

## **Theses of PhD dissertation**

***György Pray's Epitome Rerum sub Josepho II. Leopoldo II. et Francisco I.  
regibus Hungariae gestarum (introductory study and text edition)***

**Written by Orsolya Báthory**

Supervisor: Prof. Havas László DSc



University of Debrecen

PhD School for Linguistics

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## I. The aim of the dissertation, the setting of the topic

The special literature which deals with the Hungarian historiography sets the birth year of the criticism-based scientific historiography unanimously to the year of 1761, since the *Annales veteres Hunnorum, avarorum et Hungarorum*, the definite early history work - even from the scientific historical point of view - by the former Jesuit historiographer György Pray was published that year. Unfortunately Pray, whose eminence lies in the collection of data, the criticism of sources and in the transformation of them into historical narration, does not belong to the often studied parts of literature history; however the results of his scientific activity, which in some cases are still relevant today, are used from time to time.

The topic of my thesis is one of Pray's unpublished works, the *Epitome Rerum sub Josepho II. Leopoldo II. et Francisco I. regibus Hungariae gestarum*. The writing, which I refer to as *Epitome* from now on, is a short, outline-like work, as its name suggests. Its topic is the yearly based presentation of the main internal and external political events which happened the reign of the Hungarian kings Joseph the Second, Leopold the Second and Francis the First on annual basis. Pray does not break the tradition of the Jesuit historiography as he presents the events connecting them to years. The period which the writing includes lasts for 21 years, from 1780 (the coming to the throne of Joseph the Second) until the April of 1801. (the Battle of Cobenhaven.) Pray was prevented in continuing his work by his serious illness and later by his death in the September of 1801.

The core of the dissertation is the publication of the text plus the linking critical apparatus and explanatory (factual) notes which are connected to the work as end notes. The text publication is preceded with an introductory study which has two main parts. The first part deals with Pray's last large-scaled historical enterprise, the *Historia regum Hungariae*. (Buda, 1801) Pray presumably started the writing of the *Epitome* as the continuation of this three-volume-long kingship history which lasts from the Hungarian conquest to Maria Theresa's death in 1780. For this reason I intended to present the circumstances of formation of the *Historia regum Hungariae*, its important content elements, and its reception by the public. The topic of the second part of the thesis is the *Epitome* itself. In this part I list the copies of the work, their history, the circumstances the work was born under, and the sources cited by Pray. After a short content presentation I describe the basic principles of text edition, the occurring hardships of the publication, and their solutions.

## II. 1. The methods used in the text edition and the basic principles

We have several copies of the *Epitome*. The autograph text, which can be considered as final version, is in the Manuscript Archive of the Széchényi National Library under the signature Quart. Lat. 310. Obviously I took this one as the basis of the text edition; I indicated those momentums which are worth being mentioned from textual criticism's point of view. Apart from the autograph copy, three other copies of the *Epitome* can also be found in the Széchényi National Library (Quart. Lat. 347.) and in the Manuscript archive of the University Library (G 128, Coll. Pray. Tom. 68. /1., 3r-33v) The one in the Pray collection was made by István Schönvisner (1738-1818), the director of the University Library and the executor of Pray's will. I only indicated the differences between the autograph copy and this one, as the differences in this copy are from intentional text correction. I did not want to state the differences between the autograph copy and the copies of the Schönvisner version (Quart. Lat. 347., G 128.)

The studied copies during the text edition also include the manuscript which contains Pray's handwritten versions, drafts. This also can be found in the 68. tome of the Pray's collection bounded after the Schönvisner copy. Coll. Pray, 68. tomus, 1. köteg, 36r–108v). From these text variations we cannot compile the whole text. Firstly because they do not go further in the introduction of the events than the 21<sup>st</sup> caput of the part which deals with Francis's reign, which is the year 1798 (if we take the final version and chapter system of the autograph copy, OSzKK Quart. Lat. 310.) Secondly there are parts in the finalized text of which we cannot find the drafts in this copy. The chapters do not follow each other in chronological order; they are in different lengths, so called blocks. Of these blocks the longest is nearly 40 pages long (44r-63v) and the shortest ones are only one page (recto-verso) long. The mess of the chapters might be explained by the jumbling of the unbound leaves. This is contradicted by the fact that only the ordering of the pages would not result in a comprehensive text, so it might be that some pages are lost or hidden. It is also possible that Pray only wanted to record notes, ideas, variations and he did not intend to write the whole work in a form of a draft. This is underpinned by the disorder of the manuscript: several parts were rewritten two, even three times with more or less alterations.

I think that the draft copy must be taken into account for the text edition as it contains Pray's textual variations, his side notes and footnotes which are significantly different from the final version in many places. The publication of the text variations in an appendix would not have been practical because it would have been difficult to follow the formation of the final text

and the limitations of size did not make it possible. Among Pray's autograph notes there are a lot of marginal notes and footnotes, there are many deleted items which become easy to be studied if they are published along with the main text. The publication of the whole note material in a parallel form would not have been a good solution again because of size limitations. That is why I decided to sign the differences to the finalized version in the critical apparatus including the deleted items, the footnotes and the side notes too. It might seem to be problematic that this method results in a kind of 'negative' apparatus, which does not reflect the classical way of textual tradition. The reason that supports it is that it is adequately informative and the size did not exceed the limits.

During the transcription of the *Epitome* I took the autograph copy as a basis, following its orthography both in the Latin and in the German or French texts. I conserved the features of Pray's orthography including the use of capitals and lower cases and the punctuation (also meaning the preservation of commas which Pray often used). I considered this essential because in many cases the meaning of the long, complex sentences become clear if we take the commas into account which indicate the individual, conceptual parts. As at this time there are no rules for editing the modern age Latin texts, I took mainly the classical and medieval publication guides as a basis, so I used the well-known Latin abbreviations in the critical apparatus.

The publication of Pray's own notes introduced further difficulties. To give his sources, to quote them, or to complete the text Pray used ABC-marked footnotes restarting on every page, both in the drafts and in the fair copy. The preservation of the notes in this form with the use of the earlier presented critical apparatus would have been difficult to realize technically. In the Schönvisner copy (Coll. Pray. Tom. 68., 3r-33v) of the copy which can be found in the University Library (G. 128) one can find the same notes by Pray with continuing ABC markings at the ends of the individual chapters. I chose the latter solution during the text edition and regarding the notes as main text I equally marked the differences of the final version in the critical apparatus.

## II. 2. The *Historia regum Hungariae* and the *Epitome*

In the introductory study preceding the text edition I tried to collect and order the data of the formation of the *Historia regum Hungariae* and the *Epitome*.

It made necessary to study the *Historia regum Hungariae* (mainly the introducing *Notitiae praeviae*) that the professional literature of Pray does not deal with the topic fully. The

circumstances the *Historia regum Hungariae* was born under (the request of the Viennese court, the help and supervision of József Izdenczy state councillor, etc.) were revealed by the so far sole Pray monograph and a study by Ferenc Strada, but the arranging of the data and their completing using the newer sources has not happened yet<sup>1</sup>.

The deeper study of the *Historia regum Hungariae* was also made necessary by the fact that the *Epitome* and the *Historia regum Hungariae* are connected in the historiographer's intention and at textual level too. By the historiographer's intention I mean that even in the time of Pray there was a demand for a work which presents the whole Hungarian history ending with the present. With the *Epitome* Pray apparently wanted to continue the list of historical events temporarily closed in the *Historia regum Hungariae* even if it was clear for him that his work would not pass the censorship.

Besides the relevant professional literature I tried to use the results of my studies in archives and manuscript collections to present the formation of the two works in as detailed as it was possible. So after reviewing the sources mentioned in Gáspár Lischerong's work, the information from it along with the recently discovered was presented connected to the topic in their relevancies.

### III. Presentation of the results

The aim for continuation between the *Historia regum Hungariae* and the *Epitome* can be spotted in two places in discrete copies of the manuscript. The first such occurrence is in the aforementioned, so-called draft copy (Manuscript Collection of the University Library, Coll. Pray. Tom. 68./1., 36r–108v) where Pray quotes several sentences of the ending chapter of the *Historia regum Hungariae* which deals with the reign of Maria Theresa as an introduction for the part dealing with the reign of Joseph II. However, it is not the printed form but a variation of it. The other reference to the *Historia regum Hungariae* does not appear in the drafts, but it can be read in the autograph version, in the fourth chapter of the unit which deals with Joseph. 'Confer quae de hac pace ad annum 1762., in rebus Mariae Teresiae memorata sunt.' In this reference to the Hubertusburg peace (actually made in February, 1763) Pray also refers to the *Historia regum Hungariae* especially to its third volume. He does not see it as an

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<sup>1</sup> Lischerong Gáspár SJ: *Pray György élete és munkái* [György Pray's life and works], Bp., 1937. Strada Ferenc: *Izdenczy József, az államtanács első magyar tagja* [József Izdenczy the first Hungarian member of the State council]. In: A gróf Klebelsberg Kúnó Magyar Történetkutató Intézet Évkönyve, Bp., 1940, 54–149.

individual work but as the earlier part of the monarch-connected list of events (*res gestae*), which deals with the reign of Maria Theresa.

Pray was trusted with the writing of the *Historia regum Hungariae* by Joseph II. (Respectively by József Izdenczy state councillor who was acting on his behalf.) in 1788. Pray had entered court's service as a *historiographus regius*. Among his further goals the emperor had the alteration of the Hungarian state law and the feudal constitution (Under the term constitution the cardinal laws are meant.) Ultimately these laws prevented him of fulfilling his reforms and the creation of a homolog empire in the legal and administrative point of view. Originally the king charged Pray with the writing of a so-called *historia statistica* (state history, *Staatsgeschichte*) which would have served as the historical support for the aforementioned efforts for constitutional changes. Izdenczy supervised the forming work wishing the state history course book would convey a public law (in its narrower form a state law) point of view for the future solicitors and officials which was considered to be desirable by the court. His remarks written to Pray's draft, the so-called *Conspectus* are mainly rooted to the Anonymus-written *Gesta Hungarorum*'s blood-contract-based state and public law approach.

József Izdenczy interpreted the genre of *historia statistica* as mainly public law oriented representation of the evaluation of the parts and the institutes of the *status* which was endowed with the meaning 'state' in the modern times. The state councillor and the Viennese court expected a tendentious state history in which the 'critical' historical and constitutional-historical events (blood treaty, Golden Bull, Tripartitum, the royal diplomas) are presented in a way which supports the greater power of the monarch.

Miklós Skerlecz (1729-1799), whose advice Pray had asked for in a letter, had completely different ideas about the *historia statistica*. As one of the most educated persons of his age, Skerlecz encouraged Pray to write a solely scientific, unbiased *statistica* which presents the changes in the different areas of the state.

The so-called statistical works of the age belonged to the state counting literature and were basically state descriptions. A necessary part of these descriptive works was the presentation of what evaluation the different parts of the state (legislation, government offices, law courts, state dignitaries) had gone through during the history of that particular state. Skerlecz suggested the adaptation of the statistical approaches.

The *Historia regum Hungariae*, which appeared in 1801, is not a *historia statistica* as it does not follow the changes of the different parts of state in the course of the historical events. It is the 155-page long *notitiae praeviae* which is supposed to present the main parts of state and

their changes. After this the work is not more than the short, summarizing history of Hungary until 1780.

The event presentation closed in the *Historia regum Hungariae* is continued in the *Epitome* with the coming to the throne of Joseph the Second. The existence of the *Epitome* was not unknown to those dealing with Pray's work. Short after the death of the historiographer the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* in Jena and Joseph von Hormayr's *Österreichischer Plutarch* mentioned the work as one which is worth publication along with the rest of the legacy. The works of the two former Jesuits, Mihály Paintner and István Schönvisner also refer to the work.

Actually the circumstances the *Epitome* was born under are not known. Neither the work, nor the last decade in the life of Pray is well studied. The correspondence of Pray, which might give some information, got sparse greatly as many of his scientific correspondence partners had already deceased by that time. The several references to the *Epitome* are known from the correspondence between Mihály Paintner and István Schönvisner and from their correspondence with others and from the aforementioned biographies.

The *Epitome* deserves our special attention because Pray, who had mainly been dealing with the ancient Hungarian history and medieval times, concentrates on his own age and its external political events in this writing of his. Pray's interest towards the events of contemporary politics was not new during the time of the birth of the *Epitome*. In the diet of 1790-91 Pray participated as the delegate of the chapter of Nagyvárád and he took an active part in the discussion of matters of public law and religion politics and also in the replying of the leaflets concerning these matters in the form of pamphlets. The fact that he was concerned by the events of his age is also supported by his epigrams.

The author only mentions those events that he believes to be important and this gives a short epitome-like character to the writing. However, the relatively few, well-selected subjects are the results of Pray's historian concept. He does not want to allude to all events; he rather tries to emphasize those events which are important from the European politics and diplomacy's point of view and to include them in cause and effect relations. His aim is to explore and explain the processes which had led to historical events. Similarly to his published work he wrote notes for the *Epitome* too which are to give his sources, to quote them, or to complete the main text. We can find the other characterizing element of Pray's discussion method, which is the presentation of the different views of an event. These features which characterise Pray's historical writings might suggest that Pray intended to have his work published. However, the writing has some strongly worded views which are typical for Pray's

denominational and political views. This might give an explanation why this work was not published after the author's death.

For writing the *Epitome* Pray used several contemporary sources. He probably got informed about the main events of internal and international politics from journals. Once he mentions that the information written down by him had been read 'in publicis ephemeridibus.' From the government papers he probably cites the *Wiener Zeitung* (under the name of 'Staats- und Ministerialzeitung) and the Parisian *Le Moniteur universel*. From the conservative, anti-revolutionary journals he refers to the *Mercure britannique* and to the Hamburgian *Politisches Journal* which had turned from enlightenment sympathizer into deeply anti-revolutionary.

During the writing of the *Epitome* Pray used several contemporary works which belonged expressly to the anti-enlightenment and anti-revolutionary literature. These writings are conservative in the original meaning of the expression. These works take sides in favour of reserving the pre-French Revolution state of sociological, political, religious and cultural conditions. The works of Edmund Burke, Christopher Girtanner, Francis d'Ivernois, Jean François de la Harpe belong to this category amongst others.

In the last part of the study I briefly introduce the events mentioned in the *Epitome* primarily focusing on the author's unique point of view. Since the events discussed in the *Epitome* are known from summarising and monographic works dealing with the age or even from school books, I tried to emphasize the momentums which demonstrate Pray's approach and opinion about events he himself had chosen and written. These make the work be really interesting; they give its memoir character. The parts presenting the authors' opinion not only tell a lot about Pray's political, ideological attitude (not giving too much surprise), but they are often quite amusing as well.

## List of publications in the topic of the dissertation

### Papers

Báthory, O.: Pray György II. József-képe [György Pray's portrait of Joseph the Second]. In: Maczák I. (szerk.): *Summa. Tanulmányok Szelestei N. László tiszteletére [Summa. Papers in honour of László Szelestei N.]*. Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2007, 30–32.

Báthory, O.: Pray György Dudith András életéhez [György Pray's data to life of András Dudith]. In: Császtvay T., Nyerges J. (szerk.): *Szolgálatomat ajánlom a 60 éves Jankovics Józsefnek [I recommend my service to 60-year-old József Jankovics]*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, MTA Irodalomtudományi Intézete, 2009, 35–41.

Báthory, O.: György Pray's Unpublished Manuscript: *Epitome rerum sub Josepho II., Leopoldo II. et Francisco I. regibus Hungariae gestarum*. In: Havas, L., Tegyei, I. (edd.): *Classica – Mediaevalia – Neolatina 3*. Debreceni: Societas Neolatina Hungarica Sectio Debreceniensis, 2009, 407–417.

Báthory, O.: Pray György egy kiadatlan epigrammája [György Pray's unpublished epigram]. *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* CXII (2008)/ 5–6, 741–745.

### Book review

Madas, E.: *Sermones de sancto Ladislao rege Hungariae. Középkori prédikációk Szent László királyról [Medieval sermons about Ladislaus I]*. Debrecen, 2004. In: Havas, L., Tegyei, I. (edd.): *Classica – Mediaevalia – Neolatina II*. Debreceni: Societas Neolatina Hungarica Sectio Debreceniensis, 2009, 169–171.

### Conference talk

Báthory, O.: Epitome – Pray György kiadatlan emlékirata [György Pray's unpublished memoir]. Colloquium in Memory of István Borzsák (20–25. April 2009, Budapest)