

Common Design Sources at Canterbury and Esztergom: A Case for Margaret Capet as Artistic Patron*

Matthew Palmer

Introduction

In our recent paper “The English Cathedral: From Description to Analysis” we suggested that Hungarian medieval architecture provides rich pickings for students of English engaged in the study of what is often called Early English architecture.¹ In the pages which follow we would like to test the validity of such a statement by investigating the rôle of Margaret Capet (1158–1198), as elder daughter of Louis VII of France and Constance of Castile, in transmitting artistic ideas into Hungary. That a French princess should be of interest to us here is explained by the fact that Margaret Capet was wife of both Henry (1155–1183), eldest son of Henry II of England, otherwise known as the Young King on account of his being crowned king of England in 1170 in his father’s lifetime, and Béla III of Hungary (1148–1196). Her candidacy as a possible patron of the arts is based on the fact that her arrival in Hungary in the summer of 1186 coincided with major building operations at the cathedral and the (royal) palace in Esztergom.

The Gothic Reception in Hungary

Despite the correspondence between the date of Margaret’s arrival and feverish architectural activities in Esztergom surprisingly little attention has been paid to the possible active involvement of Béla III’s second wife.²

* This paper aims to be the first in a number of case studies illustrating the virtue of adopting an intercultural approach when dealing with certain debates within the domain of British Cultural Studies.

¹ Palmer, Matthew, “The English Cathedral: From Description to Analysis”, *Eger Journal of English Studies* (Eszterházy Károly Főiskola, Eger, Liceum Kiadó, 2004), p.82

² Building activities at Esztergom are generally attributed to Béla III in the literature. References to Margaret Capet can be found in relation to the reception of the Gothic style in Hungary in Takács Imre, “A gótika műhelyei a Dunántúlon a 13–14. században”, *Pannonia*

Indeed, when Margaret Capet is mentioned as a possible transmitter of western artistic ideas such suggestions are usually couched in the vaguest of terms due to lack of concrete evidence.³ Instead, art historians have tended to trace the movement of ideas to Hungary via other means: the movement of workshops from France via intermediary sites,⁴ Parisian-trained scholars,⁵ and the influence of the monastic orders.⁶ On the issue of patronage, the issue of the possible existence of a “royal workshop” has aroused debate,⁷ while the identification of patrons has been pared down to social groups

Regia (eds. Mikó Árpád and Takács Imre, Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 1992), p. 23; and Soltész István, *Árpád-házi királynék* (Budapest, Gabo, 1999), pp. 140–141. Tolnai, Gergely in “The Hungarian National Museum’s Esztergom Castle Museum Collection”, *Two Hundred Years’ History of the Hungarian National Museum and its Collections*, (Budapest, Hungarian National Museum, 2004, p. 486) goes so far as mentioning the involvement of an architect in Margaret’s retinue in the building of the chapel. He suggests, however, that building activities at the palace were started during the 1170s and proceeded in several campaigns. Entz Géza, in *Die Kunst der Gotik* (München, Emil Vollmer Verlag, 1981, p. 61), suggests the possible involvement of masons who accompanied Margaret to Esztergom, albeit on the instigation of Béla III.

³ Takács, op. cit., mentions Béla’s marriage to Margaret in isolation, attributing the arrival of French ideas to architects from the Ile-de-France and those employed on the construction of the Cistercian abbey of Pilis (founded 1184). While suggesting architects came during Béla’s lifetime Takács does not venture to say who invited them.

⁴ Marosi, Ernő, in *Die Anfänge der Gotik in Ungarn: Esztergom in der Kunst des 12.–13. Jahrhunderts* (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1984, p. 169), traces the arrival of a continual stream of workshops to Hungary from the end of the 12th century in which sites such as Bamberg Cathedral and the Cistercian foundation in Tisnov are seen as intermediary stopping off points in the relentless movement of ideas from Reims. This is a topic Marosi also addresses in “Künstlerischer Austausch”, *Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte Berlin*, 15.–20. Juli 1992 (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1992, pp. 16–19), where he addresses the question of the transmission of groundplans and building types.

⁵ Marosi Ernő, *Esztergom, királyi vár* (Budapest, Tájak–Korok–Múzeumok Kiskönyvtára, 1979), p. 14; Kristó Gyula–Makk Ferenc–Marosi Ernő, *III. Béla emlékezete* (Budapest, Magyar Helikon, 1981), pp. 31–32; Zolnay László, *A középkori Esztergom* (Budapest, Gondolat, 1983), p. 162; Marosi Ernő–Wehli Tünde, *Az Árpád-kor művészeti emlékei* (Budapest, Balassi Kiadó, 1997), p. 41.

⁶ On the possible architectural influence of the Cistercians during the late 12th century: Gieysztor, Alexander, “Cultural Interchanges”, *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1970), p. 190. This is not, however, an opinion held by many.

⁷ Martindale, Andrew, in *The Rise of the Artist* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1972), notes that one cannot assume that all medieval monarchs had painters in their entourages. While Marosi rejects the idea of a permanent royal workshop in Hungary at this time, preferring to stress the importance of the court and the chapel royal as institutions which both attracted and commissioned artists (in Mikó and Takács, op. cit. pp. 156–7), Zolnay suggests that a whole army of Greek, French, German and Hungarian master builders were working at Béla III’s service (op. cit. p. 161).

rather than individuals through lack of written and archaeological evidence.⁸ Thus far little effort has been made to test Margaret Capet's credentials as an artistic patron. It is the aim of this paper to make a tentative step in this direction by placing special emphasis on the life of Margaret Capet prior to her arrival in Hungary.⁹

Margaret Capet's Reputation

In the maelstrom surrounding the courts of her father Louis VII, her parents-in-law Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and her first husband, Henry the Young King, Margaret Capet's name is usually associated with the Vexin question (see Fig. 1),¹⁰ and a supposed affair with the leader of her husband's household William Marshal.¹¹ Her credentials as a possible patron, however, are tarnished by the character of her husband, the Young King,¹² and the reputation of the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, where she was brought up and where she spent some of her adulthood.¹³ Margaret's

⁸ Entz Géza, *A középkori Magyarország gótikus építészete* (manuscript), Hungarian Academy of Arts doctoral dissertation (Budapest, 1976).

⁹ My most frequently used secondary sources are: Hallam, Elizabeth (general ed.), *The Plantagenet Chronicles* (London, Guild Publishing, 1989); Weir Alison, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: By the Wrath of God, Queen of England* (London, Pimlico, 2000) and Karl Lajos, "Margit királyné, III Béla király neje", *Századok* (Budapest, 1910 I. füzet), pp. 49–52.

¹⁰ The County of Vexin, the northern (Norman) part of which was centred on the castle of Gisors, was, like the County of Perche, an important border province standing where Normandy met the French royal lands. In 1144 Geoffrey Plantagenet ceded Gisors to Louis VII of France in return for French recognition of Geoffrey's conquest of Normandy. The rest of Norman Vexin was given to the French in 1151. It was in 1158 that Louis promised Henry II the Norman Vexin as part of Margaret Capet's dowry, something that was to remain a bone of contention throughout her lifetime.

¹¹ My thanks to Kathleen Thompson, Lindy Grant and Jane Martindale for these observations.

¹² On the Young King's character, Giraldus Cambrensis (c.1146-c.1220/23) says of him that he was "rich, noble, lovable, eloquent, handsome, gallant, every way attractive, a little lower than the angels – all these gifts he turned to the wrong side", while Walter Map (c.1137-c.1209/1210), describes him, "a prodigy of unfaith, a lovely palace of sin". Both quoted by A.L. Poole in *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta* (Oxford, OUP), p. 341. For more on Henry the Young King's character and the company he kept see: Crouch, David, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147–1219* (London, Longman, 1990), pp. 38–39. However, such guilt by association is presumptuous as Henry and Margaret were betrothed aged three and six months in August 1158, and mutual compatibility was not an issue. Henry II was more concerned with establishing a dynastic claim on the Kingdom of France, one which was to founder with the birth of Margaret's half-brother Philip Augustus in 1165.

¹³ Legend has it that Eleanor's court at Poitiers was a centre of chivalry, patronage and troubadour culture, and a place where courtly love flourished. The Courts of Love over

perceived weaknesses are further heightened by her sharing the fate of those other princesses entwined in Henry II's dynastic intrigues held hostage by the king for longer or shorter periods of time (Fig. 2).¹⁴ But was Margaret really so shallow, so capricious, so powerless, so lacking in culture?¹⁵ Is there any evidence to suggest that Margaret was in fact a cultured person to the extent of being the driving force behind the building operations going on at the court of her second husband?

Margaret's Marriage to Béla III

Henry the Young King died aged 28 on 11th June 1183 in Turenne in Gascony during a dispute with one of his younger brothers, Richard (the Lionheart), over his right as Duke of Normandy to demand the homage and allegiance of Richard as Duke of Aquitaine. The following year, Anna (Agnes) of Châtillon, wife of Béla III, also passed away. Following Young Henry's death Margaret returned to the court of her brother Philip Augustus, who, together with Henry II, then went about deciding what would become of the County of Vexin, which had formed part of Margaret's dowry in 1158 in the marriage agreement made on behalf of six-month-old Margaret and three-year-old Henry.¹⁶ After an initial agreement on 6th December 1183, in

which Eleanor has been said to have presided are now considered to have been a literary conceit invented between 1174 and 1196 by Andreas Capellanus. See Weir, *op. cit.*, pp. 181–2.

¹⁴ Gillingham, John, *The Angevin Empire* (London, Arnold, 2000), p. 122: "If Louis VII had died without a son – as for a long time seemed likely – the crown of France could well have fallen to an Angevin prince, the Young King, husband of Louis's elder daughter Margaret or, if she died, to the husband of the younger daughter Alice whom Henry II kept in his custody for twenty years". Margaret herself was also held captive following the dismantling of Eleanor of Aquitaine's court in Poitiers on 12th May 1174, where she was resident at the time. She was then taken by Henry II, along with his daughter Joanna, her sister Alice, Emma of Anjou, Constance of Brittany and Alice of Maurienne to England, where she was imprisoned with Alice and Constance at Devizes Castle.

¹⁵ Soltész also challenges this view, but fails to reveal his sources (*op. cit.*, pp. 138–9).

¹⁶ According to the dowry agreement the dowry was not to be officially handed over until 1164, unless the marriage had been solemnised earlier with the consent of the Church. In the meantime Norman Vexin was kept in the custody of the Knights Templar. In the event Henry was betrothed to Margaret in 1160, shortly after the death of Margaret's mother Constance. The fact that the marriage took place earlier than expected and without his consent, a condition stated in the marriage contract, became a source of grievance to Louis VII, prompting him to strengthen the defences of Chaumont. For his part Henry II sent troops into Norman Vexin, besieging Chaumont and forcing Louis VII and his allies to flee. Henry and Margaret were married in Rouen on 5th November, "as yet little children in their cradles" in the presence of Henry of Pisa and William of Pavia, cardinal priests and legates of the Holy See.

which Henry was allowed to keep the lands based on his claim that he could prove they belonged to Eleanor, a second agreement was made on 11th March 1186, attended by Henry II, Philip Augustus, Margaret's half-sister Mary countess of Champagne and Margaret, when it was decided that Margaret would be compensated financially for the loss of her dowry and marriage portion.¹⁷

On the death of his first wife, Anna of Châtillon, Béla initially considered marrying the Byzantine princess, Theodora Comnena.¹⁸ Instead in 1185 Béla III petitioned Henry II for a possible marriage to his granddaughter Matilda (1171–1210), daughter of Henry's daughter Matilda and Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, who had moved into exile in England in 1180.¹⁹ When Henry II proved loath to provide an answer, Béla's envoys went instead to Paris to ask for Margaret Capet's hand in marriage.²⁰

For Béla, marriages to either Matilda or Margaret would have constituted an anti-German alliance,²¹ but Henry II's hesitation in the case of the former may be explained by the fact that while Béla III would have borne the cost of supporting Matilda, Henry II would not have gained anything from it politically, something which was the case when she eventually married Geoffrey, count of logistically important Perche in July 1189. Béla's choice of Matilda as a prospective wife had been bold, as she was according to Kathleen Thompson "the most eligible of King Henry's female relations", Henry II's daughters all having been married by this time. Whether a marriage to Henry's widowed daughter-in-law rather than his granddaughter constituted a climb down for Béla III is not clear. On 24th August 1186 Margaret went to Paris to be married to Béla III, an event about

¹⁷ Karl, op. cit., p.51; Hallam, op. cit., p. 176; Weir, op. cit., p. 236 and quoted in full by Fejérpataki László in *III Béla magyar király emlékezete* (ed. Forster Gyula, Budapest, 1900), p. 349.

¹⁸ Fodor István in *Mesélő krónikák* episode 61 (Hungarian Radio, 13th June, 2000); Kristó Gyula, *Magyarország története 895–1301* (Budapest, Osiris, 1998), p. 177. Relevant document quoted in Kristó–Makk–Marosi, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁹ Karl, op. cit., p. 51. Béla III was not Matilda's only suitor, as William the Lion of Scotland also sought her hand in marriage. She eventually married Count Geoffrey III of the Perche in July 1189. See Kathleen Thompson, "Matilda of the Perche (1171–1210) the Expression of Authority in Name, Style and Seal", *Tabularia* (Caen, 2003).

²⁰ Soltész claims marriage negotiations went on between Béla III, the Archabbot of Cîteaux and the Provost of Paris during their visit to Hungary in 1183 (op. cit., p. 140).

²¹ On a deliberately anti-German marriage alliance see Makk Ferenc, *Korai magyar történelmi lexikon (9–14. század)*, (chief ed. Krisztó Gyula, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1994), p. 443; Kristó, op. cit., p. 171. A marriage to a daughter of Henry the Lion would have been deemed anti-German at this time as a result of the quarrel between Henry and Frederick Barbarossa at the end of 1181 which forced Henry to go into exile in England.

which chroniclers record that Béla was capable of competing with Richard the Lionheart in magnificence.²²

Henry II's rationale in compensating Margaret at Gisors was to get her off the marriage market and clear of a possibly damaging marriage to one of his troublesome sons, who had been in a state of rebellion on and off since 1173. At the same time Henry II was also in the process of stalling Margaret's sister Alice's prospective marriages to his sons Richard or John.²³ According to the Second Gisors Agreement, Henry II would have to give Margaret an annual endowment of 2750 Angevin pounds,²⁴ but in the event, at a third meeting which took place near Nonancourt on 17th February 1187, Henry failed to pay the promised allowance to Margaret claiming that in remarrying, she had broken the terms of the contract. This, and Henry II's decision not to allow Richard to marry Alice, led Philip Augustus to leave the meeting and prepare for war. It was at this point that the Third Crusade intervened.

Looking at the unrolling events, it appears that Henry II exploited the presence of Béla III's envoys to marry Margaret off to Béla III and that Margaret's cash allowance, which, according to the March 11th 1186 agreement, would be handled by Philip Augustus, would form a "cash dowry" to be taken or transferred to Hungary. That Henry II was being disingenuous in referring to a non-marriage clause in the endowment agreement is proved by the fact that before the Second Gisors Agreement he would already have known of the forthcoming marriage to Béla III. Indeed, it was a marriage he positively supported,²⁵ something proved partly by documentary evidence that Béla III had sent three hundred marks to Margaret for the saying of an annual mass at the tomb of Henry the Young at Rouen Cathedral on the anniversary of his death (June 11th), a document Fejérpataki dates to between 1st January and Easter 1186.²⁶ Margaret was therefore deliberately cheated out of her allowance once she was in distant Hungary, and hadn't deliberately forfeited her allowance for a marriage to Béla III.²⁷ The fact that it was Béla III who financed Henry the Young King's memorial mass suggests that Béla's payment was made at a time when Margaret was short of funds prior to the first half-yearly payment on

²² Takács, *op. cit.*, p. 22. The chroniclers were André de Chapelain and Drouart la Vache.

²³ Henry II held Alice hostage for twenty years and was accused by some of his contemporaries of keeping her as his mistress.

²⁴ By means of comparison, the Norman revenue for 1180 was 27,000 Angevin pounds.

²⁵ Karl, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

²⁶ Fejérpataki, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

²⁷ Karl, *op. cit.*, p. 51

the fourth Sunday after Easter.²⁸ One can assume that Margaret left Paris with at least half of her first annual allowance.²⁹

Margaret's Dowry

The progress of Margaret's "great train" across Europe would have born similarities to her former sister-in-law Matilda's journey to Saxony on her marriage to Henry the Lion, when the Emperor's envoys arrived in England in July 1166 to escort the eleven-year-old princess to Germany. As Alison Weir writes, using evidence from the Pipe Rolls:

Her parents had provided her with a magnificent trousseau, which included clothing worth £63, 'two large silken cloths and two tapestries, and one cloth of samite and twelve sable skins' as well as twenty pairs of saddlebags, twenty chests, seven saddles gilded and covered with scarlet, and thirty-four packhorses. The total cost amounted to £4,500, which was equal to almost one-quarter of England's entire annual revenue, and was raised by the imposition of various taxes, authorised by the King.³⁰

Although Margaret Capet moved from the epicentre of Plantagenet intrigue to the court of Béla III on the fringes of western Christianity,³¹ the kingdom of Hungary was at this time on one of the well-worn pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land. Indeed, it was in 1147 on the Second Crusade that Margaret's father, Louis VII, then married to her future mother-in-law Eleanor of Aquitaine, became Béla's elder brother Stephen's godfather.³²

²⁸ According to agreement of 11th March 1186 the annual allowance would be paid in two instalments, the first on the fourth Sunday after Easter to the Templars at St Vaubourg, who then had eight days in which to get it to Margaret. The second installment was to be made in Paris on 1st January.

²⁹ It has been suggested that a 15th-16th copy of a manuscript referring to Béla III's finances was compiled in 1185 on behalf of the Capets in order to prove Béla's financial credentials prior to a possible marriage to Margaret. This a view which has subsequently been rejected. See: Kristó, op. cit., p. 179. For the text itself see Forster, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

³⁰ Weir, op. cit., p. 175.

³¹ Szűcs Jenő, *Vázlat Európa három történelmi régiójáról* (Budapest, Magvető, 1983), pp. 10–11.

³² This was an event reported in a letter sent back to Abbot Suger. The Second Crusade also witnessed Eleanor of Aquitaine's famous affair with Raymond of Provence in Antioch, a transgression which led to her divorce from Louis VII in 1152 and subsequent marriage to Henry II. It is interesting to note that one of the conditions for the marriage agreement affecting Margaret and Henry in 1158 was that Margaret would under no circumstances be brought up by her mother-in-law. Amid the rancour which followed their betrothal, Henry II took Margaret into his household as hostage, where she would be in the care of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Shortly after her arrival in Hungary, Margaret's former father-in-law was to ask permission from her new husband, on behalf of both himself and Margaret's half-brother Philip Augustus, for safe passage across the Kingdom of Hungary on what was to become the Third Crusade.³³

Having arrived in Esztergom after a journey lasting in the region of a month and a half Margaret would have continued to find herself in familiar architectural surroundings, despite having slipped from being titular queen of England, duchess of Normandy and Anjou.³⁴ Taking into consideration the dated (1156) consecration of the Altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which lay to the west of the choir, art historians believe that the reconstruction of the cathedral of St Adalbert in Esztergom was a long and slow campaign which was only completed with the construction of the narthex during the period Margaret was resident at the neighbouring royal palace.³⁵ The archaeological remains suggest a building bearing the same stylistic traits, and using the same acanthus-leaf motifs, as the great contemporary building projects of the Ile-de-France (St Denis, Noyon, Laon /pre 1160/, Sens/pre 1164/, Senlis) and beyond (St Étienne, Troyes /1160s/).³⁶

Despite being in her late twenties when she married Béla III, Margaret did not bear him any children, despite the fact that Béla III cut a fine figure.³⁷ One can read into this what one wants. As Béla already had two male heirs, Imre and Andrew, there was no compulsion to produce more.³⁸ Margaret had born Henry the Young King a child, William on 19th June 1177, only for the infant to die three days later.³⁹ Perhaps, one can glean some information on the state of Margaret and Béla's marriage from Margaret's decision after Béla's death to take the Cross and go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In doing so she was not only keeping a promise made by her first husband, which he himself had failed to carry out before

³³ Published in Kristó–Makk–Marosi, pp. 74-75. Henry II, however, died on July 6th 1189 before he could fulfil his vow. In the meantime his son Richard had taken the Cross without his father's permission at the new cathedral of Tours. He was to sail to the Holy Land from Sicily, via Cyprus.

³⁴ The calculation for the length of the journey is based on Gillingham's (op. cit. p. 72) observation that the wagons of a household would have travelled at an average 20 miles a day. Although we do not know her exact route, what we know of the routes taken by pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, suggests she probably followed the course of the Danube, presumably having either crossed northern France, or gone along the Maas and down the Rhine.

³⁵ Marosi, in Takács and Wehli, op. cit., p. 154.

³⁶ Marosi, op. cit., 1984, pp. 54–58.

³⁷ For the appearance of Béla III: Kristó–Makk–Marosi, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁸ Anna (Agnes) Châtillon in fact bore him four boys: Imre /b.1174/, Andrew /b.1177/, as well as Salamon and István, who died in infancy.

³⁹ Weir, op. cit., p. 227.

his untimely death,⁴⁰ but going some way to fulfilling Béla's unrealised vow to launch an independent crusade.⁴¹ In his will Béla gave his son Andrew II certain castles and large properties as well as an enormous sum of money in order that he could go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁴² In the event Margaret proved much more willing to undertake a pilgrimage, leaving almost immediately, while Andrew waited another twenty years. Béla was buried next to his first wife in Székesfehérvár. This parting of the ways suggests that both parties' obligations, and perhaps their hearts, lay with their first spouses.⁴³

Margaret in Esztergom

Margaret Capet's involvement in building activities at Esztergom Cathedral and the royal palace complex has not been proved. Where her name is mentioned as a possible patron it is in relation to the palace chapel. This hypothesis is based mainly on the purity of the design of the apse, which bears a resemblance to contemporary northern French designs at Soissons, Laon and Deuil.⁴⁴ That her involvement has not been extended to the palace as a whole has been due to an assumption that Béla III was the patron and that building operations elsewhere in the complex began before her arrival.

What are Margaret's credentials as an artistic patron? That Margaret could have been a patron is supported by the dating for the palace in the documentary evidence we have, which tells us that the palace was still unfinished in 1198.⁴⁵ The appearance of Archbishop Job, whose pontificate began in 1185, and Béla, who died in 1196, on the *Porta speciosa* in the narthex of the cathedral, also correspond with Margaret Capet's arrival in

⁴⁰ Referring to Geoffrey of Vigeois's account, Weir states: "On Saturday, 11th June, the Young King realised he was dying and, overcome with remorse for his sins, asked to be garbed in a hair shirt and a crusader's cloak and laid on a bed of ashes on the floor, with a noose round his neck and bare stones at his head and feet, as befitted a penitent. His conscience was troubling him because he had once sworn to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and had never fulfilled that vow, but William the Marshal set his mind at rest by promising to fulfil it for him" (*Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 234).

⁴¹ Kristó-Makk-Marosi, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴³ It has been suggested that the decision to be buried next to Anna of Châtillon was due to Anna's producing an heir. Margaret's setting up of a perpetual mass funded by Béla III, in memory of Henry the Young King at his tomb in Rouen, may suggest that Margaret herself saw to it that Béla was buried next to her first wife, before she went on pilgrimage (*Ibid.* p. 32).

⁴⁴ Takács, op. cit., pp. 22–24.

⁴⁵ 1198 Imre's document giving tithes and mentioning the unfinished palace published in Kristó-Makk-Marosi, op. cit., p. 108.

Esztergom.⁴⁶ One gains some idea of how Margaret settled into life in Hungary from Arnold Bishop of Lübeck's description of Frederick Barbarossa's four-day stay in Esztergom in 1189 on his way to the Third Crusade.⁴⁷

Margaret presented the Emperor with a magnificent tent covered with a scarlet carpets containing a bed covered with expensive bedclothes and a pillow, together with an ivory chair and a cushion positioned in front of the bed of a refinement, "mere words were unable to express". If that wasn't enough a baby white hunting dog had been left to roam on the carpet.⁴⁸

The event was lavish enough to prompt Frederick Barbarossa's son Henry to include the event in the painted programme depicting the key episodes of his father's life at his palace in Palermo.⁴⁹

The description makes an interesting comparison with the objects mentioned above in Matilda of Saxony's train. It is not impossible that the presents were made up partly of objects Margaret had brought with her from France. One can perhaps gain some idea of the appearance of the textiles from the wallpaintings representing Byzantine cloth in the palace of the chapel.⁵⁰ In the case of the ivory chair, we cannot assume that it was made from the elephant tusks imported from Africa and India. Indeed, it is more likely that it was made of walrus tusk originating from Scandinavia of a type similar to the throne fragment currently in the British Museum (London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1959, 12-2,1).⁵¹ Certainly the scroll ornament on the London chair fragment would have merited similar praise for its detail and refinement.⁵²

⁴⁶ Marosi, op. cit., 1984, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Arnold, Bishop of Lübeck was in Frederick Barbarossa's retinue. Another account of the visit was made by Ansbert. See Györffy György, *Pest-Buda kialakulása* (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1997), pp. 98–99.

⁴⁸ Györffy, op. cit., p. 98, describes the white hunting dogs as being woven into the fabric rather than being living animals.

⁴⁹ Zolnay, op. cit., p. 161.

⁵⁰ Entz Géza, "Az esztergomi királyi kápolna oroszlános festménye", *Esztergomi Évtalaj* (Esztergom, 1960), pp. 5–10. Entz associates the style with a Byzantine influence dating back to the arrival of Béla III's first wife, Anna of Châtillon from Constantinople.

⁵¹ Lasko Peter, *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200* (eds. George Zarnecki, Janet Holt and Tristram Holland, London, The Arts Council of Great Britain), p. 210, 227.

⁵² Other objects associated with Margaret Capet include the splendid coronation robes made for the coronation of her first husband, Henry the Young King, which took place at Westminster Abbey on 14th June 1170. In the event she was not crowned with him then because of the predicted difficulties this would have caused with Louis VII of France on account of the prohibition of Thomas à Becket as officiating priest. In the event Margaret stayed in Caen with Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Having presented the gifts, Margaret asked Frederick Barbarossa to intervene in the dispute which had caused Béla to imprison his younger brother Géza for fifteen years. This the emperor did, prompting Béla not only to release Géza, but to make two thousand Hungarians available to the emperor to lead the pilgrims through the country.⁵³ Having been a “hostage queen” herself it was apt that she should intercede on Géza’s behalf. Géza had spent eleven of those fifteen years’ imprisonment at the castle in Esztergom.⁵⁴

It is interesting to consider Margaret’s motives for acting on Géza’s behalf. Had they struck up a friendship which could have got tongues wagging in the same way as her presumed relationship with William Marshal?⁵⁵ This seems unlikely. Rather Margaret appears to be engaged in *realpolitik* over an issue in which Béla appears to have been totally intransigent. Béla had after all spent the early years of his reign putting an end to Géza’s claim to the throne, to the point of pursuing him into Austria. As Géza had been a pro-German pretender to the throne Béla III needed to be assured from the emperor himself that the threat to his rule was over.⁵⁶

If one is to believe Alison Weir, Margaret would already have had experience at ceremonial occasions, having stood in for her mother-in-law at royal occasions in 1175 following Eleanor of Aquitaine’s fall from grace.⁵⁷ This view is supported by the Pipe Rolls which show that her allowance was increased at this time to a level far exceeding Eleanor’s. Margaret’s handling of Béla III and Frederick Barbarossa certainly gives the impression of a woman who is at home with ceremony and diplomacy.⁵⁸

The departure of Géza for Byzantium would have left the palace with one inhabitant less. Whether this inspired any building work we do not know. It is currently thought that the rebuilding took place during the second half of the 12th century at a similar pace to work going on at the

⁵³ Having accompanied Frederick Barbarossa through Hungary, Prince Géza went on into the Greek Lands where he adopted the name Ioannés (John) and married a Byzantine princess.

⁵⁴ It was there also that Prince Andrew (later King Andrew) was to be incarcerated during his struggles with his older brother King Imre. It is also possible that it was in the castle that Andrew’s wife Gertrude was murdered.

⁵⁵ The accusation of an adulterous relationship between Margaret and William Marshal is made in the verse *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* written by a certain John, who was financed by William Marshal’s eldest son, the second Earl William. It was completed after 1226 and before 1229. David Crouch rejects the accusation of adultery saying that it was “an invention of the author of the *Histoire*, derived from contemporary romances and maybe subsequent, erroneous gossip” (op. cit., pp. 45–6).

⁵⁶ Géza was later to reemerge as a claimant to the throne in 1210 during the reign of Andrew II.

⁵⁷ Weir, op. cit., p. 220.

⁵⁸ It may be his behaviour during Frederick Barbarossa’s visit that leads Soltész to describe Margaret as being “particularly well-educated, extremely refined and quick-witted” (Soltész, op. cit., p. 139).

neighbouring cathedral.⁵⁹ This is an issue to which we will be returning. In the 1198 document referring to the incomplete state of the palace, Imre also mentions his desire to pass on the royal palace to the archbishop, with the proviso that the archbishop provide accommodation for the royal family when necessary.⁶⁰ This suggests that the unfinished palace had become a burden and that the king was keen to be rid of it and all the running costs that it entailed.

The Queen's Residence?

The wording in Imre's 1198 document suggests that he did not want to use the Esztergom palace as a permanent residence, and that the archbishop should provide the staff. In the event, however, the royal palace only became the archbishop's residence in 1249⁶¹ replacing the archbishops' former residence on the northern side of castle hill (Fig. 3).

We do know that in 1212 the royal palace in Óbuda was being used on a regular basis,⁶² while the palace in Esztergom returned to its function as prison for undesirable members of the royal family, as in the case of Andrew II during Imre's reign, and Andrew's wife Gertrude of Andechs.⁶³ We would like to suggest, therefore, that the arrival of Margaret's household in the summer 1186 marked a significant change in the way the royal palace in Esztergom functioned, and it was at Margaret's behest that major changes were made to the building with the intention of turning it into a queen's residence.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Archaeological evidence suggests that the royal palace on the southern tip of castle hill was built during the reign of St Stephen and reconstructed at the end of the 11th century. It replaced the palace built by Stephen's father Géza on the north of the hill site in the vicinity of the church of St Stephen the Protomartyr. It was in the older complex of buildings, later to form the site of the archiepiscopal palace following the foundation of the archdiocese in the first decade of the 11th century, where Stephen was born.

⁶⁰ Kristó – Makk - Marosi, op. cit., p. 54.

⁶¹ 1249 is the date most frequently mentioned, although Tolnai states that Béla IV returned the palace to the church in 1256 following the royal lord-lieutenant Simeon's overseeing of the castle during the Mongolian invasion of 1241-42 (op. cit., p. 479). The Mongolians whilst devastating the town, failed to take the castle. See Zolnay, op. cit., pp. 168-9 for the relevant passage of Rogerius's contemporary account.

⁶² Arnold of Lübeck and Ansbert mention Frederick Barbarossa's two-day stay at the royal palace in Óbuda in June 1189, a venue which corresponds with Anonymous's description of "the king's palace" built among the springs and the (Roman) ruins.

⁶³ Zolnay, op. cit., p. 167.

⁶⁴ This is a suggestion that is at loggerheads with the conclusions made by László Gerevich in "The Rise of Hungarian Towns along the Danube", *Towns in Medieval Hungary* (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), who claims that the "unfinished royal house" mentioned in Imre's 1198 document refers not to the royal complex to the south but to building operations at the

It is also tempting to believe that when the queen moved on and onto her pilgrimage to the Holy Land following the death of Béla III, she was accompanied by her household, leaving a complex more or less bereft of staff. Looking at the make up of a contemporary royal household one can gain some idea of the hole Margaret would have left. In the case of a king:

This was an elaborate domestic service: cooks, butlers, larderers, grooms, tentkeepers, carters, sumpter men and the bearers of the king's bed. There were also the men who looked after his hunt, the keeper of the hounds, the horn-blowers, the archers. Then there were the men whose work was political, military and administrative as well as domestic.⁶⁵

Although we cannot be sure what Imre meant by “unfinished”, we would like to suggest that with Margaret's dowry and the arrival of her household, work on the palace was brisk, progressing at a rate comparable with the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral, and that any appearance of incompleteness in 1189 was relatively superficial.⁶⁶

Moreover, in the same summer, that is of the sixth year (1180), the outer wall round the chapel of St. Thomas, begun before the winter, was elevated as far as the turning of the vault. But the master had begun a tower at the eastern part of the circuit of the wall as it were, the lower vault of which was completed before the winter.⁶⁷

If what was going on amounted to a remodelling, it may be instructive to look at Eleanor of Aquitaine's modernisation of a royal residence also standing within the precincts of a cathedral (Fig. 4), namely the work done at Winchester starting in 1160, when she paid £22 13s 2d “for the repair of the chapel, the houses, the walls and the garden of the Queen, and for the transport of the Queen's robes, her wine, her incense and the chests of her chapel, and for the boys' shields, and for the Queen's chamber, chimney and

old palace built by Prince Géza, situated among the buildings of the archiepiscopal palace to the north of the cathedral. Gerevich suggests that reconstruction work at the former could have taken place before 1198, while the royal palace was rebuilt in the years that followed (p. 34).

⁶⁵ Gillingham, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁶⁶ This view is at variance with Zolnay's opinion that the palace was far from finished and that its completion may be related to Robert of Limoges, who was archbishop of Esztergom between 1226 and 1239. (Zolnay, *op. cit.*, p. 171). Gerevich also believes the royal palace was built later (*op. cit.*, p. 34).

⁶⁷ Gervase of Canterbury, “History of the Burning and Repair of the Church of Canterbury” (1185), *The Documentary History of Art Vol. 1* (ed. E.H. Holt, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 59.

cellar”.⁶⁸ Apart from giving us an idea how much a project of this nature would have cost, the above description describes a residential building project overseen by a queen going on within a cathedral precincts. Not only that, Winchester and Esztergom were also major governmental centres: the former housing the treasury, the latter the chancellery and the royal mint.

Winchester was but one of many Angevin residences Margaret became acquainted with during her childhood.⁶⁹ Having spent three years of her life in the custody of Robert of Neubourg, chief justice of Normandy, from the age of six months until her marriage to Henry, Margaret was then transported around with her mother-in-law, staying in royal residences in England (Winchester, Marlborough, Sherborne, Berkhamstead) and on the French mainland (Poitiers, Le Mans, Angers, Argentan, Falaise, Caen, Bayeux and Cherbourg).

Looking at the groundplans of the two complexes, both contain the same constituent elements: a donjon, a great hall, a gatehouse, and a chapel, and they both form an area walled off from the cathedral precincts (Figs. 4 and 5). From the description one can perhaps assume there was a garden at the palace in Esztergom as well.⁷⁰ The remains at Winchester are predominantly from c.1130-40, having been built by Henry of Blois.⁷¹ While the repairs made by Eleanor of Aquitaine appear relative minor compared with those undertaken at the palace in Esztergom, the contemporary description of Winchester Castle gives us some idea how the palace at Esztergom would have functioned.

How extensive were the building activities going on between the summer of 1186 and Béla’s death almost ten years later?⁷² Art historians like Gergely Tolnai argue that building at the palace started in the 1170s and that building operations continued into the 1190s “over a number of campaigns stretching over several decades”. The rebuilding of the palace was started with the construction of a separate building two storeys high on the northern

⁶⁸ Weir, op. cit., p. 158.

⁶⁹ Pevsner, Nikolaus and Lloyd, David *Buildings of Britain: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967), p. 657, who quote H. M. Colvin: “If under the Norman Kings England can be said to have possessed an administrative capital, then Winchester shared that distinction with Westminster. For it was at Winchester that the King kept his treasure, and in the C11 and C12 the King’s treasury was the heart of his government.” The Domesday Book also was kept at Winchester, and it was in Winchester on 27th August 1172 that Henry the Young King was crowned for a second time, this time together with Margaret. For the Archiepiscopacy, the chancellery and the royal mint see: Zolnay László, op. cit., p. 76 and Dercsényi Dezső–Zolnay László *Esztergom* (Budapest, Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, 1956), pp. 14–15.

⁷⁰ Marosi Ernő refers to a “southern garden” in his description of the building (op. cit., 1979, p. 8).

⁷¹ Brother of King Stephen of England, Bishop of Winchester between 1129 and 1171.

⁷² Béla III died on 23rd April 1196.

part of the site, the so-called “Little Romanesque Palace”. To this a great hall was added immediately to the south at right angles to its western end. The argument for an truncated building campaign is supported by the appearance of the carved details excavated and found in situ on the site of the White Tower at the southern end of the site and the sheer scale of the underpinning and buttressing necessary to support the construction of the tower.⁷³

The White Tower was built on the remains of St Stephen’s palace and formed the central feature of what was essentially a palace within a palace, with an attached chapel and adjunct concealed behind its own wall. The tower takes a polygonal form common at the time in royal castles in France.⁷⁴ Some idea of the appearance of Esztergom Castle in c. 1200 can be gauged by looking at the royal castle in Orford in Suffolk (begun 1165–6), which T. A. Heslop compares with the count and countess of Champagne’s donjons at Étampes and Provins.⁷⁵

Based on their stylistic similarities the acanthus capitals in the so-called “Saint Stephen’s Chamber” at the base of the tower are thought to be contemporary with the earlier stages of the rebuilding of the cathedral.⁷⁶ Designs of a similar kind can also be found on the floor above in the capitals of the two round-headed doors and the western portal into the chapel. On purely stylistic grounds it would be here, with two floors of the donjon complete and work in progress on the western wall of the chapel, that one would suggest a break in building activities, as from henceforth, in the chapel, the acanthus capitals are joined by trefoil features, crocket capitals, zig-zag mouldings, dog-tooth as well as other one-off features.⁷⁷ It is this

⁷³ Marosi, op. cit., 1979, p. 6.

⁷⁴ George Zarnecki, in Zarnecki, Holt and Holland, op. cit., p. 38.

⁷⁵ T.A. Heslop: “Orford Castle, nostalgia and sophisticated living”, *Architectural History*, 34, 1991, p. 51.

⁷⁶ Tolnai draws special attention to similarities with Lombard, Emilian and Provençal acanthus designs (op. cit., p. 485), while Marosi and Wehli suggest forms originating from the Loire region (op. cit., p.38). The numerous comparisons made by Marosi, including those adopted by Tolnai, spread the possible design sources over an ever larger area and perhaps most significantly for us to Champagne (St Remi, Reims; Notre-Dame-en-Vaux, Châlons-sur-Marne; St Madeleine, Vézelay). See Marosi, op. cit., 1984, pp. 54–59.

⁷⁷ The designation acanthus and trefoil is sometimes fraught with difficulties due to the existence of transitional forms which could be treated as either one or the other. This is as true for the western portal into the chapel at Esztergom, as it is in the (northern) transept arm at Noyon, William of Sens’ capitals on piers III and V at Canterbury Cathedral and the main choir arcade and northern aisle at St Remi, Reims. Looking at the design of the building as a whole, Marosi detects inconsistencies in the designs of the portals into the chapel and the living quarters in the White Tower and their vicinity suggesting a contrived unity forced by a change in conception rather than a break in building activities, a conclusion he supports with photography dating from the 1934-38 excavations, showing

change in style which art historians tend to associate with the arrival of Margaret Capet.⁷⁸ If this was the state of building activities when she arrived she would have had the opportunity to make her mark on the building in a similar manner to Eleanor of Aquitaine at Winchester.

For art historians looking for French influences, it is the articulation of the apse of the chapel which has aroused most interest. The free-standing piers and the vaults at Esztergom have been compared with similar solutions at St Germain-des-Prés in Paris, Soissons Cathedral, Laon Cathedral and St Eugene, Deuil.⁷⁹ While one can discount St Germain-des-Près through lack of sufficient similarities, the tribune level transept ends at Soissons Cathedral, the upper eastern transept chapels at Laon Cathedral and the apse at St Eugene, Deuil do offer us a good opening into discovering the design origins of the architecture. Indeed, the list of possible influences could be extended to the second wall passage of the transept at Noyon Cathedral, the chapter house at Reims Cathedral and the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral.

In looking for the sources used by William of Sens and William the Englishman, the architects of Canterbury Cathedral, following the fire of 1174, Jean Bony has produced a taxonomy of details all of which can also be found at Esztergom, namely:⁸⁰ complicated mouldings,⁸¹ Soissonais and Picardy dog-tooth,⁸² acanthus and trefoil capitals,⁸³ crocket capitals,⁸⁴

unbroken masonry between the west wall of the chapel and the arch of the palace entrance (op. cit., 1984, p. 50–51).

⁷⁸ See footnote 2.

⁷⁹ For St Germain-de-Prés: Entz, op. cit., 1981, p. 61; Zolnay, op. cit. p. 68 and Soltész, op. cit., p. 141. For Soissons and Laon see Takács, op. cit., p. 23; for Deuil: Takács, op. cit., 1984, p. 24.

⁸⁰ Bony, Jean, “French Influences on the Origins of English Gothic Architecture”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12, 1949, pp. 8–9.

⁸¹ Tóth, Sándor, “Architecture et sculpture en Hongrie aux Xie-XIe siècles”, *Arte Medievale* 1, 1983, pp. 81–99. The complicated mouldings at Canterbury are directly related to a group around Soissons, with Ambleny being the closest approximation (Bony, op. cit., p. 8).

⁸² Used in the ribs on the tribune chapel in the southern transept at Laon cited by Takács and at Dhuizel (Aisne), by Bony, in a similar way to the aisle ribs at Canterbury, and at other Canterbury-related sites in southern England (Chichester Cathedral, Boxgove Priory, Hardham Priory). The use of dog-tooth in this way, sandwiched between two rolls / scrolls, can be compared with the archivault on the west portal into the chapel at Esztergom.

⁸³ See footnote 73.

⁸⁴ Crocket capitals were taken from the Notre-Dame-de-Paris. Their use at clerestory level in the choir at Canterbury should be compared with the free standing columns in the apse at the chapel in Esztergom.

detached shafts,⁸⁵ and twin columns and capitals.⁸⁶ The conclusion Bony draws for Canterbury is that both architects used similar sources, using features existing side by side in and around the so-called Arras-Valenciennes-Noyon-Reims quadrangle.⁸⁷ What is particularly interesting to us is that unlike the sites mentioned above, Esztergom also incorporates the zig-zag, a feature which can be found at Canterbury.⁸⁸ Similar English Romanesque features bearing a resemblance to the designs on the double columns in the infirmary cloister arcade at Canterbury Cathedral, associated with the office of Prior Wilbert and dating from the 1150s, can be seen on the jamb columns of the western portal at the royal palace.⁸⁹ These are details which take Esztergom closer to Canterbury than any of the sites previously mentioned.⁹⁰

Other distinguishing features linking Esztergom and Canterbury are the *en delit* shafts which have been worked up into a polish, a feature shared by Tournai Cathedral and the now lost church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Valenciennes (begun 1171).⁹¹ The single piers supporting the chancel arch in the chapel at Esztergom, in diverging from the double pier design of the apse, adopt a short and stocky format resembling the “intimate proportions” of the double piers in the apse arcade in the Trinity Chapel in Canterbury.⁹² Although the single crocket capitals look disproportionately large, the mouldings on the chancel arch at Esztergom also resemble those at

⁸⁵ Laon, Notre-Dame-de-Paris, Bagneux, Cambrai, Soissons, Canterbury, Noyon, St Remi in Reims.

⁸⁶ Twin columns and capitals (the western bays of the nave at St Remi).

⁸⁷ Main sites: Noyon (c.1150?–1185); St Remi, Reims (c.1170-75); Notre-Dame-La-Grande, Valenciennes (begun 1171) – descriptions and drawings tell us it was a replica of the choir of Noyon but with shafts of Tournai stone; Cambrai (c. 1175); Laon (c. 1180-85); Soissons (c. 1185). Canterbury was bang in the middle of this movement.

⁸⁸ Marosi suggests the transmission of “Norman” elements via the Ile-de-France (op. cit., 1984, p. 69).

⁸⁹ Woodman, Francis, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 81.

⁹⁰ The zig-zag does of course feature elsewhere in Europe, at Bamberg Cathedral for example, a site frequently mentioned in relation to the arrival of Gothic ideas. Ideas arriving from Bamberg, however, are associated with the opening decades of the 13th century rather than the end of the 12th.

⁹¹ Detached (*en delit*) shafts appear in England as early as 1165 or 1170, with the source probably being Tournai. Black Tournai marble shafts can also be found at the churches of the Holy Apostles and St Gereon in Cologne.

⁹² Severens K, “William of Sens and the double columns at Sens and Canterbury”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (London, The Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 1970), pp. 307-313. At Canterbury the lowering of the height of the main arcade by William the Englishman was caused by raising of the floor level, and with it the shrine of St Thomas à Becket, while retaining the level of the tribune and clerestory levels in William of Sens’ choir.

Canterbury. Although wall arcades similar to those in the chapel at Esztergom can be found in the transepts at Noyon, the ambulatories at Sens Cathedral and at the abbey of Ste Madeleine in Vézelay, the fact that the Esztergom design includes a fitful use of dog-tooth, also points to the round-headed arches used at Canterbury.

The long leaf accompanying one of the two corbel heads in the blind arcade on the northern wall of the chapel at Esztergom can also be found in the north aisle at St Remi in Reims. The trefoil leaves at Esztergom are also in evidence at St Remi and Canterbury. As Canterbury does not contain a rose window it is to the Arras-Valenciennes-Laon-Reims quadrangle that one needs to refer. Applying Richard Pestell's analysis of the transept roses at St Yved in Braine, the earliest appearance of the design seems to be in the window of the Salle de Trésor at Noyon Cathedral (completed by 1185, albeit probably a few years earlier).⁹³ Marble is a material mentioned many times by Gervase in his description of the building activities, and its presence in the pillars of the new building is listed amongst the features which distinguished it from its predecessor.⁹⁴ Marble is also a material much in evidence in Esztergom.⁹⁵

Using this geographical area as a starting point would also resolve the debate surrounding the mosaic work in the narthex of the cathedral. While much is made of Béla III's upbringing in Byzantium at the court of Emperor Manuel in an effort to understand the use of incrustation, less emphasis has been laid on the fact that northern France was in thrall of Byzantine art, something most famously expressed by Abbot Suger in his description of the new building work and the consecration of the Abbey of St Denis:

XXVII. Of the Cast and Gilded Doors. Bronze casters having been summoned and sculptors chosen, we set up the main doors on which are represented the Passion of the Saviour and His Resurrection, or rather Ascension, with great cost and much expenditure for their gilding as was fitting for the noble porch. Also (we set up) others, new ones on the right side and old ones on the left beneath the mosaic which, though contrary

⁹³ Pestell, Richard, "The Design Sources for the Cathedrals at Chartres and Soissons", *Art History*, Vol 4 No. 1, 1981 p. 5. For illustration of the Noyon rose window see: Seymour, Charles, *Notre-Dame of Noyon in the Twelfth Century* (New York, The Norton Library, 1968), ill. 31.

⁹⁴ The other distinguishing features are the height and the number of the pillars, the decorated (rather than plain) capitals, the complex vaults and keystones, the open transepts, the double triforium, the height of the building.

⁹⁵ Marble of a colour similar to the red Torna marble found at Esztergom can be found at some of the Canterbury-related sites in southern England, like Easebourne Priory, for example.

to modern custom, we ordered to be executed there and to be affixed to the tympanum of the portal. We also committed ourselves richly to elaborate the tower(s) and the upper crenelations of the front, both for the beauty of the church and, should circumstances require it, for practical purposes. Further we ordered the year of the consecration, lest it be forgotten, to be inscribed in copper-gilt letters in the following manner: [...]⁹⁶

While we do not know the exact appearance of the mosaics at St Denis, or whether they bore any relation to the incrustation work at Esztergom, which was likewise affixed onto the tympanum, the deliberate decision at St Denis to incorporate a feature which was “contrary to modern custom” (i.e. Byzantine) is clear. Suger was also keen that visitors to the abbey would see in it craftsmanship which could be compared with the magnificence of Constantinople.⁹⁷ Master Theophilus, who is presumed to be one of the many learned Greeks travelling throughout Europe at the time tells us where one would be most likely to find the craftsmen best suited for executing a particular piece:

Should you carefully peruse this, you will there find out whatever Greece possesses in kinds and mixtures or various colours; [whatever in artistically executed enameling and various types of niello Russia manufactures;] whatever Tuscany knows of in mosaic work, or in variety of enamel; whatever Arabia shows forth in work of fusion, ductility, or chasing; whatever Italy ornaments with gold, in diversity of vases and sculpture or gems or ivory; whatever France loves in a costly variety of windows; whatever industrious Germany approves in work of gold, silver, copper and iron, of wood and of stones.⁹⁸

This was a philosophy followed by Suger who summoned artists “from all parts of the kingdom”.

The pavement at the Notre-Dame-de-St Omer, often referred to in relation to the incrustation work at Esztergom, continues in this vein, as well as being close geographically to the architectural sources mentioned above.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ De Administratione XXVII, quoted in Panofsky, Erwin, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of S.-Denis and its Art Treasures* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, Second Ed. 1979), p. 47.

⁹⁷ *De Administratione XXXIII*, quoted in op. cit., p. 65.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Holt, op. cit., p. 2.

⁹⁹ Marosi compares the designs at St Omer with the floor tiles in the Confessor’s Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral (op. cit., 1984, p. 64).

Likewise the wallpaintings in the chapel use Byzantine motifs, although there is nothing to suggest that they did not date from Margaret's residence in Hungary. The correspondence between the origins of the architecture and the decorative features suggests that we are dealing here with a project led, and partly executed, by a group of masters and craftsmen handpicked in northern France, and it was they who built the narthex and the palace and perhaps more besides. If Margaret Capet were indeed the driving force, the choice of craftsmen from that particular region would not be surprising considering how much time she spent in and around Paris from 1174 onwards.¹⁰⁰

It is tempting to suggest that with the first payment of her Vexin allowance Margaret offered contracts to employ masters specifically with the intention of completing the donjon in Esztergom and turning it into a Queen's residence. The chamber next to the chapel would have functioned as a kind of sacristy for the storage of "her incense and the chests of her chapel", and we know that the smaller of the two round-headed doorways on the first floor of the tower led to a garden offering a view towards the River Danube.¹⁰¹

The donjon (The White Tower) on the southwestern corner of the site, where the living quarters were, would have offered superb views of the cathedral narthex¹⁰² and St Thomas à Becket's Hill with its Deanery Church and town district. That there was an intention behind the latter is supported

¹⁰⁰ In 1176, we know that with grave misgivings, Henry II refused his son permission to go to Compostela, but allowed him instead to visit King Louis in Paris with Queen Margaret, on condition that the Young King would afterwards travel south to Poitou to assist Richard against the rebels. However, after the briefest of visits to Paris, the Young King hastened to Flanders, where he unburdened his grievances to a sympathetic Count Philip. On 19 June 1177 Margaret of France bore the Young King a son, William, in Paris and on 1st November 1179 she attended Philip August's coronation in Reims. One of Louis VII's deeds before he died was to visit Canterbury with Henry II on 22nd August 1179, where he gave gifts to the shrine of St Thomas à Becket. During her period as titular duchess of Normandy building activities were going on at: St Étienne, Caen; Fécamp Abbey (begun 1168); St Laurent, Eu; Coutances Cathedral; Mortemer Abbey. For common design sources at St Étienne, Caen and Canterbury Cathedral see: Grant, Lindy, "The Choir of St Étienne at Caen", *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context* (eds. Fernie, Eric and Crossley, Paul, London, Hambledon, 1990).

¹⁰¹ Marosi, op. cit., 1979, p. 8. Tolnay calls it "a smaller enclosed court" (op. cit., p. 485). The area was only roofed sometime during the Late Middle Ages.

¹⁰² The main entrance to the narthex was from the north, and there were smaller doors from the west and the south (see Krey /1756/ill. in Zolnay op. cit., p. 103). There was a staircase which would have led up to a gallery with an opening on to the nave not dissimilar to that at Ste Madeleine, Vézelay. According to the descriptions on Krey's 1756 groundplan, the porch, marked with the letter G, leading into the narthex contained the altars of St Luke and St Nicholas as well as an entrance down into the crypt.

by the fostering of the cult of St Thomas à Becket by the daughters of Henry II in the dominions of their respective husbands: Joan in Sicily, Matilda in Brunswick and Eleanor in Castile.¹⁰³ It was a cult which manifested itself in an enamel image of the martyr on a gospel cover in the cathedral of Capua (1175-6?), a mosaic in the cathedral of Montreale (1188-9?) and some fine wall-paintings at Brunswick.¹⁰⁴

The architectural details at Esztergom point to designs in circulation at about the time of the reconstruction of the choir at Canterbury, possibly a little earlier, and for this reason it is conceivable that Margaret was the patron, and that the similarities with Canterbury are not coincidental. Indeed, the appearance of the palace and the narthex would suggest that Margaret was an educated and discerning patron in the same manner as her half-sisters and former sister-in-laws.¹⁰⁵ Having been brought up in the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, involvement in a project like that at Esztergom is what one would have expected, particularly with the resources she had available to her when she left France.

One can speculate what Margaret did in the short period of time between the death of her second husband and her departure for the Holy Land. It is tempting to suggest that she was as understanding and supportive as Béla III was, when her first husband Henry the Young King died, overseeing his burial next to his first wife, Anna of Châtillon, at the cathedral in Székesfehérvár. When Margaret and her household moved to the Holy Land, where she died in September 1197, she left behind an all but complete palace which had lost its *raison d'être*, causing Béla III's successor Imre to load the royal palace off onto an archbishopric which was equally loathe to take the complex on. Margaret's royal place was only taken over by the archepiscopacy fifty or so years later: ... *si ipso titulo donacionis illa acceptassent et possidere voluissent*.

¹⁰³ Poole, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹⁰⁴ Matilda was co-foundress of St Blasius in Brunswick.

¹⁰⁵ No one has yet speculated Margaret Capet's possible involvement in contemporary building activities at the Cistercian monastery in Pilis founded in 1183.

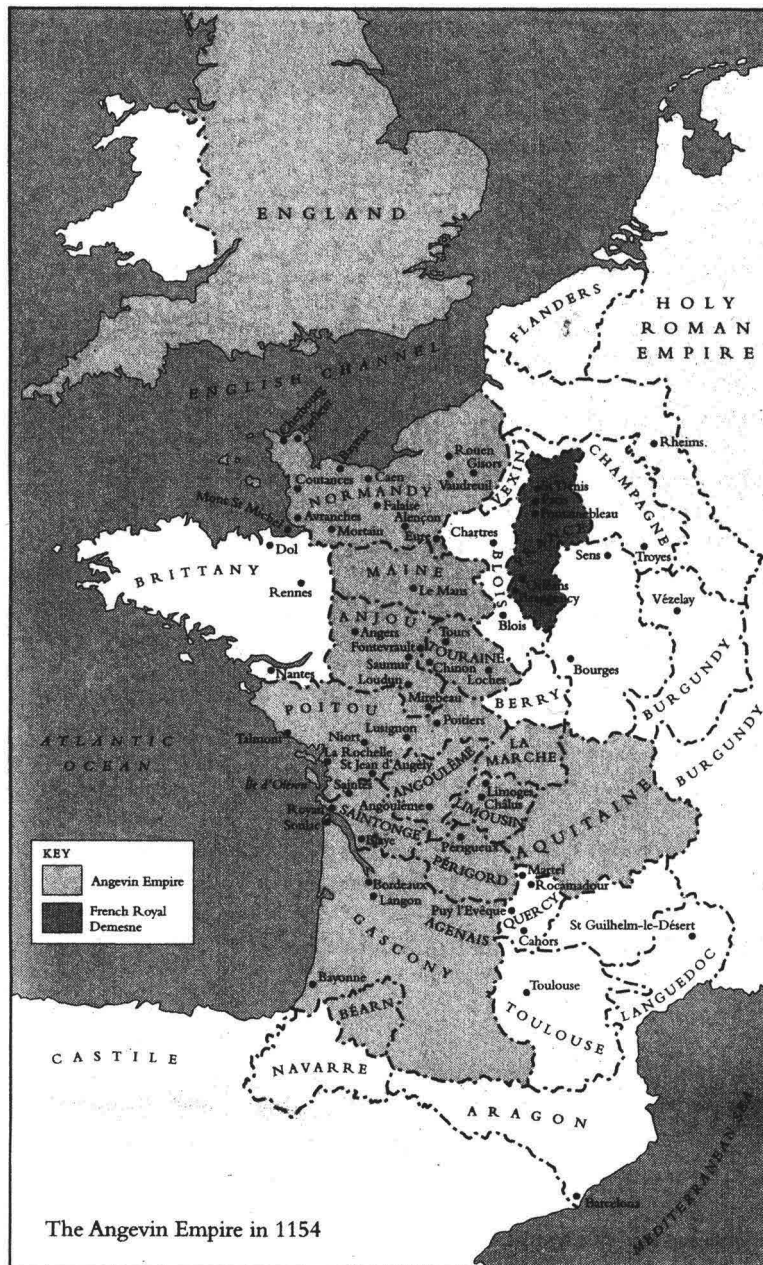


Fig. 1. The Angevin Empire in 1154 (taken from Weir /2000/)

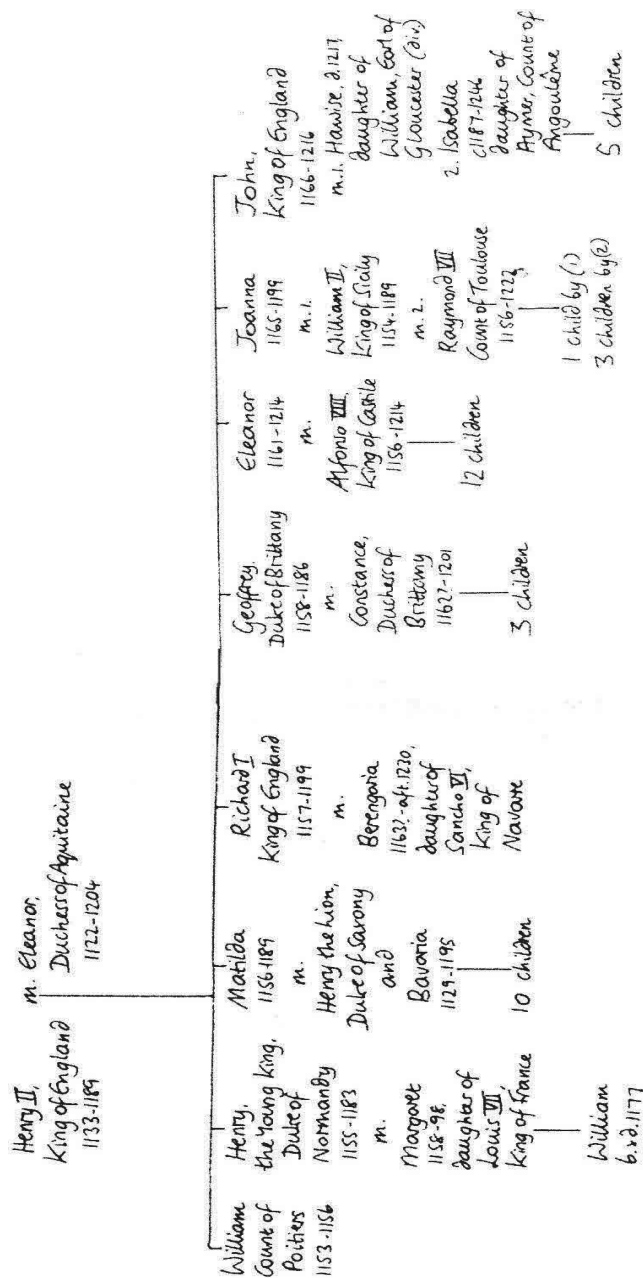


Fig. 2. The children of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine (Weir /2000/)



Fig. 3. Castle Hill, Esztergom (Gerevich /1967/)

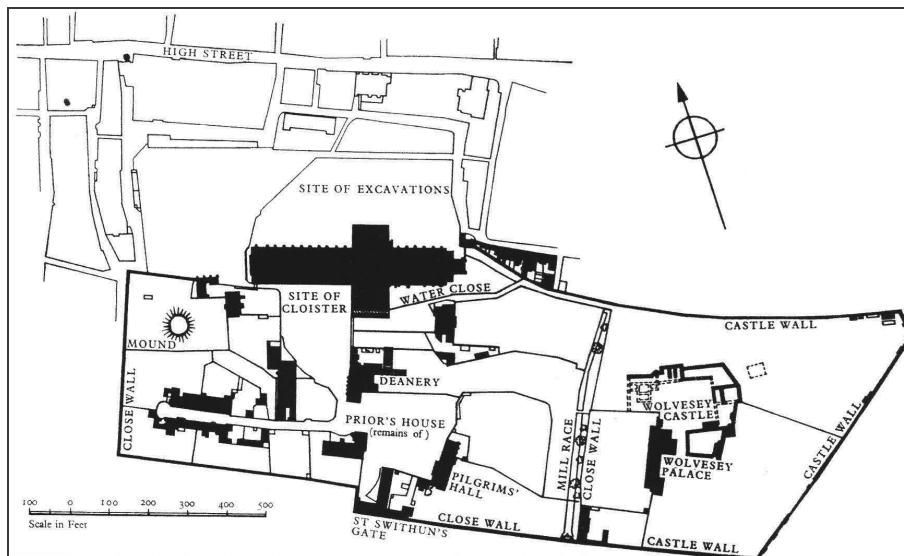


Fig. 4. Winchester Castle (Pevsner and Lloyd /1967/)

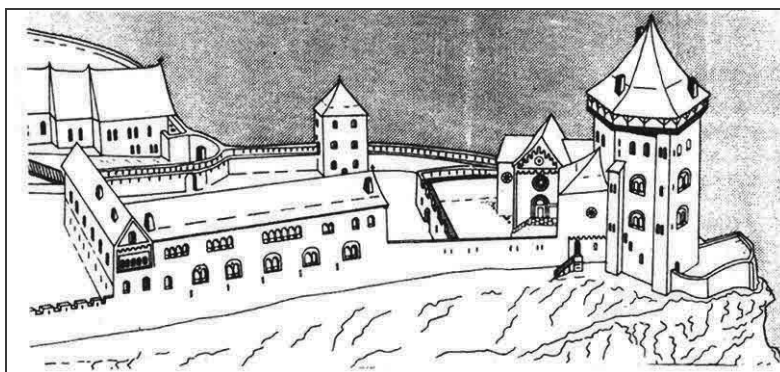


Fig. 5. Artist's impression of the royal palace of Esztergom at the end of the Twelfth Century (István Horváth)