

# THE BANAT REGION AS REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR OF THE CHANGING ECCLESIASTIC NETWORK

*Beatrix F. Romhányi\**

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The Banat region known in the history of medieval Hungary as Temesköz is not an easy terrain.<sup>1</sup> Its medieval charters, settlement network and architectural memories have largely disappeared, and post-Ottoman settlements have covered the previous layers not only physically, but in terms of historical memory as well. In addition, the storms of the twentieth century did not favour the research of this region. Some of the medieval and modern events in the region's history also suggest that some of its parts have been difficult to populate at times. The failure of the Cumans to settle in the thirteenth or the difficulties of the colonization initiated by Queen Maria Theresia in the eighteenth century are the best-known examples of this phenomenon. Obviously, the lost written sources cannot be replaced, but getting to know the dynamics of changes in the settlement network and in the population can also contribute to a better understanding of the (public) history of the region. Here, I would like to contribute to this by examining a relatively well-known data group, the network of the church institutions.

From a geographical point of view the area bordered by the Mureș/Maros, the Tisza, the Danube and the Transylvanian Mountains is one of the most watered areas of the Great Hungarian Plain. The northern part of the region was formed by the former branches and the floodplain of the Mureș/

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\* Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, Budapest, e-mail: t.romhanyi@gmail.com

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Maros, Aranca/Aranka/Zlatica, Galadska/Galacka, Bega/Béga and many other unnamed streams. The western border at the Tisza is also accompanied by many abandoned riverbeds, rotting and intermittently watered areas, and in the south not only the floodplain of the Danube, but also the Deliblato Sands and the Alibunar Swamp have influenced the possibilities of settling and transport. There were fords in the Mureş/Maros at Cenad/Csanád and Arad, in the Tisza at Kaniža/Magyarkanizsa, Bačko Petrovo Selo/Péterrève, Bečej/Óbecse and Titel, and in the Danube at Kovin/Keve and Banatska Palanka/Palánk (medieval Haram). These crossings were not a single bridge-like point in themselves, but a longer or shorter section of the river, where it was possible to get over depending on the time-varying water course, the eventually changing course of the riverbed and the current water level. In addition, these sites did not always work in parallel, their use was dependent on environmental factors, changes in the network of settlements and trade opportunities. The roads leading from the region to the East passed partly to Transylvania (through the Mureş/Maros valley, Făget/Facsád or Haţeg/Hátszeg), partly to the Balkans (through Caransebeş/Karánsebes or along the left bank of the Danube).

The smaller, mountainous part of the area belonged in the Roman era to Dacia, the plain part to Barbaricum, but due to the importance of the roads passing through it, Roman facilities were built between the 2nd and the 4th centuries along both the Mureş/Maros and the Danube, too. Among them, Contra Margum (Kovin/Keve) and Morisena (Cenad/Csanád) played an important role in the development of the medieval settlement network. In addition, the Devil's Dykes (*Şanţurile diavolului/Csörszárók*) also crossed this area, connecting Arad with Timişoara/Temesvár and Kostolac (Roman Viminacium) and remaining a visible element of the landscape for centuries.<sup>2</sup> Although it is outside the area, it is worth mentioning the two longitudinal ramparts in the southern part of the Danube-Tisza interfluvial region: the great Roman rampart between Bačko Gradište/Bácsföldvár and Kać/Káty, and the little Roman rampart between Apatin and Bačko Petrovo Selo/Péterrève.<sup>3</sup> The original function of all these earthworks is controversial from time to time, and the possibility of using them as a road has reappeared in addition to the most common protection function.<sup>4</sup> Without taking a stand on the issue, it is surely

<sup>2</sup> É. Garam, P. Patay, S. Soproni, *Sarmatisches Wallsystem im Karpatenbecken* (Budapest, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> N. Stanojević, *Srednjovekovna seoska naselja od V–XV veka u Vojvodini* (Novi Sad, 1996), 117–118; L. Szekeres, “Adalékok a Kis római sánc kérdéséhez,” *Híd* 50 (1986): 518–527.

<sup>4</sup> E. Istvánovits, V. Kulcsár, “The history and perspectives of the research of the Csörsz Ditch,” in *Proceedings of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies Held in Amman, Jordan (September 2000)*, eds. P. Freeman, J. Bennett, T. Z. Fiema, B. Hoffmann, BAR International Series, I–II, 1084 (2000), 625–628; Zs. Pinke, “A Csörsz-árók és a tiszántúli erek

possible to say that in many places, the well-known dungeons were certainly used as a signpost in the past centuries, thus influencing the development of the settlement network.

In fact, in the Middle Ages we are interested in, we are not abundant in written sources. For the eleventh century, we only have data on the edge of the Banat, the interior of the area first appeared in the written evidence as late as in the twelfth century. Of the county's headquarters, Cenad/Csanád was already a centre before 1030, and Kovin/Keve appeared as an important ford in 1071.<sup>5</sup> At the very end of the eleventh century, the county of Arad appeared when the estates of the new collegiate chapter of Titel were confirmed. The fortress of Arad itself was first mentioned in 1132 in a charter.<sup>6</sup> The first mention of Timisoara/Temesvár is found in the work of al-Idrisi in the middle of the 12th century, with the first data on the county being known from 1177.<sup>7</sup> Haram was first mentioned in the 12th century in connection with the Byzantine-Hungarian conflicts of 1128 and 1161; the count (Hung. ispán) of the castle was mentioned in 1177.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the fords of Kovin/Keve and Banatska Palanka/Haram, the fords of Kaniža/Magyarkanizsa, Bačko Petrovo Selo/Péterrève, Bečej/Óbecse and the Titel were all mentioned in eleventh- and twelfth-century documents. The harbour of Sâmbăteni/Szabadhely (medieval Szombat) near Arad also appears early. Besides, monasteries and some church estates are mentioned in the sources before the Mongol Invasion.

The situation is slightly better with the archaeological sources. Due to the boundaries of the area since 1920, and the varying intensity and interest of archaeological research over a long period of time, we have quite uneven data on both the spatial and the temporal aspects of Banat. However, the situation has improved somewhat in recent decades, new research has been launched, and previously unpublished materials have been published. Although the overall picture is incomplete, the patterns on the map help to interpret the

kapcsolata," in *Történeti tájak – vizes élőhelyek. Régészet, környezettörténet, tájvédelem*, eds. E. Jerem, J. Laszlovsky, Zs. Pinke, Á. Drosztmér, Z. Renner (Budapest, 2017), 65.

<sup>5</sup> Gy. Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza*, vol. I (Budapest, 1967), 850 and vol. III, (Budapest, 1987), 317–318.

<sup>6</sup> Gy. Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza*, vol. I (Budapest, 1963), 170–171, 240–241.

<sup>7</sup> A. Zsoldos, "A megyeszervezés kezdetei a Magyar Királyságban (Az "óriás" és az "átlagos" nagyságú megyék kérdése)," in *Megyetörténet. Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére*, eds. I. Hermann, B. Karlinszky (Veszprém, 2010), 313.

<sup>8</sup> SRH I, 441; I. "Borsa, III. Béla 1177. évi könyvalakú privilégiuma az aradi káptalan számára," *Levéltári Közlemények* 33 évf (1962), 213.

written sources – for example, to identify areas that were constantly or periodically empty.

Despite the shortcomings, one group of data connected to the medieval settlement network can certainly be used as an indicator for the analysis of demographic processes of a particular area. That group of data is the ecclesiastic network, i.e. the rural churches, the parishes and the monasteries. Of course, we cannot claim at all to know all of them. But institutions that need to be included or, where appropriate, excluded, no longer have a significant effect on the overall picture. After this brief, somewhat apologetic introduction, let us see the point.

It is not a simple task to write about the diocese of Cenad/Csanád and the monastic network of Banat/Temesköz. Most of the institutions are known only from one single evidence, some of them cannot be even identified precisely. As for the numerical data of the monastic network (Table 1), two things can be immediately noticed: on the one hand, the number of institutions is small compared to the size of the area, and on the other there are many short-lived monasteries. The former is less unusual in the dioceses of the Great Hungarian Plain (see Table 2 about the relative proportions of the monastic networks of the dioceses), but the latter is clearly an outlier, even if considering that we know neither the exact time of founding, nor of closing of many monasteries.

Looking at the data in a little more detail, it also turns out that the strong presence of monastic orders throughout the Middle Ages in other parts of the country, especially in the western regions, can be observed in this area only until the middle of the thirteenth century. The number of abbeys fell by half after the Mongol invasion. The financial conditions of the survivors have deteriorated significantly, and none of them has survived till the end of the Middle Ages. They were dissolved at the latest in the 1490s, their estates having been merged with those of the Csanád bishopric or with the Collegiate Chapter of Arad. Only the Csanád Abbey continued to function as a monastic institution, run by the Observant Franciscans who strictly rejected possessing landed property. Similarly, in contrast to the northern and western parts of the country, the Premonstratensians played only episodes in the diocese: the monastery of Sadio (Szaggyú) – most probably identifiable with present-day Soca/Karátsonyiliget, mentioned in various forms and repeatedly wrong diocese in the Order's registers – was abandoned in the second half of the 14th century the latest. Meanwhile, the dissolution of the abbeys was followed by the spreading of the mendicants with a considerable delay. Certainly, the Dominicans settled shortly before the Mongol invasion in Vršac/Érsomlyó (there is no data on the late medieval existence of the friary), other friaries are documented rather late. The Austin Hermits settled in the late thirteenth century in Şemlacu Mare/Mezősomlyó

and Lipova/Lippa, but the first one vanished before the end of the fourteenth century. The Dominican friary of Timișoara/Temesvár is mentioned in the early fourteenth century, like the Franciscan friaries of Timișoara/Temesvár and Lipova/Lippa. Still, compared to the rest of the country, the establishing of the mendicant network was much slower. The network became denser only in the 1360s when a large number of new Franciscan friaries were founded. However, it should also be added that, unlike the general tendencies, these friaries were not part of the Hungarian Franciscan province but of the Bosnian vicariate. Sacoșu Turcescu/Cseri, Gherman/Ermény, Banatska Palanka/Haram, Kovin/Keve, Bocșa Română/Kövesd, Caransebeș/Karánsebes and Orșova/Orsova belonged to the Bulgarian custody comprising only Hungarian friaries, except for two short-lived attempts in Vidin and Čiprovc. They were both on the territory of the Bulgarian Banat founded by King Louis I. During this period, only the monastery of Arača/Aracs near the Tisza River, established by Queen Elisabeth the Elder, belonged to the Hungarian province of the Order. Most friaries of the Bosnian vicariate disappeared around the middle of the fifteenth century, only Sacoșu Turcescu/Cseri and Caransebeș/Karánsebes survived as part of the Hungarian Observant vicariate established in 1445. Almost all these mendicant friaries were founded for to promote the mission among the Orthodox population of the North Balkans, and, besides the alms of the local population, their presence was largely based on the direct royal support.<sup>9</sup>

The spatial distribution of the abbeys is also instructive. Most of them stood along the Mureș/Maros River and its smaller arms that left the main course after the river reached the plain. In the inner part of the Banat, there was only one Benedictine abbey, mentioned under interesting circumstances: the monks of the monastery of Ittebe (Srpski Itebej) were accused in 1219 of minting false coins. Taking advantage of this, the Bishop of Cenad/Csanád transformed the abbey into a collegiate chapter, which, however, probably fell victim to the Tartars, at least by the fact that after the middle of the thirteenth century it disappeared from written documents. The settlement itself is located next to the Bega River. The road leading from Cenad/Csanád to Kovin/Keve passed here. Since there were two settlements called Böszörmény (today Banatsko Veliko Selo/Bánátnagyfalu and Jaša Tomić/Modos) close to the monastery, it is

<sup>9</sup> According to the tradition of the Franciscan Order, the friaries of the Banat/Temesköz were founded by King Louis I. Although that statement cannot be proven by contemporary written evidence, the high interest of the ruler for the friaries of the region can be demonstrated by a charter of King Sigismund of Luxembourg issued in 1428 (*Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica cum insertis editorum documentorum regestis: ab anno 925 usque ad annum 1752*, ed. Eusebius Fermendžin (Zagreb, 1892), 127–130, n. 679). The reason of the royal support is also given in the text: the king took diverse measures for to convert the Orthodox population of the region.

possible that the abbey itself was in contact with the trade, and their unlawful actions were also related to this. The fact that the bishop converted Ittebe into a collegiate chapter refers to the need for pastoral care in the area, that could not be undertaken by a monastery after the Council of Lateran IV prescribing a stricter observance of Church ordinances.

In contrast to the overwhelming majority of abbeys, the Mendicant friaries and the Pauline monasteries appeared in the Banat mainly along the road to the south, connecting Arad to Haram. Outside this area, there were a Pauline monastery and two friaries – one of the Austin Hermits, the other of the Franciscans – in and around Lipova/Lippa, and the Franciscan friary in Arača/Aracs, mentioned above. This pattern suggests that the number of souls increased significantly in the south-eastern part of Banat after the Mongol invasion. However, the established network could not survive permanently. After the mid-fifteenth century, while most of the Observant Franciscans left, orthodox monasteries appeared. Among them, Vojlovica, Partas (Mănăstire/Monostorszentyörgy) and Bodrogu Vechi/Hodos Bodrog already existed in the last quarter of the 15th century, and by the 1580s the number of Orthodox monasteries increased to 25.<sup>10</sup> Until then, all the Latin monasteries and friaries have been extinct, western Christianity was represented mainly by Protestant preachers. The orthodox monasteries, as the earlier pattern, appear mainly in the lane of the road connecting Arad to Haram. Thus, the change was not in the number of souls or in the settlement area, but in the composition of the population. The process began in the 1360s with the arrival of Bulgarian refugees. King Sigismund's above-mentioned 1428 charter (see footnote 9) was already the result of the next Balkan refugee wave, and immigration was since essentially continuous. In the relationship with the newcomers, the Florence Union, signed in 1439, was a major change, since the conversion of the Orthodox population was removed from the agenda. One of the consequences was the departure of the Franciscans from the Banat, another the increasing number of Orthodox monasteries from the last decades of the fifteenth century on.

Due to its small size, the monastic network can only give a very general

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<sup>10</sup> Reliable data on the early modern Orthodox monasteries can mainly be found in the Ottoman defterler. They also give some information about the community of monks living in them. In general, there were no more than two or three monks, i.e. they were hardly bigger than the late medieval parishes. Thus, they can be considered as a transitional form between Latin monasteries and parishes. In this context it is even more striking that there were hardly any such institutions in the western part of the Banat, while they were completely absent in the north-western corner. On the one hand, this suggests that the population density of the territory was low, and on the other, it sheds new light on the presence and activity of the Franciscans in Szeged who lived in their friary throughout the Ottoman period.



overview of the settlement network of the region. The first – and indeed the only – source showing some sort of picture of the entire settlement network of Banat is, similarly to many other parts of the country, the papal tithe register of 1332–1337. Here I would not detail why the list can be considered complete in the statistical sense. I have already described it elsewhere and I will only refer to the relevant parts of that article<sup>11</sup>. Unlike some other areas of the Great Hungarian Plain, such as the Danube-Tisza Interfluvium, many parishes were registered in the Banat: 218 in the entire area of the Cenad/Csanád diocese, about 80 per cent of which was south of the Mureş/Maros River. Based on the pattern of the network, the region can be divided into four parts. The densest parish network was in the narrow strip along the Mureş/Maros. Another rather dense network can be observed in the eastern part of the central band extending from the Mureş/Maros River to Gherman/Ermeny, while in the western part of the same band towards the Tisza River, the network is rather loose. Furthermore, it was visibly aligned with the fords (Senta/Zenta, Bečej/Óbecse, Zrenjanin/Nagybecskerek, Titel). To the south of the Titel-Biniş/Bényes line, we can hardly find any parish. The few ones follow the road leading to the ford at Banatska Palanka/Haram. At the time of the compilation of the papal tithe register, the area reaching the mountains was still almost empty.<sup>12</sup>

“Although the whole picture recorded by the tithe list reflects reality, there are confusing shortcomings. Such is the missing parish of Kovin/Keve. Albeit the settlement was the headquarters of one of the archdeaconries of the Cenad/Csanád diocese, the parish of the town is not on the list, which may have several reasons. The least likely is that there was no parish in the town, or it was simply forgotten. It is possible that it was hiding behind one of the unidentified parishes that are only referred to by their patron saints, or the parson did not pay the tithe himself because of his status as archdeacon and member of the cathedral chapter. Theoretically, it may also be that the page recording the parish disappeared for some reason. However, if we assumed this, it would mean that many other parishes were “lost” besides Kovin/Keve, which is, however, unlikely, since the parish network of the neighbouring Eastern Sirmium does not differ

<sup>11</sup> Beatrix F. Romhány, “A középkori magyar plébániák és a 14. századi pápai tizedjegyzék,” *Történelmi Szemle* 61 (2019), 339–360.

<sup>12</sup> The distribution map of the tenth- and eleventh-century archaeological findings shows a similar picture, see M. Takács, “A honfoglaló magyar szállásterület déli kiterjedése,” in *A honfoglalás kor kutatásának legújabb eredményei – Tanulmányok Kovács László 70. születésnapjára*, eds. L. Révész, M. Wolf (Szeged, 2013), 641–666; as well as the topographic works published about the territory: E. Gáll, *Az Erdélyi-medence, a Partium és a Bánság 10–11. századi temetői*, vol. I–II (Szeged, 2013); *Археолошка топографија Баната*, vol. I (Нови Кнежевац) – II (Чока), ed. С. Трифуновић (Novi Sad, 2013–2016).

from the southern part of the Banat. Thus, in the first half of the fourteenth century, there were two sub-regions with a dense parish network and a correspondingly higher population density in the north and east of the Banat; there was a sparsely populated area on the Tisza side and a barely populated part in the south. The northern sub-region corresponds to the Maros salt transport route, and the eastern strip corresponds to the north-south trade route along the Devil's Dyke, crossing the Danube at Banatska Palanka/Haram.

Apparently, in the twelfth–thirteenth century, the salt transport on the Mureş/Maros determined the settlement network. During this period, the Arad-Haram Road seems to be less busy. Instead the Cenad/Csanád–Timișoara/Temesvár–Banatska Palanka/Haram road with an alternative towards Turnu Severin/Szörényvár and the Cenad/Csanád–Kovin/Keve road that was also marked by al-Idrisi, were more intensively used. The transport corridors crossed relatively sparsely populated areas.

At the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, the north-south band, which also passed through Timișoara/Temesvár, became at least equal to the former, which reflected not only the growing intensity of economic activities in the region, but also the increasing number of souls – as it was reflected in the parish network and in the monastic network. One of the driving forces was obviously the Balkan trade, but other factors could also have played a role. One of these factors was mining, albeit we have no data on its volume. Its importance is suggested by a few fourteenth and fifteenth century charters. In 1351, the road leading from Ocna de Fier (Bánya, later Vaskő) to Biniș (Bényes) appears in a charter<sup>13</sup>, in 1358 a royal mine is mentioned in Dognacea (Székesbánya).<sup>14</sup> A charter issued in 1395 about King Sigismund's exchange of land with the Csáki family highlighted the iron mine of the Bocșa Română/Kövesd estate, today Bocșa Montană/Boksánbánya.<sup>15</sup> Since iron mines were usually not recorded, the fact alone that it was mentioned, refers to its importance. In 1437 Ciclova Montană (Csiklóbánya) and in 1454 Gladna (Galadnabánya) were mentioned.<sup>16</sup> About 1400, four of the five mines, mentioned above, were without any doubt in royal hands (besides Dognacea/Székesbánya

<sup>13</sup> V. Achim, "Mutații în statutul unor sate cneziale din Banat în epoca angevină. Cazul Biniș," *Banatica* 12 (1993), 58.

<sup>14</sup> F. Pesty, *Krassó vármegye története*, vol. III, *Oklevéltár* (Budapest, 1882), n. 29: *cuiusdam montane regalis Sekusbánya*.

<sup>15</sup> G. Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatának kritikai története* (Budapest, 1880), 124: *necnon aliud castrum ipsorum Kevesd vocatum in comitatu de Crassow habitum, simul cum villis et montanaferri ad ipsum castrum spectantibus*.

<sup>16</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, 274, n. 305. Both, iron and copper ore can be found in Ciclova Montană, any of them could be produced in the Middle Ages.



and Bocșa Montană/Boksánbánya, Ciclova Montană was the pertinence of the Ilidia/Illyéd estate<sup>17</sup>, Ocna de Fier/Vaskő also belonged to the estate of Bocșa Română). Iron processing was present in the region as early as in the Árpáadian age. Bog iron can be found, for example, in Ilidia/Illyéd, Berliște/Berlistye, Vršni and in the valley of the Vicinic stream. Furthermore, a twelfth-century iron-melting workshop was discovered in Gornea (Felsőlupkő).<sup>18</sup> In the mountains around Reșița (Resica), there was intensive mining in the Roman era, and production was significant in modern times, too. Although the number of medieval sources is small, however, considering the extent of the destruction of written evidence and the fact that they were iron and copper mines, which appear less often in written sources, their significance is much greater. In addition, a 1522 source mentions gold-wash around Caransebeș/Karánsebes, which obviously also had previous history.<sup>19</sup> Considerable population density and economic importance of the Banat mountain range are supported by data on early Ottoman raids<sup>20</sup>, by the network of Orthodox monasteries dating back to the end of the fifteenth century, as well as sixteenth-century defterler.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps even the failed attempt of King Louis I to establish the Bulgarian Banat was connected with the increasing activity of the region.

However, several phenomena point to the vulnerability of the region. The slow establishment of the monastic network, concentrated on the northern part of the area in the Árpáadian age, the discrepancy between the monastic network and the central places of the region<sup>22</sup>, the repeated colonization (the Cumans in the mid-thirteenth century, the Bulgarians in the 1360s, the Serbs from the late fifteenth century on). Of course, in the 15th century, Ottoman raids were important causes, but perhaps other options might have to be considered, regarding the lack of stability even in peaceful periods. One of the factors is the dense hydrographical picture of the area, which was also very volatile: the dynamically changing sediment cone of the Mureș/Maros, the constantly changing meander of the Tisza, as well as changes in the bedrock and water flow of the rivers passing through the area. As an example, let me refer to a

<sup>17</sup> A large tower dated to the twelfth century was unearthed in Ilidia/Illyéd that was the centre of the estate. In 1233, the domain was given by King Andrew II to his sister Margaret who was the widow of the Byzantine Emperor Isakios. See D. Țeicu, *Banatul Montan în Evul Mediu* (Timișoara, 1998), 105, 122, 176, 304; Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori földrajza*, III, 473.

<sup>18</sup> Țeicu, *Banatul Montan*, 261 and 267. The author also quotes the above charters.

<sup>19</sup> Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatának*, 125.

<sup>20</sup> P. Engel, "A török-magyar háborúk első évei," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 3 (1998): 561–577.

<sup>21</sup> P. Engel, *A temesvári és moldovai szandzsák törökkori települései 1554–1579* (Dél-Alföldi évszázadok 8) (Szeged, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> I. Petrovics, "Towns and Central Places in the Danube-Tisza/Tisa-Maros/Mureș Region in the Middle Ages," *Banatica* 26/II (2016): 87–88.

charter issued by King Ladislaus IV in 1277, in which the bishop of Veszprém received the income of the salt delivered on the Mureş/Maros (!) in Slankamen/Szalánkemén.<sup>23</sup> Another – partly related – factor is the limited availability of arable land. In other regions of the Great Hungarian Plain, this also limited the settling of mendicant friaries<sup>24</sup>, and probably affected the estates of the abbeys along the Mureş/Maros, more precisely their extreme scarcity. This may be the reason why their income came from other sources, mainly from the salt trade, before the Mongol invasion. The consequences of landscape features, partly related to the number of souls and the differing maintenance capacities can be clearly seen in the differences of the ecclesiastical network of the dioceses of Cenad/Csanád and Veszprém, similar in size (Table 2, graph 1a-b). The ratio between the number of monasteries and parishes of the two dioceses was quite different even in the “peace era” of the fourteenth century (218/515 vs. 11/68), meaning that while the ratio in parishes between Cenad/Csanád and Veszprém reached about 1:2.5, the same ratio in monasteries was 1:6. By the end of the fourteenth century, the situation did not improve much, and in the fifteenth century there was no chance because of the repetitive Ottoman attacks. Such anomalies can be seen mainly in areas of animal husbandry, mining or forestry (e.g. in the Danube-Tisza Interfluve, in the northern Hungarian mining towns or in south western Hungary, along the Austro-Hungarian border). Apparently, animal husbandry and mining were present in the late medieval Banat.

In summary, the inhabited areas of the Banat changed several times during

<sup>23</sup> RA, II/2–3, n. 2789. The formulation refers to a branch of the Mureş/Maros that does not exist anymore and joined the Tisza near Titel and Slankamen/Szalánkemén. That branch probably left the Mureş/Maros somewhere close to Sâmbăteni/Szabadhely and came around Timişoara/Temesvár on the north, partly in the bed of today Bega/Béga. The abbey of Srpski Itebej/Itebe, from 1219 on Collegiate Chapter stood at that river branch. We do not know when this water way ceased to exist, but the change of the inner structure of the Banat/Temesköz around 1300 may have been a consequence of that event. About recent activity of the Mureş/Maros alluvial fan see G. Timár, B. Székely, G. Molnár, Cs. Ferencz, A. Kern, C. Galambos, G. Gercsák, L. Zentai, “Combination of historical maps and satellite images of the Banat region – reappearance of an old wet land area,” *Global and Planetary Change* 62/1–2 (2008): 29–38. About the changes of the channel and of the discharge of the Mureş/Maros in the past 1500–2000 years see also O. Katona, Gy. Sipos, A. L. Onaca, F. Ardelean, “Reconstruction of Palaeo-Hydrological and Fluvial Architecture at the Orosháza Palaeo-Channel of River Maros, Hungary,” *Journal of Environmental Geography* 5/1–2 (2012): 29–38; F. Timofte, A. L. Onaca, “Paleodischarge of Mureş River in the low land area,” *Ecoterra – Journal of environmental research and protection* 13/1(2016): 7–13.

<sup>24</sup> Zs. Pinke, P. Pósa, Z. Mravcsik, B. Romhányi, F. Gyulai, “A hajdúsági várostérség agroökológiai adottságai,” *Urbs – Magyar Várostörténeti Évkönyv* 10–11 (2017): 235–274. A similar phenomenon could be observed in Western Hungary, in the south-western part of Zala County and the neighboring part of Styria, see B. F. Romhányi, “Kolostorhálózat, területfejlesztés, régiók a Borostyán-út mentén,” *Soproni Szemle* 72/2 (2018): 119–146, esp. 140–141.

the middle Ages. Only the coastal strip of the Mureş/Maros, parts of the transport corridor between Arad and Haram and the narrower area of the Tisza and Danube were inhabited permanently. The western part of the region had a much weaker population than the east, and the south western part between the Tisza and Deliblato Sands was almost uninhabited. Based on the evolution of the monastic network, the sustaining capacity of the area reached its peak twice during the middle Ages: first just before the Mongol invasion and secondly around 1400. Compared to the monastic network of other regions of the country, the number of monasteries was clearly lower than the national average. It could not even reach the proportion of fourteenth-century parishes, even in pre-Ottoman peacetime periods. The reason for this can be found in economic factors related to the natural environment.

Table 1: Development of the monastic network in Banat/Temesköz between 1100 and 1580

Order	1100	1200	1240	1300	1400	1500	1580
Eastern rite	1	1	0			5	25
Benedictine	1	6	11	4	3	0	
Cistercian		1	1	1	1	0	
Premonstratensian				1	0		
Dominican			1	1	1	1	0
Franciscan					8 (1)*	3	0
Austin Hermits				2	1	1	0
Pauline				1	1 (2)*	1	0
Female communities							0 (2)*
Sum	2	8	13	10	15 (3)*	12	25 (2)*

\* (In brackets the number of monasteries destroyed in the 1390s and 1550s which were not included into the figure before.)

Table 2: The two church provinces, as well as the dioceses of Veszprém and Csanád/Csanád compared on the basis of different data, expressed in per cent

		Esztergom province	Kalocsa province	Veszprém diocese	Csanád diocese
monastic network	1200	66,9	33,1	18,5	6,2
	1300	81,6	18,4	23,8	4,1
	1400	74,2	25,8	23,9	4,8
	1500	71,4	28,6	24,1	3,1
parishes (1332–1337)		61,1	38,9	12,0	5,1
1433 (draft of Siena)		59,8	40,2	3,6	3,6
art. XX of 1498 decree <sup>1</sup>		60,9	39,1	6,3	2,1

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the fifteenth century, there was a difference in the conscription rate between

certain parts of the kingdom. The general rate was 36 tenant plots per light horseman, but in eleven southern counties including the Banat/Temesköz the rate was 24 tenant plots per light horseman. One of the possible explanations may be connected with the decrease of the income of the Cenad/Csanád bishop. The Orthodox population was exempted from paying the tithe to the bishop, limiting the military capacity of the bishopric. Still, the expected number of soldiers could be granted by increasing the conscription rate. See art. XVI of the 1498 decree: *Decreta Regni Mediaevalis Hungariae. The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. IV, 1490–1526, eds. P. Banyó, M. Rady, J. Bak (Budapest, 2012), 96–98. About the comparison of the draft of Siena and the articles of the decree of 1498 see B. F. Romhányi, “És ha mégis tudtak számolni? Avagy: hány katona kell az ország védelmére?,” in *Hadi és más nevezetes történetek: Tanulmányok Veszprém László tiszteletére*, ed. K. M. Kincses (Budapest, 2018), 106–116.

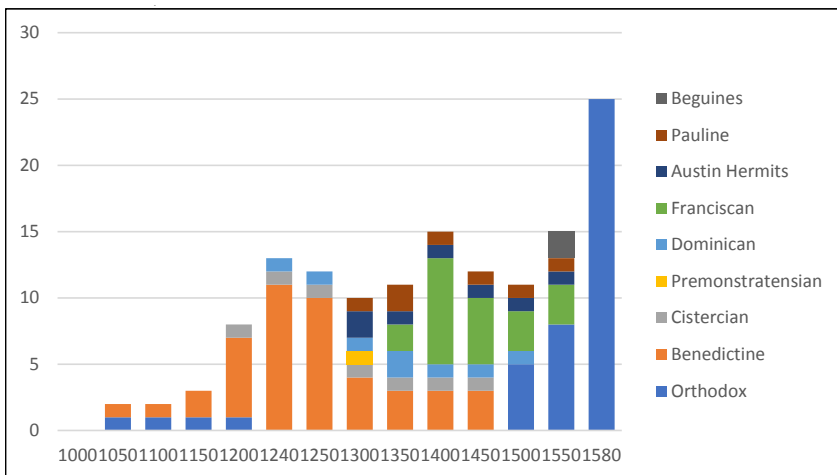


Fig. 1a: The monasteries of the Cenad/Csanád diocese between 1000 and 1580

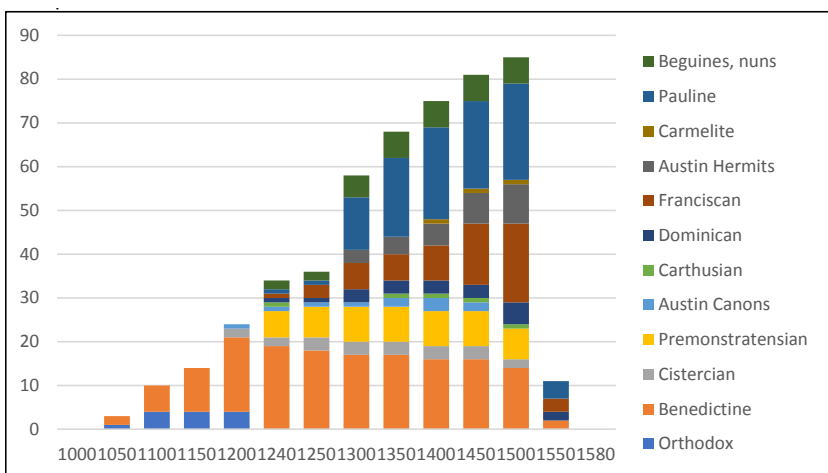


Fig. 1b: The monasteries of the Veszprém diocese between 1000 and 1580

Although the number of the late medieval and early modern Orthodox monasteries was considerably higher than the number of earlier, Latin monasteries in the region, the number of monks in each of those monasteries was in general much lower, often not more than two or three. Therefore, and because they participated in pastoral care, this monastic network was a sort of transition between the Latin monastic network and the parish network.

## REGIUNEA BANATULUI REFLECTATĂ ÎN OGLINDA SCHIMBĂRILOR DIN REȚEAUA ECCLEZIATICĂ

### *Rezumat*

Cercetarea regiunii Banat, cunoscută în istoria Ungariei medievale sub numele de *Temesköz*, este dificilă întrucât au dispărut în mare măsură documentele sale medievale, rețeaua de așezări și vestigiile arhitecturale, iar așezările de după cucerirea otomană au acoperit nu doar fizic vechile straturi, ci și sub aspectul memoriei istorice. În plus, turbulențele din secolul al XX-lea nu au fost prielnice cercetării acestei regiuni. Parte din evenimentele epocii medievale și moderne petrecute în acest areal indică faptul că popularea unora dintre zonele sale a fost dificilă uneori

Articolul de față își propune să contribuie la detectarea evoluției regiunii prin analiza unui grup de date relativ cunoscute, anume rețeaua instituțiilor religioase. Pe baza analizei rețelei monastice și parohiale, rezultă că zonele populate ale Banatului au cunoscut mai multe modificări în Evul mediu. Numai zona de coastă limitrofă Mureșului, părți ale culoarului de transport dintre Arad și Haram, precum și zonele imediat limitrofe Tisei și Dunării au fost permanent locuite. Zona vestică a regiunii a fost mult mai slab populată decât cea estică, iar arealul sud-vestic, între Tisa și Dunele Deliblat, a fost aproape nelocuit. Evoluția rețelei monastice indică faptul că zona a avut două perioade de vârf din perspectiva susținerii acesteia în Evul mediu: prima, înainte de invazia mongolă, cea de a doua, în jurul anului 1400. Comparativ cu alte regiuni ale țării, numărul mănăstirilor a fost categoric mai mic decât media națională. Rețeaua monastică nu a mai putut atinge nivelul numeric al parohiilor din secolul al XIV-lea nici măcar în perioadele de pace ante-otomane. O explicație în acest sens poate fi dată de factorii economici în strânsă legătură cu mediul natural.