

Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Doctoral School of History

(headed by Dr. Sándor Óze DSc)

Church History Workshop

(headed by Dr. László Perendy OSchP)

Theses of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

Róbert Szvorényi

**János Jacobinus' life and oeuvre, the historiographical and historical background of the *Brevis enarratio*,
and the afterlife of his text**

Supervisor: Dr. Péter Tusor DSc

I. Antecedents of the research, problem raising

János Jacobinus (1574–1603), the Unitarian author from Kolozsvár, chosen as the topic of the dissertation, is not a well-known author of old Hungarian literature. However, we cannot claim that literary history did not pay any attention to him at all. Significant and supportive measures of the research included in the dissertation were the previous results of Emma Bartoniek, György Bónis, Tamás Kruppa, Péter Kulcsár and Béla Stoll, among others. However, the author's lifework has not been studied in its entirety.

Our knowledge of Jacobinus's life is quite incomplete. We know that despite his young age, he quickly had a successful career in the Transylvanian chancellery. We are left with a celebratory poem written on the occasion of a marriage, the *Chorus Musarum*, as well as his brief account of the 1595 campaign in Havasalföld, the *Brevis enarratio*, which is an essential source of events from an eyewitness.

II. Methodology

The dissertation achieves results relevant to science using a complex methodology. The tools that are used by this methodology are historical biography, print history, comparative historiography, Latin textology and source philology. First, it undertakes to draw the authors' portrait, and to this end, it summarises the available data on Jacobinus's life in a thorough manner. It pays attention to the conditions under which *Chorus Musarum* originated. In connection with the work, it outlines the 16th-century history of the genre of wedding poetry, which has not been examined in literary history so far, based on data of Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok (Old Hungarian Printed Books). It does the same for the other work, *Brevis enarratio*. It also outlines and analyses the historiographical context in which Jacobinus's historical work was born. First, it organises the historical works recommended to Zsigmond Báthory and, relying on the preliminaries, forms a picture of the role of historiography in the age. The source-centred historical part of the dissertation discusses the antecedents of Transylvania's entry into war before the Fifteen Years' War, thus creating a context for what is contained in *Brevis enarratio*. The works of Jacobinus and Péter Pellérdi, another eyewitness, are used in the discussion of the history of the campaign in Havasalföld. The philological part of the dissertation deals with the diversified legacy of *Brevis enarratio*. With the use of text analysis and comparison, it looks for its influence in the works of other Transylvanian writers. In the same manner, it also examines the formation of the Latin text into Hungarian historical songs.

III. New results

György Bónis's study of the date of birth of János Jacobinus, based on the recommendation in *Brevis enarratio*, concluded that Jacobinus was born between 23 March 1574 and 23 March 1575. Since then, it has become certain from an entry in Paul Eber's calendar that Jacobinus's birth's exact date was 23 August 1574. The exact date of János Baranyai Decsi's death was also entered in a similar calendar. We assume that the copy of the calendar containing data on Jacobinus's birthday was owned by his father, Bernát.

Jacobinus published his work titled *Brevis enarratio* in 1596 as the notary of Kolozsvár. The date at the end of the recommendation to Zsigmond Báthory is 25 March 1596. Between 10 April and 21 August 1598, after the first resignation of Zsigmond Báthory, Jacobinus already registered diplomas in May and June as the secretary of the Transylvanian chancellery, under the rule of Mária Krisztierna. In the history of the Transylvanian princely chancellery, within the Báthory era and the chancellery of Imre Sulyok, the other great official career was his, who did not rise as an aristocrat, but in a purely official career. It is palpable in the history of the chancellery that being part of the chancellery and the activity of a historian went hand in hand. However, Jacobinus published his historical work before he held a national office. He did not write an extensive retrospective work based on documents, diplomas, minutes, resolutions, instructions, or other types of notes, but a shorter one based on his personal experiences with events of great significance. According to our hypothesis, Jacobinus was motivated not only by the recording of Zsigmond Báthory's military deeds but also by his career in office, and the publication of *Brevis enarratio* may have played a role in his appointment as secretary of the chancellery.

Another work by Jacobinus, made on the occasion of the wedding of the prestigious Catholic citizen of Kolozsvár, István Kakas and Susanna Romer, is entitled *Chorus Musarum*, was published in 1597. After reviewing the history of the 16th-century genre of wedding occasional publications, Jacobinus's work appears unique because of its title. While the titles of the works left to us are typically formulated by naming their genre, the title of Jacobinus's work refers to the content of his poem, which was unusual at the time. The person of Jacobinus is also unique among the other authors in that he was the only one to hold a public office, as a notary in Kolozsvár at the time of his work. However, five years after the poem's highfaluting good wishes, the relationship between Kakas and Jacobinus had deteriorated due to a property lawsuit.

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The *Brevis enarratio* recommendation also contains explanations of historical theory. Therefore, it was apparent to review the prefaces of the historical works recommended to Zsigmond Báthory. It can be said that what Jacobinus has to say about the usefulness, beauty, dignity, and meaning of the study of history cannot be considered unique or is even commonplace, but it is noteworthy that it reflects the prevailing views of the age. The historical works examined were primarily aimed at capturing contemporary events, and their genre was *commentarii*. We can only speculate on the reasons that motivate their authors. The manuscript *ars historica* by István Szamosközy was inevitably involved in the investigation, which echoes the ideas of Justus Lipsius. Taking Sallustius as a sample of the historian's master prose embellished with floscules, Szamosközy himself takes a turn from him, thus enriching his reviewer account of the historical work of the Italian Joannes Michael Brutus.

The dissertation covers the work of Veit Marchthaler, which has the same title and theme as Jacobinus'. However, his work pays little attention to the commemoration of the events of 1595, but rather to the glorification of the prince, presumably in the interests of his principal, the Henckel Bank in Vienna, in the hope of successful business in the future. It simultaneously carries glorifying traits, seeks to win the prince's benevolence while also draws from the *Chronicon Carionis*, the Wittenberg Protestant view of history, one of Kaspar Peucer's formulations – for a Catholic prince.

Reviewing the situation in Transylvania before the war against the Turks, we agree with the standpoint of László Szilas that the Jesuit confessor and diplomat of Zsigmond Báthory, Alfonso Carillo, cannot be held responsible for the illegal and brutal settlement with the Turkish party in Transylvania.

Another contemporary account of the campaign in Havasalföld is from the pen of Péter Pellérdi. His letter is an authentic source of events, his text independent of that contained in the *Brevis enarratio*, thus a parallel narrative to the successes of the war. The dissertation included the text of both of them in the part of the Havasalföld campaign. Although their works contain two parallel passages, it cannot be established with certainty that they knew of each other's writings.

Tamás Kruppa explored the relationship between the campaign in Havasalföld and the Jesuit propaganda. In his work *Tradíció és propaganda keresztútján – Fejezetek Báthory Zsigmond udvarának kultúrájából* [At the Crossroad of Tradition and Propaganda – Chapters from the Culture of Zsigmond Báthory's Court] (2015), he also analysed the works of Marchthaler, Jacobinus and Baranyai Decsi. We must see, however, that the propaganda associated with the campaign, recognised by all Christian contemporaries as a tremendous and exceptional success, or, in our opinion, more aptly, a glorifying overtone typical of contemporary sources that choose the theme of the campaign, is polyphonic in one degree or another. This dissertation points out and emphasises that regardless of their religious denominational affiliation in the Christian world – Marchthaler was Lutheran, Jacobinus Unitarian, János Baranyai Decsi was Reformed – they expressed their enthusiasm uniformly and not only for propagandistic purposes but also for their individual interests.

The afterlife of Jacobinus' *Brevis enarratio* is very diverse. The textual connection between the historical works of Jacobinus and János Baranyai Decsi was also incidentally referred to by Péter Kulcsár when he wrote the preface introducing the translation of the historical work of János Baranyai Decsi. This dissertation,

based on the texts of the two authors examined where did Baranyai Decsi literally copy Jacobinus, where did he reworded it without any intellectual change, where did he added to it or added something else to his text, and where did he shorten it. However, the comparison of the works of the two authors is not an end in itself, as it also provides essential lessons for textual criticism. Ferenc Toldy's edition of the text of Baranyai Decsi can be improved in many places by taking into account one of its sources, the text of *Brevis enarratio*.

This opens up the investigation that attempts to clarify the dating of Baranyai Decsi's *Commentarii de rebus Ungaricis* based on the publication of Jacobinus's text. Most of the work must have been completed after 25 March 1596, probably in April, shortly after the appearance of the *Brevis enarratio* in Kolozsvár, up to the text border of 10. 9. 15, which reports on the death of Pasha Sinan.

Other contemporaries and later Hungarian historians writing in Latin also used the works of Jacobinus. Ambrus Somogyi copied literally the *Brevis enarratio* into his work; Miklós Istvánffy also used his text to a much lesser extent. Later Bethlen Farkas, who also literally took over his brief accounts, notes that Jacobinus was his source.

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Jacobinus's late humanist prose, historical work, historiola also became the text of historical songs. The identity of one of the songwriters of *Brevis enarratio* is unknown. In his truncated work left to us, he consistently mentions Prince Zsigmond as king. Sometimes he broadly follows the text of his source, sometimes he uses insertions, sometimes he omits part from Jacobinus' text, sometimes he only undertakes paraphrases, and sometimes he extracts from it. He can be said to be true to its source, but it rarely translates it literally. Presumably, the publisher of this work, who was also Gáspár Heltai, had the business policy interest in publishing it to the general public in the year 1596, perhaps simultaneously or shortly after the publication of *Brevis enerratio*, in Hungarian as well in order to increase the number of copies sold.

The author of the other historical song is known. István Szőlősi, a Unitarian preceptor, formed the work of Jacobinus into a historical song again, in 1635. The internal arguments taken from the work support the theory that the author was no longer alive when the work was published. Szőlősi probably did not use the independent edition of *Brevis enarratio*, but a collection edition containing works on Hungarian history. He added fictional speeches to the singing, but there are also parts that he left out. Contrary to Lajos Dézsi's statement, his poetry and language do not fall short of those of his unknown translator, and despite his insertions, he cannot be said to be wordy.

The text edition and translation of the *Brevis enarratio* can be found in the appendix of the dissertation. The publication improved Béla Stoll's interpretations in several points. The appendix of the dissertation also contains the hitherto unpublished text of the *Chorus Musarum*. The appendix also contains all the parallel text parts of Jacobinus and Baranya Decsi.

From this dissertation, it is also clear that the lifework of János Jacobinus is short but vastly important for his era. *Brevis enarratio* is one of the authoritative and defining sources in the history of the Havasalföld campaign. After reviewing his work's afterlife, it can be proven that this work significantly influenced later historians who wrote about the campaign in Havasalföld in Latin. Also, historic poems formed from his work made the greatest triumphs and military achievements of Zsigmond Báthory widely known.

IV. Related publication activity

Studies and lectures

SZVORÉNYI, Róbert: *Jacobinus János és históriája* [János Jacobinus and His Historical Work]. In: *Érték és értelmezés*. Editors: László BOKA and Ildikó SIRATÓ. Budapest: Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, Gondolat, 2010. 181–187. (Bibliotheca Scientiae et Artis, 1.)

Presented in a lecture in Budapest, at the scientific session of National Széchényi Library, on 7 December 2009, titled: *Jacobinus János és históriája*.

SZVORÉNYI, Róbert: *Jacobinus János szöveg helyei Baranyai Decsi Jánosnál* [Texts (Loci) of János Jacobinus in the Work of János Baranyai Decsi]. In: *Források és hagyományképek*. Editor: Ágnes STEMLER. Budapest: Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, Gondolat, 2014. 40–52. (Bibliotheca Scientiae et Artis, 5.)

Presented in a lecture in Budapest, at the scientific session of National Széchényi Library, on the 21st of January 2013, titled: *Jacobinus János szöveg helyei Baranyai Decsi Jánosnál*.

SZVORÉNYI, Róbert: *A Báthory Zsigmondnak ajánlott történeti művek előszavai* [Forewords to the Historical Works Recommended to Zsigmond Báthory]. In: *Humanista történetírás és neolatin irodalom a 15–18. századi Magyarországon*. Editors: Enikő BÉKÉS, Péter KASZA, Réka LENGYEL. Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Science, Research Center for the Humanities Institute of Literary Studies, 2015. 74–83. (Convivia Neolatina Hungarica, 1.)

Presented in Szeged, on the Neolatin Conference held between the 7th to 9th of November 2013, titled: *A Báthory Zsigmondnak ajánlott történeti művek előszavai*.

SZVORÉNYI, Róbert: *Baranyai Decsi János történeti művének (Commentarii de rebus Ungaricis) datálásához* [To Date the Historical Work (Commentarii de rebus Ungaricis) of János Baranyai Decsi]. In: *Interpretációk interpretációja – Tudós bibliothecariusok, tudós elődök*. Editor: Edina ZSUPÁN. Budapest: Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, Gondolat, 2015. 50–57. (Bibliotheca Scientiae et Artis, 7.)

Presented in a lecture in Budapest, at the scientific session of National Széchényi Library, on the 24th of November 2014, titled: *Baranyai Decsi János történeti művének (Commentarii de rebus Ungaricis) datálásához*.

SZVORÉNYI, Róbert: *Veit Marchthaler történeti munkája Báthory Zsigmond erdélyi fejedelemről* [Veit Marchthaler's Historical Work on Prince Zsigmond Báthory of Transylvania]. In: *Scientiarum miscellanea – Latin nyelvű tudományos irodalom Magyarországon a 15–18. században*. Edited: Péter Kasza, Gábor Kiss Farkas, Dávid Molnár. Szeged: Lazi, 2017. 45–52. (Convivia Neolatina Hungarica, 2.)

Presented in Szeged, on the Neolatin Conference held between the 5th to 7 November 2015, titled: *Veit Marchthaler Rerum a Sigismundo [...] gestarum brevis enarratio*.

Recensions

Tanulmányok Nagyvárad újkori történetéből [Studies from the Modern History of Nagyvárad]. Editor: András EMÖDI. Nagyvárad: Partium, 2009. 316 l. (*Miscellanea Historica Varadinensia*, 1). In: *Magyar Könyvszemle* (126) 2010, 281–282.

Veits Marchthallers Beschreibung Ungarischer Sachen von A(nno) 1588. [Description of Veit Marchthaler's Hungarian Affairs from 1588.] Translated, edited and introduced it to the press by Katalin S. NÉMETH. Budapest, Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Science – International Society for Hungarian Studies, 2020. – 208 p. In: Magyar Könyvszemle (136) 2020, 277–282.