



# UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN HUNGARY



Digital services at the library include the use of the 20 available CD-ROMs, access to 78 databases through the Internet and through the library's network, access to information resources available via the Hungarian network of researchers and higher education, the use of online catalogues of other libraries, and access to the virtual library. These services are available in the computer lab of the Electronic Information Services (EIS) as well as in both the general reading hall and in the periodicals reading hall. Upon request, the library provides Internet monitoring and the compilation of Internet bibliographies. At the EIS lab, database training, printing services of previously prepared research materials, and online reference services are provided. The library's homepage was revised and extended in 2003. Now it is also available in English and in German.

The ELTE libraries use an integrated library system called Horizon. It was issued by Dynix. The same system is used by the University of Miskolc and by the Semmelweis Medical University in Hungary. In 2003, the shared electronic catalogue of the ELTE libraries held more than 175,000 bibliographic and 200,000 item records.

Each year 1,707 foreign periodical titles are subscribed to by the ELTE libraries, 584 of those titles being available at the University Library itself. Besides its current subscriptions, the University Library has an invaluable collection of periodicals from the 18th and 19th centuries.

### *Special Collections, Historical Values*

#### THE COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS AND RARITIES

The library houses one of the oldest and richest resource collections of history, cultural studies, and literature. The scientific and national interest aims to guarantee and improve the conditions of this collection for research purposes. The primary goal of this department is to save this valuable collection, to restore damaged documents, and guarantee access to these resources now and in the future.

The need to both separate this complex collection from the library's main stock and to analytically explore it began in the middle of the 19th century. Lajos Csapodi had introduced the first classification catalog for separating the manuscripts in 1774. The catalog of the historical collection has a rather short history, spanning only the last 100 to 150 years. The first attendant of the collection, János Garay, started the first alphabetical index card filing system in 1849. This system, however, did not include detailed information, so the introduction of a printed catalog was needed that required additional preparation. The high number of new acquisitions at that time further highlighted the importance of cataloging.

Some of the most valuable additions to this collection include the legacy of Sándor Szilágyi, containing historical materials, mainly from the time of the Turkish occupation and from Transylvania; manuscripts concerning national and county assemblies that were from a legacy given by Tivadar Pauler; manuscripts by János Arany and the translation of Aristophanes' works by the poet, all of which were donated by Arany's widow.

The Manuscript Collection has 183 codices in various languages, including 137 Latin, 13 Arabic, Turkish, Ethiopic and Persian, 11 Slavic, 8 Hungarian, 6 German,

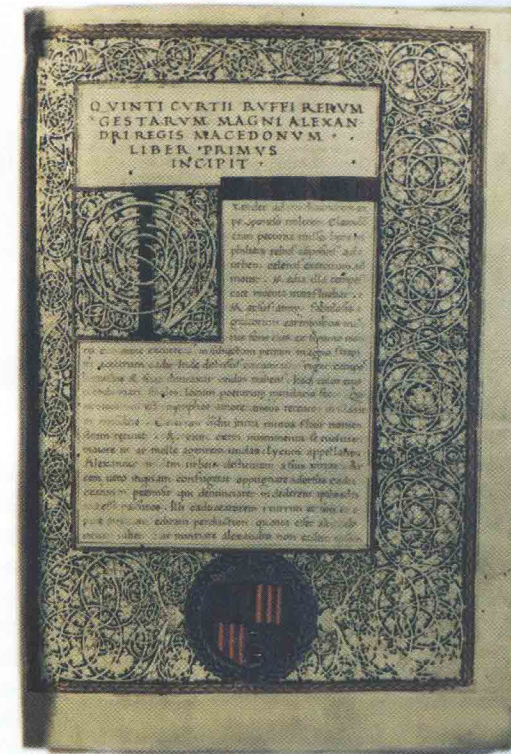
4 Greek, and 4 Italian. The majority of this collection originates from the libraries of suppressed monastic orders. The remaining 35 codexes were donated in 1877 to the students of Budapest by the Turkish sultan, Abdul Hamid II. Twelve of those items proved to be from the Corvina Library, the famous library of King Matthias from the 15th century. Other outstanding codexes from the Turkish donation are the Chirurgy of Albucasis Alsaragus, of which the Latin translation was done by Gerardus Cremonensis around 1280, and the manuscript of Dante's *Divina Comedia*, dating from around 1345 and decorated with more than 90 miniatures. The Manuscript Collection also holds approximately 300 codex fragments in Latin.

During reorganization in 1954, László Mezey found part of the *Vita Rhythmica Cuthberti* by Beda Venerabilis, dating from the 8th or 9th century. This is the oldest manuscript at the library. Apart from the codices, there are three main parts to the Manuscript Collection: the *Diplomata* autographa; the *Litterae et epistolae* originales, which include several documents dating from before the Turkish occupation of Hungary in the 16th century; and the so called *Classified Manuscripts*.

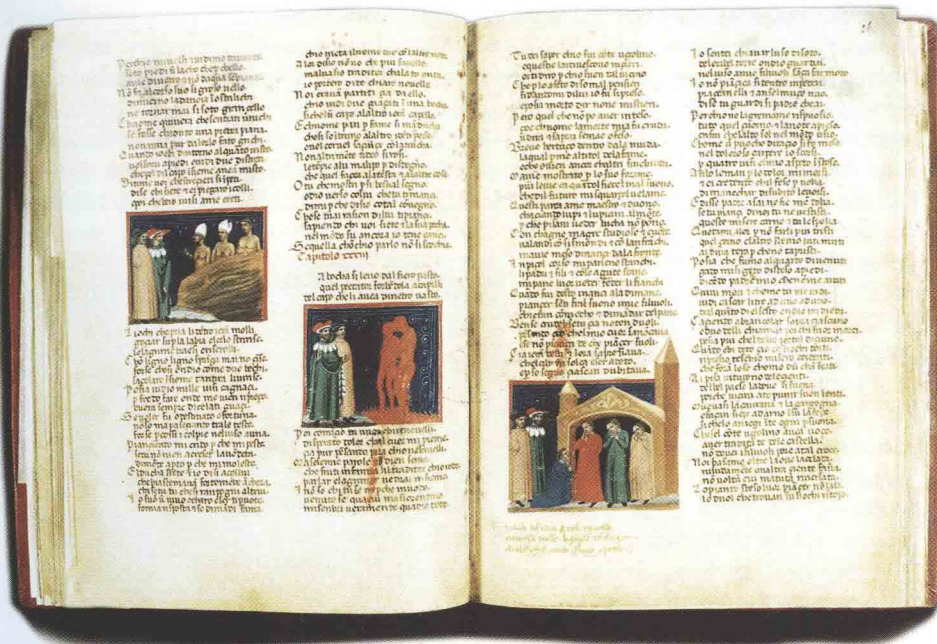
Many of the collections of various Jesuit historians, such as Gábor Hevenesi (1656-1715), István Kaprinai (1714-1786), and György Pray (1723-1801), include original and copied documents. These resources arrived in the li-

brary at the turn of the 19th century. Hetvenesi organized his collection at the request of Archbishop Lipót Kollonich. This collection was transferred from Nagyszombat to the Hungarian Chambers in Pozsony. This is where the collection of Kaprinai was also moved following his death. Later these collections became the basis for the *Litterae et epistolae* originales collection. Pray sold his collection to the library in 1784.

These collections include several historical documents measuring approximately 15 linear meters. The documents are invaluable in the research of Hungary's general and cultural history. The collections of Hetvenesi and Kaprinai concern mainly modern history. Moreover, some of these materials have never appeared in print. György Fejér, however, published the documents of older times in the serial *Codex Diplomaticus*.







The Collection of Charters of Incorporation, Litterale Coehales, is important in the research of Hungarian economic history. Before 1848, when planning the reformation of the Hungarian guild system, the government offices collected the charters, both originals and copies. The collected documents were sent to the Chancellery in Vienna and returned to Hungary in 1887. They were placed partly in the archives of the Hungarian National Museum and partly in the University Library. The charters kept in the museum later were transferred to the Hungarian National Archives, where they were destroyed by fire in 1945. Thus the collection of charters held in the University Library became the country's single major historical collection of charters, consisting of around 850 documents.

The Collection of Rarities holds various collections of national significance. The main part of this is the Collection of Incunabula that consists of over 1,040 units in 1,150 volumes. This collection has been growing continuously since the foundation of the library. There are 26 incunabula dating from before the founding of the university. Six of these were already in the library's possession according to its catalog in 1632. After the suppression of the Jesuit order, the library in Nagyszombat received 223 volumes from various monasteries. By 1780 the library owned approximately 350 incunabula. In the following decade, a further 300 incunabula were added. The most valuable ones are: Decretalis by Pope Georgius IX, a richly illustrated volume published in 1479 in Venice; Opuscula by Augustinus, published in Venice in 1483, bound in the Carthusian monastery of Lövöld in 1486, and representing the style of late Hungarian gothic binding; the volumes of the Missale

Strigoniense published in Venice in 1493 and 1503, representing the different styles of the bindery of Buda; unique in the country is the Biography of St. Jerome, written by Laudivius in the 15th century and printed in Hungary in 1478-79.

The University Library has 1,900 items belonging to and listed by the Old Hungarian Library (Régi Magyar Könyvtár or RMK I-III.), the catalog of Hungarian printed materials dating up to 1711. Items belonging to RMK I-III amount to 63 meters of shelves in the stacks.

The Rariora Hungarica Collection was established after 1945. It houses especially valuable Hungarian printed materials published after 1711, such as first editions and unique copies.

The Collection of Cuts, Maps and Landscapes holds around 15,000 bibliographical units. This collection was established at the beginning of the 20th century and holds richly illustrated and engraved books. It also has books of extreme value and items that need extra protection. About fifteen to twenty percent of this collection is from Germany.

The Pamphlet Collection houses pamphlets, obituaries and speeches, as well as the Miscellaneous Collection. The Miscellaneous Collection is rich in Catholic sermons from the 18th century, printed both in Hungary and abroad. Altogether both collections equal about 35,000 bibliographical units. These are organized in a printed catalog.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF OLD PRINTS

This department holds books printed abroad between 1501 and 1800 and written in any language—except Hungarian—by foreign authors. Interest in European and national materials from the 16th century grew considerably over the past twenty years within the country as well as abroad. Due to considerable progress in the bibliographical exploration of the incunabula, a new task was given to explore the collection of printed materials originating from the 16th century. Since most libraries did not separate the stock of the so-called Antiqua Collection of 16th century books from that of the manuscripts and incunabula, the primary task was to sort out these volumes.

The introduction of the numerus kurrens system at the library in the 1950's played an important role in

