

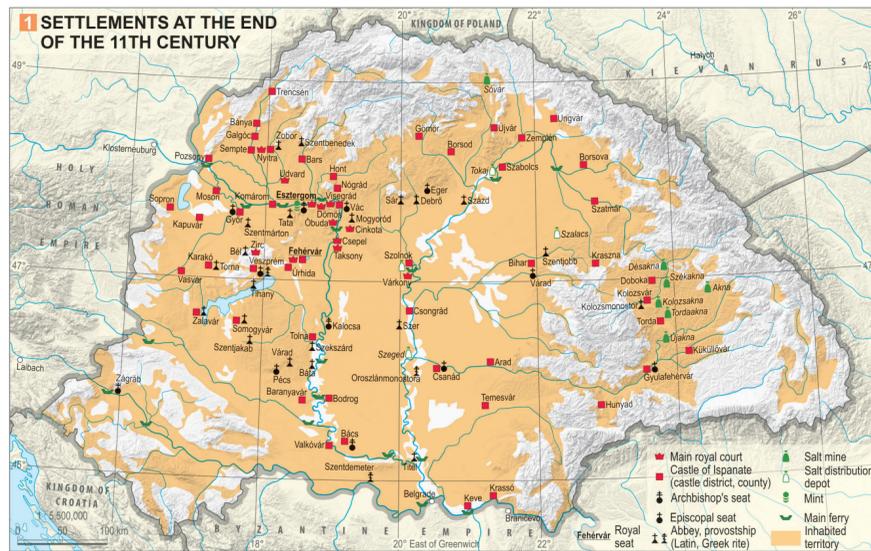
HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT

Pál Beluszky, Péter Bajmócy, Ferenc Jankó

From the 10th century until the end of the 15th century

The conquering Hungarians lived in winter and summer encampments in line with their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The winter shelters formed settlements of a relatively permanent nature. They often lay near major rivers, and the surrounding land was also cultivated. In the summer months, some people moved to temporary accommodations, tending to their herds on extensive pastures. The conquered populace sheltered in loose groups of houses consisting of stack dwellings set into the ground. Following the gradual decline of nomadism, other population groups in the nascent Hungarian state adopted similar dwellings. The undeveloped social and geographical division of labour did not necessitate or enable the emergence of large settlements with urban features.

Important 'crystallisation points' in the settlement system of the country were the *royal courts*. Esztergom soon proved to be the most important among them, where the ecclesiastical centre (archdiocese) and the country's sole mint was established. The royal court in Esztergom attracted foreign merchants, who settled here and met the royal court's supply needs. However, the ruler spent some of the year visiting other parts of his realm, managing affairs at his court, delivering royal justice, and living off the taxes levied in kind there. Further centres of secular administration were the earthen *castles of Ispanates* (early counties). Such fortresses functioned as administrative centres

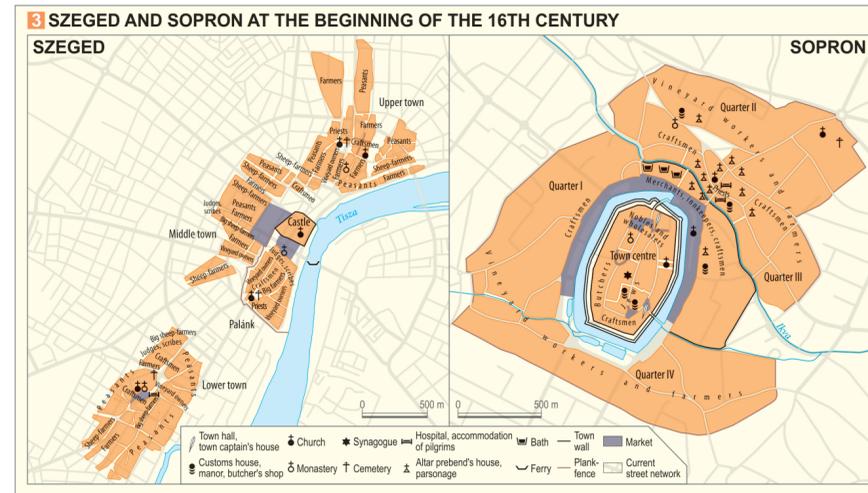


for the royal estates and as places of tax collection and administration. It was at such places that the first stone churches were built. The castles of the Ispanates were particularly common in the western third of Hungary, which was the most intensively cultivated and most densely populated region in the country.

The foundations of ecclesiastical organisation were laid by Saint Stephen I of Hungary. By the end of the 11th century, there were 12 archiepiscopal and episcopal

seats in Hungary. The monastic houses not only performed religious and ecclesiastical functions but also served as economic and cultural hubs.

Even before the Hungarian conquest, salt had been mined in Transylvania. The *salt mines* and the associated distribution routes played an important role in shaping the spatial structure of Hungary. Most of the Transylvanian salt was transported by river to the salt houses in the central parts of Hungary.



The conditions of settlement development underwent changes at the end of the 12th century and in the first half of the 13th century. These included the increased production of agricultural goods, which made the separation of agricultural and handicraft activities possible both within society and spatially. The conditions for the development of settlements with urban features were established. Four centuries of development towards Western European standards were halted only by the ravages of the *Mongol Invasion* (1241–1242). Alongside the human losses, in the more exposed lowland areas of Hungary (e.g. the Alföld), the destruction of the settlement system may have reached 75–80%. In contrast, most of the towns and fortified places were never captured by the Mongols.

With the development of the geographical division of labour and recognition of the protective role of towns, the residents of some settlements began to fo-

cus on handicraft production, long-distance trade, and cultural and administrative activities. Their advance within the settlement system was assisted by the Hungarian kings, who granted them privileges.

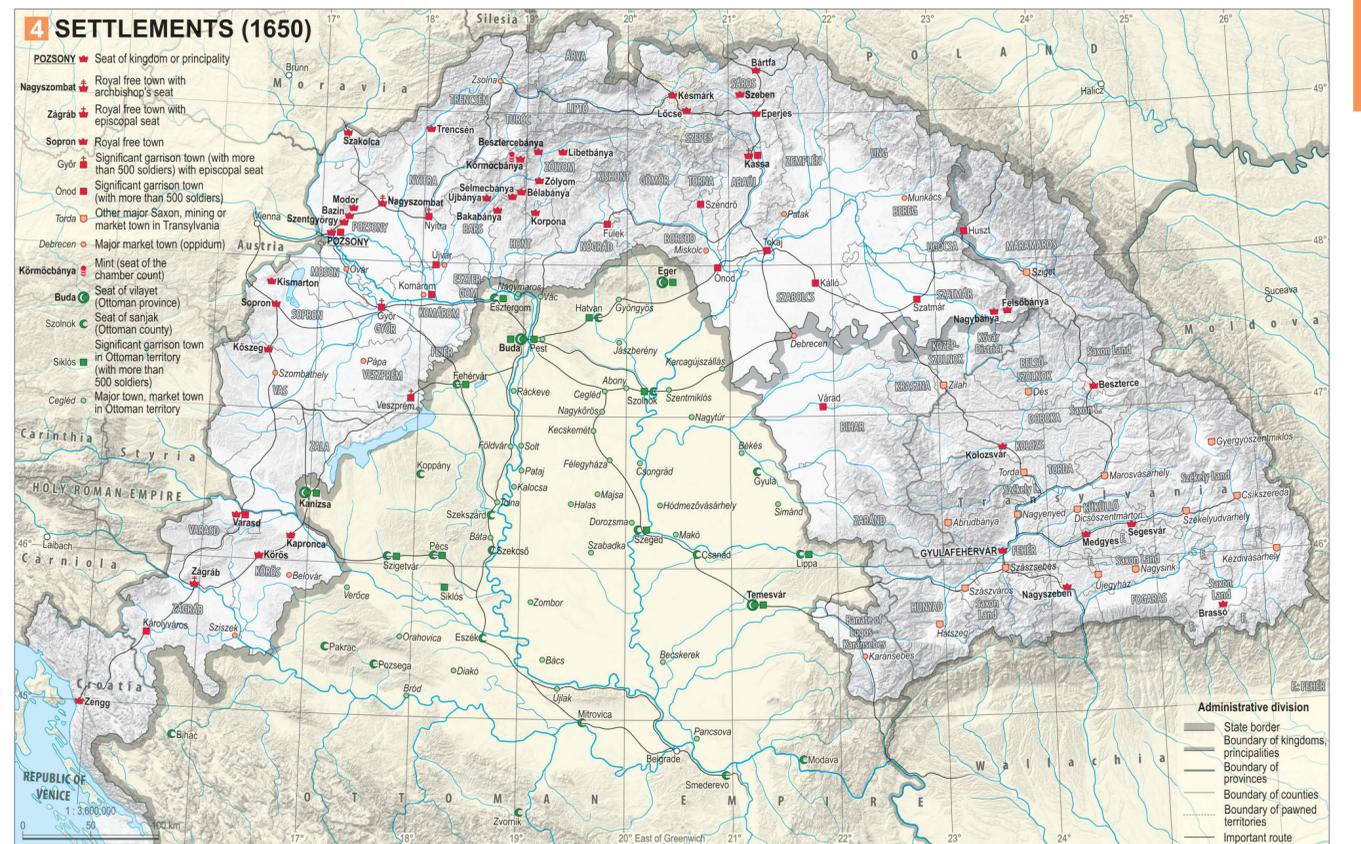
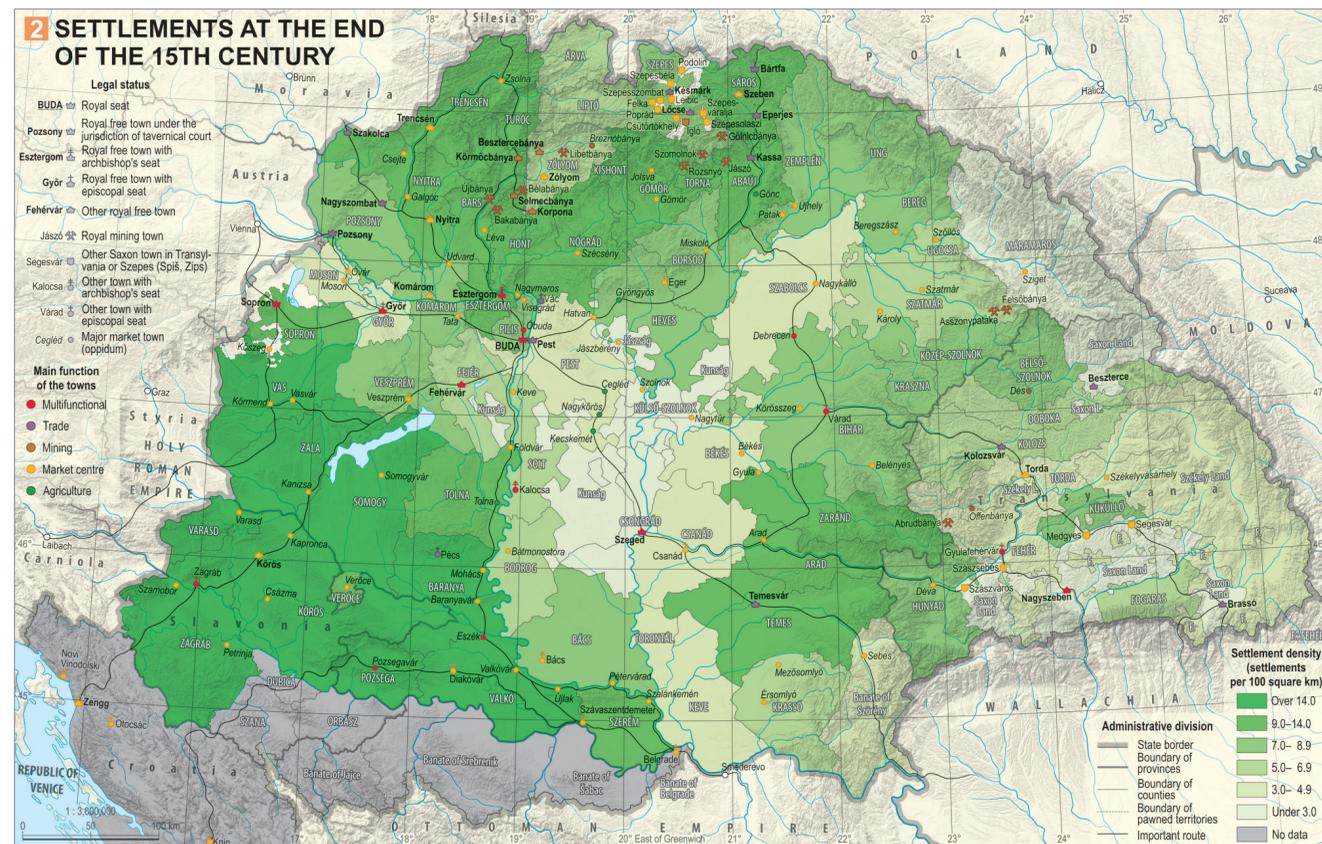
These privileged settlements were the *royal free towns*. By the High Middle Ages the number of privileged towns had risen to more than thirty. The largest and richest towns developed near the border and along routes leading to foreign countries (e.g. Sopron, Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava), Nagyszombat (Trnava), Kassa (Košice), Eperjes (Prešov), Brassó (Braşov) and Nagyszében (Sibiu). By the 15th century, *Pest* and *Buda* had become the dominant cities of the country. A permanent royal seat was established in Buda, which during the reign of Matthias Corvinus became a European centre of humanism. Three-quarters of goods coming from abroad were handled by the merchants of the twin city. At the end of the 15th century, around

12–15 thousand people lived in Buda, and about 10 thousand in Pest. In Upper Hungary a series of towns lay along the *Selmecbánya* (Banská Štiavnica) – *Bártfa* (Bardejov) axis. Their development can be partly explained by the mining of precious metals. Hungary was the leading precious metal mining country in Europe in the 12th–15th centuries. Precious metals were also mined at *Telkibánya*, *Rudabánya* and *Nagybörzsöny* on the present-day territory of Hungary, but these settlements were privately owned by feudal lords.

The royal free towns proved insufficient to meet the demands of the market and craft centres. This explains why settlements owned by the feudal lords developed; although they were inhabited by serfs, they fulfilled certain urban roles, held markets and fairs, and were places of employment for craftsmen. These settlements became known as market towns. We attempted to define the role and types of Hungarian late medieval towns. However, owing to the lack of numerical data, our efforts resulted in a rather simplified picture of the various types of towns in the country.

Based on the Hungarian taxation census of 1495 a map also showing the settlement density of the counties at the time could be drafted. The current settlement system of the Carpathian Basin had largely taken shape by the end of the Middle Ages, with low settlement density in the Alföld, in the Kiszálya and at higher elevations in the Carpathians and a fragmented settlement structure in Western and Southern Transdanubia, in the area between the *Dráva* and *Száva* rivers and in Upper Hungary.

Map 3 shows the towns of *Szeged* and *Sopron*; the former is depicted as it was before the Ottoman occupation. Sopron has been a royal free town since 1277, while Szeged was designated a royal salt storage and ferry site in the provisions of the Golden Bull of 1222, receiving the town privileges in 1247. Reflecting these developments, Szeged too came to be considered



The change of the settlement system in the early 20th century area of Csanád County (1498–2020)

The settlement system of Hungary has changed considerably over the centuries. Developments in the historical county of Csanád in the Alföld illustrate these processes. In the Middle Ages, a network of tiny villages developed in this area, which, however, was depleted under Ottoman rule. Before this period, the area had 62 settlements. Of these, only a dozen had a relatively large population, including two market towns. The area suffered even more than the rest of the Alföld during the Turkish period: all its settlements were destroyed, although Makó was uninhabited for only a few years. Apart from Makó, even in 1720 there were only five

other settlements (inhabited by Serbian border guards) in Csanád. From the 18th century onwards, new villages were established, including many tobacco-growing settlements. Thus, in 1784 there were 9 villages in Csanád, with the number rising to 29 by 1910. Meanwhile, the size of the settlements also increased: in 1784, the average size of the settlements was 2,500 inhabitants, whereas in 1910 it was 5,000. By this time the settlement network was dominated by medium-sized villages. During the 19th century, conditions became suitable for creating open outlying habited locations in the surroundings of large settlements. Csanád is one of the few areas where scattered farmsteads (tanyas) and manor farmsteads also appeared in large numbers. The latter type of settlement was a particular feature

of the settlement of Mezőhegyes, which at first consisted exclusively of manor farmsteads. Both in the interwar period (Nagykopáncs, Nagyalak, Kaszaper) and after World War II (Kisdombegyház, Óföldsék, Rákos), independent villages were founded based on the tanyas or manor farmsteads, thus further expanding the settlement system. Three villages lost their independent status in the 1960s and 1970s (Reformátuskövesháza, Nagykopáncs and Rákos). Since then, the population of the villages has declined steadily (the average population was 4,000 in 1960 and 2,800 in 2011). Most of the once populated outlying areas have disappeared, leaving only a few tanyas in the Makó area and some of the manor farmsteads of Mezőhegyes.

a royal free town. The history of both settlements is characterised by continuous urban development in the medieval period. Their looser settlement structure became more compact in the wake of the Mongol Invasion, which led to the construction of fortifications and the settlement of suburbs. Concurrently, a social distinction arose between the town centres and their suburbs. In Sopron, a triple town wall system was built on top of the remains of the Roman wall and the earthen fortifications; the settlement took on the appearance of a western town of burghers. Society in the rural-like suburbs, protected by a stone wall only from the 17th century, took on a diverse character, attracting Germans, the Knights Hospitaller and the Franciscans. Meanwhile, the market place was established along the town walls, between the two parts of the town. Szeged was originally settled on three islands, with the castle in the middle, the suburbs to the north and south, and the market square at the foot of the castle. By this time, both towns had become centres for long-distance trade. As the largest and increasingly sophisticated former peasant town in the Alföld, Szeged was not far behind Sopron in terms of its cityscape and social development. However, the Turkish occupation in 1543 – although it was a privileged hass-town owned by the Sultan – set it back in development.

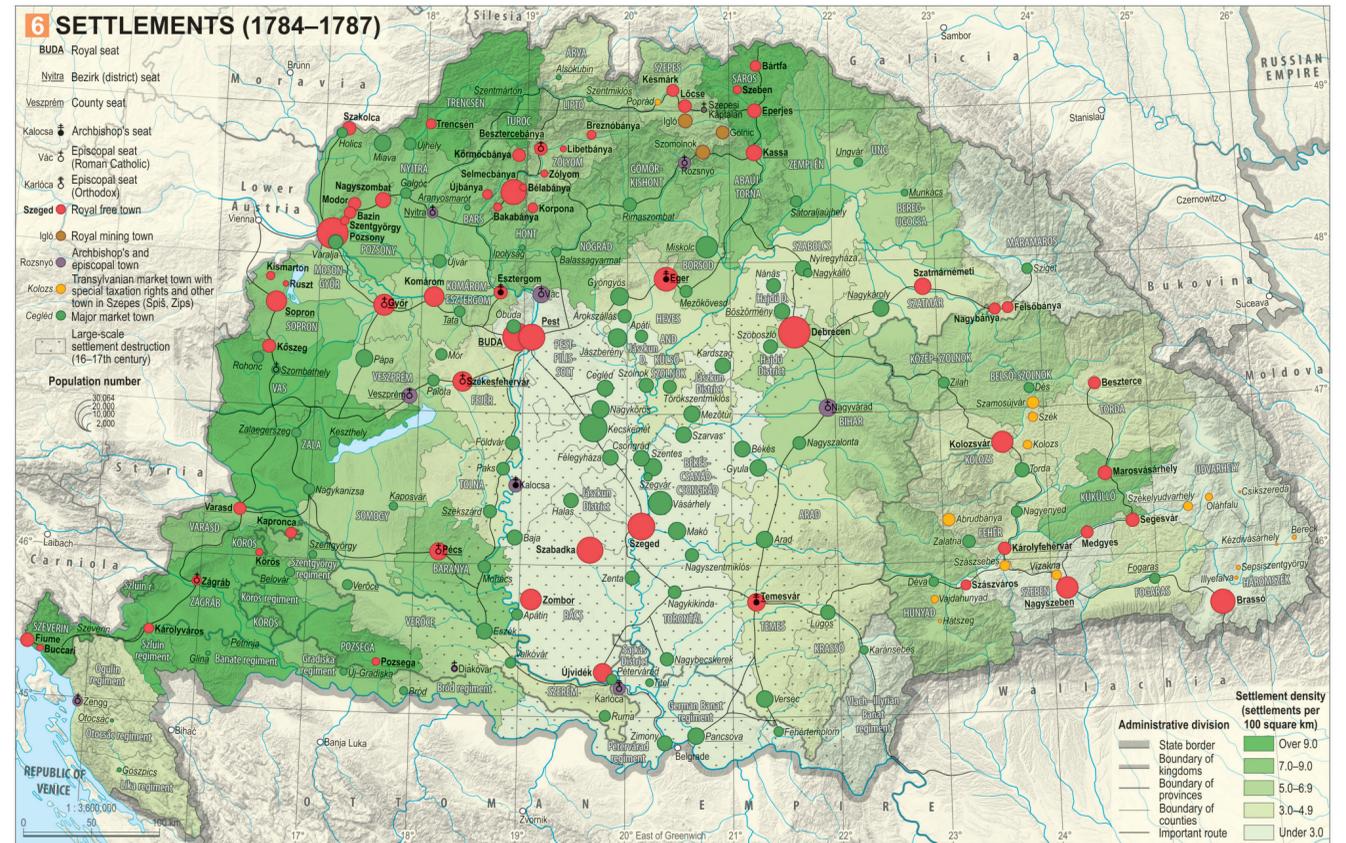
By the second half of the 15th century, society, economy and settlement patterns in Hungary closely resembled those of Western Europe. At the end of the century, however, the process of development was halted – for two main reasons. The first was the regional realignment of the European economy, whereby the economic core and the hub of social transformation shifted from the Mediterranean to the Low Countries, to the western German provinces, and then to England. The continent developed an economic core, while all other areas became peripheral regions, importing industrial goods from the core in exchange for their agricultural products and raw materials. The outlined processes can be clearly detected in Hungary, with signs of stagnation appearing as early as the 15th century. This shift hindered industrialisation in Hungary and, ultimately, urban development.

From the beginning of the 16th century until the beginning of the 18th century

Even more influential on conditions in Hungary was the advance of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, which pursued an aggressive policy of expansion and whose path of social development differed markedly from

the Western European model. As early as the second half of the 14th century, Hungary took steps to prevent the Turkish advance. Despite such efforts, Belgrade, the gateway to Hungary, fell in 1521. After the Hungarian defeat at Mohács (1526), the centre of the country, including Buda, gradually fell into Ottoman hands. Until the expulsion of the Turks in the 1680s, much of Hungary was the scene of unceasing warfare, while the eastern part of the country (Transylvania) became a tribute-paying vassal of the Ottoman Empire. This period was marked by human and economic losses and the destruction of settlements and the cultural landscape. In the occupied zones most settlements vanished. Some protection was provided by the market towns, especially those held by the Sultan in his own possession. Such towns attracted newcomers from the destroyed villages. Significant populations were sustained in this way, with Debrecen becoming the most populous settlement in Hungary in this period.

Royal Hungary lay on the periphery of Christian Europe and the Habsburg Empire. The number of royal free towns increased somewhat, but most of them were small in population size. The proportion of people living in royal free towns has been estimated at no more than 5%. During this period, the majority of inhabitants continued to be guild craftsmen, while many



made a living from agriculture, especially wine production. Most towns functioned as local market centres. Except for Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica), Selmecbánya (Banská Štiavnica) and Körmöcbánya (Kremnica), the mining towns declined in significance following the depletion of the precious metal mines.

From the beginning of the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century

Hungary experienced a century of peace after Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703–1711). However, the medieval administrative unity of the country was not restored. Transylvania remained a formally separate principality, and a Military Frontier under the Vienna Military Council was established along the southern borders. The population of the country was almost unchanged compared to the end of the 15th century; it was 3.0–3.5 million people at the beginning of the 18th century. In the area of the Turkish occupation, oasis-like inhabited settlements emerged amid the desolation. Under these circumstances the rebuilding of the country began. The results achieved by the end of the 18th century are recorded in map 6.

The first essential step in the rebuilding process was the resettlement of the depopulated parts of the country. Settlers in the sparsely populated regions of Transdanubia and the Alföld came either from the overpopulated periphery or from abroad.

The effects of the Turkish period continued, however, to be felt. Indeed, settlements in the Alföld differed in terms of their development from settlements in other parts of Hungary. In this region, only some of the market towns had survived the Ottoman occupation. Further, only a few former villages could be revived in the course of the repopulation of the Alföld. The majority of the population thus lived in the market towns;

their population size was remarkably large under the conditions of the age. Most people continued to make a living in agriculture, but the major market towns had significant functions (craftsmen, merchants, grammar schools, fairs, printing houses). A return to the desolated villages was hindered by the realisation that in such resettled (serf) villages the personal freedom and economic opportunities of ordinary people would be more limited than in the market towns. During the 18th century, however, the importance of arable farming as opposed to animal husbandry increased. As it was impossible to cultivate areas that lay far from the interior of the market towns, a special farming and settlement system, a peculiar-ensemble of market towns and scattered farmsteads (tanyas) arose. The owners of the tanyas lived within the market towns, moving only temporarily to the tanyas when the work was at its peak. The settlement density of the Alföld is therefore much lower compared to other parts of Hungary. The towns of Transdanubia and Upper Hungary were small in population size and their residents had limited economic opportunities. At the time, however, such disadvantages were not yet noticeable. Only from the turn of the 19th century did the impact of modern urban development reshape and differentiate the urban settlement system in Hungary. At the time, Pest-Buda was merely 'first among equals'.

At the turn of the 19th century, there were clear signs of capitalist transformation. The advance of crop and wool production and trade to the detriment of animal husbandry and livestock trade had far-reaching consequences in Hungary, a predominantly agrarian country. Crop trade was controlled by non-guild traders, who soon accumulated considerable capital. In conjunction with boat owners with an interest in crop transportation, they formed a mobile layer of entrepreneurs. The crop trade also led to a realignment of the urban settlement system, with crop-

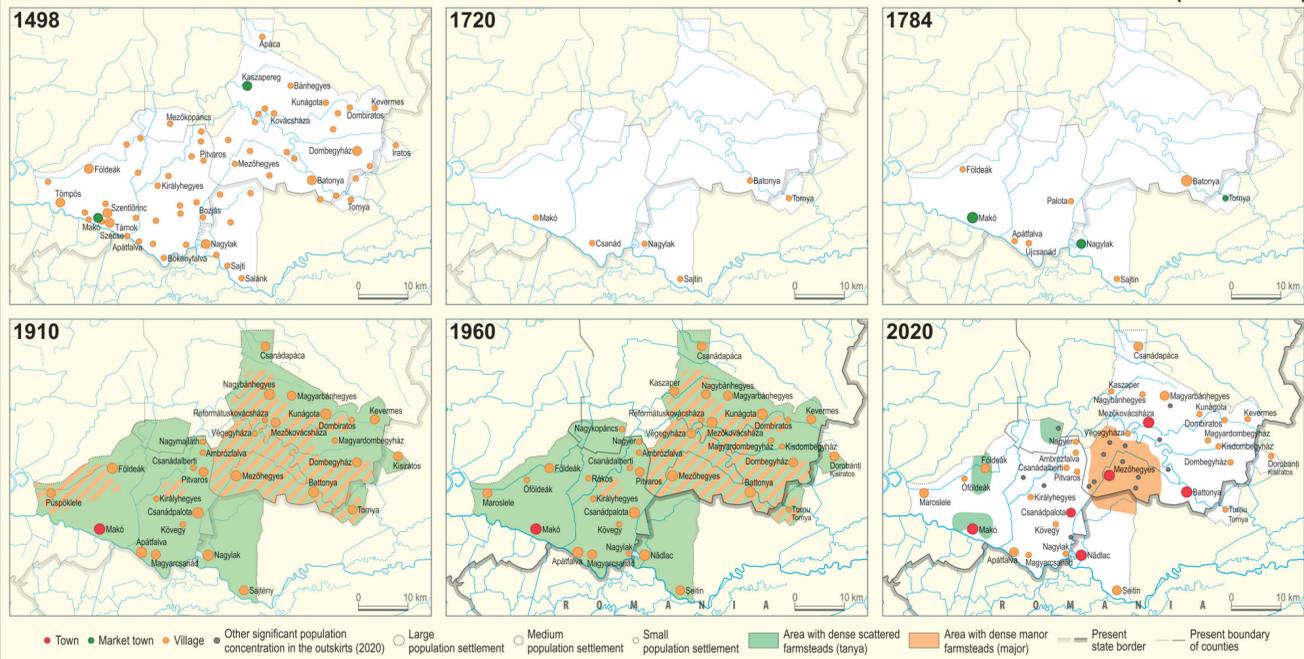
producing and trading towns at the forefront of urbanisation. Crop trading towns emerged and flourished along the navigable rivers (e.g. along the Danube: Komárom, Pest, Baja, Újvidék/Novi Sad, along the Tisza and its tributaries: Szeged, Arad and Temesvár/Timișoara). In contrast, towns in Upper Hungary and in Transylvania were not affected by the crop trade; they continued to preserve their medieval features and atmosphere.

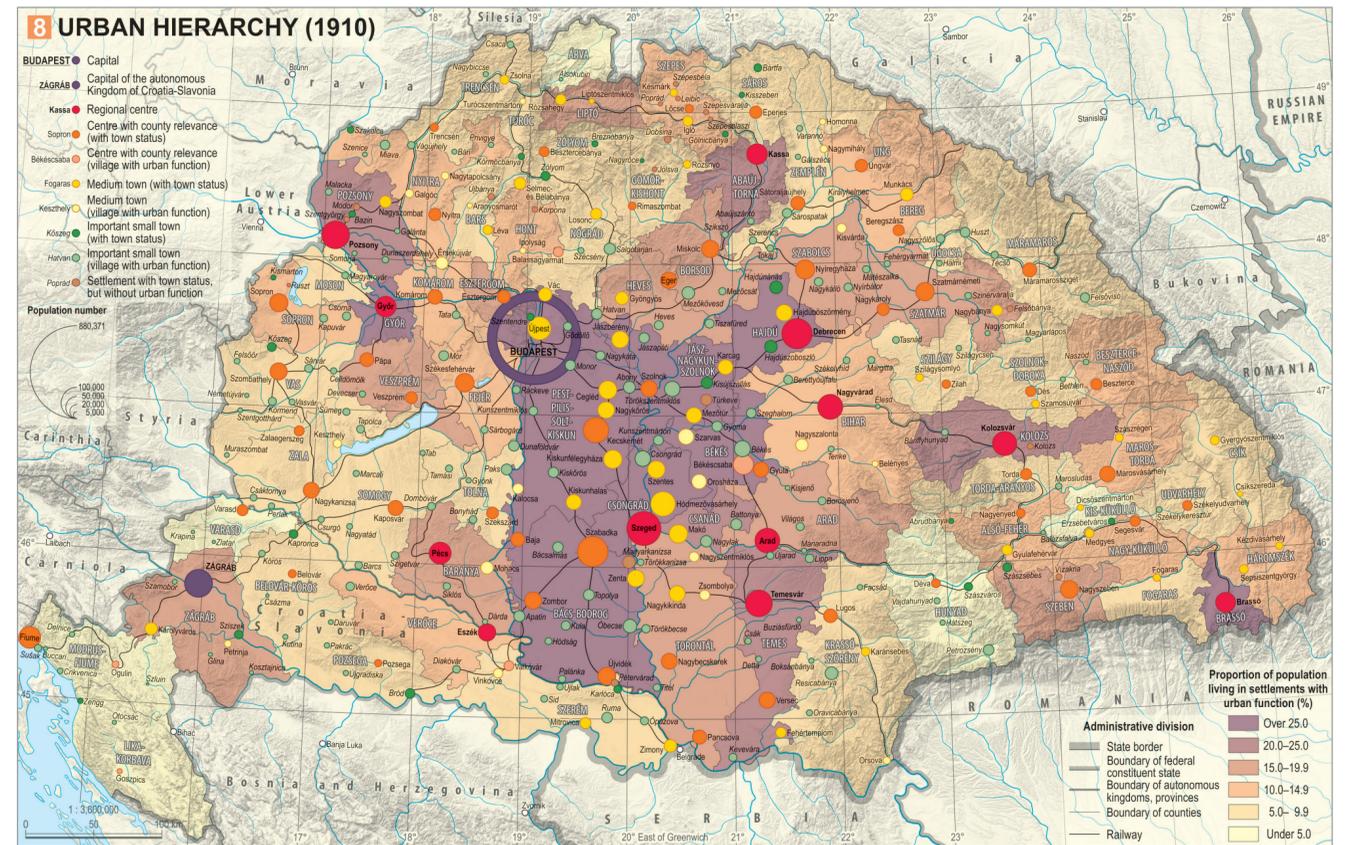
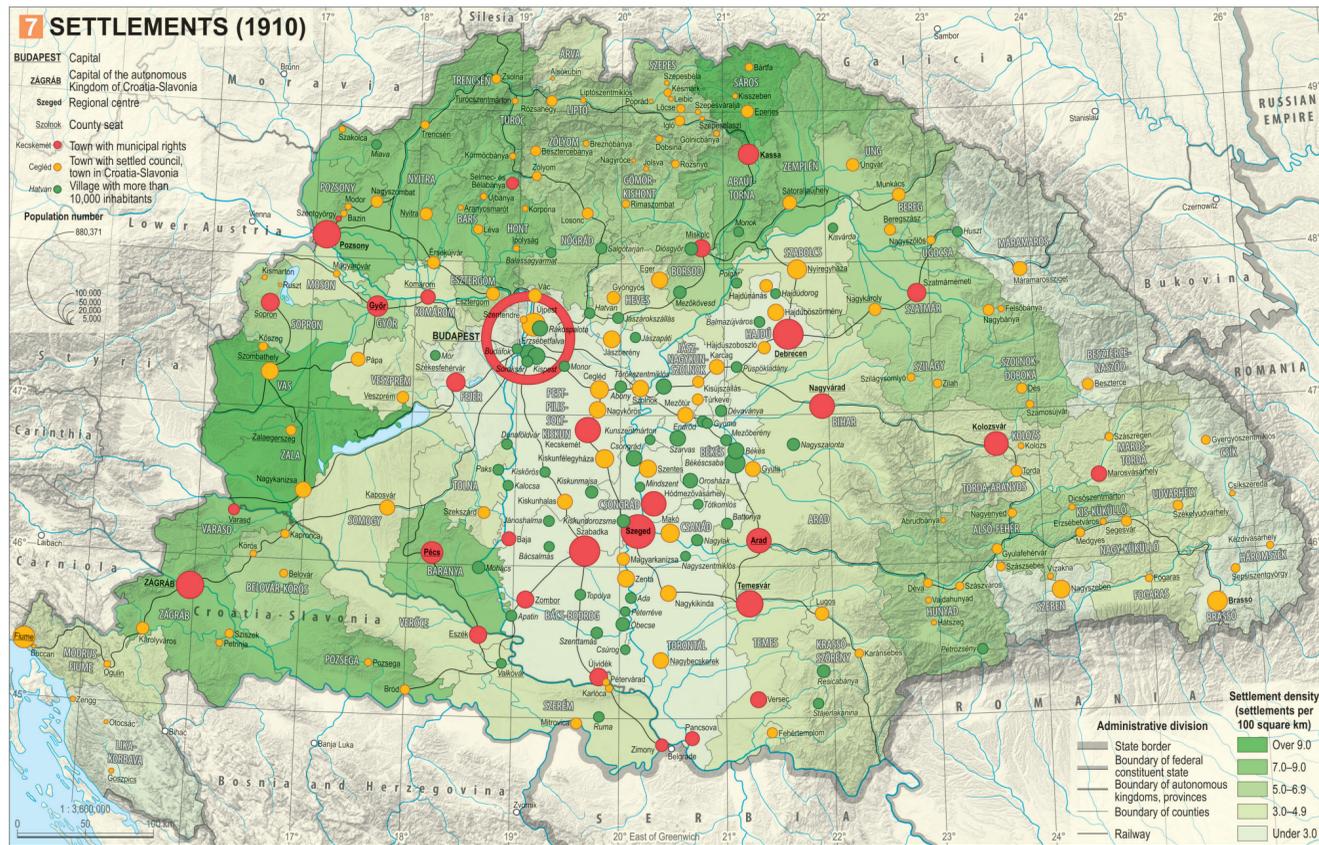
The forerunners of manufacturing industry also appeared in the first half of the 19th century. However, for the time being, their influence on urban development remained small. In addition to changes in the economy, settlement development was also influenced by the growth of institutions and activities in the so-called third sector. In the field of public administration, the rationalisation measures of Joseph II and the relocation of government offices from Vienna and Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava) to Buda and Pest contributed to the subsequent rapid growth of the Hungarian capital. The only university in Hungary at that time, in Nagyszombat (Trnava), was also moved to Buda in 1777. Pest-Buda also became home to many of the national institutions established in the Reform Era (1825–1848), including theatres, museums, libraries, casinos and the academy of science.

As a culmination of the process, in 1848 the April Laws abolished the legal and economic framework of the feudal system, the privileges of the estates and the right of the feudal lords to exercise jurisdiction in the settlements owned by them. The April Laws also emancipated the serfs and introduced the general sharing of taxation. All this created new conditions for settlement development.

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (1867), a period of explosive growth began. The conditions for the development of a capitalist economy were favourable. Not only were the legal conditions for a civil sys-

5 CHANGE OF THE SETTLEMENT SYSTEM IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY AREA OF CSANÁD COUNTY (1498–2020)





tem in place, but also the economy received a boost from the resumption of (limited) national sovereignty. The 1850s saw the advent of a global economic boom, which also affected agriculture. Foreign loans were available for Hungary, and the state was committed to supporting economic and infrastructural developments, especially the expansion of Budapest into a world city. Following 1867, business opportunities (including business start-ups) were abundant in Hungary and companies were set up at a feverish pace. Between 1867 and 1873, 4,000 kilometres of railway tracks were laid in the country, and more than 500 new financial institutions and 170 industrial joint stock companies were founded. As a result of the technological revolution, urban settlements were modernised. Indeed, towards the end of the century, electric public lighting and trams appeared in the major provincial cities and Budapest, where even an underground line was completed in 1896, the first of its kind on the continent. A running water supply and sewerage became widespread. The advent of civil public administration led to the abolition of the royal free and market towns. In lieu of these, the more populous cities – a total of 25 – gained municipal rights, while 106 urban settlements became towns with settled council.

Some outcomes of these processes are included in Maps 7 and 8. At first glance, the dense urban settlement system of the core of the country between the Danube and the Tisza and in the Tiszántúl region, is striking. In most counties of the Alföld, more than a quarter of the population lived in towns in a functional sense in 1910. These features are a legacy of the Ottoman period and the grain boom of the second half of the 19th century. However, in the areas surrounding this urbanised core (i.e. in Transdanubia, Upper Hungary and Transylvania), the proportion of town dwellers was less than 10%. The only exceptions were the counties of such major cities as Győr, Brassó

(Braşov), Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) and Kassa (Košice). The manufacturing sector contributed greatly to the urbanisation of Budapest and some other major cities, including Pozsony (Bratislava), Arad, Temesvár (Timişoara), Brassó (Braşov) and Fiume (Rijeka). Also shown on the map are the mining settlements that were rapidly becoming centres of manufacturing (Resicábánya/Reșița, Stájerlakanina/Anina, Salgótarján, Diósgyőr).

The urban hierarchy reflects the number of institutions and activities in each town, their hierarchical rank, and their range. Budapest was far ahead of other cities at the top of the Hungarian urban hierarchy at the beginning of the 20th century. The city was evidently the Hungarian bridgehead of business (and foreign) capital, technology and innovation, and social ideas and artistic trends. (e.g. in 1910, 87.9% of monetary assets were held in the accounts of financial institutions in Budapest, 61.9% of higher education students studied here, 41.5% of telephone calls were made in the capital, and 26.4% of telegrams were submitted here.) The capital was already surrounded by a ring of suburban towns from Újpest to Budafok. Together with their residents, Budapest crossed the threshold of one million inhabitants. The counter-poles of the Hungarian capital were also emerging: e.g. regional centres as Zagreb, the capital of Croatia-Slavonia; Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava), Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Temesvár (Timişoara), Kassa (Košice), Debrecen, Nagyvárád (Oradea) and Szeged. The county centres formed a rather heterogeneous group in terms of their economic base and population. At the beginning of the 20th century, there were 330–335 settlements that may be considered as towns in Hungary – excluding Croatia-Slavonia – regardless of their legal status.

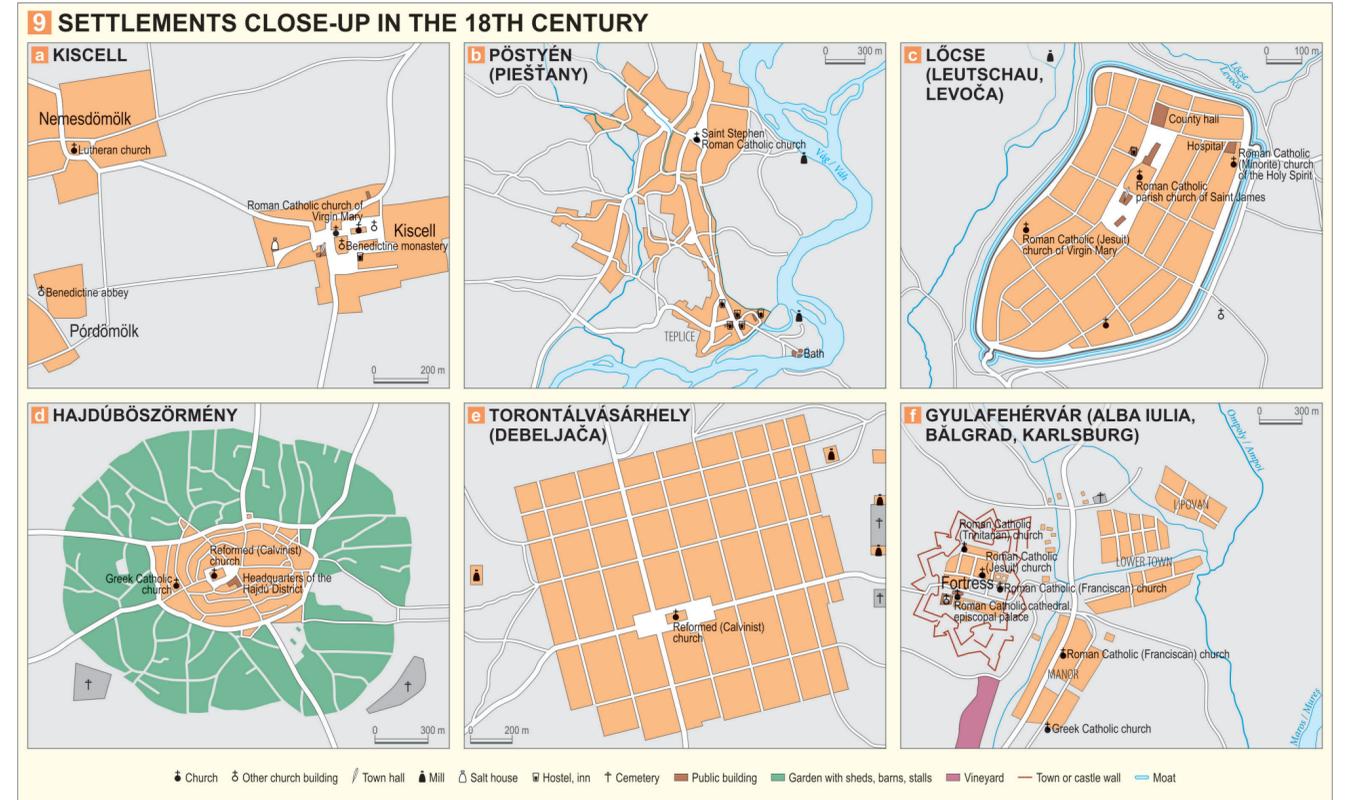
In terms of origin, structure, architectural character and layout, an extremely wide range of settlements has developed in the Carpathian Basin over the centuries.

Kiscell (today's Celdömök) is a Transdanubian settlement of special origin: it was built as a place with urban features from the beginning. The Benedictine abbey church and monastery, as a famous place of pilgrimage, forms the core of the settlement. This core attracted 'facilities' for pilgrims, merchants, traders, inns, a salt house. The original core of the settlement developed into a regular village and then into a marketplace and railway junction.

Written sources mention medieval bathing customs in Hungary, but bathing only became a popular pastime with the advent of the bourgeois lifestyle in the second half of the 19th century. The *Pöstény* (Piešťany) spa, built on one of the islands of Vág (Váh), became the country's principal spa in the final years of the Dual Monarchy. The map depicts the early guest service institutions in the island and in Teplíce.

Lőcse (Levoča) in Upper Hungary (Szepes/Spiš County) is an example of a medieval western-style town. The German (Saxon) founders designed the rectangular main square in accordance with the urban planning traditions that they had brought with them, including the free-standing, arcaded town hall (built in 1551) and the masterpiece of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture, the Church of Saint James. The city core (as in Bártfa/Bardejov, Sopron, Buda, and Segesvár/Sighişoara) is surrounded by medieval walls.

The map of *Hajdúböszörmény*, the seat of the privileged Hajdú District in the 17th–19th centuries, has always been a popular topic in monographs on Hungary in view of the peculiar double-plot composition of the settlement, an invention of the market towns where the inhabitants kept large numbers of livestock. Each household had a residential plot, the centre of the settlement and, in another part of the settlement, a much larger garden plot (a hutch garden) for livestock and fodder. The latter in addition to animal husbandry, also functioned as a vegetable garden.



Torontálvásárhely (Debeljača), inhabited by Reformed (Calvinist) Hungarians, is a village in the Banat that was desolated during the Ottoman occupation and in the 18th century re-established (with a chessboard layout) according to the plans of engineers. Similar settlements are common in the present-day territory of Hungary and in the Romanian part of Banat.

With its ancient roots, *Gyulafehérvár* (Alba Iulia) is one of the traditional centres in Transylvania (e.g. episcopal seat of the Diocese of Transylvania since the beginning of the 11th century, seat of the Principality of Transylvania during the 16–17th century). The core of the city comprises the fortress, which was constructed in the first half of the 18th century on the pattern

of a star-shaped, classical Renaissance fortification. The complex of buildings within the castle walls includes the Roman Catholic cathedral and episcopal palace.

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LÍVIA MURINKÓ

GÁBOR NAGY

GYULA NAGY

ÁDÁM NÉMETH

PÉTER ŐRI

VIKTOR PÁL

GÁBOR PÁLÓCZI

ISTVÁN ZOLTÁN PÁSZTOR

JÁNOS PÉNZES

JÁNOS PINTÉR

PÉTER RÓBERT

TAMÁS T. SIKOS

BALÁZS SZABÓ

LAURA SZABÓ

KATALIN SZENDE

JUDIT SZÉKELY

PÉTER SZILASSI

SÁNDOR SZÜCS

PATRIK TÁTRAI

†GUSZTÁV THIRRING

TIBOR TINER

GÁBOR TOLNAI

GÉZA TÓTH

PÁL PÉTER TÓTH

ANDRÁS TRÓCSÁNYI

ANNAMÁRIA UZZOLI

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