

## CONNECTION OF FARMING AND LANDSCAPE FORMING IN THE BENEDICTINES

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### **ABSTRACT – Connection of farming and the landscape forming in the Benedictines**

Where the orders settled, they began the landscape forming. The monks ensured their livelihoods, by forming the landscape, using it rationally. The settlement of the particular orders and during the following centuries, one aspect was to ensure their livelihoods. The position influenced their scope of activities, including their impact, on the landscape. The Benedictines laid a great emphasis on farming, and the adapting to the conditions, and onto its maximum utilisation. The wish of St. Benedict was, that his followers settle down on a place, and make their environment human, as a result, the Benedictines cultivated land across Hungary, drained swamps, made purposeful farming, created flourishing agriculture. The agriculture and the landscape forming is closely contacted to each other, Pannonhalma, Tihany and the other estates are good examples.

**Keywords:** Benedictines, farming, landscape forming, cultivated land, flourishing agriculture

## INTRODUCTION

Religion plays a central role in the human's life. Over the centuries more and more religions and orders appeared. Religious centers, necessary buildings for the exercise of religion, and other structures have been established in order to ensure their livelihood, and they changed, formed the landscape. What they established and created in the scenery is permanent, and make an impact in our days, so the image and character of the landscape is define and effects. That special position and activity is related to each order. Some particular orders dealt with ministering, teaching, grooming, but there were those, in which the arable farming was dominant, instructed by the order such as the Benedictine. The order, beside the obligatory religious action, the arable farming was very important for them. The farming and the landscape forming are in a tight context with each other, and I going to write about this connection.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

In the first step I made a historical research in this topic to deal with it thoroughly. I studied the literature of the order's history and formation, their appearance in Hungary, in particular regarding Pannonhalma. I chose Pannonhalma for the sample area, because it was the first monastery in Hungary, and also has been the centre of the Benedictines since the beginning. The research followed in this the map collection and in the archival for the pilot place, to prove the description with visual material.

## RESULT

The scenery comes through a continuous transformation as the result of human activities. In the area where the humans appear, the original function, facade and significance of the landscape will change. The settlement of some orders and during the following centuries, one aspect was to ensure their livelihoods. The settlement of the orders is area specific. There is a Latin proverb: „Bernadus valles, montes Benedictus amabat, oppidia Franciscus, celebres Ignatius urbes.”, so Benedick liked the mountains, Bernat liked the valleys, Francis the cities, and Ignac liked the big cities. (Gecse, 1995) The position influenced their scope of activities, including their impact, on the landscape. A great emphasis was laid on the farming, and the adapting to the conditions, and onto its maximum utilisation. The agriculture, the grape- and fruit growing, the animal farming or the fishery enjoyed priority depending on the orders or conditions. Great St. Basil wrote in her book, *Life rules I. that:*” First of all /we have to choose/ farming, because it provides the food for our existence...” (I. Aszk 38.). St. Benedict’s wish was that his followers settle down on a place, and make their environment human, as a result, the Benedictines cultivated the land across Europe, drained swamps, made purposeful farming, created flourishing agriculture. St. Francis of Assisi and his brother had brotherly relationship with the nature, but they did not want convert it, just to live in it, praise God for it. By the vow of poverty they had a commitment, to treat the material goods with respect, not to own them, but to use them properly. (Puskely, 2006) “But the servants of the Church were not only the providers of spiritual goods. They were educators, leaders of the people at farming too... They destroyed forests, dried out marshes, dug channels... Villages were generated. “- wrote Menyhért Érdújhelyi (Érdújhelyi 1903, 3).

The farming and the landscape forming are in a tight context with each other, especially this is true for the Benedictines, because bleak, uninhabited areas were made rank, their monasteries were built, so the landscape was formed and changed. These changes are important, and not only at that time, but the forthcoming time they have had effect. I will illustrate my statements with domestic example.

The watchword of abbeys is „Cruce et aratro” at the Benedictines that is with a cross and with a plow. The Benedictine monasteries established flourishing agriculture in a short time all over Hungary. (Puskely, 2006) The centre of the national Benedictine order is Pannonhalma, which is the earliest founded monastery. It was founded Grand Prince Géza in 996, but that work was finished by St. Stephen. (Romhányi, 2000) The farming was on the St. Martin’s Hill and the surrounding area from 11<sup>th</sup> century, bottom of the slope and in valleys it was arable cultivation, within three-crop rotation was applied the, while on slopes there were vineyards. (Puskely, 2006) The constant development was interrupt by the Tartaric invasion, the Turkish invasion, and the regulation of Joseph II. In 1802, the order was reinstated, and the new task of the Benedictine was the education of the youngsters. The system of the order was changed, because the teaching became more prominent, so the agriculture was relegated in the background. (Gecse, 1995) In the 1-4. Figure we can trace the change of the landscape.

On a 1680 depiction (Figure 1) the monastery’s building is well discernible. The depiction was made after the expulsion of the Turkish, and accurately reflects the fact, that during the occupation the area was completely deserted the nature took control of the area. The

settlers broke up virgin lands again, but the growing population prompted them to make many great cultivated areas. Especially the forests' clearing was severe in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. The new lands were taken away from forests, pasture, fields and completely useless areas. The names show this as well: Old Pines, Forest bottom, Flat, Little Field. The grapes were replanted, and planted them to new areas. The wine-growing was the main occupation in this area. The pace of development was fast. The cultivation methods and pace were adjusted to the needs and capabilities (Tóth, 1998) Some houses surrounded the abbey at the foot of the mountain, and in the surroundings and in the hills there are fields. The settlement due to the presence of the order, because the viable places have strength to modulate the settlement, which would suffer from the shocks, but did not disappear, but re-populated, and they were blooming again duly for the presence of the order. (Tóth, 1998) The appearance of a settlement means a considerable change in the landscape, as the settlement appears a new landscape element, the load of the landscape grows furthermore, the numbers of people living there were growing, their livelihoods had to be ensured, so the new land had to be taken into cultivation. The following representation is the first military survey (Figure 2), it was made in 1784. It can be seen how much development and transformation had been in this area. The settlement was continued to grow, in the hill the viniculture was carried on, and while in the surrounding areas there are fields, and on the not arable, steep slopes there was woods. In the Benedictine observed the development of the fishponds. The river, at the foot of the mountain, was inflated in several places. The second military survey was made in this area between 1846-47 (Figure 3). The areas of the viniculture were grown, this shows, that this area was suitable for this agriculture. The damming were continued to increase, because the number of the abbey increased constantly, so that more produced food was needed. The 1880 survey (Figure 4) shows, that the area of the vines was reduced, but it defines the landscape still. The damming disappeared, a swampy, moorland area took shape on its place. The landscape changes show that other values came into the foreground. Today, in Pannonhalma the farming activity is minimal besides the teaching (growing herbs, lavender plantation).

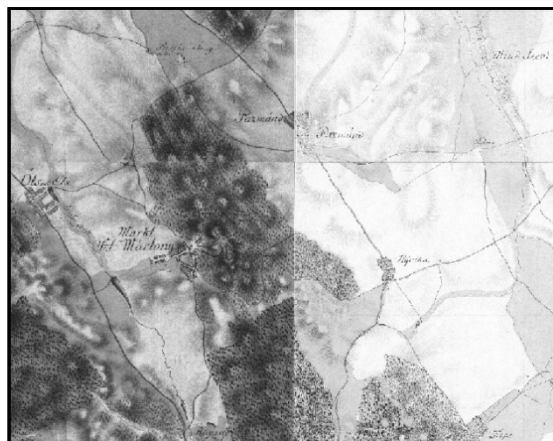


**Figure 1: The abbey in 1680 (Benedictine monastery on St. Martin-Hill)**

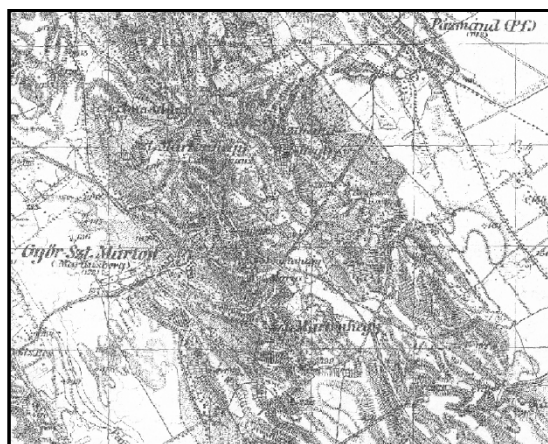
Source: Iconismus astorum urbium et regionum Hungariae ex Museo Hungarico, Depiction



**Figure 2: Pannonhalma and its neighbourhood in the first military survey**  
Source: The first military survey, 1784, VII 14



**Figure 3: Pannonhalma in the second military survey**  
Source: The second military survey 1846-47, XXVII 50



**Figure 4: Pannonhalma in the third military survey**  
Source: The third military survey, 1880, 4959/4

## CONCLUSIONS

Trough the demonstrated domestic and foreign example it can be seen, that farming and landscape forming are connected to each other, but its significance, his measure change continuously. Initially the aim was, the interest of the assurance of the self-sufficiency, the more land was feature of under cultivation, this activity in the case of the Cistercian was well organized and planned, for all works had the aim and its way. The initial changes were the biggest changes in the landscape, because, where earlier forest or barren was, the monastery was built, and they made tillages and fishponds. With the sapping of the time these not as strange landscape elements, but they appeared as the elements defining the character of the landscape, and the newer interventions meant the changes. In the course of the centuries the landscape changed, because the habits, the values and the order it-self working was transformed, so the farming, what was the main source of living, was sidelined onto 20<sup>th</sup> century, the neighbourhood was populated duly for the processes of urbanization, and other revenue sources provided the living for the order. The agricultural landscape characteristics disappeared by today, in some places its traces can be found, the 21<sup>th</sup> century shaped and formed values and landscape took it over.

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