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The Bishop and His Chapel: The Hédervári Chapel in Győr and the Episcopal Chapels of Central Europe around 1400

Among the spectacular life stories of the prelates of Central Europe, that of János Hédervári, bishop of Győr (northern Hungary), is remarkable from several perspectives. He was one of the bishops who played an active political role in the history of his country and, as a figure of the church who founded a private chapel, also a representative of an important tradition of Central European episcopal patronage. The first part of my paper deals with János's life, which has not yet been made the subject of detailed study. More precisely, I will emphasize János's role as a confidant of Queen Elisabeth and someone who assisted as such in her endeavor to hinder the future king, Sigismund of Luxemburg, from seizing the Hungarian crown. János managed to become bishop just a few months before Sigismund ascended to the throne, but he was to spend the first two decades of his episcopal rule in the shadow of political neglect. During these two decades, however, János nurtured a remarkable artistic culture in his episcopal town. Between 1386 and 1403 the Gothic building of the Győr Cathedral was built, as was the delicate structure of the Holy Trinity Chapel, the chapel he himself founded. Through an architectural analysis of the chapel in the second part of the paper, I aim to demonstrate that a structurally complex and prestigious building was constructed under his auspices – and in spite of the fact that the diocese of Győr was by no means the richest among the bishoprics of the country. Furthermore, I will argue that the Holy Trinity Chapel not only integrates the latest architectural features of its era, but also mingles them with a unique structure and adaptations from non-episcopal architectural models, which lends it an individual character and makes the chapel an interesting Hungarian case of episcopal patronage in the late fourteenth century.

Keywords: Hédervári Family, episcopal patronage, church architecture

Introduction

The fresh air of the spring of 1386 brought memorable events in the tranquil life of the town of Győr, seat of the bishopric of the same name in western Hungary. Many decades after its *castrum* had been chosen to stage the marriage

negotiations between the Hungarian and the Czech rulers in 1318,¹ in 1386 it became a place of similarly illustrious, though much less friendly political discussions.² The rivals for the Hungarian throne, contested since September 1382, chose this place to make peace and thereby also the first step towards creating a new basis for central power.

At the same time, a new prelate was appointed to the episcopal seat in the person of János Hédervári (lived 1340–1415, bishop from 1386).³ Although earlier historical research did pay attention to his noble origins and several of his political posts, János's life has basically remained unresearched in local historical scholarship. So has the history of the Holy Trinity Chapel, his foundation at the Győr cathedral: despite the fact that it was praised as the only surviving building of its kind in Hungary within the entire fourteenth century, it has not been devoted a detailed art historical investigation.

Broadly speaking, this paper intends to fill in both of these lacunae. In the first part of the study, I aim to reconstruct János Hédervári's biography based on the investigation of primary evidence. I will argue that he, who has been known before mostly for his connections to the military orders, played an influential role in both political upheavals (1382–1387 and 1402–1403) in the early years of King Sigismund's Hungarian reign. Secondly, I will analyze the architectural features of János's private chapel by comparing it to other episcopal chapels, the founding of which gained popularity in Central Europe in the fourteenth century.⁴ Through that, I will demonstrate that contrary to general practice, the building of the Holy Trinity Chapel has a remarkably complex structure

1 The marriage of King Charles I (1308–1342) and Beatrix, daughter of John of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia (1310–1346) was arranged in Győr in the spring of 1318. See: Gyula Szávay, *Győr. Monográfia a város jelenkoráról a történelmi idők érintésével* [Győr. Monograph on the Present State of the Town with Reference to its Past] (Győr: Győr. Szab. Kir. Város Törvényhatósága, 1896), 31.

2 Antal Pór, "Az Anjouk kora" [The Age of the Angevins], in *A Magyar Nemzet Története*, ed. Sándor Szilágyi (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1895), vol. 3, 381–82.

3 The papal confirmation bull is dated 12 June 1386. Conradus Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi* (Monasterii: Sumptibus et Typis Librariae Regensbergianae, 1913), vol. 1, 282.

4 In average, one should count with one or two chapels pro cathedral. Episcopal chapels in the largest bishoprics of Central Europe are: Prague: St. Vitus cathedral, burial chapel of Archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim; Gniezno: Our Lady and St. Adalbert cathedral, Our Lady and St. Stanislaw Chapel (Bishop Jaroslaw of Bogoria and Skotnik); Litomyšl/Leitomischl: former Augustine church, St. Josef Chapel (Bishop Jan of Neumarkt); Wrocław: St. John the Baptist cathedral, Our Lady Chapel (Bishop Preczlaw of Pogorell); Krakow: Wawel cathedral, St. Margaret Chapel (Bishop Nanker); Our Lady Chapel (allegedly Bishop Jan Radlica); St. John the Evangelist Chapel (Bishop Jan Grot); Chapel of the Immaculate Conception (Bishop Jan Bodzanta). From medieval Hungary, the following chapels are known to have existed: Esztergom:

and its architectural characteristics are rooted not only in courtly art but also in alternative sources.

Furthermore, through its choice of topic and methodology this study also aims to contribute to current scholarly discourse on art in the Late Middle Ages. Recently, there has been a growing interest in the question of medieval patronage; in particular, much attention has been devoted to the artistic agency of prelates in the works of such excellent scholars as Paul Crossley, Zoë Opacic and Charlotte Stanford.⁵ Connecting myself primarily to their research, in the present investigation I have tried to treat the bishop and his chapel in terms of founder and foundation as much as possible. That is, I have sought typical (or atypical) characteristics in Hédervári's biography that were most likely to influence his patronage agency and, with regard to his chapel, I made efforts to put it into the context of similar contemporaneous foundations rather than into that of stylistic analogues.

The Bishop

János Hédervári came from a distinguished noble lineage in the medieval Hungarian kingdom.⁶ First arriving in the country around 1150, the earliest Hédervári ancestors had acquired a great piece of land along the upper course of the Danube and were appointed to posts of local governance. Although their estates did not extend considerably, during the ensuing decades their descendants were very successful in further increasing the family's influence. Their success is reflected in the fact that around the middle of the thirteenth

former St. Adalbert cathedral, Corpus Christi Chapel (Archbishop Demeter), Our Lady Chapel (Archbishop János Kanizsai), Pécs: Gilded Chapel of Our Lady (Bishop Miklós Neszmélyi) besides the Holy Trinity Chapel in Győr, analyzed in this paper.

5 To cite only their most recent works on the topic, see: Paul Crossley and Zoë Opacic, "Prague as a New Capital," in *Prague, the Crown of Bohemia*, ed. Barbara Drake Boehm et al. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 59–74; Charlotte Stanford, "From Bishop's Grave to Holy Grave: The Construction of Strasbourg Cathedral's St. Catherine Chapel," *Gesta* 46 (2007): 59–80.

6 For the most important literature on the Hédervári family, see: Iván Nagy, *Magyarország családai czímerekkel és nemzedékrendi táblákkal* [The Noble Families of Hungary with Coats-of-arms and Genealogical Tables], (Pest: Friebeisz István, 1857–1868), vol. V, 73–78; János Karácsonyi, *A magyar nemzetségek a XIV. század közepéig* [The Hungarian Kindreds up to the Mid-fourteenth Century] (Budapest: MTA, 1901), vol. 2, 157–64; Levente Závodszy, *A Hédervár-család oklevéltára* [The Charter Collection of the Hédervár Family] 2 vols. (Hereafter: *Hédervár oklevéltár*) (Budapest: MTA, 1909–1922), vol. II, I–LXXXIII; Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301–1457* [The Secular Archontology of Hungary 1301–1457] 2 vols. (Budapest: História – MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1996), vol. 2, 96–97.

century no less than three family members held offices of importance in the kingdom, a sure sign of their influence in the court.⁷ In the political difficulties occurring after the ancient ruling dynasty had died out (1301) and foreign dynasties raised their claims to the Hungarian throne, the Héderváris maneuvered well in their supporting the Angevin candidate. As a result, under the rule of the Angevin kings (1310–1382) the Héderváris not only maintained the political status their ancestors had reached before, but also further extended their authority. Over the fourteenth century, the Héderváris successfully occupied more courtly dignities—in the queen’s retinue in particular—and also succeeded in augmenting their estates.

Thus, around 1340–45, when János (II) Hédervári was born, the family was clearly in the ascendant.⁸ As a child, János certainly lived at the center of the family estates, Hédervár, which was located along the Mosoni Danube and, not insignificantly, in the neighborhood of the bishopric of Győr, his future site of activity. These lands around Hédervár offered a rising noble family an ideal place for hunting enterprises because of the rich wildlife there, but they were also important commercially, as the trading route connecting the royally privileged Pressburg (today Bratislava, Slovakia) and Komárom passed through the region. Although no large-scale building activity unfolded during the Middle Ages in Hédervár itself, significant artistic centers such as the aforementioned Győr (episcopal palace and cathedral) or the famous *Mons Sancti Martini* (Pannonhalma, Benedictine monastery) flourished in its vicinity.⁹

In his early years, János could look to two of his family members as ideals for leading a virtuous and nevertheless successful life. His great-grandfather, Dezső (1285–1330) must have been known to him from family stories, for he had died a heroic death on the battlefield saving the life of King Charles I of

7 They are: Héder vol. II, *ispán* of Győr (1223), *Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. II; Herrand, *ispán* of Trencsén and Master of the Horse (1262, 1265–1267), *ispán* of Moson and master of the horse (1268–1269), *tavernicorum regalium magister* of the Queen and *ispán* of Semppte and Bars (1274), judge of the Queen and *ispán* of Zala (1275), *ispán* of Vas (1275–1276) *ibid.* vol. II, IV–V; Héder III, *ispán* of Hont (1269) *ibid.*, vol. II, VI.

8 His name first appears in a charter dated September 5, 1348; Imre Nagy et al eds., *Hazai Okmánytár* [Domestic Charters] vol. I/8, (Győr: n.p., 1865–1891), 205, no. 134.

9 Concerning the edifices mentioned, see Géza Entz, “Főpapi építkezések” [Architectural Patronage of the Prelates], in *Magyarországi művészet 1300–1470 körül* [Art in Hungary, 1300 to c. 1470], ed. Ernő Marosi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987), 412–13; Csaba László, “A győri püspökvár építéstörténetének vázlatja” [Outline of the Construction History of the Episcopal Castle in Győr], *Arrabona* 38 (2000): 97–130 (with German summary); Imre Takács, “Die Erneuerung der Abteikirche von Pannonhalma im 13. Jahrhundert,” *Acta Historiae Artium* 38 (1996): 31–65.

Anjou (1308–1342) by exchanging garments with the ruler.¹⁰ Whereas his great-grandfather could have been taken as an icon of valor and loyalty to the ruler, János's other great ancestor, his uncle Miklós III served him as a model for succeeding in his own space and time. Instead of his early deceased father, the rights of John and his brothers were protected by Miklós, who, besides keeping an eye on family affairs and augmenting the Héderváris' landed property, made a shining career in the royal court, too.¹¹ In particular, as his dignities show, Miklós was bound particularly to the entourage of Queen Elisabeth, a fact that would later prove decisive for János's future destiny.¹²

It was thanks to Miklós's achievement in particular that the entire generation of János, his brothers and nephews served King Louis I (1342–1382) and/or acquired influential secular dignities. János's closest relatives, his two brothers György and Mihály, took part in the king's military campaign against Bosnia as early as 1363;¹³ György was later also mentioned as *ispán* of Nógrád County in northern Hungary.¹⁴ Unlike his brothers, János is not known to have held any secular posts, though he definitely acquired smaller ecclesiastical dignities, which may suggest that he was preparing for a career in the church. Although we have but a handful of sources on young János's career, the prebends he held in the early 1370s suggest that he built up a firm position at Buda in the king's service.¹⁵ His later success in becoming a bishop testifies—as opposed, for instance, to his nephew, who also held similar offices—János's sensitive approach to, and talent in, political matters.¹⁶

10 Karácsonyi, *Magyar Nemzetségek*, 161; Dezső Dercsényi, ed., *The Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle* (Budapest: Corvina, 1969), facsimile edition, 143 and 146.

11 Miklós Hédervári was *ispán* of Fejér and Tolna counties (1364), *ispán* of Csongrád County and castellan of Szeged (1365), and *ispán* of Moson County (1368, 1371); *Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. II, X–XI. Miklós's ties to his ruler are well exhibited by a royal charter from March 27, 1366, in which he is mentioned as “nobilis et magnificus vir (...) fidelis noster et dilectus;” *ibid.*, vol. I, 61, no. 64.

12 He held the titles of the master of the doorkeepers (1361–1374) and count of the court (*comes curiae*, of the queen 1364); Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 97.

13 *Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. I, 59, no. 62 (March 3, 1363).

14 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 96.

15 Archdeacon of Locsmánd (1373) (*Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. II, 335, no. 317 (October 13, 1373), canon of Győr. Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. II, 97.

16 His remarkable talent in the political sphere is well exhibited by the fact that his cousin Dénes appears to have similarly held ecclesiastical prebends, but could not get that as far as did János. This is especially interesting since all these dignities, among others a prebend in the cathedral chapter, tied Dénes to the Győr bishopric, where later not he, but János became bishop. On Dénes's dignities see Vince Bedy, *A győri székeskáptalan története* [The History of the Cathedral Chapter of Győr] (Győr: Győregyházmegyei Alap, 1938), 314–15; Pál Engel, *Középkori magyar genealógia* [Medieval Hungarian Genealogy], CD-ROM (Budapest: Arcanum, 2001), Héder nem, 2. Tábla.

His excellent skills soon earned him royal recognition, for by 1377 at the latest, he had been entrusted with a confidential position as governor¹⁷ of a *praeceptorium* of a special Hungarian military-religious order, the so-called Stefanites.¹⁸ According to recent historical investigations, a governing post of this kind was an invention of late fourteenth-century royal government and aimed to temper the decrease in royal property by extending its control over the wealth of the military-religious orders in the kingdom.¹⁹ Understandably, royal trustees usually occupied these positions, which clearly means that János Hédervári belonged to the king's closest retinue already in the 1370s. Moreover, the particular house he governed was the second largest among those of the Stefanites, also underlining the ruler's appreciation towards the young János.

King Louis I of Hungary died in September 1382, and, for reasons which cannot be discussed here, the rule over the country was taken over by his daughter Mary (crowned at the age of twelve in 1382) and her mother, Queen Elisabeth.²⁰ The rule of the queens (approximately September 1382 – April 1386), during which a total of three candidates were invited to occupy the Hungarian throne, led to a severe inner crisis that reached its peak only a few months prior to János's episcopal appointment. After the brutal murder of the freshly crowned candidate, Charles of Anjou, in February 1386, Sigismund of Luxemburg hurried to Hungary backed by a considerable military force in order to make good his claim to the throne. In the spring of 1386 his troops reached Győr, where, facing the resistance of Queen Elisabeth, Sigismund entered into negotiations with her—which was almost exactly the time and venue when János acceded to the episcopal seat of the bishopric of Győr.

17 "Hodie... Johanni Stephani canonico Jauriensi de magistratu ecclesiarum sancte trinitatis de calidis aquis in Buda Wesprimiensis diocesis et Sancti Stephani prope Strigonium, invicem canonice unitarium, ordinis cruciferorum.... mandavimus provideri...;" Vilmos Fraknói and József Lukcsics, eds., *A veszprémi püspökség római oklevéltára* [The Roman Charter Collection of the Bishopric of Veszprém] 4 vols. (Budapest: Franklin, 1896–1907), vol. II, 248.

18 The Stefanite order was discovered by Karl-Georg Boroviczény, a German hematologist of Hungarian origin. Károly György Boroviczény, "Cruciferi Sancti Regis Stephani. Tanulmányok a stefaniták, egy középkori magyar ispotályos rend történetéből" [Studies from the History of a Medieval Hungarian Hospitaller Order: the Stephanites], *Orvostörténeti Közlemények. Communicationes de Historiae Artis Medicinae* 23–24 (1991–1992): 133–140, 7–48.

19 This tendency of royal authority in Hungary to control the property of the military-religious orders was proven in the case of the Hospitaller order by Zsolt Hunyadi, *The Hospitallers in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary, c.1150–1387* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010). I am especially thankful to Professor Hunyadi for his help and advice concerning the Stefanites.

20 Elemér Mályusz, *Zsigmond király uralma Magyarországon* [The Rule of King Sigismund in Hungary] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 11–12.

The apparently close correspondence in circumstances between the negotiations (Győr, April 1386) and János's appointment to the local bishopric (before June 1386) implies that his becoming bishop was closely connected to, if not a byproduct of, the political events. A closer look at the sources reporting on the previous year reveals János to have been a highly influential figure in Queen Elisabeth's political strategy. This is implied by the terminology of the relevant charters,²¹ his increased presence at the queen's court,²² and finally, by his appointment (before April 1385) as prior of Aurana (Vrana, Croatia), in the heart of the southern territories, which had provided a refuge for the queen's greatest opponents.²³ We also know that the former bishop of Győr, who had closely cooperated with the queens previously, was put aside suddenly and under mysterious circumstances.²⁴ All these point towards János having acquired the episcopal title thanks to his loyalty to Elisabeth.

János's episcopal appointment around the late spring of 1386 occurred in the very last moment before political events, thus far favorable for him, took a dramatic turn. Only a few months after he had become bishop, the queens were captured and his greatest supporter, Queen Elisabeth, was murdered by the rebels. The Hungarian throne was finally seized by Sigismund of Luxemburg. János's high profile in Queen Elisabeth's retinue, not to mention that his nephew István actively supported the rebels against the ruler, must have discredited him in the eyes of the new king; István was captured in 1388 and sentenced to death (1393).²⁵

These circumstances obviously prompted János to act soon in order to secure his former political positions under the new king and to gain a foothold at the newly forming royal court. A quite tangible sign of his efforts to win Sigismund's benevolence is reflected by the iconography of János's episcopal

21 *Fidelis et devotus: Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. I, 97, no. 90 (April 21, 1385); *honestus*: Imre Nagy et al., eds., *Zala vármegye története. Oklevéltár* [The History of Zala County. Charter Collection] 2 vols. (Budapest: Zala vármegye közönsége, 1886–1890), vol. II, 208. (May 18, 1385). Of course, the extent to which the rather routine wording of the charters can be interpreted in this way is open to doubt.

22 In 1385 he is mentioned twice as *relator* of the queen's charters. Szilárd Süttő, "Adalékok a 14–15. századi magyar világi archontológiához, különösen az 1384–87-évekhez" [Contributions to the Hungarian Secular Archontology of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, with Particular Regard to the Years 1384–1387], *Levéltári Szemle* 52 (2002): 28–39; unpublished and undated charter of Queen Mary from 1385, Hungarian National Archives [MNL OL], Medieval Charters (DL) 28932.

23 *Zala vármegye története*, vol. II, 208 (May 18, 1385).

24 Engel, *Archontológia*, vol. I, 71; József Bánk, "A győri püspökök sora" [The Bishops of Győr], in *Győregyházmegyei almanach*, ed. Győri Egyházmegyei Hatóság (Győr: Győri Egyházmegyei Hatóság, 1968), 37.

25 *Héderváry oklevéltár*, vol. II, XV.

seal, on which the ruler's highly venerated Árpadian royal saint, Saint Ladislaus, appears at the bottom left corner.²⁶ Furthermore, the new bishop of Győr was willing to confirm his loyalty towards the king by being present at the royal court. Even if János could not hold a dignity in Sigismund's retinue, he sought and found a means to stay at Buda until as late as 1389.²⁷ Over this period, his name appears in connection with the leading noblemen of the early Sigismund era, for example, the brother of János Kanizsai, who later, as archbishop of Esztergom, founded a chapel (1396) as his burial place at Esztergom Cathedral. These new connections are likely to have influenced the bishop's foundation, which took place just around this time.

Surviving charters suggest that from 1390 on János lived in Győr, which fits well with the actual dating of his chapel before 1404 (when its rector is mentioned)²⁸ or even before 1402, the outbreak of the rebellion against King Sigismund, in which Bishop János also took part.²⁹ Although evidence about the exact time of the foundation is lacking, the beginning of the campaign is probably marked by affairs about the bishop's unwarranted tax collection and pledging of property in 1393–94.³⁰

Bishop János and Patronage Agency

As reflected by written evidence, extensive patronage activity could hardly have been characteristic of János. This is also suggested by the fact that there is only one building which can be associated with him.³¹ Architectural

26 Imre Bodor et al., eds., *A középkori Magyarország főpapi pecsétjei* [Episcopal Seals of Medieval Hungary] (Budapest: MTA, 1984), 53–54.

27 This is suggested by the fact that his auxiliary bishop is mentioned in 1387 and also that no activity of János in Győr is recorded before October 1389; Elemér Mályusz et al., eds., *Zsigmond-kori oklevéltár* [Charters from the Age of Sigismund] 12 vols. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1951–2013), vol. I, no. 342 (December 16, 1387); *Veszprémi püspökség római oklevéltára*, vol. II, 256, no. CCCVI (November 14, 1389).

28 IX. Bonifác pápa bullái 1396–1404. [The Bulls of Pope Boniface IX]. *Vatikáni magyar okirattár. Monumenta Vaticana historiam regni Hungariae illustrantia*, vol. I/4 (Budapest: Franklin, 1886), 603 (July 8, 1404).

29 Mályusz, *Zsigmond király*, 52–53.

30 *Zsigmond-kori Oklevéltár*, vol. I, no. 2857 (March 2, 1393).

31 Earlier research attempted to attribute to him the leadership of the building campaign on the Stefanite churches in Esztergom and Budafelneház, too; Károly Kozák, János Sedlmayr and Ferenc Levárdy, "A győri székesegyház Szentháromság- (Hédervár-)-kápolnája," [The Holy Trinity (Hédervár) Chapel of Győr Cathedral], *Arrabona* 14 (1972): 103. The theory was convincingly refuted by Béla Zsolt Szakács, "A lovagrendek művészete a középkori Magyarországon" [The Art of the Religious-Military Orders in Medieval Hungary], in József Laszlovsky et al., eds., *Magyarország és a keresztes háborúk* [Hungary and the Crusades], (Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2006), 195–208, 424.

commission was, in any case, an expensive enterprise that not everyone could afford. His general lack of interest in his episcopal duties, which traditionally included donational activity, is another sign of his passivity with regard to artistic patronage.

János's lack of interest in donations may have been rooted primarily in family issues, since widespread patronage activity was not characteristic of the Héderváris either. In the fourteenth century, family motives of the kind were focused upon one major enterprise, the campaign of the Church of Our Lady at Hédervár, which was connected to burial demands probably already at this time.³² Its dating to the first half of the fifteenth century, however, suggests that this church postdates the Hédervári Chapel, thereby raising the possibility that it was the construction of the church as an intended burial place that was influenced by János's chapel foundation and not the other way around.

Against this background, the noble fabric of the Holy Trinity Chapel at Győr, János's only known foundation, emerges in sharp contrast. Very probably, János's architectural incentive was nourished in the first place by his personal connections in the royal court, where he could get in touch with such prominent patrons of art as, for example, Demeter (archbishop of Esztergom, 1378–1387), founder of the Corpus Christi Chapel at the Esztergom cathedral just around this time.³³ The dazzling architectural achievements of his time, particularly in neighboring Prague, which he visited at least once, in 1383, could also have served as a source of inspiration.³⁴ It is easy to imagine that the freshly carved magnificent *gisant* of Jan Očko of Vlašim (archbishop of Prague, 1365–1380), who was buried in one of the radiating chapels of St. Vitus cathedral, impressed the young bishop, too.³⁵

32 Csaba László and Andrea Jámor, "A hédervári Boldogasszony templom kutatása és helyreállítása" [Research on and Restoration of the Church of Our Lady at Hédervár], *Műemlékvédelem* (1995): 31–36.

33 Iván Bertényi, "Demeter," in *Esztergomi érsekek 1001–2003* [Archbishops of Esztergom], ed. Margit Beke (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2003), 192.

34 *Hédervári oklevéltár*, vol. II, 337, no. 321 (June 27, 1383). Allegedly, the aim of the journey was pilgrimage, but it could have been more diplomatic in nature, since choosing Prague as a target of pilgrimage was not characteristic of the peregrinating Hungarian aristocracy. See Enikő Csukovits, *Középkori magyar zarándokok* [Medieval Hungarian Pilgrims] (Budapest: História – MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2003), 65–76.

35 Jiří Kuthan and Jan Royt, eds., *Katedrála Sv. Víta, Václava a Vojtěcha, svatyně českých patronů a králů* [The Cathedral of St. Vitus, Wenceslas and Adalbert, the Czech Patron Saints and Kings] (Prague: Lidové Noviny, 2011), 13–21.

The Holy Trinity Chapel of the Cathedral of Győr

Sources

About the Hédervári Chapel (Fig. 1), the most important source is undoubtedly a papal bull dated to 1404, which mentions János, bishop of Győr, as founder of the Holy Trinity Chapel at Győr Cathedral.³⁶ Together with a boss in the chapel's choir bearing the coat of arms of the Hédervári family, this bull identifies the building adjoining the southwestern corner of Győr Cathedral (recently, Chapel of St. Ladislaus) as the former Holy Trinity Chapel.

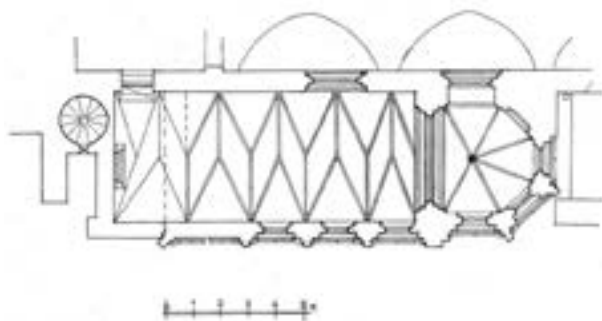


Figure 1. Győr, Holy Trinity Chapel, ground plan

The same papal bull also refers to the fact that, at least in the beginning, János tried to avoid directly subordinating the chapel's benefice to the Győr cathedral chapter and keep it under his personal auspices.³⁷ About the amount of this benefice we are informed from charters from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which were collected and systematically analyzed by Vince Bedy in 1936.³⁸

36 "...Johannes, Episcopus Jauriensis, capellam sancte Trinitatis, sitam prope ecclesiam Jauriensem, de novo canonice fundavit..." *Vatikáni magyar okirattár*, vol. I/4, 603.

37 The chapel's first priest appointed by John came from the Budafelrhévíz *praeceptoría*, and he very likely did not have a prebend at the Győr chapter, which the papal bull of July 8, 1404 (see note 26) should have otherwise mentioned. The chapel's income became the property of the chapter in 1538 at the latest. Vince Bedy, *A győri székesegyház története* [The History of Győr Cathedral] (Győr: Győregyházmegyei Alap, 1936), 78–79.

38 Bedy, *Győri székesegyház*, 76–78.

Description

The chapel is adjoined to the southern aisle of Győr Cathedral, which was built contemporaneously. It has preserved much of its original form. The chief alterations have been in its western part, where the last bay with the probably original western gallery was demolished during the baroque rebuilding campaign, which was also responsible for diminishing the interior's architectural decoration. Slight modifications to this baroque state were applied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the latest restoration of the chapel was carried out between 1967 and 1972.³⁹

Today, the chapel can be accessed from the southern aisle through a portal of Gothic origin. On the east, the chapel choir terminates in five sides of the octagon and is covered by a ribbed vault with a bosse decorated by the Hédervári coat-of-arms. The choir wall is separated into two horizontal registers, with three windows above and three round-arched sedilia beneath. On the northern wall, a large opening with a rich profile opens to the cathedral space.

The choir and nave are slightly isolated from each other by a richly profiled triumphal arch. The chapel's nave is five-bay long (the westernmost bay is a seventeenth-century addition) and is covered by a jumping vault. Similar to the choir, the northern wall in the nave features a large opening the same size as the one in the chancel. A pointed-arch sedile fills the wall surface to the east, whereas the Gothic portal stands on its other side. The elevation of the opposite, southern wall follows the pattern in the choir: above, three relatively large ogive windows illuminate the space (their original tracery, if ever executed at all, is now lost), below which five sedilia of different shapes and sizes run along the wall. To the west, under the former western gallery two double-arched niches decorate the wall on both sides.

On its exterior, the wall of the chapel is articulated into multiple horizontal layers of different depths as well as vertical sections (Fig. 2). The thin windows are bound into the rhythm of buttresses and delicate pairs of three-quarter columns, from the top of which wimpergs originally spanned over the windows.

39 For the published results of the restoration and archeological excavation made at the site of the chapel, see Kozák, *Hédervári kápolna*. The detailed documentation is available: research diaries Nos. 11951/1970, 11952–11954, 12822, Forster Gyula Nemzeti Örökséggazdálkodási és Szolgáltatási Központ, Budapest. This restoration was preceded by two other renovations: 1861 (leader: József Lippert) and 1912–1914 (Sándor Aigner); Kozák, *Hédervári kápolna*, 137.



Figure 2. Győr, Holy Trinity Chapel, exterior

At the bottom of the horizontal layers, cylindrical drums support the buttresses, the easternmost of which is somewhat wider than the rest in order to close the row visually.

Dating

Since the chapel's rector is already mentioned in 1404, the construction must have been completed around this time; questions arise, however, about the process of its erection. Based on observable architectural irregularities, Károly Kozák and Ferenc Levárdy opined that the chapel was erected in two separate periods, first between 1350 and 1360 and then, after a pause, between about 1385 and 1395. To support this theory, they also suggested that the passage "*de novo canonice fundavit*" contained in the 1404 charter may be understood as referring to a re-foundation of the chapel, implying that János Hédervári only completed a building that was already under construction beforehand.⁴⁰

In contrast to Kozák and Levárdy's opinion, Szilárd Papp in 2006 pointed out that, on the one hand, the quoted Latin passage does not necessarily presume

⁴⁰ Kozák, *Hédervári kápolna*, 132–36.

two separate building campaigns and, on the other, the chapel building seems to be architecturally homogenous.⁴¹

Architectural Features: Burial Function and Liturgy

Given that private chapels were typically built in order to commemorate their founders through regular prayer and also to shelter their tombs, we should assume that Bishop János would have been buried in the Hédervári Chapel. According to general medieval practice, founders were buried *in medio ecclesiae*, which in the case of this chapel would mean the spot in the nave closest to the choir.



Figure 3. Győr, Holy Trinity Chapel, north wall with the two large openings

Because a crypt was built in the seventeenth century exactly beneath this spot,⁴² archeologically it can no longer be confirmed whether an episcopal tomb was indeed located there; yet, there is a peculiar architectural element in the chapel, which underlines a possible burial incentive at this spot (Fig. 3). Looking exactly there, one can observe a large opening in the north wall, which, together with its twin in the choir, must have been executed in order to reveal and highlight an outstanding object in the chapel—for example, a prominent burial—to any visitor in the cathedral.

41 Szilárd Papp, “Győr, Kathedrale, Dreifaltigkeits (Hédervári-) Kapelle,” in *Sigismundus rex et imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismundus von Luxemburg 1387–1437*, ed. Imre Takács (Budapest–Luxemburg: Philipp von Zabern, 2006), 649–50.

42 Bedy, *Győri székesegyház*, 46.

Surprisingly, chapels that are connected to the main cathedral space through similarly large arches are rare in the architecture of the Late Middle Ages. With a dating close to that of the Győr chapel, the St. Catherine Chapel in Strasbourg Cathedral (1340–1350) provides a good example in the Rhineland.⁴³ Another analogue might be the former *Gundekarkapelle* (today St. John Chapel) in the Cathedral of Eichstätt (Bavaria), a result of a fourteenth-century rebuilding of a structure from the eleventh century.⁴⁴ In the latter case, the arcades were part of the Romanesque structure and were, especially interestingly from our viewpoint, incorporated into the Gothic building. Given that both chapels open onto the cathedral space through three or four large arcades and also the fact that a bishop was buried in both of them, one can argue that the arcades were instrumental in enhancing the visibility of the burials from the cathedral interior and providing access to them. There is also a third analogue, interestingly again from medieval Hungary, the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist in the Franciscan Church of Pressburg (Bratislava, Slovakia).⁴⁵ In this chapel, besides the original western entrance, there are two arcades—one large and one small—on the wall common with the church building (both of them are now walled up). Based on the parallels in Strasbourg and Eichstätt, it is likely that the arcades in the Pressburg chapel were connected to the tomb of the founder—a high-ranking citizen of medieval Pressburg.

These analogues also draw one's attention to an important difference between the Győr chapel and these other examples, namely, that its opening is neither an arcade nor an arch, but a large window. That is, thanks to its low-lying cornice, it is intended not to give access, but rather only a view of the burial/relic possible and exhibits thereby a structure. To my knowledge, such a feature is unprecedented in the chapel architecture of fourteenth-century Central Europe.

There is also a medieval source that reports on the functional aspect of a chapel with an arch. In his brief account about the former St. Nicholas Chapel in the Wawel cathedral, the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz (1412–1480) mentions that its arch was customarily used for putting a prominent relic on display: “...*altare sanctorum Innocentium habet capellam propriam versus aquilonem in modum arcus seu fornicis dudum sub loco in quo caput S. Stanislai ostendi solitum est sitam et muratam.*”⁴⁶ This clearly

43 Stanford, *Bishop's Grave*, 65.

44 Jürgen Fabian, *Der Dom zu Eichstätt* (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), 76–78.

45 Szilárd Papp, “Pressburg, Franziskanerkirche, Johanneskapelle,” in *Sigismundus rex et imperator*, 118–21.

46 Paul Crossley, *Gothic Architecture in the Reign of Kasimir the Great* (Krakow: Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, 1985), 24.

means that the arch or arcade of the Krakow chapel was meant to elaborate upon a saint's liturgy—and not insignificantly, that of the most prominent saint in the bishopric of Krakow—which takes us back for a moment to our former examples of Strasbourg and Eichstätt. At both these places, the aforementioned episcopal burials were also distinguished by a saintly cult: in Strasbourg, we know that the bishop's tomb was transformed into a Holy Grave,⁴⁷ whereas in the Bavarian cathedral Bishop Gundekar II himself was considered to be saint.⁴⁸

It is likely then that in the Hédervári Chapel, too, a saintly cult was extant, even if this assumption cannot be buttressed by written or architectural evidence.⁴⁹ The medieval herm or head-reliquary of St. Ladislaus, which is now displayed on the chapel's modern main altar, was first transported to Győr from the Cathedral of Várad (Oradea, Romania) in the seventeenth century and later placed in the chapel in the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ Apart from Győr, one other remarkable example of matching relics and episcopal burial in a fourteenth-century Hungarian episcopal chapel can be found and that is the so-called Gilded Chapel of Our Lady at Pécs in southwestern Hungary. According to a reliable account from the sixteenth century (Miklós Oláh, Archbishop of Esztergom), above the tomb of Bishop Miklós (1346–1360) hung his penitential belt, probably as an indication that he was treated as *beatus*.⁵¹

Besides its peculiar large openings, there is yet another architectural structure in the Hédervári Chapel that may be connected with a (founder's) burial: the former western gallery. An analogue for the architectural connection of a western gallery and the founder's burial from medieval Hungary is the thirteenth-century parish church of Felsőörs. This building, in size not much exceeding the dimensions of the Hédervári Chapel, furnishes a good example of a founder being buried under the gallery, where—as the remains of a mensa indicate—mass and prayers served to preserve his memory.⁵²

47 Stanford, *Bishop's Grave*, 69–75.

48 Julius Sax, *Die Bischöfe und Reichsfürsten von Eichstätt* (Landshut: Krüll, 1884), 157–75.

49 Papp, “Dreifaltigkeitskapelle,” 649.

50 Gyula László, “Szent László győri ereklyetartó mellszobráról” [The Reliquary Bust of Saint Ladislaus in Győr], *Arrabona* 7 (1966): 164.

51 Nicolaus Olahus, *Hungaria-Athila*, ed. Kálmán Eperjessy and László Juhász (Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1938), 15.

52 Sándor Tóth, “Felsőörs késő román templomtornya” [The Late Romanesque Tower of the Church of Felsőörs], *Művészet* 21 (1980): 22–26.

Architectural Features: Representation of Social Standing and Power

Besides the already mentioned liturgical and burial functions, another important aspect of any private chapel is the representation of the power and social ranking of its founder.

From this viewpoint, too, the Hédervári Chapel exhibits remarkable architectural solutions, first of all, its vaulting. It features a triangular-type of vault, the so-called jumping vault. Broadly speaking, the jumping vault was employed in spaces where opposite supports could not stand exactly opposite to each other. Taking a closer look at its interior, one will recognize that this condition was fulfilled at the Hédervári Chapel: its already analyzed large opening occupied the place of a corbel required for a cross vault, which consequently made the employment of the jumping vault a suitable solution. Besides the architectural necessity, there were other factors at play in employing the jumping vault, which is suggested by the fact that this is the only chapel from Hungary to feature this vaulting type.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the idea of the jumping vault was no longer new; it had first occurred a century earlier (e.g. Cologne, St. Cunibert Church, cloister).⁵³ It is true, however, that by the second half of the fourteenth century this type of vaulting had come into fashion in certain parts of Central Europe. One of these regions was Silesia, where the first jumping vaults date from 1370–80 and occur mostly in long, narrow spaces: typically in ambulatories or aisles (Wrocław, the churches of the Virgin Mary on the Sand and the Holy Cross; the churches of Namysłów and Góra Śląska).⁵⁴ The other region where this type of vaulting appeared was Bohemia, where differing traditions of its use evolved. While it was applied in its classical form in porches (southern porch of St. Vitus Cathedral, before 1368, the western porch of the Church of Our Lady before Týn, 1370–1380),⁵⁵ it was also popular in a “duplicated” form,⁵⁶ a solution that is associated with Peter Parler’s genius and one of the best known examples of which is the tower of the Charles Bridge

53 Ernst Gall, “Dreistahlgewölbe,” in *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, eds. Otto Schmitt et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1958), vol. IV, 547–48.; Mateusz Kapustka et al., eds., *Silesia. A pearl in the Bohemian crown* (Prague: National Gallery, 2007), 165–71; Norbert Nussbaum, *Deutsche Kirchenbaukunst der Gotik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), 188–89, 217.

54 Teresa Mroczko and Marian Arszczyński, *Architektura gotycka w Polsce* [Gothic Architecture in Poland] (Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 1995), vol. 2, 162, fig. 275 (Namysłów), 89–90, fig. 128 (Góra Śląska).

55 Václav Mencl, *Česká architektura doby Lucemburské* [Czech Architecture of the Luxemburg Era] (Prague: Sfinx, 1948), 95, no. 42; 96–97, no. 44.

56 The term was used by Nussbaum, *Kirchenbaukunst*, 188.

(after 1380).⁵⁷ Interestingly, none of these solutions appear in chapels in the major artistic centers associated with the Parler family.

It is less known however, that parallel to the Parlerian development there was another tradition unfolding in Bohemia. From 1370 on, we encounter the earliest examples of the employment of the jumping vault in chapels, and in remarkable numbers as well. There is no topographical focus of these chapels' location, but they were spread generally across Bohemia: such vaulting we found in the sacristy of the All Saint's Church in Plzeň,⁵⁸ the northern chapel of the Holy Trinity Church in Sezemice,⁵⁹ the sacristy of the Saint Nicholas Church in Znojmo,⁶⁰ and, on the border of Bohemia and Silesia, in the southern chapel of the Church of Our Lady and in the north chapel of the Church of Saint John the Baptist, both in Opava.⁶¹

I would argue that employing the jumping vault in Győr was probably inspired by these chapels. The prime mover in the chapel construction, János Hédervári, indeed travelled to Bohemia (Prague) in 1383 and thus could have been acquainted with this fashion.⁶² The significance of the jumping vault's employment at Győr cannot be underestimated: with a date of construction around 1395-1400, the Hédervári Chapel belongs among the earliest examples that adopted this modern idea of Bohemian private chapels into the canon of episcopal chapels and thereby introduced it to the courts of Central Europe. With that, the patron of the campaign, Bishop János, put a finger on developments just then unfolding in the architecture of Central Europe.

Apart from its vaulting, another feature of the chapel, its series of sedilia, also reflects Bishop János's artistic motives (Fig. 4). The sedilia appear on both the nave and choir walls of the chapel, a feature which seems to have permeated the architectural vocabulary of other episcopal foundations in East-Central Europe (meaning especially those in Bavaria, Bohemia, Poland and the

57 Mencl, *Czech Architecture*, 121-22, no. 74.

58 Jiří Fajt, ed., *Gotika v západních Čechách (1230-1530)* [The Gothic in Western Bohemia] (Prague: Národní Galerie v Praze, 1995), 338-39.

59 Mencl, *Czech Architecture*, 127, no. 77.

60 Kaliopi Chamonikola, ed., *Od gotiky k renesanci. Výtvarná kultura Moravy a Slezska 1400-1550* [From the Gothic to the Renaissance. Fine art of Moravia and Silesia] (Brno: Moravská galerie v Brně, 1999) vol. II 131-35.

61 Dobroslav Libal, *Katalog gotické architektury v České republice do husitských válek* [The Catalogue of the Architecture of the Czech Republic until the Hussite Wars] (Prague: Unicornis, 2001), 298-99; Chamonikola, *Od gotiky*, vol. IV, 43-45, 46-48.

62 See note 34, also quoted by Papp, "Dreifaltigkeitskapelle," 650.



Figure 4. Győr, Holy Trinity Chapel, interior

Hungarian Kingdom) to a lesser degree; the only, yet not survived example is interestingly in Hungary again, the Corpus Christi Chapel at the former medieval Cathedral of Esztergom (founded by Archbishop Demeter in 1384).⁶³ The similarity between the two Hungarian chapels, which are also chronologically and topographically very close to each other, cannot be by chance, but might derive from the founders' personal acquaintance in Sigismund's court.

This seems to indicate that the idea of employing more sedilia in a chapel space is related to the art of the court, a hypothesis that is buttressed by further analogues. Namely, there is a group of private chapels in Austria, roughly contemporary with the Hédervári Chapel, which reveal the same feature.

⁶³ Gergely, Buzás, "Az esztergomi vár román kori és gótikus épületei" [The Romanesque and Gothic Buildings of the Esztergom Castle], in *Az Esztergomi Vármúzeum kőtárának katalógusa*, ed. Gergely Tolnai et al. (*Az Esztergomi Vármúzeum Füzetei* 2), (Esztergom: Esztergomi Vármúzeum, 2004), 21.

The chapels in Enns (parish church, the so-called Wallseerkapelle), Imbach (Saint Catherine Chapel of the Dominican church) and Raabs an der Thaya (parish church, northern side chapel) are well known monuments of Austrian art historical research due to their remarkable quality.⁶⁴ Their circle is to be completed by a fourth chapel, the already mentioned Chapel of St. John the Evangelist in the Franciscan Church in Pressburg, the stylistic position of which equals the Austrian examples and was founded by a high-ranking citizen.⁶⁵

Even if the financial resources he had at hand could not allow him to erect a chapel that could compete with the lavish embellishment of its Austrian counterparts, the remains and imprints of its original decoration still rank the Hédervári Chapel as one of the most richly furnished episcopal chapels of its time. The remains of the wall clearly demonstrate that on the southern wall pinnacles adorned the meeting points of sedilia arches, above every second of which columns rose high up to the corbels, which also bore baldachins.⁶⁶ Through the assembly of these elements, originally completed by the architecturally certainly highlighted western gallery, a rich and exquisite appearance was lent to the chapel to express the high social ranking of its founder.

Finally, let us take a glance at the chapel fabric as a whole. Its most characteristic feature is its differentiated structure: its space is clearly separated into a choir, a nave and a western gallery. To (visually) separate and connect these spaces, the decoration system of the chapel, in particular the sedilia, were put into work. Differing in size and form, the sedilia in the choir, nave and at the original western gallery emphasize the isolation of these spaces, though their presence (re)binds these parts again. This definitely not unique, yet certainly delicate solution undoubtedly praises the master mason's refined sense in creating small but complex architectural structures. This is modestly underpinned by two further effects: first, the illumination of the chapel through its proportionally large windows and, in particular, the large openings on its southern choir and nave wall. These latter, both of an identical size, offer a unified view from the cathedral to the chapel space.

64 Günter Brucher, "Imbach (Austria), ehemalige Katharinenkapelle, heute Josefkapelle, an der ehemaligen Dominikanerinnenkirche," in *Geschichte der Bildenden Kunst in Österreich, Gotik*, ed. Günter Brucher (Munich–London–New York: Prestel, 2000), 259.; Günter Brucher, "Raabs an der Thaya (Austria), Pfarrkirche zu Maria Himmelfahrt am Berge," in *ibid.*, 279–81; Günter Brucher, "Enns (Austria), Wallseerkapelle (Kapelle Hl. Johannes der Täufer), Pfarrkirche Maria Schnee, ehemalige Minoritenkirche," in *ibid.*, 260–61.

65 Recently dated to ca. 1361 by Papp, "Johanneskapelle".

66 Papp, "Dreifaltigkeitskapelle," 649.

Another feature characteristic of the entire chapel space is its embellishment with a handful of delicate and not immediately visible architectural details. A good example of this is the jumping vault's formeret, which is slightly emphasized by a decorative architectural framework. Another feature of this kind is the way the vaulting ribs run together and turn on the arch of the large opening in the nave. (By comparison, a similar architectural situation was handled in a less elegant way in the already mentioned chapel in Pressburg.) The vivid and fragile contours of the vaulting serve as a compact expression of this highly decorative attitude of the builders.

Through its transparency, illumination and discreet decoration the chapel interior conveys a sense of clarity and modest elegance, which is counterbalanced through the experimental tone of the external wall elevation. In contrast to the interior, here the volume of the wall comes to the foreground through its almost sculptural articulation. The thickness of the wall alternates between moldings and columns, and at the meeting points of horizontal and vertical architectural elements unusual transitional, cylindrical forms emerge that diverge from traditional medieval solutions.

Conclusion

The Holy Trinity Chapel provided an impressive setting for holy masses and diverse liturgical events because of its capacity to accommodate a larger number of priests, its distinctive structure, and its modest, thoroughly planned system of adornments. A study of the chapel reveals János Hédervári to have been a donor who was well acquainted with the most important architectural achievements of his time (e.g., the fourteenth-century use of the jumping vault). Interestingly, he did not rely on episcopal foundations as models for his chapel, but was inspired rather by the architecture of buildings made for the secular nobility (Austrian chapels). Also, his models were not exclusively from the largest artistic centers of Central Europe and their courtly art. This constitutes a major difference between the buildings constructed under his auspices and buildings founded by the royal court, and at the same time means that episcopal patrons – especially those of middle-sized episcopal centers – also looked for models in the artistic traditions of the surrounding areas. Thus the bishops served as a bridge between the achievements of the high culture of the court and the artistic traditions of local and smaller urban settlements.

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List of Illustrations

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