

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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**The life and works of a polyhistor from Késmárk – as mirrored in his notes
The diary of Georgius Buchholtz jun. (1709–1737)**

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I. Preliminaries to the research

His contemporaries as well as literary and science historians of the 18–19th centuries considered Georgius Buchholtz jun. (1688–1737) as one of the most erudite people of his age, an outstanding scientist, preacher, teacher, and not least an excellent poet, however his name became almost totally forgotten by the second half of the 20th century. Buchholtz, born in Késmárk (today Kežmarok, Slovakia), noted day by day between 9th May 1709 and 25th July 1737 into his near 3000-pages-long diary what happened to him and in his environment, where he went, who he met, who he sent to and received from letters, what he read, what he wrote, what he taught at school, what he ate, what he bought, how he spent his free time. The manuscript, preserved in the Slovakian National Library (earlier *Matica slovenská*) in Turócszentmárton (today Martin, Slovakia; signature: C24/1–2), contains a great deal of information on everyday life, education, the Evangelical denomination, the world of science etc. The diary, forgotten for a long time, practically until now rested – apart from the examination of some smaller parts – unprocessed and unpublished. The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the diary, completing the information in it and the presentation of the author's wide activity with data from other sources, manuscripts and printed material as well. The approach to the text is basically from cultural historical point of view, but I also examine it as a literary work.

Studying the secondary literature one can find the name Georgius/György/Georg/Juraj Buchholtz jun. in many kinds of works. He is a constant character of biographical lexicons, histories of different branches of science, church and school; most of the short references, however, contain quite a number of inaccuracies. The literature dealing directly with Buchholtz is less rich. At the beginning of the 20th century Samu Weber, Rudolf Weber, Johann Lipták did research on the family, especially the older and younger Georgius as preachers, teachers, scientists and explorers of the Tatra mountain. In the 1950–

60s several studies were published about Georgius Buchholtz jun. within the frame of researches on history of German universities, which mostly treated his short stay in Halle and Jena on the basis of the text of his diary. The newer literature, written by Imre Varga, László Szelestei N., Ferenc Földesi (and me) deals primarily not with his person but his literary work.

II. Methodological remarks

To work up the whole diary – after examining some smaller parts – first I “excerpted” the text, that is I made a kind of database with the following headings: page number, date, topic, information, my remarks. The data in the chart is searchable and can be grouped according to different points of view.

With knowledge of the content of the diary and Buchholtz’s life and activities, a basically cultural historical approach seemed the most fruitful out of the different possibilities, this is how the colourfulness of the notes can be best shown. I examined the rich material in the diary by themes chosen according to the following points: what the author writes a lot about, in what fields the diary contains new information; main spheres of cultural history (peregrination, education, science, literature, reading etc.); biographical facts and events in connection with Buchholtz’s social status, profession, denomination; typical diary subjects. To understand and evaluate the information in the diary and to put it into wider context I used not only secondary literature but also manuscripts and prints by Buchholtz and his contemporaries.

The dissertation starts with an introduction containing reasons for the choice of subject, methodological remarks and a short survey of the literature on Buchholtz. It is followed by a summary of different theories on the genre of diary, then by Buchholtz’s biography. The main part of the dissertation deals with the processing of the data in the diary concerning the following topics:

peregrinations, education and school life, Buchholtz's literary works, his participation in the Hungarian and foreign world of science, correspondence (partly on the basis of his remained letters), reading, religion, everyday life. After the content analysis comes the examination of the author's usage of languages and of his Hungarus-consciousness, then the study of the diary as a work of art. In the latter chapter I try to answer the questions to what extent Buchholtz's diary suits the requirements of its genre, and whether it can be taken – and if yes, why – as a literary work. The appendix contains a chart of the structure of the diary (years, months and page numbers), the text of Hungarian poems in it, and the transcription of three letters written by Matthias Bél to Buchholtz, unknown so far.

III. New results in the dissertation

The abundance of the material and the limits of the dissertation's extent, the great number and at the same time the unexploredness of other scripts by Buchholtz, the contradictions between the primary sources and the technical literature and in many cases the lack of them – they all take part in that the research cannot be regarded as completed. I tried to provide a comprehensive survey of the diary so I could not (but I did not really wanted, either, to) make an analysis of each themes with full particulars. Nevertheless, the examination brought important results: on the basis of the explored data many statements of the technical literature can be completed or modified, and a great deal of new information concerning e. g. the history of peregrination, schools, education, scholarly life in Hungary and abroad at the beginning of the 18th century, the birth of literary works, well and less known people, not least Georgius Buchholtz himself came to light.

Buchholtz's diary is an acknowledged – for Greifswald a unique – source of German university life and education of his age. The parts about Halle and Jena have already been written about in German, the several hundred pages about Buchholtz's stay in Greifswald have only been planned to publish for a long time by the local archive. At the beginning of the diary Buchholtz is relatively talkative so one can get a great deal of information on university education, subjects, curriculum, methods, disputations, student life, the early history of the scholarship that made the university of Greifswald so important for Hungarian students, and also on how a poor student sustains himself, how he rounds his small income from the scholarship, from his patrons and very rarely from home off with teaching, paid work in writing and composing poems. Buchholtz's dissertation has been known, now the circumstances of its birth came to light, too.

The diary contains a lot of new information on Evangelical education. Very little has been known so far about the school in Nagypalugya (Veľká Paludza, Slovakia; not existing any more), from Buchholtz's notes it becomes clear that he taught many kinds of pupil groups for many kinds of knowledge, on high level. Important contributions are the sample texts to the history of teaching of rhetoric, the greeting poems to the history of cantations, recorded in the diary. Since the Evangelicals had no uniform rules of education, any new data on certain schools widen our knowledge on this field. Therefore it is very important what from Buchholtz's diary we get to know: besides the usual subjects concerning religion and Latin he taught history, geography, different branches of philosophy, physics, Greek and Hebrew, and he used teaching material made by himself as well as books by Dietericus, Matthias Bél, Comenius, Hedericus, Curtius, Weiss, Heunischius. From the remained laws of the secondary school in Késmárk we know quite a lot about that school, but Buchholtz's diary is an important source of the application of the regulations in practice. New subjects compared to those in Nagypalugya are arithmetic, geometry, architecture, medicine, Hungarian,

German, and some basic Polish, Syriac, French and Russian. He uses books by Vossius, Dietericus, König, Lange, Weiss, Wolff, Schrader, Curas and Hübner, and he uses newspapers as teaching material, too. One can get to know different events of the school year, the course of exams, excursions, punishments. The diary is an especially important source for school theatricals – a part of the data concerning this topic has already been known, but a more thorough examination of the text resulted in many additions and modifications to them.

Georgius Buchholtz was considered an excellent poet by his contemporaries. He mentions the writing of nearly three hundred poems in his diary, and the text of more than one hundred of them can be read in it. From one-line chronostichs to several-pages-long greetings the poems are very different in length, genre and theme. Buchholtz mentions them by the following names: carmen, versus, rhythmus, cantilena, mnemonicus, versus Adonicus, epicaedium, chronostichon, epigramma, anagramma, cabbala, versus retrogradus, distichon, versus saphicus, epitaphium, epithalamium, sequentia, epigraphum, panegyricus, versus dactylicus, aenigma, leoninus, emblemata, versus onomasticus; and there is also an echo poem, a picture poem and a cisio in the diary. As for the topics, most of them are greetings for the new year, for someone's birthday or name day, for weddings or funerals. Some of them are intended only for the addressee, others are read out publicly. He writes poems about his voyage from Danzig to Greifswald, the Swedish kings, chronostichs on his friends' name and his mother's death, a distich with chronostich on Luther, anagrams out of his friends' and acquaintances' name, epitaphs for a dissected dog and a Martin-day goose. The texts are mostly in Latin, but there are some Hungarian and German ones among them. Some of his poems (mainly for weddings and funerals) were printed. He mentions several times that church songs by him were also published, but they are not known today. The transcription and examination of some of his poems in this dissertation widens our knowledge on occasional poetry of that age.

Today Buchholtz's name can be met first of all in works on science history. The technical literature mostly considers him as a colleague of Matthias Bél; from his diary it turns out what it means exactly, the steps of his work of describing counties and caves can be followed. The notes reveal that Daniel Fischer intended to found not only a journal at around 1730 but presumably also a kind of scholarly society; and they also show (with some complements from letters) how Buchholtz helped Samuel Matthaëides in continuing Johannes Rezik's *Gymnasiologia*, what kind of material he collected to it and how his students made copies of the manuscript for Matthaëides. Ferenc Földesi has already proved that Johannes Christoph Kheberitsch's *Directorium* to his son, Adam, was written by Buchholtz, besides the data he introduces, however, many other pieces can be found in the diary on this topic, and it is very interesting to compare the *Directorium* with other works by Buchholtz. The diary provides many pieces of information on Buchholtz's connections with foreign scholars and scientific life: one can get to know the people he knew personally or via correspondence, his cooperation in the journals *Sammlung* and *Nachrichten*, and it turns out that he is one of the unknown authors of *Zedler's Universal Lexicon*. It shades the picture on science of that age interestingly as superstitions and beliefs in dragons, witches, ghosts appear in the diary beside serious topics, experiments, observations, descriptions and statements partly valid up to now.

According to his notes, Buchholtz wrote 14 137 letters and received 6558 ones between 1712 and 1732. He refers to them in his diary with horizontal and vertical lines on the margin. However, he did not sign all the letters, and we know of some letters not mentioned in the diary. He sent and received several hundred letters before 1712 and after 1732. A list found in the archive in Tiszolc records the people Buchholtz corresponded with; it contains about five hundred names: his relatives, friends, acquaintances, patrons, teachers and pupils, school mates, colleagues, pastors, intellectuals, foreign scholars, people of different denominations and also women. Some of his famous pen-friends were Matthias

Bél, Samuel Matthaeides, Paulus Lányi, Thomas Szirmay, Daniel Krmann, Martinus Regis, Carolus Otto Moller, Daniel Fischer, Georgius Bohus, Johannes Sartorius, Johann Brewer, Johann Kanold, János Csécsi. He had contacts with professors from Greifswald and Wittenberg as well as intellectuals from Germany, Austria, England Transylvania and Debrecen (East Hungary). In his diary he usually records only the fact of writing or receiving letters, but does not talk about their content, thus we have more knowledge of those the manuscript of which remained. Thematically they show great variety from the events of personal and public life through the world of science, literature and school to the weather and nature etc. Today we know of about 560 letters, they are mostly unprocessed, only a few of them have been published so far.

The diary gives evidence of Buchholtz's interest in, nearly passion for books and reading. He always notes what he reads, what kind of books he buys (and what they cost), gets, lends or sees. His opinion, however, he does not record, he never says if he likes or not the books he reads. Usually he refers to the books by author and title, but sometimes he mentions the place and year of publishing, or even the name of the publisher or his company. In some cases he records only the number of the books he buys. He reads the most in his youth, mainly during his peregrinations; later he has less time for it beside the teacher's and pastor's tasks and his family, but books still remain constant characters of his notes. His readings are mostly in Latin and German, sometimes we can find Hungarian titles, and even some Hebrew, Greek, Czech and Slovakian ones. He reads books of all kinds of topics, written from ancient times to his own age, published earlier or quite recently. He reads the Bible every day, and often mentions other religious works, mainly Evangelical ones, but sometimes by authors of Catholic and other denominations. He also reads books on philosophy, geography, nature, history as well as fiction, dictionaries, lexicons, grammar books, journals. He obtains the books in various ways: buys them personally, orders them from booksellers, from catalogues – mainly from Boroszló (today

Wrocław, Poland) and Lőcse (Levoča, Slovakia) –, gets them as presents or on loan, and some of them he presumably inherits from his father. In many cases students studying abroad or foreign acquaintances send him books. Besides reading Buchholtz often mentions other forms of dealing with books: their ordering and sorting, cleaning, binding, registering, making bookshelves etc. One can read several times in the diary that he writes catalogues of others' books or helps with taking inventories of legacies. He keeps records of his own books, too; not once does he mention that he is working on the catalogue. Several lists of his books – partly fragmentary and mixed with each other – can be found in the archive in Tiszolc together with the catalogue of his father's books. A paper also kept here preserved Buchholtz's figures on the number and value of his books: according to this he had 1055 volumes on 23rd June 1732, these were worth 1616 Hungarian forints and 30 garases, and the catalogue took up 39¼ sheets of paper. He continued keeping records in the following years thus the increase of his library can be tracked: at the beginning of 1737 he had already 1394 books – this can be considered a really significant collection in Hungary.

Buchholtz's diary draws the portrait of a deeply religious man. Many aspects of his piety are reflected in his notes: his activities as pastor, his participation in the life of the Evangelicals in North Hungary, his relation to pietism and people of other denominations, the elements of his religiousness at home, at church and at school, prayers, interest in Luther and the historic monuments of Lutheranism. However, he hardly records any attacks against Protestants.

The diary provides the reader with many pieces of information on the way of life and mentality of that age, on public events and different forms of entertainment, illnesses and cures. Descriptions of the author's wedding and funerals of his relatives can be interesting and important for ethnography as well.

Buchholtz was a four-tongued Hungarus, he spoke, wrote and rhymed in Latin, Hungarian, German and Slovakian equally well. In different periods of his

life one or the other of them was primary for him, according to the environment; besides these four “main” languages, however, he acquired Greek, Hebrew, Polish and presumably Czech, and he had some knowledge of Italian, French, Syriac and Russian. He kept his diary in Latin, but there are some Hungarian and German poems and Greek, Hebrew, Slovakian, German, Hungarian and Polish words and expressions in it. He often mixes languages in the use of names in the diary. The Evangelical intellectuals in North Hungary had a strong sense of Hungarus-consciousness, Buchholtz’s notes also reflect his interest in the history of Hungary and anxiety about his homeland’s fate. Not once does he talk about the Hungarian language with other people, but some references in the diary show that he does not consider it more important than the other languages of the country.

Beyond introducing and analyzing the content and the formal characters of the diary and presenting its new data for cultural history, I tried to answer the question to what extent Buchholtz’s diary suits the requirements of its genre. As regards form and order of everyday notes, it is just as a diary “has to be” by the technical literature, the topics in it are not extraordinary, either; it is special due to its great extent and informativeness. The usual points of examination, mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation in the chapter on diaries in general, are relevant for Buchholtz’s notes, the consequences, however, are quite different from those in the theoretical writings. This work cannot be classified as a clear example of a certain diary type; and among its motifs only a few can be discovered out of those emphasized by the technical literature, e. g. memory, manifesting religiousness, partly family model and account, but there are no traces of self-examination, self-justification, self-defence, confession. It hardly reflects personal feelings, emotions or opinions, it is not subjective. Nothing refers to any intention by Buchholtz to write it for his descendants or anyone else to read or publish, neither that he used it as a source material. As regards

language, style and rhetoric, it is not outstanding, rather quite simple; from literary point of view it is important not for its artistic merits but as a treasury of data on the history of literature.

Many elements of Buchholtz's work would deserve a dissertation or monograph on its own. Collecting and publishing his literary pieces and correspondence, working up his readings and lists of books are great tasks in front of me, and the diary offers a lot of smaller topics to elaborate, as well. Making a critical edition of the text would be a lifelong activity, but it would possibly draw disproportionately little interest compared to the invested work. Nevertheless, because of the great number of unknown data referring to many people, it would worth to make an index of names in it, which would help researchers to find the information they are interested in.

IV. Publications related to the dissertation

Ifj. Buchholtz György magyar nyelvű köszöntőversei [Greeting poems by Georgius Buchholtz jun. in Hungarian], Magyar Könyvszemle, 1998, 390–397.

Ifj. Buchholtz György második peregrinációja (1713) [Georgius Buchholtz jun.'s second peregrination (1713)], s. a. r., bev. BOGÁR Judit, Piliscsaba, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2000 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely – Források, 1).

Egy „négy nyelvű hungarus”: *Ifj. Buchholtz György és a nyelvhasználat kérdései* [A four-tongued Hungarian – Georgius Buchholtz jun. and the questions of his usage of languages] = *Irodalmi és nyelvi kölcsönhatások az integráció folyamatában – Literárne a jazykové interakcie v procese integrácie*, szerk. František ALABÁN et al., Banská Bystrica, 2005, 261–269.

„Draconum ossa”: *Ifj. Buchholtz György és a deményfalvi barlang* [„Draconum ossa” – Georgius Buchholtz jun. and the cave of Deményfalva] = *Magyarországi tudósok levelezése a 18. században: Tanulmányok*, szerk. SZELESTEI N. László, Budapest, SZENAL, 2006, 11–26.

BOGÁR Judit, GUITMAN Barnabás, *Bél Mátyás levele ifj. Buchholtz Györgyhez, Pozsony, 1727. október 28.* [Matthias Bél's letter to Georgius Buchholtz jun., Pozsony (Bratislava), 28th October 1727] = *Summa: Tanulmányok Szelestei N. László tiszteletére*, szerk. MACZÁK Ibolya, Piliscsaba, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2007 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely – Tanulmányok, 7), 39–42.

Mesterkedő költői játék: *Ifj. Buchholtz György kéziratosa versei* [„Machinating poetic play – Manuscript poems by Georgius Buchholtz jun.”] = *„Ember lenni mindig, minden körülményben”*: *Tanulmányok Kiczenko Judit születésnapja alkalmából*, szerk. RADVÁNSZKY Anikó, Piliscsaba, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2008 (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely – Tanulmányok, 8), 28–41.

„Mesterkedő költői játék” [„Machinating poetic play”] = *Kontext – Filológia – Kultúra II. Kontextus – Filológia – Kultúra II.*, szerk. František ALABÁN et al., Banská Bystrica, 2008, 105–112.

Lexicon entries: *Magyar művelődéstörténeti lexikon*, főszerk. KÖSZEGHY Péter, szerk. TAMÁS Zsuzsanna, I–VIII, Budapest, Balassi, 2003–2008.