

THE CONQUEROR OF THE TURKS  
 IN THE *KUNSTKABINETT*. CURIOSITY AND THE CULT OF THE  
 HERO IN PÁL ESTERHÁZY'S POEM *EGY CSUDÁLATOS ÉNEK*  
 (A SONG OF WONDER)

*Fidelitatis industriaeque exemplum* – this is the line written on the wall of the Esterházy castle in Forchtenstein (Hung. Fraknó / Croat. Fortnava).<sup>1</sup> The Esterházy family – which had left the ranks of the smaller nobility at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century – was indeed an example of loyalty and diligence: it became one of the most illustrious and richest aristocratic families in Hungary during the Baroque era. Their ever-increasing influence was due to their faithfulness to the Habsburgs and Catholicism, to their achievements in the fight against the Ottoman conquerors as well as to their excellent marriage strategy. They possessed great treasures and were the richest and most powerful landowners in early modern Hungary. Their ambitions, however, were never satisfied by war and politics alone. No aristocratic family supported culture (mainly the arts) as much as they did. The long-lived Paul (Hung. Pál) Esterházy (1635–1713, Fig. 1)<sup>2</sup> was unique even among his culture-minded relatives; as the son of Nicholas (Hung. Miklós) Esterházy (1583–1645),<sup>3</sup> the founder of the family's power, his loyalty and diligence matched that of his father who had the above-mentioned line written on the castle wall. His steadfastness – apart from following his father's exemplar – was rooted in personal reasons. Four male members of the family, including Pál's older brother Ladislav (Hung. László, 1626–1652), the head of the Esterházy family, had died in the 1652 battle of Nagyvezekény (Slovak. Velké Vozokany).<sup>4</sup> The 17-year-old Esterházy who had been contemplating a religious career and artistic plans was suddenly forced to take the heavy responsibilities of the head of the family.<sup>5</sup> From this moment on, he spent all his life on the political stage, in the public sphere. Nevertheless, he never gave up his private ambitions.

As the most generous patron in the country, continuously enlarging the collection and the treasury he had inherited from his father,<sup>6</sup> he facilitated the creation of numerous works of art<sup>7</sup> and was himself experienced in music<sup>8</sup> and poetry.<sup>9</sup> He was a 'lover of the arts' in the traditional and at the



Fig. 1 Jacob Hoffmann: Pál Esterházy in the year 1681. Copperplate. Budapest, Magyar Történeti Képcsarnok, Cat. No. 55.1337 (Photograph: Museum)



Fig. 2 Philipp Jacob Drentwett: The »Vezekény Platter«. Augsburg 1654. Budapest, Iparművészeti Múzeum, Cat. No. E 60.3 (Photograph from: Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, 97)

same time »noble« sense of this expression (Words such as »amateur« and »dilettante« had originated in the context of pleasure and entertainment – »delectare«, »dilettare« – and gradually took on a negative connotation, thereby changing the perception of collectors like Pál Esterházy into old-fashioned characters).<sup>10</sup> His interest covered several artistic genres; his sensibility and the range of activities in which he engaged were so diverse that later generations were fascinated by his personality. However, it has rarely been supposed that the truly Baroque universality of his artistic and creative activities was the expression of a coherent world view. The intention of the art collector and the poet may appear different on the surface, yet they originate from a similar mindset. The artistic programme of the Esterházy patronage might help to interpret his literary works and vice versa: the meticulous reading of the poems may provide us with a closer insight into the underlying concept of his collection of works of art.

One of Pál Esterházy's early manuscripts is an epic poem entitled *Egy csudálatos ének* (*A Song of Wonder*) whose contents are enigmatic and difficult to understand.<sup>11</sup> The precise date of its writing is unknown; all we know for certain is that it formed part of his first collection of poems assembled in 1656. Some scholars question its authorship due to the fact that later, in 1670, Esterházy again copied all his poems into another collection, but for some reason omitted this particular one.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, there is no valid evidence to argue against his authorship, as the contents, form and especially the genre of the text are similar to his other poems.

The author's favourite genre was the »catalogue poem« which listed and itemised the various phenomena of nature and life. In this way he described precious stones, flowers, fish, birds, and terrestrial animals, the amusements of hunting beasts and fowl.<sup>13</sup> The 112 stanzas of *A Song of Wonder* are also assigned to the genre of catalogue poems, yet its topic is not the natural but the supernatural. The poem lists mythical warriors with unique, almost semi-divine skills. However, these fantastic heroes live in the real world, in different parts of the globe, which are described with an almost cartographic preciseness. The fictitious elements of the poem thus interpret reality; as a kind of *theatrum mundi*, they try to capture, represent and to some extent model the world known in a geographical sense.

As if a hand were spinning the globe while the eyes are travelling all over the world in the reader's imagination, the warriors leave Hungary and suddenly find themselves in Scythia, the legendary land of the Hungarians' origin; with unexpected and unrealistic leaps, they wander across familiar as well as hardly known regions of the four continents. They travel to more than forty countries, including Moscow, Iceland, Greenland, the Baltic countries, Persia, India, China, North and South America, and even to the Maluku Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The last stop is the »beautiful country« of Adaea, the legendary Hadya, i.e. Ethiopia, identified as earthly paradise.

The only study of Pál Esterházy's poem by Sándor Iván Kovács was published more than twenty years ago, interpreting it on the basis of the martyrdom of the Esterházy heroes killed by the Turks in the battle of Vezekény and the tradition of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hungarian epic poetry.<sup>14</sup> The analysis demonstrated the models of some parts of the poem, revealing in particular convincing textual parallels to Miklós Zrínyi's (Croat. Nikola Zrinski) famous anti-Ottoman epic *Obsidio Szigetiana* (*Siege of Sziget*).<sup>15</sup> The crucial impact of this work is beyond doubt as Pál Esterházy had idolized Miklós Zrínyi since his youth.<sup>16</sup> It is also obvious that throughout his long life Esterházy went to great lengths to enhance the fame of the »martyrs« of his family who had been killed in action against the Turks; this aim formed part of his efforts to bolster the power and glory of the Esterházy, and therefore the heroes' deaths at Vezekény were highly significant (Fig. 2).<sup>17</sup> Less successful were Kovács's attempts to identify some of the poem's heroes with famous Hungarians of the era, such as Miklós Zrínyi (1620–1664), Péter Zrínyi (Croat. Petar Zrinski, 1621–1671), László Esterházy, and the poet himself. These allusions are possibly correct, but not sufficient to formulate an allegorical narrative of the epic poem.

Fig. 3 Abraham Ortelius: Presbiteri Iohannis, sive Abissinorum Imperii descriptio. Antwerp 1603 (Photograph from: [http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual\\_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-central/1603%20ortelius.jpg](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-central/1603%20ortelius.jpg) (06/11/2011))

The heroic character of the poem is obvious anyway, since the mythical heroes fighting all over the world are characterised by frequently repeated attributes; and by way of magnifying the strength of their fantastic opponents, the heroes themselves become giants: »they measure the sky«. <sup>18</sup> Last but not least, the genre of the poem, the catalogue, is also of epic nature. However, in difference to the enumerations usually encountered in this literary genre, Esterházy's work is a universal catalogue, embracing the entire world. A catalogue is a constituent literary form of genre leading us to the very source of the ideas of the poem. The almost incomprehensible curiosities of the narrative are to a large extent defined by the underlying formal components of the »catalogue« genre. Apart from his commitment to Christianity, the Hungarian nation, and his family, Pál Esterházy pursued one other passion: the enrichment of his art collection. Therefore, his catalogue poems – among them the *Song of Wonder* – should be approached from the point of view of a collector.

This leads to the question as to what types of sources Pál Esterházy used when he wrote the poem. It is certainly not a mere product of bold fantasy, yet it can be stated without doubt that it is a rich, unique composition as far as Hungarian aspects<sup>19</sup> are concerned. Unfortunately we do not know the direct textual antecedents of the poem. As Esterházy composed the work at a young age, he might have been inspired by sources such as geography textbooks,<sup>20</sup> maps, and *Mapae Mundi* which would have been accessible to him in the Jesuit schools of Nagyszombat (Slovak. Trnava) and Graz.<sup>21</sup> However, he did not make use of them in a straightforward way, as Jesuit geography operated on a level transcending the bonds of medieval perspectives,<sup>22</sup> whereas Esterházy's poem demonstrates an opposite trend: it depicts the parts of the world unsystematically and does not refrain from employing geographical myths.<sup>23</sup> Although the cartography of the era

Fig. 4 Claes Janszoon Visscher: Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica. Amsterdam 1652 (Photograph from: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/Claes\\_Janszoon\\_Visscher\\_-\\_Nova\\_Totius\\_Terrarum\\_Orbis\\_Geographica\\_Ac\\_Hydrographica\\_Tabula\\_Autore%27.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/Claes_Janszoon_Visscher_-_Nova_Totius_Terrarum_Orbis_Geographica_Ac_Hydrographica_Tabula_Autore%27.jpg) (06/11/2011))



advanced quickly, it did not break entirely with the traditions of mythical geography. These were even reinforced in the decorative elements of the increasingly elaborate atlases. The new, illustrated maps of Mercator and Ortelius (Fig. 3) were extremely popular.<sup>24</sup> They often represented the personified winds, elements, the wonders of the world, planets and seasons,<sup>25</sup> fictitious and realistic animals.<sup>26</sup> Other maps showed the characteristically dressed inhabitants and rulers of distant countries or great figures of history, such as the Roman emperors or the personifications of the four points of the compass. The latter were usually represented sitting on ani-

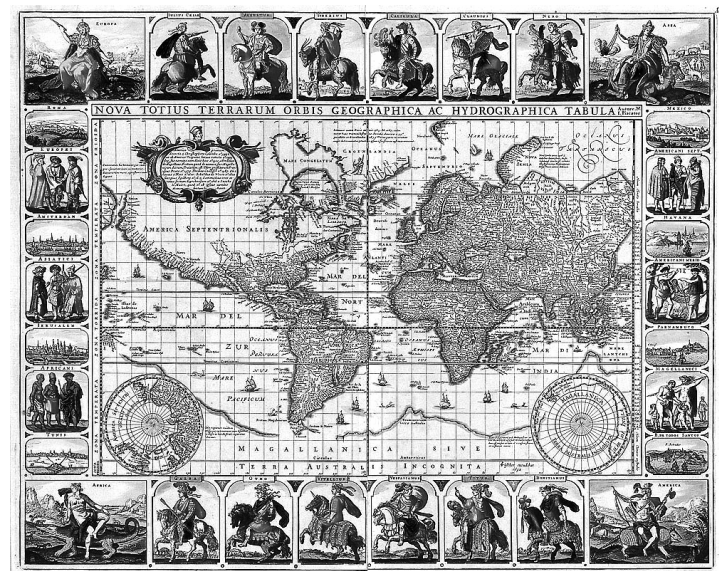




Fig. 5 Allegory of America sitting on an Armadillo. Etching after Marten de Vos. Esterházy Privatstiftung Eisenstadt, Forchtenstein (Photograph: Enikő Buzási)

mals typical of the regions in question, on camels or crocodiles. On Claes Janszoon Visscher's world map, entitled *Nova Totius Terrarum Orbis Geographica* and published in 1652 in Amsterdam (Fig. 4), the Indian figure representing America is sitting on an armadillo. Pál Esterházy knew this picture, because he owned the engraving (the reproduction of a painting of the Antwerp painter Marten de Vos)<sup>27</sup> that had served as model for the illustration of the map that is still part of the Esterházy collection at Forchtenstein (Fig. 5). The young Pál Esterházy must have seen similar allegoric representations in the collections of the Viennese Hofburg.<sup>28</sup> He also had the chance to admire material souvenirs of distant countries and exotic works of art when – during his travels in Germany – he was a guest of the Bavarian elector, together with his brother-in-law, the famous art collector Ferenc Nádasdy.<sup>29</sup>

It is a well-known fact that the great Austrian and Bavarian collections visited by Esterházy differed substantially from today's museums. They did not only contain works of art but also objects representing the past, *naturalia* of the present, minerals, fossils, or archaeological treasures.



Fig. 6 Mobile Bacchus Automat. Augsburg ca 1600. Esterházy Privatstiftung Eisenstadt, Esterházy Schatzkammer, Forchtenstein, Cat. No. K170. (Photograph: Pál Ács)



Fig. 7 Hans Petzolt: Ornamental Goblet with Allegoric Figure of Prudence. Nuremberg ca. 1580. Budapest, Iparművészeti Múzeum, Cat. No. E 60. 15 (Photograph from: Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, 71)



Fig. 8 Ornamental Goblet with Mining Scenes. Selmezbánya (Slovak. Banská Štiavnica) 1650. Budapest, Iparművészeti Múzeum, Cat. No. E 68.2. 1–2 (Photograph from: Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, 174)

Furthermore they assembled a huge variety of old and new creations of human hands and spirit: ancient statues; coins; paintings; treasures made of gold, silver, precious stones, ivory and other costly materials; books; weapons; instruments; watches and other automatic machines.<sup>30</sup> The gardens with their plants and animals also formed an integral part of the collections. Capturing the entire cosmos within a microcosm, this type of collection was called *Kunstkammer* from the mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century onwards.<sup>31</sup> Their was a common denominator to the »Weltanschauung« of the encyclopaedic world maps – known as »theatrum« – and the early museums – known as »chambers of wonder«.<sup>32</sup>

In Forchtenstein castle, Pál Esterházy assembled one such »wonderful« collection, majestic even by the tastes and measures of the era.<sup>33</sup> In one of his wills, he encouraged his heirs to enlarge the collection further, and instructed them to keep all the artefacts, tapestries, furniture, pictures, mirrors etc. at Forchtenstein unchanged.<sup>34</sup> The art collection

that can partially still be experienced *in situ* conforms to all the characteristics of a *Kunstkammer* with its elaborate stones, natural rarities, or the mobile Bacchus automaton (Fig. 6)<sup>35</sup> which remains a completely unique piece. Automata were basic components of the early museums. It is known that, in 1696, an art-dealer offered to purchase a talking head for Pál Esterházy, reminding the nobleman that one year previously he had sold him a special and sophisticated calendar as well as a portrait depicting Esterházy himself.<sup>36</sup> The celebrated artefacts of the Esterházy treasury now on display in Budapest once formed part of the Forchtenstein *Kunstkammer*, too. The characteristic pieces include a goblet made of mother-of-pearl (Fig. 7),<sup>37</sup> the table ornament devised from an ostrich egg,<sup>38</sup> and especially the fine goblet showing mining scenes (Fig. 8): This object illustrates the essence of the *Kunstkammer* spirit, namely the process of cleansing the metal brought to the surface, that is, ennobling the treasures of nature and thereby connecting *naturalia* and *artificialia*.<sup>39</sup>

In his will written in 1664, Esterházy explicitly named his collection of art a *Kunstkammer*.<sup>40</sup> Towards the end of his life, in 1695, he wrote: »Habeo etiam aliquas raritates, uti dicitur Cabinetum, seu Kunstkammer...«<sup>41</sup>. However, he must have embraced the fashionable organising principle of European art collections – the concept of *Kunstkammer* – from his youth onwards. Several aspects of *A Song of Wonder* testify to this. The above-mentioned genre of the catalogue poem does not only relate to an epic context but – self-evidently – to the concept of the *Kunstkammer* as well. Although the poem defines itself as »chronicle«, it cannot be interpreted as a continuous story. The historic aspect of the poem is not a sequence of individual events but a cosmic history of development: step by step, in space and in time, it gradually registers the changes taking place in nature. In this sense, it is the catalogue of a universal *Kunstkammer*,<sup>42</sup> since contemporaries used to call the world »God's *Kunstkammer*«,<sup>43</sup>

All this is closely related to the title of the poem. The Hungarian word »csudálatos« means »pretty«, »beautiful«, »admirable«, but in this case it obviously also means »rich in miracles«, »full of wonders«, »about miracles« (of course also referring to miracles happening in the poem: the powerful warriors overcome even the most terrifying enemy). And the most conspicuous trait of the *Kunstkammer* is the rich collection of natural miracles: remains of exotic plants, fossils of extinct animals, taxidermy specimens of distant creatures such as armadillos, the tusk of the narwhal that people thought to be the unicorn: in short, *mirabilia*.<sup>44</sup> The poem lists similar natural miracles as the enemies of the mythical heroes.<sup>45</sup> The extraordinary strength of one of the warriors is illustrated by the fact that he can even destroy marble. Another hero appears in a treasury holding great treasures, precious stones. The heroes slay birds, beasts, bears, lions, elephants, tigers, and wild bulls. They struggle with »miracles«, »wonders« (in Hungarian the word »csuda« is used, from which »csudálatos« is derived), »beastly crocodiles«, asps, vipers, or whales. One of them, as we learn, »has fought many wild creatures, / Even terrifying animals, / Struggled with fish of the sea, / With beastly whales«. <sup>46</sup> One of the heroes kills an »earthly wonder... a miraculous animal« in Scythia, measuring »Hundred spans in length, / Nine yards in width«. <sup>47</sup> Some of the heroes have to face angry dragons, even demons and spirits: »As I say, he faced Furies, / Or rather Harpies, / He fought with the Fates, / And a hundred witches.« <sup>48</sup> The warriors also fight bloody battles with the »pagans« (that is, the Ottoman Turks) who are in the same league with monsters. The word »pagan« is referring evidently to the Turks, whilst the allusions to Scythia point to the Hungarians. The heroism

of Esterházy's work evokes that of the epic poem written by Miklós Zrínyi. However, the larger part of the »Song of Wonder« is taken up by a universal battle between good and evil. All these characteristics relate to the idea of the *Kunstkammer*. Of course, the comparisons imply a sophisticated allusion to the struggle against the Turks informed by various humanist sources.<sup>49</sup> Members of the lower nobility, such as Ferenc Wathay, operated from a lesser level of education and were not interested in devising a symbolism related to the own family, as Esterházy did. The case of Esterházy is characteristic for the 17<sup>th</sup> century, an era which witnessed the rise in affluence and power of »new« aristocratic families.

The poem presents itself as if the reader were contemplating pictures on a cabinet, depicting the wonderful fauna, the strange creatures of the four points of the compass, the decorations of a *Kunstkammerschrank* (1664/1665), a genre that is perhaps represented best by the cycle of paintings by Jan van Kessel the Elder in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (Germ. München) – from about the same age as Esterházy's poem.<sup>50</sup> In line with the speculations associated with the *Kunstkammer*, all the creatures mentioned in Esterházy's poem are real miracles, natural wonders or distortions. According to Horst Bredekamp, »although they do not comprise species in and of themselves, they attest to nature's striving for its own development, and even if they remain monstrous, they verify the condition for all evolution via the interaction of time and chance of which they are evidence«. <sup>51</sup>

The poem depicts the monsters, curiosities and miracles emanating from »God's laboratory« in a peculiar perspective, which should be taken into account when carefully reading the beginning and the end of the poem. The last stop of the imaginary journey around the world is Aadae, »The most beautiful country in the world, / The earthly paradise«. <sup>52</sup> The precise place of the country at one end of the earth is said to be an unrevealed secret, but the poet is obviously thinking of Ethiopia, which was during the 16<sup>th</sup> century associated with the mysterious empire of »Prester«<sup>53</sup> John, the priest-king, and with the earthly paradise.<sup>54</sup> The travel stories published in 1540 by the Portuguese envoy to Ethiopia, Francisco Alvares (c. 1465–c. 1541), familiarised a wider public with the edifying story of the marriage of the Ethiopian emperor, Zara Yaqob (1399–1468)<sup>55</sup> to the Muslim-born South Ethiopian princess Helena.<sup>56</sup> Queen Helena, called Queen Aadae in Esterházy's poem, was a distinguished ruler, a major figure of Ethiopian history who had died in 1522. Hadya and Ethiopia were unified during her reign, a time of peace and flourishing in the African empire which saw Muslims and Christians living together in harmony.<sup>57</sup> According to Pál Esterházy, eve-

rybody in this country is virtuous and pious, although they »believe in God in many ways«. It is this story upon which he projects the medieval legend – known all over Europe<sup>58</sup> and developed into a Hungarian poem in the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>59</sup> – evoking the country of Prester John, the crown, the court, the palace of the Oriental Christian priest-king.<sup>60</sup>

The poem depicts this country as the Garden of Eden, representing divine creative force in all its perfection and harmony. The most hidden secrets of creation – the ability of flying, magnetism, the mechanism of winds and volcanoes, and the changes of physical conditions – illustrate the original perfection of the world. This »rich country full of treasures« is the real homeland of the heroes scattered all over the globe: »When they are in this country, / They feel happy for a short time, / They enjoy life together, / Even make good friends with each other. // But as soon as they are out of this place, / They miraculously change, / They ruin everything, / And fight each other.«<sup>61</sup> Thus, looking back from the Garden of Eden at the end of the poem, the real world appears as a realm of monsters and hideous beasts. The hero's task is to fight against them.

From the perspective of the beginning of the poem, a heroic battle is taking place across the globe. In this sense, *A Song of Wonder* is indeed an epically inspired text. At the same time, it follows precisely the ideas of *Kunstkammer* theory in the sense of making a bond between human creative force and its products, between *ars* and *artificialia*.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the creative process imitating evolution in practice, producing *artefactae* – such as the most beautiful pieces in the Esterházy treasury – elaborates upon, and completes, natural objects. Pál Esterházy's poem features only one person possessing artistic virtues as well as superhuman force, admired both by the god Mars and the Muses. It is a Hungarian who writes poems in his spare time. The character might have been inspired by a real person, presumably Miklós Zrínyi. This eminent strategist and poet was deeply admired and deified by Pál Esterházy.<sup>63</sup> What is more important, though, is that this character's artistic nature interprets the struggle fought in the rest of the poem in a peculiar way. This hero is the inversion of the negative distortions of nature: he is a miracle himself, distinguished as he is by the characteristics of natural miracles, the lion, the wild goat, and the furious bear. This is also true for all the other heroes as well: they are similar to deers, vultures, or wild wolves who are »repulsions in nature's eyes«.<sup>64</sup>

The heroic perspective in this special case is undoubtedly a Hungarian phenomenon. In a Hungarian poem based on some foreign geographical sources, this aspect might pos-



Fig. 9 Martin Filser: Equestrian Statue of Pál Esterházy 1691, Forchtenstein (Photograph: Pál Ács)

sibly be the poet's own contribution. But it has to be emphasized that the poem is a mixture of ›Hungarian‹ – that is, anti-Ottoman – heroic elements on the one hand and geographical, artistic, *Kunstkammer*-like features on the other. In Esterházy's poem, heroes usually fight lions and dragons, just like the greatest of all heroes, Hercules. Maybe it is not too far-fetched to suppose that Pál Esterházy – who saw the struggle against the Ottomans as a national and familial mission – employs the topos of Hercules in his poem, a topos often applied to Hungarians fighting the Ottomans from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>65</sup> Literary scholarship has shown that the efficacy of the *Hercules Hungaricus* topos was such that Süleyman the Magnificent – following his victory – was not satisfied until he had the three Hercules statues from Buda castle transported to Constantinople and erected in chains [!] by the tomb of emperor Theodosius.<sup>66</sup> When he was old, Pál Esterházy also had a statue of himself erected (Fig. 9). This characteristic equestrian statue, following a type established for the ruler representation of Louis XIV, depicts the ruler as a hero defeating the Ottomans. Géza Galavics has highlighted the contradictions inherent to this unusual statue.

At the time of its erection, Pál Esterházy was the Palatine of Hungary, deputy of the king. However, the political influence of this office was still quite limited. By depicting himself as a viceroy, Esterházy presumably desired to compensate the actual weakness of his position. With regard to the political implications of this type of monument, the placement of the equestrian statue in the enclosed courtyard of Forchtenstein castle should also be taken into consideration as a deliberate choice. It is highly significant that the base of the monument is decorated with reliefs showing Ottoman captives.<sup>67</sup> The setting of the statue is explained by the poem on the one hand and the specific decoration of the castle gate with a mounted crocodile on the other. Pál Esterházy bought a crocodile for his Forchtenstein collection and instructed the castellan to place it under the gate vault, where it can still be seen today (Fig. 10). He made precise arrangements concerning the position of the crocodile. The tail was to point towards the courtyard and the head towards the exterior.<sup>68</sup>

Fig. 10 Crocodile over the Entrance to Forchtenstein (Photograph: Pál Ács)





The statue and the crocodile – the defeated apocalyptic dragon, sign of the Antichrist and the Turk – show a menacing face towards the supposed Ottoman aggressors. However, from a different perspective, this scene is more bizarre than terrifying. We see a crocodile – primarily an object arising curiosity – and a hero riding his horse, enclosed within the thick castle walls. We know that Forchtenstein was the seat of Esterházy's *Kunstkammer*, a fact clearly signified by the crocodile.<sup>69</sup> Our eyes then move from the beast to the heroically depicted owner of the cabinet of wonders. The whole arrangement is a pictorial metaphor denoting the lord of the castle as an art collector with heroic virtues. For Esterházy, the cause of liberating the country did not differ much from the creative contemplation of the structure of the world within the laboratory of his *Kunstkammer*.

For his contemporaries, however, fighting the Ottomans was a much more ordinary and vital matter. It formed the common way of life, challenging society as a whole and individuals with fundamental, essential problems and real dangers for a period lasting 150 years. Yet by 1691, when Esterházy erected his equestrian statue, the Ottomans had been expelled from Hungary and were no longer a real threat to the country. The elderly Pál Esterházy must have felt nostalgia for his »heroic« youth, being only too aware of the fact that he did not actually play a significant role in the Ottoman wars. The equestrian statue is a substantial part of his artistic representation symbolising the »era« of his early years when the struggle against the Ottomans was of paramount importance.

The heroes of the poem written in his youth also move about in the space of an ideal, virtual *Kunstkammer*. By their involvement in a gradual and constant struggle against nature's distortions, they perform Hercules's tasks.<sup>70</sup> A well-known type of Renaissance painting depicts the collector of art as Hercules, imitating the ancient hero on the crossroads of *virtus* and *voluptas*, supporting both virtue and art.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the Hungarian hero at the very beginning of the poem is both a poet and artist who restores the original, paradisiacal state of the country.

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- Kleydungen, Sitten und Gottesdienst. Darauf folgt eine umständliche von Türckey Beschreibung. Der Türken Ankuftt: .aller Sultanen Lebens-Lauff und Bildnüß; ... Des Sultans Hoff, Regierung, Intradan, ... Wie auch ihres Propheten Mahomets Lebens-Beschreibung und sein Verfluchtes Gesetz-Buch oder Alkoran. Alssdann eine kürztbündige Beschreibung von Ungarn. ... Hiernechst eine umbständliche Beschreibung des Lebens-Lauffs Ihrer Käyserl. Mayest. Leopoldi I. Hamburg 1688.
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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895.
- 2 ANGYAL 1939. – IVÁNYI 1989.
- 3 SZALAY/SALAMON 1863–1870. – CSAPODY 1942. – PÉTER 1985.
- 4 GALAVICS 1992. – SZILÁGYI 2006/2007, 34–35 – ÚJVÁRI 2006. – Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, 95. See Pál Esterházy's memories about his youth: ESTERHÁZY 1989, 318.
- 5 BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895. – SZILÁGYI 2006/2007, 36. – VISKOLCZ 2009. – Pál Esterházy lived under the care of his guardian György Homonnai Drugeth until 1655. Then he reached his majority, married and became the head of the family: BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895. – PÁLFFY 2002. – PÁLFFY 2009.
- 6 At the time of Miklós Esterházy the treasury was only in the course of formation. Pál Esterházy shaped it into a high-quality collection of art: HÉJJNÉ DÉTÁRI 1975. – SZILÁGYI 1994.
- 7 GALAVICS 1992. – KÖRNER/KOPP 2010.
- 8 ESTERHÁZY 2001.
- 9 KOVÁCS 1996.
- 10 GOMBRICH 1977.
- 11 RMKT XVII/12, 598–617, (No. 144).
- 12 RMKT XVII/12, 796–799.
- 13 RMKT XVII/12 No. 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 143.
- 14 KOVÁCS 1989.
- 15 Cf. SZÖRÉNYI 2009. – BENE 2009.
- 16 BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895.
- 17 GALAVICS 1992. – SZILÁGYI 1994.
- 18 »Hogy az eget ezek mérik«. – RMKT XVII/12, 598.
- 19 In the further parts of the essay it will be made clear that there are parts of the poem referring to Hungarian history (e. g. Miklós Zrínyi), some other parts are borrowed from foreign sources.
- 20 GEHL 2003.
- 21 BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895. – IVÁNYI 1989, 432–434.
- 22 BROWN 1979, 158.
- 23 DELUMEAU 1995, 39–70.
- 24 In the Library of the Esterházy Family (today in the Library for Foreign Literature, Moscow, founder M. I. Rudomino) can be found: Gerardus Mercator: *Atlas sive Cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura. Galliae tabulae geographicae; Belgii inferiores geographicae tabulae; Germaniae tabulae geographicae. Duisburg [1585–1595].* Inv. 627965; *Descriptio ac delineatio geographica detectionis freti, sive, transitus ad Occasum, supra terras Americanas, in Chinam atque Japonem ducturi...* Amsterdam 1612. Bound in one with: Michael Potier: *Gnorismata hermetico-philosophica ...* [Köln, ca 1634?]. Inv. 612693-9; Giorgio Ponzà: *La science de l'homme de qualité, ou l'idée generale de la Cosmographie, de la Chronologie, de la Geographie...* Torino 1684. Inv. 612750. – DMITRIJEVA/SUBKOV 2007.
- 25 For example: *Nova totius terrarum orbis geographica ac hydrographica tabula* by Willem Janszoon Blaeu. Amsterdam 1635.
- 26 See, for example, the map of Iceland by Abraham Ortelius (Antwerp 1585). In: CAMPBELL 1981, 88–89.
- 27 Exhib. Cat. Vienna 1992, No. 3.10; POLLERROSS 1992/I, 24, 26 and POLLERROSS 1992/II, 40 and 43. – Special thanks to Enikő Buzási (Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest) and Theresia Gabriel (Esterházy Privatstiftung zu Eisenstadt) for their help and advice with regard to this topic.
- 28 Cf. Exhib. Cat. Essen/Vienna 1988. – The Vienna *Kunstammer* was initially located in the building erected as residence of the future Emperor Maximilian II next to the core of the *Hofburg* later known as the *Stallburg*. The core of the collection was formed around 1650 from objects owned by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614–1662) with an emphasis on works of art rather than marvels of nature.
- 29 ESTERHÁZY 1653. – Pál Esterházy and Ferenc Nádasdy travelled to Germany in 1653 on the occasion of the diet of Regensburg at which Emperor Ferdinand III succeeded in having his son Ferdinand (IV.) elected King of the Romans. During their journey they visited Munich, where Esterházy frequently attended the church and gymnasium of the Jesuits and admired the Electoral Collection. On the *Kavalierstour* of Pál Esterházy see: HORN 1989. – TOMA 2005. – KÁRMÁN 2010.
- 30 DACOSTA KAUFMAN 1994. – DIEMER 2008. – BLOM 2004. – Exhib. Cat. Munich 2008.
- 31 BREDEKAMP 1995, 30–36. – GROTE 1994. – SCHRAMM/SCHWARTE/LAZARDZIG 2003. – EVANS/MARR 2006.
- 32 BREDEKAMP 2007.
- 33 SZILÁGYI 2006/2007, 31–42.
- 34 MELLER 1915, XVII. – Special thanks for Borbála Gulyás for the data in Simon Meller's book.
- 35 Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, No. 106. – MCLAUGHIN 1994.
- 36 MELLER 1915, XVI.
- 37 Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, No. 111.
- 38 Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, No. 107.
- 39 Exhib. Cat. Budapest 2006/2007, No. 104.
- 40 BUZÁSI 2008, 27, 47.
- 41 ESTERHÁZY 1696.
- 42 On the *Kunstammer* as microcosm see: POLLERROSS 1992, 40–52. – GROTE 1994. – Exhib. Cat. Braunschweig 2000.
- 43 HAPPEL 1688. – BREDEKAMP 1995, 73.
- 44 BREDEKAMP 1995, 65–67.
- 45 LE GOFF 2005, 130–143.

- 46 »Volt már közü sok vadakkal, / Sőt rettentő állatokkal, / Vívott tengeri halakkal, / Rettenetes cethalakkal.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 603.
- 47 »Hibernusok egy havasban, / Rettenetes vak barlangban, / Havas, jeges Scythiában, / Földi csudát ölvén abban.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 603.
- 48 »Mondom, bizony Fúriákkal, / Avagy inkább Háрпиákkal, / Kegyetlenkedett Párkákkal, / Egyszersmind száz boszorkánnyal.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 607.
- 49 See: JARDINE/BROTTON 2000.
- 50 Exhib. Cat. Munich 1973.
- 51 BREDEKAMP 1995, 65.
- 52 »Világnak legszebb országa, / Az földnek paradicsoma.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 610.
- 53 »Prester« is an old abbreviation to »presbyter«.
- 54 JONES/MONROE 1974, 59–107.
- 55 Emperor Zar'a Ya'qob ruled from 1434. – BARTNICKI/MANTEL-NIEĆKO 1978, 58–60.
- 56 BARTNICKI/MANTEL-NIEĆKO 1978, 90–96. – ÁLVARES 1961. – ÁLVARES 2007. – The first edition of Álvares' book was published in Lisbon in 1540: Ho Presto Joam das Indias. Verdadera informação das terras do Preste Joam das Indias.
- 57 HAMMERSCHMIDT 1967, 58–59. – BARTNICKI/MANTEL-NIEĆKO 1978, 88–90.
- 58 DELUMEAU 1995, 88–96.
- 59 Valkai, András: János pap-császár birodalma [The Kingdom of Prester John], 1573. – RMKT XVI/9, 187–203. – The main source of Valkai's poem was the 18<sup>th</sup> volume of *Historia sui temporis* by Paulus Jovius. TURÓCZI-TROSTLER 1961.
- 60 In the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, European intellectuals – Catholics and Protestants alike – showed increasing interest in Ethiopian culture, religion and history. The Portuguese humanist Damião de Gois, an adherent of Erasmus, wrote a famous treatise entitled *Fides, religio moresque Ethioporum* (1540). This expressly tolerant book was popular in Protestant circles. FEIST HIRSCH 1967, 146–159. – At the same time the Jesuits, beginning with Ignacio de Loyola himself, initiated a lasting mission to Ethiopia. JONES/MONROE 1974, 88–101. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Ethiopian scholarship and the idea of *Kunstammer* went hand-in-hand. The duke of Saxe-Gotha from 1652 onwards started to support Hiob Ludolf, the most illustrious representative of Ethiopian studies, with the aim of enriching his famous *Kunstammer* with Ethiopian objects. COLLET 2007.
- 61 »Midőn ez országban vannak, / Kevés ideig mulatnak, / Egymással szépen vigadnak, / Kedvesen is barátkoznak. // De mihelt onnét kijutnak, / Csuda dolog, mint változnak, / Mindent ők öszverontanak, / Egymással is megharcolnak.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 611.
- 62 BREDEKAMP 1995, 11–19.
- 63 BUBICS/MERÉNYI 1895. – KOVÁCS 1989.
- 64 »Az természet iszonyodik.« English translation by the author. RMKT XVII/12, 604.
- 65 It was a widespread idea among Hungarian humanists. Matthias Corvinus favoured this reference to the mythical hero in his cultural representation. Even Philipp Melanchthon identified Hercules as the mythological ancestor of the Hungarians. – TÉGLÁSY 1987. – MIKÓ 1990.
- 66 BENE 1999. – MIKÓ 2000.
- 67 The artist of the equestrian statue was Martin Filser. – GALAVICS 1992, 88, 149, 151. – One should bear in mind the programmatic allusion to Hercules was very popular at the Habsburg and Wittelsbach courts. On the other hand, the equestrian statue was a type of monument with a particular imperial connotation; cf. KELLER 1971.
- 68 Letter of Pál Esterházy to Ádám Bezerédi, castellan of Forchtenstein – 30. June 1706. EPA [Esterházyische Privatarchiv Forchtenstein] Fürstenbriefe am Bezeredy 1680–1728 o. Nr. – Special thanks to Ferenc Dávid for his permission to use this unpublished document.
- 69 The dragon-like crocodile (*draco rufus*: Rev 20. 1–3) was a symbol of evil referring to the heretics, the enemies of Christendom, the Ottomans and an indispensable ingredient of the earliest *Kunstammer*. The turn of the dragon-symbol had a meaning of victory over the Ottomans: JARDINE/BROTTON 2000, 13–22; SCHLOSSER 1908, 17 and 19. – Exhib. Cat. Vienna 1992, 233–234. – TRIPPS 2004.
- 70 Giovanni Battista Nicolosi: *Hercules Siculus sive Studium geographicum*. t. 1–2. Roma 1670–1671. – Esterházy Library, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. Inv. 625996. – DMITRIJEVA/SUBKOV 2007.
- 71 PANOFKY 1930; Lorenzo Lotto: *Portrait of Andrea Odoni* (1527). Royal Collection, Hampton Court. – Interpreted by Péter Meller (1923–2008) in his public lecture at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2000.