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NICOLAUS OLAHUS 450

Tagungsband der internationalen Konferenz
zum 450. Todestag von Nicolaus Olahus

Herausgegeben von
EMŐKE RITA SZILÁGYI



WIEN 2019

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Edited by EMŐKE RITA SZILÁGYI

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Grabstein von Nicolaus Olahus in Trnava/Nagyszombat/Tyrnau (1568)
 Foto: Kornél Divald (1927)

THE FIRST EDITION OF NICOLAUS OLAHUS'
HUNGARIA IN MATTHIAS BEL'S *ADPARATUS* (1735)

"To few other peoples does their mediaeval past mean so much", the English diplomat Bryan Cartledge very aptly writes about Hungarians.¹ Indeed, the Hungarian view of the past considers the Middle Ages as a sort of golden age. This is because Hungary was an independent and unified state at the time. However, both independence and unity were lost at the Battle of Mohács, fought against Sultan Süleyman I on 29 August, 1526. This date marks the end of the Hungarian Middle Ages in traditional historical periodisation, and the Ottoman conquest caused immense financial and demographic losses for the country. It comes as no surprise then that the period before Mohács started to be glorified in Hungarian public thought, being merged with the idea of Hungary's greatness and "olden glory".

The "standard work" of Hungarian longing and nostalgia for the Middle Ages, and its first manifestation was Nicolaus Olahus' *Hungaria*.² The Hungarian humanist, who by then was living in Brussels, finished his work in 1536, which is a last snapshot or panorama photo of his homeland, Hungary, a strong and rich European kingdom, before being swallowed by darkness. For contemporary Hungarians, that is definitely the strongest reading of the work; and the author helps the reader in this interpretation, as his lines always suggest a longing for a lost past.

As for its genre, *Hungaria* is a geographical introduction of an unrealised history of Hungary, that is, a classical humanist *chorographia*, a compulsory ele-

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¹ CARTLEDGE, 2011, 77.

² See the critical edition of the work in: OLAHUS, 1938. An important monograph on the life and works of the author: NEAGU, 2003. In the newly published edition of his correspondence from 1523 to 1533 (OLAHUS, 2018), the publisher, Emőke Rita Szilágyi also surveys the life of the author and reviews new studies on the subject. See: SZILÁGYI, 2018.

ment of historical writings since Herodotus, also included in historical works on Hungary.³ The first three chapters do not constitute a part of the chorography but introduce Hun-Hungarian history, which is interrupted by a topographical description from the fourth chapter on. Afterwards, the historical narration is continued by *Athila*, another famous work of Oláh. Yet, posterity does not read *Hungaria* as a fragment of one great oeuvre but as an independent work. It seems that Olahus himself treated *Hungaria* and *Athila* as independent creations, as did his friends (to whom he sent them).⁴

A basic characteristic of Olahus' work is the above-mentioned nostalgia. It does not depict his own age, it depicts Hungary as it existed a few decades earlier.⁵ Although he mentions the Battle of Mohács and the Ottoman threat multiple times, he prefers to dwell on old Hungary, on the idealised age of King Matthias.⁶ In the insightful words of Emőke Szilágyi, "time has stopped in the Hungary of Olahus."⁷ The aim of the author might also have been to raise attention: by using *topoi* depicting Hungary's fertility, vastness and richness, he wished to shake up popular opinion in the West, and, like Johannes Cuspinian⁸ had done, draw their attention to the fact that a rich and great country was in mortal danger.⁹

The work was only published two hundred years later, in 1735, with the help of Matthias Bel (1684–1749), the excellent Hungarian linguist, histo-

³ BARTONIEK, 1975, 27; KULCSÁR, 2008, 131–132.

⁴ For instance, Craneveldius writes in his letter dated 30 September, 1537: "Accepi, vir ornatissime, litteras tuas una cum Athila, atque Hungaria..." OLÁHUS, 1875, 605. See further references in the letters in the same book, pp. 599, 600, 605–606. Cristina Neagu emphasises the strong links between the two works and that they can be interpreted as one work (as well). See: NEAGU, 2003, 202–204. Her points of view are definitely to be considered (for example, the original title in codex V: *Athila seu Hungaria*); however, the two texts have different characteristics, they stand on their own. From the fourth chapter, *Hungaria* does not mention the Huns, the author completely turns to presenting his own homeland; likewise, *Athila* does not contain references to the Hungary of the time. *Athila* and *Hungaria*, however, are mainly separated by the fact that the former (one wonders whether it had been at the order of Olahus or the decision of the publisher, Johannes Sambucus) was published separately in 1568, detached from *Hungaria*. Cf. FODOR, 1990, 48–49.

⁵ HADROVICS, 1983, 173.

⁶ BARTONIEK, 1975, 26; HADROVICS, 1983, 173; KULCSÁR, 2008, 132–133; SZILÁGYI, 2017b, 58.

⁷ SZILÁGYI, 2017b, 59.

⁸ On Cuspinian's work see: IMRE, 1995, 225–227; TÓTH 2019, 76–83.

⁹ BARTONIEK, 1975, 26, 28; see also: IMRE, 1995, 223–233, especially 227. Emőke Rita Szilágyi also proposes another possible motivation: with this idealised picture of Hungary, Olahus wished to elevate his own image in the eyes of contemporary humanist readers. See: SZILÁGYI, 2017b, 59. This is a very promising proposition, but in my opinion, it requires further evidence.

rian, and geographer.¹⁰ Bel launched his significant source material series entitled *Adparatus ad historiam Hungariae* with this text. In my paper, I will present what editorial methods he followed, the manuscript he used, how he proofread the text, and finally, what the introduction he wrote for the work, and his numerous explanatory comments on the writing of Olahus tell us: how he read *Hungaria*.

I. MATTHIAS BEL, SOURCE PUBLISHER

In a letter alluding to one of his unrealised plans, Matthias Bel wrote that he would have liked to publish Hungarian authors in a monumental collection “that would contest with that of Muratori”.¹¹ In other words, he wanted to follow the example of the great source material series of Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*.¹² This clearly shows that Bel was well-informed and up-to-date in the subject of European sciences, and that he was adamant about keeping up with the swiftly developing Western European historiography.

Although the concept of a *Collectio scriptorum Hungaricorum* dissolved into thin air, the above-mentioned *Adparatus* was, fortunately, realised. In this edition, Bel, for the first time in Hungarian historiography, published historical sources with critical notes and scientific forewords, and in the introduction of the collection, he called upon his fellow-scientists to co-operate and collect sources. Here, too, Bel emphasized Western examples. He included a sort-of “catalogue of authors” in the foreword, where he mentioned the following predecessors: “Indeed, Hungary had no such luck so far as to producing personalities like Pistorius, Freher, Goldast, Schardius, Lindenbrog, Reineck, Reuber, Meibom, Schilter, Mencke, Struve, Petz like Germany; or Muratori like Italy; Duchesne, Labbe, Baluze like France; Camden, Selden, Fell, Gale like England; Schott like Spain and Grotius like the Belgians, and Hungary cannot boast collections of such personae, who – in sum as well as individually – by collecting the surviving works of various authors, not only saved their nations’ history from oblivion but also glorified them more.”¹³ By enumerating these authors, Bel pointed out examples to be followed for himself, and thus, it is worth discussing them briefly.

¹⁰ An excellent bibliography regarding his persona, his works, and the literature on him: BELÁK, 1984; on his manuscript legacy, see: SZELESTEI NAGY, 1984; TÓTH, 2006; the latest, with ample further literature, see TÓTH, 2017.

¹¹ See the letter of Matthias Bel to Andreas Mohr. Bratislava, 25 June, 1744. In: BÉL, 1993, nr. 855. For the unsuccessful plan, see: TÓTH, 2011.

¹² See: MURATORIUS, 1723–1751.

¹³ BEL, 1735–1746, I, f.)(1^v.

One very important characteristic of the list is the predominance of German authors. This was not because Bel knew more scholars from Germany than from other countries but rather because the publication of mediaeval sources had indeed already become popular in the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century. The first seven German authors on Bel's list represent this late humanistic source publishing practice. Later, in the seventeenth century, those mentioned by Bel – Meibom, Schilter, Mencke, Struve and Leibniz, primarily known as a philosopher – carried on this tradition, although at a higher standard. These authors had already read works by Jesuits from the Low Countries ("Bollandists") and by French Benedictine Maurists, who elevated source criticism and source publishing to a high level in the seventeenth century; some of them (e.g. Leibniz) even corresponded with representatives of these schools.¹⁴ New methods and new perspectives are clearly reflected in the works of the above-mentioned German authors. They were regarded as exemplary by Muratori (also on Bel's list), who specifically emphasised the Germans' lead within this genre at the beginning of his source edition.¹⁵ It is also true, however, that the Italian author was also very close to the Maurist school.¹⁶

Thus, with the *Adparatus*, Bel, as he declared by listing the authors, wished to realise the Western European source publishing practice in Hungary. This intention, as we will see, is clearly shown in the introductions and notes on the sources of the collection. Naturally, because he published *Hungaria* as the first piece of the collection, he wished to present it in the most sophisticated form, as a sort of showpiece. Before discussing this edition, however, we have to say a few words about what manuscript Bel used for the publication.

¹⁴ For the development of historical science and especially source criticism in the seventeenth century, see: KRAUS, 1968, 56–60; WAGNER, 1979, 19–25. For Leibniz's work as a historian, there is ample literature. Specifically on his source publishing, and on his correspondence with the Maurist Mabillon and the Bollandist Papebroch, and on the pre-Leibniz history of German source publication in general, see: SCHRÖCKER, 1976, 130–131.

¹⁵ MURATORIUS, 1723–1751, I. *Praefatio* f[1]r.

¹⁶ Muratori considered Jean Mabillon his master, who was an iconic figure of the French Benedictine monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and that of the scholarly historian community organised there, versed in source publication as well as in diplomacy. On the Benedictines of Saint-Germain, Mabillon's Italian influence, and Muratori, see: FUETER, 1911, 310–315, 318–320; MOMIGLIANO, 1977, 277–293.

II. THE MANUSCRIPT USED BY MATTHIAS BEL

As established by previous research, there are two surviving manuscripts of *Hungaria*: the Viennese (*V*) and the Cologne (*K*) codex.¹⁷ The basic text of Bel's edition does not match either of these. It contains part of the corrections in the *V* codex: but merely the corrections of one hand, and not those of another three or four hands.¹⁸ From this, the publishers of *Hungaria*, Kálmán Eperjessy and László Juhász, drew the conclusion – in my opinion, correctly – that there had been an early copy of *V* (*x*) that had already contained some of the corrections, and which are later present in the text of the Bel edition, but after this, Olahus (and perhaps also others) further amended the text of *V*.¹⁹

There is another important difference between codices *V* and *K* and the text of the Bel edition. The text in the *Adparatus* includes the complete nineteenth or last chapter of the work, while the last page of *V* is lost, so the text of the chapter has only remained in an incomplete form (similarly to *K*, which was copied from it in 1631).²⁰ I hypothesize the following explanation for the loss of the last page of *V*. In its original form, the codex probably contained the manuscript of *Athila* as well, which, presumably, came consecutively after *Hungaria* – the title at the beginning of the text, *Athila seu Hungaria*, might also refer to this.²¹ The publisher of *Athila*, Johannes Sambucus (János Zsámboky) must have possessed this codex,²² and before publication, he must have detached the text of *Athila* from the end of the codex so that he could send it to the printing press. Since its first page contained the final part of *Hungaria*, too, it has thus been lost. Adam Franciscus Kollar, the would-be publisher of Olah's two works, already suspected this possibility.²³ Whatever happened, from the complete text published by Bel, i.e. the one that also contained the

¹⁷ The reference number of *V*: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739. The deposit of *K*: EDDB, Hs. 293, fol. 3–39. Basic literature on the manuscript tradition: EPERJESSY–JUHÁSZ, 1938; FODOR, 1990; SZILÁGYI, 2014.

¹⁸ For example, at the beginning of the text, in the second line of the first chapter of the Viennese codex (*V*), a hand has subsequently corrected *eas* to *utramque*. See: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739. f. 2r. Bel's edition of the text also contains this modification. See: OLAHUS, 1735, 1. This hand's corrections are adopted all throughout by the Bel edition of the text. However, the text published by Bel does not contain the corrections of other hands: for instance, the form *adscribunt* written above *iniiciunt*, from the second page of the codex. See: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739. f. 2v; OLAHUS, 1735, 1.

¹⁹ See: EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, v. On the later, contingent correctors of the text, see: FODOR, 1990, 12–13.

²⁰ See: EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, v; FODOR, 1990, 19, 47; SZILÁGYI, 2014, 71.

²¹ Cf. NEAGU, 2003, 204.

²² Cf. FODOR, 1990, 48.

²³ See: OLAHUS, 1763, 97. note t.) (Kollar's note); see also: KOLLARIUS, 1763,)(2v–)(3r.

end of the work, we might conclude that when the manuscript used by Bel (x) was finished based on *V*, the codex *V* still had its last page.

Bel was not the first to discover and use *Hungaria*, it was Márton Szentiványi (1633–1705), a scholarly Jesuit professor from Trnava (Nagyszombat, Tyrnau) to do so. He cited parts of the work in *Dissertatio paralipomenonica*, published in 1699, and used them for his own description of Hungary.²⁴ From the quotations it seems that Szentiványi used *V*, which already contained all amendments when he saw it, or he got hold of a later copy of it.²⁵

It was from Szentiványi's book that Matthias Bel heard of the existence of such a work at all. His book *Prodromus*, published in 1723, presented the scholarly world the plan of his monumental oeuvre of country description, *Notitia*. In the foreword he indicated that based on the fragments published by the Jesuit author, he would also make ample use of Olahus' *Hungaria*.²⁶ After reading *Prodromus*, Jacopo Facciolati (Jacobus Facciolatus), a doctor of theology and philologist from Padua, informed him, or more precisely, his brother-in-law, Andreas Hermann, that certain manuscripts of Olahus were kept in the Jesuit college of Esztergom, and the work Bel sought might be among them.²⁷ Bel looked at the question again in 1731, when he asked an unknown Jesuit whether there were really Olahus manuscripts in the residence at Esztergom.²⁸

²⁴ SZENTIVÁNYI, 1699, 14–16 (Buda); 16 (Esztergom); 17 (Pécs); 18–19 (Visegrád); 25–26 (Diósgyőr). On this question, see also: SZILÁGYI, 2014, 72.

²⁵ For example, the detail including Buda's description contains all corrections on said part of *V*. See: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739, 8r–v, and SZENTIVÁNYI, 1699, 15. There is, however, a serious difference between the text of *V* and one of the Szentiványi quotations on the description of Esztergom, to which Bel drew attention in a note. See: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739, 12r, and SZENTIVÁNYI, 1699, 16 (in the critical edition: OLAHUS, 1938, 7. 5.); Bel's note containing Szentiványi's different text: OLAHUS, 1735, 14, note a.). From this, we can perhaps conclude that Szentiványi used a different manuscript, but one can also suppose that he himself made – minor – modifications in the text. Szentiványi was the regent of the Viennese Pazmaneum between 1676 and 1679, and also the main censor of the country from 1673, and later he visited Vienna many times as the rector of the University of Trnava, to proceed in the business of the university printing press. SERFÖZŐ, 1942, 13–14, 120–129, 143–144. One can easily imagine that he saw the Viennese codex with his own eyes and jotted down excerpts from it.

²⁶ “Nicolai Olahi, viri summi, et Strigoniensis Archiepiscopi, Adversaria Rerum Hungaricarum, ubi locorum, aut cuius industria adserventur, equidem nescio. Multum me ex iis profecturum, fragmenta illa pollicentur, quae diligentissimus scriptor, Martinus Szentivány S. I. passim sua fecit; si essent, quemadmodum futuros spero, qui liberaliter in medium conferrent, quod ad communis patriae laudem pertinet.” – BEL, 1723,)()(2r.

²⁷ FACCIO LATI, 1765, 161. The letter was discovered by Emőke Rita Szilágyi. See: SZILÁGYI, 2014, 72. I am indebted to Dániel Siptár for the information on the eighteenth-century history of the residence in Esztergom.

²⁸ See: BEL, 1993, nr. 409; SZILÁGYI, 2014, 72.

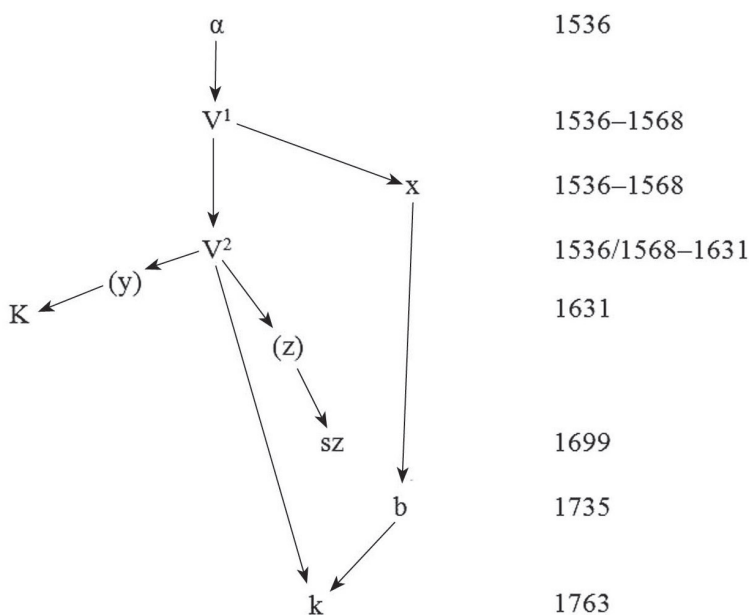
From Bel's foreword, however, we can conclude that this was not the manuscript he finally used; he got hold of another copy, in a rather adventurous way. In the foreword, he admits that he was given the manuscript he used by royal fiscal advocate (*Fisci Regii advocatus*) István Zitkovszky, and Zitkovszky received it from the clerk of the Hungarian Locotenential Council, Ferenc Barinay, who had received it from his scribe. Yet, the origin of the manuscript remains unknown because, as Bel remarked, the above-mentioned scribe had stumbled upon the text "at a flea market or in a cheese shop".²⁹ It sounds as if Bel or the intermediaries wished to keep secret the previous place or the previous owner of the text on purpose. All in all, Zitkovszky and Barinay belonged to Bel's circle of administrative connections in Bratislava and in Vienna, thus, the origin of the manuscript Bel used could be traced back there.

Based on the above, the connections between the early manuscripts and editions of *Hungaria* can be outlined as follows. Olahus wrote the work in 1536 (the symbol of the autographical manuscript is α), then he had a copy made and made certain amendments (this status of the text is indicated by V^1), then he ordered another copy to be made of this amended copy, perhaps for one of his friends, which already included these amendments (x). However, he later further amended manuscript V , and perhaps others corrected it after his death;³⁰ furthermore, the last page of the manuscript was lost, supposedly because around 1568 Zsámboky detached the pages containing *Athila* from the codex and with them, the end of *Hungaria*. We indicate the textual status thus formed of codex V by V^2 on the stemma. From it, or from a copy of it (y) the Cologne manuscript was made in 1631 (K). Szentiványi knew the textual status of V that we indicated by V^2 (it is problematic whether this was V or some copy of it – z on the family tree). Fragments he published in 1699 (sz) bear witness to this. However, Bel got hold of a copy (x) that retained the early textual status (V^1) of V , and based on this, he made his edition (b) in 1735, comparing it to the later status of the Viennese codex (V^2), as well as with the partial Szentiványi publication (sz). In his 1763 edition (k) Adam Franciscus Kollar also took into account the amended and final status of V (V^2), but he took the Bel text (b) as the basis, and he also adopted Bel's notes from the

²⁹ "At enim, vobis forte cognoscere, benevole lector, unde nobis, utilissimi scripti copia? Paucis dicam. Stephano id Zitkovszkyo, Fisci Regii avvocato, viro, rerum patriarum curiosissimo, et nostri studioso: hic, amico Francisco Barinay, proto-notario locumtenentiali; iste, ammanuensi, qui illud in scrutario foro, an taberna casearia, fatis meliore, repererat, in acceptis referimus." BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [ii]. (Bel's foreword without page numbers can be found before the first numbered page, that is, before *Hungaria*, which occupied first place in the book.) Zitkovszky appears multiple times in Bel's correspondence. See: BÉL, 1993, nr. 347, 367, 432, 440, 451, 583.

³⁰ FODOR, 1990, 12–13.

1735 edition with the missing ending in *V*.³¹ Based on the above, the following stemma can be drawn:³²



Thus, Bel knew about the Viennese codex (*V*), and he stated that his “friends” compared it to the manuscript he got hold of (*x*).³³ It is to be noted,

³¹ See: OLAHUS, 1763; KOLLARIUS, 1763,)(2v–)(3r; EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, vi–vii. (In their introduction, the letter *t* indicates the printer Trattner because they do not consider Kollar’s role in the edition to be proved; despite the fact that Kollar’s name is at the beginning of the foreword, and from the foreword it is obvious that he was the publisher. See: KOLLARIUS, 1763; SZILÁGYI, 2014, 69–70, 73, 74. (Szilágyi also indicates Kollar’s edition with the letter *t* – I changed it to *k*, thereby signalling that the persona of the publisher is beyond dispute.)

³² For the creation of the family tree, we have used the symbols of the text editors; furthermore, we used the possible family trees drawn by Emőke Rita Szilágyi as the starting point. See: EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, v–vi; SZILÁGYI, 2014, 70, 73, 74.

³³ He mentions in the first text-critical note: “Manu scriptus codex, quem cum nostro hoc contulerunt amici, *loco* lepidi, habet *sapidi*.” See: OLAHUS, 1735, [i], note a.) Cf. ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739, 1r. Bel must have thought of the Viennese codex (*V*) because he even mentions

however, that in Bel's text there are divergences from the "early" status of *V* that included only said hand's corrections (*V*¹) – this has already been noted by previous research.³⁴ Beside the smaller differences, we have noticed one significant difference.³⁵ So far we do not know how to explain these divergences. Perhaps Olahus (or someone else?) was also working separately on the text of the copy (*x*),³⁶ but the author had no time to unify the different versions. It is also possible, however, that Bel stylised the text a bit, even though he wrote that he published the work faithfully.³⁷ The introduction of the critical edition also notes that Bel aligned the names of geographical places with the spelling of his own era,³⁸ which was a characteristic way of his also in the case of citing other sources.

III. IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MURATORI: BEL'S FOREWORD AND HIS NOTES ON THE WORK OF OLAHUS

Bel wrote a short but substantial foreword before the edition of *Hungaria*. He wrote about the author, the circumstances of the birth of the work, its contents and source value, and about manuscript tradition. In style, structure, content, and even in length, Bel's foreword (and other forewords in *Adparatus*) is similar to the forewords of Muratori in *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*.³⁹ Therefore, we can conclude that Bel had referred to the Italian scholar in his correspondence and source editions, since he had indeed regarded him as the standard.

In the foreword Bel only briefly mentions the author's person, noting that in the first volume of *Notitia*, also published in 1735, he had already presented

its old reference number in the foreword and cites Olahus' own hand-written entry from it on the time of its writing. See: BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philobistora*, [i.] On the entry, see: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739, 1r.

³⁴ See: EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, vi; SZILÁGYI, 2014, 73. The divergence pointed out by Szilágyi (*ibid.* 74.), which is in the description of the River Tisza between *V* and Bel's text (see: ÖNB, Cod. Lat. 8739, 7r, and OLAHUS, 1735, 7–8), does not really belong here because in the uncorrected text of *V* (*V*¹) there is the same text as in Bel's edition. Therefore, the modification of the text is the result of a later correction in *V* (*V*²), which did not make it into copy *x*.

³⁵ See the problematic text in the sixth chapter in the critical edition: OLAHUS, 1938, 6. 14. For Bel's divergent reading, see: OLAHUS, 1735, 12.

³⁶ Cf. EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, v., note 7.

³⁷ See: BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philobistora*, [ii.]

³⁸ EPERJESSY – JUHÁSZ, 1938, vi.

³⁹ See: MURATORIUS, 1723–1751, I. i–v; 189–190. etc.; IX. 3–4; 59–60; 99–102. etc.

the archbishop's biography.⁴⁰ After this, he describes the time of the creation of the book and Olahus' own handwritten entry in the Viennese codex, which refers to the time and place of writing (Brussels, 16 May, 1536).⁴¹ He opines that *Hungaria* was written at the same time as *Athila*. To prove it, he cites the letter of Olahus' friend, Petrus Nannius, in which the renowned humanist of the Low Countries praises both works at the same time.⁴²

After this, Bel would have liked to discover how it could be that the archbishop's country description was not published. He reckons that Olahus did not want to finish his work until he came home and verified the data, which eventually did not happen.⁴³ It will be clear below that he, correctly, concluded all this from two lines of Olahus' rhyming dedication.⁴⁴ He saw the greatest value of *Hungaria* in the lengthy descriptions: as he writes, this work informs us what Buda, Visegrád, Esztergom, and the famous *Bibliotheca Corviniana* had been like in the era of kings Matthias, Vladislaus, and Louis.

As we have seen above, Bel also discussed the circumstances of the acquisition of the manuscript because scholarly opinion required it: it was almost a compulsory element of forewords written by text editors to present the manuscript tradition. It also had been an expectation at the time to compare

⁴⁰ BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [i], note a.). *Notitia* indeed contains the biography of Olahus (BEL, 1735–1742, I, 472–485), for which Bel used *Hungaria* and information from another Olahus work, the *Chronicon*. The latter was also published in *Adparatus*, after *Hungaria*. See: BEL, 1735–1746, I, 38–41.

⁴¹ BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [i.] On the note of Olahus, see also NEAGU, 2003, 205.

⁴² BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [i.] On the connections between Nannius and Olahus, Gilbert Tournoy has written a paper, publishing in its appendix the letter that Matthias Bel cited in his foreword. The text of this letter has remained as a part of a planned edition Nannius edited for the death of Olahus' brother, Matthaeus, from the poems of several authors. The letter of Nannius – including the obituary poem written by him – was dated 9 February, 1539. See the text of the letter in TOURNOY, 2006, 150–152. (The part cited by Bel: *ibid.* 151.); on the planned edition, see: *ibid.*, 135–139. How Bel stumbled upon this letter requires further research. He probably got hold of the manuscript collection of poems edited by Nannius and the codex that contained it, which is in the University Library (Budapest) at the moment (see: EK H 46) because he mentions Nannius' editing in the biography of Olahus in *Notitia* ("Petrus Nannius [...] qui lessum Matthaeo, et ipse cecinit, et lugubria aliorum carmina, uno fasce edidit"), and then he cites the same excerpt of the letter as in the foreword. See: BEL, 1735–1742, I, 477.

⁴³ BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [i]–[ii].

⁴⁴ See said lines (*Quum dulces repetam ... candidiore fide*) in: OLAHUS, 1938, *Ad lectorem*, 31–32. In Bel's edition see: OLAHUS, 1735, [i]. See Bel's note: *ibid.* note b.) Later scholars agree with Bel's assumption. See: KOLLARIUS, 1763,)(2v; FODOR, 1990, 46–47; NEAGU, 2003, 205–207.

manuscripts: as he writes, he had completed this task, or had it completed by certain friends of his, that is, he made them compare and check the Viennese codex and his own manuscript.⁴⁵ Also, Bel emphasises that he published the text faithfully; however, as discussed above, this is only partly true: he himself remarks that he “revised” the spelling of the original text but did not change the author’s words.⁴⁶ Finally, he emphasises that he gave appropriate titles to each chapter, divided them into paragraphs, and also written notes, as doing so coincided with the principles of his endeavour and his means.⁴⁷

For the text, which was 38 folio-sized pages long, Matthias Bel prepared 87 notes, which is in itself a significant number, compared to the publishing practices at the time. We can only find eight text-critical notes, where Bel indicated certain differences between *V* and *x* and made a few remarks about the Szentiványi quotations. In fact, there are much more differences between *V* (and its final state: *V*²) and Bel’s text.⁴⁸ It is not known whether it was Bel’s “friends” who worked carelessly, or whether Bel himself was too overwhelmed to document in the notes the amount of divergent readings. Knowing Bel’s extraordinary diligence, the former seems more likely.⁴⁹ Contemporary Western publishing practices also required making textual critical notes: Muratori also always noted divergent readings of other manuscripts in his editions, at least when he had the chance to do so.⁵⁰ One thing is for certain: the critical apparatus is not the strongest point of Bel’s edition.

The impression is somewhat more favourable if we consider those remarks as text-critical notes where Bel identifies Olahus’ ancient and mediaeval sources (Iustinus, Herodotus, Iordanes, Thuróczy, etc.). Ten such notes can be found in the text. Besides, there are three notes in which he writes about the circumstances of the birth of the work. Inter alia, he correctly concludes that Olahus refers to *Athila* at the end of the work, i.e. the fact that Hungarian history that started with *Hungaria*, continues with *Athila*.⁵¹

Therefore, on the whole, Bel – or rather his friends – did not place great emphasis on revealing the divergences between the extant texts of *Hungaria*. His main objective with the notes was to interpret Olahus’ work, explain its

⁴⁵ See footnote 33 above.

⁴⁶ “...recensuimus scriptionis genus, nil quidquam contemeratis auctoris verbis...” BEL, 1735, *Ad lectorem philohistora*, [ii].

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ For divergent readings in the critical edition, see: OLAHUS, 1938, 76–90.

⁴⁹ Kollar, the author of the joint edition of *Hungaria* and *Athila*, knowing the Viennese codex, also noticed the significant differences between the two texts (*V* and *b*) and he also blamed Bel’s friends for the lack of the notes (“...illi parum fidis ac diligentibus amicis, hoc quidem in officio, uti contigit”). KOLLARIUS, 1763,)(3r.

⁵⁰ See MURATORIUS, 1723–1751, I, 1., 2., 3. etc.

⁵¹ OLAHUS 1735, 38., note s.).

ambiguous parts, and weigh it on contemporary scholarly scales. Once again, Muratori comes as a parallel because he also provided his significant sources with source-critical and historical commentaries: he contrasted their statements with other sources, drew attention to inaccuracies and problematic parts, and also mentioned earlier criticism on source materials. An outstanding example of this is the monumental work of Paul the Deacon, *De gestis Longobardorum* (or *Historia Langobardorum*), to which the Italian author added a multifaceted body of commentary, which can be considered of a high standard even by present-day criteria.⁵² Another example might be the Silesian historiographer Friedrich Wilhelm von Sommersberg, who happened to be in correspondence with Bel, and who also wrote numerous critical remarks for published sources in his source edition.⁵³ All in all, such notes were widespread by this time.

These notes of Bel can be divided into two main groups: geographical and historical ones. Of the former, we can find twenty-three in the text. On the one hand, in these Bel explains Olahus' text: drawing attention to where geographical names are misspelt in the work or are referred to differently from contemporary usage; that is, he identifies the geographical names of *Hungaria*. For instance, he indicates that the *insula Comaron* ("Isle of Komárom") mentioned by Olahus is called *Csallóköz* (Žitný ostrov); similarly, the river Olahus referred to as *Sáros* is *Sárvíz* in contemporary usage.⁵⁴ He writes notes where data are incorrect, highlighting the author's mistake in placing the wellspring of the River Ipoly above Banská Štiavnica (Selmecbánya).⁵⁵ As an indicator of his outstanding geographical knowledge, he can name the mountain near Vác that Olahus merely referred to (Naszály).⁵⁶ His well-informed status is due to the fact that he had almost finished collecting data for his country description, *Notitia*, by the mid-1730s,⁵⁷ so by then he knew as much about the geography and hydrography of Hungary as perhaps no-one ever before.

There are forty-seven historical notes in the other group, which means that they make up more than half of the notes. In some of them, Bel identifies

⁵² MURATORIUS, 1723–1751, I, 405–511.

⁵³ SOMMERSBERG, 1729–1730, I, 3, 4, etc. Sommersberg's work was a part of Bel's library. See: TÓTH, 2006, 86. (nr. 20–21.)

⁵⁴ The data on the "Isle of Komárom" (*insula Comaron*) was later amended by Olahus, and he also provided its popular Hungarian name (*Challokewz*), but this was a late correction in the *V* codex (*V*²), which did not make it into the supposed copy *x*, so Bel could not have known about it. See: OLAHUS, 1938, 4. 7. (See the critical note on page 78.). See Bel's comment: OLAHUS, 1735, 7. note o.). The data on *Sárvíz*: OLAHUS, 1938, 6. 3. For Bel's note, see: OLAHUS, 1735, 11. note t.).

⁵⁵ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 10. 26.; For Bel's note, see: OLAHUS, 1735, 20. note x.)

⁵⁶ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 10. 10.; See Bel's note: OLAHUS, 1735, 19. note q.)

⁵⁷ For the collection of data, see: TÓTH, 2007.

and aligns historical events mentioned by Olahus with other sources. For instance, when Olahus mentions the siege of Esztergom, Bel correctly associates it with the 1532 attack led by Lodovico Gritti.⁵⁸ Furthermore, when Olahus writes that Visegrád could host four kings, Bel makes the fitting point that the author must have had the 1335 Congress of Visegrád in mind.⁵⁹ He also indicates whenever Olahus writes something hitherto unknown or divergent from the narration of standard historiographers. The author of *Hungaria* wrote that King Matthias was crowned on the ice of the Danube, to which Bel remarks that Bonfini speaks of no such thing but only that the Danube froze during the election, and thus the aristocratic party that opposed the election of Matthias had to cross over from Buda to Pest.⁶⁰

Bel's notes are especially impressive where, alluding to fresh literature, he colours certain statements of Olahus. A perfect example for this is chapter 17. Here, in connection with the famous Trajan Bridge built over the Danube, Nicolaus Olahus quotes Cassius Dio on the building and greatness of the bridge.⁶¹ In connection with this, Bel remarks that scholars do not agree on the bridge: while Iustus Lipsius and István Szamosközy both follow in the footsteps of Cassius Dio and praise the building, Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, the renowned Italian military engineer and antiquary, based on his own on-the-spot inspections, refutes many statements of the Roman historiographer.⁶² Here, Bel gives evidence of his in-depth antiquarian literacy and knowledge, which is remarkable in *Notitia* as well.⁶³

The notes where Bel interprets Olahus' text using charters are also worth attention. The scholar already indicated elsewhere that he considered the collection of charters and diplomatic research important primarily because of Western European influences and antecedents (e.g. Mabillon's works).⁶⁴ Often in *Notitia*, he used charters as sources, which he not only published but also analysed in a professional way.⁶⁵ He deliberately aspired to include this

⁵⁸ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 7. 5. For Bel's note, see: OLAHUS, 1735, 14. note b.)

⁵⁹ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 6. 5. Bel cites the place of the congress from Bonfini's Hungarian history and also from a Bohemian historical work to interpret Olahus' place of the text. See: OLAHUS, 1735, 11, note u.)

⁶⁰ Bel's note: "Nihil eius, in electionis historia, quam Bonfinius, *Decad.* III. Lib. IX. exhibet, observaris; praeterquam, quod Danubius, quarto Idus Februarias, subito rigidoque gelu concretus, et quasi pavimento constratus, perterruerit factionem Corvino contrariam, ut relictā Buda, Pestum concederet." See: OLAHUS, 1735, 18–19, note p.)

⁶¹ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 17. 13–17.

⁶² See: OLAHUS, 1735, 32. note a.) The said location of Marsili's work: MARSILI, 1726, II, 25–30.

⁶³ On Bel's interests in the antiquity, see: TÓTH, 2015, 161–162; see also NAGY, 2018.

⁶⁴ TÓTH, 2013, 604, 606, 608, 609, 610–611.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 604, 611.

group of sources in the examination, also in the notes of *Adparatus*. Thus, when he finds in the text of Olahus that there is European sturgeon fishing near Kolárovo (Gúta), to prove the author right, he remarks: he read in old charters that here, by the River Váh (Vág), Hungarian kings used to cultivate sturgeon-lakes in the river, surrounded by palisades, the remnants of which can still be seen when the water is shallow.⁶⁶

There is a separate, small group of remarks on early Hungarian history. Throughout his life, Bel was very much preoccupied with this issue and retained his view of the traditional Scythian-Hun-Avar origin of Hungarians until his death, although he always tried to support it with linguistic evidence. Also, similarly to the renowned German historian, Philipp Clüver, and certainly following in his footsteps, he intended to discover the “traditions” and artefact culture of Scythians, Huns, and Avars in the customs and way of living of the Hungarians in his own age. One can find numerous examples from his oeuvre for the latter, but perhaps the best parallel is the Latin-language edition of Priscus of Panium’s work in *Adparatus*, and its notes written by Bel, where this aspiration was quite often manifested.⁶⁷ In the edition of *Hungaria*, one can find examples for linguistic and “ethnographical” arguments as well. In one place, he identifies the source of Olahus, i.e. Iustinus, and he cites another sentence of the historiographer, where Iustinus writes: in Scythian, *exiles* are called *parthi* (in singular: *parthus*). After this, Bel triumphantly exclaims: “Here is an obvious record of Hungarian language! Because *pártos* still means *rebel*.”⁶⁸ In other words, he reckoned that the Hungarian word *pártos* (“wrangling”, “factious”, “rebellious”) originates from the “Scythian” *parthus*, although it can easily be seen that it originates from the Latin word for *party* (*pars*).

The other note is also very characteristic of him. When discussing the beggars of the village of Šimand (Simánd), Olahus mentions that parents in this town cripple their new-born babies on purpose in order to continue the beggar “profession”. Bel suggests that all this could be the remnant of the old Hun tradition of cutting the faces of babies, even citing the source of information, Ammianus Marcellinus, whom he often quotes because of the abundance

⁶⁶ See: OLAHUS, 1938, 10. 12. Bel’s note: “Legi in diplomatibus, reges Hungariae, antaceorum vivarium hic olim habuisse, per oram fluminis, roboreis palis circumclusum; quorum trunci, decrescente amne, notari possunt hodieque.” OLAHUS, 1735, 19. r.) Bel mentions all this in *Notitia*, in the general part of the description of Komárom County, and also in the description of Gúta. See: BEL, 2016, 279, 476–478. Further places where Bel used charters in the notes of *Hungaria*: OLAHUS, 1735, 29. note s.); 37. note p.).

⁶⁷ Bel’s Priscus edition: BEL, 1735–1746, II, 1–83. For Bel’s linguistic and ancient historical research, see: TÓTH, 2012.

⁶⁸ “En, Hungaricae linguae exstans vestigium! *Pártos* enim, hodieque *seditionum* significat.” OLAHUS, 1735, 4. note g.).

of his data on the Hun.⁶⁹ Finally, he admits that this parallel is untenable because Huns wanted to make their offsprings scary, while those of Şimand wanted to make them able to beg.⁷⁰ If we look at these thought experiments and ancient historical pathfindings today, we might smile, but we should keep in mind that at the time, research on the origin of nations and comparative linguistics were in their infancy throughout Europe.⁷¹

SUMMARY

Bel's edition of *Hungaria* is a very important milestone in the reception of the oeuvre of Nicolaus Olahus. On the one hand, we owe him one part of the work, as Bel acquired a manuscript which, although it did not contain every amendment by Olahus (and others), it retained the final part of the text that was missing from the other two manuscripts. This is a substantial gain for *Hungaria*.

On the other hand, the edition was in very good hands with Bel. The renowned scholar launched his source edition, *Adparatus* based on Western models, primarily following in the footsteps of Muratori's text editions, and he found a place for the work of Olahus in it. Moreover, he made *Hungaria* the first of his collection, being aware of its significance, and thus elevated it to a sort of exemplary edition: he paid special attention to emendation and interpretation. In the brief introduction before the work, he very aptly revealed the birth of the *Hungaria* and emphasised its source value. Even more significant are his notes for the work in which he commented on the text on a contemporary scientific level, confronting it with brand-new research.

As we have seen, Bel made rather few text-critical remarks in these notes, although he knew the Viennese codex, and his "friends" had compared that text to the manuscript he had acquired. Although later researchers might condemn him – or, rather, his friends – for the lack of philological comparisons, when looking at his other notes, Bel's work might elicit acknowledgement from us. He made ample use of the experience of collecting data for his country description, *Notitia*, when preparing geographical-topographical notes; as for historical notes, thanks to his monumental, decade-long source gathering and collection of charters, and his excellent literacy and preparedness, he could compare with other sources, prove, interpret, or refute Olahus'

⁶⁹ Cf. TÓTH, 2012, 232–234, 241, 242.

⁷⁰ "Crederes, imitatione Hunnorum, id factitasse Simándienses, de quibus Ammianus Marcellinus [...] sic scribit [...] Sed contra se res habet. [...]" OLAHUS, 1735, 38. note r.) On the vast literature of this part of *Hungaria* and its possible interpretations see: SZILÁGYI, 2017a.

⁷¹ BORST, 1957–1963, III/1, 1048–1394.

statements in an almost modern way. He was outstanding in his knowledge of contemporary scientific literature and was up-to-date in it.

Bel's role is also significant from the perspective of reception because in the notes and the foreword he emphasised the most important data of the book, i.e. he showed what hitherto unknown information Olahus' work provided. We can also add that beside Szentiványi, he was the first to use *Hungaria* to a larger extent: in *Notitia*, when describing certain cities and castles, he cited and analysed its text many times.⁷² Thus, he familiarised Hungarian scientific circles with Olahus' work and incorporated its data into public thought.

Finally, it was also Bel who, after the expulsion of the Ottomans, surveying his war-torn, plundered country that was starting to recover,⁷³ sensed one of the main messages of Olahus' work: the ever-present melancholy due to the loss of old, splendid Hungary, as a basic and common experience of post-Mohács-generation Hungarians. After citing at length Olahus' words in *Notitia* on the old splendour of the royal palace and the court of Visegrád that was destroyed in the Ottoman wars, he writes: "This had been the image of the castle and the city at that time, its gemstone, its special privileges. Therefore, we, Hungarians, indeed, have reasons to mourn the fate of the castle and the city; if at all it were enough to mourn that, the pain of which one cannot unfeel any more."⁷⁴

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⁷² Cf. BEL, 1735–1742, I, 473, 477; III, 225, 226, 245, 487–490, 507, 518–519, 583; in the county descriptions of *Notitia* that remained in manuscript form and were published not long ago: BEL, 2016, 529, 550, 552.

⁷³ Bel often discusses Hungary's losses in the Ottoman conquest in *Notitia*. Cf. TÓTH, 2017, 378–386.

⁷⁴ "Haec tunc arcis oppidique facies fuit, hi ornatus, iuraque praecipua. Ut habeamus omnino, cur arcis, urbisque fortunam, Hungari doleamus; si doluisse sit satis, quod dedolere possis nunquam." BEL, 1735–1742, III, 490. With similar sadness, he remarks in the *Adparatus* that now one can hardly see the ruins of the Palace of Visegrád that Olahus praised so high. See: OLAHUS, 1735, 12. note y.).

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