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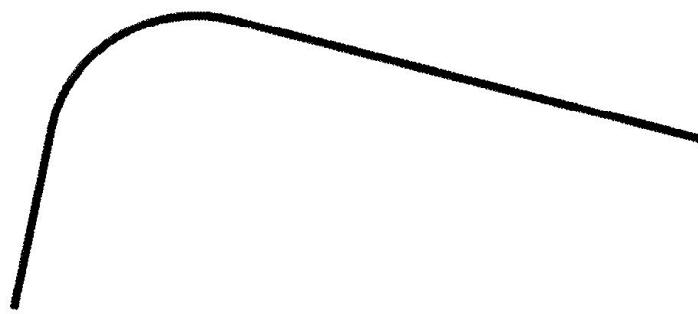
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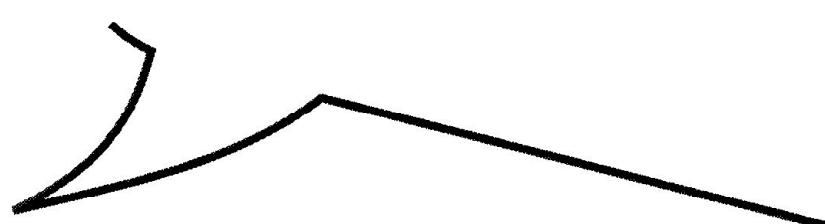
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APPROACHES AND METHODS IN SECOND AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING



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REPETITION AND FORMULAIC DICTION IN THE 16TH CENTURY HUNGARIAN EPIC

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INTRODUCTION

As a researcher of the Hungarian Epic of the sixteenth century, my interest concerns the patterns and the role of repetition and the characteristics of the formulaic diction. Scholars of the old Hungarian literature recognize without difficulty the stereotypic elements, schemes and patterns that distinguish the Hungarian epic (the so called *históriás énekek* «historical songs»), and everybody knows well that some words in them are much more frequent than others. Nonetheless, we have no precise information on these aspects and there isn't any comprehensive analysis of the Hungarian formulas and epic motifs.

The aim of my research is the computer-aided elaboration of all the historical songs that reached us to create a unified corpus¹ that facilitates the analysis and to provide a detailed overview of the repetitions and formulas.

THE CORPUS

According to the repertoire of the Hungarian poems written up to 1600 (*A régi magyar vers számítógépes repertóriuma*)², the historical songs of the Sixteenth century (from the Seventies

¹My analysis depended on the manuscripts, the facsimiles and the critical editions in existence. Furthermore I re-edit the songs written in old Hungarian and used transcriptions with modernized spelling.

²*A régi magyar vers számítógépes repertóriuma (Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne – RPHA)*, edit. Iván HORVÁTH, Gabriella H. HUBERT, collaborators: Zsuzsa FONT, János HERNER, Etelka SZÖNYI, István VADAI, Gépeskönyv, ContentWare Labs, 2000, v. 5.0.5.

of the fifteenth century to 1600) are represented by 185 poems (divided in two main groups: religious and profane¹). Some of them are known only by title, so the real corpus is composed only by 175 works.

My research starts from the notion of formula in the well-known international studies and as it was introduced in studies concerning the Hungarian historical songs by Hungarian scholars and mainly by the Italian scholar Amedeo Di Francesco.²

Besides the collection of the repeated hemistiches and lines, which would highly limit the results of this study, my aim is a systematic analysis of the words that figure in the corpus and their context to draw attention to the formulaic material. In other words, my interest focuses on the attitude of the words to emerge in repetitions and formulaic structures and on their combinatory attitudes in the formulas.

As the construction of the whole corpus is very time consuming and still in progress, in my paper I'll refer mainly to the sub-corpus composed by the works of Sebastian Tinódi (Tinódi Lantos Sebestyén, 1510-1556), one of the most significant representatives of the Hungarian Renaissance epic. This sub-corpus contains 57016 tokens distributed in 11241 lines.

It's important to put into evidence that, with the aid of the computer and the concordance software, it's possible to display the tokens, the frequency and the context of the words, but the collection of formulas and formulaic lines and their classification means a very meticulous and time consuming task supported but not replaced by the computer.

PATTERNS OF COORDINATION

An important tool for the rhythmic realization of verses is the usage of formulaic word pairs or parallelism, as the elements have the same syntactic structure. In the following examples the pair is constituted by the Hungarian words *arany* 'gold' and *ezüst* 'silver':

¹For the classifications of these songs, see Ferenc TOLDY, *A magyar nemzeti irodalom története a legrégebb időktől a jelen korig. 1864–1865* [The History of the Hungarian Literature from the ancient times to the present. 1864–1865], Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó 1987, Frigyes RIEDL, *A magyar irodalom története a XVI. században* [The History of the Hungarian Literature in the XVI century], Budapest, [s.n.] 1907; Béla VARJAS, *A magyar reneszánsz irodalom társadalmi gyökerei* [The social roots of the Hungarian Renaissance literature], Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó 1982, 126–127 and *Használati útmutató a régi magyar vers számítógépes repertoriумának* (*Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne*) 3.2-es [(c) 1979–1999] verziójához [User guide to version 3.2 [(c) 1979–1999] of the Répertoire de la poésie hongroise ancienne], <http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/repertoriuum/dokument/index.html#13>.

² For a bibliography on formulas in the Hungarian epic see References.

Császárnak nagy summa | ezüstjét, aranyát³ (Tinódi, *Szegedi veszedelem*, V, 99)⁴

The pair is highly formulaic and versatile, so it can be easily used in different kind of contexts and texts. These word pairs can be made of nouns, verbs and also adjectives, their structures are based on parallelism and often on synonymy or other types of semantic relationships and usually they fill one of the hemistiches.

Alázatos, békességes egyik részeges⁵ (Tinódi, *Sokfélé részegsről*, V, 70)

Among the verbal pairs one of the most frequent combinations is represented by the co-occurrence of *dúl* ‘devastate’ and *éget* ‘burn’. This formulaic pair makes part of those hemistiches, that are used in the descriptions of the conflicts. Usually, the devastating action refers to the following elements: *föld* ‘land’, *ország* ‘country’, *város* ‘town’, *vég* ‘border castle’, *minden* ‘everything’:

Ez országban égettenek, dúltanak⁶ (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 378)⁷

The basic formula has a certain grade of flexibility as, for example, the order of the constituents can be inverted or the pair can be integrated by adverbs like *erősen* ‘heavily’ or *sokat* ‘a lot’, that on one hand emphasizes the intensity or the duration of the action while on the other fill the empty slots of the metric structure. Also, the natural order of these two verbs is *dúl* ‘to devastate’ followed by *éget* ‘to burn’ considering the alphabetic order and also their iconicity: the shorter (monosyllabic) precedes the longer (bisyllabic) item.

Menten török véget égete, dúlata (Bogáti, *Castriot György históriaja*, V, 173)

Másfelől országban | dúl, éget erősen (Bogáti, *Castriot György históriaja*, V, 278)

Úr a török földön | sokat dúla, égete (Bogáti, *Castriot György históriaja*, V, 208)

Mindent éget, dúlat, kóborlat vala (Cserényi, *História az perzsiai fejedelmekről*, IV, 842)

Another tendency of this pair is its collocation in the second hemistich, while an interesting case is registered *Mátyás király históriaja* (before 1568, History of King Matthias) composed by Ambrus Görcsöni, in which the strict relationship between the two verbs is loosened, as the first verb is collocated at the beginning and the second at the end of the line just like a frame:

Égeté és deszpot földjét dúlatá (Görcsöni, *Mátyás király históriaja...*, I, 400)

3 The great quantity of silver, gold of the Emperor.

4 See also Aranyért, ezüstért | ti ne vivjatok (Tinódi, *Dávid király*, 378); Arannyal, ezüttel | fizete a szászoknak (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, IV, 1172) and Arany, ezüst ágyait kihozatá (Kákonyi, *Az Asverus királyról*, 19); És ötet bescsűlé arannyal, ezüttel (Székely, *Az szent Thobiásnak egész históriaja*, 24); Ezüstnek, aranynak sokaságával (Tolnai, *Az szent Jóbról*, 39); Aranyból, ezüstből csinált edényit (Dézsi, *Makhabeusról*, 30); Aranyat, ezüstöt bőven talála (Dézsi, *Makhabeusról*, 201); etc.

5 One of the drunkard was humble, peaceful.

6 They devastated, burned in this country.

7 A Mátyus földjét égeté, dúlatá (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 958); Dúlá, felégeté Miskolcnak városát (Tinódi, *A szalkai mezőn való viadalról*, 17); and also Török földet messze dúlák, égeték (Bogáti, *Castriot György históriaja*, II, 175); Sok földjét Deszpotnak dúlá, égeté (Bogáti, *Castriot György históriaja*, II, 208); etc.

The productivity of this procedure, based on the parallelism between verbs, is remarkable not only for the formulaic character, but also for the items that enter in this peculiar relationship.

The above mentioned pair is not so rigid, as the verb *dúl* 'devastate' can be found also in other pairs (ex. with *foszt* 'to raid'), like in the following lines:

Közel Temesvárig **dúlnak, fosztának** (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, II, 511)

Kik neki tolvajtak, **dúltak, fosztottak** (Tinódi, *Szitnya, Léva, Csábrág*, II, 363)

The parallelism can be even extended and distributed in the whole line with the aid of a third verb ex. *lop* 'to steal':

Ötödfélék **dúlnak, fosztnak, oly igen lopnak** (Tinódi, *Sokféle részegesről*, V, 74)

As far as the repetition of nouns or enumeration, we often register structures that fill the whole or almost the whole line, like the followings:

Besliákkal, akancsákkal, jancsárokkal¹ (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, II, 707)

Vajdáknak, besliáknak, akancsáknak² (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1472)

Jancsárok, besliák, akancsák veszének³ (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1510)

Another highly illustrative and well known example is represented by the pair *dob* 'drum' and *trombita* 'trumpet', that evokes the call to arms:

Dob és trombiták zengeni kezdének⁴ (Tinódi, *A vég Temesvárban*, 385)⁵

In the next line the parallelism is extended to three elements: besides the drums and the trumpets we have also the Hungarian noun *síp* which means 'fife':

Sípok, dobok, trombiták harsognak vala⁶ (Tinódi, *Ördög Mátyás veszedelme*, V, 239)⁷

The enumeration can be expanded even more, till the presence of four elements in a line:

Zászlója, dobja, sípja, trombitása vala⁸ (Tinódi, *Ördög Mátyás veszedelme*, V, 160)

1 With beslis, akincis, janissaries.

2 To voivodes, beslis, akincis.

3 Janissaries, beslis, akincis died.

4 Drums and trumpets began to blast.

5 See also Dobját, trombitáját hamar harsogtatá (Tinódi, *Verbőczi Imrének...*, II, 89); Dobok, trombiták igen harsognak (Tinódi, *Egri históriának summája*, IV, 402); Köztük dobot, trombitát riasztának (Tinódi, *Zsigmond kirdly és császárnak*, II, 709); Nagy sok dob, trombiták oly igen harsagnak (Tinódi, *Szegedi veszedelem*, V, 205); Trombiták, dobok zöngeni kezdének (Tinódi, *Szitnya, Léva, Csábrág*, II, 385).

6 Fifes, drums, trumpets were blasting.

7 See also Sípok, dobok, trombiták zönögtenek (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, III, 1248); Trombiták, dobok, sípok zönögnek (Tinódi, *Egri históriának summája*, IV, 354).

8 He had flag, drum, fife, trumpeter.

PATTERNS OF ENUMERATION

As far as the repetition/enumeration, we need mention at least two more patterns. The first is composed by toponyms and the second by proper names:

I) Nándorfehérvár és jó Szalánkemén,
 Péterváradja, Szerém, Újlak, Atya.
 Erdőd, Dejakó, Eszék, Valpó, Soklyós,
 Geresgál, Pécs, Málévár, Pécsváradja,
 Szekszárd, Anyavár, Döbrököz, Dombóvár,
 Simontornya, Ozora, Székesfehérvár.
 Nám a Csókakő, Esztergom, Visegrád,
 Vác és Hatvan, Nógrád, Szonda, Gyulabanni,
 Kit Szegeden erősen most raktanak,
 Harminc háza Duna mellett császárnak.

(Tinódi, *Varkucs Tamás idejébe lött csaták Egerből*, II, 27–36)

II) Nagy János, Vitéz János, Pribék János

...

(Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, II, 552)*.

These patterns can surpass the limits of the single line and fill more lines or strophes as well. In Tinódi's *Eger vár viadaláról*... one of the enumerations of proper names involves as many as 36 lines (vv. 550–585).

REPETITION OF FORMULAIC STRUCTURES

Given the high flexibility of the Hungarian epic formulas, for register all the occurrences of a given formula or a given formulaic expression, I start the analysis by examining the single words that emerged in the corpus.

So, for example, the relative frequency (limited to the Tinódi sub-corpus) of the verb *ajánl* 'to offer' is 36. In this material, considering the hemistiches and the lines, we find a certain number of entire and partial recurrences as well. Recurrences can be found in the same text, but also in texts written by the same or different authors.

An example of an entire recurrence is represented by the following three lines:

- I) minden kegyelmével magát ajánlá¹ (Tinódi, *Első Károly császár hada Saxóniába*, IV, 503)
- II) minden kegyelmével magát ajánlá (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, I, 263)
- III) minden kegyelmével magát ajánlá (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1614)

The first line is the most “neutral” as chronologically this is the first occurrence (1546), while the other two were written in 1553. It means also, that the first line represents an antecedent respect to the others.² Obviously the three lines differ from each other as they are inserted in different contexts as well: in the first song it's King Charles who offers his mercy to the Hungarian heroes, in the second this is King Ferdinand who offers his mercy and support to István Mekcsey, one of the defenders of Eger. The third occurrence, on one hand, is in a more generic relationship with the first line (the external one) and, on the other, in a more specific one with the second line (as ii) and iii) occur in two different parts, but of the same historical song). At this point of the song we are already at the end of the Siege of Eger, when a legation reached the King and offered him Ali Pasha's flag. The King granted many gifts to the heroes and offered them his mercy.

To the three previous occurrences we need to add one more, which has a specular structure and represent an intermediate phase between example i) and the examples ii) and iii), as the song was composed in 1548:

Magát ajánlá | ō nagy kegyelmével³ (Tinódi, *Varkucs Tamás idejébe lött csaták...*, II, 278)

Here the two hemistich's order is inverted and the second part is slightly modified, but the idea is the same. While imprisoned, Péter Príni entrusted Tamás Varkucs with the defense of the fortress of Eger against the troops of King Ferdinand. After the death of Príni, Varkucs demonstrated his loyalty toward Gabriel, son of Príni and handed back the keys to him. After that the fortress was given to a trustee of the King.

By partial recurrences I intend those structures that manifest some lexical variations without affecting the transmission of the “same essential idea” (M. Parry) given in the basic formula. Considering the basic formula *magát ajánlja* ‘to offer oneself to

1 With all his mercy he offered himself.

2 See Edward E. HEINEMANN, *L'art métrique de la chanson de geste. Essai sur la musicalité du récit*, Genève, Droz 1993 (Publications Romanes et Françaises, 205), 223–236.

3 He offered himself with his great mercy.

sy', we can see that it can be expanded further with the addition of different elements (attributes, pronouns, marks, etc) to fill the actual penta-, hexa- or heptasyllabic hemistich or the whole line.

The basic formula can occur both in the first and second hemistich, and it's possible that the continuity of the expression is broken up as in the example iv):

- I) **Magát ajánlá** minden vitézinek⁴ (Tinódi, *Egri históriának summája*, IV, 448)
- II) A császárnak **ajánlák ő magukat**⁵ (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 1006)

See also:

- III) **Ő magát ajánlá** mint illik urának⁶ (Ráskai, *Egy szép história az Vitéz Franciscóról*, 555)
- IV) **Magát neki** minden szóba **ajánlja**⁷ (Lévai Névtelen, *Paris és Görög Ilona históriaja*, 214)

The corpus contains some other lines in which we can still find the verb *ajánl* 'offer' related to the idea of *kegyelem* 'mercy':

Hogy kegyelmét király nekik ajánlja⁸ (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 496)

Király kegyelmét mindenben ajánlá⁹ (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1674)

Mindenben kegyelmes voltát ajánlá¹⁰ (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1697)

Kegyelmességét mindenben ajánlá¹¹ (Tinódi, *Egri históriának summája*, IV, 60)

The same idea is expressed also in the following line:

Király őmagát **mindenbe ajánlá**¹² (Tinódi, *A vég Temesvárban*, 136)

In the formulaic structures the noun *kegyelmével* 'with one's mercy' can be replaced also by *hívséggel* 'with loyalty':

Hívséggel magát ajánlotta vala¹³ (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 923)¹⁴

⁴ He offered himself to all his heroes.

⁵ He offered themselves to the Emperor.

⁶ He offered himself, according to the courtesy, to his husband.

⁷ He offered himself to her in every word.

⁸ That the King offered him his mercy.

⁹ The King offered his mercy in everything.

¹⁰ He offered his merciful being in everything.

¹¹ He offered his mercy in everything.

¹² The King offered himself in everything.

¹³ He offered himself with loyalty.

¹⁴ See also Kik őneki ajánlák hívségeket [Who offered him their loyalty] (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 1032).

This kind of paradigmatic substitution is related also to the rank of the protagonists in question (rulers vs. dependants), such as in the following group of lines, in which we find the basic formula *szolgálatát ajánlja* ‘to offer one’s service’:

(in 1541) Úrfi ott ajánlá | nagy hív szolgálatát¹ (Tinódi, *Buda veszéséről...*, 64)

(in 1553) Nagy hív szolgálatát | igen ajánlá² (Tinódi, *Eger vár viadaláról*, IV, 1671)³

The basic formula is distributed in the whole line, so that the two constituents are separated by the caesura. The adjectives *nagy* ‘great’ and *hív* ‘loyal’ are used mostly with the aim to fill the empty slots of the hemistich.

In the following group the verb *ajánl*, respect to the previous ones, has a different, more concrete and tangible object, *ország* ‘country’ or *Magyarország* ‘Hungary’:

Minden országát neki ajánlaná⁴ (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 1075)

A Tiszántúl ez országot neki ajánlá⁵ (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, I, 84)

Jó Magyarországot németnek ajánlotta⁶ (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, I, 348)

Jó Magyarországöt meg öneki ajánlá⁷ (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, IV, 1380)

A török császárnak országát ajánlotta⁸ (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, V, 1472)

Another formulaic expression is represented by *hitét ajánlja* ‘to offer one’s faith’:

A császár hitét úrfinak ajánlá⁹ (Tinódi, *A vég Temesvárban*, 324)¹⁰

If we consider the religious sphere, than we will come across the formulaic structure *lelkét Istennek ajánlja* ‘to offer one’s soul to God’:

Sót az Istennek lelkét ajánlotta¹¹ (Tinódi, *A vég Temesvárban*, 305)

Lelkét az Istennek ajánlá, ígéré¹² (Tinódi, *Budai Ali basa históriája*, 91)¹³

1 There the Lord offered his great, loyal service.

2 He offered firmly his great, loyal service.

3 See also Hitét, szolgálatát öneki ajánlá (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, IV, 1378); A huszadik szolgálatát igen ajánlja (Tinódi, *Sokféle részegsről*, V, 118); Szeretetből ajánlom szolgálatomat (Tinódi, *Az udvarbírákról és kulcsdrokról*, 1).

4 He offered him all his countries.

5 Over the Tisza he offered him this country.

6 He offered Hungary to the Germans.

7 He offered Hungary to him.

8 He offered his country to the Turks.

9 The Emperor offered his faith to the Lord.

10 See also És énnekem ajánlott hitetekért (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 1126); Basák, szancsákok hitüket ajánlá (Tinódi, *A vég Temesvárban*, 325).

11 Moreover, he offered his soul to God.

12 He offered, he promised his soul to God.

13 See also e.g. Az Jézus Krisztusnak ő magát ajánlá (Ilosvai, *Az nagy Szent Pál Apostolnak életéről*, 226); Magát és családját Istennek ajánlá (Sztárai, *Az vízözönnek históriájáról*, 365).

The remaining occurrences¹⁴ of the verb have a more generic character and at this moment their analysis doesn't add new elements to our discourse. They could be taken in consideration and compared to other lines in a future step of the research.

CONCLUSION

I managed to get rid of the previously mentioned limits and difficulties as in my research the central position is occupied by the words and the very simple assumption that words express thoughts. A theme, *topos* or motif is described, evoked and recited using words, and also, the elements of the different semantic fields are words. So, starting from the analysis of the simple words we can get to the formulas and the corresponding motives and themes.

The scientific literature has already discussed another problem, that concerns those lines that appear only ones in the corpus, and nonetheless researchers consider them formulas or at least formulaic structures.¹⁵ Actually, I take into consideration all the lines, that emerge only ones in the Tinódi sub-corpus, as I can accept that they could reappear again in the whole corpus.

It can also happen that a hemistich or line will be registered only one in the entire corpus, despite the fact that it corresponds clearly to a formula belonging to the genre of epic. These kind of hypothesis could be supported by examples taken from the epic prose narrative.

Future tasks are the completion of the entire corpus, the detailed elaboration of the data, the classification of the repeated themes, motives and the corresponding formulaic structures, the analysis of the diachronic development of the formulaic diction in the 16th century Hungarian epic songs.

¹⁴ Fiát, feleségét csak önekkik ajánlá (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, I, 24); Mint király fiának ajánlá ő magát (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, I, 227); Kit testamentumba király neked ajánla (Tinódi, *Erdélyi história*, II, 564); A Lippa kulcsával magukat ajánlák (Tinódi, *Erdélyi historia*, III, 1039); Isten malasztjának ezt ajánlottam (Tinódi, *Az udvarbírákról és kultúrokrol*, 7); Az Ali basának két apródját ajánlá (Tinódi, *Budai Ali basa históriaja*, 80); Szóval, ajándékkal magad ajánld annak (Tinódi, *Buda veszétről...*, 28); Szeretettel nektek ötet ajánlom (Tinódi, *Zsigmond király és császárnak*, II, 1121).

¹⁵ Marjorie WINDELBERG – D. Gary MILLER, "How (Not) to Define the Epic Formula", *Olifant* 8 (1980), I, 29–50; 39–40; H. L. ROGERS, "The Crypto-psychological Character of the Oral Formula", *English Studies* 47 (1966), 93.

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Texts

A nagy Szkenderbégnek, kit Castriot György hercegnek hívtak, Epirusnak, Nagy Albániának és Macedóniának Urának csodálatos jeles vitezi dolgairól, két török Császárral, ki Görögország veszte után, csak egyedül állotta meg a törökök ellene Európában, Hunyadi János idejében [On the marvelous and valorous deeds against two Turkish sultans of the great Skanderbeg, called George Kastrioti, Prince of Epirus, the great Albany and Macedonia, who after the fall of Greece alone in Europe resisted to the Turks at the time of John Hunyadi], [typ. Hoffhalter Rudolf]], Debrecenben Anno. XXXXVII, [recte: 1587].

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