

MGH CONSTITUTIONES ONLINE

BERLIN-BRANDENBURG ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG PROJECT

The Berlin department of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH)¹ is working on the subseries *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum* of the MGH *Leges*-series. The *Constitutiones* aim to edit a selection of texts that describe written constitutional acts emanating from the highest ranks in the mediaeval Empire: primarily imperial privileges, writs and letters, then their approval by the electors, alliances among princes, regional peace treaties etc.

Eight volumes published between 1893 and 1914 included documents up to the reign of Emperors Lewis IV ('the Bavarian', 1314–1347) and Charles IV (1346–1378). In the following six decades the *Constitutiones* had to struggle not only with the political circumstances, but also had to face the editorial challenges which rose from the significantly increasing number of charters in the 14th century. Without finding a unanimous solution to this problem, four more volumes² were then released from 1974 to 2003.

In the late 1990s the foundations had to be laid for a Digital Edition that would enable scholarly research on the transcribed texts long before the charters were published as a book. To this end, the *Constitutiones*-team developed a chronological naming-system for the single charter-files, a font for the documents written in Early Modern High German, which – initially a proprietary solution – was put in an application for *Unicode* and successfully became part of its *Combining Diacritics*³, and a pre-formatted, extensible template for a simple, user-oriented scholarly editing of diplomatic texts.

DIGITAL EDITION

First published on CD-ROM, the *Constitutiones* from Central and Northern Germany are now accessible online as a work in progress. The Digital Edition of the *MGH Constitutiones Online* was realised by the TELOTA⁴ working group of the Academy. TELOTA's first step was to create an XML-format according to the guidelines of the *Charters Encoding Initiative* (CEI)⁵. The XML-encoded charters were then stored


1 <http://www.mgh.de/>
2 The hitherto published volumes can be accessed through the Digital MGH: <http://www.mgh.de/dmgh/>
3 <http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0300.pdf>
4 TELOTA – The electronic life of the Academy: <http://www.bbaw.de/telota/>
5 <http://www.cei.uni-muenchen.de/>
6 <http://www.bbaw.de/telota/sade/>
7 A Unicode font for medievalists: <http://junicode.sourceforge.net/>
8 <http://code.google.com/p/timemap/>

in a native XML database that is part of the *Scalable Architecture for Digital Editions* (SADE)⁶, a modular publication framework developed by TELOTA to present scholarly resources in the humanities online.

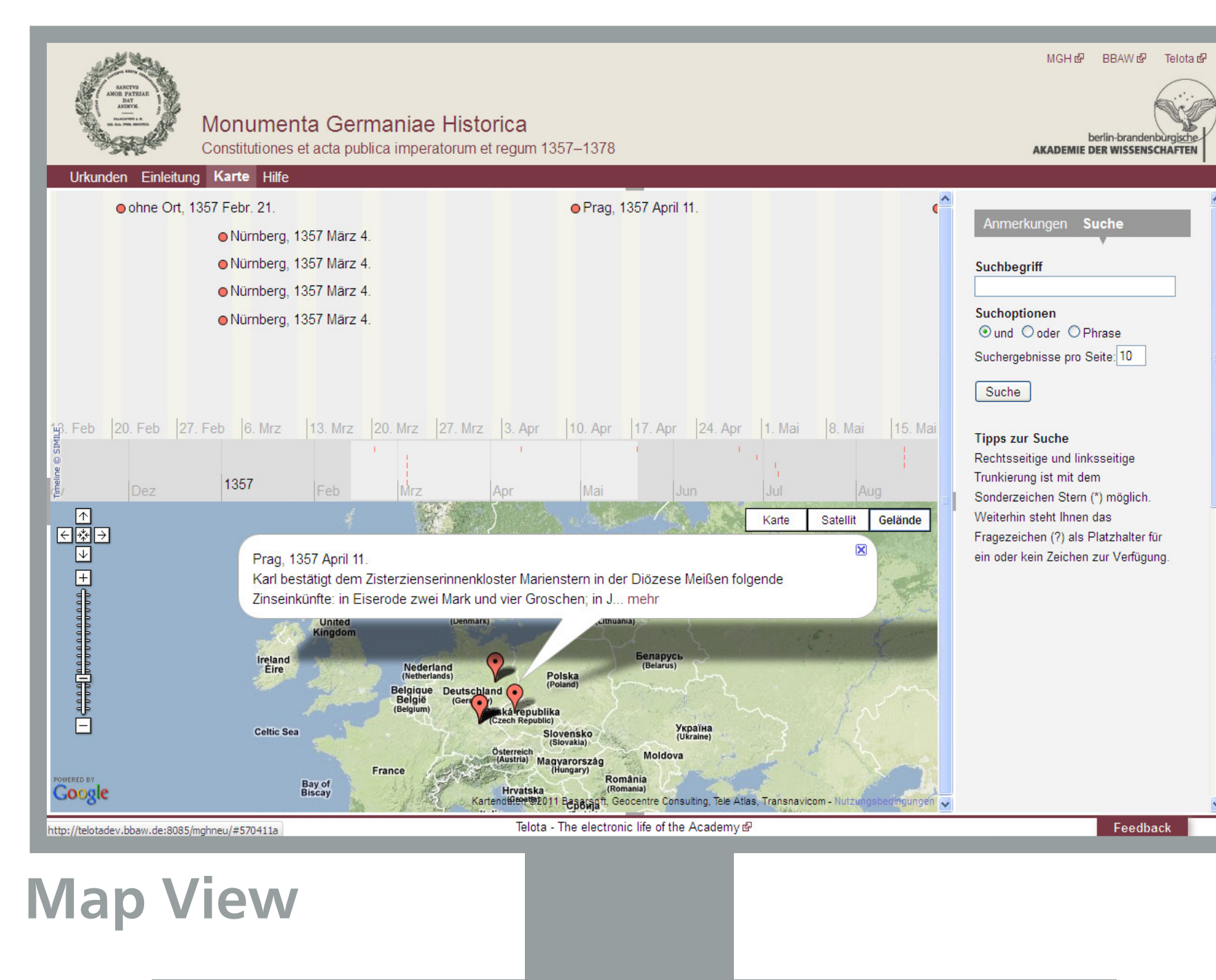
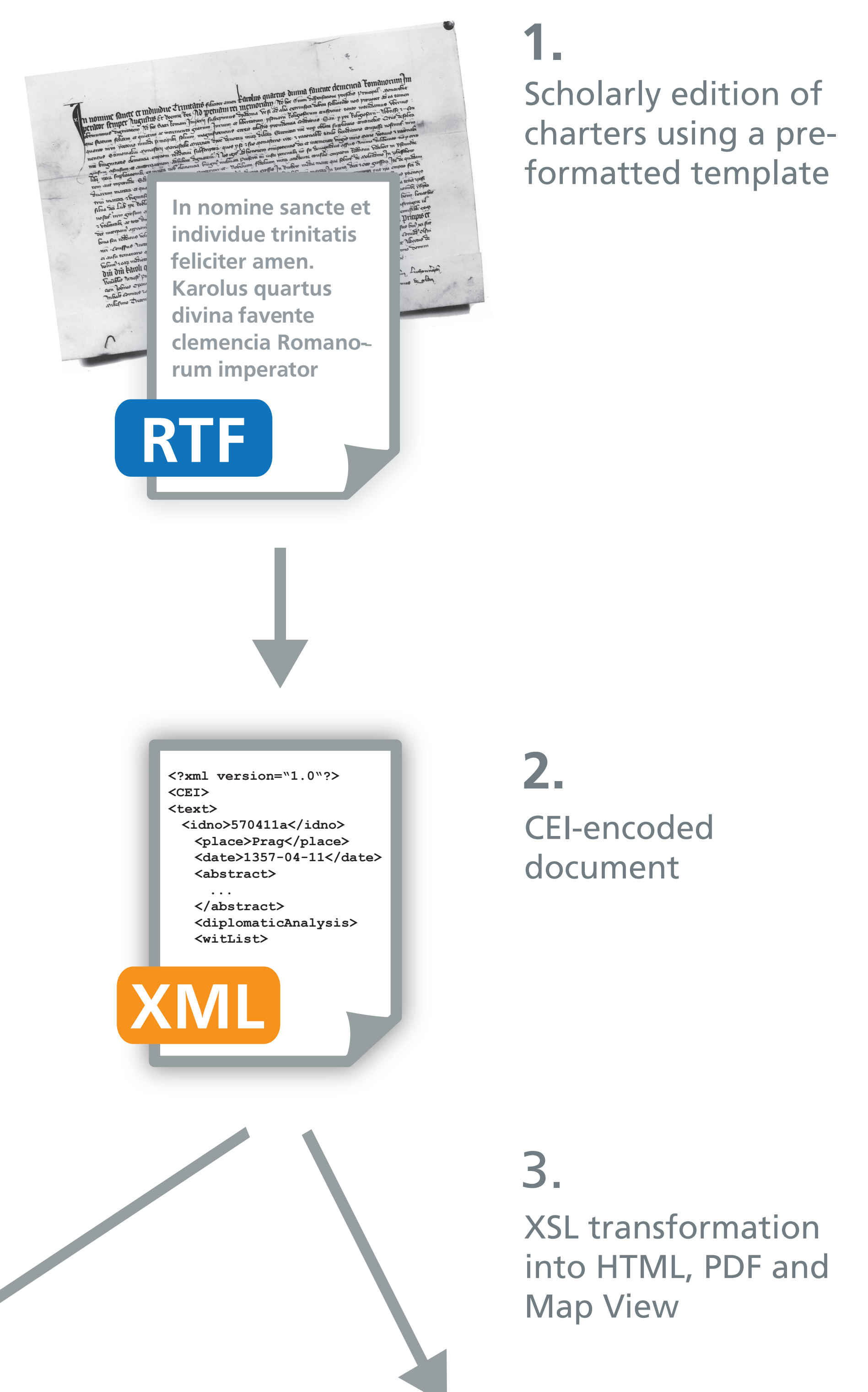
Every charter is addressable and citable by its URL. Each document consists of different diplomatically significant parts which are distinguished by colours. The critical apparatus and notes are shown at the right part of the presentation. Special characters are displayed by using *Junicode*⁷. Additionally, a PDF-version and the XML-source are accessible for further use.

As a special feature of the *MGH Constitutiones Online*, named entities can be found in different writings and languages via normalised search techniques. Thus a search for the city *Mainz* also returns *Maguntinum* and *Meyntz* as well as *Moguntinensis* as results. All corresponding terms and names found are highlighted in the list of results and in the document itself. Additionally, the search function suggests terms which can be queried while typing the search term. A charter opened after a search can be cited with its highlighted parts.

As an alternative visualisation option, every charter is put on a map and a time-line⁸. By these means, it is e. g. feasible to trace the itinerary of the royal household in one glance. The scrollable time-line shows an extract of the documents issued at a certain time; the corresponding places of issue are marked with red bubbles on the map. Via a click on one of these bubbles or on the time-line the charter can be opened directly from the map-view.

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MGH WORKFLOW



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GERMANIAE
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TELOTA – The Electronic Life Of The Academy