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**PHYSIOGONOMY IN THE DESCRIPTION AND PORTRAITS OF KING
MATTHIAS CORVINUS**

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MATTHIAS CORVINUS**

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the representations, both textual and visual, of King Matthias in the light of Antique physiognomical theories. I intend to focus on those descriptions and portraits which were influenced by the lion's physiognomy. The main primary sources to be examined in this part are the representations of the ruler's outward appearance by Antonio Bonfini in the *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, and by Galeotto Marzio in the *De Egregie, Sapienter ac Iocose Dictis ac Factis Regis Mathiae*. Concerning the visual sources to be analysed; this study focuses on the contemporary portraits of the king shaped according to the lion's physiognomy, such as the Bautzen-monument and his portraits mainly in the Corvina-manuscripts.

The portraits and the iconography of King Matthias have been studied exhaustively by several scholars; thus one may suppose that concerning this field of the Renaissance art in Hungary the research can be regarded as complete.¹ Scholars, however, have not hitherto dedicated more than a paragraph in their writings to the topic, except for Peter Meller, who was the first and almost the last in publishing an article about Matthias' physiognomy in 1963.² This paper aims to follow the approach of those studies which treat the Renaissance fine arts at the Buda court not only in the light of art-historical problems in the strict meaning – style criticism, dating and

¹ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király ikonográfiája" (The Iconography of King Matthias), in *Mátyás király – Emlékkönyv születésének ötszázéves fordulójára* (King Matthias – Essays Presented on the Occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth), ed. Imre Lukinich (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1940), vol. I, 435-548; *A művészet Mátyás király udvarában* (Fine Arts at the Court of King Matthias) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1966), vol. I, 705–716;

² Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory in Renaissance Heroic Portraits," in *Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art: Studies in Western Art, Renaissance and Mannerism*, ed. Millard Meiss and Richard Krautheimer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), vol. II, 53-62. See also Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép: Szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon* (History – Image: Excerpts from the Relationship Between Past and Art in Hungary), ed. Árpád Mikó and Katalin Sinkó (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2000), 39-40.

attribution – since those precise problems seem to have been solved to a greater extent, but also taking into consideration the ruler’s probable political intentions and mode of self-representation.³ Physiognomy, in my interpretation, provides the art-theoretical background in the analysis, contributes to a, hopefully, more appropriate understanding of the image-shaping processes, and enables us to decode the ruler’s intentions.

The method of my analysis is mainly philological: I intend to compare the characteristic traits of the textual and visual portraits with the physiognomical writings, and to demonstrate that the theories could have indeed influenced the representations. I consider it to be indispensable to provide an overview of two main ideas before this examination: the tradition of physiognomical representations from Antiquity onwards and the symbolism of the lion, in order to outline the context of King Matthias’ images.

The last chapter deals also with the portraits of Matthias, but with the Attila-faun-like images. These representations, however, should be discussed in a separate chapter, since they reflect an entirely different image from that of the lion. They must be treated separately also because they are not contemporary portraits and the circumstances of their commission are very obscure. The method, nevertheless, is the same: after a survey of the tradition of Attila’s textual and visual representations I intend to analyse the portraits of Matthias again by comparing their features with the physiognomical doctrines. The main primary sources of this part are the *Attila* of Callimachus Experiens and three paintings from the Historical Picture Gallery (Történelmi Képcsarnok, Hungarian National Museum, inv. 14, 16, 17).

³ I refer here primarily to the quoted studies in the thesis of Ernő Marosi, Árpád Mikó and Dániel Pócs.

The science of physiognomy takes for granted a mutual relationship between body and soul, therefore representations of the outward appearance both in texts and in the visual arts can be interpreted by means of physiognomy only if this theory is reflected in the discussed images as well.⁴ The portrait bust of Socrates well demonstrates those cases when the context must be taken into consideration to a greater extent than physiognomical interpretation: since the message of the portrait is precisely that even an ugly exterior can embody a noble inward nature, and that even an ignoble exterior contains good connotations. This idea can be demonstrated in the Late Antique aesthetic views as well, claiming that inner beauty is not reflected in the outward appearance. Consequently, the physiognomical mode of representation gained vigour, especially in the fine arts, always with the revival of classical Antique aesthetics. Together with the claim for realism and imitation of nature, physiognomical thought also appeared as part of the Antique theory of art.

Imitation of nature and concept of reality, nevertheless, did not contradict the phenomenon of idealisation. As Gombrich pointed out, the Renaissance mode of representation was similar to that of the Middle Ages in applying types and schemes.⁵ This thesis aims to demonstrate, through the images of King Matthias, how physiognomy contributed to the creation and application of these patterns.

⁴ On the notion of *kalokagathia*, see, *inter alia*, C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939–1210* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 147ff.

⁵ Ernst H. Gombrich, “Ideal and Type in Italian Renaissance Painting,” in *New Light on Old Masters. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance, IV* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1986), 89–124.

CHAPTER ONE:
**HISTORY OF ANTIQUE PHYSIOGNOMY AND THE ROLE OF
PHYSIOGNOMIC
THOUGHT IN THE ANTIQUE LITERATURE
AND FINE ARTS**

1. The main theories and treatises. The medieval and the Renaissance afterlife

Physiognomy derives from the Greek words *φύσις* and *γνωμα*. According to physiognomy's teachings, body and soul are mutually related to each other, and thus the inner human character can be judged by the outward appearance, especially by the facial features.⁶ This thesis was stated not only in the physiognomic treatises, but also by Aristotle, who, in his *Analytica priora*, discussed the syllogistic methods of physiognomy.⁷ Physiognomy, however, was not elaborated first in Greece; there are testimonies demonstrating that the theories existed earlier in ancient Mesopotamia, although there physiognomy had a stricter relationship with astrology.⁸

The Western Antique tradition considered Pythagoras and Hippocrates to be the inventors of physiognomy.⁹ As Galen reports, Hippocrates claimed that without the knowledge of this science physicians cannot diagnose properly, and the theories of the Hippocratic works have other similarities with that of physiognomy, since the examination of human characters lay at the centre of Hippocrates' interest as

⁶ Johanna Schmidt, "Physiognomik," in *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft vol. XX* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche, 1941), coll. 1063–1072; J. André, ed., *Anonyme Latin. Traité de Physiognomonie* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres 49. Collection des Universités de France, 1981), 7–8; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1181.

⁷ Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, II, 27, 70b, 7ff.

⁸ Schmidt, "Physiognomik," col. 1066; D. Nickel, "Fiziognómia" (Physiognomy), in *Antik Lexikon* (Antique Lexicon), ed. E. Szepes (Budapest: Corvina, 1993), 180; see also Plutarch, *Lives*, "Sulla," 5; T. S. Barton, *Power and Knowledge* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 100; Pseudo Aristotele, *Fisiognomica, Anomino Latino, Il trattato di fisiognomica*, ed. Giampiera Raina (Milan: Rizzoli, 1993), 7–9.

⁹ A. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 1, 9; Galen, *Anim. Mor. Corp. Temp.* 4, 797–798.

well.¹⁰ He discussed the connections between body and soul in his doctrine related to the bodily humours, claiming that our physical condition influences the state of mind, and he accepted the theory of their mutual relationship also in his milieu theory. According to the milieu theory climate and environment have an impact on outward appearance and on personality; the same thought appears in the ethnological physiognomy. Pseudo-Aristotle, the author of the first extant treatise, argued with similar examples, mentioning illness, love and fear, that bodily and mental conditions affect each other.¹¹

Reliable references did not survive concerning the appearance of the first physiognomists, but due to the legend about Zopyros, recorded by several authors, we can assume that the theories were practised in Athens at the time of Socrates. Zopyros may have been a practising physiognomist, who after having examined the outward appearance of Socrates identified him as a stupid seducer.¹² Physiognomy became a widely popular science in the Hellenistic Age, when the concept of individuality appeared as a central topic in literature, fine arts, and also in philosophy. Aristotle had a crucial role in disseminating the ideas, being in his *Analytica priora* the first author

¹⁰ E. C. Evans, "Physiognomics in the Ancient World," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Philadelphia, N.S. 59, no. 5 (1969): 19, and "Galen the Physician as Physiognomist," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 76 (1945): 287–298.

¹¹ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* 805. a: "Mental character is not independent of and unaffected by bodily processes, but is conditioned by the state of body, this is well exemplified by drunkenness and sickness, where altered bodily conditions produce obvious mental modifications. And contrariwise the body is evidently influenced by the affections of the soul – by the emotions of love and fear, and by states of pleasure and pain. But still better instances of fundamental connexion of body and soul, and their very extensive interaction may be found in the normal products of nature. There never was an animal with the form of one kind and the mental character of another. One soul and body appropriate to the same kind always go together, and this shows that a specific body involves a specific mental character." Transl. T. Loveday and E. S. Forster. In *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, I. 1237, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹² Cicero, *De fato* V, 10. "... stupidum esse Socratem dixit et bardum, quod iugula concava non haberet, obstructas eas partes et obturatas esse dicebat, addidit etiam mulierosum, in quo Alcibiades cachinnum dicitur sustulisse... ab ipso autem Socrate sublevatus, cum illa sibi in sita, sed ratione a se deiecta diceret"; see also Cicero, *Tusculani Disputationes* IV, 37, 80; Alexandros Aphrodisias, *De fato* 6. Regarding other sources about physiognomists, see Aristotle, *De generatione animalium*, 5, 3, 769b, and Evans, "Physiognomics," 10. A version of the story with Philomon and Hippocrates can be read in Johannes Thomann, "Pietro d'Abano on Giotto," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 54 (1991): 241.

to declare, as has been already mentioned, that one may judge the inner personality by the bodily signs.¹³ In the *Historia animalium* he analysed the forms of the eyes, ears and foreheads, stating that the medium size is the ideal of these parts of the body.¹⁴ In his *De partibus animalium* he compared animals to human appearances, a method which was applied in the zoological physiognomy as well.¹⁵

The author of the first extant physiognomic treatise, the *Physiognomonica*, is unknown, but since the work had been attributed for a long time to Aristotle, the writer received the name of Pseudo-Aristotle, as in the case of his other, not authentic works.¹⁶ The *Physiognomonica* was written probably in the third century BC, and it has been supposed that its writer belonged to the peripatetic school.¹⁷ Pseudo-Aristotle systematised the rules of physiognomy, accepted and applied later by other authors as well. He used the three main methods of the science, namely the anatomical, the ethnological and the zoological physiognomy.¹⁸

Concerning the anatomical analysis, he regarded as the most important criteria for a physiognomic examination the parts and size of the body, the quality and quantity of the flesh, the colours of the hair and skin, gestures, voice, hairstyle and stature.¹⁹ According to his statement, the most determining sign is our face, and especially the eyes, which clearly reveal the inner character.²⁰ In comparing the

¹³ Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, II, 27, 70b, 7ff.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, 1, 8, 491b;

¹⁵ Richardus Foerster, *Scriptores Physiognomonici Graeci et Latini vol. I–II* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), XVI–XVII; Evans, “Physiognomics,” 5–6, 22–23.

¹⁶ Foerster provides the Greek-Latin bilingual edition of the *Physiognomonica*, besides other physiognomic treatises. The most recent commentary on the *Physiognomonica*: Aristoteles, *Physiognomonica* ed. and comm. Sabine Vogt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999). The author debates Foerster’s opinion, who attributed the work to two different authors; see Vogt, 188.

¹⁷ Evans, “Physiognomics,” 7; Foerster, *Scriptores*, XIX; R. Megow, “Antike Physiognomielehre,” *Das Altertum* 9 (1963): 215–216.

¹⁸ Evans, “Physiognomics,” 6–7; see also the following: A. MacC. Armstrong, “The Methods of the Greek Physiognomists,” *Greece and Rome* 5 no. 1 (1958): 52–56; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 52–56; André, *Anonyme*, 12–14.

¹⁹ cap. 7.

²⁰ cap. 73. The same thought is expressed in the proverb “Animus habitat in oculis,” and it was declared by Heraclitus as well, who interpreted the eyes as doors of the soul. See also Sextus Empiricus,

human personalities to animals he applied the zoological method, discussed by Aristotle as well. According to this theory the most excellent and courageous men resemble the lion, while the treacherous bear the likeness of a panther.²¹ Pseudo-Aristotle treated the common external features of a nation by means of ethnological physiognomy: for example, he drew a parallel between men with thick or curly hair and the Ethiopians, stating that if a person resembles the cowardly Ethiopians it indicates that he has the very same nature.²²

After the Hellenistic diffusion, physiognomic literature revived in the second century AD again. Orators and particularly the sophists showed interest towards the science, since they laid a special stress on the outward appearance of the rhetors.²³ In this century Polemon, the orator of Laodicea and the confidant of Emperor Hadrian, composed his treatise about physiognomy, which is more detailed and elaborated than that of Pseudo-Aristotle.²⁴ When discussing the history of the science, many other authors from Antiquity who enriched the physiognomic literature with their works could be mentioned here,²⁵ but for our examination it seems to be more important to present the medieval and the Renaissance afterlife of the ideas.

The *Physiognomonica* was very influential from Antiquity onwards; both European and Arabian authors mediated the pseudo-aristotelian teachings during the Middle Ages. It was translated by Bartholomeus de Messana in the thirteenth century

Adversus Mathematicos VII, 130, and Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 11, 141–145: “... profecto in oculis animus habitat.”

²¹ cap. 41–42. This same method can be traced in the *Physiologus* and in the medieval bestiaries as well.

²² cap. 69.

²³ Evans, “Physiognomics,” 13.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11, and “The Study of Physiognomy in the Second Century A. D.,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 72 (1941): 96–109; Megow, “Antike,” 216; V. Stegmann, “Polemon,” in *Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. XXI (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche, 1952), coll. 1320 ff, J. Mesk, “Die Beispiele in Polemons Physiognomik,” *Wiener Studien* 50 (1932): 51–67.

²⁵ *Inter alia*, Adamantius: see Evans, “Physiognomics,” 15.

for Manfred, king of Sicily.²⁶ In the Middle Ages many new physiognomic treatises were composed under the name of Pseudo-Aristotle; the most influential of them was the *Secretum Secretorum*, an encyclopaedic work, dealing also with physiognomy in one chapter.²⁷ The work has been derived from an Arabic *speculum* and its existence can be demonstrated from the tenth century. It was used until the seventeenth century in Europe, North Africa, and in the Near East.²⁸

Other physiognomic treatises were also read continuously from Antiquity during the Middle Ages, and in fact until the nineteenth century. Max Manitius pointed out that from the ninth century onwards physiognomic literature was collected in medieval libraries.²⁹ There are references demonstrating that in the twelfth century in the monastery of Cluny, or in the fourteenth century in the Sorbonne, there were kept books entitled *Liber physionomiae*.³⁰ A special interest can be traced in the science during the twelfth-century Renaissance, caused by the rediscovery of Aristotle's works and the changing concept of nature. From the fourteenth century onwards physiognomy was integrated into the studies at the universities, and became an important part of the theories regarding human nature and microcosm.³¹ Under the influence of the Antique writings new treatises were composed; here must be mentioned, *inter alia*, as the first original medieval physiognomic works, the *Liber de*

²⁶ Foerster, *Scriptores*, XX, L–LI.

²⁷ *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus. A Guide to Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle Before 1500*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt and Dilwyn Knox (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1985), 45–50. The work lists eleven medieval pseudo-aristotelian works: *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts*, ed. Jill Kraye and W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1986), 1–2.

²⁸ *Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets: Sources and Influences*, ed. W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt (Warburg Institute Surveys IV, London: University of London, 1982), 1–2. See also *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, fasc. V, ed. Robert Steele (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920).

²⁹ Max Manitius, "Bemerkungen zur römischen Literaturgeschichte," *Philologische Wochenschrift* 52 (1932): 155.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Jole Agrimi, "Fisiognomica: nature allo specchio ovvero luce e ombre," *Teatro della natura. Micrologus*, 4 (1996): 134, and "La ricezione della Fisiognomica pseudoaristotelica nella facoltà delle arti," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire d'Moyen Age* 64 (1997): 127–188, and "Fisiognomica

Physionomia of Michael Scot (1228–1235), the *Liber compilationis physionomiae* of Pietro d’Abano (1295), and the *Liber Naturae* by Konrad von Megenberg (1342–1348).³² Von Megenberg refers to a certain Rasis (Abu-Bakr ibn Zakaria ar-Razi, 865–925), as his main source, who was one of the most prominent scientists of Arabic medicine. This reference properly indicates that for the Western medieval cultural history the physiognomic knowledge was mediated mainly by the Arabic medical and natural scientific literature.³³

The age of Humanism was a period of revival for physiognomy as well. The Renaissance theory of art borrowed from Antiquity also the ideas of physiognomy; thus it became one of the most important theoretical bases of Renaissance art, which emphasised the individual, but physiognomy, along with astrology, metoposcopy and chiromancy, played an important role in the occult sciences of the age as well.³⁴ The *Physiognomonica* of Pseudo-Aristotle was reedited with commentaries in the fifteenth century, and modelled on it new treatises were written, such as the *Speculum Physionomiae* of Michael Savonarola (c.1450), or Bartholomeus Cocles’ *Chyromantie ac Physiognomoniae anastasiis cum approbatione magistri Alexandri de Achillinis* (Bologna, 1503), and the *De scultura* of Pomponius Gauricus (Florence, 1504).³⁵

e ‘scolastica’,” *Micrologus: Natura, scienze e società medievali. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies* 1 (1993): 235–271.

³² Hubert Steinke, “Giotto und die Physiognomik,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59 (1996): 526–546; Gerold Hayer, *Konrad von Megenberg. “Das Buch der Natur”: Untersuchungen zu seiner Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998).

³³ See also Johannes Thomann, “Avicenna über die physiognomische Methode,” in Campe, Rüdiger and Manfred Schneider, ed., *Geschichten der Physiognomik: Text, Bild, Wissen* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1996), 47–63.

³⁴ Kurt Seligmann, *Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 249–254.

³⁵ Schmidt, “Physiognomik,” coll. 1067–1068.; Otto Baur, *Leonardo da Vinci. Anatomie, Physiognomik, Proportion und Bewegung* (Cologne: F. Hausen, 1984), 71. See also Flavio Caroli, *Storia della fisiognomica. Arte e psicologia da Leonardo a Freud* (Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1995), and Campe and Schneider, ed., *Geschichten*, 597–603. For the medieval and Renaissance afterlife of physiognomy, see also Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), I–IV.

2. The influence of physiognomy in the Antique literature and fine arts

According to physiognomy's teachings, human character and outward appearance perfectly correspond to each other; therefore the role of the external features in the evaluation of a personality is indispensable. In literature, however, this statement is usually applied conversely, since authors generally shape a fictive appearance of their protagonists, bearing in mind their inner characteristics. Their common feature is that both methods take for granted a deterministic relationship. When analysing literary descriptions, the impact of this way of thinking can always be taken into consideration; the question is whether this phenomenon can be interpreted in every case as a conscious application of the physiognomic theories.³⁶ Categorisation and classifying according to certain types are common features of our mentality, and they are similar to physiognomy in creating stereotypes. Imagining the external and the internal in harmony is also a typical human attitude; this is probably the only reason in some cases for the parallels between the descriptions and the science of physiognomy.

Although the physiognomic type of description can be read in the works of several Antique historiographers and authors, it was Suetonius who first consciously incorporated "iconistic" portraits into his biographies.³⁷ His descriptions can be interpreted according to the pseudo-aristotelian definitions, and they are perfectly harmonised with the personality of the emperor under discussion. Suetonius considered the outward appearance to be symbolic of the character, and he applied the

³⁶ E. C. Evans examined exhaustively the relationship between physiognomy and descriptions; see Evans, "Physiognomics," and also Schmidt, "Physiognomik," coll. 1070–1071; A. E. Wardman, "Description of Personal Appearance in Plutarch and Suetonius. The Use of Statues as Evidence," *The Classical Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1967): esp. 414; G. Misener, "Iconistic Portraits," *Classical Philology* 110 (1924): 106–120.

³⁷ The term "iconistic" derives from Evans; see Evans, "Roman Descriptions of Personal Appearance in History and Biography," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 46 (1935): 43–85, esp. 44.

methods of physiognomy in providing an elaborated image.³⁸ For our following analysis it seems indispensable to present the Antique tradition of the physiognomic description: since the accounts regarding King Matthias were constructed by the same method, they must thus be interpreted similarly.

Application of *topoi* must be taken into consideration in the examination of visual images as well. Physiognomic thought can be demonstrated in artistic theory and practice gradually from the fifth century BC onwards, with the differentiation of mimicry. Physiognomy's influence gained significant importance in the age of Hellenism, when the expression of emotions, the representation of individual characters became aesthetic requirements for the artists.³⁹ The portraits of Socrates provide an expressive example for the observation of how physiognomy influenced the creation of an image. (**Fig. 1**) If we interpret the features of his portraits, with their bald and round forehead, big eyes, snub nose and fleshy lips, only in accordance with the pseudo-aristotelian meaning of these signs, the comparison indeed results in an ignoble person's image.⁴⁰ The philosopher's portraits were formulated according to the *silenos*-physiognomy, but taking into consideration the *silenos*' positive interpretation, as expressed Plato's Dialogues.⁴¹ Socrates' case reveals that the context where the visual representation appears must be always examined in the process of an interpretation. The portraits of King Matthias belong also to those rare cases when the written sources, regarding to the same person, contextualise the portraits' message,

³⁸ J. Couissin, "Suetone physiognomiste des les vies des XII Césars," *Revue des Etudes Latines* 21 (1953): 234–256. Suetonius' method was followed by the authors of the *Historia Augusta* and Ammianus Marcellinus as well: see Evans, "Physiognomics," 50, 94–96.

³⁹ Luca Giuliani, *Bildnis und Botschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986); There are also several written sources regarding the pictorial skill in representing the inner character: Xenophon, *Symposion*, 8, 3; Philostratos, *Imagines*, 2, 9.

⁴⁰ Paul Zanker, *Die Maske des Sokrates – Das Bild des Intellektuellen in der Antiken Kunst* (München: C. H. Beck, 1995).

⁴¹ Plato, *Symposion*, 215b, 216d; and *Theaitetos*, 143e; On the physiognomy of Socrates, see also Luca Giuliani, "Das älteste Sokrates-Bildnis," in W. Schlink, ed., *Bildnisse – Die Europäischen Tradition der Portraitkunst* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 1997), 11–55.

thus contributing to the correct interpretation. Matthias Corvinus' portraits, both visual, and written, were shaped according to the physiognomy of the lion. But the lion-symbolism is the topic to be discussed in our next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE LION

1. The model of Alexander the Great and the physiognomy of the lion

Alexander the Great was regarded as the model of almost every ruler from Antiquity onwards. From the third century BC onwards workshops in Latium reproduced a great amount of his images, spreading them all over the empire.⁴² The legendary episodes of his life, recorded by several biographies, above all by the Alexander the Great romance, continuously returned as *topoi* in the accounts about the ruler's deeds.⁴³ The *imitatio Alexandri* became one of the essential motifs in Matthias Corvinus' self-representation as well, manifesting itself both in the textual and in the visual testimonies.

In the physiognomical literature the ideal man corresponds to the lion's character; consequently he has to resemble the lion in his outward appearance as well.

Pseudo-Aristotle describes the lion-character as follows:

Hiis ita se habentibus videtur leo omnium perfectissimum in assumendo maris formam. Leo enim est habens os bene magnum, faciem autem quadratam, non valde osseam, superiorem mandibulam non praeextantem, sed aequaliter pendentem deorsum, nasum autem magis grossum, quam subtilem, oculos charopos concavos, non valde rotundos nec valde protensos, magnitudinem vero moderatam, supercilium bene magnum, frontem quadratam, ex medio subcavam, ad supercilia autem et nasum sub fronte sicut nubes superstat. Superius autem fronte iuxta nasum habet pilos inclinatos, caput moderatum, collum bonae longitudinis, grossum moderatum, habet crines flavos non planos nec valde crispas, quae sunt circa iuncturam spatularum bene spatiosa magis quam coniuncta, spatulas fortes et pectus iuvenile... Talis enim est secundum ea quae sunt circa corpus, quae autem circa animam, dativum et liberale, magnanimum et amativum cum quibus associabitur.⁴⁴

⁴² István Borzsák, *A Nagy Sándor-hagyomány Magyarországon* (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1984), 8–12.

⁴³ George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

⁴⁴ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 41, in Foerster, *Scriptores*, vol. I, 49–51.

Pseudo-Aristotle's criteria, the wavy, blond hair falling down to the shoulders, the lock rising at the forehead, the bump above the eyebrows, the deep eyes and the slightly separated lips, are all reflected in the portraits of Alexander the Great.⁴⁵ (**Fig. 2**) According to Plutarch, Lysippus was the only artist who could properly express the ruler's internal and external nature. He reported it in the following way:

*The outward appearance of Alexander is best represented by the statues of him which Lysippus made, and it was by this artist alone that Alexander himself thought it fit he should be modelled. For those peculiarities which many of his successors and friends afterwards tried to imitate, namely, the poise of the neck, which was bent slightly to the left, and the melting glance of his eyes, this artist has accurately observed... Whereas he was of a fair colour, as they say, and his fairness passed into ruddiness on his breast particularly, and in his face.*⁴⁶

Plutarch discussed Alexander's external signs also in his other works, always emphasising his lion-type glance.⁴⁷ His image was constructed according to the lion's physiognomy, which implied, in the interpretation of physiognomy, that he possessed the lion's internal nature as well: namely, he was magnanimous, just, brave and generous. Precisely this relationship between the lion's outward appearance and his inward nature was given by Aristotle as an example of a syllogism:

*For if a particular affection (natural quality) is peculiar to any individual class, as courage is to lions, it must be expressed by some physical sign, for it has been assumed that [body and soul] are affected together. Let this be having large extremities, which are not found in any other class as a whole... Thus this sign will be found with other classes as well, and a man or some other animal [having large extremities] will be courageous.*⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Bente Kiilerich, "Physiognomics and the Iconography of Alexander," *Symbolae Osloenses* 63 (1988): 51–66, and A. Stewart, "Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics," in *Alexander the Great. Reality and Myth*, ed. Jesper Carlsen, *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Suppl.* 20 (1993): 61–69, and M. Bieber, *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1964).

⁴⁶ Plutarch, "Alexander," 4, 1–3, in *Plutarch's Lives with an English Translation by Bernadotte Perrin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 231–233.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *De Alexandris seu virtute seu fortitudine*, 2, 2.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Analytica Priora*, II, 27, cited in Kornél Szovák, "The Transformations of the Image of the Ideal King in Twelfth-Century Hungary. Remarks on the Legend of St. Ladislav," in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (London: King's College, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1993), 255–256.

This physiognomical image-creating practice, to fit the features existing in reality to an ideal, was followed afterwards both in the descriptions and in the representations of the Roman emperors, and medieval rulers as well.⁴⁹ But also fictive persons, for example Antique gods, heroes or excellent warriors, were usually represented with the physiognomy of the lion, and this image became the attribute of all kind of personalities possessing outstanding qualities. Finally, Alexander's figure became inseparable from the lion's physiognomy to such an extent that his name was often mentioned even in the later physiognomical treatises in connection with the aforementioned signs. An anonymous author of the fourth century AD refers to Alexander the Great when presenting the different types of the eyes listed by Pseudo-Aristotle as well:

*... at ubi moderatae magnitudinis et humidi sunt atque perlucidi, magnificum hominem, magnarum rerum cogitorem atque perfectorem indicant; sane iracundum et vino deditum et iactantem sui et cupidum gloriae ultra condicionem humanam ostendunt, cui huiusmodi oculorum signa contigerint. Scias quia his oculis aestimatur etiam Alexander Magnus fuisse.*⁵⁰

The afterlife of Alexander's physiognomy can be observed also in Pseudo-Callisthenes and in the *Historia Alexandri Magni*, works which can be regarded as the tradition's mediators for the Middle Ages.⁵¹ We will see in the third chapter how the same patterns were applied in the descriptions of King Matthias, and how the lion's physiognomy was used in the Renaissance fine arts.

But let us continue dealing with Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The influence of the lion's physiognomy has been demonstrated in the Christian iconography as well; this very same image-shaping method had an impact on the

⁴⁹ D. Michel, "Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Antonius," *Archäologische Untersuchungen, Coll. Latomus*, 94 (1967): 125–132.

⁵⁰ *Anonymi De Physiognomia Liber*, cap. 33, in Foerster, *Scriptores*, vol. II, 50.

iconography of Christ.⁵² Moshe Barasch pointed out the influence of this physiognomical type in the coins of Justinian II's age (685–695) representing Christ. **(Fig. 3)** The coins of that period have been divided into an “A” and into a “B”-type. The main features of the former type are the round face, beard and the hair reaching down to the shoulders. Barasch identified this iconographical type with the character of the lion, mediated by the Greek Zeus sculptures and by the Hellenistic and Roman ruler portraits.⁵³ Hans Belting called the “A” type Hellenistic, Haussig termed it Antiochian, but both scholars derived these images from the lion's physiognomy.⁵⁴ The features of these images of Christ, elaborated and developed in the Justinian-coins, can be traced in the later Byzantine, Pantokrator-type representations as well.

The Christ-lion parallel has also its written testimonies. The Book of Revelations compares Christ to the *leo de tribu Iuda radix David*.⁵⁵ Here we cannot leave unmentioned the fact that the David metaphor can be connected to King Matthias, since his fights against the Turks were compared to the clash between David and the Philistines. This interpretation would justify Matthias' and David's common representation on the double frontispiece of the Florentine Psalter-Corvina.⁵⁶ **(Fig. 4)**

⁵¹ Kornél Szovák, *P. Mester Gesta Hungarorum és a Szent László legenda* (The Gesta Hungarorum of Master P. and the Saint Ladislav legend) (D.Phil. thesis, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1994), 169ff. and 179.

⁵² H. W. Haussig, “Der Einfluss der hellenistischen Physiognomik auf die frühchristliche Bildgestaltung,” in *Atti del VI Congresso Internazionale dell'Archeologia Christiana, Ravenna, 29-30 Sett., 1962* (Vatican City, 1965), 199–205, and Moshe Barasch, “The Ruling and the Suffering Christ: Physiognomic Typology on Justinian Coins,” in *Imago hominis – Studies in the Language of Art* (Vienna: IRSA, 1991), 112–118.

⁵³ Barasch, *Imago hominis*, 113–114. The features of the “B” type: long, thin face and nose, curved and contracted eyebrows. He derives this type from the Antique tragic masks: *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Haussig, “Der Einfluss der hellenistischen Physiognomik,” 199–205, and Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich: Beck, 1990), 156. They both assume that the other type may have taken its origin from an Eastern akheiropoieton: *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Book of Revelations, 5, 5, in *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber OSB (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 1886.

⁵⁶ For more on this, see Dániel Pócs, “Holy Spirit in the Library: The Frontispiece of the Didymus Corvina and the Neoplatonic Theology at the Court of King Matthias Corvinus,” *Acta Historiae Artium* 41 (1999/2000): 118–121, and “Exemplum and Analogy. The Narrative Structure of the Florentine Psalterium Corvina's Double Front Page,” in *Potentates and Corvinas. Anniversary Exhibition of the National Széchényi Library*, ed. Orsolya Karsai (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2002), 81–89.

Returning to the lion as a symbol of Christ, the other important source that has to be mentioned concerning this parallel is the *Physiologus*.⁵⁷ The work draws a comparison between the lion and Christ, claiming that just as Christ appeared among the people without being recognised, so in this manner also the lion erases his own paw-prints with his tail. The second parallel is that the lion sleeps with open eyes, which may be related to the fact that Christ died only as a human being, and the third is that the lion breathes life into his whelps, which is interpreted as the symbol of Christ's resurrection.⁵⁸

With these latter references we have reached that field of the lion's symbolism which points beyond the physiognomical studies. An entire, exhaustive presentation of the lion's symbolism would be far beyond the scope of this paper. A survey of with what, almost commonplace, contents and in which contexts the lion appears from the literature to the fine arts, not to mention the architectural decorations from Antiquity onwards, is not the main purpose of this thesis. Some other aspects of this tradition, however, must be highlighted in order to emphasise the point that physiognomical thought was not the first to consider the lion as a proper symbol for rulers or for other charismatic persons.⁵⁹ The aim of the following overview is to demonstrate the presence and impact of the tradition in different, both literary and visual, genres and to point out the symbolism's continuity spanning over centuries.

2. The manifestations of the lion's symbolics in other contexts

⁵⁷ *Physiologus*, 1, ed. Franciscus Sbordone (Hildesheim, NY: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976), 1–8. (The author of the *Physiologus* is anonymous. It was derived from a Greek original, probably made at Alexandria in the second century AD. It was first translated into Latin around the fourth century.)

⁵⁸ This latter scene is represented in a painted medallion in the Scrovegni chapel of Giotto linking the episodes of the Lamentation and the Resurrection.

⁵⁹ We should be aware of the fact that the lion also possessed several evil connotations, which we do not intend to discuss here, although there are certain cases when the two interpretations can be hardly separated from each other. For more about this subject see Peter Bloch, "Löwe," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Rome: Herder, 1994), vol. III, 112–119.

Even Homer, in the descriptions of his heroes, frequently applied the phrase “lion-hearted.” He characterised with this *epitheton ornans* Hercules and Achilles, but also Odysseus, as can be seen in Penelope mourning over the loss of her lion-hearted husband.⁶⁰ The epithet became a kind of a surname in the Middle Ages, Richard the Lionheart (1189–1199) or Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria (1156–1180), did not receive their names accidentally.

Pliny the Elder dedicates a long passage to the lion in the eighth book of his *Natural History*, dealing with zoology. He interprets the mane as the indicator of the lion’s generosity: *Leoni praecipua generositas tum cum colla armosque vestiunt iubae*; moreover, he also adds that this can be regarded as the sign of maturity as well.⁶¹ He states that there are two types of lions, those who have a long mane hold injury in contempt, while the short-maned ones are timid.⁶² Pliny’s zoological analyses are important contributions to the symbol’s tradition also because he seems to aim at demonstrating the lion’s characteristic features, mercifulness and gratitude, on the basis of a scientific observation of the nature.⁶³

The lion was regarded as the emblem of the courageous kings and wise rulers also in the Bible. Let us quote here, from the great amount of these biblical comparisons, the first Book of the Maccabees, where Iudas Macchabeus is described as follows: ... *similis factus est leoni in operibus suis, et sicut catulus leonis rugiens in venatione*...⁶⁴ Wisdom and justice as royal characteristics are symbolised also by

⁶⁰ Evans provides a survey on Homer’s physiognomical type of descriptions: Evans, “Physiognomics,” 59–62.

⁶¹ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, VIII, 17, ed. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), vol. III, 32.

⁶² Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, VIII, 18, ed. H. Rackham, vol. III, 36. For our point of view this is important because on the portraits reflecting the lion’s physiognomy the coiffure stands for the mane.

⁶³ See Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, VIII, 21, 56, ed. H. Rackham, vol. III, 38ff.

⁶⁴ *Liber I Macchabeorum*, 3, 4, in *Biblia Sacra*, ed. R. Weber OSB, 1439.

lions on the gilt ivory throne of Solomon: ... *et duo leones stabant iuxta manus singulas et duodecim leunculi stantes super sex gradus hinc atque inde...*⁶⁵

The lion as the personification of kingship appears in the medieval encyclopaedic works as well, for example according to Hrabanus Maurus: *Leo autem Graece, Latine rex interpretatur, quod princeps sit omnium bestiarum.*⁶⁶ The medieval encyclopaedists, similarly to the physiognomical writings, emphasised also the significance of the lion's eyes and forehead, claiming that their power is situated there.⁶⁷ In Alexander Perrig's interpretation this idea is clearly expressed in a drawing of Villard de Honnecourt representing an ideal portrait of the king of beasts.⁶⁸ (**Fig. 5**)

When discussing symbols of power we cannot avoid mentioning heraldry. Being the emblem of power, the lion was often represented on shields and coats of arms.⁶⁹ On the coins of Bela III the lion appears together with the other royal sign, the eagle; the lion was inserted into Andrew II's coat of arms too.⁷⁰ It can be found in Matthias's coat of arms as well, due to his being titular king of Bohemia and due to his title of count of Beszterce. The Hercules Fountain in Visegrád is decorated with these two coats of arms, but lions support the columns of the so-called Fountain of the Lions also in the royal palace of Visegrád.⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Liber Malachim*, 10, 18, in *Biblia Sacra*, ed. R. Weber OSB, 476.

⁶⁶ Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo libri*, VIII, 1, in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Brepols, 1996), 218.

⁶⁷ Ernő Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás. Művészet és valóság a 14–15. századi Magyarországon* (Picture and Image. Art and Reality in Hungary of the 14th and 15th Centuries) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1995), 99. See also on this: Fl. McCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962).

⁶⁸ Alexander Perrig, "Der Löwe des Villard de Honnecourt. Überlegungen zum Thema 'Kunst und Wissenschaft'," in *Musagetes. Festschrift für Wolfram Prinz*, ed. Ronald G. Kecks (Berlin: Mann, 1991), 105–121.

⁶⁹ V. Filip, "Löwe," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. Robert-Henri Bautier (Munich: Artemis, 1991), vol. V, 2141–2142.

⁷⁰ F. Donászy, "Az Árpádok címerének kérdése" (The Question of the Árpád Coat of Arms), *Turul* 49 (1935): 24–33.

⁷¹ For the Hercules Fountain, see Peter Meller, "La fontana di Mattia Corvino a Visegrad," *Annuario dell'Istituto Ungherese di Storia d'Arte* (Florence), 1 (1947): 47–72, and Gergely Buzás, *Giovanni Dalmata Hercules-kútja a visegrádi király palotában* (Giovanni Dalmata's Hercules Fountain in the Royal Palace of Visegrád) (Budapest-Visegrád: TKM Egyesület, Mátyás király Múzeum, 2001).

Those phenomena when the ruler's name includes the word *leo* merit again a separate treatment. In these cases the lion not only appears as a general symbol, but refers directly also to the name of the commissioner, for example in Pisanello's medal fashioned for Lionello d'Este in 1444. Here, on the obverse, Lionello's portrait is represented surrounded by the inscription: *Leonellus Marchio Estensis Ferrarie Regii et Mutine*. On the medal's reverse the lion alludes to Lionello, while Love, in the form of a winged Cupid, teaches the lion to sing. (**Fig. 6**) The interpretation of the composition, which seems to be rather enigmatic at first sight, is explained by the circumstance that Lionello became engaged to Maria of Aragon at that time.⁷²

The lion, nevertheless, became the attribute not only of kings and princes, but of saints as well. As the symbol of St. Mark the Evangelist it can be derived from one of the four creatures guarding the Lord's throne in the Book of Revelations (4,6–7). The four creatures; the lion, the man, the eagle and the bull, were later treated as symbols of the evangelists by the Church Fathers. (We will not here deal with the *figurae* of these types inherent in the four-faced angels in Ezekiel.) Gregory the Great identified Christ coming to life with the man, the dying Christ with the sacrificial bull, during the resurrection with the lion and in the ascension with the eagle.⁷³ The winged lion was displayed in Venice as the attribute of St. Mark, patron saint of the city, in several paintings, facades and sculptures to such extent that the lion itself also became the emblem of the city.⁷⁴ Thus it appears in a painting of Tintoretto, in one of the antechambers in the Ducal Palace, where Tintoretto painted the lion as the attendant of St. Mark, who protects the doge Girolamo Priuli, but at the same time the lion may

⁷² Pisanello, Lionello d'Este, lead, cast, Washington, The National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, inv. 1957.14.602, in *The Currency of Fame. Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, ed. Stephen K. Scher (New York: The Frick Collection, 1994), 47–50.

⁷³ *Lexikon der Namen und Heiligen*, ed. Otto Wimmer, Hartmann Melzer (Vienna: Tyrolia, 1988), 268.

⁷⁴ Patrizia Labalme, "Holy Patronage, Holy Promotion: the Cult of the Saints in Fifteenth-Century Venice," in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. Sandro Sticca (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and

refer to the allegorical personification of Justice as well, represented in the same painting.⁷⁵ But the lion, named Marzocco, was regarded as a city emblem also by the Florentines,⁷⁶ which has significance in connection also to King Matthias, as we will see in the third chapter.

Finally, concerning the lion's symbolism we must mention the emblematic, a genre where image and text must be interpreted together completing each other. Although the handbook of Cesare Ripa from 1603 points beyond the period under discussion here, the prototypes of the emblems he presents may well have originated in earlier times. In his *Iconologia* the lion can be found, *inter alia*, in emblems symbolising power, ambition, clemency, magnanimity and temperance.⁷⁷ These virtues embodied the characteristics of an ideal king for King Matthias as well. But before focusing on how the lion's symbolism was reflected in his self-representation, and also in his image, shaped by the contemporary Italian Humanists, we must briefly present the antecedents of the lion's symbolism in Hungary.⁷⁸

3. The Hungarian antecedents

When discussing the lion's presence in heraldry, we have already referred to its existence in the Hungarian coat of arms. As István Borzsák demonstrated, the Alexander the Great-tradition was well known to the historiographers of medieval Hungary as well. According to him the descriptions of Anonymus are interwoven with

Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), 233–249; Silvio Tramontin, “Realtà e leggenda nei racconti marciani veneti,” *Studi veneziani* 12 (1970): 35–58.

⁷⁵ On the personification of Venice in the figure of *Iustitia* see David Rosand, “Venetia Figurata: The Iconography of a Myth,” in *Interpretazioni Veneziane – Studi di Storia dell’Arte in Onore di Michelangelo Muraro* (Venice: Arsenale, 1984).

⁷⁶ Francis Ames-Lewis, “Francesco Pesellino’s ‘Story of David’ panels in the National Gallery, London,” *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki* 62 (2000): 201–203.

⁷⁷ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Rome: Lepidus Facius, 1603).

⁷⁸ For the lion's further meaning in the arts, see also O. Beigbeder, *Symbolisme du lion* (Saint-Léger-Vaubau, 1961, Zodiaque 50) and M. Gady, “Le symbolisme des lions dans l’art chrétien,” *Bulletin Soc.*

the Alexandrian *topoi*, and the tradition also influenced Simon Kézai.⁷⁹ This can be pointed out, for example, when Anonymus portrays Prince Taksony, comparing him to the lion: ... *pulchris oculis et magnis, capilli nigri et molles, comam habebat ut leo*.⁸⁰

But the lion's physiognomy was applied *expressis verbis* in a version of St. Ladislav's legend. The description well befits the ideal of the knight and saint king:

*In naturalibus autem bonis divinae miserationis gratia speciali cum praerogativa praeeminentiae super communem hominum valorem praetulerat. Erat enim manu fortis et visu desiderabilis et secundum phisionomiam leonis magnas habens extremitates. Statura quippe procerus, ceterisque hominibus a humero supra praeeminans, ita quod exuberante in ipso donorum plenitudine, ipsa quoque corporis species regio dyademate dignum ipsum declararet.*⁸¹

According to another variant of the text, St. Ladislav had a face like that of King Priam of Troy: ... *speciali tamen praerogativa ipsa corporis phisionomia, uti species Priami imperio digna declararet*. As László Mezey has claimed, the phrase of *phisionomia leonis* became more dominant in the text's tradition, because this comparison could have recalled for the audience the figure of Christ, or that of David, associating the passage with the aforementioned biblical quotation, a parallel which was more worthy of King Saint Ladislav than the pagan Priam-metaphor was.⁸² Besides the lion, the text contains another hidden allusion to David; since according to the medieval etymologies the original meaning of his name was the idiom *manu fortis et visu desiderabilis*.⁸³

des Sciences Hist. et Archeol. 71 (1949): 56–87, and V. Huhn, "Löwe und Hund als Symbole des Rechts," *Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kunst* 7 (1955): 167–196.

⁷⁹ I. Borzsák, *A Nagy Sándor-hagyomány*, 15ff.

⁸⁰ P. Magister, *Gesta Hungarorum*, 55, ed. L. Juhász (Budapest: K. M. Egyetemi Nyomda, 1932), 38.

⁸¹ *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum Ducum Regumque: Stirpis Arpadianae Gestarum*, ed. I. Szentpétery (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1938), vol. II, 517.

⁸² See note 55 and László Mezey, "Athleta Patriae," in *Athleta Patriae. Tanulmányok Szent László történetéhez* (Athleta Patriae. Studies on the History of Saint Ladislav), ed. László Mezey (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1980), 28.

⁸³ Kornél Szovák, "The Transformations," 259–262.

Kornél Szovák has stated that the source for the legend's author must have been Aristotle, more specifically, according to his hypothesis, that passage of the *Analytica priora* to which we have referred earlier in connection with Alexander the Great's physiognomy.⁸⁴ The legend reflects the image of an ideal king, which was emphasised also by mentioning his physical excellence. Since the legend aims at presenting the image of the *rex iustus* and *generosus*, the most appropriate metaphor to be applied was that of the lion, bearing in mind its general European diffusion and symbolism. Szovák stresses that the idea of the king being endowed by God not only with the necessary spiritual, but also with the proper physical qualities had its origins in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century theories about the states and rulers. The ideal king of John of Salisbury is also characterised in a similar way: *ab humeris sursum supereminebat universum populum*.⁸⁵ In this, again physiognomical, interpretation the physical appearance symbolises the ruler's virtues, and thus his *idoneitas* for the governance. The legend's message is that Saint Ladislav was similar to the lion because of his virtues, which were manifested in his outward appearance as well. This same conception can be demonstrated in the background of the creation of Matthias's portraits as well.

The afterlife and the impact of the legend's description can be observed also in a fourteenth-century Saint Ladislav sermon. The author of the sermon lists in ten distinctions ten characteristics of the lion which a good ruler must also possess.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ See note 13 and Kornél Szovák, *P. Mester*, 1994, 174ff.

⁸⁵ Kornél Szovák, "The Transformations," 255–258. More on the description see also Kornél Szovák, "Szent László alakja a korai elbeszélő forrásokban" (The Image of Saint Ladislav in the Early Narrative Sources) *Századok* 134 (2000): 117–145; Edit Madas "'Species Priami digna est imperio.' Les enseignements d'un sermon du XIII^{ème} siècle sur Saint Ladislav" *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (2000): 311–319; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 173–194.

⁸⁶ The ten characteristics are as follows: "In morum mansuetudine, in virium fortitudine, in membrorum pulchritudine, in stipendiorum erogatione, in pavorem cohortatione, in bonorum occultatione, in verborum dulcedine, in finis sui recordatione, in divini iudicii timore, in scientiae acquisitione." For more on the sermon, see Edit Madas, *Coepit verbum dei disseminari in Ungaria. Prédikációirodalom a*

The cult of Saint Ladislav and its main features, courage and righteousness, are reflected in the king's visual representations as well. Ernő Marosi has pointed out that the ideal of the Christian knight king can be demonstrated also in his images. He states that in contrast to the textual testimonies the lion's physiognomy cannot be traced directly in his representations; his physiognomy, however, befits the idea of the *imitatio Christi*. The strongly marked features of his face and particularly the beard are all meant to express royal dignity.⁸⁷ In terms of physiognomy this interpretation is important because, as has been presented above, the physiognomy of Christ and that of the lion have several similarities. **(Fig. 7)**

Saint Ladislav became the model for several Hungarian rulers; this can be demonstrated for example in the *Illuminated Chronicle*, commissioned by Louis the Great, but his person was cultivated in the age of Matthias Corvinus as well. It cannot be regarded as an accident that at the beginning of the *Thuróczi Chronicle* the fight between King Ladislav and the Cumans was represented as referring to Matthias' battles against the Turks.⁸⁸

Besides Saint Ladislav's cult the tradition of Alexander the Great was still alive in fifteenth-century Hungary. The Alexander romance of Arrianos was translated into Latin by Pier Paolo Vergerio, friend of Johannes Vitéz and creator of the Hungarian culture of Humanism, presumably for King Sigismund in Buda. A revised version of this work was kept also in Matthias' Bibliotheca Corviniana, such as a manuscript of Curtius Rufus.⁸⁹ The figure of Alexander the Great also influenced Antonio Bonfini in his descriptions of King Matthias. As Bonfini reports the ideal for Matthias was also

középkori Magyarországon (Sermon Literature in the Medieval Hungary) (Ph.D diss. 2000), 191–194, 221–224.

⁸⁷ Ernő Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 67–75.

⁸⁸ For the *Illuminated Chronicle*, see Ernő Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 37 and *passim*; for the cult under Matthias, see Ernő Marosi, "Mátyás király és korának művészete. A mecénás nevelése" (King Matthias and the Arts of his Age. The Education of the Patron), *Ars Hungarica* 20 (1993): 31.

the Macedonian ruler, *quem semper vitae habuit archetypum*.⁹⁰ In the next chapter I intend to analyse how the physiognomy of Alexander the Great influenced the textual and the visual representations of Matthias Corvinus.

⁸⁹ István Borzsák, *A Nagy Sándor-hagyomány*, 22–23.

⁹⁰ Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, ed. Iosephus Fógel, Bela Iványi and Ladislaus Juhász (Leipzig: Teubner, 1934) IV, 8, 247–248.

CHAPTER THREE:
PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE LION IN THE PORTRAITS AND DESCRIPTIONS
OF
KING MATTHIAS CORVINUS

1. The influence of physiognomical theories in Renaissance art

Before focusing on the analysis of King Matthias' images in the light of physiognomy, this subchapter aims at presenting the impact of physiognomical knowledge both in the Renaissance theory of art and in artistic practice as well. As we have seen in the first chapter, physiognomy as a science was transmitted from Antiquity onwards; according to the testimonies, from the ninth century onwards it formulated part of medieval cultural history belonging to the class of *philosophia naturalis*. Regarding the physiognomical mode of representation in the fine arts, however, an almost unbroken continuity cannot be observed to such an extent. Physiognomical thought began to take effect on the mode of expression parallel with the revival of Antique aesthetics, that is, mainly from the fourteenth century.⁹¹ The idea of naturalism, realism and lifelikeness involved the appearance of physiognomy among the necessary studies for artists in improving their artistic skills.

Lifelikeness was the principal achievement in the painting of Giotto as well, and because of the representation of various emotions and characters he was admired even by his contemporaries. *Ut vivere et anhelitum spirare contuentibus viderentur*: thus Filippo Villani paraphrases the virgilian verse when discussing Giotto's capacity

⁹¹ Georgia Sommers Wright, "The Reinvention of Portrait Likeness in the Fourteenth Century," *Gesta* 39 (2000): 117–134, and Ernő Marosi, "Barátságos arcok. Néhány középkori fej értelmezéséhez és az értelmezés módszeréhez" (Friendly Faces. On the Interpretation of Some Medieval Heads and on the Method of the Interpretation), in *Entz Géza nyolcvanadik születésnapjára. Tanulmányok* (Studies on the Occasion of the Eightieth Birthday of Géza Entz), ed. Ilona Valter (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1993), 151–167. Marosi also presents several earlier, thirteenth-century phenomena, where the physiognomical signs were consciously applied in order to differentiate the various characters, the first examples of which can be considered to be the different types of smile or facial expressions in the architectural sculpture.

of representing lifelike figures.⁹² As several studies have recently demonstrated, Giotto must also have applied the physiognomical definitions in order to portray realistic characters, and, as Steinke pointed out, he presumably knew the treatise of Pietro d'Abano, the *Liber compilationis physionomiae*, well.⁹³

Physiognomical expression appeared in the Hungarian art of the fourteenth century as well. The representation of the inward character and the state of mind can be traced in the statue of Saint George by Martin and George of Kolozsvár (Klausenburg-Cluj), from 1373. In this case a physiognomical formula was used again for the sake of intensifying the degree of nature's imitation; the wrinkles on the saint's forehead and his contracted eyebrows symbolise the struggles of the knight saint against the dragon.⁹⁴ **(Fig. 8)**

Renaissance humanists argued also, in a similar way to Antique authors, that one of the main requirements of artists was the proper representation not only of the outward appearance, but through the external the depiction also of the internal, that is to say, the inner nature. Bartolomeo Facio, the student of the humanist Guarino Veronese, who was the professor of the Hungarian poet Janus Pannonius in Ferrara as well, claimed that an artist has to represent even in a more lively and vivid way the features of the soul than that of the body.⁹⁵ Leon Battista Alberti, one of the most

⁹² Virgil, *Aeneis*, VI, 847–848: “spirantia mollius aera... vivos ducent de marmore vultus,” and Filippo Villani, *Liber de civitatis Florentiae famosis civibus*, ed. G. C. Galletti (Florence: J. Mazzoni, 1847), 35.

⁹³ Hubert Steinke, “Giotto und die Physiognomik,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59 (1996): 526–546; on the relationship between physiognomy and Giotto's art, see also Johannes Thomann, “Pietro d'Abano on Giotto,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 54 (1991): 238–244, and Moshe Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁹⁴ Ernő Marosi, *Kép és hasonmás*, 98–99.

⁹⁵ Bartolomeo Fazio, *De viris illustribus* (Florence: J. P. Giovanelli, 1745), 13; for similar statements from the Antiquity, see also Xenophon, *Symposion*, 8, 3; and Philostratos the Elder, *Imagines*, 2, 9.

important theoreticians of Renaissance art, also emphasised the role of physiognomical studies both in his *De pictura* and in the *De sculptura*.⁹⁶

The connection between body and soul was not rejected by the Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino either. He began to deal with physiognomy probably under the influence of Michael Savonarola, whose works reflect the theory of the relationship between the stars and the human body.⁹⁷ In a letter addressed to Angelo Poliziano, when listing his works he mentions a physiognomical one as well, which unfortunately did not come down to us.⁹⁸ In another letter written to Pietro Bembo he presents the ideal form of a maiden, referring also to the connection of body and soul, as follows:

*Corpus est enim anime ipsius est umbra forma vero corporis [...]. O quam amabilis, o quam mirabilis est haec animi forma, cuius umbra quaedam est forma corporis, tam vulgo amabilis, tam mirabilis.*⁹⁹

The statements of Ficino regarding physiognomical thought are relevant for our treatment because it is almost otiose to demonstrate how influential his Neoplatonist philosophy was in the spiritual life of the Buda court under discussion here.¹⁰⁰

The first elaborated Renaissance treatise which deals with sculpture in the light of physiognomy is the *De sculptura* of Pomponius Gauricus from 1504. His work can be inserted also in that tradition the most important representatives of which were the works of Albertus Magnus, Pietro d'Abano and the above-mentioned Michael

⁹⁶ Patrizia Castelli, “«Viso cruccioso e con gli occhi turbati». Espressione e fisiognomica nella trattatistica d'arte del primo Rinascimento,” in *L'ideale classico a Ferrara e in Italia nel Rinascimento*, ed. P. Castelli (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki, 1998), 54.

⁹⁷ Patrizia Castelli, “Viso cruccioso,” 56.

⁹⁸ “... composui Physiognomiam...” in *Marsilii Ficini Opera Omnia* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1962), I, 616; see also André Chastel, *Marsile Ficini et l'art* (Geneva: Droz, 1954), 93–96.

⁹⁹ *Marsilii Ficini Opera Omnia*, II, 807.

¹⁰⁰ József Huszti, “Platonista törekvések Mátyás király udvarában” (Platonist Endeavours in the Court of King Matthias), *Minerva* 3 (1924): 153–222; 4 (1925): 41–76; and Péter Kulcsár, “Az újplatonizmus Magyarországon” (Neoplatonism in Hungary), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 87, no.1–3 (1983): 41–48.

Savonarola. They treated physiognomy as medicine, namely considering to be the main doctrine of this science the stars' impact on human body.¹⁰¹ Leonardo da Vinci rejected physiognomy as a divinatory science, but in the artistic creative processes he also highly appreciated the physiognomical studies, the most evident testimonies of which are his drawings of grotesque heads.¹⁰² **(Fig. 9)**

When speaking about the physiognomical mode of expression in the Renaissance fine arts we have to bear in mind the fact that while physiognomy analyses constant interior characteristics and their permanent reflections in the exterior, physiognomical theories apparently were applied in the fine arts also in the representation of transitory emotions. This interpretation is true first of all in the case of the narrative scenes. The Italian portraits of the fifteenth century, however, enable us to analyse the influence of physiognomy in its original, strict meaning.¹⁰³ This can be proved by their later, but still Renaissance, reception; as Alexander the Great's facial features were mentioned by the Antique physiognomical writings, so does Giovanni Battista della Porta provide examples for his descriptions from famous Italian personalities, illustrating his physiognomical treatises with their portraits.¹⁰⁴ The large nose in his *De Humana Physiognomia*, for example, is illustrated with a portrait of Angelo Poliziano stating in the text below the woodcut that people with such a big nose despise the works of other persons. **(Fig. 10)** Even contemporaries

¹⁰¹ Patrizia Castelli, "Viso cruccioso," 59.

¹⁰² I would refer here only to some fundamental studies on the topic: Otto Baur, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 1995; Ernst H. Gombrich, "Leonardo da Vinci's Method of Analysis and Permutation: The Grotesque Heads," in *The Heritage of Apelles: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), 57-75; Flavio Caroli, *Leonardo: Studi di Fisiognomica* (Milan: Mondadori, 1991); M. W. Kwakkelstein, *Leonardo as a Physiognomist. Theory and drawing practice* (Leiden: Primavera Press, 1994).

For more on the relationship between physiognomy and Renaissance art, see Ulrich Reißer, *Physiognomik und Ausdruckstheorie der Renaissance: Der Einfluss charakterologischer Lehren auf Kunst und Kunsttheorie des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Scaneg, 1997).

¹⁰³ I chose examples from the Italian fifteenth-century portraits because this period and territory can be taken into consideration as a principal source for the physiognomical image-creating method in the court of King Matthias.

made fun of Poliziano's really big nose and the humanists criticising the entourage of Lorenzo il Magnifico did not omit mockery of his nose either.¹⁰⁵ In the *Coelestis Physiognomonia* he presented the portrait of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in a more flattering position, among the angelic faces.¹⁰⁶

The portraits of the celebrated intellectuals reflect innate, therefore permanent, characteristics also by means of physiognomy. The representation of the inward virtues was the special aim of the Renaissance ruler portraits as well. This type has been termed in the scholarship "state portrait," in which genre the portraits of King Matthias must be ranked as well. In state portraits the visualisation of the internal values is almost more important than that of the external ones; thus the outward appearance in these cases becomes the medium of an expected inward nature. As Marianna Jenkins expressed, the point of the state portrait is that it "is not the portrayal of an individual as such, but the evocation through his image of those abstract principles for which he stands."¹⁰⁷ Moshe Barasch, developing further the concept of state portrait, claimed that it should be regarded as the "visual manifestation of the ruler's legitimacy."¹⁰⁸ Peter Burke interpreted Renaissance portraits in a similar mode, as a "form of communication, a silent language, a theatre of status, a system of signs representing attitudes and values, and as a means to 'the

¹⁰⁴ Giovanni Battista della Porta, *De Humana Physiognomia* (Naples: J. Cacchius, 1586); *Coelestis Physiognomoniae Libri Sex* (Naples: J. B. Subtilis, 1603).

¹⁰⁵ Nicole Hegener, "Angelus Politianus enormi fuit naso," in *Antiquarische Gelehrsamkeit und Bildende Kunst, Die Gegenwart der Antike in der Renaissance*, ed. Katharina Corsepius (Cologne: Walther König, 1996), 85-121.

¹⁰⁶ Vilmo Cappi, "Della fisionomia dell'uomo e della celeste. Su alcuni ritratti antichi di Giovanni e di Giovan Francesco II. Pico," in *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Convegno internazionale di studi nel cinquecentesimo anniversario della morte*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994), 397-414. See also Moshe Barasch, "Charakter und Physiognomie. Bocchis Abhandlung über Donatello's Heiligen Georg: Ein Renaissancetext zum Künstlerischen Ausdruck," in Campe and Schneider, ed., *Geschichten*, 185-209.

¹⁰⁷ Marianna Jenkins, *The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution* (Monographs of the American Institute of America and the College Art Association of America, III, n. p. 1947).

¹⁰⁸ Moshe Barasch, "The Ruler in Renaissance Art," in Barasch, *Imago hominis*, 231.

presentation of self’.”¹⁰⁹ At this point we should again recall Gombrich’s thoughts, discussed in the introduction, concerning the question of ideal and type. We can state indeed that the seemingly naturalistic Renaissance portraiture adjusted the rulers to certain ideals by applying consciously elaborated types, rather than creating a portrait from nature or life itself.¹¹⁰ For our point of view these interpretations are significant because the science of physiognomy provided a theoretical background for this image-shaping method.

The portraits of Federico da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, fit perfectly the category of the idealising state portrait, in spite of the fact that his visual image bears individual features as well. **(Fig. 11)** His nose seems to be very realistic, but the main message of its highlighted representation was its identification with the aquiline nose. His hooked nose has been compared in several studies to the physiognomical definition of Pomponius Gauricus: *Aduncus qui et aquilinus, regalem animum, ac magnificentiam [i.e. significat]*.¹¹¹ Besides the application of such an ancient and universal royal symbol as the lion, the connotation with the eagle played an important role in demonstrating his legitimacy as well, being a child born out of wedlock.¹¹² As we will examine in the next subchapter, the concept of magnificence was placed at the service of the legitimist endeavours also of King Matthias.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Peter Burke, “The Presentation of Self in the Renaissance Portrait,” in *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy. Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 150.

¹¹⁰ Joanna Woods-Marsden, “Ritratto al Naturale: Questions of Realism and Idealism in Early Renaissance Portraits,” *Art Journal* 46, no.3 (1987): 209–216; L. M. Sleptzoff, *Men or Supermen? The Italian Portrait in the Fifteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978).

¹¹¹ Pomponius Gauricus, *De sculptura*, ed. A. Chastel (Geneva: Droz, 1969), 147. On the aquiline physiognomy of Federico da Montefeltro, see Claudia Brink, “Die zwei Gesichter des Federico da Montefeltro,” in *Bildnis und Image: Das Porträt zwischen Intention und Rezeption*, ed. A. Köstler (Cologne: Böhlau, 1998), 119-143.

¹¹² Claudia Brink, “Die zwei Gesichter,” 132.

¹¹³ On the artistic connections between Urbino and the court of King Matthias, see Rózsa Feuerné Tóth, “A budai vár függökertje és a Cisterna Regia” (The Hanging Garden of the Buda Castle and the

2. Physiognomy of Matthias Corvinus

Introduction

Both in the textual and in visual sources regarding the outward appearance of King Matthias, scholarship has recognised the influence of the lion's physiognomy.¹¹⁴ It has been pointed out that his physiognomy was created following the *imitatio Alexandri*, which metaphor gained an actual content in the Buda court, since Italy expected Matthias to expel the Turks from Europe.¹¹⁵ His physiognomy, however, has not yet been analysed in details. I have presented in the previous chapters the tradition of the physiognomical image-shaping method in Antiquity and in the Renaissance, and the lion's symbolism: the two main ideas to be taken into consideration when interpreting Matthias' representations. In this subchapter I intend to examine the testimonies about his external features in the light of physiognomy by comparing their characteristics with the physiognomical literature. The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate the physiognomical meanings of the elements constructing his image. The comparison is meant to be a contribution to the proper interpretation of his descriptions and portraits proving by this that they were consciously created according to the ruler's intentions and also to the idealistic expectations of the Italian humanists. The presentation of his image, taking physiognomy into consideration, provides also the cultural historical background which must have been a fundamental component in the process of his images' creation. The other point of the physiognomical interpretation is to situate

Cisterna Regia), in *Magyarországi Reneszánsz és Barokk* (The Renaissance and the Baroque in Hungary), ed. Géza Galavics (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1975), 11–54.

¹¹⁴ Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory in Renaissance Heroic Portraits," in *Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art: Studies in Western Art, Renaissance and Mannerism*, ed. Millard Meiss and Richard Krautheimer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), vol. II, 53–62, and Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép*, 39–40.

¹¹⁵ Tibor Klaniczay, "A kereszteshad eszméje és a Mátyás-mítosz" (The Idea of the Crusade and the Myth of Matthias), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 79, no.1 (1975): 1–13, and Klára Pajorin, "Humanista irodalmi művek Mátyás király dicsőítésére" (Humanist Literary Works in Praise of King Matthias), in *Hunyadi Mátyás – Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500. évfordulójára* (Matthias

Matthias's portraits among the state portraits, mentioned above, which can be traced back to Alexander the Great, such as in the case of Federico da Montefeltro.

The literary descriptions

There are two surviving idealistic descriptions of the king's outward appearance. The author of the earlier one is Galeotto Marzio, who described Matthias in the *De Egregie, Sapienter ac Iocose Dictis ac Factis Regis Mathiae* dedicated to Johannes Corvinus, son of the ruler, in 1486.¹¹⁶ Galeotto arrived for the first time into Hungary in 1461, probably at the invitation of his friend Janus Pannonius, who was his fellow student at the school of the humanist Guarino Veronese in Ferrara. He returned to Matthias's court several times until 1486, and became the court humanist of the king.¹¹⁷ He described Matthias Corvinus as follows:

*... cum rex Mathias virium mediocrium pulchritudinisque virilis sit videaturque. Nam capillo non plene rutilo, subcrispo, denso atque promisso, oculis vividis et ardentibus, colore genarum rubicundo, longis manuum digitis, quorum minimos non plene extendit, Martiali potius quam Venerea pulchritudine decoratur*¹¹⁸

In the following I will analyse this source in the light of physiognomy, an interpretation which has not yet been employed by the scholars. The comparison of the elements with the pseudo-aristotelian definitions will result in the conclusion that Galeotto did not select the components for his presentation accidentally. The falling thick wavy reddish hair are doubtless signs of the lion's physiognomy, the main

Hunyadi – Studies on the Occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of his Death), ed. Gyula Rázsó and László V. Molnár (Budapest: Zrínyi kiadó, 1990), 333-363.

¹¹⁶ Tibor Karodos, ed., *Galeotto Marzio Mátyás királynak kiváló, bölcs, tréfás mondásairól és tetteiről szóló könyv* (Galeotto Marzio's Book on the Excellent, Wise, Facetious Sayings and Deeds of King Matthias) (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1977), 111–115; Gabriella Miggiano, "Galeotto Marzio da Narni. Profilo biobibliografico," *Il Bibliotecario* 35 (1993): 72–79.

¹¹⁷ Jenő Ábel, "Galeotto Marzio," in *Adalékok a humanismus történetéhez Magyarországon* (Contributions to the History of Humanism in Hungary) (Budapest: Academia Hungarica, Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1880), 231-294; Gabriella Miggiano, "Galeotto Marzio da Narni," 65ff. According to Miggiano the last stay of Galeotto in Hungary can be dated at the latest around the year of 1482.

characteristics of which I have presented earlier in connection to Alexander the Great.¹¹⁹ The bright and gleaming eyes are the symbols of brave, clever, talented and generous people.¹²⁰ The ruddy face is characteristic of passionate personalities, but this corresponds to the nature of Matthias as well, since according to Bonfini he was *non difficilis ad iram*.¹²¹ The long fingers in the *Secretum Secretorum* are regarded as signs of wise, educated men and those who are apt for governance.¹²² According to another, medieval treatise men who have long fingers are of good judgement.¹²³ After having examined the description's parts we can assume that Galeotto bore in mind the physiognomical meanings when selecting his phrases. It can be also stated that similarly to Suetonius' method, the ruler's external representation was adjusted to the praise of his inward virtues discussed by Galeotto in another passage:

*Maxima nanque virorum multitudo ex toto fere orbe ad regem Mathiam confluxerant, quoniam varietate bellorum, multitudine victoriarum, magnitudine gestorum totius Europae principes anteibat essetque in eo summa cum humanitate benignitas, eruditio prima, eloquentia mitis et facunda et multarum linguarum cognitio.*¹²⁴

Concerning the last information on the king's body provided by Galeotto, that he could not extend his little finger entirely, we can suggest that this is in accordance with Galeotto's style, which is idealising, but to a lesser extent than that of the other

¹¹⁸ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie, Sapienter ac Iocose Dictis ac Factis Regis Mathiae ad Ducem Iohannem eius Filium Liber*, 23, ed. Ladislaus Juhász (Leipzig: Teubner, 1934), 22.

¹¹⁹ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 41, 69. I chose as the main source of my analysis the treatise of Pseudo-Aristotle because his definitions were regarded as prototypes for the later authors as well, and concerning the signs under discussion here any comparison with other physiognomical works would not result in a considerably different interpretation.

¹²⁰ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 13, 15, 68.

¹²¹ Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, IV, VIII, 250–251, ed. Iosephus Fögel, Bela Iványi and Ladislaus Juhász, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1934).

¹²² *Secretum Secretorum*, in Foerster, *Scriptores*, II, 215. It has been supposed that a manuscript of the *Secretum Secretorum* prepared for Louis the Great was preserved in the Bibliotheca Corviniana: Csaba Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library. History and Stock* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1973), 140.

¹²³ *La fisiognomia. Trattatello in francese antico colla versione italiana del trecento*, ed. E. Veza (Bologna, 1864), 40–41.

¹²⁴ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie*, cap. 10, 9.

Italian panegyrics.¹²⁵ Mentioning a small corporal defect does not depreciate the general effect at all. He may have inserted this element into his laudatory presentation also because, as Galeotto explains the context of the passage, his aim was to describe the reality, in contrast to the exaggerated panegyrics despised by the ruler himself.¹²⁶ Galeotto, however, was also a court humanist, who had to be aware of the modes how to please the king in order to receive support from the court. The interest was mutual; King Matthias needed an elaborated propaganda as well.¹²⁷

Physiognomical knowledge can be demonstrated in the works of Galeotto Marzio not only through this description, but relying upon also his own hints and arguments. In this same work he claims about King Matthias that the king's physiognomical expertise contributed also to his good knowledge of human character:

*Iuvabat praeterea regis solertiam et exercitationem astrorum cognitio et physionomiae scientia, quas a doctissimis viris largissime acceperat.*¹²⁸

One may say that this reference again only formulated part of the idealising picture, but from our point of view the question is not whether King Matthias was indeed an expert in physiognomy; the point is that it testifies to Galeotto's education in the topic.

The theory of the mutual relationship between body and soul was accepted by Galeotto as well. Moreover, his works reflect the doctrines of averroist philosophy; therefore he dedicated to the body an even more determinant role than physiognomy, stating that the inner features are determined by the physical conditions, and not

¹²⁵ Klára Pajorin, "Humanista irodalmi művek," 346.

¹²⁶ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie*, 23.

¹²⁷ Tibor Klaniczay, "Nagy személyiségek humanista kultusza a XV. században" (The Cult of Great Personalities in the Fifteenth Century), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 86 (1982): 135–148; In 1482 Galeotto visited Matthias in his camp in Baden in order to request a wedding present for his daughters. Warnke lists wedding presents received from the rulers as a typical act of a patron, mentioning the example of Galeotto: Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist. On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993) 130.

¹²⁸ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie*, cap. 13, 12.

conversely.¹²⁹ This thought can be traced again in the *De Egregie*: when writing about a man of six fingers he interprets this phenomenon as an evil omen, since *monstrousa enim... apud veteres ut ominis infausti expiabantur sacrificio...* and continues that *anima enim, ut a doctis viris accepi, ex medicorum sententia sequitur corporis habitudinem.*¹³⁰ He claimed in his *De doctrina promiscua* and in the *De incognitis vulgo* that body and soul cannot be separated from each other and that the soul does not exist without the human body.¹³¹ Galeotto devoted a complete book to the human body, providing a physiological analysis in his *De homine* written in Hungary and dedicated to Johannes Vitéz around 1470–1471.¹³²

Besides the concept of body and soul, in his works he treated astrological and medical topics as well. The theory of the stars' influence upon our organs appears also in Galeotto's works. He encountered this doctrine in Padua, where he studied medicine and taught literature at the same time.¹³³ In Padua the spiritual heritage of Pietro d'Abano was still influential at that time, which is important for Galeotto's education, because his works also could have mediated the physiognomical thoughts for Galeotto. The physiognomical knowledge of Galeotto can be explained by the examination of his sources as well. He often refers to Avicenna, who also dealt with physiognomy, classifying it along with astrology, medicine, magic, dream-

¹²⁹ Cesare Vasoli, "Note su Galeotto Marzio," *Acta Litteraria* 19 (1977): 51–69; László Szörényi, "Galeotto filozófiai értekezésének antik forrásai" (The Antique Sources of Galeotto's Philosophical Treatises), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 86 (1982): 46–52.

¹³⁰ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie*, cap. 22, 20–21.

¹³¹ *De doctrina promiscua* (Florence: Torrentinum, 1548); *Varia dottrina*, ed. Mario Frezza (Naples: Pironti, 1949); *Quel che i più non sanno*, ed. Mario Frezza (Naples: Pironti, 1948); "L'immagine dell'uomo e del mondo nel *De doctrina promiscua* di Galeotto Marzio," in *L'eredità classica in Italia e Ungheria fra tardo Medioevo e primo Rinascimento*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Amedeo di Francesco (Rome: Il Calamo, 2001), 185–205.

¹³² Gabriella Miggiano, "Galeotto Marzio da Narni," 33–34 (1992): 65–87; G. M. Anselmi and E. Boldrini, "Galeotto Marzio ed il *De homine* fra Umanesimo bolognese ed europeo," *Quaderno degli Annali dell'Istituto Gramsci* 3 (1995–96): 3–83.

¹³³ Alessandro d'Alessandro, "Astrologia, religione e scienza nella cultura medica e filosofica di Galeotto Marzio," in *Italia e Ungheria all'epoca dell'Umanesimo corviniano*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Cesare Vasoli (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1994), 133–179.

interpretation and alchemy under the category of physics.¹³⁴ His interest in the occult sciences, such as physiognomy, astrology and chiromancy, is manifested in a work entitled *Chiromantia perfecta*. Although only the introduction has been attributed to Galeotto, this treatise can be regarded also as a testimony of his physiognomical expertise.¹³⁵ Finally, we have to mention also the fact that Galeotto allegedly was called *Zopyros Europae* by posterity, referring to his capacity of diagnosing from the external features.¹³⁶

In the preceding part I made an attempt at demonstrating that Galeotto's description of Matthias Corvinus was composed taking into consideration the science of physiognomy, with which he must have been acquainted, as testified by the presented philological evidence. This statement is relevant for our argumentation not only for the description under discussion. Since physiognomy influenced the king's visual representations as well, we can assume that one of the science's mediators for the Hungarian ruler was Galeotto himself, whose activity in the Buda court seems to be too significant for us to consider him only as a court jester, as he has often been presented in the scholarly literature. His role must be emphasised also because he was a good friend of Janus Pannonius, who is regarded as being the probable inventor of the ruler's *all'antica* image.¹³⁷ We can suppose that Janus Galeotto also fashioned the attitudes and taste of King Matthias because of the following circumstances: the description by Galeotto is earlier than that of Bonfini's, dated after 1488 and completed after the king's death, and Galeotto still stayed in Buda in the time of the

¹³⁴ In the *De doctrina promiscua* he dedicates two complete chapters to Avicenna: *De doctrina promiscua* (Lyons: Tornaesium, 1552), 70–94. For the physiognomy in Avicenna, see Johannes Thomann, "Avicenna über die Physiognomische Methode," in Campe and Schneider, ed., *Geschichten*, 47–62. Works of Avicenna have been identified with corvinas: Csaba Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library*, 151. See also Sándor V. Kovács, "Avicenna középkori magyar hatásához" (On the Medieval Influence of Avicenna in Hungary) *Filológiai Közlöny* 7, no.3–4 (1961): 341–342.

¹³⁵ *Chiromanzia*, ed. Mario Frezza (Naples: Pironti, 1951); Gabriella Miggiano, "Galeotto Marzio da Narni," 35(1993): 93–108.

¹³⁶ Paolo Cortesi, *De cardinalatu*, II, 98.

all'antica portraits' appearance, in the 1480s, when Janus was dead.¹³⁸ But before discussing Matthias' portraits, the description by Bonfini must be presented.

Bonfini's characterisation was considered to be an authentic portrayal until it was discovered that his main source was Plutarch's description of Alexander the Great, and that he had reused a text composed earlier for the introduction of the translation of Hermogenes' *Rhetorica*, written in Italy, before he had met the king.¹³⁹ After having been introduced to Matthias in 1487 in Vienna, the Italian historiographer remained in the royal court as lecturer of the queen, Beatrix of Aragon, and court historiographer. He began to write the *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades* in 1488, but the work was finished only after the king's death; around 1497.¹⁴⁰ Bonfini enlarged and rephrased his former version, taking over phrases verbatim from Plutarch. His obvious purpose was to compare Matthias to Alexander the Great:

*Divo Mathie statura corporis fuit aliquanto maiuscula quam mediocris, forma eximia, generosus aspectus et multum referens magnanimitatis; rubens facies et flava coma, cui venustatem obducta supercilia, vegeti et subnigricantes oculi et sine menda nasus ne mediocrem quidem cultum addebant; obtutus eius liber ac rectus, leonis more oculis nunquam inter videndum fere conniventibus. Favorem semper obstinato indicavit obtutu, quem vero limis respexit, oculis infensum sibi esse portendit; prominentiore collo et mento fuit et ore aliquanto latiore. Caput huic addecens, quippe quod nec parvum nec magnum videri poterat, frons vero parum spatians. Consentiebant inter se membra spatiosa; brachio terete et oblonga manu, latis humeris et patente pectore fuit... Proinde formosum erat corpus, cui color albus cum rubore fuerat admixtus, ex qua quidem mixtura mirum quandoque, ut de Alexandro perhibent, fragravit odorem. Quin etiam lineamentis oculorum et levitate illi nimis fuit assimilis, quem semper vitae habuit archetypum.*¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Árpád Mikó "Divinus Hercules," 151.

¹³⁸ On the friendship of Matthias and Galeotto, see Tibor Klaniczay, "Galeotto Marzio és Mátyás" (Galeotto Marzio and King Matthias), *Világosság* 18 (1977): 32–35; "L'ambiente intellettuale di Galeotto Marzio in Ungheria," in *Miscellanea di studi in onore di Vittorio Branca* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1983), vol. 3, 545–555.

¹³⁹ Árpád Mikó "Divinus Hercules," 151; Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép*, 40. The Hermogenes version was published in *Analecta nova ad Historiam Renascentium in Hungaria litterarum spectantia*, ed. Jenő Ábel and István Hegedüs (Budapest: Academia Hungarica, 1903), 57.

¹⁴⁰ Péter Kulcsár, *Bonfini Magyar Történetének forrásai és keletkezése* (Sources and the Produce of Bonfini's Hungarian History) (Budapest: Balassi, 1973), 199.

¹⁴¹ Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, IV, VIII, 244–286.

The idealising patterns of the detailed description deserve again a physiognomical analysis. The components are known to us from the second chapter; if we recall how Pseudo-Aristotle and Aristotle represented the lion character we can identify the lion's image in Bonfini's text likewise. Scholars agree in considering Plutarch to be the main source for the author, but nevertheless it is not otiose to examine this part also in the light of the physiognomical writings, as in Galeotto's instance, in order to propose a physiognomical decoding of the quotation.¹⁴²

The blond hair, bright eyes, a mouth somewhat large, the free and direct gaze, not too large a forehead, wide shoulders and chest are the features of the leonine character.¹⁴³ Bonfini points out also that the king's head was of a medium size (*nec parvum nec magnum*) and his body was well proportioned (*consentiebant inter se membra*) which characteristics are mentioned in Pseudo-Aristotle as signs of the brave, the just, in other words the ideal male type.¹⁴⁴ As regards the whitish-ruddy colour of the skin (*color albus cum rubore... admixtus*), according to the *Physiognomica* it is the indicator of the talented and gentle-tempered man.¹⁴⁵ In Polemon's treatise this colour symbolises the man who is expert and educated in literature; in the *Secretum Secretorum* it is the sign of the just personality.¹⁴⁶

But we have to point out that Bonfini's representation contains not only phrases taken from Plutarch, but also others. He may have borrowed from Suetonius, whose *Vita* he could study even in the Bibliotheca Corviniana.¹⁴⁷ Some features resemble the portrayal of Augustus and Julius Caesar, not accidentally, since their

¹⁴² It was first Peter Meller who suggested the pseudo-aristotelian interpretation of Bonfini's description, but he did not enter into details. He did not mention Galeotto's text in this context. See "Physiognomical Theory," 60–61.

¹⁴³ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 41.

¹⁴⁴ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 72.

¹⁴⁵ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 9, 15,

¹⁴⁶ Polemon, cap. 55, *Secretum Secretorum*, 23, in Foerster, *Scriptores*, I–II.

¹⁴⁷ Péter Kulcsár, *Bonfini*, 177.

representations bear marks of the discussed ideals as well. Making an allusion to Caesar may have been a reflection of the *topoi* created by the Italian humanists, since they compared in their panegyrics the Hungarian king not only to Alexander the Great, but also to the Roman emperor.¹⁴⁸ Let me highlight some of these parallels:

- Antonio Bonfini, *Decades: statura corporis... aliquanto maiuscula quam mediocris*
- Suetonius, *Vita Caesarum: excelsa statura* (Caesar, 45.)

- Bonfini: *flava coma*
- Suetonius: *capillum subflavum* (Augustus, 79.)

- Bonfini: *obducta supercilia*
- Suetonius: *supercilia coniuncta* (Augustus, 79.)

- Bonfini: *vegeti et subnigricantes oculi*
- Suetonius: *nigris vegetisque oculis* (Caesar, 45)

- Bonfini: *ore aliquanto latiore*
- Suetonius: *ore paulo pleniore* (Caesar, 45)

- Bonfini: *brachio terete*
- Suetonius: *teretibus membris* (Caesar, 45.)

Concerning the contracted eyebrow we have to bear in mind in our interpretation also the fact that the aim of its representation in the Antique sculpture was to intensify the wise, contemplative facial expression of rulers and philosophers.¹⁴⁹

Although Bonfini's description is more elaborated than that of Galeotto, and it implies a direct hint to the lion-type (*leonis more*), physiognomical knowledge cannot be discerned in his works and education. His sources, however, along with the authors he could use in the king's library, seem to support the hypothesis that he consciously applied the suetonian-type of iconistic description influenced by physiognomy. Besides Plutarch and Suetonius, Ammianus Marcellinus, the *Scriptores Historiae*

¹⁴⁸ As Klára Pajorin presented, in the works of Antonio Costanzi, Ludovico Carbone and Alessandro Cortesi; see "Humanista irodalmi művek," 334–335, 349.

¹⁴⁹ Luca Giuliani, *Bildnis und Botschaft*, 134–140; 156–162.

Augustae and Einhard were also identified among Bonfini's sources,¹⁵⁰ which is interesting for our point of view because they all applied in their works the presented description-type.¹⁵¹ In other places Bonfini also attached importance to the external signs. For instance, when writing about the ruler's son, Johannes Corvinus, destined to be the heir to the throne, he mentions the fact that he did not turn his head all around, he walked with dignity and his eyes did not blink.¹⁵² For Pseudo-Aristotle the blinking eyes reveal the timid persons, and the turning head the lascivious ones.¹⁵³

The confrontations do not prove *per se* that we should consider Pseudo-Aristotle or any other physiognomical treatise to be Bonfini's direct source. The point of his composing method was intertextuality; he consciously selected his phrases taking into consideration the context of their previous occurrence. Idealising was part of his working method and style; to support this, it is enough to note that first he composed an idealising description of the king without ever meeting him. He applied this same system for the presentation of the royal castle, borrowing terms from Pliny the Younger, but Naldo Naldi described the royal library also adjusting his text to certain ideas.¹⁵⁴ But even if we have to state that he used *topoi*, there is no doubt that he was aware of their precise meanings. Physiognomical interpretation is, therefore, one important aspect of the traditions that make schemes.

¹⁵⁰ Péter Kulcsár, *Bonfini*, 166–177. Among the sources of Bonfini Borzsák lists the *Historia Alexandri* as well: Borzsák, *A Nagy Sándor-hagyomány*, 23–32.

¹⁵¹ On the relationship between physiognomy and these authors see Evans, "Roman Descriptions,"; Evans, "Physiognomics," 50, 94–96.

¹⁵² Bonfini, *Decades*, IV, VII, 125–129.

¹⁵³ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Phys.* cap. 14, 20, 21.

¹⁵⁴ Rózsa Tóth Feuerné, "Művészet és humanizmus a korareneszánsz Magyarországon" (Arts and Humanism in the Hungary of the Early Renaissance), *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 36 (1987): 32–36; Árpád Mikó "Divinus Hercules," 150; "Ekphrasis. A budapesti Philostratos-kódex és a Bibliotheca Corviniana" (Ekphrasis. The Philostratos-Codex of Budapest and the Bibliotheca Corviniana), in *A Magyar Nemzeti Galéria Évkönyve* (1991): 69; "Egy stílusfordulat reinkarnációja. Antonio Bonfini építészeti terminológiájának értelmezése" (The Reincarnation of a Stylistic Shift. On the Interpretation of Antonio Bonfini's Architectural Terminology), in *Sub Minervae Nationis Praesidio. Tanulmányok a nemzeti kultúra kérdésköréből Németh Lajos 60. születésnapjára* (Studies on the National Culture in Honour of Németh Lajos on his Sixteenth Birthday) (Budapest: ELTE, 1989), 37–40; Klára Pajorin,

Matthias' outward appearance befits his inward nature in the work of Bonfini likewise in Galeotto's *De Egregie*. According to Bonfini the king is ... *suapte natura liberalis et magnificus*,¹⁵⁵ but he refers to magnanimity also in the above presented description: *multum referens magnanimitatis*. Magnanimity, generosity and righteousness, as seen in the former chapters, were always regarded as features of the lion-type ideal ruler. The leonine character is reflected also in the portraits of the king.

Physiognomy in the portraits

The lion's physiognomy influenced Matthias' visual representation as well.¹⁵⁶ The wavy, blond hair falling down to the shoulders, the lock rising at the forehead, the bump above the eyebrows, the deep eyes, the fleshy, blunt nose, the gaze directed up to the heavens and the slightly separated lips became the main features of his images shaped according to the Alexandrian image. The portraits, however, like Bonfini's description, were thought to be authentic for a long time. Jolán Balogh, who compiled a catalogue of Matthias' representations, while admitting their idealising character and recognising the leonine hairdressing, ranked the lion-type images in the group of the so-called authentic portraits.¹⁵⁷

“Angelo Decembrio és Naldo Naldi ideális könyvtár leírása” (Angelo Decembrio's and Naldo Naldi's Description about the Ideal Library), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények*, under print.

¹⁵⁵ Bonfini, “*Decades*,” IV, IV, 103–114.

¹⁵⁶ It must be stressed that in the thesis I intend to deal only with these types of Matthias's portraits. Other images different from the lion-type, not to mention his representations dating from the later centuries, are not the subject of this thesis.

¹⁵⁷ The term authentic was used to express the hypothesis, which has been rejected since that time, that the portraits would be almost photograph-like reflections of the king's original outward appearance. Jolán Balogh, “Mátyás király ikonográfiája” (The Iconography of King Matthias), in *Mátyás király – Emlékkönyv születésének ötszázéves fordulójára* (King Matthias – Essays Presented on the Occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth), ed. Imre Lukinich (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1940), vol. I, 435–548; *A művészet Mátyás király udvarában*, vol. I, 705–716; *Mátyás király és a művészet* (King Matthias and the Fine Arts) (Budapest: Magvető, 1985), *passim*; see also János Csontos, “Mátyás és Beatrix arcképei Corvin-codexekben” (The Portraits of Matthias and Beatrix in the Corvin-codices), *Archeológiai Értesítő* (1888): 97–115, 209–220, 310–326.

Peter Meller first put the portraits of King Matthias in an international context and demonstrated the impact of the lion's physiognomy upon them.¹⁵⁸ Meller examined in the same article the physiognomy of the lion in other Italian portraits of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as well. One of his overview's results is the fact that the portraits of Matthias seem to be relatively early in this rank. Meller pointed out the influence of this type, *inter alia*, in one of Leonardo's drawings prepared as a study for a portrait of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, but the Hercules of Baccio Bandinelli or the Neptune of Jacopo Sansovino, likewise Benvenuto Cellini's bust of Cosimo Medici, also bear the lion's marks. **(Fig. 12)** He provided an example for the appearance of the lion's physiognomy in a religious context as well; in Uccello's Adoration of the Child the lion is depicted below St. Jerome, whose profile bears the lion's traits, just as the other two saints represented in the same painting resemble the animals depicted below them. **(Fig. 13)**

The Hungarian scholarship accepted Meller's interpretation. Scholars agree concerning the hypothesis that this *all'antica* type of Matthias' representations appeared first – at least regarding the surviving testimonies – on his second coin-version bearing the inscription *Marti fautori* on the reverse, in the years around 1480.¹⁵⁹ **(Fig. 14)** The quick diffusion of the *all'antica* portrait-type befitted the

¹⁵⁸ Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory," 60–61.

¹⁵⁹ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király ikonográfiája," 444. She surveyed how the king's images were gradually influenced by the Italian Renaissance style abandoning the Late Gothic style. The first testimony of this phenomenon can be considered to be the portrait of Mantegna. On the lion-type image see also Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," 39. The dating of the coin is uncertain. Manfred Leithe-Jasper does not consider the extant testimonies to be of the fifteenth century, and accepts this dating only related to the coin's prototype: Manfred Leithe-Jasper, "Matthias Corvinus und die Medaille," in *Matthias Corvinus und die Renaissance in Ungarn 1458–1541*, ed. Gyöngyi Török (Vienna: Niederösterreichisches Landesregierung, 1982), 190–194. In the same catalogue Jolán Balogh emphasised the idealising feature of the images to a greater extent than in her previous writings, but in the coin's dating agrees with the former opinion: Jolán Balogh, "Die Bildnisse des Königs Matthias," in *Matthias Corvinus und die Renaissance in Ungarn 1458–1541*, 6–16. On the coins of Matthias, see also Vera G. Héri, "Hunyadi Mátyás érmei a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum gyűjteményében" (The Medals of Matthias Hunyadi in the Collection of the Hungarian National Museum), *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények, Mátyás király halálának ötszázadik évfordulójára* 103 (1990): 100-103. Finally the article of Lívía Varga must be mentioned, who, in my point of view, misunderstands the physiognomy of the king: Lívía Varga,

general shift in the artistic style which had proceeded in the court in the 1470s. The influence of the lion's physiognomy has been demonstrated in almost every portrait of Matthias dating from the period between around 1480 and his death in 1490.¹⁶⁰ One of the most remarkable examples of this type is his profile-portrait on the leather binding of the *Erlangen-Bible* which representation itself imitates also an Antique coin.¹⁶¹ **(Fig. 15)** The same physiognomy has been traced, *inter alia*, in the illuminated pages of the following Corvinas: *Missale* of Brussels; *Philostratus* of Budapest; *Hieronymus* of Budapest and of Vienna; *Marlianus* of Volterra and the *Didymus* of New York.¹⁶² **(Figs. 16–20)** The codices belonged to the *Bibliotheca Corviniana*, they were commissioned by the king, whose profile portrait appears in these manuscripts mostly on the marginal decorations, in a medallion form (for instance in the *Hieronymus* of Vienna), or who was represented as a donator in a kneeling pose (for example in the *Didymus*-Corvina). The *all'antica*, leonine character of the images was often emphasised by the context as well; for example in the *Missale* of Brussels above Matthias' medallion Alexander the Great's profile was depicted.

It seems to be superfluous to recapitulate again the physiognomical meaning of the represented faces, presented in relation to the portraits of Alexander and the descriptions of Matthias' outward appearance. The characteristic traits of the images spoke for themselves, and the educated humanist entourage of the king, the inventors of the image, such as the Italian artists who formulated it, correctly understood its

“The Reconsideration of the Portrait Reliefs of King Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490) and Queen Beatrix of Aragon (1476-1508),” *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts* 90/91 (1999): 53-72.

¹⁶⁰ Jolán Balogh, “Mátyás király ikonográfiája,” 462–508; Árpád Mikó, “Imago Historiae,” 39.

¹⁶¹ Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. lat. 231: Jolán Balogh, “Mátyás király ikonográfiája,” 485.

¹⁶² *Missale Romanum*, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9008, fol. 8v; *Philostratus, Heroica, icones, vitae sophistarum et epistolae ab Antonio Bonfine traducta*, Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 417, fol. 1v; *Hieronymus, Commentarii in epistolas Sancti Pauli*, Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 347, fol. 1r; *Expositio evangelii secundum Matheum...*, Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Lat. 930, fol. 1r; J. F. Marlianus, *Epithalamium in nuptiis Blancae Mariae Sfortiae et Joannis Corvini*, Volterra, Biblioteca Guarnacci, Cod. Lat. 5518. IV. 49. 3. 7, fol. 4; *Didymus, De spiritu Sancto*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 496, fol.2.

message. Visual representations had another important aspect in that period: they often had a more public display than the written works. The portraits, conforming to the functional criteria of the state portrait, expressed the virtues of which a king should be in possession. The facial features and the carriage of the head likewise stood for the ruler's aptitude, expressing the ideal inward nature through physiognomy.¹⁶³ As Ernő Marosi pointed out: "A ruler needed the expression of a strongly marked character rather than to be recognisable."¹⁶⁴ But before discussing the ideas lying behind the imitation of Alexander, we have to turn back to Meller's interpretation.

Meller made a distinction between two types of the lion's physiognomy. In the face of Donatello's Gattamelata he recognised the clement, merciful aspect of the lion, while in the face of Verrocchio's Colleoni, the etymology of whose name was *caput leonis*, he saw the cruel, ferocious nature.¹⁶⁵ **(Fig. 21)** The head of Colleoni is significant for the Hungarian history of art also because it has a stylistic connection with one of the reliefs sent to Matthias by Lorenzo il Magnifico.¹⁶⁶ The Medici ruler sent to Matthias Corvinus two reliefs as a present in 1482. These reliefs, attributed to Andrea del Verrocchio as well, were meant to be clear manifestations of the Italian expectations towards Matthias as the Turk-defeater, alluding to the king's victories over the Ottoman troops. One of the reliefs represented Alexander the Great, as an allusion to Matthias, the other one Darius, referring to the enemy.¹⁶⁷ **(Fig. 22)** Even if

¹⁶³ Martin Warnke relates this gesture to Matthias' representation: Martin Warnke, *Erhobenen Hauptes*, in *Die Beredsamkeit des Leibes. Zur Körpersprache in der Kunst*, ed. Ilsebill Barta Fliedl and Cristoph Geissmar (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz, 1992), 192.

¹⁶⁴ Ernő Marosi, "Mátyás király és korának művészete," 17.

¹⁶⁵ Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory," 65ff. On the visual manifestations of the two lion-characters, see 63–64.

¹⁶⁶ Lajos Vayer, "Alexandrosz és Corvinus – A Verrocchio-oeuvre és az olasz-magyar humanizmus ikonológiája" (Alexandrosz and Corvinus – The Verrocchio-Oeuvre and the Iconology of the Hungarian-Italian Humanism), *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 24, no. 1 (1975): 25.

¹⁶⁷ The original reliefs did not survive; only their Renaissance copies and versions have come down to us. There is another pair-relief, produced probably also by Verrocchio himself, or by his workshop, showing another couple of the same interpretation; Scipio and Hannibal. Vayer's hypothesis is that each four reliefs can be attributed to Verrocchio and they were all intended to be sent to the Hungarian king, see Lajos Vayer, "Alexandrosz és Corvinus," 101.

we did not know who are precisely modelled on the reliefs, due to their physiognomy we could easily identify them. The traits of Alexander's face were more softly formulated than that of Darius, or Colleoni as well. We can observe on the two surviving copies that there are striking differences between their facial characters: Darius' facial expression is more severe and hard, his chin and nose are sharper, his eyes are more deep-seated.¹⁶⁸ Let us confront again these features with the pseudo-aristotelian definitions listing the meanings of these signs: sharp, pointed nose: inflammable, hollow-eye: harmful.¹⁶⁹

But how is this interpretation related to Matthias? Meller claimed that the cruel Colleoni (Darius)-type of the lion's physiognomy is reflected on the stone sculpture of Matthias executed in 1486 in the fortress of Ortenburg at Bautzen.¹⁷⁰ **(Fig. 23)** As he pointed out, we have to ascribe to the king an important role in the figure's formulation as well, since the preparatory studies were sent three times to Buda, although it was commissioned by Georg Stein; the king's *stadholder*.¹⁷¹

My hypothesis is that Meller's thought can be developed further, claiming that the leonine Matthias' portraits could be categorised according to the two natures of the lion, and we can make a distinction between them after a closer examination, taking into consideration the two lion's physiognomies. A thorough detailed elaboration of this problem would be beyond the scope of this thesis, but let me suggest a further interpretation. In most of the previously presented manuscripts the king does not appear with the ferocious expression, but rather with the gentle one reminiscent of the

¹⁶⁸ Vayer also pointed out the differences in their physiognomy but without mentioning any concrete physiognomical comparison.

¹⁶⁹ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 61, 63.

¹⁷⁰ Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory," 61.

¹⁷¹ Peter Meller, "Physiognomical Theory," 61, see also Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király ikonográfiája," 462–466; Ernő Marosi, "Mátyás király és korának művészete," 22: he calls the attention on the transition between the Late-Gothic and the Renaissance style in the sculpture; the ruler's face was shaped according to the *all'antica* style, but the architectural frame still in the Gothic manner of the region of the Upper-Rhine.

head of Gattamelata. It can be observed for example in the *Marlianus* of Volterra. Here the ruler's features are not so sharp and his nose is blunter, which creates a more clement impression. This portrait has an important similar trait also to the relief showing Alexander the Great as personification of the gentle lion: the position of the lips. In these two latter cases the upper lips reach over the lower ones, in contrast to Darius' face in the relief and to Matthias' profile in the Bautzen-monument, where the reversed position of the lips contributes to a completely opposite facial expression to a great extent. The position of the lips, as seen in the *Marlianus*, is mentioned in the *Physiognomonica* again as a typical sign of the leonine face.¹⁷²

I also assume that the application of the different physiognomies of the lion can be regarded as conscious and dependent on the context of the image. In the case of the Bautzen-monument the severe facial expression can be explained by the figure's placement; above the gate of a fortress the image had to express authoritativeness and power for the viewers. The group of the sharply-featured images can be enlarged; thus he appears in the work of Cortesius, where the king's wars and military glories are praised.¹⁷³ **(Fig. 24)** On the other hand, in the work of Marlianus which was composed for the engagement of the king's son, he could show his other face, as in the philosophical or theological manuscripts represented as the ideal philosopher ruler and patron of art.

Clemency was indeed part of Matthias' self-representation. In an epigram Janus Pannonius apparently compares Matthias to the clement lion:

*Tu princeps hominum, princeps leo nempe ferarum, nobilis ille iuba, pulcher
es ipse coma, unguibus ille ferox, gladio tu fortis et hasta, parcere tu victis,
parcere et ille solet.*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 60.

¹⁷³ Alexander Cortesius, *De Matthiae Corvini Ungariae Regis laudibus bellicis carmen*, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf 85. 1. 1. Aug. 2^o fol. 3r.

¹⁷⁴ Janus Pannonius, *Opera Omnia*, epigr. 444, ed. V. Kovács Sándor (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1987), 234.

The notion of clemency was represented in an emblem as well, showing the lion sparing a dog.¹⁷⁵ The emblem's inscription; *parcere subiectis* was taken from Virgil, which line must have been in Janus' mind as well.¹⁷⁶ The king's mercifulness was praised in the humanist panegyrics as well; Ludovico Carbone compared Matthias to Alexander the Great because of sparing the Turks and releasing them unharmed after defeating them at the fortress of Jajca.¹⁷⁷

The Italian Expectations and Matthias' Self-representation.

The *imitatio Alexandri* which had a long tradition during the Middle Ages, often interwoven with the lion's symbolism, was actualised according to the historical and political situation in the case of King Matthias. The Alexander metaphor existed earlier than the previously presented descriptions and portraits, since it was originally elaborated by the Italian humanists after having realised that Europe's last hope for defeating the Turks was the Hungarian king.¹⁷⁸ The comparison between the two rulers, Alexander, the conqueror of the East, and Matthias, expected leader of a crusade, became constant element in the panegyrics of the flattering humanists. This idea was behind the sending to Matthias of the reliefs by Lorenzo il Magnifico, but not only Alexander's image with the physiognomy of the lion was sent; allegedly live lions were also presented to the court in 1469 by the Florentine Signoria.¹⁷⁹ The letter reporting the event also compares the king to the lion:

¹⁷⁵ *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1996), 381.

¹⁷⁶ Virgil, *Aeneis*, VI, 853.

¹⁷⁷ Klára Pajorin, "Humanista irodalmi művek," 343.

¹⁷⁸ See more on this: Tibor Klaniczay, "A kereszteshad eszméje és a Mátyás-mítosz,"; Klára Pajorin, "Humanista irodalmi művek," Magda Jászay, "Milyen volt Mátyás király?" (What was King Matthias like?), in *Mátyás király: 1458-1490* (King Matthias: 1458-1490), ed. Gábor Barta (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1990), 156-183.

¹⁷⁹ Janus Pannonius composed his above-quoted poem on this occasion.

*Credimus te his delectari, quod inter cetera animalia nobile genus sit. Est enim in his precipua quedam animi magnitudo et vis insuperabilis. Habent igitur illi quidem cum regibus similitudinem quandam.*¹⁸⁰

The letter refers to magnanimity, mentioned by Bonfini as well (*multum referens magnanimitatis*). Besides clemency, magnanimity was another significant virtue embodied by the ruler's physiognomy. According to the sources above the throne-room's door in the royal castle the inscription also called the king magnanimous: *Magnanimum principem victoria sequitur Anno 1479.*¹⁸¹

The other principal virtue of an ideal ruler was justice, in our context a traditional feature of the lion as well. The myth of the "just Matthias" indeed had its long afterlife even in the folk-tales.¹⁸² In this paper we cannot enter into details concerning all theological and political interpretations of justice. It must be stressed, however, that besides being one of the cardinal virtues and, according to both the Antique Aristotelian and the Christian political theory, a supporting pillar of the state, it had a special content for King Matthias.¹⁸³ As has been recently demonstrated in relation to the *Didymus* Corvina, the concept of justice expressed for the king also his political intentions and any allegorical reference of the virtue, or his representation as

¹⁸⁰ Vilmos Fraknói, *Mátyás király levelei* (Budapest: Külügyi Osztály, 1893–1895), vol. I, 241–242. The letter also explains that the reason why two animals were sent was that one should symbolise the town of Florence, the other King Matthias.

¹⁸¹ Jolán Balogh, *A művészet Mátyás király udvarában*, vol. I, 66. See more on *magnanimitas* as an ideal ruler's virtue: R.-A. Gauthier, *Magnanimité. L'idéale de la Grandeur dans la Philosophie Païenne et dans la Théologie Chrétienne* (Paris: Vrin, 1951); Paul Kirn, *Das Bild des Menschen in der Geschichtschreibung von Polybios bis Ranke* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1955) 60ff.

¹⁸² Ildikó Kríza, "Supranational Hero in Central-East European Folk Tradition," in *Europäische Ethnologie und Folklore im Internationalen Kontext. Festschrift für Leander Petzoldt zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ingo Schneider (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 157–165; "Rex iustus – Rex clarus. Mátyás király és a néphagyomány" (King Matthias and the Folk-tradition), in *Hunyadi Mátyás – Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500. évfordulóján* (Studies on the Occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of King Matthias' Death) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1990), 363–410.

¹⁸³ Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 1988); Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies – A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Vittore Branca, "Diligite Iustitiam – Lettura del XVIII canto del Paradiso," *Acta Litteraria Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 8, no. 1–2 (1966): 61–77.

a just ruler served the legitimacy of his power.¹⁸⁴ Andreas Pannonius, the Carthusian monk who dedicated his *Liber de virtutibus* to King Matthias, discusses justice in one separate chapter. He refers to justice also as the queen of the virtues:

*Quapropter decet te, o rex sapientissime, hanc praeclarissimam virtutem iustitiam, quae est regina omnium virtutum, habere.*¹⁸⁵

Justice as symbol of the good governance became a dominating topic also in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian fine arts, especially in the frescoes decorating town halls.¹⁸⁶

Clemency, magnanimity and justice were those principal virtues which the imitation of Alexander the Great, *inter alia*, through the lion's physiognomy, implied. Matthias gladly accepted this image, just as he did the *Corvinus*-legend proving his Roman origin. A special interest directed him in constructing myths: his legitimist claim. The circumstances of his election, and the fact in itself that he was not descended from a royal dynasty, forced him during his entire life to justify his governing capacities. But the lion's physiognomy could be interpreted also as an imprint of his later political ambitions as well.¹⁸⁷ This thesis is not concerned about how it was executed in his real deeds, but aims at presenting physiognomy as a means of self-fashioning and as part of making of the images.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Dániel Pócs, "Holy Spirit in the Library."

¹⁸⁵ Andreas Pannonius, *Liber de virtutibus*, ed. Jenő Ábel, Vilmos Fraknói, in *Két magyarországi egyházi író a XV. századból – Andreas Pannonius, Nicolaus de Mirabilibus* (Two Clerical Authors from the Fifteenth Century) (Budapest: Irodalomtörténeti emlékek, I, 1886), 75.

¹⁸⁶ For example, the fresco cycle of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena; the *Maestà* of Simone Martini and the Sala dei Nove of Ambrogio Lorenzetti. For more on this, see Quentin Skinner, "Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986): 1–56.

¹⁸⁷ I intend to refer here to the fact that he did not entirely fulfilled the exterior expectations, but rather pursued a considerably expansive politics.

¹⁸⁸ Scholarship has laid more stress recently on the ruler's political intentions when studying the artistic phenomena of Matthias' age in contrast to the earlier views which considered the king's new marriage to be the main reason of the stylistic changes, see, *inter alia*, Ernő Marosi, "A reprezentáció kérdése a XIV–XV. századi magyar művészetben" (The Question of Representation in the Hungarian Art of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries), *Történelmi Szemle* 27 (1984): 517–538; "Mátyás király udvari művészete: stílus és politika" (The Courtly Art of King Matthias: Style and Politics) *Korunk* 9, no. 5 (1998): 4–11. On Matthias as seen in modern historical science, see the following: Péter E. Kovács,

3. Other aspects of physiognomy at the court of King Matthias

In this last part of the chapter I intend to highlight two other aspects of the physiognomical science which have not been discussed yet relating to Matthias. Surprisingly enough the science of physiognomy itself can be linked to the theories of good governance as well.

*Iuvabat praeterea regis solertiam et exercitationem astrorum cognitio et physionomiae scientia, quas a doctissimis viris largissime acceperat.*¹⁸⁹

Galeotto Marzio claimed about Matthias that he could physiognomise people, like the ancient Zopyros. For our approach, it is not so much the coverage of reality that is important, but the fact that the passage enables us to suggest one more interpretation of the science, even in Matthias' entourage, revealing possible, hitherto unknown sources of Galeotto as well. Physiognomy, as mentioned earlier, belonged in the Renaissance in the category of the occult or medical sciences.¹⁹⁰ This reference of Galeotto nevertheless presents physiognomy as part of philosophy. Let me quote several authors from the earlier centuries as representatives of this reception of physiognomy. Johannes de Janduno also placed physiognomy within philosophy, stating that it must be studied for the *regimen hominum*:

*... et est illa scientia multum conveniens ad moralem scientiam et ad vitam practicam, quia cognoscere mores hominum naturales, quod docetur ibidem, multum confert ad ordinatam conversationem cum hominibus, et ad debitum regimen ipsorum hominum, sicut sciunt experti in illis.*¹⁹¹

In this, medieval tradition the science's ethical-political function was emphasised; thus it became part of the *speculum*-literature. This same interpretation

Matthias Corvinus (Budapest: Officina Nova, 1990); András Kubinyi, *Mátyás király* (King Matthias) (Budapest: Vince kiadó, 2001); Jörg K. Hönsch, *Matthias Corvinus* (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1998).

¹⁸⁹ Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *De Egregie*, cap. 13, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Ulrich Reißer, *Physiognomik und Ausdrucksstheorie*, 52ff.

¹⁹¹ Johannes de Janduno, *Super octo libros Aristotelis de physico auditu subtilissimae quaestiones* (Venice, 1551), preface. See also Jole Agrimi, "La ricezione della *Fisiognomica*," 148–149.

can be traced in the commentary upon the *Physiognomonica* of Gulielmus dictus de Mirica dedicated to Clement VI (1342–1352).¹⁹² Michel Scot offered his *Liber physiionomiae* (after 1227) to Emperor Frederick II with these words:

*Physiionomia est doctrina salutis, electio boni et vitatio mali, comprehensio virtutis et praetermissio vitiorum.*¹⁹³

The treatise of Michael Savonarola can be placed in the same tradition. Savonarola was a court-physician in Ferrara, and dedicated the *Speculum physiionomiae* to Leonello d'Este in 1442.¹⁹⁴ This date is important in terms of Galeotto's work, because he also arrived in Ferrara a few years later to study at Guarino Veronese.¹⁹⁵ We can suppose that he read or knew Savonarola's work. Savonarola also argued that a ruler must use the science of physiognomy in order to select his employees properly:

*Cognosces proinde tui corporis ceterorumque hominum complexionem, suorum membrorum utilitatem, et quibus deputentur officii et hominum mores, eorum animi occultas inclinationes et admiranda semper nature secreta. Noscitabisque, quod tibi debetissimum erit, filiorum tuorum indolem, quasve ad artes proni erunt quibusve studiis abhorrentes esse videantur, ut alios rei militari, alios ad regnum sceptrique moderationem, ad Dei immortalis cultum alios coaptandos esse censebis.*¹⁹⁶

Although Galeotto did not dedicate such a long passage to the topic, the same usage of physiognomy is implied in his sentence as well. This interpretation supports the hypothesis that the physiognomical knowledge was known at least through Galeotto Marzio at the court of King Matthias. It also cannot be left out of the context

¹⁹² Jole Agrimi, "Fisiognomica: nature allo specchio," 142.

¹⁹³ Michel Scot, *Liber Physiionomiae*, Paris, Bibl. Nat. nouv. acq. lat. 1401. Quotes Danielle Jacquart, "La physiionomie à l'époque de Frédéric II: la traité de Michel Scot," *Micrologus* 2 (1994): 20, n.3. (The emperor must have been interested in the topic because he examined his wife's body in order to find out the sex of his child to be born; see 34–36.)

¹⁹⁴ Federici Graziella Vescovini, "L'individuale nella medicina tra Medioevo e Umanesimo: La fisiognomica di Michele Savonarola," in *Umanesimo e Medicina: Il problema dell'individuale*, ed. Roberto Cardini and Mariangela Regoliosi (Florence: Bulzoni, 1996) 63–87.

¹⁹⁵ Gabriella Miggianno, "Galeotto Marzio da Narni," 32 (1992): 55ff.

¹⁹⁶ Michele Savonarola, *Speculum physiionomiae*, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. lat. VI. 156 (2672), quotes Jole Agrimi, "Fisiognomica: nature allo specchio," 134.

that Paolo Cortesi referred to Galeotto, like Zopyros Europae in a chapter of the *De cardinalatu* entitled *De modo cognoscendi homines per physionomiam*. This work is also a *speculum*-type treatise composed for cardinals.¹⁹⁷

One of the most influential medieval *specula*; the *Secretum Secretorum* was probably preserved among the books of Matthias Corvinus in the Bibliotheca Corviniana.¹⁹⁸ The treatise was written in a form of a letter composed by Aristotle for Alexander the Great. The *Secretum Secretorum* also presents physiognomy, together with medical and astrological topics. According to the surviving manuscripts Matthias did not collect physiognomical writings. The works of Galeotto Marzio, however allow the conclusion that physiognomy was known in Buda not only as an artistic image-shaping method, but also as a practical part of an ideal ruler's erudition. Ficino even claimed, when discussing how people can affect each other with their expression of emotions, that the face of the ruler has an impact on the citizens:

*Nonne principis in urbe vultus quidem clemens et hilaris exhilarat omnes?
Ferox vero vel tristis repente perterret?*¹⁹⁹

Physiognomy's notoriety at the court of Matthias can be proved also by its relation to astrology, and *philosophia naturalis*, which is the second aspect to be pointed out at the end of the chapter. The king did not only collect philosophical, theological works, or Antique authors; astrology and "natural sciences" were at the centre of his interest as well, to the same extent. The ideal of the *uomo universale* or of the ruler who has power over nature should also be taken into consideration as elements of self-representation.²⁰⁰ Astronomy and astrology were specially popular

¹⁹⁷ Paolo Cortesi, *De cardinalatu*, II, 98.

¹⁹⁸ On the treatise see chapter I, note 22; also Csaba Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library*, 140.

¹⁹⁹ *Marsilii Ficini Opera Omnia* (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1962), vol. II, 555.

²⁰⁰ Csaba Csapodi, "Medical and Scientific Manuscripts of the Corvinian Library," *Orvostörténeti Közlemények* 109–112 (1985): 37–45; Péter Erdősi, "Reneszánsz természetfelfogás és udvari kultúra" (The Renaissance Concept of Nature and the Courtly Culture), in *Táj és történelem. Tanulmányok a*

sciences because of the strong belief in the stars' influence upon human life, a theory which was accepted by physiognomists as well. Besides Johannes Regiomontanus, who became the court astronomer of the king, the Polish Martinus Ilkus or Johannes Tolhopff also visited the court.²⁰¹ The sixteenth-century afterlife of astrological and physiognomical theories of Matthias' scientists is well documented in the Hungarian translation of Regiomontanus' calendar; in this edition of Gáspár Heltai chiromancy and physiognomy appears also among the useful instructions.²⁰²

Conclusion

In this chapter I analysed the relationship between the lion's physiognomy and the literary and visual representations of King Matthias. I also aimed at demonstrating the knowledge of physiognomy in the court of the king focusing on the figure of Galeotto Marzio. Finally, I have presented that physiognomy was known in the ruler's entourage not only as an image-shaping artistic method, but also as a topic of the *speculum-literature*.

It must be mentioned, however, that besides the lion several other symbols expressed the same royal virtues for Matthias. In addition to the raven and the king's

történeti ökológia világából (Landscape and History; Studies from the Field of Historical Ecology), ed. Ágnes R. Várkonyi (Budapest: Osiris, 2000), 209–222.

²⁰¹ Csaba Csapodi, "Mátyás király és a természettudományok" (King Matthias and the Natural Sciences), in *Évfordulóink a Műszaki és a Természettudományokban* (Our Anniversaries in Technical and Natural Sciences) (Budapest: Műszaki és Természettudományi Egyesületek Szövetsége, 1992), 57–59; Tibor Klaniczay, "Természettudomány és filológia a közép-európai humanizmusban" (Natural Science and Philology in the Central European Humanism), in *Stílus, nemzet és civilizáció* (Style, Nation and Civilisation), ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Péter Kőszeghy (Budapest: Balassi, 2001), 163–175.

²⁰² *Csízio*, ed. Gedeon Borsa (Budapest: 1986). For more on sciences at Buda, see Ladislao, Münster, "Medici e naturalisti italiani e dei loro rapporti professionali e culturali con l'Ungheria," *Corvina* 26 (1953): 105–132; Zoltán Nagy "Ricerche cosmologiche nella corte umanistica di Giovanni Vitéz," in *Rapporti Veneto-Ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1975), 65–93; László Szathmáry, "Az asztrológia, alkémia és misztika Mátyás király udvarában," in *Mátyás király emlékkönyv születésének ötszázéves évfordulójára*, 415–451: he mentions physiognomy related to the culture of Buda.

emblems²⁰³ the figure of Hercules must be also emphasised.²⁰⁴ The presentation of this other *all'antica* phenomenon and the examination of its role in the king's self-representation would be, nevertheless, beyond the scope of this thesis. I chose as the topic for my last analysis Matthias' other face; reminiscent of Attila, king of the Huns.

²⁰³ Loránd Zentai, "A Mátyás-emblémák értelmezéséhez" (On the Interpretation of the Matthias-emblems), *Építés-Építészettudomány* 6 (1974): 365–371.

²⁰⁴ Árpád Mikó "Divinus Hercules,;" Árpád Mikó, "Imago Historiae," in *Történelem – Kép*, 42–43; Péter Meller, "Mercurius és Hercules találkozása Galeotto emlékéremén," (The Meeting of Mercury and Hercules on the Medals of Galeotto) *Antik Tanulmányok* 2 (1955): 170-180; Imre Téglássy, "Hercules Hungaricus. Egy Sambucus-embléma előtörténete és utóélete" (Hercules Hungaricus. Precedents and Afterlife of a Sambucus-emblem), in *A Reneszánsz Szimbolizmus. Ikonográfia, Emblematika, Shakespeare* (The Renaissance Symbolism. Iconography, Emblematic, Shakespeare), ed. György Endre Szőnyi (Szeged: JatePress, 1998), 137–143.

CHAPTER FOUR: FAUNUS CONTRA LEONEM?

1. Introduction

The image of King Matthias, presented in the previous chapters, seems to be constructed according to the intentions of the ruler and the similar perceptions of the Italian humanists. Matthias Corvinus, nevertheless, also had another face, and the shaping of this other image raises many hitherto unsolved questions. The aim of this chapter is not to give any final solution, but rather to present the ways leading to different possible interpretations. There are three similar extant paintings representing the king with the same outward appearance from the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; all of them are preserved today in the Historical Picture Gallery (Történelmi Képcsarnok) of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest.²⁰⁵ Today scholarship considers the surviving paintings to be copies of earlier prototypes.

These three half-length portraits belong to the same type, which Jolán Balogh called the fictive group, distinguishing them from the portraits discussed above, thought to be authentic at that time.²⁰⁶ The dating and the provenance, not to mention the attribution, of the paintings are uncertain. The earliest example of the type under discussion has been identified with the piece marked by the fourteenth inventory number, which may have been painted in the sixteenth century.²⁰⁷ (Fig. 25) Balogh regarded it as the work of a German artist, while Lajos Vayer recognised the style of

²⁰⁵ Inv. 14, 16, 17. Scholarship has not paid special attention to the painting marked with no.16.

²⁰⁶ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király arcképei," 520, 524; "Mátyás király ikonográfiája," 710.

²⁰⁷ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király arcképei," 520; *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei* (The Collections of Miklós Jankovich), ed. Árpád Mikó (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2002), 77–78.

Tintoretto in the painting.²⁰⁸ Concerning the provenance, in the inventory of Miklós Jankovich, former possessor of the portrait, the Fugger family in Augsburg is indicated as the original owner.²⁰⁹

The later version of this type, marked with the seventeenth inventory number, may date from the seventeenth or from the eighteenth century.²¹⁰ (**Fig. 26**) According to the inventory of Jankovich it was painted at the end of the fifteenth century and it was preserved in the collection of the Podjebrad family in Prague.²¹¹ The style of the painting, however, indicates a later period, as Vayer pointed out, considering its style to be that of Lucas Cranach.²¹²

The most striking characteristics of these images are the beard and the short, curly brown hair, which completely differ from the type of Alexander the Great. The other main features of these three portraits are the pointed ears and nose and the small round eyes. In each case King Matthias is represented in armour, with a red cloak across his shoulders.²¹³ This pictorial tradition also influenced the iconography of the king in the following centuries, although to a lesser extent than the lion's physiognomy; *inter alia*, in the eighteenth century the same portrait-type of the king returns in the *Notitia* of Mátyás Bél.²¹⁴ (**Fig. 27**) Lajos Vayer was the first art historian who made an attempt at interpreting this rather unusual iconographic type; he recognised that in these portraits the image of the king was subsumed in that of Attila,

²⁰⁸ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király arcképei," 520; Lajos Vayer, "Faunus Ficariustól Matthias Corvinusig" (From Faunus Ficarius until Matthias Corvinus), in *Témák, formák ideák* (Themes, Forms, Ideas) (Budapest: Corvina, 1988), 122–123.

²⁰⁹ *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei*, 720.

²¹⁰ *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei*, 97–98.

²¹¹ Jolán Balogh, "Mátyás király arcképei," 524; *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei*, 720.

²¹² Lajos Vayer, "Faunus Ficariustól Matthias Corvinusig," 122.

²¹³ Lajos Vayer, "Faunus Ficariustól Matthias Corvinusig," 122–126; *Történelem – Kép*, 236–237; *Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846) gyűjteményei*, 77–78, 97–98.

²¹⁴ *Képes Könyvek. Régi nyomtatványok az Országgyűlési Könyvtár Gyűjteményéből (16th–18th Century Illustrated Books Held by the Parliament: Exhibition Catalogue)*, ed. Dániel Pócs and Szabolcs Serfőző (Budapest: Országgyűlési Könyvtár, 2002), 84–91; IV–6 with further secondary literature. As in the case of the leonine type I do not intend to discuss the afterlife of the Attila-type of images either.

the king of the Huns. According to his hypothesis, the aim of this parallel between Attila and Matthias was to identify the Hungarian king with the barbaric enemy of civilisation: thus it should be considered as the visual manifestation of anti-Matthias propaganda, the most notable representative of which was the Italian humanist Callimachus Experiens.²¹⁵ Before the examination of this hypothesis, however, first of all the tradition of Attila's image, both textual and pictorial, must be discussed here.

2. Attila in Image and Text

Attila, the King of the Huns, in Late Antique and Medieval Western Historiography

From Late Antiquity onwards the Huns were regarded as the descendants of demons and witches.²¹⁶ This legendary imagination can be explained with the fact that this new conqueror and his devastating hordes belonged to a race completely different from, and unknown to, the Romans. Therefore their threatening appearance was immediately connected with the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible,²¹⁷ just as a few centuries later that of the first Hungarian settlers was to be. Those *topoi*, which were applied in connection with every foreign, hostile ethnic group, constituted important elements also of the accounts regarding the Huns. According to these beliefs they ate flesh of infants and drank the blood of women.²¹⁸ Their negative perception was emphasised with the description of their outward appearance as well. Ammianus Marcellinus depicted them as follows:

Hunorum gens monumentis veteribus leviter nota ultra paludes Maeoticas glaciale Oceanum accolens omnem modum feritatis excedit. Ubi quoniam ab ipsis nascendi primitiis infantum ferro sulcantur altius genae, ut pilorum vigor tempestivus emergens corrugatis cicatricibus hebetur, senescunt imberbes

²¹⁵ Vayer, "Faunus,"

²¹⁶ Vayer, "Faunus," 123; Árpád Mikó, "Divinus Hercules," 152.

²¹⁷ Denis Sinor, "The Historical Attila," in *Attila. The Man and his Image*, ed. Franz H. Bäuml and Marianna D. Birnbaum (Budapest: Corvina, 1993), 3.

²¹⁸ Sinor, "The Historical Attila," 4; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum libri*, ed. W. Seyfarth (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978), 31, 2.

*absque ulla venustate, spadonibus similes, compactis omnes firmisque membris et opimis cervicibus, prodigiose deformes et pandi, ut bipedes existimes bestias...*²¹⁹

Attila, the king of the Huns was represented differently in the medieval sources, each of them emphasising his different features. On one hand, he was considered to be a monstrosity, who destroyed towns and was responsible for the massacre of the virgins in Cologne.²²⁰ On the other, he symbolised the protection of Christianity, since he ceased from attacking Rome, at the request of Pope Leo I.²²¹ The image of Attila was so Janus-faced that his destructions incorporated revival as well: the town of Venice, for example, was established by the fugitives of Aquileia, sacked by him. Moreover in the German *Nibelungenlied* and also in the Scandinavian saga-literature he appears as the hero of justice.²²² In the Italian sources, however, his physical descriptions seem to reflect rather his barbarous features. That is what we can observe also in the *Vita Attilae*, written by Juvencus Coelius Calanus Dalmata:²²³

Erat autem Attila rex... superbus incessu, huc et illum circumferens oculos, ita in omnibus suis arrogans, ut eius iactantiae superbia ex corporis gestibuscumque, etiam incognitis, facillime cognosceretur... Corpore fuit brevis, statura tamen prope iusta, lato pectore, capite grandi, oculis minutis, longisque acutisque auribus, hirsutis et hispidis crinibus, ut fere ab omnibus

²¹⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 31, 2, 3. See also Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. Th. Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882) 185. Jordanes used as his source the works, lost since that time, of Priscus, who visited Attila on the occasion of a legation.

²²⁰ According to the legend of Saint Ursula, see György Rózsa, “Pictorial Types of the Attila Iconography,” in *Attila. The Man and his Image*, 35. On the patterns of illustrating Attila as an evil ruler, see Gábor Klaniczay, “Representations of the Evil Ruler in the Middle Ages,” in *European Monarchy. Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992), 71–79.

²²¹ Ferruccio Bertini, “La leggenda di Attila: Fonti ungheresi e italiane a confronto,” in *L’eredità classica in Italia e Ungheria fra tardo Medioevo e primo Rinascimento*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Amedeo di Francesco (Rome: il Calamo, 2001), 261–262.

²²² Sándor Eckhardt, “Attila a mondában” (Attila in Legend), in *Attila és hunjai* (Attila and his Huns), ed. Gyula Németh (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1986, facsimile reprint), 143–216.

²²³ He was identified by several scholars with the bishop of Pécs and chancellor of Andrew II. Some scholars attribute the work to him; some of them claim that it is a fifteenth-century fake, cf. Bertini, “La leggenda” 263–264; Marianna D. Birnbaum, “Attila’s Renaissance in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *Attila. The Man and his Image*, 90; Magda Jászay, “Callimaco Esperiente e il parallelo Mattia Corvino – Attila,” in *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, ed. Tibor Klaniczay and József Jankovics (Budapest: Balassi, 1994), 158. The quoted studies, however, seem not to take into consideration the results of János Horváth, who has demonstrated that the work must have been composed in the fifteenth century, and that its author must have been an Italian humanist: János Horváth ifj., *Calanus püspök és a Vita Attilae* (Bishop Calanus and the *Vita Attilae*) (Budapest: Pécsi Egyetemi Könyvkiadó, 1941).

*caninae dicerentur: rara barba sed more suo demissa, canis quidem adpersus, simius naso, colore subrufus, moribus ferus, audacia pronus, vere originis suae barbarae signa vel lineamenta demonstrans, ore parvo, latis tamen labiis, uno dentium qui foris eminebat plus iusto faciem dehonestante quantillum.*²²⁴

The author's intention with the selection of the description's elements in this quotation must have been the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as that which we saw in the previous chapter, concerning King Matthias' representations by Bonfini and Galeotto Marzio: namely, to support the presented inner personality by the means of an appropriate outward appearance. As Calanus himself expresses, even for strangers, his arrogance was easily recognisable from his bodily gestures. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to analyse this rich depiction in the light of the physiognomic literature, but I intend to apply such an examination later, dealing with a source which has been related to King Matthias himself. Nevertheless, one part of the quoted passage must be highlighted: his dog-like physiognomy. This aspect of his image obtains a more important role in the *La Guerra di Attila*, composed by the Italian Nicolò da Càsola in the fourteenth century, where the dog-headed Attila appears.²²⁵ For our approach this element of the tradition is important because of Attila's iconography.

Attila in the Visual Arts

In medieval iconography the devil was often hidden in the image of the dog.²²⁶ There are also certain passages in the Bible and in the apocryphal writings which refer to the interpretation of this animal as evil.²²⁷ But the dog is only one link to the identification of Attila with the devil. The devil was more often represented in the image of the faun,

²²⁴ Mátyás Bél, ed. *Adparatus ad historiam Hungariae Decas* (Bratislava: Royer, 1735), vol. 1, 115–119.

²²⁵ Thomas E. Vesce, "La guerra di Attila: Maker of Heroes in the Quattrocento," in *Attila. The Man and his Image*, 75–81.

²²⁶ Moshe Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gestures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 163; P. Gerlach, "Hund," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. E. Kirschbaum (Rome: Herder, 1994), II, 334–336.

who embodied lasciviousness and ignoble instincts from Antiquity onwards.²²⁸ Since the Huns were thought to be the descendants of demons and witches, they were also depicted as fauns, and this became the iconography of Attila as well.²²⁹

This visual image of the Hun king was shaped in harmony with the written sources. The small eyes, pointed ears, thick unruly hair and thin beard can be demonstrated as the main features of his portraits, and these will also characterise the images of King Matthias, to be discussed in this chapter. This iconography of Attila developed in the north Italian medals in the second half of the fifteenth century. **(Fig. 28)** Thus he appears in a marble relief in the Certosa of Pavia and in the *Elogia* of Paolo Giovio, where Matthias Corvinus is depicted as well.²³⁰ **(Fig. 29)** The only element not mentioned in the sources is the pair of horns, which he received due to his faun physiognomy.²³¹

The aim in giving a survey about the tradition of Attila's textual and visual portrayal was to demonstrate that in his Italian perception it was chiefly the negative associations that were emphasised. Italy is relevant for our point of view because for King Matthias and for his entourage the Italian humanist culture was considered to be the model to be imitated. But in the evaluation of Attila the Buda court did not follow the Italian example at all.

3. Attila in the Hungarian Chronicles

²²⁷ *Inter alia*, The Acts of Andrew, 6: "He thanked God and commanded the demons to appear: they came in the form of dogs."

²²⁸ Luther Link, *IL diavolo nell'arte. Una maschera senza volto* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995); B. Brenk, "Teufel," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. E. Kirschbaum (Rome: Herder, 1994), IV, 295–300.

²²⁹ Vayer "Faunus," 123; Mikó "Divinus Hercules," 152.

²³⁰ *Történelem – Kép*, III–3, III–8.

²³¹ On the horns interpreted as dishonorable attributes, see Ruth Melinkoff, "Ambiguity of the Meaning of Horns: Horns of Dishonor As Well As Horns of Honor," in *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 121–137.

For the understanding of this attitude we have to bear in mind the traditionally Hunnophile behaviour of the Hungarians. The representation of the distant and foreign people was combined always with the concept of the marvellous and of the other. After the appearance of the Hungarians, coming also from the east, the Western sources applied in their descriptions patterns already existing at that time and constructed previously in the relationship with the Huns and Scythians. And the Hungarians accepted this absolutely unflattering parallel with pleasure, because their purpose was precisely that of terror.²³² Since their invasion was no less terrifying than that of the Huns, also the Hungarians were soon identified with the sons of Gog and Magog.²³³

The Hun-Hungarian relationship, proposed by the medieval historiographers, led to the elaboration of the theory of Hun-Hungarian kinship in the Hungarian historical writings.²³⁴ Therefore also Attila gained a much more positive image in this context. Already in the *Gesta Hungarorum*, composed around 1210, he is considered to be the descendant of Magog, and his progeny is Álmos, father of Árpád, the leader of the first settlers. The author had a conscious programme in mind when referring to this relationship; his intention was to prove the legitimacy of the Árpád dynasty.²³⁵ The next writer who actually elaborated the theory of the kinship, in the 1280s, was

²³² Ernő Marosi, “A magyar történelem képei. A történetiség szemléltetése a művészetekben” (The Images of the Hungarian History. Visualisation of the Historicity in the Arts), in *Történelem – Kép*, 21–24. The first historiographer who identified the Hungarians with the Huns was Liutprand di Cremona, cf. Bertini “La legenda,” 278.

²³³ Pál Ács, “Apocalypsis cum figuris. A régi magyar irodalom történelemképe” (*Apocalypsis cum figuris*. The Historical Imagination in the Old Hungarian Literature), in *Történelem – Kép*, 48–62; see also the Book of Ezekiel, 38, 18.

²³⁴ Gyula Kristó, “Volt-e a magyaroknak ősi hun hagyományuk?” (Did the Hungarians Have an Ancient Hun Tradition?), in *Tanulmányok az Árpád-korról* (Studies on the Arpadian Age) (Budapest: Magvető, 1983), 313–329; for further literature, see *Korai Magyar Történeti Lexikon* (Lexicon of the Early History of Hungary), ed. Gyula Kristó (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1994), 274–275.

²³⁵ Birnbaum, “Attila’s Renaissance,” 82.

Simon Kézai, also not free from political motivations. In his work Attila lives like an Asian ruler in pomp and luxury.²³⁶

The first medieval Hungarian historical source, whence also pictures of Attila have come down to us, is the *Illuminated Chronicle*. Here Attila appears as the ancestor and model of Louis the Great, which is reflected also in the illustrations. He plays an honoured role in the entire chronicle and he is often depicted with a crown and other insignia befitting a king.²³⁷ This same tradition was followed by János Thuróczy in his *Chronicle*, composed in the entourage of King Matthias.²³⁸

4. King Matthias as *Attila Secundus*

In the *Thuróczy Chronicle* there is no trace of Attila's horns at all; moreover, sitting on a throne he holds in his hand a flag bearing the *turul*, the mythical bird of the ancient Hungarians, on it.²³⁹ **(Fig. 30)** The work of Thuróczy begins with the history of the Huns and finishes with Matthias' accession to the throne, and this is the first source where the king is *expressis verbis* called *Attila secundus: Victoriosum quidem hunc hominem ut secundum Attylam reddidere fata*.²⁴⁰ The king, besides the Alexander-metaphor, liked this identity as well, since for him Attila may have

²³⁶ Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 82; János Horváth, "A hun-történet és szerzője" (The Hun-story and its Author), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 67, no.4 (1963): 446–476; Jenő Szűcs, "Társadalomelmélet, politikai teória és történetiszemlélet Kézai Simon *Gesta Hungarorum*ában" (Sociology, Political Theory and Concept of History in the *Gesta Hungarorum* of Simon Kézai), *Századok* 107, no.3 (1973): 569–643; 107, no.4 (1973): 823–878.

²³⁷ Reference to the Hun king must have been not accidental also on the part of an Anjou king, see Tünde Wehli, "Magyarország történelme a középkori krónikaillusztrációk tükrében" (The History of Hungary in the Light of the Medieval Chronicle-Illustrations), in *Történelem – Kép*, 300; see also *Képes Krónika* (The Illuminated Chronicle), ed. Dezső Dercsényi and Klára Gárdonyiné Csapodi (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1964), 52.

²³⁸ Elemér Mályusz, *A Thuróczy-krónika és forrásai* (The Thuróczy-Chronicle and its Sources) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1967).

²³⁹ *Történelem – Kép* IV–4; Thuróczy János, *A magyarok krónikája* (The Chronicle of the Hungarians) (Budapest: Helikon, 1986, facsimile reprint of the 1488 edition of Augsburg); Rózsa, "Pictorial Types," 29.

²⁴⁰ Mikó, "Divinus Hercules," 152.

embodied his other political intentions, first of all his anti-imperial politics.²⁴¹ It also contributes to the positive role of Attila in the *Chronicle* that his image is transformed from disastrous irruption *simpliciter* to the *flagellum Dei* as means of God's punishment.²⁴²

After having presented the Italian type of Attila's descriptions, it is worthwhile to examine how Thuróczy portrayed his hero:

... corpore strenuus, animo fortis pariter et audax, in voluntate quidem magnanimus et in preliis astutissimus, persona egregius, pectore et humeris latus, colore teter sive fuscus, intuitu austerus, barbam quidem longam deferebat, venerus quoque admodum fuisse traditur.²⁴³

The difference is striking between the two images, since this latter is more similar to the Alexandrian-type panegyrics, especially because of the mention of magnanimity.

But the *Thuróczy Chronicle* is not the only testimony for the cult of Attila in the age of King Matthias. As Bonfini writes in the introduction of his work, Matthias originally commissioned the *History of the Huns* from him,²⁴⁴ and also Petrus Ransanus devoted an important role to Attila in his *Epitome Rerum Hungaricarum*.²⁴⁵ Even Janus Pannonius, who had the impression, after having returned from Italy, that he was living in the barbarous Pannonia, called the Hungarians Huns.²⁴⁶ The history and origins of the Hungarians, and therefore that of the Huns and their runic script, were often discussed in the chancellery of Matthias Corvinus.²⁴⁷

We can conclude that, besides Alexander the Great, another hero was Attila, who played an important role in the self-representation of King Matthias. Attila could

²⁴¹ Mikó, "Divinus Hercules," 152; Kardos, "A magyarországi humanizmus," 176.

²⁴² Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 83; For the interpretation of Matthias as *flagellum dei*, see Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Matthias the 'Flagellum dei' of the Renaissance," in *The Orb and the Pen. Janus Pannonius, Matthias Corvinus, and the Buda Court* (Budapest: Balassi, 1996), 121–129.

²⁴³ Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, ed. Erzsébet Galántai and Gyula Kristó (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1985), 38.

²⁴⁴ Bonfini, *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades*, I, 2.

²⁴⁵ Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 84.

²⁴⁶ Iani Pannonii *Poemata*, ed. Samuel Teleki (Budapest: Balassi, 2002, facsimile reprint), vol. 1, 337.

have symbolised for the king a ruler who was independent from both the emperor and the pope. His identification with Attila may have had another important aspect as well: it did not entirely contradict the Alexander the Great-Matthias parallel. The Hun king was also considered to be the guardian of Christianity, because he spared Rome from destruction, and the humanists in Matthias' entourage were aware of this fact.²⁴⁸ But how should we interpret then the paintings, presented in the introduction of the chapter, since they seem to follow the anti-Attila tradition?

5. The Attila of Callimachus Experiens

Lajos Vayer interpreted this so-called “bearded type” portraits of King Matthias as visual testimonies of the anti-Matthias propaganda, developed mainly in the Polish and Bohemian courts. He also claimed that these images reflect the negative Attila-Matthias parallel, the most important literary source of which is the *Attila* of Callimachus Experiens.²⁴⁹ Callimachus gained his humanist name due to his adventurous (*experiens*) life; he was baptised Filippo Buonaccorsi. After having become involved in the conspiracy against Pope Paul II, he escaped and travelled in Greece and Egypt, finally arriving in Poland in 1470.²⁵⁰ Here he faced a very strong hostile atmosphere towards King Matthias. The Polish-Hungarian conflict was rooted in the events of the recent past: first of all because Prince Casimir, son of the king, Casimir IV, was invited by the conspirators against Matthias to subvert the king's power. The other main reason was that Elisabeth, who was the daughter of Albert the

²⁴⁷ Kardos, “A magyarországi humanizmus,” 175–177; see also Marianna D Birnbaum, “Matthias Corvinus in Humanist and Popular Perspective,” in *The Orb and the Pen*, 130–142.

²⁴⁸ Vayer, “Faunus,” 124: Vayer mentions László Vetési. Versenyi László; envoy of the king also mentions Matthias as second Attila to the pope in Rome, in 1475, see Ernő Marosi, “Mátyás király és korának művészete,” 31.

²⁴⁹ Vayer, “Faunus,” 125–126.

²⁵⁰ Birnbaum, “Attila's Renaissance,” 84; Klára Pajorin, “Humanista irodalmi művek,” 340–341.

Habsburg, therefore vindicating the right of the Hungarian throne for herself, lived also in Krakow.²⁵¹

Callimachus became a courtier in Krakow and tutor of Casimir IV's sons, then the secretary and finally royal chancellor of the king.²⁵² During his diplomatic missions he began to organise an alliance against Matthias, for which his main argument was that the king's politics were too expansionist and therefore dangerous for Europe.²⁵³ His biography about Attila was edited in 1488–1489 and it is considered by most scholars to be an anti-Matthias pamphlet, since it contains many allusions to the Hungarian king.²⁵⁴ Callimachus criticised King Matthias not only in this work, but also in his *Pro Regina Beatrice ad Mathiam Hungariae*, where he attacks the king for expanding towards the west, instead of defending Europe from the Turks.²⁵⁵ Lajos Vayer stated that the bearded images of King Matthias should be interpreted in this context. His main argument for this interpretation was that in the three paintings the king was represented with the faun's physiognomy, which, as we could see above, symbolised the enemy, contrary to the Hungarian pictorial tradition.²⁵⁶

6. Arguments and Counter-Arguments

There is another part of the biography worth examining which can indeed support the interpretation of the work as a parody of Matthias, and this is the physical description of Attila, which well fits into the traditional representations of the Hun king:

²⁵¹ Jászay, "Callimaco Esperiente," 152.

²⁵² Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 84–85.

²⁵³ Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 84–85; Jászay, "Callimaco Esperiente," 153–158.

²⁵⁴ Tibor Kardos, *Callimachus. Tanulmány Mátyás király államrezonjáról* (Callimachus. A Study about King Matthias' Power) (Pécs: Dunántúl Pécsi Egyetemi Könyvkiadó, 1931); László Szörényi, "Callimaco Esperiente e la corte di Re Mattia," in *Callimaco Esperiente, poeta e politico del 1400*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1987), 105–118.

²⁵⁵ Birnbaum, "Attila's Renaissance," 86.

²⁵⁶ Vayer, "Faunus," 125.

*Statura corporis fuit intra mediocrem pectore ac toris supra staturam sese in robur efferentibus. Capite autem maiusculo aut erat aut apparebat ex oculorum orbibus ad sarmatarum speciem parvis. Barba illi rara admodum et iam tum raris aspersa canis: at color, qui eius agreste originis genus indicaret. Sermo horridus ac minax et pronuntiationem propter barbarum auribus gravis. Incessus quoque adeo gestuosus et compositus, ut vel exinde superbissimi animi contraxerit infamiam.*²⁵⁷

Besides the fact that the quoted passage follows the Late Antique patterns, the meaning of which is already clear for us, its analysis in the light of physiognomy, which has not been analysed yet in the scholarship, may also contribute to its better understanding. The author's intention was to make a negative impression on the reader by means of the description of the outward appearance. This can be supported by the physiognomic meanings of the various outward signs which indicate certain ignoble characters according to Pseudo-Aristotle:

- *statura... intra mediocrem... capite autem maiusculo*: he was rather small, but his head was a little big, so he had a misproportioned stature, which characterises the insidious panther, the opposite of the lion in all aspects.²⁵⁸
- *ex oculorum orbibus... parvis*: he had small eyes, which is the sign of timid personalities.²⁵⁹
- *barba illi rara admodum*: with this kind of beard were represented in Antiquity the peasants and fishermen, contemptible people.²⁶⁰

Vayer correctly recognised that these images of King Matthias were created according to Attila's faun physiognomy.²⁶¹ The beard itself is absolutely at odds with the physiognomy of the lion, and therefore with the portraits of Alexander the

²⁵⁷ Callimachus Experiens, *Attila*, ed. Tiberius Kardos (Leipzig: Teubner, 1932), 6.

²⁵⁸ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 42.

²⁵⁹ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 26; 63.

²⁶⁰ H. P. Laubscher, *Fischer und Landleute* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1982).

²⁶¹ Although he incorrectly states that the "barba rara" was Callimachus' invention in the description, because it had been part of Attila's portrayal from Late Antiquity onwards: see quotation from J. C. Calanus Dalmata above.

Great.²⁶² If we examine also the elements of these portraits, not mentioned by Callimachus, the result will be similar, as in the case of the written evidence:

- curly hair: according to Pseudo-Aristotle this is the indicator of the timid Ethiopians.²⁶³
- big pointed ears: this is donkey-like.²⁶⁴

In the previous chapters the physiognomic analysis of both the textual descriptions and the visual portrayal related to King Matthias outlined the same magnanimous, lion-type character for us. Concerning his other face, which has also traces both in the literature and in the iconography, the physiognomy connects together again the sources to be interpreted. The only, yet not negligible, difference is that in the latter case the intentions of the commission are much less clear.

Vayer based his interpretation on the portraits' provenance. According to tradition one of the paintings belonged to the collection of George Podjebrad, who was the first father-in-law and later enemy of King Matthias.²⁶⁵ The other one probably came from the Fugger family's collection down to us.²⁶⁶ In such an anti-Matthias entourage the representation of Matthias as Attila-faun seems to be indeed plausible. There is however one aspect of this question that still must be explored: in what circumstances should we imagine the display of the enemy? It also cannot be left unmentioned that these are all alleged provenances and their authenticity has not yet been proved. There are two other facts that might modify Vayer's interpretation: in each painting Matthias is depicted in imperial costume and in one of them with a

²⁶² The bearded Matthias portrait appears at the first time in the *Pronosticatio* of Johannes Lichtenberg in 1488, but it was not intended to represent this negative image, cf. Soltész Zoltánné, "Johannes Lichtenberg Pronosticatiojának Mátyás királyra vonatkozó jóslatai és illusztrációi" (The Prophecies and Illustrations, Regarding King Matthias, of the *Pronosticatio* of Johannes Lichtenberg), *Magyar Könyvszemle* 92 (1976): 25–41.

²⁶³ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 69.

²⁶⁴ Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiogn.*, cap. 66.

²⁶⁵ See note 206 and *Történelem – Kép*, III–5.

²⁶⁶ See note 204.

laurel wreath on his head, imitating Antique emperor portraits,²⁶⁷ and a laudatory inscription is also depicted in one version.²⁶⁸ The scholarship seems to have accepted the hypothesis of Vayer. The interpretation, however, might be more complex.

The image of Attila and that of Matthias Corvinus was double-faced, and so was the activity of a Renaissance courtier. That same Callimachus who criticised the Hungarian king in his works and tried to form an alliance against him also took Matthias as his model for the ideal ruler in his *Consilia*.²⁶⁹ Therefore it must be concluded that just like the intentions, seemingly contradicting each other, the perceptions of one personality also have two sides. And the two sides of the medal formulate an entire image and they cannot be separated from each other. Thus, the Matthias-Attila-faun identification also may not incorporate only negative content.

In support of this idea the article of József Fóti must be mentioned; he compared the meeting of Attila with Pope Leo I. to an episode recounted in the novel of Alexander the Great.²⁷⁰ In the medieval sources from Paulus Diaconus onwards Attila withdraws his army from the town of Rome because a heavenly figure appears to him behind the pope, threatening him.²⁷¹ Fóti claims that the prototype of this event can be read in the novel of Alexander the Great, where the Macedonian ruler changed his mind before attacking Jerusalem because of a similar heavenly vision.²⁷² Therefore, both of them became protectors of (Judaeo-)Christianity. For our point of

²⁶⁷ *Történelem – Kép*, III–5.

²⁶⁸ Vayer, “Faunus,” ill. 107. There is also another possibility: that the inscription appeared only in the later version.

²⁶⁹ Birnbaum, “Attila’s Renaissance,” 86; here must be mentioned the fact that Magda Jászay does not accept the interpretation of the *Attila* as a parody of King Matthias; see Jászay “Callimaco Esperiente,” 159–164. But this seems to contradict the fact that it was dedicated to Maximilian, the son of the emperor, Frederick III, also not kindly disposed towards Matthias.

²⁷⁰ Lajos József Fóti, “A római Attila-legenda” (The Roman Legend of Attila), *Akadémiai Értesítő* 21 (1910): 49–64.

²⁷¹ In the Vatican, in the Stanza d’Heliodoro it appears in the image of the Apostles Paul and Peter, in the fresco of Raphael.

²⁷² See also I. Borzsák, *A Nagy Sándor-hagyomány*, 14. He mentions also Josephus Flavius among the sources of Paulus Diaconus.

view this argument is relevant, because it proves that the Attila-Matthias parallel does not exclude a parallel with Alexander the Great at all. Moreover the lion, the symbol of both the Macedonian and the Hungarian ruler, was represented even on the reverse of some Attila medals.²⁷³ Even a faun can be generous, as the lion is also cruel sometimes.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present the Attila-type of Matthias' representations. For lack of evidence and authentic sources I did not intend to provide any final interpretation. My main intention was to point out that Vayer's seemingly plausible interpretation is based on uncertain sources. The other purpose of the chapter was to highlight the fact that even if we are fortunate enough to make an analysis in the light of reliable sources, the final picture remains always complex. The representations of Matthias incorporated both the good and the evil figure of Attila, just as the lion's image was also double-faced, and his political intentions influenced to a great extent which aspect became more dominant in a certain situation. According to his ambitions he could show either his cruel Attila face or his gentle lion side, and the same ambiguities must be taken into consideration when decoding the reception of the images.

²⁷³ Louis Huszár, *Attila dans la numismatique* (Budapest: Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat, 1947).

CONCLUSION

The physiognomical analysis of King Matthias' portraits, which hitherto has not been elaborated in detail, has supported the hypothesis that the ruler's representations were indeed constructed according to certain ideals by applying patterns inherited from Antiquity onwards. It can also be stated that in the shaping of Matthias' physiognomy the ruler had an even more important role than the Italian Humanists. The Antique theories of physiognomy contributes to a more exact interpretation of his images, and the physiognomical comparison has resulted in a more nuanced picture about his iconography, even in the case of the Attila-faun-type portraits, where we cannot study such clear-cut intentions. Due to the research, we can plausibly place the leonine images of King Matthias among the Renaissance state-portraits, after having taken into consideration the king's political intentions as well.

The overview of the various manifestations of the lion's symbolism, focusing on the presentation of the lion's physiognomy from Alexander the Great through Christ until King Matthias can also be considered an innovation in the research. This topic too has not hitherto been discussed in relation to the king. The survey could present the images of the ruler, highlighting always the earlier Hungarian precedents, in a complex and broad cultural historical context.

The analysis has also proved by philological evidence that physiognomy could indeed have influenced the descriptions and portraits of the king. The examination of the sources has resulted that the role of Galeotto Marzio must have been crucial in mediating the physiognomical theories towards the Buda court. I have also demonstrated that in his work physiognomy appears as an element of the theories related to the good governance.

The research, however, cannot be regarded as having been completed. In the case of the leonine portraits, the physiognomical knowledge of the artists should also be examined. Considering the Attila-type images, the circumstances of the provenance should be revealed more exactly. The examination of the discussed representations' impact and afterlife in the following centuries would merit another study, especially in the instance of the Attila-Matthias image, since, being later copies, the reception by the posterity must have influenced their final articulation. But these problems are all beyond the scope of this thesis.

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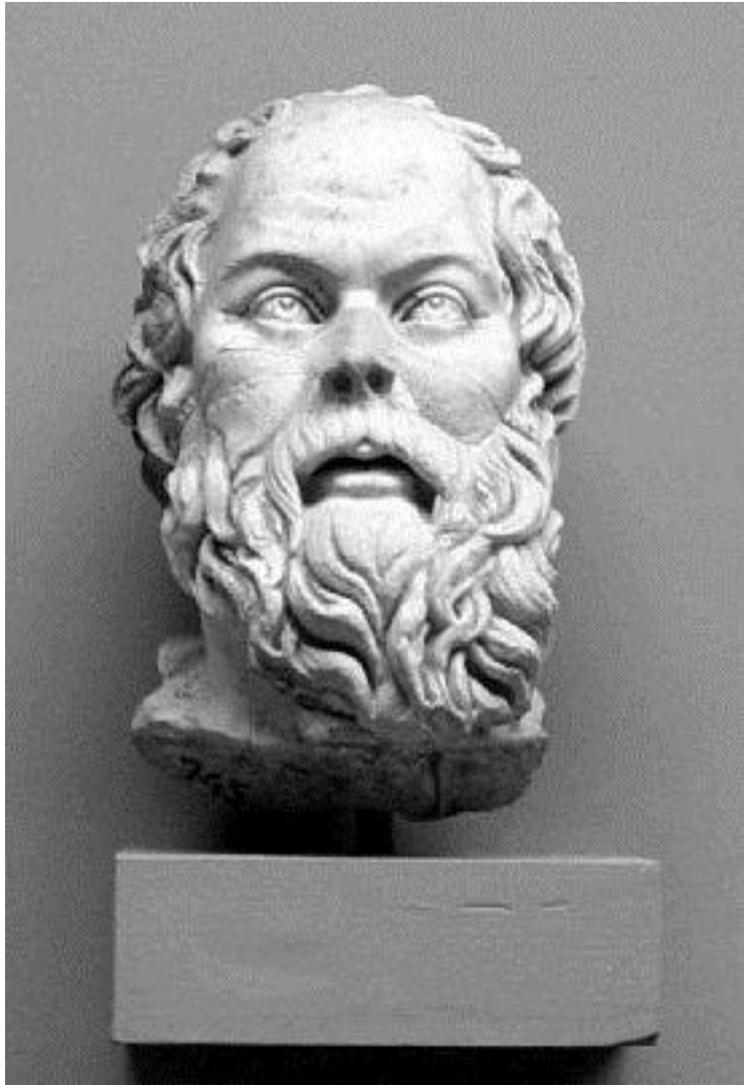


Figure 1. Socrates, ca. AD 100-300, Naples, Museo Archeologico, Inv. Nr. 6129.

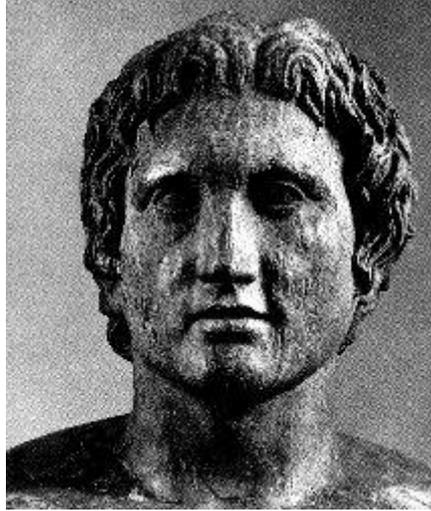


Figure 2. Alexander the Great (known as the Azara Herm), Roman copy of a Greek original probably by Lysippos, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inv. Nr. MA 436.



Figure 3. Left: Coin with the face of Christ (obverse) from the reign of Justinian II, 685–695, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks.
Right: Coin with the face of Christ (obverse) from the reign of Justinian II, 705, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks.



Figure 4. King David with King Matthias in the background, frontispiece in the first Book of Psalms, Florence, second half of the fifteenth century, Monte di Giovanni del Fora, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 15.17, f 2v.

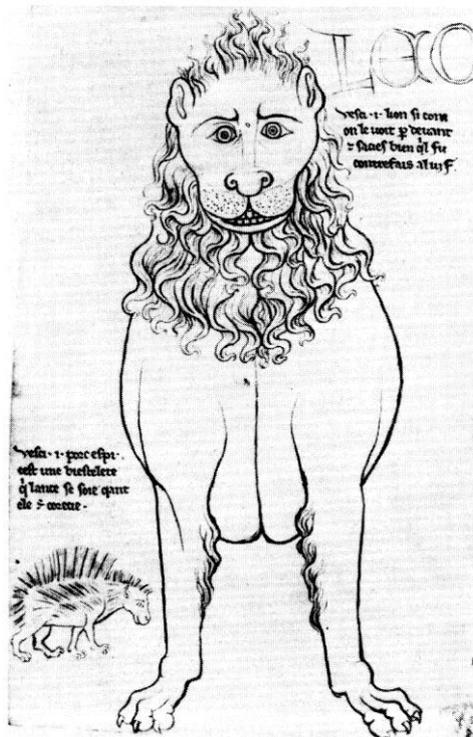


Figure 5. Villard de Honnecourt, Lion, in Villard de Honnecourt's sketch-book, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 19093, f. 24.



Figure 6. Pisanello, medal of Lionello d'Este (reverse), Love in the form of a winged cupid teaching a lion to sing, 1444, lead, cast, Washington, The National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, Inv. Nr. 1957.14.602.



Figure 7. Keystone with the face of Saint Ladislav, fifteenth century, Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg) Town hall, vault of the chapel.



Figure 8. Márton and György Kolozsvári, Saint George slaying the Dragon, bronze, 1373, Prague, National Gallery.

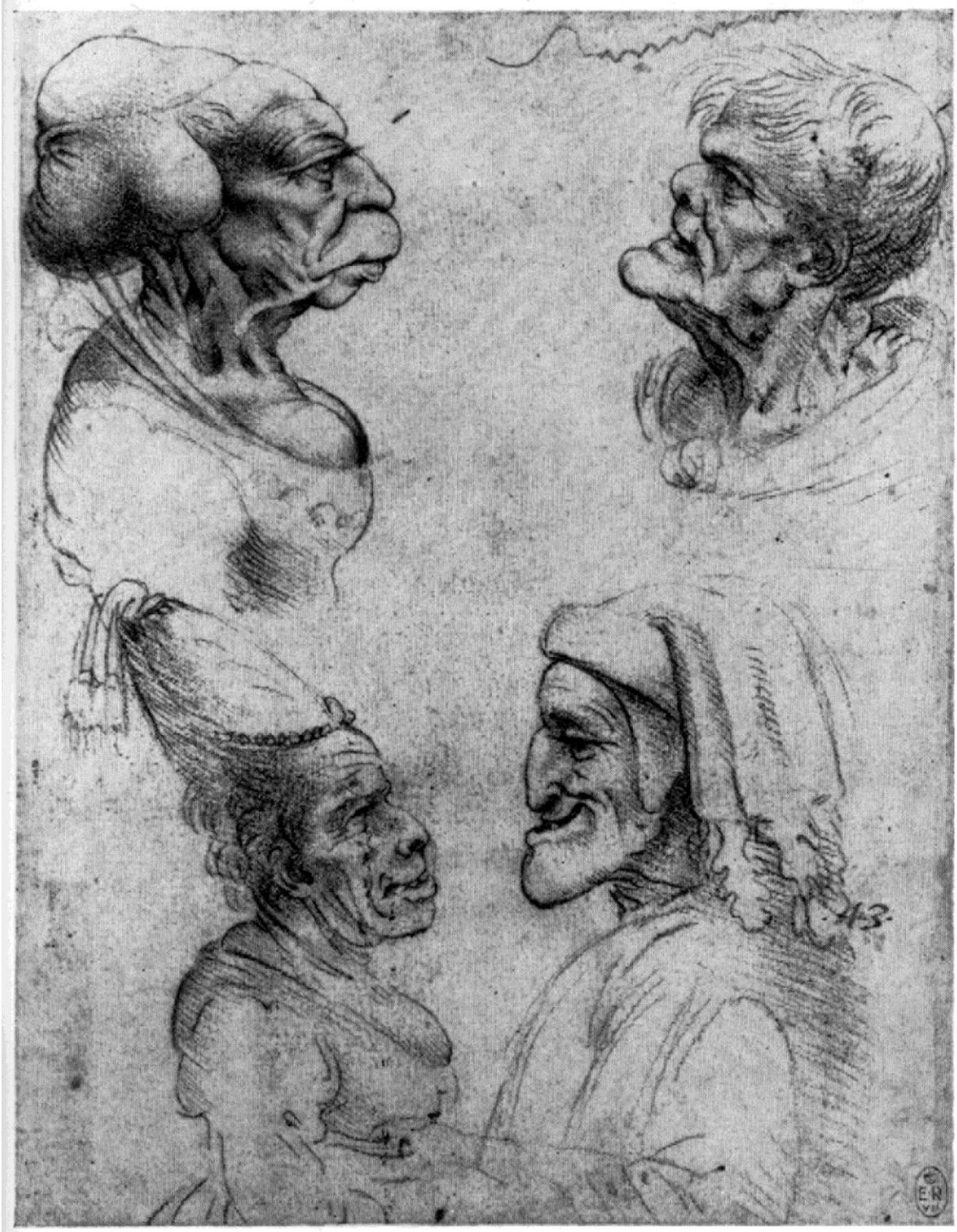


Figure 9. Francesco Melzi (?), Four Heads, copies after Leonardo, Windsor, Royal Library, 12493.



Figure 10. Giovanni Battista Della Porta, Portrait of Angelo Poliziano with a rhinoceros after Dürer, woodcut, in *Della Fisionomia Dell’Huomo Libri Quattro*, Naples: Tarquinio Longo, 1598.



Figure 11. Piero della Francesca, Federigo da Montefeltro, tempera on wood, 47×33, 1472, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

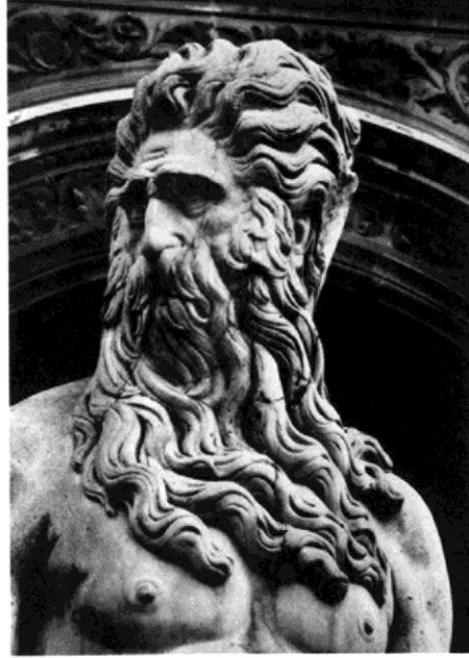
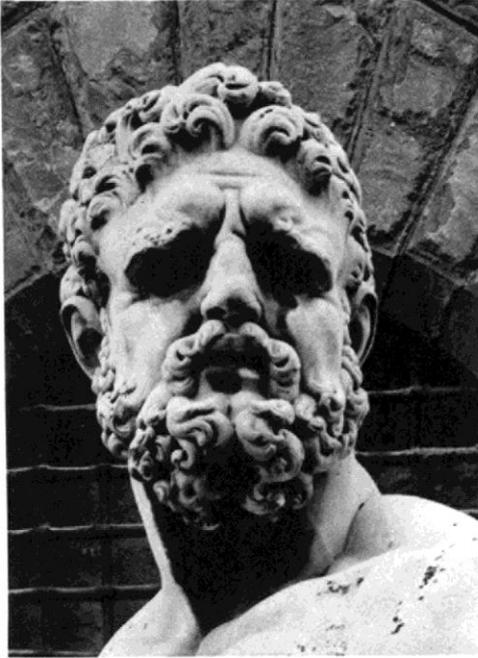


Figure 12. Top left: Baccio Bandinelli, Hercules and Cacus (detail), 1527-34, Florence, Piazza della Signoria, marble.

Top right: Jacopo Sansovino, Neptune (detail), 1554-66, Venice, Palazzo Ducale, Scala dei Giganti, marble.

Bottom: Benvenuto Cellini, Bust of Cosimo I de' Medici, after 1548, Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, bronze.

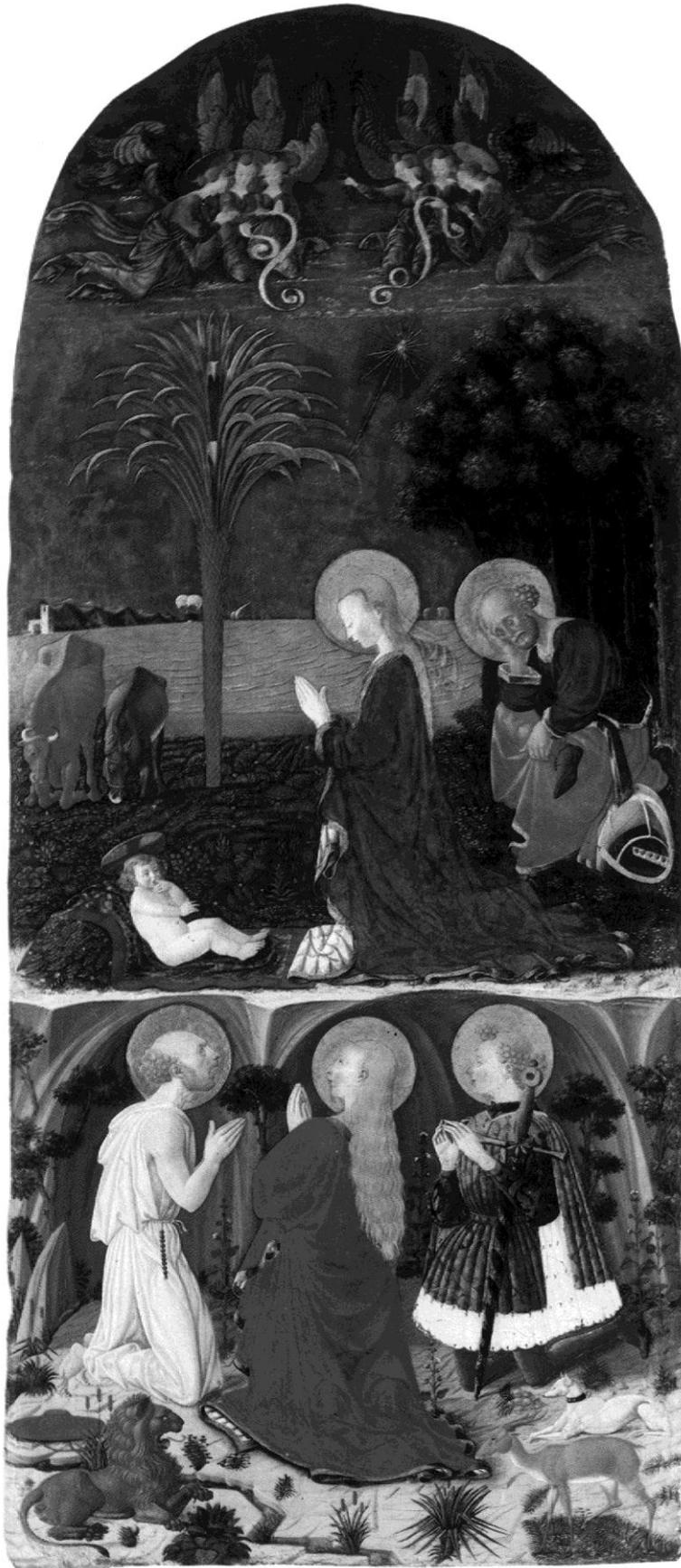


Figure 13. Uccello, The Adoration of the Child with Saint Jerome, Saint Mary Magdalen and Saint Eustace, c.1431–1432, tempera on wood, 110×47 cm, Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle.



Figure 14. Medal of Matthias, unknown Italian artist, the front side made after an unknown Italian medal, made before 1490, bronze, cast, diameter 52 mm.

On the front side: Profile portrait of King Matthias with laurel wreath, inscription:
MATTHIAS REX HVNGARIAE BOHEMIAE DALMATIAE

On the reverse side: representation of a man standing on a column in the middle, surrounded by combating soldiers, inscription: **MARTI FAUT/ORI** Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, Collection of Medals (Éremtár), Inv. Nr. 147/885–50.



Figure 15. Bible, 1480's, Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. lat. 231, leather binding with the portrait of King Matthias.



Figure 16. Profile portrait of King Matthias, Attavante, 1485–87, in *Missale Romanum*, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9008, fol. 8v.



Figure 17. Profile portrait of King Matthias, in Philostratus Flavius, *Opera – Philostratus Lemnius, Imagines*, Florence, 1487–90, Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 417, f. 1v.

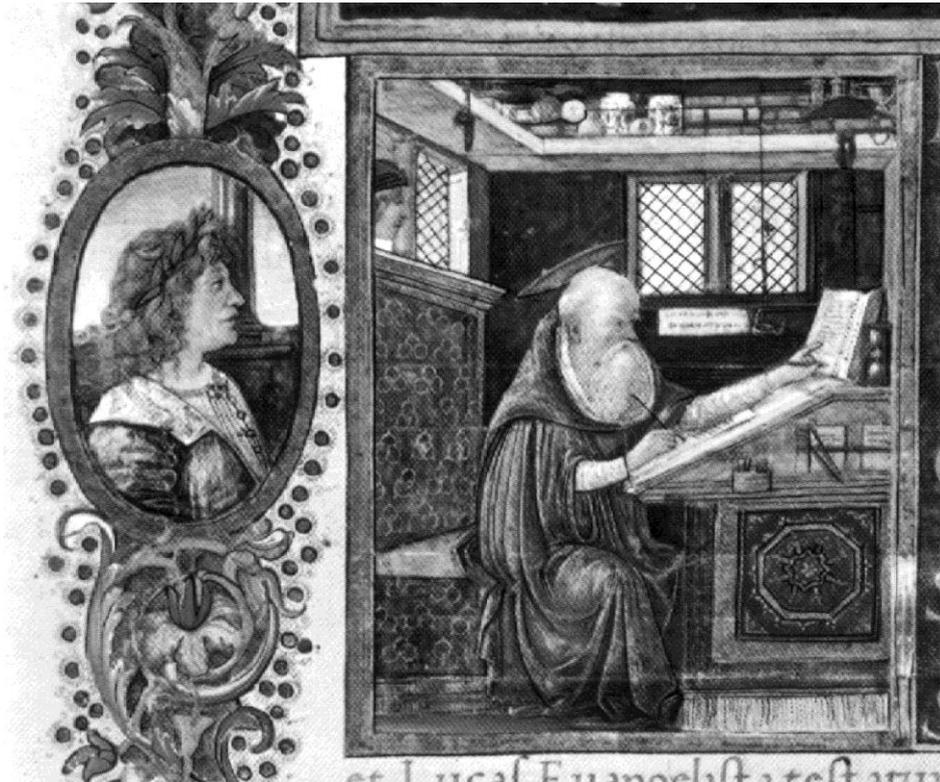


Figure 18. Profile portrait of King Matthias, Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni, 1488, in Hieronymus, *Expositio evangelii secundum Matheum...*, Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Lat. 930, fol. 1r.



Figure 19. Profile portrait of King Matthias, Ambrogio de Predis, 1488, in J. F. Marlianus, *Epithalamium in nuptiis Blancae Mariae Sfortiae et Joannis Corvini*, Volterra, Biblioteca Guarnacci, Cod. Lat. 5518. IV. 49. 3. 7, fol. 4.



Figure 20. Portrait of King Matthias, Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni, 1488, in Didymus, *De spiritu Sancto*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 496, fol.2r.



Figure 21. Left: Donatello, Gattamelata (detail), bronze, 1447–53, Padua, Piazza del Santo.
Right: Verrocchio, Colleoni (detail), bronze, c.1479–92, Venice, Campo San Zanipolo.



Figure 22. Left: Verrocchio, Alexander the Great, marble, c. 1480, Washington, The National Gallery of Art.
Right: Workshop of Della Robbia, Dareios, terracotta-relief, c. 1480, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



Figure 23. King Matthias, detail of the statue on the tower of Ortenburg at Bautzen, sandstone, 1486.



Figure 24. Profile portrait of King Matthias, in Alexander Cortesius, *De Matthiae Corvini Ungariae Regis Laudibus Bellicis Carmen*, Rome, 1487–88, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf 85, 1.1.Aug.2°, fol 3r.



Figure 25. Left: Portrait of King Matthias, sixteenth century (?), Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, Historical Picture Gallery (Történelmi Képcsarnok), Inv. Nr. 14.



Figure 26. Portrait of King Matthias, seventeenth century (?) oil on canvas, 75 x 61 cm, inscription: MATTHIAS CORVINUS / REX HVNGARIAE, Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, Historical Picture Gallery (Történelmi Képcsarnok) Inv. Nr. 17

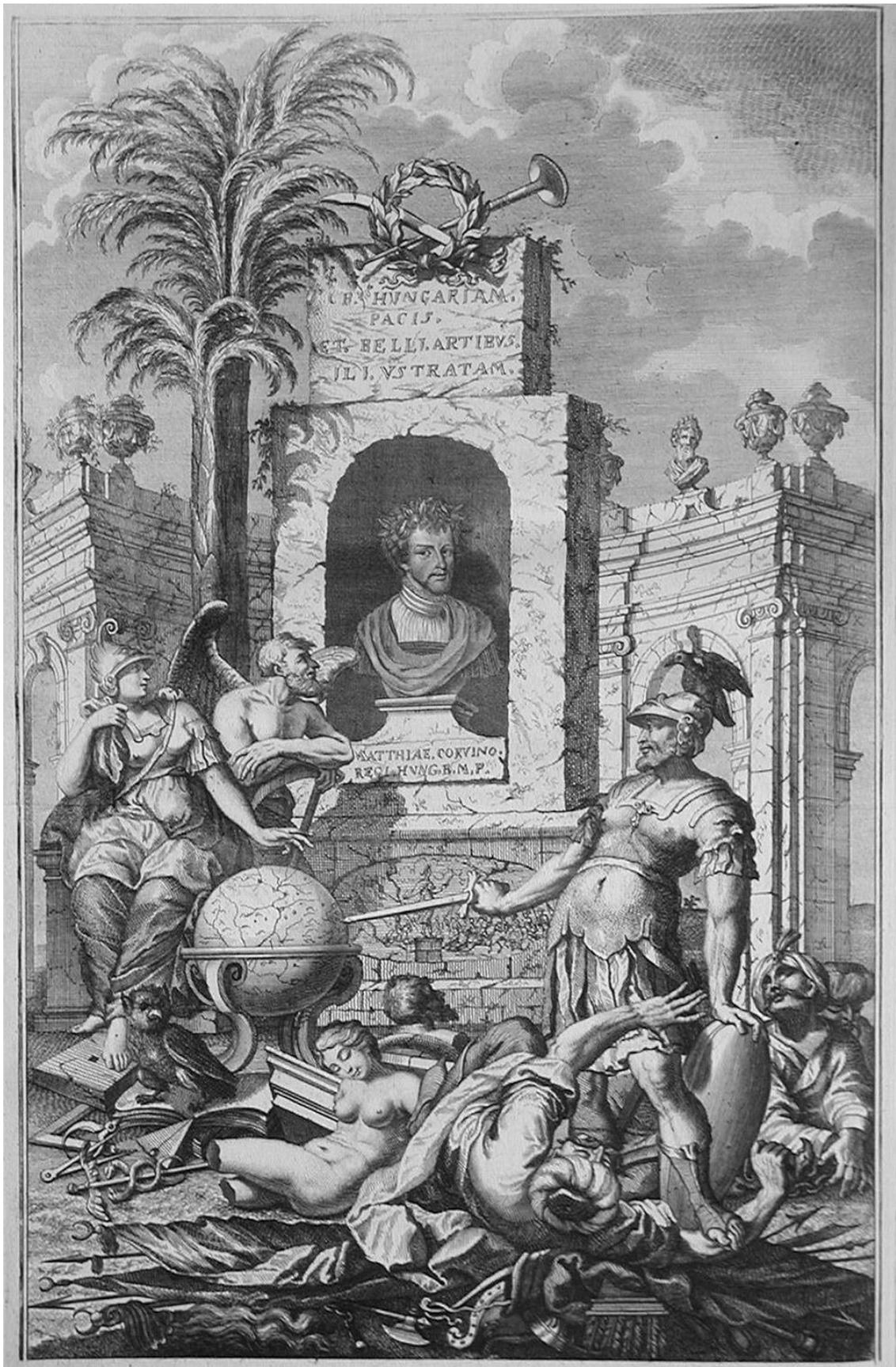


Figure 27. Andreas and Josef Schmutzer, Allegory of King Matthias, etching, 340 x 215 mm. Frontispiece in Mathias Bel, *Notitia Hungarorum*, vol. III, Vienna, 1735–1742.



Figure 28. Medal of Attila, second half of the fifteenth century, unknown Italian artist, bronze, cast, diameter 50 mm. On the front side: Attila represented as Faun, with horns on the forehead, inscription: ATTILA /REX On the reverse side: representation of a city with towers, surrounded by wall, inscription: AQVILEIA
Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, Collection of Medals (Éremtár), Inv. Nr. 5/852–12.



Figure 29. Tobias Stimmer, Portrait of Attila, woodcut, in Paolo Giovio, *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium*, Basel: Peter Perna, 1575, National Széchényi Library, Collection of Old Prints, Ant. 146(1)

hunis q̄draginta milia: necnō illoꝝ capitanei: bela:keme: ⁊ kady
cha cecidisse dicunt. quoz tandē capitaneoz cadavera ipsi huni
ad statuā memoratā detulerūt: ⁊ ibidē ⁊digne tradiderūt sepulture
Quāti aut̄ romano de exercitu corruerūt ꝑ compto valet dicere
nemo. sufficit tñ certamine in hoc tantā ipsos cladeꝝ accepisse: q̄
ꝑamplius illos ꝑtra hunos ꝑgregari nullus oīno hoīm ꝑsuadere
potuit.



Figure 30. Attila, coloured woodcut, in Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*,
Augsburg: Erhard Ratdolt, impensis Theobaldi Feger, 1488.