THE CHARTERS OF EMPEROR SIGISMUND IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung and RI-online:
Current state and possibilities for further development

Abstract
This study introduces the reader to the on-going re-edition of the abstracts of Emperor Sigismund’s charters within the Regesta Imperii series and their parallel publication at the RI-online portal. The project team prepares new volumes containing Sigismund’s charters from the Czech Lands and Hungary, while simultaneously a partial emendation of the existing old abstracts by Wilhelm Altmann in the RI-online database is undertaken, due to the complications caused up to now by their brevity and their system of abbreviations.

Keywords
Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg, charters, editions of abstracts, online databases of charters

1 The following paper was prepared within the project of specific research MU-NI/A/1053/2015 “Tradice a inovace ve zpřístupňování historických pramenů II”, conducted at the Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University (=FA MU) in Brno, in close cooperation with its two partner institutions, the Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Abteilung Editionsunternehmen und Quellenforschung – MIR at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna and the Deutsche Kommission für die Bearbeitung der Regesta Imperii e.V. at the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz. The author thanks Mgr. Stanislav Vohryzek for the provision of background materials and critical notes.
1. Introduction: *Regesta Imperii* and *RI*-online

Although medieval Roman emperors issued incomparably fewer charters than the popes – the truly universal authority of the medieval West – German medieval studies have not been able so far to make these charters accessible in their full extent. The reason is inter alia the fact that the medieval empire covered a substantially larger area than today’s German-speaking lands. In some of the modern countries which exist today within the historical territory of the empire, the history of the medieval empire certainly enjoys no priority in research. However, to trace imperial charters in the archives is quite complicated also in Germany itself, which is especially true for late medieval patents and letters and for later copies of charters, which have not survived in their original form, and for deperdits.

To make medieval imperial charters accessible is the task of two large-scale German-Austrian editorial undertakings. While *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* provides in its *Diplomata* series a critical edition of all imperial charters until the end of the Interregnum (1273),*Regesta Imperii* aims at making all imperial charters issued until the end of the reign of the “last knight”, Emperor Maximilian I (†1519), accessible to the public in the form of abstracts.*Regesta Imperii*, moreover, provides in addition to the diplomatic evidence also extracts from contemporary chronicles and annals, which contain information on the emperors. In addition, a chronological series of abstracts of papal charters until 1198 is projected, which will complement the *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*-series. While these *Papstregesten* still have a long way to go, the imperial abstracts are already completed for the majority of the early and high medieval sovereigns, and there is reasonable hope that the existing gaps will be filled in the near future. However, it will be necessary to re-edit some earlier volumes, because new charters have been discovered since their completion, while also research on already edited charters and narrative sources has advanced since (concerning the authenticity of the

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2 On the history of the MGH Diplomata-series with a particular accent on their Vien-

charters, the discussion of their dating, the reliability and interpretation of the narrative sources etc.).

Concerning the late medieval kings and emperors the situation is more complicated. Even though *Regesta Imperii* does not provide abstracts of their mentioning in the narrative sources, the number of charters, especially of paper patents and letters, nevertheless expands exponentially. Furthermore, in the archives patents and letters are usually not joined to the chronological series, but are scattered all over the record series, which often lack detailed indices. This is especially true for the archives of the large imperial cities (Nuremberg, Frankfurt etc.) and for the archives of the Italian territorial states (Milan, Florence, Mantua and others). From the 15th century onwards, the imperial registers, preserved in the *Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* in Vienna, assemble the out-going documents of the imperial chancery. The registers have already been extracted many times. However, for a number of sovereigns the method used was not entirely apt, as will be shown using Sigismund’s example below.

In the past, *Regesta Imperii* has tried to organise the regesta of the late medieval kings and emperors in a fundamentally chronological order. In the 19th century, Alfons Huber published the regesta of Charles IV from Böhmer’s legacy accordingly,\(^4\) at the turn of the 20th century Wilhelm Altmann the regesta of Sigismund of Luxembourg (see below), in the 1970s Günther Hödl the regesta of Albert II,\(^5\) and currently the regesta of Henry VII are also being processed chronologically.\(^6\) Other than that, it is necessary to mention the regesta of Rupert of the Palatinate, which were treated within the *Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein* and supply the 10th volume of *Regesta Imperii*.\(^7\)


It is, however, problematic to publish the abstracts of the charters of the late medieval rulers in chronological order for many reasons. While this method is quite suitable for dealing with rulers with a short reign (Henry VII, Albert II), it is practically impossible to do so where emperors who reigned for many years and acted on a European scale are concerned. This problem is particular tangible in the early volumes of the abstracts of Charles IV and Sigismund, which show significant gaps for the modern reader.\(^8\)

For these reasons, a different approach was chosen for the publication of the abstracts of other late medieval sovereigns. For Maximilian I, the charters and abstracts were deliberately divided in two chronological series: 1. selected charters of Emperor Maximilian, 2. Austrian, imperial and European matters, i.e. mainly the political correspondence of Maximilian’s court.\(^9\)

With the regesta of Frederick III, the RI-abstracts were for the first time published arranged according to the physical transmission of the charters in the archives and libraries, hence organised along individual countries, cities or institutions. Even though initially there were doubts about the feasibility of this approach, the 30 volumes published to this day confirm that the decision was undeniably right.\(^10\) The regesta of Emperor Louis of Bavaria follow the model of Frederick III. So far they have already produced 10 volumes.\(^11\) When it came to a re-edition of the regesta of Emperor Sigismund, the same model was chosen. Originally, this approach was also considered for the hitherto entirely unpublished regesta of Wenceslas IV; though given the existence of two extensive collections of photographs by Ivan Hlaváček

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and Wilhelm Hanisch it may in the end be possible to publish this ruler’s regesta in chronological order.\textsuperscript{12}

The fundamental reservation that could be levelled against the territorial segmentation of the volumes of the abstracts of Frederick III, Louis the Bavarian and Sigismund lies in the fragmentation and chaotic arrangement of the material that naturally arises from this approach and, connected to this problem, the impossibility to research across volumes. This problem was nevertheless solved by the introduction of the internet database \textit{RI-online},\textsuperscript{13} which after 2001 was fed gradually with the content of all volumes published so far within the \textit{Regesta Imperii}-series, and which is now regularly updated with the material published in new volumes.\textsuperscript{14} As the individual abstracts are added one by one to the database, cumulative indices are compiled simultaneously, covering all published volumes of the regesta of Frederick III and Louis the Bavarian. These indices are regularly updated and the current version made accessible online in pdf format.\textsuperscript{15} With these cumulative indices it is possible to search all published volumes the traditional way, which in some cases can be more reliable or more precise than the search engine of the \textit{RI-online} database.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{12} The photographic collection of Ivan Hlaváček is located at the Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies of Charles University, a digital copy was made for the \textit{Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Abteilung Editionsunternehmen und Quellenforschung – MIR} at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The collection of Wilhelm Hanisch is stored in the holdings of the \textit{Deutsche Kommission für die Bearbeitung der Regesta Imperii e.V.} at the Academy of Sciences and Literature, Mainz. Short abstracts from Hanisch’s collection are accessible to the public in the database \textit{Rlplus}, which is an extension of \textit{RI-online} and uses the same search engine (see the following note).

\textsuperscript{13} \url{http://www.regesta-imperii.de/regesten/suche.html} (accessed 05/2016).


\textsuperscript{15} On the cumulative index of the abstracts of Frederick III, see \url{http://www.regesta-imperii.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/ri_xiii_komplett.pdf} (accessed 05/2016); on Louis of Bavaria, see \url{http://www.regesta-imperii.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/ri_vii_gesamtregister_titel.pdf} (accessed 05/2016).

\textsuperscript{16} A typical example for the traditional index’s superiority to the current search engine of
After this introductory overview, we may now proceed towards the core of this paper – the abstracts of the charters and letters of Emperor Sigismund. As said before, there is an old abstract edition by the German medievalist and musicologist Wilhelm Altmann within the Regesta Imperii-series.\textsuperscript{17} The volume was published in two parts in 1896–1900 and contains 12,362 abstracts.\textsuperscript{18} If one considers the conditions of travel and communication and the technical resources at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, it is a respectable work.

Despite its merits, it cannot be overlooked that Altmann’s volume has certain weaknesses, which impede its usability for historical research. The first of them – which is at the same time the most understandable – is the incomplete heuristics. It will never be possible to create an absolutely complete corpus of Sigismund’s charters, due to the sheer quantity of archival material from the 15\textsuperscript{th} century and the Early Modern Period (especially if we include later copies of charters and references to deperdits). Altmann’s particular problem was that he could not visit in person a number of archives and had to rely on information provided by the archivists. This, for

\begin{quote}
the database \textit{RI-online} is the case of nobles, who held successively or simultaneously several and/or variable predicates and residences. In the classical index a given person is named under a headword, which assembles all predicates this person used. Should the user know only one predicate, the entry for the single predicate directs him/her to the basic headword, thus enabling him/her to identify the person and find all other predicates used by this individual. In contrast, in the \textit{RI-online} database the user usually finds only those abstracts, in which the given person appears under the predicate entered into the search engine. A second example for superiority of the traditional index is the case of plural individuals, who have the same Christian name and predicate, which was quite common in the medieval aristocratic milieu. Whereas in the classical index, these people can be clearly distinguished and the relevant abstracts found based on the individual entry, a search in \textit{RI-online} may yield a mass of abstracts, in which for example all people called Jan of Hradec/Neuhaus appear. These examples amongst others fully justify the compilation of cumulative indices from the abstracts of Frederick III, Louis of Bavaria (and soon also Sigismund), although their practical realisation is a relatively difficult task.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{17} The basic biographical information on Altmann comes from L. o s c h h, Philipp: \textit{Wilhelm Altmann}. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie. I. Berlin 1953, pp. 226–227. It is worth mentioning that Altmann also edited the most significant chronicle of Sigismund’s reign \textit{Eberhart Windeckes Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds}. Ed. W. Altmann. Berlin 1893.

instance, was the case for the majority of the archives in the Czech Lands.\(^{19}\)

The same is true for Italy, where it seems that Altmann either did not contact several significant archives at all, or that he did not receive an answer from them. Naturally, Altmann often received only superficial information from the archives, e.g. only very brief abstracts of the diplomas on parchment preserved in the original, while patents and letters, (later) copies and references to deforments remained entirely unknown to him.\(^{20}\)

Another problem, which was beyond Altmann’s capabilities, is posed by the multi-ethnic character of Sigismund’s realms. As is well known, Sigismund was not only king of the Romans and Emperor, but he also ruled from 1387 onwards as king of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom, which included today’s Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, a large part of Romania and smaller parts of Austria, Serbia and Ukraine. The royal charters for these lands were issued predominantly in Latin and to a lesser degree in German; however, these charters contain many Hungarian, Slavonic or Romanian personal and place names, and their transcription and interpretation is not always an easy task.\(^{21}\) Certainly, not only for linguistic reasons but also for reasons of time and systematics, Altmann decided to completely leave aside the Hungarian royal charters from the years of Sigismund’s reign in the Empire (1410–1437).\(^{22}\)

19 His main Czech consultants were Vojtěch Nováček and Jaromír Čelakovský in Prague and František Mareš in Třeboň. Altmann gives their names in italics next to the abstracts, which he compiled based on their information.

20 A significant example are the charters from the Brno City Archives. Altmann only knew three of the charters by Sigismund preserved in this archive: Sigismund’s mandate to the Moravian land captain Jindřich Plumlovský of Kravaře from 6 February 1420, the general confirmation of Brno’s privileges from 28 March 1421 and the confirmation of the rights of the Jews from Brno and Moravia from 6 April 1421 – see RI XI/1, Nos. 4004, 4492 and 4502. They are very brief and imprecise abstracts, which may be explicable by the fact that Altmann names the Brno municipal council (“Ge- meinderat”) as source of his information (see fig. 2–4).


22 Altmann himself states right in the first sentence of the introduction of RI XI/1, p. III: “Indem ich hiermit die erste Abteilung der „Regesten K. Sigmunds“ der Öffentlichkeit übergebe, bemerke ich, dass ich es nur für meine Aufgabe gehalten habe die Tätigkeit Sigmunds für das römisch-deutsche Reich zu veranschaulichen; darum sind die Urkunden, welche Sigmund als König von Ungarn ausgestellt hat, obgleich sie vielfach für das Itinerar von Bedeutung gewesen wären, nicht berücksichtigt; ich glaubte
charters but also in a number of charters from the imperial chancery, which were issued for recipients from the Empire. In these charters, Hungarian localities appear as place of issuance and various individuals of Hungarian origin as guarantors, witnesses, relators, scribes etc.; in these cases Altmann could not avoid inaccuracies in the interpretation. As for the Holy Roman Empire, Altmann’s language competences were sufficient, with one substantial exception – the lands of the Bohemian Crown. Altmann included these lands in his collection of abstracts because they were a traditional part of the empire and the base of Luxembourg family power. In consequence, though, he had to deal with several hundred charters written in Czech and especially with several thousand Czech personal and place names, for which he could not always use the parallel German names, which were widespread only in the border regions of Bohemia and Moravia. Altmann’s abstracts of Sigismund’s charters for Czech recipients thus, unfortunately, contain many errors of identification, which have spread from there into the (mainly non-Czech) secondary literature.

The third general problem with Altmann’s abstracts is their extreme brevity and the frequently unsystematic nature of their compilation. Often this can certainly be ascribed to the problems of the above-described heuristics at a distance – Altmann could only use the abstracts that he received from the archives. However, if one looks at the abstracts of the charters that are contained in the imperial registers, which Wilhelm Altmann apparently studied himself in Vienna, it becomes evident that the brevity and the inconsistencies are to a certain extent also the consequence of the working method of the editor. From Sigismund’s reign, seven volumes of imperial registers (labelled E, F, G, H, I[J], K, L) have been preserved in Vienna’s Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, which cover Sigismund’s entire reign with

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23 Altmann thanks in the introduction of his edition the Prague archivist Vojtěch Nováček for the translation of the Czech charters – see RI XI/1, p. III, Note 2.

24 As pars pro toto I refer to the already quoted abstract of Sigismund’s mandate to the Moravian land captain Jindřich Plumlovský of Kravaře from the Brno City Archives (RI XI/1, No. 4004), where Altmann labels the recipient as “Heinrich von Krawan” instead of the correct German Krawarn or the Czech variant Kravaře (cf. fig. 2–4). In the abstract of Sigismund’s mandate to the Strasbourg municipal council from 9 July 1417 (RI XI/1, No. 2457), Altmann describes the same Jindřich as “Heinrich von Erwarn, Herr zu Plumnaw”. In Sigismund’s debtor’s note from 1419 (RI XI/1, No. 1989) the same Moravian lord is then presented for a change as “Heinrich von Blumenau”, and “Blumenau” in the index localized in Alsace. Altmann’s volumes contain a long series of similar problematic identifications for individuals from the Czech Lands.
some short pauses. Particularly diplomas were copied into these registers, either in extenso or – in a case of standardized documents – only as brief abstracts. While Altmann usually more or less copied the brief abstracts and only slightly reformulated them, he very often capitulated before the text of long and complicated charters that were copied in extenso. Even though they often contain a series of provisions, Altmann regularly mentions in his abstracts only one point of the disposition: either the most important one, or simply the first. I want to illustrate this complex of problems with the help of one example from my own research: A total of 15 litterae comitatus palatinatus are copied in extenso in Sigismund’s registers. These charters usually contain, beside the appointment of the individual recipient to the Lateran Palatinate (including the precise definition of the extent of their competences), a series of other provisions, for instance the appointment as familiar or counsellor, the granting of a safe conduct (salvus conductus), the granting or amelioration of a coat of arms etc. In Altmann’s abstracts, however, we usually read only that a certain person was elevated to the Lateran Palatinate (see fig. 5 and 6). Another problem is the lack of system and thoroughness in the listing of the titles of individuals. While Sigismund’s chancery, when talking about individual persons, quite consistently used their relevant court titles (consiliarius/Rat, familiaris/Diener, commensalis/Tischgenosse, secretarius/heimlicher [Schreiber], capellanus/Kaplan etc.),

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Altmann in his abstracts adopted these titles rather haphazardly, which greatly complicates prosopographic research on Sigismund’s court. I believe that these deficiencies of Altmann’s work entirely justify a re-edition of the abstracts of Sigismund’s charters within the framework of *Regesta Imperii*.

Before dealing with this re-editon, it is necessary to add at least some basic information on the Hungarian edition of abstracts, *Zsigmondkori oklevélár* (“charter collection from the period of King Sigismund”). The initial impetus to create an edition of the charters and letters concerning the history of Hungary from the time of Sigismund’s reign was already given in the 1880s – hence still before Altmann’s volumes of *Regesta Imperii* appeared – by the Budapest archivist and later professor of auxiliary historical sciences László Fejérpataky. His preparatory work was taken up again in the 1940s by Elemér Mályusz, who published in 1951 the first volume of a new regesta series with selected abstracts of charters from 1387 to 1399.

While originally in the 19th century it was planned that the abstracts and the extracts from the charters should be in Latin, it was decided after the war to use Hungarian, which has remained the language of *Zsigmondkori oklevélár* to this day, although in the most recent volumes longer passages from the charters are usually quoted in the original Latin. A substantial change from the first two to the later volumes of the series is that the principle that only historically “important” documents were selected was abandoned. Now all charters that were issued during the given period are incorporated, so that each volume contains only one or two years. *Zsigmondkori oklevélár* has so far produced twelve volumes up to 1425, hence approximately one fourth of Sigismund’s 50-year reign is still missing.

The progressing of *Zsigmondkori oklevélár* in the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21st century engendered ideas about a possible addition to or

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27 More detailed information in German is provided by Kondor, Márta: *Zsigmondkori oklevélár*. In: http://www.regesta-imperii.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/ZsO.pdf (accessed 05/2016).

28 Altmann refers precisely to this plan in the introduction of his edition, which was quoted above.


re-edition of Altmann’s Regesta Imperii XI. The original plan of the Regesta Imperii working group at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, drawn up in 2003, was to translate the Hungarian abstracts of Sigismund’s charters (which constitute only a part of Zsigmondkori oklevéltár) into German and to publish them at RI-online. In addition, it was planned to prepare a first printed addendum to Altmann, containing the charters unknown to him from Bohemian and Moravian archives. Both tasks were at the centre of two research projects by Karel Hruza at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2004–2008 and 2008–2012).\textsuperscript{31}

However, the first of these projects showed that a simple translation of the Hungarian abstracts into German was not feasible, because the abstracts in Zsigmondkori oklevéltár follow completely different editorial standards. Moreover, they reflect many Hungarian legal customs, which have no suitable German equivalent. The translated abstracts were therefore fundamentally reworked to fit them into the editorial framework of Regesta Imperii and adapted for non-Hungarian scholars. In a time-consuming process, every abstract was revised on the basis of the original charter. Therefore, only one instalment has been published so far as an online supplement to Regesta Imperii XI – Neubearbeitung.\textsuperscript{32}

The first Sigismund-project also thoroughly confirmed the assumption that the abstracts Altmann compiled from the Czech material represent the weak spot of his work: It contains less than half of the charters by Sigismund that can be found in the archives of Bohemia and Moravia; the abstracts of charters for Czech recipients Altmann published show the highest number of erroneous identification or factual errors. Under these circumstances it was decided that it was not enough to produce a mere supplement to Altmann for the Czech Lands, but that it would be necessary to undertake a complete re-edition of the entire source collection. This new edition was designed upon the model developed for the regesta of Frederick III and Louis the Bavarian. It contains modern abstracts with a diplomatic and

\textsuperscript{31} See the projects P 17519 “Emperor Sigismund (†1437), Hungarian and Bohemian King” (2004–2008) and P 21198 “Emperor Sigismund: Lordship in Practice in three Monarchies” (2008–2012). Both projects were funded by the Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (Austrian Science Fund).

historical commentary, which aim to replace Altmann’s abstracts. The first volume focused on Moravia and Czech Silesia. No less than 75% of the abstracts published in this volume provide material not assembled in Altmann’s original volume. In 2011, a branch office of *Regesta Imperii* was established at Masaryk University in Brno, where two research projects were conducted with the support of the Czech Science Foundation. Within their framework, another two volumes were published; currently another three volumes of Sigismund’s abstracts from the Czech Lands are being prepared.

Today, *Regesta Imperii* on the one hand gradually completes Altmann’s work by publishing online “instalments” of German abstracts of Sigismund’s charters from historical Hungary, based on a translation of *Zsigmondokori oklevéltár*. On the other hand it pursues a complex gradual reworking of Altmann’s volume for the historical Holy Roman Empire in the form of paper volumes, organised according to archives and libraries. It is an ambitious long-term plan, which depends on the successful acquisition of grants and institutional financial support by the Viennese and Brno divisions of *Regesta Imperii*. Only success in the acquisition of funding makes it possible to sustain the team of highly trained specialists, which emerged during the first Viennese and Brno projects, and allows at the same time for the cost-intensive archival research.

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3. Sigismund’s regesta in the RI-online database: current situation and possibilities

Sigismund’s regesta are, like all other publications of the Regesta Imperii-series, published at the portal RI-online. The old abstracts by Altmann were transcribed more than 10 years ago and added to the RI-online database, while they are also available in the form of scans. Likewise, the new, regionally organised abstracts emerging from Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung are added to the RI-online database, whereas the scanned paper volumes are published in open access on its webpage by Böhlau. The German abstracts of Sigismund’s Hungarian charters, though, are only available for download in the pdf format. They are not added to the RI-online database, because they are not directly part of Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung, but only an online-supplement to this series. At this point it is necessary to also mention the Hungarian portal http://mol.arcanum.hu/, where scans of the Zsigmondkori oklevéltár-series are available.

Since the completion of the re-edition of Sigismund’s regesta for the Holy Roman Empire will only be achieved in the distant future, Altmann’s edition will, despite all its insufficiencies, for a long time remain the basic starting point for any research on Emperor Sigismund and his time. In addition to the pursuit of the new volumes of Regesta-Imperii Neubearbeitung, it is therefore necessary to make use of the technical possibilities of RI-online and try to at least partially improve the online version of Altmann’s abstracts. This improvement concerns or will concern mainly the following areas:

A) The fundamental obstacle that stands against a thorough utilisation of Altmann’s abstract edition in the RI-online database is the distinctly condensate form of Altmann’s regesta. In the original publication the author clearly wanted to use as few pages as possible. Therefore the individual abstracts refer wherever possible to the previous one. If there was a sequence of abstracts of similar content for different recipients, only the first abstract was spelled out, while the rest was abbreviated to “desgl[eichen] an NN” (see fig. 7 and 8). Thus, if we use the RI-online database to find for

37 RI XI/1–2 were digitalized by Deutsche Kommission für die Bearbeitung der Regesta Imperii e.V. in collaboration with the Bavarian State Library. Cf. http://regesta-imperii.digitale-sammlungen.de/seite/ri11_alt1896_0001 (accessed 05/2015) and http://regesta-imperii.digitale-sammlungen.de/seite/ri11_alt1897_0001 (accessed 05/2015).
38 RIXINB/1, see http://www.boehlau-verlag.com/download/162910/978-3-205-78762-4_1_OpenAccess.pdf (accessed 05/2016); RIXI NB/2, see http://www.boehlau-verlag.com/download/164507/978-3-205-20204-2_OpenAccess.pdf (accessed 05/2016).
39 See above, Note 32.
instance all charters on the donation of a coat of arms, it is not sufficient to search for “Wappen” in the search engine. This would deprive us of those numerous charters, where the abstract says simply “desgl. an NN”. More similar examples could be given. Since Altmann’s edition lacks a thematic index, there is no alternative to working with the original print edition when searching for certain thematic keywords.

Another similar problem is posed by series of charters for one recipient. In this case, Altmann used the pronoun “derselbe” in the respective grammatical form (dems[elben], dens[elben] etc.). If we look for the charters issued for one specific person, we always have to think of the possibility of a cluster of charters for the same recipient, whose name appears only in the first abstract. Again, we cannot rely on RI-online’s search engine, though we are a bit better off, because we can use the index of names provided by Altmann’s edition.

Thirdly, Altmann regularly abbreviated the information on the place where a charter was stored, by again referring to the previous abstract (e.g. “Or. ibid.”). As the information entered RI-online in this form, we stumble upon this problem if we want to search there, for instance, for all of Sigismund’s charters preserved in the State Archive in Nuremberg, etc.

Finally, identical chancery notes on charters following one another pose a very similar problem. After the first mentioning of the chancery notes the following abstracts look as follows: “KU. w. v.”. If we look for a particular notary or relator, we must be aware that there could be a substantially larger number of charters that bear their names than the research result at RI-online would make us believe.

The majority of these shortcomings can be resolved by adding to these abbreviated abstracts the parts that are omitted. In doing so, we change the text of Altmann’s original abstracts, but this only leads to their complementation by passages quoted from other regesta by the same author. In the example of the series of coats-of-arms they will then not look like “desgl. an NN/AB/CD[…]” any more, but “erteilt NN/AB/CD[…] ein Wappen”. The authentic form of Altmann’s text remains fully preserved in the scans of the printed volumes on RI-online.

This completion of Altmann’s abstracts is already taking place (at the moment in an off-line regime; the publication of the corrected abstracts in

40 I treat this problem in Elbel, P.: Die Wappenbriefe (forthcoming).
41 Altmann’s index is available at RI-online not only in the scan of volume RI XI/2 (see Note 37), but also as a transcription in pdf format, which enables full text search – see http://www.regesta-imperii.de/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/ri_xi_register_kumuliert.pdf (accessed 05/2016).
the \textit{RI-online} database is planned as a one-off event during 2017 or 2018).\footnote{42} The longer abstracts containing narration and various provisions of the disposition naturally pose the greatest challenge. It cannot be specified from the subsequent abstract abbreviated in the usual way (“desgl. an NN”) whether the original charter really contains what the pronoun “desgleichen” suggests, or if the abstracted charters differ, either in details or in substantial points. In these specific cases it is therefore necessary to proceed with utmost diligence and check the completion of the abstract against the original charter, which significantly slows down the work process.

\textbf{B}) In addition to the completion of the abbreviated abstracts, it is also possible to improve Altmann’s abstracts at \textit{RI-online} in yet another way, which we plan to undertake in the second phase: We want to link the abstracts to digital copies of the original charters and manuscripts, accessible for instance at \textit{Monasterium} (http://monasterium.net/mom/home) or at the webpages of the individual archives, and also with the digital copies of relevant editions, which are accessible for example at the portal \textit{Czech Medieval Sources online} (http://cms.flu.cas.cz/cz/badatele/sources-on-line.html). These improvements could be undertaken not only with regard to Altmann’s abstracts but also for the recent volumes of the \textit{Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung}-series. For these volumes, this task will be much easier, because the editors are already acquainted with the online-resources because of their earlier research experience. Thus, no complicated research will be necessary. In any case, such an enrichment of Altmann’s abstracts will be of great assistance to anyone using them, given the abstracts’ usual brevity.

In this context it would also be very attractive to link the individual abstracts with a digital copy of the respective pages of Sigismund’s imperial registers. High quality scans of these registers already exist in Vienna’s Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv. If their publication on the web and their linking with Altmann’s abstracts in \textit{RI-online} could be assured, this would provide a fundamentally new approach to the old edition by Altmann, although the digital copies can never replace the highly desirable new abstract edition of this unique material.\footnote{43}

\footnote{42} Mgr. Stanislav Vohryzek (Brno) took up the extensive work of reformulating the abbreviated abstracts of Sigismund’s charters in \textit{RI-online} within the projects of specific research MUNI/A/1176/2014 “Tradice a inovace ve zpřístupňování historických pramenů” and MUNI/A/1053/2015 “Tradice a inovace ve zpřístupňování historických pramenů II”, conducted in 2015 and 2016 at the Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies of FAMU in Brno. In 2017, the complemented abstracts of RI XI/1–2 will be made accessible to public use.

\footnote{43} We are aware that it might arguably be wisest to produce new abstracts of the charters
C) Thirdly, it would be possible to enrich the abstracts of Sigismund’s charters within *RI-online* with a cumulative index to the new volumes of *Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung*, which potentially could also include the old edition by Altmann. If Altmann’s index was included, this cumulative index would allow for a gradual concretion and correction of Altmann’s erroneous identifications. However, these possible corrections could prove the Achilles heel of a cumulative index, because they would require an enormous amount of work. We consider it to be more fruitful to privilege the editing of the new volumes of *Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung* over an emendation of Altmann’s index. For the time being, a possible linking of the cumulative index of *Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung* with the index of Altmann’s *Regesta Imperii XI* is hence under discussion only.

D) Finally, one last planned innovation, which needs to be mentioned here, is the scheduled geo-referencing of all localities appearing in the *RI-online* database, and their visualization on a map. This instrument will be implemented uniformly for the entire *RI-online*. Apparently it will not be connected with any content-related corrections of possibly erroneous identifications in the database.

4. Conclusion

At the end of this brief presentation I would like to express the hope that the new *Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung*-series and its online-supplement of abstracts of Sigismund’s Hungarian charters will proceed steadily preserved in Sigismund’s imperial registers only after all the individual regional volumes have been published, because these volumes are based on the examination of originals or close copies. This tradition in many cases is preferential to the copies in the imperial registers, which lack certain information that can only be drawn from the original. Until the editing project has progressed so far, though, many charters will for a long time remain accessible only through Altmann’s very short abstracts and the respective copies in the imperial registers. We therefore suggest a compromise: We propose to enrich the planned on-line publication of the digital copies of the imperial registers with detailed metadata. This metadata should provide more content information than Altmann’s abstracts, but do not aim at fulfilling all formal demands of the *Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung*-series. They will focus in particular on giving all personal and place names from the charters and the key points of the disposition – thus, they will essentially form a high-quality index of names and subjects for Sigismund’s imperial registers. At the moment, the question of how exactly the digital copies of Sigismund’s imperial registers will be made accessible online and how the metadata are going to be processed remains the subject of negations; the implementation of this idea will depend on an agreement with Vienna’s Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv and on the successful acquisition of the necessary funding.
and that they will, in combination with the innovative online version of Altmann’s *Regesta Imperii XI*, create the most functional and user-friendly environment for accessing the charters of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg possible. To ensure this high-quality accessibility is the long-term duty of German-speaking, Hungarian and – not least due to the existence of the Brno branch of *Regesta Imperii* – also Czech medieval studies.

**LISTINY CÍSAŘE ZIKMUNDA V DIGITÁLNÍM VĚKU**

*Regesta Imperii XI Neubearbeitung a RI-online: současný stav a možnosti dalšího rozvoje*

Článek představuje projekt nového zpracování regestů listín císaře Zikmunda v rámci řady *Regesta Imperii*, usídlěný na Ústavu pro studium středověku Rakouské akademie věd ve Vídni a Ústavu pomocných věd historických a archivnictví Masarykovy univerzity v Brně.


Protože kompletní nové zpracování Zikmundových regestů je otázkou budoucnosti (zejména pro německy mluvící země nebo Itálii, kde se ještě ani nezačalo), bylo rozhodnuto, že budou částečně inovovány též staré Altmannovy regesty v databázi *RI-online*. V těch se především velmi špatně vyhledává, protože Altmann regesty silně zkraťoval. Pokud např. následuje po sobě několik listín pro téhož příjemce, Altmann používá u druhého a dalšího regestu pro označení příjemce zájmeno „týž“ (ders.); pokud je více listin shodného obsahu pro různé příjemce, Altmann používá pro změnu formulaci „totéž pro“ (desgl. für) a následuje jméno příjemce. Podobně Altmann zkraťoval i další skutečnosti a vyhledávací stroj databáze *RI-online* je pak při zadání různých dotazů bezbranný. Řešením je doplnění Altmannem zkrácených regestů o text ze předchozích regestů, tedy prakticky nahrazení zájmen „týž“, „totéž“ atp. příslušným obsahem. Autor upozorňuje na některé problémy, které s tím jsou spojeny, a popisuje jejich řešení.

Vyhledávání v komplexu Zikmundových listin v databázi *RI-online* vylepší také kumulativní rejstřík ke všem Zikmundovým regestům, který se bude inspirovat kumulativním rejstříkem k regestům Ludvíka Bavora a Friedricha III. Posledním dlouhodobým cílem, který bezprostředně souvisí s předchozím, je konečně georeferencování lokalit v databázi *RI-online* a možnost jejich zobrazování na mapě, které je výhledově plánováno pro celý tento portál.
Fig. 1: Title page of the first volume of Altmann’s abstract edition of Sigismund’s charters (RI XI/1).
Fig. 2: Page from Altmann’s edition with the marking of abstract No. 4004 (Sigismund’s mandate to the Moravian land captain Jindřich Plumlovský of Kravaře from 6 February 1420), cf. fig. 3 and 4.
Fig. 3: Copy (not original!) of Sigismund’s mandate to the Moravian land captain Jindřich Plumlovský of Kravaře from 6 February 1420 from the Brno City Archives, fond A1/1 – Město Brno, sbírka listin, mandátů a listů [The City of Brno, the Collection of charters, mandates and letters], sub dato (old sign. 249), cf. fig. 2 and 4.
Fig. 4: The new abstract of Sigismund’s mandate to the Moravian land captain Jindřich Plumlovský of Kravaře from 6 February 1420 in Regesta Imperii Neubearbeitung (RI XI NB/1, No. 18), cf. fig 2 and 3. There is also the deperdit mentioned in the mandate (RI XI NB/1, No. 17).
Fig. 5: Copy of palatinate privilege of Sigismund of Luxembourg for Andrea Donato from Venice from 6 February 1434 in imperial register (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, imperial register vol. K, fol. 83v–84v old fol. 73v–74v; at the image fol. 83v). This charter contains, beside the appointment to the Lateran Palatinate, the right to legitimate the children out of wedlock or appoint the public notaries, the granting of a coat of arms, the receiving of knighthood, the appointment as familiar of Sigismund’s court, the granting of a safe conduct (salvus conductus) and finally the right to appoint 12 doctors, to knight 12 persons, to grant a patent of nobility to six persons, a coat of arms to six persons and the Order of the Dragon to 12 persons. Cf. fig. 6
Fig. 6: Altmann’s abstract of the palatine privilege of Sigismond (RI XI/2, No. 10020), cf. Fig 5. Only the appointment to the Lateran Palatine with the usual right to legitimate the children out of wedlock and to appoint the public notaries is chosen from the bright content of the disposition. The rest of this remarkable charter hides behind the abbreviation etc.
Fig. 7: The series of the abstracts with the same content for different recipients in Altmann’s edition (RI XI/1, No. 127–131: litterae consiliariatus; No. 132–134: litterae familiaritatis).
Fig. 8: The abstract RI XI/1, No. 128 in *RI-online* database. If we search the charters containing the keywords Rat/Räte or consiliarius/consiliarii/consiliariatus using the searching engine in *RI-online* database, we will not find this charter.