

Zitierhinweis

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Sopron. Edited by Ferenc Jankó, József Kücsán, and Katalin Szende with contributions by Dávid Ferenc, Károly Goda, and Melinda Kiss. (Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns, 1.) Sopron: Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Soproni Levéltára, 2010. 87 pp.

Sátoraljaújhely. Edited by István Tringli. (Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns, 2.) Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2011. 81 pp.

Szeged. Edited by László Blazovich et al. (Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns, 3.) Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Honismereti Egyesület, 2014. 155 pp.

With the publication of these three fascicles (text and maps), Hungary has joined the European Historic Towns Atlas project. As is outlined in the introduction to the first volume, this project was set up by the International Commission for the History of Towns in the aftermath of World War II with the aim of encouraging comparative studies of European towns that would be based on large-scale (cadastral) maps. The principal map for each town was to be the same in scale, 1:2,500. There are now eighteen countries involved in this project, and atlases of more than 500 towns have been produced so far.

The Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns started in 2004 under the auspices of the late András Kubinyi, a prominent urban historian. It was continued by Katalin Szende, who took responsibility for the Hungarian project. Towns were selected in order to represent different settlement types and different geographical locations. A very important asset of these three fascicles is that all the explanatory texts and keys to the maps (unfortunately not the topographical gazetteers) have been translated into English, opening up a brave new world about which English speakers knew very little previously.

The cadastral surveys of the second half of the nineteenth century served as the basis for the 1:2,500 maps showing the preindustrial topography of the three towns in question. The original names were kept. In the case of Sopron, the names of public buildings are in German, but in the case of the other two towns, the names of the buildings are in Hungarian. It would be very helpful if an English translation of the functions of public buildings could be provided as part of the key. The surroundings of the three towns under discussion are shown on selected sheets of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Military Surveys, rescaled to 1:50,000. A reproduction of an early twentieth-century plot-level survey, at a scale of 1:50,000, and large-scale aerial photographs show the modern expansion of the towns. In fact, the Hungarian Atlas provides more original research for the

transformations of towns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than other European atlases, which were designed in their time not to go beyond 1900. The International Commission formulated their recommendation that the atlases should continue into the twentieth century only at their meeting in Prague in 2012.

In the three Hungarian volumes the cadastral and related maps constitute Series A, which is obligatory for each fascicle. Series B compliments these maps with cartographic representations of recent research on the morphology and social topography of the towns in question. Series C contains reproductions of early maps and prospects depicting topographically relevant features. Like the Irish Historic Towns Atlas, the Hungarian Atlas includes a thematically arranged topographical gazetteer. This is a most welcome addition, as the historical data compiled in the gazetteer greatly facilitates comparative work. In one important methodological aspect the Hungarian atlas differs from its European counterparts: there is no comprehensive growth-map. Instead, there are a series of growth-maps arranged side by side on one sheet. No doubt this method allows for greater accuracy in the representations of the individual growth-phases. Perhaps a composite growth-map at a greater level of abstraction might be added to the individual ones in the future in order to help the reader.

As a scholar of urban history working at the far western end of Europe, I found reading the above three volumes a demanding but very worthwhile venture. The challenge when looking at the three Hungarian volumes (and this is true of the European Historic Towns Atlas project as a whole) is that you look at primary source material. When you study the principal maps of the three towns, you are struck by the differences. Sopron is surrounded by a massive wall (inherited from antiquity), while the other two towns have no town walls at all. In Sopron the individual house plots are built side to side. In other words, houses are contiguous, while in Sátoraljaújhely and Szeged gable-sided houses cover only part of the plot. In all three towns irregular market places appear to be an open space associated with the earliest church. They are not comparable with the rectangular market places that we know from medieval town foundations in the area east of the Elbe, modern Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

Sopron originated as a trading post on the former Roman Amber Road. On the basis of archival sources and topographical and archaeological evidence, Szende shows that the early layout of the town in plots occurred simultaneously with the arrival of the Franciscans. In other European countries Franciscan friaries were only set up once the towns were well established. I believe that this very

early division of the town into plots is not found in any of the other European atlases. The archaeologists made a particularly significant contribution to the Sopron Atlas with reconstructions of the former Roman town and the eleventh to mid-thirteenth-century *ispán* castle (the castle of the royal representative). The transformation from the *ispán*'s castle to the royal town in the mid-thirteenth century coincided with the arrival of the Order of the Knights Hospitallers, who were settled in Sopron by Béla IV in 1247. There are parallels in other countries: the Hospitallers arrived in Kells (Ireland) at the time of the foundation of the town by an Anglo-Norman lord.

Sátoraljaújhely was planned as part of the effort to rebuild the kingdom of Hungary after the Mongol Invasion. Its charter dates to 1261 and is detailed, portraying an advanced civil society with more rights for the citizens than citizens appear to have enjoyed later in the landlord period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the Middle Ages, the town was home to a parish church, Saint Emeric, a Pauline Monastery dedicated to Saint Giles, and the Saint Stephen's Augustinian Friary. The history of the town between 1526 and 1711 was strongly influenced by the nearby presence of the Ottomans. The Ottomans never entered the town, but the Crimean Tatars did in 1566, and they burned down 86 percent of the houses and took denizens of the town as slaves. After the town was no longer in royal ownership, it became part of the estates of various aristocratic or noble families over time, including the Pálóczi, Perényi, Dobós, and Rákóczi families, who demanded services and taxes from the citizens.

A special characteristic of Sátoraljaújhely is the formation of districts which segregated areas of the town according to the ruling landlords. The aristocratic Perényi family was Lutheran, and the Újhely church became Lutheran until 1567, when the inhabitants took up Calvinist doctrines. In 1554, the Augustinian friary was dissolved and the lord integrated the street in which the friars had owned property into his domain. The Pauline monastery survived until the end of the sixteenth century and only reappeared as part of the Catholic Restoration of the 1640s. By the end of the seventeenth century, the population was divided among three religious traditions: Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and Calvinists. In 1789, the Calvinists built a new church. By the end of the nineteenth century, Judaism had become the fourth major religious denomination. In 1940, there were 4,960 Jewish residents in Sátoraljaújhely. Tragically, by 1949 only 360 remained.

The maps showing the surroundings of Szeged, adapted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Military Survey, provide a lively picture of the Tisza River, with all its meandering bends,

that flooded parts of the town whenever the waters rose. Szeged was occupied by the Ottomans. Its fascicle contains a fascinating thematic map showing the social topography of Szeged in the sixteenth century on the basis of two tax registers, one from 1522 and the other from 1548, i.e. before and shortly after the Ottoman occupation. The map shows that in the suburb east of the castle (the so-called Palánk), judges, scribes and master craftsmen resided. North of the castle we find farmers, flock owners, and vineyard owners. The reader will wonder where the merchants were. My Hungarian colleagues tell me that local merchants were subsumed into the categories of flock-owners and vineyard-owners, because cattle, sheep, and wine were the main export articles both before and during the Ottoman period. Merchants specializing in other goods (spices, textiles, etc.) were usually not local residents, but rather people who traveled through the town.

The map also shows important buildings, including churches. It is interesting to learn how long into the period of Ottoman occupation churches survived. Only the Franciscan friary in the so-called Alsóváros part of the town remained and provided pastoral care to the surviving Catholic population. Otherwise, all the other Catholic churches were turned into mosques. The Ottoman occupation lasted from 1543 to 1686, but no buildings from that period have been preserved. In Szeged Sokollu Mustafa's palace was situated in the marketplace in a building that most probably had been there prior to the Ottoman occupation. One wonders if it is still standing. It would be helpful if the atlas also gave indications of the dates at which buildings were demolished, redesigned, or put to other uses.

The presentation of the history of the three towns is done chronologically. Therefore, Szeged is discussed as a royal town between 1247 and 1543. The thematic map showing medieval churches and associated settlements vividly portrays the churches as focal points, which were surrounded by the houses of the wealthiest families. During the period specified in the next heading, "16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: the late medieval city and Ottoman rule," the town stagnated and became a military assembly point. According to an Ottoman tax register, in 1548 there were 1,203 heads of household in the city, 300 fewer than in the census of 1522. The Ottomans converted the Saint Demetrius Church into a mosque and built a minaret next to it. One interesting aspect of the period is that many churches fell into ruins, but cemeteries survived. The same observation applies to Ireland after the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. Under the Ottomans, the town was divided into different

quarters along ethnic lines. From 1554 to 1560, the Turks expelled the entire Christian population from the central town-quarter, which was called Palánk. The wealthier among them abandoned the city. This process is reminiscent of what happened in former Roman towns along the Rhine when the Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century.

The suggestion is made that in the post-Ottoman period there was no consolidated bourgeoisie in Szeged. Bad floods and epidemics were responsible for the fact that the number of inhabited plots fell by 50 percent by the middle of the eighteenth century. In the latter part of that century, life began to improve in Szeged due to an economic revival. After 1711, Szeged again became the nationwide center for salt storage. In the context of the Counter-Reformation, prominent buildings were built in the baroque style. The nineteenth century was a time of modernization, which bore witness to the construction of new squares, new public buildings in a neo-classical style, and improved infrastructure. The reconstruction of the town that followed the disastrous floods of 1879 turned Szeged into a modern city with a circular layout of roads reminiscent of Frankfurt am Main, where boulevards follow the line of a former medieval wall, as shown in the Szeged Atlas in order to further comparison.

These three fascicles are a tremendous achievement. While there is an editorial board, there is as of yet no host institute. The editors had to rely on sponsorship from archives and museums. Without the tenacity of the senior joint editor, Katalin Szende, that would hardly have been possible. The lack of a permanent hosting institute and an executive officer has deprived the Hungarian series in some instances of a unified approach. For example, the introduction to the Sopron volume contains an outline of the role of the Commission as founder of the series and a discussion of the importance of cadastral maps and the military survey for the production of the core maps. It would be helpful for readers of later fascicles if this information were repeated. Why is it that only the Sopron volume includes a CD with a PDF version of the publication? This situation will most likely improve in the near future, as a full-time researcher and coordinator has been appointed, who will streamline the project and iron out any inconsistencies. As of 2016, the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has been hosting the project.

Judging from the bibliography, a large amount of research had been done in Sopron and Szeged before the work of compiling the atlas was undertaken, while in Sátorajújhely a lot of research had to be undertaken by the author himself. The bibliography for Sopron consists of 340 entries very few of which

have been published in Latin (medieval sources), German, or English, and works by archaeologists like János Gömöri in Sopron or medieval historians who work in a pan-European context, like Mozdioch, Piekalski or Szende. If one takes into consideration the fact that a vast amount of research has been incorporated into the atlases and thereby made available, along with primary source material in the form of maps, illustrations, taxation records and fieldwork, then we begin to appreciate just how important these atlases are for researchers in Hungary but also for urban historians from other parts of Europe and beyond. We owe a debt of gratitude to our colleagues who took on this meticulous work. On some occasions, the authors of these volumes point towards comparative urban studies and tempt the reader to think of more comparisons with other towns that are part of the European Historic Towns Atlas project.

These three beautifully produced volumes open the door to Hungarian urban history. They are essential for defining the typology of Hungarian towns, and they will facilitate comparative urban studies on a European scale. Furthermore, they will enable scholars and instructors to teach the history of Hungarian towns on a much wider scale than has previously been possible.

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