

**PhD Thesis**

SZABOLCS KONDÁKOR

Gábor Pécsváradi's  
*Compendiosa descriptio*  
and Franciscan Literature

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## **Aims and objectives:**

*Compendiosa descriptio* is the only existing description of the Holy Land written by a Hungarian author that was published in the Middle Ages and within a short period of time there were two subsequent editions in Vienna. It was translated by Béla Holl and published in Hungarian in 1983 with the title 'Jeruzsálemi utazás' (*Journey to Jerusalem*).

Whereas the 1521 publication (RMK III 189, and RMK III 5107, version **P**) names observant Franciscan Gábor Pécsváradi as the author, the colophon of an undated edition printed by the same printhouse (RMK III 75, version **F**) has Franciscan monk Miklós Farnádi as the author.

Due to the lack of clarity regarding its authorship, the above work has entered the history of Hungarian literature as the first case of plagiarism through the work of Ferenc Toldy and Károly Széchy. The consensus reached subsequent to a study conducted by Széchy in 1897, remained unquestioned for 120 years in Hungary, according to which Farnádi plagiarised Pécsváradi's text by omitting **P**'s personal experiences **F** thereby creating a shortened version published under a pseudonym. The above consensus was accepted despite the fact that the authorship of **F** prior to that of **P** can already be found in German language biographies of literature on pilgrimage.

The reception of *Compendiosa descriptio* was none the less facilitated by the fact that although Péter Hatala published parts of **P** in *Magyar Sion*, further publications that did not retain the medieval characteristics of the text's latinity and consistently omitted the literary parts conveyed a false picture about the entire *Compendiosa descriptio*.

This false picture was finally augmented by Béla Holl who made the text of version **P** available in Hungarian translation with an additional

introductory part and notes. Later, the introduction was further extended and published as a separate paper. Thorough research conducted by Holl revealed the most important features of the work: the unique structure including four main parts based on the four points of the compass and chapters incorporating five main points. While he attributed the former structural characteristic to Franciscan influence, namely, the description of the Holy Land by Anselmus de Cracovia during his pilgrimage in 1507–1508, the latter, according to him, may have derived from scholastic divisions. Holl identified most of the sources including unmarked scenes from apocryphal books. He identified Bernhard Breydenbach's work as the source of descriptions of Egyptian scenes. An important finding of Holl's was that Pécsváradi's letter to János Bánffy, was brought back to public attention. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that his translation deviates from the original in many respect and contains factual errors as well.

Preparing a critical edition, which was necessitated by the facts that the original latin text was difficult to access and that it is a unique piece of medieval Hungarian literature, revealed data that proved superior to the question of who plagiarised whom; namely, the issue of the relationship and connection between the two editions. It has become clear that **F** was genetically prior and that the work underwent substantial revision. Thus, it was necessary to clarify why there was a need for two editions and to what extent **F** was attributable to Pécsváradi as its author. Upon collationing, it was found that the foreword to **F** mentions a map consisting of four parts to be found at the back of the book, together with a binary system of indulgences including the plenary and the 7 years and 7 lent of indulgences options that could both be gained at places of pilgrimage. Although this explained the

four-part structure, novel sources of information had to be analysed: i.e. maps.

### **Methodology:**

The thesis discusses the historical background of *Compendiosa descriptio*, the description of the Holy Land, through the life of Franciscan monk Gábor Pécsváradi and his relationship with the Bánffy family of Alsólendva. Subsequently, the thesis outlines the reception history of *Compendiosa descriptio*. The analysis of his relationship with the Bánffy family and that of the court culture gaining ground in this noble household was necessitated by Jakab Bánffy's pilgrimage, Pécsváradi's chaplainship in the Bánffy household and information relating to the Turks in a letter to János Bánffy.

The main part of the thesis analyses a section that can be found in both editions of *Compendiosa descriptio* describing the liturgy of the holy fire the source of which, that had previously been unknown, has been found by the author of the present thesis in a liturgical codex from Barletta published by Charles Kohler. Through the philological analysis of the texts from this ordinal book and those in **F** and **P** versions, my aim was to clarify the relationship between **F** and **P** due to the fact that the excerpt, as opposed to other sources of the *Compendiosa descriptio* available in printed format, were difficult to obtain.

Via analysing references upon the map in **F** my aim was to reconstruct features of the missing map used in *Compendiosa descriptio* and to investigate to which of the maps depicting the Holy Land it may have had the closest similarity.

Through the in-depth analysis of sources and identification of previously unidentified borrowings, my prior aim was to demonstrate Pécsváradi's

relationship with respect to works written for members of his order and further preaching aids.

The five-part structure as a governing principle is demonstrated by a table in the appendices part and by numbering the revisions based on findings in the literature on medieval Hungarian and Central-European mnemotechnic methods. Furthermore, the thesis investigates changes in titles including the merge or division of titles and the possibility of number symbolism in the background of the number of chapters in either **F** or **P**.

By outlining the syntactic, lexical and stylistic differences between the two editions, I intended to characterise the latin language skills of Pécsváradi and to highlight linguistic features that further prove the fact that the fundamental text of *Compendiosa descriptio* is not Pécsváradi's own work but a borrowing that underwent minor revision in **F** and more extensive revision in **P**.

By discussing rules and regulations governing literary activities of Franciscan monks as defined by Franciscan leadership and opinion with respect to authorship my prior aim was to examine the disparity that could have led to allegations of plagiarism, the author of **F** being unknown despite the fact that personal experiences mentioned suggest Pécsváradi as the author- while **P** has Gábor (Pécsváradi) the title page. Consequently, the thesis examines structural changes from the aspect of authorship.

## Novel Results

The thesis could only reveal few details with respect to the life of Pécsváradi: based on two parallel travel diaries, he is supposed to have left the Holy Land with Jakab Bánffy and that they visited the monastery in Cyprus which owns the cross of the thief right to Jesus. As regards the presence of knight culture, while there seem to be numerous data available in the Bánffy family history there is a complete lack of reference to it in *Compendiosa descriptio*. Accordingly, accounts on deeds of crusaders is quite superficial and overly moralising: besides the character of Buillon Godfried only legends recounting Christian crusaders of Charles the Great and Saint Stephen are mentioned.

The comparison of the section about the liturgy of the holy fire in the Codex of Barletta with the texts of **F** and **P** it has become apparent that **F** could not originate from **P**. On account of the paleographically consistently wrong characters depicted in **F**, it seems to be the first printed version of a manuscript. However, based on the similarities between the two editions, version **P** was undoubtedly printed subsequent to and on the basis of **F**. Due to data from the map missing from **F** nonetheless supplied in **P**, **P** could only come to existence as a result of consulting both edition **F** and the manuscript.

Summing it up, **F** is not an abridged version based on **P**, but a first edition of a manuscript from the Holy Land brought by Pécsváradi and partly revised by him, which by all means retained the characteristics of the compiled sources better, than **P**, while **P** is revised edition based on **F** and the original manuscript as well.

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Contrary to the general view held in the history of Hungarian literature the philological examination of the two editions of *Compendiosa descriptio* has proved that the text of the undated edition by Miklós Farnádi, published in Vienna ( RMK III 75; version **F**) is not the shortened, 'plagiarised' version based on the 1521 edition (RMK III 189 and RMK III 5107; version **P**) but the first edition of the manuscript brought by Pécsváradi from the Holy Land, which he partially revised. Compared to **P**, this edition maintains more of the features of the original sources. **P** has been proved to be a revised edition based on **F** and the original manuscript.

The map mentioned in the prologue of **F**, entitled *Compendium locorum Terre Sancte*, which is missing from both editions, was most probably a drawing similar to Breydenbach's map of Jerusalem depicting Jerusalem from a distance, indicating the four cardinal points and the nearby sacred places of the Holy Land mostly used in the context of virtual pilgrimage, showing many details of the Holy City, for example the two doorways of the Golden Gate.

Based on references in **F** to pictures depicting the Church of Holy Sepulchre and the holy cave of Bethlehem, the thesis has found the closest connection of the missing map with the fragmentary map of Hermannus Borculus. Therefore, *Compendiosa descriptio* provides written evidence of a map developed by Franciscans that was either a direct inspiration for



compiling the Breydenbach-map or was directly originating from it but was definitely a drawing inspiring the Borculus-map.

Virtual pilgrimages mainly practiced in cloisters in Flanders meant saying prayers at paintings depicting holy places or at designated places in cloisters or they could include physical exercises according to the passage for which they used texts taken from descriptions of the Holy Land that were transformed. Transformation of these texts meant changes to the order of places, omitting descriptions of personal experience, adding precise data on latitude, translations to the language of the public or the appearance of feminine pronouns. Precise data on size served the purpose of locating stations, counting steps taken along the ambulatory or the creation of metric relics.

The *Compendiosa descriptio* exemplifies the marked presence of female saints of the Holy Land the addition of interesting data on distance furthermore, it provides references to a female target audience and to the purpose of the work being an aid for both physical and spiritual pilgrimage. Nevertheless, both the expansion of descriptions of personal experience included and the geographical determinants used for the structure go against Western practice. Data from medieval Hungary are only available from sources of the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit including altars set according to events of the passage. Relations of the Bánffy family did surely possess a metric relic. Consequently, while the existence of the map proves the structural division of the work according to the four seasons, the concept of virtual pilgrimages explain some of the revisions and changes made by Pécsváradi.

The thesis identifies, as one of the main features of the revised edition, the 5-part structure of chapters already present in **F**, uniformly used in **P** with the aim to separate or merge individual chapters. While earlier research suggested its origin to have been that of the scholastic division of texts, the thesis provides an explanation for the above through the method used in mnemotechnics.

This is further supported by contemporary theoretical texts analysed by Gábor Kiss Farkas et al. that are closely linked to observant Franciscans. It does not contradict virtual pilgrimages however, as mnemotechnic methods were also based on building up an imaginary space, what is more, mnemotechnic spaces were also created using routes of pilgrimage.

The thesis discusses the use of previously unidentified liturgical and pious sources among them that of works by members of the order of Pécsvárad: Pelbárt Temesvári and Osvát Laskai. Precisely checking the given loci it became apparent that **P** made correction to **F** and that the use of the two main sources that were quoted several times (works of Alphonsus de Spina and Nicolaus de Lyra) was actually more widespread than indicated by Pécsvárad.

The joint appearance of quotations from *glossa ordinaria*, *glossa interlinearis* suppose the existence of a printed bible with a glossary generally including the work of Mathias Döring in which he defends Nicolaus de Lyra against the criticism of Paulus Burgensis. Discussion of the nature of authorship that has not been previously researched in the literature is to be found in the work of Döring in the section on the first psalm; the part about the authorship of psalms. Applying the fundamental tenets of Döring based on Aristotle upon undeclared texts, the primary author is not the writer of the

literary material but the creator of the literary form. Consequently, the creation of the five-part structure plays a pivotal role in connection with authorship.

The linguistic and stylistic analysis of the two editions have revealed that compared to **F**, **P** is a substantially extended, thoroughly revised version clearly representing the intentions and linguistic competence of Pécsváradi, the author. The several, consistent differences between the two editions in terms of syntax, lexis and discourse clearly demonstrate that a large proportion of text **F** was not written by Pécsváradi himself. The above aptly supplements and supports findings of the philological analysis conducted and highlights Pécsváradi's efforts to employ an adequately elaborate and sophisticated language and style manifesting in parts revealing an incredibly rich array of stylistic skills.

Findings of the thesis are based on the text and identified sources of the critical edition of *Compendiosa descriptio* published parallel with the present work. The appendix contains an analysis of a poem entitled *Peregrinatio Laurentii de Taar* attached to the Gyöngyös copy of **P** the source of which, contrary to prior research, can be found in Walter de Chatillon's *Alexandreise* and not in Mandeville.

## **Publications related to the topic of the thesis**

### **Studies:**

KONDÁKOR Szabolcs: Pécsváradi Gábor Jeruzsálemi utazásának szerzőségéről. In: BALÁZS József – BOJTOS Anita et alii (szerk.): *Studia Varia Tanulmánykötet*. Budapest [Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar 2016, 154–167. (online kiadás: [https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/960623/file/PDK\\_k%C3%B6tet.pdf](https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/960623/file/PDK_k%C3%B6tet.pdf))

### **Lectures:**

KONDÁKOR Szabolcs: *Pécsváradi Gábor Jeruzsálemi utazásának szerzőségéről*. Pázmány Doktori Konferencia. Budapest, 2016, február 5.

KONDÁKOR Szabolcs: *Indulgenze e passi –La descrizione della Terra Santa di un francescano osservante ungherese, Gabriele di Pécsvárad*. Utazás és spiritualitás a klasszikus és a neolatin kultúrákban. Budapest, 2018. május 18.

KONDÁKOR Szabolcs: *Szentek Legendái Pécsváradi Gábor Szentföldi utazásában*. XIII. Magyar Ókortudományi Konferencia. Szeged, 2018. május 25.

KONDÁKOR Szabolcs: *Változatok a Szentföldre. Pécsváradi Gábor Compendiosa descriptiója*. Középkorral foglalkozó doktoranduszok konferenciája. Budapest, 2021. június