

The Charters of the Angevin Period



At the beginning of the 1980s a series of publications of source material was started by a group of scholars under the direction of professor Gyula Kristó (then the chair of the Medieval and Early Modern Hungarian History Department of the Attila József University, Szeged). The aim of this venture was to make extracts (*regesta*) from the charters of the Angevin period and to prepare them for publication.

This scholarly enterprise which filled a gap was made necessary by the fact, that Hungarian medieval-studies had a considerable amount of work to undertake by the close of the twentieth century in the field of research on sources. As far as documents of the Arpadian age are concerned there were much fewer charters and most of them had already been published in the nineteenth century and these collections of sources were enriched by the work of Imre Szentpétery, Iván Borsa and György Györffy in the twentieth century. In the fourteenth century many more charters were issued, which meant a more difficult task for scholars of late medieval Hungarian history (the Angevin, Sigismund, Hunyadi and Jagiellonian period). The number of charters in the Arpadian age can be estimated at about 10,000, this amount increased to around 60,000 by the Angevin era and rose even higher in later periods.

In the nineteenth century there was a general tendency to achieve some kind of balance in researching the source material of the different historical periods. Then, from the 1920s, a break can be observed; earlier series of publications remained unfinished or in the case of charters of the era of king Sigismund the documents were not printed for a long time.

Editions of documents started to be overshadowed as a scholarly enterprise with the development of the so-called "history of ideas" historiographical trend and this tendency became marked in early Marxist historiography. Scholars could no longer obtain degrees for publishing medieval charters, so source edition no longer had value in terms of pursuing an academic career.

At the same time a new generation appeared, whose members evidently did not know Latin. The education of young scholars became uncertain, the gulf between sources and researchers widened. The works of eminent scholars who were just tolerated like Bernáth L. Kumorovitz, Elemér Mályusz and Iván Borsa could appear in 1950s due to the fact, that their source publications did not endanger the ruling Marxist ideology.

This situation changed, when Hungarian historical studies loosened its political connections. New generations obtaining their university degrees in the 1960s and later appeared on the scene with significant publications based on archival researches. It was clear to all concerned that Hungary had a remarkable backlog in medieval source publications in relation of even to neighbouring countries.

The most important effort to publish documents started in Croatia at the beginning of the twentieth century. These volumes of charters marked by the name of Smičiklas were published till 1934, then, after a short pause, the work continued and now it has reached the end of the Angevin period. The publication of sources in Romania is represented on the one hand by the volumes of *Documenta Romaniae Historica* and on the other by the series of documents of the Transylvanian Saxons which started around 1900. The latter covered archival material up to the fifteenth century. The volumes of the charters of Burgenland have been published from 1955. The publication of documents in Slovakia started in the 1970s with the series of *Codex Diplomaticus et Epistolaris Slovaciae* and the extracts (*regesta*) of the Angevin period (Slovakian Collection of Charters).

In Hungary research on the Angevin period had already been neglected in the nineteenth century, the Arpadian age and the era of the Hunyadis seemed to be more interesting for scholars because of national reasons and a better knowledge of published sources. At the turn of the century only Antal Pór treated the time of the Angevin kings in depth.

The systematic publication of charters from the Angevin period started in the nineteenth century. The volumes of the *Archive of the Angevin Period* were published from 1878 till 1920. Unfortunately, this work came to a standstill, the last volume stopped at March 1359. Since some documents of the Angevin era had already appeared in several source publications – mainly in Fejér's *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* consisting of more than 40 volumes – only the unprinted charters were published partly in complete, partly in abridged form.

The neglect of the Angevin period within the research on the Hungarian Middle Ages and the personal encouragement of Elemér Mályusz gave Gyula Kristó and his colleagues the decisive stimulus to publish all the edited and unedited charters of the age in chronological order, in the Hungarian language and in extract form together with critical notes and references to earlier editions.

This collective research work was made possible by the appearance of a specialised team dealing with medieval history inside the Attila József University, Szeged. This team, due to the scientific and educational activity of Gyula Kristó formed a kind of "school", which has been working now as the "Medieval Workshop of Szeged" publishing the "*Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon*" and a series of monographs (collections of sources included) as well.

From the beginning of the 1980s the most talented disciples of Professor Kristó obtained employment in the University of Szeged or in the County Archive of Csongrád (Szeged). Among the authors of the published volumes of the Angevin period Professor László Blazovich represents the older generation, Lajos Géczi and Tibor Almási the younger generation. With the help of Professor Ferenc Makk (chair of the Historical Auxiliary Sciences Department) and his colleague,

Tibor Almási students were influenced towards medieval studies and source publications in the early 1990s. Institutionally the medieval studies minor branch of the MA diploma and the postgraduate medieval studies PhD program helped this process in the 1990s. One of the results was the appearance of a young researcher, Ferenc Piti who participated in the doctoral program, and published two volumes of charters of the Angevin period.

After the preparations, the actual research work started in 1983 with a search for published charters in books and periodicals (from 1983 till 1985). According to preparatory estimations the complete work would contain extracts of about 45,000 charters concerning Hungarian topics from the Angevin era. The main goal was to publish collection of extracts, so, exceptionally charters were to be published in the original form (i.e. *in extenso*). The language of the extracts is Hungarian, since most scholars using this edition are dealing with Hungarian history. The authors of the volumes took into consideration the experience of the *Archive of the Age of Sigismund* edited by Elemér Mályusz. At the same time they departed from the principles of Mályusz, e.g. they did not make any difference in length between published and unpublished charters or between "relevant" or "irrelevant" documents.

This great venture of contemporary Hungarian historical science was started in the 1980s by historians in different cities, working in different institutions. Later it became basically an enterprise of scholars living in Szeged.

The researches concerning the collection of documents have been funded by the *National Scientific Research Fund*. The publications were sponsored at first by the program called *The Recording and Editing of Cultural and Historical Documents* directed by academician Tibor Klaniczay, then by the *Archival College of the National Cultural Fund*. The edition of recent volumes have been supported by the *Ministry of the National Cultural Heritage*.

The work on the charters started in the second half of the 1980s. Each volume contains charters from one or more years and the extracts of documents follow each other in chronological order. The first volumes of the edition comprised the charters of a number of years. The increased number of documents after 1320 made it necessary for the charters of each year to be published in separate volumes. To facilitate and organise the research the authors were asked to make extracts from the charters of years following each other in order to be able to examine a relatively longer period in a unified way. So far 14 volumes have appeared.

The first volume produced by Gyula Kristó was published in 1990. It contains extracts of charters (806) between 1301 and 1305. The seventh volume of the series written by László Blazovich and Lajos Géczi was published in 1991. This book consists of 733 extracts from the year 1323. The second volume edited by Gyula Kristó appeared in 1992 and comprised 1036 charters from 1306 till 1310. In 1993 the eighth volume written by László Blazovich containing 613 documents was published. It was followed by the third volume with 885 regestas from the years 1311–1314, edited by Gyula Kristó. Two years later, in 1994 appeared the fourth volume also compiled by him. This consisted of 697 charters from the period

between 1315 and 1317. In the same year the eleventh volume was published, the work of Tibor Almási comprising 632 extracts, from the year 1327. The sixth volume of the series was compiled by Lajos Géczi and contained the charters of 1325, i.e. 597 extracts. This book was printed in 1997. In 1998 Gyula Kristó produced his next volume (fifth volume of the edition) for the period 1318–1320 with 990 documents. The first volume of the young researcher, Ferenc Piti was published in 1999. This book (vol. XXIII.) included 990 extracts from 1318–1320. The year 2000 saw the appearance of two publications, the tenth and the sixth volumes of the series. In the former László Blazovich and Lajos Géczi brought out 588 extracts from the year 1326, while in the latter volume Gyula Kristó published 916 extracts from the period 1321–1322. This year two volumes have also been issued. In the book (vol. XXIV) of Ferenc Piti 777 extracts has been published from the year 1340, while in the work (vol. XXII) of Tibor Almási 520 extracts from 1328 can be found.

In the volumes issued so far there are altogether 10,574 extracts from about 25,000 charters, since in lots of cases the original documents are missing, so the editors had to use transcripts and copies.

The aim of the series and its underlying principles were fixed by the editorial committee consisting of Gyula Kristó (chief editor), László Blazovich, Géza Érszegi and Ferenc Makk, and set out in the preface of the first volume (1990). Only those archival sources were extracted, which had been written between 1 January 1301 and 30 March 1387 and which had references to the territory of Hungary. At the same time documents concerning the internal affairs of the Dalmatian coastal cities sometimes belonging to the Hungarian Kingdom, or concerning the occurrence of Hungarian coins abroad were excluded. The clear intention of the editorial committee was to finish the volumes dealing with the era of Charles I (1301–1342) as soon as possible, then to continue the series – the age of Louis I (1342–1382) and Queen Mary (1382–1387) – with the participation of young researchers. As of July 2001 the work has been supported by the *National Research and Development Program of Hungary*.

The medieval collection constitutes the core of the research. This collection can be found in the Hungarian National Archive, partly in the archive of documents preserving the original charters before 1526 (the battle of Mohács) and in the collection of photos of documents from the same period containing 100,000 or so photocopies.

A list of abbreviations in three parts can be found in the first volume of the series and the further volumes give the explanations for other abridgements too. At the end of each volume there is a list of names (place and personal names), which makes its practical use easier for those, who are interested in definite persons or places. In this respect in addition to historians other scholars may benefit from these volumes, such as linguists, archeologists etc.

The material of some volumes has been filed in computer programs, which makes it possible to have complete lists and experts in computer use may search for different subjects and ideas.

To sum up, one can say, that volumes containing the charters of the Angevin period have been published in almost every year from 1990 and more frequently in recent years. Including the recent volumes, all the archival documents between 1301 and 1328 are now at our disposal. At the same time volumes from the last years of Charles I (1339–1340) have been published as well.

There is great interest in this edition even abroad, it has been reviewed in Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, The English Historical Review and the Hungarian Museum. And what is more important, a number of studies have used the material from these volumes.

Hopefully, the volumes of the *Angevin Period Archive* will help to fill the gap between the almost completely published documents of the Arpadian age and the richly documented era of Sigismund in Hungarian medieval source research. This present series gives much new information on the Angevin era helping research on this neglected period and enriching our knowledge of it.

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