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**INTERIOR DESIGN, FURNISHINGS, AND THE SETTINGS
OF DAILY LIFE AT COURTS IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES**

Theses of the doctoral dissertation

Budapest
2017

I. THE TOPIC AND GOAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This PhD dissertation analyses the domestic culture (Germ. *Wohnkultur*) of the Hungarian elite (king, magnates, prelates) courts. Its time frame covers the years between 1400 and 1600. The title refers to the late Middle Ages, but concerning the sixteenth century, the end of this period is not the conventional year 1526 (the year of the Battle of Mohács), but the year 1600. The dissertation has an antecedent, namely an MA thesis titled *Courtly interiors in late medieval Hungary (from the time of King Sigismund of Luxembourg to the time of Matthias Corvinus)*, which was defended at the Department of Archaeology of the Eötvös Loránd University in 2001. Data and results of the MA thesis were integrated into the present dissertation. This thesis provided a scientific basis for the reconstruction of the interiors of the royal palace at Visegrád.

The late medieval ‘Wohnkultur’, concerning the homes of the king, magnates, or citizens, raised numerous researchers’ (mainly historians’ and art historians’) interest as early as the second half of the nineteenth century and even more in the upcoming century. Researchers dealt with the different periods of the royal courts and that of the magnates and prelates comprehensively, and therefore the ‘Wohnkultur’ of the courts was a part of their interest to a greater or lesser degree, with regards to the interest of the researcher and to the available sources. For example, Albert Nyáry discussed the court of Ippolito d’Este, archbishop of Esztergom, Dezső Csánki examined the court of Matthias Corvinus, and Henrik Horváth investigated the court of King Sigismund of Luxembourg. The first book analysing in depth the interior decoration and furnishings of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century elite on the basis of written, pictorial, and material sources was published only in the forties of the twentieth century. The author of this lavish volume titled *Régi magyar otthonok* [Old Hungarian Homes] was Pál Voit, who dedicated two chapters to the ‘Wohnkultur’ of the period under discussion. The book of this distinguished art historian is not only about medieval interior decoration and furnishings, but it reviews the topic from the Hungarian Conquest of the Carpathian Basin to the Bauhaus. The examination of the comfort in medieval castles, mansions (*castella*), and manor houses were not part of his work, neither the investigation of the less representative parts of the residential buildings (e.g. kitchens, bathrooms) and their furnishings.

Systematic survey of the home furnishings, interior architectural elements, the arrangement of rooms, the role of the interior design in the courtly representation, and the comfort of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century elite homes has not been published yet. The present dissertation supposed to fulfil such gap.

II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION AND THE APPLIED METHODS

The dissertation is composed of eleven chapters. *Chapter 1* is a short introduction, which is followed by the literature review of the topic (*Chapter 2*). *Chapter 3* introduces the different sources available for the research of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century ‘Wohnkultur’. During the preparation of this dissertation, the written and pictorial sources, as well as the surviving examples of furnishings, too, were indispensable to discuss the various areas of the ‘Wohnkultur’ in detail. The inventories and account books have supplied the most fruitful sources for the study of the elite interiors, in addition, the trousseaux inventories and the testaments.

Our first inventories concerning castles and mansions are available from the third third of the fifteenth century. Nonetheless, only a few survive from this period, but more inventories are available from the second third of the sixteenth century. It is very variable how detailed the inventories are. Some are quite detailed concerning the contents of a given stronghold, including the home furnishings, but some contain only a few pieces of information about furniture and other furnishings beside the list of weapons. Since the individuals compiling the inventories recorded basically the equipment of strongholds, the listing of the weapons and alimentation was primary for them, while the other objects were ‘secondary’. Among the latter, the metal household items were important (e.g. lighting equipment, tools, kitchen utensils). Tapestries, carpets and bed linens, namely the textile furnishings meant value to the persons making the inventories, too. Ceramics, furniture and other, smaller wooden artefacts were regarded as less valuable items because their material represented a cheap category. The above-mentioned statements are primarily related to those inventories which were taken between the end of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth centuries. In the middle-late sixteenth century furniture came to the fore. There are inventories in which only these are listed at a given room, or almost only these are mentioned. One can observe another change as well: in the inventories dated to the late fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth centuries household items and furnishings are seldom recorded room by room, but later on, it became a frequent practice. By listing the name of the rooms, we also get a picture of the layout of a given building.

The rich material of the inventories is diversified by the items of the account books. While in the inventories of castles furniture was not always listed (or not every type), in the account books that was precisely recorded when one bought a piece of furniture or had some kind of furniture made. Beside a given item one can find the invested amount as well. Unfortunately, in Hungary only a few

royal account books remained; the earliest ones originate from the Jagiellonian era. From the published aristocratic account books, the Nádasdy account books (from the 1540s and 1550s) proved to be very useful, in which numerous data can be found about furnishings. Relevant data from the account books of medieval towns were also included in the dissertation.

Most of the surviving Hungarian dowry inventories were compiled in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century. Concerning furniture, they can be used to a limited extent, since usually only chests and wardrobes (by which we mean carpentered chests) are recorded in them, namely only those items of storage furniture in which the brides received their trousseaux. Beds might appear in such inventories, but it is more common, that brides got ‘only’ different expensive beddings as wedding gift. Trousseau inventories are excellent sources for tapestries, carpets, tablecovers, and hand-washing equipment.

In contrast with inventories, in testaments not only the items are listed, but these documents contain such important pieces of information as well that a certain item from whom came into the possession of the legator and who would inherit it. In the testaments and legacy inventories of the magnates few pieces of furniture can be found, unlike those of citizens. These written sources proved to be very useful to study carpets, tapestries, bed hangings, tablecloths, precious metal vessels, pewterware, candlesticks, and bedsheets. Moreover, castle restoration accounts and documents, Latin–Hungarian glossaries, as well as contemporary narratives and descriptions (e.g. chronicles, memoirs, travelogues) were used to the research.

As for the visual sources, primarily the depictions of the panel paintings on winged altarpieces dated to the second half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries were useful for studying the topic. Household items depicted on panel paintings allow us to gain insight into the interiors of the great nobles and citizens. However, through these we are rather able to observe general furnishings than special ones, and the interiors created by those. The miniatures and woodcuts in different illuminated manuscripts and books, the certain depictions of frescoes survived in churches, as well as the impressions of seals also provide important pieces of information about the interior decoration of the period.

Unfortunately, most of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century furnishings vanished during the centuries or have survived damaged. The majority of the wooden artefacts and significant amount of the textiles perished. Those survived partially enrich the collections of the museums. Thanks to the archaeological excavations, from the period under examination we can be acquainted among others with lighting equipment, wooden and metal kitchenware, ceramics (e.g. pots, bowls, inkstands), glass

artefacts (e.g. beakers, goblets, lamps, glass roundels for windows), parts of heating systems (e.g. stove tiles, carved stone elements of fireplaces), floor tiles, and toilet instruments. Furthermore, archaeology helps to identify the layout of the destroyed buildings. In the course of building archaeology research the interiors of the residential buildings become known, such important details as doors, windows, wall decorations, as well as floors and ceilings.

III. THE RESIDENCES OF THE ELITE IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

Talking about interior design and furnishings without analysing residential buildings would have given a false picture, therefore in *Chapter 4* I made a summary about the residences of the king, magnates and prelates, selecting from those castles, mansions, and manor houses which were researched by building archaeology, or were known from the written sources. The primary aim of this chapter is to introduce the layout of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century residential buildings of the elite. Since the period under discussion begins with the reign of King Sigismund of Luxembourg, the royal residences are listed according to their status in the Sigismund era, starting with the principal government residences (Visegrád, Buda, Pozsony/Bratislava), continuing with those greater castles which were mainly used for hunting and recreation (Diósgyőr, Zólyom/Zvolen, Tata). The ‘smaller’ hunting lodges and manor houses of the king (Csepel, Nyék) and the archbishop of Esztergom (Ákospalota, Pusztamarót) were discussed in a subchapter. The residential buildings of the magnates and prelates were classified into three categories: 1. castle (*castrum*), 2. mansion (*castellum*), 3. manor house (*curia nobilitaris, domus*). During the course of selection primary considerations were the contemporary significance, extent of research, number of publications, and last but not least the knowledge about the layout of a given late medieval residence. Furthermore, this chapter contains a short review of the aristocratic urban houses situated on Buda Castle Hill.

After the presentation of castles, mansions, and manor houses, *Chapter 5* gives a description about the Latin and Hungarian vocabulary used for the different kinds of rooms in the fifteenth–sixteenth-century written sources. According to these sources, the largest and most representative hall of the castles, mansions, and urban aristocratic palaces was called *palotha* in Hungarian, *palatium/palacium* in Latin. One can find many kind of words for rooms in these documents: *stuba, camera/kamora, domus/baz, zoba, testudo/boltha, hypocaustum/hipocaustum*. In the Middle Ages the term *Stuba* (Germ. *Stube*) covered a heatable, smoke-free room. In the fifteenth–sixteenth-century Italian palaces the word *camera* undoubtedly meant a bedroom, and in Hungary it often had the same function as well.

On the other hand, bedrooms were called *domus cubicularis* or *domus dormitoria*. *Domus/baz* could be almost every kind of room (e.g. treasury, repository, granary). Words *testudo* and *boltha, bolt, wolta* meant rooms or chambers with a vault just like the German *Gewelb*. Rooms named *hypocaustum* or *hipocaustum* frequently appear in the inventories of the second half of the sixteenth century; those might mean a heatable room. In the Middle Ages *pretorium* and *atrium* were used for hallways in Latin. Terms for serving places and storage rooms are more or less identical in the fifteenth–sixteenth-century documents. The kitchen can be found in Latin written sources as *coquina* and *culina*, while the bakehouse as *domus pistoris*. Storage rooms were called: cellar – *cellarium*, granary – *domus frumentaria*, storeroom for flour – *domus farinaria*, treasury and repository – *domus tavernicalis*, *promptuarium*, *penarium*. Bathhouses and bathrooms were called *balnea stuba* or *balnei domus* in Latin and *ferdew baz* in Hungarian. In the sixteenth century privies were referred in Latin sources as *locus necessarius*, *latrina*, *loca secreta*, and in Hungarian as *arnyk szek/arniek szek*.

Chapter 6 is about the furnishings of great halls, apartments and other rooms, more precisely, about what might belong to them according to the written and pictorial sources.

IV. THE INTERIOR DESIGN OF THE FIFTEENTH–SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ELITE HOMES

The appearance of interiors was strongly influenced by interior architecture (*Chapter 7*). This provided a suitable ‘frame’ to the furnishings. In the fifteenth–sixteenth-century castles, mansions, and manor houses the rooms had wooden ceilings (e.g. beamed ceiling, coffered ceiling) or stone vaults (e.g. barrel vault, rib vault, stellar vault, net vault). These types usually varied within a given building. Walls were covered with panelling or were decorated with wall paintings, on the other hand, tapestries or carpets were hung on them. The existence of rooms with wooden panelling in the Kingdom of Hungary was primarily proved by building archaeology research. Beside of royal and aristocratic castles (e.g. Kőszeg, Visegrád, Gyula, Szigliget), once the houses of citizens could be characterized with such rooms as well. Different techniques were used to cover wall surfaces with wood.

Very spectacular, however, expensive decoration was the wall painting. According to the written sources and the surviving Hungarian examples, fresco paintings were decorated with ornamental, figural, or geometric motifs. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries one of the most characteristic wall decorations was the rich foliate ornament (Germ. *Ast- und Laubwerk*); the vaults were often painted alike. In literature such rooms are referred as a ‘green room’ (Germ. *Grünstübl*), the Latin

written sources also mention them as *stuba viridi*. In the Kingdom of Hungary, mostly in Upper Hungary quite numerous medieval green rooms – or only the remains of their decorations – survive in castles and urban houses as well. Themes of figural wall paintings show great diversity in the Middle Ages: they could be depicted constellations, heroic deeds, court festivities, coats of arms, moreover, standing figures of Virtues, kings, heroes, and noblemen. Geometric patterns provided the simplest painted wall decoration. Often silk or velvet (e.g. velvet with pomegranate motif) was imitated on the bottom part of the wall surfaces. During the Renaissance different painted architectural elements (e.g. columns, pilasters) were very popular, as well as inscriptions written in Antiqua. In contrast with the non-movable fresco paintings and wooden panels, the tapestries were ‘portable wall paintings’. In the period under discussion walls were primarily decorated with valuable silk and woollen tapestries, the latter were woven in the Low Countries or in France; in the sixteenth century linen wall hangings were also in use.

Floors of the residential buildings could be paved in various ways. One of the easiest ways to make floor was the so-called terrazzo floor, the other was the wooden floor. More ornate floors were made of marble or tiles. The floor tiles could be plain, decorated, or glazed; their shape was diverse (e.g. squared, lozenge-shaped, octagonal). In addition, floors could be covered with rush matting or carpets.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries doors showed a diverse picture; there were different techniques to embellish them. One of the most characteristic Gothic door wings, the so-called ‘iron doors’ were made from the mid-fourteenth century onwards. To make the doors more aesthetic, their surface were carved, by which they had a less austere appearance than the ‘iron doors’ had. The majority of the carved ornaments was flat-cut floral decoration. A popular decoration was the intarsia, many Renaissance doors were embellished with this woodworking technique. Painted (*iratos* in Old Hungarian) doors were very common in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, we even have documentary evidence for them as early as the first half of the sixteenth century.

Glazing was not the only solution to cover a window in fifteenth–sixteenth-century Hungary. There were easier and cheaper techniques as well: the windows were covered with paper, tarnish, or linen. Often all above-mentioned solutions were present in a given building. Crown glass was the most common form of glazing; the glass roundels were placed into lead cames. For the protection of windows iron grilles and wooden shutters were used; window curtains were in fashion as early as the fifteenth century.

V. FURNISHINGS AND COMFORT IN THE FIFTEENTH–SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ELITE HOMES

Furniture is the most characteristic element of the interiors (*Chapter 8*). Concerning Gothic furniture-making, it is generally divided into a northern European (England, France, Low Countries, Northern Germany) and a southern European (Central and Southern Germany, Switzerland, Tyrol, Eastern Europe) culture. The Hungarian furniture-making can be connected to the southern culture; it was strongly influenced by the German furniture-making. Furniture was made, on the one hand, with carpentered structure, and later, at a higher level of joinery and furniture-making with so-called frame and panel construction. The period under discussion is rather characterized by joined furniture. Examining the material of local fifteenth–sixteenth-century pieces of furniture which originate from Upper Hungary and Transylvania, they were primarily made of pine, beech, linden, or maple. Material used by the joiner strongly determined the ornaments. Fifteenth–sixteenth-century furniture was embellished with flat carving, painting, stencilling, gilding, or inlay in Hungary. Stencilling seldom appears on the surviving pieces of furniture (e.g. a cupbord from Hervartó/Hervartov), although several wooden ceilings prove that it was a kindly used technique in Hungary. In contrast with the seventeenth-century practice, to paint the entire surface of furniture was not in fashion in the period under examination. Beautiful ornaments could be made by wood inlaying (*intarsia*). Diverse geometric patterns and townscape depictions (the latter is called *tarsia prospettica* in Italian) appear on Hungarian inlaid furniture remained from the end of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries. According to dowry and legacy inventories, in the sixteenth century the Hungarian word *intarzia* (inlay/intarsia) was not used for inlaid furniture, those were called *rakott*; in Latin written documents those pieces of furniture which were ornamented in such manner were described as *vermiculatus*, *segmentatus*, or *tesselatus*.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the representation was crucial at royal and noble courts. Furniture and other furnishings were suitable for representation, both indoor and outdoor. At the royal court the three pieces of furniture of estate were the seat of authority (throne or chair of estate), the stepped buffet, and the bed, which meant a canopied bed. At the courts of the great nobles the stepped buffet and mainly the precious metal vessels on it indicated the richness of the owner. Textiles, carpets and tapestries of high value could be connected to the above-mentioned items of furniture, they are studied in this chapter, too, as well as those precious metal artefacts which were used on festive occasions. This chapter examines such question as well, how tables were arranged in the great halls during banquets.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries all types of furniture were available in Hungary: there were uncountable variations of beds, tables, seat- and storage furniture. In the late medieval written sources numerous expressions were used for bed in Latin and in Hungarian: *lectus, lectulum, lectisternium, sponda, stratum, lectica, nozolya*, and *ag, agy*. In Hungary wealthy people slept in carpentered beds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but with the appearance of the new, joiner-made beds, their prestige faded away during the second half of the fifteenth century. A richly furnished bed was not valued by its wooden frame but by the canopy made of precious textile and by the curtains belonging to it (*agmeyn, soporlab/suporlab, tentoria, superlat/superlath*), as well as by the bedding. The textile baldachin was widespreadly used in fifteenth-century Europe. It was also in use at the Hungarian royal and aristocratic courts at that time. Posted and posted-canopied beds were considered as elegant items of furniture; they came in fashion in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century. The fashion of the posted bed came from Italy to Hungary. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the full equipment of a bed was as follows: straw and feather mattresses, bed sheet, coverlet/duvet, bolster, and pillow. The most outstanding piece of the bedding was the coverlet/duvet (*supellectile, stragulum, toral/thoral, coopertorium lecti, tegumina lectum, pablan/paplan*). In the Middle Ages not everyone had a bedstead, and this statement was not only true for the servants of the royal and aristocratic courts, but sometimes for the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting. For lack of a bed, they slept on straw-filled mattresses or on rush mats.

Tables were seen as valuable in the Middle Ages. Although they were made of wood ‘only’, we can nearly always find them in the late medieval inventories, or even often only these, but no other types of furniture. As to its structure, one of the simplest type of tables was the trestle table, which could be easily dismantled. Further typical types of tables of the late medieval period were the table with carved board legs, the table with ‘fake drawer’, as well as the so-called ‘Transylvanian’ table (a table with cradle-like container). The latter, in contrast with its name, was not only made in Transylvania but in Upper Hungary as well. The tables with ‘fake drawer’ and the ‘Transylvanian’ tables were used in Hungary from the second half of the fifteenth century. Beside of rectangular tables, circular ones also existed in the period under discussion. In contrast with other European countries, no hexagonal or octogonal tables survive in Hungary from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there are no illustrations of them either.

Late medieval chairs from stools with three or four stake-like legs to armchairs upholstered with leather or velvet show a very diverse picture. In the fifteenth–sixteenth-century written sources the following words were used for chairs and stools: *sedile, sedes, sella, cathedra, sedes selye/sellyezek, settzel*

zsek/Zetzelzsek, tamasztbo zék, batas zek. In the period under examination the most common form of seat-furniture was the stool with three or four stake-like legs (Hung. *gyalogszék*). Alike this kind of stool, the X-frame chair (*sella curulis*) has a long history, too; its name was given after its X-shape. In most cases such chairs could be folded. They were made of wood or metal (wrought iron, bronze). From the X-frame chair with slats developed the backed chair with slats. Moreover, the backed chairs with slat frames can be proved in Hungary from the thirteenth century onwards; these have not been 'out of fashion' either in the fifteenth century. The fashion of chairs with board back spread from South German territories to Hungary during the course of the sixteenth century. The Hungarian expression *tamasztbo zék*, which can be found in the inventories compiled in the second half of the sixteenth century, probably mean this type of seating. The upholstered *Zetzelzsek* and *sellyezek* were rated as the most expensive and most elegant type of chairs; in Hungary documentary evidence can be found for these since the end of the fifteenth century. These upholstered chairs became common in aristocratic homes since the second half of the sixteenth century.

In the late medieval royal palaces and in the homes of the great nobles and prelates a broad diversity of storage furniture was available. Chests, caskets, small boxes, shelves, rods, stepped buffets and different kind of cupboards (for storing books, alimentation, kitchenware, towels, bed and dining linen, linen garments etc.; hanging cupboards) were all used at that time in Hungary. Due to its multifunctionality, the most practical and mostly used item of storage furniture was the chest. In Latin sources three words were basically used for chests: *cista*, *scrinium*, and *ladula*. They were adorned with painting, carving, inlay (intarsia), or gilding. In the homes of the magnates and citizens, among storage furniture the aumbry – in other words armoire – has become more and more important during the course of the fifteenth century. The Latin *almarium/armarium* was a general term in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it meant a hanging or standing cupboard, a sideboard, a kitchen cupboard, and a hand-washing cabinet equally. The Hungarian word *szekrény* (old: *szökrön*) was used for carpentered chests at that time.

The Interior furnishing subchapter demonstrates those minor household items (flower pots and vases, clocks, bird cages, paintings, maps, and kitchen utensils) which were crucial elements of the late medieval interiors.

The interiors of the Hungarian wealthy households were enriched by artefacts of foreign origin in every period, so in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also. The Italian and German household items and furnishings were quite characteristic in both centuries. Furthermore, foreign furnishings came from the Low Countries, France, and Spain, as well as from the Near and the Far East to the

Hungarian elite homes also. From Italy, among others, silk and velvet fabrics (from which, for instance, bedspreads, wall hangings, cushion covers, baldachins were made), glassware (lamps, beakers, goblets), furniture, and maiolicaware arrived to Hungary. The German import furnishings were even more diverse: lighting equipment, kitchen- and tableware, time measuring instruments, stoneware, stove tiles, glassware, textiles (e.g. cloth and linen as raw materials for bedspreads and mattress covers), and furniture can be found among them. As for the Low Countries, lighting equipment, woodcuts, paintings, woollen tapestries were present in the upper-class Hungarian interiors, the latter also came from France to Hungary, while from Spain Hispano-Moresque earthenware arrived. Import household items from the Near and the Far East primarily contained various types of potteries. As far as the Turkish goods concerned, leatherwork and carpets are worth mentioning.

In the fifteenth–sixteenth-century elite homes the daily life was made more comfortable by different heating systems, lighting equipment, bathrooms, and privies (*Chapter 9*). The assessment of comfort of a castle or a mansion highly depended on the quantity and quality of the above-mentioned amenities. Although hypocaust heating was still in use in fifteenth-century Hungary, it was counted as an old-fashioned heating system; in the first half of the fourteenth century tiled stoves appeared and they became more common and widespread. Fireplaces were also in use in the fifteenth–sixteenth-century castles and mansions. In the written sources stoves are referred as *fornax* in Latin and as *kemencze* in Hungarian. The Hungarian word *kályha* (stove) did not mean a heating system in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but stove tiles. During the Gothic, stoves were mostly rectangular on their lower section, and cylindrical or also rectangular on their upper part. In the third third of the fifteenth century more massive, wider stoves appeared. As regards the appearance of the sixteenth-century Renaissance tiled stoves, their shape was characteristically rectangular both on the lower and on the upper part. Tiled stoves were often richly coloured, so they were spectacular parts of the interiors.

For the artificial illumination of the interiors ceramic oil lamps, candlesticks, candlestands, chandeliers, lanterns, candles and torches were used equally. The different types of lighting equipment were made of ceramic, wood, silver, copper, bronze, iron, tin, glass, and ivory, so of almost any material. In the royal and aristocratic homes several kind of imported (South German, Flandrian, Italian) lighting equipment was available.

In the late medieval elite homes one of the most widespread forms of bathing happened in a wooden bathtub which was placed into the bedroom, or somewhere in the building there was a

separate room for bathing. In the royal palace of Visegrád, a bathroom supplied with hot and cold water was part of the comfort as early as the second half of the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century bathrooms were erected in the archiepiscopal palace in Esztergom and in the royal palace of Buda. While bathing was not an everyday activity in the Middle Ages, for minor cleaning of the body copper, silver, or silver-gilt sets – containing a ewer (*anfora, cantharus, fusorium*) and a basin (*pelvis, scutella, lavatorium*) – were used. In medieval castles and mansions the privies were mostly connected to unheated bedchambers rather than to heated daylight rooms.

Similar patterns might appear on many kinds of furnishings or could be parts of interior design (e.g. on furniture, stove tiles, textiles, floor tiles, wall paintings). The different patterns characterized the period such as animal figures or legendary creatures in a medallion, braided ribbon ornament, pomegranate motif, rosettes with three leaves motif, truncated branch motif with or without a ribbon, various personal emblems (devices) are discussed in a separate chapter (*Chapter 10*).

VI. PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY FURNISHINGS?

The last, summarizing chapter deals with the frequent travels of those living at the royal court and at the courts of magnates and prelates, as well as focuses on those household items and furnishings with which the elite travelled. We searched for answers for the following questions: on the basis of the inventories what sort of items of furniture were used in the late medieval homes of the magnates and prelates, which of these were permanently left behind in their homes, and where these were stored, furthermore, to what extent the interiors were designed. Moreover, we asked whether it was possible to talk at all about permanent furnishings as regards Hungarian elite homes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It can be concluded that if a court – be it the royal court or the court of a magnate or prelate – was present in a given residence, then the interior furnishings of that residence could not have been poorish. In such cases, we should not think of ‘minimalist’ interiors, to use today’s term. Another issue is that when they moved on, courts did not leave everything in its place: we can be certain that they put some furnishings (e.g. tapestries, carpets, vessels made of precious metals) in storerooms and treasuries, and that they took other furnishings with them. At such times, interiors may indeed have seemed bare. When, on the other hand, a court arrived somewhere in the course of its travels, rooms generally had to be furnished and equipped. This could be done quickly by unpacking the contents of chests, by hanging up tapestries, and by making up beds. Since kings, as well as magnates

and prelates possessed numerous residences in the late medieval period, and since for this reason (also) they were often on the road, the furnishings of their residences could not have been permanent or non-movable. On the basis of the inventories dated to the second half of the sixteenth century, we should count with a larger amount of furniture in the castles and mansions. The increased number of furniture can be explained on the one hand by the changes in inventory-making customs, on the other hand by the higher need of the elite for furniture as well, which was supported by the development of joinery.

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