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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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PARISH CHURCHES OF MARKET TOWNS IN MEDIEVAL REGIONS WITHOUT TOWNS

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## **The Subject and Objective of this Thesis**

The fundamental subject of this thesis has been the analysis of mediaeval market town parish churches in many respects. The cardinal objective of this paper has been to analyze the function of these vicarages in the clusters of the criteria scheme elaborated by A. Kubinyi, and to compare these clusters as well as the rural regions to have been dissected with each other. Moreover, this treatise also canvasses whether particular market towns were capable of holding urban functions in particular areas, where cities, in terms of the laws, did not evolve throughout the Middle Age, and whether the parish churches reflected such urban functions in their appearance, and whether such parish churches were converted or enlarged as a consequence of these urban functions.

The region to have been analyzed comprised as many as three areas, namely North-Eastern Hungary, the northern region of the Great Hungarian Plain, and Southern Transdanubia. The main reason beyond this selection was, as regards the urban network of Hungary, that the north-eastern region of current Hungary had been considered as rural in Mediaeval times, and the corresponding statement had applied to Southern Transdanubia, more specifically to its southwestern part primarily, in the Middle Age to boot. Thus, the scrutiny and comparison of the two aforesaid large regions in a settlement network point of view have been based on a mutual ground.

## **The Structure of this Thesis**

This thesis is composed of nine chapters. The *Introduction* lists the aspects of the selection of the theme and the regions, as well as the sources and methods plied. This chapter includes the research history of the central site of the market and small towns both in the Hungarian and international bibliography. After that, it provides the clusters applied in the criteria scheme of A. Kubinyi (particularly clusters 3 and 6 of said scheme), and it also verifies the aspects of their selection. At this point, the processing of four current counties (Baranya, Nógrád, Tolna, and the Zemplén region of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén) that was completed according to the aforesaid criteria scheme has been presented. Such processing was not finished by A. Kubinyi.

The second chapter is defined the period of the formation and development of market towns.

The third chapter is titled *The Parish Churches of the Market towns and the Organization of the Church*. Pro primo, it reviews the fact of having been included in or excluded from the Papal tithe records by examining the reasons beyond any likely absence.

Posteriorly, it focuses on outlining the characters of clerical staff serving at parish churches as has been recorded in the sources. It highlights on the issue of having two offices, namely of vicars and of archdeacons, intertwined, as well as on the appearance and capacity of altars and chapels at the parish churches and in the market towns. Ulteriorly, the duty of the rest of the clerical institutions, including the *hôtel-Dieus* of utmost importance in view of the urbanization process, have been portrayed. Finally, this topic has been closed by an introduction to the *patrociniums*.

The fourth chapter reviews the problems and options of the history of building construction, the identification and dating of the parish churches of the market towns. The first task was to complete the identification of the churches, after that to conduct the comparison and reconciliation of the available written and archaeological sources, and finally, based on the foregoing, to elaborate the uniform architecture-historic scene. Subsequent to these questions, the queries arisen in connection to the function of the parish churches in the market towns have been discussed. As a consequence of the fact that the process of market town development took place mainly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the primal objective has been to acquire an in-depth knowledge of and to carry out the assessment of changes occurring in this period and to be identified. The point of many churches built in the same settlement, as well as the era of their construction and their function in the Late Middle Age has been scrutinized at the end of this chapter.

The fifth chapter discusses the plans and floors of the parish churches dating to the Late Middle Age, as well as their relationship with the Gothic art. The basic hypothesis of the research has been represented by Anders Andrén's system polished in the course of the research on the urbanization of Denmark in Mediaeval Times. The demonstration of the relationship between the development of the market towns and the Gothic art follows the explanation and the exploitation options of the foregoing hypothesis. The chapter is finished by the assay of the plans and floors of the parish churches as per each category, and next by the study and comparison of two rural areas.

The sixth chapter concentrates on the position of the parish churches and the rest of the ecclesiastical institutions in the settlement structures. In addition to the position of the parish churches, it reviews the locations of chapels, vicarage and foundation houses, schools, hospitals, monasteries, and cloisters. It separately discourses the residence of the land owner in the settlement, as well as the relationship between the residence and the parish church.

The seventh chapter recapitulates the results of the vital themes.

The eighth chapter includes the catalogues of the churches, and it outlines the written references to the churches, as well as the archaeological and wall research results in addition to the most crucial market town data of the settlements.

The ninth chapter incorporates a picture gallery as an appendix: first, the maps and the settlements subject to investigation depicted in clusters followed by the plans of the churches, if any has been of avail, and by the photos.

## **Results of the research and the processing efforts**

### *The Parish Churches of Market Towns and the Organization of the Church*

The first relevant census, i.e. the Papal tithe records completed between 1332 and 1335, constituted an essential part of the analysis of the written records of the parish churches of the market towns. Although this document had been generated much earlier in view of the development of the market towns, it is a cornerstone source and baseline of the research on the mediaeval churches. The subject of settlements not listed in the tithe records, but still relevant in some ways has been a critical point. The relevant settlements referred to can be categorized into three classes: (i) those, which were subordinated to some sort of an ecclesiastical *exemptio*; their absence from the tithe records can generally be connected to an instrument dating to 1389, which lists vicarages that were directly subordinated to the authority of the archbishop of Esztergom (e.g.: Szeged, Sárospatak). Class (ii) incorporates those, which were not listed in the tithe records partly by virtue of particular ownership events and partly of some sort of minor *exemptio*, such as specific settlements (Csurgó, Gyánt) controlled by the crusaders. Class (iii) encompasses the churches of the settlements, which did not hold any key role in the settlement hierarchy or in the network of vicarages. A preponderance of them belongs to the last class analyzed.

Based on the analysis of the written records, data concerning priests assisting the vicars, and further regarding altars and chapels are more frequently available in case of the churches of the *oppida* classified in the higher categories. Such data can be regarded as relevant evidences for the economical development of the particular settlements. Of the vicars performing their duties at the parish churches, special attention should be paid to those and to their assisting priests, who were appointed as archdeacons and vice-archdeacons. Relied on the comparison of the categories, it can be concluded that the office of the vice-archdeacon was rather conferred upon the vicars of settlements holding relevant urban functions and of *oppida* holding a more prestigious position in the settlement hierarchy.

Grounded on the research on the matter of chapels, it can be concluded that data dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, or written data dating to earlier periods, or further architecture historic data under all circumstances report on independent chapels built outside the parish churches, whilst the construction of those furnished interiorly and of the altars took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, primarily in the second half of and at the end of it. Records dating to the first half of the same century are typical to large settlements and centers in the first place, while data dating to an expressly later period, to say the outset of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, refer to the churches of settlements having the lowest number of points. The number of altars and chapels constructed at the parish churches of market towns grew as times passed, which phenomenon historiography has considered as the period of market town urbanization, and it can be stated in case of churches classified into higher categories in the first place.

Apart from parish churches, altars, and chapels, other ecclesiastical institutions (monasteries, *hôtel-Dieus*, and schools) were also linked to the settlements' appearance and their ecclesiastical topography. The presence, number, and function of these ecclesiastical institutions within the settlements were significant aspects in view of the research on urbanization. Written records concerning schools support the fact that the magistrates of the market towns, justifiably in case of even smaller settlements, made efforts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the second half of it, to employ schoolmasters at the local schools who had at least a baccalaureate degree. Therefore, particular connection between the positions of the settlements in the urban hierarchy and the existence of the schools and the quality of the education conducted at these schools can be pinpointed.

*Hôtel-Dieus* in the Northeastern Hungary can be identified in a large percentage in the high category, especially smaller towns and market towns holding relevant functions; their ratio supports their relevant role within this region subject to investigation as regards the analysis of the central sites. The fact that the medium urban function withholding market town of Nagykanizsa, which had its own *hôtel-Dieu*, was the only one among the clusters analyzed in the Southern Transdanubian region nonetheless contradicts the aforementioned. The main reason beyond this phenomenon might be that the central sites in this region were located densely, as a result of which the majority of the settlements belong in clusters no. 5 and 6. These, nevertheless, cannot be considered as relevant central sites as opposed to those, in which the landowners or actually the populations of the settlements might have been capable of establishing and maintaining such facilities.

As regards the argument of the research on the market towns, as many as two issues have been examined in concern to the *patrociniums*. One of them was whether the great deal

of respect paid toward the patron saints of merchants and their trades held an outstanding part within the region subject to examination. The other, partly connected to the first one, was whether any patron saint could typically be associated with the churches of the market towns, and whether the distribution of the *patrociniums* showed any striking difference compared to the national average. Contingent upon the results of this analysis, it turned out that although there is a patron saint (St. Michael) that can typically be connected to the urban function in Hungary when selecting a *patrocinium*, it is not outstanding statistically, and paying respect to another saint is not typical either that would show a typical divergence compared to the national average.

#### *History of building construction – issues and problems*

The accurate identification of the sites of the churches is required for the purpose of their delineation. This requires different sort of source exploitation in case of each settlement. Miscellaneous topographical data known in respect the settlements might be of help, primarily the finds spots of the mediaeval burials, aerial photographs, the results of field researches, as well as pictorial depictions occasionally, and the data of the minutes of clerical visits. Of the sixty-six settlements in the northeastern region examined, the location of a total of fifty-eight churches can be identified, out of which forty-eight church buildings are known through partial or total excavations, or in certain cases based on their plans only. The churches of seventy-six settlements in the South Transdanubian region have been reviewed, but in total it means as many as eighty churches, given that several parish churches stood in particular settlements. Of these, as many as twenty-six have been standing partly or wholly or have been discovered partly or wholly during archaeological excavations. In addition, as a result of the foregoing and the written sources, the construction period of the churches might have been outlined.

The number of the market towns began growing from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which lasted until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Contingent upon this fact, it is important to review in the course of the ascertainment of the parish churches of the market towns whether any expansion or reconstruction of these churches took place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, because their hosting settlements matured into market towns in this period with some exceptions (e.g.: Gyöngyös, Miskolc). Smaller towns and market towns holding significant functions represent the highest settlement category, and the modifications that the 15<sup>th</sup> century brought for the churches of these settlements might be identified both in their ground spaces and artistic solutions. It has also been observed that in case of the churches of settlements listed in the

transitional and lower categories, not primarily the expansion of the ground space occurred, if the area of the nave was expanded, because it can be dated to earlier periods, usually to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As regards these, the main objective was to construct a church building of high standard, which did not only concern the interior (vaults, late Gothic presbytery, stalls, etc.), but also the external appearance of the buildings.

As regards particular oppida, the existence of more than one church holding the function of a vicarage in the same settlement could have been identified in the course of the investigation. Bear upon the sources, such settlements can be categorized into two large classes: (i) the totality of those settlements that operated as the centers of chief deaneries. Seven of these settlements (Heves, Tolnavár, Segesd, Somogyvár, Gyöngyöspata, Nógrád, Becsehely), in which probably two churches holding the rights of a vicarage stood in this manner, have been located in the area investigated. Since these churches were the first parish churches in the Árpáadian Age, i.e. when they were established, the role and functions of the two churches were judged differently in the Late Middle Age.

The other class comprises settlements, where two parish churches were built in Mediaeval Times. We know of seven settlements, where the existence of two churches has been confirmed by either written or archaeological sources (such as Pécsvárad, Somogyvár, Mecseknádasd, Dunaszekcső). Of these, the first record of one of the parish churches in case of three settlements can be linked to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, whilst the second parish church was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that has been recorded in the sources (Miskolc, Paks, Zákány). The construction of the two parish churches was triggered in the Middle Age by demographical issues, the population growth tendency, and the increasing population of the settlement, which occasionally might have contributed to such an incremental expansion of the particular settlement in this epoch that lead to the increase of the number of the churches.

#### *The survey of the ground spaces and plans of the parish churches*

The size of the parish churches and its modifications is vital in the relationship of the parish churches and urbanization, which aspect might also be one of the controls of the centralized system. The methodology that is applicable to this purpose and might bring assessable results was elaborated by Anders Andrén in connection with the scanning of mediaeval cities in Denmark. In the course of his work, he intended to evaluate the level of urbanization of the settlements, in order to which he set up a sequence based on the number and dimensions of the settlements' churches. Relying on his research and on the number of the churches, the urban character of the particular settlements can be defined.

Correlations defined by the Andrén methodology can be linked to the plan typology of the churches. Therefore, it is worth being engaged in the ground spaces and dimensions of these churches, and additionally, in the possible application of the high standard artistic solutions of the age. The varying options of having been investigated, as well as the results of the researches conducted in respect to the regions subject to sifting must have been taken into account in the course of defining the viewpoints of the assay. Thus, two aspects have been highlighted to complete the comparison of the churches: (i) the survey of the ground spaces and the comparison of them, and (ii) the plan structures.

The churches located in the more thoroughly dissected region of Northeastern Hungary provided more unequivocal data in the course of the perusal; the results connected to the Southern Transdanubian region rather only supported the foregoing, and they focused attention to the regional variations and differences.

Dependent on the distinct tests of the categories, it can be concluded that there are measurable and conspicuous dissimilarities between the ground spaces of the parish churches included in each particular category. Naturally, there are distinctions between the particular classes, but perhaps there is a more remarkable difference between the first (criteria scheme 3 by A. Kubinyi) and the second (criteria scheme 4 by A. Kubinyi) categories, and especially between the second and third (criteria scheme 5 by A. Kubinyi) categories. The average size diversity shown between the third and fourth (criteria scheme 6 by A. Kubinyi) classes is approximately half, one-third of the previous ones. Rested on these, it can be confirmed that the churches listed in the first category under all circumstances surpass those of the other settlements in a somewhat smaller territory, but the smaller replicas of these are the churches of the second class. For that matter, this is the class that can be connected to the cities according to the categorization scheme by A. Kubinyi. Perhaps, this can be demonstrated at the boundary of the second and third clusters, in which case the deviation between the averages is itself of an average size village church. Discrepancies, nonetheless, cannot be detected only in respect to the ground spaces. In the first class, practically with no exception, the most up-to-date ecclesiastical architectural solutions of the architecture of the age were applied, with which high standard interior design was associated. Rather the latter aspect remained in case of the sequential category; the only exception is Nyírbátor, where, nevertheless, the parish church of the settlement bears a particular representation feature that demonstrated the national rank of the noble family and the impact of the royal court.

Founded on the foregoing, the statement that the Andrén methodology can be applied and construed in this case as well is thence acceptable. Relying on the comparison, it can be

concluded that these reconstructions and ground space/plan expansions dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century are correlated with the appearance of the high standard solutions of the late Gothic art in concern to both the new space structures, and the new structure vault types and other interior design. Grounded on the review of the aforementioned, an even more specific line can be drawn between the clusters. The first one is notably separated, while the second one can be connected to it only partly. The two clusters behind show a more homogeneous scene, in which, as pointed out earlier, exceptions also occur, but the average is not close to these churches as regards their veneer and quality.

Referring back to the Andrén methodology, another important conclusion can be made. Bear upon the character of the town, single polarity is typical in Hungary, and we know of only a few, already mentioned cases, whereas the evolution and existence of two late mediaeval parish churches can be verified. It might also be observed that chapels loomed primarily also in the Late Middle Age, and not unconditionally within the churches, but outside of them as well specifically in the settlements. Some of the written sources concerning the chapels already reviewed have been verified by archaeological excavations, for instance the *Szent Bertalan* chapel of Tolnavár.

The frequent existence of the wide narthexes as a space structural solution in the Southern Transdanubian region can be assessed as a particular regional feature; to say when the nave and the presbytery of the church have the same width. Such a solution can be seen, for instance, in Segesd, Babócsa, Zalasántó, Valkó, and Ete. The three-nave Gothic church type equipped with a polygonal closure of the presbytery that has innumerable specimens in the north-eastern region of Hungary has been represented in an insignificant number in the Southern Transdanubian region (e.g.: Mecsknádasd-Schlossberg). As regards the expansion of the Southern Transdanubian churches, it has been observed that the area of the nave was not unconditionally increased only westward, but also southward in many cases; such a construction can be seen in Pécsvárad (*Mindenszentek Church*; expansion took place in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries) and in Mecseknádasd (*Szent István Church*; reconstruction took place at the outset of the 14<sup>th</sup> century).

#### *Ecclesiastical institutions, settlement and residence*

The parish churches as the primal religious centers and spaces of the settlements held a central post in their physical reality in the topography of the settlements. According to the fundamental and general settlement structure solutions, the churches were located in the centers of the settlements, and they occupied the broadening part of the streets in case of

spindle shape or market street structures, while they were erected at the intersections of streets or either side of the market square/place in case of street intersection structures. Of course, dissimilarities, which root partly in the shifting of the center of the settlements, and partly in ownership historic reasons (e.g.: Miskolc, Pásztó), have also been known. As regards chapels, the locations of the facilities built within the settlements, but outside the churches have been described.

Of the schools, the locations and structures of as many as three buildings in the areas appraised (Miskolc, Sárospatak, Pásztó) have been known. In all three cases, these buildings were located adjacent directly to the churches. Their structures, on the other hand, were different: the ones in Miskolc and Sárospatak deviated from the one in Pásztó both in their sizes and design.

One of the major factors of the locations of the *hôpital-Dieus* was the proximity of water, and these facilities were located on sites, where it was easy to approach the water (e.g.: Gyöngyös). *Hôtel-Dieus* were built not far from the centers of the settlements in most cases; separation and maintaining a certain distance away from the populations and the settlements were typical to the leper and plague curing hospitals.

The capacity and locations of the monasteries and the cloisters as religious venues were of key importance in the life of the settlements. If the parish churches of the settlements as religious venues that can equally be approached by each member of the community are considered as elemental, the title of the secondary religious facilities can be granted to the monasteries. The locations of the monasteries and cloisters were decided not only by the rules of the particular orders, but by their relationship and its tightness with the landlords, founders, and patrons (e.g.: Szécsény, Sárospatak, Ozora).

Considering the source capacities, a few settlements can be outlined, in case of which it is worth screening the relationship of the residence and the parish church, as well as the landlord's possible impact on the construction of the latter building. The landlord's support as a patronage was supremely indispensable in this sense. As regards settlements that belong in the cluster of small towns and market towns holding significant functions, the citizens in addition to the landlord had their part in the construction of the parish churches in the Late Middle Age. It must be pointed out, on the other hand, that the churches were built in the late Gothic art style by the application of its most sophisticated solutions, but the reconstruction of the residences, or possibly only their interior design, were influenced vastly by the Renaissance. Contingent upon the foregoing, the landlords, even if they did not live in the centers, undertook certain functions in the construction and design of the churches and

increased their standards. If a landlord, however, moved to the settlement, he did not unconditionally build his residence adjacent to the parish church, but he moved to the surroundings of the monastery of the order he preferred.

### *Recapitulation*

By recapitulating the results of the research, it can be concluded that the churches of the smaller towns and of the market towns holding key functions (criteria scheme 3 by A. Kubinyi) surpass the rest in all respects, and particular settlements that belong in the class of market towns holding medium urban functions (criteria scheme 4 by A. Kubinyi) might partly be classified in this category. This totally harmonizes with András Kubinyi's statement that specifies that central sites over sixteen points can be considered as towns. It can also be stated that the churches of settlements falling in the range of 11 and 15 points (criteria scheme 5 by A. Kubinyi) constitute a transitional category indeed between cities and villages, whilst the churches of the average market towns and villages of a market town nature (criteria scheme 6 by A. Kubinyi) share the features of the village churches. Grounded on the research, the analysis of the churches' plans, ground spaces, and particular structural parts has confirmed that the alteration between the categories of the criteria scheme examined can be measured in respect to the churches, and they can be applied as a control cluster.

It can also be concluded that the churches of the settlements that belong in the highest category anatomized by the author of this thesis can be compared to the parish churches of the average independent royal towns as regards their ground spaces and interior design. In addition to the churches, the settlements can be fitted among the independent royal towns based on one or more elements of the ecclesiastical topography, and they can overtake their functions in the rural regions. Naturally, they cannot be compared to Buda, or Bratislava (Pozsony in Hungarian), or Pest, but rather to those independent royal towns, in which only one parish church stood generally in the Late Middle Age, and the monasteries and cloisters, and *hôtel-Dieus* construed as secondary religious facilities concurrently existed.