

Pious Resolutions: Humanist Poetry, Commonplace Collecting, and Student Interaction at the University of Wittenberg in 1586

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The University of Wittenberg* was the most important destination of Protestant students from Hungary in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹ Students from Hungary formed a university nation called ‘natio Ungarica’ there, but they were a composite group: many of them hailed from one of the overwhelmingly German cities of the country, and they adhered to the Lutheran confession even after 1560s. However, most ethnically Hungarian students adopted the First Helvetic Confession after the synod of Debrecen in 1567.² These students preferring the Helvetic confession were tolerated at the Lutheran university of Wittenberg without serious conflicts until the death of Prince August in 1586, and his heir, Prince Christian I was even more supportive of Crypto-Calvinist

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¹ Géza Szabó, *Geschichte des ungarischen Coetus an der Universität Wittenberg, 1555–1613* (Halle, 1941); András Szabó, *Natio Ungarica. Die Mitglieder der ungarischen Studentengemeinschaft in Wittenberg 1555–1613* (Göttingen, 2021).

² Csaba Fekete, “Kinek és mit ajánlott 1567-ben a debreceni zsinat?,” [What did the Synod of Debrecen offer in 1567 and to whom?] *Magyar Könyvszemle* 134 (2018), 211–215; Jan Andrea Bernhard, *Konsolidierung des reformierten Bekenntnisses im Reich der Stephanskronen* (Göttingen, 2015), 432–444.

doctrines at the university. Thus, the 1580s were a flourishing decade for the Hungarian speaking community at Wittenberg. The backlash came along with the death of Prince Christian I in 1591, as the Lutheran professors forbade pro-Calvinist teachings at the university, and expelled the members of the Hungarian community in 1592. Although the ban was later lifted, the Hungarian student community never reached its former prominence, and most students chose to continue their studies in Heidelberg in the subsequent decades.³

The studies in Wittenberg became a vital element of the formation of Protestant pastors in sixteenth century Hungary. The financial means of the peregrinating students were usually provided either by a single patron (usually a Protestant lord of the country), or by a city council or a local community, which might have seen a future pastor or schoolmaster in the selected student who received their support.⁴ Thus, publishing a piece of poetry or an oration was a significant element in the life of the student community. In the absence of other kinds of evidence, the texts published at the university demonstrated the linguistic skills and the social network of the student at the same time. Unlike later publications by peregrinating students, printed texts from Wittenberg were mostly literary texts, not scholarly disputations. On the one hand, these publications allowed the

³ Szabó, *Natio Ungarica* (see above, n. 1.), 35.

⁴ Ágnes Ritóokné Szalay, “A wittenbergi egyetem magyarországi promoveáltjai a 16. században,” [The promoted students from Hungary at the University of Wittenberg in the sixteenth century] in *Kutak: Tanulmányok a XV-XVI. századi magyarországi művelődés köréből* [Fountains: Studies on the cultural history of Hungary in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], ed. by Ágnes Ritóokné Szalay (Budapest, 2012), 220–235.

formation of a group identity: many of the printed small booklets have multiple authors beside the primary author and these authors mostly share a common Hungarian background. On the other hand, the literary products of the students, written in elegant Classical Greek and Latin, provided tangible proof of their poetic skills which they could show to their future employers in their home country.

Beside some orations and prose *hodoeporica*, the most important literary texts produced in this community were poems. Secondary literature often calls this type of poetry “occasional poetry”, or in German “Gelegenheitsdichtung”, and more recently, “Kasualpoesie”,⁵ but it is a generalizing term that obfuscates the differences between the target audiences and the social context of these poems. E.g., *propemptica* (farewell poems) were mostly addressed to the members of the community by the members of the community,⁶ while encomiastic poems were rather written to the patrons and the former teachers in the home country. Poetic paraphrases of the Bible demonstrated the literary skills of the students, who often started their careers in town schools as school rectors. According to András Szabó, the most important literary genres that were widespread as occasional poetry in the ‘natio Ungarica’ in Wittenberg were *propemptica*, *apobateria* (farewell speeches), *epibateria* (arrival poems), *epicedia* (funerary poems), epithalamies (marriage

⁵ On Latin and German school handbooks of poetics of occasional poetry, see Gunter E. Grimm, *Literatur und Gelehrtentum in Deutschland: Untersuchungen zum Wandel ihres Verhältnisses vom Humanismus bis zur Frühaufklärung* (Tübingen, 1983), 281–295.

⁶ On *propemptica* and *hodoeporica* of the Hungarian community, see Tünde Móré, *Utazás és hírnév. Wittenbergi magyar diákok latin nyelvű búcsúztatóversei (1560–1600)* [Travel and fame. Latin farewell poems of Hungarian students in Wittenberg, 1560–1600] (Budapest, 2022).

poems), encomia (poetic praises), Biblical paraphrases, and the publication of anthologies.⁷ Nevertheless, at a closer look we often find that these poems contain traces of mixed genres, and they use poetic tools that are characteristic of different genres. Epithalamies might contain the praise of the city where the future couple will live, or where the bride and bridegroom come from, or the other way round, farewell poems, as *apobateria* and *propemptica* might refer to planned weddings and other life events. Ancient, or late-antique generic traditions, transmitted e.g. by Menander Rhetor,⁸ play a lesser role in defining the shape of these poems than learned rhetoric tools, as the use of amplification, *prosopopoeia*, *ecphrasis*, or rhetoric questions.

At the first glance, Georgius Kaposi's *Song in praise of Christian Piety* looks like a typical example of such 'occasional poetry', which promises little to the modern reader.⁹

⁷ Szabó, *Natio Ungarica* (see above, n. 1.), 97–98.

⁸ On the transmission of post-Classical rhetoric theory in Renaissance Europe, see Pernille Harsting, "The Golden Method of Menander Rhetor. The Translations and the Reception of the *peri epideiktikon* in the Italian Renaissance," *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 20 (Rome, 1994), 139–157 and ead., "The Discovery of Late-Classical Epideictic Theory in the Italian Renaissance," in *Ten Nordic Studies in the History of Rhetoric*, ed. Pernille Harsting and Stefan Ekman (Copenhagen, 2002), 39–53.

⁹ Georgius Caposius R., *Carmen in commendationem Christianae pietatis, ad generosum et magnificum dominum, Dn. Andream Magochium, scriptum a Georgio R. Caposio alumno beneficiorum memoriam pia mente recolente* (Wittenberg, 1584). The only known copy of this work survives in the Library of the Hungarian Academy, Ráth 1155.

Nevertheless, as I will try to show, this poem might offer us more than a haphazard selection of Biblical commonplaces of piety, as it reflects the intellectual interests within the Wittenberg student community and represents how the rhetoric strategies of these poems transcended traditional generic patterns. In 1584, more exactly on September 4, Georgius Kaposi (or by his family name, Ráti) published a poem with the title *Carmen in commendationem Christianae pietatis*, which he dedicated to Andreas Mágocsi, his Hungarian patron. In selecting András Mágócsi as his patron, Kaposi turned to someone who himself was an alumnus of the university of Wittenberg more than 20 years earlier, as he studied there between 1559 and 1562. Son of a military captain and nephew of one of the magnates supporting Protestantism in North Eastern Hungary, he was sent to Wittenberg and had Basilius Fabricius of Szikszó as his private tutor.¹⁰ After his return to Hungary, he became a generous patron of students wishing to study at Wittenberg, and got into contact with Matthaeus Dresser, a professor in Leipzig, who later dedicated to him his work on the origins and meanings of pagan and Christian feast days, with the title *De festis diebus Christianorum* (1584).¹¹ This work contained not only the dedication of the Leipzig

¹⁰ On András Mágocsi, see András Szabó, “Mágocsy Gáspár és András udvara,” [The court of Gáspár and András Mágocsy] in *Magyar reneszánsz udvari kultúra* [Renaissance courtly culture in Hungary], ed. Ágnes R. Várkonyi (Budapest, 1987), 263–278, 379–385.

¹¹ Matthaeus Dresser, *De festis et praecipuis anni partibus liber* (Erfurt, 1584). On his Hungarian contacts, see András Szabó, “A magyar későhumanizmus történetéhez. I. Matthaeus Dresser és magyar barátai,” [On the history of Hungarian late humanism. I. Matthaeus Dresser and his Hungarian friends] in *Collectanea Tiburtiana. Tanulmányok*

professor, but also a number of dedicatory poems by other students who András Mágocsi supported, including Georgius Kaposi, Johannes Siderius, Johannes Gyulai, and Isaac Fegyverneki (the latter will have special importance for us later). The circle of students who were sent to study in Wittenberg by András Mágocsi was similarly remembered in the dedication of a cycle of epideictic orations (*Orationes*, 1584, published in 1587) by Matthaeus Dresser.¹² These festive, epideictic orations of the Leipzig professor about various subjects, such as wrath, the art of dying, holy war, history and eloquence, provide a background for the rhetoric structure of Kaposi's poem as well.

In terms of poetic genres, Kaposi's 'commendation' of Christian Piety has been described by Szabó as an *encomium*. At a closer look, the poem belongs to a subgenre of encomia, the hymn: Menander Rhetor differentiates between several kinds of hymns (summonses, dismissals, philosophical, mythical, genealogical, precatory, deprecatory), and one of them is what he calls "peplasmēnoi", or fictive hymns.¹³ Their main characteristic is that these are addressed to personified figures. Julius Caesar Scaliger describes the genre in similar

Klaniczay Tibor tisztelőtére, eds. Géza Galavics, János Herner, and Bálint Keserű (Budapest, 1990), 215–225.

¹² Matthaeus Dresser, *Orationes, tam rerum varietate et copia, quam sermonis puritate et elegantia commendatae* (Frankfurt am Main, 1587), fol. 1r–7v. The dedication is dated to Sept 1, 1584. See Mihály Imre, "Matthaeus Dresser magyaroknak szóló ismeretlen könyvajánlása 1587-ből," [An unknown dedication to Hungarians by Matthaeus Dresser from 1587] *Acta historiae litterarum Hungaricarum* 30 (2011), 198–206.

¹³ Menander Rhetor, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ars rhetorica*, ed. and transl. William H. Race (Cambridge, Mass., 2019), 26–27 (Treatise 1,2).

terms, when he claims that those praises, which invoke an abstract addressee, are called fictive: “Ficti nanque sunt, quemadmodum Dies, Nox, Tempestas, Iustitia, Lex, Virtus, Honor, Fama.”¹⁴ Indeed, Piety can be paralleled to the subjects enumerated by Scaliger, such as Honor or Fame.

The poem starts with an idyllic scenery: the poet himself strolls through the meadows after dawn has come and the Sun has risen, and enters a grove, from which a road takes him to the shore of the river Elba. Thus, the poem clearly represents a vision in Wittenberg, where the author’s patron, András Mágocsi studied as well, which might evoke good memories in the addressee. On the bank of the river, the poet starts to meditate upon the goodness and beauty of the world, and how much divine love has been shed upon the pious since the Creation. He comes to the conclusion that virtuous people were never misled by false cults of pagan gods, who were honored by the profane masses. Many people gave their offerings to Ceres, to Minerva, Flora, and Bacchus, but all these cults were the creations of the devil, the evil Dragon (“peperit quos foeda Draconis / Proluvies cultus”). But in spite of these evil cults, Piety has descended from heaven and taught mankind to honor God. It is at this point, that Andreas Mágocsi becomes more than a patron: Kaposi turns to him with an invocation, asking for his aid as a Muse. The patron’s task will be to share all his knowledge about Piety.

The opposition between the divine cult and the worship of pagan Gods appears here probably for a good reason: exactly in the year 1584, when Kaposi published his *De pietate*, Matthaeus Dresser dedicated his *De festis* (About feast days) to Kaposi’s patron, András

¹⁴ Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem*, ed. and transl. Luc Deitz and Gregor Vogt-Spira (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1995), vol. 3, 156.

Mágocsi, and Kaposi contributed a poem to that volume as well, celebrating Mágocsi's virtues.¹⁵ In its recommendation to the reader, Mihály Debreceni (Michael Debrecinus), Kaposi's fellow-student in Wittenberg, mentioned pre-Christian, Hebrew, and pagan feasts,¹⁶ claiming that the most impious Roman custom was to call some days 'allowed', and others 'prohibited' ("dies fasti" and "nefasti").¹⁷ As he speculates, this impious custom was inherited by the Romans from the Chaldaeans or the Arabs, because Albumasar wrote that if one prays to God when the Moon is in conjunction with Jupiter and with the head of the Dragon ("si quis Luna Iovi coniuncta cum capite Draconis ad deum preces fundat"), than his wishes will be fulfilled. Although the "impious Draco" refers here clearly to the constellation, this passage might have given inspiration to Kaposi's description of the pagan feasts, and to the idea of calling the devil's actions "dirty swill of the Dragon".

After this prelude, the praise of Piety, who appeared in a vision at the shore of the Elba, starts with a paraphrased quotation from St Paul, which states that all things in life are fragile: "nostrae quam fluxa domuncula vitae / Fluctuet", and all things perish so suddenly: "rerum species speculamur abunde / Quam cito decurrant", as Aeolus blows through the void: "tereti ceu cardine moto / Aeolus emittit ventos per inane volantes."

¹⁵ Dresser, *De festis* (see above, n. 10), fol. O7v–O8r.

¹⁶ Dresser, *De festis* (see above, n. 10), fol. B1v: "Praeter enim publica festa (qualia fuerunt Agonalia, Carmentalia, Consualia, Hilaria, Floralia, Compitalia, Tubilustria, Vestalia, Martialia, Lucaria, Neptunalia, Furrinalia, Meditrinalia, Fontinalia, Flaminica, Saturnalia, Novendalia, Bachanalia et alia sexcenta) privatae quoque familiae suas habuerunt ferias."

¹⁷ Dresser, *De festis* (see above, n. 10), fol. B2r.

This holds true also for human life, and if humans yearn for eternal life, they have to stay away from sins and strive for the heavenly castles, which are revealed in the writings of pious poets (“vatum monumenta piorum”). As many times as the Sun rises, and as Titan disappears on the Western horizon (“Titan sua lumina condit / Fluctibus Hesperis”), and as many times as the Moon travels around the Earth, a pious man will meditate sweet hymns in his heart and offer sacrifices to God, avoiding sins. Only divine matters rest in his heart, and he always strives to understand the commands of the heavenly King. Day and night, the pious will adjust himself to the holy will of God (“sese noctesque diesque / Illius ad nutus sanctos componit”). His pious eloquence is focused on the praise of God, and not on colorful lies, and therefore he has no reason to fear from anything. Divine piety, the mother of virtues deserves this behavior (“Pietas hoc diva meretur / virtutum genetrix”), and without her, one tries in vain to live a happy life. The praise of Piety continues with the enumeration of her generosity: she is capable of mitigating the wrath of God, and can call forth divine clemency. Piety not only ensures a long life, but it secures bountiful crops and rich grape harvests. As she is the mother of all other virtues, she can keep all human in good honors and make their life happy.

The direct praise of Piety ends here, around the middle of the poem, structurally in the center. Thereafter, the focus shifts from the praise of Piety to demonstrating her effects through examples. The argument of the second half of the poem concentrates on exemplary humans, who turned out to be of extraordinary Piety. The list starts with Abel, as opposed to Cain, then continues by Noah, Loth, Isaac, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, and Josiah. All these exemplary, pious figures are described in several lines by the author. Although this list contains no great surprises, and their order is chronological, it is still worth taking a look at the possible sources of this selection of

exemplary, god-fearing men. In 1586, two years after the publication of Kaposi's poem, Isaac Fegyverneki (Fegvernekinus), his fellow student in Wittenberg, published a collection of theological commonplaces in Basel, with the title *Enchiridion locorum communium theologicorum*.¹⁸ By the time of publication, Fegyverneki already switched to the University of Heidelberg because of the growing confessional tensions in Wittenberg, but he had studied in Wittenberg from 1581 until 1585, and most probably knew Kaposi personally, as well, because both of them appear as authors of paratextual poems in Matthias Dresser's *De festis*, mentioned above.¹⁹ Fegyverneki's volume is an alphabetical lexicon of commonplace keywords, which lists the pertinent Biblical passages under headings of general theological concepts as hope, love, or piety. Fegyverneki already confessed on the title page of his book that he had copied out most of the collection from earlier works of Augustin Marlorat and Christoph Obenheim.²⁰ Both of them were published only a decade earlier: Marlorat's *Propheticae et apostolicae, id est totius divinae et*

¹⁸ On the publication history of this volume, and Fegyverneki, see Szabó, *Natio Ungarica* (see above, n. 1.), 67–70. On commonplace collecting in early modern Hungary, see Gábor Förköli, "Az excerpálás és közhelygyűjtés kora újkori elmélete Magyarországon," [The theories of excerpting and commonplace collecting in early modern Hungary] *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 125 (2021), 3–25, although Fegyverneki's collection is not mentioned in this article. On commonplace collecting in general, see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996).

¹⁹ Dresser, *De festis* (see above, n. 10), fol. O8v–9r.

²⁰ Isaac L. Fegyverneki (Fegvernekinus), *Enchiridion locorum communium* (Basel, 1586), title page: "Ex Aug. Marlorati Thesauro et Christ. Obenhinii Promptuario."

Canonicae scripturae Thesaurus appeared in 1575,²¹ and Obenheim's *Promptuarium sacrosanctum* in 1576 in Oberursel.²² Despite being a blatant copy, Fegyverneki's work turned out to be more popular than its sources, because it was smaller in size than the huge folio volumes of Marlorat and Obenheim, and it would be republished 14 times in Basel, Geneva and London until 1628.

If we take a look at the headword "Pietas" in the collection of Fegyverneki, Kaposi's fellow student, we find the very same list of pious people from the Bible (Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, David) who were cited in Kaposi's poem.²³ Fegyverneki enumerated many more Biblical passages connected to these pious people, but he did not offer anything else to the reader but a reference number to the Biblical *loci*. In comparison, Marlorat's work contained the very same examples as the collection of Fegyverneki, but it included some Biblical citations, as well, which explained the stories connected to the Biblical figures in some detail. Similarly, the *Promptuarium* of Obenheim contained the same exemplary figures, but shortened the references and abbreviated the sentences of the Bible which he in all probability also took from Marlorat's work. In comparison with Fegyverneki's *Enchiridion*, Marlorat's and Obenheim's works had the advantage that they

²¹ Augustin Marlorat, *Propheticae et apostolicae, id est totius divinae et Canonicae scripturae Thesaurus in locos communes rerum [...] digestus* (Lausanne, 1575). Marlorat's collection was published by his friend, Guillaume Feugueray, as its author, the Protestant pastor of Rouen, was executed in 1562.

²² Christoph Obenheim, *Promptuarium sacrosanctum tam virtutum quam vitiorum exempla continens* (Oberursel, 1576).

²³ Fegyverneki, *Enchiridion* (see above, n. 20), 488–489.

could be used without having to recur to the Bible itself. Still, the publishing success of Fegyverneki's commonplace collection shows that most readers were satisfied with a shorter reference to the Biblical books, and did not need an extensive quotation to be able to reuse the text.

It is clear that Kaposi used Fegyverneki's commonplace books, but it remains still to be determined whether he had access to his sources (Marlorat and Obenheim) only, or he could already turn to his fellow student's *Enchiridion* already in 1584, two years before its publication. Luckily, Fegyverneki's own copy of the *Promptuarium sacrosanctum* of Obenheim survives in the library of the Calvinist College of Sárospatak.²⁴ His marginalia in this volume clearly demonstrate how he added new Biblical passages to his sources, and enriched the volume with new data, while he abbreviated the original text to very short references at the same time. According to an annotation in the volume, he finished reading Obenheim's work on November 22, 1584 in Wittenberg ("absolvi divina favente gratia die xxii. IXbris 1584 Vitebergae").²⁵ Thus, Fegyverneki finished reading and annotating the book of Obenheim more than two months after his fellow student published his poem in September of the same year on the praise of Piety. Consequently, Kaposi still had to use the original printed sources of Fegyverneki (perhaps with his annotations) which his friend might have provided to him.

The process of the creation of this poem shows how intellectual collaboration might have looked like at the Hungarian community in Wittenberg. Since Fegyverneki had both

²⁴ András Szabó, "16. századi tanárok könyvei Sárospatakon," [Books of sixteenth century teachers in Sárospatak] *Magyar Könyvszemle* 103 (1987), 306–312, here 307–308.

²⁵ Szabó, "16. századi" (see above, n. 24), 308.

Marlorat's and Obenheim's collections at hand according to the title page of his *Enchiridion*, it is easy to imagine that his fellow student could recur to them as well. These handbooks served as a starting point for Kaposi, but his descriptions became more elaborate, and he enriched the stories around the names with poetic materials taken from the Bible, and with the rhetoric tool of copiousness. Whereas both Marlorat and Obenheim quote only a single sentence of the Bible about the offering of Abel: "Abel quoque obtulit de primogenitis gregis sui, et de adipibus eorum: et respexit Dominus ad Abel, et ad munera ejus" (Gen 4,4),²⁶ Kaposi paraphrased it poetically and attached a long moral advice to it:

Hac [scil. pietate] Abel acceptus fuerat *iuvenilibus annis*

Offerret Domino *pingues* dum rite bidentes,

Munera grata Deo, pingues facientia flammis.

Abel's good example is counterpoised by Cain, whose offerings were not accepted because of his impiety, and the two examples are followed by a 25 lines long exhortation to the reader to follow the path of piety. Here, the *exemplum* is prolonged by a moral advice, not by the amplification of the story.

In the following example, Noah's story, it is rather the copiousness and not the moral advice which amplifies the original Biblical narrative. Kaposi applied allegorical personifications of Vices in order to describe the moral decay preceding the Flood. Piety

²⁶ Marlorat, *Propheticae* (see above, n. 21), 166–167; Obenheim, *Promptuarium* (see above, n. 22), 528–529.

was mourning, as the swill (“proluviis”) of sins flooded the cities. Following the rhetorical practice of Erasmian copia (which might have reached the author through Melanchthon’s rhetoric teaching in Wittenberg), he describes how Sins swept over the world:

[...] mali sceleratus amor, fraudesque dolique
Foedaque spurcicies, secura Licentia, et ipsa
Garrulitas petulans, sufflata Superbia, nec non
Fauce tumens Lucrum, turpi comitata sorore
Usura, et macerans aliena ob commodum sese
Invidia, atque Odium, scelerata Calumnia, et ipsa
Semper in insontes acuens Iniuria dentes,
Et stimulo feriens foeda Obtreectatio acuta,
Criminis insontesque petens Infamia morsu.

After generalizing denominations (“mali sceleratus amor, fraudesque dolique”), Kaposi enumerated altogether twelve Vices. However, this amplifying rhetoric procedure is rather the exception than the norm in his poem. In most cases, he prefers to summarize the original Biblical story and to paraphrase it poetically, either addressing the Biblical figures with an apostrophe and rhetoric questions, or representing them as exemplary personalities to be followed by the reader.

Finally, at the end of the poem, two historical figures demonstrate that piety can be practiced also outside of the Biblical world. First, Emperor Constantine is represented as having introduced Christianity to the Empire and expelled all pagan believers, and then,

Charlemagne is praised for having erected churches and supported schools. These two historical *exempla* are not introduced in order to characterize piety, but rather, they pave the way for the final praise of Kaposi's worldly patron, András Mágoösy. Obviously, these two figures are not present in the commonplace collections of Marlorat, Obenheim, or Fegyverneki, but it is still possible to make a guess regarding the sources, from which they were derived. In the dedication of his *Enchiridion* to Stephen Báthory of Eösed, Fegyverneki listed some historical figures, as well, who might be compared to his own benefactor because of their patronage activities. As parallels to Báthory, he mentioned

nunquam satis laudati illi Imperatores et Principes, *Constantinus, Carolus Magnus,*
Ludovicus Pius, et Patrum nostrorum memoria, Ioan. Fridericus Saxonum Dux
Elector.²⁷

(those emperors and princes who are never praised enough: Constantine,
Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and in the time of our fathers, John Frederik, the
Saxon Elector)

Fegyverneki's dedication was printed two years later than Kaposi's work, but he might have prepared a collection of historical commonplaces already earlier, or they might have found these two examples together with Kaposi during their studies in Wittenberg.

²⁷ Fegyverneki, *Enchiridion* (see above, n. 20), fol. α4v.

In sum, the *Praise of Piety* is an interesting piece of poetry that shows how rhetorical exercises, the use of prosopopoeia, and commonplace thinking could function together in humanist occasional poetry in a university environment. The result could be valuable to its audience not only for its poetic value, but also as a practice of piety: the composition of a poem required an imaginative process that was pious in itself. It had to focus on the examples of piety, and to frame this concept both fictionally (as the descent of the goddess Piety) and in terms of exemplarity, finding the proper Biblical and historical exempla. But perhaps more importantly, this poem represents in a unique manner how student collaboration and collaborative writing might have looked like in a student community in the late sixteenth century.