

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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