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Tomáš König

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF HIGH MEDIEVAL NITRA
NEW DATA CONCERNING THE TOPOGRAPHY
OF MEDIEVAL TOWNS IN SLOVAKIA¹

Nitra was one of the most important castle towns in the Kingdom of Hungary during the High Middle Ages between the 11th and 13th centuries. The results of existing research have not produced a uniform image of the town's topography. Opinions among scholars differ especially concerning the location and extension of the extramural settlement. Archaeological excavations at the Tržnica and Mlyny locations raise the possibility that the extension of the extramural settlement was larger than the area later enclosed by the town walls. The reason behind such reduction could have been the decline of the town as a result of the devastating consequences of the Tatar invasion of Hungary in 1241.

Nyitra az Árpád-kori Magyar Királyság egyik legfontosabb ispánsági vára volt a 11. és a 13. század között. Az eddigi kutatások eredményei nem szolgáltatnak egységes képet a város topográfiájáról. A szakemberek között a vélemények megoszlanak a váralja település helyéről és kiterjedéséről. A Vásártér (Tržnica) és a Malmok (Mlyny) lelőhelyeken végzett feltárások nyomán feltételezhetjük, hogy a váralja település nagyobb lehetett, mint a későbbiekben a városfal által bekerített terület. A város méretének csökkenése mögött nagy valószínűség szerint az 1241. évi tatárjárást követő hanyatlás állhat.

Keywords: Nitra; 11th–13th century; castle town; topography; extramural settlement; Tatar invasion

Kulcsszavak: Nyitra; 11–13. század; ispánsági vár; topográfia; váralja település; tatárjárás

The importance of the town of Nitra in the High Middle Ages is well documented from the perspective of historical research. However, archaeological excavations over the long-term, especially those of the cemeteries (FUSEK 2008), document the continual development of the local settlement-network beginning in the Great Moravian period. As the results of recent archaeological research also suggest, it is possible to assume that Nitra was not even affected by the military events connected with the establishment of power by the Old Hungarian tribal union in the Carpathian Basin at the beginning of the 10th century (KÖNIG 2016). In this case, it is also possible to consider that not only did this involve the continuity of settlement, but also, in a certain form, a continuation of its function as an administrative centre.

Natural conditions and long-distance routes

The localisation of medieval towns was fundamentally linked to trade routes. However, the course

of routes, especially in the distant past, was most heavily influenced by the structure of the terrain and watercourses, both of which represent obstacles. Nitra has no defined market square nor regular layout and a respective system of streets. Therefore, it must be assumed from the outset that as a town growing out of the continuity of settlement, it had a topography that was heavily affected by natural conditions and the trade routes that ran through the town and which became the skeleton of its later network of streets (Fig. 1).

The geomorphological structure of Nitra is dominated to this day by three elevated positions – Castle Hill, Summit (Vřšok) and the town cemetery – natural formations, around which the main branch of the Nitra River flows. In the past, Castle Hill was completely cut off from the surrounding space by a stream named the Little Nitra (Nitrička). However, during the first half of the 20th century, major changes were made in Nitra, including the filling of the Little Nitra, the relocation of the main riverbed

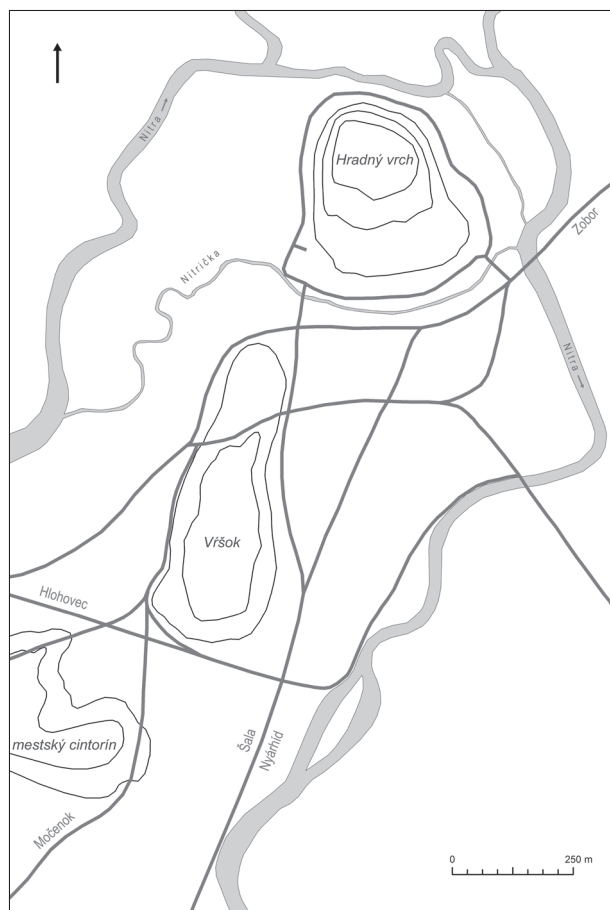


Fig. 1 Nitra, reconstruction of the medieval street network
1. kép Nyitra, a középkori utcahálózat rekonstrukciója

of the Nitra and the filling of its side branch that flowed through the Mlyny location (BŘEZINOVÁ–SAMUEL 2007, 61; KÖNIG et al. 2014, 21–23).

With respect to the long-distance routes, several of superregional importance met up in Nitra. According to the testimony of written sources, a route from Hlohovec ran from the northwest to Nitra (connecting probably somewhere before Nitra with a trail from Šintava), from the southwest a route from Šaľa (LUKAČKA 2002, 209–210). Both of these routes secured communication with prominent crossing points and toll collection locations on the lower part of the Váh River (JAMRICHOVÁ 1997, 65–68). After meeting in Nitra, the long-distance routes diverged in different directions. A northward route ran to the peak of Mt. Zobor, while the other ran southward to Nyárhíd (LUKAČKA 2002, 209–210). The content of a letter of the Nitra Chapter from 1247 states that the route from Šaľa passed through Cabaj-Čápor (CDSI 2, 191, no. 272). But as concerns the street network of Nitra, this route likely entered the town already joined with the aforemen-

tioned road to Nyárhíd. The document also mentions that a route of local importance also ran from the southwest to Nitra, thus creating a direct link with Močenok (CDSI 2, 191, no. 272).

Another source that can document the presence of routes and streets is archaeological finds. In addition to the loosely dated medieval road to Castle Hill (SAMUEL–BEDNÁR 2012, 199–200), sections of medieval streets with a paved surface are also known from two other locations in Nitra. Investigated in Mlynská Street (RUTKAY 2006, 170), the first of these corresponded to the horizon with settlement finds datable to the 13th–15th century, and it seems that the street followed the former town walls. A street with the same direction is also known in this area of the town from old maps (BŘEZINOVÁ–SAMUEL 2007, 46–47, Fig. 69). The second street, uncovered in Nitra-Mlyny, was constructed sometime in the second half of the 13th century and was not used for longer than fifty years (KÖNIG et al. 2014, 90). Given its location and direction, its connection to the modern street network presented on the available old maps is not traceable.

Description of the town in the written sources

As concerns a description of the town preserved in written sources, there are only three documents related to the studied period. The first is the *Chronica Boemorum*, which records a military event from the year 1109 (CHRONICA BOEMORUM, 194–195, III/26). This source clearly indicates that an unfortified extramural settlement (*suburbium*) also belonged to Nitra Castle (*urbs Nitra*), which was protected by a wall. The second document is a report from the Nitra Chapter from 1247 in which the line of the town border is described (CDSI 2, 191–192, no. 272). In addition to the town itself (*civitas Nitriensis*), this report also describes the location of some of its individual spatial units (*terra ecclesiae Nitriensis* and *suburbium*). A site named *castrum Iudaeorum* is also mentioned, albeit without further explanation. Finally, the third important document for the topography of Nitra, despite already dating to the beginning of the Late Middle Ages, is a charter issued by Charles Robert in 1313 (RDSI 1, 485–486, no. 1142) recording the existence of town fortifications (*menia et turres civitatis Nitriensis*).

History of research

All data on the topography of high medieval Nitra come from modern research, with the first phase

composed of works by experts from the historical sciences. A key source for them was the aforementioned letter of the Nitra Chapter from 1247. Based on its interpretation, V. Šmilauer (ŠMILAUER 1932, 101, 103–104), a Czech linguist, noted on the map of the relevant section of the Nitra River region that the town space was lined on the north by Little Nitra Stream, while also including land along the left bank of the Nitra River. The site designated in the document as *castrum Iudaeorum* was the same as the formerly separate village of Párovce, in the Early Modern period a Jewish settlement situated at the western edge of Nitra.

The author of the first topographical plan of historical Nitra (Fig. 2) was V. Mencl, a Czech art historian and expert in medieval architecture. Although it is not known what exactly led him to such a conviction, he believed that Nitra in the High Middle Ages was limited to Castle Hill (MENCL 1938, 57–60). At that time, the area of the present day Old Town was presumed to be occupied only by separate settlements. Mencl's plan, likely based on the heavily stylised Early Modern renderings of the

town with which he worked, features a rather unrealistic reconstruction of the Nitra River branches.

Albeit without graphic representation, Slovak historian R. Marsina produced a fundamentally different view of the topography of high medieval Nitra (MARSINA 1977, 34, 36). Based on the document of the Nitra Chapter from 1247, Marsina claimed the existence of multiple town parts with different legal status. On Castle Hill, he distinguished the castle and outer bailey (later called the Upper Town), both of which were to have been fortified. According to Marsina, a legally and spatially separated part, later known as 'Podhradie' (extramural settlement), already existed in this period at the base of Castle Hill, approximately in the area of today's Podzámská Street. Neither was it part of Nitra nor property belonging to the Nitra Chapter (*terra ecclesiae Nitriensis*), which was located roughly in the area of the modern Vikárská and Ďurková streets. The actual extramural settlement (later known as the Lower Town) was to have been designated on the document as *suburbium* and belonged to the population, which was granted privileges in 1248.



Fig. 2 Nitra, topographical plan of the historical town after V. Mencl (MENCL 1938, 58, Fig. 6)
2. kép Nyitra, a történeti városság topográfija V. Mencl alapján (MENCL 1938, 58, Fig. 6)

The second phase of activities aimed at recognising the historical topography of Nitra then belonged primarily to researchers in the field of archaeology. Referring continually (and surprisingly) to the charter of Bela IV from 1248 (CDSI 2, 208–209, no. 298), A. Ruttkay outlined a modified concept of the topography of high medieval Nitra in multiple studies (RUTTKAY 1995; RUTTKAY 1996; RUTTKAY 1999). In his written description (RUTTKAY 1999, 246), which does not fully correspond to the graphic depiction (Fig. 3), Ruttkay stated that the historical designation *suburbium* can be linked to the base of Castle Hill, to a narrow unfortified space north of the Little Nitra. He equated the *castrum Iudaeorum* location with the Summit (Vfšok) site, suggesting that it could have been a fortified settlement. As confirmation of this assumption, Ruttkay presented the find of the remnants of three stone side towers built at intervals along the west edge of the Summit (RUTTKAY 1999, 248). He equated the space northeast of the Summit position with the designation *civitas*.

A. Ruttkay's topography concept, was soon in principle adopted by J. Ruttkayová and M. Ruttkay

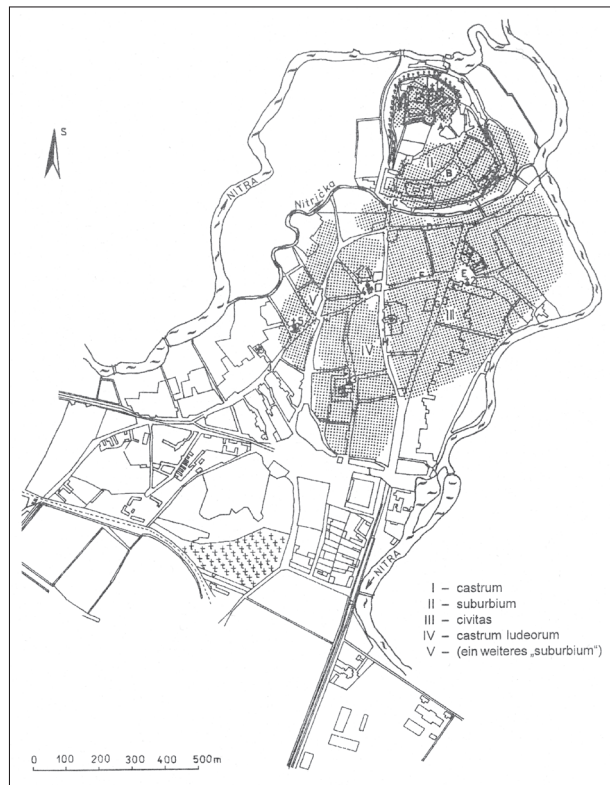


Fig. 3 Nitra, topographical plan of the high medieval town after A. Ruttkay (RUTTKAY 1999, 247, Fig. 9)
3. kép Nyitra, az Árpád-kori város topográfiája A. Ruttkay alapján (RUTTKAY 1999, 247, Fig. 9)

(RUTTKAYOVÁ–RUTTKAY 1997, 104, 111), albeit with a new graphic processing (Fig. 4). They connected the position of the Summit on the plan with Párovice and equated them with the *castrum Iudaeorum* location.

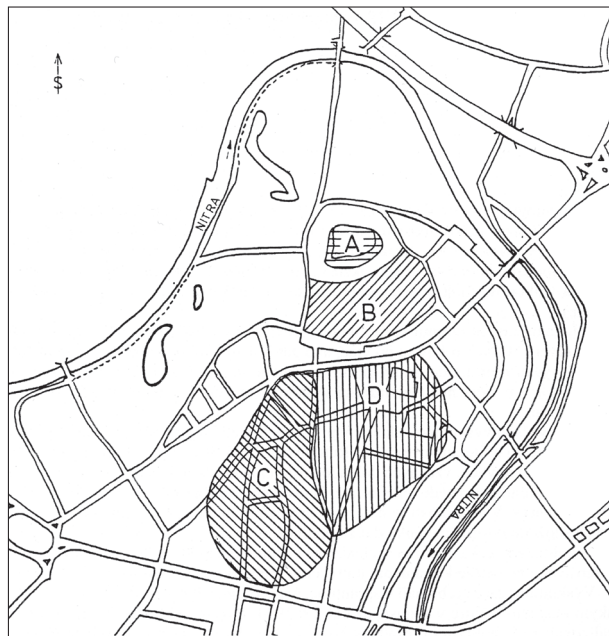


Fig. 4 Nitra, topographical plan of the high medieval town after J. Ruttkayová and M. Ruttkay (RUTTKAYOVÁ–RUTTKAY 1997, 104, Fig. 1)

4. kép Nyitra, az Árpád-kori város topográfiája J. Ruttkayová és M. Ruttkay alapján (RUTTKAYOVÁ–RUTTKAY 1997, 104, Fig. 1)

P. Bednár (BEDNÁR 2002) presented the topography of high medieval Nitra in recent years essentially in the spirit of A. Ruttkay's concept. However, he also created a new plan (Fig. 5) with a number of important modifications. He demarcated a space belonging to the Nitra Chapter in the north-western part of the town south of the Little Nitra. In agreement with the written description of A. Ruttkay (RUTTKAY 1999, 246), he reduced the space identified as the *suburbium* to a narrow strip at the base of Castle Hill. He expanded the scope of the settlement related to the term *civitas* toward the south up to the level of the modern Štúrova Street.

Although scholars from the field of archaeology became involved in the issue of Nitra's topography, their efforts have not been reflected in works by historians. The younger generation was represented by J. Lukačka, whose publications (also exclusively with written descriptions) build on the work of R. Marsina. He equated the *castrum Iudaeorum* with a separate settlement with the parish Church of

St. Stephen the King, specifically with probably a considerably significant Jewish community, likely quite large (LUKAČKA 1998, 160; LUKAČKA 2010, 284–285).² He also addressed an assumption, albeit undocumented with sources, that the extramural settlement of the town of Nitra (later the Lower Town) expanded toward the south all the way to the Tržnica location (LUKAČKA 2010, 285). He likewise expressed the conviction that this space was protected by a wood and earth rampart throughout the High Middle Ages.

The Nitra suburbium before the middle of the 13th century

Archaeological excavations south of Štúrova Street, at the Tržnica (BEDNÁR–FOTTOVÁ 2003) and Mlyny (KÖNIG et al. 2014) sites gradually raised the need for a new re-evaluation of the high medieval topography of Nitra. Evidence of settlement activities involving production dated to the period between the 11th century and the middle of the 13th century was uncovered at both locations. At the time that finds from only the Tržnica location were known, P. Bednár and E. Fottová (BEDNÁR–FOTTOVÁ 2003, 310) considered a separate settlement that was not part of the area occupied by the town itself. However, after the excavation was conducted at the Mlyny location, the identified scope of the occupied area expanded to such an extent that

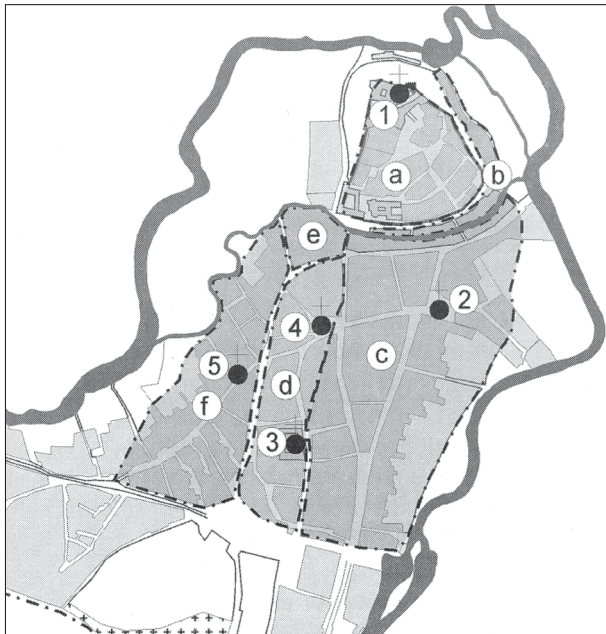


Fig. 5 Nitra, topographical plan of the high medieval town after P. Bednár (BEDNÁR 2002, 226, Fig. 33)
5. kép Nyitra, az Árpád-kori város topográfiája P. Bednár alapján (BEDNÁR 2002, 226, Fig. 33)

it was necessary to look for different possibilities to interpret the finds from this site.

The first step that raised the possibility of acquiring new information was a critical interpretation of the document issued by the Nitra Chapter in 1247. The aim of this work was to gain a clear impression of the course of the town border in the section that involved the actual town of Nitra and to identify places with a controversial localisation (*suburbium* and *castrum Iudaeorum*). The second step was to define the geographical extension of the town territory for the period before the mid-13th century.

The following passage of the document is relevant to the historical topography of Nitra, which begins and ends at the town borders: *prima meta incipit a fluvio Nitriae nomine in nemore ab oriente a parte terrae ecclesiae nostrae (...) descendit et ascendit ad montem, qui dicitur mons Chypany et ibi est meta; descendens vero de monte venit ad castrum Iudaeorum, circa quod est magna meta; inde tendit ad civitatem Nitriensem ad curiam Balassaey, filii Petros iobagionum castri Nitriensis; hinc a superiore parte pallacii cuiusdam Vadas nomine tendit inter ecclesias beatae virginis ac beati Michaelis et descendit inferius ad terram ecclesiae nostrae et de suburbio venit ad fluvium Nitriae; et transiens revertitur ad priorem terminum et ibi terminatur* (CDSI 2, 191, no. 272).

The description of the course of the borders begins (*prima meta*) and ends at this specific point on the left bank of the Nitra River (Fig. 6). Nevertheless, a detailed description of its course along the right bank of the river documents, albeit only partially, the road network distributed in these parts of the landscape. Based on this description and observed spatial contexts, Šibeničný vrch (Borina), below the eastern slope of which ran the route from Močenok, can be identified with the site presented in the document as *mons Chypany*. While the border of the town area probably ran around the hill of today's town cemetery (*magna meta*) from the north, the route from Močenok passed by its south side. Behind this hill, near the town of Nitra, yet beyond its border, was a location designated as *castrum Iudaeorum*. After coming alongside it, the borderline of the town area ran directly toward the space of the town (*ad civitatem Nitriensem*), where it passed between two churches (*inter ecclesias beatae virginis ac beati Michaelis*) standing on the Summit. Descending from this elevated position and taking a northerly direction, the border passed the aforementioned property of the Nitra Chapter (*ad terram ecclesiae nostrae*). Its final section ran through the extramural settlement heading toward the Nitra River

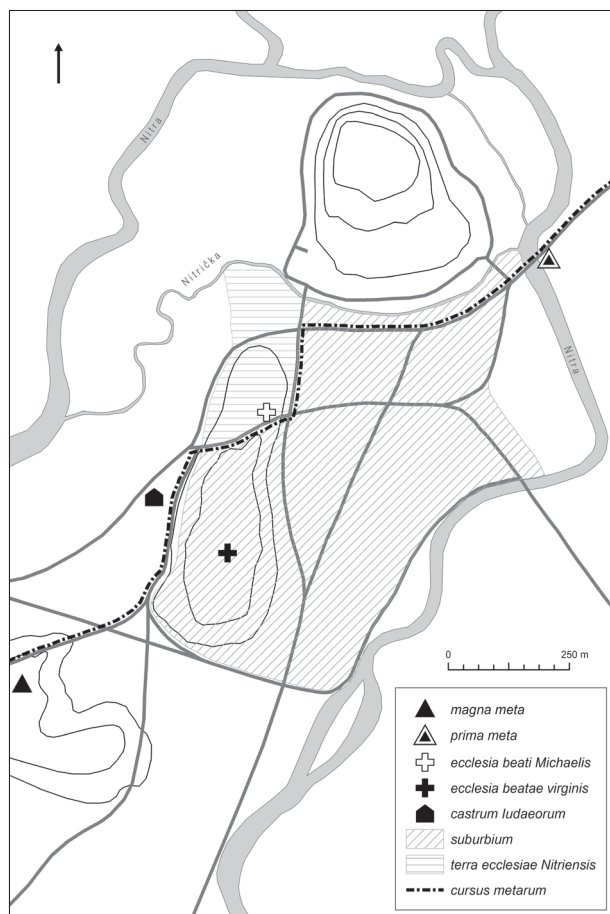


Fig. 6 Nitra, sites mentioned in connection with the Nitra Chapter from 1247

6. kép Nyitra, a nyitrai káptalannal kapcsolatban 1247-ben említett helyszínek

(*de suburbio venit ad fluvium Nitriae*), on whose opposite bank was the border point (*prima meta*).

The presented interpretation of the border document describes the structure of Nitra in the period before the acquisition of town privileges as follows. The designation *civitas Nitriensis* in the document is a broad term encompassing multiple components that together formed the town. The document mentions two of these located south of the Little Nitra, *terra ecclesiae Nitriensis* and *suburbium*. In the context of the charter (CDS1 2, 208–209, no. 298), the area north of the Little Nitra, Nitra Castle, is also related to these. In the described period, *cives castrum Nitriensis* were townsmen of Nitra Castle (MARSINA 1977, 34).

Despite the fact that the updated interpretation of the written source provided a new view of the town topography, it did not offer a more precise idea of the extension of the extramural settlement of Nitra. Hence, an answer to the classification of the Tržnica

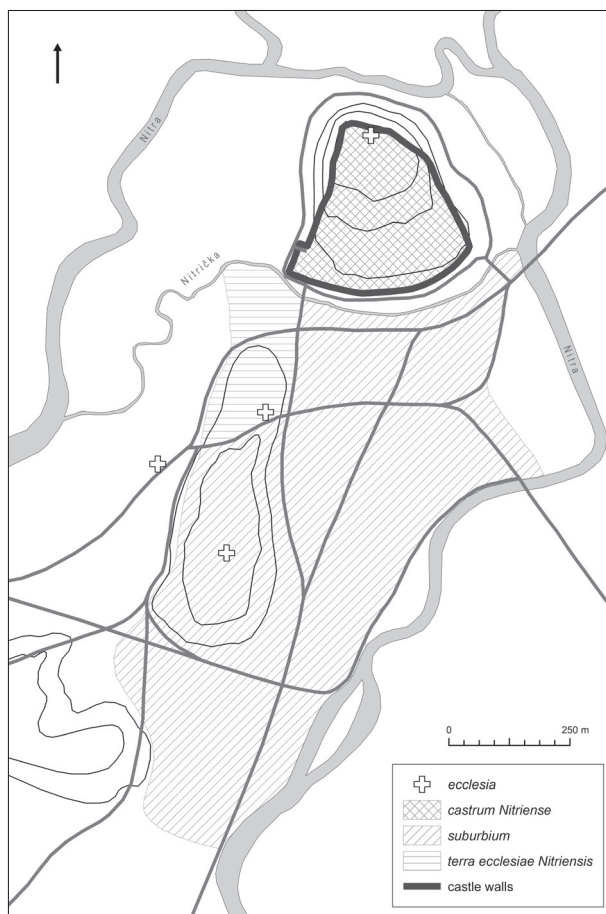


Fig. 7 Nitra, topography of the town in the High Middle Ages

7. kép Nyitra, a város topográfiája az Árpád-korban

and Mlyny locations can come only from an actual analysis of the finds from these sites.

The high medieval finds unearthed at both of these locations appear to be not only contemporary but also similar in character. These are sunken settlement features mainly of a production nature. The question is whether the predominance of features that can be interpreted as production or production-related makes it possible to designate the entire space south of the route to Hlohovec as a peripheral part of the extramural settlement in which craft activities were concentrated (Fig. 7). After all, it cannot be ruled out that only production areas were excavated at these locations, whereas, as is known for example from the pre-urban settlement of Brno, the actual inhabited space was located distinctively and hypothetically could have been situated along a route (PROCHÁZKA 2000, 120) that ran roughly through its centre. A demarcation of the occupied space to the south is still not possible.

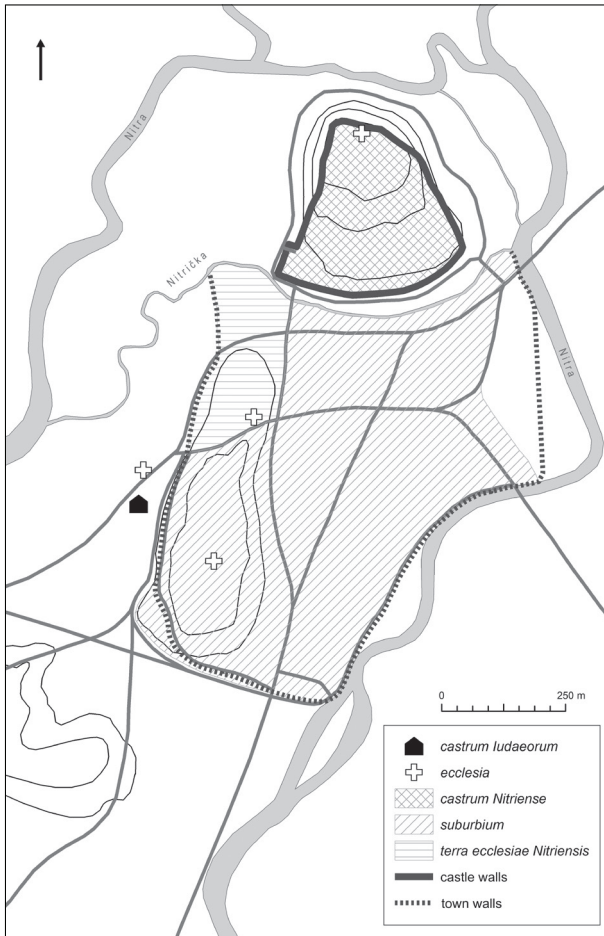


Fig. 8 Nitra, topography of the town around 1300
8. kép Nyitra, a város topográfiája 1300 körül

But taking into account the aforementioned finds and their character, it continued somewhat further toward the south. It can be assumed that even generally dated production features excavated in the space of a former stud farm (HANULIAK 1989, 200) are high medieval and together with others formed one spatial unit.

Also speaking in favour of the Mlyny location (and therefore likely Tržnica) being part of the Nitra extramural settlement is the amount of graphite pottery. During an analysis of high medieval graphite pottery from sites in Slovakia, G. Fusek and J. Spišiak (FUSEK–SPIŠIAK 2005, 312–313) stated that in comparison with agrarian settlements, the composition of finds from early royal centres or the pre-urban phases of later towns has a significantly higher representation of precisely this type of pottery. While at the nearby rural settlement uncovered in Nitra-Šindolka the average values documenting the percentage of graphite wares present in features ranged only from 1.33%

to 3.60% (FUSEK–SPIŠIAK 2005, 313), the values from Nitra-Mlyny were from 9.66% to 26.75% (KÖNIG et al. 2014, 56–57).³

The Nitra suburbium after the middle of the 13th century

The Nitra extramural settlement underwent considerable changes roughly around the mid-13th century. As it has been found, its southern part known from the Tržnica (BEDNÁR – FOTTOVÁ 2003, 310) and Mlyny (KÖNIG et al. 2014, 90) sites does not show signs of continual settlement activities that were convincingly datable to later than the middle of the 13th century. By this time, this territory was essentially no longer used as before.

Yet another important change occurred in the following period: the construction of town walls protecting the extramural settlement (Fig. 8), a fact documented in both written sources and by archaeological excavations.⁴ Perhaps the earliest reference is a document describing the extent of damage caused by an attack from the army of Matthew Csák (RDSI 1, 485–486, no. 1142), probably in 1313, during which the town walls and their towers (... *tota etiam ipsa civitas Nitriensis menis et turribus usque ad solum prostrata et diruta et horribiliter igne extitit concremata*) were reportedly razed and burned (BREZOVÁKOVÁ 2002, 223). It can, therefore, be assumed almost with certainty that the fortifications were combined walls consisting mostly of a wooden palisade or a wood and earth rampart. Supporting this conclusion was the find of the remnants of three stone side towers built at intervals along the west edge of the Summit (RUTTKAY 1999, 248). An iconographic depiction of Nitra from 1657 also documents the wood and earth fortifications (SAMUEL–BEDNÁR 2012, 206, Fig. 10). The south line of the town walls is likely demarcated by the place where the lower town gate (the Turkish Gate) was later built. Known from iconographic sources and old maps (e.g. BŘEZINOVÁ–SAMUEL 2007, 48–49, Fig. 70), this gate was not demolished until 1859 (ZEMENEOVÁ 1998, 272).

The construction of the town walls also created new spatial arrangements. The territory protected by the walls began to be more intensely utilised and acquired a regular layout of individual urban elements such as market squares, building development and streets. In the case of the foundation of Old Town in Prague, a unique phenomenon occurred in the second half of the 13th century in connection with the construction of its fortifications: the extramu-

ral settlement greatly exceeded the size of the enclosed area. In the case of the Újezd sv. Martina settlement, the Old Town walls cut through the homogenous settlement area and part of its built-up area was cleared and moved away from the fortified space (CYMBALAK–STAŇKOVÁ 2014, 162). At the site of the later Republic Square (Náměstí Republiky), even impressive Romanesque buildings in the space beyond the walls were razed and the mentioned area remained for a long period of time essentially vacant (JUŘINA 2009).

Although the extent of the Nitra extramural settlement clearly exceeds the space later surrounded by fortifications, there is still no evidence demonstrating that its shrinkage was related precisely to the construction of the walls. The handicraft activities that were demonstrably conducted in these areas were probably not moved behind the town fortifications, as the trend was exactly the opposite in emerging medieval towns (PODLISKA 2008). In Nitra, it is even possible to assume that a considerable amount of time passed between the end of settlement activities in the southern part of the extramural settlement and the construction of the town walls, perhaps even decades. The surface of the road documented in the north-western part of the Mlyny site and datable to the second half of the 13th century was paved with stone pitching (KÖNIG et al. 2014, 79, 90). One of the possible reasons for the construction of the road across the abandoned part of the extramural settlement could have been that it offered a shortcut for connecting the road running essentially along the Nitra River (RUTTKAY 2006, 169–170) with the route running from Nyárhíd. The strongest evidence for this hypothesis is the orientation of its excavated section and the assumption that it was not used for a long period of time.

If the abandonment of the large territory used previously for many years in the southern part of the Nitra extramural settlement was not connected with the construction of the town fortifications, then

it could have reflected a loss of economic potential for the town perhaps leading to a decline in its population. This suggestion would not be all that surprising, as the importance of Nitra actually did decline in the 13th century. The existing evaluation of events known from historical sources connects its economic decline with a change in the route of the ‘Czech Road’ and with the military conflicts occurring in the final third of the 13th century and at the beginning of the 14th century (LUKAČKA 1998, 161–165). But while all of the mentioned events undoubtedly had an impact on the further development of the town, a major decrease in the population of Nitra could have occurred somewhat earlier.

A historical event recorded in the first half of the 13th century could have had a decisive impact on the beginning of the process of Nitra’s gradual decline: the invasion of Hungary by the armies of the Mongolian ruler Batu Khan in 1241, traditionally known as the Tatar invasion (MARSINA 2008a, 9). As period documents state, the territory of southwest Slovakia became an area in which the units of Orda Khan operated. Nitra Castle was the target of one of their attacks. A letter from Hungarian church and secular officials addressed to the pope states that the town was still holding out against the Tatars at the beginning of February of the following year (MARSINA 2008b, 52). Attention should also focus on the fact that mentions of the Tatars and their invasion also repeatedly appear in the charter of Nitra issued in 1248 (CDSI 2, 208–209, no. 298). In assessing the motivating factors that led the king to grant the privileges, emphasis has only been placed so far on the recognition of the town population for its loyalty, assistance and valorous efforts in the fight against the Tatars (LUKAČKA 1998, 159; MARSINA 2002, 191); however, there could have been other reasons behind this decision. The town privileges can be understood mainly as a stimulus followed by a period of prosperity that perhaps ended precisely with the Tatar invasion.

Notes

- 1 The article was written with the support of the Scientific Grant Agency VEGA 1/0827/16 entitled ‘*Beginnings of the Formation of Urban Space in Bratislava*’.
- 2 The first reference to this settlement under the name Párovice (*Parulcha*) comes from 1343 (ZEMENE 1977, 130–131).
- 3 The first value corresponds to the average percent-

- age of graphite pottery among all of the vessels at the given site. The second value is the representation of graphite pottery in features in which it occurred.
- 4 The parish Church of St. James, archaeologically unknown, was intentionally not drawn on the plan. With respect to the Middle Ages, this church is not known until the second quarter of the 14th century, when it first appears in a written source (MVS I 1, 56).

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AZ ÁRPÁD-KORI NYITRA TOPOGRÁFIÁJA

ADALÉKOK A KÖZÉPKORI VÁROSOK TOPOGRÁFIÁJÁHOZ SZLOVÁKIA TERÜLETÉN

Összefoglalás

Az Árpád-kor folyamán – a 11. századtól a 13. század közepéig – Nyitra az egyik legfontosabb ispánsági központok egyike volt Magyarországon. A temetők feltárása megmutatta, hogy folyamatosan lakott volt a Morva Fejedelemség korától, s valószínűleg ekkortól kezdődően megőrizte a központi szerepét is. Éppen ebből a kontinuitásból adódóan szabálytalan alaprajzzal rendelkezett, melynek utcaszerkezetét a terepi adottságok és a távolsági úthálózat határoztak meg (1. kép).

Az Árpád-kori város topográfiájának modern kutatásai elsősorban a történészek oldaláról indultak meg (V. Šmilauer, V. Mencl, R. Marsina). Meglehetősen behatárolt mennyiségű írott forrásból indultak ki, melyekben csak töredékes utalások találhatóak a város méretéről és belső felosztásáról. Véleményeik a lokalizációról és a váralja település méretéről eltértek. A kutatás második szakasza már elsősorban a régészeti feltárásokat vezető szakemberekhez fűződik. (A. Ruttkay, J. Ruttkayová és M. Ruttkay, illetve P. Bednár). Ugyan a kísérleteiket mindig grafikus formában is ábrázolták (2., 5. kép), munkáikban hangsúlyos szerepet kapott a kulcsfontosságú írott forrás, a nyitrai káptalan 1247. évi oklevelének interpretációja. Az említett forrás *castrum Iudaeorum* helyszínét a Halom (*Vršok*) magaslattal kapcsolták össze. Véleményük szerint a város olyan különálló részéről volt szó, mely saját erődítéssel is

rendelkezett. Nyitra városát még két, nem erődített városrész alkotott (*suburbium* és *civitas*). A forrás új értelmezése szerint *castrum Iudaeorum* Párutcával egy önálló településsel, míg a *suburbium* a nyitrai Várhegyet (*Hradný vrch*) körbefolyó Nitricska patakától délre elhelyezkedő, nyitrai váraljával kapcsolható össze (6. kép).

A közelmúltban a Vásártér (*Tržnica*) és Malmok (*Mlyny*) lelőhelyeken végzett feltárások olyan Árpád-kori leleteket szolgáltatottak, melyeket szükséges volt összekapcsolni a város településtörténetéről való addigi ismereteinkkel. A leletek azonos korúak voltak és mind gazdasági vagy ipari jellegű jelenségekhez lehetett kötni. Ezek alapján egyértelműen arra következtethetünk, hogy a város kiterjedése eredetileg nagyobb lehetett, mint a később városi erődítések által körülvevett terület (7. kép). Városi település mellett nem csak a lelőhely területi kapcsolatai szólnak, hanem a grafitos kerámia nagy aránya.

Nagyjából a 13. század közepe után a nyitrai váralja déli része jelentősen összement. A korábbi korszakkal összevetve, a Vásártér és Malmok lelőhelyeken a települési aktivitás már nem folytatódik. Ez a törés még valamikor a városi erődítések 1313 előtti kiépítését megelőzően történt meg (8. kép). A lakott terület feltehetően az 1241. évi tatárjárás Nyitrát is érintő pusztító hatásainak következtében zsugorodott össze.

TOPOGRAFIA VRCHOLNOSTREDOVEKEJ NITRY
PRÍSPEVOK K TOPOGRAFII STREDOVEKÝCH MIEST NA SLOVENSKU

Abstract

V období vrcholného stredoveku (11. až polovica 13. storočia) bola Nitra jedným z najvýznamnejších hradských miest v Uhorsku. Výskum pohrebísk ukázal, že bola kontinuálne osídlená od veľkomoravského obdobia, odkedy si zrejme zachovala aj funkciu správneho centra. Ako stredoveké mesto vychádzajúce z kontinuity osídlenia malo pritom nepravidelný pôdorys, podmienený geomorfologickým členením terénu a priebehom ciest, ktoré dali základ jeho uličnej siete (obr. 1).

Počiatky moderného bádania topografie vrcholnostredovekého mesta sú spojené bádateľmi z oblasti historických vedných disciplín (V. Šmilauer, V. Mencl, R. Marsina). Vychádzali z veľmi obmedzeného množstva písomných prameňov, v ktorých sa nachádzali strohé zmienky o rozsahu a vnútornom členení priestoru mesta. Ich názory na lokalizáciu a rozsah jeho podhradia sa rôznili. Druhá etapa bádania sa viazala predovšetkým už na odborníkov z radov archeológov (A. Ruttkay, J. Ruttkayová, M. Ruttkay a P. Bednár). Hoci výsledky ich snažení dostali vždy aj podobu grafického spracovania (obr. 2–5), boli postavené ťažiskovo na interpretácii kľúčového písomného prameňa, listiny nitrianskej kapituly z roku 1247. Lokalitu uvádzanú v zmienenom dokumente ako *castrum Iudaeorum* dávali do súvisu s vyvýšenou polohou Vŕšok. Podľa ich názoru išlo o osobitnú časť mesta s vlastným opevnením. Mesto Nitra mali spoluvytvárať ešte dve ne-

opevnené časti (*suburbium* a *civitas*). Nová interpretácia tohto písomného prameňa, odvodená dôsledne z priestorových vzťahov, spája *castrum Iudaeorum* s Párovcami, samostatnou osadou a *suburbium* s nitrianskym podhradím, rozkladajúcim sa južne od Nitričky, potôčika obtekajúceho Hradný vrch (obr. 6).

Archeologické výskumy uskutočnené v nedávnej dobe v polohách Tržnica a Mlyny priniesli vrcholnostredoveké nálezy, ktoré bolo potrebné dať do súvisu s ostatnými poznatkami o osídlení mesta. Spoločnou črtou týchto nálezov bol ich hospodársky či výrobný charakter a taktiež datovanie. Dovoľujú nám uvažovať o tom, že rozsah mestského osídlenia bol pôvodne väčší ako priestor neskôr ohraničený mestským opevnením (obr. 7). V prospech toho, že išlo o mestské osídlenie hovoria nielen priestorové súvislosti, ale azda aj percentuálne zastúpenie grafitovej keramiky.

Zhruba po polovici 13. storočia došlo pravdepodobne k výraznej redukcii osídlenia južných častí nitrianskeho podhradia. V porovnaní s predchádzajúcim obdobím, polohy Tržnica a Mlyny sú totiž od tohto času bez stôp kontinuálne prebiehajúcich sídliskových aktivít. Stalo sa tak akiste ešte pred vybudovaním mestského opevnenia, s ktorým rátame v období pred rokom 1313 (obr. 8). Príčinou tejto redukcii osídlenia mohol byť úpadok mesta vyvolaný ničivými dôsledkami tatárskeho vpádu do Uhorska v roku 1241.

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