Acta Univ. Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies, **18** (2020) 11–28

DOI: 10.2478/auseur-2020-0008

A Few Chapters of the Earlier History of Operational Urban Development in Central Europe

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Abstract. The necessity of operational urban development becomes obvious if we intend to respond with a planned urban development to the challenges posed by an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable urbanization. We all know the means necessary to enable operational urban development, the ones making planned urban development possible in the most developed founding Member States of the EU as well as in Central Europe – the region of the former 'Mitteleuropa'. Operational urban development needs to be fully consistent with its objective in a constantly changing public policy, market, economic, and social environment while also being guided by the current local conditions, which is why improving and developing its toolbox and methodology according to scientific standards is an ongoing task. In terms of the evolution of this process, the culture ensuring its control is a crucial factor, wherefore not only the existing toolbox and methodology, serving as its subject, is worth investigating but the very historical foundation it relies on. Indeed, this is a factor that, even despite an uncertain public policy and social environment, can prove conclusively that operational urban development, acting as a prerequisite for a conscious and planned urban development, is possible not merely because there is an established and rich toolbox in place in the most developed Western European EU Member States, which has been functioning continuously and efficiently since the end of World War II and which has, since 1990, increasingly provided for the reintegrating countries

of Central Europe too, allowing for adaptation to the local conditions, but it is also possible because what we call in today's terms operational urban development is not some questionable practice of uncertain past but is nearly as ancient as the present-day European civilization with thousands of years of history, taken root in the wake of the Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian cultures – and this statement holds true not only for the most developed and richest countries but for those of Central Europe as well. The activity known today by the name of operational urban development already yielded some results in the past without which our cities would not be the same. This is not just the case in Western Europe but also in Central Europe. The mainstream of the European history of operational urban development that can be identified in connection with Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and England is a better-known and internationally more addressed topic in the literature even if it does not emerge in public awareness directly by this name but as a phenomenon integrated in other dimensions of the history of urbanism and architecture, the history of ideas, engineering, history, and geography. At the same time, although the turning points in its Central European history are increasingly present in scientific publications, the latter is still awaiting substantive treatment. In the above-specified context, the present study aims to facilitate this European cognitive process focused on Central Europe for 'the history of science is science itself'.

Keywords: conscious urban development, planned urbanization, structural and cohesion funds, Multiannual Financial Framework

The Significance of the History of Operational Urban Development

Scientific publications point out that operational urban development (Lacaze 1995) is clearly a necessary aspect if we intend to respond with a planned urban development to the challenges posed by an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable urbanization (Bajnai 2016: 8–11). Indeed, these challenges can only be addressed through extensive, long-lasting interventions that are already complex in themselves, that lead to comprehensive and profound transformations in the spatial and physical structure as well as urban fabric of cities and the villages located in their attraction zone, and that pay off in the long run but almost never in full, at least not in a direct manner – and these interventions cannot be expected from the spontaneous development of the cities but from consciously performed, planned development alone (Bajnai 2016: 105–112).

The organizational, legal, and financial instruments enabling operational urban development, having different maturity level in each country, and being used with varying degrees of efficiency are well known from practice, the international literature (Audon–Figeat–Gay–Lambert–Parcollet–Roux–Subileau 1996: 21–22),

and the scientific publications of our Central European homeland (Bajnai 2007: 35–146) – these are the instruments that, besides the most developed founding Member States of the EU, make planned, operational urban development possible in Central Europe as well (Bajnai 2018: 79). These nation-state instruments are supplemented by financial assistance – so far primarily in the form of non-refundable financial aid – granted through EU public policies, under the aegis of regional politics and within the framework of structural and cohesion funds. The objectives and rules of utilizing these funds are established every seven years together with the adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Presently, at the time of writing this study, we are amidst the preparatory and adoption procedures of a new MFF – covering the period of 2021–2027 and entering into force as of 1 January 2021 –, on the eve of the new MFF's coming into effect. The efficient use of the financial support provided either directly or indirectly by the EU's structural and cohesion funds with a view to facilitate urban development and address the challenges posed by sustainable urbanization depends very much upon the level of development of a given Member State's operational urban development toolbox and the efficient use thereof. Drawing on literature and the experiences, we can conclude that where the nation-state's toolbox is more developed and its intended use is more efficient, the grants available through the EU's structural and cohesion funds can also be more efficiently utilized in the service of urban development objectives as compared to situations where this is not the case. Indeed, as evidenced by cohesion reports, the financial support for the development (such interventions would naturally include those aimed directly as well as indirectly at urban development) of EU Member States of the Central European region, with accession in the years 2004 and 2007, would generally take place from the EU's funding sources and the additionally provided governmental co-financing. Therefore, if this issue bears some significance in any geographical area of the EU – and we know it does –, then it is of particular importance in the countries of Central Europe to find out the extent to which operational urban development is possible considering the toolboxes available at the level of each Member State. And this issue – especially in terms of the Central European countries – cannot boil down simply to the specific instruments available at a given moment.

As a matter of fact, operational urban development as such needs to be fully consistent with its objective in a constantly changing public policy, market, economic, and social environment while also being guided by the current local conditions (Bajnai 2020: 113–135), which also holds true for countries and historical moments where and when there is a developed and rich toolbox in place that can be used efficiently and has been used continuously in everyday practice, routinely and in accordance with its intended purpose, for over half a century (Bajnai 2007: 157–191). Consequently, improving and developing the toolbox and methodology according to scientific standards is an ongoing task in such cases too. Assuming that is the case, it is not

necessary to particularly demonstrate the significance of this issue in EU Member States where in the past decades the toolbox of operational urban development could not have (re)developed at all or only to a limited extent. In such cases, it also adds to the difficulty that the politics and public opinion of a given region, or in some places even the academic world and the professional public, have trouble accepting the activity – guided and managed by the public sphere – what we call in today's terms operational urban development. It is not unusual that while the meaning of the strengthening urban, urban development dimension of EU public policies remains hidden from it for the most part, it is able to interpret it, even well over a decade after EU accession, as a short-term fundraising opportunity serving merely particularist interests in everyday practice.

While also preventing the efficient use of financial support targeting urban development in the framework of the new EU development period (2021–2027), this precarious situation acts as a formidable barrier against the conscious and planned (Bajnai 2018: 71–80) operational urban development – which is the only type of intervention able to address the urbanization challenges of sustainable development – because it indicates some perceptional problems attributable to cultural attitudes, the correction of which is at least as difficult as finding a remedy for financing gap, since experience has shown that changing mindsets is one of the most difficult undertakings, and, even if possible, it requires consistent awareness-raising work. This also reveals that, like in other areas of life, culture plays a crucial role (Mannheim 1995) with regard to the process of operational urban development and to how the necessary toolbox is ensured at the level of each Member State, considering that controlling the above-mentioned development process is defined by the culture (Mannheim 1995) of those who have decisive influence on it. Therefore, when – in the context of the previously mentioned circumstances and the uncertainties associated with them – we investigate the prerequisites of the conscious (Bierbauer 1940: 53) and planned urban development, it is appropriate to look beyond the horizon emerging upon the initial brutal approach, from the available instruments considered in isolation. The claim that operational urban development is possible is confirmed not only by the fact that there are instruments – depending on the specific circumstances and with differing levels of development as well as of various modes of use in each country and region – available at a specific time and place, whose efficiency has been demonstrated over the past three (or seven in Western Europe) decades, but also by the fact that the activity that we here and now call in today's terms operational urban development was already practised by our forefathers on a regular bases in the distant past – and it was done with the highest degree of awareness possible under the given circumstances, resorting to public management procedures and technical solutions in line with the level of the social, economic, and technical development of their time. Further, it can be stated that this is the case not just in developed

Western European countries that are the pioneers of this process and where the different phases and operations are well documented by contemporary sources and international literature but also in less favoured Central European areas with a much more tumultuous history, what we illustrate in the present study through the example of Hungary and what can be revealed in the same way in other areas of the Central European region as an outcome of research work. Now, if we can trace down that the conscious and planned actions of operational urban development were already practised by our ancestors – sometimes with results of worldwide importance –, then it could only be so because the thoughts and ideas guiding the development and building activities of cities at the time formed an inseparable part of their culture. Therefore, they also form part of our inherited culture despite the fact that certain elements of this culture that are presented here would in their original form fade into oblivion from time to time during the turbulences of history, and perhaps they are not widely known even in our days, and also despite the fact that a more in-depth exploration – complying with scientific standards – of this historical and spiritual heritage would only be viable in the long term and assisted by numerous future research studies.

The present study has the ambition to put its modest resources to work in a bid to contribute to the facilitation of this process. It does so partly in order to make our knowledge more complete with regard to our heritage in terms of history as well as history of ideas so as to serve the interests of the general enrichment of our culture.

On the other hand, it particularly takes on this commitment due to the real topicality of the issue: by claiming some significant moments and results from the past of operational urban development in Hungary, it aims to show that it is possible not only because we have some of the relevant instruments in place but because what we call today operational urban development was already practised by the state and more generally by the public sphere on a regular basis (with periodic breaks) and in the most conscious way possible over the past thousand years – if looking back from 2020.

In doing so, the present study wishes to address the overwhelming obstacles standing in the way of operational urban development, a key factor that sustainable urbanization cannot go without, placing specific focus on the elimination of conceptual barriers. As a matter of course, any activity carried out in accordance with scientific standards, suitable to remedy perceptional problems traceable to cultural origins can only be achieved by way of a culture-transforming awareness-raising process, whereby the science of urbanization itself (as they would say in Hungary in the first half of the 20th century: urban science, or as it would enter the public consciousness after 1949: settlement science) is enriched since ‘the history of science is science itself’ (Goethe 1810).

With a view to facilitate awareness-raising, the paper at hand attempts to recall this story through the schematic presentation of eras of paramount importance in

terms of urbanization, having the intended purpose of exploring a much-needed knowledge base and promoting the better understanding of the current, modern instruments developed as a result of a lengthy and complex process from former approaches and public management attitudes as well as solutions.

Further research studies will be able to present the Central European history of operational urban development, including its chapter dedicated to Hungary, with more completeness and in more detail since this is a largely unexplored area as far as we know. Experts of the specific aspects of history, legal science, and art history certainly feel superior at several points in connection with the issues discussed in this study. However, our aim – similarly to an excellent specialist of a later era, Dezső Dercsényi (Dercsényi 1990: 6) – was not to bring out publications of scientific results but rather to structure the available knowledge according to the internal logic of our own field of science and by glancing through 270 years of history that bequeathed to us but a few original written documents, which is why we can draw exclusively on results achieved in the fields of history, history of architecture, and legal history as reliable sources. It follows from the nature of things that we cannot gain a complete picture even regarding the period under study, those centuries abounding in unknown or less charted areas and blind spots. 'Often only the contours are visible, while at other times the pieces of the picture must be put together as if it were a jigsaw puzzle'[1] (Dercsényi 1990: 6). As with all general works, the goal is not merely to obtain a broad outline, summarize the results attained so far in terms of our own field of interest, and create a consistent image but to embark on the trail to recover the missing pieces.

Therefore, and due to the above-mentioned aspects, we considered, despite the uncharted areas, that the present circumstances impose the overriding requirement that the available factual material be published, leaving no room for any time delay that might be justified by making up for the blind spots and working out a more complex and sizeable scientific publication.

Additions to the History of Operational Urban Development in Central Europe in the Light of Some of Its Significant Moments in Hungary

What is today known under the name operational urban development has already existed in the past, hundreds of years before the formation of the present-day concept. Consequently, our review – which cannot be comprehensive for reasons already known, wherefore it is rather mosaic-like, sketchy, preliminary, and indicative – attempts to show the historical beginnings, the milestones of the Early Middle Ages still having considerable impact on our times.

1 All translations throughout the paper belong to the author.

The Work of King Saint Stephen and His Descendants – The Planned Building of the Urban Network in the Period of 1000–1270

The Works of King Saint Stephen

The backbone of the 21st-century urban network of Hungary was shaped by Stephen I a thousand years ago (ruled: 1001–1038). He was directing the state-building process in the country – with a sedentary population, established borders, and a culture forced to accelerated lifestyle change under his rule and radically transformed in an (historically speaking) extremely short space of time through joining Western Christianity and thereby being irrevocably connected to the Western European civilization – in such a way that the organization of the public administration inextricably intertwined with construction projects realized under his direct control and as a result of his stimulating support. A great many royal castles were built during his reign in the territory of today's Hungary as follows: Esztergom, Sopronvár, Mosonvár, Visegrád, Veszprémvár, Vasvár, Fehérvár, Kolonvár, Somogyvár, Tolna Castle, Hontvár, Borsod Castle, Szolnok, Csongrád, Szeged, Szabolcsvár, Békésvár, and Csanád Castle. In addition, he built numerous castles in the territory of his kingdom: in Central Europe, north of the country borders of present-day Hungary: Borona Castle, Sasvár, the Trenčín Castle, Zobor Castle, Pozsonyvár, Nyitravár, Barsvár, Komáromvá, Gömörvár, Újvár, Zemplénvár, Ungvár, and Borsova Castle; east of the borders: Szatmár Castle, Biharvár, Dobokavár, Kolozsvár, Tordavár, Arad, Zarándvár, and Küküllővár; south of the borders: Baranya Castle, Bodrog Castle, Valkó Castle, Bácsvár, Nándorfehérvár, Kevevár, Krassóvár, Temesvár, and Hunyadvár (Györffy 1977: 184–185) – 48 castles altogether, of which 18 fall within the territory of Hungary and 30 are situated in other countries of Central Europe as follows: 12 in Slovakia, 2 in Ukraine, 10 in Romania, 1 in Croatia, and 6 in Serbia. Parts of Budapest, the Hungarian capital, are not included in this list of building locations unlike two other Central European capitals: Bratislava (Pozsonyvár), the capital of Slovakia, and Belgrade (Nándorfehérvár), the capital of Serbia.

Upon his encouragement, serving as a royal incentive, princes, provincial lords, and other aristocrats also began to build castles. György Györffy's view implies that this is how the preconditions for protection necessary for the establishment of bishoprics may have been created.

In addition to the above, the following castles were built under Stephen I in the territories of ducal 'dux', count 'comes'/'ispán', and prefectural 'praefectus' seats within the framework of the state management activity under the guidance of the king, as specified by György Györffy (Györffy 1977: 206–207): Oroszvár, Kapuvár, Budavár (prefectural seat), Pestvár, Úrhida Castle, Regöly, Váty Castle, Nógrád,

Pata, Heves, and Szerencs within the territory of Hungary; north of Hungary: Vasvár; east of Hungary: Krasznavár, Várad, Désvár, and Gyula-Fehérvár (dux); south of Hungary: Szerém (dux). Thus, in addition to the above-summarized 48 castles, the building of further 18 are credited to him and other 2 (in Pécs and Eger) are also presumed to be his work, thus amounting to an additional 20. This makes up a total of 68 built and fortified castles.

Have there been any precedents of castle building? Apart from archaeological findings, there are first of all linguistic research studies whose results can be employed. It has long attracted archaeologists' attention in Hungary that a significant part of the settlement names in the Carpathian Basin can be traced back to Slavic languages. Linking this finding with the also Slavic-origin denominations of the settlements giving the name for several counties (Visegrád, Nógrád, Csongrád, Baranya, Pest, etc.), they inferred the Slavic, and thus the pre-conquest, origin of the county system. Archaeologists of the neighbouring countries (Slovakia, Romania) had a penchant for adopting Erik Molnár's theory, while the most comprehensive refutation is credited to Gyula Kristó. According to the prevailing theory, castle names originate from personal names. The issue concerning the relationship between the historical figures and castle names was the most impressive in the Carpathian Basin, where Anonymous named several castles after various figures (Örsúr, Óbars, Szabolcs, Borsod, Gyöngyöspata, Veszprém). However, some of these proved to be nothing more than the products of the anonymous scrivener's imagination (e.g. Alpár) (Mordovin 2016: 89–91).

Besides his castle-building activities, King Saint Stephen established the Archdiocese of Esztergom, the bishoprics seated in Győrvár, Veszprémvár, Pécs, Eger, Kalocsa, and Gyulafehérvár – all of them being of Latin rite (pertaining to Western Christianity under the leadership of the Pope of Rome) and within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese –, and a Latin abbey with episcopal status in Pannonhalma, until around the year 1030 (Györffy 1977: 178–187). Built on St Martin Hill, named after Saint Martin of Tours born in Roman Savaria in 316 AD, the abbey was dedicated to St. Martin, and, following the teachings of St Benedict and the example of the abbey of Monte Cassino, it nurtured and further enriched St Martin's legacy that had a major influence on the fate of the whole of Europe (Bajnai 2014: 152–159). It was one of the most significant spiritual centres of King St Stephen's Hungary, and its cultural role is still very much alive, having survived a thousand years of history.

As can be seen from the above-listed place names, King St Stephen would normally designate bishop's seats where there was already a palace or castle owned by a royal family member or a provincial lord and where the military escorts or armour-clad warriors of these royalties and noblemen could provide protection to the church leader (Györffy 1977: 186). This is how the archbishopric came to be located in the royal seat of Esztergom, the Bishopric of Kalocsa in the first royal

family seat of the Arpads, and the Bishopric of Veszprém in the queen consort's castle. Furthermore, 'the bishoprics of Pécs, Eger, and Győr must also have been ducal or provincial seats, even though this cannot be proven in all cases', claims György Györffy.

The churches and the related system of services provide an important starting point for modelling the settlement network. The papal tithe register made between 1332 and 1337 is perhaps the most important document of the transition period between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Late Middle Ages, whose analysis can serve with key points of reference. Over 4,000 parishes are included in the register, but processing the data revealed certain shortcomings as well – these concern primarily significant territories of the Diocese of Győr and of the Great Hungarian Plain. While the former might have partly got lost, the latter may be owing to the fact that, on the one hand, a farm-like settlement structure was characteristic of the territory already in this period because of animal husbandry, and, on the other, the Cumanians that would later inhabit the area have not yet settled completely (Romhányi 2019: 402–403).

The diocesan cathedral and the bishop's palace were built within the castle walls, next to the king's, the queen's, and the duke's court. The presence of the church leader infused new blood into life in the castle and the 'castledom' developed under its jurisdiction. This way, by building the royal and provincial castles as well as the bishopric and archbishopric established under their patronage, Stephen I of Hungary created a momentum for urban development in the European sense. As a result of the king's state management activities and construction works, the bishop's castles – initially called 'civitas' or 'urbs' – were established and under them the suburbia including the houses of various subject populations, craftsmen, and merchants (Györffy 1977: 186). Subsequent upon their internal social and economic processes and as a result of royal decisions – esp. of Béla III in the 12th and of Béla IV in the 13th century – of a political, state management, legal, and economic nature, implemented through public administration management and building activities, these next-level settlements established in consequence of conscious and planned building activities guided and organized by the king would develop by the end of the 13th century into cities in the strictest Western European sense of the word.

There was a close connection between the development of the settlement structure and the region's road network. Their division into two separate groups is necessary since in Pannonia there was a strong tradition around the development of the Roman road network that served as a basis for the mediaeval system. The greatest difficulty in the research focusing on the roads of the Great Hungarian Plain is the lack of built trails unlike in the case of several paved roads in Pannonia. Frequent changes in the course of the River Tisza as well as its tributaries, and hence the occasional relocation of the harbours, had a serious impact on the

associated roads too. Therefore, routes in this area functioned much rather as transport corridors, which, however, had some individual stations that can be pinpointed. Such transport corridors were the salt roads, where the 'white gold' was transported from the Transylvanian mines to the west and the south (Romhányi 2019: 400).

In the course of his research, Gyula Kristó (2003) took into account those elements of spatial planning for which we have contemporary written sources of sufficient amount and quality so that conclusions can be made as to whether or not the spatial organization network roughly covered the available mediaeval space. Kristó analyses mediaeval spatial planning and its related changes by distinguishing three or sometimes even four timelines that are clearly comprehensible for him from a geographical point of view. In doing so, he establishes consistent historical timelines that more or less overlap in time. When analysing these individual 'timelines', he also focuses on presenting the changes that took place between them. His division of timelines is as follows: I. – King Saint Stephen and the age of conquest; II. – the middle of the 12th century, the conditions developed up to this point in history also being outlined; III. – early/first half of the 14th century; IV. – we can encounter this final timeline in almost all cases, covering the turn of the 15th-16th centuries.

In one of his greatest works, Pál Engel (2001) looks into the history of the Kingdom of Hungary and seeks to support the existing base of evidence with reliable sources. In this context, he notes that 'the Hungarian history is remarkably poor in narrative sources, and even the existing ones are not exactly matterful' (author's translation). Probably this is one of the reasons why his description of the still obscure period of the state foundation is highly fragmented and broken down into several parts. According to Pál Engel, the social organization of the Kingdom following the conquest was not established 'ex nihilo' – there might have been (were) various antecedents. He represents social hierarchy from top to bottom and claims that the major difficulty in the process of social transformation was the protection of landed property, which would lead to the transformation of the counties (and within that the castle estates) into national counties only in the time of Andrew II.

Stephen I's planned organizing activities targeting public administration, and the building initiatives inextricably linked with them, launched the urbanization processes that through the work of his descendants would result in the emergence of cities in the Western European sense of the word, proliferating all over the territory of early mediaeval Hungary by the end of the 13th century. It was owing to King St Stephen's operational urban development interventions that two – Óbuda and Pest – of the three districts, merged in the year 1870 to form the capital of present-day Hungary, Budapest, made a step forward towards truly becoming a city, followed by Sopron, Győr, Veszprém, Székesfehérvár, Pécs, Eger, Szolnok, and

Szeged of today's 23 cities with county rights, all three of the currently functioning archiepiscopal sees (Esztergom, Kalocsa, and Eger – the latter two as diocesan towns at the time), and some of the smaller towns as follows: Moson, Vasvár, Tolna, Heves, Szerencs, Csongrád, and Békés. Therefore, it can be stated that Stephen I's development efforts created the backbone of the historical as well as present-day urban network of Hungary. This was completed in the subsequent centuries by further products of both spontaneous and conscious urban development. However, in the light of the analysis of historical data, it shows that King St Stephen's public administration management and building activities set in motion the urbanization process of the key nodes and pivotal elements in the urban network not just regarding present-day Hungary but also including the Central European countries neighbouring Hungary: in Slovakia: the capital (Bratislava), Trenčín, Nitra, and Komárno; in Ukraine: Ungvár; in Romania: Kolozsvár, Nagyvárad, Arad, Temesvár, and Gyulafehérvár; in Serbia: the capital (Belgrade). Therefore, the past of operational urban development, dating back to an era a thousand years ago, and its achievements form an integral part of the common cultural heritage of the above-mentioned Central European countries.

Establishing the New Capital, Buda, and Further Results of Béla IV's City-Building Activities

Over two centuries after St. Stephen's reign, following the ravages of the Mongol invasion and the 1241-42 destruction of large parts of the country, it was the turn of Béla IV, 'the second founder of the state' (Rados 1971: 84), to rebuild the country. In the context of his conscious urban development activities of a significance and magnitude comparable to Stephen I's creations, architectural history literature credits him with the building of 40 castles fortified with stone walls, making it possible to prevent a new surge of attacks by the Tatars (Rados 1971: 83). Some of these achievements were realized in the form of a royal castle, as newly-built – e.g. Visegrád Castle (Rados 1971: 86) built for the queen or the Castle of Sárospatak – or fortified structures – e.g. the Castle of Esztergom – erected directly in the context of his undertakings, while some other works were carried out by bishops and the king's high officials at Béla IV's royal instigation, just like in King St Stephen's time. Eger serves as a fine example for the first case and Kőszeg for the second one.

In the suburbia of the royal castles established by Stephen I of Hungary, it was Béla III's supporting policy that at the end of the 12th century laid the economic foundations of a growing merchant and industrial population and of a boom in urban development. Nevertheless, it was Béla IV who, on the solid foundations laid by his ancestors, led these achievements towards their rightful place in history and whose determined actions transformed these settlements into veritable cities in the mediaeval sense, comparable to their Western counterparts. He came to the

realization that their bourgeoisie can provide the most reliable support for the king from a political point of view and act as the most dependable funding source for the royal treasury from a long-term financing perspective, while its valuable role played in the national defence did not escape his attention either. Hence, he drove a sustained effort to rely in his nation-building endeavours on the support of these cities more than his ancestors had done before him, wherefore he sought to promote their development (Györffy 1973: 295). To this end, he established royal free cities, raising their status by granting extended (e.g. Pest) or, in other cases, new privileges to them (e.g. Körmend), and he would also surround them with fortified walls. These measures set a new direction for the development of the cities.

Nonetheless, Béla IV's embarking on a proactive policy aimed at urban development was not triggered by the Mongol invasion. The aftermath of the destructions probably just further reinforced his initial efforts, a fact also shown by his 1238 granting of town privileges to Nagyszombat. That interpretation is borne out by the fact that, as György Györffy claims, 'already in the year 1242 during his stay in Dalmatia, he confirmed and extended the privileges granted to the coastal and Slavonian towns, one after the other. In November the same year, he decreed that the settlers of Zagreb move to the Gréc Mountain, build their town on that place, and send ten well-armed soldiers for his army.' Thus, following King Saint Ladislaus's foundation of the Bishopric of Zagreb, the construction projects launched by Béla IV gave new impetus to the urbanization of Zagreb, the present-day capital of Croatia.

However, Béla IV did not confine himself to the above-mentioned interventions. He would establish settlements, mining towns regenerated with new settlers and elevated to the rank of royal free cities also north of today's borders of Hungary, populating these areas with German peoples coming from abroad – 'hospites' – as a means of developing the economy and strengthening the central royal power in the following settlements: Selmecbánya, Besztercebánya, and Gölnicbánya. In the same region, he founded a new mining town populated with German settlers in the place of a settlement completely destroyed during the Mongol invasion: Igló (Spišská Nová Ves). The settlement is first mentioned in documents in 1268, and it was granted town privileges by Béla IV's son, Stephen V of Hungary in the year 1271, although it would not become a royal free city until much later. Populated with German settlers, Késmárk is the product of a similar act of refoundation, its 'hospites' being granted town privileges by Béla IV in 1269.

Nevertheless, Béla IV's urban development achievement of the highest rank was probably founding the new capital of Hungary in one of the most significant strategic hubs of the contemporary country's urban and transport network, on the banks of the Danube River. With great foresight, he chose a location with favourable natural conditions and a strong defensive position, whose long-term sustainability

– ensured by the water sources and storage possibilities deep inside the mountain – was guaranteed also during times of sieges and epidemics. The king established Buda, the new royal seat and capital of the country, opposite to Pest, a mercantile city on the other side of the river, already flourishing before the Mongol invasion.

Even during his reign, he developed it into an actual, functioning city (Györffy 1973: 307) in less than twenty years and populated the new capital with the Hungarian bourgeoisie pouring in from the neighbouring Óbuda and Felhévíz and the territory of the suburbium as well as with the German bourgeoisie relocated from Pest. The still existing basic architecture of the fortified city established in the second half of the 13th century followed the dual segmentation of the royal cities of Stephen I. Its river-frontage on the Danube, the south-eastern part of the town gave home to the royal castle, the later Palace District that has since been serving central state functions, while the remaining major part of the developed plateau surrounded by castle walls and extending northwest included the civilian town divided into Hungarian and German districts. These two districts built on the higher-situated and larger block of Castle Hill show the picture of a regular settlement, realized in accordance with a planned city layout and adapted to natural conditions (Györffy 1973: 299).

In essence, Béla IV's city-building operations in Buda fulfilled the king's public management and urban development goal of settling the population of the two neighbouring cities, defenceless against the Tatar invaders, in a safe place and thereby merging Óbuda administration centre with Pest commercial centre (Györffy 1973: 297). On the other hand, based on a letter written by the king dated in the year 1253, stating that he entrusted the crusaders with the castles built 'in the heart of the country' 'along the Danube', there are valid reasons for believing that the Johannite/Hospitaller crusaders took part in the construction of the castle. The castles built by crusaders in Syria and in the vicinity of Jerusalem were state-of-the-art strongholds at the time, believed to be impregnable. A few decades earlier, Andrew II, Béla IV's father, sacrificed a fortune on them (Györffy 1973: 299).

Construction of the Buda Castle and settling the citizens of Pest on Castle Hill began in the spring of 1247 (Györffy 1973: 299). It was typical of the pace maintained throughout the city-building activities that as soon as three years later, around 1250, the Church of Mary Magdalene of the Hungarian bourgeoisie was already standing and the first bourgeois houses were also completed (Solymosi 1986:152). The completion of St Nicholas Dominican Monastery took place around the year 1253, where the grand chapter of the order was held already in the following year. This is also where the Provincial of France, Humbertus de Romanis, was elected as the fifth Master General of the Dominican Order, whose members were strong supporters – both in intelligence service and fortified construction works – of King Béla IV's policy pursued during the period of the Mongol invasions (Györffy 1973: 301). The significance of Buda and the king is witnessed through the fact that earlier sessions of the grand chapter would be held mostly at the headquarters of

the order, in Bologna or Paris, and once in each of the following cities: Cologne, Montpellier, and London; Buda was followed by Milan, Paris, Florence, and Toulouse. In 1255, a mint workshop was already operated near Szombat-kapu 'Saturday Gate' on the north side (Györffy 1973: 300), while we have data from the year 1264 confirming that the headquarters of the minting chamber was also housed here, and the necessary precious metal reserve was kept in the count of the chamber's house in Buda (Györffy 1973: 300). Thirteen years after construction works had started, around 1260, the Church of the Assumption, the present-day Matthias Church, was completed for the German bourgeoisie (Solymosi 1986: 157). In the 1250s, settlement took place on the southern, lower-situated, narrowing part of Castle Hill as well (Györffy 1973: 302). Further data certify that in the year 1268 the Franciscan's Saint John Monastery was definitely standing on the Danube side of the southern part (Györffy 1973: 303). György Györffy takes the view that the occupation of the southern part around 1258 and the appointment of the first rector in the year 1264 – that is, 17 years after construction works and the moving-in process began – can be considered as the final momentum in the process of settling the castle, i.e. creating the new city of Buda (Györffy 1973: 307).

In this short span of time, the churches in Buda, the monasteries of the Dominicans and Franciscans, the palaces, the public buildings, and the bourgeois houses were all built in the new, European architectural style of the age, in the Gothic idiom. The Mongol invasion swept through the country in the full bloom of Late Romanesque architecture. Destroyed cities and villages had to be rebuilt, and the catastrophic rupture had an appreciable effect on all areas of life, also triggering changes in style. The new wave of the religious orders' development and settlement in Hungary unfolding after the Mongol invasion also paved the way for these changes since members of these orders and the architects accompanying them brought the spirit of Christian renewal also manifested in the new architectural style. The history of architecture counts among its ranks some of the most fascinating artistic personalities such as Villard de Honnecourt, who – according to his entry in his sketchbook found in the National Library of France – visited Hungary between 1244 and 1251 (Rados 1971: 83). Although there is no conclusive proof of his collaboration in the construction works related to Buda, the mere journey of the French master to Hungary, the architectural and (military) engineering knowledge represented by the well-travelled Johannite crusaders, or the 1254 grand chapter of Dominicans – held in their own monastery in Buda seven years after construction works had begun – based in Bologna and Paris all give a sense of the European intellectual forces that, besides the political will of the contemporary state and the enormous financial resources, swung into action in support of rebuilding the physical and cultural reality in Hungary and the devastated Central European area and in support of building up the symbolic status of the new capital in the focus of the interventions. And imagine the cultural quality of the selection of the mandating and recipient

partners, embracing the European values in every way, this force in motion must have involved on the part of the royal house and the nobility as well as bourgeoisie moving into the city! Taking a different approach and looking at the 17-year process, carried out at record speed, in terms of an evaluation of the performance manifested in the visible results, the architectural quality of the works realized suggests the same. Regrettably, the devastation that occurred during the past seven and a half centuries full of vicissitudes denies us to get to know these achievements in their entirety. All there is left is but a few residential and public buildings to help us form an idea of these creations; however, Matthias Church still has the symbolic power to represent them. Still, this architectural creation is not the expression of the charmingly uncertain and immature groping and blundering that goes hand in hand with the process of becoming familiar with the formal manifestations of the new spirit, but it unfolds before our eyes as the mature manifestation of the Gothic style expressing the spirit of the age and also suggesting the past existence of some, by now completely destroyed, buildings/structures of exemplary architectural standard. Indeed, regarding the quality of the performance manifested during the construction activities of the new royal seat, nothing shows this more clearly than the finding that it is becoming increasingly probable that the wide-reaching example of the Buda workshop was not without effect in other parts of the country either, in cultural areas such as Sopron, Pozsony, Kassa, Besztercebánya, Lőcse, Kolozsvár, or Brassó (Rados 1971: 88), whose significant works of ecclesiastical architecture, bourgeois houses, and public buildings seven centuries ago and during the time that has since passed have functioned as decisive ingredients of the culture – and thereby the identity – of the population living in these regions just as they do today. Exploring the cultural influence of Béla IV's work and the specific impact of the Buda workshop is a task for the future, an exciting opportunity awaiting the new generations of researchers in architectural and art history. All the more so because there are two further circumstances that must not be forgotten. One of them is that the population of the above-mentioned cities was most probably ab initio the carrier of a culture comparable in quality to that existing in Buda. Secondly, given the fact that the majority of this population was made up of German or Latin hospites (mostly coming from the territory of present-day France, Belgium, or Italy), they were in all likelihood connected by a thousand threads to the homeland from where they, or perhaps their ancestors a few generations earlier, settled in the central region of Europe. Thereby, independently of the capital, in fact, concurrently with the events/processes taking place there, they must have been exposed to the same European cultural stimuli as the citizens of Buda. Accordingly, should future research not confirm the above, well-supported (Rados 1971: 88) yet – reasonably – very cautious hypothesis, it could not necessarily be inferred that the impact, which can be meaningfully measured in the dimension of culture, of the Buda workshop and thereby of Béla IV's city-building activity was not of a great order of magnitude.

Conclusions

The foregoing provide sufficient grounds to draw several conclusions that cannot be enlarged upon, however, without exceeding the limits of this paper and whose implications and large number would already require a standalone study, therefore excluding even a schematic overview within the confines of these pages.

Notwithstanding, in order to serve the purposes of this paper as stated in its first chapter, it is essential that – quasi pre-empting the other study already mentioned – we formulate the following two lessons learned:

1. To an extent far exceeding our original expectations, the facts known from the scientific literature and presented here demonstrate the truth value of our initial statement formulated in the first chapter as a hypothesis. In particular, it is not a mere hypothetical view but a proven fact that the activity known today under the name operational urban development was already practised by King Saint Stephen on a regular basis and was carried on by Béla IV in a conscious and planned manner, similar to our modern times, throughout his construction and state-building activities outlined in the previous chapter.

2. King St Stephen's and Béla IV's state and public administration management activities inextricably intertwined with their building activities[2] through which they transformed the physical reality inherited from nature and created the physical framework for the operation of social space as well as of the state, public administration, and economy. The state and public administration management work of Stephen I and Béla IV could not have led to the known outcome without their building activities being conducted in coordination with it, just as, manifestly, the latter would have been deprived of meaning and potential in lack of their state-building operations.

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2 In modern terms, non-existent in those times, we would say operational urban development activities that facilitated the process of urbanization in a conscious and planned manner.

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