

STUDIA **H**ISTORICA
Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae

E. FÜGEDI

CASTLE AND SOCIETY
IN MEDIEVAL HUNGARY
(1000—1437)

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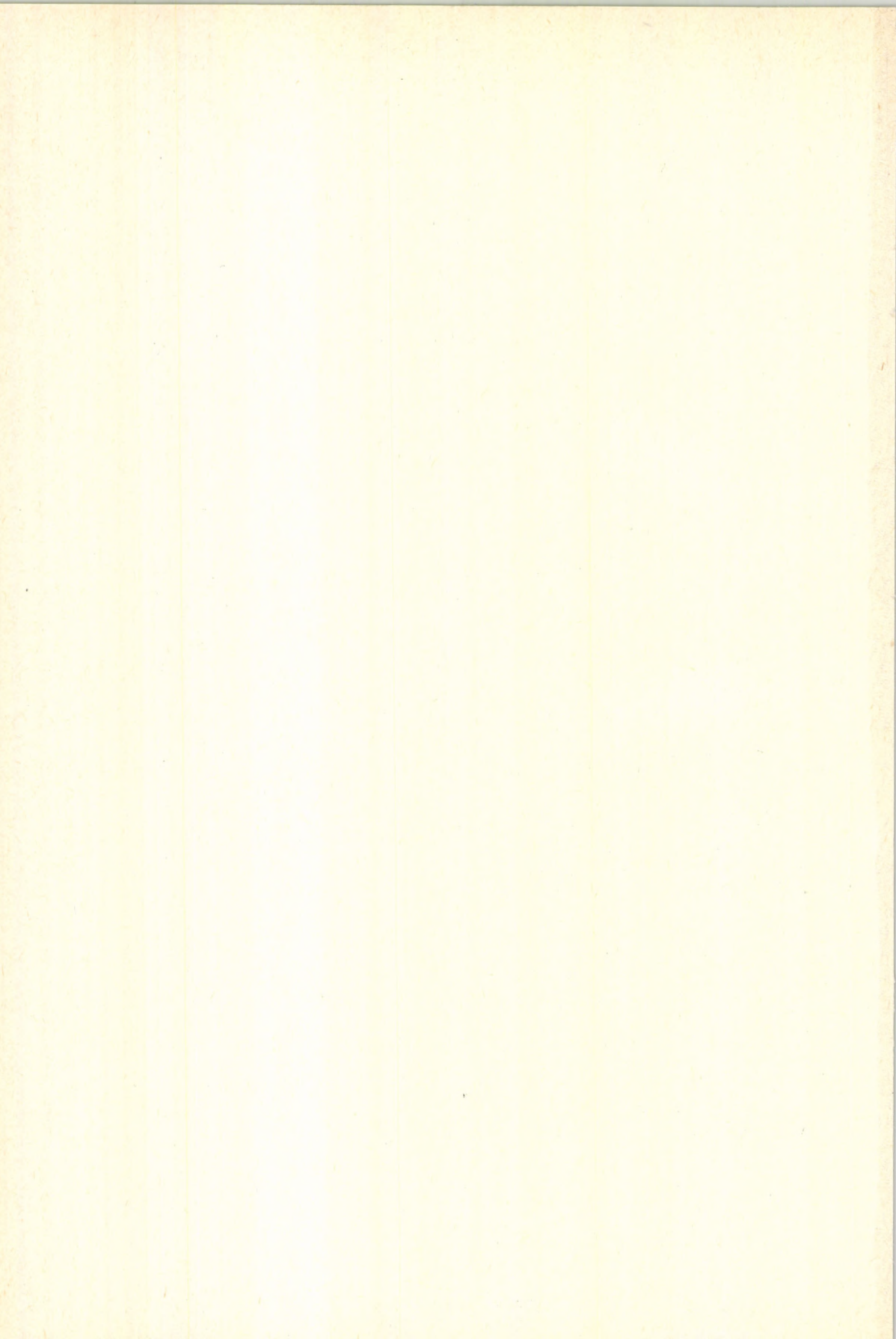
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The monograph, the first foreign-language survey of the topic, describes the evolution of the Hungarian *castrum* from tenth century earthworks to fifteenth century baronial *châteaux* within the framework of a royal and seigneurial system of politics, warfare, economy and administration. It is the first to combine the results of recent archaeological research on medieval fortifications with a historical and functional approach, covering both the social and political role of the castle. It discusses in a complex manner topics such as the royal administration of castle districts; the consequences of the 1241 Mongol invasion; the role of strongholds in the era of oligarchal rule, and the development of the great estates.

The book offers new theses on the history of the medieval Hungarian state, the interdependence of building technology and social change, and the characteristics of Hungarian nobility, that will be of great interest to social scientists and laymen alike. The maps and illustrations of the volume provide further information on the major sites of the country.



AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ
BUDAPEST



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CASTLE AND SOCIETY IN MEDIEVAL HUNGARY (1000–1437)

by
ERIK FÜGEDI



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PREFACE

In the area of historical Hungary, just as in other parts of Europe, innumerable constructions had been built since pre-historic times that may be regarded castles. The historian of castles in medieval Hungary will concentrate on three questions, leaving aside the pre-historic fortifications: what kind of castles did the Hungarians (Magyars) find in the Carpathian Basin when they entered and occupied the area in the late ninth century; what rôle did these castles acquire after the foundation of a Christian kingdom in the eleventh century; and how did their functions in government, society and economy develop in the course of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.

Archaeologists and art historians turned to the study of medieval castles and ruins in Hungary in the middle of the past century, and collected an impressive corpus of descriptions, plans and photographs. The archives of the Budapest national office of monuments (*Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség*) is a veritable treasure trove of such documents. The first encyclopaedic survey was written by József Könyöki in 1905, who utilised the then available international literature "with special reference to Hungary". Even though interest decreased in the following forty years, the reconstruction of medieval monuments after World War II, especially that of castle Buda in the capital, placed the architectural history of castles once more on the agenda. In 1975 László Gerő, in cooperation with archaeologists and art historians, was able to present a new synthesis on medieval castles. In Slovakia (the northern part of historical Hungary) Dobroslava Menclová wrote several monographs on medieval castles and attempted a historical survey of them. At the same time Hungarian archaeologists launched their ambitious project of a topography of monuments in Hungary [*Magyarország Régészeti Topográfiája*, 1969ff]: it is aimed at a complete inventory of finds and sites by community and area. This enterprise includes not only the inventory of museal objects, a bibliography of the older literature and the re-examination of old excavations' logs, but also local surveys intended to establish the exact location of formerly explored sites and those of potential new ones. In regard to the medieval castles, a team was established, with Gyula Nováki at its head, especially for the study of early fortifications. This increase in scholarly projects was accompanied by an even more impressive growth of popular interest, witnessed by the success of several picture books on castles [Fiala, Pison], and even of a guide-book for "castle-hikes".

The purpose of the present study is not primarily archaeological or architectural, which explains why relatively few ground plans and pictures have been included, and no complete coverage of known sites attempted. My intention is much more to discuss the functions of castles in medieval Hungary's social, economic and political development.

I have not attempted to offer a definition of "castle", but rather accepted the contemporary Latin diplomatic usage and have included all those constructions that were called *castra*. Thus the fortified monasteries, although complete with defenses and even having castellans in the later ages, were left out, as they were never referred to as *castra*. Also, those settlements that originally were castles but later developed into towns and cities have been dropped from our survey, even though their names retained the reference to their origin, as for instance the city of Székesfehérvár, which was called throughout our period *castrum Albense*, Fehérvár, Weißenburg, Stolečný Belehrad—all names referring to the "white castle". The principle of following the sources obliged me, on the other hand, to note and analyse the terminological changes in the texts.

There are three distinct periods in the types and architectural forms of castles in medieval Hungary, and they reflect roughly three distinct stages in social and political development. (1) Earthworks in the first century after the conquest; (2) fortified banks and ditches as essentially royal castles in the beginning of the kingdom; and (3) stone castles correlated to the development of a medieval (more or less feudal) society in the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries, in which ecclesiastical and secular lords joined the king in building and owning castles.

Unfortunately, the historical development of the medieval Hungarian kingdom is not very well known outside the Carpathian area, and much of it is misunderstood. The responsibility for this rests mainly with Hungarian scholars who publish little of their results in foreign languages, and even then frequently in poor translations. There are, of course, genuine difficulties with translation, as many Hungarian termini technici do not have English equivalents and translators are rather inconsistent in adapting the one or the other. I hope that in my case the friendly collegial cooperation of Prof. János M. Bak of the University of British Columbia, who was good enough to assist me in editing my study beyond the difficult task of translation, will help to avoid some of these shortcomings. I am very much indebted for his endeavours. While it might have been the simplest solution to stick to the Latin terms of the sources (and we have done so in many cases), we did not want to overburden the text with foreign words, hence chose the closest English parallel, well aware of the differences in at least nuances. Still, we are confident that our joint effort will help to establish a more or less uniform usage, and also add to the understanding of medieval Hungary.

The study covers the area of the medieval kingdom of Hungary; therefore, we decided to use place names in their Hungarian form. To include the other languages would have been very awkward; every castle had a Hungarian name, while today at least four other languages have to be considered, not to mention the medieval Latin,

German, Slovak etc. appellations. A gazetteer on p. 154ff. will enable the reader to identify the locations on any modern map and compare the place names in the different languages of the area. As to personal names, we use their Hungarian form (i.e. János and not John) for all persons with the exception of rulers, for whom the Anglicized version (i.e. Andrew III and not III. András) is widely accepted. In the thirteenth century Hungarian aristocrats began to identify themselves by reference to their clan (*de genere* X) beyond their own Christian name and that of their father. We have retained these "clan names" in abbreviated form as *d.g.*

I am very much indebted to Mrs. Alice Horváth, who kindly overtook all the technical difficulties with the sketches.

Budapest, Fall 1982

Erik Fügedi

I

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM

In order to establish a point of departure for our survey, we must first ask ourselves what kind of castles existed in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century, when the pagan Hungarians entered and occupied the area.

At that time the region of historical Hungary was under the control of at least three powers. The northwestern part belonged to Great Moravia; the western borderlands were first ruled by Pribina, whom Svatopluk, prince of Great Moravia, had expelled from the region around Nyitra and later by his son, Kocel. North of their realm, around the present town of Győr, lived the remnants of the Avars, after their state had been crushed by Charlemagne's campaigns. Both Kocel and the Avars acknowledged Frankish overlordship. The eastern part of the Danubian Basin was inhabited by Bulgarian Slavs, about whom only fragmentary information is available from Byzantine sources and late (eleventh-thirteenth century) Hungarian chronicles. As far as castles are concerned, these chronicles contain few references. While their authenticity for the age of the Hungarian conquest has been seriously questioned, they still can be trusted to the extent that the Carpathian Basin had to be conquered by force, including the siege of castles held by greater or lesser leaders.

According to the so-called Anonymous, a notary of King Béla (III), who wrote his *Gesta Hungarorum* around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century, the siege of Veszprém took quite some effort:

On the fourth day they reached the castle of Veszprém. Then . . . they ordered their troops and made a valiant attack on the Roman soldiers who guarded the castle. And the battle lasted for an entire week. Finally, on the Wednesday of the second week, when both armies were extremely exhausted in the struggle . . . many a Roman had been killed by the sword, others by arrows. The rest of the Romans, having seen the courage of the Hungarians, abandoned Veszprém and took to flight, saving their lives by retreating to German territory.¹

Tradition also holds that the leaders of the Hungarian tribal alliance built new castles themselves. Again, following the Anonymous:

Then Szabolcs, a man of great wisdom, inspected a place near the River Tisza, and when he saw what it was like, he reasoned that its strength would be suitable for building a fortification. Therefore, also following the counsel of his followers, he called together the commoners, had them dig a huge ditch and

make a very strong castle built of earth. This is now called Szabolcs's castle. Then Szabolcs and his followers have attached many of the people of the land to the castle as servants and they are now called *castrenses*.²

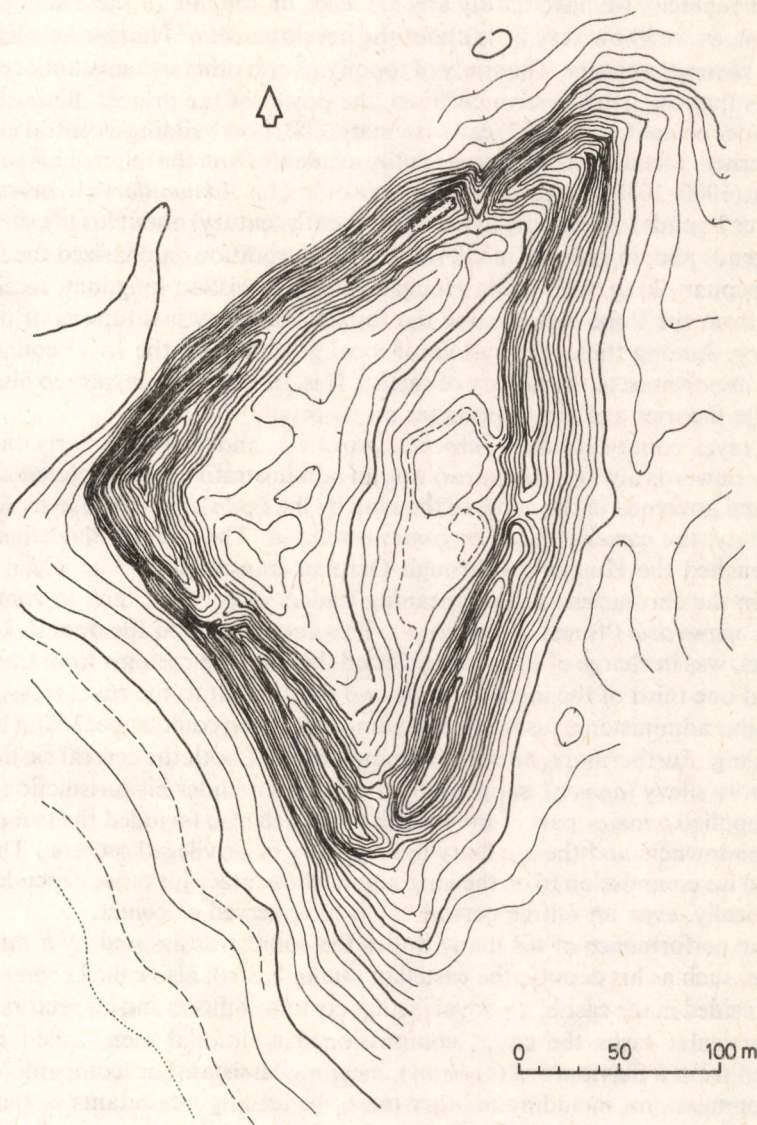
Much of this is, of course, a figment of the chronicler's imagination. If there was a castle in Veszprém, it was certainly not manned by Romans when the Hungarians came to attack. But Szabolcs was definitely a castle, even if it had not been built exactly in the way our author described it.

Szabolcs is a rare example, because it has recently been archeologically explored. It does not feature in early medieval charters, but there is continuous reference to "its people" and "its lands"; hence, it must have been in use well into the thirteenth century. As an object it survived to our own time and was marked by a monument in 1896 à propos the "millennium" of the Hungarian conquest. Minor archeological work had also been done in that time, but systematic exploration began only in recent years. The castle is on a triangular mound, 337 × 235 × 387 m at its foot, rising above the flood plain (earlier probably an arm) of the River Tisza. Its timber framed earth bank, still standing, is of impressive size: its height is 13–17 m on the northwest side, 10–14 m on the east side and 10–12 m on the average towards the inside. Archeologists believe to have established two building periods: one in or after the middle of the tenth century and another in the first half of the eleventh.³

Many of the castles mentioned in Byzantine, German (Bavarian) and Hungarian sources can no longer be located. The known ones include Mosaburg, predecessor of Zalavár;⁴ Pribina's earlier residence, Nyitra;⁵ and Győr, the seat of the Avar kagan.⁶ The last two became episcopal sees in the eleventh century and developed into modern towns; and thus, successive building activity has eradicated the ninth century conditions.

Győr was not built by the Avars. It was a Roman town, called Arrabona, abandoned after the retreat of the Roman Empire from Pannonia and Dacia, but its ruins were impressive, and useful for the people who migrated across the region. They served the Avars just as the amphitheatre of Aquincum (to-day Óbuda in the northwest of Budapest) became a fortress of the Gepides⁷ in the seventh and the fortified residence of one of the Hungarian chiefs in the late ninth century.⁸ Although evidence on Roman continuity exists only in some points of the former Pannonia,⁹ the ruins and the still usable remnants of Roman roads influenced the settlement of the Hungarians both in terms of urban nuclei¹⁰ and as starting points in their castle-building on a more general plane.

In the very centre of the kingdom, near to present-day Budapest in the Pilis mountains, stood one of the earliest castles, that of Visegrád, mentioned as early as in the foundation charter of the bishopric of Veszprém (c. 1002 A.D.). At this section of the Danube where the Roman road runs next to the river, no less than three castles were built in the Middle Ages. Excavations have shown that the oldest, Visegrád, was transformed into a castle in the eleventh century from a Roman castle that had stood there since the fourth.



Sketch 1. Castle Szabolcs (according to P. Németh); level lines by 1 m

Unfortunately, we have hardly any evidence on the fate of these sites after the conquest, as we know very little about the development of Hungarian society and state in the tenth century. The study of toponyms and other circumstantial evidence suggests that the tribal system declined, the power of the princes diminished and only under prince Géza (†997) can systematic efforts at building a central authority be discerned. Details become more readily available from the reign of his son, Saint Stephen (1000–1038), onward. Two decrees of his, his *Admonitiones* to his successor and three legends (originating in the late eleventh century) about his life survived.¹¹ The legends and, in general, medieval historical tradition emphasized the figure of the missionary king, who made Hungary into a Christian kingdom, received the crown from the Pope and became the founder of many institutions of medieval Hungary. Among these, the system of local government, the royal county, is of central importance to the history of castles. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the data, the theories and the hypotheses on its origin.

The royal county (*civitas*, *parochia*, *provincia*, and from the early thirteenth century onwards always: *comitatus*) was an administrative unit, centered around a castle and governed in the name of the king by the *ispán* (from the Slavic: *župan*) of the county: the *comes civitatis* or *comes comitatus*. The count's Slavic name may have reached the Hungarian through German transmission,¹² as it can also be found in the chronicles as *span* (meaning leaders of people)¹³ and in composites, such as *spanerdeje* ('forest of the *span*'). This count received the dues in kind and the taxes, was in charge of fairs and collected the tolls and customs from traders. He received one third of the income, while two thirds went to the royal treasury. The *comes* also administered justice in the county; free men could appeal from his court to the king. Furthermore, he was the commander of both the central castle and of the county's levy (*agmen*), supplied by the free men under his jurisdiction. (These units supplied a major part of the royal host, which also included the troops of the great landowners and the auxiliary light cavalry of privileged settlers.) The count received his commission from the king, upon whose grace his office depended: thus, theoretically, even an unfree person could have served as *comes*.

In the performance of his many duties the count was assisted by a number of officials, such as his deputy, the castellan (*maior castri*), also called *comes curialis*, for he resided in the castle; the royal justice; customs officers and inspectors of fairs. For particular tasks the count commissioned additional men, called *pristaldi*, latinised from a Slavic word (**pristav*), meaning 'assistant' or 'companion'.¹⁴ For such commissions, including military ones, the leading inhabitants of the county were at the count's disposal. Called castle warriors (*jobagiones castri*), they were tax-exempt freemen, who held inheritable land from the king and owed the crown only military service. The rest, the majority of the county's population, had specialised, assigned duties in agriculture, the crafts or court service (e.g. couriers). The task of these *cives* or *civiles* was to maintain the buildings of the castle and its appurtenances.¹⁵

By the thirteenth century, not only the term *comitatus* for the county became generally accepted,¹⁶ but the whole range of expressions related to it received their final form. So, for example, the county centered around the castle of Bihar was termed *comitatus castri Bihor* or simply *comitatus Bihoriensis*, the royal domain in the county *terra castri Bihor*, its officers *jobagiones castri Bihor* (and its serving population now generally *castrenses*, including the former *civiles*). The central castle lent its name to all the institutions. Toponymical study suggests that this was also the case in the vernacular. References can be found to *várfölde* (*vár*=castle, *földe*=its land) and to guardsmen called *várkajátó* (from: *vár* and *kajáltó*, *kiáltó*=crier) whose duty it was to alarm the garrison. The Hungarian name for county became *vármegye*, a composite of *vár* and the word for "boundary" (derived from the Slavic *mežda*=boundary).¹⁷

The received view is that at the time of St. Stephen's death the country had forty-five counties. The basis for this count is a passage in the national chronicle about King Salomon having commanded the troops of thirty counties against the dukes (his cousins) who opposed him in 1074.¹⁸ Considering that eleventh century kings mostly assigned one third of the realm to the "duke", i.e. the second oldest member of the dynasty, it is logical to assume that the total number of counties was forty-five. But, since the chronicle does not list the counties on either side, there is much debate as to which were these original units.¹⁹ Before archeological research could supply data, historians mostly tried to reconstruct the network of counties by linguistic research, concentrating on toponymics. Almost half of the county seats were named after a person. Castle and county Hont was named after that Hont (some form of the German Kunz) who belonged to St. Stephen's closest retinue and had—according to the narrative sources—girded the young king before his first battle with the sword, *Teutonico more*.²⁰ His name became, without any addition or change, a toponym. This process fits well the Hungarian way of naming places. The fact that at least eighteen of the forty-five counties were called simply by a person's name,²¹ probably that of their first count, suggests that these men were, just like Hont, leading and powerful persons. Ten county names recall their Slavic backgrounds, such as Csongrád (=black castle) or Visegrád (=high castle), containing the Slavic *grad*=castle as a suffix.²²

The counties were not only secular administrative units but also ecclesiastical ones. St. Stephen's charters define dioceses in terms of counties: the foundation charter of the bishopric of Veszprém lists four counties, Veszprém, Fejér, Kolon and Visegrád, as constituting its diocese.²⁴ By the end of the eleventh century bishops entrusted the supervision of the parishes to archdeacons (*archidiaconi*) whose jurisdictions coincided with royal counties:²⁵ thus the diocese of Veszprém contained four archdeaconries. The archdeacon of Veszprém, the episcopal see, was called *archidiaconus cathedralis*, while the rest were referred to by the name of their county, e.g. the one of Fejér—*archidiaconus Albensis*, etc. The archdeacons cooperated with the *ispán* of the county, but lived mostly in the cathedral town, where they were members of the chapter. An exception to this rule was, in the

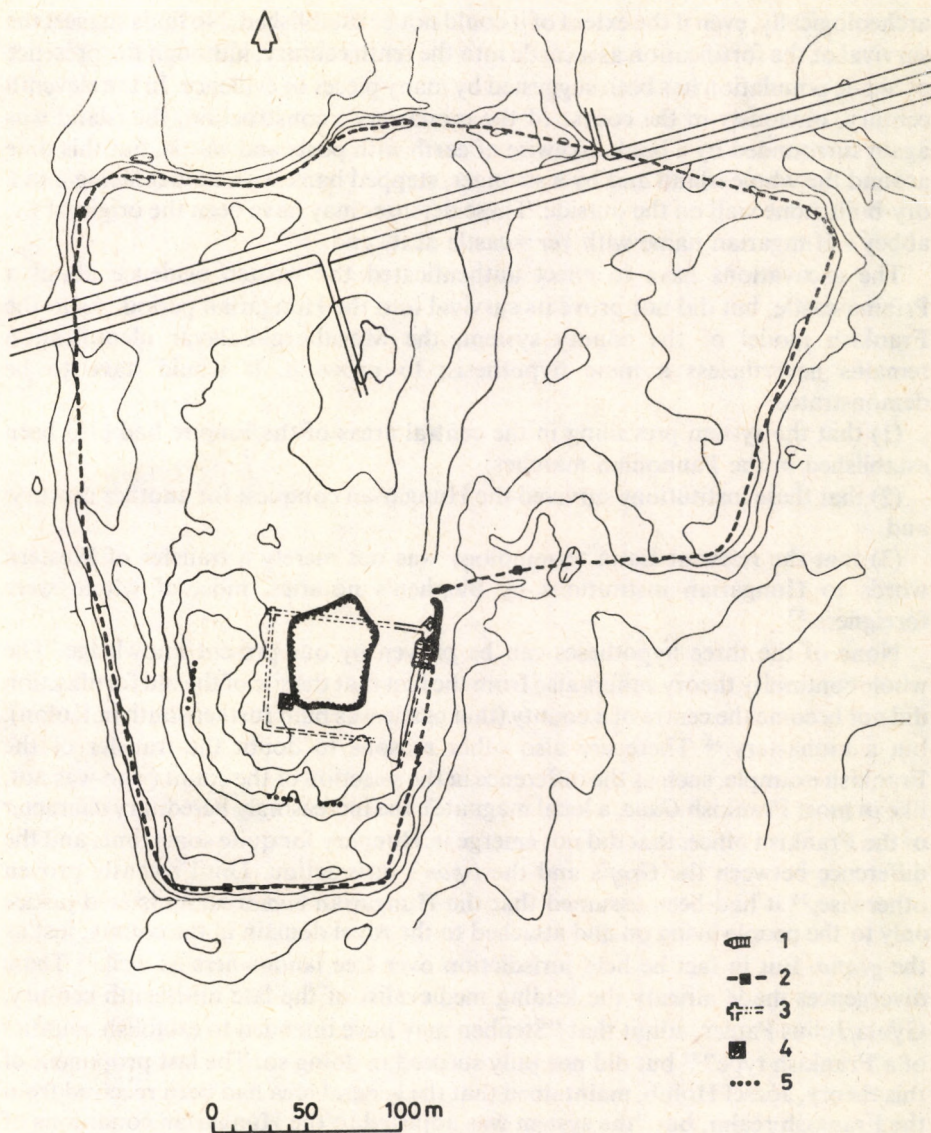
eleventh century, the archdeacon of the endangered border-county Pozsony: here the duties of the archdeacon were entrusted to the provost of Pozsony, and he resided, together with the count, in the border-castle, within which his church was also built. Only in 1204 did he move down into the suburbium where a new church was built for him.²⁶ Otherwise, as we shall see, the archdeacon's church stood outside the castle, though near to it.

While most historians are now in agreement as to the names and basic functions of the county-system, there is much controversy around the origin of the system and its core, the castles. A crucial issue in this matter is that older scholarship regarded the Hungarians of the late ninth century as fully equestrian nomads and thus dismissed the possibility that they built any castles, these not being part of nomadic peoples' strategy.

According to these views, St. Stephen took the Frankish *Gau* as his model and borrowed the Latin expressions from its institutions. Proponents of this theory point to the frequent quotations from capitularies in the laws of King Stephen and to the strong parallels between the tasks of the Frankish *grafio* and the Hungarian *ispán*. Among others, the entourage of Queen Gisela, sister of Emperor Henry II, formerly Duke of Bavaria, has been regarded as the main agent of transmission, since many of its members received high offices in Hungary.

The former Frankish souzerainty over Mosaburg (later Zalavár) has also been adduced as a possible influence on the development of royal counties.²⁷ As mentioned above, prince Pribina was expelled from Nyitra between 833–836. The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* reports that "the king [Louis the German] granted Pribina a *beneficium* around the River Sala [Zala] where he began to settle and to build a castle (*munimen*) in the marshes and lakes of that river". After the completion of the fortification, Pribina had built within its walls (*infra primitus*) a church, and Archbishop Liupram (of Salzburg) came and consecrated it (*castrum*!) in the name of the Mother of God in the year 850.²⁸ A few years later another church was built in the town of Mosaburg as the burial site for the martyr Adrian.²⁹ The fate of this castle after the Hungarian conquest was an important link in the argumentation for Frankish–Hungarian continuity of castle and county. It was a weak case. The "successor" of Mosaburg was a monastery, although dedicated to the same St. Adrian, but only in Hungarian called Zalavár (= Zala-castle), while in Latin sources it was correctly styled *monasterium Zaladiense*.³⁰ It is true that this medieval abbey was fortified, but only in the sixteenth century, in the face of Ottoman advance; the fortifications were razed in the eighteenth.³¹

Several years of archeological work under the direction of Mrs Ágnes Sós yielded important results. On a small island (of c. 500 m diameter) in the river Zala two periods of early medieval construction could be established. In the first, which can be identified with Pribina's times, a part of the island was surrounded by an earth bank, enforced by piles within and without, with wattle revetting. Only a small segment of this palisade was found, but this was definitely a staggered entrance. Thus the existence of a fortification from c. 840–50 A.D. has been proven



Sketch 2. The Zalavár excavations (according to Á. Cs. Sós)

1 = 9th century ramparts; 2 = 11th century ramparts; 3 = walls of the monastery (11th century);
4 = tower; 5 = 16th century palisade (level lines by 0.6 m)

archeologically, even if the extent of it could not be established. No finds suggest the survival of the fortification as a castle into the tenth century, although the presence of Slavic population has been suggested by many pieces of evidence. In the eleventh century, obviously in the course of the monastery's construction, the island was again surrounded by a bank, likewise of earth with posts and wattle, but this time around the whole island and by a stronger, stepped bank with timber lacing and a dry-built stone wall on the outside. These defenses may have been the origin of the abbey's Hungarian name with *vár* = castle at its end.³²

The excavations have in effect authenticated the written evidence about a Pribina-castle, but did not prove its survival into the Hungarian period. As to the Frankish model of the county system, the Mosaburg-Zalavár identification remains nevertheless a mere hypothesis; to prove it, it would have to be demonstrated

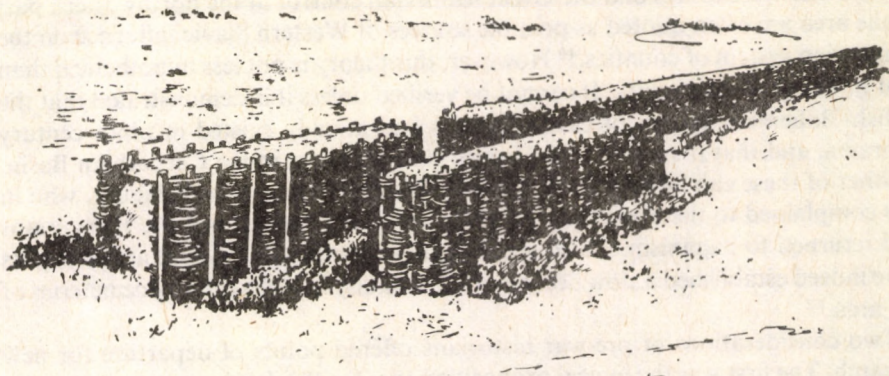
(1) that the system prevailing in the central areas of the Empire had also been established in the Pannonian marches;

(2) that these institutions survived the Hungarian conquest for another century; and

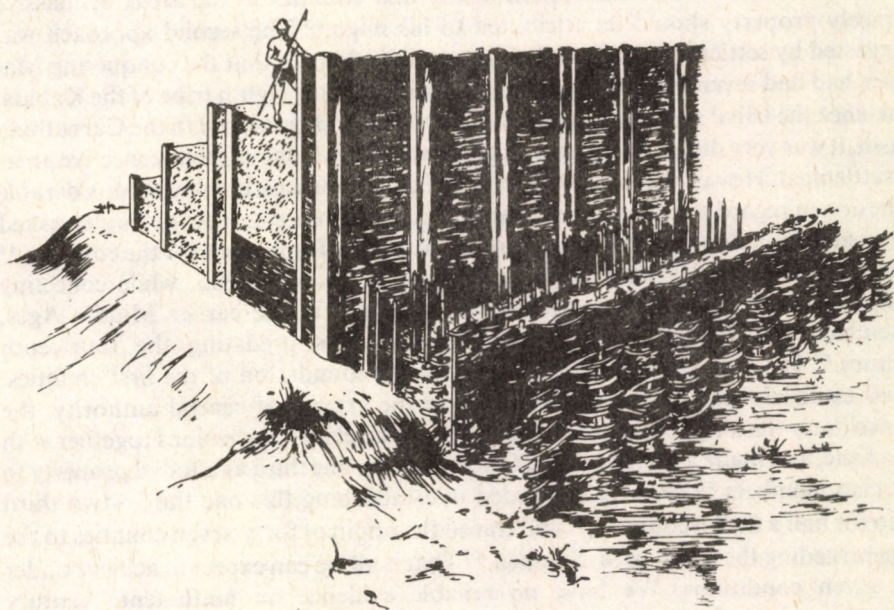
(3) that the relevant Latin terminology was not merely a transfer of Western words to Hungarian institutions by Stephen's notaries, most of whom were foreigners.³³

None of the three hypotheses can be proven by our present knowledge. The whole continuity theory suffers also from the fact that the site of the old fortification did not become the centre of a county (that castle was built further south in Kolon), but a monastery.³⁴ There are also other reasons to doubt the transfer of the Frankish example, such as the difference in the selection of the count (who was not, like in most Frankish *Gaue*, a local magnate); the increasingly hereditary character of the Frankish office, that did not emerge in Hungary for quite some time; and the difference between the *Graf*'s and the *ispán*'s jurisdiction. Until recently proven otherwise,³⁵ it had been assumed that the Hungarian *comes* administered justice only to the people living on and attached to the royal domain in the county, just as the *grafio*. But in fact he held jurisdiction over free landowners as well.³⁶ These divergences made already the leading medievalist of the late nineteenth century, Gyula/Julius Pauler, admit that "Stephen may have intended to establish counties of a Frankish type"³⁷ but did not fully succeed in doing so. The last proponent of this theory, József Holub, maintained that the general idea had been received from the Frankish realm, but "the system was adjusted to the Hungarian conditions of the time."³⁸

Another major theory of origin was first suggested by German legal historians: they saw in the royal county a derivate of Slavic administrative units and based their arguments, above all, on the Slavic origin of two important technical terms, *ispán* and *megye*.³⁹ This theory has been revived by study of the central places of the counties: as already mentioned, ten county seats' names are definitely Slavic and a few more derive from Slavic personal names. The model of Pribina's residences



A



B

Sketch 3. Zalavár: reconstruction of the gates in the (A) 9th and (B) 11th century ramparts (according to Á. Cs. Sós)

(Nitra and Mosaburg) and the Great Moravian control of the northwestern part of the area are often quoted as possible sources of Western Slavic influence on the Hungarian system of counties.⁴⁰ However, this theory is not less hypothetical than that of Frankish continuity. It cannot be verified unless it is demonstrated that the Polish-Bohemian system of castle-districts had already existed in ninth century Moravia, and that it survived the Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian Basin. Neither of these can be proven. A letter by Bishop Theotmar of Salzburg, who in 900 complained to the Pope that the Moravian Slavs have joined the Hungarians and returned to paganism,⁴¹ also speaks against continuity. Slovak archeologists have indeed established a slow decline of Christianity in tenth century cemeteries of the area.⁴²

Two considerations of pre-war historians offered points of departure for new research. The first was the logical proposition that for the development of an entire state apparatus with forty-five units, the four decades of Stephen I's reign could not have been sufficient. This development must have begun earlier, at least under Prince Géza, and the establishment of the first counties in the areas of massive princely property should be attributed to his reign.⁴³ The second approach was suggested by settlement study. It has always been known that the conquering Magyars had had seven tribes and were accompanied by the eighth tribe of the Kabars. But since the tribal system declined rather soon after their arrival in the Carpathian Basin, it was very difficult to acquire any reliable knowledge of their respective areas of settlement. However, the sub-units of the tribes, the clans, displayed considerable cohesion in regard to property, defense and cultural matters. Already Pauler risked the assumption that their settlement areas became the framework for the counties.⁴⁴ This thought was developed further by György Györffy, who, while collecting material for the historical geography of Hungary in the earlier Middle Ages, assembled the written sources of all place-names predating the fourteenth century.⁴⁵ He, too, credits Prince Géza with the foundation of the first counties. Their establishment is seen as connected to the growth of central authority: the prince (later the king) confiscated two thirds of the clans' possessions together with the castle, and made a royal county of them, leaving one third as allodial property to the clan members.⁴⁶ Györffy succeeded in establishing this one third—two third ratio for half a dozen counties,⁴⁷ and traced the origin of forty-seven counties to the time preceding the death of St. Stephen.⁴⁸ That is all we can expect to achieve under the given conditions. We have no reliable evidence on ninth-tenth century Hungarian clans. So many records were lost, especially in the central and southern parts of the county that were under Ottoman occupation for over 150 years, that the property conditions of the early Middle Ages cannot be reconstructed to any degree of completion. Neither do we have sources mentioning the names of the clans in the age of the original settlement. It has not become general practice to refer to the descent by clan (*'de genere'*) until the mid-thirteenth century. The clans appearing in the charters around 1300 include so many newcomers, who arrived after the settlement or rose from lower strata in the centuries following the conquest, while

omitting all those who became extinct or lost status in the meantime, that they cannot be regarded as dating back to the early Middle Ages. Györffy's results can be accepted to the extent that the counties most probably originated from the *allodia* of the clans, of which one third remained in their property, while two thirds, together with the castle, passed to the crown.

Proceeding along these lines, Györffy also maintained that the royal county is of totally autochthonous Hungarian origin. Its prerequisites were the knowledge of castle building among the conquering Hungarians, their familiarity with the notion of "border" and the beginnings of that free soldiering stratum that became castle warriors.⁴⁹ However, to raise these points beyond the level of hypotheses, the continuity between the pre-conquest warrior strata and the *jobagiones castri* would have to be proved and at least two questions answered. The first is the origin of the words *megye* and *ispán*: If the institution was autochthonous, why was not a Magyar word used for these? The Hungarian word for border, *határ*, did exist already in the language of the ninth century; why then a Slavic name? Or, to put in differently, what kind of transformation lay behind the replacement of a Hungarian word by a Slavic loan-word?⁵⁰ The second question is more complex. In the above-quoted foundation charter of the bishopric of Veszprém, not only the four counties are called *civitates*, but also castle Úrhida with its district (*compagus*). The name (lord's bridge) suggests that it was a castle guarding a ford or bridge, and had some land attached to it.⁵¹ There might have therefore been such castles that served as centres of minor areas but did not—could not?—become county seats. Referring to the ecclesiastical parallel, we see that Úrhida did, indeed, not become an archdeaconry; later it was part of the archdeaconry of Fejér in the county of the same name. Úrhida, alas, is not the only anomaly. Recent archeological research established the existence of a medieval castle in Pata and there has also been an archdeaconry of this name. If we have to assume that such castles as Pata or others, where the archdeaconry's name refers to a see with a castle (e.g. *Kapuvár* = 'gate castle') were, just as other archdeacons, organised along the line of counties, the picture of the county-system's origin may have to be altered. We may have to accept Györffy's additional assumption that "within the county there were smaller castle-districts, which could either develop into a *comitatus* or wither away".⁵² In this case the connection between the central castle and the county could not have been as close as we had assumed, since at least in some counties there were more castles than one. We may also assume, and I would support this, that the county-system developed gradually and the smaller, "truncated" districts were no more than the inevitable remnants of a somewhat haphazard process. This assumption would also demand a revision of the connection between clan and county, insofar as these smaller districts may have to be seen as settlement areas of clans. Recently, Györffy investigated the details of the clan-county relationship and came to distinguish between great, middling and smaller landowner clans.⁵³ In most counties he found more than one great landowner clan in many a number of middle size landowner families as well. Thus we may refine the above question by asking whether the

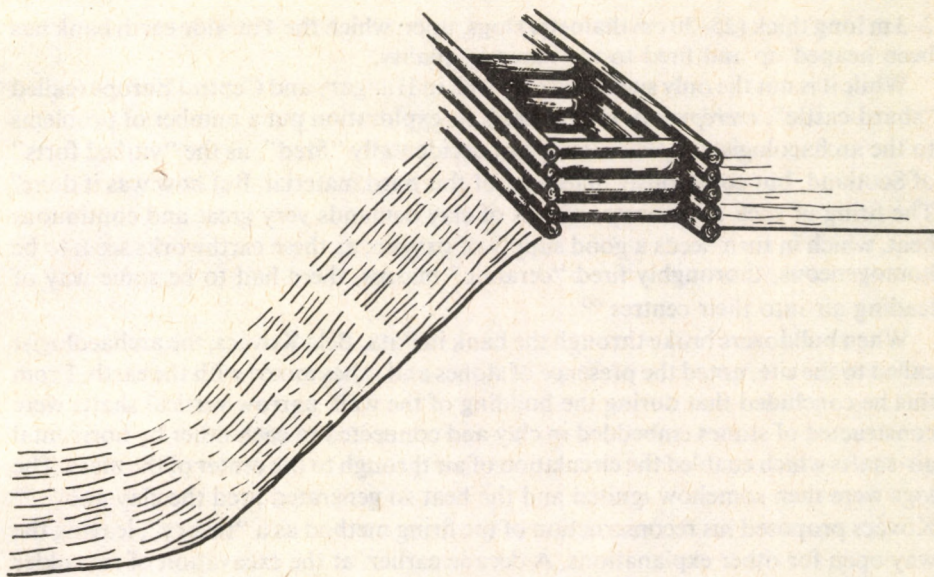
smaller castle-districts did not reflect the settlement areas of clans with minor property.

Hungarian research has been preoccupied for a long time with the origin of the royal county. Possible Western and Slavic parallels were compared to elements that suggested autochthonous Hungarian development, and the differences between the territorial structures elaborated. While these may have been useful projects, less attention was paid to the common features of East Central Europe. During the tenth and eleventh centuries a series of new polities—kingdoms and duchies—developed in this region. As František Graus pointed out, these foundations proved to be much more stable and longer lasting than the political units that preceded or, for that matter, followed them.⁵⁴ One of the few reasonably well-known common characteristics of Hungary, Bohemia and Poland is the territorial organisation of central authority based on the network of castles, built or acquired by the kings and dukes. In all three principalities the keeper of the castles was a plenipotentiary representative of the ruler, commander of the local military force within and around the fortress, judge of the people in the district and administrator of the royal domain pertaining to his seat. These parallels were recognised by H. F. Schmid more than half a century ago,⁵⁵ and even if minor differences had been discovered since, his proposition that the *Burgbezirk* organisation characterised the three major tenth-eleventh century states of the region, has not been seriously challenged.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries can be regarded as a distinct epoch in the history of castles, not only from the evidence of written sources, but also on archaeological grounds. Lacking textual evidence, archeology has to play a central rôle for these early centuries, even if its findings are often fragmentary or controversial. As to the archeology of castles, the problems are increased by the fact that excavations can rarely do more than explore a segment of an earthwork or bank and have to date, assign and analyse everything on the basis of the occasional find of shards or coins. For the questions of the origin of the county it would be, for example, crucial to determine what type of ceramics proves the presence of Slavic population in the ninth and tenth centuries, but, as one archaeologist complains:

[while ...] this problem does not emerge in purely Slavic areas, such as Bohemia or Poland, it becomes the more difficult in border areas of Slavic settlement. Ceramics, the most important finds for dating eight-ninth century earthworks, can be regarded in these times as international products among which the output of remote workshops may be very similar to each other. Then there is the longevity of certain forms and decorations, which makes exact dating and ethnic ascription almost impossible.⁵⁶

Besides Szabolcs and Zalavár, discussed above, two more comital castles were explored by archaeologists: the centers of Borsod and Hont counties. The one of Borsod was excavated during the 1920's.⁵⁷ The oval plateau of ca. 185 × 107 m size, rising above the River Bodva, was here, just as in Szabolcs, girded by an earth bank with internal timber framing. Its construction has been dated into the



Sketch 4. Castle Hont: reconstruction of the rampart (according to Gy. Nováki)

tenth–eleventh century. The church lay here, too, some 80–100 m outside the castle. The castle of Hont has also been excavated, but because its site is presently occupied by a village with houses and economic buildings, only to a very limited extent. It was a relatively small, oblong fort of $123 \times 55\text{--}75$ m dimension in the flood plain of the River Ipoly. In spite of the difficult conditions of exploration, it was possible to establish how the ramparts were built: “Two parallel banks, about 1.7 m apart were built on horizontally piled logs and connected by timber walls, joined to the logs. The whole construction may have rested on transversal logs extending into the bailey.”⁵⁸

Another important archaeological site of an early medieval castle is the one in Pata. The castle is not mentioned in any charter, only the Anonymous chronicler wrote about it: “Prince Árpád gave a great piece of land to Ed and Edömen in the Mátra forest, where their grandson, Pata, had built a castle. Of their family descended, a long time later, king Samuel . . .”⁵⁹ Settlement study offered proof for the authenticity of this report insofar as the area was indeed settled by the Aba clan to which King Samuel Aba (1041–1044) belonged. Thus the existence of a castle and a castle-building magnate is plausible. Archaeologists found that the castle was built on a hill that had been the site of a Bronze-age fortification. The near-circular plateau of 120–150 m diameter is fully girded by the c. 400 m long bank with an artificial ditch in front of it. The highest elevation of the wall, 3.5 m, is about 7 m from the edge of the ditch. Two sections of the earthwork have been explored and display a peculiar structure: the outer wall consists of dry-built stone, reinforced by

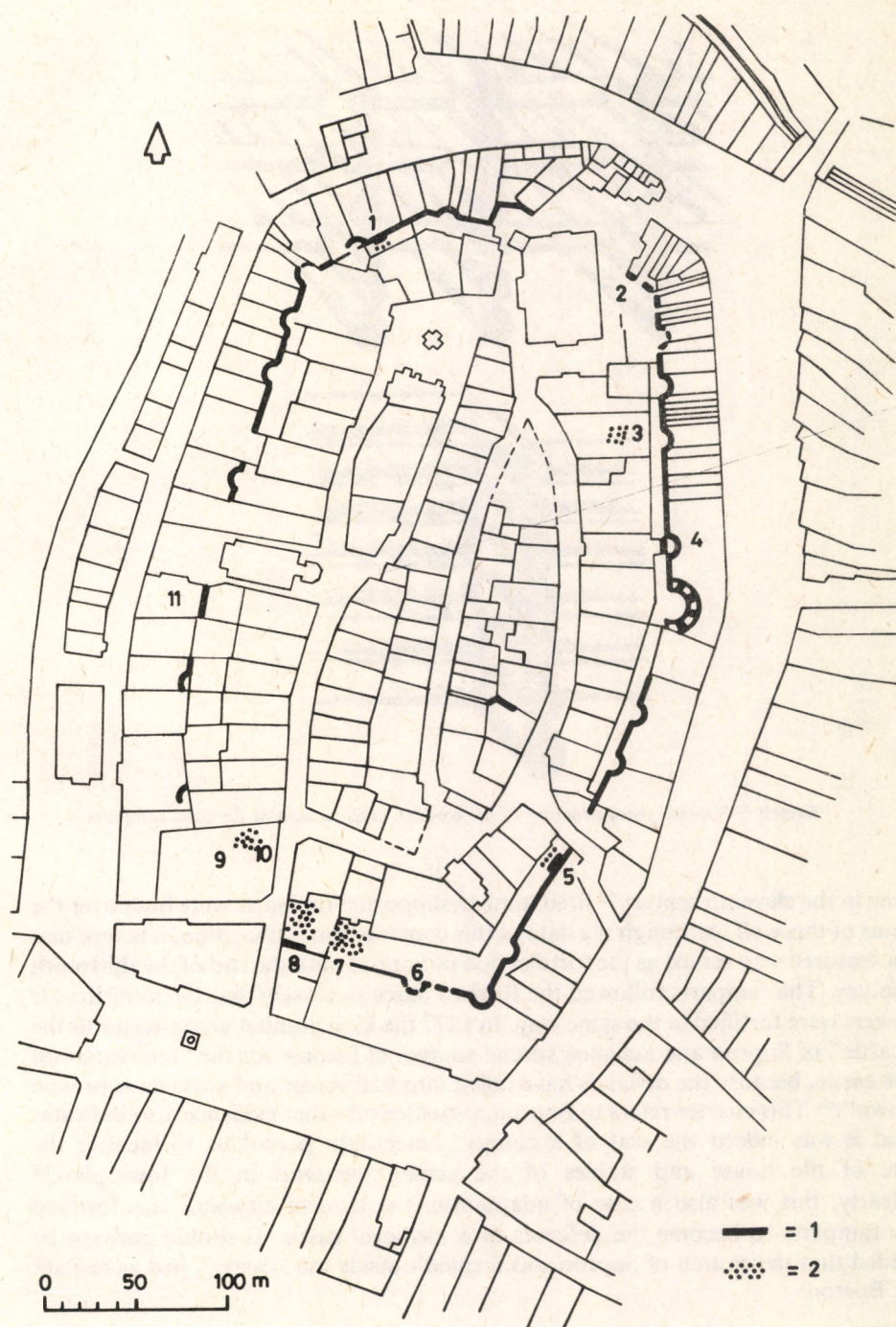
2–3 m long thick (25–30 cm diameter) logs, upon which the 4 m wide earth bank has been heaped up and fired to red ceramic quality.

While it is not the only such fired clay wall in Hungary and Central Europe (called “shard-castle”, *cserépvár* in Hungarian), its exploration put a number of problems to the archaeologists. It was clearly not accidentally “fired”, as the “vitified forts” of Scotland, but consciously made out of this hard material. But how was it done? The firing of such an enormous mass of clay demands very great and continuous heat, which in turn needs a good supply of oxygen; as these earthworks seem to be homogeneous, thoroughly fired “ceramic” masses, there had to be some way of leading air into their centres.⁶⁰

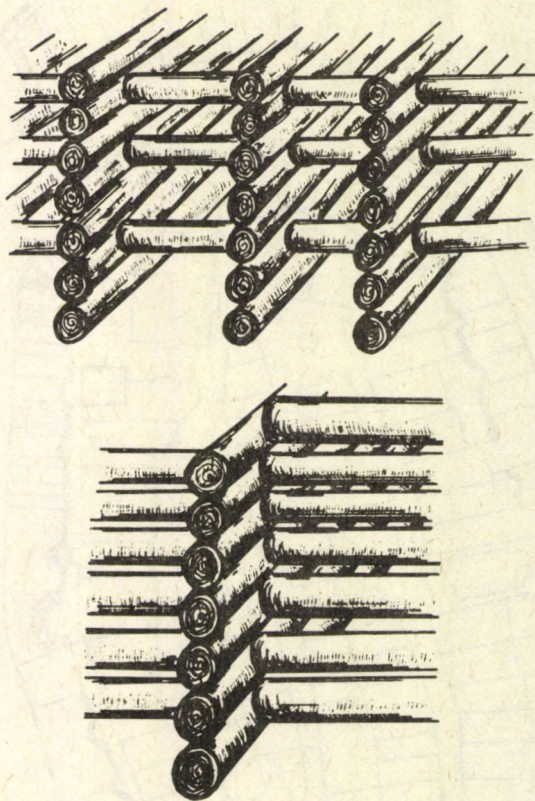
When bulldozers broke through the bank in Pata, Béla Kovács, the archaeologist called to the site, noted the presence of stones and ashes mixed with the earth. From this he concluded that during the building of the wall, narrow vertical shafts were constructed of stones embedded in clay and connected to each other by horizontal air-shafts which enabled the circulation of air through to the center of the mass. The logs were then somehow ignited and the heat so generated fired the clay above.⁶¹ Kovács proposed his reconstruction of the firing method as a “theory”, leaving the way open for other explanations. A decade earlier, at the excavation of two older “shard-castles”, Gyula Nováki and his chemist collaborator, Dr. G. Vastagh arrived at a different conclusion: the earth was not fired *in situ*, but the bank had been built from fired clay that had been ground to powder, mixed with slaked lime and so pressed between the logs. Subsequently the chemical reaction between the ground “ceramics” and the lime produced a cement-like material of very high density. This was further enhanced by gradual oxidation in the open air, the calcium hydroxide becoming calcium carbonate.⁶²

There are two more points to be noted in regard to Pata: first, that the church of the archdeacon “of Pata” has been built some 2–250 meters outside the defenses; second, that on the basis of tenth-eleventh century shards found within the walls and the genealogical reference of the anonymous chronicler, Kovács was able to date the origin of the castle to c. 950 A.D. It can therefore be described as a fortification built of fired earth and stone wall on the summit of a Bronze-age fort in the middle of the tenth century. No doubt, the fortification was built by Hungarians (to be exact, by a Hungarian clan), and had been regarded a castle. It must have lost its significance early on, because it would have been mentioned in a charter, had it survived into the thirteenth century.

The history of the city of Sopron, the seat of the medieval county Sopron on the western border of the kingdom, built on the site of the Roman city of Scarbantia, has been well known in general, but some significant details, important for the history of castle-building, were not examined until 1959. The walls of the medieval town (the present-day city centre, *Belváros*) follow a peculiar shape: an oval cut off at both ends. This area was protected by walls with fortified semicircular towers. Archaeological evidence suggests that Scarbantia had been fortified probably around the middle of the fourth century against Barbarian attacks. Probably some

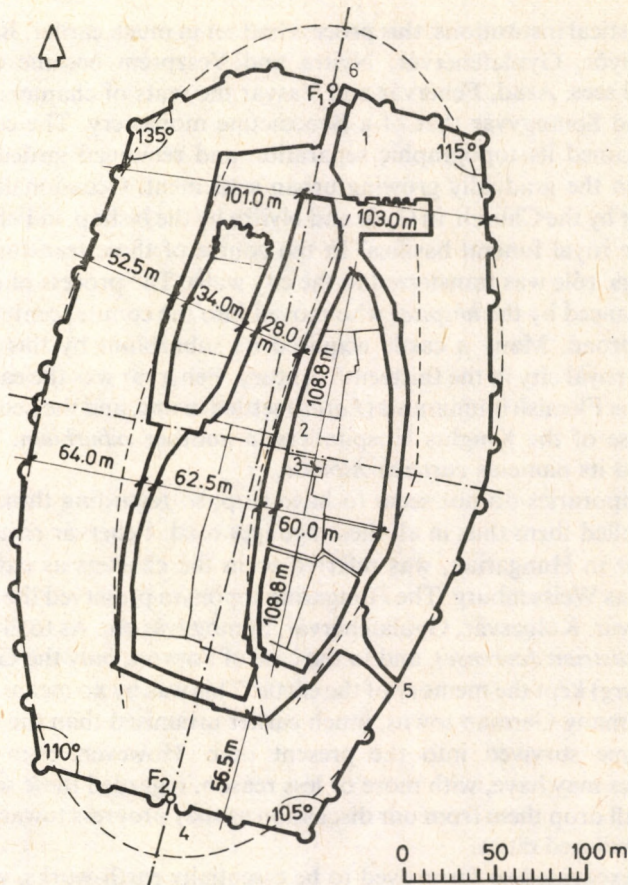


Sketch 5. Sopron: Roman wall and rests of the fired ramparts (according to I. Holl)
 1 = Roman wall; 2 = fired rampart



Sketch 6. Sopron: reconstruction of the wooden construction of the fired ramparts

time in the eleventh century⁶³ fired, timber-supported ramparts were built over the ruins of this wall. Although the date of this construction is uncertain, it is sure that the restored wall served as the fortification of Sopron until the end of the thirteenth century. The ramparts followed the Roman bases so closely that the semicircular towers were fortified in the same way. In 1277 the king granted urban status to the "castle" of Sopron and assigned special sources of income for the "renovation of the castle, because the defenses have fallen into bad repair and parts have broken down".⁶⁴ This charter refers to Sopron as castle and other evidence also indicates that it was indeed the seat of a county. Later data permit us to identify the site of the house and stables of the *comes comitatus* in the town-plan.⁶⁵ Clearly, this was also a case of adaptation: the Roman city-wall was fortified by ramparts to become the defenses of a medieval castle. It should perhaps be added that the church of Sopron was located outside the "castle", just as in Pata or Borsod.



Map 1. Sopron. Today's city center in the 11–13th centuries (according to J. Major)
 1 = Town Hall; 2 = stables of the count; 3 = synagogue; 4 = southern gate of the Roman fortification; 5 = back gate; 6 = fore-gate

We may therefore assume that the archidiaconal church outside but near to the comital castle was the rule in the early Hungarian ecclesiastical organisation. In the case of Sopron, however, it caused some difficulties. When King Ladislas IV confirmed the urban liberties of the *hospites* who had moved to Sopron from Hungary and abroad,⁶⁶ there were already suburbia at the foot of the castle together with which they constituted the town. The church of the archdeacon became its parish church, but remained beyond the walls; unusual for towns, even though it seems to have been typical for county seats.

The urban development of Sopron began apparently in the thirteenth century, while at some other county centres, especially those which were also the seats of

major ecclesiastical institutions, this process had set in much earlier. Bács, Csanád, Esztergom, Győr, Gyulafehérvár, Nyitra and Veszprém became episcopal or archiepiscopal sees; Arad, Fehérvár and Vasvár the seats of chapters under royal patronage; and Somogyvár that of a Benedictine monastery. The comital castle frequently retained its topographic separation and remained girded by its own defenses within the gradually growing urban settlement. Occasionally, the castle was taken over by the Church; in Győr and Nyitra by the bishop, in Fehérvár by the provost of the royal funeral basilica. In the course of these transformations the castle's strategic rôle was transferred to the city walls. The process of urbanisation was often enhanced by the *hospites* who moved into the comital centres from both inland and abroad. Many a castle acquired its suburbium by this process and became a free royal city in the thirteenth century. Fehérvár was the earliest among them, where the Flemish immigrants (*Latini*) settled in one, and the people of a well-endowed house of the Knights Hospitallers in another *suburbium*. The old city centre retained its name as *castrum Albense*.

The contemporaries do not seem to have stopped regarding these settlements castles, and called them thus in all the languages used: Fehérvár remained to our own day a *vár* in Hungarian, was referred to in the charters as *castrum* and in German texts as Weissenburg. The Hungarian toponym preserved the *vár* suffix for Vasvár, Budavár, Kolozsvár, Gyulafehérvár, Somogyvár etc. As to Győr, only the Latin usage (*castrum Jaurense*), and in the case of Sopron, only the German place name (*Ödenburg*) kept the memory of the castle. This was by no means exceptional: in the case of many German towns, much earlier urbanised than the Hungarians, the *-burg* name survived into the present time. However, even though the contemporaries may have, with more or less reason, regarded these settlements as castles, we shall drop them from our discussion as they progress towards becoming towns and privileged cities.

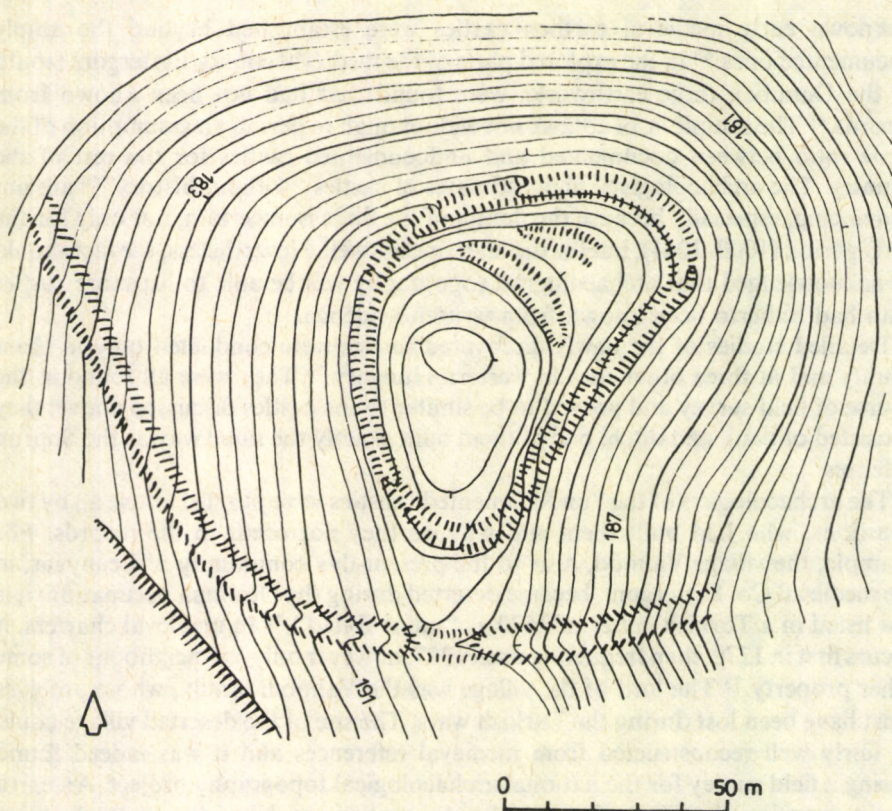
All castles excavated so far proved to be essentially earth-works, whether fired into a "shard-wall" or not, and whatever the timber frame of the earth bank may have been like. None of the early medieval castles in Hungary were built of stone. It is also characteristic of them that they were "adaptions", either of Roman walls or of Bronze-age mounds enforced by defenses.

Archaeology has proven the existence of several castles not mentioned in written sources, not even—as in the case of Pata—as a seat of an archdeacon or other officer. This holds true not only for the central and southern part of the country, where sources may have been destroyed during the Turkish occupation, but for the north and west as well. However, systematic archaeological surveying has been done in only three countries. Most of Co. Veszprém, the southern part of Co. Hont and parts of the medieval county Esztergom belong to these areas. Unfortunately, all three are forested, hilly regions, where geography was conducive to castle-building from the earliest times, and hence hardly representative for the rest of the country. In southern Hont county two undocumented early constructions were found besides the well-known county seat;⁶⁷ in Veszprém county five hitherto

unknown early medieval earthen castles were established beyond the amply documented ones.⁶⁸ In the explored parts of the medieval county Esztergom (south of the Danube), three earthworks were found that had not been known from records.⁶⁹ The sample is, of course, not wide enough to permit an assumption of the same ratio between documented and undocumented castles for the rest of the country. The archaeologists' high estimates of castles "without history"⁷⁰ are not convincing, especially because the dating of the finds is uncertain, not only for the early period (1000–1241), but for the later ones as well. Nevertheless, the fact should be acknowledged that archaeological topography will be able to list more castles than had hitherto been known from written evidence.

Detailed studies of the newly-discovered castles were conducted only in Hont county and at three other sites in western Hungary.⁷¹ They were all found in the course of field survey and proved to be similar to the castles discussed above: they consisted of bank and ditch, one of them built exactly the same way as the Sopron defenses.

The archaeologists of the "undocumented" castles were puzzled above all by two questions: who had built them and why do they not occur in the records. For example, the village Valmód, near to the present-day community of Leányvár, in the medieval Co. Esztergom, became deserted during the Ottoman occupation: it is last listed in a Turkish *defter* of 1570 as "uninhabited".⁷² In medieval charters, it occurs first in 1270, then frequently until 1327, however only as a neighbour of some other property.⁷³ The lord of the village was the Valmódi family, whose archives must have been lost during the Turkish wars. The site of the deserted village could be fairly well reconstructed from medieval references and it was indeed found during a field survey for the national archaeological topography project. An earth castle, mentioned still in the seventeenth century as Ulmódvár (clearly from Valmód-vár), was found about 1 km from the village. It is an oval plateau, rising about 10–12 m above ground (save on the south side, where a ditch had to be dug to separate it from the adjoining hills) and fortified by a bank. The castle's total area is quite small: about 60 × 90 m elliptically. Its having been occupied can be proven by shards from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries; exploratory digs in 1951 claim to have brought Roman and late medieval coins to light.⁷⁴ However limited and fragmentary these data may be, they permit a few conclusions. The castle was clearly not one of those stone-built fortifications that became typical for the thirteenth century and there is no stringent evidence for its continuous occupation. Let me interject here that it is impossible to prove by archaeological evidence how long a castle had been occupied, to say nothing of the uncertainty in the dating of ceramics. Such a fortified mound would have been totally out of date in the thirteenth century. I am convinced that we have here a minor, local refuge (*Fluchtburg*), built by the villagers of Valmód who, together with their cattle, took shelter in it in case of danger. The hill-refuge offered a better chance for survival than the village near a major road. It is not unlikely that the need for such a sanctuary was most acute around the turn of the thirteenth to fourteenth century,



Sketch 7. A "castle without history": Valmód (according to I. Horváth and A. Balla)

when the archbishop of Esztergom was a major target of the competing factions in the succession crises following the extinction of the founding dynasty.

This may lead us to the second question and in particular to that of appellation: why were these "undocumented" fortifications not called *castra*? Archaeologists suspected that they "may not have been regarded castles by the contemporaries and hence left unmentioned",⁷⁵ but they, too, had to admit that we "do not know the criteria of a fortification's being legally termed *castrum*".⁷⁶ I believe, it is not necessary to search for legal criteria: military considerations may have been much more decisive. Two actual events from the thirteenth century, to which I shall refer later, induced me to approach the problem from a military angle. It is as certain that the *ispáns'* castles were continuously occupied and manned by a standing garrison under their own or their castellans' command as it is unlikely that the "undocumented" castles had regular garrisons. It is much more probable that these fortifications were used by the population of the area in case of danger and

abandoned once the enemy had departed. If this was so, then their rôle in defense was that of shelter for the non-combatants, and hence they were not deemed to be castles. At least a great number of the castles "without history" must have been just such refuges.

However, the lack of military importance did not necessarily mean that a fort would not have been called *castrum*. For example, a charter of 1255 still speaks about Óvár (= Old castle) in Co. Abaúj as *locus qui Ouwar dicitur*, even though it had long lost its military rôle and the count's seat had been transferred to Újvár (= Newcastle). Even as late as 1317, the old castle is referred to as *castrum Nagyóvár* (literally: 'great old castle') *dictum*.⁷⁷

There is another expression in medieval Latin charters: *locus castr*, obviously the translation of the Hungarian *várhely*, which cannot be fully explained and may have been used for these "minor" fortified places. When in a charter of 1292 we read that the boundary of a property was *subtus locum diruti castr* *Zamarvar*,⁷⁸ this is easily understood: the archaeologically known site of Szamárvár (= Ass-castle) was originally a Roman camp, again occupied in the ninth-eleventh centuries, but when it became a ruin, it was no more called castle but "the castle's place".⁷⁹ There are other, similar cases known from elsewhere.⁸⁰ However, the expression also occurs without reference to a castle's name and in regard to sites where we have no knowledge of a former castle. In a property transaction of 1366, mention is made of an island *cum omnibus suis utilitatibus et pertinentiis et specialiter loco castr* *in eadem habito*.⁸¹ It is not impossible that the reference here is to such a castle "without history", i.e. an earthwork-refuge. The term may have been used to designate such sites as were not, but could become, castles, necessity arising. One would have to collect all mentions of *locus castr* and then compare this list with the topographical data of archaeology to answer this question.

Nováki has recently attempted to summarize our knowledge of the early medieval castles, based on the excavations of sixteen sites. He found that "Hungarian castle-building began around the middle or rather in the second half of the tenth century",⁸² and discussed three problems. First, in concert with Györffy, he admitted that the Magyars may have become familiar with castle-building before they reached their present homeland. Considering, however, that nearly a hundred years had passed between that time and the first castles built in Hungary, he doubted that this knowledge would have gone back to their wandering on the southern steppe. Second, contradicting the general assumption that the conquering Hungarians took over castles found in the Carpathian Basin, Nováki maintained that there is no evidence for the existence of Frankish or Slavic castles, with the exception of Zalavár which did not survive the Magyar settlement as a castle. Before the dating of the tenth-eleventh century shards found in Hungarian castle sites, not even the participation of the local Slavic population in their construction can be determined. Third, the late start of castle building is explained by the thesis that the defeat of the raiding armies in 933 (at the Unstrut) and 955 (Lechfeld) forced the Hungarians to consider the country's defense and then "immediately



Map 2. Castles in Hungary at the middle of the 11th century

smaller, strategically important border defenses were built ... instead of the widespread early forms of sizeable earthworks offering refuge to a considerable number of people".⁸³

It must have become obvious by now that the assessment of early medieval Hungarian castles is rent by innumerable contradicting views, many of which lack the logical foundation and solid basis required to being more than hypotheses. Let us therefore try to sum up those few points that are reasonably well substantiated or at least can be substantiated. To begin with: there were castles in Hungary at the time of the foundation of the kingdom. The most important among them were—at least since the early eleventh century—the castles of the counts (*ispánsági vár*), as they served as the military, administrative, juridical, economic and, to a certain extent even ecclesiastical, centres of the county. The spread of the term *castrum* (or the Hungarian *vár*) suggests that they not only retained their significance during the whole period under review, but also increased it. Until about 1200 A.D. the comital castles remained the most significant ones in the country, although they were not the only ones. However, we cannot risk even a guess as to the number of the others. Owing to their central functions during the eleventh-twelfth centuries, some of the county seats grew into cities. By the end of the twelfth century the comital castles, including the ones on their way to urbanisation, had been spread over the entire area of the kingdom and had reached the number of seventy-two. The more recent constructions did not differ in structure and organisation from the earlier ones.

It can also be stated that castles played a minimal part in the defense of the frontiers. *Map 2* shows that there are very few castles along the borders of the kingdom. Although the country was threatened by German invasions from the west and incursions of different nomadic peoples from the east, these attacks were repulsed not by fortifications but in open pitched battles. Instead of border-castles, the frontiers were guarded by a method of nomadic origin: considerable areas were designed as defensive wastes (*indagines regni*), in which various obstacles were built to slow down unexpected attacks and which, by their "scorched earth", hindered considerably the advance of the enemy. Behind the traps and obstacles mobile mounted archers were assigned to guard duty. Entrance to the country was permitted only at defined *portae*. One of the most important ones, on the western border, was the gate of Moson where one of the earliest earthwork castles, Magyaróvár,⁸⁴ had been built as the seat of the count. In the county-system the border-counties, for example Pozsony, also called *marchia*, were in charge of the border defense.

Finally, it is certain that all castles, including county seats, were built of earth and not stone; their defenses consisted, with very few exceptions, of banks girded by a ditch. The structure of the ramparts was not uniform: some were "shard-castles" with a fired wall or a wall built of ground ceramics, others were constructed around timber frames so that the earth was piled into what may be called boxes. The various methods of construction do not seem to have particular relevance, as the

archaeologists have not—or not yet—used these differences for dating the monuments or anything else.

So far no archaeological evidence is available about the interior of any of the early castles. What kind of buildings stood within the walls, if any, is not known. While we can prove only for Sopron that the count had a house and stables there, it is safe to assume that the comital castles did contain some timber buildings, maybe wooden towers such as those known from later periods, but, owing to their building material, they vanished without trace. It is to be hoped that further excavations will clarify this matter.

These are the areas for which a reasonable consensus exists or can be achieved. Everything else is both uncertain and heavily debated, hence not more than a few tentative considerations can be presented here. One of these issues is the origin of castles in Hungary. As we recall, the Anonymous Notary and other chroniclers preserved the tradition that the Magyars encountered castles in their new homeland and had to besiege them. Linguistic evidence suggests that some of the county centres were of Slavic origin. On the other hand, both historians and archaeologists doubt or reject the Slavic origin of Hungarian castles. But then Csongrád and Visegrád at least, both of them carrying the Slavic castle-suffix in their names, remain a puzzle. The results of the Zalavár excavations refuted the assumption that the Hungarians simply “inherited” existing castles and kept occupying and using them. However, considering that several early medieval castles did incorporate older remnants by “adaptation”, I cannot exclude the possibility of the “adaptation” of Slavic earthworks.

The *Gesta* of the Anonymous points to another puzzle. We have read its description of the foundation of two castles: Szabolcs and Pata. One of them weathered the past ten centuries, the other has been unearthed by archaeologists: the *Gesta* proved to be a reliable guide. In the case of Pata we were also able to verify the reference to a certain clan that indeed held property in the area and may very well have been the founder of the castle. We have to consider therefore that our early castles may indeed have been built or “adapted” by the clans. Something along these lines is suggested by our *Map 2* as well: there seems to be no regularity in the location of the early castles. Frontier defense was clearly not an issue. But even the territorial organisation is extremely uneven: some county seats received incomparably larger areas than others. The distance between castles is anything but uniform: Visegrád is some 25 km from Esztergom, Vasvár about 65 km from Sopron. The only regularity seems to be the guarding of the main roads. In summary, then, Györffy may well be correct in maintaining that the castles were originally founded by the clans and the developing monarchy used them, or some of them, in the establishment of the royal county. The anomalous cases of Pata and Úrhida, however, remind us that the process was by no means based on abstract rules, but followed the local conditions elastically; the archdeaconry of Pata may be the remnant of a county that for some reason did not materialise. As we cannot hope to find additional relevant written sources for the period, theoretical debates

themselves will hardly lead us out of the stalemate: only new archaeological finds can supply such "hard facts" as may help to solve the presently unsolvable riddles.

The end of the twelfth century, roughly the date when a list of royal income—perhaps for the marriage of King Béla III (1170–1196) to a French princess—was compiled, marks the end of an epoch in the history of castles. In the preceding two centuries the king of Hungary enjoyed considerable power, in the eyes of western observers of almost despotic extent. The country's economic resources were essentially in his hands, as he was not only the greatest landowner, but also sole proprietor of the salt, gold and silver mines, the customs and tolls and the mint. Naturally, all castles were royal property as well. Their upkeep was the duty of the entire population of the respective county, with the exception of the castle warriors.

The sources do not mention a single castle in private hands, which is surprising as ecclesiastical property had reached an impressive size in this time and the first secular estates were developing as well. However, it seems that none of the prelates contemplated—as yet—the building of castles, or they may not have had the right to do so without royal consent.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹ Anonymus cap. 46, *SRH* I: 97.

² *Ibid.*, cap. 21, *SRH* I: 62.

³ Németh, 1973.

⁴ Sós, 1973.

⁵ *Conversio* cap. 10, 50.

⁶ Váczy, 1971, 55.

⁷ Fügedi, 1959.

⁸ Györffy, 1959, 147–148.

⁹ Fügedi, 1970, 101–102.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

¹¹ The *Institutiones* are edited in *SRH* II: 619–627; the *Vitae ibid.*, 377–440; for the charters, see Szentpétery, 1938.

¹² Kniezsa, 1955, 24.

¹³ *Okl. Sz.* 126.

¹⁴ Bartal, 1898, 412–414.

¹⁵ Holub, 1938, 24.

¹⁶ Hóman, 1939, 211–3.

¹⁷ Kniezsa, 1955, 333.

¹⁸ *SRH* I: 384.

¹⁹ The 45 counties were first reconstructed by Pauler, 1899, 53–7, 402–406; following him Holub, 1938, 101–6 and Hóman, 1939, I: 220.

²⁰ *SRH* II: 63.

²¹ I.e.: Bács, Bars, Békés, Bihar, Bodrog, Borsod, Csanád, Doboka, Hont, Keve, Pozsony, Sopron, Szabolcs, Szatmár, Szolnok, Torda, Ung, Veszprém. Uncertain: Arad, Baranya, Győr.

²² I.e. Borsova, Csongrád, Nógrád, Nyitra, Pest, Pozsega, Trencsén, Valkó, Visegrád, Zemplén.

²³ These are Fehérvár in Transylvania, and Esztergom, Kolozs, Sopron, Torda, Vasvár.

²⁴ Györffy, 1960, 534–5.

²⁵ Fügedi, 1947, 125–9.

²⁶ *MES* I: 170: According to a bull of Pope Innocent III of 1204: *quia in quodam castro suo [= regis] Posoniensi prepositura constitit et ex accessu hominum ad eandem timet sibi de castro illo periculum provenire.*

²⁷ Holub, 1938.

²⁸ *Conversio* cap. 11, 52.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, the text refers to *infra civitatem Privinae* as the place where the church dedicated to St. Adrian was built; we do not know whether this was identical with the *munimen* mentioned earlier in cap. 11, or another settlement, near by.

³⁰ The monastery was referred to as *abbas et conventus Zaladiensis*, later as *conventus monasterii b. Adriani martyris de Zala* (1260: Zalai O. I: 35; 1274: *Ibid.*, 75).

³¹ Füßy, 1902.

³² Sós, 1973.

³³ Györffy, 1977, 211.

³⁴ Füßy, 1902, 27–9.

³⁵ Váczy, 1935, 33.

³⁶ Hóman, 1939, I: 231.

³⁷ Pauler, 1899, 25.

³⁸ Holub, 1938, 77.

³⁹ Schmid, 1926, 103.

⁴⁰ Molnár, 1945–49, 101–8.

⁴¹ Gombos, 1938, III: 2198–2201.

⁴² Gombos (*ibid.*, 2200) regarded the letter a forgery; however, Marsina (1971, 82–3) has established that even though it contains certain overstatements, the text has to be accepted as authentic.

⁴³ Marczali, 1911, 65.

⁴⁴ Pauler, 1888, 503–16.

⁴⁵ Györffy, 1963.

⁴⁶ Györffy, 1959, 16–36.

⁴⁷ Györffy, 1959, 20–26.

⁴⁸ Györffy, 1977, 209.

⁴⁹ Györffy, 1977, 194–8.

⁵⁰ Györffy, 1977, 212–213 argues that *medža* meant in no Slavic language a county nor *ispán/župan* its head.

⁵¹ Györffy, 1960, 534.

⁵² Györffy, 1977, 209.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 256–8.

⁵⁴ Graus, 1965, 7–10.

⁵⁵ Schmid, 1926, 92–9, 116.

⁵⁶ Nováki, 1975, 46.

⁵⁷ Leszih, 1927.

⁵⁸ Nováki–Sándorfi–Miklós, 1979, 34.

⁵⁹ Anonymus, cap. 32, *SRH* I: 73.

⁶⁰ Kovács, 1974, 243.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Nováki, 1964.

⁶³ Holl–Nováki–Póczy, 1962; Holl, 1967–8.

⁶⁴ *CD* V/2: 399: *pro reparatione castri . . . antiquis operum consumptionibus et fracturis in eodem castro nostro Sopron.*

⁶⁵ Major, 1965.

⁶⁶ *CD* V/2: 397.

⁶⁷ Nováki–Sándorfi–Miklós (1979, 90) speak about four, but castle Salgó has to be deleted from these, because it not only appears in written records, but its construction can be dated from them (Fügedi,

1977, 185). The other castle that does not belong here is Bibervár: even the authors admit that it may have been built in the thirteenth century.

⁶⁸ Nováki etc. *ibid.* assign 12 castles to this group, including, obviously, both early and later medieval objects.

⁶⁹ These are: Leányvár–Kolostorhegy (*Rég. Top.* V: 251), Nagysáp–Gédáshegy (*ibid.*, 261) and Süttő–Leányvár (*ibid.*, 313–314).

⁷⁰ Sándorfi, 1980.

⁷¹ According to Nováki's (1975, 47) map: Zalavár, Kapuvár and Bacsá.

⁷² Fekete, 1943, 63.

⁷³ *Rég. Top.* V: 252.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁷⁵ Nováki–Sándorfi–Miklós, 1979, 93–4.

⁷⁶ Pámer, 1970.

⁷⁷ Györfly, 1963, I: 126.

⁷⁸ *MES* II: 324.

⁷⁹ *Rég. Top.* V: 215.

⁸⁰ Fügedi, 1977, 135, 148, 203.

⁸¹ Zalai O. II: 6.

⁸² Nováki, 1975, 59.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁸⁴ *SRH* I: 165.

II THE MONGOL INVASION

The death of King Béla III in 1196 marked the end of an epoch in the history of Hungary and with it in the development of castles. On *Map 1*, showing the forty-five to forty-seven counties assumed to have existed at the end of St. Stephen's reign, it is conspicuous that there are none in the border area, especially in the north and the east. The conquering Hungarians, together with the population they found in the area, constituted too small a number for settling the entire Carpathian Basin. This process was to be completed by foreign settlers (*hospites*) who were called into the country after the turn of the eleventh-twelfth century, when the participants of the First Crusade made their acquaintance with the Kingdom of Hungary.¹ In the course of this "internal colonisation" several new counties were established, so that King Béla III could already list seventy-two counties in the account of royal revenue.² The structure of the new counties followed that of the old ones with a castle at the centre.

Even after these developments there remained plenty of uncultivated land in the kingdom, especially in the mountainous regions of the north and the north-east. The vast royal hunting reserves organised here were also administered by *comites*, but their tasks were above all the preservation and maintenance of the forest, and their subjects not castle-warriors and peasants, but rather foresters, hunters, fishermen, drivers and houndsmen whose dues they collected and whose cases they judged. The centers of the royal forests (*praedia*) were initially *curiae*; they did not become fortified castles until much later.

As we have seen, the castles of the preceding centuries were not stone-castles but earthworks, among which the county seats gained a certain pre-eminence, not by their superior construction or greater size, but because of their standing garrisons and the many functions attached to them. The castles did not play a crucial rôle in the wars of the eleventh-twelfth centuries: most of the attacks from both east or west and the major confrontations between competing parties in civil wars were fought out in open battles. Neither were the innovations in castle-building in the thirteenth century triggered by advances in military technology, but rather by social developments, enhanced by the Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241.

King Béla's successor, Imre (Henry), had to face the challenge of his younger brother, Andrew. The rebellions of the latter were rewarded by an almost independent territory in the southern parts of the realm and finally, after the early death of Imre and his minor son Ladislas III, Andrew II became king of Hungary (1204–1235). Abandoning the policies of his predecessors and, as he himself wrote

in a charter "altering the hitherto preserved intact condition of our kingdom", he "granted castles, counties, lands and other resources of our abundant Hungary in *perpetuas hereditates* to . . . barons and knights."³

This "perpetual heredity" implied that the donated royal property became once and for all the possession of the clan, descended in the male line without any restriction (not even that of primogeniture!) and was burdened with military service alone. Parallel to the lavish donations, the king increased the strata of "knights" by receiving into "his court, house and family" free and unfree men and granting them lands under the same conditions, i.e. ennobling them. These warriors of minor property were referred to as *servientes regis*, in distinction from the aristocrats or *nobiles*.

Andrew's new policy was tantamount to a death warrant for the royal county, even though its demise took quite some time and was not a conspicuous event. The king clearly favoured the aristocrats with donations and this "enriched landed aristocracy showed definite signs of oligarchic inclinations".⁴ The minor landowners, be they castle warriors of old or newly created royal servants, could rarely resist the pressure of the powerful ecclesiastical and increasing secular great landowners: they tended to lose their lands and the cultivators who lived on them. While initially all inhabitants of the county were subject to the count's administration and jurisdiction, the major ecclesiastical institutions had acquired in the twelfth century immunities for their possessions, exempting their lands and people from the *ispan's* authority. With the decline of the royal domain, the count's jurisdiction shrank further and the royal county became gradually and inconspicuously unviable. In the exceptional case of a whole county's being given away, the *comitatus* even ceased to exist from one day to another. Accordingly, the royal host now consisted not of the original *agmina* of the counties under the count's command, but—besides the troops of the magnates and prelates—of the units of the *servientes regis*, probably also organised by counties.

However, the two hundred years' old institution of the county seems to have been such a strong geographic unit that it refused to die even after the king's having abandoned it. Rather, it emerged in a new form, enabling it to continue under the new conditions for many centuries to come. The transformation started simultaneously in several counties, but we know most about this process in the vast county of Zala on the western border, because the nobles there have written down its beginnings in a charter dated 1232:

Whereas in our area malicious men, guided by their viciousness have committed many evil deeds, injustices, injuries and caused much harm by also oppressing several of the well-to-do men (*potentiores*) who, however, owing to the distance of the judges and many other obstacles were unable to find redress, we asked our lord the king in humble subjection to be granted the right to sit in judgment and do justice to the oppressed and the sufferers of injustice . . .⁵

Having received the requested royal permission, the *universi servientes regis* of Co. Zala actually opened the case against the bishop of Veszprém and a secular aristocrat. The justices were elected by the royal servants of the county. Thus began the transformation of the royal county into the noble county, the unit of central administration into the organ of the nobility's self-government. The most important part of the new institution was the county's bench (*sedes iudiciaria*); its leading persons, the justices of the *servientes* (in Hungarian *szolgabíró*) later called *iudices nobilium*.

The change from *serviens* to *nobilis* reflects a significant social process of the thirteenth century. In the time of the first county court in Zala the term *nobilis* meant a great landowning aristocrat. When in 1222 King Andrew II issued his famous privilege under a golden bull (regarded as the Magna Charta of Hungarian nobility until 1848), the *nobilis* and the *serviens regis* were still clearly distinguished. However, the latter were granted so much of noble privilege that the difference between them, at least in law, began to wither away. By the end of the century both groups had been regarded and termed *nobiles*. The elected justices of the county were still occasionally (e.g. in 1330) called *iudices servientium*, and retained this name in its Hungarian translation for centuries, but while in 1290 they were referred to simply as "four nobles" or "good men", in the law XLV: 1290 they are called *iudices nobilium*. The *servientes*, together with the former castle-warriors and other free landowning men, became what is usually called the "lesser nobility". In 1351 they achieved full noble privilege, without, of course, having changed their inferior social and economic situation vis-à-vis the aristocracy.

The noble opposition that in 1222 demanded the change of government and forced the issue of the Golden Bull was headed by the king's oldest son, Prince Béla (King Béla IV, 1235–1270). The crown prince had abundant reasons to be opposed to his father's policies. As a child he witnessed in 1213 the murder of his mother by a palace conspiracy, few members of which were duly punished by Andrew; while growing up, he saw the collapse of the monarchical power that his grandfather and idol, Béla III had consolidated. Upon his ascension to the throne, the conspirators of 1213 were brought to justice, the counsellors of Andrew tried, and attempts were made at reversing the decline of the royal domain. These *recuperationes*, the king's anti-baronial policy and also his impatient, rigid personal behaviour made him highly unpopular in the country, just when the most serious outside danger rose on the horizon.

In the course of their westward move, the Mongols had captured Kiev in January 1241 and turned towards Hungary. Besides the king and his entourage the threat from the east was dismissed lightly or not believed at all. Béla, aware of his weak position, offered sanctuary to the heathen Cumans, fleeing from the Mongols, in the hope that they might increase the royal host by war-like troops, familiar with the menacing enemy. However, this move was not received favourably in Hungary. The chief of the Cumans was murdered, whereupon they left the country, burning and pillaging on their way. The small Hungarian detachment protecting the so-called

Russian Gate in the Carpathians was swept away by Batu Khan's army in early March and a month later the royal host suffered ignominious defeat from their hands. Béla IV escaped to western Hungary, while two thirds of the country were at the mercy of the Mongols. The Danube slowed down their advance for a short while, but when in the hard winter of 1241–42 it froze solid, the Mongols crossed it and marched against Esztergom, sending a raiding party towards Dalmatia, where Béla had found refuge. The news of the death of the Great Khan in Central Asia cut their campaign short: Batu found it necessary to return home and the Mongols left Hungary.

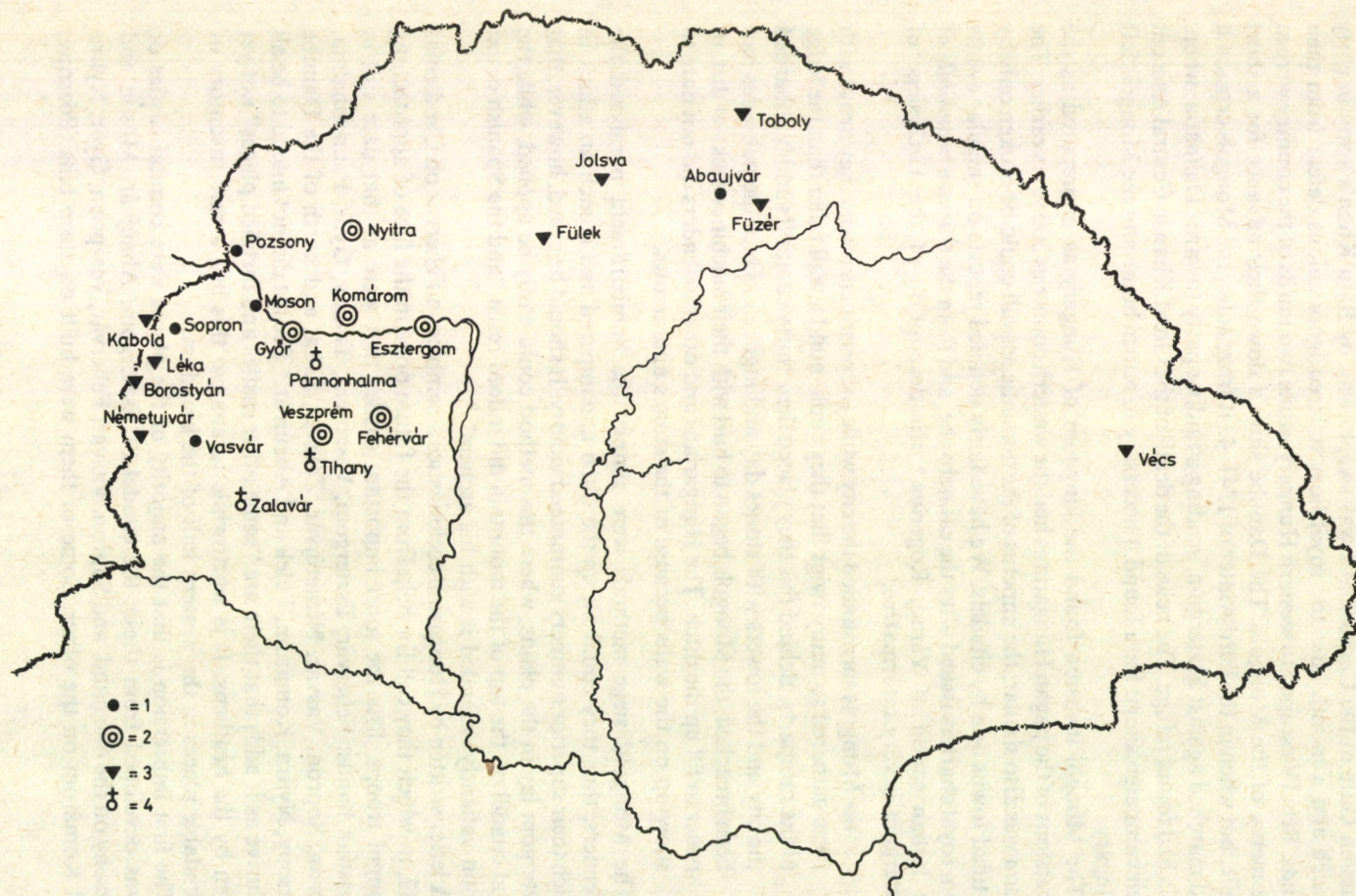
The Mongol invasion found the kingdom of Hungary as unprepared as the incursions of the pagan Hungarians had the western countries 300 years earlier. The lesson was also similar: the impetus of the nomadic assault could be broken only by fortified towns and by citadels. We have fairly detailed reports on singular events from royal charters issued after the catastrophe, and from the *Carmen miserabile* of the Italian canon of Várad, Rogerius.⁶ His description of the 1242 siege of Esztergom is very informative:

... the Mongols surrounded the city while the prisoners whom they drove with them gathered so many twigs that they could build a wall taller than the ledge of the ramparts. Behind this they placed their thirty catapults and bombarded the city and the towers with stones day and night ... Once the palisades had been breached, the Mongols began to hurl with their machines sacks of dirt, in order to fill up the ditch. The Hungarians and other defenders did not dare to show up on the walls because of the stones and arrows.⁷

The Mongols' siege methods were simple: the bombardment paralyzed the defenders, thus they could fill up the ditch unhampered and launch an attack in which their superior numbers guaranteed victory. It should be noted, however, that Esztergom lay in the plains, where this method could easily be applied, while the royal citadel on the top of the mountain did indeed resist "and the Spanish count Simon valiantly defended it with his archers".⁸

A letter written by Hungarian ecclesiastics assembled in Fehérvár on Candlemas 1242, in which they call for help from the future pope in the face of approaching Mongol troops, lists the most important castles that were at that date still in Christian hands: Fehérvár, Esztergom, Veszprém, Tihany, Győr, Pannonhalma, Moson, Sopron, Vasvár, Németújvár, Zalavár, Léka, and north of the Danube Pozsony, Nyitra, Komárom, Fülek and Abaújvár.⁹ The list did not intend to be all inclusive as it adds that there are "some other castles and fortified places" not yet taken by the heathens. It is worthwhile to analyse this list, a rare inventory of defendable places in the western half of the kingdom.

The first impression is that the majority of the places were comital castles or towns developed from these: the citadel of Esztergom, Abaújvár, Moson and Pozsony on the one hand, and Sopron, Vasvár, Fehérvár, Veszprém, Győr, Nyitra and Komárom on the other. Some of them were built on steep hills (Pozsony,



Map 3. Fortifications holding out against the Mongols, Candlemas 1242
 1 = county center; 2 = town; 3 = new-style stone castle; 4 = fortified monastery

Abaújvár, Veszprém, Nyitra), others protected by various geographical advantages from the Mongolian siege tactics described by Rogerius. According to another report,¹⁰ Fehérvár was saved by the thawing of the surrounding marshes; Komárom must have profited from the confluence of the Rivers Vág and Danube. But there are two groups which were not county seats. The first consists of monasteries, fortified and protected by their geographical location: Zalavár, as we know, stood on a fortified island, Tihany and Pannonhalma on high hills. Rogerius mentions that other monasteries were also hastily fortified and the population of the area sought refuge there "as in a strong fort", but being built in the plains, they could not resist the Mongol attacks.¹¹ Three castles belong to a third group: Némétújvár, Fülek and Léka were neither comital castles, nor earthworks. They belonged to a type as yet unknown in Hungary: the stone castle built on a summit.

From the 72 comital centres known to have existed in the late twelfth century 29 were in the Mongol-occupied part of the country: only six could be held against their attacks, all but one built on a elevated site. The balance is sad and fully supports Pauler's diagnosis that "those earth- or mudpies that [before 1241] used to be called castles"¹² could not resist the attack even of a nomadic horde not particularly versed in and equipped for siege warfare.

The letter of 2 February 1242 also mentions that there were "other fortified places" where Hungarians found shelter. If we assume that the major castles and towns were listed by name, the "other places" may very well have been those "unrecorded" earthworks which we have already assumed to have served as refuges. They are mentioned in more than one source, including Rogerius' *Carmen*. He describes how he had reached one, fleeing from the destroyed cathedral town of Gyulafehérvár:

Some ten miles hence is a village near the forest, called Fatra in the vernacular, and beyond the woods a marvellously tall mountain with an awful rock on its top. Great many men and women fled there and received us kindly, in tears. . . . We stayed with them for a whole month, not daring to leave, but occasionally sending out scouts . . .¹³

In this case a remote summit had been fortified and served as a refuge against the Mongols. The second reference dates from half a century later, but refers back to 1241 and to a minor Mongol raid of 1285. Law X:1298 stipulated that castles built after King Béla IV's death be razed. In an undated charter from c. 1289-1301 three magnates, sent to Co. Borsod by the king to inspect the enforcement of this law, report that there is a castle in Velezd, built by *comes* Miklós *de genere* Hont with permission from King Ladislas IV in 1284.¹⁴ The royal commissioners were told by the local nobles what they knew themselves, that

before the castle had been built at that place an uncounted multitude of Christians found refuge from the ruthless killing by the Mongols and even recently a great number of Christians was saved from the attack of the godless Tartars.¹⁵

The name of the castle is, characteristically, not mentioned in the royal licence, nor in the commissioners' report; hence it can be grouped with the "undocumented" ones. Its site was found by field survey and proved to be an earthwork on top of a hill: a typical refuge-fort. Clearly, experience had shown that the place was defensible and that is why the nobleman asked for the licence to build a stone castle there. The third case is not as clear as the others. In a charter of 1245 King Béla acknowledges the merits of a castle warrior family, having—during the Mongol invasion—"fortified a mountain on their inherited possession, commonly called Dánoskő, where they preserved many of our subjects unharmed and uninjured".¹⁶ This castle, later called Ajnácskő, was a small fortification that may have offered already in 1241 refuge behind some kind of improvised banks.¹⁷ These refuge-forts were mentioned in the sources, because they survived the Mongol attack; the many others that did not, were forgotten. Whatever their number may have been, and however better chances some of these forts on hilltops may have had—the time of the earthwork castle was definitely over.

Besides the above-mentioned three there were a few more stone-built castles in 1241. Historical sources list three on the western border, three in northern Hungary and one in Transylvania: altogether ten.¹⁸ In comparison to the seventy-two county seats they were indeed an insignificant minority, thus King Béla IV spoke the truth when he wrote in 1250 to the Pope that the country had to face the Mongol attack "almost without any castles and garrisons".¹⁹ The new-type castles were spread rather unevenly. Half of them lie along the River Lajta (Leitha), the other five in different corners of the kingdom. The Transylvanian one guarded the salt-road, another the iron mines of Gömör; Toboly and Fülek rose above main trade routes, Füzér alone, in Co. Abaúj, had any military significance. In a word: the only significant cluster of stone-castles stood next to the western border where the king of Hungary was faced with an adversary armed up to date for the age.

Even more conspicuous is the fact that only three of them were in private hands (Fülek, Kabold and Füzér), but one of these may have been originally built by the king. Füzér was built by Andronicus *de genere* Aba and Kabold by Pósa *d.g.* Szák. In 1241 the Transylvanian Vécs was also private possession, as it had been given away as early as 1228 by King Andrew II. Apparently no castle, at any rate none with a standing garrison and of some military importance, was built by a private lord in Hungary before 1220.²⁰ Kabold castle (between 1222 and 1229) might have been the first, followed by Füzér, still under Andrew II. In other words: when, after the massive alienation of the royal domain, the king began—as Andrew II himself stated—to donate castles, and at the same time private landlords had an opportunity to build theirs, the king ceased to be the sole proprietor of castles in Hungary.

The lords of the new-style castles, be they recipients of royal ones or builders of their own, came from a small group of magnates in the closest entourage of the ruler. Vécs was given to Dénes *d.g.* Tomaj, who has been royal marshal in 1222–4 and *magister tavernicorum* (chamberlain) in 1224–30, both high household offices.²¹

Pósa of Kabold must have been a personal confidant of Andrew II, as he stayed in Greece as a hostage for the king.²² Still, however limited the circle may have been, the ice was broken and the road to private castles, at any rate with royal licence, open.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ Fügedi 1974.

² Hóman, 1939, I: 403–4.

³ *MES* I: 216: *terre nostre statum ab antiquis illibate conservatum alterantes, castra, comitatus, terras et ceteros totius opulentis Hungarie proventus in perpetuas hereditates nostris baronibus et militibus distribuimus.*

⁴ Tagányi, 1916, 11.

⁵ Zalai O. II: 643., cf. Holub, 1929, 98.

⁶ *MÉL* II: 528.

⁷ Rogerius cap. 39, *SRH* II: 584–585: *Ecce una dierum Tartari civitatem circumdederunt et captivi, qui cum eis erant, tot ramorum disciculos portaverunt, quod in una parte civitatis supra fossati supercilium altum murum simul et semel de fasciculis construxerunt et statim post murum illum dietas triginta machinas posuerunt ita, quod die noctuque ad civitatem et ad turres ligneas lapides emittebant . . . Cum vero Tartari munitiones ligneas destruxissent, saccos plenos de terra ad implendum fossata cum machinis emittebant. Verum nullus ex Hungaris et aliis audebat in fossati supercilio comparere propter lapides et sagittas.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, cap. 40: *Castro civitatis non expugnato, in quo erat comes Simeon Hispanus cum multis ballistariis, qui se viriliter defendebant.*

⁹ *MIÖG* 35 (1915), 668.

¹⁰ According to the chronicle of Thomas, archdeacon of Spalato/Split, Gombos, 1938, 2241.

¹¹ Rogerius cap. 37, *SRH* II: 582.

¹² Pauler, 1899, II: 196.

¹³ Rogerius cap. 40, *SRH* II: 588: *Et erat ibi ad decem miliaria iuxta silvam villa, que Frata dicitur in vulgari, et infra silvam ad quatuor miliaria mons mirabilis et excelsus, in cuius summitate lapis et petra fundabatur terribilis; magna ibi hominum et mulierum confugerat multitudo, qui nos gratanter cum fletu receperunt . . . Mansimus igitur ibidem uno mense nec fuimus ausi discedere, sed mittebamus semper speculatores ex hominibus levioribus . . .*

¹⁴ *DI*, 75, 163.

¹⁵ Fejér, *CD* V/2: 240; *RA* 3317.

¹⁶ *RA* 1828.

¹⁷ Fügedi, 1977, 98–99.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98, 134, 146, 147, 170, 174, 205, 210.

¹⁹ Fejér, *CD* V/2: 222; *RA* 934: *regno nostro fere penitus fortaliciis et defensoribus immunito . . .*

²⁰ Hajnik, 1872, 77.

²¹ Karácsonyi, 1901, III: 105.

²² *Ibid.*, III: 40.

III

KING BÉLA IV AND CASTLE BUILDING

After the retreat of the Mongols, King Béla returned and began the reconstruction of his kingdom. It is to his credit that he realized the consequences of his earlier policies and was courageous enough to return to his father's previously disapproved procedures. He granted extensive donations to his faithful men and did his utmost to strengthen the defense of the realm. As to the castles, it was not difficult to draw the lessons of the Mongol attack: hardly any of them stood up to the demands, hardly any town in the kingdom was able to protect its inhabitants. The old castles had to be rebuilt and new ones added. Not only did the king begin to accomplish these tasks but, having changed his policies vis-à-vis the magnates, he also encouraged the great lords to do so. These activities took a great upsurge around 1247, when a new Mongol attack seemed to approach. Although it did not materialise, it was in these years that the king re-settled the German burghers of Pest on the castle hill of Buda and the citizens of Fehérvár and Esztergom into the castle, even though the latter moves challenged the ecclesiastical lords of the towns.¹

The king spoke about his intentions in several charters. He stated that in order to "increase, protect and strengthen" the population decimated by the ordeal of the Mongol invasion,² he had, with the unanimous consent of his barons and the council of the entire realm,³ "granted the places suitable for fortification to those of his faithful who had the knowledge and faculty to build castles".⁴ In later charters he went so far as to say that the king "ordered that in the entire territory subject to his crown castles be built on suitable sites where the people may find refuge if they have to retreat from threatening dangers".⁵ In order to accomplish this, the king commanded that privately owned sites for castle building "be given to a group of people for the purpose of construction". Unfortunately, we cannot establish what was meant by the peculiar expression *multitudo hominum*; one might assume that the reference is to those voluntary groups, such as villages, inhabitants of an estate or a small region, that had built the refuges before and during the Mongol invasion. But the charter contradicts this assumption, continuing with this clause: "if the site is under the king's jurisdiction, it shall be given to private persons or churches or prelates for use and they shall assign the fortified places to those who will take care of erecting such refuges".⁶ The king's programme is obvious from these passages: not only the comital castles serving their counties were to be rebuilt, but several minor ones which could protect the population of their limited *Hinterland*. No doubt, it was the great landowners in the king's entourage who had the financial

means and knowledge to erect castles, and it was also they who supported these policies. Perhaps the *multitudo* refers to the people of their estates.

A number of charters permits us to reconstruct the king's procedures. On some sites suitable for fortification he himself ordered the building of a castle, as he did on the royal estates in Szepes where the fortress was named "from that Marcell who first tilled the soil there" Marcellvár.⁷ Many such sites were given in donation. For example the "fairly suitable place for castle-building, called Szársomlyó" in Co. Baranya was given to Miklós, chamberlain of the king's brother, Prince Kálmán. The recipient "built there a castle at his own cost and money . . . for the defense of his person and the advantage of the country".⁸ In Slavonia the king granted the mountain Lipóc to a man who then "at his own expense, for the honour and defense of the realm"⁹ erected a castle. Sometimes the procedure was more complex. Thus, for example, we read in a charter of 1247 that the *jobagiones castri* of Bolondóc sued a certain Márk for two properties. The king found against the plaintiffs; however, on one of the properties there was "a place suitable for fortification", but as Márk complained that he was too poor "to have the means to gird the mountain by wall and ditch", the king redeemed the estate for 50 mark of silver and granted it to a great landowner of his retinue, *comes* Detre.¹⁰ While the charter does not state it in so many words, Márk's complaint implies that the possession of the mountain imposed the duty of castle-building on its proprietor. This implication also explains why some castle warriors of Borsod parted with a third of their property in Dédes and gave it to the powerful Miskolc clan in 1247 "in order that they erect a fort on top of the rock".¹¹ The formal justification behind all this can be found in another charter containing the donation of the hilly island of Szigliget in Lake Balaton to the Abbot of Pannonhalma. The island was the property of the king's son, whom Béla convinced "paternally" to resign in favour of the abbey. Prince Stephen dutifully "considering that the intention and admonition of our lord and father is salutary and divinely inspired" agreed to the transaction.¹² In the subsequent royal charter we read that the king "in order to facilitate the realization of this salutary provision [i.e. the building of a castle — E. F.] proceed so that if a private person acquired a fortifiable site by exchange or other means, it should be handed over to a group of men for fortification."¹³ The charter is also unequivocal as to the initiative of the king: it was he who persuaded his son and decided to give (*destinavimus*) the island to the abbey, it "being powerful and rich enough" to have a castle erected.¹⁴ These examples suggest that the king did his utmost to impose the duty of castle-building at every opportunity.

The above-mentioned case of Marcellvára tells us even more. Although the king started the construction, it had been interrupted and by 1250 the incomplete building had stood for many years unguarded. The people of the county did not complete the task and take over the guard, in spite of the king's repeated commands and encouragements, but purported that they were unable to carry the expenses of the construction. "The king", so the charter continues, "had even contemplated having the unfinished building destroyed", but then decided to grant it, with two

villages, to the Provost of Szepes.¹⁵ This charter does not mention any castle-building duties either, but they are implied in its *narratio*; and the two villages were the compensation for fulfilling them. Furthermore, to make matters perfectly clear, in 1278 King Ladislas IV confirmed this charter "although there was still no progress in the construction".¹⁶

The wave of castle-building after the Mongol invasion has been well-known in Hungarian historical research for over a hundred years.¹⁷ It has been maintained that "the entire country participated enthusiastically" in this enterprise and was impressed by the moral strength of King Béla for having reversed his policies in the face of failure. While this may have been so, "the entire country" consisted, in fact, of the lords and prelates who only enhanced their own power by building castles. As to 'enthusiasm', there was probably more pressure than voluntary action. When in 1266 the king made peace with his rebellious son and ceded a part of the realm to his administration, a special clause was inserted on castle-building: "We shall not force [the people of Stephen] to build or maintain nor shall we tax them for maintaining or building castles."¹⁸

Whatever the king's procedures may have been, what counted were the results: How did the castle-building activity after 1241 change the sad picture of ten castles worth that name, noted in the previous chapter?

Elsewhere, I have attempted to collect statistical evidence on castles that existed in thirteenth-fourteenth century Hungary, with the exception of the comital castles.¹⁹ I tried to establish the builders of castles and the date of their construction. Our sources mention possessions and castles essentially when there was some kind of change in their legal status, e.g. when the king gave them away or they changed hands through sale, exchange, inheritance or partition of property. Of course, confiscation for felony or the like was also such a legal change. Occasionally a castle features as a place of an important event, or from which a document was issued. As to the date of a castle's construction these sources mostly supply a *terminus ante quem*. So, for instance, we know that the armies of King Béla and *rex junior* Stephen met at the foot of castle Déva in 1265, hence this castle must have been built before that date. Sometimes we may get a *terminus post quem* as well. The castle of Dévény—at the Austrian border—was besieged and taken by the troops of King Ottokar II of Bohemia in 1271; however, when the Austrians pillaged the western countryside in 1233 and burned down the town of Dévény no mention was made of any castle. Hence castle Dévény must have been built between 1233 and 1271. In such a case we cannot decide at what point during the rather long period between the fixed dates the castle was actually built: Dévény might have been erected soon after 1231, to forestall similar devastation, but it may also have been built in the 1250's under the increasing threat from Bohemia, or even later. In order to avoid unfounded speculations, we may always opt for the earliest authentic mention by which token we (a) avoid any error of dating a castle older than it actually was, but (b) we construct a statistical table "on the safe side" and may reconstruct a slower development than the actual one. The following *Table 1* (based on my earlier

calculations with the inclusion of the comital castles) is such a conservative estimate: it is quite certain that castle-building in the thirteenth century proceeded with a greater speed than suggested here.

Table 1. Castle-building in Hungary, 1241–1400

Period	New	Total	Period	New	Total
1242–1250	17	27	1321–1330	33	269
1251–1260	6	33	1331–1340	15	284
1261–1270	30	63	1341–1350	10	294
1271–1280	25	88	1351–1360	11	305
1281–1290	39	127	1361–1370	12	317
1291–1300	35	162	1371–1380	3	320
1301–1310	21	183	1381–1390	5	325
1311–1320	53	236	1391–1400	19	344

As we can see, the table would suggest that the smallest number of castles were built immediately after the Mongol invasion and the largest number in the 1311–1320 period, during the succession crisis and civil war between Angevin supporters and their opponents. This is related to the fact that most castles are first mentioned when Charles recaptured them from the opposing oligarchs: not less than seventeen of the total fifty-three are mentioned in such a context. There may very well have been earlier records of these castles, but they got lost during their reconquest or during the illegal occupation of the property by usurpers. The example of castle Szinnye may explain what is meant here.²⁰ The introduction of an authentic copy issued in 1311 records that Miklós Szinnyi protested in his own name and in that of his brother Péter at the convent of the Hospitallers in Esztergom that Amadé's son János *d.g.* Aba had occupied their property and castle in Szinnyefalva, captured his brother whom he held still in irons and whom he threatened to kill unless they hand over "those privilegial charters by which the aforementioned possessions were held by them and their ancestors". Miklós, "hounded by fear", requested an authentic copy of the charter of King Béla IV of 1262 and admitted that he was about to hand over the original to the violent usurper.²¹ This case demonstrates the "technology" of usurpation: the powerful did not only occupy the estate and (if there was one) the castle of the weaker, but attempted to eliminate the authentic records of the original holder's legal title. The Szinnyi were exceptionally lucky for not having kept the parchments, as was the usual practice, in their castle and thus Miklós was able to reach a place beyond the territory of the "petty kingdom" of the Aba clan, where he could procure a transcript: his luck is also ours as through this *vidimus* we have a copy of the 1262 donation charter. For our statistics, then, we have to correct the date of Szinnye moving it back into the five decades between 1262 and 1311, with a certain probability to ca. 1287. Had Miklós Szinnyi not managed to escape to Esztergom and had he only raised his claim after the battle of Rozgony in which Charles

defeated the troops of János Aba, we would have only a *terminus ante* of 1312. Such corrections may be necessary, but not possible, for many other dates, hence we must be sceptical about the speed of castle-building suggested by *Table 1*.

If we attempt to correct that table by assuming, as we did in the case of Szinnye, that castles were built just around the middle of the period for which we have evidence, we get a considerably different picture:

Table 2. Castle-buildings in Hungary 1242–1320 (corrected)

Period	New	Total	Period	New	Total
1242–1250	17	27	1281–1290	44	151
1251–1260	9	36	1291–1300	36	187
1261–1270	29	65	1301–1310	22	209
1271–1280	32	97	1311–1320	37	246

These figures indeed prove that the efforts of Béla IV did bear fruits in the last decade of his reign (1261–70): twenty-nine new castles were built in those ten years, more than in the preceding eighteen. However tentative and approximate even our corrected figures may be, they tend to support the traditional view about the accelerated castle-building activity in the later decades of King Béla IV's reign: between 1251 and 1270 more fortifications were built than ever before in Hungary. It is worth noting that the peak was reached in the 1280's, during the reign of King Ladislas IV (1272–1290).

The evidence of charters suggests that this task was jointly fulfilled by the king and the lords secular and spiritual, hence it may be worthwhile to augment the preceding tables by another, detailing the builders of castles where this is known.

Table 3. Newly built castles according to their builder, 1242–1330

Period	Built	Builder known	Royal	Period	Built	Builder known	Royal
1242–50	17	15	6	1281–1290	44	37	—
1251–60	9	9	9	1291–1300	36	32	2
1261–70	29	27	6	1301–1310	22	19	1
1271–80	30	30	9	1311–1320	37	25	10

This table is very instructive insofar as it correctly suggests the decline of royal construction activity between 1281 and 1310. The reign of Ladislas IV is regarded as the nadir of royal power, and this is appropriately reflected in the fact that the king had not built a single castle after 1281. The situation did improve somewhat under the last king of the founding Árpád-dynasty, Andrew III (1290–1301), but not much. The greatest disadvantage of these statistics is that they still do not reflect the situation under Béla IV: for this we have to adduce data relating to the reconstruction of the comital castles.

While we have no sufficient information to construct a statistical table for these, there is relatively good evidence about the reconstruction or reorganisation of several county centres. Pozsony was reconstructed in the middle of the thirteenth century, the first step having been the relocation of the provost's church. In 1245 we are told that the castle-warrior family Csukárdi had built a tower in the castle with their own means and committed themselves to defend it in case of attack; for this they received an estate.²² Similarly, in the castle of Szepes, the provost received from the king in 1249 "a place necessary for the building of a tower and a palace" with the note that the provost "undertook to build them".²³ In both cases King Béla, true to the programme described in his charters, managed to mobilize the resources of knights and clergy for the reconstruction, just as he did for the building of new castles; the policy of placing a group in charge of the construction was also transferred to renovations. This may also have been the case with castle Komárom. The old comital centre stood on a small island at the confluence of the Rivers Vág and Danube and was, as we have mentioned, able to withstand the Mongol attacks. In those days it was in the hands of two Jewish money-lenders, royal *comites camerae*, who then handed it over to the queen as payment for a debt, and she passed it on to a burgher of Buda. This burgher rebuilt the castle some time before 1265 for which he received the vast royal domains surrounding it as a reward.²⁴ Five other comital centres are known to have been rebuilt, two of which are particularly interesting for the counties of which they were the centres were about to fall apart or vanish.²⁵

There were also comital castles that did not seem to be worth rebuilding after the Mongols had devastated them. Béla IV apparently tried to sustain the system of royal counties, insofar as he wanted to maintain their central castle: if the old one had to be abandoned for whatever reason, he caused a new one to be erected. This was the case in the eastern county of Borsova, where castle Borsova was not reconstructed and castle Bereg became the new central place of the county. The reasons for this are easy to guess: Borsova lies on the plains, at the confluence of the Rivers Tisza and Borsova, while Bereg was built on the top of a hill.²⁶

There were also other newly built comital castles, especially in the royal forests, where the count's residence was not an earth-castle but a royal *curia*.²⁷ The new castles of the former forests of Patak and Torna were built in Patak and in Szádvár, replacing the *curiae* of Patak and Görgő, respectively. The castle of Sáros was built between 1248 and 1262 also as such a new centre.²⁸ The forest districts gradually changed into regular royal, and later noble, counties, with Co. Zólyom at their lead, that had already in the twelfth century an earthwork castle as its centre. This was replaced in 1246–54 by a hill-top stone castle, of which we even know the stonemason by name.²⁹ We also read about some old-style castles which took a kind of intermediate position between the abandoned old and newly built fortifications: Abaújvár, Borsod and Baranyavár were not reconstructed after the Mongol invasion, only repaired. This led, in the long run, to their demise: by the end of the century they had been in such a bad shape that they were abandoned.³⁰ For the sake

of completeness, we have to admit that in seven cases we have no information at all about the fate of comital castles in the later thirteenth century. Their existence before and after 1241 is beyond doubt, but the references to them are so fragmentary that we cannot establish whether they were repaired, rebuilt or replaced. Most of them are castles of the southern parts where all archives were lost during the Turkish era.³¹

In the remaining dozen known cases the reconstruction was mostly done at the behest of the king, which must have placed quite a heavy burden on the population of the counties. An earthwork was no more regarded a sufficient defense: stone walls had to be erected with a tower inside. Such projects can be safely regarded as new constructions and it is reasonable to add them to the newly founded castles:

Table 4. Castle building in Hungary under Béla IV, 1242–1270

Period	Castles built			Founder known	Royal
	new	reconstr.	total		
1242–50	17	3	20	18	9
1251–60	9	6	15	15	15
1261–70	29	4	31	30	9

This table gives a much better picture of the castle-building activity under Béla IV; while it is true that the initial impetus after the Mongol invasion had slowed down in the 1250's, during the entire three decades twice as many castles were built than there were altogether in pre-1241 Hungary; all of them were stone-built, mostly on some kind of elevation. More than half of this construction work was carried out by the crown and the results of the first twenty years after the disaster are impressive, indeed. If we add to this that Béla IV had also supported the fortification of towns, we may in fact accept the judgment that no medieval ruler did as much for the country's defense as he, even though he relented somewhat in his efforts after 1260, when his energies were taken up by the struggle with the opposition led by his son, Stephen. As we recall, the 1266 agreement virtually restricted Béla IV's efforts at new construction projects to his half of the country.³² To this we have to add that, owing to the magnitude of the task, the attempts were not always successful. Not only the efforts of the Saxons in Szepes fell short of completing Marcellvára, but we also hear of a nobleman in Körmend who started to build a tower, but ran out of money and could finish it only after the king had granted him an additional estate.³³

Evidence suggests that the building or at least the maintenance of the old-style castles was not totally abandoned. When we read that in 1287 the men of the Héder clan destroyed the castle that stood on the property of János Csukárdi, and it is never mentioned again, we have to assume that it was nothing more than a wooden tower surrounded by a wall. This seems to be also the case with the *terra Zalak* (Co. Vas) that was sold in 1278 with *loco castri*, its old ditches and banks. These

“castle sites” feature in several records, both in the possession of great clans and minor nobles. Probably the castles called Buzád-, Terestyén- and Lancrertornya (“-tornya” = its tower) on the properties of the Hahót clan, that vanished without a trace, were just such earth and wooden defenses.³⁴

Table 4 also draws attention to those who, supporting the king's policies, expended their own means for building castles. Out of the sixty-three castles whose founders are known to us, thirty were built on private initiative. The castle builders were above all the immediate companions of the king and the major officers of the realm. Their position in the power structure and their financial possibilities are suggested by the emergence of several multiple castle-owners. Pál Geregye, governor of eastern Hungary (1242–49) and Chief Justice (1248–51)³⁵ owned two castles (Adorján and Sólyomkő), as did Arnold *d.g.* Hahót, Count Palatine in 1242, lord of Pölöske and Purbach at the western border.³⁶ Henrik *d.g.* Héder, one of the most devoted men of the old king in his last years and holder of several high offices, erected Szalonak and Szentvid for certain, and perhaps Monyorókerék as well.³⁷ Other castle founders, likewise from the king's council, included the builder of Dédes, Ernye *d.g.* Ákos, Chief Justice between 1248 and 1269.³⁸ For equity's sake we should, however, point out that not only the greatest clans were represented among the castle builders: about half of the remaining twenty privately built castles were erected by lesser nobles. They include simple knights from among the *jobagiones castri*, and even one totally unknown person, Farkas Zagorjei who had founded two castles in the west of Slavonia: Kosztel and Oszterc.

The negative side should not be overlooked either. There were two archbishoprics, ten bishoprics and several great Benedictine abbeys in the country, all of them, just like Pannonhalma, “rich enough” as the king had put it, and certainly able to finance the building of castles. After the Mongol invasion the pope expressly admonished the Hungarian episcopate to assist the king in enhancing the country's defenses.³⁹ Still, among those who have built castles between 1242 and 1270 only one bishop (that of Zágráb) and one abbot (of Pannonhalma) is listed. The bishop of Eger received a licence to build a castle, but—at least at the specified site, Füzérkö—no castle was built until much later. The absence of the prelates can be explained by the fact that their residences were all fortified cities and they did not see the need—yet—to erect castles for the defense of their properties. The Bishop of Zágráb needed a castle as his see was not fortified before. That the king took away his castle Medvevár for the safe-keeping of the royal treasures and did not return it to the bishop until 1273,⁴⁰ may not have exactly encouraged other prelates to follow his example.

On a map showing the location of the castles newly built by the king and the lords (Map 4), it is conspicuous that they are mainly along the borders of the kingdom. Most of the castles are near the Austrian-Bohemian border and some of the northern and northeastern sites can be regarded as border areas as well. Of the sixty-six castles built after 1242 only seventeen stood in the central parts of the country.⁴¹ If we add the older stone-built castles, the ratio changes somewhat, but



Map 4. Castles built before 1270

the over-all picture remains the same, considering that seven of the ten were near the frontiers, and another six of the reconstructed ones (Pozsony, Trencsén, Magyaróvár, Szepes, Sáros and Bereg, all at or near the borders) can be counted into the same group. In thirty years a new border system had been established, based on the new-style castles. Paradoxically, this development was concentrated to the western frontier—just a few years after the devastating attack of the Mongols that came from the east.

Another puzzle is posed by the king's policy in alienating border castles from the crown. As we have seen, in 1242 the western border fortifications were overwhelmingly in royal hands. The king placed great importance on these strongholds in the continuous Hungarian-Bohemian wars; in order to secure the western entrances, in 1263 he entrusted the castles Pozsony, Sopron, Magyaróvár and Nyitra to his favourite son, Prince Béla of Slavonia. The weight of this step can be gauged from the fact that a papal confirmation was also procured for it.⁴² King Béla suffered many grave blows in his old age, one of the severest ones was the death of Prince Béla in 1269 by which the system of western border defense became lordless. It is the more noteworthy that of the nine border castles built in the years 1242–1270 between the Rivers Drava and Danube now only one, Dobra, was erected on royal initiative. This meant that the Hahót clan was exclusively in charge of the defense of the Medjumurje and *comes* Farkas of that of Zagorje. It is even more significant that in 1260–70 Count Palatine Henrik *d.g.* Héder received two royal castles to his own two new ones: with Borostyán, Kőszeg, Szalonak and Szentvid in his hands he was virtually the sovereign lord of all entrances on a long section of the western border. Neither between his castles, nor west of them were there royal strongholds, thus it was an easy thing for Henrik to occupy the castles of the Hahót clan and of Farkas Zagorjei when, after the death of King Béla, he and his allies joined the side of King Ottokar. They took with them not less than twelve castles. By this, Ottokar of Bohemia acquired such an open road on the western frontier that he could have a castle built in Slavonia: Szamobor. *Comes* Henrik was certainly one of the king's most trusted counsellors. He held the highest secular office, the palatinate, for twelve years (1254–1266), and when Béla had to partition the country with his son, Henrik received the important post of banus of Slavonia. It is understandable that the king wanted to express his confidence and gratitude by lavish donation, but that he overrode all considerations of caution and granted a whole territory to him, is less so. This incomparable preference shown to *comes* Henrik and especially the alienation of such a cluster of castles was clearly a political mistake the extent of which became obvious immediately after the king's demise.

This favoritism vis-à-vis Henrik *d.g.* Héder is the more surprising as King Béla IV proved otherwise a very cautious and circumspect ruler. He acquired several castles, built by others if he found it advantageous. We spoke of the Bishop of Zagrab's Medvevár. Only three years after the original donation the king exchanged "the good and useful" castle Szigliget, built by the abbot of Pannonhalma "at a great

expense",⁴³ for some estates without a castle. The abbot of Szentgotthárd was induced to exchange a property with the king so that the border-castle of Dobra could be erected there.⁴⁴ These we may count as the king's traditional claim to the use of ecclesiastical property, a typical feature of medieval kingship. But the king also acquired by exchange castle Árva⁴⁵ that guarded the road towards Silesia and Poland with a secular lord. This suggests a conscious effort at increasing the number and quality of royal castles.

In spite of the changes in castle construction and the spread of the new-type castles, chancery practice in the thirteenth century did not change its Latin vocabulary. Old-style earthworks and new stone-built castles were equally called *castra*. There wasn't even consistent usage for the different size of fortifications: the solitary tower of Boldogkövára was *castrum*, but the same kind of tower in Körmend a *turris*, while the "tower of Simon" (Simontornya) was styled *castrum et turris* for good measure. If we add that the city of Fehérvár remained *castrum Albense* and that Béla IV described the foundation of Buda as *castrum . . . exstrui fecimus*,⁴⁶ we have to assume that the word in fact meant defenses in general, rather than castle in particular, including as it did a tower, a fortified monastery, a walled city and a castle proper alike. The continuity in the vocabulary is not unwarranted insofar as the new architecture did not change the basic functions of the castle. As a place protecting its occupants and their goods, stone castles served the same purpose as the earlier constructions. Besides, protection as the purpose, and fortification as the means characterized all the above-mentioned settlements with defenses. And they were all part of the over-all system of the country's defense, as were the castles.

Building techniques, on the other hand, had changed considerably from the earlier epoch. It used to be emphasized that the new-style castles were built on an elevation, which is true, but that was also true for a good many earthwork castle, such as the comital castle of Borsod or castle Pata.⁴⁷ However, the older castles mostly fortified the top of relatively small hills, while the new ones were erected on the summit of steeper mountains. A greater difference was, however, not so much in the elevation, but in the careful selection for the site of the new-style castles.⁴⁸ As a rule, such sites were chosen as rose steeply over their surroundings and were accessible only from a definite, narrow side, thus protecting the stronghold from an attack by catapults. In many cases a rock or a rocky peak was fortified, hence quite a lot of the castles had the word "kö" [= stone, rock] in their name. The other main difference had been seen in the building material. Therefore, the new castles were simply called "stone castles" in contrast to the earth banks of the old ones.⁴⁹ But as a matter of fact, some of the castles of the eleventh-twelfth century were built by some combination of stone and earth, such as the Roman walls of Sopron and Visegrád surmounted by earth ramparts or the dry-built stone façade of Zalavár's earth bank. Still, the new castles differed essentially from those in that their main building material was stone bound by mortar. We cannot yet determine the date of

the appearance of the new technology, but future archaeological study will certainly elucidate both that and the characteristic details of this building technique.

Considering all this, I am still convinced that the essential innovation was not topographical nor technological but structural, defined by socio-economic changes. The first notable difference is the legal one made between castles and other kinds of property. From the late fourteenth century onwards, royal licences for castle-building contain a clause that the grantee and his successors shall hold the castle "just like other nobles". In a charter of 1469 the chancery formulated this in the words, that they should *tenere... ad instar aliorum iurium suorum possessionariorum*.⁵⁰ The great compiler of medieval Hungarian customary law, István Werbőczy wrote in 1514 that widows are not to be excluded from the use of possessions and houses of their deceased husbands "unless that house is a castle, which cannot be handed over to her, but another residence, outside of the castle has to be designated for her instead".⁵¹ Even though this paragraph may not have correctly described medieval legal practice, a judgment of 1437 regarding castles Fraknó and Kabold seems to support Werbőczy's view. Pál Fraknói died without a male heir, leaving two daughters behind, whereupon his cousin on the father's side, Vilmos Fraknói, sued on the basis of medieval Hungarian inheritance law to obtain the castles. Pál's widow, however, declared that she was expecting a child from her deceased husband and therefore refused to hand over the strongholds. The two chief justices of the realm found that the castles would have to be partitioned between the parties and, if the widow bore a son, the division be regarded as final and she had the right to name a castellan for her son. If, however, her child were a girl, the division would be null and void, and both castles should be handed over to Vilmos.⁵² Another case is also relevant to this issue: in a will of 1415 the lord of Vöröskő near Pozsony specified that he wanted to designate *domum seu castrum superius, habitationem scilicet dominarum* to be the residence of his widow, but that the main tower (*turris maior*) should go to his sons.⁵³ This will modifies Werbőczy's contention, which must have been understood in such a way that the widow might remain in the castle, but she could not be its mistress, or commander. In other words, the castle was regarded as a greater seat of power rather than a possession in general, and this power was to be in the hands of men.

This custom, documented by these legal cases, refers, of course, to the fifteenth century when Hungarian society was already clearly divided into two major classes—nobles and tenants (*jobagiones*). The development of these two strata took several centuries. In the beginning of the thirteenth century it was still the privilege of the immigrant (mostly German) settlers to render set dues in kind and coin in return for a uniform sized holding (*leunes, lehen*). The indigenous peasants were still obliged to personal service; their field systems and the use of the commons are unfortunately unknown. In the middle of the century the older villages were gradually transformed along the lines of *hospites* status. Uniform *sessiones* (Hungarian: *telek*) were allotted to the families, for which they had to render monetary rent (*census*), dues in kind (*munera*) and boon work (*servitium, robot*) to

the landlord. This process, which has its parallels in twelfth-thirteenth century Poland and Bohemia, was essentially completed by the mid-fourteenth century.⁵⁴ The new element in the social and economic context of the castles was due exactly to these changes in the position of those whose work was to maintain them. On the surface it may appear that these were merely semantic. The *jobagiones castri* and the *castrenses* of the eleventh-twelfth centuries were in the same way obliged to guard and maintain the castle as the military retainers and the *jobagio*-tenants in the later Middle Ages; and the peasants on the castle's possessions submitted their dues to the lord in both periods. However, the ties of dependence were very different. In the earlier epoch the warrior and labourer subjects of the castle were attached personally to the one or the other *castrum*. There was, for instance, no such thing as "a" *jobagio castri*, only a *jobagio* of this or that *castrum*. From the fourteenth century onward the dependence of the tenants lost its immediacy: it became mediated by money. The new relationship was one of monetary arrangements: it was the tenants' payments that enabled the lords to build and maintain castles. Every tenant had a lord and their relations were defined not only by the rent but by those complex ties of dependence which we call dominion. For the fifteenth century our sources permit us to describe it in some detail. The contemporary expression, *dominium*, meant above all a great estate (*latifundium*), consisting of villages and within them more or less equal-sized tenant holdings, other agriculturally exploitable lands and sources of revenue. This is implied in the donation formula of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in which the castle "and its appurtenances" is usually described thus: *cum quibuslibet pertinentiis eiusdem, utpote terris cultis et incultis, silvis, nemoribus, pratis, pascuis, piscinis, aquis aquarumque decursibus ac aliis utilitatibus, emolumentis et commoditatibus universis*,⁵⁵ all this *sub suis veris metis et antiquis*. Sometimes additions or special emphases are inserted, such as *notanterque [cum] iure patronatus, quod ad ecclesias ibidem seu inibi existentes habere dinoscuntur*,⁵⁶ by which not only material rights are included. *Dominium* implied, besides the landed property, also power, i.e. the jurisdiction of the lord over his subjects and his right of patronage over the churches. The new type of castle is, therefore, best characterised as being connected to its lord's dominion over his tenants and, in turn, the *dominium* of the estate is concentrated in the castle. The castle ceased to serve merely as a defense of its area, but became the seat of the landowner, the treasury of his treasures and charters, the expression of his dominion over the tenants and the means of his exerting political power in the realm (or the power of the crown, if it was the king's castle). This transformation of function, reflecting the social changes that brought about the territorial amassed properties of the great estates with their dormant political significance, was the essentially new character of the castles of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, much more so than their site or their building material.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ Zolnay, 1963, 57–58; Fügedi, 1969, 128–129.

² Fejér, CD IV/2: 49; RA 904: *post subitam irruptionem Tartarorum grande dispendium pertulisset et de ipsis incolis, tam nobilibus quam inferioribus in maiori parte per praefatam gentem interemptis, paucis remansissent, ad eorum multiplicationem, tuitionem pariter et corroborationem modis debitis intendentes*

³ *Ibid.*, ÁÚO II: 320–321; RA 1244.

⁴ Fejér CD IV/2: 50; RA 904: *loca quaedam munitionibus apta communi baronum nostrorum consilio fidelibus nostris nosse et posse aedificandis habentibus regia auctoritate duximus conferenda.*

⁵ ÁÚO II: 320; RA 1244: *quod cum olim regno nostro depopulato a barbaris nationibus et a tyrannide Tartarorum permittente vel iubente Domino pene penitus devastato, timentes ne regnum ipsum ad exinanitionem ultimam deveniret, ac desiderantes, quod reliquie populi divina dispositione domino nostro subiecti providentia nostra salva forent, invocato baronum totius regni nostri consilio ordinavimus, quod in locis aptis in omnibus terris nostre subiectis munitiones fierent, castra surgerent, ubi se populus imminente persecutionis tempore salutis causa recipere posset et salvare...*

⁶ *Ibid.*: *si similis locus sub regia existeret potestate, is similiter privatorum vel ecclesiarum aut prelatorum donaretur usui, ut hoc adhibito moderamine loca fortia semper, illis deputarentur per quorum providentiam constructa refugia fierent plurium...*

⁷ Bárdossy, Suppl. 50; RA 933.

⁸ Fejér, CD IV/2: 50; RA 904: *ubi idem pro defensione personae suae et utilitate regni de nostro beneplacito suis sumptibus et expensis castrum sibi instruxit...*

⁹ HO VI: 59; RA 843: *montem quendam Lipouch nomine contulerimus pro castro construendo et idem suis propriis sumptibus et expensis ad honorem et confortationem regni fidelitate previa castrum extruxit in eadem...*

¹⁰ ÁÚO II: 195; RA 866: *postmodum autem idem Mark ad nostram accedens presentiam a nobis humiliter et instantissime postulavit, quod cum mole oppressus egestatis tantum in suis facultatibus non haberet unde montem supradictum posset circumdare et vallare...*

¹¹ *DI*, 84 765.

¹² ÁÚO II: 323; RA 1767.

¹³ ÁÚO II: 320; RA 1244: *Et ut huiusmodi salubris provisio commodius duceretur ad effectum hoc usi fuimus moderamine, quod si aliquis privatus locum optineret situm fortem permutationis seu alio iusto titulo, publicatus communiter alicui multitudini hominum deputaretur construendus...*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: *ut in ipsa eadem [sc. ecclesia] castrum edificaret, que ad id faciendum potens est et abundans...*

¹⁵ Bárdossy, Suppl. 50; RA 933: *nec provinciales aliqui ad commonitionem et exhortationem regiam ipsum castrum ad consummandum assumpserunt et servandum, imo penitus reclamaverunt se non posse sufficere ad ipsius castri edificia et onera supportare...*

¹⁶ Fejér, CD V/2: 440; RA 2903.

¹⁷ Czobor, 1877, 602; Gerő, 1955, 8.

¹⁸ ÁÚO III: 129; RA 1481: *Ad opus etiam castri vel castrorum edificandi vel edificandorum eos non compellimus, nec eis huiusmodi operis seu edificii nomine collectam aliquam indicemus.*

¹⁹ Based on Fügedi, 1977.

²⁰ *DI*, 70 150.

²¹ RA 1312.

²² Fejér, CD IV/1: 380; RA 812.

²³ Anal. Scepus. I: 294; RA 910: *quem et ipse [prepositus] assumpsit edificandum, muniendum et conservandum ad tutelam castri.*

²⁴ MES I.

²⁵ Bolondóc and Sempete; the former was rebuilt in 1264 (Cs. IV: 65–66.), the latter between 1261–79 (Fügedi, 1977, 54, n.154).

²⁶ Györffy, 1963, I: 534–5, 530–2.

²⁷ See above.

²⁸ Patak: Fügedi, 1977, 177; Szádvár *ibid.*, 193. — There are many unfounded views in currency about castle Sáros. According to Pison (1973, 335) it stood already in the eleventh century; Varsik (1964–73, I: 138) assumes that it was built before 1274 when the count of Sáros is first mentioned. Its castellan is first referred to in 1262 (*Dipl. Sáros* 513; *RA* 132), the charter of 1248 (*ibid.*, 457; *RA* 874) mentions no castle, hence it has to be dated between 1248 and 1262.

²⁹ Fügedi, 1977, 29; cf *RA* 1051.

³⁰ The guards of Abaújvár are still mentioned in 1254 (*ÁÚO* XI: 373; *RA* 946); its castellan is mentioned between 1330 and 1334 (Györffy, 1963, I: 61), but it must have been abandoned soon thereafter, because in 1393 the king granted a licence to build a new castle there (*Zsk.* I: 611). — Borsod must have collapsed even earlier, because in 1334 there was only a *fossatum vulgariter feldvár* (= földvár, earthwall) at its site (Györffy, 1963, I: 762). — Hont became a ruin some time in the later thirteenth century (Bakács, 1971, 47). — Baranyavár had certainly not been in existence by the end of the fourteenth century (*Cs.* II: 454, 456).

³¹ Namely: Gömör, Haram, Kapuvár, Keve, Pozsega, Temesvár and Valkó. Apparently Locsmánd was not rebuilt either, but the last word belongs to the spade (Prickler, 1972, 167).

³² See above, p. 33.

³³ *RA* 1041.

³⁴ Holub J.: *Zala megye történeti földrajza* [Historical geography of Co. Zala]. Unpublished ms. in the Balaton Múzeum, Keszthely, I: 127.

³⁵ Karácsonyi, 1901, II: 10–1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II: 117.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, II: 145, 147.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I: 102.

³⁹ Theiner, 1859, 204.

⁴⁰ Fügedi, 1977, 166.

⁴¹ Listed in Fügedi, 1977, 30.

⁴² Theiner, 1859, I: 254–5.

⁴³ Fejér, *CD* IV/3: 116; *RA* 1340.

⁴⁴ Fügedi, 1977, 125.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁶ *ÁÚO* IX: 242; *RA* 1043.

⁴⁷ See above.

⁴⁸ Nováki-Sándorfi-Miklós, 1979, 94.

⁴⁹ Used in this sense by Acsády, 1903, I: 313–5; Ágoston, 1913, 80–1; Molnár, 1949, 94.

⁵⁰ *DI.* 50 140: *constructumque ad instar aliorum iurium suorum possessionariorum... tenere valeant*

⁵¹ *Tripartitum* I: Tit. 98 § 4: *De loco tamen et domo curiaque solitiae residentiae mariti excludi mulier ipsa nequivit; nisi forsitan domus ea castrum fuerit, quod sibi non conceditur, sed domus alia mariti extra castrum alicubi sita ad habitandum eidem deputabitur.*

⁵² Sopron m. II: 268–9.

⁵³ Héderváry, I: 148.

⁵⁴ Fügedi, 1981, 121–33; Szűcs, 1981.

⁵⁵ Wenzel, 1874, 57.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

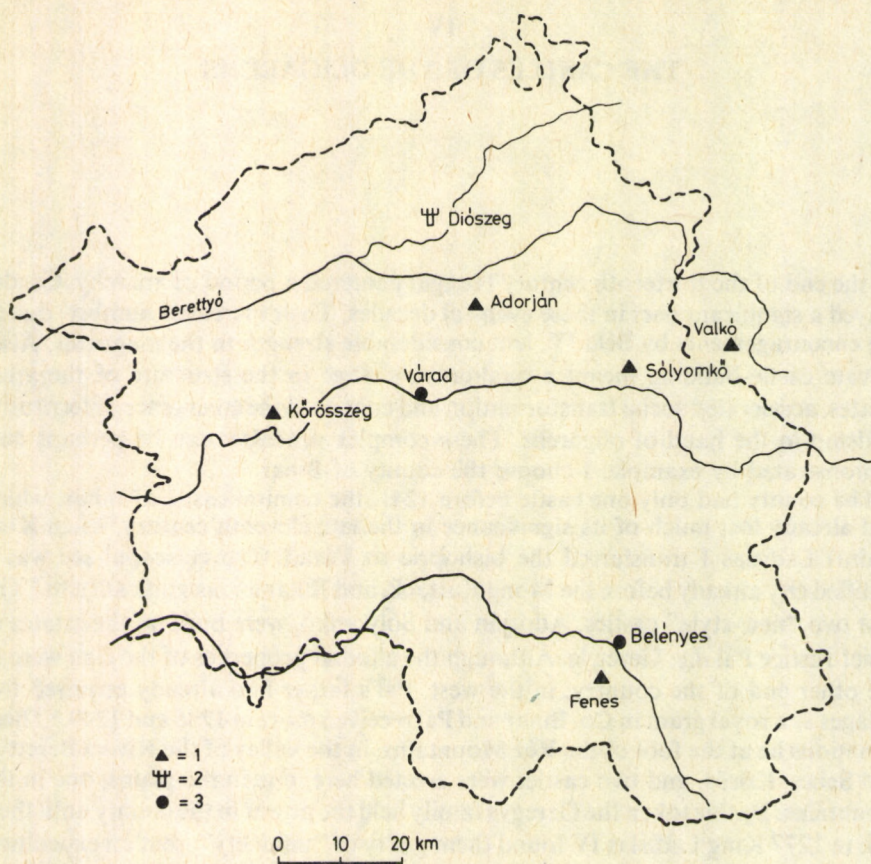
IV THE CASTLES OF THE OLIGARCHS

At the end of the thirteenth century Hungary entered a period of anarchy. Castles played a significant part in these eventful decades. Their increased number, due to the encouragements by Béla IV, lent considerable strength to the magnates. Also, private castle-building meant a qualitative change in the structure of the great estates, accelerated social transformation and enhanced the emergence of territorial lordship in the hand of oligarchs. These complex processes can be perhaps best demonstrated by example; I choose the county of Bihar.

The county had only one castle before 1241, the comital castle of Bihar, which had already lost much of its significance in the late eleventh century, when King (Saint) Ladislas I transferred the bishopric to Várad. The episcopal see was a fortified city already before the Mongol attack, and Bihar an insignificant site.¹ The first two "new-style" castles, Adorján and Solyomkő, were built on the estates of Chief Justice Pál *d.g.* Geregye. Although the allodial properties of the clan were at the other end of the country, in the west, Pál's father had already acquired five villages as a royal grant in Co. Bihar and Pál received more in 1236 and 1249.² These donations lie at the foot of the Réz Mountains, in the valley of the Rivers Berettyó and Sebes-Körös, and two castles were erected here: one in the plains, one in the mountains. By this token the Geregye family held the power in the county until their fall: in 1277 King Ladislas IV found them guilty of "infidelity", sent an expedition against the sons of the deceased Pál, besieged and took castle Adorján.³

In 1278 the king passed judgement against the rebels in Várad in front of the nobles of seven counties. From the records of this trial we hear that the sons of Justice Pál had occupied the estate of the sons of Dorog *d.g.* Gutkeled, called Derspalotája, and from there their steward attacked the neighbouring landlords *d.g.* Borsa.⁴ The king granted the two forfeited castles of the Geregye to Tamás *d.g.* Borsa. However, the case had taught the other nobles of the area that castle meant power: the Borsa clan hastened to build one at Körösszeg, and the bishop of Várad at Fenes, near Belényes. Even the much less well endowed sons of Dorog did not want to miss their chance and expelled the monks from their family monastery at Egyed, planning to make it into a castle. When ecclesiastical intervention stopped this attempt, they took the stones and erected a tower in Diószeg.⁵ The new castles challenged the powerful Borsa clan, which attacked castle Fenes, but failed to take it.⁶

All this happened during the reign of the last king of the founding (Árpád) dynasty, Andrew III (1290–1301), marked by the weakening of the central



Map 5. Castles of County Bihar, 1242–1317

1 = castle; 2 = tower; 3 = town

authority. The lack of a male heir to the throne also foreshadowed a succession crisis. The Sicilian Anjou, descendants of the Árpád dynasty in the female line, claimed the throne and challenged the legitimacy of Andrew's rule. When the Borsa chose to support the Angevin claims, they became "rebels" in the eyes of King Andrew. This led to a second successful siege of Adorján in 1294, this time by an army under the king's command.⁷ After the death of Andrew III and the final victory of the Anjou, one of the sons of Tamás *d.g.* Borsa, by the name of Kopasz, rose to the highest offices: as a trusted advisor of King Charles I, he became count palatine. The king returned to him his father's acquired castles, Adorján and Solyomkő, to which he added Valkó in Co. Kraszna; the Borsa clan owned now four castles. However, in 1317 Kopasz turned against Charles and lost a battle against the royal host; Adorján was once again under siege, but Kopasz managed to

escape into Sóllyomkő. Besieged there, hoping in vain to be relieved by his followers, Kopasz chose submission over starvation.⁸

The actors in these events were great landowners, their power base the territorially compact *latifundium*, which the magnates of the country had begun to establish in the mid-thirteenth century.⁹ The logical next step was to build a castle on the property, and, as we recall, even the king had encouraged his great men to do so "for the defense of their persons and properties".¹⁰ Such considerations guided the bishop of Várad in constructing a castle in Fenes for the defense of the silver mines in Belényes, or in general, of his possessions in the area, at some distance from his see. Until he had done so, the episcopal estates were inferior to the property of the Geregye clan, the latter having a stronghold on it. To continue our detailed study, we have to make a detour and clarify two matters: the expenses of castle building and the geographical location of the new castles.

Few data are available about the expenses, because, although the clause that someone built a castle "at his own expense"¹¹ is quite frequent, actual sums are not mentioned until later. In 1333 Magister Tamás Losonczi declared that "at an uninhabited place among the high mountains which pertained to him undivided with his kinfolk he had some time ago built a castle and buildings called Mentő . . ." and that he had spent, without the contribution of his relatives a sum of 2000 marks.¹² The sum is enormous, equivalent to 8000 gold florins. An even later record (from 1439) informs us that 1285 gold florins were spent for the building of a castle in Co. Sáros, between 1378 and 1423.¹³ As to Mentő we have no other source to judge the reason for such a cost; about Kőszeg in Sáros we know only that it consisted of an outer and inner wall, with a cellared hall (*palatium*) and a tower in the centre. It must have been quite an up to date building, as it is noted that a room in the tower was fueled from outside, implying probably that it had a tile stove serviced from a passageway instead of the older kind fireplace; these stoves were an innovation of the late fourteenth century. Unfortunately, the ruins have not been studied,¹⁴ hence no other details can be established. There is one more, earlier, piece of information, but of little use to our inquiry: when the estate and castle of *comes* János Csukárdi had been devastated in 1287, he claimed damages to the value of 1000 marks (=4000 gold florins),¹⁵ but neither the accuracy of the claim nor the specific worth of the burned-down castle can be ascertained from this lump sum. All that we can say is that castle building was a very costly enterprise, at any rate in the fifteenth century.

Are these figures valid for the preceding century as well? We might assume that they are not, and that castle building was a much less expensive proposition in the thirteenth century, as the manpower of the great estates was freely at the lord's disposal. This would of course imply that the *latifundia* came first and only later, mainly out of their revenue, did castle building with *corvée* labour become widespread. But was this the sequence? While our example of Co. Bihar seems to confirm it, in fact the connection was not as clear as all that. The story of Szársomlyó proves the exact opposite of our assumption: the first royal grant

contained only a site for a castle while the lands surrounding it were given to the builder only after the completion of the fortifications.¹⁶ There are similar examples known from Slavonia,¹⁷ and Ban Ernye received a grant in Borsod from a property acquired by the king long after his castle Dédeskő was completed.¹⁸

No doubt, the great landowners had the right to impose building duties on their subjects; we have already seen King Béla IV agreeing not to force his son's subjects to construction work and we may add to this a charter of Ladislas IV, even though spurious, for the people of Liptó in which they are granted exemption from castle-building demands of the county's *comes*.¹⁹ Data regarding the subjects of the great private estates are not available until the early fourteenth century. In a long document, listing the abuses of Máté Csák, one of the greatest oligarchs who managed to build up a veritable petty kingdom in the north-western part of the country, the prelates of Hungary issued in 1318 a charter, containing the charges brought against Csák by the bishop of Nyitra. The bishop told that Máté had forced his tenants (*jobagiones*) to dig ditches, carry stones and timber, burn lime and transport material needed for cisterns at the fortification of the castles Trencsén and Tapolcsány.²⁰ These being only a few of the oligarch's many misdeeds, the charter does not give any further details. Maybe the reference was to towns rather than castles, because, for example, by this time Trencsén had stood for many decades, and hardly needed ditches to be dug around it. As a matter of fact, only two of the mentioned abuses were strictly castle-building activities: lime-burning and cistern construction, and even these two were not jobs requiring trained craftsmen, such as a stone-mason or carpenter. All the works Máté was supposed to have imposed on his subjects were tasks performed by any peasant: cutting wood, carving stone and timber, in modern terms "unskilled labour".

A somewhat earlier case sheds additional light on the types of labour needed for castle construction. Around 1280 the Kállay family wanted to erect a castle at their estate Panyola. They were apparently unable to arrange for the earth moving and transport with their own men, as the king had to command the nobles of two counties to assist the Kállays.²¹ Even if we assume that the "assistance" was not for these tasks, we know that stone and lime had to be shipped on the River Szamos, for which the Kállays had to pay. That every penny counted can be gauged from the fact that they asked the king to grant them custom-free transport, which Ladislas IV duly did.²²

These two cases suggest at the very least that the labour force at the disposal of great landowners was not sufficient for castle building. It needed skilled craftsmen and other services that had to be paid for. The great estate was an important source of income, but in itself not sufficient for building a castle. Thus we can explain that there were many great estates without a castle, and also that in the early stage of private castle building mainly those magnates were able to afford such a construction who also held high offices of the realm. They were able to finance the enterprise, if from no other source (e.g. war booty) than from the income derived

from their dignities. In summary one might say that not every great landowner had enough capital to build a castle.

The geographical distribution of the castles built between 1270 and 1300 (see *Map 6*) still resembled, in spite of the increased number and density, that of the previous era: they were concentrated along the border, even though by that time the mountains of western Hungary (Bakony, Vértes) and of the area between the great plains and the frontier were also covered with castles. The increase of the comital castles in Slavonia is conspicuous (although they were always more densely spread than north of the River Drava): before 1270 seven new castles were built here, in the next thirty years their number tripled. Many such clans are listed among their builders, who originally settled further north and received Slavonian properties only later.²³ This southbound migration did not start with the Mongol invasion, as the clan Monoszlo received their first grant still under Béla III, but it seems to have been accelerated after 1241. It has been assumed that the powerful Héder clan divided their properties before 1279 so that a new branch was founded that received the Slavonian estates.²⁴ The clan was obviously well aware of the growing importance of the area between Drava and Sava.

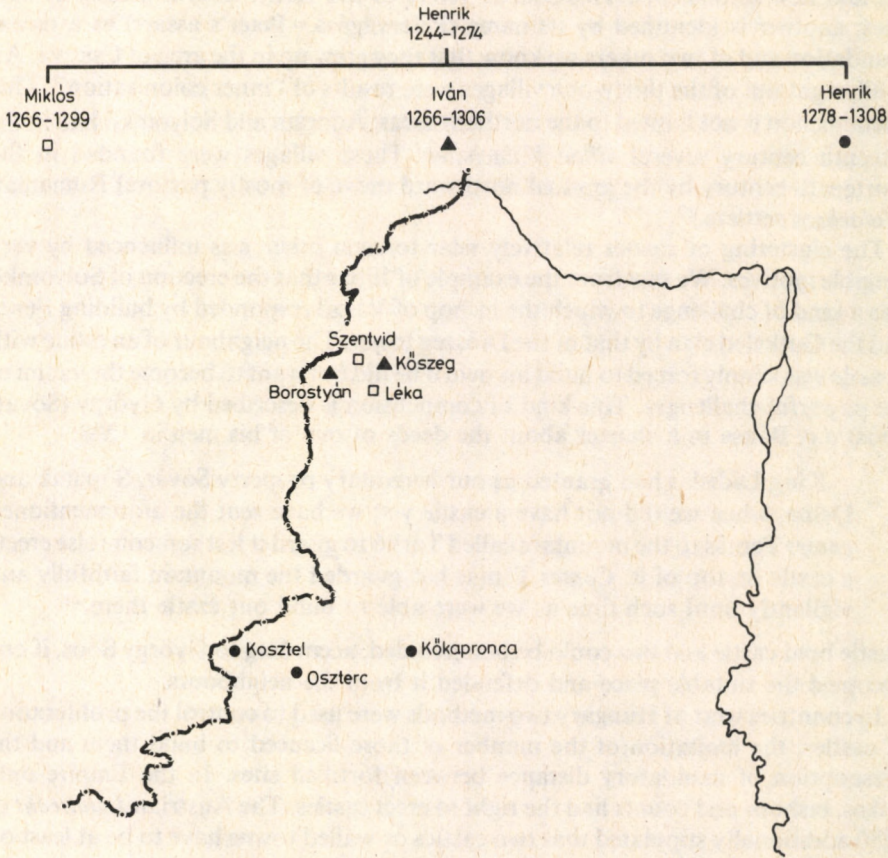
We have noted earlier that the conquering Magyars did not populate the entire Carpathian Basin for some centuries. As to the geographical distribution of castles, one might be tempted to think that they were built outside this initial settlement area. This is, however, not so. While we indeed find a good number of castles beyond the line of early settlement, the castles of western Hungary (Transdanubia) are mostly within that line. Geographical features might be also adduced for an explanation: the Carpathian Basin being surrounded by mountains, naturally castles would be built in these mountainous regions. But this cannot be maintained wholly either, since several castles were built on the plains, such as the water-castle Adorján in Co. Bihar.

It is more convincing to correlate the sites of castles with the areas of continuous forest coverage: this holds equally true for the western border areas and for those of the north. To return to the example of Bihar: Solyomkő was built on the western slopes of the same forested mountain of which Fenes stood on the southern, Valkó on the northern and Szász-Fenes (later Gyalu) on the eastern side.

There are not enough detailed studies on the medieval great estates in Hungary to explore these connections in appropriate depth. Only a few characteristics can be sketched. The lands within and below the forest line had been settled in the first centuries of the Hungarian state. When, some 300 years later, the growth of territorially compact great estates set in, these areas were in the possession of other landowners, to a great extent of ecclesiastical ones, who could not be evicted. On the northern shores of Lake Balaton, for example, the king could not have granted a major estate to a follower of his, however influential that lord might have been, because that land belonged to a great number of ecclesiastical institutions, from Benedictine abbeys through bishops and provosts of the area to the Knights Hospitallers and others. Beyond the forest line, however, the king had a much freer



Map 6. Castles built before 1300



Map 7. Partition of the castles of the Héder clan, 1297

hand in granting sparsely inhabited or even uninhabited lands. When, for instance, some time between 1236 and 1241 the king gave away the estate of Losonc, he could include the entire valley of the Losonc creek, which was so large that even after the king had revindicated a smaller part (20 *aratra*, some 140 ha.) for mining, not one, but two castles could be built on it: Divény and Gács. Their appurtenances are known only from 1467,²⁵ by which time the estate had fifteen villages; three of them were called *lehota*, indicating that they were founded by assarting, which was one of the major advantages of estates in the forested regions. In these areas it was easily conceivable to establish or enlarge the *dominium* needed for the support of the castle by assarting and founding new villages. The Rozgonyi family received Csicsva (Co. Zemplén) in 1270 with two villages mentioned by name and "other attached places".²⁶ The castle Csicsva was built before 1316, but only a 1363 charter lists the

old and new settlements. This charter refers to five settlements expressly as new ones; another is identified by its name (Pétervágása = Peter's assart) as a recent foundation and of two others we know that they grew up in the area of Csicsva. All in all, eight out of the thirty-one villages were results of "inner colonisation". This phenomenon is not limited to the northern areas: Adorján and Solyomkő had in the fifteenth century several *villae Valachales*. These villages were founded in the fourteenth century by the gradual northward move of mostly pastoral Rumanian (*Valachus*) settlers.²⁷

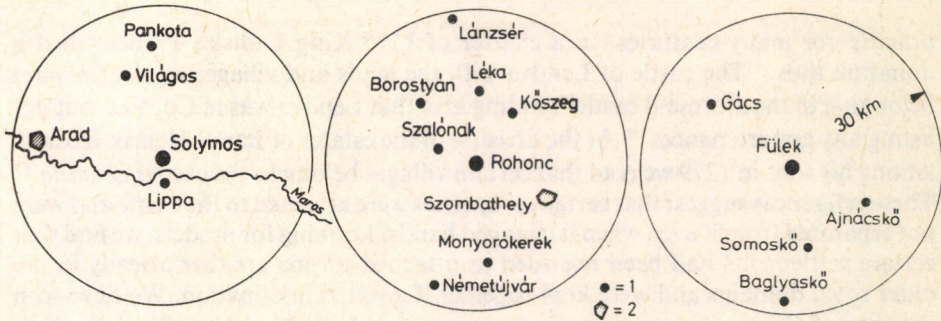
The clustering of castles relatively near to each other was influenced by very tangible motives. We saw from the example of Bihar that the erection of Solyomkő was a kind of challenge to which the bishop of Várad responded by building Fenes and the Gutkeled clan by that of the Diószeg tower. The neighbour of an estate with a castle was simply forced to build his own if he did not want to become the victim of the powerful challenger. This kind of competition is described by György (Sóvári Soós) *d.g.* Baksa in a charter about the deeds of one of his men in 1298:

King Ladislas had granted us our hereditary property Sóvár, Sópatak and Delna, when we did not have a castle yet; we have sent the aforementioned *comes* Tamás to the mountain called Tarkő to guard it lest someone else erects a castle on top of it. *Comes* Tamás has guarded the mountain faithfully and vigilantly until such time as we were able to build our castle there.²⁸

Castle bred castle and this could be best avoided, according to György Soós, if one occupied the suitable place and defended it from the neighbours.

In countries west of Hungary two methods were used to control the proliferation of castles: the limitation of the number of those licenced to build them and the prescription of mandatory distance between fortified sites. In the Empire only dukes, bishops and counts had the right to erect castles. The Austrian *Landrecht* of 1280 additionally stipulated that two castles or walled towns have to be at least on *Rast* (ca. 25–30 km) distance of each other.²⁹ The first method was not really relevant for Hungary in the thirteenth-fourteenth century, because the nobility had not reached the extent of differentiation characteristic for the German territories. As to the second, a few selected examples—reflected on *Map 8*—clearly demonstrate that no such rule was observed in Hungary.

Thus the only way to control the building of castles was the king's right to issue licences. As we have seen, up to ca. 1196 all castles worth the name were in royal hands. During the reign of Andrew II some of the major lords may have had castles, but there is no evidence for explicit royal licencing. After the disaster of 1241 Béla IV issued a number of oral commands or permissions to erect castles; examples for these were quoted *in extenso* above. Nevertheless, it is obvious that castles were permitted to be built only by explicit royal licence, as is obvious from a charter of King Béla IV of 1247. In that we read that a *fidelis* of the king, Farkas Zagorjei had acquired merits during the Mongol invasion and "as a recompense be licenced to construct that castle on his lands which he had commenced to build, and he and his



Map 8. Castles built within a 30 km distance
1 = castle; 2 = town

successors should own it in perpetuity".³⁰ Royal licence remained theoretically the prerequisite to castle-building, as witnessed by the three licences that survived from the reign of Ladislas IV.³¹ However, with the decline of royal power unlicensed castles sprung up, as one can gauge from Art. X of the decretum of 1298, in which all castles built since 1270 were condemned to destruction.³²

Lacking all effective control, the challenge-response process took free run: castle bred castle. The increased speed of proliferation was due also to the fact that a castle was not only a defense for the existing estates but also a jumping-off point to acquiring additional ones. Chief Justice Pál *d.g.* Geregye, styled "the lord of the Berettyó [valley]",³³ for example, was able to occupy, based on his new castle, the property Székelyhida of the Gutkeled clan which was an important ford on the River Ér on the road to the plains. When King Ladislas IV in 1278, after the defeat of the Geregye clan, ordered the property to be restored to its lawful owners, he specified that the youngest son of Pál *d.g.* Geregye "as a public enemy has caused incessant devastations and incendiaries to the country" and that Székelyhida was to be returned not only by reason of restoration but also "as a reparation for the damage and devastations caused".³⁴ This is a telling example for the thesis that the castle is the point in which the power of the lord is focussed and whence it radiates within the estate (for its defense) and without (for expansion of his property). That this thesis is not simply the product of the imagination of the modern historian is proven by the words of a charter of Ladislas IV (1274) stating that the owners of castle Gimes defended it against King Ottokar II of Bohemia so "that they did not cause any harm from the castle" but rather "guarded the peace and tranquillity of the region and the realm".³⁵

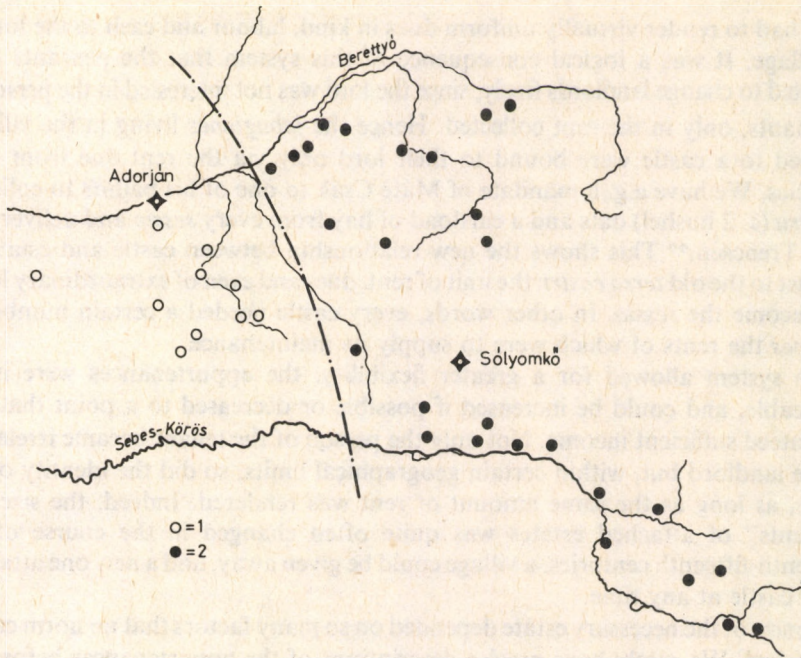
While we have seen a few examples where the castle was built before its lord had extensive properties around it, by the end of the thirteenth century every castle had its "appurtenances": these were the links between castle and estates. There are charters describing the appurtenances from as early as the late thirteenth century, and actually one of these already contains the formula which became Chancery

practice for many centuries. In a charter of 1275 King Ladislas IV described a donation thus: "The castle of Lendva with the lands and villages legally (*de jure*) belonging to the aforesaid castle", stating also that Lendva was in Co. Vas, but not listing any appurtenances.³⁶ At the division of the estates of Banus Henrik Kőszegi among his sons in 1279 we read that certain villages belong to the castles *ab initio*.³⁷ These references suggest that certain properties were attached to the castle and were not separated from it even when it changed hands. Looking for models, we find that certain settlements had been regarded as attached to one another already in the older royal domains and were kept together if granted in donation. We have seen the case of Csicsva, granted to the Rozgonyi family "with other villages" which seem to have been attached to it while they were still a part of the royal domain.³⁸ As a rule, castles were granted, inherited or exchanged together with their appurtenances.

Although we established that the income of an estate was rarely sufficient to build a castle, we have to add now that without it no castle could be maintained. There had to be such villages that were "institutionally" attached to the castle and rendered their dues to its upkeep. In the case of Harsány/Szársomlyó we know that the lands surrounding the castle hill were granted to the founder after the completion of the castle. In the third generation the family of the grantee became extinct, the castle escheated to the crown and in 1289 the king granted it to a new owner "together with the hill, the vineyards and forests on which the castle was built and all the villages belonging to it."³⁹ The villages are listed by name and although we do not know the history of all of them, those of which we do know, had been granted to the lord of the castle or purchased by him and became now "appurtenances".⁴⁰ In many a property division of a family or clan the castle is assigned to a member with a number of villages that were regarded as its appurtenances.⁴¹

One of the reasons for endowing every castle with appurtenances was that lacking sufficient income from an estate the lord of the castle might look for some other "income" for its support and this will most likely be robbery. This consideration is also reflected in §3 of the oft quoted Article X:1298, where "those without sufficient estates" feature among the condemned castles.

The role of the appurtenances is nicely demonstrated by an example from Slavonia. The maintenance of Medvevár was the duty of the cathedral chapter of Zagrab, specified in an agreement of 1313 as 500 *cubuli* (about 1000 bushel) grain and 1000 *cubuli* wine⁴² for victualling, and 40 marks for "other useful and necessary purposes" annually.⁴³ This was, of course, to be collected from the chapter's tenants, organised into *portiones*, each of which consisted of four peasant households. In 1336 every *portio* had to render 5 *cubuli* grain, 15 *cubuli* wine and 5 pennies cash,⁴⁴ which suggests that at least 400 tenant households were needed for the upkeep of the castle. The chapter also appended a clause that the grain and wine had to be delivered by the tenants to the castle "as has always been customary".



Map 9. The partition of the appurtenances between the castles Adorján and Solyomkö
1 = to Adorján; 2 = to Solyomkö

These data and the implications of the law of 1298 prove that the purpose of properties attached to the castle was its maintenance, whether the estate preceded the building of the stronghold or not. In some cases we can follow the growth of a great estate, as we have in the examples of Adorján and Solyomkö, but so far no record is known that would specify the precise relationship between estate and castle. It is nevertheless certain that the properties attached to the castle were defined every time in connection with its construction. In our Bihar example it is easy to establish that the Geregye estates were divided between the two new castles, assigning a number of villages to each of them. This partition, of which no record survives, was purely formal, following a north-south line (see *Map 9*); even though some villages were nearer and better connected to Adorján, they were attached to Solyomkö.

At first sight it may seem that all this was no novelty in comparison to the castle-county relationship of the eleventh century.⁴⁵ But in fact there was considerable difference between the people attached to the early comital castles and the tenants living on the estates of the appurtenant villages. We have already noted that the earlier relationship was a personal one and this was replaced by an objective dependence in the course of the thirteenth century. The old villages were transformed, their fields divided into equal-sized holdings (*sessiones*) the tenants of

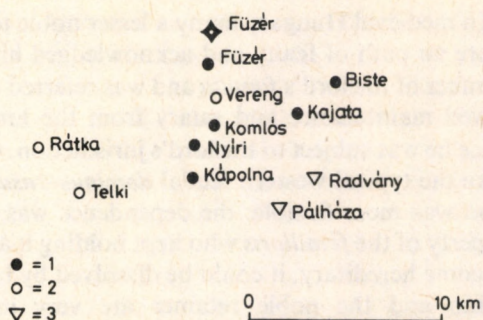
which had to render virtually uniform dues in kind, labour and cash to the lord of the village. It was a logical consequence of this system that the peasants were permitted to change landlords freely, since the lord was not interested in the person of his tenants, only in the rent collected. Hence the *jobagiones* living in the villages attached to a castle were bound to their lord only via the rent due from their tenancies. We have e.g. a mandate of Máté Csák to one of his bailiffs to collect a *metretra* (c. 2 bushel) oats and a cartload of hay from every *sessio* and deliver it to castle Trencsén.⁴⁶ This shows the new relationship between castle and estate, in contrast to the old *terra castri*: the unit of rent, dues and even of extraordinary levies had become the *sessio*. In other words, every castle needed a certain number of *sessiones* the rents of which were to supply its maintenance.

This system allowed for a greater flexibility: the appurtenances were interchangeable, and could be increased if possible or decreased to a point that still guaranteed sufficient income. Not only the person of the tenant became irrelevant for the landlord but, within certain geographical limits, so did the identity of the village, as long as the same amount of rent was rendered. Indeed, the size and "contents" of attached estates was quite often changed in the course of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries: a village could be given away, and a new one attached to the castle at any time.

The size of the necessary estate depended on so many factors that no norm can be established. We rarely have precise descriptions of the appurtenances before the fifteenth century, and we are not helped a great deal by knowing how many villages or market towns belonged to a castle, since the decisive factor was the amount of rent. In the case of Monyorókerék the estate remained virtually identical between 1221 and 1279.⁴⁷ In the case of Ugróc we have records of 1295 and 1389: the latter contains eighteen villages more, but two villages listed in the former are missing.⁴⁸ These two castles changed hands many times in the period between the two surveys, but changes did occur even during the tenancy of the same family. Essegvár was sold in 1309 with four villages but in 1344 it had six, one of the original ones not being listed any longer.⁴⁹ Castle Füzér had in 1270 eleven villages, in 1389 nine, but only six were identical (including village Füzér itself); however, two of the thirteenth century ones had already vanished by the beginning of the fourteenth.⁵⁰ The estate of Szentgrót counted both in 1299 and 1350 four villages, but only one, Szentgrót, at the foot of the castle, was identical.⁵¹ It seems that the changes were slower in the thirteenth century, but one thing did not change: the fact and principle that every castle had to have its appurtenances, its *Hinterland*.

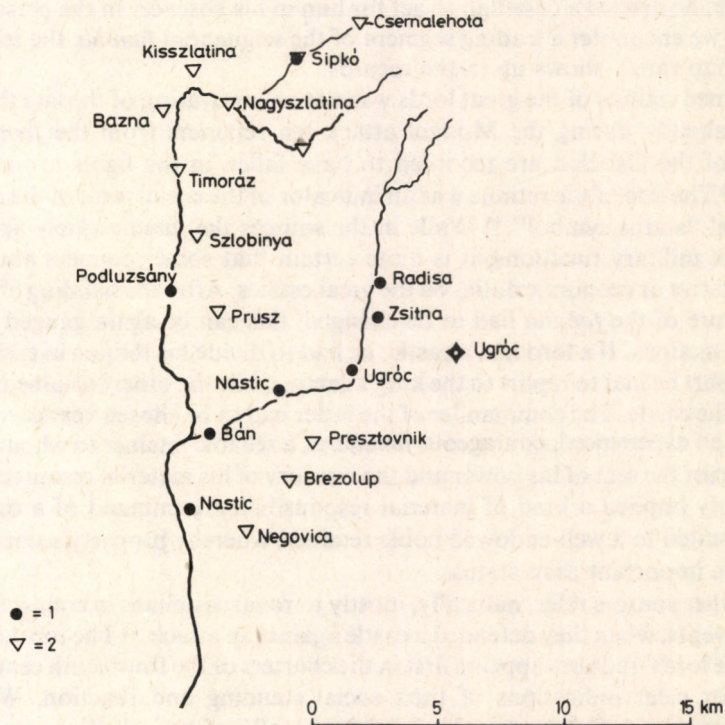
The estates attached to a castle had the task of supplying its inhabitants. Here again the castle appears as the centre of the estate and the focal point of the lord's riches, because it was here that the dues in kind were kept. From our Bihar example we can quote the bishop of Várad ordering that great stores of grain and salt be delivered to Fenes to prepare the castle against attacks.⁵²

Not only villages were attached to the castle, but personnel as well. Since most of them belong to the group of the lord's noble retinue, we have to acquaint ourselves



Map 10. a) Changes in the appurtenances of Füzer from 1270 to 1389

1 = to be found on both lists; 2 = to be found on the 1270 list only; 3 = to be found on the 1389 list only



Map 10. b) Changes in the appurtenances of Ugróc from 1295 to 1389

1 = to be found on both lists; 2 = to be found on the 1389 list only

with this institution. In medieval Hungary many a lesser noble took service with a great landowner, swore an oath of fealty and acknowledged him as his *dominus*. Thus he became a member of the lord's *familia* and was referred to as his *familiaris* or *serviens*. He received maintenance and salary from the lord and in matters pertaining to his service he was subject to the lord's jurisdiction. Clearly, this was a relationship not unlike the typical western feudal *dominus-vasallus* tie. However, the Hungarian version was more flexible: the dependence was personal, did not touch the private property of the *familiaris* who kept holding it as a nobleman and not only did it not become hereditary, it could be dissolved by both parties at any time. This relationship and the noble retainer are very important for the development of the castles and their function in medieval Hungary. Let us once more return to Bihar: we recall that the Geregye clan had two, the Borsa three castles. Both clans had enough male members for one of them to be in charge of each castle. But when those of Borsa acquired their fourth castle, the three brothers needed a fourth man as commander of a castle. But even if the lord commanded his own castle, he needed a castellan to act for him in his absence. In the person of the *castellani* we encounter a leading segment of the seigneurial *familia*; the rest of this larger group rarely shows up in the records.

The armed retinue of the great lords was not an innovation of the late thirteenth century: already during the Mongol attack ten retainers from the *familia* of a member of the Osl clan are recorded to have fallen in the fights around castle Kőszeg.⁵³ The size of the retinue was an indicator of the social rank of the *dominus*, a medieval "status symbol".⁵⁴ While in the sources the *familia* rarely appears in other than military functions, it is quite certain that some retainers always had administrative or economic duties on the great estates. After the building of a castle, the structure of the *familia* had to be changed: this can be again gauged from its military functions. If a lord had a castle, he had to divide his retinue in case of war: with one part he had to report to the king's camp, while the other remained at home to guard the castle. The commander of the latter had to be chosen very carefully: he had to be an experienced, courageous *familiaris*, a reliable retainer to whom the lord could entrust the seat of his power and the treasury of his material resources.⁵⁵ And as this duty implied a kind of material responsibility, command of a castle was mostly granted to a well-endowed noble retainer, whereby property seems to have been more important than status.

Our earlier sources refer, naturally, mostly to royal castellans in connection with military events, when they defended a castle against an attack.⁵⁶ The top stratum of the private lords' retinues appears first in the charters of the fourteenth century, but with rather clear indications of their social standing and function. When the Rozgonyi-castle in Csicsva was besieged by an ally of the rebellious ex-palatine Kopasz, it was defended by Miklós Peres, a nobleman from the neighbourhood as castellan. He succeeded in holding the castle, but he lost his brother István, "three noble *servientes*" and his own left hand in the struggle.⁵⁷ Comes Kenéz was a nobleman with properties in Co. Pozsony whence he had to flee the revenge of Máté

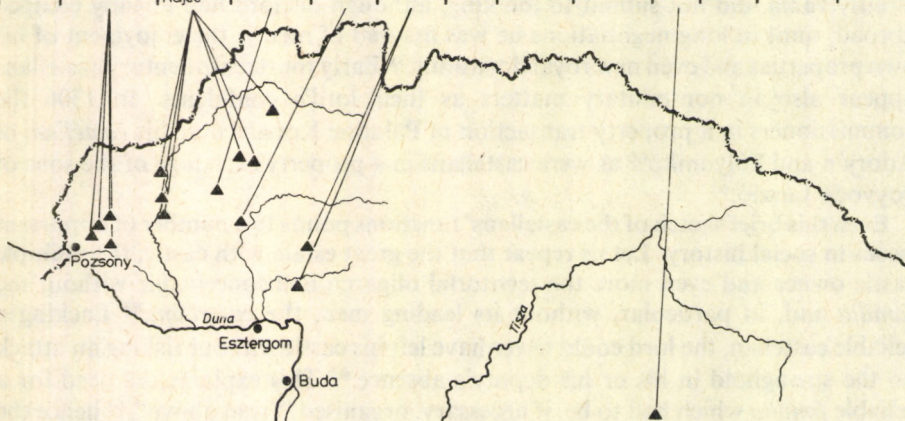
Csák and took service with the king. In the decisive battle against Kopasz he led the first attack of the royal army and, to his peril, was captured. As he had been the castellan of the (royal) castle of Valkó, the men of Kopasz tried to force the garrison to submit by dragging Kenéz bound to a horse's tail around the castle. Still, the faithful royal servant did not order the submission of the castle.⁵⁸ Fidelity was no royal monopoly, though: a *castellanus* of László Kán, the rebel voyvode of Transylvania, did not submit to the king, although his lord had already escaped abroad, until in long negotiations he was assured of mercy, the enjoyment of his own properties and even new royal donations.⁵⁹ Early fourteenth century castellans appear also in non-military matters as their lord's confidants. In 1306 the commissioners in a property transaction of Palatine Kopasz were his *castellani* of Adorján and Solyomkő⁶⁰ as were castellans in a property exchange of the sons of voyvode László.⁶¹

Even this brief sketch of the castellans' functions points to a number of important issues in social history. Let us repeat that the great estate with castle, the multiple castle owner and even more the territorial oligarch is inconceivable without the *familia* and, in particular, without its leading men, the *castellani*.⁶² Lacking a reliable castellan, the lord could never have left his castle without risking an attack on the stronghold in his or his deputy's absence.⁶³ This explains the need for a reliable *familia* which had to be, if necessary, organised "from above",⁶⁴ hence the great lords did not shy from using violence in acquiring *servientes*.⁶⁵

More than that. As we have seen, Peres held property near the castle of Csicsva and so did the Transylvanian castellan; this was no rarity.⁶⁶ What we have here is the expansion of the great estate beyond the confines of the lord's property, into the private possessions of the familiares, even though they were not part of the feudal arrangement. Recent studies on the growth of Máté Csák's *familia*⁶⁷ permit us to go a step further: the great landowner was, to a certain extent, in a dilemma as he could not protect his castle and his extended properties unless he acquired a greater and better organised *familia* and a trustworthy castellan (or more) with commanding abilities. This situation was in a way quite advantageous for the *familiaris* who was to command a castle, as he was able to retain more of his freedom in the bargain. Some *castellani* even had their own retainers, as we have seen in the case of Peres and elsewhere.⁶⁸ Apparently the jurisdiction of the *domini* over their castellans was rather nominal. Those "sentences" which were passed by the oligarchs against such leading *familiares* were always signed by their fictive or usurped titles, such as that of palatine which they in fact were only briefly before 1300.⁶⁹ Furthermore, general protests against these judgments suggest that they were still not regarded as legitimate sentences but rather miscarriages of justice.⁷⁰

Greater freedom meant greater mobility for the castellan, for which again the rather fluctuating *familia* of Máté Csák supplies a good example. One of his leading men was Márton's son Bogár, who in 1287 had been a *familiaris* of the palatine from the Csák clan, after the death of whom he became King Andrew's man and as such in 1297 castellan of Trencsén. He changed loyalty when Máté took up arms against

Branch	Szentgyörgyi	Bényi	Garadnai	Forgách	Bozóki	Szegi	Csalomjai	Födémesi	Cibak	Ujhelyi	Rakamazi	Besztereci
Castles	4	6	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Name of the castles	Bazin Hédervár Cseklész Szentgyörgy	Csejte Pöstyén Hrádek Privigye Bajmóc Rajec	Pepárd	Gimes	Litva Drégely	-	-	Velezd	Palota	-	-	-



Map 11. The castles of the Hont-Pázmány clan at the beginning of the 14th century

the king and became his closest associate, commander of several campaigns, until in 1318 he again went over to the royal side, this time to the Angevin king, Charles.⁷¹ That such careers as Bogár's, which was by no means unique,⁷² were easier in the age of constant struggle for the throne does not mean that there were not similar cases in more peaceful and ordinary times.

All these considerations about the need for appurtenances and faithful *familiares* adumbrate in the last resort one question: the growth of the great landed estate. To properly assess their development from the defense needs of the later thirteenth century through the assemblage of property complexes to their acquiring political significance by the building of castles, we should compare them with their counterpart, the great estate without a castle rather than the declining royal domain. This will demonstrate that it was the castle that had qualitatively increased the power of the great estate and enhanced the differentiation of landowners, leading to the emergence of a group of the richest landowners.

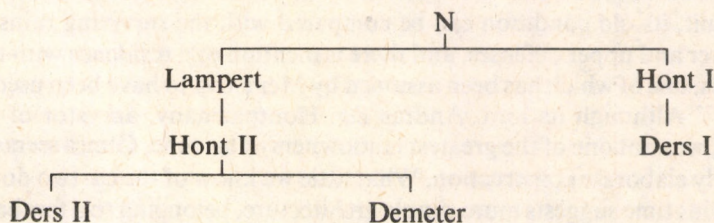
This thesis can be best illustrated by the history of such a differentiation within a clan. Let us take the branches of the Hont-Pázmány clan, descendants of the oft-mentioned comes Hont and his brother Pázmány. Their earlier genealogy cannot be fully reconstructed, but by the late thirteenth century the clan consisted of twelve branches, identified—"for the sake of order", as their genealogist suggested⁷³—by geographical terms. As Map 11 demonstrates, by c. 1300 the Bényi branch had had

six, the Szentgyörgyi four, the Bozóki two castles and four other branches had one castle each. Five other branches, although well endowed, did not manage to construct a castle and lost out in the race. During the interregnum, Máté Csák successively took away the properties and, of course, the castles of the Bényi, Forgách, Garadnai and Bozóki branches. One of the Szentgyörgyi castles was lost by the extinction of a sub-branch, the castle of the Czibak branch vanished in the course of the struggles in Co. Bihar. By the mid-fourteenth century the Szentgyörgyi branch had been on top, because it could retain both of its castles, located along important routes. It is, therefore, not surprising that from the whole great clan of Hontpázmány only the Szentgyörgyi "made it" into the aristocracy, while all other branches remained on the level of the well-endowed lesser nobility.

The story so far may sound like a lament over the ferocious Csák clan's viciousness that caused the fall of the unfortunate Hont-Pázmány families. This was by no means so: not only were the members of the Bényi and Garadnai branch well-known usurpers of castles and estates of others weaker than themselves, but also there was not much brotherly love lost among the different branches. Within the Bozóki branch

... some time before 1276... Ders II and Demeter occupied castle Litva of Ders I, imprisoned him and took away his charters on Szentantal. They released him later but kept the castle. In return, the king confiscated all their property and granted it to Ders I ... but nothing came of it.⁷⁴

The relationship between these gentlemen was the following:



The events are characteristic for the conditions at the end of the thirteenth century. A castle was now such a value that close relatives, in this case cousins and uncles, would fight over it. Similar cases are known from the clan Csák or the Kőszegi branch of the clan Héder.⁷⁵ The monarch still had the authority to pass a sentence against the evildoers, but no power to enforce it, and the castle remained in the hands of the usurpers. The differentiation among the great landowners deteriorated into a ruthless struggle and by the first decades of the fourteenth century a few oligarchs dominated the field. While the violence of the confrontations increased, royal power declined almost simultaneously.

To assess this development, we again turn to statistics, with ownership as the main variable: How many castles were in the hands of the king, and how many in private possession at the death of King Béla IV and in the last years of Andrew III?⁷⁶

Table 5. Castles by owners, 1270–1300

	1270	1300
royal	32	42
private	44	124
total	76	166
destroyed	—	10
unknown	—	4
grand total	76	180

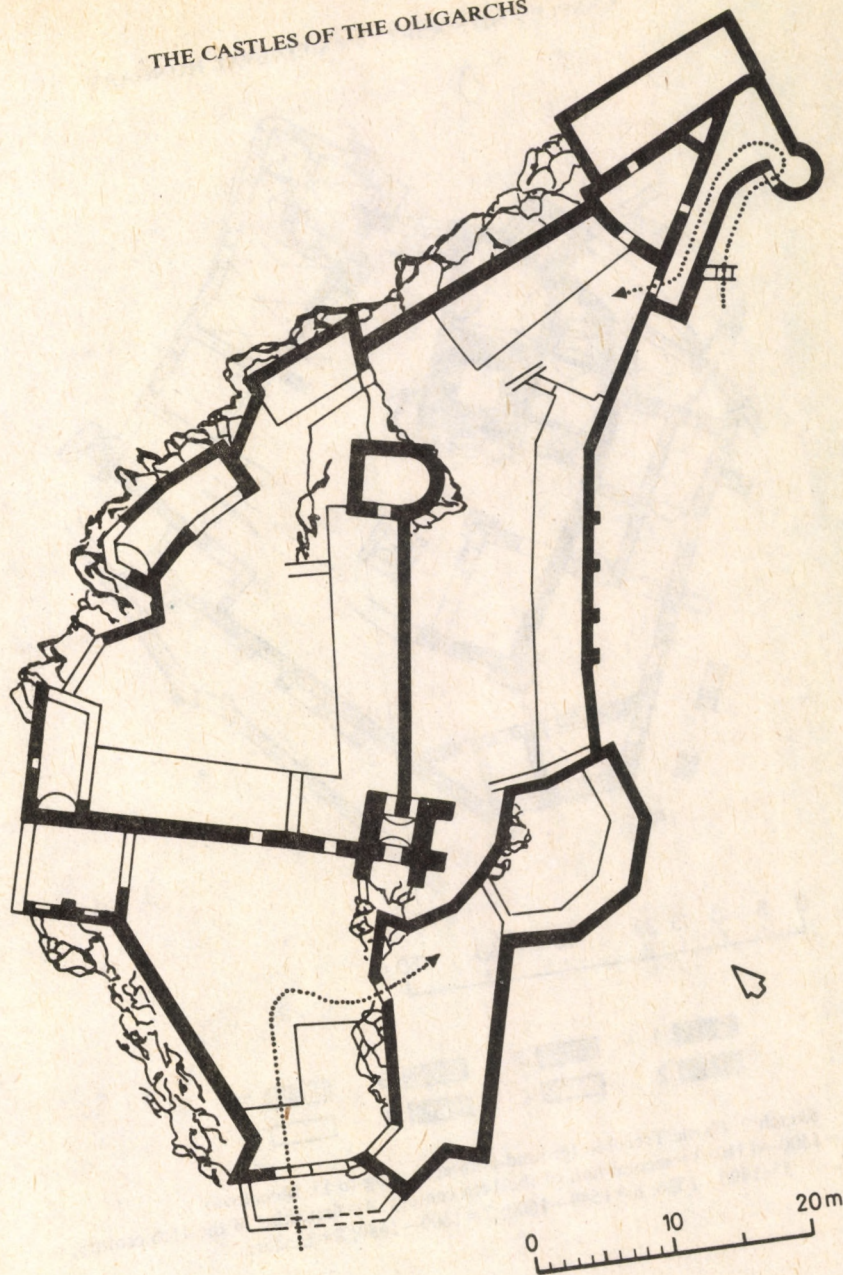
(The five castles under the rule of Prince Stephen as *rex iunior* in 1270, later King Stephen V [1270–72], were of course counted as royal.)

We have already seen in *Table 3* (p. 54, above) that the ratio between royal and private castles changed drastically to the detriment of the crown after 1270. While King Béla IV still owned a considerable portion of all castles, by 1300 only a quarter of them were in royal hands. In 1270 Henrik *d.g.* Héder was still the only lord with four castles, but by 1300 he was joined by Máté Csák and Amadé Aba, both owning more than four castles.

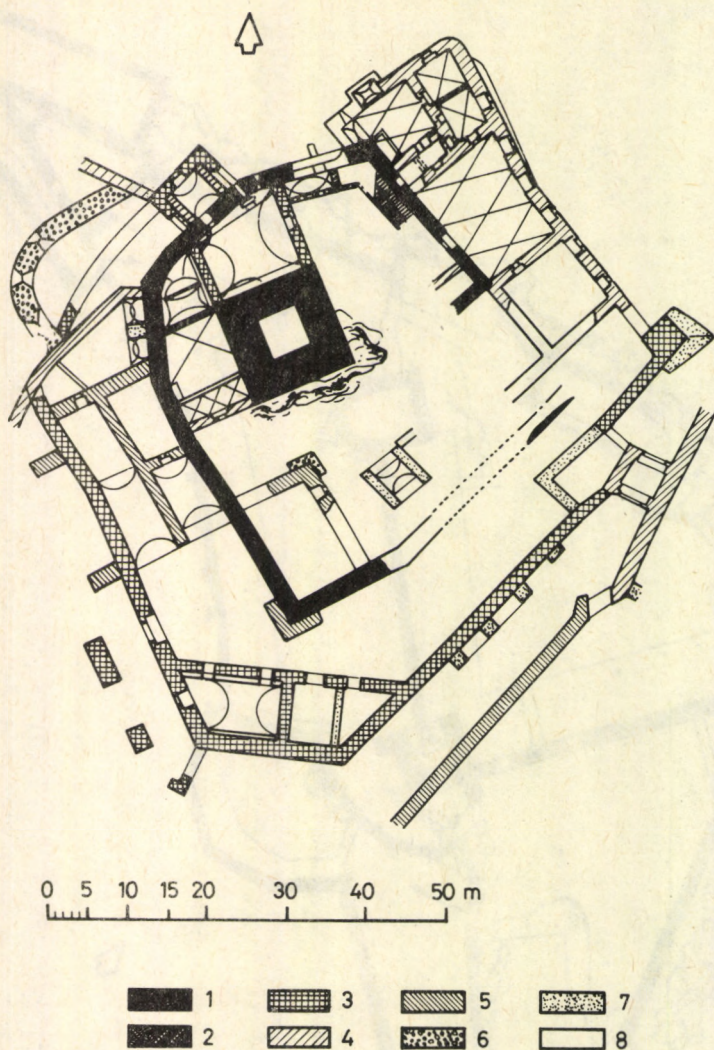
Besides the few references in charters quoted above, no evidence survived on the architecture of castles built before 1270. Descriptions were not made or did not come down to us, and no details are listed in records on property division. Gímes is the only castle that was included in a division in 1295, and since it has not been extensively rebuilt, its old condition can be compared with the surviving ruins. It consisted of lower and upper defenses, and there is mention of a residence with two towers at its ends, one of which has been assumed by Menclová to have been used as living quarters.⁷⁷ Although its lord, András *d.g.* Hontpázmány, ancestor of the Forgách family, was not one of the greatest landowners of his time, Gímes seems to have been a fairly elaborate construction. What little we know of the ca. two dozen other castles of this time suggests more simple architecture, belonging to a few basic types.

The comital castles renovated or built under Béla IV (Trencsén, Szepes, Sáros) belong to one type: they consist of a circular wall with a square or circular tower in the middle of the surrounded place.⁷⁸ Probably Körösszeg, Bajmóc, Hollókő and Adorján belong to this group, as well as the latecomer in Transylvania, Hátszeg. Szepes differs from the rest insofar as an early hall is found there, hence it can be seen as a transition of the second type (Saskő, Szigliget and perhaps Szalónak), where the tower was built in a corner of the walls. Two royal castles, built in the thirteenth century, Visegrád and Dévény, represent a rare type in Hungary, the Norman-style keep. We know the details only of Visegrád, the founding charter of

THE CASTLES OF THE OLIGARCHS

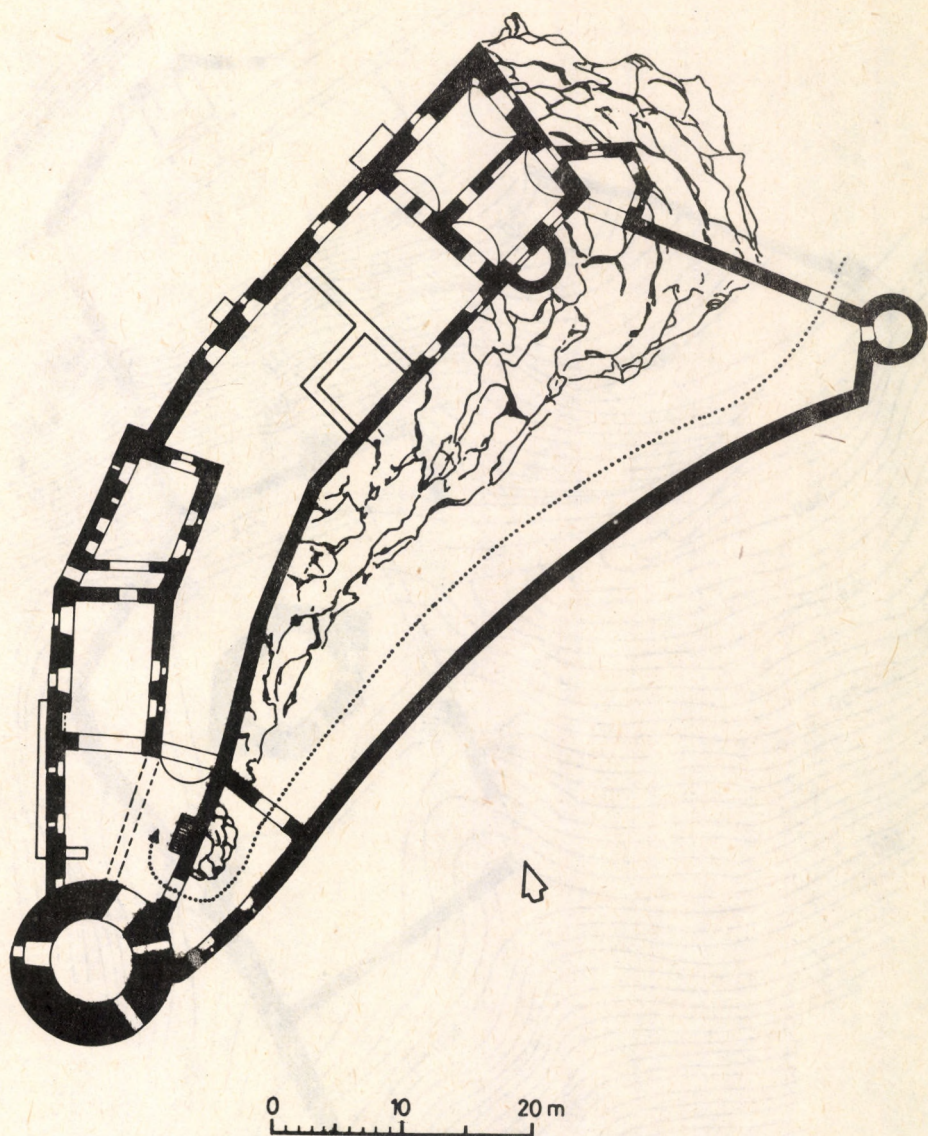


Sketch 8. Gimes (ground-plan)

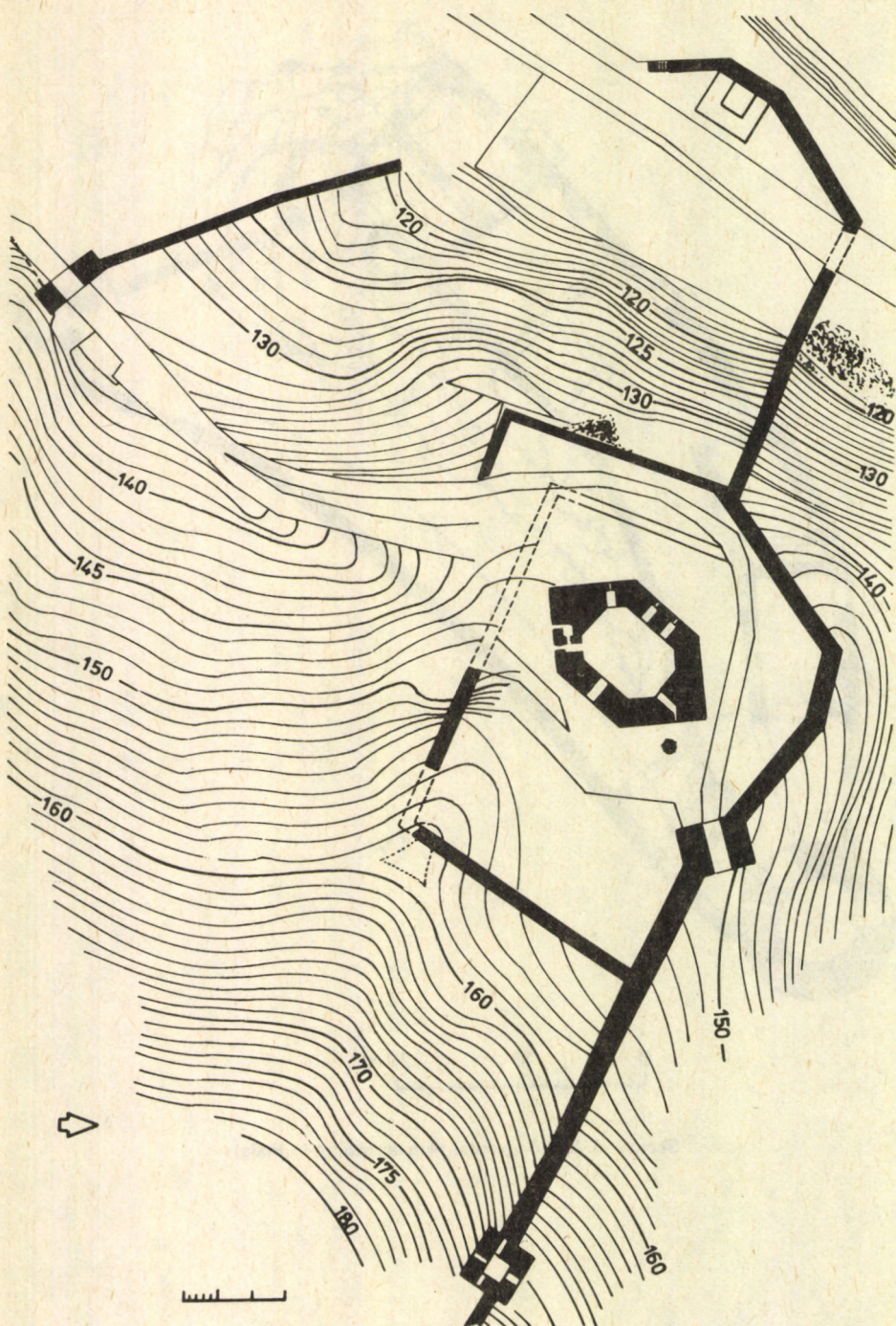


Sketch 9. Castle Trencsén (ground-plan according to D. Menclová)

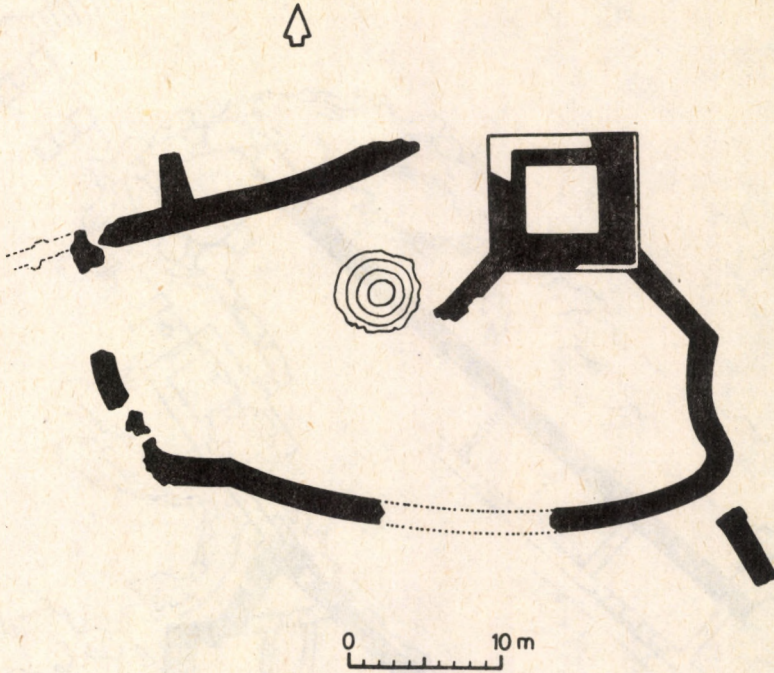
1 = c. 1260; 2 = 1300—1310; 3 = second half of the 14th century; 4 = first third of the 15th century;
5 = 1490—1526; 6 = 1540—1600; 7 = 1600—1680; 8 = modern



Sketch 10. Saskõ (ground-plan according to Fiala)

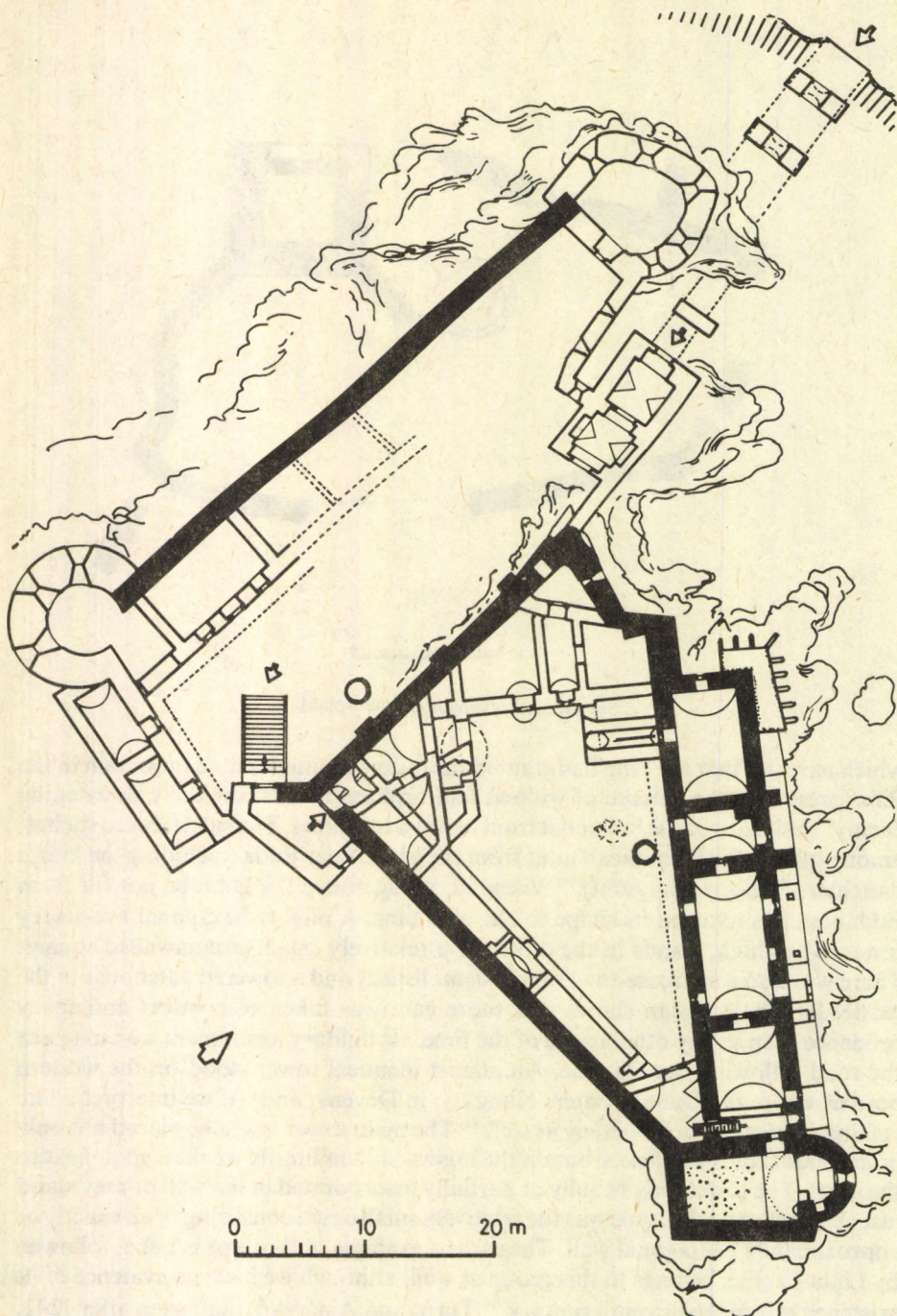


Sketch 11. The royal keep in Visegrád (ground-plan)



Sketch 12. Bálványos (ground-plan)

which narrates that the king has granted the queen an uninhabited mountain in the Pilis forest “for the defense of widows and orphans against the daily threatening enemy” and had a castle built on it from his own resources. The castle was to shelter, among others, the Dominican nuns from the island near Buda (including the king’s daughter, Princess Margaret).⁷⁹ Visegrád, rising above the Danube not far from Budapest, has retained its shape to our own time. A mighty hexagonal five-storey tower, 31 m high, stands in the centre of a relatively small, circumwalled square. There was also a staircase-tower (now demolished) and a towered gatehouse in the castle. Its whole design shows that more care was taken of comfort and spacy residence than in any other castle of the time. Its military assignment was to guard the road following the Danube. An almost identical tower stood on the western border, where the Danube enters Hungary, in Dévény, and—if we interpret a late etching correctly—in Köpcsény as well.⁸⁰ The main tower might be placed not only in the middle of the defenses but on the highest and militarily weakest spot, next to the gates. The tower may be fully or partially incorporated in the wall or may stand just next to it. Another type was the relatively small castle consisting of an exactly or approximately pentagonal wall. The earliest example of this type is Léka, followed by Lipoc; Velike belongs to this group as well, although we have no evidence of its existence before the fifteenth century.⁸¹ Turóc and Ajnácskő, built soon after 1241,



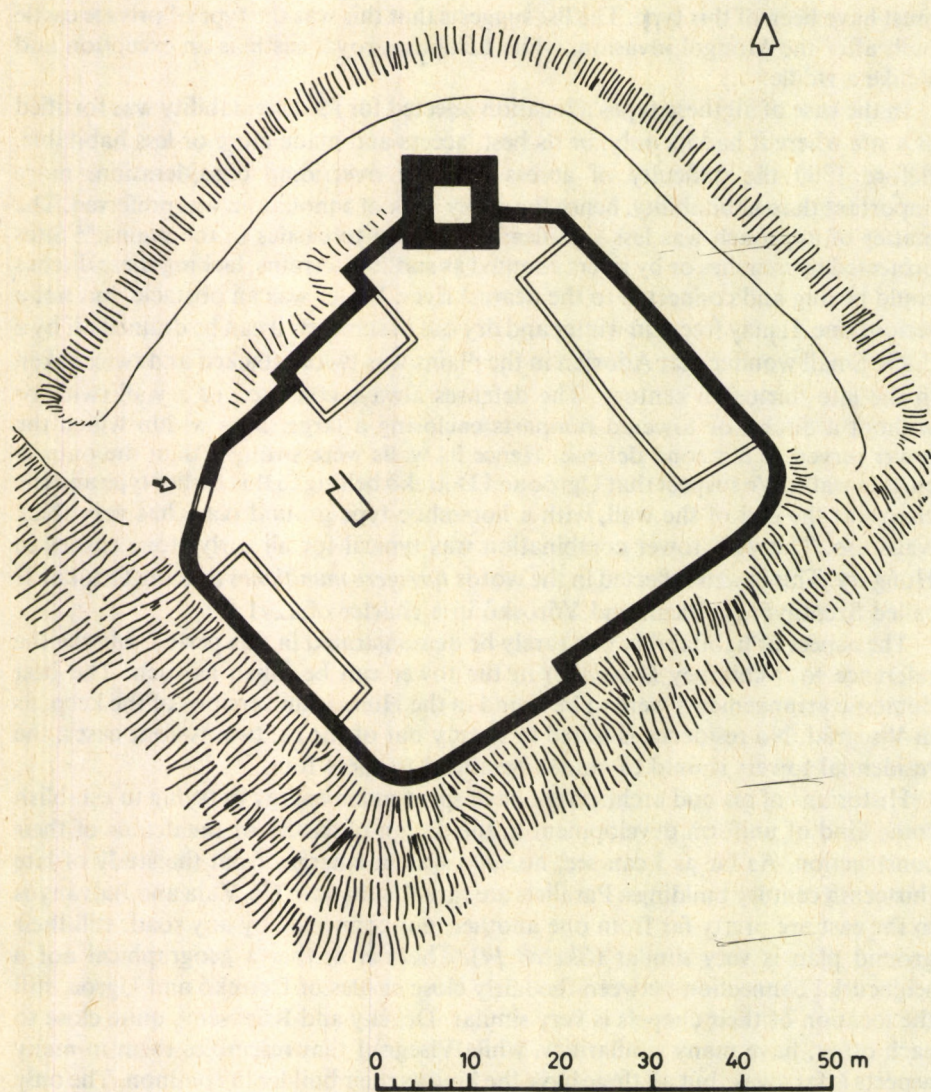
Sketch 13. Ugróc (ground-plan according to D. Menclová)
 Dark lines show parts from the middle of the 13th century, lighter ones parts from the end of the 16th century.

must have been of this type. The list suggests that this was the type of private castle built after the Mongol invasion, while Léka as a royal castle is an exception and Velike a riddle.

In the case of all these types a location selected for its defensability was fortified at a site where it had its only, or its best, access and made more or less habitable. Before 1300 the difficulty of access was the overriding consideration, more important than habitability: hence the rocky peak of a mountain was preferred. The matter of approach was less significant in regard to castles in the plains.⁸² Sites protected by marshes or by rivers counted as suitable terrains, lacking these ditches could be dug and connected to the nearest river. Water was an obstacle, but not a serious one. It may freeze in winter and dry out in summer; it can be drained off by a ditch. Small wonder that Adorján in the plains was twice attacked and twice taken in the late thirteenth century. The defenses always consisted of a wall (with or without a ditch), or towered ramparts enclosing a larger area within which the tower served as a second defense. Hence its walls were stronger than the outside curtain walls. We suspect that Ugróc and Detrekő belong to this earlier type and the chapel at the end of the wall, with a horseshoe-type ground plan, has very thick walls too. The wall-tower combination was typical for all early stone castles in Hungary. This is well reflected in the words *turrigere munitiones* as King Ottokar II called Szentgyörgy, Bazin and Vöröskő in a charter of 1271.⁸³

The aspect of habitability can rarely be demonstrated in this period. Maybe the reference to a chimney (*kandalló*) in the tower can be taken as such. The best domestic arrangements were to be found in the Hungarian versions of the keep, as in Visegrád. No residence is noted in twenty out of the ca. twenty-four cases; the residential towers should of course be added to these four.

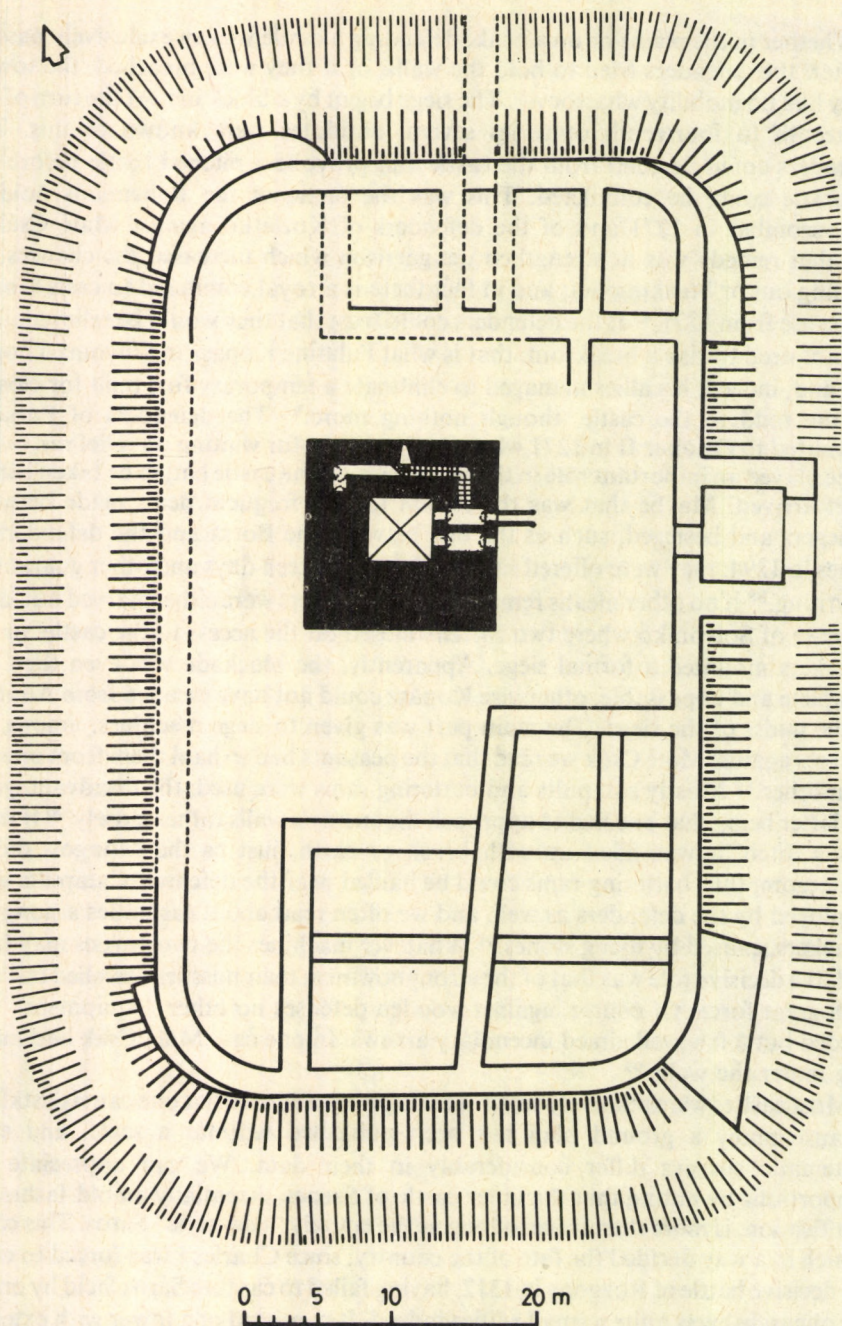
Historians of art and architecture have spent much energy in trying to establish some kind of uniform development in the design of castles or the details of their construction. As far as I can see, no such system emerges from the study of late thirteenth century buildings. Parallels are rare. Csobánc in Co. Zala and Bálványos in the east are pretty far from one another, not connected by any road, still their ground plan is very similar (*Sketch 14*). There is neither a geographical nor a seigneurial connection between the fairly close castles of Detrekő and Ugróc, still the location of their chapels is very similar. Dévény and Köpcsény, quite close to each other, have many similarities, while Visegrád that resembles them in many aspects is far away, but all three have the king as their builder in common. The only apparent scheme is a chronological one: before and immediately after 1241 small mostly pentagonal walls, around 1250 a tower surrounded by a wall and after 1260 architectural ensembles of wall and tower(s). This pattern is, however, chequered by exceptions, such as the larger residential towers. The uncertainty of this classification originates not only in undecided chronologies of archaeology, art and architectural history, but also from the oft-mentioned fact that we have few, if any, exact dates for the construction of castles in this period.



Sketch 14. Csobánc (ground-plan according to T. Koppány)

Whether in the plains or on a peak, defending a castle was an exclusively passive matter: the defenders tried to hold the walls, or if they were breached, the tower. They had no mobility whatsoever. The siege began by a blockade. At the turn of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries several antidotes were known to this. The defenders could descend from the castle and provoke a pitched battle before the blockade could be completed. This was the tactic of the Bohemians holding Nagyszombat in 1271 and of the defenders of Korlátkő against Máté Csák.⁸⁴ Another remedy was to strengthen the garrison which increased the chances for holding out or breaking out; and in fact there is a royal command to castellans in this sense from 1271.⁸⁵ If the defenders could trust that they would be relieved, they did not need to risk a break-out: that is what Palatine Kopasz in Solyomkő hoped for, and, indeed, his allies managed to eliminate a temporary fort built for closing off the road to the castle, though nothing more.⁸⁶ The defenders of Pozsony submitted to Ottokar II in 1271 when their patience for waiting on relief ran out.⁸⁷ Time played an important role in the siege, because the castle had to be taken before relief arrived. Maybe that was the reason for the frequent deals made between besiegers and besieged, such as the one between the Borsa and the defenders of Fenes in 1294: they were offered safe conduct for fifteen days and other guarantees in writing.⁸⁸ If no other means remained, the defenders were either starved out, as in the case of Solyomkő where two *castella* closed off the access to the castle, or the attackers mounted a formal siege. Apparently, the blockade was even then not complete and unpassable, otherwise Kopasz could not have escaped from Adorján in the midst of the siege. The main part was given to siege machines: among the charges against Máté Csák we read that the peasants had to haul them from one site to another.⁸⁹ Mostly catapults and battering rams were used; the disadvantage of the latter being that one had to approach the enemy's walls rather closely.⁹⁰ If there was a ditch, it was filled up with brush or earth, just as the Mongols did at Esztergom; thus battering rams could be hauled near the defenses. Catapults were employed by the defenders as well, and we often read about casualties among the attackers, caused by flying stones.⁹¹ Whatever machines the two parties may have had, the decisive role was that of the strongbowmen: their missiles travelled fast and with great force. Of course, against wooden defenses no other "equipment" was needed but a few well aimed incendiary arrows. In one case Máté Csák had mines dug under the walls.⁹²

Most castles were relatively small. This is pretty well all what one can risk stating, because many a ground plan has been published without a scale, and even systematic surveys differ considerably in their data. We can appreciate the proportions by noting that the inner castle of Szepes, essentially an old-fashioned fortification, is more than twice as long as the entirely "new-style" Sáros. This castle (which in a way decided the fate of the country, since Charles I was forced to enter the decisive battle of Rozgony in 1312, having failed to capture Sáros, held by one of the oligarchs) was quite a small edifice indeed. It consisted of a tower with external dimensions of 13 × 13 m and walls 4 m thick in the midst of a defendable area of

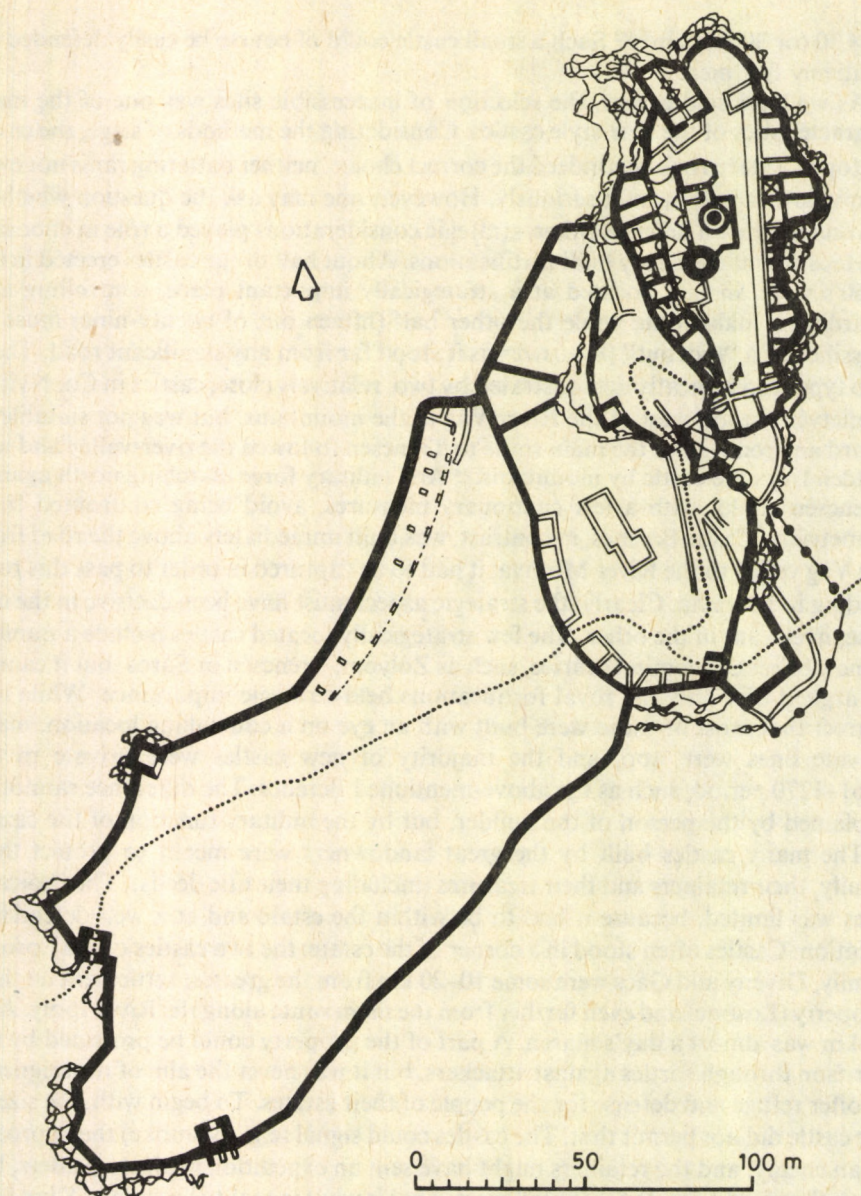


Sketch 15. Castle Sáros at the beginning of the 14th century (according to D. Menclová)

20×30 (or 30×50) m^2 .⁹³ Such a small castle could of course be easily defended by relatively few men.

As we have said earlier, the selection of inaccessible sites was one of the main characteristics of the new-style castles. Considering the methods of siege, the castle on top of a steep rock was indeed the correct choice: neither battering rams nor even strongbows could harm it seriously. However, one may ask the question whether, beyond their own defense, other, strategic considerations played a rôle in choosing the location of the newly built fortifications. About half of the castles erected in the 1260's were, in fact, located at a strategically important place, controlling and guarding a main route while the other half (fifteen out of twenty-nine) must be classified as a "hideout" (*mentsvár*) as it stood far from any significant road. These two types can be neatly demonstrated by two, relatively close, castles in Co. Nyitra. Temetvény stood west of the River Vág in the mountains, but was not suitable to guard any road, since the main route to Trencsén followed the river-valley and was hidden from the castle by mountains.⁹⁴ Any military force marching north against Trencsén could, with a few cautionary measures, avoid being confronted from Temetvény. Castle Berencs, in contrast, was built immediately above the road from the Vág valley to the River Morava: it had to be captured in order to pass this road leading to Moravia. Clearly, the strategic aspect must have been decisive in the one case, irrelevant in the other. The few strategically located castles include a number of new or rebuilt comital centres, such as Zólyom, Trencsén or Sáros, but it cannot be argued that only the royal fortifications held strategic importance. While it is correct that most of those were built with an eye on a controlling location, many private ones were, too, and the majority of new castles were private in the 1261–1270 period, such as the above-mentioned Berencs. The difference cannot be explained by the person of the builder, but by the military function of the castle.

The many castles built by the great landowners were meant to protect their family, their retainers and their treasures (including their title deeds). The choice of sites was limited, because it had to be within the estate and at a well-defendable location. Castles often stood in a corner of the estate: the two castles of the Losonci family, Divény and Gács were some 10–20 km from the greatest settlement on their property (Losonc) and even further from the main route along the River Ipoly. And 20 km was almost a day's march. A part of the property could be protected by the garrison through sorties against attackers, but it was never the aim of the seigneurs to offer refuge and defense for the people of their estates. To begin with, the size of the castle did not permit that. The castles could signal (e.g. by smoke) the approach of an enemy, and the retainers might have sent an expedition against invaders, but more they could not do for the villagers. That is what in reality became of King Béla IV's programme of fortifications "for the defense of the people". Nevertheless, the hideouts of the type of Divény and Gács were not without a certain strategic significance as can be seen from Ottokar II's campaign in 1271. The Bohemian army marched south in the Morava valley towards Pozsony: they had to besiege and take Stomfa and the near-by Dévény controlling the road. But they also attacked castle



Sketch 16. Szepes (ground-plan according to D. Menclová)

Detrekő,⁹⁵ although it lies far from the main route, deep among the mountains as a typical "hideout" in our classification. However, had the Detrekő garrison remained intact in its castle, it could have easily attacked the rear of the Bohemians marching toward Stomfa.

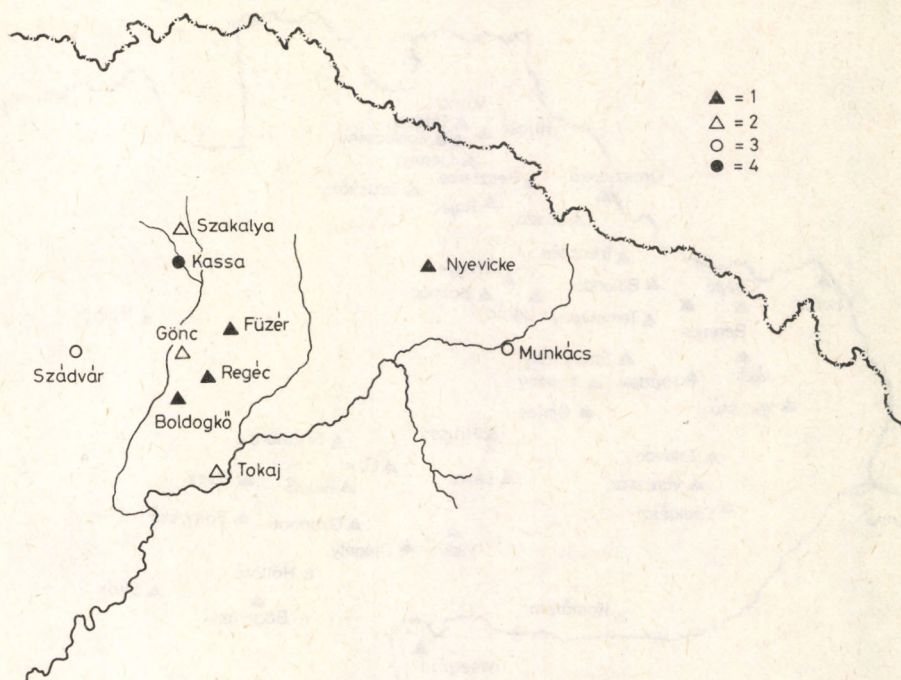
Whether strategically important or not, the close connection between castle and the great estates had significant political aspects. The power of the great landowner was supplied by his armed retainers. Once he had a castle, he could keep them in safety and could hold the castle for some time. This fact cannot be overestimated in regard to social development. However impressive great estates might have been, whatever size private army a lord might have had, he could never match the royal ones. As long as he did not have a defendable castle, he could not risk challenging the king. With a castle to his name, the magnate's position changed radically: he could oppose the monarchy, as the Kőszegi family did when, in 1283, they retreated into their castles Borostyán and Szentvid and held out until King Ladislas tired out and gave up the siege.⁹⁶ That the Kőszegi managed to keep their private army in reasonably good shape in the castle is obvious from their attack on the city of Pécs, soon after the siege was lifted.⁹⁷ Two military factors added to this situation. In the thirteenth century the royal host consisted mostly of Cumans, Székelys and other light cavalry units that were an impressive force in the pursuit of an opposing lord without a castle, but were nearly useless for a siege. Furthermore, defenders of a castle, however condemned to passivity, are always in a superior position to their attackers, especially if the latter do not have appropriate siege warfare specialists: the failure of Ladislas IV under Borostyán proves just that. This increase in the political rôle of the great estates through their castles was quite advanced already in the later years of Béla IV's reign, and it was only the conflict within the royal family, between father and son, that veiled its true character. While many castles were involved in the wars around 1264, the actual power of the lords of castles came to the light only when the confrontation was between king and magnates: Borostyán was defended by the Kőszegi barons, not the crown prince, against King Ladislas.

The advantages of castles for political aims were first realised by those magnates who, at the end of the thirteenth century, attempted to build territorial principalities. The best way to solidify a power base was to acquire the castles of other great landowners, gradually amassing a petty kingdom. Less reliable was a second road, which led through alliances with other lords of castles. A version of the former was, of course, when a baron took over royal castles through his offices at court. In the second half of the thirteenth century many lords started out to become territorial oligarchs. By the death of Andrew III multiple castle-ownership had far surpassed the numbers of 1270: the Kőszegi stood at the peak with fourteen strongholds, followed closely by Máté Csák with his twelve; the third place belongs (although this has not been noted hitherto in the literature) to the Balassa family with seven of their own castles, plus two (Zólyom and Nagyvár) that they held as counts of Zólyom. Amadé Aba was no more than a novice with his six fortresses. This field changed in the first decade of the fourteenth century so that Máté Csák

became the greatest, with the Kőszegi and the Aba close behind. Since the story of the Kőszegi-Güssing family is extremely complicated and not well enough researched, let us take the rise of Máté and Amadé as our paradigm for the rise of an oligarch.

Both came from the mightiest clans of the realm. Two brothers of Amadé held high royal offices, one of them the highest secular post, that of count palatine. Amadé earned his spurs in averting the second Mongol attack and held under Ladislas IV, according to the factional struggles, the palatinate several times. He was a firm supporter of Andrew III from whom he received the entire county of Ung. With the extinction of the dynasty, three claimants fought for the crown of Hungary: Venceslas (III), son of the King of Bohemia; Otto of Wittelsbach of Bavaria and Charles Robert of the Sicilian Anjou, all descendants of the founding dynasty in the female line. Venceslas was first successful and had been acknowledged king from 1301 till 1305. Amadé supported him until 1304 when he changed his allegiance to Charles and remained faithful to him to his death. His territory was in the northeast of the country where he styled himself palatine (although he did not hold that office after 1300). He was able to avoid any clash with the king, but not with the burghers of Kassa at the edge of his "petty kingdom"; they killed him in 1312.⁹⁸

Amadé started out as a minor figure in terms of castles. He acquired three or four of them before 1300 (*Map 12*) and augmented them with two newly built ones: Gönc and Tokaj. With these the county-size territory between the Rivers Tisza, Bodrog and Hernád was nicely rounded out. At the time of Andrew III's death, Amadé controlled the two main routes to Poland and Russia, thus the strategic point of departure was promising. The directions of expansion were suggested by the valleys of the Rivers Bodrog and Hernád, but, since there were few castles in the former, the next obstacle was Kassa. The "palatine" exercised suzerainty over the town, not yet fully developed into a city, and to make his position clear to its burghers, built a castle immediately above the town: Szakalya. This fortress also played the rôle of a border marker. While his new castles would have allowed it, Amadé did not turn against the neighbouring seigneurs (such as the Nagymihályi family or Péter Petenye) but rather into the northwesternly direction by taking Szádvár. At this point the anger of the burghers stopped his "promising" career. There are a few characteristic features in this story. To begin with, he displayed a "conspicuous moderation" (J. Karácsonyi)⁹⁹ insofar as probably Szádvár was the only violently captured castle, but the legal forms were observed even there.¹⁰⁰ He attempted to round out a definite territory but did not risk attacking fellow barons and did not usurp royal castles (with the probable exception of Munkács). Therefore, the territory was undefendable when he died: Patak and Zemplén were not in his hands, neither was Kassa near to which the troops of Petenye stood intact at the king's disposal. The sons of Amadé tried to correct their father's mistakes, but too late. They attacked Patak, but could not take the castle; they usurped Szinnye by extortion (as we have seen), but this opened only the road toward Szepes, where

Map 12. The castles of Amadé *d.g.* Aba

1 = castle acquired before 1300; 2 = castle built by Amadé; 3 = castle acquired after 1300; 4 = town

the impressive military force of the loyal Saxons remained faithful to the king. The king brought about a formal accord between the sons of Amadé Aba and Kassa, but this was, in fact, a declaration of war against them, against Máté Csák and the Balassa family. This led to the siege of Sáros, of which we have already spoken.¹⁰¹

Máté Csák was similarly a scion of a major clan, his father was also palatine. His first deeds were in the service of Andrew III: he recovered Pozsony from the Kőszegi clan for the crown. In 1297, he was briefly palatine, at which time he acquired Trencsén which remained the centre of his territory and his residence to the end. He then turned against Andrew and supported Venceslas; only in 1308, on the intervention of the papal legate, did he acknowledge Charles, but without in fact giving up the regalian rights usurped in his territory. Therefore, he was excommunicated in 1311, in response to which he marched against Buda, temporarily took Visegrád and in 1312, realising the political contents of the Aba-Kassa agreement, sent troops to aid the sons of Amadé. The defeat of his army in the ensuing battle of Rozgony did not succeed in breaking his power which he held until his death in 1321.¹⁰² The basis of Máté's rise was in fact one great estate, Tapolcsány in Co. Nyitra. Following this he acquired eight castles with appurtenances before 1300: he "bought" one for a ridiculous sum, and the rest he



Map 13. The castles of Máté Csák, 1310

occupied by naked force. By this time he had more castles than Amadé would ever have, and established a round and closed territory. If he actually built Hruszó (Co. Bars) and Appony (Co. Nyitra), then he, too, managed to surround the area with "border castles". At this time his situation was similar to that of Amadé in that other petty kings were growing up around his area. But he was cleverer: he swiftly expanded his base of nine castles and reached through the Vág valley the Túróc plateau. Here the Balassa clan was about to establish its petty kingdom: Máté took their recently usurped castle and four more.¹⁰³ He was extremely successful in his alliance policies: the Kacsics clan helped him to find entry into Co. Nógrád and he managed to make some agreement with the Balassa without returning their castles or making them his open enemies. At the time of the battle of Rozgony Máté Csák owned at least forty-one (with the Moravian Veseli, forty-two) castles and his power was unchallenged in the northeast. He acquired the castles of his neighbours much more systematically and organised his *familia* much better than Amadé Aba. That is why he was able to retain not only his pre-1300 but also his pre-1310 acquisitions.

Hungarian historians often refer to the "petty kingdom" of these two men as "principalities", without technically being correct. There is not enough known of the organisation and administration of the Csák territory but it is clear that he never attempted royal status and whatever regalia he usurped, he "legalized" them by the fictive palatinate, just as Amadé Aba did.¹⁰⁴ Máté's power was uneven within his own sphere of influence: it was genuinely stable only in Trencsén and Nyitra counties. As far as we know, in Co. Nyitra he supported the survival of the royal comital system, while he divided Trencsén into *provinciae* by castles, with castellans at their head.¹⁰⁵ It may be that this system would have, in due course, reached Nyitra, because there is some reference to Csák's castellans in that county.¹⁰⁶ The organisation of districts suggest two things: first that he opposed the development of the noble county (as did Amadé), as the lesser nobles' self-government would have surely challenged his lordship; and second that he was unable to conceive and organise any unit larger than the estates *cum* castle complex, even though he owned several dozen of them in several adjacent counties. This, in itself, was, of course, no novelty: the acquisition of all available estates and especially castles in a county had been done decades before by the Geregye or the Borsa clan.

It has been often pointed out that the great estates killed the royal county, and that they were the gravediggers of the idea of noble autonomy as well, but it is not said that in the last resort they have also been a major obstacle blocking the way to the development of true petty kingdom. The territories of the Amadé, Máté and the Kőszegi clan emerged from the *bellum omnium (seniorum) contra omnes (seniores)* and managed to exist for more than a generation, but none of them, nor their opponents, were able to propose any other concept but that of a great estate which, based on its castle, expands by all legal and illegal means. Whatever fancy titles (aping the royal ones) they might have granted to their *familiares*, they had no concept of a higher organisation than the *familia* of the great landowner. Their "principalities" were but colliers of estates and when they fell apart, they were replaced by new collier-collectors. The castle was the means of unfolding the political and military power of the great estate, but even so, they did never become more than great landed estates in medieval Hungary.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ Györffy, 1963, 601.

² Karácsonyi, 1908, II: 10–12; Györffy, 1963, I: 591, 606, 613, 631, 638, 643, 647, 654, 658, 691; Jakó, 1940, 299, 304, 345, 373.

³ Bunyitay, 1888, 22.

⁴ *ÁÚO* XII: 250–253; *RA* 2942.

⁵ *HO* VII: 170: *edificia que in claustro obruta, lapides eorundem et lapides quos de monasterio deposuerant . . . deferri fecisset Petrus filius Drug et in Gyozyk turrin sibi ex eis fecisset edificari*

⁶ Bunyitay, 1888, 29–32.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 130–131.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 142–150.

⁹ Hóman, 1936, 458–459.

¹⁰ As King Ladislas IV wrote in the proem of one of the charters licencing the building of a castle: *quia nobiles . . . locis indigent pro defensione personarum et rerum suarum aptis munitionibus* (Fejér, CD V/3: 179; RA 3210).

¹¹ RA 1828; HO VI: 59; RA 943.

¹² Bánffy, I: 79: *quod cum ipse in quadam terra deserta et inter alpes constituta tamen ad ipsos cum suis fratribus sine divisione pertinente, novum castrum et aedificium Mentheu vocatum iam satis a magno tempore aedificasset, struxisset et erexisset et in erigendo aedificia et munia castri sumptus et expensas proprias ad duo millia marcarum . . . fecisset*

¹³ DI. 13 339.

¹⁴ Súpis, II: 165.

¹⁵ ÁÚO XII: 450; RA 3420.

¹⁶ Györffy, 1963, I: 313–314.

¹⁷ HO VI: 59; RA 943.

¹⁸ RA 1021.

¹⁹ ÁÚO XII: 256; RA 2978.

²⁰ Fejér, CD VIII/2: 175: *praeterea ad fossatum Trencheniensem et ad muniendum cum lignis murum eiusdem, ad ligna deferenda, pro calce coquenda, pro meatu aque vehementis obstruendo, pro arena fodienda, pro argilla pro cisternis deferenda et machinis deportandis huc atque illuc ad castra impugnanda, pro victualibus in castrum deferendis et trabibus maximis pro eisdem firmandis . . . Item ad fossatum de Topolchan fodiendum, muniendum cum lignis maximis et propugnaculis faciendis . . . pro lapidibus in propugnaculis et pro muris faciendis . . . populos nostros destruxerunt*

²¹ ÁÚO XI: 562; RA 3579.

²² ÁÚO XI: 561; RA 3559.

²³ Hungarian clans who migrated to Slavonia erected there seven new castles before 1270.

²⁴ Karácsonyi, 1905, II: 150.

²⁵ Bánffy, I: 93–94; cf. Cs. I: 89.

²⁶ ÁÚO XII: 12; RA 2041.

²⁷ Jakó, 1940, 192, 139–140, 341.

²⁸ Dipl. Sáros, 310: *nam cum istae haereditates Sowar, Sowpotok et Delna per dictum regem Ladislaum nobis datae fuissent et adhuc castrum non habuissimus, praedictum comitem Thomam misimus ad montem Tarkew vulgariter nuncupatum, ut eum custodiet, ne aliquis super eundem montem castrum aedificaret et nos de haereditate nostra depelleret, quem montem idem Thomas vigilanter et fideliter custodivit quoad usque castrum construximus super eundem*

²⁹ Könyöki, 1905, 37.

³⁰ ÁÚO VII: 225; RA 851: *in cuius recompensationem concessimus, ut castrum, quod in terra sua edificare inceperat, edificet ipsum et tam ipse quam sui successores possint et valeant in perpetuum possidere*

³¹ 1283: Fejér, CD V/3: 179; RA 3210: *hanc eidem duximus gratiam faciendam, ut in monte Thorzol . . . aedificandi castrum liberam habeant facultatem*; 1288: Dipl. Sáros, 52; RA 3502: *Concessimus etiam eidem magistro Georgio castrum construere*; 1284: Fejér CD V/3: 240; RA 3317: *Castrum concessimus construendum*. These expressions prove that the licencing of castles was the same kind of royal grace as in the early fifteenth century, under Sigismund. This should be underlined in contrast to those erroneous views (Sándorfi, 1980, 247.) that assume their necessity only for the fifteenth century. While the formulae of the licences were indeed not developed until later, licences were granted by Ladislas IV as well as by the Angevin kings (Fügedi, 1977, 10–2). The gap between these two epochs is filled by the Art 10: 1298 speaking about unlicensed castles that were to be destroyed, exactly because of the lack of royal permission (see below next note).

³² The decretum of 1298 contains in Art. 10 the following measures about castles:

1. §. *Item munitiones et castella de novo, absque licentia domini regis;*
2. §. *vel que furrunt tales, de quibus detrimenta inferuntur vel in posterum inferri presumantur;*
3. §. *aut etiam quibus ipsae possessiones non sufficiunt;*
4. §. *minores etiam super ecclesias et monasteria facte sine dilatione omni deleantur.*

³³ *Mon. Rom. Vespr.*, I: 320: *dominus de Berechio*

³⁴ *ÁÚO IX*: 196–197; *RA 2895*: *vastus et incendia per regnum nostrum velut hostis publicus exercuit incessanter*

³⁵ Fejér, *CD V/2*: 343; *RA 2660*: *dictum castrum . . . quod quasi in confinio Bohemiae est positum aliis castris quampluribus occupatis potentialiter fideliter defenderunt nullo tamen vasto et nocumento ex eodem castro irrogato, sed pacem et tranquillitatem regni nostri et provinciarum circumiacentium conservato*

³⁶ *ÁÚO XII*: 143; *RA 2661*: *castrum Lyndua cum villis et terris ad prefatum castrum de iure pertinentibus*

³⁷ Fejér, *CD V/2*: 593.

³⁸ *ÁÚO XII*: 12; *RA 2041*: *quandam possessionem Chychwa vocatam . . . cum villis ad ipsam pertinentibus Husscemezeu et Wysno vocatis, simulcum utilitatibus et pertinentiis earundem, prout dux Radzilaus habuit et possedit*

³⁹ Györffy, 1963, I: 313: *castrum Scarsumlu vocatum simul cum monte, vineis et silvis, in quo idem castrum est constructum ac aliis villis universis ad ipsum pertinentibus*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 278, 373, 381, 343.

⁴¹ At the division of the Hontpázmány clan's properties the appurtenances of castles Drégely and Liptó were defined in detail: see Kubinyi, II: 27.

⁴² There were so many different *cubuli* used for measuring liquids that no modern equivalent can be guessed at.

⁴³ Tkalčić, I: 84.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁴⁵ See above, pp. 000.

⁴⁶ Karácsony-Kristó, 1971, 20.

⁴⁷ *HO VI*: 12; *RA 364*; *ÁÚO XII*: 604.

⁴⁸ *Cs. IV*: 82.

⁴⁹ Fejér, *CD VIII/1*: 365; *AO III*: 78; cf. *Cs. III*: 210.

⁵⁰ *ÁÚO VIII*: 255; *Zsk I*: 915.

⁵¹ Kubinyi, I: 170; Holub, *Tört. földr. III*: 751–752.

⁵² Györffy, 1963, I: 617.

⁵³ *ÁÚO VII*: 263; *RA 882*.

⁵⁴ Szekfű, 1912.

⁵⁵ *AO II*: 262: *eundem Stephanum tamquam sui proximi habendo confidentiam in dicto castro constituerit et . . . res sue mille marcas valentes in argento et auro, aliis rebus pretiosis apud eundem remanserint*

⁵⁶ *RA 2571*; *ÁÚO XII*: 101; *RA 2459*.

⁵⁷ *AO I*: 405.

⁵⁸ Kristó, 1973, 159–161.

⁵⁹ *Dl.* 29 422.

⁶⁰ *AO I*: 107.

⁶¹ *AO I*: 301.

⁶² Szekfű, 1912, 47–48.

⁶³ A letter-book from about 1235 contains six missives of a castellan whose castle has been captured during his absence; *BU I*: 165–6.

⁶⁴ Kristó, 1973, 138–139.

⁶⁵ Bónis, s.d. 224–225.

⁶⁶ E.g. *ZO I*: 147.

⁶⁷ Kristó, 1973, 114–140; cf. Fügedi, 1975, 422.

⁶⁸ Kristó, 1973, 137.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 156–157.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 162–163.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 123–124.

⁷² Karácsonyi, 1901, II: 408.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, II: 185.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, II: 188.

⁷⁵ Márk's son István d.g. Csák seems to have occupied Csókakő built by the Dudari branch, even though this was later legalised (Fügedi, 1977, 119f). Miklós Kőszegi maintained that his cousin András had besieged two of his castles *die noctuque cum omnibus actis contra castra inventis* (ZO I: 147).

⁷⁶ King Andrew III died on 14 January 1301.

⁷⁷ Pisoň, 1973, 411.

⁷⁸ Maybe the castle of Zólyom, built around 1250–60, should be counted into this group with its additionally fortified tower opposite to the gate in the citadel (Fiala, 1966). The interior space and the size of the wall of some of the major towers (*őregtorony*) were calculated by Könyöki (1905, 183–4), based on his own surveys. The early, square types had central areas of 3.5 by 3.5 m to 6 by 6 m. Dévény and Trencsén (6 × 6), Lietava and Revistye (5.5 × 5.5) and Hrussó and Kőszeg (3.5 × 3.5) have identical internal measures, but different walls. Among the round towers Szepes and Bajmóc (with 8 m diameter) have identical sized interiors.

⁷⁹ *ÁÚO* VV: 501–3; *RA* 1223: ... *carissima consors nostra domina Maria regina Hungariae quondam desertum montem in silva Pilis existentem pro castro construendo ad defensionem viduarum et orphanorum a nobis instanter petiti sibi dari*

⁸⁰ The etching is in Prickler, 1972, 73.

⁸¹ Ground plans, *ibid.*, 91; Szabó, 1920, 48, 117.

⁸² Bunyitay, 1888, 129–30.

⁸³ *Codex epistolaris Primislai Ottocari II* (Viennae, 1803), 2.

⁸⁴ *AO* II: 116; *ÁÚO* VIII: 256, *RA* 1908; *ÁÚO* IX: 199 (*RA* 2854); *AO* I: 520.

⁸⁵ Fejér, *CD* IV/3: 548; *RA* 1904.

⁸⁶ Bunyitay, 1888, 148–9.

⁸⁷ *Österreichische Reimchronik*, vv. 11 10920–40; Gombos, 1938, 1809.

⁸⁸ *ÁÚO* X: 153; Karácsony-Kristó, 1971, 15–7.

⁸⁹ *Cod. ep. Ott.* (as above, n.83) 2: *castrum Alterburch machinarum tormentis continuis laceratum*; *Öst. Reimchr.* 29.850–5 (Gombos, 1938, 1842); on the *ballistarius*: Kubinyi, I: 125; *RA* 3220; Fejér, *CD* IV: 66; *RA* 1299.

⁹⁰ Fejér, *CD* VIII/2: 175.

⁹¹ *TT* 1883, 211; *RA* 3169, 2740; *HO* IV: 291; *RA* 3212.

⁹² Györfy, 1963, 435.

⁹³ There are two ground plans for Sáros: Myskovsky (Könyöki, 1905, Fig. 63b) gives 40 × 50 m for the quadrangle within the walls, Menclová (Pisoň, 1973, 410) has 30 × 60 m. I followed the latter for the measures of the tower.

⁹⁴ Ethey, 1936, 183.

⁹⁵ Házi, 1914, 194.

⁹⁶ Pauler, 1899, 384–5.

⁹⁷ Karácsonyi, 1901, II: 151.

⁹⁸ *MEL* I: 1.

⁹⁹ Karácsonyi, 1901, I: 25.

¹⁰⁰ While we have no immediate evidence about the procedure, we can gauge it from Szádvár's subsequent history. When King Charles reconquered the castles of the oligarchs, the violently usurped properties were returned to their rightful owners while those which were formally, "legally", transferred, the king retained for the crown; the latter was Szádvár's fate, which implies that Amadé Aba must have legalised its acquisition even though probably by threatening its former owners.

¹⁰¹ See above.

¹⁰² Kristó, 1973, with lit.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 64–5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 156f.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 157f.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 121f.

CASTELLANS OF THE ANGEVIN KINGS

We have seen the rise and fall of oligarchs who attempted to build a territorial lordship from their multiple castle-ownership and their estates. In 1312 the sons of Amadé Aba lost their father's power and property; four years later the king defeated the Borsa clan. Máté Csák managed to retain most of his castles till his death in 1321, but then his dominion also fell apart and escheated to the crown. We have also surveyed briefly the structure of these great estates with their *familiae* and its leading group, the castellans.

The estates or *dominia* of the fourteenth century achieved a more impressive power and a much more elaborate structure. For their origins we have once more to turn to the royal domain and its centres, the comital castles. When, in the course of the thirteenth century, the royal county began to disintegrate, to be replaced by the units of noble self-government, this change was neither abrupt nor complete. The office of the *comes comitatus* survived in an altered form; his title did not change, and he was still the ruler's representative vis-à-vis the nobility and the commander of the county's noble levy. If the comital castle was not alienated from the crown, the deputy of the count remained its keeper and retained some other functions connected to it. Apparently, the old title of the *maior castri* was, in the early thirteenth century, replaced by the *prefectus castri*, but the vernacular name remained, witness the *Regestrum Varadiense*, the minutes of ordeals held by the cathedral chapter of Várad, which still contains the word *várnagy* (i.e. castellan).¹ After a long silence, the keepers of the castles emerge again in the sources around 1260, but now called *castellani* and serving as executive officers of the royal administration. When a certain property was sold in Co. Szepes, the king sent the castellan of Szepes to erect boundary signs between the estate and the land of the Saxons.² In 1272 the castellan of Szepes assisted at a seizure in a function that would have earlier been performed by a *pristaldus*.³ From then on *castellani* regularly appear at such occasions all over the country and always on immediate royal commission.⁴ It is hence not surprising to find them conducting criminal inquiry or that the counts send them out to do so.⁵ In the area of the former royal forest of Zólyom, first a vast county was organised, which also included the basin of Liptó, separated from the rest by Lower Tatra. In Liptó, which later became a separate county, the comes of Zólyom was represented by the *várnagy* whose task it was, among others, to delineate the borders of some property seized by his superior.⁶ All in all, the *castellani* seem to have fulfilled administrative functions in their counties, both within and beyond the area of the castle under their command.

During a siege, the castellan had always had judicial powers in the castle. Stephen *rex iunior* ordered in 1272, when he granted a half-completed tower in the castle of Patak to a nobleman in perpetuity, that "in wartime he and his family are to be subject to the jurisdiction of the keeper of the castle as everyone else within the walls."⁷ Many lawsuits in medieval Hungary, even of those that have been initiated before a royal justice, were completed in arbitration courts, consisting of *probi viri* elected by the parties. Castellans served regularly on these juries from the late thirteenth century onwards, surely not because of their legal expertise but owing to their status and reputation.⁸ There is evidence for the peace-time judicial function of a *castellanus* in a royal court from 1283. However, at this time he was also styled *comes curialis*, implying that he acted as a deputy of the count.⁹ A charter issued in 1296 by the castellan of Sopron leaves no doubt that he was a justice in his county on the basis of his own office.¹⁰ This tallies with a report sent in 1291 by the castellan of Kapu to the king. He was supposed to receive a property from the Provost of Vasvár, but the provost refused to hand it over. The castellan concluded his report by noting that "the property indeed belongs to *magister* Herbord, as I have read in the pertinent charter and as I am aware of it."¹¹ It is most likely that the case was tried in the first instance in the court of the castellan, hence his expert knowledge of the facts. These somewhat jejune sources suggest that parallel to the disintegration of the royal county the royal castellans inherited the functions of the *pristaldi* and later those of the county *ispán* or of his *comes curialis*. In the beginning at least, they needed a special commission from the king or the count. Their competences and powers are suggested by such examples as the one in which the castellan of Sáros simply confiscated a privately owned salt-well and had some kind of fort built next to it for the guards.¹²

In analogy to the royal domain, it was only logical that the castellans on the estates of magnates would also become judges and administrators of the appurtenances of their castle and function in the name of its lord as the region's authority. As it may be recalled, we have assumed from an order to his castellans that Máté Csák had his territory organised into *provinciae* under the keepers of his castles. Thus we may take it that by the turn of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries a system had emerged that consisted of units based on castles and their estates with the castellan at their head. This system was taken over and developed by King Charles I when he began to consolidate central authority.

Once the castles formerly held by the oligarchs were recovered, the king could turn to the recuperation of other alienated crown property. This policy was vigorously pursued after 1327. Of course nothing similar to the attempts of Béla IV at reconstructing the old royal domain could be considered, but still "the royal castles offered themselves as . . . economic centres and their lands as economic bases". Hence the domains were attached to the castles and "these greater or lesser appurtenances, administered by the *castellani*. . . were to serve the supply of the castle and its garrison".¹³ Bálint Hóman assumed that the castellans had primarily military and police functions and the administration of the "castle estates" or

“castle domains” was only their secondary task.¹⁴ He actually regarded the system as an absolute innovation and compared it to the royal county of the eleventh-twelfth century. Having been interested mainly in the royal revenue, he resolved that the income of the royal castle-estates was insufficient and this prompted Charles I to turn to other sources: the *regalia* of mining and minting. The issue of the castle-domains is, however, too important to be left at that; it needs to be reconsidered, not only from the financial point of view but from that of the distribution of power as well.

Just as in the era of the oligarchs the castellans were the ones who emerged most clearly from the magnate's *familia*, so in the royal system, they are the officers best known by the royal commands and commissions sent to them. Therefore, we must start with an inquiry into their functions, legal status and personnel. The castellan was appointed by the king, just as was the count of the county, and presented to his territory by a royal officer (*homo regius*).¹⁵ The king's command was addressed to the *villici* of the villages and the tenants on the castle's estates, ordering them to receive the new castellan with due honour, and to render him the dues and obedience just as if he were their lord. The castellan received the castle *pro honore* and filled his office *auctoritate regia*. He was to collect the revenue for the king and defend the castle in his name.¹⁶ In one case it is also noted that a *castellanus* received gifts (*munera*) from the peasants; obviously these were also given to him in the king's stead.¹⁷

We know remarkably little about the actual functions of the castellans. As usual, written evidence survives only on extraordinary matters, such as special royal commissions for seizins of major importance,¹⁸ for representing the king in significant lawsuits¹⁹ or for acting as escheators for the crown.²⁰ Their foremost task was, of course, the upkeep, repair and guarding of the king's castle. Most of the castles suffered heavily in the struggles with the oligarchs or fell into bad repair because of their age. The revenue from the appurtenances was rarely sufficient for major renovations. When Charles I managed to recover two castles from a relative and adherent of Csák, they were in such bad repair that the king had to assign the taxes of four counties for their reconstruction.²¹ In the case of castle Sirok the king borrowed 2000 florins from the castellan for its rebuilding and mortgaged the castle and its appurtenances to him.²² The amount is quite impressive, especially if we consider that unskilled labour was still freely available from the estates, just as a century before. If that did not suffice for transport and labour, the castellans could call upon the serfs of the adjacent county, as it was done in Gömör for the reconstruction of castle Dédes in Borsod.²³

The appurtenances were likewise entrusted to the castellan. He was in charge of these *nomine honoris regii*,²⁴ administered them and collected their dues, in a word “ruled, held and owned”²⁵ them. He was accountable for the economy but, judging from the settlement agreements made by castellans, enjoyed considerable autonomy. In the fourteenth century there were still vast forests—particularly in the north—where new settlements could be founded on assarts. This was mostly

done by contracts with a *locator* (*Schultheiss*, *soltész*) who organised the operation for which he received an exempt plot in perpetuity or a mill, maybe a butcher's licence.²⁶ Several such contracts between *castellani* and *locatores* have come down to us, referring to areas of royal castle-domains.²⁷ A grant of two plots to the burghers of a small *suburbium* by the castellan, who was "moved by their poverty and need" also suggests the fairly wide discretionary powers of these officers.²⁸

In the beginning the economic and administrative functions of the keepers of private castles might not have been very different from those of the royal castellans. The new and decisive feature in the development of the royal domain of the fourteenth century was the castellans' judicial authority over the tenants of the estates, their *iurisdictio*.²⁹ The judicial power of private landlords over their *jobagiones* had not matched this for a long time, although it began to develop in the thirteenth century. The ecclesiastical lords acquired the right to administer justice first by way of immunities; the secular lords, following their lead, did not manage to get beyond the right of judging minor matters on their estates. By the mid-fourteenth century this was described as "old and general custom".³⁰ Grants of *ius gladii*, that is jurisdiction including capital cases, begin to show up in the early fourteenth century, but relatively few charters are known that include this privilege.³¹ It has been assumed that many of those lords who actually exercised such jurisdiction in the fifteenth century "did so on their great estates whether they received a royal permission or not".³² The solution is suggested by a remark of the legal historian Imre Hajnik, who noted that the jurisdiction of the royal *castellani* over their tenants "was highly developed".³³ Even though we do not know of any specific legal decision on this matter, it is only logical that if the *jobagiones* were to honour the castellan just as their ruler (as we have seen in the wording of a commission), they were also subject to his plenary jurisdiction. This seems to be implied in a charter of Louis I (1342–1382) of 1376 in which a *locator* is limited in his jurisdiction to minor cases, since the major ones (here theft, brigandage and arson) are reserved for the king's or the castellan's court held three times a year. In the same charter the *locator* is granted the privilege of being exempt from any other citation except to the "presence of our castellan".³⁴

Besides the occasional charter already noted in older studies,³⁵ the jurisdiction of the *castellani* can be best reconstructed from two groups of sources: agreements of settlement and franchises granted to villages or agrarian towns (*oppida*). While there is some difference between the practice of the northeastern and the northwestern parts of the country,³⁶ the *locator* is always empowered to administer justice in minor cases, whilst the major ones are reserved to the castellan or his deputy at his *iudicium generale* or *iudicium legitimum* held three times annually.³⁷ The dates for the court sessions may differ from case to case, but the general practice is that the castellan holds the seigneurial court together with the village magistrate and local jurors. The franchises reflect the same customs, as for example in the dominion of Némétújvár, where the castellan is held to nominate only one and not more justices for the entire estate.³⁸ If a settlement received urban privilege from the

king, it was exempted from the jurisdiction of the castellan.³⁹ On the other hand, writs commanding that royal tenants should only be cited to the court of the castellan suggest the same system.⁴⁰ All of these regulations lead us to conclude that the castellans had the same jurisdiction in capital cases as the count or a nobleman with *ius gladii* (sometimes called *comes liber*): in the last resort all of these jurisdictions devolved from the king's supreme judicial power. Not surprisingly, few sentences passed by castellans came down to us. Since they referred to matters of dependent tenants, they were hardly ever put into writing. Written records were needed only in cases that involved a party beyond the confines of the castle-estates, but even these are rare, since few of them touched upon feudal rights that demanded formal proof. The jurisdiction of the *castellani* ended at the borders of their estates and nobles with landed property were also exempt from their courts. One castellan, who later made a great career, once attempted to pass judgment on matters of noble property, but it was found "that such a *castellanus* as the one of Sáros has no jurisdiction over nobles in property cases according to the *statuta regni* as it can be seen from the letter of king to *magister* Micsk, read by *magister* (Chief Justice) Lampert".⁴¹

Unlimited jurisdiction over the *jobagiones* of the great estates was a social fact of considerable consequence. It deprived the county of its power over the subjects of the *dominia* and thus made these estates into veritable *seigneuries banales* by adding the administration of justice to the economic power of the castle. Henceforth, not only the dues in kind and coin were to be delivered "up there", but the judge also descended "from there" into the villages.⁴² In the above-mentioned cases the lord of the castle was the ruler of the kingdom, but this was not to be the end of the road. The judicial powers of the castellan do not seem to have ended when the estate was granted to a private owner. Miklós Kont, long time palatine of Louis I, received from the king the estates of Bátorkö; he later gave away one of the appurtenant villages to the Pauline monks of the monastery of Csatka, which he had selected as his burial site. In 1394 Kont's widow ordered her castellan not to hold court in that village any more.⁴³ As there is no evidence either of Kont's or his widow's having been explicitly granted *ius gladii*, we have to assume that the castellan's jurisdiction went back to the time when Bátorkö was a royal castle. Such developments may supply the clue for the great landowners' judicial powers with or without royal licence. As in the thirteenth century villages changed hands with the castles as their appurtenances, the jurisdiction may have become an "ideal appurtenance" and passed on from the royal to the private lords of the castle. Hence the castles granted by Louis I became not only residences of the great landlords and treasuries of their valuables but also the seats of their seignorial administration of justice, low and high.

In the middle of the fourteenth century the royal castle-estates represented the highest stage of development of Hungarian great estates, the *dominium*. At the death of Louis I their majority was still crown property, but even if they were alienated, they retained that plenitude of power which they had enjoyed as the

king's domains. It may be that a puzzling formula in donation charters, adding to the castle and its appurtenances also the *ius regium* pertaining to it, refers to this "inheritance" of royal rights of justice by the new owner.⁴⁴ This formula may have implied criminal and capital jurisdiction, but we have not enough evidence to establish this beyond doubt.

The great secular estates seem to have acquired some other rights besides the ones copied or "inherited" from the royal castle-estates. One of the few scattered references is to be found in the franchise of three villages in the Nyaláb estates, granting the parishes "their previous privileges and liberties unperturbed by the castellan."⁴⁵ This short clause allows us to assume that the king's patronage over the domain's churches was also exercised by the castellan. Charters of King Sigismund (1387–1437) frequently contain expressly the patronage among the rights and appurtenances belonging to a castle.⁴⁶ Another connection between great landowners and the Church originated in the collection of the tithe. The Church needed the assistance of the secular lords, including the king, in this respect as in many others. It is more than likely that ecclesiastical administrators soon realised the advantage of cooperating with the lords of great estates in collecting the tithe from the many villages under the latter's control. The earliest sign for such an arrangement can be found in the Pozsony tithing district of the diocese of Esztergom, where in 1332 four castle districts are mentioned. This division may very well go back at least half a century, because one of the castles, Stomfa, had been razed by Ottokar II in 1271 and never rebuilt.⁴⁷ One has to consider, however, that in all of these *districtus castrorum* viticulture prevailed and this may have suggested the arrangement for the collection of the vine-tithe. However, in 1367, some landowners offered the bishop of Eger to pay annually 200 gold florins for the tithe,⁴⁸ and their villages were in the north of the country, far beyond the boundary of viticulture. In this case only the acknowledgment of the estate's power and the bishop's preference for a cash lump sum payment could have motivated the deal. The same kind of accommodation may have prompted the bishop of Győr to farm the tithe of a distant property of the bishopric to the owners of castle Alsólendva; however, only fifteenth century evidence exists of this arrangement.⁴⁹

Renting the tithe from the Church was highly advantageous for the lords of estates as it cut one more tie that would have bound their peasants to an instance beyond their confines. According to Art. VI:1351 the tenants owed—after the tithe—a ninth of their harvest to the landlord, that is a second tithe. With both in his hands, the lord of the dominion collected 20% of the tenants' produce. Since he had the means to do so, in the late fourteenth century it became profitable to rent the tithe of both grain and vine and thus collect one-fifth of the harvest into seignorial barns.

As a result of these developments the keepers of the castles became powerful men who collected most of the peasants' surplus, administered justice to them and controlled in every aspect the castle's estates. While these rights did survive even in private hands, most of the castellans of the fourteenth century were royal officials,

since the majority of the castles belonged to the crown. Their names were first established by Mór Wertner on the basis of published charters,⁵⁰ and I have recently attempted to augment and correct them, partially from archival sources.⁵¹ While the results are far from complete, a few characteristics can be established.

To begin with, there are castles for which *castellani* are seldom if ever mentioned: for example the count of Pozsony, who was the keeper of the castle since ancient times, is rarely styled as such; neither is the count of Sáros. There are clusters of castles, where the castellan of one is frequently referred to, but not those of the adjacent ones. In the case of the castles along the River Vág only the keeper of Beszterce is known, while those of Hricsó, Lednice, Oroszlánkő are not. The clue is to be found in a settlement charter of 1325 which was issued by Chief Justice Sándor *castellanus de Bistriczia ceterorumque castrorum in circuitu*.⁵² A similar case is the group of castles in the border district (Zagorje) of Co. Varasd, which were acquired by the crown in 1326 and placed in charge of one *castellanus castrorum in districtu Zagoria existentium*.⁵³ However, not all castellans styled themselves keepers of every castle in their charge, hence some castles may remain hidden to the reader of written records. With this in mind, we have to satisfy ourselves with a general rather than thorough survey of the distribution of castles among castellans.

It is conspicuous that castellans frequently held more than one castle simultaneously. Here are some of the known cumulations with the years of their joint administration:

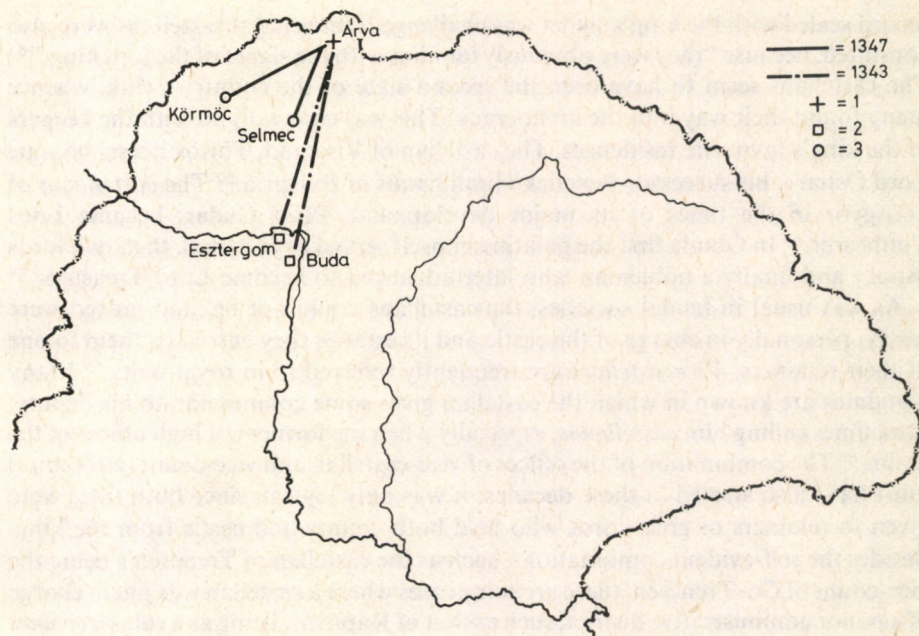
I. Bajmóc–Kesselőkő	1335–1363
Bajmóc–Privigye	1341
Bálványos–Csicsó–Küküllő	1333–1335
Becse–Solymos	1319
Becse–Miháld	1328
Berencs–Bolondóc	1336
Berencs–Csejte–Holics	1344–1349
Csesznek–Hölgykő	1325
Csókakő–Gesztes	1331–1333
Dédes–Diósgyőr	1355–1360
Dédes–Regéc	1322–1323
Desznye–Pankota	1318–1347
Detrekő–Borostyánkő	1366
Dévény–Pozsony	1340
Nyaláb–Huszt	1353
Saskő–Léva	1320–1329
Bolondóc–Holics	1338
Miháld–Zsidóvár	1322
Óbuda–Visegrád	1346
Sebes–Illyéd	1325–1353
Sempte–Vöröskő	1381

II. Dunajec–Palocsa–Adorján	1347
Körösszeg–Tapolcsány	1347
Léva–Óbuda	1343
Makovica–Sirok	1347
Sebes–Miháld	1366
Világos–Kapuvár	1318
Kapuvár–Komárom–Szekcső	1321–1324

The pairs (or triplets) of the first group were neighbouring castles or at least fairly close ones. It has been assumed⁵⁴ that in the case of neighbouring castles one was subject to the other. This may often have been so, especially when one (e.g. Dédes) was less significant than the other (e.g. Diósgyőr). It is, however, unlikely in others, e.g. in the Léva–Saskő pair. That twelve of the known twenty cases combine castles in the same county and in two instances (Bajmóc–Kesselőkő, Hölgykő–Csesznek) they were in the charge of the county's count may be more significant. No such simple logic helps to explain the combinations in the second group where the two jointly held castles are at considerable distance from each other, such as Körösszeg in the east and Tapolcsány in the west, over 300 km apart.

The picture of combinations between the office of castellan and count is also a mixed one. We know of forty such cases, but only in thirteen of them was the connection between county and castle a more or less regular arrangement.⁵⁵ If we add the occasional joint office-holdings (four) and the three traditional ones (Pozsony, Sáros, Magyar-Óvár), we are still faced with puzzles for more than half of the known cases. In the rest—with the exception of four where the counts regularly serve as *castellani* of one of several royal castles in the county⁵⁶—there is no obvious explanation. When, for example, the count of the south-eastern county Temes is also keeper of the castle of Jókő in the northern mountains, the explanation may lie only in the biography of the office-holder or some accidental consideration unknown to us. If, however, we also consider whether the castle of which the count was also castellan lies within his or an adjacent county, the riddles can be somewhat reduced. We have to remember that even after the defeat of the oligarchs, the king did not own a castle in every county. Therefore the crown may have had to “borrow” a castle for the count, for example, for the *comes* of Szabolcs the castle is Adorján in the adjacent county Bihar. These considerations solve twenty-four or twenty-seven out of the forty cases, and only nine of the remaining sixteen escape any logic along these lines.

The whole matter may be better understood if we remember that the county of the fourteenth century was no more a royal, but rather a noble institution. The *comes comitatus* had no real power base any more. The royal castle in his own county or near to it was entrusted to him exactly in order to balance this situation, as it supplied the count with the necessary military strength. But, alas, we cannot prove that every county's count had a castle assigned to him, and it is unlikely that additional research would do so. Nevertheless, it may be true in general that the



Map 14. The castellans of Árvá as heads of the mining and minting chambers, 1343, 1347
 1 = Castle Árvá; 2 = chamber administered by Árvá in 1343; 3 = in 1347

power of most *comites* rested in a royal castle and its appurtenances. This development might have been also enhanced by the fact that a few prelates (e.g. the archbishop of Esztergom, the bishops of Nyitra and Veszprém) had by this time acquired the comital office of their counties in perpetuity. In these counties the royal castellan had an even more significant rôle in representing the interests of the crown.

Four counts-castellans were in charge not of a county but, as *comites camerae*, of mines and mints. The castellan of Árvá administered the Körmöc *camera*, the one of Saskő that of Selmec. The latter two are fairly close but the former rather far apart, so while Saskő–Selmec may fit into the pattern assumed for the counties, Árvá–Körmöc does not. As a matter of fact, the castellan of Árvá in the farthest corner of northern Hungary was in 1343 in charge of the mints of Esztergom and Buda⁵⁷ (Map 14) and the castellan of Buda in 1363 administered the Kassa *camera*, not much closer to his seat.⁵⁸

A muster of the royal castellans shows that they came from the group of the Angevin kings' most trusted *fideles*. They were the ones who enjoyed the king's grace and the esteem of their peers. Many were knights of the court, *familiaris*-retainers of the king,⁵⁹ judges on the bench of the lord Chief Justice or chosen arbitrators, which proves their social status.⁶⁰ When in 1336 the authenticity of a

record sealed with the king's signet was challenged, three royal castellans were also consulted, because "they were obviously familiar with the signet of the lord king."⁶¹ The castellans seem to have been the second slate of the country's elite, whence many found their way into the aristocracy. This was especially so with the keepers of the king's favourite residences. The castellan of Visegrád, Töttös Becsei became Lord Ostiary, his successor Benedek Himfi banus of Bulgaria.⁶² The *castellanus* of Diósgyőr in the times of its major development, Péter Cudar, became Lord Cupbearer.⁶³ In Óbuda first the palatine himself served as castellan, then two lords ostiary and finally a nobleman who later advanced to become Lord Treasurer.⁶⁴

As was usual in feudal societies, the castellans could not be, and indeed were rarely, personally in charge of the castle and its estates; they entrusted them to one of their retainers. *Vicecastellani* are frequently referred to in royal writs.⁶⁵ Many mandates are known in which the castellan gives some commission to his deputy, sometimes calling him *castellanus*, especially when the former is a high officer of the realm.⁶⁶ The combination of the offices of vice-castellan and vice-count (*vicecomes*) must have also started in these decades; it was only logical, since both titles were given to retainers of great lords who held both county and castle from the king. Besides the self-evident combinations, such as the castellan of Trencsén's being the vice-count of Co. Trencsén, there are some cases where a castellan was put in charge of a minor administrative district, such as that of Kapuvár, being as a rule *vicecomes* of Rábaköz in county Sopron.⁶⁷ The example was followed by the prelates, in particular by the count-bishops in perpetuity. The vice-counts of Co. Veszprém in the fourteenth century were always castellans of Veszprém or Sümeg;⁶⁸ castellans served also as military sub-commanders of the lords spiritual. The so-called *praediales*, nobles holding tax exempt properties from a prelate, were organised in *sedes nobilium episcopatum* with a castellan as their *ispan* in command.⁶⁹

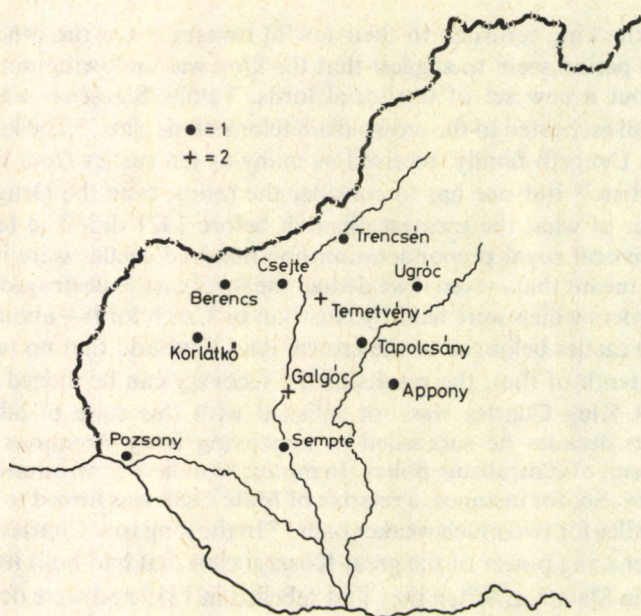
The combination of castle and comital office, just as the jurisdictional authority of the castellan, sometimes survived the alienation of the castle from the crown. The *castellanus* of Csesznek used to be the *comes* in charge of the royal forest Bakony, and remained in this post even after King Sigismund had given the castle to the Garai family.⁷⁰ Similarly, the castellan of Kapuvár kept serving as vice-count of the Rábaköz district although the castle became private property.⁷¹ Noting these cases and the fact that the castellan-count combinations also survived the Angevin epoch,⁷² the traditional opinion that the combination of the two offices "did not mean any connection between institutions, but was merely a personal union",⁷³ cannot be upheld.

Besides these structural and administrative changes, the main question was, of course, the distribution of castle-ownership between crown and aristocracy. As we have seen, the first decades of King Charles' reign were spent in securing the throne and recovering rights and properties alienated from the crown by the oligarchs. By the fall of Amadé Aba the king had regained only eight castles.⁷⁴ The victory over the Borsa was more valuable, as it brought home twelve.⁷⁵ The death of Máté Csák meant the greatest gain: twenty-eight castles came into royal hands, not counting

those which the king returned to their lawful owners.⁷⁶ On the other hand, the grants in this period seem to suggest that the king was endowing not only a new aristocracy, but a new set of territorial lords. Tamás Szécsényi was given five castles; true, all escheated to the crown from felons of his clan.⁷⁷ The king's Sicilian courtiers, the Drugeth family, received as many as ten castles from the Aba and Borsa properties.⁷⁸ But one has to consider the ratios: even the Drugeths owned only a quarter of what the greatest oligarch before 1321 did. The balance sheet shows unequivocal royal preponderance: one hundred castles were in the king's hands, which meant that—even if we deduct the forty castles destroyed and the five along the borders which were held by Austrian or Czech lords—about half of the country's 210 castles belonged to the crown. And if we add that no magnate held more than a tenth of that, the results of the recovery can be indeed regarded as splendid. Yet King Charles was not satisfied with this state of affairs. In the following two decades he succeeded in improving it by strenuous efforts and stubborn pursuit of centralising policy. In minor, bloodless confrontations the king carried the day. So, for instance, a relative of Máté Csák was forced to "exchange" four of his castles for two much weaker ones.⁷⁹ In the long run, Charles managed to defuse the menacing power of the great Kőszegi clan that had built its territory in the west and in Slavonia. When they first rebelled in 1319 and were defeated, their return into royal grace cost them seven castles.⁸⁰ They retained their western Hungarian allods and the castles in Slavonia, but when they again challenged the king and lost in 1326, they had to give up eleven castles, amongst them their ancient seats Némethújvár and Kőszeg. Even so, the clan was allowed to retain five castles and received "in exchange" three additional ones (Tamási, Szekcső and Kőszeg in Co. Baranya) which still placed them second among the country's great landowners, albeit without a contiguous territory. The last act was played out in 1336–7: together with another powerful family the Kőszegi joined an attack by the dukes of Austria on King Charles. After their defeat in 1337 the king confiscated four of their castles and that was the end of the clan's power.⁸¹ Two branches, later called Rohonci and Tamási, kept a castle each, a third, called Szekcsői Herceg, two castles. The king was no less vigilant with his new followers than vis-à-vis the old aristocracy. At the heirless demise of Palatine Vilmos Drugeth in 1342, the king claimed eight castles from the family.⁸² In comparison to these steps, the recovery of three castles from the Balassa⁸³ and the exchange of one with the bishop of Veszprém for an unfortified property⁸⁴ count but a pittance. The castles in foreign hands, from the Austrians⁸⁵ and a Czech cousin of Csák,⁸⁶ were also regained by assiduity and great financial sacrifices.

New castles were built on the king's command in areas where the crown lacked fortresses, so Blatnica (maybe also Szklabina) in Turóc, next to the Balassa properties, Szarvkő on the western frontier and Huszt in the newly colonised territory of Máramaros in the northeast.

The acquisition and donation policy of Charles was so successful that even at the death of his son the crown still owned ninety-three castles, although King Louis I



Map 15. The granting of royal castles under Louis I
 1 = granted castle; 2 = surrounding royal castles

gave away eighteen and had one torn down. His donations were as cautious as those of this father. Only his most favourite followers, the Lackfi, were granted three castles to the one they had inherited and the two they had built. The other well-endowed family was that of Kont (later called Újlaki), with three castles granted and a fourth built.⁸⁷ The multiple castle owners were thus:

- one family with 6 castles (Lackfi)
- one family with 5 castles (Szécsényi)
- two families with 3 castles (Drugeth and Kont), and
- four families with 2 castles each.⁸⁸

Except for the three top magnates, the castles of the others were not near to one another and even the two relatively close castles of the Kont (Galgóc and Temetvény) were so surrounded by royal ones (see *Map 15*) that they were never a threat to the crown.

To the donations we have to add the castle of Sirok that the king had mortgaged to its castellan, as mentioned above. This is the first known case for such a transaction that may have been chosen instead of a grant in perpetuity because Sirok was the only royal castle in the area. This form of transaction excluded any doubt as to the crown's property rights to the castle.

Under the Anjou the magnates were never allowed to form such continuous chains of castle properties as those of a Csák or Borsa clan. However large their

properties were, the royal castles prevailed and in some parts of the country nearly all castles belonged to the crown. This pattern had its extremes: all castles of Co. Trencsén escheated to the crown in 1321 and Charles returned only two minor ones to their private owners, one of which he later recovered; in contrast, in Co. Tolna only one royal castle existed and Louis I gave away that to the Lackfi. Maybe one can risk saying that the king's attention was concentrated on the border areas (especially in the west), where almost all castles remained in his hands.⁸⁹ The overall count in 1382 still shows almost half of all castles in Hungary proper being in the king's hands; and, if one takes into account those of Transylvania and the Banate of Szörény as well, more than half.

Charles I succeeded not only in recovering usurped royal castles but also in getting the royal attitude to castle lordship accepted. His chancery revived the formulation used in many charters of King Ladislas IV charging the oligarch of having "detained the castles" in opposition to the king.⁹⁰ This formula was shorthand for the Angevin view that power embodied in the castle was by definition the king's; he would not object to its being in the hands of his prelates and barons, provided that they stay faithful to the crown. This idea is neatly expressed in the name *Hűség* (= fidelity), given to a castle for which Charles issued a licence in 1334.⁹¹ The charge of high treason against András, bishop of Transylvania was triggered by the bishop's refusal in 1349 to admit King Louis to one of his castles "to no minor detriment of the royal office and honour". The king deemed this act to be treason and ordered his nearby castellan to arrest the bishop and seize his castles, properties and all valuables.⁹² The tone of the royal writ leaves no doubt about Louis' having regarded his suzerainty over all castles as a basic royal right and the bishop's recalcitrance as the gravest offense.

The organisational, personal and legal steps of the two Angevin kings, best summed up as a process of consolidation, found also its expression in the architecture of castles. Whereas many of the castles built in great haste in the late thirteenth century were rather temporary constructions—so that many having been but wooden towers⁹³ or mere palisades⁹⁴ were simply burnt down in the fighting—the fourteenth century was characterised by systematic rebuilding in stone. Many of the old castles were, however, abandoned, not being worth reconstruction: forty such cases are known, including royal castles. The comital castle for the Máramaros territory, built under Andrew III in Visk, was replaced in the mid-fourteenth century by the better located Huszt.⁹⁵ Hölgykö in western Hungary, torn down on the behest of Louis I when a Carthusian monastery was founded near-by, was a rare case of a royal castle's demise without replacement. Many smaller private castles were simply abandoned when, after the turbulent years of the civil war the age of general peace did not warrant their upkeep. Sóllyomkő in Co. Torna featured as the seigneurial castle in a property division of 1389, but a decade later, according to an inquisition *post mortem* a much more comfortable manor house served as the estate's centre and Sóllyomkő was listed as *castrum nunc desertum*.⁹⁶ Twenty-five castles were thus abandoned in the decades of consolidation.

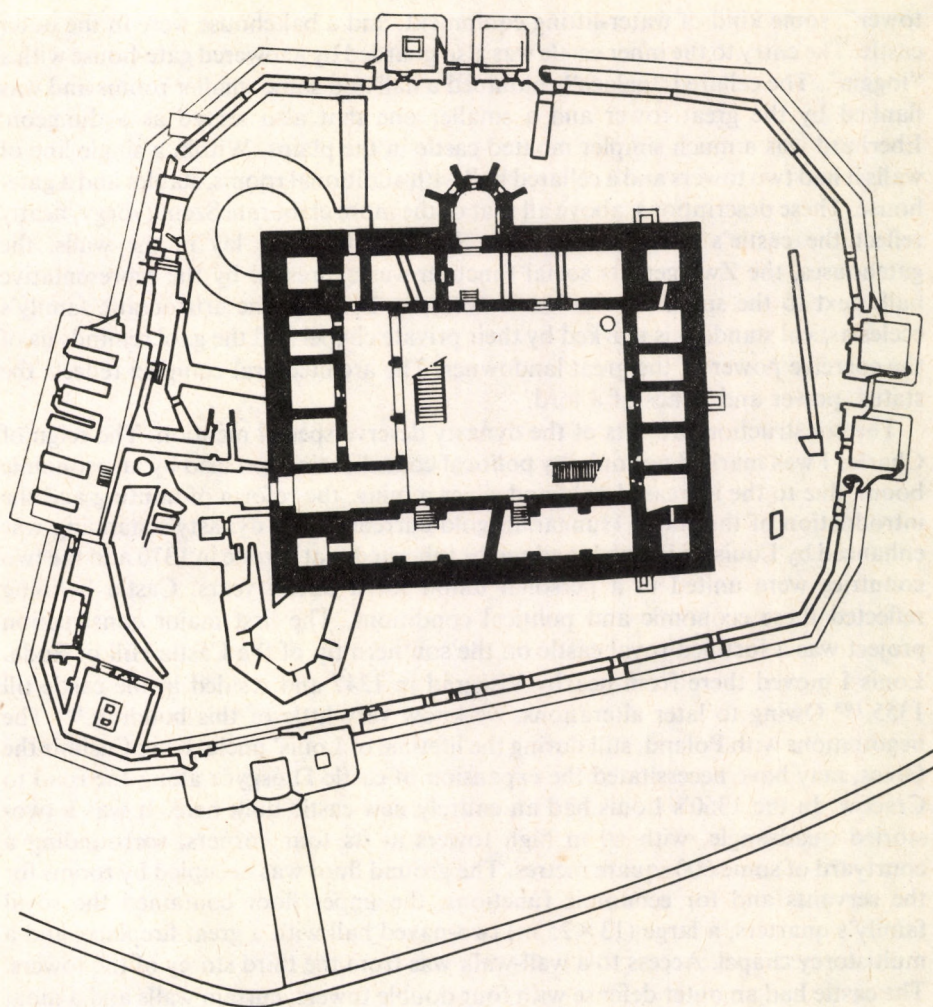
A good example of the change from wood to stone is a certain Újvár built in 1332 by a banus of Slavonia, who then in 1342 asked for royal licence to rebuild it in stone.⁹⁷ In other cases only parts needed reconstruction, so for example in those two castles which the king recovered from the Csák cousins and had to rebuild, because nothing but the curtain walls survived the civil war. Obviously, all other buildings were of wood.⁹⁸ This pattern has been confirmed by research in several castles where thirteenth century wood construction was replaced by stone in the fourteenth.

Another sign of peaceful times was the greater attention paid to comfort and habitability. As discussed above, thirteenth century castles rarely had comfortable rooms, save the great keeps; "palaces" with halls and chapels were even less frequent.⁹⁹ In contrast, a residential block with a great hall was virtually *de rigueur* in all fourteenth century castles, new and re-built ones alike; and many of them had also private chapels. The most elaborate of these was the two-story chapel in castle Szalánc, built on French model by the Drugeth family.¹⁰⁰ One might say that fourteenth century castles had to consist not only of the defense but also of buildings representing their lord's social status: hall and chapel. Even lesser nobles tried to display these elements in their smaller castles, such as Kígyókő or Essegvár.

Another general innovation of the age, less obviously reflecting social needs, was a second tower. If it was a gate-house, then it enhanced the castle's defense, but this was not too often the case; the second tower stood mostly within the walls. Two towers flanking the residential building has already been noted for thirteenth century castles such as Gimes and Siklós, but in the fourteenth it became the general pattern all over the country. The towers varied in form; the early examples were square or ovoid, in fourteenth-century Boldogkő one of them was triangular, in Csesznek the second tower was pentagonal. The tower-hall-tower scheme can be found in new and rebuilt, royal and private, greater and smaller castles alike. Sometimes a second tower was erected even without a residential block in between, as in Simontornya, where the first tower originated from the turn of the century, or in minor castles, such as Kígyókő. A third kind of extension, the building of a second, outer line of defense is a rarity; only two fourteenth century instances are known.¹⁰¹

No late fourteenth century description survived of a castle that fulfilled the social needs of the age, but two records from the early fifteenth may represent the conditions at the end of the Angevin age. Although there were profound changes, especially in power relations, during the decades following 1382, the descriptions of two western Hungarian castles, Szentgyörgy and Eberhard, in a charter on property partition from 1412 probably reflect their stage in late Anjou times. Their lord held high royal office under Louis I, hence major building activity would have been done during that time, and in general, architectural patterns do not change so quickly as to invalidate conclusions drawn from this document.¹⁰²

Szentgyörgy consisted of two lines of defenses; the entry to the outer castle was guarded by—apparently two—gate-towers, connected by a zwinger. A "water-



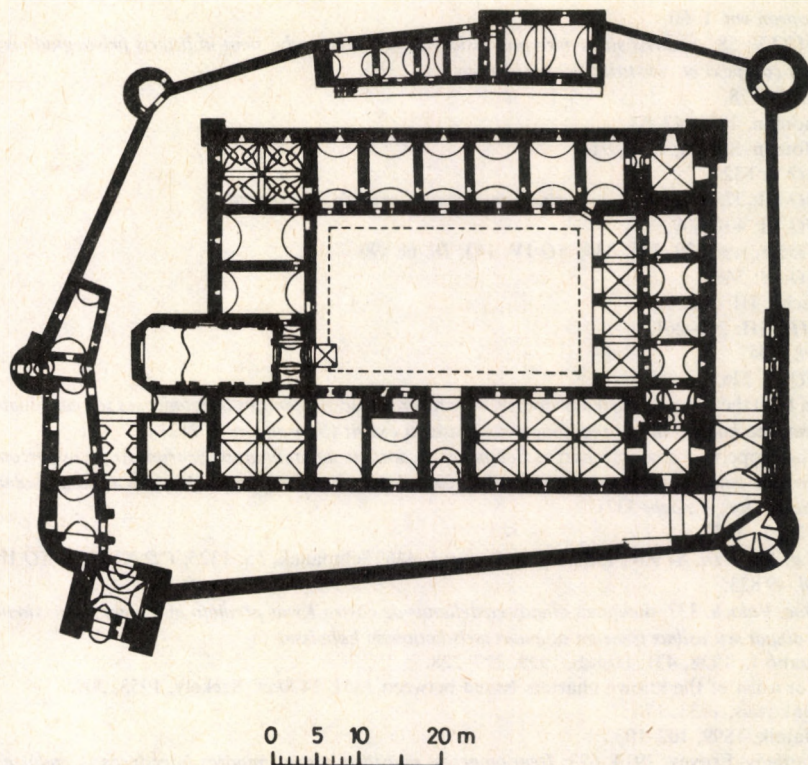
0 10 20 m

Sketch 17. Diósgyőr (ground-plan according to I. Czeglédy)

tower", some kind of water-lifting equipment, and a bakehouse were in the outer castle. The entry to the inner castle was also guarded by a towered gate-house with a "loggia". The cellared "palace" contained a hall and some smaller rooms and was flanked by the great tower and a smaller one that also served as a dungeon. Eberhard was a much simpler moated castle in the plains. Within a single line of walls it had two towers and a cellared hall with additional rooms, stables and a gate-house. These descriptions, above all that of the more elaborate Szentgyörgy, neatly reflect the castle's different functions. Its military value lay in the walls, the gatehouses, the Zwinger; its social function was expressed by the representative hall, next to the space for the lord's everyday housing; the aristocratic family's ecclesiastical standing is marked by their private chapel and the gaol reminds us of the coercive power of the great landowner. The architectural complex reflects the status, power and riches of a lord.

The construction projects of the dynasty deserve special mention. The reign of Charles I was marked not only by political consolidation but also by an economic boom, due to the increased gold and silver mining, the reform of minting and the introduction of the stable Hungarian gold currency. The dynasty's standing was enhanced by Louis I's Polish kingdom: he inherited that throne in 1370 and the two countries were united in a personal union for a dozen years. Castle building reflected these economic and political conditions. The first major construction project was a fortified royal castle on the southern tip of the Castle Hill of Buda. Louis I moved there from nearby Visegrád in 1347 and resided in the castle till 1355.¹⁰³ Owing to later alterations, we know very little of this building.¹⁰⁴ The negotiations with Poland, still during the lifetime of Louis' uncle, King Casimir the Great, may have necessitated the expansion of castle Diósgyőr along the road to Cracow. In the 1360's Louis had an entirely new castle built here. It was a two-storied quadrangle, with 60 m high towers at its four corners, surrounding a courtyard of some 600 square metres. The ground floor was occupied by rooms for the servants and for economic functions, the upper floor contained the royal family's quarters, a large (13 × 25 m) two-naved hall with a great fireplace, and a multistorey chapel. Access to a wall-walk was from the third storey of the towers. The castle had an outer defense with four double towers, curtain walls and a moat filled by a brook. Hungarian authors tend to see French influence in the design and assume that the architect, a certain *Ambrosius murator* came from France.¹⁰⁵

Whilst in Diósgyőr the defensive aspect was still important, as the castle stood far from any settlement, the second Angevin castle, Zólyom was built in 1370 on a hill at the outskirts of the town and followed the example of French and Italian urban palaces. It is also a quadrangular building of about the same size as Diósgyőr, but has only two towers on the eastern wing with entries from the royal quarters. Zólyom also had outer defenses. The smaller rooms of the ground floor, the royal chapel and the great reception hall resemble Diósgyőr's.¹⁰⁶ It was in this hall that the Polish parliament (diet) of 1382 was held. Zólyom is unique for this type of château in fourteenth century Central Europe, although some elements borrowed



Sketch 18. Zólyom (ground-plan according to D. Menclová)

from Italian palaces can also be detected on castle Tata, built by Louis I's favourites, the Lackfi family who had probably consciously copied the royal example.¹⁰⁷

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹ *Reg. Var.* 1214: Nr. 103. (190.), 1215: Nr. 112. (194.), 1219: Nr. 229. (239.); *praefectus castri* in a charter of Béla IV 1262. *BU* I: 275; *RA* 1290.

² *ÁÚO* VIII: 26; *RA* 1297.

³ *RA* 2154.

⁴ 1278: *ÁÚO* X: 367 (for the date *TT* 1905, 178.); 1283: *ÁÚO* IX: 370; 1290: *DI.* 40 261; 1297: *ÁÚO* V: 169; 1300: *DI.* 40 269; 1290–1300: Károlyi, I: 25.

⁵ Károlyi, I: 25.

⁶ *DI.* 40 261, 40 269.

⁷ *ÁÚO* III: 24; *RA* 1785: *in tranquillo dictus Michael comes et filii sui possessores dicte turris in nullo iudicio castellani ipsius castri adstare teneantur, si vero aliquid sinistri evenerit, quod tamen absit, iudicio castellani ipsius castri adstare teneantur, sicut alii in eodem castro commorantes...*

⁸ *ÁÚO* XII: 519, 613.

⁹ *ÁÚO* IX: 370.

¹⁰ *Sopron vm.* I: 60.

¹¹ *ÁÚO V*: 58: *quamvis sit de iure possessio magistri Herbordy, sicut in litteris privilegialibus exinde confectis conspexi et constitit michi evidentiis*

¹² *Dl.* 75 278.

¹³ Hóman, 1921, 47–63.

¹⁴ Hóman–Szekfü, 1939, 91.

¹⁵ *AO V*: 632.

¹⁶ *AO III*: 27: *Stephanus auctoritate regia castellanus de Wysegrad*

¹⁷ *AO VI*: 407–409.

¹⁸ *Veszpr. reg.* 220, 335, 336; *AO IV*: 143; *Dl.* 68 890.

¹⁹ *AO IV*: 549.

²⁰ Zichy, III: 168.

²¹ *MES III*: 260–261.

²² *Dl.*, 6047.

²³ *AO II*: 226.

²⁴ In 1350 the King granted a property, which *per nos ac per comites Soprunienses seu castellanos dicti castri nomine honoris nostri regii hactenus possessa extitit* (*Sopron vm.* I: 212).

²⁵ The property is characterised as *Semper et ab antiquo ad prelibatum castrum Aranyas pertinuisse et easdem cum omnibus ipsorum integritatibus castellanum eiusdem castri Aranyas rexisse, habuisse et possedisse* (*Doc. Valach.* 337).

²⁶ Fügedi, 1952.

²⁷ E.g. 1312: *Dl.* 87 901; 1322: *Anal. Scepus* I: 446; Schmauck, 55; 1325: *CD XI*: 510; *AO II*: 214.

²⁸ *Dl.* 49 823.

²⁹ *Doc. Valach.* 337: *nunquam aliquis castellanus de castro Kwar predicto in eisdem possessionibus vel earum aliqua seu usibus ipsorum aliquam iurisdictionem habuisset*

³⁰ Szabó I., 1938, 431; Holub, 1929, 227–228.

³¹ For a list of the known charters issued between 1351–1400 cf. Székely, 1953, 309.

³² Sinkovics, 1933, 17.

³³ Hajnik, 1899, 102–103.

³⁴ Szerémy–Ernyey, 1913, 673: *Item omnes et quaslibet causas minores inter ipsos oriendas exceptis solummodo causis maioribus, videlicet publicis furtis, latrociniiis, incendiis et aliis criminalibus pro nobis et dicto castellano tribus vicibus in anno in eorum medio iudicare consueto reservatis, idem Henricus [=locator] et sui heredes iudicandi semper habeant facultatem.*

³⁵ Hajnik, 1899, 102–103; Hajnik, 1872; Gábor, 1908, 31.

³⁶ Fügedi, 1953, 226–227.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

³⁸ Wenzel, 1899, 290.

³⁹ *AO II*: 527: *preterea comiti Borsiensi et castellano de Lewa nunc constitutis et constituendis in futurum in nullo teneantur hospites ipsius civitatis subiacere*

⁴⁰ *CD IX/5*: 167: *in presentia castellani de dicto castro vel eorum officiali legitime exequantur*; — 1355: *AO VI*: 409: *in presentia castellani aut villicorum exequantur*

⁴¹ *Dl.* 31 178.

⁴² The castellan of Bajmóc promises that *in anno tria iudicia legitima habebimus . . . in quibus nos vel nostri delegati descendunt iudicaturi* (*CD X/2*: 165. cf. *Dl.* 58 602).

⁴³ *Zsk.* I: 3290.

⁴⁴ E.g. in 1435: Károlyi, II: 158: *totum et omne ius nostrum regium, quod in portione possessionaria . . . qualitercunque haberemus et nostram quibuscunque causis et modis et rationibus concerneret maiestatem . . .*

⁴⁵ 1355: *AO VI*: 409: *item ecclesie eorum parochionales pristina potiantur privilegia et libertates absque impetitione castellanorum castri nostri Nyalab antedicti*

⁴⁶ Wenzel, Stibor, 67: *notanterque [cum] iure patronatus, quod ad ecclesias ibidem seu inibi existentes habere dignoscimur*

⁴⁷ MES III: 208.

⁴⁸ Wenzel, 1889, 260., cf. Mályusz, 1953, 330–331.

⁴⁹ In the accounts of the cathedral chapter of Győr.

⁵⁰ Wertner, 1907.

⁵¹ Fügedi, 1977, 98–214.

⁵² 1325: AO II: 214: *Alexander iudex curie domini regis castellanisque de Bistriczia ceterorumque castrorum in circuitu*; CD IX: 510, = DL 2332: *castellanus de Bystricha necnon plurimorum castrorum iuxta fluvium Vagh existentium*.

⁵³ 1358: Zichy, III: 109: *comes Varasdiensis et castrorum in districtu de Zagoria existentium castellanus*; — 1366: Smič. XII: 545: *comes... Worasdiensis et castellanus castrorum nostrorum terre Zaguriensis*

⁵⁴ Márki, 1892, I: 379.

⁵⁵ These are the following: Arad–Solymos, Bars–Léva, Bereg–Munkács, Csongrád–Szeged, Hont–Drégely, Hunyad–Déva, Moson–Óvár, Szabolcs–Adorján, Szepes–Szepesvár. Only once mentioned: Kolozs–Léta, Ugocsa–Munkács, Zólyom–Saskő, Zágráb–Medvevár, Forest Börzsöny–Damásd.

⁵⁶ Nyitra–Sempte, Holics, Beckó, Tapolcsány; Krassó–Haram, Galambóc; Pilis–Óbuda, Visegrád; Borsod–Dédes, Diósgyőr, Fülek; Abaúj–Boldogkő, Szalánc, Szepesvár.

⁵⁷ Fügedi, 1977, 101.

⁵⁸ 1315–35, the *comes camerae* is at the same time rector of Buda (DL 102 945; 2 906); 1351: at the same time comes of Vas and Sopron (*Sopron vm.* I: 223); 1361: simultaneously castellan of (Magyar-) Óvár and comes of Moson (Pesty, Krassó, III: 44).

⁵⁹ Fügedi, 1977, 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶¹ AO III: 254–255.

⁶² Fügedi, 1977, 82, n.249.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, n.250.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, n.248.

⁶⁵ The usual formula runs: *castellano... vel eius vicecastellano*; or in the case of more general mandates: *castellano... et vicecastellano suo... nunc constituto et constituendo* (AO III: 27; V: 595; cf. Hóman, 1921, 53.)

⁶⁶ Fülöp Drugeth sent such a mandate to the castellan of Sáros: TT 1900, 393; DL 47 854.

⁶⁷ Sopron *vm.* I: 161 (1341), 202 (1347); DL 61 206 (1359); HO I: 272 (1378).

⁶⁸ Cs. III: 294.

⁶⁹ Zsk. II: 4430.

⁷⁰ 1401: Miklós Garai sent a mandate *vobis... castellano de Cheznek... vicesque nostras gerentibus, necnon comiti Bakaniensi presenti et futuro* (Zsk. II: 127; DL 8 655).

⁷¹ Zsk. I: 2075.

⁷² Sáros: Zsk. II: 3610, 3887, 7730; Szepes: Zsk. II: 5158, 6027; Trencsén: Zsk. II: 6399, 6648; Arad: Zsk. II. 25.

⁷³ Gábor, 1908, 31.

⁷⁴ Boldogkő, Füzér, Gönc, Munkács, Nyevice, Regéc, Szádvár, and Szakalya; Szinnye was returned to its lawful owners, Tokaj destroyed.

⁷⁵ Adorján, Aranyos, Bálványos, Barkó, Dédes, Diósgyőr, Körösszeg, Nyaláb, Nyevice, Sebes, Solyomkő, Valkó (Dergóc was destroyed).

⁷⁶ Appony, Baglyaskő, Bajmóc, Beszterce, Csejte, Cseklész, Drégely, Ecseg, Fülek, Gimes, Hrussó, Jókő, Kasza, Kesselőkő (?), Lednice, Léva, Lietava, Oroszlánkő, Rajec, Sirok, Somoskő, Sztrecsény, Szucsá, Szucsány, Tapolcsány, Ugróc, Varin. At the same time Csicsó was returned to the King in Transylvania.

⁷⁷ Only castle Bene had belonged earlier to the Ába clan.

⁷⁸ In the will of Vilmos Drugeth (1330, CD VIII/3: 507) eleven castles are listed: Szalánc, Parics, Barkó, Jeszenő, Palocsa, Lubló, Dunajec, Szakalya, Regéc, Gönc and Szepes. Of these he had built

Dunajec, held Szepes by reason of his office. After Vilmos's death the King gave in 1343 Barkó and Jeszenő to the sons of János Drugeth (77 1907, 85), together with Nyevice; Dunajec was bought back from them, the remaining eight lost. It is most conspicuous that the king claimed escheat for Szalanc, although it has been acquired by a perfectly legal exchange by Vilmos.

⁷⁹ *Veszpr. Reg.* 172.

⁸⁰ Dombó, Döbrököz, Kanizsa, Kőszeg in Co. Baranya, Kéménd, Nyék. I assume, and counted accordingly, that they lost Pölöske at this date. In 1326 Kosztel, Krapina and Oszterc in Zagorje, Kapronca, Ozal, Zdenec in Slavonia, that is, 6 castles. In western Hungary (Transdanubia) the king took at this date Kőszeg, Nemetújvár, Sárvár, Szalonak and probably Ugod.

⁸¹ Belec, Borostyán, Léka and Nemti.

⁸² See above, n.44.

⁸³ Budetin, Dobronya and Árva.

⁸⁴ Zala, I. 406.

⁸⁵ AO V: 504. Charles I paid the Austrian 400 mark silver (= 16 thousand gold florins). — Kabold was also in Austrian hands, the king granted it to the Nagymartoni family which then recovered it, *per quod status regni nostri honor et imperium non modicum sumsit incrementum* (CD VIII/2: 199; *Dl.* 1969 and 2079).

⁸⁶ Kristó, 1973, 212.

⁸⁷ The Lackfi received Csáktornya, Sztrigó and Döbrököz, to which they acquired Simontornya by inheritance and built their castle in Tata; the Újlaki received Bátorkő and Temetvény and built Galgóc.

⁸⁸ The two-castled families were: Wolfart (Vöröskő and Kőpcsény); Drágfi (Kővár and Nyaláb); Szekcsői Herceg (Szekcső and Kőszeg) and Jolsvai (Bajmóc and Kesselőkő).

⁸⁹ With the exception of two on the western border: Csáktornya and Sztrigó, next to the River Mura was in the hands of the Lackfi family.

⁹⁰ 1285: *contra nos detinebant* (CD V/3: 258; RA 3348.); 1322: *in opprobrium regiminis nostri detinebant* (AO II: 38.); 1323: *contra nostram magnitudinem detinebatur* (Zichy I: 219).

⁹¹ AO III: 60.

⁹² AO V: 337; Eszterházy, 1868, 90–94.

⁹³ AO I: 4–6.

⁹⁴ Gerő, 1975, 149–150.

⁹⁵ Komáromy, 1894, 502.

⁹⁶ *Zsk.* I. 6095.

⁹⁷ AO IV: 263.

⁹⁸ MES III: 260.

⁹⁹ E.g. Gimes and Siklós.

¹⁰⁰ Myskovszky, 1905, 72.

¹⁰¹ In Hollókő, which belonged to the powerful Tamás Szécsényi, and in Kőszeg (Co. Sáros), the residence of a minor noble family.

¹⁰² *Dl.* 758.

¹⁰³ Gárdonyi, 1944.

¹⁰⁴ "About the Angevin building activities in Buda or, more precisely, about the castle preceding Sigismund's palace, we know very little and our knowledge has not been expanded by the written source" (Gerevich, 1955, 261). After the several reconstructions, only the royal chapel and the so-called István tower (named after King Louis' younger brother, Stephen) survived. Whereas historians never doubted that Louis I built the first castle at the southern tip of the Castle Hill (Györfy, 1973, 305–5, 344 with lit.), the archaeologists maintained that Béla IV had erected a castle here after the Mongol invasion (Gerevich, 1973, 388 with lit.). Probability supports the historians' view.

¹⁰⁵ Dercsényi, *s.d.*, 97–8; Czeglédy, 1975, 130–3.

¹⁰⁶ Menclová, 1954, 29f; Dercsényi, *s.d.*, 99.

¹⁰⁷ Szatmári, 1975, 277–8.

THE LONG REIGN OF KING SIGISMUND

When, after almost exactly 40 years of rule, King Louis died, more than half of the country's castles were in royal hands. More importantly, by having systematically grouped estates around them and combining the office of castellan with that of the *comes*, they were made into firm bases of central authority. After Louis' death the problem of succession plagued the kingdom for nearly a decade. The planned personal union of Hungary and Poland under his daughter Mary was rejected and the younger daughter, Hedwig (Jadwiga) became queen of Poland, while Mary, assisted by her mother Elisabeth, tried to govern Hungary as "king". An opposing baronial faction called Duke Charles of Durazzo, a Sicilian Anjou, into the country, but he was killed by the queens' men soon after his coronation. Civil war broke out, the queens were taken captive and Elisabeth murdered. The majority of the magnates elected Mary's spouse, Sigismund, second son of King and Emperor Charles of Luxemburg, who was to inherit the imperial crown in 1410. King Sigismund (1387-1437) managed to free his wife and lead an all-European campaign against the Ottoman Turks whose first forays had reached Hungary's forelands during the reign of Louis, but his defeat at Nikopolis (1396) and his irresponsible policies at home led to a baronial revolt in which the king was taken captive in 1401. Sigismund bought his liberty by joining the Garai-Cilly baronial league which he then formalised as the Order of the Dragon (1408) and made, in fact, his co-rulers. During the increasing number of the king's long absences on German, Bohemian or imperial business, this league virtually ruled the country sharing the royal power, together with the ownership of castles, as equals with the king.

Sigismund's reign used to be regarded in exclusively negative terms by Hungarian historians. As a

king of faction Sigismund lacked the faculty and the means to act like a legitimate ruler, as an equalising and equitable authority. Induced by his steady shortage of money, his obsessive largess and the demanding requests of his powerful subjects . . . he gave away without measure the goods pertaining to the original body of crown property and those that accrued to it by escheat or confiscation. Guided by factional solidarity he endangered the balance of power by inordinately enhancing the riches of a small group.¹

This judgement of Hóman seems to be supported by the results of Pál Engel's recent study on the alienation of castles,² above all quantitatively speaking. However, Sigismund's policies passed through several changes and it would be



Map 16. The castles of Hungary, 1382 (according to P. Engel)

1 = royal castle; 2 = other

wrong not to distinguish at least between the period preceding 1408 and that following the foundation of the Order of the Dragon.

According to Engel, at his accession Sigismund owned 100 out of the country's 235 castles,³ in addition to which he acquired in the course of the first twenty years seven by escheat and an additional 30 as the result of confiscations from defeated opponents.⁴ Of these the king retained fifty and gave away eighty.⁵ These extensive donations went naturally to his supporters or, more precisely, to the members of his baronial league. Fifteen major families were represented in the Order of the Dragon; one family had two members and one member came from an obscure lesser noble family.⁶ A count of the castles belonging to the Knights of the Dragon at the moment of the Order's foundation sheds light on Sigismund's early donation policies.

Table 6. Castles of the Knights of the Dragon in 1408⁷

Family	Castle				
	New	Old	Donation	Built	Other
Cillei (Cilly)	14	—	14	—	—
Garai	11	1	9	1	—
Stibor	11	—	11	—	—
Szécsényi	6	6	—	—	—
Perényi	5	—	4	1	—
Csáky	3	—	3	—	—
Lévai-Cseh	3	—	3	—	—
Maróti	3	—	—	3	—
Szántai Lackfi	2	—	2	—	—
Bessenyő	1	—	—	—	1
Pécsi	1	—	1	—	—
Tamási	1	1	—	—	—
TOTAL	61	8	47	5	1

The first most conspicuous conclusion is that one third of all available castles (148) was given to the members of the Order. Furthermore, of these only four families with eight castles belonged to the older aristocracy, among them the Szécsényi, successors of one of the greatest land- and castle-owners of the Angevin age, did not acquire new properties. Of the three leading families of 1408 two, the king's father-in-law Cillei and voyvode Stibor, had no castle at all before Sigismund's times; the third, the Gara or Garai, the king's brother-in-law, only one. In twenty years these families received among themselves thirty-four castles, that is, a quarter of all that had changed hands.

These figures demonstrate clearly that Sigismund used the donation of castles to build up the strength of his party. Additional constructions by the members of this league—one of them even without having received donated castles—added further power to the Order.



Map 17. Castles granted by King Sigismund between 1387-1407
1 = to Herman von Cilly; 2 = to Stibor

Map 17 illustrates another feature of Sigismund's early alienations, the granting or mortgaging of castles in territorial clusters. The subject of the map is the Pole Stibor who had entered royal service under Louis I and became one of Sigismund's most trusted and reliable supporters. He received his first castle and estate in 1388 in the northwest of the country and he acquired eight more by donation and two as securities for loans. One of the latter was redeemed in 1406, but Stibor replaced the loss by a castle inherited (or purchased) from his brother and another which he had captured while defeating the rebellion of 1403 and retained by title unknown. The result was that this relative newcomer became the owner of ten castles in twenty years and could by right call himself "lord of the entire River Vág."⁸ The other example is also a foreigner, the scion of the Styrian and Carinthian counts Cilly, who came to Hungary under Louis I, then founded a baronial league with the Garais and in 1402 became father-in-law to both Garai and the king. At the time of Sigismund's accession Cillei held one castle in mortgage—twenty years later, he owned fourteen fortified sites.⁹ Both of them acquired their castles in territorial clusters near to the border; in the case of Cillei, they almost joined his family's Austrian possessions.

After the first rebellion against his rule in 1397, Sigismund called a diet to Temesvár and issued, among others, a law about alienated castles. Article XLIX: 1397 decreed that

it should be just and equitable to recuperate those castles, towns, territories and estates which we have given away out of fear in the time of the violent and vicious uprising against us together with those which we have donated guided by the abovementioned fear to the sponsors of peace and the arbitrators of peace between our majesty and the rebels.¹⁰

The same law authorised the king to reclaim without any recompense any castle of the crown sold or mortgaged earlier.¹¹ In a charter based on these articles Sigismund once referred to his youthful inexperience as an excuse for recuperations.¹² All this would suggest that after his political and military victory over his opponents Sigismund regretted his irresponsible youthful largesse and decided to inaugurate an entirely new policy by restoring royal power through recovery of lost castles and estates. In fact no such sudden political change came about. As far as we know, only four castles and two lesser estates were reclaimed by the king on the basis of the Temesvár *decretum*.¹³ In the case of a fifth no certain proof exists.¹⁴ Be that as it may, in comparison to the eighty castles alienated in the preceding decade, it makes little difference that four or five were, in fact, recovered. Actually, the four castles thus seized belonged to one family from the Angevin era that had deserted Sigismund in favour of the Neapolitan pretender, Ladislas of Durazzo, and hence became traitors.¹⁵ Even these confiscated castles did not remain crown properties, but were immediately passed on to new owners: two of them to members of the Order of the Dragon.¹⁶ Thus the *decretum* of 1379 was nothing more than words pretending strict measures with no consequence whatsoever.

At the end of his long reign, Sigismund seems to have seriously attempted to correct the mistakes of his first years on the throne. While he did not become better off in cash, his good luck did not leave him either. Three great families died out between 1423–1436, and that meant the escheat of no less than nineteen castles; to these came additional escheats and confiscations (this time for felonies not rebellions) adding up to twenty-seven castles at the king's disposal. He retained four for the crown and mortgaged eight to his wife, Barbara. It would seem reasonable to measure these corrections by comparing the holdings of the Knights of the Dragon at the end of Sigismund's reign to those of 1408, but by that time the Order had lost its importance and became just a courtly pageantry, similar to many other late medieval orders (such as that of the Golden Fleece). A comparison of families owning more than four castles offers a better picture. Not counting the border fortifications in the southeast, at the end of Sigismund's life there were 56 castles in royal and 185 castles in private hands:¹⁷ the balance between the two did not change significantly in the last thirty years of the king's reign:

Table 7. Owners of four or more castles in 1408¹⁸

Family	Castle	Family	Castle	Family	Castle
Garai	15	Kanizsai	8	Perényi	6
Cillei	12	Losonci	8	Lévai Cseh	5
Branković	9	Frangepán	6	Újlaki	5
Bebek	8	Rozgonyi	6	Szentgyörgyi	4
TOTAL					92

Table 8. Owners of four or more castles in 1437¹⁹

Family	Castle	Family	Castle	Family	Castle
Cillei	14	Losonci	8	Újlaki	5
Garai	11	Szécsényi	6	Szentgyörgyi	4
Stibor	11	Perényi	5	Treutel	4
Kanizsai	4	Jolsvai	5		
TOTAL					77

The number of powerful families has decreased by one since 1408, but the wealth of the leading group grew. The changes on the top were caused by the extinction of aristocratic families, leaving the over-all balance in favour of private castle ownership unchanged. All in all, the fifty years of Sigismund's rule marked an enormous concentration of landed property, including castles, in detriment to the royal domain. This unequivocally negative development of royal power was naturally reflected in the social and political conditions.

Not surprisingly, the combination of county and royal castle that served to strengthen royal centralisation under the Anjou, was lost. Instead, as Engel has

demonstrated,²⁰ Sigismund regularly granted the *comitatus* of several counties to his favourites and thus inaugurated certain larger administrative units. Even though such supracomital units were typical mainly for the border areas and cannot be detected in all parts of the kingdom, they played an increasing part in the growth of aristocratic power, and tended to become institutionalised. The effects of the royal administration depended to a great extent on those magnates who served as counts of several counties. While this did not cause major problems in Sigismund's times, it made the country as good as ungovernable after the death of his son-in-law, King Albert I (1437–1439).

The unfettered donation of castles and estates not only made the king dependent on the great lords, but also deprived the crown of all those instruments of local administration that under the Anjou were in the hands of the king or his castellan. We have already seen that the royal castellan's complete jurisdiction over the tenants and his royal rights of patronage in the local churches were regularly inherited by the private landowners and their castellans. In cases where a family owned a whole cluster of castles, this kind of near-sovereign dominion meant nothing less than territorial lordship. For instance, no bishop could be installed in Zágráb without the approval of the Cillei.²¹

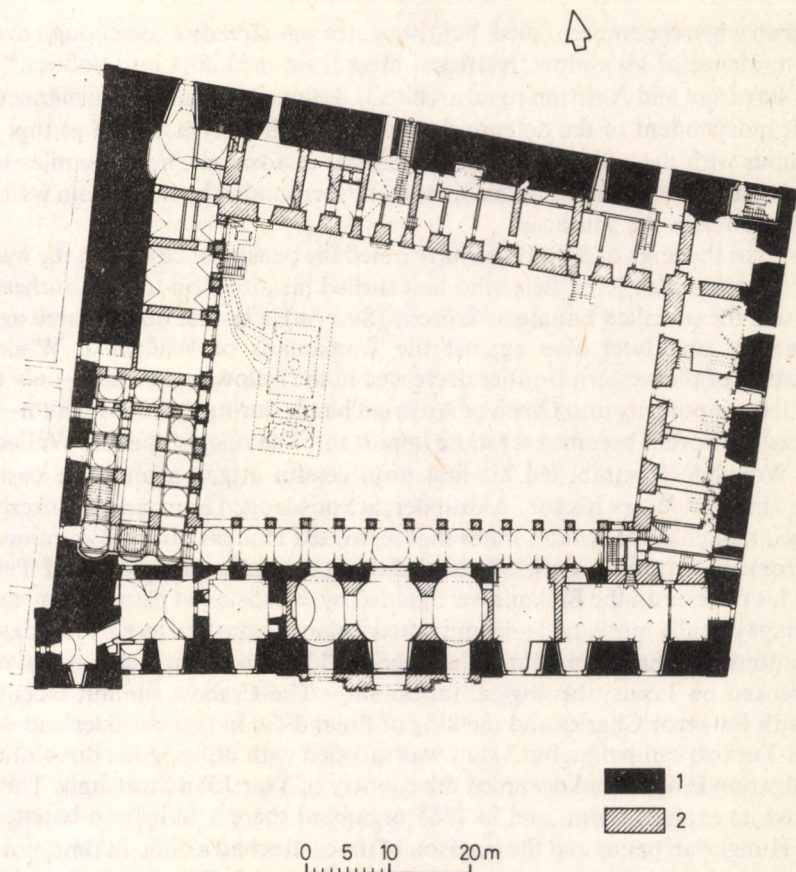
The transfer of castles from the crown to the magnates had significant impact on the status of its personnel, the lesser noble castellans and their *familiares*. While in Angevin times they were in the last resort the king's men, they now became dependent on the great landowners, whose castles they guarded and whose estates they administered. It is not surprising that this further loss of noble independence was reflected in the first attempts of the lesser nobility to establish themselves as an estate independent of the magnates.²²

The growth of private landed estates enhanced the position of the castellans. As officials of the lords of the castles they exercised near absolute rule in their estates, and as holders of public offices they participated in the administration of the realm. The survival of the connection between the castle of Kapuvár and the vice-comital post in the Rábaköz district after the privatisation of the former has already been noted.²³ When in 1392 a burgher of Sopron was robbed, the king called on three castellans, besides the mayors of the surrounding royal cities, to testify, although they were all keepers of privately owned castles.²⁴ The castellans were in general well-to-do noblemen, particularly on the estates of greater lords. They had already some experience in administering and ruling minor estates before greater power was entrusted to them in the service of the magnates. The castellans received the castles in the same way *pro honore* as royal castellans did in Angevin times. Their power and competences are suggested by Article VI. of the II decretum of 1435 in which castellans are held both criminally and materially liable for crimes committed by "abusing the power of their lords".²⁵

The re-distribution of castles and the emergence of gigantic possessions in the early fifteenth century introduced some characteristic features to the social and political development of the kingdom of Hungary. The aristocracy succeeded,

above all through the *familiaritas* as the means of administering and defending the great estates, in mediating the lesser nobility, including its better-off stratum (i.e. the members of the *moyenne nobilité*). This fact reduced the nobility's chances of becoming a politically relevant factor. It has been demonstrated that all attempts at organising the lesser nobles in this period were led by men who were in the service of an aristocrat.²⁶ In turn, the power of the nobility within the estates increased—also via the *familiaris* relation. In the course of the fifteenth century a fairly formal group of leading retainers (*familiares notabiles*) developed and constituted, as castellans or other household officers, sometimes even styled marshals or other court officials, something of a *curia* around the magnates.²⁷ This body had considerable influence on the family politics of great lords and also on the aristocrats' positions and actions in national affairs.

The inquiry into the numerical distribution of castles and estates and the political impact of their alienation from the crown confirms the essentially negative picture traditionally drawn of Sigismund's reign. However, the adverse effects did not become obvious during his long rule, and in the last years, his Imperial dignity and his age commanded sufficient authority to attempt to correct the earlier mistakes. In two respects however, in developing the capital and strengthening the country's frontiers, Sigismund continued the policies of his predecessors. Three major construction projects are known from Sigismund's times, all aimed at establishing an impressive residence, commensurate to the king-emperor's international standing. The Buda residence of Louis I proved to be short lived and was, as we have seen, given up in favour of Diósgyőr, nearer to the king's second country, Poland. Under Sigismund the rôle of Buda as the natural centre of the Carpathian Basin emerged again. The insufficiency of the Angevin palace became clear probably in 1411, in connection with the splendid ceremonies at the betrothal of the king's daughter Elisabeth. During Sigismund's subsequent long absence between 1416–1426 a great and elegant palace was built in the castle, called Fresh (= new) Palace, together with an uncompleted, hence Csonka (= truncated), tower.²⁸ An Italian Humanist who visited Buda at the end of the century called these buildings *magnificia Sigismundi aedificia*.²⁹ The castle was supplied with water from the Danube: the bronze pipes have been unearthed during excavations following World War II.³⁰ The defenses were also reconstructed with the addition of gates, towers and zwingers. "But all these fortifications were of secondary importance as compared to the chief object: the comfort and beauty of the palaces".³¹ According to art historians, the architects of Buda came from France.³² Similarly to Buda, the castle of Tata, not too far from there and near to extensive hunting forests, is seen (for not quite convincing reasons)³³ as having been developed by Sigismund into a palace of the Diósgyőr–Zólyom type. In fact, Tata's completion into a four-towered quadrangle with halls and a two-storey chapel may have been a continuation of Angevin works, just as in Zólyom, where a few decorative elements of the reign of Sigismund are to be found.³⁴



Sketch 19. Pozsony (ground-plan)

1 = 15th century (Gothic) walls; 2 = 16—18th century walls

The reconstruction of the partially still extant Pozsony castle was motivated by both representative and defensive considerations. After the execution of Jan Hus in Constance, Sigismund became the target of Bohemian hatred. Beginning in 1419, when he had inherited the Crown of St. Venceslas, the Hussites waged continuous war against him and all his lands. Pozsony had been a key fortress ever since the Hungarian conquest and its renovation now became an urgent necessity, when Hussite armies retaliated against Sigismund's and his Hungarian troops' attacks on Bohemia. The reconstruction, of which—exceptionally—the accounts survive,³⁵ began in the 1420's with the up-dating of the defenses. However, the construction work did not get seriously underway before 1431, by which time the main interest had shifted from the defenses to representative architecture. Work was still

unfinished when the emperor died, but the palace was already good enough to serve as the residence of his widow, restricted there from meddling into politics.³⁶ The Czech, Bavarian and Austrian royal architects designed the palace in a manner that made it independent of the defense system, unlike the earlier buildings that were contiguous with the curtain walls. The irregular quadrangle, not dissimilar to the Zólyom château, was placed in the open space surrounded by the curtain walls and had one tower in the southeast.

Ever since the reign of Béla IV we have noted the density of castles on the western border.³⁷ It was also King Béla who first turned his attention to the southeast by organising the so-called Banate of Szörény (Severin), a border defense area against the Cumans and later also against the Rumanians of Wallachia. While the significance of the western frontier decreased in the following century—only a few castles fell temporarily into Czech or Austrian hands during the interregnum—the southeastern border became ever more important. The ruler of the first Wallachian polity, Voyvode Basarab, led his first unsuccessful attack against the castle of Szörény in 1324. When his son, Alexander, acknowledged Hungarian suzerainty, he joined that chain of Balkan states that separated Hungary from Byzantium and soon from the Ottoman Turks. Louis I did not recognize the gravity of Turkish threat; his policies on the Balkans were guided by expansionist plans, augmented—or perhaps initially motivated—by missionary plans against eastern orthodoxy. His negotiations with Emperor John Palaiologos in 1356–66 about ecclesiastical union shipwrecked on Louis' theological inflexibility. The Cracow summit meeting in 1364 with Emperor Charles and the king of Poland did in fact consider and decide an anti-Turkish campaign, but Louis was satisfied with utilising the dissolution of the Bulgarian Empire and occupied the country of Tsar John Stratsimir. The king captured its capital, Vidin, and in 1365 organised there a Bulgarian banate.³⁸

The Hungarian banus and the garrison of the castles had a difficult time, not least because of the aggressive missionary activity of the Observant Franciscans, insisting on rebaptising Byzantine Christians.³⁹ To strengthen the hand of the banus, Louis entrusted him with the county of Temes and several castles of the Banate of Szörény. The single known royal mandate from 1368 suggests that the castellans were still appointed by the king, but the banus was their immediate commander. This seems to be implied in Louis' words, ordering "his castellans" to "obey in all matters the banus of Bulgaria or his deputies, just as our majesty".⁴⁰ There was not much novelty in this institution: in Transylvania and in the south the royal castles were always administered by the voyvodes and bani who served there as the king's representatives, while the castellans in the central areas were subject immediately to the king. The new feature was not the transfer of the immediate command to the banus, but the attachment of a hinterland to the banus' jurisdiction. We have no evidence on the rest of the frontier, but in the case of the Bulgarian banate it is clear that the king's aim was to grant additional regions as a resource for the upkeep of the garrisons and castles under the banus' command. Louis was forced to give up the Bulgarian banate five years after its conquest, and

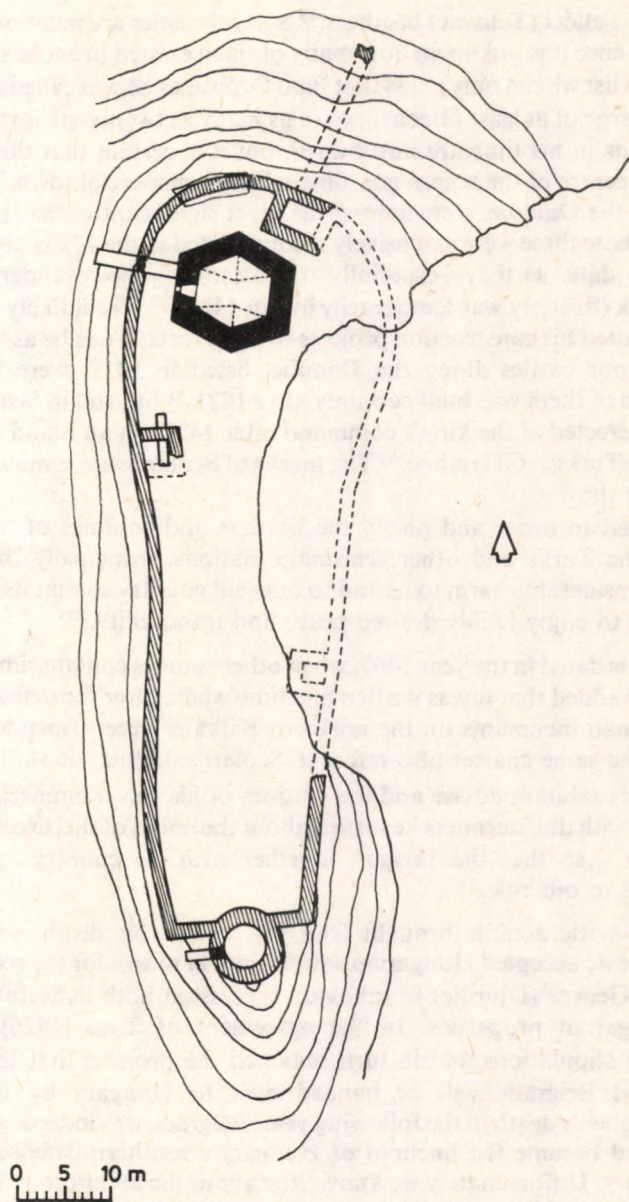
with it ended the greater unit entrusted to the banus. Naturally, since in Louis' lifetime there was no need for such defenses—yet. The Turks were far from reaching Hungary's frontiers; the first Turco-Hungarian encounter was still beyond the border regions.⁴¹

When Sigismund came to the throne the situation was already quite different, and with the defeat of the Balkan armies in 1389 at Kosovo Polje "the alliance that also protected Hungary, fell apart".⁴¹ In typical Ottoman fashion,⁴² Turkish raids for pillage and booty reached Hungary: in 1391 Nagyolaszi, 1393 Érsmlyó, 1395 Csák and in 1396 even Temesvár saw Ottoman foraying detachments (see *Map 18*). In three of the four cases the enemy was halted under the walls of a royal castle; it became obvious that systematic defense arrangements have to be built around a series of castles, preferably under unified command. This insight seems to have donned on Sigismund around 1392, because in 1387–92 he still appointed separate officers for the county of Temes and the banate of Szörény, while in 1394 he entrusted the entire southeastern defense to the count of Temes. Following the example of Louis' later years,⁴³ the king appointed two experienced warriors from the *moyenne nobilité* to this post and made them also castellans of Temesvár. In all likelihood, they were also in charge of the Banate of Szörény. In 1395 they received the county of Csongrád and thus held the command of the most important town and castle of the area, together with the lucrative salt-chamber of Szeged.⁴⁴ Their power and status is neatly reflected in their *magnificus* title, virtual baronage and appearance in the list of dignitaries on solemn royal charters.⁴⁵ One of them received an estate from Sigismund in 1396 and it is in the *narratio* of this donation charter that we are told about the faithful services performed "in the defense of the realm at our behest in the region around Temesvár and in the fights against the cruel heathen, namely the Serbs and Turks, who attacked our country".⁴⁶ After five years in office, the two *ispán* were replaced by Sigismund's trusted—and most able—follower, the Florentine Filippo (Pipo) Scolari, the true founder of the southeastern defense system.

The importance of the region is reflected not only in the concentration of command in one hand but also in the fact that Sigismund did not alienate but three of the royal castles in the southeast. Two of them were given to the *comes* of Temes and one to a banus of Szörény, thus the donations only strengthened the power of the commander of defense. The latter was actually revoked a few years later and replaced by a castle farther away from the frontier. Thus finally only two of the fifteen castles in the area were in private hands and even those two were somewhat off the border. During Scolari's twenty-three years in office the defense system received its final form. He united seven—after 1409 even eight—counties under his command, virtually the entire area between the Rivers Danube, Tisza and Maros. The number of royal castles in Pipo's territory is less well known. Our only source is a seventeenth century copy of a list drawn up around 1439 of castles alienated under Sigismund, reflecting the situation at the end of the king-emperor's reign.⁴⁷ This list contains a special category of frontier castles that were in the hands of Scolari's late



10. The defence of the southern border under Pipo Ozorai.
 Map 18. The defence of the southern border under Pipo Ozorai



Sketch 20. Szörény (ground-plan)

successors, the Tallóci (Talovac) brothers.⁴⁸ Several castles are mentioned here for the first time, hence it is unknown how many of them existed in Scolari's times. On the basis of this list we can only guess that Pipo Ozorai, as he was called in Hungary, had been in charge of at least fifteen if not of as many as twenty-six fortifications.⁴⁹ Their conditions in his time are not known, but it is certain that three of them, Temesvár, the centre of the region guarding a busy commercial town, Orsova and Szörény along the Danube, were among the most significant ones. There is good evidence that these three were extensively reconstructed in the 1420s, their defenses brought up to date, as they—especially the latter two—were under immediate Ottoman attack (Szörény was temporarily lost in 1432).⁵⁰ It is unlikely that Scolari would have limited his construction projects to these forts; it can be assumed that a number of minor castles along the Danube, listed in 1439, were built at his command. One of them was built certainly after 1421,⁵¹ but still in Scolari's times, while one was erected at the king's command after 1427, on an island of the river, opposite to the Turkish Galambóc.⁵² The merits of Scolari were summed up by the royal chancery thus:

he intended to order and pacify the borders and confines of our country, whence the Turks and other schismatic nations, principally the Serbians, caused considerable harm to us and to our said country so that its inhabitants were able to enjoy highly desired peace and tranquillity.⁵³

This charter is dated in the year 1407, when other sources contain similar praises, but it has to be added that it was written in a time when, after the defeat of 1402 at Ankara, Ottoman incursions on the northern Balkans were suspended for quite some years. The same charter also refers to Scolari's diplomatic skills:

With his salutary advise and the wisdom of his clever counsel, combining liberality with due sternness he turned about the [mind of the] excellent Despot of Serbia...so that the Despot, together with his country's inhabitants, submitted to our rule.⁵⁴

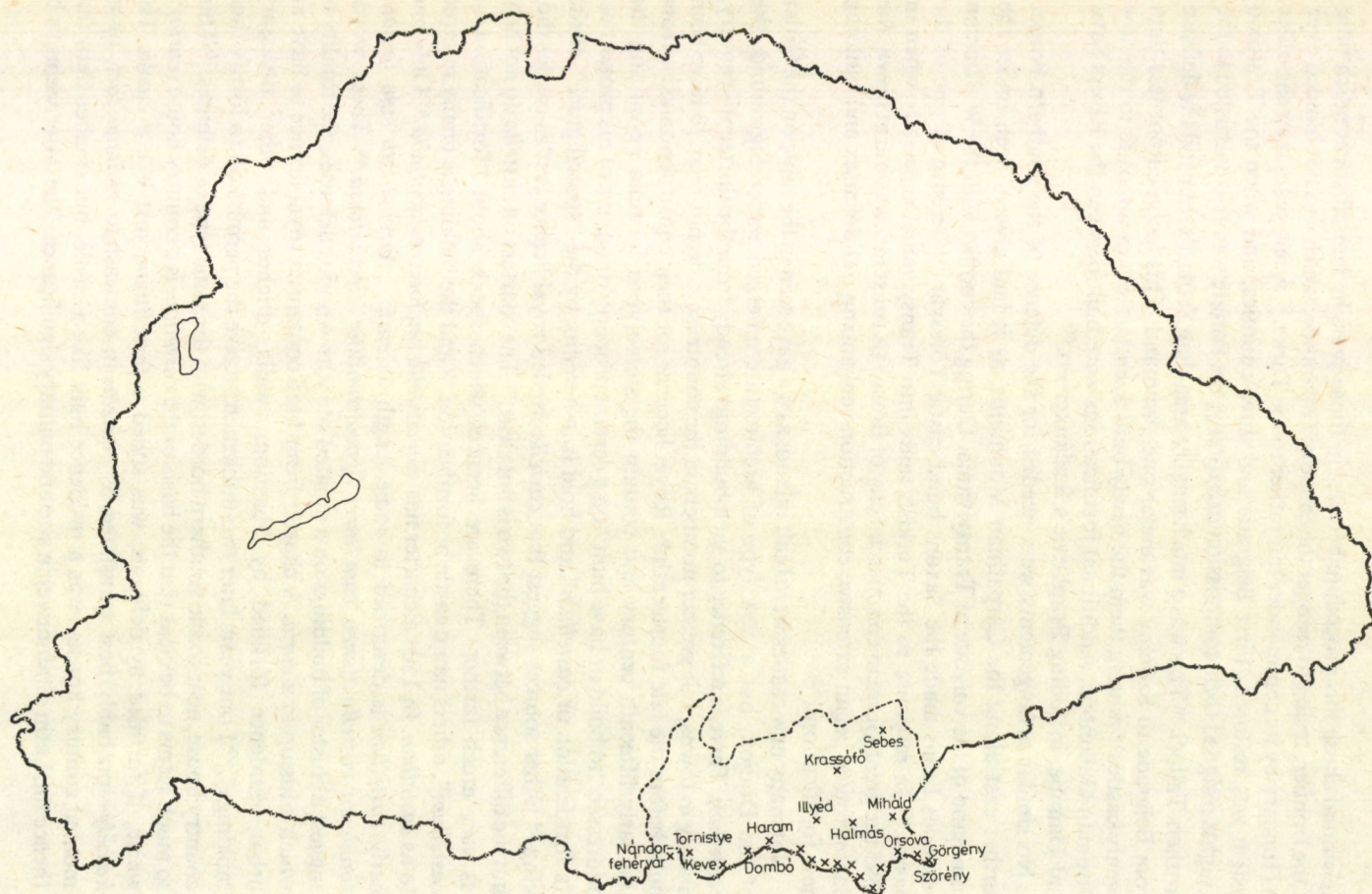
Scolari's diplomatic actions brought fruit just before his death, when Despot Stephen Lazarević accepted Hungarian suzerainty in return for the recognition of his nephew's, George (Djurdje) Branković's succession both in Serbia and in the despot's Hungarian properties. In the agreement of Tata (1426) Sigismund accepted these stipulations and in turn obtained the promise that the castles of Galambóc and Belgrade will be handed over to Hungary by Branković.⁵⁵ Following Stephen's death in the following year, Belgrade was indeed taken over by Sigismund, and became the linchpin of Hungary's southern defense system for almost a century. Unfortunately we know little about the architecture of town and castle Belgrade; under Lazarević they were the capital of Serb lands, but now, due to the defense needs, the fortress began to overshadow the city.⁵⁶

After Scolari's death in 1427 Sigismund experimented with a different solution for the southeastern frontier. The revived Banate of Szörény was entrusted to the Teutonic Knights and the rest divided into two parts. It has been assumed that

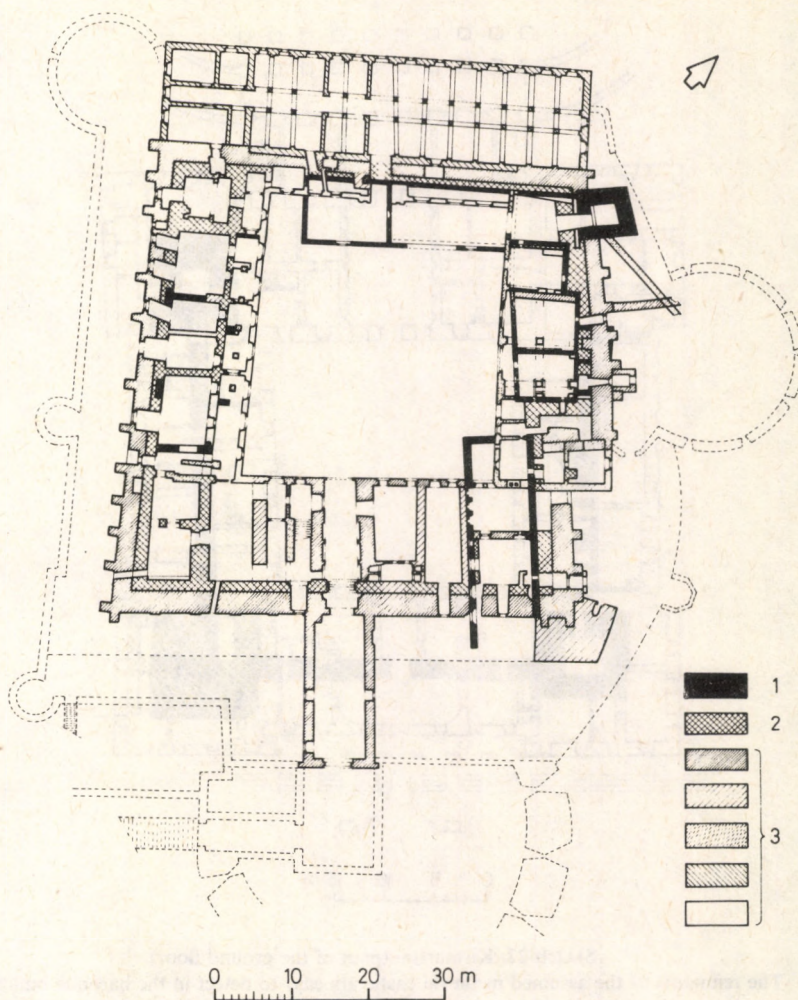
Sigismund chose this procedure because in those years he himself spent much time at the frontier, trying to recover the castle of Galambóc, which was not handed over to Hungary by its commander but rather to the Turks.⁵⁷ A few years later the older system was restored. First Belgrade and three counties, and when the Teutonic Knights resigned their commission in Szörény, the Banate was also entrusted to the brothers Tallóci.⁵⁸ This was a much smaller area than Scolari's, but still the defense from Belgrade to Szörény was under one command. This included not less than twenty castles⁵⁹ among them the newly built Szentlászlóvára opposite to the now Ottoman Galambóc. Additional fortifications were built between the Rivers Sava and Danube, including Branković's Szalánkemén.⁶⁰

No similar arrangements were needed for the defense of the southern border further east along the Carpathian Mountains, as it had always been under the command of the voivode of Transylvania. During the conflict with the Wallachian voivodes Louis made the Saxons build castle Töröcsvár in defense of one of the passes.⁶¹ In response to the Turkish raids into Transylvania, especially when in 1395 the great German commercial city of Brassó (Kronstadt) was burnt down, the Saxon towns began extensive constructions enhancing old defenses and building new fortifications.⁶²

Not many new castles were built inland, as we have seen in the table on the Order of the Dragon, but a new type of architecture emerged under Sigismund, the *castellum*. There is reference to such buildings already from the thirteenth century, mainly in towns, but greater numbers in the countryside do not seem to have been built before the late fourteenth.⁶³ Royal licences for their construction exist from the early fifteenth century and contain the stereotyped formula permitting the addressee "to build or have built" on a certain property or on one of his properties, "a fortification or *castellum*" and hold it in heredity by the "special grace" of the king.⁶⁴ Other sources suggest that *castella* needed royal licence just as castles did, but the difference between the two is not clear.⁶⁵ The charters on *castella* do not help us very much farther. There are licences which speak about "fortification or *castellum*", others name castle or fortification,⁶⁶ and the building is finally referred to as *castellum*. In 1504 a charter has *duo castella seu loca residentialia*.⁶⁷ Only one early *castellum* is described to some length as *curia*. . . *circumdata cum fossatis simulcum castello ligneo cum turri lignea similiter circumfossa*.⁶⁸ These words suggest a cluster of buildings on a moated site with wooden defenses, the totality of which adds up to a *curia*. A charter from 1465 contains a royal licence to have an urban residence fortified by "bastions, walls, ditches and other necessary buildings".⁶⁹ Four years later two noblemen receive the permission to fortify their country house, near to the southern border, with the same type of defenses.⁷⁰ Thus so much seems to be clear that the basis of the *castellum* is a country house (*curia*)⁷¹ which, if fortified by defenses, was styled a *fortalitium*, just like a castle. The *kastély*—probably best translated as *château* in contrast to *château fort*, or as moated country house—was a residence built like a castle, but smaller than that (hence the Latin diminutive) in size and military significance. The latter seems to be

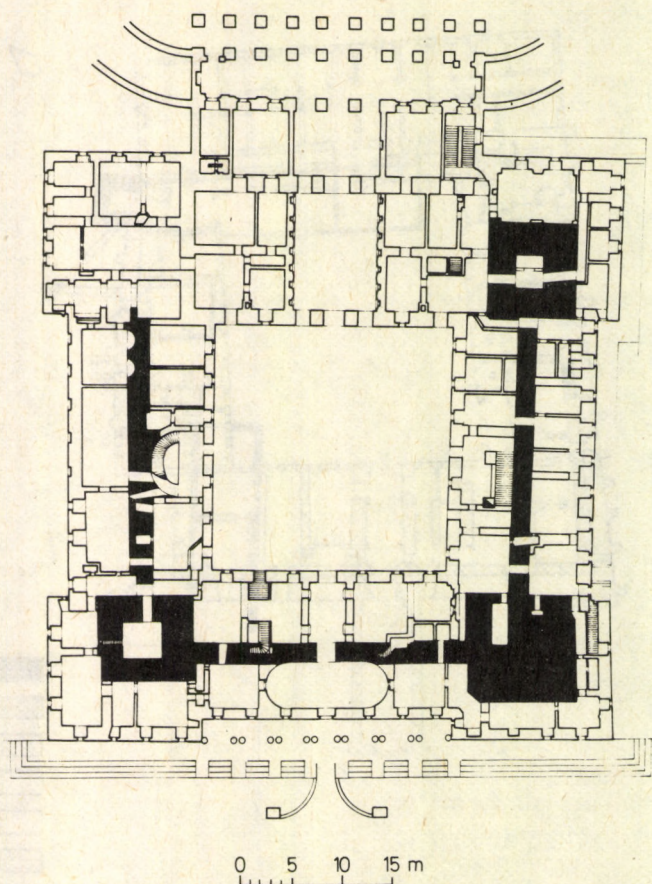


Map 19. The defence of the southern border under the Tallócis



Sketch 21. Várpáloča (ground-plan according to D. Várnai)

proven not only by the inferior and by the fourteenth century surely outdated wooden defenses but also by the fact that they stood mostly within a settlement or quite close to a town or village. Such a fort could serve as the defense of the settlement or as a seigneurial see controlling and overseeing it. In a charter of 1406, Sigismund argues that it is for the benefit of the country when cities are “fortified by protective defenses”, and in 1409 he permitted one of his men to build *castrum, bokkam seu fortalitium* within the walls of the town of Podolin.⁷² These fortified county houses seem to have been built in the centres of estates, at well-travelled roads, in contrast to castles erected at inaccessible sites.



Sketch 22. Kismarton (plan of the ground-floor)

The remnants of the assumed medieval castle are easy to detect in the baroque building.

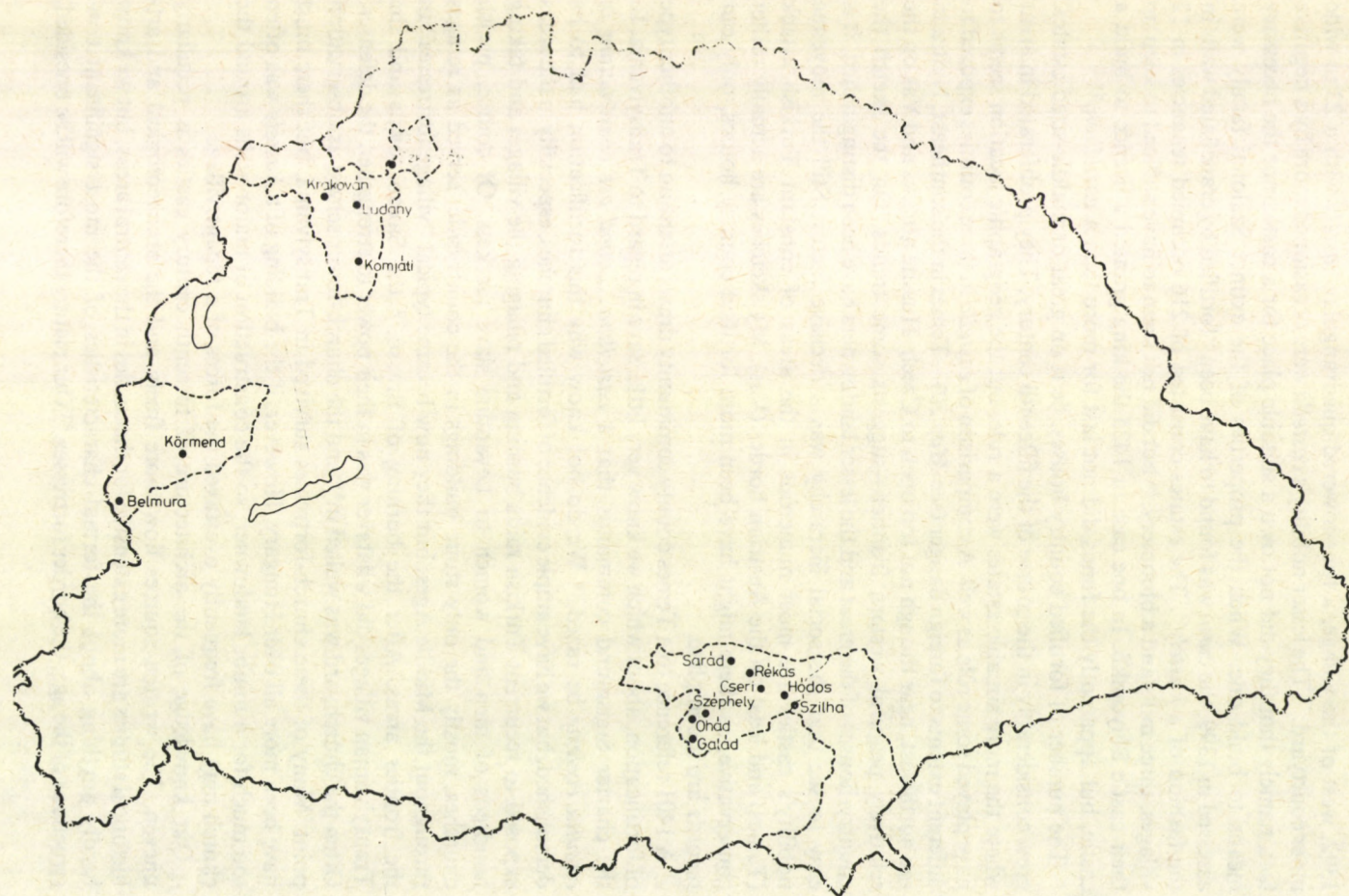
If these assumptions about the *castella* are correct then we may assume that a *kastély* could be built not only by the great landowners but also by members of the *moyenne nobility*. The great landowner may have moved from the inaccessible and uncomfortable, though well-defendable, castle into a *kastély* situated in the existing or planned centre of his estates. So, for example, the Újlaki family, whose castle Bátorkö (= Courage-rock!), built in the thirteenth century, stood on the summit of an inaccessible mountain⁷³ in the peaceful decades of the fourteenth century moved to a residential palace, tower and chapel surrounded by walls, built in the new centre of the dominion called Várpalota (= Castle-palace).⁷⁴ Another, newly risen family of the age of Sigismund, the Kanizsai, were even more ambitious builders. In the centre of their estates appertaining to castle Szarvkö, they built in Kismarton before

1392, west of the village, a four-towered quadrangular *kastély* with a 23 m wide inner courtyard.⁷⁵ The lesser nobility's *castella* were occasioned more by a negative fact, namely that they did not own a suitable place for a castle, nor the necessary means to build one. When the properties of the extinct Szalonai family were assessed in 1399, the *curia* was found to have been "fortified by cranellated walls in the fashion of a *kastély*". The estates consisted of 216 occupied tenancies in 12 villages, three mills and a bloomery,⁷⁶ but did not seem to have sufficed to keep up their castle Solyomkő. In one case in 1425 the king granted a licence to build a castle, but apparently the funds did not last for more than a *castellum*.⁷⁷

The number of fortified country houses, be it on great or middle-sized estates, grew considerably in the course of the fifteenth century. They proliferated in areas where the more sizeable estates were a rule, but the geographic location seems to have played some rôle as well. A comparison of *castella* in three counties exposed to different extents to foreign danger (see *Map 20*)—Temes in the southeast, Nyitra in the northwest, near though not too open to Czech–Hussite attacks and Vas on the relatively peaceful western frontier—suggests some trends. On the sketch the country-houses of the great and the lesser landowners have been distinguished. It is easy to see that the social hierarchy was a decisive factor. Still the *moyenne nobility's* castles are most numerous in the areas of constant Turkish attack (Temes) and least on the Austrian border (Vas). My sketches are actually rather conservative, as there might have been more fortified country houses, only our records are incomplete.

A 1401 reference to a Temes county community draws attention to another type of fortification, about which we know very little, save in regard to Transylvania. In the charter Sigismund commands that a *castellum... quod est constructum in circuitu ecclesie* be razed.⁷⁸ We do not know why this fortification had to be demolished, but we have ample evidence of fortified churches, especially in the areas exposed to recurrent Turkish raids burning and pillaging the villages and taking hundreds of men and women to Levantine slave markets. Of course, parish churches, mostly the only stone buildings in the countryside, served as refuges throughout the Middle Ages, but they now became typical "village fortresses" in the frontier areas. After the burning of Brassó,⁷⁹ the Saxon towns and the Transylvanian villages did whatever was in their power to strengthen the defenses. Often the churchyard was walled in⁸⁰ and the church-tower served as observation point. Many of these church-fortresses survived in Transylvania, but there must have been more all over Hungary. However, if the building of a *kastély* was often too much for a minor landowner, so the construction of major walls around the church may have frequently overtaxed the forces of a tenant village.

Our knowledge of the architecture of fifteenth century castles is peculiarly uneven. The written sources flow more freely and the archaeological and art-historical studies are more extensive for the castles in the central areas, but we know hardly anything about the formal characteristics of the most significant constructions of the age, the border fortresses.⁸¹ Our picture therefore will be onesided,



Map 20. Fortified manor houses in counties Nyitra, Vas and Temesvár

insofar as we are best informed of the castles of the aristocracy of which not too many were built in this period, as already established above.

When the Kismarton *kastély* of the Kanizsai clan was completed, the coat of arms of the family was placed in its wall, commemorating that it was their castle. When the new owners of castle Csesznek rebuilt the fortress they had received from Sigismund, they placed a plaque with the completion date on it and had one of the gates decorated by the monogram of the elder brother together with the combined crests of the two brothers and their spouses.⁸² Similar heraldic decorations survived from many castles.⁸³ The use of coats of arms—a relatively new sign of the Hungarian aristocracy's social standing in the later fourteenth century⁸⁴—underlines the castles' function in symbolising its lord's status, beyond its being the administrative, economic and judicial seat of the magnate. The dignity of the aristocrat, who was sharing the power of the crown, had to be expressed in the entire structure and inner architecture of the castle. While the tower or keep remained the crucial element of the castle as a defensible site—so much so that a banus asked another magnate to house his family in his keep while he served on the exposed frontier⁸⁵—it certainly did not suffice any longer as a residence. The hall and the chapel were now as necessary as the defenses had been before. The "palace", mostly one great hall—from the royal 125 × 13 m² in Diósgyőr down to the modest 15 × 8 m² room in a smaller western Hungarian castle⁸⁶—was best suited for representation. The towers were too small for it and security also counselled against admitting too many guests to the strongholds.

As to the castle chapels, three observations can be made from what little we know about them. First, we may assume their existence in every castle: since they can be found in the smallest castles, it is unlikely that the larger fortifications would have been lacking one, even where there is no mention of a chapel. Secondly that their *patrocinia*—of which we know, unfortunately, only eight—were the Virgin Mary, the knight-saints George and Michael with one dedicated to St. Otilia and one to Corpus Christi.⁸⁷ Finally, they had in principle no parish duties, but in fact administered at least two sacraments "in necessity" (meaning probably a siege) to the occupants of the castle, namely absolution and last rites, as specified in the consecration document of the chapel of Gyula.⁸⁸ Most importantly, the chapel in the castle allowed the lord to hear mass and receive the sacraments even in case of interdict.⁸⁹ Thus the private chapel exempted him from the parish and distinguished him even as a Christian from his subject peasants. The most splendid chapels were, of course, the ones in royal residences, such as Diósgyőr, Tata and Zólyom.

A law of Sigismund's confirms that these inferences are no mere *ex post* speculations by the modern historian. Article III of decretum II:1435 grants exemption from military service to castellans acting as deputies during the absence of a prelate, baron or nobleman and to those "noblemen who serve the barons and other major lords secular as *judex curiae* for their spouse and other members of their household and additional noblemen *ad conservandum honorem curiarum suarum*".⁹⁰ The expression *honor curiae* needs hardly any explanation: the status of

the magnate included not only his person and family but also his residence, be it a castle or a country house, and deserved to be protected and defended as the expression of the lord's dignity.

Finally an issue should be raised which I do not feel qualified to resolve, but should like to note for further discussion. We have seen that several royal residences—Charles' Temesvár,⁹¹ Louis' Diósgyőr and Zólyom, Sigismund's Pozsony—consisted of impressive quadrangles surrounded by appropriate defenses. No private castle of such a design is known from the fourteenth century. However, at the very end of the century, it was those two families who erected similar *châteaux* that had received the greatest share in royal power under Sigismund: the Kanizsai in Kismarton and the Garai in Siklós. Not only the ground plans are similar, but the sizes (as we noted for Kismarton) are also "royal". Later two more magnates followed suit: Pipo Scolari in Ozora and the Újlaki, who rebuilt their Várpalota country house into a four-towered quadrangle. It seems as though all these were explicit emulations of the royal building style.

While the display of the family's crest was an obvious sign of status, I suspect that the recurrent rebuildings served the same purpose. A good example is supplied by the castle of Trencsén. According to the architectural historian D. Menclová, in the thirteenth century it was only a tower surrounded by a curtain wall. Under Máté Csák it became one of the first castles to have a representative hall and a private chapel. After its recovery by the crown, rebuilding was delayed until Louis I found it necessary for his diplomatic negotiations. New walls were built some 8–10 metres beyond the old ones, a hall and stables added. In the fifteenth century Trencsén became the residence of Queen Barbara; this time the Csák hall was demolished and replaced by the so called Queen Barbara palace: a two-storey building with loggia, great fireplace and, of course, a Luxemburg-Cillei crest. Csák's chapel survived, but another, more majestic one was added. The old defenses had to be strengthened by an outer wall; probably the double-towered gatehouse was built at that time. At the turn of the fifteenth to the sixteenth century the castle came to the Szapolyai family. They rebuilt everything in the citadel, erected a new tower and fully reconstructed the old defenses, with an entirely new bastion in the south, a rondella with gun embattlements, and the so-called Jeremy bastion.⁹¹

The sketchy story's summary is this: (1) every owner reconstructs; (2) the new buildings add to living quarters and representation, but (3) serious changes in the defenses do not occur until the early sixteenth century when the development of artillery is first accounted for. Similar patterns can be detected in the history of other not royal or reginal castles.⁹² Let me cite the case of the already mentioned Csesznek, where a new element was added to the defenses: an external tower accessible by drawbridge from the castle. This could serve as a last defendable refuge for the lord and his immediate retinue, even after the fall of the castle. None the less, even such a free standing tower belonged to the age preceding artillery. All in all, the reconstructions of Hungarian castles during the fifteenth century were essentially characterised by enhanced residential and representative functions and

not by essential changes in the defenses. Greater and more comfortable halls, artistic decoration, splendid heraldic devises reflected the social and political growth of an aristocracy overshadowing the crown.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹ Hóman, 1939, II: 383.

² Engel, 1977 compiled a catalogue of the property conditions of Hungary's castles between 1387–1437 (89–171) and summarised them in statistical tables (207–33) which I have extensively utilised.

³ Engel (*ibid.*, 207), augmented by eleven castles from the southern parts of the country, left out by him (Becse, Csák, Kövesd, Krassó, Érsomlyó, Dombó, Haram, Illyéd, Keve, Miháld, Tornyiste), and a few others omitted by Engel, but documented in the standard reference works (Csánki): Berzète in Gömör, Csobánc in Zala, Dáró in Tolna, Dorog in Sopron, Kéménd in Baranya, Lipa in Arad, Ludberg and Monoszló in Körös and Torockó in Torda county. It is possible that three more castles existed at this time, i.e. Bálványos in Transylvanian Fejér, Berzence in Bars, and Szucsány in Turóc county, but there is no unequivocal evidence for that. Thus the number of private castles has to be raised from 126 to 137 and that of the royal ones from 100 to 111, giving a total of 248. This number still does not include the border castles of Banat Severin/Szörény, of which we shall treat later.

⁴ Engel, 1977, Table 7, 219–23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Table 5, 215–7, which, however, contains, only the sixty castles granted in perpetuity, not the mortgaged ones.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Table 4, 210–4, based on data for 1407. Of the lords featuring with one castle Bessenýő (together with others) inherited Gönyű, Pécsi received Garity in 1403 from the king and Tamási retained their patronymic castle (cf. Engel, 1977, 114; 112; 160).

⁸ Wenzel, 1874, 118.

⁹ Engel, 1977, 89–171 *passim* and table 4.

¹⁰ *Decreta* 168: *ut omnia castra, tenute, civitates et possessiones, que vel quas quibusdam eo tempore, quo iidem adversus nos animo indurato et manu potenti insurrexissent, pre timore insurrectionis eorundem tradidissimus et donassemus simul cum talibus donationibus, quas hiis, qui inter nostram serenitatem et predictos rebelizantes in nos pro pace facienda tunc laborassent aut pacem fecissent contulissimus, et tradidissimus pre timore prenotato, merito et iusto modo auferre valeamus ab eisdem.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 168–169: *quod cuncta castra, tenutas ac possessiones quaslibet, quas et que vendidissimus aut impignorassimus, ab hiis, quibus ipsas et eadem vendidissimus aut impignorassimus sine omni pecuniarie solutione recipere et in ius ac proprietatem sacre corone nostre regie ad manus nostras applicandi habeamus facultatem.* It should be noted that this ordinance had to be revoked by Sigismund in the agreement following the 1403 revolt (*Ibid.*, 177).

¹² Zsk. II: 4373: *ob iuvenilem tunc nostre maiestatis etatem.*

¹³ *Decreta* 169, n.2. The four castles certainly recuperated were Beszterce, Hricsó, Lietava and Solyomkő (Engel, 1977, 97; 117; 131; 150).

¹⁴ Engel (1977, 99) considers it possible that Boldogkő and Zselin were recovered by the king according to the Temesvár dietal decretum.

¹⁵ János Kaplai took part in the 1403 rebellion.

¹⁶ Solyomkő was given to Szántai Lackfi; Lietava was acquired by Stibor after 1403 by unknown means (Engel, 1977, 150; 131).

¹⁷ The families Medvei (three castles), Jolsvai (five castles) and Stibor (eleven castles) became extinct (Engel, 1977, 220–1, 223). A member of the Szécsényi family was condemned to forfeiture of goods in 1424 because of counterfeiting money.

¹⁸ Engel, 1977, Table 4. for 1437.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ Fügedi, 1974, 122—123.
- ²² Mályusz, 1957, 61ff.
- ²³ *Zsk.* I: 2075.
- ²⁴ *Sopron m.* I: 507.
- ²⁵ *Decreta* 264: *cum potentiis dominorum suorum*
- ²⁶ Mályusz, 1957, 530—536.
- ²⁷ Kubinyi, 1973, 22ff.
- ²⁸ Gerevich, 1971, 83—84.
- ²⁹ A. de Bonfinis: *Rerum Ungaricarum decades* (ed. I. Fögel, B. Iványi et L. Juhász) Budapestini 1941, 4; 7; 92.
- ³⁰ Zolnay, 1961, 22—4.
- ³¹ Gerevich, 1971, 88.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ S. B. Szatmári, 1975, 276—279.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, Menclová, 1954.
- ³⁵ Szűcs, 1958.
- ³⁶ Ratkoš, 1960, 19—22 and J. Lichner, 1960, 51—80.
- ³⁷ See above.
- ³⁸ Thallóczy, 1900, 577—617.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 595; Wadding, 1932, VIII: 254—255.
- ⁴⁰ *CD IX/4: 120: quatenus eidem magistro Benedicto... vel homini suo in omnibus tamquam nostre maiestatis persone parere et obedire debeatis.*
- ⁴¹ Szakály, 1979, 72.
- ⁴² Fügedi, 1970, 20—23.
- ⁴³ Rázsó, 1973.
- ⁴⁴ Engel, 1977, 186; 176.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.
- ⁴⁶ Csáky, 184: *signanter in defensione et tuitione confiniorum regni nostri a parte ipsius Themeswar ex nostro edicto per eosdem facta contra et adversus sevissimorum paganorum, Turcorum scilicet et Rasciensium ipsa confinia regni nostri sepius subintrantium*
- ⁴⁷ Reedited by Engel, 1977, 194—204.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 203—204.
- ⁴⁹ Temesvár, Világosvár, Solymos, Sebes, Krassófő, Borzafő, Miháld, Orsova, Illyéd, Haram, Dombó, Keve, Halmás, Szeged, Érsomlyó were certainly in his charge.
- ⁵⁰ Engel, 1977, 158.
- ⁵¹ Görény, cf. Szakály, 1979, 80.
- ⁵² Csánki, II: 96.
- ⁵³ *TT* 1884, 22: *ubi etiam terminos et confinia antedicti regni nostri ab ea parte unde nobis et regnicolis nostris per crebras invasiones ipsorum Turcorum et aliarum scismaticarum nationum multimoda imminebant incommoda signanterque a parte regni Rascie taliter rectificare et pacificare studuit, quod abinde dictum regnum nostrum et regnicole optata pacis tranquillitate fruuntur.*
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: *et illustrem principem dominum dezpotum ipsius regni Rascie ducem... suis salubribus monitis et ingeniosi consilii prudentia interdum etiam lenitati severitatem intermiscens taliter et adeo studuit demoliri, ut idem dux despotus cum dictis suis regnicolis se nostre ditioni submitit servitutum.*
- ⁵⁵ Pesty, 1877.
- ⁵⁶ J. Kalić-Mijusković, 1967, 82—104.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ Engel, 1977, 79—80.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, map.
- ⁶⁰ Csánki, II: 233.
- ⁶¹ Zimmermann—Werner, II: 480.

⁶² *Ibid.*, III: 346; 350; 357.

⁶³ Prickler, 1972, 123–124. on the château of Rohonc.

⁶⁴ E.g.: *in superficie seu territorio unius possessionis sue . . . ubi et in loco, ubi et in quo ipse maluerit, fortalium seu castellum ligneum vel lapideum, prout sibi videbitur et placuerit, expediri, instruere seu edificare aut construere seu edificari facere constructumque vel edificatum idem magister Ladislaus et sui heredes conservare, manutenere et possidere valeant atque possint ex presenti nostre maiestatis annuentia et gratia speciali* (Zichy, V: 228).

⁶⁵ In 1403 the King commanded *si idem magister Ladislaus litteras nostras super constructione eiusdem castelli termino per vos ad id deputato exhibere et producere non valuerit, funditus aboliri et annihilari facere debeatis*. (*Ibid.*, V: 349).

⁶⁶ See above n.64.

⁶⁷ *Dl.* 59 942.

⁶⁸ Csánki, II: 574.

⁶⁹ *Dl.* 16 155: *curiam suam in oppido suo Pathak vocato habitam ad modum castrum cum propugnaculis, menibus, fossatis et aliis necessariis edificiis construere et edificare . . . valeat* cf. Koppány, 1974, passim

⁷⁰ *Dl.* 30 888: *cum propugnaculis, menibus, fossatis et aliis necessariis edificiis*.

⁷¹ *Zala m.* II: 275.

⁷² *Zsk.* II: 6719.

⁷³ Fügedi, 1977, 105.

⁷⁴ Gergelyffy, 1967, 259–278.

⁷⁵ Dümmerling, 1960, 80–87.

⁷⁶ *Zsk.* I: 6095: *curiam propriam prefati Stephani muratum cum meniis seu muris dentatis ad instar castelli ac domibus lapideis*

⁷⁷ Csánki, II: 43.

⁷⁸ Csánki, II: 43.

⁷⁹ See above, n.62.

⁸⁰ Phleps, 1941, 105–111.

⁸¹ Alice Horváth is preparing a Ph.D. thesis on the castles of the southern defense; she was good enough to refer me to the ground plan of Temesvár.

⁸² Dümmerling, 1960; Koppány, 1962, 14–7.

⁸³ Pamer, 1960.

⁸⁴ Fügedi, 1970, 13–7.

⁸⁵ *Dl.* 88 160.

⁸⁶ Éri, 1971, 7–8.

⁸⁷ The Virgin Mary in Várpalota and Kanizsa; St. George in Essegvár; St. Catherine in Vöröskő and Óvár; St. Otilia in Körösszeg and Corpus Christi in Hédervár.

⁸⁸ Scherer, 1938, 54.

⁸⁹ Fügedi, 1975, 82.

⁹⁰ *Decreta* 280: *similiter ipsi barones, nobiles et maiores persone seculares coram coniugibus et domesticis suis personas nobiles pro magistris curie et alias ad conservandum honorem curiarum suarum deputandi et relinquendi habeant facultatem*.

⁹¹ Menclová, 1956, 30–75.

⁹² K. Végh, 1966; Sós, 1913, 65–88.

TITLES QUOTED IN ABBREVIATION

SOURCES

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
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| AO | <i>Anjoukori okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Andegavensis</i> . Eds I. Nagy, Gy. Nagy. Budapest, 1873–1925. 7 vols. |
| ÁÚO | <i>Árpádkori új okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus</i> . Ed. G. Wenzel. Pest, 1860-Budapest 1874. 12 vols. |
| Bánffy | <i>Oklevéltár a Tomaj nemzetségbeli Losonczi Bánffy család történetéhez</i> [Cartulary to the history of the L.B. family <i>de genere</i> T.]. Eds. E. Varjú, B. Iványi., Budapest 1908–28. 2 vols. |
| Bárdosy, Suppl. | <i>Supplementum analectorum terrae Scepusiensis</i> auctore J. Bárdosy. Leutschoviae, 1802. |
| BU | <i>Urkundenbuch des Burgenlandes und der angrenzenden Gebiete der Komitate Wieselburg, Ödenburg und Eisenburg</i> . Eds H. Wagner, I. Lindeck-Pozza. Graz-Köln, 1955–65. 2 vols. |
| Conversio | H. Wolfram, <i>Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum. Das Weißbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien</i> . Vienna etc., [1979] |
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GAZETTEER

Abbreviations for the countries: A = Austria, C = Czechoslovakia, H = Hungary, P = Poland,
R = Roumania, SU = Soviet Union, Y = Yugoslavia

Asterisks occur before the names of those castles which totally disappeared during the middle ages, only their Hungarian names are recorded. As official place-names the names of the actual settlements are indicated, where the fortresses once stood.

Name	Actual country	Official name	Name	Actual country	Official name
Abaújvár	H		Csesznek	H	
*Adorján	R	Sálar	Csicsó	R	Ciceu
Ajánáskő	C	Hajnácska	Csicsva	C	Čičava
Alsólendva	Y	Dolnja Lendava	Csobánc	H	
Appony	C	Oponice	Csókakő	H	
Arad	R	Arad	Csongrád	H	
Árva	C	Orava	Damásd	H	
Bács	Y	Bač	Dáró	H	
Baglyaskő	H		Dédeskő	H	
Bajmóc	C	Bojnice	Dergőc		
Bálványos	R	Turia	Detrekő	C	Plavecký hrad
Baranya	H		Déva	R	Deva
Barkó	C	Brekov	Dévény	C	Devin
Bars	C	Tekov	Diósgyőr	H	
Bátorkő	H		Divény	C	Divin
Beckó	C	Beckov	Dobra'	A	Neuhaus am Klausenbach
Becse	Y	Novi Bečej			Dobrá Niva
Békés	H		Dobronya	C	
Belényes	R	Beius	Dombó	H	
Bereg	SU	Beregovo	Dorog	A	Trausdorf
Berencs	C	Branč	Doboka	R	Dăbăca
Berzete	C	Brzotyn	Döbrököz	H	
Beszterce	C	Povážský hrad	Drégely	H	
Bihar	R	Biharia	Dunajec	P	Nedec
Blatnica	C	Blatnica	Ecseg	H	
*Bodrog	Y	Bački Monoštor	*Egyed	R	Dióság
Bolondóc	C	Beckov	*Érsomlyó	R	Varadia
Borostyán	A	Bernstein	Esztergom	H	
Borostyán	C	Pajštun	Fehérvár	H	
Borsod	H		Fenes	R	Finiş
Borsova	SU	Borshawa	Fülek	C	Filakovo
*Borzafő	R	Reşița	Füzér	H	
Budetin	C	Budatin	Gács	C	Halič
Csák	R	Ciacova	Galambóc	Y	Golubač
Csáktornya	Y	Čakovec	Galgóc	C	Hlohovec
Csanád	H		Gesztes	H	
Csejte	C	Čachtice	Gimes	C	Jelenec (Gymeš)
Cseklész	C	Bernolákovo (Čeklis)	Gömör	C	Gemer
			Gönc	H	

Name	Actual country	Official name	Name	Actual country	Official name
Görgény	R	Gurghiu	Makovica	C	Makovica
Gyalu	R	Gilau	Medvevár	Y	Medvegrad
Győr	H		Miháld	R	Mehadia
Gyulafehérvár	R	Alba Julia	Monoszló	Y	Moslavina
Halmás	R	Bozovics	Mogyorókerék	A	Eberau
*Haram	Y	Nova Palanka	Moson	H	
Harsány	H		Munkács	SU	Mukatchewo
Hátszeg	R	Hațeg	Nagyszombat	C	Trnava
Hollókő	H		Nagyvár	C	Liptovský hrad
Holics	C	Holič	Németújvár	A	Güssing
Hont	H		Nemti	H	
Hölgykö	H		Nógrád	H	
Hricsó	C	Hričovský hrad	Nyaláb	SU	Korelowo
Hrussó	C	Hrušovský hrad	Nyék	H	
Illyéd	R	Iladia	Nyevicke	SU	Niewitzke
Jeszenő	C	Jasenovský hrad	Óbuda	H	
Jókő	C	Dobrá Voda	Oroszlánkő	C	Vršatec
Kabold	A	Kobersdorf	Oszterc	Y	Oštrc
Kapuvár	H		Ozora	H	
Kasza	H	Košeca	Palocsa	C	Plavec
Kéménd	H		Pankota	R	Pancota
Kesselőkő	C	Šivý Kameň	Pannonhalma	H	
Keve	Y	Kovin	Panyola	H	
Kismarton	A	Eisenstadt	Pata	H	
Kolon	H		Patak	H	
Kolozs	R	Cluj	Pest	H	
Komárom	C	Komárno	Pozsega	Y	Požega
Korlátkő	C	Korlátský hrad	Pozsony	C	Bratislava
Kosztel	Y	Kostel	Pölöske	H	
Körösszeg	R	Cheresig	Privigye	C	Prievidza
Kőszeg	H		Rajec	C	Rajec
Kőszeg	C	Kysak	Regéc	H	
Kővár			Revistye	C	Revište
Kövesd	R	Gavosdia	Sárvár	H	
Krassófő	R	Carșova	Saskő	C	Šášov
Küküllő	R	Cetatea de Baltă	Sebes	R	Caranșebes
Leányvár	H		Sempte	C	Šintava
Lednice	C	Lednica	Siklós	H	
Léka	A	Lockenhaus	Simontornya	H	
Léta	R	Literiu de Sus	Sirok	H	
Léva	C	Levice	Sólyomkő	H	
Lietava	C	Lietava	*Sólyomkő	R	Peștiș
Lipóc	C	Lipovec	Somogyvár	H	
Lipovec	Y	Lipovac	Somos	C	Drienov
Lippa	R	Lipova	Somoskő	H	
Locsmánd	A	Lutzmannsburg	Sópatak		
Losonc	C	Lučenec	Sopron	H	
Lubló	C	Lubovňa	Stomfa	C	Štupava
Ludbreg	Y	Ludbreg	Szabolcs	H	

Name	Actual country	Official name	Name	Actual country	Official name
Szádvár	H		Temesvár	R	Timoșoara
Szakalya	C	Sokol	Temetvény	C	Tematin
Szalánc	C	Slanec	Tihany	H	
Szalónak	A	Schlaining	Torda	R	Turda
Szamobor	Y	Samobor	Torna	C	Turna nad Bodvou
Szársomlyó	H		Tornis'ye	R	Rimetea
Szarvkő	A	Hornstein	Törcsvár	R	Bran Poartă
Szászfenes			Trencsén	C	Treňcin
<i>vide</i> Gyalu			Turóc	C	Turiec
Szatmár	R	Sátmar	Ugod	H	
Szeged	H		Ugróc	C	Uhrovec
Szekcső	H		Újvár	C	Hanigovský hrad
Székelyhid	R	Sacheihid	Ungvár	SU	Ushchorod
Székesfehérvár	H		Úrhida	H	
Szentantal	C	Antol	Várád	R	Oradea
Szentgrót	H		Valkó	R	Subectate
Szentgotthárd	H		Valmód	H	
*Szentlászló-vára	C	Coronini	Varasd	Y	Varaždin
Szentvid	H		Varin	C	Starý hrad
Szepes	C	Spišský hrad	Várpalota	H	
Szigliget	H		Vasvár	H	
Szinnye	C	Svinia	Vécs	R	Brîncovenesti
Szklabinya	C	Sklabina	Velike	Y	Velika
Szolnok	H		Veszprém	H	
Sztrecsény	C	Strečno	Világosvár	R	Șiria
Sztrigó	Y	Strigova	Visegrád	H	
Szucsá	C	Suča	Visk	SU	Wishkowo
Szucsány	C	Sučany	Vöröskő	C	Červený Kameň
Tamási	H		Zágráb	Y	Zagreb
Tapolcsány	C	Topolčianský hrad	Zalavár	H	
Tarkő	C	Kamenica	Zemplén	C	Zemplin
Tata	H		Zólyom	C	Zvolen
			Zsidóvár	R	Idioara

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