

Letentur et exultetur universa Panonia.
An unknown gratulatory oration for King
Matthias's betrothal to Beatrice of Aragon

Patrik Paštrnák
Palacký University Olomouc
patrikpas@gmail.com

Abstract

This study offers a scholarly edition of the newly discovered oration by the Venetian ambassador, Sebastiano Badoer, delivered to King Matthias Corvinus during his proxy betrothal in Wrocław. Aside from a description of the manuscripts that contain this text, the study puts the speech into the diplomatic and historical context of the 1476 Hungarian royal wedding, using additional new evidence in the reconstruction of the engagement ceremonies that featured unusual rites of dressing the king in the garment sent by his future wife. Furthermore, the thematic analysis of the oration bears witness to Venice's diplomatic endeavour, striving to use the wedding as a tool for strengthening the alliance with the Hungarian king, while the contextual stylistic comparison places the speech as the first scion of the emerging genre of Humanist wedding orations beyond the Alps.

Royal weddings were pivotal moments in the medieval and early modern period. As a major event in the life of a monarchy and dynasty, nuptials had a grave political as well as diplomatic dimension, and even more so if an upcoming royal consort was coming from abroad. Diplomacy was involved in arranging the marital bond, when envoys and ambassadors of two wedding parties travelled to negotiate specifics of the marriage contract, and in preparing the logistics of the bride or bridegroom's transfer. However, third parties were also involved – many times, a prospect of marital union was first proposed or explored via a ruler who had dynastic or friendly connections with both potential wedding parties. Due to political needs or dynastic bonds, foreign rulers

participated directly in the wedding festivities, or sent their representatives who were to offer their regards and gifts to the newlyweds.

Each step in this process might have come hand in hand with delivering formal speeches: wedding negotiators, representatives of third parties, city delegations receiving the bride passing through their territories etc. used this medium to arrange the marriage, convey messages of friendship and good wishes, or welcome the special guest. On top of that, court poets and humanists, striving to attain the favour of a wealthy patron, could author special laudatory orations that strictly followed the principles of the epithalamia genre. As indispensable pieces of dynastic propaganda and memory, these epithalamia were subsequently elaborated into lavishly decorated manuscripts or published as occasional prints.

The nuptials of King Matthias of Hungary and Beatrice of Aragon in 1476 was no exemption to this rule. For instance, the Neapolitan chronicle of *notar* Giacomo states:

On the 20th day of June of the said year (1475), an orator of the most serene King Matthias of Hungary entered the city of Naples on account of the matrimony with the most illustrious madame Beatrice, a legitimate daughter of the most serene King Ferdinand, who heard the ambassador on the 23rd day of the same month in the hall of Castel Nuovo.¹

In the course of the marriage negotiations and festivities, there must have been a formal speech not only at the occasion of this sort but many others. However, unlike for other royal weddings from this period, the full transcripts of these addresses for the 1476 nuptials have not been known to scholarship thus far. This is no longer the case as this study aims to present a newly resurfaced oration of the Venetian envoy Sebastiano Badoer, delivered to King Matthias on the 5th of February 1475.

Who was Sebastian Badoer and what was the objective of his speech? Could it tell us something about the political climate of the 1470s in Central Europe and Italy? In what way was it influenced by the emerging genre of Renaissance wedding orations? Aside from providing a critical edition of Badoer's oration, this study aims to provide a deeper look into the diplomatic background of the 1476 Hungarian royal wedding. The analysis of the oration shows

¹ P. Garzili (ed.): *Cronica di Napoli di notar Giacomo*, Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1845: 129.

the precarious position of the Venetian diplomacy when confronted with an emerging union between the traditional rivals, i.e. Hungary and Naples, and its improvised yet prompt reaction, striving to maintain amity. The political manifesto however lags behind the literary qualities of the text which, as it is argued, represents a clear shift from the medieval matrimonial orations to the Humanistic models emerging at that time in Italy. In the first part of this study, attention is brought to the conditions and qualities of the text as such. Subsequently, the persona of the author alongside his role in the wedding and the wider political-diplomatic atmosphere, as evidenced by the content of the speech, is discussed. At the same time, attention is brought to the events surrounding the date of its delivery, that is the proxy-engagement rites in Wrocław (Breslau)², drawing upon another newly discovered source. The last part looks into the stylistic aspects of the oration, juxtaposing the oration with the other marriage speeches.

The preservation of the text and its textual qualities

The text of Badoer's oration has survived in two copies, in the codex C 700 stored in the Uppsala University Library and the manuscript 1674 of Leipzig University Library. The Uppsala codex was compiled no sooner than in 1479, probably in Warmia (Ermland), and was a part of the cathedral library in Frombork. Aside from Badoer's speech on folios 24v–26r, the codex contains the treatise of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini about the Prussians (*De situ et origine Prutenorum*); bulls of Pius II (against Turks), Paul II (e.g., against King George of Poděbrady), and Sixtus IV; letters of bishop Nicolaus of Tüngen, bishop of Warmia, as well as letters of Jacopo Piccolomini in the lawsuit between the bishop Nicolaus of Warmia and the bishop Vincentius of Chelmno.³ Nicolaus of Tüngen was a canon of Wrocław and an ally of King Matthias, whose support Tüngen needed in the conflict to claim his diocese against the king of Poland. Thus, if we are to speculate, Tüngen was present during the speech and got a copy of it, which later on was added to the codex which might have been commissioned by him.

² I use modern names of the cities.

³ M. Andersson-Schmitt, H. Hallberg & M. Hedlung: *Mittelalterliche Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala. Katalog über die C-Sammlung*. Band 6. Handschriften C 551–935, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993: 313–315.

The Leipzig codex compiled between 1474–1483 belonged to the Leipzig professor and rector Johannes Weiße (d. 1486). It contains around 120 Latin and German texts of various genres, such as imperial decrees, charters, papal bulls, legal records, letters, reports, or pieces of occasional poetry, assembled by Weiße, who intended to make the codex a sort of archival dossier of the important ongoing news and reports. Hence, the manuscript contains a report on the 1475 Landshut wedding, as well as several texts related to Hungary and King Matthias (reports about his campaigns against Turks, etc.).⁴ Johannes Weiße, an owner and compiler of the manuscript, was interested in Matthias's acts and recorded also the events occurring in Wrocław around the time of Badoer's oration, such as the arrival of the news of the wedding in October 1474, or the presence of the Neapolitan delegation in February 1475 (see below).

Given their positions within wider opuses, none of these versions can be an autograph. If we compare the two versions, it becomes evident that both were copied from a lost original: while the Leipzig version (L) contains a considerable amount of grammatical and syntactical errors that are corrected by a different hand and ink, sometimes in the margin, sometimes in the text itself, the Uppsala version (U) skips words such as 'caritate' and 'eucrathon' that were illegible or unknown to the scribe, leaving blank spaces instead. In addition, in one case, U omits the whole sentence. On the other hand, L has an additional title that reiterates the original one and marginal notes referring to the personages as well as the authors cited in the text.

Sebastiano Badoer and the role of Venice in the 1476 wedding

Sebastiano Badoer (1425/7–1498) was born into a patrician family in Venice. During his childhood or adolescence, he probably obtained a good level of humanistic education as in later years he was able to speak Latin fluently and compose letters in an embellished style. This skill served him well in several diplomatic missions on behalf of the Venetian republic: to the pope during the crisis following the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478, to the emperor during the war of Ferrara in 1484, to the duke of Milan, and many others. A collection

⁴ F. Eisermann: 'Archivgut und chronikalische Überlieferung als vernachlässigte Quellen der Frühdruckforschung', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 81, 2006: 50–61, p. 57; R. Deutinger & C. Paulus: *Das Reich zu Gast in Land. Die erzählenden Texte zur Fürstenhochzeit des Jahres 1475*, Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2017: 209.

of his orations and epistles was published in 1477 and was cited by many Venetian historians. However, this volume is now lost and up until now, his only surviving piece of rhetorical expertise has been the oration addressed to the newly elected Pope Alexander VI in 1492.⁵

Most likely, the oration addressed to King Matthias in 1475 was one of Badoer's first works of this sort since his diplomatic beginnings were connected with Hungary. A year before, in 1474, he was charged with the task of persuading the Hungarian ruler to attack the Ottomans, who were then laying siege to the Venetian-held town of Shkodër (Scutari). Badoer succeeded in his mission, and what is more, he seems to have won the special affection of the monarch, who knighted him.⁶ For his aid, Corvinus was promised a sum of 30 thousand ducats by the *Serenissima* but eventually he was paid only half.⁷ Badoer kept sending dispatches to Venice about the campaign against the Ottomans and monitoring the events in Hungary throughout the year 1475, as is evident from several letters exchanged between him, the doge, King Matthias, and Gabriele Rangone, bishop of Eger.⁸ The last trace of Badoer's activity in Hungary can be found in September 1476 when he took part in Matthias's parade of captured Turks and held a speech *in laudem regis* exhorting the king to carry on with the Turkish campaign "in a manner which surpassed the speech of Marcus Antonius after the death of Julius Caesar".⁹

As a Venetian envoy, Badoer had to deal not only with the coordination of the ongoing war against the Ottomans but also with the union of King Matthias and Princess Beatrice, which heralded the reconfiguration of political alliances and deepening of ties between Hungary and Naples at the expense of the *Serenissima*. The match with the Hungarian ruler and the Aragonese dynasty was already considered a decade earlier, in 1465, when both the king of Naples and the duke of Milan offered their daughters to Matthias. In the case of Naples,

⁵ G. Cracco: 'BADOER, Sebastiano', in *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 1963, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-badoer/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/sebastiano-badoer/_) (Dizionario-Biografico).

⁶ *Idem*.

⁷ A. Simon: 'Crusading between the Adriatic and the Black Sea: Hungary, Venice and the Ottoman Empire after the Fall of Negroponte', *Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 42, 2010: 195–230, p. 203.

⁸ I. Nagy & A. B. Nyáry (eds.): *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek Mátyás király korából 1458–1490 II* [Monuments of Hungarian diplomacy from the time of King Matthias, henceforth: MDE], Budapest: A M.T. Akadémia könyvkiadó-hivatalában, 1877: n. 187, pp. 267–268; n. 195, pp. 279–2782; n. 196, pp. 282–283; n. 197, pp. 283–284; n. 198, p. 285; n. 200, pp. 287–288; n. 201, pp. 288–291.

⁹ Giustiano Cavitelli to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Buda, 8 September 1476, MDE II, n. 224, pp. 325–326.

Beatrice's elder sister Eleanor was considered to be a future queen of Hungary, but reportedly Matthias was not interested in her on account of her physical qualities, as the Milanese ambassador put it: "la figliola del predicto Re Ferrando non è bella, e lo Re de Ungaria se voleva una bellissima."¹⁰ Venice was supposed to serve as an intermediary in arranging the wedding – King Ferdinand offered the hand of his daughter via the Venetian senate which formally agreed to act in this matter. However, despite a positive answer, the talks dragged out and eventually the matrimonial project was abandoned.¹¹ The reasons for this might have been the quoted insufficient beauty of the bride, but more likely Matthias's interest in finding a wife from one of the Central-European rather than Italian dynasties.¹² If one is to speculate, the Venetians too might have secretly worked on thwarting the match, since the Hungaro-Neapolitan alliance would by no means have benefitted their interests.

However, as Albert Berzeviczy supposes, the matrimonial discussions between Naples and Buda restarted in 1468 and culminated in 1474, when – after the intercession of Lorenzo Roverella, bishop of Ferrara, and Antonio d'Ayello, archbishop of Bari – Matthias agreed to actively proceed with the nuptials and sent his legation to Naples.¹³ King Ferdinand, Beatrice's father, consented to the union in a letter from 5 September, which was delivered to Matthias at the end of October in Wrocław. According to the city chronicler, the king ordered celebration of the news by lighting bonfires and candles and ringing the bells for an entire hour. At that time, Wrocław was surrounded by Bohemian and Polish troops so the fire show made the besiegers think that the entire city is burning and affected by the plague.¹⁴

¹⁰ Gerardo Colli to the duke of Milan, Venice, 21 November 1465, in: A. Berzeviczy: *Aragoniai Beatrix magyar királyné életére vonatkozó okiratok* [Documents related to the Life of Beatrix of Aragon, Queen of Hungary], Budapest: Magyar Tud. Akadémia, 1914: 16; A. Kalous: 'Tři týdny slávy, tři roky šťastného manželství: Beatrix a Matyáš' ['Three Weeks of Glory, Three Years of Happy Marriage: Beatrix and Matthias'], in: P. Kras & M. Nodl (eds.): *Manželství v pozdním středověku: rituály a obyčaje* [Marriage in the Late Middle Ages: Rituals and Customs], Praha: Filosofia, 2014: 187–205, pp. 188–189.

¹¹ A. Berzeviczy: *Beatrix királyné (1457–1508). Történelmi élet- és korrajz* [Queen Beatrix. Historical Biography], Budapest: A magyar történelmi társulat, 1908: 106.

¹² A. Berzeviczy: *Beatrix királyné*, *op.cit.*: 106; A. Kalous, 'Tři týdny slávy', *op.cit.*: 188.

¹³ A. Berzeviczy: *Beatrix királyné*, *op.cit.*: 108; A. Kalous, 'Tři týdny slávy', *op.cit.*: 189.

¹⁴ P. Eschenloer: *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau II*, G. Roth (ed.), Münster: Waxmann, 2003: 954–955; A. Kalous: 'Tři týdny slávy', *op.cit.*: 189.

Thanks to the better network of informants or just because of the sheer geographical proximity, the Venetians learned about Ferdinand's approval for the union much sooner than Matthias, already on 17 September. However, unlike the Hungarian ruler, they were not particularly excited about the match, quite the opposite: Leonardo Botta, the Milanese ambassador in Venice, informs his lord that the new dynastic bond made the Venetians quite displeased, probably more than one can see.¹⁵ Yet the outer reaction was supposed to convey the contrary: reportedly, on the very same day (17 September), the senate addressed a gratulatory letter to Matthias, stressing the ancient and constant friendly relations between the king and the republic and lauding Beatrice's qualities.¹⁶ With respect to Corvinus's marriage, Venice had to walk a fine line: on the one hand, the republic was aware that only Hungary had the power to stop the Ottoman threat and therefore she needed Matthias's help. On the other hand, there were fears of the king becoming too powerful, either by expansion into Dalmatia, or alliance with the Habsburgs, thus creating a major Central European power that would threaten Venetian dominance in the region.¹⁷ Such an alliance was looming in 1470 when there were talks about concluding a marriage between Matthias and Kunigunde, daughter of Emperor Frederick III, that would corroborate the peace between the two rulers. As a part of the dowry, Kunigunde should have received Trieste, Pordenone, and other towns bordering the Venetian territory.¹⁸ Ultimately, this union did not take place; however, the matrimonial alliance with Naples, a traditional enemy of the maritime republic, was yet another blow to the interests of the *Serenissima*, who feared seeing the Hungarian king in a potential anti-Venetian coalition.

¹⁵ 'Qui sono venute littere da Roma como el re Ferdinando ha concluso parentato col Re de Ungaria et che il dicto re Ferdinando gliha dato per mogli l'ultima figliola legiptima, che l'havevo della quale parentela questa brigata monstra haverne displicentia, et credo ne habiano anche piu che non dimonstrano.' Leonardo Botta to Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Venice, 17 September 1474, Archivio di stato di Milano (ASMi), Carteggio Visconteo-Sforzesco, Potenze estere 650, f. 207. Accessible online: vestigia.hu/kereses/nyomtat.php?a=1415005611.

¹⁶ A. Berzeviczy: *Beatrix királyné, op.cit.*: 109. According to Berzeviczy, the transcript of the letter should be in MDE II, pp. 305–307, however, this reference is wrong and the letter is not at the other place of the volume either. However, the letter must have existed since Badoer refers to it at the beginning of his speech.

¹⁷ G. Nemeth: 'Mattia Corvino e Venezia: Gli anni della collaborazione nella lotta antiottomana', *Studia historica adriatica ac danubiana* I, 2008: 45–57.

¹⁸ A. Papo: 'Mattia Corvino e la politica ungherese al confine orientale d'Italia', *Studia historica adriatica ac danubiana* I, 2008: 59–72, pp. 60–64.

Hence it was necessary for Venetian diplomacy to adapt – to keep Corvinus in the anti-Ottoman league and out of Italian squabbles and Dalmatia. As Adriano Papo points out, these fears were unjustified since Matthias's mind was fully occupied with the campaign in Bohemia and Austria and he never really considered a war against Venice.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the republic did not take any risk and put her best foot forward, by assuring the king of Venice's joy from the wedding and alliance with the Aragonese dynasty of Naples. This task was given to her ambassador in Hungary – Sebastiano Badoer.

Betrothal festivities in Wrocław

Badoer's time came at the beginning of February 1475. According to the Wrocław chronicler Peter Eschenloer, Matthias came back to the city on Candlemas Day and on the following Saturday (4 February)

[...] an honourable delegation from the king of Naples and Venice came to him, which he quite generously received. They brought him great honours from his upcoming lady bride, some expensive royal garments which the bishop of Bari, the head of this delegation, put on him (Matthias) in the church of Saint Elizabeth during the great solemnities. He (Matthias) spent with him and other lords a pleasant carnival with jousting, dancing, and all sorts of joy.²⁰

A much more in-detail report of the events is preserved in the Leipzig codex, on the folios following the Badoer's oration. According to this account, the legation consisted of the archbishop of Bari, Sebastiano Badoer, and a certain crusader from Catalonia (*crucifer de Cattolonia*), and was accompanied from Hungary by Miklós Báthori, bishop of Vác. One mile before the city, the embassy was greeted by John Pongrácz of Dengeleg (*Pangracius Weyda, regius patruus*) as well as by townspeople. Surprisingly, the king was also present but not in an obvious way:

The king, disguised in a certain hamlet nearby the road, where he was hiding because of the people, saw their (the townsfolk's)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 69.

²⁰ P. Eschenloer: *Geschichte, op.cit.*: 980.

splendour and how everything is well organized, which made him very proud. Having seen this, he returned to the city via a different road.²¹

Following the joyous entry, the envoys were lodged in the town. On Mardi Gras (7 February), the king dined with the ambassadors and other prominent lords, and the report explicitly mentions Haubold of Sleynitz, Johann of Weisenbach, the future bishop of Meißen, Rudolf of Rüdesheim, bishop of Wrocław, and Miklós Báthori sitting at the king's left side, and the archbishop of Bari, Sebastiano Badoer, and the enigmatic crusader on the right side.²²

The Leipzig manuscript also expounds on the gifts sent to Matthias by Beatrice. The handover indeed took place during high mass in the church of Saint Elizabeth. Bishop Rudolf of Rüdesheim officiated the service and during it he and other prelates

[...] dressed the king in the white damask undergarment (*albicanti tunica ex adamesco*) and girded him with a black belt. Then, they brought him before the altar and there dressed him in a precious cloak (*precioso pallio*) with a red Persian trimming (*parsica subductura ex rubeo*), adding a necklace of precious Arabian gold [on the neck] together with a ring on the finger. Decorated in this way, the king awaited the end of the holy office.²³

In the codex's margin, this rite is described as *desponsatio* – the betrothal. The staged acceptance of the clothes, jewels, and most importantly the ring, gives evidence to the fact that it was indeed an engagement in absence. Such a rite was quite common in the Middle Ages, especially in the case of princely newlyweds who often lived in different parts of Europe. Yet usually this sort of engagement was accompanied by a sole exchange of rings, sometimes with letters containing the bride and groom's consent to the marriage, not by a church ceremony and ritual investiture of the clothes sent by another matrimonial party.²⁴ Thus, the 1475 *desponsatio* in Wrocław shares many features with the usual wedding by proxy (*per procurationem*), especially in the public

²¹ UB Leipzig, Ms. 1674, fol. 49v–50r.

²² *Ibid.*: fol. 50r.

²³ *Idem.*

²⁴ C. Debris: *'Tu Felix Austria, nube': la dynastie de Habsbourg et sa politique matrimoniale à la fin du Moyen Age (XIII^e–XVI^e siècles)*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2005: 362–371.

character and involvement of the Church. However, at the same time, it cannot be denoted as a proxy wedding since there is no description of an exchange of the verbal consent and the symbolic bedding ceremony, such as lying down in the bed and touching each other with a bare foot, that were typical for these rituals.²⁵

Nonetheless, the Wrocław betrothal is a proof that medieval matrimonial rites were to a great extent in a state of flux, and that both wedding parties tried to secure the solidity of the proposed union as firmly as possible. Matthias and Beatrice's nuptials are no exception: before the princess departed from Naples, the wedding by proxy took place, and not surprisingly, it featured the same people present at the betrothal in Wrocław, such as Bishop Rudolf of Rüdesheim or John Pogrącz who stood in for Matthias.²⁶ Perhaps the most intriguing part of the ceremony is the fact that the garments, ritually conferred on Matthias, were sent by Beatrice herself. As part of the nuptial transition, princely brides were sometimes required to accept the sartorial code of the husband, thus visualizing their incorporation and adaptation to the new environment. Often, the husband's emissaries were instructed to learn the bride's measurements so that fitting clothes could be made for her in time for her arrival, or alternatively, bridal trousseaus could contain pieces associated with the new environment.²⁷ For Beatrice, yet another way was used: she was given pieces of attire *all'ongaresca*, in the Hungarian manner, as a wedding gift from Matthias himself.²⁸ If the garments used during the 1475 Wrocław ceremony, were indeed sent by Beatrice, it does not only make for an unusual reversal of gender roles but it also evidences the active role of the princess in the marriage

²⁵ K.-H. Spieß: 'Unterwegs zu einem fremden Ehemann. Brautfahrt und Ehe in europäischen Fürstenthümern des Spätmittelalters', in: I. Erfen & K.-H. Spieß (eds.): *Fremdheit und Reisen im Mittelalter*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997: 17–36, p. 26; K. Vocelka: *Habsburgische Hochzeiten 1550–1600: kulturgeschichtl. Studien zum manieristischen Repräsentationsfest*, Vienna: Böhlau, 1976: 31.

²⁶ A. Kalous: 'Tři týdny slávy', *op.cit.*: 190.

²⁷ K. O. Frieling: 'Dressing the Bride: Weddings and Fashion Practices at German Princely Courts in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,' in: E. Griffey (ed.): *Sartorial Politics in Early Modern Europe. Fashioning Women*, Amsterdam: University Press, 2019: 75–92, pp. 78–85; D. Antille: 'Valentina Visconti's Trousseau: Mapping Identity through the Transport of Jewels', in: T. Chapman Hamilton & M. Proctor-Tiffany (eds.): *Moving Women Moving Objects (400–1500)*, Leiden: Brill, 2019: 247–71.

²⁸ See my forthcoming article 'Mechanics of royal generosity: The wedding gifts from King Matthias Corvinus and Beatrice of Aragon's wedding (1476)', *Speculum* 3, 2023.

from its very beginning, which became more visible later on, for instance, in the Italicization of Hungarian court, patronage of offices, or foreign policy.²⁹

The Leipzig codex claims that the peculiar engagement ceremony took place on *dominica Invocavit*, i.e. 12 February, a week after the arrival of the Italian delegation and Badoer's speech, which supposedly occurred on 5 February. It is not out of the question that both events occurred at the same time, on 5 February, especially given the fact that the latter Sunday was already in Lent. However, there is no reason to suspect the veracity of details in the Leipzig manuscript, considering the correct chronological order of the events, such as placing *dominica Invocavit* rightly after Shrove Tuesday, or noting that the Italian embassy departed from Wrocław on *dominica Reminiscere* (19 February). Therefore, most likely, the engagement ceremonies spread over the course of two weeks, and the oration of the Venetian ambassador was the first item on the menu. What exactly did it contain?

Badoer's speech and epithalamic tradition

At first glance, the oration is not particularly vocal in expressing the bonds between Hungary and Venice. The first passage is devoted to spelling out the alleged joy with which the senate accepted the news of the match: "...nothing more pleasant, nothing more desired, nothing more delightful could have happened to the Venetian republic". As stated above, this was not true, quite contrarily, the union of Matthias and the king Naples went directly against the interests of the *Serenissima*. However, this does not prevent Badoer to draw a comparison of the union, in which Venice plays a crucial role. The wedding should, according to him, give rise to the alliance of not two, but three sides – Venice, Matthias, Ferdinand – a pact of "true love, mutual goodwill, and indissoluble bond" that will mimic the "indivisible Trinity" in heavenly spheres. This political manifesto, dressed in semi-religious terms, ends with an exhortation to unity and uniformity. The role of Venice is highlighted, but at the same time, limited to the first paragraph as Badoer does not elaborate on the famous personages or history of the good relations between this projected "holy Trinity" of his, simply because there was none. Quite contrarily, the opposite interests of each of these polities, especially Venice and Naples led them often on a collision course, not only prior to Matthias and Beatrice's nuptials but

²⁹ A. Kubinyi: *Matthias rex*, Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2008: 137–40.

many times after it as well.³⁰ On the other hand, the marriage only strengthened the already good Hungaro-Neapolitan relations that went back to the early 1470s when, for example, the war provisions for Matthias's army in Bosnia were supplied from the southern Italian regions.³¹ However, the intensification of the contacts dragged Matthias too close to his Neapolitan relatives and the Italian matters in general, which proved to be often detrimental to the Hungarian interests.³²

More than for its political contribution, the speech deserves attention because it employs many elements of the new genre of wedding orations, epithalamia, emerging at this time in Italy. Drawing upon the classical patterns of panegyrics, Italian humanists used this rhetorical form to not only extol their patrons but also to spread political propaganda, court ideals, philosophical, religious ideas about marriage and sexuality, etc.³³ Although very rudimentarily, Badoer's oration also follows this model. Firstly, he extols the qualities of the bride, both physical and mental. According to him, Beatrice possesses "abundantly all virtues that are necessary for the importance of a matrimonial bond", namely "nobility and antiquity of blood, the beauty of body and manners, pre-eminence in all virtues". Elaborating on these points, Beatrice's father Ferdinand and grandfather King Alphonso, as the most recent scions of the noble lineage, going back to the first man, are mentioned. Furthermore, special attention is paid to the bride's chastity – it is, in the words of Jerome – "the first ornament of matrons" and "the most beautiful flower". Stating that in this respect, the future queen of Hungary "does not only surpass female sex" but she is "a disguised god (*sic*, not goddess) in a human body" was not only meant to praise her qualities, but it had very practical repercussions for Matthias and Beatrice's potential offspring. Sexual purity and chastity was a critical factor not only in the public image of medieval queens but also for the legitimacy of

³⁰ For instance, in the upcoming war of Ferrara in 1482–1484, Naples and Venice stood at opposite sides. J. H. Bentley: *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1987: 30.

³¹ P. E. Kovács: 'Magyarország és Nápoly politikai kapcsolatai a Mátyás-korban' ['Political relations of Hungary and Naples in the age of Matthias'], in: P. Fodor, G. Pálffy & G. I. Tóth (eds.): *Tanulmányok Szakály Ferenc emlékére*, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 2002: 229–247, p. 233.

³² *Ibid.*: 240–243.

³³ A. F. D'Elia: *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

their offspring and dynasty as a whole.³⁴ The praising of the bride is followed by the extolling of the groom, about whom one can say so many lauds that “no generation will ever put an end to them”. According to a usual list of masculine virtues, Matthias excels in prudence, equanimity, military prowess, magnanimity, the aid of providence, and “imperial” courage, which are “like walls that surround him and make him always invincible”. Finally, the speech ends with exhortations to joys and wishes that the royal pair enjoy a happy life and “divine” offspring.

If we compare the wording of the oration with other rhetorical pieces delivered on similar occasions just two decades earlier, we can see a clear shift in style. When István Várdai, archbishop of Kalocsa, addressed the king of France, demanding the hand of his daughter Magdalene for King Ladislaus Posthumous in 1457, he also went to great lengths in praising both kings, uniting by the marriage. However, when listing Ladislaus’s virtues, emphasis is put on his “compassion, piety, how he helps and protects those who suffer, how he is gracious to those who are oppressed, how he is just and merciful to those who are faithful [...] and how he will not succumb to any crime”.³⁵ The bride’s qualities are briefly outlined in one sentence, starting with piety and ending with a statement that she could call herself “happy to be the wife of such a king”,³⁶ therefore using her only as a tool for the further promotion of Ladislaus. The whole union is framed as a result of God’s will, in allusion to the Psalm 118, verse 24: “This is a day made by God, let us rejoice in it!” Similarly as in Badoer’s oration, the final words are an exhortation to joy, but it is not Pannonia or Bohemia who are exhorted but “the entire Christian kind”.³⁷ The liturgical language and use of Biblical references is visible in other matrimonial speeches. For instance Jacob Motz, an envoy of Frederick III, sent to marry by proxy the future empress, Eleanor of Portugal in 1451, does not hesitate to compare himself to God’s angel:

The most serene emperor (Frederick III) sent priests (to fetch the bride) because every divine work is done in this way in both the

³⁴ E. Woodacre: ‘Saints or Sinners? Sexuality, Reputation and Representation of Queens from Contemporary Sources to Modern Media’, *De Medio Aevo* 10/2, 2021: 371–85, p. 372.

³⁵ E. Sándor (ed.): ‘Várdai István beszéde a Francia király előtt’ [‘The speech of István Várdai before the king of France’], *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* 62, 1938: 101–104, p. 103.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 104.

³⁷ *Idem.*

Old and New Testaments. That is why a prophet says when speaking about the Incarnation: “I send my angel before you,” that is, a priest.³⁸

Likewise, the bride is hailed in spiritual terms:

You are all beautiful, beautiful on the inside, beautiful on the outside [...] You are all beautiful by nature, more beautiful by virtues, more beautiful for the grace given from above. You are a maid of King Ahasuerus [...]³⁹

While the wording “You are all beautiful” alludes strongly to the ancient Christian hymn *Tota pulchra es, Maria*, thus putting the princess side by side with God’s mother, the expression “the maid of Ahasuerus” refers to the biblical queen Esther. In medieval instructional treatises, both personages were presented as models for queens,⁴⁰ so it is no surprise that this theme found its way into matrimonial rhetoric as well. Beyond Italy, it was still quite usual to follow this pattern of panegyric, for instance when the bishop of Metz, coming to conclude the wedding by proxy between Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian of Habsburg in 1477, greeted the upcoming bride by basically paraphrasing the Annunciation scene from the gospels:

“You are blessed amongst the women; you are in Emperor Frederick’s (Maximilian’s father) grace [...]”. (Having heard these words) the lady (Mary) rejoiced and responded: “I am a humble servant of my most excellent lord. May everything which pleases him happen...”⁴¹

Badoer sometimes, but very seldom, uses religious rhetoric (the quoted “holy Trinity” analogy, “enemies of the cross”) but he refers to God in a classical

³⁸ ‘M. Iacobi Motzii theologi, legati caesarei coram serenissimo Alphonso rege Portugaliae oratio, pro filia eius Lionora Friderico caesari desponsanda’, in: M. Freherus (ed.): *Germanicarum rerum scriptores aliquot insignes, hactenus incogniti, qui res in Germania & Imperio sub Friderico III. & Maximiano I. impp. memorabiliter gestas, illo aevo litteris prodiderunt II*, Frankfurt am Main: Typis Wecheliani apud Claudium, 1602: 15–16.

³⁹ ‘Eodem tempore ad imperatricem tunc futuram oratio facta, in praesentia regis, et sui parlamentii’, in: M. Freherus (ed.): *Germanicarum rerum..., op.cit.*: 16–71.

⁴⁰ J. C. Parsons: ‘Queens and empresses: The West’, in: M. Schaus (ed.): *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, New York: Routledge, 2006: 683–691, p. 689.

⁴¹ J. A. Buchon (ed.): *Chroniques de Jean Molinet II*, Paris: Verdrière, 1828: 94–95.

term *rerum opifex* (“artificer of things”) and on the other hand, in an almost blasphemous way, he does not eschew calling Beatrice a god. Although lacking a complex philosophical ideology or a deeper exposition of particular heroic deeds, Badoer’s oration marks a break from the previous formulations and models: he relies heavily on the quotes from pre-medieval, though mostly patristic literature (Jerome, Boethius, Justin) while ignoring ancient Roman historians or philosophers, and he does not go into specifics at all when talking about the glorious history of uniting dynasties, like Giovanni Francesco Marliani did during the proxy nuptials of Bianca Maria Sforza and John Corvinus in 1487.⁴² However the renouncement of biblical language and older medieval moral models, as well as the introduction of classical references and adherence to the themes of the epithalamia genre, clearly makes this oration worthy of attention and it is yet more proof of cultural exchange between Hungary and Italy in this period, when Corvinus’s realm stood first in line in terms of promoting Humanist erudition and literature beyond the Alps.

Appendix

The oration of Sebastiano Badoer

The critical edition of the speech is reconstructed from the two codices, C 700, stored in the Uppsala University Library (U), and Ms. 1674 of Leipzig University Library (L). Minor typological variations are not marked (haut L – haud U, christianissime U – cristianissime L, sidus U – sydus L). Quotes and very close paraphrases from other sources are in italics.

[U 24v, L 48r]⁴³ Clarissimi patricii veneti viri senatorii eloquentissimi⁴⁴ Sebastiani Baduari, dignissimi oratoris illustrissimi senatus veneti apud invictissi-

⁴² ‘Ioanni Francisci Marliani ... epithalamium ... in nuptiis illustrissimae virginis Blancae Mariae Sphortiae vicecomitis et illustrissimi ducis Ioannis Corvini’ in: J. Ábel (ed.): *Olaszországi XV. századbeli íróknek Mátyás királyt dicsőítő művei* [Works of the fifteenth-century Italian authors glorifying King Matthias], Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1890: 359–381.

⁴³ L *habet superscriptionem alio atramento et alia manu* Oratio ad Mathiam regem Hungarie super nuptiis cum filia regis Neopolitani habita die 5.a mensis Februarii anno 1477.to Wratislavie in ecclesia sancte Elizabeth in media sollemnitate misse maioris.

⁴⁴ eloquentissimi] eloquetissimi U

mum principem dominumque serenissimum dominum Mathiam Hungarie et⁴⁵ Bohemie⁴⁶ regem christianissimum oratio pro faustissimis nuptiis suis, habita die quinto februaryi m. cccc. lxxv Wratislaviae in ecclesia sancte Elisabeth in media sollempnitate celebrationis misse maioris.⁴⁷

Licet regia celsitudo tua, christianissime et invictissime rex, ducalibus et meis literis de facili intelligere potuerit conceptum a senatu veneto⁴⁸ gaudium ex faustissimis et felicissimis nuptiis tuis, tamen tante rei magnitudini convenire videtur id etiam certiori firmiorique adhuc medio, hoc est vive vocis oraculo explicare, quoniam, ut ayt⁴⁹ divini eloquii princeps ille Paulus *habet nescio quid energie viva vox*,⁵⁰ et doctissimus phisicarum disciplinarum Gilbertus Poretanus *verba sunt earum, que anime insunt passionis note*,⁵¹ et moralissimus⁵² stoicorum ille Seneca *ymago animi sermo est*,⁵³ quantam ergo animi leticiam conceperit ex tanto sacramentali connubii tui vinculo venetum dominium illustrissimum et si haud complete non modo orationis ornatu, verum haud ex⁵⁴ verbis exprimi non posset, hoc unum tamen indubie teneatis, tu rex christianissime, oratores clarissimi, heroes⁵⁵ et viri prestantissimi,⁵⁶ nichil iocudius, nichil optatius, nichilve delectabilius venete⁵⁷ rei publice potuisse contingere, et hoc⁵⁸ merito iure veri amoris, mutue benivolentiae, indissolubilisque federis inter maiestatem tuam, Ferdinandum⁵⁹ [U 25r] regem serenissimum, ipsumque senatum vene-

⁴⁵ et] et cetera U

⁴⁶ Bohemia *omisit* U

⁴⁷ habita... maioris *omisit* L

⁴⁸ veneto] venetu U

⁴⁹ ayt *omisit* U

⁵⁰ Cf. Hieronymus, *Epistulae* 53.

⁵¹ Cf. "Sunt ergo ea quae sunt in voce earum quae sunt in anima passionum notae et ea quae scribuntur eorum quae sunt in voce." Boethius, *In librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias commentarii*, 1.

⁵² moralissimus] molarissimus L

⁵³ Cf. Publius Syrus, *Sententiae*.

⁵⁴ ex *omisit* L

⁵⁵ heroes] heroas U *et sic passim*

⁵⁶ prestantissimi *insertum alio atramento et alio atramento in margine* L

⁵⁷ venete] veneto L

⁵⁸ hoc] hac U

⁵⁹ Ferdinandum] Fredinandum U ; Fferdinandum L

tum, quo fiet, ut⁶⁰ inter vos verum individue trinitatis exemplar et vestigium continue intueri⁶¹ licebit, ut quemadmodum⁶² simplicissima eterna illa essentia trium realem personarum distinctionem in esse naturali⁶³ compatitur, ita et vos suppositales differentias ex individuali⁶⁴ caritate⁶⁵ conceptas servabitis, servaturique estis cum voluntatum⁶⁶ conceptuumque omni unanimi, uniformi, indivisaque in omnibus existentia. Quis enim tam⁶⁷ excors, qui nullo ductus errore ex diva Beatrice tibi matrimoniali vinculo assignata,⁶⁸ non summe letetur, cum in ea omnia cumulatissime sunt, que ad amplitudinem cuiusque coniugalis federis sint requisita. Hec enim sunt, rex invictissime, que divo huic [L 48v] sacramento decorem maximum asserunt et ornamentum: sanguinis nobilitas et vetustas, corporis species et decor morum, virtutumque omnium prestancia et dignitas, diva⁶⁹ ipsa Beatrix, recte nomen consequens rei, cum omni ea beatitudinis et felicitatis gradu sit predata, quo nos mortales in hoc viatico beatos aut felices appellari liceat. Nonne Ferdinandi regis christianissimi filia, Ferdinandus nonne⁷⁰ divi Alfonsi semen in lucem eductus,⁷¹ et sit ab Alfonso ad avum proavum attavumque ascendentes usque ad primum humani generis parentem, nichil preter regalem sanguinem, quo nil prestantius decursu⁷² inveniemus,⁷³ corporis videlicet speciem artiumque omnium conformitatem tantam in ea apposuit rerum opifex et magister, ut de ipsa recte dici possit: Spes tua, universi orbis imperio digna, digna hoc regali solio. Et quod Nicodemus de divino supposito hoc idem de ipsa Beatrice recte fari possit:⁷⁴ Vere corpus hoc

⁶⁰ ut *omisit* U

⁶¹ intueri] *retueri* L, *alio atramento deletum et in margine emendatum*

⁶² quemadmodum] *quamadmodum* L

⁶³ naturali] *munerali* U ; *alio atramento munerali deletum et naturali superscriptum* L

⁶⁴ individuali] “in-” *alio atramento addita* L

⁶⁵ loco caritate *habet* U *spatium vacuum*

⁶⁶ voluntatum] *voluptatum* U

⁶⁷ tam] *tamen* L

⁶⁸ assignata] *assingnata* L

⁶⁹ diva] *originaliter divina, alia manu et alio atramento emendatum* L

⁷⁰ nonne *omisit* L

⁷¹ eductus] *edoctus* U

⁷² decursu] *decursum* L

⁷³ inveniemus] *originaliter innomemus, alia manu et alio atramento emendatum* L

⁷⁴ Spes ... possit *omisit* U

eucrathon⁷⁵ et coequale, morum virtutumque omnium prestantiam, quantam in se contineat, haud copiose explicare posset. Nam *pudiciam ipsam primam rerum matronarum ornamentum*, ut priscus ille Pitagoras asseruit,⁷⁶ adeo supra humane fragilitatis vires omni etatis sue gradu coluit, ut immaculatam semper illesamque servavitur, quod eo divinius [U 25v], eo preclarius, quo difficilius cum phisica summa circa difficile sit virtus constituta. Et Barbatus ille Hieronimus⁷⁷ *tenera res in mulieribus fama pudicitie est, quasi flos pulcherrimus⁷⁸ ad levem⁷⁹ marcescit⁸⁰ auram, levique flatu corrumpitur, maxime ubi etas consentit ad vicium, et maritalis deest autoritas, cuius umbra tutamen uxoris est,*⁸¹ et *difficile*, quod *ymmo impossibile* sit,⁸² rex christianissime, *deliciis et voluptatibus affluentes, non ea cogitare, que gerimus, frustra que quidem simulant salva fide, pudicitia et mentis integritate, se abuti voluptatibus, cum contra naturam sit, copiis voluptatum sine voluptati perfrui.*⁸³ Et divinum equidem sit in maxima peccandi licencia a peccato abstinuisse, que omnia cum diva Beatrix continentissime immaculateque servaverit, dubitabimus eam celitus⁸⁴ lapsam preditare reliquis vero animi dotibus omnibusque liberalibus artibus ita decorata, ut non modo femineum sexum, verum omnes humani generis metas excesserit, ut non universalibus [L 49r] educata principiis, sed potius deus unus humano in corpore latitatus⁸⁵ dicenda sit. Quibus rebus est⁸⁶ divum certe faustum felicissimumque⁸⁷ connubium Mathia etiam principe invictissimo orna-

⁷⁵ loco eucrathon habet U spatium vacuum

⁷⁶ Cf. "...vera ornamenta matronarum pudicitiam, non vestes esse." Justinus, *Historiarum Philippicarum* 20, 4.

⁷⁷ Hieronimus] Ieronimus L

⁷⁸ pulcherrimus] pulcherrimum L

⁷⁹ levem] levam L, alio atramento ad litteram a cauda addita

⁸⁰ marcescit] marcessit L

⁸¹ Cf. Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 79.

⁸² sit omisit U

⁸³ Cf. Hieronymus, *Adversus Jovinianum* II, 9.

⁸⁴ celitus] colitus L

⁸⁵ latitatus] latitusque L

⁸⁶ est] o U

⁸⁷ felicissimumque] felicissimum U

tum, cuius laudum⁸⁸ preconia tanta sunt, ut nulla⁸⁹ eis etas sit unquam⁹⁰ finem allatura. Quis enim eo uni prestantissimi⁹¹ aut rerum gerendarum prudentia, aut juris equanimitate conficiendis bellis fortitudine omnibusque animi dotibus prestantior, clariorque visus est, qui virtutibus omnibus tanquam menibus septus invincibilis inexpugnabilis semper extitit, cui illa ipsa rerum humanarum diva fortuna, que viri magnam habere dicitur, cedit locumque prestat. Quorum omnium testes sunt clarissima gesta, testes estis vos, heroes et viri clarissimi, qui in dies intellex estis⁹² animi sui virtutem incredibilem, rerum inauditam providenciam in adeundis periculis, cesariem⁹³ fortitudinem omnibusque in rebus celitus lapsam magnanimitatem, [U 26r] adeo, ut humanae religionis splendor, virtutumque exemplar esse dicatur, demum diva Beatrice, quam in⁹⁴ corporis specie virtutum prestancia tamquam sidus splendidissimum⁹⁵ intuemur. Letare igitur, rex christianissime, letamini heroes et viri prestantissimi, letentur et exultetur universa Panonia, Moravia, Slesia, Bohemia, que tante⁹⁶ domine splendore illustrande omni ex parte clariores, omnique ex parte lucidiores eius decoris puditia, future sunt, dentque vobis superi felicem et peroptatam vitam, divamque sobolem et filiorum filios videatis, usque ad extremos mundi limites⁹⁷ tranquillumque regni statum, et de crucis inimicis gloriam et triumphum reportare, quemadmodum eterna providentia tibi, rex invictissime, indubie est assignatum, que omnia ut quam faustissime felicissimeque fiant, deum optimum maximum, que precamur.

⁸⁸ laudum] laudem L

⁸⁹ nulla] ulla U

⁹⁰ unquam] in quem U

⁹¹ uni prestantissimi] prestantissimi uni U

⁹² estis] sistis L

⁹³ cesariem] cesarem L

⁹⁴ in] et L

⁹⁵ splendidissimum] splendissimum L

⁹⁶ tante] tanta L

⁹⁷ limites] limitas L

Acknowledgements

I want to thank to György Domokos and Tibor Marti for bringing the Leipzig codex to my attention and to Bence Péterfi for providing me with many important details and literature on this source. My thanks also go to Antonín Kalous who, as always, read the entire manuscript and provided me with much needed feedback and comments, and to Martin Dixon who proofread the article.