

Chapter 7

THE LIGHT OF PANNONIA

The Network Expands

The following sections examine the most thoroughly researched period of Vitez's career, regarding which very few new insights can be added. We therefore limit ourselves mostly to a recapitulation of earlier researchers' work, with some additions and an effort to present this part of Vitez's life in the context of his previous endeavours. First, we continue the examination of Vitez's informal network of international contacts, starting where we left off—namely, Matthias's accession—and ending with Vitez's death. This subject is closely related to the books Vitez gathered and read during this time. They are therefore presented simultaneously.

Vitez continued to expand his cultural network, as well as his knowledge, throughout Matthias's reign. In 1460 he read and emended *Philosophia*, the cosmological work of William of Conches, signing it with his initials JEW. He remarked that he found the book tedious, and filled it with reproachful observations, especially its third part—that dealing with the celestial spheres and the zodiac.¹ This corresponds with what we know of Vitez's later involvements with astronomers, as the problem of precisely calculating the coordinates of the astrological houses remained one of his preoccupations. This was probably due to his interest in prognostication, as the exact calculation of the houses' positions, or cusps, was crucial for the casting of horoscopes.²

Many of the astronomers contemporary to Vitez tried to solve that problem. John Gazulić of Dubrovnik was one of the most successful, and King Matthias fruitlessly tried to attract him to Buda in 1458 or 1459. We may assume he did so on Vitez's advice. Although the government of Dubrovnik gave Gazulić its permission to leave and agreed to cover his travel expenses, he declined the invitation, sending his book to Buda in his stead. This book may have contained his lost treatise on astrological houses; from later sources we know it was called *De directionibus*. Conceivably it found its way to Vitez's library, as Regiomontanus is known to have read it, perhaps while he was staying in Esztergom when Vitez was its archbishop.³ It is also significant that Janus Pannonius wrote to Gazulić after he was made bishop of Pécs, as it gives us reason to think Vitez was interested in his work as well. Pannonius praised Gazulić's book and asked him to send an armillary sphere next, claiming no one in Hungary was capable of making one.⁴

1 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 51–52 and 147.

2 Regarding the significance of houses in medieval astrology, see Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 57–58.

3 Grmek and Dadić, "O astronomu Ginu Gazulu," 58–60.

4 Pannonius, *Opusculorum pars altera*, ed. Teleki, 101–2, doc. 18. See also Dadić, "Znanstveni i

Besides books on astronomy, based on the information available to us we know Vitez also read theological works, as well as pieces of Classical literature. He also continued expanding his library. In July 1461, the municipal council of Dubrovnik approved the purchase of a codex containing a collection of Cicero's letters, called *Epistolae ad familiares*, for ten ducats at the city's expense, as Vitez himself had, through the Hungarian king's emissaries, asked the council to send it to him.⁵ Csapodiné Gárdonyi thought this Cicero codex is the same as the one today kept in the Vatican Library.⁶

In 1462, at the time of Matthias's abortive expedition to Wallachia, Vitez read Gaius Marius Victorinus's commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*, leaving a note saying he finished reading it in Sibiu, and that he had emended it as best he could.⁷ From September 3 until October 31, 1463, during Matthias's first Bosnian campaign, he read the theological work *Quaestiones super I. libro Sententiarum* by Francis of Mayrone, containing the commentary on the first part of Peter Lombard's seminal work *Libri quatuor sententiarum*.⁸ Next year, from July 22 to September 1, when the second Bosnian campaign (the one resulting in the unsuccessful siege of Zvornik) was being prepared, Vitez read and emended a collection containing Cicero's *De fato*, *De principiis rerum* by Pseudo-Timaeus of Locri, and the agricultural treatise *De insitione* by Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus.⁹ It seems it was Vitez's custom to take some books along on his travels, and to read and emend them on the way. He did so in the aftermath of King Matthias's coronation, as he finished reading and emending a book containing the works of Pliny the Younger in Buda, on May 23, 1464.¹⁰

Vitez and his nephew Janus Pannonius may have influenced King Matthias to purchase books for the royal library, perhaps to promote his international reputation as an enlightened ruler.¹¹ It is also possible Vitez was trying to influence the young king to actually study the humanities, in a way he might have thought suitable for the development of a ruler. Regarding that, we should note that Janus may have been responsible for the first arrival of a Greek version of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* in Hungary, as such a book was given to him as a present by his friend Battista Guarino, Guarino Veronese's son. It is possible that Vitez read a Latin version of the work, which was sent to John Hunyadi by Poggio Bracciolini,¹² and might have thought it useful for Matthias's education.

kulturni krug," in *Dani Hvarskog kazališta XVI*, ed. Batušić et al., 183–207 at 187–88.

5 *Raguza és Magyarország összeköttetéseinek oklevéltára*, ed. József Gelcich and Lajos Thallóczy (Budapest: Magyar tudományos akadémia, 1887), 750–51, doc. 16.

6 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 95.

7 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 145–46.

8 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 103.

9 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 93–94.

10 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 126–27.

11 Domokos, "Letture e biblioteche," 71; Pajorin, "The First Humanists at Matthias Corvinus' Court," 139–40.

12 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 147–48.

Vitez continued to carefully cultivate the image of a patron of the arts, and he was indeed seen as such abroad. His reputation was above all diffused by his own protégés, including George Polycarp Kosztoláni and Janus Pannonius. For example, Polycarp came into contact with the Italian humanist and Janus's school colleague Raffaele Zovenzoni during his embassy to Italy in 1462. As Polycarp informed him about the current state of affairs in Hungary, Zovenzoni wrote to Pannonius, asking to be recommended to Vitez. Pannonius agreed, noting Vitez supported all men of learning without being prompted.¹³

Hungarian and Slavonian students Vitez supported during their studies also contributed to his reputation. For example, the so-called John Vitez the Younger studied in Bologna from 1463 until 1466, and in 1468 he graduated in canon law in Padua. During that time, he was a canon of Oradea and Zagreb, and from 1467 provost of Oradea.¹⁴ Vitez likely arranged for him to hold those offices as a source of income, especially considering that Matthias gave Vitez the right of patronage over canonries of the diocese of Zagreb in 1462. Gregory Handó was studying together with Vitez the Younger; they often witnessed their colleagues' examinations, and shared the experience of their own final examinations.¹⁵ Handó was supported by Vitez and Janus Pannonius, and Vitez secured a canonry of Oradea for him, perhaps due to the influence of his elder brother George, provost of Pécs and Matthias's vice-chancellor during the 1460s.¹⁶ It is possible that this George was one of Pannonius's adherents.¹⁷ Peter Váradi and Stephen Bajoni, who would both later attain high posts in King Matthias's chancery and the Hungarian church, were Vitez's protégés and their studies in Bologna were partly financed by incomes he secured for them. He gave Váradi a canonry of Esztergom in 1465, and Bajoni was awarded a canonry of Pécs by Pannonius in 1467.¹⁸ Bajoni's family had long been in Vitez's service; his father was a retainer of Vitez's, who arranged for him to receive some estates in 1458.¹⁹

Parallel to creating a network of reliable and educated men to buttress his power over the Hungarian ecclesiastical hierarchy, Vitez maintained his contacts with international humanist circles. Janus Pannonius played a pivotal part there, and his studies in Italy turned out to have been an excellent investment, as they brought Vitez in contact with a number of foreign dignitaries. For example, the previously mentioned Protase Černohorský of Boskovice, who would become bishop of Olomouc in 1458, studied in Ferrara with Janus, and it was probably through Janus that Vitez came into

13 Pannonius, *Opusculorum pars altera*, ed. Teleki 87–88, doc. 11. Zovenzoni's surname is here mistranscribed as "Tonenzoni." Regarding his connection to Pannonius, see Margolis, *The Politics*, 105–6, Birnbaum, *Janus Pannonius*, 54, and Fraknói, "Mátyás király magyar diplomatái," 11.

14 Kristóf, "I modi di acquistare benefici," 308; Kristóf, *Egyházi közélet*, 55–56.

15 *Matricula et acta Hungarorum*, 1:13–14.

16 Kristóf, "I modi di acquistare benefici," 311; Tamás Fedeles, "Pécsi kanonokok egyetemlátogatása a későközépkorban (1354–1526)," *Magyar egyháztörténelmi vázlatok* 17, no. 1–2 (2005): 51–82 at 57.

17 Kubinyi, "Adatok," 35.

18 Kristóf, "I modi di acquistare benefici," 309–10; Kristóf, *Egyházi közélet*, 56–57.

19 *Codex diplomaticus comitum Károlyi*, ed. Géresi, 2:319–22, doc. 190.

contact with him.²⁰ Protase was close friends with Pannonius and Galeotto Marzio (also a Ferrara alumnus) ever since their student days. During their studies, the former two together read one of the seminal humanistic works on the Latin language, *Elegantiae linguae latinae* by Lorenzo Valla, and about a decade later, when they were both bishops, Protase reminded Pannonius of it and asked whether he could borrow that book.²¹ This little circle could have appealed to Vitez not only for its members' erudition, but also for their capabilities. For example, Marzio wrote to Protase in the first half of 1461 that Vitez was full of praise for him, and that he called him the apogee of his respective homeland.²² Marzio himself was brought into Vitez's circle by Janus Pannonius, and was in Hungary twice: for the first time in 1461, and for the second, much longer, when Vitez was already archbishop of Esztergom.²³

As we have mentioned earlier, Protase was, despite their religious differences, one of the closest advisers of George of Poděbrady, and carried out numerous embassies for him. For example, he was present in Brno in mid-1459, when Vitez and Oswald Rozgonyi concluded a one-year truce with the emperor's emissaries, and in Vienna in 1460, when Cardinal Bessarion mediated the peace negotiations between Frederick and Matthias. In fact, Bessarion accused Protase of sabotaging the peace effort.²⁴ It is possible that Vitez and Bessarion became acquainted during this failed mission,²⁵ although there is no evidence of them ever having been close. There is an indication, however, that the cardinal befriended Vitez's protégé Polycarp, as on May 19, 1462, he recommended the latter to Cardinal Ammannati Piccolomini, asking him to make sure Polycarp's future mission in Rome went well.²⁶ Ironically, Polycarp later married the daughter of Bessarion's intellectual adversary, George of Trebizond.²⁷

Vitez and Bessarion had at least one common acquaintance: George Peuerbach. The cardinal met him in Vienna in 1460 and commissioned him to write a summary, or an epitome, of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, but the astronomer died before completing it. Before his death in 1461, he asked Regiomontanus to finish the work and dedicate it to Bessarion,²⁸ which the latter did a few years later.²⁹ Vitez himself owned at least

20 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 38; Kalous, "Boskovice urai," 376.

21 Ritoókné Szalay, "Peregrinazioni erudite," 66; Ritoókné Szalay, "Der Humanismus in Ungarn," 167. See also the letters exchanged by Protase and Marzio in 1461 in Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *Epistolae*, ed. László Juhász (Rome: Királyi Magyar egyetemi nyomda/Messaggerie Italiane, 1930), 3–4, docs. 1–2.

22 Galeottus Martius Narniensis, *Epistolae*, ed. Juhász, 3, doc. 1.

23 Regarding his first visit, see Birnbaum, *Janus Pannonius*, 118.

24 Kalous, "Boskovice urai," 377–78.

25 Ritoókné Szalay, "Der Humanismus in Ungarn," 163. Cf. Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 114.

26 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 116.

27 Regarding the polemic between Bessarion and George, see Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 86 and 91.

28 Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 29.

29 Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 52.

one of Ptolemy's works—his *Cosmographia*—a still extant codex bearing Vitez's coat of arms. Some of its contents are confusing, such as a map drawn after the discovery of America. There were also other Ptolemy's works in King Matthias's library, such as a translation of the *Almagest* into Latin by George of Trebizond.³⁰

Considering examples like these, it is undeniable that diplomatic activities contributed immensely to the establishment of cultural connections.³¹ Cultural liaisons would often translate into political power, as some of the men involved were powerful statesmen, and their personal contacts or friendships could make or break political alliances. During the early years of Matthias's reign, Vitez gathered influential humanists at his court. As many of them were diplomats and prelates, their gatherings cannot be viewed purely as harmless pastimes.³² We know of these gatherings thanks to Bishop Nicholas, first of Senj and then of Modruš, because he wrote in one of his books—the *Dialogus de mortalium foelicitate*, dedicated to Vitez—that he once wintered at Vitez's court in Oradea, in its magnificent library, in the company of many learned men.³³ Špoljarić convincingly proved the winter in question was that in 1461/62, when Galeotto Marzio was also in Hungary, which could be the identity of at least one of the mentioned "learned men." Nicholas's book, however, was written later, and probably given to Vitez during the winter campaign in Bosnia in 1463, when Bishop Nicholas joined Matthias's army after returning from a mission to Venice and Dubrovnik. On the same occasion, he gave another of his books to Stephen Várdai, complete with a dedication.³⁴ Of course, Vitez could not have spent the entire winter of 1461/62 at his court, as he participated in the reconciliation of the counts Szentgyörgyi and other rebels with King Matthias in Esztergom in February 1462.

When Vitez was made archbishop of Esztergom in 1465, his new see was already a distinguished cultural centre, with a well-stocked library, and many of its canons were highly educated in canon law.³⁵ Vitez probably brought many of his own books from Oradea, and continued to purchase new ones. Regiomontanus, who was a resident of Esztergom for a long time, wrote that Vitez spared no expense or effort to create a library filled with all kinds of books.³⁶ He ordered high quality codices from Italy, some made by the famous copyist Pietro Cennini. Janus Pannonius assisted Vitez in his efforts, as he purchased or commissioned a number of books during his mission to Italy in 1465.³⁷ For example, the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci wrote that Vitez established a great library and spared no expense to purchase books in

30 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 128–30; Nagy, "Ricerche cosmologiche," 77.

31 See Pajorin, "The First Humanists at Matthias Corvinus' Court," 141.

32 Špoljarić, "Politika, patronat," 9.

33 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 121.

34 Špoljarić, "Politika, patronat," 5–6 and 9–10. See also Kubinyi, "Vitéz János," 21.

35 Prokopp, "The Scholarship of Johannes Vitéz," 354.

36 *Analecta ad historiam renaescentium*, ed. Ábel, 169–70.

37 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 38.

Italy,³⁸ that Janus Pannonius, during his embassy in 1465, bought all available books both in Rome and in Florence, and that in Florence he ordered copies of those books not available for purchase. Those copies alone allegedly cost several hundred florins.³⁹ It is probably correct to assume that Bisticci wrote Vitez's and Pannonius's biographies precisely because they were among his best customers.⁴⁰ As for Cennini, he was a good friend of Bartolomeo Fonzio, and certainly in contact with Peter Garazda on at least one occasion, in January 1469, when he produced a charter for him.⁴¹ Both Fonzio and Garazda were members of Vitez's circle,⁴² so they may have brought Cennini into it as well.

Vitez purchased such immense quantities of books at least partly to be celebrated as a learned patron of the arts. But he did read at least some of them. He did not stop reading or emending after his transfer to Esztergom, and he still habitually carried books with him while travelling. Based on scattered bits of information, we can conclude he was interested in a variety of topics. Many books which might have been his are still extant. There is a codex containing Cicero's speeches, decorated with both Matthias's and Vitez's archiepiscopal coat of arms (with a two-barred cross). Csapodiné Gárdonyi suggested Matthias gave it to Vitez as a present.⁴³ It is not surprising that an orator as celebrated as Vitez would be interested in Cicero's rhetoric, but he also possessed a codex containing Cicero's works on philosophy, decorated with his coat of arms and copied by Cennini.⁴⁴

One codex also bearing Vitez's archiepiscopal coat of arms contains Plautus's comedies,⁴⁵ with a miniature portrait possibly depicting Vitez on its front page. As the codex bears Matthias's coat of arms as well, and that of Bosnia on the right-hand margin of the front page, it could be that it was a gift meant to commemorate Matthias's (partial) conquest of Bosnia.⁴⁶ Another codex marked with Vitez's coat of arms contains Pseudo-Quintilianus's *Declamationum liber*, but in that one Matthias's coat of arms was painted over Vitez's, signifying a change of ownership.⁴⁷ There is also a codex containing Tacitus's works with an inscription reading "Io. Ar. legi transcurrendo a. 1467 sed mansit inemendatus" (Jo[h]n Ar[chbishop]. I read this during the year 1467, but it remained unamended),⁴⁸ meaning Vitez read it during the year he

38 Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. Greco, 1:321.

39 Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. Greco, 1:333.

40 Pajorin, "The First Humanists at Matthias Corvinus' Court," 140.

41 Alessandro Daneloni, "Sui rapporti fra Bartolomeo della Fonte, János Vitéz e Péter Garázda," in *L'eredità classica*, ed. Graciotti and di Francesco, 293–309 at 295 and 305–8.

42 See the chapter "The Glory Lives on?"

43 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 96–97.

44 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 95–96.

45 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 125.

46 Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library*, 321–22.

47 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 131.

48 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 138–39.

PLAVTI POETE COM
ICI CLARISSIMI P
RIMA COMEDIA



N faciem uertus ambitionis lupiter
Dum bellum gerere cū thelobori hostibz
Alcmenam uxorem coepit usurariam
Mercurius formam solis seui gerit
Abrens. his alcmena decipitur dolo
Postq̄ redire uiri Amphitræo & solis
uictq̄ deludunt doli mutum in modis
Hinc iugum tumultus uxori & uito
Donec cum tonitru uoce missa ex ether

A dulterium se iupiter confessus est

ALIVD ARQVMEHTVM

Amore captus alcmena iupiter mutauit se se
In formam illius coniugis pro patre amphitræo
Dum erant cum hostibus habitum mercurius ei subterit solis
I s aduenientis seuum ac dominum frustra hē tabas uxori
C it amphitræo atq̄ inuicem raptant p̄ mebris defato capē
A ebiter uter sit non que amphitræo decernere
O mnem rem noscunt geminos Alcmena emittit

PROLOGVS

At uos in uostis uolitis mactationis seruandis vendam inter
M e lectum lucris affertis atq̄ adiuuare inuentionibus
E t ueres rationesq̄ uostorum omnium
B ene expedite uolitis peregreq̄ & u domi



Figure 3: Title page of Plautus's *Comedies* bearing Vitez's coat of arms, and perhaps his portrait (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 111, fol. 1r).

was negotiating with Albert Kostka, participating in the Diet of Nuremberg and dealing with the Transylvanian Revolt, so it is understandable he had no time to emend it. During the next year, when he was organizing the defence of the northwestern regions of the kingdom in the opening stages of the Bohemian Crusade, he read and partly emended Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*, finishing it in Nitra on June 2. As he noted, he was unable to emend it completely, because the other specimen of this work at his disposal was not emended either.⁴⁹ It is obvious that Tertullian's works remained an object of Vitez's study.

Despite the variety of books Vitez perused, his literary interests remained largely unchanged, and can be grouped into three categories: Classical literature, theology, and astronomy, with the observation that Classical works he was interested in were mostly those on rhetoric and theology. However, there are outliers. Some of the books perhaps in some way connected to him are on medicine, which is understandable, as Vitez suffered from kidney stones and may have tried to alleviate his condition. One of these is a collection of texts on primarily medical matters, also copied by Cennini, in Florence, in 1468. Its margins contain notes that Csapodiné Gárdonyi thought were Vitez's.⁵⁰ The texts inside include one by Pseudo-Benedict Crispus, and one by Quintus Serenus Sammonicus; the latter contains prescriptions for treating illnesses of various parts of the body, written in the form of an anatomical examination.⁵¹ In those aspects it is similar to Galeotto Marzio's *De homine*. Another medical work perhaps connected to Vitez is a copy of *Clavis sanationis* by Simon of Genoa, which Csapodiné Gárdonyi guessed contained Vitez's emendations.⁵² That thirteenth-century text contains mostly pharmacological data.⁵³

Judging by the preserved specimens of Vitez's books, the period when he read the most was during 1470. As we have seen, he spent the better part of that year in Esztergom, between the failed negotiations with Frederick III in Vienna in February and the Diet of Buda in November. Judging by the number of books he read during this time, it seems he really did temporarily withdraw from politics, either due to the failure of the mentioned negotiations, or because of his illness.

The assumption that Vitez read the following books hinges on the premise that the initial "Jo" in them (presumably shortened from "Johannes") was his, as Csapodiné Gárdonyi thought. If we accept this, we can assume that during the year 1470, Vitez read the *Compendium grammaticae ad Andream filiolum* by George of Trebizond,

49 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 140.

50 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 135–36.

51 See Svetlana Hautala, "As a Matter of Fact, This Is Not Difficult to Understand!": The Addresses to the Reader in Greek and Latin Pharmacological Poetry," in *"Greek" and "Roman" in Latin Medical Texts: Studies in Cultural Change and Exchange in Ancient Medicine*, ed. Brigitte Maire (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 183–200 at 193–96.

52 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 136.

53 See Petros Bouras-Vallianatos, "Simon of Genoa's 'Clavis Sanationis': A Study of Thirteenth-Century Latin Pharmacological Lexicography," in *Simon of Genoa's Medical Lexicon*, ed. Barbara Zipser (London: Versita, 2013), 31–47.

marked with the note “Anno domini 1470” followed by the initial “Io,”⁵⁴ as well as the novel *Historia Troiana* by Guido delle Colonne. The latter specimen contains the initial “Jo,” the word “Pannonia” in two places in the margins, and a note at the end placing its production in the year 1470.⁵⁵ We can be more certain about him having read in 1470 a collection of letters and sermons by St. Jerome in three parts, as the codex containing them is decorated with Vitez’s archiepiscopal coat of arms, as well as marked with the initial “Jo.” At the end of each of the three parts is the date on which he finished reading and emending it: the first on July 11, the second on July 23, and the third on September 1, 1470. At the end of the book is a note saying he could not emend the copy sufficiently due to the discrepancies between the exemplars (note the plural) he had at his disposal, but that this text is better than the other ones he had seen.⁵⁶ This remark makes it obvious that this was not the first time he read Jerome’s works. That is corroborated by the fact that in 1467, Gregory of Heimburg referred to the author as “your Jerome” in a letter addressed to Vitez,⁵⁷ meaning that the latter’s predilection for Jerome’s works was well known.

The assumption that Vitez read the following two books again depends on whether he was the author of the initial “Jo.” If he was, it would mean that immediately after finishing Jerome’s book, he started another. On September 20 he finished George of Trebizond’s *Comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* and inscribed a remark saying: “Contra hunc scripsit dominus Bissarion cardinalis Nicenus vir eruditissimus pro Platone non tamen contra Aristotelem” (Lord Bessarion, Cardinal of Nicaea and a most learned man, wrote against this [book], defending Plato, but without offending Aristotle).⁵⁸ This would mean Vitez was aware of Bessarion’s reaction to George’s anti-Platonistic work, which the cardinal expressed in his *In calumniatorem Platonis*. In it, he defends Plato and, indirectly, his own teacher Gemistus Pletho, as George accused them both of being enemies of Christianity.⁵⁹

Bessarion tried to reconcile Platonism with Aristotelianism, and had admitted to admiration for both Plato and Aristotle.⁶⁰ As Vitez usually tried to find a peaceful solution to a conflict, he could have found this view appealing because of its reconciliatory nature; in this context it is interesting to note that Leonard Huntzpichler advised Vitez to admit followers of both Realism and Nominalism into the university he founded in Bratislava, to avoid conflicts over philosophy.⁶¹ However, the conflict between George and Bessarion spiralled out of control when George accused Pletho of paganism. As Bessarion knew the accusation was true, he tried to play it off as a

54 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 142.

55 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 105.

56 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 105–6.

57 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*, 11:282, doc. 442.

58 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 142–43.

59 Pajorin, “L’Influsso del concilio di Basilea,” 113–14.

60 Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 87.

61 Frank, *Der antikonziliaristische Dominikaner Leonhard Huntzpichler*, 372–73.

conflict between philosophical systems.⁶² By the 1460s, their conflict evolved into a much larger dispute, involving other Italian humanists.⁶³ We do not know to what extent Vitez knew this, and there is no indication that he participated in the dispute, but the fact that he was aware of it indicates he monitored contemporary humanistic trends. In any case, George's treatise did not preoccupy him for very long; merely six days after he finished reading it, on September 26, he finished another, completely different work—that of St. John Climacus, an early medieval monk. Vitez (presumably) added summaries to some of its chapters and marked its pages with Arabic numerals.⁶⁴

Based on the data we have at our disposal, it seems Vitez's favourite authors were Tertullian and Jerome, fitting for a prelate famous for sermonizing, especially one who spent much of his life dealing with heterodox colleagues or adversaries—namely, Utraquists. We can also assume Vitez found it important to obtain high quality codices, as we know he either already possessed the texts they contained, or at least had access to them, as he used them as exemplars while emending.

Astronomers, Astrologers, and the University of Bratislava

This section touches upon Vitez's interest in astronomy, well-developed by this point in his life, in the context of his founding of the University of Bratislava. As we will demonstrate, these two subjects were intertwined, as astronomers were foremost members of both Vitez's court in Esztergom and of his university. As the history of the latter is, due to a lack of sources, unclear, we begin with examining the role of astronomers at Vitez's court, and then try to assess their involvement with the university.

To begin, it is important to note that astronomy remained Vitez's primary interest. Based on what we know of his activities, he would find time for it even at his busiest. Namely, during 1469, Vitez left Esztergom in March, to participate in the negotiations with Poděbrady, and affairs of state kept him away from his see until the spring of 1470. Despite his numerous responsibilities, during 1469 he found the time to read and emend a copy of Marcus Manilius's *Astronomicon* together with Galeotto Marzio. Of that there is no doubt, as the book in question contains a remark stating so, signed with initials that are doubtlessly Vitez's—"Jo. Ar. Strig" (Johannes Archiepiscopus Strigoniensis or John, Archbishop of Esztergom). This is another of the codices that bears Vitez's coat of arms.⁶⁵

Not long after that, Marzio dedicated his work *De homine* to Vitez, explicitly calling it a treatise on astrological medicine.⁶⁶ He based his idea of using astrology for medical

62 John Monfasani, "George Gemistos Pletho and the West: Greek Emigrés, Latin Scholasticism, and Renaissance Humanism," in *Renaissance Encounters—Greek East and Latin West*, ed. Marina S. Brownlee and Dimitri H. Gondicas (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 19–34 at 33.

63 Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 91–92.

64 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 108–9; Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library*, 258.

65 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 119. See also D'Alessandro, "Astrologia, religione e scienza," 133.

66 D'Alessandro, "Astrologia, religione e scienza," 142; Enikő Békés, "From King Matthias to Lorenzo

purposes on the teaching of Avicenna, according to which the positions of planets at the time of birth determined the length of one's life.⁶⁷ Marzio could, therefore, be useful to Vitez both as an astrologer and as a physician, and it is worth noting that those two disciplines overlapped significantly—the study and practice of medicine was almost inextricable from astrology.⁶⁸ This was during Marzio's second, longer sojourn in Hungary, lasting from 1465 until 1472.⁶⁹ During this period that Pannonius wrote a jocular poem about how Marzio once wrestled someone in Esztergom, before King Matthias.⁷⁰ This occasion possibly took place in the autumn of 1466, when we know the king was in Esztergom.⁷¹

King Matthias himself valued astrological advice,⁷² and we may assume that Vitez's influence played a part in that. For example, on July 25, 1468, while besieging Uherské Hradiště in Moravia, Matthias ordered the city of Bratislava to provide Galeotto Marzio and Martin Bylica with a carriage and horses, and to bring them to him as soon as possible.⁷³ As we have seen, Vitez was in Bratislava around that time,⁷⁴ perhaps organizing the newly founded university, so it is probable the two astrologers were with him there. One of the few purposes Matthias could have had for them was to use their advice for the siege. If he did, it was not particularly useful, as Victor Poděbrady later managed to relieve the besieged city.⁷⁵

Martin Bylica of Olkusz, a student of Martin Król Rex, resided in Rome with John Regiomontanus at the time of Pannonius's embassy in 1465, so it is probable the latter met them both there and invited them to Hungary.⁷⁶ They were both proficient in

de' Medici: Galeotto Marzio's Astrological Works and his Dedictees," in *De Frédéric II à Rodolphe II: astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, ed. Jean-Patrice Boudet, Martine Ostorero, and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: Sismel, 2017), 295–312 at 297–299.

67 Eugenio Garin, *Lo zodiaco della vita—La polemica sull'astrologia dal trecento al cinquecento* (Rome: Laterza, 2007), 48–49.

68 See, for example, Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 48–49, and the entire first and fourth chapter of that book.

69 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 38.

70 Pannonius, *Epigrammata*, ed. Barrett, 94–95.

71 MKL, 1:144–46, doc. 109.

72 See, for example, Endre Zsoldos, "The Stellarium of Johannes Tolhopff," in *Corvina Augusta: Die Handschriften des Königs Matthias Corvinus in der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*, ed. Edina Zsupan and Christian Heitzmann (Budapest: Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, 2014), 213–21; Darin Hayton, "Martin Bylica at the Court of Matthias Corvinus: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Hungary," *Centaurus* 49, no. 3 (2007): 185–98; Leslie S. Domonkos, "The Polish Astronomer Martin Bylica de Ilkusz in Hungary," *The Polish Review* 13, no. 3 (1968): 71–79.

73 Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*, 11:350–51, doc. 477; see also Jean-Patrice Boudet and Darin Hayton, "Matthias Corvin, János Vitéz et l'horoscope de fondation de l'université de Pozsony en 1467," in *Matthias Corvin, les bibliothèques princières et la genèse de l'état moderne*, ed. Jean-François Maillard et al. (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2009), 205–13 at 206.

74 He was there on June 10: see DF 266 510.

75 Heymann, *George of Bohemia*, 512.

76 Birnbaum, *Janus Pannonius*, 170–71; Nagy, "Ricerche cosmologiche," 80 and 83; Backowska,

casting horoscopes.⁷⁷ It was in Esztergom, in 1467, that Regiomontanus composed, with Bylica's help, the *Tabulae directionum et projectionum*.⁷⁸ In it they described the procedures for determining the division of the ecliptic plane into astrological houses and provided the instructions and charts for making horoscopes.⁷⁹ This work criticizes the method developed by John Gazulić,⁸⁰ so it may be Vitez had been using that method himself before Regiomontanus's and Bylica's arrival. Their method was not significantly more precise (the underlying theory was the same in both cases), but it was simpler.⁸¹ Also, in 1469 Regiomontanus made for Vitez a complex astronomical device—a torquetum—and composed the instructions for its use. The machine was meant to be used to determine the position of the planets, and Regiomontanus himself used it for that purpose.⁸²

It is therefore apparent that prognostic astrology remained one of Vitez's chief preoccupations, perhaps even more so as his power and responsibilities increased, along with the risks that came with them. Perhaps he sought solace in the stars then more than ever. It was probably he who had frescoes of the zodiac painted on the vault of a chamber in the archiepiscopal palace in Esztergom,⁸³ and the depictions of the sybils who prophesied the birth of Christ in his palace chapel could also point to his preoccupation with predictions.⁸⁴ However, it should also be noted that we do not have any evidence suggesting whether he possessed many of the key astrological texts, such as those of al-Qabisi, Abu Ma'shar, pseudo-Ptolemy or Michael Scot.⁸⁵ This could be attributed to the fact that we have no inventory of his library. However, it could also mean that delving too deep into astrology was unseemly for a prelate, or that he was more interested in applying its results than in studying its principles. After all, he could always employ men who could do the latter for him.

Vitez's pivotal role in the founding of the University of Bratislava, the *Universitas Istropolitana*, should perhaps be viewed in the context of his preoccupation with astro-

"Die internationalen Beziehungen," 85.

77 Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 33 and 94–95.

78 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 37–38 and 131.

79 Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 92–94.

80 Grmek and Dadić, "O astronomu Ginu Gazulu," 60–61.

81 Zdravko Faj, "O Gazulovoj tablici u Regiomontanusovu djelu 'Tabulae directionum...,'" in *Zbornik radova četvrtog simpozija iz povijesti znanosti*, ed. Dadić, 63–68 at 64–65.

82 Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 98–99; Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 132–33; Nagy, "Ricerche cosmologiche," 81.

83 Prokopp, "The Scholarship of Johannes Vitéz," 355–56 and Mária Prokopp, "L'Academia Istropolitana e il suo cancelliere Johannes Vitéz (1408–1472), primate d'Ungheria. Il programma degli affreschi nel suo studiolo a Esztergom," in *Matthias and His Legacy*, ed. Bárány and Györkös, 135–48 at 135–41.

84 István Horváth, "The Palace of Archbishop János Vitéz in Esztergom," in *A Star in the Raven's Shadow*, ed. Földesi et al., 197–207 at 197–200.

85 The library of the dukes of Milan, for example, did contain these books: see Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 50ff.

logy.⁸⁶ On May 19, 1465, during his embassy in Italy, Janus Pannonius requested from Pope Paul II permission to found a university in Hungary, at the place of the king's choosing. The pope approved and issued the bull with his permission to Vitez and Pannonius; it prescribed that the university was to be modelled on the one in Bologna.⁸⁷ Bratislava was elected for the new university's location, and it was officially opened on July 20, 1467.⁸⁸ According to the astrological chart made for its founding day, preserved on the last page of a copy of George of Trebizond's translation of the *Almagest*, the university was actually founded on June 5, in Esztergom Cathedral.⁸⁹ As we know Vitez participated in the Imperial Diet of Nuremberg between those two dates, it is possible he held the founding ceremony before departing, and the opening itself took place after his return.

Vitez apparently cared much for this university, at least at the beginning. According to an undated document probably written during the summer of 1467, Vitez personally received and welcomed distinguished students arriving to study in Bratislava. There was a considerable group of scions of powerful families there. The document in question was written by a tutor of a son of John Kállói, one of Vitez's oldest allies, so his son may have received special treatment, but Vitez certainly devoted his attention to the new university's inauguration.⁹⁰ On July 18, 1467, two days before the university opened, Vitez wrote from Esztergom to the municipal authorities of Bratislava that he sent to their city three professors—Giovanni Gatti, Martin Bylica and a doctor of liberal arts and medicine called Peter—so the university could start working, and that other professors were expected to arrive, as Vitez invited them from Italy and France.⁹¹ Gatti was probably the “Brother Johannes Watt,” professor of theology, who arrived in Vienna in July 1467 and presided over a disputation at the city's university, impressing everyone and spreading the fame of Vitez's university. The Dominican scholar Leonard Huntepichler described his visit in a letter to Vitez, mentioning that

86 Regarding the university, see Miriam Hlavačková, *Kapitula pri Dóme sv. Martina—Intelektuálne centrum Bratislavy v 15. storočí* (Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied / Historický ústav, 2008), 105–39.

87 Birnbaum, *Janus Pannonius*, 159; Prokopp, “Az egyetemszervező,” 263; for a transcription of the text of the bull, see Császár, *Az Academia Istropolitana*, 102–4, doc. 2.

88 Székely, “Universitätskanzler im Ungarn,” in *Universitas Budensis 1395–1995*, ed. Szögi and Varga, 47–48.

89 See Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 130 and Pajorin, “L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea,” 112. For a detailed description of this horoscope, its reproduction and transcript, see Boudet and Hayton, “Matthias Corvin, János Vitéz et l'horoscope de foundation,” 208–13. For a concise explanation of the practice of casting various charts, see Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars*, 60ff.

90 DL 48 206. For a thorough examination of the document and its transcript, see Tibor Klaniczay, “Egyetem Magyarországon Mátyás Korában,” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 94 (1990): 575–612 at 590–93 and 608–11.

91 Vitéz, *Opera*, ed. Boronkai, 221, doc. 45. Regarding those professors, see Ritoókné Szalay, “Der Humanismus in Ungarn,” 161 and 166. Said author thought that the mentioned “Peter” might have been the German humanist Peter Luder.

the said professor conveyed to him Vitez's greetings.⁹² It is therefore probable that this visit to Vienna was connected to the opening festivities held in nearby Bratislava.

Vitez did not neglect the university in the following years; in fact he worked to attract more lecturers, especially from the nearby University of Vienna.⁹³ He worked closely on this with Huntpichler, who advised that the new university should be an elite institution, with a small number of students.⁹⁴ This was not only good advice, but also necessary, due to the new institution's staffing problems. In 1467 Vitez had to resort to hiring graduate students from Vienna as theology professors. Two of them—Nicholas Schricker of Hüttendorf and Stephen of Brück—were apparently accomplished scholars (the former was eventually made a canon of Bratislava), likely recommended by George Schönberg. However, about two years later, in 1469, Vitez asked the University of Vienna to issue conditional licences to Lawrence of Krumbach and Matthias Gruber of Mödling allowing them to teach in Bratislava, and also allowing one of them to finish his practice lectures at the *Istropolitana*.⁹⁵

Sadly, as with many of Vitez's initiatives, the university came to nothing and disintegrated not long after his death. Vitez was perhaps also behind the opening of a printing house in Buda, maybe to supply books for the university. However, it became operational in 1473, after Vitez's death, and was also short-lived.⁹⁶ The only one who truly profited from the university was Martin Bylica, who went on to become King Matthias's court astrologer.⁹⁷

The Fame Lives On?

Upon examining Vitez's cultural activities during the latter years of his life, it only remains to their impact on his contemporaries. As we will explain here, Vitez's main means of spreading his fame were the same as when he was bishop of Oradea—to subsidize talented youths' studies in Italy, and to maintain contacts with foreign intellectuals. He continued doing so during his years as archbishop of Esztergom.

By the time he reached the apex of his career, Vitez had cultivated the image of one of the most generous patrons of the arts in central Europe. It is debatable whether he was more well-known than before, as many of the distinguished humanists with whom he had established acquaintanceships (such as Enea Silvio Piccolomini) had already passed away. The others knew him mostly through his protégés, such as Kosztoláni and Pannonius. As already mentioned, information regarding Vitez reached his first biographer, Vespasiano da Bisticci, through those two. Perhaps he had become more of a distant idea, an image of a wise man in a far away country.

⁹² Frank, "Das Gutachten," 433.

⁹³ Császár, *Az Academia Istropolitana*, 58–62 and 114–18, docs. 13–19.

⁹⁴ For a transcript of Huntpichler's treatise containing his advice to Vitez, see Frank, "Das Gutachten," 435–37. See also Ritoókné Szalay, "Peregrinazioni erudite," 64.

⁹⁵ Frank, "Das Gutachten," 430–32.

⁹⁶ Ritoókné Szalay, "Der Humanismus in Ungarn," 162; Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 124.

⁹⁷ Hayton, "Expertise *ex stellis*," 27ff.

Janus Pannonius was a more familiar face in international circles. He became acquainted with many of the Italian humanists, especially the Florentine ones, such as John Argyropoulos and Donato Acciaiuoli, during the late 1450s, while touring Italy upon finishing his studies. He renewed those acquaintances during his embassy to Rome in 1465.⁹⁸ On that occasion, he had the opportunity to meet a number of people who would later praise Vitez in their writings, such as Andrew Pannonius and Gaspare Tribraço.⁹⁹ In his book *De regiis virtutibus ad Matthiam Hungariae regem*, finished on September 1, 1467,¹⁰⁰ Andrew Pannonius praised a whole group of Hungarian prelates, even suggesting that the book could be read to Matthias by either Janus (of whom he said his voice was sweet and clear, and as rich as organ music), or Nicholas of Lunga (Nyújtod), bishop of Knin,¹⁰¹ also an associate of Vitez's. As for Vitez, Andrew dedicated a whole chapter of his book to praising his virtues.¹⁰² As for Gaspare Tribraço, he dedicated to Vitez a booklet containing seven of his eclogues, and had its title page decorated with a visual representation of the dedication: an image of himself offering the book to Vitez, whose image is surrounded with the inscription "Lux Pannoniae."¹⁰³ We may, therefore, assume Janus was behind these people's admiration for Vitez. There are other examples: John Argyropoulos dedicated his Latin translation of Aristotle's *On the Heavens* to Vitez, emphasizing his love of astronomy in the dedication.¹⁰⁴ It is possible Vitez's influence was behind King Matthias's invitation to Argyropoulos to Hungary in 1471,¹⁰⁵ but nothing indicates they were in direct contact. The circumstances again point to Janus as the intermediary.

As an ambassador to the Holy See, Janus Pannonius was received by the pope on May 19, 1465, the day he received permission to found a university in Hungary. On the same occasion he arranged for some ecclesiastical offices to be granted to Peter Garazda and other Hungarian and Slavonian students in Ferrara, along with permission for them to hold these as absentees for the duration of their studies.¹⁰⁶ He also personally recommended Garazda to Battista Guarino, the son of his late teacher.¹⁰⁷

98 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 117; see also Péter Ekler, "Propugnacula Christianitatis—studia humanitatis. Relations between Byzantium and Byzantine Humanists Active in Italy and Hungary in the Middle of the 15th Century," in *A Star in the Raven's Shadow*, ed. Földesi et al., 105–16 at 110–12.

99 Birnbaum, *Janus Pannonius*, 158.

100 For a comparison of this work to a similar one by the same author, written in 1471 and dedicated to Ercole d'Este, see Bene, "Where Paradigms Meet," 182ff.

101 Andreas Pannonius, "Libellus de virtutibus," ed. Fraknói and Ábel, 131.

102 Andreas Pannonius, "Libellus de virtutibus," ed. Fraknói and Ábel, 87–88. See also Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 47.

103 For descriptions of it, see Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 143 and Prokopp, "The Scholarship of Johannes Vitéz," 348.

104 Nagy, "Ricerche cosmologiche," 76; Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 48.

105 MKL, 1:256–57, doc. 182; see also Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 121–22.

106 MHEZ, 7:525, doc. 466.

107 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 116.

Peter's family had long served Vitez—his father John Garazda was a castellan of Oradea in 1457, and in that year a Demetrius Garazda was also mentioned as a retainer of Vitez's.¹⁰⁸ In return for the favours bestowed upon him, Peter spread Vitez's renown and prestige during his sojourn in Ferrara and, later, Florence. He probably influenced Bartolomeo Fonzio to dedicate his book *De poenitentia* to Vitez and to plan a journey to Hungary, though it never took place due to Vitez's death. As Vitez died soon after the book was finished, Fonzio ultimately dedicated it to Giuliano Medici. However, he mentioned in the dedication that he meant to bring the book with him to Hungary and present it to Vitez.¹⁰⁹ He wrote to Peter Garazda in the second half of 1471 that, as he failed to find employment in Ferrara, he was ready to move to Hungary,¹¹⁰ in the hope of entering Vitez's service. His hopes were dashed by Vitez's arrest, and he himself wrote to Battista Guarino on April 19, 1472, that he was shocked by the misfortunes that befell his friends—that Vitez was arrested by the king and that Pannonius perished while fleeing from the king. Fonzio was afraid the king's ire would reach Peter Garazda as well,¹¹¹ which indicates Peter's close association with the disgraced prelates.

During his Florence days, Garazda also served as a liaison between Janus Pannonius and the famous Neoplatonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino, who sent Pannonius a copy of his commentary on Plato's *Symposium* in August 1469.¹¹² In return, Pannonius sent Ficino his own poems. Although there is no proof of Vitez's direct contact with Ficino, he was perhaps aware of his work.¹¹³ It is also worth noting that many of the scholars who were members of Vitez's court—such as Regiomontanus and Gatti—were previously members of Bessarion's circle in Rome.¹¹⁴ This might indicate Vitez had an interest in Neoplatonism. Still, even the anti-Platonist George of Trebizond, Bessarion's adversary, tried to get in Vitez's good graces, perhaps hoping for employment. The liaison between the two of them was almost certainly Polycarp Kosztoláni, George's son-in-law. In 1467, after George was shunned by the pope due to his secret dealings with the sultan during an embassy to Constantinople in 1465,¹¹⁵ the recently disenfranchised philosopher sent out three copies of his Latin translations of Greek works.

108 Theiner, 2:284, doc. 447. See also Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség*, 1:293. For a reconstruction of the Garazda family tree, see Pálosfalvi, "Vitézek és Garázdák," 16. Also note there were Slavonian nobles with the last name Garazda, so it would have made sense for Vitez to take them on as retainers, but that that name was borne by other families as well. See Pálosfalvi, *The Noble Elite*, 295–301.

109 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 102; Daneloni, "Sui rapporti," 299; Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 122–23.

110 Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, 24–26, doc. 12.

111 Fonzio, *Letters to Friends*, trans. Davies, 36, doc. 16; see also Daneloni, "Sui rapporti," 294.

112 Valery Rees, "Marsilio Ficino and the Rise of Philosophic Interests in Buda," in *Italy and Hungary*, ed. Farbaky and Waldman, 127–51 at 130–32.

113 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 120–21.

114 Ritoókné Szalay, "Der Humanismus in Ungarn," 163; Bene, "Where Paradigms Meet," 212; Zinner, *Regiomontanus*, 51ff and 90.

115 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 114.

To Vitez he sent *Contra Eunomium* by St. Basil the Great, originally commissioned by Bessarion; to Pannonius *De spiritu sancto ad Amphiloichium* by the same author; and to King Matthias the already mentioned Ptolemy's *Almagest*.¹¹⁶ There is also a codex containing George's translations of two of St. Basil's texts, as well as Bessarion's dedication of it to Pope Eugene IV and George's polemical letter to Bessarion; it was originally marked with Vitez's coat of arms, later painted over and covered with Matthias's. Vitez possibly gave this codex to Matthias after receiving the book dedicated to him personally by George.¹¹⁷

Stephen Bajoni also contributed to Vitez's renown in Florence. He served as King Matthias's emissary to Florence in 1469, and the Florentine authorities noted that he told them of Vitez's and Janus Pannonius's good will towards their city.¹¹⁸ He was the one who suggested to the city fathers that they send a few lions to Matthias as a present, because of the king's fondness for the animals.¹¹⁹ The lions were actually sent, and a Hungarian student named John Telegdi was charged with escorting them during transport; he called himself "Leontinus" to commemorate that occasion.¹²⁰

Perhaps it is ironic that Vitez's fame became an urban phenomenon in Florence, as he essentially did not have any contacts with that city until the very end of his life. Still, it might be that he was remembered as a great man at least by some Florentine humanists. Jacobus Publicius mentioned in his work on the history of the House of Laval, the *Panegyricus domus Lavallensis*, that before composing that text he wrote the histories of the Ottoman and Bohemian wars of King Matthias, and a biography of a very wise and saintly archbishop of Esztergom ("sapientissimi atque sanctissimi strigoniensis archiepiscopi"), to commemorate his glorious and virtuous life: that was most likely Vitez.¹²¹ The biography itself, unfortunately, is not preserved.

Except for scattered traces in various codices, little remains of Vitez's physical legacy. The construction works he commissioned in Oradea and Esztergom were almost completely destroyed during the centuries after his death. As for what is left, we have already seen that his tombstone is today mostly reconstructed, and there are some fragments that might be remains of his building projects. Bonfini wrote of the marvelous works executed for Vitez in Esztergom, such as a new roof for the basilica, a bath with cold and hot water, a lovely garden, and a tower on a cliff top overlooking the

116 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 110–12. Regarding George's translations, see also Péter Ekler, "Die *Bibliotheca Corviniana*: Lateinische Übersetzungen griechischer Autoren," in *Matthias Corvin, les bibliothèques princières et la genèse de l'état moderne*, ed. Jean-François Maillard et al. (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2009), 237–47 at 238–39.

117 Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 88.

118 Gentile, "Marsilio Ficino," 94.

119 MKL, 1:241–43, doc. 177.

120 Pajorin, "L'Influsso del concilio di Basilea," 119.

121 Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library*, 338–39; Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Die Bibliothek des Johannes Vitéz*, 131. For the original text, see Jacobus Publitiu, *Panegyricus Lavallensis domus, ad illustrissimum Remorum Ducem dominum Petrum de Laval*, fol. 2v. Available online at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9077974t/f3.image>.

Danube, in which the prelate was fond of residing.¹²² Janus Pannonius also praised his edifices.¹²³ However, although the existence of some of the buildings described by Bonfini, such as a large dining hall with an adjacent chapel and an external red-marble gallery, is attested by sixteenth-century sources, only fragments of them still stand above ground. The archiepiscopal palace was so completely destroyed and overbuilt that even the memory of its location was utterly lost.¹²⁴ In recent times, fragments of frescoes were excavated from the ruins of the old archiepiscopal complex in Esztergom, depicting personifications of the cardinal virtues and the already mentioned signs of the zodiac.¹²⁵ These might have been commissioned by Vitez, but it is impossible to say with certainty. Nothing beside remains.

122 Bonfini, *Rerum Ungaricarum*, 593. See also Horváth, “The Palace of Archbishop János Vitéz in Esztergom,” 197–98. Horváth thinks that most of the construction works attributed to Vitez were actually initiated by Dennis Szécsi.

123 Pannonius, *Epigrammata*, ed. Barrett, 94 and 226.

124 Horváth, “The Palace of Archbishop János Vitéz in Esztergom,” 198–207.

125 Prokopp, “The Scholarship of Johannes Vitéz,” 355–56 and Prokopp, “L’Accademia,” 135–41.