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Ovidius Est Magister Vitae (et Litterarum)

Language, Literature and Life via Ovid in Hungary in the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth Century¹

Throughout the last decades, researchers of the history of the reception of classical authors have paid particular attention to the study of Ovid's influence. The enormous impact the large and varied body of the poet's work had had on later centuries is a richly illuminated topic. As the editors of one of the essential handbooks on the reception of Ovid put it their introduction, „[a]t the beginning of the twenty-first century, Ovid has proved the most influential and indeed the most versatile by far of all the poets of Latin antiquity”². In the introductory essay of another important collection of studies, James G. Clark argues that „[i]t was not the sober sages of republic and empire – Virgil, Seneca, Cicero – who proved for medieval audiences the most popular and resonant voices of the pre-Christian past. [...] it was [...] Ovid who provided the greatest number and diversity of Europeans with their most memorable encounter with the classical world”³. The contributors of these volumes examine the history, the major components, and the diverse forms of the reception of Ovid, focusing on the works of individual authors or longer periods in the history of literature. The studies commonly show the lasting appeal of Ovid's works to readers from the Augustinian period onwards. The lyric and epic poetry of Ovid remained the favorite of such prominent authors as Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ariosto, Milton or Goethe, in addition to the enduring popularity of the the manuscript or printed copies of *Metamorphoses*, *Fasti* or the erotic poems amongst minor authors and common people. There are other ways to approach the

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² Carole E. NEWLANDS, John F. MILLER, Introduction. In: J. F. Miller, C. E. Newlands (ed.), *A Handbook to the reception of Ovid*. Chichester 2014, 1–7, here 1.

³ James G. CLARK, Introduction. In: James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, Kathryn L. Mckinley (ed.), *Ovid in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge 2011, 1–25, here: 1.

reception of Ovid besides the research focusing on literary history,. The classical poet has been widely used as an authoritative source of philosophical or scientific information relating to the most varied of topics. In these cases an exploration from the context of the history of philosophy or of science could be worthwhile. Fruitful research can also be conducted in the field of art history, as Ovidian topics have always provide inspiration to book illuminators and all other visual artists⁴. Compared to international results, the study of Ovid's reception in early modern Hungarian literature is largely unexplored⁵. By collecting data regarding printed editions, the manuscript tradition and translations of the Ovidian corpus, I mean to explore the lesser-known aspects of the classical poet's historical reception.

In the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century Hungarian readers first met Ovid usually in the classroom, as schoolmasters adapted his texts to teach their students to read Latin. Ovid's poems were employed to a variety of didactic purposes,

⁴ For the reception of Ovid see also: Charles MARTINDALE (ed.), *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge 1990; Gregory M. SADLEK, *Idleness Working: The Discourse of Love's Labor from Ovid through Chaucer and Gower*. Washington D. C. 2004; Theodore ZIOLKOWSKI, *Ovid and the Moderns*. Ithaca, London 2005; Gian Mario ANSELMINI, Marta GUERRA (a cura di), *Le Metamorfosi di Ovidio: nella letteratura tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Bologna, Gedit Edizioni 2006; Alison KEITH, Stephen RUPP (ed.), *Metamorphosis: The Changing Face of Ovid in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Toronto 2007; Roy K. GIBSON et al. (ed.), *The Art of Love: Bimillennial Essays on Ovid's Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris*. Oxford 2006; Frederick A. DE ARMAS (ed.), *Ovid in the Age of Cervantes*. Toronto 2010; An FAEMS et al. (éd. par), *Les translations d'Ovide au Moyen âge: actes de la journée d'études internationale à la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique le 4 décembre 2008*. Turnhout 2011; Richard E. MORTON, *The English Enlightenment reads Ovid: Dryden and Jacob Tonson's 1717 Metamorphoses*, New York 2013; Pierluigi Leone GATTI, *Ovid in Antike und Mittelalter: Geschichte der philologischen Rezeption*, Stuttgart 2014.

⁵ Cf. Ludovicus T. VÁLI, *De locis poeticis qui congruunt in operibus P. Ovidii Nasonis et Nicolai Zrinyi. Cassoviae 1898*; Adolf HAVAS, Petőfi és Ovidius. [Petőfi and Ovid.] *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* 23 (1899), 478–479; József WALDAPEL, Ovidius Amoresének magyar fordítása 1819-ből. [A Hungarian Translation of Ovid's Amores from 1819.] *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* 53 (1929), 144–150; István LUKÁCS, *Metamorphosisok a XVIII. század hazai irodalmában*. [Metamorphoses in Eighteenth-Century Hungarian Literature.] Budapest 1944; Károly MARÓT, Bevezetés. [Introduction.] In: Ders., *A kétezer éves Ovidius: Szemelvények a költő műveiből*. [The 2000-Years Old Ovid: An Anthology of His Works.] Budapest 1957, 5–49; József HUSZTI, Az Ovidius-legenda magyarországi vonatkozásai. [How the Ovid-Legend is Related to Hungary?] *Antik Tanulmányok* 4 (1957), 3–4, 289–300; Béla STOLL, Ovidius egyik helye a magyar népköltészetben. [One of Ovid's Places in Hungarian Folk Poetry.] *Antik Tanulmányok* 4 (1957), 1–2, 124–126; György SZABÓ, Ovidius költészetének visszhangja az erdélyi magyar irodalomban. [Reflects of Ovidian Poetry in Hungarian Transylvanian Literature.] *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Series philologica* 4 (1959), 129–138; Mária B. RÉVÉSZ, Hozzászólás a magyarországi Ovidius-legendához, [Additions to the Hungarian Ovid-Legend.] *Antik Tanulmányok* 8 (1961), 3–4, 287–292; Anikó POLGÁR, *Ráfogások Ovidiusra: Fejezetek az antik költészet magyar fordítás- és hatástörténetéből*. [Pointing at Ovid: Chapters of the History of the Reception of Classical Authors in Hungary.] Budapest 2011.

even if the poet himself could have never imagined his books being used by schoolmasters for instruction in Latin language and literature. In this practice the Ovidian texts educated the class in Latin by expanding the pupils' vocabulary, by teaching grammatical structures and by instructing them in the rules of writing poems and epistles⁶. Similarly to the previous centuries, Hungarian readers mainly read Ovid's works in foreign editions. Studying the library catalogues and remaining collections of aristocrats, noblemen, priests, and literati shows that the most popular works of the ancient poet were *Metamorphoses*, *Fasti*, *Heroides*, *Epistolae ex Ponto* and *Tristia*⁷. Readers acquired their volumes in Latin, German or French translations through the publishers or during their travels abroad. These were typically published in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy. The same tendency can be seen in the collections of Catholic and protestant school libraries. In Hungary, Jesuits published text editions of Ovid for the purposes of education (in Nagyszombat)⁸, as well as teachers of the Reformed College of Debrecen⁹, but these editions only included expurgated versions of Ovid's works, not the full texts. . Manuscripts - compiled by students who were either

⁶ Cf. for example: Erzsébet SZABÓNÉ FEHÉR, A sárospataki kollégium 19. század eleji kéziratos tantervei. [The Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Curricula of the Sárospatak College.] *Levéltári Szemle* 30 (1980), 3, 491–502. Some handbooks on aesthetics were also used by the students interpreting the Ovidian texts. Cf. György Alajos SZERDAHELY, *Eszztétikai írásai, I: Aesthetica (1778)*. [Studies on Aesthetics, Vol. I.: Aesthetica (1778).] Transl., comm. by Piroska BALOGH. Debrecen 2012 (*Csokonai Könyvtár, Források, Régi kortársaink* 15).

⁷ On the editions of Ovid's works in the Ráday Library cf. Györgyi BORVÖLGYI, *Ráday Pál (1677–1733) könyvtára*. [The Library of Pál Ráday (1677–1733).] Budapest 2004 (*A Kárpát-medence kora újkori könyvtárai VII*), 151. The collection of the Library of Sámuel Teleki included nine editions printed in the fifteenth–eighteenth century. Cf. *Bibliothecae Samuelis S. R. I. Com. Teleki de Szék, Pars Prima*, Viennae 1796, 114–115; for Ferenc Széchényi's collection cf. *Catalogus manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Nationalis Hungaricae Széchényiano-Regnicolaris, I–III*, Sopronii, Siess 1814–1815; for the collections of the Festetics and the Károlyi family see the paper of Attila Buda and Anna Tüskés in the present volume. An online database of the illustrations in Ovidian manuscripts and printed editions: Daniel KINNEY, *Revisioning Ovid: Alternative Versions of Ovid's Reception in Image and Text* <<http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/others.html>> (06.08.2018)

⁸ For the bibliographic data of the editions printed in Nagyszombat see: Stephanus KÄFER–Esther KOVÁCS, *Ave Tyrnavia! Opera impressa Tyrnaviae Typis Academicis, 1648–1777*, Budapestini–Strigonii–Tyrnaviae 2013.

⁹ Cf. István SZABADI, Sinai Miklós klasszika-filológusi működése. [Miklós Sinai, the Classical Philologist.] = Enikő BÉKÉS, Péter KASZA, Réka LENGYEL (ed.), *Humanista történetírás és neolatin irodalom a 15–18. századi Magyarországon*. [Humanistic Storiography and Neo-Latin Literature in Hungary in the Fifteenth–Eighteenth Century.] Budapest 2015 (*Convivia Neolatina Hungarica* 1), 267–271.

instructed to do so by their teachers or were following their own interests - played an important role in the study of the ancient poet¹⁰.

In schools, *Metamorphoses* was one of the foundational texts of linguistic, poetic and rhetoric studies. A handful of copies were circulated, however, during the first half of the eighteenth century, in certain parts of the country, it was impossible to acquire a copy. József Hermányi Dienes, who studied in Székelyudvarhely (Oderhellen in Transylvania) in the 1710s, asked his father to buy him the books he needed. He wrote the following into his diary: „Even when I was in the rhetoric class, my Father could not acquire any classical books, as these Books are awfully scarce”, and „This time Ovidii Metamorphosis is wanted, but neither in Udvarhely, nor elsewhere could my Father find or acquire it”¹¹. Hermányi Dienes (whose father tried to make up for the missing book by giving him a piece of cheese) had better luck with other works of Ovid. According to his diary,

This summer I will read Ovidii Amorum Libros et Libros de Arte amandi, but knowing myself I say if only the adolescents would leave these kinds of poems alone, quae igvina lámbunt, but my Father does not know, what wicked grass I would have stepped on et quod angvis lateret in herba, and that might have been good, because had he forbidden me to read, I would have liked it even more¹².

Similarly to Hermányi Dienes', most parents did not consider Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars amatoria* appropriate for their children. Another Transylvanian author, Sámuel Andrád wrote the following:

¹⁰ Vö. például: Borbála L. KOZMA, Sándor LADÁNYI, *A Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerület Ráday Gyűjteményének (Budapest) kéziratkatalógusa – 1850 előtti kéziratok*. [Manuscript catalogue of the Ráday Archives of the Dunamellék District of the Reformed Church in Hungary.] Budapest 1982 (*Magyarországi egyházi könyvtárak kéziratkatalógusai* 3), 736 K-1. 599. (*Opera Publīi Ovidii Nasonis*, early 19th century, written by Lukács Micski, voll. 1–4); József BÖRZSÖNYI, *A Tiszáninneri Református Egyházkerület Nagykönyvtárának (Sárospatak) kéziratkatalógusa – 1850 előtti kéziratok*. [Manuscript catalogue of the Library of the Tiszáninnen District of the Reformed Church in Hungary.] Budapest 1986 (*Magyarországi egyházi könyvtárak kéziratkatalógusai* 4), 1478 Kt. 1890. (József Gyarmati's *omnium*, 1804, ff. 1–23) and 1758 Kt. 2665. (István Csontos, *Sententiae memorabiliores ex Carminibus Ovidii excerptae*, 1819); Miksa BÁNHÉGYI B., *A Győri Egyházmegyei Könyvtár kéziratkatalógusa – 1850 előtti kéziratok*. [Manuscript catalogue of the Diocesan Library of Győr.] Budapest 1991 (*Magyarországi egyházi könyvtárak kéziratkatalógusai* 8), 76. sz. (vol. misc., end of the 18th century). In the collection of the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (Széchényi National Library, Budapest): Quart. Lat. 123. (*Disceptatio historica, qua in locum sepulchri Ovidii Nasonis disquiritur, idque Hungariae vindicatur*, 18th century, 19 f).

¹¹ József HERMÁNYI DIENES, *Szép prózai munkái*. [Prose Works.] Ed. by Margit S. SÁRDI. Budapest 1992, 157.

¹² HERMÁNYI DIENES (note 11), 159.

[...] in Transylvania I could never read the Books of Love (*Amorum libros*) of Ovid. Instead I asked a friend of mine, a nice fellow here in Vienna to give me his copy, which, he said, had acquired at the age of 12, here in the big city, where people has much experience not only in medicine, but in everything, and the first time I read the book there. I do not know if there were any other reasons, or maybe for sure that I already had enough sense for it, but indeed I understood every letter of it better than *Metamorphosis*, even without notes¹³.

Ovid's erotic works, which were deemed harmful, were not taught in schools, and it was difficult to get printed copies. According to the censorship decree of 1792, it was forbidden to distribute the works of Kotzebue, Wieland, Rousseau and Ovid in Hungary¹⁴. Still, the prohibitions by parents, schools and authorities only had a limited reach, since the interested readers – even if not easily – were able to acquire foreign editions or handwritten versions of *Amores* and *Ars amatoria*. In the second half of the eighteenth century, some of the erotic poems were translated to Hungarian, and some of them even appeared in print despite the censorial prohibition. Scholarly literature has so far discussed the efforts of János Fekete and Ádám Pálóczi Horváth.¹⁵; a lesser-known translation by László Kazinczy of part 4 from the second book of *Amores* is discussed below. In Hungary, the first complete translation of *Amores* was published in 1820, its Latin text in 1907; and *Ars amatoria* only in 1883¹⁶.

One of the first Hungarian translators was Kelemen Mikes. In letter nr. 70 of his *Letters from Turkey*, Mikes commented on the full-length outer garment of Turkish

¹³ Sámuel ANDRÁD, *A magyar Democritus életének délig való része*. [The Life of the Hungarian Democritus Until Noon.] [Bécs]: [s. l.] 1791, 8.

¹⁴ Cf. [János MOLNÁR], *Némelly nevezetes emberekről*. [On Some Famous Persons.] In: Ders. (ed.), *Magyar könyv-ház*, IX. szakasz. [Hungarian Library, vol. 9.] Pest: Trattner 1797, 10.

¹⁵ Cf. Anikó POLGÁR, „Kerek tsetsetskéit feddvén tenyereim”: Galánthai Fekete János *Amores*-fordításai. [„The palms of my hands covering her round apples”: János Galánthai Fekete's Translation from the *Amores*.] In: POLGÁR (note 4), 169–189; POLGÁR, *Erotikus félhomály és profán epifánia: Az Amores I. 5 és magyar fordításai*. [Erotic Penumbra and Profane Epiphany: The *Amores* I,5 and Its Hungarian Translations.] In: POLGÁR (note 4), 190–208; Anikó POLGÁR, Zoltán CSEHY, *Korinna és a vénasszony: Pálóczi Horváth Ádám és a latin műfordítás*. [Corinna and the Old Woman: Ádám Pálóczi Horváth and the Latin Translations.] In: Rumen István CSÖRSZ, Béla HEGEDÜS (ed.), *Magyar Arión: Tanulmányok Pálóczi Horváth Ádám műveiről*. [The Hungarian Arión: Studies on the Works of Ádám Pálóczi Horváth.] Budapest 2011, 219–241; Ádám PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai (1787–1796)*. [Lyric Works (1787–1796).] Ed. by Barna TÓTH. Budapest, Debrecen 2015 (*Régi Magyar Költők Tára, XVIII. század, XVI*), 358–359, 821–822.

¹⁶ Cf. Publius OVIDIUS Naso, *Amores*. Transl. by László PERETSÉNYI NAGY. Pest: Trattner 1820; see: WALDAPEL (note 4). Cf. also: Publius OVIDIUS Naso, *Amores*, edidit, adn. Geyza NÉMETHY, Budapestini 1907; OVIDIUS, *A szerelem művészete*. [The Art of Love.] Transl. by Tamás SZANA. Budapest 1883.

women, which covered their entire body, by quoting a few lines of Ovid in his own Hungarian translation: „mennél inkább légyen, valami meg tiltva, / légyen is előttünk, erősen el zárva, / ámbár ahoz jutni, kellesék fáradva, / annál inkább birni, azt várjuk suhajtva”¹⁷. In another place in *Letters from Turkey*, Kelemen Mikes wrote that it is not the Latin language and literature on which school teachers should focus. ; Instead, it would be much more useful to teach historical, legal, economic and commercial knowledge, which the students could utilize upon returning to their lands and taking up work as deputies or judges. According to Mikes, the main problem is that after finishing school, the young man „burying his few books and philosophies in some hidden cabinet” will not do more than

what he has read of Virgil or Ovid he reveals only in the company of his wife or in the sitting room” [...] He spends two or three years accordingly hunting, drinking, or in the court of Venus, and whatever he studied for a few years, he forgets most of it in that short time¹⁸.

There is also data confirming that a century later, some were of the same opinion as Mikes about the usefulness of school education. Antal Pucz, a Catholic parish priest, writes the following in his *Essay on the refinement and promotion of the Hungarian national language* (1824, Esztergom): „Boileau and Voltaire did not suffer reading Poésis for a year, and eventually they still became royal Poets. [...] Our sons spend a lot of time in school; still, their education is nothing but awfully superficial”¹⁹.

The picture drawn by Mikes and Pucz can be refined by asserting that most readers did not simply see Ovid’s poems as boring assigned readings, indeed they remembered them fondly for a long time. As Sámuel Andrád wrote, even the young readers understood the erotic-romantic poems without any notation or commentary. There is a wealth of data suggesting that most items of Ovid’s oeuvre were close to the readers’ hearts. Many memorized or wrote down their favourite passages in their collection of quotes. Besides literary works, we can also find several references to Ovid in eighteenth and nineteenth century letters, which shows how easily the readers identified

¹⁷ *Amores*, III, 4, 17–18. Cf. Kelemen MIKES Kelemen, *Törökországi levelek és Misszilis levelek*. [Letters from Turkey and Other Letters.] Ed. by HOPP Lajos. Budapest 1966 (*Mikes Kelemen Összes Művei*), 124.

¹⁸ MIKES (note 17), 106–110.

¹⁹ Antal PUCZ, *Értekezés a’ nemzeti nyelv’ tökéletesítése és terjesztése módjairól*, [Essay on the Refinement and Promotion of the Hungarian National Language.] Esztergom: Beimel József 1824, 79.

with situations described by him, and how much help the lines of the ancient poet provided in figuring out, experiencing and expressing their own emotions.

László Kazinczy translated *Amores* in Jablanác, a small town which lies on the shore of the Adriatic Sea, where Kazinczy was stationed with his troop in the winter of 1784²⁰. In a letter to his brother, Ferenc, written in December 1785 he writes about a scene he witnessed while being a guest in Futak. There was a young countess in the gathering, whose beauty made a certain General Schmidtfeldt utter the following „declaratio“:

Holl mich der Teufel, die Gräffin ist die Schönste Person, die ich je gesehen hab. Und Wenn ich ein Mann von 20 Jahren wäre, ich thäte nichts als verschmachten, in Ohnmacht fallen und Sterben. Ich sehet aus blas. — Aber nicht, wie die von der 4 Tägigen Fieber ausgemergelte. Ich würde blas wie es uns, unser Lieber Ovidius lehret. — Nicht war Gräffin, Sie Können die Blase. Nein, so ein schönes Kind wie sie Kann das unmöglich nicht können²¹.

As we can see, the General quotes only one word from Ovid, which, it seems, is perfectly suitable to express his erupting emotions²². László Kazinczy even tells Ferenc that another time, when he was in private with the countess, he himself also expressed his admiration of her, and that he considers the General's words absolutely suitable for courting in different situations too. He mentions this so his brother too will be able to tell this little speech to a pretty lady if need be.

Besides young people in love, others turned to Ovid in more difficult life situations in need for comfort. László Kazinczy, for example, could not only identify with the emotions recorded by the poems when he wanted to confess his love to his beloved, but also when he was stationed at the other end of the country as a soldier. He wrote to his brother about how he put a few lines from the elegy number 10 in *Tristia's* third book on the wall in the lodgings of the officers on patrol²³. In his opinion, the description of the poet fits precisely the area of Jablanác, where no vegetation lives on the deserted land, and where his soldiers feel like they have been sent to exile. A few years later another soldier, Sándor Kisfaludy, a poet, wrote a few lines in his diary in which he

²⁰ Ferencz KAZINCZY *Összes művei, Harmadik osztály, Levelezés, I.* [Complete Works. Third Class. Letters, vol. I.] Ed. by János VÁCZY. Budapest 1890, 84–85.

²¹ KAZINCZY (note 20), 82.

²² The quotation „Ich würde blas wie es uns“ may refer to the verses of the *Ars amatoria*: „Palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti; / Hoc decet, hoc stulti non valuisse putant.“ (I, 729–730).

²³ KAZINCZY (note 20), 83.

confessed his painful homesickness by quoting the poem number 9 of the first book of *Epistulae ex Ponto*: „Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos detinet, immemores nec sinit esse sui!” „By what sweet charm I know not the native land draws all men nor allows them to forget her” (A. L. Wheeler transl.)²⁴.

Several other examples could illustrate how the work of Ovid, first known and loved by many as compulsory readings, became part of Hungarian popular culture. In spite of this popularity, there were a few authors who thought that life can only be learnt through experience, and not from ancient poets. József Katona in his essay called „*Why cannot theatrical poetry gain strength in Hungary?*” sets those who learn about love from *Amores* as a negative example. In his opinion, this is as fruitless as learning play-writing from books²⁵. Despite his verdict, however, a large amount of data confirms that Hungarian readers, and even scholars and scientists learnt a lot about the world from Ovid. His poems not only served as reference points for works on historiography, philology, and ethics, but also in textbooks on botany, dietetics, and psychology. One example is found in a work titled *New Hungarian Garden with Grass and Flowers* (Bratislava, 1775) by József Csapó, a physician from Debrecen, in his description of plants²⁶. István Mátyus, a polymath from Transylvania, references *Metamorphoses* and some parts of *Fasti* at several points in his six-volume *Old and New Dietetics*, for example where he discusses eating habits regarding wheat and bread²⁷. We can see an interesting example of referencing Ovid in the 1844 textbook called *A Note on Empirical Psychology*. The author, Jácint Rónay, was a Benedictine teacher, scientist, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Science, tutor of Habsburg princes and of Kossuth’s children, and the first Hungarian to teach Darwinism. In his work on psychology he gives a biological and physiological description of emotions, and he illustrates fear with a quote from *Metamorphoses* („Me timor invasit, stabam sine sanguine maestus”)²⁸.

Since Ovid’s oeuvre contains an encyclopaedic array of descriptions of various phenomena and of a wide variety of life situations, and, in general, a lot of wisdom,, a wide range of readers found him. Additionally, the ancient author’s poetry as a whole had a huge influence on the poets and writers of Hungary, particularly from the last third

²⁴ Sándor KISFALUDY, *Napló és francia fogságom*. [Diary and My Imprisonment in France.] Budapest 1892, 222, 232.

²⁵ József KATONA, *Összes művei, I.* [Complete Works, vol. I.] Ed. by Andor SOLT. Budapest 1959, 73.

²⁶ József CSAPÓ, *Új füves és virágos magyar kert*. [The New Hungarian Garden with Grasses and Flowers.] Pozsony, Pest: Landerer, 1792, 289, 410.

²⁷ István MÁTYUS, *Ó és új diaetetika*. [Old and New Dietetics.] Pozsony: Landerer, 1793, 49, 51.

²⁸ Jácint RÓNAY, *Mutatvány a tapasztalati lélektan köréből*. [A Note on Empirical Psychology.] Budapest 1844, 14.

of the eighteenth century²⁹. We have referred to the translations of *Amores* and *Ars amatoria* above: from the 1770s, Hungarian poets of every level of talent tried to translate at least some of Ovid's poems. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the whole *Heroides*, *Metamorphoses*, *Tristia*, and *Epistulae ex Ponto* were published in the translation of Antal Egyed, Imre Homonnai and Pál Wiski, and even some of these had more than one version. Besides the aforementioned translators, we need to highlight Ádám Pálóczi Horváth's work, not necessarily for his translation of *Amores*, but because it was his poetry and prose which reflects Ovid's impact the most vividly from those who wrote in Hungarian during the period.

After the Bible, Ovid's opera omnia was the most important text to Pálóczi Horváth. He was of protestant origin, and wrote in a variety of genres. Besides the Book of Moses he also quotes the Roman poet in support of his theological-ontological arguments on the topic of the creation of the world in his poems *Dying happily (Vidám indulatú haldokló)* and *The shortest summer night (Legrövidebb nyári éjszaka)*. Both are rhymed didactic poems³⁰. In his opinion, the pagans accepted the teachings of ancient Christian philosophers, which is why the descriptions of the world's creation found in the Bible and in the first book of *Metamorphoses* are so similar. In his argument he also goes into detail about how Ovid was just as wise and knowledgeable as Moses, and the only reason he did not see everything clearly was that he lacked „such a good glass eye” ('glass eye' means 'glasses')³¹. He also considered the Roman poet to be a historian. Ovid served as the main source for Horváth in the history of the world: in his historical account titled *From Magog Patriarch to King Stephen I.* he quotes Ovidian texts³². In his book on astronomy he borrows some of his data from Ovid. In order to entertain the reader he also inserts fictional parts, the so-called „tales” from *Metamorphoses*, in this

²⁹ Cf. Anikó POLGÁR, *Felülírás és korrekciós igény a fordításban: Gyöngyösi István és Ányos Pál heroida-fordításai*. [Overwriting and the Need for Correction in Translation.] In: POLGÁR (note 4), 43–54; POLGÁR, „Holtig Ulyssesnek Penelopéje leszek”: *A heroida-fordító Dayka Gábor*. [“I Will be Ulysses's Penelope Until I Die”: Gábor Dayka, Translator of Heroides.] In: POLGÁR (note 4), 55–70; on the reception of the *Heroides* in the poetry of Ferenc Faludi and in folk poetry 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*), 102–104.

³⁰ PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai* (note 15), 425–496, 694–701.

³¹ PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai* (note 15), 434.

³² Ádám [PÁLÓCZI] HORVÁTH, *A' magyar Magóg pátriarkhátul fogva I. István királyig*. [From Magog Patriarch to King Stephen I.] Pest: Trattner, 1817.

work. In some of his other writings, for example in the epic poem *Hunniás*, there are references to a number of Ovid texts apart from the excerpts from Virgil³³.

An important consideration is how Pálóczi Horváth finds both his own and his fellow poet's poetic forefather in Ovid. In a poem written in three parts in 1784, entitled *True friend (Igaz barát)*, he bids farewell to the terminally ill Pál Ányos³⁴. In the poem, which also touches upon theological and philosophical topics, he mourns his ill friend „according to the poems of the ancient Poets”, and comforts him by saying that there is truth in teachings about reincarnation. Along the same lines he discusses how the soul which incarnated in Ányos recently used to live in Orpheus earlier, and then moved to Ovid. We can also find the same idea in Pálóczi Horváth's novel about freemasonry called *The Secret Reveled (Felfedezett titok)*, in which the characters are not named, but similarly, the narrator talks about his ideas of reincarnation at the deathbed of his friend³⁵. On the other hand, he considers Ovid his own predecessor as well. He brings up Ovid in the first place in the Foreword to his collection of poems, published in 1788 and titled *Holmi* (roughly: *Belongings* or *Things*). In the Foreword he argued that Ovid, too, was an author who wrote a lot of lighter, entertaining erotic and romantic poems, and who, even if as tried to correct this mistake with his more serious work, was sentenced to exile³⁶. Pálóczi Horváth was accepted to one of the Masonic lodges of Pest shortly after the publication of the volume, where he acquired the name Arión. The only remaining authentic portrayal of him was made in 1791: the half-length portrait of the writer is surrounded by Masonic symbols, under him two lines from *Fasti* about Arión.

To Ádám Pálóczi Horváth, out of all the classical Roman authors, Ovid was the poet that served as a reference point regarding his own creative persona, and he considered Ovid the poet of all poets. Some of Pálóczi Horváth's contemporaries also expressed the opinion that the Hungarian language is particularly suitable for the translation of ancient literary works in Latin. György Aranka wrote the following in 1806: “*Si nisi quae forma poterit te digna videri Nulla futura tua est: nulla futura tua est.*” (“If nothing but what's possessed by beauty will seem worthy to you, none will be yours in future, none will be

³³ PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai* (note 15), 55–240.

³⁴ PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai* (note 15), 269–282.

³⁵ Cf. Ádám PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Felfedezett titok*. [A Secret Revealed.] Ed. by József NÉMETH. Budapest 1988, 33–35; Ádám PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *A Secret Revealed*. In: Réka Lengyel and Gábor Tüskés (ed.), *Learned Societies, Freemasonry, Sciences and Literature in 18th-century Hungary: A Collection of Documents and Sources*. Budapest 2017, 204–216.

³⁶ PÁLÓCZI HORVÁTH, *Verses kiadványai* (note 15), 267.

yours in future!" transl. A. S Kline).³⁷ Neither the German, nor the English has been able to properly translate this last poem of Ovid". From the end of the eighteenth century, quantitative poetry really came into fashion in the practice of Hungarian poets. They not only followed the original metres when translating ancient authors' works, but they also successfully applied these forms in their own works as well. However, not everyone agreed with the extent of imitating the Roman poets. János Molnár, a former Jesuit published his hexametric didactic poem *Zoologican* in 1780³⁸. Mátyás Ráth, a scholar of linguistics wrote the following in his review of *Zoologican*: „I would rather wish the young minds studying Poesis to learn Poems like this instead of the Elegies of Ovid, in which there is not much more than weird thoughts to learn about"³⁹. We need to add, however, that in composing his poem Molnár relied partly on ancient authors and partly on more modern scholarly work; therefore, he himself learnt a lot from Ovid. A nineteenth-century author, the teacher, politician, and academic officer Károly Sasku concurs with Molnár regarding the classical poet's re-evaluation:

This period [the classical period of Latin literature] is famous about the epic authors imitating Homer. There was nothing new in their works, generally even less than in Homer's. But it was only because Rome was never free. And no one becomes a poet if his spirit is not free. The art of Ovid was sparkling in that period, but not one of his pieces resembles the glorious purpose of poetry. He was a genius, the biggest any human being can be, but his heart was not a noble one, not even in proportion to any common man's. He enriched Homer's treasures with a number of images; but these images are only preparations and instruments for reaching the highest purpose of poetry⁴⁰.

When it comes to imitating the Roman poets Ferenc Kazinczy had contradictory opinions as well. In his autobiography called *Pályám emlékezete (Memoirs of my Life)* he says he loved *Metamorphoses* even as a child, and that he knew many parts of it by heart. Later, as a young poet he translated a part of *Heroides*⁴¹. However, even later than that, in a letter from 1814, he writes: „our semi-docti were spoilt in school by Ovid", and he

³⁷ György ARANKA, *Elme játékjai*. [Mind-playing.] Nagyvárad: Szigethy 1806, 8.

³⁸ Joannis Bapt. MOLNÁR, *Zoologicon, complexum historiam naturalem animalium*, Budae: Typis Regiae Universitatis 1780.

³⁹ János MOLNÁR, *Magyar és deák könyvei*. [Hungarian and Latin Works.] Győr: Streibig 1792, 31.

⁴⁰ Károly SASKU, *Az okoskodás és költészet tudománya*. [How to become intelligent and the art of poetry.] Pest 1836, 88–89.

⁴¹ Cf. Ferenc KAZINCZY, *Pályám emlékezete*. [Memoires.] Ed. by János VÁCZY. Budapest 1900.

wishes that the poems of Ferenc Faludi and Ferenc Kunics, two exceptional Jesuit poets from the eighteenth century, would be an example to follow for the students coming afterwards⁴². Meanwhile, another group of writers trying to refine the Hungarian literary language and improve Hungarian language were convinced that they can only achieve the desired results if they followed the example of ancient Roman authors. According to the members of the Society in Transylvania for the Cultivation of the Hungarian Language:

Concerning this matter, the Society is happy to agree that if someone uses Hungarian in a way similar to Terentius, Cicero, Caesar, Virgil, Ovid and Horatio, at the same time attaching dignity and sensitivity of expression to the beauty and purity of being Hungarian, then that is the utmost honour they can give to the Hungarian language, and they cannot find a better and quicker way to raise that⁴³.

Ferenc Verseghy, a very versatile poet and translator held a similar opinion: Latin [people] needed Quintilianus, Cicero, Ovid, Academie de la langue francoise for the French and della Crusca society for the Italian, while the German wanted Adelung to reach perfection, which makes them shine. Was it then only the curious privilege of the Hungarian language to have its culture upside down: when no one thought about the Hungarian grammar, the language shone the brightest⁴⁴? Verseghy thus considers the ancient Latin authors a sort of association for the cultivation of language, and thinks that there needs to be a consensus, by following the Latin authors' example, regarding the basis and improvement of literature in Hungarian. Verseghy thought that writing independent literary works and translating the classics of world literature are equally important. He himself started to translate *Metamorphoses*, although in the name of morality he left out the romantic and erotic scenes from the text⁴⁵.

The analysis of the presented literary and historical sources shows that in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Ovid's works still met the various demands of

⁴² Vö. Ferencz KAZINCZY *Összes művei, Harmadik osztály, Levelezés, XII.* [Complete Works. Third Class. Letters, vol. XII.] Ed. by János VÁCZY. Budapest 1902, 139.

⁴³ Elemér JANCSÓ, *Az Erdélyi Magyar Nyelvmívelő Társaság iratai.* [Documents of the Society in Transylvania for the Cultivation of the Hungarian Language.] Bukarest 1955, 187.

⁴⁴ Ferenc VERSEGHY, *A' tiszta magyarság, avvagy A' csinos magyar beszédre és helyes írásra vezérlő értekezések [...].* [Pure Hungarian Speaking, or Studies on Fine Speaking and Writing Hungarian.] Pest: Eggenberger 1805, 6.

⁴⁵ Vö. *Verseghy Ferencz' maradványai és élete.* [The Unpublished Works and Life of Ferenc Verseghy.] Ed. by Ferenc SÁGHY. Buda: Királyi Magyar Univ. 1825, 13–116.

generations of Hungarian readers. Many of them used these texts as schoolbooks for learning Latin grammar, rhetorics, and poetics, while for others they served as a guide on principles or as an inspiration and blueprint for composing Latin- or Hungarian-language literary works. Another fascinating way Ovidian texts survived is found in how authors of philosophical, historical or scientific works applied elements of classical knowledge in their various essays and studies. It is also worth mentioning that Ovid's influence extend beyond the limits of high culture or high literature. The classical poet's influence is not restricted to authors working in the field of linguistic or literary education: his work instructed a wide readership on how to live and how to love. In his work titled *Pro cultu litterarum in Hungaria vindicatio*, the Piarist priest, Josephus Dezericius argues that in Hungary even the pigherds can speak Latin fluently and recite the verses of Ovid⁴⁶. Although there is no doubt that Dezericius overestimated the erudition of common Hungarian people, we find that Ovid, because of the popularity of his topics and his narrative mastery in their elaboration, found his way into the minds and hearts of lessert educated readers..

⁴⁶ Cf. László SZÖRÉNYI, Desericzky Ince védirata a magyar műveltségéről. [Ince Desericzky's Defense of Hungarians Erudition.] In: *Humanista történetírás* (note 9), 168–177.