

The City and the Castle: An Example of Cohabitation in the Case of Buda

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The article tries to follow up the history of mediaeval Buda city and its royal residence's from around the middle of the 13th century until 1541. Most of the experts suppose that there must have been a kind of a royal residence within this new founded city (named that time as *castrum*) from the very beginning. However, its true location and shape forms the stumbling block of heated debates: some identify it to the nord-east corner, while others to the south angle. At the moment we do not have enough archaeological or historical data to confirm any of these two opinions, even although we know, later both sites were indeed royal properties. The ensemble in the nord-east corner was first mentioned in a written source relating to 1301 as *Kammerhof* and acted then unquestionably as the actual royal residence. The other, south one can be traced only from the 1340's, but later on – as the *Kammerhof* was given out from royal property in 1382 – it became the single royal palace in Buda, that acted from around 1408 as the main seat of the royal administration until 1526 (1541). Meanwhile its area immensely grew and was strengthened by a series of new fortifications.

1) The author would like to thank Miss Eve Dewan and Miss Kerry Hill (USA) for their precious help in the correction of his text. However, any mistakes that remain are the responsibility the author.

Shortly after the Mongol invasion that stormed over Hungary in 1241–42, King Béla IV (1235–70) founded a new settlement upon the plateau of the hill known today as Castle hill in Buda. This had far-reaching consequences on the structure and hierarchy of the earlier settlements of the area (for the earlier settlement-network, with the dual-urban-characterised nuclei of Buda – the later Óbuda=Old Buda – and Pest/Ofen=Oven/Killn see Kubinyi 1965, 135–137; 1972, 9–27; 1991, 5–16; Györfly 1969; 1973, 249–294; Gerevich 1990, 27, 35–38; Altmann 1991; Altmann – Bertalan 1991; Irás-Melis 1991a; 1991b; Magyar 1991a, 153–158). The exact date of the new royal foundation act is not known, but the threat of the return of the Mongol hordes – obviously the main reason for the foundation – was almost continuous around 1247–1249 (Zolnay 1963, 52–55; Györfly 1973, 297–299). On the other hand, the privileges of the (old) town of Pest (situated on the other, left bank of the Danube and named Ofen by its mainly German inhabitants) were renewed in 1244. This fact is of importance, since a short (but unknown) while later the same privileges were “transplanted” to the newly-founded settlement, as were a great number of the inhabitants of Pest (Kubinyi 1965, 137; 1972, 27–30 – Kubinyi uses the term *Siedlungsverlegung* for this process [after H. Fischer]; Györfly 1973, 299). But this translocation was obviously not yet in plan in 1244. The real peopling process of the new settlement must have been completed by 1255, since a deed of this year mentioned the fact in the past tense: “...*inter alia castra defensionis regni congrua in monte Pestiensi castrum quoddam extrui fecimus, refertum multitudine hominum numerosa...*” (MDCB/BTOE I, 54–55, No. 40).

While the contemporary naming of this new settlement as a topological place showed great variety (relating to the doubly-rooted origin of the population), it was still almost perfectly consistent with its determination as an administrative unit: *castrum*, i.e. *castle* was the terminology used throughout the 13th century (Kubinyi 1972, 30). This undoubtedly refers to the basic military importance of the new location, even if we know it acted and lived as a town and its full-right inhabitants were described as *cives* (Kubinyi 1972, 30). In the earliest phase – ca 1243–1247/1248 – it had been planned as just a *refugium*, i.e. shelter, and only later, by transplanting the inhabitants of Pest (and their privileges) to the new fortress, did it gain real urban character (Zolnay 1963, 56–57, 78, 83; Magyar 1991c). Therefore, today we should apply the term “fortified town” as the best for this new creation.

2) After the death of his father King Stephen V (1270–72).

According to the transplanted privilege of Pest issued in 1244, the new town could have had its own free elected head: the *maior villae* or *villicus*. However, from 1264 up to around 1346/47 this was replaced by a *rector* (a military commander and civil chief-judge/mayor) who was designated by the king and who normally had other important royal offices as well (Zolnay 1963, 64–68; Kubinyi 1972, 71–75; 1991, 19–20). No wonder this was so, the new settlement was from the beginning an important – if not the most important – town in the country, for three main reasons. **First**, it was one of the largest fortified places in the country. **Second**, it could therefore provide shelter to the royal court in case of emergency. **Third**, it had serious human and economic power. Altogether it seemed to be reasonable that a city of such importance should be controlled directly by a confidante of the king. The only question that may arise is about the timing of the change. It could be explained by the discordance between the king and his son that finally ended in warfare (Kubinyi 1972, 72 – to the conflict between the elder and the younger king [*junior rex*] see most recently Zsoldos 2007). The treaty of Pozsony (Pressburg/Bratislava) in 1262 caused the kingdom to be divided between the elder king, Béla IV (1235–70) and the younger king, István (Stephen; Zsoldos 2007, 18–22) 2); By this act the Danube became the vertical, north-south border between the territories of the two kings and Buda became a border fortress for some years.

Now we have to return to the **second** point, namely to the problem of the royal “shelter”. There has been a long and heated debate among some archaeologists and historians about the question of the first – 13th century – royal residence (*curia*/palace or castle) of Buda: where it stood or whether it stood at all. 3)

3) The main difference arose in this question between the opinion of László Gerevich (the leader of the first excavation series) and László Zolnay (a participant in the first series and later head of the second one) – see below. Some other historians, such as Kubinyi, Fügedi and Györfly joined the debate later with opinions that differed slightly or entirely. The latter, for instance, argued as to whether there had been any permanent royal residence at all in the new settlement in the 13th century. See the different opinions summarised in Zolnay 1967, 39–40; Kubinyi 1972, 56–61; Magyar 1991, 162–164.

To start with the second, – I agree with Zolnay that the answer is “yes”. In 1249, King Béla granted his palace situated within the castle of Esztergom (Gran – one of the most important early royal centres; Gerevich 1990, 28–35 – with wide historical background; Horváth 1991 – with the results of the archaeological excavations) to the archbishop (Zolnay 1963, 47–48). 4) This donation could hardly have happened if there had not been another site equivalent in security to the castle of Esztergom somewhere else (here we must remark that the hill-fort of Esztergom was among those very few early strongholds that could resist the Mongol siege). At that time Buda might have been the only other possible place safe enough to house the royal court. This can be indicated by another fact, too. By 1255 at the latest, some of the staff of the royal mint at Esztergom were brought to Buda, to the same place as the royal court (Zolnay 1963, 48, 68–69).

4) At the same time the residents of the town of Esztergom were also moved up to the castle on the hill, which otherwise had a rather large area, Zolnay 1963, 52–53; see also Gerevich 1990, 34.

It is much harder to determine the exact location of this first royal palace in Buda since we have very little archaeological data to interpret the written sources, which are also scarce. That is why we have two basically different answers to this question.

5) For detailed results of the excavations at the south end of the plateau, see Gerevich 1966.

6) According to the first article this kind of urban fortifications, typical of the 12–13th century would unquestionably date the system of Buda, too, i.e. the southern palace/castle must have been ready in the 13th century (in the second he has a slightly less clear-cut opinion about the dating). However, clear archaeological evidence of such a palace complex in this area can be dated only from around the middle of the 14th century. See other considerations below.

According to László Zolnay the **first royal residence** – house or palace – was situated **within the city, in the north-east corner** of it (Fig. 1). And indeed, there did exist a complex in the north-east corner of the city, first appearing in 1301 as *Kammerhof* and in later sources as *magna curia regis* or *antiqua domus regis* (Zolnay 1963, 90–95; Végh 2006, 269–272).

Others, like László Gerevich, tried to identify this complex with the royal mint. Meanwhile they locate the **early royal residence “castle”** at the place of the later one, i.e. **on the south end of the plateau** (Fig. 12). According to him, this had been separated from the city from the beginning, but still formed one unit of defence with it (Gerevich – Seitz – Holl 1953). 5) This formation was classified as the so-called *Vorburgstadt* morphological type of fortification system (Kubinyi 1962; 1981). 6)

Although the first explanation seems much more plausible, as we shall see, the second cannot be perfectly excluded, at least not in any form of royal buildings. Thus, it seems we can count on some kind of royal presence in Buda from the beginning: an ensemble of buildings standing within the town-walls, or separately. Another question is how much it was favoured and attended by the kings/queens. In other words, did it function as a residence or was it rather considered to be a possible temporary shelter used otherwise by royal military and administrative officers or the masters of the mint?



Fig. 1
The City of Buda with its suburbs in the second half of the 13th century; after Magyar 1991a, 154.

7) For plot 9, *Táncsics M. Street*, see Zolnay 1968. These excavations brought to light some scattered architectural remains of various periods and scales. Unfortunately, they are far from enough to reconstruct ground-plans for the periods. In the 1970's excavations were carried out by Katalin Gyürky on the neighbouring plot at 7, *Táncsics M. Street* (H. Gyürky 1984). She found here – among other things – the ground-walls of a polygonal apse, identified by her as a remnant of St. Martin's chapel. This chapel (first mentioned in 1349) had belonged originally to the *Kammerhof* (see Fig. 4).

8) The gate once opened on the north-eastern suburb and – it seems – it did not have a separate name; see most recently Végh 2006, 60.

9) Like the *hôtel St. Pol*, *Les Tournelles*, *hôtel de Nesle*, *hôtel de duc de Bourgogne* (*hôtel d'Artois*), etc. See most recently Paris 1400, texts by F. Meunier, S. Jugie, Ph. Plagnieux and the map on p. 22; earlier e.g. Whiteley 1990.

10) This complex was incidentally situated just next to one of the gates of the Old Town. Katalin Gyürky (H. Gyürky 1984, 40) drew attention to another possible parallel: the *Vlašský dvůr* in *Kutná Hora*, which acted as a royal minting centre from around 1300, but later was used as a residence as well, see Durdík 2000, 601–602. A contemporary parallel could perhaps also be found in the *Royal House in Brno*, built by *Václav II*. Unfortunately its true form – apart from the chapel's – is not known. See Benešová 2003 and Vitovský 2003.

According to the results of the small-scale preliminary archaeological research (Fig. 2, 3, 7) to the *Schön*-woodcut of 1541 (Fig. 4) and to the *Hauy-Rabatta*-plan of 1687 (Fig. 5), this complex did not have too many military characteristics, but was still not completely without fortification features. It stood just next to the town wall and joined directly to one of the gatehouses. 8) The centre of the complex was a unit of two or three towers: a gate-house and *donjon* (*wohnturm*) like buildings. However, up to this time no traces of separation (such as curtain walls, gatehouse, moat, etc.) of this ensemble from the other parts of the city have been pointed out. The whole complex might have looked like the earlier slightly fortified *Pfalz* – es, or rather the 14–15th century French town-palaces, *hotels*, 9) as well as the *Králův dvůr* in Prague Old-Town (Durdík 2000, 292–293). 10) A possible attack was expected from the outside, and in the event of emergency the defence of the *curia* was a common duty with that of the city. Unquestionably it required harmonious relations between the king (or his exponents) and the townspeople. We can tell the first fifty years or so of cohabitation worked without conflict. However, relations were not heavily tested within this time. The only case in which a real common threat emerged ended without troubles. The raiding troops of the second Mongol invasion in 1285 were defeated on the open battlefield by King László (Ladislau) IV, on the other side of the Danube. However, this case demonstrated the strength of the fortified city, since the queen and her court judged the walls to be safe enough to retreat behind them. At the same time she obviously trusted the *cives* of Buda (Zolnay 1963, 88–89).

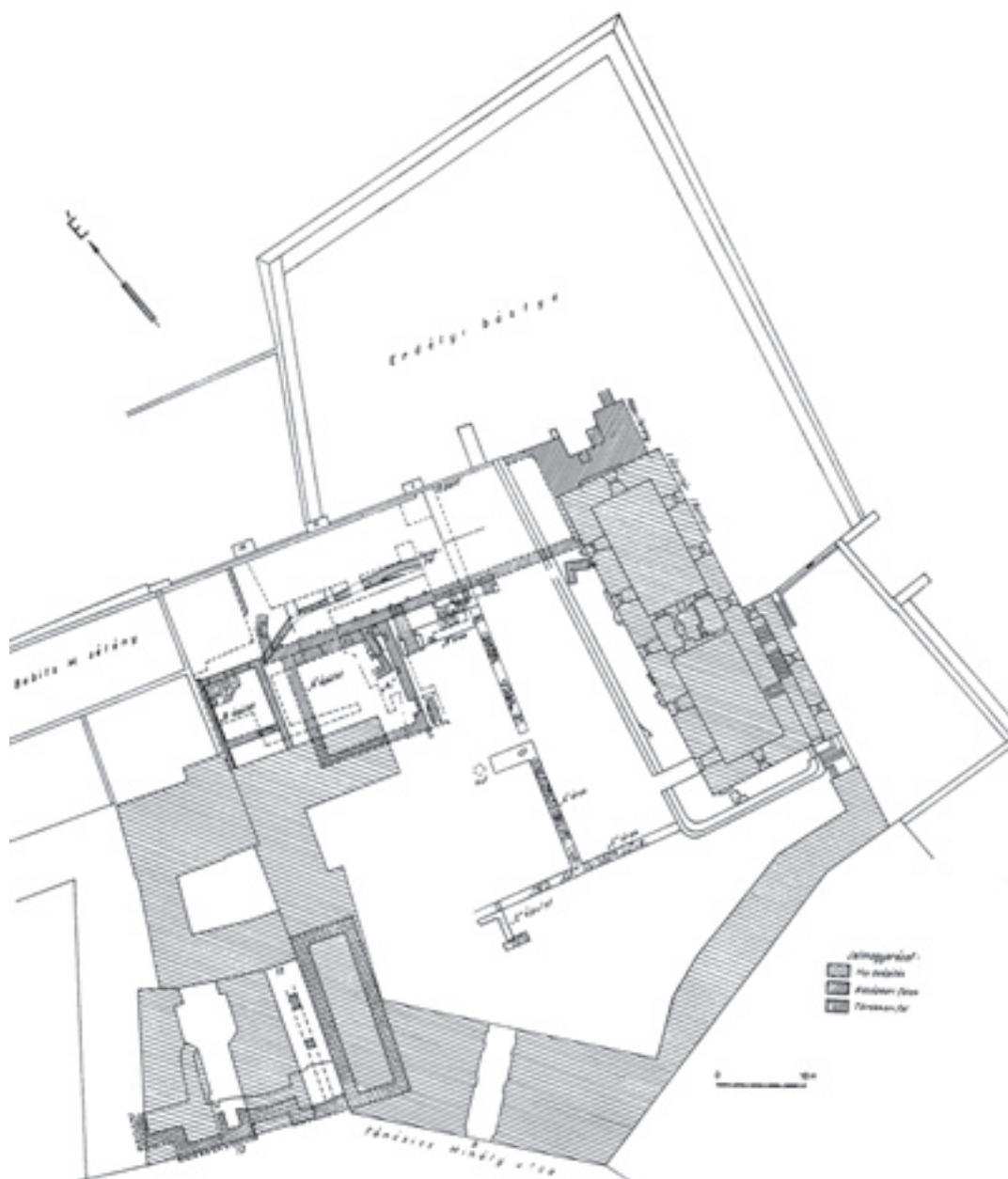


Fig. 2
The remains of the *Kammerhof* after the excavations of plot 9 *Táncsics M. Street*; after Zolnay 1968.

11) *The archbishop of Esztergom crowned him as early as May 1301, but only with a surrogate crown. He was elected as king at the diets of 1307 and 1308, and crowned again in 1309 with another crown, sanctified for the occasion, but he was crowned with the true Holy Crown only in 1310. Thus – at least in sense of Hungarian constitutional law – he was a legal king only from this year on. However, he counted the years of his rule from 1301.*

12) *„Darnach furten sy jin/in den Chammerhof hin/in derselben Kluse/Wunt der kunic mit huse.” – Citation from Ottokar’s Österreichische Reimchronik, see Zolnay 1963, 90.*

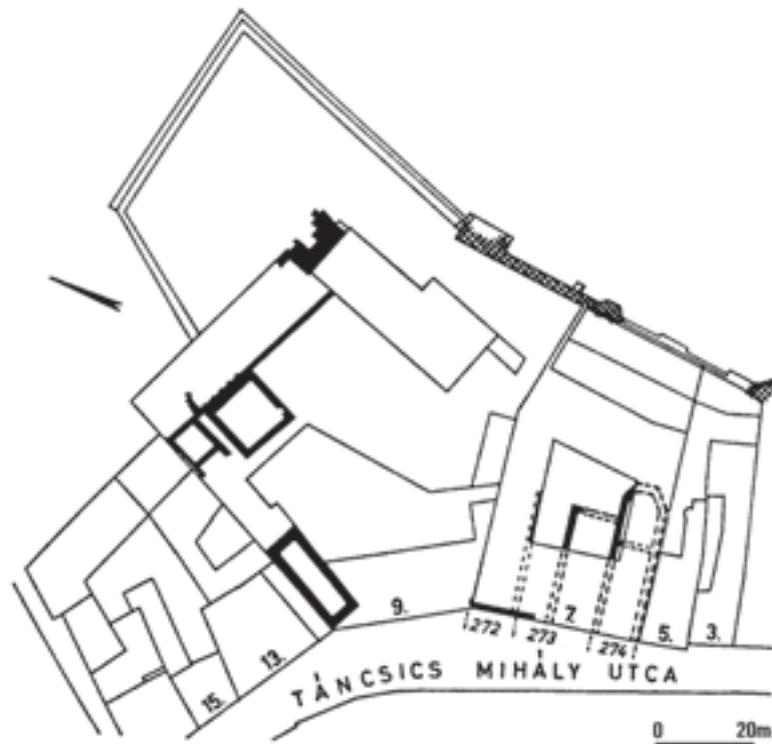
13) *Vencel/László left the country in August 1304, taking the Hungarian Holy Crown with him. Shortly after this, when his father died (on 21 of June 1305) and he was crowned king of Bohemia (Václav/Wenceslas III – 1305–1306), he abdicated the Hungarian throne in favour of Duke Otto III of Wittelsbach, grandson of Béla IV. The latter came to Hungary and was crowned in December 1305, but finally – just like his predecessor – he had to leave the country in 1307 (however, he insisted on the title of Hungarian king until his death in 1312). It was after this, that Károly Róbert was elected as king of Hungary, but he was crowned with the Holy Crown of Hungary only in 1310.*

14) *For the political and economic development of the new city, which gradually attained the role of capital, see Kubinyi 1991.*

Fig. 3

The remains of the Kammerhof and the St. Martin’s chapel after the excavations of plot 7 Táncsics M. Street; after H. Gyürky 1984.

Paradoxically, the fortified city – one of the main functions of which ought always to have been to protect the king and his court from any external threat – two decades later had to face the king’s, i.e. one of the kings’ siege as the first real and close physical threat. This was a different political situation. After the Árpáadian dynasty ended in 1301, there appeared two candidates for the throne. They were Károly Róbert (Carlo Roberto/Charles Robert – King Charles I, 1301/1308/1310–1342) 11) from the Neapolitan branch of the Anjous and Vencel (Václav/Wenceslas – reigned in Hungary as László/Ladislav in 1301–1305) of the Přemysl dynasty, the son of the Czech king, Václav (Wenceslas) II (1278–1305). At this time Buda, feeling it had enough power to express its own political interests, supported the latter. In August 1301 Vencel, coming from Bohemia, was first introduced to Buda, where he took up his residence *expressis verbis* in the *Kammerhof* 12) (he was then crowned with the Holy Crown in Székesfehérvár). So, Charles had to try to open the gates of the most important city by siege in 1302. The siege ended in failure, and only the suburbs and vineyards were ravaged. However, some years later, in 1307 – when Vencel and even his successor, Otto of Bavaria were over 13) – the city fell without a fight. Apart from the ensuing cruel executions of the main members of the opposition party, a surprisingly correct relationship developed between the new king and the city. By this time Buda had become indisputably the most important and wealthy city in Hungary, and was named by the king himself as *civitas nostra principalis* (Zolnay 1963, 91, 97). 14) This went so far that four years later, in 1311, when the king stay within the walls of Buda because of the fidelity of the townspeople, the siege against him by the revolting magnate, Máté Csák, concluded in exactly the same result as the one in 1302. However, these two sieges provided a good opportunity to reach two conclusions. First, the new fortified city worked very well as a fortification. Second, the strong city with its own political ambitions and decisions could cause serious troubles for the king whether he was outside or inside the walls. Even in the latter case he could feel himself *quasi passer in tecto* i.e. “like a pigeon in a cage” not merely because he was surrounded by the troops of Máté Csák, but also because he was entirely at the mercy of the city. It is not known whether these conclusions were really drawn, but the fact that some years later Károly chose Temesvár (today Timișoara in Romania) and then Visegrád as his main residence, renders it very probable. The conclusions gave rise to another, later-emerging consequence that resulted a fundamental change in the general outlook of the city.



15) *This position is very similar to the one in Prague, where The Hradčany settlement is situated higher than Prague Castle (Pražský hrad) itself.*

After the death of Charles Robert, the court of his son and successor Lajos I (Louis the Great – 1342–82) resided for a while in Visegrád, but between 1347–1355 Buda became the main centre again. Most likely the *Kammerhof* was used as the residence of the court. Nevertheless, based on archaeological evidence, at almost the same time there must have appeared another important building complex on the southernmost part of the plateau as well (though the archaeological excavations have brought to light here some earlier, scattered remnants as well, proving that there had been some sorts of buildings even before, the nature and context of these remain unclear; Magyar 1991b, 207–210; 1997, 101–107). Thus the first **relatively** well determinable architectural unit on this part of the hill we can date only from around the middle of the 14th century (Fig. 6, dark-grey). According to the archaeological observations, this consisted of at least two parts: a massive tower (*Bergfried*) standing on the southernmost rock-spur and – joining directly to it from the north – a palace-block with a trapezoidal ground-plan that enclosed a small courtyard in the middle. Other considerations also lead us to suppose that a further part of the plateau lying to the north must have belonged to the aforementioned complex as a bailey or forecourt. This was separated from the north, i.e. from the city, by a dry moat cut across the rocky plateau (Dry Moat I; Magyar 1991b, 201–202, 210–212; 1997, 107–108). The geographical position of this southern complex was not favourable with respect to its own defence, as it was situated on a much lower level than the city lying to the north of it. 15) However, it covered the weakest point in the overall defence system, and also the important ferry to (old) Pest, crossing the Danube below at the foot of the hill (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 4
The nord part of Buda with the tower-complex of the Kammerhof; detail from the woodcut of Erhard Schön (1541).



16) This identification is generally accepted by Zolnay and Gerevich as well as by others. On Prince István of Anjou see Spekner 2002, 404–412.

17) The archaeological context of the tower is not quite clear, so there various interpretations are possible.

18) For István of the Arpadian Dynasty, as well as Zsoldos 2007, see Spekner 2002, 413–417; he was generally titled *rex iunior*, but he also used the term *dux*.

At this point it should be noted that the southern tower is a rather debatable part of the complex, as its dating to an earlier period cannot be precluded. Space precludes addressing this question in detail. On the one hand this tower was undoubtedly identical with the one was mentioned in 15th and 16th century sources as *turris condam Stephani ducis*, i.e., “the tower of late Prince Stephen”. The prince named Stephen is generally identified as the younger brother of King Louis I, who stood in for the king as a regent while the latter was away in Italy. If the identification is true, we may suppose he resided on the site. **16)** On the other hand, we cannot exclude that the tower was named after the son of Béla IV (Magyar 2004), **17)** who – as we have mentioned – lived almost a century earlier. **18)** Whatever the truth of the matter, around the mid 14th century a building complex of such a size and in such a position must have been owned by the king or someone close to him.

As we have seen, no true archaeological evidence of an earlier 13th century royal palace – supposed to be here by some experts – has been presented yet. We must stop here for a short speculation. How could it happen, or could it happen at all, that a rather large complex of royal property appeared here “from one day to another” around the mid 14th century with no antecedents? This question is reasonable because, as we have seen, the site must have been of strategic importance from the very beginning. We cannot give a satisfactory answer to this question. Probably there had been some kind of royal objects, such as fortifications, standing on the southern end of the plateau. Otherwise we ought to suppose that the above-mentioned mid 14th century complex was erected upon a piece of land of about 4400–4500 m², cut out of the territory of the city. We cannot exclude this latter variation, especially since it happened in following periods.

Had it been thus or so, it is unquestionable, that from 1340's to 1381/82 – so for about 40 years – there were two large royal properties coexisting within Buda, situated on two opposite sides of the city. It seems, however, that only the southern one developed on a larger scale in the second part of the 14th century. This development of the southern unit was – especially after 1381/82 – characterised by a series of large-scale physical, territorial expansions (Fig. 6, medium and light grey).

Fig. 5
The nord-east corner of Buda; detail from the so called Haury-Rabatta map (1687).

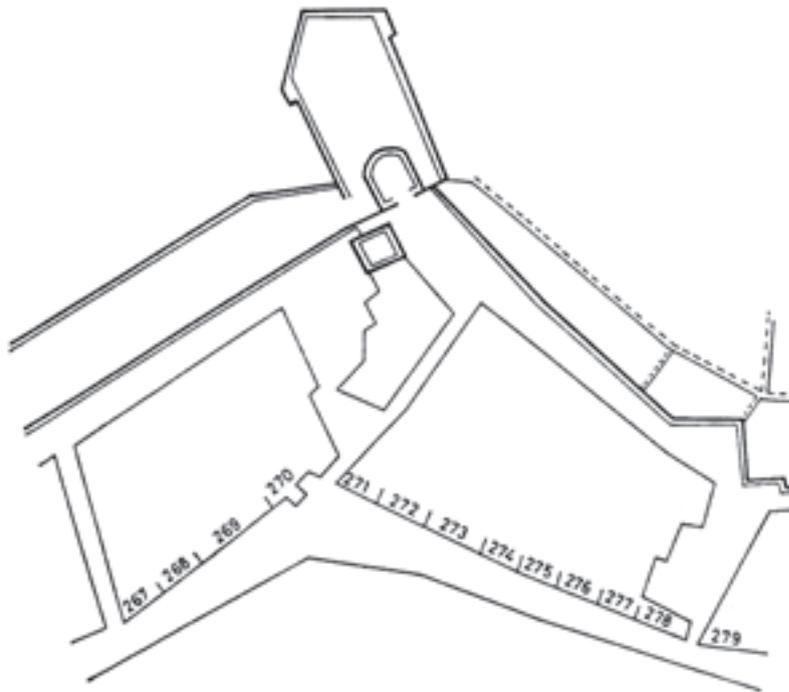




Fig. 6
The royal palace of Buda on the south part of the Castle Hill, marking the different building-phases.

As archaeological excavations of recent decades have demonstrated, the greater part of these expansions happened "at the expense of" the city's territory (Fig. 6, strong black contours). To date, little attention has been paid to the historical background of this phenomenon, although several questions may arise around it. What was – if there was at all – the legal basis of this process? How did it happen in practice? Why don't we have written sources for this, such as documents on the compulsory of private properties, or on compensation for them.

Some ten years ago we could have answered these questions more easily. It is a well-known fact that the Jewish population of Buda (and of Hungary) was expelled by King Louis I around 1350 or 1360 (Zolnay 1963, 98; it is also quite clear from written sources that the earliest, 13–14th century Jewish diaspora of Buda lived in the south-western part of the city). When, some years later, they were allowed to come back, they were – at least it has been thought in the case of Buda – settled on the opposite, north-eastern side of the city (N.B: next to the *Kammerhofl*) where they lived until the end of the Middle Ages. All this would have explained the process, but some new research by András Végh has questioned the basis of these thoughts. Nowadays, scholars assume that the expelled Jews returned to their original quarter and it was only later, around 1410, when they were moved to the northern area. 19)

By the end of King Sigismund's reign (1387–1437), the area of the southern royal complex, the palace – that after 1381/82 undoubtedly became the single royal residence within the city – had grown immensely (see Fig. 6; Magyar 1991b, 219–228). It was well separated from the city by a new moat (Dry Moat II) that was much deeper and wider than the older one (Dry Moat I). This could have protected the precinct of the palace from any inconvenient internal revolts, damage, etc. that might have arisen within the city. Beside this – now totally separate from the city-walls – there was a much more sophisticated system of fortifications built on all the other sides of the palace, i.e. on the slopes. The system was based on multiple lines of the defence. By the multiplication of curtain walls a number of smaller inner courts, and larger outer wards (*Zwinger*-s) were created around the main courtyards situated on the plateau.

This kind of fortification system, without the strong flanking towers, might have seemed rather old-fashioned even in its own age, but – as we will see – it worked very well even much later. On the other hand this huge architectural complex was built to be a royal palace, i.e. a residence, rather than a fortress (however, it was quite often mentioned in late medieval sources as *castrum* or later as *arx* as well). Finally, we must not forget that Buda, the capital of Hungary, as well as the royal palace within it, did not have to face any kind of external threat for more than 180 years. This is why – apart from one single unconfirmed source – we do not have much data about the fortification works of King Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490). The only work that can at least partly, be attributed to him seems to be the formation of a huge, empty space, later the area known as the Northern forecourt, next to the Northern (II) Dry Moat of the palace (Magyar 2005, 100–101). The creation of this open area, however, could have begun earlier, in the age of King Sigismund.

This space came to importance shortly after death of King Matthias, when the palace was held by a confidante of his natural son, János/John Corvinus. The barons of the opposition party deployed their troops and cannon here, in front of the moat (Magyar 1992, 62). This was the first time the southern palace acted as a castle, separated from other fortifications of the city (the city proved to be neutral in this question). Even though the confrontation was resolved through negotiation (the palace was given over to the barons) this case ought to have served as a warning signal: the fortification system of the palace, formerly thought to be perfect, had a very vulnerable part facing the city. However, it seems this conclusion was not drawn at all.

Less than forty years later, in 1529 (three years after the Battle of Mohács), almost the same situation occurred (Iványi 1941). The only difference was that in this case the city and the castle had to face an external siege together. After some days of artillery fire the Turkish troops were able to break into the city, and they assaulted the area of the palace from the north again. After strong cannon-fire from around Saint Sigismund church, the castle was lost again. This was probably the reason that in the 1530's a new, huge curtain wall was built on the northern side of the empty foreground of the palace (Magyar 1992). However, the new wall was by no means a final resolution of the problem. This was not evident at once, since during sieges in subsequent years (1530, 1540, 1541, and 1598, 1602–1603, 1684; see Iványi 1941 on the years 1530–41 and Fekete – Nagy 1973, 337–343, 423–434 on 1598–1684), the city and the castle resisted together. Later on it was proven that while the fortifications of the palace – some of which were renewed – could resist any kind of external siege, they were not enough to resist assaults from the direction of the city. In 1686 (when Buda was recaptured from the Ottomans) the city fell first, but the area of the palace/castle fell shortly after this, too (Fekete – Nagy 1973, 423–434). The same thing happened as late as 1849! Thus, the *Vorburgstadt* fortification system that was invented in Buda around the middle of the 14th century to open up the possibility of separate defence of the royal palace did not prove to be perfect or timeless: whenever the city fell, the palace/castle fell, too. However, as long as royal power was strong enough (and this was the case for almost all of the late Middle Ages) there was no problem.

19) This was the age in which King Sigismund founded a new royal chapel dedicated to Blessed Virgin and St. Sigismund in the foreground of the palace, on the area of the former Jewish quarter (so within the territory of the city; Végh 2006, 86–87).

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Buda: příklad soužití města a hradu

Město Buda založil král Béla IV. po mongolském vpádu (1241–42) někdy mezi lety 1245–1255. Základní charakter tohoto nového sídla můžeme dnes vyjádřit termínem „opevněné město“, což je ekvivalent dobového označení „castrum“ (např. „castrum novi montis Pestiensis“, „castrum Budense“, atd.; variace poukazují na dvojí původ jeho obyvatel), které se používalo po celý středověk. Mnozí archeologové a historici se shodují v názoru, že uvnitř Budy musel již od samého začátku existovat nějaký druh královského sídla. Horečně však diskutují o tom, kde tato nejstarší královská rezidence stála a jakou měla podobu. Autory dvou hlavních teorií jsou László Zolnay a László Gerevich. Podle Zolnaye byla první rezidence situována v severovýchodním vrcholu trojúhelníkového půdorysu města a měla podobu více či méně otevřeného městského paláce sestávajícího z několika odlišných budov včetně věží. Gerevich ji naproti tomu lokalizuje na podlouhlou ostrožnu v jižní části náhorní plošiny. Podle něj měla tato rezidence charakter hradu, který byl sice od města oddělen, ale stále tvořil část společného hradebního systému (tento typ fortifikace klasifikuje András Kubinyi jako tzv. *předhradní město*, kdysi pozorované a popsané Johansenem v oblasti Livlandu). V současnosti nemáme k dispozici dostatek archeologických či historických dat, která by potvrdila některý z těchto dvou názorů, i když víme, že později se na obou zmíněných místech skutečně nacházely královské majetky. Komplex budov v severovýchodním rohu města je poprvé zmiňován v písemných pramenech ve spojitosti s událostmi roku 1301 jako „Kammerhof“, a tehdy beze všech pochyb fungoval jako královská rezidence. Druhé, jižní sídlo je možné sledovat v pramenech až od 40. let 14. století. Nicméně později – když byl v roce 1381 až 1382 Kammerhof předán poustevníkům řádu sv. Pavla – stalo se jediným královským palácem v Budě, který fungoval jako hlavní sídlo královské správy přibližně od roku 1408 až do roku 1526 (1541). Mezitím jeho plocha postupně narostla do značných rozměrů a byl posílen řadou nových opevnění. Tím nepochybně získal charakter bezpečného hradu a přinejmenším v pozdním středověku byl skutečně označován jako „castrum“ nebo „arx“. Přesto však, jak ukázaly pozdější události, mohl tento silně opevněný palácový (hradní) komplex odolávat hrozbě zvenčí jen tak dlouho, dokud společně s ním odolávalo i město.

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