

The Translation History of the *Gesta Hungarorum*

Gyopárka F. BÁTORI

Department of Hungarian Historical Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Dialectology

Eötvös Loránd University

batori.gyopi@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-9762-595x

ABSTRACT

The *Gesta Hungarorum* (Deeds of the Hungarians) is an important source for the early history of the Carpathian Basin and, more broadly, of Europe. More than 300 years have passed since the discovery of the *Gesta*, and debates about the identity of its author and the authenticity of its narrative have continued ever since. Alongside the expansion of scholarly literature, the number of published editions of the text has also increased. Today, numerous transcriptions and translations – both in Hungarian and in other languages – are available to researchers and interested readers. In my opinion, it is among the responsibilities of Hungarian historians and historical linguists to follow the domestic and international reception of our historical sources and linguistic relics. In this paper, undertaking this task, I present the textual and translation history of the *Gesta*.

Keywords: Anonymus, *Gesta Hungarorum*, facsimiles, transcriptions, translations, maps

1. Introduction

The *Gesta Hungarorum* tells the story of the Hungarian conquest and settlement. By his own admission, Magister P wrote the genealogies of the kings and nobles of Hungary at the request of his friend N: “Mindful therefore of your kindness, and although hindered by the many and various affairs of this wearisome world, I have undertaken to do your bidding, following the example of diverse historians, supported by the help of God’s grace; seeing this as best lest it be lost to posterity forever, I considered it best that I should write to you truthfully and plainly, so that readers can know exactly what happened” (Veszprémy–Rady 2010, 5). Indeed, his work has not been forgotten, and the text was

presumably known to Anonymus' contemporaries and to the historians who followed him (Györffy 1977, 8; Veszprémy 1999, 79) – but little reliable information is available on the early reception of the *Gesta*.

The real afterlife of the work began with its scientific discovery: after the first edition of 1746, it became an outstanding source of Hungarian and international history and literary studies. The old Hungarian place and personal names appearing in the text are important for Hungarian linguistic history research. Translating these old Hungarian elements is not a one-off task, as the translation process is multi-stage, not only translating between languages, translators also face the difficulties of diachronic translation.¹

In my opinion, one of the tasks of Hungarian historians and language historians is to trace the domestic and international journey of our historical sources and language data. As a first step in this task, I present the textual and translation history of the manuscript that has come down to us in the form of a copy. This paper is part of my ongoing dissertation, in which I examine the translation possibilities of old Hungarian names (see my previously published studies: Bátori 2020, 2022).

2. The manuscript

The manuscript we know, written in 13th-century letters, is the only copy of the original work that has survived. This copy was found between 1601 and 1636 by Sebastian Tengnagel, a former official and later director of the Vienna library. The work was therefore probably in the library's possession before 1636, catalogued in 1652 by Mattheus Mauchter (Jakubovich 1927, 92; Szilágyi 1946, 5–6), and remained in the possession of the Vienna library for almost 300 years. The manuscript, together with other historical relics, was finally transferred to Hungary in 1933, on the basis of the Venice Treaty of 1932 (Csapody 1978, 14). Since then, the twenty-four-leaf card index Cod. Lat. Medii Aevi 403. is kept in the Manuscript Archives of the National Széchényi Library. The first facsimile edition was published in 1892, courtesy of Fejérpataky, then in 1975 and reprinted in 1977, together with a translation by Dezső Pais. Most recently it appeared in 1996 as an appendix to Tonciulescu's Romanian translation. The task of today's digital philology is to make an online facsimile version available to Hungarian and foreign researchers alike by modern means.

3. Afterlife of the manuscript (transcripts, translations, maps)

The manuscript's afterlife began in 1746, when it was first published in print, and continues to this day. Almost three centuries have passed

1 For a detailed discussion of diachronic translation, see Steiner 2005, 24–26.

since the first publication of Anonymus' *Gesta Hungarorum*. Ever since, historians, linguists, and literary scholars have been concerned about the identity of Anonymus, the authenticity of the work, its characters, the places and people mentioned in it. As the literature on the gesta has grown, so has the number of publications, including Latin transcriptions, translations into Hungarian and foreign languages, and even maps to aid in interpreting the text. The map projections of Anonymus' conquest history represent a non-typical type of translation, the intermediate translation. The maps are closely linked to the textual and translation history of the work, and the cartographic representation of the work, as well as its communication in other languages, is an important part of the manuscript's afterlife.

Transcripts, translations, and maps are interconnected in a network, a translation (or even a map) can rely on one or more transcriptions, or even other translations. This, of course, also affects the way Old Hungarian elements and Latin proper names are communicated and identified.

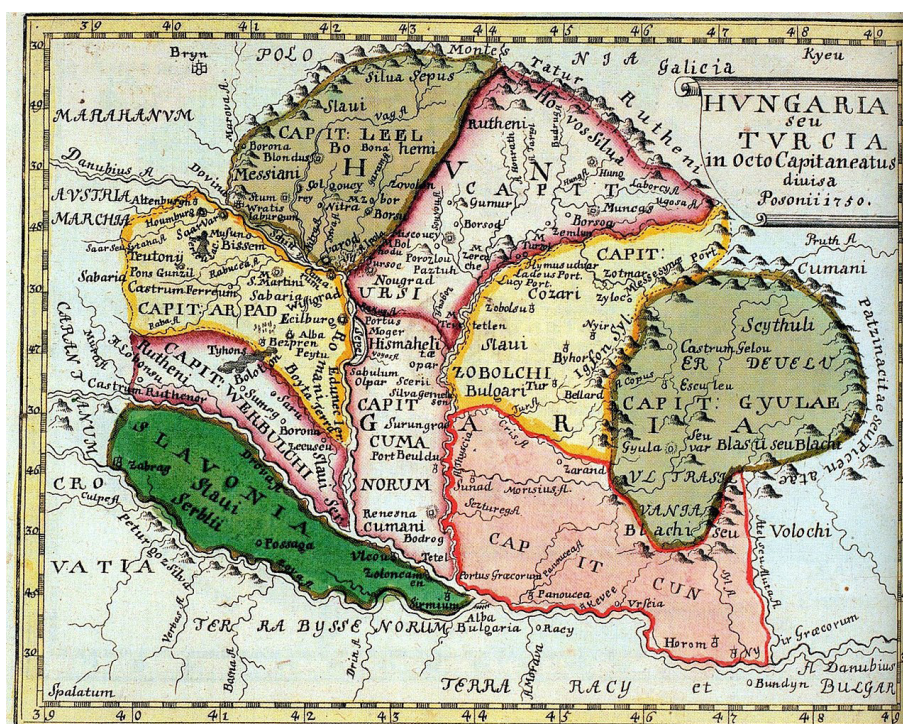
The aim of this paper is to present the transcriptions and translations in their interrelationship, and to make it easier to understand, I will divide the context of the texts into three periods. The starting dates of these periods are based on the year of publication of the editions that were in some way significant for the following period: 1. 1746–1827: in this early period, the main role is still played by the Latin editions, with a total of eight Latin transcriptions published by different publishers in addition to the three translations (two Hungarian and one French); 2. 1860–1934: Károly Szabó's translation was published in 1860, and has been the most translated of all; this period saw an increase in the demand for translations, with Slovak and Romanian translations being produced alongside the Hungarian versions; 3. 1937 to the present: this period is mainly characterised by translations, most of which are based on the 1937 transcription (SRH.).

3.1. The period 1746–1827

The afterlife of the *Gesta Hungarorum* begins at the dawn of the Enlightenment, in 1746. The very first transcription of the *Gesta Hungarorum* was published by Joannes Georgius Schwandtner in 1746 as the opening text of the large-scale collection of Hungarian historiography, *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricum*, volumes I–III. Mátyás Bél wrote a foreword to the volumes, in which he defined the publication of historical sources for the preservation of the national past as a priority task. The preface stresses the need for critical analysis and careful processing of the sources. Mátyás Bél emphasises that the transcriber of the work was anxious to provide an authentic and reliable picture of Hungarian history, and therefore took special care to copy the manuscripts accurately and correct errors. The collection contains the works of early Hungarian historians, compiled from original manuscripts and rare editions, with rich notes and commentaries to

facilitate the understanding and interpretation of historical events (Bél 1746, I–XXI). This edition was not without resonance, as evidenced by the reprints of the volume (1765: Nagyszombat,² 1766: Vienna) and the reprints of the text of the *Gesta* (1747: Kolozsvár;³ 1747: Kassa; 1772: Kassa⁴), as well as the debates that were launched on the work (see Csapody 1978).

As a scientist in Pozsony,⁵ János Tomka-Szászky was one of Mátyás Bél's students. He published the first historical atlas of Hungary in 1751 (*MÉLex. Tomka Szászky János*), in which we find the fourth historical map of Hungary (Map 1.), based on the work of Anonymus, drawn in 1750.



Map 1.

Twenty years later, in 1771, Miksa Hell produced a large-scale map of 9th-century Hungary using the chestnut, the copper engraving by Anton Schlechter of Vienna. He, like his predecessor, considered the *Gesta Hungarorum* to be an authentic source, and so he used the *gesta* as the basis for his map of old Hungary. In 1772, a new version of the map was published, the copperplate of which was also made in Vienna by Gabriel Ruderstorffer. The only difference between the two maps is the colophon: in the 1772 version, the names of the groups of leaders appear alongside the names of the leaders (Map 2.). Only later, in 1802, did the general public come across Hell's work.

2 Today: Trnava, SK.

3 Today: Cluj, Romania

4 Today: Košice, SK.

5 Today: Bratislava, SK.



Map 2.

The need for a Hungarian translation arose in the 18th century, and within a decade two were produced. In 1790, János Lethenyei was the first to translate the gesta into Hungarian, his work was published in Budapest under the title “Anonymus, the unnamed notary of King Béla, who wrote the adventures of the Seven Hungarians from Scythia under the leadership of King Almos”.⁶ This Hungarian translation is the first in which we find the name *Anonymus*; by not translating the common colloquial reference – *anonymi notari* – into Hungarian, Lethenyei created the proper name of the Anonymus author (cf. Csapody 1978, 18).

In 1799, István Mándy published his translation with this title: “Hungarian Sunád, or the Unnamed Notary of King Béla I”.⁷ The name *Sunád* in the title is Mándy’s invention, identifying the P master with the character *Sunad* in the gesta. There is no connection between the two translations, as Mándy makes no reference to Lethenyei’s work, a fact that was even noticed by Cornides (1802, c3). The fact that Mándy was not familiar with the work of his predecessor may have geographical reasons, since this second translation was made in Debrecen.

In addition to the two Hungarian translations, a French translation was also produced in the same decade. In 1796, Jean Potocki, a Polish-born scholar who wrote in French, translated the text into French. His work was completed up to chapter 52 of the Gesta, and

6 „Anonymus, az az Béla királynak nevetlen íródeákja Hétmagyaroknak Szittyából Almos hertzeg vezérlése- alatt lött ki-jövetelöket meg-írta” (Lethenyei 1790).

7 „Magyar Sunád, avagy I. Béla királynak nevetlen író-deákja” (Mándy 1799).

the translation was finished by Marc Swajczzer during the digitisation process, preserving Potocki's footnotes to the text. The text is available on the website *L'antiquité grecque et latine du moyen âge* [Greek and Latin Antiquity of the Middle Ages] (<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/anonyme/bela.htm>), along with the Latin transcription, which also contains several historical source texts. The website does not provide any information on the circumstances, reasons or purpose of the translation, nor on the work on which the digitisation is based.

Stephan Ladislaus Endlicher's 1827 transcription of the map, published in Vienna, is closely connected with this period, as he relied on the translations of Lethenyei and Mándy, as well as on Hell's map. In the preface, he expresses his opinion that the works of authors who have recorded the events of the Hungarian nation from the very beginning must be protected from oblivion. Therefore, he publishes the work cleaned of errors, thus contributing to the memory of the Hungarian people (Endlicher 1826: V). Not everyone thinks so, and Marczali (1880, 65) describes Endlicher's transcription as very flawed. Endlicher attached to his transcription an index of names of persons and places (1826, 224-272), in which he indicates the equivalents of the names that appeared in the previous Hungarian translations, sometimes also the variants of the names on the map of Miksa Hell (1772), e.g. *Emesu* (Emesö Leth. Emezsát Mand. filia Eunedubeliani, mater Almi ducis.); *Gelou* (Gelö Leth. Gyalu Mand.); *Sunad* (Tsanád Leth. Mand.); *Curzan castrum* (Csörsz Leth. Mand.); *Humusouer, fluvius* (Hó-mosó-ér Mand. Krasna fluv. Comit Szabolcs et Szathmar? Mappa Helli); *Tékereu fluvius* (Black Girth, Mappa Helli), *Zotmar* (Szathmar) *castrum* etc. At the end of the publication, we find Endlicher's own map on a folded sheet, the etching of which was made by Anton Woraček (Map 3).



Map 3.

3.2. The period 1860–1934

During this period, the central location of the publications changes, the role of Vienna is slowly taken over by Budapest, and the transcriptions and Hungarian translations are mostly published in Budapest. In 1860, Károly Szabó published in Budapest his translation of King Béla's anonymous notary's book on the deeds of the Hungarians, which was considered by his contemporaries to be superior to its predecessors (Marczali 1880, 65). This translation has been reprinted and revised several times (1892, 1897, 1898); reprint editions were also published after the fourth and fifth Hungarian translations (1993, 2005, 2019, 2020) – most of the translations were published in Budapest, with the exception of the Kecskemét reprint of 2005. The late popularity of this translation in the 20th and 21st centuries can perhaps be explained by the archaic reading experience provided by the preservation of Old Hungarian proper names. In this translation, the sporadic names appear with a largely preserved (*Olpar, Oundu, Etthe, Tulsuoa*, etc.) or only partially modernised orthography (*Álmos, Zerensz, áldomás*, etc.); in later Hungarian translations, we find a completely modernised orthography (*Álmos, Szerencs, áldomás* stb.)

The *Gesta Hungarorum* is an important work for Slovak historiography as well, in 1877, as the opening text of the second volume of Franko V. Sasinek's "Slovak chronicle for history, topography, archaeology and ethnography".⁸ Sasinek considers the way in which Anonymus speaks of the ancestors of the Slovaks to be undignified, and therefore does not spare any effort to express his negative feelings against the Hungarians: "The Hungarian heroic imagination has indeed raised the triumphal prestige of Anonymus to the highest level, but surely only to fall from this greater height and with this greater glee into the dust, like the Samaritan sorcerer of old. But it is not only in the interests of historical truth that Anonymus' fallacies can be undermined, but also in the interests of our Slovak national honour and our national right in Hungary; for Anonymus casts nothing but aspersions on our forefathers and heaps the yoke of slavery on the necks of the Slovaks"⁹ (1877, 2). The place of publication of the work is not specified.

In 1883 another transcription was made by Matthias Floranius. This edition was published in Leipzig and is now available on Google Books, as it has been digitised by Harvard University Library. It can be assumed that the place of publication and the activities of the Harvard library have to do with the fact that, in recent years, it has been

8 "Slovenský letopis pre historiú, topografiu, archeológiu a ethnografiu" (Sasinek 1877).

9 "Maďarská hrodonárodina fantasia povýšila sice domelý víťazný Anonyma už až na najvyšší stupeň, ale jiste len preto, aby z tým väčšej výšky a s tým väčším posmechom padol do prachu, jako nekdý čarodejník samaritanský. No nielen v zaujme historickej pravdy leží plodkopat bludy Anonyma, lež i v zaujme našej slovenskej národnej cti a nášho národného práva v Uhorsku; lebo Anonym len kyďá hanu na otcov našich a vnucuje otrocké jarmo na šije Slovákov."

reprinted by several publishers specialising in reprints. The colophon of these publications is incomplete, and the place of publication can only be inferred from the publisher's location: in 2010, Nabu Press, South Carolina, and in 2018 and 2024, Forgotten Books, London. According to the website descriptions, Florianus' work has also been published in Estonian: 2012 by Ulan Press; 2014 by Nabu Press, and 2022 by Legare Street Press. It can be assumed that the Estonian language is an error, as there is no trace of a possible Estonian translation in the Estonian library database.

In 1892, two transcriptions of diametrically opposed fates were made: that of Henrik Marczali, whose work was ultimately not published, and that of László Fejérpataky, whose work reached a very wide audience and formed the basis of several later translations – both made in Budapest. László Fejérpataky is the first to publish a copy of the manuscript in the publication of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the transcript of which appears as an appendix to the publication. Although Fejérpataky acknowledges the merits of Anonymus's previously published transcriptions (in the introduction he makes no reference to the first transcription [Schwandtner 1746] or to the translations), he feels that the need for a more careful edition of the text makes it necessary to publish a new transcription: the editions are adequate, the gaps in the publications are perfectly filled. The purpose of the edition is not only to give a faithful text of the only manuscript, but also to give practical instructions for reading old manuscripts (Fejérpataky 1892, 3), which is supported by the inclusion of a full facsimile of the gesta. Fejérpataky's transcription differs from its predecessors in that it dissolves the abbreviations, while at the same time it is confident that it will be of use to anyone who wishes to become acquainted with an essential part of old writing (paleographia), the solution of the word abbreviations, in a practical way. He further indicates that, the spelling is the spelling of the manuscript; it differs from it only in this respect, and then, too, for the sake of clarity and intelligibility, that proper names are used in capital letters, regardless of the fluctuations of the manuscript, and that punctuation, though roughly adhering to the original, is given according to sense. He also reproduces the errors of the manuscript, correcting here and there – of course, taking note of them in the notes – simple pen errors (Fejérpataky 1892, 3-4). The second edition of Károly Szabó's translation, supplemented by corrections by László Fejérpataky, was published as an appendix to this publication.

In Volume XII of the 1896 *Pallas Encyclopaedia*, the fourth map (Map 4.) designed by Sándor Márki, based on the work of Anonymus, is appended to the glossary article on Hungary, specifically at the end of the conquest. In this map, Anonymus' names appear in a modernised Hungarian form: *Hungvár*, *Tröcsön*, *Almás*, etc. In addition to the names in the gesta, other names also appear, as this is not specifically an Anonymus map: *Brno*, *Krakow*, *Napoca*, *Sarmisegetusa*, etc.



Map 4.

At the end of the 19th century, after the French and then the Slovak translations, another foreign language translation appeared, Mihai Bésán's Romanian translation, based on Fejérpataky's 1892 transcription. The translation was published in three parts in 1899 by Mihai Bésán in the journal *Transilvania*, and later that year in a small volume (Bésán 1899b). The Latin transcription is published in parallel with the Romanian text. This parallel publication adds to the value of the publication (Bésán 1899a, 14). At the end of the volume, we find the first map (Map 5.) by a Romanian translator/researcher: "Map of ancient Hungary composed by Mihail Bésán based on the data of the Anonymus Notary Chronicle of King Bela".¹⁰ On this map, the names are mostly in old Hungarian, and where a proper name has a Romanian equivalent, it appears in Romanian.

¹⁰ "Carta Ungariei vechi compusă de Michail Bésán după datele croniciei notarului Anonim al regelui Bela" (Bésán 1899b).



Map 5.

Fejérpataky was probably not aware of the text accompanying the Romanian translation of 1899. In the preface to his transcription of the collection of texts entitled *The Fountainheads of the Hungarian Conquest*, published in 1900, he lists the previous editions. Still, the 1899 reprint in the *Transilvania* journal does not appear. By his reckoning, his work is the thirteenth edition (Fejérpataky 1900, 386), and the fourteenth if the 1899 publication is taken into account. The 1900 transcription is annotated more extensively than the previous one, and Györffy (1995, 212–213) classifies the transcriptions in a bibliography of one of his studies, counting the later ones, as the best edition.

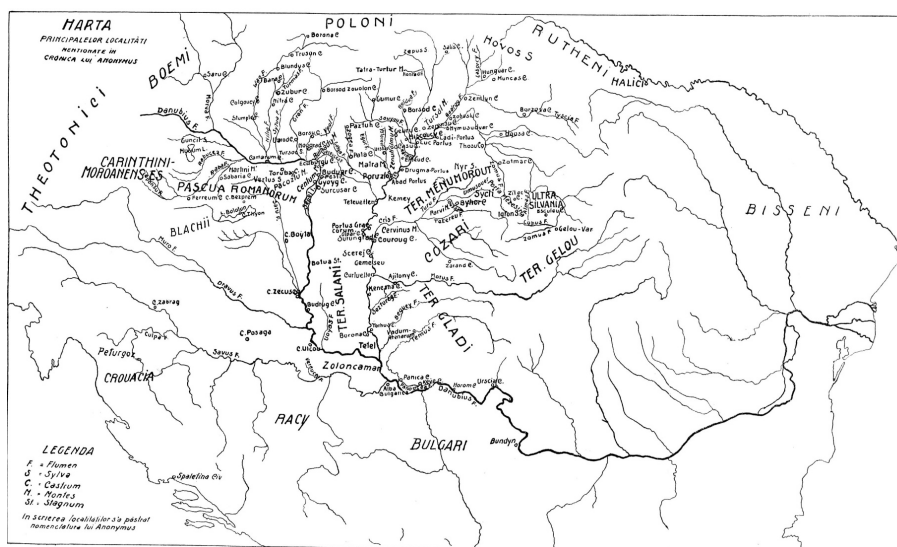
This transcription was the basis for the impressive Hungarian translation by Dezső Pais, published in Budapest in 1926. This new translation is completely opposed not only to Szabó's, but also to the methods of the early predecessors, Lethenyei and Mándy's. This method is also reflected in Pais's map supplement (Map 6.), in which, also to help the reader to find his way around, place names that do not appear in the text of the gesta are distinguished by a bracket: *Zala*, *Szolnok*, *Várad*, *Berettyó*, *Kolozsvár*, *Gyulafehérvár*, etc. The aim of the work is thus to make the text more reader-friendly. Linguistic accuracy is not neglected either, and the notes' explanations of proper names also provide the reader with original variants of names.



Map 6.

In 1932, László Juhász launched the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum* series, in which he publishes critical editions of unpublished or difficult-to-access 12th-17th-century writings. Between 1930 and 1946, 36 booklets were published in the series, the third of which contains a transcription of the *Gesta Hungarorum*. Surprisingly, this transcription was a success in Romania: the second Romanian translation (Popa-Lisseanu 1934), which has survived four editions, is accompanied by a transcription by Juhász.

Popa-Lisseanu is also responsible for the fifteen-volume collection of texts entitled *Sources of Romanian History* (*Izvoarele Istoriei Române / Fontes Historiae Daco-Romanorum*), published in Bucharest between 1934 and 1939. The fact that the text of Anonymus occupies the first place in the collection says a lot about the importance of the *Gesta* in Romanian historiography; among the fifteen volumes in Romanian, we also find the *Chronicle of Kézai*, the *Pictorial Chronicle*, the *Carmen miserabile* of Canon Rogerius, and the account of *Richardus' voyage to Magna Hungaria*. In parallel with the Romanian translation of the *Gesta*, he published a transcription by Juhász, while also using the facsimile by Fejérpataky (1900) and notes by Dezső Pais (1926) (Popa-Lisseanu 1934, 9). Four new editions of his translation (although a third Romanian translation was published in 1996) have appeared: in 2000, 2010, 2018 and 2020. For his translation, he has also produced a map showing both the preserved and modified forms of Anonymus's proper names, with the outline of Greater Romania (Map 7.).



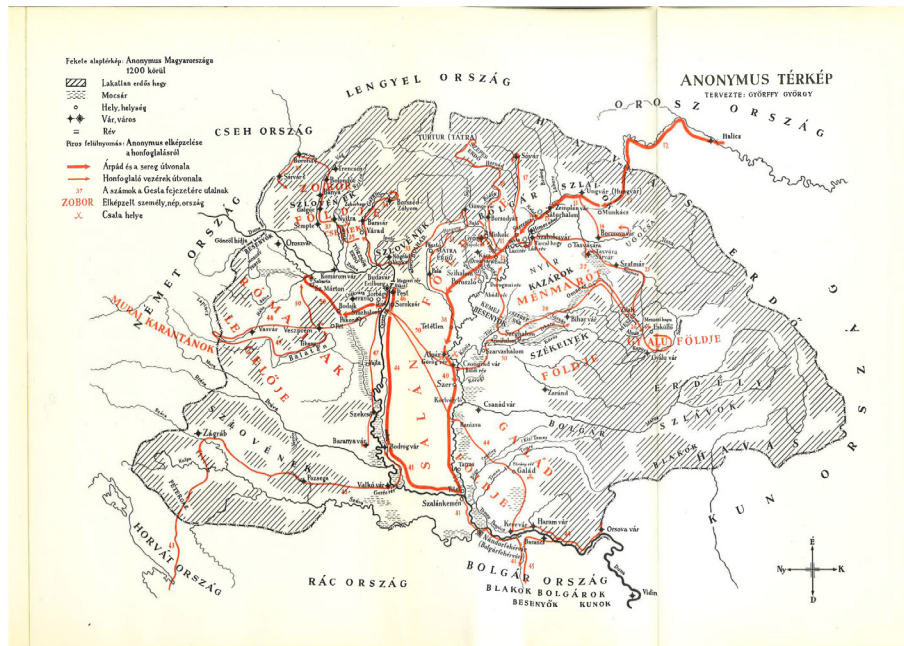
Map 7.

3.3. From 1937 to the present

The last critical transcription was published in 1937, in the *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum* (SRH.) series edited by Szentpétery, Jakubovich and Pais. In the words of Fehértói (1993, 321), the work of Anonymus “met with a fate of destiny”.¹¹ Emil Jakubovich, the historian and director of the Széchényi Library, who had undertaken the publication, died in 1935, and the critical editing of the text was completed by Dezső Pais. Subsequent translations into Hungarian and foreign languages are based on a version of this transcript; where the Latin work is published, this transcript, or possibly a supplemented version of this transcript, appears in their work. This, and the Hungarian-related publications, are usually published in Budapest; during this period, there is a strong geographical expansion, as the work is read in an increasing number of European languages.

A revised version of Dezső Pais’s early translation was published in 1975, accompanied by an impressive, high-quality facsimile edition, and in 1977. The introductory essay and notes were written by György Györffy; the fold-out map (Map 8.) is also by György Györffy. Only Anonymus’s place names and generic names are shown on this map. This translation was later replaced in Madas’ collection of texts (1992). Two reprints without facsimiles were published in the 2000s (2003; 2023). Since 2004, this translation has been easily accessible to all in the Hungarian Electronic Library; however, the valuable notes and the map are missing from this digitised version.

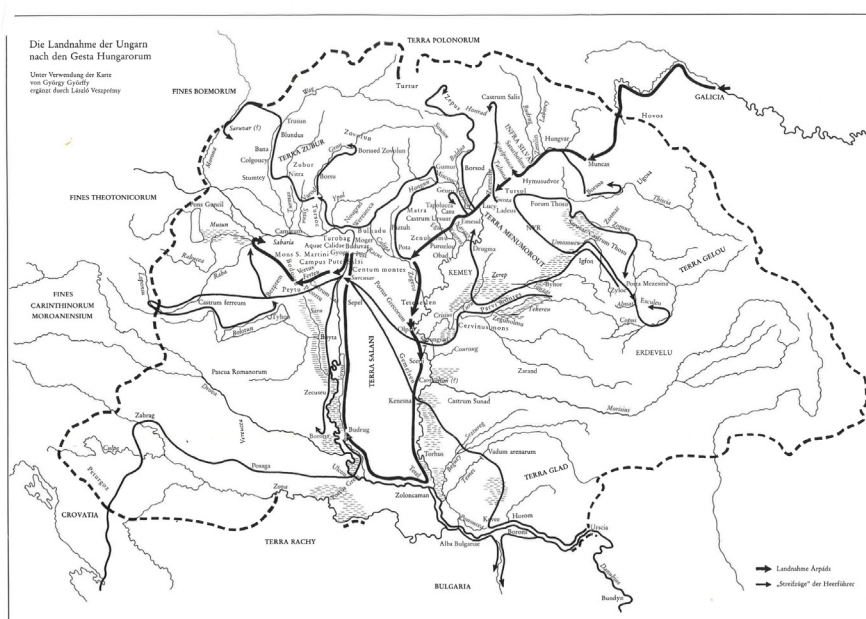
11 “Sajnos, (...) Anonymus kiadása mostoha sorsra jutott, mert a kiadásra vállalkozó kiváló történész, Jakubovich Emil, a Széchényi Könyvtár igazgatója 1935-ben meghalt” (Fehértói 1993, 321).



Map 8.

In 1988, Richard Pražák, an eminent hungarologist of the former Czechoslovakia (Csanda 1982: 27), edited the anthology *Legenda a kroniky Koruny uherské* (*Legends and Chronicles of the Hungarian Crown*), published in Prague, in which he publishes, together with other medieval texts, Anonymus' *Gesta Hungarorum*, in a Czech translation by Dagmar Bartoňková. The anthology is based on the SRH. (1937), with accompanying studies of the works by Pražák, the most extensive of which is the introductory essay to the *Gesta*. He has researched the Hungarian literature and describes the Czech and Slovak literature on gesta. He is familiar with the Slovak translation of Sasínek (1877) and agrees with him in classifying the gesta as a novel (Niederhauser 1991, 163).

Since the 1990s, the *Gesta* has been read in more and more foreign languages. In 1991, Veszprémy and Silagi published their first German translation in Sigmaringen, with the aim of making this unique text available to scholars and the interested general public (1991, VIII). In addition to the German text, a parallel publication is the 1937 transcription by Jakubovich, with the page numbers of the SRH. on the page edges for clarity. The Old Hungarian collocations are in modernized Hungarian forms in the text. An important appendix to the book is the map showing the place names in their original form (Map 9). The map also shows the direction of the occupation. In the notes to this edition, the family relationships of the various characters are illustrated in a unique, albeit incomplete, way (1991, 146-147). A future edition should not only map the locations but also depict the relationships of the characters.



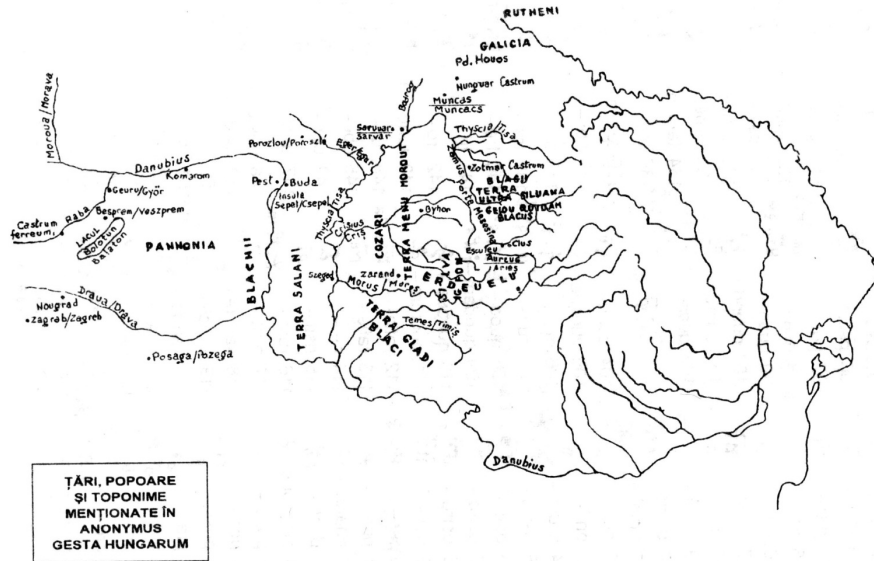
Map 9.

The latest Hungarian translation was made by the historian László Veszprémy, the first version of which was published in 1995 in Szeged, in the volume entitled *The Written Sources of the Age of the Conquest*, edited by Gyula Kristó. A corrected version of the book, published in Budapest, has been in circulation since 1999, and a reprint was produced in 2004. The reason for this new translation is not explicitly stated, nor is there any reference to an evaluation of earlier translations into Hungarian. The copious notes, the short studies accompanying the text, and the bibliographical guide are clearly a valuable addition. In this edition, following the usage of the *Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon* (KMTLex.), proper names are presented in their modern Hungarian form. Accordingly, for the first time in the history of Hungarian translations, place-names which are not in the territory of present-day Hungary are identified in notes with their present-day official linguistic equivalents (see e.g. Veszprémy 1999, 62): “Zólyom, today a forest panchayat, then a county, organised around Zvolen (Slovakia)”¹² (KMTLex. *Zólyom*).

In 1996, the Romanian Paul Lazar Tonciulescu’s translation is published in Bucharest. Tonciulescu saw the need for a new translation (i.e. the third Romanian) because, in his opinion, the translators of the previous Romanian editions, Mihail Bésán and Gheorghe Popa-Lisseanu, had based their translations on Hungarian rather than Latin; he also considers it a mistake that the notes of the previous Romanian translations were based on Hungarian literature (1966, 5). Tonciulescu does not specify which edition of the facsimile he based his translation on (presumably Fejérpataky 1892 or Pais 1975/1977), but he claims to

12 „Zólyom, ma Zvolen (Szlovákia) körül szerveződött erdőispánság, majd vármegye” (KMTLex. *Zólyom*).

be the only one in Romania to have this document, which he hereby makes available to the Romanian reading public. He has also prepared a map for his work entitled “Countries, peoples and place names mentioned in Anonymus Gesta Hungarorum”.¹³ The map is far from faithful to the title, with several places missing, some of them with incorrect localisation (e.g. *Poroszló*), and places not mentioned in the gesta: *Szeged*, *Cluj*, *Arieș*. The water network shown on map R3, as on map R2, reminds the reader of Greater Romania (Map 10).



Map 10.

In the first decade of the twenties, six new foreign language translations appeared. In 2000, Vincent Múcska's work was published. This Slovak publication is not available in Hungarian libraries, but there are two Hungarian-language reviews of the work: Veszprémy (2001) and Tóth (2008, 173–176). The Slovak text is accompanied by a Latin transcription, which can be traced back to the 1937 SRH., via the transcription of the German translation volume (Veszprémy–Silagi 1991). The inside cover is impressively decorated with a map by Hell (Map 2.). This is the second time in the history of the translation of the Gesta that a translator has not known his predecessor's work (i.e. Mándy did not know Lethenyei's translation); the book's publisher, Pavel Dvořák, says: “I do not understand how it is possible that this book has not yet been published in Slovak. I don't believe that there is anyone who is not interested in the history of their own nation”¹⁴ (quoted in Tóth 2008, 173). As Tóth explains, the spelling of place

13 “Țări, popoare și toponime menționate în Anonymus Gesta Hungarorum” (Tonciulescu 1996).

14 „Nem értem, hogyan lehetséges, hogy ez a könyv még nem jelent meg szlovákul. Nem hiszem, hogy lennének olyan könnyelmű emberek, akiket nem érdekelne saját nemzetük történelme” (quoted in Tóth 2008, 173).

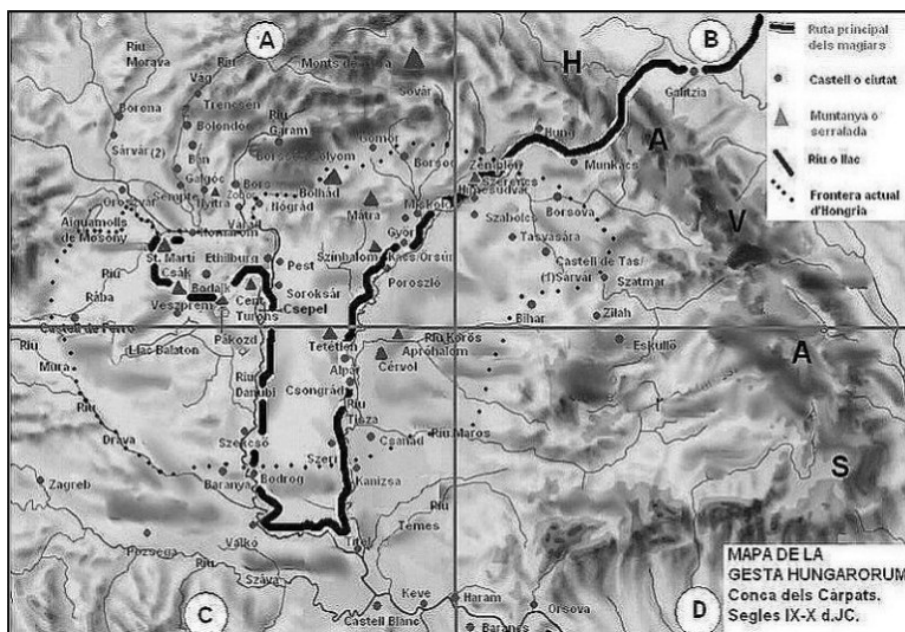
names in Slovak translations is based on the following principle: where possible, foreign names are transcribed into Slovak, and for other names the Latin-based spelling is taken into account (Tóth 2008: 173). Tóth points out the uncertainty of Slovak historiography in the context of the *Gesta* translation: Is the history of Hungary their own or foreign? (Tóth 2008, 173). It is also telling that, contrary to the principle set out, the communication of Slovak name variation is not fully fulfilled, as the guiding principle of the name translator seems to be how well known the name of the settlement is among the target audience, rather than sticking to the historical names. In this way, the Slovak reader does not need to bother himself with identifying the old Slovak name, he will have the present official form, possibly the Slovak pronunciation, ready (Tóth 2008, 174–175). This is how it can happen that some settlement names, although they have Slovak equivalents, are given in Hungarian form, so that, for example, the Slovak forms *Pastúchov*, *Jáger*, and *Budínsky hrad*, which are otherwise used by the Slovak-speaking population in Hungary, are replaced by the Hungarian versions *Pásztó*, *Eger*, and *Budavár*. We must agree with Tóth that a name index could solve the problems of translation, but the question of the ideal form of place names in the text remains open. Veszprémy (2001, 267) considers the translation of names to be a real difficulty, but his opinion is that the translator managed to find an acceptable middle way between the present-day Slovak, the Slovak-sounding Hungarian, and the Hungarian forms left in their original spelling (Veszprémy 2001, 268). Unfortunately, Veszprémy does not support his position with examples, so the question is what should be understood by an acceptable middle way. It is obvious that there is a scalarity between Slovak and Hungarian place-name variants. Nevertheless, the distinction between these “Slovak”, “Slovak-sounding Hungarian” and “Hungarian” names is by no means an easy task, and as already alluded to in Tóth (2008), it is not only the presence or absence of the Slovak variant that influences the translation of the name, but also the presumed knowledge of the target readership that is a decisive factor. A careful study of Slovak translations of the *gesta* is at least as important as that of Romanian publications. An analysis of the ways in which proper nouns are translated would not only be useful for the translation of names in general, but would also shed light on Slovak historical thinking and historiography. According to Veszprémy (2008), this source text will serve as a stimulus for Slovak source research, as Múcska is well-informed and makes critical use of source material available on the international scene. While the translator is familiar with Madgearu’s (2001) *Românii în opera notarului anonim*, with an English introduction (also available in English since 2005: *The Romanians in the Anonymus’s Gesta Hungarorum*), the Hungarian historical bibliography does not appear in the publication. The simple explanation is that Hungarian literature is not present on the international scene. Since then, progress

has been made with the translation by Veszprémy and Rady (2010) and the introductory study, although the real task of producing and internationally presenting a monograph on Anonymus is still to be done.

2005 is a significant date in the history of the text, as it is the year in which the Latin version of the text became available on Wikipedia. The site does not make it clear which version of the text is the digital one, nor are there any notes accompanying the text. The transcription of the gesta was uploaded by a user named Bogdan, whose Romanian nationality is indicated by the fact that the other text he uploaded is Dimitrie Cantemir's *Descriptio Moldaviae*.

Since 2006, the Master's work has been available in Polish, translated by Ryszard Grzesik, who completed his postgraduate studies at CEU. In his review of this work, Veszprémy (2009) notes that the translator has written an introduction to the translation based on up-to-date literature and is familiar with both Hungarian and German literature.

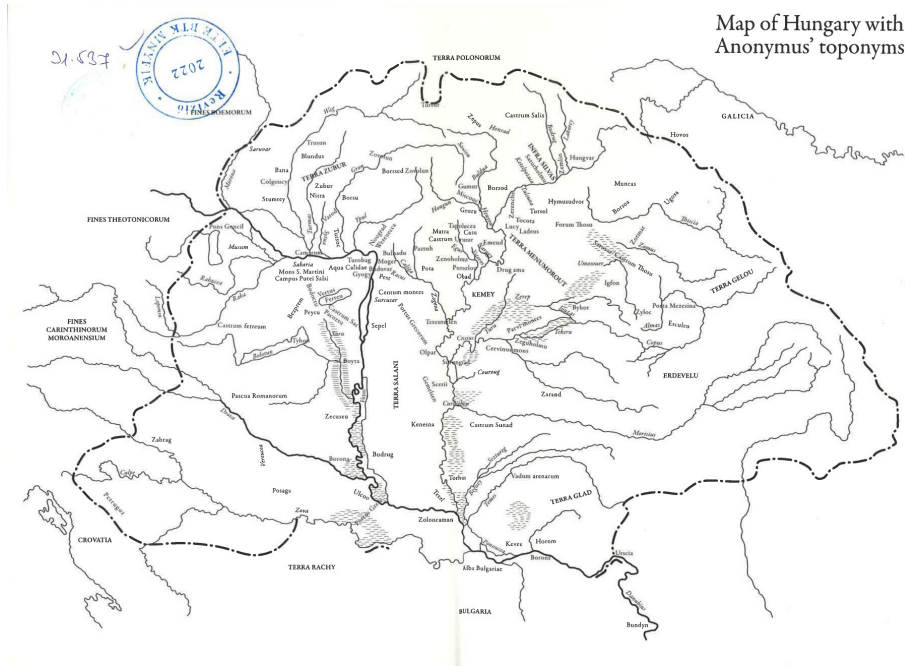
The Catalan translation of Fernàndez-Komlósi plays a special role in the history of the translation of the gesta, as there is no objective reason for the work, which was probably done out of pleasure. The previous translations into foreign languages were typically done to place the work in the scientific context of the country concerned, or perhaps because of some historical relevance. Although the introductory text of this work mentions that the adventurous Hungarians also reached Catalonia (Fernàndez-Komlósi 2008, 5), there is no indication that this might have been the reason for the translation. The translation is available online in the Hungarian Electronic Library of the Hungarian National Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (<https://mek.oszk.hu/05800/05885/05885.pdf>). As an annex to this translation, we can see a new map of Anonymus (Map 11.), on which the localities are indicated in a non-exhaustive manner. The place names appear in their modernised Hungarian form (*Tisza*, *Mátra*, *Apróhalom*, etc.) and the name complements in Catalan (e.g. *Riu Maros*, *Castello de Tas*).



Map 11.

It seems that we should also look eastwards when trying to map the international route of the gesta. Indeed, a Russian translation of the gesta is being produced. The first 18 chapters of the gesta have been translated by Юраков (2007, 2013) and published in *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana* with extensive annotations, but the sequel is still awaited.

The 2000s slowly brought the moment when the Gesta Hungarorum was introduced in the lingua franca of today's scientific life, i.e. in English. Two English translations were produced in quick succession: the first in 2009 by Rady, and the second in 2010 by Rady and Veszprémy. The first English translation, like the Russian one, was published in a journal, the *London Slavonic East European Review*. The introduction (Rady 2009, 681-685) refers to the Romanian and German translations published so far, highlights the role of the work in Romanian historiography, and gives a brief general overview of the gesta. In 2010, Rady, in collaboration with Veszprémy, republished his English translation in the *CEU Central European Medieval Texts* series (Budapest–New York), accompanied by a transcription of SRH. (1937), revised by Veszprémy. This second English translation is accompanied by a more extensive and up-to-date introduction and notes, an index of names is appended to the text, and the twelfth map of our country (Map 12.) appears on the inside cover. In this publication, the English text is accompanied by a transcription of SRH. (1937), as revised by Veszprémy.



Map 12.

The most recent is Alexander Báally's publication in German from Norderstedt (2022). The names are given in a variety of ways, with both old and modernised Hungarian forms appearing in the text. Báally also has his own website. He is of half-Hungarian origin, and turns out to be a passionate book enthusiast, writing science fiction and fantasy books. His translation of the *Gesta Hungarorum* does not fit in with the interests described on the website, and there is no indication of any historian's qualifications. It was this particular context that prompted me to contact the translator and ask him about his motivation. His ready reply reveals that he was fascinated by the story of Anonymus, that he translated the work as a hobby, and that it should be seen as a literary translation rather than a scholarly work. The translators's stated objective in composing this work is to ensure the preservation of the Magister's oeuvre for the twenty-first century, and to provide Germans of Hungarian descent with an informed appreciation of this masterpiece. When he was working on the translation, it soon became clear to him that he would need to annotate the work, and he used only internet sources. This is the reason why the earlier German translation (Veszprémy–Silaghi 1991) escaped his attention. This is therefore the third time in the history of the translation of the *Gesta* that a translator has been unaware of the work of his predecessor (i.e., Mándy did not know the translation of Lethenyei; Múcska did not know the translation of Sasínek). This work, despite its specific characteristics, fits organically into the history of the translation of the *Gesta*.

To summarise these chapters, let's look at the afterlife of the Gesta in numbers. A copy of our gesta has been published a total of four times by three researchers (Fejérpataky 1892; Pais 1975, 1977; Tonciulescu 1996).

Seven transcriptions of the text have been made, resulting in a total of 28 publications (Schwandtner 1746, 1747a, 1747b, 1765, 1766, 1772; Endlicher 1827, 1849; Florianus 1883, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2022, 2024; Fejérpataky 1892, 1899, 1900, 2000; Marczali 1892 [not in circulation]; Juhász 1932, 1934, 2001, 2010, 2018, 2020, 2022; Jakubovich 1937, 1991, 2010). Lethenyei 1790; Mándy 1790; Szabó 1860, 1892, 1897, 1898, 1993, 2005, 2019, 2020; Pais 1926, 1975, 1977, 2003, 2023; Veszprémy 1995, 1999, 2005; one French (Potocki-Swajczner 1796/n.d.); two Slovak (Sasinek 1877, Múcska 2000); three Romanian (Bésán 1899; Popa–Lisseanu 1934, 2001, 2010, 2018, 2020; Tonciulescu 1996); one Czech (Bartonková 1988); two German (Silaghi 1991; Bály 2022); one Polish (Grzesik 2006); one semi-finished Russian (Юраков 2007–2013); one Catalan (Fernandez-Komlósi 2008); and finally two English (Rady 2009; Veszprémy-Rady 2010). These translations have appeared in a total of 36 different publications. In total, 11 maps were produced independently of, or as part of, the Gestalt-covered text editions.

Together with the facsimile editions, transcriptions, translations, maps and literary adaptations of the *Gesta Hungarorum*, there are 80 publications published in different cities of Europe: Vienna (1746, 1766; 1771, 1772; 1827); Košice (1747, 1772); Cluj (1765); Bratislava (1750); Budapest (1790; 1860, 1892, 1897, 1898, 1993, 2005, 2019, 200; 1892; 1896; 1900; 1926; 1932; 1937; 1975, 1977, 2003, 2023; 1999, 2004); Debrecen (1799); Kecskemét (2005); Leipzig (1883); Cracow (2006); Sibiu (1899a; 1899b); Bucharest (1934, 2001, 2010, 2018, 2020; 1996) Budmerice (2000); Prague (1988); Sigmaringen (1991); Szeged (1995); St. Petersburg (2007–2013); London (2009; 2018, 2024); Norderstedt (2022). I have also included a map to illustrate the European presence of the *Gesta Hungarorum* family of publications.¹⁵ The places of publication of the French (Potocki-Shwajczner 1796), Slovak (Sasinek 1877), and Catalan (Fernandez-Komlósi 2008) translations have not yet been identified, so I will assume the respective capitals to be Paris, Bratislava, and Barcelona.

4. The future of the *Gesta Hungarorum*

The wide-ranging textual and translation history of the *Gesta* clearly demonstrates that there is a need for newer and newer texts and translations to meet the needs of readers and researchers, and we can be sure that the German translation of the *Gesta* by Bály (2022) will not be the end of the post-evolutionary life of the *Gesta*. As long as there is a need for historical knowledge, newer and newer texts will appear. It is important to see, however, that we must be open to change and that the contemporary communication of texts implies the advancement of scholarship. Given the international dimension of the *gesta*, there is no

¹⁵ An enlargeable version of the map is available at https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1exC70h9WH6f5ob-P3eZheC5LLUmDks8&usp=sharing_

question that future work on it must be carried out on a platform that can serve as a basis for national and international research, using the tools of digital humanities: “Digital humanities can be a contemporary embodiment of scholarly activity aimed at collecting, organizing and communicating world knowledge, and can be a search for a balance between qualitative and quantitative inquiry”¹⁶ (Maróty 2020). The time has come for the history of language to make use of the alternative offered by digital humanities, the first step of which is the digital editing of our language data; the second step is the assignment of revised, updated, systematised knowledge about it as meta-text.

Knowing the history of our texts and translations, it is clear that there is still work to be done in the field of digitisation and the organisation of the text and translation versions available in the digital space. Most of texts available on the Internet are in pdf format; only Pais (1975) is available in HTML format – the potential of the format remains unused, with hyperlinks appearing only in the chapter headings of the content and only allowing to jump to the individual chapter titles. However, the Library does have a digital humanities research group, which is working on the digital representation of literary texts, one of their major projects is the critical transcription of the correspondence of the writer József Kiss, which is available to anyone on their website (W1.). On the right side of the interface is a photograph of the letter, on the left side the transcript; by placing the cursor on a line of the facsimile, the line of the transcript becomes the highlighted line; to each word or text fragment, so-called tags can be assigned, which can be used to mark different properties, and of course meta texts can be added.

This type of transcription of our gesta would certainly open up new directions and new possibilities in research, serving the advancement of science. The platform could, of course, also make the entire family of texts of the Gesta available and searchable.

In addition to presenting the text, it will also be necessary to summarise the relevant knowledge. As a meta-text, article-like explanations can be added to each vocabulary or proper noun. In connection with proper names, Valéria Tóth raises the idea of creating an encyclopaedia of Anonymus. The dictionaries she presents would be divided into three sections: 1. philological information; 2. knowledge that can be gleaned from the text of the gesta; 3. proper noun system links, linguistic-historical explanations (Tóth 2023, 266-267). In my opinion, the publication of an encyclopaedia of this type in the usual way would also be an important scholarly achievement; at the same time, the combination of encyclopaedic content with interactive textual communication would certainly represent a powerful step forward in the history of research on the Gesta.

16 „A digitalis bölcsészet lehet a világtudás összegyűjtésére, rendezésére és közreadására irányuló tudós tevékenység kortárs testet öltése, és lehet egyensúlykeresés a kvalitatív és a kvantitatív vizsgálódások között” (Maróty 2020).

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Author’s profile

Gyopárka F. Bátori is a doctoral candidate at Eötvös Loránd University. Her research focuses on the Old Hungarian remnants of the Gesta Hungarorum and their translation. She has published studies on the subject in both Hungarian and Romanian.