

# **MITTELALTERLICHE UND FRÜHNEUZEITLICHE BEFESTIGUNGEN IN DER MÁTRA-REGION**

**EXKURSIONSFÜHRER**

## **MEDIAEVAL AND EARLY MODERN FORTIFICATIONS IN THE MÁTRA REGION**

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### **BENE CASTLE**

The Castle of Bene is located on a height called Várberc between Somor and Csatorna streams in the Mátra Mountains, North Hungary. The only little remains of the former stronghold are situated 460–470 m above sea, north of Mátrafüred (part of Gyöngyös). The castle is one of the most ancient buildings of the region and has become a symbol for Castle studies not only in Hungary but in the whole Central Europe.

The earliest scientific research concerning the castle is connected with Kabos Kandra whose results published in 1890 were used as a basis for the later tourist descriptions. Almost hundred years lasted until István Draskóczy collected all the written sources about Castle of Bene and the former neighbouring village of the same name. This was published in 1988. The excavations of the site were continuing for a decade, from 1982 until 1992. József J. Szabó was the leader of the archaeological research and he has partially published his results in 1984, 1986 and 1990. However, the complete evaluation of the material as well as the publication of the latest results or a monograph was never prepared. This duty was transferred to the writer of the present study who is trying to answer the questions raised during the excavations and to establish a building history of the castle in her ongoing MA Thesis.

The neighbourhood of the castle became a domain of Aba Kindred already since early 11th C, after the Hungarian Conquest. The members of Csobánka branch of the mentioned Kindred are said to be the landlords of the region in the 13<sup>th</sup>-C sources. Most likely the founder of the castle was John, count Csobánka's son. He, together with his brother Peter, in 1275 equally divided their father's heritage resulted in that the future town Gyöngyös, Bene and several other villages became John's estate. The castle itself must have been constructed shortly after this event as one of many similar aristocrat seats.

The first data concerning the stronghold is known from 1301 when it as a part of family heritage was divided between John's three sons David, Ladislaus and Samuel. The charter is quite unique because of the very detailed description of a 13<sup>th</sup>-C castle in such an early period. The family joined the opponents of Charles Robert of Anjou during



*1. Aerial view of Bene Castle Bene from north-east (Péter Szabó)*

the following internal struggle and consequently the last becoming the King of Hungary dispossessed them of all their domains and granted those to Thomas of Szécsény, voivode of Transylvania. The family of Szécsény held these lands with the castles up to 1424. Nicholas of Szécsény, Thomas' great-grandson was found guilty of disloyalty to the King, so all his property was acquired and confiscated by Sigismund of Luxemburg. The further fate of the castle is unknown. Most probably the King ordered it to be pulled down. A charter from 1497 mentions Bene as abandoned and dilapidated.

According to the written sources there are two main phases in the building history of the castle. In the time of possession of Csobánka family it served as a living place and a residence suitable for lords of the higher rank. In turn, since Thomas of Szécsény's time, it was just a subsidiary castle used as an administrative and economical centre of the domain lead by a castellan.

The already mentioned 1301-year charter is worthy of a closer look. Describing the castle it mentions a palace at the northern side, which was divided equally between the brothers; three smaller towers and one larger wooden tower situated in the centre, a larger chamber, a house and other outbuildings. The chapel and the gatehouse were used collectively by the brothers. Among the main goals of the archaeological research was to unearth and identify these buildings giving a unique opportunity for comparison of the written sources with the archaeological data.

Only some derelict earthworks showed the site of the castle by the time of the first season of archaeological excavation. The core of the stronghold was surrounded by



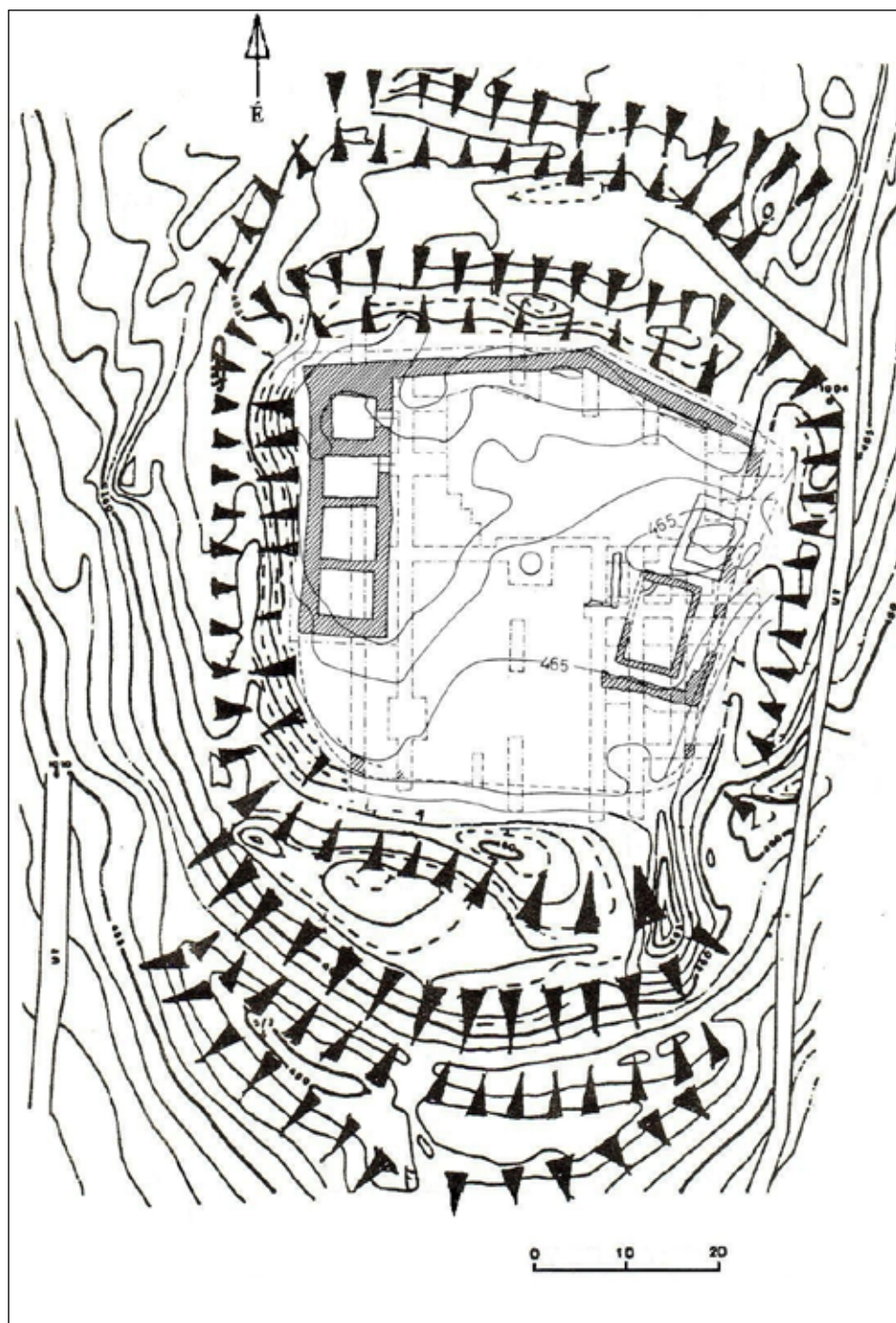
2. Aerial view of Bene Castle from north-west ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

irregular dry moat fortified with additional fosses at the most vulnerable northern and southern sides. The excavations investigated only the innermost ditch which reached 3.2 m depth. The other parts of the earthworks were only surveyed superficially and put to the ground plan.

The core of the castle is consisted of a non-regular pentagonal, approx. 40x45 m stone building complex. The outer stonewalls survived at the northern side reaching in some places height of 2.5 m and width of 1.7-1.9 m. The eastern and southern outer walls remained only partially. The northern side was closed by the palace building. The excavated walls were slightly heightened during the conservation works.

The palace building situated in the north-western corner of the castle includes three chambers. The northernmost with a south-eastern doorway is 4.5x4.5 m large and has thicker walls (3.2-3.7 m) than the other parts of the palace (1.7-1.9 m) and thus it can be interpreted as foundation of a tower. The remains of the burnt timbers and also a burnt door-frame stone excavated inside this tower referred to a devastating fire which possibly caused the final destruction of the castle.

The palace continued to the south with an adjoining 11 m long chamber split in two by an archway roughly at its lateral axis. The entrance was at the north-eastern side opening directly onto courtyard. Charred beams, collapsed and burnt carved stones found in the southern part of the chamber and the fact that the floor in some places had burnt to red also refer to an intense fire. The southernmost part of the palace is a 5.6x6 m large chamber having no traces of ground-floor entrance. Its function is unclear. Some secondarily built-in carved stones were found in the northern wall of the room but no signs that they would have been used for walling up could be traced. A thin burnt layer connected with the destruction of the castle ran along the whole building. The destruction layers of the bu-



3. Ground plan of the excavated remains of Bene Castle (after J. J. Szabó)

ilding debris as well as the rubble of the courtyard presented a large amount of different finds dated to 13–15<sup>th</sup> C. Unfortunately, this was not yet evaluated.

A small tower interpreted as a gatehouse was excavated at the north-eastern side of the castle. According to the finds from its remains it can be dated to 15<sup>th</sup> C. Its uncovered walls somewhere are still 1.5 m high. An almost 2 m deep and 5.3×4.2 m large rock-hole was found within its walls most probably used as trou-de-loup or drawbridge pit. Just slight remains of ground walls of another building were unearthed south-westward of gatehouse. Its inner size is 8.9×5.4 m, foundations were made of stone but basing on architectural features the upper part was timber-framed. Some traces of a former fireplace were identified in the north-western corner of this building. The hearth of the fireplace was of bricks and it was surrounded by a carved stone wall. Most probably another fireplace was also in the south-eastern corner of the same building but only remains of the burned earthen hearth and some random carved stones were found. This building of still unknown function according to the archaeological material from its destruction layers can be dated to 13–14<sup>th</sup> C.

A rock pit 3–3.5 m in diameter and 3 m deep was excavated in the centre of the courtyard. Its fillings contained exclusively 15<sup>th</sup>-C finds. It can be interpreted as a cistern. Three unusual ring-shaped objects were unearthed southward of the dry moat. Only one of them was completely excavated. It appeared to be a lime kiln which containing finds from 14–15<sup>th</sup> C can be connected to the last phase of the castle.

Trying to connect the data from the charter with that got from the excavations a number of questions rise up answering which is quite difficult. The “palatium” of the charter interpreted as a great hall must have been situated above the long chamber split in two by an archway of the north-western building. This can be confirmed by many carved stones belonged to the representative interior of the hall and found among debris during the excavations. Even more problematic is the identification of four wooden towers (“tribus Turribus ligneis” and “lignee Turris in medio eiusdem castris”) because the charter gives no hints where they could have stayed within the castle. Not too many traces of such constructions were discovered during the research, however, the central and partially the southern parts of the castle were not investigated. According to the present day stage of the research one of the wooden towers may be identified with the stone-based timber-framed building beside the gatehouse. The other possible localisation can be connected with the rock pit in the centre of the castle: the tower might have stood above it. Interesting still that the northern part of the north-western building interpreted as a tower due its thick walls is not even mentioned in the charter. This can be explained in two ways: or it was unintentional or only the ground floor of the tower had such impressive walls and its upper part was timber-framed. Also problematic is the localisation of other chambers described in the charter (camera, domus) and even the former site of the chapel used by all three of the brothers is unknown. It seems that most of these rooms were located somewhere inside the north-western building.

The localisation of the gatehouse to the eastern side of the castle seems to be quite sure due to the drawbridge pit. However, the excavations revealed some architectural details referring to that the tower of the gatehouse was built later and originally a simple doorway was used as the castle entrance. This is the only alteration connectable to the later phase of the stronghold which in other way kept its primary appearance up till its final destruction.

The pottery is the main group of finds similarly to many other castles. This is composed mainly of spiral-ornamented white ware dated to 13-14<sup>th</sup> C. Lots of iron objects were found, including horseshoes, spurs, keys, bone handled knives and different arrowheads. The most unique find was a very rare dark blue, golden rimmed glass sherd with enamel painted Arabic script. The way how it got here is very intriguing in itself thus a separate research based on it may have interesting results in the future. Altogether the finds can be dated to 13-15<sup>th</sup> C only confirming the dating built on the written sources.

The part of the charter that describes the castle:

„...*Item castrum eorum in tres parte equales divisissent ex quibus una pars existens a parte aquilonali cum tercia parte pallacii et tribus Turribus ligneis ac una domo et camera versus orientem Samueli. Item medium eiusdem pallacii tercia cum dimidietate magne stube et alii minutis edificiis ad eandem plagam magistro Ladislao et tercia pars eiusdem pallacii meridionalis simul cum dimidietate dicte magne stube ad eandem plagam prefato David. Item quedam particula retro portam dicti castri ab oriente existens ab eadem porta usque ad locum ubi murus terminatur eidem magistro Ladislao, ab alia autem parte scilicet a plaga occidentali quedam particula cum dimidietate ligneae Turris in medio eiusdem castri site Samueli et tercia particula a parte dicti pallacii scilicet portionis eiusdem David sita cum reliqua dimidietate eiusdem Turris prefato David et suis heredibus in perpetuum cessissent possidende, Capella vero eorum de dicto castro et porta eiusdem castri eidem communiter inhabitande remansissent...*” / MOL DI1626/

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## THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE OF KISNÁNA

Two main characteristics should be mentioned in the first place about the castle of Kísnána. First, this castle is one of those that remained almost unchanged in its medieval form, with no later post medieval rebuilding or alterations since it was almost entirely abandoned after the mid 16<sup>th</sup> C. Thus only the ruinous conditions obstruct the study of several medieval building periods at Kísnána. Second, this not too large castle is located on a very low (approx. 20 m high) hill in the middle of the present day village of medieval origin and displays a peculiar transition from a representative aristocratic residence to a real fortification.

The reconstructable history of the medieval Kísnána starts in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> C. A rotunda with a horseshoe-shaped apse must have built before this time on the top of the present day castle hill and a contemporary village probably was situated beside the church south and east of the hill. (The possibility of an earlier settlement was raised but its dating is still questionable.) The foundations of the rotunda were uncovered beneath the Gothic church during the excavations of 1962-1966 led by Nóra Pámer and are dated by a coin and other finds from the cemetery around the church. Presumably the three oval tombstones exhibited in the castle courtyard derive from the early period of this cemetery, which was used until the late 15<sup>th</sup> C or even longer. The next known phase in the history of Kísnána is the enlargement of the rotunda with a round western section most probably in 13<sup>th</sup> C. It is doubtful whether the local landowner family already played any role in the refurbishing of the church or not. Anyway, it is quite likely that a greater or smaller damage by fire could have been the reason for the reconstruction of the rotunda. Written sources mention the church of All Saints in Nána in 1325 and in 1332-1337, as well as the village *Egyházasnána* ('Nána with a church') in 1325 that is equivalent of the medieval Kísnána (first appears as *Kysnana* only in 1415).

The origin of the medieval castle (so that the first manor house or residence) is hard to date. Written sources show that the local landowner family, the *de Kompolti* obtained the lordship of Kísnána domain approximately in 13<sup>th</sup> C. From 14<sup>th</sup> C they already used the *de Nana* predicate. It seems quite probable that in the first half of 14<sup>th</sup> C some kind of a manor house must have been built in Kísnána, most probably not too far from the rotunda. The social status of the landowner Kompolti family changed considerably when the new Angevin dynasty appeared in Hungary. King Charles Robert of Anjou I. consolidated his power by 1320 and many of his supporters including the Kompolti family were granted significant estates and positions. Peter of Kompolt (Kompolti) became Count (*comes*) and Royal Treasurer (*magister tavernicorum reginalium*) already in the 1310s and also his descendants owned important positions, namely *comes*, *magister pincernarum*, *iudex curiae* etc. and contracted marriages with significant aristocratic families till the death of the last male Kompolti in 1521. One of Peter of Kompolt's three sons, Stephen of Kompolt (member of the *aula regis* from 1342) founded the *de Nana* branch of the Kompolti family and used first this predicate.

Nothing can be stated for sure about the first house of the Kompolti in Kísnána, even the location is uncertain. One possibility is that it was built on the northern edge of the castle hill where the ruins of the later northern palace wing stay now. This idea is supported but not completely proved by the fact that under the cellars of the palace wing



*1. Aerial view of Kislána from south-east (www.civertan.hu)*

some building rubble of bricks and big stones was found during the excavations. This can be interpreted as signs of a possible earlier building. There is also another possible localisation on the site of the south-western building, which later was built in the curtain walls. This large (22×8 m) building originally could have had wooden upper structure because the remained stone walls of the cellar level seem to be too thin for stone walls above. Since the first period of this building can not be dated precisely, this as well might have been the first manor house. Its size and form do not contradict this theory. Moreover, due to the modern reconstructions some annex walls attached to the western wall creating a tiny rectangular space inside the building can be observed. Its function is unknown but according to the most recent investigation it seems to have been a trace of an air-heating system. An upper cover stone of such a structure was found next to the large south-western building. If there really was an air-heating system, it seems very probable that this south-western building might have been the original (14<sup>th</sup> C?) palace of the Kompolti. Nevertheless, the dating and location of the first manor house in Kislána is still unknown.

The next phase in the building history of the aristocratic residence in Kislána is known much better. The reign of King Sigismund and Wladislaus I seem to be a flourishing period for the family of Kompolti. Their social status reached the highest rank at this time. Some members of the family also got into the Dragon Order created of the leading barons loyal to the king in 1408. Thus the Kompolti appeared among the most powerful and influential aristocrats even if they themselves belonged to the second class in that exclusive group. Perhaps this flourishing period enabled the most important improvements in Kislána. On one hand there is a new palace building, a real residence on the northern

edge of the castle hill, on the other there is the reconstruction of the church in late Gothic style. Finally, by the end of the reign of Wladislaus I the residential site became fortified and received a stronghold-like appearance.

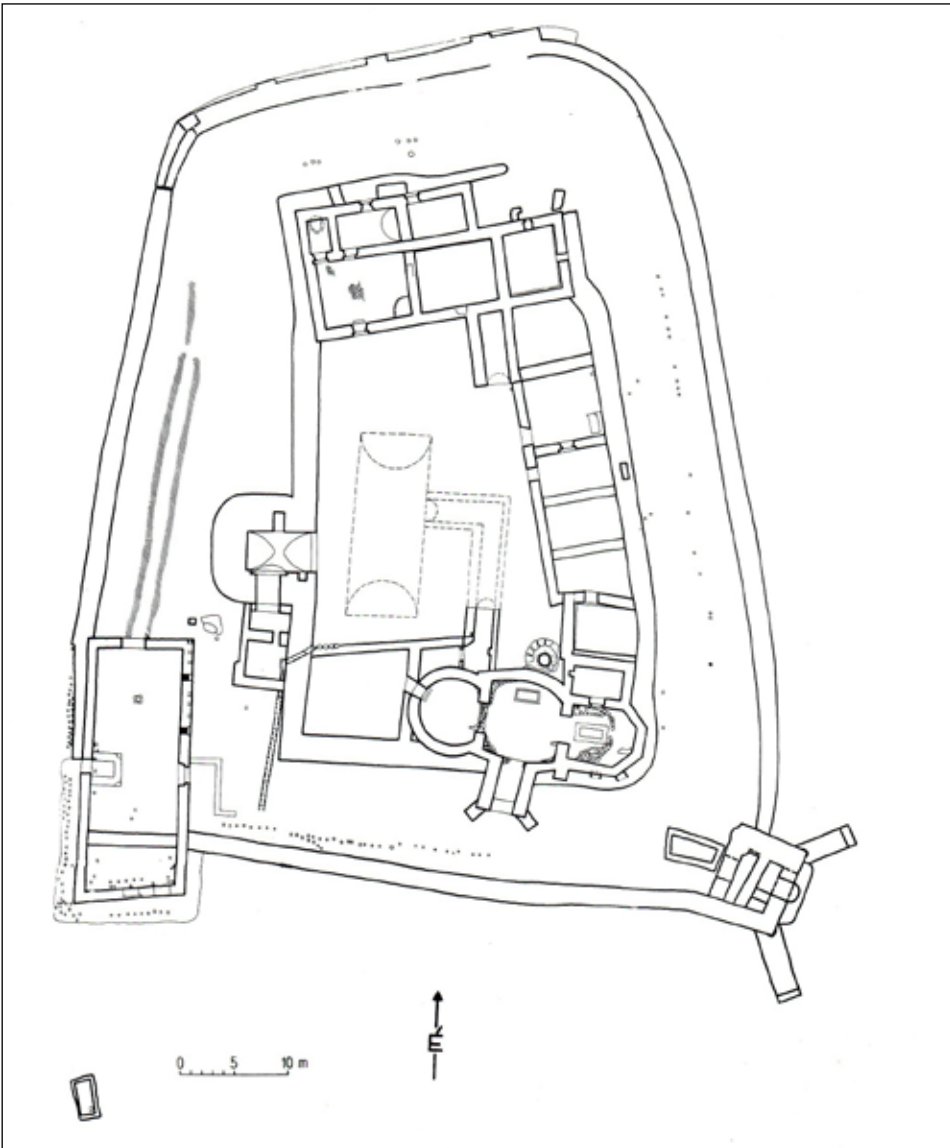
The northern palace wing consists two lines of chambers, three southern of which are wider and larger, while the northern line is narrower and has no certain eastern termination. Thus the reconstructed ground plan of the building is not rectangular but has a hiatus on the north-eastern corner. Originally the northern line of chambers might have been same long as the southern and could have had more than three rooms. The construction of the northern palace is partly dated by coin finds: 36 quartings of the Sigismund era make sure that the southern line of rooms, at least above the two eastern cellars was built not much later than the 1390s. The northern line of chambers could have been built somewhat later and the whole palace was finished probably in the first half of 15<sup>th</sup> C. Only few walls of the cellar level and the ground floor remained of the palace but originally it might have had a two-storey appearance as it can be reconstructed from the carved stone material found during the excavations.

The south-western chamber was the largest in the palace. It had a tile floor and a fireplace in the south-eastern corner. The north-western small room included an inner well. Next to this tiny room was a larger one, barrel vaulting and white plaster work of which have partially survived. A latrine was accessible from the eastern chamber of the northern line. The central and the eastern chambers of the southern line remained only on the cellar level. They had originally a flat ceiling but later it was replaced by barrel vaults.

Along with the construction works on the northern palace considerable alterations were carried out on the church. The round middle nave and the presbytery were pulled down keeping only the western expansion. The new polygonal presbytery was much larger than the earlier one. The new nave was built more or less above the earlier foundations. An approximately 17 m high new tower was attached south of the nave. This tower served as the main doorway to the church as well. The two lower storeys of the tower were built in rectangular plan and the two upper were octagonal. The fourth level was decorated with tracery windows. A rectangular sacristy was added north to the new presbytery. Thus the new Gothic church succeeding the earlier and simpler one had a rather unparalleled ground plan not only in the Hungarian medieval architecture but in the neighbouring regions.

This reconstruction of the church is well dated by the tombstone of Ladislaus of Kompolt. This tombstone was placed in the new polygonal presbytery. Consequently, this presbytery must have been built before 1428, the year of Ladislaus Kompolti's death. Most probably the whole Gothic refurbishing of the church took place in the early 15<sup>th</sup> C. The new church tower and its windows, the carved stone material belonged once to the church, and especially the tomb in the middle of the new presbytery spectacularly represented the power and wealth of the landowner Kompolti family.

Kisnána first appears as a fortified site in 1445 when written sources mentions John Kompolti's brand new castle. Slight traces of some wooden fortification around the castle hill were discovered during the excavations. However, it does not seem too likely that the newly built castle would have had only some palisade in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> C. Most probably the inner stone wall of the castle was finished until 1445 and perhaps the curtain wall as well. The wooden construction could have served as an earlier defensive system or as a later reinforcement of the stone walls (e.g. after the first Turkish siege in 1543). Its dating is quite uncertain. Both the inner and the curtain walls were approximately 2-2.5 m thick. The inner wall was originally 8 m high, which is well visible on the south wall of the inner gate-



2. Kislána. The ground plan of the castle (After N. Pámer)

house. This tower was built at the same time as the inner wall or at least its lower levels. The walls of the tower are more than 3 m thick. This multi-storey tower remained almost at its original height. The ground floor was accessible from the bailey between the two castle walls and the upper floors only from the courtyard using a spiral staircase. The front of the inner gatehouse was reinforced by an artificial *trou-de-loup*. A splendid coat-of-arms above the main gate of the tower represented the power of the family of Kompolt.

The inner wall incorporates the earlier buildings on the castle hill, namely, the northern palace and the Gothic church. The large south-western building was built into the

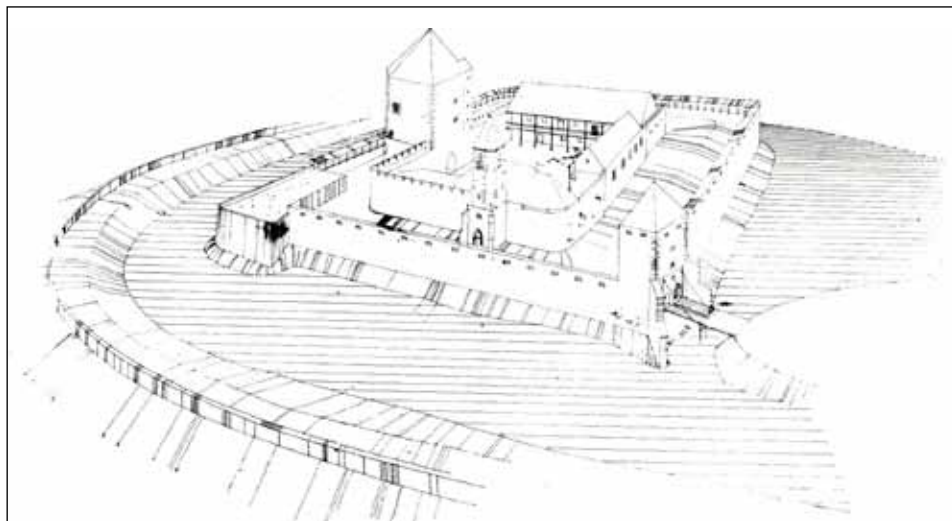
curtain wall but the dating of this wall is rather problematic. Theoretically it might have been built simultaneously with the inner wall. This model of fortification with a bailey between the two walls is not unusual in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> C. What makes this theory questionable is the long use of the graveyard south of the church. It is quite sure that the burial activity was still continuous in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> C and even in the end of the century. Although the existence of a used cemetery in a castle bailey is not impossible (but still quite unusual), most probably the curtain walls might have been built after the burials were suspended. Thus the possible dating of this wall varies from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> up to the early 16<sup>th</sup> C.

The question of the outer gatehouse is closely connected with the curtain walls. This gate was built opposite the south-western large building by the south-eastern slope of the castle hill. The dating of this gate seems to be even more problematic than that of the curtain walls. It might have been built either before the curtain walls or simultaneously with them. Some later periods were also observable during the excavations, namely the inner partition walls and the sunken arcades of the outer façade of the walls. Two large buttresses on the eastern corners of the gatehouse are also signs of a later alteration, because they cover the crook-backed quoins of the first phase of the gate. Only some walls of the ground floor have survived. Thus the real height of the originally multi-storey gate tower is unknown. In any case, the large buttresses cannot be interpreted as the obvious signs of the original great measures of the tower, because they could have been necessary as well due to the sloping ground. Carved stones and iron objects prove that there was a drawbridge in the outer gatehouse. This drawbridge led above the moat dug along the curtain walls surrounding the castle hill. An unusual rectangular walled pit was attached to the western wall of the outer gatehouse. Its dating and its original function is unclear.

When the inner wall was finished, the courtyard remained quite empty, except the church and the northern palace. The eastern side was built in not earlier than in the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> C, because the partition walls of the eastern chamber-line were attached to this inner wall. The southernmost chamber of the eastern wing was finished first; the others were built somewhat later. The eastern wing comprised five rooms altogether, three of which survived the following alteration when two partition walls were removed creating a large middle chamber. A well was situated in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard probably decorated with richly ornamented well house. The southern side of the courtyard beside the church was built in as well, although it is still uncertain whether it was a Hall opened to the courtyard or a closed room.

The last important phase of the castle is connected with the new landowner family in Kisdána: the Ország of Gut. After the family of Kompolt died out in 1521, Ország of Gut inherited all their estates. The function of Kisdána had changed drastically from the main residence of Kompoltis to a secondary manor house of the Ország family. Nevertheless, some smaller reconstructions were made and new buildings were built in the castle. First of all, a great cellar was constructed under the courtyard, which could not have been finished before 1522, according to a coin find between the vault of the cellar and the stone cover of the courtyard. The stone cover must have been also renewed at this time. Many fragments of a splendid stone relief were excavated in the entrance corridor of the cellar.

The relief made of the so-called Hungarian red marble depicted a coats-of-arm, emblems and a lion. It was interpreted as belonging to a well. According to its inscription it could have been carved in 1448. Now the relief is exhibited next to the well in the courtyard, although its original place is unknown.



3. Kisnána. Virtual reconstruction of the castle c. 1500 (Ferenc Erdei)

Besides the above mentioned buildings, the Országh family renewed and raised the floor level of the southern chamber in the courtyard and dismantled the south-western large building keeping only the cellar level but filling it up with debris. This alteration is dated by a coin after 1526 and could have strengthened the defensive system of the castle: the site of the former building probably was used as a battery.

Despite all the changes and fortifications, the castle was too far from withstand any serious siege in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> C. Kisnána was first occupied by the Ottoman army in 1543. The walls might have suffered serious damage and probably there was no reason to rebuild the castle. Anyway, after the 1560s there was surely no attempt to restore the ruins. The medieval castle of Kisnána was never used again as a residence or a fortification and falling in disrepair and decay, the weather and the time hastened its decline turning a former attractive complex into miserable ruins.

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## SIROK CASTLE

Sirok is situated in Heves County. Its castle was constructed on the top of a hill over River Tarna. The ruins of the castle represent the most spectacular Hungarian example of the relation between castle building and rock surface. The hill comprises soft volcanic tuff. The latest petrological investigation has affirmed that this rock is not riolith-tuff (as it is often stated) but dacit tuff. The castle was built around the end of 13<sup>th</sup> C. It was first mentioned in written sources in 1320, when King Charles Robert I of Anjou occupied it during the conflict against Máté Csák, an oligarch of the northern part of Hungary. That time the owners were Demeter, Bodon's son and his son, and Leustach Nagy of Verpelét. All were the descendants of the Aba Kindred, which occupied Tarna valley and was possessing huge estates in Northern Hungary after the Hungarian Conquest (895). (This clan is famous for Samuel Aba, king of Hungary from 1041 to 1044 who was buried in Feldebrő or Abasár.)

In 14<sup>th</sup> C the castle remained a royal property until 1389 when it fell into the hands of the Tari family. After 1472 the castle was owned jointly by the Kompolt and the Ország of Gut families, becoming the sole property of the latter family in 1511. The lower bastioned fortress was built by Christopher Ország, Lord Chief Justice and Count of Nógrád County in 1562. After his death his son-in-law, Francis Török of Enying, later his daughter, Susan and his husband, Paul Nyáry inherited it. Although the castle was occupied by the Ottoman army between 1596 and 1687, its destruction should be dated to the end of 17<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> C. As some lists of the Turkish soldiers show, by the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> C the number of soldiers varied between 119 and 127. They were mostly infantry and gunners. In 1687, when the Ottoman guards left the castle, an inventory was drawn up which is an important source of the buildings and storage of the fortress. After the Ottoman rule the ruins passed to the Nyáry family again, later to the Károlyi family, and the castle remained in their property until 1945.

During the excavations led by Béla Kovács between 1965 and 1967 the entire area of the lower castle was uncovered, together with its immediate surroundings. Due to the construction of the road leading up to the castle (in 2003) it became necessary to conduct archaeological investigations on the intended course of the path linking the new road with the castle. We also had an opportunity to investigate the upper castle that had been untouched till then.

In Sirok the upper castle is dated to 13-14<sup>th</sup> C. We found proof of that in the south-eastern corner of the upper castle there had been a cellared palace wing laid out on an east-west axis, to which the openings positioned high up on the south-eastern corner of the upper castle could have originally belonged. The northern walls of this palace are under the ground level now. Due to the lack of larger excavations we still do not know if there are different periods represented in the upper castle.

During the archaeological investigations it became clear that in many cases the rock surface has not been carved but the large projecting rocks had been built in to the castle walls. Another interesting feature of the 13-14<sup>th</sup>-C upper castle is that it could be reached from the level of the latter lower castle by stairs leading up to it through a tunnel cut into the steep rock. Down in the lower castle, near the entrance passage a gateway was built to strengthen it by carved out two rectangular walls (with an opening) from the rock



1. Aerial view of Sirok Castle from south-east ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

standing in its place, while the third and fourth walls were built of stone – these were later pulled down. Similar tunnels with carved steps can be seen in Drégely Castle (Nógrád County) from different periods.

It was in 1562, when the lower castle with pentagonal bastions was built by Kristóf Ország. It is interesting, that in the western walls of the lower fortress Romanesque fragments of cornices were built in. These pieces are dated to 13<sup>th</sup> C and had belonged to a church not far from the castle. Actually, these pentagonal bastions, which looked like modern Italian fortifications, were much different from them. What was missing? These bastions did not form a system, as due to the shape of the plateau the ground-plan of the lower castle could not be symmetric, though the crenels, which were suitable only for rifles, were perfectly directed to the curtain walls, as usual. Inside wooden structures, floors, watchpaths were made; their remnants are visible on the surfaces of the walls by in form of holes.

A new gateway was built in the north-western corner of the lower castle; the walls of the old gateway were demolished, only the steep rock remained. On the façade of the new gateway the date and the builder's name was eternalized by an inscription carved into stone. Unfortunately this inscription does not exist now, but we know its text from 18-19<sup>th</sup>-C written sources: "*Magnificus Dominus Cristophorus Ország de Gut Co. Neugrad, ac S. Rom. Caes. Mttis Pincerna*". The gateway was strengthened by a drawbridge which worked like a balance, as it is proved by two excavated shafts cut into the rock. It is only the western wall of the gateway that has remained in a good state, the other one is missing.

Probably during 16<sup>th</sup> C a new house was built in the upper castle, its vaulting still exists. In one spell the old tunnel carved into the rock was enlarged by new wings of cellars. In these cellars niches were cut into the rock for keeping candles or any instruments in them. Inside a big hole is cut into the ceiling perhaps for lifting barrels. Independent of this cellar in the upper castle another cellar system was formed, where – according to the inventories – wine was stored. This cellar system had windows to the north, these windows had wooden frames. The cellars were divided by wooden walls; their traces can be still seen in the cellar walls. On the surface of a cellar wall under the ground level of the upper castle a male figure wearing Renaissance clothes is scraped into the stone.

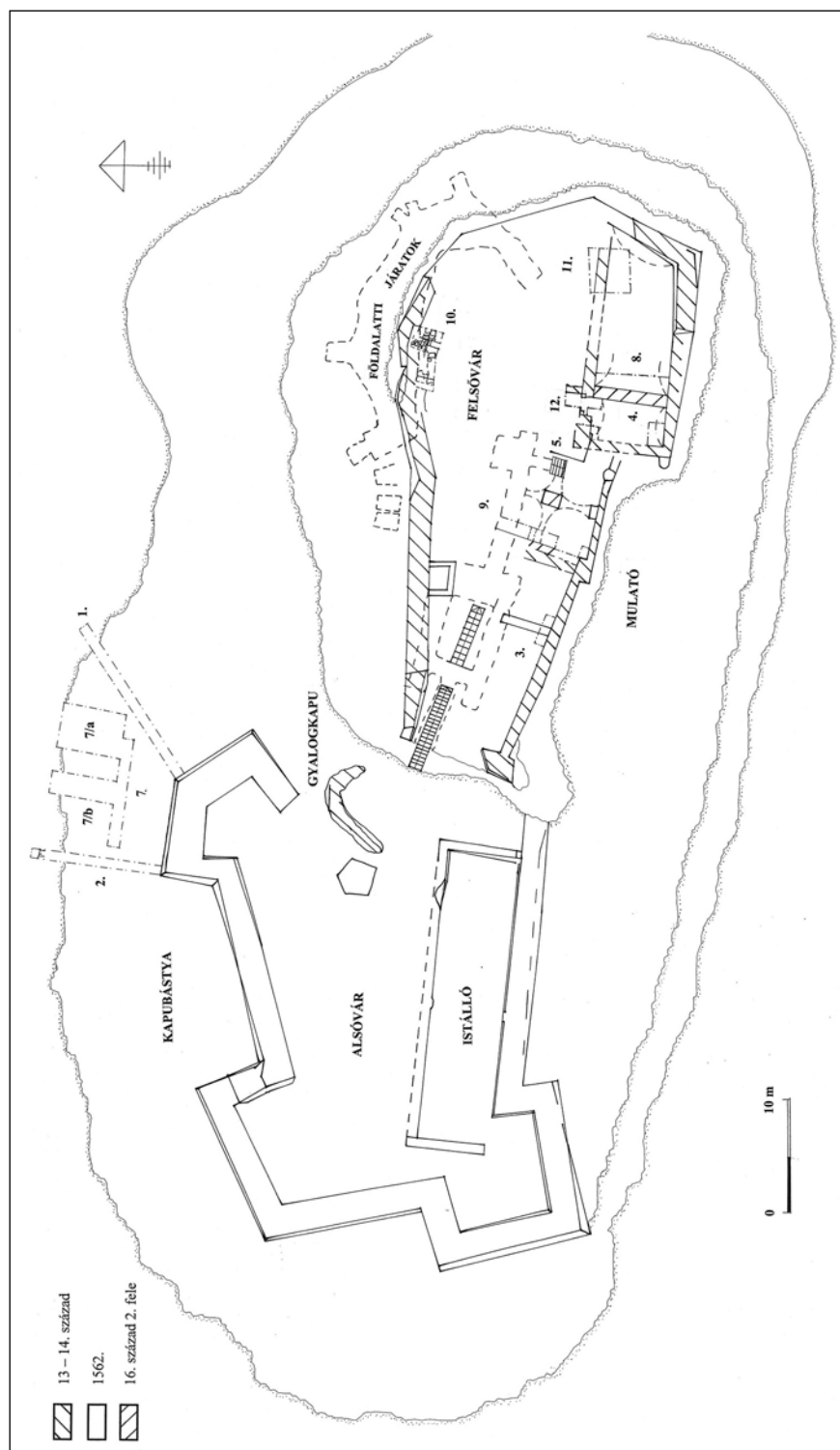
As it came to light during the excavations, at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> C or at the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> C an exterior wooden-earth fortification was also made around the bastions to the north of them (it is the area where we arrive following the path leading up to the castle). This fortification is also mentioned in the castle inventory which was made following the 1687 expelling of Ottoman guards, and was a regular way of defence in Hungarian castles. We do not know whether it was constructed by the Hungarians against the Ottoman army around 1596 or by the Turks themselves.

Different examples in connection with everyday life can be seen in Sirok Castle. As a result of the easily formed rock of the castle hill a tradition of cave-dwelling cut into the rock was common down in the village till the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even the interior – stoves, niches - were carved out of the rock there. The castle inventory helped a lot to identify further carved elements in the castle. Log structure wooden buildings stood supporting the exterior walls and bastions in the lower castle and their basement ditches were found in the rock during earlier excavations. These could be identical with the Ottoman wooden houses mentioned by the inventory. The traces of their roofs remained on the exterior surfaces of some bastions. Ovens carved in the rock of the northern ditch belonged to these houses, which, on the basis of analogies of the village dated from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, could have a built, projecting part. Similar ovens are known from Boldogkő Castle (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) mentioned in the 1682 inventory, saying that they were used for baking bread.

In Sirok on the basis of the post holes in the pavement level of the lower castle court a large size wooden building could be reconstructed which proved to be identical with one stable mentioned in the sources. Two holes with openings on the top and the sides might be identical with the two grain stores mentioned in the inventory. Above one of them – on the basis of traces on the rock – might have stood a wooden building, the other one stood next to the other stable. Although their form is not typical of grain pits, we have to agree with the view that here a new type of grain store has been found.

Concerning the niches cut high in the western rock wall of the plateau of the upper castles first we have accepted the former view that beehives were standing in them, although they are different from the known Hungarian beehive niches cut in rock walls. These were cut so high that could not be used regularly, so their role is still questioned. Anyway, when the 1687 inventory was written, eight barrels of honey was transported from the castle.

What else do we know from the above mentioned inventory about the everyday life? The weapons were rifles, gunpowder and bullets. They stored wheat and millet, shingles and iron instruments in addition. A mill and a well are also described in the inventory. The latter has been excavated in the lower castle, and although water wasn't found in it, the inventory calls it "live well", like in many cases in Hungary.



2. Ground plan of Sirok Castle

It is very interesting that the ceramic finds from the archaeological investigations contain very little Turkish material. From the upper castle we have fragments of glazed tiles of stoves dating to 16<sup>th</sup> C. Around the bastions especially Hungarian pottery from the late 17<sup>th</sup> was found.

As it has been proved by geological investigation, the stone material of Sirok castle – both in case of 13-14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-C periods – was the same as the rock in the surroundings of the village. Although the soft volcanic tuff was not the best material for building walls, it was much cheaper than carrying stone from a great distance. Now, when the reconstruction of the fortress is in question, the same volcanic tuff is planned to be the stone material of the new walls.

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MÁTYÁS BEREZ – MIHÁLY GIBER

## EGER CASTLE

### Geographic Location of the Castle

Eger, the seat of Heves County, is located in north-eastern Hungary. The Castle of Eger is one of the largest and, due to its historical role, the most important fortifications of the country. The episcopal see, which was later transformed into a post-medieval castle, described in this paper, is situated on a hill in the centre of the present day town. However the visible remains of the castle are only those of the western part of the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century fortress. Its eastern part was demolished in 1702, and its territory was densely built in later.

### Brief History of the Eger Bishopric from Its Foundation until 1526

Although the precise date of the foundation of the bishopric is debated, it belongs undoubtedly to King St. Stephen's foundations, most probably in the first third of his reign. So far as the possible early, 11-13<sup>th</sup> century fortifications are concerned, there weren't found archaeological remains and we have not written sources on them. Most of the early structures, together with the charters, must have been vanished during the Mongol invasion of 1241. The sources describing the devastation mention only the Cathedral of St. John. The first appearance of the castle is known only from 1323. The relatively small amount of the sources concerning the castle may be connected with their destruction during the Ottoman era.

The castle was besieged only few times during in Middle Ages. In 1404 it was recaptured by King Sigismund's troops from Bishop Thomas of Ludányi who attached himself to the rebels against the King. Hussites, who settled in the northern parts of Hungary in the first half of 15<sup>th</sup> century, besieged the castle in 1442 but were repelled.

The end of the Middle Ages, the turn of the 15-16<sup>th</sup> centuries was the zenith of the history of the Eger Bishopric. The bishops of the period were mighty officials of the Hungarian rulers, namely kings Matthias I. and Vladislaus II. Many of them carried out larger construction works on their residence from the incomes of the bishopric, and developed Eger into a most lavish see by the 1520s.

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History of the Castle in the 16-19<sup>th</sup> centuries

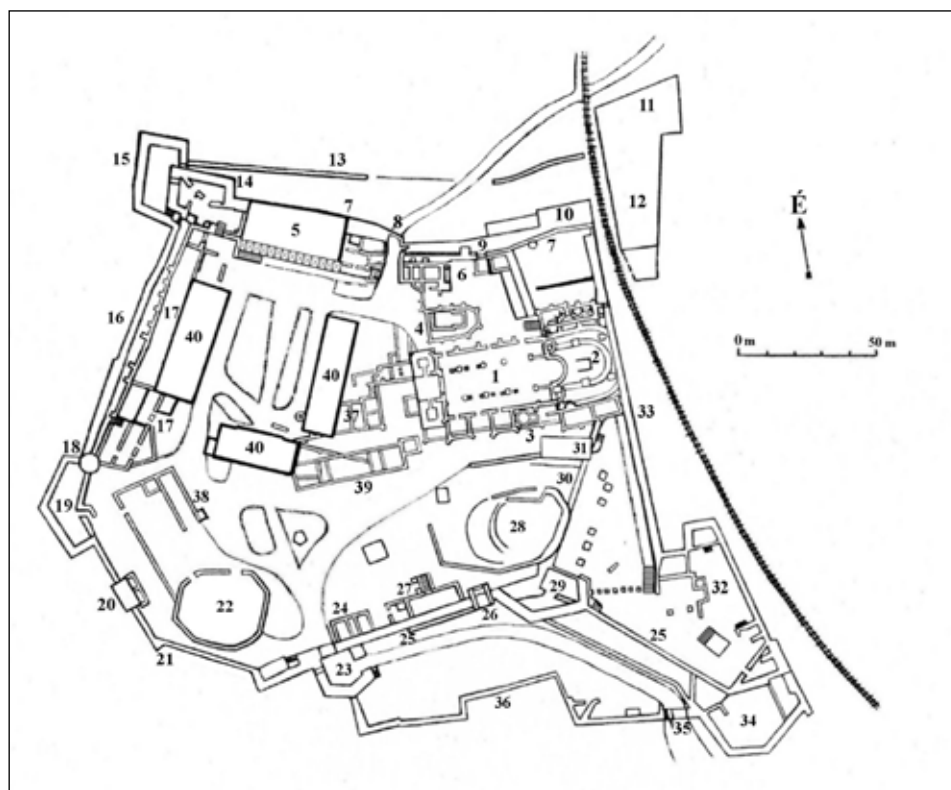
During the civil war between the followers of Ferdinand of Habsburg and John Szapolyai after the battle of Mohács (1526) Eger was granted to different bishops, dependents of the actual rulers of the territory. The Ottoman conquest of Buda (1541) and the formation of the Turkish Rule in the central territory of the Kingdom of Hungary resulted that Eger became one of the main border fortifications defending not only the neighbouring region but also the mining towns of the Upper Hungary. In 1542 the castle was given to Chancellor Peter Perényi whose castellan, Thomas Varkoch did all his best to improve the fortifications. After Perényi's death the castle became royal fortress in 1548, due to an agreement between King Ferdinand I and Nicholas Oláh Bishop of Eger. All the incomes of the castle domain were maintained by István Dobó who was stated as governor. One of the most famous sieges of the 16th century Hungarian history took place at Eger in 1552 when the Ottoman army was defeated. This victory showed the advantages of the site and proved the worth of its rebuilding. The reconstruction started immediately in 1553. For this purpose the Vienna Court Chamber and Court Council of War (Hofkriegsrat) sent several military engineers to Eger including such famous fortress-architects as Paolo Mirandola, Pietro Ferrabosco and Carlo Theti.

The transformation of the castle into an Italian system fortress was led by Ottavio Baldigara from 1569 to 1582. His work was continued by an other Italian architect, Christoforo Stella. These large-scale reconstructions of the castle according to Baldigara's plans however, due to the huge expenses, were suspended in the 1580s and were never completed.

The modernized fortress was besieged second time by Sultan Mehmed III in 1596 but, though having been partly improved, was not prepared enough for such a siege. According to the report of the Castle Survey Commission neither the three bastions of the inner castle were finished by the time of the attack nor the breastworks defending the soldiers and the cannons on the walls were ready. Defence was also largely obstructed by the quarrels between the chief castellan, Pál Nyáry and the architect of the fortification works, Claudio Cogonara. Due to all these problems the fortress was occupied by the Ottoman army.

Eger became the centre of a new Ottoman province – *vilayet*. This vilayet had four more fortifications in Heves County: two stone castles of medieval origin, Sirok and Szarvaskő, and two newly built palisade fortifications, Hatvan and Heves. These four, together with Eger, formed the main eastern defence line of Buda. The Long War of the Holy League started in 1683 after the siege of Vienna resulted in the liberation of several larger settlements including Buda, Szolnok, Hatvan and Jászberény in 1686. Eger was besieged for several months until its final capitulation on 17 December 1687.

The liberated castle was occupied by Imperial troops. The fortification had ceased to be of military value after the end of the Ottoman wars. In 1702 the Court Council of War, due to the enormous costs of its maintenance ordered the whole castle to be dismantled. However, even the demolishing of the castle was too expensive and thus only its outer parts were pulled down. The stone material of the blown up ramparts and bastions was used for building works in the city. The destruction of the outer castle completely bereft the fortress from the possibility of defence on its eastern side. Last time Eger played important strategic role during the Freedom Fight of Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi: it became one of the main fortifications of the Kuruc (Hungarian) forces. The castle was slightly



*1. Plan of Eger Castle as it is at present (showing survived and excavated buildings)*

- 1. Cathedral of St. John; 2. 14-15th C presbytery; 3. Rotunda; 4. St. Stephen's Church;*
- 5. Bishop's Palace; 6. Buildings excavated along the inner side of the northern wall; 7. Northern curtain walls of the mediaeval castle; 8. The northern Gatehouse of the present day Castle;*
- 9. The Timber Gate (Porta Lignea); 10. Alexander (Sándor) Bastion; 11. Zárkándy Bastion;*
- 12. North-eastern Bastion; 13. Northern Rampart; 14. Gaol (Tömlöc) Bastion; 15. Earth Bastion;*
- 16. Western Rampart; 17. Buildings behind the northern rampart; 18. A mediaeval tower;*
- 19. Dobó Bastion; 20. Smiths' Tower; 21. South-western Rampart; 22. South-western Cannon Hill; 23. Varkoch Gate; 24. An 18th century three-chambered house; 25. Southern Rampart;*
- 26. Hippolit Gate (Southern mediaeval gatehouse); 27. Building complex along the inner side of the southern rampart ("Great Gothic Building" and an annex with an oven); 28. South-eastern Cannon Hill (Belle Bastion); 29. Gregory (Gergely) Bastion; 30. Eastern inner wall (Eastern wall from 1540s of the inner castle); 31. Dark (Setét) Gate; 32. South-eastern Bastion;*
- 33. Eastern Rampart (Eastern wall from 1570s of the inner castle); 34. Turkish Gate Defence (Turkish Garden); 35. Lower Gate; 36. Southern Outer Rampart; 37. Governor's Palace;*
- 38. Hospital; 39. Barracks; 40. Buildings of the Castle Museum*

modified and strengthened according to French engineer, Jean de Rivière's plans but after a month-long siege it was surrendered to the Imperial troops.

Eger Castle remained in the maintenance of the Royal Treasury until 1783 when it was returned to the Bishopric. The walls and older buildings became unnecessary and were subsequently subjected to quarrying out. The decline was hastened by disrepair of several parts of the castle, which led to the collapse of long parts of the ramparts on the



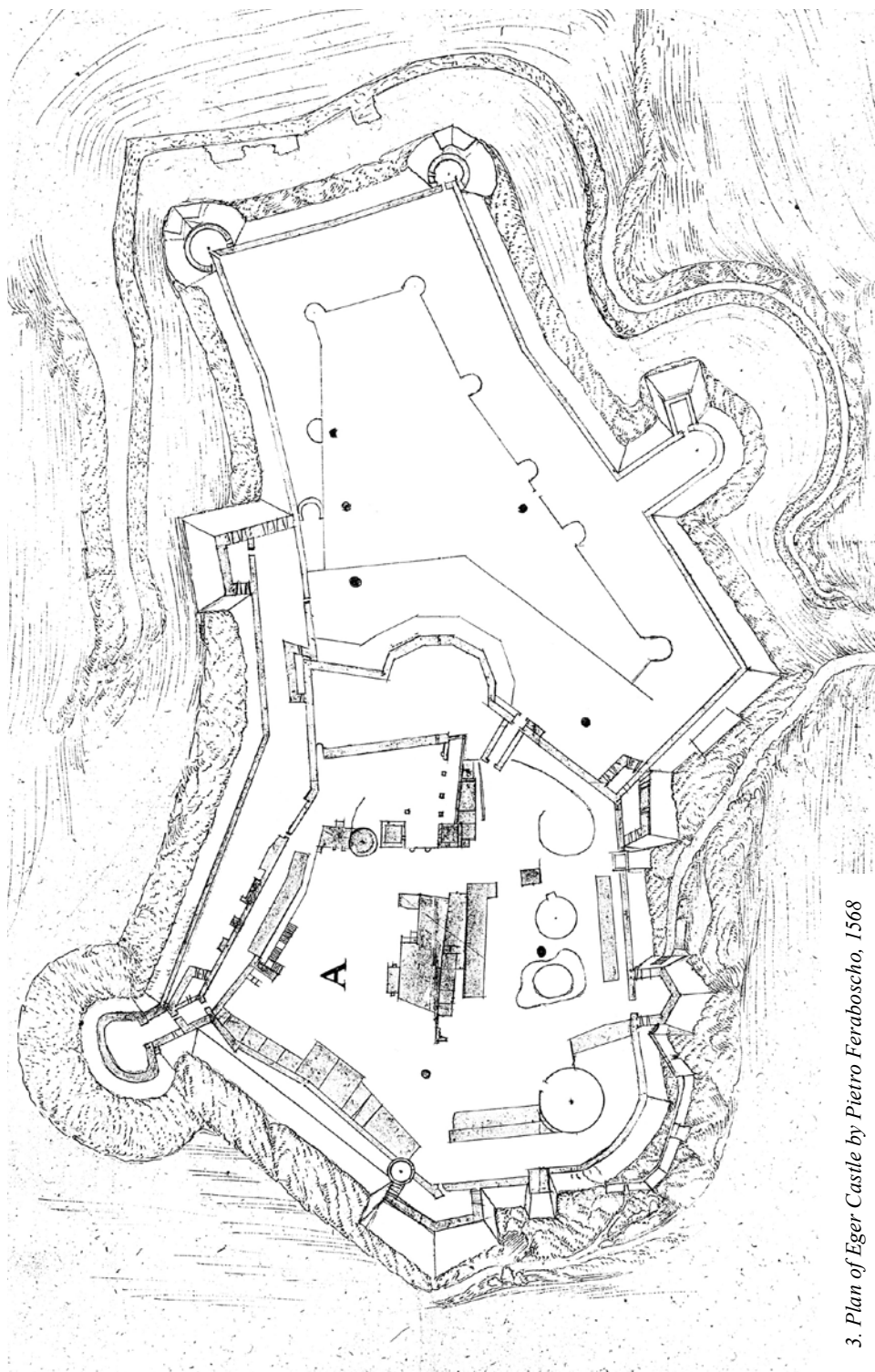
*2. Aerial view of Eger Castle*

southern and south-western side demanding human lives. The height of the walls which were found dangerous was lowered in 1803-1806 as it was suggested by József Sartory, engineer of the bishopric. This affected mainly the western, south-western walls, Dobó Bastion, South-western Cavaliere and Turkish Barbican. The Varkoch Bastion was pulled down completely. All the inner constructions except the Gothic Palace were also demolished within few years.

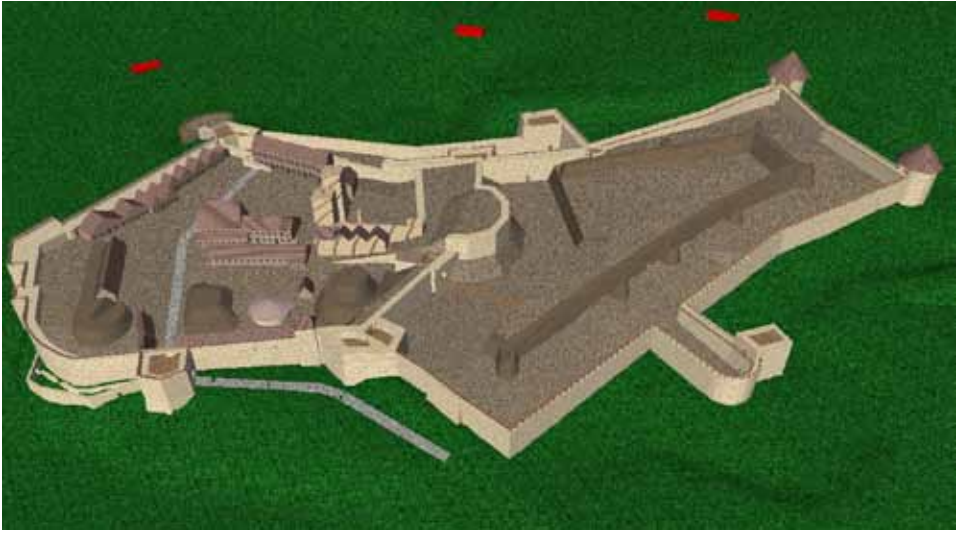
The Church passed up the castle in favour of the Treasury in 1870 and the fortress was used for military barracks. The territory of the castle was cleared of debris and new buildings were erected along the eastern, southern and western edge of the Palace Court. The Hungarian Defence Forces handed over the castle in 1957 for museum purpose.

### Archaeological Research and Monument Protection in Eger Castle

The rising interest regarding the cathedral only resulted in construction of some monuments. The first few-days-long excavations took place just in 1862 due to Imre Henszlmann's initiation and targeted the presbytery of the vanished mediaeval cathedral. These investigations were helped by Arnold Polyi's archival researches.



3. Plan of Eger Castle by Pietro Feraboscho, 1568



4. An attempt to reconstruct Eger Castle on the base of Feraboscho's plan, 1568

In 1881 a whole book was published about the history of the castle by an amateur local historian, who collected all the knowledge accessible at that time, and summarized his own experiences. The scholarly investigations paused up to 1920s. The larger part of the complex was closed for the public.

The first systematic archaeological excavations in the castle started in 1925 on social initiative and were followed by conservation works. This investigation was led by János Lénárt and Vidor Pataki and supervised by István Möller. The survey maps and drawings were prepared by town engineer Sándor Hevesy. The archaeological excavations were continued until 1936 and uncovered most of the remains of the cathedral and casemates. These unearthed structures were partially restored.

Vidor Pataki was among the first who started researches in the archives of Hungary and different foreign countries. Although he could not finish his work, "The Life of Castle of Eger," published in 1934, served as a stable basis for other modern historical works. An another book with a collection of the historical illustrations of the fortress came out in 1938 by Zoltán Barcsay-Amant, which is still the most complete work on the topic.

The new excavations, initiated by the *Monument Protection Inspectorate*, reorganised after the Second World War, started in 1957 after the castle was transmitted to the museum. The leader of these investigations from the next year became Károly Kozák who, having stable financial background, also organised a permanent archaeological team in the castle.

The first main result was the reconstruction of the Gothic Bishop's Palace, which was uncovered by Károly Kozák; the reconstruction plans were made by Mihály Détshy. The building was finished in 1963 and gave place for the museum exhibitions. The renovation of the main mediaeval building of the castle was accompanied by the rearrangement and resettling of its closest neighbourhood, namely in the northern bailey, Gaol Bastion and Earthen Bastion, and all these works were finished by 1963. The eastern end of the Gothic Palace was excavated only in the last year of the works, when the small house built above it was pulled down.

The excavation and restoration works, which started in 1957, targeted several sites of the fortification. The cathedral, being the other significant building of the castle, was re-excavated, and the remains were built up. The Hippolit Gate, wedged into the rampart between the Varkoch Gate and Gergely Bastion, was excavated in 1959 and the works brought to light an extraordinary fresco, showing the coat of arms of its builder, Bishop Hyppolit d'Este. The Varkoch Gate was uncovered and restored in the next stage of the works, in 1960.

In the mid 1960s the highest point of the castle, the Szép (Belle) Bastion, was reconstructed after previous excavations in connection with the renovation of the burial site of the famous Hungarian writer Géza Gárdonyi (author of the *Stars of Eger*). Unfortunately this work has not been finished since then. The South-western Bastion and its vicinity were rearranged in 1966-1967. The main reconstruction works of the 1970s concentrated to the Setét (Dark) Gate and the territory south of it, where some burials were found probably from the Arpadian age. The renovation of the building was finished in 1976. In 1975 the Dobó Bastion was planned to be reconstructed but the collapse of its southern wall balked the works. The authorities immediately decided to pull down the remaining stubs of the walls. Between 1986 and 1990 only protection works were continued in the castle. The Dobó Bastion was rebuilt along with the gothic Round Tower. The reconstruction of the South-western Cavaliere and the Kovács (Smith's) Bastion was also finished. During the last few years the western part of the South-western Bastion with the Main Gate, the western and the northern ramparts and the walls of the cathedral underwent serious restoration and renovation. At the same time the rebuilding of the Dobó Bastion was also completed.

The most important archaeological research of the last years was the excavation of a rotund located beside the southern wall of the cathedral. Its remains were discovered yet during Károly Kozák's investigations in 1970s but only the year of Millicentenary gave the occasion for complete excavation led by László Fodor.

### Buildings of the Medieval Episcopal See of Eger

The topography of the mediaeval Eger Castle and its site in the Árpadian Ages is known very superficially. The written sources name only some particular buildings only from the later Middle Ages. The late medieval castle is known much better from the extensive excavations. Thus it is getting clearer that in the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century the castle was twice as extensive eastwards as it is today. The 16<sup>th</sup> century outer castle was formed from this eastern part and divided the whole architectural complex in two almost equal parts. This outer part was wiped away in 1702. No locations of the buildings of the former outer castle are known.

#### *The Cathedral of St. John*

There are no data at all about the earliest cathedral of Eger which might have been built about the time of the foundation of the bishopric. There are only some secondarily built in Romanesque carved stones that may be connected to this phase.

The earliest known remain of the building activity is the Rotunda with a crescent shaped apse beside the south-eastern corner of the cathedral, on the site of a late medieval chapel,

and some walls of a longitudinal structure beneath the row of the late medieval chapels, west of the Rotunda. The architectural and functional relationship between the Rotunda, the longitudinal building and the supposed early cathedral is very much questionable.

The earliest known cathedral building can be dated to 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was a three-aisled 47 m long and 24 m wide construction with semicircular apses, built of large stone blocks. This was modified by the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> or about early 13<sup>th</sup> century but the extent of the alteration is unknown. According to the tradition King Emeric was buried in the cathedral in 1204 and probably his son, Ladislaus III in 1206, too.

The building must have suffered serious damages during the Mongol invasion in 1241 and was completely rebuilt in the second half of 13<sup>th</sup> century. The alteration was accompanied by rearranging the pillars and making new vaultings. Most probably two new entrances were opened in the northern and southern walls of the cathedral in this phase keeping, however, the earlier, western doorway. The apses of the presbyteries were not changed but a new sacristy chapel was built on the north-eastern corner. Two towers were erected before the western façade which incorporated a new large porch and main gates. After receiving Papal indulgence permission in 1347 a new three-aisled cathedral was started with ambulatory and a ring of chapels east of the 12<sup>th</sup> century presbytery. This enlargement resulted in a bit wider but half as long a building as the earlier cathedral had been; the floor level was higher. The construction was finished about the last quarter of 14<sup>th</sup> century.

By the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century another greater modification works had been started which might have been finished in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. During this work the 14<sup>th</sup> century presbytery was almost completely removed and a new one was erected on its site, just slightly narrower and shorter than the former one, but had very different structure: it was a three-aisled hall church with richly profiled pillars and hall ambulatory. The polygonal presbytery was enlarged by a ring of chapels, central of which were opened toward the hall. The rectangular chapels on both sides of the presbytery had lavishly decorated portals. Double spiral staircases lead to the gallery from the back, western corner of the closed chapels. As a result of the 16<sup>th</sup> century fortification works the largest part of the late mediaeval alterations vanished without a trace, leaving only four pillars (2.4×2.4 m large, 7 m from each other) of the hall part, four chapels, two on each side of the cathedral, and the western walls of two chapels. The mentioned pillars and the also survived three original and one reconstructed piers hold the vaults of the 13 m wide nave and 6 m wide ambulatory. The precise architectural connection between the earlier western part of the cathedral and the 15-16<sup>th</sup> century chancels is yet unknown.

During 15-16<sup>th</sup> century five other chapels were built along the southern wall of the cathedral on the site of the earlier Rotunda and longitudinal building. Their common characteristic is that – except the westernmost one – their northern foundations are the southern buttresses of the cathedral.

### *St. Stephen's Church*

The St. Stephen's church was located only a few meters northward of the cathedral. It was excavated first time in the late 1930s and then in 1984. Its remains were covered in and are not visible.

There are two main, separable phases in the building history of the church. The Romanesque building must have been stood already in the first half of 13<sup>th</sup> century. This



5. Aerial view of Eger Castle from South ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

had a rectangular nave and straight chevet. Its main portal opened in the western wall. The church had a flat ceiling and tile floor; its walls were built of broad-stones. The late medieval Gothic building was a much larger vaulted hall church with polygonal presbytery. Its floor level was significantly higher than that of the predecessor. Its main doorway also opened on the western façade. Two buttress-like foundation walls were excavated in the south-western and north-western corners of the church, which might have supported a choir. The church bearing the rank of Provostry is mentioned by the written sources between 1346 and 1514. It must have been destroyed in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *St. Peter's Church*

St. Peter's was the third church of the mediaeval castle of Eger. It is mentioned in several 14-16<sup>th</sup> century charters but the precise date of its destruction is unknown. Even its location and ground plan are dubious, however, according to the sources, it could have been only situated to the eastern part of the mediaeval castle.

#### *The Bishop's Palace*

The only medieval building in the castle is the Gothic Palace, extensively rebuilt in the later centuries. Its building history can be divided to two main periods according to the data from the 1475 charter of Bishop John Beckensloer.

The pre-1475 building must have already existed in 15<sup>th</sup> century but it might have been built even earlier, in 14<sup>th</sup> century. Five ground floor chambers are known inside the building, four of which had doorways with semicircular lintels and two of them had small,



6. Aerial view of Eger Castle from South ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

stone-framed windows. The fifth one, the so-called vaulted chamber with a central pillar, had two similar windows. Some partition walls of the buildings have survived, others are known only from excavations. No data are available about the upper storey.

It is still questionable if the building described above or its part had already been the bishop's palace before 1475 and thus probably can be identified with the palace mentioned several times in the written sources since 1390. It is also probable that this "palace" had annexes eastward of it.

The late mediaeval palace was formed by modifying the pre-1475 building. The main change was a cross-vaulted archway on the ground floor. This corridor consisted of 19 bays. Fourteen western bays were reconstructed and can be seen today, the pillars of the last five were excavated along the missing eastern part of the palace. During the late 15<sup>th</sup> century alteration new shouldered doors with small windows above were built in the southern wall of the earlier building and two simpler stone-framed windows were installed beside them. All the earlier openings were walled up. The new doors were situated in the axis of each of the newly arranged chambers of the modified palace in accordance with the bays of the archway. Due to this, some of the earlier partition walls, which were not suitable for this arrangement, were removed and substituted by new ones, shifted east- or westwards. These new walls served as springers of the barrel vaults at the same time and survived until present day. The height of the new partition walls did not exceeded the level of the ceiling of the ground floor.

The first floor of the palace was more extensively modified throughout the later centuries and thus only the eastern part of its southern wall can be considered as medieval. Its medieval origin is proved by two partly reconstructed and one partially survived gothic cross-mullioned windows and the existence of the fourth one on the

site of the present-day, similarly reconstructed renaissance doorway. The springer on the top of this wall, which seemingly hold the vaults of the archway of the first floor and which was graved almost to the plain of the wall is most probably contemporary with the wall itself.

There are no survived traces of the inner arrangement of the first floor. However, the ground floor partition walls might have carried some kind of similar structure above. A wooden staircase led to the upper archway and to the chambers from the courtyard, on the south-western corner of the palace, on the site of the modern staircase. This is clearly identifiable from the 16<sup>th</sup> century survey plans.

The block of the medieval palace extended northward up to the inner walls of the castle creating a possible defence line on the top of the wall. The western end of the building has survived relatively intact. It must have been cellared already before the 1475 modification. The eastern part of the palace originally was significantly longer and continued along the inner walls of the castle. Its interior arrangement is known only from the excavations. This eastern part of the palace consisted of a large representative chamber, twice as big as the present-day eastern room. There is an octagonal pillar built in the eastern wall of the modern palace. It must have been originally the central pillar of the large chamber holding the vaults. A furnace of a hypocaust was excavated in 1981-82 in the north-eastern corner of the room. The whole chamber, on the basis of the profiles of the frames of the partially survived windows, can be dated before 1475. The existing vaulting and the eastern wall were built in 16-18<sup>th</sup> century.

The eastern end of the palace is still questionable. All the remains uncovered so far show that the palace and some other buildings, excavated along the northern wall of the castle, were connected already in the Middle Ages. This, however, can be proved only by another archaeological research on the site of the modern road leading toward the Northern Gate.

#### *Buildings Excavated along the Inner Side of the Northern Wall of the Castle*

A road leading toward the 19<sup>th</sup> century Northern Gate and a warehouse are located on this territory (today a parking place). From the many remains excavated since 1935 nothing is shown, all were filled up.

On the eastern part of the site some walls of an undatable house were excavated. Due to the limited excavations the whole ground plan of the building is not known. This house was situated exactly on the inner side of the medieval Northern Gate, the *Porta Ligneae*, thus these two buildings could not function at the same time. Evaluating the archaeological documentation it is likely that the gate was opened after the demolishing of the house, probably in 15<sup>th</sup> century.

A two storey house – known only from the photos made during the 1935 excavations – was unearthed on the western part of the territory (on the site of the present parking place). The walls of the building were made of broad-stones. The building had a west-eastern and a south-northern wing. The dating of its construction is unknown but in the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was rebuilt. Its timber ceilings were removed and the ground floor was filled up. A partition wall was built in the west-eastern wing with a well preserved gothic door, which made the dating of the reconstruction possible. Some windows with sediles, found in the 1980s in the innermost and thus the earliest layer of the northern wall of the castle, probably belonged to the upper storey of the building.

The abovementioned building, according to the written sources, belonged to the Chapter. Although a 1560 source and a ground plan from 1711 indicate this building, the 16<sup>th</sup> century survey maps do not mark it and depict only another building to the south.

### *Buildings Excavated along the Inner Side of the Southern Wall of the Castle*

The earliest building of the site is a construction datable to the Arpadian age, which was excavated in an 18<sup>th</sup> century house, beside the inner wall of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Varkoch Gate. According to the finds it must have been a smithy.

A "large Gothic building" was uncovered near the medieval southern Hippolit Gate between 1969 and 1971. The building is 18x7 m large; its walls are 1.3 m thick. Only the cellar level survived and no information is available regarding its upper parts or appearance. The building was attached to the southern castle wall and had no own southern wall. The eastern and western walls of the cellar were overlaid by the 16<sup>th</sup> century inner layer of the castle wall. The probable dating of the house is the period of the 14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

A smaller, 7x8 m annex was attached west of the house. Its entrance was in the middle of the western wall. A stone oven was built in the north-eastern corner of this annex. The precise function of the complex is unknown. It was used as a storehouse and workshop as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### The Medieval Defence System of the Castle

The castle itself is not mentioned by the written sources before 14<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest sources do not give any hint concerning either the size or the territory of the castle. It is also questionable if the mentioned castle can be identified with the earliest survived medieval fortifications on the site. The remained walls had already existed by the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century because they were used for building the 16<sup>th</sup> century fortress. Nowadays only the western part of the medieval castle can be investigated.

The northern inner wall can be divided into two parts by the modern Northern Gate. The whole length of the wall from the rail track to the Gaol Bastion is 130 m. There is a strange break in the wall west of the modern gate. It may be a trace of an earlier fortification, probably a tower. Only an excavation could give an answer to this question. There are several buttresses in the medieval layer of the castle wall; all the buttresses have shafts inside, the function of which is unknown. There is a reconstructed staircase tower by the inner side of the eastern section of the wall. This staircase led to the battlements.

The Gaol Tower, mentioned already in 1508, was situated on the joining of the northern and western castle walls. The Gaol Bastion was constructed with the modification of the earlier tower in the mid or late 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are still many questions concerning the building history of the tower, especially regarding its relation with the mediaeval castle walls. The known remains clearly show that there were quite many building phases at this part of the castle, most probably already in the Middle Ages.

Another massive medieval tower was unearthed in the 1960s on the southern part of the court of the Gaol Bastion just in front of the western façade of the Bishop's Palace. The tower had 8x9 m inner space and 2.4 m thick walls. Its function and building history is quite obscure. It must have been pulled down in the time of the erection of the Bishop's Palace.



7. Aerial view of Eger Castle from West ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

The medieval western wall is the 1.5-1.8 m thick innermost layer of a 95 m long section of the present day ramparts, supported with buttresses, and leads from the southern side of Gaol Bastion to the reconstructed Round Tower.

The south-western wall is also considered as medieval. A reconstructed rectangular tower, situated in the middle of the wall, may be identified as Smiths' Tower. This is also of medieval origin and must have been at least two storey higher than today. The eastern straight section of the south-western castle wall is a modern reconstruction, since the original, slightly bended collapsed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The southern wall of the castle is in the best condition due to several monument protection works carried out on it. The modern age dismantling did not affect this part too much. Its present day average height is about 10 m, the medieval wall layer is 1.4-1.5 m thick and approximately 211 m long. Several Arpadian age features were excavated on a terrace between the Hippolit Gate and the 17<sup>th</sup> century Turkish Garden outside the wall, including a smithy and pottery along a contemporary road. The southern wall cuts these earlier features.

The medieval castle, according to the late mediaeval sources, had three gates. The northern one, known as *Porta Ligneae* (Timber Gate) is the only, in which case the sources can be compared with the archaeological data. This gate is mentioned in the 1508 survey as being beside the St. Stephen's church. There is no information about its appearance but its name probably concerns its building material. Some slight traces can be visible near the north-eastern corner of the modern lapidarium. It was 2.5 m wide.

The Southern Gate was located in the middle of the southern castle wall. It received its present name (Hippolit Gate) after the excavations when the remains of a painted coat of



8. Aerial view of Eger Castle from North-west ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

arms of Bishop Hippolit d'Este (1497-1520) were discovered under the post mediaeval wall. The gate is  $7.9 \times 7.9$  m large; the gateway is 3.5 m wide and has two sediles with segmental lintels on both sides. According to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century surveys the Gatehouse was two storey higher than today and must have been built simultaneously with the wall. The gateway was walled up not later than in 1542 in connection with construction of the Varkoch Gate but it was used as a tower for several centuries.

The third gate of the late medieval castle was the Old Gate also known from the written sources but have not been localised because of its position on the completely vanished eastern wall of the castle.

There are two other gates mentioned in the 1508 survey with the Timber Gate. The identification of *Porta Parva* (Small Gate) with the Hippolit Gate and *Porta Magna* (Great Gate) with the Old Gate is questionable because the source gives no guidelines for their localisation.

### Questions Concerning the Other Buildings of the Castle

Despite of the decades-long excavations and their serious results there are still many questions remained unsolved. There is a building block behind the western wall and the so-called Governor's Palace west of the cathedral; its dating to the Middle Ages is possible but not fully certified yet.

Other buildings must also have stood within the castle walls in the Middle Ages. Their traces were found in 1985-86 during the construction of public utilities. There are also

semi-buried remains of some buildings between the western towers of the cathedral, the Governor's Palace and the storehouse of the museum. Their arrangement is still unclear, only their identification with early bishopric buildings seems to be possible. Most probably they had some kind of connection with the earlier cathedral because the 14<sup>th</sup> century towers of the cathedral and the porch are situated above the eastern end of these remains.

### Other Buildings of the Medieval Castle

Amongst the "other buildings" the wells should be mentioned which can be identified with those shown on the 16<sup>th</sup> century survey maps. There is a 15<sup>th</sup> century cistern excavated beside the south-eastern corner of the Museum building. The medieval road surface, found in 1985-86 between the Varkoch Gate and the main building, belongs to this complex, too. Finally there is an other noteworthy, special feature of the castle, the so-called and approximately 10 m deep *tenth cellar*, which consists several branches and chambers. This carved cellar incorporates natural caverns of the rock. Its mediaeval origin is very likely but all the excavations produced only post medieval finds.

### Buildings and Topography of Eger Castle in the 16-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

#### *The Gergely Bastion*

The irregular, pentagonal bastion was built in the south-eastern corner of the inner castle according to the plans of Castellan Gergely Bornemissza in 1553-55. The bastion is divided by the medieval south-western castle wall, which used to support the ceiling and roof. The original entrance of the bastion was on its eastern side from the vaulted corridor between the southern wall and Szép Bastion. This entrance is walled up now.

#### *The Varkoch Gate Bastion*

The construction of this bastion was started after the dividing of the castle in two parts and building of a new gate in 1542. This event was commemorated on a stone inscription, which can be seen now in the Dark Gate. Many carved stones from the presbytery of the cathedral damaged by fire and then pulled down were built in the walls of the bastion. The pentagonal bastion can be seen first on the Paolo Mirandola's and Ferabosco's plans. These plans depicted the ground level of the construction showing a large gateway on the eastern and a smaller on the western side, and embrasures on the northern and southern sides. The bastion was strengthened in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, its ground floor was barrel-vaulted, and the upper part was roofed with shingles. This building, with a small clock-tower, is shown on Siebmacher's etching. The bastion was demolished in 1804-6. All that remained are the 6.5 m high ground walls, protruding for 15 m from the castle walls. Its width is 19.5 m.

#### *The Dobó Bastion*

This bastion was built on the order of Castellan István Dobó in 1549-52 of the stones of the late medieval presbytery of the cathedral and its towers. This bastion defended the

western side of the castle with the Gaol and Earthen Bastions. The today's building is a reconstruction. The original bastion was built in front of the south-western and western corner of the castle wall and was a 20 m high, Italian system pentagonal structure. The northern wall of the bastion incorporated the mediaeval corner tower. According to the 16<sup>th</sup> century maps the entrance was on the corner of the back walls. Originally the bastion had vaulted ground casemates, which collapsed already in 17<sup>th</sup> century. The remains of the construction were finally destroyed in 1976 after the larger part of the bastion fell out and became dangerous.

### *The Gaol Bastion*

The rectangular bastion is a medieval tower in its core, which was first enlarged by a triangular fortification on the north-eastern side about 1542-48. Its function was the defence the northern bailey together with the Sándor Bastion, projected by Alessandro Vedani. This fact suggests that both these bastions were planned by the same engineer, namely Vedani. The construction was finished in 1569-72 according to Baldigara's drafts. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century it was in disrepair, its vaults fell in and remains were filled up.

The medieval Gaol Tower was incorporated into this bastion keeping only its north-western and south-western walls. The north-eastern wall is survived in ruinous condition inside the bastion. The south-eastern wall was removed and substituted by an outer one in 1542-48, which divides the bastion in three parts: northern and southern bastions and bastion yard.

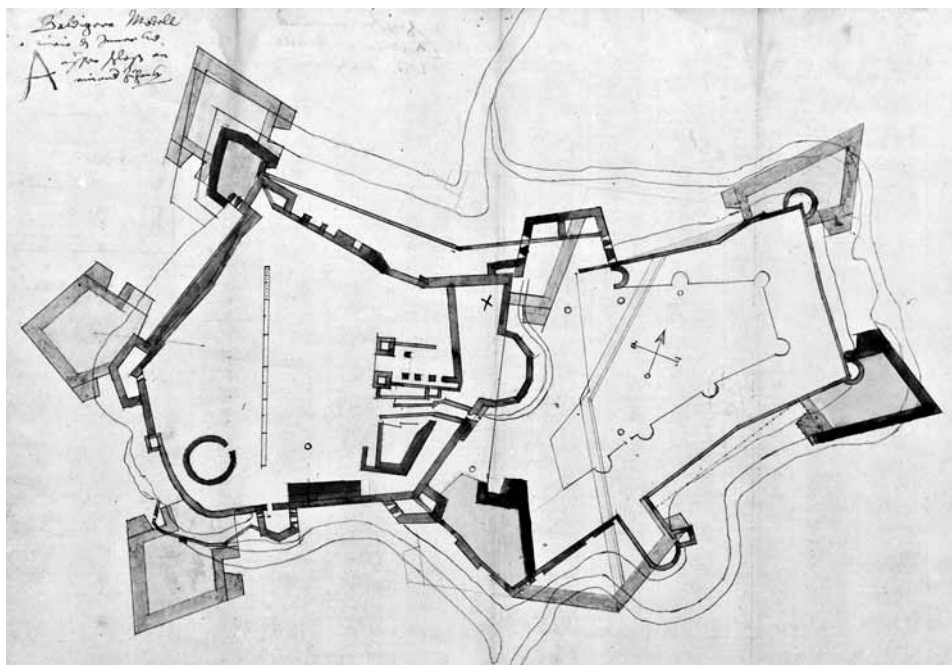
### *Earthen Bastion*

The original earthwork was constructed in the second quarter of 16<sup>th</sup> century on the north-western corner of the castle. On Ferrabosco's sketch from 1568 this approximately oval structure was connected with the Gaol Bastion by a "stone neck". The stone bastion was built according to Baldigara's plans in 1569-72 and was surrounded by a dyke. The casemates collapsed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its upper walls were pulled down later.

The stone bastion was trapezoid in plan and was built overlapping the Gaol Bastion from its western side. Originally the Earthen Bastion, which kept its name even after its complete reconstruction, was two storeys high and risen above the outer earthworks by at least 4 m.

### *The Northern Rampart and Bailey*

The rampart was created during the building activity of Péter Perényi between 1542 and 1548 enclosing a bailey. This ended at the Gaol Bastion on the western side and at a corner beside the Sándor Bastion on the eastern side. The mentioned corner was incorporated into the Zárkándy Bastion in 1566. The eastern end of the structure was broken through during the construction of the railway in 1906, and the whole bailey was gradually filled up with debris from the castle. The original level of the 150 m long bailey was reconstructed only on the western side, near the Gaol Bastion.



9. Ottavio Baldigara's Plan 'A' to reinforcement of Eger Castle, 1572

### *The Sándor Bastion*

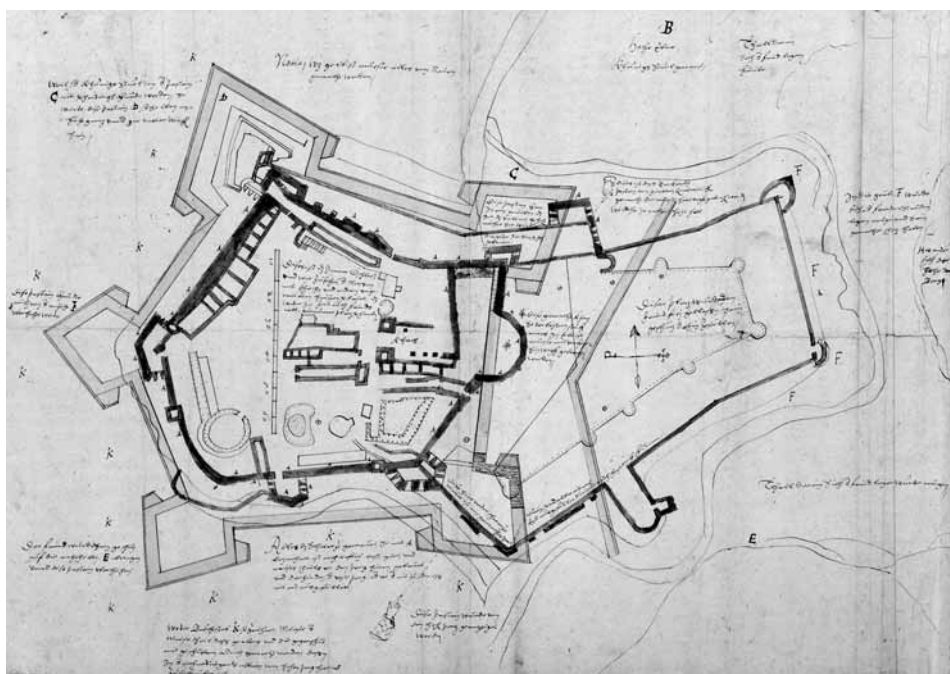
The trapezoid bastion was built after the dividing the castle in two parts in 1542-48 on the north-eastern corner of the inner castle. The engineer of the bastion was Alessandro Vedani, Péter Perényi's Italian master mason. According to Baldigara's plans it should have been connected with the north-eastern Bastion but only the finished eastern part of the last was attached to the Alexander Bastion. Originally it might have been two storeys high. Its eastern half was demolished by the railway construction in 1906.

### *The Zárkándy Bastion*

The trapezoid bastion was built by the order of castellan Pál Zárkándy in 1556. After the construction of the North-eastern Bastion, according to Baldigara's plans, it became a part of the inner castle. This bastion must have been modified when Baldigara's bastion was attached.

### *The Eastern Rampart of the Inner Castle of 1540*

The rampart was initiated by Péter Perényi and was built under the Vedani's guidance in 1542-1548. It divided the mediaeval fortification in two parts, each of which was intended to be well defendable by its own. The northern, approximately 40 m long part of the rampart led from the presbytery of the cathedral (burnt down in 1542) to the north-



10. Ottavio Baldigara's Plan 'C' to reinforcement of Eger Castle, 1572

ern inner wall of the castle. This link of two walls was strengthened by the Alexander Bastion. The southern, 70 m long section of the wall led from the polygon of the presbytery to the southern inner wall.

### *The Dark Gate*

The gate opened on the southern section of the eastern wall connecting the inner and the outer parts of the castle and originally was called *Porta Media* (Middle Gate). It received its present day name somewhat later. In 1561 it was modified according to Paolo Mirandola's plans.

The gatehouse was almost completely destroyed in 1790 but partially reconstructed in 1960s. The inner façade of the gatehouse, decorated with Ionic columns, was built in the 1830s.

### *The South-eastern Cavaliere (Calvary Hill, Szép Bastion)*

The Cavaliere was built of earth got from the ditch dug between the two new parts of the fortification, after the division of the castle, from 1542. Situated on the south-eastern corner of the castle it must have been modified first after the construction of the Dark Gate, and again by Baldigara in the 1570s. On the plans it is shown as a trapezoid structure with breastworks, closed by the wall of the Dark Gate on the northern side. The three Calvary crosses were erected on its top in 1846.



*11. An attempt to reconstruct Eger Castle on the base of Baldigara's plans, 1572*

### The Fortifications of Baldigara

The fortifications of Baldigara, built in front of the former eastern castle wall, were constructed from the eastern curtain wall, the north-eastern Orilloned Half-Bastion (never completed) with the attached Zárkándy Bastion, the South-eastern Orilloned Bastion with the attached southern curtain wall and the earthworks behind them, containing a system of communication routes and galleries.

The eastern curtain wall (the eastern castle wall) runs straight and some 100 meters long on the western side of the fosse, which divides the two former castle-parts. In its substructure, under the level of the bottom of the fosse, a mine detecting corridor was built with barrel-vaulting. The inner side of the southern part of the wall is supported by buttresses and earthworks. The northern part of the wall, which includes the earlier eastern wall as well, is 5 meters higher than the southern one.

The North-eastern Orilloned Half-Bastion abuts to the northern end of the eastern castle wall and because its northern half was not built, the northern end of its eastern part became attached to the Zárkándy Bastion. Today the bastion stands separately from the castle, because a part of it, which once gave place for the artillery casemates, had been destroyed during the railway construction in 1906. Its remaining enceinte walls are ruinous. The mine detecting corridor of the eastern curtain wall continues in the lower part of the enceinte walls.

The South-eastern Orilloned Bastion at the southern end of the curtain wall has been completed and survived. Its northern and eastern walls have been built on the castle hill, some 15-20 m higher than the southern and western ones, which begin at the base of the hill, so the inner terrain level in the eastern part of the bastion is 14-17 m higher than that of the southern part. The two parts of the bastion are separated from each other nearly diagonally as a revetment by the south-western wall of the former outer castle to which the western part of the southern wall of the former outer castle joins at right angles.

Beside the curtain wall, protected by the Orillons, stepwise one above the other, there are artillery casemates with two embrasures each. The spandrels of the bastion



*12. Georg Houfnagel's view of Eger Castle from South, 1588*

are levelled with the curtain walls. The orillon covers only the embrasures of the lower casemate, those of the upper one are defended by the end of the spandrel.

The lower castle gate (carriage and foot entrances; the last left to the first) opens right in the middle of the southern spandrel. The notched opening of the foot entrance together with the thimble-like profile of the base of a survived rusticated pillar make probable that the gate was closed by a pont-levis.

The southern curtain wall (the southern outer castle wall) runs westwards from the south-western corner of the bastion to the Varkoch Gate and is built to the cut off rocky base of the castle hill. The height of the curtain wall was similar to that of the southern wall of the Orillon Bastion and forms a Zwinger with the southern inner castle wall. The artillery casemate, planned behind the south-western orillon, was never built.

The (mine detecting?) corridor of the eastern curtain wall continues in the enceinte walls of the South-eastern Orillon Bastion. From the southern side of the Dark Gate a passageway makes connection with the caserma rooms on two levels. The rooms have been built on the site of the former fosse, between the old and new eastern walls. The lower eastern room opens to the Gergely Bastion which is connected with the lower artillery casemate of the Orillon Bastion by a corridor. The ruined upper artillery casemate was reconstructed in 1928. The ventilation shafts in the walls of the corridor and the artillery casemates lead to ventilation heads on the upper terrain level.

#### Turkish Gate Defence (Turkish Garden)

The trapezoid bastion, situated in front of the southern wall of the South-eastern Bastion is the only surely Ottoman fortification in the castle. It must have been built shortly after the conquest of Eger for replacing the blown-up part of the earlier bastion and for defending the lower gate. This defence was lowered in 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Other 16-19<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings in the Castle

According to the 16<sup>th</sup> century plans three smaller buildings were along the western wall on the site of the present day buildings. The southernmost of these might have been the granary mentioned as finished in 1558. The survey mentions a bakery North of the granary and a cellared "bread-spreading" house. This latter is presumably identical with the cellar of the „gaol exhibition" of our days. The premises protruding in the middle of the row of buildings can be identified with a kitchen, a loaf distribution house („cipóosztóház") and a bakery. The first, built by István Dobó in 1550, is mentioned as „king's kitchen" by some inventories which remark that they had upper levels, too. A narrow house of five premises, marked at the northern end of the row of buildings, was probably the home of Bishop Verancsics, who took up his abode in it as Archdeacon of Szabolcs in 1550. On the upper level of the house (later simply called as „Bishop's House") a „summer palace" is mentioned by the sources; it was probably a simple loggia.

According to the 1711 survey the row of buildings falls into three groups with a narrow casemate corridor between the castle wall and them on their southern part. The present day picture gallery of two storeys (the western one of the buildings of the Castle Museum) has been built on old foundation walls on the eastern side of the site of the buildings after 1871.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century surveys lead us to believe that the north façade of the Bishop's Palace, together with the premises behind it, became completely destroyed during the 1552 siege. The restoration of the upper part of the palace presumably took place parallel with Kristóf Ungnad's building operations between 1581 and 1587. The eastern end of the palace was pulled down in the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The eastern wall, having been built at the time of the division of the castle in two parts, met the early and late Gothic chancels. The late Gothic chancel, protruding from the castle wall and filled up with earth, became a raised gun-emplacement (Chancel Bastion). During the 1552 siege the gunpowder, having been stored in the sacristy, blew up and the explosion ruined the northern part of the cathedral; following the siege only its southern part became renovated for ecclesiastical use.

The inventories from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century mention only the Chapels of the Holy Spirit and St. Michael from the southern row of side-chapels; this latter was used for the holy services until 1580. A 1757 protocol states that the southern part of the shingled church was vaulted, while its northern part had only loft without vaultings. From the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the once cathedral was used as a quarry and became completely pulled down.

So far as the two buildings are concerned, which stood in front of the main façade of the cathedral on the castle square, the northern one can be identified as the Steward's Palace (Bailiff's House/Udvarbíró-ház) – some data can be found on its building or enlargement in 1550-1552 accounts from the time of István Dobó. From the comparison of the contemporary surveys and inventories it seems that the building had two storeys, numerous annexes and a cellar under one of its premises. The entrance of the so-called „tithe cellar" have been excavated under the middle part of the eastern, single-story museum building only some years ago. The 18<sup>th</sup> century ground-plans show the building in a shorter form with four transversal gable roofs. The palace was demolished in 1810.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century ground-plans mark a longish, oblong building south of the Steward's Palace but its precise identification with the premises mentioned by the inventories seems

to be problematic. The 18th century surveys name the trace as barracks. Before 1804 the building was already demolished.

On the northern side of the redoubt running north from the South-western Cavaliere a long, parallelepiped shaped building is marked in the 16th century ground-plans which, on the basis of 18th century surveys, can be identified as the „building above the great cellar.” According to the accounts several premises have been built (or covered with roof) over the great cellar in 1555. Its today’s name – Hospital – goes back as early as the 1775-76 ground-plans which name at least a part of the building as a kind of sanitary establishment. Its barrel-vaulted cellar has been excavated and restored in 1970.

Behind the Varkoch Gate, south of its entrance, a very long and narrow building is marked in the 16th century ground-plans, which extends from east to west besides the southern castle wall almost to the Hippolit Gate, but the 18th century surveys mention only a house of three premises on its western part as officers’ quarters, built directly attached to the castle wall.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*Agria*: Annales Musei Agriensis, Az egri Dobó István Vármúzeum Évkönyve  
*Az egri vár híradója*: Eger Vára Baráti Köre kiadványa, Eger

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS OF MEDIAEVAL GYÖNGYÖSPATA

The village Gyöngyöspata is situated in the southwest part of the Mátra Mountains (Northern Hungary). Administratively it belongs to Heves County, to the Gyöngyös region. Its population is more than 2800 people, and the area of the village exceeds 6000 acres. The village was set up between the Zám and Danka streams, and its vicinity is dominated by two mounts: Várhegy ("Castle Hill") from the northeast and Kecskekő ("Goat Stone") from the west. Due to the excellent natural conditions it is not surprising that the area of the village has been populated already since the prehistoric times. For example the earliest finds found on the Várhegy belong to the Neolithic Bükk-culture. A cemetery from the Avar period was excavated in the southern part of the Várhegy in the 1960's by János Győző Szabó, and a 10<sup>th</sup>-C sabre was found at Csákberek, east of the village.

In the history of the village, however, the most important period was the Middle Ages. The following chapters will briefly outline the medieval history and archaeological monuments of Gyöngyöspata.

### History of Gyöngyöspata from the time of Hungarian Conquest until the first half of 13<sup>th</sup> C

The only written source concerning Pata from this period is a late 12<sup>th</sup>-C chronicle compiled by Anonymus, King Béla's III notary. His work, "*Gesta Hungarorum*" in its 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter contains the following information: "*Tunc dux Arpad in silva Matra dedit terram magnam Edunec et Edumenec, ubi postea Pota, nepos eorum, castrum construxit, ex quorum etiam progenie longo post tempore rex Samuel descendit, qui pro sua pietate Oba vocabatur.*"

Certainly, Gyöngyöspata is not mentioned directly in this work. This is only the first appearance of the name "*Pata*". According to this part of the chronicle, Prince Árpád granted lands to Ed and Edumen in the Mátra Mountains. Later their grandson, Pata built a castle there, and long time after one of their descendants, Samuel Aba, the denominative of the Aba Kindred acquired the Hungarian throne for a short period from 1038 to 1041.

In connection with this source György Györffy has already demonstrated that Ed and Edumen were probably Kabar chiefs who joined the Hungarian tribes at Kiev, just before the conquest. Although this theory is very questionable and no other data confirms it, it was widely accepted by Hungarian scholars. At the same time Pata as a historical person remains quite problematic. Two main theories were raised concerning Pata. According to Gy. Györffy, Pata was the husband of a Princess from the Árpád-dynasty (in this case, he must have married one of Prince Géza's daughter), and he lived at the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the theory states that King Samuel Aba was Pata's son. On the opinion of Béla Kovács, author of the other theory based on Anonymus' work, Pata, Ed's or Edumen's grandson must have lived in the third part of 10<sup>th</sup> C having no relations with the Árpáds. He neither had direct father-son relation with Samuel Aba but they were close relatives.



1. Gyöngyöspata. Aerial view of the castle and the village from east ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

It is quite obvious that we hardly have any information regarding the early medieval history of Gyöngyöspata. The only source is Anonymus but he is not too reliable, namely, he based his work upon oral traditions and personal names and toponymy of the late 12<sup>th</sup> C. The more serious problem is that Anonymus' work contains no data concerning the existence of medieval Pata County.

The theory of existence of a county with Pata as its centre was created in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> C by Ferencz Balássy and his follower, Frigyes Pesty. According to their research, there was a county called *Pata* or *Pata-Újvár*, which would have existed already before the reign of King Stephen I. and later gave the name for the archdeaconry of Pata. They stated that this county coexisted with County Heves but they merged into Heves-Újvár in 13<sup>th</sup> C. The theory was questioned first by Tivadar Botka who underlined its main mistakes, namely, the complete lack of the data concerning Pata County in the Middle Ages and thus the lack of any evidence of its existence. However, the idea of Pata County was not forgotten. László Bártfai Szabó revived the question in 1907. Examining all the arguments pro and con he resulted in that the Pata County never existed. In his work Bártfai Szabó had had three main conclusions, two of which are still valid and one has been already refuted. He once again verified that there are no written sources concerning Pata County from the Middle Ages and noted that there were not enough royal domain here what he could organise a county from. The wrong conclusion concerned the existence of castle in Pata, which fact he refused. The truth is that there are still impressive earthworks at the top of Várhegy (Castle Hill) datable exactly to this period. Anonymus most probably wrote about this object in his *Gesta* ("*Pota [...] castrum construxit*"). The debate was solved in the last few decades by János Győző Szabó who suggested a "golden middle way". According to him, Pata was a centre of a region which



3. Gyöngyöspata. The parish church from south-east

just started to be organised in a county in the 10<sup>th</sup> century but this process was suddenly stopped by unknown events in an unknown moment.

#### History of Gyöngyöspata from 13<sup>th</sup> until the end of 17<sup>th</sup> C.

It was apparent from the previous chapter that there is no exact information about early mediaeval history of Gyöngyöspata. The first authentic document concerning the village is a charter from 1234 when the whole estate was granted to master Demeter of Aba Kindred. Demeter's three grandsons inherited Pata in 1299. One of them, Demeter of Nekcse was royal treasurer (*magister tavernicorum*) during the reign of King Charles Robert of Anjou. The descendants of Demeter of Aba, the Nekcsei family possessed the village until 1403 when it was confiscated for disloyalty to the King.

In 1405 the village was granted to the Szécsényi family but by the mid 15<sup>th</sup> C passed by marriage to the Országh and Losonczy families. In the time of their possessing the place was site of an important event described by Antonio Bonfini and Wladislas provost of Eger. Hussite troops occupied and reinforced the earlier fortification of the Várhegy. They were threatening the population of the village and its neighbourhood. King Mathias I. sent his general, Sebastian of Rozgony to release the settlement but his several attempts were unsuccessful. The king in order to ease the situation of the region came to Pata himself. He brought his cannon called "Daw" to Pata. With the royal help the hussites were



2. Gyöngyöspata. The parish church from north-west

defeated and surrendered at 8 July 1460. At the same day King Mathias burnt down the fortification, and issued a charter emerging Pata from a village to a status of market town, which rights were preserved up to 1871.

In the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> C the possessions of Országh and Losonczy families were split into small portions and transferred to other families. After the Ottoman conquest of the central parts of Kingdom of Hungary Pata was also occupied after 1544. Administratively it became a “khas possession”, the Sultan’s own territory belonging to the sanjak of Hatvan and vilayet of Buda. Pata, similarly to many other villages on the border of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, suffered a lot from the double taxation, that is it was levied both by the Turk administration and the

mentioned Hungarian possessors. At the same time, the heavy burden of the local population gave very valuable information concerning the 16-17<sup>th</sup>-C history of the region in form of Hungarian and Turk assessments (latter called *defters*) preserving data about the population, families, wealth and ethnic relations of Pata. The town survived the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries without depopulation but it suffered serious losses during the Long War (or Fifteenth Years War) at the turn of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the War of the Holy League at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> C during which the occupied territories of the Kingdom of Hungary were liberated after more than 150 years. The official Hungarian possessors gained back Pata by the early 18<sup>th</sup> C and a hundred years later the town had already more than 5 possessors.

### Parish church of Virgin Mary

The parish church of Gyöngyöspata is located in the centre of the village. The building has three aisles in a pseudo basilica arrangement. The church was investigated in the 1960’s. Its building history was established basing on the results of that. In its earliest 12<sup>th</sup>-C period it had a semicircular apse and a single nave without tower. The western wall of the earliest building is still visible in the western façade of the present day church, north of the tower. As the importance of the village had risen the church was consequent-

ly enlarged by its possessors. First it was rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with adding a western tower, a chapel and a sacristy. (The chapel dedicated to St. Andrew was demolished in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> C.) In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Demeter of Nékcsé made the church rebuilt, prolonging the nave 3 metres to the east and constructing a new presbytery with straight termination. A fresco depicting the apostles and the birth of Virgin Mary remained from the time of this reconstruction behind a secondarily built in roman arch. This fresco decorated the northern wall of the new presbytery. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the church was extended again and transferred into a three-aisled building. The frescoes on the southern wall showing the scenes from Life of Jesus of the church can be connected with this period. The dating of the frescoes basing on their style can be

put to the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg. The church underwent one more alteration in 15<sup>th</sup> C most probably during the possession of the Országh and Losonczy families. In this time it gained its present day Gothic appearance: the new polygonal presbytery, tracery windows of the southern side and the southern porch. The earlier western tower was pulled down and a new one was built partially reusing its material south of the first one. The complete church was vaulted in this time. Later the building suffered almost no changes except a 18<sup>th</sup>-C enlargement when a northern aisle was added.

The western tower of the church is placed to the right of the middle-axis. Its ground floor is rectangular in plan but the upper floors are octagonal. The representative and richly decorated entrance of the tower is at the same time entrance of the church. A strange stone in form of human head is placed above the doorway. According to the local tradition it shows Pata's face. The Gothic entrance to the upper floors of the tower is on its southern side. The church also has a southern entrance dated to the early 15<sup>th</sup> C and there is a porch in front of it from the late 15<sup>th</sup> early 16<sup>th</sup> C.

Among the inventory of the church some items are worth to be mentioned. There is a chalice, made around 1500. It is 21 cm high, its diameter is 12 cm, it is hammered, moulded gilded silver. It is the oldest goldsmith work of the church. There is an early Baroque altar of St. Michael from 1653 in the southern aisle and a processional sculpture of Virgin



4. Gyöngyöspata. The parish church.  
Remains of the earliest church



5. Gyöngyöspata. The parish church.  
The door of the western tower

Mary from 18<sup>th</sup> C. Another classic style sculpture of Holy Sepulchre placed in the northern aisle was made in 19<sup>th</sup> C. The most important and most valuable object of the church is the Tree of Jesse (Fig. 7.). It is located in the presbytery behind the high altar and it shows Jesus' ancestors. It was made in the late Renaissance style of the early 17<sup>th</sup> C. Down in the middle lays Jesse, whose body a tree grows up from. On the branches of this tree are Jesus' ancestors, kings and prophets, while Mary and the Infant can be seen enthroned above them. Between the branches a painting is planted showing the birth of Virgin Mary. The tree was restored in 1878 after fire damage and it is still in that state.

### Várhegy (Castle Hill)

The two hills of Várhegy (Castle Hill) and Póc-tető rises above Gyöngyöspata, 260 meters above the sea level, 400 meters from the church. The local people do not separate Várhegy and Póc-tető, they call both just Várhegy. In contrary, the archaeology makes strict distinction between these two places. Unfortunately, there are no detailed written sources concerning these sites (Várhegy and Póc-tető) thus the main information is derived from the archaeological research.

The fact that there is some kind of fortification on the Várhegy has been known from 19<sup>th</sup> C. The first short description was made by Gyula Bartalos in 1909. Later Elemér Soós wrote a complete essay about it in 1911. In his work he tried to make a reconstruction of the former fortification. Although the essay must be treated with serious critic he still had a pioneer role in the research of the Várhegy.

The first archaeological research on the Várhegy was carried out between 1965 and 1971 by Béla Kovács. The fortification has ramparts 400 metres built along the edge of the plateau of Várhegy. The width of the ramparts is 16-17 mm including the 4.5 m wide and 1.5 metres deep ditch. The highest place of the ramparts is 3.5 m. The entrance seems to have been on the northern or north-eastern side.

The excavations could not give the precise dating of the fortification yet. According to the observations made during the research in 1960's, the ditch was prepared first. Then, 1.5-2 m away from the inner edge of the ditch a 0.8-1 m long stone wall with clay mortar

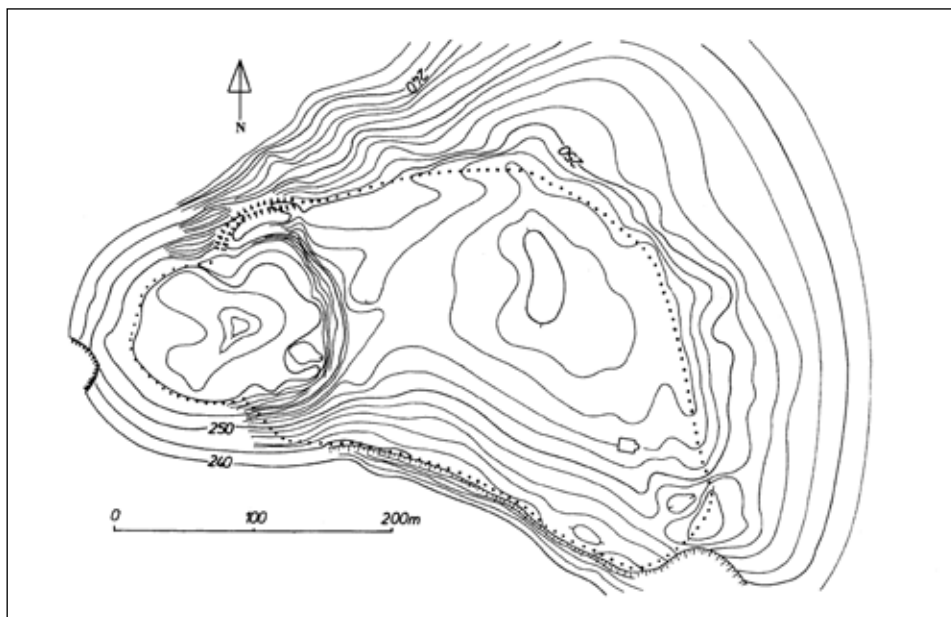


6. Gyöngyöspata. Aerial view of the castle from west ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

was built. This stone wall supported the wooden inner construction of the rampart, which was made of 2-3 m long trunks laid mostly perpendicularly but somewhere diagonally to the line of the wall. Above this “foundation” a thick (up to several metres), compact, burnt to red clay structure was excavated similar to that of many other contemporary fortifications in Hungary. It is questioned yet if this feature known in Hungarian archaeology as “red rampart” was made intentionally or just as result of heavy siege and fire. Anyway, even the way these “red ramparts” were created is unknown.

According to Béla Kovács’ explanation, vertical stone flues were built into the wooden construction of the rampart connected with horizontal stone pipes also from stone and then the whole construction buried with earth was set on fire. The heat generated during the burning burnt the rampart throughout and thus the red rampart-layer was created. This theory was accepted by the scholars for quite a long time but in the last few years it was seriously criticised because no traces of such flues or pipes were found so far during the excavations of the fortification neither at Gyöngyöspata nor at any other similar sites.

The dating of the rampart is also problematic. Béla Kovács supposed that the building method of the fortification is a 10<sup>th</sup>-C technology and accordingly he dated the rampart to the mid 10<sup>th</sup> C. On the one hand the published archaeological material (mostly ceramics) does not allow making a precise dating within 10-11<sup>th</sup> C, on the other hand the theory was based almost exclusively on the statement of Anonymus’ *Gesta Hungarorum*. Due to the problematic dating and unreliability of the *Gesta* this theory cannot be accepted. Presently the construction of the fortification basing on the archaeological finds can be dated to late 10<sup>th</sup> early 11<sup>th</sup> C.



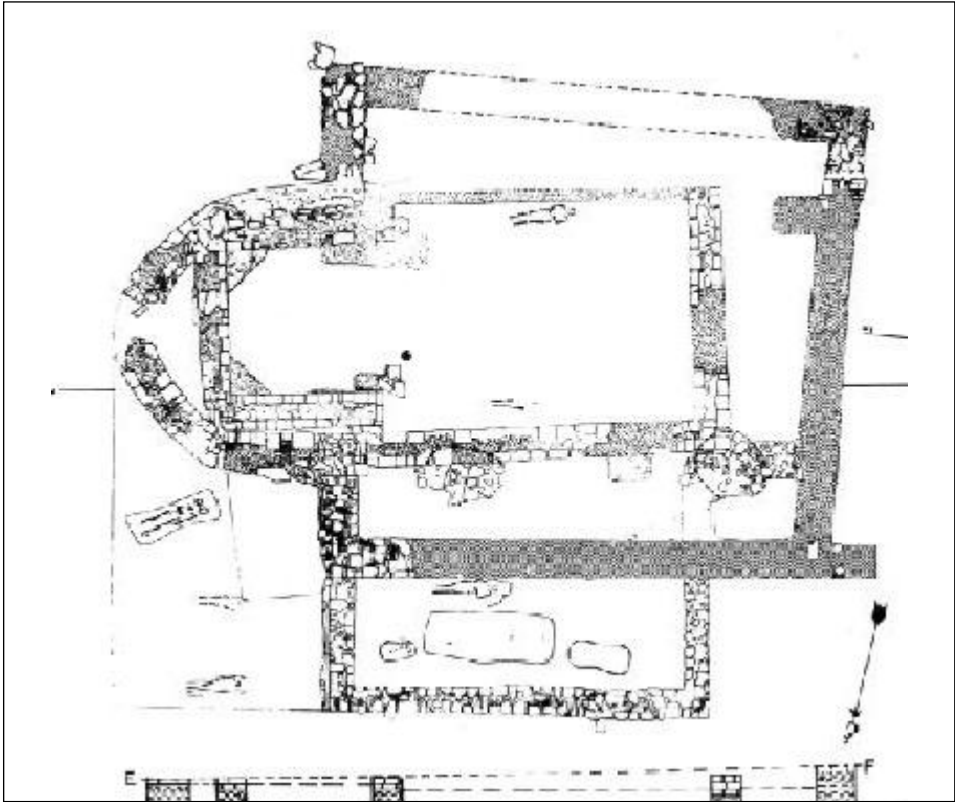
7. Gyöngyöspata. Plan of the fortification (after Nováki et all. 2009.)

Almost forty years lasted since Béla Kovács' excavation until the next archaeological investigation of the site. László Fodor from István Dobó Castle Museum of Eger has carried out small excavations on the Várhegy in 2004. In one of the three trenches 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>-C pottery was found in the lower layers just above the remains of "red rampart" and wooden construction. In the other trench some traces of a 60-70 cm thick stone wall were uncovered but neither its date nor the function could be clarified. In the filling layers belonged to this wall prehistoric and 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>-C pottery was found. Unfortunately, these excavations could not bring the solution of the "red ramparts" closer.

Gyula Nováki suggested a new theory regarding the construction of the ramparts. He admitted that the technique of the construction of the ramparts can hardly be imagined as a 10<sup>th</sup>-C technique. According to him the rampart might have been built by the Hussites in 1460, so the red-layer can be connected with them. There are indeed sources mentioning Hussites' fortifying activity at the site in 1460 but there is no hint to define whether the whole fortification or only its red layer was made by them. The archaeological finds do not confirm this theory yet but until the exact building technique of this structure is unknown the theory can be neither accepted nor refused. More modern excavations and the precise evaluation of the archaeological finds can help to answer these questions. Until these works will not be performed, we can just try to guess about the past of the Várhegy.

### Póc-tető (Póc Hill)

The Póc hill is situated east of the Várhegy, some meters lower than that. Its territory is several times larger than that of the Várhegy. One of the most important monuments



8. Gyöngyöspata. The ground plan of the St. Peter's church (after Szabó J. Gy. 1985.)

of Gyöngyöspata, the remains of the archdeaconry church of St. Peter's is located there. The church is mentioned in the written sources only from 1460, which is extremely late for such building. Nicholas, provost of Eger wrote: "*Patha inter vineas super Capellam Sancti Petri...*" The author does not write about any kind of archdeaconry church just about a chapel. It is unambiguous that by that time the building had already lost its importance and parish-church function.

The first excavations lead by János Győző Szabó lasted from 1969 until 1975. As the result, he located the church, which was situated 230 m southeast of the earthworks of the hill. There were two main periods. The building had a 12 m long and 540 cm wide aisle and straight apse in its earliest period, in the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> C. There was a graveyard around the church in its earliest phase. In the third quarter of 11<sup>th</sup> C this church was demolished and a new one was built onto its place. It was a 17 m long and 10 m wide vaulted building with three aisles and semicircular apse. A rectangular chapel was attached to the northern wall. The church was abandoned and fell in decay in the 13<sup>th</sup> C after the archdeacon moved to Eger. Moreover, the burying in the graveyard was suspended in this time and the locals did not use it until 16<sup>th</sup> C. In 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> C the non baptised children were buried into the church. The church was finally abandoned in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> C.

After János Győző Szabó's excavation 30 years passed until Gyöngyöspata got into the focus again. During the excavations lead by László Fodor in 2004 two dwellings of



9. Gyöngyöspata. The reconstructed foundations of the St. Peter's church.  
Aerial view ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

Árpáadian Age were uncovered in a trench west of the church. These dwellings were cut by some later unfurnished (and thus undatable) burials.

There were some earthworks along the edge of the Póc-hill but they were almost completely destroyed by the agricultural works. Just a small part of them remained on the north-western part of the hill. It is already clear that the fortification of the Póc-tető and the Várhegy had different structure but there is no information whether the earthwork of the Póc-hill was built. It might have been built along with the ramparts of the Várhegy but it also might have been result of a later building activity. In this case the time that might pass between the constructions of these buildings is still unknown.

As the conclusion it is obvious that more and more intensive research is needed at the site of the parish church of Virgin Mary, the Várhegy and also the Póc-hill. Moreover, it would be very important to evaluate the finds found so far because it is the only way to get information from the prehistoric to the middle ages. Hopefully, these works will be done soon and the results will help to know better the history of Gyöngyöspata.

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## DIE BURG HOLLÓKŐ

Nordöstlich von Budapest, in der Mitte des Cserhát-Gebirges befindet sich eine der von der Landschaft aus gesehen, am schönsten liegenden Burgruinen Ungarns, die einen typischen Burgennamen trägt: Hollókő – deutsch: Rabenstein. Die auf dem niedrigeren, westlichen Felssporn eines langgestreckten Bergkammes, 362 m ü. M. liegende, relativ gut erhaltene Ruine gehört zusammen mit dem darunter liegenden Dorf – dank ihres architektonischen Wertes – zum UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe und gilt als ein bekanntes und daher besonders oft besichtigtes Baudenkmal des Landes.

Die Burg erhielt ihr heutiges Aussehen während der 1996 abgeschlossenen Konservierungsarbeiten (Architektin: Ilona Kremniczán), denen eine zwischen 1966 und 1969 von Éva Kozák durchgeführte Ausgrabung voranging. Im Burgkern wurden vor allem die hochgehenden Mauerstrukturen gefestigt, man rekonstruierte hier zum Teil auch (oft mit modernen Elementen) das ehemalige Geschoß-, Öffnungs- und Verkehrssystem, im unteren Geschoß erfolgte auch die Wiederherstellung der Gewölbe einiger Räumlichkeiten. Die ergrabenen Zwingermauern sowie die Baureste der unteren Burg sind meist nur konserviert, aber auf den Grundmauern der südlichen Wirtschaftsbauten wurde auch ein Ausstellungsbau errichtet. Neuerdings plant man den weiteren Ausbau des Burgkernes, darunter die Überdachung des markanten Bergfriedes.

Die Anlage entstand wahrscheinlich zwischen 1270 und 1290, als Machtstützpunkt von Mikus, dem Sohn von Peter aus dem Herrengeschlecht Kacsics, dessen Mitglieder in der Region zu dieser Zeit eine Reihe von Burgen errichten ließen. Ihr Besitzer gehörte aber am Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts zur Partei von Máté Csák, dem mächtigen Territorialherren des nordwestlichen Gebietes des Königreiches Ungarn, dem größten Gegner des Königs Karl Robert von Anjou. Letzterer ließ daher wahrscheinlich 1313 die Burg erobern und schenkte sie 1327 endgültig seinem Anhänger, Tamás Szécsényi, der auch aus dem Kacsics-Geschlecht stammte. Die Burg blieb bis 1460 im Besitz seiner Familie, als László, der letzte Szécsényi, starb. Es ist nicht näher bekannt, wie oft sich die Mitglieder dieser Aristokraten-Familie hier aufgehalten hatten. Da Frank, der Enkel von Tamás, allerdings 1388 nach der Burg benannt wurde, nimmt man an, dass er zu dieser Zeit hier residiert hat. Auch der bereits erwähnte László stellte 1442 hier eine Urkunde aus. Nach 1460 haben die Männer seiner beiden Töchter die Burg erworben, und so kam die Anlage in den Besitz der Familien Ország bzw. Losonczi. 1480 wurde das Szécsényi-Erbe unter den beiden Magnatenfamilien aufgeteilt, seitdem gehörte Hollókő nur der Familie Ország an. Zsófia, die unverheiratete Tochter des Palatins Mihály Ország, wohnte und starb in der Burg am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts.

Die Geschichte der Burg in der 1. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhundert ist nicht näher bekannt. Nach der Schlacht bei Mohács (1526) eroberten die eingedrungenen Osmanen immer größere Gebiete des zentralen Landesteiles, 1541 fiel auch die Hauptstadt Buda in ihre Hände. Sie führten regelmäßige Feldzüge gegen die noch unbesetzten Gebiete, so eroberte 1552 Ali, der Pascha von Buda auch die Burg Hollókő. Sie blieb dann bis 1593 in osmanischem Besitz, nach den Soldatenlisten hielten sich hier meistens nur 20-25 Leute auf. Während des sog. fünfzehnjährigen Krieges (1593-1608) gewann der Heerführer Bálint Prépostváry durch Verhandlungen die Befestigung zurück, wonach die Burg als ein nicht besonders bedeutender Posten der Verteidigungslinie gegen die Osmanen



*1. Die Burg Hollókő von Osten*

diente. Den zeitgenössischen Berichten zufolge waren ihre Bauten zu dieser Zeit in sehr schlechtem Zustand. 1663 wurde sie wieder von den Osmanen besetzt. Ihre endgültige Befreiung erfolgte 20 Jahre später, als sich die Osmanen nach dem Sieg der vereinigten christlichen Heere bei Wien von den nordöstlichen Landesgebieten zurückziehen mussten. Damit aber verlor die Burg ihre militärische Funktion. Über einen direkten Abbruch ihrer Mauern haben wir keine Angaben, 1718 wird sie aber bereits als Ruine erwähnt.

Die erste Vermessung der Burgruine stammt aus dem Jahre 1862. Auch József Könyöki, der Verfasser des ersten ungarischen Burgenlexikons hat sie zeichnerisch dokumentiert. Im berühmten Burgenbuch von László Gerő aus dem Jahre 1955 wird sie als typisches Beispiel einer „unregelmäßigen Burg mit innerem Turm“ bezeichnet.

Da über die hier geführten Grabungen – eine komplexe Bauforschung war in den 60-er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts in den Burgruinen Ungarns noch nicht verbreitet – neben kleineren Zusammenfassungen nur Vorberichte mit kaum ausreichender Dokumentation vorliegen, sind viele Fragen der Baugeschichte der Burg noch ungenügend geklärt. Es steht aber fest, dass zu der ersten Anlage, die am Rande des etwa 30x20 Meter großen Felsenblocks auf einem fast ovalen Grundriß erbaut wurde, zwei Meter dicke Wehrmauern gehörten, die mit dem auf dem höchsten Punkt, auf einem unregelmässigen Sockel errichteten, fünfeckigen Bergfried zusammengebaut waren. Mit Ausnahme der Westseite steht die Wehrmauer – oft mit den ursprünglichen Zinnen und mit Resten des Wehrganges – in Originalhöhe, was bei den ungarischen Burgen des 13. Jahrhunderts eine Seltenheit darstellt. Auch der Bergfried ist als das beste Beispiel dieses Turmtyps in Ungarn zu bezeichnen. Er besaß nur einen Hocheingang im zweiten Obergeschoß, wo zwei Kragsteine auf das ehemalige Zugangssystem hinweisen. Seine kleinen Innenräume mit Holzdecken wurden nur durch schmale Schlitzfenster beleuchtet. Die Mauerdicke



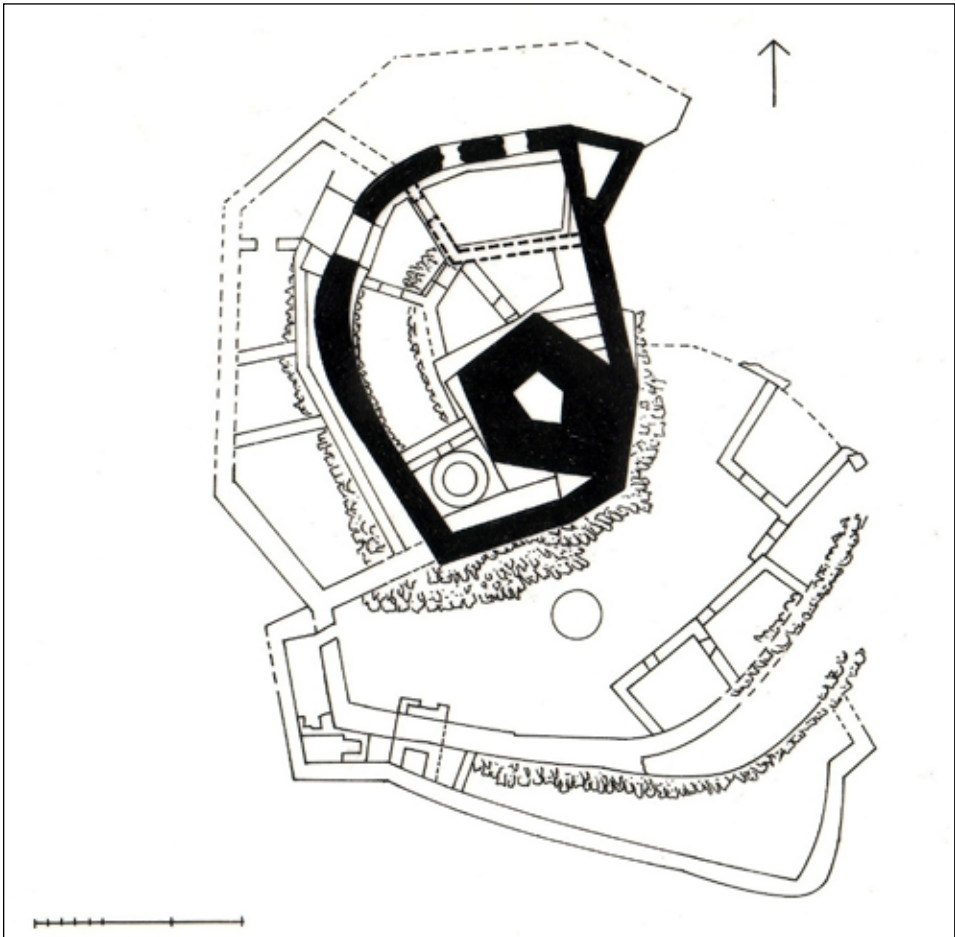
2. Die Burg Hollókő von Norden. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

beträgt hier unten mehr als 3,5 Meter. Das dritte Obergeschoß stammt schon aus dem Spätmittelalter, als wegen des starken vertikalen Ausbaus der Kernburg die Erhöhung des Turmes notwendig wurde – der hier ausgebildete, neue Eingang war wahrscheinlich aus dem erhöhten Westflügel erreichbar. Die Interpretation des aus der Nordostecke der Wehrmauer herauspringenden, dreieckigen Baus ist unklar.

Der einzige Turm der frühen Burganlage war also nicht bewohnbar, die Identifizierung des ersten Wohnbaus ist aber nicht eindeutig. Es ist anzunehmen, dass der früheste „Palast“ in der Nordostecke stand. Hier sind aber nur die Mauern des unteren (Keller) geschoßes erhalten geblieben, die aber über den Anfängen des späteren Tonnengewölbes Spuren einer früheren Holzdecke aufweisen. Wir können darüber mit einem 5x10 Meter großen Wohnraum rechnen – Reste von Fensternischen und eines Abortes wurden hier beobachtet – das Fehlen der Zinnen in der Nordmauer schließt aber auch das einstige Vorhandensein eines weiteren, frühen Wohngeschoßes nicht aus. Neuerdings wird aber vorausgesetzt, dass in der ersten Bauperiode bereits das ganze, tiefere, nordwestliche Gebiet der Kernburg auf einem L-förmigen Grundriss bebaut wurde, also man rechnet auch mit einem weiteren Gebäudeflügel im Westen. Der etwas langgestreckte (Keller) geschoßraum des letzteren Bauteils wäre so aus einem Vorraum hinter dem einfachen, ursprünglich etwa 1,5 Meter breiten Burgtor erreichbar gewesen.

Die Zeit der Errichtung der runden Zisterne in Erdgeschoßhöhe der Südwestecke ist nicht eindeutig geklärt. Ihre Quaderverkleidung war mit Lehm isoliert, das Regenwasser floss zum Teil durch einen im Mauerwerk des Bergfriedes ausgebildeten, senkrechten, steinernen Abflusskanal bzw. durch einen Schacht hierher. Das Gewölbe des Raumes über der Zisterne stammt wahrscheinlich schon aus einer späteren Bauperiode.

Nach der zuletzt genannten Auffassung wäre im späten 13. Jahrhundert nur ein kleines Gebiet nördlich des Bergfriedes unbebaut gewesen – eine Treppe aus der Richtung des



3. Der Grundriss der Burg Hollókő mit Hervorhebung der frühesten Bauten

Tores habe zu diesem unregelmäßigen Hof auf der Erdgeschoßebene geführt. Man rechnet damit, dass sich die Fenster und Türen der Wohntrakte hierher öffneten. Die ergrabenen Mauerreste in der Südostecke sind als Unterbau eines Treppenhauses zu interpretieren.

Es ist aber auch nicht auszuschließen, dass die zuletzt geschilderte Anordnung späteren Bauperioden zu verdanken ist – der kleine Hof wurde sicherlich erst im Spätmittelalter durch eine Zwischenmauer geteilt, was vielleicht mit dem kompletten Aus- bzw. Umbau des frühesten Burgareals in Zusammenhang zu bringen ist. Die genauere Chronologie dieser Bauarbeiten ist zwar nicht bekannt, die bisherigen Forschungen deuten aber darauf hin, dass – wenn die früheren Wohnbauten nur über ein wirklich bewohnbares Geschoß verfügten – im 15. Jahrhundert bzw. in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts die ganze Kernburg (oder wenigstens ihr nördlicher Bau) zwei neue Stockwerke erhielt. Dafür war natürlich auch die Erhöhung und Ummantelung der frühen Wehrmauern und die Errichtung einer neuen Mauerkrone mit Zinnen notwendig. Letztere sind nur an der Nordseite auf uns geblieben.

Die einfachen, gotischen Formen der Türen der unteren Geschoße sind für eine nähere Datierung ungeeignet, im Falle der schon in den äußeren Burgmauern ausgebildeten, großen Fenster kennen wir nur ihre Nischen. Während der Grabungen fand man nur wenige Bruchstücke gotischer und vorwiegend Renaissance-zeitlicher Fensterfassungen. In situ sind nur Details eines einst mit dem Rippengewölbe zusammengebauten, spätgotischen Kamins in der Nordwestecke des nördlichen Raumes des zweiten Wohngeschoßes zu finden gewesen – sie wurden in einer noch späteren Bauperiode vermauert. Die architektonischen Elemente und die Schriftquellen sprechen dafür, dass die größten Erweiterungen bzw. Ausbauarbeiten in der Zeit durchgeführt wurden, als ab 1480 die Familie Országh die Burg inne hatte. Das bedeutet aber nicht, dass wir gewisse Bauarbeiten der Mitglieder der Familie Szécsényi vor 1460 nicht voraussetzen können und der Abschluss der Bauarbeiten auch erst im 16. Jahrhundert erfolgen konnte. Es sind mindestens zwei große spätmittelalterliche Ausbauperioden festzustellen. Auf den drei Wohnebenen können wir vor der osmanischen Eroberung mit etwa 10 bis 12 Räumlichkeiten rechnen. Ob eine davon eine Kapelle gewesen ist, ist mangels zuverlässiger Daten nicht zu entscheiden. Dasselbe bezieht sich auf die Identifizierung der Burküche, die aufgrund des keramischen Fundmaterials neben der Zisterne gesucht wurde.

Die genauere Chronologie der um die Kernburg errichteten Nord- und Westzwinger sowie der südlichen, halbkreisförmigen unteren Burg ist auch nicht eindeutig. Sicher ist nur, dass der Südzwinger in einer späteren Bauperiode entstand, als auch der erste, mit Wolfsgarbe versehene Torbau in der Südmauer der unteren Burg vermauert wurde. Die Errichtung dieses Zwingers diente eindeutig dem erhöhten Schutz des Burgeingangs. In seinem Ostabschluss wurden die Reste eines einfachen Tores, in der Südwestecke die einer mehrteiligen Toranlage (Torturm) freigelegt. Die Details des letzteren Baus deuten auf ein kompliziertes Zugbrückensystem hin. Die genaue Form der weiteren, voraussetzenden Torbauten – wie z.B. des inneren Westzwingers, wo der Weg von der unteren Burg zur Kernburg führte – ist nicht bekannt. Vor dem Tor der Kernburg wurde auch eine Wolfsgarbe freigelegt.

Aufgrund der erwähnten Angabe aus dem Jahre 1388 über den vermuteten, hiesigen Sitz von Frank Szécsényi wird die Errichtung der unteren Burg noch in das 14. Jahrhundert gesetzt und der Bau ihres Südzwingers und der neuen Torwerke mit der Gefahr der Angriffe der hussitischen Krieger (sog. Brüder) um 1450 in Verbindung gebracht. Der Westzwinger scheint aber auch gleichzeitig mit der unteren Burg entstanden zu sein, für eine frühere Datierung sprechen keine eindeutigen Daten. Es ist zur Zeit sogar auch noch nicht auszuschließen, dass alle bekannten Bauten außerhalb des frühen Burgkernes erst im 15.-16. Jahrhundert entstanden sind, als die erwähnten, großen Ausbauarbeiten der Palastflügel durchgeführt wurden. Es ist aber auffallend, dass in der Burg keine Elemente der modernen Militärarchitektur des 16. Jahrhunderts aufzufinden sind.

In der unteren Burg wurde zu unbestimmter Zeit auch eine Zisterne errichtet. Die entlang der Südostmauer stehenden Bauten werden in das 16. bis 17. Jahrhundert datiert und als Wirtschaftsgebäude interpretiert. Auch die Zwischenmauern des Westzwingers müssten aus dieser Zeit stammen. Das zutagegekommene archäologische Material stammt auch vorwiegend aus dem 16. bis 17. Jahrhundert. Die ergrabenen Kachelbruchstücke sprechen dafür, dass in der 1. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts einige Wohnräume der Burg mit reich verzierten Kachelöfen geheizt wurden.

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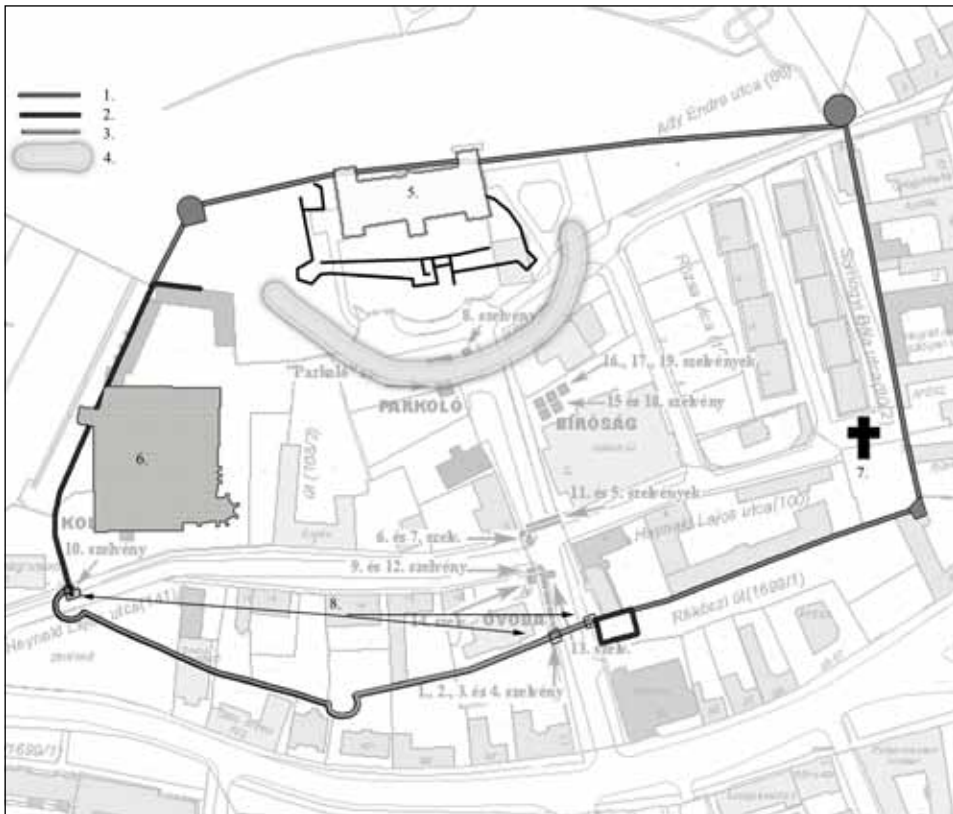
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## ISTVÁN FELD

**DAS FORGÁCH-SCHLOSS IN SZÉCSÉNY**

Die Kleinstadt Szécsény liegt südlich vom einstigen Überschwemmungsgebiet des heutigen slowakisch-ungarischen Grenzflusses Ipoly, auf einem etwas erhöhten Plateau. In der Nordachse der auch heute noch teils mit Mauern umgeben Altstadt, direkt am nördlichen Plateaurand, befindet sich das auf mittelalterliche Vorgängerbauten zurückzuführende Schlossgebäude. Der heutige Schlossbau ist ein symmetrischer, zweigeschossiger Zweitraktbau mit geschlossenen Gängen im Süden. Nur sein Nordtrakt ist unterkellert. Es besitzt einen H-förmigen Grundriss – an allen seinen vier Ecken sind demnach markante Eckrisalitbauten ausgebildet. Der höhere, mittlere Teil des Gebäudes – dem ein unten offener, oben mit einem Tympanon abgeschlossener Eingangsbau vorgelagert ist – wurde mit einer Pseudokuppel bekrönt. Darunter befinden sich das Treppenhaus und der Festsaal. Mittelalterliche Bauteile – wie zwei Fenster mit einfacher Umrahmung, sowie weitere ähnliche Details – findet man heute nur im NW-Risalit, sowie in den anschließenden Innenräumen des Kellers. Erwähnenswert sind noch der östliche Nebenbau mit früheren Resten der Küche, sowie der Prachtzaun des Vorgartens. Gegen Osten und Westen schließt die in der Neuzeit stark umgebaute Stadtbefestigung an den Schlossbau.

Szécsény diente schon im 13. Jh. als Herrschaftsmittelpunkt des Herrengeschlechtes Kacsics. Tamás, die bedeutendste Persönlichkeit der aus diesem Geschlecht entstammten Familien – der sich nach der Ortschaft nannte und zu den Günstlingen des Königs Karl Robert (1308-1442) gehörte –, erhielt 1334 die königliche Genehmigung, die Siedlung mit Befestigungen zu umgeben. In diesem Jahr stand bereits das von ihm gegründete



*1. Die mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Befestigungen von Szécsény  
auf dem heutigen Stadtgrundriss*

*(1. Befestigungen aus Backstein, 2. Steinmauer, 3. archäologisch nachgewiesene, hölzerne Befestigungen, 4. Graben, 5. Schlossgebäude, 6. Franziskanerkloster, 7. Ruinen der mittelalterlichen Pfarrkirche, 8. Ergrabene Teile der hölzernen Stadtbefestigung)*

Franziskanerkloster im SW des Siedlungsgebietes. Zu dieser Zeit ist hier auch mit einem Herrenhof zu rechnen, aber ein befestigtes Steinhaus im Besitz von László Szécsényi wird erst 1440 erwähnt. Später wurde hier entweder ein *castrum* (Burg) oder ein *ca-stellum* (Schloss) genannt – die erstere Benennung (zuerst 1457) konnte sich vielleicht auch auf die nicht näher bekannte, aber keinesfalls steinerne – frühe Stadtbefestigung beziehen, die aber archäologisch bisher noch nicht nachgewiesen werden konnte. Um das Kloster herum existierte aber vielleicht noch im Spätmittelalter eine eigene, steinerne Befestigung. 1461 und 1478 ist hier ein *castellum* bezeugt – ab 1462, nach dem Aussterben der Familie Szécsényi, schon im gemeinsamen Besitz der Aristokraten-Familien Losonci und Guti Országh. Ab 1480 gehörte die Befestigung mit gewissen Residenzfunktionen nur der Familie Losonci, deren Kastellan aus dem Jahre 1497 überliefert ist.

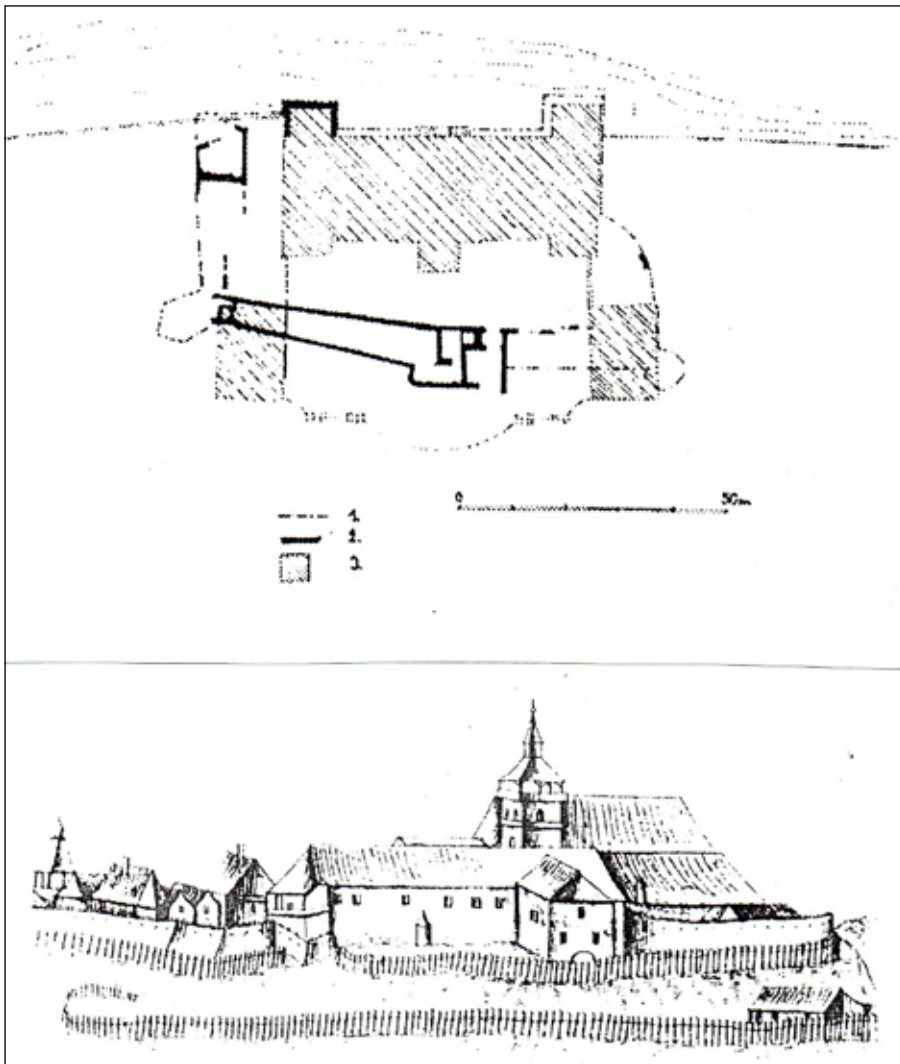
Ab den 1540er Jahren zählte Szécsény mit ihren, spätestens zu dieser Zeit errichteten, meist hölzernen Außenbefestigungen zu den Grenzburgen des Königreiches. Die Osmanen konnten sie 1552 erobern. Die Zahl ihrer hier stationierten Soldaten betrug zwischen 200 und 250, es handelte sich also um eine wichtige Befestigung. Von 1593 bis



2. Die Stadt Szécsény von Norden. In der Mitte das Schlossgebäude, rechts das Franziskanerkloster. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

1663 stand sie wieder unter christlicher Führung – zu dieser Zeit war die Familie Forgách schon der Besitzer des Marktfleckens. Ab 1643 ist der Umbau der Plankenbefestigung in Stein bzw. Backstein bezeugt. Dann folgte bis 1683 wieder eine türkische Besetzung, die Befreiung der Siedlung ist dem polnischen König, Jan Sobieski zu verdanken. Die Befestigung spielte auch noch während der Zeit des Rákóczi-Aufstandes am Anfang des 18. Jhs. eine militärische Rolle. Von den 90-er Jahren des 17. Jhs. bis 1724 ließ der Pfandbesitzer István Koháry die älteren Bauten des als „arx“ bezeichneten Wohnsitzes mehrmals renovieren, danach erhielt die gräfliche Familie Forgách auch den Wohnbau zurück. Die heutige Form des Schlosses ist ihnen zu verdanken. Im Jahre 1846 kaufte die Familie Pulszky ihre Besitztümer zusammen mit dem Schlossbau. Das Gebäude ist seit 1948 Staatseigentum, bis zum Ende der 1960-er Jahre diente es zu Wohn- bzw. gewerblichen Zwecken, seit 1973 ist hier eine Abteilung des Komitatsmuseums untergebracht.

Die bisherigen, meist begrenzten und teils noch unveröffentlichten archäologischen Untersuchungen und die partiellen Mauerforschungen konnten die Baugeschichte des Schlosses noch ungenügend klären. Wir wissen aber, dass das heutige Schloss unter der Verwendung von bedeutenden, spätmittelalterlichen Bauteilen entstand, die aus den ab der Mitte des 15. Jhs. erwähnten, herrschaftlichen Bauten stammen könnten. Besonders im turmartig ausgebildeten (und vielleicht mit dem 1596 erwähnten Steinturm zu identifizierenden) NW-Risalit und im länglichen Nordtrakt des Gebäudes konnten – bei letzterem vor allem im Kellerniveau – höhere, mittelalterliche Mauerteile, darunter einfache Fenster- und Türöffnungen beobachtet bzw. freigelegt werden. Sie weisen auch Spuren von mehreren Bauperioden auf, deren genauere zeitliche Einordnung innerhalb des



3. Das Schloss und das Franziskanerkloster von Szécsény vom Norden auf einem Stich des 17. Jhs. und die vor 2005 bekannten mittelalterlichen Teile des Schlosses (nach Majcher 1999.)

15. bis 16. Jhs. noch nicht möglich ist. Teile der abgestürzten Nordfassade wurden schon am Hang vor der heutigen Nordfassade gefunden. Reste abgetragener Bauten – meistens schon aus dem 16. Jh. – kamen noch vor der West- und Südfassade des Schlossgebäudes hervor – so ein Torbau mit Zwingermauern, je ein Befestigungswerk an der Südost- bzw. an der Südwestecke, sowie Teile eines Gebäudeflügels im Westen. Weiter südlich konnte auch ein breiter Graben identifiziert werden, der bis zum Ende des 15. Jhs. im Gebrauch war und erst danach aufgefüllt wurde. Im östlichen Nebenbau fand man auch Details einer früheren Küchenanlage.

Eine Bautätigkeit der osmanischen Besetzungszeit ist nicht näher bekannt. Die gegen Osten an den Schlossbau anschließenden Stadtmauern mit runden und quadratischen

Batterietürmen datieren eher in das 17. Jh. Es konnte aber archäologisch nachgewiesen werden, dass im SW noch vor 1663 nur eine hölzerne Befestigung mit Rondellen existierte. Die Stadt verfügte über zwei Tore, nämlich eines neben dem Batterieturm im NO, sowie eines in der Mittelachse der Südmauer.

Die frühesten, historischen Stiche sind aus dem 17. Jahrhundert auf uns geblieben. Schriftquellen berichten von bedeutenden Erweiterungen und Renovierungen vom Anfang des 18. Jhs, die aber nicht näher zu identifizieren sind. Das heutige Schloss entstand wahrscheinlich zwischen 1753 und 1762, der Bauherr war Zsigmond Forgách. Nach 1800 ist noch ein Umbau bezeugt – zu dieser Zeit entstand auch ein englischer Garten um das Gebäude herum. Während des Weltkrieges wurde der westliche Nebenbau des cour d'honneur's abgetragen. Zwischen 1969 und 1977 fand die erste Wiederherstellung des Schlosses statt. Die letzte, umfassende Sanierung wurde 2005 abgeschlossen, als auch die Sanierung der ganzen Innenstadt durchgeführt wurde.

Schon Ferenc Pulszky fand auf dem Gebiet „der alten Burg“ in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jhs. Ofenkacheln und mehrfarbig glasierte Tafelkeramik aus dem 16. Jh. Anlässlich der ersten Wiederherstellungsarbeiten konnte Csaba Héjj 1974-75 eine kleine Rettungsgrabung vor der Süd- und der Westfassade des Schlosses durchführen. Später waren nur baubegleitende Beobachtungen möglich (Tamás Majcher), aber auch die vor und während der Sanierung von 2005 von mehreren Fachleuten durchgeführten Maueruntersuchungen und Grabungen können keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit erheben. Das relativ reiche, aber noch nicht bearbeitete Fundmaterial besteht vorwiegend aus Keramik des 15-17. Jhs., es kamen aber auch gotische und Renaissance-Steinelemente zum Vorschein.

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MIROSLAV PLAČEK

### DIE BURG ŠOMOŠKA/SOMOSKŐ

Ähnlich wie die nahe gelegenen Burgen von Salgó und Hajnácska (Ajnácskő) wurde die Burg (heute auf dem Gebiet der Ortschaft Šiatorská Bukovina in der Slowakei) auf einem Vulkanhügel (ca. 490 m ü. M.) in der Nähe der bedeutenden Verkehrslinie von Filakovo (Füleky) nach Vác und Buda errichtet.



1. Die Burg Šomoška/Somoskő vom Süden. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))



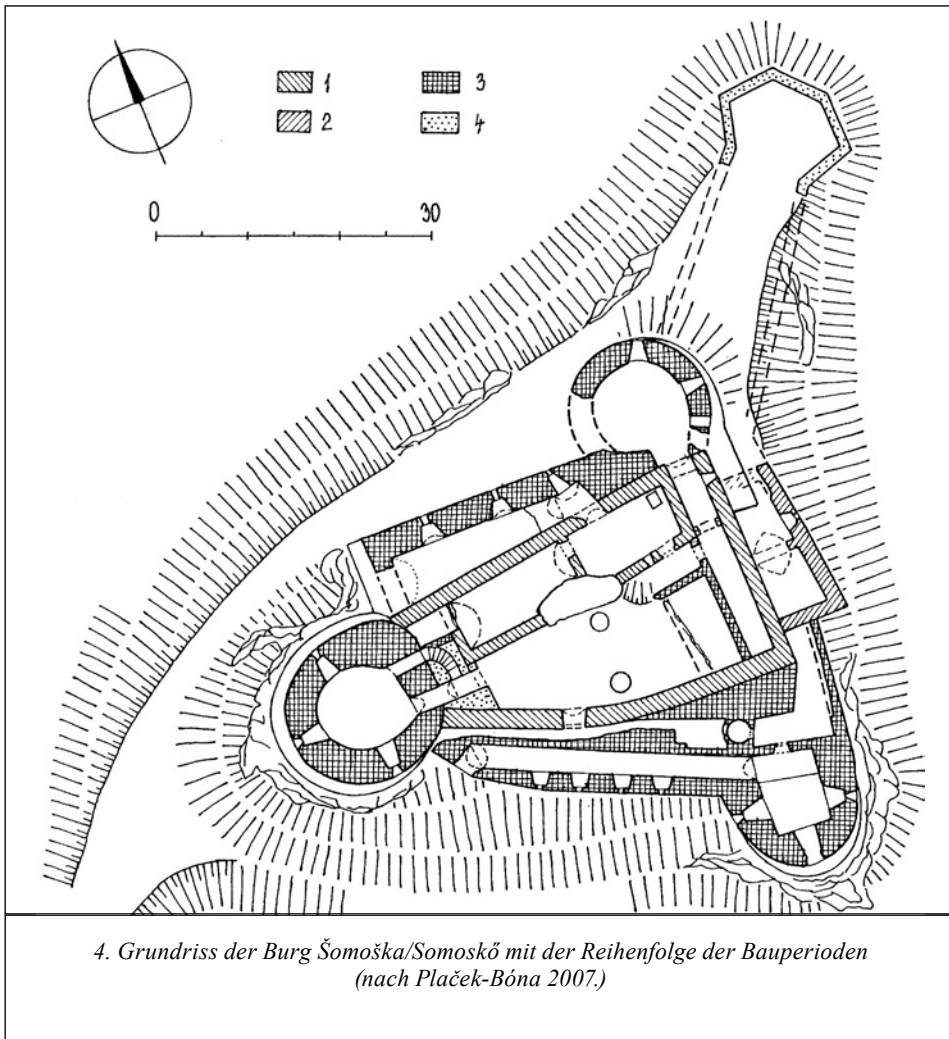
2. Die Burg Šomoška/Somoskő vom Südosten. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))



3. Die Burg Šomoška/Somoskő vom Norden. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

Die Burg wurde anscheinend um 1290 von Peter aus dem Geschlecht Kacsics erbaut, der in dieser Gegend mehrere Güter besaß. Seine Söhne übergaben 1310 die Burg an Máté Csák, der hiermit eines der südlichsten Vorposten seiner Besitztümer gewann. Nach der Schlacht von Rozhanovce (Rozgony) dürfte Tamás aus dem Geschlechte der Kacsics die Burg erworben haben, der als Begründer der Szécsényi-Familie gilt. Die Burg blieb bis 1455, als László Szécsényi das Gut für kurze Zeit verpfändet hatte, im Besitz dieser Familie. In dieser Zeit wurden zwei Angriffe durch die Soldaten von Jan Jiskra abgewehrt und nach dem Hinscheiden von László fiel die Burg an die Familien Ország und Losonci, da die zwei Töchter des verstorbenen Edelmannes, Hedwig und Anne, in diese Familien eingeheiratet hatten.

Nach dem Tode von István Losonci in der Schlacht bei Temesvár im Jahre 1552 besetzten die Türken Filakovo (Füleke), Modrý Kameň (Kékkő) und Divín (Divény). Obwohl Šomoška (Somoskő) neu und beachtlich befestigt wurde, vermochte es der Schwiegersohn von Losonci, Christoph Ungnad, nicht, sie 1576 vor dem türkischen Heer zu verteidigen. Aber schon im Jahre 1593 wurde die Burg im sogenannten Langen Türkenkrieg von den kaiserlichen Heerführern Nikolaus Pálffy und Christoph von Tieffenbach zurückerobert. In der Folge erwarb Sigismund Forgách das Gut durch Heirat; nach der verhängnisvollen Erfahrung mit der Besetzung durch die Aufständischen um Stephan Bocskai von 1605, wurde die Burg auf Anordnung des Landtages im Jahre 1618 zum letzten Mal befestigt. Zur türkischen Belagerung kam es zwar nicht mehr, doch hielt die Befestigung den Anhängern um Bethlen (1619), und den Kurutzen (1703) nicht stand. Während der Unterdrückung des Rákóczi-Aufstandes eroberten die kaiserlichen Truppen die Burg, anschließend sprengten sie nach der volkstümlichen Tradition den festen Bau in die Luft, um einer missbräuchlichen Verwendung zuvorzukommen.



Die älteste Burg war nicht besonders geräumig und ist vollkommen durch die Renaissance-Fortifikation verdeckt. Ihre Form war dreieckig und in der zum Zufahrtsweg gerichteten, scharfen Westspitze wurde ein Batterieturm errichtet. Er hat die Gestalt eines verformten Kreises mit einem Durchmesser von 16,5 m, die Mauern sind mehr als 3,5 m stark. Dadurch galt er als eine der besten Anlagen zur Unterbringung von Geschützen. Zwei andere Wehrbauten befanden sich in den restlichen Ecken der Anlage, im Erdgeschoss der nordöstlichen Ecke lag das Tor. Der südöstliche, halbzyllindrische Batterieturm mit im Grundriss rechteckförmigem Innenraum liegt dicht an einer merkwürdigen Kasemattenbefestigung. Die Gänge und Räume mit Tonnengewölben in den zwei Geschoßen waren hier durch eine Spindeltreppe verbunden. Der einzige Zugang aus dem Burgkern führte durch einen schmalen Gang. Eine ähnliche Anlage war auch entlang der Nordfront der Burg zu finden. Die sich nach oben verjüngenden Wehrbauten bestehen aus einheimischem Basalt und der Schrägsockel war vom Körper der Türme durch ein abgerundetes Sandsteingesims optisch abgesetzt.

Entlang der Nordmauer des Burgkerns sind die Überreste von zwei Räumlichkeiten des gotischen Palastes erhalten geblieben, der sich auf einen zugeschnittenen Felsblock gestützt hatte. Hier befindet sich der höchste Punkt der Burg. Der etwaige Hauptturm fiel der Errichtung der Renaissancebauten zum Opfer. Es ist wohl zu vermuten, dass die Besitzer der Burg bereits in der Spätgotik die Unzulänglichkeiten der Wohnräume zu lösen genötigt waren, als im östlichen Teil ein neues Gebäude der äußeren Wehrmauer vorgelagert wurde, dessen Eckverstärkung aus Sandsteinquadern noch erkennbar ist. Die im Erdgeschoss gefundenen Spitzbögen waren Teile der Wölbung. Darüber rechnet man noch mit zwei Geschoßen. Zur weiteren Verdichtung der Bebauung kam es anscheinend im Zeitalter der Renaissance, als im Burghof ein neues Gebäude erbaut und zwischen diesem Haus und dem alten Palast noch ein Tor errichtet wurde. Da die Burg auf einer Felspitze erbaut wurde, musste man sich mit dem Problem des Wassermangels auseinandersetzen, weshalb im Burghof und im Erdgeschoss des alten Palastes zwei runde Zisternen (eine von ihnen war vielleicht das Resultat des Versuchs einen Brunnen auszugraben) und eine weitere, jedoch eckige Zisterne errichtet wurden.

Bei der unlängst uneinfühlsam durchgeführten Denkmalsicherung der Burgruine wurde einer der Batterietürme überdacht. Obwohl sowohl technische Untersuchungen, wie auch bauarchäologische Forschungen Teil der Vorbereitungsarbeiten gebildet haben, wurden die Unterlagen und die aus ihnen abzuleitenden Schlussfolgerungen bislang nicht publiziert. Deshalb ist es möglich, dass die hier vorgelegte Baugeschichte noch geändert werden soll.

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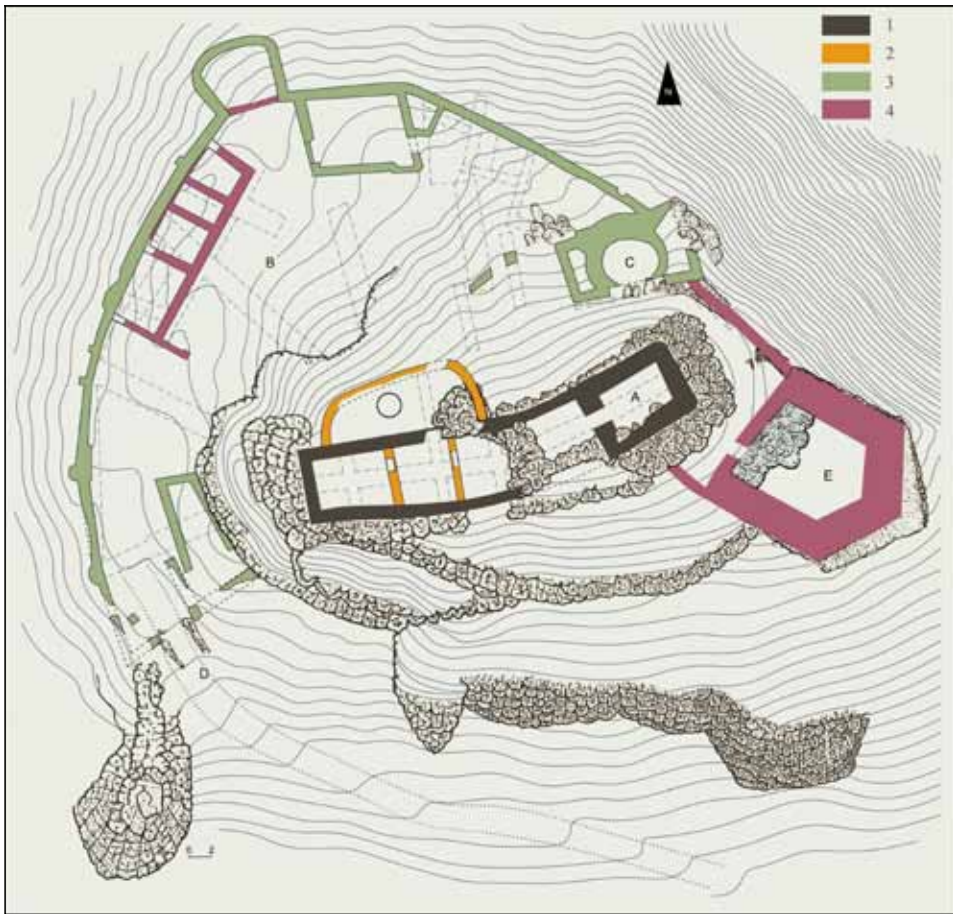
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EMESE LÁSZLÓ

### DIE BURG SALGÓ

Nördlich von Salgótarján liegt Salgóbánya, eine ehemalige Bergbausiedlung. Über dem Dorf erhebt sich eine 625 m hohe Felspitze, die nicht nur wegen der auf ihr befindlichen Burgruine, sondern auch wegen des von da aus zu bewundernden Panoramas und der sehenswürdigen Basaltsäulen zu den beliebtesten Ausflugsorten der Umgebung gehört. Sándor Petőfi, der berühmte, ungarische Dichter des 19. Jahrhunderts hatte die Ruinen auch besucht, woran heute noch eine Marmoraltafel erinnert. Dies ist auch ein bestimmendes Element der Attraktivität der Gegend.

Aus diesem Grund wurden Teile der Burgruine im Jahre 1938 nach den Plänen von Géza Lux als Aussichtspunkt umgebaut – aber damals natürlich noch ohne archäologische Forschungen. So diente der Stumpf des Turmes, der über dem höchsten Punkt des Bergrückens stand, bis zum Ende des zweiten Weltkrieges als Aussichtsturm, bis er später zerstört wurde.



1. Der Grundriss der Burg Salgó mit der Reihenfolge der Bauperioden (1-4.)  
 A: Der Turm der oberen Burg, B: Die untere Burg, C: Die große Zisterne,  
 D: Das äußere Burgtor, E: Der Kanonenturm

Im Jahre 1981 wurden die regelmäßigen archäologischen Ausgrabungen, und auf diese folgend, die denkmalpflegerischen Arbeiten begonnen, die bis in das Jahr 2006 anhielten. Diese Arbeiten verliefen unter der Führung des Archäologen István Feld und mit dem anfänglichen Mitwirken der Architekten Géza Máthé und später Sándor Móga. Die finanzielle Unterstützung lieferten anfangs der damalige Rat der Stadt Salgótarján, später – ab dem Jahre 1996 – die KVI, die Direktion des Staatsvermögens.

Dank dieser Arbeiten können die Ruinen der oberen Burg von Besuchern heutzutage bereits im restaurierten Zustand bewundert werden. Heute steht nur das unterste Stockwerk des Turmes – wir kennen seine ursprüngliche Höhe nicht –, welches ein modernes Schutzdach erhalten hat, und wieder als Aussichtsturm dient. Die dazu von Westen anstoßenden, in gestaffelter Form absteigenden Mauern erhielten eine Ergänzung bis zur Brusthöhe. Das ehemalige, schmale Burgtor und die davor aufgedeckte, kleine Zisterne wurden auch wiederhergestellt. Die Holztreppen, deren Aufgabe es war, den Verkehr zu sichern, wurden ebenfalls neu aufgebaut.

Die auf dem nördlichen Teil des Berges ausgebildete untere Burg verfügt über einen sichelförmigen Grundriss. Die freigelegten äußeren Mauern dieses Burgteils wurden im geringst möglichen Ausmaß, entlang der gesamten Länge aufgemauert. Dazu gehören auch das in nordwestlicher Richtung herausragende, bogenförmige Verteidigungswerk und die in nordöstlicher Richtung liegende, größere Zisterne. Das Gebäude, das diese Zisterne umfasst, wurde ebenfalls in ähnlicher Weise präsentiert. Es wurde auch die Ergänzung der Mauern des riesigen, fünfeckigen Kanonenturmes begonnen, der sich am Fuße des Turmes befindet. Die Funktion dieser Fortifikation war der Schutz jener Straße, die auf die Burg führte.

Die Aufgabe der nächsten Jahre wird die Konservierung jener Reste der Gebäudeflügel sein, die ehemals an die Wehrmauer der unteren Burg angeschlossen haben. Darauf wird die endgültige Präsentation des äußeren Burgtores folgen und schließlich natürlich die Durchführung der entsprechenden Inbetriebnahme der Ruinen.

Die Burg Salgó wurde von einer Familie des Kacsics-Geschlechtes erbaut. Dieses Geschlecht hatte eine besonders wichtige Stellung im Komitat Nógrád. Aber wie hieß jenes Familienmitglied, das diese Burg zu errichten begann? Auf diese Frage haben wir heute leider noch keine genaue Antwort. Der Bauherr konnte zwischen 1280 und 1308 ein Mitglied des Geschlechtszweiges Tarján oder Salgó gewesen sein, womöglich Illés' Sohn Simon, oder eher dessen Sohn Miklós, obwohl in den schriftlichen Quellen die Burg selbst erst im Jahre 1341 erscheint. Ihre Eigentümer bildeten später zwei Familien, die – sicher nach ihren Herrenhäusern in den gegebenen Dörfern – Rapi bzw. Szőlösi genannt wurden. Sie verloren die Burg im Jahre 1460, als sie von den Hussiten, den sogenannten „bratri“, eingenommen wurde. Noch im selben Jahr wurde die Burg von König Matthias I. zurückerobert, der die Burg Salgó seinen treuen Anhängern, der Familie Szapolyai übergab. Wir kennen die Namen zahlreicher, hiesiger Burgvögte dieser Familie aus Urkunden und anderen schriftlichen Quellen.

Nach dem Jahre 1526 gehörte die Burg zuerst der Familie Ráskai, auf die in der Reihe der Besitzer ab 1544 Ferenc Bebek folgte. Salgó war nur für vier Jahre Teil des Bebek-Besitztums, da Ferenc Bebek es im Jahre 1548 an Farkas Derencsényi verkauft hatte. Im Jahre 1554 war sie schon im Besitz der Türken – gemäß der traditionellen Überlieferung, aufgrund eines Betruges. Der Sage nach wollte das türkische Heer an einem nebeligen Tag die Burg besetzen. Sie wussten jedoch nicht genau, wieviele Soldaten sich dort befinden. Kara Hamza, der Beg von Szécsény wollte nichts riskieren, und hat deshalb versucht, Baumstämme so zu verschleiern, dass sie von der Burg aus wie Kanonen erscheinen. Diese Stämme wurden von mehreren Ochsen südöstlich der Burg auf den Boszorkánykő – oder Kleine-Salgó – hinaufgeschleppt. Die Verteidiger der Burg waren auf einen Angriff von solch großer Feuerkraft nicht vorbereitet und Simon Zagyvai, der damalige Burgvogt, entschied, dass die Burg aufgegeben werden sollte.

Aus der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts besitzen wir mehrere türkische schriftliche Quellen über die Burg, die meisten davon sind sog. Defter, d.h. Soldatenlisten. Aus diesen wissen wir genau, wieviele türkische Soldaten – und von welchem Typ – hier stationiert waren. Es ist immer noch unbekannt, wann genau Salgó aufgegeben wurde. Vielleicht können wir dieses Ereignis mit dem sog. „fünfzehnjährigen Krieg“ (1591-1606) verbinden. Denn im Jahre 1593 nahmen Kristóf Tieffenbach und Miklós Pálffy im Laufe eines Feldzugs, der mit diesem Krieg zu verbinden ist, die Burg Fülek – etwa 10 km nördlich von Salgó – nach deren Belagerung ein. Wahrscheinlich überrannten



2. Die Burg Salgó vom Süden. Luftaufnahme. ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

in demselben Feldzug die Truppen von Bálint Prépostváry nun die Burg Salgó, und ruinierten sie endgültig durch Kanonenbeschüsse.

Aufgrund der Ergebnisse der archäologischen Forschungen umschloss die erste Burg nur den schmalen, gestreckten obersten Felsblock des Gipfels. Der auf dem höchsten Punkt des Berges errichtete Turm, dessen äußere Größe etwa 7,5x9,5 m beträgt, verfügte ehemals über mehrere Stockwerke, und war vermutlich auch dazu geeignet, in besonderen Notfällen von den jeweiligen Burgherren bewohnt zu werden. Der unregelmäßige rechteckförmige Grundriss der Burgmauern, die mit dem Turm zusammengebaut waren, begrenzten ursprünglich nur einen offenen Hof, in dem keine Spuren von ehemals jedoch vielleicht vorhandengewesenen Gebäuden – die nach der Meinung von István Feld wahrscheinlich aus Holz gebaut worden waren – zum Vorschein kamen.

Im unteren Teil der oberen Burg wurde während der Ausgrabungen im Jahre 1983 der Schwellenstein des schmalen Tores *in situ* vorgefunden. Dieses Tor öffnete sich gegen Norden. Ihre weiteren Umfassungselemente wurden im Bauschutt davor und auch in der kleineren Zisterne gefunden. Die originalen Stücke konnten jedoch aufgrund ihres Zustandes nicht wiedereingesetzt werden. Aufgrund dieser Fragmente konnte der Archäologe ein Tor mit einfachem Profil rekonstruieren, was heute hier in Kopie steht.

Mit der Hilfe der in der oberen Burg zum Vorschein gekommenen Keramik können wir die Bauzeit der Burg von Salgó bestimmen. In der Bauauffüllung neben den Mauern wurden mehrere Töpfe aus weißem Ton gefunden, die mit Doppelrand geformt und mit Spirallinien dekoriert waren. Aufgrund dieser Kennzeichen können wir die Burg in die Jahrzehnte um 1300 datieren. Es kann nur angenommen, aber nicht nachgewiesen werden, dass der bis dahin offene Hof der oberen Burg erst während der Herrschaft der Szapolyai



3. Die Burg Salgó vom Norden. Luftaufnahme ([www.civertan.hu](http://www.civertan.hu))

Familie – das heißt, in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts bzw. am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts – bebaut wurde. Das bedeutet, dass hier ein mehrstöckiges Wohngebäude gestaltet – das im Erdgeschoss mindestens drei- oder viergeteilt war – und vor dem ehemaligen Burgtor die kleine Zisterne errichtet wurde. Diese Bauten können wir mit Hilfe der Kacheln der ehemals in der oberen Burg aufgestellten Öfen einer genaueren Zeitspanne zuordnen. Diese Kacheln gehören nämlich zu den späteren Typen des sog. Besztercebánya/Banská Bystrica-Kreises, die in der Fachliteratur meistens um oder nach 1500 datiert werden.

Es ist aber sicher, dass die Verteidigungswerke der unteren Burg nach 1526, also nach der Schlacht von Mohács, erbaut wurden. Diese Bauten wurden wahrscheinlich in einem Bauprozess gestaltet. Zusammen mit der Burgmauer wurde das neben dem bogenförmigen Turm stehende Gebäude errichtet. Dieses Gebäude, das das größte in der Burg ist, besitzt eine äußere Größe von etwa 10x8 Meter und blieb aufgrund seines etwas eingetieften Niveaus in den untersten Partien erhalten.

Die Ausdehnung des Kanonenturmes beträgt 15x15 Meter, seine Mauern sind z.T. mehr als drei Meter breit, aber er könnte etwas später als die vorher genannten zwei Bauteile errichtet worden sein. Das südliche, äußere Tor der Burg, das sicherlich sehr einfach gestaltet war, kennen wir nicht genauer, jedoch verfügte es sicherlich über keine Wolfgrube. An der östlichen Seite dieses Tores steht jenes Haus, das der Wache zugeordnet wird. Zur Datierung dieses Baues verfügen wir über keinen Anhaltspunkt, aber der ehemalige Lehmofen in der Mitte des Gebäudes ist mit den Osmanen zu verbinden. Vielleicht entstand der jüngste Gebäudeteil, nämlich der Gebäudeflügel, der sich an die innere Seite der westlichen Mauer der unteren Burg lehnt, bereits während der

Herrschaft der Familie Derencsényi. Er ist sechs Meter breit und besteht im Erdgeschoß aus vier Räumen, die sicherlich gewölbt waren. Wie wir aufgrund der Fenster- und Türrahmungen, die über Renaissanceprofile verfügen, feststellen können, diente es als Wohn- und nicht als Wirtschaftsgebäude.

Die Frage muss offen bleiben, ob die während der Grabungen auch hier gefundenen Holz-Lehmkonstruktionen – die in erster Linie zu den ehemaligen Stockwerken der oberen Burg gehörten, die während der Belagerung von 1593 auf den nordöstlichen Hof der unteren Burg stürzten – zu den Bauten vor 1544 gehören oder mit der fünfzigjährigen türkischen Herrschaft in Verbindung zu bringen sind.

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