

SOME HUNGARIAN ASPECTS OF EARLY EUROPEAN MAPS

ESSAYS ON THE THEME OF CARTOGRAPHIC PHILOLOGY

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KORABELI EURÓPAI TÉRKÉPEK MAGYAR VONATKOZÁSAI SZEMELVÉNYEK A TÉRKÉPÉSZETI FILOLÓGIA TÁRGYKÖRÉBŐL

Összefoglalás

A „térképészeti filológia” a kartográfia történet és számos más tudományág (nyelvészet, művelődéstörténet, orientálistika, írástörténet, papírtörténet stb.) határmezsgyéjén álló tudományterület. E kis tanulmány egyik része a „Magna Hungaria” kérdéskör egy sajátos szeletét villantja föl az olvasó számára: ti. nincs az ismert kontinens- és világtérképeken, a régi Oroszország-ábrázolásokon még egy, a magyarhoz hasonló nép, népcsoport, nemzetiség, amely ilyen sok helyen és egymástól ennyire távoli területeken fordulna elő. Nevezetesen a Sarkkörön túli „Obscura Regio” lakatlan földjétől a Kaukázusontúli területekig. A másik fejezet a Kárpát-medencében élő magyarság első térképi ábrázolásainak egy máig csak utalásból ismert, lehetséges forrásával foglalkozik, s a Rosselli-hagyatékban olvasható „Ungheria doppia d’un foglio reale” rejtélyének feloldásához próbál adalékot szolgáltatni.

Summary

„Cartographic philology” is a discipline on the borderline between the history of cartography and several other disciplines such as linguistics, cultural history, orientalism, paleography and the history of paper. The first part of this short study highlights a peculiar aspect of the „Magna Hungaria” theory: no other nation or ethnic group occurs in so many or in so widespread locations in the different continental and world maps or on old illustrations of Russia, as the Hungarians. Namely, from the uninhabited, Arctic land of „Obscura Regio” to Transcaucasia. The other chapter deals with a possible source of the first cartographic illustrations of Hungary in the Carpathian Basin, trying to contribute to the solution of the mysterious reference to this source in the Rosselli heritage: „Ungheria doppia d’un foglio reale”.

Illustrations of „Magna Hungaria” and the peoples related to Hungarians on old maps

The past decade of research into the history of cartography unambiguously shows that the cartographers of the late Middle Ages and of the Renaissance reacted quite sensitively to all new travel accounts, both written and oral. We find these old maps to contain data not only on travelogues that are regarded as classics but also on journeys that we have had little information on from other sources.

In other words, the toponymic and other information on the old maps do not completely coincide with that of the travel accounts which have come down to us. Linguists and cartographers alike may obtain surprisingly new information from this fresh material. On the borderline of the history of cartography, cultural history and linguistics, the new approach could be called *cartographic philology*: its acceptance as a new discipline will depend upon how useful it proves to be.

Even a superficial acquaintance with a few dozen late mediaeval or Renaissance maps indicates that no other European people figures so frequently on the maps of Asia and the middle and lower Volga region as the Bulgars and the Magyars.

The relatively early appearance of „Magna Hungaria” on the maps is partially a reflection of the interest that historians and chroniclers have taken in the origin of the Magyars and of related peoples for more than a thousand years. Less well known is the fact that a great number of Hungarian missionaries – Franciscans and Dominicans – had travelled to what is today southern Russia from the beginning of the 13th century on, reporting to their provincials and generals and to the Holy See.

Until the appearance of the first maps expressly relying on Russian sources, the maps of Russia made in Europe were based on descriptions and travel accounts of Western European and Russian diplomats, merchants, missionaries, and travellers, and on sketches of original Russian manuscript maps obtained from personal contacts. The written explanations on these contemporary maps often rely on oral information of dubious value. In several cases the erroneous data on these maps were perpetuated for centuries, becoming the sources on the basis of which new maps, too, were made.

On late mediaeval and Renaissance maps we find information of doubtful value admixed with authentic geographic, ethnographic and historical data. Their separation and explanation is the task of teams of historians, linguists and cartographers.

The historically and linguistically interesting topographic material of the maps included here does not necessarily reflect the development of the techniques of cartography. The present selection is primarily an attempt to present material inviting philological, ethnonymic and toponymic processing. Mariners’ maps (compass maps), and disc-shaped world maps reflecting the antique conception of the Earth are included among these maps whose dates of origin range over eight centuries. Some of the maps represent the Arabic, Greek and Roman outlook with an eastern, or southern orientation, or with the northern orientation „normal” today: some, without projection, are richly ornamented with artistic illustrations: others are mere globe segments, details on a projection, and giving only laconic data.

The assumed geographical location of the erstwhile settlements of Hungarians and related peoples is one of the much debated, open questions of prehistoric research. The century-old „chaos” of written records is obvious from the late medieval Renaissance maps: no other nation or ethnic group occurs in so many or in so widespread locations in the classic illustrations of Russia, or in the continental and world maps, as the Hungarians. Namely, from the uninhabited, Arctic land of „Obscura Regio” to Transcaucasia.

Thoughts on the Hungarian aspects of the early 15th century Borgia map

North of the Mare Caspium the following legend can be read to mark the town of Saray: *Sedes Iambec imperatoris Medie, confinatus cum Ungariis*. I.e. „Dwelling place of Iambeck, ruler of Media, which borders (on the land of) the Magyars”.

Apropos the Borgia map, and practically all Catalan maps (Catalan Map, 1375, Map of Florence – and of the 14th century, Map of Modena) discussed here, it is worth calling attention to a few hints at the eastern Magyars. Saray was the seat of the Kipchak khan *Uzbek* (1313–1341), friendly towards the Christians: and subsequently of his son, *Janibek* (elsewhere *Iambek*, *Jambeth* etc. 1341–1357).

Some of the data reported by Julianus and Riccardus had already found their way into cartography. Similarly, the statement concerning Iambek or Janibek, i.e. his living in the neighbourhood of the Magyars, was presumably based on contemporary Hungarian sources. Uzbek Khan had established contacts with the Holy See as early as 1318 and these contacts were revived with new vigor in 1338. The main role in these contacts was played by Elia d’Ungheria, or Elias of Hungary, a Franciscan friar, who enjoyed the confidence and even friendship of both the Pope, and of Uzbek Khan and his son, Janibek. When Pope Benedict XII sent three monks under the leadership of Giovanni de Marignolli to the Kipchak ruler in 1338, the mission got a warm letter of recommendation from the Pope to Elias of Hungary, who was *intimo familiare e amico del principe Janibek*, asking him to aid the missionaries in their task. The Pope also wrote a letter to Charles Robert, King of Hungary asking him to support the mission on its way through Hungary. Consequently, we cannot regard it as mere coincidence that one of the three monks accompanying Marignolli, Gregorius de Hungaria, was also Hungarian. When in 1340 Elias of Hungary appeared in Avignon to meet the Pope as the envoy of Uzbek Khan and Janibek who by then was junior co-ruler with his father, he probably passed on a lot of information to members of the Papal Court: these data were quick to reach the workshops of cartography. Marignolli and his Hungarian companion returned to Europe in 1353: it is quite probable that some of the eastern Magyar references in the cartography of the 14th and 15th century should be attributed to them.

It should be also noted that among the missionaries, the main carriers of geographic information, there was an extremely large number of Hungarians. They, too, may have had some significance from the point of view of our subject, provided they had sent reports to their orders or to the Holy See from their mission, information which was absorbed by contemporary cartographers through channels that can no longer be traced. Earlier research has only concentrated on those Hungarian missionaries who were martyred in the east. Fra Stefano Ungaro, for example, died as a martyr in 1284 in Georgia after many years of service. Another Friar Stephen, also called Fra Stefano d’Ungheria, was born in Nagyvárád (today: Oradea), and died on 23 April, 1334 in the town of Saray in the Kipchak country. They were only two of those who probably contributed to the picture that contemporary maps gave of the Magyars who remained in the east in the territory and neighbourhood of the one-time Borgaria (Bulgaria), and of „Magna Hungaria”. But we will be much more certain of the Hungarian influence on the cartography of the Volga region and the territories east of it if we succeed in compiling a list of Hungarian monks who returned home from their eastern missions: a considerable amount of the written and oral information they gave was probably included in the maps.

Contributions to solving the mystery of the unknown „Rosselli map”

Uzielli, G. (1894), *Hülsen, Chr.* (1914) and other researchers studying the dawn of Hungarian cartography have made several references to the presumably oldest map of Hungary, the

vanished, and to the present day phantom-like Rosselli map. According to *Banfi* (1947), *Francesco Rosselli* lived in Buda, Hungary from 1476 to 1484, and, influenced by humanist astronomers working for King Matthias Corvinus, started to work on cartography. He probably made his map of Central Europe and his still unknown map of Hungary during this period. The heritage inventory of his son, *Alessandro Rosselli* (+1525) dated 24 February and 4 March 1528 in Florence, mentions a map titled „*Ungheria doppia d'un foglio reale*”, which is till the present day believed to be lost. *P. Hrenkó* (1975) assumed probably justifiably that „...it must have been more detailed” than *Lázár's* map.

Why is it particularly interesting to discuss a map that has never been seen in modern times? First of all, because the rich toponymy of *Lázár's* 1528 map, or more precisely, the source of his set of place names is still an unsolved puzzle for the experts of Hungary's cartographic history. So is, as compared to other contemporary works, the outstanding knowledge of Hungarian geography and rich nomenclature displayed on the two maps „*Hungariae Descriptio*” and „*Kriegschauplatz in Ungarn*” made by *Wolfgang Lazius* in 1552 and printed in 1556. Analysing the toponymy of Transdanubia only, *Lázár* used 150 geographical names, while *Lazius* already placed 301 such names on his map. Twice as many as *Lázár*. The arguments and doubts concerning the toponymy of the *Lázár* map are valid just as well for *Lazius's* incredibly rich nomenclature. Of the 301 Transdanubian place names, at most 110 may have come from *Lázár's* map. But where are most of the names from? One possibility is obvious, as explained by *Lazius* himself: plate 17 of the *Oberhammer-Wieser* publication lists the names of all those who contributed to the compilation of the map. The list contains several of the 16th century humanists of Hungary, from highly educated clerical and secular circles. In our research, we thoroughly analysed the toponymy of *Nicolaus Cusa's* map of Central Europe (Germania), *Henricus Martellus Germanus's* maps of Central Europe and Hungary, *Giovanni Andreas di Vavassore's* map, *Sebastiano Compagni's* detailed itinerary and *Francesco Rosselli's* map of Central Europe. Aware of the analyses of *P. Hrenkó* (1975) and *Stegena L.*, we paid distinguished attention to digesting the toponymy of the most important cartographic work on Hungary from the pre-*Lazius* times, the 1546 map of *J. Gastaldi* (Paesi danubiani). The spatial restrictions of this study do not allow a detailed analysis. However, it can be stated that neither one of the above sources, nor their aggregate can explain the unmatched richness of *Lázár's* and *Lazius's* nomenclatures. There may well have existed a more detailed map of Hungary.

Having said all that, what can be the meaning of the reference found in *Rosselli's* heritage inventory? What did the phantom map depict and, particularly, how large was it?

With the guidance of late *István Bogdán*, an excellent expert of the Hungarian and European history of paper, we managed to solve the puzzle of the sentence quoted from the heritage inventory and thereby determine the probable size of the vanished *Rosselli* map. As it turns out from a Bolognese prescription from around 1398 (see *C. M. Briquet*, 1923), the word *reale* (in English: *regal*) refers to the size and quality of the sheet of paper. Thus, the quoted sentence means: „*Hungary on a double regal sheet*”, that is „*Hungary on a sheet twice the size of a regal sheet*”.

Based on the bolognese standard, the sheet size known as *realle* (*regal*) used in Hungarian and German papermaking until the 18th and 19th centuries measured 44.5 × 61.5 centimetres. By gluing two sheets together along the longer side, the shorter side can be „doubled”. Calculating with a loss of 0.5 cm along the adjusted edges, the phrase „*doppia reale*”, i.e. „double regal” means a 61.5 × 88.5 cm sheet. However, with regard to the usual practice, the margins of the *reale* (*regal*) sheets were probably cut around. Thus, the measurements of the adjusted plate may have diminished to about 60.5 × 87.0 cm. Even so, the presumed area of the unknown map (5264 cm²) still exceeds the area of *Lázár's* map published in 1528 (54.8 × 78.3, that is 4291 cm²) by 973 cm².

Based on its title known from the heritage inventory, we can safely presume that the map did not depict the whole of Central Europe or the Balkan Peninsula, but predominantly and primarily Hungary. A map of this size probably also exceeded that of Lázár's map in scale, and, as a logical conclusion, in detail. The „phantom map” may have played a decisive role in Hungarian cartographic history. The solution of this puzzle encourages us to further research.

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