring role in popularizing ancient and biblical motifs. Its representatives came from the young elite of medieval society, and goliardic songs thus represented a counterculture – a parody of the religious world order. It did not matter that those representatives would later become church or sometimes secular functionaries: The international poetry of university youth was a "lead-in" to the social criticism of the Renaissance and the Reformation, allowing young men to use anti-religious and anti-imperial phrases and frivolous songs that they would never again be permitted to recite later in life. The increasingly numerous, mostly Latin poems were subsequently further polished by similar student communities over many centuries, and this heritage became a model for many genres of popular poetry written in vernacular.

The Latin 'intellectual laboratory' that tolerated such misdemeanors effectively served as entertainment for the elite intelligentsia, since it was the

only group that understood the intertextual references hidden in the songs and poems. This parodistic intention was further enhanced when religious texts or tunes were placed in an expressly profane context. The drinking song addressed to Bacchus (*Bacche bene venies*), for example, is to be found not only in *Carmina Burana*: Its shorter version also appears in a contemporary liturgical drama, *Ludus Danielis*, during the feast of Darius, king of Babylon. This may be the original form of the poem (i. e. the self-exposing choral song of anti-heroes, of rowdy pagans), and it is where it was borrowed by the students now emphatically venerating Bacchus. Wine can induce many different types of pleasure, and through it the spirit of Bacchus possesses the soul. Thus students who were otherwise being raised in keeping with a medieval, ascetic-stoic world view could sing about it even if doing so ostentatiously violated taboos. In the goliardic tradition, this intention of holding up a crooked mirror, of making things profane or rewording them, can be found in many places – like the *Officium lusorum* (“Office of the Gamblers”), the *Evangelium secundum marcas argenti Gospel* (“According to the Mark of Silver”), or the *Missa potatorum* (“Bacchus Liturgy”) and its variations over several centuries that we will talk about later, to name but a few. With some exaggeration, this deviance caused by the excessive consumption of wine may have been part of some form of lyrical self-interpretation.

The song *In taberna quando sumus* was created from fragments of religious tunes, and it declares that before wine all men are equal, for wine belongs to everyone. This constitutes a perversion of the moralizing dances of death in which leaving the mortal world is not represented by death but by the dictate of drinking, and thus as part of a common social system: “Like the emperor drinks, so does the servant.” The pub song also builds on homologous verses and stanzas and had a significant impact on the popular culture of subsequent eras, for example on Endre Pázmándi Horváth’s (1778–1839) famous convivial song<sup>3</sup> quoted by Mór Jókai (1825–1904)<sup>4</sup>, by János Arany (1817–1882) in his *Collection of Folksongs* (1874)<sup>5</sup>, and in Sándor Petőfi’s (1823–1849) *Kördal* (“Round Song”) written as a parody of patriotic

<sup>3</sup> Endre Pázmándi Horvát, *Kisebb Költemények*. Pest 1832, 176–177.

<sup>4</sup> Mór Jókai, *És mégis mozog a föld (Eppur si muove)* [And Yet The Earth Moves] (novel, 1872), chapter 1: *A csitvári krónika* [Chronicle from the Hush Castle].

<sup>5</sup> János Arany, *Régi népdalok...* [Early Folk Songs] (1874, manuscript), part I, nr. 51 (paraphrasis of Pázmándi Horváth’s song).

convivial songs, intentionally resurrecting goliardic tradition. It should also come as no surprise that a fragment of *In taberna quando sumus* known from *Carmina Burana* appears in a Debrecen manuscript from the 1820s<sup>6</sup>, where it begins with *Bibit ille, bibit illa, bibit servus cum ancilla* and is entitled *300 Esztendő's Nóta* ("300-Year-Old Song"). Since the first edition of the old Bavarian codex discovered in 1803 was published in 1847<sup>7</sup>, the Debrecen author could hardly have copied this drinking song from a German periodical. What is more, the versions also differ in their wording. The song must therefore have been introduced by wandering students returning from foreign universities; it is unlikely that it would have survived the changing eras of the Hungarian tradition unaltered.

Bibit ille, bibit illa,  
Bibit servus cum ancilla,  
Bibit Abbas cum Priore,  
Bibit Coqus cum factore,  
Et pro Rege, et pro Papa,  
Bibunt vinum sine aqua;  
Et pro Papa, et pro Rege  
Bibunt omnes sine lege,  
Bibunt primum, et secundo,  
Donec nihil sit in fundo.

At the time, Latin was the principal language in Hungarian literacy (often as opposed to German)<sup>8</sup>. What was not yet accessible – or sometimes also inexpressible – in Hungarian could easily be enunciated in Latin in the intellectual circles of the intelligentsia, who had various mother tongues (Hungarian,

<sup>6</sup> Dániel Sárvány (1828–1835); Béla STOLL, *A magyar kéziratok énekeskönyvek és versgyűjtemények bibliográfiája (1542–1840)*. Budapest 2002, no. 758.

<sup>7</sup> *Carmina Burana. Lateinische und deutsche Lieder und Gedichte einer Handschrift des XIII. Jahrhunderts aus Benedictbeuern auf der k. Bibliothek zu München*. Ed. Johann Andreas Schmeller. Stuttgart 1847.

<sup>8</sup> Rumen István CSÖRSZ, *Közköltészet a többnyelvű Magyarországon (1700–1840)* [Popular Poetry in Multilingual Hungary, 1700–1840]. In: Ferenc BIRÓ (ed.), *Tanulmányok a magyar nyelv ügyének 18. századi történetéből* [Papers on the History of the Case of the Hungarian Language in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century]. Budapest 2005, 207–260, here 211–219. On the international context of Hungarian student poetry: Attila T. SZABÓ, *A magyar diákénekelés történetéhez* [On the History of Hungarian Student Singing]. In: Attila T. SZABÓ, *Nyelv és irodalom. Válogatott tanulmányok, cikkek* [Language and Literature. Selected papers]. Vol. V. Bucharest 1981, 162–175.

Slovak, German, Croatian, etc.). As we know now, this predominance of Latin also cast some shadows on the Hungarian language; still, we can consider the cooperation fruitful. Even the convivial songs of German student associations were first published in Latin: *Gaudeamus igitur*, of medieval origin, came to Hungarian colleges from German academies. We have corresponding notes primarily from Debrecen<sup>9</sup>, but no knowledge of a Hungarian translation<sup>10</sup>.

The roots of convivial student songs mostly go back to the Middle Ages, and the “clerical” layer is quite strong in Hungarian popular poetry. While Hungarian versions of other genres already appear during the seventeenth century<sup>11</sup>, however, topics related to drinking wine only begin to appear in the relevant *written* sources in the eighteenth century. Though it is difficult to imagine that the oft-denounced drunks of the sixteenth century would have downed their wine without singing toasts, many sub-genres like the praising of a good wine or the bragging and storytelling of profligate men became widespread in Hungary only relatively late, namely around the middle of the eighteenth century. The exception to this general rule of thumb is the debate between wine and water, which was also present in school drama.

The medieval poet known as Archipoëta (“Archpoet”) was identified as Gualterus de Mapes in the eighteenth century. An excerpt from his humorous *Confession* achieved exceptional dissemination throughout European popular poetry, including that of Hungary<sup>12</sup>. We can already find its contaminated Latin text in the *Codex Magyi* compiled around 1478<sup>13</sup>, which undoubtedly proves a continuous awareness of it. It only appears in Hungarian around the middle of the eighteenth century, however – initially adapted to drunken women, with the original male version making the rounds soon thereafter. Besides individual attempts at translation – Gedeon Ráday (1713–

---

<sup>9</sup> See the songbook by Bálint Nyáry (Debrecen 1823), STOLL (note 7), no. 1251: 156 (5 couplets).

<sup>10</sup> Only one Latin text was recorded in the manuscript *Nótás könyv* (“Songbook”; 1821–1828), STOLL (note 7), no. 1234: the *Gaudeamus igitur* (178–179).

<sup>11</sup> E. g. love songs, laments, thoughtful and satirical songs of women, the topsy-turvy world and the variants of the Eldorado motif, animal weddings etc.

<sup>12</sup> József TURÓCZI-TROSTLER, *Az Archipoeta és a magyar irodalom* [The Archpoet and Hungarian Literature]. *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* [Literaturgeschichtliche Mitteilungen] 57 (1953), 97–109.

<sup>13</sup> János Magyi’s *Formulary* (1476–1493), Pécs, Library of Episcopacy, 95.

1792)<sup>14</sup>, Ádám Pálóczi Horváth (1760–1820)<sup>15</sup> – we also know of a translation by Gergely Édes (1763–1847) in 1803, later printed in an almanac, with the title *Epitaphium egy ifjú borisszák halálára* (“Epitaph on the death of a young wine drinker”)<sup>16</sup>.

Due to the text’s linguistic authority, the Latin original as well as its modified modern versions were included as aphorisms in manuscripts, where we can otherwise barely find any convivial songs at all<sup>17</sup>. Some of the versions go back to Gottfried August Bürger’s (1747–1794) volume published in 1778<sup>18</sup>; Gábor Sebestyén, for instance, remarks the following about *Cantilena potatoria* in his manuscript<sup>19</sup>: “I copied it from Bürger.” Beethoven likewise looked to this source when he set the cellar song to music in 1790–91, and Gedeon Ráday’s literary translation<sup>20</sup> can also be traced to Bürger’s work. The precise title descriptions of the various manuscript versions indicate that the Bürger version can be considered the source for all of them – with the exception of one collection of poems from Nagyenyed, which specifies issue 2 of the periodical *Erdélyi Muzéum*. The Latin version thus also spread within the intellectuals’ own circles through philological vectors. In the primary manuscripts (which reflect the practical needs of their compilers), the Latin opening is typically also followed by a Hungarian stanza. This is what we find in *Ötödfélszáz énekek* (“450 Songs”, 1813), in Ádám Pálóczi Horváth’s own translation, and in the following Debrecen manuscript, in which Ráday’s version appears<sup>21</sup>:

---

<sup>14</sup> See below, note 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ötödfélszáz énekek* [450 Songs], (1813), no. 355 *Korcsma-tus* (“Toast in the Pub”).

<sup>16</sup> Édes Gergely’ Íramatai és danái (Epigrammata & Odae) [Epigrams and Odes by Gergely Édes]. Vác: Antal Gottlieb 1803, 74 *Egy borisszák’ halálára* (“On the Death of a Wine Drinker”); Kassai új és ó kalendárium [Old and New Calendar]. Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) 1811, Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Hungarian National Library), PKB 20/1811.

<sup>17</sup> Songbook by Elis Balassa (1771), STOLL (note 7), no. 302; Collection of Lajos Farkas (1823–1832), STOLL no. 7709.

<sup>18</sup> Gottfried August Bürger, *Gedichte*. Göttingen: Johann Christian Dieterich 1778, 290–291 *Carmina potatoria*.

<sup>19</sup> Collection of Gábor Sebestyén (1813–1814), STOLL (note 7), no. 696, fol. 117<sup>b</sup>–118<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Ráday Gedeon, Földi János *Összes versei* [Complete Poems by Gedeon Ráday and János Földi]. Ed. Szilárd BORBÉLY. Budapest 2009 (*Régi Magyar Költők Tára XVIII. század* [Corpus of Early Hungarian Poetry, 18<sup>th</sup> century] 11), 53.

<sup>21</sup> Collection of János Polgár (1830), STOLL (note 7), no. 771, Toldalék [Appendix].



Mihi est propositum in taberna mori,  
Large vinum fundere sitiendi ori,  
Ut dicant mox in coelo angelorum chori,  
Deus sit propitius bono potatori.

Szándékozom életemet végezni korcsmába,  
Haldokló számhoz közel hol bor lesz kannába,  
Hadd mondják az angyalok a végső órába:  
Isten a jó borivót vegye oltalmába.

Collection of János Polgár (1830)

I intend to finish my life in a pub;  
there will be a wine pot near my lip.  
Let the angels say in the last hour:  
may God take the good winedrinker to heaven!

Besides these short Latin-Hungarian poems, there is also a more extensive text family that propagates the motif of the testament of a drunken person burying himself in a barrel from the Archpoet's confession. We can trace the song *Hogyha én ma egy oly pincébe lemászok* ("If I climb down to such a cellar today") – with variants – to Hungarian manuscripts from the first years of the nineteenth century, and later to folklore tradition<sup>22</sup>.

Ha én a pinczébe jó kedvvel lemászok,  
Hol kétszáz hordó bort nyögve tart az ászok,  
Addig iszom, míg a fogam ki nem ázik,  
S a szőlőmag bennem majd ki nem csirázik.

If I climb down to such a cellar in good cheer,  
where the moaning sleepers hold two hundred barrels,  
I will drink until my teeth get soaked  
and the seed of the grape will germinate in my stomach.

The Latin original appears in another important location as well, namely as a stanza of the convivial song *Vinus, vina, vinum* quoted in the title of this essay<sup>23</sup>. Collegiate Latin linguistic awareness and praise for wine – and even

<sup>22</sup> A variant from the beginning of the nineteenth century was published in: *Világi énekek és versek 1720–1846* [Secular Songs and Poems 1720–1846]. Ed. by Rumen István CSÖRSZ, epilogue by Imola KÜLLÖS. Budapest 2001 (*A magyar költészet kincsestára* [Treasury of Hungarian Poetry] 97), no. 275.

<sup>23</sup> With melody found in the songbook of Dániel Melegh (1797), STOLL (note 7), no. 432. Critical edition with commentary on the melodies and texts: Dénes BARTHA, *A XVIII. század*

the apotheosis of intoxication – are combined quite ingeniously in it: It claims that wine only makes one happy in the neutral gender, but then it can even turn a peasant into an expert in Latin. The corresponding stanza is relatively rare in the West, although it is encountered several times in sixteenth-century Italy. Orlando di Lasso, for example, composed a five-part piece around the text (*Fertur in convivii / Vinus vina vinum*), while Guillaume de Faugues composed an entire polyphonic mass in which the popular tune functions as the cantus firmus.

In *Világi nóták* (“Secular songs”), a manuscript from the end of the eighteenth century, possibly from Transylvania, we find an extended version supplemented with stanzas about student life<sup>24</sup>:

Vinus vina vinum nomen adjectivum  
 Masculinum displicet sordet femininum  
 In neutro genere vinum est divinum  
 Vinum facit rusticum optimum latinum  
 Discat puer sedulo sua rudimenta  
 Principista supleat [sic!] sua suplementa  
 Gramatista genere hic haec hoc attendat  
 Syntaxista regulas per verba perquendat [sic!].  
 Moduletur poeta carmina perpendet  
 Diligenter precedet quantitatum leget  
 Agrum votat rusticus artem suam sutor  
 Destineat figuras tropus suas rhetor.

*Világi Nóták* (“Secular Songs”), no. 18

The song was apparently still quite common during Mór Jókai’s student years, and he refers to it in the Latin gibberish in chapter eighteen of *Rákóczi fia* (“Rákóczi’s Son”; 1892) as well as in chapter five of *A lőcsei fehér asszony* (“The White Woman from Lőcse”; 1892), where he quotes it word for word:

Vinus, vina, vinum,  
 Nomen adjectivum...

Mór Jókai, *A lőcsei fehér asszony*, chapter 5

---

*magyar dallamai. Énekelt versek a magyar kollégiumok diák-melodiáriumaiból (1770–1800)* [Hungarian Tunes from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Sung Poems from the Student Songbooks of the Hungarian Colleges (1770–1800)]. Budapest 1935, 96–97.

<sup>24</sup> *Világi Nóták* (“Secular Songs”; late 18<sup>th</sup> century), no. 18; STOLL (note 7), no. 516A.

Also known from *Carmina Burana* is the *Drinkers' Mass*, a liturgical parody that was popular during Renaissance times: We find versions mixed with other languages (especially German) among the Saint Martin's Day student songs<sup>25</sup>. *Forrott mustkori tus* ("Toast to fermented must"), noted down in 1813, also invokes this tradition<sup>26</sup>:

Vinum, bonum,  
Post Martinum  
Vinum bonum Guter vein,  
Post Martinum lustig szein.

*Ötödfélszáz énekek* ("450 Songs"), 1813, no. 334

Rewritten versions desecrating liturgy or praising the drinking of wine or playing with dice first appear in István Herschman's songbook (1746–1797)<sup>27</sup> entitled *Vespera de S. Bacho* (written down by a Catholic student who later became a priest and possibly also visited Krakow). A copy from the 1830s by József Kelecsényi (*Vesperae Bachii praesente Copiosa Crimena*)<sup>28</sup> is preserved. In it, antiphons and psalms follow each other in regular succession, with the hymn concluding the service being not a parody but an excerpt from a student song with a life of its own:

Sic semper laeti  
Sunt studiosi  
Audaces, bibaces et generosi.  
Nobis popina  
Non est ruina  
Solamen iuvamen et medicina<sup>29</sup>.

Songbook by István Herschman, 47

---

<sup>25</sup> *Presulem sanctissimum veneremus, gaudeamus, wölen wir nach gras gan, hollereyo!* Quoted from Forster's songbook (1540) by Franz Magnus BÖHME, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch. Volkslieder der Deutschen nach Wort und Weise aus dem 12. bis 17. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig 1877 (reprint: Hildesheim 1966), no. 353.

<sup>26</sup> Critical edition: Dénes BARTHA, József KISS (eds.), *Ötödfélszáz énekek. Pálóczi Horváth Ádám dalgyűjteménye az 1813. évből* [450 Songs. Collection of Songs by Ádám Pálóczi Horváth from the year 1813]. Budapest 1953, 414.

<sup>27</sup> Songbook by István Herschman (1746–1797), STOLL (note 7), no. 310.

<sup>28</sup> József Kelecsényi, *Mulattatók tára* ("Diverting Collection"; 1832–1840), STOLL (note 7), no. 783, 60<sup>a</sup>–64<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Songbook by István Herschman (note 27), 47 (*Hymnus*).

The Latin-language *Felelgető tus* (“Toast to back-and-forth”), surviving among the convivial songs in *Ötödfélszáz énekek* (“450 Songs”), likewise parodies church singing<sup>30</sup>:

Jam ego bibo,  
Fiat voluntas tua;  
In bellis resonant, resonant arma fortissima, arma fortissima,  
In vitris latitant, latitant vina dulcissima, vina dulcissima,  
Piff, paff, puff, trallalalalala.

*Ötödfélszáz énekek* (“450 Songs”), 1813, no. 337

Beside the purely Latin songs, there are also some featuring a mix of languages. The kinship of *A, B, C, D, luctus cede* and *A, B, C, D, vigyázz ide* (“A, B, C, D, listen here”)<sup>31</sup> is based on the same joke: Imitating a nursery rhyme for children learning how to write and spell, the song in fact praises carnival festivities, dancing, and drinking wine<sup>32</sup>. Its Transylvanian version, which parodies the Song of the Three Holy Children, is *Canticum trium perversorum puerorum*<sup>33</sup>. The most important stanzas were available in both languages and could occasionally replace one another even though their meanings were not identical. The importance of the Latin language decreased with time, however: While the earliest version by Péter Beregszászi Tóth from the 1730s was still entirely in Latin<sup>34</sup>, Sámuel Almási happily deleted the first two stanzas and replaced them with Hungarian ones a hundred years later<sup>35</sup>.

As an example, let us look at two parallel stanzas from the repertoire, then at two using a mix of languages:

I, K, L, M, Nem kimellem	I, K, L, M I don't save
-----------------------------	----------------------------

<sup>30</sup> BARTHA, KISS, *Ötödfélszáz énekek* (note 17), 415, no. 337.

<sup>31</sup> Critical edition: CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 2.

<sup>32</sup> A song type with a similar system: *A, A, A, éljen a nagy csutóra* (“A, A, A, hurrah the flask”). The antecedents in Hungary are the poems written by László Amade (1703–1764) as well as the Hungarian and Slovakian popular poetry. See for example *Közköltészet I. Mulattatók* [Popular Poetry I: Amusing Songs]. Ed. Imola KÜLLŐS in collaboration with Rumen István CSÖRSZ. Budapest 2000 (*Régi Magyar Költők Tára: XVIII. század* [Corpus of Early Hungarian Poetry, Eighteenth Century] 4 = RMKT XVIII/4), no. 114.

<sup>33</sup> Collection of László Miksa (turn of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries), STOLL (note 7), no. 501, vol. V. 169<sup>a-b</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Songbook of Péter Beregszászi Tóth (1736–1738), Stoll (note 7), no. 136, 3a.

<sup>35</sup> Sámuel Almási, *Magyar Dalnok* [Hungarian Bard] (1834), Stoll (note 7), no. 795, no. 23.

Tszimámat a portul,  
Torkomat a bortul.  
I, K, L, M,  
Nem kimellem.<sup>36</sup>

I, K, L, M,  
Amo talem  
qui bene bachatur  
vino purgatur  
I, K, L, M,  
amo talem.<sup>37</sup>

Nam, nem, nim, nom,  
Hoz bort innom,  
Vivat compania  
Tota frequentia,  
Nam, nem, nim, nom,  
Hozz bort innom.<sup>38</sup>

ABCD  
Lucrum CD  
Gazda borral kínál,  
jó bor kedvet tsinal:  
ABCD  
Lucrum CD.<sup>39</sup>

my boots from the powder  
nor my throat from the wine.  
I, K, L, M  
I don't save.

*Felvidító V. Nóták I.* (“Exhilarating Songs”), 1824

I, K, L, M  
I like someone  
who can drink a lot  
and can be purified by wine.  
I, K, L, M  
I like someone.

Collection of János Veress, 1828–1830

Nam, nem, nim, nom  
Bring me wine to drink!  
Hail  
the whole company!  
Nam, nem, nim, nom  
Bring me wine to drink!

Songbook from Lőcse, 1768

ABCD  
We win! CD  
The keeper offers wine,  
the wine elevates us.  
ABCD  
We win! CD

*Eb-marásra Kutya-szőr* (“Hair of the Dog”)

The Latin language made it possible to share songs with student literature in other countries and languages. An example for this is the song *Ez a pohár bujdossék* (“Let this cup wander”), which can be traced back to a German

<sup>36</sup> *Felvidító V. Nóták I* (“Exhilarating Songs”) 1824, V/1; STOLL (note 7), no. 720, no. 49, stanza 3.

<sup>37</sup> Collection of János Veress (1828–1830); STOLL (note 7), no. 1287, 226–227, stanza 3.

<sup>38</sup> Songbook from Lőcse (today: Levoča, SK; 1768), STOLL (note 7), no. 1080, 17–18 *Aria de Bacho*, verse 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Eb-marásra Kutya-szőr* (“Hair of the Dog”): Undated chapbook, Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Hungarian National Library) 803.098, no. 3. ABC ének (“ABC Song”), stanza 1, RMKT XVIII/8 (note 2), no. 2/V.

drinking song<sup>40</sup>. From the end of the 1780s it is mostly Hungarian versions of the song that are known, with Latin translations being relatively rare. One Latin stanza is included in Ádám Pálóczi Horváth's version (*Hoc poculum vagatur, vivat societas*), while the Slovak Ján Buoc (1770–1790) wrote down two independent Latin stanzas beginning with *Hoc poculum ebibam, vivat societas*<sup>41</sup>. This makes it clear that the song also spread with the Latin lyrics.

Another song type occasionally “locked” into Latin was also documented around the same time<sup>42</sup>:

Cur engratur otiatur Nostrum poculum  
Solvant ejus quo tenetur Retinaculum  
Ut cicius pergere  
promptius procedere  
Possit ordo sitienter cito tangere :/:

Collection from Ekel / Csallóköz (today Okoličná na Ostrove, Slovakia) (1767–1790)

In Mátyás Dubinsky's songbook (1787) originating from Upper Hungary, we find almost exclusively Latin texts – including unique songs, as is the case in the manuscript of *Felvidító* (“Exhilarating Songs”) from Sárospatak, compiled after 1824<sup>43</sup>:

Erat quondam dies festus  
convocatus est comestus  
Abbas Prior et Claustralis  
cum tota familia.

Songbook by Mátyás Dubinsky (1787)

From the above, we can clearly see the important role that Latin popular poetry played in creating the “common denominator” between Hungarian

<sup>40</sup> Gábor Mátray argues that this song was based on the melody and text of the German drinking song *Unser Gläschen* (more precisely: *Ich nehm' mein Gläschen in die Hand*). Néprajzi Múzeum Ethnológiai Adattára [Ethnological Archive of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography] no. 2969, l. 175–178. [1806, 1812, 1847]

<sup>41</sup> Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Hungarian National Library), Kt. Quart. Lat. 2688, 169<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Collection from Ekel (1767–1790), STOLL (note 7), no. 1079, 340<sup>b</sup>, Más Déak, in connection (342<sup>a</sup>) with the more popular incipit *Cur muratur otiatur nos*. Hungarian and bilingual variants: CSÖRSZ, KÜLLÖS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Songbook by Mátyás Dubinsky (1787), STOLL (note 7), no. 1373, 8<sup>b</sup>–9<sup>b</sup>. *Alia de Bachiferiis Monachor[um]*.

and foreign students. However, we can also observe other processes in student literature – which also frequently included ethnic mockeries, i.e. disparaging messages addressed by students to each other in Latin<sup>44</sup> – beyond the spontaneous maintaining of harmony: an imprint of domestic social norms on the psychology of the knowledge of the Latin language. Namely, the distance between the world within the college (regulated by its own rules, in Latin) and the world outside (in market towns and villages where Hungarian or some other vernacular language was spoken) had inevitably increased. The students were allowed to leave the college building in their free time and could thus step into a world that recalled their old self, but the many common collegiate experiences and challenges along with the associated linguistic code system likely deepened the Latin or *deák* (student) identity. Latin translations or mistranslations of popular pieces of Hungarian popular poetry provided excellent opportunities to express this, but also to parody the language laws<sup>45</sup>. Naturally, these were mostly love songs, and the convivial songs were also connected to the poetry of the students' private life.

The students' identity as part of the elite developed under a burden they shouldered proudly, and it relied to a great extent on the power of the Latin language to advance and elevate people within society. In addition, we can observe another important aspect in their convivial songs besides the underlying goliardic mode. References to antiquity in Csokonai's poems, for example – which we will analyze below – clearly show that the ancient poets and writers that were part of the curriculum also had an effect through their similar, more personal texts. In this regard, it would also be worthwhile to investigate more closely the impact of Anacreon's poems and world view on popular poetry.

As it was, it was certainly easier for Hungarian students to identify with the attitudes of pagan poets praising wine and exalted ecstasy than with those of the market-town bourgeoisie. The imitation of antiquity with a medieval tinge was thus also an expression of educated licentiousness, for which drinking wine provided an important background of identity. What is

---

<sup>44</sup> See the satirical song *Studentes Poloni* on Polish students: Bocskor Codex (until 1730): STOLL (note 7), no. 180, 21a–b.

<sup>45</sup> CSÖRSZ, *Közköltészet* (note 3).

more, the world of Dionysus certainly prevailed on occasion, e. g. in one of the wine-toasting rhymes in the Sárospatak college manuscript *Felvidító*<sup>46</sup>:

Éllyen Bakhús a kantsóval,  
Ne gondollyunk Apollóval  
Egy szőlő fürt többet ér,  
Mint ezer levél babér.

Hail Bacchus with the jug,  
let's not think about Apollo!  
A bunch of grapes is worth more  
than a thousand bay leaves.

*Felvidító V. Nóták I.* ("Exhilarating Songs"), no. 45.

"IN THIS I AGREE WITH HORACE":  
MIHÁLY CSOKONAI VITÉZ (1773–1805) AND THE CHANGING  
TRADITION OF HUNGARIAN CONVIVIAL SONGS

It is important to observe how individual motifs are syncretized, e. g. how they can create an impression of being antique and not antique at the same time. Convivial songs feature drinking not only as the anthropological situation of their singing, but also as their leitmotif.

Such jovial songs are completely absent from the Hungarian literature of centuries before the eighteenth – even those forms that were allowed and conventional in the West. The person drinking wine beyond everyday measure previously always appears deviant, and the lines spoken by drunk characters in eighteenth-century school drama are also invariably of a self-exposing nature. Bragging rakes in popular poetry follow in this manner<sup>47</sup>, and the satirical convivial songs of Gergely Czuczor (1800–1866) and Sándor Petőfi signal the rich afterlife of this genre.

Talking about wine itself in this context meant a conscious deviation from the rules of the genre. The ancient model is more helpful in this regard than the goliardic precedents – with the exception of the paraphrases of the debate between wine and water, and possibly of the comparison of certain wine types and regions, for which we can also find examples in Horace's works<sup>48</sup>. It is not a coincidence that the first eighteenth-century convivial songs originated from this collegiate, communal space: *Vizet, pájtás, te ne igyál*

---

<sup>46</sup> *Felvidító V. Nóták I.* ("Exhilarating Songs") (note 36).

<sup>47</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLÖS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 50.

<sup>48</sup> Horace primarily praises the wine made in Falernum. With his reference to his own wine as "bad Sabin wine", he depicts his way of life as simple and provincial (*carm.* I, 20).



(“Water, my fellow, you shouldn’t drink”; 1730s/1760s)<sup>49</sup>, for example, or the rewritten versions of the Archpoet’s confession with male or female characters. These appear in the manuscripts and chapbooks as if supporting each other, keeping the topic alive.

Another key source of models and influence was the mostly also goliardic social song culture of Western Europe. The import of primarily German as well as some Italian songs during the seventeenth century increased noticeably in the eighteenth century, with the French *vaudeville* – to which István Kultsár (1760–1828) correctly linked László Amade’s (1703–1764) work as well as the work of anonymous song writers in 1823 – playing an increasingly larger role, for example<sup>50</sup>. Both in Western Europe and in Hungarian popular poetry, alphabet songs – sometimes featuring playful Macaronisms (e. g. *Minden nap, minden nap jó borral kell élni / Omni die, omni die vinum est bibendum*)<sup>51</sup> – constituted a sub-genre, while *toasts* were often embellished with proverbial inserts<sup>52</sup>.

The world of Horace’s and Anacreon’s convivial songs differs significantly from this, but it was nevertheless gently incorporated into the Hungarian tradition. Ancient topics were mixed with texts of a different nature, especially at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The major difference was that wine no longer served only as social entertainment, but also for the soul’s refreshment and the drowning of sorrows: Instead of *combibitas* (“drinking together”, which was also one of the sources for the names of medieval Hungarian jocalators and harlequins)<sup>53</sup>, it played an

---

<sup>49</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Rumen István CSÖRSZ, Kultsár István és a Hasznos Mulatságok »köznépi dall«-ai (1818–1828) [István Kultsár and the Popular Songs, Published in Hasznos Mulatságok (Useful Pastime)]. In: Rumen István CSÖRSZ (ed.), *Doromb. Közköltészeti tanulmányok* [Jew’s Harp. Popular Poetry Papers] 2. Budapest 2013, 150–151; Csaba SZIGETI, A magyar vaudeville 1823-ban [Hungarian Vaudeville in 1823]. In: Rumen István CSÖRSZ (ed.), *Doromb. Közköltészeti tanulmányok* [Jew’s Harp. Popular Poetry Papers] 4. Budapest 2015, 283–312.

<sup>51</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 6.

<sup>52</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 12/III.

<sup>53</sup> On this rare “profession”, which may have been known only in Hungary, see László ZOLNAY, *A magyar muzsika régi századaiból* [On the Early Centuries of Hungarian Music]. Budapest 1977, 296–298.



Fig. 2: Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, Ódák két könyvben [Odes in two books].  
Nagy-Váradon: János Ferentz Tichy 1809  
(Private collection)

increasingly individualistic role. Horace's message of not wasting a care on a grim future can be traced in several texts, which incidentally formally belong to the *vaudeville* type:

Megnyertük, amit rég kértünk, Szörnyű borbőséget értünk, Káros volna most meghalni, S e világról eltalpalni, Haj, haj, Péter, Pál, Elébb állít az halál, E' még azért rád talál, Egyet jót igyál! <sup>54</sup>	We have reached what we wished for there is a monstrous abundance of wine it would be sad to die now and kick the bucket. Hey, hey, Peter, Paul death will come to you, but until then, have a good drink!
A, B, C, D, Örvendezz te, Én ugyan nem bánom, Sőt inkább akarom, A, B, C, D, Örvendezz te! [...]	A, B, C, D, be merry, I don't mind, indeed I want it. A, B, C, D, be merry!
K, L, M, N, Nem lesz nékem Búsulásom Avagy rossz lakásom, K, L, M, N, Nem lesz nékem. [...]	K, L, M, N, I won't yearn or have poor food. K, L, M, N, I won't yearn
S, T, V, U, Nem bánt a bú, Szívemre nézhetek, Kedvemre élhetek, S, T, V, U, Nem bánt a bú.	S, T, V, U, sorrow doesn't outrage me: I can see my beloved and I live as I like. S, T, V, U, sorrow doesn't outrage me!
X, Y, <i>Eb sirasson</i> <i>Az elmúlt napokat,</i> <i>jövendő dolgokat,</i> X, Y, <i>Eb sirasson!</i> <sup>55</sup>	X, Y, let the dog cry about past times and the future X, Y, let the dog cry!

A common motif in goliardic poetry is the cult of the present time, of youth and bachelorhood as opposed to the future, authority, and old age symbolizing troubles<sup>56</sup>:

<sup>54</sup> 1790s; CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 51, stanza 7.

<sup>55</sup> Late 18<sup>th</sup> century; CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 43, stanzas 1, 3, 5–6.

<sup>56</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 37/III, stanzas 1–2.

Bánatom nincs, élek vigassággal,  
Vigadozok kedves barátimmal,  
Barátságom közlöm az ifjakkal,  
Ifjúságom teljes nyájassággal.

Vigan élek, nincs semmi bánatom,  
Mit bánkódom, mikor jól van dolgom?  
Mulatsághoz most vagyon jó módom,  
Mivel még most csak magamra gondom.

Ifjak vagyunk, éljünk frissen,  
A vén tyúknál szebb a pisen,  
Majd, majd ha megvénülünk,  
Osztán eleget ülünk.  
Aki komor, nem gavallér,  
Az egy pipa dohánt nem ér. [...]<sup>57</sup>

I have no sorrow and live merrily  
carouse with my dear friends  
I make friends with the young  
so my youth is full of suavity.

I live happily, have no sorrow.  
Why should I yearn if I have a good life?  
I have a chance to be merry  
as I take care of myself.

We are young, let us live without care  
a chick is nicer than an old hen.  
When we grow old,  
we will sit enough.  
He who is surly is not a cavalier,  
he isn't worth a dose of tobacco for a  
pipe.

#### MIÉRT NE INNÁNK? (“WHY WOULDN'T WE DRINK?”)

Csokonai's two important convivial songs imitating antiquity provide good examples of how various threads of tradition are woven together and a new genre is created.

The poem *Miért ne innánk?* (“Why wouldn't we drink?”) is dated 1796 and was published in the same year. One of its lines emphasizes what Csokonai intended to suggest with the strange, apologetic title.

Igyunk barátim! a' komor  
Bú' lángja nem tsatázik,  
Ha mádi borral a' gyomor  
A' kis pokol meg ázik.  
Igyál! ne, e' szőlő-gerezd'  
Levével öblödet fereszd.  
Vígadj ötsém! ma-holnap  
Zsákjába dughat a' pap.

Mi gondod a' továbbira,  
'S világotat hogy' éled?  
Tekints tsak e' jó mádira,  
Szíved tudom meg éled.

Let's drink, my fellows! The flame  
of the surly sorrow doesn't flatter  
when the stomach, the little hell  
becomes wet with Mád wine.  
Drink! Wash your throat  
with the liquor of this grape.  
Be merry, young man! The priest  
may put you in a sack soon.

You shouldn't care a pin for the future  
and how you live in the world!  
Look at the good wine from Mád  
and your heart will revive.

<sup>57</sup> ca. 1800. CSÖRSZ, KÜLLŐS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 53/l, stanza 1.

Más hadd gyötörje a' fejét  
Töltvén bolond esztendejét;  
Éljünk rövid napunkkal  
Múlatva víg *igyunkkal*.

A' Bakhus úr' pintzéjibe  
Magam leszek vezérték:  
Nunc est bibendum! Ennyibe  
Horáttzal egyet értek.<sup>(\*)</sup>  
Igyunk, eb a' ki nem barát!  
Tegyünk le minden maskarát,  
'S már most no, *poculatim*  
Igyunk vidor barátim!

(\*) Horatius. Carm. Lib. I. Od. 37.

Let others worry their head  
and spend their fool years.  
Let us live with our short day  
celebrating and whooping: "Let us drink!"

In the cellar of Lord Bacchus  
I will be your leader  
"Nunc est bibendum!" in this  
I agree with Horace.  
Let us drink, he who is not our friend is a dog!  
Let us put down all our masks  
and now, my fellows, *poculatim* – by the cup –  
let us drink, my merry friends!

A direct precursor of Csokonai's convivial song agreeing with Horace is another student song of the same genre: *Vígan, barátim, kacagjuk ki a gondot* ("Friends, let us laugh at troubles joyfully")<sup>58</sup>.

Igyunk, barátim, kacagjuk ki a gondot,  
Vígan szájára fordítsuk a hordót!  
Míg az ember ifiú, töltse vígan életét,  
Hagyja vén korára a kedvetlenség terhét!  
Majd elég idő lesz az aggódásra, ha  
Eljő a papok telhetetlen zsákja.<sup>59</sup>

Let's drink, my friends, let's laugh at our troubles,  
let's open the barrel!

While you are young, spend your life merrily,  
leave the burden of misery to your old age!  
You will have enough time to be anxious,  
when the voracious sack of the priests swallows you.

There are a number of commonalities between the two songs in terms of content: Besides forgetting one's troubles, the motifs of praising youth and cursing old age as well as that of the alms bag are also shared. Around the

<sup>58</sup> See Rumen István CSÖRSZ, *A kesergő nimfától a fonóházi dalokig. Közköltészeti hatások a magyar irodalomban 1700–1800* [From the Mourning Nymph to the Songs in Weaving Houses: The Influence of Folk Poetry in Hungarian Literature]. Budapest: 2016 (*Irodalomtudomány és Kritika, Tanulmányok* [Literaturwissenschaft und Kritik. Studien]), 276–277.

<sup>59</sup> CSÖRSZ, *A kesergő nimfától* (note 60), 276. See *Dávidné Dudája* ("Bagpipe of Mrs. David"), 1809, CSÖRSZ, *KÜLLŐS, Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 34/III.

time of the creation of both songs, this final reference alluded not only to the sacks carried by mendicant brothers (*Papzsák telhetetlen*, “The alms bag is insatiable”), but also clearly refers to people buried in sacks due to epidemics.

We thus have a sample text from popular poetry that provided Csokonai with important key words. Interpreting the Horace reference offers further important elements, however. The quotation – which is also emphasized in the poet’s notes – refers to the beginning of the famous ode celebrating Cleopatra’s death:

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero  
pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus  
ornare pulvinar deorum  
tempus erat dapibus, sodales.

Horace, *carm.* I, 37, 1–4

Now drink we deep, now featly tread  
A measure; now before each shrine  
With Salian feasts the table spread;  
The time invites us, comrades mine<sup>60</sup>.

Master Flaccus thus also encourages us to celebrate, the reason being the news of the death of one of Rome’s main adversaries – Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. As a topical news item (from a Roman point of view), the song refers to being relieved of great national, even international troubles. As far as we know, there were no analogous events in 1796 for Csokonai himself or related to Hungary. The national scandal of the Jacobin movement had blown over by this time, and Napoleon’s advance represented a grim message rather than joyful tidings for the poet publishing poems during parliament. It is therefore of no use for us to seek political references in the poem – the travesty seems personal instead.

Imitating Anacreon and others, Horace naturally also mentions drinking wine in happier, more intimate moments. He does so even in some quite prominent places, e. g. *carm.* I, 7, 17 *sic tu sapiens finire memento / tristitiam vitaeque labores / molli, Plance, mero*. Or in the poem addressed to Leuconoe, *carm.* I, 11, 6 *sapias, vina liques et spatio brevi / spem longam reseces*. His ode to P. Quintilius Varus specifically refers to wine as a medicine for life: *carm.* I,

---

<sup>60</sup> English translation by John Corington (1882), <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0025:book=1:poem=37>> (21/9/2018).

18, I *Nullam, Vare, sacra vite prius severis arborem / [...] neque / mordaces aliter diffugiunt sollicitudines.*

Csokonai adds: “In this I agree with Horace”. The Roman poet’s reputation within the Habsburg Empire at the time was not unambiguously positive; it was precisely due to his “unbridledness” in affirming worldly pleasures that many of his works were deemed to be harmful and their presence in education was reduced<sup>61</sup>. Csokonai’s cautious agreement thus refers not only to drinking itself, but also to the fact that *nunc* (“now”) is the opportunity to do so. He does not mean the present moment or occasion, however, but worldly existence in general, since such pleasures could hardly be expected in the afterlife. And this is why the poet assumes a Bacchic leading role: The rapture of the cellars helps us shed the oddities of worldly life and shepherds us back to ourselves, taking off our masks. Of course, wine must be drunk *poculatum* (“by the cup”), as the exhortation at the end of the poem emphasizes.

The poem appeared in Csokonai’s one-man periodical, *Diétai Magyar Múza* (“Hungarian Muse at the Parliament”) in 1796. That he did not consider the genre of the “celebratory song” to be unworthy or unfit for publication is also proven by his publication in the same short-lived periodical of *Asztali dal (Márkgróf Mafféi után)* (“Table song after Marquis de Maffei”), translated from Italian<sup>62</sup>: Scipione Maffei (1675–1755), *Amici, amici, è in tavola*. The poem’s opening as well as several of its parts conjure up convivial songs of popular poetry. The motif of *remedia amoris* is mixed in as well to create a more “elevated” atmosphere of philosophical wine drinking.

Pajtás, pajtás, kész az asztal!  
Már ne gyermekeskedjetek,  
Minden gondot kergessetek  
Ördögbe pokolba:  
Mert az ég akár derül,  
Akár felhőbe merül,  
Jó napunk lesz itt ma.  
[...]

Comrade, comrade, the table is ready!  
Don’t be childish  
chase all your troubles  
to hell, to the devil!  
Because whether the sky is clear  
or cloudy,  
we will have a good day.

<sup>61</sup> I am grateful to Piroska Balogh / ELTE BTK for informing me about these data.

<sup>62</sup> Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* [Poems] 2: (1791–1793). Ed. Ferenc SZILÁGYI. Budapest 1988 (Csokonai Vitéz Mihály *Összes Művei* [Complete Works of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz] 2), no. 154.

Hajdan ha eggy szem lankasztott,  
 Ha eggy szép melyet öleltem,  
 Minden kedvem ebbe leltem:  
 Bolondság, ifjú szél!  
 Mennél jobb így múlatni,  
 A' kantsókat forgatni,  
 Míg fel ázik a' bé!

When I was fascinated by an eye  
 or when I embraced a lovely bosom,  
 it was all my passion:  
 Folly, young wind!  
 It is better to revel like this  
 and rotate the jugs  
 while the gut is soaked.

According to Ferenc Kazinczy, it was this poem by Scipione Maffei<sup>63</sup> that served as inspiration for *Miért ne innánk?*<sup>64</sup>. The latter is also thematically related to a Csokonai *pictura* (descriptive poem) entitled *Az Ősz* (“The Fall”), whose series of images depicting harvest and the figures of first industrious, then inebriated viticulturists are among the Hungarian gems of the genre.

Directly before and after *Miért ne innánk?* can be found two poems of invocation, and their titles exhibit a parallel structure as well. *Serkentése a' Múzsának* (“Urging of the Muse”) touches upon the issue of poetic self-interpretation and eternal memory. *Hívása a' Múzsának* (“Invocation of the Muses”) then tempts the reader with the joys and merriment awaiting at “zöld Tempe” (“green Tempe”). This small cycle thus connects wine drinking and a Bacchic frame of mind to the activities of the Muses, to serious endeavors that ensure glory, as if ennobling certain formulae of popular poetry.

Returning to the quotation of Horace’s *Nunc est bibendum*, there are also many other authors who recognized and referred to these few characteristic words. The exhortatory hemistich is featured even more prominently in a Latin student poem from the 1820s whose composition may have been influenced by Csokonai – although it is quite possible that the author already knew the song, since the materials of the Sárospatak collection contain a wealth of eighteenth-century texts. At any rate, even the “dog” curse shows the interconnection between the two texts.

Nunc est bibendum omnibus  
 Parvis, aut sublimibus.

<sup>63</sup> The poem is included in: Johann Joachim Eschenburg, *Beispielsammlung zur Theorie der Literatur und schönen Wissenschaften*. Vol. 5. Berlin 1790, 32–33.

<sup>64</sup> Letter by Ferenc Kazinczy to Izidor Guzmics (1829) including the quotation of the Italian original (*Amici, amici e in tavola*). See Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* [Poems] 4: (1797–1799). Ed. Ferenc SZILÁGYI. Budapest 1994 (Csokonai Vitéz Mihály *Összes Művei* [Complete Works of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz] 4), 620.



Nunc dicetur vivat! vivat!  
 Quisque hoc vinum ebibat  
 Nunc ne spectentur futura  
 Anima non muritura  
 Si non bibis care frater  
 Canis tua tota mater.<sup>65</sup>

Felvidtő V. Nóták I. (“Exhilarating Songs”)

### BAKHUSHOZ (“TO BACCHUS”)

Csokonai’s ode *Bakhushoz* (“To Bacchus”) was published in 1805 in the posthumous volume *Ódák* (book I, number 10). Szilágyi’s critical edition dates it to around 1798<sup>66</sup>, while the newer chronology by Attila Debreczeni more cautiously states “before 1802”; no autograph manuscript has survived<sup>67</sup>. It is certainly younger than the text of *Miért ne innánk?* and may thus have been based on the latter, enriched by its generic experiences. The poem conjures up the ancient Greek dithyrambs, building on the back-and-forth between the *Egygyes* (“soloist”) and the *Kar* (“choir”) while simultaneously maintaining a refrained-strophic structure – just like the contemporary *Orgiák* (“Orgies”) written in Anacreontic verse<sup>68</sup>:

ÉVOÉ!	Evoé!
Bakhe, éván, évoé!	Bacchus! Evan! Evoé!
Évoé!	Evoé!
Bakhe, töltsd lelkünket bé!	Bacchus, fill up the spirit with glee!
Itt van a’ zúzos Detzember:	What though the snows of December may fall –
Bor van é?	Bring wine to me!
Bort igyon ma minden ember:	Bring wine to me – bring wine to all!
Évoé! <sup>69</sup>	Evoé! <sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Felvidtő V. Nóták I. (“Exhilarating Songs”) (note 36), no. CC: *Tuss*.

<sup>66</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), 617–618. Szilágyi doubted that this poem was written in Sárospatak.

<sup>67</sup> Special thanks to Attila Debreczeni (MTA–DE Research Group for Textology).

<sup>68</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), no. 319 “*Lantom danold LIÉUST; / A’ szíveket feloldó, / A’ gondtörő LIÉUST, / Méltó danolni néked.*” (“My lute, sing Lyaeus / who dissolves the hearts / and refracts the worries / he is worthy of my song”).

<sup>69</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), no. 318.

<sup>70</sup> English translation: John Bowring, *Poetry of the Magyars*. London 1830, 109–112.



Fig. 3: Bacchus rides a barrel. Cover picture of the chapbook *Öt szép világi énekek* („Five beautiful profane songs“, around 1800) (Library of the Reformed College Sárospatak, sign. 295/7.g.)

We do not know its precise origin, but Ferenc Szilágyi notes that Csokonai may have encountered the *Evoé!* exclamation in Horace (*carm.* 2, 19,7 *euhoé parce Liber, parce*) or in Virgil or Ovid<sup>71</sup>. It is likewise possible, however, that he was recalling not an ancient text, but instead a classicist one – for example, Ferenc Kazinczy’s translation of a Gessner idyll may also have been an influence (1788)<sup>72</sup>. Kazinczy was certain that Csokonai’s ode was of German origin despite the fact that an Italian version by Angelo Poliziano from the second half of the fifteenth century<sup>73</sup> appears in Eschenburg<sup>74</sup>. Other more distant German models also fail to ultimately clarify the source, leaving it an open question until today. But do we even need to look for an immediate model from world literature? Is Csokonai not perhaps playing a similar game of intermixing genres here as he does in his 1796 convivial song?

<sup>71</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), 621.

<sup>72</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), 620.

<sup>73</sup> Csokonai Vitéz, *Költemények* 4 (note 64), 620.

<sup>74</sup> Eschenburg, *Beispielsammlung* (note 63),

The reverence of Bacchus certainly invokes pagan rituals, and writing a poem about him was a bold idea considering the somewhat reserved Hungarian literary public, even if the dying and resurrected Dionysus can be considered one of the forerunners of the story of Christ<sup>75</sup>. The original or apocryphal works of Arion, the singer and poet considered to be the inventor of the genre of the dithyramb, and later those of the classical Greek poets of choral poetry (e.g. Pindar, Simonides) were available to Csokonai, as were those of their imitators. On the other hand, István János raises the question whether *Bakhusoz* and *Miért ne innánk?* could also be reflections of the experiences at Hegyalja (Tokaj vine region) – not only because the latter poem mentions wine from Mád<sup>76</sup>. The Bacchus cult of the German settlers of Hegyalja can be dated back to the 1770s, and their masked dramatic plays accompanied by music – which no doubt built on the traditions of the medieval Walloon viticulturists – were also influenced by the plays of the Sárospatak college. From the end of the eighteenth century, all this obtained a strong Hungarian tinge, for the nineteenth-century Bacchus statue from Tokaj also rides his barrel in Hungarian attire<sup>77</sup>. The line “tegyünk le minden maskarát” (“let us put down all our masks”) is an invitation to a social revelry following a masked Bacchus play, while the play itself is invoked by the ode *Bakhusoz*<sup>78</sup>. *Miért ne innánk?* may indeed be from 1796, but the references to Hegyalja in it are mere memories. Beyond referring to the well-known late harvest of Tokaj wine, the refrain mentioning “zúzos december” (“chilly December”) may have reminded singers in other areas of holiday wine drinking during winter.

Csokonai had already written the Bacchus invocation around 1794 (and printed it in 1796) by the time he created the abovementioned harvest scenes of *Az Ősz* bidding farewell to the month of October – which can also be understood as the essence of the new choral song. Almost every word and motif returns in the ode *Bakhusoz*.

<sup>75</sup> István JÁNOS, *Bacchus Hegyalja színpadán* [Bacchus on the Stage of Hegyalja Region]. In: Rumen István CSÖRSZ (ed.), *Mindenes gyűjtemény I. Tanulmányok Küllős Imola 60. születésnapjára* [Omniary I. Papers for the 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Imola Küllős]. Budapest 2005 (*Artes Populares* 21), 75–92, here 88.

<sup>76</sup> JÁNOS, Bacchus (note 75).

<sup>77</sup> JÁNOS, Bacchus (note 75), 87–88.

<sup>78</sup> JÁNOS, Bacchus (note 75), 88.

Idvez légy Liéus, jóltévő Istenség!  
Te tőled szívünkől fut a' kedvetlenség,  
Te a' barátságot 's örömet érleled:  
Légy jó! ím kezet fog az ember te veled.

Hail to thee Lyaeus, benefactor God  
misery runs away from our hearts thanks to you  
you ripen friendship and delight.  
Be good! Lo, man shakes hands with you.

This ode is obviously connected to the *Anakreoni dalok* (“Anacreontic songs”) completed in 1802, although it is a thematic rather than a strictly philological connection. The cycle of songs, which follows ancient Greek models and verse forms, speaks about rapture in a more personal tone rather than in the sense of social revelry or wine consumption. However, the two Csokonai songs also have a convivial, collegiate connotation, and we must examine this background as well.

The Bacchus cult also took roots in goliardic culture; the Latin student examples of the genre have already been discussed. *Bacche bene venies*, surviving in *Carmina Burana*, features very similar content. It also besings the power of wine to liberate and pacify, to encourage and secure love, with a structure of refrains<sup>79</sup>:

Bacche, bene venies gratus et optatus,  
per quem noster animus fit letificatus.

Refl. Istud vinum, bonum vinum, vinum generosum,  
Reddit virum curialem, probum, animosum!

We have seen several examples of how these medieval poems survived for centuries and underwent changes in student society. I have no knowledge of a close continuation of the above Bacchus choral song, but several text fragments from the “Bacchus liturgy” appear in the *Felvidító* manuscript series from Sárospatak from around 1824<sup>80</sup>, among them a familiar detail<sup>81</sup>:

---

<sup>79</sup> *Carmina Burana*. Die Lieder der Benediktbeurer Handschrift. Zweisprachige Ausgabe. Anmerkungen, Nachwort Günter BERNT. Munich 1985, no. 193, 200 (600–602).

<sup>80</sup> Thanks to Martin Svatoš (Prague), expert of the Bacchic cults in early modernity, for the consultation.

<sup>81</sup> *Felvidító V. Nóták I.* (“Exhilarating Songs”) (note 36), no. CXCV. *Tuss*.

Vive Bache Pater!  
 Bibe istud vinum frater  
 Ardet amor hoc frigus depelletur  
 Fervida ira hocce [!]<sup>82</sup> reprimitur  
 Faedus icitur, et desinunt bella  
 Est quae gaudet felix vino cella.

The text neighbouring this manuscript (perhaps of course already due to the influence of Csokonai's ode) quotes the ancient Greek exclamation of rapture word for word, and the image of transience is also included. A third Latin rhyme praises both Horace's dear Falernian wine and Bacchus<sup>83</sup>:

In aeternum vivat! vivat!  
 Nomen Bachi factum [?] sit  
 Redde animum Phalernum  
 Quem dolor jam consumsit [?]  
 Nam gustatis guttis tuis  
 Levas luctibus mutuis  
 O Bache! cor gravatum.

A longer Hungarian lyric has also survived in the same location as a harvest prayer from Hegyalja, which also addresses the god of wine and complains about the damage to the vines caused by bad weather<sup>84</sup>:

Oh Bakhus bornak Istene  
 Mért nem állottál ellene  
 A tavaszi hidegeknek  
 Vége a szőlős kerteknek [...]  
 Ne légy hát hozzám illy mord óh!  
 Hadd legyen sok tele hordó  
 Hogy neked sok jó kedveket  
 Szenteljük sok innepeket.

Oh Bacchus, God of wine,  
 Why did not you stand against  
 the cold spring weather:  
 It is the end of the vineyards  
 Oh, be not so sullen to me!  
 Let there be many full barrels  
 so we could devote  
 many feasts gleefully!

Felvidító VI. Nóták II. ("Exhilarating Songs")

The above excerpts also show that Hegyalja indeed had a Latin and Hungarian-language Bacchic song culture, invoking the ancient god in a highly varied selection of genres. Csokonai's ode, however, sheds the characteristics

<sup>82</sup> "Hocce" is a Hungarian insertion meaning "Give us [the wine]!"

<sup>83</sup> Felvidító V. Nóták I. ("Exhilarating Songs") (note 36), no. CXCIII. sz., *Tuss*.

<sup>84</sup> Felvidító VI. Nóták II. ("Exhilarating Songs") (note 36), no. CLXXXIX, verses 1 and 12.

of its ancient antetypes and approaches the atmosphere of *Miért ne innánk?* when it speaks out against priests and vehemently rejects worrying about the future:

Tsak te vagy	God of joy! thou hast possess'd us;
Szíveinknek mindene:	O leave us never!
El ne hagyj	God of joy! that once hast blest us;
Óh örömnék Istene!	O bless us ever!
Meg halunk; de semmi gond az,	Death may come – but melancholy
Fére bú!	Shall not life annoy:
A' ki búsúl, mind bolond az.	Joy! – for sorrow is but folly –
Hú, hú, hú!!	Joy! joy! joy!
[...]	[...]
Soknak kárt	Wine, says Eld, may be pernicious –
Tészen a' bor: szent igaz.	That's both wise and true;
Soknak árt	So may every feast delicious –
A' Tivornya: semmi az.	What is that to you?
Fére most az Étikával:	Here's no priest – be here no preaching:
Nints itt pap:	Press the goblet to your lip;
Tántzra víg kompániával.	Trip the dance – 'tis wiser teaching –
Hap, hap, hap!	Trip! trip! trip!

English translation by John Bowring (1830)<sup>85</sup>

An important characteristic of the Bacchus ode is that beyond the theme of drowning one's sorrows and enjoying pleasures, it also interprets the moral role of wine: Similar to the examples of medieval student literature, here wine symbolizes social equality and stability. Furthermore, the exclamation *Evoé!* does not apply to men, but rather to Bacchantes, meaning that the choir must have been made up of both genders. Drinking wine is considered veritable medicine for the troubles of the world: It turns disadvantages into advantages, deepens friendships and love, and even promises a better fate for the poor.

---

<sup>85</sup> Bowring (note 70), 110–111.

## EPILOGUE

Despite all the texts mentioned above, the most “Horace-like” contemporary work of popular poetry, *Vigan élem világom* (“I live my life joyfully”), is not linked to Csokonai or even Ádám Pálóczi Horváth (1760–1820), although many attributed it to the latter during the first half of the nineteenth century. One passage from it has survived in a poem by Krisztina Újfalvy (1761–1818), so she has also been suggested as the author. While the full text of the poem is definitely not Újfalvy’s work, its authorship remains unclear to this day. What we know for certain is that it was published around 1800 in a chapbook and subsequently distributed in countless manuscripts, almanacs and calendars<sup>86</sup>. It shows the influence of Csokonai’s convivial songs in several places, and the overall tone of a moderate feast accompanying a Epicurian world view is reminiscent of Horace. The poem is about the joys of worldly life that help us endure troubles, and urges us to consciously look for them; at the same time, it warns against excess and overindulgence in love’s rapture with the help of a few selective references to the teachings of popular poetry<sup>87</sup>:

Vigan élem világom,  
Míg virít ifjúságom,  
Eszem, iszom, vigadok,  
Az búnak helyt nem adok.  
Búsuljon az, kinek tetszik: én vigadok,  
Búmban, tudom, soha meg nem bolondulok.

Ez az élet úgysem sok,  
Használják az okosok,  
Zivataros néha bár,  
Vesztegetni mégis kár,  
Nem kell mindjárt lemondani ez világról,  
Mézet lehet itt szedni minden virágról. [...]

Tiszteld Bakhus oltárát,  
Kóstolgassad nektárát,  
Bakhus jó ízű teje

<sup>86</sup> CSÖRSZ, KÜLLÖS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 59 and notes.

<sup>87</sup> Based on the earliest printed (chapbook) edition: CSÖRSZ, KÜLLÖS, *Közköltészet* (note 1), no. 59/l, stanzas 1–2 and 6–7.

Az életnek ereje,  
Ki mértékletessen ez kúrával élhet:  
Víg napokat s boldog órákat szemlélhet.

Youth's the season of enjoyment,  
So I'll give full scope to joy;  
Pleasure, wisdom's best employment,  
Shall my thoughts and dreams employ.  
Let the sad ally with sadness,  
I have made my peace with gladness. [...]

Life is fleeting – then improve it;  
Lo! it melts beneath thy touch;  
'Tis too lovely not to love it,  
'Tis too vain to love too much:  
It has honey-giving flowers,  
It has balsam-bearing bowers.

English translation by John Bowring (1830)<sup>88</sup>

Worship the altar of Bacchus  
and taste his nectar;  
the delicious milk of Bacchus  
is the force of life.  
He who can keep this cure with measure  
can have merry days and happy hours.

The multiple (ancient, medieval and modern) sources for the Csokonai poems analyzed above and their popular poetry form of existence indicate what new opportunities the genre of convivial songs offered for interpreting and disseminating the authorial texts. The tune and manner in which these songs were sung presumably differed from community to community. It was this communal use that elevated Csokonai's oeuvre to the pinnacle of the communal canon and helped preserve its popularity over decades. For subsequent generations, most of Csokonai's poems were accessible as songs (*dal*), and convivial songs were considered to be particularly characteristic of

---

<sup>88</sup> Bowring (note 70), 265–266. The “Bacchus” stanza is missing in Bowring's translation; translation by the author.



him. Pál Szemere (1816) drew attention to this in one of his letters to Kazinczy<sup>89</sup>:

a' Csikóbőrös Kulacs, Evoé, a' Vityilló szép Katója, 's a' farsangi dal, méltók hogy megkoszorúztassanak [...]

Love song to the foal-hide flask, the pretty Kate from the shanty [in the poem "Peasant Song"] and the carnival song are worthy of a wreath [...].

As we can see, it is with good reason that we experience these sung poems as both fresh and respectful of tradition at the same time – as followers and to be followed themselves.\*

---

<sup>89</sup> Letter by Pál Szemere to Ferenc Kazinczy (1816), quoted in Csokonai Vitéz, *Költevények* 4 (note 64), 623.

\* The author is a senior research fellow at the Department of Eighteenth-Century Literature of the Institute for Literary Studies, which is part of the Research Center for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The author is a member of the research group "Literary Culture in Western Hungary, 1770–1820" financed by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Special thanks to Réka Futász, Andrew C. Rouse and Dávid Szabó for the English translation.