

PSALMUS
HUNGARICUS
A HUNGARIAN CULTURAL HISTORY

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VOLUME I:
FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO 1526

*Edited by
József Szentpéteri*

VOLUME I: FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO 1526

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF HUNGARIAN PREHISTORY

Attila Türk

Early Hungarian history, better known as Hungarian prehistory, is a research area with scarce written sources. Consequently, archaeology, as a scientific discipline boasting a rapidly increasing number of sources, may acquire significant importance in this area. This is the case, even if from a methodological perspective the historical and ethnic assessment of archaeological finds must satisfy much stricter criteria than before. To arrive at a reliable historical interpretation, we would need to be familiar with the ethnic identity of the original owners of the archaeological finds as well as with their political affiliation, which obviously surpasses the scope of archaeology. Nevertheless, thorough knowledge of the contemporary, significant archaeological differences between the Eastern European grassy and forest steppes, forest regions, and the microregions of the former, makes it possible to research migration with traditional archaeological methods. Completing our investigation with natural scientific methods (and with some luck), we may have a lot more to say about these matters than our predecessors.

For archaeology, the fundamental question about early Hungarian history has been the same to this day: from the archaeological finds of the territory stretching from the Urals to the Carpathian Basin, i.e. west of the western Siberian proto-homeland hypothesised earlier based on linguistic arguments, what links can be made to the early medieval ancestors of Hungarians? Or to put it differently, can the location of the individual settlement areas – hypothesised on the basis of the written sources – be confirmed in light of the more recent archaeological finds? Moreover, do the origins and the system of relations of the finds from the Conquest Period point primarily towards the east and if yes, to what extent? To answer these questions, two research methodologies have essentially been developed over little more than the past 100 years or so. One of them proceeds from the Urals towards the Carpathians and is known as the linear method. The other takes the 10th-century heritage of the Carpathian Basin

as a point of departure and looks for the Eastern European antecedents. This is the retrospective method. In my article, I will go over the latest archaeological findings based on the latter.

In the past decade, the archaeological research of early Hungarian history has taken a huge leap forward thanks to the new early medieval finds recovered in the region of the Dnieper River and the Ural Mountains. From the aspect of archaeological methodology, we can affirm that this group of finds and archaeological

phenomena appears to be related to the 10th-century material culture of the Carpathian Basin. Such connections have only been established in the southern Russian forest and partly grassy steppes, in the region of the Volga elbow of Samara and the southern Urals.

The Hungarian Conquest is traditionally dated to 895, but in addition to the data of the written sources, certain archaeological finds also seem to have confirmed recently that the material culture of the Conquest Period had appeared earlier in the Carpathian Basin. An indication of that, for instance, is the radiocarbon dating of the graves of a few armed men buried separately (for example near Szeged). If new discoveries could be added to this group of finds, that will be yet another argument in support

Silver gilded harness fittings with palmette motif from the archaeological sites of Sineglazovo and Uelgi



of the hypothesis that the Conquest did not take place over one or two years, but that it should be regarded as a historical process lasting for several decades, closed by the battle of Pozsony in 907.

Studying the eastern connections and the archaeological heritage of the Conquest Period and the early Árpáadian Age could reveal some references as to which direction the conquering forefathers may have reached the Carpathian Basin from. The earliest such finds that are relevant to this research are located on the external, eastern side of the Carpathians, in the region of today's Republic of Moldova and the Lower Danube. However, doubts of a chronological nature have been raised recently concerning the historical assessment of the finds. The characteristic S-terminalled ring ornaments exposed in the cemetery near Przemyśl are an indication of burials carried out in the second half and at the end of the 10th century. Thus, the possibility was raised that these archaeological sites – or at least, some of them – are not the westernmost remnants of the settlement areas of Etelköz, but they could be evidence of groups sent to live in the frontier region of the passes at the end of the 10th century, most likely for the purposes of military defence. The graves that were discovered here and there in the multi-grave burial sites of 10th-century Rus certainly cannot be linked with the residence of Etelköz. These graves are as distinct from their environment as the group of finds – recently discovered near the battlefield of Augsburg – originating from the 10th-century Carpathian Basin. These finds most likely belong to Hungarian warriors who served in Kiev as mercenaries. In exchange, there were numerous soldiers who came to Hungary from there, commemorated, for instance, by the toponym Oroszvár and the axe-shaped amulets in the Carpathian Basin. The third heavily contested group of artefacts found around Bucharest and Lake Tei, whose less characteristic archaeological material (mainly based on the features of the Subbotsy horizon to be presented below), is regarded today as belonging to the Pechenegs or other late nomadic groups.

Regrettably, from the territory of present-day Moldova to the region of the Dniester River, we have only few finds of interest from the aspect of Hungarian prehistory. This phenomenon might be explained by the different geographical environment, as there we can find hilly geomorphological forms of greater altitude. It should be noted that the western border of Etelköz was most likely not the stretch of the Lower Danube, because archaeological signs of the First Bulgarian Tsardom (including entire sites) occur in considerable numbers far to the north as well. The archaeological site of Slobodzeya, along the Dniester, has been the archaeological sensation of the past few years. The finds of the more than twenty burial sites, linked with the Hungarians by most researchers and which were dug secondarily into the embankment of the Bronze Age kurgan, clearly reflect Slavic connections

(for example the pottery finds of the late Luka-Rakovica culture). However, they also include some Byzantine silk and ceramics supposedly from Crimea and even wheel-thrown pottery originating from the Volga region. In addition to the types of jewellery and horse harness showing a clear parallel with the 10th-century material culture of the Carpathian Basin, the raw material (silver gilt) and the floral ornamentation as well as the manner of burial (skull facing west, flayed horse skin) signal an incontestable association.

As of today, we do not have additional finds of this kind east of the Dnieper, but it should be noted that in other ages and in the case of other peoples too, the settlements were typically located in larger



*Silver gilded belt mount
from the burial site at
Subbotsy*

river valleys. Finds like the ones exposed at Slobodzeya were unearthed along the middle course of the Dnieper, in the region of present-day Kryvyi Rih, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk and Kremenchuk. These finds have been archaeologically registered as the Subbotsy horizon, after the first archaeological site where they were located. These finds seem to originate from the second half of the 9th century, according to both the traditional dating method as well as carbon dating. Thus, based on both the characteristics of the finds and their dating, those buried here must have been the Hungarians of the settlement areas of Etelköz. All of this is in fascinating harmony with the chronological data of the written sources, in which Hungarians do not appear before the second half or second third of the 9th century.

The territory between the Dnieper and the Volga is the biggest blank spot in the archaeological research of early Hungarian history. The only find that we can mention from here is the grave of Vorobyevo in the Don region. Although it shows strong signs of Saltovo origin (or pseudo-Saltovo, to be more precise), the buckle and some other features indicate an obvious origin from the Volga–Urals region. Levedia, whose existence was hypothesised to begin from the second third of the 8th century, located around Don–Seversky Donets, cannot be archaeologically confirmed, and what is more important: there are no finds originating from the Volga–Urals either. In fact, archaeologically speaking, there are no signs whatsoever that would indicate the migration of any population to Europe from the eastern bank of the Volga, the possibility of which was, at any rate, successfully reduced by the Khazar Khaganate according to the written sources. On the other hand, it has been clearly shown that such a process did take place in the second third of the 9th century. As a matter of fact, the one-time existence of the settlement area of the Don River region was built exclusively on the etymology of the word *Dentümogyer*, noted down in the 13th century. However, the interpretation of the latter as *Don tői magyar* [i.e. Don root Hungarian] has been discarded. Incidentally, the “Don root” was one of the most densely populated areas of Eastern Europe at the time, inhabited by the Alans of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture in the 8th–10th centuries. So, our forefathers would have hardly been able to set up camp there. Furthermore, there is another argument that goes against this hypothesis: Levedia’s “placement” in Khazaria was motivated by the attempt to define the place where the ancient Turkish

loan words would have been received. However, the Alans living in the above-mentioned area spoke an Iranian language, not Turkish, and the Turkish language swap is neither proven in their case, nor is it likely. The same two arguments hold true for the northern frontier of the Caucasus in relation to the hypothesis of the Caucasian or Kuban-region proto-homeland. In the past couple of years, we have received news of some exciting finds from the region of Krasnodar (quite similar to the ones from the Conquest Period). However, these are finds mostly collected by treasure hunters, and they lack an archaeological context. Also, presumably they were not found in pit graves, but in chamber graves that were unique to the Alans. Therefore, their assessment requires further and substantial

research. Naturally, the question of Levedia’s location does not refute the fact of the Khazar–Hungarian encounters; it is only the geographical site of these ancient relations commemorated by written sources that needs to be reconsidered. The human-figure fittings of the Subbotsy horizon (i.e. the legacy of the settlement areas of Etelköz), which depict the figures in a characteristic cross-legged position, or the 9th-century appearance of the silver and pressed silver fittings (though decorated by Saltovo patterns) in the Saltovo Alan chamber graves can serve as evidence of the ancient connections. The links to the Khazars are also explicitly confirmed by the trapezoid cross section of the bow-hilt plate as well as by certain types of mounts that are typical of the Conquest Period and the Sokolovskaya

*Silver gilded belt buckle
from the burial site at
Subbotsy*



Balka horizon of the Khazar Khaganate. This is in spite of the fact that the latter had disappeared by the beginning of the 9th century, and we are not yet familiar with the 9th–10th-century archaeological finds of the “real” Khazars.

In the territory enclosed by the Dnieper and the Volga rivers, the 9th–11th-century cemeteries of the ancient peoples who spoke most likely Finno-Ugric languages, and who lived on the frontier of the forests and the forest steppe, represent much closer parallels in archaeological terms. At the same time, the so-called proto-Mordovian and proto-Cheremis burial sites are not related to the ancestors of the Hungarians in an ethnic sense. The similarities observed should be interpreted primarily as cultural links, even though the archaeological material that is of interest to us often emerges from women’s tombs, and may be a sign of intermarriages in the given period. Although both criteria – the co-presence of the Uralian and the Conquest Period traits – are satisfied here, further detailed chronological examinations will be necessary. For instance, it has already been revealed about some supposedly Hungarian finds (such as the belt mounts of Grave 505 of Kriukovo Kuznoye), based on their technical specificities and material composition, are most probably objects of Bulgarian origin. Nevertheless, the historical–archaeological analysis of the typological similarities and their characteristic distribution areas will continue to be a cardinal task.

At the Samara elbow of the Volga, on the left bank of the river, we know of six or seven archaeological sites from the 8th and 9th centuries (Nemchanka, Proletarskoye Gorodishche 116 km, etc.) that are noteworthy from a Hungarian perspective. In addition to the metal finds, the appearance of Uralian-type ceramics is a significant phenomenon here (Bakalskaya culture and Kushnarenkovo/Karayakupovo culture). Among the latter, we can mention the hand-made pots with a sphere-shaped bottom and a braid ornament around their neck, eroded by river mussels or talc. These kinds of pots occur at several other sites and also from much earlier times. The early medieval finds of this microregion show that waves of migration from the direction of the Urals hit the territory in two or three periods from the Hun Period until the 9th century. On the right bank of the river, research has discovered the appearance of supposedly Turkic-speaking peoples in a similar chronological order. In other words, it was not only and primarily the appearance of the Volga Bulgarians that led to the “Turkization” of the Volga region. From the territory of the Saltovo culture, there are unquestionable traces of relocation from the second half of the 7th century. Thus, if finds should appear around the Samara elbow of the Volga that are akin to the Zlivki horizon, i.e. the archaeological legacy affiliated with the Bulgarians of the Khazar Khaganate, then we can rightly hypothesise the presence of a population speaking a western Turkic language near the middle course of the Volga.

Why, and more importantly, how the Hungarians crossed the Volga and moved to the west, we do not yet know. In my opinion, we have reason to suppose that (as later written reports about the Pechenegs suggest) these events could not have taken place without the cooperation, agreement and alliance of the Khazars. A probable underlying reason for the move could have been the arrival of the Pechenegs in the frontiers of the southern Urals at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries from the south, and then the Kims (Srostrinskaya culture) from the east. Chronologically speaking, a likely date seems to be the second third of the 9th century, which is also supported by the dating of the finds typical of the Volga–Southern Urals region that appeared in Eastern Europe. Note that this chronology is in accordance with the data of the written sources as well, which do not mention the ancestors of the Hungarians in Eastern Europe before 830/850. According to the latest research, the crossing of the Volga must have taken place through the Zhiguli Mountains located north of the town of Samara, and well-known from later sources, where the river bottleneck is split by several smaller islands.

In the southern Urals, it is the Bashkirian and East Tatarstania, so-called Kushnarenkovo and Karayakupovo archaeological cultures from the 6th–9th centuries, that research has connected with the forefathers of the Hungarians. Recently, the archaeological sites of these cultures have extended much



*Silver bowl
with palmette motif
from the burial site at
Korobcino (Ukraine)*

further south and east of the previous places (i.e. the grassy steppes of Orenburg – Filippovka and the Trans-Uralian forest steppes – Sineglazovo, Karanayevo, Uelgi), even overlapping into the 10th century at places. There were obviously significant changes taking place in the territories lying east of the Urals at the turn of the 8th century (like the disappearance of the kurgan burials). Leaving the eastern side of the Urals has been linked with various historical events by different researchers, and most often, they have been interpreted as the northern effect of mass migrations related to the emergence of the First Turk Khaganate.

Concerning the Eastern precedents, we should mention the recently outlined Bakalskaya culture (4th–6th centuries). At certain archaeological sites of this culture, the proportion of the so-called “Proto-

Kushnarenkovo ceramics” is as high as twenty-five per cent. The significance of the distinction of the Bakalskaya culture in the forest steppes of the Trans-Urals lies in the fact that it fills the chronological void after the termination of the Sargatskaya culture, the most important culture of the region going back to the Iron Age, and which was also linked – mistakenly – with the predecessors of the Hungarians. Previously, many tried to date the end of the Sargatskaya culture (4th century BC–4th century AD) to the 6th century, mainly to be able to link it with the beginning of the Kushnarenkovo culture. In the Bakalskaya culture, however, it is clearly the Sargatka traditions that live on, while its links with the Kushnarenkovo culture are also clear-cut. Its chronological place between the 4th and 6th centuries AD is supported by dozens of radiocarbon examinations. Today many local researchers do not see any Hungarian–Ugrian precedents in the Sargatskaya culture; rather, they emphasize the mostly southern, Scythian-type features and origin of the latter. While this question necessitates a lot more future investigation, we can ascertain that this is the most distant archaeological culture in time and space to which we can go back to, on the basis of the heritage of the Conquest Period, with more or less certainty. It is, of course, possible to study the historic events of the Iron Age of the region, as well as the Uralian archaeological cultures of the period prior to the evolution of the Hungarian language. At the same time, there are more and more Hungarian researchers who think that the events that took place before the birth of the independent Hungarian language (approx. 1000–500 BC) should no longer be considered as part of the Hungarian prehistory.

THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST PERIOD

László Révész

While certain scholars consider the Conquest of the new homeland that began in 895 as a purposeful, planned operation devised by Prince Árpád and Prince Kusály, which was only accelerated and disrupted by the Pecheneg attack, others attribute a decisive role to the latter, and they depict the movement of people as a panicked flight. The leaders of the Hungarians must have certainly realised that their shelters in Etelköz, surrounded by vast open areas on every side, could no longer be protected, and that their people would find safety only in the Carpathian Basin enclosed by imposing mountains. Thanks to their earlier military campaigns, they also knew that the great plains that promised to be the most suitable for them were not firmly under the rule of any significant power. The clans living in the eastern part of Etelköz must have suffered dramatic losses in terms of material goods and human lives, but the bulk of the people managed to cross the mountain passes along with their belongings. Although the troops of the Bulgarian King Simeon outflanked them from the south, the attack caused only a minor disturbance.

The above has been supported by archaeological findings as well. During the excavation of 10th-century Hungarian cemeteries, there was no indication that legions of widowers would have been buried there, possibly in the company of their new Slav women. Alongside the warriors, graves of women, children and elderly people were also found, who belonged to the same anthropological type, wore the same style ornaments and were buried according to the same traditions. Moreover, the events of the subsequent years demonstrate that it was by no means an ailing people with an exhausted military force that had erected their tents in the Carpathian Basin.

The Hungarians found Avar groups in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin, while the periphery was inhabited by Slavic peoples, and Transdanubia (the former Roman province of Pannonia) was under Frankish authority.

The Conquest of the new homeland took place in several phases with the leadership of Prince Árpád. At first, the Hungarians occupied the great plains to the east of the Danube; they wandered into the hilly areas only along the river valleys. In 899, their troops marched into northern Italy as the allies of Arnulf, the East Frankish ruler (887–899), with the plan to topple the rule of his opponent, King Berengar I (888–924). In September that year, they defeated Berengar's armies in the battle of Brenta, and upon returning to their homeland, they occupied the Pannonian territories of Arnulf, who had passed away during this episode. In 902 they crushed the principality of Great Moravia to the north of the Danube, annexing its lands into their country. With that act, the demarcation of the frontiers of Hungary, as they would be known for more than a thousand years, was more or less completed.

In the battle of Pozsony (907), the Hungarians successfully repelled the attack of the Frankish ruler, who was unwilling to acknowledge the changing status quo in the region. When one of the Hungarian princes, Kusly, was invited to a feast and insidiously killed by the Bavarians in 904, the Hungarians extracted revenge by leading lethal military campaigns into the territories of Saxony, Thuringia, the Duchy of Swabia, Burgundy and Lotharingia. Over the next few decades, their troops got as far as Denmark (915) and the Iberian Peninsula (942). Peace was restored with the northern Italian kingdom of Berengar I in 904, after which the ruler and his successors paid regular annual tributes to the leaders of the Hungarian tribal alliance till 950. During this half-century, the Italian rulers as well as the pope called on the Hungarian troops several times in their clashes with their rivals. This is how their troops appeared in Pavia (924), Rome (927, 933, 940), Apulia (922, 927, 947), Tuscany (927) and – during a



The arrival of the Hungarians, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum

the consolidation of the power of German rulers, Henry the Fowler and Otto I (936–973), that finally put an end to the raids in the western region. At first, they extended their supremacy to certain areas that were in alliance with the Hungarians, i.e. Lombardy and Bavaria, then they defeated the Hungarian troops in 955 at Augsburg. After this misfortune, the Hungarians attempted a few campaigns against the Byzantine Empire, but even these excursions were repelled at the battle of Arcadiopolis in 970.

From the end of the 9th century, the heavily stratified society was headed by Árpád tribe princes. For a short transitory period, during the time of the Conquest, Hungarians seemed to have been ruled – based on the Khazar model – by two monarchs simultaneously: the chief king of divine ascent (“kündü”) and the sub-king in charge of the practical issues (“gyula”). The tribes were no longer organised according to bloodline; they were political units directed by chieftains. The core of society was composed of the free clans uniting numerous families of various financial and social standing from within the individual tribes. They provided the members of the military escort for princes, chieftains and clan leaders, and they made up the majority of warriors in the raid campaigns as well. The rank of the leaders of these escorts (especially those of the princes) was indicated by their insignia. Their weapon belts, the weapons and tools fastened to them as well as their harnesses were adorned with golden or gilt silver mounts. Their quivers were decorated with striking sun symbols to demonstrate that the possessor performed military service in the immediate entourage of the prince.

This broad mass of society was composed of the peoples found locally and the Hungarian rural population, whose villages were arranged around the centre of a rich kindred and who were obliged to provide various services to their lords. The majority of the 10th-century Hungarian population lived in more or less permanent villages.

The agricultural activities of the Hungarians were just as varied as the Hungarian society itself. Certain groups dealt with stock-breeding (the Carpathian Basin was not suitable for classic nomadism, nor did its geographical parameters necessitate long trips in search of new pastures), but most

military campaign led in 937 – to the region of Capua, Benevento, Naples and Monte Cassino. The only mode of defence against their unexpected attacks was the creation of protected zones and the resettlement of the dispersed population around forts. The fort-building campaign launched by the local landowners and provincial lords set the direction of development for Italian society for many generations to come. A similar process took place in the Frankish (especially east Frankish) territories. Like Lombardy, Bavaria also became a Hungarian ally, providing a starting point and military operation zone for their further campaigns (917–937). The east Frankish ruler, Henry the Fowler (919–936), paid regular annual tributes to the Hungarian princes in exchange for peace. It was

Hungarians were self-sufficient farmers who had settled down or were in the process of doing so. They arrived in their new homeland from the east equipped with extensive knowledge about farming. They broke up the ploughlands with contemporary ploughs, and they grew wheat, barley and millet for the most part.

The first written sources about the trade activity of the Hungarians date back to the pre-Conquest Era. Most likely, the Arabian long-distance trade reached mainly north-eastern Hungary in the first half of the 10th century, which is indicated by the presence of Arab dirhams in the burial grounds of that region. According to contemporary records, Hungarian traders were regular visitors at the markets in Prague and Pereyaslavets in the Lower Danube region in the 960s: they traded mostly with silver and horses, and bought slaves, tin and fur. From the middle of the 10th century, the import of weaponry (double-edged swords and lances) from the Rhine region and Scandinavia was increasingly significant.

The ethnic and social diversity of the Hungarians arriving in the Carpathian Basin in 895 is reflected in the relevant findings and the structure of its cemeteries. About 26,000 graves of the 10th–11th century population are known to us, but only a fraction – barely a thousand of them – contained horse bones, weapons or oriental-type jewellery and costume ornaments.

The graves prepared for the rich and distinguished dead were bigger than the average size, for besides the numerous accessories, they also had to be able to contain the stripped skin of the horse, including the skull, the cannon bones and the harness. The corpses were placed in the graves with their head to the west and their face and feet to the east. They were laid in their tomb dressed in their most ornate clothes: men with their weapons, insignia of rank, flint and steel, women with their smaller everyday items. The accessories found in the tombs are an indication of their beliefs and the rites performed during the burial ceremony. Although the Hungarians must have encountered the followers and principles of the big world religions during their previous eastern settlements, their dominant system of beliefs was a combination of thousands of superstitions and conjectures that were supposed to provide an explanation for the world around them, commonly known as shamanism.

Since not one Hungarian grand prince's tomb has been found so far, we do not know in what manner the privileged leaders of the conquering Hungarians were



*Sabretache plate with
palmette motif, Rakamaz-
Strázsadomb*

buried. Nonetheless, chronicles written two to three hundred years later report that Prince Árpád was buried near Óbuda, and King Saint Stephen erected a church over his grave. The eternal resting place of one of his successors, Taksony (reigned approx. 955–972), could also be located by the Danube: written sources direct us to the proximity of an existing village bearing his name, his one-time residence. Although there is no archaeological evidence to support this claim, if the chronicles documented a tradition based on true practices, it is obvious that the location of the tombs of revered leaders was known for many decades or even centuries after their death. On the other hand, it has become increasingly evident in recent years that the extremely rich male graves dating back to the first half of the 10th century, i.e. the resting places of the leaders of the contemporary prince's military entourage, are located in the Upper Tisza region, Szabolcs County and Bodrogeköz. It is not unlikely that the burial grounds of the princes could also be found in their vicinity.

Part of the tribal-clan aristocracy rests in family cemeteries containing four to eight graves, in which the wife (or wives), adorned with rich jewellery, and younger children were buried alongside the husband equipped with his insignia of rank. The graves of wealthy women buried alone or in the company of a few domestic servants and escorting horsemen are most probably signs of polygamy.

The legacy of 10th-century free people were preserved by burial grounds consisting of either only a few dozen plots or up to 60–100 graves, which sometimes stand out for their abundance of precious metals adorning female clothing. The former indicates the burial grounds of dwellings used for a shorter time while the latter signal those of village communities that settled down more permanently. The communities' richness in weapons, jewellery and costume ornaments also depended on their way of life; the graves of farming villages contain a much more modest set of findings than those of the groups involved in animal breeding. Items recovered from the graves of these common-order people are usually poor; weapons, horses or richly decorated clothing were buried only beside the family members of the leaders of the given community.

The society of contemporary Hungarians was structured according to strict rules, and allowed individuals to use only such emblems of rank that were due to them on the basis of the position they occupied in the tribal-clan hierarchy or their role in the military escort of princes and chiefs. The rank of the conquering Hungarian warriors was indicated by a weapon belt decorated with precious metals and the ensemble of the weapons and tools similarly ornamented and fastened to it. Based on the latest research, the set of insignia of rank may have been composed of different elements for born aristocrats (family members of chieftains and clan leaders) and the members of various ranks of the professional armed escort. With regards to clothing, the scraps of fabric stuck to the rusted metal objects allow us to draw conclusions about the material used. According to this, fine linen was widely used, while the headwear, boots and overcoats were made of felt or finely tanned leather. Silk or brocade were used for the clothing of the wealthier. The headdresses, blouses, kaftans and boots of women were sometimes decorated with dozens of gilt silver mounts. The archaeological findings reveal lavish and diverse attire, where some of the ornaments can be regarded as genuine goldsmith masterpieces. The most extraordinary pieces of women's costumes, at the time of the Conquest, included hair braid discs that were made with various techniques: moulded and cut-out, or pressed from a plate.

The military fiascos that put an end to the venturesome military campaigns (955, 970) shook the power of the tribal-clan-based aristocracy, and were a clear sign that the Hungarians' way of survival and development would have to assimilate into the European environment. Changes took place within the ruling family as well: the existing rulers were relegated in terms of authority. The new princes, Taksony (955–972) and Géza (972–997), established a new centre of power, first in the region between the Danube and the Tisza, then in the towns of Esztergom and Székesfehérvár. They organized a new military escort from those members of the tribal-clan aristocracy who joined them and from members

*Hair braid ornament
with Turul motif,
Rakamaz*



of the common order, whom they equipped with modern western-style weapons (double-edged swords, battle axes and heavy lances). This army helped them break the power of resistant chieftains and clan leaders. The western border of Hungary – which ran as far as the Enns River till the middle of the 10th century – was consolidated along the Leitha River and at the eastern foot of the Alps in the 970s.

By that time, conditions were ripe for the conversion to Christianity and the organisation of a Christian kingdom within the Hungarian economy and society. Hungary had irreversibly joined the kingdoms of Christian Europe, and for many centuries, it was the strongest state of the region. Its oriental art and belief system slowly faded away, and the Hungarian people made their latest dwelling place surrounded by the Carpathians their final homeland.

THE AGE OF THE FOUNDATION OF HUNGARY

Attila Zsoldos

While 10th-century western and southern Europe – having encountered the weapons of the Vikings and the Arabs – became acquainted with the terrifying arrows of a new enemy, the Magyar horsemen, there were significant, albeit much less spectacular, developments in the settlement area of the Hungarians as well. In the middle of the century, the tribe of Árpád, who had taken part in the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin, was emerging steadily among the Hungarian tribes that began their own ways of independent development.

There are barely any authentic local Hungarian sources about the Hungarian medieval tradition of the 10th-century history of the Carpathian Basin. Our knowledge is partly based on the reports of contemporaneous foreign sources, and partly on rather risky assumptions deduced from later developments. In such circumstances, it is only natural that the historical interpretation of the scarce, lacking, and often self-contradictory records has led to different conclusions by various researchers.

From Tribal Alliance to “Tribal States”

The conquering Magyars were bound together by a tribal alliance – this is one of the few undisputed facts. The term *hétmagyar* [seven Hungarians], preserved in the Hungarian tradition, was probably the original designation of the federation. The names of the Hungarian tribes were recorded by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine: according to his enumeration, these were Nyék, Megyer, Kürtgyarmat, Tarján, Jenő, Kér, and Keszi. The emperor also noted that the Hungarian tribes were joined by three

Kabar tribes (before the Conquest).

The term *Kabar* was most likely a collective noun, which was used to denote the mixed-ethnicity population that had seceded from the Khazar Empire. The tribal alliance was headed by two dignitaries: the *kende*, revered as a divinity, who had nominal power, and the *gyula*, who was inferior to the *kende* in rank, but who effectively managed the tribal alliance. In the times directly preceding the Conquest, the *kende* was Álmos, who was followed in this position by his son, Árpád. Alongside Árpád, Kurszán performed the duties of the *gyula*. (However, it is quite characteristic of the history of this period that some

The seven chieftains,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum



historiographers think that it was the other way around: they consider Kurszán to have been *kende* and Árpád the *gyula*.) This ruling system – often referred to as dual kingship, or diarchy – disintegrated after the Conquest due to the events of the battles leading up to the Hungarian occupation of the Carpathian Basin. The Bavarians murdered Kurszán in 904, and in the first years of the 10th century, *kende* Árpád also passed away (the circumstances and the date of his death are unknown). Their deaths brought an end to the Hungarian tribal alliance, as the institution of the unified leadership of the Hungarian tribes fell apart. Nevertheless, the rank of the *gyula* did not die out entirely: the leaders of one of the Hungarian tribes bore it as a hereditary title in their family. Presumably at the same time, Árpád's offspring – as the *kende*'s successors – equally claimed some sort of supreme power over the Hungarian tribes. Proof of this could be that Constantine, the Byzantine emperor, refers to Fajsz (Árpád's grandson), as a prince (using the Greek term *archon* to denote his position) just as he referred to Árpád. It is also an important circumstance that Constantine heard this piece of information from one of Árpád's descendants: Tormás, Árpád's great-grandson who travelled to Constantinople around 948 as an envoy. It is quite understandable that he would have informed Constantine about the state of Hungarian affairs in the spirit of the family tradition. Nevertheless, the emperor must have been much closer to reality when he noted: in his age, i.e. in the middle of the 10th century, the Hungarian tribes were no longer obeying their own princes. And these princes could hardly be regarded other than the descendants of the former dignitaries of the tribal alliance. The Hungarian tribes must have preserved some form of consciousness of belonging together, but this cohesion was no longer reflected in the system of political institutions.

We have no reason to doubt that, after the Conquest, the Hungarians – along with the Kabars who joined them and later united in one tribe – settled down in the new homeland separated in tribal groups. At the same time, we cannot determine which tribes occupied what territories. Although the tribal names enumerated by Emperor Constantine are present among the Hungarian toponyms of the Carpathian Basin (Békásmegyér, Budakeszi and Dunakeszi, Borosjenő – just to mention a few of the place names located around present-day Budapest), but the examination of the geographical distribution of these toponyms has not provided an answer as to where exactly the original settlement areas of the tribes were situated. Due to the complete lack of primary sources, a reconstruction may be attempted only with the help of a few indirect facts – a reconstruction that is plausible, at the most, but far from being certain.

Based on the examples of peoples similar to the conquering Hungarians, we have reason to believe that the tribe of *kende* Árpád occupied the safest, central territories of the Carpathian Basin. It is likely that around the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries as well as in the first half of the 11th century, some of the dignitaries showing armed resistance to St. Stephen (Gyula, Ajtony) were also chieftains of certain tribes, or their offspring, and the same can be supposed about Vata, who was active in the middle of the 11th century. Based on these hypotheses, the “Gyula tribe” would have been located in Transylvania, the “Ajtony tribe” in the region between the Maros River and the Lower Danube, while the “Vata tribe” would have settled along the Körös rivers. Our records indicate that Bulcsú, one of the most active leaders of the Hungarian raids was the head of another tribe. Since Bulcsú led campaigns both to the west and the south, the settlement area of his tribe had to be in a territory whose geographical location allowed for raids in both directions. Accordingly, the territory of Bulcsú's tribe must have included the southern part of present-day Transdanubia and the Drava–Sava interfluve. As for the remaining two tribes, they may have settled in western Transdanubia and in the north-western part of Upper Hungary. In comparison to these hypotheses, it is almost certain that the Kabar tribe(s) occupied the northern periphery of the Great Plain and the river valleys of the eastern part of Upper Hungary.

Apart from Árpád's tribe, we have some – rather fragmentary – information about the internal relations of the individual tribes only in three cases. We know that both Bulcsú and Gyula travelled



Chieftain Árpád in the
Chronicon Pictum

to Constantinople in the middle of the 10th century, where they got baptised, and continuing the ancient Roman tradition pursued by the Byzantines, both obtained the rank of *patrikios*. Ajtony, who lived more than half a century later, adopted Christianity according to the Greek Rite. Thus, quite clearly, a part of the Hungarian tribes was looking to Constantinople for continuation as the raids were drawing to an end – but not to the same extent. Gyula went the furthest: he was recorded to have taken a monk ordained as a bishop from Constantinople to Hungary to help the conversion of the people, and upon his return home, he released the Christian prisoners of war whom he had captured during his earlier military campaigns. With that, Gyula made significant steps with a view to linking his tribe to Byzantine Christianity. The baptism of Bulcsú and Ajtony was probably a less genuine act. As opposed to Gyula, Bulcsú continued his raids to the south and the west even after his trip to Constantinople, up until his defeat at Augsburg that proved fatal to him. As for Ajtony, although he founded a monastery for Greek monks, he did not abandon polygamy even after converting to Christianity.

However restricted our knowledge is about this period, it can be affirmed that all those phenomena that are usually considered as the preliminaries of the foundation of the state by St. Stephen – i.e. the adoption of Christianity, laying down the basis of the Hungarian church organisation, commencing diplomatic relations with the neighbouring German and Byzantine empires, the establishment of the estate system of the chieftains (which served as the basis later on for the royal estates), the imposition of customs duties that would become a royal privilege – were not only typical of Árpád's descendants and the territories under their rule. In light of this, we can rightly talk about tribal states if we want to describe the power relations in the Carpathian Basin in the second half of the 10th century. Thus, we should not see the Carpathian Basin as a single country, but rather as tribal states existing side by side. The state of the Árpádians was just one of many, and the fact that eventually, it was the Árpád dynasty that managed to unite the whole Carpathian Basin under their authority was more likely due to the political, and even more, military power relations at the time than to any other circumstance.

Árpád's Tribe

The disintegration of the institutions of the tribal federation after the death of Árpád (and Kurszán) did not bring about any changes in the leadership of the *kende's* tribe. Everything seems to indicate that Árpád bequeathed his power to his descendants – even if this power now extended only over the members of the “Árpád tribe”. Although we know of several of Árpád's offspring, we cannot trace back the order of succession in the position of the chieftain after the *kende's* death. Anonymus – writing at the beginning of the 13th century – drew up an order, according to which Árpád was followed by his son, Zoltán, succeeded by his son, Taksony, succeeded by his son, Géza in the line of chieftains – or as the Árpádians would claim, in the princely seat –, but the authenticity of this chronicle is entirely discredited by two circumstances. First of all, it is highly suspicious that the above-mentioned list corresponds too

precisely to the medieval Christian idea of power bequeathed from father to son. More importantly, neither the tradition noted down by Anonymus, nor other Hungarian sources reference Fajsz, who was, nevertheless, referred to by Emperor Constantine around 950 as the “current prince”.

In the 50-year period between Árpád and his grandson, Fajsz, we cannot name any chieftains from the Árpád dynasty with certainty. However, it is undoubted that sometime after the Battle of Augsburg in 955, Fajsz was succeeded by Taksony as the head of the “Árpád tribe”. It was most likely under his leadership that the process started where the tribe of the Árpádians would gradually acquire hegemony in the western half of the Carpathian Basin. The defeat suffered at Augsburg delivered a significant blow to the anonymous tribes of western Transdanubia and north-western Upper Hungary, which were the most interested in western-oriented raids, and at the same time must have happened to the “Bulcsú tribe”, which lost even its chieftain in the battle. According to one feasible hypothesis, Taksony did not hesitate to seize the opportunity and began extending the Árpáds’ rule. At the same time, he was very careful to avoid any substantial conflicts with the Duchy of Bavaria,

and obviously, the main reason for his search for eastern allies was the attack he expected from the west after Augsburg. We know that Taksony’s wife was “a Cuman” (i.e. most likely, Khazar), and there are also some signs indicating that fractions of various Eastern peoples (Muslim “Ishmaelites”, Pechenegs) settled in his territory during his rule. He must have been guided by a similar motive when he married his son, Géza to Sarolt, the daughter of the chieftain of the “Gyula tribe”.

Taksony’s policy was partly pursued and partly radically changed by his son, Géza, who succeeded his father as the head of the “Árpád tribe” in the early 970s. He was the one who finished the unification of the western territories of the Carpathian Basin under his rule. In terms of foreign policy, Géza surpassed his father, who had thought to find the guarantee for peace with the Germans in isolation from the West. At the beginning of his reign, Géza took some spectacular measures hoping to win the benevolence of the western empire, which had been revived in 962 as the Holy Roman Empire. He got baptised, and although he did not break with paganism entirely, the missionaries arriving from the West could count on Géza’s armed forces if necessary. As the main sign of settled formal diplomatic relations with the Germans, Hungarian envoys visited Emperor Otto’s court in Quedlinburg in 973. Even if Géza was eventually forced to wage a war against the duke of Bavaria, Henry (II) the Quarrelsome, it can still be declared that Géza managed to settle German–Hungarian relations, which had been hostile for decades, without having to give up his political independence. The following achievements of his “dynastic” policy are excellent proof of his successful foreign policy: he obtained the hand of Gisela, duchess of Bavaria, for his son Vajk (baptised as Stephen) while his daughters were married to the Polish prince and the Bulgarian heir to the throne. Two other daughters of his got married after Géza’s death. One of them was wed to the son of the Doge of Venice and the other to Samuel Aba, the



*Chieftain Géza in the
Chronicon Pictum*



*The Bamberg Horseman.
Equestrian statue of the
young King Stephen I*

chieftain of the Kabars. Although not all of these marriages proved to be long-lasting, they certainly demonstrate that the sovereigns of the neighbouring states were ready to accept the Árpád dynasty as an equal partner.

Historical memory did not treat Géza kindly. The figure of his son, Stephen (997–1038) unjustly eclipsed Géza's numerous accomplishments. In fact, it was during Géza's rule that the "tribal state" of the Árpáds broke with the tribal frameworks once and for all. When Géza died in 997, he left his son, Vajk a country that comprised the entire western part of the Carpathian Basin, a country that was linked to Latin Christianity with increasingly strong ties, and which cherished good relations with the Holy Roman Empire.

St. Stephen, the Founder of the Hungarian State

The story of the birth of the medieval Hungarian state is no different from that of any other barbarian state formation from the 5th century anywhere in Europe: among the rivalling chieftains of ethnically related tribes, the one making the most of his political and military opportunities gets his power acknowledged, and having united the tribes, he lays down the foundations of a state as we know it today. This was the agenda followed by the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons, and approximately simultaneously with the foundation of the Hungarian state, the same pattern was followed by the various Scandinavian peoples as well as the Bohemians and the Poles.

Géza appointed Vajk, his son as his successor, but his decision was opposed by one of his relatives, Koppány, the lord of the Somogy region. Koppány also laid claim to Géza's widow, and with her, to the chieftain's position, and he buttressed his claims with an armed attack.

Although Koppány's action is usually explained as a so-called state organisational struggle, these events were, in fact, motivated by another factor. The father of Koppány was Szerénd, whose epithet *tar* (meaning bald) must have been a reference to his paganism. It is a fact that Szerénd – as well as Koppány – were the descendants of Árpád, even if their exact level of kinship is unknown. Thus, in reality, Koppány's action was nothing other than an attempt at returning to the original, i.e. tribal, succession line, according to which, the position of chieftain was supposed to be fulfilled alternately by the offspring of the four sons of Árpád. However, this practice had already been abandoned when Taksony was followed by his son, Géza as the head of the tribe, and possibly, it was then that Szerénd the Bald was granted authority over Somogy as a recompense for being relegated to a secondary position. The fact that in the next generation, Géza also appointed his own son, Vajk as his successor made it clear for the other relatives in the Árpád dynasty that the branch of Taksony was trying to appropriate the dignity of chieftain for good. Koppány protested that, and his action was most of all a struggle for power within the "Árpád tribe," which was only indirectly related to the state organisation by St. Stephen.

Koppány's attempt was not successful: in 997 Vajk gained a decisive victory over Koppány's army in a battle near Veszprém. The German dignitaries had a key role in the military success, some of whom

had settled in the Árpáds' country during Géza's rule. One of our sources – not necessarily authentic to the last letter – describes the conflict as a war between “the Germans and the Hungarians” where “the Hungarians” stood for Koppány's army and “the Germans” referred to Vajk's troops. Although this kind of formulation must be highly exaggerated, it does indicate that Géza's German-friendly policy proved to be successful.

The Unification of the Carpathian Basin

Although Vajk's triumph over Koppány gave him power over the entirety of the state of the Árpáds, it did not actually change the power relations with respect to the whole of the Carpathian Basin. To the east of the Danube–Tisza interfluvium lay the tribal territories of the former *bétmagyar* alliance: the “Gyula tribe”, the “Vata tribe”, the “Ajtony tribe” and the descendants of the Kabars. Among the leaders of these “tribal states”, only one was – indirectly – concerned by the Vajk–Koppány conflict: the head of the “Gyula tribe” because Géza's widow, Sarolt was his daughter. Koppány's body was quartered after his death, and Vajk had three parts nailed upon the gates of fortresses located in his own territory (Esztergom, Győr, Veszprém), but he sent the fourth quarter to Transylvania, to his mother's relatives. We have reason to believe that the latter gesture was intended to have a double meaning: in this way, Vajk let the *gyula* know that he was able to defend the interests of Sarolt, but it was also an unequivocal hint at the fate of those who would turn against him.

Due to lack of sources, it is the later course of events that confirms the hypothesis that right after the defeat of Koppány, Vajk was already thinking about extending the country he had inherited.

As a first target, his choice fell on the territory of his mother's tribe. In 1003 Stephen, who by then had been crowned, led an army against Gyula: he defeated him and captured him along with his family as prisoners of war. To quote the words of the Hungarian chronicle: “he attached his extremely spacious and rich country to the monarchy of Hungary [i.e. to the state of the Árpáds]”. Next, Stephen used various means to rein in all the other “tribal states”. The Kabar chieftain, Samuel Aba and his people surrendered to him voluntarily. In exchange, he could marry Stephen's younger sister and became the number one dignitary of the king. Nothing indicates that Stephen would have prepared a military action against the “Vata tribe”, so it is quite probable that the Stephen's unification efforts did not encounter any overt resistance here either. On the other hand, he needed a major military campaign to break the independent rule of Ajtony. The date of this event is debated: 1003–1004, 1008 or 1014–1015 have been proposed just as much as a date around 1028, which is the most probable. Another campaign of Stephen's was also recorded by the Hungarian chronicle, reporting that the king had defeated Kean, the voivode of the Slavs and the Bulgarians. Whether we identify Kean with the tsar of Bulgaria, outside of the Carpathian Basin – with whom Stephen did clash according to other sources –, or we assume that he was the head of a hypothetical southern Transylvanian Bulgarian–Slav state formation – which idea is equally supported by certain arguments and considerations –, one thing is certain: Stephen united the entire territory of the Carpathian Basin under his rule.



*The defeat of Koppány,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*



King Stephen I in an initial S, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum

internationally recognized Christian sovereign – which he did. The principal proof of this conscious aim is that he had himself crowned king even before the termination of the “tribal states” of the Carpathian Basin, which was a crucial symbolic act necessary to achieve his goals. The narrative written down by Bishop Hartvic at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries about how Stephen obtained his crown, became received wisdom in Hungarian historical thinking. According to this, Stephen would have sent a delegation to Rome to ask the pope to affirm the recently founded Hungarian bishoprics and request a crown for himself. The pope – upon divine inspiration – did send him a crown: the one which was originally prepared for the Polish prince who had approached him with a similar request. The pope declared: “I am apostolic, but he [Stephen] is rightly the apostle of Christ”. This story – as the well-known interpretation goes – would prove that Stephen fended off the claims of the Holy Roman Empire to make Hungary its vassal by requesting a crown from the pope directly, as the papacy was an authority independent from all secular powers. As agreeable as this tradition of the origin of Stephen’s crown may be, and as logical as the interpretation may seem, neither of them have stood the test of historical critique. For it is undoubtable that for Hartvic, who wrote the biography of St. Stephen on the order of King Coloman, the Booklover, the key motive in this episode was not the origin of the papal crown, but the statement associated with the pope. When Hartvic wrote this piece, the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire had been fighting against each other for decades. Thus, Hartvic’s primary goal was to justify the papal origin of the ecclesiastic privileges of the Hungarian kings against the papacy of his age, that was striving for unlimited supremacy both in church and secular matters. The underlying purpose of the words attributed to the pope was that the bishop of Rome was only apostolic, but Stephen was a genuine apostle. For Hartvic, the crown sent by the pope himself was only the backdrop for the formulation of this thesis.

A little more than one century after the disintegration of the tribal federation, the descendants of the conquering Magyars were once again directed by a single political force. Yet the position that sees the state-organising work of Stephen as the resurrection of the strength of a “central power” (lost after Árpád’s death) that was continuously present from the system of the dual kingship to the birth of the Christian kingdom does not hold water. Gyula and Ajtony were not rebels fighting against Stephen’s reign, but the leaders of states – states that were less developed than that of the Árpáds, perhaps less able to progress, but with incontestably similar roots to, but independent from the latter, and they acted accordingly. As for the other side of the coin, Stephen was not the heir and reviver of the “central power” extending over the entire Carpathian Basin, but the creator thereof.

Similarly to the state-founders of other nationalities, the reason why Stephen could rise above the barbarian leaders was that, among others, he did not simply wish to be the most powerful chieftain, but wanted to become an

How different the relationship was between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire in the age of Hartvic and in the age of Stephen can be easily judged by the fact that Pope Sylvester II (ca. 999–1003), who supposedly sent the crown to Stephen, was staying in Rome at the presumed time of the sending of the crown, in the company of Emperor Otto III (986–1002), in perfect understanding. In fact, this is not surprising as earlier, Gerbert d’Aurillac – the future Sylvester II – had been Otto III’s tutor, and it was Otto who had elevated him to the position of pope. Thus, it is quite unlikely that Sylvester would have sent a crown to Stephen against Otto’s will, let alone by circumventing him. In view of the circumstances, it is undeniable that the emperor must have played a major role in the fact that Stephen received a crown. This statement is also confirmed by the fact that according to Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg, who was a contemporary of Stephen’s, “Vajk, the brother-in-law of Henry, duke of Bavaria, who is founding bishopric seats in his country, received the crown and consecration with the favour and urging of the emperor” [Otto III].

There is only one common element in the contradictory reports of Hartvic and Thietmar: both mention the church-organising activity of Stephen. This circumstance is especially significant because according to the European state theory of Stephen’s age, the principal indicator of the sovereignty of a monarch was that he had independent authority over the matters of the Church of his country. As opposed to the contemporaneous Danish, Bohemian and Polish monarchs, who were in fact the vassals of the Holy Roman Emperor, and in whose countries the local Churches were subordinate to the German church organisation, Stephen fully satisfied this requirement – regardless of the way he had acquired his royal crown.

Independence in church policy had an especially important role in the assessment of royal sovereignty, as the people of the age regarded the king primarily as an ecclesiastic dignitary rather than a secular one. Kings were crowned in a church ceremony, and the coronation was considered to be a sacrament. The ordained king became the defender and head of the Church of his country and obtained pontifical privileges. The coronation of Stephen took place on the first day of the new millennium (on 25 December 1000 or 1 January 1001, depending on the interpretation). Having gained international recognition with the coronation, Stephen could set out to establish the political unity of the Carpathian Basin as a member of the community of Christian monarchs.

The newly created Christian kingdom had to overcome two grave crises already in the life of Stephen, its founder. One of them was related to foreign policy. In 1024, Emperor Henry II, Stephen’s brother-in-law, passed away, and Hungarian–German relations, which had been amicable up until then, deteriorated shortly after his death. The new German emperor, Conrad II, launched a series of aggressive political and military attacks on the peoples neighbouring the core territories of his empire, and Hungary was no exception to that. The troops of the German empire raided the country in 1030. Stephen’s armies evaded any decisive battles; their plan was to cut the supply lines of the Germans

The figure of King Stephen I on the Hungarian coronation mantle



instead. The chosen tactic proved efficient: the starving imperial troops were forced to retreat, and in the peace concluded in the next year, Conrad had no choice but to acknowledge the absolute sovereignty of Hungary.

A burden of different nature, but equally heavy, that bothered the aging Stephen was that Prince Emeric, his only son who lived to be an adult, lost his life in a hunting accident in 1031. What was a personal tragedy for the father raised a political issue for the monarch: the death of Emeric, who had received excellent education and had been thoroughly prepared for ruling, all of a sudden jeopardised the continuation of the state-organising work of Stephen. Distrustful of his fraternal relatives, Vazul and László Szár, Stephen eventually nominated Peter Orseolo, the son of his sister and the former Venetian doge, as his successor. His decision was not well-received – as indicated by an unsuccessful attempt upon Stephen's life and Vazul being blinded, to which this is probably linked. Stephen must have also been tormented by doubts whether he had made the right choice, so he made Peter swear that he would abide by the provisions of his predecessor.

Stephen, who passed away on 15 August 1038, was revered as a saint by his Church and as the source of the law by his people. He person justly became the measure of statesmen's eminence: his acts affected the destiny of his country and his people for centuries.

The New Social Order

Although the unification of the territory of the Carpathian Basin and the ownership of the Christian insignia of the imperial power were crucial prerequisites of state organisation, neither of them can be identified with the foundation of the state itself. For the latter consists essentially of the extensive organisational efforts which resulted in the institutions that defined the order for the entire Hungarian society at the beginning of the 11th century, putting in place the frameworks of everyday life.

Following his coronation, Stephen made substantial efforts to introduce all those customs in his country and court according to which the Christian rulers of his age governed. Independent coin minting began in Hungary; the king issued charters and formulated laws. In all three practices, the imitation or influence of the German models was quite clear, but the examples were not simply copied.

There are ten charters under Stephen's name whose text survived. Six of those are fake documents made centuries later, which do not enhance our understanding regarding the age of Stephen. Out of the remaining four, one was written in Greek, and it has not been preserved in its original form but in a transcription dating from a hundred years later. The other three charters are close to the original copies, but they still underwent some modifications over the centuries. The conditions of the age of Stephen are best reflected by the Deed of Foundation of the Abbey of Pannonhalma. Based on the charters, it can be concluded that Stephen looked to the German imperial charters for models, but the advanced literacy that he wished to spread in his country was too alien for the Hungarian circumstances at the time, and it was only much later that literacy developed, rooted in Hungarian traditions.

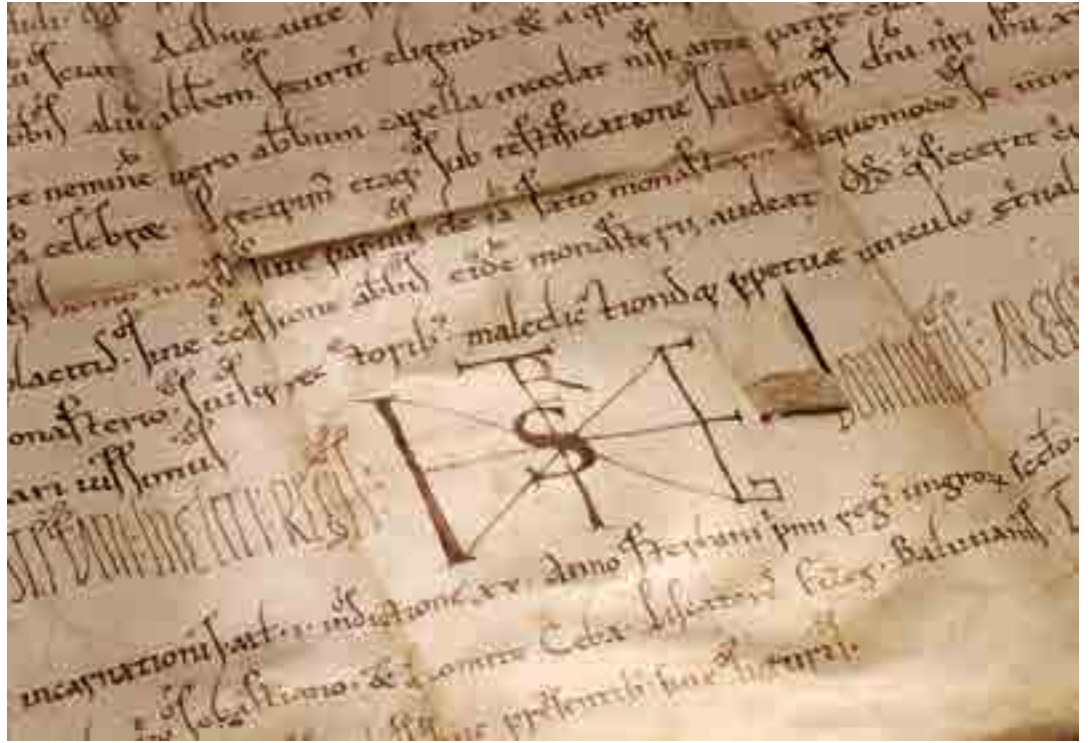
The laws of Stephen, however, are a different matter. Although there are some textual similarities between these documents and various Western – ecclesiastical and secular – legislation serving as models, his laws were made for Hungarian society, tailored to the unique Hungarian context. These laws, which are available only in subsequent copies, were preserved arranged in two "law books". The individual articles regulate extremely diverse domains of everyday life. Nevertheless, the First Law Book is predominantly composed of penal regulations while the Second Law Book completes them in many respects. The dating of the two books is uncertain: the first one is usually dated to the times after his coronation, while the second is thought to have been created towards the end of this reign. However, it is more likely that the individual articles originate from various periods of Stephen's long reign, and were arranged in their current order only subsequently.

The significance of Stephen's laws points beyond their content: thanks to them, we can get a picture of Hungarian society as it was in the first third of the 11th century. The population of the country was divided into clearly definable groups, and this stratification of the society must have had certain preliminaries. Most of all, from a legal aspect, society was divided into two groups: servants and freemen. Servants were owned by their lords, but their situation was not entirely similar to that of the slaves of Antiquity, as servants were also considered as human beings. Freemen – as opposed to servants – could dispose of their own will. The fundamental difference between freemen and servants is clearly reflected by the punishment for murder: when a freeman was killed, wergild had to be paid, when a servant was slain, compensation was awarded to the owner. At the same time, the line between freemen and servants was not impassable: if a servant was solemnly freed by his lord, he could acquire the legal status of a freeborn man.

Again, it is the measure regarding manslaughter that shows most eloquently that legal differences were more important than economic situation regarding the stratification of society. For the amount of wergild was the same in the case of a poor freeman and a wealthy, highborn dignitary. At the same time, the financial penalties imposed upon the perpetrators of other crimes and misdemeanours indicate a triple stratification of the society of the freemen. At the top of the hierarchy in terms of wealth stood the dignitaries, called *ispáns* or lords. This group included the traditional circle of tribal leaders who supported Stephen – and thus preserved their wealth and authority – as well as foreigners who had immigrated from abroad and were granted estates and positions in exchange for their services done for Stephen. The middle layer was composed of *vitézs* (*miles* or *soldiers*) who were probably connected through their warrior lifestyle. In any case, it included persons with independent possessions just as much as soldiers undertaking military service for others. The members of the freemen living in the most modest circumstances were said to have “originated from the people” or were referred to as “commons”. Many of them probably had a hard time making ends meet, but thanks to their personal freedom, they were still considered full-right members of the society of freemen.

Guests (*hospes*) should equally be mentioned. In the beginning, this term was used to designate all settlers arriving from abroad, while later it referred to those free peasant settlers who undertook the cultivation of someone else's land with certain terms and conditions. Their number was eventually boosted by those Hungarians who became penniless but preserved their personal freedom.

As a result of the fights surrounding the foundation of the state, the assets of Stephen's enemies and their supporters were seized by the victorious king. Obviously, the Árpáds had already stood out in terms of wealth in their own territory, but in the new situation, the assets of the king regarding lands, beasts and people grew to inconceivable dimensions. For more than two centuries, it was this wealth that constituted the most solid foundations of the royal power. The gigantic lands and the people



The signature of King Stephen I on the Deed of Foundation of the Pannonhalma Abbey



King Stephen I's
denarius

living in them were governed by two royal estate systems, which were then broken down into several independent units. One of these was the manor system as the lands, and peoples belonging to it were related to a royal manor (*curia, curtis*). The network of manors stretched across the whole country. The manor system had an economic importance in the first place: it was in charge of the supplies for the king and his retinue travelling all over the country, and in the absence of the monarch, it had to accumulate reserves

earmarked for various purposes. The people belonging to the manor system were called stewards, and with time, certain groups of them were distinguished according to their duties.

Another group of the royal estates and people were subordinated partly to the newly built fortresses in the country, and partly to the castles that had existed earlier and were taken by the king. The purpose of the royal castle system thus created was the military occupation of the country: it provided rapid reaction forces against both external assaults and rebellions threatening the internal order. The people living in the lands belonging to the fortresses were referred to as castle folk. The various groups of the latter were obliged to perform jobs necessary for the maintenance of the castle system. In the case of these fortresses, generating revenue for the ruler was only of secondary importance.

A common feature of the two royal estate systems was that the people belonging to them – the stewards and the castle folk – were equally servants subordinated to the king's authority, who was their owner. They were divided into units of tens and hundreds in order to organise their everyday tasks. It is possible that the system of tens and hundreds – which also played a role in jurisdiction and tax collection – was already set up in the Stephen's time, but it was certainly in place in the last quarter of the 11th century. The *tíz*nagys and *száz*nagys, heading the units of tens (*tíz*) and hundreds (*száz*), were the direct superiors of the stewards and the castle folk. In addition to their managerial duties, they also owed military service. The members of this higher-ranking group were mostly penniless combatants who undertook service at the royal estate voluntarily, but it is also possible that some fortunate servants managed to rise to their rank. (One of Stephen's laws seems to indicate that the king could place a servant at the head of a castle or a manor.) The governing dignitaries of both manors and castles were called *ispáns* (*comes*), but while the latter usually belonged to the most prestigious noblemen, the *ispán* of the stewards mostly came from a humbler background.

Although the two estate systems were similar in several aspects, one of the characteristics of the royal castle system distinguished it clearly from the manor system: the royal castle system was closely connected to the counties that were the basic institutions of the territorial administration of the country.

We can read about counties as early as in the sources of the age of Stephen. Even though there are some historians who derive the existence of counties from the times before St. Stephen's state-organising efforts, it can be stated with certainty that the institution itself, as well as the administration system of the country based on the counties, was the achievement of Stephen. From the beginning, a county was a territorial unit with adjacent lands, marked off from its environment by precise boundaries. A county incorporated the lands of the various (royal, ecclesiastic, private seigniorial) estates located in its territory, just as much as the folk living on them. One of the estate types, the royal castle lands, had a special relationship with the counties: the organisational order of a royal castle, the individual local

units of the royal castle district system, was adjusted to the counties. The connections between these two institutions are quite conspicuous both on the level of territories and people. The territory of a county covered the region where the dispersed estates of the local castle district were located at varying distances from each other. At the same time, the county *ispán* heading the county was the same person as the *ispán* directing the castle district. Accordingly, the county *ispán* had a double duty. As county *ispán*, he had various administrative, tax collection and military authorities over nearly all the inhabitants of his county, and as castle *ispán*, he exercised the same rights over the folk of the castle entrusted to him, completed with the right of jurisdiction as judge.

In addition to this general type of duality regarding counties and castle districts, two other versions are also reported by our 11th-century sources, and it can be assumed that both of them were formed during Stephen's reign. The so-called frontier counties differed from the general type in that the castle folk of the castle district belonging to the county also included archers (shooters) and guards, who were ordered to defend the borders and had to do special service. A more significant difference can be detected in the case when certain castle districts were not related to the counties, i.e. both their castles and their lands lay in different counties (which had their own castle district). Their formation can be put down mostly to the efforts of Stephen and his successors to increase the military presence of the royal power in certain parts of the country.

In the early period, the personal decisions of the king played a cardinal role in the central administration of the kingdom. At the same time, a royal council formed around the ruler, which was composed of prelates and county *ispáns*, whose members contributed to the governance of the country with their opinions. Out of the members of the council (or to use the text of the laws, the *senatus*), the archbishop of Esztergom and the palatine *ispán* had the strongest influence. The palatine owed his special political weight to the fact that he was also the head of the royal court, and as such, the national chief justice of the folks of the royal manorial system, while he also often substituted for the king in jurisdictional matters. This is what led to the fact that in the next century, the position of the palatine left the administration of the royal court, and became a national chief justice with jurisdiction over everyone.

Besides the jurisdiction carried out at the royal court, a royal system of jurisdiction was also set up in the countryside. According to our sources dating from a later period, but applicable to Stephen's age as well, there were two royal justices operating in every county with their own field of judicial authority, independent of the county *ispán*.



*Árpadian-age capital
from the chapel
of the royal palace
in Esztergom depicting
the fight between good
and evil*

THE PREHISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE

János Pusztay

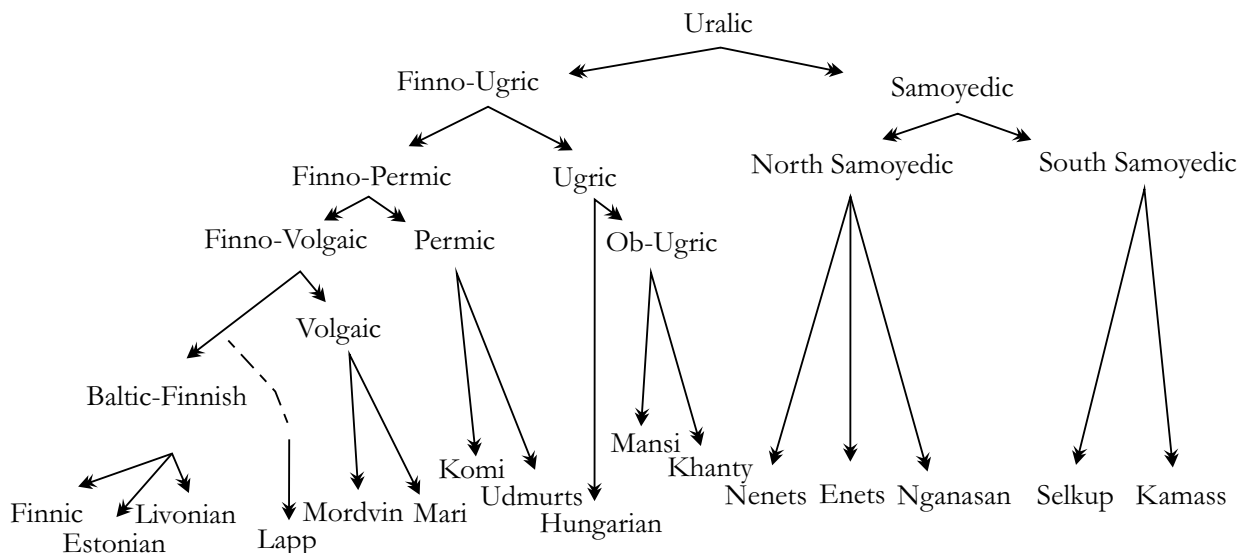
The question of how a language began is a natural question to raise, and is no different for Hungarian. Here, I will restrict myself to the examination of the genealogy of the Hungarian language and not of the people. The origins of a people and the roots of their language are usually not the same. It is important to stress this, as those who reject the theory of the Finno-Ugric relationship most often blend the kinship of these two, i.e. that of the people and the language – which incontestably does not exist – with the linguistic relation between them, and discard the idea as a whole.

What Do We Know Today about the Origin of the Hungarian Language?

According to the traditional view, the Hungarian language belongs to the Ugric group – along with Mansi (Vogul) and Khanty (Ostyak) – within the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. The languages of the Uralic language family can be traced back to a common ancestor, called Proto-Uralic language. The community that used this language dissolved approximately 6,000 years ago, after having lived together for about one to two thousand years. With that began the disintegration of Proto-Uralic over the millennia into various branches, then individual languages, and finally, as a result, we saw the emergence of present-day Uralic languages. Due to a lack of written records, the Proto-Uralic language is not accessible for us as a specific object of investigation. Historical-comparative linguistics is a branch of linguistics which deals with the reconstruction of presumptive proto-languages conceived as the starting points of the individual language families. Although there have been different attempts at capturing the genesis of language families, traditionally, and under the influence of Darwinian evolutionism, this process is presented by a family tree.

Proto-Uralic is traditionally reconstructed as a language with a complete grammar system (i.e. inventory of sounds, morphological categories such as numerous elements of declination and conjugation: case markers, number markers, genitive and comparison on the one hand, and personal suffixes, conjugation types and markers of tense and mode on the other) and a relatively extended vocabulary. Understandably,

Figure 1:
The Uralic language family according to the traditional view



the reconstruction is more restrained with respect to syntax, but this rich morphology clearly implies that the ancient community of Proto-Uralic speakers expressed their thoughts in sentences. (The level of development of the human mind six to eight thousand years ago also allows this assumption.) The Hungarian language also inherited the above categories and most of their components.

According to our present knowledge, Hungarian grammar has preserved the following elements from the Proto-Uralic/Finno-Ugric age:

Case markers: *-t* accusative (*házat*, ‘house’), (fused into the stem) *-k/-j* lative (i.e. answering the question *hová?* ‘where to?’) case marker (*ide* ‘hither’, *oda* ‘there’, *mellé* ‘next to’, etc.), *-n/-on/-en/-ön* locative (i.e. case marker answering the question *hol?* ‘where?’) (*házon* ‘on the house’, *kézen* ‘on the hand’, *kinn* ‘outside’, *-ban/-ben* ‘in’, etc.), *-t* locative case marker occurring only in adverbs and certain settlement names (*itt* ‘here’, *ott* ‘there’, *Pécsett* ‘in Pécs’, etc.); and the *-l* ablative case marker that can be traced back only to the Ugric age (i.e. answering the question *honnan?* ‘where from?’) (*mögül* ‘from behind’, *felől* ‘from the direction of?’; *-tól/-től*, *ból/-ból* ‘from’). The above listed case markers can be equally found in all Paleo-Siberian languages.

Number markers: *-k* plural marker (*házak* ‘houses’), *-i* plural possessive marker (*háza-i* ‘sy’s houses’). In Mansi and Khanty and contemporary Samoyedic languages as well as in certain Lapp dialects, a dual marker is known to be in use, i.e. in addition to singular and plural noun forms, the dual number is also distinguished, for example in Nenets *t̚* ‘reindeer’ – *te-xe?* ‘two reindeer’ – *t̚-ʔ* ‘several reindeer’ (*-x-* stands for the *h* sound, and *-ʔ* stands for the plosive, *-y* stands for velar *-i*). The dual marker **-ka/-kä* has been reconstructed for Proto-Uralic, which in my opinion is based on a pre-conception, as in light of the limited presence of the dual, the family tree does not justify such an assumption. The traces of the dual can be detected in Hungarian, too (*két* ‘two’ < **käktä* – *kettő* ‘two’ < **käktä-kä*, as well as in some old Hungarian words now obsolete such as *monnó* ‘both’).

Possessive declination and conjugation: the suffixes of declination and conjugation logically coincide in those languages that have only one type of conjugation because in these cases, the personal suffixes have usually developed from personal pronouns. For Proto-Uralic, the following personal pronoun stems have been reconstructed: **mV-* for the 1st person -, **tV-* for the 2nd person and **sV-* for the 3rd person (where *V* = vocal, i.e. a vowel that cannot be precisely determined). It is from these stems that the dual and plural forms of personal pronouns are also reconstructed with the use of the relevant reconstructed dual and plural suffix. The possessive and personal suffixes of Hungarian that derive from a personal pronoun are the following:

Sg1	<i>*mV</i> >	<i>-m</i>	(<i>házam</i> ‘my house’, <i>olvasom</i> ‘I read’)	Pl1	<i>*mVke</i> >	<i>-unk/-ünk</i>	(<i>házunk</i> ‘our house’, <i>olvasunk</i> ‘we read’)
Sg2	<i>*tV</i> >	<i>-d</i>	(<i>házad</i> ‘your house’, <i>olvasod</i> ‘you read’)	Pl2	<i>*tVke</i> >	<i>-tok/-tek/-tök</i>	(<i>házatok</i> ‘your house’, <i>olvasatok</i> ‘you read’)
Sg3	<i>*sV</i> >	<i>-V</i>	<i>háza</i> ‘his/her house’, <i>olvassa</i> ‘he/she reads’)	Pl3	<i>*sVke</i> >	<i>-Vke</i>	(<i>házuk</i> ‘their house’, <i>olvassák</i> ‘they read’).

For the interpretation of the Pl1 and Sg3, Pl3 forms: the Pl1 **mVke* form still occurs in “Funeral Oration” (*Halotti beszéd* from the year 1192–1195): *vogmuc* (pronunciation: *vod’muk* or *vodzmuk*) ‘vagyunk’ ‘we are’, *isemucut* (pronunciation: *isbemüküt*) ‘ősünket’ ‘our ancestor’; the *s* sound of the Sg3, Pl3 **sV(ke)* has disappeared from Hungarian (see: the Finnish *sulaa-* ~ in Hungarian: *olva/-d/* ‘melt’, the Finnish *ylä* ~ in Hungarian: *öl* ‘lap’, etc. Those verbal suffixes that do not derive from personal pronouns most

likely originate from participles. Participles serve as important category shapers in many languages: they can be used for marking verbal tenses and modes, but they can also operate as the basis of an entire verb paradigm (like in Lapp and partly like in Finnish and Hungarian). Such verbal suffixes in Hungarian are, for example: *-k* (Sg1): *látok* ‘I see’, *-l/-sz* (Sg2): *nézel/látsz* ‘you look/you see’, *-n* (Sg3): *megyen* ‘he/she goes’, *-(ju)k/(jü)k* (Pl1): *várjuk* ‘we wait’, *-nak/-nek* (Pl3): *mennek* ‘they go’ (< the plural form of *megyen* created through assimilation).

Tenses: two past tense markers have been reconstructed in Proto-Uralic: **-s* (not pursued in Hungarian) and **-i/-j*, which have been preserved in forms merged with the original stem- ending vowel such as *mond-á* ‘he/she said’, *kérd-é* ‘he/she asked’, etc.

Modes: **-k* reconstructed as the marker of the imperative has lived on as *-j* in Hungarian (*men-j* ‘go’), while **-nA*, the marker of the conditional has continued as *-na/-ne/-ná/-né* (*ír-na* ‘he/she would write’, *men-ne* ‘he/she would go’, etc.).

Vocabulary: The Hungarian language has about 700 words of Finno-Ugric origin, and they make up approximately 10–15% of our root words. Out of the 100 most frequently used Hungarian words, 87 are of Finno-Ugric origin or derive from a root word of Finno-Ugric origin. The etymological analysis of the thousand-word list compiled on the basis of the Hungarian National Corpus containing 187.6 million words reveals that the ratio of ancient words (i.e. of Uralic, Finno-Ugric or Ugric origin) is 61% (or 67% including the uncertain cases). Their proportion is 66% (or 73%) in the case of derived words and 73% (77%) among compounds. A bigger proportion of the ancient words are used for the formation of new vocabulary rather than loan words, for instance. 84% of the top one hundred words of the thousand-word list have an ancient origin whereas this ratio varies around 60% in the other hundreds.

Some examples of the Finno-Ugric elements of the Hungarian vocabulary:

- kinship terminology: *ős* ‘father’ (see: HB *ise-muc*), *eme* ‘female’ (see also *em-ik* ‘suck’ – *em-lő* ‘breast’, *csecs-emő* ‘baby’ and *emse* ‘sow’ > *Emese*), *meny* ‘daughter-in-law’, *vő* ‘son-in-law’, *fiú* ‘son’
- social organisation: *had* ‘group, community/unit’ (cf. *hanti* ‘Khanty’)
- system of beliefs: *léle(k)* ‘spirit’, *hagy-* (see *hagymáz* ‘delirium’)
- hunting: *ideg* ‘bowstring’, *nyíl* ‘arrow’, *lő* ‘shoot’, *nyúl* ‘rabbit’, *ravasz* ‘fox’, *daru* ‘crane’, *fajd* ‘grouse’
- fishing, aquatic life: *háló* ‘net’, *tat* ‘stern’, *hab* ‘foam’; R. *jó* ‘river’ (see *Berettyó* < *berek+jó*, *Sajó* < *sav+jó*), *tó* ‘lake’; *hal* ‘fish’, *ta^l* (fish species)
- gathering lifestyle: *mony* ‘egg’, *méz* ‘honey’, *méh* ‘bee’, *bogyó* ‘berry’
- accommodation, clothing: *ház* ‘house’, *ágy* ‘bed’, *öv* ‘belt’, (ruha)*ujj* ‘sleeve’, *fon* ‘weave’, *köt* ‘knit’, *varr* ‘sow’, *mos* ‘wash’
- household utensils: *ár* ‘awl’, *fúró* ‘drill’, *kés* ‘knife’, *nyél* ‘handle’
- materials: *bőr* ‘leather’, *kő* ‘stone’, *vas* ‘stone’, *arany* ‘gold’, *ón* ‘tin’
- nutrition: *fő* ‘cook’, *főz* ‘cook’, *e*-(szik) ‘eat’, *i*-(szik) ‘drink’, *faz(ék)* ‘pot’, *lé* ‘juice’, *vaj* ‘butter’
- natural phenomena: *bó* ‘moon’ (see *bó-nap* ‘month’), *menny* ‘heaven’, *ég* ‘sky’, *felhő* ‘cloud’, *bó* ‘snow’, *jég* ‘ice’
- time: *év* ‘year’, *tél* ‘winter’, *tavas* ‘spring’, *ősz* ‘autumn’, *éj* ‘night’
- environment, flora: *láp* ‘mire’, *víz* ‘water’, *fa* ‘wood’, *fagyal* ‘privet’, *fenyő* ‘pine’, *szil* ‘elm’
- body parts: *fő*, *fej* ‘head’; *szem* ‘eye’, *száj* ‘mouth’, *kéz* ‘hand’, *szív* ‘heart’, *máj* ‘liver’, *mell* ‘breast’
- counting: *olvas* ‘read’ (< R. *lovas* – cf. Finnish *luku* ‘number’, *luke-* ‘read, count’), *két* ‘two’, *kettő* ‘two’, *három* ‘three’, *négy* ‘four’, *öt* ‘five’, *hat* ‘six’, *húsz* ‘twenty’, *száz* ‘hundred’
- basic life phenomena, actions, sensations: *le(sz)* ‘will be’, *te(sz)* ‘put’, *val-/vol-*, *ad* ‘give’, *men*-(ni) ‘go’, *él* ‘live’, *fél* ‘be afraid’

What Do We Know About the Origins of the Hungarian Language?

It is evident that the so-called Proto-Uralic language was also preceded by some sort of a linguistic state, and that each Uralic (Finno-Ugric) language contains elements that date back to the era prior to the Proto-Uralic period. Therefore, it is especially strange that the Finno-Ugric (Uralic) historical-comparative linguistics should treat this question as some kind of taboo, i.e. where exactly the grammatical categories reconstructed for Proto-Uralic originate from. I do not suppose that the scholars of traditional Finno-Ugric (Uralic) historical-comparative linguistics would view Proto-Uralic as a sort of *lingua ex machina*. Although there have been certain studies that analysed the putative relations prior to the age of Proto-Uralic, they were either haphazard or focused only on a particular segment.

The blocs making up the so-called Proto-Uralic:

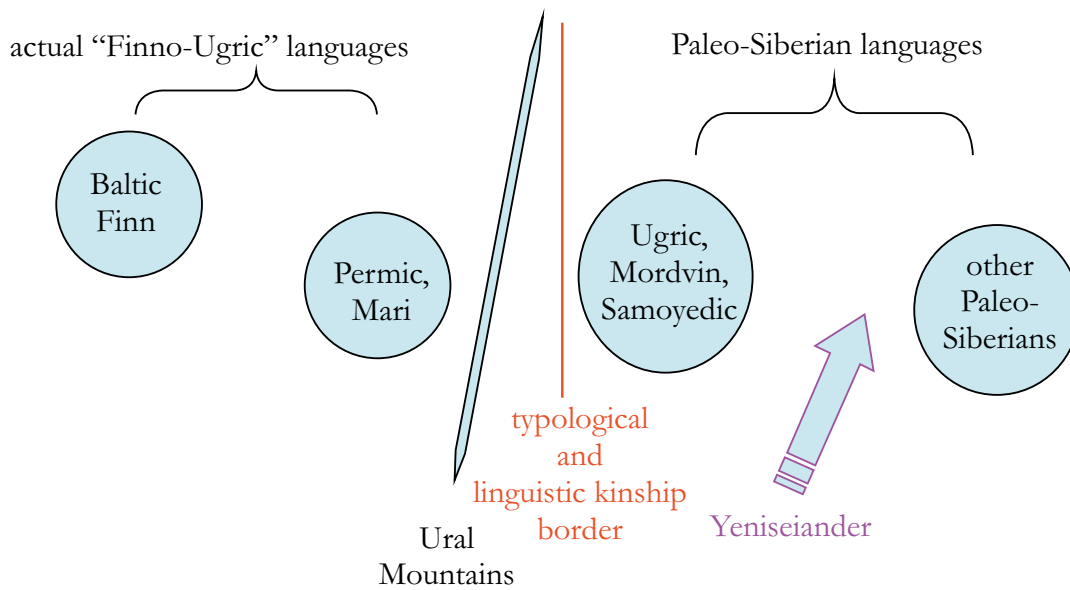
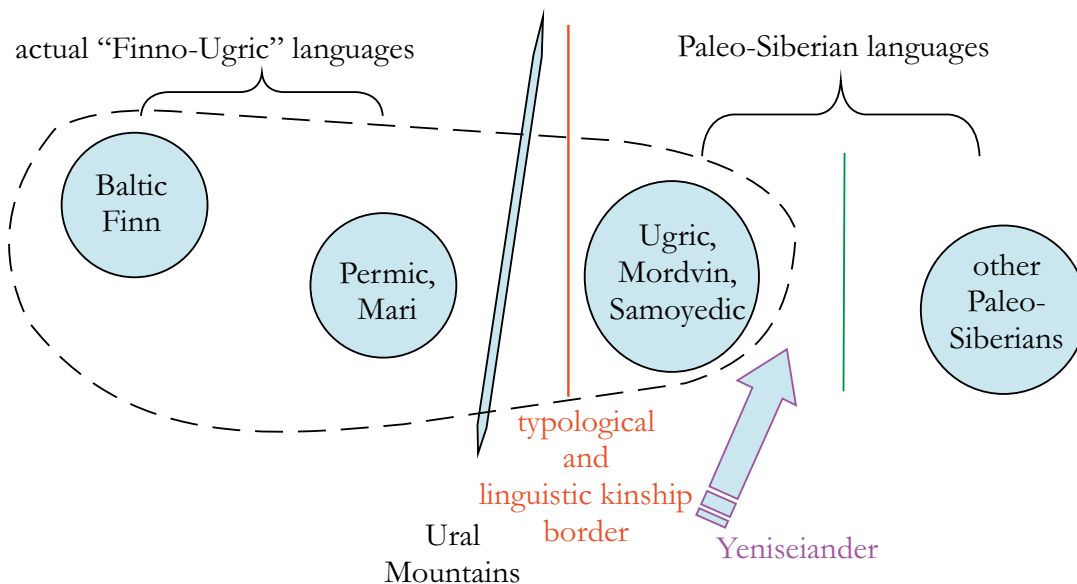


Figure 2:
The evolution
of Proto-Uralic

The blocs making up the so-called Proto-Uralic:

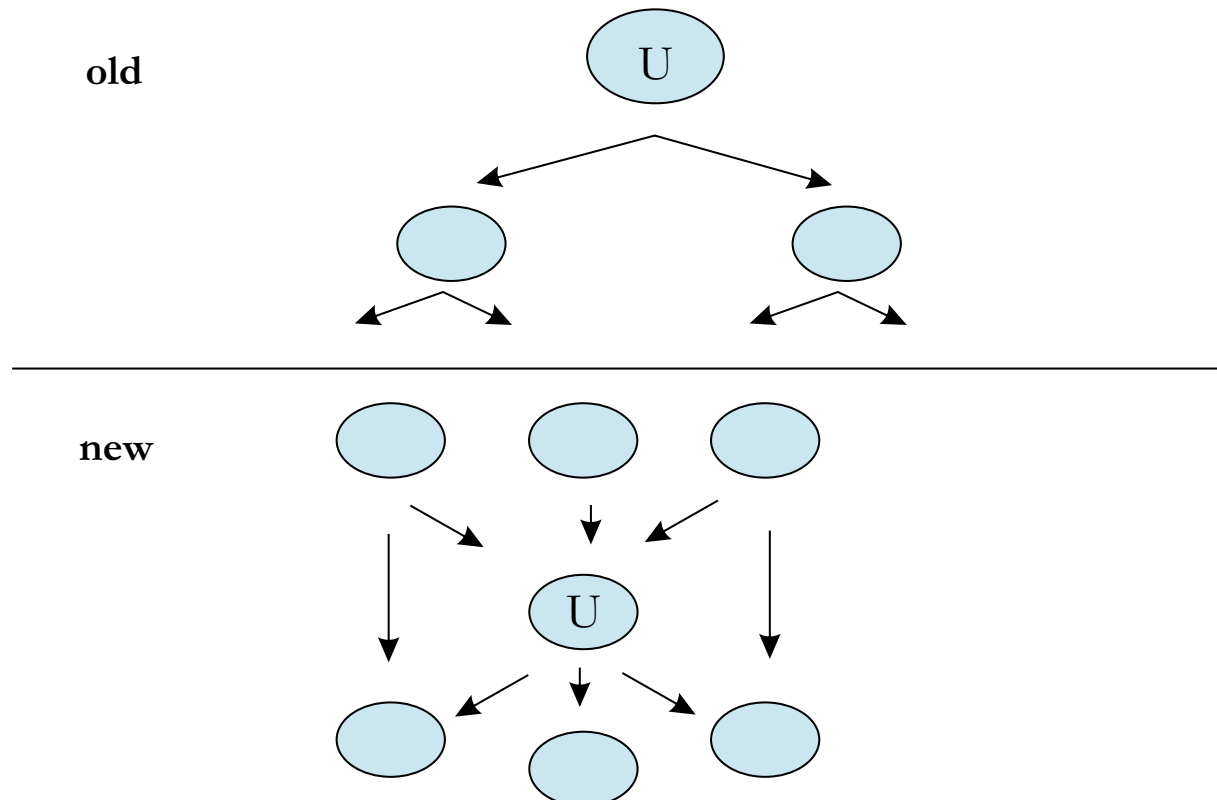


In the following paragraphs, I will present the key stages of the evolution and development of the Uralic language family, highlighting the Hungarian language from a perspective that is different from the traditional view: with the help of morphological analysis, which is the most reliable way to demonstrate linguistic evolution.

A recurring objection to the analysis of the Pre-Uralic age is the lack of methodology. True enough, there is no procedure similar to the sound correspondence used in historical-comparative linguistics, and it would not even be feasible. This undoubtedly complicated matter of investigation can be treated only through an interdisciplinary approach, as it was attempted by the programme titled *Roots of the Northern Eurasian Peoples and Languages* – frowned upon by traditional Finno-Ugric linguistics – at the turn of the 1990s–2000s. This programme involved anthropologists, archaeologists and geneticists in addition to linguists. The research pointed out the appearance of the anatomically modern man in the North Eurasian region in time, and mapped out the genetically and archaeologically justifiable interethnic relations that had existed continuously for several tens of thousands of years. If we can isolate certain, well-defined focal points in time through diverse scientific disciplines about the same age and territory – points that might differ from present-day ones –, we can draw conclusions concerning the process of the evolution of language families. Besides historical comparative linguistics, it is the methodologies and results of language typology and areal linguistics that offer the most help for the above line of research. As the Uralic proto-homeland is placed by all researchers (with some minor divergences) in one of the regions of the North Eurasian Linguistic Belt (NELB), it is advisable to include the so-called Paleo-Siberian languages in the scope of the examination, as languages of a similar kind go through a similar development curve, thus with their help, we can shed light on the potentially missing chapters of the evolution of certain languages and language families.

Based on the unbiased morphological examination of Uralic and Paleo-Siberian languages, the NELB can be broken down into two blocs with a diverging linguistic viewpoint, a European one and a Siberian one, with a transition zone incorporating certain features of both at their intersection. From a Finno-Ugric aspect, the European bloc can be divided into two parts while the Siberian can be divided

Figure 3:
The difference between the
old view and the new one



into several Paleo-Siberian ones. The five branches of the so-called Paleo-Siberian language group (language family) are the following: the now isolate Yukaghir, Yeniseian (Ket) also a sole survivor of its family, the Chukchi-Kamchatkan with five languages (Chukchi, Koryak, Alyutor, Kerek, Itelmen), the Eskimo-Aleut with two languages (Eskimo, Aleut) and the Gilyak, also an isolate language.

The westernmost Paleo-Siberian group (including the precedents of present-day Ugric, Mordvin and Samoyedic languages) can be regarded as a transition between the two big blocs.

The Lapps have been left out from the list because their origin has not been unequivocally identified to date. According to my linguistics-based hypothesis, the Lapps originate – at least partially – from Siberia, which is indicated by the dual, the participial character of their verbs as well as the countless Samoyedic-Lapp, Ugric-Lapp and Samoyedic-Ugric-Lapp correspondences within the reconstructed vocabulary of Proto-Uralic. Taking into consideration the various etymologies, I consider the Lapps as one of the ancient nomadic peoples of the Arctic territory that may have come into contact with the predecessors of present-day Ugrians and Samoyeds around the time of the so-called Uralian age.

It is characteristic of the whole geographical area that – with the exception of the Yeniseians who migrated there relatively late, about 8,000 years ago as attested by archaeological evidence, and who represent an inflexional language type – all (Uralic and Paleo-Siberian) languages are agglutinating with incorporating features in the Chukchi-Kamchatkan and Eskimo-Aleut groups and sporadically in the Samoyedic group. All the languages of the territory typically underwent a similar evolution of the fundamental linguistic categories (case system, singular/plural marking and elements of conjugation), which can usually be expressed by the same morphemes. Besides these shared features, the two linguistic blocs can be distinguished on the basis of a number of traits, for instance:

	European	Siberian
dual	+	-
accusative marker (Acc/Loc)	Acc	Loc
two conjugations	-	+
predicative declination of nouns	-	+
tempus vs. aspectus	T	A

Hungarian as a Member of the Ancient Western Paleo-Siberian Bloc

Traces of the dual: The dual can be found in all Paleo-Siberian languages except for Yugakhir and Yeniseian. The number markers also correspond to those of the Uralic languages.

Expressing the object by locative: In contemporary Uralic languages, the marked object of the sentence is usually expressed by accusative while in Paleo-Siberian languages – if the object is marked – by some sort of a locative case. Traces of that can be found in Uralic languages, too. There are many examples for marking the object by a locative ending in the Mordvin dialects, but further examples can be cited from Khanty, Nenets and Hungarian as well (in Hungarian: *bennünk* ‘in us’ ‘where’ ~ *bennünk[et]* ‘us’ ‘whom’, *bennetek* ‘in you’ ‘where’ ~ *bennetek[et]* ‘you’ ‘whom’).

Two conjugations: the two conjugations reconstructed for Proto-Uralic based on preconception can be found only in the Samoyedic branch of the Uralic language family as well as in the Ugric group and in Mordvin language(s). These conjugations are referred to by various terms – which are, however, inaccurate and misleading in every case – as subjective/intransitive/indeterminate and objective/

transitive/determinate conjugations. (In addition to these, a reflexive conjugation may also exist such as the originally reflexive conjugation with *-ikē* ending in Hungarian.)

According to an obstinate view – mostly based on Hungarian –, the use of these conjugations is determined by the presence or absence of the object and the definite or indefinite character of the object. For instance, there is subjective conjugation with an intransitive verb (*Az apa megy* ‘The father goes’), in a sentence with no object (*Az apa olvas* ‘The father reads’), with an indefinite object (*Az apa /egy/ újságot olvas* ‘The father is reading a newspaper’); but objective conjugation is used with a definite object (*Az apa az újságot olvassa* ‘The father is reading the newspaper’). In other Uralic and in all Paleo-Siberian languages that distinguish between these two types of conjugation, the principle of use is different from that. Based on the examples of Nenets, I think that the choice of the appropriate conjugation is determined not by the definiteness or indefiniteness of the object, or its presence in the sentence, but by the focus. Nenets employs a subjective conjugation when an object is in the focus of the sentence, among others (in other words: the logical emphasis falls on the object): *nísaw t’iki gazetam? tolab’i* ‘my father is reading **this newspaper** (and not the book)’, while an objective conjugation is used when the logical emphasis is on the predicate (i.e. the predicate is in the focus of the sentence): *nísaw t’iki gazetam? tolab’ida* ‘my father is reading this newspaper (and not throwing it out)’. Similarly, objective conjugation is used in sentences with a verb predicate in focus that cannot take an object, for example *t’uküm njäedarab?nän jä jaykoda? ním?* ‘if I drop this (i.e. a mudball representing the earth), there **will be no earth**’ (*jayko-* ‘sg is not, is missing’). In present-day Hungarian, it is indeed the presence or absence of the object and the definite or indefinite character of the latter that determines the choice of conjugation, although the rule is not without exception, nor did it hold true in the earlier history of the Hungarian language. In 16th-century Hungarian – as it has been shown, but left without explanation by certain prominent Hungarian language historians such as Géza Bárczi and Erzsébet Abaffy –, these two conjugations were employed differently than today. For instance, the objective conjugation was used instead of the subjective: *kegelmeteókteól minden jó szomszédtagot war-yuwk* ‘we expect all good neighbourhood from you’, and vice versa: *aztbes (= azt is) ertettewnk az mi nepejntkteól, hogj...* ‘we understood it from our people...’ All of the above suggests that the rules applied today are not the original ones. The differentiation between the two conjugations depending on the definite-indefinite character of the object lost its significance from the moment when articles developed in Hungarian because with their help, a distinction could be made between the definiteness and indefiniteness of the subject and the object. With this innovation, the Hungarian language entered the “European” system where it was not the focus, but the distinction between definiteness and indefiniteness that mattered. The strength of the old structures organized into paradigms is shown by the fact that contemporary Hungarian expresses the opposition of definiteness and indefiniteness with two tools simultaneously, thus contradicting one of the basic tenets of language, economy (articles and the appropriate conjugation type). This phenomenon is called redundancy.

Several languages are capable of expressing the connection between the subject and the object within the structure of verbs. In Mordvin this phenomenon was present for all possible relations (but disappeared with time); in Hungarian it exists only in the Sg1 subject – Sg/Pl2 object relation (*látlak téged, titeket* ‘I see you’). This phenomenon is common in the majority of Paleo-Siberian languages.

Predicative conjugation: All Paleo-Siberian languages as well as Mordvin and Samoyedic languages are familiar with the phenomenon that personal suffixes and tense markers can be added to nouns. Below is an example from Nenets: *xasawa* ‘man’ and *jil’ē-* ‘live’ (verb).

Sg1	<i>xasawa-dm?</i>	‘I am a man’	<i>-jil’ē-dm?</i>	‘I live’
Sg2	<i>xasawa-n</i>	‘you are a man’	<i>-jil’ē-n</i>	‘you live’
Sg3	<i>xasawa</i>	‘(he is) a man’	<i>-jil’ē</i>	‘he/she lives’, etc.

In the past tense:

Sg1	<i>xasawa-dam-ś</i>	‘I was a man’
Sg2	<i>xasawa-na-ś</i>	‘you were a man’
Sg3	<i>xasawa-ś</i>	‘he was a man’, etc.

Although the predicative declination of nouns does not exist in most Uralic languages, there are some characteristics reminiscent of them: typically in the past-tense forms of certain Uralic languages (such as Hungarian, Mari) that derive from the past participle (participium perfectum). This is how the *-t(t)* participium perfectum has become the cornerstone of the past tense paradigm still in use today. Several analogies have contributed to the evolution of the latter:

– the Sg3 form is usually unmarked within the verb paradigm (*ír* ‘write’), and the other personal suffixes are added to this stem. Accordingly, the past participle *olvasott* ‘read’ can be interpreted as a base form to which the other personal suffixes are added. The difference between the original nouns and deverbal nouns (participles) is that the latter have a tense category, which is usually the past tense in the case of the past participle, so the predicative declination of this form automatically yields a past tense paradigm;

– on the analogy of sentences with a noun predicate, characteristic of the majority of the Uralic languages (*ő fiú* ‘he is a boy’, *ő fiatal* ‘he/she is young’), the participium perfectum *olvasott* ‘read’ can also be a noun predicate (*ő olvasott* ‘he/she is [well-]read’ = as an adjective [not: as a verb]).

The particularity of tense marking and aspect: The NELB can be divided into two blocs with respect to tense marking: the *unmarked present – marked past* is characteristic west of the Urals whereas the *marked present – unmarked past* is typical to the east of them (in Yugakhir and Chukchi-Kamchatkan languages). As for the buffer zone of the two systems ([Ob-]Ugric and Samoyedic languages, Ket), the elements of the two systems are mixed up. However, the main difference between these two blocs of the NELB does not lie in tense marking but in the fact that their verb paradigms are characterized by different categories. The languages of the western bloc(s) are tempus languages, while the eastern ones operate with aspect. The phenomenon that can be detected in the buffer zone – also interesting from a Uralic perspective – (i.e. the possibility of marked and unmarked present and past in Ob-Ugric and Samoyedic languages) results precisely from the clash of these two systems. In order to dissipate this confusion, Samoyedic languages decide on the basis of a semantic property which tense will be marked or unmarked. In the case of momentary verbs (*meghal* ‘die’, *belép* ‘enter’), the past is unmarked, while in the case of durative verbs (*él* ‘live’), the past is marked. The interest of this dilemma for Hungarian is that the verbs *lesz* ‘will be’, *tesz* ‘put’, *vesz* ‘take’ manifest a case for the unmarked past in their forms *lón* ‘was’, *tón* ‘put’, *vón* ‘took’, which shows kinship with the unmarked past tense forms in Samoyedic languages. (The *-n* is a personal suffix of participial origin, see *megyen* ‘is going’.) Although phonologically it is possible that the stem-end *-ő* hides a *-j* or *-k* tense marker.

Hungarian–Samoyedic parallels in conjugation: Hungarian conjugation shows interesting parallels with the Samoyedic conjugation types. The paradigm of the reflexive conjugation (of the so-called *-ik* verbs) in singular:

	Hungarian		Nenets	
Sg1	<i>fáz-om</i>	‘I am cold’ (< obj. conj.)	<i>jadal-j-uw?</i>	(< obj. conj.)
Sg2	<i>fáz-ol</i>	‘you are cold’ (< subj. conj.)	<i>jadal-j-an</i>	(< subj. conj.)
Sg3	<i>fáz-ik</i>		<i>jadal-j-?</i> (-? < *-k etymologically corresponds to the Hungarian personal suffix <i>-(i)k</i>)	

The 1st person singular personal suffix of the so-called subjective conjugation is $-k$ both in Hungarian and Selkup. Although this correspondence is indicated by literature, no far-reaching conclusion is drawn from that, saying that it is a single phenomenon shared by two distantly related languages (which are, indeed, distant according to the family tree conception). However, if we compare the 1st person forms of the conjugation in these two languages, we find a complete correspondence:

	Hungarian	Selkup
Sg1	$-k$ (subj.)	$-k$ (subj.)
Sg2	$-l$ (obj.)	$-l$ (obj.)
Sg3	\emptyset	\emptyset

Based on the bloc-view that I also advocate, these two languages are not as far from each other as the family tree representation would suggest.

Summary

On the basis of the above presented phenomena, I believe that the most ancient layer of the grammatical system of the Hungarian language is Siberian, while the surviving elements of its identifiable ancient vocabulary are Finno-Ugric. Over the past eleven–twelve hundred years, the Hungarian language, planted into Central Europe, has significantly drawn closer to the Central European linguistic area dominated by

the Indo-European languages, especially

German. In addition to loan

words, this is indicated

by features such as the

creation of a native

terminology (instead

of loan words), the

expansion of the

prefix system and

the Indo-European

(German) style trans-

formation of the

Finno-Ugric argument

system.

*Hair braid ornament
engraved with the motif
of the Tree of Life,
Sárospatak*



ORAL TRADITION AND LITERACY

Kornél Szovák

Similarly to pre-historic cultures, the ancestors of Hungarians – who lived as wandering communities on the steppe on their way to becoming a unified people – also produced some literary output in the centuries preceding the Conquest. These creations initially served the preservation of the familial and historical remembrance and the religious cult, and they essentially differed from the literary remains of developed cultures in two respects: these pieces were not written, and their transmitters shaped them freely both in terms of form and content throughout generations. Although some sort of writing (runic script [*rovásírás*]) was known among the Turkic peoples of the steppe, this script was inadequate for recording longer texts due to its character set and the material used. The recording of these works was also hindered by the ancient traditions of orality. Due to these circumstances, we have no coherent textual remains from this period; we can only draw certain inferences – mostly about the form – on the basis of the text fragments of the folklore, dating back to pre-industrialisation times. At the beginning of the 11th century, there was a brief, transitory overlap between the ancient pagan oral tradition and the germs of Latin-language written literature that was just emerging, and thanks to that, some elements of the former (often re-interpreted in a Christian light) were adopted by the written tradition. We know from the descriptions of ancient chronicles that certain members of society (minstrels and joculators) specialised in the transmission of the historical and cultic text remains of the pagan culture. The enchanters whose incantations led to the pagan riots of 1060 must have been such individuals. The credibility of the historic tradition transmitted by them was called into question even by Anonymus, who wrote a fictive gesta around 1200, when he stressed in the preface of his work that it would be a shame if “the excellent people of Hungary [should learn about] their origin and heroic deeds from the deceptive tales of peasants or the prattling chants of joculators, in the form of visions”. Besides making a theoretical distinction between the rivalling credibility and authenticity of oral tradition and literacy, Master (Magister) P’s remark also defines the upper chronological limit of the literary and cultural remains of the pagan era.

Based on an insertion in the short chronicle having survived from the end of the Árpád Age, we are able to get a picture of their manner of presentation – bearing in mind that the centuries gone by and the Christian conceptual grounding of the scribe may have, of course, all left their mark on the description of this phenomenon. According to the narrative, after one of the lost battles during the military raids, the enemy let seven “grieving Hungarians” go so that they could report about the ignominy they had had to suffer. These seven men wrote songs about themselves, and in order to spread their fame as well as to entertain the public, they went from house to house, from tent to tent and chanted these stories until the state-founder king entrusted them to the authority of a religious order. Despite his theoretical disapproval of orality, Master P relied heavily on such traditions: on the one hand, he noted down the genealogical traditions maintained by the individual baronial clans of his age, and on the other, he reworked epic narratives that must have been widespread and well-known among the entire population. In that respect, the predecessors of the 11th–12th-century chronicler did a lot for the survival of the oral tradition (the author of the proto-gesta composed around the mid-11th century was the best-equipped to do that): they incorporated the narratives that had been passed on to them through the folklore into their Latin-language historical works. Naturally, they understood little of their original meaning, or nothing at all, so they often re-interpreted them in a Christian context.

It is also a Latin-language relic that informs us about the visual elements of the ancient lyric poetry: one of the catalogues of virtues in the St. Ladislaus legend born around 1192 reflects the formal



The hunt of the White Stag with Hunor and Magor, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum

A similarly totemistic story, the Turul myth explaining the origin of the Árpáadian dynasty that rose to power, is not as ancient as the above one – it must have been created on the eve of the Conquest. The Turul myth offers an epic form of the family tradition, and derives the subsequent generations of the dynasty from the union of a bird of prey living on the steppe and a woman (perhaps a female animal). Again, the story was recorded about three centuries later, around 1200. The chronicler polished the original message and meaning, which no longer complied with the Christian ethos, into a vision seen in a dream. The period of invasions – i.e. the age of the western military campaigns led by the Hungarians – must have especially abounded in such epic works. One of the stories traces the cunning purchase of the land back to an agreement and a misunderstanding related to it, where one of the parties is not familiar with the customary law of the other: this myth places certain elements of the Hungarian proto-religion and cult into an ancient Indo-European framework (the myth of the white horse). After the Hungarian loss suffered in the Battle of Augsburg, the emperor sentenced two Hungarian chiefs, Lehel and Botond to death. The dramatic force and dialogues of their story as well as the references to the proto-religious

components of the ancient stanzaic four-line, eight-beat verses of Hungarian poetry. Through the efforts of Latin-language historiography, we have more extensive knowledge about ancient epics. The most archaic epic piece is the origin story of the Hungarian people: the myth of the so-called miraculous deer. Wondrous and abstract elements are mixed with the descriptions of the genuine geographical environment as well as the event history of the migration during the process of becoming a people. This – supposedly collective – piece of work had already been shaped by numerous factors even in the ancient times: the originally totemistic story (tracing back the origin of Hungarians to a white stag ancestor), which also appears in the belief systems of several other peoples of the steppe, had already been contaminated centuries before the Conquest with the story about the abduction of women committed by the forefathers (Hunor and Magor) personifying merging peoples of diverse origins (Onogurs, Magyars), which introduced additional factual elements into the narrative. The story of the abduction of women is quite remarkable, as it focuses on a factor that is epic in itself: ancient epic literature often used old customary law in its actions. Based on the historical authenticity of these factual elements, the myth must have been created and the two stories must have merged simultaneously to the historical events. Accordingly, the epic narrative must have been preserved by the oral tradition for about four centuries before it crossed the threshold of publicity provided by Latin-language literacy.

mentality take us from the domain of origin myths to heroic epic literature. The composition of the duel between the rather short Botond and the Greek giant under the walls of Constantinople is based on the dichotomy of appearance and reality. In Botond's case, if we disregard the potential influence of the biblical story of David and Goliath, we have an entertaining story created by minstrels and joculators, which was preserved through the oral tradition up until the age of Master P. The dynasty itself had its own epic traditions overarching centuries, which were lost in the transition to literacy (for example descent from Attila, the Hun). The family traditions of the lords were noted down by Master P around 1200 with more or less authenticity. The burgeoning of oral epic literature created by the folk as collective works did not end with the foundation of the state.

The dramatic events of the end of the 11th century (struggles for the throne) provided ample inspiration for literary creation, offering a subject that the various users could interpret again and again. The Latin-language chronicle narrating this period, which was born nearly simultaneously with the events, shows highly epic characteristics in terms of composition and dramatic structure, line of action and in its linguistic-rhetoric content. So much so that János Arany supposed the existence of an underlying ancient Hungarian-language epic work, which could have been incorporated into the Latin-language literature of Hungary in the form of a translation. In addition to epic stories, a relic of a labour song was also included in Latin-language Hungarian literature. Folkloristic texts inspired not only chroniclers but also the authors of hagiographic works, which had to meet stricter requirements regarding form and content. The life story of Gerard (Gellért), bishop of Csanád, the first Christian martyr of Hungary, must have been noted down around 1146. The proto-legend (which was lost in its original form, but which can be authentically reconstructed from its derivatives) drew heavily on the effervescent historical oral tradition, especially from the epic stories. In one of its extremely long, dramatized chapters, sprinkled with dialogues and cunning, the author recounts the story of the repression of Chieftain Ajtony, who occupied the future seat of the bishopric of Csanád, and that of the rectification of *comes* Csanád, who was sent against Ajtony by the state-founder king, but who was falsely accused by one of his warriors. Both the composition and the linguistic nuances of the narrative suggest that the source must have been folk epic. However, even more interesting is another – literary – episode of the work, which tells about the journey of the protagonist and Walther, a schoolmaster in Csanád. During their night rest, they hear the rattle of a hand mill and the singing voice of a woman running the mill. At this point, the hero of the legend turns to his companion: “Walther, can you hear the symphony of the Hungarians?” To this humorous enquiry, Walther informs the bishop that it is the song of a slave performing a tiresome job that diverts the bishop's attention from his reading. The source provides no information as to the style and form of the labour song, but it does say that the melodies were harmonious, and they commanded the full attention of the listener.

For the texts of the Hungarian-language literature to be recorded, literacy had to tackle a problem: the Hungarian phonetic structure was fundamentally different from the phonetics for which the Latin alphabet had been introduced. This struggle, fought with varying success, began at the end of the 12th century and was still going on at the beginning of the 16th century. Nevertheless, the first attempt was made around 1190 to note down a funeral sermon (*sermo*) with Latin characters (*Halotti beszéd és könyörgés* [Funeral Sermon and Prayer]), and about one hundred years later a Hungarian-language lyric relic was also recorded for the first time (*Ómagyar Mária-siralom* [Old Hungarian Lament of Mary]). Through these efforts, the ancient Hungarian epic and lyric literature – doomed to disappear – and Christian Hungarian literacy crossed each other's paths for a fleeting moment, but at this point the baton was taken by Latin-language literature, which, with the help of its content and formal models, raised and matured Hungarian literacy and literature over the centuries.



Stove tile fragment depicting a jocator

THE BIRTH OF LATIN-LANGUAGE LITERATURE

Kornél Szovák

The Greek-language deed of foundation of the Veszprémvölgy monastery and its Latin transcription

As a result of St. Stephen's decision by which he connected his people to the Latin Church, Latin-script literacy spread quickly in the Carpathian Basin. Becoming acquainted with the characters of Latin writing was, in fact, one of the prerequisites of the birth of literature. At the same time, the fact that literacy and literature were still closely interrelated at the time had a huge impact on the beginnings of Latin literacy. The documents of official literacy had to comply with the same strict literary forms and rhetorical rules that applied to literary works. The expertise required for their proper application was acquired by the creators (both charter drafters and literary authors) at the very same course, however, which particular trait of their personality was needed always depended on the given occasion. This phenomenon also prepared the ground for intensive intertextual relations to be created between official

literacy and literature representing a higher aesthetic standard. In addition to the Latin alphabet, attempts were made to promote Greek literacy as well – perhaps prior to the choice of Rite – (e.g. the founding charter of Veszprém Valley), but they were not pursued. The stylistic era that Hungarian literature was embedded into was the Romanesque Period with a preference for simplicity, anti-dialectic logic, grim tones and monastic asceticism. During the reign of St. Stephen, several works saw the light in Latin in the fledgling Christian country. Naturally, the first artists who came to the court of the Hungarian king arrived from various regions of the Western Christian world, but they all had one thing in common: they all belonged to the clergy. Some of them were simple monks while others were former monks who ascended to the rank of prelates. The monastery school, whose role was to supply the country with priests, is supposed to have operated from the date of the foundation of the first monastery (996). A landmark achievement of this school was the appearance of the first author around 1030 with Hungarian as his mother tongue. Appointed



Nave of an Árpáadian-age abbey church, Ják



bishop of Pécs in 1036, Mór (St. Maurus of Pécs) began his career as a schoolboy (*puer scholasticus*) in Pannonhalma. After his studies, he became a monk, then abbot there, and eventually he became a writer as the monk-bishop of Pécs in the early 1060s. Still, the majority of the authors came from abroad in the first century of the Hungarian state.

It is highly likely that the author who formulated St. Stephen's admonitions to Prince Emeric in Latin also penned the decisions of the Royal Council in the two law books of King Stephen. The language usage and the mindset of the author indicate that his homeland must have been northern France or Lorraine, where the Carolingian Renaissance traditions were still kept alive; several scholars identify him with Archbishop Astrik. The work that he created belongs to a genre that flourished in the Carolingian Age, but declined shortly after: it is a genre that held a mirror to the ruling sovereign. Compared to previous works in this genre, the author summarised with remarkable pragmatism the royal virtues that constituted the set of criteria needed for successful government according to the Carolingian values of political theology. This argumentative essay composed of a prologue and ten chapters demanded supreme rhetoric expertise from its author – pious tradition has attributed the authorship to the state-founding ruler himself since the 1080s. Although the personal tone of the work is proof that the ruler, who commissioned the actual author for this task, devoted continuous attention to the content in creation, and he could perhaps put forth his opinion regarding its structure and style, the practical accomplishment of the text should still be attributed to a highly qualified prelate. Shortly after its creation, *Admonitions* became a fundamental reading in the canon of Hungarian political thought, which had a huge impact on both literature and political science until the end of the Middle Ages. In the 1480s it was revered as the First Law Book of King Stephen (about public law) because it happened at this time that the two law books of Stephen were merged into one (the first one of those is also preceded by a prologue of literary value).

Having arrived in Hungary in the early 1020s, St. Gerard (after 977–1046), originally of Venetian descent, had been a monk in his youth, and he also spent a long time as a hermit during his stay

in Hungary. With his single surviving and numerous lost works he introduced the Latin culture of northern Italy in the court of St. Stephen. According to certain researchers, he wrote his work titled *Deliberatio supra hymnum trium puerorum* during his reclusion in Bakonybél (full title: “Treatise by Gerard, the bishop of the Marosvár Church about the ‘Song of the Three Youths’ to the learned Isingrimus”), which he must have originally drafted in his youth in Venice, and which he perfected during the reign

Stone slab with relief:
Samson fighting a lion,
Somogyvár



of Kings Aba and Peter. In the work, which has been preserved in its integrity, but perhaps not in its ultimate form, the author discusses eight verses of the Book of Daniel. The first exegetical treatise written in Hungary comments on the details of the Old Testament song of the Early Morning Prayer (*laudes*) of the divine office of monks. The author’s aim was to reveal the deeper underlying (allegoric) meaning behind the literal text with the help of other Bible verses and the exegeses of the church fathers as well as other scholarly works because he felt that the text had become worn-out due to its everyday use. He linked the citations of the other works he relied on in a chain-like manner, and completed them with his own remarks, which resulted in a catena biblical commentary (Latin *catena* = chain), closely related to the anti-dialectic method in its argumentation. Ever since the Age of Patristics, this was the first longer independent philosophical work (apart from the Carolingian-era Eriugena) that Otto of Freising, the future bishop (then still a Cistercian monk), who became a proponent of dialectic in Paris later on, studied so meticulously in the middle of the 12th century. As such, the work – which holds a central place in medieval western Latin literature, but some of whose sections are barely comprehensible – reflect the influence

of the mystic philosophy of Dionysios the Areopagite and a familiarity with northern Italian liturgy. Its language and style are just as hard to follow as its logic. It has a special preference for individualistic expressions (for example the designation of the books of the Scripture: the Song of Songs is referred to as the “Mighty Wedding”). Gerard makes a reference to two other works of his in his piece, but his commentaries written for the epistles of apostles Paul and John (one of each) and his work about the Holy Trinity were all lost. According to the biography of the author canonised in 1083, Gerard wrote a sermon (homily) for each day of the year, but these were most likely not thematic sermons (*sermos*). Some fragments of the latter have been discovered lately.

The third genre that blossomed in the first decades of Christian Hungary was historiography. As the guard codex (Pray Codex) was discovered in Pozsony in the 18th century, the annalistic records included in it were also named the Yearbook of Pozsony (*Annales Posonienses*) by old Hungarian historical research. From 997, it recorded the events contemporaneously with the years passing: taking a national

perspective in the first part and a local perspective in the second. Originally, this work was most likely conceived in the Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma, and its author must have had access to national news through the royal procession and residences there. Although the sentences used by the author are succinct and simple, it is the desire to preserve historical memory that is manifested in them, which endeavour would be formulated again and more emphatically around the mid-1060s.

In the meantime, official literacy also began to flourish. Chancellor Heribert's anonymous notary – indicated by the letter “C” –, the writer of the letter of privilege of Pannonhalma came to Hungary from Germany, from the chancellery of Emperor Otto III. The clerk who worded King Stephen's charter of Pécs also originated from a German province, and he followed the practice of the German chancellery led by Chancellor Egilbert. The charter of Veszprém (1009) shows the linguistic and chartering peculiarities of northern Italy. This charter was formulated by a clerk who was born in Lombardy: historians believe he may have been Bonipert, bishop of Pécs. Finally, the Greek-language charter of the Veszprém Valley may have been the work of a Byzantine monk.

The diversity resulting from all these influences was soon beginning to settle into a definite direction. The influence of the Lorrainian French, who had already played an important role in Stephen's court, was – briefly – reduced during Peter's reign by the Italians and the Germans. However, from the time of Andrew I, the French-speaking Walloons acquired an increasingly significant role. They were almost entirely squeezed out by the real French by the end of the century: the commanders in chief of Andrew I were almost all Walloons from Lorraine. As for St. Ladislaus, he founded a monastery in Somogyvár which accepted only French monks among its walls for centuries and had a key role in the maintenance of French–Hungarian relations.

The specimens of the 11th-century liturgical books originated from the French language regions. The Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey marked the beginning of the French chartering practice, and eventually our Latin orthography and pronunciation was adjusted to the rules of French spelling and pronunciation from the 11th century. This process peaked at the end of the 12th century thanks to the clerics having studied at French universities, when it received further impetus through the crusaders and the dynastic relationships of the Árpáds. It can be stated that by the end of the Árpád Age, the Latin-language literature of Hungary, born under Italian, Lorrainian and Bavarian influences, came to be entirely dominated by French models in terms of language, genre and aesthetics.

The volume of Latin-language literature, which was undoubtedly born during the first decades of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary, is quite significant in comparison with other surviving texts and the production of the neighbouring young states. The power of this young Christianity and the high ambitions of its prelates are perfectly illustrated by the fact that the content of the works created discussed the functioning of the Christian state, and they sought to understand the Scripture better and record historical memory. These theoretical and practical concerns resulted in the dominance of the genre of treatise. The drafters of the documents of official literacy were spurred by similarly pragmatic goals. The education and theoretical expertise of the authors show an artistic self-awareness from the very beginning, while the sites of creation were dispersed nationwide between the royal court and the monastery. The works that saw light at that time had a bright future ahead of them in terms of impact. It can be declared that Latin-language literature in Hungary set firm foundations from the moment of its birth, and these foundations were able to hold the edifice constructed upon them: the full weight of the literature of medieval Hungary composed first in Latin and then in Hungarian.

Péter Langó

The bulk of the archaeological remains of the Hungarians conquering the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century were revealed during excavations of burial sites. Apart from a few fortunate exceptions, it is difficult to isolate the archaeological legacy of the contemporary settlement remains from other groups of remains of earlier (8th–9th) and later (11th) centuries. Thus, in relation to settlement remains, there was a certain continuity and homogeneity with regards to both built environment and pottery. The remains found at the Hungarians' burial places, however, are entirely different from what were the typical clothing or objects of the previous Avar inhabitants that were placed in the graves. Although the grave accessories of the dead buried in Christian village graveyards are largely connected to the material culture of the 10th century in many respects, they are still quite distinct from that. Hence, the widening array of finds saved by burial archaeology can help us learn about the material sources of garments, armour and every-day as well as equestrian objects of the ancient Hungarians. However, the image that can be construed with the help of this material culture is only fragmented because the archaeological sources are inadequate for drawing a complete and all-encompassing historical representation. Nonetheless, these sources still allow us to get a closer insight into the ordinary lives and

Belt strap-end
with animal figure,
Benepusztá



customs of the conquering Hungarians' age. Examination of the objects laid alongside the dead can unveil the personal history of these items, while analysis of the parallels can reveal the chronological and regional usage of these artefacts. Through the broader relevance of their occurrence, we can study the Hungarians' network of connections in the given age. The history behind these objects can also indicate the influence of the major manufacturing centres and trade routes. The changes in the formal specifications of certain object types can help us track down the changes of the material culture in time and in space, and thus, that of the evolution of the ancient community in the given historical period.

The material culture of the conquering Hungarians demonstrates that the community that left this behind formed a remarkable unity both in terms of composition and lifestyle while it preserved its cultural diversity. The wealth assumed on the basis of the surviving remains is also alluded to in the description provided by 9th-century Muslim travellers as it was recorded in the al-Jayhānī tradition, according to which “The Magyars are handsome and pleasant looking, their bodies are bulky. They have wealth and visible property on account of their commerce.” The grave goods can offer but a pale reflection of the contemporary brocade clothing and of other remains of organic material, since they have not been well preserved. Similarly, there have been no discoveries of items that could be classified as *grand art* in the broad sense. The artefacts found in the graves are mostly metal objects or, on rare occasions, bone carvings, while the textile and leather products can be assessed only in a deteriorated condition, fragmented even in their own context. The main sources are definitely the remains of arts and crafts that were part of the attire, and hence of the everyday material culture. The ornamentation of these remains, however, has directed archaeological research towards conclusions that point beyond the immediate location of the sources. Through the meticulous analysis of the ornaments appearing on these pieces, experts have analysed and unveiled the links of various motifs with not only the steppe,

but their connections with the contemporary Islamic, Byzantine, Carolingian and other European cultural background as well.

Hungarians paid particular attention to their personal presentation, which is also manifest in their grave accessories. The booty acquired during the military raids of the age, and the annual tributes negotiated at peace talks, must have been an important source of those precious metal objects that lay in the graves of mainly the elite of the age. Some of the textiles and objects made from precious metals, acquired the same way, maintained their original function and rendered the Hungarian attire more colourful, while other parts were modified according to the contemporary Hungarian fashion by the craftsmen employed by the conquering forefathers.

The legacy found in 10th-century Hungarian graves makes up a characteristic and distinct unity both with regards to its form and ornamentation, which can be clearly distinguished from the grave goods of the neighbouring regions. Regarding the type of decoration and the ornament carriers, this Hungarian material culture is closely related to the contemporary finds from the steppe, especially to the scope of finds recently identified in the Subbotsy horizon, as well as to the material culture of the First Bulgarian State. Nevertheless, this Hungarian cultural unity could not be considered homogeneous in the 10th century. Its variations in time and space have long been unveiled by archaeological research, calling attention to regional differences and changes that took place over time.

As for the latter, the material culture of the population found on site and the cultural effects of the neighbouring areas played a crucial role. Besides the graves containing finds rich in precious metals and decorated by plant ornaments, other burial grounds were also discovered with fewer objects, containing mostly wire jewels made from bronze. While the dead of the first group were usually placed in cemeteries with only a few plots, the latter are mostly found in village cemeteries with numerous graves.

The ornamented remains of exceptional quality usually originate from the graves of the first group. The adornments found in the graves of men and women differed from each other also with respect to the objects expressing their gender identity. The masculine attire is poorer in metal ornaments while the female clothing was much more lavish. The clothes themselves were mostly made of linen; the outer garment was often composed of felt and, quite frequently, of other expensive fabrics. Similarly, the shoes and headwear were made of felt or of tanned leather. Many pieces of the garments of the wealthy were sewn from silk (samit) and brocade. These ancient attires, however, are barely recognizable, for no embroideries, leather or felt ornaments have survived from that era; their one-time richness is only implied by other remains from the same age, but in faraway places.

In the case of men's graves, the clothes were decorated with fewer precious metal ornaments. If there were any, they included bracelets, wires, golden plates on the sleeves of the outer garment and decorative mounts matching the belt mounts as well as coins sewn into the garment. The headgear finial found in Beregszász is an indication of the fashion of cone-shaped hats, but the most remarkable

Necklace from the archaeological site of Halimba-Cseres





*Sabretache plate
from the archaeological
site of Szolnok-
Strázšabalom*

finds from graves are belts on the waist. Leather and silk belts were usually fitted with gilded silver or bronze (or in exceptional cases, gold) mounts, with a buckle on one end and a pointed strap end on the other. Sabretache-plates and mount ornamented sabrestaches, which – in addition to the pots found in the graves – are the objects with the biggest ornamented surface among early Hungarian antiquities. The front of the sabretaches was often covered with a single plate, and many of these objects were adorned as well. The ornamented plates were usually pre-etched, then the patterns were highlighted by graving, chasing and punching. Quite often, the makers would emboss the plate on the reverse, or hammer in the background of the pattern from the front, thus making the design even more expressive. These types of objects, however, were not only present in the Carpathian Basin but also in the eastern regions; the custom of wearing such objects was widespread. Weapons were also fastened into the belt, among them numerous

ornamental ones as well, especially in the graves of the wealthy.

The garments adorned by mounts and placed into women's graves reflect a much richer and more versatile picture than the burials of men. The hem of the shirts was ornamented with diamond-shaped dress ornaments and small pendant dress ornaments. The ornaments of the outer clothing included two-piece caftan mounts and round spangles. The anklets cut out from plate that were found in graves suggest that women would sometimes brace their wide-leg trousers at their ankles. Footwear adorned with mounts is typical of women's graves. Boots ornamented with studs with a hemispherical head, and triangle-shaped or floral mounts have been found only in women's graves so far.

Jewellery was an integral part of the feminine attire. The jewels worn on the head included various open ring jewels made of gold, silver and bronze wire. The first half of the 10th century saw the rise of jewels made of a simple wire, then in the second half of the century twirled rings and S-terminalled rings became increasingly fashionable. A broad choice of earrings added variety to the attire. Besides earrings with bead-row pendants made after oriental models, grape-shaped and various beaded pendants and earrings came into fashion, originating in the Balkans. The pieces made from gold and silver by granulation were no doubt the products of a central workshop, whereas the moulds made from cheap bronze were simple mass products. Numerous jewel types were incorporated into the Hungarian attire from the

western alpine areas or from the northern regions. Women's characteristic ornaments included lamellar and moulded hair braid ornaments. The most exquisite specimens are among the outstanding remains of 10th-century Hungarian goldsmithery. Many researchers think that the images etched on them reflect the contemporary worldview of our forefathers. The lamellar and moulded items were prepared in a similar manner and with a similar ornamental technique as sabretache-plates. Popular jewels also included necklaces, rolled torques and bracelets as well as various wire jewels. Graves more copiously supplied with objects revealed various jewels with ornament compartments: silver bracelets with stone or glass inlay as well as gold and silver finger rings with blister head and glass inlay. The female fashion, as always, was changeable in the 10th century too. The second half of the 10th century saw the emergence of bracelets moulded with animal heads, whereas silver bracelets of sheet were less frequently found from this period; wire bracelets with a square cross-section and braided bracelets started to appear.

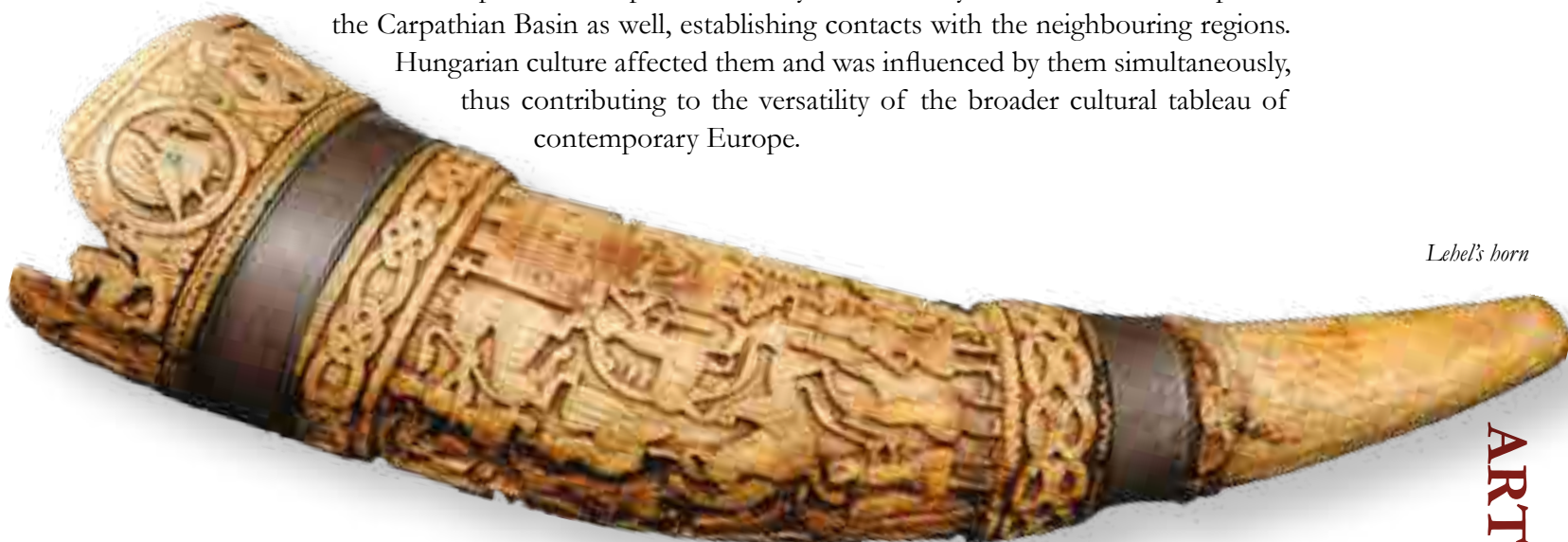
The elements of horse harnesses found in graves (as well as partial horse skeletons placed next to the dead) are also an indication of the special role these animals held in the lifestyle of early Hungarians. The components of the harness, wrought iron bridles and stirrups, saddles decorated with carved bone plates or silver mounts as well as the silver or bronze fittings fastened to the straps were often richly ornamented. The iron objects were frequently decorated with silver inlays, while the moulded mounts were gilded.

Based on the archaeological finds, the Hungarians settling in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century seemed to form a clearly defined and homogeneous unity regarding their burial rites, material remains and the style of ornamentation reflected by the latter. However, if we take a closer look at this homogeneity, we notice that it manifests such a rich internal cultural diversity, the roots of which reach as far as the territories beyond the Ural Mountains and which connect to the oikumene of the age on numerous points. This particular unity and diversity continued to be shaped in the Carpathian Basin as well, establishing contacts with the neighbouring regions.

Hungarian culture affected them and was influenced by them simultaneously, thus contributing to the versatility of the broader cultural tableau of contemporary Europe.



Hair braid ornament showing a mythical creature, Ibrány



Lebel's horn

János Mezei

No written records of ancient Hungarian music have survived – as is the case with our other ancient intellectual treasures. In order to reconstruct the musical traditions of the conquering Hungarians, researchers must compare folk music recorded in the 20th century with the musical relics of those people who had once lived with Hungarians, or had some sort of relations with our ancestors. We can find sporadic information in historical sources at the end of the first millennium that can be linked to the music of Hungarians, but only the findings of comparative musicology can contribute to the study of this field.

According to Nestor, of the author of the Russian *Primary Chronicle*, the songs of the Hungarians entranced the people of Kiev too, in 885. In his chronicle compiled around 1108, Ekkehard reported (more than 150 years after the Magyars' military campaign in 926, but drawing on existing traditions) that the Hungarians had found a simple-minded fellow called Heribald in the deserted Abbey of St. Gallen. Seeing his idiocy, they had mercy on him and spared his life; they even had dinner with him. After drinking the enormous quantity of wine they had found in the cellar, “they began shouting to their gods in terrible voices”. After this loud revelry, their interpreter, a captive priest who spoke Hungarian, began to sing the antiphon of the Holy Cross (*Sanctifica nos* – Sanctify us) together with Heribald, as it was the Feast of the Holy Cross on the following day (3 May). The Hungarians listened to the strange song of the captives in astonishment, then continued carousing until the horns and cries of their watchmen drew their attention to the approaching enemy.

In his description of the Battle of Merseburg (Battle of Riade) in 933, Liutprand, bishop of Cremona, mentioned that the pagan Magyars – shouting the battle cry “hui, hui” – hurled themselves on the Germans who sang the prayer *Kyrie eleison* (Lord, have mercy on us). Their battle cry must have been similar to the “kai, kai” cry of present-day Ob-Ugrian shamans with which they plea to their gods. Anonymus also wrote about the revels of the Hungarians in his chronicle (Having taken Attila's town, they feasted merrily, cobzas and pipes resounded in harmony with the songs of the minstrels.) Previously, when describing the fights near Kiev, he mentioned the battle horns too, which the *Thuróczy Chronicle* (*Chronica Hungarorum*) described as rousing battle instruments.

The descriptions of pagan revolts after King Stephen's death referred to the ritual-like music of the Hungarians in one way or another: in 1046, János, son of Vata, collected numerous shamans and prophet-priests around him, who praised their lord with entrancing songs. In 1060, when the crowd demanded the restoration of pagan religion from King Béla I – who hid behind the walls of the Fehérvár castle –, their leaders cursed Christianity with outrageous *carmens* (charming songs), and the crowd approved, shouting “so be it”. (In light of the latter formula, it is curious to consider that it was precisely the Christian liturgy that preserved the religious-ritualistic recitative consisting of the alternation of the precentors' invocations and the replies of the crowd.)

According to the careful hypothesis put forward by researchers, there might have been several layers of style during the development of Hungarian folk music. The first major stage of development coincides with the time of co-existence with Ugric peoples, whereas the second one may have evolved over the centuries of contact with Turkic peoples.

The group of diatonic dirges – the oldest layer in Hungarian folk music, presumably from the age of co-existence with Ugric peoples – represents archaic forms, and shows a relationship with a particular genre of Ostyak (Khanty) epic songs. (Its chief musical notes are G²-F²-E²-D²-C, then the

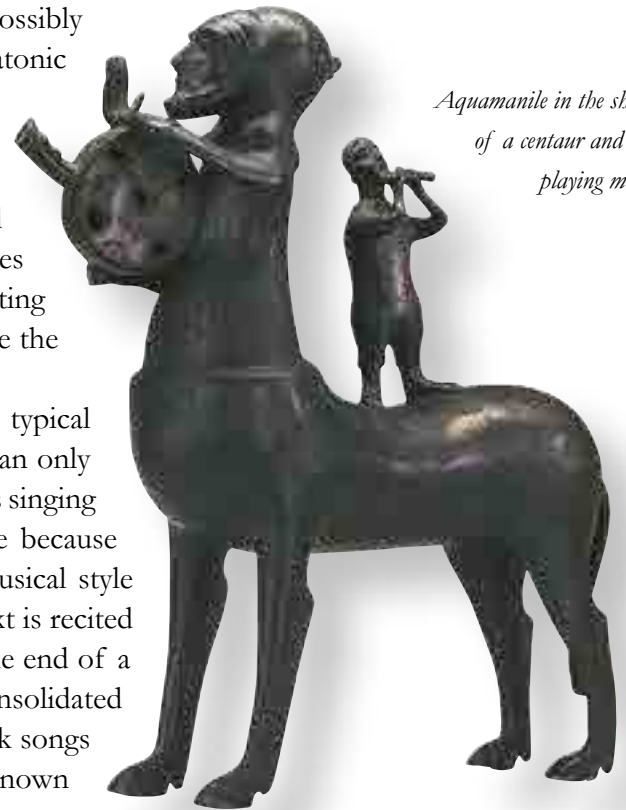
melody descends to A or G; or with solmization: re'-do'-ti-la-sol, possibly going down to mi or re.) Another variant of this genre is the pentatonic dirge sung in Transylvania, in equally free form and with a similar function. Its chief musical notes are D'-C'-B'-G'-(F), or with solmization: mi-re-do-la-(sol). In this genre, the functions of the ritual and the memorial, the laudatory and the weeping (for the dead heroes) were still interwoven; they did not come to form distinct genres until later. The memorial function continued in epic genres recounting the deeds of the ancestors, laudation lived on in hymnal works, while the invocation of spirits persisted in dirges.

Soloistic recitative, or half-spoken, half-sung presentation is a typical feature of dirges. On the one hand, they are soloistic because one can only mourn one's dead on their own, or alternatively, with several mourners singing simultaneously but to themselves. On the other, they are recitative because their essence lies in the free-form improvised text to which the musical style adapted ignoring the regularity of verses. Most of the improvised text is recited on the upper three or four notes of the musical scale, and only at the end of a sentence do performers descend to deeper registers. Having been consolidated in strophes, later on both melody types were also associated with folk songs (the texts of lamenting songs, ballads and funeral songs). The best-known strophic descendent of the pentatonic dirge style is the ballad of the great mountain robber, "Szivárvány havasán felnőtt rozmaringszál", whereas the epitome of the diatonic style is "Katona vagyok én, ország őrizője" as well as its variant, "Szörnyű nagy romlásra készül Pannónia".

While dirges can be traced back to a (Finno-)Ugric influence, the appearance of the fifth-construction pentatonic melodies in Hungarian musical traditions can be explained by the centuries-long co-existence with the Turkic peoples. In these melodies, musical beauty (in its modern sense) and the expression of emotions were granted a greater role. The individual musical units (lines, couplets) have a larger amplitude, and bigger interval steps are more frequent. They are characterised by an organically connected rhythm, a more expressive rubato (performed freely), or a giusto dance rhythm arranged in measures. The tonality of these melodies is also pentatonic (G'-F'-D'-C'-B'-G', with solmization: la-sol-mi-re-do-la). A verse is usually composed of four lines; the first two lines move in the upper zone of the musical range and end on the quint note. The third and fourth lines take the lower zone and end on the base note. The relation between the temporary resting note at the middle of the melody and the final at the end regulates the flow of the entire melody and its descending character. This style received its name (pentatonic fifth construction) from the fifth construction. The best-known example of this style is the folk song titled "Leszállott a páva" from Somogy County.

The tradition of the epic-ritual style can be detected in the dirges of later times, in ancient ballads, beggar, fugitive and prisoner songs, laments, outlaw songs as well as in lyrical folk songs. Festivities of nature can presumably be traced back to the Conquest Period and the founding of the state. The musical material of these celebrations has survived among the people until today. Minstrel (*regös*) songs are the reminders of the feast of the winter solstice, but the refrain of minstrel songs itself has its equivalent in the refrain formulae of Byzantine rituals. Midsummer night songs – that revolve around the summer solstice – and the musical elements of other spring folk traditions point to the growing influence of European agricultural states, Byzantium and Slavic peoples.

Originally, minstrels were performers of heroic songs from the pagan era in princely courts. The existence of their separate settlements is attested by chartered place and personal names. Today's folk



Aquamanile in the shape of a centaur and boy playing music



Minstrels at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Garabonc, Zala County

minstrels are accompanied by loud musical instruments, such as the duct flute, friction drum, chains on sticks and minstrel's pipe.

Musical relics of natural-magic were preserved in some children's songs. The enchantment-like lullabies and cradle songs imitated the rhythm of rocking. They are simple melodies, sometimes almost without a tune. They are characterised by the use of archaic-sounding words (*beli, csicsijja, tente*) and frequent pampering. The markedly rhythmic choosing rhymes, counting songs and nursery rhymes also testify to their ancient origin.

Folk music preserved and developed the ancient melodies, assimilating the various influences. The folk song and the Western musical culture cross paths

in the famous anecdote about the "Hungarians' symphony" in St. Gerard's legend. At the time of the Conquest, Europe had already surpassed the early stages of its musical development.

The adoption of Christianity brought a significant change in Hungarian music. Together with the new religion, the cultural heritage and melodic repertoire, which were already common property in the European Christian civilisation at around the turn of the millennium, were transmitted into the Carpathian Basin. It was equally important that the network of institutions supporting the preservation, cultivation and transmission of these spiritual values was already set up. In addition, monastic, parish and chapter schools spread literacy, science and music. In fact, they were virtually the only institutions promoting Western Christian culture till the 12th century. The appearance of the first European universities did not happen until the end of the Middle Ages or even later.

School education rested on two main pillars: *grammatica* and *musica*. Musical literacy (theory and practice) was so significant that in lack thereof, the knowledge of any cleric or intellectual would have been considered imperfect. At medieval schools children were obliged to sing for 2–3 hours a day during Mass and Vespers (folk term: *vecsernye*). Both the music sung and the unified liturgical frame tied Hungary to the European Christian community, but slowly, a unique Hungarian Gregorian style developed that was different from Western Gregorian music.

Hungary adopted the Gregorian repertoire in the form of the Central European, so-called pentatonic version, which manifested – in contrast to the Western and southern European diatonic version – in more characteristic melodies and a preference for pentatonic turns. Records show that around 1028, a monk called Arnoldus arrived in Esztergom from Regensburg and there, together with Archbishop Anastasius, created a new series of songs in honour of St. Emmeram, the patron saint of Regensburg, based on ancient texts and documents. The choir of the cathedral sang these songs on the day of the saint, abandoning the old movements. Musicians were probably encouraged and inspired to write similar songs by the flourishing cult of local saints.

The Hungarian Gregorian repertoire was supplemented by local variants from the outset. The first cycle of Hungarian Gregorian music was a series of antiphons and responses written for the canonisation of King St. Stephen – probably in Fehérvár, which included neo-Gregorian style melodies

composed for rhymed prose. Its main movement was preserved by the Érdy Codex (from the end of the Middle Ages) in the following Hungarian translation: *“Idivézlégy bódog szent István király, te népednek nemes reménysége...”* (Hail to Thee, late King Stephen, the noble hope of your people...). Later, other rhyming hymns were created to honour other Hungarian saints such as Prince Emeric and King Ladislaus.

In line with King Stephen’s church and state organisation, the first liturgical–musical codification may have taken place during King Stephen’s reign. It affected the repertoire and the structure of the service (especially of the divine office), and also the melodic variants, i.e. the songs to be sung, their order, and the choice of melody variants. The latter were made ever more diverse by the musicality of the Hungarian countryside, taking it further towards a pentatonic universe. The Hungarian canonical hours must have obtained their characteristic features then, and it is from here that the traditions of Esztergom, Kalocsa and Transylvania began to evolve later on. (A unique Hungarian invention is, for instance, the supplementary movement inserted into the second Vespers on Sundays, “*Quam magnificata sunt responsorium*”.) Another identity marker of Hungarian Gregorian music was the birth of Hungarian musical notation, which combined the German neumes and French-Italian orientation. The first examples of this musical notation can be found in the Pray Codex.

Pipers and drummers were also employed in princely courts in this period. They lived in groups in the neighbouring villages; minstrels were associated with them. A Polish chronicle may have referred to them when it said that following their alliance in 1000, King Stephen and Mieszko I, duke and prince of Poland revelled to the sound of stringed instruments, songs, drums, choir pieces, violins and pipes. Alongside the Latin (Western Christian) music, songs from the pagan era also lived on mainly in folk traditions, which we can read about in the *Thuróczy Chronicle*.



Page with neumatic notation in the Pray Codex

László Felföldi

Regarding the early history of Hungarian dance culture, in the absence of evidence we can only guess how people in the Carpathian Basin danced at the time of the Conquest.

The comparative analysis of the sparsely available historical sources and the folk dance of today's European peoples distinguishes three big regions according to dance genres in Europe:

1. Southeastern European region, where the dominant dance form is the chain and circle dance which is performed in groups in a half-regulated manner.
2. Eastern European region, where individual, free-style, solo improvisational dances dominate.
3. Western European region, where regulated, space-formative couple-based dances (quadrilles and contra dances) constitute the majority of traditional dance styles.

Based on the records of dance history and numerous Western European sources, it became apparent that these three regions, in fact, represent the three periods of the historical development of European dance culture. People from the Balkans, isolated from the European cultural changes for a long time, have preserved the medieval collective chain and circle dances up until today. Eastern European peoples

(including the Hungarians) kept alive the Renaissance couple courtship dances, which became popular at the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Modern Period, while Western European peoples maintained quadrilles and contra dances that were widespread in the 18th century.

In this wide historical, geographical, and social framework, researchers have managed to differentiate two layers, an older and a newer one, in Hungarian dance traditions, which are markedly distinct from each other in terms of function, display and music.

The dance styles of the older layer show remarkable similarities with the dances of the neighbouring peoples in



*Swineherd's dance
with cane*

the Carpathian Basin. Circle dances at the meeting point of the historical old and new layers imply southeastern European and old medieval connections. In a wider sense, sources from the age of the Conquest suggest that Hungarian culture showed ambiguity even at that time. In the description of the St. Gallen adventure and in the set of martial games, songs and revels mentioned in Anonymus's *Gesta Hungarorum*, dances presumably occurred in an undifferentiated form, just as in the dance history and folklore of the oriental peoples nowadays.

Iconography from works of art from the 10th–11th centuries include the joculators on Lehel's horn, and Miriam-dances on the crown of the Byzantine emperor, Monomachos, and present another dimension of medieval Hungarian dance culture. They attest to how cultural elements (including those of dance culture) from distant territories of Europe reached Hungary through dynastic relationships.

THE BELIEFS OF THE PAGAN HUNGARIANS

Vilmos Voigt

In Hungarian history, we distinguish between the religious phenomena of the age before the Conquest, and the folkloristic popular beliefs, customs and popular religiosity of the times following the adoption of Christianity (these three terms represent similar yet distinct categories).

Accordingly, the former, pre-Conquest era (and also the period in the Árpád Age until the adoption of Christianity) is usually discussed in history textbooks, while the latter, post-conversion era is covered in ethnographic and folkloristic works. To some extent, the pool of evidence used by these two categories also differ from each other, but a much more significant difference between them is the way the notions of “religion” and “worldview” are used by the respective researchers. In both cases, they simply project the ethnographic phenomena collected in the 19th century onto the age of the Conquest (or even earlier times). It is seldom pointed out that social stratification was present already in the pre-Conquest ages – both in terms of beliefs and customs.

In Quest of Religion and Its Antecedents

Hungarian authors have been asked several times to write the respective chapters of international history books on the subject, and in general, their summaries have been well-balanced (although there might be cardinal differences regarding their interpretation of “proto-religion” or “shamanism”, for instance). Among Hungarian ethnographic overviews, few have been written in English for international use (Tekla Dömötör). Shamanism, on the other hand, has been the subject matter of several English-language volumes (Vilmos Diószegi, Mihály Hoppál).

The view that the recent belief system of Uralic peoples (within that, Finno-Ugrians, and Ob-Ugrians in particular, our closest linguistic relatives) could serve as a point of reference for the reconstruction of the early stage of Hungarian religious concepts evolved over several centuries. Linguistic ethnographic research trips of this kind began in the 19th century, mainly thanks to Finnish and Hungarian scholars. The truly rich archaeological exploration of the Volga region, the Ural region and southern Siberia in general commenced even later. However, here we run into another difficulty: we cannot determine the early ethnic background of findings related to religion. Hungarian researchers often draw parallels with even more distant lands: they go as far as the Amur region, Mongolia, the Turkic peoples of Inner Asia – not to mention even farther, tenuous “similarities” (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indian, Native American, etc.).

After minor observations, it was within the framework of historical research concerning early Hungarians at the end of the 18th century that Daniel Cornides prepared his treatise titled *De vetere Hungarorum religione* (1785), in which he summarised the findings pertaining to Hungarians in ancient historical sources as “proto-religion”. He meticulously described “the adoration of fire”, the Persian



Hair braid ornament with palmette motif, Anars

etymology of the word *Isten* (God), the lack of polytheism and the sacrifice of horses. In his work, “proto-religion” is a phenomenon that can be described in terms of historical records instead of being an ostentatious phantasmagoria. This broad interpretation of religion coincides with the European (mostly English) concept of religious history of the age. This explanation was then adopted by several other Hungarians researchers as well – even up to the present day.

A new paradigm – the concept of “mythology” by the Grimm brothers – appears in Arnold Ipolyi’s monography titled *Magyar Mythologia* (1854), in which he thematically discusses all that had been presented as a belief system by the historical sources and ethnographic collections that had originated then. At the same time, arguing with Ipolyi, Antal Csengery (1855) identified the ancient Hungarian belief system with “shamanism”. Nonetheless, the “natural mythological” approach – fashionable in those days – never really flourished in Hungary.

The positivist–comparative line of research has been predominant ever since. An exception to that was Géza Róheim’s evolutionist anthropological (*A varázserő fogalmának eredete* – 1914) and later Freudian–psychoanalytical (1954) approach. In the past fifty years, a researcher focusing intentionally on Hungarian ancient beliefs was Vilmos Diószegi (1923–72), who found the “relics” of shamanism in the Hungarian folklore of the recent past, and who looked for ethnographic parallels to back this up on his research trips across Siberia. His disciple, Mihály Hoppál, has been working on the worldwide phenomena of current shamanism in an even broader spectrum. Hoppál and some other researchers have examined modern Hungarian folk beliefs with the help of structuralist/semiotic methods as well.

Over the decades, Éva Pócs has abandoned the thesis of “Hungarian shamanism”, and she has interpreted Hungarian folk beliefs through European (even “Old European”) belief systems, and especially mediator-like players (1999). According to her present conception, the system of folk beliefs that can be observed today is significantly different from the systematisation established by researchers in earlier books. (The question immediately arises: if there is such a huge difference between the folklore of two centuries, how many transitions and changes should be taken into consideration in

Golden eye plate from a
Conquest-period grave,
Rakamaz



retrospect?) Since the past decades have seen the publication of the corpus of old and new Hungarian incantations, several volumes of witchcraft trial documentations, an anthology of archaic lay prayers and parabiblical essays, finally it has become possible to examine them from the perspective of a genuine religious and textological history. I have personally analysed key terminology dating back to the Middle Ages from a religious historical aspect.

Historical–Social Layers in Beliefs

Although it is hard to specify the natural life cycle of any religion of the past, several attempts have been made at drawing a comprehensive evolutionary outline of our “proto-religion”.

In the first phase of our ethnogenesis, belief in the spirit, or rather, in the dual spirit, the practice of hunting magic and simple healing can be automatically assumed. The Finno-Ugric background of our words *lélek* (soul) and *jó/gyógyít* (good/heal) can be applied to our ancestors who lived in small communities thousands of years ago. They must have had a “worldview” and chronology as well – but we can only assume that in general terms. The tripartite worldview (lower world

– our world – upper world) is so general that it is taken for certain that it existed. However, we may doubt the existence of a clearly divided view of the world such as the one represented on Lapp or Siberian shaman drums among ancient Hungarians, or that its traces could even be discovered in the Hungarian folk art of the recent past. The categorisation of the known animals, on the other hand, was certainly present. The existence of the organisation by clans determined marriage customs and other rituals. In that respect, the concept of reincarnation of Ob-Ugrians has only been studied recently. In theory, the latter could also go back to ancient times. Totemism might have been related, but there is no way to prove that convincingly.

In the second period (still in Siberia), the performance of rites and rituals – shamanism among them – must have become regular annual and generational customs. Shamanism had a threefold role: shamans would heal, predict the future as well as detect and fight forces that would be perilous to the community. The words *rejt/részeg* of the Hungarian language refer to the rites performed in an altered state of consciousness. Based on recent analogies from Siberia, there were some “sacred places” with simple “idols”, and the place of burials must also have had a certain continuity. Relations with Turkic peoples had already begun – but they would be more regular in the next period when the tribal organisation was formed. Regarding animals, some evidence indicate the presence of totemism as well.

The third period is generally conceived as follows: the ancestors of Hungarians wandered further south and west, reaching the steppe. Animal husbandry and a certain form of agriculture developed. We can only have a vague idea about how nomadic ancient Hungarians were in a certain century. Few archaeological findings survived from this period that could be linked to the burial rites of the conquering Hungarians. This period was certainly familiar with notions such as *Isten* (God), *ördög* (devil), *ég* (sky) and *menny* (heaven), *ima* (prayer) and *bűn* (sin), and *álmom* (dream), while *orvos* (medicine man) was probably even more ancient. The religious specialist developed from the shaman, and the Hungarian word *táltos* is probably related to that. Our words *ír* (write), *ró* (carve), and *betű* (letter) indicate that mere orality was no longer sufficient to coordinate social activities.

The question of when “pagan” Hungarians encountered which genuine religion has long puzzled historians. We are quite certain that along with the conquering Hungarians, Muslims and Khazar Jews also arrived in the Carpathian Basin. Hungarians were familiar with Byzantine Christianity; they witnessed the conversion of the Kievan Slavs, and the Latin Church also knew about the “Hungarians”. The best-informed Arab and Byzantine sources described Hungarians as a splendour-loving *Turkic* people. For them, sacrifices were obviously a matter of prestige and propaganda (for example burial with a horse). Ornate military-style accessories were placed in the graves of rich chiefs.

The lifestyle of the three to four generations that lived in the period between wandering away from the last proto-homeland and the baptism of Vajk/Stephen appears to be somewhat of a mystery. Despite the promising abundance of several thousand archaeological findings, for example “religious” technical terms that are still in use in Hungary [e.g. *igy*, *egy*, *ügy*, originally meaning “sacred”, then *egy-báz* (church), *ünnep* (holiday); *boldog* (happy), perhaps in the original sense of “out of the ordinary”, or *imád* (adore) as part of “reverence”, later *imádság* (prayer), *vallás* (religion), originally a legal term, etc.], as well as illness names, the fact is that no pagan “rite” or “cult sanctuary” has been discovered up to this day. (Such references occurring in 19th-century Hungarian Romantic literature are all the products of



Belt mount showing an eagle, Karos

the authors' imaginations.) The number of corpses discovered in an "irregular, unusual" position (tied together or laid on their stomach) is scarce; they are of various ages, and there is no valid explanation for these phenomena. As it is well-known, the placement of men and women in community cemeteries is not accidental, but very much coordinated from legal, social and economic aspects. At the same time, the "reversed world" that has been considered so universal by Gyula László cannot be found in every "Conquest-age" cemetery. On the other hand, the golden plates placed on the eyes of the dead were known not only in Hungarian territories but also west of the middle reaches of the Volga: they served as a burial mask.

The Conquest and the subsequent ventures provided fantastic new ecological encounters: without the experts of worldview, meteorology and healing, life would have been inconceivable. By that time, there was certainly a well-known and coordinated worldview, some knowledge about the people's past and a will to influence its future. All of that converges toward a Christian explanation, like the giant cross on the sabretache plate with palmettes. Finally, a lot of personal names and toponyms testify to an existing worldview. However the explanations of *Emese*, *Árpád*, *Sarolta* and *Álmos* that imply a totemistic or ritual murder have only some degree of credibility. We are not aware of any belief-related explanation of the names of the seven tribes or the seven chieftains – although there must have been one. Out of the dignitary names, *kende*, *gyula*, and *tárkány* imply such a background. On the other hand, the names *Solt/Zsolt/Szultán* come from the Arabic languages and reflect a completely different view of the world.

It is also debated how long and to what extent pagan beliefs survived in feudalising Hungary. Usually, it is the examples of pagan-type sacrifices that are cited in this context. These instances, however, date from centuries later (possibly from the pen of Anonymus), and St. Ladislaus's laws imitated the Latin texts of the Carolingian Age – which did not exclude pagan sacrifice. Nonetheless, the phrase "at trees, springs, rocks" does not make mention of any rudimentary sanctuaries.

Regrettably, no *Conversio Hungarorum* has been left to us, or was, in fact, ever written, which would have outlined, as a contrast, the spiritual life of Hungarians before Christianity. This is because Christianity was adopted from various directions and in different waves. Even if foreign or Hungarian sources mention certain instances as facts of beliefs, they cannot be taken for granted. According to a popular ancient story, Lehel, the Hungarian chief captured after the Battle of Augsburg (955) blew his horn as his last wish and struck the German emperor to death with it, shouting "you will go to the other world before me, you dog!" However, the Byzantine horn that was found in the 18th century originates from the 10th century, while this story is first mentioned in 14th-century Hungarian chronicles – even Simon of Kéza questioned its credibility.

The descriptions of the so-called pagan uprisings (1046 and 1061) contain a lot of interesting elements: people attack and sack priests – but in this case, especially in that of Andrew I, the context also involved a fight for supremacy, and the leader of the revolt Vata later became the king's steward. That Janus, the Pecheneg leader of the second revolt, would have also been a "medicine man" is deemed highly unlikely.

We also regard the text of "medieval Hungarian shaman trials" as a fraud. There is no evidence that the "scholarly" subjects of later witch trials would have descended from medieval *táltosok*. The institution of the "seer of the disappeared persons" took root only in the past centuries, and Hungarians definitely did not bring that with them from Siberia. Naturally, there are only written incantations passed down from ancient customs (from 1488), but it is clear that in the early decades they were used by educated noblemen, and they involved both Christian elements and magic texts. Of course, incantations constitute a well-known and ancient genre all over the world, so there must have been other Hungarian texts older than that as well – but they did not survive. As for the "archaic lay prayers" collected by Zsuzsanna Erdélyi, philologically they do not date back to pre-Christianity, although some of their organisational

traits and formulas are quite ancient, indeed. These texts can be safely traced back to the 19th century.

The customs, burials and lamentations (dirges) may look back on a thousand years of history – even if we do not have the references. Minstrelsy (*regöls*) is, in fact, a folk custom based on abundance spells that is performed at the end of winter: groups of youth go round in the village and visit every house. Several Hungarian researchers classified this rite as one of pagan or ancient origin, but in fact, it has been known only for a couple of centuries. It also features a “miraculous deer”, which has been linked by scholars – on the basis of complicated and obscure arguments – to the “miraculous deer” that would have shown the Hungarians the way to their new homeland.

No matter how rich Hungarian folklore is, its elements can seldom be traced back to the pre-Conquest pagan belief system – and even then, it should be done so with great care. However superficial Hungarian Christianisation was at times, this form of Christianity was still passed on by dozens and dozens of generations.

It underwent transformation from time to time, also developing on its own: this is how the manifold universe of Hungarian folk religiosity took shape, including parabiblical folklore as well as healing by magic.



*Chieftain Lehel before
Emperor Conrad,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*

THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

Attila Zsoldos

Stephen's state-founding activity was inevitably intertwined with his church-organising efforts. Stephen – like in so many other respects – followed in the footsteps of his father, but with much more determination. This, however, does not diminish what he accomplished.

It is a fact that it was Géza who opened the territories under his rule up to missionaries preaching the tenets of Christianity, but his decision was motivated by political considerations and not by his religious conviction. He must have been aware of the fact that the paganism of his people could serve as a pretext any time for the surrounding Christian states to attack the Hungarians even without provocation. Even if he had doubts about the necessity of converting to Christianity, he must have been convinced about the dangers of procrastination by the politically motivated marriage between Otto II (then co-emperor with his father) and Byzantine Princess Theophanu in 972. It must have seemed highly likely that the alliance forming between the German and the Byzantine empires was made, amongst others, against the pagan Hungarians. The only chance to break out from this “cornered” situation was to gain the goodwill of one of these empires, and Géza recognized

the symbolic importance of the adoption of Christianity. Now the only thing to decide was whether the inevitable should take place according to the Latin or the Greek Rite, i.e. Rome or Byzantium?

It is without doubt that Géza decided to take an epochal step, but it can also be asserted that Christianity was already known among Hungarians at the end of the 10th century. Known it was, but not followed, certainly not by the masses. We have little information about the beliefs practised by pagan Hungarians, but there are specific records showing that Hungarians came into contact with various monotheistic religions before the Conquest. The leading layer of the Khazar Empire believed in the Jewish faith, whereas on the steppe, Hungarian tribes could encounter Muslim traders and travellers.

They may have become acquainted with the representatives of the eastern branch of Christianity (the Greek Rite): revered as the apostles of the Slavs, it was documented that saints Cyril and Methodius both on occasion spent time among Hungarians.

Tighter, but still quite loose relations were formed only after the Conquest. The population fragments – mostly Slavs – found in the Carpathian Basin followed Christianity, and the thousands of prisoners of war brought in from the west and from the south during the period of the Hungarian invasions of Europe also added to the number of Christians living in the Carpathian Basin. Thus, Christianity was present in the settlement areas of the Hungarian tribes, though as the religion of the subjugated, it could have hardly made a significant impression on the pagan Hungarians.

This situation was beginning to change with the christening of Bulcsú and Gyula. Along with Bulcsú, Tormás, a descendant of Árpád, also converted to Christianity, but as far as we know, he was



Reliquary pectoral cross,
11th century,
Tiszaeszlár

not a chieftain. However, with Gyula's conversion, the establishment of the Greek Rite church organisation started in his state. It is quite likely that Géza, who was related to the Transylvanian Gyula through his wife, turned to Rome in the end, i.e. to the Western Church, precisely because of that. He must have been aware that if he followed Gyula's example, he could become only number two at best in the eyes of Byzantium. However, the adoption of Latin Christianity guaranteed him primacy, with all the political consequences of that decision.

In 972, simultaneously with the establishment of political relations with the Holy Roman Empire, Bruno, a monk of St Gallen, who had been ordained bishop with the support of Otto I, arrived in Géza's state, and apparently, he did a good job as a missionary. Géza as well as several of his distinguished followers got baptised. The beginnings were so promising that soon a canonical debate evolved between the archbishop of Salzburg and the bishop of Passau in order to decide which of them would have supremacy over the Hungarian Church, which had not even been created. (This circumstance – from another perspective – also highlights the exceptional importance of the fact that eventually Stephen managed to achieve the creation of an independent church organisation.) With the help of his Western counsellors, Géza must have also understood what was at stake in this debate. An indication of this was that after some time, he tried to loosen the relationships with the German Church while welcoming the presence of the Bohemian Adalbert, who came to visit his country. Although the former bishop of Prague did not spend much time with Géza, a number of his disciples stayed here and had a key role in the subsequent missionary work. Some of them ascended to become the first prelates of the Hungarian Church.

Sources related to Stephen's coronation unanimously confirm that the establishment of the Hungarian bishoprics had already begun even before the coronation. The first bishopric to be set up was most likely in Veszprém. The main reason of uncertainty is that out of the ten bishoprics (and archbishoprics) whose establishment has been attributed to Stephen, we have a specific date for the foundation of only two: the bishopric of Pécs was set up in 1009, while the one in Csanád was created in 1030. These two figures are a clear indication of the fact that the process of church organisation embraced the entire reign of Stephen. We can estimate the creation of the churches of Esztergom and Győr to have taken place between the set-up of the bishopric of Veszprém in the 990s and the foundation of the bishopric of Pécs in 1009. In the eastern half of the Carpathian Basin, the organisation of the bishoprics was launched after the sovereignty of the "tribal states" had been terminated. After the defeat of Gyula, the Transylvanian bishopric was set up whereas the bishopric of Csanád was certainly created after the fall of Ajtony. The organisation of the diocese of Eger can reasonably be linked to the marriage of Samuel Aba and Stephen's younger sister, and the extension of Stephen's power over the Kabar tribes. We have no certain information about the remaining three bishoprics attributed to Stephen in the domain of church organisation. Some vague traces seem to indicate that the bishopric of Kalocsa may have been established around the same time as the bishopric



King Stephen I and Queen Consort Gisela founding a church at Óbuda, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum

of Pécs. The church districts of Vác and Bihar were certainly in existence in the 11th century, but our sources reveal nothing about the date and circumstances of their foundation.

The Hungarian church organisation created in the first decades of the 11th century was headed by the archbishop of Esztergom. As first prelate of the country, he enjoyed special prerogatives: among others, he held the privilege to crown the king. During the 11th century, the church of Kalocsa was also promoted to an archbishopric; according to certain hypotheses, the event took place during Stephen's life. In the period of the Árpád dynasty, the bishopric of Veszprém equally enjoyed a privileged position: its bishop was entitled to crown the queen, and usually it was him who performed duties as the queen's chancellor as well. The bishopric of Transylvania was somewhat different from the other bishoprics as it was named after its territory and not after its seat. The identification of its early seat is still debated, but it can be affirmed that Gyulafehérvár became the bishop's seat only later.

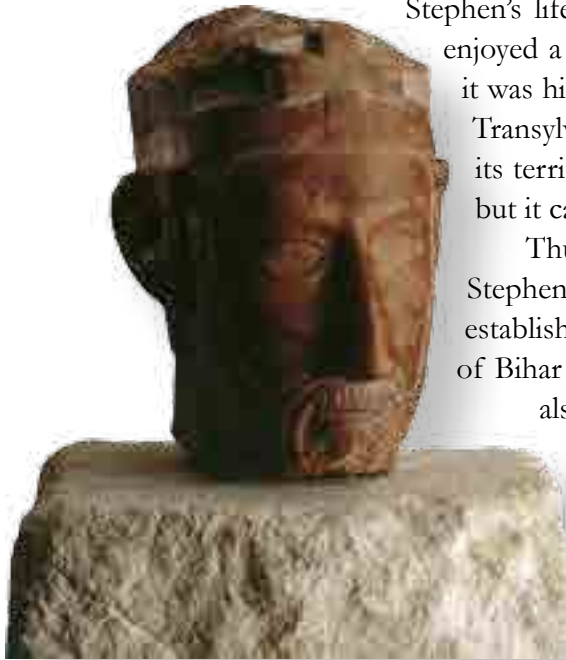
Thus, the majority of the Hungarian bishoprics were certainly organised by Stephen. Following his example, his successors also contributed to the full-scale establishment of the church organisation. During St. Ladislaus's reign, the bishopric of Bihar moved its seat to Várad (Nagyvárad), and later on other church districts were also created: at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, a bishopric was set up in Zagreb and Nyitra, while the 13th century saw the creation of the bishoprics of Sarmia and Bosnia.

With the organisation of the bishoprics, the framework of the Hungarian church organisation was put in place, but the propagation of the Christian faith required further measures. A parish network needed to be constructed, serving as the grass roots of the church organisation, and the economic basis of the existence of the churches also needed to be

assured. The beginnings of the establishment of the former are manifested in the section of the First Law Book of Stephen on going to church, and the process was probably accelerated by an article in the Second Law Book stipulating that every ten villages had to build a common church. Stephen took care of the Church partly through the donations of lands and people, but the real source of the richness of the Church became the tithe, the introduction of which was also ordered by the king through legislation.

In addition to the bishoprics and parish churches, other church institutions were also established. The representatives of Western monasticism, the Benedictines, appeared in Hungary. Their most important monastery stood on "Pannonia's sacred hill", today's Pannonhalma: its foundation could certainly be put down to Géza's initiative. Pannonhalma was followed by other monasteries. There is no doubt that Stephen was the founder of the abbeys of Zalavár, Pécsvárad and Bakonybél, but the monastery of Zobor may have also owed its existence to him. Founded equally by Stephen and consecrated to the Virgin Mary, the cathedral chapter of Székesfehérvár had an outstanding importance all throughout the Middle Ages: Stephen – and later numerous successors of his – were buried in its basilica. It was where kings were crowned, and the chapter house safeguarded the bulk of the treasures of the royal dynasty.

Thus, the Árpáds committed themselves and the country to Latin Rite Christianity. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Eastern Orthodox Church was also present in Hungary, though on a much smaller scale. There were Basilian sisters following the Greek Rite, who lived in the nunnery of the Veszprém Valley, and through the Russian or Byzantine marriages of the kings of the 11th and 12th centuries, the relationship with the Byzantine culture was maintained. However, paganism did not perish at once or without a trace: the sources of the Árpád Age preserved the increasingly sporadic records of the old beliefs. It is noteworthy that we can find individuals even among the Árpádians who insisted on



King's head from Kalocsa, part of a relief, most likely depicting King Stephen I

the ancient faith in the middle of the 11th century: according to the chronicles, Levente, the son of Vazul (who was Stephen's cousin), died as a pagan. The example of the descendants of Taksony is quite revelatory: one of his sons, Géza, committed himself to Latin Christianity while also presenting sacrifices to pagan gods, and his other son, Mihály, followed the Greek Rite. Among the grandchildren of Taksony, István was genuinely and deeply religious and a fervent adherent of the Latin Church, but out of his cousins – Mihály's sons –, Vazul may have been Orthodox, similarly to his father. At the same time, László Szár most probably preserved the pagan beliefs of his ancestors.

Religious division was probably more characteristic of the country's population than anything else. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Christianity, more specifically its Latin branch, had taken root in Hungary already at the beginning of the 11th century. An unmistakable sign of this was that although the duty of conversion was necessarily started by foreign priests and monks, the first prelate of Hungarian descent, Mór, bishop of Pécs, appeared already during Stephen's rule. His predecessor, Bonipert, the first bishop of Pécs must have been of German or French origin.

The appearance of the Church in Hungary was a definite sign of the fact that the new kingdom was able and willing to adapt to the Western European order of its age. The presence of the Church



*The 11th-century
crypt of the church
in Feldebrő*

provided a vivid and permanent relationship with the workshops of European intellectual life. Ecclesiastical persons played a crucial role in the transmission of Western European institutions, customs, and models, thus in the adoption of agricultural techniques and cultures, the teaching of legal norms, and the creation of Hungarian literacy and the workshops of the written culture. The relationship between the Church and the State was characterised by mutuality from the beginning: the kings and their subordinates made the Church rich while the Church also enriched the country in many respects (both regarding intellectual and material goods).

KINGS OF THE ÁRPÁD DYNASTY AFTER ST. STEPHEN (1038–1301)



HISTORY

HISTORY OF LANGUAGE

LITERATURE

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LAND AND PEOPLE

WAY OF LIFE

FIGHTS FOR THE THRONE AND CONSOLIDATION

Attila Zsoldos

Following King Stephen's death, his nominated heir, Peter, took up his uncle's throne without difficulties. King Peter's (1038–41) measures appeared to continue the path marked by Stephen: he founded churches, issued laws and charters, minted money, and imposed taxes on people. However, in contrast to Stephen, he acted with impatient violence, ignoring the peculiarities of the situation in Hungary, subsequently creating irreconcilable conflicts between the king and the whole of Hungarian society. The church leaders and secular dignitaries conspired against Peter, whom they called a tyrant, and soon dethroned him. Peter fled with his family to the German king, Henry III, hoping that Henry would support him in his attempts to regain his power.

Struggle for the Throne

After Peter, Stephen's brother-in-law, Samuel, (who probably descends from the family of the Kabar chieftains) was chosen to be king by the dignitaries (1041–44). Some people now expected the restoration of tribal freedom, others the renewal of Stephen's well-balanced policy. Samuel fell short of these ambiguous expectations, and his position was worsened by the fact that he had to face Henry III's military threat, in support of Peter. Samuel failed in his attempt to prevent Henry's intervention – both his military actions and his peace-negotiations were unsuccessful. In the meantime, Peter had his opponents within Hungary slaughtered. After such a bad prelude, Henry attacked the country, and Samuel was killed whilst fleeing after his defeat at the Battle of Ménfő.



*Ring with king's head,
11th century*

King Peter (1044–46), regaining his power with German support, showed his gratitude to Henry III by taking an oath of vassalage to him. Thus, Hungary became a vassal state, which was a complete denial of King Stephen's policy. Following bloody retaliations for the unsuccessful conspiracies by the dignitaries, a popular rising put an end to Peter's rule in 1046. While the leading noblemen of the country were discussing the problems of removing Peter and calling Vazul's sons – who lived in exile – back to the country, people in the region beyond the Tisza River sparked a revolt with the leadership of the pagan Vata. It was generally considered a pagan revolt against the institutions and representatives of both the state and the church.

King Peter was blinded after he was captured and died soon after. Another victim of the pagan revolt was an outstanding figure of the age, Gerard (Gellért), bishop of Csanád, who was on his way to welcome Vazul's returning sons. The vacant throne was taken by Vazul's middle son, Prince Andrew; his elder brother, Levente, was pushed into the background for reasons unknown. King Andrew I (1046–60) suppressed the pagan riot and governed the country following the path set by King Stephen. He founded an abbey in Tihany, and its Deed of Foundation is the first Hungarian charter which survives in its original version. We can read several Hungarian words and a segment of a sentence in its Latin text, making this charter a precious linguistic record.

Andrew I invited his younger brother, Prince Béla, to return home from Poland around 1048. Andrew, who had no children at the time, nominated Béla as his heir and organised a duchy for him. The collaboration of the two brothers was untroubled for a long time. They jointly repelled Henry III's

attack in 1051. With this attack, Henry hoped to avenge Peter's death and re-establish Hungary's feudal dependence upon Germany. The relationship between Andrew and Béla worsened when, in 1058, the king made his own son, Solomon his heir, dismissing Béla. The hostility between the two brothers did not end even following their meeting at Várkony, and soon they started a war against each other. Andrew lost a battle, and he died from his wounds. His family found shelter at the court of the German ruler, Henry IV.

Béla I (1060–63) – like Samuel – ruled the country under the shadow of a possible German attack. Although this attack was late in coming, there were new problems arising inside the country. The representatives of common people, who gathered at Székesfehérvár, clamoured against Christianity, which is why this movement is usually called the Second Pagan Revolt. The rebels were dispersed by Béla, who also took measures for the benefit of common people: he decreased prices and taxes, and abolished debts. At the time of the German attack, finally launched in 1063, Béla suffered a serious accident, and he soon died. His sons (Géza, Ladislaus and Lampert) escaped to Poland, as Solomon returned to the country together with the Germans.

The King and the Princes

Solomon (1063–70) richly rewarded Henry IV for helping him regain his throne – the so-called Attila sabre might have been taken to Germany from the treasury of the Árpád dynasty at that time – though he did not swear an oath of fealty. After the imperial troops had left, Béla's sons entered the country, but this time there was no fighting. The dignitaries mediated between the nephews, and a treaty was agreed, according to which Solomon reigned as king, and the princes regained their father's former duchy. The king and the princes joined together to defeat the Pechenegs, who attacked the country in 1068. The legend – which had already been popular in the Middle Ages – about the fight between Prince Ladislaus and the Cuman warrior who abducted a maiden, can be linked to this battle at Kerlés.

The good relationship between the king and the princes deteriorated in 1071. Prince Géza had probably had enough of his inferior role, but it is also true that Solomon was incited against the princes by his closest confidant, Vid. In the first battle of this inevitable clash, Solomon defeated Prince Géza. Meanwhile, Prince Ladislaus arrived at the head of Bohemian auxiliary troops, and under his command, Béla's son triumphed over Solomon at the Battle of Mogyoród. The king was pushed back to the region of Moson and Pozsony, the rest of the country was ruled by Géza.

Now, the dispositioned Solomon was ready to become a vassal to Henry IV in return for his support, but the German ruler was preoccupied by the struggle for investiture and the conflict with Pope Gregory VII. King Géza I (1074–77) found a supporter in the Byzantine emperor, who sent him a crown – the bottom part of the present Holy Crown, known as the “Greek crown”. Pope Gregory VII, while expressing the feudal demands of the Holy See towards Hungary, after a little hesitation, acknowledged the legitimacy of Géza's kingdom. Therefore, Hungary – in contrast to Henry IV who patronised Solomon – supported Rome in the controversy between the papacy and the western emperors.

St. Ladislaus leading his army, part of the depiction of the legend on the mural of the church at Karaszékó



During his short reign, Géza was unable to do anything about Solomon. It was left to his younger brother Ladislaus who was crowned as his heir. Ladislaus I (1077–95) made Solomon surrender – partly with the help of armed forces, partly by treaties – and he was imprisoned when he was found plotting against the king. In 1083, Ladislaus canonised the first Hungarian saints, such as the state-founder Stephen and his son Emeric (Imre), the martyr Bishop Gerard and two hermits. In this way, he intended to prove that Hungary held a worthy place within the community of the Christian states. As part of the ceremonies, Ladislaus freed Solomon, who left the country and lived among the Pechenegs until his death.

Consolidation at the Turn of the 11th and 12th Centuries

The internal problems caused by continuous warfare in the preceding decades were smoothed over during Ladislaus's reign. This was achieved by his very strict laws. Due to Ladislaus's strict government, the country regained its strength, and even became a conquering power – a new aspect to the history of the state. In 1091, Ladislaus, intervening in a local Croatian war, occupied the region along the Adriatic Coast. He also founded a bishopric in Zagreb, Slavonia – though the date is unknown. Since Croatia was the vassal of the pope, following the Hungarian occupation of the country, the relationship between the papacy and Hungary became tense.

After Ladislaus's death, Géza I's sons, Coloman and Álmos competed for the throne. Coloman ascended the throne eventually (1096–1116), and Álmos had to be satisfied with ruling the duchy. However, he was not content with his subordinate position, so he made several attempts to seize power during Coloman's reign. Sometimes he organised plots against Coloman, at other times he tried to find supporters abroad, but he gave up in the end. Coloman, who initially was very patient and lenient towards his brother's actions, finally lost his temper, and had Álmos and his young son Béla blinded – probably in 1115. The crippled princes spent the rest of their lives in the monastery of Dömös, which was founded by Álmos himself in 1108.

Coloman was judged unfavourably by the coming generations because of the unfortunate disputes with Álmos, although he proved an outstandingly wise and successful ruler. He continued the codification

started by Ladislaus I, he reformed the taxation system and the structure of the army, reorganised the institutes of legislation, and regulated certain rights of possession. He expanded the Hungarian Church with the foundation of the bishopric of Nyitra, he reinforced Hungarian superiority in Croatia – which had become independent for a very brief period –, and he occupied a certain part of Dalmatia as well.

Coloman was succeeded on the throne by his son, Stephen II (1116–31). His foreign policy was unsuccessful, and there was general discontent during his reign. Usurpers tried to take over the throne several times, including the blind Prince Álmos. After the failure of his attempt to seize royal power, Álmos fled to Byzantium. In his thirst for revenge, King Stephen II launched a series of wars against Byzantium. Álmos's son, Béla, stayed in Hungary, and King Stephen II learned of the whereabouts of his nephew shortly before his own death. He brought Béla into his court and took care of him generously. The Premonstratensian Order settled down in Hungary during the reign of Stephen II, and the king was presumably buried in their monastery at Váradhegyfok.

King Coloman and Prince Álmos in the miniature of the Chronicon Pictum



THE LAST DECADES OF THE EARLY KINGDOM

Attila Zsoldos

As King Stephen II did not have any heirs, Béla II (1131–41) was crowned king. Instead of the blind ruler, his wife, Helena of Serbia governed the country. Béla and Helena had their political enemies slaughtered on two occasions: firstly, the dignitaries supporting Coloman, who were suspected of participating in the king's blinding, were killed, then the partisans of an usurper called Boris, who claimed that he was Coloman's son. Béla tried to expand the territory of the country over the Balkans, and he was the first Hungarian king bearing the title of king of Rama, signifying power over Bosnia.

After Béla's sudden death, his minor son, Géza II (1141–62) followed him on the throne, but in the beginning his uncle (on his mother's side), Belos, governed the country. The adult Géza led a very active foreign policy. He launched many military campaigns in Italy, intervened in German local policy and supported the rebellion of the Serbs against Byzantium. His activity was moderated by two factors: firstly, the two neighbouring states were ruled by the two most outstanding rulers of the age – Frederick I, the Holy Roman Emperor and Manuel, the Byzantine emperor – and secondly, his power at home was weakened by the newly initiated fights for the throne. He had to deal with several pretenders to the throne during his reign, first Boris, then his own brothers, Ladislaus and Stephen.

In the Shadow of Byzantium

Princes Ladislaus and Stephen found a powerful supporter in Manuel, the Byzantine emperor. After Géza's death, Stephen III (1162–72) was crowned in vain: the king soon had to escape. From among his uncles, Ladislaus II reigned for half a year (1162–63), then Stephen IV for a few months (1163). The Battle of Székesfehérvár put an end to the reign of the latter, and brought victory for Stephen III's army. Stephen IV fled to Byzantium again and made several attempts to return – without success. After taking back his country, Stephen III continued his wars against Byzantium, and eventually his troops suffered a defeat at Zimony in 1167.

At the time of the battles for the throne, the prevailing archbishop of Esztergom, Lucas, played an important political role. He was the first Hungarian prelate who was educated at the University of Paris. As the relentless warrior of Gregorianism, Lucas tried to persuade Hungary to support Rome in the controversy between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. He convinced both Géza II and Stephen III that they should give up their rights of investiture. Being a supporter of Stephen III, he refused to crown Ladislaus II and Stephen IV king, and excommunicated the pretenders, who in turn put him in prison. However, when Stephen III took hold of church property, he did not hesitate to excommunicate the king with the purpose of making him more obedient.

The coronation of Stephen III, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum



Golden Age at the End of the 12th Century

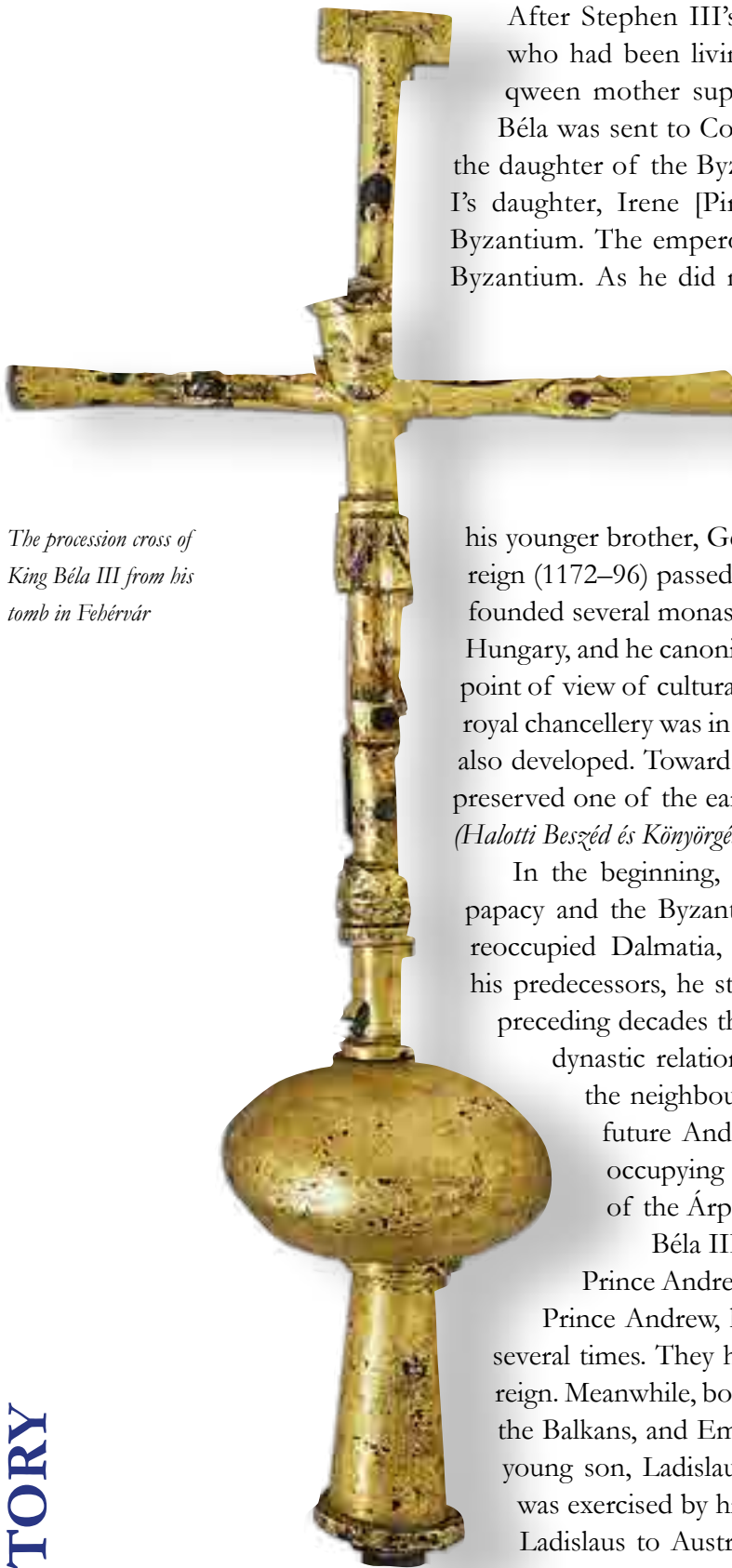
After Stephen III's death, his two brothers, the younger Géza and Béla – who had been living in Byzantium for years – battled for the throne. The queen mother supported Géza, but the dignitaries preferred Béla. Prince Béla was sent to Constantinople in compliance with a treaty, as the fiancé of the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, Manuel. Manuel's mother was Ladislaus I's daughter, Irene [Piroska in Hungary], who was worshipped as a saint in Byzantium. The emperor had serious plans for Béla, who was called Alexios in Byzantium. As he did not have a son, Béla was the heir presumptive, and was given an education suitable for a future emperor. Later, however, Manuel had a son, so he changed his plans concerning Béla. When a delegation came to take Béla back to Hungary, he supported the idea of his relative becoming king of Hungary.

In the fight for the throne, the returning Béla defeated his younger brother, Géza, who died in exile in Byzantium. The years of Béla III's reign (1172–96) passed peacefully. He had a splendid castle built in Esztergom, he founded several monasteries contributing to the spread of the Cistercian Order in Hungary, and he canonised Ladislaus I in 1192. Béla III's rule is significant from the point of view of cultural history: people started attending universities in France, the royal chancellery was in the making, and the activity of credible places (*loca credibilia*) also developed. Towards the end of his rule, the Pray Codex was compiled, which preserved one of the earliest texts in Hungarian, the “Funeral Oration and Prayer” (*Halotti Beszéd és Könyörgés*).

In the beginning, Béla III maintained his good relationship both with the papacy and the Byzantine Empire. After Emperor Manuel's death, however, he reoccupied Dalmatia, which had fallen under Byzantine rule earlier, and like his predecessors, he started to pursue an aggressive foreign policy. While in the preceding decades the military campaigns against Russia were the outcomes of dynastic relationships set up by royal marriages, Béla wanted to conquer the neighbouring Russian principality, Halych, for his younger son, the future Andrew II. He managed to conquer it for a brief period, but occupying Halych, remained the main objective of the foreign policy of the Árpádians in the following decades.

Béla III left his throne to his elder son Emeric (1196–1204), while Prince Andrew was left with his father's unfulfilled wish to lead a crusade.

Prince Andrew, however, intended to rule, and rebelled against his brother several times. They had a hostile relationship throughout the years of Emeric's reign. Meanwhile, both the king and his younger brother led campaigns to occupy the Balkans, and Emeric even bore the title king of Serbia. After his death, his young son, Ladislaus III (1204–05), became king, but only nominally. Power was exercised by his guardian, Andrew. The supporters of the child king took Ladislaus to Austria, to protect him from Andrew, but the young boy soon died there.



The processional cross of King Béla III from his tomb in Fehérvár

THE AGE OF THE MONGOL INVASION

Attila Zsoldos

Some years after his succession to the throne, Andrew II (1205–35) started to bring significant reforms into the country's life, which were designed to transform the traditional institutions and customs of the royal governance. He called these reforms “the new institutions”. The most spectacular element of the king's policy was donating royal possessions in great proportions, with a generosity hitherto unseen. This practice fundamentally transformed the relationship between the noble dignitaries (*nobiles*) and the royal power. Previously, the wealth and power of the dignitaries depended on the offices gained from the king and the revenue of the office. Andrew's land donations, however, became the basis of huge private estates in the hands of his old partisans and new favourites. At the same time, Andrew II also modified the institutions of the kingdom and the system of royal revenues in a way that they connected even more directly to the ruling king.

The Golden Bull

The king's new institutions caused furore in wide circles. The growing discontent manifested itself from time to time in numerous ways and forms. In 1209, a group of unknown conspirators attempted to present the sons of Géza (Béla III's brother, who was exiled to Byzantium) as pretenders to the throne against Andrew II. In 1214, a group of prelates and dignitaries insisted on crowning the king's eldest son, Prince Béla, the future King Béla IV.

After such precedents, in the spring of 1222, Andrew II tried to disarm the new movement of the dignitaries who supported Emeric by issuing a charter of privilege that was later called the Golden Bull, named after its seal. Some of its regulations were meant to address general grievances, others secured privileges to the royal servants (*serviens regis*), who were small estate holders in alliance with the kings, and subordinate only to the king.

The Golden Bull was not able to settle the political debates at the time, but its significance became apparent in the long run. By defining the rights of the royal servants, it contributed to the crystallisation of this social layer, and many centuries later this well-known document of the Árpád Age was recorded among the cardinal laws of the “constitution of the nobility”. The political tension in the country did not decrease after the Golden Bull had been issued. In the last years of Andrew II's reign, there were still conflicts; the king's son, Prince Béla, turned against him, then the Church, wanting to protect its own interests against the royal power, acted against him. The prince was not successful, but the Church managed to enforce the signing of a contract in Bereg in 1233, which redressed their affronts.

Despite difficulties at home, Andrew II led an active foreign policy. He initiated endless complicated military campaigns to occupy the Principality of Halych, without any lasting success. A notable event of his reign was the crusade to the Holy Land in 1217–18. It took Andrew much deliberation to



*The seal of
the Golden Bull*

launch this action, which was a hopeless undertaking from the beginning from a military aspect, and accordingly, it was not successful. However, he achieved some victories against the duke of Austria. In 1211, Andrew II invited the Teutonic Order to settle in southern Transylvania to protect the country from the nomadic Cumans. The knights, however, tried to establish an independent state, so Andrew II expelled them in 1225, despite the objection of Pope Honorius III. Prince Béla, who governed Transylvania, was very successful in subduing and converting the Cumans. In the first third of the 13th century, two provinces lying east and west of the Lower Danube, called the Banate of Severin and Macsó, became part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

A Conservative Turn

Béla IV (1235–70), who was crowned after his father's death, made it clear with his first measures that he wanted to break with his predecessors' policies in every respect. Béla's political ideal was the absolute power of the first Árpád kings, and his objective was to restore conditions of the era of Béla III. He thought that taking back the "useless and unnecessary land donations" of the previous years was the first step to his goal. He had already tried to implement his policy in his father's life – without any success. After his accession to the throne, he started to realise his plan again. This action brought only moderate success, but the consequences were rather serious.

There was such great dissatisfaction with the king's policy that in 1239, Béla had to give up repossessing royal donations. However, the "hostility between the king and the Hungarians" – as the contemporary Rogerius characterised the mood of the country – did not cease. The reason for this was the receiving of the Cumans into the country. A large group of Cumans settled in Hungary in 1239, with Béla's permission, and these nomadic Cumans soon got into clashes with the local people. Both sides were insulted, but the Hungarians found that their king sided with the Cumans in dubious questions.

The Catastrophe

This was the situation in the country at the end of 1240, when the troops of the Mongolians – known as Tartars in Europe – reached the borders. Friar Julian, who went to search for the Eastern Magyars, brought reliable news about the launch of a Tartar attack years earlier, but the king was engaged in domestic problems, and the people in the country thought the Tartars were just some sort of rambling nomadic people. Béla was late and hesitant to take measures to defend the country; and matters even worsened when the Cuman Khan Köten – who was unjustly accused of colluding with the Tartars – was massacred in a camp in Pest by the mob. The furious Cumans stormed out of the country leaving desolation behind them, and Béla IV lost a powerful army.

In the spring of 1241, the Tartars launched attacks on the unprepared country from three directions. Béla IV tried to attack their main army with his troops, but he suffered a catastrophic defeat at Muhi, near the Sajó River. The king's followers saved their ruler with great difficulty, but most of his army – among them were prelates and dignitaries – was lost. By the summer of 1241, the territory north and east of the River Danube fell into the hands of the Tartars. Only few fortresses and castles could resist. Béla IV organised the defence of the Danube line, and he desperately tried to solicit help from the West – without success.

With the onset of winter, the Tartars crossed the frozen Danube, looking for Béla IV. The king had fled to Dalmatia, and the Tartars, following his trace, rushed through Transdanubia and Slavonia. They failed to capture Béla, and in the spring of 1242, they unexpectedly left the country, which they ravaged savagely. The degree of the Mongol devastation is hard to estimate: the decrease in population might

have been somewhere between 10 and 50 per cent. The greatest damages were incurred in Transylvania and in the Great Plain; while the mountain areas, Transdanubia and Slavonia were quite lucky. After a year of war – as typically happens – famine further decimated the population of the country.

The Reconstruction of the Country

Returning from Dalmatia, seeing the bitter consequences of the Mongol Invasion, Béla realised that his policy had been a failure. Instead of confrontations, he tried to find the balance between the autonomous development of society and the interests of royal power. His surveys of possession after the invasion did not intend to forcefully restore the former royal estates any more, but they guaranteed the people's own legal possessions. In his policy, he focused on measures to repel a new Mongol attack. He learned the strategic lessons from the Mongol Invasion, so he had stone fortresses built, and with his land donations he motivated his subordinates as well. Resettling the Cumans into the country was another defensive measure.

Béla IV's other measures were aimed at consolidating the economy of the country. By founding new settlements, or giving privileges to existing ones, he created Western European-type cities, i.e. cities with autonomous local governments. One of these was Buda, founded in 1247. His successors followed this example later, so the outline of the medieval Hungarian network of cities started to take shape in the decades after the Mongol Invasion. Béla also reformed the minting of money and customs regulations. He had some new mints set up – in one of these, in Slavonia, silver denarii of stable value were minted – and the new customs regulations considered not only the quantity of goods but also their value.

In his foreign policy, the king was busy with the case of the neighbouring Babenberg provinces. The Babenbergs were the rulers of Austria and Styria, and the last male member of the family died in a battle fought against Béla IV in 1246. There were several claims for this valuable province; its fate was finally decided in the fight between the king of Bohemia, Ottokar II, and Béla IV. They came to an agreement at first, as a result of which South Styria was annexed to Hungary for a couple of years, but the fights flared up again later, ending with Béla's defeat, so he had to give up his plans for a westward expansion.

The aging Béla IV's last years were embittered by the conflict with his elder son, Stephen. The exact reasons are not known; contemporary sources suggest several, equally credible answers. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the initiator was Stephen, who governed first Transylvania, then Styria and finally Transylvania again. In 1262, he forced his father to extend his part of the country to the line of the Danube, and then he took up the title "junior king", which was unknown up to that time. The relationship between Béla and Stephen was still not resolved, and in 1264, Béla IV sent troops against his son. After Béla's initial successes, Stephen gained victory. The peace treaty signed in 1265 restored previous conditions, but the tension among the members of the dynasty did not ease.



*The Mongol Invasion,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*

THE LAST KINGS OF THE ÁRPÁD DYNASTY

Attila Zsoldos

After his father's death, the junior king became the king of the whole country under the name Stephen V (1270–72), and despite the precedents, he continued Béla IV's policy. Like his father, he concentrated on preserving the remaining royal possessions and on the development of cities. He reaffirmed the majority of his father's city charters and he also issued new ones, for example to Győr. At the same time, Stephen, in contrast to Béla IV, was considered to be an outstanding soldier, who was able to force Ottokar II to retreat, who wanted to annex certain western Hungarian territories to his developing empire.



The presumed funeral crown of King Stephen V

The Barons and their Familiares

After Stephen V's death, the kingdom of the Árpád dynasty experienced one of its biggest crises in its history. The throne was mounted by Stephen's minor son, Ladislaus IV (1272–90), but the real power fell into the hands of rivalling baronial groups. The title "baron" – in contrast with modern times – was not yet a hereditary aristocratic title (there was no aristocracy at that time), but it was a word signifying the main royal office-holders. So, the notions of baron and big landowner dignitary are theoretically not identical, although in practice most of the dignitaries bore one of the baronial honours for a shorter or longer period during their lives. The most powerful dignitaries continuously held baronial offices, sometimes even several honours at the same time.

The power of the barons was based on their estates, castles (built after the Mongol Invasion) and the armies of their *familiares*. A *familiaris* was a person, who – at least in principle – voluntarily joined the household of a bigger landowner, preferably a baron, as his servant, so he could become a member of his lord's family. A *familiaris* could expect protection and occasional allotments; in return, he governed his lord's estates and castles, he substituted him in his honours, and, most importantly, they went to war together, sometimes even against the king himself. The institution of *familiares*, which spread in the middle of the 13th century, resembles the Western European institution of vassals, but they are not identical.

In the middle of the 13th century, Béla IV, and to a smaller extent Stephen V, could put the increased power of the barons into their own service, but after 1272 this balance broke up and the barons left the control of the deteriorating central power. The barons intended to unite regions and establish districts of power, where there was no other influential power than theirs, not even the king's. For the sake of this cause, they fought one another and the king. In this period of private wars, violent occupations of lands and other forms of arbitrary measures were most common.

King Ladislaus the “Cuman”

Ladislaus IV, who was declared to have come of age in 1277, temporarily stabilised the position of central power with the help of the prelates of the Hungarian Church, who suffered greatly from the barons' violence. He even managed to defeat some of the rebelling barons. Foreign policy became more active as well. The German princes elected Rudolf of Habsburg to be king of the Romans in 1273, who claimed the former Babenberg provinces for himself. In the conflict between Ottokar II and Rudolf, King Ladislaus IV supported Rudolf, and in 1278 they fought together in the Battle on the Marchfeld and defeated Ottokar's army, who also lost his life. This victory was the basis of the Central European authority of the Habsburg dynasty.

The conflict with the Cumans put an end to Ladislaus IV's experiments for consolidation. In 1279, a papal legate arrived in Hungary to give support to restore the authority of the royal power. Instead of helping the king, however, he focused on the violent conversion of the Cumans, who supported the ruler, but lived according to pagan traditions. He forced the issue of the so-called Cuman Laws, but Ladislaus IV was rather unwilling to enforce this. The debate grew to considerable proportions and led to the rebellion of the Cumans. In the battle at Lake Hód, the king put down the rebels, but after that he turned his back on state affairs and lived among his beloved Cumans until his death. Central power practically ceased to exist: the fate of the country fell into the hands of the rivalling baronial groups.

After the death of Ladislaus, called contemptuously “the Cuman” because of his way of life, many people thought that the Árpád dynasty had become extinct. Dynasties related to the Árpádians on the female side laid their claims to the throne: the Anjous from Naples, the Bavarian Wittelsbachs and the Czech Přemysl dynasty, but the leading dignitaries chose Prince Andrew, who was crowned Hungarian king as

The death of King Ladislaus IV, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum



Andrew III (1290–1301). The prince had his claim for the Hungarian throne as Andrew II's grandson, and if there had been any doubts around the legitimacy of his origin – as his father was said to be born from the adulterous relationship of Andrew II's third wife, Beatrice – the coronation silenced these voices.

The Beginnings of the Feudal Estates

Andrew III's main supporter was a political group, headed by Lodomér, the archbishop of Esztergom. Lodomér and his circle expected Andrew III to break the power of the barons, and they hoped to reach their aim by reforming the system of government according to feudal traditions. The system of estates first appeared in Western Europe in the second half of the 13th century. While vassalage divided the interest groups vertically, from the great vassals of the ruler to the vassal's vassal, the estates created groups with equal rights horizontally. This way power was shared between the ruler and the estates of the realm.

The reconstruction of the system of government concerned the main institutions of political decision making. Up to that time, the members of the Royal Council – responsible for making decisions in daily matters – were prelates and barons, but now “counsellors sent by the country” were also among them. The ruler's decisions were invalid without the agreement of the Council, meaning that the classic division of power evolved. The Diet was formed according to the very same principle.

It differed from the previous assemblies performing legislative and juristic tasks, as now representatives of the nobility also participated and formed a corporate body, and had an active role in decision making.

The king and his prelates saw the social base of the contemporary Hungarian political system in the nobility of the counties. The royal power admitted the royal servants to the ranks of the nobility in 1267, which was previously a privilege of the leading dignitaries. Andrew and his followers wanted to mobilise this new

class of nobility against the barons, so they supported and urged their efforts to form local governments. A law prescribed that servants' judges (*iudex nobilium*), representing the nobility, be appointed in each county. A corporate body that included the county *ispán* and the servants' judges was responsible for the matters of the county's inhabitants. The servants' judges were appointed by the king at that time, and their duties included supervising the county *ispáns*, who were appointed from among the barons.

Although Andrew III was forced to fight against his barons almost every year of his reign, the reconstruction of the system of government – the results of which were recorded by the 1290 and 1298 laws – brought remarkable results. By 1300, the barons were slowly forced to surrender, and the position of royal power seemed stable. This consolidation stopped when the king died on 14 January 1301. The House of Árpád undoubtedly became extinct with the death of Andrew III. The new institutions gradually deteriorated, and the barons, having recovered their strength, turned the fights of the pretenders for the Hungarian crown to their own benefits.



The denarius
of King Andrew III

LINGUISTIC RECORDS OF THE EARLY OLD HUNGARIAN PERIOD

Antónia S. Hámori

From a linguistic point of view, the time of the Árpád dynasty is called the Early Old Hungarian period. The most important changes in the phonetic and morphological system of the language – and later the modifications in spelling – took place in this period. Linguistic records from the age, which enable us to learn about the contemporary state of the language, survived in three categories: sporadic records, which are Hungarian words scattered in Latin texts; textual relics, which are short, unbroken Hungarian texts; and finally, commentaries to Latin texts (on margins, or between lines), called glosses.

Sporadic Records

Sporadic accounts of the language can usually be found in charters. The oldest authentic charter which survived in the original version is the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey from 1055. It is a written document about establishing the Benedictine Abbey of Tihany in honour of the Virgin Mary and St. Aignan of Orleans. It confirms the land possessions of the abbey and its borders. Among its Hungarian words (proper names and place names) there are fifty-eight common words with thirty-three suffixes. Among place names there are word-groups and fragments of sentences as well. For example, (in modern reading and spelling) *Mogyoróbokorra* (monarau bukurea), *Óút kútjára* (ohut cutarea), *Nagyszó fejére* (nogu azah fehe rea), *köves homok* (cues humuk), *Fehérvárra menő hadútra* (feheruaru rea meneh hodu utu rea). Consequently, the Deed of Foundation is a very important source with regards to phonetics and morphology, and to a certain extent, even syntactical aspects of the contemporary language. Among its proper names we can already find Tihany, Somogy and Tolna.

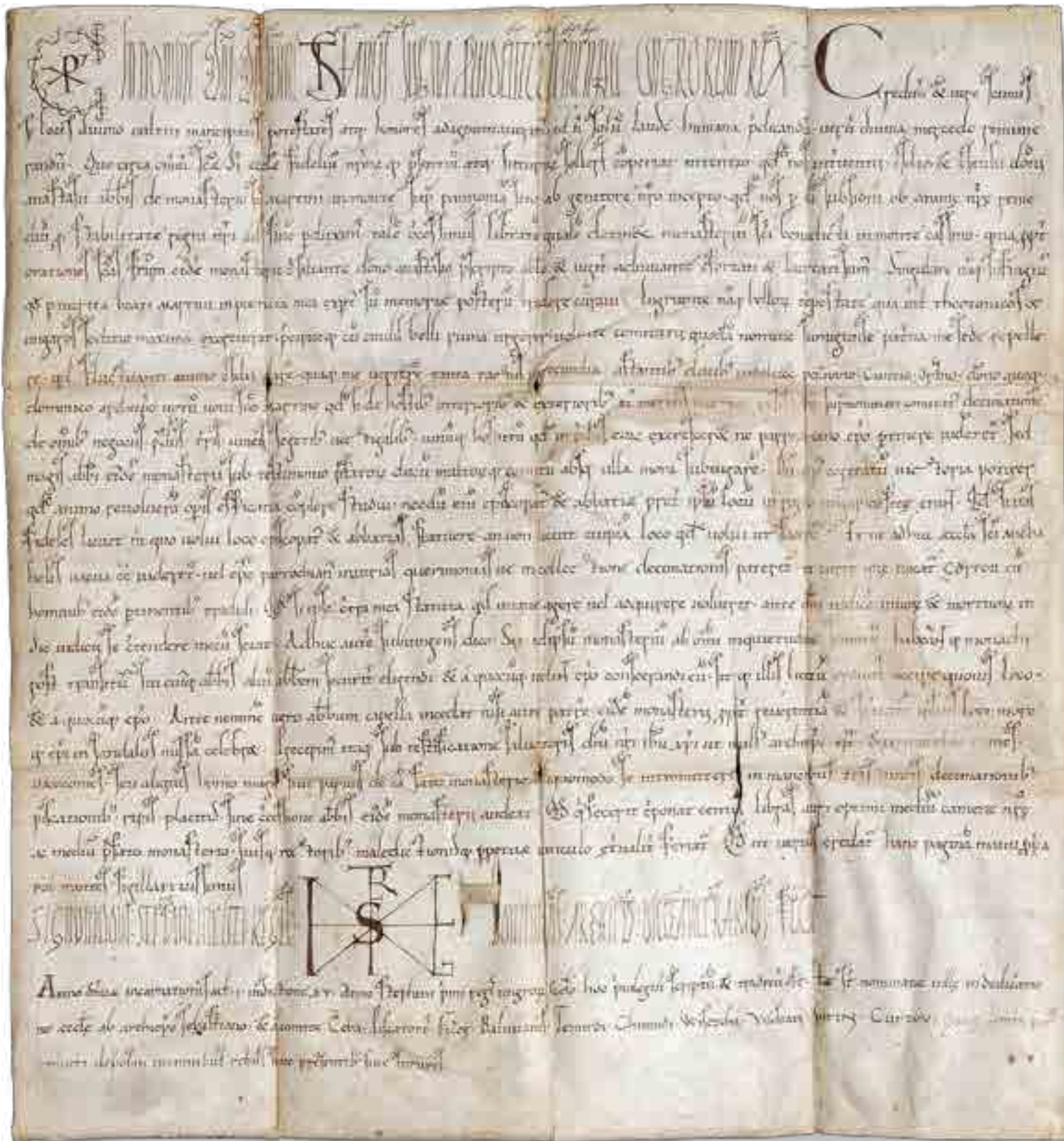
The Deed of Gift of Dömös Prepostery (1138) assures the prepostery of their possessions



*The Deed of Foundation
of Tihany Abbey*

and servants and new gifts were bestowed upon it. This charter is also the first collection of Hungarian proper names: it contains more than 100 geographical names and about 1,400 personal names in connection with the land possessions of the prepostery in different parts of the country. Names of land possessions are, for example, Nógrád (Naugrad), Fekete, Bata, Ság (Sagu). The personal names in the Deed are names of the servants. They are partly of biblical origin, such as Gábel (Gabriel), Jákok

The Deed of Foundation of Pannonhalma Abbey



(Jacob), János (Janus), and partly they originate from common words, such as Lengyel (Lengen), Péntek (Pentuk), Vasas (Wasas).

The biggest collection of names in this period was the Inventory of Possessions of Tihany Abbey from 1211. This charter confirms the contents of the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey. It contains about 150 place names and 2,000 personal names. Some of its place names can be matched with place names already mentioned in the Deed of Foundation, such as Kolon, Fertő, Kövesd, Szakadát. From among the names of servants Patkány (Potcan), Látomás (Latomas), Szállás (Zalas), Emse, Szombat could be mentioned. A similarly large collection of names can be found in a charter, issued in 1193, which grants the crusaders of Székesfehérvár their possessions. In this, the king confirms the properties of the Székesfehérvár crusaders (Knights of St. John), which were donated to them earlier, and bestowed further gifts upon the order. In the deed of gift there are 55 estate names, for example: Újudvar (Ojvduor), Megyer (Meger), Szulok (Zuloc), Fehéregyház (Feyrhigaz).

The letter of foundation of Pécsvárad from 1015, which is thought to have come from King St. Stephen, is also famed, as it contains several personal and place names. This charter is an inventory of donations for the benefit of the monastery at the foot of Vashegy. In reality, this letter proved to be a forgery from a later period, from around 1220, in the manner of St. Stephen's foundation letters of Pannonhalma and Pécs.

A linguistic record similar to charters, and at the same time one of the most significant sources of the history of Hungarian education and law, is the official record of the cathedral chapter of Várad, called the *Regestrum Varadiense* (the Várad Regestrum). For the smaller part, this book of records contains the summary of agreements, testaments, contracts of sale and other matters settled in front of the chapter between 1208 and 1235. For the greater part, it is a list of trials by ordeal which were performed in the hall of the Nagyvárad chapter house, in front of St. Ladislaus's tomb. In the list, more than 30 counties, 600 villages and 2,500 persons are mentioned. Place names are, for example: Szerep (Scerep), Szántó (Zamtou), Keserű (Qesereu). Personal names are: Nemhiz (Numhiz), Ölyves (Vlues), Fehéra (Fehera). Personal names with accusative suffixes are: Bélát (Belat), Medvét (Meduet).

Anonymus's book about the origin of the Hungarians and the Conquest, the *Gesta Hungarorum* (The Deeds of the Hungarians) helps us learn about the language of the age. The author – according to his own words – wrote it so that the Hungarians could learn about the history of their origin and the Conquest from an authentic source, and not “from the false tales of peasants or prattling



Christ is taken off the cross, illustration in the Pray Codex

songs of the minstrels”. Anonymus, indeed, knew the Hungarian regions and the names and location of cities and rivers well, but he did not have accurate accounts about the details of the Conquest. He composed his work in the narrative style, with invented names and stories.

Among the *Gesta*'s sporadic records, we can find common words (for example, *szerelmes* “loved”, *aldumas* [áldomás] “blessing”), and several place and personal names. These names, however, are not characteristic of the language at the time of the Conquest, but of a later period, around 1200. Anonymus projected the geographical names of his own time to the age of the Conquest, and moreover, he invented personal names from these geographical names. From among his heroes and leaders, Zobor was named after mount Zobor, Zalán was named after Szalánkemén, Gyalú was named after the fortress of Gyalú, and Elkölcs was named after the village of Elkölcs, next to the fortress of Szabolcs. Anonymus's inclination to explain names is also reflected in the fact that he gave several naive explanations and folk etymologies concerning place names. In his opinion, Esküllő is called Esküllő, because the Hungarians took oaths there (*eskü* = oath), he connects the name of Szerencs with love (love = *szerelem*), and he explains that Munkács was called Munkács because people worked a lot there (*munka* = work).

Textual Relics

Textual relics provide a great opportunity to discover the language of the age. Only four short texts survived from the Early Old Hungarian period. These are so-called embedded texts copied into Latin church service books. All of these texts were written for the spoken part of Christian church services. Thus, these relics are the first Hungarian manifestations of early Hungarian Christianity. In all probability they are not unique or occasional works; the writer or copier might have put well-known, frequently repeated texts into writing. The form and the high standard of the language suggest that the cultivation of the mother tongue in the age of the Árpád dynasty may have reached high standards.

The oldest known Hungarian text relic is the “Funeral Oration and Prayer” (*Halotti beszéd és könyörgés*) from the end of the 12th century, which survived in the Pray Codex. Its first part, the oration itself is not a translation of a Latin funeral speech but a Hungarian interpretation of it by heart. The person who wrote it down might have made a lot of similar speeches before he recorded this piece. He reminds us of the Fall in bitter words, and mentions the fact that by breaking the law of Paradise, the first man brought death into the world for the whole human race. The oration is written in rhythmic prose, full of questions and adequate answers, repeating words and sentences for emphasis; a unique genre on the borderline of poetry and prose.

The various poetic tools enhance the effects of the text, for example: figura etymologica: *halálnak halálával balsz* (you will die with the death of deaths), synonyms: *jorgasson őneki és kegyedjen* (let God be righteous and merciful with him), alliterations: *mennyei malasztban* (in divine grace), *halláholtát* (having heard of his death). The second part of the “Funeral Oration”, the prayer for the dead person, is the translation of the official Latin church text. The structural division of the text reflects a conscious planning: the full stops followed by capital letters are used to indicate a separate sentence; the full stops followed by lower case letters are used to indicate (sub)clauses.

The Königsberg Fragment and its Ribbons is a praise of the Virgin Mary from the beginning of the 13th century. Its text was repeated as a litany. It consists of three incomplete text fragments. The first part is the “Fragment” itself, it is a meditation on Mary as a virgin mother. The second part tells the story of the archangel Gabriel's mission in a colourful dialogue, then it quotes the words of the annunciation. The prayer referring to the angelic salutation, beginning with “Hail (*üdvözlégy*) ...”, first appears here in the Hungarian language. The third part of the text fragment is an extract from a medieval Mary legend, in which the author meditates on Mary being a mother. Here we can also find poetic tools (figura etymologica, alliteration), for example: *királyok királyának szent arany oltára* (saint

golden altar of the king of kings), *angyaloknak asszonyához* (to the lady of the angles), *világon való bűnösök* (sinners on the earth).

The “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary” (*Ómagyar Mária-siralom*) is the first poem written in Hungarian. It originates from the middle of the 13th century, and it is one of the most beautiful and most lyrical pieces of early Hungarian poetry – and of Hungarian literature as a whole. The miserable mother Virgin Mary is standing under the cross, and she is lamenting the sufferings and unjust death of her saintly son. She is calling her son in pain, then states that she would like to die together with her son. The author enhances the beauty of his two-beat line poem by using various linguistic means, such as similes: *édes mézjül* (like sweet honey), *véred hízul vízjül* (your blood will become water); synonyms: *bíval aszok epedek* (I’m suffering in pain and agony), *fogva, húztozva, ...ököd* (you are holding and carrying [it] ... and kill [it]), alliterations: *siralommal sepedek, választ világotól*, figura etymologica: *Világ világa, virágnak virága* (world of worlds, flower of flowers). The “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary”, which avoids Latinisms, represents high standards in Hungarian literary composition, and its author had an outstanding sense of language, rhythm and music.

The Gyulafehérvár Lines from the second half of the 13th century do not form a complete text, they are actually drafts of sermons, or leading ideas of sermons in rhythmic form. This linguistic record consists of three parts. The first part is the draft of a sermon for the New Year, and the author meditates on the question of what Jesus’s name means to people. The second part is about the celebration of Thomas the Apostle, and answers the question of how the believers see Christ. The third part is a sermon for the Passion Week, and it lists the circumstances which make Christ’s suffering especially painful spiritually. The Gyulafehérvár Lines is on the borderline between the spoken and written text. Presumably, it was not written as a poem, but the regular structure of sentences and rhyming lines make it similar to a poem.

Glosses

They are evidence of Hungarian spiritual and material culture, so they represent great value from the point of view of cultural history. There are three glosses from this period. These are: the Oxford Glosses from around 1230, which contain eleven Hungarian words, the Vatican Glosses from around 1290, which include four Hungarian words and the Leuven Glosses. This latter one appeared in the same codex which contained the “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary”, and it has nine Hungarian words in it.

THE LINGUISTIC SYSTEM OF THE AGE

Antónia S. Hámori

The written records from the Early Old Hungarian period prove that the language had a rich vocabulary and it also had a well-developed grammatical system.

Vocabulary

In the vocabulary of the age we can still find words of ancient origin (Uralic, Finno-Ugric and Ugric words), and also independent Hungarian words derived from ancient elements, which played a very important role in the language. They are partly names of body parts, partly words referring to kinship, natural objects and phenomena, and the everyday life of people: *él, lát, eszik, ül, vesz, kéz, mál = mell, apa, anya, fiú, ház, vég, lélek, világ, virág, vén, nagy, édes, szép, fehér, három, öt, hat* (live, see, eat, sit, buy, hand, chest, father, mother, son, house, end, soul, world, flower, old, big, sweet, beautiful, white, three, five, six). The number of loanwords, which were adopted in the age of the migration and during the Conquest, is quite high. For example: *szekér, tehen, vám, vásár, csákány, gyümölcs, homok, harang, széplő* (cart, cow, customs, market, pick-axe, fruit, sand, bell, freckles).

The adoption of Christianity and the organisation of the state brought changes in the economic, social and spiritual life of the country, and these changes consequently left their marks on the language. The meaning of some already existing, old words was modified or changed according to the new conditions. For example, the words *Isten, bűn, ördög, ige* (God, sin, devil, Scripture) were used in the Christian sense. The meaning of other words broadened, for example: the word *világ* meant both “light” and “universe”; the word *fél* meant “half” and “companion”, the word *asszony* meant “queen, princess” and “married woman”.

Many new words were created with the help of suffixes and word-combinations (though some of them might have existed already in the ancient Hungarian period): *kegyelem, intet = intés, áldomás, bírságnap, bútor, egyház, húsvét* (grace, warning, blessing, punishment day, furniture, church, Easter). Words created by inner word formation (onomatopoeia, tone-painting) also emerged: *dörög, cinege, cseng, zeng* (thunder, titmouse, jingle, ring). The number of loanwords also increased. Words in connection with ecclesiastical life were borrowed from Latin: *kar, templom, mise, apostol, prédikál* (choir, temple, mass, apostle, preach). From the Slavic languages Hungarian borrowed words that referred either to the Church or economic life: *kereszt, pap, malaszt, király, megye, ispán, ruha, zab, kádár* (cross, priest, grace, king, county, bailiff, clothes, oat, cooper). Some of the Italian

*Detail of the gate of
the abbey church at Ják,
Christ with angels*



Some of the Italian

loanwords also originate from this period: *mázsa, szerecsen, fátyol* (two hundredweight = ca. 100 kg, Moor, veil). German loanwords are: *sáf = korsó, torony, herceg* (mug, tower, prince). Some of the loanwords are so-called wandering (or international) words, which were wide-spread in the majority of European languages. For example: *mécs, püspök, pünkösd* (wick, bishop, Whitsun). At the same time, some words that were in use at the beginning of the period were suppressed, later on they even became old-fashioned or extinct: *isa* (surely), *beon* (only), *fész* (prey), *jonh* (heart, soul), *jorgat* (have mercy).

An assessment of the auxiliary words shows that the system of pronouns – which was formed earlier – is almost perfect. The definite article was created from demonstrative pronouns at that time. The group of postpositions – including the earlier postpositions – widened with the forms of *-koron* (at ... time), *-képpen* (as, somehow).

Concerning proper names, the majority of personal names consisted of only one element. In the beginning, in accordance with primitive name-giving traditions, names originated from common nouns. They referred to the body or character of the person described: Nyomorék (Crippled), Hitvány (Wretched), Munkás (Hard-working), Fekete (Black). Names referring to kinship are: Apa, Unoka, Fia (Father, Grandson, Son). Plant and animal names are: Bokor, Szamár, Medve (Bush, Donkey, Bear). Activity and job names are: Sípós, Lovas, Keverő (Whistler, Rider, Mixer). Later Christian names of Latin origin also appeared: Pál, János, Benedek (Paul, John, Benedict). There were hardly any names which consisted of two elements; such names would include a Latin Christian name followed by a Hungarian common noun: *Johannis girhes* (John bony), *Ladislaus sipos* (Ladislaus whistler).

Some of the geographical names are of foreign origin, and these were created well before the Conquest. For example: Duna (Danube), Körös, Szamos rivers. The majority, however, are of Hungarian origin, which became place names from common nouns. Linguistic records mention several such place names: Füzegy, Agárd, Újudvar, Vasvár, Köveskút. There are a lot of common nouns with suffixes of place names; since the possessive *-é* modified to *-i* in the Early Old Hungarian period, and this *-i* took on a different role, it became a suffix of place names: Püspöki, Halászi, Olaszi. The method, that villages were named after the patron saint of the church of the village, became popular at this time: Szentgyörgy, Szentlászló, Szentlőrinc. It was also wide-spread that the place was defined by a combination of nouns with a possessive adjective (it consisted of a personal name and common name with a possessive adjective). We can find such place names already in the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey, for example, *Bagát mezeje* (the field of Bagát), *Petre szénája* (the hay of Petre).

The Grammatical System

The main trends of the Hungarian grammatical system had already been formed during the ancient Hungarian period. In the Early Old Hungarian period, this system becomes more sophisticated and it also becomes fixed; the grammar is very similar to today's language. Phonetics and morphology



*Árpáadian-age capital
with man's head from the
chapel of the royal palace
at Esztergom*

underwent more profound changes than syntax. The sounds of the language also changed; the system of sounds became complete. Spelling – which was also in the making at that time – could not follow these changes for a long time.

The number of consonants increased with the sounds /c/ and /zs/, then at the end of the period with the sound /ty/. The lip-rounding, voiced fricative at the beginning of words /β/ became /v/.

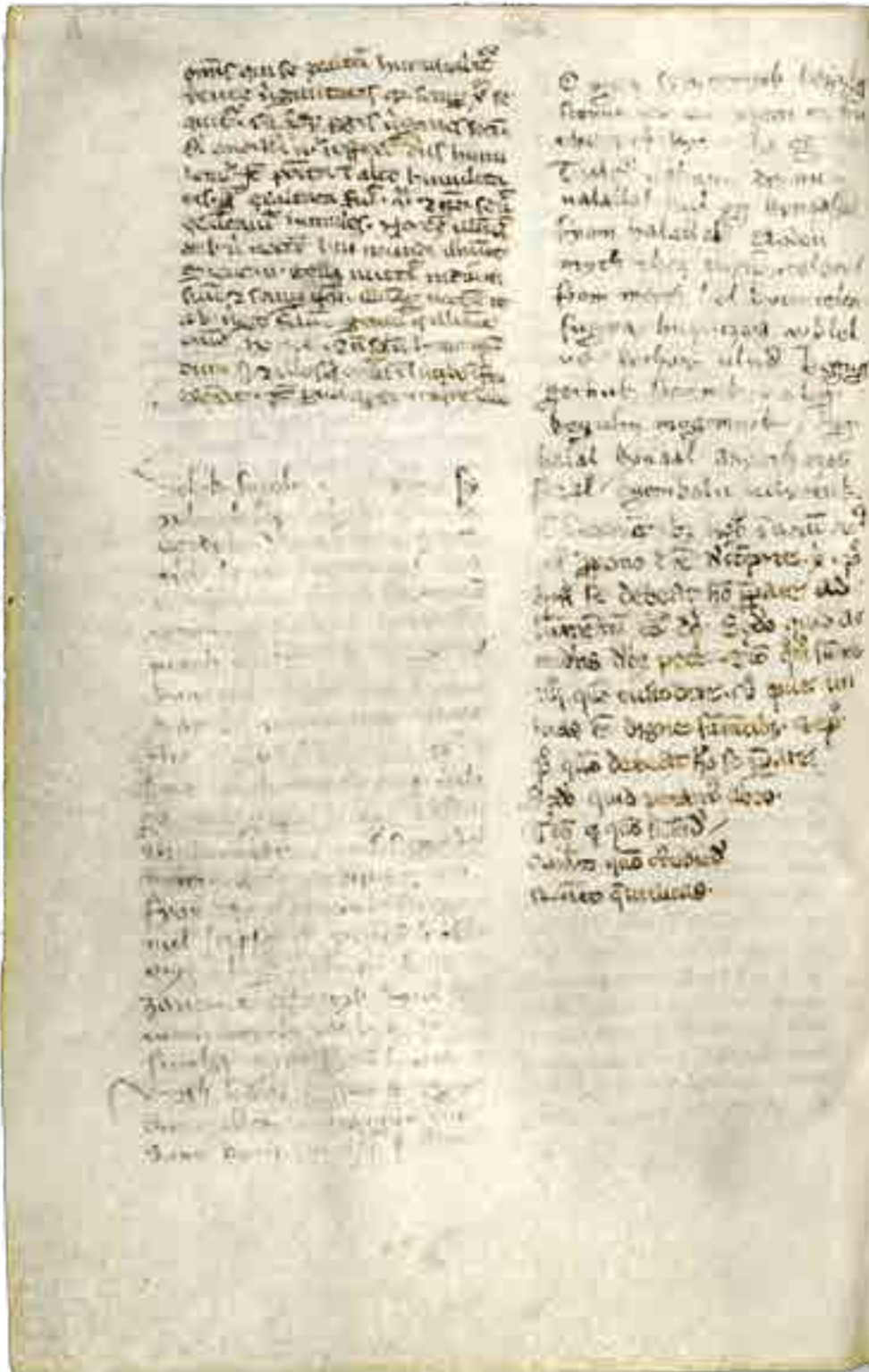
*Old Hungarian Lament
of Mary, Leuven Glosses*

The ancient Hungarian /dzs/ was pronounced /gy/ at the end of the period. The sounds /χ/ and /γ/ pronounced in the place of /k/ and /g/ disappeared. Concerning vowels, the process of dropping the short /i/ and /u/ at the stem of words was completed by the end of the period. We can still

find forms written with vowels at the end of stems in the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey: “hodu, utu”; but these became sporadic by the 13th century (rare sounds, letters).

Other changes in the vowel system made pronunciation more colourful and sonorous. The back vowel /i/ became a front vowel. One of the most important changes was that some vowels became lower and more open: i>ë, ë>e, u>o, o>a. The pronunciation of certain vowels became more lip-rounding: i>ü, ë>ö, â>a. The two-open-syllable tendency became faster. Interestingly, sometimes the very opposite of these tendencies also had their effects. The diphthongs - which consisted of an emphatic one and a less emphatic one - were simplified into long vowels: ou>ó, ou>ú, iü>ëü>ő, iü>üü>ű.

The system of word-stems in the Early Old Hungarian period is very similar to the present-day system. In the formation of verbs and nouns, besides the ancient one-element formative syllables (for example, -d, -r, -s, -sz, -z, -l were verb formative syllables, -d, -a, -e, -g, -k, -m, -r, -s ...etc. were noun forming syllables), longer formative syllables were used. For example, -dok/-dek/-dök, -dít/-dul/-dül, -lal/-lel, -tat/-tet, -bat/-bet as verb formative syllables, -csó/-cső, -ócs/-őcs, -bó/-bő, -ók/-ők, -nok/-nek/-nök as noun formative syllables. The ancient signs expressing time and modality of verbs were still in use. The personal suffix of verbs in the first person plural -muk/-mük changed to -unk/-ünk, parallel with the possessive personal suffix of nouns.



During this period, the system of noun suffixes (inflection) was still in the making; its development lasted till the Late Old Hungarian period. Besides the basic suffixes, which originated from the ancient Hungarian period (for example, the accusative ending *-t*, the suffixes for adverbs of place: *-á/-é, -n, -l, -t*) and the suffixes, which were made from these, new, longer suffixes appear: *-val/-vel, -nak/-nek, -ban/-ben, -ról/-ről*. Certain postpositions became suffixes. The transitional phase is shown by the development of the suffix *-re/-re*, for example: in the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey it is still a postposition: “ohut cuta rea” (*óút kútja reá*), “azah fehe rea” (*aszófo reá*), but in the 13th century it is already a suffix: “Balwankure” (*Bálványkéőre*). The role of certain adverbial suffixes was extended: for example, the suffix *-ban/-ben*, which was originally a suffix for adverbials of place, took a new function- it was also used as a suffix for participles.

The structures and patterns of sentences and word-combinations are shown, first of all, by the textual relics. The system of sentences was stable and varied in the period. We can find almost all the types of sentences and word-combinations that are used today. Examples for simple sentences are: from the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”: *mondá neki* (he told him) - affirmative sentence; from the Königsberg Fragment: *ki legyen neki atyja* (who will be his father) - interrogative sentence; from the “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary”: *Kegyedjeteke fiannak* (Have mercy on my son) - imperative sentence. Due to the restrictions of the genre (sermon, poem), we can find a lot of exclamations in textual memories. For example, in the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”: *Szerelmes barátaim!* (My beloved Friends!), in the “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary”: *Óh, nekem! én fiam* (Oh my! my son). Among the compound sentences, the subordinating clauses are quite rare. The clause beginning with the conjunction *ha* expresses purely the time adverb. For example, in the Königsberg Fragment and Ribbons: *Fel ... mennybe ha tekintte, ékesen téged ... ha láta* (*ha* = if = when; when he looks up to Heaven, when he sees you embellished).

The method of combining words, which was formed in the ancient Hungarian period, stabilised in the Old Hungarian period. There were predicates of verbs, nouns and noun-verb combinations. The subject could be a noun or a nominal pronoun. The subject and the verb had to be agreed in person; in the case of predicates of noun-verb combinations the number of the subject and verb were not always agreed. The verbs and participles were made more complex by adding objects and various adverbials to them. There were a lot of participle structures. In this period, governments expressing abstract relations had already been used. From among the complements of nouns the adverb of quality and the adverb of possession can be found in the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey. The original, unmarked form of structure with adverbs of possession had become more complicated by this period. For example, in the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”: *birságnap* (punishment day), *Megyehatár* (County border). In structures with markers of possession the number of the adverbs of possession *-nak/-nek* increased towards the end of the period. The adjective appositive was relatively rare; its main role was to create the atmosphere and make the style more colourful. For example, in the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”: *mi ősiünket, Ádámot* (our ancestor, Adam) and in the Königsberg Fragment and Ribbons: *boldog anya, szűz Mária* (the happy mother, Virgin Mary).

The complements of adjectives and numerals can also be found in the text, though only sporadically. Furthermore, there is some evidence in connection with the complements of adjectives: in the Königsberg Fragment and Ribbons: *malasztal teljes* (full of grace).

The subordinate structures of the text are almost all connected to some kind of a relation. These structures, formed without any conjunctives, are quite frequent in the “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary”.

The word order of word-combinations and sentences mainly originate from the ancient Hungarian period, and it is still unchanged in the present-day usage. The complement usually preceded the basic element of the main structure. Strict restrictions regulated the word order of adjectives and appositions: the adjective stood before the noun, the apposition stood after the noun.

Kornél Szovák

The Medium: the Language

In the age of the Árpád dynasty, the Carpathian Basin was the meeting point of significant cultures. Consequently, the country of the Hungarians was a multilingual cultural unit. Very few written relics of this multilingualism survived which would attest to the birth of literature. Muslim communities living in Hungary had the literacy necessary for practising their religion, which explains how an Arabic codex turned up at the Benedictine abbey of Corvey from Hungary during the 12th century, or how

Funeral Oration and Prayer, the Pray Codex



Thaddeus of Hungary – a translator of Aristotle – could reach the Spanish city of Toledo in the 1170s. It is also possible that the Muslims, who pursued a very active commercial activity, had practical literacy as well. Church institutions practising Greek rites – whose growth could be traced back to the beginning of the 13th century – also possessed appropriate liturgical books.

Besides these, as the Greek letter of foundation of the monastery in the Veszprém Valley shows, there was an attempt to introduce Greek as the language of official matters. It was a significant fact that in the first half of the 12th century, it was Hungary that received one of the most outstanding Byzantine theologians: Cerbanus, the Venetian clergyman, found the work of Maximos Homologetes (“the Confessor”) titled *Peri Agapes* (About Love) and also some paragraphs from St. John of Damascus’s *Ékdoxis* (Exposition) in the monastery of Pásztó and he translated them from Greek to Latin.

Anonymus’s work from the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries preserved a tiny fragment of the everyday literature living in the Hungarian vernacular; although only in Latin translation. Experts consider the quotation from the twenty-fifth paragraph a fragment of a jocular’s song: “Since Tétény wanted to obtain fame and land with his honesty, as the minstrels sang: ‘They all gained places for themselves and in addition, they also acquired fame.’” Besides this, we have knowledge of a few pieces of work in the Hungarian language in the last century of the age of the Árpád dynasty. Concerning genres, the first unbroken literary relic of the Hungarians,

the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”, is a church sermon. The “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary” is an example of liturgical poetry, and the Königsberg Fragments and the Gyulafehérvár Lines (although they are from a later age, they reflect the 13th century state of the language) are examples of a sermon and a theological essay.

Starting from the widespread use of names of heroes from antique and medieval epics (Tristan, Hector, Helena, Ehellős [Achilles], Roland-Loránt, Elefánt [Olivant]) and certain linguistic peculiarities of the southern Slav Trojan novel, some experts suspect that there were Hungarian translations of the works of Western chivalrous epic poetry (The Romance of Troy, The Romance of Alexander, The Song of Roland) appearing at the beginning of the 13th century, but the existence of these has not been substantiated. Studying the first unbroken literary relics of the Hungarians, we can certainly differentiate Hungarian and Latin literature in the age of the Árpád dynasty.

The language of the literary works from the Árpád Age that survived in sizeable quantity was predominantly Latin, more precisely a version of it used in the Carolingian Age, called Middle (or Medieval) Latin. The reason behind the dominance of the Latin language in the age is mainly the fact that early medieval literature was basically church literature with established, strict genres. Secondly, medieval thinking strove for universality. We must also remember the fact that the alphabet in use was most suitable for voicing the Latin sound system. Change in the prevailing role of the Latin language came only at the end of the 15th century in Hungary, but even then, only very few literary works were written in Hungarian. Latin preserved its dominance in the West through the Middle Ages too, even though, starting from the 12th century, the German language became quite significant in literature and literacy by the end of the Middle Ages, competing with Latin.

Though only learnt in schools, Latin was not a dead language in the Middle Ages in the modern sense of the term. It served as a kind of international mother tongue (*lingua franca*) among educated people speaking different languages to get in touch with one another in several subjects, including



13th-century Bible from
Pannonhalma Archabbey

diplomacy and literature. In his legend, St. Stephen was said to be skilled in Latin grammar, and this is not far from the truth since he might have spoken Latin, just like his son Prince Emeric, legal heir to the throne, who died in 1031. A Polish source mentions King Coloman – who earned the epithet “the Booklover”, and who was educated from his early youth to be a bishop; he might have actually been consecrated bishop of Várad – as the most scholarly ruler in the world. The first literate secular person who is known by name was Fulco *hospes*, who arrived in Hungary at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries from abroad, where he earned his living through his skills in reading and writing.

Lord Adalbert, who was sent to Sicily as an envoy of King Géza II, might have been of Italian origin: he left a book to the monastery of Pannonhalma in his will. As an envoy, and in the possession of a book, he must have spoken Latin, which perhaps he could also read. Miklós from the Csák clan who lived in the first half of the 13th century (1212–39) was educated by his brother, Ugrin, from the Csák clan (bishop of Győr and later the archbishop of Esztergom) is also noteworthy. Out of his three wills, the one from 1231 may have been composed by him, at least this is what its personal tone and sophistication suggest. This may prove that a small group of secular landowners knew and used the Latin language. In the first half of the Middle Ages, the obligatory literary style was rhymed prose, which was followed by rhythmic prose at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Education

The basic means of literary production, the Latin language, was taught to medieval pupils in primary education. The first known record takes us back to St. Stephen’s reign, according to which a school was already functioning in the monastery of Pannonhalma already in the 1010s, a decade after its foundation. Its first pupil who is known by name was Mór, later a monk and abbot at Pannonhalma, eventually bishop of Pécs from 1036, who mentioned in his work, written around 1064, that in his childhood he had been a pupil (*puer scolasticus*) at Pannonhalma. The legend of Gerard mentions that around 1030, this school sent seven monks – who could preach in Hungarian – as consecrated priests to help Gerard, bishop of Csanád, in his Christian mission to convert.

In the second half of the 11th century, the priests of the cathedrals formed cathedral chapters. In the schools functioning alongside them elementary education also began. From the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, in the monastery and chapter schools, the head of the school was the reading monk or canon (*lector*), the teacher of liturgical music was the singing monk or canon priest (*cantor*); but during the 13th century, in chapter schools, both the lector and the cantor passed their jobs to substitutes (*sublector*, *sucentor*). For three years, the curriculum was to read and learn the book of psalms by heart. Besides school teaching, the acquisition of the Latin language was facilitated by performing the daily service: the Latin texts recited day by day were memorised, and their meanings were gradually understood through education.

Theoretically, the curriculum of medieval education consisted of the seven liberal arts (*septem artes liberales*). At the lower level, in the so-called *trivium* grammar, rhetoric and logic (the technique of reasoning) were taught regularly. In an ideal case, this was followed by the curriculum of *quadrivium*, the upper level education: music, arithmetic, geometry and astrology. The schoolbook of the Latin language was Donatus’s classic grammar book, but already in the age of St. Stephen it seemed necessary to obtain the higher-level Priscianus-grammar book. Bonipert, bishop of Pécs, asked Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, to send it to him. Bishop Hartvic modestly said that in his youth he knew this work very well, but by his declining years, the knowledge sank into oblivion.

The first teacher in Hungary who was mentioned by name was Magister Gerard, a witness named in the will of Knight Guden in 1079, but the place of his activity is unfortunately not known. The school of Veszprém, which trained future priests, had gained fame by the second half of the 13th

century but was destroyed in 1276 by the troops of Palatine Peter of the Csák kindred. The revival of the school was secured by King Ladislaus IV's donation, and in his deed of gift the school of Veszprém, which taught the seven liberal arts, was compared to education in Paris, with a little exaggeration. What is more, it also stated that the legal education conducted there was to serve the defence of the rights of the country. The priests educated in Hungarian schools also learnt to write alongside reading. From the beginning of the 13th century, a prelate was required to be able to read Latin texts, and he had to be familiar with canon law and rhetoric, so the Hungarian schools certainly satisfied the local needs.

The Dominican Order, which appeared at the beginning of the 13th century, required theology studies from its members because of the missionary work. In every convent that had more than ten members, the lector held lectures. However, the organisation of independent higher education, the Dominican *studium generale* (college) in Buda, happened only at the end of the 13th century. Until the second half of the 13th century, Hungarian Dominican friars usually gained their qualifications abroad.

Those who wished to receive higher education had to go abroad from Hungary. From the middle of the 12th century, students had to attend Paris, then from the end of the 12th century, Bologna. In French schools, theology and the *artes* were taught (Paris, Orleans). In the modern sense, these were departments of humanities; in northern-Italian Bologna, Roman and canon laws (later medicine and humanities) were taught. At the universities students learnt the most modern forms of practical (diploma) writing. So, these practices appeared in Hungary almost simultaneously as they were introduced, and the “scriptors” passed the knowledge to one another in the writing workshops.

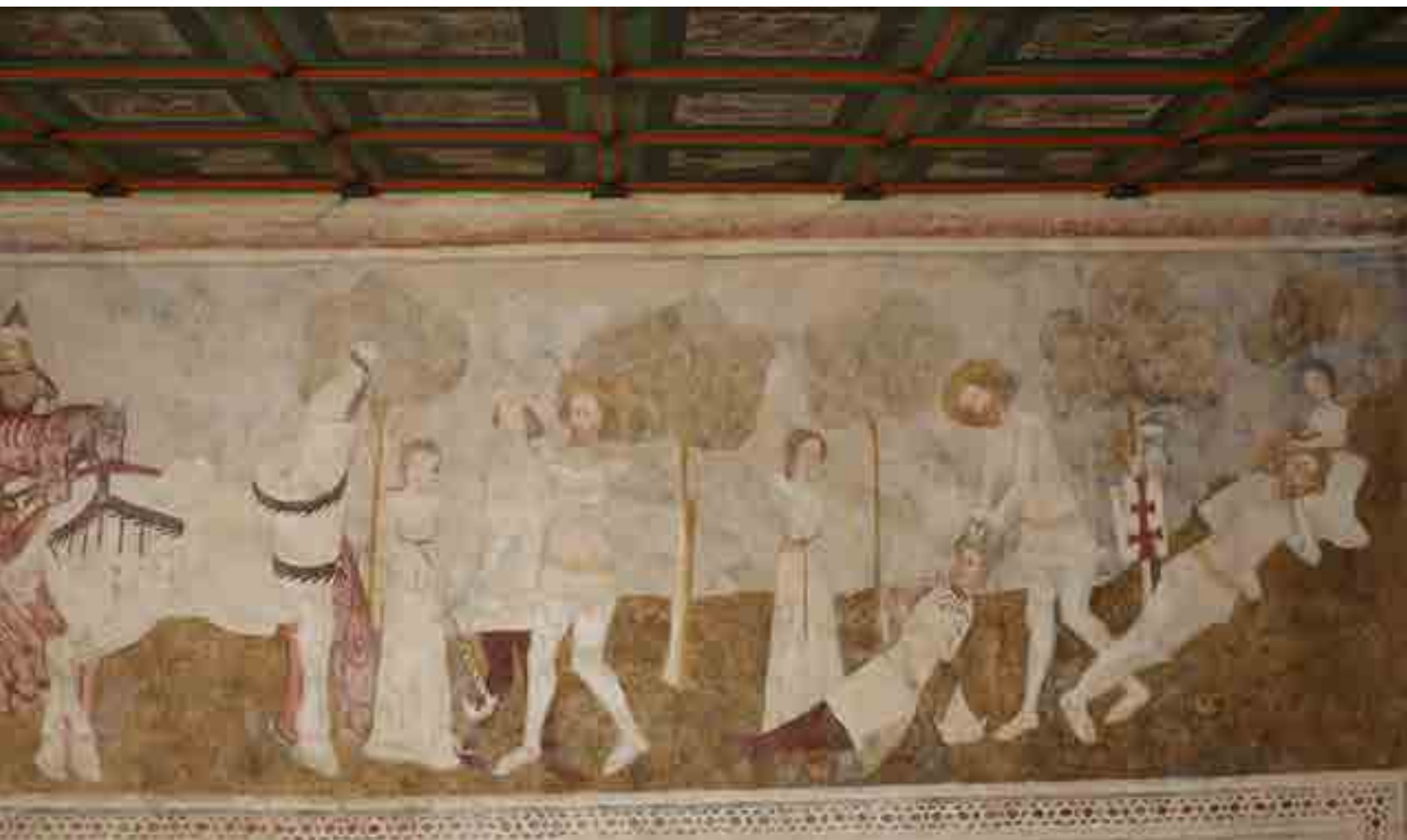
From the schoolbooks of *ars dictaminis*, the theoretical and practical rules of literary creation were learnt. From Paris, students returned home with the title of *artium magister*, and from Bologna with the title of *doctor decretorum*. These students were usually sponsored by their royal or prelate relatives. The first Hungarian student who



Liber Ruber of Pannonhalma, the book containing the transcriptions of the charters and diplomas of the monastery, ca. 1240

received his juristic education in Paris was Lucas, later bishop of Eger, then archbishop of Esztergom, in the middle of the 12th century. The prelate's knowledge in sciences was greatly appreciated by Pope Alexander III. Partly on his suggestion, King Béla III realised that he must regularly send youth to Parisian schools, so he could set up his own well-functioning chancellery.

In all probability, Béla III's famous anonymous clerk belonged to this group of youth who were keen to learn, and in the preface of his *Gesta*, he himself mentioned that he pursued studies of higher education; he might have studied in a school in Paris or Orleans, and he returned as a *magister*. Nicolaus (Miklós) de Ungeria, a Hungarian clergyman, was the first Hungarian student at Oxford who was known by name. Paulus Hungarus went to Bologna at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, and later, in the 1210s, he became a lecturer of canon law at the university there. He then returned to Hungary as a Dominican friar. In the 13th century, more and more Hungarians received their qualifications as



Depiction of the legend of St. Ladislaus on the mural of the church at Karaszkeő, 14th century

doctors of law in this northern-Italian town, until, in 1265, a Hungarian section (*natio*) was formed, where all the Hungarian students could unite. The king supported his loyal clergymen in their studies, as when they returned, they became the enforcers of law in the country, clerks in the chancellery, or even prelates.

Books and Libraries

Engaging in reading and writing required books. In his *Second Book of Laws*, King St. Stephen ordered that the local bishop be responsible for supplying the church – built by ten villages – with the necessary liturgical books. A great deal of these service books were brought by missionaries from abroad. However, part of them must have been written in Hungary; at the foundation of the bishopric diocese of Zagreb around 1090, service books were brought from Esztergom and Győr to the new church. The oldest codex written in Hungary could be the sacramentary of the monastery of Garamszentbenedek from the 11th century. Only one page of it survived.

The place where books were copied in monasteries and cathedrals was called *scriptorium*. The Admont Codex, which contains the text of St. Stephen's laws, though incompletely, the Ernst Codex, which contains the St. Stephen legends, and the Pray Codex, which preserved liturgical texts and historical records were made in the scriptorium of a Benedictine monastery at the end of the 12th century. The Liber Ruber, the book which contains the copy of the charters and diplomas of the monastery of Pannonhalma, was also made here in the 13th century. The book of gospels from Nyitra and the book of antiphon from Graz were copied in the scriptorium of cathedrals, and it is also possible that the only

copy of Anonymus's work, which survived from the beginning of the 13th century, was copied in the scriptorium of the royal court.

The oldest authentic Hungarian list of books survived from around 1090 in a charter listing the land possessions and movable properties of the monastery of Pannonhalma. The list mentions eighty codices by their titles, and since they each might have contained more than one, after careful examination a total of two hundred independent works could be identified. The books served the daily services and the Benedictine way of life, but among the titles we can find some antique authors, Donatus's Latin grammar, the biography of St. Martin, the patron saint of the monastery, and the works of Pope St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, and Isidore of Seville. The other significant inventory of books originates from 1277, when Magister Ladislaus, the provost of Esztergom, made his will concerning his estates and movable properties. The testament lists eighteen books altogether, which could be considered quite a respectable private library at the time. Books in the possession of a secular man were first mentioned in Lord Adalbert's will, which were left to the Benedictine monastery of Pannonhalma by the owner. A typical case of the fate of Hungarian books, and at the same time the proof that they are treasures is the case of the Bible of Csátár [also known as the Admont Bible].

The Audience: Places of Creation

Concerning the place of creation, Hungarian literature in the Latin language in the age of the Árpádians can be divided into two categories. Part of them are of monastic nature. The authors of these works remained anonymous. The primary goal of these books was that they should be read during services. They reflected the spirit of the Romanesque period: their main element was the preparation for the Final Judgement and eliciting fear of it. The audience for monk-authors were the monk-communities and the secular priests, who then transmitted the content to the people through their sermons in Hungarian. For this reason, the role of monks in the development of Hungarian literary thinking is invaluable: they were the audience and transmitters at the same time. St. Stephen's longer, St. Emeric's, and St. Gerard's shorter legend and the legend written by Bishop Mór belong to this category.

The other category incorporates books written at the court, in the king's environment. Their authors either named themselves, or the style of the preface and the deliberate hints enable us to guess their person. Their audience consisted of the more or less educated secular, and from the 12th century on, the highly-educated, ecclesiastical members of the royal court. The prosaic stylistic art of these books often crossed into poetry, their rhymed composition sometimes made them sound like poems (for example, Anonymus's last lines about the story of Tonuzoba, or the hymn about Ladislaus's virtues in the *Legend of St. Ladislaus*). This group of works includes the *Admonitions*, St. Stephen's *Lesser Legend*, Bishop Hartvic's work, Albericus's lawbook, the legend of St. Ladislaus and almost the whole historiography in the age of the Árpád dynasty, which was closely connected to the employees of the royal chancellery this entire time.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTENTS OF LITERATURE

Kornél Szovák

The Diverse Levels of Creation

The boundaries of literature and literacy were less sharp in the Middle Ages than nowadays. Every text that was written in Latin, consequently in limited, strict forms, and was aimed at a definite audience, was considered a literary product.

Juristic and administrative literacy also contains certain elements that make them part of literature. We can also include charters, laws, and council resolutions, which were almost all created in royal and church chancelleries, and in the scriptoriums of chapters and monasteries, where many of the historical works were also born. The arengas and narrations of charters urged high quality compositions. Amongst the written pieces of works, these administrative and juristic texts survived in the greatest number, there were far more of them than the total of narrative texts.

Purely scientific, didactic literature survived only in very small numbers from Hungary from the time of the Árpád dynasty, and these were mainly themed around theology and philosophy (St. Gerard's *Deliberations*), juristic books (Paulus Hungarus's works), or works connected to political science (King St. Stephen's *Admonitions*). Historical and narrative literature in the age of the Árpáds in Hungary meant mostly historiography, i.e. stories about the past (chronicles and gestas, legends), and in a smaller number they were written as memoirs or contemporaneous history (Magister Rogerius's *Carmen Miserabile* [Sad Song], Riccardus's report about Friar Julian's journey). Poetry appeared mostly as church or liturgical poetry. Compared to this, secular lyrics survived only in very small numbers ("Planctus");

*Detail with inscription
from the coronation
mantle*



they were oath inscriptions (the Gisela Cross, the inscriptions on the coronation mantle) and rhymed epitaphs (for example Béla IV's epitaph).

The Categorisation of Works by Their Contents

Literary pieces of works written in the Hungarian language survived in a very small number from the age of the Árpáds (such as the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”), which usually followed the original Latin structure, if there was any, but they always satisfied the requirements of the style and genres of the Latin language. Most of the literary works were written in classic Medieval Latin, and survived in this form. There was a sharper divide between ecclesiastical and secular literature. The aim, audience and function of ecclesiastical literature is entirely different from those of secular literature. Ecclesiastical literature was made to enrich and improve the texts of the service (liturgy). It was supposed to deliver moral teachings and was aimed at church or monastic communities. Its task was to spread religious ideas and understanding to a broad audience.

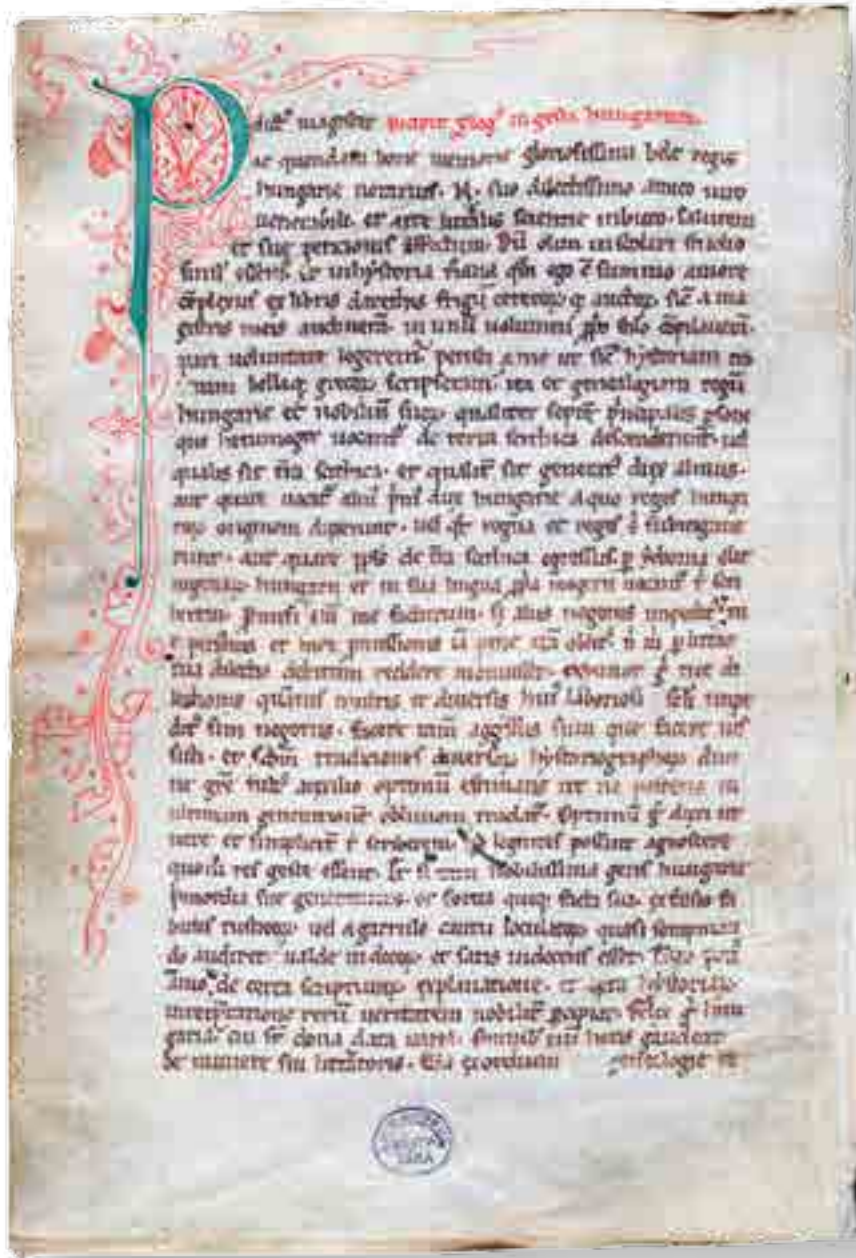
Secular literature, on the other hand, came into existence to preserve human remembrance and to entertain. It was aimed at prelates and dignitaries at the court, in other words, it was for an audience who lived a worldly life. Its task was to promote political ideas and to spread the awareness of authority. Concerning forms, however, secular literature was often disguised as church literature, but the analysis of the content and aesthetic values clearly shows the characteristics of secular literature. The debate on the existence of chivalric/court literature belongs to the domain of secular literature. Even though there were several signs showing that certain phenomena of Western court culture were becoming deeply rooted in Hungary from the beginning of the 13th century, we cannot talk about court literature in Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty. The signs of chivalric culture were limited to formalities and appearances, lacking references to substantial content. The reason for this could be the lack of a relevant social base which could have been the carrier of the courtly lifestyle and chivalric values.

The Periods of Literature

In the age of the Árpáds, literary creation in the Latin language was continuous. Charters (or references to them, for example a piece of a broken lead seal from King Peter) were preserved from every single ruler, without exception. The authors of these learnt from their older colleagues in the chancelleries, and they used their predecessors' charters as samples when copying and creating new charters. During the Árpád dynasty, in almost every ruler's court there was a chronicler, who copied, rewrote, or compiled and continued the codices of earlier chronicles. It is not surprising that the legends, which were created first and foremost for liturgic purposes, were known and read until 1301, but the fact that the influence of St. Stephen's *Admonitions* could be felt continuously is quite amazing.

Besides continuity, there are periods when literature became noticeably more intensive. After the age of St. Stephen, the first such period is the age of King Ladislaus (1077–95) and King Coloman (1095–1116), when not only charters but also legends, chronicles and laws were created. Writers became aware of their values, and juristic literacy also became widespread. Doubtlessly, this upsurge in literacy was the result of the spread and consolidation of the Christian belief and the system of institutions; it was spectacularly shown by the canonisations. The second peak period was the time of King Béla III (1172–96), when juristic literacy was institutionalised by the organisation of chancelleries. In Béla's court, Anonymus wrote a narrative gesta, and the author of the St. Ladislaus legend wrote a biography reflecting a worldly philosophy.

Besides the encouraging influence of the consolidation in Béla's reign, there is a certain purposefulness in the intellectual content of the two literary pieces mentioned above, and also in the fact that Béla



Excerpt from *Gesta Hungarorum*
by Anonymos

sent clergymen to Paris. The ruler – his experiences in Byzantium might have spurred him – probably recognised the necessity and opportunities of a royal propaganda that literacy offers. In addition, the German emperor's crusaders, who marched through the country, also had an influence on the country. The third outstanding period is the age of Stephen V and Ladislaus IV, when historiographies explaining social theories emerged, and chronicle-writing, hymn-poetry, and letter writing became intensive. The latter boom was rooted in the serious problems of social changes, since St. Stephen's system of institutions started to break down terminally, and more modern political and social forms took its place.

The Survival of Literature in the Age of the Árpád Dynasty

Until the invention of printing, medieval texts were preserved in handwritten codices, which were exclusively made of parchment until the 14th century. After that, the cheaper paper was used, which was brought from China via Arabic merchants. It was very rare when texts survived in the author's manuscripts (*autographon*), but in Hungary there were no texts found at all that would have been approved at least by the original author. In most cases, there are only copies, the origin of which cannot be traced, except by checking the mistakes which occurred during copying and then were further copied. The manuscripts of early

works often originate from a later period, and there are works which were preserved only in the first prints.

Initially, manuscripts were copied in the scriptoriums of monasteries, in the chancelleries of the courts of royals and prelates in the High Middle Ages, and finally, at the end of the Middle Ages in manufactures, which were continuously operating. In the Late Middle Ages, copying books was in connection with university education. The size of codices could vary from one eighth of a page (octave) to the big folio, so the sheets were folded into gatherings respectively. The text was organised into one or two columns on the page, and it was written with the relevant font of Latin writing of the age. Big differences can be seen between the plain codices in use, which were written with cursive characters, and the beautiful, expensive codices, which were richly decorated with initials and miniatures according to the customers' special request, or the purpose or content of the manuscript.

There are codices which contain only one piece of work, and there are volumes where several works of the same, or even different topics are collected (sometimes it happened that a later owner had various manuscripts bound in one volume). While being copied, manuscripts were often supplemented, marked with notes, sometimes they were completely rewritten. The survival and preservation of a

piece of work depends on the age, the quality and the number of copies of the original manuscripts. Among the antique authors, the first codex of Virgil's work originates already from the 4th century, the first codex of Ovid's works is from the 9th century, and that of Propertius comes only from the 12th century.

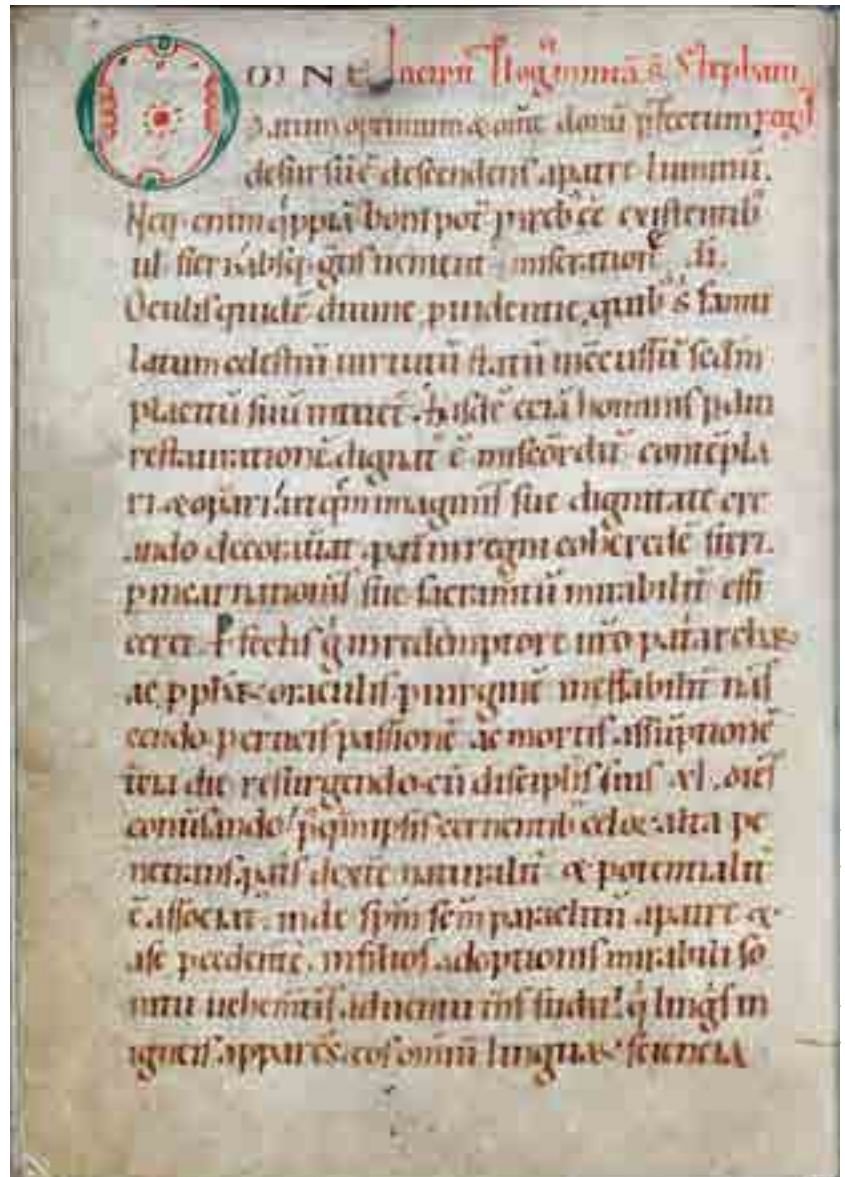
The number of manuscripts was also influenced by its genre. Books of general use, books containing liturgical, juristic and educational texts were preserved in several manuscripts: there are more than 8,000 Vulgata-manuscripts, around 1,000 of the popular *Legenda Aurea*, and Donatus's *Ars Grammatica*, about 400 copies of St. Augustine's work describing the city of God, or Isidore of Seville's encyclopaedia, and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. Historical works survived in an average of 50, maximum 200 manuscripts. The first complete printed book was the Bible from 1455, followed by the first printed editions (*editio princeps*) of certain works of St. Augustine (1467), and Virgil (1469). The critical editions of the works give information about the survival of the text.

Most of the Hungarian manuscripts, including the earliest ones, contain liturgical texts. From among literary texts, the manuscripts of St. Gerard's and Anonymus's work were copied almost contemporaneously as they were written (Anonymus's work was copied no more than three decades after the author's death). They survived in one manuscript only. The earliest manuscript of St. Stephen's lesser and greater legends was made at the end of the 12th century (Ernst Codex), but there are later versions as well. Similarly, the synod resolutions from Coloman's age (together with the Yearbook of Pozsony) were preserved in a codex from the end of the 12th century (Pray Codex), but the oldest codex in which the Emeric and the lesser Gerard legends survived originates from the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Bishop Hartvic's work was not so fortunate, since its earliest copies, which contain the unbroken text, originate from the 14th–15th centuries. The greater legend of Gerard survived in a codex from the 14th century, and the text of the Ladislaus legends was preserved in a 15th-century codex and in a proto printed version (*incunabulum*). The *Admonitions* and Ladislaus's laws were found in the 15th-century Thuróczy and in the 16th-century Ilosvay codices. The earliest manuscript of Stephen's laws is the Admont Codex from the 12th century, although it does not contain all the acts; in contrast to this, the Thuróczy and Ilosvay codices give the complete, and at several points, better text. Magister Rogerius's *Carmen Miserable* was preserved only in the first print of János Thuróczy's chronicle. Simon of Kéza's *Gesta* was the most unfortunate: presumably the only complete manuscript was lost at the end of the 18th century, only the 18th–19th century copies are known.

The case of Hungarian chronicles from the age of the Árpáds is very complicated. Numerous manuscripts – including the ornamented manuscript

The page of the Ernst Codex relating the legend of St. Stephen



14th-century mural
depicting St. Ladislaus
from the church at
Velemér



of the *Chronicon Pictum* (Illustrated Chronicle or Illuminated Chronicle) – preserved the texts of earlier chronicles, most likely without changes, but now it is impossible to trace the history of later changes in the text. As their texts are continuous until the reign of Charles I and Louis I, it is uncertain which part was written by which author and in what age. Still, it is encouraging that fragments of a chronicle (*fragmentum*) were found in bindings during recent decades.

The earliest work which was printed in Hungary is the Buda Chronicle. It was printed by András Hess in 1473 in Buda at László Karai's expense. This was followed by – although abroad, in Brünn and Augsburg – the Thuróczy Chronicle (*Chronica Hungarorum*), which also preserved the text of the Hungarian chronicles, in 1488, in two editions. Hartvic's version of the legend of St. Stephen, the Emeric legend, the Ladislaus legend and the first edition of the Mór legend of the hermits of the Vág Valley appeared in a first edition print, which was reprinted many times at the

end of the 15th century: in Strasbourg (1486), in Venice (1498, 1512) and Krakow (1511, 1519). (In this case, we disregard the extracts from the Pelbárt of Temesvár legend and printed breviaries.) By contrast, Anonymus's work was first printed in the very same year when it was discovered, in 1746, while Gerard's work was printed only in 1790.

We must not forget the fact that several pieces of literary work might have been destroyed, and we do not even know of their existence. Nevertheless, there are references to some lost works. For example, we know that Bishop Gerard had other works as well: he wrote a treatise about the Holy Trinity and commented on the letters of apostles Paul and John (some fragments from his sermons – the legends suggested their existence – were found recently). Similarly, the work of Bernard, archbishop of Spalato, King Emeric's tutor, against the heretics, and his sermons were lost, too. Anonymus also mentioned one of his works, which was written during his years of study, about the story of Troy and the Greek wars, which was also lost in the course of time. But the whole historiography of the Árpád Age was lost in its original, independent form. There are many references to charters and letters that are also lost. And we did not even mention literature in the Hungarian language, which was almost entirely lost...

THE AUTHORS

Kornél Szovák

With and Without Names

Part of the works survived under the name of their authors, part of them survived without. The first legend that was born in Hungary, the legend of St. Zoerard/Andrew and Benedict, suggests a monastic, ascetic world view, but the author – Mór, bishop of Pécs – contrary to our expectation, revealed himself: “I, Mór, am a bishop from God’s grace now, but then I was a schoolboy; although I could see the good man, (i.e. Zoerard/Andrew), but I did not know what his monastic life was like, I learned about it through hearing”. We could assume that the gloomy atmosphere of the legend was defined by the author being a monk; and the self-awareness we can feel is defined by the author being a prelate. This is possible, but it is rather his quest for authenticity that made the author give up his anonymity.

The other Hungarian author of legends who mentioned himself by name is Bishop Hartvic: “Bishop Hartvic, who holds this spiritual office from God’s grace, wishes his Lord, Coloman, outstanding king, a happy eternal life after the final limits of life”. The bishop-author’s demand for literary perfection, his skills, and his self-awareness as a writer are expressed by the fact that he had written a letter of recommendation as a preamble to his work. According to *ars dictaminis*, one of the basic rules of writing letters of recommendation, letters or charters is that after naming the addressee, the author of the letter should identify himself (*intitulatio*). This is how we found out the senders of delivered letters (in case of these and charters, the person who issued them and the actual writer should be differentiated, of course).

The Emeric legend is a special exception, since luckily its author could be identified as Fulco *hospes*, whose biographical data coincided with the data mentioned in the legend, which referred to the author.

The majority of those who compiled laws were also anonymous, from among them only Albericus – contemporary of Bishop Hartvic, King Coloman’s clerk, who composed the laws – mentioned himself by name: “To Seraphin, a bishop who burns with the fire of heavenly virtues, from Albericus – although he is one of the smallest, – a loyal servant of God in the palace of heavenly contemplation”. His case is similar to that of Hartvic.

In the case of scholarly treatises, the name of the author was preserved in the title of the work by tradition, as we can see it in Bishop Gerard’s case: “Gerard’s, bishop of the Marosvár Church, dissertation on ‘The Song of the Three Youths’ to the learned Isingrimus”. The reason why we do not know the name of the person who compiled the text of the *Admonitions* is that tradition already considered King Stephen the real author of it already by the end of the 11th century.

The authors of sermons are known by name only if the supplementary content of the preserving mother codex makes a reference to them, as in the case of Benedek, bishop of Várad’s sermons; while, at the same time, anonymity is quite expected in the case of a collection, known as *Sermons of Pécs*.

Finally, we must mention historical works. The author of the notes in the Yearbook of Pozsony (*Annales Posoniensis*) is not known. We can only suspect that the writer of the first part, until 1060, might have been a Benedictine monk from Pannonhalma. Before the end of the 12th century, we can only make educated guesses as to the identities of chronicle writers. The experts, who date the primary gesta back to the reign of Andrew I and Solomon, suppose that the writer of the Deed of Foundation of Tihany Abbey was Miklós (Nicolaus), Bishop of Veszprém, since they found stylistic similarities



The seal of Magister
Ákos, provost
of Óbuda

between the texts of the chronicle and the Deed of Foundation, and also because the chronicle contains an article on Bishop Miklós. Drawing conclusions from the chapters in the chronicle about St. Ladislaus's life, Bishop Koppány from the Rád kindred – who died in 1099 – might be considered the author of *Gesta Regis Ladislai*.

The evidence from Magister Ákos's career supports the possibility that he was the writer of the *Gesta* written in the years of Stephen V. Simon of Kéza named himself in the letter of recommendation: "To the invincible and powerful Ladislaus III, the most glorious king of Hungary, Magister Simon of Kéza, his loyal priest, wishes that he desire the one, whose beauty is admired by the Sun and the Moon". The name of Magister Rogerius was preserved in the title of a historical treatise on the Mongol Invasion; the situation was the same in case of Friar Riccardus's report. Friar Julian wrote his report in the form of a letter, so he identified himself in the *intitulatio*.

There is a single case when the author calls himself by name – yet we do not know his name: the author of the narrative *Gesta*, Anonymus, King Béla's clerk, kept his whole name secret because of the compulsory modesty of the writer, fulfilling the demands of *captatio benevolentiae* with this. The only thing he revealed is that his name started with the letter P, and there have been a lot of guesses about his identity. Researchers thought he was one of prelates after Béla III's death, called Peter; either Peter, provost of Esztergom, or more recently Peter, bishop of Győr. In the letter of recommendation, the author says that he is a *magister* and he was the sometime notary of the most glorious King Béla, and in school he had a friend, whose name started with the letter N, at whose request he started to write his work. Experts seem to agree that the King Béla mentioned must have been Béla III (1172–96). According to the surviving records, King Béla III had only one clerk whose name started with the letter P: it was provost Pál, who later became a bishop in Transylvania, then the archbishop of Kalocsa.

Foreigners in Hungary – Hungarians Abroad

The peculiarity of medieval literature was its international spirit, expressed in the language and the rules of creation. International spirit was irrelevant for literatures written in national languages, and although this fact increased the intensity of Hungarian literature, it also definitely decreased the tendency to turn outwards. For an educated clergyman, there were more possibilities in the Middle Ages than for a peregrine in the 16th century, since church institutions were the same everywhere, and all the educated people spoke Latin. Consequently, the foreign environment had a major influence on the works of writers.

The authors of the first Latin works, the writers of the *Admonitions* and Stephen's laws, Bishop Gerard, and the writers of charters must have come to Hungary from abroad. Some of the foreign authors soon returned to their country: Arnoldus, a monk from Regensburg, performed his St. Emmeram antiphons and responsorial psalms in Esztergom; Bruno of Querfurt came to Hungary to find Radla, one of the students of St. Adalbert, to check data for the Adalbert-biography. With the appearance of the first Hungarian authors (Bishops Mór and Miklós), this process changed in proportions, but it did not go to the other extreme: in accordance with King Stephen's *Admonitions*, Hungary still meant an asylum. The country offered a church career for those who came from abroad, even if the synod resolutions in the age of Coloman sought to regulate the employment of foreign clergymen.

Bishop Hartvic came to Hungary because of the dispute around the German ruler's right to appoint prelates: previously he had been a Benedictine in Hersfeld, then he became a bishop, then the governor of the Magdeburg archbishopric, but he soon had to leave his residence, and after 1088, he was received in King Coloman's court. Albericus might have originated from a region where French was spoken, and the archbishopric of Esztergom was the ideal place for him to go. Cerbanus only travelled through Hungary, but the memories of his visit are his precious translations from Greek. With the settling of new monastic orders in Hungary from the 12th century, the western connections of the country became more intensive: the Cistercian monasteries kept constant and close relations with their parent abbeys, from time to time the monks appeared in far monasteries, and after a certain period of time they returned to their original residence.

Jean de Limoges came to Hungary through such a relationship. Between 1208 and 1218 he was the abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Zirc, then he returned home to France. Only one of his works is said to be in connection with his stay in Hungary. This is *Libellus de Dictamine*, which placed the art of letter writing, the *ars dictaminis*, into the system of scholastic logic. Jean de Limoges created a dictamen-teaching book, which was highly respected in later times, too: the text of it can be found in a codex, which was once owned by Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch). If the author really wrote his work, or at least a part of it, in Hungary, then this is probably the only handbook of *ars dictaminis* written in Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty. We must also remember the fact that in King Emeric's court, famous troubadours from Provence were composing their poems: Peire Vidal (1175–1210) mentioned, among other things, King Béla's enormous feet.

*The ruins of the
Cistercian abbey at Kerc*



The role of the authors who left Hungary and wrote their books abroad is also significant. The best-known among these is Paulus Hungarus, who later returned to his homeland to promote the conversion of the Cumans as a member of the Dominican Order. He appeared at the university of Bologna in the 1210s, where he taught canon law, then from around 1219 he joined the Dominican Order. In 1221, he became the prior of the Church of St. Nicholas and the dean of the university of Bologna. Later he returned to Hungary at the request of the universal chapter of the order. He died as a martyr while converting the Cumans in 1242, during the Mongol Invasion. Both of his works are in connection with his time spent teaching in Bologna. In the *Notabilia*, he commented on certain parts of canon law, and *Summa de Paenitentia* is the collection of instructions concerning penitence disciplines – a kind of manual for confession.

Although in the latter there are no mentions of Hungary, the comments on canon law contain a lot of references to the country. It is certain that both of his works were written during his stay in Bologna. Both Magister Ákos and Magister Simon of Kéza travelled to Italy, not only because of their studies, but also as the king's envoys to work on establishing dynastic relations. When King Stephen's daughter was accompanied to Sicily to her fiancé, the son of Charles of Anjou, Andreas Hungarus might have gone with them, but he did not return with the delegation. He became Charles of Anjou's chronicler. He is a very interesting person, since he completed his *magister* degree with the king's support, then he became a member of the king's chapel ("Magister Andreas Hungarus, one-time chaplain and friend of glorious King Béla and Stephen").

Although the topic of his chronicle is not Hungarian, the language and education of the author is the same as those of the contemporary Hungarian chronicle writers. In his work, which consists of seventy-five chapters, he eternalised Charles of Anjou's campaign to Naples in 1266, the event during which the Anjou dynasty obtained the throne of Naples in the fight between the papacy and the Western rulers. The activity of these two authors suitably illustrates the participation of Hungarian writers in foreign literary environments. These facts show that the transfer of literature, the exchange of works and the practice of authors leaving their home countries was continuous between Hungary and the West from 1000 on. The universality of the system of institutions – as the basis of literature – seemed to function well in Hungary too.

THE WORKS

Kornél Szovák

Juristic Literacy

The common feature in charters and in pieces of literary works was that the same rules and ideas applied in their construction and style. The reason for this, on the one hand, is that the manual and curriculum of literary demands was the *ars dictaminis* – both for authors of long books and writers of charters, but on the other hand, the authors of literary works were often the same as the writers of charters. The proof of this relationship is the structural and stylistic similarity of charters, actual or fictive letters, and letters of recommendations in the Middle Ages. Two of the formulae of charters were especially suitable for creating literary compositions. One of them was the *arenga*, which – in most cases – was compiled from international *arenga* sources, but there were special Hungarian types of it too. The other formula, whose wording could reach the standards of literary requirements, was the *narratio* of charters; the part that explained in detail the reasons and circumstances of the person issuing it.

While narration remained a short and plain statement of facts in the West, from the second half of the 12th century in Hungary, in the royal chancelleries, it became more and more elaborate. In the case of royal gift donations, the narration listed the receiver's merits and described the events concerning the fate of the country and that of the monarch and royal family. As the *narratio* of the charters grew in size, the demand to create more precise compositions followed suit until the narratives were in the end transformed into complete biographies and stories of careers. These works often showed epic features, and were carefully structured (in parallels or oppositions). But the key point is that in this way royal chancelleries were not only the workshops of juristic literacy but also those of preserving personal or communal memories.

The Genres

The surviving works represent a variety of genres of the Middle Ages, and the diversity

King Béla III's charter from 1193 in which he confirms his mother's donation to the Knights of St. John of Fehérvár



of genres is an indication of the quality of literature. Looking at the conditions of Hungarian cultural life and the genres existing in the West, it is not likely that entire genres would have been lost in the course of time. All that has been preserved should reflect a true scene of contemporary reality.

The most represented genre in the Árpád Age was hagiography. Several facts encouraged the creation of the biographies of saints. As the number of manuscripts and *editio princeps* show, legends were the most popular, and at the same time, they had the widest audience too.

It is typical that a significant part of their audience – the middle and lower layers of secular priesthood – was also a transfer medium: they brought the literary content of the legend to the widest range of people in the vernacular language. Liturgy also required biographies: when performing the divine office of monks and secular priests, there was a need for relevant readings besides hymns and psalms for the holidays of saints, and this was usually taken from the biography of the given saint. Sometimes the biography was specially structured: in each of the six hours of prayer there was an appropriate extract to be read. The medieval practice of the dissemination of ideas also required the means of the legend: in 1083, the canonisation of the first saints of Hungary was celebrated at various places in the framework of a series of festivals throughout the whole year. On 16–17 July hermits Zoerard/Andrew and Benedict in Zobor, on 26 July martyr Bishop Gerald in Csanád, on 20 August King Stephen at Székesfehérvár, and finally on 5 November Prince Emeric were declared saints.

The earliest legend is about the lives of the hermits of the Vág Valley, almost two decades before their canonisation. The author of the legend was probably encouraged by local and personal adoration, and the development of the theories and the propagation of the Italian ascetic trend of monastic reforms.

At the scene where St. Gerard died as a martyr, and opposite this, in the building of the Pest parish, the veneration of relics started quite early. But the common ancestor of the two preserved legends was written at the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries at the earliest, or more likely around 1145. From this, an extract – a sermon – was made at the end of the century at the earliest, and it was used for liturgical purposes. The longer, detailed version was rewritten at several points at the end of the 14th century.

The spirit of the original Gerard legend was highly influenced by the fact that the author in the worldly environment used several sources, which could have hardly been accessible in the solitude of the monastery: presumably he used the text of the chronicle from the age of Andrew I, and in the representation of chieftain Csanád's story, he relied on heroic songs and local traditions of Csanád County. The fact that this text is the first manifestation of the new mentality having evolved in Chartres, France, which was to become the foundation of both Renaissance thinking and Gothic art in the 12th century, also adds to its value.

In contemporary sources, there is no trace of the veneration of King St. Stephen yet. The first sign of the development of this cult is the birth of the *Greater Legend of Stephen*, which does not yet mention the canonisation, despite the fact that it was written between 1077 and 1083, after Ladislaus's accession to the throne.

The author, who wrote for Benedictine communities, worked out an important thesis in the history of foreign relations: King Stephen had refuted Pope Gregory VII's demands to make Hungary his fief in the name of St. Peter by offering the country to the patronage of the Virgin Mary, so the country became her spiritual heritage (the thesis of *patrimonium Petri* was contrasted to *hereditas Mariæ*). The author of the shorter legend was already familiar with the work of his predecessor. His work was governed by a completely different view: in the figure of Stephen he did not represent the ruler of the greater legend who always had his eye on the final judgement, but a pragmatic, powerful and righteous king. This is the first literary work in Hungary that fully satisfied the criteria of contemporary literary theory: it has a recommendation reflecting the author's self-awareness in a literary sense, and the first traces of an interest in Antiquity appear in the text.

Whereas the first two Stephen legends were motivated by liturgical and educational aspects, the creation of the third legend had an underlying political motive. In the prologue, the author Bishop Hartvic makes several references to the royal order, and not only out of politeness. The foreign-born Hartvic had no other sources to rely on other than the two previous legends: all he could do was to merge the two texts. He only added new material where he described how Stephen received a crown from the pope. At the time of the birth of the legend, the Holy Roman Emperor and the pope had been engaged for long in the investiture conflict, i.e. the dispute about the right to appoint prelates. Thus, Hartvic was to prove that due to the papal privilege given to Stephen, contemporary Hungarian rulers had every right to intervene in church matters – a right that the popes had been trying to withdraw from the Christian rulers ever since Pope Gregory VII.

The traces of St. Emeric's adoration are so faint prior to the time of his canonisation that hardly any valuable data have been preserved by Hungarian sources in reference to him. His legend was written between 1109 and 1116 in a Benedictine environment as a reading for monks. In Emeric, the author celebrated chaste innocence, but a critique of the intentions of Gregorian papacy can also be felt in the text (he refers to Pope Gregory VII simply as Hildebrand!).

About a hundred years after the first canonisations, in 1192, at Béla III's request, the pope's legate invested King Ladislaus among the saints at Várad, and with this, the number of saints of the Árpád dynasty rose to three. Although the veneration of King Ladislaus had already started in the first half of the 12th century, political aspects must have played an equally important role in his canonisation.

The original legend, which was written at the time of the canonisation, did not survive. It was shortened at the beginning of the 13th century for liturgical purposes, and in those days changes were made in the longer text too. The aim of the author was to highlight the typical features and virtues of the ideal ruler (in many aspects he came close to the idealised conception of a Christian knight in Hungary), and in his representation, he was the first to draw on the international pool of miracles.

Apart from the legend of St. Elizabeth, who went abroad, the legend of St. Margaret of the Árpád dynasty (*Legenda Vetus*) was the last one born in Hungary during the Árpád Age.

Margaret was not canonised, though there were many attempts to enter her among the Hungarian saints. The writer of her legend, Marcellus, her father-confessor, relied on the official minutes of the canonisation procedure for the story. With the simplicity of the language and structure of his work he sought to express the idea to which his heroine had dedicated herself, and which was relevant throughout Europe at the time: Christian mysticism. The same is true for the legend of Blessed Ilona (Helen) of Veszprém, which was completed at about the same time as the Margaret legend. Although it came to light rather late, its numerous references to the age leave no doubt about its authenticity.

As for the genre of theological treatises, few such pieces (in fact only one) survived that date back to the beginning of the era (monastic regulations written in charter forms, the regulations of the Paulines, and Paulus Hungarus's juristic works do not belong to this genre). Only one piece of St. Gerard's theological works has been preserved: *Deliberatio*, but we know that he wrote more of those. The complicated style and difficult chain of thoughts, the allegorical expressions, the many Italianisms and the omissive sentence structures used by the author must have impaired the

*The birth of
St. Stephen,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*



popularity of the work. The reason why this genre was poorly represented in Hungary is that St. Gerard's work is the only theological work representing the genre in the Christian West between the 9th and 11th centuries.

Though poetry also served mostly liturgical purposes in Hungary, its first examples were not preserved in liturgical forms. It is highly likely that the votive writings of the coronation mantle of the Hungarian kings and the Gisela Cross originate from Hungary. The first Hungarian Leonine hexameter – the spoken invocative formula of the inventory of property from Pannonhalma from around 1090 (*Divinum firmet nomen, quod scripsimus amen*) – was also written by a native poet. It was continued by Enoch, the Dominican friar, and Cognoscens, a canon from Esztergom, in their charter of 1233 (*Cum patre nos Natus iuvet hic et Spiritus almus!*). After St. Stephen's canonisation, three antiphons and three responsorial psalms were written in rhymed prose for the celebration of the king. Until the end of the 12th century, a single antiphon about St. Gerard and the Mary-sequence of the Pray Codex (starting with *Mira mater extitisti*) represented this style.

From the beginning of the 13th century, liturgical poetry became very popular; sequences and hymns survived about the saints of the Árpád dynasty. This process peaked in the 1280s, when –

Depiction of St. Stephen, St. Ladislaus and St. Emeric on the main altar of the church at Szepeshely



probably at the encouragement of Archbishop Lodomér – an Augustine monk from Esztergom wrote a rhymed chant about King St. Stephen (in which he summarised the saint's life and the lesson that could be drawn from it), to compensate for King Ladislaus (the Cuman) IV's Attila-cult and his interest in the pagan past. The first Hungarian dramatic fragments also belong to liturgical poetry. Although these are but slightly modified versions of contemporaneous European dramas, their appearance was

a milestone. The “Star Play” of the Twelfth Night was preserved in the prelate service book of Bishop Hartvic, and an Easter play beginning *Quem quaeritis* survived in many places: in Bishop Hartvic’s service book, in Codex Albensis and in the Pray Codex too.

The first piece of secular poetry might have been written by an educated, anonymous monk who in his work lamented Hungary’s devastation by the Tartars [Mongols]. His poem consists of sixty-two five-line, rhymed verses; both its style and careful structure represent high-quality poetry in contemporary literature. The same cannot be said about the Slovenian rhymed chronicle, written by a foreign Cistercian monk, who summarised Hungarian history from St. Stephen to 1245 in twenty-seven eight-line verses. His poems do not attain the standards of “Planctus”, or the general level of contemporary poetry either. A poetry-minded copier monk of the Pannonhalma scriptorium wrote a distichon about the foundation of a monastery by *ispán* Walfer on the margin of the *Liber Ruber*. This is probably the first example of autotelic poetry in Hungary (“Walfer from the Nagy kindred, who actually bears the title ‘great’ [*nagy* = great],/ had a church built in the honour of the Saint Virgin”).

Letter writing as a genre is worth mentioning, since Hungarian prose under the Árpádians reached the highest standards in this particular genre. King Ladislaus’s letter to Oderisius, abbot of Monte Cassino, might have been composed by Bishop Hartvic himself. He borrowed St. Ambrose’s thoughts from his funeral oration over Theodosius the Great. A lot of letters survived from Géza II’s sister, Princess Zsófia, sent from Admont, but the actual writer of these letters is not known, though he/she must have been a good stylist who wrote letters of outstanding quality. Diplomatic correspondence was of high standards in general (for example, Béla IV’s famous “Tartar”-letter from 1250), in terms of style and rhymed prose. Because of its literary sophistication, Lodomér’s (archbishop of Esztergom) letter to Pope Nicholas IV, in which the archbishop lets the pope know about the undesirable aspects of Ladislaus IV’s reign, is outstanding writing.

Historiography

Historiography must also be examined, not only because of the number of the texts preserved, but also because it can compete with hagiography in continuity, popularity and its role in the transfer of ideas. Its records can be put into the following categories: history-writing (the summary of knowledge about the past), memoirs and narrative gestas of an entertaining character.

Following Western models, historiography had already started when Hungary became a Christian state. Annals-type records were regularly kept (on the analogy of Western monasteries) in Pannonhalma until the 1060s, which were then continued elsewhere. However, annals recorded the facts in a dry mono-sentence style. Genuine historiography emerged with the appearance of the proto-gesta, the common ancestor of Hungarian chronicles in the 11th century.

The authors of Hungarian chronicles knew and read each other’s and their predecessors’ works: they restructured or combined the text with other texts, added supplementary information or shortened the original text, or even argued with it. Although chronicles were continuously written



The death of St. Stephen, 15th-century altarpiece, Mateóc



King Attila at the siege of Aquileia, miniature in the *Chronicon Pictum*

throughout the Árpád era, a peculiarity of Hungarian chronicle writing is that the earliest chronicle survived only from the age of the Angevin dynasty. The text is a synthesis of the works of earlier authors. This means that the time of each historiographer's activity as well as the quantity of text written by them can only be defined with the help of meticulous micro-philological examination. Basically, there are two different views regarding the texts: according to the first (more plausible one), the earlier texts were preserved almost in their original form, maybe with some slight modifications. According to the other view, however, there was an author at the beginning of the 13th century who terminologically and stylistically standardised the text, which incorporated all the earlier historiographic writings.

The other highly debated issue concerning chronicles is the time when the earliest common ancestor of the texts might have been created. The advocates of the more plausible explanation claim that based on certain stylistic and historical observations, the first Hungarian historiographer must have lived around the middle or the second third of the 11th century, so either in the time of Andrew I (in this case, the author might be Miklós, bishop of Veszprém) or King Solomon. There is good reason to assume that there was a revised version made in King Ladislaus's court, which turned the focus of attention to the history of the Béla line. Nevertheless, all researchers agree that King Coloman's chronicler reworked the whole gesta in accordance with his king's interests.

The latter chronicler placed the struggle of Solomon, Andrew I's son, and Béla I's sons in the centre of his epic representation. Based on certain indications, it is quite likely that this author was bishop Koppány from the Rád kindred. The larger part of the text that survived is the work titled *Gesta Ladislai Regis* (The History Deeds of King Ladislaus), but it is also true that this was the text that must have undergone the most transformations, since the different authors tried to answer the political questions of their age by taking sides in the strife between the princes and Solomon. Having been continued by an author in the age of Stephen II, the gesta was rewritten by a historiographer of the Álmos line, who did not agree with the earlier representation. It is most likely him who depicted the personality and reign of Coloman and Stephen II in dark colours in the age of Géza II or Stephen III.

The chroniclers of the 12th century described the events in detail only until 1152. After that date, only a short extract survived from a German extract, which is about Stephen III's reign. Following

this, authors merely completed the work of their predecessors with short comments, or they may have rewritten the story at certain points. It is also possible, though, that there were chroniclers during the reign of Béla III and Andrew II too, but we have virtually no information about the content of their works. The story was continued at the end of the 13th century, when the body of the text was increased significantly, and a general structure was introduced, which is reflected in nearly all the manuscripts to a certain degree.

In the age of Stephen V, Magister Ákos, from the kindred Ákos, completed the chronicle with facts based on family traditions and foreign sources. Additional information was included in the chapters concerning the history of the family and the period of the raids. Regarding the latter, he recorded historical sagas and described the privileges and treasures of the Fehérvár and Buda chapters in detail. His work reflects the perspective of the dignitaries who gained power during the reign of Stephen V, but were neglected under Béla IV. With this, the text was considerably extended, but structural changes were introduced only by Simon of Kéza. In order to be able to express his views on the origin of power, he came up with the theory of Hun–Hungarian kinship, based on an earlier idea (which he may have borrowed from Anonymus), and he inserted a long Hun chronicle before the Hungarian chronicle. Then he also added an appendix describing the immigrants and the origins of social inequalities in the country. Subsequently, the works of Magister Ákos and Simon of Kéza became the textual basis of all later chronicles.

Due to its content, the report about Friar Julian's travels, written by his fellow friar Riccardus, is also part of the historiography of the age. Apparently, the author was not an expert in style, yet this work is an essential source about the history of the 13th century. The most significant piece of writing concerning the history of the era is Magister Rogerius's *Carmen Miserabile*, penned around 1243–44. The Italian author described the events of the Mongol Invasion in a very expressive way, dedicating his work to his patron, Giacomo di Pecorari. In contrast to the traditions of Hungarian historiography, he chose a unique form (epistle) and method (pragmatism) for his writing. The modernity of his thoughts as well as the perfectly adequate form, style and structure make his work an outstanding piece in contemporary literature.

As he was a source for the history of the age, Anonymus is also classified under the label of historical literature. The purpose of Anonymus was to make his mysterious friend acquainted with the past of the Hungarians, so he offered a spectacularly elaborate picture of the Hungarian Conquest. Although the scholarly disputes surrounding his personality have not been settled to this day, it is certain that he was King Béla III's notary, and he wrote his work at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries. Even though he did lean on written historical sources, his basic method consisted of using toponyms and his imagination to revive the enemies of Árpád and his people, and with the help of his peculiar geographical knowledge, he populated the Carpathian Basin with various peoples. Sometimes old traditions can also be identified in the gesta (for example Chieftain Marót leading the Moravian people), but fundamentally, instead of written sources, he used spoken sources (a method fiercely condemned by him in the prologue in order to win over his readership) and folk etymology to compile his *Gesta Hungarorum*.



Solomon, Géza and Ladislaus at the siege of Nándorfehérvár, miniature in the *Chronicon Pictum*

*Terézia Kerny***Pre-Romanesque Art and Architecture****The Second Half of the 10th Century**

The conquering Hungarians gave up their nomadic heritage that they brought from the East in the middle of the 10th century – after having settled in the Carpathian Basin and having been defeated in the course of their European campaigns. They adopted the model of European Christian countries. The ruling prince, Géza, played an important role in this process by accepting Christianity.

It was at this time that Géza started to build a new residence at Esztergom. The first palace building and keep, which oversaw the road leading to the castle and the marketplace, is thought to have been built during Géza's leadership. The other important centre became Székesfehérvár, which contained St. Peter's parish church. In accordance with his will, Géza was buried here. The building with four lobes may have originally been an early baptistery. Behind this structure, there was a parish church with a longitudinal ground-plan, which to this day has yet to be fully studied. Géza's astute and successful reign enabled his son, Stephen, to establish the Hungarian feudal state. He organised the system of local governments based on counties, as well as establishing the church districts. From

*The coronation
mantle*



Stephen's laws we know that royal castles were important elements of church organisation. The baptising churches of royal castles, the centres of archdioceses, were the roots of church organisation; from them the network of subordinate churches and chapels was created. The organisation of royal estates was the basis for forming church districts.

The typical church building of the era was the round church or round chapel, which could be found both in royal castles and near palaces, and they were built in a fashion that embraced Central European traditions. The chapel of St. George in Veszprém was probably built at the end of the 10th century, and shortly after that a cathedral was built next to it.

Art at the Time of Founding the State

Art in the age of St. Stephen is known only from written sources, legends and later chronicles, as materials decayed. Primary sources are King St. Stephen's legends, in which the authors took great care to loyally introduce the king as the founder of the Church, who regularly visits the cathedrals and monasteries he founded. His wife, a Bavarian duchess, Gisela, is also mentioned, presenting liturgical robes to these churches.

Byzantine works could also be found in Stephen's treasury, and he must have had an outstanding collection of relics. During his campaign into Bulgaria, which he led jointly with the Byzantine emperor, the king came into possession of the relics of St. George's monastery in Ohrid for a time. The *Greater Legend of St. Stephen* mentions that the king presented golden retables, a ciborium, crosses and rich robes to his basilica in Székesfehérvár.

Besides St. Stephen, Queen Consort Gisela also presented devotional objects to churches. She had the so-called Gisela Cross made and decorated with precious stones and enamel, for the tomb of her mother, who died in 1006, in the Niedermünster Abbey of Regensburg. She is also thought to have presented the liturgical chasuble to the Church of Our Lady of Székesfehérvár in 1031, and which was later re-made and became the coronation mantle of the Hungarian kings. This piece of clothing represents the known universe, as there is Christ sitting on the throne (*Maiestas Domini*) in the centre surrounded by angels, prophets, apostles and saints in the company of St. Stephen and Gisela.

Besides courtly art, which was mostly imported, church constructions also had an important role, as they changed the character of the country quite significantly. St. Stephen founded the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary (Church of Our Lady) in Székesfehérvár in 1019, which served several duties at the same time. The crown jewels of the ruler were kept here, it was a burial place, and it also housed the court priests, who had a role in overseeing state matters. The royal basilica of Székesfehérvár was significant both in state and ecclesiastical matters.

Unfortunately, only the foundation walls survived from the Székesfehérvár church, and they were built re-using Roman stone-cuttings. Its ground-plan shows a traditional basilica arrangement with a semi-circular chancel (apsis) and three naves. Originally – following Italian or Byzantine patterns – it was decorated with mosaics, but these were destroyed with the exception of a few uninterpretable pieces.

Further surviving examples of the type of church foundations made in the era of King Stephen are the first cathedral of Kalocsa and the cathedral of Gyulafehérvár that was finished later. The history of construction of the Pécsvárad Abbey, founded in 1015, is still barely known today. St. Adrian's Benedictine Abbey of Zalavár also raises several dilemmas, as the earliest known records are from a 16th-century military engineering plan.



Golden corpus
from Újszász

The first churches of the 11th century were quite pure and simple buildings. Most of them were likely to have been built of wood. Rich, grandiose decoration was not yet popular in this age in Europe. The fragments that survived suggest that decorative stone-cutting played an important role only in the decoration of the inner space – with braided patterns and representations of animal shapes designed according to strict geometrical logic (Zalavár).

One of the best-known monuments of the century is the sarcophagus of St. Stephen. It is kept in the ruin garden of Székesfehérvár. The sides of the coffin were carved from a Roman sarcophagus and decorated with symbolic reliefs, according to Byzantine tableaus. Products of minor arts from the age of St. Stephen were almost all destroyed. From among the few pieces of work that survived we must mention St. Stephen's "purse", and a golden corpus, which was found at Újszász.

The Second Third of the 11th Century

St. Stephen's actions and example in organising the state defined his successors' political agenda as well. Several construction works begun during Stephen's reign were completed only in the middle of the 11th century, and the building of many cathedrals also started then. St. Peter's Cathedral of Pécs was presumably founded during the reign of King Peter, but the only certainty is that its reconstruction works started after the great fire of 1064. St. Peter's Parish Church of Óbuda was also founded by King Peter, however, the construction works lasted for a long time. Stephen's successors followed his example and founded their own monasteries during their lives to guarantee a burial place for themselves and their families.

It was not until the age of King Coloman, the Booklover, that burying the king at Székesfehérvár became a tradition. Before that they were usually buried in their own churches. The church of Feldebrő, which stood on the estate of the Aba kindred, was probably founded with this aim too. The church of Feldebrő had a square ground-plan divided by four rows of pillars, with a central place enlarged with four apses on either side and with a crypt decorated with frescos representing stories from the Old Testament.

*The Monomachos
crown*



King Béla founded the Benedictine monastery-abbey of Szekszárd in 1061, which followed the space arrangement of the developed Byzantine cross-shaped churches. The chancel closed with three semi-circular apses, the main nave and the transepts rose in a cross-shape. The eastern and western parts of the abbey's side-aisles fit into the system of the Byzantine nine-division space plan, and its four robust pillars must have supported the dome. This church is a very important relic because its decorative stone-cuttings also survived, which show further reference to Byzantine art.

The main characteristic feature of stone-cuttings in the palmette-braided ornamental style is that they are definitely of Byzantine nature. Palmette-motifs appeared frequently in significant positions in churches at that time: on capitals, corbels, corner stones. Besides rulers, aristocrats also founded churches in the second half of the 11th century. Around 1067, Peter from the Aba kindred founded a monastery at Százd. Around 1061 Otto *ispán* from the Győr kindred also founded a monastery at Zselicszentjakab.

Byzantine relations appeared not only in decorative sculpture, but there were also several Greek Christian churches and monasteries in this period (for example, Tihany, Visegrád). The adoption of Byzantine smithery was quite significant, as is demonstrated by the partitioned enamelled woman's crown, made during the reign of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, which was found in Nyitra, and the partitioned enamelled hoop of the Holy Crown of Hungary. Wood-cuttings from the Benedictine monastery of Dombó in the south of Hungary and the tomb stone from Aracs refer to Byzantine cultural relations too.

Romanesque Art

The First Period of Romanesque Art

(The End of the 11th Century – the Beginning of the 12th Century)

In this period, the basilica, which was divided into three naves by archways supported by pillars, without transepts, and was closed with three semi-circular apses, became a dominant feature in architecture. It was usually covered with an open stone-dressing (the cathedral of Vác, the Benedictine abbey of Garamszentbenedek, Szentjobb, Kolozsmonostor).

The Benedictine Abbey of Somogyvár dedicated to St. Aegidius, founded by King Ladislaus in 1091, is very significant. Besides its architectural values, it is worth mentioning for the fact that its letter of foundation is known. The monastery was under the control of the Abbey of Saint-Gilles in France, and until the beginning of the 13th century it only took in French monks, so this monastery became one of the earliest centres of Hungarian–French intellectual relations.

Amongst the constructions at the end of the 11th century, the reconstruction of the basilica at Székesfehérvár is worth mentioning. It probably happened after 1083, when King Ladislaus I canonised St. Stephen and his son Prince Emeric. The town, which was one of the significant stations *en route* to Jerusalem, quickly became a national centre of pilgrimages. The basilica soon turned out to be too small and needed further expansion, which lasted till the 12th century.

A similarly large-scale reconstruction started in 1064, when St. Peter's Cathedral of Pécs was destroyed in a fire. A huge crypt covered with cross-vaulting without ribs was built under the sanctuary in the church that has three naves and is closed with three apses. The crypt was divided into five naves by columns with square capitals. Above it there was the choir providing seats for the priests of the cathedral. The two figurative stone-carvings that survived show the typical iconographical topics of the Romanesque period: "the fight of the good against the evil". The construction of the St. Margaret's collegiate church of Dömös, founded by Prince Álmos around 1105, began in the early 12th century.



*The crypt of the
provostal church,
Dömös*

middle of the 12th century. They were most probably related to Italian, mainly Lombardian, Pavian and other northern-Italian styles. Parallel to the development of the main centres, building activity became widespread and diverse. Private churches and kindred monasteries appeared, the most significant architectural element of which became the western gallery. The role of these galleries is still not clear. According to the findings of modern research, it was not only the specific place of the patron of the church, but an altar was also set up there.

There were two basic types of private and village churches: the first is the so-called rotunda or a version of that, enlarged with a single central apsis; the other type was the square church from the middle of the 12th century, covered with a flat ceiling. It consisted of a single nave and an apsis vaulted with a semi-dome. There is hardly any information about wall paintings and book culture; only a few written sources or later descriptions and inventories reveal some bits of information.

The existence of early wall paintings is documented only by few fragments (for example, from the archdeaconry church of Visegrád or the royal castle of Esztergom). On restoring the church of Feldebrő, besides the Italian–Byzantine tableaus, some southern-German (Salzburg, Regensburg) adoptions can clearly be recognised, which also appeared on the apsis of the Pécsvárad Abbey and at the first restoration of the cella trichora of Pécs.

The earliest memory of book-painting is the service book from the end of the 11th century, called the Nyitra or Szelepcsény Evangelistarium. This codex, written in Carolingian minuscule, was made for use by the Hungarian Benedictine community. Besides the initials drawn or painted on a coloured base, enriched with a tendril, stylised bird, it is decorated with red, blue and green initials. The Bible that was once kept in Márton *ispán*'s (from the Gutkeled kindred) monastery of Csátár is an outstanding piece, called the Admont Bible today. This memory of Benedictine book-painting from Salzburg was not the only one in the age, it had a great influence on several other codices (Pray Codex).

Contemporary metalwork – the examples of which survived in great numbers – is represented by some bronze reliquary crosses, found as funeral accessories. The pieces of seals – as the practise of issuing charters spread quickly and the use of signets became compulsory – were destroyed. Most Hungarian royal signets also disintegrated, and the signet of medieval Hungarian prelates, chapters and convents are mentioned only by brief descriptions in contemporary sources.

The Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma was consecrated in 1137 in the presence of King Béla II and his court. The details of its early architectural periods were discovered only a few years ago, during archaeological excavations. Significant construction started in Esztergom around the same time too. Its high quality sculptural decorations enriched with new motifs were probably made by the nearby Dömös stone-dressers. The church of the St. Peter's Collegiate Chapter (or chapter-house) of Óbuda shows similar decorative motifs, where the same antique elements appear as those of Esztergom.

The decorative elements of buildings were quite varied in the



The Golden Age of Romanesque (The Second Half of the 12th Century)

*12th-century round
church, Bény*

In the last quarter of the 12th century, the Romanesque style went through a significant change in Hungary. The reasons for this, among others, are the following: the consolidation of royal power during King Béla III's reign, the broadening of cultural relations from Byzantium to Paris, the settling down of new French monastic orders, especially that of the Cistercians, and last but not least the financial stabilisation of the ruling class of the country and their striving for luxury and representation. The centre of this development became the castle of Esztergom. The most important architectural features of the age of Béla III were the enlargement of St. Adalbert's Cathedral and the royal castle.

As the 1188 fire destroyed the archbishopric cathedral, it can only be reconstructed from some high-quality fragments. Such important pieces are the triumphal arch, the Porta Speciosa of Esztergom. From some fragments and an 18th-century copy of an oil-painting, a so-called incrustation technique helped to reveal the sacred topic for the first time, when King St. Stephen offers his crown to Virgin Mary in the company of apostles and prophets. The composition of the scene is analogous with the decoration of the arch of the St. Anne's Gate of the Notre Dame in Paris. Even the rhythmic prose of the writings shows a relationship with the royal chancellery, where the employees were educated in France.

The French influence is even more significant in the inner arrangement, the inner and outer decorative elements and painted decorations of the chapel of the royal castle. Béla III was the first among his Central European contemporaries to turn to the parisian court, which was the Western model of courtly art and royal representation at that time. The Hungarian ruler invited masters from Burgundy or Champagne to the country, who knew the achievements of the Paris region very well.

While Hungarian architecture followed Western patterns, painting showed Byzantine influence. It might be that the only surviving piece of painting in the chapel of Esztergom is a curtain imitation on the plinth, and this is undoubtedly a painted imitation of purple brocades featuring lions.

The other leading workshop of mature Romanesque art emerged around St. Peter's Cathedral of Pécs. The church obtained its final Romanesque style at the end of the 12th century with its richly divided inner space and its two twin-towers, first built on the east, then on the west. The arrangement of its decorated inner space can be best traced on the series of reliefs on the two staircases leading to the crypt. On the northern staircase we can see the ancient biblical parents and the standing figures of the six apostles, while on the southern one Jesus' birth and childhood is portrayed with his tortures above it and the Samson story beneath.

The masters of the relief series must have known the northern-Italian adoptions of these topics, but the role of the French tableaus could also be influential. The baldachin of the altar of the Holy Cross, which used to stand in front of the western façade of the crypt in Pécs, shows a definite similarity with the decorations of the churches of Pavia, appearing after the middle of the 12th century. This style of decoration quickly spread all over the country. The wood-cuttings of Ercsi, the fragments with apostle representations decorating the 12th century gates of the Székesfehérvár basilica, the outer

*Angel's figure from
the Cathedral of Pécs,
1170–80*



relief tabloids of the Benedictine abbey of Somogyvár – on which we can see the half-shape of the judging Christ, an angel and a mythical bird and a boy, who is pulling out the thorn – all represent this category.

Around the end of the 12th and at the beginning of the 13th century, the European import of works of art played an important role in the development of Hungarian art. This process was especially felt in the field of metalworks, but the import of textiles and tapestries, which disappeared before today, could also be traced. In the course of this trade, carved bronze plates, figural hand-washing dishes (aquamaniles), incense, crosses and candle-sticks were brought into the country from the most outstanding centres of Saxony, the Rhine region and the Maas region.

Besides objects brought from the West, other significant products of smithery were the objects with tiny decorations with Byzantine origins. Gold mounts, belt decorations, golden beans and hangers were such pieces of artefacts. A bigger group of these was found in the royal tombs of Székesfehérvár, and the handle and the mounting of the Hungarian coronation sceptre also belong to this group.

The funeral insignia of Béla III and his wife (Agnes of Antioch) which were made of silver and were found in Székesfehérvár, provide information about royal burials. The accessories included a crown, a sceptre, a chest cross, a sword, spurs and a bracelet. Béla III's golden bull, ring and a disc with partitioned enamels, found in Székesfehérvár represent contemporary goldsmiths works.

The reform policy at the end of the 12th century had its influence on state administration and on the settling of monastic orders. Besides the dominant Benedictine Order, the Premonstratensians and Cistercians began to play an important role as well. They soon represented a completely new view, system and liturgy in Hungarian architecture and book-culture. The monasteries of the Cistercians were all built according to the strict monastic regulations and the traditional French styles concerning both the division of their monastic buildings and the arrangement of the church. The details are various, but all of them can be characterised by Early Gothic space-division and the layout of churches whereby chapels open from the transepts.



The most important centre of Cistercian architecture – which lasted till the end of the first third of the 13th century – was the monastery of Pilis (today Pilisszentkereszt). The Cistercian abbey dedicated to the Virgin Mother was founded by King Béla III in 1184. The ruins of the buildings of the monastery, which was destroyed during the Ottoman wars, were revealed by the latest archaeological excavations. The discovery of the monastic complex and the church with a traditional groundplan is worth mentioning not only because it had a richly carved, ornamental plastic decoration with animal shapes, but also Andrew II's Meranian wife was buried here. Based on the surviving carvings, Queen Gertrude's tomb might have been made in the 1230s, and it can also be connected to French art and to the stone-cutting workshop of Reims.

*Premonstratensian
provostal church, Ócsa*

The other significant secular–ecclesiastical centre at the beginning of the 13th century was the second cathedral of Kalocsa. The archbishop of Kalocsa, who seriously fought for power with the archbishop of Esztergom, raised his demands with the fact that he had his cathedral built after the model of French Gothic cathedrals, in a chapel-wreath arrangement and in which the chancel could be walked around. So Kalocsa became the local centre of the area between the Danube and Tisza rivers. The king's head of Kalocsa must have belonged to the decoration of the main entrance.

The workshop of Kalocsa may have transmitted the new stylistic elements from the constructions of the royal centre of Esztergom to the constructions of the Premonstratensian monasteries of Ócsa, Jánoshida and to the Benedictine abbey of Aracs. It was the same in the case of the sculptural decorations of the Benedictine abbey of Vértesszentkereszt. The octagonal pillars of its nave were closed with freezes of animal shapes, and prophets were painted on the prisms of the arches of its gates.

The Late Romanesque

The kindred monasteries represented a widespread type of architecture in 13th-century art. The decorative elements applied on buildings of the age became richer. Elegant façades emphasised with

towers and even twin-towers were more diverse, and there was a choir inside the building. Smaller private churches were meant to look like the family monasteries of rich clans, but we can see the same process in the construction of village churches.

During this period the new mendicant orders (Franciscans, Dominicans) also appeared. The churches and friaries built for them were usually located on the edges of towns, usually near the town walls. The Mongol Invasion did not break this dynamic transformation. The revival of the country, which was burnt down during the Mongol attack, brought about a new wave of settlement, followed by large-scale constructions. The art of the late Romanesque period developed among these circumstances, and it was quite significant considering its achievements and intensity. The constructions of the churches of Lébény, Gyulaféhérvár, Zsámbék and Túrje started then, suggesting the activity of a large stone-dressing workshop.

The abbey church of Ják was outstanding in its neighbourhood. Southern-German characteristics were influential here, both in the architectural arrangement of the buildings and the sculptures decorating them. The church at Ják, which was consecrated in 1256, is closely related to the historical monuments of the Austrian regions. Several smaller churches in Transdanubia followed the model of Ják, such as the churches of Csemeszkopács, Magyarszecsőd, Óriszentpéter and Kéttornyúlak, especially with respect to their gates and outer arrangements. A similar group of masters worked in the region of Lake Balaton, where the architectural details of the church of Litér and Felsőórs suggested the existence of a larger workshop there.

The most important construction works of the age were undoubtedly connected to the third abbey of Pannonhalma, which started in 1224, in Abbot Oros's time. The Early Gothic inner church

*Abbey church,
Ják*



also followed the model of the neighbouring Austrian, Czech and Moravian styles, traces of which can also be found in the fragments of St. George's Chapel at Veszprém, and later at the fragments of the Gisela Chapel, built as a double-chapel of the queen's palace. This process was the most influential in the decorative sculpture of the Premonstratensian monastery of Zsámbék. At the same time there were some efforts to follow the architectural model of classical Gothic art, for example at the constructions of the Cistercian Order (Bélapátfalva, Kerc).

Besides ecclesiastical constructions, secular buildings also played an important role after the Mongol Invasion. It became necessary to strengthen earlier castles, fortresses and mansions. Although the fragments of the reconstructed fortresses and towers (Visegrád, Kislána) are not very significant from the point of view of the history of art, it is a fact that their role was very important during the rebuilding of the country.

A surprising phenomenon in the art of the second half of the 13th century are the unique iconographic decorative elements appearing in private churches. It is best shown on the tympanums above doorways, where we can see the representation of the founder (donator), or the usual *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) composition (Szentkirály, Sopronhorpács, Ják, Bátmonostor).

The remaining surfaces of wall paintings suggest similar ambitions, following partly Byzantine, partly southern-German models (Hidegség, Szalonka, Dejte, Süvete).

Since the time of Béla III, the pieces of work of minor arts prove the adoption and reception of unbroken Western-European (French) influences, especially in smithery. Liturgical objects with carved bottoms, decorated with enamel came to the country from German territories, and some decades later from Limoges in France.

Gothic Art

Classical Gothic Style in the Second Half of the 13th Century

Traces of Gothic art – which had already been popular and wide-spread in Western Europe for a long time – could best be seen in architecture in the third quarter of the 13th century. These influences can be discovered on the building of the Church of Our Lady of Buda, but the same tendencies can be observed on the building of St. Mary Magdalene's Church or on the Dominican church and nunnery on Margaret Island, or even at the reconstructions of the Franciscan church and convent of Sopron and the Gyulafehérvár cathedral.

The stylistic trends traced in architecture played an important role in other fields of art. The new style of the building wave on Margaret Island had its influence in smithery too, as it is shown by the hoop of a woman's crown decorated with bunches of ivy leaves, found in Stephen V's tomb, originating from the third quarter of the 13th century.

The coronation oath cross, originating from the second half of the 13th century, the sides of which are decorated with precious stones and real pearls, is a good example of how the tradition of Byzantine miniature works paired with the Gothic styles of northern France and the Rhine region.

At the end of the 13th century, imported objects had a very influential role. Such an object was the so-called diptych of Bern – made in Venice –, which can be linked to the last king of the Árpád dynasty. The representations of Hungarian saints (Stephen, Emeric, Ladislaus and Elizabeth) first appear on this, along with Venetian saints: on miniatures painted on parchment, though without independent, special characteristic features. There were changes in book-painting and in the art of making signets – in the spirit of classical Gothic style and iconography.



*The coronation
oath cross*

Laying the Foundations of Liturgy and Music

After King Stephen's death, the dynamic development of the country seemed to come to a halt. However, the most important bishoprics had been built, and the institutional foundations of the spiritual-religious life of the country (the network of bishoprics and parishes, the monastic and chapter educational system) granted the continuity of progress and helped to overcome the troubles caused by the pagan riots. While the liturgical and musical life of the country was quite diverse in the first half of the century (as a result of the work of missionaries coming from various regions, during the time of conversion and the organisation of the Church), in the second half of the century the landscape becomes more homogenous, and the leading role of Esztergom increases in prominence.

The newly founded bishoprics – such as the one founded by King Ladislaus in Zagreb – asked for liturgical books from Esztergom, thus accepting the centre's defining and leading role. In 1083, the canonisations of Stephen, Emeric and Bishop Gerard also strengthened the cohesion of liturgical songs, since they brought about the creation of new musical compositions or the application of old ones.

The above-mentioned tendency defined the characteristic features of Hungarian liturgical-musical tradition by the beginning of the 12th century, and Esztergom achieved its full dominance in the second half of the century. "Esztergom is at the summit of its authority; it is directed by highly educated archbishops of a firm character; its priesthood is also educated, many of them studied in French and

Part of a mural depicting a singing choir from the cycle of murals of St. Ladislaus



Italian schools and gained a worldview there that broadened their 'Latin' horizons and a capacity to look beyond the German borders...We are now in the years of Géza II's and Béla III's reign". The Esztergom reform of liturgical songs might have been executed at that time, during Lukács Bánffy's term as an archbishop. This reform regulated the repertoire of songs ("what we should sing"), the structure of the divine office ("in what order we should sing"), and finally the variants ("which melody variant we should sing"). After this we can speak of a "Hungarian Gregorian dialect", especially because this reform must have entailed the definition and selection of the signs used in Hungarian musical notation.

Musical Sources and Hungarian Music Notation

Three service books survived from the end of the 11th century which contained musical notations (the Esztergom Benedictional, the Sacramentary of St. Margaret [St. Margaret Sacramentarium] and the Agenda of Hartvic, bishop of Győr). The musical symbols in these are variants of German neumatic notations, which did not designate the exact pitch yet, but helped only to remember the well-known melody. The first office book, the Codex Albensis, originating from the beginning of the 12th century (presumably from Gyulafehérvár), used the same notation technique. In its contents and arrangement it showed the consolidation of the Hungarian Gregorian dialect.

Hartvic's Agenda and the Codex Albensis contained two drama plays, which were popular and well-known all over Europe: the Twelfth Night "Star Play" (*Tractus stellae*) and the Easter resurrection play (*Quem quaeritis...*). The origin of such drama plays goes back to the tropes (insertion of verse and music into liturgical texts). They were usually sung at the end of the service during the night office, transforming the biblical story into a drama play with numerous dialogues. Both the Twelfth Night and the Easter play had their equivalents in Hungarian folk tradition: the first one was called "star pass" while the second one was the search for Jesus at Easter dawn.

The Pray Codex, which contains the "Funeral Oration and Prayer", is only a few decades younger than the Codex Albensis. Its musical notation from the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries already offers readable scores written on staves. These are the first surviving relics of Hungarian musical notation. Curiously, they adopted continuous tracing from the German neumatic notation, and the ability to indicate the pitch from French and Italian musical notation, thus forging a new, compact way of musical notation. Such a systematic combination of different influences could not happen by chance; it must have been created at the same time and in connection with the above-mentioned liturgical reform.

Other Musical Influences

There is definite historical evidence pointing to the fact that Hungarian musical life kept up with the European development in the time of Béla III. The king sent his court clergyman, Elvinus, to Paris to study the new style of liturgical singing so that he could bring this knowledge back to Hungary. This new style was, in fact, a new period of sequence poetry, booming in the Augustine monastery near Paris, which was hallmarked by the name of Adam of St. Victor. The movements of the St. Ladislaus office, composed in Várad after 1192, reflect traces of this influence, especially the hymn of the office and the sequence of the Mass. The 13th century is the period noted for the composition of offices of Hungarian saints and song series composed in their honour. An unknown poet-composer modified some movements of the songs of St. Elizabeth – which originated in Germany – to the office of St. Emeric. The office of King Stephen was completed into a whole cycle around 1280.

Apart from some fragments, complete musical scores did not survive from this period due to the historical calamities of the century. The Árpád-age Missale Notatum (a service book supplemented

*St. Emeric's prayer,
altarpiece from Mateóc*



with notes) is an exception, which was made in Zagreb in the middle of the century and is now kept in Güssing. It is also one of the first records to attest to the somewhat different rite of the archbishopric of Kalocsa–Bács – founded in the 12th century – in comparison with that of the archbishopric of Esztergom.

Musical Life in the Monasteries

It is certain that the first Western missionaries came to Hungary equipped with liturgical books containing musical notation. (For example, the Pannonhalma library catalogue from the end of the 11th century recorded several service books that contained notation.) Nevertheless, liturgical music life practised in monasteries usually followed the liturgical traditions and musical practice of the Western parent-monastery of the order, with only a few exceptions. In some cases – as in the case of Benedictine monks, who played an important role in the first wave of conversion – the musical traditions of the monastery might have been adjusted to local Hungarian practice, presumably because of the

reduction of the missionary period. While two of the early Hungarian sources of notation are of Benedictine origin (the St. Margaret Sacramentarium and the Pray Codex), in the case of the Cistercians and the Premonstratensians, who were settled with the king's support in the 12th century, no musical relics survived.

The Benedictines, similarly to the two begging orders of the 13th century, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, must have more or less followed the example of their Western European centres, thus they constituted a virtual “island” of education and music. This is also reflected in their musical notation, which used symbols different from the Hungarian notation illustrated with drawings (for example, the so-called quadrata notation of the Dominicans and the Franciscans). At the same time, these two orders also had a great influence on Hungarian intellectual life: the Franciscans excelled in pastoral activities (they would be the ones advocating singing in the vernacular in the following centuries), while the Dominicans distinguished themselves in the boosting of the intellectual life (by founding a college in Buda and organising numerous study tours abroad).

The highly educated saint of the Dominicans, St. Thomas Aquinas, who summarised medieval theology, used his influence with the pope in 1270 to get permission for Canon Eusebius to found a new order, which was to be named after their patron saint, St. Paul the Hermit (which was the one and only order to be founded in Hungary). The Pauline Fathers adopted the liturgical rules and melody variants of Esztergom, and preserved them eagerly as the “emblem” of the order until the end of the Middle Ages – longer than Esztergom did.

The Dominicans were the spiritual pastors of nunneries and groups of lonely widowers, the so-called Beguine communities. The 13th-century manuscript containing the “Old Hungarian Lament of Mary” – which may have been made for the purposes of Beguine pastoral care – originated from

such an environment. While the “Funeral Oration and Prayer”, which is a hundred years younger, was the origin of Hungarian artistic prose, the “Lament” marked the beginning of Hungarian literature in verse. It is still debated whether it was a poem to sing or a translation for a deeper understanding. The model, the original Latin poem, “Planctus ante nescia” was the work of Godfrey (Geoffroi) of St. Victor (†around 1194), the learned poet of the St. Victor Abbey near Paris.

The Latin “Planctus” developed from the sequence literature of St. Victor concerning its language, poetic form and musical composition. It became widely popular in Europe, and was sung with various melodies. Approximately half the length of the original one, the Hungarian text variant is an amazing condensation and recomposition, “which we can consider a marvellous translation and at the same time the first and most beautiful Hungarian poem. It is a worthy overture of Hungarian verse, which was booming for centuries to come...”

Secular Musical Life and Folk Music

Besides liturgical church music, there must have been a rich secular and folk musical life as well, although we can infer that only through a few indirect written documents and the findings of comparative folk music studies. A famous anecdote is that of Bishop Gerard, who in the course of his travels – together with his companion, Walther – heard a servant girl singing as she was winding her hand mill at night. Jokingly, the bishop called it *symphonia Hungarorum* with a scholarly term: the symphony of the Hungarians (he used the word “symphony” according to the original Greek meaning, i.e. “agreement of sounds”).

We know of the existence of singers reciting epic songs from the pen of the unknown chronicler, Anonymus. They were welcome guests both among common people and at the festive banquets of the royal court. Musicians playing musical instruments (brass and percussion) also enhanced the entertainment provided at the royal court, just as the famous troubadours and minnesängers (Gaucelm Faidit, Peire Vidal, Neidhardt von Reuenthal, Walther von der Vogelweide) did during their visit.

Earlier styles continued to live on and develop in Hungarian folk music: for example, the richest variants of minstrel songs date back to the Árpád Age. Some of these songs were almost complete cycles – the persona of Stephen, the first martyr and that of King Stephen are blended in them. The versification of recitative styles and their transformation into songs may have equally started in this period which saw the emergence of a variant of dirges and the psalmodic folk song type. (A later example of these is the “Lament of Mary” from the Brassó region.) The enrichment of Hungarian folk traditions could be put down partly to the stabilisation of settlement structures and partly to encountering the music of the neighbouring peoples: in some cases, obvious European parallels could be established with traditional Hungarian custom-related melody variants.

Zoltán Kodály, for example, cites a 13th-century Spanish melody, which is quite similar to a Hungarian wedding song: “Ne aludj el...” (Do not fall asleep...). (Both of them were traditional melodies of a dawn-song that troubadours sang to their lovers.) Another Hungarian wedding song (Hegyen-völgyön járogatok vala vala [I was travelling through hills and valleys]) had an even closer equivalent recalling the conductus (Solvitur in libro Salomonis...) – a song accompanying the procession of a 12th-century French liturgical drama (the so-called Daniel-play). “Behind other melodies of weddings, match-making, and Midsummer Night (connected to the latter), an early medieval European background seems to appear”. The flourishing of these, however, would take place only in the late Middle Ages.

László Felföldi

Local and foreign sources which refer to dance in the period of the Árpád dynasty are quite sparse, and, at the same time, rather manifold. The expressions *musica sacra*, *musica aulica*, *musica bellica* and *musica*



Part of Lehel's horn,
hornist and dancer

profana (sacred music, court music, war music, profane music) refer to the spheres of medieval culture where music played a special role. Dancing did not yet have such a favoured social consideration, sophisticated genres and forms as music did. Borrowing from the terminology of music history, the notions of sacred dance, court dance, war dance and profane dance, however, still allow for capturing the common features of contemporary dance phenomena – through the close relationship between music and dance.

Sacred Dances

Dancing at holy places (in temples, cemeteries, at tombs of saints) was a widespread practice in the early centuries of Christianity. According to the Roman ecclesiastical author Tertullian, Christians, for example, performed canticles and hymns accompanied by dancing at the turn of the second and third centuries. Biblical dance scenes became the theme of devotional dances, and their representations on sacred objects were widely used symbols. For a Christian, as with music and poetry, dance was a way of approaching God. Widespread beliefs held that dancing was the sacred activity of angels, and the souls of sinners repented their sins in hell in ecstatic dances too.

With time, the Christian Church saw a looming danger in the ritual dances of newly christened peoples. These dances initially had their role in the order of service, at the vigils of great celebrations, and at services performed during these celebrations. The Church deemed them profane and rude, although the people practising them considered these rites just as sacred as the circle dances of the early Christians. Almost all the outstanding Church Fathers left a written document in which they banned the practice of profane dances. Among the resolutions of universal and local ecclesiastical synods, we can find many that banned dancing for the believers as well as the performances of professional entertainers (joculators) till the end of the Middle Ages. The canons of the Council of Paris (1198), the Council of Rome (1215), and the Council of Buda (1279), for example, held similar views in the matter of dancing.

According to the forty-sixth canon of the Council of Buda, “priests should not tolerate people dancing in cemeteries, or inside churches, because, according to St. Augustine, one should rather hoe or plough during feasts than dance”. Looking at the historical sources, it appears that as Christianity became widely accepted in Hungary, the Church turned away from dances because they considered dancing the devil's work – under the influence of medieval mystic thinkers. From among Hungarian relics which prohibited dancing, St. Gerard's *Deliberations* – written between 1001 and 1004 – is worth mentioning. In this, he raised his voice against the inferior habits of priests who liked hunting, quarrelling and the performances of joculators who juggled, played music, and danced. In King Coloman's time, the Council of Esztergom (1100) was compelled to reprimand priests participating in “festive banquets” because of their debauched behaviour.

Because of the series of bans, dancing gradually disappeared from churches during the Middle Ages. However, the fashion of representing biblical dances survived, as proved by the sources. Some believe that two plates of the so-called Monomachos crown, made of partitioned enamel (cloisonné), probably show the Prophetess Miriam's triumphal dance after crossing the Red Sea. Other experts dispute this assumption, but most of them agree that the plates illustrate a sacred dance. It is a Byzantine piece of work from the 11th century, preserved in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum. The bronze bowl representing several musicians and a woman, who is in an acrobatic pose, was also made in Byzantium. Based on international parallels, it can be assumed that this woman probably represents the biblical Salome. The same figure can be seen on the gates and capitals of several Western European churches (for example, in the Basilica of St. Zeno in Verona from the 11th century).



The dance of Miriam the prophetess on the Monomachos crown

The representation of the dances of the angels was a popular topic in ecclesiastical art for centuries. The Byzantine Church Father, St. Basil the Great, had already written in the fourth century that the main activity of angels in heaven was dancing, which he considered a practice to be followed on earth by the mortals too. Such a case is not known in Hungary from the age of the Árpád dynasty, but considering similar European examples, it is likely that it once existed. Unfortunately, none of the medieval Hungarian illustrated written sources (Anjou Legendary, the Nekcsei Bible, Chronicon Pictum) contain representations of sacred or biblical dances, while King David's dance in front of the ark, the greeting of David (who defeated Goliath) with dances, and the dance of angels in heaven appeared several times in 12th and 13th-century Western European codices.

Court Dances

The medieval fashion of dancing was obvious evidence for a European cultural unity, which was taking shape at the time. It started in the West and spread throughout the continent. In the background, there was the specific way of life and culture of the European nobility, the so-called chivalry, in which dancing played an essential role. Besides courtly poetry and music, dance also helped to distinguish the nobility sharply from the peasants and the middle classes, and create a particular culture that suited their worldview. The best-known dance was the circle dance, which originally consisted of a women's circle dance accompanied by singing, and a strolling couple dance, processing in a circle, which was accompanied by musical instruments. In the course of time, these two became more similar to each other in character, so the former could be danced in pairs, accompanied by musical instruments, and later both were supplemented with new, faster, leaping dances.

The conditions of courtly culture had developed in Hungary by the 13th century: a royal court settled in a permanent residence and balanced power conditions with intensive international relations. In the time between the reign of Béla III and King Sigismund, the Hungarian royal court was highly respected; it was also a meeting point for the sovereigns of the age. Hungarian kings got into kinship with ruling families, who owned the richest courts (centres of chivalry) in Europe. The visits of rulers, family celebrations, coronations, receptions of envoys, international negotiations took place according

to the rules of courtly code of conduct, where fights, tournaments, banquets, hunts, dancing, and other forms of entertainment were essential.

War Dances

A note from the 10th century referring to the plundering Hungarians – the St. Gallen adventure described in Ekkehard’s Chronicle – said that the warriors started a triumphal feast in the monastery yard, and “they performed a boisterous dance in front of their leaders”. Later, Anonymus’s *Gesta Hungarorum* also mentioned – when writing about the conquest of the Carpathian Basin by the Hungarians – that after successful battles, Árpád’s warriors held feasts: for example, after the occupation of the Nyírség “the warriors had great happiness in their hearts, and while having a feast, each of them was boasting of his success”. When he described the twenty-day-long feast held after taking over Etyűburg (Óbuda) – which was supposed to be the Hun king Attila’s town –, occupied without any fighting, Anonymus coloured the stories with the knightly pathos of his age. These references might cover a pantomime-like dance-play, which can still be found in the folklore of Asian peoples. The scanty sources of these early war dances may be valued as the disappearing elements of a manifold, rich historic tradition.

Profane Dances

The medieval Church considered everything profane which was outside the realm of consecrated religious life, and was not reconcilable with the disciplines and ideas of the Christian Church. Thus, several elements of the traditional culture found in the Carpathian Basin or brought from the East (heroic songs, ritual dances, cultic rites) stayed outside this circle, just as the performances of dancers, singers, and musicians, who recalled the memories of ancient Roman and Byzantine (maybe Eastern) cultures. There is exact data about the places of settlements and possessions of joculars, chroniclers, minstrels (professional entertainers) often mentioned in Hungarian sources, but we do not know much about the pieces of work created by them.

Looking at the sources, these entertainers seem to form a special social layer consisting of people of different origin and of various social positions. Many of them settled down and served the king or noblemen while others were wandering through Europe earning their living by entertaining people. Secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, priests, friars, citizens of towns and even villeins made use of their services. Skilful entertainers had to be equally able to improvise poems, perform acrobatic exercises, play musical instruments, sing and dance in the 12th–13th centuries.

Despite the absence of sources, the traditional dances of Hungarian common people living in the age of the Árpád dynasty can still be reconstructed from historical sources of later ages and 19th–20th-century folk dances. Based on comparative historical and folklore research, it seems that in this period, dance, music, drama, games and sports were closely related to one another in the traditional culture; both in rites and outside rites, in sacred and profane environments alike. When describing the nuptials of Árpád’s son, Zolta, held at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, Anonymus used the verb *ludere* (to play in Latin). In sources written in Hungarian the word *tombol* (to rave) also appeared. The word “dance” referring uniformly and exclusively to the art of rhythmic movements was still in the process of formation at this time in Europe, and as an international loan word, it appeared in Hungary only in the middle of the 14th century.



Brooch with dancing couple from Tömörd

ST. STEPHEN'S HERITAGE

Kornél Szovák

A Country of Many Languages and Traditions

During their migration, the Hungarians became acquainted with monotheistic religions which accompanied them to the Carpathian Basin. Until the Mongol Invasion of 1241, there were Muslim people living in Hungary in quite a sizable number. They were called *Böszörmény*s, Ishmaelites, Khalyzians or Moors. There were isolated communities of Muslims in 80 villages of twenty-six counties. It was the third biggest Muslim population in contemporary Western Europe after the Iberian Peninsula and southern Italy. They were very active in royal financial matters, and many of them were tradesmen or mercenaries defending the border. Some of them arrived in the Carpathian Basin with the Hungarians at the end of the 9th century, others settled down later spontaneously, for example, together with the Pechenegs, or as tradesmen, or during military recruitment. The synod of Szabolcs tried to convert them into Catholicism by transferring half of the Muslim population to other places. The synod of Tarcal decided to build Catholic churches in their villages and coerced them into mixed marriages. Between 1150 and 1220, a peaceful assimilation started among them, but the persecution in the age of Andrew II put an end to it.

According to some theories, there might have been several Jews among the members of the Kabar tribe which joined the Hungarians. From the 11th century, the Jews lived in urban settlements in smaller communities (in diaspores). The synod of Szabolcs prohibited their mixed marriages with Christians, or keeping Christian servants, or working on Christian holidays. King Coloman ordered to settle them at bishopric residences and to make sealed documents of any deals made with them. In the 1220s they were attacked, partly because of their significant role in royal financial matters, and partly in accordance with the resolution of the 1217 Council of Toledo. Béla IV appointed the master of the treasury to be the judge of Jews in order to supervise them. In 1251, a royal charter assured the Jews' personal protection and the defence of their properties. It also regulated their obligations concerning taxation.

*Mural depicting Christ
in the crypt of the church
in Feldebrő*



As a result of St. Stephen's conversion work, the adoption of the Christian faith was quite successful among the Hungarians. The decline of pagan beliefs is shown by the fact that the 1046 pagan riot led by Vata – which broke out in response to King Peter's violent ways of introducing feudal practices – was not against the Christian belief, but against the Christian system of institutions and the Christian social order. In 1060 Béla I comfortably suppressed Vata's son János's revolt. At the end of the 11th century making sacrifices at wells was banned, although it already was not widely practised. Though Western historiographers still described Hungarian Christianity negatively in the middle of the 12th century, for political reasons, conversion of the population to Christianity had actually been completed in the country by the end of the 11th century.

Only immigrants could cause problems concerning Christian conversion. At the end of the 11th century, the Pecheneg settlers, who came in small groups, soon assimilated into the Christian culture. The Cumans, however, who were received into the country in 1238–39 by Béla IV in one group, stuck to their old religion for four decades, and only Ladislaus IV's Cuman Laws ordered their conversion.

The most noteworthy evidence of conversion by the Byzantine Christians was the name of the Transylvanian church district, which was organised in the tribal territory of the former *gyula*. This did not receive its name after its centre but after the territory itself, in accordance with Greek traditions. Although Byzantine Christianity did not have a substantial social base in the age of the Árpád dynasty, monasteries were founded for the members of the royal family who practised the Byzantine Rite. The Veszprém Valley nunnery was founded for Prince Emeric's fiancée and the Oroszkő of Tihany for Andrew I's wife. The Greek precedents of the monastery of Szávaszentdemeter and the archbishopric of Bács fell victim to the spread of the Latin Church. Around 1204 there was a possibility to organise all the Hungarian Orthodox believers into one independent church diocese, however, the reason for this could have been the temporary termination of the Byzantine Empire. At that time, the animal herding population, that came from the Balkans had not built churches or shrines yet. As there were not enough Orthodox believers, Greek Church institutions were taken over by Latin priests and monks.

The First Inheritors

The first chapters of St. Stephen's *Admonitions* to his son, Prince Emeric, and indirectly to all his successors, were dedicated to the question of how a king should be related to the Church and the clergy, and how patience is needed to convert people to Christianity. His first successor, King Peter, however, did not take his advice at all. Following the example of the German emperor, he taxed the Church, and replaced two bishops during the very first years of his reign. The aggressive method, by which Peter tried to apply Western policies in Hungary, made church people worry. The episcopacy, with the lead of Gerard, stood up to him and declared him unsuited to the throne. They wanted to expunge even the memory of Peter, so the foundation of the chapter of Óbuda and the construction of the Pécs cathedral was attributed to someone else.

Peter's successor, Samuel Aba, ruled in accordance with the expectations of the bishops in every aspect. The eloquent testimony of his ecclesiastical measures is down to the fact that he asked Rome to approve the bishops he appointed. Secular dignitaries objected to him because he tried to accomplish the regulations of the Early Church concerning communal property during his reign. It was very similar to the patriarchal relations of the early period of Christian conversion, when the poor members of clans were protected by the clan. The episcopacy, however, supported King Aba until his defeat at Ménfő. After his death, the king was buried in his own monastery at Sár, and the news of him being a saint also spread.

The events which put an end to King Peter's second rule showed that the fear of the bishops was not at all unfounded. With the lead of Vata from Békés, a pagan revolt triumphed over the rule of the

tyrant. A lot of bishops and clergymen died as martyrs in the skirmishes – so did Bishop Gerard. Only those three bishops survived who later crowned Andrew I (who suppressed the pagans): one of them was Mór, bishop of Pécs appointed by St. Stephen. The ruler, who restored the Christian order, received the epithet “Catholic” later, but the Chronicle mentioned that the reason he did not have any male successors was that he let Christian priests be killed in the early years of his rule.

There were no objections against King Andrew's strict measures. This fact shows that paganism was only a concomitant of the events by then. Andrew's notable order was that people were obliged to keep a three-day fast before St. Peter's celebration (29 June). His younger brother Béla I's laws affected the Church as well. He ordered the change of the date for markets from Sunday to Saturday, to protect the significance of the Christian holiday.

Consolidation of the New Faith

Andrew I's death led to a fight for the throne, and this gave a good opportunity for the pope to intervene in the internal matters of the country. Through the claimant to the throne supported by him, the pope tried to realise his plan of making Hungary accept the suzerainty of the Holy See, thus forcing it into vassal status. Pope Gregory VII supported Géza and Ladislaus against Solomon. In his letter to Géza, written in 1074, he explained that God took the reign from Solomon and transferred it to them because Solomon supported the emperor, and by that he caused grievance to St. Peter (*translatio regni*). However, Géza refused the pope's demands in a very elegant way in *St. Stephen's Greater Legend*: in this, St. Stephen dedicated Hungary to the Virgin Mary, and accordingly, Hungary is the legacy of the Virgin Mary, who is higher up in the hierarchy of saints.

During the reign of St. Ladislaus and his successor King Coloman, the Christian belief and institutions were finally stabilised in Hungary. It was shown by the growth of church organisation, and the fact that ecclesiastical jurisdiction became more intensive, which determined the Christian ways of life. To some extent, Ladislaus reorganised the existing dioceses (for example, he moved the residence of the bishop of Kalocsa to Bács, and that of Bihar to Várada), he attached the newly-conquered territories, Slavonia and Croatia, to the country by founding a bishopric in Zagreb. The new diocese – its bishop was a Czech prelate appointed by the king – was supervised by the only archbishopric, that of Esztergom. The required service books were also brought to Zagreb from Esztergom. The southern bishopric was transferred under the supremacy of Kalocsa only after the bishop of Kalocsa was elevated to the rank of archbishop.

1083 was a significant year in the life of the Hungarian Church, when under the order of King Ladislaus – and surely without the approval of Pope Gregory VII – King Stephen and Prince Emeric (at Székesfehérvár), Bishop Gerard (at Csanád), the hermits of the Vág Valley (Zoerard/Andrew and Benedict, at Nyitra or Zobor) were canonised. Ladislaus had a synod called at Szabolcs in 1092. The king, with his secular and church advisors, took measures in questions urged by the reform papacy, like the celibacy of priests, restoring old churches and building new ones, and the strict observation of Sundays and holidays. Concerning church disciplines, he regulated the receiving of immigrant priests, the paying of the tithe, and marriage affairs were put under the authority of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Among the forty holidays discussed at the synod of Szabolcs, we can find the feast days of the first Hungarian confessor and martyr saints, like King St. Stephen (20 August), Prince St. Emeric (5 November) and St. Gerard (24 September).



Byzantine-style golden double-cross, second half of the 12th century

Coloman and the Reform of the Church

During King Coloman's reign, around 1104 and 1112, there were two (purely ecclesiastical) synods held at Esztergom. With Archbishop Lőrinc as chairman, and his ten bishops participating, the synod focused on making church discipline stricter. It regulated the most important duties of priests, it banned pagan rituals for believers, protected ecclesiastical property against the encroachments of the prelate. It also took measures regarding church government and the celibacy of priests, the way of life, economic and social situation of canons, monks, and village priests, and also the order of services. The king put the crimes of bewitching, magic, adultery and manslaughter under the authority of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The second synod of Esztergom made celibacy stricter, and it ordered – for the first time – that marriages be performed in churches.

The first canons of the second synod at Esztergom declared crimes against the king as crime against religion, which should be punished by excommunication. The king's prerogatives concerning church government were still unchanged at the time. Around 1113, while organising the bishopric of Nyitra (founded by King Ladislaus), Coloman acted without the approval of the pope, like his predecessor in the case of the Zagreb bishopric. The king answered pope Urban II's letter, in which

King Coloman and his bishops at the coronation ceremony, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum



he demanded obedience to the Holy See, in St. Stephen's third legend. In this, Bishop Hartvic approved King Coloman's right to govern the Church from a historical aspect – embedded in the theory of the crown being sent by the pope. His theory (along with the Sicilian ruler), guaranteed a unique position for the Hungarian king throughout the 12th century. The pope could not send a legate to the country without his permission, and the Hungarian clergy could keep in touch with the Holy See only with the approval of the ruler.

Though in 1201, Pope Innocent III gave permission to use the Hartvic legend as a reading in St. Stephen's office only with the restriction that he took a part out of it – the section according to which St. Stephen could take measures in church matters using “both of his rights”. The Hungarian ruler's demands to be considered apostolic king prevailed into the 13th century. In 1238, during King Béla IV's Bulgarian military campaign, the king asked the pope to let him use these rights in the conquered territories, i.e. he wanted an apostolic cross to precede him, and he wanted to establish the church organisation at his own will.

The Century of the Monks

The most striking feature of the ecclesiastic history in 12th-century Hungary was the appearance of various monastic

orders. The 11th century was the time of Benedictine supremacy. The basic structure of Hungarian monasticism was in development: monasteries were founded privately or by the king. After King St. Stephen, almost every single Hungarian monarch of the era founded his own monastery, which became his burial place later in most cases. Andrew I founded a monastery in Tihany in 1055, Béla I founded one in Szekszárd in 1061, Géza I in Garamszentbenedek in 1075, and Ladislaus I in Somogyvár in 1091. In the first half of the century, secular dignitaries expressed their religious beliefs by giving donations to monasteries, but later they also founded monasteries to guarantee their own salvation and a burial place of their own. Otto, *ispán* of Somogy, from the Győr kindred founded an abbey at Zselicszentjakab in 1061. Peter from the Aba kindred did the same in Százd, on his estate near the Tisza River, in 1067.

The Premonstratensian canons settled in Váradhegyfok during the reign of Stephen II, with the aim of performing pastoral duties. The Cistercians, who reformed the Benedictine way of life, and who played a key role in the spread of modern agriculture and Gothic culture, were invited to Cikádor, near Bátaszék, by King Géza II in 1142. However, they settled in greater numbers only during the reign of King Béla III. The monasteries of Egres, Zirc, Szentgotthárd, Pilis and Pásztó were founded then, and they became the parent monasteries of later abbeys. The distinctive feature of the spread of the new monastic orders in Hungary was that most Cistercian houses were transferred to Hungary directly from the most significant French parent-houses, eliminating the German mediating monasteries (as an exception, though, Cikádor was transferred from Heiligenkreuz). The other local feature was that the spread of orders was inversely proportional to that of Western Europe: the Cistercians, who were very popular in the West, had only about 20 monasteries in Hungary, while the Premonstratensians established about 40 parent-houses. While the Cistercians were not very keen on taking up the advowson of secular estate owners, and they almost exclusively belonged under the patronage of the king, the Premonstratensians accepted dependence on secular patrons, and their secular advowees were buried unhindered in their churches, in contrast with the Cistercians.

The growth of the prestige of the country in the 12th century showed that Christianity became firmly established in Hungary. It manifested in the fact that both the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor clamoured for the support of the Hungarian ruler. After the double papal election of 1159, King Géza II first took sides with Frederick I Barbarossa, but after 1160 – under the influence of the archbishop of Esztergom – he consistently supported Pope Alexander III, like his successors, up until his triumph in 1177. The tension between Archbishop Lucas and King Béla III was the starting point of the competition between the two archbishoprics: Esztergom and Kalocsa. In the first decades of the 13th century, Esztergom finally became the leading archbishopric of the country. Its position is first mentioned in sources in 1239. Lucas may have had a role in founding the St. Thomas prepostery in Esztergom, as it was named after his one-time schoolmate, the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket.



Church of the Premonstratensian monastery in Zsámbék, ruined in the 18th century

In Hungary, the orders of knighthood were represented by the Knights Hospitaller (also known as the Order of Saint John) of Esztergom from 1147 and by the Knights Templar of Vrána from 1169. They played an important role in caring for the sick and in military actions. A sign of the spread of religious ideology was the fact that Hungary joined the crusades for the liberation of the Holy Land. In 1217, King Andrew II led the Fifth Crusade, and both orders took part in it, as in the Battle of Muhi in 1241 against the Mongols. By the end of the 13th century, the number of Johannite houses was around 30. The knights of the Teutonic Order spent the shortest time in Hungary. King Andrew II entrusted the Barcaság to them in 1211, but because of their goal for independence, the Hungarian ruler was forced to drive them out of the country in 1225. There was speculation that the Hospitallers of Esztergom was, in fact, an order founded in Hungary who, besides their main monastery, also had houses in the Holy Land (in Jerusalem and Acre).

The Organisation of the Church

The turn of the 12th and 13th centuries brought the growth of the Church. The monarch established two prefectures around 1186 and in 1198, in Szeben and Szepes, for the Saxons who had settled in Transylvania. The bishopric of Milkó was organised by the Dominicans in 1228, who worked on the conversion of the Cumans, while the bishopric of Syrmia, approved in 1229, was founded privately by Ugrin Csák, the archbishop of Kalocsa, with the aim that it should stop heresy coming from the Balkans. When the Dalmatian region and the southern frontiers were firmly ruled by Hungary, the Bosnian bishopric, with Diakovár as the centre, and the diocese of the Dalmatian Spalato and its bishoprics also joined the Hungarian Church. By the 13th century, the outlines of the parish network were established in the country.

*St. Martin's Cathedral,
Szepeshely*



IN THE SHADOW OF THE PAPACY

New Monastic Orders

In answer to poverty in the urbanising settlements of the 13th century, a new monastic movement was born: the mendicant (begging) orders. In 1221, Paulus Hungarus, the dean of the University of Bologna, was present at the time of the establishment of the Dominican Order in Hungary. He became the leader of the first group sent to Hungary. The number of their houses, after Győr and Székesfehérvár, reached ten by the time of the Mongol Invasion. The first friary of the Franciscans was founded by their German province in Eger. By 1233 their houses in Hungary were organised in separate *custodias*, and by 1238 in separate provinces of the order. The third order, which played a significant role in Hungarian history, was actually founded in Hungary: the Paulines. Bartholomew, bishop of Pécs, collected the hermits of Jakab Hill into a monastery in 1225. He founded a monastery in 1250 near the village of Keszthely, in honour of the Holy Cross, for the hermits living in the Pilis Mountains. In 1256, the order was named the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit. On the insistence of St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Alexander IV acknowledged the new order. Due to economic changes and the spread of the mendicant orders, monastic orders were pushed into the background, and the great age of the Benedictine and the Cistercian orders came to an end around 1240.

Legates in Hungary

During the 13th century, the papacy, which gained strength in the investiture conflicts, exerted a profound influence throughout Europe. Following Pope Innocent III's repeated calls, it was eventually out of political interests that King Andrew II felt obliged to lead a crusade to complete his father's wish. In the middle of the 1220s, the pope introduced the theory of inalienable royal properties – in opposition to the wasteful land policy of the Hungarian monarch. This served as a base for King Béla's policy to take back royal estates. During the century, papal legates visited the country twice. In 1233, Giacomo de Pecorari, the bishop of Palestrina, made a deal with the ruler in the forest of Bereg, and made him promise to keep the basic privileges granted in 1222 (clergymen belonging to ecclesiastical courts and immunity from taxes), and to guarantee the salt monopoly of the Church. Pope Nicholas III sent Philip, the bishop of Fermo, to Hungary to restore the king's reputation and to solve the problem of the pagan Cumans. After settling the Cuman question, legate Philip called a synod in Buda in 1279, the aim of which was to guarantee the freedom of the Catholic faith and Church, and to improve the way of life and morals of both ecclesiastic and secular people.

Church and Society in the Age of the Árpád Dynasty

The structure of the Hungarian church hierarchy was established during the 13th century. It was headed by the board of prelates, who had the same rights as the secular barons, and they constituted a major part of the Royal Council. Under them stood the chapters with their priors and the abbots of monasteries. The middle layer consisted of the priests of the chapters, and the canons, who could afford to study at foreign schools, and quite often they were members of the royal chapel. Parish priests and pastors,

Philip, the bishop of Fermo arrives in Hungary, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum



benefice-priests – who substituted canons in the choir – and choir priests, who all had modest incomes, belonged to the lower layer of the clergy. The prelates and the prestigious monasteries had huge freehold estates. Church estates were made up of scattered lands, the work organisational structure of which – with servants grouped according to their services – guaranteed a dynamic early development period. However, in the 13th century, secular estates took over the leading role, and the scattered ecclesiastical estates were on the decline.

Meanwhile, the role of priests also became fixed in public life. The synodic courts of the Coloman Age had already shown that secular society approved the Church taking up public roles. At bishopric residences, witness duty was a key role at hot iron ordeals. This role gradually expanded to include writing and authenticating documents in the countryside. The first significant places of authentication were the great cathedral chapters and royal priories (Veszprém, Székesfehérvár, Győr, Esztergom and Buda). They were followed by monastic convents of the Benedictines and the Premonstratensians from the 1240s.

Theoretically, by the end of the 12th century, the question of appointing prelates (investiture) was solved, but, in fact, the ruler had all the means to help his own candidate into the bishopric chair. Besides centralising church disciplinary matters into the papal court of justice, this was still a sore point in the relations between the Holy See and Hungary. Since Béla IV did not get sufficient help from the papacy during the Mongol Invasion, he reproached the head of the Church.

The vitality of Hungarian Christianity was shown by its missionary activities. The Dominicans undertook the search for the Eastern Magyars and the conversion of the Cumans in Wallachia. The king took upon himself the responsibility of organising and supporting conversion activity in the Balkans, and creating the structure of the Church there. Until the reign of Ladislaus IV, the pagan Cumans provided the need for domestic missions.

The authority of the archbishop of Esztergom seemed firmly established already by the 1230s, and in the second Golden Bull, in 1231, he received the right of resistance. From the middle of the century, he tried to take care of the priests by organising synods. The archbishop was the first person to have a significant role in secular government as a member of the high clergy. He became the perpetual *ispán* (count) of Esztergom County. At the end of the century, the personality of Archbishop Lodomér shows most clearly the place and role of the Hungarian Church in society. The archbishop of Esztergom headed the ecclesiastical movement which undertook the reorganisation of Hungarian society (which weakened in the time of Ladislaus IV) by following the most modern European practices i.e. transferring the early feudal model to Hungary. The death of Lodomér in 1298 was symbolic: it closed the first period of the history of the Hungarian Church.

THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Attila Zsoldos

The Picture of the Country

The general picture of Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty can be drawn with the help of several complementary descriptions. Three of them are from the middle of the 12th century. In 1147, the German Otto, bishop of Freising, marched through the country with the participants of the Second Crusade, and in one of his works he recorded his experiences in Hungary. Another traveller, the Muslim Abu Hamid al-Gharnati from Granada, stayed in Hungary between 1150 and 1153. The third description was written by the Sicilian Arab geographer, Idrisi, in 1154. Another piece of work can be added to this group titled *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis* (Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe), which was written by an anonymous author in 1308. All of them characterise the kingdom of the Árpáds unanimously as a wealthy country, rich in natural resources.

Because of the fertility of the soil in the country, famines were very rare in this region in comparison to Western European conditions. There were natural resources lying deep in the soil. Silver mining was

*Hungary's representation
on Idrisi's world map,
1154*



quite significant; its early centres were in Selmecbánya in Upper Hungary, and in Radna in northern Transylvania. The peak of gold mining would come in the 14th century. Besides precious metals, mainly iron and copper were excavated. Apart from metals, the most important product of mining was salt, which was essential both as a spice and a preservative. The most significant salt mines were in Transylvania, and in the possession of the king, but the Church also drew a big share of the profit from the salt trade.

The Neighbours

The territory of Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty was almost identical to the area of the Carpathian Basin. Its frontiers, however, were largely uninhabited during the 11th–12th centuries, being populated only towards the end of the era. The western neighbour of Hungary was the Holy Roman Empire (formed in 962), more precisely Austria and Styria. In the northwest, the country was bordered by Moravia, part of the Czech Lands which later became an electorate of the Empire. In the north, Hungary was bordered by Poland, in the east by Kievan Rus. After the collapse of Rus, Halych (Galicia) and Vladimir (Lodomeria) became the two closest Russian principalities.

East of the Carpathians stretched the steppe, where various nomadic peoples followed one another. From the middle of the 11th century, the Cumans ruled this territory, which was named Cumania after them in the 13th century. In the 14th century, two Romanian principalities, Moldavia (to the east of Transylvania) and Wallachia [Havasföld] (south of Transylvania) would emerge. The southern neighbour of the country was Bulgaria at first, later the Byzantine Empire (which incorporated Bulgaria). Then from the beginning of the 13th century, besides the newly-independent Bulgaria, two southern Slav states would form: Serbia and Bosnia. The southwestern neighbour Croatia, will be discussed below.

THE GOVERNMENT

The Court and the Royal Districts

Office-holders, who belonged partly to the court and partly to certain institutions of regional administration, helped the king in governing the country. Among the court officials, the palatine (*nádor*) was the highest ranking. In the 11th century, the holder of this office – as the *ispán* of the court – performed mainly economic duties, but by the 13th century, he had become a judge, whose authority extended over the whole country. His economic duties were overtaken first by the *ispán* of the royal court, and later – when the holder of this office also became a judge under the title of judge royal – by the master of treasury in the 13th century. At the same time, the masters of the table, of the horses and of the cup-bearers also appeared in the royal household. The holders of these offices were appointed from among the dignitaries enjoying the support of the king, and they were also members of the Royal Council, which had the right to make decisions in political matters.

Other royal office-holders stood at the head of different *ispanates* [district of an *ispán*]. Royal servants responsible for specific services (for example, horsemen) lived in separate *ispán* districts. Manorial *ispanates* were organised around different royal manors, whereas castle *ispanates* were organised around royal forts. The latter were the local units of the royal castle district system. The plots of a castle district lay scattered around in groups of various sizes and formed incoherent large estates with the *ispáns'* castles serving as the centre. These were usually strengthened by an earth rampart with wooden structures in the 11th–12th centuries. The majority of castle *ispanates* belonged to a county, so the office of the *ispán* counted as a baronial honour.



Seal of Thomas, ispán of Nyitra and Bars, 1299

The Institution of the Counties

Counties were the basic units of regional administration in the country. The first counties were formed at the time of the foundation of the state, taking into view the local conditions. Counties expanded over the authority of royal castles, but they were not identical to the castle *ispanates*. The territory of a county included the royal, church and secular private estates within its borders, besides the local castle *ispanate*. However, the person directing the local castle *ispanate* was identical to the *ispán* (count) of the county, who directed the entire county, thus, in his dual role, he had double responsibility and power over military, legal, economic, and administrative matters. This early type of county is often called the royal county; it was governed by its *ispán* through the institutions of the local castle *ispanate*.

In the last third of the 13th century, the institution of royal counties underwent fundamental changes. During the 13th century, due to big land donations by the kings, the system of castle districts collapsed, and the landed freemen, who gained noble rights through their status as royal servants, no longer fell under the juristic power of the county *ispán*. As a result, the traditional procedures of county administration could not be continued. As a solution, four servants' judges (*iudex nobilium*), who were

*Inscription in the Church
of Sveta Marija referring
to King Coloman, Zadar*



chosen from among local noblemen, were appointed to help the county *ispán*. This kind of county administration became responsible for the matters of all the inhabitants of the county, including the non-nobles until the end of the 14th century.

The Provinces

Separate governments, that were superior to the counties, formed in two parts of the county: in Transylvania, which was led by the voivode, and in Slavonia, led by the ban. Initially the Transylvanian voivode was the *ispán* of Fejér County, whose authority expanded over the whole of southern Transylvania. His juristic power was extended over the other Transylvanian counties by the middle of the 13th century. As the governor for the king, the Voivode of Transylvania had juristic, military, and economic responsibility. The ban, directing medieval Slavonia in the western part of the territory between the Sava and Drava rivers had a similar role. Both the voivode and the ban belonged to the group of barons sitting in the Royal Council. In the

13th century, more banates were formed along the southern stretch of border; Macsó and Severin (Szörénység) were the most significant ones among them.

From the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, medieval Croatia – the land between the Dinaric Alps and the Adriatic Sea – also belonged to the kingdom of the Árpáds. The country of the Slavic Croatians was conquered in 1091 by St. Ladislaus, and Hungarian rule was stabilised by King Coloman, who had himself crowned as King of Croatia in 1102. Croatia could keep its own social and institutional system, but until 1918, the prevailing Hungarian ruler bore the title of King of Croatia, latterly without even a separate coronation ceremony. Croatia – together with Slavonia – was governed by the bans from the 13th century.

NON-HUNGARIAN INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTRY

Settlers from the East

A lot of ethnic groups lived together in the territory of Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty. Some of these – for example, the various Slavic groups, or fragments of the population from the Avar Age – were found living in the Carpathian Basin by the conquering Hungarians, while other groups moved into the country during the 10th–13th centuries. It is also without doubt that the conquering Hungarians did not form a homogenous group of people concerning their ethnic origin and language: the basic Finno-Ugric population formed a political unit, and the *hétmagyar* [Seven Magyars] tribal alliance, included fragments of peoples speaking various Turkic and Iranian languages.

Most of the settlers came from the East, including Muslims of varying origin, who were called either Ishmaelites (or *Böszörménys*) or Khalyzians in Hungary. Some of the Ishmaelites were soldiers, others were tradesmen or experts in economy. Groups of considerable sizes lived in the Nyírség (northern Hungary) and in Syrmia. The first Ishmaelites might have come to the Carpathian Basin together with the Hungarian conquerors, and there are records of their immigration even from the middle of 12th century. 11th-century laws tried to stop their religious clustering, but despite these laws some of their communities survived

until the middle of the 13th century, and assimilated into Christian Hungary only after this time.

The Pechenegs, who spoke a certain type of Turkic language, belonged to these early settlers. During the 10th–12th centuries, the Pechenegs, who settled in groups, lived in Fejér and Tolna counties in significant numbers.

Part of them assimilated into the Hungarian population quickly, but other groups preserved their ethnic identities by living in independent *ispán* districts even in the 14th century. Jews had already been living in the Carpathian Basin in the 10th century, although data about their existence multiplied only from the end of the 11th century. Most of them dealt with trade and financial matters. In 1251, King Béla IV enacted a separate law to regulate their situation all over the country.

In the middle of the 13th century, fragments of the Cumans – another people who spoke a Turkic language – immigrated to the country. After the Mongol Invasion, the Cumans moved nomadically in the territory between the Danube and the Tisza, around the Körös rivers, and the Maros. They preserved their pagan traditions for a long time, despite the regulations of the 1279 Cuman Laws. After 1270, the prevailing palatine exercised authority over them. Their residences were not incorporated into



Floor brick showing a Cuman horseman shooting arrows

the county system; by the 15th century, these developed into special independent ethnic governments, the so-called Cuman seats. Presumably, the first groups of the Jász people, of Iranian origin, – who are mentioned in Hungarian documents from the 14th century – came into the country together with the Cumans.

The Romanians appeared within the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 13th century. The ancient Romanian people, who spoke a neo-Latin language, can trace their origin back to the Balkan Peninsula in the 1st millennium AD. The nomadic Romanians, who were called Vlachs in Slavic and Byzantine sources, appeared first in Transylvania at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries. The first groups settled in southern Transylvania in the Fogaras region. After the Mongol Invasion, they also lived in the mountains of Bihar County, though only in small numbers. Their immigration continued in later centuries through the Middle Ages.

The Székelys were considered an ethnic group different from the Magyars in the Middle Ages. Their separate identity and independence was shown by their peculiar institutions and traditions. The origin of the Székelys is not clear; they only appear in written sources from the 12th century. According to one theory, they are the successors of the fragments of the Bulgarian–Turkic Esegel tribe, who had

joined the Hungarians in the Eastern European steppe. They might have assimilated with the Hungarians well before the Conquest. As there is no evidence that the Székelys ever spoke any language other than Hungarian, other experts say that the Székelys originated from various Magyar groups, and the idea of their ethnic independence was formed secondarily.

The Székelys appeared at several places in Hungary in the age of the Árpád dynasty. Besides the western borderline and Szabolcs and Baranya counties, their most significant early settlements were around Telegd in Bihar

County. In Transylvania, they were first mentioned at the beginning of the 13th century, but there might have been Székely settlements in southern Transylvania already in the 12th century. The majority of the Székelys settled in the territory of today's Székely Land (Székelyföld) around 1200 to defend the frontier. A separate Székely administrative district was organised for them, which did not belong under the rule of the Transylvanian voivode. The special institutions of Székely administration, the so-called Székely seats developed here by the 14th century. The archaic social system of the Székelys survived throughout the Middle Ages.

Settlers from the West

Other groups of foreigners, who immigrated to the country, arrived from the different regions of Western Europe, and they were originally known as *hospites* [guests, settlers]. Part of them were called Italians (Latinus); this expression referred to people who spoke neo-Latin languages, so besides the Italians, it applied to the French and the Walloons as well. As a result of their immigration that started in the middle of the 11th century, significant Italian settlements were formed around Sárospatak, in Syrmia, and in the Eger region. The majority of the Italians settled down as farmers. In some bigger settlements (for example, Esztergom, Székesfehérvár), however, Italian trade-colonies were also found. These latter *hospes* [plural: *hospites*] communities were the seeds of Western-type urban development in Hungary.



Seal of the Latin settlers of Esztergom

The other considerable group of settlers spoke German, and they were called Saxons collectively. Their settlement might have already started in the 11th century, but their two largest areas of habitation – in Transylvania and in the Szepes region – were formed only from the middle of the 12th century on. Saxon *ispanates* – independent of the supremacy of the voivode – were organised in four regions in Transylvania: their centres were in Szeben, Brassó, Radna and Beszterce. The introduction of a local Transylvanian Saxon government was made possible by a letter of privilege, called the Andreanum – issued in 1224 by Andrew II –, which contained the rights and obligations of the Saxons of Szeben.

Most of the Transylvanian Saxons earned their living from agriculture, and their leaders were called *grafs*. Some of those who settled around Radna were miners in the local silver mines. Among the Saxons of the Szepes region we can find both peasants and miners. The first groups of the German population were followed by a bigger wave of immigrants after the Mongol Invasion. In the second half of the 13th century, the Saxons of Szepes lived in an independent district, and their circumstances were regulated by Stephen V in a letter of privilege similar to the Andreanum. After the Mongol Invasion, Slavs came to the Szepes region in bigger numbers. Their settlement was organised by the *soltész*, and the Czech, Moravian and Polish settlers merging with the native Slavs formed today's Slovakian people.

SETTLEMENTS AND PLACES OF HABITATION

Attila Zsoldos – Miklós Takács – Gyula Siklósi

Roads

The regions of the country were linked by roads, and the continuation of the roads outside the borders connected the Kingdom of Hungary to the surrounding world. Giving up the isolation of the 10th century, St. Stephen opened a road, which connected Western Europe with the Holy Land through Byzantine, in 1018. This road crossed Transdanubia, touching Győr and Székesfehérvár, and it led further to the Balkans. The main roads that played important commercial and military roles started from a triangle marked by the early royal centres of Esztergom, Székesfehérvár and Óbuda. Therefore, this region was called the “centre of the country” even in early times – in accordance with its actual geographical situation.

*Crusaders marching
through Hungary,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*



Idrisi produced a valuable description of the early road system. In his work he mentioned four main roads. One of them follows the route of salt transport in Transylvania, through the stations of Gyulafehérvár, Csanád and Csongrád. The road to Kiev touched Vác, Eger and Ungvár, while the main junctions towards Byzantine might have been Bács, Titel, Keve, Barancs and Nagyolaszi. It is worth mentioning that the road towards the West, which followed the line of the Danube, was relatively insignificant in Idrisi’s description.

By the second half of the 13th century, this situation changed in two aspects. The role of the earlier central region was overtaken by a single town, Buda, which was founded right after the Mongol Invasion, – and its “twin-town” on the other bank of the Danube, Pest. The six main roads of the country started from here. During the 13th century, the importance of Kievan and Byzantine trade stopped or significantly declined due to the political events occurring in the neighbouring regions of the Carpathian Basin. They were replaced by Western European connections, and accordingly the roads that led there became the main arteries of trade.

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Villages

Villages were smaller settlements where the population was mainly engaged in agriculture. These types of settlement varied in structure and in the dynamics of development in the Árpád Age. At the time of the Conquest, the Hungarians led a semi-nomadic life style. Families established their winter home base at the same location for years in order to survive the cold season. Several, presumably related, families lived in and maintained these winter residences, as well as cultivating the surrounding land. Bulgarian and Turkish loanwords in the Hungarian language suggest that in addition to

grains, vegetables were also likely to have been grown there. Winter home bases became the nuclei of later villages.

After the foundation of the state, the organisation of the county-based administrative system and the formation of secular and church estates pointed towards a more permanent, settled establishment. The written records of 11th-century Hungary reflect the absence of a nomadic lifestyle, although this may have been influenced by the views of their, most likely Western European, authors. In the laws of St. Stephen and St. Ladislaus and in deeds of gift from the 11th century, the settlements of common people appear exclusively as villages (*villa*) with fixed borders. Comments referring to kindred and tribal relations are missing from these sources, but these villages already had leaders, not too dissimilar to later centuries. This was the village chief, or as he was later called, the judge (*villicus*). On the basis of modern (Bashkirian, Kazakh, Kirghiz) ethnographic analogy, we can assume that they probably still herded livestock in search of grazing grounds, but only within the fixed frontiers of the village. During springtime, when the animals were driven afield, only some of the population of the village followed them.

For the majority of villages in the Árpád Age animal husbandry was more important than the cultivation of land, though these two branches of agriculture were usually practised within the boundaries of the same family estate, and they complemented each other. In this semi-nomadic farming system tamed domestic animals around the house played a very important role. Without manuring, the cultivated lands soon degraded, so the inhabitants of villages would move on to use the regenerated sites of their previous villages and cultivate those. Consequently, their winter home base and the core-village had to be moved in order to cultivate the more fertile land of their former living site. The historical projection of this phenomenon was a law passed by St. Ladislaus, which banned the moving of villages far from churches. The archaeological evidence of cyclically wandering villages is the fact that at least eight to ten sites can be found from the Árpád Age within the administrative borders of the same present-day village. This is called *wild*, or in other words, unregulated soil-shifting or two-field farming system.

Until the middle of the 13th century, there were no significant changes in this system, only the number of settlements increased. Due to this process, the previously extensive bounds of villages on the plains were most likely reduced, and from the end of the 12th century, the population in the mountain regions on the east and north borders of the country also grew, making these areas more densely inhabited. Villages differed in size: the population of a village fluctuated between only few and several dozen families – the most common version was to have approximately ten families in a village. The size of a village was also influenced by the juristic status of its inhabitants. From among the people of royal and church estates, those in charge of agricultural or handicraft industry services lived in bigger villages, while those who were responsible for military services were more likely to live in much smaller settlements. Besides these, there were detached, manor-like settlements consisting of one or two houses. Last but by no means least, was a small, special type of settlement, called a *praedium*. This was usually a farming centre owned by a secular landlord populated with slaves.

The structure of the Árpád Age villages was basically defined by their natural environment. The villages were usually established near lakes or rivers on flood-free pitches. The selection of the site for a village was not merely influenced by the supply of nearby water (as dug wells were not uncommon at that time). Fish caught in a river or lake provided food; reed and sedge cut on the riverbank was



Everyday objects from the Árpádian-age village of Kána

used as building materials. It appears that the network of roads that had developed by this time did not necessarily attract villages yet.

The ground-plan structure of winter home bases and villages can be drafted on the basis of archaeological findings. The area of the settlement was usually extensive. In these early settlements houses, yurts, kilns and pitfalls were located seemingly unsystematically in clusters. Residences were usually organised around a system of ditches and pinfolds built for keeping tamed animals; domestic objects were usually located in the corner of the enclosed area.

*Árpáadian-age church,
near Mánfa in Baranya
County*

Apart from farming, the life of villages was basically defined by whether or not they could rise to become the centre of a region. Settlements located around roads, ferries or those having a church had a better chance. One of St. Stephen's laws ordered that every ten villages should aim to build

one church. Until the end of the 13th century, in the more developed part of the country, half of the settlements had their own church buildings, while in other areas only a fifth of them built churches. From the end of the 12th century peasant artisans appeared in villages, who met the demands of the local people. Villages usually had a smithy; however, craftsmen working with leather and wood were very rarely needed in that period. Pottery was popular, but the cultivation of this trade depended on whether there were clay-pits located nearby.

The housing culture of common people was quite varied around the country. Living in tents was rather widespread until the middle of the 12th century as this tradition brought from the South Russian steppe survived. Felt yurts were most likely only used in warmer periods of the year, while in winter they lived in pit-, mud-, or harrow-houses. In 1147, Otto, bishop of Freising, described the homes of Hungarian commoners like this: "Since in their villages and towns the houses are very wretched, made merely of reeds, rarely of wood, most rarely of stone, during the entire period of summer and autumn they live in tents".

Yurts were much more comfortable than pit-houses because of their bigger inner space and better ventilation. It is a misconception that the spread of pit-houses showed a more modern housing culture. Pit-houses were

small, dark and smoky, they had only one principal advantage: their walls and roofs were easy to build using materials (trunks, branches of trees and reed) available at winter residences. They were also likely to be warmer than yurts. The use of felt yurts had one major disadvantage, namely that almost a whole herd of sheep was needed to maintain it because a continuous supply of felt was required.



According to archaeological findings, the basic type of village house was a small pit-house dug in the ground (typical dimensions of three-by-three metres to four-by-four metres). Its roof structure was supported by at least two forked posts, and there was an oven built from clay or small stones in one of the corners. Due to the small size of pit-houses people only lived there intermittently, during the winter months. When it was possible, they stayed in the open air or in the outbuildings. Besides the pit-house dug in the ground, the living area of common people also contained an open-air oven, some storage pits, occasionally buildings for keeping animals and some temporary buildings. We have some sporadic data – already from the early Árpád Age – about bigger dwellings that were barely dug into the ground. However, their archaeological detection is quite difficult as their support structures went under the layer of humus only partially.



*Reconstruction of an
Árpádian-age house*

The small size of pit-houses did not allow common people to live together with their domestic animals. From the records of Margaret's (of the Árpád dynasty) canonisation, it is known that around the year 1250, it was typical in the family of a common man that only the wife and two children could sleep in the house. The husband spent the night in the open air, near the animals. From this very same source we learn two other important facts. One is that the houses in some of the villages may have been scattered. According to a common man, who under oath described the miraculous case of his child's resurrection, their nearest neighbour lived at an arrow's shot; i.e. at least 100 metres from their house. The other fact is that this free common family that was neither rich nor poor might have lived at three different locations within a few years, suggesting rather significant mobility.

The picture of the village described above started to change in the middle of the 13th century. In the next 150 years a significant number of the villages became deserted. Previously this process was explained by the Mongol Invasion. Today the social changes of the Árpád Age are considered the primary reason. This process was accelerated by the tragic events of 1241–42. However, some of the villages survived and grew even larger. Besides the natural environment (configurations of the land and water supplies), the influence of the road network is the most important factor in this change, although larger buildings like churches and mansions also influenced the topography of the settlements. In the majority of villages a system of regular building plots was established. In these settlements an outer field or ploughland also belonged to the house. Two and three-field farming was beginning to spread. Habitation also changed: instead of pit-houses, typically three-room peasant houses were in use. This arrangement was so successful and convenient that it remained popular until recent times.

Towns and Fortresses

The buds of Hungarian towns already appeared during the reign of the first kings of the Árpád dynasty. Then, a significant part of the country was covered with woods and wetlands. Farming was limited to a small area, and due to its primitive forms, it could not provide for a great number of people moving into towns. The population explosion, which had already occurred in Western Europe, was somewhat

delayed in Hungary, allowing time to create the conditions for the formation of towns. As a result of the growing commodity production, more and more market places appeared in the second half of the 11th century. Weekly markets were regulated by royal laws, and became the forums where agricultural products and simple craft products (textile, shoes) were exchanged. The more significant trade routes traversed the country in east to west and north to south directions. The first Hungarian urban-like settlements evolved along these roads.

In the middle of the country (*medium regni*), the area from the Danube Bend to the north-eastern shore of Lake Balaton, there were only huge forests. In this period, forests provided protection, building material, fuel and food, – for example mushrooms, fruits, game; the latter was very important since the domestication of animals was not as wide-spread as it is today. It is not by chance that the early Hungarian royal castles, mansions, towns and monasteries founded by kings were built in or around forests (Pannonhalma, Tata, Esztergom, Dömös, Visegrád, Óbuda, Fehérvár, Veszprém, Pilis).

There is relatively little information about the structure and ground-plan of early Hungarian cities. Hungarian kings stayed mostly in Esztergom until the 13th century. St. Stephen was born here. He deemed it important to found an archbishopric in this city, thus to turn it into a national ecclesiastical centre. In Fehérvár, at St. Emeric's birth-place, King Stephen rebuilt the princely residence founded by his father, and established a royal castle and palace there. The basilica founded by him was the scene of coronation ceremonies, royal weddings and christenings, and the earthly remains of several Hungarian kings were also placed here, next to St. Emeric's and St. Stephen's tombs. During the St. Stephen's day justice service, the king would always hold court here, as we can read about, in the laws of the Golden Bull.

In Óbuda, the settlement was formed around the royal mansion, and later, from the 13th century, around the castle. The ecclesiastical centre of the town, the building complex of the collegiate church, was situated in the northern part, and a market settled nearby, and also the church and monastery of the Franciscans, near St. Peter's Church. Some of the first Hungarian towns were formed in the place of ancient Roman settlements, or on top of their ruins. In some cases, only the favourable conditions for settlements (availability of water, forests, good defence possibilities, the easily recyclable building materials of the Romans) urged people to build their towns on top of Roman ruins. Such places were

View of the Danube Bend from the Pilis hills, the fortress of Visegrád on the right



Szombathely (Savaria), Győr (Arrabona), Pest (Contra-Acquincum), Esztergom (Solva), Kolozsvár (Napoca).

Some new settlements, however, used the existing, partly ruined buildings. According to certain theories, the grand prince of the conquering Hungarians, Kurszán, having crossed the Danube over to the Buda side by ferry boats with his soldiers, established his fortress in the amphitheatre of the former military garrison. The road network of Óbuda was built following the road system of the old Roman castrum. The centre of Visegrád's *ispán* was protected by the walls of castrum Pons Navatus, and the medieval town of Sopron was surrounded by the walls of the old Roman Scarbantia. The road network of the castrum of Pécs (Sopianae) also had an influence on the development of the street structure in the medieval town, which was built on this site. The survival of Sopianae in the Middle Ages was guaranteed by its tomb chapels, which stood even in the Middle Ages. These tomb chapels were also sacred destinations of pilgrimages in Europe, and several settlements were founded around them. Pécs might have been one of them, as its medieval name suggests (Quinqueecclesiae, Fünfkirchen).

Medieval towns of Roman origins developed from market places that were in the path of commercial roads, or ports on rivers suitable for shipping (Pest, Óbuda, Esztergom), or some were newly founded towns (Fehérvár). The settling down of foreign tradesmen – Muslim Khalyzians and Jews –, and migration due to a demographic surge in the middle of the 12th century, and the appearance of foreign settlers – Latins, Germans – provided the population of these settlements. The development of Hungarian towns was aided by granting them municipal rights, the enrichment of their citizens (burghers) and the development of handicraft industry. Nevertheless, the population of early towns also engaged in agricultural activities – for example, grapes were grown near Fehérvár, and fishing was quite customary in Esztergom. Among the early Hungarian towns, several were founded without a fortress, such as Pécs, where there was a bishopric castle and palace surrounded by a rampart. Pest might have been similarly laid out in the 12th century.

Towns with two centres were, for example, Győr, Nyitra, Vác or Kalocsa, where the core settlement itself was located under the *ispán*'s or bishop's castle (there were eleven bishopric residences). In Győr, the secular centre, protected by a rampart and moat, gave home to the bishopric palace and church. There were cities with many centres, like Fehérvár, where there were at least three settlements around



the early royal castle and palace and the walled building complex of the collegiate church (which also contained the royal basilica named after the Virgin Mary). These early towns – from today's modern view – may have been village-like settlements with one main street. The residents were tradesmen, castle warriors, servants and serfs. Settlements belonging closely to the nucleus of the town were surrounded by a number of suburbs (Győr, Esztergom, Fehérvár, Veszprém). Contemporary commercial centres



*Early Christian
Necropolis, Pécs*

were also formed (Fehérvár, Esztergom, Óbuda, Pest), where the main marketplace was in the geographical centre of the settlement, although there may have been several marketplaces in the area of these towns.

At Fehérvár, we clearly see the structure of the early town. In the heart of the town there was the marketplace, to the south stood the early royal castle and palace, to the east there is the building complex of the collegiate chapter with the royal basilica. To the north of the collegiate church, its villeins lived around the church of the Holy Cross; the warriors of the castle might have lived on the north-western side of the marketplace, around St. Bartholomew's church,

while St. Jacob's church on the northern side of the marketplace may have been the church of the settlement of the tradesmen.

In the royal and bishopric castles of early towns there were churches and chapels next to the palace. The residences of watchmen and the stables might have been there too. The surface area of the early royal castle of Fehérvár was about 5,200 sq. metres, which is nearly the same as the surface area of contemporary European royal castles. The beauty of palaces in early royal castles can be admired on carved stone fragments and ground-plans, or the castle of Esztergom itself.

In the ecclesiastical centres, which were usually fortified by walls, stood a palace, a church, and a monastery on the southern side of the church, following the pattern of the royal basilica of Fehérvár. The canons lived alongside the cloistered walk, and the school and the guest house also may have been there. The surface area of the walled building complex was nearly the same size as that of the enlarged early royal castle (about 20,000 sq. meters). The building of fortresses in Hungary may have started as early as the middle or end of the 10th century, in the course of which a lot of earth-forts were built in the territory of the country. Fortresses built in strategically important places, on islands in rivers and marshes, peninsulas or foothills may have also been protected by moats, and their ramparts were usually made of wood. These early fortresses guaranteed the protection of the borders, or they were kindred or *ispán's* centres. In the 12th–13th centuries, new earth-forts were built, but this time their ground-plan was round or oval. With their construction, natural protective frontiers (like steep mountain sides, valleys) made them even safer. In the centre, a keep or agricultural buildings were erected, usually out of durable materials such as brick or stone.

Relatively early, already in St. Stephen's time, there might have been several stone fortresses in Hungary, and the number of them may have grown in the beginning of the 13th century. In 1242, besides Esztergom and Fehérvár, the fortresses of Veszprém, Tihany, Győr, Pannonhalma, Moson, Sopron, Vasvár, Németújvár, Zalavár, Léka, Pozsony, Nyitra, Komárom, Fülek and the fort of Abaújvár that had no stone wall proved so strong that they resisted the siege of the Mongols. Some of the fortresses were of Roman origin, for example, Visegrád (Pons Navatus). The most typical feature of Hungarian stone fortresses was that they were built in places that were difficult to reach (Detrekő).

Several fortresses were surrounded by a moor (Fehérvár) or they were built at the confluence of rivers (Adorján, Újvár).

During the course of the reconstruction programme following the Mongol Invasion, under Béla IV's reign, several royal and private fortresses were built from stone, with relatively high walls. These were dissected by towers of square-shaped, rectangular or semi-circle ground-plans. Such walls protected the fortified Hungarian towns (Fehérvár, Esztergom, Pest, Buda). Gates were also fortified by separate towers. Royal (secular) or ecclesiastical fortresses were erected in a suitable corner of walled towns, and were also separated from the rest of the settlement. Sometimes they were even surrounded by a ditch or a moat (Fehérvár, Buda, Kőszeg, Vác). Within the town walls, in the corners of fortresses there might have been towers built (Kőszeg, Fehérvár).

Hungarian towns surrounded by stone walls were built in response to the Mongol Invasion, not long after they appeared in Western Europe. Fehérvár, Buda, Nagyszombat, Pécs, Kassa, Eperjes, Kőszeg received their walls at that time. The extension of towns was determined by the number of their citizens, the importance of their position in trade, their defence possibilities and, last but not least, their natural environment (in case of Fehérvár the edge of the wetland). Accordingly, the ground-plan of Hungarian towns was either triangular, square or round. Some of the suburbs outside the fortifications received ramparts made of earth or wood, or moats (Fehérvár) not long before the Turkish invasion. Later, certain suburbs received stone walls (Sopron), while many suburbs – spread over a large area – remained totally unprotected.

Within the walls a network of streets was formed. In the centre of Fehérvár, which was built according to plans, the ancient marketplace remained the central point. Three streets were built both to the north and south of this, which were crossed by other streets. The street network was usually irregular, but in many places some kind of planning can be detected. There were various shapes of squares. Marketplaces were formed at the widening part of important commercial roads; they may have had a funnel or square shape. The town hall and the church – characteristic of the marketplace – were usually built next to the market. The various monastic orders also appeared in towns: the Franciscans,



*Vazul's Tower of the
fortress of Nyitra*



Medieval house in the Buda Castle, reconstructed in the 18th century

Dominicans, Augustine hermits and Carmelites, the Poor Clares and Dominican nuns. Their monasteries, as there was no room in the central area, were built in the outskirts.

Among the irregular streets and squares, there were blocks of houses, and between them plots of different sizes with irregular ground-plans. People of different nationalities lived in separate streets or squares (Magyar Street, Latin Street, German Street, Jew Street), who assimilated into the Hungarian population by the end of the 15th century, or the Hungarian population became dominant after having moved into these streets. The name of these streets may refer to the profession of the dwellers (Baker Street, Canons' Street). Streets were also named after saints or the church in the street (St. Peter Street, St. Anne Street, St. Nicholas Street). The name of the street could also refer to its size, age or importance (Main Street, Big Street, Old Street), or it could show the owner (Chapter Street) or its function (Market Square, Wheat Market, Fish Market).

Different from the 11th–12th-century houses, which were dug into the ground, made of wood or mud, stone houses were built in the streets and squares after the Mongol destruction. The frontal and outer sides of the house walls were made of bigger stones. The part between the two stone rows was filled with mortar mixed with gravel. Walls made of yellow, brown

or white mortar were 80–120 cm wide, so one or two-storey buildings, sometimes even with a cellar, could be built. The corners of such houses were made stable by corner-quoins. Early town buildings were usually built with an axis at right angles to the street, but in later centuries the front of the streets was built in with houses almost everywhere.

Early houses, which consisted of two side rooms and a kitchen in the centre with a free chimney, were enlarged in a cell-like manner towards the yard and in the street front. Their floor was a simple terazzo floor, though in some places the floor was made out of brick or planks. There are several medieval houses today in Buda, Székesfehérvár, Pécs and Sopron open to the public.

Attila Zsoldos

The Freeman and the Servants

The first and foremost principle, which governed Hungarian society in the age of the Árpád dynasty, was the possession of freedom – or the lack of it. Accordingly, the people of the country could be divided into two main groups: freemen and servants. Servants were their owners' property, who could handle them as they wished. However, the servants' position was not identical to that of the slaves of ancient times, because they were considered as human beings – in accordance with Christian teachings. Freeman were their own masters: they were not the property of others. The dividing line between freemen and servants was rigorous but not impassable. Freeman could lose their freedom (for example, as a punishment), and servants could be freed by their owners.

In the age of St. Stephen, freemen could be categorized into three layers in terms of wealth. The dignitaries were known as *ispáns* (counts) by Stephen's laws. This grouping consisted of a blend of emerging noblemen who were considered the last remnants of the old chieftains, as well as knights who had immigrated from the West. The middle layer included the group of "warriors", the members of which were associated with a military lifestyle. They were soldiers serving other people, or people who had their own properties. The lowest layer of freemen consisted of "folk" or "commoners". Even though the differences were huge within the society of the freemen, their legal status was identical. The poor freemen had the same rights as the most powerful dignitaries.

Nobility and Limited Freedom

Significant changes occurred in society by the last quarter of the 11th century. The layer of dignitaries, which had special privileges, was separated from the juristically homogeneous group of the freemen. They were called "noblemen", while the layer of common free people was called "the non-noble". Just as not all noble people were rich, there were also great differences among the common freemen concerning their financial circumstances. The wealthy common people owed military service to the king, so King Coloman exempted them from paying the tax known as "the denarii of the freemen". However, the commoners who cultivated other people's lands had to pay this tax. It was at this point that the fate of land owners and commoners without any property separated.

A completely new form of servant liberation appeared in these decades. This – in contrast with the surviving practice used during King Stephen's reign – did not endow the privileged ones with the legal status of those who were born free, but it guaranteed more favourable conditions for the servants

*13th-century figures on
the mural of the church
in Szalonna
(the legend of St.
Margaret of Antioch)*



compared to their earlier total subordination. Those who were given these privileges were also called freemen, but as they were not allowed to give up their duties arbitrarily, they remained, in fact, servants. Their freedom was limited. To differentiate between the real freemen and the privileged servants, the freedom of people who were free from restrictions was called “complete” or “golden freedom”. Thus, similarly to that of the freemen, the society of the servants became more differentiated.

A unique group of people had already appeared in Hungary at the time of St. Stephen, who were called “guests” in contemporary Hungarian, or *hospes* in Latin. Originally, these guests were foreigners, who intended to settle in the country. Most of the settlers were farmers coming from various regions of Western Europe, who settled in and cultivated deserted or uninhabited areas under certain conditions. According to their legal status, they were free commoners with special privileges. They could keep their customs in their new homeland, and their communities had local governments with limited rights. They represented the elite layer of peasant society, and during the 13th century, more and more local peasants lived according to *hospes* rights.

There were three types of land property in Hungary during the age of the Árpád dynasty: royal, ecclesiastical (belonging to the Church), and secular (private). Within royal estates, we can differentiate between the system of castle districts providing military and public duties, and the system of royal estates serving the provision of the king and his household. The queen’s and princes’ estates reserved for the members of the royal family have more common features with the latter. A great number of servants and common people with restricted rights lived on all types of estates. The status of the individual groups – within the framework of their shared servant status – was extremely varied, depending mainly on whom they belonged to.

The World of Servants

The servants of royal estates all belonged to the layer of servants. Some of their groups were known by the services they performed (for example stablemen, treasurers, bison-hunters). The most typical group of servants on royal estates were called stewards, while the people of the castle districts were referred to as “castle folk”. The taxation and administrative units of royal servants consisted of either units of ten or a hundred people. Their direct superiors were free stewards with limited rights, or they were appointed from among the castle warriors (*iobagiones castri*). Of all groups of servants, the latter had the most favourable position. Their duties were limited to the supervision of the castle folk and military services, and most of them were wealthy and respected land owners.

The servants on ecclesiastic estates were all in the possession and under the authority of the land owner, and they were categorised according to the services they provided, similarly to servants on royal estates. The hierarchy among ecclesiastical servants was formed according to the type of services they provided, depending on how respected or inferior the service was considered. At the bottom of this hierarchy stood those who performed ploughing and wine growing. The various craftsmen (carpenters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths and so on) were in a somewhat better position. The direct supervisors of the work of the servants were the most respected. They were called *iobagiones* on the ecclesiastical estates too. Their duties were not particularly taxing, and the armed escorts of bishops and abbots were appointed from among them.

In contrast to that, the groups of servants on secular (private) estates were differentiated according to juristic categories. The reason for this was the fact

Capital with a hunter figure, 13th century, Bény



that the extent of the authority of the land owner varied over the people living on his land. The landowner had unlimited power over the common servants. These servants did not even have their own tools. They worked with the tools and animals of their owner. The group called “libertines” was in a somewhat more favourable situation. They were servants who worked on independent farms. Free people also lived on secular estates; there were liberated servants among them just as common free people who did not have their own lands.

Royal Servants and Noblemen

This layer of Hungarian society of the Árpád Age underwent significant changes during the 13th century. The name royal servant (*serviens regis*) – appearing at the beginning of the century – originally referred to those people who were liberated on the royal estates by the king himself and were presented with land property. Their social status was actually the same as that of the free landowners. Consequently, the two social layers soon merged. Many of the elements of the rights of royal servants were included in the 1222 Golden Bull. These privileges included some of the privileges of the nobility, to show that the rights of royal servants were of higher standing than those of the common freemen (free peasants).

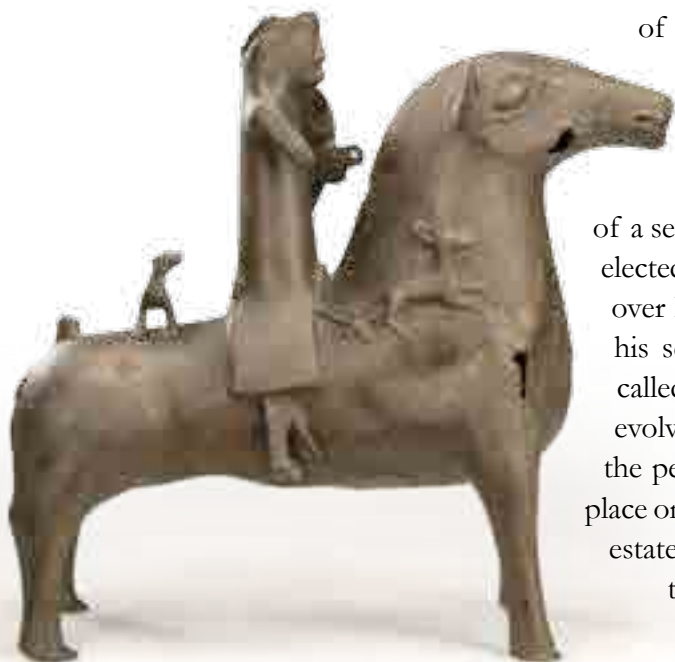
The owners of smaller estates, who were called royal servants at the royal court, considered themselves equal to noblemen with regards to their privileges. This concept, which extended the term noble to them, became gradually accepted. The royal power recognized the noble legal status of royal servants only in the law of 1267. The social and financial status of the new nobility, consisting of dignitaries and royal servants, and consequently their way of life, was rather heterogeneous. People originating from royal servants, who were privileged and ennobled by rulers in reward for their services, also joined the layer of nobility.

The Development of the Layer of Peasant Villeins

The other trend of change in the 13th century concerned the people who were legally considered servants. From the middle of the century, the significance of servants on secular estates decreased in contrast with the libertines and the freemen. The increased demand for labour after the Mongol Invasion enabled the gradual fusion of these three layers. Servants either ran away from their owners and performed peasant duties at their new residences as free *hospites*, or the owner himself liberated his servants to be able to keep them. By the end of the 13th century, the layer of free peasant villeins was thus formed on secular estates.

The peasant villein was a free man who had the right to move. He paid tax to his landlord based on his farming activity. He held rights to his farm: for example, he could leave it to his sons. The peasant community of a settlement could have a restricted local government with an elected judge at the head. As a remnant of the owner’s power over his servants, the juristic authority of the landowner over his servants was preserved, and this institution was the so-called manorial court of justice. The duties of peasant villeins evolved from the duties of the libertines. The development of the peasant villein layer in the age of the Árpád dynasty took place only on secular estates: the people of royal and ecclesiastical estates remained in the bonds of dependence to the owner till the end of the 14th century.

Aquamanile in the shape of a hunter



István Tringli – Miklós Takács – Attila Zsoldos

Agriculture

The majority of the country's population was engaged in agriculture. This was also the daily activity for most of the urban dwellers, and also of tradesmen living on royal estates who otherwise provided handcrafted items, such as coopers or locksmiths. In the agriculture of the Árpád Age, the 13th century marked an important turning point. In comparison to the start of the century, agricultural production changed throughout the country by the end of the century. As a result, changes followed both in society and in the structure of settlements, with effects lasting till the 18th century, or even until 1848 in many cases.

*Man with grains –
Cain's sacrifice, mural in
the crypt of the church in
Feldebrő*

The mouldboard plough appeared in Hungary in the 13th century, and it proved very effective. Used together with the asymmetric ploughshare, coulter, wheel-barrow, and the steering board, it turned

the soil over – in contrast to earlier ploughs, which could only scrape the soil – so it enabled a more efficient cultivation of the ground. Greater production yield could provide for a larger population. There was a significant increase in population in Western Europe in the 12th century, and people began to migrate to uncultivated areas within and outside their countries.

In the first half of the period, unregulated soil shifting was in practice, which was a simultaneous agricultural and animal farming system. The land in the frontier of the village was cultivated until it became exhausted, then it was taken over by a herd of animals that would fertilise it in a natural

manner. Meanwhile, the land that had been a grazing field began to be used for crop cultivation. In the central areas of the country, people turned to a regulated soil-shifting system in the 13th century. This meant that the rotation of the grazing fields and arable lands took place in regular intervals, every four or five years, depending on the local conditions. The grazing grounds, forests, and sources of water of the village remained in common use.

In the first period, grain crops yielded about double of the seeds sown, in the second period the yield was three or four-fold. Only a small amount of fruit was grown, and mainly the church estates were at the forefront of fruit-growing. The most important vegetable was the cabbage. Grapes were grown everywhere except in the Great Plain and in higher mountain regions. From the 13th century,



vineyards were treated as specific properties: regions where grapes were grown were considered as clearings similar to lands cultivated by the *hospites*. Those who cultivated them bore more rights to these than the cultivators of plough lands, for example. The clearings and settlement of the mountain regions and borderlands began at the beginning of the 12th century, but these processes accelerated in the 13th century. Here, instead of a regulated soil shifting system, due to the lack of plough lands, grain crops were grown in backyards, behind the houses. This piece of land was constantly under cultivation and fertilisation, and was always used by the same family. The division of plough lands was not in fashion here. There were two ways of clearing lands: people either took the bark off trees and let them dry out – thinning the woods –, or they burnt the land down. This practice is known as the slash and burn agriculture.

In Hungarian agriculture, animal husbandry played a bigger role in the Middle Ages than it did in the western areas of Europe. The significance of horse-keeping gradually decreased. In the first half of the period, only small cattle were bred, and the ancestors of large grey cattle only appeared in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the Árpád Age. The proportion of pigs in the live-stock mix gradually increased; most of them were kept in forests eating acorns. Sheep played a significant part in food supply. In the southern and eastern borderlands of the country, people who lived according to the so-called Vlach rights, dealt with transhumance, a type of controlled animal keeping. This kind of pastoralism led to the development of scattered mountain settlements.

Craftsmanship

Besides animal husbandry and farming, the third most important branch of economy in the age of the Árpád dynasty was craftsmanship. Its origin is manifold. On the basis of loanwords, some crafts must have already existed before the Conquest, so there were most likely some common craftsmen among the conquering Hungarians. A limited number of archaeological findings from the 10th century suggest the existence of crafts other than those needed for the war industry – like the making of weapons and harnesses, or goldsmithery.

After the foundation of the state, the structure of the Hungarian handicraft industry also underwent some changes. According to written sources from the 11th–12th centuries, hand-made items were produced in royal, ecclesiastical or secular estates within the bounds of the servant-system, first and foremost to supply the estate. The formation of this system was triggered by the undeveloped network of roads and trade. The landowner settled the craftsmen in larger groups, sometimes all in the same village, and they were required to provide not only agricultural products but also handcrafted items. (This can be traced in place



12th-century coloured stone carving from the Cathedral of Pécs (resurrected souls)

names which refer to different trades: for example Tímár [tanner], Szakácsi [cook], Esztergár [turner].) Legally, craftsmen were not separated from the commons; in fact they belonged among the servants.

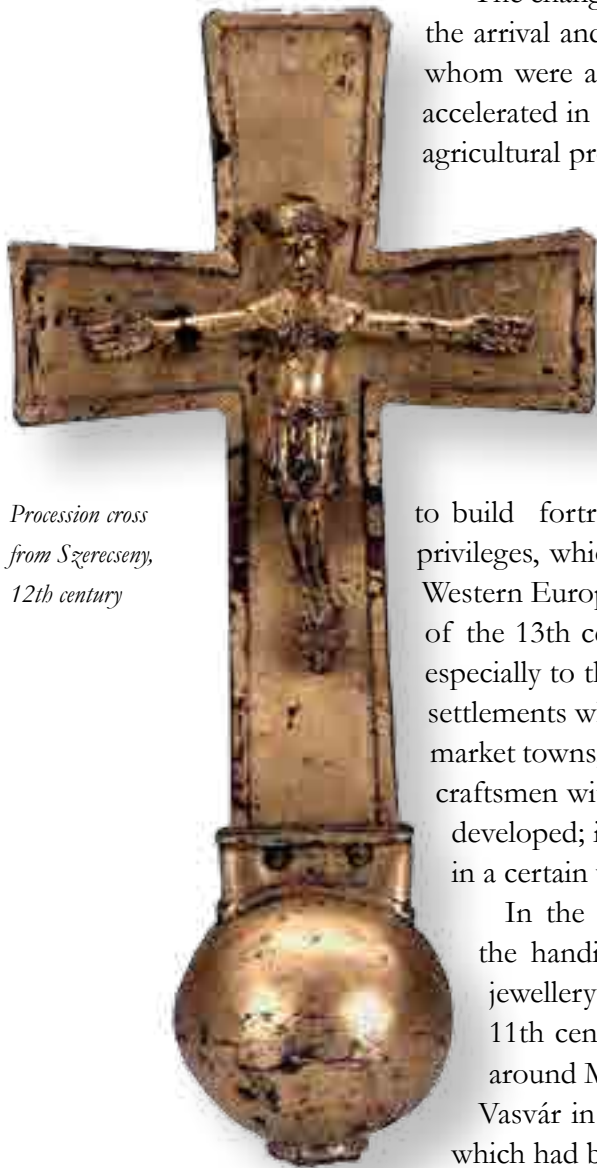
Owing to the scarce number of written sources, most details of the system of servants are still only vaguely known, and there must have also been differences among the various estates. However, it is believed that craftsmanship must only have been a secondary activity among craftsman servants besides farming and other services (such as transport or stable services). The majority of craftsmen worked with their own tools, so they could sell the surplus goods that remained after delivering the compulsory quota of handcrafted products. Sources prove the existence of markets in Hungary since the beginning of the Árpád Age.

As early as the 11th century, certain craftsmen already rose above the cast of servants. These master craftsmen usually lived in busy county centres, and they satisfied the special or luxurious demands of dignitaries or the royal court (such as weaponsmiths, goldsmiths, coin minters). In these city-like centres, craftsmen of the same profession could live – according to place names – in separate groups, even in independent suburbs, notably in larger conurbations like Esztergom. There were masters who travelled from town to town. Their specialist skills and knowledge (for example stone masonry or bell-founding) were aligned with religious architecture and its related trades, rather than the handicraft industry.

The change in the servant-system started in the second half of the 12th century with the arrival and settling of guest workers (*hospes*) from Western Europe, the majority of whom were artisans. With this, the development of the handicraft industry and trade accelerated in communities that obtained royal privileges. In the 13th century, profitable agricultural products became increasingly important for landowners, so they urged their craftsmen to deliver these instead of handmade items. The escape of artisan servants to cities was a further sign of the decline of the servant-system. Archaeological findings also show this transition in the handicraft industry: from the beginning of the 13th century, in the more developed regions of the country, consumer goods made in villages or cities could be clearly distinguished (for example iron knives, pots).

The evolution of the urban handicraft industry was accelerated by the devastation caused by the Mongol Invasion in 1241–42. In the rush to build fortresses during the time of Béla IV, many towns managed to secure royal privileges, which provided favourable circumstances for craftsmen, just as elsewhere in Western Europe. The grouping of craftsmen of the same trade began in the second half of the 13th century, primarily to guarantee the good quality of products. This applied especially to the food industry. Guilds were formed later, in the 14th century. Town-like settlements which could not obtain royal privileges, for example bishopric residences or market towns, remained in the possession of the estate owner, who frequently helped his craftsmen with various privileges. In villages, however, the handicraft industry was less developed; it satisfied local demands only, so it was common to have only one smithy in a certain village.

In the 11th–13th centuries, different branches of smithery were significant in the handicraft industry: various new agricultural equipment, tools, weapons and jewellery were invented through the development of the smithery. In the 10th and 11th centuries in Hungary, iron was smelted in two smaller geographical regions: around Miskolc and Ózd in the northern mountain region, and around Sopron and Vasvár in western Hungary. The conquering Hungarians smelted iron in furnaces, which had been unknown in their new homeland before their arrival, but the old iron-



Processional cross
from Szerecseny,
12th century

smelting techniques of the 8th–9th centuries also lived on. This technology required the repeated heating of iron ore until red hot, which was then hammered to remove the slag.

Smithery separated from iron-smelting as early as in the 10th–11th centuries. Smiths were very important among servants in the age of the Árpáds, especially those who were skilled in forging weapons. These smiths were the best in producing steel, and in blending together harder (high carbon content) and softer (low carbon content) layers (pattern-welding) to produce a product with the desired steel properties. When smithery specialised into further independent trades, many new trades were born in the industry: makers of steelware, gunsmiths, swordsmiths, knifsmiths, locksmiths, armoursmiths, farriers and nailsmiths. Specialising did not take place in the villages; most villages did not have any forges till the end of the Árpád Age.

Smelting bronze was somewhere in between smithery and jewellery-making. On the one hand, its masters usually dealt with making jewellery: they made the modest versions of expensive jewellery from bronze. On the other hand, they were the makers of many liturgical devotional objects: candle sticks, incense smokers, procession crosses. Relic holder crosses – which were significant in the history of applied arts – however, were not the works of Hungarian masters; they were imported from Byzantium. The most attractive objects of medieval bronze-smelting were the so-called aquamaniles. They were water-pouring dishes with representations of different animals and imaginary creatures. Some of them must have been imported to Hungary from the region of the Rhine and Maas rivers. The first monumental objects of bronze smithery were bells, which were smelted by travelling masters. The two earliest bells were cast in the 11th century: the bells of Csolnok and Ruzsa.

The most highly respected craftsmen were the smiths in the Árpád Age, partly because of the value of objects made by goldsmiths, and partly because their customers often belonged to the higher social classes. Smiths who worked at the royal court were also important people: minters of coins and makers of citation stamps and seals were appointed from among them.

Of course, not all the smiths worked for dignitaries: a good number of them dealt with the mass-production of jewellery worn by common people. Connections throughout Europe can easily be traced in the smithery of the Árpád Age via the migration of motifs. However, it is often difficult to decide whether the most outstanding pieces of smithery (such as the ornaments found around the palace of Esztergom or the royal basilica of Székesfehérvár) were made in the country or brought into Hungary through trade relations.

In the field of woodworking, we can only find carpenters in the servant-system of the Árpád Age. Besides the roof structures and walls of churches and houses of dignitaries, the so-called cassette wood-frames of mounds were also made by them. Cart-making might have been an independent trade at that time. Traces of this industry could be observed at Kocs in Komárom County in the Árpád Age. The word *kocsi* (cart) – a special version of carts – comes from this place name. Shipwrights and coopers making various types of wooden dishes also existed in this period.

Skills in woodworking were needed in the production of several types of weapons, tools and harness accessories. Furniture must have existed in the 11th–12th centuries – first of all in the houses of the wealthy, though trunks were generally used by common people since the beginning of the Árpád Age. Carpentry became an independent trade only in the 13th century as a consequence of the development of city-like centres.

In the structure of the servant-system, a lot of records refer to furriers, tanners and cobblers. Leather works were very important in a wide range of industries. Besides leather armour there were leather clothes, shoes, harnesses and straps. Among the known early tanning techniques the Hungarians used mainly fat and alum. The latter was used together with ground seeds and the by-products of milk. The so-called Hungarian leather, tanned with alum and soaked in warm tallow, was very famous throughout Europe. This kind of leather was used for making harnesses.



Cloak clasp adorned with peacocks, second half of the 13th century

The vocabulary of weaving and spinning in the Hungarian language is adopted to a great extent from Slavic languages. It reflects the fact that certain techniques could have been adopted from Slavic peoples after the 9th–10th centuries. The relative underdevelopment of this industry can be inferred from the fact that there was a significant textile import to Hungary up to the end of the Middle Ages. There were no craftsmen making fine textiles to meet luxurious demands. For example, the material of the Coronation Mantle – the oldest complete Hungarian piece of clothing that has survived – is Byzantine silk embroidered with golden thread. Monastic orders were the first to adopt Western techniques (the first mill was built in Locsmánd, which functioned between 1206 and 1218), and later Western *hospites* (guest workers) joined them. The cotton industry, spinning wheel and pattern-weaving were also introduced by them.

Clay pots were used for cooking and frying in the 10th–13th centuries in Hungary. As pots were cheap and fragile, they were found at archaeological excavations

in great numbers. The simple design of the majority of the pots was perhaps due to the fact that in the Árpád Age potters were still leading a peculiar lifestyle, devoting only half of their time to craftsmanship, as they could make clay pots only seasonally, in addition to maintaining their agricultural production. This was so because in the first half of the Árpád Age potters functioned within the frameworks of the servant-system. Potters appeared in cities only at the turn of the 13th century. Their work was also of better quality in terms of shapes and burning. New techniques were mostly adopted from Western Europe, so they spread in Sopron and Pozsony first, near the western border. Urban masters started to imitate the so-called Vienna pots, while masters in villages adopted these forms only later.

Money and Trade

The economic life of the Árpád Age, especially in the first two centuries of the kingdom, was based on natural resources. The main characteristic feature of this was striving for self-sufficiency. As a result, certain servant groups, who worked on various estates (royal, ecclesiastic and private), were obliged to deliver a fixed quota of their surplus handicraft or other special products (for example, honey, wax, etc.). The fact that besides paying tax in kind, they also had to work the fields to provide food for themselves and their families shows the low level of division of labour. Natural economy, however, was not a completely closed system, and money, goods and trade played a vital role from the outset.

The minting of coins in Hungary started during the reign of St. Stephen. Minting money was a royal prerogative. Besides the ruler, only those princes who had independent territorial rights could mint money. Minting money and related matters belonged under the authority of the royal chamber, which must have been located in Esztergom until the middle of the 13th century. After this, coins were minted in other regions of the country in the name of the king (for example, the denarii of the

ban in Slavonia). The precious metal needed for minting was provided by the royal silver mines. The profit from minting coins came from either devaluation of the money, which decreased the quantity of precious metal in the coins, or from the exchange of money, which guaranteed profit for the chamber.

The money in public use would find its way back to the royal chamber in several ways. Already St. Stephen began to impose taxes on his people, which might have been the predecessor of the royal tax called “the denarii of the free”, regulated in detail in King Coloman’s laws. Extraordinary tax was first imposed by Andrew II, and his act was continued by his successors. Besides nationwide taxes, there were local taxes at certain places, for example the tax in marten pelts in the territory south of the Drava River. People paid their tax in money as well as in kind. For example, the Pechenegs and Székelys delivered horses instead of money.

Various customs duties were also royal incomes similar to taxes. Originally, they belonged under the authority of the king, so the incomes of customs enriched the royal chamber. In some cases, however, rulers donated the incomes of customs duties. At first, only ecclesiastic institutions received these donations, then, in the course of the 13th century, private persons as well. By the end of the age of the Árpád dynasty, a great deal of the customs duties was in private hands. Customs duties collected from transportation (ferry, bridge and road customs duties) and trade (market customs duties) initially only considered the quantity of goods. Later, after King Béla IV’s 1255 reforms, the value of the goods was taken into account, and the amount to pay was defined by the amount and the type of the goods.

Markets yielded a great deal of the customs duties. The existence of markets is proven by records from the 11th century. The spread of these markets is reflected, among others, in place names – (for example, Vásárhely [Marketplace], or names referring to the day of the market, like Szerdahely [Wednesday place], Szombathely [Saturday place], etc.). Weekly markets were probably held in the centres of *ispánates* too. In some of the more significant marketplaces, yearly trade-fairs were held, mainly associated with church holidays, which attracted sellers and customers from far regions. Giving up the royal customs duties of the market led to the birth of so-called free markets. The license to these markets became one of the elements of privileges given to *hospes* communities and towns during the 13th century.

A document from the end of the 12th century gives an invaluable summary of the royal incomes. This document may have been prepared for a foreign royal court, possibly in connection with Béla III’s second marriage. The inventory gives the sums in the currency of mark, which was an exaggeration according to general opinion. However, the composition of incomes and the proportions of the various items may reflect the real situation. According to this, the most important source of income was minting money (about 37%), followed by the incomes of customs (19%) and the incomes of the counties (16%). The remaining listed items contributed less than 10% individually. The inventory also contains the incomes of Hungarian prelates.

Foreign trade was an organic part of economic life in the age of the Árpádians, even in the time of resource-based economy. Until the 13th century, Hungary might have had busy relations mainly with the East: Kiev and Byzantium. The signs of joining the Western European economy are quite significant from the second half of the 12th century, and by the 13th century, trade with the West became dominant. The main items of export – besides agricultural products – were slaves and animals,

*Denarius of King
Andrew II*



*Byzantine
stoup*



especially horses. 11th-century laws contain some regulations regarding their export. Most imported goods were products of the handicraft industry and luxury items (expensive textiles, jewellery, spices), just like in later times.

During the 13th century, the main trend in foreign trade turned towards the West. Besides the traditional goods of export, Hungary began to export precious metals (especially silver, gold, copper, and tin). The vast majority of imported goods remained the products of the handicraft industry and luxury items, but the proportion of cheap iron products and textiles increased significantly to satisfy consumer needs. The circle of participants in trade also changed: while earlier mainly Eastern tradesmen (Jews, Ishmaelites, and in a smaller proportion, Greek and Georgian people) played a significant role in commerce, in the 13th century, more and more Western tradesmen (mainly German and Italian) settled in the country. Hungarian merchants also joined this circle.

Domestic trade in the age of the Árpáds meant the exchange of regional products throughout the country, so most goods were agricultural products. The most important and earliest items of trade were wine and salt. Later, with the development of agriculture, grain-crops also became important items of trade. From the second half of the 13th century, grain-crops supplied the provisions of the developing cities. The products of the Hungarian handicraft industry were items of everyday use, so they met the demands of basic needs. The domestic exchange of goods was settled by Hungarian merchants. The places of exchange were cities, around which local markets began to develop.

EVERYDAY LIFE

László Kovács – Enikő Csukovits

Men's Clothes and Weapons

In the Árpád Age, the right to carry arms became increasingly restricted to certain groups of men. In the following, we will present the Western European type of garments and weapons one by one, as well as the traditional Hungarian and Eastern equipment, enriched by newer trends. The sources available to us from the 11th–13th centuries indicate a powerful conquest of the Western type of clothing.

As depicted by contemporaneous illustrations, men would seldom wear a shirt: first they would put on a tunic. Tunics were shirt-like, loose garments with a round neckline and long sleeves that were made of linen or silk, coming in a variety of colours. They could be ornamented with a broad stripe of embroidery at the neckline, on the sleeves, and at mid-thigh length. Under the tunic, men wore long-legged, fitted trousers or colourful thighs. Their footwear consisted of boots or soft-soled shoes reaching above the ankle. They were also familiar with the Byzantine-type sandals which were embroidered in the middle.

A strap tied with a knot functioned as a belt, but straps fitted with a buckle were also in use. The textile belts laced with metal threads as well as belts made from spun threads and adorned with gold, silver or enamelled fittings also came into fashion among the noblemen. Over the tunic, they would wear a colourful, patterned, sleeveless robe of various lengths, or a cloak (*chlamis* or *pallium*). These could come either with a simple neckline, or a wide collar. The two wings of the cloak were fastened by a band whose two ends with a knotted tassel were reeved through the slits of the cloak edges. *Capas* and *mantellums* were somewhat less elegant shoulder cloaks, often equipped with a hood. *Garnacia* was an outer garment made from fur or a thicker material, lined with fur and adorned with leather.

With the adoption of Western fashion, the hairstyle changed as well: women would generally let their hair down in a combed-down coiffure. They would often braid into it loops and ornaments made of bronze or precious metals. The so-called lock rings with an S-shaped end remained popular throughout the whole era. Men would typically wear a beard and a moustache. They would cover their heads with a sort of pointed hat made from fur or textile. The commoners would wear sturdier felt hats with a rim. The noblemen tended to adorn their headgear: at the wedding of Prince Béla, son of Béla IV (1264), for instance, the pointed hats of the guests were decorated with a peacock plume in a silver tip, and their beard and long hair braids were ornamented with pearls and precious stones.

When the men were preparing for battle, the above described outfit was completed by additional elements. Naturally, they would wear different weapons depending on whether they belonged to the heavy or the light cavalry. In the following, we will first present the weapons of defence of the heavy cavalry, then offensive weapons and the horse harness before moving on to describing the equipment of the light cavalry.

In the 11th–13th centuries, many types of armour were in use to protect the body. A popular type was the so-called strap chainmail armour whose wrought iron ringlets were sewn onto straps one by

Fragment of a bearded-moustached man's figure (gargoyle), ca. 1250



one, which yielded a reliable yet light and flexible armour. A variant of the former was composed of rings sewn onto a leather garment in thick rows. Only the highest-ranking noblemen could afford to buy a real chainmail shirt weighing about ten kilograms, which had to be assembled meticulously from at least twenty thousand interlocking iron ringlets. To protect the hips, chainmail trousers, or chausses were invented, and in the 12th century, the chainmail gauntlets were also created by the closure of the sleeves of the hauberk.

It became necessary to provide greater protection for the shoulders, elbows, and knees. These were the most exposed body parts to the enemy's weapons, so mobile armour plates were fastened to them. At the same time, a variety of plate armours were also in use. In the second half of the 13th century, the most popular type was the so-called brigandine: this was a leather coat lined with iron strips or iron plates. This kind of armour was developed after the Mongol Invasion in Central, then in Western Europe. These plate armours were prepared on the model of the knee-length overalls of the 11th

century. Wide leather straps were wrapped around the lower legs. The protective gear was made complete with a plated cap tightly fitted to the head and equipped with a hood (aventail) – the dignitaries would also put a plate helmet on top of all that.

The chainmail shirt and the chainmail trousers were separate in the 12th century. The warrior put on his armour over a loose shirt. In the 12th–13th centuries, a padded shirt fastened



Golden belt buckle with knights, Kígyópuszta

with a belt (*bambusium*) was also put over this armour. This latter practice was propagated by the crusaders in Europe, and its purpose was to protect the armoured body against the sunlight. By the end of the 13th century, the white padded shirt was starting to lose its appeal, or it was transformed into a colourful knightly cloak.

Few depictions of armours were left to us from this period. In addition to the pictures of a few chainmail shirts and scale armour, three remains should be described in more detail. The first one is a crown that was taken to Poland after the marriage of Béla IV's daughter Kunigunda (Kinga), and it was attached onto the bars of a crucifix. The crown is decorated with tiny, half-an-inch tall golden figures, including knights. The other object is a golden buckle from Kiskunmajsa-Kígyópuszta (from around 1260), whose niello inlay battle scene depicts knights wearing hoods, long-sleeve, knee-length scale armour and helmets. The third remain is a series of murals at the church of Gelence painted around the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries about the legend of St. Ladislaus. Here, the holy king is wearing leather armour with interlocking iron rings over a long shirt, as well as a belt without fittings, with a dagger hanging from it. There are tights on his legs and scale armour shoes (*sabatons*) on his feet. He is wearing a crown-ornamented helmet on his head.

There is a collection among the remains of the 13th century, the so-called horseman's seals, upon which the individual elements of the contemporaneous armour are clearly identifiable (despite their small size). Looking at the knights' outfit, it can be stated that while their armour can only be hypothesised, their chausses and the pointed tip of their shoes are clearly distinguishable, as is their long mail shirt fastened around their waist with a girdle that floats behind them below their thighs, and the bucket helm on the top of their head. If they carry a shield, then it is small and triangle-shaped, showing the first Hungarian coats of arms.

Having briefly presented the garments and the defence weapons, now let us turn our attention to the offensive weapons. The heavy cavalry (knights) usually did not use distance weapons, so it seems to be a Hungarian specificity – demonstrated by a plethora of data from the mid-13th century – that bows

*King Béla III's
funeral sword and
spurs*



were also part of their equipment. These bows were most likely identical to the ones used in the century of the Conquest; their form would not be renewed till the appearance of the Cumans.

The lance, however, seems to have gained more importance in comparison with earlier times, since after the battle-opening operations (for example a torrent of arrows) carried out by the light cavalry, the heavy-armor main troops would form a wedge and fight each other in a lance attack. The entire kinetic energy of the horse and the horseman was accumulated in the head of the lance. The handle of the lances was decorated below the tip with small flags showing the coat of arms.

After the lance combat of the wedges charging towards each other, one-on-one fights developed. The principal weapon of these hand-to-hand combats was still the double-edged sword, but it underwent significant changes due to the more frequent presence of the defence weapons. Its weight began to



Cuman horseman on the mural depicting the legend of St. Ladislaus, Kakaslovníc

meaning various types of axes appeared in the Hungarian language in the first half of the 13th century. The wrestling scene of the mural of the St. Ladislaus legend from Gelence refers unmistakably to the role of the first mentioned weapon. In this picture, the girl is cutting the Cuman's hooked sinew with a *bárd* – the weapon of the saintly king, which became a permanent attribute in his later representations.

Having discussed weapons, we can now move onto the introduction of the horses and harnesses of warriors. With the development of weapons, bigger horses appeared in the Carpathian Basin from the last third of the 10th century. The armoured warrior sat on a big horse in a saddle, which was quite specific and different from Eastern type saddles. Both pommels of the saddle rose high into the air. In their high saddles, horsemen sat with straight legs at first, but later with legs stretched forward. In the 12th century, when the role of lancers' charges became very important, deep knight saddles with pommels surrounding the waist of the horseman appeared to avert strong crashes and provide a suitable support.

Harnesses were decorated with mounts, fringes, and bobtails, but on the harnesses of the previously mentioned murals, the golden dots of mounts were painted onto the straps as well. The use of spurs became widespread in the Hungarian heavy cavalry, which was a novelty of the age. Horseshoeing in Hungary presumably appeared in the 11th century. Heavy cavalry tried to avoid using horseshoes even in the Middle Ages so that they could keep the maximum speed of horses.

A knight's armour and the horse together represented a small fortune. Most of the common landowners did not possess large enough estates (400–500 hectares) that would have yielded enough revenue to afford them. That is why the majority of small landowners – who were required to take part in military campaigns – remained in the light cavalry in the second half of the 13th century. At the very most, they could supplement their equipment with a sword or a light spear, since these proved to be very useful against both heavy and light-armoured enemies.

The Pechenegs, the Székelys, the Cumans and the Jász people – who settled here in the 13th century – fought only in light armour. Before discussing their weapons, we must talk about their clothing, before and after the Conquest.

Presumably, these people – who were still pagans in the 11th century – insisted on their traditional clothing. Representations from the 11th–13th centuries show shirts with raised collars and a tight,

increase substantially from the middle of the 12th century in order to boost the efficiency of the blow: the weight of the sword slowly grew from one kilogram to one and a half kilograms, or even more. The sword's centre of gravity was brought closer to the hilt, which resulted in an improved manageability and stab precision. A common characteristic of the blades of various dimensions was that they ended in a definite tip instead of being rounded, which shows that they were regularly used for stabbing as well. In view of the above, King Béla III's short-bladed silver funeral sword cannot be regarded as a weapon.

The many types of hatchets were quite effective – mainly for the infantry – against armoured enemy troops. Loan words like *bárd* (1214) and *topor* (1235)

caftan-like super-tunic reaching to the knees, with long tight sleeves, which was loosely pleated under the belt. Their clothing always included a belt without mounts. The legs of the figures in the pictures were either bare, or covered with tights. They wore boots on their feet. Although we know that common people wore their hair in plaits – thus keeping the old tradition – for centuries, in the above-mentioned murals they were shown with Western-type hairstyles: sleek hair let down, with shaved faces, or with moustaches and beards.

The survival of the Eastern-type clothing of the age of the Conquest was guaranteed by the Székelys and Pechenegs and other Muslim peoples (Ishmaelites) besides the Hungarians and their military supporters, who assimilated into the country. Later in the 13th century, the settlement of the Cumans and the Jász people brought a new boost in Eastern fashion. The overgarment of the Cumans – which can be traced back with the help of 12th–13th-century Cuman stone sculptures from the southern Russian steppe and the wall-paintings of the St. Ladislaus legend – included a caftan reaching to the knees, trousers, and boots. The wings of the loose caftan – which was made of a thick material (in case of dignitaries it was Byzantine fabric) – were folded onto each other from right to left in the front, and they were pressed down by a belt.

Occasionally the shirt was so long that it could be seen under the caftan. Cuman warriors used their belts to gather the caftan down and hold weapons (such as sabres, bow-quivers or quivers) and keep other accessories in (knives, strikers, combs, pouches). The belt was usually plain; the only decoration could be the buckle. Cuman dignitaries, however, laid their claims for belts with precious metal mounts. The different mounts on these, however, do not show Eastern influence – what is more, quite surprisingly, they are connected to chivalrous court life.

Cuman warriors did not wear trousers, but tights reaching to the groin. Their light boots with soft soles reached over the knees. Cuman men shaved their heads and wore the remaining hair in one, two or three plaits, which often differed in length and thickness. They had no beards either, but twirled moustaches. They wore a long, pointed high cap with a rolled-up edge, the so-called Cuman high cap, which had no fur on it. This type of clothing became so widespread among the Hungarians in the second half of the 13th century that the Church tried to ban it twice (1279, 1288) – without success.

Warriors in light armour were also forced to use defence weapons. They put on leather armour to protect their bodies. Warriors of higher ranks wore plate armour or chainmail. They also protected their heads with helmets, which were made of either riveted iron sheets, or made of one piece into a cone shape. These helmets ended in



Cuman horsemen, part of the mural depicting the legend of St. Ladislaus, Karaszkó



Illustration of women's clothing on the mural Last Judgement in the church at Ócsa

three or four edges, pyramidal and spear-shaped) became very popular from the 11th century due to the fact that archers had to face armoured enemies quite frequently. Besides these, flat, leaf-, diamond- and deltoid-shaped or fork-like arrow heads also survived.

Among the weapons of close combat, we must mention the sabre – though even among the Mongols only the richest could afford one. This weapon also underwent changes from the 11th century: a longer, wider, and more strongly bent blade appeared.

There was another traditional hitting weapon, which appeared in the Carpathian Basin with Pecheneg or Cuman mediation: the mace. Only sporadic archaeological findings are known. Maces were made of iron or bronze in various forms, and they were attached to wooden sticks.

The equipment of light cavalry had not developed significantly since the Conquest. There is no definite information about their saddles, but it is sure that snaffle bits remained popular. The warriors' stirrups were decorated with wide, curved stays and round or pointed-round straps – in conjunction with their boots with soft soles. Spurs were not used by light cavalry.

After discussing the weapons of heavy and light cavalry, we must mention crossbows. These threatening weapons were used by the infantry, so it did not belong to the equipment of either heavy or light cavalry. According to the first records, in 1242 the Spanish *ispán* Simon defended the castle of Esztergom – sieged by the Mongols – with the help of his archers. In 1265, a source mentioned that horses were shot down with crossbows, so this weapon must have been used in Hungary at the end of the Árpád Age.

In the history of the Kingdom of Hungary, the year of 1301 – which was otherwise quite significant – was not very important with regards to the history of weapons and clothing because the ratio of weapon usage remained the same till the end of the 14th century, and the weapons did not develop substantially, either.

Women's and Children's Clothing

The adoption of Christianity brought significant changes in both men's and women's clothing. Shirts were items of clothing for both men and women. These were caftan-like garments gathered with a belt.

forward deflected apex, which held the helmet-decoration, or in a small pole, which held a little flag (similarly to a Phrygian cap). They were often made with nose protecting bar flaps, or metal masks.

Warriors in light armour hardly ever used shields. The reason for this was that it impeded the user in handling the bow and the horse simultaneously, as the main attacking weapon remained the bow and arrow. Reflex bow types used in the Conquest Period were preserved in the 11th–12th centuries, though there is no archaeological proof of that in Hungary.

Regarding the many types of arrow heads, sharp heads which could pierce armours and shields (arrow heads with

The shirts, along with trousers and richly mounted boots were replaced by new clothes that, according to the rules of the new religion, hid the shape of the body. The closed, robe-like garment – which was worn all over Europe – consisted of several layers on top of one another. The standard apparel was an under and overgarment called a tunic and super-tunic. Over the tunic people wore a shorter cape and a longer, semi-circular cloak.

The several layers of clothing on top of one another were made of the same material, but their colours were different. The material of the clothes was usually broadcloth, but it also may have been silk, brocade or velvet brought from the East. The inventory of Stephen, the junior king, from 1264 proves that the dignitaries of the country had had their clothes made of the most expensive foreign textiles. The inventory listed a great amount of Flemish broadcloth, Italian, Byzantine and Asian – maybe Chinese – silk and velvet, and fine linen for both men's and women's clothes. These clothes were lined or decorated with expensive furs.

As their names indicated [*hajadon* = hair let down] maidens wore their hair let down, but married women hid their hair with a kind of coif or veil. The simplest of these was the so-called nun's coif or veil, which covered the hair, neck and partly the shoulders. We can see this on the murals of the church at Ócsa, titled the *Last Judgement*. Presumably, elderly women and widows wore such veils. The figure of the female donator on the Szentkirály tympanum is wearing a flat, box-like headgear, which was fastened under the chin. There is a long veil at the back under the coif. This kind of headdress was very popular among the nobility. We can see the same on the famous sculptures of female donators from Naumburg in Germany.

Few pieces of jewellery were worn at that time: the most popular ones were buckles and clasps for robes. According to archaeological findings from tombs, silver or bronze hair rings were used for gathering hair braids, but necklaces, bracelets, and rings were also found. Their material was usually copper or bronze; only the high-born wore silver and gold jewellery. The girdles, worn by girls and married women as well, also counted as jewellery. They were woven from metal or gold threads, and were decorated with metal plates and pearls in most cases.

The headdress called *párta* (corolla) was worn by maidens. Several proverbs and sayings refer to this, for example, “she remained in *párta*” means that a girl did not marry anyone. The *párta* was a ribbon or wreath worn around the head, richly decorated with pearls, plates or precious stones – in a similar manner to belts worn around the waist. On the basis of written sources, it is not certain how widespread it was in the age of the Árpád dynasty, but the fact that pearls and pressed plates have been found around the head of occupants in excavated tombs shows that it was in use.

The most expensive pieces of gold jewellery were worn by the members of the royal family and the court. These treasures travelled from one court to another due to dynastic marriages among ruling families. Thus, some headpieces were brought to Poland as King Béla IV's daughters' wedding crowns, which survived from that period. One of them still decorates the herm of St. Sigismund, while the other two were transformed into a promise-cross. It was noted in the legend of St. Elizabeth that her parents, Andrew II and Queen Gertrude – who was later murdered – sent their daughter off to Thuringia with a rich dowry.

Elizabeth was engaged to the son of the landgrave of Thuringia as a child, but her dowry – clothes and jewellery – did not differ from the attire of an adult princess. It was common in the Middle Ages that children's clothes differed from adults' clothing only in size, regardless of financial–social status. Except for the youngest ones, children wore the same types of clothing as their parents.

THE ANGEVIN AND THE SIGISMUND AGE IN HUNGARY (1301–1437)

HISTORY

HISTORY OF LANGUAGE

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LAND AND PEOPLE

WAY OF LIFE



István Tringli

Fights for the Throne and Autocracy

The child Caroberto arrives in Hungary, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum



The male line of the Árpád dynasty became extinct with the death of Andrew III. The female line continued, and the House of Anjou from Naples [Angevin is a dynastic name derived from Anjou] was the first to lay their claim to the Hungarian crown. They did not even accept Andrew III's right to inherit the throne. In August 1300, twelve-year-old Caroberto landed in Spalato, Dalmatia. He was Stephen V's great-grandson through relation to his father's grandmother Maria. In the country, few people supported him: the Šubic family, Ugrin from the Csák kindred, and Gergely Bicskei, the archbishop of Esztergom, who was loyal to the pope. His foreign supporters were more influential: the feudal lord of the Kingdom of Naples, the pope gave him diplomatic help, whereas his cousins on his mother's side, the Habsburg princes, provided him military help.

On hearing the news of Andrew III's death, the archbishop had Caroberto taken to Esztergom in the spring of 1301, and crowned him with a temporary crown. The king, who used the name Charles [Károly] from then on, counted the years of his reign from this very year. After this coup-like coronation, he retreated to his supporters in the south. The majority of the dignitaries of the country chose another king from the Přemysl dynasty: Wenceslas, the son of Wenceslas II of Bohemia, who was a year younger than Charles. He was Béla IV's great-great-grandson on his great-grandmother Anna's side. After the coronation, he ruled under the name Ladislaus. Pope Boniface VIII's legate to Hungary made some of Wenceslas's followers support Charles instead, who sieged Buda in 1302 unsuccessfully. The people of Buda, who favoured Wenceslas – they were under church interdiction – forced their priest to excommunicate the pope.

In the debate between the two kings, Pope Boniface VIII, as a church judge, adjudicated the kingdom to Charles, and banned Wenceslas from bearing the title King of Hungary. Wenceslas II took his son back home to Bohemia together with the crown jewels. Charles I's Hungarian and Cuman troops – allied with Austrian and German units – started a military campaign against him, without any success. Wenceslas, who

became the King of Bohemia after his father's death, gave up the title King of Hungary in 1305, and ceded it – together with the crown – to Otto, duke of Bavaria.

Otto, duke of Bavaria, from the Wittelsbach dynasty – on his mother Elizabeth's side he was Béla IV's grandson – was forty-four years old in 1305, in contrast to the teenagers Charles and Wenceslas. Only the regional lords and the Transylvanian Saxons supported him; the bishops mostly acknowledged Charles as king. As the bishops of Veszprém and Csanád crowned him with the Holy Crown retrieved from Bohemia, the opposing sides signed a year-long armistice. His reign ended in the summer of 1307,



The coronation of Charles I, mural in St. Martin's Cathedral of Szeged

when Voivode Ladislaus Kán captured him in Transylvania and took the Holy Crown away from him. After a brief period spent in captivity, he returned to Lower Bavaria through Russia, where he retained the title King of Hungary till his death.

The supporters of Charles took Buda over by a ruse, so the middle of the country fell into the hands of the king from the House of Anjou. In October 1307, at an assembly held in the Field of Rákos, a large number of the leaders of the provinces, the prelates and common noblemen declared Charles as Hungarian king. The papal legate, Cardinal Gentilis arrived in Hungary in 1308. To make Charles's reign accepted, first he sought reconciliation, and when he failed, he resorted to excommunication. Since the Holy Crown needed for the coronation was in Ladislaus Kán's possession, Charles was crowned king once again in 1309 with a crown consecrated by the cardinal. When the Holy Crown was regained, Charles was crowned for the third time – and for the last – in 1310.

The cardinal's activity was quite unsuccessful; Charles's rule extended only over the middle part of the country. The main offices were held by the oligarchs of the provinces, and royal power depended on their goodwill and cooperation. The war broke out first with the most powerful of them, Máté Csák, but the main battlefield soon moved to the northeast of the country. The ruler of this region, Palatine Amádé Aba – who wanted to take over the town of Kassa as well – was murdered in 1311 by the people of Kassa. In the following year, the debate between the town and the sons of Amádé, who were also supported by Máté Csák, escalated into an open war. The battle fought at Rozgony, near Kassa, was won by the royal army.

The power of the provincial oligarchs was based on their private possessions, but it was exceeded by the honours they obtained – national offices and countships (*ispán*) of county administration –, and the influence and income associated with these honours. They took over the royal possessions on their territories, and juristic power was also in their hands. Impoverished noblemen in the neighbourhood served them as *familiars*. They continued to hold their offices even after the king had appointed someone else to that post. Most of the provincial lords came from old noble clans, but power was exercised by their close family. It was quite common that members of the same kindred supported opposing sides.

Most of the provincial lords refused to take part in the 1314 military campaign against Máté Csák. Charles declared them disloyal and deprived them of their honorary titles, then appointed his own partisans to these positions. In 1315 Charles transferred his residence from Buda to the safer city of Temesvár. He directed the long war against the regional oligarchs from here. The king took revenge

on the lords one by one, as the rebels rarely united. His method was to take over the fortresses of the enemy first, then make his followers surrender, then he confiscated their possessions and appointed another person to the position of the rebel. Open battles were hardly ever seen.

The most important year was 1317, when royal armies fought multiple battles at the same time. The rebellious forces were the strongest in Transylvania, but fights ended in 1321 there too. In the very same year Máté Csák died, against whom the king had not really been able to succeed. This year, however, he was able to conquer his province in a few months. He was also able to maintain order temporarily in Slavonia and Dalmatia, and deprive the Šubic family of their power in Croatia. By 1323 the country was reunited. The king moved back to the middle of the country and set up his court at Visegrád.

Consolidation under Charles I

The new system of government was strictly centralised. All matters of the country were settled in the royal court. The court consisted of barons and noblemen who did not bear any honours at the time, but they were involved in political decisions. By the end of Charles' reign, cases of possession of estates were heard only at central courts, at the High Court of Justice, at the so-called eighth circuit courts, or at general assemblies held jointly for several counties.

Charles convoked the Diets only in the first period of his reign; later he himself made important political decisions in the Royal Council, with the help of the prelates and barons. He reformed the chancellery and finance in several small steps. At this time, the office of the royal treasurer appeared in Hungary for the first time. In contrast to Western countries, the Kingdom of Hungary would

always be characterised by the dominance of royal power, so in his reforms, Charles would refer to his predecessors. The Angevins considered themselves the descendants of the Árpáds, and this was also expressed in the use of their coat-of-arms. The bigger part of the country's area was in the king's possession; his supporters could receive land as gifts (honour) for their services.

The dominance of crown estates was typical throughout the Angevin period. The majority of mines and towns also belonged to the king or queen. Charles and Louis the Great were not very generous when it came to donating inheritable land gifts. The bearers of offices – except for the Drugeth family from Naples – were families of Hungarian origin, the majority of them descended from the members of old clans. Charles's reforms – such as the right of the sword and the promotion of a daughter to a son, then later, under Louis the Great, the introduction of the new donation – were in favour of the loyal court nobility. Feudal lords, who were granted the *ius gladii*, the right of the sword, could punish criminals caught on their estates, which usually meant execution under medieval customary law. They held jurisdiction over not only their own villeins, but serfs belonging to other lords as well.

King Charles I,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum



Promoting a daughter to a son interfered in the custom of inheritance: if a nobleman died without a direct male heir or a close relative, daughters could be authorised to inherit their father's estate as if they were sons. In reality, this privilege benefited the husbands of noble daughters who had no brothers or male cousins, as they could lay their hands on their wives' estates, and bequeath them to their own children. The principle of new donation abolished the existing custom that the receiver of a royal land donation could pass the estate on to relatives other than direct heirs. Charles asserted his absolute power even against his first followers, the bishops. He appointed them, sometimes even in their predecessors' life.

Charles took back the Banate of Macsó from the Serbian ruler during the war to unite the country. The ban governing that district had power over other Hungarian counties. Further efforts to expand the territory of the country southward failed due to the emerging Serbian power. Bosnia, as before, existed as an independent country, though it depended on Hungary.

In Croatia, Charles did not manage to restore royal power, even after dethroning the Šubic family. Venice had strengthened its power over the Dalmatian cities, the authority of Hungarian kings over Zára, Sebenico, Trau, Spalato and Nona became nominal.

Hungarian kings – as kings of Cumania – claimed the right to rule over Wallachia [Havasalföld]. By this time, the population there was almost completely Romanian, and they lived in an independent principality formed by their leader Basarab – who was of Cuman origin – with Bulgarian support. In the autumn of 1330, Charles personally led a campaign to subjugate the new country. The returning Hungarian army might have been captured in the Red Tower Pass; most of the soldiers perished there, even the king himself barely managed to escape. Charles did not launch any more attacks against Wallachia, and this battle contributed to the consolidation of the independent principality.

Foreign policy became more active after the years of domestic conflicts, and it also changed direction. At the beginning of the 14th century, the good relationship with the Habsburgs ended due to the fights to take back Pozsony and Muraköz [region of the Mura River], which had fallen into Austrian hands. Hungarian troops attacked Austria several times, but the Austrian dukes supported the Kőszegi clan, who last rebelled in the 1330s. Polish–Hungarian relations were the most stable. In 1320, Charles married the Polish king Ladislaus Lokietek's daughter, Elizabeth. He gave military help to his father-in-law many times against the Teutonic Order, Lithuania and Bohemia. As a result of the new foreign policy, the relationship with Bohemia slowly improved, where the last Přemysl kings, then the Luxembourg dynasty also laid their claims to the Polish throne.

According to the Angevin order of succession, Charles should have received the right to inherit the throne of Naples. However, because of his young age and his affairs in Hungary, his uncle, Robert the Wise, became King of Sicily – in reality, King of Naples. Since Robert's only son died during his father's life and left two daughters, Charles renewed his claim to the throne on behalf of his son. Neither the papal court nor Naples supported the idea of unifying the Hungarian and Neapolitan powers. In 1333, Charles brought his six-year-old second son, Andrew, to Naples personally. He was engaged to Joanna, Robert's eldest granddaughter. Although Charles did not manage to make his son king, he believed that



*Double pendant seal of
King Charles I*



*View of Visegrád from
the Danube*

after Robert's death Andrew would ascend to the throne, as there was no tradition of female rulers in Europe at that time.

In 1335, mediation ended successfully between John the Blind, the King of Bohemia, and Casimir III (the Great), the Polish king, which was confirmed at the royal congress held at Visegrád in November. John gave up his claim to the Polish throne. As judges in the debate between Poland and the Teutonic Order, the Hungarian and Czech kings adjudicated Kuyavia and other regions to belong to the Poles, and Pomerania to the Germans. However, in the case of Silesia, the Czechs and the Poles could not reach an agreement. In 1339 Casimir made a will: in case he died without a male descendant, one of Charles's sons should be crowned Polish king.

Before these events, in the spring of 1330, one of the king's men in his court, Felician Záh, a landowner in Nógrád County, attempted to murder Charles and the royal family in the Visegrád castle, as supposedly the queen's younger brother seduced his daughter Klára with the queen's knowledge. Charles suffered minor injuries, but Queen Consort Elizabeth lost four fingers. Záh was immediately killed, and members of his clan within the third degree of kinship were executed. This procedure, which reminds us of a Neapolitan blood feud, was against Hungarian law, so the events contributed to the general opinion which regarded the reign of the first Angevin king inferior to that of his son, Louis the Great.

The Age of Louis the Great

After his death, Charles was followed on the throne by his sixteen-year-old son, Louis, the only Hungarian king whom his country called "the Great". Alongside him – almost as a co-ruler – his mother, Elizabeth, intervened in everything. When he was out of the country, the king asked Elizabeth

to fulfil the governor's duties. Louis liked warfare – he came close to losing his life in several battles –, tournaments and while hunting. Like his mother, he was deeply religious. He was a great admirer of St. Ladislaus, and minted his golden forints with his portrait on them, instead of the coins with St. John the Baptist's image minted by Charles after the Florentine model.

When Robert the Wise died in 1343, in his will he formally bequeathed his throne to his granddaughter, Joanna. When, after a long hesitation, the pope approved the crowning of Andrew, Charles I's son, as King of Sicily, Joanna's supporters killed the prince with the Queen's knowledge. Although the murderers were executed, Louis's attempt to ask the pope to dethrone Joanna was unsuccessful, as the pope did not want the Angevins' Hungarian and Neapolitan lines to unite. The Hungarian king – referring to his father's one-time claim to the throne of Naples – considered himself the legal heir to the Neapolitan throne. According to the new order of succession, however, after Joanna's withdrawal, another Angevin, Charles – the duke of Durazzo – would have inherited the right to the throne.

In 1347 Louis personally led a campaign against Naples. His Hungarian and German mercenaries met only slight resistance. Queen Joanna escaped to her ancient French estates to recruit people for her troops. Louis captured the Anjou princes, who hastily came to honour him, and had his rival Charles executed. At the beginning of 1348, he marched into Naples, and awarded himself the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem. Due to the discontent following the execution and the plague that had reached Naples, Louis returned home after a few months. The troops left behind could not control the conquered regions, and Joanna – on her new husband's side – soon took back her country with the exception of a few forts.

In 1349 the Black Death reached Hungary, and the queen consort – Louis's first wife – also died of the disease. In 1350 the royal Hungarian army set off for its second campaign against Naples. They took the capital, but they did not manage to consolidate Hungarian rule this time, either. Louis gave up his claims to the throne of

*King Louis I in the first
page of the Chronicon
Picturn*



Sicily and Jerusalem, and signed a ceasefire with Joanna. The majority of the royal army returned to Hungary, but Hungarian knights, as members of a mercenary group called “the great Hungarian army”, continued to fight in Italy for years.

Louis the Great promoted the centralised government introduced by his father. He was forced

to make concessions only once, in the aftermath of the unsuccessful Neapolitan wars and the plague. In November 1351 – for the first time during his reign –, he convoked the Diet in Buda. He reinforced the Golden Bull, which was considered the fundamental law of noble rights in that codified form from the 15th century on. In one point, however, he changed Andrew II’s policies: he repealed the right of noblemen dying without heirs to make a free will, and extended the principle of aviticity to them. In order to prevent the alienation of the land, property without a legal heir should be returned to the king, unless there is any single, however distant, surviving male heir of the original owning family.

The 1351 law declared the idea of “one and the same liberty” of noblemen living within the borders of the country. This meant exemption from all kinds of taxation and services – so with this law he also exempted the noblemen of Slavonia, Pozsega and Valkó counties from paying taxes. He limited the Church’s right to interdict noblemen who carried a lawsuit against churches. He regulated the collection of a tax called “the profit of the chamber”, ordered to abolish the unlawful

customs duties, and decided in various lawsuit matters. He ordered the collection of the ninth, and he promised to extend this to the king’s and the queen’s estates, too.

Louis the Great did not intend to share his power with the Diet permanently. The influence of noblemen extended only over their county. Counties did not have a permanent armed force, or any authority other than the *sedria*. We cannot even talk about local governance in the counties. To judge local criminals, and the administration of justice in case of noblemen who could not visit the Royal Court of Justice was the duty of other office bearers – following the orders of the Palatine and the king –, who held joint general assemblies for several counties from time to time.

In the 1370s, there were several changes in the government, aiming at an even stronger centralisation of power. The chancellery was divided into two parts; the secret chancellery was established with the lead of the secret chancellor. The head of the former chancellery got the title Lord Chancellor. A third department of the Royal Court of Justice was also set up: besides the tribunal of the palatine and the court of royal presence headed by the judge royal, the court of special royal presence was formed, headed by the Lord Chancellor. The master of the treasury was not a financial office bearer any more: he became the judge of appeal cases of royal towns. His financial duties were taken over by the independent treasure keeper from that time on.

Louis the Great restored royal power in Croatia at the beginning of his reign. He made Dalmatian towns surrender during his Venetian campaign that was started in alliance with Padua in 1356. In the



Tapestry decorated with the Angevin coat of arms from the Buda Castle

1358 Treaty of Zára, the *doges* of Venice gave up their titles “the duke of Croatia and Dalmatia”, which they had held for centuries. Hungarian supremacy extended from Ragusa – conquered at that time – to as far as Quarnero. This was reinforced by the Treaty of Turin in 1381, after yet another war. In Bosnia, Louis entered a war because of Bogomilism, a form of heresy, after the death of his loyal father-in-law, Stephen Kotromanić.

Serbia crumbled after the death of Stefan Dušan, who was crowned tsar in 1346. The northern part of the country fell into the hands of the Hungarians, and southern Serbia fell under Ottoman Turkish rule after the battle near the Maritsa River (1371). In Wallachia, the successor of Basarab surrendered to the Hungarian king – in return he received the Banate of Severin. The Romanian principality, however, remained practically independent. In the 1370s, border fortresses were built against the unreliable neighbours: Töröcsvár and Tolmács; Orsova was renovated. In 1375, the Hungarian troops fought against the Ottoman Turks – who were then allies of Wallachia – for the first time. During Louis the Great’s life there was no Ottoman attack against Hungary.

Bulgaria was divided into two regions at that time, and the northern part, the territory of the Tsar of Vidin, fell under the rule of Hungarian bans for a short while, then it became a feudal tenure. Beyond the eastern border, the Hungarian army defeated the attacking Mongol Tatars. After the retreat of the Golden Horde, Bogdan, the Voivode of Máramaros, founded Moldavia, the second Romanian principality around 1359. Louis the Great led several military campaigns here, but Moldavia became Hungary’s feudal tenure only for a very brief period, and it later fell under Polish influence.

The Polish king Casimir the Great, died in 1370. In accordance with the agreement of 1339, Louis – who helped the Poles in several campaigns against Lithuania earlier – followed him on the throne. The Polish–Hungarian personal union was quite unsuccessful. The king left the government of the country to his mother, but there was a riot in Krakow against Elizabeth’s violent rule, and the queen was forced to return home. Her successor, Vladislaus, the duke of Opole, was also unsuccessful as a regent. Louis the Great ruled Halych – taken over from the Lithuanians – from Hungary, and appointed Hungarians to the lead of local fortresses.

The “Great Privilege” or the Pact of Kassa – which played an important role in Polish social development – was issued in 1374 in Kassa. With this document, the ruler made his people recognise the right of his daughters to the throne. Louis the Great wanted his elder daughter Mária, and her fiancée, Sigismund of Luxembourg, to ascend to the throne after his death. Joanna of Naples – who supported the pope of Avignon after the division of the Western Church – was dethroned by the pope of Rome in 1380. He offered the throne to Little Charles, who was brought up at the Hungarian royal court. Little Charles, supported by Hungarian troops, easily defeated Naples in 1381, and had Joanna murdered in 1382.

At the end of his reign, Louis the Great became infected with leprosy and retreated from public life. He led a religious life until his death. His followers accepted succession on the female line, but the legal practice pursued by secular people was against the rule of queens, holding the view that the suitability of sovereigns depended on their military skills. After the king’s death, his eleven-year-old daughter Mária was crowned at Székesfehérvár. The country was governed by her mother, Elizabeth of Bosnia, and Palatine Miklós Garai on her behalf. The Polish would have accepted Mária and Sigismund, on condition that the ruler should settle in Poland.

The Reign of Queens

After a long hesitation, Elizabeth, the queen mother, sent her younger daughter Hedvig to Poland (where she was known as Jadwiga). She was crowned in 1384, so the possibility of renewing the personal union came to an end. Two years later, Hedvig was married to the Grand duke of Lithuania, Wladyslaw

*Portrait of Queen Mária
on the coat of arms of
the House of Forgách de
Ghymes*



problems, were attacked by the Horváti brothers as they reached the market town of Gara. Garai and his company were killed, the women were captured, and Elizabeth was strangled in prison in the following year. Horváti, insisting on legal succession, wanted Little Charles's infant son, Ladislaus of Naples, to be king. The barons declared themselves to be governors of the country, they even had a new signet made with the writing "signet of the people of the country" on it. There was no representation of the Estates, no Diets were convoked, and Louis's one-time barons considered themselves to be representatives of the whole country.

Jagiello, who had accepted Christianity not long before. In Hungary, there was great dissatisfaction with Elizabeth, who addressed herself as queen. The queen mother and her followers, with the lead of Palatine Miklós Garai, wanted Mária to marry Louis, the duke of Orléans. The majority of the barons insisted on Sigismund; the Horváti brothers – who were very influential among the common noblemen – wanted a male king, and offered Little Charles, the Angevin king of Naples, the Hungarian throne.

Little Charles landed in Dalmatia in September 1385. Mária and Elizabeth, who were afraid of losing their leading position, now accepted Sigismund. The wedding was held, but the husband escaped upon hearing the news of the arrival of the pretender to the throne. A Diet was convoked in Buda, which elected Little Charles king, and made Mária give up her claim. The reign of the new king lasted for 39 days. Elizabeth's followers attacked him in the palace of Buda in 1386. He was taken to Visegrád with serious injuries, where he was probably poisoned.

A civil war broke out in the country. Slavonia, Croatia and Bosnia fell into the hands of the rebels. In 1386 the queens, who went to the south to soothe the

KING SIGISMUND AND HIS AGE

István Tringli

The League and the King

The noblemen, who now joined in a league, accepted Sigismund of Luxembourg in their company. Sigismund made a promise in his letter of alliance that he would keep the old traditions of the country, governing it only with the league's advice, and would not give offices or land gifts to foreigners. He was crowned king in 1387. His reign was based on election and not on succession. After his wife's release from captivity, he formally became a co-ruler, but in fact, he governed the country. He managed to suppress the southern rebels only after a lengthy battle. In 1395 Queen Mária died, and "with her the kindred of saintly kings died out on both lines." The Árpád dynasty had been called "the saintly kings" in the Middle Ages, in fact until the end of the 18th century.

Sigismund's reign until 1403 was overshadowed by the influence of the league – though it was gradually decreasing. The leaders of the league were János Kanizsai, the archbishop of Esztergom and lord chancellor, and István Lackfi, the palatine of the first years. The other members also originated from Louis the Great's one-time baronial families. They received enormous land gifts between 1387 and 1392, and as a result, the royal demesne, which had dominated over private land possessions since the beginning of the age of the Árpáds, was now in minority against private land possessions, especially secular estates. Half of the royal castles with the surrounding lands, but also cities or smaller estates were given away within a couple of years.

After the 1389 Battle of Kosovo (Rigómező), the neighbouring Balkan states gradually surrendered to the Ottoman Turks. The Ottomans often marauded the region of the Temes River and Syrmia. At first Sigismund tried to hold them back by attacking them. In 1396, after long diplomatic preparatory works, he declared his campaign against the Ottomans a crusade, and left for the Balkans with a cavalry composed of various European nationalities. The traditional courtly warfare proved to be unsuitable against the Ottomans, whose army, led by Sultan Bayezid, destroyed the Christian troops on 28 September at Nicopolis, on the Bulgarian border.

From 1396, Hungary prepared for defence against the Ottoman attacks, using buffer states as a means until the 1420s. The neighbouring Balkan states were made Hungary's vassals by Sigismund. Ottoman attacks were impeded in the territory of these countries. He appointed Mircea the Elder to the lead of Wallachia in 1395, who also received estates and castles in the south of Transylvania. In Serbia, Stefan Lazarević, who submitted to the Ottomans, also accepted Sigismund as his king in 1403. The subjugation of Bosnia was a rather more challenging task, as there was no firm central power. The real ruler of the country, Hrvoje, surrendered to him only after several campaigns, in 1409.

*King Sigismund leading
his banderium, detail
of the Calvary altar in
Garamszentbenedek*



After the battle of Nicopolis, István Lackfi, the former palatine, who was dissatisfied with Sigismund, contacted Ladislaus of Naples, who saw a favourable occasion to grab the Hungarian crown. The plot was discovered; the king's followers murdered Lackfi in 1397, and the huge wealth of his family was confiscated. That same year a Diet was convoked at Temesvár. The 1351 laws and the Golden Bull were reinforced with few changes, but the resistance clause was omitted.

Despite their old privilege, noblemen were required to join the army and fight even beyond the borders during the Ottoman threat. Those who resisted had to pay a fine. There were new orders about setting up the army of servant-soldiers: landowners had to provide an archer after every 20 of their villeins. To cover the costs of defence, the Church also had to pay extraordinary tax, and their tenth was distrained as well. The right of villeins to free migration was reinforced: after they had settled their land rents and debts, they could leave their lords freely. The king promised to restrict the promotion of daughters to sons, take back his unfair gifts, and replace foreign office bearers.

To help him repress the power of the league, Sigismund had already found his new supporters before the Battle of Nicopolis. The barons arrested the king in 1401 with the aim of removing foreigners. The council of prelates and barons governed the country for a few months in the name of the Holy Crown. They issued their charters “with the signet of the Holy Crown of Hungary”. They could not, however, agree on the question of succession. The king was saved by Miklós Garai and Hermann Cillei's (Celje) intervention. Sigismund became engaged to Cillei's daughter Borbála, and he promised that he would not punish the participants of the plot.

In 1402 Sigismund appointed Albert IV, duke of Austria, to the Hungarian throne, should he die without a legal heir. He also appointed Garai to the post of the palatine. The members of the league who felt cheated organised an open riot in 1403. The centres of their operations were in Transylvania, the region beyond the Tisza and in the south. Common noblemen also joined them in vast numbers. Ladislaus of Naples, who arrived in Dalmatia, was crowned with a temporary crown in Zára by Kanizsai. Sigismund's partisans, however, had military advantage, so most of the rebels surrendered without any fight, and any remaining resistance was soon broken down.

Hungarian King as an Emperor

Detail of a decorative saddle carved from bone, with the emblem of the Order of the Dragon

After the riot, Sigismund's power remained firm in Hungary. His main supporters were Miklós Garai, who was the palatine of the country until the end of his life, and Hermann Cillei. The king was away from the country several times, on such occasions his deputies, the vicars (*vicarius*) governed the state

instead of him but with his knowledge. In 1408, he founded the Order of the Dragon with his wife, Barbara, and twenty-two of his followers. The order operated similarly to any other chivalric order founded by a monarch. The order was named after the insignia, a dragon incurved into a form of a circle, with a red cross on its back. Formally, the order's aim was to fight against the pagans, i.e. the Ottoman Turks, but in reality it was the union of the new elite and the ruling family.

In the question of succession, Sigismund insisted on the Habsburgs even after Albert IV's death. His daughter, Elizabeth, married Albert V, duke of Austria. His relationship with the Jagiellos was quite stiff: at the beginning of his reign he was forced to give up Halych for their benefit and accept that Moldavia was Poland's vassal state. In 1409, Ladislaus of Naples sold Dalmatia to Venice for 100,000 golden forints. By 1420 the republic occupied the whole



province, and Sigismund launched several futile campaigns to take it back. All of them ended with an armistice; the Dalmatian towns escaped Hungarian supremacy for good. In 1412, he pawned thirteen Szepes Towns to Wladyslaw II, the Polish king.

By the 1420s, the system of the neighbouring buffer states used for Hungary's defence collapsed. Due to the unreliability of the Bosnian dignitaries, some of their fortresses were occupied by Hungarian guards, but there was no chance to make the whole country surrender. After Mircea's death, the chief princes of Wallachia vacillated between Hungarian and Turkish vassalage. The Ottomans attacked Slavonia from Bosnia, and Transylvania from Wallachia. Stefan Lazarević handed over Nándorfehérvár to Sigismund in 1427, but Galambóc fell into the hands of the Ottomans. In the following year there was an unsuccessful campaign to take back the fortress. Thus, the country had common borders with the Ottoman Empire.

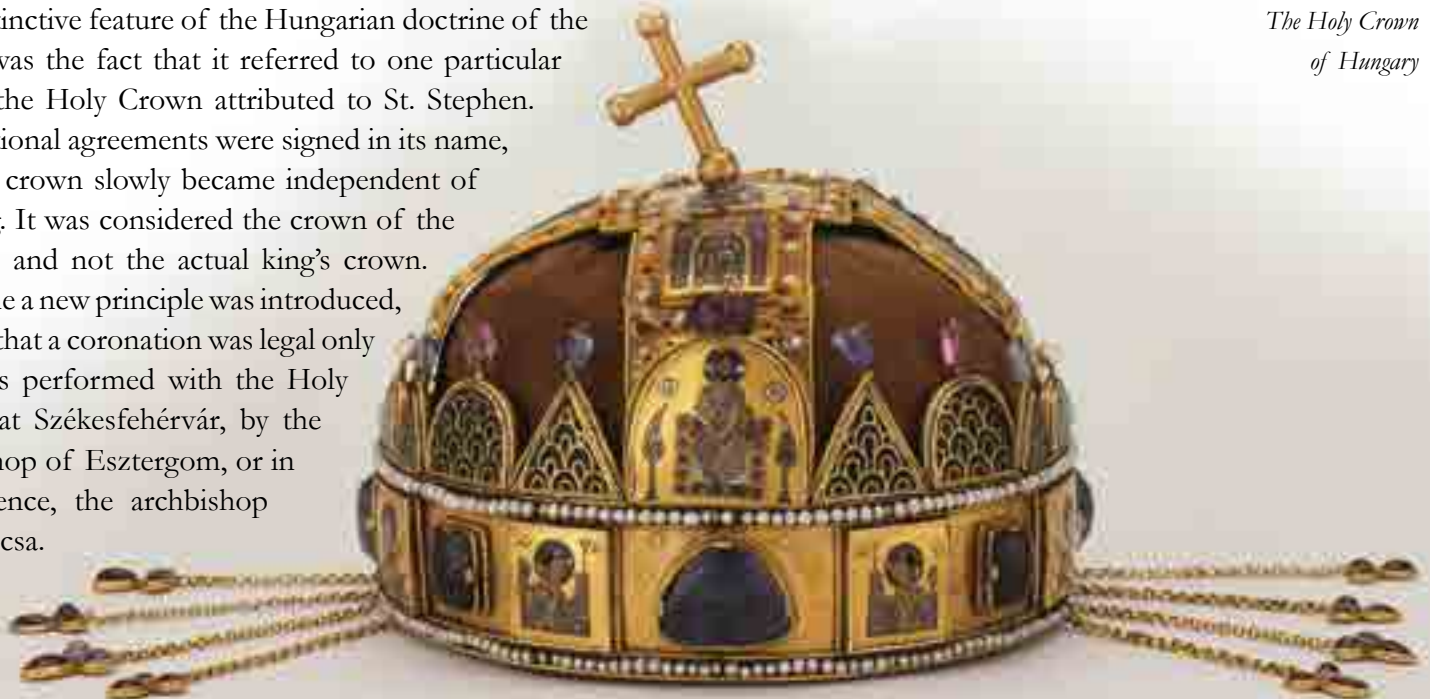
The new system of defence was made up of a network of fortresses built in the south at a very high cost, which impeded the Ottomans for almost a century. In the 1430s the military system was reorganised. The army of the age consisted of three parts: royal troops, the contingents (*banderium*) of baronial landlords, and the military units of the counties. The troops were told in advance where to fight. In 1435 a significant litigation law was accepted. The court of special royal presence was abolished, and the court of personal royal presence was created in its place. This was the court of the lord and secret chancellor, who administered justice in the king's name.

In the spring of 1437, Hungary's first major peasant revolt erupted in northern Transylvania, and in Szatmár, Szabolcs and Ugocea counties. The cause of discontent was that in 1436 the bishop of Transylvania demanded that the tithe of the previous three years should be collected in the newly-introduced valuable money – as he did not collect tithe in the previous years because of the high inflation rates. The rebels, who gathered on Bábolna hill, near the market town of Alparét, defeated the army of the voivode. In two agreements the parties regulated the villeins' right to making a will, the feudal taxes paid in cash and in kind, and the forced labour owed to the feudal lord, the provisions for armies marching through the region, and the sheep fiftieth tax of the Romanians. The riot was suppressed at the beginning of the following year.

The Doctrine of the Holy Crown

Because of the change of dynasties and the natural development in legislation, a new concept appeared in political law. The notion of the crown – which hitherto referred to the king's rights – was extended in the 14th century: it meant the territory of the country, the power of the state independent of the king. The distinctive feature of the Hungarian doctrine of the crown was the fact that it referred to one particular object: the Holy Crown attributed to St. Stephen. International agreements were signed in its name, and the crown slowly became independent of the king. It was considered the crown of the country, and not the actual king's crown. This time a new principle was introduced, namely that a coronation was legal only if it was performed with the Holy Crown at Székesfehérvár, by the archbishop of Esztergom, or in his absence, the archbishop of Kalocsa.

*The Holy Crown
of Hungary*



Antónia S. Hámori

Characteristic Features of the Hungarian Language of the Time

In the history of the Hungarian language, the time of the Angevin kings and Sigismund is considered the middle period of the Old Hungarian period. Phonetic and morphological changes – which started when the Hungarians began their independent existence, and were advancing in the age of the Árpád

dynasty – became complete and stable by this time. The spread of intellectual culture was parallel to the increase of material culture. Vocabulary was quite rich. The number of schools increased, for not only ecclesiastic but also secular places of learning were established.

Literacy also spread. More and more people visited foreign schools, such as the universities of Paris, Padua, Bologna, Vienna and Krakow. Universities were also founded in Hungary, at Pécs in 1367, and Óbuda in 1389. The spread of literacy helped the development of the vernacular which became more suitable to express thoughts more accurately and in a more sophisticated way.

There were thousands of charters, issued at royal chancelleries or places of authentication. The very few Hungarian



The reconstructed building of the medieval university of Pécs

phrases they include inform us about the vocabulary, phonetic and morphological relations of the age. From the end of the 14th century, longer written works were produced, which provide a rich source of material about the condition and development of the language of the age. These texts are partly ecclesiastic, partly secular works.

Ecclesiastic Linguistic Relics

The majority of ecclesiastic linguistic relics are codices. The earliest Hungarian codex is the Jókai Codex, which includes the legends of St. Francis of Assisi. This is the first hand-written book in Hungarian, a 1448 copy of a codex that was translated from Latin after 1372. The original text was translated by Observant Franciscan friar for the Poor Clare Sisters or the Beguines of Óbuda, who did not speak Latin. The original translation was lost; only a copy survived. The copy was probably made in Óbuda (or Gyöngyös).

The text of the Jókai Codex originates from several Latin translations. The majority of it is from a 14th-century collection of legends, titled *Actus Beati Francisci et sociorum eius* (The Life of St. Francis

and his followers). This source describes St. Francis as similar to Christ. It tells us about St. Francis's 40-day fast, his prayers on mount Alverna, it describes how he obtained Christ's five wounds and how he founded the Franciscan Order.

The Jókai Codex also mentions endearing episodes and miracles: how a wild wolf was converted in Gubbio at the request of St. Francis and how the saint preached to his "sisters, the birds". The examples describing St. Francis's virtues (poverty, obedience and devotion) were taken from a collection of legends, called *Speculum perfectionis* (The Mirror of Perfection). Besides these sources, the translators also used St. Bonaventura's biography about St. Francis.

The spelling of the Jókai Codex does not use the secondary signs of punctuation; it follows the practice of chancery spelling. Its language is rather archaic; the copy shows an earlier state of the language. For example, its spelling does not reflect the open vowels in certain words, like, for example (in modern spelling) *busszú* (long), *társot* (company), *lassan* (slowly), *magamot* (myself), *fiadot* (your son). From among the changes in consonants, it does not show the *mt > nt* assimilation (for example, *himt*, *romt*, *cimterem*), nor the assimilation of suffixes *-val/-vel*: *malasztval* (with grace), *járásva* (with walk), *sebességre* (with speed)...etc. It uses a lot of archaic words: *álojt* (think), *ösztövérit* (consume), *késál* (fight), *lenzát* (scandal)...etc.

Instead of the word "temple" it uses "church"; regarding the word *puszta* it does not know it as a noun "plain", instead, it uses the meaning "dreary". There are a lot of words created by conscious word forming: derivated and compound words. For example: *kedveletes* = *kedves* (nice), *jelenségbeli* (private, individual), *községbeli* (communal), *átkozottak* (damned), *hogyhana* = *mintha* (as if)...etc. The structure of sentences in the codex is strongly influenced by Latin. The Latin text is often clumsily translated word by word, and the Hungarian version follows not only the literal meaning but also all the tools of comparison, word order, passive voice and agreement of the Latin.

The first Hungarian Bible translation is the Hussite Bible. This is the only Hungarian product of Hussitism. The Bible (or at least the greatest part of it) was translated by two secular priests from Sarmia: Tamás Pécsi, altar priest from Kamanc and Master Bálint Újlaki, parish priest from Belcsény. Both of them studied at the University of Prague between 1399 and 1411, and having learnt about the teachings of Jan Hus, they became Hussites themselves. They started the Bible translation around 1416 and finished it before 1441. Besides the Hussite teachings, they also adopted Hussite spelling and used it in their translation.

The translation did not follow the spirit of Catholic teachings. For example, the expression *spiritus sanctus* (the Holy Spirit) was translated as "the holy breath", which was considered heretic. As the Franciscan inquisitors were pursuing them, in 1439 priest Tamás and his followers escaped to Moldavia. The pursuers caught up with them and took the Bible translation away. Fortunately, they did not destroy the confiscated translation, but they used it themselves. The original translation was finally destroyed in the 15th century, its text survived only in manuscripts. The codices which include the text of the Hussite Bible are the following:

The earliest copied codex of the Bible translation is the Vienna Codex. It was probably copied from the original around 1450. It includes some minor books from the Old Testament: Books of Ruth, Judith, Esther, the Maccabai, Baruch, Daniel and the Twelve Minor Prophets. The sequence of the books does not follow the order of the Vulgate. The codex was copied by three different people. The majority of it is the work of the second person. The copiers made a lot of spelling mistakes, but they all follow the marks of Hussite spelling. The signs for open and closed /e/ sounds are the most consistent in this codex.

In chronological order, the second manuscript is the Munich Codex. It includes the four gospels of the New Testament. There is a twelve-page Hungarian calendar on a parchment bound in front of the gospels, with the names of public holidays, the saints and a calendar wheel. With the help of the wheel,

one could compile the calendar for every year. The calendar wheel is valid for the years between 1416 and 1435; this shows that the Bible translation must have started after 1416.

The Munich Codex was also copied by three different people. The copy is not as consistent in spelling (with special regard to the signs for the /e/ sound) as the Vienna Codex. The copier of the biggest part wrote his name, the place and date of copying under the finishing sentence of John's gospel. According to this, the copier was Imre Henzsel's son, György Némethi; his work was finished in the Moldavian town Tatros in 1466. His name, Némethi refers to the fact that he might have come from a Saxon family.

The Apocryph Codex consisted of several manuscripts of different origin and content. It was probably the result of repeated copying. The multitude of misspellings and misuses of words in it refer to this possibility. Its copiers were probably Catholic monks. Only the part containing psalms from the Old Testament – made around 1490 – came from the Hussite Bible. This part was written by two people. The other parts were copied by four different people. These are already from the 16th century, and contain translations made in the spirit of Catholicism. The so-called three significant services might have been made around 1500, which describes the order of service for the three Mary celebrations. In the part which was made around 1510, there are medieval hymns and prayers from the Old Testament. The part which describes Jesus' torture may have been copied around 1515.

The three codices of the Hussite Bible are closely connected by their contents, language, and

Excerpt from
the Jókai Codex



style of expression. The original condition of the language of the Bible translation was probably preserved by the Vienna Codex, and the other two codices contain the dialects of the copiers. The translators had to cope with many problems so that they could express the richness of the Bible's culture in the Hungarian language. Biblical, religious linguistic elements, and Hungarian extracts known from masses that were used in Hungarian Christianity might have helped their work. They may have known German and Czech Bible translations as well, and these could influence their usage of words.

They created more than two hundred new words by derivation, compound words and the renewal of old words. They used several special words, which have become archaic since then. For example, *álanalkodat* = *csel* (trick), *címerlet* = *cím* (title), *ragadozat* = *préda* (prey), *villamodat*

= *bajnal* (dawn), *levált* = *farizeus* (Pharisee), *hírvadat* = *halványság* (plainness), *monnó* = *mindkettő* (both), *holval* = *reggel* (morning etc. Their language is full of emphatic adverbials and pronouns. For example, *míglén*, *mikoron* (when), *netalántál* (probably), *önnön bennük* (in themselves), *minenmagunk* (ourselves) etc. The consistent use of linking words is also typical of the language. For example, *monnal* = *mint* (like), *és úgy* = *tehát* (therefore), *mint*, *miként*, *miképpen* (as) etc.

Certain forms of verbs, which later became archaic, were quite frequently used, for example, future tense with *-nd* (*látand*, *üldözend*, *meghaland* [will see, will chase, will die]). The structure of their sentences, the agreement of the modes and tenses of verbs were frequently influenced by the Latin language. In spite of the linguistic inaccuracy and Latinisms, we can say that the translators of the Hussite Bible had created the literary language of the 15th century.

Amongst the religious linguistic relics, a short piece of work called The Lines and Glosses from Marosvásárhely also deserves a mention. It was discovered in the Koncz Codex of Marosvásárhely. It was made by an unknown translator around 1410. It contains a translation of a part from the Book of Kings, one of the books of the Old Testament. There are numerous mistakes and mistranslations in its text. Its language can be characterised by vowels referring to pronunciation without lip-rounding. For example, *melléled* = *mellőled* (next to you), *midén* = *midőn* (as), *kelket* = *kölyköt* (young of an animal), *tivis* = *tövis* (thorn) etc. The translator inserted four short marginal notes (altogether eleven words) next to the biblical text.

The short relic from 1433, called the Laska Lines, is also of religious type. This is a five-line Hungarian text in a Latin codex. Its author is a Benedictine monk, Demeter Laskói. The content of the relic is a prayer to Christ written in verse; a poetic translation of a Latin prayer also written in verse. Its language can be characterised by the use of closed vowels /i/, /ü/. Its spelling resembles chancery spelling.

Secular Linguistic Relics

The secular linguistic relics of the age are almost all Latin–Hungarian word lists. In fact, these are dictionaries of the time. They were prepared to make Latin easier to learn, and they were used in school education and in chancelleries. The Latin words are grouped around concepts. The Hungarian meanings are written above the Latin words. These word lists are very important with respect to medieval Hungarian vocabulary, word formation and the etymology of words. The earliest Hungarian dictionaries are thought to have developed from these word lists.

The oldest Latin–Hungarian word list is the Königsberg word list. It may have been compiled around 1380. It was probably used in a royal chancery. It contains 159 Latin words, but only 100 words were explained in Hungarian. It is the work of two copiers, whose mother tongue was probably German. The word list contains words referring to family relations, senses, good and bad characteristic features, emotions, illnesses and the names of items of clothing, tools and weapons.

The Beszterce, Schlägl and Sopron word lists can be traced back to one single original source. All these lists were made with the mediation of several lost copies. The original list may have been prepared between 1380 and 1390. The sample could have been the Latin material of a Latin–German list of words, made in the Bavaria–Austria region.

The Beszterce word list was copied by a guest teacher, George of Slavonia (Tótországi György) around 1395. The word list may have been a school book used in a town school. It contains 1,316 Hungarian words, grouped around twenty-one main concepts. It also lists words that today have become extinct. For example, *bort* (greyhound), *pikonbog* (a type of helmet), *pakocska* (mocking), *kotorgárt* (shield), *bigy* (earring), *egyven* (brother or sister) etc. The majority of its words shows closed vowels; for example, *iszop* = *iszap* (mud), *sum* = *som* (dogberry), *lopus* = *lapos* (flat) etc. A very interesting fact in

the history of culture is that it does not seem to know the names of fire weapons, although it gives a detailed description about the weapons of the Sigismund Age.

The Schlägl word list was compiled around 1405. Its copier is unknown. It contains 2,140 Hungarian words, grouped around thirty-two main concepts. We can find words of intellect in it. For example, *elme, értelem, szándék, ok* (mind, sense, will, reason) etc. Its words belonging to literary education are, for example, the names of musical instruments: *kürt, síp, gajd, hegedű, lant* etc (horn, whistle, a type of wind instrument, violin, lute etc) and the job names of entertainers: *kürtös, igric, dobos* (horn-player, minstrel, drummer). Extinct words also occur, for example, *verő = kalapács* (hammer), *kőlab = oszlop* (column), *állterem = álkapocs* (jaw), etc. In some words there are very closed vowels, for example, *harum = három* (three), *habus = habos* (foamy), *orrus = orros* (nosy) etc.

The Sopron word list was probably a fragment of a longer word list. There are only five main concept groups with 217 words. It was copied around 1435. The copier was inaccurate and unskilled, and may have been an apprentice. The list is shorter than the Beszterce and Schlägl word lists, but it contains words which were not included in earlier bigger word lists.

The Jász word list – which was prepared after 1422 – can be found in a Jász–Latin word list. It contains only six (maybe eight) Hungarian words; these are names of food and drinks, and items needed for cooking, for example, *vaj, árpa, fű (= vadkacsa)* (butter, barley, wild duck).

The relic called “The Hungarian language master of student John of Rotenburg” is a collection of words similar to word lists. The words are the notes of a man whose mother tongue was German. Between 1418 and 1422 the student wrote the most important Hungarian words and expressions on a page of a Latin school book. These were, for example, names of family relations, words referring to eating, washing, clothing and everyday life, even some obscene expressions. The language-master contains some fragments of sentences, and short sentences, such as *Tied-e ez?* (Ez a tied?), *Adj te bort!* (You give me some wine!), *Hova mégy?* (Where are you going?), *Neked szólok* (I am talking to you) etc.

Among the secular linguistic relics, we can find shorter or longer glosses. The Mondsee Glosses contains three words “*ravasx [róka] átkozta szél*” (“cunning [fox] damn wind”), and was written around 1390 in the codex of legends of the Upper Austrian Mondsee Abbey. The Vienna Glosses can be found in a school book from around 1423, which had been taken from Esztergom to Vienna. The glosses were written by four different people. One of them – as his name shows – Jakab Bélai, was a student whose mother tongue was German, so he may have learnt the Hungarian language alongside Latin. The biggest collection of glosses is the Schlägl glosses. This contains 130 words, which may have been copied into a Latin codex around 1430. The Schlägl word list was attached to this codex. The majority of the glosses are nouns: names of plants and animals.

THE SYSTEM OF THE OLD HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE

Antónia S. Hámori

Vocabulary

The linguistic relics of the age prove that both the vocabulary and grammar of the language underwent large-scale growth and expansion. The ancient words of the ancestors were the basis for the vocabulary: words inherited from the Uralic, Finno-Ugric and Ugric periods. Early Turkish and other loanwords from the period preceding the Conquest also survived. Many new words were created through derivation and compound words. The words which originate from this period are the following: from among derivated words: *szó́l, remél, szerez, habozik, forgács, szerzet*, etc (say, hope, obtain, hesitate, shavings, acquisition); from among compound words; *szerszám, timsó, szűkszerű = szűk, társzekér*, etc (tools, alum, tight, wagon). Inner word formation is also very productive in this period, for example, *ri, óhajt, köp, hurut = köbög, üvölt, ah, no, rendül, háborodik* (cry, wish, spit, cough, roam, ah, come on, be shaken, become angry).

Looking at native word formation, it is noticed that not only the main parts of speech (verbs and nouns) show development but also others. The definite article, the formation of which started in the Early Old Hungarian period, is now more separated from demonstrative pronouns, and its role as article became firmer. The numeral *egy* (one = a) started to take up the role of the indefinite article in this period, too. The emphatic forms of personal pronouns *ön, ten, tennen, minnen = mi* (self, yourself, ourselves) became more popular. The group of linking words, modifying words, adverbials and verbal prefixes also grew.

As a result of frequent communication with other peoples, the number of loanwords referring to culture, religion, different areas of everyday life, flora and fauna and economic life also increased. Adoptions from Latin are, for example, *cédrus, cinterem, legenda, fundál, július* (cedar, legend, found, July). Italian loanwords are, for example, *lándzsa, egres, mandula, dézsma, füge, korcsolya*, etc (spear, gooseberry, almond, tithe, fig, skates). The words *paraj, lakat, tárgy, címer, kílincs* (spinach, lock, object, shield, handle) were adopted from French. Adoptions from the German language are: *bognár, erkély, csűr, font, hóbér, kalmár, lant, példa* (cooper, balcony, barn, pound, executioner, merchant, lute, example). Words of Slavic origin are: *gabona, jászol, ige, pecsét, kapca, galagonya, póráz, lencse, kár, parancsol*, etc (grain, manger, verb, seal, socks, hawthorn, lead, lentil, damage, to order). There are some adoptions from the Romanian, (for example, *ficsúr* [dandy]) and the Cuman (*kalausz* [conductor]) languages.

There are some changes concerning proper names. Personal names had only one element in the Early Old Hungarian period. They were partly based on earlier secular name-giving (for example, Fekete, Szőke, Szár = kopasz...etc.

*Self-portrait
of Johannes Aquila, a
fresco painter, Velemér*



[Black, Fair, Bold]), and partly on religious names received by baptising (for example, János, Iván, Benedek, Mihály [John, Ivan, Benedict, Michael]). The tradition of using names of two elements started during the 14th century, as the changes concerning possessions required the exact distinction of the names of the estate owners. The distinctive element was attached to the personal name, first in a Latin-like form – with the help of the word *dictus* (= said, named) or *filius* (= son).

Examples of names from the Hungarian Charter dictionary: Antonius dictus Kerekes (Anton named Kerekes), Petrus dictus Fekete (Peter [who was] said Black), Ladislaum filium Petew (Petew's son, Ladislaus)...etc. The element *dictus* was later omitted: Jakobus Oregh (Old Jacob), Georgii Kun (George Kún)...etc. Documents started to refer to the father with the help of a Hungarian element, the word *fia* (son). For example, Pálfiájános (Paul's son, John); Demeter fia István (Demeter's son, Stephen), etc. Later the distinctive element of the name became the family name. For example, (in place names) Egrimihályháza (House of Mihály from Eger), Varjujánosháza (House of János Varjú), etc. People in the lower classes of society started to use family names only in the 16th–17th centuries.

When naming settlements, the number of names created by place name suffixes (*-d*, *-s*, *-i*) decreased, while the number of compound names significantly grew. It was very popular to name a place after the patron saint of the local church: Szentjános, Szentimre, Szentanna and so on. Another widespread tradition was to put the ethnicity in front of place names: Magyarfalú, Németfalú, Oroszmező, etc. (Hungarian village, German village, Russian field).

Grammar

The development of the grammatical system follows the direction set by the ancient and early Old Hungarian period. The most important phonetic changes, which made the language more sonorous and similar to its modern form (like, for example, the open vowels, the simplification of diphthongs, and the assimilation of consonants), were finished or almost finished by this time. Spelling, however, preserved the original phonetics for a long time.

Due to phonetic changes and tendencies towards different phonetic equalisations, there were changes in the roots of the words as well. Low-position vowels at the end of word roots (a, e), then later middle-position vowels (o, ö) separated from word roots and became part of suffixes. The development of the complete system of modern types of word roots started; single and multi-form roots and the different versions of v-roots appeared (for example, *bokor*: *bokrot*; *mező*: *mezeje*; *sző*: *szővök*; *ló*: *lova*; *keserű*: *keserves* [bush, field, weave, horse, bitter]).

New grammatical means of the morphological system appeared. Concerning verbal formative syllables, there were various compound affixes and formative groups besides the simple formative syllables which were used earlier, for example, *-ng*, *-sít*, *-doz/-dez/-döz*, *-dokol/-dekel/-dököl*, *-aszt/-eszt*, *-asztal/-esztel*, *-aml/-eml*, *-lkodik/-lködik*, etc. The number of participles formed with the affix *-andó/-endő*, *-ván/-vén* is significantly large. The new noun formative syllables are: *-ós/-ős*, *-atos/-etes*, *-cska/-cske*, *-dad/-ded*, *-lat/-let*, *-ságos/-séges*, *-ságú/-ségű*, *-zat/-zet*, the new form of the word 'nő' (woman) was *-né* etc. The possessive affix *-é* develops into *-i*, a formative affix of place names.

In the usage of ordinal numbers a new affix appears: *-ik* (for example, *harmadik* [third]). In the conjugation of verbs all the modes and tenses are used. To express past actions and happenings, narrative past (*mene*, *láta*) and compound past continuous (*megy vala*) were often used. To describe permanent conditions participles with affixes *-va/-ve*, *-ván/-vén*, *-atta/-ette* were used instead of verbs. What's more, personal suffixes were added to them. For example, in the Vienna Codex: *nézvéjek* = *ők nézték* (they watched it); in the Munich Codex: *aluvánk* = *aludtunk* (we were sleeping); in the Vienna Codex: *elmenettem* = *elementem* (I have gone), *lakattam* = *laktam* (I lived); in the Munich Codex: *evezettek* = *eveztek* (they were rowing) etc.

To express future, not only the present tense is used, but also auxiliary verbs with the ending *-nd*, and *fog* (will). In the usage of modes and tenses of verbs, a strong Latin influence can be felt: the verbal predicates of subordinated sentences are often in conditional mode, instead of affirmative or imperative modes, which would be more accurate according to Hungarian grammar. For example, in the Vienna Codex: “*midőn a király vig volna*” (when the king would be merry); in the Jókai Codex: “*parancsolá, hogy semmit ne szólna*” (he ordered that he would not say anything), etc.

The inflection of nouns shows an increase in the number of suffixes. It is the first time the suffix *-szor/-szer/-sör* appears; *-ként* becomes a suffix as well, from the word *kéj, kény*; and *-kor* also becomes a suffix originating from the noun *kor*. New suffixes are *-nként/-nkéd*; *-stul/-stül*; *-lan/-len*. Besides the *-i* suffix, indicating plural possessive in case of nouns, *-ai/-ei*, then *-jai/-jei* also appears. In plural possessive nominal structures, the plural could be expressed by the signified noun too. For example, “*embereknek házuk*” (people’s houses).

The structures of sentences varied in this period. In the text relics we can find every kind of sentence. Concerning simple sentences, the affirmative sentences were the most used, but different forms of questions, exclamations and wishes also appear. For example, in the Vienna Codex: “*Avajba eladattatánk*” (If only we could sell it); in the Munich Codex: “*Jaj, tinektek*” (Woe is you/ Oh, dear), “*Ne akarj félned*” (Don’t be afraid)...etc. Sentences were separated by full stops or commas, or no punctuation was used at all. Question and exclamation marks were not known then. The predicate of a sentences could often be a participle. For example, in the Jókai Codex: “*ő vala jövendő*” (he was going to come); in the Munich Codex: “*Valának evők és ivók*” (There were people eating and drinking); “*valának csudálkodók*” (there were people wondering) etc.

The agreement of the subject and the verb in number often follows the Latin pattern: after a quantitative or collective subject there is usually a plural verb. For example, in the Munich codex: “*hallák a két tanítvány*” (the two students heard); “*a gyülekezést egybe gyülekezének*” (the congregation gathered together) etc. In sentences, the verb and the participles could be complemented with an object or different adverbials – as before. The number of free adverbials increased, and number of fixed adverbials referring to abstract relations also grew.

Concerning the complements of nouns, qualitative adjectives are often nouns (names of materials, colours, different kinships and jobs). This situation urged the appearance of double parts of speech (noun-adjectives). New types of (adjectival) participles also appeared: *hallandó fülek* = *hallásra alkalmas* (ears suitable for hearing), *keresendő* (something to look for), *szeretendő alázatosság* (loveable obedience); *tisztelendő fiú* (a boy to be respected)...etc. The participle *való* complemented with an adverb was often used as an adjective: in the Jókai Codex: “*Szent sebekről való csuda*” (a miracle about holy hands), in the Beszterce Word List: “*mívesnek való éték*” (food for an artist) etc.

Words with qualitative adjectives are often in the plural, after the Latin pattern. For example: *harminc napok* (thirty days), *két latrok* (two rascals), etc. In structures with possessive adjectives the number of emphatic suffixes *-nak/-nek* increased: *Izraelnek fiai*, *Szamaritánusoknak városai* (sons of Israel, cities of the Samaritans) etc.

Appositions are relatively rare. Their role is to create an atmosphere and define the signified word more accurately.

Complements to adjectives are frequently used. These are always adverbs, often with fixed structures, and they expressed different abstract relations. There were only very few complements to cardinal numbers and adverbs.

Concerning compound sentences, all the modern types of subordinate or co-ordinate clauses were in use. This fact also proves that the language of this period was suitable for expressing various meanings and logical relations. Latin influence was very strong in the agreement of mode and time of clauses. Separation from the Latin language began only in the next period of linguistic history.

Kornél Szovák

The Language

The age of the Angevin rulers brought a significant change in the history of literature in Hungary: the mother tongue of the new ruling family was originally French and Italian, therefore their political and cultural intentions were defined by the origin of their dynasty throughout the era. The Italian relationships affected primarily the style, interest, and genres of Latin literature. The richness of genres in literature narrowed down compared to that of the age of the Árpád dynasty, but at the same time, the tone of literature became secular. Latin continued to be used as the language of literature in most cases:

The Vienna Codex



historical literature and poetry were written primarily in Latin, but several pieces of German literature were also composed at the court.

The Saxon mastersinger, Heinrich von Mügeln compiled the history of the Hungarian people in his mother tongue, but his work was based on one of the Hungarian chronicles. It was not only foreigners, though, who wrote in German: historical records were made in German at Szepesszombat throughout the 14th century, and around 1370, the Saxons of Szepes also wrote their law book (the Zipser Willkür) in their mother tongue. After 1405, the German citizens of Buda did the very same thing (The Law Book of Buda). Moreover, the expansion of Hungarian literature can also be dated to this century. The underlying catalyst was the secularisation of the church culture, and its contributors were the initiators of the lay movements, the friars of begging orders, who made Latin translations for nuns who did not speak Latin.

According to some views, the Hungarian translation of the biography of St. Margaret of the Árpád dynasty, who was very popular with the Dominican nuns, was written at the beginning of the 14th century by a nun who spoke Latin. It was probably rewritten in the second half of the century. This was followed by the first complete Hungarian language codex, the Jókai Codex with the translation of the legend of St. Francis at the end of the century. We must not forget about the activities of the evangelising begging orders, since their sermons were the transmitting media of religious culture, and they were also the ones who created the standard Hungarian literary language at the same time. It was also a significant event

when, around 1420/1430, two priests from Syrmia, Tamás, an altar priest from Kamanc, and Bálint Újlaki, the parish priest of Belcsény, who became acquainted with the teachings of Hussitism at the university of Prague, translated the majority of the Bible into Hungarian.

Their translation was preserved by later copies (the Vienna Codex around 1450, the Munich Codex from 1466, and the Apor Codex at the end of the 15th century). The birth of the Hussite Bible was the sign of a new kind of spiritual wave and the manifestation of new demands, according to which religion became a personal issue in contrast to earlier collective forms. The movement of the Franciscans – who stayed within the boundaries of the Church – was supplemented with the teachings of Jan Hus, although the contemporaneous official opinion declared him to be against the philosophy of the Church. Word lists, which give the Hungarian equivalents of Latin expressions, are proof of the close relationship between the mother tongue and Latin. They are also important sources of the history of the language.

The first such list was born between 1380 and 1410, when George of Slavonia copied the Beszterce word list, which contained 1316 words grouped around different topics. At the same time, before 1410, an unknown copier made the Schlägl word list, which kept the thematic order, but it included over two thousand words. These might have been made for educational purposes, in contrast to student John of Rotenburg's phrasebook, in which he prepared Hungarian word lists for foreigners, probably for Germans. The latter was made between 1418 and 1422 in Buda. The explanations were Latin and German definitions of some essential Hungarian vernacular phrases, which were necessary to make contact with people in Hungary.

Oral Traditions and Secular Literature

Besides literacy, oral tradition also presented some reliable sources. Until the end of Sigismund's reign, there must have been some historical songs that told the heroic deeds of certain noblemen. János Thuróczy, in his chronicle tells the story of how István Kont – a nobleman who conspired against King Sigismund – faced his hangman in 1388, referring to Hungarian historical songs. We know of songs from the 16th century about Felician Záh's murderous attempt, and maybe even about Pipó of Ozora [also known as Pippo Spano or Filippo Scolari]. The fragment of a song about Lőrinc Tar's visions, and his "visit to Hell" when he descended into St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland in 1411, was also included in Sebestyén Tinódi's chronicle written in verse.

*Depiction of Sigismund
of Luxembourg in János
Thuróczy's Chronicle*



Although the Toldi legend was recorded in writing only later on, in the 16th century, its elements clearly show that the basic story was formed during Sigismund's reign at the latest, and that the model it followed was the popular French genre of the age, the *chanson de geste*. The above examples of court and chivalric literature are partly the relics of historical folk songs in the vernacular, partly the works of Latin court poetry, which survived in translation. In all probability, the legends and adventure stories created by 11th–13th-century chroniclers reached the creators of folk epic through secular minstrels and poets, and vice versa: the figure of St. Ladislaus, who resurrected from his tomb and helped the Hungarians against the Mongols, might have also been transmitted from folk songs to chronicle literature via the same people.

The Spread of Literacy: Literate Laymen

The 14th century is known as the age when literacy spread widely. Several priests thought to make good use of their knowledge in a worldly environment: thus, the Latin *clericus* (clergyman, member of the clerical order) gradually became the synonym for *litteratus* (learned, educated, literate person, a clerk) and the Hungarian word meaning student [*deák*]. At first, these people who left the clergy were employed as clerks in market towns and at credible places (like Bertalan, clerk of Vasvár, and István, the head of the credible place at Pannonhalma). However, later in the century, even the royal chancellery started to hire literate secular men (for example, Magister Stephen from Ór), and the offices of the Royal High Court of Justice were regularly headed by lay judges (for example, Jakab Szepesi, later judge royal of the country).

The appearance of secular educated men damaged the prestige of those who stayed within the Church. It was probably due to the conflict of the two social layers that in the middle of the 14th century, Magister János Uzsai tried to exclude clerks (students) from the circle of people who enjoyed the privileges of priests. However, besides secular intellectuals, who made a living out of their ability to read and write, and sometimes built a bright career, there were the representatives of aristocracy, such as Benedek Himfi, who corresponded in Latin with his friends in the begging orders and his villeins in Temes, and who was also the envoy of King Louis I at the papal court of Avignon. In his figure, the interest in begging orders and lay culture was mixed in a fortunate manner.

The Expansion of Space

Lőrinc Tar (Laurentius de Tar) might have composed his letter to the members of his family personally. In the age of the Árpáds, the representatives of secular society could get in contact with Western aristocracy only at royal weddings. In the 14th century, not only foreigners came to Hungary, but King Louis I's Italian campaigns and King Sigismund's European travels, and in general, the extended diplomatic and religious connections created brilliant opportunities for the Hungarian aristocracy to meet the culture of their Italian, French, English contemporaries in their homelands, and adopt their traditions, world view and philosophy there.

Louis's Hungarian commanders of mercenary troops often stayed in Italy after finishing a campaign, and Sigismund's barons took advantage of their ruler's willingness to travel to learn about Western culture. A significant sign of this was the increased interest in literature and the desire to become acquainted with it. The story of the visions of Lőrinc Tar – who, as it was mentioned above, could read and write – show that the lord, who came back from St. Patrick's Purgatory, must have been familiar with Western visionary literature (independent of the clerk who wrote down Lőrinc's visions). Enterprises abroad broadened the mind of ecclesiastic authors: János Kétyi's account of King Louis's campaigns testifies to the fact that the author himself took part in the events.

Education

In the age of the Angevin rulers, after the recession of the chaotic decades at the beginning of the century, Hungarian students were still eager to attend foreign universities. At the end of the Árpád Age, most students preferred Italian universities to those of Paris, and this situation did not change. From the mid-14th century, we almost exclusively know of students who pursued their law studies at Italian universities, either in Bologna or Padua, although we also know of three magisters working at the royal court in 1366 who graduated in Paris. After the campaigns against Naples, King Louis started to send his young followers and chaplains to the best-known law schools, and he took care of them throughout their studies by giving them ecclesiastical benefices. This is how Bálint Alsáni, Benedek Himfi the Younger, Imre Czudar and János Kanizsai completed their studies in Italy, and consequently, they could look forward to a glorious career.

Besides the famous old schools, new centres of learning also appeared: universities in Prague (1348), in Krakow (1364) and in Vienna (1365). These universities were visited by Hungarian students in considerable numbers: students started attending the university of Prague from the 1380s, Krakow from the beginning of the 15th century, and Vienna from 1368. At this latter one, the *Natio Hungarica* uniting Central European students was formed in 1384. In 1367, at the request of King Louis, Pope Urban V approved the foundation of the university of Pécs, where humanities and law were taught until 1390, when it was closed. Among the chancellors (for example Bálint Alsáni, bishop of Pécs) and lecturers (such as Galvano di Bologna) of the university, there were ex-students and lecturers of the university of Bologna. After its closure, the students were taken over by the university of Prague. For example, Petrus de Wydera, who obtained his bachelor's (*baccalarius*) degree at Pécs in the 1380s.

King Sigismund may have intended to replace the university of Pécs, when, around 1390, he started the foundation of a university at Óbuda. The university was confirmed in 1395 by Pope Boniface IX, who appointed Lucas Szántai, provost of Óbuda, as the first chancellor. After a long period of uncertainty, the university was reorganised in 1410, when four faculties were established enjoying the same privileges as the universities of Paris, Bologna, Oxford and Cologne. Students could learn theology, canon and civil law, medicine and humanities. The university, which also had its own coat of arms, was represented at the Council of Constance by all four of its faculties. The university of Óbuda was also closed after a short period of functioning at the beginning of the 15th century, so the main reason for founding the Academia Istropolitana in 1465 was that Hungary did not have a university. Concerning the colleges of begging orders, the Dominicans' college at Buda (at the end of the age of the Árpád dynasty) was followed by the *studium generale* of the Franciscans in Esztergom, of which we have records from sources since 1411.

Secular persons still obtained their practical knowledge mainly at chapter schools. In some of these schools, the standard of education was very high in the 14th–15th centuries. The records of the 1397 Esztergom church visits regulated in detail the duties of the reading canon (lector), who was engaged in teaching literacy then, and those of his deputy (sublector), who directed the chapter school. It also stated that the school should teach poor students and the relatives of the canon free of charge. The range of education varied from teaching reading and writing to the teaching of arts subjects of the universities, where a big emphasis was put on the art of composition (which also included the basic skills of literary creation), a branch that developed from ancient rhetoric. In the mid-14th century, the reading canon of the chapter school of Eger, János Uzsa, compiled his own collection of sample texts for this, and between 1419 and 1423, Tamás Zákáni, the lecturer of the school in Esztergom, made four of his students copy a codex which summarised the material taught at the time.

Besides chapter schools, the system of colleges – linked to university education – was also a great facilitator in education. On the one hand, teaching was independent and self-sufficient in the college;

The Bible of Demeter
Neksei



on the other, the institution provided financial support to its students for their further studies. At the end of the 14th century, in the chapter of Esztergom, János Budai, the archdeacon of Bars, established a foundation called Christ College of Poor Students (*Collegium Christi Pauperum Scolarium*) from the income of four of his houses at Buda, the aim of which was to support the studies of the poor but talented students of the chapter. The institution was approved by Pope Boniface IX in 1399, and it functioned well until the middle of the 16th century: its own library enabled the students to be thoroughly immersed in science.

Books and Libraries

From the 14th century, books were not purely treasured possessions any more as they became a personal necessity for a growing number of people. The demand for books required cheaper production, so by the end of the century, paper codices appeared. Instead of the earlier, calligraphic Gothic writing (*textualis*), the more practical typeface (*cursiva*) of the charters was used in codices. The place of writing was no longer the scriptorium of monasteries, but the copy workshop of the royal court, the manufacture of universities where textbooks were made; in other words: secular copying places. Only few decorated codices survived, which might refer to the change in requirement: the emphasis now shifted to the content.

There was a copy workshop at the court of the Angevin kings, the products of which have been preserved. The *Chronicon Pictum* (also known as *Illustrated Chronicle and Illuminated Chronicle*) and the *Secreta Secretorum*, which is kept in Oxford, were made in the 1370s to a very high standard. Their illuminator was identified as Miklós Meggyesi. The same can be said about the ornate Bible of Bishop and Cardinal Demeter Nekcsei. It is possible that the *Hungarian Anjou Legendary* was also made here. These manuscripts were made as presents or for the education of a member of the ruling family, so not for practical but representational purposes. In contrast, practical codices were very simple and undecorated; they were made mainly in Franciscan and Augustine scriptoria.

As the secular demands put the focus of teaching reading and writing on chapter schools, chapter libraries gained a growing significance. Several inventories of books survived from the chapter of Veszprém from the first third of the 15th century, and the book list of the Pozsony chapter – from the same time – is also known. We can see from these lists that chapter libraries increasingly tried to satisfy practical demands. The majority of the books listed were law books, which facilitated practical education in the school and the jurisdiction of archdeacons living in the chapter. Besides these, there were theological and liturgical books, of course. Occasionally we can find some works of Cicero or Aristotle, and the works of medieval chroniclers. At the beginning of the 15th century, there were 225 books in the book inventory of the Zagreb chapter, most of them were liturgical books or works about preaching and church government, but we could also find some university textbooks. We can conclude that the books of chapters represent the book output of the previous two or three centuries. The library of the “Brotherhood (*confraternitas*) of the twenty-four royal parish priests” of Szepes must have been of a similar nature.

Kornél Szovák

The 14th century was the age of a major transformation throughout Europe. The world was still medieval, but it was governed by rulers who had been touched by the wind of change. Louis the Great and his barons usually chose their confessors from among the Franciscans, who were the promulgators of the new way of religious life as authors of literary works. As religion became more personal and private, it foreshadowed a new world view. This was Humanism, which focused on the individual. Although the educated circles were still enthusiastic about courtly and chivalric culture, the signs of a new awareness of life could also be seen: King Louis I corresponded with the poet Petrarch, and Coluccio Salutati, the famous Florentine chancellor. The humanist of Padua, Giovanni da Ravenna, was born in Hungary as the son of King Louis's physician. King Sigismund invited Pier Paolo Vergerio to Hungary, who was the most outstanding forerunner of Humanism. Dante's *Divina Commedia*, the first work of the Early Renaissance was known in Hungary at the time of Louis the Great, and its Latin translation was sent to Hungary to King Sigismund by Giovanni Serravalle.

Hungarians Abroad, Foreigners in Hungary

Latin, as the mother tongue of literature and the Church, provided good opportunities for Hungarian artists who went abroad. After finishing his studies in Paris, the Augustine Alexander de Hungaria became a magister of the university there from 1302. Later, his opinions were often quoted by his students who wrote commentaries. We know several works of Herbord of Hungary, who wrote commentaries to psalms, sermons, and a treatise against heretics. His activity as a writer contributed to the fact that he became bishop of Bergamo at the end of his life. At the end of the 14th century, Ladislaus of Hungary (Ladislaus Ungarus) lectured in Vienna; he wrote an essay on how to look after gyrfalcons.

Foreign authors kept coming to Hungary in great numbers. Heinrich von Mügeln, the German mastersinger might have gone to Buda after leaving the court of the Czech king and the emperor. At the latest in 1333, he summarised Hungarian history for his patron, Rudolf IV, duke of Austria, in his mother tongue. Besides the Stephen legend of Hartvic, his source was a chronicle whose references to the age of Géza II and Stephen III have already been lost in their original form. Around 1361, he offered his Latin historical work, the *Chronicon Rhythmicum* to King Louis I, in which he compiled the history of the Hungarian people until 1072 in four parts, written in different rhythmic and rhyming stanzas. Lorenzo de Monaci was a Venetian envoy at Queen Maria's court, so he might have written his epic poem about the unfortunate reign of Charles (Little) II (*Carmen seu historia de Carlo II cognomento Pravo, rege Hungariae*) here, which he dedicated to the queen. Thuróczy adopted this poem in his chronicle in prose.

The Relics of Historiography from the Age of the Angevin Rulers

The Minorite of Buda from the Age of Charles I

The 14th century was the golden age of interest in the past, and historical literature dominated due to its richness of genres and extent. The urban population and members of ecclesiastic institutions

started to record the historical past and events at that time (for example, the Chronicle of Szepesszombat). The representatives of the new religiosity, the Franciscans, brought new colours to Hungarian historiography in the age of the Anjous. In the first half of the 1330s, a new demand appeared for a comprehensive national history, in contrast with the earlier monographic gestas. It must have been a Franciscan from Buda, whose name is unknown, who united the relics of historiography of the end of the 13th century, that is the works of Simon of Kéza and Magister Ákos, and he continued the text until 1334. As an author, not only did he continue the summary of history, but he also created a new part: horrified by Felician Záh's deed, he wrote the story of Ban Bánk.

The author was strongly influenced by his inclination to tell anecdotes – which is typical of Franciscan historiography. This might be the reason why some episodes were discussed in more detail: how King Otto lost his crown, how the people of Buda excommunicated the pope, or how King Charles switched clothes with Dezső Szécsi in battle. Though the structure is sometimes loose, its style is lively; he deliberately uses the rhythmic prose, similes, metaphors and adventurous twists in the story. Apparently, the aim of the author was to fascinate his readers with his art. His work did not survive in its individual form: it was preserved only in the codices of the Buda Chronicle.

The Chronicon Pictum

In 1358 – probably at the king's request – another historiographic work was born, the aim of which was to show a representative Hungarian history. Though he did not name himself, the author is thought to be Márk Kálti, canon of Székesfehérvár, who was in charge of the royal treasury and the archives. His method was the same as that of earlier chroniclers: he partly united earlier texts, and partly included new paragraphs. He used the popular version of the age from King Charles as the basis of his work, and interpolated shorter or longer texts from earlier chronicles in it.

He is most likely to be the first editor who used the old gesta called *Gesta Ladislai Regis*, which was written at King Coloman's court, and put it in the focus of his work. By doing so, he made King St. Ladislaus, the chivalric ideal of the Angevin rulers, the hero of the chronicle. He adopted lengthy parts from a gesta written in the age of Stephen III. The work gives the impression that its author was a court priest. His views and methods of writing were strongly influenced by the ideals he consistently wanted to represent. He wrote a prologue to precede his work, which might as well be called a short essay, in which he summarised the essence of the ideal of the king, which functioned as the ideal of the state in the Angevin Age. According to this, all power comes from God. God places kings on their thrones to govern their people in peace and welfare, following the model of God's Heavenly Kingdom, and this way they lead the souls before God to be judged. At the end of the Middle Ages, this was the clearest description of the ideal ruler of the Carolingian Age.

The author must have been highly educated and well-trained, especially in theology, as in his prologue he refers to Petrus Comestor, the "Master of History" (*magister historiarum* – he is represented in the famous miniature of the *Chronicon Pictum*, also known as the *Illustrated Chronicle*) besides other authors. He also quotes from him and Nicolaus de Lyra. The tone, style and deliberate structure of the chronicle shows that its author lived at the court, and was very different from his Minorite



Depiction of Felician Záh's attempt to murder the royal family in the Chronicon Pictum



Depiction of a monk writing a codex, miniature in the *Chronicon Pictum*

predecessor concerning his world views. His work did not survive in its original form either, only in a copied, decorated manuscript from around 1370, which was probably given as a gift for someone. This version stops at the events of 1330 (some scholars put it down to Márk Kálti's death). It was also preserved in the offshoots of the manuscript, the chronicle family of the *Chronicon Pictum*.

János of Küküllő

The real change in the view of history was shown by the appearance of the genre of biography. János of Küküllő (Küküllei János) began his career as a secular literate man at the royal court before entering the clergy in the first half of the 1350s. He started to write a biographical work titled *Chronicon de Ludovico Rege* in the 1360s. In the first twenty-five chapters, he summarised the events of Louis's campaigns against Naples as a witness. After 1382, he complemented his work with 30 more chapters, in which he focused on the emotional representation of the old king's deeds and characteristic features. He followed the model of the biography of King St. Louis (IX), who was respected by the Angevin rulers, written by Guillelmus de Nangis.

It is typical of János of Küküllő's method that, as a member of the chancellery, he had access to the archives, so he included parts from charters (arengas, narratives) in his work word for word generously. At the same time, he did not refrain from changing some facts in order to create an ideal picture of the ruler. Eventually, his work is the modern version of Early

Medieval royal mirrors and High Medieval biographies of holy kings, in which the material is modified by the ideal he wanted to represent. The author applied a clear and careful structure, and regularly used rhythmic prose. Naturally, his sources included King Louis's favourite reading, *Secreta Secretorum*, in which the hero is compared to Alexander the Great (the codex of this, which was made at King Louis's court, is kept in Oxford). He also referred to Aristotle, and Vegetius' military epitome. János of Küküllő's work did not survive in an independent form, but it was included in the chronicles of Buda and Dubnica, alongside János Thuróczy's chronicle.

The Anonymous Minorite

In the focus of the fragment of a chronicle, which survived in the text of the Chronicle of Dubnica, we can also find the detailed description of the events of Naples. It was established long ago that the text must have been part of a longer, independent chronicle, the author of which must have been a Franciscan friar living in the king's environment, who wrote his work between 1345 and 1355. In light of these facts, the focus of attention turned to János (Egri) Kétyi, who was the confessor of the king and of his mother. The author insisted on the Franciscan tradition of historiography: the work followed the author's inclination to tell anecdotes instead of a carefully designed structure. As a result, he recorded numerous detailed, short story-like anecdotes as well as local events. Its language and tone is sometimes

rough (he recorded a sporadic linguistic relic of Hungarian!), but the author made an effort to fascinate the reader with his stylistic turns and abundance of metaphors.

The author's usage of Latin differs from the usual: he prefers the rather archaic rhymed prose in contrast to the rhythmic one, so he sounds a bit folk-like. He starts the narrative with the murder of Prince Andrew, and prepares the reader for further events emotionally. In his work, he focuses on the ideal of court/chivalric culture, which makes sense in the end, when he tells the story of Ladislaus, the holy king ideal of the Anjous, when he resurrected from his tomb in Várad to help András Lackfi's troops. In the spirit of this, the story turns into a chain of enumerations of troops, duels and individual deeds, which makes the work of the Anonymous Minorite stand out in medieval Hungarian literature.

The Beginnings of Church History

In the first half of the 14th century, interest in the past of certain church institutions began to grow. Around 1334, in Zagreb, the statutes of the chapter were compiled in a chronicle, adding the history of the period from the foundation of the chapter until 1354 as historical background. Where the chronicle mentions events of national relevance, it provides extracts from 14th-century chronicles. In 1374, Emeric, the reading canon of Várad (1370–76), put the same chronicle at the head of the Statutes of the Várad chapter (Várad Chronicle), but he corrected the text of the Zagreb Chronicle (*Chartularium capituli Varadiensis*) on the basis of one of the codices of the Buda Chronicle, and supplemented it with a list of bishops of Várad. The latter text tells the events from the foundation in the age of St. Ladislaus until 1354. The first part of both texts survived in a broken form, and the second part consists of twenty-two chapters.

The Franciscans' interest in the history of their own order was probably influenced by the effort of the stricter branch of the order to justify their existence and stance by quoting facts of the past. Balázs Szalkai, the eleventh vicar of the Bosnian province (1420–33), which was founded in 1339, started to collect the material: he compiled the list of vicars and the documents of the order. The person who continued this work adopted the precedents of the foundation from the universal history of the order, and later he obtained records from the archives of the order and other sources. From this work, which started with the events of 1313, we know that in the 1320s Hungarian Franciscans joined the dispute between the papacy and the begging orders, and several of them wrote essays on whether it was heresy to preach about common property.



Illuminated page
in the Chronicle
of Dubnica



The construction of the church in Várad, miniature in the Chronicon Pictum

Religious Literature

Sermon Literature

The chronicles of Buda and Dubnica, and János Thuróczy's chronicle, preserved especially detailed and colourful descriptions about King Charles's death and funeral. Despite the fact that the story was noted down later, the author was undoubtedly a contemporary witness, whose introductory words were followed by the funeral farewell speech by Archbishop Csanád Telegdi. The author was inspired by the latter to compose his own reflections. In addition to the fact that emotions are brilliantly reflected by the rhetoric figures, the structure and the chain of thoughts of the archbishop's speech, and his method of reasoning show a surprising likeness to the "Funeral Oration and Prayer". The only reason for this could be that the structure of the speech pronounced over the deceased became a liturgical formula in Hungary from the Early Middle Ages. The most popular genre among educated priests was necessarily the sermon, which made the clergy transmitters of literature. Preaching priests thus played a cardinal role in elevating the vernacular to the level of literature. Although there were several reports about Hungarian authors who wrote sermons, we have only few linguistic records.

Hagiography: the Gerard Legend

Despite the flourishing cults of the saintly kings at the court of the Anjou kings, dealing with the biography of saints purely involved copying codices in the Angevin era, and only few original works survived. Reliable sources prove that near St. Stephen's tomb, in the royal treasury under the supervision of the canon of Székesfehérvár, a special codex of the Hartvic-type St. Stephen legend was kept, which was considered authentic in the whole country. This may be

the reason why the abbot of Pannonhalma sent the notary of the convent to Székesfehérvár in 1349 to have a certain part of the Stephen legend copied into a charter by the credible place of the local chapter. This part was about the donation of the tithes of Somogy County to Pannonhalma. When, in the same year, Louis I ordered the chapter of Székesfehérvár to examine the St. Stephen legend in the matter of the freedom of the Karakó castle warriors, the chapter replied that they could not fulfil this request as Louis's father had already had the legend transferred to Visegrád.

There is certainly some authenticity in the St. Gerard legend, which was written at the end of the 14th century based on an ancient 12th-century text. The work called *The Greater Legend* summarised and recomposed the original text in many places, sometimes with smaller interpolations, and finally added a supplementary section about Gerard's miracles. In the last chapter, the unknown author declares that Queen Elizabeth, King Charles I's widow, was cured by Gerard, so she had a decorated silver coffin made for Gerard's relics. Finally, he noted down that Elizabeth died in 1381 (or in 1380, according to modern time) and she was buried in the cloister of the Poor Clares of Buda, which she had founded herself. Maybe it was Dowager Queen Elizabeth's admiration for Gerard and the wish of the court that encouraged the creation of the new legend.

The Story of How the Relics of St. Paul the Hermit Were Brought to Hungary

At the start of the war with Venice, Louis I vowed that if he won, he would have the relics of the denominative saint of the Pauline Order brought to Hungary. The king finally made peace with Venice in Turin in 1381, and in accordance with the peace treaty, he had the bones of St. Paul, the Theban Hermit, brought over to Buda. He had the relics placed in the central monastery of the Pauline Order in Budaszentlőrinc amidst grand celebrations. On this occasion, a literary piece was written titled *Historia de Translatione Sancti Pauli Thebaei Cognimento Primi Eremitatae*, which told the story of how the relics had been acquired. The genre is connected to the traditions of medieval hagiography, which ordered the recording of not only the biography of saints, but also to commemorate the fate of their bones. The genre of this work of art was *translation*, and it survived in Pauline breviaries.

This short historical work was made as the next chapter of St. Jerome's hagiography of St. Paul. It consists of seven chapters, which tells the story of how the relics were brought to Venice through Constantinople. It also recounts the king's promise and the instruction of the peace treaty, and finally, how Bálint Alsáni, bishop of Pécs and Pál Horváti, bishop of Zagreb, brought the relics home to Hungary and put them in their final resting place. The author must have belonged to the retinue of the learned bishop of Pécs. The world of thoughts in this short piece of work shows the ideas connecting court culture with the Early Renaissance: it focuses on the desire to be famous and heroic, and the praise of the important and amiable (*insignis et amoenissimus*) natural environment. Its style is strongly reminiscent of the sequence of sentences used by the chancellor, yet each word seeks to persuade (*pulcher* or *decorus stylus, affatus facundus*).

Visionary Literature

The popular–secular branch of religious literature; the visionary literature left hardly any traces on our Latin literature. However, the visions of the Hungarians clearly did not go unnoticed in places where they were noted down with the purpose of reinforcing the authenticity of the given location. Since the 12th century, the favourite place of pilgrims who were attracted to miraculous visions was St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland, a sulphurous cave in the province of Ulster. Several Hungarians visited here, but only two pilgrimages were recorded in the contemporaneous literature: Krizsafán's son George Grissophan's pilgrimage in 1353, and Lőrinc Tar's in 1411. An unknown Augustine author noted down the visions of the Anjou-era pilgrim, and the royal notary of Dublin recorded the revelations of King Sigismund's baron, who also included Lőrinc Tar's own manuscripts in his work.

Both visionary stories contain visions that seem authentic, but there are several story lines which might originate from the themes of the manual for visitors of hell, i.e. the 12th-century story of Knight Oenus. There is evidence of Lőrinc Tar's pilgrimage in literature other than the Dublin notes. In connection with Hungarian court epic, we have already mentioned that the Hungarian language song about Master Lőrinc's visions was likely to have been created at the beginning of the 15th century, but there was also a Latin song about him. The literary value of these examples of visionary literature



Fragment of the shrine
of St. Paul of Thebes,
the First Christian
Hermit



Mural with the depiction of the Devil from the church of Zseliz

is quite high: on the one hand, the openness of the genre offers greater freedom to the author's imagination, and a simple story becomes literature. On the other hand, the personal voice of religious doubt appearing in these stories paved the way for a new world of ideas, called Humanism, which would place the individual in the centre.

Literacy: Charters, Letters, and Books of Formulae

The practice of issuing charters peaked in the 14th and 15th centuries. Various types of medieval charters developed, and the formulae of the types became fixed and permanent. Textbooks exerted a more remarkable effect on their style. Letters written in a private tone also appeared, becoming the forerunners of modern private and missilis letters. Literary records grew not only in terms of quantity but they also became more diversified socially. We can see noblemen writing their own letters (for example Benedek Himfi, Lőrinc Tar), and the most emblematic figure of the age is the clerk [*deák* = student], the secular literate man, who – equipped with his knowledge – goes as far as to forge charters (see the damned clerk János).

Jurisdiction became a widespread and permanent practice, and many records survived, the content of which was composed in accordance with the rules of writing charters. The main institute of court literacy, the chancellery, became rather office-like. At that time, vice-chancellor Tatamér had the identification data of the chancellery written on the charter itself so that the responsible clerk could be identified, then the text was recorded in registers (later called royal books). During the 14th century, the institute of the chancellery became strongly differentiated: the various matters were handled by different departments. Besides credible places in the countryside, a writing workshop of the court also launched its authenticating activity: the royal chapel.

The new style of the chancellery can be observed in the deeds of gift through which King Charles gave away Felician Záh's estates. It is widely known that the sentence was also inflicted upon his relatives to the seventh degree of kinship. The violence of crime and punishment was represented in the chronicles too, but the dismay of the court was echoed by the narrations of charters for years. These charters did not emphasise the merits of the receiver (as they were supposed to), but elaborated the wickedness of the assassin instead with a generous measure of rhetoric figures, vivid descriptions and colourful turns. The most dramatic depiction can be found in the sentencing document (*proscriptio*) of the assassin from the year 1330.

After describing the desperateness of the decade following the extinction of the Árpádians, the composer of the charter contrasts it with the peace of the age of Charles – creating proper suspension. Then he suddenly moves on to present the murderous attempt: Felician, possessed by the fox-like devil (*vulpinae dolositatis astutiā*), the ill and impudent dog (*morbidus et impudicus canis*) – whose name is etymologically connected to “pain”; he was also called or rather mocked “unhappy” (Infelicianus) – was not ashamed to satisfy his rapacious greed by shedding the holy blood, and wanted to exterminate the whole royal family. Because of his action, he became a figure of hatred not only in the eyes of the divine majesty but also in those of all the people of the earth and heavens. The punishment was inflicted on him by God's holy right.

Books of formulae facilitated the teaching of charter composition. These were made in the workshops of literacy in increasing numbers. The same codex that preserved the Gyulafehérvár Lines also contains fourteen (charter) drafts, which were compiled by Franciscan friars around 1320 at Székesfehérvár. In this collection, we can find complete charters relating to the government of the order and preaching. The other record survived in Bartholomew of Tapolca's codex, which contained notes from the university of Vienna. The owner copied an unbroken collection of thirty-four pieces – the pieces were themed around one topic – into it around 1385, which was supposed to make judgement easier for the archdeacon in matters of marriage.

Besides formulae books, there were rhetorical and law textbooks as well in Hungary. Between 1346 and 1351, after studying and fulfilling the position of dean at Bologna, the leader of the chapter school of Eger, reading canon János Uzsai, compiled a textbook with references to actual legal cases. His aim was to help teach the pragmatics of law, and this of course, included introduction to the art of writing. His Parisian-type *ars dictaminis*, or rather *ars notaria*, consisted of a prologue and four parts. It was effectively in use in the chapter of Eger for the next hundred years. Besides theoretical grammar advice, based on Donatus's *Ars Grammatica* from the Late Antiquity, it contains different formulae of charters, including the most important charter types.

Poetry

While the hagiographic production was rather poor in the 14th century, liturgical poetry was booming. Hymns, sequences, rhyming prayers were created at this time to proclaim the glory of Hungarian saints. Unknown authors wrote sequences about the saints of the Árpád dynasty, which fitted in well with the interests of the Angevin rulers: sequences about kings St. Stephen and St. Ladislaus, St. Elizabeth, a hymn about King St. Stephen, a rhyming prayer about Prince St. Emeric. At the same time, the canons of Esztergom composed an antiphony in a fourteen-line distichon in honour of the patron saint of their cathedral St. Adalbert. The monk authors strengthened the consciousness of the community of the order with their poem about the saints of the order. A Pauline author wrote a sequence about St. Paul the Hermit, and around 1300 a Dominican poet wrote the office of St. Margaret.



Donatus's *Ars Grammatica*, fragment

A remnant of the Leonine hexameter survived in János Thuróczy's chronicle. After the funeral farewell speech by Csanád Telegdi, before János of Küküllő's chronicle, there is a fifteen-line text written in hexameters about King Charles's death. It might have been written by a contemporary author, just like the prosaic farewell speech. Secular lyrics reached their summit in Heinrich von Mügel's poem about Hungarian history. Each part (consisting of several verses) of the famous mastersinger's *Chronicon Rhythmicum* was different and specific in its verse form, and they were accompanied by an independent melody (which also survived). Conscientiously, the poet noted when the melody and the verse were not his own but adopted from a fellow poet.

As culture was becoming more and more secular, a certain degree of church critique also appeared in some pieces of medieval poetry. Around 1310, a Hungarian clergyman wrote a poem, titled "Planctus Clericorum" (The Priests' Lament), which described the Hungarian battles for the throne, the pope's intervention, and the undeserved richness of Hungarian prelates in woeful terms. The same collection from Styria preserved another poem, the "Rambling Students' Lament", which was perhaps written by an itinerant clerk rather than a clergyman, and which described in sad verses the miserable life of learned students who did not get a job within the Church, and the decadence of the world. These poems as well as the sharp voice of criticism indicate that medieval poetry was about to cross the threshold of the Renaissance.

Gergely Buzás

Art in the Early Angevin Age (1300–50)

The chaotic history of the first quarter of the century was not ideal for the development of the arts. Wealthier people would rather spend their money on building fortresses and defending themselves. However, the *hospes* settlements founded in the 13th century became more stable in this period, where numerous new – though simple and conservative – churches were built. The king, the Church, and the new aristocracy became keen patrons of art only from the 1330s. Architecture followed the French Late Gothic style of the neighbouring Czech and Austrian territories. The same style prevailed in sculpture and partly in painting too, but we can also feel the influence of the Italian Trecento in the new genres, especially in the luxurious environment of the court and prelates.

Architecture

*The church of Zsegra
in Szepes County*

Fortresses

The anarchic situation following the extinction of the Árpád dynasty was beneficial for the provincial kinglets and their *familiares*. The fortresses they built at the turn of the century were small stone buildings with a tower, stone walls, a palace and a cistern, which were difficult to approach (for example Márévár before 1316). They did not care much about comfort and splendour. Near the smaller landlords' mansions, wooden fortresses, the so-called mottes, were built in even greater numbers. They consisted of a moat, a palisade, and a wooden tower or house. During the consolidation of Charles I's power, the king seized most of the fortresses. He had many of them destroyed and rarely gave permission to build new ones.

Village Churches and Monasteries

The first stone churches were built at the turn of the 14th century near the borders, in the new villages that were founded in the 13th century. These were simple buildings with a conservative design, for example in Csorda and Vámosatya in Szatmár, Kakaslomnic and Zsegra in Szepes County, and Velemér in western Hungary. The Pauline Order of hermits, which originates from Hungary, began to flourish at the time. They based their centre at the monastery of St. Lawrence near Buda. The landowners also had some churches built, mainly for the modest Paulines, but these buildings were hardly bigger than village churches (Diósgyőr before 1304, Dédes before 1313, Uzsaszentlélek before 1333, and Felnémet in 1347). The



Carthusian hermits also settled in Hungary: Menedékkő was built in Szepes (before 1308), then the Red Monastery of Lehnic (1319–44). The Siklósi family had a monastery built for the Augustine canons next to their fort in Siklós before 1333.

Cathedrals

The reconstruction of cathedrals which were destroyed in the internal conflicts of the preceding decades started in the 1330s. Bishop András Szécsi (1320–56) finished the construction of the 13th-century building of the Gyulafehérvár cathedral. The single-naved Gothic cathedral of Nyitra (1333–55), and the lobby of the Esztergom cathedral (around 1336–51) were also completed then. Bishop András Bátori (1329–45) had a monumental western façade built to the cathedral of Nagyvárád in the 1330s, which consisted of two column-like towers with a choir between them, and decorated portals. The cathedral of Eger was also enlarged with similar, western-facing twin towers, initiated by Bishop Miklós Dörögdi (1332–61). He himself was buried in the lobby between the towers. In the two latter cathedrals, an ambulatory with chapels was added to the chancel before the middle of the century, following French models. The construction works in Nagyvárád, which were started in 1342, lasted until the beginning of the 15th century.

*The abbey church of
Kolozsmonostor
from the sanctuary*

Royal Centres

Charles I moved his residence to Visegrád in 1323. First, he set his court up in the fortress of Visegrád, then in an urban house, which became the predecessor of the Visegrád Royal Palace. Around 1340, a decorative chapel was going to be built next to the royal house, but the construction works soon stopped because of the court moving to Buda in 1347. In 1343, Louis I gifted the earlier royal castle in Óbuda to his mother, Dowager Queen Elizabeth Piast, who established her residence there. Nearby the revamped castle, the queen had a monastery built for the Poor Clare Sisters before 1350, and she had a new church built in honour of the Virgin Mary before 1348, next to St. Peter's priory church of Óbuda. St. Martin's chapel was built in the Kammerhof, the former royal residence built by Charles I. With this addition, the location was considered fit to be the actual residence of the royals. The king's brother and governor of the country, Prince Stephen, had his castle built in the southern part of the medieval Buda Castle.

Royal Church Constructions

In 1318, the Székesfehérvár basilica was destroyed by fire. Charles I had the church rebuilt: he had the pillars reinforced and had a vaulted, wooden ceiling constructed. Fire destroyed the wooden vaults again in 1327, after which stone vaults were built, however they were only finished in the side-aisles. At Kolozsmonostor, the king had the Árpád-age Benedictine abbey reconstructed. The simple chancel of the church can still be seen today. During the 1330s and 1340s, a new chancel was added to the Dominican convent on Margaret Island, which was quite close to the new royal centre. A little later, a splendid screen with sculptures was added to the chancel of



the church of the Cistercian monastery of Pilis. The latter constructions can be linked to the building workshop of the unfinished palace chapel of Visegrád, and all of them represent Central European Late Gothic style.

Cities

Several cities completed the erection of their city walls and churches in the first half of the 14th century. The triple city of Sopron was finished by 1340. The nave and the chancel-screen of the Franciscan church of Sopron were built around 1300, while the chapter hall was completed in the first third of the century. The first synagogue of the city was also finished at this time. The chancel of the Poor Clares' church in Pozsony was built in the 1330s, in the same style as the Sopron chapter hall. Large church halls were built in Igló and Lőcse in Szepes County. New shrines were added to the parish church of Nagyszében and to St. Elizabeth's Church of Kassa. In Kassa, a new cemetery chapel was also built in honour of St. Michael. Manorial centres of landlords also became more imposing. For example, Tamás Szécsényi founded a Franciscan monastery at Szécsény after 1335.

Fine Arts

Sculpture

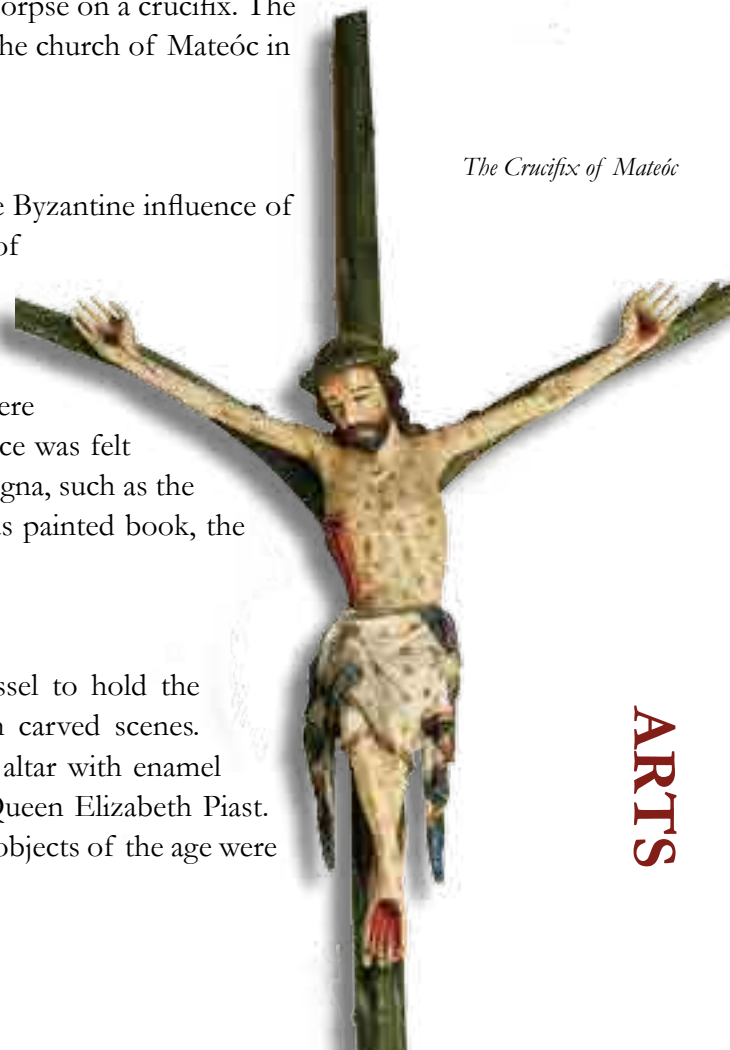
After the building of the new chancel in the Dominican convent on Margaret Island, the tombstone of St. Margaret was erected in the second third of the century, made by Italian masters. The same sculptors made a monk's head out of stone, which was found at Visegrád. The earliest winged altar in Hungary survived from Kríg, the central baldachin of which is surrounded by wings with reliefs. The Madonna of Pozsonyszőlős copied a French model. The Madonnas of Toporc and Ruskin, which originate from the second quarter of the century, follow a more modern, southern German model. Besides the Madonnas, crucifixes are also typical among the wooden sculptors of the era. Their characteristic feature is the painful representation of the wounded corpse on a crucifix. The most beautiful relic from the middle of the century survived from the church of Mateóc in Szepes County.

Painting

The frescos of Szepeshely, Szepesdaróc and Kakaslomnic show the Byzantine influence of the beginning of the century in painting style. The series of frescos of Tereske, however, followed the Central European Gothic style. The legend of St. Ladislaus was a popular theme. The archbishopric chapel of Esztergom was painted in the 1330s; the chapel of the bishopric palace of Zagreb and the cathedral of Nagyvárad were painted in the 1350s by Central Italian masters. The Italian influence was felt in book decoration, too, especially in codices written mainly in Bologna, such as the Bible of Demeter Nekcsei, master of the treasury, or the luxurious painted book, the *Anjou Legendary* painted for Prince Andrew.

Minor Arts

A fine example of 14th-century smithery was the *ciborium* (a vessel to hold the Eucharist) of Körtvélyes, the sides of which are decorated with carved scenes. The cross of Igló was decorated in a similar manner. A portable altar with enamel decorations, which was made in Paris, was in the possession of Queen Elizabeth Piast. Later she donated it to the Poor Clares of Óbuda. Secular everyday objects of the age were



The Crucifix of Mateóc

discovered in treasure troves and as tomb accessories. Goldsmiths carved seals too. Besides the series of royal seals and signets, which were of high artistic quality, the great seal of the chivalric Order of St. George must be mentioned, which was very special in the age. The seals of barons usually represented their coats of arms, sometimes images of knights. The seals of the cities depicted their patron saint or their walls. The signets of prelates were often almond-shaped and showed the patron saint of their church.

Art in the Late Angevin Age (1350–1400)

At the beginning of the period, the most important patrons of art were Elizabeth Piast, the queen mother, then Louis I from the 1370s, and also his daughter, Maria and her husband, King Sigismund. The flourishing court culture fitted organically into the International Gothic style of the age. Italian influence could be felt in every branch of the arts, but the emperor's court in Prague was also becoming increasingly influential. Peter Parler, who led the constructions in Prague, opened a new chapter in Gothic architecture, which resonated well in Hungary too. Besides this, a less decorated, puritan variant of the style was also cultivated in Central Europe, and was favoured mainly by mendicant orders. Urban arts had connections with Austria and Little Poland through the trade connections of the burghers.

Architecture

Visegrád

After the royal court moved back to Visegrád in 1355, Louis I had the earlier royal house enlarged into a palace. By the 1370s, the fortress-citadel of Visegrád was also rebuilt. The reconstructions of

The castle of Zólyom



the Royal Palace of Visegrád may have started in the 1350s, but were completed by Sigismund around 1400. The city's parish church dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the Augustine monastery were also refurbished. Louis I made the Palace of Buda his royal residence, and he began to expand it with a new courtyard, palace-wings and a chapel from the end of the 1370s. The earlier royal house, the Kammerhof, was donated in 1382 to the Pauline Order, which meant that the palace must have been completed by then. The fortresses, which defended the new courtyard were built during Maria and Sigismund's reign. The constructions of the Gothic chancels of the Church of Mary Magdalene and the St. Nicholas Dominican friary in the city started at that time.



Franciscan monastery and church, Keszthely

Bishopric Buildings and Fortresses

Coloman, bishop of Győr (1336–75), and Charles I's illegitimate son, enriched the fortress of Győr with a gate-tower bearing an escutcheon. At Pécs, Bishop Miklós Neszmélyi of Poroszló founded the Golden Mary Chapel in 1355, next to the old bishopric palace, which was also renovated by him. He was buried here in 1360. His successor, Bishop William of Koppenbach (1361–74) had the old palace rebuilt again, and it may have housed the university of Pécs – which was also founded by him. Bishop William had another palace built at the other end of the city. He was also buried in the Mary Chapel in a splendid tomb with sculptures and baldachin. Louis I had the fortress of Diósgyőr turned into a magnificent Gothic castle with four corner towers in the 1360s, and the castle of Zólyom was also rebuilt, but without towers. Both castles had a regular square ground plan. Sigismund's castle at Végles followed the pattern of the Zólyom Castle. The castle of Gesztes, which was also built in the age of Sigismund, had a simple but regular ground plan and a closed yard between the two residential wings.

The Cities of Western Hungary and Upper Hungary

The constructions of Hungarian cities in the western part of the country followed the models of Vienna and Wiener Neustadt. In Sopron, the tower of the Franciscan church, St. Michael's Parish Church and St. George's Chapel, and the new synagogue represent the architecture of the second half of the 14th century. In the same period, the city of Pozsony had the western parts of St. Martin's Parish Church and Poor Clares' church built, and also the St. John's Chapel of the Franciscan church. The construction of the parish church of Lőcse was finished then, but the building of the Nagyszombat church had just started. A new, large Franciscan church was also built in Lőcse. The parish church of Pest was enlarged with an ambulatory decorated with shrines. The new chancel of the Veszprém cathedral with a crypt underneath was built around 1380–1400 with plain details.

Transylvanian Cities

The influence of 14th-century Austrian architecture can also be observed in Transylvania; the patterns of the chancels of the parish church of Szászsebes and the Black Church of Brassó, and the triple-chancel apse of the parish church of Kolozsvár came from there. The longitudinal nave of the parish church of Nagyszeben was finished in an older basilica style with a transept, and a huge square tower was built in front of its western façade, in accordance with local Saxon traditions. This type of church was also built in a smaller version in other Saxon settlements, for example, in Ecel. The Franciscan church of Marosvásárhely followed the model of the single-naved Franciscan church with a long chancel; this type was widespread in the whole country. Its portals are manifestations of a slightly old, nevertheless richly partitioned style, which was quite popular in Transylvania. Some other fine examples of this type are the portals of the Calvinist Church of Ótorda.

Detail of the mural series of Johannes Aquila, Velemér

Monasteries

The flourishing of the Pauline Order continued in the second half of the 14th century. The church of the Tüskevár monastery is similar to the buttress church of the Csatka monastery, which was consecrated in 1361. The triple-naved new church of Budaszentlőrinc was built in Sigismund's age, and the rebuilt chancel of the former church was reconstructed into a chapel to house the relics of St. Paul the First Hermit. In market towns and beside the residences of landlords, monasteries were quite often built for the communities of the begging orders. The long apse of the Franciscan church of Keszthely, which was founded by István Lackfi, was already standing in 1397. The vaulted nave was built at the beginning of the 15th century. The church of the Premonstratensian monastery of Lelesz was rebuilt in the 1350s–60s.

*Fine Arts**Sculpture*

Unfortunately, the Angevin royal tombs of Székesfehérvár survived only in fragments. On the other hand, the tombs of two abbots of Pannonhalma from 1365 and 1372 were preserved intact. The wooden sculptures of the age survived primarily in Upper Hungary. The sculpture of St. Nicholas of Szelcse is from the region of the mining towns. The richest series of sculptures in Szepes consists of the apostles on the pediment of the main altar of the St. James's Church of Lőcse. The Madonnas of Szlatvin and Kőperény represent different types of Madonna sculptures. St. George's bronze statue (1373) – which can be seen in Prague today – and the equestrian statue of St. Ladislaus of Nagyvárad (which was later destroyed,) and the statues of the saintly kings (St.

Stephen, St. Ladislaus and Prince Emeric) were made by perhaps the most significant sculptors of medieval Hungary, Márton and György of Kolozsvár.

Painting

The effects of the Italian Trecento still played a huge role in the paintings of the second half of the century. The frescos of the shrine of the Franciscan church in Keszthely from the end of the 14th century attest to it, as do the frescos of the church of Zsegra in Upper Hungary from the 1360s. The decoration of the shrine of the church of Somorja in Csallóköz represents the linear Gothic style, which originates from Western Europe. In the paintings of St. James's Church and in the St. Dorothy cycle of Lőcse, we can already find signs of the International Gothic style from the end of the century. The most outstanding series of frescos were painted by Johannes Aquila, whose main works – in spite of his Styrian origin – survived in the territory of medieval Hungary: in the churches of Velemér (1378), Bántornya (1383 and 1389) and Mártonhely (1392).

Book and Tableau Painting

The most important memory of the second half of the 14th century is a painted codex, made by a master who studied in Italy: a *Chronicon Pictum*, also known as the *Illustrated Chronicle*. A parish priest, Henrik of Csukárd is known by name; as an illuminator, he decorated a service book (missal) in 1377. The influence of International Gothic was very strong at the end of the century. It was spread by Czech manuscripts brought into the country, for example, the Bible of Vencel Ganoy, which was obtained by the chapter of Pozsony. The missal of Ladislaus of Miskolc' (1394) is a relic representing the International Gothic in Hungary. The earliest Hungarian tableaus originate from this period. In 1367, Louis I donated three pictures to the Hungarian chapel of Aachen, but today only their frames are original. More survived from the Madonna picture donated to Mariazell, which followed Italian patterns.



*The herm of Trencsén
(Trenčín, Slovakia)*

Minor Arts

Several pieces of goldsmithery survived from Louis I's court, such as the King's double cross, and treasure that he gifted to the Hungarian chapel of Aachen: altar equipment, relic holders, cloak clips with escutcheons. The herm (head relic holder) of Trencsény, originating from the 1380s, represents the popular type of relic holder of the age. St. Simeon's silver coffin in Zára was made to the order of Queen Elizabeth. The altar cloth of Esztergom embroidered with the figure of the resurrected Christ might have been brought to the Pauline monastery of Göncruszka as Queen Maria's present. The mitre (bishop's headdress) of Győr is a nice example of the liturgical garments of the age. Master Konrad, a bellfounder, cast the great bell of Visegrád, which has a diameter of 2.8 metres, in 1357. He also founded the workshop in Igló, which supplied most parts of Upper Hungary with bells and bronze baptising pools for centuries. Tile stoves also appeared at that time.

Art in the Late Sigismund Age (1400–1437)

Artistic representation was an important political tool for King Sigismund. He endeavoured to create a court in Buda that was suitable for an emperor, based on Western models. The French, southern German and Austrian masters participating in the royal constructions created spectacular pieces of work both in architecture and sculpture. The style of royal constructions had a strong influence on the

art of the cities and baronial residences. An independent artistic centre formed in eastern Hungary, along an important trade route, with Kassa in the centre. The paintings of the royal court were worthy rivals of the pictures of Charles IV's court in Prague. In painting, Italian trends did not disappear, but they started to fade.

Architecture

Forts and Castles

King Sigismund had the castle of Tata built in the first decade of the 15th century, in a similar manner to Diósgyőr, with a row of arcades in its yard. He also had the castle of Visegrád enlarged, with an outer wall and an impressive outer gate tower. Sigismund's barons followed the king's example: Filippo Scolari had a northern Italian-style castle built in Ozora, which had a regular ground plan (1416–26), and János Maróti also had one built in Gyula. The huge castle of the Garais in Siklós had a rather irregular ground plan, just like their castle in Csesznek, which was built on top of a mountain (1424). Here – like in the case of Voivode Stibor's mountain castle at Beckó – it was not possible to follow a regular ground plan. In this peaceful period, numerous less fortified, comfortable fortresses and castles (*castellum*) were also built, for example at Tar, Kiszána and Szászvár.

Buda

The expansion of the Buda Castle was started in the 1410s by Sigismund. A new residential block was built including a huge audience hall and an extended fortification system. The king founded St. Sigismund's priory in the foreground of the palace, near the royal house, in a town called the Fresh [Friss] Palace. The church of the priory, completed between 1410 and 1424, was very similar to the Church of Mary Magdalene, which was also rebuilt at that time. The Church of Our Lady of Buda was rebuilt alongside the constructions of the palace. It was enlarged with new side-chancels, a splendid southern portal, and the chapel of the Garai family. The town itself gained its medieval outline then: several one- or two-storey stone buildings had already been built there.

The castle of Ozora



Pozsony

The construction of Pozsony was carried out under Viennese influences in the first quarter of the century, examples are the spire of the Franciscan church or the structure of the town hall. Due to the Hussite threat, Sigismund started to fortify the castle and the city in the 1420s. In the 1430s, the castle became an important residence for the ruler. The construction of Buda were stopped, and the architectural workshop moved to the castle of Pozsony with the lead of Master Konrad of Erling. The castle with a square ground plan followed the pattern of Diósgyőr. The sumptuous gate tower of the outer

wall is a close relative of the Visegrád and Buda gate towers, and resembles the bridge tower of the old city of Prague. The style of the building workshop determined the construction of the city: telling signs of its style can be seen on the new wing of the town hall of Pozsony, the final look of the western part of St. Martin's Church of Pozsony, and also the details of several houses in the city.

Eastern Hungary

The reconstruction of St. Elizabeth's Cathedral of Kassa started at the beginning of the 15th century. A five-naved church with a transept was raised with three ornate portals. The construction, especially the style of the gates, shows the influence of the royal construction works at Buda, and that of Peter Parler's workshop in Prague. The vault of the church was finished before 1440 by masters who studied in Vienna. The building works at Kassa created a unique style, which was present from Krakow to Brassó in the 1420s. The Franciscan church of Kassa was built under the influence of the cathedral, but the style of Kassa was copied in northeastern Hungary too. We also find examples in Transylvania: the nave of St. Michael's Church of Kolozsvár, the parish church of Brassó, and the mountain church of Segesvár, and in Krakow the Augustine church of the Kazimierz district.

The Western Part of the Country

The cathedral of Győr was entirely rebuilt by Bishop János Hédervári (1386–1415) at the beginning of the 15th century. He added a richly elaborated chapel to the southern side of the three-naved new building with twin towers on its western side. St. James's Parish Church of Kőszeg was reconstructed by the Garai family into a three-nave church hall with a longitudinal chancel. St. Mark's Church of Zagreb is similar to this, and was built at the turn of the century. Its 15th-century portal resembles that of the Garai chapel at Buda. Pál Horváti, bishop of Zagreb (1379–80), started the building of the nave and the towers of the cathedral of Zagreb, which was continued by his successor, Eberhard (1397–1419). The other face of architecture in Transdanubia, the style of the churches of small market towns, was represented by the parish church of Berhida.

The Architecture of Upper Hungary

The construction of the new church hall of the abbey and the monastery of Garamszentbenedek started in the mid-14th century, but the works stretched well into the 15th century. In Eperjes, a similar, but rather irregular hall-like chancel was added to the parish church after 1391. The parish churches of the market towns of Szepes (for example Szepesbéla, Kakaslovník) were vaulted with arches resting on a central pillar or row of pillars, copying Czech and Polish models. Such vaults were built in the parish churches of Körmöcbánya and Tar, and probably the Franciscan church of Kassa as well. Among monasteries that were also burial places for aristocratic families, the Augustine church of Vágújhely founded by Voivode Stibor is a special one as it copies the church of St. Charles the Great in Prague



St. Elizabeth's Cathedral, Kassa (Košice, Slovakia)

(and indirectly the palace chapel of Aachen). The Pauline churches of Kurityán (after 1419) and Gönc (1429) are traditional buildings.

Fine Arts

Stone Masonry

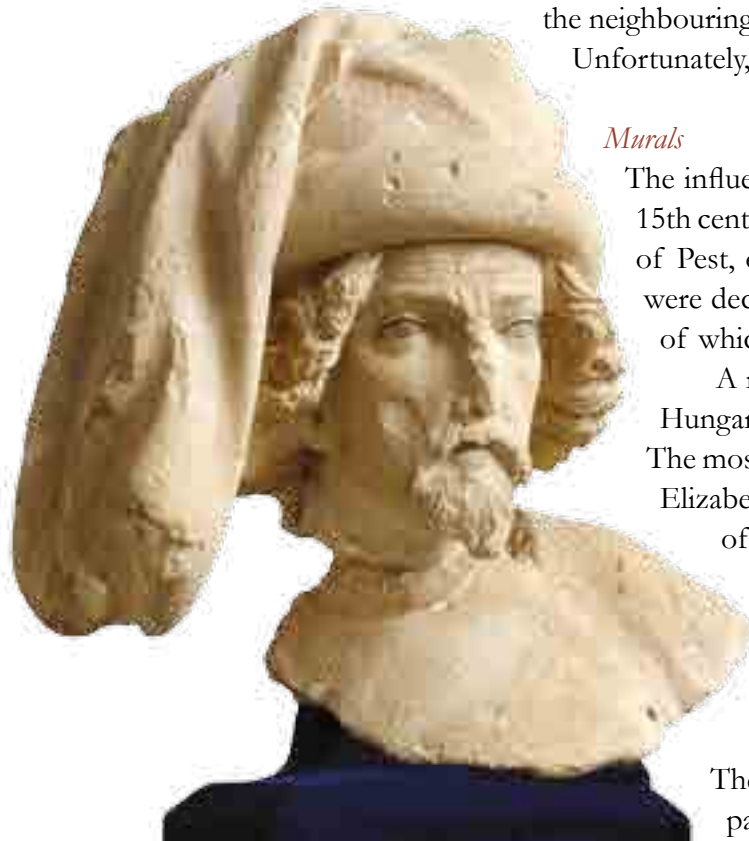
In stone masonry, the soft style [a version of International Gothic in the arts] of the first decade of the 15th century is represented by the popular Pieta sculptures (Mary crying over the dead Christ). The most beautiful piece survived in Nagyszeben. The most significant sculpture find of the second and third decades of the 15th century is the group of Gothic sculptures found in Buda in 1974. The creators of these sculptures came from various regions of Europe, and represented the most modern styles of the period. The sculptures, which were found in St. Sigismund's Church, were made by these masters, just like the girl's head found in the royal palace. There are also some sculptures in the Church of Our Lady of Buda as well, that originate from the beginning of the 15th century. The most significant pieces of contemporary funeral masonry are the figurative red marble Stibor tombstones.

Wooden Sculptures and Altars

The most important Hungarian wooden sculpture relic of the soft style was made in the 1410s: the altarpiece of Kislomnic. The Magdalene sculpture of Dénesfalva and the St. Dorothy sculpture of Barka represent a similarly graceful style. "The Miserable Christ" of Fonyód shows common features with the sculpture finds of Buda. The second Madonna of Toporc has the elements of Late Gothic style.

The first painted altars survived from the beginning of the 15th century. The Jeremy tableau of Pónik and the triptychon built into the St. Catherine altar of Lőcse, and the "Calvary Altar" of Garamszentbenedek painted by Tamás of Kolozsvár in 1427 – which is the most significant relic of the Hungarian soft style – were all made under the influence of Czech painting. The art of the neighbouring Austrian territories defined the style of the altar of Némétújvár. Unfortunately, only a cut picture of the spinning Mary survived from it.

Fragment of a male sculpture wearing a chaperon from the statue finds in the Buda Castle



Murals

The influence of Italian arts still played a key role at the beginning of the 15th century, as shown by the fragments of the murals of the parish church of Pest, or the frescos of Rimabrézó. Small churches in the countryside were decorated by the masters of itinerant painting workshops, the style of which was strongly provincial.

A remarkable example of the Central European soft style in Upper Hungary is the cycle of frescos in the parish church of Pónik from 1415. The most important relic of this style is the "Resurrection" painting of St. Elizabeth's Cathedral of Kassa from the 1420s. We can see the influence of Czech painting on the rich fresco decorations of the church in the Transylvanian Almakerék. The representation of the St. Ladislaus legend remained a popular topic; a good example of this is the fresco from Székelyderzs from 1419.

Book Painting

The Czech soft style strongly influenced Hungarian book painting at the beginning of the 15th century. Besides rich floral



ornamentations, the “D missal” of the priory of Pozsony was decorated with soft figurative initials. A Canon picture, representing the crucifixion of Christ, originates from another missal of Pozsony. The Law Book of Körmöcbánya was also richly decorated. The 1423 missal of the goldsmith guild of Vác, decorated by illuminator János, is of outstanding beauty. The first initial of the missal is decorated with the picture of St. Eligius, the patron saint of goldsmiths. The beautiful breviary of György Pálóczy, archbishop of Esztergom (1423–39), also survived. During his travels, King Sigismund issued several ornate escutcheoned letters, and these were drawn by the available local painters.

*Service books of the
goldsmith guild of Vác*

Applied Arts

The textile art of the Sigismund Age is represented by several chasubles decorated in the soft style. A nicely cut saddle decorated with the emblem of the Order of the Dragon proves that chivalric culture flourished at King Sigismund’s court. An early memory of the typical Hungarian filigree technique was King St. Ladislaus’s herm. Richly decorated monstrances, like the one in Szendrő, became widespread in the age. The chalice of Torna is covered with engraved decorations. Several bronze baptising pools – which followed 14th-century traditions – were cast in Upper Hungary and Transylvania. Stove-building was also booming in the Sigismund Age. Various colourful tiled stoves were built not only in the royal court, but also in castles, manor houses and city houses.

János Mezei

After the Árpád Age, there were significant changes in Hungary both in political–economic life and the intellectual sphere. Music also underwent a major change. The disintegration of the country (the Mongol attacks, inner anarchy) was stopped and reversed by the policies of Charles I. He was open to the influence of Western Europe, and the 14th century brought about genuine cultural prosperity. Through the dynastic relations of the Angevin rulers the intellectual horizon was broadened towards the West. With the boom in mining and trade, new city centres emerged (especially in Upper Hungary and Transylvania). The economic prosperity provided new opportunities for the development of music as well. Though the network of cities was not as dense as in Western Europe and did not or could not achieve the concentration of intellectuals on the same scale, the Late Middle Ages were still the golden era of music. Music life in this period shows a unified picture both in terms of music education and practice.

New Features of Music Life

The number of relics of musical notation increased in this period. Charters and bills also prove that there was a permanent and intensive music life both in churches and in public life. Besides the daily Mass and Vespers, schools also provided the music service for the foundation and Mary masses, requiems and funerals. It meant at least three to four hours of singing in the church itself. Certain movements are mentioned in the foundation masses by their titles: for example, the popular *Salve Regina* or from among the newer, more modern pieces the *Ave Verum Corpus*. As the majority of the foundations were located in Upper Hungary, it is possible that their growing number reflected a more comfortable and wealthy bourgeois lifestyle.

Students could often be heard singing outside churches: they participated in Eucharistic processions and spectacular celebrations (greetings, elections). Besides the Gregorian movements, they performed polyphonic pieces and chants as well. Their greeting activity (greeting songs) – which were also performed by simple clergymen or even peasants – have survived to this day as folk customs (New Year’s greeting song, name-day greeting songs). Thanks to this tradition, the melodies of medieval greeting songs have survived.

*Musicians at King
Charles I's nuptials,
miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*



Joculators and Instrumental Musicians

Although the word “joculator” had originally denoted both the singers of heroic legends and the entertaining singers in the past, later its meaning gradually shifted towards the latter. The most popular group of instrumental musicians

was that of trumpet players (and drummers), who may have been considered as the sounding insignia of lords and royal power. (For example, they accompanied Sigismund not only on his visit to France but also while hunting and fishing.) In cities they were employed at festivals (such as Corpus Christi) or as tower guards.

Organs were used in Hungarian churches from the 14th century (organists were usually organ builders as well). Franciscan, Dominican and Pauline friars were very good at playing this instrument. As cities began to flourish, records showing the use of organs increased, particularly since the 15th century. At this time organs were used not to accompany singing, but to decorate the melody, or, in line with the so-called *alternatim* practice, singing and instrumental music altered from verse to verse.

There were many names for instrument players from the 14th century – for example Dobos, Dudás, Gajdos, Hegedős, Kobzos, Kürtös, Lantos, Sípos (drummer, piper, singer, fiddler, lutenist, hornist, bard, whistler) – but these were used as job names, rather than inherited family names at the time. The stratification of musicians was the following: village musicians, musicians employed in the city, musicians employed by landlords or prelates (or maybe by the king), errant musicians. Examples of musical notation did not survive, but in the light of secondary sources “it is not without foundation ... to talk about a network of musicians, which interlaced the whole country”.



Oswald
von Wolkenstein

Music at the Royal Court

The royal court was one of the most significant centres of artistic music. Its golden age was the era of King Matthias, coming close to reaching the standard of Western European *capellas*. The first step towards this was taken by the Angevin dynasty. By Sigismund's age, court music had become very important. Sigismund, who had the palace of Buda rebuilt and the royal chapel reorganised, considered it important to be accompanied on his travels by the famous *minnesänger*, Oswald von Wolkenstein. They regarded each other almost as friends. On his diplomatic travels he took along his *capella* – just like at the Council of Constance – as a musical symbol of his power. The *capella* had its own school, organ player and wind instrument players, so they could perform polyphonic music. However, their primary duty was still to perform Gregorian songs during services.

Gregorian Music in the Late Middle Ages

Gregorian music maintained its dominant position in the Late Middle Ages. It was still the musical core curriculum taught in schools, and its theoretical and practical cognisance was part of the basic knowledge of medieval intelligentsia. In certain genres, there was a compositional growth: in the Mass there were new movements besides the *alleluias* and sequences. These were the *ordinarium* movements and the more ornate reading tones. As the number of saints increased, new song cycles appeared in the office through adoption (import), and they satisfied mostly local spiritual needs. The indications of liturgical books also refer to this fact at the relevant saints: “Own office – if you have it in your book”.

Books and Musical Notation

About 30 complete codices and hundreds of fragments survived from the 14th and 15th centuries, implying that literacy was appreciated and cultivated. Most of the manuscripts were relatively small and

made by unskilled hands which were nonetheless good at musical notation. These so-called manuals were replaced by large decorative codices in the next historical period. The golden age of Hungarian musical notation was the 14th century. It is showcased in the *Notatum* (service book with musical notation) of Esztergom, which is kept in Pozsony. “Its notation, liturgical order and the multitude of melody variants make this book the most reliable manuscript of central Hungarian traditions.”

Besides Hungarian musical notation, a modern notation also appeared in the 14th century in the border areas of Hungary, which was developed from a Lorrainian notation type. It was a strongly articulated, “Gothicised” writing composed of large elements, called the “Metz Gothic musical notation” (or the Messine neumes). For example, the *Gradual* of Upper Hungary was written in these Gothic neumes at the end of the century, and we can find it in the codices of Pozsony from the 14th century as well as in some manuscripts from Kassa, Kolozsvár and Brassó. In the north-western areas the Bohemian musical notation was used – the influence of this can be seen, for example, in the notation of *The Second Esztergom Antiphoner*. Besides the centres that kept the Esztergom traditions, Hungarian musical notation was preserved by the Pauline Order, which later tried to develop it into a large-font style codex-writing.

Polyphonic fragment from the age of Sigismund

The influence of Metz Gothic notation on Hungarian musical notation could already be felt in the 14th century, becoming only stronger in the 15th century. The change in musical notation reflects

a kind of change in mentality, according to which attention was drawn to the individual notes, and the cohesion of the groups of notes (neumes) became looser. The direction of writing also changed: instead of the downward rows of points of clear Hungarian notation, this notation went from left to right, following the order of the notes in time. This mixed notation can be considered a Hungarian innovation: it merges the punctual, clear Metz Gothic notation and the flexibility and the drawing-like tracing of the Hungarian notation. It was used from the first third of the 15th century till the middle of the 16th century, mainly in grand, decorated choir books. Its significance is shown by the fact that this musical notation was used in the major Hungarian codices (for example, *The First Esztergom Antiphoner* and *the Gradual of Futak*).

Franciscan and Dominican service books from the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries differ from the prevailing Hungarian liturgical-musical traditions both in content and musical notation. Their so-called quadrate (square-shaped) musical notation and melody variants follow the foreign models of their centralised orders and not the local tradition. In contrast to these, the four 15th-century antiphons of Pozsony were written in the Metz Gothic notation, but they followed the Esztergom tradition, which was considered to be the mainstream of medieval Hungarian music notation.

Medieval Polyphony

In contrast with the great number of Gregorian codices, we have only few polyphonic records. Several 14th-century



fragments and the statute of the Pauline Order – which banned polyphony – proves the living practice of polyphony. A source from Upper Hungary from the beginning of the 15th century includes several movements: the so-called Sigismundian Fragment. 14th and 15th-century sources contain old-fashioned European music styles, which were very popular a few hundred years earlier. Some of these techniques had already been known in the West at the turn of the millennium. It was a special, solemn performance, for example, if the soloistic parts of a Gregorian chant were enhanced with a richer melody (first by improvisation). The main principle of constructing textures for two or three voices, based on quarts and quints, is the parallel and opposite movement of the melodic lines.

Besides celebratory readings, popular tropes or – as in a Franciscan codex – the *alleluia* movement of the mass could also be decorated like this. If a rhythmic countermelody was composed to a non-liturgical, free melody, it yielded a more modern sound, even if the treatment of intervals followed the old traditions (based on quarts, quints and octaves). Strictly speaking, such animated polyphonic chants were not considered liturgical music, but they enriched the social musical art of clerical intellectuals. However, the circumscribing of Gregorian melodies with brisker countermelodies was already a solution suitable for the liturgy, and it was also closer to the “learned” composition style of the day.



Music notation
in the Peer Codex

Popular Religious Songs in the Vernacular

The first recorded Hungarian popular religious song was the most popular Easter song in Europe: “Krisztus feltámada mind ő nagy kínjából” (Christ resurrected from his great pain). This can be read on the margin of the pages of the Sigismundian Fragment in four languages: in Hungarian, Czech, German and Polish. (It was probably sung by everyone in his or her own mother tongue at Easter.) This movement was originally added to the *Victimae paschali* sequence, or it was sung by the audience at the end of the Night Office, after the resurrection play (Easter play).

Another early Hungarian popular religious song was the Hungarian *Te Deum*. Although it was first recorded only around 1500 in the Peer Codex, indeed, it is indicated that the song was already popular and widely known. Presumably, it may have been sung already in the 15th century.

Besides the Easter song and the *Te Deum*, we can mention the Christmas song “Csordapásztorok” (Herdsmen), which was the greeting song (telling about the forthcoming feast) of medieval students (in the text we can find references to King Sigismund’s “Fresh Palace”). Possibly the Easter song “Feltámadt Krisztus e napon” (Christ resurrected on that day) was equally sung in that period, since



Stove tile with the figure
of a pipe player

its Latin text was also written on the pages of the Sigismundian Fragment. The history of popular religious songs would more generously unfold in the following centuries.

Medieval Epic Songs

No musical notation of epic songs has survived. The *Song of St. Ladislaus* is known from a 16th-century source, the Peer Codex, though the roots of its melody go back to the Middle Ages. The dirges of Hungarian folk music underwent a development (verses connected to the text of funeral songs, hymns, ballads and *keserves* [laments]), which might have preserved a certain public epic style, whose later variants would be the historical songs in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The Medieval Layers of Hungarian Folk Music

The rich culture of folk customs practised during the Middle Ages – a significant part of which is kept alive in folk traditions today – preserved many melodies. Some of them were organised into real cycles, such as the melodies of *Midsummer Night* from the Zobor region. Its antiquated, small-range songs certainly originate from the Middle Ages. Archaic custom-related melodies had some common features with Gregorian songs, not because they influenced each other but as a result of similarity in the musical background. The ceremonious major hexachord melodies that accompanied children's games (bridge, procession or pair games) might also originate from the Middle Ages, just like the music of drama plays of cultic male societies, the one-

time singing guilds (*bethlehemes* = nativity play).

Medieval greeting songs were preserved in the chants of young men or children. The basic layer of the Procession of St. Gregory is also of medieval origin. Acoustic elements of medieval villages and towns were the cries of night guards and the recitative verse learning at school. The traces of recitative verse learning were preserved by the rhymes of the Transylvanian nativity plays and the carrying of the host in Advent.

According to Lajos Vargyas, the oldest group of Hungarian ballads originates from 14th-century folk poetry. As he had found only French parallels to these, he hypothesised that this influence might have come from that direction, via Walloon settlers.

However, a closer European parallel can be drawn to Hungarian swineherd dance songs. The Western European counterpart of the rhythm of swineherd songs is the vagant verse, so swineherd songs preserved the musical material of the songs of medieval entertainers, the jocalators. Similarly, the nativity shepherd dance or the dance motifs of Whitsun dances may have preserved medieval dance music.

Records show that the ancient dirges continued to survive in the Middle Ages (for example Charles I's mourning songs). The tunes of those dirges may have been the same as we know them today. Wide-range melodies must have become popular at this time, and a great number of strophic folk songs might have separated from dirges during this period too.

HISTORY OF DANCE

László Felföldi

The hundred and fifty years between 1300 and 1450 saw the flourishing of ecclesiastical arts, while courtly arts became more independent, and city culture blossomed. In Hungary, this development was very specific, and in a typical Eastern European manner, it was connected almost exclusively to the royal court. The latter can be explained by the fact that urban development was delayed, and there were not enough aristocratic courts suitable for promoting court culture. During the reign of the three significant rulers – Charles I, Louis (I) the Great and especially Sigismund – the Hungarian royal court became an important political and cultural centre, and this enabled the country to adopt the popular forms of European arts. If we want to form an opinion about the whole of the contemporary culture, we must consider the elements of peasant culture as well – which are rarely mentioned by the sources. It is especially true for dance culture, which has few sources, in contrast to music, literature, and fine arts.

The Written Sources of Dance Culture

Relics of language history play a key role among the evidence of the dance culture of the age. With the increase in the number of sources in the Hungarian language, more and more common Hungarian or international words appear with reference to dance. The word “dance” appeared first in the language in 1350 as an international loan word, probably referring to couple dances accompanied by instrumental music – according to the contemporary European usage of the word. The Schlägl word list from 1405 matches the word *tombás* (entertainer) with three Latin expressions: *cantatrix*, *gestulator*, *palpanist*. This does not mean that the composer of this list of words was inaccurate; rather, it refers to the various activities of the *tombás* (entertainer, minstrel, puppet player). The act of dancing is expressed with the word *tombol*, *tomb* in many sources, probably in the sense of jumping dance.

Heavenly and Earthly Love

A unique feature in the development of 14th–15th-century European culture is that court arts became more and more independent in contrast to ecclesiastical arts. In the field of dance, this process took place alongside the ban on the practice of dancing itself – which was declared profane –, and the propagation of idealised dance symbols (King David’s dance, Salome’s dance). With some exceptions, dance was not part of church services anymore, so it did not bear the advantages that religious songs and poetry enjoyed in contemporary schools. No one was engaged in making dance an independent art, creating its literacy, or including its artistic forms into the canon.

Dancing, however, could stand its ground under such circumstances too, as the basic form of expression of European culture. Being an important part of court culture and chivalric way of life, it was booming. The code of behaviour and movements, which defined European dance culture and social life, was gradually developing. Its cradle was the 12th-century Provence, its nurse was the 14th-century Italy, its master was the 15th-century Burgundy, and it spread throughout Europe. We can detect the ancient Greek and Latin cultures in its origins, and later the influence of Syrian, Old Hebrew, Arab and other Eastern cultures was also significant. Experiences gathered during the crusades also helped its development.



Gothic mural with
a female figure in
the Thury Castle at
Várpalota

In medieval Europe, the most important virtues were polite and obliging behaviour, abstinent love, skilfulness, self-control, good taste, and reliability besides the admiration of women and loyal service to the liege lord. In dance, these virtues were embodied by a solemn and firm posture, and circle dances performed with restrained movements and a chaste and reserved behaviour.

The most magnificent part of knightly service was love, entertaining and courting (*Amor, Joi, Cortesia*) in order to seek the favour of the lady of the castle. Each knight had his chosen lady, whom he escorted and served. This lady reigned over the knight's heart. The scene of the service, the garden of love (*cour d'amour*) was the castle, suitable for social life, where the knights could practise polite behaviour through court dances and songs in the company of the lady and her ladies-in-waiting. The typical figures of the garden of love were the troubadours, the talented cultivators of music, singing and dancing. They often amused their audience with dance performances (laudās, ballads), short plays, satirical songs, rebuking songs, and romances.

As we mentioned before, opulent courts, like the Western European aristocratic and royal centres, and the possibility of chivalry and court life developed in Hungary too, during the reign of the Angevin kings, and especially that of Sigismund. Its scenes were the royal residences of Esztergom, Visegrád, Buda and Diósgyőr. There were plenty of family occasions, coronations, peace treaties, receptions of envoys and diplomatic meetings, which provided an opportunity for splendid feasts, tournaments and dances. Unfortunately, there are no descriptions, official or private letters about these events, and contemporary account books do not mention dances either.

We must mention the representations in the frescos of Runkelstein due to their Hungarian references, where Louis the Great's mother, Queen Elizabeth, performs a procession dance with Meinhard, duke of Bavaria and the members of his court. This dance could be the local variant of the popular marching dance – which used slow steps – (*Tanz, Hofetanz, Basse danse*), usually followed by a

quicker leaping dance combined with pantomime-like elements, in concert with the tradition of the age.

Similar dances might have been danced at the banquet following the coronation of King Sigismund in 1387, and at the great council of European knights in Buda in 1396. Several contemporaneous sources mention the ruler's passion for dancing. According to one source, in 1411 the king wanted to win the favour of a bourgeois girl by dancing against Frederick, duke of Austria in Innsbruck. Another source mentions that even at the age of sixty-six, he was an enthusiastic dancer at a burghers' feast in Augsburg. In 1432, when he was crowned emperor, there were lavish celebrations in Rome, which the Hungarian members of his escort tried to make memorable for the participants in many ways.

Besides the above, several other sources prove that the clothing, musical instruments, and way of dancing of the Hungarians attracted the attention of the other peoples as they were different. It is known that János Hunyadi, when he was in Italy with King Sigismund in 1433–34, was the centre of attention because of the way he danced. All the high-born ladies wanted to dance with him, even the king himself became envious. The pilgrimages of the Hungarians to Aachen had similar effects on the foreigners, where they became famous for their spectacular marches, bear-leading and street dances.

Beginning from the 14th century, in Western Europe the scene of secular dance life expanded and besides royal courts, it came to include the cities as well. The townsfolk, the burghers danced their own dances as well as dances learnt at courts at specially designated dancing places – which were maintained at public expense – under the strict control of the aldermen. This is proved by the representations of

brides' chests from Florence from the early 15th century. On these chests, the rich citizens perform a procession dance accompanied by instrumental music. A similar scene can be seen on the mural of a contemporaneous house in the Castle District of Buda, where the dancers are followed by a jester wearing a jester's cap.

Profane Dances

In Dante's *Comedy (La Commedia)*, the heavenly Estates of the Realm, the armies of the saved dance the elegant *ruota* and *gira* dances in Paradise, while the damned dance *ridda* and *tresca* – that is peasant dances – in Hell. This idea shows the approach of the age to the various new and traditional dances. (This evaluation may have been known in Hungary too, since Dante's work could be found in Louis the Great's library. The Latin translation of the *Comedy* was directly dedicated to King Sigismund by the translator.) Despite the underestimation and frequent bans, peasant dances survived in Hungary, mixed with the newly acquired European traditions.

By the 15th century, the tradition of carnivals, Whitsun, lighting fires on Midsummer Night and chanting at Christmas, were widespread in Hungary too. Besides the new forms of traditions connected to family celebrations and working, these were the main occasions for dancing. A note from the teaching of Pelbárt of Temesvár – though it might refer to an earlier practice – mentioned the case of women participating in the mask carnival near the Kapos River, one of whom was captured from the dance by a demon – as a punishment. It is probable that there were no separate occasions for dancing with the pure purpose of entertainment in contemporary peasant communities, while these events were quite frequent and popular at princely courts and urban bourgeois communities.

The system of genres, which is typical of today's folk dances, did not yet develop during the Middle Ages. According to the sources, there were only two genres: joint chain-circle dances accompanied with singing, which were based on slow steps (there could be different forms for women, men, and mixed companies); and dances based on leaping-stamping-throbbing movements, which appeared in various forms (solo, paired, group, men's, women's dances, performed with or without instruments, in or without masks). These developing genres were held together by different rhythmical, formal, and functional frames.



Procession dance of Queen Elizabeth and her companions, mural in the Runkelstein Castle

Dancing couple, stove tile from Besztercebánya



György Rácz

Weakening Papacy in a Strong Kingdom

The papacy prospered in the 13th century, but it was a period of slow disintegration for the Hungarian royal power, especially during the second half of the century. After 1301, Hungary was a state without a centralised power; it was a country divided and destroyed by the barons. The idea of kingdom was represented by the strict institutions and disciplines of the Catholic Church and the material reality of the Holy Crown, originating from the state-founder St. Stephen. Central power was re-established by Charles I's "uniting" policy. He left a well-organised country – which was considered a great power in the region in terms of its foreign policy – to his son, Louis the Great. However, the Avignon papacy, often referred to as "exile" or "captivity" of the popes by drawing parallels with the Babylonian exile of the Jews, is an apt term for the status of the papacy between 1305 and 1377. The popes lost their political strength under the guardianship of the French kings.

*The priests of Buda
excommunicate the
Pope, miniature in the
Chronicon Pictum*

Accession to the Hungarian Throne and the Legates

According to the philosophy of the Holy See, Hungary owed Christian obedience to them and belonged under their earthly authority. However, already under the reign of Andrew III, most members of

the council of bishops and the barons believed that the country was independent of the papacy with regards to secular matters. They considered Hungary to be the legacy of the Virgin Mary (i.e. not of St. Peter's), and the defence of the sovereignty of the country was more important than obedience to the pope. In their opinion, an elected candidate should have ascended the vacant throne in 1301, but the pope tried to force the Hungarians to accept his candidate, Charles of Anjou, as the legal successor of the Árpád dynasty. He sent his legates, bishops Boccasini and later Gentilis, to Hungary to convince the bishops that they should elect Charles as king.



Charles I and the Church

After consolidating his power, Charles – who was helped to the throne by the papacy – soon had to face the opposition of the Hungarian prelates. They were dissatisfied with their new king, because they thought he was ruling in an absolutist way, without convocing the Diet. They resented that after defeating the provincial kinglets, he kept former church estates for himself that

had been previously usurped by the oligarchs, and appointed secular persons to vacant prelate positions. Prelates had to recruit bigger armies than they could afford, and members of the clergy were often summoned to secular tribunals. The king appointed his own men as bishops, even by ignoring the canonical election of chapters if necessary. The letter the bishops sent to the pope in their despair in 1338 contained these complaints amongst similar accusations. The tepid papal warning that followed had no result: Charles did not change his church policy at all.

Charles strived to assert the interests of the country, even when he had to oppose the papal power that helped him to the throne: he consistently applied his right of patronage that he inherited from the Árpáds. He even laid tax on the so-called papal tithe, which was collected between 1332 and 1337. Foreign tax collectors could only start their work after the pope had offered one third of the tax to the benefit of the king. However, Charles's measures taken in the interest of the monasteries were remarkable. He reaffirmed the old privileges of the monasteries, and the political influence of the monastic orders (especially that of the begging orders) increased significantly during his reign. He appointed several monks as bishops.

King Louis the Great, the Champion of the Church

Among the wars of King Louis, only his fruitless fight for the throne of Naples was against the interests of the Avignon papacy. Later he led campaigns far and wide (for example, against the Eastern Orthodox Serbs, the heretic Bosnians, and pagan Lithuanians and Tartars) that were in accordance with the political and converting ambitions of the Holy See. Louis the Great often provided military help in the internal battles within the Church. Hungarian troops protected the pope on his return from Avignon to Rome. In 1356, a letter from the pope called him “Christ’s shield, the Lord’s athlete”. In the meantime, Louis the Great continued his father’s policy of banning the collection of papal tithe and asserting royal interests when filling church positions.

During the fight for the throne of Naples, there was an intensive, unprecedented exchange of legates and envoys between the papal States and the Hungarian court. After this period, papal legates continued their visits to Hungary only in matters of world politics. Their duties included converting in the East, settling the Balkan situation, and mediating in peace treaties. Cardinal Guido’s visit in 1349 was of high significance. The popes recognised the Ottoman threat early on, and Pope Urban V sent his legate to Buda to assess the situation. In 1371, a papal legate came to Hungary to settle the dispute between King Louis and Emperor Charles IV. At the same time, Hungarian envoys also spent months in Avignon, where – besides settling public matters – they forwarded the requests of their relatives or *familiares* to the pope in the form of so-called papal requests (*supplicatio*).

Hungary and the Western Schism

After the death of Pope Gregory XI, who had moved back to Rome, the opposing groups of cardinals chose two popes in 1378, one of whom returned to Avignon. Hungary was one of the countries that accepted and supported the “lawful” Roman pope. This act exceeded mere diplomatic politeness, since

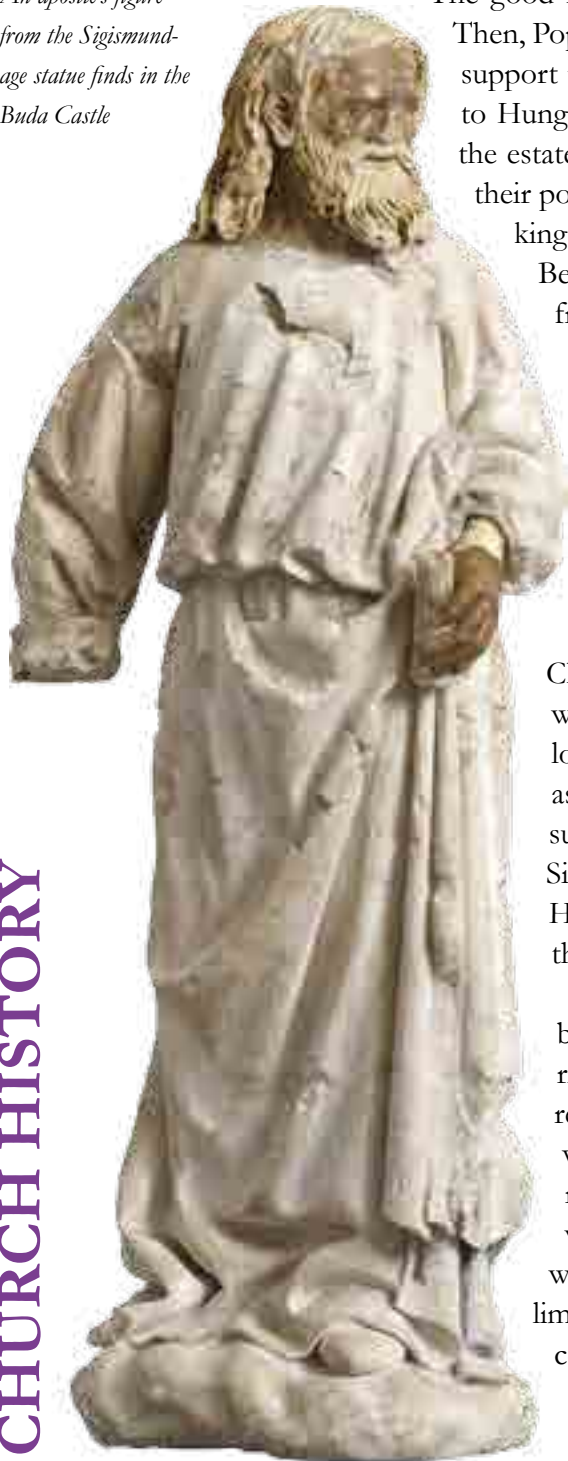


King Louis the Great among angels holding the coat of arms, alcove from Pöstyén

at that time the pope's power was quite significant concerning the governing of the Church in Hungary. By this time, the tradition that the popes reserved their rights to fill vacancies in Hungarian church positions (*reservatio*) was widely accepted in the country. Thus, the foreign appointees (who arrived with a papal bull) occupied not only bishopric seats but also the positions of archdeacons, canons and other benefices, which the awakening Hungarian intellectual middle layers naturally also wanted to keep for themselves. At first, King Sigismund and Pope Boniface IX were able to resolve this conflict of interest with compromises.

King Sigismund's Church Governance

An apostle's figure
from the Sigismund-
age statue finds in the
Buda Castle



The good relationship between the popes and the Hungarian king lasted until 1403. Then, Pope Boniface IX joined with some of the Hungarian prelates and aristocrats to support the anti-king, Ladislaus of Naples, against Sigismund. He even sent a legate to Hungary to improve Ladislaus's chances. When Sigismund triumphed, he seized the estates of the rebelling prelates and removed some of the leading prelates from their positions. He appointed secular governors to the head of church districts. The king gave up his obedience to Pope Boniface IX, but did not accept Antipope Benedict XIII either. His intention was to withdraw Hungarian church issues from the authority of the Holy See and to take matters into his own hands. For the sake of the cause, he issued a decree on 6 April 1404, in which he introduced the *placetum regium* (royal approval). This situation lasted until 1410, when Sigismund entered into a diplomatic relationship with Pope John XXIII, who was elected by the reform Council of Pisa.

Sigismund – as King of Germany and heir presumptive to the emperor's throne, convoked the Council of Constance in 1414, the most significant congress of the Late Middle Ages, where he was chairman. Its most important aims were to put an end to the papal Schism of the Western Church, which had divided the continent since 1378, elect a new pope that would be accepted by everyone, and to reform the secularising Church. After long diplomatic negotiations, Sigismund's endeavours were partly successful, as two popes were willing to abdicate, and he deprived the third one of his supporters. The reform failed, but before the new pope, Martin V, was elected, Sigismund forced the cardinals to issue a decree, the so-called Constance Bull. Hungarian kings later referred to this document when they wanted to assert their right of patronage.

After the council, Sigismund's relationship with the papacy was well-balanced, despite the fact that Pope Martin V asserted his and his successors' right to be in command of church possessions right at the beginning of his reign. In practice, however, the king's role was still more influential, as for vacant positions the pope usually appointed the person who was previously recommended and presented by the king. Sigismund's other crucial decision was that he restricted the clergy's opportunities to appeal to Rome. This was important for the Hungarian clergy because of the costs of lawsuits, and limited the power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction for the advantage of secular courts.

Prelates

The prelates, who were the heads of church society, delegated the actual governance of their dioceses to their vicars, while they were hugely involved in the matters of the country. Archbishops and bishops were official members of the Royal Council, chancellors – leading the written administration of the government – were appointed from among them, though there were some secular secret chancellors as well during King Sigismund's reign. As they could write and speak languages, the prelates were often in charge of diplomatic duties. In times of war they also led troops that they armed out of their income, under their own banner. At the time, prelates usually came from aristocratic families. The provost of Székesfehérvár and the prior of the Hospitallers at Vrána also belonged to the top layer of the clergy.

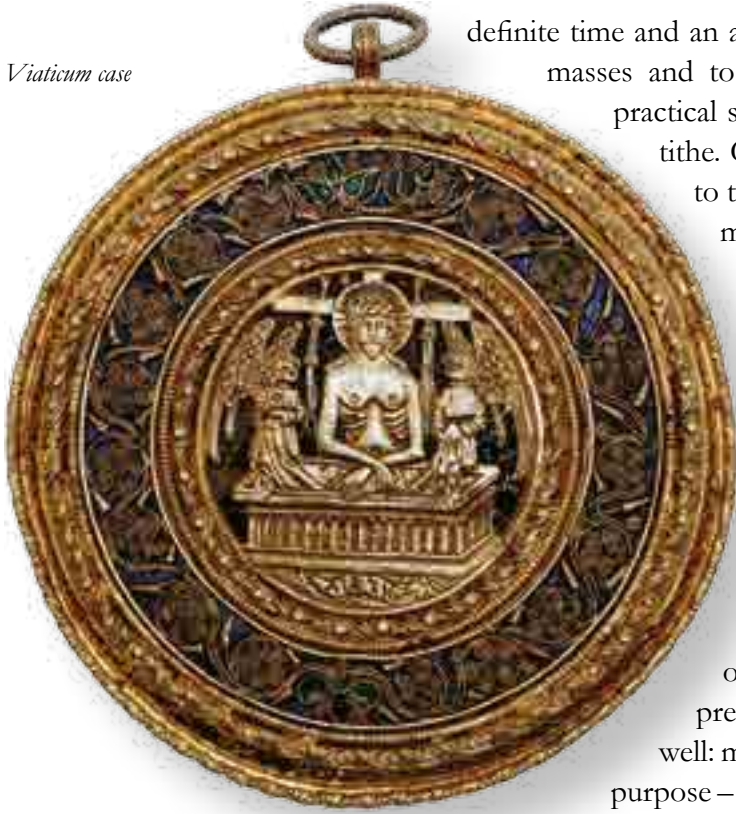
The Middle Layer

If a prelate died or was removed from his office, the appointment of a new bishop was a lengthy procedure, and three major factors played a key role in it. The right of the cathedral chapters to elect bishops – which was widely practised in the 13th century – was ignored now for the advantage of the two other factors. The pope usually appointed the bishop after the king had presented his favoured candidate to him (*praesentatio*). From the 14th century, the middle layer of the Church, the canons, did not perform their liturgical duties themselves, but they delegated them to substitutes called prebendaries – they were named after their regular income, the prebend. Concerning the financial situation of these prebendaries, they belonged to the lower layer of church people. The regular income of canons – there were 600 positions for canons in 50 cathedral and communal chapters – enabled them to constitute a significant part of medieval Hungarian intellectuals.

In church hierarchy, the diocese of bishops was divided into archdeaconries, which usually covered the areas of counties. They were directed by the archdeacons, who moved into the cathedral chapters and were members of the board of canons. These archdeacons practised the bishop's rights to control parish priests, who belonged under their juristic authority, in the form of church visits (*visitatio*). Their annual visits put a huge material burden on the village priests, so the size of the archdeacons' retinue was strictly regulated by law. At the beginning of the 14th century, parish priests were sometimes the priest of royal towns or market towns, which were removed from the juristic authority of the archdeacons or sometimes even the bishop. These priests could keep the whole of the tithe they collected. These distinguished church positions and the due income were sometimes received by persons who had nothing to do with the Church. That is how Charles I's court physician received the parish of Patak. In most cases, however, parish priests were elected by the people of cities and market towns. Royal appointments were exceptional.

The Lower Layer of Priests

By the end of the 14th century, priests of smaller religious communities, who did not have the above-mentioned privileges, were also called parish priests, while earlier they were called by other titles, such as *rector ecclesiae* (leader of the church), *sacerdos/presbiter parochialis*, chaplains. In accordance with the practice of the right of patronage, inherited from a previous period, they were employed by landlords for a



definite time and an agreed salary. Their task was to deliver sacraments, to celebrate masses and to preach. Most of them received their basic theological and practical skills at the chapter school. They received one sixteenth of the tithes. Chaplains, appointed and supported by parish priests, belonged to the lower layer of church society. Besides them, altar- and chapel masters – who were paid from the mass foundations – prayed for the salvation of the founders. There were poor altar masters in bishopric cathedrals as well: they belonged to the choir.

The Transformation of Monastic Orders

By the 14th century, monastic orders were past their golden age. The number of their monasteries decreased, there were fewer monks in the remaining communities, and the discipline became lax. The reason for the slow but continuous decline was that they could not keep up with the new spiritual demands of society. The believers expected a more active spiritual care, preaching, and looking after the poor. There was another reason as well: medieval popes and kings – due to lack of financial means for this purpose – paid their subjects who performed duties of church government and diplomacy by donating richer abbeys. Such abbots were usually secular persons, called commendators or gubernators, or were members of a different order. They did not live in the monastery of their abbacy, and they did not deal with the interests and discipline of the monks either. Wladyslaw of Piast, a Polish prince, was such a commendator in Pannonhalma in 1376.

Canons Regular, Monastic and Chivalric Orders

The number of abbeys of the Benedictine Order, which owned eighty-one monasteries originally, was only sixty-four by 1400. During the 15th century, twenty-seven of them were given to commendators. In the interest of an inner renewal, there were reform movements that ordered the convening of the annual country-wide monastic meetings, the so-called chapters. The Cistercians had less than twenty monasteries, and the grand-chapter was warned by King Louis the Great himself to stop the misuse of authority. The Premonstratensians, who had thirty-three monasteries, had managed to keep their importance and popularity, partly because they also functioned as credible places. The community of monks of a certain monastic order was called the convent. Orders of knighthood had only a few monasteries. After the dissolution of the Order of the Knights Templar in 1312, their possessions were given to the Johannites (Hospitallers), like the priory of Vrána. King Sigismund also tried to settle the Teutonic Order in Transylvania, but he was unsuccessful. The decline of the Order of the Hospitaller Canons Regular of St. Stephen – which was founded in Hungary – started in the 14th century, and they stopped functioning by the middle of the 15th century.

Hermit Orders

Hermit orders, that demanded more discipline, were more appreciated by society at that time. The “silent monks”, the Carthusians, who were famed for their strictness, had four monasteries. The other monastic order which was founded in Hungary, the Pauline Order, was prospering in the 14th–15th

*The church of the
Cistercian abbey of
Bélapátfalva*



centuries. It received St. Augustine's regulations from legate Gentilis in 1308. In 1327, they had 30 monasteries and by the age of Sigismund this number had doubled. In 1367, at Louis the Great's request, the order was approved by the pope, which enabled them to be independent from bishops. Louis the Great obtained St. Paul the Hermit's earthly remains from Venice in 1381, and the relics were placed into the centre of the Pauline Order at Budaszentlőrinc. In 1418, they received permission from the pope to preach. At the head of the monasteries were the priors, who were appointed by the minister general of the order in Hungary at the annual chapter meeting at Budaszentlőrinc.

Mendicant Orders

In contrast to the Paulines, who withdrew from the noisy world, the begging orders lived in densely populated areas. At the beginning of the 14th century, the members of the Augustine Order, that had about twenty-five monasteries, were called hermits, but in fact it was a begging order. The Carmelites managed to settle at Buda in 1372, but they were not very popular; they had four monasteries altogether. Not so the Dominicans, who had at least 40 communities, mainly in towns. Besides preaching, they were engaged in culture and sciences. The Franciscans were even more dynamic. In 1316, the Hungarian Franciscan province was divided into eight custodies with forty-three cloisters, and this number grew to 50 by 1379. Charles I appointed Franciscan friars to be head of bishoprics, and his envoys were often chosen from among the Franciscans. Begging orders played a vital role in missions on the Balkans.

György Rácz

The Everyday Life of Christians

The everyday life of people was restricted by the Church. The rhythm of the change of time was defined by the proportional division of weekdays spent working, and the Sundays and holidays of the church year. Church holidays were often the days when the villeins of the villages had to deliver their taxes in kind to the landlords. Holidays in the calendar were connected to the cult of saints. The day of the patron saint of a church community was also celebrated. The popularity of the saints of the Árpád dynasty (“holy kings”), especially of King St. Ladislaus, was encouraged by the Angevin kings and Sigismund, who was buried at Várad, at St. Ladislaus’s tomb.

Pagans, Heretics

The liturgical ceremonies performed by priests were in Latin, but the vernacular linguistic vocabulary of the Church must have evolved very early, which was connected to the preaching of the mass and the confession of sins. There were non-Christian, or non-Catholic ethnic groups in the territory of Hungary. Tendencies to convert these pagan and heretic people increased in the second half of the 14th century, since King Louis considered this his first and most important duty. He also tried to convert the Jews, but after his failure he expelled them from the country around 1360. Although he withdrew his order in 1364, the majority of those who left never returned. The closed communities of

*The church of Karaszó
village built at the turn
of the 13th and 14th
centuries*



Jewish settlers coming from the west – and settled in bigger cities – could keep their religious independence, though at the beginning of the 15th century there were some anti-Jewish riots.

The converting and assimilation of the Cumans was not a straightforward process, even after the 1279 Cuman Laws. They insisted on their pagan lifestyle and ancient traditions. The Jász people, who originally followed the Byzantine Rite, received their privileges in return for their military services, but converting them to the Catholic religion – with the participation of begging orders – was a very long process, ending in the second half of the 15th century. Their reluctance to pay the tithe played a major part in their delayed conversion. In the 14th century, the settlement of the frontier area with Eastern Orthodox ethnic groups continued. The Ruthenians, who settled in the northeast, and the Romanians, who settled in Transylvania (they were around 150,000), were converted with the help of the Franciscans.

After uniting the Orthodox people with the Catholic Church in 1366, only those who adopted Catholicism could become noble. When the union came to an end in 1386, Sigismund tried to revive Louis's policy in 1428. In contrast to this, the number of Orthodox churches and monasteries gradually increased. Some of the ennobled Romanian *kenézes* became Catholic, not under pressure but rather for reasons of prestige, as the difference of religion was an obstacle in marriages to Hungarian noble families. The Eastern Orthodox Serbs – who fled from the Ottomans from the end of the 14th century and settled in Syrmia and Keve County – were also considered heretics by the Catholic Church. However, royal power and the landlords provided the freedom of religion to them too, mainly out of economic interests.



*14th-century chalice from
Vizakna, Transylvania*

The Growth of the Church

The Hungarian church organisation was at its largest in area during the reign of the Angevin kings. Royal policy, which wanted to establish its vassal states along the eastern and southern borders, agreed with the converting activities of the Catholic Church, performed by mainly Franciscan friars. The leaders of missionary bishoprics were often recruited from among the members of begging orders. Charles I reinstated the missionary bishopric of Nándorfehérvár in 1322, which was founded at the end of the 13th century but only functioned for a brief period of time then. Louis I's attempt to reorganise the Milkó bishopric failed in 1354. The southernmost Hungarian missionary bishopric was founded by Louis I in 1365 in Vidin, which was rather short-lived, similarly to the bishopric of Argyas, founded in 1382 (they were both closed in 1386). The bishopric of Szeret, which was founded in 1371 (it functioned until the end of the 15th century) to convert the Romanians beyond the Carpathians, belonged directly under the authority of the Holy See, so it was not part of the Hungarian church organisation. The Dalmatian and Croatian prelates were mentioned among the Hungarian dignitaries in royal charters, though they did not belong to the Hungarian Church either.

Heretics

The fight against heretics in the 14th century was directed against the Flagellants and Waldenses, and the Patarenes (also known as Cathars and Bogomils) in Bosnia. The latter were most often the target

of King Louis's southern campaigns. From the 15th century, the southern heretics got into contact with Hussitism, which spread from Upper Hungary. Sigismund started a crusade against the Czech Hussites from 1420, who in retaliation, regularly launched destructive campaigns against Hungary after 1428. Eventually, at the reform Council of Basel, the king managed to make an agreement with the Utraquist side, and together they defeated the Taborites in 1434. The spread of Hussite teachings played a key role in the preparations of the 1437 peasants' revolt in Transylvania. Priests Bálint and Tamás from Kamanc, the Hungarian translators of the Hussite Bible (fragment), fled from the activity of the Franciscan Jacob of Marchia, whose authority extended over some southern and eastern church dioceses. Eventually, they found shelter in Moldavia.

Education, Schools, Universities

Devotional image in the Hungarian Chapel at the Aachen Cathedral, 1367

The Church played a primary role in spreading culture. Monastic and chapter schools were primarily the institutions for training priests, but besides the seven liberal arts, some of them taught law as well, in the interest of preserving the laws of the country, and prepared students for secular careers (chancelleries, credible places). The Buda College of the Dominicans (*studium generale*) functioned continuously from the beginning of the 14th century in the Middle Ages, though it never became a real university.

The first Hungarian university was founded by Louis the Great at Pécs in 1367. Pope Urban V licensed the institution, except for the faculty of theology. Unfortunately, the university was terminated at the end of the 14th century. The Óbuda University, founded by Sigismund in 1395, had an even shorter life, but it was reorganised by the king with the help of the papal legate, Branda Castiglione, in 1410 in the wake of the Hussite danger. The representatives of the school took part in the Council of Constance, but the institution was no longer mentioned by sources in the 1420s. Thus Hungarian students had to go to foreign universities, such as the universities of Vienna or Krakow.

Going to universities abroad was a privilege of the few, but foreign and domestic pilgrimages provided an occasion to travel for wider layers of society from the 14th century. The most popular place of pilgrimage for the Hungarians was Aachen in Germany, since Louis the Great founded a chapel there in 1367 with the relics of the saint kings (Stephen, Emeric and Ladislaus). Besides Aachen, Hungarian pilgrims also travelled to Jerusalem, Rome and Compostella.



NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND PROVINCES

István Tringli

Compared to the age of the Árpád dynasty, the borders of Hungary did not change, unlike those of the neighbouring countries. To the north, the Kingdom of Poland was ruled by the Piasts until 1370, then it was ruled by the House of Anjou between 1370 and 1386, followed by the Jagiellonian dynasty from 1386. The ruling family of Halych–Volhynia died out in 1340, and a few decades later, the western part of Halych and Volhynia fell under Polish influence. During the reign of Louis the Great, as the King of Poland, this region was governed by the Hungarians for a decade under the title of the Voivode of Russia. From 1387, it became part of Poland for good under the name of Little Russia. This territory lost its significance for Hungarian politics. With Charles I's first marriage to Maria of Halych, the century-old Russian–Hungarian dynastic relations came to an end.

In the southeast, Hungary was bordered by the territory of the Golden Horde. During the reign of Charles I, there were several Mongol attacks against the country. By the middle of the century, the Golden Horde retreated to the region behind the Dniester, and the territory without a lord – called the “Moldavian land” – fell under Hungarian supremacy, and it was governed by the Romanian voivodes of Máramaros: Dragoș, then his son, Sas. Another voivode of Máramaros, Bogdan, expelled Sas and took over the region around 1359, and established the Principality of Moldavia. This country, which later became the vassal of Hungary, surrendered to Poland at the same time as Halych, though they occasionally acknowledged Hungarian supremacy as well.

The other Romanian state Wallachia [Havasalföld] became an independent principality around 1330, after Charles's unsuccessful campaign. Its territory consisted of Oltenia (a district of the Banate of Severin) and Muntenia, beyond the Olt River. Their voivodes, when they surrendered to the Hungarian king, bore the title of the Ban of Severin, and they had power over Fogarasföld too. From 1394, they hesitated between Ottoman or Hungarian suzerainty. Voivode Mircea the Elder (1386–1428) pursued a policy in favour of the Hungarians, and after his death, King Sigismund put the fortress of Severin under Hungarian supremacy. The defence of the fortresses in the Banate of Severin was taken up by the Teutonic Order in 1429, but they were defeated by the Ottoman Turks, so in 1435 royal troops occupied the fortresses again.

At the lower reach of the Danube, Bulgaria was the neighbouring country on a short stretch. In the middle of the 14th century, Bulgaria was divided into two parts. The part which was closer to Hungary belonged to the Bulgarian Tsardom of Vidin. Louis the Great occupied this state in 1365, and until 1369 it was directed by a Hungarian governor, under the title of the Ban of Bulgaria. Similar to other bans, the Ban of Bulgaria also held authority over Hungarian territories. After the battle of Nicopolis (1396), Vidin was occupied by the Ottomans.

The Banate of Macsó lay outside the borders of Hungary, but Hungarian kings considered it part of the country. Serbia also laid

*King Louis the Great's
coin in Halych (serf)*



The fortress of Galambóc and the battle of Galambóc, detail of the map of Lazarus secretarius (Tabula Hungariae)



claims to this territory, and Charles I launched several campaigns to acquire it. The king organised this ban district in 1320, which survived till 1479. On occasions, several Hungarian counties belonged under its supremacy: Valkó, Bodrog, Szerém, Baranya, Bács, Tolna. With the exception of Nándorfehérvár, the areas beyond the Sava were taken over by Serbia after 1389.

After the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 – which was now the vassal state of the Ottomans – Stefan Lazarević, the despot of Serbia, entered into alliance with King Sigismund around 1403. The despot also became a member of the Order of the Dragon and received large possessions in Hungary. Before his death, he signed a contract in 1426 with Sigismund in Tata, according to which his heir in Serbia and to his estates in Hungary would be his nephew, Durad Branković, who promised to hand over Nándorfehérvár and Galambóc to the Hungarians. The captain of Galambóc gave the fortress to the Ottomans, and the attempt to take it back in 1428 was not successful. On the land stretch between Severin and Galambóc, Hungary became the direct neighbour of the Ottoman Empire.

Bosnia gained independence in the 14th century; its rulers acknowledged Hungarian vassalage with shorter breaks until the Ottoman occupation. In the 14th century the members of the Kotromanić dynasty ruled; first Louis the Great's father-in-law, Stephen II. This was the last dynastic relationship with the South Slav ruling family, and it came to an end when the Ottomans pressed forward. In 1377, Tvrtko was crowned king of Bosnia and Serbia with permission from the Hungarians. During the reign of Sigismund, Bosnia seemed to be an unreliable vassal, so Hungarian armies occupied part of the former Banate of Ozora together with Srebernik in 1404 and Jajca in 1434.

Dalmatia was not a unified country. It consisted of city states along the coast, which had their own local governments, and each led different policies. Charles I acknowledged that these cities surrendered to Venice. Hungarian rule lasted from 1358 to 1412 in Dalmatia. In 1420, Spalato and Trau also surrendered to Venice, and after this the right of Hungarian kings to rule over Dalmatia became nominal, and only Ragusa remained under Hungarian sovereignty. The Croatian port of Zengg was

not thought to belong to Dalmatia: this town remained under the suzerainty of the Hungarian kings during the whole era.

In contrast to the countries mentioned above, Croatia had close connections to Hungary. According to the principle of the dynastic power share, between 1353 and 1356, the country was governed with Slavonia by Prince Stephen, who was followed by his minor son. After this, Dalmatia and Croatia were governed separately from Slavonia till 1476 – by bans. The country was divided into several districts (*župa*), which were quite different from the Hungarian counties.

Croatia and Slavonia bordered Krajina; Slavonia and Hungary were neighbours of Styria; Hungary bordered upon Styria and Austria – the part called Lower Austria. The district under the authority of Count Cillei became independent for two decades at the end of Sigismund's reign, so it became the neighbouring country of Slavonia. Krajina, Styria and Austria were ruled by the Habsburg dynasty. To the north of the Morava River lay Moravia under the supremacy of the Bohemian kings. Silesia, which was bordered by a part of Trencsén County, also belonged under the authority of the Czech (Bohemian) crown.

István Tringli

The King

Between 1370 and 1382 Hungary was in a personal union with the Kingdom of Poland. The two countries were governed separately.

In the middle of the 14th century, the Angevin kings renewed the dynastic power share for a brief period. During the reign of Charles I, his sons received the title of duke; Louis became duke of Transylvania and Stephen became duke of Slavonia, but neither of them governed their countries by themselves. Stephen was given a court of his own in 1349, as he was the governor of Szepes and Sáros counties, and later duke of Transylvania. He was also made duke of Croatia and Dalmatia in 1351, and in 1353 duke of Slavonia as well. A year later, upon his death, his infant son John inherited this title. In 1356 the separate government was abolished, so the dynastic power share was terminated in Hungary once and for all.

Slavonia was considered a separate country, but as before, the title of king of Slavonia was not used by the rulers. Transylvania was not called a country: it was referred to as the “Transylvanian parts”. The acting voivodes of Transylvania also bore the title of the *ispán* (count or *comes*) [head of local government] of Szolnok, and in the 14th century, they were also the *ispán* of Arad County. The bans of Macsó had powers similar to that of a voivode and the bans of Slavonia. In their territories, the *ispáns* were appointed by the bans, and they had their own independent tribunals. During the 15th century, the office of the ban and voivode was fulfilled by several persons at the same time. The voivodes usually did not come from Transylvanian families.

Louis the Great, when he was away for longer periods of time, was substituted by his mother, who acted as regent; Sigismund was substituted by his so-called vicars. The most important decision-

making body besides the king was the Royal Council, which consisted of prelates, barons and some officers from the court. Members of the common nobility represented themselves at the Diet, which was convoked many times in the first part of Charles’s reign, and twice during the reign of Louis the Great. Nevertheless, the decisive power was in the hands of prelates and barons. At the Diet of 1385, when Little Charles was elected king, each county was represented by four representatives for the first time in Hungarian history. Later on as well, laws were occasionally enacted without the consent of the Diet, based on the opinion of the Royal Council.

The Virgin of Mercy in the parish church of Ptujška Gora. Sigismund and some other important figures of his court stand sheltered under the outspread cloak of the Virgin Mary





Counties and Law Courts

In the bigger part of the country, counties were responsible for the local government. Newly populated regions were organised into counties now, for example, Liptó, Turóc, Máramaros. At the head of the counties there were the *ispáns* (counts), who were usually in charge of several counties simultaneously. Their substitutes, the *vice-ispáns* (vice-count), were appointed by them from among their *familiars*. The only regular fora of the counties were the law courts, which gathered every two weeks at a definite time and place. This was called *sedria*, an abbreviation of the Latin expression *sedes iudiciaria*. Usually only the *vice-ispáns* took part in these meetings, and they were helped by servants' judges (*iudex nobilium* or noble judge) appointed by the nobility.

In the 14th century, town-clerks were employed in more and more counties. For smaller administrative divisions, the circuits were marked out at that time too. Their number was usually the same as the number of servants' judges. These circuits were the units of tax collection, and not units of local governments. Starting from the reign of Sigismund, the role of counties became more and more important in state administration, so we can speak about the local governments of counties from this time onwards. Slavonian counties functioned similarly to Hungarian counties, except for the so-called Lower Slavonian counties (Szana, Orbász and Dubica), as these were governed by a *župa*.

In certain parts of the country, not counties, but special administrative law courts called "seats" were organised. Cuman law seats were based on kindreds. Originally all six Cuman seats had their own clan-affiliations. The existence of the independent seat of the Jász people was uncertain in this period. Originally the Székelys had seven seats. After defeating the 1324 Saxon revolt, the government of the Saxon region was completely reorganised. The Saxon seats were established at that time, but these did not cover all the Transylvanian regions where Saxon people lived. The Székely Land did not belong directly under the authority of the Voivode of Transylvania; its government was headed by the Székely *ispán*. The Székely *ispáns* were not Székelys themselves, but they also run the so-called "two Saxon seats" till 1402.

Romanian districts remained within the boundaries of the county system; these were usually organised around a bigger fortress, gathering several units of *kenézes*. In the Szepes region, three forms of government existed simultaneously: the county, the community of the Saxons of Szepes and the seat of the ten lance-bearers. In 1412, Sigismund pawned the castle of Lubló, the market towns of Lubló



Sigismund-age knights hall in the Buda Castle

and Podolin and a further 14 “free villages” in Szepes to the Polish king, Wladyslaw II. This part of the Szepesség [Zips] was reannexed to Hungary only in 1772. The local governments of the region could survive without any change in their legal status: they were considered parts of the Kingdom of Hungary (Holy Crown).

Finance

The incomes of the country were the incomes of the king as well. The rulers considered the matters of the treasury or the chamber as matters of their

own private estates. Financial matters were controlled by local chambers, which depended first on the master of the treasury, then on the royal treasurer, with the chamber *ispáns* at their head. They rented these local chambers for a certain contracted amount. The chambers were engaged in special activities. The salt chambers, for example, had nothing to do with mine chambers, which dealt with the mining of non-ferrous metals.

Places of Authentication

Places of authentication or credible places (*loca credibilia*) were the local institutions of authenticated literacy. They issued reports on investigations conducted upon higher judicial command, or wrote up so-called confessions following the request of private persons. The 1351 laws stopped smaller convents from issuing certificates in which estates were alienated. Two years later, the signets of all places of authentication were investigated, and only those could continue their activities that got their signets back. After this, during the Middle Ages, the number of chapters and convents that dealt with issuing charters did not really change.

Royal Residence and Capital City

From the beginning of the 14th century, Buda was considered the capital city of the country. The residence of the royal court with the central law courts was Visegrád from 1323 to 1405–08; they moved to Buda only between 1346 and 1355. Visegrád, however, had never been the capital, only a royal seat. Royal residences were not identical to capital cities in other European countries either. The separation of the permanent residence and the capital city was the last transitional stage in the long course of development, during which the itinerant royal household settled at the residence-capital.

The royal castle and the new palace were built during Sigismund’s reign, in the place of today’s palace complex. During the later years of his reign, Sigismund wanted to move his residence to Pozsony, which lay on the border of the Holy Roman Empire, and he had the local castle rebuilt then.

SETTLEMENTS AND PLACES OF LIVING

Gyula Siklósi

In 1301, when the Árpád dynasty became extinct, most Hungarian cities were surrounded by walls as a consequence of the Mongol Invasion. In the western part of Europe, fortified towns appeared much earlier, at least a hundred years before their Hungarian counterparts.

The development of farming and the cultivation of new territories enabled villagers to produce extra food. This relative surplus of goods allowed for a growth in population, which resulted in masses of people migrating from villages to towns where they hoped to find work and a place to live. In these urban settlements handicraft industry also produced surplus goods.

Because of the increasing exchange of goods, contemporary church institutions seemed unsatisfactory, and the markets that formed near fortresses outgrew the local bounds. Long distance trade became very important.

Towns and Capitels

At the beginning of the 13th century, the Latin inhabitants of Fehérvár claimed that their letter of privilege – which defined their municipal rights – was granted by King St. Stephen. This is called the *Fehérvár rights*. On the basis of this, several other towns managed to gain similar charters, for example Nagyszombat in 1238, Nyitra in 1248, Győr and Szatmár in 1271, Sopron in 1277 and Vasvár in 1279. Many other towns were aspiring to achieve similar entitlements even in the 14th century. The most important element of these privileges was the exemption from paying customs duties. The right of holding trade fairs was also a significant privilege. Besides Fehérvár only few towns had this right: for example, Buda from 1287, Sopron and Pozsony from 1344, Kassa from 1347 and the Transylvanian Beszterce from 1353.

The significance of the new capital Buda gradually increased. While the most important trade routes were controlled by Fehérvár till the end of the 13th century, this role was taken over by Buda after the Mongol Invasion. From the end of the 13th century, the charter of Buda was frequently referred to as an example, but Korpona, or in the case of mining towns, Selmecebánya and Teschen were also set as examples. The legal unification of urban privileges started only in the middle of the 14th century.

The majority of towns that gained their walls following the Mongol Invasion in 1241–42, had been large towns earlier too. Fehérvár, for example, was a town of significant size at the end of the Árpád era, and by the end of the 15th century it had a territory of 1,780 hectares. It was impossible (and a futile attempt) to surround its entire territory with walls, so when the walls were eventually built around the inner city, suburbs and streets had to be disrupted.

The walled inner city was first mentioned between 1259 and 1270. Its territory was quite small compared to the whole city: it was only 20.8 hectares – one-ninth of the territory of Fehérvár at the end of the 15th century. The artificially formed suburbs were mentioned in charters from this time



The seal of the town of Óbuda, 1395

on: for example, the suburbs of Buda from 1331 as *suburbium*, in 1406 as *civitas exterior*, Újváros (New Town) was mentioned in 1327 as the Island, the Ingovány (the Swamp) in 1372 as Inguan, and Újfalu (New Village) in 1298 as Nova Villa.

The same thing can be observed in the case of Esztergom – Royal town, Győr, Körmöcbánya, Víziváros (Watertown) of Buda, Pécs and Pozsony. It was a typical urban problem that the dwellers did not have enough space within the city walls and moved out of the city. The solution was that the territory of the city was enlarged with a new section of the city wall, as was later the case of Ruszt, or large suburbs were established outside the town walls, like in Nándorfehérvár and Brassó.

These parts, which grew like cells, were later either incorporated into the inner city, or the suburbs received a similar fortification to the inner city wall (Győr, Nagyszeben, Pécs, Sopron). Pozsony received its city walls in 1311, Nagyszombat, Bártfa, Eperjes, Kőszeg, Trencsén, Kismarton and Szokolca were fortified in the 14th century. The majority of towns were built near a fortress, and their markets were also controlled by the owner of that fortress.

These fortresses belonged either to the king, the queen, an archbishop, a bishop or a count. They were not only built on top of hills (Brassó, Eger, Esztergom, Selmecbánya, Szalónak, Trencsén, Veszprém, Visegrád and Zólyom), but they could also be within the city walls – sometimes they were built first (Pécs – the bishop's castle), sometimes they were separated by a moat (Fehérvár – newer royal castle, Késmárk, Kolozsvár, Kismarton).

Until the middle of the 15th century, there were no major changes in the fortification of the cities which had been built earlier, at the end of the 13th or at the beginning of the 14th century. The relatively high city walls preserved their form, which were strengthened with towers of round, horse-shoe, semi-circle or square shaped ground-plans. Towns built in less protected areas were surrounded by wide moats, with drawbridges crossing over them, which could be pulled up, leading to two or three city gates. These gates were, of course, protected by separate gate towers.

The medieval town walls of Bártfa





*Medieval burgher houses
on the main square of
Szepesszombat*

Contemporary castles had similar defence systems. These castles were usually built on top of hills rather than on flat, open lands. The distribution and general use of canons in city sieges can be dated to the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century, thus they could not have influenced the architecture of this period.

Fortification walls were thin and very high, since they were built to protect against the enemy attempting to conquer the fortress on ladders, and not against canons. Archers shot at the attackers who wanted to occupy the fortress from the towers. Inside the cities usually a separate fence protected the parish church (Bártfa, Besztercebánya, Brassó, Eperjes, Földvár, Lőcse, Nagyszeben, Szepesszombat, Zólyom) or the royal basilica and the attached building complex (Székesfehérvár). In many cases the cathedral or church stood in the inner fortress (Óvár, Eger, Kolozsvár, Esztergom, Körmöcbánya, Pécs, Segesvár, Selmecebánya).

In planned cities, a regulated system of streets and a central square market place was typical. Beszterce, Korpona, Kolozsvár and Lőcse had such market places in the 13th century, but Pécs and Győr also followed their example.

The houses and city walls of Körmöcbánya, a town that was founded by thirty-six families, were built around a huge irregular square-shaped marketplace on more than 10,000 square metres. The city received some privileges in 1328, but the city walls were finished only in 1426. Cities that became rich from gold mining built blast furnaces. Wine-trading also made the citizens rich.

The location of the marketplace was at a funnel-shaped road, especially in towns which evolved spontaneously along busy trade routes (Gölnicbánya, Besztercebánya, Eperjes, Kassa, and the towns that received the title of *oppidum*: Pásztó, Szászsebes, Szepesszombat, Zólyom).

*Burgher house constructed
in the 14th and 15th
centuries, Székesfehérvár*



There was another boom in development in the second half of the 14th century: the trade connections of cities became well established. Their legal status was also stabilised. The cities' development depended on the extent to which they could take part in long distance trade. New mines were opened, which led to the formation of new mining towns (Aranyosbánya, Nagybánya, Felsőbánya, Körmöcbánya, Telkibánya, Zólyomlípce, Rózsahegy).

More than twenty settlements received the status of city by the middle of the 14th century. After the initial rivalry, there was cooperation in the Angevin age, primarily in legal proceedings (the Saxon right of Szepes, the court of appeal of seven Saxon law courts). From the second half of the 14th century, the Law of Buda became the model, but around 1370 several cities demanded the same legal status as Korpona. From 1383 the law court of the master of the treasury employed lay members as well.

City dwellers also pursued agricultural activity in this period. In the 15th century, however, more and more people turned to the handicraft industry. At the beginning of the 15th century, this meant about one-third of the population. In the agricultural production of towns, the cultivation of corn and vineyards played a very important role (Sopron, Pozsony, Fehérvár, Buda, Kassa).

Wine cellars, farm yards – i.e. village buildings – characterised the scenery of towns, which showed a tighter, more urban-looking form only from the 15th century. The privilege to hold markets or the right to deal with local or long distance trade continued to be the basic privileges. Foreign trade became very important, just as water or land routes, and the cities controlling the routes became influential.

At the turn of the 14th–15th centuries, then in the 15th century, new city-scapes emerged. Stone cuttings, statues, decorative windows, doors and balconies appeared on the façades of houses (Buda, Sopron, Fehérvár). Parish churches also became richly decorated, which was the symbolic proof of the wealth of the citizens.

By the 15th century, some of the Hungarian cities rose to Western European standards. The decree of 1405 meant a legal stabilisation for them. However, several towns showed decline by being pawned or being donated to landowners (Sárvár, Sárospatak, Sátoraljaújhely, Kőszeg). The 1405 decree also helped the development of market towns (oppidums) and it was an important result.

Fortresses

Fortresses were built separately, near towns or as an organic part of cities. At the beginning of the 14th century all the fortresses had high walls dotted with high towers. Fortresses that were built in towns, or to protect towns stood near important trade routes or near an intersection. The majority of fortresses were built as centres of estates, or part of the defence line of borders.

The gate tower survived from old castles till the 14th century, but could still be found even in the 15th century. Their basic area was 10–12 by 10–12 metres, and some of their rooms could be heated. The core of the Visegrád citadel consists of such a gate tower and palace wings attached to it. Along the fortified walls new buildings and, residences were built in the 14th century, enriching the old fortress with castles and yards (Trencsén). It is typical that the fortress walls were fortified with additional walls, creating wall passes in the process (Zwinger).

The building of the fortress and palace of Diósgyőr – which had a square ground-plan and four corner towers – is attributed to King Louis the Great. The construction works and enlargements of the royal fortress of Buda and Visegrád were also carried out at this time. They show a strong Italian influence. The fortress of Végles – without corner towers – was built in King Sigismund's time. It also had a square ground-plan. The fortress of Gesztes had a regular ground-plan, with a square central courtyard. Buildings around the central yard (palace wings) could also be found in the new royal fortress of Fehérvár, which had a square ground-plan too. King Béla IV had it built at the end of



the 13th century. The fortresses of Kismarton and Kőszeg also had similar palace wings around their central yards.

Monasteries

Monastic orders functioned and had been expanding their buildings since the founding of the Hungarian state. The Benedictine monks, who appeared first, then the Cistercians and Premonstratensians founded several monasteries. Their construction was of a high standard. They rebuilt or enlarged old churches and monasteries, so they played an important role in contemporary architecture. However, in the development of cities at the end of the 13th century, only the activity of mendicant orders was significant: primarily Franciscan and Dominican friaries appeared in the increasingly urban settlements. Besides them Augustine hermits, the Paulines, the Carmelites and even the Carthusians erected urban monasteries.

According to the 1303 inventory, the Dominican friars and nuns built their homes in prospering cities (Esztergom, Vasvár, Pécs, Csázma, Székesfehérvár), or in developing towns after the Mongol Invasion (Buda, Pest, Margaret Island, Sárospatak, Nagyolaszi, Nagyszombat, Kassa, Selmecbánya, Nagyszében, Segesvár).

Not long after the Dominicans' arrival, the Franciscans also became active in Hungary. In 1316 they had forty-three monasteries in Hungary and in Slavonia, while the Dominicans had thirty-five. The first Franciscan monasteries were built in Beszterce, Buda, Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, Szombathely, Győr, Nagyszében, Pest, Nagyszombat, Szeged and Sárospatak. Numerically, the Augustine hermits were less significant. They had only thirty-three monasteries at the end of the Middle Ages: the most important ones were in Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, Gyulafehérvár and Pécs.



Mural depicting St. Francis in the Franciscan church of Keszthely

Besides the mendicant orders, the number of hermits had significantly increased by the 14th century. There were a few Carthusians (in Szepes and in the Bakony mountains), but the only monastic order which was founded in Hungary, the Pauline Order, was much more popular. The hermits probably asked Pope Urban IV (1261–64) for permission, allegedly in the name of Eusebius and his associates, to let them use St. Augustine's rules as the basis of their life. The Pauline hermits, who were acknowledged as a religious order at the end of the 13th century, founded a monastery near Budaszentlőrinc in 1301, which became the centre of the order. In 1327, there were around 30 Pauline monasteries, and by the end of the Middle Ages, their number was about 70. The majority of Pauline monasteries were built near forts. They had no monasteries on the Great Plain.

Landlords played an important role in the lives of monastic orders. They gave donations to the Franciscans and Paulines as advowees, as they chose their burial places in their monasteries in the 14th–15th centuries. The Paulines built their monasteries far from settlements, in woody places in hill regions, but they also had some monasteries in bigger towns or near them (Szalónak, Huszt, Bereg). In contrast, the Franciscans are regarded as a typical urban religious order, but they had some friaries in villages as well. The number of their friaries was over 100 at the end of the Middle Ages.

The Franciscans had friaries in Bártfa, Buda, Pest, Debrecen, Eger, Esztergom – Royal town, Gyöngyös, Győr, Kassa, Eperjes, Kolozsvár, Nagyszeben, Nagyszombat, Nagyvárad, Pécs, Pozsony, Sopron and Székesfehérvár. Dominican friars and nuns had monasteries in Beszterce, Brassó, Buda, Pest, Debrecen, Győr, Gyulafehérvár, Kassa, Kolozsvár, Nagyszeben, Pécs, Segesvár and Székesfehérvár.

The Order of St. Clare, or the Poor Clares' monasteries were built in Nagyvárad, Nagyszeben, Nagyszombat, Pozsony, Segesvár and Óbuda. Carmelite monasteries could be found in the suburbs of Buda, in Eperjes, Pécs and Privigye. Mendicant orders often built their friaries on the edge of cities, in most cases near city walls. They rarely built monasteries along inner streets or near city gates. They found empty places only in the suburbs, as they usually needed a quarter of a hectare for their base. The most important building of a monastery was the church. Churches of begging orders had long, narrow naves, which were separated from the chancel by a triumphal arch and the rood screen in the east. Until the 13th century, the longish chancels had straight closings, but from the 14th century on, they had Gothic chancels with pillars and octagonal closing. Pillars were needed because the walls were not strong enough to hold the weight of the vault. The carved ribs of Gothic churches formed beautiful net vaults. The huge painted glass windows with stone bars (tracery) let the divine light through into the church.

The towers of the churches of mendicant orders were built on the northern side of the chancel, near the nave or in front of the chancel-closing. But in the case of a few 13th-century monasteries,

the tower was built in front of the western façade. In this period, people were buried in the nave or chancel of the church or in the courtyard or cloister of the monastery. The tombs were covered with carved stone sheets. Monasteries were usually built on the southern side of the church, but we know of instances where they were erected on the northern side (Zalaszentgrót, Óbuda, Szécsény, Szeged). In the centre of the monastery was the cloister, and an entrance to the nave of the church. This corridor surrounded a square yard. There was a well-house in the yard, which was the pride of the monastery in many cases. From the cloistered walkway one could go to the important rooms, such as the chancel, near the sacristy, which was next to the chapter hall. The kitchen, the heating room, the refectory (dining hall), and dormitories were also here. Many monasteries had hospitals, guest houses, or separate chapels. A farm yard and farm buildings also belonged to the monastery. Usually the whole building complex was built as a closed system; the external parts were surrounded by a fence.

Villages

In the 14th–15th centuries, the majority of Hungarian settlements were villages. In between cities and villages, there were the market towns (oppidum) both in the judicial and urban development sense. Many market towns were village-like settlements, but their basic area was much bigger. Village dwellers show a great diversity concerning their occupations and their origins. There were “noble villages” (for example Sarvaly) and “tenant villages” (such as Szentmihály and Csút). By the end of the 14th century, more than half of the settlements had churches. The village churches were usually built in the centre of the settlement or at an outside location. Within their circular or oval fence, there was the cemetery, where several generations were buried. In the 13th century these small villages consisted of eighteen to twenty houses. The church had one nave and the chancel had a semi-circular or horse-shoe shaped closing. Around the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, these were rebuilt into chancels with a square closing. Later, Gothic chancel closings, vaulted spaces, pillars and Gothic details were also added.

Villages can be divided into two categories regarding their arrangement: regular (with rows of streets) and irregular villages. Land plots belonged to the houses, where one-room pit houses were gradually replaced with two-, later three-room houses, which were sometimes built out of stone.

Handicraft industry was very important in villages besides farming: primarily smithery, tailoring, shoemaking and pottery. During the archaeological exploration of village houses, bones of wild animals were found among the kitchen waste, which suggests that the domestication of animals was not advanced yet.



Gothic church in the village of Nógrádsáp

István Tringli

The Inhabitants of the Country

In the 1330s, the pope's tithe-collectors visited Hungary. Their accounts of the collected sums survived, even if in fragments. Historians used this data to try to estimate the number of people living



*The Virgin of Mercy,
Ógács*

in Hungary at the time. The methods used to calculate the population are very problematic; in fact, it would be advisable to accept that these records are unsuitable to draw conclusions about the demographics of the era. However, we do not have any other sources for this purpose. Based on estimates, the population of Hungary, together with Slavonia, might have been around two million. The Great Plague swept through the Carpathian Basin in 1349, and at the end of 1359 another epidemic decimated the country. There is no data concerning the number of the victims of these plagues. Famines were far less devastating in Hungary, though they occurred regularly elsewhere in Europe. The general decline in population, which was noticeable in most European countries in this period, did not seem to happen in Hungary, as the population of the country seems to have increased to 3–3.5 million by the 1430s.

Unified Nobility and Serfdom

In the Middle Ages, the privileges of certain social groups were called “liberties”, and there were frequent mentions of the liberties of *hospes* and noblemen. The 14th century saw the legal unification of different social strata. In the first couple of decades, the nobility ensured that they enjoyed the same rights and privileges throughout the country, while the status of the serfs was consolidated by the middle of the century.

The nobility included royal servants and a layer of the castle warriors besides the group of people who had always been regarded as noblemen.

The “one and the same liberty” of the nobility declared by the 1351 laws did not mean that they had identical rights from that time on – this had already been established decades earlier –, but it referred to the situation of noblemen living beyond the Drava, in Transylvania, and Szepes, whose legal situation had been different from that of the noblemen of Hungary. Landowners were also called noblemen, irrespective of the size of their estates; a single piece of plot or several manorial estates could be considered a noble demesne.

A noble estate did not belong to a certain family but to the whole clan. The ancient estate was inherited within the clan. Aviticity was not invented by Louis the Great; he only codified the already existing legal theory in his laws of 1351 in a way that he invalidated a regulation of the Golden Bull from 1222, which was scarcely or never practiced. The 1351 ruling was made in the defence of royal rights, so the property of those who died without a male successor would revert to the king. At the beginning

of his reign, Louis the Great introduced the system of the new gift, which was quite disastrous for the land ownership of old extended family relations.

In the second half of the 14th century, the ancient noble clans loosened up, core families lived their lives as independent families, and only the ancient estate and the common coat-of-arms reminded them of their ancestral kinship. Members of noble families who received gifts for their services at the court did not share their newly acquired possessions with the rest of the clan. In the age of the Angevin rulers and at the beginning of the Sigismund's reign, the real dividing line within the nobility was between court and country nobility. Through court services one could join the ranks of barons as well.

In the Angevin period, barons were the main office-bearers of the country. Their number decreased first around 1350, and from then on, the county *ispáns* – with the exception of the *ispán* of Pozsony – did not belong to their group. Former office bearers were also barons, but their children could not use or inherit the title. The exclusive estate of the high nobility began to form after Sigismund's great land grants, and the basis of it was not solely the office but also the estates obtained through inheritance.

Noblemen living at the court who had not yet been given a baronial office were divided into three groups: court knights, court youths and court pages. The basis of this categorisation was not their age, but their descent and merits. Court noblemen took part in the everyday activities of governance. Court noblemen and barons received not only land grants but also an office fief called the “honour”, which could be repossessed by the ruler at any time, but the revenue of the office fief was their legal due.

Country noble landowners were called common noblemen or the lesser nobility. They could not get involved in high politics; they could only represent themselves in county administration. The lowest layer of nobility lived in the manner of peasants. From both groups of nobility, several people served a lord or joined his family, hence the term *familiars*. Although the circles of court nobility and *familiars* each formed actual social layers, they did not go on to become a separate Estate. Their members were considered noblemen just like the lords and barons. This was because according to contemporary Hungarian law, everyone was a nobleman who owned his own land.

There were noblemen living in various parts of the country who had different and more restricted rights than the noblemen of the homeland. They were called “particular” or local nobility. The exemption from taxes of noblemen living beyond the Drava was declared only in 1351, and the right of the Transylvanian noblemen to act as a judge over their peasants in minor matters was also acknowledged at that time. The differing conditions of the nobles of Liptó and Turóc, or the ten-lanced nobles of Szepes, was due to their ancient origin and closed geographical situation. Ecclesiastic nobles, the so-called predialists, were not considered real noblemen. They lived on church property and performed administrative duties in times of peace, and fought on the side of their lords in times of war.

In the chaotic political conditions at the turn of the 13th–14th centuries, the institution of the royal castle districts disappeared, and so did the social layers tied to it: servants and castle warriors. The organisation of the royal manorial courts and offices also disintegrated. Peasants living on other people's estates were uniformly called villeins or serfs from the middle of the 14th century, no matter whether they lived on royal, noble, or ecclesiastical fiefs. Villeins could be liberated servants, who received lands from their lords,



The statue of a high-ranking man and a herald holding an armour from Buda

people of royal castles, impoverished castle warriors, manorial tenants or settlers (*hospites*). Their rights and duties were defined after the pattern of the rights of earlier *hospites*.

Serfs or villeins could use their lands freely, and their offspring inherited the land. Once a serf settled his debts and paid his feudal tributes in cash (*census* or *terragium*), he was free to move to another landlord's estate. However, the serfs' free movement was often impeded by the landlords, so it had to be reinforced by law in 1391. To their landlords, serfs had to pay the *census* in cash, and also had to pay tribute in kind, for example, presents such as lambs or cakes, and they had to pay ninth after certain produce, for example, wine and land products. The term "ninth" is misleading, as in reality it meant

a tithe of the grain and wine. It was called the "ninth" because the term "tithe" had already been used for the church tax, so the ninth was in fact the ninth tithe. The labour service, or *corvée*, which had to be performed in the landlord's farmstead, was quite insignificant at the time. The census and presents had to be delivered at various times and occasions, depending on the traditions of the given region.

The services of serfs and villeins were regulated by customary law. Despite their legal uniformity, there were big differences in the services of serfs, depending on which earlier social layer their ancestors came from. The last time royal manorial tenants

had been differentiated from serfs was under King Sigismund. *Hospites* kept their more advantageous position throughout the Middle Ages in many places. Through inheritance, land plots became smaller and smaller. Serfs owned half, quarter, or even smaller fractions of these plots, and in the 15th century the average size of a plot was a quarter. Landless peasants who only possessed their own houses were called cottars: they worked for wages or rented their lands.

The landlords had to defend their serfs – if it was needed, even by force. They also had to provide administration of justice at their own manorial court.

Ethnic Minorities and Privileged Groups

Settling people on the frontiers of the country continued in the 14th century. On the one hand, there were not enough people in the country to move groups of people to the sparsely populated areas, and on the other, these wooded mountain regions required special farming methods, so the new settlers were invited from abroad. Owing to the movement of colonies, the population did not decrease in Hungary – which was quite general in Europe at the time –, and the border areas of the country became inhabited by Slovak, Ruthenian and Romanian people.

Besides the Slavs, who always lived in Upper Hungary, new colonists arrived from Moravia, Poland, and the Russian principalities, mainly with the lead of German entrepreneurs, who were called *soltés*. They created new villages by clearing forests. Orthodox Ruthenians came to the eastern Carpathians in large numbers in the 14th century. A part of them lived according to Vlach (Wallach) laws: this meant that they exclusively dealt with animal husbandry and they had to pay only the fiftieth tax.



Depiction of farm work on the mural of the church in Csetnek



The church of Szászfehéregyháza reconstructed and fortified in the 15th century

In the 14th century, there was a change in the settlement of Vlachs (future Romanians). Charles I legalised the practice which had been used during the internal conflicts, when he allowed the landowners to settle Vlachs on their estates, but the sheep fiftieth tax had to be paid to the king. Romanians living on royal estates were organised into Vlach districts, for example, the Lugos, the Sebes, the Hátszeg and the Hunyad districts. The various Vlach groups were under the leadership of *kenézes*. The second wave of Vlach settlers arrived then from the east, from Moldavia. The Vlachs were led by voivodes, and they showed greater social differences than their ancestors. They populated the Máramaros region on the left bank of the Tisza. The Vlach voivodes of Máramaros laid the foundations of the Principality of Moldavia.

The Székely (Szekler) and Saxon communities in Transylvania formed an independent, closed society. The Székelys were divided into three estates: the most privileged were the high-ranking leaders (*primores*), under them the mounted warriors (*lőfő, primipili*) and then the common Székelys. The early leaders of the Transylvanian Saxon society, the Grafs (*geréb* or in German: *Gräve*) did not exercise noble liberties over the inhabitants of Saxon villages. At the end of the 14th century, the *Grafs'* role was taken over by the leading burghers of towns. In the Saxon territories, there were no Saxon villeins: the peasants remained free. Because of Ottoman attacks in the south, many villages were destroyed in the age of Sigismund. This territory was later inhabited by Serbs who fled from the Balkans.

The assimilation of Cumans into Hungarian society meant that the Cumans gradually gave up their nomadic lifestyle, settled down and adopted a farming lifestyle. The residences of clans became the Cuman seats, and their leaders became their residence captains, and later on, noblemen.

The Jász people were first mentioned in the territory of the country in 1319. Besides today's Jászság (Jász land), they lived in Pilis County and in the region of the Lower Danube. They might have arrived in Hungary some decades earlier, but certainly after the Cumans. Their languages were not related to each other either: the Cumans spoke a Turkic language, while the Jász spoke an Indo-European one. By the 15th century, the *Magyarization* of both languages was very advanced.

*Angevin-age keystone
at the entrance portal
of the Old Town Hall
in Pozsony*



Cities – Burghers

The Angevin rulers continued their ancestors' policy of founding cities. However, not all the privileged cities fulfilled the expectations. Only those that could support themselves were given royal patronage that could support themselves. These cities lay along the main trade routes of the country. At the beginning of his reign, Sigismund gave away several cities. The free (privileged) royal (owned by the king) cities and villages were called together for a meeting by the king in 1405. There

had never been a similar meeting before in Hungarian history, and there would never be again.

As a result of this meeting, an urban decree was issued, which ordered that the royal privileged settlements be surrounded by walls, and introduced the usage of the Buda units of measurements as compulsory. The court of appeal of royal cities was the court of the royal treasurer. Cities were given the *ius gladii*, that is the power of life and death, and they were exempt from the staple right of Buda. Later, a small elite group emerged from among the royal towns, which had special rights based on the privileges of Buda, and they were under the jurisdiction of the treasurer's court: Buda, Pozsony, Sopron, Nagyszombat, Kassa, Bártfa and Eperjes became known as the towns of the treasurer, or tavernical towns (*civitates tavernicalis*). Another privileged group of cities was formed later: the towns of the chief justice, the Transylvanian Saxon towns, and royal mining towns.

Alongside walled cities – the so-called keyed cities – market towns (*oppidums*) were formed at the main market places of the country. These market towns were mostly owned by private landlords. From the beginning of the 15th century, castles were built in some of them, and they became aristocratic residences (Kismarton, Pápa, Gyula). People who lived in market towns were considered villeins, but in several towns the villeins obtained significant privileges. The dwellers of free royal cities and market towns earned their living from agriculture; only a minority dealt with industry or trade.

The majority of the population of privileged Hungarian settlements were Germans. Until the beginning of the 15th century, the leadership of more significant cities was in the hands of a certain social layer, which followed court life, owned big estates, and was engaged in trade as well. They often married daughters of aristocratic families, and many of them became noblemen. By the turn of the century, most of these families died out, and their place was taken over by local urban merchants. There was no such change in the mining towns: the descendants of the founding families – burghers, who had houses on the main square and big shares of the mines – kept their positions.

István Tringli

Agriculture

The proportion of farming and animal husbandry varied from region to region. In the economy of the Cumans and Romanians, animal husbandry was much more important than the cultivation of land. In the majority of the Carpathian Basin, a regulated soil shifting system was practised, while in the region of Transdanubia rotational farming was also used. The difference between these two kinds of farming was that the ploughed and unploughed turves were changed yearly, and not just every four or five years.

Where rotational farming was used, a three-field crop rotation system was applied. In the case of rotational farming, members of the village community had to work together as it was the only way to defend the land from grazing animals. In both farming systems, the plough lands belonging to each household were scattered around the village in several plots. The individual pieces were assigned to the members of the village by shooting an arrow, and the pieces of land were separated by strips of grass.

At the formation of the system of land plots, at each respective settlement, every villein's estate was assigned the same sized land plots. The size of the plots depended on the extent of the arable land and the quality of the soil. The size of the inner plot – which included the house in the village, farm buildings and the garden – was also regulated.

The vineyard was outside the system of land plots as it was considered a clearing. Usually one tenth of the wine was given to the landlord; this was the so-called mountain tax. As not every village possessed a mountain vineyard, it was not rare that people from different villages owned territories of vines on the same mountain. Usually white wine was produced – if they needed red wine they coloured white wine by adding blueberry, elder and sour cherry to it.

In Transdanubia, besides treading, grape presses were also used from the 13th century on. However, to the east of the Danube, winepresses were not in use. Here, pressed wine was considered of lower quality than trodden wine. The harvested grapes were trodden on, and pressed in the open air in the vineyard. Further processing and storage were done at home. There were no buildings at most vineyards at the time; they were just beginning to be built in the Balaton region and South Transdanubia.

Animal Husbandry, Fishing, Mills

Animal husbandry in Hungary not only satisfied the needs of local consumption but had also made cattle trade possible to the west and south since the age of the Angevins. Large cattle were bred on the Great Plain. These animals were kept in the open air; barns and stables were in use mainly outside the Great Plain. Swine were kept in the woods – if it was possible – half in the open air. In Transylvania, Romanian sheep-keeping was based on herding the animals from the mountain



*The golden forint
of King Charles I*

in the summer to the valley in the winter. Only the rich could afford to keep horses, but they were also used for cartage by villeins, and their value was relatively low compared to their worth in Western Europe.

In the Middle Ages, a lot of fish was consumed, partly because of fasting days, and partly because there was plenty of natural water suitable for fishing all over the country. Fish were caught at fishing points near natural waters; in other places fishing ponds were created by damming up streams. The latter ones were used jointly by the members of the village.

Water power was most commonly used for milling corn. For this purpose, mills were built on streams, or boat mills were used on rivers. Millers paid a rent to the landlord for using the mill. In the case of boat mills, they paid a fee for mooring on their land.

Mining and Minting Coins

The gold mines of Kőrmöc, Szomolnok, Nagybánya, Abrudbánya and Zalatna were opened between 1320 and 1350. These newly opened fields made the minting of the golden forint possible. At that time, Hungary produced approximately one-third of the known world's gold, and ninety per cent of Europe's gold. Silver mines were exploited as well, but the silver production of the country fell behind that of Bohemia, Saxony and Tyrol.

The reform of mining and coin minting was carried out in Hungary by adopting Czech methods. Kőrmöcbánya was founded by people who arrived from the Czech Kuttenberg, and the city received the Kuttenberg mining right. In 1327, Charles I issued a decree in which he assured landowners that he would not take their lands if someone found precious metals on their estate, and that the owner himself could open a mine and keep one-third of the *urbura* (the tax on minerals). Louis the Great's 1351 law repeated this, but in practice almost all the precious metal mines were in the hands of the king. In accordance with the system of free mining, the citizens of mining towns were free to search for metals on royal and private estates.

The smelted metals had to be sold to the royal chambers at a fixed price, and the trade of un-coined

metals was banned. There is no data about the quantity of metal products. The only piece of information we have is that in 1344 Queen Elizabeth – who went to Italy to act on Prince Andrew's behalf – took 6,628 kilograms of silver, 5,150 kilograms of gold and golden forint coins with her. By the 1370s, mines were flooded with water and were exhausted, so the royal chamber, which was used to plentiful revenues, had to resort to debasing the currency at the end of Louis the Great's reign.

Iron quarries from the age of the Árpáds, such as the one at Vasvár, lost their importance.

The Miners' Church of Nagybörzsöny constructed in the 14th century



The centre of iron mining and metallurgy shifted to the Szepes–Gömör ore mountain and, to the town of Dobsina. The special royal prerogative was not applied to iron mining. The mines were in the possession of private landlords, and Bavarian, Tyrolean and Austrian settlers were employed as workers there. The word *hámor* (small forging mills) was first mentioned in Hungary in 1344. Iron mining in Torockó, Transylvania probably also started in the 14th century.

The most important preservative of the Middle Ages was salt. The salt of the Carpathians was mined in cubes. Salt wells – which were popular abroad – were very rare here, so there was no need for boiling salt. Dry salt mining did not require any particular technical knowledge or capital, compared to salt boiling, so there were no entrepreneurs in Hungarian salt mining, in contrast to precious metal or iron mining. Besides the Transylvanian salt mines, the Máramaros salt mines became significant by the 14th century. By the end of the century, most of the salt that was distributed in the country was produced here. Salt was also mined in Sáros County.



*The denarius
of the town of Buda*

Salt trading was a royal privilege, supervised by salt chamber *ispáns* (counts). In the age of the Angevins, the major part of the treasury's revenue came from the exchange of precious metals. During Sigismund's reign, the most important source of income originated from the salt monopoly, the second one was from the royal chamber's profit, and the third was the exchange of precious metals. At the end of Sigismund's rule, the annual total income of the treasury was around half a million golden forints.

In the period between 1301 and 1437, the system of minting coins had completely changed. Until the middle of the 14th century, in the eastern part of the country, especially in Transylvania, people often paid and counted in un-coined silver bars, but by the age of Sigismund, monetary management became widespread. During the reign of Kings Otto, Wenceslas and Charles I, the minting traditions of the late Árpád Age were continued. Two kinds of silver coins were minted: the denarius and the half denarius (*obulus*). There were many foreign coins circulating in the country, especially the Czech groat, which spread in the 1320s.

Charles I started to have his golden forint minted probably in 1325, after Florentine patterns. This was the first golden coin minted in Hungary, and this forint was minted with the same weight and money rates in the following centuries. Golden coins were generally kept at home as treasure. In everyday circulation silver coins were used. Charles I was the first to issue silver groats, following the Czech model, but these coins did not become a durable currency. After 1369, only denarii and small denarii, which were worth fractions of a denarius and had different names in folk culture, were minted in Hungary for a century. Minting markers, which referred to the place of minting and the officer of the chamber, appeared from the age of Charles I.

In 1336, Charles I abolished the annual compulsory exchange of money in the countryside, and the revenue coming from this, i.e. the profit of the royal chamber, turned into a royal tax collected yearly. This was imposed on the plots of land of the villeins by gates, and its sum was independent from the size and income of the farm. Three groats (later one-fifth of a forint) was collected by this right. Noblemen, servants, ecclesiastical people, cities, and former stewards were exempt from paying this tax. In cities, the compulsory exchange of money was performed in the traditional way for a time. In 1338 this compulsory exchange was totally abolished. The minting of permanent denarii started, and the use of foreign coins was banned.

However, this regulation was not very long-lasting. Louis the Great restored the system of compulsory exchange, but denarii were only debased in the last years of his reign. In 1390, Sigismund introduced a major currency reform: he had new, valuable denarii minted, and 100 of these were worth a golden forint. After 1403 the currency was debased again, followed by another monetary reform in 1427. Besides the centralised royal minting, coin minting by the ban of Slavonia – which started in 1255 – also survived till 1384. Between 1311 and 1355, the city of Buda also had the right to mint. At both places denarii were minted, and both issued their money under royal authorisation. In Hungary, only the king had authority to issue money.

Taxes

With a later expression, the royal chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*) was a regular direct tax, while war tax (*subsidium*) was an extraordinary tax, and was only collected on special occasions. In Slavonia, in Pozsega and Valkó counties, the tax in marten pelts, called *marturina*, was by then paid in cash. Special taxes were imposed on cities, Jews, Transylvanian Saxons, Romanians, Cumans and Székelys. Though it was not a tax, it also increased the revenue of the chamber when the office of a bishop was kept vacant, since in these cases the part of the church revenue, which was legally the bishop's due, went into the royal treasury.

Craftsmanship, Trade

Most of the everyday objects were produced by the peasant households themselves, and the rest by the village craftsmen: smiths, coopers, furriers, shoemakers. In cities, specialised branches of industry also appeared and developed. In 1379, in Sopron eleven per cent of the population was engaged in handicraft industry, while in 1424–27 this percentage rose to 20.5. The first guilds also formed around this time in Hungary. In 1411, King Sigismund wanted to move all the fustian weavers of the country to Kassa, and gave them privileges. In Bártfa, canvas bleaching was protected by royal privileges.

A great proportion of inland trade was transacted at the markets. The right of holding markets could be received through a royal privilege. In the case of weekly markets, the settlement having the rights could organise a trade fair on a fixed day of the week. There could not be another market on the same day in the area within a day's journey. More significant cities had two market days. The right of holding annual trade fairs was rather rare, and these were usually held on the day of the celebration of the patron saint of the settlement.

Hungary needed to import industrial goods. From the West, textile and iron products were imported, while Hungarians exported precious metals and livestock – despite strict prohibition. Hungary's most significant trade partners were the southern German cities. Besides land transport, the Danube provided an important shipping route between the western frontier and Buda.

Enikő Csukovits

Men's and Women's Clothing

Chronicon Pictum: Eastern and Western-type Clothing

No item of clothing has survived intact from the 14th and 15th centuries in Hungary, so our knowledge is based on written sources (testaments, inventories, etc.) or contemporaneous pictures. Besides wall paintings, tabloids, sculptures, and the miniatures of codices, seals – that authorised charters –, and even tombstones also provide information about the history of clothing. However, medieval representations should only be used as documents of cultural history with reservations, as some of the attires presented are “ageless” clothing, regularly drawn in pictures ever since the ancient times. Others are imitations, copies of the original work of art, and the emblems and objects seen in representations often have a symbolic meaning.

King Louis the Great was portrayed on the cover of the 14th-century *Chronicon Pictum* (also known as *Illustrated Chronicle*). The monarch is sitting on his throne wearing striped clothes and a cloak with ermine lining. The members of his retinue can be divided into two groups based on their clothing: on the king's right side, there are armed knights in Western-type armour with swords and shields, while on his left we can see men wearing Eastern-type, caftan-like clothes holding bows, arrows, and sabres. In this period, this kind of duality was typical in the Hungarian manner of clothing: besides Western fashion, the spread of Cuman clothing could be noticed from the second half of the 13th century, while from the 15th century on, the influence of Balkan fashion became apparent, later increasingly inspired by Turkish motifs.

Western-type Clothing

The fashion of wearing loose clothes in several layers – each of them was made of the same material but differed in colour – gathered up by a belt was still popular in the first decades of the 14th century. We can see Charles I and his armour-bearer, Tamás Semsei, the castellan of the Szepes fortress, in the mural of the church of Szepeshely, made in 1317. The new trend in European fashion is noticeable from the 1340s, while in Hungary it appeared slightly later. The most typical feature of the new fashion trend was that the overgarments followed the outline of the body as they became tighter and shorter.

We can observe this new fashion – which was first introduced at the Hungarian king's court, copying the clothing habits

*Tombstone of Stibor
the Younger,
1434*





Man in shirt on the coat
of arms
of the Kistárkányi family

of Western aristocracy – in the miniatures of the *Chronicon Pictum*. Men's underwear was a pair of short trunks, like today's swimming trunks, called the *berbe*. We can see this piece in the picture of the self-scourging Flagellants. The *berbe* was fastened by a string around the waist, and the colourful tights that covered the legs (or in other words trousers, as at the time these two words designated the same item of clothing) were also fastened to that. People carrying the soil at the siege of Krakow were wearing the same kind of tights – in the picture of the *Chronicon Pictum*.

Shirts – worn as underwear on the upper body – became widespread only from the beginning of the 15th century. We can see such a shirt in the letter of grant of arms issued by King Sigismund to Kistárkány: a knee-length, loose, linen shirt with high neck and sleeves. In the 14th century, the colourful, tight-sleeved tunics were worn directly over the upper body. Tunics, which reached to the knee, were tight on the upper part but slightly looser under the hips. These tight clothes were fastened by buttons, strings or straps.

Armour was worn over the tunic, and chainmail was a bit shorter than tunics. The loose chainmail shirt, the hauberk, that was gathered up with a girdle at the waist and was worn over the armour in the 12th–13th centuries, went out of fashion by the beginning of the 14th century. One of its last depictions was from 1317, on the St. Ladislaus mural of Kakaslomnic. Instead, a knee-length hooded cloak or a tight gambeson was worn, or tight loin-cloths, which were made of leather and decorated at the bottom with slits. Belts and girdles lost their function: they

were moved to the hips and were assigned a decorative role only.

Smart attire involved wearing a tight-fitting coat over the tunic, like the one Louis the Great wears on the cover of the *Chronicon Pictum*. These coats were often decorated with embroidery, lace and silver clasps. Multicoloured upper clothing, or clothes sewn from stripes of varying colours were quite popular. To protect the body from extreme weather conditions, or for the sake of appearance, a knight's cloak with precious fur lining was worn over the coat. The rich, and mainly the young were keen to follow the fashion. Older generations still insisted on the traditional, ankle-length upper clothing.

We can follow the changes in men's fashion at the end of the 14th, beginning of the 15th centuries on the figures of the Buda sculpture finds. The overgarment worn over the shirt at that time was called the *dolmány* (dolman/pelisse) from the end of the century. This was a kind of tunic, tight to the waist, with split sleeves, and loose and frilly under the belt. The wide sheepskin coat (*suba*) or gown worn over the dolman or shirt was very elegant. It was made of velvet or brocade, with a fur collar or trimming, and it was often split at the side. Hats or caps decorated with feathers or fur also belonged to everyday wear.

Leather soles were added to tights, which covered the feet as well, against wear and tear. These soles were often reinforced with another sheet of thick leather or wooden soles. In addition, high nobility often wore soft, short boots laced at the ankles, which were sometimes decorated with lace-like cuttings. These boots were not very durable, so people bought several pairs of them, just like gloves. Despite their flimsy nature, relatively intact, restorable boots were recovered at several archaeological sites. There was

a strange trend in shoe-fashion in the 14th century: the “crakow” shoes. These shoes had very long, pointed, spiked toes which made even walking more difficult. These “beaks” were stuffed, or they were tied up. It did not spread in Hungary, though.

Eastern Clothes

The typical Cuman attire consisted of a long gown or caftan, tall, pointed caps, and boots with soft soles. Caftans – which originated from Central Asia – were tied on the side, and just like gowns from the Far East (for example the ones we can see on the figures on the cover of the *Chronicon Pictum*) were made of fine silk. Weapon belts were important parts of the attire. Surprisingly, these belts were decorated with Western motifs – according to the surviving pieces. In contrast to Christian traditions, Cuman men cut off their beards and wore a thin moustache. They shaved their heads at the front, and the remaining hair on the back was worn in plaits.



Armoured soldier on the Easter catafalque from Garamszentbenedek

Armour

The body of a warrior was protected by chainmail or plate armour, but there were transitional armour-types between these two basic types. The chainmail was a long-sleeved shirt made of interlocking welded flat iron rings, which was also reinforced with iron plates in places to protect the most vulnerable body parts. The scale armour was made of tiny metal sheets attached together like scales. The popular brigandine was a leather coat lined with strips or plates of iron to reinforce it. Members of the light cavalry, primarily the Cuman warriors, wore hard armour made of several layers of leather.

The plated armour developed from the plates used to reinforce the chainmail in places. From the 14th century, the body surface covered with plates steadily increased, and by the middle of the 15th century, a warrior was dressed in iron plates from top to toe. The whole plate armour suit weighed 20–25 kilograms, and the separate chest-, back-, arm- and leg-plates were fixed to the body by straps. The hands were protected by chainmail gauntlets and the feet by sabatons (steel shoes). A full set of armour was worth several villages, so very few people (only a small group of the nobility) could afford it.

There were several types of helmet in use for the protection of the head. Cylinder-shaped cauldron or pot-helmets with flat tops became obsolete by the 14th century. Instead, cone-top helmets came into usage, which allowed little surface for hostile attacks. The basic type of these helmets was cone- or bell-shaped light helms. The neck and shoulders were protected by the chainmail that was attached to the helmet. The face, however, remained uncovered. The fully closed bucket helmets and beaked helmets used from the second half of the 14th century were much safer. In the case of beaked helmets, the face was protected by a holed helmet visor, which could slide up. It was riveted to the helmet.

King Ladislaus I and his army pursuing the Cumans. Depiction of the legend in the church of Túrje



Knights fighting in full armour could be recognised by the coat-of-arms painted on their shields, or by another heraldic display, the crest on the helmet. The earliest Hungarian grants of arms were in fact grants of crests. Next to them, the occurrences of shields were often insignificant. We can see the crest quite clearly on the seal of Tamás Szécsényi, the judge royal – it is a crowned lion growing out of the helmet –, but the shield is missing. The crest of Angevin kings was a crowned ostrich biting into a horseshoe with its beak. Its representation survived on several relics. The Council of Constance was a turning point in the use of coats-of-arms in Hungary: during their foreign travels, Hungarian noblemen saw Western coats-of-arms, and asked Sigismund for grants of arms in vast numbers.

Weapons

The most important weapon was the sword; both of its basic types were used in Hungary. The Western-type double-edged, straight sword was the weapon of heavy cavalry, the curved sabre, which widened near the point, was the weapon of light cavalry. It was represented in contemporary pictures as the distinctive feature of Eastern attire. War knives and daggers were used in close combats as accessories of swords. The best-known bludgeoning weapon of the age was the mace. The heads were usually cast from bronze. They appeared in various forms, the most popular ones were the spiked versions called the “morning star”.

Crushing weapons were hatchets and battle-axes, which came in various forms and sizes. In Hungarian art, we can see battle-axes most often on representations of St. Ladislaus: it was considered to be the attribute of the knightly king, an emblem that helps the audience to quickly recognise the king. In the murals of the St. Ladislaus legend, the whole contemporary weaponry can be identified: the king and his retinue went into battle with lancets, while the enemy, the Cumans held drawn bows and arrows riding into battle. The size and form of lancets and pikes depended on their use (for example, different lances were made for mounted soldiers and infantry).

The most important long-distance weapon was the bow and arrow, and its advanced version, the crossbow. Bows were used most of all by the Cumans in the light cavalry. In contemporaneous imagery, it was an accessory of Eastern wear, just like the sabre, but its usage was not limited to this ethnic group. In wall paintings and miniatures we can see bows in flexed positions, and these were reflex bows of the

same type. In some cases, the representation of arrow quivers (arrows were stored in these) and bow quivers was so clear and detailed that experts could fully reconstruct them.

Female Attire

The change in fashion in the 14th century also influenced women's clothing. The typical feature of the new fashion was emphasizing the contour of the body. Instead of the closed super-tunics and sur-coats of earlier centuries, which concealed the shape of the body, the fashionable lady of the age wore dresses and cotehardies that followed the shape of the upper body down to the waist or hips, then flared out, with tight sleeves and a plunging neckline. This type of clothing had to be adjusted to the body of their wearer, so the 14th century was a turning point in tailoring. The dress or skirt (at that time they meant the same thing) was made out of one piece, the waist started high up, under the bust, and the bottom of the dress was richly pleated.

At the beginning of the 15th century, tight sleeves were replaced with loose ones: sleeves were often cut in or split, allowing the shirt to be seen through the cuts. This richly embroidered underwear was also visible at the low neckline of the dress. Over the dress a cloak was worn against the cold, which was held together with a buckle or clasp at the neck. The bottom of the cloak, or sometimes even the bottom of the dress, was decorated with fur. The head – except for that of unmarried girls – was covered with veils or caul. The material of these showed diversity, but the extreme trends of Western fashion did not appear in Hungary.

The most fashionable clothes were worn by the female members of the aristocracy. The must-have pieces of the day appeared much later in the wardrobes of the bourgeoisie or the lesser nobility, in a lower quality version and with a less sophisticated cut. The material of these clothes – in both men's and women's garments – showed the social status of the owner. Golden brocade textiles, silks and velvets were worn by the members of the richest, most distinguished families, as they were very expensive. The textiles themselves were imported too, but the price depended on the place of origin and quality. Everybody could find the textile suitable for their status and financial position.

Jewellery

Jewellery had a two-fold role in the Middle Ages: on the one hand, they were the most important displays of grandeur and appearances besides clothing, on the other hand, (besides decorative dishes) they were the straightforward way of accumulating and mobilising

Coat of arms of the Herenchéni family with a female figure, 1432



valuables and assets. Some items of jewellery were used for fastening clothes, or were decorative elements of the attire. Such items were buckles for gathering cloaks, decorative buttons of clothing, and the typical accessories of the age: metal buttons, rosettes, figures, and heraldic motifs. Besides the original items the casts were also found.

Belt buckle with a lady flying a falcon



The most important accessory was the belt. Fashionable belts of the age were girdles worn on the hips. The most ornate items were made out of metallic threads, and were decorated with gold or silver plates. We can see such belts in the images of the *Chronicon Pictum* and on the secular figures of the Buda sculpture findings. Belts were worn both by men and women, just as they were part of both Western and Eastern attires. Golden necklaces and rings were worn by both sexes. Sometimes there were valuable crosses, relic holders or rank insignia hanging from necklaces that may have been worth a small fortune.

The most valuable pieces of jewellery were worn at the royal court, but these did not survive. According to written sources, Charles I was buried with a golden crown on his head, boots with decorated golden spurs and precious stones on his feet, and the three knights representing the king in the funeral procession wore the war emblem of the king that was adorned with a golden crown. These knights and their horses were covered in pearls and precious stones and even the harnesses were made of gilded silver. The king's widower, Queen Elizabeth, bequeathed a golden head-dress to her granddaughters in her testament, but she also left crowns with precious stones and pearls to the Poor Clare nuns of Óbuda.

The lily crown found in Sigismund's tomb at Várad was originally made as a relic crown (not for personal use) in the 14th century. The gilded silver lilies are decorated with precious stones and pearls of assorted colours. The decorative mantle buckles that Louis the Great donated to the Hungarian Chapel of Aachen were made to the order of the court. The two bigger and four smaller gilded silver enamelled clasps of the liturgical vestment show Louis the Great's coat-of-arms. The peculiar shape of the bigger ones followed architectural models.

The treasures recovered from archaeological excavations nicely supplement the picture we get based on written sources and contemporaneous representations. The owner of the findings of Kelebia, which consists of ninety-seven pieces, was the wife of Pál, the Ban of Macsó. Among the treasures there were cloak clasps, earrings, bracelets, rings, buttons, decorative plates and discs as well. The treasure of Körmend, also from the 14th century, included buttons and seal-rings. The findings of Kiskunhalas also contained some clothes-mountings and rosettes. These pieces of jewellery were made by Hungarian goldsmiths in a considerable number, according to the casts and moulds that survived.

The belts and belt-mounts are especially valuable among these treasures. The belt of Kígyópuszta, decorated with a picture of fighting knights, was found in the former residence of the Cumans. When it was re-decorated at the beginning of the 14th century, buttons with Latin writings (prayers to saints) were added to it. The belt of Felsőszentkirály with a shield image, whose owner died around 1350, was also found in this region. Further decorative belts were found from the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century: the silver plate of the Nagytállya belt buckle was decorated with a hawking woman; and the belt of Kerepes was decorated with leaves.

The 14th and 15th centuries were the period of founding secular chivalric orders throughout Europe. These orders had their own symbols and insignia. There is no data about the activity of the first Hungarian order, the Order of Saint George, founded by Charles I. Only its letter of foundation survived. However, several relics of the Order of the Dragon – founded by King Sigismund in 1408 – were preserved. The symbol of the order, a dragon formed into a circle, was worn by the members as badges applied to their clothes, or as jewellery hanging around the neck or on a ribbon across the shoulders. Sigismund was buried with a gold dragon placed on his neck, but the emblem that was found at the opening of his tomb at Várad at the end of the 18th century was lost later on.

The Objects of Everyday Life

Furniture

During the 150 years between Charles I's accession to the throne and Sigismund's death, everyday life changed substantially. Demands and needs increased in every layer of society: at the beginning of the 14th century, most castles consisted of a keep and the surrounding wall, and the leaders of cities lived in similar towers too. By the end of the 14th century, castles and cities underwent significant changes: within the fortified walls palaces and chapels were built, while in cities two- or more-storey bourgeois houses appeared. In the villages, however, three-part houses became quite widespread.

According to modern standards, buildings at that time were quite plain in most of the rooms there were only one or two pieces of furniture. The most useful item of furniture was the multifunctional wooden chest. It was mainly used for storage, since people kept everything in chests or coffers, from flour to items of smithery. But it was also used for seating or lying down. Its earliest type was the wooden trough chest carved from one trunk, reinforced with iron straps. The chest of Szepesbéla – made in the 14th century – is a good example. A more developed technique was used later on with the advance of joinery in constructed chests (for example, the Rozsonda chest from Nagyszeben). They appeared and spread in Hungary only in the second half of the 15th century.

Tables were not very valuable in this period: they were just assembled quickly out of saw-horses and boards for the duration of mealtimes, then they were simply taken apart. People sat next to the table on benches; chairs were items of luxury even in the 15th century. In contemporary pictures, even the king's throne appeared as a rigid, square, uncomfortable structure. The bases of beds were similar, rectangular structures, and from the 14th century on, head- and footboards were attached to them. People slept naked in bed, and there were several people sleeping in one bed. In the 15th century, there were already beds in the houses of villeins, though men – according to a tradition which was preserved till the 20th century – slept near the animals, in farmhouses or stables.

Besides simple items of furniture, carpets and textiles, which provided comfort, played an important role. Bedding items like pillows and duvets were quite valuable: they were an indispensable part of dowries. Bed-clothes were important in villeins' houses as well – social and financial differences appeared in the quantity and quality of the textiles. Only wealthy noblemen or citizens could afford carpets, though. The use of carpets was manifold: they covered beds or chests, decorated walls, and sometimes they were also used to separate neighbouring rooms.

Stove tiles covering the floors of rooms, and glass windows appeared at wealthy families only in the 15th century, and they were considered luxury items for a long period of time. Windows were usually covered with *lantornas* (dried pellicle from cows), or they were boarded up in winter against the cold. The central room of village houses was the kitchen with an open fireplace. The stove of the rooms was heated from here. The heating of castles and town houses was a bigger problem. It was quite typical that most of the rooms were not heated at all. One of the richest aristocratic families of the country, the Garai

*Painted beinn chest,
Nagyszében*



family, had two valuable houses in Buda, and only a few of the fifty rooms had a fireplace or a stove.

Decorated stove tiles appeared in royal and aristocratic castles and in the houses of rich citizens in the middle of the 14th century. The basic type of stoves had a square fireplace on a stone base with a tower-shaped structure on top of it – which usually had a sill. They were covered with tiles or dish-shaped “stove-eyes”. The majority of the green, yellow, or brown tiles were covered with lead

glaze, and were decorated with scenes of chivalric life, or motives of flora and fauna or geometry. Most of the tiles were made after wooden or clay forms (negatives). The most beautiful ones – which were formed as a niche or were trough-shaped – were open tiles with tiny sculptures in the niches. They may have been handmade, independent works of art.

Dishes and Household Tools

The majority of dishes in the household were clay dishes used for cooking or storing. Clay cauldrons used in the Árpád Age disappeared by the 14th century, but most of the dishes were still made for open-fire cooking. Clay dishes were mainly products of the home industry, but according to archaeological findings, urban pottery was also gaining ground.. The findings show territorial differences: in the region of Buda, white ceramic dishes were popular, while in the eastern and southern territories of the country, darker ceramics were preferred. Near the western border, higher-quality grey (later yellow or red) ceramics were used.

Under the influence of Western import, Hungarian masters also adopted yellow or red clay from the 15th century. These ceramic bowls and dishes were often covered with lead glaze. Potters made pots in the greatest number, and pot-lids were also used from the 13th century. For storing liquids different jugs, jars, and bottles were used; bowls and mugs were also used during meals. The new table-dish, the clay cup and its bigger version, the chalice, appeared in the 14th century. From the 15th century, clay cups were made in diverse forms, almost every city had its own typical shape.

The representative demands of the royal court, aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie could not be satisfied by home industry alone for a long time to come. From among imported decorative dishes, the salt glazed cups of Moravia, Loštice became widespread, but Austrian and German clay dishes were also used. Glass products were brought into the country by Venetian tradesmen in the 14th century for

those who could afford these expensive glasses and bottles. From the beginning of the 15th century, glass products were made in Hungary too – first by Italian glass-blowers who settled down here – but luxurious dishes were still imported.

Table Decorations

Besides clothing and jewellery, the financial situation of a family was best reflected by its decorative dishes. Since glass products were relatively rare, and tin dishes became widespread only from the end of the 15th century, in this category mainly silver or gold-plated silver (and very rarely gold) dishes were put onto the festive table. The abundance of gold dishes – which was described in Palatine Vilmos Drugeth's testament – was not typical even in aristocratic circles, but everyone aspired to own as many, as they could afford. Among the treasures of Körmend gilded silver dishes were found, while the treasure of Kiskunhalas was hidden in a silver cup that was dropped into water.



*Gilded silver kitchenware
from the treasure finds of
Körmend*

THE HUNYADIS AND THE JAGIELLONIAN AGE (1437–1526)

Dunc detricū galeā quandā hūisse: et illas q̄nto magis deferebat
tanto maiori claritate refulsisse fabulant. In hoc quidez plio ex
hunis q̄draginta milia: necnō illoꝝ capitanei: bela:keme: et kady
cha cecidisse dicunt. quoz tandē capitaneoz cadauera ipsi hūni
ad statuā memoratā demiserūt: et ibidē adigne tradiderūt sepulture
Quāti aut̄ romano de exercitu corruerūt. p̄ compto valet dicere
nemo. sufficit tñ certamine in hoc tantā ipsos clades accepisse: q̄
p̄ amplius illos p̄tra hunos p̄gregari nullus oīno hoīm psuadere
potuit.



HISTORY

HISTORY OF LANGUAGE

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LAND AND PEOPLE

WAY OF LIFE

István Tringli

The First Habsburg on the Hungarian Throne

Sigismund, Holy Roman Emperor, as well as king of Hungary and king of Bohemia, died without a male heir to the throne at the end of 1437. He had already appointed Albert IV, duke of Austria, to the Hungarian throne in 1402, in the event of him dying without heirs. After Albert's death, Sigismund appointed the duke's son, Albert V, as his successor, so the only daughter of the king, Elizabeth, was married off to Albert. Sigismund exerted such great authority even after his death that his wish was fulfilled. About two weeks after the king's death, the Royal Council chose Albert to be king. Nobody had been king of Hungary under that name before. By the middle of the following year, Albert I had a large Central European empire: besides Hungary, he also controlled Bohemia and Austria. He was also elected Holy Roman Emperor.

In the spring of 1438, King Albert left the country for a year. In his absence, Hungarian matters were settled partly by the queen consort, who was her husband's co-ruler, and partly by the vicars, who were members of the Royal Council, who were specially appointed to this post. Public opinion – which really meant the opinion of the common nobility at that time – suddenly changed while the king was abroad. In the summer and autumn of 1438, Ottoman armies were able to attack Transylvania without difficulty, destroying first the Saxon Lands, then the Székely Land (also known as Szeklerland), taking thousands of prisoners of war. Common nobles blamed the foreign king and his advisers, who were negligent in matters of the country.

The king convoked the Diet in Buda in May 1439. While the envoys were having a meeting, there were uprisings in the city. German merchants, who had a substantial influence on the government of Buda and also rented certain incomes of the royal chamber, did not want to share their power with the rich Hungarian citizens. What is more, they also had the leader of the riot, a goldsmith, murdered in secret. After uncovering this plot, the Hungarian inhabitants ruined the Germans' houses and ransacked their shops. From this time on, the judge of Buda was appointed annually in turns between the two nations; he was Hungarian one year, and German the following year. Half of the members of the council were Hungarians, the other half were Germans. The city of Kolozsvár had a similar system.

The hatred of foreigners also had an influence on the laws enacted at the sessions of

*Depiction of Albert V,
Duke of Austria
in János Thuróczy's
Chronicle*



the Diet. Laws banned the employment of foreigners in offices, and they could not derive an income from the country, either. The defence of the country and its borders became the responsibility of the king, and Hungarian noblemen were not obliged to cover the costs of the defence. They reconfirmed the act of the Golden Bull, which stated that noblemen could not be forced to take part in wars outside the country.

After the parliamentary assembly, the king marched to the southern borders to fight against the Ottoman Turks. As troops were difficult to gather, the only thing they could do was to prevent further Turkish attacks. However, they watched helplessly the siege of Szendrő, the residence of the Serbian despot, and then they withdrew when an epidemic of dysentery had broken out. The king was also infected with dysentery, and he died in October 1439. At that time, the queen was already expecting a baby.

As he lay dying, Albert had his will noted down. If his child was to be a boy, his guardian would be Elizabeth and the eldest member of the Habsburg dynasty. He wished to entrust a joint council with the government of his countries, and the revenues would also be shared. His will was not fulfilled; joint government and the shared management of the revenues remained impossible to execute in the Habsburg countries even centuries later.

Troubled Times and Ladislaus V's Reign

The Hungarian estates chose the energetic 15-year-old Polish monarch, a member of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Wladyslaw III, to be Hungarian king. Queen Elizabeth had the Holy Crown stolen from the fortress of Visegrád, then she had her six-week-old new-born child, Ladislaus V, crowned, who was born after his father's death, so he is often referred to as Ladislaus the Posthumous. The coronation ceremony met all three requirements of Hungarian customary law: it was performed with the Holy Crown, it took place in Székesfehérvár, and with the participation of the archbishop of Esztergom. When Wladyslaw III arrived in Hungary, the queen and her entourage fled to western Hungary. The young king had himself crowned with a substitute crown that came from the reliquary of St. Stephen, and became Vladislav I of Hungary (Ulászló in Hungarian).

The country was divided into two parts: Elizabeth and the infant king ruling one part, and the partisans of Vladislav I controlling the other. The following fifteen years were a troublesome period. During this time, Hungary was embroiled in a civil war – except for the armistices for the winter months. The forceful occupations of lands were political actions, so whole estates changed hands for lengthy periods or sometimes even permanently. Laws declared that the occupied lands be returned, but they were not enforced.

The queen invited Czech mercenary troops to Upper Hungary under the command of Jan Jiškra. They served her for roughly two decades. The queen authorised Jiškra to use the revenues of the local mines, to impose taxes, and to take over the royal castles. He then occupied the fortresses of Vladislav's partisans. The other significant base of Ladislaus V's party was Slavonia, where Ulrich Cillei was in power. However, the count was wary of the Habsburgs, so he later formally surrendered to Vladislav. At the beginning of 1441, Vladislav also occupied Transdanubia. An influential political figure, János Hunyadi, emerged at that time, and drove out the supporters of Queen Elizabeth from this region, with the help of Miklós Újlaki.

Denarius minted during the Interregnum



In her hopeless situation, Elizabeth entrusted the crown and her child to Frederick, the duke of Styria, who in the meantime was elected Holy Roman Emperor. Újlaki and a former *familiaris* of his family, the ambitious János Hunyadi, became voivodes of Transylvania together in February 1441, so Vladislav I's power was consolidated there too. The king was engaged in fighting the Turks and dealing with domestic problems. He exercised his power together with the estates, and it was only in the last year of his reign, in 1444, that he tried to restore his lost royal authority. His plans were not fulfilled, as he died in battle at Várna.

In Hungary, even months after the Battle of Várna, people still expected King Vladislav to return. The Royal Council was responsible for governing the country in 1445, and domestic peace was maintained by the seven “captains in chief”, among whom there was also one follower of the Habsburgs. The Hungarian estates could only accept Ladislaus V as their king on the condition that Frederick III released the child and returned the Holy Crown to Hungary, but Frederick refused this request. The civil war continued. At Whitsun in 1446, Hungarian barons, the majority of whom were

Depiction of János Hunyadi in the Angsburg edition of Thuróczy's Chronicle



former supporters of Vladislav I, with the silent approval of the Habsburg party, elected János Hunyadi as regent, bestowing the title governor upon him, until Ladislaus V came of age.

Jiškra and Cillei did not turn up at the election of the governor. Military actions against them were not very successful, and the country was engaged in war with Frederick III too. Barons united in so-called leagues to protect their families and estates. Austria, Bohemia and Hungary were formally united in a personal union under the reign of Ladislaus V. As a result of the joint action of the estates of the three countries, Frederick III set the young king free in 1452, and handed him over to Ulrich Cillei, but he did not return the crown. In January 1453, János Hunyadi resigned from his regency, but he kept the royal castles he oversaw as captain general of the kingdom.

Domestic conflicts ended, but the barons wanted to keep their power and the estates they acquired during the chaotic period. The rivalry of Hunyadi and Cillei continued. When János Hunyadi died after the victory at Nándorfehérvár, Cillei became the captain general of the kingdom. Ladislaus V claimed his royal castles back, which were still in the possession of the Hunyadi family. However, the leader of the family, the elder son, László Hunyadi, refused. He had Cillei murdered by his *familiares* in the presence of the king when he came to Nándorfehérvár to negotiate. He appointed himself to the post of captain general of the country.

In the spring of 1457, the king had László Hunyadi, his younger brother, Matthias and several of their leading *familiares* captured. László was caught plotting against the king and was planning to have him murdered. László Hunyadi was beheaded for high treason. However, the power of the Hunyadis was not broken. The widow of the governor, Erzsébet Szilágyi and his brother-in-law, Mihály Szilágyi, counting on the support of their *familiares*, did not give up the castles, so the civil war started again. Ladislaus V took Matthias with him to Prague as a hostage. As the military campaign against the Hunyadis was unsuccessful, the barons proposed peace negotiations, and this process was accelerated by the death of Ladislaus V. The death of the king, who did not have a successor, put an end to the first reign of the Habsburg dynasty in Hungary.

Matthias Hunyadi

In 1458, Matthias Hunyadi (also known as Matthias Corvinus) was about fifteen years old. His supporters started to negotiate with the Czech governor and the Hungarian barons in order to make them accept Matthias as the Hungarian king. During these separate negotiations, they arranged not one but two marriages: according to one version Matthias would marry Anna, the daughter of the most powerful baron, Palatine László Garai, and according to another version, he would marry Catherine, daughter of George of Podiebrad. Under pressure from the Hunyadi party, which was led by Szilágyi, the Diet in Pest chose Matthias to be king, and assigned Mihály Szilágyi beside him as regent for five years.

The acts of the Diet which elected Matthias king reflected the will of the estates that had become very powerful during those turbulent times. On his way home, the elected king got engaged to Catherine of Podiebrad at the border. Then, in the first year of his reign, he appointed new people to important positions: László Garai was replaced by Mihály Ország de Gút in the position of the palatine, who remained in office until his death. Mihály Szilágyi resigned, and later on, when he entered into league with Garai and Újlaki against the king, he was sent to prison.

A total of 25 barons, deprived of their powers, elected Emperor Frederick III to be king of Hungary at Némethújvár on 17 February 1459. Matthias had already been privy to this plot, so he asked for a declaration of loyalty from many of the Hungarian barons and prelates a week before Frederick's election, and he defeated the plotters in a victorious military action. The emperor's election to be Hungarian king did not threaten Hunyadi's royal power, but it was an important act with consequences regarding future events. From this time on, Frederick carried the title of king of Hungary, and his election was the basis of claims by the Habsburg dynasty to the Hungarian throne in the future.

The first phase of Matthias's reign could be marked out until his coronation in 1464. His main goals at the time were to recover the prerequisite of his legitimacy, the Holy Crown, while forcing Frederick to give up his claim to the Hungarian throne, and to consolidate his power over the whole country. He initiated military campaigns against Frederick; and in the summer of 1461, Czech domination in Upper Hungary was broken first under the command of the king, and later under Imre Szapolyai. It was finalised with Jiškra's surrender in the spring of 1462. Frederick III and King Matthias made peace in 1463 at Bécsújhely.

Frederick returned the Holy Crown and the town of Sopron to Matthias for 80,000 forints, then adopted him as his son, promising to help in his crusades against the Ottomans. The emperor kept some fortresses along the border, and he was permitted to use his title as king of Hungary. It was also agreed that in the event of Matthias dying without a male successor, Frederick's descendants would inherit the Hungarian throne. The coronation ceremony was delayed until 1464 because of the Bosnian campaign. The universal reform of state administration started right after the coronation. There was a revolt against the crowned king in Transylvania in 1467 because of the new taxation system. Matthias put this revolt down, but he had mercy on the ringleaders. However, several participating common noblemen lost their heads and their estates after the event.



Matthias Hunyadi on the throne, a stove tile from the era



A copy of the statue of King Matthias in Bautzen located in the Buda Castle

Pope Paul II excommunicated the Hussite George of Podiebrad and pronounced his deposition as king of Bohemia in 1466. Matthias thought it was time to unite several countries under his crown, as seemed to be customary for Hungarian kings. In 1468, he declared war on Victor of Podiebrad, the son of the Bohemian king. Of the countries under Czech rule, Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia remained Catholic. The local estates and the Czech Catholic minority offered the Czech crown to Matthias. In 1469, he was elected Bohemian king in the Moravian town of Olmütz and wore the title until his death. Matthias reigned over two-thirds of the lands of the Czech crown, but he could never conquer the whole of Bohemia proper.

The relationship with the Poles became quite hostile owing to the Czech problem. When George of Podiebrad died in 1471, the Czech estates chose a new king in the person of Wladyslaw from the Jagiellonian dynasty, the eldest son of the Polish king, Casimir IV. The Jagiellos voiced their claim to the Hungarian throne in the very same year. In the absence of the king, several Hungarian noblemen participated in a plot against Matthias, under the leadership of János Vitéz, archbishop of Esztergom, who was a long-time loyal supporter of the Hunyadi family. According to contemporaries, there were a lot of reasons for the plot: the exclusion of the nobility from government, high taxes and restraints upon church revenues. The plotters offered the

Hungarian crown to Prince Casimir, the Polish king's second son.

Just as in 1459, Matthias first requested a declaration of loyalty from his supporters, and only then did he prepare for the defence of the country. Casimir's Polish troops suffered a shameful defeat in Hungary. János Vitéz died in captivity, and Janus Pannonius, the bishop of Pécs, died while fleeing. Most participants of the plot received a pardon, and Mihály Újlaki, who proved loyal this time, became king of Bosnia. Peace was made with the Poles only in 1474, but it did not last long: a war broke out for the possession of Silesia. There was another war with Frederick III for the Czech Kingdom, which was also the vassal of the Holy Roman Empire.

Emperor Frederick initiated Wladyslaw as king of Bohemia in 1477, but after the success of Hungarian military troops, he gave the Czech tenure to Matthias in the same year. However, this fact had no practical consequence, as although both were prince-electors, neither was invited to the Imperial Diets. Wladyslaw and Matthias made peace in Olmütz in 1479: both were allowed to bear the title king of Bohemia, but Moravia, Silesia and Lusatia belonged to Matthias until his death. After that, these regions came under the authority of Wladyslaw. Upon normalising his relations with the Jagiellos, Matthias turned against the Habsburgs. His aim was to conquer the prosperous Austria and Styria.

With the occupation of Vienna in 1485, Matthias possessed almost the whole of Lower Austria, and from 1487 he used the title duke of Austria. He gave small favours to the estates at the Diet of 1485 in Hungary, and introduced certain reforms in the judicial system. During Albert's reign, Vladislav I, Ladislaus V and Matthias, the king of Hungary, ruled over other countries too. However, they had no real empires in the modern sense of the word, with the individual countries being governed separately, which also served the interest of the local estates. Matthias, who had a strong centralising policy in

Hungary, adopted a very compliant attitude towards the estates in Austria and Moravia, while in Silesia he proved a very strict ruler.

The Hunyadi family could not establish a dynasty. In 1474, Matthias married Beatrice of Aragon, daughter of the king of Naples, through his representatives. They did not have any children, so the king spent his last years ensuring the succession of his illegitimate child, John Corvinus, who was brought up at the court. He received the huge Hunyadi estate, and inherited the revenues of the estates of the king. Matthias's supporters were in the leading positions, for example, in charge of the fortresses. John Corvinus received the newly created title of prince of Liptó, in addition to the countship of Hunyad.

The Jagiellonian Age

Matthias could not assert the prince's right to the throne through diplomacy, so on his death bed, he made the Hungarian barons swear that they would support John Corvinus in his succession. In May 1490, a group of 9,000–10,000 noblemen gathered in the Field of Rákos (Rákosmező) to elect a new king, and the representatives of towns also appeared, after fifteen years of passivity. There were four candidates to the legacy of Matthias: John Corvinus, Maximilian, king of the Romans, and two brothers from the Jagiellonian dynasty – Wladyslaw, the Czech king and his brother, Prince John Albert. They were expected to fulfil two requirements: first they had to break with Matthias's domestic policy, and second, they had to forge an alliance with another country to ensure Hungary's protection against the Ottomans.

Maximilian, who also became ruler of Tyrol in those months, referred to the 1463 contract of succession. However, he did not have many supporters. The Hungarian estates saw Maximilian as the representative of the defeated Austria, and they did not like the fact that he based his claims to the throne on the right of succession, in contrast with their own right to elect king. The estates were afraid that his western interests would distract him too much from the Hungarian matters. John Albert was popular with the common nobility because of his earlier military successes over the Mongolian Tartars. He was also supported by his father, Casimir IV, king of Poland. The lesser noblemen proclaimed John Albert king, but they did not wait until the end of the Diet; most of them returned home to tend to the harvest.

The Wladyslaw party suppressed John Corvinus with military action. The retinue of the prince, who was marching with the contents of the treasury southwards to his followers, was defeated by the troops of Wladyslaw. Wladyslaw accepted the conditions of being elected as king at Farkashida in Pozsony County, near the Moravian border. He promised he would put an end to Matthias's damaging reforms and the collection of the tax of one forint per villein's plot. These conditions were not much different from those accepted by Albert or Matthias when they ascended to the throne, and they met the general expectations of the European system of estates. Wladyslaw, however, kept most of his promises.

Wladyslaw, or Vladislav II [Ulászló II] as he was known in Hungary, came to an agreement with John Corvinus, but the other two pretenders caused a lot of trouble for him during the first two years of his reign. John Albert's Polish troops took over Eperjes and besieged Kassa. By the end of the autumn, Hungarian rule ended in Austria, Styria and Carinthia. Maximilian marched across Transdanubia without any resistance and occupied Székesfehérvár in November 1490. At the end of the year, however, Vladislav II managed to start his military campaign to take over the country.

First, he forced his brother out of the country, who then returned once more in the second half of 1491, only to suffer a final defeat. Maximilian's unpaid mercenary troops disbanded and gave up Székesfehérvár in the summer of 1491. Vladislav even had time to attack the Ottomans in Bosnia. To secure his reign, he made peace with Maximilian in Pozsony in November. The treaty they made was a

*John Corvinus in
the miniature of the
Philostratus Corvina*



renewal of the 1463 contract. Maximilian kept the title king of Hungary, and the barons of the country took an oath to accept his right of succession.

The peace treaty of Pozsony declared that should Vladislav II die without a legitimate male successor, Hungary and the Czech lands would fall to the Habsburgs; in addition to this, Vladislav had to return the Austrian fortresses. Following this, Vladislav enjoyed some peaceful years of rule. If the king stayed in Bohemia, the country was governed by the palatines as governors. From 1498, permanent assessors were elected to the Royal Council from among common noblemen. As far as finance was concerned (which hitherto had been under the king's authority), they tried to separate royal and national revenues, and sometimes a separate treasurer was appointed from among the estates alongside the royal treasurer.

The Jagiello kings continued Matthias's policy regarding the Ottoman Turks. Except for some short periods, peace ruled from 1495 to 1520. In practice, however, there was stationary warfare along the southern border, which gradually weakened the economically most developed region of medieval Hungary, Syrmia. Vladislav's problem of succession was settled when he had two children from his marriage to Anna of Foix-Candale: Anna and Louis. The main concern of common noblemen was national policy. Before Louis's birth, at the Diet of 1505, they declared that if Vladislav were to die without a male heir, they would only elect a Hungarian person to be king. The declaration of the idea of a national kingdom was directed against the Habsburgs.

Vladislav did not reinforce the resolution, which was later called the "decision of Rákos", instead he invalidated it when he made a Habsburg–Jagiello succession treaty with Maximilian in 1506. In accordance with this contract, if he had a son, he would marry Maximilian's granddaughter, Maria, and Vladislav's daughter would be married to Maximilian's grandson, Ferdinand. As Vladislav II had had a stroke earlier, they declared that if he died, the guardian of his children would be Maximilian, and in the event of him dying without a male heir, the Habsburgs would inherit the throne. In 1515 in Vienna, Sigismund I, the Polish king, Vladislav II and Maximilian confirmed this treaty, so Maximilian and Sigismund jointly became Louis's guardians. A few days later, the double engagement ceremony was held in the Stephansdom in Vienna.

The biggest peasant revolt of Hungarian history led by György Dózsa took place in 1514. In the previous year, Pope Leo X had announced a crusade against the Ottomans. The papal legate of the campaign was Cardinal Tamás Bakócz. The Observant Franciscans oversaw the organisation of the crusade, and when this crusade turned into a peasant war, they provided the ideology. Mainly villeins gathered in the military camps, and their leader became György Dózsa the Székely. When the troops started looting the locals, recruiting was stopped in May, and the crusade was cancelled.



King Vladislav II and his children on the grant of arms of the Petbő de Gerse family

*The Battle of Mohács,
King Louis II of
Hungary and his
queen consort, Mary of
Austria on the 1526
commemorative coin*



The crusaders formed an independent group; the main army – under the command of Dózsa – killed the bishop of Csanád, took over Lippa and then laid siege to Temesvár. The king began to raise an army to fight against the rebels only at the beginning of June. Troops around Pest and in Heves County were defeated at the end of June. Dózsa's army was defeated at Temesvár by John Szapolyai, the Voivode of Transylvania. György Dózsa and the captured leaders were executed, but the majority of the crusaders managed to return home unharmed. The punishment of villeins who had taken part in murdering and plundering was prevented by their landlords.

The peasant war did not spread to the whole country. The peasants of Transdanubia, Upper Hungary and the greater part of Transylvania and Slavonia did not take part in the rebellion. The wealthier urban peasants of market towns in the Great Plain, who lived from breeding cattle, joined the revolt in particularly large numbers. The direct reasons for the outbreak of the Hungarian peasant war did not stem from social problems or the crisis in trade, but could rather be attributed to the fact that the armed crusaders believed that noblemen, who were privileged due to their former military achievements, did not actually defend the country or protect their villeins. Owing to similar reasons, there was a peasant revolt in Central Austria in 1478.

Vladislav II was followed on the throne by his son, the ten-year-old Louis II. During his reign, the Ottoman threat grew more menacing. Common noblemen abandoned the Diet of 1518 at the field of Rákos and convoked an independent Diet in Tolna. Their leader, István Werbőczy, demanded a campaign against the Ottomans from the king. However, in 1519, they made peace with the Turks for three years, and for the last time. In 1520, a new sultan ascended to the throne of the Ottoman Empire, Süleyman the Magnificent. When the ambassador, Sergeant Behram, sent to Buda to renew the truce was captured and imprisoned, an attack against Hungary was launched in retaliation. The Hungarians were defeated at Nándorfehérvár in 1521.

Louis II wanted to resolve his domestic problems first. In 1523, he wanted to strengthen his royal power in both of his countries: Hungary and Bohemia. His attempts failed. The idea of an international alliance against the Turks was not realised, either. Poland made peace with the Ottoman Empire in 1525. Only the pope gave financial help to Hungary. The sultan's army, which attacked the country in 1526, defeated the royal army in the Battle of Mohács, and Louis II also died on the battlefield.

István Tringli

The Armed Forces

The organisation of the army changed completely in the 15th century. The military role of the nobility lost its significance; the old forms of recruitment in Hungary, such as the general call to arms, when all noblemen were mobilised to fulfil their military obligations, no longer applied. The Hungarian army of the time consisted of three main parts: the royal, the baronial-prelate, and the county troops, the so-called *banderia*. After Sigismund's reforms, it was King Matthias who first reorganised the army. The secular and ecclesiastical elite who presented their own *banderia* under their own standard were called bannerets. From 1498, they were the ones who collected half of the war tax, which they invested in equipment for their own armies, and the other half of the tax was the king's income.

The basis of the baronial and county *banderia* was the *militia portalis* (manor militia), that is the armed soldiers a nobleman had to provide for every twenty peasants' land-plots he owned. If there was a general call to arms, noblemen joined the county *banderium*. The modern army of the age contained permanent mercenary troops. In Hungary, this was introduced by Matthias Hunyadi in the middle of the 1460s. It was first founded when Jiškra and his warriors changed sides, but it became more important during the Bohemian wars, when a captain of mercenary troops, Frantisek Hag, organised a permanent mercenary army for the king's service, which consisted of about 6,000–8,000 soldiers. Most of these soldiers were Czech or Polish.

After Matthias's death, a part of the mercenary army became known as the Black Army. It derived its name from one of the mercenary commanders, the "black" Haugwitz. These mercenary armies were suitable to be used mainly in the western battlefields. Vladislav II also hired them against Maximilian and John Albert, but when there was no war to fight and no money was provided, they started to loot. They were redirected to the southern border to fight the Turks, but the troops started to plunder instead. In 1492, they were defeated by Pál Kinizsi, and those who survived were deported to Austria. Some mercenary soldiers could still be found in the Hungarian army during the reign of the Jagiellos, but there was no need to employ them in great numbers on a regular basis.

*Armoured troops in
the initial M of the
Matthias Gradual*



There were five different branches of service in the army. The light cavalry played a vital role, especially in the wars with the Ottoman Empire. Most of the hussars, who served in the light cavalry, were of southern Slav origin. The heavy cavalry was deployed in open battlefields. The infantry had a defence role; they hardly ever used the wagon-fort tactic, which was the favourite tactic of the Hussites. The importance of the artillery had slowly increased: at the beginning of the age, siege engines were more useful than cannons. The task of the ships was to defend the lower part of the Danube.

The Ottoman Wars

King Sigismund changed the political–military system of the defence against the Ottoman Turks in the 1420s. Up to that time, buffer states (Wallachia, Serbia, Bosnia) defended Hungary and Croatia from the



Coat of arms with armoured infantryman holding a crossbow, 1460 (Both de Bothfalva family)

Ottomans, but then chains of border fortresses took over the role. During the reign of Matthias, a dual defence line of border fortresses was built, which survived until 1521. The southern outer line started at Szörény, Orsova, and went through Nándorfehérvár, Szabács, the ban district of Srebrenik, Banja Luka, Jajca, Knin, and Klissa to Scardona, while the inner line started at Temesvár, went through Karánsebes, Lugos, Sermia, Dubica, Kruppa, Otcóság and Bihács to Zengg.

Serbia was first annexed by the Ottoman Empire in 1439. Although Đurađ Branković got his country back in 1444, the Turks reoccupied southern Serbia in 1455, and the residence of the despot, Szendrő, was also occupied by 1459 for several centuries. In 1439, the Ottoman Turks attacked Krassó and Keve counties as well as Transylvania, taking advantage of the internal troubles in the country. The Hungarians only started to fight back in 1442, when the Ottoman army was engaged in conflicts in Karamania. The so-called winter or long campaign, led by János Hunyadi in 1443–44, then the 1444 campaign (ending with the Battle of Várna, and then the Second Battle of Kosovo in 1448) were not very successful.

After Hunyadi's long campaign, the pope, Vladislav I and duke of Burgundy, Venice, and Geneva started a joint war against the Turks. The main aim was to put an end to Ottoman rule in the Balkans. According to the military plans, the galleys of the sea powers would have obstructed the Dardanellas, and the land army would have attacked the Ottoman troops in Europe (Rumelia), which would have their line of retreat cut off. However, the sea blockade was unsuccessful: Sultan Murad crossed the strait from Asia, united his armies in Anatolia and Rumelia, and defeated the joint Hungarian–Polish–Vlach armies in the Battle of Várna on 10 November 1444.

Although Serbia revived briefly as a Turkish vassal state, the Hungarian positions in the Balkans could not be regained. When in 1456 Sultan Mehmed II set out to occupy Serbia, he planned to conquer Nándorfehérvár as well. Since the fall of Byzantium in 1453, a crusade against the Ottomans had been organized on the pope's initiative. In Hungary, the new venture was promoted by John of Capistrano. The pope ordered that the bells be rung at noon as a prayer for the success of the crusaders. The victory at Nándorfehérvár was János Hunyadi's greatest victory: this was the only occasion when the army of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary defeated the sultan's army.

Independent Bosnia fell in 1463. After the sultan's army had left, Matthias personally led a campaign to the freshly surrendered province in the winter of the very same year. He took over Jajca, Ključ and Banja Luka. Bosnia, divided between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary, became a means of defence as part of the border fortress system, rather than a buffer state. Miklós Újlaki's Bosnian kingdom did not become a real country: the Bosnian bans did not become barons; they remained purely military commanders. Jajca was kept under the authority of Hungary till 1527, but in the final years, supplying this region could only be undertaken through real campaigns.

The Bohemian and Austrian Wars

The war against the lands of the Czech crown started in 1468. In the first year, Matthias occupied Moravia, and in the next year he took most of Silesia. However, by this time it could be seen that there was a likelihood of a very long war; the Czechs defeated the Hungarian army at the Moravian Uherský Brod. In the year 1470, there were campaigns of varying success. The Podiebrad dynasty created some anxiety in Matthias's provinces, while the Hungarian king tried to occupy the Czech silver mines – albeit without success. The campaign turned into an expensive stationary war, which contributed to the 1471 plot in Hungary.

The war was resumed in 1474, when Frederick III and Władysław, the Czech king, formed an alliance against Matthias. This alliance was also joined by the Poles, although it was only a month after the peace treaty signed in Ófalu. In Silesia, military events ran in the autumn. Matthias had the reserves transported to the strengthened fortresses and towns away from the Czech–Polish troops, and his mercenaries harried the enemy. The Hungarian king went to Breslau and settled in the fort there, then declared his engagement to Beatrice of Aragon during the siege of the town. The defence soldiers occasionally broke out and took a lot of captives, and the attackers of the town, who suffered from lack of food, asked for a truce from the defenders. It was a very strange event in military history.

The Austrian campaign that started in 1482 was fought mainly by mercenaries. They fought for the occupation of certain fortresses, which could only be taken one by one, after prolonged battles. The first two years of the war were limited to Lower Austria; the estates of Carinthia having already signed a separate peace treaty with Matthias in 1482. In 1483, the Hungarian army took over Klosterneuburg near Vienna, and the emperor fled to Graz, which seemed to be a safer place. In the following year, the Hungarian troops ravaged Styria and Carinthia, but the main battlefield remained in Lower Austria. The blockade around the city of Vienna was complete in January 1484.

The defenders' persistent struggle was futile, as the famished city capitulated after a siege of several months. Matthias marched into the capital city on 1 June 1485, accepting the homage of the Austrian estates, and ruled his new province from here. However, the war did not end, as Bécsújhely surrendered to the Hungarians only in 1487. After this, the Austrian campaign was practically over.

War Against the Ottomans

From the middle of the 1460s until 1521, there were hardly any open conflicts with the Turks. Peace practically meant stationary warfare. The last western buffer state on the Balkans fell with the occupation of Herzegovina. No army of the sultan attacked the country, only the neighbouring beys led some military actions. As there were long distances between the neighbouring border fortresses, the Ottoman troops attacked Hungary many times. In 1474 and 1490 they reached Váradi, in 1479 they plundered Transylvania. During this attack, they suffered a defeat at the battle of Kenyérmező (the Battle of Breadfield), then in 1480 Matthias led a three-front campaign in revenge to Wallachia, Serbia and Bosnia.

*Painted wooden shield
for infantry with the
initial M*



Matthias also used the Ottoman campaigns against Frederick III. In the 1470s and 1480s, he allowed Turkish troops plundering Inner Austria to pass through the country. So later, in the Jagiellonian period, the Habsburgs demanded that they should also be included in the Hungarian–Ottoman peace treaties. There was already a crisis in the Croatian border defence in the last decades of the 15th century. In the battle of Udbinja, in 1493, the Croatian troops suffered serious defeats.

Wallachia managed to retain its independence, since it did not really bother the Ottoman Empire in its expansion. However, the voivodes of Wallachia paid taxes more or less regularly to the Turks from the end of the 14th century. Sometimes they surrendered to the Hungarian king, or struck up an alliance with him, but such events were limited to very short periods. Moldavia, which was under the influence of Poland, resisted the Turks for longer, but after the death of Voivode Stephen the Great, it also submitted to the Ottomans.

In 1520, Hungary did not intend to spark war, but its unfriendly actions were considered reasons for war by Sultan Süleyman. Because of the devastation in the southern regions, the Hungarians saw war as a better alternative than a destructive peace. The army of the sultan attacked Hungary in June 1521. They occupied Szabács and Zimony. Nándorfehérvár also capitulated after a 66-day siege. Having taken control of the fortress, the sultan returned home. Local forces widened the wedge in the defence line at this front too, having occupied Orsova, Szörény, Tinin and Scardona in the west.

After 1521, the Kingdom of Hungary could no longer defend itself on its own. Sirmia was wrecked in a couple of years in endless fights. Territories in the north were defended by the Danube and the second defence line of fortresses. From 1522, the Habsburgs sent regular military and financial help to Croatia, and this contributed to the fact that after the Battle of Mohács, the Croatian Estates chose Ferdinand as their king, and later they were more loyal to the Habsburg rulers than to the Hungarians.

In 1526, the army of the sultan set out against Hungary with the aim to defeat the Hungarian royal army. The Hungarian troops gathered at Tolna, and the Czech mercenaries financed by the pope also joined. The commander of the army was Pál Tomori, the archbishop of Kalocsa, who had earlier commanded the defence of the southern regions, and György Szapolyai. Voivode John Szapolyai's Transylvanian troops and Christoph Frankopan's Croatian troops did not arrive. The Ottomans occupied Pétervárad and Újlak, and setting up a bridge at Eszék, they crossed the river Dráva. The battle took place at Mohács on 29 August 1526. The Hungarian army suffered a catastrophic defeat.

István Tringli

The Inhabitants of the Country

In Hungary, as in Western Europe, social classes or groups were called estates, and belonging to an estate was considered a state, a condition. The estate was the community of people with the same rights, but there could be tremendous differences within an estate with regards to the wealth of its members. Belonging to an estate was defined by birth (the only exception was the clergy), so the possibility of social mobility was very low.

There is no exact data concerning the population of the country in this period – similarly to earlier periods, figures are only estimates. In 1494–95, Zsigmond Ernuszt prepared the accounts of the treasury on the revenues and expenditures of the state. Based on this source, historians concluded that the population could have been around three, or possibly even five million. According to the most probable estimate, the population (including Transylvania and Slavonia) was about 4–4.5 million. Any changes in the population level are even more difficult to define: there may have been a very gradual growth, or sometimes stagnation.

In this period, there were no serious epidemics or famines in Hungary, which would have caused significant demographical changes. There is various data about the size of the households: in the 1520s, in a village in Hont County there were 7.6, and some decades later in a village in Sopron County there were 6.3 persons living together in one household on average. Servants were also included in these numbers.

Depiction of various groups of society in the initial A of the Matthias Gradual

The Nobility

On top of the secular hierarchy were the barons. At the beginning of the age, this concept referred only to office holders at the royal court, but some decades later it became the term for a social group to which one could belong primarily by birth. Sons of barons could usually become barons in earlier times too, and they inherited their fathers' estates; however, they could not bear the title until they received an office, and they could not be addressed "The Right Honourable...". In the Jagiellonian age, the real barons of the country – who were the main dignitaries – were distinguished from natural barons, or as they were called then "barons' sons" or "magnates".

In 1498, a law listed all the bannerets by their names, i.e. the noble barons who were



obliged to set up a *banderium*, troops under their own standard. The magnates who were not included in this elite group based on their wealth were practically excluded from the high aristocracy. Up to that time, the aristocracy only included barons; the title of count was used by only a few families of German and Croatian origin. From that time on, however, titles bestowed for political merits, such as the title count to János Hunyadi, and later Mihály Szilágyi (count of Beszterce) and the Szapolyai family (count of Szepes), became highly respected, and the Hungarian rank of count was born.

The real barons of the country were the palatine, the judge royal, the ban of Slavonia, the ban of Dalmatia-Croatia, the voivode of Transylvania, the count (*ispán*) of the Székelys, the bans of Macsó and Szörény, the king's and queen's main office holders, i.e. the masters of the treasury, masters of the doorkeepers, masters of the table, masters of the cupbearers, and the masters of the horse, and the

counts of Temes and Pozsony counties. The rights of barons differed from common noble rights in four respects. They entered a war under their own standards, their oath was worth ten times that of other noblemen, but one hundred noblemen's oaths were needed to take an oath against them, and their widows were due to receive a sum of one hundred marks.

In this period, common noblemen were also called noblemen. There were big differences in the wealth of landed nobility. Barons owning a fortress with the surrounding villages and engaged in trade, as well as lower noblemen owning only two or three villein's plots all belonged to the very same social group. The members of the top layer of landed nobility were called "better-off noblemen" by their contemporaries, and this category was used without numerical limitations. They had the casting votes in matters of the county; their opinions influenced the positions of common noblemen in debates at the Diet.

The majority of the nobility was made up of noblemen who only owned their own small plot or estate. However, their rights of ownership to their small estate were the same as those of a powerful baron to his estate the size of half a county. Since King Matthias's tax reform was enacted, lesser noblemen also had to pay tax, though they often objected to this, and their taxation was not always regular. Most of these noblemen lived in the manner of peasants, with no obligation

to take part in meetings of the Diet personally, and their minor political influence only counted in the matters of the county.

Common noblemen often referred to the "one and the same liberty", by which they meant that all noblemen of the country were entitled to the same rights and privileges. Werbőczy's law book, the *Tripartitum*, summarised this concept in four points. 1. They could not be arrested without previous summoning and legal sentence – except in the event of being caught in the act. 2. They were subject only to a legally crowned monarch's authority. 3. They could freely exercise their legal rights, or use the revenues of their estates; they did not have to pay any taxes or customs duties, their only obligation was to defend the country in the event of war. 4. If a king attempted to interfere with their privileges, they could resist without being accused of disloyalty.

At the beginning of the age, the institution of *familiares* was flourishing. Barons and rich noblemen employed noblemen in their families in return for accommodation and board. The relationship between the lord and his *familiaris* became looser by the end of the Middle Ages, and noblemen were in service for only a very short time, for example, one year. The expression *servitor* appeared in the Jagiellonian



Augmented coat of arms of János Hunyadi, perpetual count of Beszterce (Bistrița, Romania)

Age, and referred to noblemen in service. There were big differences among noblemen in service too: the income of the *maior castri* of a fortress could be as much as that of a nobleman with an average-size estate, but there were people who worked merely for food, accommodation and clothes.

Villeins

The majority of the population of the country was made up of villeins. The legal unification, which had started at the beginning of the previous century, was completed by the 15th century. By then, everybody was considered a serf who was subject to the authority of a landlord, no matter if he was a burgher of a market town renting several meadows for his herds or a cottar living in the house of another person. Villeins did not own their lands, although their sons could inherit them under certain legal conditions. They came under the legal authority of the landlord: their cases were judged at the landlord's own tribunal; in return, however, the landlords were obliged to see to their defence.

After the peasant rebellion of 1514 was put down, the free movement of serfs was prohibited by law, though it was not put into practice. For centuries, the relationship between the landlord and villein was determined primarily by local customary law – and not by enacted laws. The allowances paid to the landlord were also determined by local customs, which were more and more often recorded in writing in the so-called *urbariums*. Regular revenues, gifts given twice or three times a year, and the rent for the land recorded in the *urbariums* were not very high, but these were supplemented by the “extraordinary tax”, which was quite regularly collected on some estates. The ninth was not paid everywhere; the extent of forced labour was low, and it usually included cartage and hay making.



Depiction of serfs paying taxes on a woodcut from Rodericus Zamorensis: Mirror of Human Life

The Burghers

The urban burghers – just like the other estates – did not form a homogeneous group. The top layer of the population in bigger urban settlements was made up of merchants, renters of royal chambers, and trading artisans; in mining towns, they included the owners of mines and smelting-furnaces. They controlled the town, and the members of the so-called inner council were elected from among them. Artisans represented the middle layer in towns; they joined in with the government of the city through the outer council. The majority of the urban dwellers were called townspeople. Although they were considered burghers outside the town walls, the leaders of the city did not accept them as real burghers. They earned their living as day labourers, transporters, or performed other services.

According to the country's law, the dwellers of market towns were villeins, but they were usually called burghers, like those who lived in bishopric centres. In the 15th century, several new guilds formed in the market towns. Usually all the craftsmen joined a common guild. At that time, there was no difference between guilds and religious associations. Such associations erected their own altar, and their meetings were the scenes of political life in the city. Guilds of Corpus Christi in bigger cities were associations of rich merchants, but there was also a separate guild for those who were very poor.

István Tringli

State finance was an unknown concept in the Middle Ages. King Matthias was the first ruler who attempted to separate royal and state revenues. The estates had the right to interfere in how state incomes were spent. There is no exact data on all the incomes and expenditures in the central accounts, not even after the reform of the treasury. The budget of the late medieval Hungarian kingdom, like those of other European countries, was in the red, and there was a continual shortage of money. There were two distinct periods in the finances of the age: before and after the reforms of King Matthias.

In the first period, the income of the state was less than during Sigismund's reign, which can be explained by the chaotic political situation. Most of the income came from the salt monopoly, followed by the revenues of the money reform, the thirtieths, and finally from the exchange of precious metals. King Albert introduced the system of regular money reform. After his death, there were chaotic conditions in money minting: money being minted in the name of several rulers at the same time. Although the golden forint was able to keep its value, the silver coin used in everyday life was devalued.

The initiator of the financial reform carried out between 1464 and 1470 was János Ernuszt. There were four main innovations. Money exchange was abolished as a lot of landowners were exempted from paying the tax known as the profit of the chamber. Although money exchange was cancelled, a new tax of the same value was introduced in the same year under a new name: royal fiscus. The name of the thirtieth customs duty was changed to crown customs duty. There were innovations in money minting too, and at the treasury, the structure of financial control was also overhauled.

After the reforms, the income from taxes became the main source of revenue of the state, exceeding all others.

There were two kinds of taxes: one fifth of a golden forint treasury tax per gate, and an extraordinary tax of one forint per gate. The latter was imposed at the beginning of King Matthias's reign, and then collected more often, almost every year during the Bohemian wars. Despite their promises, the Jagiello kings did not change this system. The cities, the Jews, the Romanians and Székelys paid taxes separately. King Matthias's income amounted to about 900,000 golden forints in the best financial years. At the same time, Venice had an income of about one million golden forints, the Ottoman Empire 1,800,000 and the Kingdom of France 4,000,700.

Before the reform, three kinds of money were minted: the golden forint and two kinds of silver coins, the *denarius* and the *obulus*. After 1467, the minting of the groat was reintroduced. At that time, one golden forint was worth a hundred denarii, one groat was worth four denarii, and one denarius was worth two obuli. During the reign of Vladislav II, a new valuable silver coin was minted, which was called *guldiner* and later *thaler*, but it was still not used in everyday life. The appearance of coins also changed. Coins with the image of a Madonna appeared, which were minted for centuries. The head of the coin showed a coat of arms, and the tail presented the image of the Virgin Mary. From 1471, the picture of the Virgin Mary appeared on the forint coin too.

Because of the 1521 Ottoman campaign, the royal court made changes in the minting of money, which had been unchanged since 1467. This innovation meant the devaluation of the money; the new coins contained only half the amount of silver

*The golden forint
of King Matthias*



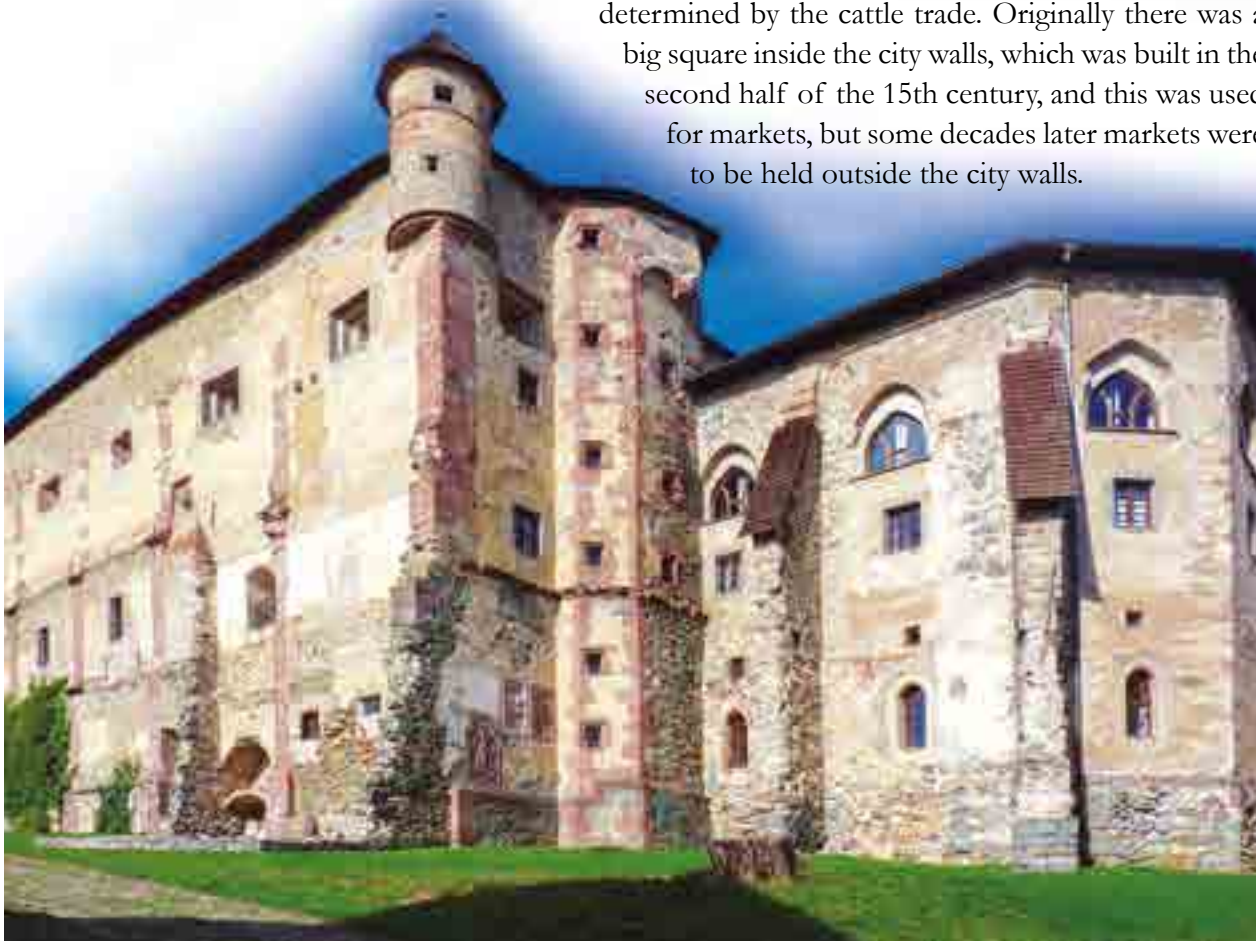
as that of the older coins. This experiment lasted until 1525. Although it helped solve the problems of the treasury in the short term, it could not continue because of the people's anger caused by the inflation. By the time of the Battle of Mohács, expenditures took up all the income. Foreign money was also used in the period: in western Hungary, the Austrian denarius was used, while in Transylvania the Wallachian *ospora* was in circulation.

The income from the gold and silver mines was gradually decreasing, as the mines became useless because of the deep excavations. Water leaked into the tunnels. The maintenance of the water pumps was too expensive for the citizens of mining towns, and foreign entrepreneurs were needed. The Fugger family, for example, had a banking network in Europe and were also the main creditors of the Habsburgs. From 1496, the Fuggers and their Hungarian relatives, the Thurzó brothers, rented the production and trade of the copper and silver mines in the Garam region. As the silver of Selmec in the 13th century, the gold of Körmöc in the 14th century, then the copper and silver of Besztercebánya were the sought-after products of the Hungarian mining industry. The hitherto insignificant copper became a valuable commodity as it was needed to make bronze for casting cannons.

Hungarian foreign trade was mainly directed towards the west, followed by the southern Italian connections in importance, then the trade with the Polish and Romanian principalities. Western trade was carried out along the Danube between Vienna and Buda, or on the Danube itself, in the valley of the Mura and Sava rivers. Cities on the borders, especially Sopron and Pozsony, took advantage of this trade. They declined later in the 1460s because of the deteriorating internal conflicts in Austria, something which Buda and Pest profited from. From Western Europe, textile and iron goods were imported, while Italy traded in quality textile and luxury items.

Owing to King Matthias's conquest of Silesia, the road from Breslau through the valley of the Vág River to the centre of the country became very important, and the copper export was carried out here too. The main goods of export were cattle. The cattle trade and husbandry were inseparable: Pest, Szeged and Székesfehérvár took advantage of this, as big herds were kept in these regions. Pest, under the authority of Buda from the 1250s, became a free royal town, and its outer appearance was also

determined by the cattle trade. Originally there was a big square inside the city walls, which was built in the second half of the 15th century, and this was used for markets, but some decades later markets were to be held outside the city walls.



*The castle of
Selmecbánya (Banská
Štiavnica, Slovakia)*

Antónia S. Hámori

Characteristic Features of the Hungarian Language of the Time

In the history of the Hungarian language, the period starting with King Sigismund's reign and ending with the defeat at Mohács is called the Late Old Hungarian period. By this time, the major linguistic changes which had started earlier came to an end (or they were very close to their end), so the form of the Hungarian language at this point was very similar to the language used today. Through further development, the vocabulary and expressions, morphology and syntax became richer and more consistent.



*Virgin Mary reading,
part of a mural from the
church of Velemér*

Linguistic development was parallel with the gradual material and spiritual growth. The number of schools also increased, so the use of the written language became more widespread, though literacy and correspondence was still mainly in Latin at this time.

Besides charters, mainly religious documents were produced (theological works, sermons, legends, service books), but there were several secular works as well (especially chronicles and poems). At first, usage of the Hungarian language was limited to speech, but the demand for writing and reading in Hungarian continuously increased, so there was a need for written Hungarian works. Primarily, there were codices containing translations of Latin religious literature. However, some Latin–Hungarian word lists and glossas for Latin sermons were also preserved. Apart from these, independent Hungarian pieces of work also appeared in this period, such as poems, letters and civilian documents.

Codices

Codices were religious readings. (The first pieces of Hungarian codices, the Jókai Codex and the Hussite Bible were discussed in the previous chapters.)

In the Late Old Hungarian period, the number of codex translations increased significantly. The boom in translations was partly due to the medieval reforms of the principles of monastic orders, which instructed monks to read religious texts and perform prayers. Owing to the reform, church – especially monastic – literature began to flourish. In Hungary, just like in most other countries, this kind of literature was written in Latin. However, Latin sermons, legends and hymns had to be translated into Hungarian for nuns who did not speak Latin. The rich codex literature of the Late Old Hungarian

period grew from these translations. The period is also known as the era of codices because of their great number written at this time. Nuns escaping from the Ottoman destruction brought about 50 codices with them – thus saving these valuable pieces from destruction.

The majority of sermons in the codices are from a collection of speeches by Pelbárt Temesvári (also known as Pelbárt of Temesvár), a Franciscan friar, who wrote them on the basis of contemporary theological literature and made them more interesting by adding moral stories to them. His collection of speeches, called the *Rose Wreath*, was finished by his Franciscan student, Osvát Laskai. The main source of the legends of the codices was a collection known as *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend), the work of a Dominican prior, Jacobus de Voragine († 1298). This collection was very popular all over the world. Another source of the legends was the Italian bishop, Petrus de Natalibus's († 1400) *Catalogus Sanctorum* (the list of saints, i.e. the series of legends of saints), which was published in printed form in 1493, and contains more than 3,000 legends.

Codices were translated into Hungarian by monks. Most of the codices were preserved in copied versions and not in their original form. The copies tended to be made by monks or nuns. There were copy workshops in several of the richer monasteries in the country. The Dominicans, for example, worked in the monastery on Margaret Island (then called the Island of Rabbits); the Franciscans worked in Óbuda (in the monastery of the Poor Clares), in Buda, Sepsiszentgyörgy and Marosvásárhely; the Paulines in Nagyvázsony; the Premonstratensians in Somlóvásárhely. Certain copy workshops often lent the copied codices to other workshops, so some texts are identical in several codices. In this period, the language of literature was not standardised; the copiers often copied the texts in their own dialect. However, the swapping of codices actually encouraged the unification of the written language.

A codex was usually copied by the same hand (that is a monk or nun), or occasionally by several hands. Only a few names of the copiers are known: for example, Pál Váci, András Nyújtódi, Bertalan of Halábor, Pál Tetemi, student Michael, Lea Ráskai, Márta Sövényházi. Copiers of codices often scribbled personal notes on the margins during copying: they asked their readers to pray, apologised



*Ruins of the Dominican
convent on Margaret
Island, destroyed in the
Ottoman period*

Woodcut depicting
St. Margaret

for bad writing, gave thanks for being able to finish their work. For example, “The one who wrote this asks for an Ave Maria prayer”; “pray for the sinner who wrote this. Halleluyah”; “I was very ill”; “I have a bad headache”; “Thank God” – Lea Ráskai’s notes are especially interesting. Most of the codices were copied in the workshops of Dominican and Franciscan friars (seventeen Dominican and seventeen Franciscan codices have survived).

The majority of the Dominican codices were carefully planned, containing only one long unit of text. These were probably written for the nuns of Margaret Island. The oldest of them is the Birk Codex from 1474, which was written by Pál Váci, a Dominican friar. The deletion of certain parts and corrections of the text suggest that it could be the original composition, the draft of a translation. The first part contains the rules of St. Augustine, while in the second part we can read about the instructions concerning the lifestyle of Dominican nuns. (In today’s reading: “So that you can see yourselves in this little book like a mirror, so that you won’t miss anything because of your forgetfulness, it must be read once a week”.) The huge Winkler Codex (1506) was written by three people and it is quite mixed regarding its content. It starts with a calendar, and the second part is a well-designed book of hours (devotional book). You can find prayers and litanies both in Latin and Hungarian in it. In the rest of the work, we can read different parts of the gospels, Mary’s laments (because of Christ’s sufferings) and prayers and legends in verse. Certain parts of it are original Hungarian works.

The most outstanding pieces among Dominican codices are Lea Ráskai’s codices. The best known is the *Legend of Saint Margaret* from 1510, which tells of the life of King Béla IV’s daughter, St. Margaret (of the Árpád dynasty). The original text of the legend was written for the investigation of the canonisation of Margaret by Marcellus, the head of the Dominican Order, who was also Margaret’s confessor. The codex was divided into three parts. The first part describes Margaret’s lifestyle in the nunnery, the second part tells of her miraculous deeds and the last one contains the statements of her fellow nuns made in front of the canonisation committee. The legend describes Margaret’s humble and self-sacrificing life, but we can read about the everyday life of contemporary monasteries. The corrections and crossings in the codex show that Lea Ráskai corrected and modified her text.

Lea Ráskai’s second outstanding biographical codex was the Dominican (Domonkos) Codex of 1517. In this, Ráskai describes St. Dominic’s life in detail and introduces the history of the order of preachers, which is the Dominican Order that he founded. She commemorates the fact that St. Dominic sent Magister Paulus (Paulus Hungarus) to Hungary to preach. The codex tells of several miracles, parables and visions from the saint’s life. Its style is very impressive and powerful. We can find several expressions from the subject of teaching, science and education; for example, student, dean, master, school, science, learn. Lea Ráskai copied the major part of the Book of Examples in 1510 (from page 19 to 64). The other two scribes of the codex are unknown. Its Latin source was a collection of religious parables from the 15th century, which contained moral teachings and parables. The most significant of its parables are the conversation on life and death and the so-called *danse macabre* (dance of death), which emphasises the terrible fact that death knows no distinctions.

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In the first part of the Cornides Codex, which was copied between 1514 and 1519, we can find sermons for the significant feasts of the ecclesiastical year. The main source of these was a collection of speeches from the 15th century. The second part of the codex tells of the legends of female saints who died as martyrs in the first centuries of Christianity. At a certain point, Lea Ráskai noted down the date of copying, and she also revealed her name there (after St. Justina's biography): raskay lea. The different notes at the end of certain sections of the text provide information about the events of the age and the life of the monastery: about the re-consecration of the chapel, the death of Palatine Imre Perényi and the Dózsa peasants' revolt. Lea Ráskai's handwriting had an individual style with a firm and consistent presentation. Her spelling was correct and logical; she was one of the most outstanding copiers of her age. On the basis of her name written in the Cornides Codex, we can identify the codices that were copied by her.

The Jordánszky Codex, compiled between 1516 and 1519, is a voluminous Dominican codex. Its content, similarly to the Hussite Bible, is a Bible translation but independent of that. It included certain parts of the Old Testament, the four gospels, the Acts and other parts of the New Testament. Its spelling and language show similarities with the Érdy Codex (for example, it doubles the letters when it refers to sounds /é/ and /á/.) Its copier is not known.

The *Booklet about the Honours of the Saint Apostles* from 1521 describes a contest between the apostles and other saints in a conversational form, imitating live speech. It lists the reasons why the apostles are more honourable than other saints. The original version of the codex was an unknown Latin essay. The text mentions Dante, and the first lines of metrical poetry appeared here for the first time in the Hungarian language. The codex must have been copied by a Dominican nun in the nunnery of Margaret Island.

The greatest Dominican codex is the beautiful Érsekújvár Codex dating from 1529–31. It was copied by three people and was also decorated with painted pictures. Most of it was written by the nun Márta Sövényházi. Its content is mixed: it contains Lent and Easter gospels as well as short teachings and parables. Its most famous part is the legend of St. Catherine of Alexandria in verse. It is a scholarly work full of theological essays. The main source was Pelbárt Temesvári's sermons and a medieval Latin book of sagas. The translator did a very good job putting the text into Hungarian with a very good sense of rhythm, independent of the original Latin text.

Other Dominican codices are: the Horváth Codex from 1522 (Lea Ráskai's writing), the Gömöry Codex (1516), the Virginia Codex (1529), the Kriza Codex (1532) and maybe the Christina legend (1510) and the Thewrewk Codex (1531).

The majority of the codices copied by Franciscan friars contains parts of the gospels, sermons as well as legends, essays and songs. Most of them were copied in the rich monastery of the Poor Clares in Óbuda. The earliest of them is the Guary Codex from around 1490. Its copier was probably Lucas Segösdí, the head of the order at that time. It was copied precisely and had a nice layout with beautiful language. It contains religious essays and teachings. Certain parts are parallel with the text of the Nádor Codex. Its spelling partly follows the spelling of the Hussite Bible. The Nádor Codex was also copied for the Poor Clares of Óbuda by an unknown scribe in 1508. It contains meditations, legends, holy songs and a list of sins for confessions. Certain parts of it are identical to texts of similar topics of other codices (for instance, the Winkler Codex, the Érdy Codex, the Kazinczy Codex). This codex contains the oldest Hungarian noted song. Its songs are Hungarian folk songs – one of them was still being sung even in the 17th century.

The copier of the lengthy Nagyszombat Codex, which was made in 1512–13, is also unknown. A large part of the codex is devoted to meditations and essays. It also includes the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the *Credo* (I believe) prayer and the explanation of the salvation – and also a list of sins. Some of its teachings give insight into the state of medieval natural sciences. For example, it claims



Page decorated with
flowers from the *Festetics*
Codex

that the Sun is eight times bigger than the Earth, there is five times more water on Earth than soil, and there is a heaven above the starry sky. The dialect of the codex uses /ö/ and /ü/ sounds.

The greatest Franciscan codex is the Debrecen Codex, copied in 1519. The first part tells of the legends of the saints, who are celebrated in the period from St. Andrew's Day (30 November) until 25 March. The second part includes teachings and legends of other saints.

The compilation of the Kazinczy Codex took a very long time. The dates 1526, 1527 and 1541 are mentioned in it, so it must have been finished after the defeat at Mohács but before the occupation of Buda and the escape of the Poor Clares of Óbuda. It was copied by three unknown friars; the second and the third copier used the *ö*-dialect (it used the sound /ö/ instead of the sound /e/). This codex is a collection of sermons, proverbs and legends. It contains valuable romantic proverbs and legends (for example, the St. Anna legend, the St. Alexius legend and the story of Barlaam and Josaphat). Its copier asks for an *Ave Maria* from the reader.

Other Franciscan codices made in Óbuda and Buda are the Simor Codex (1508), the Weszprémi Codex made in 1512, the Lobkowitz Codex (1514), the Bod Codex (around 1520), the Sándor Codex (around 1518), the Vitkovics Codex (1525), the Miskolc Fragments (1525) and the Tihany Codex (1532).

Franciscan codices made in Transdanubia contain translations of psalms. The Keszthely Codex was copied in 1522 by Gergely Velikei in Léka in Vas County for the Sisters of the Third Order. The copier noted down the date and his name onto one of the pages of the codex. The Kulcsár Codex, made in 1539, was written by Pál Pápai, a Franciscan friar in Ozora, in Tolna County.

Some Franciscan codices were made in Transylvania. The most notable among these is the Székelyudvarhely codex. The first two parts of it – The Book of Judith and the catechism – were translated and written down by a friar, András Nyújtódi, in 1526. He translated it – as he wrote – for his “beloved sister, Judit Nyújtódi”, a nun from Tövis. He asked his sister not to consider his “peasant style but the real meaning of it”. The translation of the Book of Judith from the Old Testament existed in the Hussite Bible as well as the Vienna Codex, but this is independent of those. Its text shows a lot of similarities with today's Székely dialect. We can also find the first Hungarian catechism in this codex. The other parts contain meditations and parts of the gospels. The copier of these parts was probably Judit Nyújtódi herself, the owner of the codex. The note on a page refers to this: “This book belongs to the virgin Judit: it was written in the year 1528 in Tövis”.

The Teleki Codex was made for the Beguine sisters of Marosvásárhely (1525–31). Its legends are romantic stories written in an imaginative style. The Zelma Lázár Codex was probably also copied in Marosvásárhely, after 1525. The *Festetics* Codex, written around 1494, and its supplementary book, the Czech Codex from 1513 are the works of Pauline fathers and these are two old books of prayers. Both of them were made in the Pauline monastery of Nagyvázsony (Veszprém County) for Mrs Kinizsi, a Hungarian Beguine herself. The *Festetics* Codex is a beautifully decorated book of prayer. Its special value is that it contains the first Hungarian translation of Petrarch's seven repentance psalms. In the Czech Codex we can find private prayers besides the offices. The most significant of them are St. Brigitte's fifteen prayers and a beautiful poem: “St. Bernard's hymn to the crucified Christ”.

The Peer Codex most probably originates from the Pauline monastery of Nagyvázsony from around 1518. It is a work of six hands; its writers are unknown. The codex contains legends, prayers

and poems. András Vásárhelyi's beautiful song is a prayer in verse to the Virgin Mary, the patron of Hungary. The poet included his initials in the starting lines of the verses. The other beautiful poem of the codex is a song about King St. Ladislaus. We can also find the "Cantilena" here, a mocking, jeering song about priests written by Ferenc Apáti. The codex also includes an eternal calendar, the so-called *csízió* (calendar), which is a translation of a calendar written in verse, very popular throughout Europe. A similar calendar has survived from earlier times; it was preserved in a Latin codex, the Thuróczi Codex, written after 1462.

There are very few codices from Premonstratensian priests. One of them is the Döbrentei Codex from 1508, which was copied by Bertalan of Halábor, a priest and royal clerk. It contains translations of psalms, sermons, parts of the gospels and hymns. But we can also find a tale in it – simply called "Tale". The codex is the oldest memory of the *i*-dialect of the Tisza region (it uses the sound /i/ instead of the sound /é/). The Lányi Codex was also made by the Premonstratensian priests. It was copied in 1519. Written for the nuns of Somlóvásárhely, it describes the rules, regulations and religious ceremonies of the Order of Prémontré.

The best known Hungarian codex – and also the biggest collection of Hungarian legends – is the Érdy Codex. It was written and translated by an unknown Carthusian monk between 1524 and 1527 in Lövöld (Városlőd). The codex was compiled for "all monks and nuns". It has both a Latin and a Hungarian preface; this is the first preface written in Hungarian in Hungarian literature. The book is a collection of speeches based on Pelbárt Temevári's sermons: it contains Sunday sermons, legends about the life of saints and explanations of the gospels. The legends about Hungarian saints are quite significant. The unknown Carthusian was an independent, brave translator; his vocabulary was very rich. The language he used was the most developed dialect of the age.



Page from the Érdy
Codex

Glosses, Word Lists

We have already mentioned the glosses (explanatory notes written to Latin texts) and the Latin–Hungarian word lists, which made learning easier, in the previous chapters.

With the spread of Latin literacy, the number of glossaries and word lists increased significantly in the Late Old Hungarian period. There are glosses from this period both in religious and secular texts. Most of the glosses come from a Latin collection of sermons, which were compiled into two connected codices, called the *Sermones Dominicales* (Sunday Sermons). The two codices are copies of a series of sermons written in 1456. The glosses were attached to the text to help the Hungarian performance of the speeches. For example, *glossa*: explanatory note, *philosopher*: pagan wise man, *bibliothek*: book chamber. The two copies contain 6,200 Hungarian words in total.

The Jászó Glosses originate from around 1460. They were discovered in the library of the Premonstratensian monastery of Jászóvár, in a collection of Latin manuscripts. It contains twenty-three Hungarian words. The Zirc Glosses were entered into the collection of sermons of a

Premonstratensian monastery at around 1470–1480. The glosses contain about twenty words. We can find more glosses (about 400) in the collection called the Nagyváty Glosses. These were written around 1490 to the text of a Bible printed in 1478. The vocabulary is quite varied, with lots of secular words included.

The Szalkai Glosses (1490) were written by secular priests and students. László Szalkai noted down 440 Hungarian words into the school book of Sárospatak. His words show the growth of vocabulary encouraged by Latin education, and they are significant additions to the history of Hungarian literary language. For example, the word *poeta* means the “creator of poems” for him, but he also uses the word as “poet”. The word *muzsák* (muses) means “female poets”; the word *törlít* (write) means “write, create a piece of written work”.

Contemporary view of Szabács (Šabac, Serbia) in Hartmann Schedel's *Chronicle of the World*, 1493

The Ábel Word List from around 1490 is of secular origin. It must have been written after dictation; it contains 220 pairs of words including conversational expressions. We can also find a list of numbers in it. The word list was discovered in Jenő Ábel's heritage.

Among glosses dating back to the beginning of the 16th century, the most significant ones are

the Gyöngyös Glosses from 1520, containing 600 words. These can be found in the manuscript of a Latin codex describing the rules of the observant Franciscan Order. The glosses (454 glosses) of *Ortus Sanitatis* (The Origin of Health), a natural history encyclopaedia from around 1525, are also quite outstanding. They might have been made by a doctor. The work describes three kingdoms of nature (plants, animals, minerals).



Original Hungarian Texts

There are also examples of original (that is not based on a translation) Hungarian written records from the Late Old Hungarian period. Most of them are secular works. They include a historic song, but also poems as well as fragments of poems, civilian documents and letters.

The most outstanding of them may be a 150-line historic song from 1476, *The Battle of Szabács*. Its unknown author wrote about King Matthias's famous act, the siege of the fortress of Szabács near the bank of the Sava River. This historic song was likely to have been written soon after the occupation of the fortress. In all probability it is a fragment of a longer poem. Earlier, it was considered to be a forgery because of its perfect metric features. However, modern research concluded that it might be an original work of art after all.

The oldest cursing was recorded in 1479. The Hungarians swore at their enemies, the Germans; they threatened them with the words “you drank

our blood before, but now we will drink your blood”. The cursing was attached to the text of the Latin Chronicle of Dubnica from 1479 as an embedded text.

The Bagonya healing curses from 1488 contain three superstitious folk curses. The first one was used for curing the ulcer of a “reddish horse”, the second one for curing the limping of a horse, and the third one for getting rid of the warts of a man called John.

The oldest memory of love poetry is the Sopron love song from 1490. In today’s reading it says: “Little flower, you have to know I must leave you. And I must wear mourning clothes because of you”.

During the time between the end of the 15th century and the battle of Mohács (29 August 1526), a lot of private letters, jurisdictional and other civilian documents were written. The most significant of these were the following:

The first Hungarian missile letter is from 1479–90. It was written by Aladár Várdai to his brother, Miklós Várdai. In his letter, Aladár ensured Miklós that his case was also supported by the voivode. Imre Török’s greetings in verse originate from 1485. The writer greeted his betrothed, Christina, in the postscript of a Latin letter. The first Hungarian invoice is András Vér’s safe-conduct from 1493. In this, András Vér admitted that his debtor, Blasius Erdőhegyi, had given him 20 forints from his 100-forint debt. The first will that survived is from 1507, and it was written by István Cseh, who had left his estate, mill and movable property to his wife and children. A rare memory of court literacy is a sentence from the court of honour from 1516. In this document, the state judges reconciled the governor of Croatia with the ban of Jajca, whom he had slandered.

Mária Drágffy’s list of dowry (from 1516) is a valuable document from a cultural and linguistic point of view. It contains a lot of words which do not exist today (names of jewellery, types of textiles). For example, *majc*, which meant “a ribbon weaved from gold and silver threads”; *násfa*, which meant “necklace”; *gíra*, which meant “the measurement of weight used for measuring gold and silver”; *futa*, which also meant “a type of textile”; *velez*, which meant “a type of textile”; *salfil*, which meant “saphire”.

A lot of private letters survived from the weeks before the defeat at Mohács. Ferenc Batthány’s letter to his wife, for instance, is a moving farewell letter, and his letter, to Ban Doroszlay, in which they apologise to each other, is also beautiful. Another outstanding example is Ilona Bocskay’s (she was head of a nunnery) letter to her nephew, István Bocskay, who died in the battle of Mohács. It was written before 19 August 1526. In this letter “Elena, a prioress from the Island of Rabbits”, asks her brother not to disturb the serfs of the church. The special feature of the letter is that it was not written by the sender but by Lea Ráskai, who lived in the Dominican nunnery on the Island of Rabbits and was a librarian there.



*Depiction of a bookcase
on the mural of the
church at Velemér*

Linguistic records indicate that the language system of the Late Old Hungarian period – regarding both vocabulary and grammar – was the subject of further development.

Vocabulary

One way of enriching vocabulary was for the old words to gain new meanings, especially the main parts of speech: verbs and nouns. For example, the word *atya* (father), which originally meant “father”, then “priest”, gained the meaning “God”. The words *úr* (gentleman) and *ember* (man) gained the new meaning “husband”; the word *fél* (half of something) began to mean “wife”. The meaning of words *galamb* (pigeon), *virág* (flower) enriched with the meaning “my love”, when addressing a beloved person. The word family of *nyomorodik*, *nyomorog*, *megnyomorít* (live a poverty-stricken life, lead a miserable life), which originate from the word “weigh, to put weight on something or someone”, got the new meaning of “to go into bankruptcy, suffer, destroy” at this time.

The group of words formed by word formation expanded significantly. Such words are: *böjtöl*, *búsít*, *borotvál*, *egyenget*, *egyezzik*, *fonnyad*, *bitel*, *ismeretes*, *könyörög*, *tilalom*, *társas*, *végső*, *végtelen* (the Hungarian equivalents of to keep a fast, make someone sad, to shave, to smooth out, to be identical, to fade, credit, to be known, to beg, ban, communal, final, and eternal). A lot of words which do not have an independent original root also date from this period. For example, *fojt*, *foldoz*, *gerjed*, *gömbölyű*, *göngyölt*, *bólyag*, *ismer* (the Hungarian words for to drown, to mend, to excite, round, to roll up, bladder, and to know). A lot of compound words also appeared at this time. For example, *atyafi* (son of someone), *baromfi* (chick of a hen), *bőkezű* (generous), *fenevad* (beast), *gondviselés* (divine grace), *holteleven* (scared to death) and *pártütés* (revolt). The nouns *folyosó* (corridor), *himlő* (plague), *lakó* (dweller) originate from verbs. The stock of onomatopoeic words formed by inner word formation also grew. Such words are *babuk* (hoopoe), *bibic* (northern lapwing), *borzad* (to be shocked), *borzas* (scruffy), *hopp* (jump!), *paskol* (to pat), and *karattyol* (to chatter).

In connection with the changes in economic and social life, and also due to peaceful or war-like relations with other peoples, a lot of loanwords were built into the language in this period. Slavic loanwords from this age are *vecsernye* (evening prayer), *barack* (peach), *cirok* (broomcorn), *gázol* (wade), *goromba* (rude), *hofnica* (a type of canon), *kolompár* (tinman), *rab* (captive). Latin loan words were related to religious life, as well as intellectual and material education. For example, *árguvál* (argue), *biblia* (Bible), *augusztus* (August), *cédula* (label), *forma* (form), *ciprus* (cypress), *cífra* (colourful), *cirkalom* (decoration), *cirkál* (circulate), *fáklya* (torch), *farizeus* (the Pharises), *flaska* (bottle), *grácia* (grace), and *iskola* (school).

German loanwords referred mainly to urban and court life and trades. For example, *cégér* (signboard), *céb* (guild), *cérna* (thread), *cél* (aim, goal), *böllér* (pig-slaughterman), *erkély* (balcony), *gúnár* (goose), *kapucni* (hood), *islóg* (a small shining metal plate used for decoration). Italian loanwords come from the vocabulary of military, court and urban life. Such words are *bástya* (bastion), *kandalló* (fire place), *falkonáta* (a light fire arm, or type of canon), *karazsia* (a type of thick textile), *trombita* (trumpet). From this period some Romanian loanwords have also survived: *bács* (the shepherd in charge), *cimbora* (mate, friend), *katrinca* (apron). There were loanwords from the period which later became widespread throughout Europe. These were *bank* (bank), *gránát* (a kind of precious stone), *garas* (goat), *kapitány* (captain), and *firis* (a piece of clothing).

Besides the group of verbs and nouns, smaller parts of speech – which are important in the grammatical structure of sentences – also developed. These were not loanwords; they originated from the Hungarian language itself. Such words (which were originally nouns with adverbial suffixes) are: *balra* (on/to the left), *nyomban* (immediately), *végre* (finally), *ősszel* (in autumn), *egyedül* (alone), *különben* (or else), *oldalt* (on the side), *örömet* (with pleasure), *nyilván* (obviously), *alattomban* (in secret). A lot of adverbs were formed by combining words. For example, *ahol* (where), *amikor* (when), *imígy* (like this), *ugyanottan* (at the same place), *valahol* (somewhere), *soha* (never), *sehol* (nowhere). Adverbs became pre- or postpositions of verbs. The adverbs *alá* (under), *elé* (in front of), *által* (by), *felül* (above), *egybe* (together), *össze* (together), *hátra* (back/wards), *ide* (here, towards this direction), *vissza* (back/wards) were already used as pre- or postpositions of verbs.

This period is a milestone in the development of conjunctions. Some conjunctions originated from adverbs, such as *visszont* (but, however), *tovább* (later on, and), *meg* (and), *azért, ezért* (for this/that reason, so), *így* (so /that/), *tehát* (so), and *aztán* (then). The words *bizzen* (< *hiszem* [I believe]) and *talán* (< *találom* [I find]) developed from conjugated verb forms. Several adverbs and participles became modifying words. For example, *bizony* (certainly), *inkább* (rather), *úgy* (that way, like that), *monnal* (as), *bátor* (let it be), *bezzeg* (in contrast), *íme* (see), *lám* (well, see), *nyilván* (obviously, surely). The sign of superlatives became the emphasis *-leg*, and the signs of comparative *-b/ bb*. The development of definite and indefinite articles was finalised in this period.

The development of proper nouns continued. The majority of proper nouns, which had earlier consisted of a single element, now contained two elements in the Late Old Hungarian period: a personal name and an adjective, which described a characteristic feature of the person. The structure of combinations for personal names are different in charters and other contemporary texts. The majority of the name combinations in charters are Latin structures: the adjective stands after the Christian name and it is connected to the name by the help of the Latin word *dictus* (said, named) or the preposition *de* (meaning “coming from”). Here are some examples from the Hungarian Charter Dictionary: Nicolai dicti Garazda, Valentini dicti Feketew, Ewden de Naghmyhal. Names without the Latin word: Johanna Galambos, Paulo Halaz, Johannes Kazdag.

In the textual records (codices, letters), the adjective elements stand before the name – in accordance with Hungarian word order. For example, in the Érdy Codex: Burgundyay Sygmond kyal (King Sigismund of Burgundy). These adjectives later became family names, which could be inherited. This process started among the nobles: Bekefy Janus, Lakosantalháza (in a place name). In medieval Hungarian letters personal names were referred to in this manner: Batthyany Ferenc, Ver Andras, Dragffy Janos. Among the lower social classes family names developed later, in the 16th–17th centuries. Place names were compound words. The traditions connected to giving names were the same as earlier traditions. Places were usually named after the patron saint of the church of the given place: Szentmárton, Szentimre, Szentgyörgy, Szentmihályúr. Another popular way of naming places was referring to the nationality of the dwellers: Magyarvég, Németegyház, Szászvég, Oroszfalu.

The Grammatical System

The changes in the grammatical system followed the previous trends. The most important phonetic changes (such as assimilation, lengthening, the simplification of diphthongs) had already been completed, or were about to be. Due to phonetic changes, the roots of words also changed. By the end of the period, the modern type roots, which are used today, had been created: one- and multi-form roots (for example, *ház*: *házat*, *kéz*: *kezet*, *varjú*: *varjak*, *ajtó*: *ajtaja*, *ökör*: *ökröt*, *lő*: *lövök*, *nyugodni*: *nyugszik*, *tesz*: *tevé*, *alszik*: *aludni*, *bó*: *havas*).

Page from the Peer
Codex with the depiction
of the human figure



The system of suffixes also widened. Besides the suffixes used earlier new, compound suffixes also appeared. For example, *-doz/-dez/-döz*, *-sít/-siül*, *-dokol/-dekel/-dököl*, *aszt/-eszt*, *-aml/-eml*, *-ós/-ős*, *-cska/-cske*, *-dad/-ded*, *-ika*, *-lat/-let*, *-ság/-ség*, *-zat/-zet*. The independent word *fi* (someone's son, boy), and *né* (someone's wife), from the word *nő* (woman) became a suffix. The possessive sign *-é* became a suffix making place names.

In conjugation, the rules of the usage of definite and indefinite conjugation (i.e. objective and subjective conjugation) also developed fully in this period. More tenses were used at that time than today. Events of the past were referred to by four different past tenses. In the narrative the *mene*, *lata* forms (approximately simple past) were used, while imperfect activities (imperfectum) were expressed by the *megy vala*, *lát vala* forms (past continuous). Completed actions in the past (perfectum) were expressed by *ment*, *látott* forms (simple past), and the past perfect was also used: *ment vala*, *látott vala*. Towards the end of the period, the most frequently used form was the perfectum (simple past *ment*, *látott*). Future events were expressed by present forms, the *-nd* forms (*menend*), or by a compound form: with the auxiliary verb *fog* (will) and the infinitive.

The usage of verb modality in compound sentences shows a strong Latin influence. The verbal subjects of clauses are in the conditional, following Latin rules. For example, in the Domokos Codex (in modern

spelling): “When he would have caught someone”; “He said that an altar would be set for him, who would be prayed for”; in the Margaret legend: “When he would have heard a lot of miracles about martyr Saint Thomas...”

The system of the inflection of nouns also develops: the number of adverbial suffixes increases. The suffixes *-szor/-szer/-ször*, *-nként/-nkéd*, *-stul/-stül*, *-lan/-len*, *-lag/-leg* became inflective suffixes at this time. The usage of the suffix of the adverb of place *-n*, *-on/-en/-ön* and that of the adverb of manner *-n*, *-an/-en* became separated. From among the versions of adverbial suffixes derived from postfixes (for example, *belé* ~ *-be*, *belől* ~ *-ből*) the shorter versions (*-ba/-be*, *-ból/-ből*) became general.

The system of sentences varies considerably in this period. All of today's sentence types were used, although we can find significant differences in the dissection of texts. We can hardly ever find punctuation marks in the texts. The most commonly used marks are the full stop and the comma. Question marks also appear during the period, however, exclamation marks are not used at all. The usage of the existing punctuation marks is also inconsistent.

There are a lot of adjectival predicates in the sentences, especially at the beginning of the period. For example (in today's spelling), in the Nádor Codex: “I'm to be resurrected”; in the Birk Codex: “it would be giving reason”; in the Book of Proverbs: “I'll be becoming dust”.

By the end of the period, predicates with participles are substituted by noun predicates. The agreement of subject and verb in number often follows Latin rules: the verb is the plural if the subject is an adjective of quantity or a number. The number of governing rules among the complements of the verb and participles increases. Considering nouns, the adjectives of quality are used to decorate the style and create an appropriate atmosphere there: “dreadful death”, “tough speech”, “sad saying”, “incredible pain” – these were often accumulated: “sweet spoken doctor Saint Bernard”, “sad and miserable hour”, “glittering and shining gold”. The usage of noun adjectives encouraged the process where certain nouns became adjectives. Such adjectives are *dús* (thick, rich [originally “senator”]), and *derék* (brave, good [originally “body, trunk”]).

The participle adjective *való* (being) is quite commonly used at the beginning of the period; for example, *messze való föld* (a land being very far), *hamar való időben* (a time being close). Later these were substituted by simpler adjectives. The agreement of structures with adjectives of quantity often shows Latin influence in the codices: the noun is in the plural. For example: three victims, three thousand warriors. This kind of agreement is very rare in letters.

In structures with possessive adjectives the suffixes *-nak/-nek* are often used: *Istennek félelme* (fear of God), *Úrnak szentje* (The Lord’s saint). There are a lot of structures with possessive personal pronouns: *én házám* (my house), *te anyád* (your mother). The reason for this is partly the Latin model for the usage of possessives, and partly the fact that they wanted to emphasize the person, the possessor. The number of structures with appositive complements also increases. Different versions of nouns can also be found in this period.

Adjectives can also have complements, which are always adverbs. The adverbs of adjectives are used to colour and decorate the style, for example, *igen jó, fölötté érdekes* (really good, very interesting). All kinds of subordinating and coordinating word structures are used. In compound sentences, all types of subordinating and coordinating clauses can be found. The system of compound sentences already existed in the ancient Hungarian period; in the Late Old Hungarian period their further development can be traced. Analysing the linguistic development of the period, we can state that the vocabulary is rich and colourful, and the grammatical system is firm and flexible.

The Flourishing of Hungarian Literature in Monasteries Between 1470 and 1530

The two literary phenomena of the second half of the 15th century were the adoption of Latin humanist literature and the development of Hungarian literature in monasteries. The latter was closely related to Latin church literature. Its literary significance is not in its originality, content, or independent aesthetic values, but rather in the effort the translators made, which encouraged the birth of a written Hungarian literary language within a couple of decades. At the same time, the opportunity to learn to read and write became available for those who could not speak Latin. The entire process was encouraged by the demands of a rather small social group: nuns who did not speak Latin, lay brethren who did the manual work and some enthusiastic secular people.

Before the middle of the 15th century, only very few Hungarian codices were prepared. Religious education, i.e. preaching, was carried out in the mother tongue from the outset. Law cases were tried in Hungarian too, but everything was recorded in Latin. Literate persons also spoke Latin, but churchgoers and legal clients were unlikely to even read Hungarian. Translations were made by word of mouth, so the language slowly developed, and it became adequate to express abstract theological ideas as well as juristic ones. The direct influence of Latin grammar was very strong as Latin texts were translated in writing word by word. The translation of the Francis legend made around 1370 (Jókai Codex, 1440)



highlights the difficulties: the Hungarian text is meaningless in several places due to the direct use of foreign grammatical structures, which do not exist in Hungarian.

The Hungarian Francis legend might have been translated for Franciscan friars whose Latin was very poor. The Bible translation, the so-called Hussite Bible (Vienna, Munich, Apoc Codex) was made in the first third of the 15th century, and its origin is debated. No other Hungarian codices are known from this period, but in any case, there might not have been more than a dozen. However, 40 codices survived from 1470–1530, most of them being copies. The preserved copies refer to 200–300 codices, which were destroyed, and this number shows the increased demand for literature in the mother tongue. From this time on, codices were made continuously, for a specific social group about a certain topic.

The quick development of Hungarian literature in monasteries was helped along by numerous factors. Several reforms were introduced during the 15th century to re-establish the strict discipline of monasteries, which had become lax by this time. For example, better quality education gained importance, where knowledge of the Latin language and literacy was compulsory. Nuns were supervised by “reformed” monks, who checked that principles were being observed in the nunnery, and they also mediated in the development of a new, personal religious devotion (*devotio moderna*). Nuns who did not speak Latin were not satisfied with common Latin offices, the text of which they did not understand, and they wanted to pray and meditate independently. The texts for these prayers were chosen and translated by monks, who learnt to read – some of them even to write – in Hungarian.

The Characteristic Features of Hungarian Literature in Monasteries

The content of the Hungarian texts was defined by the spiritual needs of the new readers. This was religious literature which encouraged spiritual growth, education, and devotion. These were not original works of art, but translations of Latin liturgical works. Hard-working translators and copiers made these texts available in Hungarian throughout a period of 50–60 years. Although the Latin sources had already appeared in print by this time, the hand-written Hungarian codices were always unique, individual collections. A lot of them had a mixed content. Some of the codices served whole monastic communities, and were read out aloud during meals or at the chapter room in the evenings. Others were made for personal use and private reading.

The Monastic Background of Codices

The majority (thirty-three pieces) of the codices, which are linguistic records as well, were the property of the two mendicant orders: the Franciscans and the Dominicans. The centre of the Hungarian Dominican Order was the famous St. Michael monastery in Pest, where the college of the order also operated. The nunnery on the Island of Rabbits (Margaret Island) might have been reformed from here too. In the name of the reforms, Pál Váci translated St. Augustine’s regulations and the resolutions of the order for the nuns in 1474. The fragments of the original manuscript of Pál Váci are called the Birk Codex. Under the supervision of the Dominican friars, the nunnery on the island became the main centre of collecting and copying Hungarian codices. On the opposite bank of the Danube

*Page from the Festetics
Codex with miniature
showing the Virgin
Mary and her child*



was the convent of the Poor Clares of Óbuda. This was supervised by a nearby monastery of the Marian Franciscans, who also provided them with Hungarian readings. The Poor Clares and Dominican nuns often lent codices to each other for copying.

The Paulines of Nagyvázsony donated two prayer books to the wife of their founder, Mrs Kinizsi, Benigna Magyar. One of these was the richly decorated Festetics Codex, made in 1493; the other was the Czech Codex from 1513. The Peer Codex, which probably contained prayers, also originated from the monastery of Vázsony. It was made for a secular customer. The Premonstratensian ordinary, the Lányi Codex (1518–19), is a book of instructions which describes the order of Latin services in Hungarian. It is the only book of instructions in the mother tongue in Europe. The Carthusian monastery of Lövöld was a very special place, where the Érdy Codex was written. The Carthusians did not have a nunnery and did not deal with the spiritual care of secular people either – still, the first significant codex writer emerged from their ranks, who was able to rise beyond the restrictions of orders and estates. He compiled a collection of sermons and legends sufficient for an entire year.

The Translators

The translators of codices were usually ordinary monks, about whom we know very little. According to the customs of the Middle Ages, they did not even record their own names. Pál Váci, Magister of Theology, was identified only later as the translator of the Birk Codex, based on references in the history of the order. The other translator who is known by name is András Nyújtódi from the Székely Land. He was a Franciscan friar, who translated the Book of Judith in the Bible into Hungarian for his sister who was a nun called Judit. Nyújtódi named himself in the heartfelt dedication written to his

Érdy Codex



sister. The Székelyudvarhely Codex was his work. The unknown Bible translator of the Jordánszky Codex used an unusually personal tone when claiming that he did not understand a part of the Second Book of Moses, and at the end of the fifth book he was relieved and asked the readers to pray for him.

The Only Conscientious Author, the Carthusian Anonym

The above mentioned Érdy Codex was not just the literal translation of a completed Latin work, but a collection especially made for Hungarian readership. It is not only the planned structure of the text which indicates the purposefulness of the author, but also a longer and a shorter Hungarian preface. In the Latin prologue, the author declared for whom and why he compiled his work, and besides this he provided important details about himself, although he did not mention his own name. The author known in literary historiography as the Carthusian Anonym wanted to provide useful readings for nuns and lay brethren of various orders in the face of the threatening Lutheran heresy. He translated the sermons and relevant parts of the gospels for all the feasts and holy days, then he added long commentaries to them and provided the legend of the relevant saint at every fest day of saints. The final version of this work prepared over several years is known as the Érdy Codex (1526).

The Copiers

Copiers were often monks, but there were some nuns as well, who could both read and write. The most famous copier was Lea Ráskai, who produced five codices (The Legend of St. Margaret 1510, Book of Examples 1510, Cornides Codex 1514–19, St. Dominic's life 1517, Horváth Codex 1522). She was a nun from the Island of Rabbits, who was not just a simple copier of books, but often made comments on the text, and in her clauses, she often referred to the local or national event of the given year. She may also have been the librarian of the nunnery. Márta Sövényházi also lived in that nunnery. St. Catherine of Alexandria's legend in verse in the Érsekújvár Codex was preserved in her handwriting. Nuns often jotted down emotionally loaded words next to the text being copied, even complaining of headaches occasionally.

Codices, Genres, Works

The academic value of the codices, which are also linguistic sources, was recognised only at the beginning of the 19th century, when their systematic collection and publication began. They usually acquired their names at that time too: some of them were named after the place where they were kept (Debrecen Codex), some after their content (Domokos Codex), some after their owners (Lobkowitz Codex) or the person who discovered them (Czech Codex). Names were needed because they did not have titles – in accordance with medieval customs –, and it would have been impossible to identify them according to their genres only (such as prayer books), as there were several codices with similar contents. In addition to this, the majority of the manuscripts have a mixed content. For example, the lengthy Érsekújvár Codex contains parts of the gospels, sermons, short parables and legends, as well as essays. Texts of different genres are only connected by the fact that they were all supposed to be read out loud. However, different genres in a piece of work could evolve into a meaningful unit, such as in the above mentioned Érdy Codex.

About Bible Translations

Readings from the Bible could be found in different versions in our linguistic records. A systematic but incomplete Bible translation was the Hussite Bible. Another systematic translation, although its adaptation of the Old Testament was rather poor, was the Jordánszky Codex (1516–19). Monks read the Bible from beginning to end in Latin once a year as part of their evening office. There was no regular Bible reading in the mother tongue, and historic books were hardly ever used for private prayers. Pericope and psalm translations were more popular than continual Bible translations. Pericopes are readings of the Mass: the sermon and the gospel. Nuns regularly heard these texts in Latin, and even though they were familiar with the sermons and the stories from the preacher's interpretation, they must have been keen on listening to them again in Hungarian in the chapter room.

Psalms were recited in Latin weekly, without being understood. Translations of psalms helped people to understand the texts already known by heart, and immerse into the spirit of these wonderful prayers. We can find the translations of 150 psalms and the relevant breviary psalms and Bible songs in the Döbrentei (1508), Keszthely (1522) and Kulcsár (1539) codices, in addition to the Apor Codex. A series of pericopes for the entire year can be found in the Érdy Codex, Döbrentei Codex and Székelyudvarhely Codex. Sometimes a whole book of the Bible was translated independently, for example in the case of Judit Nyújtódi. Such translations are the Song of Songs in the Döbrentei Codex, which was often used as a source of songs in the office and a very popular mystic text in the allegorical sense. In wedding songs, the groom represents Christ and the bride symbolises the Church.

*Hail Mary, altarpiece
from Szepesbely
ca. 1480*



Sermons

The knowledgeable preacher used Latin drafts of sermons including quotations from the Bible and references to highly respected church persons as the sources of his sermons in the mother tongue. Additional content was included in live speech. In some of the codices we can find sermons (for example, in the Cornides Codex, Érsekújvár Codex and Horváth Codex), but we also have two systematic collections of sermons combined with legends (these are the Érdy Codex and the Debrecen Codex). These sermons were supposed to be read out, and as far as their roles were considered, they were quite close to the genre of essay (tracts) and reflection. The direct translations (such as the speech of Dorothy from Pelbárt Temesvári's sermon in the Cornides Codex) are rather tedious because the sources are mainly drafts.

However, the Carthusian Anonym – whose source was also Pelbárt Temesvári – compiled his speeches independently, making his texts highly readable.

Treatises, Reflections

The most popular topics of treatises (in the medieval sense of the word: morals, explanations) were, for example, monastic virtues and sins, the joys of Heaven and the tortures of Hell, the Last Judgement, conscience and prayer. Their sources, among others, were the regulations of the great Franciscan theologian and Minister General, St. Bonaventure (†1274) and his treatise *Concerning the Perfection of Life* (Teleki, Vitkovics, Debrecen, Lobkowitz and Veszprémy codices), then one of the greatest mystic works, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis (Debrecen Codex, Lobkowitz Codex) and the German mystic, Henricus Suso's (†1471) dialogue between Wisdom and the Disciple, entitled *Horologium Sapientiae* (Nagyszombat Codex). The only tract, the original version of which was also made in Hungary, was the *Booklet about the Honours of the Saint Apostles*. This systematic booklet, full of twists, contains a witty, lively debate among the apostles, as well as a quotation from Dante and the first Hungarian hexametric line.

Legends and Parables

The church was aware of the immense value of the legends and miracles of the saints, for the way they influenced people. Therefore they read out these legends in the offices not only at feasts but also at the table during mealtimes. The life of the founder of the order was an example for most of the members. Besides the Jókai Codex, two other codices also contain the legend of St. Francis; these are the Simor Codex, copied for the Poor Clares of Óbuda, and the Virginia Codex, made for the Dominican nuns of the Island of Rabbits. The Dominican Lea Ráskai copied the life and miracles of St. Dominic in 1517 (Domokos Codex). The example of the saint of the nunnery, Margaret, would have been even more relevant and convincing for the nuns (Margaret legend).

Shorter legends appeared in several codices, but only in the Érdy Codex and Debrecen Codex do they follow one another in the order of the feasts of the saints. The sanctorale of the Érdy Codex embraces a full year, and the main source of the legends is the most popular collection of legends of the Middle Ages, the *Legenda Aurea*. However, the Carthusian Anonym used other sources in addition to this one. He was the first to put down in writing the legends of Hungarian saints in Hungarian. The sanctorale of the Debrecen Codex is very rich, but unfortunately it is not complete. Most of the legends originate from the collection known as *Catalogus Sanctorum*. The most popular saint must have been the ascetic ideal, St. Alexius, whose legend has survived in six Hungarian codices. The parables (*exemplum*) constituted an independent genre. They are short, complete stories with a religious or moral message. They are often used in sermons and treatises, as they help to make abstract ideas understandable, while entertaining the listeners or readers. A rich collection of allegories is the Book of Parables.

Prayer Books

Unlike teaching genres, prayer is the direct method of speaking to God. One can pray in a community (for example, during Mass or offices, the recitation of psalms also belongs here) or personally. Prayer books were used for personal prayers. There are nine codices from Hungary which contain prayers (the most significant ones are the Festetics, Winkler, Peer and Kriza codices). They were all made for private individuals, some of whom were secular people. The Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria and the Credo are translations from the age of the Árpád dynasty, which were formed in live speech. The source of these thanksgiving prayers to Christ, Mary and the Holy Ghost must have been a Latin prayer book, known as the *Hortulus Animae* (The Garden of Soul) in most of the cases. The series of prayers attributed to the Swedish founder of the Bridgettines, St. Brigitte (†1344), containing fifteen prayers, were translated from this book. This series of prayers survived in eight different codices. Petrarch's seven repentance psalms (Festetics Codex) are among the most beautiful prayers.

Church Poetry – Legend in Verse

The translations of Latin hymns primarily helped to make the text comprehensible; they were not used for singing or liturgic purposes but were read as prayers. Although the poem was separated from the tune, some translators tried to keep the number of syllables and the Latin forms of verse. The hymn translations of the Döbrentei and Festetics codices are the best ones (for example, the hymn of St. Ambrose: *Veni Redemptor Gentium* [Come, Saviour of Nations], or *Ave Maris Stella* [Hail Star of the Sea] from an unknown author). András Vásárhelyi's song for the Virgin Mary is not a translation, but an independent poem to be sung. The name of the poet can be read out from the first letters of the verses, and the date and place of the song (cantilena) was preserved in the last verse (Pest, 1508). The most beautiful example of Hungarian poetry from the end of the Middle Ages is St. Catherine of Alexandria's



*Death of the Virgin Mary, altarpiece from
Berki with figures holding prayer books*

legend in verse, which is composed of 4,074 lines.

Secular Poetry

The “St. Ladislaus song” was written in two languages: Hungarian and Latin. This poem is at the borderline of church and secular lyrics. The melody of this beautiful, well-structured song has also survived and was composed in half ten lines. The author of the first Hungarian satire was Ferenc Apáti. In his “Cantilena” he described Hungarian society before the defeat at Mohács, and his name was preserved in the first letters of the verses. The oldest example of Hungarian love poetry is a two-line fragment called the “Love song of Sopron” from 1490. The “Körmöcbánya dance” (1505) is a fragment of erotic mocking poetry. The poem entitled “The Battle of Szabács” (*Szabács viadala*, 1476) is a poem of 150 lines describing one of King Matthias’s military victories, and for a long time, it used to be considered a forgery. The rhyming pattern is precise, and it contains couplet rhymes, which are often perfectly formed. By the end of the Middle Ages, a new type of literary language was born, which was on the one hand capable of expressing abstract ideas, and on the other hand, it was composed of Hungarian lyrics independent of the Latin language.

LATIN LITERATURE

Kornél Szovák

Historical Background

The end of the Middle Ages in Hungary was the period when literary culture was divided along two main concepts: language and ideals. Compared to previous periods, the number of literary memories in Hungarian significantly increased, but Latin literature was still dominant. The ideals divided Latin literature on the inside: on the one hand, there were still works composed according to the characteristic features of the medieval Latin language and medieval thinking, but on the other, humanist literature also appeared, which followed the Latin traditions of the Antiquity concerning both linguistic norms and styles, and focused on respect for the individual. The traditional High Latin literature produced new genres, and the number of the representatives of these genres also increased. Juristic literature and sermons flourished, and the significance of these genres lay in the fact that they transferred and represented the most important models for Hungarian literacy and literary thinking.

In the last century of the Middle Ages, it was not only the humanist ideals that introduced novel concepts, but the structure of society and its values also changed. The number of secular jurists increased, who – as a group of literate people – encouraged the democratisation of literature. Religious forms also went through transformations, with individual religiosity gaining ever greater importance, and this fact had a major influence on the content of literature. So, it can be said that Humanism exerted its influence on two major levels, the more important one beyond doubt being the lower level. Thanks to the universities of Vienna and Krakow, more and more people had access to education and, at the end of the 15th century, the majority of Hungarian students attended these two universities as they were within easy reach. With the increase in the productivity of paper mills, we know of an increasing number of secular people living in the countryside who, occasionally or as their occupation, copied books, so the possession of books became possible for a wider public. The first book traders appeared in Buda, and in 1473, András Hess set up the first printing press with the encouragement of László Karai, the provost of Óbuda. Associations were formed, whose aim was to educate; in addition, they also established and maintained libraries. Such associations were the Deák Association in Igló (*Fraternitas Litteratorum*) and the Brotherhood of the 24 royal parish priests of Szepes. In cities, secular believers formed associations or religious unions around their altars, where they could study the values of ecclesiastical culture.

Bookcase with trompe l'œil intarsia from the choir stall of the Church of the Friars Minor in Nyírbátor



Historiography

We suspect the influence of Humanism to be behind the fact that the great synthesis of earlier Hungarian chronicle literature was born at the end of the Middle Ages in Hungary, which was then studied and read by the upcoming generations for centuries. The author was János



Decorative page from
Thuróczy's *Chronicle*
with Attila, king
of the Huns

Thuróczy, a notary at the office of the judge royal, and he started his work to supplement earlier chronicles on the advice of his superior, István Hásságyi. First, based on the poem of Lorenzo de Monaci, he added Little Charles's story to written Hungarian historiography. Then he rewrote the Hun history encouraged by his superior, Tamás Drági, chief justice of Hungary, who employed him as a protonotary. He then started to rewrite and supplement a 14th-century chronicle, to which he added János of Küküllő's work about King Louis I's life. Finally, he recorded the period between the death of Little Charles and Matthias's accession to the throne, and he also made a draft of the historical events leading up to his own age. In 1488, he had his own works printed in two editions, and he also added Magister Rogerius's historic work as an appendix.

When János Thuróczy wrote his work *Chronica Hungarorum* (Chronicle of the Hungarians), he used his knowledge from his readings – as well as earlier Hungarian chronicles, of course. He used several sources, quoting from antique authors and modern ones, such as Pope Pius II. He knew and used the correspondence of his contemporaries, the charters issued at the chancellery and oral traditions as well. His chronicle is different from those of his predecessors. His common noble origins were quite influential in his theory of society which can be read in the text of his work: he underlined the power of the common nobility in shaping society (Simon of Kéza's Hun theory), and he was unconditionally loyal to the Hunyadi family. He thought King Matthias was the ideal prince, whose honourable predecessor was the figure of Attila, the king of the Huns. According to Thuróczy, history is not formed purely by God's will, but fate and destiny also interfere. He thought his subject, the history of the Hungarian people, was more important than the history of ruling families, so he supplemented his work with accounts of the great deeds of noble lords, the conflicts of baronial leagues and peasants' revolts. The readable style of his Latin story-telling met the demands of contemporary expectations of the chancellery: he liked similes and descriptions of nature, episodes, and the taste of chivalric literature. His influence could be explained by his talent as a writer.

Church History

It was typical of the historiography of the age that with the strengthening of the self-awareness of monastic orders, the monks' interest turned towards their immediate and distant past. In the Pauline Order, which was founded in Hungary, for example, Mark Dombrói had already started to keep the annals of the order and the study of historical material in the second half of the 15th century. The results of these works were incorporated into the work of Gergely Gyöngyösi, general of the Pauline Order, titled *Vitae Fratrum* [The Lives of the Brethren], which was left incomplete at the beginning of the 16th century. Later it was finished by a fellow monk of Gyöngyösi, Bálint Hadnagy, but the history of the Pauline Order remained in manuscript, although it was outstanding among similar works regarding both its length and quality. Gyöngyösi studied authentic sources, compiling a list of charters that were important for the history of the order. Balázs Szalkai, an Observant Franciscan prior provincial, started to compile the chronicle of his order in the middle of the century, which was later continued by others,

such as Osvát Laskai. In monastic historiography, there was a certain interest in the history of literature. For example, Balázs Szalkai dealt with the question of the translation of the Hussite Bible, and Gergely Gyöngyösi wrote about the poet Adalbert Csanádi.

Memoirs

There were few memoirs written in the Middle Ages. Among these, linguistically and in its depictions, the most significant piece was Martin Leibici's work. He was born in Szepes County, and his mother tongue was German. He studied at the universities of Krakow and Vienna, after which he joined the Benedictine Order in Subiaco during a pilgrimage to Rome and then spent the rest of his life in the Benedictine Scottish Abbey in Vienna. Between 1446 and 1462 he was the abbot there, and he died in 1464. He recorded the events of his life, of the monastery and his chosen homeland, Austria, in the form of a fictitious dialogue. In the dialogue called *Senatorium*, he answered the questions of his younger self (*iuventis*) as a wise old man (*senex*). He highlighted his experiences in Hungary as a child. He gave a uniquely interesting picture of late medieval monastic culture in his lively memoirs. The author had close ties to the leading figure of the reform movement in the Church, Nicolaus Cusanus, upon whose encouragement he wrote some works about the reforms of the Benedictine Order.

Juristic Literature and Literacy

The first scientific synthesis of customary law regulating the life of medieval Hungary was made by István Werbőczy in the first decade of the 16th century. Having been commissioned by King Vladislav II and encouraged by the Hungarian nobility, the author started to compile his material for his law book. He finished it in 1514 and called it *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary in Three Parts*. The *Tripartitum* is divided into a prologue and three main parts. The parts are divided into titles, the titles into paragraphs. In the prologue, the author defines the basic concepts of law, the differences between the technical expressions of customary and Roman law, and the relationship of law and customs. The first part describes the rights of possession for the nobility, the second part summarises civil procedure, and the third part is about the juristic traditions in Transylvania and Slavonia. In the letter of dedication added to the work, the author describes the conditions of the birth of his work, its significance, and his own juristic and scientific intentions, in the style of Viennese humanists. His sources were the charters of the royal chancellery, earlier laws, records of sentences and living unwritten law.

Although the influence of Roman law can undoubtedly be felt in his work, its basis was the aspects of canon law. Werbőczy built up his work with the help of scholastic systematic methods, which were reflected in his language. Even though he denies the independence of his work, he absorbed the elements of the ideas of the common nobility into it. His most important theory was the complete equality of all nobles. According to this, juristically there is no difference between the noblemen of the different noble classes, and fundamental noble rights should be the privilege of

*Edition of Werbőczy's
Tripartitum from 1565*



every nobleman, be he a petty nobleman, common nobleman or a baron (this was the so-called *primae nonus* or *una eademque nobilitas*). He asserted this theory by historic precedents taken from János Turóczy's chronicle. His other important theory was the so-called Holy Crown Theory, which he developed from the doctrine of the crown – emerging since the 13th century – and the organic theory of the Hungarian state. He also emphasised the Hungarian king's right of patronage. Although the *Tripartitum* never became an official law book, its influence in modern Hungary could be compared only to that of the Bible. It was translated into several languages, including Hungarian, Croatian and German, therefore it became the means of the development of Hungarian literary and juristic language.

The Law Book of Újlak

The market town of Újlak had once been in the possession of the Újlaki family, who originated from Syrmia. In 1524, it came under the direct authority of the king. The citizens of this prospering town – it was a place of pilgrimage because of John of Capistrano's tomb – turned to the king himself and asked him to make Újlak a free royal town. First there were seven, then eight such free royal towns in Hungary. The king supported this idea, and on 13 December 1525 he issued the law book of

Ruins of the Benedictine abbey at Somogyvár, cloister



Újlak (in the form of a codex bound in velvet), which adopted the law of Buda in many cases, and was translated into Latin. Even though the law book did not contain all the privileges of free royal towns, it encouraged the freedom and economic position of the citizens of Újlak. The law book is divided into five books, and the books into chapters. It is certainly a unique piece of the juristic codification activity of the Late Middle Ages, as it recorded the rights of towns. However, the citizens of Újlak hardly had a chance to enjoy their privileges, as in the following year they were forced to flee from the weapons of the Ottoman conquerors.

Literacy was spreading and it increased the demand for it. An indication of this process was that more

and more books of formulae were compiled, which were to summarise the rules of letter writing and provide templates for offices. János Magyi compiled a collection from the samples of the royal chancellery under the title of *Stylus Cancellariae* [The Style of the Chancellery]. At the same time, the work of credible places in chapters and monasteries was also made easier with the appearance of a collection of sample chapter letters, made after 1521, and the formulae book of Somogyvár, which was compiled between 1460 and 1480, probably by the secular clerk of the Benedictine convent of Somogyvár. The Franciscan book of formulae, compiled in the first decades of the 16th century, is a significant collection, as it reflects the dynamic structure of the order, and it showed the process of how remarkably quickly the Observant Franciscans organised the army of crusaders, which eventually turned against their lords in 1514. Although these books of formulae preserved old, fixed forms, modern humanist ideas and the relevant style of Latin began to spread in the royal chancellery.

Travelogues

Travelogues had been a highly popular literary genre since ancient times, which relied on ancient models itself. The oldest account by a Hungarian author, which, at the same, is the last account of a journey to the Holy Land before the Battle of Mohács, was written in the decade preceding the catastrophe of Mohács. The author was an Observant Franciscan friar, Gábor (Gabriel) Pécsváradi, who set out for a pilgrimage in 1514 and spent three years in the Franciscan monastery of Jerusalem on Mount Zion before returning to Hungary. Being away on his journey, he missed the events of the peasants' revolt in Hungary, which forced the members of the Franciscan Order to come to a serious decision. After his return home, he published his book in Vienna in 1519, in which he summarised his experiences in the Holy Land in Latin. This popular, highly readable piece of work, titled *Compendiosa quaedam; nec minus lectu iocunda descriptio urbis Hierusalem* [A Short and Pleasant Description of the City of Jerusalem], provided the readers with important travel information, listed the sights and the possible periods of indulgence to be gained at shrines. The outstanding value of his work lay in the fact that he was a witness, and he even measured the dimensions of holy places with Hungarian units of measure.

Hungarian authors were the first to report on the internal conflicts of the Ottoman Empire. In Gábor Pécsváradi's work we can read a unique account of Sultan Selim I's campaign in 1516–17, where he was an eye-witness. Friar George of Hungary – or as he was formerly known, the Anonymous of Szászsebes – became very popular throughout Europe. As a student at the Dominicans of Szászsebes, the author was captured by the Turks in Transylvania in 1438. He penned his memories and the experiences he gained throughout twenty years of captivity in Latin, in Rome, titled *Incipit probemium in Tractatum de moribus condictionibus et nequicia Turcorum* [Essay about the Traditions, Circumstances and Cruelties of the Turks]. It was so well received that it was published seven times between 1480 and 1514 and was also translated into German. He gave a detailed description of the world of the conquering Ottomans and the miserable life of their prisoners. He was very objective, respecting and accepting the religious patience and humanity of the Muslims.



*Turkish slave market,
woodcut by Erhard
Schön*

Theological Literature

The most original author of medieval Hungarian theological literature was Andreas Pannonius, a member of the Carthusian Order of silent monks. Although he spent his life in Italian monasteries, as a former warrior of János Hunyadi he never lost interest in his homeland. He dedicated one of his works to King Matthias. His most outstanding work was a commentary to the Song of Songs, which was written in 1460, but he continuously worked on it until his death. Within the boundaries of scholastic and mystic viewpoints, he created a uniquely original piece of work, which brought great respect for Hungarian theological literature. Nicolaus de Mirabilibus was a member of the Dominican Order, who also spent the best part of his life in Italy. However, from 1494 he became the prior of the Hungarian province of the order. During his years in Italy, where he worked as a lecturer at a university and as a preacher, he wrote an essay on conscience in Italian, then a Latin work on predestination. Both authors used an enormous amount of theological source material for their works.

Sermons

Sermons constitute a special genre of church literature: on the one hand, they serve religion and education, and on the other, they provide the basis for the development of literature in the mother tongue. Collections appeared partly anonymously, and some already with an indication of the names of the authors. Between 1456 and 1470, a priest from the region of Pécs compiled a collection entitled *Sermones Dominicales* [Sunday Sermons], which was based mainly on the preaching of Jacobus de Voragine. His work spread in manuscripts with Hungarian glosses. Compiling collections of sermons flourished and became significant throughout Europe in the mendicant orders, especially among the

Pelbárt Temesvári on the cover page of his work, Pomerium, 1502



Observant Franciscans in the second half of the 15th century. Pelbárt Temesvári collected his sermons for his fellow monks in the order, and he planned his texts as drafts, not as speeches. He built up his preaching according to a scholastic logical order, and he supported his reasoning with enormous quantities of quotations from church fathers and medieval experts. To capture the attention of the audience and illustrate the subject, he used moral parables from his own life, or other collections of parables.

Pelbárt Temesvári's younger peer was Osvát Laskai. He also published hundreds of sermons. In the prologue of his collection of Sunday sermons, he informed the readers that his aim was to help village priests and educate simple people. He emphasised the consciousness of the individual and his commitment to ideas. In contrast to Temesvári, his speeches were original owing to his sensitivity to social and national consciousness. He often criticised wealthy social groups that did not make any sacrifices for holy purposes, and he tried to protect the poor in his principles. As a new element of national consciousness, developing since the 13th century, he extended the Hun–Hungarian identity to the whole nation and declared that the Hungarian nation was the shield of Christian Europe. He drew attention to the Ottoman threat and the internal ethnic–religious divide of the country. He intended to strengthen the identity of the members of the order when he undertook to continue the Franciscan chronicle, and he researched

the heroic life of John of Capistrano. The works of the two Franciscan authors were published in several editions, and had a major influence in Europe.

Hagiography

When John of Capistrano died on 23 December 1456 in the cell of the Franciscan monastery of the market town of Újlak in Syrmia, an enormous crowd of people set out on a pilgrimage to his catafalque, and many more people came after the funeral. There were a lot of miraculous recoveries among people seeking a cure for their illnesses at the tomb of the Franciscan, who was revered as a saint. The authorities of the town had these miracles recorded in minutes in 1460, with the intention of encouraging the canonisation of John of Capistrano. The pilgrims attributed 389 recoveries and ten miraculous escapes from Turkish captivity to the merits and mediation of the venerated Franciscan brother, or the oaths taken at his tomb. Apart from the list of miracles at Újlak, Péter Soproni, a Franciscan friar, tried to summarise the miracles linked to John of Capistrano, and there are references that Osvát Laskai wrote his biography. Laskai's work was lost, but Péter Soproni's work appeared in print in 1523.

The relics of St. Paul of Thebes, the First Hermit, patron saint of the Pauline Order, were brought to Budaszentlőrinc at the end of the 14th century, and consequently the central monastery of the Paulines also became a destination of pilgrimages. There were a lot of miracles among people who hoped for a recovery from their illnesses by praying at the relics, and these miracles were collected and published in print by Bálint Hadnagy in Krakow in 1507. The well-known Pauline author also dealt with publishing the biography of St. Paul the Hermit, which was finally completed in 1511 in Venice. Thus, the late medieval hagiographic literature had a two-fold aim: they wanted to emphasise Christian consciousness with the ideal of the hero saint, who had died in the struggle against the Turks, and they wanted to strengthen monastic self-awareness through ancient Christian examples. For both purposes, they used the most modern means to spread literature: book printing. A collection, the aim of which was to publish the legends of Hungarian saints not included in the *Legenda Aurea* (titled the *Legenda Sanctorum Hungariae*), was published several times after the first edition in Strasburg in 1486.



*Keystone depicting
St. Paul of Thebes,
the Hermit from Buda*

Scientific and Educational Literature

Archbishop László Szalkai of Esztergom, who came from a commoner family, was one of the most educated and eloquent prelates of his era, and he also wrote poetry and sermons. He did not study at foreign universities but in the Augustine school of Sárospatak. The memories of his student years at Sárospatak were the school notes of the future archbishop. Under the rectorship of baccalaureus Johannes Kisvárdai in 1489–90, he recorded the only school book of music theory in medieval Hungary, which could have been used at any of the contemporary universities for its quality. Besides music theory, the Szalkai Codex contains notes about astronomy, church law and rhetoric, but these are less independent works. At the end of the 15th century, in Germany, George of Hungary – who gained a magister's degree at one of the universities – compiled a handbook of arithmetic. In his work, he used

Depiction of the legend of St. Ladislaus in Thuróczy's Chronicle

money from around the Utrecht region, but in the appendix, he also gave the rates of exchange of Hungarian money. His work was printed in 1499.

Poetry

The appearance of Humanism was strongly felt in the forms and content of poetry. Liturgical poetry was still popular, but the characteristic features of this genre became rather the Hungarian language and the insistence on antique forms. The authors of liturgical poetry were, of course, monks, primarily Paulines. Antonius de Tata, the preacher of the Budaszentlőrinc monastery, who published a Pauline service book and a breviary containing the texts of the office in the 1470s, studied at the University of Vienna. His peer in the order, Adalbert Csanádi, who was described in Gregorius Gyöngyösi's history of the order as an outstanding preacher, wrote hymns about angels and angelic messages for the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed

Virgin Mary. Besides these, he wrote the verse-prayer of the patron saint of the order, St. Paul the Hermit, in hexametric lines, under the influence of Humanism. The accompanying hymns were written in Sapphic stanzas.

The “St. Ladislaus Song”, written by an unknown author in Late Gothic style, might have originated from the 1460s or 1470s. The author added new content to the elevated hymnic form: in connection with the figure of Ladislaus, he referred to the “royal successor of the Huns”, which must have reminded his contemporaries of Attila, the king of the Huns. It helped to spread the Hun–Hungarian identity, which can also be found in Osvát Laskai's sermons, and the works of János Thuróczy and István Werbőczy. Political aspects lured the author into using anachronistic elements. For example, the hero had to fight against the Ottoman Turks and Hussite heresy. In this way, the hymn of the saint king became a means of supporting King Matthias, but it does not diminish the literary value of the work. Its Hungarian translation was a real artistic work itself. Despite its weaknesses, it proved that Medieval Latin was the nurse of literature in the mother tongue.



HUMANIST LITERATURE

Klára Pajorin

The Preliminaries of the Appearance of Humanism in Hungary

At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, a new Late Medieval movement appeared in Florence, the aim of which was to renew the Latin language – which had declined in the Middle Ages – on the basis of newly discovered Antique sources. It also wished to renew the whole culture. This spiritual trend was called Humanism as it was initiated by the humanists; or Renaissance, as its aim was to encourage the “rebirth of literature” (*renascentes litterae*). It opened a new phase in European culture, having created the basis of modern education. It grew and developed in the 15th century in Italy, where the people considered themselves the true heirs of ancient Rome and the Latin language. It also gained ground in other European countries in the 16th century, and as far as literature was concerned, it encouraged the use of national vernaculars.

Hungary encountered the new culture relatively early, compared to other European countries. King Sigismund’s Buda castle, which was also an imperial residence, was frequently visited by outstanding humanists (for example Francesco Filelfo, Ambrogio Traversari) as Italian envoys. Hungarian scholars were also able to get acquainted with humanist ideas and their representatives (such as Poggio Bracciolini), when they accompanied the king on his trips to international forums, especially at councils. The Hungarians who studied in Italy, and the Italians who got their high social status from King Sigismund (such as Scolari of Florence) also had a profound influence on Hungarian culture. The great humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio also played a significant role in the transplanted of Humanism. In his last years, he had been one of the closest friends of János Vitéz.

János Vitéz, the “Father of Hungarian Humanism”

János Vitéz, who called himself Ioannes de Zredna after his birthplace, started his career in King Sigismund’s chancellery, then he gradually rose to the peak of secular and ecclesiastical life in Hungary (becoming King Matthias’s lord chancellor and archbishop of Esztergom). Although he had no formal humanist education, he taught himself throughout his life. His knowledge was outstanding in many respects among his contemporaries, and besides his literary works, he also engaged in astronomy and astrology, history, moral philosophy, and philology. He corrected (emendated) his own Latin codices. He was a very close friend and colleague of the “apostle of Central European Humanism”, Enea Silvio Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II). He supervised the education of the Hunyadi sons and played a key role in making Matthias king of Hungary. However, later he led a plot against Matthias, and died in 1472.

We do not know of any independent literary ambitions of Vitéz; most of his letters and rhetoric speeches were made out of necessity concerning his political career. His *Epistolae* was the first Hungarian scholarly work from the age of Humanism, written in collaboration with Pál Ivanich. The most important topic of his rhetoric speeches (orations) was to encourage his audience to join forces against the Turks, which was also the greatest concern of his fellow humanists in Italy. This was supplemented with the description of the sufferings of the Hungarian people and their willingness to make sacrifices. He also asked for help from the peoples of Europe. In both genres of his writings, Vitéz; mixed medieval type rhetoric with humanist elements, such as adoptions and paraphrases from his earlier readings. In

Portrait of János Vitéz
in the miniature of the
Tribrachus Codex

Hungary, his works were considered exemplary, and foreigners also appreciated them.

Worried about the lack of education among his fellow patriots, János Vitéz took the responsibility upon himself to spread, organise and support humanist culture in Hungary. His bishopric library in Várad was often visited by foreigners, and he gathered a humanist library in Esztergom, setting the example for King Matthias's library, the *Bibliotheca Corviniana*. He also supported the foundation of the first Hungarian book printing house and established a university in Pozsony, called *Universitas Istropolitana*. He supported many foreign humanists – especially Italians – who came to see him and who wrote and dedicated works to him. He formed the precedents of Hungarian humanist academies in Várad, then in Esztergom. He sent several talented young men to study in Italy, who received high positions back in Hungary with his help. Among them were three notable poets: Péter Garázda and László Vetési, and his famous nephew, Janus Pannonius.



Janus Pannonius

Janus Pannonius (his original name was János Chesmiczei) was the first outstanding figure in Hungarian literature, the founder of Hungarian secular poetry based on literary education and the first celebrated figure of European humanist poetry outside Italy. He was born into a noble family in 1434 in Chesmicze, in Slavonia. He studied in Ferrara, in Guarino Veronese's school (1447–54), at the expense of his famous uncle, János Vitéz. Later he studied law in Padua. After his return home (1458), he followed a successful career: he became the bishop of Pécs, King Matthias's chief treasurer and the ban of Slavonia. When he was forced to flee – owing to his participation in the plot against the king – he fell ill and died in 1472 in Medvevár. He was known for his translations of poems and prose from Greek into Latin, and he was a significant representative of humanist letter writing.

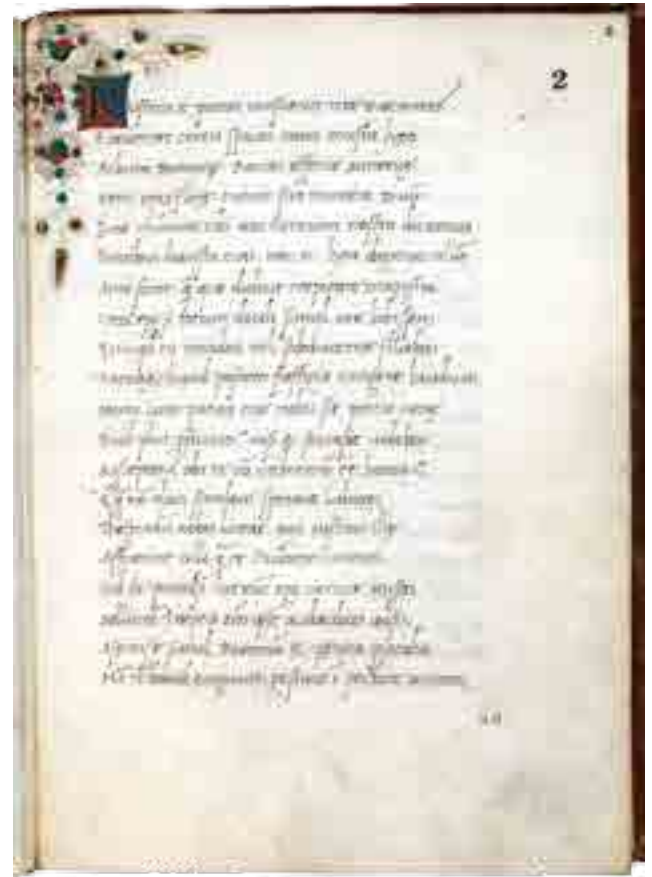
During his school years in Ferrara, Janus Pannonius was prominent in poetry and became famous in Italy; as he himself wrote he was “the first of Pannonia to be honoured”. He wrote elegies and panegyrics (cf. Claudius Claudianus), but his most famous works were his skilful, sharp epigrams. In his epigrams he imitated Martialis. His inspirations for his epigrams written in Italy were his own experiences about everyday life in Ferrara, his readings, and literature and poets. The tone of his epigrams is either praising or satirical; he praised virtue, knowledge, the ability to create and great deeds, and he was satirical about human ignorance and dishonesty. His erotic epigrams, the majority of which are also satirical, are still very popular.

His most outstanding praising epigrams are the ones written about himself and his own importance. He had tremendous self-confidence, since he was aware of his own poetic values and greatness. He wrote excellent epigrams about his teacher, Guarino, whom he loved and adored very much, as if he were his own father. He began his Guarino-panegyric in Ferrara, in which he remembered him with great respect. In his erotic epigrams, he made fun of the lascivious, perverted and debauched people of his neighbourhood. He wrote the poem *De Aetate Sua* [About his Age] when he was sixteen, in

which he wrote about his experiences of becoming an adult man. He hardly ever praised women, hiding his romantic feelings, but his poem *Ad Agnetem* [To Agnes] is the first gem of Hungarian individual love poetry.

He wrote only a few poems in Padua, but his longest poem was written there (Marcello-panegyric). In his Hungarian period, his main genre was elegy, but he also wrote some epigrams. He described political and military events and wrote about his creative solitude and anti-war feelings. The most significant poem of his Hungarian period is *Abiens Valere Iubet Sanctos Reges Waradini* [Farewell to Várad], in which he described the winter Hungarian landscape and the natural, cultural and spiritual values of Várad. In his elegy for the death of his mother, Borbála, he wrote about his love and mourning in a heart-wrenching manner. He often wrote about his own suffering. In the elegy, *De Se Aegrotante in Castris* [When He Became Ill in Camp] he bid farewell to life and composed his own epitaph and poetic greatness.

In one of his last elegies, *Ad Animam Suam* [To His Own Soul] – in which he gives account of his Neoplatonic philosophical studies (cf. Marsilio Ficino), – we can find the motif of death and his disillusionment in mankind. In another one, *De Inundatione* [Of the Great Flood], he had the apocalyptic vision of a flood that would destroy the world. His other favourite allegory was the allegory of the tree, which appeared in his Hungarian poems *De Amygdalo in Pannonia Nata* [To an Almond Tree in Pannonia] and *De arbore nimium foecunda* [Fruit tree overloaded with fruit]. The early blossoms of a fruit tree were frozen in the Pannonian winter, the other one is full of fruits, which are knocked off with thick sticks rather than delicately picked by hand.



The poems of Janus Pannonius in Battista Guarino's Codex

King Matthias and Humanist Education

János Vitéz involved his student, King Matthias, in his organising activities, Italian connections and patronage. After putting down and recovering from the plot led by Vitéz, the king himself took charge of developing and controlling humanist culture in the country. King Matthias was very intelligent: he was quite familiar with humanist studies and certain sciences (such as astronomy and alchemy). His prominent level of education was praised by his Italian contemporaries. Most letters composed in his name were written by Hungarian humanists in his chancellery, but he himself also composed and dictated letters. According to the aesthetic norms of humanist letter writing, his epistles were purposeful, well-organised, clear and free from superfluity, and they reflect Matthias' royal merits.

After marrying Beatrice of Aragon (in 1476), King Matthias set out to implement his grand plan of “making Hungary a second Italy” (Bonfini). The royal court became the citadel of Hungarian Humanism, where foreign, mostly Italian scientists and academics worked carrying out the king's wishes. Neoplatonism was the prevalent philosophy of the court, and owing to his direct and close connections (as described by Gábor Klaniczay), Matthias established a branch of the Florence Academy in Buda. Latin translations from Greek and Italian, works praising King Matthias and his deeds, including humanist dialogues set in the court of Buda (for example, Aurelio Brandolini Lippo's works) were written there. The most important result of literary and scientific work was the birth of modern Hungarian historiography.

Page with the initial V with King Matthias's coat of arms from the *Philostratus Corvina*



The king entrusted Antonio Bonfini with recording Hungarian history from a humanist perspective. The historiographer adopted Thuróczy's chronicle supplemented with several documents and living traditions. He used witnesses and his own experiences as sources in describing the age. Events of Hungarian history were shown as part of universal history, using a lot of ancient sources. Until the 19th century, information about the past of the Hungarian people originated from Bonfini's work, both in Hungary and abroad. Galeotto Marzio's booklet about Matthias was as popular as Bonfini's. He wrote down his experiences with the king and his family, Hungarian traditions and culture, and his Hungarian friends in anecdote-like short stories. One of his closest friends was Nicolaus Báthory.

One of King Matthias's greatest achievements was the establishment of his famous library, the Bibliotheca Corviniana. It was one of the largest secular libraries of the world at that time with its 2,000–2,500 volumes. Only the Vatican library was bigger in terms of the number of its books. As it was a humanist library – just like that of János Vitéz earlier – it was extremely valuable. The king collected ancient works of literature, i.e. all the translations from Greek and Latin including patristic literature. The library had very few printed books; it was more a collection of precious codices. These were copied or checked by scholars who spoke Greek and Latin, and were then decorated by the finest Italian and Hungarian book painters. Finally, the specially decorated bindings and plates were made by outstanding masters. Today only 216 original corvinas are known from this great library.

*Ornate title page of the
Philostratus Corvina
with the coin portrait of
King Matthias*

Humanist Literature in the Jagiellonian Age

After the death of King Matthias, nobody continued his great deeds and initiatives. Most of the Italians left the court. Their places were occupied by the Czechs and Moravians who escorted King Vladislav II, and people from Vienna, with whom relations became closer. The thing which attracted humanists the most was still the Corvina library. Although the number of books did not increase (the 150 codices which were ordered by King Matthias from Vespasiano da Bisticci's Florence workshop did not arrive in Hungary), many codices were lent or even given away. The uniqueness and richness of the library – for example, the priceless Greek and Latin codices – was unrivalled in Europe, and it was an extraordinary place for literary and scientific work.

During Vladislav II's reign, the leaders of court Humanism were the Czech and Moravian humanists. They worked in the royal chancellery in Buda and oriented towards Vienna, which became another famous humanist centre alongside Italy. Their leaders were two outstanding European humanists: Augustinus Moravus from Olmütz and Bohuslav Hasistejnsky z Lobotid, the greatest Czech humanist poet. The first great German humanist poet, Konrad Celtis, based his academy, the Danubian Literary Association (Sodalitas Litteraria Danubiana) – the centre of which was in Vienna – on foreign humanists living in Hungary. Its members were Central European humanists. They chose János Vitéz The



Younger, the bishop of Veszprém, to be their president, and members from Buda could hold their meetings as an individual group (*contubernium*) as well.

The ideas and works of Erasmus of Rotterdam began to spread in Hungary towards the end of King Louis II's reign (1516–26), and they also gained the approval of the royal couple. Humanist culture reached the outer circles of society too, such as the lower priests and citizens of towns. The leaders of humanist education and the disseminators of this modern culture were members of the Hungarian church elite. Though they could not compete with the bishop of Eger, Ippolito d'Este, Hungarian prelates (for example, György Szatmári, Ferenc Várdai) also collected and read the books of ancient and humanist authors (György Handó founded a humanist library in Pécs), and mentored talented young people in their studies and surrounded themselves with humanist writers.

In the Jagiellonian Age, the main interest and the aim of the activities of the Hungarian humanists was to collect, publish and evaluate the manuscript of Janus Pannonius's works, which had also become a national interest. Foreign scholars also took part in the Janus philology, partly because of their Hungarian students and supporters, and partly because of the poet's international fame and greatness. Among the Hungarians, mainly poets (Sebestyén Magyi and Adrianus Wolphardus) championed the publishing of Janus's works. They considered Janus their model and spread national self-confidence and pride through his works. The most outstanding Hungarian philologist of the age was Matthaeus Fortunatus, who published a Seneca edition which became famous throughout Europe (1523).

In literature, poetry flourished, and Hungarian authors introduced new genres. The poet Jacobus Piso was highly respected by his contemporaries and was Erasmus's first Hungarian friend. Stephanus Taurinus wrote an epic poem on a Hungarian topic, remembering the Dózsa peasant revolt of 1514 in his work titled *Stauromachia*. This had a great influence on Martinus Thyrnavinus, who encouraged Hungarian noblemen to unite and defend themselves against the Turks in his poem *Ad Regni Hungariae Proceres* (To the Dignitaries of the Hungarian Kingdom), which was written after the defeat at Nándorfehérvár (1521). Bálint Hagymási was also a talented poet, whose poem praising the beauty and richness of Hungary is worth mentioning besides his classic *declamatio*, *De Laudibus et Vituperio Vini et Aquae* (The Praise and Condemnation of Wine and Water), which abounds in quotes from classical authors.

Bartholomeus Francofordinus Pannonius was a talented poet, who introduced humanist comedy with his work *Gryllus* [The Cricket]. With regards to prose in the Jagellonian age, the most popular

genre was the humanist letter; and the best-known author of this genre was Péter Váradi, who collected his letters written between 1490–97 in a book called *Epistolae*. The above-mentioned works prove that the demand for Latin humanist literature increased significantly in Hungary. This process – and also philology, which drew people's attention to their mother tongue – created the conditions where Renaissance literature could be born in the Hungarian language.

15th-century bookcase
from Bártfa



Gergely Buzás

Art in Hungary

After Sigismund's death, Vienna, the seat of the Austrian dukes and heirs to the imperial throne, became the most important cultural and political centre in Central Europe. At the 1459 Regensburg Congress, which was a meeting of master masons, Lorenz Spinning, the master of the building lodge of the Viennese Stephanskirche, considered Hungary to be under his authority. This was not only a formal demand, since we know from the history of art that the Viennese style was widespread in Hungary, although local traditions of the age of Sigismund were also discernible in the art of the period. In fine arts, there was a notable change in the 1440s: the former soft style of the International Gothic Art was replaced by a new, realistic trend that appeared in Western European, especially in Dutch artistic centres. This was transmitted to Hungary via the southern German and Austrian territories. The leading style of this period in this region was the so-called hard style.

Castles

In the chaotic, troublesome years after Albert's death, a lot of older castles were fortified. In Kisnána, the Kompolthi family incorporated into their new castle not only their former manor but also the parish church of the village. This example was followed by the Újlakis in Várpalota, but here a more decorative



*Ruins of the castle
of Kisnána*

ground plan was used with four corner towers. At the same time, the Maróti added new wings and a chapel to their castle in Gyula to make it more commodious. The archbishop of Kalocsa, István Váradi, protected his residence at Bács from the imminent Turkish attacks by building an enormous fortress. János Hunyadi at first fortified his residence at Vajdahunyad, then enlarged it by adding a chapel and a new palace wing including two large rooms one above the other. Certain characteristic spatial elements indicate that French masters may have worked on these constructions. A similarly splendid great hall decorated with a row of balustrades was started in Esztergom by Archbishop Dénes Szécsi, and continued by his successor, János Vitéz.

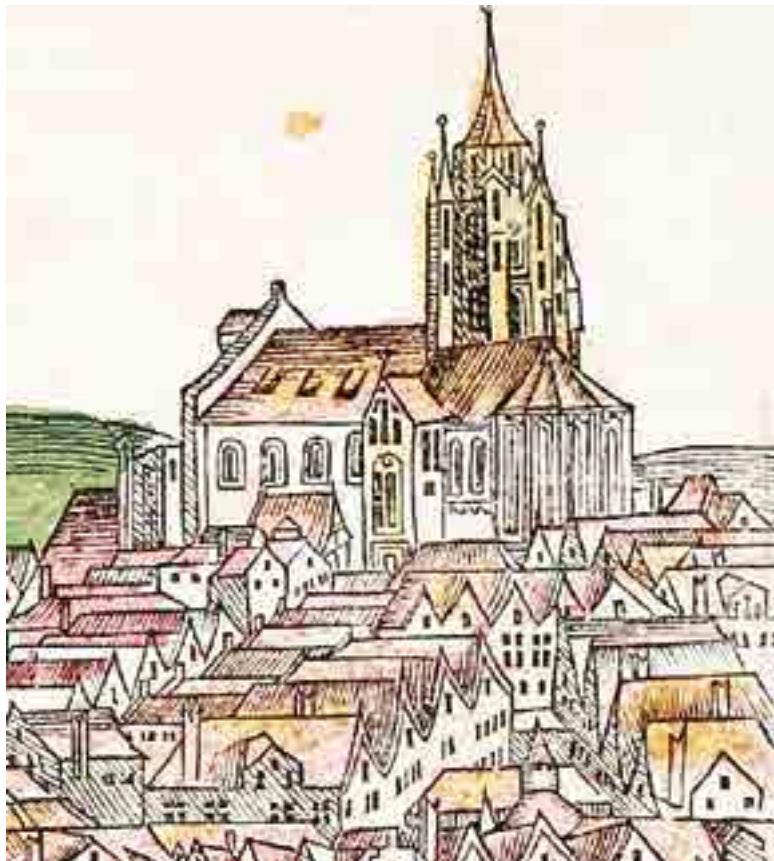
Churches in the Countryside

In Vas County, on the estates of the Ellerbach family in Mogyorókerék, a characteristic Late Gothic brick architecture developed parallel with the art of the neighbouring Austrian territories. A beautiful example of this is the church of Szentpéterfa. In the eastern part of the country, János Hunyadi's building activities are relevant from the same period. On his estate in Debrecen, a hall church with a large ambulatory was erected. In Transylvania, the Franciscan church of Tövis was built for him by the mason Konrad of Brassó. Similar to this puritan structure was the parish church of Vingárt, built by János Geréb of Vingárt, a relative of the Hunyadi family. These buildings had stone walls with few carved stone elements in them.

The Church of Our Lady of the Buda Castle in Hartmann Schedel's Chronicle of the World showing Buda, detail

Church Buildings in the Central Part of the Country

According to the date inscribed on a stone that bears King Matthias' coat of arms in one of the tower windows, the construction of the southern tower of the Parish Church of Our Lady of Buda was completed in 1470. The walls of the high, octagonal upper part of the tower, which includes



three floors, were perforated by pointed windows with deep and moulded frames. There was only a small amount of building work in the central region of the country in this period. A typical example is the reconstruction of St. George's chapel next to the cathedral of Veszprém, which was transformed by Bishop Albert Vetési into his own tomb-chapel. He had a tower-shaped Late Gothic sacrament house added to the southern part of the apse, whose corbel bears the name of the builder, his coat of arms and the date: 1467. This inscription is the oldest record in Hungary written in "antiqua" font. The portal of the chapel was also replaced by a new, decorative gate made of red marble, crowned by a gable and framed by pinnacles.

The Architecture of Pozsony

The death of King Sigismund did not slow down the development of big towns that had become important in the preceding decades. The most significant work in Pozsony was the completion of the nave and aisles of the parish church, where the vaulting of the side aisles

shows close connections to the vault of the nave in the Stephanskirche of Vienna, built by Hans Puchspaum. The plans for the vault of the Pozsony church have also been preserved in Vienna. They were almost certainly designed by Puchspaum himself, and built by stonemasons from Vienna. Lorenz Spenning, the master mason of the Viennese builders' lodge corresponded with the city after 1456. The works on the new chancel of the church started at that time but progressed very slowly. The final consecration of this part of the building took place only in 1497.

Kassa and Northeastern Hungary

The construction of St. Elizabeth's parish church in Kassa was directed by a workshop whose members previously worked in Vienna. The vault of the church was completed before 1440. The star-shaped vaults follow Viennese prototypes and also appear in another building in Kassa: in the chancel of the Franciscan church. After 1440, the western gallery and the southern tower were completed, and side-chapels were added to the church. The construction of St. Elizabeth's Cathedral must have been directed by a city architect called István. He also built the new vaulting and the tabernacle in the chancel of the parish church of Bártfa. The new main chancel of the parish church of Kassa was built at the same time as the western parts but was executed by masters trained in southern Germany.



*Szapolyai Chapel,
Csütörtökhegy*

The Architecture of Upper Hungary

The towns and market towns in Upper Hungary transformed their parish churches into representative three-vessel hall- or pseudo-basilica structures with Late Gothic net vaults. During the reconstruction of the parish church of Csetnek, new vaults were made and a chancel with three apses was started. A three-vessel pseudo-basilica of rather low proportions was built with star vaults in Gyöngyöspata, too. In the Szepes region, the parish church of Késmárk received a wide chancel with a net vault, and the provostal church of Szepes was a similar building. The chapel built by the Thurzó family by the side of the parish church of Csütörtökhegy in Szepes County is outstanding in the region, on account of its high quality. The plans of this two-storey building originated from the Viennese lodge.

The Architecture of Transylvanian Towns

In the towns of Transylvania, the large-scale development of churches continued. These preserved much from the local forms of the late Sigismund Age. The western facade of St. Michael's Church of Kolozsvár was completed at the same time as the portal. The vaulting was probably finished afterwards. The bottom of the southern tower received its final form when the chapel of Gregor Schleuning, the parish priest, was completed. In Brassó, a splendid entrance hall was erected in front of the southeastern portal of the parish church. An enormous entrance hall called *ferula* was raised in front of the



*Altars of St. Stephen
and St. Emeric, Mateóc*

western facade of the parish church of Nagyszében. In Szászsebes, only the side aisles of the 13th-century church-nave were rebuilt.

Sculpture

Besides the simple and traditional tombstones, aristocrats and prelates usually had full-figure tombstones made in this period (for example, the tombstones of John Corvinus in Gyulafehérvár, and of György Bazini Szentgyörgyi (†1467) and of Dénes Szécsi, archbishop of Esztergom (†1465). The monument of György Schönberg, prior of Pozsony and the chancellor of the university in Pozsony, is of outstanding quality and shows a stylistic relationship with the sculpture of Nicolaus Gerhaerts and Hans Multscher, representatives of the hard style. Another important master of this style was Jacob of Kassa, who was of Hungarian origin but worked in the German-speaking territories. The characteristic features of the hard style, which replaced the soft style, can be seen on the first Madonna of Tüskevár carved in the middle of the 15th century.

Altars

In the middle of the 15th century, winged altarpieces became widespread throughout the country. They consisted of movable wings and a central case. The simpler versions were made of painted panels crowned by a row of painted triangular gables. A typical work of this type is the altarpiece of Mateóc in Szepes, painted by an artist who also worked in Little Poland. The altarpiece of Liptószentmária also has close ties with the art of Poland. The high altar of the Transylvanian Almakerék represents a type of winged altar enriched with a carved pediment. The master of another Transylvanian altarpiece, the high altar of Prázsmár, also used elements of Dutch painting in his work. An example of the richest altar form with statues is the St. Barbara altarpiece of Bártfa. According to the usual arrangement of the type of altarpiece known as *Viereraltar*, the central figure, here a Madonna, is surrounded by the figures of four small saints. The statues and painted panels of the altarpiece all represent the hard style.

Book Painting

The influence of the Viennese style was also noticeable in book illumination. The Viennese master Michael decorated a special volume of Donatus' *Ars Grammatica*, made for Ladislaus V. Another Viennese master named after the schoolbook he made for Maximilian of Habsburg – *Lehrbüchermeister* – illuminated the register of Hungarian students at the university of Vienna, then decorated, on the request of King Matthias, the so-called Franciscan missal with the king's portrait. The greatest bibliophile of the age was János Vitéz, who ordered numerous codices from Florentine workshops. Among the charters of grants of coats of arms, there were more Hungarian-made pieces than foreign ones. The charter of the Bod family of Bodfalva was painted in 1460 in Buda. The charter of the town of Késmárk, donating a seal to the town, is one of the most outstanding examples of Hungarian paintings of coats-of-arms. However, the 1459 charters of coats of arms of the Szentgyörgyi and Bazini families, counts of the Holy Roman Empire, were made in Vienna.

Minor Arts

The most outstanding piece of metalwork from the period is a chalice with filigree enamel decoration, which was given to the cathedral of Gyulafehérvár by the Transylvanian nobleman Benedek Suky. A viaticum box for the Host, with carved mother-of-pearl and filigree enamel decoration, was the product of the same Transylvanian workshop that made the Suky chalice. Monstrances resembling the grand Gothic altars also became widespread in this period. The most beautiful example of these is in the St. Martin's Church of Pozsony. Bronze baptismal fonts were also part of the usual church equipment. The older, traditional forms were usually preserved on these, as can be seen on the baptismal fonts of the parish churches in Késmárk in Szepes or in Brassó in Transylvania. Among the seals, the most beautiful piece was King Matthias's royal seal and golden bull, which he began to use at the time of his coronation in 1464.

Art in Hungary between 1476 and 1526

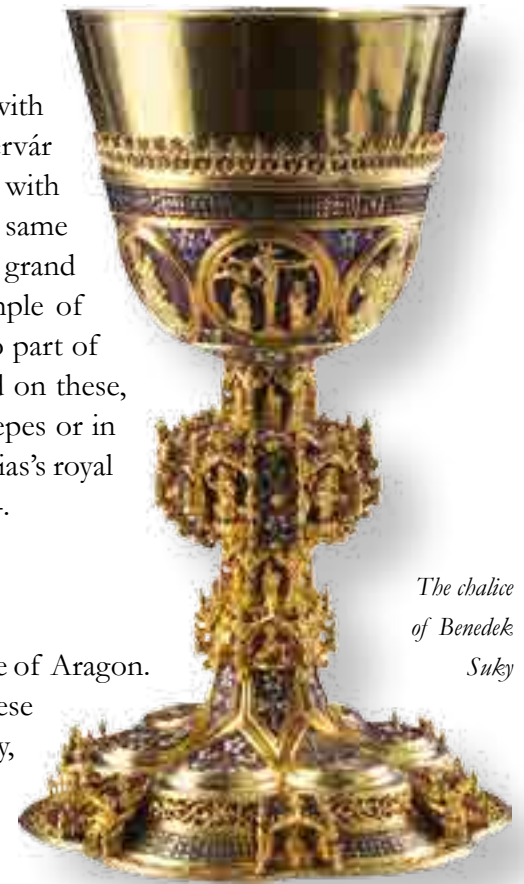
King Matthias became a significant patron of art only after his marriage to Beatrice of Aragon. In the beginning, his buildings continued in the Late Gothic style under Viennese influence. In the first half of the 1480s, when Italian artists settled in Hungary, Renaissance elements appeared on his most important buildings at Visegrád. There was a major change in style in the second half of the 1480s. The Late Gothic style of the southern German areas reached Hungary and became prevalent in the eastern and central parts of the country. At the same time, however, Italian Renaissance exerted a strong influence on the architecture, sculpture and book illumination of



the court in Buda. These two styles developed side by side under the Jagiellonian kings as well but were no longer confined to the art of the court. The first entirely Renaissance buildings appeared around 1500, and the Italian style spread in all fields of art throughout the country. Nevertheless, the parallel use of the Late Gothic and Renaissance styles remained characteristic during the whole period.

Visegrád and its Architectural Connections

King Matthias started the building work at Visegrád after 1476, which was directed by the provisors (*provisores curiae*) of Buda. The Royal Palace of Visegrád became a magnificent country residence during the next decade. The buildings from the Anjou Age were updated: the window and door frames, ceilings, balconies, loggias and fountains were all replaced by new Late Gothic structures



*The chalice
of Benedek
Suky*

*The loggia of the Royal
Palace in Visegrád*

occasionally mixed with Renaissance elements. Italian stone masons carved the Hercules fountain and the fountain of the Muses, the furnishings of the chapel and the loggia in the inner courtyard in the Renaissance style. The Late Gothic architectural workshop also worked on the citadel. The work of the same workshop, or at least its style, is discernible at other royal buildings, mainly on estates under the authority of the provisors of Buda, such as the castles of Tata and Zsámbék, or at the rebuilding of the castle of Vajdahunyad and the monastery building of the abbey of Pannonhalma, also rebuilt under the commandship of the provisors of Buda. The palace building of Bishop Orbán Nagylucsei at Győr also followed the style of Visegrád.

Buda

During the extension of the Buda Castle in the second half of the 1480s, King Matthias had the buildings of the Sigismund period renovated. The palace chapel was entirely refurbished and new vaults were installed, and the Corvina Library was moved to the rooms of the adjacent eastern wing. Bronze statues and ornate fountains were erected to decorate the courtyards. In the southern and eastern wings of the inner courtyard, large halls were created on the second floors, and a two-storey loggia was raised on the arcades on the ground floor. The entrance of the eastern wing of the Sigismund-period courtyard was decorated with red marble stairs and a decorative double portal. The influence of Italian Renaissance was already prevalent here. Matthias had the big cistern on the southern part of the castle rebuilt and a hanging garden created above it after Italian models. An ornamental garden was established on the western side of the Castle Hill. The work was not finished in Matthias' lifetime and continued under Vladislav II's reign.

The Spread of the Renaissance

Miklós Báthory, bishop of Vác and one of the best educated humanists among the Hungarian prelates, built his castles in Nógrád in 1483 and Vác in 1485, probably still in the Late Gothic style. In 1489, he occupied the abbey of Mogyoród, on the site of which he later built a castle decorated with a Renaissance loggia. At the same time, he probably had another Renaissance loggia built at his palace in Vác. Johann (Pruisz) Filipec, the bishop of Nagyvárád (1476–91), had the episcopal palace of Várád rebuilt. The red marble Renaissance structures originating from Buda also appeared on these constructions together with Late Gothic elements.

Cathedrals Rebuilt in Late Gothic Style

Bishop Osvát Laki Thuz had the vault of the choir of the cathedral of Zagreb rebuilt by masters from Vienna. One of the original designs for the vault can still be found among the archived plans of the Viennese lodge today.

The re-vaulting of the nave of the provostal church in Székesfehérvár began in the first half of the 1480s. After that, the building of an enormous hall-chancel with an ambulatory began, which was still unfinished in 1490. There were similar constructions in Eger, where Orbán Nagylucsei commissioned a new chancel, which was completed under his successors in the first decade of the 16th century.

Northern and Eastern Hungary

At the end of the 15th century, several flourishing market towns in the eastern part of the country had large halls with ambulatories built in their parish churches, following the example of the churches in Pest,

Szászsebes, Brassó, and Debrecen. There are no records about the building of St. Bartholomew's church of Gyöngyös and St. Demeter's church of Szeged (the present-day Calvinist church), but the construction of St. Stephen's church of Miskolc was dated in a charter and in an inscription to around 1489.

In Szepes County, building activities on the churches of Késmárk and Szepeshely continued. In Szepeshely, István Szapolyai had a beautiful side chapel added to the renewed church. In Okolicsnó in Liptó County, the three-naved hall church of the Franciscans was built with the support of Matthias and John Corvinus.

Architecture in Transdanubia

A typical example of the residences of the growing number of wealthy landowners was the complex of László Egervári in Egervár, which comprised the castle, the Franciscan friary and church of the nearby village of Fancsika. These buildings were built with shaped brick structures, the use of which was widespread in Vas and Zala counties in the 15th century. Pál Kinizsi established his residence in Nagyvázsony (castle, Pauline friary, parish church). The Late Gothic forms represented by the Nagyvázsony building complex became widespread in the whole region to the north of Lake Balaton. A monument of this architectural collection that survived largely intact is the parish church of Zalaszentő. After 1490, Renaissance elements also appeared in some places. The castle of Kőszeg, then occupied by Emperor Maximilian I, was also rebuilt. The Renaissance row of windows of the large hall dates from this time.

Royal Buildings in Buda and Visegrád

Building activities in the Buda palace started by Matthias continued under Vladislav II. The Late Gothic style, alongside the Renaissance, still played an important role at these constructions. The architects of Vladislav's castle in Prague were Benedict Reid and Hans Speiss. The influence of their work can be observed on the buildings of the Buda Castle and the Franciscan monastery next to the Royal Palace of Visegrád, which was started by King Matthias.



*Kinizsi Castle,
Nagyvázsony*

The Activity of the Workshop of Nyék

Matthias and Vladislav II had the hunting lodge in Nyék from Sigismund's time converted into a splendid Renaissance castle. Near the church of the village, two large buildings were raised. The main facade of the residential quarters was decorated with a two-storey loggia, and a terrace was added to its side facade; the other building was surrounded by a porch. Mózes Buzlai commissioned the workshop active in Nyék and Buda to make several carvings for his castle at Simontornya out of marl of Buda, including the Renaissance loggia along the courtyard of his castle. Imre Perényi set up his residence in Siklós, where he also employed masters who previously worked at Buda. The Late Gothic style is visible in the construction of both castles. The stunning chapel of the castle of Siklós is still standing today.

*György Szatmári's
tabernacle*



The Architecture of Pécs

In the southern part of the country, Pécs became an important artistic centre. Bishop Zsigmond Ernuszt had the castle and the city walls rebuilt and a new vault installed in the cathedral. The architect of the cathedral, Master Demeter, presumably came from the workshop of Székesfehérvár and also worked on the construction of Eger. Master Demeter may have also built the star net vault of the Dominican church in Pécs. Ernuszt's successor, Bishop György Szatmári, was a generous patron and continued with the decoration of the cathedral, from which a red marble tabernacle has survived. Besides the cathedral, he had the building of the chapter rebuilt and the episcopal palace reconstructed in the Renaissance style. Outside the city walls, at Tettye, he had a Renaissance villa erected. Work on these buildings was probably mainly carried out by Dalmatian masters.

Renaissance Constructions of Ecclesiastical Centres

The castle of Bács was rebuilt by Péter Váradi, the archbishop of Kalocsa. The building was fortified with a barbican and decorated with a Late Gothic chapel and Renaissance palace wings.

The Renaissance rebuilding of the episcopal palace of Nagyvárad took place under Bishop Zsigmond Thurzó. At Gyulafehérvár, Canon János Lászai had a Late Gothic chapel added to the side of the cathedral. The chapel had a net vault, and its facade was decorated with Lombardian Renaissance elements. In Esztergom, Archbishop Tamás Bakócz had a Gothic shrine added to the cathedral, then had a tomb-chapel raised at the side of the basilica for himself. This red-marble building, built on

a cross-shaped ground plan and boasting a dome with a metal structure, was the clearest example of High Renaissance architecture in Hungary. Its white-marble altar was carved by Andrea Ferrucci, superintendent of the Dome of Florence. Bakócz's successor, Archbishop György Szatmári, had a new residence building erected in the inner part of the palace, to which a hanging garden decorated with a Renaissance loggia was added.

The Architecture of Buda and its Surroundings

On the buildings of the town of Buda, several trends of the Late Gothic style can be distinguished. The two western bays and the western tower flanked by two chapels of the Church of Mary Magdalene show Viennese connections. A similar tower was added to the parish church of Nagymaros. The Late Gothic style that appears in the castle of Buda can also be observed in the rebuilding of the Dominican St. Michael's church in Buda. Both the vault of the nave and the tower, part of which is still standing, were also built at this time. Near Buda, at the Paulines' main friary at Szentlőrinc, St. Paul the Hermit's tomb-chapel and his relic tomb, carved by Friar Dénes, were finished, then the new chancel and the chapter room were built.

Transylvania

The shrine of the former Franciscan monastery in Farkas street in Kolozsvár was rebuilt by Friar János, who arrived from Visegrád around 1490. The nave of the church, however, already bears the features of the Late Gothic trend. Pairs of buttresses also appear on the former Dominican friary of Kolozsvár. Similar buttresses were also used at the parish church of Dés and the nave of the Franciscan church of Szeged, which was consecrated in 1503. The surviving elements of their vaults are closely related to the vaults of churches in Székesfehérvár, Eger and Pécs, all of which can be connected to Master Demeter. The stylistic parallels of the western gate of Kolozsvár can be found on the nave of the parish church of Ótorda and on the parsonage of Nagyszeben. This style was cultivated in the Saxon region of Transylvania by the stone carver Andreas of Nagyszeben, his most outstanding work being the parish church of Muzsna. The hall church of Berethalom was also very similar. These and other Transylvanian churches were surrounded by thick walls and towers in defence against the repeated Turkish attacks.



*Madonna
of András Báthory*

The Architecture of Northeast Hungary

The stylistic features of the Late Gothic style can be observed on the side naves of the parish church of Pest. Probably contemporary with these are the two inscribed Renaissance tabernacles, and probably a Renaissance altar as well. Later waves of the Late Gothic influence can be seen on the parish church of Nyírbátor, built by András, son of András Báthory. The church had a magnificent net vault and was decorated with Renaissance elements. Perhaps András Báthory's carved Madonna from 1526 was also created during this construction.

The Architecture of Upper Hungary

The one-vessel St. Catherine's Church in Selmecebánya, a mining town which became increasingly affluent from the late 15th century, was consecrated in the centre of the town. On the hill above the town, a large, three-nave parish church was built. At the edge of the town, Erasmus Roessl built the rich vault with three dimensionally curving ribs for the chancel of the Church of Our Lady of the Snows. The most perfect Hungarian example of this unique type of vaulting is the vault of an oratory in the parish church of Besztercebánya, which is closely related to Anton Pilgram's works in Vienna. In

Sáros County, the parish church of Eperjes was rebuilt by Johannes Bregyssen in Late Gothic style. The surviving account books of this construction are unique sources for the history of architecture of the period. The nearby town of Bártfa made a contract with Master Alexius in 1507 for the construction of the town hall. On this building, Late Gothic forms are already mixed with Renaissance elements.

Tomb Sculpture in Hungary

The most splendid tombstones of the period were the full-figure knight and prelate tombstones. The change of style from Late Gothic to Renaissance in the last decades of the 15th century can be clearly observed on them. In Szepeshely, the tombstone of Imre Szapolyai (†1487) was still decorated with Late Gothic elements, while the tombstone of István Szapolyai from 1499 is already in the Renaissance style. In the 1490s, a new type of Renaissance tombstone appeared, the upper part of which presented a coat of arms, while the lower part showed a field with inscription. The earliest example of this type is a tombstone from Buda, made in 1496 for Bernardo Monelli, the castellan of the queen's castle in Óbuda. Around 1500 another variant of this new type appeared, in which the coat of arms was surrounded by a so-called Italian wreath, as on Nicholas Acatius of Szentlélek's tombstone in Csátka from 1516.

The tomb effigy of Imre Szapolyai in St. Martin's Cathedral of Szepeshely

Renaissance Sculpture in Hungary



King Matthias decorated his palaces with works of art ordered from Italy. One such piece was the pastophorion in the chapel of his Visegrád palace, carved out of marble from Carrara. Several Italian masters used Hungarian red marble at the court. Giovanni Dalmata worked on the Renaissance fountains of the Visegrád palace: he carved the marvellous sculpture of young Hercules fighting with the hydra of Lerna. A lunette relief, known as the Visegrád Madonna, and the two supplementary putto reliefs are the work of Gregorio di Lorenzo from Florence. The two altar fragments found in the castle and the Pauline friary of Diósgyőr bear the stylistic elements of Giovanni Dalmata's workshop. They may have originally been made for the chancel-chapel of the cathedral of Eger, built by Tamás Bakócz. The tombstone of Miklós Dörögdi may have also been created for erection in the cathedral of Eger in the first decade of the 16th century by an Italian sculptor who resided in Pest. Later the tombstone was taken to Sárospatak. Pastophorion, similar in structure to that of the Visegrád palace chapel, became increasingly popular in Hungary in the 16th century. Besides the ones in the parish church of Pest, the most significant example of this type is György Szatmári's tabernacle in Pécs.

Wood Sculpture in Hungary

A unique work of this period is the Easter Sepulchre from Garamszentbenedek. Monumental winged altars are also characteristic of this age. A new high altar was set up in St. Elizabeth's Cathedral in Kassa, the magnificent sculptures of which can be linked to the most modern trends of southern German sculpture. The sculptor of the enormous carved high altar of St. James's Church in Lőcse, Master Pál may have been trained in Veit Stoss's

workshop in Krakow. Stoss had a great influence on other artists as well, such as the sculptor of the St. Barbara altar of Besztercebánya. The destroyed main altars from Pozsony and Selmecebánya, from which only a few sculptures survive, were related to contemporary trends of sculpture in the Bavarian territories.

Painting in Hungary

While the central cases of large altars were decorated with sculptures, the wings consisted of painted panels. Several altars from the same workshop have survived from the 1470s–80s in Garamszentbenedek, and in the church of Jánosrét, near Körmöcbánya. They are all characterised by a lively, realistic manner of painting. This realism originating from Dutch painting determines also the style of the high altar of the church in Medgyes, painted by a master with Viennese experience. After 1500, the Danube school became influential in Hungarian painting, exemplified by altars from Zólyomszászfalu. The most important painter of the age was Master MS, who painted the wings of the high altar of Selmecebánya. Very little survives from the Renaissance paintings of the period. The most significant of these is a series of frescos of virtues in the studiolo of the Esztergom palace, where Queen Beatrice resided after 1490. The vaults or wooden ceilings of churches were often decorated with Late Gothic or Renaissance ornamentation.

Book Illumination

King Matthias enriched his library of Corvinas with books of Renaissance decoration bought in Italy, but he also set up a book copying and miniature workshop in Buda. This workshop continued to function after Matthias's death, working for Vladislav II. Private patrons also followed the example of the rulers. The breviary and other codices of Dominic Kálmáncsehi, provost of Székesfehérvár between 1474 and 1495, were decorated by Franciscus de Castello of Milan. The *Graduale* of Simon Erdődy (bishop of Zagreb, 1519–43) or Ferenc Perényi's (bishop of Várad, 1514–26) *Missal* – the latter was a Venetian *incunabulum* decorated with miniatures after its arrival in Hungary – also represent the style of the Buda workshop. Other works reflect the influence of German painting, for example, the miniatures of the *Evangelistarium* of Pannonhalma, which are based on the prints of Dürer and Schongauer. The influence of the traditions of Late Gothic art can also be observed, for example, on the decoration of the *Graduale* of Kassa in which Late Gothic and Renaissance elements are mixed.



Calvary
by Master MS

Grants of Coats of Arms

The Late Gothic elements of the previous period are also discernible in the decoration of grants of coats of arms in the late Matthias Age. Besides the miniatures of nobles' coats of arms, the backgrounds of which were decorated with rich Late Gothic helmet covers (Nagylucsei, 1480; Armbrust 1518), coats of arms with Renaissance decorations were also becoming widespread

from around 1500 (Pethő de Gerse, 1507). The illuminators of the Buda miniature workshop also participated in decorating these: the painter of Simon Erdődy's codices executed the coats of arms of Dorottya Kanizsai (1519) and of the Forgách family of Gyimes (1525). Not only the rich Renaissance ornamentation of the frame decorations is worthy of attention but also the realism of coats of arms (for example, Radák, 1514).

Textiles and Metalwork

The Hungarian coronation mitre, richly decorated with Late Gothic fittings and pearls, was made in the second quarter of the 15th century. The late-15th-century horn cup of Esztergom represents a typical Late Gothic vessel form. By this time, Renaissance goldsmithery also appeared in Hungary: Matthias commissioned goldsmiths from Lombardy to make the Renaissance base of the so-called Matthias Calvary, kept in the royal treasury at the time. A chasuble decorated with Italian Renaissance embroidery was part of the equipment of Archbishop Tamás Bakócz's tomb-chapel in Esztergom. The tradition of filigree enamel decorations continued in Hungary in the 16th century too; a high-quality piece of work with this technique is the chalice of Tamás Bakócz. One of the most beautiful pieces of Late Gothic metalwork



*Grant of arms
of Dorottya Kanizsai*

in Hungary is the monstrance from Némethjárfalva, which may once have belonged to the Poor Clares of Óbuda.

Majolica, Glass

Matthias and Beatrice ordered several sets of colourfully painted majolica dishes with white tin glaze from Italy, and even invited masters to Buda, who established a majolica workshop there. The majolica floor tiles of the Buda and Visegrád royal residences and of the episcopal palace of Vác were made there. Soon, another majolica workshop was founded in Pécs. Not only from Italy were decorative dishes imported to Hungary but also from Moravian and German territories, from where hard ceramics arrived by trade. Besides the import of crystal clear and paper-thin glass vessels from Venice, Hungarian glass was also produced from the second half of the 15th century. Hungarian glassworks copied Venetian forms, but their thick, greenish glass products were far below the quality of the workshops of Murano.

Stoves, Furniture, and Upholstery

New types of Late Gothic stoves were erected for the decoration of royal palaces built in the late Matthias period. Perhaps the so-called knight-figure stove was originally made for Frederick III, but the stove with Matthias's coats of arms was definitely made for the king himself. Stoves with multicoloured tiles came into fashion during this period. Ornate stoves and their copies were found not only in the royal residences but also in private castles and manor houses. Of the furniture of the period, mainly church furnishings have survived. The choir stalls of the parish church of Bártfa are Late Gothic in style, made in 1483. The stalls of the Franciscan church of Nyírbátor, decorated with intarsia, already show Renaissance elements. The textiles used for interior decoration of the age are only indicated by King Matthias's surviving throne covers, designed probably by Antonio Pollaiuolo in the 1470s.



*The throne tapestry of
King Matthias*

János Mezei

In the history of music, the 14th and 15th centuries marked the beginning of a new era. The Western European orientation of the Angevin kings led to the flourishing of intellectual and musical life in Hungary. Although the network of towns took shape somewhat later, and thus did not allow for a significant concentration of intellectuals – as happened in the West –, the bourgeoisie became an important social group in the country, and this fact had positive consequences for music practice and teaching. There are lots of musical records from the Late Middle Ages: mostly Gregorian melodies and some polyphonic monuments of music. In addition to music manuscripts, we also have written sources about the everyday practice of music. For example, we know about paid student groups singing at foundation masses and Holy Week services, at the holy tomb or at funerals.

Musical Life in the Church

In this period, community singing in the mother tongue also became popular alongside solemn liturgical (Gregorian) songs (mainly under the influence of Franciscan and Dominican friars). However, the Pauline Order also had a flourishing musical-liturgical life from the 14th century, which was on a par with that of the collegiate chapters. It was typical, for example, that in the 15th century, the number of brothers participating in the service in the Budaszentlőrinc monastery was several hundred. In this monastic order (the only order ever founded in Hungary) the Gregorian tradition of Esztergom was kept and exercised faithfully, together with its liturgical characteristics and melodic variants. Unison singing still dominated at the end of the Middle Ages in Hungary, but this was slowly changing from the 14th century onwards. But even then, obsolete musical techniques became part of everyday practice in the beginning. In Hungary, well-documented polyphony appeared in the church only from the 15th century.

Gregorian chant, then, had a dominant role throughout the Middle Ages – in this respect the liturgical practices of schools, bishopric and monastic centres, parishes and royal chapels were uniform. According to researchers, Gregorian music could be heard in medieval churches for at least three to four hours per day. The vitality of the old musical style is proved by the fact that the number of vocal movements was still increasing in certain genres (for example, the *alleluias*, *Kyries*, sequences and readings).

Among the most important manuscripts containing musical notation, those ornamented antiphoners, which date back to the 15th century, deserve first place and are kept in the library of Esztergom. These were the guardians of Hungarian liturgical-musical traditions. Besides these, the *Gradual* (1463) of Ferenc Futaki was also quite significant, which might have reached Istanbul via Buda. Another important Gregorian source from the second half of the century was the special antiphoner written for the church of Várad at the request of Bishop Johann (Pruisz) Filipec. It is very interesting that its musical notation follows Czech examples, and its content mixes Hungarian melody variants and traditions with those of the neighbouring regions. The same can be said about the service books of the chapter of Szepes, the graduals of Kassa, Kolozsvár and Brassó from the beginning of the 16th century and the famous *Ulászló Gradual*.

The central traditions of Esztergom are preserved by a few codices from Buda from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The most outstanding piece was the two-volume *Bakóczy Gradual*. The

Hungarian tradition is also maintained in the codices of the Pauline Order like the antiphoner of Zagreb, or in the gradual of the parish of Nyitra.

Besides the central Esztergom tradition, a separate line is represented by the southern codices (from the diocese of Kalocsa–Zagreb): for example, the antiphoners composed at the request of the bishop of Zagreb, Osvát Thuz (end of the 15th century).

Franciscan and Dominican notated codices from the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries are unique in Hungarian musical tradition, as their neumes, their order of liturgy and melody variants, all followed the traditions of their central, parent order and did not adopt the musical customs of their surroundings.

The famous *Matthias Gradual* was also a

special codex, isolated from the mainstream musical tradition, since it also followed the melody variants and liturgical traditions of the Franciscan Order (and in an indirect way, those of the papal court).

Apart from notated melodies, the shorthand-like (cursive) notes in the books tell us a lot about the musical life of the medieval Church and also prove the high level of music literacy. The musical notes by the later archbishop of Esztergom László Szalkai, survived from the end of the 15th century, from the time when he was still a student at Sárospatak. In this booklet, we can find a thorough practical and theoretical summary of Gregorian chant, including the aesthetic discussion of the topic.



God with angels singing and playing instruments, carved relief

Popular Religious Songs in the Vernacular

The Hungarian *Te Deum* tune, which can be found in the 16th-century Peer Codex, was probably quite popular in the Middle Ages (a variant of this is still sung in Transylvania). As it was generally widespread, it can be considered the first religious popular song in the mother tongue. Another song, “Krisztus feltámadta mind ő nagy kínjából” (Christ Resurrected from his Great Suffering), was preserved in four languages in the so-called Sigismundian Fragment (15th century), and it was probably sung at Easter in the four languages of the town in Upper Hungary, where it was written down. In the Nádor Codex of 1508 there are three popular religious songs: “Idvezlégy idvesség hostya” (Hail Honourable Host), “Idvezlégy Istennek Szent Anyja” (Hail Holy Mother of God), and “Bínösöknek kegyös segítség” (Graceful Assistance for Sinners). The other notations (about 20–30) are just texts, which can be interpreted with the help of later sources or folk practice. The most significant of these were the Christmas “Dies est laetitiae” (The Day of Happiness) and the Franciscan András Vásárhelyi’s song from 1508, “Angyaloknak nagyságos asszonya” (The Majestic Lady of Angels).

Other popular religious songs from this period, which were preserved in living folk tradition, are “Csordapásztorok” (Herdsman), “A pünkösdeknek jeles napján” (On the Day of Whitsun), and “Ó, fényességes szép hajnal” (Oh, Bright Beautiful Dawn). These songs can be divided into three categories according to their music and text: 1. paraliturgical (which are not closely related to ceremonies) movements with dogmatic messages, 2. translations of Latin songs known throughout Europe (so-called *cantios*), 3. songs for local devotion.



Singing choir, initial C in the Matthias Gradual

from the customs of Midsummer Night, children's games (bridge, procession and pair games) could be preserving the traces of a once very rich and ceremonial medieval set of games. Nativity plays acquired a genuine dramatized form in this period. The custom of ceremonial greetings (*recordatio*) is also of medieval origin (name day-greetings, Gregory-procession). The influence of schools was also quite significant. For example, we can find the traces of poem recitation and memorisation behind the groomsman's tunes in the "Wedding song of Nyitra".

The music of swineherd-dance melodies – which had similar roots to popular goliardic poetry – might have preserved the offshoots of medieval Hungarian dance music (just like nativity plays and the dance parts of Whitsun plays). There are written records about dirges (the mourning of King Charles). The tunes of contemporary dirges may have been the same as today's (it was a prosaic genre with improvised text, a textual-musical set of formulae and fixed cadence points) and the so-called big form, characterised by the octave range – in contrast with melodies of smaller ranges – probably also became generally used in this period. A great number of verse types might have been separated from improvised, prosaic recitatives at this time.

One of the most typical medieval styles was represented by the so-called Ferryman melodies, the vocal basis of which originated from a common root with Gregorian songs: they had the same structure

Epic Songs

It is known that the praise of ancestors was sung in Hungarian at King Matthias's table. The famous St. Ladislaus song was recorded quite late, at the beginning of the 16th century. This song praised the knight king but in the framework of the ideals of King Matthias's time. The song "Néhai való jó Mátyás király" (Good Late King Matthias) was also sung to the same tune. The recitative-like, dirge style of Hungarian folk music generated multi-strophe melody forms in the later historic songs of the 16th century. Mainly 12-syllable parlando tunes may have been influenced by such a widely-practised epic style.

Types of Medieval Folk Music

In this period, between the 14th and 16th centuries, a rich culture of folk customs evolved, the messengers of which are the individual tunes and verses. What sort of songs could they be? János Sylvester mentioned love songs in the 16th century, which would have been the evidence of rich Hungarian love lyrics – if only they had survived (only one text of a chorus was recorded in a fragment from Sopron: "Virág, tudjad, tőled el kell mennem és teirtted kell gyászba öltöztenem" (Little flower, let me tell you I have to leave you and be in mourning because of you). Such refrain tunes survived in melodies related to folk customs, i.e. wedding songs, matchmaking songs and Midsummer Night's songs ("Hess, légy" [Fly away, fly]; "Tavaszi szél" [Spring Breeze], "Köttettem, köttettem" [I have it tied]). Apart

as the 7th tone antiphoners. At the end of the Middle Ages, the volta-rhythm melodies and their developed versions formed a rich circle of variants.

The Musical Life of the Aristocracy

It can be generally said that medieval thinking was hierarchic. Thus the hierarchy of society – *oratores* (praying people), *bellatores* (warriors) and *laboratores* (workers) – was also reflected in music. In accordance with this, clerical and profane music took separate paths.

Queen Beatrice's musical instructor, Tinctoris, wrote around 1475 that at a dinner banquet singers and pipers had to present a picture of heavenly joys. The noise and harsh sounds of a feast were the reflection of earthly power and authority, and they might have had even a strategic importance. For example, in the battle of Nándorfehérvár, the blare of trumpets threatened the enemy – as it was written by a chronicler. Sigismund's trumpeters and his choir were famous throughout Europe. At the 1412 kings' meeting, music was provided by eighty-six pipers and trumpeters (Sigismund's choir was later taken over and held in great respect by King Albert). At the Council of Constance (1414–18), a contemporary witness estimated that the number of musicians present was around 1,700. In 1485, King Matthias was also escorted by musicians when he met the king of Bohemia. Besides the royal court, there were other centres of art and music: Bishop János Vitéz's court in Várad and Esztergom and Bishop Mihály Báthori's court at Vác. Tamás Bakócz, archbishop of Esztergom and Janus Pannonius, bishop of Pécs were also dignitaries, who appreciated music very much.

Among the aristocratic centres, without doubt the most important was the royal court. By the 15th century it was famous for its supreme level of singing and music throughout Europe. The number of people in the royal choir in King Matthias's time was 40, and foreign guests praised it unanimously as Europe's best choir that could compete with the papal choir in quality. The choir had its own school, organist and wind players, and besides performing Gregorian chant (with foreign guest singers and Hungarian boy sopranos), polyphonic works composed in the most sophisticated style were also on the repertoire. Matthias widely corresponded in his efforts to attract foreign musicians to Hungary. The singer-composer Johannes Stockem worked in the country in the 1480s, as did Verjus (Jean Cornuel) and Erasmus Lapidica. Queen Beatrice had her own choir, and she herself played the harp. The musical grandeur of the royal wedding in Székesfehérvár was praised in enthusiastic accounts. At a later date the lute player Pietro Bono was also a guest musician in Matthias's court, and the king made enormous efforts to invite the famous organist Paul Hofhaimer to his court. After Matthias, the Jagiellonians were also great patrons of music. The famous organist Master Grympeck entertained them, and the Silesian composer Thomas Stolzer also worked at Buda for a couple of years.

According to 15th-century descriptions, it was not only church ceremonies and public events that were accompanied by music but also banquets – mostly by string and lute music, and the courses of feasts were preceded by a fanfare of trumpets. As it was described in a 1518 source, the streets of the castle district of Buda often echoed with the sounds of trumpets and drums, which shows that this custom was quite usual. Musicians playing church and secular music were often the same people: trained musicians, for example, and members of court chapels or choirs, including the organists. Trumpeters



Angels playing instruments in the miniature of the Matthias Gradual



Ornate page of the
Matthias Gradual with
a depiction of Christ
resurrected

than a hundred years earlier, just like in other regions on the European periphery. This included organum, based on parallel or contrary movement as well as the modern, more flexible, polyphonic *cantio*. The texts of these movements are usually connected to church festivals or ceremonies, or they comment on those. Polyphonic pieces with secular texts did not survive at all. In contrast to this, the musicians of the royal court followed the most modern polyphonic trends of the age – according to contemporaries. This phenomenon, however – just as the lavishly decorated *Matthias Gradual* –, remained isolated, since it was just an import, and it did not have an influence on Hungarian culture as a whole.

Musical Life in Towns

In the history of music in Hungary, there had been a backwardness since the age of chivalry, which was also noticeable in the development of towns. Due to this lag of several hundred years, there were still

played a special role, as they were the sounding symbols of secular power (they were at the front of the procession) and because of the signalling function of their instruments (signals for troops in battles, signalling fires, tower music in cities). At social gatherings, the most important musical instruments were the lute and the small portable organ (portative). At private chapels and domestic entertainments pipes and string instruments were popular.

Medieval Polyphony

Although the practice of polyphonic music was not widespread in the 14th and 15th centuries, written sources prove that it was used and performed to a certain degree. For example, the Paulines banned it in the 14th century (so it definitely existed), while in the Sándor Codex polyphonic singing was considered as a heavenly joy from the beginning of the 16th century. Polyphonic music could also be heard outside churches, as sources mention singers greeting Sigismund, the Polish prince. However, there are only few sources with musical notations: the Sigismundian Fragment is from the first half of the 15th century, and the Fragment from *Kassa* is from the second half of the century. Together they contain about 30 polyphonic movements. When analysing these movements, we can see that Hungarian common practice did not follow the latest Western European trends but kept the older techniques – sometimes from more

only 25–30 towns in Hungary in the 15th century. However, as far as the musical life of these towns was considered, they were very similar to their Western European counterparts. The trumpet was the symbol of aristocratic, then bourgeois power (as a special privilege, Sigismund allowed the use of the trumpet in certain German cities). Music was also part of the public and official life of cities during initiations, announcements, weddings, processions. Several altar and Mass foundations showed the devotion and desire of rich city people to preserve the memories of their existence. These foundations required the service of singers and musicians. (For example, in the first half of the 15th century, in Sopron there was a Corpus Christi association with 220–250 altarists.) Processions became more and more colourful and pompous (dating from the 13th century): in 1494 in Pozsony, a procession was saluted by cannon shots and trumpets. Besides celebrations and processions, music was part of family life in the cities. Rich city people and their children learned to play musical instruments. The most popular musical instrument of domestic music in the 15th century was the clavichord. With the enrichment of people, the use of the organ became quite popular, and new monastic orders (Franciscans, Paulines and Dominicans) showed a good example in this process. Gypsies playing music were first mentioned at the beginning of the 16th century.

When looking at Hungarian musical life before the Battle of Mohács, we can also see that a minor, Pominóczky, recorded the verse pair “Bátya, bátya, mely az út Becskerekére” (Brother, brother, which way goes to Becskereké?), which was a musical idea suggested by the tune of a prayer. At Queen Mary’s court we can find high-quality, sophisticated music that was played by well-paid musicians (1525). There were a lot of guest musicians at the royal court: among whom Heinrich Finck, Johannes Langus, Thomas Stolzer were the most outstanding who visited Hungary and worked here for a short or longer period. The twenty-year-old Bálint Bakfark came to Buda from Brassó to learn music from the lute-player of the Szapolyai court. In contrast to this, in most places, old polyphonic techniques were used – in the villages people sang together in unison. On the basis of numerous shorthand musical notations in liturgical books, it can be said that musical literacy was of high quality and rather widespread. Unfortunately, the two trends of music playing: the old but generally widespread style of music practice and the imported high-quality art of the royal court were not in balance – history did not give it the chance.

Altarpieces showing angels playing the organ and the lute from Csegöld



Early Renaissance Dances in Europe

With a little exaggeration, we could say that the Renaissance was the most danceful period in European history. Everybody was a keen dancer: noblemen, city people and peasants as well as kings, princes, barons, popes and bishops. Dance became one of the main symbols of the irresistible force of Renaissance activity and the cult of the body. Very few reminders survived from this special form of art among the memories of ancient cultures, so it could not become the feeder and fertiliser of the *Ars nova*, the obsession of Renaissance people with ancient cultures. Only peasant dances could fulfil this role. Thus, dance – together with literature, music and other forms of art – also contributed to the development of the cult of different quasi-national cultures.

The bourgeoisie, the social class which sought to break up the feudal system, and whose aim was to form an autonomous culture representing their wealth and power, wanted to create something very special in dance too. Accordingly, rich citizens sought to change the dance–music–play genres of the anachronistic court culture and make peasant dances gentler to fit their pragmatic view of life. Thus, noble, bourgeois and peasant dance culture diverged from each other in Europe. The sources of this transition were in the northern and middle part of Italy, France and Burgundy.

*Fragment of a mural
showing a dancing couple
from the Buda Castle*

Dance Masters

Learned experts, or dance masters as they were known, were needed to establish and spread the novel dance culture. The first dance master whose work was mentioned in written sources was the Italian Domenico da Ferrara. He was not a wandering jocolator anymore but a great master of humanist education. He was an instructor of dancing, fencing and horse riding, the organiser of spectacles at celebrations, and he worked in the Este court of Ferrara. His most famous students were Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro and Antonio Cornazano, the best-known Italian dance masters of the second half of the 15th century. Lorenzo de Medici, also known as “Lorenzo the Magnificent”, a Florentine ruler (1449–92), a recognized poet himself, also joined him as a student, and he also made his court a place where



famous scientists and artists met. Master Domenico taught his students to respect “measures”, the secrets of dancing in accordance with the Neoplatonist and mystic world view of the age.

According to contemporary ideas, in the harmony of nature, universe and a well-governed state, a mystic dance is reflected, which includes man, revered as a divine being. The secrets of harmonious dance (*misteri*) are: keeping rhythm and tempo (*misura*), the balance of the movements of the body (*maniera*), keeping the right order of movements (*memoria*), using space properly (*partire del terreno*), the talents of the mind, finesse, grace (*aere*), body skills, agility and health (*movimento corporeo*). The 15th-century writings of Domenico and his students became the basic documents of universal European dance.

Court Dances

From the books of the dance masters of the Early Renaissance and contemporaneous documents of dance history, we know exactly what and how people danced in Italy (Milan, Florence, Urbino and Ferrara), Burgundy and in European courts, which were closely or loosely connected to these areas. There were two basic types of Italian and French dances in the 15th century: the *bassadanza*, *basse danse* (marching pair or trio dance) and the *ballo*, *balletto* (dance composition of several parts). The meaning of the word *basse* is “low”, which referred to the slowness and dignity of the dance. This kind of movement was relevant to the fashion (clothes made of long and heavy textiles, shoes with long, peaked nose, heavy head decorations) and the sophisticated manners of the age.

*The Renaissance court
of the Royal Palace,
Visegrád*

The *ballo*, *balletto* was a dance composition for three, four or six dancers, which consisted of four movements (*misura*) differing in rhythm, tempo and character. These movements were the following in Italy: *bassadanza*, *quadernaria*, *saltarello* and *piva*. Among these, the *bassadanza* and *saltarello* were odd rhythm dances, and the *quadernaria* and *piva* were even rhythm dances. The *saltarello* was twice as fast as *bassadanza*, and the *piva* was twice as fast as the *quadernalia*. The instrumental backing of these movements was often the same as the melody, but the musicians could change those a little bit, according to the rhythm and the tempo. Here the dancer and the audience were not yet separated. There were big differences between Italian and French dances despite the similarity of the names of the dances, which the dancers had to be aware of.



Not Included in Early Renaissance Dance Books

In contemporary Italian and French dance collections, there is no trace of the best-known Renaissance dances (such as the *pavane*, *guillard*, *passamezzo*, *courante*, and *volta*). They only appeared one or two decades later, in the second half of the 16th century, when they became very popular. Dance collections did not contain the widely known, simple circle dances (the *branle* and *Rundtanz*), which go back to old traditions, and remained popular at noble courts and dance parties of the bourgeoisie for one or two centuries. There are no exact descriptions of the *trionfo*, a masked procession, which was organised at church and secular festivals, at parties given when envoys or princes visited the country, at weddings,

at the “thirteen days” festivals between Christmas and the Twelfth night, and at patronal festivals or at carnivals.

Performances showing the victory of Love, Truth and Death were very popular: the *trionfo* of *The Three Blind Men* from Christian and pagan mythology, allegorical scenes from Roman history and the *morescas* danced in masks in the English, Spanish, Flemish and even Hungarian style. The *festainulos*, who organised these dances, were poets, musicians, painters, dancers, actors and singers too. It was well-known that sometimes famed artists of the period, like Botticelli, Leonardo and Dürer, also designed the costumes and sceneries of *trionfos*. These secular, dancing–singing–dramatic performances were more capable of expressing the joy of life than the scenes of medieval mystery plays representing happiness in Paradise.

Terpsichore Looks for Accommodation in Hungary

In the Early Renaissance period, Hungary had quite a busy dance life, similarly to Western Europe, but sources only mention the existence of dances and their names. Dance books, like Italian ones, describing

the dances and music performed in Hungary unfortunately did not survive. However, it is certain that the Italian and French manuscript collections were known in Hungary. The collection called The Brussels Manuscript, from around 1460, may have been in the possession of Queen Mary (Louis II’s wife) before it went to Margaret of Austria, but this is by no means certain. Without reliable sources, we must be content with references in contemporary chronicles, historical works, envoys’ reports and diaries, and rare illustrations of dances.

Sources mention an “Italian dance” danced in Hungary (*wällischen Tanz*, *höfliche welschen Tanz*), a string dance called the “Zäuner” (the hedge dance), a quick “German dance” (*Germanica pyrrichia*), a dance in masks (*Mummerej*), a dance with sticks in wooden shoes (*Tanz mit Stecken*), a simple circle dance (*Rundtanz*), a turning pair dance (*Kebrab*), war dances (*militarem pyrrhichiam*, *Martiales choreas*) and a sword dance. There is an illustration of a pair dance on stove tiles, originating from King Matthias’s workshop in Buda, and on a bronze chest buckle from the 15th century. There are some other examples in which court entertainers playing the pipes are represented by swift movements, from which we can conclude that they were virtually dancing themselves. Several European sources mention that the Hungarians had special dances, which became fashionable in Europe during the Late Renaissance period.



Stove tile with courting scene from Besztercebánya

Dances at King Matthias’s Court

Most of the records of contemporary court dances can be traced back to King Matthias’s famous Renaissance court. Most of the information comes from Antonio Bonfini, King Matthias’s court historiographer, who was a keen dancer himself, a true Renaissance man. In his chronicle, he described the dance–music scenes of court festivals and celebrations in detail. From his writing, we know that the people of Buda started to dance when Matthias was elected to be king. The king himself liked dancing too. In 1470, for example, during his visit to Emperor Frederick, he excelled at the tournament and in

Hungarian dances. Matthias liked entertainment even during states of war. During the siege of Breslau, in 1474, he invited the dignitaries of the town and the Czech–Polish armies to a dance party. The wedding of Matthias and Beatrice of Aragon was also a grand celebration. According to the humanist writer Hans Seybolt, the envoy of George, duke of Bavaria, Beatrice danced with her brother, the duke of Naples, in a dance called the “Zäuner”.

According to the report of the envoy of Pfalz, Beatrice and Wladyslaw (son of the Polish king Casimir III) danced a quick *Germanica Pyrrichia* (the German dance) in Olmütz at a lavish Renaissance festival organised by King Matthias. In Bonfini’s opinion, the Hungarians blamed their king daily for spending tax money on useless things, as he led a different lifestyle than his predecessors. He turned away from the strict local morals, stopping old traditions and turning to Latin and Spanish entertainment and comfortable habits. Beatrice was blamed for this, and it was said “...Queen Beatrice forced King Matthias to turn to Italian customs ...and brought ugly men, dancers, pipers, luters and fiddlers: because Queen Beatrice took pleasure in them”. Knowing about Beatrice’s Italian connections (mainly from Ferrara), we can assume that the dances mentioned in Domenico da Ferrara’s collection also reached Hungary.

Louis II’s Passion for Dance and the Moresca

After Matthias’s death, Kings Vladislav II and Louis II were not able to maintain the luxurious Renaissance court. King Louis II and Queen Mary’s ardour for dance was too much for the poor treasury, and all of

Europe realised this. Since their childhood, they had been used to splendid festivals and spectacular court performances, so they insisted on having them all along. George, margrave of Brandenburg, uncle and tutor of King Louis II, wrote in 1519 in a letter to the chancellor of Brandenburg that he had had fun and he had danced at King Louis’s court, which was otherwise very poor, and that the king himself danced happily in the company of noblemen. “I came in a fancy dress (*Mummere*) with seventeen other colleagues, I was wearing a short coat and red pointed shoes, as the forefathers wore them earlier, then an old man turned up in wooden shoes and danced two special dances with a stick (*Tanz mit Stecken*)”.

A carnival dance with weapons and masks is also worthy of note and was recorded by Sigismund, duke of Silesia (Wladyslaw Jagiello’s younger brother) in his steward book in Buda. According to this note, on 21 February 1501, at the end of the carnival season, students from Buda performed a sword dance for him at the site of his accommodation. On the very same day, masked jesters appeared with horses, and they also performed a sword dance for him, for which they were rewarded. These sword dances and etchings made for

Emperor Maximilian at this time show masked Hungarian dancers with weapons. The Hungarian figure among the moresca dancers at the town hall of Munich also refers to the fact that the moresca was a very popular dance in Europe and Hungary. The Hungarian kings’ love of pomp and dances at the beginning of the 16th century would not have been uncommon, and Louis II would not have earned

Procession of masked people, woodcut from Weisskunig



the nickname “the vile dancing king”, had he been rich enough for this kind of lifestyle and had the Turkish threat not been looming.

Dance in Poetry

Among the products of the slowly growing Hungarian literature and poetry, there are some lines about dance too. The first one dates back to 1505 from Körmöcbánya; it was a term of dance, which is very important from the point of view of linguistics, literature and dance.

<i>Szupra aggnő, szökej fel kabla,</i>	[Up, old woman, jump up, mare
<i>Hazajött firjed, tombj Kató!</i>	Your husband has come home, dance, Kate!
<i>Az te szép palástodban</i>	In your beautiful gown
<i>Gombos sarudban:</i>	and buttoned sandals:
<i>Haja, baja virágom!</i>	Hey, hey my flower!]

The second record is the satiric lines of Ferenc Apáti's *Cantilena* of 1526 about girls who pretend to be pious.

<i>“Serényen futamnak tánchan az leányok,</i>	[The girls are running keenly into dance,
<i>Nyilván ott meglátjuk az ő jámborságát,</i>	We will clearly see there how pious they are,
<i>Szertelen ha leend az ő jámborságok,</i>	If their piety is reckless,
<i>Ott lehell pártájok.”</i>	Their headdress will fall off.]

In the seventh part of the Book of Parables, known as the Sándor Codex, which was written by the Dominican nuns of the Island of Rabbits (Margaret Island) in 1521, there were some beautiful lines about the dance of saints in heaven.

“Minémű hangosság leszön az táncolásnak idején, leszön-e ott hegedűs, lantos, dobos, cimbalmos? Leszön. Éneköt is mondanak az tánchan.”

[There will be loudness at the time of dancing, but will there be a violin, lute, drum and cimbalom? Yes, and there will also be singing with the dancing.]

War Dances, Soldiers' Dances, the First Record of the Hajdú Dance

The fashion of war dances continued during the 15th–16th centuries and gained a new momentum in the direct battles with the Turks. Three examples will be mentioned, all of which are special and unique in Central and Western Europe. The first one took place at the siege of Nándorfehérvár in 1456. According to Giovanni da Tagliacozzo, who was a Franciscan friar and John of Capistrano's escort, the defenders of the castle were to have a merry time by Capistrano's order: “some of them were singing with the horns, others were yelling, some of them were dancing or howling and jumping with their arms in the air ... with this they wanted to break the Turks' confidence and brevity, and thus attempted to threaten them...”. The second case took place at the triumphal feast after the battle of Kenyérmező, in 1479. Antonio Bonfini related it after hearing stories told by eye-witnesses: “At dinner, war songs were sung (*militari cantu*), in which they praised the leaders and commanders... Then, excited by the wine they drank, they started to dance a war dance (*militarem pyrrhychiam*). They danced with their weapons (*Martiales choreas*), and there was a big noise. At the peak of the feast every soldier made the others laugh, they used strange and funny movements and gestures. Kinizsi was also invited to join the dance, he stood in the middle of the circle, picked up a Turkish dead body with his teeth without touching it with his hands. Then he started to jump around with the corpse. The people were just staring at him, shocked at this Herculean dance (*choream se et Herculeo*). They had an enjoyable time after that, and did not even go to sleep that night.”

The third story is about the execution of György Dózsa. Several contemporary sources recorded this event, which was especially cruel. According to Antal Verancsics's report: "[He] ordered that György the Székely's clothes be taken off to the belt, and had him tied to the chair and the tree. He also had his warriors dance a recruitment dance (that is, the hajdú dance), during which the soldiers bit György's body upon each round".

Peasant Dances – Common “Hungarian” Features

With the recording of feudal customary law – in Hungary when István Werbőczy compiled his *Tripartitum* in 1514 –, peasants appeared as a different political group, and it slowly led to the separation of noble culture from peasant culture. Peasants became the carriers of the traditional dance culture, while noblemen (and the Western European bourgeoisie) started to follow new European dance fashions. The layer between these two cultures, which showed common features, became thinner and thinner. Galeotto Marzio, King Matthias's Italian librarian, was surprised at the fact that both the aristocrats and simple people understood the language of songs, in which the deeds of Hungarian heroes were sung in Hungarian at the royal table, accompanied by the lute. In his own country, in Italy, it was not possible any more, as the language and culture of the different social groups had become fully separated. Bonfini also mentioned that at the court, there was no dinner without military songs (*cantus militaris*), when their heroes were praised in improvised songs. This habit gradually retreated into the traditional communities of the peasantry.

If we compare this with the war dances and songs mentioned at the description of the battle of Kenyérmező, we can find an old, surviving feature of contemporary culture: a special genre of improvised folk poetry performed with music and pantomime. This genre also included circle dances accompanied with singing and music, jumping–stamping–pattering dances of undifferentiated genres in solo, pairs or groups, and dances with or without accessories. These must have been the special Hungarian dances of the Early Renaissance period, on the basis of which the dances of barons, soldiers or simple pilgrims were defined as Hungarian. This did not mean that there were no similar dances elsewhere, but these dances were already dying out in the central parts of Europe, and they were replaced by free individual couple dances, the expressions of love poetry.

Church and Politics

The Right of Patronage

In the decades after King Sigismund's death, Hungary managed to convince the Holy See that popes should acknowledge that bishopric and archbishopric offices were controlled by the king (or the regent and the Royal Council), because he had the right to present and appoint nominees. Rome could only confirm the suitability of the candidates. However, if the Holy See refused to support the nominee, the candidate of the king could still govern his local parish and enjoy its incomes as an elected bishop (*electus*), and he could also take part in the meeting of the Royal Council. The pope could only exercise his right to appoint office-bearers in the event of the death of prelates in Rome. King Matthias, however, made his will prevail even in that case: when Archbishop John of Aragon died in Rome in 1486, he appointed his relative on his wife's side, the seven-year-old Ippolito d'Este as the head of the Hungarian Church.

Sometimes the king did not exercise his right to appoint nominees himself but let one of his followers do so: Mihály Ország de Gút would have been allowed to appoint someone as the bishop of Nyitra, but the king soon withdrew this privilege. After his conquests, Matthias used his right of patronage outside Hungary, which explains how Orbán Nagylucsei became the head of the bishopric of Vienna. Systematic church policy did not change under the Jagiellonian kings, either. When Pope Alexander VI reaffirmed the right of the pope to appoint nominees for the benefices of the papal court, the Diet in 1495 put forward a resolution: those who did not receive their estates from the king himself should be drowned in water. István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum*, which had a great influence on the thinking of the centuries to follow, justified the king's right of patronage in four paragraphs.

Rome's Support Against the Ottomans

The compliance of popes concerning the right of patronage was closely related to the struggle against the "infidel" Turks. Rome was perfectly aware of the fact that stopping further conquests of the Ottomans in a war on the continent would be impossible without the participation of Hungary. Hungarian rulers also realised that the country could not contain the expanding Ottoman Empire without the help (money, organisation and connections) of the papacy. The Holy See entrusted the important figures of papal diplomacy, cardinals Giuliano Cesarini and Juan de Carvajal as papal legates, with the organisation of the crusades (1444, 1456). Popes Pius II, Paul II and Sixtus IV sent significant amounts of money to Hungary for this specific purpose during Matthias's reign. Between 1459 and 1476, 250,000 golden forints were sent, but since the king did not pursue an active Ottoman policy, these benefits were withdrawn, but then resumed in the 1500s.

In the Jagiellonian Age, Hungary's relationship with the Vatican was maintained by permanent representatives from both sides, both in Buda and Rome. The anti-Ottoman Vatican treated Hungary as its primary diplomatic partner, and therefore it maintained a prominent level of representation in Buda: the most talented diplomats of Rome tried to organise the Turkish war (although they sometimes prevented opportunities of peace treaties). In 1513, Tamás Bakócz, who had earlier been a candidate at

the papal elections, became the legate nominated to organise the crusade, but it turned into a peasants' revolt. Papal legates, the best-known of whom was Antonio Burgio, could take part in the meetings of the Royal Council, therefore they could also intervene in domestic matters. With the approval of the papal legate, a great quantity of church relics – made of precious metals – was collected before the Battle of Mohács and used for the benefit of the country.

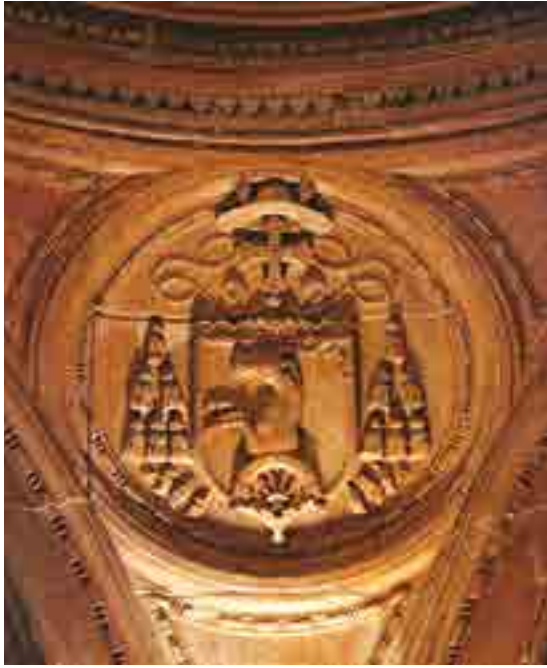
Prelates in Politics

Prelates, as the ecclesiastical group of the barons of the country, were official members of the Royal Council and the Diet. Prelates were the two archbishops and the fourteen bishops (including the church leaders of Syrmia, Bosnia, Croatia, Modrus and Tinnin), the provost of Székesfehérvár and the prior of Vrána, the leader of the Hospitaller Order in Hungary. While during the reign of Matthias the ruler could control the power of the prelates, in the age of the Jagiellos, the prelates became the leaders of the country's politics – by occupying the office of the Chancellor. Their power in politics was linked directly to their wealth. The majority (two-thirds) of their income came from the tithe, which was collected by their own network of tithe collectors, or alternatively, they made profit on the tithe by leasing it out. As they had a greater income than secular landlords, they had to provide a definite number of soldiers in the event of war.

According to the twentieth statute of 1498, church dignitaries had to provide 7,000 mounted soldiers, of which 4,100 had to come from the bishops' estates. Church dignitaries gave much more money for the defence of the country than any other social groups. In the decades before the Battle of Mohács, the defence of the country was based on church banderia alongside the armies stationed at the royal defence fortresses along the border. Several talented prelates, such as Péter Beriszló or Pál Tomori, surpassed their secular colleagues as military leaders. Several high-income church positions were united in one hand, with the purpose of centralising the defence of the country. This was a common phenomenon in 15th-century Europe, but in most of the cases it served the material interests of prelates, enabling them to also patronise cultural activities and worthy causes. From their incomes, prelates had to pay substantial taxes to the papal court, such as the tithe, various fees, the service for the papal bull on appointments (*servitium*) and the *annata*.



Orbán Nagylucei's
psalter



The coat of arms of Tamás Bakócz in the Bakócz Chapel in Esztergom

Only the prelates took a collective part in domestic politics among the clergy. In Hungary, the whole membership of the Church could not turn into a collective separate political body during the development of the estate system. This was partly because in Hungary the ratio of church demesne was insignificant compared to other European countries (being about fifteen per cent). Apart from some huge chunks of property belonging to prelates (the archbishopric of Esztergom, the bishopric of Eger, Várad, and Pécs, the abbey of Pannonhalma belong in this group, even though they were only medium-sized estates compared to the ones owned by secular barons), the majority of church institutions only possessed medium-sized or small plots of lands. The number of fortresses owned by the church was also insignificant (about twelve per cent), and these did not become manorial centres. Church estates – in principle the estates of patron saints – were usually scattered over large territories, and in contrast to secular estates, this fact made their defence more difficult and increased their maintenance costs.

Canons in the Service of Politics

In the Middle Ages, there was no group of centrally paid clerks to perform government, juristic or diplomatic duties. In the early period (11th–12th centuries), the king enlisted learned clergymen, i.e. clerics (especially canons of chapters), in the work of governance. From the 13th–14th centuries, however, the employees of the royal court (royal secretaries, protonotaries, notaries of the chancellery and the tribunals, and the members of the treasury) were paid or rewarded by receiving an estate from church property. As there were only few bishopric seats, the offices of canons at chapters were quite suitable for this purpose, and nominees for these honours were appointed by the king from the 14th century, owing to his right of patronage. Financial support for students attending foreign universities was also provided by canon offices in the lack of a scholarship system.

Church in the Service of Society

The Upper and Middle Layers

Canons in secular offices, or who studied or taught abroad, rarely stayed at the chapter, where their regular duties were performed by their substitutes. By the 15th century, chapters became institutions which financially supported the intellectual activity of learned clerics in the country. Many of these clerk-intellectuals, who joined the Church because they were forced to or were required to do so by society, and who held offices as canons or maybe even bishops, had a basically secular world view. They did not really want their offices, they accepted them reluctantly as bishopric beneficiaries (for example, György Szatmári and László Szalkai). However, they tried to fulfil their prelate duties as well as they could. The first primate of the age of King Matthias was Cardinal Dénes Szécsi, who tried to reintroduce strict principles in the Church with synods in the dioceses and by official visits.

Priests and Believers in the Villages

Church persons lower down in the hierarchy, such as priests of smaller parishes and chaplains, often copied the secular lifestyle of their superiors, some sources even talk about breaking celibacy. During their pastoral duties, they were in direct contact with the people: they celebrated Mass, preached, gave

*Carved choir stall from
Bártfa*



the sacraments, controlled and checked the keeping of Sundays and holidays – there were about a hundred such days in a year. Their work and their lifestyles were supervised by their direct superiors, i.e., deans, who were chosen from among them (in bigger parishes) and who lived locally, at the centre of their church districts. They sent their reports to the archdeacon to the centre of the diocese, where the archdeacons lived as members of the cathedral-chapter. The archdeacons sometimes paid a visit to the parishes.

In 15th-century Hungary, there were hardly any settlements which did not have a church. These churches, made of stone or sometimes wood, served as a shelter for the village people in times of emergency. In Transylvania, the so-called fortress churches were built for this very purpose. Newer village churches were founded as the subsidiary (*filiu*) of the nearest parish church. There were serious debates between the mother church and its subsidiaries concerning the income of the parish derived from the believers. In Buda, the priest of the Church of Our Lady was against the separation of its subsidiaries as independent parishes.



15th-century church,
Gyöngyöspata

Employing village priests was the right and duty of the advowees, but common people could also intervene in the election of the parish priest in the 15th century, not only in cities and market towns but also in small villages. The management of the Church supported the self-government of the believers; the caretakers of the churches chosen from among them dealt with the church estate, and sometimes they could check the parish priest himself. Local priests usually came from villein families, and their education improved by the end of the Middle Ages. Most of them had already had all the basic liturgical books. Priests were not only pastors of their villages but also the spiritual leader and advisor of the people and the guardian of local traditions. It is not surprising that they took part in the peasant rebellion of 1514 in great numbers. In contemporary texts, however, there are references to lustful priests, who frequented drinking houses, and we know of despotic priests, too.

Priests and Believers in the Cities

At the end of the Middle Ages religiosity was still very strong, but it changed, becoming more intimate and personal. City life also influenced religion, and new forms of religious life were born, such as the various religious associations with secular members (*confraternitas*). Most of them were founded with the name Corpus Christi, and they were usually prestigious associations of patricians. Guilds functioned as religious

communities too: they set up a (winged) altar in the churches from their own money and organised and celebrated feast days together with their family members. The bourgeoisie gradually took control of the care of the poor and sick, which had earlier been the duty of the Church. Hospitals were institutions controlled by the town but maintained by the Church, where the sick and the invalid were cared for.

The priests of 15th-century privileged churches considered their offices merely a source of income, and in contrast to their colleagues in villages, having the whole tithe at their disposal, a comfortable life was guaranteed for them. They were hardly ever present at their parishes; their tasks were performed by their substitutes, the chaplains. The chaplains were in the same status as village parish priests and the layer of urban directors of altars and chaplains of cathedrals and parishes. The believers gave a lot of money and contributions to the Church in the interest of the salvation of the dead and to shorten the time to be spent in the purgatory. An altar or a chapel, when land and money was donated to them, played a significant role in supporting the clerical-intellectual layer. Both priests and the believers frequently misused the graces of the mass.

The Church in Everyday Life

Because of the high rate of infant mortality, people were encouraged to take new-born babies to church very quickly (within eight days) to be baptised: infants were baptised by immersion under water three times in order to make them members of the Church. Confirmation – a sacrament that enriches the baptised person with the presence of the Holy Ghost, so that they can live according to their faith

– also took place at a young age, just as the first confession. By that time, children had to know the necessary prayers, the Lord's Prayer (*Pater Noster*), the Hail Mary (*Ave Maria*) and the Credo. The believers usually made a confession and received the Eucharist once a year. The sacrament of marriage could be received from the age of fourteen for boys, and from the age of twelve for girls, according to canon law. In cases of emergency and illness, a priest was called to administer the extreme unction to the sick. They could also declare their last will at this point, which was written down by the local priest, who also checked whether it was observed.

The dead were buried in the fenced cemetery near the church. Only those advowees and dignitaries could be buried in the church itself who had donated towards the building of it. Pagans, excommunicated people, and those who had committed suicide or had lived in deadly sin were not buried according to church ceremonies. Funerals, other milestone events and holy feasts

were performed according to special colourful ceremonies and liturgical activities, which could vary in different church dioceses, and which were designed to help the locals understand the secrets of faith. Some of these ceremonies were quite spectacular, such as the procession. At the Latin language ceremonies, the believers usually took part as an audience, but in the 15th century there were vernacular variants of liturgical hymns and Mary songs as well. The believers asked for the saints' help whenever they encountered trials in their everyday life.

Church and Education

At the end of the Middle Ages, the training of village priests took place at the parishes, in accordance with the old traditions. Candidates had to pass an exam in front of a bishopric committee on their knowledge necessary for performing liturgy and parish administration. They had to know basic texts by heart, and they also had to be able to sing and read. Higher-level knowledge was accessible only in chapter schools, some of which became the centres of Hungarian Humanism in the 15th century (Pécs, Várad). The third, short-lived Hungarian university was also founded in a chapter residence. It was founded in Pozsony (*Academia Istropolitana*, 1467) with the help of King Matthias and János Vitéz. Due to the lack of royal and archbishopric support, it was closed by the 1490s. Almost half of all Hungarian canons and bishops studied at foreign universities.

Reform Movements Within Monastic Orders

The originally contemplative monastic orders – the Benedictines, Cistercians and Premonstratensians – dealt mainly with liturgical tasks and were unstoppably declining by the end of the Middle Ages. They did not pay sufficient attention to the education of their members, to the acquisition of modern universal knowledge. More fortunate were those monasteries which fulfilled special functions besides their original tasks, such as Bába, which was a place of pilgrimage, and Kapornak and Garamszentbenedek, which



*Depiction of a procession
in the initial E of the
Matthias Gradual*

were outstanding credible places. There was a reform movement to stop the decline at the beginning of the 16th century, under the leadership of Máté Tolnai, the archabbot of Pannonhalma. The aim of the movement was to unite the originally independent monasteries. The union of monasteries under the royal right of patronage – Pannonhalma, Pécsvárad, Szekszárd, Bába, Somogyvár, Zalavár, Garamszentbenedek and Bakonybél – took place in 1512, but it did not last.

The reform of the Cistercian Order was especially encouraged by King Matthias, while the reorganisation of the Premonstratensians was led by the provost of Ság, Ferenc Fegyverneki, following the reform endeavours of the French parent monastery, and it was also supported by Tamás Bakócz. Besides being places of authentication (the biggest credible place issuing charters was at Lelesz in the Late Middle Ages), the Premonstratensians were pastors, as it was their task to be canons regular. They did this against the will of the secular priests, bishops, and deans several times, as monks were generally not allowed to work as pastors. They became very popular thanks to their commitment to the wider public. In the 15th century, nine Benedictine and ten Premonstratensian monasteries functioned as credible places, while there were no credible places operated by the Cistercians. The latter also refused to bury the dead in their churches.

The Flourishing Hermitic and Popular Mendicant Orders

There was no need to reform the four Carthusian monasteries, as they followed their original ideas consistently, and their foreign – especially Austrian and German – connections also reinforced them in their efforts. They were excellent at copying and writing codices (primarily the monastery of Lövöld).

*Benedictine abbey church
of Garamszentbenedek*





Nun's head from the shrine of St. Margaret

The Paulines not only managed to preserve their popularity, but they were also able to found more monasteries, and the number of their cloisters grew to 90 by 1450. Among the founders were kings, prelates, aristocrats and dignitaries. Instead of building monasteries, the Dominicans kept their influence in cities by careful pastoring, and scholarly work was also habitual among their members. Their college in Buda (*studium generale*) was the most permanent Hungarian university in the Middle Ages: the last record about it dates from 1530.

The task of the Dominicans in the Church also involved the identification of heretics: i.e. inquisition. After repressing Hussitism in the middle of the 15th century, they did not have too much on their hands. In 1483, the pope appointed one of the lecturers of the Dominican college of Buda (Mihály Kassai) to be the inquisitor; this honour had not been given to anyone for a very long time. There is little evidence about the activities of late medieval inquisitors. In the years before the Battle of Mohács, they had to fight against the Lutheran reformation, mainly in Buda and in some German cities. The foreign circles of Queen Mary were in favour of this new discipline. Laws were enacted at parliaments against the followers of the new belief (1523:53 and 1525:4). Their punishment was execution and confiscation of their property, then burning at the stake. In fact, there were only one or two executions.

Out of the mendicant (begging) orders, the biggest change took place among the Franciscans. The Hungarian Franciscan Order founded only eight new monasteries after 1350, the last one in 1425. In the 14th century, a new movement started within the order, in opposition to the traditional order, which was settled in convents, owned shared property, and was called Conventual, later Marian Franciscan Order. The new movement placed an emphasis on keeping St. Francis's strict regulations (therefore they were called Observants). This other branch of the Franciscan Order (which was later called the Salvatorian branch) spread from the Bosnian district to Hungary at the end of the 14th century. An independent Hungarian province was set up in 1448 after they had taken control over from the Conventuals in several monasteries. In principle, the unity of the Franciscan Order was preserved until the end of the Middle Ages, but in practice, the Observants could be considered as an independent monastic order. Total separation was officially declared in 1517.

The Observants were supported mainly by rulers and dignitaries, so the number of their monasteries increased rapidly: around 1440 they had twenty-five convents, in 1475 they had forty-nine monasteries in ten districts (*custodia*), around 1500 they had sixty-seven, and before the Battle of Mohács they had seventy convents. About 1,500–1,700 friars lived in these communities. They owed their popularity to the fact that they undertook pastoral duties in smaller towns and villages too. Minutes recording John of Capistrano's canonisation prove that folk religion was born as a result of their work. There was a great need for their activities on the southern border, where Ottoman missionaries were converting people. Their criticism of society, which continued for several decades – especially through the works of Pelbárt Temesvári and Osvát Laskai –, played an important role in the ideological preparation and the outbreak of the Dózsa Rebellion.

Nuns

Dominicans and Franciscans were mostly in control of the religious life of female monastic communities, which structurally belonged to their monastic order: nunneries, the house of the Third Order and beguines. There were not many female convents in Hungary, but the nuns living there came from the most respected dignitary families. The most famous Dominican nunnery was the one on the Island

of Rabbits (Margaret Island), which was as popular at the end of the Middle Ages as in St. Margaret's time in the 13th century. The Franciscan Poor Clare Sisters had only five or six convents in Hungary, and the best-known was the one founded by Queen Elizabeth (Louis the Great's mother) in Óbuda. Their vocation not only made them the most popular governesses in female aristocratic society – there were nuns who later returned to secular life –, but they also were the creators of codex literature in Hungarian.

Outside the Catholic Church

The Jews

Jews living in Hungarian towns were considered servants of the royal chamber, so they were under direct royal protection. Ever since the Anjou times, their leader was the “judge of the Jews”, appointed from among secular dignitaries, with the task of keeping track of their possessions, and with the responsibility to collect tax from them. With King Matthias's reforms of the treasury, János Ernusz founded a so-called countrywide Jewish prefecture, which replaced the old office and was led by a Jewish person, who was given the power to protect the rights of the Jews. At the end of the Middle Ages, sources mention Jews in thirty-eight settlements, but the situation of these 15,000–20,000 people had gradually deteriorated by the end of the Middle Ages. It was not the Church that attacked them, but rather, the weakening royal power was no longer able to protect them from the hostility of society – a reaction to their wealth and their monetary activities. In 1525, for example, the house of Imre Szerencsés (Emericus Fortunatus), a vice-treasurer of Jewish origin, was attacked in Buda.

The Eastern Orthodox

The fate of Eastern Orthodox ethnic groups (Serbians, Romanians, Ruthenians), who were growing in numbers in the southern and eastern parts of Hungary due to the Turkish advance, was not influenced by the union of the Western and Eastern churches, which came about in 1439 in Florence after long negotiations. Although they received a Greek-practising but Catholic bishop, the lack of

Jews blowing the shofar, initial in the Matthias Gradual

records makes it difficult to decide how seriously they actually took the disciplines of the union. The residence of the bishop was in the Eastern Orthodox monastery of Körtvélyes, founded by the predecessors of the Drágfi family in 1391, or in the monastery of Munkács, which had the authority of Eastern Orthodox bishops from 1491. The leaders of these monasteries (igumens) gained the right to ordain Eastern Orthodox priests in Hungary from the patriarch of Constantinople. Durad Branković, Serbian despot, and his family remained Eastern Orthodox, so there were Eastern Orthodox bishops in and around their estates, who were consecrated by the bishopric of Nándorfehérvár.



FOLK BELIEFS

*Enikő Csukovits***Patronal Festivals, Pilgrimages**

Pilgrimages played a very important role in the religious life of the Middle Ages. Believers who visited the church or site of pilgrimage and performed the necessary activities – i.e., made a confession, celebrated communion, chanted specified prayers –, received indulgence for a certain number of days, reducing the time to be spent in the purgatory. There was a hierarchy among pilgrimage sites: the most significant places attracted thousands of pilgrims year by year, sometimes coming from several hundred or even thousands of kilometres away, while the majority of churches licensed to hold pilgrimages were visited by people from only a short distance away (neighbouring villages).

The most frequented of all the pilgrimage sites in 15th–16th-century Hungary was the tomb of St. Ladislaus in Várad. The tomb of the knight king, who was canonised in 1192, was visited by people from all over the country; even Hungarian kings felt it was their duty to make a pilgrimage to Várad. There were four other tombs that became significant shrines in medieval Hungary: St. Stephen's in Székesfehérvár, St. Margaret's (Béla IV's daughter) on the Island of Rabbits (although Margaret died in 1270, she was canonised only in 1943), St. Paul the Hermit's in the Pauline monastery of Budaszentlőrinc with his relics retrieved from Venice in 1381, and John of Capistrano's in Újlak, who died in 1456.

Portal of the Basilica of Mariazell with tympanum, relief showing the story of its foundation with the figure of Louis the Great, ca. 1438

The network of Hungarian sacred destinations was made richer by the shrines of The Holy Blood, which appeared from the second half of the 14th century: the first ones were Esztergom and Kassa. The Benedictine monastery of Garamszentbenedek was another major sacred place, which also boasted a relic of The Holy Blood, just like the church of Ludberg in Slavonia, but the most famous Holy Blood relic was kept in Bába in the Benedictine monastery. Hungarian places of pilgrimage were visited primarily by peasants and the lower layers of bourgeoisie. The clergy was represented by priests from the lower end of the church hierarchy, the nobility by simple, common noblemen, but no aristocrats or prelates were seen at these places.



Hungarian pilgrims visited not only Hungarian locations but foreign ones too, albeit only the most significant ones. Their main destinations were Rome, Aachen and Jerusalem, but they also reached the distant Santiago de Compostela, Rocamadour in France, the Italian Bari and Loreto, and St. Patrick's purgatory in Ireland. Pilgrims heading to Aachen visited other important places in Germany on their way: the relics of Cologne, Trier, Düren and Regensburg. The nearby shrine of Mariazell became a



Portable statue of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, parish in Dozmat

popular place of pilgrimage for Hungarian pilgrims from the end of the 14th century, after Louis the Great's donation.

Pilgrims from Hungary went abroad mainly for pious reasons. Because of the great distances, the poor and the sick could not go on foreign pilgrimages – hence they visited local Hungarian holy places. Hungarian pilgrims came from the wealthier members of the bourgeoisie and the nobility. The burghers preferred Aachen, but many of them went to Rome, where people from all kinds of social groups could go: Aachen was visited when the big pilgrimage took place every seven years, while Rome was visited in jubilee holy years.

Due to adverse conditions and the expenses, only aristocrats set out for the Holy Land. As far as church people were concerned, there was no significant difference between the numbers of priests from the lower end of the hierarchy and prelates: regardless of their incomes, they could be found at all kinds of sacred places. Two detailed journey descriptions survived from the beginning of the 16th century, written by church authors. One of them was written between 1514 and 1517 by a Franciscan friar, Gábor Pécsváradí, who stayed in the Holy Land. In the other travel diary, we can read about the Transylvanian canon János Lászai's journey, written by his friend and travelling companion, Felix Fabri, who was a Dominican theologian based in Ulm.

Before leaving, the pilgrim had to ensure he had enough money for his journey. If he planned to visit the Holy Land, he had to ask for papal permission for the journey, and he also had to take care of his possessions and family at home (for example, he could postpone his trials). The cost of an average pilgrimage to Rome or Aachen was 30–40 golden forints, the costs of a journey to the Holy Land were four or five times more. The pilgrimage of a baron cost much more, as he took his servants and armed entourage with him: it was a spectacular event in Italy when the king of Bosnia, Mihály Újlaki, went to Rome in 1475, and in 1502 Prince John Corvinus made a pilgrimage to Loreto at the head of an army of 100 people.

Folk Religion

Christianity and ideas outside Christian beliefs – about supernatural beings and power – were not in contradiction. For example, even the most educated clergymen believed in the evil eye, cursing or magic. These ideas contradicted official church principles only when they were considered profanation, or were used together with heretic disciplines, or if they caused harm to others. In such cases, witches were brought to court, the case examined according to the usual procedure and punishment meted out. There are no records of major, hysterical witch hunts in medieval Hungary.

Folk healing and magic were closely related to each other. Women who knew herbs – they were called enchanters or watchers – recited rhymes which had the power to heal the patient. The word “watcher” referred to a connection with the other world. Watchers were able to find lost treasures or animals and could talk to the souls of the dead. They used human hair, secretion or animal organs to do their magic. The consecrated objects of the Church were very important, for example, sacraments of the altar or the scrapped eye from a portrait of Jesus or St. John. However, magic with these objects was very risky, as it was punished with burning at the stake if discovered.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

István Tringli

From the 13th century, the climate turned cooler and wetter in Eurasia than in the previous centuries. In the second half of the 15th century, there was a short, transitional warmer period, followed by cold and wet weather lasting for two more centuries, and which was later termed the Little Ice Age. Rivers were much more voluminous than today, and nearby wetlands were often covered by high water levels for longer. This climate was favourable for the growth of forests, but due to the increased demand for firewood, trees were regularly cut down and forests were cleared. Because of long winters, domesticated plants had a shorter growth period, and grains were often threatened by rotting.



*Master Wenceslas of
Bohemia: December.
Cycle of frescos of the
twelve labors of the
months, 1391–1407.*

István Tringli

The Kingdom of Hungary was a multinational country in the Late Middle Ages, just like throughout the course of its history. In this age, significant influxes of ethnic minorities came only at the end of the period, when Serbian settlers entered the country, otherwise the process was very slow. There is no exact data about the proportion of ethnic minorities, nor is there any exact data on the entire population of the country. Belonging to an ethnic minority group often meant a specific social and juristic status as well. The settlement of the north-eastern Carpathians, which had started earlier, continued, although at a slower pace; mainly Ruthenians arrived there.

*Depiction of shepherds
on an altarpiece.*

*Lamentation of Joachim,
Berzenke (Bzenov,
Slovakia)*

In Transylvania and territories close to the Banate of Severin, the settling of Romanians under Vlach laws continued. Transhumance was not possible here, but most of them were still engaged in shepherding and often moved their residences. The Romanian *knezes* became noblemen in Hunyad, Fogaras, Hátszeg and Máramaros, and their rights were no different from the privileges of Hungarian common noblemen. The traditional ethnic and tripartite (*primors*, mounted warriors [*lófő*] and common Székelys) society of the Székelys was slowly disintegrating. The first wave of Romani (Roma Gypsy) people moved to Transylvania from the Balkans during the reign of Sigismund, and their settlement slowly continued.

The leading group of the Transylvanian Saxons, the Grafs (*gerébs*), merged with the nobility and became Hungarian. At the same time, the upper social group of the Saxons was taken over by the urban citizens, and the peasants lived more freely than Hungarian villeins. In the southern counties, such as Bács and Szerém, the majority of the inhabitants were Hungarian, but the Serbs moved into this region continuously from the time of Sigismund.

The Croatian population of the southern and Slavonian counties was decimated by the Ottoman attacks. There were not any significant events among the Slovenes of the Mura region and the Slovaks of Upper Hungary that would have influenced their ethnic identities. Towns, which used to be mainly populated by Germans, became almost completely Hungarian – except for the ones along the western border and the Transylvanian Saxon settlements; or in certain places in Upper Hungary, the former German towns became more Slovak. The separate ethnic status of the Cumans disappeared, and they became an ethnic group with special privileges.



GOVERNMENT

István Tringli

The King and Regent

On top of the social hierarchy was the king, who was not only a symbolic ruler but was expected to decide in every matter of the state. The ruler controlled foreign policy, he decided in matters of war and peace, and he personally went into battle even in the Late Middle Ages. Administration of justice and exercising clemency were also his royal prerogatives. Only the king could give away an estate. His power was regulated primarily by customary law, although some of the acts referred to the sovereign's prerogatives, none of the medieval laws listed all the rights and privileges of the king.

In extraordinary situations, the country was controlled by the regent. His rights were limited by law, and his power was not as extensive as the king's. The biggest difference in power was that the regent could not give away an estate bigger than the size of thirty-two villeins' landplot. In Hungarian history, the first regent was János Hunyadi, elected in 1446. He held his office from 1446 to 1452. Mihály Szilágyi was also a regent assisting the young King Matthias for half a year in 1458.

*The seal of Hungary's
university, 1446*



The Royal Council

The most important governing body was the Royal Council, and the ruler consulted the members for advice in all matters. It held regular meetings. Originally only bishops and barons could take part in the meetings, but full membership was present only on extraordinary occasions. During the reign of King Matthias, the council consisted of five bishops and nine barons on average. In exceptional circumstances, it exercised the power of the sovereign, for example, in 1445 or after Matthias's death. On the first occasion, the council even had a signet made with the writing "The Signet of the Unity of Hungary". From 1498, common noble assessors – elected by the Diet – could also take part in the meetings. In practice, they did not really represent the interests of their estate, as they were the *familiars* of the barons on the council, so they had to vote in accordance with the will and interests of their lords.

The Diet

By this period, the general assembly, i.e., the Diet, had real significance. The king or the regent convened the assemblies, and in the case of electing a king, it was the palatine's duty to call the session. The frequency of the assemblies was regulated in the Jagiellonian age, but it never became a yearly custom. The most important right of the Diet was to impose the war tax; however, taxes were collected without the agreement of the Diet even at the end of the Middle Ages. The location of these assemblies was most often the Field of Rákos near Pest. At the meetings, the Royal Council held discussions separated from the representatives of common noblemen and towns. On such occasions, the members



*Adjudication – Christ
Before Pilate, altarpiece
of the former high altar
of the church
of Liptószentmária*

the mediator between the ruler and the estates if there was a debate. Matters of land and possession and serious criminal proceedings were tried only at the royal court. At first there were three, then four tribunals of justice: the court of the palatine's presence, the court of the king's presence, the courts of the king's special and personal presence. The last two were eventually merged and led by the chief justice of Hungary.

Chancellery and Treasury

The chancellery was reformed in 1464: the offices of the secret and lord chancellor were merged with the two chancelleries. Besides writing charters, the chancellery also dealt with the preparations of government decisions. Royal estates were separated from the treasury. Matters of the royal estates were settled by the court of the judge of Buda from 1458 until 1541. As part of the monetary reforms, the treasury became a unified organisation during the reign of King Matthias: chambers, which had been separate up until then, all came under the strict authority of the treasurer.

Local Administration and Places of Authentication

Slavonia was governed by the ban with a bit more independence, and the Slavonian estates could intervene in the election of the vice-ban. In Transylvania, however, there was no independent development of

of the Royal Council gathered in bigger numbers, and the later House of Lords evolved from the Royal Council.

At the sessions of the Diet, four estates were represented: prelates, barons, common nobility and the representatives of towns. Until 1848 they were the participants of the parliamentary sessions. Common noblemen sometimes were represented by envoys elected at county assemblies, and sometimes they all turned up personally. The estate of the towns was present through the representatives of the towns of the treasurer and the chief justice (*civitates tavernicales* and *personales*), and the mining towns of Lower Hungary. The estate of the towns first appeared at the sessions of the Diet in 1444, but their political role was quite insignificant: partly because they were not interested in domestic politics, and partly because they were not invited to all the meetings. The inhabitants of Slavonia and Transylvania had their own representatives at the Diet.

The Palatine and the Administration of Justice

The palatine of Hungary was the highest-ranking office, and his significance grew in the age of the estates. It was the only honour that was elected by the Diet and not appointed by the monarch. He was

the estates: the power of Hungarian voivodes, appointed by the king, remained unchanged; what is more, they also just acquired the office of the hitherto independent *Székegyispán* (count of the Székelys). The autonomy of the Transylvanian Saxons increased significantly; in 1486 the king reinforced the Andreatum of 1224, which originally confirmed the rights of the Saxons living in the “province” of Szeben. From then on, other Saxon territories in Transylvania lived according to these privileges.

Local administration was executed by the counties in most parts of the country. Minor cases were judged here while various matters were settled by order of higher judges: for example, people were summoned, investigations were made, taxes were collected, armies were set up. The nobility intervened in the work of the Diet through county representatives, and they announced the new laws. Almost all matters were settled at the court of justice of the county, which was called *sedria*. As a sign of the development of estates, local governance also started to take shape slowly. From 1486, the county *ispáns* (counts) had to elect their deputies from among the wealthier noblemen of the county.

In some parts of the Saxon Lands and the Székely Land, Kunság and Szepesség, there were no counties but so-called seats (*székek*). The major part of juristic documents were written at the places of authentication (or credible places) as before. They had a two-fold task: they made authentic charters at the request of their clients, and by the order of the king they took part in trials and recorded the events in charters.

Laws and the Triple Book

The role of laws (called *decretum* with a contemporary word) slowly changed. The laws no longer followed customary law, but they themselves generated new legislation. Matthias’s law book of 1486, which was the first printed Hungarian law, played a significant role in this. In 1514 István Werbőczy was the first person to collect and write down Hungarian customary law. His work is called the *Tripartitum* (Triple Book) because of the numbering of the chapters. The book never actually entered into force, but due to its concise and clear style, it was considered to be the most popular collection of customary law until 1848, and it saw dozens of editions.

The Doctrine of the Holy Crown

The abstract idea of the state was not a recognised concept in late medieval juristic thinking; it was substituted by the doctrine of the Holy Crown. According to the latter, the crown represented the country even if there was no king, and the revenues and the territory of the country were the inalienable property of the crown. The rights of the estates and the Holy Crown were parts of an organic unity: the will of the estates was enough to transfer the authority of the crown to another crown if the real crown was not available, just as it happened at the coronation of Vladislav I. According to the Triple Book, noblemen were members of the Holy Crown, as was the king himself.



Woodcut decorating
the law book of King
Matthias, the king
among his jurists

SETTLEMENTS AND PLACES OF LIVING

Gyula Siklósi – Gergely Buzás – Beatrix Romhányi – András Pálóczi Horváth

Towns

In his work summarising Hungarian customary law, entitled *Tripartitum*, István Werbőczy stated that only the *burghers*, or citizens of free royal cities possessed civil rights and privileges. According to him, citizens of any other towns were only tenants. However, the hierarchy of towns was more complicated in reality, and it could not be purely based on the contrast of burghers and villeins. There were about thirty free royal cities or towns with similar privileges in the country. The most distinguished ones were the seven “towns of the treasurer”, the so-called *civitates tavernicales*: Buda, Kassa, Bártfa, Eperjes, Pozsony, Sopron and Nagyszombat, and they were legally and juristically different from other towns by the middle of the 15th century. Pest joined as the eighth member at the end of the 15th century. Besides these, the “towns of the chief justice” or the so-called *civitates personales*, such as Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Lőcse, Kiszzeben, Szakolca, the royal mining towns (Selmecbánya, Körmöcbánya) and the Transylvanian Saxon towns (Brassó, Nagyszeben) also had certain privileges. However, it was not only the dwellers of these towns who were considered burghers. The expression *burgher* was used for the citizens of all bishopric towns and also the residents of distinguished market towns too – regardless of their legal position.

Stove tile with Buda's coat of arms, ca. 1490



The number of market towns (*oppida*) in Hungary at the end of the Middle Ages was about 500, out of which 150 had a town-like appearance or fulfilled urban duties. Market towns played a very important role in the economic life of the country. Free royal cities were usually situated along the border. Two-thirds of the area of the country had no cities: the southern part of Transdanubia and the Great Plain. There was only one royal city in that region: Szeged. However, the scantiness of the network of cities was compensated for by the network of market towns: the most important *oppida* – similarly to privileged cities – were trade and economic centres of a region, and, moreover, their church institutions, schools and in some cases their administrative functions distinguished them from the neighbouring villages.

At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, almost fifteen per cent of the population of Europe lived in urban settlements, but in Hungary this rate was less than ten per cent. The combined population of Buda and Pest was between 15,000 and 20,000, that of Kassa and Szeged was about 7,000, while in Pozsony the number of inhabitants was 5,000, and in Sopron, Bártfa and Nagyszombat it was 3,500-4,000 respectively. By this time the population of Paris, Milan and Venice had each exceeded 100,000, so the Hungarian numbers were quite insignificant, even though in most parts of Europe, the population of most towns was usually a couple of thousands of people. In neighbouring Styria, for example, Graz had a population of 7,000, while the outstanding merchant town, Pettau

had only 1,500 residents. The population of the biggest market towns in Hungary was about 1,000, but most of them had only a few hundred residents.

The majority of cities were overcrowded, especially within the city walls, while the suburbs were less densely populated. In some places even the area inside the walls was not built up completely. City walls built in the 13th and 14th centuries usually remained intact until the 15th and 16th centuries. Meanwhile, in several places, huge areas became surrounded by walls, and many fortresses had to be modernised because of the impending Ottoman threat. In 1473, one of the most important Hungarian cities, Székesfehérvár had to be fortified: the north-west rondella (round bastion) of the inner city, the rondella of the Buda gates, the barbican of the Palace gates and the southern rondella were built at that time. The king ordered villeins from the counties of Veszprém and Somogy to work on these constructions. The wooden, earth and hedge fortifications of the suburbs were built upon hearing the news of the immediate Turkish threat.

The appearance of the massive rondellas on fortresses and city walls was necessary because of the introduction of cannons in battles. High, thin towers, which were built earlier to dissect city walls, and the high, thin city walls themselves were not sufficiently protective against cannon balls. When these heavy monstrous cannons started to be used in armed conflicts, defence also changed: high walls were demolished and thicker ones supported by earthworks were built. Earthworks also made them more flexible. Previously built wall passes were also filled up with earth, and in place of the high, thin towers, more resistant protective rondellas were raised. Cannons could be placed in any direction on the rondellas, so it was possible to shoot to the side (from a side position, in front of the walls).

Earth fillings could be found along the city walls, so defensive forces could move more easily around the city on the wider walls. Moats 20–40 metres wide and one to seven metres deep also appeared on the outside of the city walls. On the other side of the moat, there was a counterscarp (*contrascarpa*): this was often made of earth with a stone wall, on which there was a covered road. These were the forward positions of the defenders. Previously built defensive gates had to be fortified, so the barbicans appeared.

The country had very little money for the fortification of suburbs, as the economic situation was dire at the beginning of the Ottoman invasion. It was impossible to surround whole settlements, so only the most important parts, necessary for the defence of the inner city, were protected by moats and earthworks (for example Fehérvár – Buda suburb). Big areas of suburbs remained unfortified, and as the houses were usually made of wood, they were often burnt down when under attack by the enemy.

Towns were often destroyed by fire. Narrow streets, where houses were built very close together, and the use of flammable building materials made them highly combustible. There was a fire in Pest in 1512, when twenty-four houses burnt down. Chimneys made of wood were also cleaned: Italian chimney-sweepers were employed in certain Hungarian towns, for example in 1508 in Buda, Pest and Eger. Although from the 14th–15th centuries a lot of churches and houses had brick vaults, it was not at all commonplace at the time. Wooden shingles were replaced by ceramic tiles in Buda and Pest in this period. These alterations reduced the number of fire incidents in the inner city, but in the suburbs there was no money for this new building material.

Outbreaks of fire could be explained by the fact that the water supply and sewage system of towns did not develop until the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries. Water was acquired from the nearby brooks, rivers, lakes and wells. In Buda, water was collected in cisterns even in the first half of the 14th century, and people drank the karst water of castle caves. In more fortunate cities, artificial wells appeared (Fehérvár). In Nagyszombat, Beszterce and Brassó, city brooks were built along the long streets.

The remains of fountains, wells and lead pipes found at excavations in the royal palace of Buda prove that there was a water-conduit after 1355–66; but written sources mentioned conduits in Buda



*View of Buda in
Hartmann Schedel's
Chronicle of the World*

only from 1416. The pipes of conduits were made of wood, lead and ceramics in the 15th century; later they were made of iron. Water pipes from the Sigismund period were also found in Buda and Pest. Water was brought from the mountains of Buda to the castle, and there were public wells at the ends of the pipes. The quality of the water, however, was not always satisfactory; this is why the consumption of wine was commonplace. Public wells were placed inside and outside towns, and in medieval Fehérvár they could be found in the suburbs (Szentkirályföldre) and along roads as well as near gates (Királykút). There were wells in monasteries, palaces, in the courtyards of houses and in several cases, even in cellars.

*Floor brick depicting
a well from the Buda
Palace of King
Matthias*



Streets in the inner city were usually covered by paving-stones at this time. These pavements were made of big, wide, flat stones or pebbles (Buda, Székesfehérvár). The arrangement of streets, the form of blocks of houses, the size of plots of land did not change much until the first half of the 16th century. However, land plots were dissected, half plots of land became popular, but the layout of towns and blocks of houses did not change. The number of two-storey houses increased slightly, and plots of lands were totally built up with long houses, which occupied the whole facade of the street (Székesfehérvár: 17 Megyeház Street and 4 Oskola Street; Buda: 18 Országház Street). Houses in towns had big, rectangular, Late Gothic or renaissance windows, the special characteristic feature of which was the cross-shaped partition. Big shop windows with a segment arch became very popular (Buda: the medieval houses of Úri and Tárnok Streets).

The Ottoman attack put an end to the development of flourishing urban life, and in the following decades, it brought about the destruction of buildings and of medieval urban space. At the same time, it also encouraged the necessary modernisation of fortresses.

The Town of Visegrád

The origins of the town go back to 1285, when it was mentioned as a *hospes* settlement. The settlement became a town after 1323, owing to the fact that the royal court moved there. By the middle of the 14th century, the well-developed

town consisted of two parts. The less significant part was the German-populated territory between the Lower Castle and the Palace. The Hungarian part was situated at the Nagymaros ferry and along both sides of the St. George brook (today called Apátkúti brook). Besides the judge at the top of the hierarchy who directed the town, one half of the twelve-strong council represented the Germans, while the other half represented the Hungarian part of the settlement. After 1408, when the royal court moved on, the town began to decline. King Matthias tried to revive the settlement by inviting Saxons from Transylvania and by granting privileges, but after his death they were repealed by the Diet. In 1544, the inhabitants fled from the Turks, and with that the medieval town was wiped off the face of the earth.

The Royal Palace of Visegrád

The predecessor of the palace was King Charles I's town house. It developed into a notable palace only during Louis I's reign, but the construction was completed only by his successors, Maria and Sigismund at the end of the 14th century. Until the first decade of the 15th century – when Sigismund moved his court to Buda –, the Royal Palace of Visegrád remained the official residence of the Hungarian rulers. In the 15th century, the palace became insignificant, until King Matthias had it rebuilt at the end of the 15th century. From that time on until the 1544 Ottoman occupation, it was the countryside residence of the Hungarian kings. The palace was severely damaged during the period of the Turkish rule and finally pulled down in the middle of the 18th century.

King Matthias started the renovation of the palace only after his marriage to Beatrice in 1476. He turned it into his countryside residence. The construction may have taken ten years. The old buildings were totally refurbished, but a new wing was erected only on the street facade. The windows, fire-places, roofs, wells, loggias and balconies were replaced. The construction was led by the court judges of Buda. The works were executed by a local building workshop that specialised in Late Gothic architecture, but some partial tasks were performed by Italian masters who worked in the Renaissance style.



*The Lion Fountain in
the Royal Palace of
Visegrád*

The Fortress of Visegrád

The castle of Visegrád, which was built after the Mongol Invasion, consisted of two parts: a citadel that was reinforced with the old tower and a gate tower; and the Lower Castle that was connected to the citadel with a wall fortified with guard towers. The hexagonal keep was in the Lower Castle. Charles I had the keep rebuilt and an inner wall constructed around it. The palace wings of the citadel, its moat and the second wall were built in the Angevin era. The Hungarian crown was safeguarded in the citadel until the Ottoman period. King Sigismund had another outer wall and a ladies' house built next to the old tower. Matthias had the palace wings totally rebuilt and the fortifications modernised. The hall on the first floor of the eastern wing and the room within the gate tower were given ribbed vaults. Two pieces of arch-stones have survived from the vault of the gate tower with the coats-of-arm of King Matthias and his consort, Queen Beatrice. In the lower castle yard, farm buildings were erected and the wall was elevated. The wall pass in front of the old tower was filled in, and a new cannon terrace was formed. From 1492, the citadel was given over to the crown guards chosen by

the Diet. In 1543, the Turks occupied the fortress, and then, between 1595 and 1605, for a decade it belonged to Christians again. The returning Turks eventually left the fortress in 1686, but by then it was only a ruin.

Visegrád – Franciscan Monastery

*The Lower Castle of
Visegrád with Solomon's
Tower*



The first monasteries were founded in the south, followed by a few others established by noble lords in the central part of the country. Visegrád was the first place in the *Medium Regni*, the political centre of medieval Hungary where an Observant Franciscan monastery was established by King Sigismund at the beginning of the 15th century. The circumstances of the foundation are known from Sigismund's

letter to the pope in 1425, in which he requested permission and privileges. From the letters it can be seen that the Observant branch of the Franciscan Order (besides the Conventuals) could not have been widely known, since the ruler described them and their activities in Hungary in detail. The friars received a dilapidated chapel in Visegrád, which was consecrated in the honour of St. George. Sigismund also had a house built for them next to the chapel. The chapel was originally founded by Sigismund's "royal predecessors", i.e. by one of the Angevin rulers, but it was out of use by the beginning of the 15th century.

This choice of location was quite unusual, as the Franciscans were settled by the side of the royal palace of Visegrád, overlooking the city, and not on the edge of the city or in the city itself – as they normally did. This fact suggests that the king had a special role in mind for this monastery.

The Franciscans probably did not inhabit this house for long, since after 1425 they started to build a new church and monastery near the old buildings, which they wanted to consecrate in honour of the Virgin Mary. The vault of the sacristy and some carvings from later buildings certainly originated from this period. After Sigismund's death, the monastery was left without a benefactor, so the buildings began to fall into decay.

At the end of the 15th century, King Matthias planned to rebuild the monastery, but it was only completed by his successor, Vladislav II, at the beginning of the 16th century. The church and the new vault of the monastery, and probably the tower above the sacristy were built at that time. The close affiliation of this new building to the royal palace was emphasised by the fact that there was direct access from the palace to the arcade of the monastery through a door. Thus, the ruler could enter the monastery without having to approach via the street. The unique position of the monastery was also demonstrated by the fact that there were no more than eight monks living there at the beginning of the 16th century, and still, it had always been considered a monastery (normally twelve monks lived in a monastery).

In 1543 Visegrád fell into the hands of the Turks, so the Franciscans had to leave. Despite this, there were always a few Franciscan friars arriving with every Christian army, and they tried to survey the condition of their abandoned monastery. After the reoccupation, at the end of the 17th century, the monastery was not rebuilt, and even its ruins were cleared away in the 19th century. The monastery faded into oblivion for about a hundred years, until archaeological excavations found the remains of the ruins in the 1980s.

Szentkirály – A Village on the Great Plain

Szentkirály was a medieval village in the northern part of the area between the Danube and Tisza rivers, north of Kecskemét, and near the road leading from Buda to Szeged (“the great road”). The old settlement was marked in Student Lazarus’ map, which was the first detailed map of Hungary, under the name S. Rex (Sanctus Rex). The first church in the village was built in the 12th century in honour of St. Stephen, and even today he is the patron saint of the Roman Catholic church of Szentkirály in Bács–Kiskun County.

In the age of the Árpád dynasty, Szentkirály was inhabited by people from the royal castle, as the village belonged to the ispanate of Csongrád. During the Mongol Invasion the village became deserted. In 1354 it was presented by King Louis the Great to a Cuman noble family as an uninhabited estate – to Cuman Peter, son of Bócsör (Bwchwr), and his sons, Mihály and János, and his cousins, Baramuk, son of Kabak, and Gál, son of Wezteg – on condition that they settle there and live according to Christian customs. After the land survey of the Buda chapter in 1356, King Louis I gave a letter of privilege to the new owners. The descendants of the family, the members of the noble Bicsak (Bychak) and Gáspár families, asked King Vladislav II in 1493 for an official copy and confirmation of the charters in their possession. In the same year, the king granted *ius gladii* (“right of the sword”), the power of life and death to the owners, according to which they could judge criminals caught on their estate.

The Cumans who owned Szentkirály and their people chose to settle in the place where the ruined church of the deserted Árpád-age village stood. At the end of the 14th century, the church was rebuilt and fortified with buttresses, plots of land for houses were marked and the first firm houses were erected, and the dead were buried near the church. This settlement was established in accordance with special “Cuman traditions”, because in 1490, the village was marked as “Szentkirály szállás” (accommodation) together with the neighbouring Barabásszállás, which was the property of the same family (today’s Borbáspuszta near Kecskemét).

The names of medieval Cuman settlements were formed with the help of the suffixes *-szállása*, *-ülése*, *-népe*, *-háza* (for example, Köncsögszállása, Csólyosszállása, Bagdasülése, Alonnépe, Bugacháza), to show that these were considered temporary settlements or family estates by the Hungarians, even after their consolidation in the second half of the 14th century. In Latin charters, usually the word *descensus* (accommodation) referred to Cuman settlements.

Szentkirály was a flourishing settlement even in the 16th century with a population of 50–60 families. The first significant decline took place during the fifteen-year war. By the end of the 17th century the village had been totally abandoned. At the end of the 19th century, only the ruined walls of the medieval church showed that it used to be a village. In place of the ruins of the church a Calvinist church was built in 1901, which still functions today.

The ruined late medieval village was found during excavations between 1969 and 1990. Szentkirály was situated on the side of a hill, lying in a north-west – south-east direction in the area between the Danube and Tisza rivers. To the north it was bordered by wetlands. The 900-metre-long main street of the village was on the crest of the hill. On either side of the street were the houses, usually 50–70 metres apart. The ruined domes of the medieval houses, made of clay and lime, rise as small dunes.

According to archaeological maps, about 30 houses can be distinguished on the surface. The layout of the village was fairly loose, consisting of rows of streets. This type of settlement was quite typical in the Great Plain.

During the excavations of Szentkirály, whole farm-yards were found around some of the houses, so there are insights into the inner arrangement of the plots of land, the economic condition and way of life of the families in the era. In the early phase of the settlement, in the 15th century, the houses stood parallel with the streets. Behind the houses, in the farm-yards, there were simple buildings: sties and stables of stick or pillar structures, huts with woven hedge or reed walls, ditches for different products, cellars and sties dug into the ground. There were hardly any bigger farm buildings with solid walls (for example, stables or barns). In contrast, the typical inner buildings of the plots of land were open or half-open enclosed places for animals, the walls of which were made of sticks, twigs, tree branches, reeds or other organic materials (for example, straw, dung, carex). Similarly structured sheep pens with oval or rectangular ground-plans are known to have existed from ethnographic collections in the Kiskunság region.

This arrangement of the inner part of the land plots – with buildings for extensive livestock rearing inside the village – shows a unique economic structure and way of life, in which animal husbandry played a very important role. This structure of settlements has close links with the traditional agriculture of the Cumans, which was based on the rearing of livestock. The cultivation of plants also might have been significant in the 15th century, but no evidence has survived that could be dated before the 16th-century tax records.

The 15th-century houses found in Szentkirály are beautiful mementos of the housing traditions of medieval peasants on the Great Plain. The basic arrangement of contemporary houses consisted of two rooms. Through the main door we would enter into the kitchen, and there was a room either to the left or right. If there was a third or fourth room, it would have been built later, and these rooms were used as pantries. Modern heating equipment also spread on the Great Plain at this time – earlier than in Transdanubia. In the covered rooms closed fireplaces (coal stoves) were built, which were heated from the kitchen, so the rooms would no longer get filled with smoke. For kitchen work – baking, cooking, drying, dehydration, roasting – a huge, round furnace was used, which stuck out from the back wall of the house.

This type of house – directly preceding the so-called middle Hungarian house type that is known from ethnography – was a milestone in Hungarian folk architecture. It probably developed from the architecture of towns or noble-mansions, sometime during King Sigismund's reign. Compared to other countries of Europe, it was the most modern type of housing in medieval villages. In Cuman settlements, this type of house was widely present.

It was possible to draft a detailed architectural reconstruction of a house which was built in the middle of the 15th century and burnt down in the first half of the 16th century. It was house No 25, and it had two rooms (the house was 12.4 metres long and 4.9 metres wide). The entrance was in the south-west. The basic area of the kitchen was 24.5 m², and the room on the left was 22 m². The walls were built with techniques such as hedge walls built onto wooden frames, which is an ancient Hungarian folk technique in architecture. The spaces between the wooden pillars and posts, which were dug in clay ditches, were loosely woven with twigs, and then covered with mud and straw. At the corners of the walls and below the main joist in the middle, baulks were used, and wreath beams were put onto the baulks in the corners. Cross beams were placed on these, then reeds and twigs were laid on top. Above the furnace there was a protective roof, supported by baulks. This might have been covered with straw, as the burn marks on the kitchen floor indicated.

In the rear corner of the kitchen, at floor level, there was a stove, built on a semi-circular clay edge. The coal stove and the fire space of the furnace opened from here. Above the stove, there was a guard

against sparks, woven from twigs and covered in mud. The bottom of the oval oven (2.2m × 2m) was covered with broken ceramic tiles to keep more heat in.

The foot of the furnace in the room of house No 25, the area of which was 1.45m x 1.45m, was painted with white clay, similar to the wall and floor of the room. On the rectangular lower part of the furnace, there was a cylinder-shaped upper part, which was covered with a dome vault. From the fragments of stove tiles, which were found in great quantity among the ruins, seven types of furnaces could be differentiated. The position of stove tiles was fixed. The dome and upper part of the furnace were covered with onion-shaped stove tiles. On the upper edge of the furnace there were tiles imitating bastion tops. The side of the stove was covered with smaller and larger glass-shaped, plate-shaped or triangular tiles in varying order. Ceramic stove tiles were fixed to the side of the stove with their “mouth” outside, except for the onion-shaped, helmet-like tiles, which were built into the vault with their tops looking upward. The 15th-century village furnaces were, of course, simpler than those of rich noblemen, which were decorated with glazed tiles. However, the Gothic forms and rich decorations of village stoves made them enduring monuments to applied folk art.

The thick layer of ruins of burnt down houses preserved the remains of dishes, kitchen equipment and tools. In the kitchens, smoky clay dishes were found around the fireplace. There were some dishes in the rooms too, sometimes they fell to the floor from the loft. The bottom of furnaces or ovens covered with ceramic tiles proved a good source for discarded and recycled old dishes. Broken dishes and other objects were found in pits around the houses. The majority of these were ceramics, which were used for a very long time, even after they were broken or had a hole in them: if they could not use them for cooking, they were recycled for other purposes. Smaller or larger pots, covers, mugs, jugs, jars and cups used in the household must have originated from different potters, as their material, texture and the way they were made suggest.

Red, reddish-brown and white or white-grey pots without glazing were widespread. Grey, shiny jars made with reduced burning time, were regularly used in the 15th century. Yellowish-terracotta and fine, polished jugs were rare, but they were found at each house – it seems that one piece was kept in each household. Thick, grey pots, imported from Austria, were also found at each house. There were fine dishes with green or yellow glazing, which were used at the table, but only broken pieces of these survived.

Glass products were also used at the table and their fragments have also been found. Wooden dishes were quite commonplace, but hardly any of them survived, only one wooden spoon was found between two layers of mud in a well.

The most common objects in the households were knives, with wooden or bone hafts and bronze hoops. In the 16th century, several thousand knives were imported to Hungary from Austria. However, the majority of iron tools were made by village smiths: scissors, awls, angles, hooks, nails, chains, drills, chisels, spits, grates, iron bands, locks for chests, coffins and doors etc. Tools and agricultural equipment were expensive, and they were rarely placed under the ground, unlike axes, hatchets, ploughs, spades, hoes, sickles, scythes and pitchforks. A broken spade was preserved in a grave; it was buried out of superstition, to protect the dead person from troubles. Fragments of curb-bits and stirrups, buckles, spurs and horseshoes were also found. Only the iron bands survived from wagons.

The making of bone and horn tools was an ancient profession. The inhabitants of medieval Szentkirály used the bones of animals to make tools. Skates were made out of the leg bones of horses, and these were fixed to the shoes, or they just stood on them pushing themselves forward on the ice with a stick ending in a pointed bone. Awls, punchers, pegs and handles of tools were also made out of bones, while whistles and needle-holders were made out of bones of wild birds, as they were hollow. The artefacts of bone-carving are beads, bone belt mountings and buckles. The pastern bone of horses was used for making toys for children.

István Tringli

There were three main farming systems in Late Medieval Hungary. The most modern method was the three-field rotational system in the Transdanubian area, in some parts of Upper Hungary and the border areas of the Great Plain in the 14th century. In these places, the significance of agriculture preceded that of animal husbandry, and animals were kept in stables. Regulated soil shifting cultivation was used in the Great Plain, which was a system of agriculture and animal husbandry at the same time, and animals were kept in the open air in fields. In the woodlands of Upper Hungary and Transdanubia,

fertilised lands were cultivated continuously. The two-field rotational system was probably not in use.

In three-field rotational agriculture, spring and autumn crops were sowed alternately while the third field was not under cultivation, and was left fallow “to rest”.

On the arable lands cereal crops were grown according to the climate. Gardens were practically cabbage gardens, and orchards were very rare. Woods, fishing lakes and vineyards did not belong to the plots of the serfs; the first two were in communal use by the whole village. Vineyards were considered clearings because of the great amount of work they required. Taxes payable after vineyards were different from those of the ploughlands, and juristic regulations applied here were more favourable for the villeins. Vineyards formed in the hills; the storage and processing buildings used here were not unknown in the rest of the country: only the pressing was done in the hills, all the other work and storage was carried out in the village or at town houses.

*Depiction of a plough on
the grant of arms of the
Szenthei family*



TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS

Gyula Siklósi

Names and professions of several artisans were recorded in city charters. We know that the following tradesmen operated in the medieval city of Fehérvár: millers, butchers, fishermen, fowlers, shepherds, balnearius, merchants, croppers, painters, turners, weavers, tailors. From later sources we know of sword cutlers, locksmiths, saddlers, websters, copper smoulders and shoemakers. In Sopron, knifsmiths, sword-grinders, smiths, merchants, butchers, goldsmiths, minters, tanners, bowyers, locksmiths, braziers, turners and rosary makers set up business. In Buda, there were goldsmiths, websters, croppers, minters, bowyers, knifsmiths, tailors, spurriers, tanners, bakers, brewsters, millers, fishermen, shoemakers, carpenters, masons, painters and coopers.

Generally, the followers of certain professions worked in separate parts of the medieval town. This is shown by the street names referring to professions. Members of certain trades could operate only in the suburbs due to a fire risk or due to their needs for large spaces or water, for example: smiths, potters, tanners, coopers, wheelers, weavers and furriers. Medieval workshops of artisans – despite the appearance of guilds – were relatively small, and their technological development was slow.

According to tax records, at least 20–25 per cent of the inhabitants of medieval towns were tradesmen; their proportion may have reached 50–70 per cent in larger Western European cities. The most important industry was clothes-making (furrier, tailor, shoemaker), but the metal workers and armourers also played important roles. One of the best-known professions was that of goldsmiths, which satisfied the demands for luxury. There were copper-, silver-, and goldsmiths and minters in this trade; even picture-painters belonged to their guild. Many of the members were engaged in exchanging money and finance. At the beginning of the 15th century, several members of the jury in Nagyszombat, and even the judge of Buda, Judge Harber were goldsmiths.

At first, the centre of goldsmithery was Buda, since most of the richer clients could be expected here due to the accumulation of wealth by the Church and lay members of society. Later, the goldsmiths of Kassa, Kolozsvár, Nagyszeben, Brassó and other towns became famous masters in the country. The so-called filigree technique, which was refined and further developed in Hungary, became widespread in the country, and different products, especially the richly ornamented chalices were decorated with filigree.

On the basis of archaeological data and research of local history, we can establish that in Buda goldsmiths lived in Ötvös (Goldsmith) Street, in Posztómető (Webster) Street, Olasz (Italian) Street, and in the area of the Saturday market, in the street opposite the north side of the Church of Our Lady, near the St. John's Franciscan monastery and near St. George's Church. Objects referring to the activity of goldsmiths were found in many places within Sopron and Székesfehérvár.

The most beautiful examples of the artistry of medieval goldsmiths were baptism pools and church bells made in the 15th–16th centuries. One of the most famous bronze-casting workshops operated in the town of Igló. The founder of the workshop, Master Konrád, cast the big bell of Visegrád, by the order of King Louis the Great in 1357. We have evidence of the activity of the Igló workshop until



*A masterpiece
of goldsmithery
from the mid-15th
century: the Nyári
chalice*

*Glass with the coat
of arms
of Bártfa*



1516. Almost all the bells and baptismal fonts in Szepes County were made there. The baptismal fonts of Gyöngyös, Bártfa, Kisselyk and Brassó are among the most beautiful medieval artefacts.

One of the most typical medieval professions was casting tin. The latest research revealed eight tinsmiths in Sopron in the 15th century. Tin dishes (cans, jugs, plates, cups, flasks and washing equipment), candle holders and even bullets were made there.

In more important towns knifsmiths were commonplace. According to our scarce written sources, they also operated in Kassa, Lőcse, Szeben, Pozsony, Buda and Sopron. In spite of their general presence, archaeological observations suggest that high-quality iron knives made by masters in Austria and Nuremberg were also widespread. Long medieval knives with thin blades were very popular; their shafts were made of bone or wood, and there were signs on them referring to the master and place of manufacture.

More and more people could afford to buy nice glass cups and bottles, and used glass in their windows – which was very expensive then – to protect themselves from the cold and windy weather. The windows of buildings, especially churches, consisted of small glass pieces framed in tin structures.

Glassblowers operated in the 14th century in Bars-Szklenó, near Selmezbánya and Körmöcbánya, where bottles, jars and plates were produced. Probably, there were glass furnaces in several other places in the 15th century, primarily in wooded mining centres, in Upper Hungary and in Transylvania. Near Diósjenő, in Nógrád County, the ruins of a glass-making factory were found.

A source from 1419 mentioned one citizen of Buda, Antal Olasz, who was a glassblower, but it is obvious that many more people must have pursued this profession. During the 15th–16th centuries, marvellous glass products were being made (cans, jars, bottles, cups and goblets).

One of the most typical contemporary vessels was the bottle. Originating from the East, with a round bottom, long, thin neck and wide, funnel-like mouth, the bottle must have already been produced in Germany in the 15th century, while in Hungary it was first produced at the beginning of the 16th century. It was used for storing oil necessary for Mass or other church ceremonies. In Transylvania people drank “cherry wine” from it. Its one- or two-pipe variants, or spiral neck variants are also known to have existed at the time.

Fine Venetian glasses were imported to medieval Hungary in great quantities. Goblets and stemmed glasses had a marvellous finish and were beautifully made. Glasses were very popular, and had various forms, as the Italian name implies (*incostatis, de mucolis incostatis* = various).

The most popular findings of archaeological excavations were ceramic pots or their fragments. The family names Cherep and Cherepes (potter) were already used in the 14th–15th centuries; in 1438 the name of Mihály Fazekgyartha (potmaker) was recorded in a charter and also in 1504, the name Gallus Fazekhgyartha. Apart from these, the family names Fazekas (potter), Gerencsér, Korsós, Téglás and Tégláégető [all connected to pottery] and the variants of these were of medieval origin. One of the brickburners living in Buda had the name Ziegelfuser.

Expressive place names, connected to pottery, were of medieval origin: Agyagosbérc, Agyagpáva, Agyagtelök, Agyagverem and Agyagszó. The pots of 15th–16th-century potters were made on revolving discs, operated by foot. One of the most widespread types of ceramics was the stove tile. Onion-shaped, glass-shaped and square (at the mouth) tiles were the most popular. The colour of the fired clay was red, white and grey in this period.

Stove tiles with a yellow and green glazing came in several types, which depicted buildings (castles), parts of buildings (copies of windows) religious scenes, coats-of-arms, shield animals, ornaments and

contemporary persons (women's heads, knights), and animals of tales, legends and myths.

The royal workshop of Nyék in the 15th century was very famous, on the stove of which King Sigismund's coat of arms and his palace were represented along with other beautifully made tiles. The stove representing the "Three Kings", made around 1469–73, might have been the work of one of the best masters of contemporary Europe. A stove reconstruction from the first third of the 15th century and the famous knight stove (1554–57) also prove the artistic skills of the masters of the period.

Other typical objects of the age were grey casting moulds for goldsmiths and distillers for brewers. The most widespread kitchen dishes were various white, grey and red lids and pots decorated with ribs on the outside, and there were three-legged pots with handles, which were glazed inside. Imported Austrian grey pots that were stamped on the edges were also popular. Fine products were the thin, white goblets decorated with engraved lines or ribs and the white, yellow or red jugs and jars. Mugs were red, grey and yellow, and they often had a loop. Among glazed dishes found in Buda, there were decorated or painted cups and hand-washing dishes; as well as a lot of German and Czech stone tiles.

An important element of medieval everyday life was the use of water power. Water was pumped into castles (Esztergom) or buildings (Fehérvár) on elevated locations with the help of various lifting devices. Machines using water power helped miners or industrial equipment. Still, the most popular machines using water power in the Middle Ages were mills. They could be found along brooks and rivers everywhere, and boat mills floating on water were also a frequent sight. In the 15th–16th centuries, there were several mills in bigger towns (Asszonypataka, Bakabánya, Beszterce, Buda, Esztergom, Fehérvár, Igló, Kassa, etc.). Grain was ground with water power and big mill stones, but small grinding stones for hand-grinding were also used.

Contemporary bakers had shops in almost every town, most often in the suburbs because of the fire risk they posed. Village bakers also played an important role, but there were wandering bakers too, who had mobile, portable ovens. Bread was made without leaven. In the 15th century, the Law Book of Buda mentioned rolls and fine bread, but the poor ate brown bread. Bakers' products were also sold at markets: in Buda and Pozsony bakers had to mark their products with Roman numerals. The family name *Pereces* (pretzel) appeared in charters after 1424, and the name *Pék* (of German origin, [baker]) also became widespread in the 15th–16th centuries. From a 1484 charter, *Zsemlesütő* (roll baker) Street of Fehérvár is known. In 1487 in Buda, roll baking master János Babocsai and his partner, Gáspár Zsemlesütő – who became a member of the jury of the town in 1503 – were mentioned.

There were several butchers in each medieval Hungarian town. Their activities were broader than those of today's butchers. The selling of cattle abroad – the Hungarian cattle trade was quite significant – also fell into their range of activities. Their guilds were the richest in the cities. With their physical strength, they were in charge of the city's peace and order, and as they were constantly on the road, they often worked as postmen. It is not surprising then that the butchers of Debrecen received postal privileges in 1478 and 1512. The meat market of medieval Fehérvár was situated in the territory of *Vicus Teutonicalis* (German Street), but there were also butchers, stalls in the market place, some of which were next to the houses.



*Stove tile from a stove
with a knight*

Enikő Csukovits

Basic education was provided by chapter-schools, town or parish schools. There are numerous examples of these schools in various parts of the country, from villages to towns and cities, so we can be certain that Hungary had a fairly uniform school network by the end of the 15th century. However, there may have been tremendous differences in the quality of teaching between schools: in most schools of villages and market towns, the teacher was the parish priest himself, or a secular teacher (*magister ludi*, or *rector scolae*), who had gained his education in a similar school.

Chapter schools provided a much higher-quality education, where the library supplied students with the necessary spiritual background. In these schools, students usually went on to pursue a church career, but the number of students who did not want to join the clergy gradually increased. In some towns, the chapter and the town maintained a school jointly. In junior school, reading, writing and elementary Latin were taught to young pupils, who were also taught by teaching assistants chosen from among the older students.

Latin grammar was taught from *Ars Grammatica* by Donatus. Students had to study and learn the rules by heart. This book contained the most vital Latin grammar in the form of questions and answers. With the help of the examples used by the book, students had to practise the declination of words. Besides this, students participated in daily singing lessons and learnt the calendar verses necessary for calculating the dates of certain feasts. After acquiring a basic knowledge, middle-school students were taught the scientific system of Latin grammar, logic, but most of all they had to master Latin as a spoken language.

After several years of learning, students of the upper school were given individual training, and study groups were organised according to individual needs. In addition, older students took part in the education of younger students. The method of teaching and the curriculum were the same in chapter schools and urban schools, the difference being only in proportions: urban schools put more emphasis on secular knowledge. The so-called Szalkai Codex, László Szalkai's school books bound together, presents a good picture of what a talented and hardworking student could achieve in the upper grades of the school – as László Szalkai himself proved, who was born into a craftsman's family in Mátészalka and later became the archbishop of Esztergom.

Szalkai may have been fourteen to sixteen years old when he attended the town school of Sárospatak where he prepared his workbooks – he could already speak good Latin, and he also had beautiful handwriting. In his six exercise books, he copied and made notes on the curriculum of the upper grades: the first book contained calendar calculations, astronomy and medical science, the second book is about music theory, the third contains the juristic expressions of family and kinship relations. The fourth and fifth books contained his literary studies, but the most important and most detailed material, the composition of letters, was in the sixth book. The verbal explanations of the dean were written on the margin, next to the main text.

A degree from a chapter school was sufficient for a student to get a job as a school master or a clerk. One did not have to go to university to become accustomed to the customary law used in everyday life, as it could be acquired in practice, initially at royal chancelleries or in courts of law. During his working time, a student who spoke Latin well could gain the necessary knowledge with the help of experienced notaries. With this knowledge he could get a job at a credible place, or in the service of a

AD SERENISSIMUM PRINCIPEM AC CHRISTIANIS
SIMAM PANNONIARUM REGEM MATTHIAM IOANNIS DE
REGIOMONTE INTABULAM PREMI MOBILIS PREFATIO



Vani sepe iudicatis viros graues dum seculi nostri caularum iniquitatem vehementer dubitare solitos plus ne horrendis rebus humanis conducant litterarum momenta an morum pericula diuersorum quibus ubiq. societates hominum contextitur. Quippe cum mortali conditione & natamur & viuamus variis ac pene assiduis impliciti curis vix tuos cuiq. affecit tam breui etatis curricula datur interuocare. alienas aut cupiditates ac motus animi quoslibet praeteritam in viris natu grauioribus quorum consiliis cepte seruantur ciuitate ne diuinare quidem possis. qui & si palam explorantur ad perpetua tamen hominum commercia haudquaquam cessant. siquidem experimenta maiorum quo minus iungi commemoratione iuniores montant multitudine interurbantur bellis caritate amone. seditionibus & illis innumeris id genus periculis. Contra vero si praescorum diuinae moniti inhiare pergat neq. aliorum mentis tue speciem fleat. cum meritis vltis degeat non inuicem videberis. aut certe vix pauca quaedam libamenta illinc capies. quae ad contemporaneos te totales concipiunt. adeo plerumq. omnia solet. eam inuicere. Quo mihi rectius colligi visum est utriusq. rei adiuuicula humani curis habenda. competere oportet. quoad huc causarum omnium legitima & inuincibilis caetera huc dei suum arbitrium permiserit. Nam & si haec duo gerendarum rerum initia contra ad morum iniqua huiusmodi pertran. & vetera hortamenta scriptorum non tri paru usq. decrit. quomodo tinguat quae negocia prudentius absoluantur. Quod plane in nostro seculo tantis tamq. variis circumuicentis erummi. inuicet liquet. lamidau. in vt externa praeteritum gloria europe nostre quous dependit. semper & litterarum cultu floruerit. adeo tamen labatit ut nisi protectore quodam diuino inuicita tutis. propediem exitum turpe patura videatur. Nescio si recedere licet quam credo.



baron or a town. The so-called *formularium*, i.e. collections of charter samples, which were compiled on the basis of the most used charters, helped with the practical training of lawyers.

With the exception of a few decades, those who wanted to go to university had to go abroad. Hungarian students usually went to the nearby universities of Vienna or Krakow. However, from the second half of the 15th century, more and more Hungarian youth chose Italian universities – primarily in Padua or Bologna. In the register of students and other records of Krakow university, 3,000 Hungarian students were mentioned between 1400 and 1536. To accommodate them, a Polish nobleman, Nikolai Bielonski, founded a separate bursary. The students of the university of Vienna were sorted into four *natio*s (nations). One of these was the Hungarian *natio*, though all Eastern European students were grouped into this one.

The majority of students could only afford to attend university for a couple of years – as it was very expensive – so they were not able to finish their studies. They usually graduated from the faculty of humanities, the aim of which was to teach the so-called seven liberal arts, to gain the necessary knowledge for further education. After two years of studying they could get a baccalaureate degree, and after two more years they could get the title of *artium magister*, which allowed the student to embark on studying law, theology or medicine. Hungarian students who continued their studies usually chose law, as their knowledge was needed mainly in diplomacy and at church courts.

At the beginning of 1465, King Matthias asked Pope Paul II to give permission for the foundation of a university in Hungary in a suitable city. The reasoning behind the request was that due to the great distances, not all the talented youth could go abroad to study. On 18 July 1467, the archbishop of Esztergom, János Vitéz, informed the local authority of the city of Pozsony via a letter, that from King Matthias's will and with the agreement of the pope, a university was to be established in the city. The Academia Istropolitana was the third attempt at founding a university in Hungary: the first one being at Pécs, during Louis the Great's reign, and the second being a university set up in Óbuda during King Sigismund's reign – both of which were closed after a couple of years.

The university of Pozsony fared no better than its predecessors. Teaching started in 1467, and the first professors were famous humanist scientists of the age, such as Johannes Regiomontanus, the well-known German mathematician–astronomer, still, this did not prevent its closure after some years. The fact that its founder, organiser and the first chancellor, Archbishop János Vitéz plotted against the king in 1471, sealed the fate of the university. His downfall irrevocably damaged the university whilst still in its formative years. Later, King Matthias supported the college of the Dominican Order in Buda, the *studium generale*, but no university was created from this institution.

EVERYDAY LIFE

*Enikő Csukovits***Holidays and Weekdays**

The everyday life of people was regulated by written and unwritten laws. In the traditional ways of medieval Hungarian law, the emphasis was on unwritten, i.e. customary law, and written law was relegated to second place. Hungarian customary law was written down at the beginning of the 1500s by István Werbőczy, jurist and judge royal, in a book titled *Tripartitum*, first published in 1517. Alongside sources of law, which were valid in the whole country, there were also town or county statutes. These regulated the legal procedures of the local community, and practically they controlled every action of life.

In the most important town document in Hungary, the Law Book of Buda, the order of market sales was described in detail, in the same manner as town government was regulated. The law book also regulated the celebration of holidays: courts of justice and shops were closed on Sundays and on feast days, and taverns could only be opened after High Mass. Those who worked in the fields on holidays had to pay a fine of one mark. The citizens of Buda followed the church regulations set out in this law book, as believers had two duties on feast days: they had to attend the church service and refrain from menial work.

Usually the synods of the ecclesiastical provinces decided on the dates of the feasts. In 1493, the synod of Esztergom and in 1515, the synod of Veszprém took steps to regulate the celebration of more than 50 feasts (plus Sundays), but the number of feasts actually celebrated was far below the number set by the resolutions of synods. The most important feasts were Christmas, Easter and the feast days of the patron saint of the church. The Corpus Christi procession was also a significant event in the church calendar – even the king and his court took part in the one in Buda.

People's sense of the passing of time was insecure and inaccurate. Years were identified by an outstanding event – such as a war, the king's succession to the throne or his death –, but days were counted in relation to feasts following one other. The Hungarian names of months in the Middle Ages were defined by the first significant feast of a given month (for example, St. Jacob's month, St. Michael's month, etc.). The days when agricultural products were to be delivered to the lords were also connected to church feasts, just as were deadlines at courts.

The change in people's notion of time began with a new invention which could measure time punctually: the clock. Before the invention of the clock, the passing of time was indicated by the sun, and time was measured by

*Time symbol in the
initial O of the Matthias
Gradual*



*King Matthias and
Queen Beatrice in
the miniature of the
Ransanus Codex*



so-called canon hours, or praying hours, which divided the day into a twelve-hour day and a twelve-hour night. The balance wheel clocks appeared in Hungary at the end of the 14th century. At the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century, a clock tower struck the hours in Besztercebánya, Pozsony, Sopron, Kassa, Bártfa, Nagyszeben, on the cathedrals of Várad and Eger, and on the archbishopric palace of Esztergom. Although sources make no mention of it, there must have also been a clock near the Magdalena church tower of Buda.

Clothing

From the second half of the 15th century, more and more written sources, contemporary illustrations and even some original pieces of clothing have survived, but the identification of the items mentioned in the sources or the validity of illustrations are questionable in several cases. The two-fold style of Hungarian dressing habits – wearing Eastern and Western-type clothes alternately – changed slightly, yet remained typical. Eastern-type clothes – primarily Cuman – were replaced by a unique fashion, which contemporary foreign sources labelled as “Hungarian style”.

The most detailed descriptions were written of various royal celebrations – weddings, peace contracts, kings’ meetings. Eye-witnesses took notes and envoys wrote reports on the wedding of King Matthias in 1476, the kings’ meeting at Olmütz or Iglau, the march into Vienna or Bécsújhely, and the wedding of King Vladislav II and Anna of Foix-Candale, and in each case, they gave a detailed description of the sumptuous, richly decorated clothes made of expensive textiles, and the valuable jewellery, weapons and harnesses of the king and his escort.

In December 1476, King Matthias Corvinus welcomed his fiancée, near Fehérvár, in a short coat decorated with pearls and a cape also embroidered with pearls. On their solemn march into Buda, he wore a cloak decorated with precious stones, and at the wedding breakfast he donned a yellow gown made of atlas silk with a sable fur lining. At their coronation ceremony, Matthias’s bride, Beatrice, wore a red and gold brocade dress made according to the latest Italian fashion. On entering Buda, she wore a blue dress and a gilded cloak, and at the wedding breakfast she wore a red dress woven with gold thread, which was decorated with sable fur. The clothes of Hungarian nobility, who appeared at the nuptials, matched in elegance: Miklós Újlaki’s attire, for example, was decorated with gold, silver, pearls and precious stones.

According to sources, Matthias took great care of the attire of his retinue. According to the reports of the envoy of Breslau, Matthias arrived in Fehérvár at the lead of 3,000 knights. The pages of the king wore clothes made of yellow, grey, green and brown velvet. The envoy of Ferrara, Cesare Valentini, gave a detailed description about the kings’ meeting at Iglau (1486), in which he showed open admiration for the clothes and weapons of the escort and Hungarian noblemen. Matthias also put great

*Hungarian and Ottoman
attire in the grant of
arms of the Radák
family*



emphasis on his soldiers' uniform. He provided his army with not only proper weapons and armour, but also supplied them with sheepskin fur coats and gloves.

Men's Clothing

Descriptions which focused on the difference between the clothes worn by the Hungarians and those worn by Western European people are very valuable. On the basis of sources, we can state that in the 15th century in Hungary, a typical fashion emerged that foreign contemporaries found easily recognisable from its specific features. It was known that Pipo Ozorai, King Matthias's famous general and count (*ispán*) of Temes, despite his Italian origins, dressed like a Hungarian: he had a long beard, shoulder-length hair, and his clothes swept the ground, "according to the habits of those people". The Buda-based envoy of the duke of Milan also warned his lord that his representatives should wear long clothes, as at King Matthias's court short clothes, made after Italian–Burgundian fashion, were not approved.

Men's apparel in Hungary in the 15th century consisted of a shirt and trousers as underwear and a dolman worn over them, as well as a short fur-lined or sheepskin coat. At special occasions, people wore gowns made of expensive materials; this was the preferred outfit by Ozorai too. Hungarian people had unique hair styles and wore tall (fur) caps. Their tights were simple in general, only their colour may have been unusual, but the dolman covered the greater part of the tights. The Hungarian shirt – according to the description of Ippolito d'Este, archbishop of Esztergom, later bishop of Eger – was long, folded at the neck, and on the basis of both written sources and illustrations, was decorated with embroidery on the neck, chest and the end of the sleeves.

The dolman, worn over the shirt, was often made of silk or velvet, or sometimes fur for rich people, but it was worn by every social stratum in less sophisticated forms. The dolman was usually knee-length, but according to Cesare Valentini's notes, Hungarian noblemen wore short upper clothes, i.e. dolmans, for riding. There are only few descriptions of fur-lined short coats, but several sources mentioned sheep-skin coats, the *suba*. King Matthias wore a decorated short coat on his shoulders on one of the days of his wedding.

The most typical, most widely worn Hungarian item of clothing was the sheep-skin coat, the *suba*. It was worn by everyone, from the king to the shepherd, the only difference being in the material and style of stitching. The *suba* was closed at the neck, had buttons at the front, and it was a long cloak or mantle with a fur lining inside. The fur coat of the king and dignitaries was made of brocade and silk with ermine or sable fur. The employees of the royal chamber wore marten-skin coats, and doorkeepers wore sheep-skin coats. According to Ippolito d'Este's book of accounts, the shepherd of the archbishop of Esztergom also received a sheep-skin coat.

There were different caps and hats for different outfits. Hungarian-type caps had an embroidered or fur rim and a feather decoration with pearls and precious stones in the middle. Hungarian hair styles were also different from the European fashion: as it was noted about Pipo Ozorai, in Hungary long hair and a long beard were common. In 1489 in Milan, Matthias's envoy, Mózes Buzlai, caused a sensation, when he wore his hair in long plaits decorated with pearls. Boots, which were considered typically Hungarian, appeared first in the 15th century, under Turkish influence.

From the first half of the 15th century, the armour of the members of the heavy cavalry consisted of a suit of plate armour covering the whole body and the necessary weapons. Palatine Imre Szapolyai and his brother, Stephen, and Tamás Tarcai, Matthias's famous general, were represented in such armour on Imre Szapolyai's tombstone in Csütörtökhely. The uniform of the members of light cavalry were totally different: by the turn of the 15th–16th centuries, Hungarian hussar-type clothes appeared under Turkish influence, which consisted of a long gown, a hat with an ostrich feather for decoration

and Turkish boots. The earliest hussar illustration survived from around 1500 on a sabre, but we could find hussars on etchings representing Emperor Maximilian's life.

The main weapons of heavy cavalry were the lance and the sword, which might have been supplemented by a dagger, a mace or a club. War lances were about four metres long, and they were hung onto a hook on the breast plate during attacks. The hands of the knight were protected by a big round disk, and this also ensured the safest position for holding the lance. In the 15th century, swords became larger in order to be more effective against plate armour. The most popular were the one-metre-long, heavy double-bladed knights' swords. In Hungary a special type of mace, the so-called feathered mace was used, and according to written sources there was also a special Hungarian dagger.

The weapons of the light cavalry in the 15th century included the sabre, the spear, and the bow, but maces or battle axes were also used. The most widespread type of sabre was the hussar sabre, copied from Turkish models. It had a slightly curved single blade, and its hilt was straight and wide. Hungarian sabres with curved hilts emerged in the 16th century, and they became the most popular weapons of the time. Warriors both in the heavy and light cavalry used shields to protect themselves. Shields were usually made of wood, with their surface covered with leather or linen, but the hussars often used small, round shields woven from reeds.

Women's Clothing and Jewellery

Women's clothing did not change much during the 15th century. It consisted of two pieces: a shirt worn as underwear, and a one-piece robe, or a kirtle as an outer-garment. The robe was low cut around the neck, so the neck of the shirt was visible, and became decorated with embroidery and pearls over time. Urban female citizens wore dresses with high necks called a *houppelande*. Women's hair was covered by veils or scarves, and only unmarried girls could go out with uncovered heads. In chilly weather, a cloak was worn over the outfit, but according to sources there were sheep-skin coats for women too.

There is substantial information about the clothes of three queens: Beatrice, Anna of Foix-Candale and Mary of Austria. While only written sources report about the clothes of the first two queens, one of the celebratory outfits of Mary, King Louis II's wife, survived and is now a treasured artefact of the Hungarian National Museum. Mary's wedding dress was a low cut, green, silk-damask gown, and she wore a white linen shirt under it, which was decorated with silver embroidery on the neck and sleeves. The material of the dress was the product of the Italian Renaissance weaving art, and it was made in accordance with the latest German Renaissance fashion of the beginning of the 16th century – which was just about to form.

Queens usually had dresses made according to Italian, French or German fashions. However, in the 15th century, a special Hungarian female attire existed – even though it is very difficult to reconstruct. In 1457, Ladislaus V sent a Hungarian dress to his French fiancée, Princess Magdalena. Similarly, Matthias gave a Hungarian dress to Beatrice and also to his son's fiancée, Bianca Maria Sforza. Typical



Wedding gown of Mary of Austria



*Set table with a chair
in the initial D of the
Matthias Gradual*

Hungarian clothes were sheep-skin coats with fur, and the pearled Hungarian head-dress, which was also given to Beatrice by Matthias.

Clothes were accessorised with decorative jewellery by both sexes. We have detailed descriptions of the jewellery of both Matthias and Beatrice, unfortunately none of the jewellery survived though. Cesare Valentini mentioned Matthias's ruby-pearled crest. His clothes were dripping with jewels and expensive pendants, and a necklace with precious stones and pearls. In 1499 Beatrice issued orders concerning her ruby-pearled brooch and gold necklace decorated with diamonds and emeralds. Barons also had such valuable jewels: Mihály Újlaki, king of Bosnia, wore a gold necklace at Matthias's wedding, and the pendant hanging on it was decorated with a huge sapphire stone and 300 smaller diamonds.

Several testaments exist concerning jewellery: in the testament of Mózes Buzlai

– who caused a sensation with his unusual hair style with pearls – a valuable gold necklace, precious stones and rings were mentioned among others. It is an interesting parallel to highlight that alongside the jewellery mentioned in Buzlai's testament (he was a landowner in Tolna County), there was a treasure find also excavated in Tolna. Gold-plated silver dishes and jewellery were discovered which must have been hidden from the Turks in the 16th century. The owner of these may have been a wealthy local merchant. Gold-plated silver Renaissance jewellery – belt and dress hooks, a pendant with a pomegranate decoration, and a fragment of a necklace were found among the treasure find.

Furniture

There were substantial changes in Hungarian homes during the 15th century: the number of furniture items increased, and new, hitherto unknown pieces of furniture appeared, which were made to technologically high standards. As well as furniture made by carpenters, the production of furniture made by joiners started in this period. Joiners appeared in Buda at the beginning of the 15th century, and by the end of the century, joiners' guilds were formed in almost all the significant towns. For example, in Kassa in 1459, they had a joint guild with wheelwrights and turners.

The most important piece of furniture was the chest, which was used for storing different things: articles of everyday use, textiles and agricultural products. Besides this, it was used as seating: according to Helene Kottanner's memoirs, velvet pillows were fastened even on top of the chest made for storing the crown – probably to make sitting more comfortable. Cottage-shaped chests, which were made as timber-work and followed German fashion, were used only for storage. They appeared in Hungary at the beginning of the 15th century. One of the most beautiful examples of these was found in Rozsonda, near Nagyszeben, and its value lies in its figurative decoration.

In the second half of the century, a new piece of furniture appeared: the wardrobe. It was formed by positioning a chest on its shorter side, or putting two chests on top of one another. On one of the boards of the altar of Jánosrét, the two pieces of furniture can be seen next to each other; both stood on a base. The development of furniture-making is shown by a bookshelf made in 1480 for the St. Giles's of Bártfa, which was recessed to the wall in its original place. Wall-cupboards were made at several places in this period: only the doors of the cupboard and the frame around the recess were made of wood.

In this period, tables, which formerly were put together and then taken apart, became permanent pieces of furniture. Several illustrations of tables have survived from the 15th century: on tableaus, it is possible to see tables covered with table-cloths, and these tables were either square or round. The earliest Gothic tables survived from the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. They were the so-called cradle tables, which looked like cradles and had a lower storage section, or they had big drawers. Similarly, the head and end boards of beds also became popular at that time, and from the second half of the 15th century, baldachin above the head became widespread.

According to tableaus, there were various pieces of furniture used for sitting. The simplest one was the cross-legged wooden bench, on which several people could sit at the same time, but there were three-legged round or four-legged square chairs too. Chairs with woven seats, with or without backs, were also known, and armchairs were probably made for wealthy customers. Armchairs could have high square-shaped backs, or they were diagonally jointed (usually folding) "scissor-chairs". From the middle of the 15th century a new piece of furniture also appeared in churches, the *stallum* (pew).

There are virtually no documented accounts regarding the furniture of royal palaces, but there was a quite detailed description of Matthias's library in Buda and the furniture at his famous feasts. In the library hall, there was a sofa covered with gilded blankets and three-legged chairs, and the books were placed into bookcases decorated with inlays, or they lay on bookshelves in rows of three. At Matthias's wedding breakfast, there was a round table for the royal couple, and a ten-metre-long table for the guests in the Fresh palace. Dishes were presented on one large and eight smaller cupboards, on which there were about a thousand gold and silver bowls and dishes. The royal cupboard was guarded by two big silver unicorns.

From among Matthias's table decorations, contemporaries raved about the animal-shaped dishes, a marvellous silver ship, the pure gold dishes of the royal couple, and Matthias's pepper-mill, which was supported by two lion figures. However, only very few of these have survived – only a couple of silver goblets. The most valuable pieces are only known from descriptions. However, some pieces from the china-set of the royal couple have fortunately survived, as did two glasses from Matthias's set.

It was not only the ruler who owned valuable tableware. In Mózes Buzlai's testament, a large number of cups, plates and bowls were mentioned. He possessed more than one hundred spoons, which were very rare at the beginning of the 15th century. Sixteen forks were mentioned in his will, which were brand new utensils at the end of the century. His coral pepper-mill might also have been a valuable piece – he may have bought it abroad. Ambrus Sárkány from Ákosháza was a well-known person in the Jagiellonian age, whose treasures were found at Kölesd in the 19th century. Six gilded silver pieces were found: a goblet with lid, a cup and four drinking cups.



*Silver cup
from the treasure
finds of Kölesd*

