



## ESTATE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOPUSKO (TOPLICA) ABBEY. A CASE STUDY OF A MIEVEAL CISTERCIAN MONASTERY

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The first Cistercian monastery in Medieval Hungary was Cikádor, founded as early as the mid-twelfth century (1142). Yet, subsequent foundations followed only later; it was King Béla III (1172–1196) and his sons who played a decisive role in the expansion of the order. Between 1179 and 1241 thirteen monasteries were founded out of the total eighteen or nineteen in Hungary.<sup>1</sup> The estate complex of the Cistercian abbey of Toplica, founded in 1211 by King Andrew II,<sup>2</sup> was one of the largest and most significant in medieval Hungary.<sup>3</sup> However, the history of the abbey has been only partially and somewhat superficially studied so far.<sup>4</sup> A closer investigation of the uniquely preserved cartulary

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Beatrix Romhányi, “The Role of the Cistercians in Medieval Hungary: Political Activity or Internal Colonisation?” in *Annual of Medieval Studies at the CEU 1993–1994*: 180–204. (hereafter: Romhányi, 1994); Ferenc L. Hervay, *Repertorium Historicum Ordinis Cisterciensis in Hungaria* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1984) (hereafter: Hervay, 1984); Marie-Madeleine de Cevins, “Les implantations Cisterciennes en Hongrie médiévale: un réseau?” in *Unanimité et diversité cisterciennes: filiations, réseaux, relectures du XIIe au XVIIe siècle: actes du quatrième Colloque international du CERCOR, Dijon, 23–25 septembre 1998*, ed. Nicole Bouter (Saint Etienne: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Etienne, 2000), 453–483.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the foundation charter see Hervay, 1984, 181–183.

<sup>3</sup> If one looks at the estate map of the country in 1439, the Toplica estate seems to have been one of the most extensive. It was indeed the largest among Cistercian estates, even larger than the estate of Pannonhalma Abbey, the most ancient, rich, and powerful Benedictine monastery (Toplica had ca. 659 km<sup>2</sup>, Szentgotthárd ca. 275 km<sup>2</sup>, Spišský Štiavnik (Savnik, now in Slovakia) ca. 261 km<sup>2</sup>, and Pannonhalma ca. 440 km<sup>2</sup>. Pál Engel, *Magyarország a középkor végén: digitális térkép és adatbázis* (Hungary in the Late Middle Ages. Digital map and database) (Budapest: Térinfo Bt. – MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Dénes Lakatos, *A topuszkói ciszterci apátság története* (The history of Toplica Abbey) (Budapest, 1911). On the basis of a collection of charters edited by I. Tkalčić, see Ivan Tkalčić, ed. *Monumenta Historiae Episcopatus Zagradiensis*, vol. 1–2 (Zagreb, 1873/1874) (hereafter: MHEZ). Lakatos’ work addressed the history of the abbey only until the end of the thirteenth century. The author’s attempt at the topographical reconstruction of the estate was not correct on many points; however, his results were adopted by Hervay.



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(copybook) of the abbey, prepared around the late 1360s,<sup>5</sup> and a more extensive collection of archival sources on the history of the whole region now allow a more detailed discussion of the economic history of the monastery. The present essay attempts to show the importance of a detailed historical topographical study on the monastic properties and their surroundings, revealing motives behind economic development by demonstrating connections between different kinds of properties (granges, houses, mills, etc.) and the structure or hierarchy of the prevailing settlement network (waterways, routes, markets, towns).<sup>6</sup> (See the map at the end of the article.)

### Neighbors, Trade Routes and Waterways

Looking at the historical-geographical environment of the Toplica estate one cannot fail to recognise the surrounding lands of two other ecclesiastical institutions: the bishopric (and chapter) of Zagreb and the Templars of Gora. (See the map at the end of the article.) The geographical order of these estates along a north-south axis seems to reflect the sequence of the royal donations. First, the bishopric was founded at the end of the eleventh century, then the Templars were settled and given donations in the twelfth century, and finally the Cistercians arrived in the early thirteenth century. The share of the Templars in Gora county was relatively minor, thus, the Cistercians were able to obtain a huge territory from the king, still with favourable conditions and not of marginal significance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Among the Cistercian monasteries in medieval Hungary the best preserved archives are those of Klostermarienberg (Borsmonostor) and of Veszprémvölgy. The copybook of Toplica is also important, however, since it has preserved numerous documents of the abbey. The photocopy of the document is referred to as Magyar Országos Levéltár, Diplomatikai Levéltár, no. 283 328 (National Archives of Hungary, Collection of Charters) (hereafter: MOL DL 283 328). Charters from the copybook have not been published in a single edition. The early charters, issued until 1299, were included in MHEZ. The fourteenth century charters were published by Tadeus Smičiklas, ed. *Codex Diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae ac Slavoniae, Diplomatski zbornik kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije*, 16 vols (Zagreb, 1904–1976) (hereafter: Smičiklas).

<sup>6</sup> This article is a revised and abridged version of the third chapter of my MA thesis “The Economic History of the Cistercian Monastery in Toplica – A Topographic Approach,” (MA Thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> According to the foundation charter and subsequent confirmation charters, Toplica was donated with the county of Gora. Its center, Gora, was already in the hands of the Templars, other parts still belonged to the king. The royal donation (MOL DL 283328/no. 1) lists more than sixty names referring to different types of settlements,



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Access to water resources was important for all of these estates. Significantly, each had a share in the most important waterways on the Glina and Kupa rivers. The fact that fishing places are listed separately at the beginning of the foundation charter of Toplica reflects a specific concern: the importance of a fish supply and access to water due to the need for fish in the diet. This was apparently a general monastic phenomenon, but was probably more explicit among the Cistercians because of their pre-occupation with managing the landscape. The idea of the *Eigenwirtschaft* resulted in the practice of establishing large contiguous properties which also made the management of water resources easier (e.g. river-course modifications for mills and fisheries). Accordingly, taking control of long river courses—apparent in this case—is believed to have been a general feature of Cistercian estate complexes.

At the early stage of the history of the abbey the natural resources of these fishing places could have been of greater significance for an economy based on self-sufficiency. Their location, however, lying along the Sava, near trade routes, could also have provided opportunities for developing commercial interests there, which might have become more and more important later. Two long-distance trade routes lay nearby. One came from the direction of Osijek (Eszék), crossed the Sava, and went to the south along the Una River to Bihac and the Dalmatian coast. The other turned north along the Sava, went to Zagreb and then turned west and reached the coast around Senj (Zennig, Segnia). The connection with trade routes was again typical for Cistercian estates, observed also in Hungary<sup>8</sup> and Poland.<sup>9</sup>

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however, contemporary differences in size, in structure, in the density of their population, and in the way their areas were populated remain obscure. A considerable number of these names can be located using modern settlement names. Proper boundaries are at some points questionable, due to the fact that the perambulation of the estates was allegedly not finished. Unfortunately, the county ceased to appear in historical documents from the fourteenth century on, thus, in fact, there is no better way to assess the historical area of Gora County than to locate the settlements mentioned in the foundation charter. The statute of the Zagreb chapter from 1334 (see MHEZ, vol. 2, 76) mentions Gora as a deaconry and also lists some of its settlements; the list of names here, however, is entirely different from those mentioned more than a hundred years before.

<sup>8</sup> Romhányi, 1994, 184.

<sup>9</sup> Andrzej Marek Wyrwa, "Voraussetzungen und Motive der Ansiedlung von Zisterziensern in Großpolen," in *Zisterzienser. Norm, Kultur, Reform 900 Jahre Zisterzienser*, ed. Ulrich Knefelkamp (Berlin: Springer, 1998), 91–126.



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## Urban Property

Besides the connection with trade routes, royal privileges in the salt trade, tax exemptions and custom rights, their urban property also testifies to the Cistercians' interest in the secondary economy.<sup>10</sup> In Hungary, the abbey of Pilis had the most significant “network” in this respect: its possessions included houses and vineyards in and around urban centres and royal residences, e.g. in Buda, Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg), Devín (Dévény), Dömös, Pest, and Visegrád.<sup>11</sup> Further examples of urban properties can be found in many other cases in medieval Hungary; they all represent a direct connection between monasteries and trade routes. The abbey of Zirc (Hungary) had a house in Pápa,<sup>12</sup> the abbey of Savigliano (now Spišský Štiavnik, Slovakia) in Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau, Slovakia),<sup>13</sup> the abbey of Kirc (Kerc, Cârța Romania) in Sibiu (Nagyszeben, Hermannstadt, Romania),<sup>14</sup> and the abbeys of Cikádor (Hungary) and Petrovaradin (Pétervárad, Serbia) around Buda.<sup>15</sup> The Cistercians of Heiligenkreuz (Austria) had a house in Sopron, on the Salzmarkt (Orsolya tér).<sup>16</sup> Strangely enough, data have often come down to us only in the early modern sources concerning these properties and due to the lack of medieval documents little is known about the function of the houses. However, in the cartulary of Toplica three charters have survived—concerning the convent's property in the coastal town of Senj (Zennj)—which are revealing in this context. According to

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<sup>10</sup> In connection to this a groundbreaking study is Constance Hoffmann Berman, *Medieval Agriculture, the Southern French Countryside, and the Early Cistercians: A Study of Forty-Three Monasteries* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1986). See also Wolfgang Bender, *Zisterzienser und Städte. Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen den Zisterzienserköstern und den grossen urbanen Zentren des mittleren Moseltraumes (12.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Trier: Verlag Trierer Historische Forschungen, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Hervay, 1984, 150.

<sup>12</sup> Jakab Reizner, “A gróf Eszterházy család pápai levéltára” (The archives of the Count Eszterházy family at Pápa), *Történelmi Tár* (1893): 601–616.

<sup>13</sup> Georgius Bohus, *Historisch-geographische Beschreibung des in Oberungarn berühmtesten Zipser Landes. Aus dem lateinischen Original übersetzt von Johann Lipták*, (Késmárk, 1919), 170.

<sup>14</sup> Dan Nicolae Busuioc von Hasselbach, *Țara Făgărașului în secolul al XIII-lea Mănăstirea cisterciană Cârța I–II*. (The Land of Făgăraș in the Thirteenth Century. The Cistercian Monastery of Cârța) (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2000), 305.

<sup>15</sup> Hervay, 1984, 140.

<sup>16</sup> Károly Mollay, “Sopron megye vázlatos története” (A brief history of Sopron County), in *Sopron és környéke műemlékei. Magyarország műemléki topográfiája*, vol. 2 (Historical monuments in and around Sopron. The Topography of Historical Monuments), ed. Endre Csatkai and Dezső Dercsényi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1956), 94–106.



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the earliest document, from 1240, the abbey had one plot there which they got from the master of the Templars in Gora. The Cistercians made use of the plot by building a warehouse there, nevertheless, there was a strict rule, enforced by the Templars, that Cistercians were allowed to sell and buy goods only for their own purposes, probably so as not to infringe on the Templars' interests.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, sources are not detailed on the later history of the house. The controversies around the person of Abbot Seifrid in the late 1350s in connection with the historical circumstances which influenced the preparation of the cartulary<sup>18</sup> could also have led to problems about property rights in Zenng (Senj). In 1363 it is recorded that the town authorities had to confirm the property of Toplica at the request of the abbot. It also turns out that the abbey already had another house there.<sup>19</sup> These houses might have played a continuous role in long-distance trade and communication at least up to the end of the fourteenth century, but further data are not known.

### Mills and Market-towns

A more detailed historical-topographical study on the estates could reveal further points of interest in the secondary economy and industry. Settlements

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<sup>17</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 70 (1240): "pro rebus propriis et necessariis dicti monasterii emendis et vendendis." The Templars' houses were located along the most important trading routes of Slavonia, which suggests commercial interests. See Balázs Stossek, "Maisons possessions des Templiers en Hongrie," in *The Crusaders and the Military Orders. Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky, (Budapest: CEU Medievalia, 2001), 245–251.

<sup>18</sup> Abbot Seifrid leased and donated various estates, which resulted in financial problems referred to by the letter of Pope Urbanus II in 1364: "abbatia dicti monasterii per laicalem potentiam de facto spoliatus..." see Hervay, 1984, 185–186. A charter from 1355 narrates that the new abbot, Guillelmus, wanted to get back the estates donated by Seifrid. See Smičiklas, vol. 12, 266 (1355). Abbot Guido, his successor and a former monk of Clairvaux, continued this policy. Some charters imply that he was clearly aware of his duty, striving to strengthen the economic background of the monastery, and it must have been he who ordered the preservation of the archival material

<sup>19</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 72 (1363): "domos dicti monasterii positus in Sennia." This is in accordance with the content of the third charter on the estate here, which says that in 1270 another house was donated to the abbey, formerly leased to a local noble by a certain archdeacon of the Zagreb chapter. See MOL DL 283 328/no. 71 (1271): "quod domus suas, quas dominus Belzaninus in supradicta civitate ab eodem magistro Petro tenebat et possidebat cum omnibus utilitatibus suis et pertinenciis ad manus predicti domini abbatis..."



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with central place functions—towns, market towns (*oppida*), or minor settlements organising weekly fairs—certainly played an important part in the estate economy. Tracing the history of the mills of Cistercian abbeys in Hungary demonstrated a marked correspondence between settlements with central functions and the mills of the abbeys.<sup>20</sup> These settlements sometimes had central functions in the settlement network as early as the time of the foundations. They were either villages with the right to organise weekly fairs<sup>21</sup> or high status sites.<sup>22</sup> When, from the fourteenth century on, market economy started to play a more important role in the overall development of the country,<sup>23</sup> interestingly,

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<sup>20</sup> László Ferenczi, “A ciszterci kolostorok malmainak topográfiája” (Topography of mills of Cistercian monasteries in Hungary), (MA Thesis, Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest, 2004). Monasteries included in the investigation were: Ábrahám (in Dombóvár), Bélapátfalva, Cikádor (in Bátaszék), Pásztó, Pilis, Pornóapáti, Szentgotthárd, and Zirc. Klostermarienberg (Borsmonostor, now in Austria) was also included because of the importance of its well-preserved archive. The importance of town mills for the Cistercian monasteries was certainly not a local phenomenon. For a regional study in Germany see, for instance, Christian Gahlbeck, “Zur Frage der Wirtschaftsbeziehungen der Zisterzienser zu den Städten der Neumark,” in *Zisterziensische Wirtschaft und Kulturlandschaft, Studien zur Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der Zisterzienser* 3, ed. Winfried Schich (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 1998), 99–139.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. *Ked*-hely, *Szerda*-hely, and *Csütörtök*-hely (-hely=place) are placenames, derived from the name of the days (*kedd*, *szerda*, *csütörtök*), which indicate weekly fairs. See Jenő Major, “A magyar városok és városhálózat kialakulásának kezdetei” (The beginnings of Hungarian towns and the town network), *Településtudományi Közlemények* 18 (1966): 48–90. Major has collected, for instance, examples in the cases of the estates of Klostermarienberg and Szentgotthárd. Near Toplica abbey, in the vicinity of its estate in Vinodol, there was a Zeredahel (Zereda [szerda] Wednesday) mentioned in 1292. See Smičiklas, vol. 7., 106–108. Further to the south, near Blina, there was Csütörtökhely (Csütörtök [Thursday]). Rights to organise weekly fairs were occasionally documented by charters as well, e.g. for Kedhely near Klostermarienberg see Hervay, 1984, 65.

<sup>22</sup> The abbey of Klostermarienberg had mills in Lutzmannsburg (Locsmánd, Austria), a centre of a county. See Gyula Kristó, “A locsmándi várispánság felbomlása” (Dissolution of the royal county of Locsmánd), *Soproni Szemle* 23 (1969): 131–144. Szentgotthárd abbey had two mills in Vasvár—also a county centre—and in Győrvár, a centre of the queen’s estate later donated to the monastery. The abbey of Zirc had mills in Pápa, a settlement of royal serfs and an important market place.

<sup>23</sup> Elemér Mályusz, “A mezővárosi fejlődés” (The development of market towns), in *Tanulmányok a parasztság történetéhez Magyarországon a 14. században* (Studies on the history of the peasantry in Hungary in the 14<sup>th</sup> century), ed. György Székely (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1953), 140–142.



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these places often occur in the documents as market towns (*oppida*).<sup>24</sup> Even if the category has to be considered as the one below the full-fledged royal towns, yet, bearing a somewhat flexible or loosely defined legal meaning, it confirms the central role of these settlements: they were the commercial centres of the estates and their population would definitely have been higher than that of average villages.<sup>25</sup>

In the charters concerning the estate of Toplica abbey, various references to mill sites can be found. For instance, the issues of the abbots usually mention mills when they record land-leasing contracts. However, these are all general, formula-type references (e.g. *cum molendinis, piscis, aquis*, etc.), and more reliable ones are only to be found in the cartulary concerning Blatuša (1211),<sup>26</sup> Unčani (*Pounje*, 1278),<sup>27</sup> *Sernou* (1278),<sup>28</sup> Svinica (1301),<sup>29</sup> Komogovina (1312),<sup>30</sup> Mlinoga,

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<sup>24</sup> Among those mentioned above, Kedhely, Locsmánd, Pápa, and Győrvar were referred to later as *oppida*. Not surprisingly, some of the monastic sites (e.g. Pásztó, Cikádor, Szentgotthárd) also became market towns in the late medieval period. For instance, the commercial importance of Pásztó is shown by the Saint Michael's dedication of the parish church and it is also recorded as a market town as early as 1406. See Romhányi, 1994, and Ilona Valter, "Mezővárosi kutatások újabb eredményei Észak-Magyarországon," in *Régészet és várostörténet—tudományos konferencia*. (Archaeology and urban history) *Dunántúli Dolgozatok, Történettudományi Sorozat 3* (Studies from Transdanubia, Historical Series) ed. Ákos Uherkóvics (Pécs: Janus Pannonius Múzeum, 1991), 195–209. Cikádor (Bátaszék) is mentioned as a market town in 1441. See József Sümegi, *Bátaszék története a középkorban* (History of Bátaszék in the Middle Ages) (Bátaszék: Bátaszék Town Council, 1997). Szentgotthárd also became a market town in the late Middle Ages. See Ilona Valter, "Szentgotthárd története a mohácsi vészig" (The history of Szentgotthárd to the battle of Mohács), in *Szentgotthárd. Helytörténeti, művelődéstörténeti, helyismereti tanulmányok* (Szentgotthárd. Studies in local and cultural history), ed. Lajos Kuntár and László Szabó (Szombathely 1981), 29–80.

<sup>25</sup> See Andás Kubinyi, "Városok, mezővárosok és központi helyek az Alföldön és az Alföld szélén" (Towns market towns, central places in and around the Great Plain), in András Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és városhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén* (Development and network of towns in and around the Great Plain) (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 2000), 7–168.

<sup>26</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 1 (1211); MHEZ, vol. 1, 25–27: "In Bachus sunt homines, qui debent ibidem reparare... molendinum"

<sup>27</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 31 (1278); MHEZ, vol. 1, 192–193: "...cum omnibus utilitatibus, usu fructibus et pertinenciis ipsarum possessionum, videlicet terris arabilibus, fenilibus, vineis, silvis, montanis, molendinis ac aliis pertinenciis et utilitatibus prescriptarum possessionum universis." The reference here is again a formula, however, I found it peculiar that mines were also mentioned, which may affirm that the text reflects real conditions. Various islands were also mentioned, situated on the Una River,



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*Vizoka* and *Strašnik* (1364).<sup>31</sup> The mill in *Blatuša* was apparently documented the earliest, mentioned already in the foundation charter. Though the villages of *Mlinoga*, *Vizoka*, and *Strašnik* are also mentioned in the foundation charter, their mills appear as late as 1364. One might, however, suspect that some of them were already established in the thirteenth century. Properties in *Komogovina*, *Svinica*, *Sernou*, and *Pounje* were all donated to, or purchased by the abbey—it is in fact the donation acts where mills are mentioned.<sup>32</sup>

If one compares these examples with the Hungarian ones, it is easy to note the same pattern in terms of the connection between mills and central places.<sup>33</sup> Though market interest could have been a possible motive, one must be careful with such a conclusion. Mills were not usually built by the abbeys at their own

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theoretically suitable for milling. Henceforth settlement names without a present-day form are indicated in italics.

<sup>28</sup> MOL DL 283 328 /no. 27 (1278); MHEZ, vol. 1, 197–198: “cum omnibus utilitatibus et pertinentiis terrarum seu possessionum eorundem, reservatis cum molendinis et vineis in eisdem terris existentibus apud ipsos, exceptis quatuor locis molendinorum et quindecim vineis, in quibus eligendis pro sue voluntatis arbitrio prefatus dominus abbas habebit plenariam optionem...”

<sup>29</sup> MOL DL 283 328 /no. 29 (1301); Smičiklas, vol. 8, 11–13: The mill appears in the text of the perambulation: “...ad rivuum in Zuyimicham cadens in eundem infra quondam fundum molendini...”

<sup>30</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 24 (1278); Smičiklas, vol. 8, 307–308: “...notum facimus quod divina inspiratione cooperante fidelibus ac salutaribus amicorum... particulam terre mee patrimonialis in Comogovyna circa ecclesiam Sancte Crucis cum ipsa ecclesia et uno molendino...”

<sup>31</sup> MOL DL 283 328/no. 65 (1364); Smičiklas, vol. 13, 379–381: “...quasdam possessiones [Mlynoga, Vizeka, Ztresich] contra crebras prohibitiones procuratoris dicti monasterii...occupassent et easdem destructis ipsarum veris et antiquis metis nunc tenerent occupatus, de quibus duodecim colonos assignari et septem molendina desolari fecissent...”

<sup>32</sup> *Komogovina* and *Svinica* were received as donations, *Pounje* and *Sernou* were purchased.

<sup>33</sup> In *Bachus* the abbey had market rights donated by King Andrew II as early as 1213. *Komogovina* is mentioned as a market town in 1486. It was also an estate centre where a castle is documented in the fifteenth century (1443). See Samu Barabás and Lajos Thallóczy, ed., *Codex Diplomaticus comitum de Frangepanibus. A Frangepán család oklevéltára* vol. 1. (1193–1453), *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* 35. (Budapest: Magyar tudományos Akadémia, 1910), 339. *Svinica* was in the closest vicinity of *Komogovina*. *Sernou* was in the vicinity of *Blina*, the centre of the estate of the *Blinai* family. *Pounje* was situated on the trade route along the *Una*, near to the market place of *Vodicsa* (*Vodičan*). See MOL DL 100 184 (1382).



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expense, but were rather received as part of the foundation or later donations. Accordingly, they are sometimes distant from the monastery and from the central part of the estate. For example, the mills of Szentgotthárd in Zalaszentiván, Győrvar, and Boldogasszonyfalva were all at considerable distances from Szentgotthárd, just like those of Toplica. Both Toplica and Szentgotthárd purchased or acquired these mills from different benefactors much later than the foundations.<sup>34</sup>

Sometimes a favourable natural condition for milling, warm-water springs, for instance, explains why one finds this kind of medieval industry often present there, but probably the relatively larger population of the market towns is a more secure explanation. There must have been a need for their capacity and it was also in the lord's interest to have them there as the income drawn from milling rights would have been considerably higher. If the topographical distribution of mills on Cistercian estates is perceived in a general sense as the result of donations, it might be interpreted quite independently from a "Cistercian" estate policy. Yet, the fact that the monks not only received, but sometimes purchased, mills in market towns shows their interest in linking the estate economy to nearby market places.<sup>35</sup>

One has to note, however, that taking only written sources into account—donation or perambulation charters, where mills commonly appear<sup>36</sup>—would give a false impression of the overall topography of mills. It is revealing, for instance, that in 1364 seven mills were mentioned in three villages of the abbey by chance, on the occasion of a feud. One must think that there may have been mills elsewhere, too, not necessarily appearing in our documents. The central part of the estate seems to be usually the most poorly represented in terms of written documents, nevertheless it was the most important in terms of industrial

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<sup>34</sup> This is, however, not to be regarded as a general tendency, e.g. Klostermarienbergr (Borsmonostor) had several mill sites on its central estates as revealed by the perambulation of the central area. See MOL DL 86 815 (1225), in *Sopron vármegye története, Oklevéltár* (History of Sopron County, Diplomatarium), ed. Imre Nagy (Sopron: 1889), 9–17.

<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to make a brief comparison here between Cistercian and Pauline monasteries. A detailed settlement and landscape study has shown that the Pauline monasteries in Upper Hungary were even more concerned with systematically acquiring mill sites in nearby market towns and they spent large amounts of money on buying them. See Károly Belényesi, *Pálos kolostorok az Abaúji-hegylján* (Pauline friaries in the Abaúj Hegyalja region) (Miskolc: Hermann Ottó Múzeum, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Mills were an important part of the holdings from the financial aspect and usually stood on those watercourses which were also the boundaries of the estates.



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activity.<sup>37</sup> A detailed analysis of landscape and settlement history, combined with fieldwalking or other surveying methods, might recover more mill sites.<sup>38</sup>

## Granges

The topography of granges is a much-discussed general problem of Cistercian estate structure and estate history. Former assumptions about Cistercian economy and the role and function of the granges can be illustrated in the Hungarian literature, for instance by E. Kalász's work on Szentgotthárd abbey.<sup>39</sup> Kalász used both the rules of the general chapter and the archive of the monastery, but the latter was rather overlooked or misinterpreted in favour of the former. Following the *Ordensmythos* and in accordance with the normative sources, he basically outlined the early years of development as a period when granges were established around the monastery on previously uninhabited lands. He argued that granges, being situated explicitly in the central zone within a few kilometres of the monastery, were always run by lay brothers.<sup>40</sup> He also stressed that the Cistercians' main field of activity was—due to the natural setting of granges—forest clearance.<sup>41</sup>

This kind of interpretation of Cistercian economy and estate structure was strongly linked to the rules of the general chapter, to contemporary ideas about the process of foundation, to the self-representation of the Cistercians' as *Rodungorden*, and to the social background. It has now been reconsidered to a great extent,<sup>42</sup> but regardless of the change, the grange economy is still best

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Benoît, "L'espace industriel cistercien à lumière des exemples bourguignons et champenois," in *L'espace cistercien*, ed. Léon Pressouyre (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994), 378–390 (hereafter: Benoît, 1994).

<sup>38</sup> It is probable that there were further mills near the monastery. Unfortunately, detailed documents describing the immediate neighbourhood of the complex have not come down to us. On the basis of an extended approach, however, there was a tendency in the case of the Hungarian abbeys that mills in the central area—especially those in the vicinity of abbeys—did not appear in the medieval records, but only later.

<sup>39</sup> Elek Kalász, *A szentgotthárdi apátság birtokviszonyai és a ciszterci gazdálkodás a középkorban* (The estates of Szentgotthárd Abbey and Cistercian economy in the Middle Ages) (Budapest, 1932) (hereafter: Kalász, 1932).

<sup>40</sup> Kalász, 1932, 22–23.

<sup>41</sup> Kalász, 1932, 28.

<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, Wolfgang Ribbe, "Die Wirtschaftstätigkeit der Zisterzienser im Mittelalter: Agrarwirtschaft," in *Die Zisterzienser Ordensleben zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Katalog zur Ausstellung des Landschaftverbandes Rheinland, Rheinisches Museumsamt, Braunweiler*.



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approached and explained based on the same questions: What were their functions? How were they run? What specific role did they play in monastic economy? How did their location, their spatial relation to the whole estate, reflect this role? and How could grange topography be influenced by structural conditions of the estate?

As far as the Hungarian scholarship is concerned, these problems have not been the subject of a detailed study so far, probably due to the lack of written sources and the complexity of the question. In medieval Hungary only a few charters mention granges in connection to Cistercian abbeys,<sup>43</sup> and the relevance of these documents is sometimes questionable.<sup>44</sup> As for architectural evidence, it seems that with a few exceptions there are no visible remains of grange buildings in Eastern Central Europe.<sup>45</sup> The little excavation evidence at hand<sup>46</sup> is valuable, yet, mostly if one is mainly concerned about the industrial or agricultural activities of the order; it provides only minor and incidental clues for a

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*Schriften des Rheinischen Museumsamtes* 10, ed. Kaspar Elm (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 1981), 203–215, (hereafter: Ribbe, 1981).

<sup>43</sup> Written evidence is known so far for Klostermarienberg (Borsmonostor), Petrovaradin (Pétervárad, Serbia) and Toplica. Hervay, 1984, 64, 65, 136, 140, 182, 184.

<sup>44</sup> In the case of Zwettl, Christoph Sonnlechner noted that there is a papal charter (issued by Innocent II) just one year after the foundation charter, where the central estates, similarly to Klostermarienberg—see Hervay, 1984, 64—are called “granges.” It is improbable that in one year the monastery re-organized the whole area. The papal curia might have used the word grange to denote the central possessions around the monasteries. Accordingly, the “granges” of Klostermarienberg also have to be treated critically.

<sup>45</sup> Katherina Charvatová, “Le modèle économique cistercien et son application pratique en Bohême,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 30 (1987): 65–70; Katherina Charvatová, “Mindful of Reality, Faithful to Traditions, Development of Bohemian Possessions of the Cistercian Order from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in *L’espace cistercien*, ed. Léon Pressouyre (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1994), 177–184 (hereafter: Charvatová, 1994).

<sup>46</sup> The presence of a grange is probably attested by an archaeological investigation in Stankovac near Toplica. The results are unknown to me at this time. See Zorislav Horvat, “Neke cinjenice o cistercitskom samostanu i crkvi u Topuskom” (Some data on the Cistercian monastery in Toplica), *Prilozi Instituta za Arheologiju u Zagrebu* 13–14 (1996/1997): 121–134, esp. 122. Another probable grange site is Kovácsi-puszta near Pilis, where field surveys, excavation materials, and the site location might support this suggestion. See István Torma, ed. *Magyarország Régészeti Topográfiája, vol. 7, Pest megye régészeti topográfiája: A budai és szentendrei járás*. (Archaeological topography of Hungary. Archaeological topography of Pest County: Buda and Szentendre districts), (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986).



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topographical analysis. Accordingly, if one has to rely on documents alone, the problem of the physical definition of a “grange” immediately arises. Does the term refer to a whole settlement or settlements completely turned into a grange or to a certain part of a settlement’s boundary?<sup>47</sup> The answer by all means requires an interdisciplinary approach, combining aerial photography, landscape survey, the collection of cartographical and place name evidence, and so on. A more elaborate “micro”-topography—like that presented by Colin Platt<sup>48</sup>—would go beyond the scope of the present study, thus I will restrict my investigation here to the analysis of written documents and address mainly the large-scale distribution of granges, also drawing on comparative examples.

Studies on Western European Cistercian estates often point out that the idealised model of grange economy is sometimes not far from reality.<sup>49</sup> Due to the significant role of the lay brethren and for practical reasons of management (the importance of the property was usually in reciprocal relation to its distance), grange economy was indeed typically established in the central area. C. Platt argued that Cistercians “for the first time set about assembling the more important of their properties into easily managed units, each to be controlled by a team of lay brethren.”<sup>50</sup> He observed the organisation of granges in close connection to the social background, specifically to the early development of the estate. It was also argued that granges could be organised sometimes with the

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<sup>47</sup> The same problem was stressed by K. Andermann in the case of the Maulbronn granges. See Kurt Andermann, “Zur Besitz- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Klosters Maulbronn,” in *Maulbronn. Zur 850-jährigen Geschichte des Zisterzienserklosters*, ed. Kurt Andermann et al. (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 1997), 31–42. See also Winfried Schich, “Grangien und Stadthöfe der Zisterzienserklöster östlich der mittleren Elbe bis zum 14. Jahrhundert”, in *Zisterziensische Wirtschaft und Kulturlandschaft, Studien zur Geschichte, Kunst und Kultur der Zisterzienser 3*, ed. Winfried Schich (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 1998), 64–98, (hereafter: Schich, 1998), esp. 67.

<sup>48</sup> Colin Platt, *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England* (London: Macmillan, 1969) (hereafter: Platt, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Maulbronn settled on uninhabited land and established granges there. Between 1150 and 1300 the number of settlements in the area grew by approximately 50 percent as a result of the Cistercian colonisation activity. Change was the most impressive in the vicinity of the monastic site, where the monks even re-located settlements. See Peter Rückert, “Die Bedeutung Maulbronn für die Siedlungsgenese zwischen Stromberg und Schwarzwald im Mittelalter,” and Kurt Andermann, “Zur Besitz- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Klosters Maulbronn,” in *Maulbronn. Zur 850-jährigen Geschichte des Zisterzienserklosters*, ed. Kurt Andermann et al. (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss, 1997), 15–29, and 31–42.

<sup>50</sup> Platt, 1969, 71.



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purpose of being the centres of those estates which were situated at a distance and did not have a direct connection to the monastic site. W. Schich has also noted that there are two different sub-groups of granges: those lying in the vicinity of the monastery and those lying at a greater distance.<sup>51</sup>

Whereas an idealised model can be a telling one, for instance, in the case of Maulbronn, case studies on the topography of the granges of, for instance, Dargun<sup>52</sup> and Preully<sup>53</sup> demonstrate a further aspect influencing their distribution. Granges were not only to be found in the central area, but also along nearby trade routes. As an early twelfth-century foundation, the history of Preully abbey reflects moreover a chronological difference between granges with central and marginal positions. The central granges were founded in the earliest period (1118–1163), while more distant granges along the trade routes (still within a radius of 10–30 kilometres) were all established later (1213–1258).<sup>54</sup> The change in the structure of the estate and in the grange-system in this case was not only the consequence of the subsequent acquisitions and the growth of the estate in size, but probably also due to the changing importance of economic opportunities offered by the developing urban centres of the thirteenth century.

When approaching the question of grange economy in Eastern Central Europe, the local historical and social circumstances also have to be considered, for they could have offered a different setting that influenced the development of the monastic properties. It is often stressed that the role of already inhabited land (villages and consequently tithes) was more important, and the bias concerning the duality (or mixed character) of the Cistercian economy definitely shifted to rent-paying villages in Poland,<sup>55</sup> Bohemia,<sup>56</sup> and Hungary.<sup>57</sup> It is also

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<sup>51</sup> Schich, 1998, 75.

<sup>52</sup> For Dargun see Gerhard Schlegel, *Das Zisterzienserkloster Dargun, 1172–1552, Studien zur Katholischen Bistums- und Klostergeschichte* (Leipzig: St Benno Verlag, 1980), 10–13.

<sup>53</sup> For Preully see Nathalie Picart, “Le domaine de Preully,” in *L’espace cistercien*, ed. Léon Pressouyre (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifique, 1994), 568–580, (hereafter: Picart, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> Picart, 1994, 573. The granges were to be found along a north-south axis, according to the route system. They connected the area with the Champagne fairs.

<sup>55</sup> The role of villages and tithes is stressed by Józef Dobosz and Andrej Marek Wyrwa, “Działalność gospodarcza cystersów na ziemiach polskich—zarys problemu” (Cistercian economy in the Polish lands. An outline) in *Monasticon Cisterciense Poloniae 1, Dzieje i kultura męskich klasztorów cysterskich na ziemiach polskich i dawnej Rzeczypospolitej od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych* (History and culture of male Cistercian monasteries in the Polish lands and the Old Republic from the Middle Ages until the present), ed. Andrzej Marek Wyrwa, Jerzy Strzelczyk, and Krzysztof Kaczmarek (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1999), 189–212, (hereafter: Dobosz–Wyrwa, 1999), esp. 211.



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noted that there was a difference between “western” and “eastern” granges in terms of their size and number.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the structural aspects of Eastern Central European Cistercian estates have not been investigated appropriately so far and the spatial distribution of the granges has usually been outside of the range of research. Only the estate of Plasy abbey in Bohemia has been studied thoroughly by K. Charvátová. She has argued that the granges of the abbey were all established in already existing settlements, in previously cultivated areas, despite the fact that the monastery had sufficient uninhabited lands suitable for agricultural expansion. Uninhabited areas were settled by villagers whom the abbey relocated after establishing granges on their holdings. Accordingly, the distribution pattern of granges seems to be quite scattered in this case. One would say that it reflects a sort of “irregularity” if compared to the Western examples, which are more identical to the ideals presented by the rules of the general chapter. Charvátová has also argued that granges were not established in the early period, but later, when forest clearance and the re-location of village populations had already taken place. Thus, not only the distribution pattern, but also the process of estate development diverges from what would have been experienced in Western European cases where the organisation of granges usually followed immediately after the foundation.

Granges of Toplica abbey are documented at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century in Bruchina (1211, 1274, 1278, 1302), Graduša (1242, 1334), Bojna (1279, 1334), *Grangya* (1334), and *Krala* (1260).<sup>59</sup> In Stankovac archaeological excavation attested the presence of a grange. In fact, Toplica is by far the best-documented abbey if one compares these data with

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See also Grzegorz Żabiński, “Mogila and Henrików: A Comparative Economic History of Cistercian Monasteries within their Social Context (Up to the End of the Thirteenth Century),” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2005), 123.

<sup>56</sup> Charvátová, 1994, 179. The papal confirmation charter of Plasy abbey from 1250 mentions 47 villages, 10 churches, and 11 granges.

<sup>57</sup> For the foundation charters of Hungarian abbeys see Hervay, 1984. The Toplica estate, as described in 1211, was without doubt not abandoned land in the back of beyond, yet most surely had uninhabited areas as well.

<sup>58</sup> See e.g. Ribbe, 1981.

<sup>59</sup> For Bruchina see MOL DL 283 328/no. 39, 40, 41. For Graduša see MOL DL 283 328/no. 23 and MHEZ, vol. 2, 76. For Bojna see Samu Barabás and Lajos Thallóczy, ed., *A Blagay-család oklevéltára. Codex diplomaticus comitum de Blagay* (The archives of the Blagay family) (Budapest, 1897), 36–38. See also MHEZ, vol. 2, 76. For Krala see MOL DL 283 328/no. 18. For Grangya see MHEZ, vol. 2, 76. These charters are the earliest ones where the names of these settlements appear, e.g. *Grangya* and its St. Michael’s church (or chapel?) was first mentioned in 1334.



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those on others connected to Hungarian abbeys. One should be careful, however, with interpreting the data from the written sources in the framework of the development patterns of Cistercian estates described above, since the reconstruction of a topographical history of the settlement pattern of Zagreb county still awaits systematic landscape survey. The relevance of comparative examples for the present study might well be that grange distribution is best considered and understood not simply as a result of a Cistercian “masterplan,” but as a subject which has to be investigated in close connection to the structural and historical development of the overall estate.

The distribution pattern of the Toplica granges in the main might resemble the one observed in Plasy. Again, a congruent central zone is missing; the grange in Boyna is the only one situated in the direct neighbourhood of the monastery, and all other granges are scattered within a 20–30 km radius, which is the usual distance limit for the central area.<sup>60</sup> A hypothetical explanation of this pattern might be the functional connection of granges with the market places in their vicinity. *Krala* was situated in the vicinity of Bihać, along the trade route leading southward in the valley of the Una River to the town of Zadar (*Zára*) on the coast. In 1260 Bihać is referred to as a fortified royal town (*civitas*). Bruchina grange was in the neighbourhood of a market place (*forum*) documented between Maya and Bruchina in 1302. The grange in Gradusa was situated next to Komogovina, mentioned as a market town (*oppidum*) in 1486. In 1515 Gradusa itself is also mentioned as a market town.<sup>61</sup> *Grangya* was located near Kladusa, similarly a market town, but is also mentioned as a market place where the abbot collected tolls as late as 1481. Stankovecz was located near Brkisevina, also referred to as a market place in 1481.<sup>62</sup>

Although the spatial relations just described probably explain a great deal about the historical circumstances of the establishment and about the development of granges, there are many practical problems making the interpretations of their genesis difficult. Due to the lack of written sources before the Cistercians’ arrival, the settlement pattern and settlement hierarchy of the area in the early period remain obscure; even the first few decades in the history of the abbey are virtually missing. Thus, the structural hierarchy of the settlement pattern of the former royal estate can only be approached in a general way. The territory should have had settlements for the service people and for the

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<sup>60</sup> Benoît, 1994, 378–390.

<sup>61</sup> MOL DL 31 006: “item castellum Gradyza cum oppido similiter Gradyza ac possessiones Babrownycza, Zelcze.”

<sup>62</sup> Ivan Tkalčić, ed., *Monumenta Historica Liberae Civitatis Zagrabiae* vol. 2 (Zagreb: 1894), 405–408.



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privileged *iobagiones castri* and also market places. Some of the nearby settlements were centres of territorial administration: Sisak, for instance, is referred to in the thirteenth-century documents as *comitatus*, similarly to Gora. Yet, this is far too little to explain the unusual distribution of granges; the written sources disguise many aspects of the Cistercians' activity—namely structural or demographical changes in the settlement pattern initiated by the abbey, assarting, other kinds of landscape management, and so on. Thus, in order to assess the development of the settlement system and the problem of grange development in a more elaborate way one has to have archaeological and other kinds of data as well. The historical-geographical development of the area must be studied further, which might confirm the above suggestion.

In all probability, written sources documenting the existence of the granges are later than the first half of the thirteenth century. In the foundation charter, only Bruchina is mentioned as the first grange of the abbey (*prima grangia*) and no others are named. Can the fact that no further grange appears in the documents until the second half of the thirteenth century support the idea of a late development of the granges, manorial farms, and demesne economy—a development similarly observable in Płasy or in Poland?<sup>63</sup> Hypothetically, the expansion of the grange economy of Toplica at that time might be connected with the occasional data from the same period on purchasing servants.<sup>64</sup> Besides, growth and innovation was not typical in the early years after the foundation due to manpower shortages. An insufficient number of lay brothers could definitely have played a part in the vicissitudes of early settlement projects. Servants and hired workers could have provided a solution, yet abbeys had to invest money in them. Interestingly, other sources show that there was no particular concern about securing manpower in other ways. Kalász has stressed, for instance, that the feudal duties of villagers toward the monasteries were mainly defined in terms of money, not in terms of labour.<sup>65</sup>

Since the territory of Toplica abbey was large enough, the Cistercians could have had, in fact, various opportunities to decide where to locate their granges or manorial courts. The reasons why they chose this or that place could be similarly various and should be further analysed with other methods. One has to remember that the distribution of granges can develop along various economic aspects of estate management. Granges could have different concerns according to different natural resources and possibilities of land usage. Marshland areas or

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<sup>63</sup> Dobosz–Wyrwa, 1999, 212.

<sup>64</sup> MOL 283 328/no. 73, 74 (1308, 1269). These two documents attest that the abbey purchased and received a number of servants.

<sup>65</sup> Kalász, 1917, 50.



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alluvial valleys were, for instance, better for harvesting crops, while granges with marginally arable soils were suitable for sheep breeding.<sup>66</sup> For a better understanding of functional questions one has to make use of various methodological approaches, exploring different contexts of grange economy. The example presented by Christoph Sonnlechner for Zwettl, where the monks experienced the limitations of the local environment and re-structured their granges in order to have more appropriate ways of exploitation, can serve as a useful comparison. This dynamism underlines that estate development can be far more complex than the few aspects considered above.

Particular aspects, such as the local natural environment of settlement boundaries, settled or unsettled areas, the settlement hierarchy, and the spatial relation between grange and village could not be taken into account in the present discussion. On the basis of the few valuable pieces of information derived from the written sources only some general elements of the estate structure could be highlighted. The Cistercians settled near important river courses and trade routes, and—as was usual for Cistercian estates—the monastery was connected to them by relatively distant “satellite” settlements. Toplica had a town house in Senj (Zenng) which served as a kind of trading post, demonstrating far-reaching commercial interest. The number of mills and granges of the abbey was relatively high. Their spatial distribution and date of appearance suggest that market economy became more relevant in the economic development of the monastery from the second half of the thirteenth century on. The milling industry, established in nearby market towns, was likely to have been an important source of income. Granges were probably not established until the second half of the thirteenth century. Their scattered pattern might be the result of the insufficient number of lay brothers, whereby central area was necessarily less important and granges were run individually with the help of local servants. Sources also shed light on the importance of a market economy: the distribution of the granges suggests that their production was beyond the practical needs of the community, and this should be seen rather from the perspective of the secondary economy.

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<sup>66</sup> These two different types of granges were already mentioned by Platt 1969, 71.

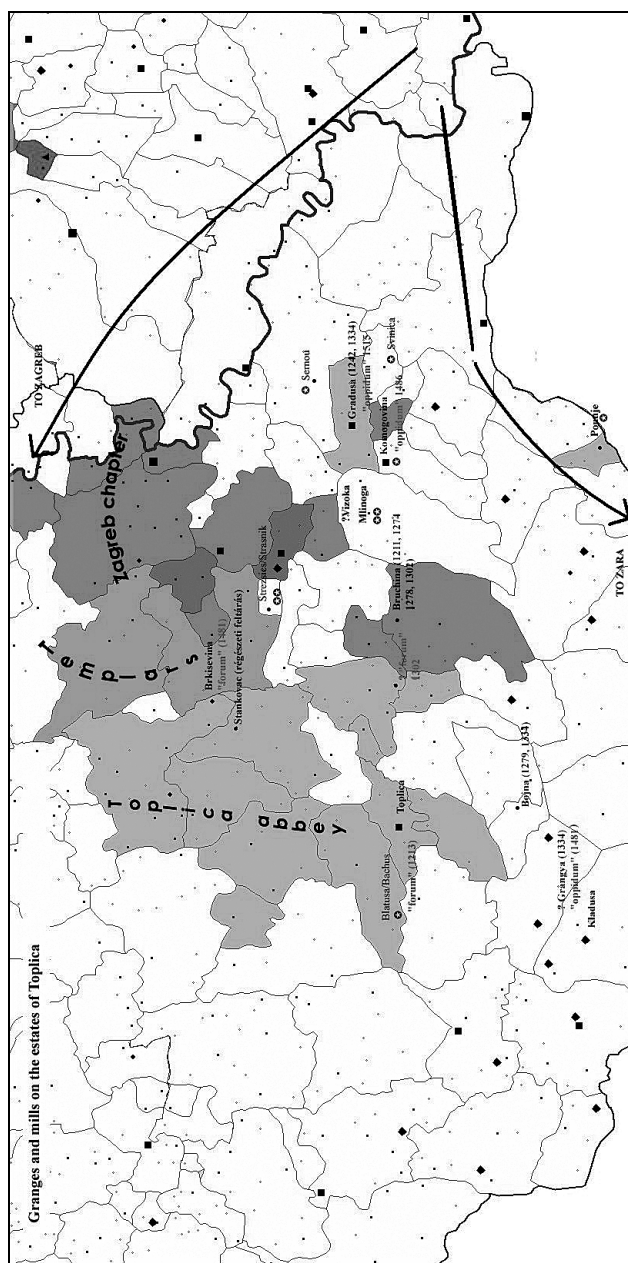


Fig. 1. Granges and Mills on the Estates of Toplica Abbey.