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**Buda Castle:
Hungary's
leading
cultural centre**

Buda Castle, the former Royal Castle of Budapest, is gradually being turned into Hungary's most important cultural centre under a standing decision of the Government.

The Castle Museum, opened in 1968, takes up a reconstructed wing of the former Royal Palace. To reach its entrance, visitors walk uphill across a pleasant park whose starting point is near the Buda head of the graceful Elizabeth Bridge.

The permanent exhibition "Mediaeval Royal Palace" in the basement includes several recently excavated and reconstructed 14th- and 15th-century chambers and vaulted rooms, including the exquisite Gothic Hall and Chapel, and the Renaissance Hall containing architectural and sculptural monuments dating back to the golden age of the palace under the reign of King Matthias, in the second half of the 15th century.

On the ground-floor of the Castle Museum, the exhibition "1,000 Years of the Hungarian Capital" illustrates Budapest's history between 896 A.D. and 1945. Archaeological finds, mediaeval art work, engravings, paintings, photographs, historic implements serve to illustrate the history of the three ancient towns: Buda, Óbuda and Pest, united in 1872 and given the name of Budapest. Monuments left by 145 years of Turkish occupation stand out in strange contrast to the homogeneous material of other historic relics. Photographs and scale models represent the most important architectural achievements of the last 25 years, and the construction projects to be realized in the near future.

The great hall on the first floor is reserved for temporary exhibitions of fine art and history.

The exhibition "Archaeological Excavations in Budapest" on the second floor presents important archaeological finds from the prehistory of the town and the ancient Roman period.

PALACE TO SHINE IN PRISTINE BEAUTY



PHOTOS MTI - JARAI-FENYES

A bird's-eye-view of reconstructed Buda Castle

Heavy hand of history

At the end of World War II, sixty per cent of Buda Castle lay in utter ruin, after having been turned into the last stronghold of German Nazi troops occupying Budapest and fighting against the liberating Soviet Army. Reconstruction work started in 1948, and would be completed by the end of 1978. At present, 3,000 workers—ranging from masons to architects—of the Buda Castle Investment Company are engaged on building work, including meticulous reconstruction of artistic and historic monuments.

The total amount of money to be spent on the reconstruction and decoration of Buda Castle will amount to 2,000 million forints, of which allocated sum 1,200 million have already been used up. Construction work will also involve the rebuilding of the former funicular railway, but fast lifts will also be installed to take visitors from the foot of the hill to the Castle itself.

Stupendous past

In the 12th century, this Buda hilltop and its slopes were dotted with peasant settlements, and vineyard cultivation was carried on. The first castle was built by King Béla IV in the second half of the 13th century, after the devastating Mongol invasion of Hungary in 1241-42. Anjou kings Robert



The Gothic Hall, reconstructed in its 15th-century form

Charles and Louis the Great added to the fortress, while King Sigismund pulled down much of the Anjou palace, and under him and King Matthias, Buda Castle was built into one of the most splendid royal palaces of the period.

The Turks, seizing Buda Castle by ruse, moved into the palace and used it for their own purposes, in their own way. The liberation of Buda from Turkish rule in 1686 wrought a destruction second only to that of the siege in the winter of 1944-45. Buda Castle was given its present general outline by the Hapsburg empress and queen Maria Theresa, while in the 19th century outstanding Hungarian architect Ignác Hauszmann gave some wings a form which can now again be seen following reconstruction.

In a sensational recent discovery, 36 works of

Anjou-age statuary were unearthed, after having been under ground for 500 years. These are of outstanding importance because of revealing artistic creativity in Hungary before the coming of the Turks—who systematically destroyed any human representation in art, following a precept of their Mohammedan religion.

The discovery was made by chance, during building work extending to a depth of 11 metres under ground. The importance of the find is such that an international scientific conference will be staged at the end of 1975 to inquire into stylistic influences seen in the statuary (Frankish, Prague, Hungarian) and other artistic and historic aspects. Paris' Louvre has already inquired about the find, held to be of general European importance.