

The Itinerary of King Charles I in 1341

FERENC SEBŐK



The late Pál Engel, a historian of the Angevin era, attempted to reconstruct the struggles of King Charles I against the oligarchs, to unravel the political history of the period between 1310–1322 in a study published in *Századok* in 1988¹ which includes the king's itinerary. Engel compared the study to a puzzle, the difference being that in this "game" one cannot ever complete the whole picture, because one simply does not possess all the pieces of the original picture. On the other hand the historian never knows beforehand how his picture will look like in the end. His task was made even more difficult by the fact that at the time of writing his study there was no comprehensive source publication at his disposal, which contained *all* the data concerning the age. Therefore the author had to rely on the sources published in the volumes of "Anjou-kori okmánytár",² charters published in different family histories and thematic source publications and his own archival research, which could not be regarded as comprehensive. At any rate, Engel himself voiced his opinion, saying that his view "will possibly be modified, completed, or refuted by that lucky researcher, who can once rely on the *completed* source material contained in the volumes of the future *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*."³

The source publication⁴ Engel lacked contains by now more than a dozen volumes courtesy of researchers from Szeged, who have dedicated more than a decade of research to this project, and work has progressed on further volumes, too,

¹ P. Engel, "Az ország újraegyesítése. I. Károly küzdelmei az oligarchák ellen (1310–1323)." [The Re-unification of the Realm. The Struggles of Charles I against the Oligarchs (1310–1323)] *Századok* 122 (1988), 89–146. Recently re-published in P. Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság. Válogatott tanulmányok*. [Honor, castrum, comitatus]. Selected Studies. ed. E. Csukovits, Budapest 2003, 320–408.

² *Anjou-kori okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Hungaricus Andegavensis* (henceforth: AO), ed. Imre Nagy, Gyula Tasnádi Nagy, 7 vols., Budapest, 1878–1920.

³ Engel, *Az ország újraegyesítése*, 92.

⁴ *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár* [Charters of the Angevin Period] I–XII, XVII, XXIII, XXIV. eds. Gy Kristó et al., Szeged 1990–2002; The series has been reviewed by Ildikó Tóth, "The Charters of the Angevin Period," *Chronica* 1 (2001), 180–184.

which are almost ready for publication. On the basis of the published volumes it is nearly possible to get acquainted with the history of King Charles I having *all* the sources at one's disposal. The material relating to the period between 1310–1323 is completed, so making use of this corpus of evidence it was Gyula Kristó, who undertook the reconstruction of the political history of the period, when Charles I overpowered the oligarchs.⁵ Kristó's study modifies the results of Engel published in 1988 at some points, which can partly be thanked to the extension of the source basis, and partly to that methodological consideration, that one must accept the fact, that due to the sporadic feature of sources some contradictions simply *cannot* be solved. Some pieces of the puzzle will not fit the picture, even if *all* the available sources are at one's disposal. This is meant by Kristó, when he says Engel "paid special – perhaps even too much – attention not to leave any pieces of evidence unaccounted for, to fit all the pieces into the picture."⁶

On the forthcoming pages I will attempt to focus on another period of the reign of Charles I. While a considerable part of Charles' reign was dedicated to crushing the oligarchs,⁷ relatively little is known about the last few years of the king's reign, but in this respect a slight shift can be observed,⁸ which can be thanked to the publication of sources relating to 1339 and 1340 in the volumes XXIII and XXIV of *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*.⁹ That the political history of the year 1341 (the sources of which will be included in the forthcoming volume XXV of *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*) is hardly known, can best be illustrated by the fact, that *Magyarország történeti kronológiája* (Historical Chronology of Hungary)¹⁰ relating the events of 1341 (p. 206) qualifies only three events worth mentioning. A recent chronology of Hungarian history,¹¹ which summarises the events from 830 till 2000, did not consider a single event from 1341 noteworthy. Bearing these circumstances in mind I decided to attempt to reconstruct the itinerary of King Charles I in 1341 on the basis of the evidence contained in *all* the charters extant from the given year. My idea can also be supported by the fact, that the itineraries

⁵ Gy. Kristó, "I. Károly király harcai a tartományurak ellen (1310–1323)" [The Struggles of King Charles I against the Oligarchs (1310–1323)] *Századok* 137 (2003), 297–347.

⁶ Kristó, *I. Károly király harcai*, 298.

⁷ Apart from the above-mentioned studies, without the contention of fullness, see P. Engel, Gy. Kristó, A. Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301–1526* [The History of Hungary 1301–1526], Budapest 1998, 27–41; P. Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, London–New York 2001, 130–134.

⁸ F. Piti, "Hungary and Dalmatia in 1340," *Chronica* 2 (2002), 3–10.

⁹ See Note 4.

¹⁰ *Magyarország történeti kronológiája I. A kezdetektől 1526-ig* [Historical Chronology of Hungary I. From the Beginnings till 1526], ed. K. Benda, Budapest 1981.

¹¹ *A magyar történelem kronológiája* [The Chronology of Hungarian History], ed. Gy. Szvák, n.d. 2001.

put together by earlier historians are outdated, and contain many misinterpretations.¹²

During 1340 Charles I was preparing to withstand a possible Mongol invasion, which in the end failed to materialise.¹³ The dissolution of the royal army (*residentia exercitus regii*) was proclaimed to 1 January 1341.¹⁴ The king had already stayed in Visegrád, at the royal residence on 19 December 1340.¹⁵ Between 1323 and 1406 Visegrád can be regarded as the capital of the kingdom. The king only left it in case of war, diplomatic negotiation, hunt or other important activity.¹⁶ As we will see below there was no exception to this rule in 1341 either.

Charles I spent the first few months of 1341 in Visegrád, until the middle of April.¹⁷ Then at an unspecified time he left Visegrád for Várad (now Oradea, Romania). On the way there he issued a charter in Heves on 28 April.¹⁸ Károly Ráth and Béla Sebestyén, who dealt with royal itineraries formerly, dated this document to 22 September 1341,¹⁹ because both of them scrutinised the published charter in the source collection of Georgius Fejér.²⁰ The date in the published form of the document reads "*sabbato proximo post festum beati Mathei Euangelistae*",

¹² K. Ráth, *Magyar királyok hadjáratai, utazásai és tartózkodási helyei* [Campaigns, Travels and Itineraries of Hungarian Kings], Győr 1861; B. Sebestyén, *A magyar királyok tartózkodási helyei* [The Itinerary of Hungarian Kings], Budapest 1938.

¹³ Piti, *Hungary and Dalmatia*, 10.

¹⁴ *A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idősb ágának okmánytára. Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vásonkeő*, eds. Imre Nagy et al. 12 vols., Pest–Budapest, 1871–1931, (henceforth: Zichy) 1: 596 (Dl.76628), Zichy 1: 597 (Dl.76625). Henceforth I will refer to published documents by giving the bibliographical data of the publication and the archival number, to unpublished documents preserved in the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* [National Archives of Hungary] by giving Dl.abbreviation and the number; to copies of unpublished documents preserved at the same place in the photo archive by giving Df.abbreviation and the number.

¹⁵ *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár* XXIV, no. 737 (Dl.77454), no. 738 (Dl.90912), no. 739 (Dl.99564).

¹⁶ Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, 147.

¹⁷ He issued the following documents there: 3 January: AO 4: 66–67 (Dl.3347); 4 January: Dl.4581; 12 January: Dl.60972; 13 January: Dl.43514; 15 January: *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, 4 vols., Hermannstadt–Köln–Wien–Bukarest 1892–1981, (henceforth: ZW), 1: 510 (Dl.62702), ZW 1: 511 (Dl.62699 and Dl.62700), ZW 1: 512 (Dl.62 698); 22 January: Dl.48556; 25 January: G. Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, 11 vols., Budae 1829–1844 (henceforth: Fejér), 8/4: 481 (Dl.3086), Dl.87118; 1 February: Df.233624; 7 February: Dl.3356; 10 February: Dl.43172; 16 February: Df.278509; 23 February: F. Knauz, L. Dedek Crescens, *Monumenta ecclesiae Strigoniensis*, 3 vols., Strigonii 1874–1924, (henceforth: MES), 3: 384 (Df.237026 and Df.237027); 18 March: Fejér 8/7, 337–339 (Dl.24464 = Dl.24465 = Dl.67544), Dl.71679, Df.266379, Dl.71773, Dl.98357; 20 March: Zichy 1: 605 (Dl.76631); 29 March: Dl.62484; 31 March: Dl.102952, Df.266606; 1 April: Fejér 8/4: 489–491 (Dl.3368); 13 April: Dl.3370, Dl.50354; 14 April: ZW 1: 515–516 (Dl.30013); 15 April: Fejér 8/4, 482–489 (Df.251806, Df.251814, Df.251825), Df.200188, Df.283215.

¹⁸ 28 April: Dl.64021.

¹⁹ Ráth, *Magyar királyok*, 57; Sebestyén, *A magyar királyok*, 38.

²⁰ Fejér 8/4: 519.

which indeed refers to 22 September. The original charter, however, reads "*sabato proximo post festum Marci evangeliste*", which proves that neither Ráth, nor Sebestyén knew the original document. What makes it more interesting is that according to Sebestyén's work on 19 September King Charles I issued a charter in Damásd,²¹ on 22 September he issued another one (the distance between the two places can just be covered in three days), but on 23 September he was again in Damásd, which is impossible (that is, to get back to Damásd in *one* day), but no logical explanation could be given to the king's behaviour: why would he have travelled from his hunting resort to Heves only to return there next day at break-neck speed? It is interesting that Sebestyén did not notice this contradiction. Scrutiny of the original charter, however, clears the situation, as Heves is just on the way to Várad.

On 6 May the king stayed at Várad,²² in four days' time he was in a village called Karul.²³ Imre Nagy, the editor of *Anjou-kori Okmánytár* identified this village with Nagykároly (now Carei, Romania), but this is unlikely in light of the following: in two days' time the king dated a charter in another village called Wossyan in Zaránd county,²⁴ which can be identified with Varsand (now Varşand in Romania). Varsand in Zaránd county is south-western of Várad, while Nagykároly is north-eastern of it. If the king had left Várad for Nagykároly (that is, in a north-eastern direction), it is hardly imaginable, that he would have turned back and gone to Varsand via Várad again. It is much more likely, that Karul can be identified with a village in Békés county called Károly, which has disappeared by now, but the toponym has been preserved in a field name in Békés county, west of Szeghalom.²⁵

Still in this month the king returned to his residence in Visegrád. On 18 May he issued a charter here (the distance between Varsand and Visegrád can be covered in six days), and he did not leave it for the rest of the month.²⁶ He was also there at the beginning of June.²⁷ Then, a strange phenomenon occurred, to which I cannot provide an explanation so far: the king issued a charter in Győr on 21 June,²⁸ the chapter of Eger referred to this charter in a transcript, but contended, that it had been issued in Visegrád.²⁹ It is imaginable, that the chapter clerk was not careful enough, when he was transcribing the royal mandate, and he considered it as a routine, issued in Visegrád. From the viewpoint of the cause con-

²¹ See Note 34.

²² 6 May: ZW 1: 517 (DI.28061 = DI.37084).

²³ 10 May: AO 4: 91–92 (DI.3379).

²⁴ 12 May: AO 4: 92–93 (DI.3363).

²⁵ D. Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában* [The Historical Geography of Hungary in the Age of the Hunyadis], 5 vols., Budapest 1890, 1: 612; Gy. Györfly: *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történelmi földrajza* [The Historical Geography of Hungary in the Age of the Árpáds], 3 vols. Budapest 1987, 1: 508–509.

²⁶ 18 May: Df.232779; 24 May: AO 4: 101–103 (DI.3665).

²⁷ The charters issued there: 1 June: DI.49425; 3 June: Fejér 8/4, 498–504 (DI.34101).

²⁸ 21 June: DI.62181.

²⁹ 21 June: DI.62182.

tained in the charter, this mistake is a minor one, (although strict criticism might have qualified the document a forgery). Győr as the place of the issue of the charter seems to be correct, as the king was on his way to Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia), where he allegedly had talks with Charles, margrave of Moravia.³⁰ Unfortunately, I could not get the publication, which contains the primary source relating to the negotiation, but the contention of Antal Pór is further strengthened by the fact, that Charles, margrave of Moravia was evidently in Prague on 7 June, then he reappeared in Prague only on 13 July, which gave him enough time to travel to Pozsony, hold negotiations there and travel back.³¹ King Charles I travelled back to Visegrád from Pozsony, he issued a charter at his residence on 29 June.³²

The king spent the whole summer in Visegrád.³³ From 5 September until 23 he went hunting and he stayed in Damásd (Hont county), which is quite close to the royal residence. One of his charters dated from here reads "*in Damas, in loco venacionis nostre*".³⁴ After he had finished hunting, he returned to Visegrád and stayed there until 18 October.³⁵ Then at an unspecified time he travelled to Pozsony again, where he had talks and concluded a treaty with the prince of Austria. Hungary and Austria had made peace back in 1338, but along the border hostilities did not ease fast. Mutual incursions and damaging each other's property became the order of the day, so now the two parties agreed to set up a six-member

³⁰ According to A. Pór, *Tót Lőrinc, a királyi tárnokok és zászlótartók mestere* [Lőrinc Tót, *Magister Tavernicorum et vexilliferorum*], *Századok* 25 (1891), 368: [Josefus Chytil], *Codex [diplomaticus] Morav[iae]*, VII, 172.

³¹ J. Emler, *Regesta diplomataria nec non epistolaria Bohemiae at Moraviae*, Pars IV/II, annorum 1333–1346, Pragae 1892, 373, 382–383.

³² 29 June: Fejér 8/4, 492–493 (DI.3393).

³³ His charters issued in this period: 2 July: DI.40 860; 3 July: AO. IV, 111 (DI.3395); 10 July: AO. IV, 112 (DI.3397); 13 July: DI.91 320; 14 July: DI.3400; 18 July: Z. I, 626–627 (DI.76 646), DI.1116; 19 July: AO. IV, 121–122 (DI.3402 = DI.3403); 26 July: DI.40864; 1 August: DI.3407; 2 August: DI.87 121; 8 August: Zichy 1: 627–628 (DI.76647), DI.3409, DI.62182; 10 August: DI.40865; 25 August: DI.1401; 27 August: DI.3403 = DI.37084; 30 August: Df.247953; 31 August: *Hazai Oklevéltár. Codex diplomaticus patrius*, 1234–1536, eds. I. Nagy, F. Deák, Gy. Nagy, Budapest 1879, 234 (Df.269952).

³⁴ His charters dated from here: 5 September: I. Nagy, D. Véghely, Gy. Nagy, eds. *Zala vármegye története. Oklevéltár* [The history of Zala County. Charters], Budapest 1886–1890, 1: 383–384 (DI.3416); 6 September: MES 3: 394–395 (Df.236071); 11 September: DI.69970; 18 September: *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius*, eds. I. Nagy et al., Győr–Budapest 1865–1891, 1: 185–186 (Df.278132); 19 September: Df.277292; 23 September: AO 4: 134–135 (DI.50137).

³⁵ His charters from this period: 29 September: AO 2: 333 (DI.2462), *A nagymihályi és sztárai gróf Sztáray család oklevéltára* [Documents of the Count Sztáray Family from Nagymihály and Sztára], ed. Gy. Nagy, Budapest 1887–1889, 1: 162–163 (DI.85 282); 6 October: M. Kostrenčić, T. Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae ac Slavoniae. Diplomatički zbornik kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije*, Zagrabiae 1904–1981 (henceforth: Smičiklas), 10: 639–640 (Df.252346); 13 October: MES 3: 409–410 (Df.248653); 18 October: AO 4: 159–160 (DI.57314), DI.99994 = DI.106789.

commission (three Hungarian and three Austrian lords) to investigate and remedy the complaints. The Hungarian members of the commission were Péter, bishop of Szerém, Tamás Szécsényi, voivode of Transylvania and Pál Nagymartoni, *judex curie*; Austrian members were Ludwig von Ötting, Ulrich von Pfannberg and Ulrich von Pergau. Substitute members: the Hungarian Miklós Gilétfi, *comes* of Turóc county, and the Austrian Konrad von Schaumburg. The commissions would meet in Pozsony and Hainburg, and what they achieved, their rulers would give their consent to.³⁶

On 25 November the king was back in Visegrád, and stayed there to the end of the first month of next year.³⁷ The following conclusions can be drawn: the state of the realm as compared with the earlier period under the rule of King Charles I was much more consolidated, no upheavals, rebellions broke out, which would have otherwise necessitated a greater activity on the part of the monarch. Unlike the previous year, no foreign invasion threatened the kingdom, and this is why there was no need to proclaim a general mobilisation of arm-bearers (*generalis exercitus*), which was common throughout the Angevin period.³⁸ The royal army of the former year had been dissolved on 1 January 1341. The ruler, as it was customary, mainly stayed at his seat. In 1341 he left it only four times. His first journey of unknown destiny took him to Bihar, Békés and Zaránd counties, and it lasted for 4–5 weeks. For the second time he travelled to Pozsony. This journey took about three weeks. His third journey was the shortest in distance, he went to the royal hunting ground in Damásd, which is only a few miles from Visegrád, where the king spent about three weeks. He visited Pozsony again, and the journey took about 4–5 weeks. Another factor in the king's relative passivity might have been his illness (he died on 16 July 1342).

The examination of the king's itinerary also casts light on the fact that historians dealing with 14th century Hungary are in a special situation as a result of the relative scarcity of sources. While historians doing research into medieval history of Western-European countries often find themselves face-to-face with an enormous amount of sources, which imposes its own difficulties. In contrast for Central European historians even the establishment of fundamental chronological, archontological, etc. facts (like the king's itinerary) remains challenging.

³⁶ The text of the treaty can be found in the following charters: 13 November: Fejér 8/4: 495–497 (Dl.6657 = Df.257982 = Df.258468). The king's other charters from Pozsony: 5 November: Dl.72526; 8 November: Dl.1682; 10 November: Fejér 8/4: 481–482 (Df.258591 = Df.262188 = Df.262266 = Df.286775).

³⁷ His charters from this period: 25 November: Df.269952; 29 November: Dl.87127; 30 November: Smičiklas 10: 646–647 (Df.252015 = Df.252027); 7 December: Dl.67668, Df.260927; 8 December: Dl.105572; 23 December: Dl.3433, Dl.3434, Dl.3435, Dl.3436. For his staying in Visegrád in January 1342, see e.g. 26 January: AO 4: 189–191 (Dl.3461).

³⁸ P. Engel, "Adatok az Anjou-kori magyar hadseregről," [Data on the Hungarian Army in the Angevin Period], *Annalecta Mediaevalia. Tanulmányok a középkorról*, ed. T. Neumann, n.p. 2001, 77.