

The Relation of Noble Residences and Market Towns in the Region of the Timiș Plain in the 15th-16th Centuries

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THE REGION we survey geographically belongs to the Great Hungarian Plain, more precisely to its eastern section. It is bordered to the north by the Mureș River, on the eastern side by the Carpathians, to the west by the Tisza River and to the south by the Bârzava River. Historically, in the Modern Era it was called the Banat of Timiș (Temescher Banat, in German). In the Late Middle Ages, the time-frame we investigate, this part of the Kingdom of Hungary was characterized by a low urban network, with only a few towns, being predominantly composed of market towns and villages¹.

Historian Erik Fügedi has already underlined the positive role of the presence of an estate administration center for the development of a settlement². András Kubinyi, on the other hand, admitted also the opposite: the authority of a landlord would have had a restrictive influence over the self-administration of the market towns he owned³. The jurisdictional role the landlord fulfilled in the litigations of the inhabitants and his intervention, as a patron, into issues of the church administration, for example (appointment of priests, benefit of the tithe), could be such negative aspects. According to the survey of Kubinyi, 90% of 15th century noble residences were to be found near urban settlements, or at least the use of the term *oppidum* designating the residence settlements becomes more frequent during the 15th century. The role of residential and administrative center of both royal and noble seat settlements is nevertheless taken into consideration in Kubinyi's centrality analyses. Lately, Szabolcs Gulyás, in his study on the relation of noble residences and thus of administrative centers and market towns from the northeastern part of medieval Hungary stressed the fact that a pattern does not exist in what the interaction between settlement development and residence founding is concerned⁴.

The development of market towns in the region of the Hungarian Plain presents certain particularities derived from the geographical, and thus also from the economic character of the region. It is mostly a rural landscape, focused in consequence on agricultural production. The smaller area within the plain of the Timiș River, due to its

position on the southeastern border of the kingdom, highly fits this description, for the constant threat represented by Ottoman invasions as early as the end of the 14th century certainly inhibited the urbanization and development of the region⁵. Not even the most important towns lying at the junction of the main traffic and commercial routes (Temesvár, Csanád, Lippa) ever reached a high level of urbanization⁶. Consequently, a powerful citizenry also was missing, who would have protested against the power of the landlords, as pointed out in some cases⁷. The efforts made by the landlord in order to gain certain rights and privileges for one's residential place: fairs, tax exemptions, indulgences, pilgrimages, also served the interests of the inhabitants, who had the opportunity to sell the goods they were producing without being forced to make long journeys for this purpose⁸. Landlords were evidently trying to increase their estates' income; therefore they were also directly interested in obtaining market holding rights for the settlements within their estates. The right to hold weekly fairs was frequent among our settlements. The privilege to organize early fairs apparently was held only by 3 market towns: Fellak, Czikóvásárhely (also shown by its name, which means market place) and Morsina. From the point of view of territorial jurisdiction, noblemen were again interested in exerting their influence. In our region we have a single example of a landlord receiving the right to hold a blood court. Benedict Himfy received such a privilege for his estates of Remete and Iersig in 1369⁹. However it is a positive achievement, for the inhabitants of the estate theoretically benefited from a more secure way of life. Of course it worked also the other way around, for involvement in conflicts with other noblemen or authorities could have made victims within the population throughout the entire estate, as it happened in many cases.

In order to increase the population and thus the economic output of the estate, landlords also colonized inhabitants, especially noblemen of foreign origins, the so-called *hospites*¹⁰. Beginning with the 15th century, due to the Ottoman advance, Serbian population arrived north of the Danube¹¹. Hungarian kings granted permission to settle and lands here to several Serbian noblemen, like the Jaksics. Later on they favored the colonization of Serbian population within their estates, on behalf of whom they also obtained tax exemptions.

In the following we will offer an analysis of the subject matter in connection to the geographical area described above. We are far from having collected all data of interest, but some observations can be nevertheless jotted down¹².

Out of the 29¹³ recorded *castella* throughout the plain of the Temes River, 15 were to be found in/nearby market towns (see map). These are: Borzlyuk, Chery, Czikóvásárhely (Pathkolcz), Endrőd (Facset), Fellak, Hodos, Iktár, Rékás, Sarad, Sasvar, Monostor, Morsyn, Zadya, Zádorlak, and Zewdy. In what concerns the level of development, according to the survey made by András Kubinyi, these belong to the category of market towns, with 6-10 centrality points, meaning average marketplaces. The other group is made up by villages with market holding rights. They are mainly located along secondary routes and represent the lowest ranked settlement group, totalling 1-5 points. Due to the severe destruction of the medieval charters referring to our region, most probably this ranking is not quite exact and it would suffer some limited adjustments.

Although there is a high number of castles and residences in the region¹⁴, data are extremely scarce regarding the moment of their construction, physical appearance etc. We encounter the same situation in the case of marketplaces referring to their privileges, market holding rights, citizens, churches or monasteries, administration and so on. Chery represents a fortunate case, for a relatively high number of charters referring to it permit a more thorough analysis. The estate of Chery, mentioned for the first time in the papal tax collection evidence from 1332 -1337, was in the Anjou period part of the royal estate belonging to the castle of Temesvár. Around 1366 King Louis the Great founded here an Observant Franciscan monastery, among the first ones throughout Hungary, alongside the one founded in nearby Caransebeş¹⁵. Both belonged to the Franciscan province of Bosnia and had a missionary role in the context of King Louis's military offensive against Bosnia and his general anti-schismatic policies. In 1372 the settlement already appeared in charters as *civitas*, and the estate was organized as a district¹⁶. In 1387 King Sigismund donated the royal estate of Chery to Stephen Korógy, ban of Mačva. According to written sources the castle near Chery, mentioned with this name, must have been built under the ownership of this aristocratic family. Its first, indirect mention dates back to 1439, when the castellan of Chery appears in a charter¹⁷. In 1453 the *oppidum* of Chery was mentioned¹⁸. After the death of John of Kórogy the estate became once again a Crown possession, being donated later on by King Matthias to the Kaniža brothers, Ladislaus and Nicholas¹⁹. At this date the same charter refers to the stronghold either as *castrum*, or *castellum*. In the case of Chery we witness a typical exaggerated formula within the donation document issued by King Matthias, in which the denominations *castrum* and *civitas* are used singularly related to the castle and the market town. In 1473, the castle of Chery appears, along with its estate, among the assets of the Nadasdi Wngor family²⁰. Following the agreement based on a co-divisional brotherhood between John Wngor and Michael Zob, after the death of John Wngor in 1506, his estates were taken over by Michael Zob²¹. In 1507 Michael gave the estate of Chery and the castle to protonotary Stephen Werbóczy²². Prior to the Ottoman conquest, in 1552 Chery, both the castle and the estate, was the property of Peter Petrovic, count of Timiș²³.

Regarding the development of the settlement of Chery, written data are nearly inexistent. In the early period of its existence Chery had belonged to the Crown. The unequal presence in charters might cause an erroneous perception on the urbanization of the village. However, we can state that the settlement received an important impulse already in the second half of the 14th century due to the establishment of the Franciscan friary. Other benefits came along later on. The Korógy family also resorted to colonization, or more likely facilitated the establishment of certain citizens, apparently craftsmen, within the boundaries of the market town²⁴. This generosity of the landlord can be interpreted as an action meant to ensure the prosperity of the (residential) estate center, but later documents let us suspect more selfish reasons, that is, the endeavor to obtain a certain control over the administrative and jurisdictional activity of the market towns council. Philip Korógy appointed Andrew as court judge (judge of *hospites*), and somewhat later also as knez at Sacoș. Within the text of the charter issued in 1403 are also men-

tioned the judges and officials of Korógy: *iudicibus et officialibus nostris in dicta civitate nostra Cheri*. The two subjects are also withdrawn from under the authority of the territorial jurisdiction.

All recorded market towns seem to have their first documentary evidence as such from the middle of the 15th century onwards²⁵. A relatively quick ascent in the settlement hierarchy can also be observed. As Historian Livia Magina has pointed out in her case study concerning Fellak²⁶, following the moment of donation of the settlement in 1478 to the Jakšić family²⁷, of Serbian origin, in the space of half a century from a deserted village (*predium*) it reached the rank of market town (*oppidum*) some time before 1534, when it gained the right of holding two annual fairs (*nundinum seu forum annualium liberum*) and a weekly fair on every Sunday²⁸. Both annual fairs were limited to a sole day. Meanwhile, due to the intercession of the landlords, the villagers (mainly Serbian population colonized by the Jakšić family) received tax exemptions as well²⁹. The geographical position of the settlement, situated near the Mures River, also generated additional financial benefits in the form of tolls, as a document mentions a lawsuit concerning the right of levying a port toll over the river between Fellak and Papi³⁰. All these privileges granted by the central authority on behalf of its loyal servant led to a quick growth of the settlement and of the estate.

The destiny of the market town called Sasvar was also bound in the Late Middle Ages to that of another Serbian nobleman, Voivode Miloš Belmužević. He had taken up residence on the territory of Hungary, more precisely in Timiș County, along with his family, through the grace of King Matthias, following the Ottoman conquest of Fort Smederevo and the territory of Despotovina³¹. In a few years he gained several estates here, as a reward for his military contribution during the wars against the Ottomans. All estates were to be found near the county seat of Temesvar³², among them the above mentioned Sasvar. The settlement and estate were obtained for the military services provided in 1474 in Silesia. The settlement appears for the first time as *oppidum* in 1492³³, and its development was probably boosted under the ownership of the Belmužević family. Unfortunately, more information is lacking regarding this aspect. However, the market town must have been the estate center and the residential settlement, for the owner families always took the appellation *de Sasvar*. Similarly to the Jakšić family, Belmužević also favored the colonization of Serbian inhabitants³⁴. From among them came also the officials found in the service of the family, bearing the Slavic title of *waywoda*. As the name of the settlement suggests, a fortification was to be found inside its boundaries, mentioned in charters, as far as we know, only at the middle of the 16th century as *Castrum Sasvar cum oppido*³⁵. The settlement's first documentary evidence can be traced back to 1332-37, then 1372³⁶. Later, in 1428, the road leading to the village was mentioned³⁷. This means either that a medieval fortification already existed at this time, or more likely the settlement was established nearby or on the site of an older, prehistoric fortification, from which it took its name. In Ottoman records from 1566-1567, a St. George monastery is mentioned nearby³⁸. The founding of the establishment must be also linked to one of the landlords, most likely the Belmužević. In the testament of the head of the family a monk Timothy is mentioned as his confessor, and the document itself was drawn up by a certain Marko, deacon³⁹. After the family's extinction on the male line with

the death of Miloš and his sons, the estate was finally obtained by the Jaksic family, through matrimonial relations with the daughter of Miloš⁴⁰. At this point they were the owners of three castles along with the adjacent market towns and estates: Nagylak, Czeffresd at Fellak and Sasvar, all of them called *castrum* in the charter. It is typical, that the “home” castle of the family, Nagylak, along with the homonymous market town, was equally divided and kept in common use, while the castle of Czeffresd with the town of Fellak and the castle and town of Sasvar were apportioned between the two heiresses.

Zewdy⁴¹ is another good example of a case study, for we have good documentary evidence. The village entered into the possession of the Pósa family sometime before 1311⁴². In 1400 it already had an annual fair⁴³. The first mention of Zewdy as a market town dates back, as far as we know, only to 1452⁴⁴. The Szeri Pósa family had its residence here probably from the very beginning. Although the male members, especially the father, had a successful career during the Anjou period, it seems that they didn't insist on the development of the settlement, whilst efforts were made to enlarge their estate through donations and purchases. One of the most important such acquisitions was the village called Hodos, received through royal donation before 1405⁴⁵. From 1428 it appears in charters as *oppidum*, and the homonymous fortification nearby appears in charters from 1458, along with the associated toll.⁴⁶ According to this document, at this date the Pósa family didn't yet have a *castellum*-like fortified residence also in Zewdy, and most likely they lived in a manor house. Before Hodos entered into the possession of the Pósa family, around the year 1368, Benedict Himfy sent his private chaplain to fulfill the role of parish priest, but the seat was already taken by a priest appointed by the villagers⁴⁷. The villagers' letter indicates that before that the count of Temes had not been involved in the appointment of priests, and they asked him to respect this privilege. The intrusion of the high dignitary could have stemmed from his position, associated with the ambition to acquire the settlement and its estate, as it becomes obvious from later documents. Another charter comes to underline the “ancient” privileges the citizens of Hodos, for in 1428 King Sigismund issued a charter in which he mentioned the Lugos toll tax freedom of the citizens and serfs of Hodos⁴⁸.

Borzlyuk, similarly with Chery, was the center of a royal estate with 28-30 villages until the middle of the 15th century. In the Anjou period the *hospites regii* were mentioned⁴⁹. In 1456, when it was granted to John of Hunyad, it was noted as a district center. We can conclude that a castle existed nearby from a charter dated in 1483, in which appears the castellan of the Bánfi family of Lendva. The Bánfi family was granted the estate of Borzlyuk sometime around 1477.

We hardly know anything about Morsina and Monostor. Both were settlements within the privileged districts from the northeastern part of the region and reached the rank of market towns in 1439, respectively in 1484. The castles are mentioned late, in 1505. Around the middle of the 15th century both were placed in gauge and granted to John of Hunyad, being included into the great Hunyadi estate. As such, the two settlements played the role of secondary administrative centers of the great Hunyadi estate. In a similar way to forts, castles were probably also the sites of toll and income collection, as the example of Monostor shows. In a charter from the beginning of the 16th century it is noted that the taxes were collected at the castle⁵⁰.

Of all residential market towns, besides the above discussed Fellak we have evidence of the right of organizing annual fairs only in three other cases: Endröd, Czikóvásárhely and Morsina. Endröd and Morsina had the right of holding weekly fairs as well. Four other market towns, namely, Rékás, Sarad, Monostor and Iktár had only weekly fairs, Hodos and Rékas benefited from the income of road tolls.

It is important to point out that *castella* are mainly concentrated in the northern part of the “province”, that is, the Temesköz region, gravitating around the county seat of Temesvár. On the one hand, this is explained by the geomorphologic character of the northern part, which was the eastern limit of the Hungarian Plain. As such, it was best suited for the formation of large estates, even to the detriment of the tenure of the royal fort of Temesvár. In the southern, part royal properties and castles were more numerous due to the strategic military importance of this border region in the vicinity of the Serbian kingdom and the Voivodate of Wallachia. If we look at the map of the region, it becomes evident that the market towns are situated along the main routes, eight in number. One ran parallel to the Mures River; the others linked the county seat of Temesvár with Arad and Transylvania towards the northeast, with Szeged and the core of the realm towards the west, and with the Danube to the south. The presence of a water flow is also a rule in almost all cases of castles. The presence of a river was important for at least two reasons. First, we must underline the defensive role: built in the lowlands, probably using less rough materials (brick, wood and earth), these fortifications, *castella* or noble residences were extremely vulnerable. As such, water courses were used as natural moats. From this feature comes the “water castle” name of this type of strongholds. The second, but not less important role of the presence of rivers is the economic one, for one of the main sources of income for castles and estates was milling. The example of Chery is extremely illustrative. It had no more than 24 mills. From one of the charters from the middle of the 15th century, which lists the possessions of the castle of Chery, we learn that four mills were made of stone and were serving directly the castle’s needs. The other twenty were dispersed throughout the estate. Watermills are mentioned in charters in a high number due to the dense river network in the region and many times represented the cause of conflicts between neighboring families.

The castles and market towns were placed in strategic points, so the taxes collected here in the form of road tolls and port tolls represented further important sources of income for the estate.

Conclusions

BASED ON the information presented above, castles and their estates in the Temes Plain can be grouped into three main categories: smaller estates of local noble families, positioned near small villages and which would never reach a higher level of development. Because of their modest social condition, the owners didn’t manage to put together a larger domain, and due to the extinction of the family, to the division of the estate, or even to the relocation of the family, the estates would not have a long life. It seems that these are the earliest castles, and they became deserted together with

the adjoining settlements towards the end of the 15th century. This is the case of the residences at Obad, Jobbágy, Macedonia, Vareleye, Jebel, and İktâr.

In the late 15th century important noble families came to acquire vast estates from extinct or disloyal landlords through royal donations or through gauge. This makes up the second category of castles. It is the case of the Guti, Garai, Haraszti, Jakšić families. Franciscus Haraszti, ban of Szörény, became the owner of several estates and castles, them through donations, purchase and pledge. The Serbian Jakšić also succeeded to amass more estates, as presented above.

In the region of the Hungarian Plain, and thus in the Temes Plain as well, where urban settlements were rare, market towns along with their pecuniary benefits certainly presented a great interest for landlords who were seeking to build up their estates here. Their military obligations demanded serious material and human resources, especially here on the border with the Ottoman Empire, for reparation and construction works on forts and military campaigns were more and more a necessity⁵¹. Consequently, supporting the development of such settlements, or trying to enter in the possession of more market towns, must have been to the benefit of landlords.

Searching for a relationship pattern between market towns and noble residences would probably not lead to considerable results, as already stated before. We can, however, ask some questions, the answers leading us perhaps to other issues than the topic expressed in the title of our paper. One of these questions is: Out of all market towns in the analyzed region, how many fulfilled the role of residential settlements and estate centers? Based on our best knowledge, in the case of Temes County we can state that out of 20 market towns (*oppidum*)⁵², 12 had a *castellum* type or fortified noble residence and two a fort⁵³. In the case of Gladna we are aware of the existence of a medieval fortification dated in the 15th century that has no documentary evidence. One, Berény, might also have had a fortification nearby that could date from medieval times. Four market towns were also district centers, two with a castle also. Two market towns which did not have a residence within their boundaries were district centers or important traffic nodes. Five other castles were related to villages⁵⁴. The situation is similar in Arad County, were out of 12 market towns 8 also had a castle within their boundaries and were estate centers. Here too we can presume the existence of further castles, as in the case of Szécsény. In Csanád there are nine market towns in evidence with only four castles⁵⁵. We encounter a different situation in Krassó, a border county, were royal forts and the adjacent estates were predominating. The two noble residences mentioned in charters as *castellum* are to be found near villages⁵⁶.

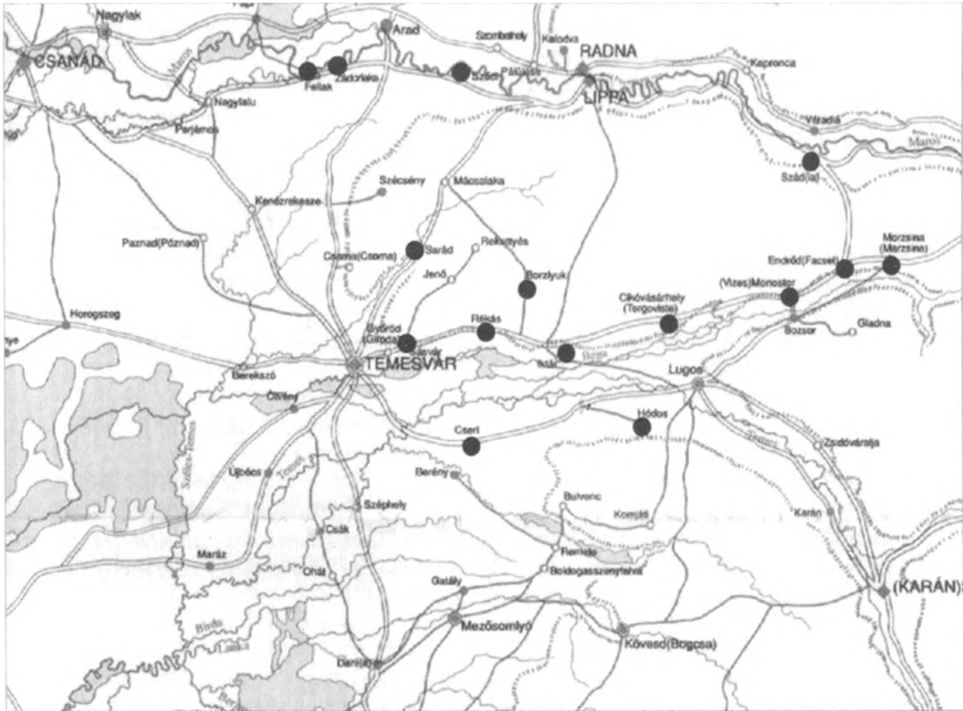
The overlapping of the two dwelling types is generally the result of social and economic changes, which took place during the 15th century. Due to the frequent donation acts of estates on behalf of noblemen, the private estates belonging to noblemen became larger. For the administration of these extended landed estates several centers, main and secondary, needed to be created, and one or even more residences were constructed. This is also the period, as noted at the beginning, when the number of market towns increased through natural development, but mainly as a consequence of the landlord's attempts to secure for themselves the economic benefits of the settlements.

Historian Erik Fügedi has isolated a distinct category of market towns, namely the estate administration centers⁵⁷. In the northeastern part of the Hungarian Plain, more precisely in the region between the Tisa and Mureş Rivers and Transylvania, out of the 20 market towns, 19 played the role of estate administration centers and also residential towns. Following the short overview of the situation found south of the Mureş River, we can state that we encountered an identical manifestation of the market towns.

TABLE 1: LIST OF RESIDENTIAL MARKET TOWNS

	Settlement name	1 st evidence of the castle	1 st evidence as oppidum	Tolls and fairs
1	Borzlyuk	1483	1477	-
2	Chery	1443	1443: civitas 1453: oppidum	-
3	Czikóvásárhely	1480	1480	Yearly fair
4	Facsád (Endrőd?)	1548	1550: oppidum 1554-1579: town	3 yearly fairs weekly fair
5	Fellak ("Czefresd")	1540-1550	1534	Port, yearly fair, weekly fair
6	Hodos	1471	1437	Road toll
7	Iktár	1597	1554-1579: town	Weekly fair
8	Monosthor	1505	1484	Weekly fair
9	Morsyn	1505	1439	Weekly and yearly fair
10	Rékás	1476	1443: Civitas 1453: oppidum	Weekly fair Toll
11	Sarad	1479	1479	Weekly fair
12	Sasvar	1540-1560	1492	-
13	Zadorlaka	1480	1480	-
14	Zadya	1479	1479	Toll
15	Zewdy	1471	1471	Port Weekly fair

MAP 1: RESIDENTIAL MARKET TOWNS IN THE TIMIŞ PLAIN
(based on a map by A. Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés*)



Notes

1. András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén*. *Seria Del-Alföldi Évszázadok* 14 (Szeged, 2000); István Petrovics, *Urban Development in the Danube-Tisa-Mureș Region in the Middle Ages*. *Analele Banatului*, S. N., *Istorie-Arheologie*, IX (2001), 389-399;
2. Erik Fügedi, *Mezővárosaink kialakulása a XIV. században*. *Történelmi Szemle* 14 (1972), 323-325.
3. András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés*, 17.
4. Gulyás László Szabolcs, *Rezidencia és városfejlődés: földesúr és mezőváros a középkori Magyarország észkekeleti részén*, *Urbs* 7 (2012), 201-226.
5. István Petrovics, *Foreign Ethnic Groups in the Towns of Southern Hungary in the Middle Ages*. Derek Keene, Balázs Nagy, Katalin Szende (Eds.), *Segregation-Integration-Assimilation. Religious and Ethnic Groups in the Medieval Towns of Central and Eastern Europe*. *Historical Urban Studies Series*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 88.
6. István Petrovics, *Urban development*, 393-398.
7. András Kubinyi *Városfejlődés*, 17, f.n. 41.
8. Erik Fügedi, *Mezővárosaink*, 323-325.

9. Pesty Frigyes, *Oklevelek Temesmegye és Temesvárváros történetéhez*, ed. Ortway Tivadar, I, (Pozsony, 1896), 107, no. 65. Remete doesn't appear in our list, for it never reached the rank of market town and no castle is mentioned.
10. István Petrovics, *Foreign Ethnic Groups*, 67-74
11. István Petrovics, *Foreign Ethnic Groups*, 88.
12. The high number of still unpublished charters also represents an impediment.
13. We have counted directly mentioned *castella* and noble residences and fortifications presumed on the basis of the mentioning of their *castellani*.
14. See the county-based distribution of such small castles at Tibor Koppány, *A középkori Magyarország kastélyai*. Művészettörténeti Füzetek 26 (1999), 249-254. Timiș County alone has 21 items. The 29 we are dealing with also include sites from Cenad, Arad, Caraș and Torontal Counties, administrative units which are partly overlapping the geographical area under our research.
15. Beatrix Romhányi (ed.), *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon*, 2007, CD-ROM digital version, s.v. "Cseri".
16. *Documenta Historiam Valachorum in Hungaria Illustrantia*. ed. Antonius Fekete Nagy – Ladislaus Makkai, (Budapestini, 1941), 243 (no. 197).
17. DL 44240.
18. Frigyes Pesty, *Diplome privind istoria comitatului Timiș și a orașului Timișoara*. II. 1430-1470, (Ed. Livia Magina, Adrian Magina), 254 (no. 222).
19. Frigyes Pesty, *Diplome*, 323-324 (no. 279).
20. DL 16167.
21. Adrian Magina, Estate and Fort of Chery in the Middle Ages. *Interethnic Relations in Transylvania. Militaria Mediaevalia in Central and South Eastern Europe*. Proceedings of the 2014 conference, ed. Zeno Karl Pinter, Anca Nițoi, (Sibiu 2015), 65.
22. DL 72111.
23. Adrian Magina, *Estate and Fort Chery*, 65.
24. One of the persons favored by the landlord was named George the Tailor. He and a certain Andrew, son of Ladislaus were exempted from paying taxes for the plots they had bought in the town. In the charter, Korogyi names them *familiars*, and his act is in fact a reward for the services of the two subjects. A. Magina, *Estate and Fort Chery*, Annex 1.
25. The documentary evidence severely marked by the destruction of charters referring to our region might suggest a slightly erroneous image, but we clearly observe in villages a tendency towards urban development taking place in the late medieval period.
26. Livia Magina, Dreptul de târg și procesul de urbanizare. Cazul Felnac. *Analele Banatului*, S. N., Istorie-Arheologie, XVIII (2010), 143-148.
27. The existence of the settlement can be traced beginning with the first half of the 14th century. Csánki, CD-ROM digital version, vol. I, Arad County, Settlements, s.v. "Fellak".
28. Livia Magina, Dreptul de târg, 145-148, appendix I.
29. Livia Magina, Dreptul de târg, 144-145,
30. Livia Magina, O dispută pentru locul de vad de la Mureș (1543). *Analele Banatului*, S. N., Istorie-Arheologie, XXI, 2013, 295-298.
31. Adrian Magina, Un nobil sârb în Banatul secolului al XV-lea, Milos Belmužević. *Analele Banatului*, S. N., Istorie-Arheologie, XVIII (2010), 135-142.
32. Some of the settlements had belonged to the royal estate of the castle of Temesvar.
33. DL 19618.
34. According to the note of historian Adrian Magina, at the beginning of the 16th century the population of Sasvar and of other settlements counted more and more Serbs. Adrian Magina, Un nobil sârb, 137.
35. Adrian Magina, Un nobil sârb, 137.

36. Tivadar Ortway, *Magyarország egyházi földleírása a XIV. század elején a pápai tizedjegyzékek alapján feltűntetve*, II (Budapest: 1892), Pesty Frigyes, *Oklevelek*, 121-122 (rec. 77). The charter mentions Abraham *litterati officialis de Sasvar*, being probably in the service of Nicholas de Gara, the landlord of Sasvar.
37. *Via Saaswarwtha*, DL 12031. The name most certainly derives from the Hungarian “sás” meaning reed, and not “sas”=eagle, for it was situated along the Temes valley and not on a hill or mountain.
38. Dumitru Țeicu, *Geografia ecleziastică a Banatului medieval* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 116-117.
39. Adrian Magina, Un nobil sârb, 140.
40. The charter dated between 1540-1560 records the division of the great estate of the Serbian family between the two daughters, Scolastica and Elisabeth.
41. The village situated in the Mures valley was located near Frumuşeni (Arad County), west of the Bizere Benedictine abbey. The first written information of the settlement dates back to the end of the 12th century. The charter survived under the form of a 14th century transcript, in which King Ladislaus I donated the village along with other estates to the provostry of Titel. György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza*. I. 1987, 186, DL 87218, Ferenc Sebők, *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, XXXI, 1347 (Budapest-Szeged 2007), 395, (no.754).
42. DL 91166, Gyula Kristó, *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár*, III, 1311-1314 (Budapest-Szeged 1994), 44, 83. sz. regezsza.
43. Pesty, *Oklevelek*, 294-295, no. 171.
44. DL 93207.
45. The estate of Hodos was coveted also by the Himfy family; in 1437 the two families were in the middle of a lawsuit on the matter of its ownership. Pesty, *Diplome*, 77-78, no. 53.
46. DF 261895, Pesty, *Diplome*, 452-454, no. 278.
47. DL 47873. The identity of the claimants, most probably *hospites*, is unknown and at that date the settlement was merely a village. In this case, as a hospes settlement, it probably had earned certain rights, such as appointing the parish priest, as long as the count or the landlord had no desire to name his own protégé. András Kubinyi, *Plébánosválasztás és egyházközségi önkormányzata középkori Magyarországon. Főpapok, egyházi intézmények és vallásosság a középkori Magyarországon*. METEM könyvek 22. (Budapest 1999), 269-286.
48. Frigyes Pesty, *Krassó vármegye története*, II/1 (Budapest 1884), 214.
49. 1374: Csánki, *Magyarország történeti földrajza a Hunyadiak korában*. CD-ROM digital version. II. Temes, Városok, s.v. “Borzlyuk”.
50. Frigyes Pesty, *Krassó*, II/2, 23-32; József Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoarei la începutul secolului al XVI-lea*. (Bucureşti 1973), 151, doc. 29.
51. The estate of Berény was, for example, donated to Filippo Scolari in 1407, then he also obtained the estate of the Lackfy situated in the Mures valley, at least Szad.
52. We based our statistics on the database created by A. Kubinyi and we included only the settlements with *oppidum* denomination. We did not count the settlements with market-holding rights called *possessiones*. We also didn't count the towns of Temeswar and Lugos.
53. Documents referring to the region are far from being exhaustively published, therefore there might be other market towns. Because of content and time restraints we have chosen to look only at one of the administrative units, Temes County, which in the 15-16th century was the largest and mainly overlapped the lowland, where the extended estates were to be found.
54. We must take into account the fact that the documentary evidence of these settlements as market towns is not yet known or has been destroyed, which would cause some variations in our survey. The observation is applicable to all counties.

55. In Kubinyi's database we find only a single castle at Kovácsháza, Koppány, on the other hand, mentioned another three.
56. Szentgyörgy and Gyertyános.
57. Erik Fügedi, *Mezővárosaink*, 325.

Abstract

The Relation of Noble Residences and Market Towns in the Region of the Timiș Plain in the 15th-16th Centuries

In our short overview we wanted to take a look at the association of noble residences mentioned as castellum in the medieval charters and the settlements found nearby. It is a general phenomenon throughout the Kingdom of Hungary and beyond: from the 15th century onwards noblemen preferred fortified residences located near settlements, instead of the more isolated mountaintop forts. Scholars have already debated the subject of this relationship and tried to answer the question whether the presence of residences stimulated the development of settlements to the rank of market towns or rather already existing market towns attracted landlords to take up residence there. On account of the lack of charters referring to the region of the Timiș Plain, the question of anteriority cannot be easily cleared. It is however evident that the landlord had the interest to contribute to the development of the settlements he owned. Rich market towns also represented important assets to the economy of the estates. In the Timiș Plain the majority of market towns were so-called residential settlements and also played the role of estate administration centers.

Keywords

noble residences, castles, market towns, estate centers, Timiș Plain