

# Mendicant Friaries as Hosts of Diets in Medieval Hungary A Short Overview\*

**András Vadas**

*ELTE BTK Institute of History, Budapest, Hungary*

e-mail: vadas.andras@btk.elte.hu

**Abstract:** In this paper I aim to combine political history and topography to highlight a less frequently discussed role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Hungary between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries: their houses as hosts of diets. In the centre of the Hungarian Kingdom in Buda and Pest Mendicant friaries hosted parts of the negotiations connected to diets on a number of occasions. Apart from that historical scholarship usually associates Franciscan friaries at Győr and Szeged as hosts to diets of 1455 and 1444, 1459 and 1495 respectively. Recent scholarship demonstrated that at least part of the diet held at Tata in 1510 was at the Franciscan friary. The paper apart from analyzing the surviving written evidence connected to the listed diets aims at drawing attention to the special role of these houses in the political life of the country.

**Key words:** Mendicant Orders, political history, topography, diets, Franciscans, Dominicans

**Rezumat:** Conventurile mendicante ca locuri de găzduire a dietelor în Ungaria medievală. O punere de problemă. În acest articol îmi propun să combin istoria politică și topografia pentru a evidenția un aspect mai puțin discutat al rolului jucat de dominicani și franciscani în Ungaria între secolele XIII și XVI și anume, conventurile lor drept locuri de întâlnire a dietelor. În centrul regatului maghiar, la Buda și Pesta, conventurile mendicante au găzduit de mai multe ori o parte a negocierilor referitoare la diete. Mai mult, cercetarea istorică a asociat frecvent conventurile franciscane de la Győr și Szeged ca fiind locuri predilecte de găzduire a dietelor, cum s-a întâmplat cu cele ținute în anii 1444, 1455, 1459 și 1495. Mai recent, a fost de asemenea demonstrat că cel puțin o parte a lucrărilor dietei desfășurate la Tata în anul 1510 a

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avut loc în conventul franciscanilor. Scopul acestui articol nu este doar acela de a analiza sursele scrise supraviețuite în legătură cu mai sus amintitele diete, ci și acela de a atrage atenția asupra rolului extrem de important jucat de conventurile mendicante în viața politică a regatului.

**Cuvinte cheie:** ordine mendicante, istorie politică, topografie, diete, franciscani, dominicani

It is a commonplace that because of the heavily destroyed archives of the Franciscans and Dominicans in East-Central Europe, scholars of ecclesiastical history are forced to look at different sorts of evidence that have traditionally received less focus in research coming from Western Europe. Even in this volume, studies show the potential of using for instance archaeology, architectural history or topography to study the role or position of a certain order, or a specific friary in the life of medieval Hungary. In this paper I aim to combine political history and topography to highlight a less frequently discussed role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Hungary between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries: their houses as hosts of diets.

In the following pages the focus will not be on specific careers of Franciscans or Dominicans and their activities in ecclesiastical circles or their lay connections but rather on the problem of the general involvement of the friaries in political life. When investigating the dietary life in late medieval Hungary it is striking that in many cases diets, or part of diets, were held in ecclesiastical spaces, including either at Franciscan or at Dominican friaries. The question is obvious then: Why there? In many cases the answer is self-evident – these churches or the enclosed areas (either courtyards, cloisters or refectories) of the friaries could host more people than any other buildings at a certain settlement where the nobility or the barons gathered. However, looking at actual settlements, the question seems less obvious and the answer seems to be more complex. What is the logic behind choosing certain institutions as the host place of a gathering of the barons and other members of the Hungarian nobility? Before turning to some cases, this study looks at the sources that can be of assistance when dealing with the problem.

## SOURCES

Writing the history of diets in late medieval Hungary is certainly a challenging task. Even finding the number of diets held in the Middle Ages is extremely difficult. Research in the last few years demonstrated

how little we know about diets of the Kingdom in the late fifteenth – early sixteenth centuries. Traditionally, the most dependable sources a historian can touch upon when studying diets are the decrees themselves issued by the king in their aftermath. There are dozens of diets however after which the kings never issued formal decrees or the decrees did not come down to us. But even if decrees survived and are known to scholars they usually tell very little about the downflow of a certain gathering and moreover about the location of diets.<sup>1</sup>

If the sources that we are dealing with were only royal decrees then we would have very limited information about the place of the diets in question as the decrees were usually issued either in Buda or at other places the king was temporarily resident, weeks after the events. It is only from the fifteenth century that there is a relatively wide variety of sources on the diets themselves. On the one hand there are more and more available charters issued during diets but what is certainly more important from the point of view of the present study are new kinds of sources, such as envoys' reports, which tell previously unknown details about the ways negotiations took place. Of course consulting the narrative sources is also fundamental as the works of Thuróczy, Bonfini and others also significantly contribute to our knowledge of the dietary life of Hungary. Despite the relatively ample research prospects there are only a few diets that have been treated in the scholarship in detail<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the problem, see amongst other studies: Norbert C. Tóth, 'Nádorváltás 1458-ban. Mátyás király első országgyűlésének időpontja' [Change of the palatine in 1458. The date of the first diet of King Matthias] *Turul*, 84 (2011): 98–101; Tibor Neumann, 'Királyi hatalom és országgyűlés a Jagelló-kor elején' [Royal power and diets at the beginning of the Jagellonian period], in Tamás Dobszay et al. (eds), *Rendiség és parlamentarizmus Magyarországon: A kezdetektől 1918-ig* [Estate system and dietary life in Hungary from the beginnings to 1918] (Budapest: Argumentum, 2013), pp. 46–54 and on the problem of the diets held in the second half of the reign of Wladislas II, see Gábor Mikó, 'Ismeretlen országgyűlési emlék a Jagelló-korból' [Unknown parliamentary record from the Jagellonian period], *Történelmi Szemle*, 56 (2014): 455–480 (all with significant literature relevant for the topic).

<sup>2</sup> See the example of the diets at Pest-Buda in 1490: Tibor Neumann, 'II. Ulászló koronázása és első rendeletei (Egy ismeretlen országgyűlésről és koronázási dekrétumról)' [The coronation and first decrees of Wladislas II (On an unknown diet and the coronation decree)], *Századok*, 142 (2008): 315–337; Tata (1510): Bálint Lakatos, 'A tatai országgyűlés és diplomáciai háttere (1508–1510)', in László János (ed), *A diplomácia válaszútján: 500 éve volt Tatán országgyűlés* [At the cross roads of diplomacy. The diet of Tata took place 500 years ago] (*Annales Tataienses*, 6) (Tata:

and even less has been written on the course of the diets themselves.<sup>3</sup> The present survey is however not intending to describe the complete history of diets in medieval Hungary and their connection with ecclesiastical institutions, but rather a few case studies are used to highlight the importance of the problem.

Most of the diets between the late thirteenth and the early sixteenth century were held in the so-called *medium regni*, the central part of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary with Buda and Pest in the centre. However a royal assembly meant much more at that time than a meeting of all the estates at a certain place and negotiations on certain problems. Two relevant questions are considered in these lines with regard to the organization of the diets: where exactly have the diets been held and what was the role of the Mendicants at these gatherings?

#### DIETS AND THE MENDICANT FRIARIES AT PEST

The first occasion when Mendicant houses were certainly involved at a diet is one in 1298. That year the nobility was called to gather at the church of the Franciscans at Pest (*nos...apud Ecclesiam Fratrum minorum in Pesth...cum omnibus Nobilibus Hungariae, singulis Saxonibus, Comanis, in unum convenientes*) after which they held a diet at the Fields of Rákos.<sup>4</sup> The diet itself or at least the parts that involved a

Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Múzeumok Igazgatósága, 2010), pp. 29–65; Pest-Buda (1514): Norbert C. Tóth, 'Az 1514. márciusi országgyűlés. (Politikatörténeti események Magyarországon a parasztháború kitöréséig)' [The Diet in March 1514. Political Issues in Hungary till the Outbreak of the Peasant War], (in preparation) or Hatvan (1525): András Kubinyi, 'Politikai vitakultúra Magyarországon: Bácsi Ferenc szózata a hatvani országgyűléshez (1525), valamint egy latin verse' [Political culture in Hungary: The allocution of Ferenc Bácsi to the synod of Hatvan], in Tibor Almási – István Draskóczy – Éva Jancsó (eds), *Studia professoris – professor studiorum. Tanulmányok Érszegi Géza hatvanadik születésnapjára* [Studies in honour of Géza Érszegi for his sixtieth birthday], (Budapest: Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2005), pp. 169–195 and András Kubinyi, 'Országgyűlési küzdelmek Magyarországon 1523–1525-ben' [Dietary struggles in Hungary between 1523 and 1525], in Tibor Neumann – György Rác (eds), *Honoris causa: tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére* [Studies in honour of Pál Engel] (Társadalom- és Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok, 40 = *Analecta Mediaevalia*, 3), (Budapest – Piliscsaba: MTA Történettudományi Intézet – Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2009), pp. 125–148.

<sup>3</sup> The most important work in this respect is: András Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések tárgyalási rendje 1445–1526' [The order of discussions at the Hungarian diet, 1445–1526], *Jogtörténeti Szemle*, 8/2 (2006): 3–11.

<sup>4</sup> *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis I–XI*, ed. Georgius Fejér (Buda: Typis Typogr. Regia Universitatis Ungaricae, 1829–1844), VI/2, p. 131. For the

considerable number of nobles were held at the Fields of Rákos that surrounded the town of Pest, and most probably at least the opening mass was held in the church of the Franciscans, if nothing else.<sup>5</sup> The friary according to the literature may have been close to the thirteenth century wall in the eastern part of Pest,<sup>6</sup> next to the road that led to Kerepes. The only proof of it is the fact that the Franciscan church still stands there, but no archaeological or written evidence from the thirteenth century supports this. The only remains that were discovered under the present Baroque church building were identified as remains of a mosque from the Ottoman period.

The memory of a diet of 1299 is preserved in a number of charters. The nobility met the barons and the king this time at the Dominican friary of Pest (*congregatione nostra in Pest in ecclesia fratrum Praedicatorum habita per nos adherant*).<sup>7</sup> The exact location of this friary is still unknown despite the existence of a number of charters referring to it. Earlier it was thought to have been previously located at the same place where it was established after the Ottoman occupation, but archaeological evidence proved that the present Baroque building (present-day church of the Loreto Sisters at 47/b Váci Street) replaced three medieval houses and not a church. Others suggested that the friary was slightly south of the

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decrees see also: János M. Bak et al. (eds) *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Decreta Regni Mediaevalis Hungariae* (5 vols, Bakersfield: Charles Schlacks Jr., 1989–2012), vol. 1, pp. 46–51.

<sup>5</sup> On the field of Rákos, see: Béla Iványi, *Adalékok régi országgyűléseink Rákos nevéhez* [Data to the Rákos name of our ancient diets] (Szeged: Tudományegyetem Barátainak Egyesülete, 1935). See also for the diets held in Rákos: László Szende, *A Rákos mezsei országgyűlések története* [The history of diets at the field of Rákos] (Budapest: Papcsák Ügyvédi Iroda, 2010). See also: János M. Bak – András Vadas, 'Diets and Synods in Buda and Environs', in *Medieval Buda in Context*.

<sup>6</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok a középkori Magyarországon* [Monasteries and collegiate chapters in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Pytheas, 2000), p. 51 and György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza* [Historical geography of Hungary in the Árpadian period] (4 vols, Budapest: Akadémiai, 1998), vol. 4, p. 545 [henceforth: ÁMTF] and György Györffy, 'Budapest története az Árpád-korban' [The history of Budapest in the Árpadian Period], in László Gerevich (ed), *Budapest története I. Az Árpád-kor végéig* [The history of Budapest I. From Prehistory to the end of the Árpadian Period] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), pp. 283–284.

<sup>7</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (Hungarian National Archives National Archive) Diplomatikai Levéltár (Collection of Diplomats) (MNL OL DL) 38 135.

late medieval town of Pest next to the Danube.<sup>8</sup> György Györffy, however, argued that the parish church of Szent(erszébet)falva (close to which village the Dominican friary was originally standing) was once at the present-day site of Szerb Street and the friary at the present-day Egyetem Square (within the thirteenth century wall, near the road leading to Szeged).<sup>9</sup> However just like the case of the Franciscan church this is only a presumption based on topographical observations (e.g. the general location of mendicant churches in the Central European towns) and other indirect evidence. It is not clear if it was only the opening mass or also some negotiations of the nobility and king which took place in the friary. The former is much more likely as the palatine Máté Csák and the king issued charters at Rákos (*Rakus*) around the same time.<sup>10</sup> Several barons as well as the palatine issued charters at the Field of Rákos again in 1300 which suggests a diet having taken place there but this time no reference was made to any friaries used during the meeting.<sup>11</sup>

The first more or less formal diet after the death of Andrew III took place at Rákos in 1307. On the 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1307 Amádé Aba, the palatine, along with some of the oligarchs accepted Charles I as king of Hungary. The charter putting down this agreement in writing was issued at the St Peter's church of the Franciscans which is that of the town of Pest. It is rather surprising that according to the charter, the church stood close to or at Rákos (*Actum hoc apud ecclesiam B. Petri in Rakus*) which implies a rather broad understanding of the regular location of diets, the Field of Rákos.<sup>12</sup> More is known about the diet called by the papal legate, Cardinal Gentile di Montefiore on the 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1308. The legate resided at Buda, whence he issued a number of letters from the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1308 to 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1309.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Gárdonyi, 'Középkori települések Pest határában' [Medieval settlements in the borders of Pest], *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából*, 8 (1940): 14–27, here p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> ÁMTF, vol. 4, pp. 544–545.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance: MNL OL DL 7735; DL 76 182 and DL 76 184. For the latter ones, see: Tibor Szócs, *Az Árpád-kori nádorok és helyetteseik okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke* [Critical calendar of the charters of the palatines and their vicars in the Árpadian period] (Budapest: MOL, 2012), pp. 245–246 (nr. 298–299).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 253–254 (nr. 314).

<sup>12</sup> MNL OL DL 39 259. Edited in Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. VIII/1, pp. 221–223. See also: Gárdonyi, *Középkori települések*, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Arnold Ipolyi et al. (eds), *Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia* (9 vols, Budapest: [Szent István Társulat], 1884–1909, repr. Budapest: METEM, 2000–2001), I/2: *Acta legationis cardinalis Gentilis. Gentilis bíbornok magyarországi követségének okiratai 1307–1311*, pp. 60–99. For the charter issued 27 November 1308, see: Fejér,

Gentile held a diet called for the 18<sup>th</sup> November at Buda; however, the supporters of the Angevin king came with a sizeable number of troops, thus their meeting was held in Pest (rather at Rákos) where there was sufficient space for their encampments. According to the account of the diet, the barons met at the Dominican church of Pest. This time the church is mentioned to have been located near the Danube.<sup>14</sup> The account of the notary, Johannes de Pontecurum, not only refers to the location of the friary but also tells of the way the barons were seated on the left and the right of the legate Gentile di Montefiori during their meeting in the friary. It is rather questionable where exactly this meeting took place within the building but according to the account, even masses (nobles and burghers) of people were present apart from the “great men” which makes it unlikely that any part of the *claustrum* – e.g. the refectory – was used as the place of the gathering. However such organization – a table around which the listed barons and prelates were seated – may be likewise difficult to imagine in the available space of the church of the Dominicans. But this is not the only troubling point in this account; the location of the whole friary may be questioned. According to the above mentioned hypothesis of Györffy, the church stood close to the present-day Egyetem Square which is not particularly close to the Danube.<sup>15</sup> The only account of the church of the Dominicans pre-dating

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*Codex diplomaticus*, VIII/1, pp. 264–269 and Gyula Kristó et al. (eds), *Anjou-kori oklevéltár I–XV, XVII, XIX–XXXI, XXXIV, XXXVIII and XL* [Angevin cartulary] (Budapest and Szeged: JATE – Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 1990–2014), vol. II (1306–1310), pp. 213–214 (nr. 494).

<sup>14</sup> “...ac in loco fratrum Predicatorum, iuxta flumen [Danubii] ipsum sito, cum ipso domino legato, prelatorum, baronum et nobilium dictarum personarum multitudo, cives etiam et advene copiosi, quos eximii spectaculi rumor ac vulgata cōventionis dicti concilii celebritas excitarat, insperate pacis admiratione stupidi, et tot discordiarum animorum unitatis increduli, pacisque avidi convenerunt (...) Actum, ut predicetur, in loco Predicatorum prope civitatem Pestensem, ultra Danubium, ex opposite dicti castris.” – *Acta legationis*, pp. 116 and 118. See furthermore: Enikő Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I. rész I. Károly és uralkodása (1301–1342)* [The Angevins in Hungary. Charles I and his reign] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2012), pp. 60–61.

<sup>15</sup> The archaeologists of the Budapest History Museum located the friary, based on this account, closer to the Danube. See: Roland Perényi – András Végh (eds), *Budapest – Light and Shadow. The 1000 Years of a Capital* (Exhibition guide), (Budapest: Budapest History Museum, 2013), 20. See also the maps of András Végh’s article in: Balázs Nagy – Martyn C. Rady – Katalin Szende – András Vadas (eds), *Medieval Buda in Context*.

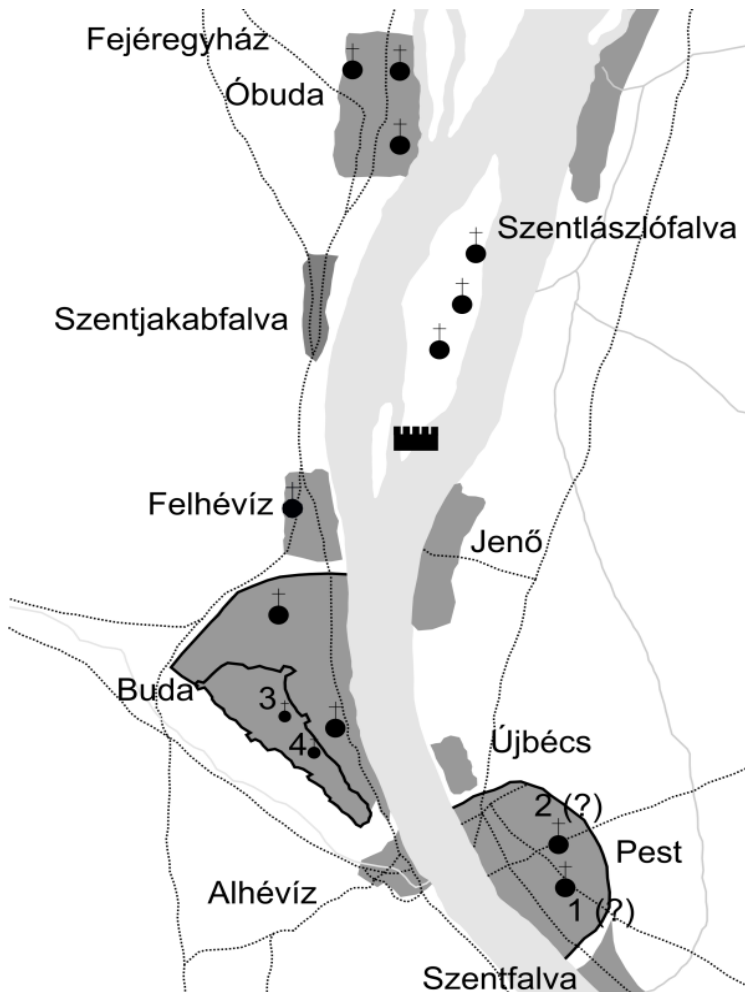


Fig. 1: The topography of Buda, Pest and Óbuda at the turn of the thirteenth century

this one is preserved from the time of the Mongol invasion. According to the work of Thomas of Split, one of the key sources on the invasion in the Hungarian Kingdom the friary was set to fire with “ten thousand



poor wretches" who had fled into the fortified building complex.<sup>16</sup> The number of course is heavily exaggerated but there is another problem when using this source to evaluate the early fourteenth century size of the friary. There is no proof of the same location of the Dominicans before and after the Mongols attacked Pest. Based on another reference though one might still believe that the friary built after the Mongol invasion was also significant in size: in 1309 some members of the high clergy from Transylvania such as Archdeacon Nicolaus not only stayed within the friary but so did his entourage and even their horses were kept there.<sup>17</sup>

### DIETS AND THE MENDICANT FRIARIES AT BUDA CASTLE

The location of the two Mendicant friaries – the Franciscan and the Dominican – at Buda has been extensively discussed in recent decades. The location of both institutions is at least peculiar. The Dominican friary may have been one of the first religious houses in Buda Castle as has been recently demonstrated by Enikő Spekner. The location of the friary leaves little doubt that the plot for the complex was provided by the king. The building in the late medieval period fell relatively far from the royal residence but the situation was somewhat different in the period of the foundation. The first royal palace on the Castle Hill was situated in the north-eastern part of the plateau fairly close to the Dominican friary. The situation changed over time as the *Kammerhof*, the first royal palace, lost its main function and became a property of the Pauline order in 1381. From the mid-fourteenth century a new royal palace complex was built at the southern part of the hill relatively far from the Dominican friary. The significance of the Dominican friary is well reflected in the use of the building as the host institution of the general chapter of the order in 1254. However the friary, according to our present knowledge, never hosted a diet.

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<sup>16</sup> "Nam venientibus Tartaris et locum fortiter impugnantibus communi exitio traditi sunt appositoque igni ad decem milia ferme hominum cum loco et rebus miserabiliter conflagrarunt" – Thomas of Split, *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum / History of the Bishops of Salona and Split* (Central European Medieval Text Series, 4), eds Damir Karbić et al. (Budapest – New York: CEU Press, 2006), pp. 276–279, here pp. 278–279.

<sup>17</sup> *Acta legationis*, p. 167. See also: Zsigmond Jakó (ed), *Erdélyi okmánytár* [Transylvanian cartulary] (4 vols, Budapest: MOL, 1997–2015), vol. 2, p. 83 (nr. 152) and *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*, vol. 2, pp. 223–225 (nr. 514).

The Franciscans however, having settled in the late-thirteenth century, had their friary by one of the eastern gates of the town relatively close to the later palace complex.<sup>18</sup> The question of the centrality of the Franciscan friary in the early period depends on the existence of an early royal residence, apart from the above mentioned *Kammerhof* at the southern part of the Castle Hill. If so, then already from its foundation the friary was at an area between the royal palace and the civic town – a crucial place – but this area certainly became more attractive with the fourteenth-century development of the royal palace.<sup>19</sup> The early importance of the friary is reflected in the fact that a friar, Henricus, was the confessor of Agnes of Austria, queen consort to Andrew III. This may have been important in the choice of the friary as the burial place of the last Árpáadian king in 1301.<sup>20</sup>

From the mid-fifteenth century at least diets were organized at multiple locations in the ‘capital’ of the kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Of course Buda,

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<sup>18</sup> For a thorough analysis of the sources on the friary up to 1444, see: Balázs Kertész, ‘A budai ferences kolostor története 1444-ig’ [The history of the Buda Franciscan friary up to 1444], in Balázs Karlinszky (ed), *Szerzetesrendek a veszprémi egyházmegyében* [Religious orders in the diocese of Veszprém], (Veszprém: Veszprémi Érseki és Főképtalani Levéltár, [2014]), pp. 27–43.

<sup>19</sup> For this, see in details: András Végh, *Buda város középkori helyrajza* [The topography of medieval Buda] (Monumenta Historica Budapestinensia, 15–16) (2 vols, Budapest: Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 2006–2008), vol. 1, passim, József Laszlovszky, ‘Crown, Gown and Town: Zones of Royal, Ecclesiastical and Civic Interaction in Medieval Buda and Visegrád’, in 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), (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 179–203 and Beatrix F. Romhányi, ‘The Monastic Topography of Medieval Buda’, in *Medieval Buda in Context*. See also: Katalin Szende, ‘How Far Back? Challenges and Limitations of Cadastral Maps for the Study of Urban Form in Hungarian Towns’, in Wilfried Ehbrecht (ed), *Städteatlanten. Vier Jahrzehnte Atlasarbeit in Europa* (Städteforschung. Reihe A: Darstellungen, 80), (Köln–Wien: Böhlau Verlag – Akademie Verlag, 2013), pp. 153–190.

<sup>20</sup> “...Interim anno Domini Mo CCCo Io in festo Sancti Felicis in Pincis idem rex Andreas in castro Budensi requieuit in Domino et sepultus est in ecclesia Sancti Iohannis Evangeliste apud Fratres Minores...” – Alexander Domanovszky (ed), *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, in Emericus Szentpétery (ed), *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum* (2 vols, Budapest: MTA, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 217–505, here p. 478.

<sup>21</sup> For the problem of Buda-Pest as capital: Lajos Bernát Kumorovitz, ‘Buda (és Pest) ‘fővárossá’ alakulásának kezdetei’ [The formation of Buda (and Pest) as ‘capital’ of Hungary], *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából*, 18 (1971): 7–57 and András Kubinyi,

especially the castle itself, could not host the masses who gathered from the different areas of the Kingdom during diets. The lesser nobles had their tents and most of their negotiations at the Fields of Rákos or sometimes in the city of Pest. However the prelates and members of the higher nobility met at Buda. As it was shown by András Kubinyi, despite their separation the two 'houses' met on a regular basis.<sup>22</sup> Gábor Mikó has shed light on the picture drawn by Kubinyi by demonstrating that in the early sixteenth century the lesser nobility, the members of the high nobility and the prelates communicated in writing during the diets but this of course does not rule out that the two 'houses' had common negotiations.<sup>23</sup> There were occasions when elected members of the lesser nobility were invited to the castle where the prelates and barons regularly met. By the Jagiello period the lesser nobles gathered regularly at Rákos to have roughly two week negotiations usually without reaching any agreement. Then they would elect delegates from amongst themselves who would continue the negotiations with the barons while the masses of the lesser nobility would return to their homes.

Still there were occasions when great numbers of people would have gathered at Buda. One of these was the opening of the diets which on a number of occasions in the late medieval period took place at the area in front of the royal palace right next to the St Sigismund's chapter and the Franciscan friary. Masses may have heard there when Simon de Begno supposedly proclaimed the papal bull of a crusade on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1514.<sup>24</sup> The particular location – between the civic town and the palace – of the Franciscan friary may be one of the reasons why this institution at least in the late medieval period was much more actively involved in the political life of the Kingdom than that of the Dominicans.

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'Buda, Magyarország középkori fővárosa' [Buda, the capital of medieval Hungary], *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából*, 29 (2001): 11–22. See the English version in the volume: *Medieval Buda in Context*.

<sup>22</sup> András Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések', p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Gábor Mikó, 'Ismeretlen országgyűlési emlék a Jagelló-korból' [Unknown parliamentary record from the Jagiellonian period], *Történelmi Szemle*, 56 (2014): 455–480.

<sup>24</sup> Jenő Szűcs, 'A ferences obszervancia és az 1514. évi parasztháború. Egy kódex tanúsága' [The Franciscan Observance and the peasant revolt of 1514. The witness of a codex], *Levél-tári Közlemények*, 43 (1972): 213–263, here pp. 213–214. See more recently on the events of 1514 with special regard to the two diets held that year: Norbert C. Tóth, 'Vita a keresztes hadjárat kihirdetéséről. Országgyűlés 1514 márciusában' [Debates around the proclamation of the crusade. Diet in March 1514], *Erdélyi Múzeum*, 77 (2015): 14–26.

The above-described pattern of late medieval diets took place for instance in May 1525. This time the elected members of the nobility gathered first at the Franciscans in Pest on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May while the royal council had their gathering in the castle. The day after an elected delegate of the royal council, István Podmanicki, bishop of Nitra met the nobility at the Franciscans in Pest, while the royal council gathered at the Franciscans at Buda. The following day masses of the nobility gathered at Rákos.<sup>25</sup> An overview of the political situation is not a focus of the present paper but it is worth noting that this diet was entirely unsuccessful and the discontented lesser nobility decided to gather armed at another diet at Hatvan (some 60 km east of Pest) in June. The diet was held at an open area surrounded with a fence. The king did not stay there during the diet, but he resided at the Premonstratensian abbey.<sup>26</sup> We do not have a clear indication in the sources but it is more than likely that not only did he reside there but part of the negotiations also took place within the walls of the abbey.

During the diet called for St George's Day in 1526 members of a secret noble association, the so-called "Kalandosok", gathered at the church of the Franciscans at Buda again indicating the role of the church. After two days of holding the diet at the area in front of the palace – described above –, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April the nobility agreed to elect one hundred from their number to continue the negotiations with the royal council<sup>27</sup> – these discussions again took place in the church of the Franciscans.<sup>28</sup>

One more place – not connected to any church institution – was also mentioned on a few occasions with regard to the gathering of the royal council. When the king was at Buda the royal council sometimes

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<sup>25</sup> The best source for the events of these days is the diary of Burgio, papal legate. See: Arnold Ipolyi et al. (eds), *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 2/1: *Relationes oratorum pontificiorum: 1524–1526*, pp. 188–195.

<sup>26</sup> "Item feria quinta post festum visitacionis beatissime virginis Marie, religiosis fratribus in Hathwan degentibus, apud quos Regia Maiestas hospicum habuit, iussu sue Maiestatis. pro hospitalitate eorundem dati sunt fl. XX." – Vilmos Fraknói, *II. Lajos számadási könyve 1525* [The account book of Louis II] (Budapest: Athaeneum, 1876), p. 190.

<sup>27</sup> "Et che li Signori havessero di andrae in San Johanne, et convenire cum loro, et foro eletti cento presone et lo resto di la nobilità si comenzó ad andar via." – *Monumenta Vaticana*, vol. 2/1, pp. 372–375 (the quotation is at p. 374). See also Kubinyi, 'A magyar országgyűlések', p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

met at the royal palace itself. For instance in 1521 Ferenc Battyáni, master of the butlers, in a letter sent to his brother Boldizsár, informs him that the barons gathered in the council chamber at the royal palace.<sup>29</sup> Battyáni notes that often they entered the palace at the morning, leaving only at vesper.<sup>30</sup> Again one of Battyáni's letter dated to the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1525 tells of the pact of eleven prelates and barons which came to light in the palace of Buda (*in arce Budensi*).<sup>31</sup>

### MENDICANT CHURCHES AS HOSTS OF DIETS OUTSIDE OF PEST-BUDA

Though most of the diets were held in the so-called *medium regni* and moreover in the late medieval 'capital city' of the Hungarian Kingdom there are a number of instances when, because of political or military reasons, the king met the nobility at other locations. At these places as well as at Pest and Buda Mendicant friaries sometimes associated with diets either as hosts or as places of accommodation for some of the participants. In the following subchapter the aim is to give an overview of some friaries that hosted diets at these settlements.

#### *Szeged*

The first time a friary is associated with a diet apart from the friaries at the centre of the realm is Szeged some 180 km south-southwest of Pest. A diet called by King Wladislas I met at the town in 1444.

The turbulent few days that Wladislas, the papal legate Juliano Cesarini, and János Hunyadi spent at Szeged in the first days of August 1444 has been subject to debates for decades now,<sup>32</sup> but from the point of

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<sup>29</sup> Its location is unknown. See: Károly Magyar, 'Et... introivit ad Hungariam sola germanica ancilla nomine Maria ...' Mary of Hungary and Buda', in Orsolya Réthelyi et al. (eds), *Mary of Hungary: The Queen and Her Court 1521–1531*, (Budapest: Budapest History Museum, 2005), pp. 97–119, here pp. 99–100 and András Kubinyi, 'A királyi udvar a késő középkori Magyarországon' [Royal court in late medieval Hungary], in Nóra G. Etényi – Ildikó Horn (eds), *Idővel paloták... Magyar udvari kultúra a 16-17. században* [Palaces in time... Hungarian courtly culture in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Budapest: Balassi, 2005), pp. 13–32.

<sup>30</sup> "et sepe cum mane castrum intrabimus, post vespas de consilio exhibimus" – MNL OL DL 104 405, 17 May 1521. Edited in: Béla Iványi, *A körmendi levéltár missilis levelei* [The letters of the archive of Körmend] (Körmendi Füzetek, 5) (Körmend: Rábavidék Ny., 1943), p. 29 (nr. 144). See: Kubinyi, 'A királyi udvar', pp. 17–18.

<sup>31</sup> MNL OL DL DL 24 148 and 28 149.

<sup>32</sup> The most detailed analysis of the events is still: Pál Engel, 'A szegedi eskü és a váradi béke: Adalék az 1444. év eseménytörténetéhez' [The oath of Szeged and the

view of this paper the most important element of these negotiations is the location. Unfortunately none of the charters<sup>33</sup> issued in those days at Szeged, neither the so-called “Oath of Szeged” preserved in the chronicle of Jan Długosz, nor Bonfini’s *Rerum Ungaricarum Decades* and Callimachus’ *Historia de rege Vladislao seu de clade Varnensi*, refer to the more exact location of the diet and the negotiations of the king and the Ottoman envoys that led to the short lived treaty of Oradea (or Szeged as it was erroneously called up to the 1970s).<sup>34</sup> The *Gesta Hungarorum* of János Thuróczy also mentions the diet being called to Szeged but no reference is made in his work to the specific locations at which the diet was held.<sup>35</sup> Despite the lack of direct information the secondary literature notes that the Holy Virgin church of the Franciscans was the home to the diet in 1444.<sup>36</sup> Some of the works, going back to the unreliable *Die Geschichten der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* of Ignaz Aurelius Fessler, suppose that 3000 people were present at the diet in the

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treaty of Oradea: contribution to the political history of the year 1444], in Éva H. Balázs – Erik Fügedi – Ferenc Maksay (eds), *Mályusz Elemér emlékkönyve. Társadalom- és művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok* [Elemér Mályusz honorary volume. Studies in social and intellectual history], (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984), pp. 77–96. Published again in Pál Engel, *Honor, vár, ispánság. (Válogatott tanulmányok)* [Honour, castle, county: collected essays] (Millenniumi magyar történelem. Historikusok), ed. Enikő Csukovits (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), pp. 198–224.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. MNL OL DL 13 794 and 59 289.

<sup>34</sup> Joannes Dlugossius, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae Lib. XI et XII (1441–1444)*, ed. Jan Dąbrowski (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2001), p. 301–308; Antonius de Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades* (4 vols Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum Saeculum XV), vols I–IV/1, eds Iosephus Fögel – Béla Iványi – Ladislaus Juhász, (Leipzig–Budapest: Teubner–Egyetemi Nyomda, 1936–1941); vol. IV/2: eds Margarita Kulcsár – Petrus Kulcsár (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1976), vol. III–6, pp. 115–130 and Philippus Callimachus, *Historia de rege Vladislao* (Bibliotheca Latina Medii et Recentioris Aevi, 3) ed. Irmina Lichonska (Varsoviae: PWM, 1961), Liber III. For the events of the year before the campaign that led to the defeat at Varna: *ibid.*, pp. 166–178.

<sup>35</sup> Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum I* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medii Recentisque Aevorum. Series Nova, 7), eds Elisabeth Galántai – Julius Kristó (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1985), cap. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Gyula Kristó (ed), *Szeged története (A kezdetektől 1686-ig)* [The history of Szeged. From the beginning to 1686], (4 vols, Szeged: Somogyi Könyvtár, 1983), vol. 1, p. 439 (the part in question is the work of Péter Kulcsár); Sándor Bálint, *Szeged reneszánsz kori műveltsége* [The Renaissance culture of Szeged] (Humanizmus és reformáció, 5) (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1975), pp. 25–28; Ferenc Horváth, ‘A szegedi vár története’ [The history of the castle of Szeged], *Castrum Bene*, 4 (2006): pp. 5–30, here pp. 23–24.

courtyard of the Holy Virgin friary.<sup>37</sup> First, no medieval chronicle – referred by these works – mentions this<sup>38</sup> but it is even more doubtful if one looks at the place itself where the earlier Franciscan church of Szeged is located.

The Franciscans had two churches at medieval Szeged. Apart from the church of the Observant Franciscans founded in the late-fifteenth century that still stands in the so-called Alsóváros (Lower Town) there was another one that stood somewhere closer to the early Árpád-age castle.<sup>39</sup> According to our present knowledge it stood within the area surrounded by a fortification plank. The whole area of the plank may have accommodated 3000 armed nobles but certainly not the garden of the Franciscans. Despite the fact that there is no direct evidence of the friary of the Franciscans hosting the diet, this still may be the most acceptable location. On the one hand the king and the royal council – though not the whole of the nobility of course – are likely to have been residing in the fortified part of the town of Szeged. Within that area the most significant building at that time was supposedly the Franciscan church. One other indirect piece of evidence may also be listed here: according to the chronicle of Długosz, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August King Wladislas I took an oath to the Eucharist to continue the war against the Ottomans. This oath is likely to have taken place at a church, and despite the existence of a chapel of significant size in the inner castle, the Franciscan church may have been more suitable for such gathering. The next occasion when a diet can be associated with a friary was the one held again at Szeged in 1459.<sup>40</sup> Again no clear indication survives about the

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<sup>37</sup> Ignaz Aurelius Fessler, *Die Geschichten der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* (4 vols, Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1816), vol. 4, p. 587 and József Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon* [The age of the Hunyadis in Hungary] (12 vols, Budapest: Emich és Eisenfels, 1852–1863), vol. 1, pp. 393–394. Their data was once accepted by scholarship without any tracing of its origin.

<sup>38</sup> See note 32.

<sup>39</sup> On the topography of Szeged, see: András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén* [Urban development and market network at the Great Hungarian Plain and at its edge] (*Dél-Alföldi évszázadok*, 14) (Szeged: Agapé, 2000). For the most recent findings on the urban structure: László Blazovich et al. (eds), *Szeged* (*Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns*, 3), (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Honismereti Egyesület, 2014). For the castle area and especially the first church of the Franciscans: Horváth, 'A szegedi vár', pp. 22–24.

<sup>40</sup> Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat*, p. 193. The diet was held again "ad civitatem nostram Zegediensem". For the critical edition of the decrees of the diet of 1459, see: Franciscus Döry et al. (eds), *Decreta regni Hungariae 1458–1490* (A Magyar Országos

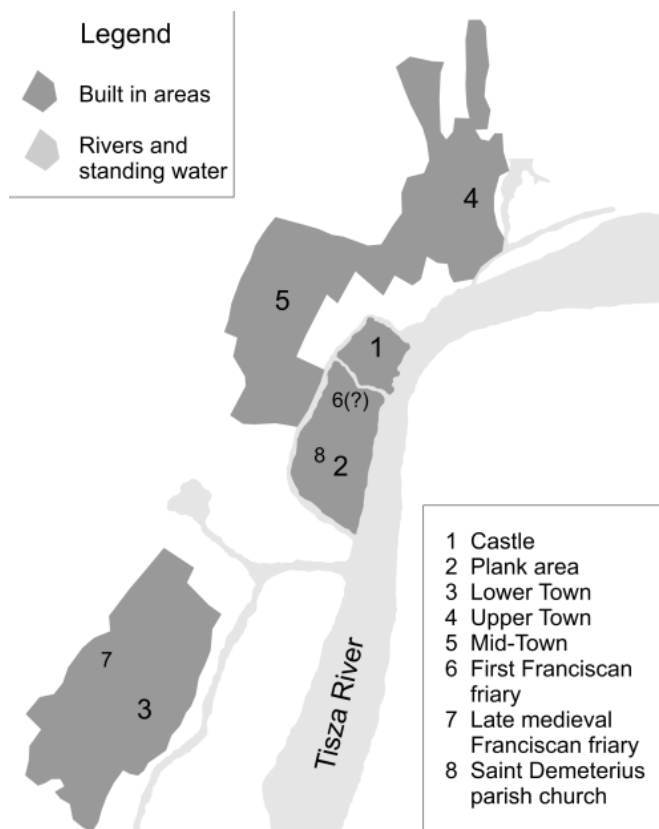


Fig. 2: Topography of Szeged in the sixteenth century (after Kubinyi and Blazovich [ed.])

location of this diet called by Matthias I. The decrees were issued at the *civitas*, the royal town, which may refer to the enclosed part of the town. In 1495 a less well-known diet was held again at Szeged. King Wladislas II called a diet for the 18<sup>th</sup> of October. The king arrived on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the latest and left no more than four days later.<sup>41</sup> Again no reference to the location

Levéltár kiadványai II. Forráskiadványok, 19), (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1989), pp. 107-118. For an English translation of the decrees, see: János M. Bak et al. (eds), *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 3: 1458-1490, pp. 9-14.

<sup>41</sup> Neumann, 'Királyi hatalom', pp. 49-50. Apart from Neumann the diet is referred to in: Gyula Kristó - Pál Engel - András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története, 1301-1526*



of the diet is known, but one of the charters leaves no doubt that the king resided again at the *civitas*.<sup>42</sup> This is important because by this time there was another church foundation of significant size in another part of Szeged, the church of the Observant Franciscans in the so-called Alsóváros (Lower Town) mentioned above, but this building was certainly not finished and the Lower Town was not then referred to as a *civitas*.

### Győr

The town of Győr hosted a diet called in 1455. Apart from masses of the Hungarian nobility and the prelates and barons, two prominent guests Đurađ Branković, the Serbian despot, and John of Capistrano, the famous Franciscan preacher were also at Győr during the days of the diet. Because of their presence not only Hungarian sources but sources on the life of Capistrano refer to the diet and the political meetings held between Hunyadi, Branković and the Franciscan friar.<sup>43</sup>

The calls for the diet that have come down to us unsurprisingly do not specify the location within the town where the diet was intended to take place.<sup>44</sup> The location of the diet of 1455 is anything but clear despite the fact that most of the scholars who dealt with the history of the town or with the development of the Franciscan order have

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[A History of Hungary, 1301 to 1526] (Osiris Tankönyvek). (Budapest: Osiris, 2005). See also: István Petrovics, 'Városi elit a középkori Dél-Magyarországon. Pécs, Szeged és Temesvár esete' [Urban elites in medieval Southern-Hungary. The case of Pécs, Szeged and Timișoara], *Urbs. Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv*, 3 (2008): 41–69, here p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> "Datum in civitate nostra Zegeadiensis" – MNL OL DL 20 298, 27 566; MNL OL DF 219 080 and 252 621.

<sup>43</sup> On the Hungarian chapter of the life of Capestrano, see: Ödön Bölcskey, *Capistranói Szent János élete és kora* [St Giovanni da Capestrano and his age] (2 vols, Székesfehérvár: Debreczeni István Könyvnyomdája, 1924), vol. 2, pp. 209–419. Specifically on the period of the diet of Győr: *ibid.*, pp. 233–247 and more recently: Stanko Andrić, 'Kapisztrán Szent János és Brankovics György: egy lehetetlen kompromisszum' [Giovanni da Capestrano and Đurađ Branković, an impossible compromise], in Peregrin Kálmán – László Veszprémy (eds), *Európa védelmében : Kapisztrán Szent János és a nándorfehérvári diadal emlékezete* [In the defense of Europe. Giovanni da Capestrano and the memory of the victory at Belgrade] (A Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum könyvtára), ([Budapest]: Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum – Line Design, 2013), pp. 31–51. The existing primary sources on the event are discussed in details in both works.

<sup>44</sup> MNL OL DL 81 210, edited in Zichy, ix, 498–499 (no 364); MNL OL DL 81 209. Edited in Zichy, vol. IX, 499 (nr. 365); DL 81 212 edited in Zichy, vol. IX, 501 (nr. 367).

suggested that the diet took place at the Franciscan friary.<sup>45</sup> Usually this view is justified by the fact that the castle would not have been able to accommodate the mass of people who attended the diet. On the one hand, the Franciscan friary was certainly no different in the sense of its own size constrictions. On the other hand, the friary was in the suburb of the town which means that the tents of the participants of the diet may have been erected around the area of the friary, but no indication of this is preserved in any of the narrative sources or charters to my knowledge. Based on the fact that some of the early gatherings of the Franciscans were held in the friary it may have been a significant church<sup>46</sup> but certainly not big enough to host the gathering of the whole of the nobility. The location of the friary itself has not been certainly established, though finding a location that could support the gathering of a diet may help support the suggestion of a certain place. György Györffy supposed that it stood eastwards of the centre of the town along the road leading to Buda fairly close to the supposed location of the Dominicans.<sup>47</sup> In 2004 traces of a Gothic building were excavated which were identified with the Franciscan friary with some incertitude.<sup>48</sup> If so then the church itself stood relatively far from the bishop's palace, the parish church, and the cathedral of the town.

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<sup>45</sup> Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora*, vol. 1, pp. 222–224; Károly Ráth, Győrvárosa története (folytatás és vége), [The history of the town of Győr (second and final part)] *Győri Közlöny* 98 (6 December 1863), 391–392, here 391; Fehér Ipoly, *Győr megye és város egyetemes leírása* [The general description of Győr county and town] (Budapest: Franklin Ny., 1874), 414–415; Karácsonyi, *Sz. Ferencz I*, 334, Vince Bedy, *Győr katolikus vallásos életének multja* [The Catholic religious life of the town of Győr] (Győregyházmegye multjából, 5) (Győr: Győregyházmegyei Alap Nyomdája, 1939), p. 32; Ferenc Jenei, 'Győr a magyar humanizmus korában' [Győr in the age of humanism], *Győri Szemle*, 11/3 (1940):121–142, here p. 126 (Published separately under the same title: Győr: Baross Ny., [1940]).

<sup>46</sup> Samu Borovszky, 'A ferencziek történetéhez' [The history of the Franciscans], *Történelmi Tár*, 18 (1895): 749–755, here pp. 752–755 and János Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferencz rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [The history of the Franciscan Order in Hungary until 1711] (2 vols, Budapest: M. Tud. Akad., 1922), vol. 1, pp. 114–117 and 334.

<sup>47</sup> ÁMTF, vol. 2, pp. 598–600.

<sup>48</sup> Karácsonyi, *Szt. Ferencz rendjének története*, pp. 174–176. On the identification of the finds with the Franciscan friary, see: Eszter Szőnyi, 'Győr-belvárosi ásások' [Excavations at Győr-Downtown], *Arrabona*, 45/1 (2007): 109–148, here pp. 121–122, 143, 148 and Katalin Szende, 'How Far Back', pp. 175–176.

What one can clearly suppose is that John of Capistrano himself stayed in the friary during the period he was in the town. Amongst the sources the ones that concern the activity of Capistrano deserve special attention in the present paper. Giovanni da Tagliacozzo, a friar and companion of Capistrano, when describing the time Capistrano spent at Győr tells us that János Hunyadi, the regent at that time, so respected the friar that he would invite him to every meeting of the royal council as well as to the gatherings of the lesser nobles. Without trying to over-interpret the words of Tagliacozzo, one may believe that neither the secret (royal) council nor the lesser nobility had their gathering in the friary if Capistrano had to be invited to them.<sup>49</sup> (Though the invitation may also have meant simply that he had the right to take part at these meetings despite not having any official duty at the diet.) Also one has to consider that it is unlikely that the friary was not be home to any gathering during the diets as Capistrano himself, according to the contemporary and later chroniclers, was a key figure in settling disputes of the time. The place where he resided in these weeks was certainly the place where Hunyadi, Branković or members of the high clergy and barons turned up to meet Capistrano. Though no contemporary evidence tells of the friary as the location of the diet, and based on the account of Tagliacozzo one might assume that the royal council, with the bishop of Győr involved, may have met at the bishop's palace within the castle, and yet some meetings may have taken place at the Franciscans.

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<sup>49</sup> „Principes, barones, nobiles atque plebeii eum summopere diligebant et honorabant, quorum tanta multitudo confluebat ad eum, ut nonnisi latissimis campis aut maxima platea eos campere valebat. (...) Et cum tum rex abesset a regno, essetque ipsius regni gubernator et defensor illustris dominus Iohannes de Huniad, tantam iste devotionem pariter et amorem concepit in ipsum virum Dei Fr. Iohannem, ut quaecunq; essent pro regno tractanda tam in secretis, quam in publicis dietis, ipse cum aliis baronibus hunc vocabant, admittebant proferebantque, nihil sine suo consilio agere volentes.” The original text found in the Biblioteca Nazionale at Naples (Cod. IX. F. 62. [saec. XV]) was published by Leonard Lemmens, ‘Victoriae mirabilis divinitus de Turcis habitae, duce vener. beato Patre Fratrem Ioanne de Capistrano, series descripta per Fratrem Ioannem de Tagliacotio, illius cosium et comitem, atque beato Iacobo de Marchia directa’, *Acta Ordinis Minorum*, 25 (1906): 28–31, 62–68, 108–109, 188–190, 228–229, 290–292, 322–324, 352–357 and 399–404. The part in question is: *ibid.*, p. 29 (it has been published also as a separate volume with the same title: *Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi]: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae*, 1906). I acknowledge György Galamb's help concerning Giovanni da Tagliacozzo.

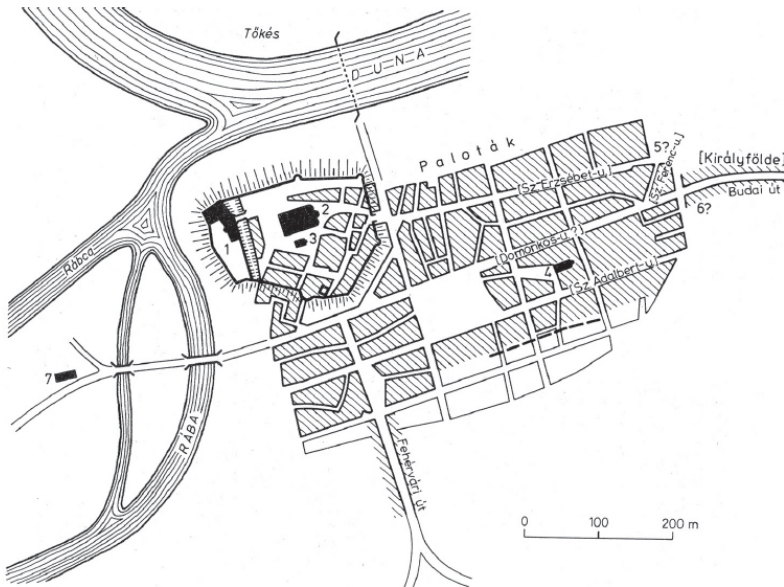


Fig. 3: The topography of Győr in the early fourteenth century (after Györffy)

### Tata

The *oppidum* of Tata was not amongst the major settlements of medieval Hungary. However its location close to the major power centres, Pest-Buda, Esztergom and Fehérvár – complemented with a royal castle, provided Tata an important position compared to its size from time to time. One of these examples is the year 1510 when the king and the nobility met there. The diet of Tata in 1510 is one of the few diets of which not only we do have exceptionally good source material but these sources have been researched recently in a systematic manner. Thanks to the studies of Bálint Lakatos and others, the sources kept in the Hungarian National Archives as well as the foreign correspondences related to this diet have been exhaustively studied. Amongst them, a report of a Venetian envoy Pietro Pasqualigo tells exceptional details of the location of one of the gatherings of the diet.<sup>50</sup> According to his report

<sup>50</sup> Bálint Lakatos, 'A tatai országgyűlés', see also Bálint Lakatos, 'Haag, Mrakes, Cuspinianus és Helianus. A német és francia követek tárgyalásai a magyar elittel az 1510-es tatai országgyűlés idején' [The negotiations of the German and French envoys with the Hungarian elite in 1510 during the diet of Tata], *Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei*, 17 (2011): 223–238.

dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1510: *I went there and I found all the aforementioned prelates and barons seated in a circle at the uncovered courtyard of the Franciscan friary, all around, there was an innumerable crowd: in all the windows of the cells of the brothers and around on the roof there were people everywhere.*<sup>51</sup> Not only the choice of the Franciscan friary, but the relatively small town of Tata, are noteworthy as Wladislas II himself did not spend much time within the walls of the castle. During the period before the diet a plague epidemic burst through the country and that made the smaller settlements a more attractive setting than the major cities such as Buda, Esztergom, or Fehérvár. The Hungarian nobility originally gathered at Fehérvár for a diet in June 1510. After a few days the barons managed to persuade the nobles waiting for the opening of the diet at Fehérvár to elect forty delegates from amongst them who would then go to Tata. Originally the plan was to receive the delegates at the castle. However Wladislas did not want to take part in the long negotiations with the forty delegates – and it was not the normal habit by then – therefore their audience was relocated to the Franciscan friary. Despite the fact that the second negotiations took place at the castle already in the weeks before the diet, the friary was home to several important political meetings.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Despite this short overview being far from complete, it is still more or less clear that the Mendicant churches were more important as places of diets than those of other orders or parish churches. The question already posed in the introduction is why? It is hard to draw conclusions based on a few cases discussed but some presumptions may still be formulated. First, the location of these churches within the towns in question was obviously a key factor. In the case of Pest, despite questions about the location of diets on the plain surrounding the town, there is no doubt that the Franciscan church was the one closest to Rákos. In the case of Buda as well, the Franciscans stood the closest to

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<sup>51</sup> “et cussi andato ritrovai tuti li prelati et baroni sentuti in circolo nela piazza scoperta del claustro de san Francesco circumstante innumerabili turba: essendo tute le fenestre de le cele di frati et tuti li tecti undique pieni di gente” – Reports of Pietro Pasqualigo, 1509–1512. Manuscript: Venezia, Biblioteca del Museo Correr a Venezia, Cod. Cicogna 2126. 100<sup>r</sup>. This part of the report is edited in Lakatos, ‘A tatai országgyűlés’, p. 29 (see the quote at note 1: *ibid.*, p. 52).

the late medieval royal palace along with the St Sigismund's church which however was less significant in size than the friary.<sup>52</sup> This factor, the size of these churches, should also be considered when we are trying to find the reason for the choice of these buildings as locations for parts of diets. Despite both friaries in the Buda Castle as discussed above being significant in size, both the German and Hungarian parishes actually became bigger buildings by the early sixteenth century. However there was an important advantage that friaries had over the parishes. These churches not only stood by themselves but were surrounded by a friary which could provide accommodation and/or food service. Also many of the meetings were not in the churches but rather in the refectories of the friaries which provided a much safer and more private place for political meetings than other locations in the towns. Providing accommodation during diets may have been a significant source of income for the friaries. Though the example comes from the Premonstratensians, it is telling that King Louis II when residing at their abbey at Hatvan during the above-mentioned diet in 1525 gave 20 florins to the monks for his and his retinue's upkeep. It does not mean however that during the diets the accommodation of those present was the friars' duty. For instance in 1510, during the diet of Tata, Pasqualigo refers to the attendees having their lunch somewhere other than the friary.<sup>53</sup>

It is also a question how much the social connections of the Franciscans and Dominicans played a role in the choice of one or another institution as the place of a diet.<sup>54</sup> The question is not only to

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<sup>52</sup> For the size of the St Sigismund chapel: István Feld, 'Beszámoló az egykori budai Szent Zsigmond templom és környéke feltárásáról' [Report on the excavation of the former St Sigismund church and its surroundings], *Budapest régiségei*, 33 (1999): 35-50. For the Franciscans, see: Júlia Altmann, 'Az óbudai és a budavári ferences templom és kolostor kutatásai' [Research of the Franciscan churches and friaries of Óbuda and Buda Castle], in Andrea Haris (ed), *Koldulórendi építészeti a középkori Magyarországon. Tanulmányok* [Mendicant architecture in medieval Hungary. Studies] (Művészettörténet - Műemlékvédelem, 7), (Budapest: Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 1994), pp. 137-152 and Júlia Altmann - Pál Lővei, 'A budavári ferences templom építészeti elemei és sírkövei' [Architectural remains and tombstones from the Franciscan friary of Buda], *Budapest Régiségei*, 38 (2004): pp. 11-34.

<sup>53</sup> Lakatos, 'A tatai', p. 43 (esp. the quotation in note 92, *ibid.*, p. 58).

<sup>54</sup> See most recently: Balázs Kertész, 'A Gyulaiak és a ferencesek' [The Gyulai family and the Franciscans], in Attila Bárány - Kornél Szovák - Gábor Dreska (eds), *Arcana tabularii. Tanulmányok Solymosi László tiszteletére* [Studies in honour of László

what extent a certain baron or prelate was related to members of the orders but how much the kings favoured certain ecclesiastical institutions. If one looks at the alms giving customs of the members of the royal families it is certainly not evenly distributed. Beatrix Romhányi recently analysed the account book of Sigismund of Jagiello to see the proportion of the alms given to the different orders and religious houses. She demonstrated that from the alms given to the Mendicants orders, almost 80% went into the hands of Franciscans from which the Observants, and especially the Observant friary at Buda, profited the most.<sup>55</sup> Sigismund, coming from outside of the country, obviously went by the habits of Wladislas II and the court of the Jagiellos.

This short overview, despite its obvious incompleteness, still allows us to conclude that in the political life of Hungary the Mendicant orders were important - above all the Franciscans who from the fifteenth century became almost the exclusive hosts of diets amongst the ecclesiastical institutions. After the battle of Mohács the political centre of the kingdom shifted and by the mid-sixteenth century the usual place of the gatherings of the Hungarian estates was Pressburg. It already was home to some diets during the reign of Sigismund (1402 and 1435) and in 1523, but after Mohács and moreover after the loss of Buda, Pressburg became the capital (along with Vienna) of the Kingdom of Hungary.<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that though the royal council met at the castle in 1523 during the diet, some negotiations may have taken place in the town

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Solymosi], (2 vols, Budapest–Debrecen: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia – Debreceni Egyetem – Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar – Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, 2014), pp. 235–248 with a short but concise summary of the existing literature.

<sup>55</sup> Beatrix F. Romhányi, *Kolduló barátok, gazdálkodó szerzetesek. Koldulórendi gazdálkodás a késő középkori Magyarországon*. Unpublished dissertation submitted to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest: [N. p.], 2013), pp. 218–231. Available online: [http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc\\_702\\_13\\_doktori\\_mu.pdf](http://real-d.mtak.hu/688/7/dc_702_13_doktori_mu.pdf) (last accessed: 28 April 2015) For the account book of the prince's stay in Hungary, see: Adorján Divéky (ed), *Zsigmond lengyel herceg budai számadásai* (Magyar Történelmi Tár, 26) (Budapest: MTA, 1914).

<sup>56</sup> Géza Pálffy, 'A Magyar Királyság új fővárosa: Pozsony a XVI. században' [The new capital of the Hungarian Kingdom: Pressburg in the sixteenth century], *Fons*, 20 (2013): 3–76.

itself and even the Franciscan friary may have served as a place for some meetings or to accommodate some who attended the diet.<sup>57</sup>

Already, the election of Ferdinand I as king of Hungary at the end of 1526 took place at Pressburg showing the shift of political power towards the Habsburg areas.<sup>58</sup> It is telling that the election took place nowhere other than the Franciscan friary of the town. This was not exceptional at all – from the mid-sixteenth century, the regular place of the gatherings of the ‘lower chamber’ at diets held at Pressburg was the refectory of the friary. This is well reflected in a note made by an envoy of the town of Sopron in 1578: “the friary where the people of the kingdom usually gather.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See: István Zombori, *Jagelló–Habsburg rendezési kísérlet 1523-ban Krzysztof Szydłowiecki naplója alapján* [Jagiello – Habsburg dispute settling attempt in 1523 in light of the diary of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki]([Piliscsaba]: PPKÉ BTK, 2006), p. 281 and István Zombori, ‘A magyar királyi udvar 1523-ban. Krzysztof Szydłowiecki lengyel követ beszámolója’ [The Hungarian royal court in 1523. The diary of the Polish envoy, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki], in *Idővel paloták...*, pp. 33–44, here pp. 36–38.

<sup>58</sup> For the diet, see: Vilmos Fraknói, *Magyar országgyűlési emlékek: történeti bevezetésekkel* [Hungarian dietary records – with historical notes] (12 vols, Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1874), vol. 1, pp. 33–70.

<sup>59</sup> “in monasterio, ubi regnicolae regulariter convenire solent” – MNL Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Soproni Levéltára (Sopron City Archive), Sopron Város Levéltára (Archive of the town of Sopron) Lad. X et K, Fasc. 7, No 222d. Quoted in Pálffy, ‘A Magyar Királyság új fővárosa’, p. 18. See also *ibid.*, pp. 20–21 for the diets held at the Franciscans in the sixteenth century.