+40 Corvinas: The digital collection of the National Library enriched with new treasures

2025/09/16



On Tuesday, 16th September 2025 at 10:00 AM the National Széchényi Library held a ceremonial press conference to announce the donation of forty digitalized Corvinas from the Austrian National Library. Thanks to this contribution, the majority of the surviving Corvinas can now be accessed online by researchers and enthusiasts alike via the Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis website.



[1]

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Corvinas from the Austrian National Library. **[2]Thanks to this contribution, the majority of the surviving Corvinas can now be accessed online by researchers and enthusiasts alike via** the Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis website. **[3]**

The ceremonial event took place in the Founders' Hall on the 6th floor of the OSZK. Director-General Dávid Rózsa delivered the opening address, followed by a keynote speech from Magdolna Závogyán, State Secretary for Culture at the Ministry of Culture and Innovation. Afterwards, a professional lecture was given by Edina Zsupán, head of the HUN-REN–OSZK Fragmenta et Codices Research Group.



[4]



[5]



[6]



[7]

The Corvina Library was the renowned collection of King Matthias Hunyadi (1458–1490), and was considered the first Renaissance royal court library north of the Alps and outside Italy. The volumes, with their distinctive bindings and heraldic decorations, formed a unified and representative collection assembled in the final years of King Matthias's reign. Although the exact size of the library is unknown, it is believed to have included up to 2000 volumes, mostly manuscript codices with a smaller number of printed books. The collection was built both from Italian orders and from the codex-making workshop of the royal court in Buda, and also incorporated older books from various former owners.

The main platform for presenting the digitalized Corvinas is the Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis website, [3] originally launched in 2002 and revamped in 2018. The collecting gained a renewed momentum in 2022, thanks to an initiative by Director-General Dávid Rózsa. At that time only 68 Corvinas were available on the site; today, that number has grown to 170. Each digitalized codex is accompanied by modern academic descriptions in both Hungarian and English. The editor-in-chief of the website is Edina Zsupán.



[8]



operis legentibus tedium generaret. i
In ipo ergo omnium auctore. q
sicut diat seruorum. dr. xxv. c. ab i
exordio. in fine tempor uenies. oo.
que est greco lictera ultima tractt i
ad A. que est latinor prima. quia ex
tremitates tractt ad primapium. et
primapium ad extremitatem. qz est
alpha. et oo. primapium 7 finis. spem
ponentes. hoc opus finit ab A. prima i
littera inchoans. usq; ad extremam lit
teram alphabeti ducit. ipso iuuante
qui est primapium et finis. qui est be
nedictus in secula seculor. amen.

Explicat prologus. Incipit i
Martiniana recti et recti talium
a fratre Martino ordinis predicator
comitis papie penitenciario et Ca
pellano per alphabetum opilata

Q aaron sacerdotium approbatur.

di. xcv. sacrosancta. Item sine sacerdo
otio sacerdotum summum pontifex rep
sentat di. xxi. §. 1.
Item ipius caritas multiplicatur insi
tuatur. de pe. di. v. §. opponitur
Item ponitur in exemplum terrenos et
usurpantes prelaturas. vij. q. i. venq;
post me.
Item ponitur in exemplum q nemo i
honorem prelationis assumat. nisi
ad hoc vocatus. viij. q. i. Inscriptus. et
i. e. vj. de elec. Qualiter.
Item ponitur in exemplum. q nullus
homo potest esse sine peccato. de peo.
v. §. opponitur. circa me.
Item ponitur in exemplum lapsis q
post penitentiam ad prelaturas resti
tui possint. di. i. §. contra exemplis.
Item cum filius suis in exemplum po
nitur epis 7 dicas de mutua immuni
honoratione. di. xxv. Esto.
Item q oblationes cedunt solis sacer
dotibus debentur. figurat. x. q. i. hac
Item est in argumentum q deus dat i
gratiam subditis per orationes sacerdo
tis. i. q. i. dictum.
Item q uirga aaron demonstrauit ue
ras imagines. xxvi. q. v. Nec mirum.

Abbas.

Q abbas non ab epo ponit
sed a monachor congregatione eligit.
xviii. q. v. Abbas in. i. c. fe.
Q in abbatem eligi debet q sit digni

[9]



DAMASI PAPE AD HYERONIMVM
SVPER QVINQVE QVESTIONIBVS
LIBRI GENESIS

DORMIENTEM TE ET LO
GOIAM TEMPORE LE
GENTEM POCIVS QM
SCRIBENTEM QVESTI
VNCVLIS AD TEMIS
SIS EXCITARE DISPOSVI NON QVo

et legere non debeat hoc enim uelut cottidiano cibo alitur et pigrescit oro. Sed quo lectio fructuosior sit iste si scribat. Itaq; etherio quoniam tabellario ad me remisso nullas iam epl̃as hīe te dixisti excepisse quas aliquando in heremo dictaueras quasq; tota auiditate legis atq; descripsi & ultro polliceris te fortunis noctium operibo aliquas si uellem posse dictare libenter accipiam ab offerente quod uolueram sine questu. Neq; uero ullam puto digniorem disputationis nīe confabulationem fore q̃m si descripserit sermocinemur inter nos. ut ego interrogem et tu respondeas qua uita nihil puto in hac luce iocundius quo animę pabulo omnia mella superantur. & in dulcia inquit propheta gutturi meo eloquia tua super mel ori meo. Nam cum idcirco ut aiē precipuum oratoris hominem ceteris animalibus differamus q̃ loqui possumus qua laude dignus est qui in carne ceteros superet inqua homines bestias antecellunt. Accingere ergo & mihi que subiecta sunt edissere. Seruans utrumq; modera men ut nec proposita solutionem desiderent nec eplę breuitatem. fateor quippe tibi cor li bros quos mihi iam pridem lectitanti dederas ideo non libenter legō quia & plurime a eplę eiusdem usq; ad mille sparta uersuum tenduntur & raro de nro dogmate disputant quo fit ut et legentis fastidium generet longitudo. Et si qua breuia sunt scolasticis magis ne apta q̃m nobis. De mensis et regionum situ et phīs disputantibus. Quid tibi uule quod in genesi scriptum ē. Omnis qui occiderit Cayn septem uindictas exoluet. Si omnia fe cit deus bona ualde quare noe de mundis et immundis animalibus precepit cum immūdū nihil esse bonum possit. Et in nouo testamento post uisionem que Petro fuerat ostensa dice ti abste domine ame q̃m commune & immundum nūq̃m introiuit in os meum. Vox de celo respondit quod deus mundauit tu ne commune dixeris. Cur deus loquit ad abrahā q̃ quarta progenie filij isrl' essent de egipto exitum. Et postea Moyses scribit & quinta aute progenie exierunt filij isrl' de terra egipti. qđ utiq; nisi exponatur uidetur ē contrarium. Cur Abraham fidei sue signum in circumcisione suscepit. Cur ysaac uir iustus et deo car? non illi cui uoluit sed cui noluit deceptus errore benedixit.

Hyero' ad damasum papā missiua ad ppositas qōes. id est in solū rndet. de aliis remittit.

BEatissimo pape Damaso hyeronimus. Postq̃m eplam tue sanctitatis accepi. Confestim acci to notario ut exciperet imperaui quo ad offitium preparato qđ eram uoce prompturus ante mihi cogitatione pingebam. Interim iam et ego linguam et ille articulum move bamus. Cum subito hebreus interuenit deferens non pauca uolumina quę synagoga

[10]



INCIPIT LIBER EPISTOLARVM AVRELII AVGVSTINI EPISCOPI HIPONENSIS DOCTORIS EXIMII EPISTOLA PRIMA AD VOLVSIANVM

DE SALVTE TVA QVAM & in hoc seculo & in christo esse cupio sancte matris tue uotis sum fortasse & ipse non impar. Vnde meritis tuis reddens saluationis obsequium: hortor ut ualeo: ut litterarum uere certeq; sacta rum te curam non pigeat impendere. Sincera enim & solida res est: nec fucatis eloquiis ambit ad animum: nec ullo lingue tectorio mane aliquid ac pendulum crepitat. Multum mouet non uerborum: sed rerum auidum & multum terret factura securum. Precipue apostolorum linguas exortor ut legas. Ex his enim ad cognoscendos prophetas excitaberis quorum testimoniis utuntur apostoli. Si quid aut uel cum legis uel cum cogitas tibi oritur questionis in quo dissoluendo uidear necessarius scribe ut rescribam. Magis enim hoc forte adiuuante domino potero q̄ presens talia loqui tecū: non solum propter occupationes uarias & meas & tuas. Quoniam n̄ cū michi uacat occurrit ut & tibi uacet. Verum etiam propter eorum irruentem presentiam, qui plerunq; non sunt apti tali negocio magisq; lingue certaminibus q̄ scientie luminibus delectantur. Quod aut scriptum habetur sep uacat ad legendum cum uacat legenti nec onerosum sit presens: quod cū uoles summitur: cum uoles ponitur.

Domino uere sancto ac merito uenerabili pri Augustino episcopo Volusianus

PEus me uir probitatis iustitieq; documentum: ut aliqua ex ambiguis lectionis pte discenda percunter. Amplector gram muneris imperati, neq; libenter in disciplinas tuas offero ueteris sententie auctoritatem secutus: que nullam ad perdiscendum habundare credit etatem. Neq; immerito sapiens prudentie studia nullis terminis: neq; fine conclusit: quando primordiis suis

[11]

The donation of forty Corvinas by the ÖNB is of particular significance, as the Austrian National Library holds the largest Corvina collection in the world. In the early 16th century, Viennese humanists such as Johannes Gremper, Johannes Cuspinianus, and Johannes Brassicanus played key roles in transferring many valuable codices from Buda to Vienna, saving them from destruction during the Ottoman conquest. Among these is the famous Philostratos Corvina, acquired by Gremper from King Vladislaus II in 1513. The efforts of these Viennese scholars helped preserve the classical and Byzantine works from the Corvina Library, as well as the writings of the Christian Church Fathers, introducing them to the European academic consciousness.

The newly donated digital treasures were created as part of **a joint Austrian–Hungarian research project** involving experts from the ÖNB, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and the NSZL. On the Hungarian side, **Edina Zsupán and bookbinding historian Marianne Rozsondai** are participating in the project. The research will culminate in a detailed catalogue, to be published as part of both the Supplementum Corvinianum of NSZL series and as an electronic publication by the ÖNB.



Magne compositionis Claudii Ptolomei libri a Georgio trapezu
tio traducti Incipiunt Capitula primi libri felicitet

Prefatio auctoris
De ordine huius doctrine
Q sphere ac globi modo celu
conuoluitur
Q terra quoq spherica sit
ad sensum qntum ad uniuersas
partes
Q terra i medio celi sita est
Q terra qi puctu e ad celes
Q tra nullo motu progressiuo
mouetur
Q dupplex in celo pmoru
motuum differentia sit
De qntitate rectaru linearu
que in circulo producuntur
Tabula cordarum & arcuum
De arcu qui est inter tropicos
Theoremata que ad sphericas
demostraciones pmittunt
De arcubus qui sunt int equino
ctialem atq obliquu circulum
Tabula solaris obliquationis
De ascensionibus in recta sphera

Sequitur Capitulum primum
Prefatio Auctoris

ER OPTIME MIHI VI
dentur o syre qui bene philosophati
sunt speculatiuam philosophie partem
ab actiua seperasse. Nam & si actiue
accidat parti ut prius speculatiua sit
magnam tamen differentia in ipsis in
uenies non solum quia nonnulle uirtu
tes morales absq disciplina et multis
inesse possunt cum speculatiuam sciencia
sine doctrina consequi impossibile sit.
Verum et quia maxima utilitas in altera
ex frequti actione que in ipsis rebus ha
betur in altera ex progressu speculaconu
fieri solet. Hinc opus esse nobis putauimus ut actiones quidem cogitandi mo
tibus sic temperemus q ne in minimis quidem consideraconis eius obliuisca
mur que ad pulcram ordinatamq mentis constitutionem perducat. Otiu
autem maxime ad doctrinam theorematum que plurima pulcherrimaq sut
& precipue illorum que propie mathematica dicuntur conuertamus. Con
mode namq ad modum Aristotiles speculatiuam ptem in tria rursus genera
partitur physicum. Mathematicum. Theologicum. Nam cum res omnes
ex materia & forma et motu constent quorum singula quis minime scor
sum a subiecto inspici possint intelligi tamen sine reliquis possunt. Primam
quidem primi oium motus causam si quis in suma simplicitate accipiat. dm

[12]



Reuendissimo in Christo patri ac domino. domno bellatiom. Episcopo Tusculano Sancte Romañ Eccie Cardinali patriarche Constantinopolitano Ioannes Germanus se offert deuotissimum .....

Admirantu michi sepenumero uel potius ḡuiter & mique ferenti tam raros esse etatiñ optimarꝝ disciplinarum non modo preceptores vm etiam studiosos satis cōpertū videtur deprauata potius hominū nā id fieri q. ad viaa produxerit uirtutem ac bonas artes pro meritis heant q. rerum ipārum difficultas eos absterreat. Si quidem maiores mi uel abhis que iam inuenta erant tradendis uel ab inuemendis nouis nulla unq̄ sunt difficultate preteriti q fuer magno semper studio elaborauere. ut posteritatem non tam auro atq. opibꝫ q̄ uirtute & bonis artibꝫ redderent locupletem. Nondum enim ambitio & cetere cupiditates hominū ingenia mitiga ac labefactare ceperant. sola uirtus in precio erat. sua cuiq. satis placebant. nullus excitandis honoi querebatur. vbi uō paulatim auido h̄endi mortalium animis irrepsit. defluere bonas artes. atq. obsolescere uirtutem necesse fuit. hinc michi preter auctoꝝ fuane credituin est. disciplinę probro habite sunt. eo q. postremo deuentum est miserie ut non modo promendis nouis tribus operam non nauemus. sed potius quo impiimus errare liceat inuentas olim ac traditas per socordiam atq. ignauiam uelut sollicitas pretereamus. hec igr̄ causa est cur pauci extent docti sint. aut pauci studiosi. aut iacent studia bonarū artium. & q̄ sepulta emergere ac splendere non possint. fieri tñ mirum pt ut difficultate rei discernde homines perterreā nec tam deesse debet ueniae locus. Sunt enim non nullas eiꝫ disciplinarꝝ aditus sup̄ modum difficiles atq. arcani. qualis est eius disciplina que astrorꝝ peritiam polliatur. tum ppter magnitudinē atq. excellentiam rerꝝ inquibꝫ uersatur. tum ppt̄ scabrositatem librorꝝ qui expetūt linguā latinā cōtemnere dibile dictum est q̄ntam pre se difficultatem ferant. nam & latini edita pauci ad modum extant habet profecto pl̄tas hec atq. insignis disciplina excellentem q̄ndam maiestatem ac

[13]


N. 3
SANCTI ATHANASII IN PRIMAM EPISTO
LAM SANCTI PAVLI AD ROMA
NOS PROLOGVS INCIPIT

[14]


INCIPIT PRA
E FATIO SAC
TI HIERONY
MI PBRI IN EXPO
SITOEM EVAGE
LII SCDVM ATTHEE
PLVRES
EVISSE
QVIEV
GELIA
SCRIP
SERIT
et Lucas Euangelista testatur dicensq̃m quidem multi
conati sunt ordinare narrationem rerum que in nobis
complete sunt sicut tradiderunt nobis. qui ab initio ip̃i
uiderunt sermonem. et ministrauerunt ei. et perseue
rantia usq; in presens tempus monimenta declarant. q̃
aduersis auctoribus edita. diuersarum heresum fuere
principia. Vt est illud iuxta ægiptios & Thomam et
Mathiam et Bartholomeum. duodecim quoq; aplor
et basilidis atq; appelles. ac reliquor quos enumerare
Ex Augustissimâ Bibliothecâ Cæsareâ Vindobonensi.

[15]

At the press conference, Director-General **Dávid Rózsa** emphasized that the Corvinas serve as cultural milestones, transmitting humanity’s accumulated knowledge and the legacy of humanism. The forty codices now made available through Bibliotheca Corvina Virtualis are accessible to all, and the long-term goal of the project is to achieve a virtual reconstruction of the royal library.

In her speech, **Magdolna Závogyán** stressed that this heritage is now accessible to everyone, anytime, anywhere. She stated that the digitalization programme of the national library opens up a new world, one in which the written treasures forming the foundation of our culture are available with equal access for all. She described the 223-year-old NSZL as a continuation of the intellectual legacy of the Corvina Library.

In her professional lecture, **Edina Zsupán** noted that the forty Corvinas themselves represent the scale of a medieval library. The aim of the research is to place these manuscripts within the broader context of Hungarian and European cultural history. The project includes up-to-date scientific descriptions, all accessible via the Corvina website of NSZL.



[16]



[17]

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[3] https://corvina.hu/en/front/
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[14] https://corvina.hu/en/corvina/virtual-corvinas/cod656-en/
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