

REPRESENTATIONS OF OTTOMAN (TURKISH) RAIDS IN SLOVAK RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE POETRY

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ABSTRACT: The article examines representations of Ottoman (Turkish) raids and their consequences in Slovak poetry of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, with particular attention to the similarities and differences between the two periods. It seeks to identify the biblical sources underlying these representations and examines the hypothesis that Renaissance and Baroque authors drew upon biblical motifs and imagery when articulating their experiences of wartime trauma and violence.

KEYWORDS: Biblical allusion. Intertextuality. Lamentations. Spiritual songs. Historical songs.

INTRODUCTION

At the outset, the question arises as to why I use the term “Turk” in this article, given that it is a problematic designation. The Ottoman Empire, whose army defeated the forces of the Kingdom of Hungary at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, was a multi-ethnic state, and consequently many of its soldiers and officials were not ethnic Turks. The reason for using this term is that it was commonly employed in the literature of the period, which referred to Turks and, in some cases, Tatars. Contemporary sources did not distinguish between different ethnic identities, treating ethnicity as an unnecessary “detail” (Kubisa 2023, 226).

The paper focuses on the Renaissance and Baroque periods because they constituted the principal era of Ottoman (Turkish) raids and their representation in Slovak literature. Following the defeat of the Hungarian army at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the Ottomans gained access to the territory of present-day Slovakia and began conducting plundering raids there. Under the 1547 agreement between King Ferdinand I of Habsburg and the Ottomans, the central regions of the Kingdom of Hungary came under Ottoman administration, with the northern boundary of this territory extending into the southern regions of present-day Slovakia.

The military garrisons stationed in castles, fortresses, and towns, particularly in the southern regions of present-day Slovakia, thus formed a defensive barrier intended to halt the expansion of the Ottoman forces. These “borderland” regions had to be closely guarded, as Ottoman troops attacked the local population during their raids, killing inhabitants and carrying others off into slavery (Hurtajová 2000, 90).

The period under consideration therefore encompasses the Renaissance, from the sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, as well as the first phase of Baroque literature (1650 – 1680), during which the Ottoman occupation reached its height following the capture of Nové Zámky in 1663 (ibid.). The Ottomans were defeated at Vienna in 1683, an event that marked the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Central Europe. They gradually withdrew from the territory of present-day Slovakia, while anti-Ottoman themes likewise began to lose their contemporary relevance (ibid., 90 – 91).

Although the presence of the Ottomans in the territory of present-day Slovakia has received greater attention from a historiographical perspective and has been examined primarily in factual

and scholarly rather than literary works (Kákošová 2010, 31), several studies have also addressed their representation in Slovak literary texts. These include Z. Hurtaiová's *Obráz Turkov a Tatárov v staršej slovenskej literatúre* [The Image of Turks and Tatars in Early Slovak Literature] (2000); Z. Kákošová's essentially identical study, published three times under different titles: *Obráz Turka v slovenskej literatúre 16. a 17. storočia* [The Image of the Turk in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Slovak Literature] (2008), *Recepčné stereotypy obrazu Turka v slovenskej literatúre 16. a 17. storočia* [Reception Stereotypes in the Image of the Turk in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Slovak Literature] (2009) and *Podoby zobrazovania Turka a tureckých realít v slovenskej literatúre 16. a 17. storočia* [Forms of Representing the Turk and Ottoman Realities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Slovak Literature] (2010); M. Zajíčková's *Obráz Turka v tvorbe Slovákov a Macedóncov* [The Image of the Turk in the Works of Slovaks and Macedonians] (2015); and T. Kubisa's *Obráz Turka a „tureckého“ v povestiach regiónu Požitavie* [The Image of the Turk and the "Turkish" in the Legends of the Požítavie Region] (2023).

The present paper does not examine the image of the Turks in general, but focuses more narrowly on the subject of Ottoman raids and exclusively on the poetry of the periods under consideration, in which this theme appears more frequently than in prose.

Turkish and Tatar themes appear in Slovak literature in a wide range of literary forms and genres, as well as in works written in several languages. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, they featured in literary works composed in Latin (Pavol Rubigal, Ján Sambucus, Martin Rakovský, Ján Bocatius, Ján Filický, Jakub Jakobeus, among others), German (Ján Dernschwam, Sebastian Fabricius, Štefan Pilárik the Elder, Daniel Speer, among others), and the vernacular (Hurtaiová 2000, 98).

As this list indicates, the subject was addressed both by authors of local origin and by foreigners living in the territory of present-day Slovakia, including Pavol Rubigal, Ján Bocatius, Jakub Jakobeus, Ján Dernschwam, Sebastian Fabricius, and Daniel Speer. It was also treated by authors who lived abroad, for example as a consequence of the religious persecution of Protestants, such as Štefan Pilárik the Elder and Vavrínek Benedikt of Nedožery (*ibid.*).

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RAIDS

This paper focuses on anti-Ottoman themes. T. Kubisa (2023, 236) states that, until the Ottoman defeat at Vienna in 1683, the Christian West perceived the Ottomans as the "Other." This constitutes a hetero-image – that is, an image of others rather than a self-image – in which they were represented primarily as foreign, cruel, Muslim enemies.

Z. Hurtaiová distinguishes two stages in the development of anti-Tatar and anti-Ottoman themes in Slovak literature. She dates the first stage as early as the thirteenth century, when Tatar military forces ravaged the Kingdom of Hungary (Hurtaiová 2000, 91). After 1526, Hurtaiová identifies a second stage, in which, as she argues, the Ottomans played the decisive role. She divides this stage into three phases: the first is situated in the first half of the sixteenth century, the second in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and the third extends from the end of the sixteenth century to the defeat of the Ottoman forces.

The first phase is characterised by a paraenetic – that is, reproachful and admonitory – emphasis and is represented by the works of Pavol Rubigal. In these works, Pannonia first implores Germania for assistance against the Ottomans, then makes a formal appeal, and finally voices a complaint: *Querela Pannoniae ad Germaniam* [Pannonia's Appeal to Germania] (Wittenberg, 1537); *Hodoeporicon itineris Constantinopolitani* [An Account of the Journey to Constantinople]; and *Epistola Pannoniae ad Germaniam recens scripta* [A New Letter from Pannonia to Germania]

(Wittenberg, 1545). The second phase comprises historical songs depicting the defence of castles and fortresses against numerically superior Ottoman forces. The works belonging to the third phase are markedly lamentational in character and also express anti-German and anti-imperial sentiments. In addition to articulating a desire for peace, they convey the belief that the Ottoman raids constituted divine punishment. Baroque tendencies are manifested in the increasing emotionalisation and subjectivisation of lyric poetry (ibid., 93). According to this periodisation, texts dealing with Ottoman raids belong to the second and third phases of the second stage in the development of anti-Tatar and anti-Ottoman themes in early Slovak literature.

The representation of Ottoman raids in Renaissance literature also appears within the genre of religious poetry. In the 1606 hymn *Ach, Bože svatý, jakých časův sme se dočkali* [O Holy God, What Times Have We Lived to See], included in the volume *Aliquot psalmorum Davidorum paraphrasis... / Žalмовé někteří v písni české na způsob veršů latinských vnově vyvedeni a vydání* [Paraphrases of Several Psalms of David... / Certain Psalms Newly Rendered and Published as Czech Songs in the Manner of Latin Verse] (Prague, 1606), Vavrinec Benedikt of Nedožery (1555 – 1614) gradually enumerates the atrocities committed by the Ottomans. The poem consists of twenty-nine five-line stanzas, and several of the motifs appearing in it subsequently became conventional topoi. First and foremost, the poem refers to killing: „K nám se teď nepřátelé Turci přiblížili, / tvých věřících křesťanův množství mečem zbilí“ [The enemy Turks have now drawn near to us and have slain multitudes of your Christian faithful with the sword]. The passage immediately establishes a religious contrast between the invading non-Christians and the native Christian population.

The destruction and burning of defensive sites are subsequently enumerated through parallelism: „Města, zámky, kostely mnohé vyvrátili, / vsi mnohé, tvrže mnohé ohněm vypálili“ [Many towns, castles, and churches they destroyed; many villages and many fortresses they burned with fire]. The amplificatory structure conveys the idea that no place is safe. The repetition of the word *many* emphasises that these acts were not isolated incidents but constituted a widespread practice. A similar form of amplification, based on age-related parallelism, expresses the devastating consequences of warfare for all generations: „Co starých postínali, mladých navázali, / k bide věčné před sebou do svých krajín hnali!“ [The old they cut down, the young they bound, and drove them before them into their lands, to everlasting misery!]

When referring to the forced Islamisation of children, the poem synecdochically conveys the grief of their parents through the figure of the mothers, since the fathers were expected to participate in the defence: „a dítky křesťanských lidí malé poturčili, / an na to s pláčem truchlé rodičky patřili“ [and the small children of Christian people they converted to Islam, while their grieving mothers watched them with tears] (all Mišianik 1981, 244).¹

Vavrinec Benedikt of Nedožery presents Christian disunity, particularly religious conflict, as a major cause of Ottoman success. „Křesťané se nesnadí, Turek se veselí, / křesťané že tak jedni proti druhým čelí“ [Christians quarrel, while the Turk rejoices, because Christians thus confront one another]. The lyrical subject therefore addresses the Christian audience directly with a question: „Křesťané milí, prosím, proč nás mrzí pokoj? / Tuť nemůže dobře býti, kdež trvá rozbroj!“ [Dear Christians, I ask you, why does peace displease us? Nothing can prosper where discord endures!] (both ibid., 245). Through parallelism and the anaphoric repetition of *how long*, the speaker then poses a series of rhetorical questions: „Dlouholiž pak křesťané budou se hadrovat, / dlouholiž pak vespolek budou se mordovat?“² [How long will Christians continue to quarrel? How long will they

1 All the texts analysed are taken from ASSL. In the following discussion, page references are provided only after the final quotation taken from the relevant page.

2 Similar parallel constructions featuring the anaphoric use of the interrogative adverb *how long* are well attested in psalmic literature: „Dokedy, Pane? Stále budeš na mňa zabúdat? Dokedy budeš pred mnou skrývať svoju tvár?“ (Ž 13, 2) – “How long, Lord? Will you utterly forget me? How long will you hide

continue to murder one another?]. The poem acknowledges that the Ottoman victories are, in a certain sense, deserved. The Turk is synecdochically assigned positively evaluative attributes precisely because of the disunity among Christians: „Skrz to jak v Uhřích se jak v jiných zemích děje, / ať se nám chytrý Turek spravedlivě směje“ [Through this, as happens in Hungary and in other lands, the cunning Turk laughs at us with good reason]. The theological explanation offered for the Ottoman incursions is that they constitute divine punishment for sin: „Hříchy naše nám škodí, zlé všechno působí, / k svému pádu křesťané se vespolek zlobí“ [Our sins do us harm and bring forth every evil; Christians, hostile to one another, hasten towards their own downfall] (all *ibid.*, 246).

This interpretation corresponds to the convictions of humanist intellectuals. Erasmus of Rotterdam, for example, described the Ottomans both as a threat to the Christian world and as an instrument of divine punishment (Kubisa 2023, 236). The source of such an interpretation of historical events lies in the *Bible*, in which numerous tragedies, natural disasters, and military defeats are explained as divine punishment for sin, disobedience, or idolatry. Renaissance and Baroque authors whose works included motifs of Ottoman raids drew particularly upon the *Book of Lamentations*, with its account of the destruction of Jerusalem, and upon the *Psalms*.³

„Nespomínej nám našich hříchů, milý Pane, / neb budeš-li mstít nás z hříchův, kdo zůstane?“ [Remember not our sins, dear Lord, for if you punish us for our sins, who shall remain?] (Mišianik 1981, 247). This passage establishes an intertextual connection with the psalmic statement: „Ak si budeš, Pane, v pamäti uchovávať neprávosť, Pane, kto obstojí?“ (Ž 130, 3).⁴

As an author of paraphrases of the *Psalms*, Benedikt also establishes a contrast between the raiders and their victims based on religious affiliation. This contrast is also evident in prayers addressed to God, in which the speaker asks Him to intervene against unbelieving enemies. Such passages recall several psalms, including *Psalms* 2 and 79, in which the psalmist asks God for protection against his enemies and adversaries, who are represented as those who have strayed and who commit iniquity. A contrapuntal opposition is therefore created between the lyrical subject, who observes the Lord's commandments, and his persecutors: „Skaz ty sám, kteří se ménu tvému rouhají, / ty, kteří cizím bohům tvou slávu dávají! Sám ty chráň svých křesťanův“ [Destroy those who blaspheme your name, those who give your glory to foreign gods! You yourself protect your Christians] (Mišianik 1981, 247).

Here, Benedikt of Nedožery asks God to intervene against unbelievers and idolaters who violate the first two divine commandments. In doing so, he draws upon biblical formulations;

your face from me?” (Ps. 13:2); „Dokedy mi bude dušu trápiť nepokoj a srdce dennodenne bôľ? Dokedy sa nepriateľ bude vypínať nado mnou?“ (Ž 13, 3) – “How long must I carry sorrow in my soul, grief in my heart day after day? How long will my enemy triumph over me?” (Ps. 13:3); „Dokedy chcete napádať človeka, dokedy ho chcete všetci krušiť ako stenu, čo sa nakláňa, ako múr, čo sa váľa?“ (Ž 62, 4) – “How long will you set yourself against a man? You shall all be destroyed, like a sagging wall or a tumbled-down fence?” (Ps. 62:4); „Dokedy ešte hriešnici, Pane, dokedy ešte budú hriešnici jasať?“ (Ž 94, 3) – “How long, Lord, shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked glory?” (Ps. 94:3).

3 In the *Book of Lamentations*, the motif of punishment for sin appears, for example, in the following passages: „Pán ho sklúčil / pre množstvo jeho hriechov“ (Nár 1, 5) – “Because the Lord has afflicted her / for her many rebellions” (Lam. 1:5); „Čože sa ponosuje živý človek, / muž pre trest za hriech?“ (Nár 3, 39) – “What should the living complain about? / About their sins!” (Lam. 3:39); „My sme sa prehrešili, búrili sa, / preto si neodpustil“ (Nár 3, 42) – “We have rebelled and been obstinate / you have not forgiven us” (Lam. 3:42). All biblical quotations in English are taken from the *New American Bible, Revised Edition* (NABRE), a modern Catholic translation of the *Bible* into English published in 2011 and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Available at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-American-Bible-Revised-Edition-NABRE-Bible/> [10. 06. 2026].

4 “If you, Lord, keep account of sins, Lord, who can stand?” (Ps. 130:3).

compare, for example, the lament over the devastated sanctuary: „Bože, dokedy sa bude rúhať nepriateľ? / Vari naveky bude protivník urážať tvoje meno?“ (Ž 74, 10).⁵

In the Hebrew tradition, the divine name not only denoted but also represented and embodied its bearer; for this reason, the second commandment prohibits its misuse. The same opposition is employed in the prayers addressed to God in the final two stanzas: „Ó, učíš svým křesťanům, rychlou učíš pomoc, / ukrutníkův neb na nás hrozná valí se moc!“ [O grant your Christians swift assistance, for the dreadful power of cruel men is advancing upon us!], and „Ať vidí nepřátelé, o nás že péči máš, / že sme věrný tvůj my lid, že nás skazit nedáš“ [Let the enemies see that you care for us, that we are your faithful people and that you will not allow us to be destroyed] (Mišianik 1981, 248).

These passages likewise reflect Benedikt's tendency to employ parallelisms and enumerations characteristic of biblical poetry. „Ó, nebeský králi náš, ó, rač se ozvati, / zběr tureckou, zběr tatarskou rač rozehnati!“ [O our heavenly King, O deign to answer; deign to scatter the Ottoman host, to scatter the Tatar host!] (ibid., 247). The final three lines of every stanza form a refrain calling upon Christ to join the defensive struggle: „Stůj při nás, / bojuj za nás, / ó, Kriste, králi náš!“ [Stand beside us, fight for us, O Christ, our King!].

Daniel Pribiš's hymnal *Pisně duchovní* [Spiritual Songs] (1634) also contains ten hymns by Eliáš Láni (1570 – 1618) that were subsequently incorporated into the *Cithara sanctorum*. Among them is the religious hymn *Auveh, běda mne hříšníci...* [Alas, Woe Is Me, a Sinner...]. The interjection *Auveh* echoes biblical texts and signifies “woe” or “alas.” It derives from the Greek *ouai*, which in turn originates from the Hebrew *hoy*. It does not constitute a threat, in the sense of “Woe to you!”, but rather expresses grief. It formed part of lamentations, including funeral laments performed in mourning for the dead (Maggi 2025, 134).

The interjection was adopted by the *Old Testament* prophets to introduce the so-called woe-oracles, which indicate the inevitability of judgement or death. Through their ungodly conduct, the addressees of such pronouncements had distanced themselves from God or separated themselves from God, which ultimately signified death.

The hymn bears the subtitle *Naříkaní církve svatej na ukrutnost tyranův* [Lamentation of the Holy Church over the Cruelty of Tyrants]. Although the text appears to be a subjective first-person utterance, the speaking subject is in fact a personification of the Evangelical Church. The tyrants include both the Ottomans, represented synecdochically by the singular used in place of the plural (*singularis pro plurali*), and Catholics, represented through a *pars pro toto* synecdoche by the figure of the pope: „Turek mne trápi, / pápež mne trati“ [The Turk torments me / the pope brings me to ruin].

The Church thus laments both the period of Ottoman raids and the religious persecution of Protestants. At the same time, however, the text remains on a general level: it does not identify specific historical events, but merely appeals to God: „daj spasitele, / zbaviž mne krvavého kúpele!“ [send a saviour, deliver me from the bloodbath!] (both Mišianik 1981, 250).

The refrain concluding each of the poem's three nine-line stanzas contains both a plea for divine mercy and a request that the pagans be put to shame: „Polituj mne, milý Pane, / ať se zahanbí pohané!“ [Have mercy on me, dear Lord, and let the pagans be put to shame!].

The motif of the humiliation of one's enemies occurs frequently in the *Psalms*; compare, for example: „Všetci moji nepřátelia nech sa zahanbia“ (Ž 6, 11);⁶ „Nech sa zahanbia a zhynú moji protivníci“ (Ž 71, 13);⁷ and „Nech sú zahanbení tí, čo vystupujú proti mne“ (Ž 109, 28).⁸

5 “How long, O God, will the enemy jeer? Will the enemy revile your name forever?” (Ps. 74:10).

6 “My foes will all be disgraced and will shudder greatly” (Ps. 6:11).

7 “Bring to a shameful end those who attack me” (Ps. 71:13).

8 “Arise, shame them, that your servant may rejoice” (Ps. 109:28).

The hymn *V veľkej žalosti sme položení* [We Are Plunged into Great Sorrow] likewise belongs generically to the tradition of lament. In the Protestant manuscript known as the *Bystrica Agenda*, dating from 1610 – 1625, it appears under the title *Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae* [The Lamentation of the Prophet Jeremiah]. Lament is a biblical genre related to the elegy or dirge. In the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the biblical *Book of Lamentations* is attributed to Jeremiah, although he was not its author, since the work contradicts the *Book of Jeremiah* on several points (Heriban 1995, 1715).

In the first stanza of the hymn, the collective lyrical subject, expressed through the first-person plural, compares its situation to Jeremiah's prophecy addressed to the Jewish people. From the second stanza onwards, the text constitutes a paraphrase of the fifth lament in the *Book of Lamentations*, which bears the title *The Prayer of the Prophet Jeremiah* in the *Vulgate*. In the *Vulgate*, the *Book of Lamentations* is entitled *Threni, id est Lamentationes* [Jeremiae] (Dirges, or Lamentations [of Jeremiah]), which may explain the title used in the *Bystrica Agenda* (*Agenda Bystricensis*).⁹

The anonymous author, however, adapts the biblical lament to contemporary circumstances. In the third stanza, he refers explicitly to the Ottomans: „*Neb sú již od nás naše očizny / Turkom v ruce prišli*“ [For our ancestral lands have now fallen into the hands of the Turks]. Egypt and Assyria in the source text are replaced by pagans: „*Pod moc pohanov již sme poddaní*“ [We have now been subjected to the power of pagans] (both Mišianik 1981, 253). The servants of the Babylonian king are transformed into oppressive lords: „*Nám sú povstali zlostiví páni / nad nami panujú*“ [Wicked lords have risen over us, exercising dominion over us]. The wilderness is replaced by the mountains: „*v huorách sme se kryli*“ [we hid in the mountains] (all *ibid.*, 254). The biblical line „*zhanobili ženy na Sione*“ [they dishonoured the women in Zion] is rendered as „*a mnohé ženy medzi kresťany / jesú pohanbené*“ [and many women among the Christians have been dishonoured]. Similarly, „*vrch Sion spustol*“ [mount Zion lies desolate] is transformed into „*naše príbytky, kde sme meškali, / ty sú spustateli*“ [our dwellings, in which we once lived, have become desolate] (*ibid.*, 255). The lament over Jerusalem is thus recast as a lament over an Ottoman raid on the territory of present-day Slovakia.

The author likewise adapts the formal features of the source text to contemporary poetic conventions. Each verse of the biblical lament is sung in a four-line stanza written in a syllabic verse system, with a regular alternation between decasyllabic and hexasyllabic lines, but with an irregular pattern of assonance. This irregularity recalls the formal irregularity of the biblical model. The fifth biblical lament is not composed in the *qināh* metre used in the preceding laments, but in a shorter and more forceful metre.¹⁰

Nor is it an alphabetic poem, although it preserves a comparable twenty-two-verse structure corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. This departure from formal regularity in the final lament has been interpreted as an indication of the extreme disorder that followed the destruction of Jerusalem; therefore, the formal organisation of the text is understood as reflecting its content.

The author of the paraphrase added two concluding stanzas. In the penultimate stanza, he announces the end of the text and explicitly states that it is a paraphrase of the final biblical lament: „*Plačíc tak mluvil, když se jest modlil, / Jeremiáš prorok, / jakž o tom svedčí plač jeho Písma / v tej*

9 It is well known that Protestants and Catholics adopted religious hymns from one another. The term *threni* derives from the Greek *thrēnoi*, meaning “dirges” or “laments,” as used in the Septuagint.

10 Metre in Hebrew poetry is based on a fixed number of stressed syllables, while unstressed syllables are not counted. The *qināh* metre consists of three stressed syllables, or metrical feet, in the first half-line and two in the second (3 + 2). The metre of the fifth lament is shorter, often consisting of two stresses in each half-line, and is sometimes described as a 2 + 2 pattern.

poslednej častki“ [Thus, weeping, he spoke as he prayed, Jeremiah the prophet, as is attested by the lament in his Scripture in its final part] (*ibid.*, 255).

Jakub Jakobeus likewise produced an updated version of the lament. His Latin epic-reflective poem *Gentis Slavonicae lacrumae, suspiria et vota* [The Tears, Sighs, and Supplications of the Slovak Nation] (1642) forms an appendix to the historical prose work *Viva gentis Slavonicae delineatio* [A Vivid Outline of the Slovak Nation: On the Origins and History of the Slovaks], which is now considered lost.

The poem is an adaptation of the Czech humanist poet Václav Klement Žebrácký's work *Tempus erat, quo parva quidem, sed debita caelo gens* [There Was a Time When a Nation, Small Yet Devoted to Heaven...] (1614), published in *Libellus supplex* [A Booklet of Supplication]. Žebrácký composed a lament in which the Czech Church mourns its fate; his contemporary Jakobeus transformed it into the lament of a nation within the Kingdom of Hungary.

The poem concludes with a lamentational monologue spoken in elegiac couplets by the “Mother of the Slovaks,” who appeals to Christ for protection against the devil, embodied by the Ottomans. The first cause of sorrow mentioned in this monologic lament is the threat posed by Muhammad (Kákošová 2008, 112). The poem subsequently enumerates Ottoman „*plienenie, zbojstvo a vraždy – strašný to osud, pod ktorým pomedzia uhorskej krajiny vzdychajú teraz*“ [plundering, brigandage, and murder – a dreadful fate beneath which the borderlands of the Hungarian realm now groan] (*ibid.*, 153).

The very title *The Tears, Sighs, and Supplications of the Slovak Nation* evokes the opening of the *Book of Lamentations*, in which the personified city of Jerusalem is represented as a widow who „*prehorko plače v noci, / líca má zaslzené, / niet, kto by ju potešil*“ (Nár 1, 2).¹¹ In Jakobeus's work, the Slovak nation is similarly personified as shedding tears.

During the Renaissance, the course of military conflicts was represented primarily through the genre of the historical song. Such songs responded to significant contemporary historical events. In addition to the anti-Ottoman wars, they depicted the uprisings of the Estates and conflicts associated with the Counter-Reformation.

More important than the historical framework itself, however, was the author's subjective ideological perspective. The relationship between the historical song and the historical event was therefore highly flexible, and the genre should be understood as a poetic interpretation of historical events, much as T. Kubisa observes about historical legends (2023, 236).

In the *Song of Sziget* (1566), which consists of one hundred stanzas of five lines each, the individual Ottoman assaults (*šturmy*) are enumerated in considerable detail. The number of Ottoman soldiers is presented through a gradation of large, rounded figures, indicating not a documentarily reliable account of an actual historical event, but rather the use of hyperbole and numerical symbolism. The latter is also evident in the repeated use of the numbers three and seven. For example, Suleiman takes three pashas, three of his sons, and seven *beys* into battle; he is expected to capture Sziget within three days; he dies after three days of illness; a woman disguised as a man beheads seven Turks; Mikuláš is not found until the third day; and on the third day the emperor is informed that Sziget has been captured.

The hyperbolic representation of the number of enemy troops serves to emphasise the heroism of the local defenders in the face of overwhelming Ottoman numerical superiority. The inaccuracies in the account of historical events reflect an effort to fictionalise the material – that is, to modify the facts so that they fit the narrative more effectively. In some cases, however, they may simply result from error, as in the rendering of the Ottoman battle cry as *Halla!* instead of *Allah* (Mišianik 1981, 174).

11 “Weeps incessantly in the night, her cheeks damp with tears. She has no one to comfort her” (Lam. 1:2).

As in antiquity – for example, in the historiography of Herodotus – historical songs sought above all to combine factual material into a compelling narrative. This was sometimes achieved at the cost of logical consistency. In stanza 10, for instance, Suleiman takes 300,000 warriors with him, whereas stanza 85 states that, after their victory, the Ottomans rejoiced and paid no heed to the fact that 300,000 of their men had fallen. Logically, therefore, no one should have remained to achieve the victory.

The speaking subject is neither neutral nor objective. From the beginning of the text, he expresses his emotional attachment to the castle where he served his “dear lord” (ibid.), Mikuláš Zrínský, the captain of the defenders. Zrínský’s antagonist, Suleiman, is conversely described as proud and malicious. Suleiman is not represented as a valiant warrior and does not die heroically in battle. Instead, he falls ill from fear during a feast after a Hungarian artilleryman strikes a pillar in the middle of the room.

The poem employs a narrative pattern similar to that found in *Mor ho!* by the Romantic poet Samo Chalupka: the native defenders are not inherently warlike, but when attacked, they fight courageously against an overwhelmingly superior enemy. Consequently, although they are defeated in battle, they emerge as moral victors.

This narrative structure is disrupted in the *Song of Certain Castles: Modrý Kameň, Divín, and Zvolen* (1596), which comprises ninety-two three-line stanzas written in octosyllabic verse and depicts the capture of as many as three castles. The narrative is framed by a conversation between the pashas and the sultan: at the beginning, they ask his permission to set out to conquer Hungary, and at the end, they thank him for granting it.

The accounts of the assaults on the first two castles contain parallel textual passages extending over entire stanzas. These include the warriors’ defiant challenge to the Ottomans: „*My vám zámku nepoddáme, / ani vy ho nevezmete, / s hanbou od neho pújdete!*“ [We shall not surrender the castle to you, nor shall you capture it; you will depart from it in disgrace!]. This passage appears in both stanzas 22 and 32 (ibid., 182), while its concluding line, „*s hanbou od neho pújdete!*“ [you will depart from it in disgrace], is repeated in a refrain-like manner in stanza 41 (ibid., 183). Similarly, the phrase „*krásnou baštu jsou lámali*“ [they battered the fine bastion] recurs in both stanzas 24 and 44.

The disruption of the established pattern lies in the contrast between the heroic defenders of Modrý Kameň and Divín and the portrayal of the battle at Zvolen. Before each engagement, the Ottomans call upon the defenders of the first two castles to surrender voluntarily, but the latter courageously choose to fight. By contrast, according to S. Šmatlák (2002, 195), the account of the events at Zvolen assumes an ironic tone: the warriors placed straw figures in the windows and fled.

The text also incorporates three individual narratives concerning named figures – Široký Ferenc, Urban Škodný, and Balaži Jánoš. This device resembles the episode in the *Song of Sziget* concerning a woman disguised as a man who heroically beheads seven Turks. That episode demonstrates that courage and the determination to resist heroically were attributed not only to men but also to women. As in the *Song of Sziget*, the motif of the traitor also appears here, represented by the terms “spy” and “traitor” (Mišianik 1981, 178, 184).

The song concludes with a lyrical prayer addressed to God, expressing not only an anti-Ottoman but also an anti-German position: „*Aby ten Turek ukrutný, / pohan, Tatár, Nemci s nimi, / aby byli zahanbení*“ [May that cruel Turk, the pagan, the Tatar, and the Germans with them, all be put to shame] (ibid., 185).

Anti-Ottoman and anti-German attitudes are likewise combined in Štefan Komodický’s historical song *O Jágri a některých vítězích* [On Eger and Certain Victories], dating from the same year, 1596. The poem is written in dodecasyllabic verse and consists of fifty-three rhyming couplets. The imperial troops, whose task is to protect the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary from the

Ottomans, themselves plunder the country even more extensively: „*Našu Uherskú zem když Turek rabuje, / dvakrát víc od Turka Nemec ji morduje. // Jakové jest stromoví, takové ovotcí, / jsú Nemci vopilci a známi pažerní vítezi. [...] Když Nemci uslyšia, že Turci na nich jdú, / do nemeckej zemi oni přeč ta ujdú*“ [When the Turk ravages our Hungarian land, the German torments it twice as much as the Turk. As the tree is, so is its fruit: the Germans are drunkards and notorious gluttonous warriors. [...] When the Germans hear that the Turks are advancing against them, they flee away to the German lands] (ibid., 189).

The proverb “As the tree is, so is its fruit” is of biblical origin and derives from the *Gospel of Matthew* (Matt. 7:16 – 20). The couplet „*Koruna padla z našej hlavy, / beda nám, zhrešili sme*“ [The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us, for we have sinned] alludes to the fifth biblical lament: „*Tá zlatá koruna dolu s hlavy spadla / i všeliká pomoc tebe opustila*“.¹² In the song, however, the motif of the crown is concretised through reference to King Louis II of Hungary and the Battle of Mohács: „*Dokud tvá koruna na tvej hlave byla, / dotud turecká zem nic neuškodila. // Na moháčském poli Ludvík král zahynul, / tehdy tvá koruna na cizího padla*“ [As long as your crown remained upon your head, the Turkish land caused no harm. On the field of Mohács King Louis perished; then your crown fell to a foreigner].

The conventional *ubi sunt* motif is subsequently employed to enumerate all those who should have provided assistance but failed to do so: „*Kde Horný Belehrad,¹³ kde Dolný Belehrad, / kde byl král Mathiáš, dobrý obránce náš. // Kde Siget, kde Pápa, Bezperín, Palota, / jenž Chorvátskej zemi byli na pomoci. // Kde Temešvár zámek, kde Šarvarsky zámek*“ [Where is Upper Belgrade, where is Lower Belgrade, where is King Matthias, our good defender? Where are Siget, Pápa, Veszprém, and Palota, which once brought assistance to the Croatian land? Where is the castle of Timișoara, where is the castle of Sárvár].

This motif likewise has biblical origins; compare, for example, „*Kdeže sú vládcovia národov, kde sú tí, čo panujú nad zverinou zeme?*“ (Bar 3, 16),¹⁴ and „*Kdeže sú bohovia Ematu a Arfadu? Kde sú bohovia Sefarvaimu? A Samáriu vyslobodili z mojej ruky?*“ (Iz 36, 19).¹⁵

The end of abundance and prosperity is expressed through the biblical motif of milk and honey. The Promised Land is frequently described, particularly in the Pentateuch, as “a land flowing with milk and honey”: „*Když vítěz(s)ký hajtman mečem porazen jest, / s mlékem také medem tá zeme vzata jest*“ [When the victorious captain was struck down by the sword, that land, together with its milk and honey, was taken away] (all Mišianik 1981, 186).

Like the *Song of Modrý Kameň, Divín, and Zvolen*, this work also contains dialogic passages. In one such episode, the emperor tells the pashas and beys that he will capture Eger and Košice, while a messenger arrives during the conversation to inform him of the courage of the Hungarian forces (ibid., 186 – 187).

Symbolic numbers also appear in the text – for example, the statement that the Ottoman camp was only three miles away – as does the motif of three traitors, identified as Janissaries (both ibid., 187). The numbers of attackers participating in the individual assaults are also specified. Renaissance individualism is reflected in the enumeration of the names of particular heroes who were killed.

The Hungarian soldiers who escaped beheading were captured, bound, and sold in the marketplace: „*zvázavši jim ruce nazpak jich privedli. // Jakožto dobytek tak jich prodávali. / Po ringu vodili,*

12 “The golden crown has fallen from your head, and all assistance has forsaken you” (Lam. 5:16).

13 Upper Belgrade was also known as Royal Belgrade and corresponds to the present-day Hungarian city of Székesfehérvár. It was called “Upper” because it lies farther north than Lower Belgrade, the historical name used for present-day Belgrade, the capital of Serbia.

14 “Where are the rulers of the nations, who lorded it over the wild beasts of the earth?” (Bar. 3:16).

15 “Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Where are the gods of Samaria? Have they saved Samaria from my power?” (Isa. 36:19).

karbáčmi švihali“ [having tied their hands behind their backs, they brought them away. They sold them like cattle, led them around the marketplace, and lashed them with whips] (ibid., 188). This passage corresponds to the previously cited lines: „*Co starých postínali, mladých navázali / k bide věčné do svých krajín hnali!*“ [The old they cut down, the young they bound, and drove them into their lands, to everlasting misery!] (ibid., 244), from Vavrinec Benedikt of Nedožery's hymn *Ach, Bože svatý, jakých časův sme se dočkali...* [O Holy God, What Times Have We Lived to See...], which was likewise composed in the early seventeenth century. The conclusion of Komodický's song is chronicle-like in character. In it, the author gives his name in the form Kemiň István (ibid., 189) and records the year in which the work was composed. Unlike the historical songs discussed above, this poem incorporates biblical motifs, albeit widely disseminated ones that had already entered proverbial usage and become conventional literary topoi.

Historical songs from the early seventeenth century, such as Matúš Roškovec's *Zpustatěnie Uherskej země pod Turky* [The Devastation of the Hungarian Land under the Turks], whose authorship is indicated by the acrostic Matthaeus Roškouecius, contain elements characteristic of broadside ballads. At the very beginning, they address their listeners directly in order to arouse their curiosity and urge them to pay attention: „*Milí páni, slyšte, k zpívání pozor mejte, / jak Uher-ská zeme zpustatěla, pohleďte!*“ [Dear gentlemen, listen and attend to the singing; behold how the Hungarian land has been laid waste!] (ibid., 196). The motif of desolation evokes the first biblical lament, in which Judah was taken into exile and Jerusalem was left abandoned, as expressed explicitly, for example, in the words: „*Cesty Siona smútia, že niet pútníkov na sviatky: brány má všet-ky spustnuté*“ (Nár 1, 4).¹⁶ This connotation is reinforced by subsequent references to the outpouring of divine wrath and by the conventional image of punishment as a scourge: „*Ach, jak veliký hněv Pán Bůh jest vylil na nás, / svoju hroznú metlu ráčil dopustit na nás!*“ [Ah, what great wrath the Lord God has poured out upon us; He has deigned to send His dreadful scourge upon us!] (both Mišianik 1981, 196). These lines recall biblical formulations from the laments over Jerusalem: „*Ako oheň vylial svoj hnev*“ (Nár 4, 11);¹⁷ „*Som muž, čo skúsil biedu pod prútom jeho hnevu*“ (Nár 3, 1);¹⁸ and God's declaration concerning Babylon: „*vymetiem ho ničiacou metlou*“ (Iz 14, 23).¹⁹ The scourge and the rod are instruments of punishment and therefore function as metonymic designations of punishment itself.

The song even contains a plea for punishment: God is asked to admonish His people through chastisement, but not to deliver them into the hands of the enemy. God the Father is compared to an earthly father: „*Jak otec laskavý, vezma prútek v své ruce, / tresce své dětátko, tak jak on míti chce, / tak Ty učiň s nami, / smiluj se nad nami, / odpusť nám naše viny*“ [As a loving father, taking a little rod in his hand, chastises his child as he wishes him to be, so deal with us, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins] (Mišianik 1981, 198).

The Turks and Tatars, by contrast, are compared to the devil and are assigned recurring epithets such as “cruel” and “wicked”: „*Harcuje²⁰ nepřítel, Turek, Tatár ukrutný / na nás, na křesťany jako diabel rohatý*“ [the enemy, the cruel Turk and Tatar, raids against us, against us Christians, like the horned devil] (ibid., 196), and „*Stíná Turek zlostný, morduje nemilostně, / starých pomor-duje, mladých přeč odvozuje, / panny poškvvrňuje, / ženy nešanuje*“ [The wicked Turk beheads and murders without mercy; he slaughters the old and carries the young away, violates maidens and shows no mercy to women] (ibid., 197).

16 “The roads to Zion mourn, / empty of pilgrims to her feasts. / All her gateways are desolate” (Lam. 1:4)

17 “[The Lord] has exhausted his anger, / poured out his blazing wrath” (Lam. 4:11).

18 “I am one who has known affliction / under the rod of God's anger” (Lam. 3:1).

19 “I will sweep it with the broom of destruction” (Isa. 14:23).

20 *Harcovať* means “to carry out armed raids or incursions; to attack” (Jarošová – Buzássyová 2011, 50).

The amplificatory inclusion of all members of society through references to people of different ages, as well as the statement that the old were beheaded and the young carried away, parallels the imagery found in Vavrinec Benedikt of Nedožery's hymn *Ach, Bože svatý, jakých časův sme se dočkali* [O Holy God, What Times Have We Lived to See]. This description evokes biblical scenes of the Babylonian captivity and the plundering of Jerusalem, such as: „mečom pobil ich mladíkov v ich svätyni. Nezlutoval sa nad mladíkom ani nad pannou, nad starcom ani nad šedivcom“ (2 Krn 36, 17);²¹ „Na zemi ležia na uliciach / chlapček i starec, / panenky moje, junáci tiež / pod mečom padli“ (Nár 2, 21);²² and „Ich ruky vešali kniežatá, / starcov si nevážili. / Mladíci nosia mlynček, / pod drevom klesajú chlapci“ (Nár 5, 12 – 13).²⁴

The motif of the rape of women and maidens likewise belongs to this complex of biblical imagery: „Zhanobili ženy na Sione, / a panny v júdskych mestách“ (Nár 5, 11).²⁵ This song also contains the contrapuntal opposition between Christians and pagans based on religious affiliation, a contrast frequently found in both religious and historical songs of the period: „Škodlivý pak pohan, jestli on to dokáže / tvých verných kresťanův jestli odsud pobere“ [But if the harmful pagan should accomplish this, if he should carry away your faithful Christians from here] (Mišianik 1981, 197).

Like religious hymns, the song repeatedly addresses God with appeals for assistance and protection. Its formal structure also resembles that of a religious hymn, particularly *Ach, Bože svatý, jakých časův sme se dočkali*. Both works consist of five-line stanzas in which the first two lines are longer – thirteen syllables in Roškovec's song and thirteen and fourteen syllables in Benedikt's – while the remaining three lines are markedly shorter. In Roškovec's song, these consist of two six-syllable lines followed by a seven-syllable line; in Benedikt's hymn, they consist of lines of three, four, and six syllables respectively.

This similarity is unsurprising, since several religious hymns of the period were intended to be sung to familiar melodies associated with historical songs. The song also contains additional motifs corresponding to biblical imagery, including the speakers' self-identification as orphans (ibid., 197; cf. Lam. 5:3) and the motif of withering skin: „uschla jest tvár naša tak jako pecná hlina, / z našeho líce krása velmi jest přeměněna“ [our face has dried up like kiln-fired clay, and the beauty of our countenance has greatly changed] (Mišianik 1981, 197). In the Bible, however, the skin is compared not to clay but to an oven or to wood: „Ako popraskaná pec je naša koža / od páľčivosti hladu“ (Nár 5, 10),²⁶ and „na kostiach scvrkla sa im koža, / bola ako drevo zoschnutá“ (Nár 4, 8).²⁷

In the Baroque period, the motif of Ottoman raids likewise appears in the genre of religious poetry and similarly draws upon biblical formulations. The hymn *Ach, nastojte na tento den* [Alas, Woe upon This Day] (c. 1663), consisting of twenty stanzas of seven lines each, signals through its very title an intertextual connection with the prophetic and apocalyptic *Book of Joel* (1:15): „Beda tomuto dňu, veď blízko je Pánov deň.“²⁸ In the *Kralice Bible*, the passage reads: „Ach, nastojte na ten-

21 “[He] killed their young men with the sword in their own sanctuary, with compassion for neither young men nor young women, neither the old nor the infirm” (2 Chr. 36:17).

22 “They lie on the ground in the streets, young and old alike; both my young women and young men are cut down by the sword” (Lam. 2:21).

23 Being forced to operate a hand mill was a great humiliation for young men (Heriban 1995, 1733), since grinding grain was traditionally regarded as women's work, particularly the work of female slaves.

24 “Princes have been hanged by them, elders shown no respect. Young men carry millstones, boys stagger under loads of wood” (Lam. 5:12 – 13).

25 “Women are raped in Zion, young women in the cities of Judah” (Lam. 5:11).

26 “Our skin heats up like an oven, from the searing blasts of famine” (Lam. 5:10).

27 “Their skin has shrunk on their bones and become dry as wood” (Lam. 4:8).

28 “Alas for the day, for the day of the Lord is near.”

to den; nebo blízky jest den Hospodinův“ [Alas, woe upon this day, for the day of the Lord is near]. It expresses terror at the approaching day of eschatological judgement.

In the *Old Testament*, the Day of the Lord is associated above all with the traditions of so-called holy wars, through which the Lord intervenes to defend His people (Varšo 2018, 294). This conception is also reflected in the hymn: „Nebudeš-li ty brániti / a pred zlými nás chrániti, / musíme zemřít“ [If you do not defend us and protect us from the wicked, we must perish] (Mišianik 1981, 383).

In the *Book of Joel*, the Day of the Lord is foreshadowed by a plague of locusts; in this hymn, it is heralded by the Ottomans. They are placed in parallel with the Antichrist, thereby emphasising their godlessness, since adherents of other faiths were commonly designated as pagans during the period: „Turek hrozný a nevážný / již ve zbroji stojí / a antikrist Boha prázdny / proti nám se stroj“ [The terrible and insolent Turk is already armed for war, and the Antichrist, devoid of God, prepares himself against us].

The Ottoman raids are presented as a consequence of divine wrath provoked by human sin, with wrath intensified into fury: „Všelikterak svú prchlivost / vypustil Bůh věčný / a vylil hroznú zúrivosť / na náš lid nevďečný, / kterýž prikázání jeho / prestupuje a hnevá ho / času všelikého“. This passage is a paraphrase of „Pán už dovršil svoju prchkosť, / vylial svoj hnev žeravý“ (Nár 4, 11).²⁹ The image of the suffering and contrite lyrical subject – „Z očí mých tekú slzy ven, / nemohuť mluviti; / o strevá trpím bolest, / srdce mé skormúcené jest“ [Tears flow from my eyes, I am unable to speak; I suffer pain in my entrails, and my heart is deeply troubled] – is likewise shaped by biblical elegiac formulations such as: „Potoky slz mi prúdia z oka“ (Nár 3, 47);³⁰ „Oči mám zoslabnuté od slz, / vnútro mám rozbúrené / pečeň sa mi na zem rozteká“ (Nár 2, 11);³¹ and „Búri sa moje vnútro, / srdce sa vo mne zvierá“ (Nár 1, 20).³²

The subject expresses pain and anguish because, on the basis of psalmic statements such as „Pán je pri tých, čo majú srdce skrúšené, a zachraňuje zlomených na duchu“ (Ž 34, 19)³³ and „Bože, ty nepohrdaš srdcom skrúšeným a poníženým“ (Ž 51, 19),³⁴ divine assistance is expected.

The text of the hymn is related to the biblical laments in a relatively loose manner. Its biblical source of inspiration is evident less in exact quotation than in the overall configuration of motifs. Therefore, it is significant that the poem brings together images of the pit, the sea, and the lion lying in wait. Pits – especially dried-up wells – were frequently used as prisons in antiquity: „Potkala nás jama“ / „Hrôza a jama nás čakala, zánik a skaza“ (Nár 3, 47);³⁵ „Veliké jest jako more / potrení naše a hore“ / „Tvoja zlomenosť je veľká ako more“ (Nár 2, 13),³⁶ and „Číhajú jako lev v skryte, / aby nás chudé pochyte / roztrhali hbiť“ / „Je mi ako striehnuci medveď, / lev, ktorý čaká v skryši. / Zviedol ma z cesty, roztrhal ma, / zničil ma celkom“ (Nár 3, 10 – 11).³⁷ In the biblical text, the beasts are represented by the bear and the lion; in the Baroque hymn, the lion is joined by bulls and oxen (all Mišianik 1981, 382).

29 “The Lord has exhausted his anger, poured out his blazing wrath” (Lam. 4:11).

30 “My eyes stream with tears over the destruction of the daughter of my people” (Lam. 3:47).

31 “My eyes are spent with tears, my stomach churns; my bile is poured out on the ground” (Lam. 2:11).

32 “My stomach churns, and my heart recoils within me” (Lam. 1:20).

33 “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed” (Ps. 34:19).

34 “A contrite, humbled heart, O God, you will not scorn” (Ps. 51:19).

35 “The pit has overtaken us” / “Panic and the pit have been our lot, / desolation and destruction” (Lam. 3:47).

36 “Great as the sea are our affliction and sorrow” / “For your breach is vast as the sea; who could heal you?” (Lam. 2:13).

37 “They lie in wait like a lion in hiding, so that they may seize us, the wretched, and swiftly tear us apart” / “He has been a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding! He turned me aside and tore me apart, leaving me ravaged” (Lam. 3:10 – 11).

Juraj Zábojník's lament *Querela super saevitiam Turcicam et Tataricam* [A Lament over Turkish and Tatar Cruelty] (1664),³⁸ whose authorship is indicated by the acrostic "knez Jirik Zabojnik" [the priest Jiří Zábojník], takes the form of a prayer consisting of seventeen four-line stanzas. It opens with the invocation „Králi vši milosti“ [King of all grace], alluding to 1 Peter 5:10: „A Boh všetkej milosti, ktorý vás v Kristovi Ježišovi povolal do svojej večnej slávy, on sám vás po krátkom utrpení zdokonali, posilní, utvrdí a upevní“ [The God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory through Christ [Jesus] will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you after you have suffered a little] (Prvý Petrov list 5, 10). The poem enumerates „jaké zlosti / spáchali pohané“ [the evils committed by the pagans], including plundering, killing, and taking people into captivity. The lyrical subject interprets these acts as a just punishment for sin: „není nám v tom křivda, / neb mnoho vin máme [...] páchali sme zlosti / nečiníc pokání“ [No injustice is done to us in this, for we bear many sins [...] we committed evil deeds without repenting].

A highly general typology of these "evils" follows: „Různice a zvady, / nespravedlnosti, / zlolajstvo, zlé rady, / bezbožnost v hojnosti“ [Disputes and quarrels, injustices, abuse and evil counsel, and godlessness in abundance] and so forth. Their consequence is that "the cruel pagans have overcome us." In its overall tone and underlying logic, the text resembles the biblical *Book of Lamentations*, particularly its first chapter. The poem also contains individual motifs whose biblical origin is unmistakable. The comparison „krev lidskou co vodu / na zem jsou vylili“ [they poured human blood upon the ground like water] (all Mišianik 1981, 366) refers to the lament over Jerusalem: „Rozlievali ich krv ako vodu / vôkol Jeruzalema a nemal ich kto pochovať“ (Ž 79, 3).³⁹ Similarly, the appeal „Obrát hněv svůj na tých, / kteří tě neznají“ [Turn Your wrath against those who do not know You] echoes the words „Svoj hnev vylej na pohanov, ktorí ťa neuznávajú“ (Ž 79, 6).⁴⁰

The Tatars and Turks are compared respectively to Magog and Gog, the enemies of God in the *Book of Ezekiel*: „Jakový jest Magog, / Tatar lýtý, zlostný, / anebo též i Gog, / Turek nemilostný!“ [Such is Magog, the savage and wicked Tatar, and likewise Gog, the merciless Turk!]. The statement „však víš, že sme blato“ [yet You know that we are but clay] (all Mišianik 1981, 367) alludes in turn to the creation of the human being from the dust of the earth in Genesis 2:7. The text contains an appeal that God redirect His wrath towards the blasphemers and, in parallel, turn His gracious countenance "towards us." In the concluding passage, the lyrical subject petitions God for salvation.

The opposition between the Ottomans and Christians, together with an appeal to God to intervene against the enemy and restore peace, also appears in other religious hymns, including the pacifist song *Odvrať nepokoj válečný* [Avert the Turmoil of War] (1696).

In the Baroque historical song *Píseň o Nových Zámkách* [The Song of Nové Zámky], the course of the fighting is no longer described as assault by assault; instead, a religious interpretation of history predominates (Šmatlák 2002, 266). Nové Zámky contained the most important anti-Ottoman fortress, constructed after the capture of Esztergom in 1543. The Ottomans seized it in 1663, and the song was composed shortly after this event, approximately at the same time as the religious hymn *Ach, nastojte na tento den* [Alas, Woe upon This Day].

Rather than recounting the course of the battle, the song enumerates the acts committed by the Ottomans following their victory: „Města i dediny s peknými kaštelý / mnoho jsou spálili, vniveč obrátili“ [Towns and villages with their fine manor houses they burned in great numbers and reduced to ruin] (Mišianik 1981, 331). This passage recalls Vavrinec Benedikt of Nedožery's religious hymn *Ach, Bože svatý, jakých časův sme se dočkali* [O Holy God, What Times Have We Lived to See]: „Města, zámky, kostely mnohé vyvrátili, / vsi mnohé, tvrže mnohé ohněm vypálili“ [Many

38 For a more detailed discussion of this song, see Pavlovičová 2014, 79 – 83.

39 "They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and no one is left to do the burying" (Ps. 79:3).

40 "Manifest your wrath on nations that do not recognize you" (Ps. 79:6).

towns, castles, and churches they destroyed; many villages and many fortresses they burned with fire] (ibid., 244).

The song enumerates the towns captured by the Ottomans, who subsequently advanced into Moravia. Here too, parallelism, synecdoche, and amplification are employed: „*Pokud Turek pohan té Zámky dobýval, / Tatar po krajíně jak besný pes běhal, / naše milé dítky, peknu čelad' lapal, / starých preukrutně bez lítosti sekal*“ [While the pagan Turk was capturing the fortress, the Tatar ran through the countryside like a rabid dog; he seized our dear children and fine household members, and most cruelly cut down the old without mercy] (ibid., 331). Symbolic numbers also occur, as in the statement that „*zámek sedem týdnů verně sou držali*“ [they faithfully held the fortress for seven weeks] (ibid., 330).

In addition to employing the same poetic devices as Renaissance religious and historical songs, the work contains identical conventional motifs. One such motif is the binding and sale of captives into slavery: „*mnohých na povraze za sebou vodili, / kterých byť hovádá Turkom prodávali*“ [they led many behind them on ropes and sold them to the Turks as though they were cattle] (ibid., 332). This recalls the lines „*zvázávi jim ruce nazpak jich přivedli. // Jakožto dobytek tak jich prodávali*“ [having tied their hands behind their backs, they brought them away. / They sold them like cattle] (ibid., 188) from Štefan Komodický's historical song *O Jágri a některých vítězích* [On Eger and Certain Victories].

The motif of withering is likewise conventional. Unlike in *Zpustatění Uherskej země pod Turkey* [The Devastation of the Hungarian Land under the Turks], here it appears in a comparison with wood: „*vyschli od plakání jak kůra na dreve*“ [they withered from weeping like bark upon a tree] (ibid., 331), which corresponds to the biblical source text in Lam. 4:8. The rape of maidens is another conventional motif. Further images convey that the conquerors showed no mercy even to the most vulnerable – widows, orphans, and children: „*Vdovám a sirotkám sou nefolkovali,*⁴¹ / *naše milé dítky na cestu metali, / mnohým bez lítosti hrdla jsou rezali*“ [They spared neither widows nor orphans; they cast our dear children upon the road and cut the throats of many without mercy].

The song also contains motifs of the destruction and burning of churches, likewise mentioned in the biblical laments (Lam. 1:10; 2:7), as well as the impossibility of burying the dead and the plundering of graves. The couplet „*Tu ptáctvo nebeské, tu zvířata polní / s tely mrtvých našich k vůli své se krmí*“ [There the birds of heaven and the beasts of the field feed at will upon the bodies of our dead] (both Mišianik 1981, 332) alludes to the lament over Jerusalem: „*Mrtvoly tvojich služebníkov dali za pokrm vtákom lietavým / a divej zveri dávali telá tvojich svätých*“ (Ž 79, 2),⁴² and to the curse: „*Tvoje mrtvoly budú za pokrm všetkému nebeskému vtáctvu a divým zverom a nebude toho, kto by ich odohnal*“ (Dt 28, 26).⁴³

This curse, directed at those who fail to observe the Law or the Decalogue, serves as a warning. The impossibility of burial and the desecration of graves represent the ultimate humiliation and complete destruction, in which the enemy does not spare even the dead.

Religion is also foregrounded through recurring epithets such as „*nevolní křesťané*“ / „*pohan ukrutný*“ [wretched Christians / the cruel pagan] (ibid., 330), while the devastation is interpreted as divine punishment for sin. The author himself claims to have composed the song in the hope of obtaining forgiveness: „*Tou písničku jeden, souc všeho zbavený, / přemýšlel sám sobe smutku postavený, / žádal svojej vlasti zase navracení, / sobě zde na zemi hříchů odpuštění*“ [One man, deprived of everything,

41 The verb *folkovať* means “to flatter” (Majtán – Kuchar – Skladaná 2008, 503), but it may also mean “to give free rein to” or “to grant a deferment,” particularly to debtors (s.v. *folgovať*; Majtán 1991, 362).

42 “They have left the corpses of your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of those devoted to you for the beasts of the earth” (Ps. 79:2).

43 “Your corpses will become food for all the birds of the air and for the beasts of the field, with no one to frighten them off” (Deut. 28:26).

composed this song, reflecting alone, plunged into sorrow; he desired to return once more to his homeland and to receive forgiveness for his sins here on earth]. The song also contains conventional Baroque motifs of transience, for example: „Zpívání veselé, hudby, kratochvíle / rýchle sa zmenili jak pěna na vode“ [Joyful singing, music, and merriment quickly changed like foam upon the water] (both *ibid.*, 333).

The historical song *Ach, Uherská zeme velmi zavržená* [Alas, O Hungarian Land, So Greatly Forsaken] likewise responds to the Ottoman devastation of the 1660s. The *ubi sunt* motif also appears in the poem (*ibid.*, 338), while the events are interpreted as divine punishment: „pokuta na tebe jest prišla“ [punishment has come upon you] (*ibid.*, 339) and „ať již tvoja metla nás švihát prestane“ [may Your scourge now cease to strike us] (*ibid.*, 340). The song contains the conventional images of plundering and the burning of houses: „pálí, rabují [...] domy se v prach obracují“ [they burn and plunder [...] houses are reduced to dust] as well as the desecration of churches: „z kostelů milých chlěvy učinili, / oltáře pekne zboríce“ [they turned our beloved churches into stables, destroying the beautiful altars], the violation of graves: „hroby, v nichž sú mrtví, smele otvírají, / telá z truhel vyhazují, / dítky mrtvé natrasují“ [they boldly open the graves in which the dead lie, casting the bodies out of their coffins and shaking the dead children], and the mistreatment of captives, who are tormented and deprived of food and drink.

In addition to these conventional motifs, the song contains elements that portray the contemporary situation in a more distinctive manner. For example, the captives are described as being bound at night and forced during the day to “run alongside the horse” across all kinds of difficult terrain and obstacles: „sírne blato, Váh, barína, / to mu je všecko rovina!“ [thick mud, the Váh, and marshland – all of it is level ground to him!] (all *ibid.*, 339).

A similar motif occurs in the *Bible*, although it does not function there as an expression of suffering but as an image of divine protection and of God’s refusal to abandon His people: „Keď budeš brodiť vodami, budem s tebou, / a keď riekami, nepotopia ťa“ (Is 43, 2).⁴⁴ The final line of each five-line stanza in this sixteen-stanza poem forms a refrain, usually consisting of the lamenting exclamation: “O Hungarian land!”

CONCLUSION

In representing their experiences of Ottoman raids, Renaissance and Baroque authors drew upon pre-existing texts concerned with comparable catastrophes, particularly works of a lamentational and elegiac character. Since most of these authors were members of the clergy, it is unsurprising that the *Bible* served as their principal source of inspiration. From it, they adopted not only descriptions of catastrophic events corresponding to their own experience but also an interpretative framework through which such events could be understood. In addition to explanation, they also derived consolation from the biblical texts.

The authors addressed God with appeals for assistance, emphasising their Christian faith in contrast to the perceived paganism of the Ottomans, much as biblical authors had petitioned God for protection against pagan nations. This biblical foundation is clearly present not only in religious poetry, but also in historical songs from the late sixteenth century onwards and in poetry written in Latin.

Not only were religious hymns intended to be sung to familiar melodies associated with historical songs, but individual literary motifs also circulated between these genres. Shared motifs can likewise be identified when Renaissance and Baroque texts are compared. They employ similar expressive and poetic devices, while conventional topoi and biblical motifs occur frequently.

44 “When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away” (Isa. 43:2).

Cruelty emerges as the most prominent characteristic attributed to the Ottomans. They are represented as plundering and burning settlements, killing and abducting inhabitants, and raping women, in a manner comparable to their portrayal in the prose literature of the period (Kubisa 2023, 243). In some songs, lamentation over Ottoman raids is combined with lamentation over the religious persecution of Protestants or with the expression of anti-German attitudes.

SUMMARY

The article analyses and interprets representations of Ottoman raids and their consequences in selected works of Slovak Renaissance and Baroque poetry, with particular emphasis on texts written in the vernacular. The genres represented include religious hymns and historical songs, as well as the Latin poetry of Jakub Jakobeus.

The authors of the period drew inspiration from pre-existing texts dealing with comparable disasters, particularly works of a lamentational and elegiac character. Since most of them were members of the clergy, the *Bible* served as their principal source of inspiration. The biblical foundation is prominent not only in religious poetry but is also clearly evident in historical songs from the late sixteenth century onwards, as well as in poetry written in Latin.

A comparison of Renaissance and Baroque texts demonstrates that they employed similar expressive and poetic devices and frequently drew upon conventional literary topoi and biblical motifs.

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