2024
Vol. 4
No. 1

Historical Studies on Central Europe

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities

Historical Studies on Central Europe 2024
Vol. 4
No. 1

Content

Research Articles

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 4–8
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.01

Absence and Presence

The Black Death and Subsequent Plague Waves in Fourteenth–Fifteenth-Century East Central Europe – A Short Introduction

Martin Bauch
András Vadas
Special editors of the block

It has been widely discussed if and to what extent the first wave of the Second Plague Pandemic, the Black Death (1347–52), made an impact on East Central Europe. Its virtual absence from large parts of the Kingdoms of Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, and the northern part of the Balkan Peninsula has long been explained by a lack of written sources, especially compared to the much denser documentation for England, France, and Italy. Moreover, since aDNA research has clarified that the Black Death was indeed caused by the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium,[1] most plague historians argue for a scheme of 'same pathogen, same outcome' across Europe, with the Central European cases unimportant exceptions to the rule they established on the better-documented areas of Western and Southern Europe.[2] New research with scientific proxy data seems to confirm that the absent impact of the Black Death in academic research is due to more than just a lack of sources,[3] confirming the overall impression of demographic continuity and even economic, political, and cultural affluence so typical for the monarchies ruled by the Luxembourgs, Piasts, and Angevins in the second half of the fourteenth century.

In the past century and a half, significant written sources have been uncovered and published that testify to the spread of the plague in Western Europe and some parts of the Mediterranean. However, not independent of the fact that the second half of the fourteenth century in East Central Europe is seen as a period of quick economic growth and political stability, studying the demographic crises was less in the focus of research. For that reason, only in the early 2020s did scholarship critically assess the available data on the plague wave at the turn of the 1340s

1 Bos, "A draft genome of Yersinia pestis."

2 Benedictow, *The Complete History.*

3 Izdebski et al., "Palaeoecological Data."

in the region.[4] However, more recently the focus of historical plague research has shifted from the dominant event of the Black Death to subsequent plague waves such as the *pestis secunda, tertia*, as well as the later waves of the second plague pandemic. Particular emphasis has been placed on the mode in which these waves emerged—their starting points, indicating post-Black Death plague reservoirs, and potential spread patterns and associated vectors like trade. Scholars have repeatedly suggested that the later plague waves were more important events for East Central Europe than the Black Death as such. Detailed reconstructions of their spread route are important for a deeper understanding of how the plague became endemic in Europe and which animal reservoirs the pathogen retreated to between outbreak waves—and yet they are not available.[5] Likewise, all conceivable sources of indirect demographic information on the impact of subsequent waves, such as wills or similar written sources, have not been adequately addressed for the plague waves of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in East Central Europe. Furthermore, cultural phenomena connected to the recurring plague waves, like flagellants and the institutionalized memory of plague victims, but also the question of contemporary explanations of the plague would merit a more detailed examination in future research.

The three articles in the thematic block address the waves of the second plague pandemic in the region and predominantly utilize traditional written sources that have been overlooked or not interpreted in the context of the Black Death. They include narrative sources, charter evidence, testaments, letters, as well as pictorial evidence. We should also keep in mind that written sources remain crucial for findings of paleogenetic studies, expanding our understanding of medieval plague waves. Despite incomplete histories, our three contributions demonstrate how examining these sources reveals new information and how medieval studies remain a key player in future plague history.

The contribution of András Vadas provides a survey of the surviving written evidence on the presence of the plague in the Kingdom of Hungary at the turn of the 1340s. While scarce, the data still provides a basis to suggest that the disease took victims in several parts of the country and spread just as much to villages in less well-connected areas of the country. The data gathered also suggests that the disease is unlikely to have been carried from the Black Sea ports via Wallachia or Serbia.

Martin Bauch and Christian Oertel's contribution reassesses the combination of narrative sources with quantified epigraphic and administrative data, hence providing dense evidence of mortality peaks and details of the seasonality of outbreaks.

4 Guzowski, "Did the Black Death"; Nodl, "Impacts of the Plague Epidemic"; Mengel, "A Plague on Bohemia?"; Kiss et al., "Food Crisis."

5 See the recent polemics: Slavin, "Out of the West"; Green, "Out of the East"; Slavin, "Reply: Out of the West."

Even regions with limited research such as Eastern Germany, or seemingly out-researched areas such as Bohemia, can offer new insights. Their study compares mortality ratios in plague years to non-plague years, showing lower ratios in Eastern Germany and Bohemia than elsewhere in Western Eurasia. These findings align with research indicating a less severe impact of the Black Death and subsequent plague waves in East Central Europe. The differing seasonality of outbreaks, with summer peaks in coastal areas, and autumn/winter peaks inland, may even provide insights into the varied spread patterns across the region.

Igor Stamenović discusses the well-known battle of Belgrade (1456), focusing on the plague that took the lives of two of the key figures of the Christian armies' victory, John Hunyadi and John of Capistrano. He provides a detailed survey of the contemporary letters and narrative sources that testify to their deaths, trying to understand how the plague is interpreted as their cause of death. He argues that by the mid-fifteenth century the plague was largely contextualized as the wrath of God, a response to sins. This however did not fit the crusading framework of the victory and, therefore, led to a frequent omission of the cause of their deaths.

While three case studies are certainly not more than a start into the renewed research of the Black Death and other plague waves of the Late Middle Ages in East Central Europe, they concisely address questions related to the rise of aDNA-backed plague histories without reducing the potential of historical research to becoming an auxiliary science of scientific approaches. While testaments as indirect indicators of plague mortality remain to be researched beyond the examples investigated in this volume, especially for the fifteenth century[6], the potential of narrative sources on plague outbreaks in East Central Europe is still not fully exploited. The ongoing project of the collaborative scientific database EpiMedDat (http://www.epimeddat.net) aims at the joint collection of historical data on highly infectious diseases in pre-modern times and already contains substantial material on East and East Central Europe between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.[7] Drawing on this resource, and certainly adding further contributions to it, will be another promising way to reinforce the role of historical disciplines in further research on the plague and other infectious diseases.

6 For a helpful overview, see: Krzenck, *Böhmische Bürgertestamente*.

7 E.g. Seventy entries on Rus' territories, fifty-seven entries for the territory of today's Poland, fifty-one entries for Bohemia, while Southeastern Europe and the Carpathian Basin are hardly represented so far.

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 9–29
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.02

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

The Black Death in the Kingdom of Hungary – Sources, Limitations, Interpretations*

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Received 24 January 2024 | Accepted 27 May 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. Western scholarship has studied the mid-fourteenth-century cataclysm of the Black Death for centuries. In contrast, due to the limited number of contemporary narrative sources, in East Central Europe, until recently historians discussed it only marginally. In the past decades, not independent of the emergence of new methods, such as archaeogenetics and palynology, and novel approaches to studying the Black Death such as climate and environmental history, scholars have increasingly turned to the analysis of the multiple waves of the second plague pandemic in this region. Recent studies have drawn attention to the apparent lack of data on the Black Death in the region while pointing to the potential role of the later waves, such as the *pestis secunda* and *tercia,* as well as later medieval and early modern recurrences of the epidemic in the historical demography of Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary. The paper provides an overview of the written evidence of the Black Death in Hungary and publishes *in extenso* some of the most important documentary evidence of the episodes of the epidemic in the Kingdom of Hungary. It argues that, unlike in the case of Bohemia and Poland, the first wave of the plague can be relatively well pursued by a critical analysis of the written evidence.

Keywords: Black Death, disease history, environmental history, King Louis I the Great, Kingdom of Hungary, charters, chronicles, Neapolitan campaign

The Black Death was undoubtedly the largest demographic, economic, and social cataclysm in premodern Europe and probably well beyond it in Asia and Northern Africa as well. The sources of the mid-fourteenth-century events have been studied for at least two centuries, thus we have a detailed image of several aspects of the Black Death in the Mediterranean, Western and Northern Europe.[1] Over the past

* The research has been supported by the ÚNKP-23-4 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Culture and Innovation from the source of the National Research, Development, and Innovation Fund. I am tahnkful to Gábor Mikó for his essential paleographic aid.

1 Campbell, *The Great Transition*; Benedictow, *The Complete History*. For more recent developments on the appearance of the Black Death in Eastern Europe, see: Barker, "Laying the Corpses"; Slavin, "From the Tian Shan."

decades, important results have been published about the spread of the disease in the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman world,[2] as well as in some parts of East Central Europe, such as Poland and Bohemia.[3] Research has also pointed to the spread of the plague in Dalmatia;[4] however, some parts of East Central Europe have received considerably less scholarly attention in this respect, such as the Kingdom of Hungary. Similarly, while crucial studies have approached the spread of the disease using natural scientific means that had not been utilized before in explaining the importance of the Black Death such as big data palynology, research has largely omitted the issue of what the situation was in medieval Hungary.[5] A third major development in recent research sheds light on the geography of the plague, using archaeogenetics. Thanks to the development of ancient DNA analysis, we already have considerable data on the spread of the pathogen from Central Asia toward Western Eurasia.[6] However, similar to the written accounts, and recent pollen-based works on the impact of the Black Death, ancient DNA results are missing not only for the mid-fourteenth-century wave itself but also for the later waves of the second plague pandemic in the region. This explains why East Central Europe, especially Hungary, is largely missing from many of the overviews of the Black Death, and even when it is present, it is often based on speculation and is loaded with preconceptions. The paper attempts to provide an overview of the written evidence of the mid-fourteenth-century plague wave and publishes *in extenso* some of the most important documentary evidence of the known instances of the Black Death at the turn of the 1340s and 1350s. Hopefully, this will lead to at least a partial reconsideration of the spread of the plague in the region, shedding light on the possible directions of the spread of *Yersinia pestis* in the broader area of the northern Balkans and the Romanian principalities. The focus is on the written evidence, which to this date is the sole source for understanding the exact chronology of the spread of the plague in the late 1340s.

The state of the art – The Black Death in the Kingdom of Hungary

For quite some time now, research in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries that shared their territories with the medieval Kingdom of Hungary has considered the demographic and economic impact of the Black Death. However, with

2 Bartsocas, "Two Fourteenth Century"; Tsiamis et al., "Epidemic Waves"; Tsiamis, *Plague*; Varlik, *Plague*.

3 Guzowski, "Did the Black Death"; Mengel, "A Plague on Bohemia"; Nodl, "Impacts."

4 Ravančić, "Prilog proučavanju"; Blažina Tomić and Blažina, *Expelling the Plague*, 42–67.

5 Izdebski et al., "Palaeoecological Data."

6 Spyrou et al., "Phylogeography"; Spyrou et al., "The Source"; Keller et al., "A Refined Phylochronology."

considerably fewer sources—or at least chronicles and annals—that testify to the presence of the plague than in Western Europe or in the Mediterranean, it has usually been up to the different scholars' taste whether they attributed this to the lighter touch of the plague or to the fact that much of the medieval Hungarian source material is lost. Some have suggested that the Black Death seriously impacted the settlement pattern in the Great Hungarian Plain and that the mid-fourteenth-century and subsequent waves may have been among the reasons for the process of abandoning settlements there.[7] Others have not attributed major importance to the Black Death in the abandonment of settlements and the formation of the numerous late medieval deserted *(deserta)* peasant plots.[8] In Hungarian historiography, probably Erik Fügedi has dedicated most attention to the presence of the Black Death and the later waves of the plague in the Kingdom of Hungary. In his 1992 overview of the demography of medieval Hungary, he stated that "having surveyed the sources, it can be argued […] that the Black Death did not cause such catastrophe as it did in Western Europe."[9] Fügedi was one of the first historians to focus systematically on the crisis years, studying the available source material for his analysis. Apart from surveying the charter evidence that was researchable at the time, he was innovative in looking at an area that no one had scrutinized before, that is the functioning of the state administration during 1349, which according to the sources to be discussed hereafter, was the year when the Black Death hit Hungary the hardest. He examined the noble congregations held by the palatine of Hungary *(congregatio generalis palatinalis)*, which went with week-long events at designated places in the counties where the nobility of the respective county or (two counties) was present, and where the palatine adjudicated in legal disputes.[10] As Fügedi argues, these events were attended by large crowds and, in the case of mass deaths and turbulence, they would have been postponed. He demonstrates that in 1349 the palatinal congregations were probably uninterrupted throughout the country. He discusses what happened in the Hungarian palatinal congregations but does not analyze Slavonia or Transylvania. It is worth noting that right at the time that a source alludes to the plague (to be discussed hereafter) in Transylvania, the judicial forum of the vice-voivode of Transylvania was uninterrupted.[11] However, it seems that in 1349

7 Balogh, "Adatok az Alföld," 149.

8 Szabó, "Hanyatló jobbágyság." For a thorough criticism of Szabó's assessment of the abandonment of the peasant plots, see: Neumann, "Telekpusztásodás."

9 "A forrásokat áttekintve egyrészt azt kell megállapítani […], hogy még így sem beszélhetünk olyan katasztrófáról, mint amilyen Nyugat-Európát sújtotta." Fügedi, *A középkori*, 29.

10 Szőcs, "A nádori," 45; Szőcs, *A nádori intézmény*; C. Tóth, *A nádori és helytartói*; Ribi, "A nádori közgyűléseken."

11 Farkas, "Erdély Lackfi István," 75, 77.

in Slavonia, somewhat exceptionally, no noble gatherings were held.[12] Even if these data are somewhat contradictory, Fügedi is right in raising this point when assessing the Black Death, as already during King Louis's reign (in 1381), there was an instance when not only a judicial forum but other legal actions were also officially postponed due to the plague.[13]

Independent of Fügedi's results, the archaeologist József Laszlovszky also argued that "We have less data on the spread of the plague in East Central Europe compared to the situation in Western Europe. They indicate that the impact of the epidemic was weaker in the East. We must, of course, exercise caution, as the lack of information on the plague does not necessarily mean that the epidemic did not claim large numbers of victims."[14] In his paper published in 1994, he argues for a lighter touch of the mid-fourteenth-century plague attributing it to lower population density, the preceding Mongol invasions, and the economic well-being in Hungary around the time of the Black Death. Since Laszlovszky's paper, the most important contributions have been associated with the publication of the summaries of the complete corpus of mid-fourteenth-century charter evidence (*Anjou-kori oklevéltár* [Angevin Cartulary]), which Andrea Kiss and her colleagues have meticulously analysed.[15] Using the surviving charter evidence, they verify the presence of the plague in the country from the end of 1348 to 1350 and verify some of the later fourteenth-century waves. A paper by Annamária Bartha also touches upon the plague when discussing health issues of King Charles I and King Louis I the Great.[16] Finally, in a volume published during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tamás Fedeles gives an overview of recent research on the Black Death, but mostly focusing on areas outside Hungary.[17]

East Central Europe as well as Hungary have certainly been represented in the main works on Eurasian plagues. They include the still frequently quoted but by now largely outdated two-volume monograph of Jean-Noël Biraben[18] and the

12 B. Halász, "Generalis congregatiók," 283–98.

13 *A zichi és vásonkeői*, vol. 4, 217–8. no. 181.

14 "Wir besitzen relativ weniger Angaben über die Verbreitung der Pest in Ostmitteleuropa als in bezug auf die westeuropäische Situation. Aus diesen geht hervor, dass die Wirkung der Epidemie im Osten geringer war. Wir müssen natürlich Vorsicht walten lassen, da wegen des wesentlich geringeren Quellenbestandes die fehlenden Angaben zur Pest nicht unbedingt bedeuten, dass die Epidemie nicht doch Opfer in grosser Anzahl forderte." Laszlovszky, "»Per tot discrimina«," 46.

15 *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*; Kiss, "Weather and Weather-Related"; Kiss, Piti, and Sebők, "Rossz termések"; Kiss, Piti, Sebők, and Teiszler, "Food Crisis."

16 Bartha, "Károly Róbert."

17 Fedeles, "»Oly rettegés«."

18 Biraben, *Les hommes*. For its criticism, see: Roosen and Curtis, "Dangers."

monumental undertaking of Ole J. Benedictow.[19] Finally, scholars of East Central Europe have dealt with the issue of the plague in Hungary mostly in the context of the foreign sources they were working with.[20] The only important exception is a recent study by the Slovak historian Adam Mesiarkin who, in his overview of the Black Death, also discusses the spread of the epidemic in Hungary. His work is important, as using evidence provided by charters, that are usually overlooked by monographers of the Black Death, he draws attention to the shortcomings and flaws of Benedictow's treatment of the spread of the disease in the region.[21]

Sources and lack of sources

For studying the Black Death, research in Western Europe, the Mediterranean, as well as in most of Central Europe relies on narrative sources. However, the respective chronicles and annals are almost completely missing from Hungary. The most important, and one of the no more than a handful of domestic narrative sources from the age of the Black Death is the chronicle by John of Küküllő (*Iohannes de Kikullew*). In his short work, he mentions epidemics during the reign of King Louis I the Great (1342–1382) but fails to provide any further detail. As in the chapter concerned, he lists all sorts of disasters—epidemics, dearth, earthquakes, locusts—the reference remains quite vague and is hardly interpretable.[22] It is therefore certainly not sufficient to rely on this narrative. One (almost) contemporary data coming from the 1360s worth noting is preserved in the Chronicle of the Unknown Franciscan *(Anonymus Minorita Chronica)*. This otherwise important source however does not tell of the Black Death in Hungary but testifies to its appearance in the lands of the Golden Horde in 1346.[23] Apart from these reports, contemporary narratives from outside Hungary also testify to the presence of the Black Death in Hungary. The most relevant is the Annals of Miechów, which describes the spread of the plague in

19 Benedictow, *The Complete History*, 512–14.

20 Guzowski, "Did the Black Death."

21 Mesiarkin, "Stredovýchodná Európa."

22 "De pestilentia fame et terremotu. 215. Item eciam tempore sui regiminis pestilencie per loca particularia, et eciam per totum regnum Hungarie, et eciam in aliis vicinis regnis viguerunt. Et fames diversis temporibus per locustas et mures, spicas frugum et aliarum segetum corrodentes, et per siccitates temporum, ac aeris tempestates inualuerunt. Et pluribus vicibus terremotus per loca factus est." *Chronicon Dubniciense*, 191.

23 "Nam anno domini millesimo trecentesimo quadragesimo sexto dominus deus misit pestilenciam in eos, que tantum in eos deseuyt, quod infra paucos menses, ut dicitur, trecentena milia tartarorum prostrauit et consumpsit." *Chronicon Dubniciense*, 148. The source is preserved in the fifteenth-century Chronicle of Dubnic. On the source, see Kristó, "Utószó"; for the manuscript, OSZK, Cod. Lat. 165.

Hungary, putting it in the context of the flagellant movement, of which we have no additional contemporary data.[24] Other contemporary and later fourteenth-century sources also report the spread of the plague in Hungary, but unlike the Miechów annals, they mostly include generic references to its appearance in the area, as well as in other regions of Europe. The most often quoted contemporary chronicle is that of Gilles li Muisis.[25] Another group of narrative sources that have been problematized in the context of the Black Death in Hungary concerns the military campaign of Louis I the Great to Naples in 1347–1348,[26] as the related sources that also give an account of the plague in Italy allowed for some speculation concerning the spread of the disease associated with the Hungarian military campaign in Italy. From the later narratives, the most frequently quoted one in the context of the Black Death in Hungary is that of Jan Długosz, whose work also encompasses the epidemics in the Carpathian Basin.[27] Several further fifteenth-century chronicles also give accounts of the Black Death in the fourteenth century, noting its appearance in Hungary.[28]

Narrative sources utilized by Western research, such as manorial and urban hearth counts,[29] burial records,[30] tax registers, Peter's Pence registers,[31] tutelage and orphanage accounts,[32] and others, are almost completely absent in Hungary for the

24 "Anno Domini 1349. nuncii Thartarorum venerunt ad regem Polonie. Eodem anno mortalitas magna fuit in regno Ungarie, multe civitates et ville deserte habitatoribus vacuate, unde multe turme hominum tam de Ungaria quam de aliis partibus adiuncti circuibant flagellantes se, in lutum cadentes, magnam conpunccionem et penitenciam aliis indixerint, virgines eciam parwe et magne de villis sparsis crinibus in modum processionis tamquam vesane discurrebant, verberantes se, et pernoctabant in silvis ad quendam Gregorium quem pro sancto colebant, sed deluse a dyabolo plures ex eis perierunt." *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 2, 885.

25 "Rumores etiam magni erant quod in Hongaria, in Alamannia, in ducatu Brabantiae de civitatibus, de villis, de castris, de oppidis et de villis campestribus homines erant provocantes se ad invicem et adunantes modo ducenti, modo trecenti, modo quingenti et plures secundum possibilitatem patriae, et ibant per patriam triginta tribus diebus continuis, bis in die, nudis pedibus et corpore praeter femoralia, capucia habentes, se scorpionibus usque ad sanguinis effusionem verberantes." *Recueil des chroniques*, vol. 2, 341. See also: "deinde quod eadem mortalitas successiue in Austriam Ungariam, Bavariam, Moraviam, Bohemiam, provinciam Reni, Sweuiam et alias prouincias Almanie etc. invadit." Sudhoff, "Pestschriften," 48.

26 For the route, see: Csukovits, "I. Nagy Lajos."

27 Dlugossi, *Annales*, Liber 9, 252, 257. For its English translation, see: *The Annals of Jan Długosz*, 298–301.

28 E.g., Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum*, vol. 12, col. 746. *Düringische Chronik*, 591–92; Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum*, vol, 2. 249. Cp. Székely, "A jobbágyság földesúri," 281.

29 Blockmans, "The Social and Economic Effects."

30 E.g., Gras, "Le registre paroissial"; Cipolla, "I libri dei morti."

31 Guzowski, "Did the Black Death."

32 Roosen and Curtis, "The »Light Touch«."

period studied here. These sources have been exceptionally important in the respective countries or smaller administrative units, as despite the methodological problems they raise, they can be used for establishing how strongly certain areas were affected by the Black Death.[33] In the lack of this type of evidence, it is almost impossible to address the population loss in Hungary.

What scholars in Hungary can utilize is also available in other countries. However, unlike the above sources, legal documents that concern land transactions, donations, legal disputes, and other judication contain relevant data at random and are almost completely unsuited for drawing conclusions on mortality rates. Nonetheless, the legal source material surviving from the Angevin period in Hungary has been extensively researched over the past years, and thanks to the summaries and *in extenso*, charter editions can be studied almost in their entirety.[34] The data these sources provide still offer a rather sketchy picture, only partially allowing for tracking the spread of the disease. In the coming section, these data will be overviewed and assessed.

A survey of the surviving evidence: The Black Death in Hungary in the late 1340s

The path of the spread of the Black Death in the Kingdom of Hungary is anything but clear based on the surviving written evidence; neither is it clear if we look at the appearance of the disease in the broader region. The Black Death may potentially have arrived in the Kingdom of Hungary from three directions. First, although there is an almost complete lack of sources from the area, research suggests that the port cities on the western shore of the Black Sea were amongst the first areas contaminated following the breakout in Crimea in early 1346.[35] From these ports, the disease may have penetrated the inland areas of the Romanian principalities, subsequently reaching Transylvania.[36] The second possible theory is that the disease reached the coastal towns of Dalmatia, from where it may have spread through Croatia and Slavonia, eventually reaching all parts of Hungary.[37] The third possible direction, which is fairly prevalent in the literature in Hungary but lacks any actual evidence, is that the disease was brought to Hungary as part of the 1347–1348 military campaign

33 Benedictow, *The Complete History*.

34 See most importantly: *Anjoukori okmánytár* and *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*.

35 Barker, "Laying the Corpses"; Benedictow, *The Complete History*, 140–46.

36 Cp. Pach, "A Levante-kereskedelem."

37 Benedictow, *The Complete History*, 198–99 and 510.

of King Louis I the Great to Italy.[38] To evaluate and decide on the direction that the disease may have taken before it arrived in the Kingdom of Hungary, we should evaluate the chronology that these routes support. If the disease had arrived from the Black Sea area directly from Crimea and the areas of the Golden Horde, the disease would have reached the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1347 at the latest. Although some early works suggested its early arrival, not even in the vicinity of the Kingdom of Hungary is there any written evidence of the presence of the Black Death before the very end of 1347, when the towns along the eastern coast of the Adriatic (such as Dubrovnik) were first affected by the plague.[39] Dubrovnik and the Adriatic coast however were certainly not infected from the ports in the western part of the Black Sea. This makes the first hypothesized route highly improbable and leads to the second possibility, namely that the disease first appeared on the Adriatic coast, spreading towards the inland areas of the Balkans, and then towards inland Croatia, Slavonia, and other parts of Hungary. The arrival of the plague in most cities along the coast can be dated to early 1348, which suggests the arrival of the disease in Hungary in the spring of the same year.

According to the third route, the plague was carried to Hungary by the soldiers returning to the country from plague-ravaged Italy. Italian cities were indeed affected during the military campaign of King Louis I, as attested in several sources, including the frequently cited chronicle of Matteo Villani.[40] Naples was first hit by the Black Death in the second half of March 1348.[41] How long it lasted is not completely clear but the decision of the king's return to Hungary in May was probably related to the outbreak of the plague in the Kingdom of Naples. He returned to Hungary through Barletta and Vrana, reaching Buda and Visegrád in late May or early June.[42] According to Villani, he had little entourage on this journey, and his

38 Bartha, "Károly Róbert," 26–27; Fedeles, "»Oly rettegés«," 53.

39 Ravančić, *Vrijeme umiranja*. Cp. Bartha, "Károly Róbert," who based her statement on the collection of Gyula Magyary-Kossa, suggested that the Black Death was already in Hungary in 1347. Idem, *Magyar orvosi emlékek*, vol. 3, 55 no. 175 (which is based on early modern compilations).

40 *Cronica di Matteo Villani*, vol. 1, cap. 13.

41 Benedictow, *The Complete History*, 233–58, esp. 253.

42 "…avendo fatto armare nel porto di Barletta una sottile galea, subitamente, improvviso a tutti quelli del Regno, all'uscita di Maggio l'anno 1348, vi montò suso con poca compagnia, e fece dare de' remi in acqua, e senza arresto valicò sano e salvo in Ischiavonia, e di là con pochi compagni a cavallo se n'andò in Ungheria. Questa subita partita di cotanto re fu tenuta follemente fatta da molti, e da lieve e non savio movimento d'animo, e molti il ne biasimarono. Altri dissono che provvedutamente e con molto senno l'avea fatto, avendo diliberato il partire nell'animo suo per tema della mortalità, e non vedendo tempo da potersi scoprire contra i baroni, i quali sentiva male disposti alla sua fede, come detto è, e commendaronlo di segreto e provveduto

army stayed in Naples for the rest of 1348. Although the literature recurrently associates the spread of the plague in Hungary with the king's return, there is no source to back up that theory, and the fact that he had little entourage does not necessarily support that *Yersinia pestis* spread along with this return journey.[43] If nonetheless this should be the case, it supports the emergence of the Black Death in Hungary in the summer of 1348.

The first option is almost completely impossible based on the written evidence from Hungary, as the first reference to the presence of the Black Death is from December 1348. The location of this data is certainly important, as it is from Transylvania, and not from the western part of the country close to Italy or the Adriatic coast.[44] Two notes are worth making based on this reference. First, this would have meant the Transylvanian presence of the *Yersinia pestis* for almost two years (from late 1346/early 1347 to late 1348), which is very unlikely based on the general patterns of the disease. Second, as there is a considerable geographic and time gap (ca. seven months) between the data on the spread of the disease in Italy and the Adriatic coast and the first reference from Hungary (Transylvania), it is practically difficult to argue for either the second or the third route as the origin of the epidemic's arrival in Hungary. Benedictow suggests that the disease spread from the Adriatic coastal cities through Croatia to Hungary. He however shows little familiarity with the political and economic situation and with the position of Croatia when suggesting "however, not only politically a weakly integrated feudal political construction it was also a relatively dispersedly settled and economically poorly integrated territory."[45] This is important in his reasoning, as he tries to explain why it took more than a year for the disease to reach Eastern Hungary. Benedictow wanted to make sense of the first data that was known to him, a charter from Oradea (Várad) in medieval Eastern Hungary, present-day Western Romania, that testifies to the appearance of the plague in the summer of the same year in Oradea. As also noted by Adam Mesiarkin, Benedictow tailored his overview of the Hungarian data to argue for the slow advancement in Hungary, which is largely undermined by the fact that the disease was already present in Transylvania in late 1348, not only in the

partimento." (*Cronica di Matteo Villani*, vol. 1. cap. 14). For his route back, see: Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon II*, 42. On his arrival at Buda, see: *Chronicon Dubniciense*, 153 that dates it to 11 June. For the actual late May arrival, see: *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*, vol. 32 (1348).

43 Fedeles, "»Oly rettegés«," 53.

44 "…propterea quod ipsi octava evenisset in diem dominicum, propter venerationem eiusdem diei et propter instantem plagam et periculum mortis deponere non posset iuramentum predictum et iurare nollet…" (*Documente privind istoria, Veacul XIV. C. Transilvania*, vol. 4, 685–6. no. 671). Cp. Farkas, "Erdély Lackfi István," 75, 77.

45 Benedictow, *The Complete History*, 512.

middle of 1349.[46] It is also worth noting that the source Benedictow used does not refer to mass death at the time the charter was issued, which is 26 June, but to many lives taken in the year 1349.[47] One further circumstance makes it unlikely that the epidemic was raging in late June. In answer to the call of the Transylvanian nobility, King Louis travelled to the area at the beginning of July, which he probably would not have done, considering that he left Naples partially to flee the plague.[48]

These data suggest that by summer 1349 the disease had been present for quite some time throughout the Kingdom of Hungary. This is confirmed by other data as well. The Black Death is likely to have been present in the central-eastern parts of Hungary in spring 1349, as attested by a last will from 17 March, in which the heirless testator (Beke son of Thomas) endowed the bishopric of Eger with vineyards he had acquired. According to the document, Beke chose to testate because of "the deathly times" *(mortalitatis tempore)*.[49] Naturally, pestilential times can be interpreted in different ways, including the presence of the plague in the region; nonetheless considering the other contemporary references from Hungary, it should probably be read as an indication of the disease's presence in the very area. Dated in these weeks, another source also reports the presence of the epidemic in the country. As part of the peace negotiations between King Louis I and the state council of the Venetian Republic, several diplomatic correspondences survived from the year. On 4 April, in a letter, the Venetian council reasons not sending envoys to Hungary with rumors of the ravaging plague.[50] In response to this letter, in June King Louis said that the plague had ceased in Hungary, which made it possible to continue the peace negotiations.[51]

By the time the peace treaty plans were formulated, the plague had started to spread again, or at least this is what Andrea Dandolo reported to Perugia in early October as

46 Mesiarkin, "Stredovýchodná Európa," 19.

47 MNL OL DL 4055. For its edition, see: Appendix no. 2.

48 Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 360–61 no. 290.

49 MNL OL DF 209 980. For its edition, see: Appendix no. 1.

50 "Et ut hoc, quod supradicitur, pateat per effectum, nisi forte casus mortalitatis, que esse dicitur in partibus Ungarie, per quem cives nostri timerent venire ad illas partes, quia de anno preterito substinuerunt casum similem mortalitatis, solempnes ambaxatores nostros presentialiter mitteremus, sed habito, quod cessaverit, illos ad excellentie vestre culmem transmittemus." Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 346 no. 284. For its more recent edition, see: *Venezia – Senato*, vol. 12, 36–73, no. 64.

51 "Super quo sciat Vestra Dilectio, quod permissione Divina plaga huiusmodi, que ut plurimum orbem giravit universum, nunc in Regno nostro eiusdem clementia disponente cessavit." Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 348–49, no. 286. Cp. the follow up letters: Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 350–51 no. 288; 351–59 no. 289; 360–61 no. 290. For the first two, see: *Venezia – Senato*, vol. 12, 130–32, no. 212, 136–39, no. 220–25.

recent news from Hungary.[52] This letter also informs of the death of the fourteen-year-old wife of Louis I, Margaret of Bohemia, but unlike suggested by some scholars, it does not say whether she died of the plague or something else.[53] Three days later, a letter the Venetian council sent to their envoys in Hungary also mentions the news of the plague.[54] On 9 November, Venice sent a further letter to its envoys, ordering them to try to reach out to the king in case he was in good health or alive. This led many historians to believe that Louis himself was also infected by the plague, although this is not hinted at in the letters; it is simply implied that according to their information many people in Hungary were infected.[55] One further circumstantial evidence is worth noting. In November, as part of a lawsuit that intended to settle a land dispute by taking an oath at the piece of land near Sopron (in Western Hungary), one of the persons involved died, while two others were sick, and therefore could not attend. It is noteworthy though that the document does not refer to them as affected by the plague.[56]

While there are fairly numerous references to the plague from 1349, there is practically no direct data from 1350. From 1351, however, two sources are important to mention. They both testify to the plague in the preceding period. The first is a charter from 23 June 1351, in which nobles from Uzsa (in Western Hungary) settled a dispute in which the previous absence of one of the parties involved was reasoned by the person's anguish during the plague in the area. This is a rural part of the country with few major settlements but with important trade routes in the region connecting the Adriatic with central Hungary.[57] It is important to note that the charter refers to the plague in the previous years (in the plural!).[58] The other relevant data from the same year also tells of the previous plague but refers to it in the singular ("in anno pestilencie").[59] Similarly to the above-discussed charter from the summer

52 Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 370 no. 299.

53 "De partibus Hungarie habemus nova, quod epidemia mortalitatis desevit multum ibidem; et quod Regina Hungarie, consors domini Regis nuper ad Dominum transmigravit." Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 370 no. 299.

54 "Cum habeantur nova satis certa, quod mortalitas maxima et orrenda est in partibus Hungarie; quod si ita est, non esset bonum exponere tanto periculo personas nostrorum Ambaxatorum…" (Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 369, no. 298 and *Venezia – Senato*, vol. 12, 253, no. 415).

55 Wenzel, *Magyar diplomacziai*, vol. 2, 370–71, no. 300 *Venezia – Senato*, vol. 12, 286–87, no. 469.

56 MNL OL DF 201 774. Edited in: Házi, *Sopron szabad királyi város*, vol. I/1, 93–95 no. 155.

57 MNL OL DL 91 428. Edited in: *Zala vármegye*, vol. 1, 508–9 no. 323.

58 "tempore ruinose mortalitatis annis proxime preteritis" *Zala vármegye*, vol. 1, 508–9 no. 323.

59 "accedens ad nostram presenciam Ladizlaus, filius Petii, filii Stephani, filii Bartholomei de Samuchkezy dixit et coram nobis viva voce est confessus, quod cum ipse iudicio divino tempore sue puericie existat orbatus utroque parente unicusque frater eiusdem in anno pestilencie decessit ab hac luce et sic ipse cum tribus sororibus suis innuptis omni spe destitutus remansisset" MNL OL DF 248 652. Edited in *Monumenta Ecclesiae Strigoniensis*, vol. 4, 66 no. 33.

of 1349, this piece of data also indicates the plague's presence in the territory of the bishopric of Oradea. The final charter to be considered is from Sopron from 1354. The document testifies to a lasting conflict between the citizens and the seemingly scandalous parish priest (Heinrich). The latter bequeathed things to the parish in last wills during "the times of mortality" *(tempore mortalitatis)*. Some of the things however that Heinrich acquired through the wills were then somehow obtained by the town's jurors leading to a lawsuit between the town and the priest.[60] From the point of view of the present work, however, it is the fact that the wills were made at a time of high mortality is that carries relevance.

Apart from the above-mentioned data from 1349, there is one further reference that is important not only concerning the presence of the Black Death in the surroundings of Oradea but also of the scale of the mortality there.[61] In the statutes of the cathedral chapter of the bishopric, one of the caputs dispensed the dwellers of the villages of the chapter (lying mostly in the counties around Oradea) from paying the 'pig tenth' *(porcorum decima)* to repopulate the settlements after the plague.[62] This is one of the very few indications that tell of the local, larger-scale impacts of the Black Death regarding population loss. It is worth noting that under the lordship of the chapter there were typically small rural settlements scattered in the hilly areas of Bihar County with only a handful of them having more than some thirty peasant plots.[63]

One last source should be considered as an indirect indication of the lack of tenant peasants *(iobagiones)* in the Kingdom of Hungary in the aftermath of the Black Death: the laws of Louis I on the tenant peasantry.[64] Of the king's laws issued in 1351, three concerned the peasantry, including the introduction of the ten percent tax *(nona)* to be paid by tenants to their landlords, as well as the act that provided tenants with the freedom of movement. Both were interpreted by the historian

60 "item quod tempore mortalitatis preterite legata in testamentis ecclesie ipsi iurati recepissent." Házi, *Sopron szabad királyi*, vol. I/1, 102–4 no. 168. Heinrich had already been the parish priest in Sopron during the years of the Black Death. Cp. Házi, *Sopron középkori*, 8–10.

61 For the estates of the cathedral chapter of Oradea: Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség*, vol. 2, 271–85.

62 "Porcorum decime in nostris tenutis olim ubique pro nostra communitate exigebantur, sed_ab huiusmodi decimarum solutione subditos nostros a tempore prime pestis, idest circa annos Domini MCCCXLVIII. exemimus, ut eo facilius ville nostre per pestem desolate statum pristinum sortirentur ; modo vero solum illi ad dandam porcorum decimam obligantur, qui in Zeplak et eius districtu commorantur, prout supra in capitulo : Harum autem1 2 continetur, porcis et apibus in silvis et pascuis cum episcopo communibus, pro tempore exigendis, inter nos et eundem equaliter dividendis." Bunyitay, *A váradi káptalan*, 51.

63 Bunyitay, *A váradi püspökség*, vol. 2, 271–85.

64 *Decreta Regni Hungariae 1301–1457*, 124–40. For the interpretation of Louis' laws in this context, see: Szabó, "Az 1351. évi jobbágytörvények," 521–22.

István Szabó and others as consequences of the lack of tenants in the country.[65] As pointed out by critics of Szabó's thesis, these acts did not originate from the period after the Black Death but rather were long-term processes in crystallizing social status and, as such, should hardly be interpreted as reactions to the plague.[66]

Conclusions

The above survey of sources may not be complete but there is little chance that substantial unknown documentary evidence might come to light in the coming years. This means that when evaluating the mortality of the Black Death of the late 1340s, we should build on these sources. The evidence presented demonstrates that, unlike in Poland and Bohemia, this wave of the Black Death certainly had significant impacts on the population in Hungary. Two points however are still unclear: first, when and from which direction *Yersinia pestis* arrived, and second, what the rate of mortality was.

The survey nonetheless shows that by analysing the complete corpus of written evidence of the plague years in Hungary, significantly more data can be obtained on the epidemic. These data contribute to a more nuanced view of the spread and especially of the lasting presence of the Black Death in Hungary for at least a year from late 1348. The data also shows that while unquestionably the most comprehensive work on the spread of the Black Death, Benedictow's monumental plague narrative is not always accurate regarding specific regions.

Appendix

1. MNL OL DF 209 980.

Beke son of Thomas having no legal heir in these deathly times and because of his admiration for the Church of John the Apostle testates his acquired vineyards next to the road leading from Eger to Szőlős (Zeleus) to the bishopric of Eger.

Date: 17 March 1349

Previous edition: —

(O)mnibus Christi fidelibus tam presentibus, quam futuris presens scriptum inspecturis capitulum ecclesie Agriensis salutem in omnium salvatore. Ad universorum noticiam tenore presencium volumus pervenire, quod Beke filius Thome, iobagio filiorum Emerici filii Pauli de Heues feria tercia proxima post dominicam oculi,

65 Szabó, "Az 1351. évi jobbágytörvények"; Szabó, "Az 1351. évi 18. törvénycikk."

66 Cp. Gulyás, "Lex és consuetudo."

anno videlicet nativitatis Domini millesimo trecentesimo quadragesimo nono in nostri presentia personaliter comparendo dixit et publice est confessus, quod quia ipse a puericie sue temporibus hucusque ad dictam ecclesiam beati Johannis apostoli specialem habuisset devocionis affectum et nunc haberet, et quia eciam in hoc mortalitatis tempore divina sit disponente clementia heredum solacio sit destitutus haberetur, ut non alii successores nisi ipse solus cum domina uxore sua adhuc inter vivos remansisset, igitur ipse quandam vineam suam empticiam iuxta stratam publicam ab hinc de Agria in villam Zeleus ducentem et intra limites civitatis Agriensis existentem tum ex causis premissis, tum ex eo, ut ipse per hec et alia bona, opera sua, que facere intenderet, Deo permitente(!) terrenis celestia, transitoriis eterna caducisque perempniter mansura in celesti commutare posset gerarchia, cum suis utilitatibus quibuslibet et pertinenciis et eo iure eaque plenitudine, qua dicta vinea dicto titulo empcionis ad ipsum, quo supra, devoluta et hactenus per ipsum habita extitisset et possessa, cum consensu prenominate domine, uxoris sue dedisset, donasset et contullisset, et exnunc coram nobis ac presentibus nobilibus viris Iohanne filio Thome de Zeleus et altero Iohanne filio Petri de Chereukuzy comitatus de Heues per eundem Beke cautela pro maiori pro testibus adductis dedit et contulit predicte ecclesie beati Johannis apostoli et evangeliste nunc et pro tempore ipsam feliciter gubernanti sub federe testamentarie disposicionis et in forma elemosinaria perpetuo possidendam, tenendam pariter et habendam nullum ius, nullum ve dominum amplius pro se et dicta domina, uxore sua in eadem reservando, dando eciam dicto domino nostro episcopo ipsam vineam in vita sua vel in morte sive pro annotata ecclesia sancti Johannis apostoli reservandi vel alicui altario de eadem ecclesia aplicandi(!) vel aliis religiosis sive ecclesiis condonandi plenariam potestatem testimonio presencium litterarum nostrarum et auctoritate, cuius rei testimonium perpetuamque stabilitatem presentes contulimus sigilli nostri autentici et pendentis munimine roboratas ac alphabeto intercisas, eciam Nicolao prae-[posito], Iohanne lectore, Iacobo cantore, Iohanne custode dominis, item Iohanne de Borsod Davide de Zab[ouch, P]etro de Heves, Dominico de Borsua, Andrea de Pankata, Iohanne de Zemplen, Georgio de Ta[rcha, Ladislao de Patha] archydianocis et aliis multis nostram ducentibus et in dicta ecclesia nostra iugiter deo [famulantibus. Datum in] die et anno supradictis regnante Lodovico illustri rege Hungarie Chanadino Strigoniensi archiepiscopo, Colochensi se]de vacante et domino nostro venerabili in Christo patre Nicolao Dei et apostolica gratia ep[iscopo Agriensi existentibus.]

At the back of the charter with contemporary handwriting: Perpetuacio Beke filii Thome de Heues super quadam vinea, quam contulit ecclesie sancti Iohannis.

2. MNL OL DL 4055.

Demetrius, bishop of Oradea makes note that the bishopric's collector, John Bobos, son of Martin, died of plague while having remained in debt to his church with 40 denars. To cover this debt, the bishopric a plot and two vineyards of the deceased were filed to the bishopric. These then were bestowed on Benedict (Magnus) son of Sebastian for his services.

Date: 26 June 1349

Previous edition (with gaps): *Anjoukori okmánytár*, vol. 5, 289–90 no. 156.

Nos Demetrius dei et apostolice sedis gratia episcopus Waradiensis significamus tenore presentium quibus expedit universis quod cum potencia divina per pestem indieibilem anno in presenti sub anno domini millesimo trecentesimo quadrigesimo nono emergentem multorum vitam temporalem fine inevitabili contulisset, et quondam Johannes Bobos filius Martini iobagio noster de vico Yenecia vocato, exactor decimarum nostrarum de Kalacha, posita nobiscum racione, nobis racione dictarum decimarum nostrarum in quadraginta marcis denariorum debitor remansisset, et per eandem pestem debitum universe carnis persolvisset, nos ecclesiam nostram nolentes in damno dictarum quadragenta marcarum relinquere, cum de facultatibus seu rebus eiusdem cum quibus nos persolvi deberemur sciscitari cepissemus, res sue alie preterquam fundus suus in vico predicto Venecia vocato existens, et due vinee, quarum una in monte Vmlas, cui ex parte orientis vinea ecclesie de Bezermen et a plaga meridiei vinea Ladislai filii Stephani vicinantur, alia vero in territorio Bihoriensi in monte supra Koachy adiacenti, cui ab oriente vinea Blasii filii Pauli et a plaga occidentis via de Byhor in Chatar transiens vicinantur situatur, reperte exstitissent, et per arbitrium proborum virorum extimacione condigna preeunte, iidem fundus et predicte vinee Johannis Bobos supradicti nobis pro triginta marcis statute et assignate exstitissent, nos volentes in recompensacionem serviciorum Benedicti magni filii Sebastiani officialis nostri de Huzyuozow et de Tenke nobis et ecclesie nostre ab antiquo exhibitorum, licet maiora meruisset, aliquali occurrere paternali cum favore, ipsum fundum Johannis dicti Bobos filii Martini cum vineis annotatis, eidem Benedicto magno officiali nostro perpetuo duximus conferendum, dantes eidem in vita vei in morte legandi donaudi, vendendi ac quoquomodo alionandi facultatem. In cuius rei testimonium patentes nostras literas patentes autentici sigilli nostri appensione communitas eidem duximus coneedendas. Datum Waradini, feria sexta proxima aute festum sanctissimi regis Ladislai et confessoris, anno domini supradicto.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 30–67
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.03

Late Medieval Plague Waves in Eastern Germany and Bohemia

Combining Narrative, Administrative, Epigraphic, and Pictorial Sources with Quantitative Approaches

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Received 25 March 2024 | Accepted 10 June 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. This paper aims to enhance our knowledge about late-medieval epidemic outbreaks in specific parts of Eastern Central Europe. The first part on modern-day Eastern Germany discusses narrative evidence and its use in the current research on plague history, before bringing in municipal records on testaments and conveyances from Görlitz and Stralsund for the reconstruction of seasonality and mortality rates, as well as funeral inscriptions and pictorial evidence from Erfurt as indirect indicators of plague waves. After a brief discussion of the scarce narrative sources, the second part of the paper concerning Bohemia works with the evidence of the *Libri Confirmationum*, a source originating from the chancellery of the archbishops of Prague. Every new appointment to a benefice was supposed to be approved by one of the vicars general of the archbishop, and this confirmation usually gives the reason for the vacancy. Expanding on Eduard Maur's research, death statistics and their frequency are analyzed statistically. The paper provides insight into new evidence for the reconstruction of plague waves, mortality rates and seasonality, and thereby highlights the characteristics of the plague in Eastern Central Europe.

Keywords: Bohemia, Eastern Germany, Erfurt, Görlitz, Stralsund, Black Death, *pestis secunda, pestis tertia*, mortality, *Libri Confirmationum*, municipal books, inscriptions, testaments, memory

The history of the plague has again become a highly dynamic field on the overlapping margins of environmental history, the history of medicine, and paleogenetics research. The heated debates of the past—about the type of disease the

medieval plague actually was[1]—are concluded, as *Yersinia pestis* has been identified as undoubtedly the bacterium responsible for the Black Death.[2] In the meantime, new academic battlefields have emerged, and historians are deeply involved in answering these questions: Where and when did the Black Death start[3], and how did it move towards Western Eurasia?[4] How large and regionally varied was its demographic impact?[5] Where did subsequent plague waves reemerge in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? In what mode—in concentric waves or metastatic leaps—did they move across Europe?[6] In finding answers, the combination of paleogenetic evidence with written sources seems to be the only worthwhile approach to follow. While the heuristic potential of scientific data on aDNA and written sources is certainly large, a more traditional approach based on narrative and administrative sources alone may be very fruitful: it has been underlined for the Italian peninsula and elsewhere that our reconstructions of plague outbreaks during the Black Death are largely based on outdated, incomplete, and often uncritical nineteenth century compilations of chronicle accounts and their derivative academic work.[7] One glance at the rather traditional diplomatic history of Venetian-Genoese-Mongol relations in the Black Sea region during the 1340s provides the most plausible theory that the Black Death arrived in Italy in 1347 by grain shipments, not by infected sailors.[8] Thus, the undisputed standard work by the Norwegian medievalist Ole Benedictow, *The Complete History of the Black Death*,[9] as the title of this encyclopedic monograph claims with some emphasis, is perhaps not the last word on written sources and the history of the Black Death in Europe. Unsurprisingly, even the second edition of this impressive and groundbreaking undertaking cannot do full justice to its author's claim of reliably tracing the spread of the epidemic and its mortality for all European regions, as critical studies for East Central Europe have recently shown.[10] Furthermore, based on scientific data, it has been argued that no

1 Cohn, "The Black Death: End of a Paradigm"; Cohn, *The Black Death Transformed*; Benedictow, *What Disease Was Plague?*

2 Bos et al., "A Draft Genome of Yersinia Pestis."

3 Cp. Green, "The Four Black Deaths"; Spyrou et al., "The Source of the Black Death in Fourteenth-Century Central Eurasia."

4 Cp. Green, "Out of the East (or North or South)"; Slavin, "From Tien Shan to Crimea."

5 Cp. Izdebski, "Paleological Data."

6 Cp. Slavin, "Out of the West."

7 Cp. Toubert, "La peste noire dans les Abruzzes."

8 Cp. Barker, "Laying the Corpses to Rest."

9 Cp. Benedictow, *Black Death*.

10 This is especially true for Poland: Guzowski, "Did the Black Death Reach the Kingdom of Poland"; and also for the territory of present-day Slovakia, critical remarks can be found in: Mesiarkin, "Stredovýchodná Európa Na Mape Čiernej Smrti"; a less recent publication like Fichtner, "Der Schwarze Tod" is not questioning the spread of the Black Death in East Central

relevant demographic impact of the Black Death can be proven for East Central Europe.[11] This article is dedicated to two parts of East Central Europe that have largely been out of the focus of recent historical research on the plague: the territory of today's Eastern Germany has been very much neglected, and Bohemia has found attention mainly by Czech scholars.[12] Both regions provide some narrative sources, but beyond them, there is a wealth of administrative documents both of secular and ecclesiastic origin, and epigraphic information that will help us clarify the extent to which the two regions were affected by plague waves in the second half of the fourteenth century.

In the first part, Martin Bauch will critically discuss Benedictow's account for contemporary East Germany and, for the first time, also draw on quantifiable sources from Görlitz, Stralsund and Erfurt.[13] Christian Oertel's approach for Bohemia aims at a renewed discussion and refined analysis of the sinecure confirmations of the Archbishop of Prague, which the Czech demographic historian Eduard Maur so fruitfully introduced into the discussion of the history of the plague in Bohemia. The combination of two neighboring regions and comparing and contrasting narrative and serial sources should help demonstrate the potentials and limitations of a quantifying approach.

Eastern Germany

The Black Death east and west of the Elbe and Saale Rivers

The presence of the Black Death on the territory of present-day Eastern Germany—for which no reliable regional studies are available to date[14]—is much harder to verify than it appears to be in Benedictow's monograph, whose information will be critically discussed here. Following the main direction of the plague's invasion as reconstructed by Benedictow, we begin on the Baltic coast, the main towns of which are said to have seen plague outbreaks as early as 1349: for Pomerania, it is the chronicle of the Cistercian monastery of Oliva near Gdańsk that provides hints at a raging Black Death in 1349,[15] but it refers to areas that were sometimes many

Europe in an adequate source-critical discussion.

11 Cp. Izdebski et al., "Paleological Data."

12 Mediated to anglophone audiences mainly by Mengel, "A Plague on Bohemia" and, more recently by Nodl, "Impacts of the Plague Epidemic."

13 The information on the mass grave in Neuses, as well as the initial survey of the funerary inscriptions is based on research by Annabell Engel (Leipzig).

14 Unfortunately, the claims made for Central Germany in Uhl, *Der Schwarze Tod*, cannot be verified in a source-critical way.

15 Perlbach, ed., *Ältere Chronik von*, 622.

hundreds of kilometres away. The occurrence of the Black Death in what is now Western Pomerania *(Vorpommern)* is therefore beyond doubt if we stick to narrative evidence; what testaments can tell about this in the case of Stralsund will be discussed later. The findings for Wismar clearly stand out from this, as an inscription and a plague letter clearly show the presence of the Black Death in 1350.[16] Benedictow provides clear evidence for the presence of the Black Death in what is now Lower Saxony, but points to a gap in local charter proliferation for Halberstadt in the plague years,[17] which is admittedly not a valid argument. The situation is not much better for Thuringia and Saxony: an outbreak of the plague in Meiningen remains without a source indication,[18] while a chronicle compilation created at the end of the fifteenth century is cited for Leipzig, which does not provide any site-specific information.[19] Benedictow wrongly places the monastic historiography of Loccum Abbey on the Weser in the village of Lucka in the Altenburger Land, in the eastern part of Thuringia.[20] A regionally relevant but not contemporary source, the annals of the Saxon monastery of Altzelle, report—not mentioned by Benedictow—in very general terms an outbreak of a great pestilence, maybe the Black Death, albeit in the obviously incorrect year of 1346.[21] If we look east of the Elbe, the evidence cited by Benedictow for the outbreak of the Black Death in Frankfurt an der Oder turns out to be a note in a sixteenth century chronicle, which cannot be considered for reasons of source criticism. The entire Brandenburg region is without any written evidence of an outbreak of the Black Death around 1350. It should therefore be noted that the presence of the Black Death in the territory of present-day Eastern Germany can be verified without hesitation only in four cities closely linked to the respective supra-regional trade networks: Wismar and Stralsund (see below) as two important members of the Hanseatic League, Wismar being in close proximity to Lübeck, which was undoubtedly affected; Magdeburg, also a member of the Hanseatic League and linked to its trade flows via the Elbe; and further south Erfurt, without any significant trade by water, but situated on the *Via Regia*, which led from Frankfurt to Krakow and even further east. The description for Erfurt is detailed and comes from a most contemporary source:[22]

16 Cp. *Mecklenburgisches Urkundenbuch*, vol. 10, no. 7097, 406; no. 7096, 405.

17 Cp. Benedictow, *Black Death*, 565.

18 Cp. Benedictow, *Black Death*, 574.

19 Cp. Marquis, "Werner, Thomas" for the so-called "Chronica brevis (Lipsiensem dixeris)," col. 55: Item 50. "Magna pestilencia per universum orbem, que ad duos annos duravit."

20 Cp. Benedictow, *Black Death*, 574, footnote 175.

21 "Annales Vetero-Cellenses," 45*:* "1346 [...] Isto anno fuit pestilencia magna et werra."

22 The Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna is located in the Erfurt St. Peter's Monastery (OSB) and is continued until 1355, cp. Eifler, "Cronica S. Petri."

> "In the same year [1350], a great epidemic pestilence broke out in Thuringia and nearly throughout all of Germany, especially in Erfurt, to the extent that more than a tenth of the population perished, as the disease was contagious. Furthermore, in consultation with physicians, the citizens were forbidden to carry out any further burials there. Such was the multitude of graves everywhere that two or three bodies were placed in a single grave. Subsequently, eleven pits were dug in the cemetery of the village of Neuses near Erfurt, to which around twelve thousand bodies were taken in wagons and carts. The corpses were transported continuously, three or four at a time, starting from the feast of Saint James [25 July 1350] to Candlemas [2 February 1351]. Many other bodies were secretly buried in the city and in the surrounding villages."[23]

The special feature of the plague report for Erfurt therefore lies in the apparently realistic mortality figures, the description of the epidemic hygiene discussions within the city's ruling élite, the measures they took, and the precise location of the plague mass graves. The spread of the plague to the close and more distant surroundings of the city is explicitly stated. As already noted by Benedictow, the plague may have come to Erfurt either via Magdeburg or via Frankfurt. It is hard to decide which route is more plausible: direct trade contacts between Erfurt and Frankfurt are documented for the spring of 1350[24], but chronology is difficult: the Black Death was present in Frankfurt until 2 February 1350,[25] but emerged in Erfurt only from 25 July 1350 onwards. The local fair in Erfurt, a perfect occasion for the import of the plague, took place between 11 April and 6 May 1350, too early for an outbreak more than ten weeks later. The plague ravaged Magdeburg from 15 May 1350, but no specific trade between Magdeburg and Erfurt is documented that might have transported the plague bacterium. What unites the two cities is the creation of special plague cemeteries in 1350, a practice otherwise only known from Kiel.[26] The report in the *Magdeburger Schöppenchronik*, a municipal historiography in Low German up to 1372, is particularly significant:

> "In that same year [1350], there was great mortality in this town from Pentecost [15 May] to St Michael's Day [28 September], and countless people died so that they could no longer be buried in the churchyards.

23 Holder-Egger, ed., "Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna," (Continuatio II A) 396–7 (Translation: Authors).

24 Cp. *Urkundenbuch Erfurt,* vol. 2, 836, no. 25–6.

25 *Annalen eines Anonymus / Acta aliquot Francofurtana,* 144–45: "Anno eodem a die Mariae Magdalenae ad diem purificationis (p. 145) Mariae proxime Francoforti pestilentia totius mundi."

26 Cp. Fouquet, "Die Pest in Lübeck und Schleswig-Holstein," 278.

> Every day they had to go out with carts and a wagon and make large ditches in Rottersdorf; the dead were thrown into them. […] It is difficult for me to write about all the sadness and the damage that Magdeburg suffered from this mortality. The brightest and the neediest of this city perished in large numbers. Laymen and priests, old and young, rich and poor people died. Death was not unique to Magdeburg, it was everywhere in the country. […] Here in the Franciscan monastery, no more than three friars have survived. I was in a house where, apart from myself, one other person remained alive and eight died."[27]

In Magdeburg too, the impact of the epidemic beyond the city limits is emphasized, and the construction and filling up of mass graves is described in detail; the information on mortality is more nuanced but credible in its local dimension. What both narrative sources also seem to confirm, however, is the absence of the Black Death in the vast majority of present-day Eastern Germany, while later waves of the plague are certainly recorded up to the end of the fifteenth century.[28]

The quantification of fear: testaments in Görlitz and Stralsund

For numerous Italian cities[29] and also for Lübeck, the availability of contemporary testaments in local archives has been identified as a valid indicator of epidemic outbreaks, in some cases accurate to the month.[30] The assumption that a rise in testaments is an indicator of fear that spread in the face of an occurring outbreak also applies to our study region, as implied by comments from Magdeburg.[31] Beyond that, we will take a comparative look at the situation in Stralsund in the second part of this section. First, a relatively new edition of urban accounts allows us to reassess the case of Görlitz in eastern Saxony due to numerous entries, especially testaments, for the period under investigation.

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27 von Lammespringe, "Die Magdeburger Schöppenchronik," 218–19 (Translation: Authors).

28 Reference should be made to the new epidemiological database www.epimeddat.net. The following overviews are relevant: Bauch and Wozniak, "Erfurt"; Bauch and Wozniak, "Thuringia"; Bauch and Wozniak, "Magdeburg."

29 Cp. Cohn, *Black Death Transformed*.

30 For Lübeck, see: Benedictow, *Black Death*, 552–56; Fouquet, "Die Pest in Lübeck und Schleswig-Holstein."

31 For Magdeburg, the *Schöppchronik* mentioned above provides the first evidence that a legal act related to testaments, the *donatio pro remedio animae*, was quantitatively directly related to the mortality caused by the plague, cp. von Lammespringe, "Die Magdeburger Schöppenchronik," 219*:* "I also heard myself say that the Augustinian monks received 1200 pieces of clothing from men and women that year as a testamentary donation for the salvation of their souls." (Translation: Author).

The oldest Görlitz Municipal Book *(Stadtbuch)*, the so-called *Rotes Buch*, dates back to the beginning of the fourteenth century, but its entries cannot be reliably dated before 1336. From 1304 onwards, the Magdeburg Legal Notice the source recorded the legal transactions witnessed by the council and aldermen in a book in Görlitz.[32] Most of the entries relate to the provision or maintenance of spouses and other family members. Two categories of entries are of particular interest: on the one hand, (marital) dispositions *mortis causa*, which, strictly speaking, were not the testators' unilaterally decreed wills but, instead, were irrevocable legal transactions made bilaterally by the testator and heirs. On the other hand, conveyances of real estate *(resignationes)* are important, in which there was a change of ownership due to a purchase or a gift; according to Magdeburg law, this was mandatory for the sale of real estate.[33]

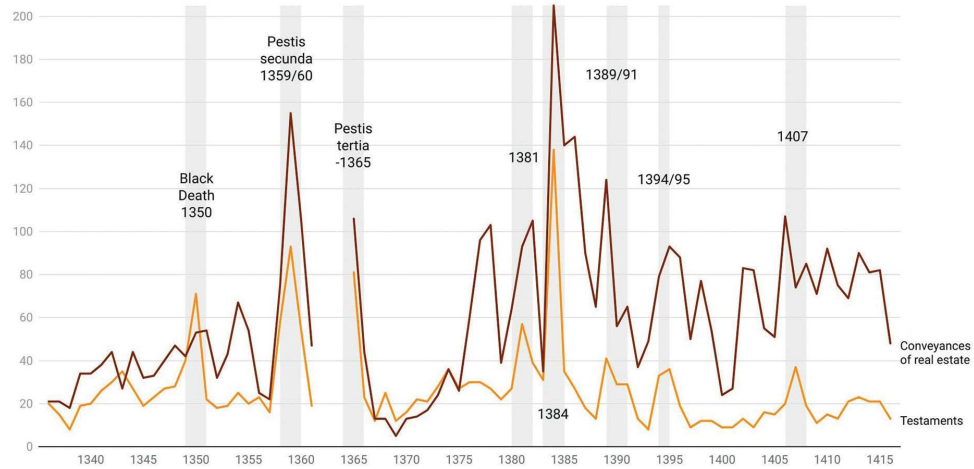

Figure 1 Entries in the Municipal Book of Görlitz of testaments (dispositions *mortis causa*) and conveyances of real estate *(resignationes)* for the entire period available with an annual dating. **Source:** Fokt, Speer, and Mikula, eds., *Liber vetustissimus Gorlicensis*, passim

The dispositions *mortis causa* which, for the sake of simplicity can be called testaments, were therefore made during the testator's lifetime, and in our context they can be quite plausibly seen as a precautionary act in the face of perceived danger

32 Cp. Fokt, Speer, and Mikula, eds, *Liber vetustissimus Gorlicensis*, vol. 1, 11–2, 20–6: during the session, the most important key facts of the case were briefly noted down on strips of paper or wax tablets. Only those acts that had a long-term effect were transferred to the Red Book: if debts were repaid quickly, they were not entered. The note-like, very brief records only had probative value in conjunction with the sworn testimony of aldermen and councilors; there are no complete document texts here. The entries were made in a fairly chronological order and, therefore, varied in subject matter. It was mainly townspeople who appeared before the Görlitz court.

33 Cp. Fokt, Speer, and Mikula, eds., *Liber vetustissimus Gorlicensis*, vol. 1, 28–30.

to life and limb. The conveyances provide indirect evidence of economic transactions, for example, when heirs sold real estate or when land had to be turned into money in times of famine. If the conveyances were to be regarded as indirect evidence of increased mortality, a time delay in the peaks compared to the wills would be expected. Finally, it is important to emphasize that, unlike in the case of Lübeck or the Italian cities, the recorded wills cannot be dated to exact months, as they were included in the Görlitz Municipal Book without a date.

A quantitative analysis of the entries in the Görlitz Municipal Book is possible on an annual basis for the period 1336–1415 with a gap at the beginning of the 1360s, yielding significant results: a first peak of testaments emerges for 1350, although we have no evidence in narrative sources from Lusatia or neighbouring regions that Görlitz may have been affected by the Black Death. The only moderate increase in the number of wills compared to later plague waves clearly indicates heightened uncertainty among burghers; however, economic transactions remained stable in 1350 and 1351. Overall, this shows a fear of the Black Death, but neither proves nor excludes an actual plague outbreak in Görlitz.[34] As there were no outbreaks of the plague in neighbouring Silesia[35] or in Bohemia (see below), we might assume that in 1350 Görlitz was spared. The amount of property tax within and outside the city of Görlitz before and after 1350 does not show any abrupt change either, especially in view of the fluctuations in previous years (Table 1).

Table 1 Taxation of property within and beyond the city walls of Görlitz, 1337–1352
Source: Jecht, ed. *Die ältesten Görlitzer Ratsrechnungen bis 1419*, 1–2.

Date	Taxation of property in mark groschen
1337	372
1343 Jan 7	52
1345	393
1347 Feb 20	452
1350 Jan 26	505
1352 Feb 14	456

In 1354, we find an increase in economic activity, but not in wills. Perhaps this activity correlates with a low-intensity plague that caused up to eight deaths a month in Erfurt up to October 1354.[36] However, the first evidence pointing to an epidemic

34 Ole Benedictow makes a similar and valid argument regarding a (moderate) increase in wills in Lübeck as early as the summer of 1349, before the outbreak of the plague in 1350, which is documented in narrative sources, and also becomes abundantly clear in the number of wills, cp. Benedictow, *Black Death*, 554–55.

35 Cp. Guzowski, "Did the Black Death Reach the Kingdom of Poland," 195, footnote 4.

36 Holder-Egger, ed., "Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna," 384.

with a high mortality rate is the remarkable surge in wills and economic transactions in the same year, recorded for 1359. It seems reasonable to assume in this observation the effect of the *pestis secunda* in Görlitz. In the years 1362–1364, there is a gap in the Görlitz Municipal Book, but entries resume in 1365 with a notable increase in wills and conveyances of real estate. This might be due to the *pestis tertia*,[37] the beginning of which in the town cannot be precisely recorded due to the gap in the records. It is noteworthy that there is divergent evidence for Bohemia (see below), which records a first wave of mortality for the fall of 1362, followed by a higher peak for the fall of 1364. The records of the Görlitz Municipal Book then only show another peak in wills and conveyances of real estate in 1381, with the latter only reaching its maximum level in 1382. The expected delay effect on trade in real estate can, therefore, be observed here for the first time. This is followed, only a few years apart, by the highest number of wills and economic transactions in the entire period of transmission in 1384. The number of conveyances remained at record levels in the following years of 1385–1386. This wave of the plague can only be dated imprecisely: in the previous year of 1383, we know of an outbreak of the plague in Magdeburg,[38] while in the same year of 1384, Polish sources report an epidemic in Silesia, Pomerania, Krakow, Sandomierz, and Bohemia.[39] In the subsequent transmission of the Municipal Book up to 1415, the absolute number of registered wills continues to decline; the previously apparent link between testaments and conveyances is increasingly dissolved, without providing us with any clues to identify the reasons. A smaller parallel peak in both kinds of documents can be verified for the years 1394–1395; in the same period, Magdeburg is reported to have been ravaged for several years by an epidemic that mainly caused infant mortality and was linked to food shortages.[40] There is a final peak in the wills for the year 1407, to which we might associate an outbreak of the plague, at least for Eisenach in Thuringia in the previous year.[41]

A comparison can be made with another city in the territory of today's Eastern Germany, the Hanseatic city of Stralsund in Pomerania. It has been frequently noted that the preservation of testaments in local archives is excellent, they can be easily compared to those in Lübeck, and that there is a considerable peak of testament numbers in 1350.[42] A most useful, chronological reconstruction of Stralsund testaments

37 Their beginning was convincingly located in Mainz in 1364, cp. Slavin, "Out of the West," 39–40, which makes a presence in Erfurt in 1365 seem conceivable.

38 Cp. von Lammespringe, "Die Magdeburger Schöppenchronik," 288.

39 Cp. Joannis de Czarnkow, "Chronicon Polonorum," 751–52.

40 Cp. von Lammespringe, "Die Magdeburger Schöppenchronik," 294.

41 Cp. Johannes Rothe, *Thüringische Landeschronik*, 134.

42 Cp. Schildhauer, *Hansestädtischer Alltag*, 11–21. I kindly thank Reviewer A for directing my attention towards the Stralsund testaments.

allows for an almost continuous reconstruction between 1333 and 1500 (Figure 2).[43]

As in the case of Lübeck and most other cities,[44] the peaks in testament numbers in 1350 is the most considerable, with two other peaks in 1359 and 1368. Even earlier than in Görlitz, testament production or proliferation becomes less important, and there are hardly any recognizable patterns for Stralsund in the fifteenth century.

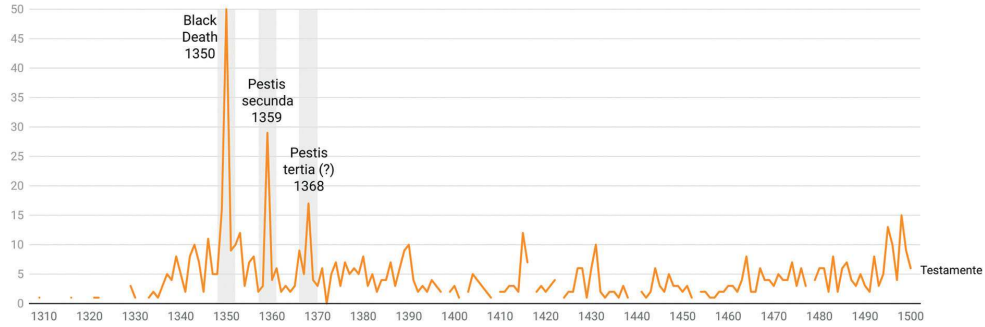

Figure 2 Number of annually datable testaments of Stralsund citizens in 1309–1500. Highlighted ranges mark presumed or known plague outbreaks.
Source: Schildhauer, "Stralsunder Bürgertestamente," 329–51. Graph: Martin Bauch

In Stralsund, we look for a monthly distribution of testament production in remarkable plague years and try to compare them to non-plague years with relatively high numbers of testaments, i.e., eight to sixteen. In 1350 (Figure 3a), we clearly see a peak in July and August 1350, compared to a more regular distribution of testaments in 1349. We find a comparable pattern for 1359 (Figure 3b), another peak in July and August, while there is no peak of testament production during the summer of 1353. There is a slightly different pattern (Figure 3c) with a testament peak in August, and a less pronounced one in September 1368, with a rather different distribution in 1366. But this peak in testament numbers points to a much later plague wave than the *pestis tertia* in both Bohemia and Görlitz. With regard to the Black Death and the *pestis secunda*, the pronounced monthly peaks of testaments in July and August fit perfectly with the plague outbreaks in Lübeck in 1350 and in 1358,[45] hit by the *pestis secunda* one year earlier than the relatively nearby Stralsund. Thus, already for the two plague waves following the Black Death, the outbreaks in Stralsund deviate considerably from those of other cities.

43 Single testaments are preserved from as early as 1309, but annual proliferation—with few gaps—starts in 1333. A comparable graph has been produced by the author of the available data, cp. Schildhauer, *Hansestädtischer Alltag*, 13, yet it seems to be based on different numbers if compared with Schildhauer, "Stralsunder Bürgertestamente", 327–51.

44 Cp. Cohn, *The Black Death Transformed*.

45 Cp. Cohn, *The Black Death Transformed*, 182.

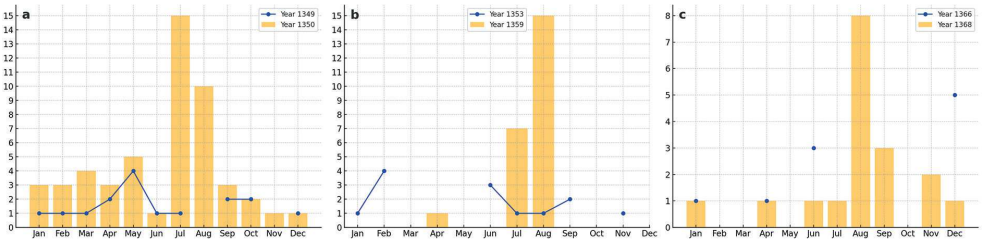

Figure 3a–c Number of testaments a month for the plague years in Stralsund (=yellow bars) compared to normal years (=blue dotted lines): a) comparing 1350 to 1349, b) comparing 1359 to 1353, and c) comparing 1368 to 1366.
Source: Schildhauer, "Stralsunder Bürgertestamente," 329–51. Graph: Martin Bauch and Annabell Engel

Countable memory: Erfurt funeral inscriptions, pictorial sources, and the plague

A second case of previously unused quantifiable information is available for Erfurt, where not only the availability of narrative sources is dense, but the epigraphic findings are also recorded.[46] In this case, particular attention is paid to the Christian and Jewish burial inscriptions collected in the city,[47] which can be counted to the exact year in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Figure 4).

The results show clear peaks of funerary inscriptions in the years 1357, 1382, 1394, 1405, 1463, and 1483. Less pronounced peaks are found in 1316, 1328, 1343, 1354, 1360, 1364, 1413, 1422 1438–1439, 1451, and 1463. In the last two decades of the fifteenth century, the number of inscriptions increases to such an extent that the significance of individual years tends to diminish. However, the correspondence with the reconstruction in the medical-historical literature on outbreaks of the plague and other infectious diseases in Erfurt is remarkable: there, the years 1316—with famine-related mortality, 1350 and 1354—with another kind of infectious disease, not the plague,[48] and 1357, 1381, 1384, 1393, 1405, 1438, 1452–1453, 1464, and 1495 are characterized as years with outbreaks of infectious diseases causing high mortality.[49] The validity of identifying these outbreaks as the plague very much depends on broader contextualization. Far from having a perfect match in all cases, the fairly consistent overlap of many grave inscriptions and epidemic outbreaks allows us to speak of a broad correlation. The absence of inscriptions in the context of the Black Death in 1350 and an elevated

46 Cp. Lorenz, "Die Erfurter Inschriften"; the collection is not above any source-critical objection, but nevertheless forms a valid starting point for further observations.

47 Cp. Lorenz, "Die Erfurter Inschriften," 8–135.

48 See footnote 36 above.

49 Cp. Rudat, *Die Pest in Erfurt*; Spiegler, *Die Geschichte der Pest in Erfurt*.

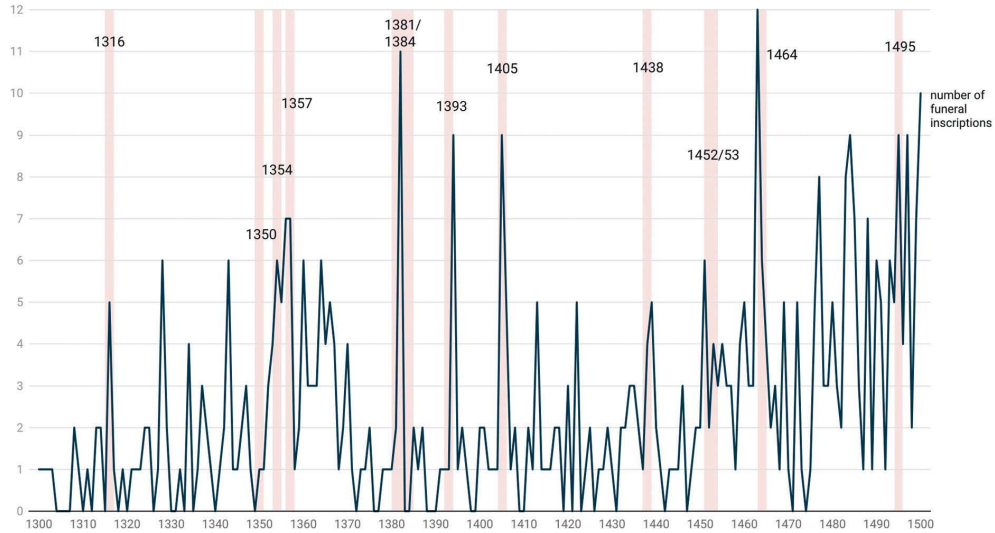

Figure 4 Annual number of funeral inscriptions in Erfurt (1300–1500) with regard to tombstones and memorial plates. Highlighted ranges mark epidemic outbreaks with precise year(s) as taken from the medical-historical literature for Erfurt (cp. footnote 49)
Source: Lorenz, "Die Erfurter Inschriften," 8–135. Graph: Martin Bauch and Annabell Engel

number of inscriptions around 1328, 1343, 1413, and 1422, which do not correspond to any known outbreak of diseases, remain to be clarified. While in the case of 1343, we might think of a reflection of victims during the flood events in Erfurt the previous year,[50] the absence of the Black Death in the city's inscriptions in 1350 can probably be explained by the shock caused by the high number of deaths, as seen above, and the requirement to bury all plague victims, regardless of their status, outside the city in the churchyard of the village of Neuses. And indeed, a (lost) memorial inscription has been retrieved from Early Modern sources for Neuses[51] which directly echoes the wording in the Erfurt-based *Peterschronik*.[52] Even if it is not possible to determine when the inscription was placed, it convincingly explains why there are no individual memorial inscriptions, as they would have been out of place on a mass grave. In the case of the plague mass grave of 1350, the memory of the deceased is preserved in another way as

50 Cp. Bauch, "Die Magdalenenflut 1342," 284.

51 Indirectly documented by a plague sermon from Prague in 1681: "At Erfurt, when all the churchyards in the town were full, eleven large pits were made outside the town, into which twelve thousand corpses were thrown, as the verse on the church shows: Hic hominum necifex, necat aere milia bis sex. / Twelve thousand people in Eyl, death has strangled with its arrow" (Pfaltz, "Pragerische Pest-Predigt," 170). Translation by authors.

52 The close literal proximity of the inscription from the mnemonic verse of the Erfurt Chronicle of St. Peter suggests that it was largely adopted, cp. Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis moderna, 382: "Mille trecentenis decies quinis simul annis / Hic hominum necifex locat aer milia bis sex."

well: through an elaborately illustrated Apocalypse attached to a *Biblia Pauperum*,[53] which was produced between 1340 and 1360 in St Peter's Monastery in Erfurt.[54] The depiction of the fourth apocalyptic horseman, Death (Figure 5), who is shown as a decaying corpse wielding a dragon like a whip, differs considerably from the biblical text: death is not riding a horse like the first three apocalyptic horsemen, but a winged hybrid creature that can be best identified as a lion with eagle wings.[55] In its iconography, it refers to the lion of St. Mark, even if the accompanying quotation from Revelation 6:8 speaks faithfully of the pale horse *(equus pallidus)* of the apocalyptic horseman. The most obvious explanation for the depiction of the lion of St. Mark as an apocalyptic mount refers to Erfurt citizens' procession to Neuses commemorating the plague dead, which was held annually on St. Mark's Day on 25 April.[56] This procession was established in the first five years after the mass grave had been built, presumably before 1355.[57] This elaborate form of collective remembrance of plague victims in performance and book illumination shows that an obvious gap in individual *memoria* in Erfurt was filled elsewhere, and in fact in an impressive way.

Finally, the assumed representation of the *pestis secunda* in 1357 in the Erfurt memorial inscriptions, fitting with Phil Slavin's reconstruction of a concentric spread of the plague from Frankfurt from late 1356[58] deserves further attention: recent paleogenetic scholarship dates the finding of Yersinia pestis aDNA in single graves

53 The genre is considered typical for the fourteenth century, cp. Schmidt, *Armenbibeln*, 117–8, is conceived with the same basic scheme with typological illustrations primarily from the image; the illustrations of the Apocalypse break through the textually expected sequence, cp. Behrends, "Versuch zur Datierung und Lokalisierung," 54–5).

54 The dates diverge, but the attribution to the scriptorium of the Erfurt monastery agrees, cp. Frühmorgen-Voss, H. Ott, and Bodemann, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften*, 316; Behrends, "Versuch zur Datierung und Lokalisierung," 64.

55 Behrends, "Versuch zur Datierung und Lokalisierung," 56 argues for a bear's body with a lion's head because of the paws, which are indeed somewhat irritating for a lion's body. However, the extremely slender torso of the animal does not seem to fit in with this; moreover, a bear–lion–eagle hybrid would be completely unprecedented, so that it should rather be assumed here that a lion's body is depicted in an awkward manner in places.

56 Cp. Löther, *Prozessionen in spätmittelalterlichen Städten*, 183–92.

57 Löther, *Prozessionen in spätmittelalterlichen Städten*, interprets a deed of indulgence from 1351 as the first evidence for the procession according to the somewhat misleading regest (*Urkundenbuch Erfurt,* vol. 2, no. 183: "die um den Kirchhof mit der Prozession umgehen"), whereby in the wording of the deed the indulgence is promised only to "those qui cimiterium dicte ecclesie pie Deum exorantes circumerint" (Hrdina and Studničková, eds., *Frömmigkeit in Schrift und Bild*, 67, no. 6), which would also apply to individual memorial practices; in terms of wording, it is only a donation of soul instruments from 1355 that mentions the procession to Neuses as taking place annually (*Urkundenbuch Erfurt*, vol. 2, no. 447).

58 Cp. Slavin, "Out of the West," 39–40.

at Krakauer Berg near Bernburg on the River Saale to around 1357.[59] While Erfurt is far from this site and has no narrative evidence to offer for 1357,[60] nearby Magdeburg is closer, where an outbreak is recorded for the same year.[61] A hitherto unknown plague outbreak in Mühlberg on the River Elbe is remembered by local Cistercian nuns for 1357.[62] But the *pestis tertia* is already invisible in the funeral inscriptions' record, while it is indeed reported in narrative accounts for 1365.[63]

Figure 5 Death as the fourth apocalyptic horseman, seated on a winged lion. In the mouth of hell, there is a personification of hunger *(fames)*, pointing to her open mouth.
Source: Klassik-Stiftung Weimar, HAAB, fol max 4, f. 15v

Bohemia: The *Libri Confirmationum* as a source of epidemiological history

The chronicler Francis of Prague states very briefly that the plague, which decimated the population in many countries around the world, also 'took place' in Bohemia.[64] How-

59 Cp. Parker et al., "Systematic Investigation of Human DNA Preservation in Medieval Skeletons."

60 Although the *Chronicon Moguntinum* reports a plague outbreak for Thuringia, 6: "Anno predicto facta est magna pestilentia in multibus partibus Rheni et in Hassia et Thuringia et Wedderabia."

61 "Dar na [1350] aver seven jare / wart hir echt ein stervent sware […] In dem jare wart hir grot stervent in der stadt, und was de suke der lude vor wesen hadde over seven jare, also dat den luden drose worden under den armen edder an dem halse edder boven an den beinen." (von Lammespringe, "Die Magdeburger Schöppenchronik," 223).

62 "[…] pro remedio animarum suae et progenitorum suorum et parentum ac etiam dominarum singularum et sororum nostrarum conventualium dicti nostri monasterii in moritalitate sive pestilentia, quae nuper videlicet de anno domini millesimo trecentesimo quinquagesimo septimo miserabiliter viguit" (*Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Meißen*, vol. 2, 22, No. 514).

63 "Anno domini 1365 pestilentia magna fuit, ita ut Erfordiae in claustro novi operis a vigilia Petri ad vincula usque ad vigiliam XI milium virginum XLII virgines morerentur, quarum animae sint in domino" (Annales variorum, col 231).

64 Zachová, ed., *Chronicon*, 212: "Anno Domini MCCCL in pluribus terris epydimia sive pestilencia genus humanum devastavit, sed tunc in Boemia eciam locum habebat."

ever, in the middle of the fourteenth century most parts of the lands of the Bohemian crown were largely spared from the first wave of the plague, known as the 'Black Death'. There is evidence that the plague raging in Austria at the time spread as far as Central Moravia and caused considerable damage in this part of the Kingdom of Bohemia while most regions of the realm remained unharmed.[65] David C. Mengel argues that this relative unscathed character of Bohemia by the plague and its representation on an influential map led to little research being conducted in the English-speaking world, even for later outbreaks of the epidemic in Bohemia.[66] František Graus' short but source-rich 1963 essay and other studies by Czech historians have been largely ignored by Anglophone scholars.[67] In its most extreme form, this gave the impression that Bohemia was a 'pocket of immunity' whose inhabitants were not susceptible to the disease transmitted by *Yersinia pestis*.[68]

In a recent essay, Martin Nodl points out that a regional-local perspective should be adopted in relation to the spread of the plague.[69] Based on his own research on Stříbro and Rakovník in Western Bohemia, and that of other Czech researchers, namely Jaroslav Mezník on Brno, Martin Musílek on Prague and Tomáš Klír on Cheb, he points out the chronologically and spatially very different severity of the plague in Bohemia and Moravia.[70] According to Nodl's explanations, however, a reasonably comprehensive investigation is hindered by the extremely patchy availability of relevant local sources.

Both Mengel and Nodl also discuss in detail Eduard Maur's research on the *Libri Confirmationum (LC)*. In a series of essays, Maur emphasizes the potential of this corpus of sources for demographic research.[71] The *LC* are a collection of con-

65 Flodr, ed., *Pamětní kniha města Brna*, 120, no 232; two charters of Margrave John of Moravia for the towns of Brno and Znojmo offer new burghers, who are willing to replace those killed by the plague, a tax exemption for four years: *Codex Diplomaticus Moraviae,* vol. 8, 95, no 129; 97f., no 133; cp. Mezník, "Mory v Brně." The raging of the Black Death in Austria in 1349 is widely documented by historiography. cp. "Kalendarium Zwetlense," 692; "Continuatio Claustroneoburgensis quinta," 736; "Continuatio Zwetlensis quarta," 685; "Annales Matseenses," 829f.

66 Mengel, "Plague on Bohemia?" refers to the map by Carpentier, "Peste noire," which he reproduces between 4 and 5.

67 Graus, "Peste noire." Further research on the plague in Bohemia in note 7.

68 Lastufka, "Bohemia during the Medieval Black Death."

69 Nodl, "Impacts."

70 Nodl, "Západočeské Stříbro v roce 1380"; Nodl, "Morová epidemie"; Mezník "Mory v Brně"; Musílek, *Patroni, klienti, příbuzní*, 144–48; Klír, *Rolnictvo*, 492–98. Recently, a detailed study was conducted by David Trojan on the deanery of Kouřim which also contains some information about the issues in question: Trojan, "Kouřimský děkanát." A rather general overview of the impact of the late medieval plague waves on Central Europe is presented by Fichtner, "Der »Schwarze Tod«."

71 Maur, "Morová epidemie"; Maur, "Sterblichkeit"; Maur, "Demographische Entwicklung." Unfortunately, I had no access to Maur's "Příspěvek k demografické problematice."

firmations of the occupation of benefices, which were issued by the changing vicars general of the Archbishops of Prague in order to confirm the legitimacy of these occupations.[72] For the period analyzed by Maur, i.e., from 1354 to 1418, there are more than 11,000 such confirmations, which were copied into codices in (roughly) chronological order. In addition to the names of the appointed priest and the persons exercising the right of patronage, a typical entry contains the name of the priest who last held the benefice and the reason why the benefice became vacant. There are two main reasons for vacancy: a) the death of the previous holder of the benefice and b) the transfer of the latter to another benefice.

A randomly selected example of a typical entry reads (with abbreviations resolved): "Nicolaus Puchnik etc., quod nos ad ecclesia parrochialis in Luzicz, per resignationem domini Otticonis ex causa permutationis vacant de consensu famosi Otticonis clientis de Luzucz et Elzcze vidue, relicte olim Hermanni ibidem de Luzicz, dominum Johannem, olim plebanus ecclesiae in Holedecz, cum dicto domino Otticone pro dicta ecclesia in Luizicz permutantem, crida etc. Prage anno domini 1401 die XIII Junii."[73] The archbishop's vicar general Nikolaus Puchnik confirms here that, after a priest named Ottico had resigned the parish benefice in Luzicz, the priest Johannes could move into this benefice. This would take place with the consent of the holders of the patronage rights to this church, the low nobleman Ottico de Luzucz and Elzcze, the widow of Hermann de Luzucz. Finally, we learn that the two priests Ottico and Johannes exchanged their benefices, i.e., that Ottico moved to the parish of the village of Holedecz, from which Johannes came to Luzicz. The entry ends with the date of issue of the deed.

Eduard Maur used an annual count of the benefices vacated by death to create a graph in which a number of years show a particularly high mortality rate. For these years, he assumes that there were plague outbreaks in the Kingdom of Bohemia. Maur notes such outbreaks for the years 1357–1360, 1362–1363, 1369–1371, 1380, 1390, 1403–1406, and 1414–1415.[74] The outbreaks of the plague and the sources documenting them are discussed below.[75]

Although this graph (Figure 6) is helpful for an overview of the mortality rates of clergymen in the Bohemian lands in the second half of the fourteenth century and the early fifteenth century, it raises a number of problems that will structure this part of the present paper:

72 Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, vol. I–X.

73 LC VI, 50.

74 Maur printed the figure resulting from the data he collected twice, in 1987 and 2001, respectively: Maur, "Sterblichkeit," 163, Fig. 2; Maur, "Demographische Entwicklung," 58, Fig. 1.

75 The corresponding data were newly collected from the *LC* for the present work and form the basis of our Figure 1. Slight differences to Maur's figures result from the fact that he only considered the parish clergy, whereas our figure is based on all deaths counted in the *LC*.

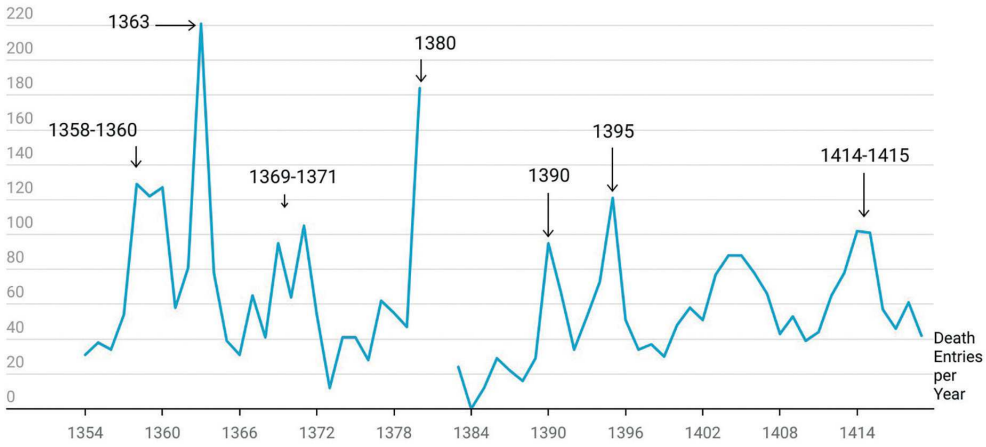

Figure 6 Reappointment of benefices after the previous holder's death (1354–1419)
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

I Losses in transmission are only visible if they cover at least an entire year (e.g., 1381–1382, but in fact the transmission is lost from the beginning of October 1380 to March 1383).

II In the event of gaps in the sources lasting several months, the picture of a year is strongly distorted downwards, and a mortality rate that actually increased over several months may escape the researcher's attention.

III It is not only the absolute numbers that are significant but also their relationship to the overall tradition. For example, a hundred benefices vacated by death have greater statistical weight if there were only 150 movements on the benefice market during the corresponding period than if there were several hundred movements.

IV Seasonal focal points of the plague outbreaks are not reflected.

Further sections will deal with the problem of the seasonal dating of plague outbreaks (V) and further potentials of the data provided by the *Libri Confirmationum* (VI).

I

The various consequences that losses of transmission may have on the graphical representation of the evaluation of the *LC* data are seen in the two graphs published by Eduard Maur. Losses of transmission are either only visible if they affect at least one whole year (as in Maur's figure from 1987) or data is lost if years are shown as a loss of transmission in which only the transmission for a few months is lost (as in Maur's figure from 2001 for the years 1383 and 1384). A solution to this problem can be

found graphically only by a higher—at least monthly—resolution. This can hardly be achieved in a single graph for the long period covered. For the 1380s, however, where data are particularly patchy, more transparency can be created in this way. In addition to the long gap in records from the beginning of October 1380 to March 1383, further gaps are observed from February 1384 to April 1385, in January and February 1387, and in August and September 1388. This means that in this decade only the years 1386 and 1389 are fully recorded. As the chart in Figure 7 focuses on the situation of the records and not on priest mortality, all appointments to benefices are included, not just those related to the death of the previous benefice holder.

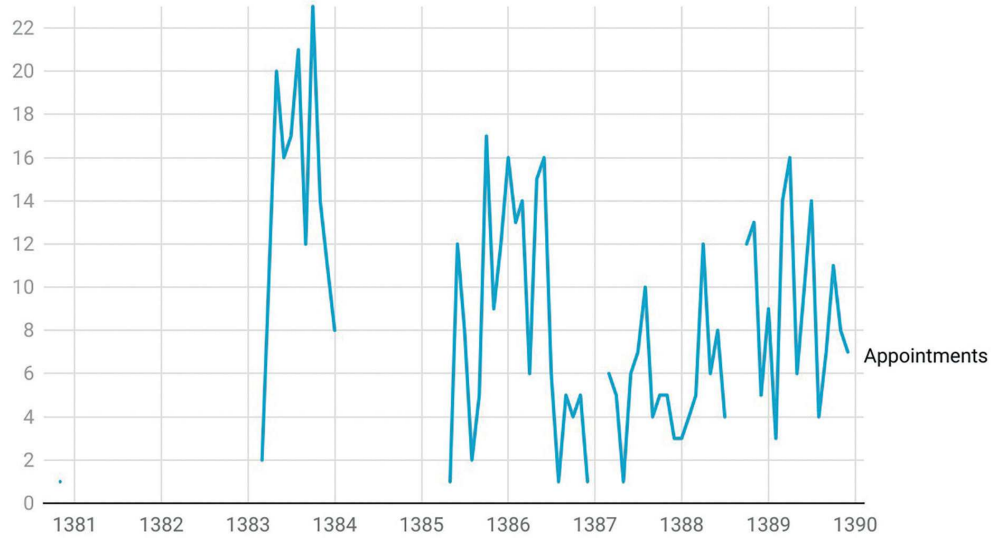

Figure 7 New appointments to benefices in the years 1381–1389
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds, *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

II

When recording the number of deceased priests on an annual basis, there is also the problem that in years with a few unrecorded months, the total value is strongly distorted downwards. This problem can be countered by not reporting the total number of those listed as deceased in a year, but by calculating a monthly average and only considering the months for which a record exists. The usefulness of this method is clearly illustrated by the year 1380: while surviving sources agree that it was this year that the most severe of the known plague waves hit Bohemia, the graph in Figure 6 shows a lower figure for this year than for 1363. The reasons for this discrepancy can be found, on the one hand, in the fact that very few vacancies *per mortem* are recorded in the first months of 1380, and these then rise sharply from late summer onwards (Figure 12), while mortality is very high both in the first

and—especially—in the last months of 1363 (Figure 10). In addition, the tradition breaks off after 1 October 1380, so the death figures for nine months of 1380 must 'compete' with those that we have for the twelve months of 1363.[76] The dark blue line in Figure 8, therefore, provides more reliable proportions of the chronological distribution of deaths than a simple count.

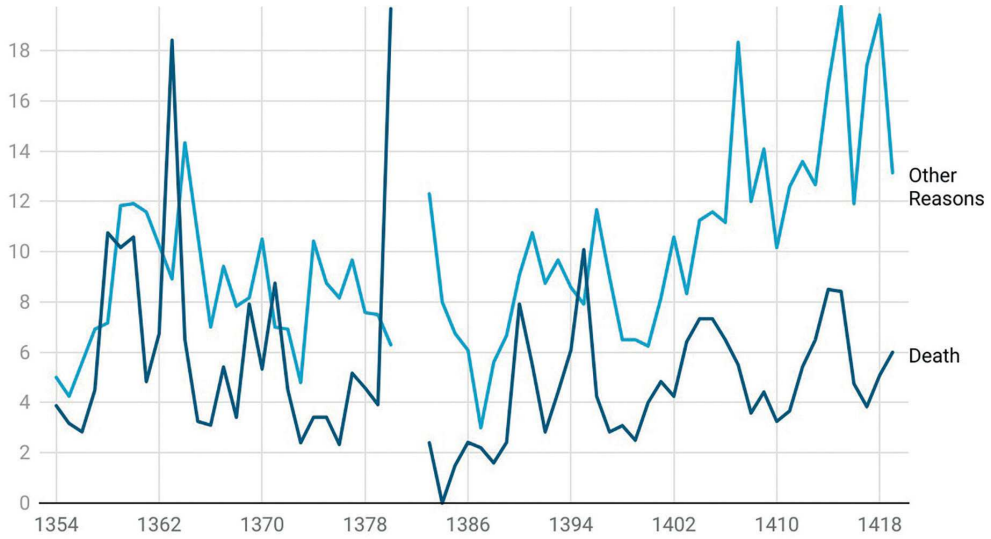

Figure 8 Average annual movements on the Bohemian benefice market broken down by the reason for the benefice becoming vacant (1354–1419)
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

III

Not only the absolute number of deaths but also their relationship to the overall tradition is significant. Figure 8 shows that from the first years of the fifteenth century onwards, the number of benefices filled *ex causa translationis* rose sharply in comparison to the number of vacant benefices *per mortem.* There are two possible interpretations of this observation. One is that there were more benefices overall due to the creation of new benefices and, therefore, the total numbers increased. However, the new foundations are also recorded in the *LC,* and there is no recognizable wave in this respect at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth

76 October, for the first day of which seven vacancies *per mortem* are recorded, was also removed from the calculation. The ratio of one day with no records and thirty days without any records means that taking this one day into account as representative of the entire month is a greater distortion of statistics than not taking it into account at all. The seven vacancies on 1 October were subtracted from the total number of vacancies for the year as a whole when calculating the monthly average.

centuries. Furthermore, this interpretation would not explain why the proportion of new benefices *ex causa translationis* rose so sharply compared to new appointments following a vacancy *per mortem.* I therefore consider the second interpretation to be more likely: in the 1400s, the Archbishop of Prague was able to better assert his claim to confirm the reappointment of a benefice (and to collect fees for it). Martin Nodl has shown that of the twenty parish benefices in the district of Rakovník in the 1380s, only nine appeared in the *LC.*[77] This agrees with Eduard Maur's assessment that only about half of the new grants of benefices were documented by the *LC.*[78] This proportion seems to increase towards the beginning of the fifteenth century. However, if a larger number of changes of benefices are recorded, it is not surprising if the number of documented deaths also increases.

For our epidemiological question, this means that the increased mortality in 1414 and 1415 is somewhat relativized by the higher overall figures. Other sources commenting on diseases during these years confirm this issue. František Graus, for example, quotes a historical note from a Munich astronomical manuscript from the 1450s, which speaks of a *magna mortalitas post Johannis* in the year 1413.[79] In Benessius Minorita's *Chronicon*, we also find the news for this year that a 'great cough' afflicted many people in Bohemia and made them susceptible to numerous other diseases.[80] However, whether this is the epidemic that is reflected in the *LC,* especially in two mortality peaks in the last three months of 1414 and from July to October 1415, seems—due to the considerable time lag—just as doubtful as the answer to the question of whether the 'great cough' should be considered a plague epidemic.[81]

IV

A final problem with the annual counting of deaths is the fact that a chronological grid of this size makes it impossible to determine seasonal focal points of increased mortality. Here too—as with the problem of individual months with lost records—the

77 Nodl, "Morová epidemie."

78 Maur, "Morová epidemie," 45. Trojan, "Kouřimský děkanát," 55 assumes that 60–70 percent of the vacancies were covered by the *LC*.

79 Graus, "Peste noire," 724, note 3; the manuscript in question is Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 26666, fol. 134v. For the dating of the manuscript, see: Juste, *Catalogus*, 169.

80 Benessius Minorita, *Chronicon*, 67: "Et eodem anno venit tuffis maxima omnibus hominibus communiter in Boemia, per quam gravati multis infirmitatibus sunt oppresi." Maur, "Demographische Entwicklung," 34 finds the same message again for 1415, but does not identify the source.

81 Maur, "Demographische Entwicklung," 35 would like to interpret the 'great cough' as pneumonic plague, but also offers whooping cough as a solution. Pulmonary tuberculosis would be another one of several conceivable alternatives.

only option is to reduce the size of the grid. If we look at the monthly data for the years with increased mortality, it is obvious that there is a clear seasonality of the disease's outbreaks in each of these phases. Increased mortality in the *LC* falls almost regularly in the autumn, winter, and spring months. This is the case for all four seasonal mortality peaks in the years 1357–1360, i.e., in four consecutive years (Figure 9).

For these years, a number of other sources have survived that speak of repeated plague outbreaks. On 15 October 1357, Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice issued a statute in which he wrote that the plague had already been in Bohemia some time before but had now returned in an even worse form. Previously, the sick would have had three days to atone for their sins, but now they would die on the very day the plague struck them.[82] He issued a document with largely identical wording almost exactly two years later, on 5 October 1359, but with an addendum to the sentence about the earlier occurrence of the plague, stating that it had also appeared in Bohemia the previous year—i.e., in 1358—but had disappeared again in the meantime.[83] For 1359, there is also an entry in the *Chronicon Moguntinum* reporting an outbreak of the plague in Bohemia around the feast day of All Saints (1 November).[84]

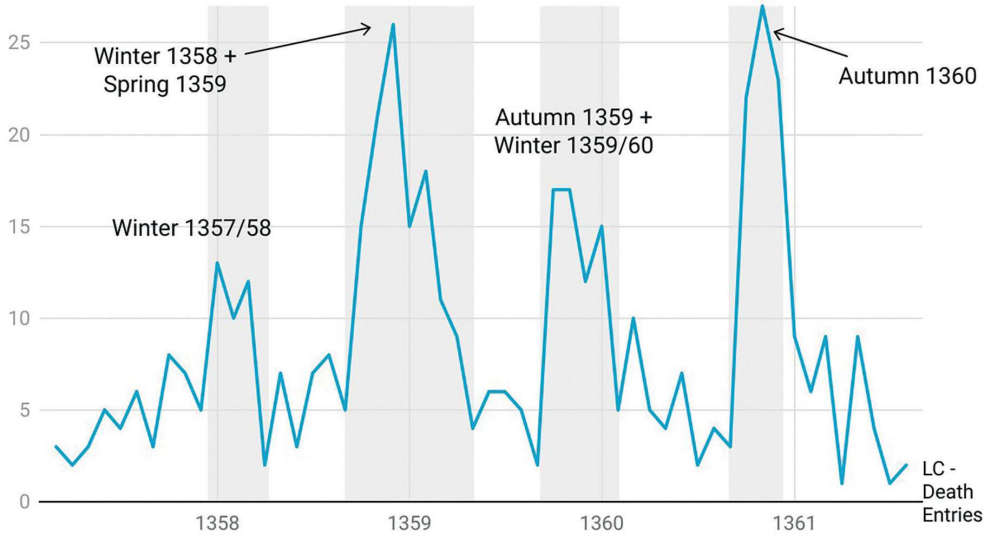

Figure 9 Mortality according to the *Libri Confirmationum* from the spring of 1357 to the summer of 1361
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

82 Menčík, *Několik statutů*, 15. "Nam cum priori dictae homines ipsius pestilentiae morbo infecti poenitentiae spatium ex misericordia Domini concedebatur per triduum, nunc ipso die, quo inficiuntur, ut plurimum moriuntur subito tamquam animalia insensata."

83 Borový, ed., *Libri erectionum*, vol. I, 11–13.

84 *Chronicon Moguntinum*, 8.

While according to the records of the *LC*, the year 1361 was unremarkable in terms of mortality among the clergy, the chronicler Beneš Krabice of Weitmil writes: "In this year […] many thousand people died of famine and others of a plague which ruled until then."[85] He probably refers here to the outbreak of the plague that preceded the famine of 1361, the peak of which the *LC* records as falling in the autumn of 1360 (Figure 9).

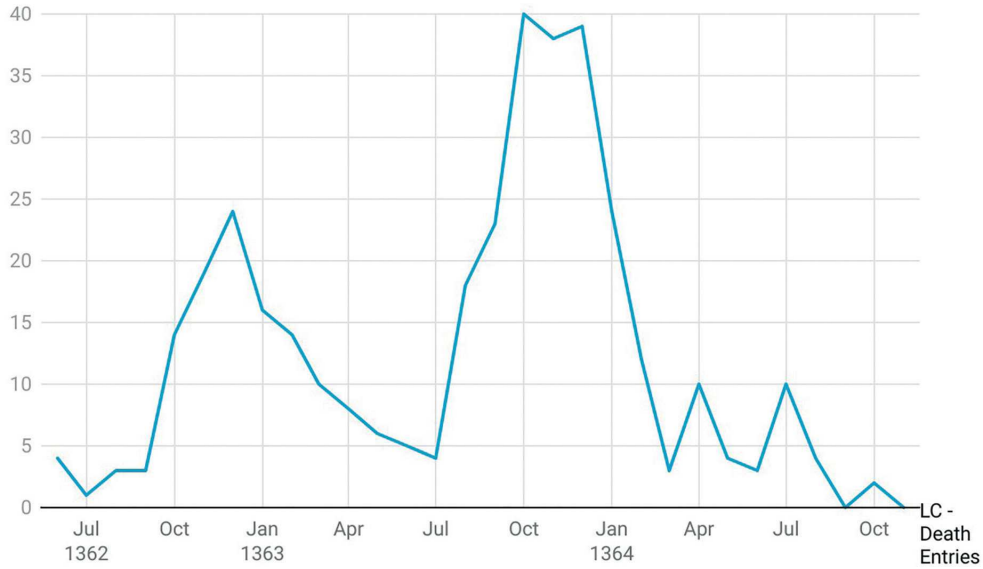

Figure 10 Mortality according to the *Libri Confirmationum* from the summer of 1362 to the autumn of 1364
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

From October 1362 to January 1364, the 1357–1360 pattern is roughly repeated (Figures 9 and 10): the number of deaths greatly increases from October 1362 to March 1363. Relatively few deaths are recorded from April to July, but this time the figures rise already in late summer from four deaths documented in July to forty deaths in October, and numbers continue to be high until January 1364. This high mortality rate over long stretches of 1363 explains why this year leads the 1354–1419 statistics with 221 documented deaths. For 18 October 1362 an appeal of the archbishop is recorded to celebrate the *missa contra pestilentiam* due to the threat of a recurring plague. In this decree, he states that "according to a flying rumor, the same dreadful and dire pestilence is spreading in our neighbouring regions."[86] By mid-October—at least according to the

85 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, 527: "Eodem anno […] mortua sunt multa milia hominum per fame et alii ex pestilencia, que adhuc vigebat."

86 Borový, ed., *Libiri erectionum*, vol. I, 39f.: "[…] et nunc iterum ipsa pestilencia terribilis et dira certo rumore volante in vicinis nostris partibus crassatur."

archbishop's information—only the news of its occurrence in neighbouring regions had reached Bohemia, rather than the plague itself.

The plague outbreaks of 1369 and 1371–1372 were again similar (Figure 11). Increased numbers of deaths are recorded for September to December 1369, and for September 1371 to January 1372. Beneš Krabice of Weitmil notes for 1369 that on 20 August Emperor Charles IV came to Prague with his wife Elisabeth of Pomerania, who had been crowned empress that year, but they quickly left due to the plague.[87] Beneš also reports outbreaks of the plague in Bohemia in 1370 and 1371.[88]

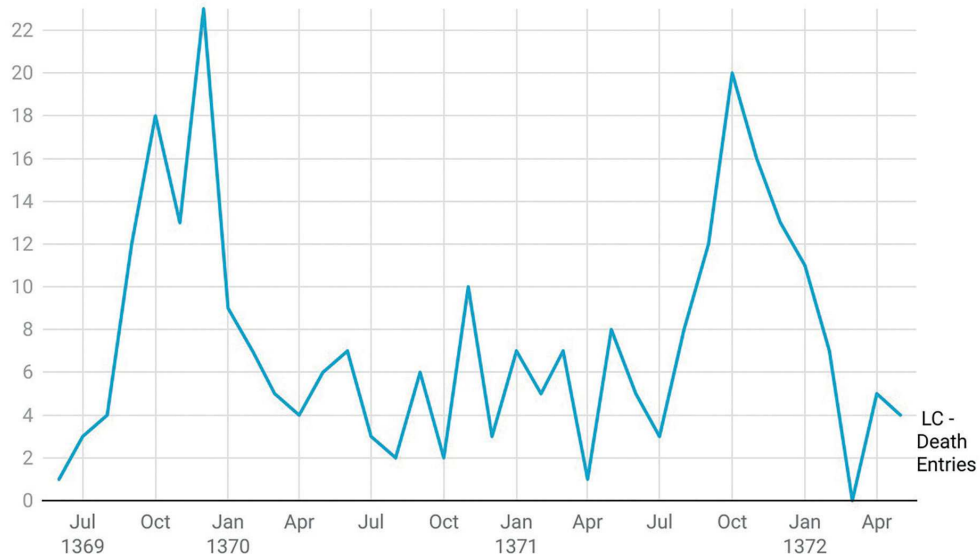

Figure 11 Mortality according to the *Libri Confirmationum* from the summer of 1369 to the spring of 1372
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

The most intense outbreak of the plague hit Bohemia in 1380 (Figure 12). Probably due to its particular severity, this outbreak is noted by a large number of narrative sources in Bohemia and even beyond.[89] It is due to their very brief information that, apart from the fact that Bohemia was hit by the plague at a certain time of the year 1380 (which varies depending on the source), hardly any additional information (e.g., on death figures or regional focal points) is provided.

87 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis,* 539f.

88 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis,* 542, 545.

89 Benessius Minorita; *Chronicon Bohemiae Lipsiense*, 5; *Chronicon Bohemicum Pragense*, 11; *Kronika Bartoška z Drahonic*, 628; *Secundum continuator Pulkavae*, 133; *Chronicon Moguntinum*, 46.

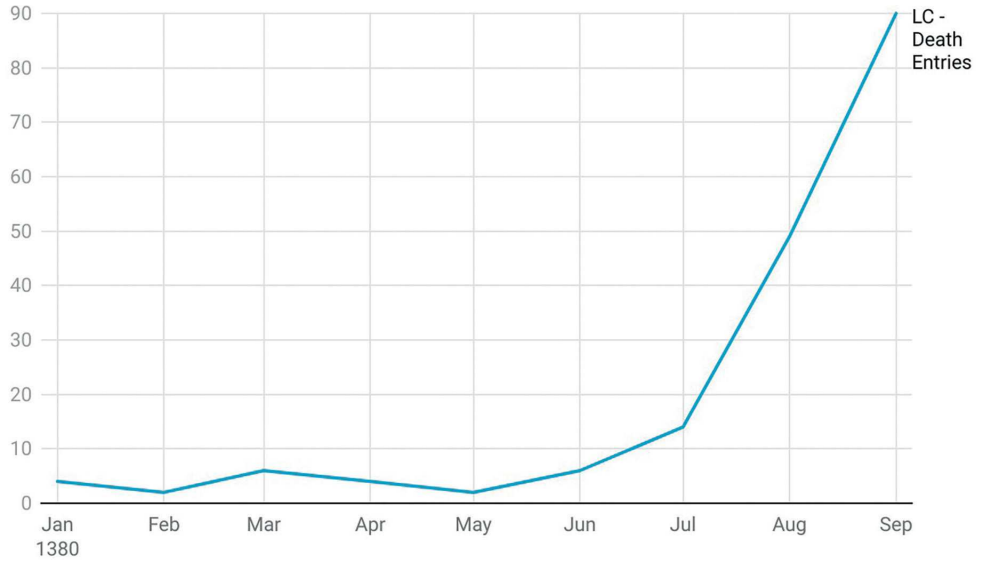

Figure 12 Mortality in 1380 according to the *Libri Confirmationum*
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

The plague of 1394–1395 shows a somewhat unusual course compared to previous outbreaks. Whereas in the cases considered so far, months with low and high mortality alternated seasonally, here—with the exception of the summer of 1394—we see a consistently high to—in the autumn of 1395—very high mortality in the *LC* records (Figure 13). It would therefore appear that there were either different patterns in the spread of the plague or that a series of smaller regional outbreaks may have occurred one after the other in 1394–1395, suggesting a consistently high overall mortality rate in the kingdom. More detailed information on this question can only be obtained through a chronological mapping of the data in the *LC* (more on this below).[90]

V

One piece of information that most annalistic reports of the great 1380 outbreak contain is the chronological dates of the raging plague. Benessius Minorita gives the duration from Ascension Day (3 May) to St Michael's Day (29 September), while the *Chronicon Bohemiae Lipsiense* speaks of Pentecost (13 May) to St Wenceslas's Day (28 September). The *Chronicon Bohemicum Pragense*, the second continuation of the

90 The increased mortality in the years 1404–1405 remains below the threshold of a hundred deaths a year (Figure 6) or eight deaths a month (Figure 8) and is, therefore, not discussed here. For the increased values in 1414 and 1415, see the discussion above.

Pulkava Chronicle and the *Kronika Bartoška z Drahonic* have the Great Dying begin on St Margaret's Day (13 July), the *Chronicon Moguntinum* more generally places it 'in the month of July'. The *Kronika Bartoška z Drahonic* gives the autumn as the end of the outbreak, the *Chronicon Bohemicum Pragense* says that the plague lasted until winter, and the continuator from Pulkava gives All Saints' Day (1 November) as the end date of the disease. As the entry begins with *Anno Domini MCCCLXXX & 81*, it remains unclear whether *duravit usque festum Omnium Sanctorum* refers to 1 November 1380 as the end of the first outbreak followed by a second in 1381, or whether the author gives 1 November 1381 as the end of a very long plague period. The start dates in early/mid-May show a relatively large deviation from the accumulation of new appointments deceased per month benefices *per mortem* recorded in the *LC*. There, the numbers of the deceased clergy are very low up to June, giving between two and six deceased, with numbers rising sharply in July (fourteen dead) and August (forty-nine dead) to reach their absolute peak in September with ninety registered deaths (Figure 12). The fact that only on the first day of October seven more deaths were recorded indicates that by September the peak of the outbreak had not yet been reached. Unfortunately, as the *LC* breaks off after 1 October 1380, no statement can be made about the final dates mentioned in the chronicles.

This discrepancy between some of the chronicle and annalistic reports and the information obtained from the *LC* about the beginning of the outbreak of 1380 raises the fundamental question of the time that would pass between the death of a benefice holder and the replacement of his position or until the replacement was recorded in the *LC*. Maur assumes a latency of between one and three months—without explaining this in detail—but seems to reckon with three months (or more), as he mentions in several places that the plague outbreaks in Bohemia regularly reached their peak in the summer months, while the data material discussed above primarily documents an increased mortality rate during the respective winter half-years.[91] It seems plausible that it could take some time for a successor to be found for a benefice and for the new appointment to be reported to Prague. Let us take a closer look at the sources in this regard:

91 Maur, "Morová epidemie," 38: "Většinu krizí lze identifikovat jako morová léta, a to nejen vzhledem k výši ztrát na obyvatelstvu, ale i k typicky sezonnímu průběhu mortalitní křivky /vrchol v létě, dočasné nebo trvalé vyhasnutí v zimě/ […]"; Maur, "Demographische Entwicklung," 33: "Der für 1395 feststellbare Mortalitätsanstieg weist insofern einen atypischen Zeitverlauf auf, als es keinen Höhepunkt in den Sommermonaten gab," 35: "Die meisten dieser Krisen lassen sich durch die hohen Verluste unter der Bevölkerung, den typischen jahreszeitlichen Verlauf der Mortalitätskrise (Höhepunkt in den Sommermonaten, zeitweiliges oder endgültiges Erlöschen im Winter) und die hohe Synchronität mit den ganz Europa periodisch erfassenden Seuchenzügen als Pestjahre identifizieren."

Figure 13 Mortality according to the *Libri Confirmationum* from the winter of 1393–1394 to the winter of 1395–1396
Source: Tingl and Emler, eds., *Libri Confirmationum*, Vol. I–X.

The first diploma of Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice from 15 October 1357 actually dates two to three months before the increased mortality among Bohemian clergy is documented in the *LC* (from January 1358). However, the two other documents of this archbishop discussed above, dated 5 October 1359 and 18 October 1362, are expedited about the same time as the beginning of the respective outbreak in the *LC*. For the year 1360, there are two short notes about the occurrence of the plague *circa festum Assumpcionis s. Marie* (15 August) and *circa festum Nativitat. s. Marie* (8 September), while in the *LC* an increased mortality is only noted from October onwards.[92] Beneš Krabice of Weitmil's entry for 1361 indicates that the famine of 1361 directly followed the last outbreak in 1360. While in the *LC* the outbreak in the autumn-winter of 1360 subsides from January 1361 onwards, according to Beneš it would have to be extended by at least a few months into 1361. The same author writes about 1369 that Emperor Charles IV left Prague at the end of August because of the danger of the plague. This again fits in very well with the *LC* tradition, which records an increase in mortality precisely for this month.

If we look at the beginnings of the outbreaks of the plague in the various traditions, we see two cases with a large chronological gap between the dates in the narrative sources and the information in the *LC* (1357: two or three months, and

92 Ms. Bibl. of the Prague Cathedral chapter, Ms D. LXXV, fol. 9; Munich, BSB, Clm 26666, fol. 134, both cited after Graus, "Pestes noire," 722, note 6.

1360: approximately one month). In contrast, there is no latency between the news about the plague in the narrative sources and the higher numbers of deaths in the *LC* whatsoever in the messages for 1359, 1362, and 1369. The most difficult problem to deal with is the different chronistic and annalistic reports for the year 1380, which give two approximate dates for the beginning of the devastating outbreak of the plague: early/mid-May and mid-July. As increased mortality in the *LC* is also visible from July; it depends on the evaluation of the narrative sources whether we want to assume a latency or not. On the basis of source-critical considerations, it is impossible to decide in favor of one of the two dates; both are handed down by authors writing relatively close in time. Therefore, a more precise delimitation of the time span between the death of a priest and the reoccupation of his benefice cannot be made on the basis of the information analyzed here, and it is likely that in practice the times differed from case to case and varied between a few weeks and several months.[93] In order to determine a middle ground in this discussion, other sources that also comment on sinecure appointments would have to be related to the *LC*.

VI

A further potential of the *LC* regarding research into the outbreaks of the plague in Bohemia lies in the exact spatial recording and chronological mapping of the surviving vacancies, which, however, could not be done within the framework of the present study. Here, too, Eduard Maur has already presented important research results. He has published maps for the outbreaks of 1360, 1363–1364, 1369–1370, and 1380, in which he manages to clearly delineate regional clusters of deaths.[94] While the map for 1360 shows an accumulation of deaths in the Glatz (Kłodzko) region, in 1363–1364, Northern and Western Bohemia appear to have been the centre of the plague's rage. In 1369–1370, however, this centre of gravity appears to have shifted to Southern Bohemia. With modern methods of (digital) cartography, today it would be possible to go well beyond Maur's results. As already discussed above, the chronological mapping of deaths in 1394–1395 could provide information on a possible regional sequence of the spread of the disease. A more precise chronological breakdown of deaths in the years already documented by Maur could also provide new insights into the spread of the plague in these periods. In the case of the

93 Robinson, "Black Death" has recently analysed the same procedure in five English dioceses after the first plague wave of 1349. He arrives at an average time for the reoccupation of a vacancy of twenty-six days and states (133): "Patrons and diocesan administrators seem to have coped with the consequences of the plague remarkably well."

94 Maur, "Sterblichkeit," 161f., Maps A–D.

map for the outbreak of 1380,[95] a combination with a map of old routes would possibly show that the plague of this year—in contrast to the other outbreaks analysed here—spread primarily along important trade routes. Many of the deaths symbolized by dots in Maur's map appear to be lined up like pearls on a string, while in all other maps we find a regionally clustered distribution. If the assumption is correct, this type of spread along the connections between densely populated towns and regions would be a possible explanation for the particularly devastating impact of the disease this year. The earlier outbreaks, which were limited to certain regions of Bohemia, may have been more frequently confronted with gaps in the transmission of the pathogen in less densely populated regions.[96]

Apart from questions of epidemiological history, maps drawn up from the *LC* could provide information on whether vacant benefices in all regions of Bohemia were reported to the archbishop's chancellery in a similar density or whether differences can be identified here. Further, the hitherto little-utilized potential of the *LC* lies in the possibility of tracing the careers of clergymen, the number and distribution of patronage rights of persons and groups of persons, and in establishing whether and, if so, to what extent these rights could represent economic resources for their holders, i.e., whether they changed hands more frequently. However, the answers to these questions must be left to later research.

Conclusion

Narrative sources are an often-neglected key feature in current plague histories. Yet, as we have seen, in combination with quantified epigraphic and administrative data, they provide the strongest evidence, down to the information on the seasonality of plague outbreaks in Stralsund in full agreement with Cohn's results for Lübeck. Even under-researched regions like Eastern Germany or well-researched, but seemingly unpromising regions like Bohemia can hence provide new information. These written sources are indispensable to frame and guide paleogenetic results, which will certainly expand our knowledge about late-medieval plague waves. There will never be a complete history of the Black Death or the subsequent waves of plague, not only in East Central Europe. Pointing out unreliability and overlooked evidence in existing 'grand narratives' does not relativize the achievements of the responsible scholars, but it does relativize the (sometimes self-formulated) expectations of those

95 Maur, "Sterblichkeit," 162, Map D.

96 The less dense population in Bohemia could also explain why the calculated mortality rates were significantly lower here than in the densely populated regions of Southern and Western Europe. For estimates of population losses, see for example: Nodl, "Impacts."

studies. However, there are quantifiable written sources such as testaments, funerary inscriptions, or the confirmation of benefices in East Central Europe, and with a little luck of source preservation, they are by no means of poorer quality than in other regions of the continent. For Eastern Germany, the article has shown the first attempts to quantitatively develop and interpret such information of epigraphic or legal nature, or to correct their previous treatments in plague histories of larger geographical focus. For Bohemia, it has been shown how relevant new information can be wrested from a long-known and well-edited source corpus through differentiated observation and careful reinterpretation, and how this data can go hand in hand with narrative sources outside the lands of the Bohemian crown. Interestingly, we find a clearly different seasonality of plague outbreaks with peaks in summer for the Baltic coast and peaks in autumn and winter for Bohemia. An explanation for this discrepancy is still out of sight.

Another unresolved task is to compare the regional results for Eastern Germany and Bohemia with what we know about the Black Death's impact on other regions. Philip Slavin has recently suggested an interesting approach to compare plague impact in different parts of Eurasia. He argues that there is a very much comparable ratio of mortality in plague years, or actually the first year the Black Death hit a locality, to non-plague years, or more precisely: pre-Black Death years. Based on different source categories like funeral inscriptions, testaments, and other mortality indicators he proposes a ratio of roughly 15:1 to 17:1 across Western Eurasia and Northern Africa.[97] This seems to confirm chroniclers' claims of the unprecedented mortality during the onslaught of the Black Death.

As this contribution has considered very similar types of epigraphic and testamentary data, it is worth checking if these ratios apply to Eastern Germany and Bohemia. Starting on the Baltic Sea coast, we should note that Slavin's ratio could not be verified for the case of Stralsund,[98] where we see an impressive, yet clearly different ratio of mortality in plague years (1350–1359–1368) vs. non-plague years (1333–1370) of 9:1 or, with regard to pre-Black Death years (1333–1347), of 10:1.[99]

97 Cp. Slavin, "Death by the Lake," 65, Fig. 2.

98 The source base for Slavin's figures on Stralsund is somewhat unclear: he does not draw upon Schildhauer, "Stralsunder Bürgertestamente," and it is unclear where the numbers for the years 1325–1357 in Slavin, "Death by the Lake," Fig. 2, for Stralsund in combination with Lubeck come from, when it is clearly a different time period; annual continuity for Stralsund testaments starts only in 1333 and the actual number of available, yearly dated testaments between 1333 and 1370 is no less than 286, cp. Schildhauer, "Stralsunder Bürgertestamente," 328–36.

99 Based on an average of 5.68 testaments a year for 1333–1370, excluding the plague years 1350, 1359, and 1368; alternatively, the period of 1333 to 1347, thus the actual pre-Black Death years, show an average of 4.93 testaments a year. With regard to fifty testaments in 1350, by far the

If we look at the Erfurt funeral inscriptions, we can still try to apply the same methodology: looking for the ratio between Erfurt's most pronounced plague year of 1382 and all non-plague years between 1300 and 1390, we see a ratio of roughly 7:1.[100] A ratio of mortality of pre-Black Death years up to the first plague outbreak cannot be calculated for Erfurt, as we have seen the almost complete absence of preserved inscriptions for 1350 and its potential reasons. We can try to apply the same methodology to Görlitz, setting different points of reference with regard to an overall period of non-plague years:[101] if we take the invasion of the *pestis secunda* in 1359 as our point of reference, the ratio of mortality in a plague year and pre-plague years (1333–1358) is about 6:1, if we have a look at the period 1333–1383 with the major plague year 1384 in focus, the ratio is 5:1. If we take the Bohemian evidence from the *LC* starting in 1354, with 1358 as first peak year of plague mortality in Bohemia, we have a plague year to pre-plague-years mortality ratio of a little over 3:1.[102]

In any case, these mortality ratios are considerably lower for Eastern Germany (based on testaments and inscriptions) and much lower in Bohemia (based on the LC) than Slavin's results for Kyrgyzstan and the indexes he calculates as generally retrievable for other places in Western Eurasia. These findings of our paper seem to be in accordance with recent research by Izdebski et al. that presents fossil pollen evidence indicating a less severe grip of the Black Death and subsequent plague waves in East Central Europe.

As another conclusion, this paper has added further evidence to reconstruct the Black Death and the *pestis secunda* (1357/59) in different places. Also the *pestis tertia* appeared in 1365 in Erfurt, Görlitz, and Bohemia, while it remains unclear if the 1368 outbreak in Stralsund should be considered part of it. The *pestis tertia* seems to be the last wave that affected somewhat synchronously our region of interest.

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highest mortality peak in this period, the ratio of both periods under consideration—pre-Black Death and non-plague years—is considerably more moderate than the numbers proclaimed as generally applicable for first-time plague outbreaks in Slavin, "Death by the Lake," 65.

100 This means ignoring the documented plague years 1357, 1365, and 1382, leaving us with an average of 1.66 funeral inscriptions a year. The peak of funeral inscription in 1382 is 11, which constitutes the ratio.

101 The overall period covers 1333–1390, while the years 1359, 1365, and 1384 are considered plague years, and 1350 a year of plague-scare. Furthermore, a data gap is to be considered for the years 1362–1364. We therefore have an average of almost 27 testaments a year in Görlitz.

102 We define the years 1354–1357 as pre-plague years for Bohemia, with an average of 39.25 dead clerics a year or between 2.83 and 4.5 clerics a month mentioned in the *LC*. In the first plague year of 1358, this number rose to 129 a year or 10.75 a month, with comparable numbers in 1359 (122 a year / 10.17 a month) and 1360 (127 a year / 10.58 a month).

And finally, we know more about the seasonality of plague outbreaks in East Central Europe—at least in the second half of the fourteenth century. While plague deaths peaked during summer months, i.e., in July and August, in Stralsund and Lübeck, we may assume a similar pattern for Magdeburg and Erfurt (although this is indicated only by the starting dates of the outbreaks in the narrative sources), and a very different result is found for Bohemia, where different mortality peaks are seen in autumn and wintertime. It seems as if summer peaks in plague mortality were a characteristic of the Black Death or if they were explicable by a spread across maritime trade links also for later plague waves. In more continental Central Europe, namely in Bohemia during the *pestis secunda* and *tertia*, mortality peaked later in the year in the cold season; this finding could also hint at the ways in which the plague was travelling once it had established its Central European reservoirs from which it emerged at least twice.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded by the DFG (Project number 464607492) "Climate, Famine and Plague: A Pilot Study of the Fourteenth-century Mass Graves of Erfurt from an Interdisciplinary Perspective", the Volkswagen Foundation's Freigeist Fellowship "The Dantean Anomaly: Phase 2 – Climate, Famine and the Black Death" and the Saxon State Ministry for Science and Cultural Affairs (SMWK), Dresden, within the funding line TG 70, Project "Historische Datensammlungen für nachhaltige Entwicklung: Die Umwelt- und Seuchengeschichte des osteuropäischen Kontaktraums (inklusive Ukraine) seit dem hohen Mittelalter."

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Codices latini monacenses - Clm. 26666
Prague Cathedral chapter, Prague
Ms. D. LXXV.
Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Klassik-Stiftung Weimar, (HAAB)
Fol max 4.

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 68–92
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.04

Contemporary Perceptions of the Spread of the Plague in Central and Eastern Europe Following the Battle of Belgrade (1456)*

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Received 1 March 2024 | Accepted 2 May 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. The study examines contemporary perceptions of the emergence and spread of the plague in Central and Eastern Europe following the Battle of Belgrade in 1456. On one hand, the Battle of Belgrade represents a significant Christian victory in the conflicts with the Ottomans during the fifteenth century. Consequently, it was utilized in crusade-related propaganda discourse and perceived as a divine blessing for the anti-Ottoman crusade. On the other hand, some prominent figures such as John Hunyadi, John of Capistrano, and Serbian Despot George Branković died shortly after the event due to the outbreak of the plague during the battle. The research aims to explore how contemporary historical sources handled this duality between the sense of triumph and the plague outbreak. It provides an overview of the areas affected by the plague due to the movement of armies and the political and economic connections between different parts of East and Central Europe. The study investigates whether and to what extent reports of the plague from the region link the Battle of Belgrade to the outbreak of the disease. Additionally, it analyses fifteenth-century sources related to the battle itself. This segment of the research examines representations of the plague outbreak, particularly the infection and death of the aforementioned Christian leaders. The research focuses on how the discourse on the plague is interpreted in relation to narratives of heroism, martyrdom, and sainthood, addressing aspects of adaptation, marginalization, and the complete omission of mentions of the plague in these interpretations.

Keywords: Battle of Belgrade, plague, 1456, later crusades, John Hunyadi, John of Capistrano

In the summer of 1456, Sultan Mehmed II (1444–1446, 1451–1481) launched a campaign toward the Hungarian frontier on the Danube River, deploying approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Ottoman soldiers. Repelled near Smederevo by the army of the Serbian Despot George Branković (1427–1456), the Ottomans besieged Belgrade in early July. Anticipating the assault, John Hunyadi, Voivode of Transylvania and

* This study was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia (Contract No. 451-03-66/2024-03).

Regent-Governor of Hungary, assembled an army of around 10,000 men, bolstered by contingents from various Hungarian barons. Hunyadi's forces joined an army of crusaders inspired by the preaching of the Franciscan John of Capistrano and reinforcements sent by Despot George. Christian-Ottoman clashes ensued from 4 July to 22 July. The battle ultimately concluded with a crusader victory, with heavy material and military losses on both sides.[1]

In the following days, the plague began to spread in the crusader camp.[2] The Balkan lands had experienced a severe wave of plague in the previous year, and it is likely that the disease spread in 1456 through the movement and encounters of the armies.[3] The two main protagonists of the Belgrade victory, John Hunyadi (d. 11 August 1456) and John of Capistrano (d. 23 October 1456), along with the Serbian Despot George (d. 24 December 1456), all appear to have succumbed to the effects of the plague.[4]

Scope of research and methodology

Given the place of the Battle of Belgrade in the Ottoman-Hungarian wars, Ottoman conquests, and the later crusade movement, historiographical studies have so far explored its political, military, and cultural aspects.[5] However, while the outbreak of the plague during the battle has been acknowledged, it has not been extensively examined on its own.[6] This paper aims to provide insights into contemporary perceptions of the 1456 plague.

The research begins with an examination of plague-related records in both documentary and narrative sources about the battle and its aftermath. Its objective is to determine whether and how these accounts address the plague while referencing

1 Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 178–81; Housley, "Giovanni Da Capistrano," 97–8. In a letter to the Hungarian King Ladislaus V (1440–1457), John Hunyadi highlighted the 'great losses,' stating that the Belgrade fortress "cannot properly be called a fortress anymore, but a field." Bernoulli, ed., *Basler Chroniken*, vol. IV, 394–5; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 94–95; Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 104; Kalić, *Beograd*, 165–68.

2 Kalić, *Beograd*, 170.

3 Hrabak, "Kuga," 19–37, 21; Lowry, "Pushing the Stone Uphill," 103.

4 Kalić, *Beograd*, 170; Hrabak, "Kuga," 21; Spremić, *Despot Đurađ*, 483, 488, 494.

5 Among the many studies that analyze the mentioned aspects of the battle, notable works include Kalić, *Beograd*, 127–70; Babinger, *Der Quellenwert der Berichte*; Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 137–50; Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 161–90; Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 174–87; Housley, "Giovanni Da Capistrano," 94–115; Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 103–5, 408–10; Fodor, "The Ottoman Empire, Byzantium and Western Christianity"; Ropa, "Imagining the 1456 Siege of Belgrade."

6 Kalić, *Beograd*, 170; Babinger, *Der Quellenwert der Berichte*, 24; Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 183; Housley, *Crusading*, 112; Marien, "The Black Death," 57, 70.

the battle and its protagonists, taking into consideration the contextual factors that may have influenced the sources' attitudes. In assessing the phrases used to describe the disease, attention is paid to their emotional meaning to determine the potential impact they had on recipients. When examining perceptions of the plague in 1456, pre-existing conceptions about the plague are considered, notably the notion of divine punishment. This is a significant aspect in the comparison of the plague-related narrative and parallel narratives of heroism, sanctity, and martyrdom, all of which were often attributed to divine intervention. The study aims to provide an overview of how the analysed sources addressed the plague, addressing the duality in the concepts of divine punishment and victory.

The sources

Contemporary accounts of the 1456 plague draw on a range of documentary and narrative sources. The scope of the current research is confined to writings originating in or related to Central and Eastern Europe. Documentary sources include immediate post-battle letters of eyewitnesses, such as John Hunyadi and John of Capistrano, and correspondences of political, intellectual, and religious figures who reflected on the battle and its aftermath. The chronological tracking of most documentary sources extends until the close of 1456 and the commencement of 1457, when the Battle of Belgrade ceases to be the focus of correspondence. The exception is the crusading bull *Ezechielis prophete*, issued by Pope Pius II (1458–1464) on 22 October 1463, which utilizes the Belgrade battle in crusade propaganda seven years after the event.[7]

In addition to its primary aim of shedding light on the early perceptions of the battle, this group of sources is significant due to the noticeable enthusiasm for crusade in the narrative. Most correspondents were connected in some way to the concept of the crusade, whether through Pope Calixtus III (1455–1458) as the proponent of the idea, key political figures, such as Milanese Duke Francesco Sforza, Venetian Doge Francesco Foscari (1423–1457), Afonso V of Portugal (1438–1477), etc., or church prelates like Juan Carvajal, Jean Jouffroy, and Ludovico Trevisan, etc.[8]

The central theme of these letters was the triumph at Belgrade, with Hunyadi taking the spotlight as the central figure. The concept of triumph was linked to Hunyadi using terms such as *fortissimo athleta*, *Dei athleta invictissimo*, *glorioso milite dei Athleta*, etc.[9] These terms, particularly those in the superlative form,

7 Pius II, "Bull: Ezechielis Prophete," 141–55.

8 An overview of most of the crusading papal letters is given in Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 94–119.

9 Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 95, 96, 98, no. 82 (67), no. 83 (107), no. 87 (118).

included connotations of the hero's invincibility. Furthermore, the terms *athleta Christi* or *Dei athleta* could evoke associations with suffering and martyrdom, given their use in the Church hymnography and homilies.[10] Consequently, Hunyadi could be perceived as an almost saintly character by the audience.

Narrative sources encompass chronicles, memoirs, historiographical, historical-geographical works, and hagiographic writings. Given that the active crusade-propagandistic use of the Battle of Belgrade persisted until the end of the pontificate of Pius II in 1464, the analysis of the narrative sources extends approximately to that time. The works of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II) are significant due to the author's contextualization of the events of 1456 within the history of Bohemia and Europe, as well as Pius' pronounced crusading zeal.[11] Although he was not a direct participant in the events, his *omniscient* point of view provides insight into the personal attitudes of the protagonists, thus potentially increasing the acceptance of the latter among the audience.[12]

The contemporary chronicles under consideration generally do not engage in crusade-related or sainthood propaganda.[13] Hagiographical works written to support the early canonization process of John of Capistrano are a different case. They include biographies of Capistrano written by Jerome of Udine (17 June 1457), Nicholas of Fara (1461/62), and Christopher of Varese (1462/63),[14] as well as two reports written by John of Tagliacozzo at the behest of James of the Marches: on the Battle of Belgrade (22 July 1460)[15] and on Capistrano's death (10 February 1461).[16] Given the explicit purpose of these writings, the prevalence of hagiographic and propagandistic narratives is expected. In this regard, their response to the simultaneous interaction between the plague, sanctity, and victory concepts is of particular

10 Hill and Hill, *Peter Tudebode,* 17, n. 19. For some of the hymnographic examples relating to Saints Stephen, Vincent, Lawrence, Martin, Sebastian, and others, see: Dreves and Blume, eds., *Analecta Hymnica*, vol. VII, 172, 189; vol. XVI, 252–3; vol. XXVIII, 157–58, 187–88, 217; vol. XXXIX, 200, 281, 304.

11 Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, 145–49; Piccolomini, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: De Europa*, 52–54; Pius PP. II, *The Commentaries*, 799–800; Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade."

12 Eekhof et al., "Engagement with Narrative Characters," 414.

13 Stojanović, ed., *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi*, 239–40, no. 705–8; Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, 434–35; Šimek, ed., *Staré letopisy české*, 118–19; Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 253–57, 268–71.

14 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 439–541; Andrić, "Lives of St John Capistran," 214–15.

15 The text has been published multiple times, with the most frequently referenced version being published in Wadding, ed., *Annales*, vol. XII, 750–96, reprinted in Van Hecke et al., eds., *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 366–81; Andrić, "Lives of St John Capistran," 216, n. 9; Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 173, n. 51.

16 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 390–92; Andrić, "Lives of St John Capistran," 216.

significance. Hagiographic narratives, which incorporate highly emotional elements depicting the zeal and suffering of Capistrano, had the potential to increase readers' identification with the main character.[17]

A somewhat limiting factor in the research is that sources primarily reflect the perspectives of the political, intellectual, and religious circles of the authors rather than the views of the broader population. Another limitation is the former's relatively modest interest in the fate of the crusader army, with a focus instead on the figures of John Hunyadi and John of Capistrano. However, as these protagonists almost became identified with the battle, the examination of attitudes to their infection and death largely reflects the sources' general perspectives about the battle and the plague.

Naming the plague of 1456: the impact of words

In addition to the basic function of providing information, words have the function of influencing the audience. The emotional meanings of words play a significant role in this, as is particularly noticeable in political or propaganda contexts.[18] The medieval emotional meaning associated with the word 'plague' is inseparable from contemporary concepts of the plague. When a concept is recalled in the human mind, sensory-motor areas are reactivated that process perceptual symbols. Therefore, when a person hears or sees a word, eye movements and perceptual representations are triggered in the same manner as if the concrete, physical event triggered them.[19] In the context of this research, this implies that mentioning, reading, or using a word or sentence that is more explicitly associated with the plague would be more likely to emotionally bind recipients and create a catastrophic image compared to the use of more general terms.

Terms that the analysed sources use to describe the illness that appeared after the Battle of Belgrade mainly include *pestis*, *pestilentia*, *morbus*, *molestia*, *aegrotus*, *valetudo*, and *aegritudo*. These terms have different semantic meanings. *Pestis* primarily refers to a deadly, contagious disease or plague, frequently associated with scourge, morbidity, and stench. It has connotations of a fatal, rapidly spreading illness. The term *pestilentia* is closely related to *pestis*, often emphasizing the condition of being afflicted by a plague. Both terms are directly synonymous with plague or epidemic.[20]

17 Kim et al., "The Presence of the Protagonist," 895.

18 Palmer, *Semantics*, 35–6, 61.

19 Goldstone, Feng, and Rogosky, "Connecting Concepts," 283–84.

20 Doederlein, *Lateinische Synonyme*, vol. II, 60–6; *Logeion*, s.v. *pestis*, *pestilentia*, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/pestis, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/pestilentia (Accessed: 11 April 2024); Slack, "Plague: What's in a Name?"

Unlike the aforementioned terms, *morbus* generally refers to any illness or disorder. It lacks direct synonymy with the plague and does not have specific connotations of widespread mortality or catastrophe. Consequently, it is less likely to involve the connotation of God's punishment. Similarly, the rest of the terms, all connected to illness or the state of health, are not connotated with the severity of the plague and lack direct synonymy with it.[21] For contemporary conceptualization, especially among ecclesial audiences, the biblical use of the term *pestis* for plague or catastrophic illness is significant. This usage appears in narratives such as the Ten Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 9:3, 15) and Jesus' description of pre-apocalyptic events (Luke 21:11), among other instances. In addition to particular terms, mention of the causes of infection widely accepted as initiators of the plague could also evoke connotations with the plague, as will be indicated in this research through individual examples from the narrative sources.

The selection of specific terms reflects the contemporary perception of the plague in 1456, as "each lexical choice marks the conceptual perspective that the speaker has chosen to take on that referent for that occasion."[22] While the choice of terms does indeed reflect the authors' attitudes and can influence readers' perceptions, the sources may not always provide sufficient data to determine why writers opt for certain terms or whether their selection was always conscious. In other words, the omission or alteration of terms related to the plague does not necessarily imply the intentional concealment or deception of readers. A thorough comprehension of attitudes requires simultaneous insight into word semantics and the narratives' political-religious setting.

Divine intervention and dual narratives: conceptualizing reflections on the Belgrade victory and plague of 1456

Shortly after the Battle of Belgrade, news of the Christian victory was strategically spread to stimulate crusading enthusiasm and advocate for the continuation of the war. Hunyadi highlighted the opportune nature of the moment for further military action in his letters.[23] Encouraged by the triumph, Pope Callixtus III directed the opening of a new front on the Aegean Sea.[24] In a letter to Francesco Sforza

21 Doederlein, *Lateinische Synonyme*, vol. II, 62; *Logeion*, s.v. *aegritudo*, *molestia*, *morbus*, *valetudo*, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/aegritudo, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/molestia, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/morbus, https://logeion.uchicago.edu/valetudo (Accessed: 11 April 2024).

22 Clark, "Languages and Representations," 21.

23 Bernoulli, ed., *Basler Chroniken*, vol. IV, 393, 395; Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds, *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 208, no. CCLXXVII; Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 187.

24 Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 187; Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, 145; Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 187.

(23 August 1456), the Pope insisted that "now is precisely the time to pursue the victory promised to us from heaven."[25] This sentiment was a constant element of papal letters from late August to the end of September. The focus was consistently on the potential liberation of "Constantinople, [the] Holy Land, Europe, and Asia" through the continuation of the war following the triumph in Belgrade.[26]

The Belgrade victory was widely perceived as a divine gift, thereby aligning with a crusade-theological model in which the triumph was interpreted as a manifestation of divine blessing and approval.[27] Cardinal Juan Carvajal, a papal legate in Hungary, characterized the triumph as "the work of the hand of God."[28] This belief was earlier echoed in Capistrano's report to the Pope (22 July 1456)[29] and can be traced in the Pope's correspondence with the Milanese Duke and French King Charles VII (1422–1461).[30] A letter from the city of Nuremberg to Weißenburg (13 August 1456), reflecting on the news of the battle, highlighted divine assistance to the Christian army.[31] Similar sentiments were echoed in the Venetian Senate's letters addressed to Cardinal Carvajal and John Hunyadi (12 August) and in the instructions for the Venetian secretary in Hungary.[32] The celebration of the victory found its liturgical expression through a special service prescribed by Pope Callixtus.[33] Public ceremonies commemorating the victory generally served to reinforce crusader ideology, thereby amplifying the connotation of divine triumph associated with the Battle of Belgrade.[34]

As reports of the victory spread across Europe, the plague took hold among the crusaders in Belgrade and Zemun. By the end of the summer of 1456, the crusader army had been disbanded, with a significant portion of its members who came from Central and Eastern Europe.[35] While sources mention Hungarians, Germans,

25 Chmel, ed., "Briefe und Aktenstücke," 35; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 124.

26 Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 91–95, no. 70 (65), no. 71 (37), no. 74 (45), no. 75 (46), no. 78 (59), no. 81 (66); Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 187–88, n. 109.

27 Housley, *The Later Crusades*, 104; Hamilton, "'God Wills It'," 96.

28 Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds., *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 211, no. CCLXXIX; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 113.

29 Wadding, ed., *Annales*, vol. XII, 429–30; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 87–8.

30 Chmel, ed., "Briefe und Aktenstüke," 123; Raynaldi and Baronius, eds, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. XXIX, 84.

31 Kern, "Zur Geschichte des Kampfes um Belgrad," 372–74; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 121–22.

32 Pop, "The Battle of Belgrade," 443–44.

33 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 142–45.

34 Gaposchkin, "Christian Crusading, Ritual, and Liturgy"; Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons*, 226–55.

35 Kalić, *Beograd*, 162–63.

Austrians, Czechs, Poles, Bosnians, and 'Sclavi'[36] among the peoples constituting the army, detailed information about their specific regions or towns of origin is lacking.[37] Fragmented reports on the plague's spread during 1456 and 1457 suggest that the wave affected Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia, the Eastern Adriatic, Poland, and parts of Central Europe. It further extended to the Apennine and Iberian peninsulas, reaching as far as France in the west and Constantinople in the east.[38] By comparing the directions of the plague's spread with data on the crusader army's composition, it may be assumed that the disbandment of the army in the summer of 1456 at least partially contributed to the subsequent transmission of the plague in East Central Europe.

The contemporary perception of the 1456 plague was shaped by a pre-established plague discourse developed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The theological dimension of this discourse reflected the belief that the occurrence of the plague was a manifestation of God's punishment. Divine retribution could be both individual and universal.[39] The understanding of the plague encompassed diverse triggers, including astrological or uncommon natural phenomena. It could also be attributed to more physical factors, such as bad air, but even then, the underlying cause was typically metaphysical, i.e., God's vengeance for human sins.[40] The crusade theology added another layer of complexity to the perception of the plague following the Belgrade victory. It linked participation in the crusade to indulgences and the forgiveness of sins and associated sinfulness with crusader defeat and failure.[41] This complex interplay of theological concepts marked the challenging task faced by authors describing the aftermath of the Battle of Belgrade. They found themselves struggling with parallel and contrasting divine aspects of victory and plague in their narratives.

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36 Norman Housley associates the term either with Dalmatians or with "Slavonians (i.e., northern Croatians)." Housley, *The Later Crusades,* 103; Housley, *Crusading*, 113. The term was used to describe the other Slavic groups, as well. Uličný, "Latinské etnonymá Slovákov"; Mesiarkin, "The Name of the Slavs."

37 Iorga, ed., *Notes et extraits*, vol. IV, 131, no. LXVI; Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds, *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 471, no. XII (DXXXIII); Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 254; Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 373.

38 Hrabak, "Kuga," 21; Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste*, vol. I, 380, 390, 396, 410, 422, 441; Varlık, *Plague and Empire*, 157; Smoljanović, Ristić, and Hayward, "Historic Exposure to Plague."

39 Carmichael, "Universal and Particular," 21, 25–34; Stearns, "New Directions," 1366–67; Horrox, *The Black Death*, 126–43.

40 Hays, *The Burdens of Disease*, 43; Horrox, *The Black Death*, 193–94.

41 Portnykh, "God Wills It!," 480–86.

The (non)distribution of news about the plague in documentary sources on the battle

News of the battle, as shown, initially circulated through letters. The earliest reports by John of Capistrano (22 and 23 July)[42] and John Hunyadi (23 and 24 July)[43] stress the significant destruction of the Ottoman army and make no mention of the plague outbreak. This omission is expected since the letters were sent a day or two after the victory, allowing insufficient time for the plague to spread.[44] Friar John of Tagliacozzo, in a letter sent from the battlefield to an unnamed Franciscan from Abruzzo (28 July 1456), also failed to mention the disease.[45]

The initial reference to the plague appears in a letter from Capistrano to Pope Callixtus III (17 August 1456).[46] While reporting on the current situation at the Christian-Ottoman frontier, the friar mentions the death of John Hunyadi, stating that he "lost his life to pestilence [*ex peste*]."[47] The mention of Hunyadi's death cause is unambiguous but remarkably brief. Although the letter provides a detailed account of the conditions of both the Crusader and Ottoman armies, it does not note the occurrence of the plague among the soldiers. The note on Hunyadi's death from the plague is inserted among the enthusiastic reports of crusader potential and the information that army leadership was assumed by Count Nicholas of Ilok.[48] The primary objective of the letter was to provide a report on the current situation at the front and, more importantly, to emphasize the need to continue the war, which was expected "not only to recover Greece and Europe, but […] the Holy Land."[49] Therefore, the inclusion of the occurrence of the plague among the soldiers would potentially have had a negative impact on the desired image of a strong army ready to continue the campaign. It is noteworthy that Hunyadi, referenced in a single sentence, is not the dominant figure in the letter. That position is held by Count Nicholas, to whom an entire section of the letter pertaining to army leadership is dedicated.

In a letter to Jean Jouffroy, the Archbishop of Arras (24 August 1456), the Pope celebrated the victory at 'the key to the Kingdom of Hungary' and highlighted the

42 Wadding, ed., *Annales*, vol. XII, 429–30; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 87–91.

43 Dobner, ed., *Monumenta historica Boemiae*, vol. II, 417–8; Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds, *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 208–9, no. CCLXXVII; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 91–3.

44 The typical incubation period for the plague is two to six days or longer. Dennis and Mead, "Plague," 476.

45 Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds, *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 380–88, no. V (DXVIII).

46 Wadding, ed., *Annales,* vol. XII, 430–2; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 104–7.

47 Wadding, ed., *Annales,* vol. XII, 431; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 107.

48 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 107; Wadding, ed., *Annales,* vol. XII, 431–32.

49 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 106.

role of Hunyadi without mentioning his death.[50] Hunyadi's death is also absent from Calixtus' crusade-propaganda letters from September 1456, which adhere to the heroic narrative patterns.[51] A brief note about Hunyadi's death, without specifying the cause, was provided by the Pope in a letter to the orator in France (October 1456). Hunyadi retains his previous image of invincibility through the use of the term *gloriosus*.[52] In a letter to Cardinal Alan of Avignon (8 October 1456), the Pope more elaborately addressed Hunyadi's death. He stated his intention to honor Hunyadi with "appropriate titles and a diadem," but that God had "adorned […] with an immortal heavenly diadem" the voivode "who can be reckoned as fortunate among the martyrs."[53] The letter does not mention the occurrence of the plague in the army, which may be partly explained by the Pope's lack of information. However, Callixtus also omits to mention the plague as the cause of Hunyadi's death, speaking of his passing in terms closely related to saintly glorification. The concept of sanctity, to some extent already present in the papal letters written during Hunyadi's lifetime, retained primacy, while the opposing concept of the plague remained unmentioned, whether intentionally or not.

An anonymous letter to Henry of Eckenfelt, a Carthusian from Gaming (November or December 1456), characterizes the deaths of Hunyadi and Capistrano as two of the four "heavenly plagues [*coeli plagas*]" that befell humanity that year.[54] While portraying the Belgrade victory as a divine blessing, the author criticizes Christians' lack of repentance after the battle, which is why God sent the 'plagues.'[55]

The crusade-propagandistic use of the victory at Belgrade demonstrated its persistence, as evidenced by its mention in the papal bull *Ezechielis prophete* of Pius II.[56] The Bull declared an anti-Ottoman crusade in relation to the context of the earlier Venetian declaration of war against the Turks (28 July 1463), followed by Hungarian (12 September) and Burgundian (19 October) participation.[57] The mention of the battle is brief, emphasizing the Hungarians as almost the sole defenders of Christendom, the Christian triumph and the Ottoman's catastrophic defeat. As anticipated, there is no mention of the plague or any other disease.

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50 Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, vol. II, 280–1, no. CCCCXLIII.

51 Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 95–6, no. 82 (67), no. 83 (107).

52 Raynaldi and Baronius, eds, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. XXIX, 89; Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 97, no. 85 (117).

53 Raynaldi and Baronius, eds, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. XXIX, 89; Calixtus PP. III, *Il "Liber Brevium,"* 98, no. 87 (118).

54 Pez, *Thesaurus anecdotorum*, vol. II, pt. III, 343; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 138.

55 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 139–40.

56 Pius II, "Bull: Ezechielis Prophete," 142.

57 Setton, *The Papacy*, vol. II, 241–50.

Narrative sources on the battle, plague, and the death of protagonists

Most of the narrative sources engage with the Battle of Belgrade at a certain temporal distance and within different post-battle settings, providing the opportunity for narratives to be carefully shaped. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini described the Belgrade victory in the works *Historia Bohemica*, *De Europa*, and *Comentarii*. In *Historia Bohemica*, Piccolomini recounts the crusader struggles, omitting any mention of the plague among the troops.[58] While he praises Hunyadi and Capistrano as leaders in the battle, he attributes post-victory vanity to both, particularly to Capistrano. This critique, formed in the context of Aeneas Sylvius' opposition to the friar's canonization, stems, in Piccolomini's own words, from the access to Capistrano's and Hunyadi's letters.[59] The accusation was seemingly primarily addressed to Capistrano, as Hunyadi remained portrayed as an ideal crusader.[60] Capistrano's cause of death is stated as ordinary 'old age,' and Hunyadi's as 'illness *(morbus)*,' with no specific reference to the plague or any sort of infection in either case.[61]

Piccolomini glorifies Hunyadi in the work through the traditional narrative of a warrior who had "saved the land of Hungary […] for Christ."[62] While Piccolomini, on other occasions, both literally and figuratively, refers to the plague as *pestis*,[63] in Hunyadi's case, he employs a different term. Moreover, he transforms a typical plague image in order to highlight the hero's Christian feat. Specifically, when describing the 'stench of human decay' around Hunyadi's dying body, Piccolomini portrays it as a moment when Hunyadi 'overcame himself in illness,' confessing and receiving communion.[64]

Given his access to Capistrano's correspondence, Piccolomini could have learned the actual cause of Hunyadi's death. However, by transforming the term *pestis* into a more sophisticated *morbus*, he allowed Hunyadi's zeal to manifest without the risk of associating him with an unworthy death.[65] With no mention of the plague or infection among the crusader army, there were few links through which readers could identify Hunyadi's 'illness' as the plague. A similar though

58 Piccolomini, "Historia Bohemica," 137–38; Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, 145–46.

59 Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, 146–47; Andrić, *Čudesa,* 79–80.

60 Muresan, "John Hunyadi," 35–42.

61 Piccolomini, "Historia Bohemica," 138.

62 Piccolomini, "Historia Bohemica," 139; Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, 148.

63 Piccolomini, "Historia Bohemica," 102–3, 110, 141–42.

64 Piccolomini, "Historia Bohemica," 139; Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, 149.

65 For a contemporary perception of death by plague as 'unworthy [*indigne*]' in the context of King Ladislaus V's death, widely attributed to the plague, see: Gelcich and Thallóczy, eds, *Raguza és Magyarország*, 604, no. 356. On Ladislaus' death, see: Papajík, "V. László magyar és cseh király halálának oka."

slightly shorter account of the battle is presented in *De Europa*, where Hunyadi's cause of death was also attributed to 'illness.'[66] In *Comentarii*, Piccolomini provides the most concise account, noting that both Hunyadi and Capistrano died from an illness.[67]

Hagiographic sources related to Capistrano did not solely seek to create and propagate his cult; rather, they played a nearly polemical role. This was particularly significant given that the idea of Capistrano's early canonization faced opposition, with influential prelates such as Cardinals Piccolomini and Carvajal among the opponents.[68] Therefore, it is possible to assume that the biographers carefully considered the terms by which they represented their teacher.

Alongside the general perceptions of the plague, the views of Capistrano himself regarding the theological nature of this disease are important due to their potential influence on both the authors and readers, many of whom were the Observant Franciscans. Specifically, in his teachings, Capistrano emphasized, through biblical, historical, and patristic arguments, the causality between the plague and various sins, including blasphemy.[69] Within this theological framework, his disciples likely found less room to associate the death of their revered teacher and candidate for sainthood with the plague.

In a biography written by Jerome of Udine, the description of the Battle of Belgrade is evidently employed to underline the friar's sanctity. Jerome's narrative portrays Capistrano as the leader of the crusaders (with Hunyadi subordinate to him), who courageously ventures onto the battlefield to inspire the soldiers yet remains unharmed.[70] According to Jerome, Capistrano desired martyrdom, and although he did not directly experience it, he achieved a 'bloodless martyrdom.'[71] When describing Capistrano's death, Jerome attributes it to "severe illness [*acerba valetudine*] due to excessive labours."[72] Hence, Capistrano is reported to have contracted the illness not from an infection but rather from zeal-related exhaustion. In further text, Jerome listed Capistrano's sufferings from labour, fevers, diarrhoea, etc. The author was with Capistrano for most of the battle and during his death, and he possessed a medical education that may have enabled him to recognize the

66 Pius PP. II, *Enee Silvii Piccolominei postea Pii PP. II De Europa*, 82–85; Piccolomini, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini: De Europa*, 52–54.

67 Pius PP. II, *The Commentaries*, 799–800; Pius PP. II, *Commentarii*, 601.

68 Andrić, *Čudesa,* 79–80, 139–74.

69 Gecser, "Giovanni of Capestrano on the Plague," 42–44.

70 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 487–88.

71 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 488. The topos of 'bloodless martyrdom' is common in Capistrano's hagiography. Andrić, *Čudesa,* 63, n. 37.

72 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 488.

symptoms of the plague.[73] However, he chose to omit any mention of the plague both in the report on the battle and the friar's death. By transforming the plague into a general 'illness' and placing it in causal relation to Capistrano's zeal, the author placed his character's 'bloodless martyrdom' at the centre of the narrative.

Nicholas of Fara and Christopher of Varese did not personally witness the Battle of Belgrade or Capistrano's last days. Nicholas relied on Jerome of Udine's and John of Tagliacozzo's accounts, and Christopher of Varese expanded Nicholas' report.[74] Consequently, their biographies adopted the topos of 'bloodless martyrdom' and the omission of the plague. Nicholas of Fara omitted to mention any illness while writing about the friar's death, stressing that during the Belgrade battle, Capistrano undertook "so many labours that his frail body […] was exhausted."[75]

Following the previous patterns, Christopher of Varese highlighted that "due to immense labours, cares, vigils, and hardships" during the battle, Capistrano "began to fall seriously ill." He reposed after several days of "suffering from a severe diarrhoea [*valida fluxus aegritudine*] (by which also Saint Bernardino died)."[76] The note on Bernardino of Siena is significant for identifying Christopher's *fluxus aegritudine* with diarrhoea, as well as drawing a saintly parallel between Capistrano and his teacher.[77] Besides the general connections between these two Franciscans, there is a noteworthy 'recycling' of Bernardino's miracles in the writings for the purposes of Capistrano's canonization.[78] In the case of Christopher of Varese's biography, the 'recycling' extends to the causes of death of both figures. Moreover, Bernardino was canonized relatively early, merely six years after his passing, as it was intended to be done with Capistrano.[79] It is conceivable that these parallels, including those concerning the cause of death, were intended to underscore the legitimacy of Capistrano's canonization. Notably, none of the three mentioned biographers documented the

73 Andrić, "Lives of St John Capistran," 214. Many of the symptoms listed by Jerome align with those which Galen underlines as plague indicators. Littman and Littman, "Galen and the Antonine Plague," 246–48. Galen's work was quite influential in medieval and Renaissance medicine, and Jerome probably had insight into some of his writings. Further on this issue, see: Michael McVaugh, "Galen in the Medieval Universities"; Fortuna, "Editions and Translations of Galen."

74 Andrić, "Lives of St John Capistran," 215.

75 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 472.

76 Van Hecke et al., eds., *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 533.

77 On St Bernardino's death, see Henschenius and Papebrochius, *Acta Sanctorum Maii*, vol. V, 100, 113. For further insight into the medieval term *fluxus* or *fluxus aegritudine*, denoting diarrhoea, sometimes with fatal outcomes, see: Sela, ed., *Abraham Ibn Ezra*, 516; Bobio, *Incipit tractatus*, 93v.

78 Andrić, *Čudesa*, 176–78.

79 Manselli, "Bernardino."

plague among the crusaders, suggesting a different focus in their narratives. This omission also deprived the audience of a link between the friar's illness and the plague infection contracted at Belgrade.

While John of Tagliacozzo was an eyewitness to the battle, his primary objective of highlighting Capistrano's sainthood shaped the content of his account known as *Relatio de victoria Belgradensi*. Tagliacozzo writes that Hunyadi "fell ill" and "passed from this world," refraining from specifying the illness.[80] Following the report of Hunyadi's death, Tagliacozzo writes that "stench had begun to rise from the bodies of the Turks" and mentions the infection of the crusaders in Belgrade and Semlin (Zemun).[81] Although this infection was not directly referred to as *pestis*, the connection between the disease and the foul air from the corpses was probably associated with the plague among the contemporaries.[82] Tagliacozzo specifically linked the cause of the stench, i.e., the plague, to the "bodies of the Turks." This approach echoed Pope Callixtus III's perspective during the Crusade of 1456. Attributing the plague to undesirable 'others,' both Tagliacozzo and Callixtus demonstrate continuity with prior medieval plague discourse.[83] According to Tagliacozzo, John of Capistrano and Cardinal Carvajal tried to find a safe place to isolate themselves from the infection.[84]

Tagliacozzo's second writing, on Capistrano's death, more strongly points out the friar's leadership in the army and his commitment to the crusade.[85] All his exertions are portrayed as a contribution to a 'bloodless martyrdom'. Following the victorious campaign, Capistrano began to fall ill "due to the force of fevers and various pains afflicting his tired body."[86] At the same time, in contrast to the *Relatio*, Tagliacozzo explicitly states that Cardinal Carvajal and Hunyadi contracted the plague *(pestis)*.[87]

In line with the *Relatio*, Tagliacozzo describes a widespread infection emerging "from the corpses of the dead."[88] This 'trouble *(molestia)*,' seemingly the plague,

80 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 213.

81 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 213–14.

82 Hays, *The Burdens of Disease*, 43; Horrox, *The Black Death*, 17, 40–41, 49, 56, 100–1; Aggarwal, "Medieval Scourge," 24. Tagliacozzo's description of the infection is accepted in historiography as a reference to the plague. Kalić, *Beograd*, 170; Hrabak, "Kuga," 21.

83 Calixtus attributed the 'new plagues' to the Ottoman attacks in his bull *Cum his superioribus annis* (29 June 1456). Calixtus PP. III, *Bulla Turcorum*, 1r; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 89. On associating the Jews and the Ottomans with the spreading plague, see: Cohn, "The Black Death and the Burning of Jews;" Horrox, *The Black Death*, 110; Pilat and Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat*, 210.

84 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 214.

85 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 390–91.

86 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 391.

87 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 391.

88 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 391.

was not presented as the one that affected Capistrano because the friar, supposedly at Carvajal's request, was sent to Zemun to isolate himself from an environment where "almost everyone was being sickened." The plague further spread to the crusader camp in Zemun, whose hygiene conditions are described as particularly poor, and the cardinal sent Capistrano to Calancha (Slankamen).[89] On both occasions, Tagliacozzo attributes Capistrano's escape from the plague to Carvajal's initiative, though in *Relatio* both of them seek refuge together. Judging by documentary sources, Carvajal was not in Belgrade by 29 July.[90] The initiative to move could have come from Capistrano himself. Indeed, Capistrano, in his teachings, approved of the clergy's fleeing from the plague when done for the greater good of the Church.[91] Nevertheless, such a motive, though theologically justified, would be in contrast with the image of Capistrano as a selfless imitator of St Francis who unquestionably helps the sick.[92] This was avoided by highlighting Carvajal's role in Capistrano's relocation.

John of Capistrano did not stay long in Slankamen, passing away in the Franciscan monastery in Ilok.[93] After his death, his body was bathed, placed in the church, and exposed for the faithful to pay their respects.[94] The Franciscans abandoned the planned public procession during the funeral, supposedly out of fear that the crowd might seize the deceased.[95] The treatment of Capistrano's body indicates that the circle of Franciscans around him did not attribute his demise to the plague or at least sought to downplay the actual cause of death.[96]

News about the battle from contemporary chronicles is mostly brief and with less specific ideological bias. The last part of the Hungarian *Buda Chronicle* of András Hess, published in 1473 but written earlier, briefly mentions the events without any reference to the plague.[97] The passages from the last section of the chronicle, especially until 1458, are very concise and focused on political events.[98] Hence, the author evidently chose to omit the plague from such a narrative, likely considering it less relevant within the prevailing context.

89 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 392.

90 On 29 July 1456, Carvajal sent a letter from Ilok to Francesco Sforza. Thallóczy and Áldásy, eds, *Magyarország és Szerbia*, 210–1, no. CCLXXIX.

91 Gecser, "Giovanni of Capestrano on the Plague," 39–40.

92 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 391–92, 401.

93 Andrić, *Čudesa*, 57–64.

94 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 401; Andrić, *Čudesa*, 65–6.

95 Van Hecke et al., eds, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. X, 401.

96 Stanko Andrić notes that the treatment of Capistrano's remains was used in the service of cult creation from the very moment of his death. Andrić, *Čudesa*, 66.

97 Podhradczky, ed., *Chronicon Budense*, 351.

98 Spychała, "Chronicon Budense," 314.

The Old Serbian chronicles from the late medieval period, with variations that are not significantly relevant to the subject of this research, document that "Iankul [Hunyadi] […] with the crusaders" triumphed over Sultan Mehmed "under Belgrade."[99] Following this account is a note on Hunyadi's death, the sighting of the "tailed star" (Halley's Comet), and the declaration: "and the plague was all over the land," or, in an alternate version, "there was a death scourge ['smr'tonosie'] in Novo Brdo."[100] Serbian chroniclers, directly confronted with the wave of the plague, apparently perceived it as an inherent component of the turbulent events of 1456.

Thomas Ebendorfer's *Chronica Austriae*, written in Lower Austria between 1450/51 and 1464, presents a report on the battle that generally adheres to the idea of victory as a divine gift.[101] However, the narrative of Hunyadi's heroism is not predominant, and his significance derives from commanding the crusader troops. The army itself is portrayed as the primary contributor to the victory.[102] Although the text does not explicitly mention the plague, it speaks of "an infection of the air because of the stench of human corpses."[103] Ebendorfer attributes this infection, which, as demonstrated in Tagliacozzo's case, could have been perceived by contemporaries as the plague, as the cause of the deaths of John Hunyadi and "the most reverend father and lord of Kalocsa."[104]

Brief reports from the Old Czech chronicles focus on the course of the battle and note Hunyadi's death without any reference to the plague.[105] Individuals from Bohemia were present in the crusader army at Belgrade.[106] King Ladislaus V's death in 1457 was attributed to the plague in the chronicles, and fear of its spread was evident.[107] However, the extent and very existence of the 1456/57 plague in Bohemia still remain unknown, providing no basis for further analysis.

The most important contemporary source for the analysis of the perception of the plague in 1456 in Poland is Jan Długosz's *Annals or Chronicles of the Famous*

99 Different versions of the texts, with notes on the variations, are given in Stojanović, ed., *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi*, 239, no. 705–8.

100 Stojanović, ed., *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi*, 239–40, no. 706–8. Novo Brdo was mentioned in the *Sečenički* chronicle, which is focused on the history of this town. Jakšić, "O imenima," 229. Haley's comet was also perceived as a herald of King Alfonso V's death (1416–1458). Martínez and Marco, "Fifteenth Century Comets," 57.

101 Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, 434–35.

102 Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, 434–35.

103 Mixson, *The Crusade*, 221.

104 Ebendorfer, *Chronica Austriae*, 435; Mixson, *The Crusade*, 221.

105 Šimek, ed., *Staré letopisy* české, 118–19.

106 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 254.

107 Papajík, "V. László magyar és cseh király halálának oka," 124.

Kingdom of Poland.[108] Although the plague is not mentioned in the thorough account of the Battle of Belgrade, Długosz registered it in the description of the comet's appearing across Poland, Prussia, Lithuania, and Italy, after which the Black Death hit these areas. Długosz notes, "during the same period, death took away Jan Hunyadi."[109] Hunyadi's death is situated among the ominous events predicted by the comet, and its cause is later explicitly attributed to the plague *(pestilentico morbo)*.[110] In addition to the previous report, Długosz details the outbreak of the plague in 1456 in "Buda and nearly all Hungarian lands" and in the "Kingdom of Poland, in the areas around Krosno, Żmigród, Strzyżów, and Rymanów."[111] Capistrano's death was not attributed to the plague but rather to a list of diseases which were followed by the friar's "trouble about matters of faith."[112]

In the context of oral tradition, it is noteworthy to mention the accounts of Byzantine Greek historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles. In *The Histories*, written around 1464, he offered a detailed account of the battle.[113] Chalkokondyles' primary historical value is in transiting Ottoman and non-Ottoman oral history.[114] He noted that the Hungarians refrained from pursuing the Ottomans "due to the plague that had broken out in the Hungarian camp […] so that they did not recover from it for a long time."[115] Chalkokondyles initially reports Hunyadi's death from battle wounds and later presents an alternative version: "it is also said that he was carried off by the plague and died that way."[116] The term Chalkokondyles used to describe Hunyadi's death cause is *loimos*, meaning literally 'the plague.'[117] Whether Chalkokondyles' work targeted a Byzantine audience within the Ottoman Empire or, more likely, one in emigration, it did not involve a particular need to emphasize the crusaders' heroism and strength.[118] The phrase 'it is […] said' suggests reliance on oral tradition, affirming that information about the plague's occurrence may have existed in these accounts.

108 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 253–56.

109 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 256–57; Długosz, *Roczniki*, vol. XII, 289–90.

110 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 268.

111 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 271; Długosz, *Roczniki*, vol. XII, 304.

112 Długosz, *Annales*, vol. XII, 269.

113 Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, vol. II, 226–43.

114 Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, vol. I, xii–xiii.

115 Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, vol. II, 241–42.

116 Chalkokondyles, *The Histories*, vol. II, 242–43.

117 *Logeion*, s.v. "λοιμός," https://logeion.uchicago.edu/λοιμός (Accessed: 14 April 2024); Jančovič, "»Before Him Went Pestilence«," 535, 548–49.

118 Further on the problem of Laonikos' audience, see: Akışık-Karakullukçu, "A Question of Audience."

The Battle of Belgrade continued to captivate the attention of narrative sources until the close of the fifteenth century, although later reports emerged from different contextual and temporal settings.[119] Works by subsequent Hungarian writers like Johannes de Thurocz, Pietro Ransano, and Antonio Bonfini document the Battle of Belgrade, consistently portraying Hunyadi as a hero. Thurocz's narrative, later adopted and expanded upon by Ransano and Bonfini, makes no mention of the plague, attributing Hunyadi's demise to illness or exhaustion.[120] The *Turkish Chronicle* by Konstantin Mihailović, written in Poland toward the end of the fifteenth century, omits any references to the plague, focusing instead on Ottoman sorrow.[121] It appears that the memory of the plague following the Belgrade battle had largely faded in subsequent decades. The extent to which this was due to a decrease in narratives about the plague or, perhaps, the latter's relatively lower mortality rate and prevalence in Central and Eastern Europe remains an open question for further research.

Conclusion

The research has shown the significant influence of prevailing narratives on the perception of the plague outbreak after the Battle of Belgrade. Contemporary views were shaped by discourses associating the plague with sinfulness, divine retribution, and unworthy death, and victory with divine blessing. Correspondences promoting the continuation of the war emphasized the army's strength, constructing heroic narratives, especially concerning its leader John Hunyadi, while mentions of the plague were minimal. Narrative sources, situated in diverse political and ideological contexts, presented varied perspectives on the plague. Texts focused on crusade-related propaganda or the glorification of Hunyadi and Capistrano generally avoided allusions to the plague either by omitting to mention the disease or using general terms with no connotations of catastrophic, God-punishing illness. This avoidance is most apparent in the hagiographic writings created to support John of Capistrano's canonization. While John of Tagliacozzo documented the plague among those outside the scope of glorification, i.e., the crusading army, Cardinal Carvajal, and even Hunyadi, details of Capistrano's infection were consistently omitted, with illness attributed to zeal-induced exhaustion. Sources not tied to crusade

119 Boreczky, "Historiography and Propaganda"; Figliuolo, "Ranzano, Pietro"; Mihailović, *Janičarove uspomene*, 57–70.

120 Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, vol. I, 267–73; Ransanus, *Epithoma rerum Hungararum*, 146–52; Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, vol. III, 182–91.

121 Mihailović, *Memoirs of a Janissary*, 100–3, 106–9.

or canonization propaganda show a greater degree of explicit documentation of the plague's appearance.[122]

The majority of the analyzed sources, laden with historical biases, struggled to balance concepts involving God's blessing and punishment, consciously or unconsciously marginalizing the plague in narratives of victory, heroism, sanctity, martyrdom, or crusade propaganda. Consequently, mentions of the plague following the Belgrade victory were infrequent and fragmented. Descriptions of the plague's spread in Central and Eastern Europe in 1456 suggest a perception of the phenomenon largely detached from the aftermath of the battle.

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122 Four out of seven analysed 'non-propagandistic' sources written between August 1456 and ca. 1464 unambiguously mention the plague (57.1 percent) compared to three out of fifteen propagandistic sources (20 percent).

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 93–94
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.05

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

On the Legal and Governmental History of the Principality of Transylvania

Introductory remarks

Teréz Oborni
Special editor of the block

History writing has already processed the political history of the Principality of Transylvania, clarifying many of its details. Nevertheless, the way state administration functioned, including the judiciary, is still very much a mystery, although understanding the framework of everyday life is vital in investigating past ages. As the leading researcher of Transylvanian political and governmental history, Zsolt Trócsányi states in his still abiding 1980 monograph, the elaboration of the Principality of Transylvania's administrative history is not commensurate with that of the political-historical line. Source publications in recent decades have tried to change this situation. The *Erdélyi Történelmi Adatok* [Transylvanian Historical Data] series, published in Cluj-Napoca, and especially the publication of *Erdélyi Királyi Könyvek* [Transylvanian Royal Books] written at the Princely Chancellery, the regesta volumes of the minutes of Transylvanian *loca credibilia* ('places of authentication' at ecclesiastical colleges), and the county minutes (Torda County) have brought considerable advancement to the field. Also recently published is the Constitutional History of Transylvania, a summary volume.[1] However, there are extant sources that shed light on the peculiarities of the principality's statehood, government, and system of adjudication, but have not yet been used by historians. Since the central archives of the Principality suffered great destruction in the seventeenth century, with no more than their fragments surviving, only through meticulous research in family and municipal archives and manuscript collections in Hungary, Romania and Austria can surviving sources be found.

The members of the research group formed at the Institute of History of the HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities (Budapest) and the Research Institute of the Transylvanian Museum Association named after Zsigmond Jakó

1 Veress, Emőd, ed. *Constitutional History of Transylvania*. Studies in the History of Law and Justice 25. Heidelberg: Springer, 2023.

(Cluj-Napoca) have set out to discover, publish, and analyse new archival sources on the statehood, government and judiciary of early modern Transylvania.[2] The first volume of our source publications published is the minutes of mobile inquisition (1679–1701) in Sepsiszék.[3] In addition to helping us understand the characteristics of lower jurisdiction, the minutes of mobile inquisition contain full population lists of certain settlements. As they list the military population, as well as villeins and newcomers, they contribute to obtaining a more accurate picture of Székely Land's everyday life, population, and the ethnic composition of its villages.

The Principality of Transylvania existed as a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, but it also maintained relations with the Kingdom of Hungary, defined by secret or less secret treaties, in which the Transylvanian princes continued to consider their country a member of the Hungarian Holy Crown. Therefore, it is not surprising that the political system of the Principality, as well as princely jurisdiction evolved on the basis of the legal and governmental traditions and customary law of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary of the time, following the formation of the new Transylvanian state. In this period, the branches of government and judicial power, and legal customs were much more closely intertwined than they are today; therefore, the problems to be explored are closely interrelated.

In this issue of HSCE, we report on some of the new findings of the research team regarding the statehood and the judicial system of the Principality. Teréz Oborni presents her view on the Unions of Estates, the unions as a basic element of the constitution, which formed the cohesive force of the state of the Principality of Transylvania. Balázs Viktor Rácz reports on the specific legal status of Székely society, the particular 'Székely law' that developed in the Middle Ages, and on the changes in the jurisprudence of Székely Land in the early modern period. Zsolt Bogdándi's research focuses primarily on the Principality's judicial system. Based on dietary decisions and archival sources, he describes the organization of the top-level adjudication, the independent Transylvanian central court of law, the so-called Royal/Voivodal/Princely Table (*Tabula* or *Curia*). As part of her research concerning the Habsburg governmental bodies in Transylvania between 1602 and 1605, Petra Mátyás-Rausch analyses the governmental changes planned in 1604.

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2 Supported by the NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office) research project, number K 139281.

3 Rácz, Balázs Viktor, ed. *Sepsiszéki cirkálási jegyzőkönyvek 1679–1701* [The Minutes of Mobile Inquisition in Sepsiszék 1679–1701]. Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Diplomataria. Budapest: ELKH BTK, 2023.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 95–115
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.06

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

The Union of the Estates in the Principality of Transylvania

The Basis of the Constitution*

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Received 25 January 2024 | Accepted 8 May 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. The paper briefly describes the basis of the constitution of the Principality of Transylvania, the union of Estates. Among the antecedents, it reviews the late medieval alliances of the Estates that were made by the nations *(nationes)* living in Transylvania, highlighting that the three 'political nations' were not nations or ethnicities in the modern sense, but rather were separated by their privileges and legal status. Based on Latin and Hungarian sources, the author reveals the covenants as renewed in the Articles of Law and emphasized that the concept of Union was broadened in the seventeenth century so that it no longer served only to support the unity of the state but also guaranteed the maintenance of the privileges of the Estates. The most precise interpretation of the Union was set out in the *Approbatae Constitutiones*, a collection of laws compiled in 1653.

Keywords: Principality of Transylvania, union of the Estates, constitution, Approbatae Constitutiones

The constitution of the new state that emerged from the eastern parts of the Kingdom of Hungary by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Principality of Transylvania, was based on and preceded by medieval alliances of the Transylvanian Estates, called Unions. When, after the fall of Buda (1541), the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary was forced to organise a new state, the Transylvanian Estates—the so-called nations—soon realised that their common interests called them once again to unite. These interests were initially to defend the country against external aggression and later to preserve the country itself and maintain internal

* The study was prepared at the Institute of History (Budapest, Research Centre for the Humanities, HUN-REN), supported by the NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office) research project (Number: K 139281).

order. While in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the nations forming the Estates repeatedly strengthened the Unions, they also strove to preserve the privileges that ensured their distinct status. Each of the Transylvanian Estates had its own self-government and special rights, which were guaranteed by the privileges they had acquired in previous centuries and which they did not want to lose in the new state. Their latter aspiration was not one of unity but of disunity and separation. This duality, the preservation of the Estates' alliance that formed the basis of the state, and the contrasting disunity of the Estates, characterised the statehood of the Principality of Transylvania. In the seventeenth century, crises—arising from external dangers or internal political turmoil—threatened to disintegrate the state. In such cases, the Estates rose above their own different interests, and in most cases considered it necessary to strengthen the alliance, the Union, that ensured the existence of their common state, the Principality.[1] In this study, I would like to briefly review the characteristics and history of the Union of the Transylvanian Estates.

But before discussing the specificity of the Union, it is necessary to briefly mention the particular and complex structure of the Estates that developed in Transylvania during the Middle Ages. The social groups with political rights, i.e., the Estates, were made up of the nations *(nationes)* living in Transylvania that had been granted special rights and privileges by the Hungarian Kings.[2] The Estates thus formed were the Hungarian nobility *(natio Hungarica)*, the Székelys *(natio Siculica)* and the Saxons *(natio Saxonica)*. The Estate of nobility or 'Hungarian' nobility, in fact, included all persons of any ethnic origin living on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary having noble privileges. The society of the Székelys, also of Hungarian ethnicity, was based on soldiering, and they formed a distinct social group through the specific rights *(libertates*) in this respect, preserved through customary law. The Saxons, who settled mainly in the southern region of Transylvania, were also bound together by their own privileges. The Romanian ethnic population of the Orthodox religion did not form a separate Estate with political rights in the Middle Ages and did not become a member of the Estates during the renewal of the Estates'

1 On the legal status of the Principality: Timon, *Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet,* 757; Rácz, *Főhatalom és kormányzás*, 108–10; Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen zwischen Habsburgermonarchie und Osmanischem Reich,* 28–42; Kisteleki, "The Principality of Transylvania."

2 On the Estates of Transylvania from various perspectives, see: Endes, *Erdély három nemzete*; Roth, *Kleine Geschichte Siebenbürgens*; Gündisch, "Ständische Autonomie und Regionatität"; P. Szabó, "Sachsen in Ungarn"; Zach, *Konfessionelle Pluralität,* 3–48; Crăciun, "Communities of Devotion"; Crăciun, *Die Szekler in Siebenbürgen;* Keul, *Early Modern Religious*; Kálnoky, *The Szekler Nation and Medieval Hungary*; Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége és a szabadságjogok"; P. Szabó, "Legal Reform Efforts"; Ardelean, "Political Boundaries." See also the study by Rácz in this volume.

Unions, but they could enter the ranks of the *natio Hungarica* by acquiring nobility.[3] However, the three 'political nations' were not nations or ethnicities in the modern sense, but instead separated by their privileges and legal status. It should nevertheless be added that the process of the ethnicisation of nations had already begun in the early modern period.[4] In the following, I will use the two terms—Estates and nations—as synonyms, for the reasons mentioned above.

The Medieval Alliances of Transylvanian Estates

The antecedents of the Union of the Estates of the Principality of Transylvania can be found in the medieval alliances. The first known such alliance, the famous Union of Kápolna (Căpâlna), was formed in 1437 after a peasant uprising in Transylvania. The document drawn up at that time stated that the nobles, the Székelys and the Saxons had established a fraternal pact between themselves ("nobiles ac Saxones et Siculos talem fraternam disposuimus unionem"), the aim of which was to defend themselves jointly against internal and external enemies, i.e., the rebellious peasants and the threat of Ottoman attacks which by then had already threatened Transylvania. The united Estates also expressed their loyalty to the King of Hungary, Sigismund of Luxembourg. It should be noted in parentheses that ethnic consciousness played no role in the creation of the Union, which was shaped solely by the common interests of the Estates. The Union was reaffirmed at the next provincial assembly held in Torda (Turda) in 1438.[5]

The next renewal of the Union took place in 1459 at the provincial assembly in Medgyes (Mediaş), which was led by János Lábatlani, the *Comes Temesiensis* and *Comes Siculorum*, on the king's personal order.[6] The Estates agreed to defend their privileges, to unite against external and internal enemies, and to support each other with military force if necessary. A new element was added to the charter to the effect that if the king

3 From a vast literature on the issue: Jakó, "Újkori román települések"; Brătianu and Makkai, *Tündérkert – Grădina Zînelor;* Miskolczy, *Románok a történeti Magyarországon*, 17–31; Drăgan, "Transylvanian Romanian Nobility"; Drăgan, "The Structure of the Nobility"; Dáné, "Az alsóoroszi Krajnikok."

4 Brubaker et al., "Transylvania as an Ethnic Borderland," 56–88.

5 On the medieval Unions, with documents: Teutsch, "Die »Unionen«"; Roth, *Kleine Geschichte Siebenbürgens*, 43–4.

6 *Comes Temesiensis* – The chief official at the head of the county of Temes (Hung. *ispán*), usually a person of high noble rank and a military leader. *Comes Siculorum* – The main political, military, administrative and legislative officer of the Székely people was the Lord of the Székely—in Hungarian '*székelyispán*'—appointed by the King of Hungary in the Middle Ages, usually a Transylvanian nobleman. The princes of Transylvania also bore the title of *Comes Siculorum*. See: Oborni, "The Titles of Transylvanian Princes."

sent any of the lords to Transylvania with the task of imposing new taxes or other obligations on the population, the royal envoy would not be assisted, and his work would be obstructed. The strong alliance of the Estates and their common action against the central power is further underlined by the other points in the document. The three nations also promised each other that if any of them were to be harmed, they would inform the other two Estates, the voivode, as well as the captains of the Estates' communities, who would have eight days to provide legal remedy to the injured party.[7]

Less known about the following decades is the alliance of the Estates in Sárd (Șard) in Fehér County, obviously in continuation of the previous ones, which we can infer from a reference. In a letter written in December 1492, the Székelys asked the Saxons of Szeben (Sibiu) to join them in defending their rights, which had been violated by the voivod of Transylvania, Stephen Báthory. In this letter, the Székelys referred to the agreement concluded between them and the nobles of the country after the death of King Matthias on the field of Sárd, according to which, if the Székelys were harmed, the other two Estates would take joint action and demand the observance of the laws of the country, i.e., the privileges of all three Estates.[8]

Cooperation between the orders was further strengthened by the 1506 covenant of the three nations, whose authors again declared not only their unity but also their common provincial interests.[9] The envoys of the Estates ("Nobilium, Siculorumque ac Saxonum earundem parcium Transsyluanarum") were then meeting in Segesvár (Sighișoara) on 10 February 1506. After declaring their loyalty to their Royal Highnesses—Vladilaus II Jagiellonian and Anne of Foix-Candale—and the Holy Crown of Hungary, they declared that they would defend Transylvania ("defensionemque huius Regni Transsyluani") with one will and in unison.[10] The reasons given for the decision were as follows: for some time, there had been no voivod appointed to represent the king in Transylvania, and therefore, the administration of justice had been suspended, which had led to much confusion and conflict between them. Therefore, the Estates decided that, as long as the king was in charge of appointing a new voivod, the three nations would establish peace and order in Transylvania. Moreover, as Transylvania lay close to the Ottomans, Tartars and other enemies, and as the latter groups had repeatedly set fire to the villages, and as many robbers, villains, murderers and counterfeiters of money were rampaging

7 Teutsch, "Die »Unionen«," 88–93.

8 Szabó, ed., *Székely Oklevéltár,* vol. III, 122–23; Horváth and Neumann, *Ecsedi Bátori István,* 119–20.

9 Teutsch, "Die »Unionen«," 99–102; Szabó, ed., *Székely Oklevéltár,* vol. I, 309–13.

10 "[…] fidelitatem Regie et Reginali Maiestati, Sacreque eius Corone, defensionemque huius Regni Transylvani similiter Sue Maiestatis, consequenterque ipsarum trium nationum unanimiter et concorditer supportare possint." Szabó, ed., *Székely Oklevéltár,* vol. I, 309.

through the country, they agreed to act against them jointly and to protect the internal public safety of their country and each other. It was therefore decided to set up a forty-three-member court to settle disputes between them and to deal with rogue criminals, with fourteen members delegated by each of the Estates and a dean from the Transylvanian Chapter. The arbitral tribunal thus set up would sit twice after the official oath had been taken. And if the latter had to decide a case in which a member of one nation was pitted against a member of another nation, and a sentence of death was passed, the condemned could appeal to the king. At the end of the covenant, they asked His Majesty to preserve the old privileges of all three Estates and promised that if the voivod and Lord of the Székelys, Peter of Szentgyörgy and Bazin should in the future violate their privileges, all three nations would take joint action against them, or would ask that such officials be removed by the king.[11]

There is also an example of the unity of the three nations from 1509, when representatives of the Saxons travelled to Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş) to attend a provincial assembly to confirm the Union of the three nations ("rationem unionis trium nationum confirmandae").[12]

The above alliances of the Estates, seeking to defend themselves against internal and external enemies, are undoubtedly evidence of the aspirations of the three nations to self-defence. This was not only due to the needs of the internal government of the Transylvanian province but also to the increasing Ottoman attacks in the first decades of the sixteenth century.

The Union of Estates in the Eastern Kingdom of Hungary

After the Ottoman conquest of Buda (1541), Sultan Suleiman expelled King John's widow, Queen Isabella, aged barely twenty, and her one-year-old son, who had been elected king, from the capital and ordered them to continue ruling in the east of the country. The territory which the sultan decided to give to Isabella and her son was still vague, but it can be defined as the eastern parts of the Kingdom of Hungary: Transylvania, the counties east of the Tisza River (i.e., Transtibiscan region) and Upper Hungary, centred on Kassa (Košice).

The Estates of Transylvania had to create a new state entity within the new geographical borders. In the following year, they held three national assemblies in which they tried to adjust their fate to the changed power situation. The first renewal of the fraternal union between the three nations in the new situation took place at the last Diet of the year in Torda on 20, December 1542:

11 Oborni, "From Province to Principality."

12 The data mentioned: Pap, "A vallási különbség," 70, note 14.

> "[…] all who are here assembled, by unanimous consent, with careful forethought and common resolution, have agreed that in future, laying aside all rancour, pretense, and so much dissension, they will serve true and brotherly friendship, and that if any hostile force should [invade the country […], they will come together in spirit and will to the defence of the country, and will mutually support and defend each other by the order of the ordinary judges whom the Sovereign has appointed or will appoint with the country."[13]

A significant milestone in the first phase of the constitution-making process was the assembly convened in Torda on 1 August 1544. Queen Isabella invited the Transtibiscan region's counties (Arad, Békés, Bihar, Csanád, Külső-Szolnok, Temes, Zaránd) to the assembly, where they declared their loyalty to King Elect John II Szapolyai and Queen Isabella as regent and also declared their intention to join the Transylvanian Diet of the Estates. This fateful act marked the legal unification of the Estates of Transylvania and the Transtibiscan counties and the establishment of the Estates' structure of the Eastern Kingdom of Hungary. The Estates of the newly emerging country then called themselves "the universal community of the lords and nobles of Transylvania and Hungary under the authority of the royal majesty John II" ("universitas dominorum et nobilium Regni Transsylvaniae et Hungariae ditionis Majestatis suae") and defined their assembly as a General National Assembly ("generalis congregatio").[14] This Diet made provision for the national revenues of the monarchs and the re-establishment of the higher judiciary. Those present declared that there would then be an annual general Diet, which would now be attended by the Estates of the Transtibiscan counties as well.[15]

The constitutional process did not end there, of course, as subsequent Diets continued to enact the fundamental laws governing the political system of the country, their amendments and the various laws regulating national affairs. In the 1540s, there was one more important assembly, the one that opened on 24 April 1545, also in Torda. At this meeting, the Estates forged an even closer alliance between the

13 "[…] domini Regnicolae trium nationum Transilvanarum in conventu Thordensi congregati […] omnes unanimi consensu, longa praehabita deliberatione, paribus sententiis convenerunt, ut futuris temporibus […] verum fraternamque amititiam servent […] animis ac voluntatibus ad tuendum regnum conveniant, juxta mandatum ordinarii judicis, quem princeps una cum regno constituit vel constituet, seque mutuo protegant ac defendant." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. I, 164.

14 Benkő, ed., *Diaetae sive rectius comitia,* 49.

15 "Singulis annis celebrentur huiusmodi congregationes generales, omnibus ordinibus dicionis Maiestatis suae tam Hungaris quam Transsilvanis." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. I, 190.

forces that held their country together. It was resolved and enacted by those present that since they all had one homeland ("una nobis omnibus patria sit"), they should unite in their efforts to sustain its welfare, and therefore, according to the old customary law and decrees, the burdens of the homeland should be borne jointly and equally by the three Estates.[16]

The process of forming the new country was interrupted for about five years when Ferdinand I Habsburg came to rule the eastern part of the country. In the summer of 1556, however, under the threat of Sultan Suleiman, Ferdinand relinquished control of the territory and returned it to Queen Regent Isabella and her son, King-elect John Sigismund II Szapolyai. The Szapolyai family returned to Transylvania in the autumn of 1556 after five years in Poland. After their return, the organisation of the state took on a new impetus, and in this spirit, the cohesion between the Estates had to be strengthened once again. This was the purpose of the article of February 1557, which stipulated that what two Estates agreed on should be binding on the third.[17] The specific purpose of the law was to ensure an equal distribution of the state tax burden, but there was no doubt that this decision was also of great importance in establishing the integrity of the new country. It is worth mentioning that when the power of the Estates was strengthened during the crisis of the mid-seventeenth century, the Diet passed a law that any decision of the Estates was valid only if it was sealed by the stamp of all three nations. This provision ran counter to the law of 1557.[18]

The situation in Transylvania and the eastern territories was settled by the Treaty of Speyer of 1570–71 between King-elect John II Szapolyai of Hungary and King Maximilian I Habsburg of Hungary, the result of a decade of negotiations. In the treaty, John II renounced the title of King-elect and took in his place the title of Prince of Transylvania and the parts of Hungary attached to it ("Princeps Transylvaniae et partium regni Hungariae eidem annexarum") and agreed with Maximilian that the eastern part of the country would henceforth be known as the Principality of Transylvania.[19]

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16 "Deliberatum est: ut eiusmodi onera Patrie, juxta antiquam Consuetudinem et Constitucionem Regni, omnes tres nationes equaliter perferant, cum utilitas que ex conservatione Regni esse consuevit, ad omnes ex equo pertineat." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. I, 217.

17 "[…] semper enim tercia nacio duarum nacionum aliarum deliberacionem sequi et imitari debet id quod longa consuetudine constat receptum esse." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 73.

18 "[…] ez pecsétek nélkül, avagy ezek közül csak valamelyik nélkül is, excepto casu praemisso, ha valamely expeditiók nomine regni kelnének, erőtlenek és hitel nélkül valók legyenek." Article III. of 1659. Szilágyi ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 295.

19 The Treaty of Speyer: Österreichische *Staatsvertrage. Fürstentum Siebenbürgen,* 182–99*;* Fodor and Oborni, "Between two great powers – the Hungarian Kingdom of the Szapolyai family."

The Union of the Estates in the Principality

As early as in the sixteenth century, the nobles had been quite successful in their efforts to redress grievances against their own privileges, but they also spoke out in defence of each other's old privileges. In November 1591, at a meeting in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), the three orders passed a law redressing the grievances of the Saxon nation, 'a member and ornament of our country'. The Saxons had complained that they had recently been overtaxed. In response, the three nations jointly called on the prince to maintain the privileges of the Saxons.[20]

The alliance between the Estates for the common homeland became strongest in times of war. In 1600, when Michael the Brave, voivod of Wallachia had already been ruling the country for three-quarters of a year as a lieutenant *(locumtenens)* of Emperor Rudolf I, the Hungarian nobles *(Proceres, comites ac universitas nobilium Transylvaniae)* made an open appeal to the Saxon community. In a letter from the military camp near Torda, they asked the Saxons to join them and the Székelys in rebellion against the voivod.[21] At the same time, the nobles of Transylvania sent a similar appeal to the Székelys, claiming that "your Grace is a true member of this country" and asking them to join the fight against Michael Voivod to save the homeland. In their letter, they mentioned that since, according to the covenant, the Estates also defended each other, the nobility reiterated their commitment to defend the privileges of the Székelys, if necessary.[22]

The need for a law to strengthen the Union was usually raised by the Estates during elections of princes or other times of crisis when the state itself was threatened with disintegration or dissolution. This was the case, for example, in the spring of 1605, when the Saxons refused to recognise the rule of Stephen Bocskai, already elected prince by the Hungarian nobility and the Székelys, who had already sworn allegiance to King Rudolf of Hungary and Emperor. This meant that they had withdrawn from the Union, and its very existence was at stake. Finally, in July of the same year, at the call of the other two nations, the Saxons joined the nobility

20 "[…] az szegín szászságnak szabadságokat mindennel helyen tartassa, liberálja és defendáltassa nagyságod." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. III, 391.

21 "Az vajda magyar lovas hadának is jó része hozzánk jű, az székelységnek is alkalmas része mellettünk leszen, főképpen az aranyasszékiek; az több székelyek felől is jó reménységünk vagyon." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. IV, 530.

22 "Sőt azon is megesküszünk kegyelmeteknek, mint szintén az aranyasföldi atyánkfiainak, kik immár velünk egy helyen vadnak táborban, hogy kegyelmetekkel együtt akarunk élni és halált is szenvedni. […] Az magyar nemzetből való vitézlő rend is mind együtt vagyon velünk, az szászság is jöttön jő mellénk, azonképen az egész föld népe, kegyelmetek is siessen mellénk, hogy kegyelmetekkel együtt országúl juthassunk jó állapatra." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. IV, 534.

and the Székelys and pledged their loyalty to the prince and the common defence of the country.[23]

The interdependence of the orders, their common will and their alliance for the survival of the country are also well illustrated by the decrees of the Diet of the Principality at the time of the election of Sigismund Rákóczi (1607). The assembled Estates reaffirmed their eternal Union *(foedus perpetuum super unionem)* and stressed that in the interests of peace and tranquillity, the nations must seek agreement on all national public affairs, but especially on the election of princes:

> "[…] that one nation shall be bound to the other by oath, that in public affairs and in more troublesome matters, especially in the election of princes according to law and good order, one shall not oppose the other, and that the succession shall be in favour of the general condition of the country, the peace and progress of the country, but will not, either openly or privately, or in public or under any pretence, but will unite in a united effort to keep all the rights, the salvation of the people, in view, and will look to this end and strive with all their might to preserve peace and tranquillity in the country."[24]

They then agreed that one nation would protect the other, that they would not secede from each other in case of rebellion, and that they would not elect a prince by secret conspiracy. To this end, not only the representatives of the three nations, but also the major cities of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Torda (Turda), Enyed (Aiud), Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș), Kézdivásárhely (Târgu Secuiesc), Várad (Oradea), Nagybánya (Baia Mare), Dés (Dej), Karánsebes (Caransebeș), Lugos (Lugoj) and Huszt (Хуст) had to take an oath.[25] An oath of allegiance to the unity of the country and to the prince was also made obligatory for the newly elected officials of local administration under penalty of disloyalty, loss of head and property. The law clearly indicates

23 "Kegyelmeteket, azért szeretettel intjük, mint urainkat, atyánkfiait, hogy kegyelmetek immár ne tréfával, hanem oly solidummal bocsássa követeit oda fel ő nagyságához, ki lehessen az közönséges unionak és ez szegény hazának megmaradásának és javának előmenetire." Szádeczky, ed., *Székely Oklevéltár,* vol. VI, 12–6. The conditions imposed by the Saxons on the other two Estates and further documents for the renewal of the Union: Szádeczky, ed., *Székely Oklevéltár,* vol. VI, 17–9.

24 "[…] egyik nemzet az másiknak köteles legyen hittel, hogy in publicis et arduis negotiis et potissimum principis electione legitime et bono ordine fienda egyik az másiknak magát nem opponálja, sőt per successionem pártolásból contra regni publicum statum, patriae pacem et emolumentum privato ausu semmit nem igyekezik, sem publice, sem privatim, sem manifeste, sem aliquo exquisito sub colore, hanem totis viribus summam legem, populi salutem ante oculos ponit és erre a czélra néz és omnibus viribus contendat, hogy pax et tranquillitas in patria conservetur." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 454.

25 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 454–55.

that the Estates saw the strengthening of the Union as a way of unifying their country. Almost immediately after his election as prince, Rákóczi informed Emperor Rudolf of the events, emphasising that the three Estates of the province had gathered in Kolozsvár on 11 February, where they first of all confirmed the Union, i.e., their everlasting confederation *(unionem sive perpetuam confoederationem)*, and assured each other of their mutual agreement by oath which was essentially equivalent to the oath of allegiance to the constitution of the country. It was also the first year in which the text of the Oath of Union has survived:

> "I, […], swear by the living God that I will keep the union and concord between the three nations in the country in all its articles, as it is written, faithfully and truly, until the end of my head, until the end of my wealth, and with all others who are under my possession or my authority, according to my ability, under the penalty of the law set forth above."[26]

Both the Estates and the would-be prince Gabriel Bethlen were well aware of the importance of the Union, and therefore, it was legislated as early as at the October 1613 prince-electing Diet that the alliance between the orders should be renewed.[27] This, however, only took place after further wrangling and princely tactics at the Diet of Medgyes in February–March 1614. After the election of Gabriel Bethlen, this was the first Diet to deal with questions of state organisation, and the prince's main aim was to renew the Union and thus ensure the unity of the state. First of all, the prince's well-thought-out propositions were uttered, in which he first of all formulated the essence of the Union:

> "The union is nothing else but a sacred agreement between the three nations for the survival of our homeland, which all Estates must preserve with strong guard *pacis et belli tempore* and they shall bear the burden of the survival of the country in equal measure."[28]

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26 "Én, […] esküszöm az élő Istenre, hogy az országban lévő három nemzetség között való uniót és concordiát minden czikkelyiben az mint meg vagyon írva híven és igazán fejem fennállatáig, jószágom marhám fogytáig megtartom s mind egyebekkel, kik birodalmam vagy tisztem alatt vagynak megtartatom tehetségem szerént az feljűl megirt büntetés alatt." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 457.

27 "Az három natio között az unió újíttassék és tartassék; az kitől isten oltalmazzon, ha mi infortunium találna bennünket, ez országbeli nemességet, székelséget és minden rendeket az városi erősségben lévő uraim befogadjanak minden marhástúl, és bosszúsággal ne illessék, hanem egy értelemben lévén, fejek fennállásáig egymásnak szolgáljanak az unio szerént." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 360.

28 "[…] nem egyéb az unió, hanem az három nemzetség között hazánknak megmaradására való szent egyezség, minden rendeknek pacis et belli tempore erős vigyázással meg kell őrizni és az hazának megmaradásának terhét valamiből kévántatik, egyenlő értelemben viselniek." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 404–9.

The *propositio* formulated by the prince in this regard laid down a strict principle: if a person, city or province breaks his oath of Union or acts against the Union, it shall be considered a *nota infidelitatis* that is punishable by the loss of head and goods. Bethlen proposed the creation of a new judicial forum, a body of seven persons *(septemviratus)*, which would be necessary both for internal government and for close cooperation against external danger.[29] The significance of the proposal lies in the fact that Bethlen wanted to set up a national judiciary, which had not existed before, to judge in a uniform manner those who violated the laws of the country. With the new court, Bethlen would not only have been able to control 'rebels' against the princely power by the force of law, but this proposal was also the first manifestation of his unifying ambitions in the field of justice.[30] He added that two members of each Estate that was to make up the proposed judiciary should be representatives of the Estates, and one should be appointed by the princely council. He specifically noted that the Saxons should send people who are also members of the princely council. The task of this judicial forum was to see to it that the laws, and the Union in particular, were enforced, stating that anyone who offended against the internal peace and the Union, or who planned to do so, either within or outside the country, would be answerable to the seven-member body.[31] This was done by summoning the accused "per directorem causarum unionis" to appear before the court, at which the councillors, the assistansts to the judges (Hung. *ítélőmester*, Lat. *prothonotarius*) and the assessors *(assessores)* of the Princely Table—the central court of law—were also present.[32] In this way, Bethlen wanted to create not only a new judicial forum but a new country official, named after the office of *causarum regalium director*, known in the history of the Hungarian government as a lawyer for the King's—and later the Transylvanian Princes'—property rights. The prince also proposed that if someone was wrongly accused, the accuser should be punished according to the principle of *talio*, but if the accusations were proven, the question of punishment or pardon should be up to the 'whole country', i.e., the Diet. If one of the seven people were to die, the Diet would elect a replacement. Finally, the prince proposed that, in order to preserve the Union, everyone at the present assembly

29 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 409.

30 See: Csizmadia, "Az erdélyi jog fejlődése a fejedelmi korban."; Dáné, "Bethlen »jog és társadalom harmonizációja«."

31 "Valami oly akadályok, bontások az unio ellen esnének, titkos és nyilván való, ben avagy az ország küűl practikak afféléről contestatiok coram septem viris legyenek. Azonképen az unio ellen való vétekért, ha ki abba találtatnék, immediate a hét ember eleibe citaltassék, in dubiis et ambiguis solenni processu." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 409.

32 Bogdándi, "The Organization of the Central"; Dáné, "»Minden birodalmak«."

should take an oath, as should all officials serving in castles and towns, along with all officials of the local administration.[33]

With the above-mentioned proposals, Bethlen not only sought to strengthen his power. His main aim was to strengthen the unity of the state through legislation and to secure the financial basis for government expenditure. He also wanted to guarantee the rights of the Estates in general while at the same time calling on individual nations to respect and protect each other's rights. The prince explained that it was necessary that the *communitas*—here meaning the whole country—should jointly help and finance the envoys sent to external powers, that the Estates should mutually look after each other's liberties, borders, towns and villages, and that if anyone should be harmed, they should turn to the persons elected later to guard the preservation of the Union.[34] The broad and more extensive interpretation of the concept of the Union, which would be included in the collection of laws called *Approbatae Constitutiones* a few decades later, was formulated in this Diet thanks to the Prince's proposal.

He also proposed that the Transylvanian Estates should contribute to the rebuilding of Gyulafehérvár, while the Estates of the Partium should contribute to the fortification of the castles of Várad, Jenő (Ieneu, RO) and Lippa (Lipova, RO). He requested that in the event of war, all three nations should bear the burden equally and that, as the Hungarian nobility and the Székelys were more involved in warfare, the Saxons should receive within the walls of their castles and fortresses the simple refugees from the other two nations, the lords and the prince, during any campaign against the country. In retaliation, the other two nations should also try to defend the Saxon towns when the country is under attack.

He also proposed the establishment of a 'public treasury' *(publicum aerarium)* to which the nobles, lords and towns would contribute using their own wealth. Interestingly, he justified this by saying that no one could be asked for a loan in the case of need, because many people in the country had suffered great losses and no one would lend *'in usum publicum.'* The money collected in the public treasury could

33 "[…] az unionak megőrizésére, mind most az gyűlésben, mind az hon levő várokban városokban levő tisztviselők most is megesküdjenek és ezután minden tisztviselőket continue annak igazán való megtartására megesküdtessenek." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 409.

34 "Egymás szabadságára, határira, városára, faluira mind békesség és had idején igen vigyázzon mind az három nemzetség, igazságában, törvényében maradhasson meg minden rend, békesség idején ne hadakozzék az országbeliekvel, ne idegenkedjék, ne rekeszkedjék és ha valaki oly czégéres igazságban, város, falu, tartomány vagy uri ember megbántódnék, fegyverre mindjárást és nilván való szerszámára ne menjen, hanem éljen contentatióval, azok előtt, kik az unionak őrezésére rendeltettek és választattak lesznek." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 406.

be used to cover unexpected expenses, embassy costs, or other needs of the country that the *fiscus,* i.e., the princely treasury, could not meet from its normal revenues. The sum collected in the public treasury would undoubtedly have served to better organise the armed defence of the country if it had been actually established, but this plan of the prince was not carried out.[35]

Some points of the Prince's proposals, however, were defeated by the resistance of the Saxons. They stated in their response that they would seek to retain their own privileges and those of the other nations of the country, to the existing system of taxation, and that although they accepted the Union, they would be loyal to the Prince. In the case of war, they would be willing to receive refugees into their towns but would not consent to the establishment of a public treasury.[36] Nor did they agree to the establishment of a seven-judge forum, taking the position that everything should remain as it was, and that if someone committed an offence against the prince, the country or the Union, they should first answer to their own court and from there appeal to the Princely Court.

Finally, in the acts of the Diet of February–March 1614, the Estates confirmed the Union. They declared that, in the interests of the country, the Union must be maintained and that each nation must contribute to it in proportion to its position and in such a manner and at such a time as the Prince or the guardians of the Union may request each nation to do so.[37]

After Bethlen's death, the Estates reaffirmed the Union and committed themselves to the oath to be taken at the Diet held in January 1630. Bethlen's widow, Catherine of Brandenburg, became the new 'prince'. The Estates declared that the only way to preserve the country was to maintain the Union and that those present should take the oath on the spot and those not present, later. In essence, the principles formulated in Bethlen's time were renewed, i.e., the freedom to practice the four established religions and the important stipulation that if one of the Estates suffered a violation of its privileges and rights, it could appeal to the other two, who together could lodge a complaint with the Diet and even take action against the princely power. They also added that the nobles living in the country had the right to sue the prince if their property or personal rights were infringed and to appeal to their own courts and those of other orders. Similarly, towns and cities had the right

35 Imreh, *Fejedelmi gazdálkodás Bethlen Gábor idejében*.

36 "[…] az publicum aerariumok jó volna meglenni, ha tudnók honnét […] minthogy ennek előtte való ödőkben a fejedelemnek tárháza volt. Ennek után is az legyen, az szükségnek idején a főrendek magnatesek adjanak." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 411.

37 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. VI, 412–14; Kovács, "Bethlen Gábor erdélyi országgyűléseinek törvényalkotása," 47–8; Horváth, "Bethlen Gábor korának erdélyi országgyűlései," 259–65; Oborni, "Az unió kérdése."

to lodge complaints and to institute proceedings. The article of law clearly spelt out the objectives:

> "In whatever good things may be devised for the preservation of our country, its peaceful tranquillity, and the maintenance of its liberty and law, let all be in one mind, each forgetting his own utility and self-interests, and let all three nations and all Estates patronise and protect each other in all ways and means, with equal understanding and will, relating to our liberty."[38]

The Diet also decreed that the oath of allegiance to the Union must be renewed every ten years. However, this was not the case later on. In December 1630, among the conditions presented to George Rákóczi I, it was stipulated that he should preserve the Union and the rights of the Estates, that he should not transfer princely power to anyone, and that he should not negotiate with anyone.[39] On the accession of George Rákóczi II to the throne, the Union was renewed without any notable changes at the Diet held in the spring of 1649.[40] Afterwards, in the middle of the century, during changes of princes, the Estates several times enacted the oath of allegiance to the Union, which was also an oath of allegiance to the new prince. Such an oath took place, for example, in November 1658, when Prince Ákos Barcsay held his first Diet.[41]

In February–March of the following year, another assembly of the Estates was held in Beszterce (Bistrița). Here, an interesting incident occurred: in order to rescue János Kemény, who was a captive of the Crimean Tatars and secretly aspiring to the Transylvanian princely throne, his son Simon proposed that the Estates should take steps to free his father. In response, the Estates decided that first of all, the prominent persons in captivity, János Kemény and others, should give a letter of intent in recognition of the rule of the reigning prince Ákos Barcsay and thus take an oath of Union, in which case they would issue the document required for them to return home, the so-called 'letter of guarantee.'[42]

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38 "Ország gyűlésében az mit hazánk megmaradására, békeséges csendességére, szabadsága és törvénye megtartására nézendő jókat feltalálhatnak, afféle dologban egy értelemben légyen minden, ki ki hátra vetvén az maga utilitását és privatumát, és nemzetségünk szabadságunk mellett mind az három nemzetség és minden statusok egyenlő értelemmel és akarattal, minden úton és módon egymásnak patrocináljunk és egymást oltalmazzuk." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. IX, 77–78.

39 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. IX, 253–54.

40 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XI, 46–7.

41 "[…] concluditur ut sub poena unionis iurent ad unionem regnicolarum, immo etiam ad homagium principum intra quindenam" Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 89, 94–5.

42 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 190.

When, at the beginning of 1660, in the midst of the power crisis that prevailed between 1658 and 1661, George Rákóczi II summoned the orders to Sellemberk (Comuna Șelimbăr), he exhorted them to appear and discuss the chances of the country's survival in view of the Union and their loyalty to the country.[43]

At the Diet of April–May 1660, the Estates reiterated the importance of the oath of Union "which is the foundation of our duty to each other, both in our religion and in our other liberties."[44] In June of the same year, at another assembly held in Medgyes, the inhabitants of the towns and the officials of the villages were also obliged to take the so-called *homagium*, i.e. the oath of loyalty to the prince and the Union.[45]

In the autumn of 1660, János Kemény returned home from Tartar captivity and succeeded in gaining the princely throne. At Christmas 1660, the Estates assembled in Szászrégen (Reghin) and formulated the conditions given to Kemény, asking him to uphold the articles of the Union that the Estates wanted to swear an oath to. In the text of the law then enacted, the Estates spoke of the Union to which not only they but also the Prince must be loyal. It was stated that if any of the members of the nations could not take the oath of Union at the time, they would be dealt with through legal channels. And anyone who refused to take the oath would be accused of disloyalty to the country and the prince and threatened with a lawsuit.[46]

The June 1681 Diet was the last time that the Union was renewed by the nations.[47] The reason for this was a grievance of the Saxons: in 1680, the Estates had decided to build a church for Calvinists in the village of Bolonya (Ger. Blumenau, Rom. Blumana) which formed part of Brassó (Brasov) city.[48] The Saxon nation not only resisted the decree but also refused its enforcement, which was clearly contrary to the principles of the Union. The Saxons declared that they were more willing to

43 "[…] generalis gyűlést promulgáltattunk egész országúi mindeneknek ad 25. praesentis mensis Januarii ide Selemberkre. Intvén Kiteket is ad unionem regni fidelitatemque nobis debitam az megírt napon és helyen becsületes követ atyjokfiai által compareálni és hazánk megmaradásáról hasznosan consultálkodni velünk egyező értelemből el ne mulassa." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 429.

44 "[…] mely fundamentuma mind religiónk s mind egyéb szabadságinkra nézve, egymáshoz való kötelességünknek" Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 505.

45 "[…] végeztük, hogy minden városokban a mester-legények, egyéb városi szolgák, hostátban lakók is a Nagyságod hűségére s az unióra megesküdjenek az articulusnak continentiája szerént; hasonlóképpen a mely falukban erősségek vadnak, azoknak az helyeknek tisztviselői és esküdtei is az unióra és fejedelem hűségére tartozzanak homagiumokat letenni de facto mindjárt." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 514.

46 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 473–74, 482–83.

47 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XVII, 31.

48 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XVII, 153.

secede from the country and pay a separate tax to the Porte "than to support the Hungarians' coercion and give them a church site."[49] Finally, the matter ended with a declaration by the Saxons that they wished to maintain their loyalty to the other nations and that they would not be disloyal to the common homeland. They pledged that, in view of the approaching times of war, they would be willing to receive both the prince and the Estates within the walls of their towns.[50] It should also be added that the city of Brassó did not build the church for the Calvinists anyway.

During the seventeenth century, when a new prince came to the throne, the Estates and the officials of the central and local administration all swore an oath to the Union of the Estates, which united the country.[51] The content of the oath of Union became increasingly complex in the second half of the century: the person taking the oath committed themselves to the free practice of the four established religions *(recepta religiones)* and the personal legal protection of the members of each of the three nations. The essence of this was that if an individual belonging to a given nation had been wronged in their person or property and the prince did not give them satisfaction, they could appeal to the other two nations, and thus, the three nations together could appeal to the prince to enforce the rights of the person concerned. In such a case, of course, each person could obtain redress on the basis of their own rights *(suum cuique)* and their acceptance of the common legal system of the state. The first major collection of Transylvanian laws, the *Approbatae Constitutiones* (1653), regulated in detail what was meant by Union:

> "[…] the four religions shall have free exercise; the country being composed of three nations (and their decisions being preserved), if any nation should be offended in its liberties, immunities, and privileges, customary and long-established, by requisitioning the two nations, they shall be bound, according to their faith and duty, to find the prince and his council *de facto* before the assembly, in respect of the offence of the complaining nation; and that in all ways and means the three nations owe each other protection and assistance, worthy of their grievances."[52]

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49 "[…] hogysem a magyar igát supportálják s templomhelyet adjanak." Szilády and Szilágyi ed., *Török-Magyarkori Állam-okmánytár*, vol. VI, 98.

50 "[…] az több natiókbeli statusokkal az unió szerént tartozó kötelességünket, igaz hűségünket és hazafiúságunkat fentartani igyekeztük, és semmi szerencsétlenségben megváltoztatni elménkben sem forgattuk." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XVII, 185–86.

51 Rácz, *Főhatalom és kormányzás,* 162–86.

52 "[…] a négy recepta religiónak szabados exercitiuma legyen; három nemzetből állván az ország (és azok constitutiói megtartatván), ha valamelyik nemzetnek szabadságában, immunitásiban, privilégiumiban szokott és régen bévött rendtartásiban bántódása lenne, requirálván felőle a két nemzetséget, tartozzanak hitek és kötelességek szerént ország gyűlésének előtte is de

This widespread interpretation of the basic element of the constitution, the Union, remained until the end of the separate Transilvanian state.

Summary

The late medieval alliances of the Estates living in Transylvania, which were repeatedly renewed in the Principality of Transylvania, formed one of the elements, that made up the basis of the country's constitution. The articles of law related to the Union were usually enacted after the election of the new prince and at the time of his inauguration. The Estates also made it compulsory for the newly elected prince to take the oath of allegiance to the Union. This meant that the Union also became a pact between the Estates and the Princes, the main aim of which was to maintain the alliance which was the basis of the State.

In the course of the seventeenth century, the concept of the Union was broadened: the Union, which symbolised the cohesion of the country, was also a guarantee of the preservation of the Estates' privileges. When the Principality was threatened with dissolution, both the Estates and the Princes sought to re-establish the Union, the alliance between the Estates, and thus ensure the unity of the state. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the articles of law that renewed the Union had become the cornerstone of constitutionalism, to which national officials and even local administrators had to take the so-called Union Oath.

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facto megtalálni a fejedelmet és tanácsit, a panaszolkodó nemzetségnek megbántódása felől; sőt minden úton és módon a három nemzetség egymásnak óltalommal, segítséggel tartozzék lenni, méltó panaszolkodásukra." Approbatae Constitutiones Pars III. Tit., I. *Erdély Országának Három Könyvekre osztatott Törvényes Könyve*, 77.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 116–133
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.07

Judicial Organization and the Sources of Decision-Making in Sixteenth-Century Transylvania*

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Received 14 February 2024 | Accepted 11 March 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. The paper describes the organization of the independent Transylvanian central court of law, the so-called Royal/Voivodal/Princely Table *(Tabula)* and its court of appeal, the court of personal presence *(personalis presentia)*, in the light of the modest secondary literature, dietary decisions, and archival sources. Manuscript and published sources of law referred to in the course of litigation in the Transylvanian Royal/Voivodal/Princely Table *(Tabula, Curia)* in the second half of the sixteenth century are also presented. Based on the analysed archival sources—mainly the various *allegationes* lawyers made—it may be concluded that different sources provided the grounds that were frequently given for the court decisions. The analysis of available sources shows that, besides the *Tripartitum*, which was mostly referred to, during the litigations lawyers generally used the laws of the Hungarian Kingdom, and that the *Decreta* of the Transylvanian diets and the Table judged some cases according to their own custom.

Keywords: Principality of Transylvania, Princely Table, Source of Law, litigations, judicial practice

The establishment of the Royal Table

After the 1541–1556 period, which may be considered a time of orientation, the independent state of Transylvania was formed after 1556, during the reign of Queen Isabella (1541–1559) and his son, the king elect, John II Szapolyai. The decisions made in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg) in the late autumn of 1556 reflected the preparations for independent statehood. The estates ordered the election of judges, protonotaries, assessors, and a attorney general *(director causarum)* on the condition that they would not claim a share of the income of the court of law, but would be paid by the queen and her son based on an individual agreement.[1] Despite

* The study was supported by the NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office) research project (Number: K 139281) and HTMKNP FAEK MTA National Programme.

1 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 58.

the early statutes, the central juridical system did not come into existence at once. It was a long process, and the main difficulty was the creation of a judicial system to satisfy the needs of all the legally different *nationes* (the Hungarian nobility from the Partium area, the Transylvanian nobles, the Székelys and, least of all, the Saxons) that constituted the becoming state. Initial hesitations and administrative uncertainties are reflected in the archival sources, and are indicated by the lack of charters. There are no surviving documents from the first two court sessions, that should have been held according to the decisions of the 1556 Diet, even if theoretically they were supposed to be exceptionally long. One year later, in a charter she issued in the market town of Torda (Turda/Thorenburg) on 2 July 1557, Queen Isabella mentioned a court session to which the diet, which was also held in Torda beginning on 1 June, had postponed every lawsuit of all the three Transylvanian nations.[2] The document, in reference to the decrees of the 1556 Diet of Kolozsvár, approved almost verbatim the previous judgment of the voivodes of Ferdinand, Stephen Dobó, and Ferenc Kendi (1553–1556).[3] It is clear from a later source that the court session began on 24 June ("pro festo Nativitatis beati Joannis baptistae"), and here, unlike later, following the example of the medieval voivodal court of law, the cases of the three nations of Transylvania were heard together. The decree of the diet held in June 1557 probably referred to the same court session, when the lawsuits related to the acts of might committed since the incursion of Péter Petrovics[4] were postponed to the *octava* of the feast of the Holy Trinity.[5] Then the *octava* of St Michael's Day was also noted,

2 The case in question was heard on 25 June: "[…] instante scilicet termino brevium et continuorum judiciorum, ad quem videlicet terminum universae causae fidelium nostrorum regnicolarum trium nationum partium regni nostri Transilvanensi, juxta publicam constitutionem eorundem hic Thordae ad primum diem Junii ex edicto maiestatis nostrae congregatorum, videlicet factum honoris, novorumque actuum potentiariorum, transmissionumque tangentem et concernentem et aliae in articulis in ipso conventu editis denotatae adiudicari debentes, per maiestatem nostram generaliter fuerant prorogatae […]" the members of the court were nobles, sworn assessors, and the protonotary (here they refer to only one, and the document was endorsed only by László Mekcsei). MNL OL GyKOLt, Cista comit. (F4), Comitatus Albensis, Cista 2, fasc. 3., no. 5. The three feudal 'nations' *(natio)* of Transylvania were the largely Hungarian nobility, the Saxon patricians, and the free military Székelys.

3 According to the text of the document: "[…] cum autem juxta publicam constitutionem fidelium nostrorum ordinum et statuum regni pro festo beatae Catherinae virginis et martiris proxime preterito in civitate Koloswar ex edicto maiestatis nostrae congregatorum factam et per nos confirmatam, universae causae tempore imperii prefati regis Romanorum in hoc regno... suis processibus in suis vigoribus relictae sint." Cp. Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 64.

4 Péter Petrovics was a pro-Ottoman magnate, ban of Lugos (Lugoj) and Karánsebes (Caransebeș), and a fervent supporter of King John I Szapolyai (1526–1540) and his son.

5 "Maiores causae differantur in octavum diem festi sancti Michaelis discuciendae, alie vero causae videlicet factum honoris decimarumque uniuersae concernentes, noui actus potenciarij ab

to which the more important lawsuits were postponed, but there is no surviving evidence about that court session, and we have only one charter issued during the session of March 1557, which a verdict refers to.[6] The decree of the diet of June 1557 relating to the judicial system was limited to a stipulation according to which eight assessors should partake in the work of the court of law. This stipulation probably goes back to medieval origins. In a mandate issued in 1561, nine assessors were listed. Thus, when each seat of the assessors was filled, the Princely Table consisted of twelve legists, including the two protonotaries and the attorney general *(director causarum/fiscalis)*.[7] It is worth noting that the Transylvanian attorney general took part in the work of the Table, because there is no information indicating the involvement of the *director causarum* of the Partium area in the work of the high court. The hardly definable jurisdiction accessible to him was probably limited to the counties in Partium.

Thus, it appears that the activity of the Princely Table was not permanent or continuous, but was connected to different sessions, so-called *termini* for all the nations of the estates (Transylvanian nobles, nobles from the Partium, and Székelys) as well as to the Transylvanian diets. After the reorganization of the high court, the aim was to have two court sessions a year for each nation, but the dates frequently varied, and some sessions were cancelled. The Princely Table also had jurisdiction in the cases appealed from the court of the Saxons, the *Universitas*,[8] the seat of which was in Szeben (Sibiu/Hermannstadt), but as there was no separate court session for them, their cases were usually discussed during the diets.[9] There was no need for a separate Saxon court session, as the cases of Saxons were rarely appealed to the princely high court, and they could only be summoned at their own court.[10]

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ingressu domini Petrowyth comitis spectabilis et magnifici patrati vel patrandj, transmissiones item comitatuum Saxonum et Siculicalium sedium ac literae transmissionis quae in curiam regis Romanorum per appellacionem deducendae erant, causae eciam dotum, rerum parafernalium, jurium impignoraticiorum et diuisionum inter fratres carnales patrueles, matrueles fientium sine intermissione discuciantur; discussionis autem dies sit die octauo post festum sancte trinitatis." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 80.

6 "[…] litteras nostras adiudicatorias sententionales Albe Julie decimo sexto die diei sabbati proximi post dominicam Oculi in anno 1557, in termino celebrationis judiciorum profesti beati Gregorii papae […]" See: ANR Cluj Arch. of Dés (Dej) (Fond 24), no. 172, 280; ANR Cluj fond fam. Haller, 2. Series, no. 69.

7 Bogdándi, "Az erdélyi és a partiumi jogügyigazgatók," 14.

8 The *Universitas Saxonum* was an administrative and legal entity of the Transylvanian Saxons, headed by the comes *Saxonum*, who resided in Szeben (Sibiu).

9 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 530. On the separate courts of law of the Saxons, see: Bogdándi, "A szászok és a fejedelmi tábla," 21–33.

10 Dósa, *Erdélyhoni jogtudomány*, 104–5.

On the question of the location of the courts (both in the case of the lawsuits of the Hungarian nobles of Partium and the Transylvanians), the diet in March 1557 decided that they were to be held where the royal majesties were actually residing, but for the periods to follow separate sessions were to be held for the Transylvanian nobility, the Székelys, and the nobles of Partium.[11] In the Middle Ages, if the king was presiding at the high court, the court had its meetings in one of the council chambers of his palace. In other cases, however, it met in the house of the Archbishop of Esztergom in Buda, probably in the same place where the 'official room and archive' of the smaller chancery was kept.[12] It seems likely that, based on the medieval model, when the ruler was in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia/Weissenburg) and took part in the work of the princely high court, the location of the sessions was one of the rooms of the princely palace, while on other occasions the *domus iudiciaria*, i.e., the lodge of the protonotary (and in the meantime certainly of the smaller chancery) served as the site of the trials. This was true, of course, only when the court session was held in Gyulafehérvár. Because of the features of the new state, in order to meet the needs of the nations that formed the state, the princely court of law was itinerant. Thus, we cannot speak of a permanent seat for the Princely Table. In Kolozsvár, Vásárhely (Târgu Mureș/Neumarkt), and Torda the *domus iudicaria* was usually a rented lodge that suited the needs of the court.[13]

At the above-mentioned 1557 diet, a decree was issued which, according to Zsolt Trócsányi, "disposes a separate high court for the Partium region… (let Bálint Földváry be the protonotary, let the separate Hungarian high court be established)."[14] However, in my assessment, considering legal evidence, this decision did not undo the unity of the princely high court. In the text of the decree, there is no reference to a high court of Partium. The decree mentions only an expert *protonotarius* designated to judge on the cases brought by Hungarian nobles from the Partium region, similarly to his fellow working in Transylvania. This was also the case when the number of assessors was considered ("assessoribus pluribus iuris peritis sedem iudiciariam ornare dignentur"), with members who were probably more familiar with

11 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 89.

12 Hajnik, *Bírósági szervezet*, 232. See also: Kubinyi, "A királyi udvar," 16–7.

13 There is concrete data on this from the court session of St Luke's Day in 1590. Dániel Pápai and Mihály Kolozsvári, who were notaries at the court, reported that they disembarked on 3 November "[…] hic in praedicto civitate Coloswar, apud domum circumspecti Joannis Hozzu, *domum videlicet judiciariam* celsitudinis vestrae." There, they summoned János Gyerőfi to appear at the *curia* on the sixth day. See: ANR Cluj Arch. Kornis (Fond 378), no. 231.

14 Trócsányi, *Törvényalkotás*, 238. At the diet of June 1557, the possibility of sending one special judge to Várad (Oradea) for the nobility of Partium (Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 81) came up, but probably because of the perpetual state of war this could not be accomplished.

the customs of the Hungarian nobility from the Partium. Accordingly, in 1559, the Table adjudicated during the St Luke's Day court session of the Hungarian nobility from Partium held in Gyulafehérvár as a unified body, and as had become customary in Hungarian charter-issuing practice by the mid-fifteenth century, the protonotaries indicated in a letter of judgment who the person to revise and issue the document ("Lecta et extradata per me magistrum Valentinum de Fewldwar serenissimae regiae majestatis prothonotarium") was, and in addition, the document was also indorsed by László Mekcsei ("Coram me Ladislao de Mekche eiusdem serenissime regie majestatis prothonotario").[15] As the jurisdiction of the two protonotaries had not yet been clearly defined, there was no person exclusively assigned to cases of the Hungarian nobles of Partium, the Székelys, and the Transylvanian nobles. This is probably the reason why, during the court session held for the Hungarian nobility from Partium after St Luke's Day, the order of their signatures on a letter of judgment issued in a case concerning a major act of might has been reversed.[16] The joint jurisdiction of the two protonotaries was also expressed in a decree issued in June 1558, according to which justice was to be served in the presence of both persons and both persons shall agree on incomes and the usage of the judicial seal.[17] Probably in order to avoid the controversies between the protonotaries, it was decided that an expert of the Hungarian law was to be chosen to act as president of the high court, to be present at the hearings, to handle the court's income and to pay the assessors from it, and to turn over the rest to the treasury.[18] However, this position, referred to as *super intendens,* remained vacant, as there are no references to his activities in later decrees or in charters; a person with the similar task of presiding over the high court, called the *praesidens,* was only invested in 1589. It is more important that, on the basis of a medieval model,[19] a court of appeal to the high court was founded at the same time. This made it clear that the cases judged by the protonotaries could be brought to the personal presence *(personalis presentia)* of presided with their councillors.

15 ANR Cluj Arch. Bethlen of Iktár, (Fond 329), chronologically organized documents. Cp. MNL OL Arch. Wesselényi (P 702), 1. item, chronologically organized documents.

16 16 May 1560: "Proclamata, publicata presentata lecta et extradata per me Ladislaum de Mekche serenissime electe regie majestatis Hungariae protonotarium. Coram me magistro Valentino de Fewldwar serenissimae regie majestatis prothonotario." MNL OL GyKOLt, Cista comit. (F4), Comitatus Bihar, Cista Bihar, fasc. 1., no. 21.

17 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 99. According to Trócsányi, this is when Mekcsei was designated as protonotary of Transylvania, but he had been appointed to this office earlier, in 1554. See: Trócsányi, *Törvényalkotás*, 238. Cp. Jakó, ed., *A kolozsmonostori konvent*, no. 5316.

18 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 97.

19 Hajnik, *Bírósági szervezet*, 57–8; Hajnik, *A király bírósági személyes jelenléte*, 24–5.

The sources of law on the Princely Table in the sixteenth century

Although a significant part of the documents preserved in the archives can be considered to be the 'products' of the different courts of justice, historians have given little attention to the organization and functioning of these courts. According to György Bónis, a deeper understanding of the practice of Transylvanian law and judicial decision-making can only be achieved by meticulously analysing thousands of original charters regarding individual cases.[20] We could not undertake this task within the scope of this study. Instead the present focus is on a single but highly important detail of the judicial practice in the era of the Principality. The analysis introduces the kind of sources used in the sixteenth-century decision-making of the Princely Table or Curia when making judgments, also showing how the use of these sources is reflected in the letters of judgment issued and in lawyers' pleadings *(allegationes*, *exceptiones*, *responsiones)*.

The *Tripartitum*

The previous literature, which only tangentially discussed Transylvanian legislation and procedural law, correctly stated that István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* provided the ground most frequently given for the courts' decisions. According to Andor Csizmadia, only after a longer period of time did the *Tripartitum* become the main source of decision-making in the Kingdom of Hungary, but in the Szapolyai-ruled Transylvania, it was 'used from the beginning', and references to the *Decretum* always appear to take note of the work of Werbőczy.[21] This statement was slightly nuanced by György Bónis in 1942, affirming that the earliest mention of the *Tripartitum* dates from 1535 in Transylvania and is made in a case discussed by a Székely court. At the same time, Bónis admitted that as the references to the *Tripartitum* had not yet been collected, it was hard to draw any conclusions regarding Werbőczy's influence.[22] This means that we do not yet have a clear picture of the use and spread of the *Tripartitum* in judicial courts. Some early Werbőczy references made before the Battle of Mohács in 1526,[23] however, suggest that further meticulous archival research could modify the claim that the *Tripartitum* had an impact on the development of procedural law in Habsburg Hungary only from the end of the sixteenth century.[24] It is outside

20 Bónis and Valentiny, eds, *Jacobinus János erdélyi kancellár*, 5.

21 Csizmadia, "Az erdélyi jog fejlődése," 149–50; Sunkó, "A Tripartitum továbbélése," 83; Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 352.

22 Bónis, *Magyar jog–székely jog*, 24–5.

23 Martyn, *Customary Law in Hungary*, 19.

24 Csizmadia, "Az erdélyi jog fejlődése," 148–49.

the scope of this study but should nevertheless be noted that it was precisely in the Habsburg period, at the Diet of May 1554, that the Transylvanian orders first invoked the *Tripartitum* in defense of the statute-making rights of the counties and cities.[25]

In the Transylvanian letters of judgments issued after 1556, the decree or decree of the country *(Decretum)* is often referred to when a judgment is given, and these references are generally to the text of the *Tripartitum*. More specific and precise references were made during the so-called 'evidentiary phase' of the trials, when the parties' lawyers submitted their *allegationes*, usually in writing, and their texts were transcribed at the other party's request. Less frequently, the original pleadings of the lawyers or a draft or duplicate of the texts have been preserved in family or institutional archives. One of the earliest examples of an accurate reference to the articles of the *Tripartitum* comes from the 1568 trial between the Hungarian and Saxon citizens of Kolozsvár, the conclusion of which extended the principles of the 1458 union to the election of a parish priest and the use of the parish church.[26] Although the letter of judgment only referred to the pleadings made at the trial and their abundance in the usual short form, the German translation of the *allegationes* has been preserved in the account of a Saxon citizen of Kolozsvár, edited by József Kemény.[27] This shows that, while the Saxons mostly referred to old customs and privileges, the response of the Hungarian *procurator* relied on the articles of the *Tripartitum* for the definition of the legal prescription, as well as on Calepinus' *Lexicon* and Cicero for the definition of the notion of *emolumentum*. On the basis of this example, reference to classical authors or using them as a source of law in the Princely *Curia* cannot yet be considered standard practice. Nevertheless, it may be concluded that the lawyers involved in this important case were knowledgeable in the laws of the kingdom and equipped with classical erudition.

Returning to the *Tripartitum*, the articles contained therein were referred to with remarkable precision in the lawyers' *allegationes*. Thus, in the spring of 1575, Balázs Tötöri's proposition, submitted in writing to the Princely Table, states [in a modernized transcription]: "I say in addition to the *latius*, that these lands in Tötör (Tioltiur) and Esztény (Stoiana), which are in Doboka County, Mikeháza (Mica), and Szilágytő (Salatiu), located in the Inner Szolnok County, which lands were owned by my deceased kinsman, Miklós Tötöri, your deceased husband, which lands should

25 "Contra illum articulum, quem iidem Domini Wayvodae proposuerunt, in eodem *Tripartito* descriptum est, ut quilibet Comitatus vel villa leges sibi condere potest, quamvis aliis in hac parte praescribere non potest." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. I, 520.

26 Kiss, "Kolozsvár város önkormányzati fejlődése," 171. The *sententia* was edited by Elek Jakab, see: Jakab, *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár története második és harmadik kötetéhez*, vol. II, 80–8.

27 Kemény, *Deutsche Fundgruben*, 88–149.

be handed over to me as I am the heir and as I expect it from the Court of your Highness, juxta *contenta decreti et consuetudinem huius Regni*, as it is written *prima parte titulo 98* […]."[28] Less often the articles of the *Tripartitum* are quoted verbatim. In 1599, the lawyer hired by the wife of Kristóf Keresztúri Ilona Körösi states in his *allegatio*: "[…] that *juxta contenta Decreti partis secundae titulo 82 in missione et commissione debet semper attendi modus et ordo patratae rei atque casus contingens et non contingens vel non deliberates […] per hoc* we are not obliged to prove nor to take an oath on it."[29]

Accurate reference to the *Tripartitum* was facilitated by fairly detailed indexes, edited according to a variety of criteria, such as those we know from the work of the court assessor János Zoltay.[30] The author of this manuscript must have intended it as a practical guide for those involved in the judgments of the Table, even in the cases for which the *Tripartitum* did not provide guidance. This may explain why, in addition to Werbőczy's articles, he also referred to the medieval decrees of Hungarian kings and to certain laws edited by the Habsburg kings as applicable to the administration of justice in Transylvania.

The decrees of medieval Hungary

The use of medieval royal decrees as a source of law is also attested by the *decreta* issued by the Transylvanian Diets. For example, the *congregatio* of Gyulafehérvár, held in February 1557, entrusted the setting of the price of charters to the *director* Márton Csoronk and the *litteratus* Benedek Gáldi, who "[…] perlustratis decretis divorum quondam Mathie et Ladislai regum Hungarie notent et observent precia singularum literarum."[31] The same commission was repeated at the Diet of Torda in April 1561, but this time for the charters issued by the minor chancellery.[32] The article of the Diet of Kolozsvár, held in the spring of 1578 regarding the cases to be discussed in Court, said: "no other shall be granted a reprieve by his majesty, but he to whom the law gives the grace according to the decree of King Matthias".[33] Finally, Article 15 of the Diet November 1591 decreed the punishment of those who concealed the wicked "according to the content of King Sigismund's decretum."[34]

28 MNL OL KmKonvLt, Cista comitatuum (F 17), Com. Doboka, T. no. 10.

29 ANR Cluj, Arch. Bethlen of Keresd (Fond 328), no. 328.

30 Oborni, "Zoltay János Supplementum," 152–59.

31 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 73–4.

32 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 191–92.

33 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. III, 130.

34 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. III, 390.

While the decrees of the Diet do not cite medieval laws by articles, Zoltay's manuscript refers to precise article numbers,[35] which leads us to believe that, depending on the date of its creation, he used either a manuscript collection of laws or the first edition of the decrees (1584), compiled by Zakariás Mossóczy.[36] The latter supposition is perhaps more likely, as the numbering of the articles by Zoltay matches the article numbers of the volume published in print, and copies of this volume reached Transylvania quickly after the edition. The volume in the Teleki Library in Marosvásárhely, for example, was already in use in 1586 in Gyulafehérvár, and by the end of the century it had passed through the hands of Zoltay's assessor-colleague János Gerendi, and the renowned lawyer and protonotary, Lukács Trausner.[37]

The next example of the citation of medieval decrees is more closely related to the use of manuscript law collections in Transylvania. According to Gábor Haller's handwritten note, on 18 August 1585 he petitioned Prince Stephen Báthory, King of Poland, for justice in his lawsuit with Ferenc Kendi over the Jövedics (Idiciu/Beleschdorf) estate and summarized the background of his case. His father received this estate from Queen Izabella, after the high treason conviction of Antal Kendi. His son, Ferenc Kendi started the litigation during the voivodate of Stephen Báthory, asserting that his father "was completely innocent and *per hoc* the queen had him killed and donated his property *per tirranidem* […], *ergo tanquam spoliatus* he asked the Table to be restituted in integrum." The Princely Curia—with reference to the text of the *Decretum* that no one should be convicted *sine citation*—decided in favor of Ferenc Kendi, and that was the reason why Haller appealed the case to the personal presence *(personalis presentia)*. But soon, as a young and helpless person, he was persuaded to release the property, withdraw the appeal, and so the estate was seized from him.

Then "not long after, I realized that I had done wrong, […] I had then retracted the appeal, and *virtute novi judicii* I asked for a new judgment. After which we had many disputes […]. I presented my argumentation with new and stronger evidence, showing that the ruler when *extremis malis extrema exhibet remedia* does not act ungodly, for *aliud fuisset* if someone had been *communis nobilis*, but being such *potentes magnates*, if the ruler had acted by course of law, he would have been killed […] *male et extremo pene periculo* the life of the prince might have been lost with it.

35 For example, on page 129: "Judices sunt duplices, ecclesiastici et seculares, Sig. 6. art: 1. Ecclesiastici de causis prophanis non judicant, Vlad. 1. art. 45, eiusdem 3. art. 61, item 4. art. 33. Secularium quidam scilicet [?] ordinarii, qui ex propria authoritate judicant, Par. 2. Tit. 77., And. art. 8 et 9., Sig. 6. art. 1., Vlad. 1. art. 10 et 42, eiusdem 4. art. 8." MNL OL KmKonvLt, Articuli diaetales (F 29), no. 3.

36 On the collection and editions of the medieval laws, see: Mikó, *A középkori Magyar Királyság törvényei*.

37 Spielmann-Sebestyén et al., eds, *Catalogus librorum*, vol. I, 195–96.

Ergo, the ruler, having both remedies, the law and the weapon in his hand, could live with it […] I have proved this by many examples, both old and new, that the rulers acted *in similibus casibus similiter.*"[38] By strange coincidence, or perhaps rather because of the special importance of the case, the above-mentioned proof, or rather the *allegationes* written by Haller's lawyer have also been preserved in another family archive. We know from these notes that Haller's old and new examples were based on the *Tripartitum*, or the laws of Kings Matthias and Vladislaus, quoted article by article, on the basis of which he believed in the justification of the murder of Antal Kendi and his accomplices.[39] The citation of the decrees by article is emphasized because the originals of the *decreta* did not contain article numbers; they were added by the compilers of the later manuscript collections of laws. It is therefore probably not mistaken to consider Haller's *allegationes* as evidence of the Transylvanian presence of these decree collections.

The *Quadripartitum*

As a source of law, there is no trace of the use of the *Quadripartitum* in the sixteenth century charters issued during the litigations before the Princely Table, although it also originated in the Habsburg Hungary and remained in manuscript for two and a half centuries. Nevertheless, it is known that two such volumes, once in the possession of the renowned lawyer Lukács Pistaky,[40] were copied in Transylvania and later

38 ANR Cluj Arch. Haller (Fond 353), II. serial, no. 23.

39 "Ubi proponunt quod Antonius Kendy pater ipsorum actorum sine legitimo processu juris nec captivari, nec interfici, nec etiam nota infidelitatis condemnare [?] per hocque bona sua amittere minime potuerit. Erre azt mondom quod in tali causa criminali longior mora non modo vitae regis et reginae sed etiam toti regno periculosa futura erat, nam idem Antonius Kendi cum suis complicibus non tantum in proventus […], verum etiam in capita eorum gladio et veneno insidiatus est, propter quod facinus idem Antonius Kendi cum prefatis suis complicibus, *juxta decreta Mathiae regis anni 1478 articulo 9. et item anni 1486 artic. 54.* a rege et regina cum consiliariorum et regni procerum et nobilium consilio punitus et nota infidelitatis legitimae condemnatus est, prout de articulis regni Transilvaniae anni 1558 jus fundamentum per expresse habet, quod quidem jus juxta decretum Tripartitum secunde partis titulo 2 observari debet. Si non placuerit extunc cum soleni [!] protestatione est appellandum juxta continentia decreti Tripartiti 3 partis titulo 3. Item quod princeps Decreta regni sine consensu regnicolarum violare et propria autoritate ea minime immunitare potest, prout cautum est in decreto Tripartito parte 2 titulo 3 ergo tale indultum seu illegitimum mandatum tanquam juribus regni et libertatibus nobilium aperte derogans juxta *decretum Mathiae regis anni 1471 art. 12 et 31 nec non et juxta decretum Ladislai regis anni 1492 artic. 9.* observari minime debebit." ANR Cluj Arch. Bálintitt (Fond 318), no. 24.

40 Pakó, "A kora újkori Erdély bíráskodása," 34–48.

used in the courts of law.[41] There is indeed evidence of the use of the *Quadripartitum* and of references to its articles in the courts of the Transylvanian counties in the first half of the seventeenth century, although once it was argued before the county of Torda that it had not been written by an accepted author and that it was not used in litigation either in Transylvania or in Hungary.[42]

The decrees of the Habsburg kings of Hungary

As noted above in connection with János Zoltay's manuscript, the author also referred to the decrees issued by the Hungarian Diets before 1569 as articles used in Transylvanian court practice.[43] Indeed, in the letters of judgment references to the statutes of the Kingdom of Hungary have been found. One of these was issued in the spring of 1578, on the octave term of *Reminiscere* (the fifth Sunday before Easter) held for the Transylvanian nobility. From the blurred notes *(signaturae)* entered on the dorse of the charter it can be deduced that the court judged the case of Pál Gerendi against János Baládfi and the defendant was ordered to produce his documents, the deeds by the following judicial term. According to the same notes, the trial continued with the submission of paperwork between the parties, then a *prohibita* was made, and in early November 1578, representing the defendant, Lukács Pistaky, submitted documentary evidence. And the judgment of the Princely Court concluded: "Deliberatum quod […] etiam tercie non […] vigore articulorum [?] *Noenzoliensium* bona per adhesionem [?] […] invalidate sunt […] ideo restituantur."[44] The reference to the articles of the Diet of Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica) can be explained by the fact that some of its decrees, mainly those concerning the forcible (illegal) seizure of property and the manner of its *reoccupatio*, were accepted by the Transylvanian orders at the request of the Hungarian orders.[45]

In addition to the above fragment, the following example can probably be linked to this provision. In 1579, in a lawsuit between Chancellor Farkas Kovacsóczy and Katalin Budai, the lawyer representing the Chancellor, János Bácsi of Kisfalud (Micești), claimed that in 1531 the late Gergely Budai Nagy of Sárd (Șardu) had obtained from the late King John Szapolyai the estates of Ferenc Budai in Kolozs County. This portion of the estate had passed into the hands of the defendant woman

41 Mikó, *A középkori Magyar Királyság törvényei*, 38–41.

42 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 352.

43 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 358.

44 MNL OL GyKOLt, Cista comitatuum (F 4), Com. Albensis, Cista 3, fasc. 5, no. 14.

45 "Articulos Novizolienses eatenus placuit observare, quatenus in illis dignitas nostra, Filiique nostri Illustrissimi, et regni utilitas, ac bonum publicum elucere videbitur. Maxime vero articulum illum, in quo de violenta occupatione bonorum, ac modo et ordine remissionis illorum, agitur." Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 61.

and was still in her possession, to the great detriment of the plaintiff and in violation of her right of inheritance. Since the Chancellor is the legal heir to these properties through his mother and such donations are invalidated by the articles issued in Besztercebánya and Pozsony ("universae huiusmodi donationes et collationes bonorum vigore articulorum Novizoliensium et etiam Posoniensium cassatae invalidatae et abolitae existant"), he requests their return.[46]

It is also most likely that the appearance of the formula in 1559 referring to the death of King Louis II can be linked to the disposition of the Diet of Besztercebánya and Pozsony in Hungary or, more precisely, to its adoption in Transylvania. In the charters issued in the autumn of that year, during St Luke's octave it is said, it seems that for the first time, that the trials had been postponed since the death of King Louis II ("ad quem videlicet terminum universae causae fidelium nostrorum regnicolarum Hungarorum ab obitu serenissimi principis piae memoriae quondam Ludovici regis ex publica constitutione adiudicari solitae generaliter fuerant prorogatae").[47] As a sign that this was not a Transylvanian peculiarity, King Ferdinand's letter of summons in the same year[48] and countless letters of judgment issued in the sixteenth century in Transylvania use almost exactly the same phrase. It is possible that this formula also emphasized the continuity of law, but—as they are legal texts—we should perhaps rather think that a specific measure, a royal decree (the *publica constitutio* mentioned in the documents) regulated the proceedings in some way. In some cases, the judgments were linked to the death of King Louis, just as in certain cases Transylvanian assemblies linked the judgments to the death of John Szapolyai or the arrival of Péter Petrovics, presumably because many court sessions were postponed. This phenomenon seems to be explained in János Kitonich's handbook on procedural law. He argues that the formula can be traced back to Article 22 of the 1542 decree of Ferdinand I of Besztercebánya and its subsequent confirmations, which stated that the period of confusion after the death of Louis II, during which the usual court sessions were not held, could not be counted in the period of prescription.[49]

46 ANR Cluj Arch. of the town Cluj (Fond 1), A2, fasc. I, no. 51.

47 MNL OL GyKOLt, Cista comitatuum (F 4), Com. Craznensis, Cista Krasznensis, fasc. 1, no. 2.

48 "[…] instante videlicet termino celebrationis judiciorum octavi diei festi beati Lucae evangelistae proxime preteriti ad quem videlicet terminum universae causae regnicolarum nostrorum ab obitu serenissimi principis quondam domini Ludovici regis pie memorie, sororii et predecessori nostri charissimi, juxta nostram et eorundem publicam constitutionem adiudicari solitae per majestatem nostram generaliter fuerant prorogatae." MNL OL DL 22894; "[…] in presenti termino celebrationis judiciorum octavi diei festi beati Lucae evangelistae proxime preteriti, ad quem videlicet terminum universae causae regnicolarum ab obitu serenissimi principis condam domini Ludovici regis piae memoriae […] ex *novis* constitutionibus publicis adiudicari solite per prefatum dominum imperatorem ac regem nostrum generaliter fuerant prorogatae." ANR Cluj Arch. Gyulay-Kuun, I. ser., no. 207.

49 Kithonich, *Directio methodica*, 10–2.

The articles of the Transylvanian Diets

According to the eminent legal historian Alajos Degré, "during the period of the independent principality, the Transylvanian criminal justice was quite independent of written legislation; not only did it not use a systematic code, but the texts of statutes and laws were not very well known."[50] Although the majority of the documentary material studied does not concern criminal trials—in any case, in this period criminal law was not treated as a separate branch of law—it provides a very different picture compared to the situation outlined by Degré. The judges and lawyers had an excellent knowledge of the texts of decrees, especially of the *Tripartitum*, the articles were precisely referred to, and the pleadings were based on the written law. Although it is true that in princely Transylvania, Diets were relatively frequent, the decrees issued at these assemblies were also put into practice. At the Diet of Medgyes (Mediaș/Mediasch), held on 28 January 1576, the orders took note that Stephen Báthory, who had left for Poland, had *in sua absentia* left Christopher Báthory and all the charters, donations and other letters that remained unaccomplished were to be sealed by the new ruler and put in force.[51] Christopher Báthory's letter of summon issued in 1577 during the *octava* held for the Székelys in Segesvár (Sighișoara/Schässburg) contains a precise reference to this decree. According to this, on 24 January the (fiscal) director Gergely Szentegyedi presented in Court the letter of judgment issued by Stephen Báthory on 6 August 1575, at the Diet held in Kolozsvár, in which the enemies of the realm, namely those who had left the country together with Gáspár Bekes, were condemned. The *director causarum*, in accordance with the articles ordered then ("vigore articulorum exinde editorum... universae judiciariae deliberationes literaeque superinde tempore regiminis fratris nostri confectae et inexecutae juxta publicam dominorum regnicolarum constitutionem debite executioni effectuique mancipare possunt atque debent"), requested the execution of the sentence which had not been carried out. The letter of judgment, which was indorsed by the protonotary Miklós Wesselényi, therefore ordered the voivode's envoys *(homo regius)* to execute the sentence with one of the deputy lords *(alispán)* or *iudices nobilium (szolgabírák)* of the county in which the rebels' estates were located. Thereupon, the envoys went out to the Bethlen (Beclean) castle and its appurtenances, to the estates of György Pathócsi, where they read out the letter of judgment *(publice et manifeste perlegimus)* in the presence of the neighbors and executed the sentence.[52]

50 Degré, "Az erdélyi büntetőjog," 156.

51 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 575.

52 MNL OL KmKonvLt, Cista comitatuum (F 17), Com. Szolnok Int., B. no. 25.

The dietal decrees were invoked not only in the case of judgments that remained unimplemented but also regarding the date when the octave courts were to be held, and this was usually referred to by the formula '*juxta publicam regnicolarum constitutionem*.' Less frequently, however, the place and date of the diet referred to were also indicated.[53] Sometimes even the court judgment was based on a decree of the Diet: on 18 May 1572, for example, Kelemen Ártándi was ordered to take a solemn oath together with three other noblemen because he had violated the decree of the last Diet of Kolozsvár by attacking the soldiers of the powerful Turkish emperor and the market-town of Simánd in Békés County.[54] In their pleadings, lawyers also often referred to the articles of the Diets, as in the case of the suit for the Valko estate in 1572 the *procurator* of László Károlyi did, who, referring to the decrees of the Diet of Kolozsvár of 19 November, asked the plaintiff to produce a privilege-letter and the Table to correct the text of the letter of judgment as it had been corrupted by the scribes.[55]

Conclusions

For the Principality of Transylvania, which came into existence after 1556, the constitutional setup of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary was the model. With regards

53 "[…] cum nos hic Albae Juliae, feria secunda proxima post festum Epiphaniarum domini proxime preteriti una cum nonnullis dominis consiliariis et magistris nostris prothonotariis juxta publicam regnicolarum constitutionem in comitiis eorum partialibus pari modo hic Albe Juliae ad vigesimam diem septembris novissime transactam [Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. III, 163–64.] celebratis editam […] tribunali consedissemus." ANR Cluj Arch. Matskási (Fond 338), 8. box, no. 794.

54 MNL OL GyKOLt, Cista comit. (F4), Comitatus Bihar, Cista Bihar, fasc. 3, no. 34.

55 "[…] hanc rationem prohibitionis assignaverat, quod domini regnicolae in comitiis eorum generalibus in civitate Coloswar ad festum beatae Helizabet viduae [Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek*, vol. II, 506.] in anno proxime preterito transacta ex edicto nostro celebratis, paribus eorum votis, ita conclusissent ut magistri protonotarii universos errores per se se vel scribas eorum in conficiendis literis commissos, tempore levationes earum, in sede judiciaria, ne causantibus damnum exinde sequatur, emendare et corrigere possint atque valeant. Igitur quia prout ex signatura quam idem procurator in sede judiciaria dicti domini regis, tempore perlectionis dictarum litterarum privilegialium raptim descriptam haberet, appareret, nomina dominarum Appolloniae et Annae in literis praefectionalibus praefati condam domini Ludovici regis non fuissent denotata, sed duntaxat isto ordine et stylo fuissent emanate, quod videlicet filias ipsius Joannis Genyeo jam natas et in futurum de femore eiusdem nascendas etc. Literae vero sententionales pro parte actoris conscriptae nomina earundem dominarum in literis prefectionalibus expressata fuisse exprimerent, quod vicio notarii et scriptoris (?) contigisset, ob eam itaque causam ipsa privilegia per actorem in specie produci et in ea parte emendationem earundem literarum adiudicatoriarum sententiam expeteret […]." ANR Cluj Col. doc. peceți atârnate (Fond 560), no. 29.

to the formation of the central court of law, usually referred to as the Princely Table, the medieval models were tailored to local circumstances. This explains the characteristics of the judicial system: the originally separate protonotaries for Transylvania and for the Partium region, which were originally separate (but not with separable jurisdiction); the separate *director* for Transylvania and *Partium* (the scope of whose activity cannot be precisely defined); the separate court sessions for each nation (later, with the frequent contraction of the sessions held for the nobility of Partium and Transylvania); the holding of these events in different locations; and the voluntary and partial absence of the Saxons from this system. The medieval models were also followed by ordering the court of personal presence as the court of appeal to the high court, where the chair was supplemented by councillors and which occasionally was attended by the ruler himself.

Medieval patterns with the continuation of earlier practice can also be seen in the sources of law used in judicial decision-making. This is most evident in the fact that Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* remained the most important reference in the judicial procedure of the Table, and there is evidence of its use in Transylvania from very early times. The precise references to medieval laws show that manuscript collections of *decreta* were in use not only in the Kingdom of Hungary but also in Transylvania. In the first half of the period under study, in the Szapolyai period, there are even references to decrees issued in the Habsburg Hungary, and certain articles of the decrees issued there were also considered valid in Transylvania. In addition, precise references to the articles of the Transylvanian Diets also show that the participants in the Court Judgment were thoroughly familiar with the laws and that the judicial procedure was utterly determined by the written law.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 134–150
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.08

Report on the Government of Transylvania, 1604

Notes on the Operation of the Provisional Habsburg Government Bodies*

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Received 25 January 2024 | Accepted 13 March 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. In the summer of 1604, the Transylvanian Council of Government, which had been formed shortly before, submitted a longer report to King Rudolf I of Hungary. They reported on the administration and financial situation of the newly pacified province of Transylvania. The most pressing issue, however, was the pay and maintenance of the mercenary corps stationed in Transylvania. Accordingly, the bulk of the report is devoted to discussing problems relating to the army. The report gives us an idea of how a Council of Government *(Regiment)* that had already been 'tried and tested' in the Austrian hereditary provinces functioned in Transylvania, and introduces the challenges members of the Council had to face.

Keywords: government, composite monarchy, Council of Government, governor, Transylvania

On 18 July 1604, Paul von Krauseneck and Carl Imhoff, commissioners of Rudolf I (as king of the Hungarian Kingdom) to Transylvania, sent a letter to the city of Beszterce (Bistrița) informing it of several important changes in government. According to these, the monarch issued a new instruction on the administration of finance and justice in Transylvania. The ruler entrusted the administration of justice to the governor appointed at the head of Transylvania and to members of the Council of Government (Ger. *Gubernatorn und Excelsius Regiment*). The Transylvanian Chamber was responsible for the management of finances.[1]

The institutions contained in the short, concise but sternly worded letter date from the second temporary Habsburg rule of Transylvania, when during the Long

* The study was prepared in the Institute of History (Budapest, Research Centre for the Humanities, HUN-REN), supported by the NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office) research project (Number: K 139281).

1 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 100.

Turkish War the territory of the Principality of Transylvania came under the direct rule of the Hungarian king for a few years. The public, political and military history aspects of the subject are well researched, but in Hungarian administrative history, in contrast to contemporary German and Austrian research, little has been said about these governmental bodies.[2] Apart from Győző Ember's monograph on the history of early modern administration,[3] only Zsolt Trócsányi dealt with this topic in his book published in 1980. In his view, the history of these governmental bodies is not part of the administrative history of the independent Transylvanian state, as they only existed for a few years in Transylvania. As such, they did not have a major impact on the development of the Transylvanian government.[4] The undoubtedly justified argument made by Trócsányi, an eminent expert on the subject, these institutions were only temporary in the Principality. Nevertheless, their history is worth looking into, as the considerable amount of surviving documentary evidence shows that, even if temporarily, the Habsburg government managed to introduce the governmental reforms that had been implemented in other parts of the Empire.

These administrative reforms, introduced in Hungary by Ferdinand I,[5] were in principle aimed at creating a government that would unite the entire Habsburg Empire according to uniform administrative principles.[6] The emphasis was on the government councils (Ger. *Regiment*) governing individual territories, known in the literature of administrative history as *dicasterium,* or government departments.[7] Based on a bureaucratic organization of work (permanent employment, trained officials, permanent headquarters), the *dicasterium* was one of the most important factors in the centralization of the modern age and a milestone in the development of the modern state. It is no coincidence that the literature considers it a major component of the modern state apparatus, since it was the *dicasterium* that first embodied (in principle) an administration independent of the influence of the estates.[8]

2 For example: Kruppa, "Tervek az erdélyi kormányzóság," 281–310; Kruppa, "Miksa főherceg," 817–45.

3 Ember, *Az újkori magyar közigazgatás története,* 423–33.

4 Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata,* 16.

5 Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 11–18.

6 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet,* 185–86.

7 The specificity of the *dicasterium* as a governmental body is not correctly conveyed in the English translations (e.g., seat of government, chairs of government, governmental court); therefore, I use the Latin terminology throughout the text.

8 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet,* 185–86. Jaroslav Pánek wrote about King Ferdinand I of Hungary's reforms in the countries of the Czech Crown that the monarch's first step was to create new state institutions not connected to the Czech estates, and thus could not be influenced by them. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 75.

However, we should emphasize, especially in relation to the Habsburg Empire of the period, that although certain areas of state administration—most notably war and finance—were significantly centralized, for a long time to come the Habsburg Empire remained a diverse, loosely interconnected conglomerate of states.[9] As a result, it could not be governed solely by the bureaucratic institutions listed; the court could not bypass the local political elite, and was constantly forced to compromise and coordinate.[10] The latter is also true of the short reign of the Hungarian king in Transylvania, although here, due to internal political events (which we will discuss later), Rudolf I took a much tougher stance against the Transylvanian estates than his grandfather Ferdinand I did in the case of the Hungarian estates.

The establishment of the governmental body/bodies[11] that operated between 1604 and 1605 was preceded by a lengthy decision-making process. There were several reasons for this. On the one hand, due to the constantly changing foreign and domestic political events and the unpredictability of the battlefield, it was not until the autumn of 1603 that Habsburg rule was actually sufficiently consolidated to allow any meaningful discussion of administrative reforms in the province (most contemporary documents used the term *provincia* for Transylvania),[12] and its integration into the complex monarchy of the Habsburgs in Central Europe. The events of the Long Turkish War (the repeated resignation and return of the Transylvanian Prince Sigismund Báthory, the rule of Michael the Brave voivode of Wallachia in Transylvania, and the punitive campaigns of Giorgio Basta) had left Transylvanian society with an almost insoluble contradiction. In February 1602, Sigismund Báthory stated in a memorandum to general Giorgio Basta that Transylvania would be doomed to destruction either by the large number of soldiers stationed there or by the campaigns of the Ottoman Empire, which was seeking to regain control of the territory.[13] It was at this time that Mózes Székely (later Prince of Transylvania), freed from captivity, came to the conclusion that the Principality could only be revived under Ottoman rule, a view supported by several prominent Transylvanian

9 Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1074–75. For further literature in English on the structure and administrative system of the Habsburg Monarchy of the period (in addition to the monograph by Thomas Winkelbauer, and Elliott's study), see footnote 118 on page 1075 of the cited article.

10 Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1074–75.

11 The relationship of the Chamber of Transylvania with the Transylvanian Council of Government is not yet fully clarified. It is probable that there was a certain dependency relationship, since the three government councillors were also chamber councillors and chamber presidents. Mátyás-Rausch, "Az erdélyi pénzügyigazgatás," 1106–19; cp. Arens, *Habsburg und Siebenbürgen,* 195–97.

12 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 77–83.

13 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. I, 654–58.

noblemen.[14] The name of Mózes Székely and his short reign in Transylvania should be highlighted because his action marked a radical change in the Habsburg court's relationship with Transylvania. Although the Hungarian king and several prominent members of his court had already 'doubted' the loyalty of the Transylvanian people in earlier years,[15] the Habsburg court was scrupulous in obtaining the consent of the Transylvanian estates for major changes in government (such as the appointment of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg as governor of Transylvania).[16] This tendency was interrupted after Mózes Székely's action and his subsequent rise to power. From that point, the royal court regarded Transylvanian nobles as notorious rebels and treated them as such.[17] Gerald Volkmer, in his magnum opus on the Transylvanian state, argued that the Transylvanian people, by increasingly taking up the banner of Mózes Székely, were in breach of the 'contract' *(Vertrag)* with the Hungarian monarch, and that this entailed the suspension of the historical Transylvanian constitution (i.e., the established Transylvanian political and power structure and the rights of the estates).[18]

This resulted in the introduction of a state administration through *dicasterium*, which was alien to the development of the Transylvanian state.[19] Why was state administration through the *dicasterium* alien to the development of the Transylvanian state? According to Trócsányi, the administrative development of the independent Transylvanian state was determined primarily by the presence of an external threat.[20] Under these conditions, it is understandable that considerable power was concentrated in the hands of the princes. The only central governmental organ of Transylvanian state administration was the princely chancellery. During the princely period, there was no administrative body in Transylvania similar to the *dicasterium* in the provinces of the Habsburg Empire, and the central administration of finance was ultimately under the control of the prince, although there was an 'office' at the princely court dealing with day-to-day finance. It was only in the eighteenth century

14 Oborni, *Erdély fejedelmei,* 108.

15 In his memorandum of 1599, György Zrínyi discussed how Transylvanian towns involved in rebellion should be fined. Documente privitóre la Istoria Românilor III. 380–81.

16 Kruppa, "Miksa főherceg," 822–23.

17 Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen*, 249.

18 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet,* 50, 53. The legal dilemmas involved in territorial unification were already a preoccupation of contemporary thinkers. The Spanish jurist Pereira in the mid-seventeenth century believed that territorial unification was generally associated with the preservation of rights and privileges, and that the only deviation from this norm was when rebellion or rebellion was to be punished. Sashalmi, *A nyugat-európai államfejlődés vázlata*, 115.

19 Mezey and Gosztonyi, eds, *Magyar alkotmánytörténet,* 184–85.

20 Trócsányi, *Erdély központi kormányzata,* 415.

that modern offices were 'established' in Transylvania, independent of the influence of the orders, with a permanent division of labour and division of tasks.

This is certainly not to suggest that the Hungarian royal court wanted to govern Transylvania solely through *dicasterium* because of the unreliability of the Transylvanian people, but merely to point out that, after the overthrow of Mózes Székely, the Habsburg administration no longer sought to introduce governmental changes in the newly conquered province by broad consensus.

The establishment of the bureaucratic state apparatus, which played a key role in the retention of the newly conquered province,[21] was not only delayed for years by historical events, but also by the 'complex statehood' of the Habsburg Monarchy. The development, characteristics and evolution of the *zusammengesetzter Staat* or *composite monarchy/state* have long been a subject of interest to scholars, with Königsberger and J. H. Elliott's works about the topic being the leading literature on the subject,[22] while the most recent and most detailed characterization of the Habsburg monarchy in Central Europe has been provided by Thomas Winkelbauer.[23] Winkelbauer's argument could be summarized as follows: the Habsburg monarchy in Central Europe in the early modern period was a dynastic complex of estates.[24] The most important link between the countries that made up the confederation was the monarch himself, who had different powers in each country/province and was forced to govern in different ways.[25] In Elliott's view, the main structural problem of the composite states in the early modern period was that the ruler maintained his centre far from certain provinces he held, and the distance from the centre required special governance arrangements, as we can see in the case of Transylvania.[26] The situation of Transylvania, while it was briefly a Habsburg province in the early seventeenth century, was special not only because it was very far from the royal seat, but also because it was annexed by the Hungarian ruler at extraordinary times.

21 In the literature on the history of public administration, it has long been accepted that without a bureaucratic state apparatus, it was impossible to finance a powerful army capable of conquering new territories for the ruler. Moreover, state building (Ger. *Herrschaftsverdichtung*) in newly conquered territories was not successful without a bureaucracy. Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 16–7.

22 Königsberger, "Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum," 127; Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 48–71.

23 Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht,* vol. I, 25. In German, the definition is: "eine monarchise Union monarchischer Unionen von Ständessaaten und ein aus zusammengesetzten Staaten zusammengesetzter Staat."

24 Winkelbauer, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht*, vol. I, 25; Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1068.

25 Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 14–5.

26 Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 56–7.

The thesis that stability in a newly conquered province by military force alone was not the most cost-effective solution was well known at the time;[27] long-term integration was achieved through central government offices.[28] In the case of Transylvania, however, the conditions of war, the widespread discontent in the province, and the subsequent reprisals following the rebellion led to the predominance of brute military force, and compromise solutions and administrative reforms in stages (which were, in fact, the main features of the administrative reforms of Habsburg rulers) were pushed into the background.[29]

The establishment and composition of the *Regiment*, which was set up in January 1604, was a topic of discussion for at least a year in the most important government bodies of the Habsburg Empire (including the Privy Council/*Geheimrat* and the Aulic Chamber/*Hofkammer*), but the Transylvanian estates were certainly not involved in this preparatory process. According to the central concept, the ruler would subsequently maintain contact with Transylvania through the newly established government body. In this way, the three Transylvanian estates (Lat. *natio*, Hung. *nemzet*) and the diet (Lat. *diaeta,* Hung. *országgyűlés*) would not have been the primary link between the country and its ruler.[30]

The idea that the independent legislative activity of the Transylvanian Diet should be radically reduced to the adoption of decisions by the Council of Government was conceived in the minds of the Hungarian king's advisers in early 1603. At the diet held in January 1603, the Transylvanian estates submitted a package of twenty-five points to the King's commissioners (Hans von Molart and Nicolas von Burghauß) and asked the commissioners to respond to them.[31] These were then to be enacted into law, i.e., into articles of law. In their report to the Emperor, the two Commissioners wrote that they had not given a substantive answer to these claims (Lat. *postulatum*). They

27 Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 55. According to the latest research, the Long Turkish War cost at least 6 million Rhenish forints to finance at the imperial level, and the cost of the field troops hired for half a year was about 2.3 million Rhenish forints. Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1053–54.

28 Elliott, "Europe of Composite Monarchies," 55.

29 Ferdinand I consolidated his rule in Bohemia in a three-stage process. The first step was the establishment of a new state apparatus independent of the estates, the second was the introduction of bureaucratic methods into traditional Czech institutions, and the third was the development of loyalty to the monarch and the increasing influence of the *Privy Council/Geheimrat*. The Emperor placed great emphasis on winning over the leaders of the estates, who themselves further consolidated Habsburg rule on Bohemian field. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 75–6.

30 Cp. Pánek, "Das politische System des böhmischen Staates," 71–5.

31 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések,* 297–98.

justified their decision on the grounds that they could not participate in the legislature, and the laws had to be sanctioned by the Emperor. This was a perfectly valid argument, but there was other reasoning behind the Commissioners' argument. They wrote about this in detail in their report. In their view, the estates wanted to use the Diet to weaken the power of the monarch in Transylvania and to impose conditions on his rule, which would inevitably lead to the Hungarian king being unable to consolidate his rule in the province he had acquired with much difficulty and sacrifice. In their report, they therefore proposed that the monarch should govern Transylvania '*per decreta et placeta*', i.e., by decree, until a governor or lieutenant (lat. *locumtenens*, Ger. *Gubernator oder Locumtenentem verordneten*) was appointed to head the province.[32] The future leader should then govern the province with the '*große Rat*', i.e., the governing council, still by decree.[33] The Diet would not have the right to legislate independently, but would only be presented with the decisions of the Council of Government for adoption, not discussion.[34]

The instructions for the Transylvanian Council of Government (*Regiment,* Lat. *Excelsi Regiminis provinciae Transilvaniae Consiliarii*), set up without the participation of the Transylvanian estates, were issued on 12 January 1604.[35] It is clear that the Habsburg government intended to administer Transylvania as an autonomous province.[36] The administrative reforms were modelled on the administrative system of the Austrian hereditary provinces (most notably the *niederösterreichische Regiment*).[37] The *Geheimrat* (Privy Council), which met at the seat of the monarch, was the main decision-making body. Below the Privy Council in the organizational hierarchy was the Transylvanian Council of Government (Ger. *Mittelbehörde*) as a mid-level administrative body, headed by the governor, similar to the Government Council of Lower Austria *(niederösterreichische Regiment)*. The difference between the two institutions was that the latter was not headed by a governor but by a lieutenant (Ger. *Statthalter*).[38] The *Regiment* consisted of twelve councillors, some of noble, and some of common origin. The most important functions of the Council, apart from political administration, were the administration of justice and military affairs.[39]

32 Relation, 88–90.

33 Relation, 88–90.

34 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések,* 297–98.

35 Several copies of the instructions have survived. Endre Veress published a copy of the text of the instruction for the Government Council, which is preserved in the archives of the Saxon University (*Universitas Saxonum/Szász Universitas*). Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

36 EOE V. 221.

37 Fazekas, "A Magyar (Udvari) Kancellária és hivatalnokai," 13–4.

38 Rosenthal, *Die Behördeorganisation Kaiser Ferdinands*, vol. I, 162.

39 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

According to Eduard Rosenthal, a scholar of the administration of the Austrian hereditary provinces, the greatest administrative development in the functioning of the *Regiment* was its permanence, i.e., the *Regiment* became a permanent office (Ger. *permanens Behörde*, *ununterbrochene Verwaltung*).[40] Naturally, continuity was also required of the Transylvanian Council, which had to meet even when Giorgio Basta, who was governor,[41] was not in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), the town designated as the seat of the Governing Council. In such cases, the senior councillor presided over the meeting.[42]

Turning to the report of the summer of 1604 and the circumstances in which it was written, it was the product of a government body which, despite many difficulties, proved to be able to function. The report on Transylvanian affairs was signed by five members of the Council: Paul von Krauseneck, Carl Imhoff, Count Tommaso Capreolo (as deputy to Giorgio Basta), Benedek Mindszenti, and Gábor Haller. Two annexes are attached to the report. One was a decree of the King of Hungary to the Transylvanian Government Council, and the other was an order to the General of Upper Hungary (Hung. *felső-magyarországi főkapitány*), Giovanni Giacomo Barbiano di Belgioioso.[43]

If we compare the report written by the members of the Transylvanian *Regiment* with the attached imperial decree, we can find several 'nodes' that were particularly characteristic of the situation of the Transylvanian administration at the time. The most expressive statement is perhaps the following quote, which appears in the introduction to the report: "alle tag so unglaubige beschwerungen einkomben."[44] In other words, councillors were under enormous pressure every single day. In the imperial decree, the response to this statement was that the king of Hungary acknowledged the efforts of his councillors to regularize the legal and financial situation of Transylvania, thus advancing the cause of the pacification and successful integration of the province.[45] The councillors placed particular emphasis on the efficient management of finances, since the key to the preservation of the province was the availability of sufficient funds to pay for military expenses.[46]

40 Rosenthal, *Die Behördeorganisation Kaiser Ferdinands,* vol. I, 162.

41 Mátyás-Rausch, "Giorgio Basta kormányzói tevékenysége," 183–98, (forthcoming).

42 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 359–67.

43 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

44 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

45 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

46 As early as December 1602, Giorgio Basta advised Rudolf I that if he did not want to lose control of Transylvania, he would have to spend a lot of money on maintaining and improving the army, without which the renegade Transylvanian estates could not be kept in check. Volkmer, *Siebenbürgen*, 249.

Although Giorgio Basta, after his victory over Mózes Székely, ruled Transylvania with a firm hand, in several places in his instruction the Hungarian king emphasized the importance of agreement and cooperation.[47] He instructed his councillors to convene the Transylvanian Diet, albeit for the sole purpose of voting the tax necessary to supply the army, and for generally contributing to its maintenance. As far as provincial liberties and privileges were concerned, the text continues, the decisions taken at the Diet at Déva (Deva) in the autumn of 1603 continued to prevail.[48] The Diet mentioned in the imperial decree was the most important meeting of the Basta period, as it was the first time that members of the Transylvanian Diet had met after the overthrow of Mózes Székely.[49] At this assembly, resolutions were passed, severely restricting former liberties, especially the privileges of the larger Transylvanian cities, and the estates were forced to adopt decisions that regulated the whole of the Transylvanian nobility.[50] The fact that the ruler insisted on the decrees of Déva sheds a different light on the desire for cooperation. Most of all because it was the decisions taken at Déva that deprived the Transylvanian estates of the possibility of cooperation. Thus, the convened Diet was merely a means of 'raising' the considerable amount of money needed to maintain the army stationed in Transylvania.

The central problem, as the report of the Council of Government shows, was therefore to overcome the financial difficulties. About two-thirds of the financial section of the report was devoted to the almost impossible challenges facing the Council in supplying the mercenary troops stationed in Transylvania. They advised the Emperor that Transylvania should have its own paymaster (Ger. *Zahlmeister)* and that the Upper Hungarian paymaster (Hung. *felső-magyarországi fizetőmester)* should not be responsible for financing Transylvanian forces.[51] In fact, the Council of Government had already 'knocked on an open door' with this request, since Georg Reichel/Reichl, who was already the court paymaster (Ger. *Hofzahlmeister*), had been entrusted with the task of settling Transylvanian military expenses in the autumn of 1603. Rudolf I had also stipulated to his commissioners in Transylvania that Reichel was to be in constant and close correspondence with the Paymaster

47 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

48 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

49 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések,* 297–98.

50 Several copies of these decisions have survived. For example: MNL OL P 677 Box 1, fol. 29. I would like to thank my colleague Balázs Viktor Rácz for the data.

51 In Upper Hungary, a military paymaster's office operated independently from the second half of the sixteenth century, which directly financed the military expenditures of the region. The majority of its revenues came from the Hungarian paymaster, while part of it was financed from the revenues of Upper Hungary. Kenyeres et al., "A Habsburg Monarchia és a Magyar Királyság," 1050–52.

of Upper Hungary, Joseph Ganz.[52] The independent position of military paymaster of Transylvania was probably established in the spring of 1604 and was directly dependent on the office of court paymaster. The post continued to be held by Georg Reichel, who was also cashier of the Transylvanian Chamber (Lat. *perceptor rationum)*.[53] The supply of mercenary troops was further complicated, the text continues, by the death of Stanislaw Krakker, the master of catering (Ger. *Obrister Proviantmeister*).[54] Paul von Krauseneck, who, incidentally, had written parts of the report in the first person singular, was forced to take over his duties because, unfortunately, no suitable replacement could be found.[55]

The members of the Council calculated that it would cost about 30,000 *talers* to maintain the army here, and that the taxes and revenues from the province would not be sufficient.[56] Their statement was not supported by precise figures, and there are no records from those years to which the Council members' statements can be compared. Only for the last years that could be called quiet (1598–1599) do we have a record of the princely treasury's income amounting to 219,000 forints and its expenditure to about 247,000 forints.[57] Reading through the list, it is evident that even at the end of the sixteenth century, the largest item of expenditure was the maintenance of the castles and the provisioning of the soldiers serving there. And by the beginning of the seventeenth century, in addition to the troops stationed in the castles, other royal troops had to be supplied for a country in serious difficulties. Reading the report of the Council of Government further, it transpires that the problem was not only that the province had little revenue of its own, but also that there was a shortage of high-quality minted coins, especially *taler*. This was not a new phenomenon, as the Transylvanian princes had already been struggling with this problem at the end of the sixteenth century, despite the fact that, among other things, a large quantity of *taler* coins had been issued in Nagybánya (Baia Mare) during this period.[58] To remedy the shortage of quality *taler* coins, Rudolf I advised members of the Council to mint as many coins with a high ore content as possible, but this was not easy, as the report shows. The main reason, as Gábor Haller

52 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 311.

53 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 401–2. Mátyás-Rausch, "Az erdélyi pénzügyigazgatás," 1104, 1126.

54 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18. At the end of March 1604, Nicolas von Burghauß informed the town council of Beszterce that Stanislaw Krakker had died. He asked the members of council to check what the master of catering had left behind in Beszterce. MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 40.

55 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

56 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

57 Oborni, "Erdély kincstári bevételei," 345.

58 Buza, *Magyarországi* és *erdélyi pénzértékek,* 68–9.

and his 'colleagues' argued, was that the mining sector, which was responsible for the extraction of precious ore, was also struggling, and in wartime there was little chance of putting this sector of the economy in order.[59]

In the report, the councillors repeatedly refer to the violence committed by the military and express the view that the key to peace and tranquillity in the province is the punctual payment of army.[60] The report sent to the Emperor, as well as the correspondence of the Transylvanian Saxon towns of the time, reveals the enormous financial and economic pressure that the Habsburg rule caused to Transylvanian society. I emphasize the Transylvanian Saxon towns for a reason: it was largely these 'well-developed' settlements that financed the Hungarian king's rule in Transylvania. The letters and decrees of the Governing Council, which it addressed in the spring of 1604 to the towns of Szeben (Sibiu) and Beszterce, among others, almost invariably contain instructions on the sums of money that the towns were to provide 'in support' of the Transylvanian army. They usually argued in their letters addressed to the towns that only the sums paid by the *Universitas Saxonum* would allow the mercenary troops to be moved into the Transylvanian castles as soon as possible, and thus the surrounding areas and estates of the towns could be freed from the soldiers who were consuming everything. In these letters, the accommodation of the Flemish and Walloon cavalry in the castles was directly named as the most important public good, which the city governments should promote with all their might.[61] In addition, they were also to provide for the Council of Government. It was not by chance that the government of Kolozsvár requested that the Saxon towns should not be the only ones to provide for the Council of Government and the Transylvanian Chamber, but that the other cities should also do their share.[62]

Despite the most advanced Transylvanian towns' considerable sacrifices made to consolidate Habsburg rule in Transylvania, the 'behavior' of the central government towards them was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, in the decrees of the Governing Council, the leaders of the towns were repeatedly threatened, implicitly or explicitly, if they did not cooperate with the Council and fail to pay the requested amount within a short period of time. The threat was that the unpaid mercenaries, including the Flemish and Walloon cavalry, would be 'forced' by the government to be billeted in the towns or on their estates and villages.[63] The letters also show that

59 Despite the difficulties encountered, the financial government sent out several commissions to survey the Transylvanian mining industry, and several attempts were made to introduce innovations in the Transylvanian precious metal mining. Mátyás-Rausch, *Ércbányászat a Báthoryak korában,* 242–47.

60 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

61 SJAN Sibiu ColMed (Urkunden) Urkunden Materia V. Nr. 15, 47.

62 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

63 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 124.

Saxon towns were generally 'asked' to pay between 2,000 and 8,000 forints, but there is also a letter addressed to the town of Beszterce asking Saxon towns to produce the next six months' pay.[64] However, the central government also sought to protect the towns' inhabitants, especially the merchants, from looting by soldiers. Carl Imhoff and Paul von Krauseneck wrote in a letter to the city of Beszterce on 1 August 1604 that they had appointed Mathias Alexander to protect merchants passing through Transylvania and their goods from the plundering of soldiers.[65] They justified their decision on the grounds that the merchants and their economic activities were of great benefit to Transylvania, and the town council of Beszterce was obliged to help the commissioner and comply with his requests.

It is seen from the above that the Transylvanian *Regiment* relied primarily on the economic strength and other resources of the Saxon towns, considered one of their primary partners in maintaining the stability of the province. However, this trust proved to be a double-edged weapon. In the spring of 1604, the members of the Council of Government had to deal with new problems. It became increasingly difficult to feed and supply the army. Public safety also deteriorated, and a wave of violence swept across Transylvania. In search of a solution, the Council convened the cities of the *Universitas Saxonum* for a special meeting. The meeting was to take place before the convocation of the Diet, and its main purpose was to discuss the administrative, legal, and financial issues that most affected the municipal jurisdictions. Invitations were sent by Georg Hoffman and Paul von Krauseneck to Szeben, Segesvár (Sighişoara), Medgyes (Mediaş), Szászsebes (Sebes), Beszterce, and Brassó (Braşov).[66] On the basis of Mihály Weiss's diary, Sándor Szilágyi believes that Georg Hofmann invited the three Transylvanian estates to the meeting in Nagybánya on behalf of the Government Council *(Regnicolas in Nagy-Bánya ad 5 diem jun. convocarunt)*.[67] However, from the invitations sent out, as well as from other sources dealing with the meeting in Nagybánya, it seems that only the ambassadors of the Saxon towns (the town judges and one council member each) were invited to the meeting. According to the text of the German-language invitation, this meeting was necessary in order to curb the military's depredations and violence and thus to bring peace and tranquillity to Transylvania.[68] The resolutions of the meeting in Nagybánya have not survived, and it is likely that it could not be held on the date announced. This assumption is confirmed by the report of the Council of Government, according to which the delegates travelling to the meeting in Nagybánya would have had to cross

64 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 101, 104.

65 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 108.

66 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 275.

67 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 73.

68 SJAN Sibiu ColMed (Urkunden) Materia V. Nr. 41.

very dangerous territory.[69] Following the failure of the meeting, no further talks were announced, at least not in the correspondence received by the municipalities. Subsequently, the Transylvanian *Regiment* sent to the Saxon towns a succession of instructions, which could be interpreted as a demand for payment. Their wording reflects that there was no room for objection and that the *Universitas Saxonum* had to continue to make further financial sacrifices 'in the interests of the homeland' *(solche Handlung dem Vatterlandt)*.[70]

In their report written in the summer of 1604, members of the Transylvanian *Regiment* not only reported to the Emperor on the financial implications of supplying the Walloon and Flemish cavalry stationed in Transylvania, but also on how they were trying to alleviate the acute shortage of grain and other foodstuffs. They had to rely mainly on the municipal authorities to remedy the latter. According to the report of the Council of Government and the letters to the Saxon towns, the castles in royal ownership formed a well-organized network, with the towns nearest to them being responsible for their supply.[71] Beszterce had to take care of two castles, Kővár and Szamosújvár (Gherla).[72] However, members of the Council of Government encountered new 'obstacles' in supplying the castles and the mercenary corps. In their report, they complain that the privileges previously granted to the Saxon towns, which had previously been confirmed by Giorgio Basta, made it very difficult to feed the troops. Carl Imhoff, in a letter dated 13 May 1604, describes in detail to the governance of Beszterce the difficulties of feeding the soldiers of Szamosújvár. According to the letter, the main problem was the inability to transport grain from the castle of Kővár to Szamosújvár. Imhoff therefore asks the town council of Beszterce to help the court judge of Szamosújvár (Johann Rattinger)[73] with the transport of grain by providing at least ten or twenty wagons. The letter also points out that the councillors were aware of the privileges enjoyed by the town, but that in view of the war situation they should be disregarded for the time being.[74] Particular attention is given to the privilege whereby the town of Beszterce was not obliged to give and deliver food to the army, nor to take their horses by force, unless ordered to do so by Giorgio Basta himself.[75] The increasing difficulties in supplying the army are also evidenced by the

69 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

70 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 275.

71 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–18.

72 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 68.

73 Jakob Rattinger, a relative of the court judge of Szamosújvár, succeeded Stanislaw Krakker as *Proviantmeister in Siebenbürgen*. ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 94. Konv. 1607. Dec., fol. 487–9.

74 MNL OL X 1249 1604/Nr. 68. In March 1604, the town of Brassó petitioned Giorgio Basta to respect their privileges and to forbid the *magister annonae* (Stanislaw Krakker) to unlawfully demand food from Brassó. Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 414.

75 Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 291.

fact that Basta, in his previous letters of command, had always promised Beszterce something in return for feeding the army serving in Transylvania. In such cases, the governance of the town was usually given the opportunity to deduct from its annual compulsory tax an amount to the value of the food distributed.[76]

In summary of the main message of the report compiled by the Council of Government, we should go back to the passage quoted at the beginning of the paper showing that the Council of Government was faced with unimaginable difficulties every day. The most pressing problem was to pacify and retain the province. Once Mózes Székely, who enjoyed the majority of Transylvanian society's support, had been deposed, the Habsburg government's primary objective was to prevent the re-emergence of anti-Habsburg voices. This task in itself posed a serious challenge to the Transylvanian *Regiment*, which had to accept the rule of the Hungarian king in an increasingly impoverished country and, at the same time, to establish a new administrative system. Members of the Council could not whole-heartedly concentrate on the latter task, as their most important job was to supply the troops stationed in Transylvania and to ease the social tensions associated with the military presence. Thus, they could not deal with such important tasks as the revision of the privileges of Székelys, the privileges and donations after the first abdication of Sigismund Báthory (1598).[77]

Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, after the Habsburg takeover in 1602, Transylvania was to be integrated into a composite monarchy of Habsburgs. According to T. H. Elliott's definition, an early modern composite state/monarchy is in fact a *mutual agreement* between the ruler and the ruling elite of the provinces/countries under his rule.[78] In the case of Transylvania, the Hungarian ruler also tried to reach at least some kind of agreement with the political elite of the province, although Mózes Székely's rise to power and his rule in Transylvania (15 April – 17 July 1603) made the royal court extremely distrustful. One element of this was the inclusion of several prominent politicians from Transylvanian noble families (Gábor Haller, Pongrác Sennyei) and influential Saxon citizens (Albert Huet, Johann Renner) in the Council of Government that governed the civil administration of Transylvania. However, the above report also shows that this 'reconciliation' had its limits. The most important decisions were taken by those whose loyalty to the king

76 The *magister annonae* issued a certificate of the quantity and value of the food delivered. Veress, ed., *Basta György levelezése*, vol. II, 56, 358, 393, 424.

77 ÖStA AVA HKA HFU RN 85 Konv. 1604. Aug., fol. 301–318; EOE V. 77–83.

78 Elliott, "Europe of composite monarchies," 55.

was beyond doubt (such as Vice-Chancellor Ferenc Daróczy).[79] The financial affairs, which played a key role in the retention of the province, were entrusted to Paul von Krauseneck, Carl Imhoff, and Nicolas von Burghauß, who were delegated by the Emperor to Transylvania to head the Transylvanian Chamber, which was set up at the same time as the Council of Government.

Going back to the quotation from Zsolt Trócsányi cited at the beginning of the paper that the Habsburg governmental bodies in Transylvania were short-lived, we should briefly summarize the fate of the Transylvanian Council of Government. The Bocskai uprising, which had broken out in Upper Hungary in the wake of general discontent (religious, etc.), naturally reached Transylvania. Transylvanian society rapidly joined Zsigmond Báthory's uncle, so that by the summer of 1605, it was no longer the Transylvanian *Regiment* but Bocskai who ruled Transylvania. The councillors retreated to the city of Szeben and after Bocskai was elected Prince of Transylvania, they returned to the Habsburg Empire.[80]

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 151–177
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.09

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Early Modern Székely Society from a Legal Historical Perspective*

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Received 25 January 2024 | Accepted 3 April 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. The paper discusses the changes in Székely society during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The topic is presented from a legal historical perspective because the scholarly literature has either paid no substantial attention to the legal framework of the early modern era or failed to utilize the sources relevant for Székely society. By re-examining already known sources and analyzing new ones, i.e., judicial proceedings, testimonies, contract and personal letters, it appears that the main turning points of the history of Székely society have been misinterpreted in some aspects, and a series of new questions have emerged that are yet to be answered.

Keywords: *ius regium*, early modern estates, social stratification, social mobility, legal history, Székely nation, Principality of Transylvania

The society of the Székely nation (Lat. *natio*, Hung. *rendi nemzet*) as one of the three estates of Transylvania and its dynamic changes during the early modern period is undeniably unique even in a regional context. Although numerous studies have addressed Székely history—and society in particular—since the birth of academic historiography, the necessity for new research cannot be overemphasized. On the one hand, our overall picture of Székely society is mostly determined by narrative sources and those published in the Székely chartulary. The constant repetition of previously extracted data from already known sources and statements in the scholarly literature has led to the extremely damaging phenomenon that György Bónis identified as early as 1942 and which still partly has an impact today.[1] Although

* The study was prepared in the Institute of History (Budapest, Research Centre for the Humanities, HUN-REN), supported by the NKFIH (National Research, Development, and Innovation Office) research project (Number: K 139281).

1 Bónis, *Hungarian Law – Székely Law*, 4.

the scholarly literature is constantly expanding, making it increasingly difficult to find one's way around it, the lack of substantial new findings only hinders historical reconstruction. In this light, the recent work of Teréz Oborni,[2] Kinga Tüdős S.,[3] Artur Coroi,[4] Zoltán Bicsok,[5] and Aranka Karda-Markaly[6] based on archival research is particularly valuable for early modern studies. In addition, the archaeological excavations in Székely Land in the last two or three decades are more than welcome, shedding new light on our knowledge of the medieval and early modern history of the Székelys.[7] At the same time, a number of other archival sources have also been utilized during the research, such as judicial proceedings, witness testimonies and contracts, helping us to modify and reconsider the picture developed so far. On the other hand, reading the scholarly literature, it is also seen that historians have paid little attention to the legal-historical processes that naturally accompanied the changes in Székely society, and have often interpreted them in a simplified and inaccurate way. In the present study, I will therefore attempt to present the most important changes in Székely society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries partly by reinterpreting previously known sources, partly by exploiting new ones from a specifically legal-historical perspective. I will point out the issues to which research has so far paid less attention than necessary.

Székely society before 1562

Though for a long time the Székelys did not have a written document recording their privileges, such as the *Andreanum* issued to the Saxons in 1224, they managed to preserve their prerogatives for centuries.[8] From the fifteenth century onwards, the specific rights of the Székelys, or parts of them, were set in writing on several occasions, primarily in connection with the judiciary system and military service.[9] This

2 Oborni, "Iszló/Isla falutörvénye"; Oborni, "A székelyek II. János választott királyhoz írott folyamodványai."

3 Tüdős S., "A háromszéki hadköteles székelység"; Tüdős S., "A székely örökség háramlása"; Tüdős S., "Kiváltságlevelek nyomában."

4 Coroi, "Kísérlet."

5 Bicsok, *Koronák, hattyúk, liliomok*; Bicsok, "Hídvégi Mikó Ferenc."

6 K. Markaly, "16–17. századi nemesi oklevelek"; K. Markaly, "17. századi hadviselő székelyek."

7 Botár, "Csík Árpád-kori településtörténetének kérdései," 71–94; Botár, *Kövek, falak, templomok*; Sófalvi, "Egy disszertáció margójára"; Sófalvi, *Hadakozás és önvédelem*.

8 Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 180; Kálnoky, *The Szekler Nation*, 39.

9 Examples include the charter of privilege issued by Vladislaus II in 1499, and the Székely national constitution ratified by Voivodes István Dobó and Ferenc Kendi in 1555, but also the resolutions of the national assemblies of Agyagfalva (1505) and Udvarhely (1506) issued by the Székelys themselves. Kolosvári and Óvári, eds, *A magyarországi törvényhatóságok*, vol. I, 2–28.

is important for the study of Székely society, because in the Late Middle Ages and the first half of the sixteenth century, Székely society was essentially determined by its strong connection with the military organization,[10] although in its polarisation wealth naturally also played a significant role, not least because it provided the financial background for military service.[11] During this period, Székely society consisted of four strata. Three were obliged to perform military service: the *primores* (Hung. *főnépek*, i.e., eminents), the *primipili* (Hung. *lófők*, i.e., horsemen), and the commoners (Hung. *közszékelyek* or *székely köznép*, Lat. *pedites*). The *primores* and the *primipili* received a larger share of the common lands to bear the financial burden of horse-keeping and military service on horseback, while the commoners were obliged to serve as infantry.[12] According to the 1473 decree of King Matthias Corvinus, the passage between the commoners and the *primipili* was guaranteed under certain conditions: if someone had sufficient wealth, he could be promoted from commoners to the *primipili* with the consent of the Transylvanian voivode and the Székely *comes*.[13]

From the fifteenth century onwards, we see the so-called *inquilini* (Hung. *földönlakók*, i.e., poor peasants in the service of wealthier landlords) emerging. They were exempt not only from military service but also from the Székelys' usual tax, the so-called 'ox-branding' (Hung. *ökörsütés*). The *inquilini* were an impoverished layer of society who placed themselves under the protection of a *primor* or a *primipilus*. Many of them certainly did so because their financial situation was insufficient to meet the expenses of military service, but some may have entered into the service of the upper classes, even if temporarily, to avoid or redeem their punishment or to repay a loan. At the time of the assembly at Zabola (Zăbala) in 1466, the *inquilini* were not yet serfs in the strict sense of the word, since they were not subject to ordinary taxes and were still free to serve whomever they wished and to change their place of residence.[14] On the part of the *primores* and the *primipili*, however, naturally, there was a tendency

10 Within the framework of the present study, I do not intend to give a more detailed description of the possible earlier organization of Székely society on the basis of kinship and the system of genera and branches *(nemek és ágak rendszere)* that determined the order of office-holding even in the sixteenth century. Although their interpretation is not a negligible problem from the point of view of the history of the Székely society, the understanding of the social changes that I intend to outline here would not be facilitated by their description, but would only complicate the already complex picture, not to mention that there are still many unanswered questions concerning these issues due to the lack of sources. See: Bodor, "Az 1562 előtti székely nemzetségi szervezetről"; Kálnoky, "The Szekler Nation and Medieval Hungary."

11 Jakó, "A székely társadalom útja," 21; Benkő and Székely, "Középkori udvarház," 25; Péterfi, "A főemberek, a lófők és a község," 197; Sófalvi, *Hadakozás és önvédelem*, 100.

12 Jakó, "A székely társadalom útja," 19–20; Egyed, *A székelyek rövid története*, 50–5.

13 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. I, 219–21.

14 Egyed, *A székelyek rövid története*, 52–3; Kálnoky, *The Szekler Nation*, 75.

to draw the *inquilini* into an actual serf-like dependence, against which the central administration tried to take measures already at that time, for instance at the 1535 Diet of Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş), in order to preserve the military potential of the Székely Land.[15] However, the dependent position of the *inquilini* was certainly tighter when they obliged their own remaining lands to a *primor* or *primipilus*. In this case, there was a conflict to be resolved between their status – which was, at least in theory, freer than that of the serfs in the counties – and the landlord's claim to the land which the *inquilini* had previously obliged for them. A 1519 lawsuit between András Lázár and Miklós Tóth sheds some light on the nature of such disputes. Presided over by John Szapolyai, the voivodal court once again declared the inhabitants of Benefalva in Maros Seat (Hung. *szék*, Lat. *sedes*, i.e., the special territorial unit in Székely Land), who had been arbitrarily liberated by András Lázár together with their land at the expense of the then rightful owner Miklós Tóth from being serfs. According to the justification of the sentence, the court did not see the infringement in the granting or restoration of personal freedom as such, but in the fact that the serfs were freed together with their former lands (apart from the fact that András Lázár was not the rightful owner of the village).[16] The discrepancy between the personal freedom of the Székelys and the commitment of their landed estates to various titles continued to be a determining factor in the legal disputes accompanying the changes in Székely society.

This slow internal transformation, together with external circumstances—the Ottoman conquest and the political-economic chain reaction that accompanied it—led to a transformation of the image of Székely society that essentially fitted into the process of organic development, but should be considered artificial because of its radical methods. After the fall of Buda in 1541, in the eastern part of the country a new state was formed. In the process, the central administration naturally sought to colligate the territories with their different administrative, legal, and social systems. This inevitably entailed the curtailment and transformation of the former prerogatives of territories and social groups with different privileges and particular legal systems. The procedure, particularly sensitive to the Székelys, began in practice with the extension of their tax obligations, but also affected their self-government and the autonomy of their judiciary system. In the Middle Ages, the only tax levied on the Székelys was the aforementioned ox-branding, which they were obliged to offer at the coronation of the monarch, at his marriage, and at the birth of his son. On these occasions, oxen were gifted to the king, with a brand imposed on them when they

15 Fraknói and Károlyi, eds, *Magyar országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. I, 614.

16 It is also worth noting that in the text of the sentence, the Latin phrase to describe the liberated peasants was no longer *inquilini*, but *jobagiones*, and that is why I also used the term 'serf.' Apparently, it also reflects the desire of the elite to treat the *inquilini* as serfs. Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. I, 344–45.

were delivered. In the 1540s and 1550s, however, in addition to the more frequent, sometimes even annual ox-branding, the authorities also tried to oblige commoners to provide monetary services.[17]

The growing tension between the Székelys and the central administration, together with the political events that accelerated during 1561–1562, led to the Székelys' uprising in April–May 1562. The Transylvanian armies eventually put down the uprising, and the Diet of Segesvár (Sighișoara), convened on 20 June, marking the culmination of the gradual legal and social metamorphosis of the Székelys.[18]

The edicts of Segesvár and the *ius regium*

The 1562 edicts of Segesvár are among the most important caesuras in the history of Székely society and law, which in many respects rearranged the previously more or less organically developing conditions in Székely Land. Two of the prominent milestones for Székely society were the change in the status of certain social strata and the introduction of the *ius regium* (Hung. *királyi főtulajdonjog*, i.e., general royal title of properties) in Székely Land.

As far as the reorganization and rearrangement of social strata are concerned, the edicts of Segesvár permanently ensured the status of the Székely *primores* and *primipili* similar to that of the nobles, although it was rather the *primores* who were considered real nobles in the next decades. The *inquilini* or, as they were later called, the primordial serfs, who had already been living in a serf-like status, were then declared to be owned by the *primores* and *primipili* in the same way as the nobles possessed their serfs, and the primordial serfs were thus accorded the same status as the serfs living in the Transylvanian counties. However, the commoners, who had previously been a free class but in the 1540s and 1550s were frequently subject to taxation, were kept by the king in his 'autonomous realm' and protected from the abuses of the *primores* and the *primipili*.[19] This status, however, meant that commoners in fact became the monarch's serfs who, together with their land, were often donated to his loyal supporters at his

17 Jakó, "A székely társadalom útja," 24–6; Egyed, "A székely jog sajátosságai," 366–67; Oborni, *Erdély pénzügyei*, 104–6; Oborni, "Székelyföld a Keleti Magyar Királyságban," 507–13; Oborni, *Erdély aranykora*, 227–35.

18 For more information on the process leading to the Székely uprising, see: Connert, "*A székelyek alkotmányának históriája*," 110–21; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *A székely nemzet története*, 107–21; Barta, *Az Erdélyi Fejedelemség születése*, 249–57; Demény, "Az 1562. évi felkelés," 59–70; Egyed, *A székelyek rövid története*, 88–95; Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 34–9; Oborni, *Erdélyi országgyűlések*, 134–35, 181–83; K. Markaly, "Csíkszék szerepe az országos politikában," 76–9.

19 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 162–3; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 203–4.

discretion, thus pushing many into the subjugation of private landlords.[20] The monarchs, however, could not completely disregard the military strength provided by the former infantrymen. Thus, the princes raised many of them from this 'princely serf' status and granted them the status of *pedes pixidarii* (Hung. *gyalogpuskások* or *drabantok*/*darabontok*, riflemen).[21] Also known as 'red riflemen' due to their clothing, they served the prince as infantrymen with swords and guns, in return for which they virtually regained their former status as free commoners: they were exempt from services and taxes, and their houses and lands became their own property.[22] In the lack of accurate censuses, it is still unsure however what proportion of the princely serfs obtained this privilege from the princes. According to Lajos Demény, who investigated the situation in Udvarhely Seat, at the end of the 1560s, there were fifteen–eighteen nobles, 300 *primipili*, almost 2,000 princely serfs, and 416 primordial serfs in this seat, and roughly ten percent of the approximately 2,000 princely serfs, i.e., 203 heads, regained their privileges through two collective donation charters (1575, 1576).[23] Due to the lack of adequate sources, Sigismund Báthory's 1592 letter about the auxiliary troops to be sent to the Moldavian Voivode Aron is a particularly rare and valuable source. According to Aron's letter, Báthory sent all the *pixidarii* of Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats—i.e., 446 heads—and all the *pixidarii* of Csík, Gyergyó, and Kászon Seats—i.e., to 354 heads—to Moldavia, plus 800 of the nobles and the *primipili* of Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats (whose total number was thus certainly more than 800).[24] For comparison, according to the 1614 census, 558 *pixidarii* were recorded in Udvarhely Seat, while 385 in Csík, Gyergyó, and Kászon Seats, and 1229 in Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats.[25] On their own, these data are certainly not suitable for drawing any particular conclusions. My intension is only to show that the number of *pixidarii* conspicuously varied in each seat (and if the change in the total population was not similarly uneven, then so was their proportion to the total population). At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their number in Csík and its adherent seats was technically constant, while in Udvarhely Seat it seems to have increased consistently, whereas in Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats it increased drastically. However, the causes of this phenomenon and the deeper demographic, social, and possibly even the political processes generating them, should be the subject of further archival research.

20 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 208–10, 213–15, 265–68.

21 Demény, "Báthori István és a székely gyalogpuskás rend," 159–62.

22 This is also clarified by the texts of the donation charters, of which we know several from the period, such as: ANR Covasna Fond 75. Fasc. 1. fol. 22; Fejér, Rácz, and Szász, eds, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek királyi könyvei*, vol. I, (VII/3), 1608, 1619, 1638–641, 1651, 1661, 1696; Demény, "Báthori István és a székely gyalogpuskás rend," 178–82.

23 Demény, "Báthori István és a székely gyalogpuskás rend," 160, 168.

24 EFK Ms. I. 310. 560–61.

25 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 197–562.

As far as the *ius regium* is concerned, it is in fact a legal declaration that the Székelys owned their lands by the grace of the monarch just like any other inhabitant of the country. This, in turn, provided a legal basis for the possible confiscation of properties, including the hereditary landed estates of the Székelys who had been convicted of *nota infidelitatis* (Hung. *hűtlenség*, i.e., crime of infidelity) and sentenced to capital punishment and forfeiture of their lands.[26] Although the edicts of Segesvár did not explicitly specify that the landed estates of the Székelys would be confiscated in the case of *defectus seminis* (Hung. *magszakadás*, i.e., escheat), it seems probable that this fact, just like the *nota infidelitatis*, provided the basis for the confiscation of properties. For example, in 1587, 1588, and 1590, Sigismund Báthory donated such estates in Kézdi and Maros Seats to his supporters, which had been escheated to the treasury after the death of their former owner without a legitimate heir.[27] Moreover, this seems to be confirmed by the 1596 decision of Udvarhely Seat, whereby the court ruled in the principle that the hereditary landed estates of *pixidarii* who died without an heir belonged to the prince.[28] Although the charters of privilege issued by Sigismund Báthory in 1590 separately for the *pixidarii* of Csík, Gyergyó, and Kászon Seats, Udvarhely Seat, Maros Seat, and Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats, declared that the property of the *pixidarii* who died without descendants was inherited by his relatives,[29] this does not seem to necessarily contradict the 1596 verdict of Udvarhely Seat. Since the edicts of Segesvár downgraded all the commoners to princely serfs together with their lands, if the monarch later granted some of them the rank of *pixidarii*, they clearly held their lands by the monarch's donation, and as such they could naturally be confiscated. However, as long as the *pixidarii* had collateral relatives descended from the ancestor who had been granted the privilege, they were entitled to inherit.[30] Due to the *ius regium* and the donation system based on it, the claim to inheritance arising from the earlier,

26 In the scholarly literature there have been various views on whether the *ius regium* may have been in force in Székely Land earlier. For a summary of the theories on this issue and a possible resolution of the controversy, see: Rácz, "A *ius regium* székelyföldi megjelenése," 1–16.

27 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 96–7, 107–8, vol. V, 148–50.

28 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. II, 282–83.

29 Fejér, Rácz, and Szász, eds, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek királyi könyvei*, vol. I, (VII/3), 1242–44, 1312. The privilege reissued to the *pixidarii* of Maros in 1591 with similar content was confirmed in 1599 by Andreas Báthory and in 1607 by Sigismund Rákóczi. Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. VI, 19–24.

30 The text of the charters of privilege also clarify that the right of inheritance is expressly reserved to those relatives who themselves have the status of *pixidarii*: "in consaguineos suos fratres propinquores pedites scilicet nostros pixidarios, si qui existerent, devolvantur et condescendant." Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. VI, 23.

pre-donation kinship or neighborly relationship was thus expired, but the donated person's descendants were naturally considered each other's heirs in the case of the death of one of them.

Obviously, the monarch would later donate to his loyal followers the properties confiscated due to *nota infidelitatis* or *defectus seminis*. It is easy to see that the new situation was not particularly advantageous for any section of Székely society. Undoubtedly, it was in the interest of the elite (*primores* or nobles and the *primipili*) that they could then increase their wealth relatively easily and quickly by gaining donations, but they were forced to compete for the prince's favor and the opportunity to obtain donations and, what is more, for holding offices as well. It became unavoidable that even the nobles originating from the counties, who had not owned any land in Székely Land before, could obtain properties through donations and, as a result, could hold offices. In the 1560s and 1570s, the Székelys repeatedly demanded the remedy for their grievances in their petitions to the monarchs (John II and Stephen Báthory), but the Székelys never actually asked for the abolition of the donation system in Székely Land. The elite who drafted the petitions did request that the monarch should not be allowed to donate land in Székely Land at all, but that land should not be given to foreigners (i.e., to the nobles of the counties), but to them, the Székely nobles and *primipili*, and that they should actually have access to the donations received so far.[31] However, it was not only to the elite that the introduction of the *ius regium* in Székely Land caused certain grievances. Although scholars tend to present the donation system only from the point of view of the prince and the treasury or the elite, we cannot ignore the fact that it also had a decisive impact on the lives of the lower social strata. As the aforementioned decision of Udvarhely Seat clearly demonstrates, the *ius regium* was the basis for confiscation also in the case of *defectus seminis*. In this case, the escheated property was often only a single house and its accessories—i.e., property of rather modest value—but the fact that the right of inheritance of collateral relatives and neighbors to these assets was abolished unequivocally violated the traditional social and economic background of village communities and made it much easier for newcomers to acquire properties and settle in the village.

Although the scholarly literature does not emphasize it, I consider it crucial to point out that the partial restoration of the Székelys' liberties during the Long Turkish War (1591–1606) and the attempts directed at it did in no way affect the legitimacy of the *ius regium* in Székely Land. In fact, those charters of privilege

31 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 326–27; Oborni, "A székelyek II. János választott királyhoz írott folyamodványai," 79, 88.

regularly confirmed the validity of princely donations.[32] Consequently, the transformation of the land ownership system in Székely Land seems to have become absolutely fixed by the end of the sixteenth century, and the perception that the nobles, *primipili,* and *pixidarii,* owned their estates by the grace of the monarch became axiomatical. The legitimacy of the *ius regium* in Székely Land was last questioned in a 1568 petition and at the 1571 Diet of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), but even then only in relation to the estates held successively since before 1562. However, the 1571 Diet placed the burden on the Székelys to prove that their lands had never been subject to the *ius regium*.[33] This, of course, could not be fulfilled, since the exemption of the Székely territories from the *ius regium* was—as already explained—not declared in the privilege charter, unlike that of the Saxons.

An important catalyst for the consolidation of the new system of land ownership was the fact that the Princely Table became the Székelys' forum of appeal rather than the court of Udvarhely Seat. At the Princely Table, judgments were made in accordance with the general law of the country instead of the local customary law, which had been used by the Székelys before but was now pushed into the background by the edicts of Segesvár.[34] Another such factor was the adaptation of the Székelys to the current circumstances. Although they had previously held their lands without a royal donation, since the *ius regium* had not been in force in Székely Land before 1562, they sought to confirm their existing rights through *novae donationes* (Hung. *új adományok*, i.e., new donations) following the decision of the 1571 Diet of Kolozsvár.[35] This meant that the monarch acknowledged by a newly issued charter of donation that the Székely noble or *primipilus* legitimately owned the property for which the *nova donatio* was requested. The beneficiary was then able to assert his rights much more effectively in any lawsuits, since he now had a document which

32 Baranyai Decsi, *Magyar história*, 259; Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. IV, 153–54, vol. V, 171; Demény, "Mihály vajda szabadságlevelei," 124; Nagyajtai Kovács, ed., "Székelyekről közlemények," 182–83.

33 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 502–3; Oborni, "A székelyek II. János választott királyhoz írott folyamodványai," 78, 87.

34 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 163–64; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 204–5. It should be noted, however, that even after 1562, in the case of lawsuits started before 1562, it could be a basis of demur if the lawsuit was immediately transferred from the seat to the Princely Table, thus violating the order of appeal of the time, since this act had neglected the jurisdiction of Udvarhely Seat. ANR Covasna Fond 75. Fasc. 1. fol. 9.

35 ANR Covasna Fond 75. Fasc. 1. fol. 23; Fejér, Rácz, and Szász, eds, *Az erdélyi fejedelmek királyi könyvei*, vol. I, (VII/3), 104, 242, 275, 290, 336, 352, 398, 423, 432, 479, 486, 491, 527, 533–5, 603, 1649; Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. IV, 63–4, vol. V, 98–100, 136–37; Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. II, 115.

had probative value at the Princely Table. In fact, from the 1590s it was common practice to refer to the charters of donation at the courts of the Székely seats, at least according to the surviving proceedings of the court of Udvarhely Seat.[36] The only change in this respect happened in 1636, when, following the charter of privilege of George Rákóczi I, the properties of the Székelys who died without heirs were not escheated but inherited by the relatives of the deceased.[37] In essence, therefore, the fact of *defectus seminis* did not then procure confiscation, but the property of those convicted in *nota infidelitatis* was still vested in the treasury. Thus, the *ius regium* did not cease to exist in Székely Land at all, but the monarch merely renounced the possibility to enforce his rights in the case of *defectus seminis*.

In addition to the modification of the status of certain social strata and the introduction of the *ius regium* in Székely Land, the edicts of Segesvár, as a complex set of provisions, brought further changes in the rights and obligations of the Székelys. The taxation of Székely commoners and primordial serfs became permanent (at least in theory): from time to time they were to pay the tally tax, and extraordinary taxes were levied on them (for example, the amount to be spent on the construction of Várad), which they did not even object to in any substantial way.[38] Theoretically, tax exemption for the nobles and the *primipili* remained in force right after 1562, and they continued to perform military service: the nobles with a few horses and appropriate equipment, the *primipili* with one horse and a helmet, shield, and spear. The salt mines in Székely Land were confiscated, and the serfs were deprived of free access to salt.[39] The nobles continued to be granted salt for the necessities of their households, and although the edicts of Segesvár did not denominate the *primipili* as entitled to free salt, it seems likely that they were included in this privilege, since the subsequent laws confirmed their right to free salt for their households similarly to

36 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. II, 28–29, 254, 340. However, the Székely nobles and *primipili* did not stop vindicating some elements of their former customary law at the Princely Table when their cases were disputed, especially with regard to the possibility of redeeming themselves from *poena capitalis* (*főbenjáró ítélet*, either capital punishment or forfeiture of property) on twenty-four *marcae*, the institution of *praefectio naturalis* (*fiúleányság*, the right of female descendants to inherit the properties in absence of male successors), and the customs related to hiring lawyers. Oborni, "A székelyek II. János választott királyhoz írott folyamodványai," 89.

37 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. V, 261–63. Some scholars mistakenly consider this privilege as a retrieval of the Székelys' full immunity from the *ius regium*. See: Balogh, *A székely nemesség*, 3.

38 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 299–300, 362, 367, 371, 375, 377, vol. III, 139, 143, 147, 159, 163, 170, 179, 198, 203, 209, 213–14, 216, 226, 231, 234, 365, 367, 371, 374, 376, 392, 402, 417, 420, 423, 447, 449, 460–61, 469–71, 485, 494–95.

39 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 166; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 207.

the nobles.[40] There were also significant changes in the self-government and judicial system of the Székelys. The court of each seat had to sit in judgement every fifteen days, and a board of twelve nobles and *primipili*—who were experts in law—had to participate in the jurisdiction, plus the seats had to appoint a notary. In addition, the appeals had to be made directly to the Princely Table from the court of the seats, rather than to the court of Udvarhely.[41] The Székelys also considered strengthening the power of the so-called 'royal judges' (Lat. *iudices regii,* Hung. *királybírók*,) as a serious violation of their self-government and autonomous jurisdiction. The 1559 edict of the Diet of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) already referred to these officials as the prince's officers (Lat. *officiales principum*), indicating that they were in fact the representatives of the monarch and enforcers of his will in the Székely seats. In addition to their participation in judicature, they were also entitled to half of the fines, and even the whole of the fines imposed for malpractice related to the production and transport of salt.[42] Also due to the uprising, two castles were built in Székely Land: Udvarhely/Székelytámadt (Odorheiu Secuiesc) castle in Udvarhely Seat, which was built from a former monastery building, and the newly erected Várhegy/Székelybánja (near Lécfalva, Leț) castle on the verge of Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats. Their status was a constant source of conflict between the monarch and the Székelys, as the captains appointed to supervise them—and at the same time the seat itself—committed numerous abuses in the following decades to the detriment of the local population.[43]

The struggle of the Székelys to regain their privileges

In the period following the edicts of Segesvár, the Székelys necessarily made several attempts to regain some of their former privileges, but with no significant success. The next time there was a systemic change in the privileges taken from the Székelys was only during the Long Turkish War, when several charters of privilege were issued. They include one issued on 15 September 1595, one on 3 November 1599, two on 28 November 1599, one on 7 March 1600, two on 31 December 1601, and one on 16 February 1605.[44]

40 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 344–45; vol. III, 204, 223, 227, 392, 487.

41 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 163–64; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 204–5.

42 Oborni, "A királybírák szerepe," 106–7; Oborni, "Székelyföld a Keleti Magyar Királyságban," 513–16.

43 Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 39–41.

44 Baranyai Decsi, *Magyar história*, 257–61; Szabó, ed., "Mihály vajda adomány-levele," 789–91; Szádeczky, ed., *Erdély és Mihály vajda története*, 313–15; Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds,

The first intense involvement of the Székelys in the war was connected to the campaign in autumn 1595. In addition to the Transylvanian and Wallachian armies and the mercenaries, which seemed insufficient to stop the army of Pasha Sinan, who was approaching Transylvania, it seemed obvious to involve the Székelys in the campaign—for the first time since the withdrawal of their prerogatives. The prince promised them the restoration of their lost privileges. This call naturally attracted huge numbers of Székelys, who had become princely serfs, and private serfs under the prince's banner. Although Prince Sigismund Báthory, under pressure from the counties and the Székely nobility, later preferred to back down from his promise, the gathered Székely army—which alone made-up half of the assembled armies of the anti-Ottoman alliance—could no longer be disbanded. On 15 September 1595, in a charter issued at Feketehalom (Codlea), Sigismund Báthory guaranteed the restoration of the former privileges of the Székelys under certain conditions. The Székelys who liberated the central part of Wallachia and who had valiantly fought in the battle of Gyurgyevó (Giurgiu) returned home and refused to fulfil their serfly services to their landlords; in some locations the confrontation between the liberated Székelys and the nobles even ended in violence. The Diet finally annulled the Charter of Feketehalom granting the Székelys' privileges and restored their former serf status together with their landed estates. The Székely commoners withstood the decision with armed resistance, especially in Maros, Csík, and Gyergyó Seats. The prince's troops led by the captains of Udvarhely and Várhegy and the royal judges put down the opposition using severe measures: many Székelys were killed, mutilated, and tortured, several villages were burnt down, and the weapons and spoils of war were confiscated. This series of events in the first months of 1596 is remembered as the 'bloody carnival of the Székelys.'[45]

The 1599 and 1600 charters of privilege were issued by Voivode of Wallachia Michael the Brave and can be considered the outcome of the struggle for power over the possession of the Principality of Transylvania. After the resignation of Sigismund Báthory, his cousin Andreas Báthory, a cardinal who had been called home from Poland, became prince of Transylvania. Since his accession to power went against the interests of Emperor Rudolf—who considered Transylvania a part his realm since his agreement with Sigismund Báthory—Voivode Michael could take advantage of the opportunity to assert his own ambitions by invoking the interests of the emperor. After launching a campaign against the Principality, he immediately tried to persuade the Székelys to take sides with him by promising them the restoration of their privileges. The aforementioned 1599 and 1600 charters of privilege were

Székely oklevéltár, vol. IV, 150–54, vol. V, 168–71; Demény, "Mihály vajda szabadságlevelei," 122–27; Nagyajtai Kovács, ed., "Székelyekről közlemények," 181–84.

45 Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 54–63.

the results of this attempt.[46] Although Voivode Michael was removed from power with the help of the emperor to restore Sigismund Báthory's reign, the privileges concerning the Székelys were not withdrawn, and in 1601 Báthory issued new—considerably revised—charters of privilege for them.[47] They already permanently fixed the position of the Székelys, mainly because in 1605 Prince Stephen Bocskai also confirmed their provisions.[48]

Through these privileges, the rulers also actively sought to shape the image of Székely society using artificial means in accordance with their current political needs. The 1595 Charter of Feketehalom declared that Székely commoners who had become serfs after 1562 were free again, but at the same time made this concession subject to certain conditions (oath-taking, taxation, military service, etc.), including that the nobles and the *primipili* had the right to keep all their landed estates.[49] I would argue that it was precisely this clause that made it impossible to enforce the deed, since after 1562 the commoners became princely serfs together with their previously owned lands, and the monarch naturally donated them to private landlords together with these properties. According to the terms of the Charter of Feketehalom, although the commoners who had become private serfs were personally freed from their subjugated status and were thus no longer obliged to perform serfly services, the lands on which they lived continued to be the property of the nobleman or *primipilus*. The Diet of December 1595, which annulled the privilege, justified the revocation of the privileges precisely on the basis of the violation of this condition, i.e., the commoners forcibly occupied those properties of the nobles and *primipili* that had been owned by commoners before 1562 and on which they had since lived as princely serfs and, subsequently, as serfs of private landlords—even though, according to the Charter of Feketehalom, these belonged to the nobles and *primipili*. In the dispute between the elite and the commoners, the above-mentioned *ius regium* was also used as a reference for the decision: "[…] as our Székely noble lords have possessed their properties unperturbed by legally justified donations of the previous pious princes and Your Majesty, and we see nothing that they have sinned for which they should be deprived of their properties, but have served faithfully and piously if required […] which donations are prior to the new privilege of the Székelys; *per hoc* the first shall stand against the last, *nam qui prior est tempore, potior est iure*."

The Diet therefore announced that the nobles and *primipili* could not lose their estates, since they had done nothing against the prince (meaning that they were

46 Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 63–71.

47 Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 71–3.

48 Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 77–8.

49 Baranyai Decsi, *Magyar história*, 259.

not disloyal), but that the donation charters they had received were earlier than the present charter of privilege of the Székelys. Therefore, on the basis of the principle of temporal priority (*qui prior est tempore, potior est iure*), it is easy to conclude that the nobles and *primipili* could keep their lands despite the liberation of the commoners.[50] With regard to land ownership, the Charter of Feketehalom was also based on the legal framework established by the edicts of Segesvár, i.e., it did not renounce the *ius regium* in Székely Land; in fact, the monarch explicitly insisted on maintaining the donation system. The legal argumentation contained in the parliamentary decision is not a legal maneuver or a means of oppression—as previously claimed by several historians, such as Lajos Demény and Ákos Egyed[51]—but a very clear and understandable line of thought. On this basis, I argue that although the liberation of the serfs went against the interests of the nobles and the *primipili;* this decision of the government cannot be seen as an attempt to forcefully relegate the Székely commoners to serfs. However, the misunderstanding deriving from the status of the lands—i.e., who was entitled to own the land used by the serfs—resulted in a wave of violence and anarchy, during which the Diet had no choice but to revoke the ambiguous charter, the terms of which the serfs had indeed violated.

This is a problem that pervades the charters of donation of Voivode Michael and their interpretations. It is a recurring observation in the scholarly literature that the content of the privileges issued by Voivode Michael to Kézdi Seat on 3 November 1599, once to Udvarhely, once to Maros, Udvarhely, Csík, Gyergyó, Kászon, Sepsi, Kézdi, and Orbai Seats on 28 November 1599 contradicts the content of the charter issued on 7 March 1600 to Csík, Gyergyó, and Kászon. Their reasoning is based on the fact that the former privileges liberated the commoners, while the latter, in relation to the litigations about the nobles' and commoners' landed estates, disposed that the nobles and *primipili* remained in possession of all their properties (not only those acquired before 1562, but also those that they acquired ever since then).[52] In contrast, I see no discrepancy between these charters. Similarly to the 1595 Charter of Feketehalom, the charters of privilege of November 1599 also restored the personal freedom of the commoners.[53] The charter of March 1600 clarified that only the social status of the commoners had changed, while their former lands, which had been transferred to the nobles and the *primipili* by donation, purchase or pledge, remained in their possession, as the 1599 charters did not intend to radically

50 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. III, 487–88.

51 Demény, "Az 1562. évi felkelés," 31–2; Egyed, *A székelyek rövid története*, 107–8; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 64; Balogh, *A székely nemesség*, 56–8.

52 Demény, "Mihály vajda szabadságlevelei," 122–24; Balogh, *A székely nemesség*, 58–60; Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 68; K. Markaly, "Csíkszék szerepe az országos politikában," 89.

53 Szabó, ed., "Mihály vajda adomány-levele," 789; Szádeczky, ed., *Erdély és Mihály vajda története*, 314; Demény, "Mihály vajda szabadságlevelei," 122–24.

reorganize the system land ownerships. The charter of March 1600 does not therefore contradict the 1599 charters but rather confirms them by stating that the liberated commoners were free to move from the estates of the nobles and the *primipili* (since they had regained their personal freedom). This is supported, for example, by the act of Imre Lőrincz's relict in 1599, in which she dismissed Mihály Incze and Pál Incze and freed them from all services, allowing them "to leave our land at any time they wish, they may leave, they are free with themselves."[54] However, the March 1600 charter set a deadline (24 April), which is an absolute limitation: those who did not leave the lands by then remained in serf status, and the landlords could settle new serfs to substitute those who had left.[55]

Sigismund Báthory confirmed the privileges of the Székelys on 31 December 1601, after they had presented one of their earlier donation charters (presumably the one of 1599). Since, as the charter stated, the Székelys were "born to bear arms rather than to work as peasants," it liberated all Székelys who had become serfs after 1562. These liberated serfs formed the large group of *libertini* (Hung. *szabad székelyek*, i.e., free Székelys). However, as far as the system of donations is concerned, the 1601 privilege charter did not bring any change in this respect. Only the sale or pledging of the donated lands was declared null and void, not the acquisition of the estate by means of donation.[56] In his charter issued on 16 February 1605, Stephen Bocskai also guaranteed the libertine status of commoners, which did not change during the existence of the Principality of Transylvania.[57]

It should also be noted that the scholarly literature considers certain articles of the Diets at Lécfalva in October 1600 and Medgyes (Mediaș) in August 1602 (12 and 14 October 1600, 26 August 1602) as revoking the privileges of Voivode Michael of 1599–1600 and Sigismund Báthory of 1601, which pushed the liberated commoners back to serf status.[58] In my opinion, however, these occasions did not actually restore former social relations, since article 12 October 1600 only disposed of the reconstruction of the destroyed castles in Székely Land (Várhegy and Udvarhely), while article 14 October 1600 provided for the procedure of compensation for the damage caused not only by former serfs but also by the *primipili* and nobles.[59] Article 26 August 1602 declares the subjection of those serfs to the landlords who had already

54 MNL OL P 2257 215. 1. fol. 2r.

55 Demény, "Mihály vajda szabadságlevelei," 124.

56 Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. IV, 150–54, vol. V, 168–71.

57 Nagyajtai Kovács, ed., "Székelyekről közlemények," 182–83.

58 Jakab and Szádeczky, *Udvarhely vármegye*, 300; Connert, *A székelyek alkotmányának históriája*, 147; Szádeczky-Kardoss, *A székely nemzet története*, 146; Balogh, *A székely nemesség*, 61; Oborni, "A székelyek országrendisége," 72, 74; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 68.

59 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. IV, 556–57.

been quasi-serfs before 1562 (Hung. *ősjobbágyok*, i.e., primordial serfs) and those who had bound themselves as serfs since the privilege charters in force (Hung. *fejekötött jobbágyok*, i.e., 'head-bounded' serfs). Another source of misunderstanding in the scholarly literature may derive from the same article, according to which nobles and the *primipili* were perfectly legitimate owners of their donated estates as well as their properties acquired by sale and purchase, exchange, or pledge (except for those seized by force) and that no one shall perturb their possession.[60]

The previous analysis, however, has shown that the privileges issued during the Long Turkish War, without exception, granted only personal freedom to the commoners who had become serfs of private landlords, but none of these documents restored the ownership of their original lands, and all of them proclaimed the legitimacy of the prince's donations. The latter provision of the Medgyes Diet is therefore logically linked to these observations and cannot be interpreted as a means of relegating the commoners to serf status. Finally, the assessment of article 26 August 1602 as a revocation of the liberation of commoners is contradicted by the fact that the same Diet, in its Articles 30 and 31, which disposed of the collection of contributions to the costs of envoys and gifts to be sent to the emperor, also specifies the amount to be paid by the *libertini*,[61] which would obviously make little sense if their liberation had been simultaneously revoked.

Székely society after the Long Turkish War

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, a rather complex picture of Székely society had developed, but afterwards no drastic changes like those of the previous period occurred during the early modern period. The circle of those with a free status was made up of the nobles, *primipili*, *pixidarii,* and *libertini*, as well as the 'bourgeoisie,' a narrow stratum of Székely society that was in a special position and is, therefore, not described in detail in this study. With regard to the situation of the nobles and the *primipili*—apart from the fact that during the seventeenth century the princes sought to strengthen these classes through their donations[62]—I will briefly address the similarities and differences in their legal status.

The 1562 edicts of Segesvár declared that "the *primores* and the *primipili* shall own their properties and enjoy the same prerogatives in all seats, just like the nobility in their estates,"[63] and the scholarly literature also considers the *primipili* to have

60 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 141–42.

61 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. V, 143–44.

62 Jakó, "A székely társadalom útja," 33; Tüdős S., "Kiváltságlevelek nyomában," 242–48.

63 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 203.

the same status as the nobles.[64] This point of view seems to be confirmed, for example, by the phrasing of a 1569 charter of John II[65] and a 1620 village statute from Csík Seat. The latter refers to the *primipili* as *primipili* noblemen (Hung. *lófő nemes személyek,* i.e., noble horsemen),[66] which expression can also be traced in other sources.[67] Yet the difference between the noblemen and the *primipili* appears to be not only of a financial nature: there are signs also in the areas of taxation,[68] military service,[69] bearing the office of the village judge,[70] the use of collective village assets (lakes and forests),[71] and the special 'right of consent' to the decisions of the village community,[72] especially in the seventeenth century.

It appears that future historical research should pay more attention to the differences and similarities between the legal status of these strata. After all, it is pointless to have a series of studies on the mobility between social classes and the wealth of the nobles and the *primipili*[73] if we cannot specify the actual effect of moving from one social class to another. Indeed, it would be worth reconsidering the actual meaning of the term 'noble' in seventeenth-century Székely Land. The meaning of this concept may seem obvious, but in practice it is not. In the late medieval period—as Benkő states—the main caesura can be drawn between those Székelys who owned lands in the counties and those who did not; members of the former group were considered noblemen across the country, while those of the latter group were not.[74] Furthermore, they tend to differentiate the substrata of the nobility corresponding to their honorary titles *(agilis*, *egregius)*,[75] and as a result the *primipili*

64 Connert, *A székelyek alkotmányának históriája*, 137; Tüdős S., "A háromszéki hadköteles székelység," 231; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 147.

65 Szabó, Szádeczky and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 246.

66 Imreh, *A törvényhozó székely falu*, 295.

67 ANR Harghita Fond 27. 1. Nr. 32.

68 ANR Covasna Fond 77. Fasc. 28. fol. 20; Szabó, Szádeczky, and Barabás, eds, *Székely oklevéltár*, vol. II, 212; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XII, 445.

69 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. II, 203.

70 Rácz, ed., *Sepsiszéki cirkálási jegyzőkönyvek*, 276; Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XI, 236.

71 MNL OL P 1868 IV. 51. fol. 10–4.

72 SZNM K Lsz. 65 886. fol. 96v. (Here I would like to thank the Székely National Museum, and especially Hunor Boér, the museum's librarian, for making the original manuscript available to me in digital form.); Rácz, ed., *Sepsiszéki cirkálási jegyzőkönyvek*, 421–22.

73 See: Tüdős S., "A háromszéki hadköteles székelység"; Demény, "Gazdálkodás és társadalom"; Balogh, *A székely nemesség*; Balogh, "Székely primorok"; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 130–51.

74 Benkő and Székely, *Középkori udvarház,* 25; Benkő, "Nemesség és nemesi reprezentáció," 227.

75 Benkő and Székely, *Középkori udvarház,* 25.

were not even considered nobles.[76] This perception, on the other hand, cannot be directly applied to examine the inner social stratification in Székely Land after 1562, because afterwards the system of land ownership changed fundamentally, and the usage of honorary titles in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seems inconsistent. According to Kinga Tüdős S., after 1562 it was a heterogeneous group that included all strata from the *primores* and *primipili* along with the so-called *armalist*s and the county noblemen who acquired landholding in Székely Land and those who later obtained the status of *primipilus* or *pixidarius* by a princely grant.[77] Briefly, this group thus would include all Székelys with free status except the *libertini*. In the early modern period, however, they operated with a clearly narrower notion of the term, in which even the *primipili* would not perfectly fit.

I would hypothesize that one of the bases of the differences between the two layers—between the *armalist*s or curial noblemen and the *primipili*—was the possession of the parcel (Hung. *telek* or *házhely*, Lat. *fundus* or *curia*) which they held at the time of the princely donation of their title, and to which the various privileges and immunities were attached. The assumption may indeed seem obvious in the light of the legal system of the early modern age. Nevertheless, the scholarly literature has hardly ever sought to differentiate between the two classes on this basis, but solely on the basis of wealth, social prestige, and career opportunities, or formalities such as seating at the table or self-representation.[78] The significance of the parcel mentioned in the donation charter is highlighted, for example, by the petition of András Mihály of Árkos (Arcuș) in 1674. In his letter, the *primipilus* Mihály describes that he had previously exchanged his parcel in Árkos for a house in Szentgyörgy (Sepsiszentgyörgy, Sfântu Gheorghe) but on condition that he was still obliged to perform military service, while the contracting party had to continue paying taxes imposed on the house in Szentgyörgy. In other terms, it was agreed that the obligations deriving from the ownership of these parcels were still to be imposed on the original owner in the future. However, resenting this situation, the town of Szentgyörgy wished to take András Mihály as a permanent resident, who as a result would have lost his privileges as *primipilus*. In order to avoid this outcome, Mihály supplicated the prince to grant him nobility by means of a simple noble charter (Lat. *simplex armalis*) which did not include a donation of property. This case seems to imply that the possession of the property for which the *primipilus* status had been granted (or of another parcel to which a princely grant attached similar exemptions) was required for someone

76 Benkő and Székely, *Középkori udvarház,* 77.

77 Tüdős S., "Kiváltságlevelek nyomában," 241.

78 Benkő and Székely, *Középkori udvarház,* 25; Benkő, "Nemesség és nemesi reprezentáció," 237–41; Balogh, "Székely primorok"; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 147–51; Tüdős S., "Kiváltságlevelek nyomában," 241, 245–46.

to vindicate the previously donated *primipilus* status and the associated privileges. On the other hand, a person with a noble title did not necessarily have to own a parcel with privileges in order to belong to the nobility, since, according to this source, András Mihály could have avoided coming under the town's jurisdiction and civic status by merely holding a noble title, for which his *primipilus* rank and his military services would not have been sufficient.[79] However, a more in-depth examination of these issues should be the subject of further targeted research.

The scholarly literature has also paid scarce attention to the question of how the status of the *pixidarii*, who were liberated from serfdom by the princes after the 1562 edicts of Segesvár to perform military service, can be compared to that of the *libertini*, who regained their freedom at the end of the Long Turkish War also in exchange for military service as infantry. Zsigmond Jakó merely noted that the layer of the *libertini* basically corresponded to the *pixidarii*, since both groups served as infantry.[80] In my view, this simplification is not necessarily correct, because the *pixidarii* and the *libertini* are in some respects different. First of all, in the censuses and military connumerations, the so-called *lustra* registers, the two strata were listed as separate categories,[81] and presumably the military equipment required for service also distinguished them, as the *pixidarii* were obliged to go to war with a rifle, while the *libertini* were under no such obligation. The statutes of the seats and the villages also distinguished the two strata, which were often entitled to similar rights and subject to parallel obligations, but were also subject to certain different regulations, which clearly indicates their distinct status.[82] Moreover, we see that even within the same document a clear distinction is made between the *pixidarii* and *libertini* in various types of contracts when determining the status of the contracting parties or the arbiters (Hung. *fogott bírák*).[83] The same distinction can be seen in the testimonial records of the trials at the courts of the seats.[84] It is noteworthy that from the mid-seventeenth century onwards we meet the so-called mounted riflemen (Hung. *lovas puskások*): they were actually *pixidarii* who undertook military service with a horse and rifle and, in return, the prince granted them privileges similar to those of the *primipili*, for example, exemption from bearing the office of village

79 ANR Covasna Fond 77. Fasc. 17. fol. 86–7.

80 Jakó, "A székely társadalom útja," 32; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 122.

81 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 197–712.

82 The statutes of Maros Seat concerning the allocation of the common land and the village statutes of Menaság, Mindszent, Szentlélek, Várdotfalva, Csomortán, Pálfalva and Delne (1620) distinguished between the *pixidarii* and the *libertini* in accordance with scything. Kolosvári and Óvári, eds, *A magyarországi törvényhatóságok*, vol. I, 61; Imreh, *A törvényhozó székely falu*, 296.

83 ANR Harghita Fond 302. No. 2.

84 ANR Harghita Fond 26. 3. Nr. 6. fol. 1v.; ANR Harghita Fond 27. 5. Nr. 2. fol. 36r.; MNL OL R 363 1. fol. 19r., 2. fol. 3.

judge. However, since this prerogative led the *pixidarii* to list themselves among the mounted riflemen in order not be elected judges of a village, a law was passed in 1656 requiring mounted riflemen and *primipili* to bear this office in addition to the *pixidarii*.[85] However, based on the documents of legal transactions and court proceedings, I believe that the mounted riflemen should be considered a separate social stratum, and should be distinguished from both the *pixidarii* and the *primipili*.[86]

There are also several different substrata among the dependent class; primarily, the serfs who already before 1562 lived as quasi-serfs, and the serfs who were liberated in the 1601 and 1605 charters but later bounded themselves serfs again. The social downgrading process at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which posed a serious problem for the princes,[87] was actually a logical consequence of the fact that many commoners were liberated without a proper financial basis for self-support, namely by letting their parcels to their previous landlords. From the Székelys who permanently bounded themselves to serfdom, we can distinguish those who bounded themselves, their entire family or only a single family member to serfdom as a quasi-pledge for a certain debt until its reimbursement. This debt could simply be a loan of money or in kind as a means of subsistence,[88] money borrowed to redeem a property,[89] to pay a fine,[90] or to redeem someone from captivity.[91] The presence of *inquilini* (Hung. *zsellérek*) and temporary residents, often of Romanian ethnicity, in the settlements dates back to the sixteenth century, but we only have significant data on them from the seventeenth century, for example from the 1614 census or the 1690–1701 registers of *inquisitio malefactorum* of Sepsi Seat.[92]

Conclusion

In this short study, I have tried to outline the fundamental changes in the peculiarly organized Székely society along the turning points of their history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the 1562 edicts of Segesvár and the privileges issued

85 Szilágyi, ed., *Erdélyi országgyűlési emlékek*, vol. XI, 236.

86 ANR Covasna Fond 75. Fasc. 3. fol. 56; MNL OL R 363 6. fol. 3v–4r., 13v.

87 For more information, see: Demény, "Gazdálkodás és társadalom," 911–12; K. Markaly, *Csíkszék és a csíkszéki nemesség*, 69–77.

88 MNL OL P 1610 63. fol. No. 45–6; Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 288, 291, 304–5, 344, 348, 352, 453, 455, 502, 768–70.

89 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 209, 525.

90 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 304, 344, 667.

91 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 296, 435, 439.

92 Demény, Pataki, and Tüdős S., eds, *Székely oklevéltár. Új sorozat*, vol. IV, 197–562; Rácz, ed., *Sepsiszéki cirkálási jegyzőkönyvek*, 51–492.

during the Long Turkish War). I have also attempted to give an overall picture of the structure of society, which was drastically transformed a few times from its medieval state, when it was composed of *primores*, *primipili*, commoners, and primordial serfs, partly by natural evolution and partly by artificial interventions. After 1562, the former *primores* and *primipili*, who gained a quasi-noble status, were joined by the *pixidarii*, who were granted this status by individual or collective donations. At the same time, former commoners became princely serfs, and from that time the monarch could donate them to private landlords. After the privileges granted at the end of the Long Turkish War (1599, 1600, 1601, and 1605), the former commoners became *libertini*, who, together with the nobles, the *primipili* and the *pixidarii*, formed the layer of Székelys with free status; despite a massive social downgrading process observed in the seventeenth century, through their donations the princes tried to preserve the military potential of the Székelys.

In my research, I have focused on the legal–historical processes accompanying the social transformation (first of all, the introduction of the *ius regium* in Székely Land and the development of land ownership). Examining these topics has enabled me to draw several conclusions that seem to radically contradict what we thought we knew about the early modern history of the Székelys. These include the fact that the *ius regium* remained an integral part of the Székely legal system throughout the period after 1562, and its consequences can be measured both in the law of succession and in the life of the village community. Furthermore, it appears that the revocation of the 1595 Charter of Feketehalom was a legally justified decision, and that the laws of 1600 and 1602 did not in fact relegate the Székelys to serf status. In addition, the legal-historical perspective has raised key social-historical questions not sufficiently addressed by previous research. For example, the similarities and differences between the legal status of the nobles and the *primipili*, and that of the *pixidarii* and *libertini*, as well as the relative proportions of the different social classes. Although this study has already tried to formulate hypotheses on the possible solutions to these questions, it is impossible to provide conclusive answers without further basic archival research.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 178–191
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.10

Epic Songs in Árpádian Age Hungary

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Received 14 November 2023 | Accepted 24 April 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. While there is no direct evidence of epic singers in the Hungarian Conquest period, their presence and activity can nevertheless be posited on the strength of indirect evidence. Epic songs in Hungarian are known from the later fifteenth century, while the chronicles mention certain epic songs from the late twelfth century. Some of these epic songs celebrated the Conquest period and its events, and it seems unlikely that these songs were inspired by written sources and were, in this sense, secondary. The Hungarian expression *énekmondás* [song-speaking] is expressly archaic and has its parallels in Turkic languages. Cobza, the name of the musical instrument used by epic singers as accompaniment (Hung. *koboz*) is likewise rooted in the Turkic world and is a legacy of the pre-Conquest period, similarly to the designation of the performers as fiddlers.

Keywords: Hungarian epic song, Hungarian Conquest period, joculator/*ioculator*, cobza/*koboz*/*kopuz*

We have little information on the musical life of the Hungarian Conquest period, particularly on epic songs and their singers, despite the untiring efforts in the nineteenth century, at the time of national spiritual awakening, to discover this genre and its possible sources. There was the hope that even though the Hungarians lacked a *Nibelungenlied* or a *Shahnameh* that the Germans and the Persians had, a heroic pseudo-epic like the *Kalevala* of the Finns could nevertheless be assembled from various folk poetry elements.[1] Indeed, epic songs and ballads represent a particularly charming ancestral form of Hungarian folk poetry. However, most of them are devoted to themes rooted in a later period, the age of feudalism; there are very few that hark back to a more distant past and have among their themes the hero hiding himself and his mythic slumber.[2] Obviously, there is no conclusive evidence that

1 Arany, *Naïv eposzunk* (originally published in 1863).

2 For a comprehensive analysis of the ballads, cp. Vargyas, "Kutatások a népballada középkori történetében." Perhaps the most oriental one is "The Ballad of Izsák Kerekes", discussed by Demény, *Kerekes Izsák*.

these would actually represent the legacy of the ninth–tenth-century Hungarians of the Conquest period.

Yet, there is another genre of Hungarian literature that possibly goes back to the distant past: that of epic songs.[3] The first reliable pieces date from the later fifteenth century, although their true *floruit* was the sixteenth century. In addition to a range of Biblical and antique themes, all composed with an educational purpose, they also covered contemporaneous events or the early history of the Hungarians, usually in a simple vernacular, and always in a sung form. Curiously, there are no texts celebrating the events of the Conquest period with any measure of originality that are not a secondary reworking of the narratives recounted in the chronicles. The single exception is Demeter Csáti's *Song of Pannonia* with its expressly archaic form that evokes the *Legend of the White Horse*, one of the emblematic episodes in the conquest of the Carpathian Basin.[4] However, we have no way of knowing how old this song actually is—it is quite possible that it only feels archaic compared to the well-known sixteenth-century standard. In sum, while both literary and folklore studies have raised the possibility of early Hungarian epic songs as the potential forerunners of the later compositions known to us, we cannot prove this.

The important question in this respect is: When was the start of the epic songs? Did they appear during the Árpádian Age, in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries, or much earlier, already during the Hungarian Conquest period, in the ninth–tenth centuries? Leaving aside the natural research agendas of literary studies and scholarly inquiries into the past of the known Hungarian traditions, there are higher stakes involved: the ultimate question is whether songs were sung about the Hungarian past before the spread of literacy or, to put it somewhat differently, was the memory of early Hungarian history sustained by an oral tradition, which then partly found its way into the Hungarian chronicle tradition.

In the lack of surviving texts, the answer remains conjectural. The initial general consensus among historians was that oral tradition did not preserve trustworthy information and could therefore be dismissed. More versatile scholarly attitudes in this respect have only appeared in the past few years. Taking a Crimean Nogay epic song as a case study, it may be persuasively demonstrated that the memory of certain events can be fairly accurately preserved in oral tradition for hundreds of years, even if this does not always measure up to our modern criteria, and it is therefore often difficult to unravel fact from fiction.

3 Ghezzo, *Epic Songs*.

4 For the different interpretations, cp. Hubert, "A Pannóniai ének"; Szabados, "Országot egy fehér lóért"; Ács, "A Pannóniai ének"; Kríza, "Song of Pannonia."

In the light of the above, it does not seem wholly inconceivable that the Hungarian minstrels upheld the memory of the Conquest period for many centuries. Obviously, one prerequisite is the very existence and activity of minstrels in the Conquest period. Given that there is no direct evidence of their presence, their one-time activity needs to be demonstrated, and this is what I have set out to do in the present study. In line with the research methods employed in the study of early history, I have approached the issue from several angles, striving to integrate as many sources as possible. Firstly, I seek to trace Hungarian epic songs back in time: although none is known from before the late fifteenth century, there are references to them. Secondly, language provides intriguing insights into early Hungarian culture in that the word used to denote a specific phenomenon is telling—whether an early Hungarian or a loanword is used, and in the case of the latter, which word was adopted. Finally, knowing that epic songs hover on the boundary between text and music, it seemed prudent to also look at music history, or more to the point, at what can be gleaned from organology.

Before turning to the Conquest period, a brief overview of the references to epic songs from the period before the appearance of written sources seems in order, moving from the known epic songs backward in time.[5] In the late fifteenth century, Galeotto Marzio (ca. 1427–1497), the Humanist historian in King Matthias's court remarked that "there are always musicians and cithara-players present at table, who sing the heroic deeds in the vernacular, accompanied by the lyre" ("Sunt enim ibi musici et citharoedi, qui fortium gesta in lingua patria ad mensam in lyra decantant").[6] The Viennese Johannes Cuspinianus (1473–1529) had also heard of them: he noted that the Hungarians "[…] clashed daily with the Turks and always triumphed over them, and their mighty deeds are still sung accompanied by the lyre. They do not sing love songs like here [in Vienna], but rather of the deeds of valiant men: John Hunyadi, King Matthias, Paul Kinizsi, and the elder Stephen Báthori."[7] Bonfini, another Italian historian, mentions that following the victory of Paul Kinizsi, King Matthias's general over the Turks in the 1479 Battle of Kenyérmező, songs were virtually born in the battlefield.[8] A song commemorating King Matthias's Bosnian

5 These have since long been studied in the period's scholarship. Suffice it here to cite some of the more important studies: Sebestyén, "Gyászmagyarok"; Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók"; Jakubovic, "Honfoglaláskori hősi énekeink"; Falvy, "Énekmondók"; Zolnay, *A magyar muzsika*, 273–309; Rajeczky, ed., *Magyarország zenetörténete*, 94–101, 478–86.

6 Galeottus, *De Egregie,* 18; Zolnay, *A magyar muzsika*, 284–5; Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 32.

7 Cuspinianus, *Oratio protreptica*, 52; Klaniczay, ed., *A magyar irodalom története*, 180.

8 "Coena non sine militari cantu transacta, incomposito extemporalique carmine ducum procerumque laudes concinuere". Bonfinis, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades,* Tom. IV. Pars 1, 114. Cited by Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 32.

campaign has actually survived ("The Battle of Szabács," 1476)[9] as well as another short fragment of no more than two lines from an epic song evoking the 1463 recapture of Jajca Castle (today: Jajce).[10]

We know that there existed an epic song commemorating the descent into the underworld of Lőrinc Tar, a Hungarian nobleman living in the early fifteenth century, narrating his visit to the purgatory of St. Patrick in Ireland (1411). This song was reworked 150 years after the event by Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, the most renowned minstrel of the sixteenth century, who, as he acknowledged, had "heard the story sung" (i.e., he did not read it somewhere) and had in all likelihood incorporated its greater part into his own work (ca. 1552).[11] It is possible that a portion of the original poem survived in a Latin translation.[12]

There are two uncertain references to epic songs recounting events of the fourteenth century. The first, an epic song narrating the revolt and execution of István Hédervári Kont and his fellow-conspirators (1388), is mentioned by János Thuróczi, King Matthias's Hungarian chronicler: "A very illustrious knight, famous, and often greatly praised among all Hungarians, István Kont by name, whose daring and courage are still well remembered and not merely evoked in words, his praises are sung to the accompaniment of the lute."[13] In this case, roughly a century elapsed between the event and its textualization. The story of Felicián Zách and his family, who were executed in 1330 after the assassination attempt on King Charles I of Anjou (1308–1342) and his family, was still sung in the sixteenth century ("Accounts spread by word of mouth and are sung by minstrels to the accompaniment of the lyre," *et a cytharedis ad lyram cantitur*).[14] Yet, it remains uncertain when these songs were actually composed, and it is quite conceivable that they emerged well after the narrated events. Nevertheless, these data confirm that epic songs as a genre definitely flourished in fifteenth-century Hungary.

Curiously enough, no epic songs celebrating the Christian sovereigns of the House of Árpád are known, neither are there any contemporaneous references to them, while there are several allusions to songs commemorating the events of the Hungarian Conquest in the Hungarian chronicle tradition. Given that the sources

9 Imre, *A Szabács viadala*.

10 The text was written down by Miklós Zrínyi some two hundred years after the event. Cp. Gerézdi, "Az úgynevezett jajcai ének-töredék."

11 *Prohemium memoriale,* 35–60; Sághy, *Hungarians in Hell,* 31–2; Szilády, ed., *Régi magyar költők tára*, vol. 3, 357.

12 Széchy, "Adalékok a régibb magyar irodalomhoz", 400–3. The text was recorded in 1520.

13 Turocz, *Chronica Hungarorum,* 311–12; Thuróczy, *Chronicle of the Hungarians*, 49–50; Thuróczy, *Magyar krónika,* 76.

14 Miklós Istvánffy's remark. Fejér, *Cod. dipl. Hung.,* Tomi VIII. Volumen III, 427.

in question drew from each other, here the chronological sequence is reversed, and I will proceed from the earlier texts to the later ones. For example, the Anonymous Notary, the first Hungarian chronicler whose work has survived (ca. 1200), often speaks of the gabbling song *(cantus garrulus)* of minstrels, which he deems most untrustworthy and disdains. Yet, his passionate condemnations actually confirm the strength of this epic song tradition and the fact that songs celebrating the events of the Hungarian Conquest were still sung in his time, around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Anonymous mentions them in the Prologue to his chronicle, claiming that he did not use them when composing his work.[15] He repeatedly asserts his distaste for them: "Of their wars and brave deeds, if you do not wish to read the present pages of writing, then you may believe the gabbling rhymes of minstrels *(a garrulo cantu ioculatorum)* and the spurious tales of countryfolk who have not forgotten the brave deeds and wars of the Hungarians even to this day."[16] Nevertheless, Anonymous did draw from these songs: "Tuhutum wished thereby to acquire a name and land for himself. As our minstrels say: They take all the places for themselves and get a good name."[17] In this passage, he actually cites one of these minstrels, translating his words into Latin, and we therefore have no way of knowing how the original Hungarian sounded; yet, it has been suggested that Anonymous's wording was in fact a poetic translation since it is rendered as a rhyming couplet.

The description of the adventures in Byzantium of the Hungarian warrior Botond is most instructive. Anonymous barely mentions him: "But as I have found this in no book written by historians, and have heard it only in the spurious tales of countryfolk, I do not propose so to write in the present work."[18] Yet, Botond's deeds were set forth in narratives and—judging from the context—in songs, as well. Roughly a century later, around 1282, another chronicler, Simon de Keza, recounted these events in detail, most likely drawing from oral tradition. It is noteworthy that while the events of the Hungarian Conquest are covered extremely laconically, this episode of little importance is described in detail and at the greatest length of all the period's events, in a near-literary style.[19]

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15 "And it would be most unworthy and completely unfitting for the so most noble people of Hungary to hear as if in a dream of the beginnings of their kind *(primordia sue generationis)* and of their bravery and deeds from the false stories of countryfolk and the gabbling song of minstrels *(ex falsis fabulis rusticorum vel a garulo cantu joculatorum)*." Anonymus, *The Deeds,* 4–5; Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 1, 33–34.

16 Anonymus, *The Deeds,* 90–1; Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 1, 87.

17 "Vt dicunt nostri ioculatores: Omnes lóca sibi aquirebant, | Et nomen bonum accipiebant." Anonymus, *The Deeds,* 60–61; Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 1, 65.

18 Anonymus, *The Deeds,* 90–91; Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 1, 87.

19 *Simon of Kéza*, *The Deeds,* 98–9; Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 1, 171–72.

The *Chronicon Pictum* or *The Illuminated Chronicle* (1358), the first of the fourteenth-century chronicle compositions, which possibly drew on much earlier texts, also contains some interesting information: speaking of the seven leaders of the Hungarians, it notes the following: "Since worldly vanity makes men attribute to themselves greater excellence than they are credited with by others, those seven captains composed lays about themselves *(de se ipsis cantilenas componentes)* and have them sung among themselves in order to win worldly renown and to publish their names abroad, so that their posterity might be able to boast and brag to neighbours and friends when these songs were heard."[20] This passage appears virtually verbatim in the text of the other variants, one of which contains some additional information: "Similarly, in the seven songs recited by the Hungarians about the seven captains, [it is said] of Árpád that there were many gemstones in the snow-covered mountains and that the said Árpád was seated in the saddle of the thickest-necked horse."[21] There is yet another variant, the *Pozsony Chronicle,* that despite its strongly differing rendering can be confidently assigned here: it contains an account of the sorry fate of the seven Hungarian captives whose ears were cut off before being sent back to Hungary after the Hungarians' defeat in the 955 Battle of Lechfeld. Instead of the seven captains, this chronicler identifies the seven captives with the seven Hungarians who composed songs about themselves: they and their descendants sang their story 'walking among the tents' until King St Stephen had them settle down.[22] The latter narrative gave rise to several misinterpretations, and most scholars agree that the first variant should be regarded as the one preserving the authentic tradition: it was the seven leaders of the Hungarians who had songs recited about themselves.[23] The issue of primacy among the textual variants is raised because these chronicle compositions quite certainly drew on earlier chronicles that have not survived, the implication being that familiarity with the songs about the captains could date from well before the first known fourteenth-century variant. The one-time existence of epic songs about the leaders of the Hungarians is also underpinned by Anonymous's cited couplet embedded in the story of Tétény, one of the Hungarian leaders.

Thus, the Hungarian chronicle tradition bolsters the activity of Hungarian minstrels during the Árpádian Age on several counts, while the chroniclers take

20 *The Illuminated Chronicle,* 81.

21 Mikó, "Élt-e valaha Szent István fia," 16. "Item in septem cantilenis, quae de septem capitaneis decantari Hungari solebant, de ipso Arpad, quod de montibus niveis plures gemmati fundarentur, et super emissarium habentem cervicem pinguissimam ipse Arpad insideret."

22 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, vol. 2, 51; Kulcsár, ed., *Krónikáink magyarul,* 36.

23 For a discussion of this passage, cp. Jakubovich, "Honfoglaláskori hősi énekeink," 266–68; Sebestyén, "Gyászmagyarok," 1–11.

their existence for granted, as well as the fact that they were the ones to preserve the narratives about the Conquest period. This is all the more important because, unlike in later periods, it can be wholly excluded that the performers of the epic songs were inspired by any of their readings.

The next spate of evidence comes from the linguistic record. Anonymous designates minstrels with the Latin word *ioculator*, a term that also appears in various other sources, such as legal documents.[24] For example, a village called Igrickarcsa whose residents were *ioculatores* belonged to the castle district of Pozsony (Bratislava) (mentioned in documents dated to 1244, 1253, and 1329).[25] Another village inhabited by royal *ioculatores* was in County Zala (mentioned in 1251, 1255, 1256, 1260, and 1271).[26] We know of still another *ioculator* who had estates at Köveskál in County Veszprém (1296). A royal *ioculator* is mentioned as having land at Vészveres in County Zólyom (1263), while the estate of another royal *ioculator* at Endréd in County Somogy is mentioned in 1288.[27] Although *ioculator* was a rather broad category in medieval Latin, and probably also in medieval Hungary, Anonymous's text would suggest that the term was used to designate performers engaged in presenting historical songs. The charters sometimes specifically speak of royal *ioculatores* (*iaculatoribus Regis*, *Joculatores nostri*), who were also landowners (e.g., *quandam terram ioculatorum nostrorum Igrichy uocatam*)[28] or received estates,[29] suggesting that they were held in esteem and were not mere wandering minstrels. This prestige can in all likelihood be ascribed to their social role as custodians of the memory of noble families and even of the royal dynasty, as professional memory-keepers. This was particularly important in periods with low levels of literacy and in other similar societies. The passage of the *Chronicon Pictum* noting that the leaders composed songs about themselves so that their fame and renown would not fade underpins that the nobility deemed this role to be highly important. One faint reference dates from a later period: the *Styrian Rhymed Chronicle* would suggest that Iván Kőszegi had his own—probably German—epic singer, a certain Peter der Wachtelsack.[30] There are other references to the activity of *ioculatores*: the 1279 Synod of Buda forbade, among other things, men of the church to listen to *ioculatores*;[31] some 250 years earlier, Bishop

24 For a comprehensive overview, cp. Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 21–35.

25 Modern Síposkarcsa, now part of Egyházkarcsa (Kostolné Kračany, Slovakia).

26 Modern Zalaigrice. For the charter, cp. Szőcs, *Az Árpád-kori országbírók*, 55.

27 Zolnay, *A magyar muzsika*, 288–94.

28 King Andrew III's charter, published by Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 26.

29 An *ioculator* called Zumbot (Szombat) received the Urbana estate from Queen Maria, Béla IV's wife: Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 26.

30 Seemüller, *Ottokars österreichische Reimchronik,* 539; Ottokár, *Stájer rímes krónika,* 57.

31 *Antiquissimae constitutiones,* 70; Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 26.

St Gerard had also grumbled in his treatise that priests had a great fondness for *scurrae* (clowns).[32] Obviously, it is also possible that *ioculatores* were entertainers and not performers of epic songs, although it is conceivable that they were actually performers, as Anonymous and Simon de Keza were both members of the clergy who had quite certainly heard minstrels singing their songs.

In the sixteenth century, epic songs were generally called histories or historical songs, although this was hardly the olden designation of compositions of this type.[33] In medieval Latin sources, they were called *cantilena*, while the Hungarians simply referred to them as songs. A considerably more archaic, although rarely used expression should also be recalled in this context, namely the term *énekmondó* [song-speaker], which did not merely designate singers but was used to denote professional musicians. As far as I know, it is first attested at a relatively late date, in 1593: István Póli addresses his audience in the cadence of his epic song with the following words: "Would that you fill that great cup with goodly wine for the song-speaker." Some fifty years later, an unknown composer refers to himself in the closing lines of his military song: "Whoe'er listens and a soldier hopes to be / Should ready his money the song-speaker to give!" (1648).[34] Although the attestations date from a late period, the formation of the compound noun is expressly archaic: the renowned Hungarian historian György Györffy, lists several words with a similar structure among the occupation names in the Árpádian Age: *boradó* [one who pays his tax in wine], *márcadó* [one who pays tax in mead], *mézadó* [one who pays tax in honey], *mézmívelő* [honey-maker], *disznóóvó* [hog-keeper], *bivalyóvó* [buffalo-keeper], *erdőóvó* [forest-keeper], *kenyérsütő* [bread-baker], *kővágó* [stone-cutter], *vasverő* [(iron)smith], *szállásadó* [hosteler], and *tömlöcóvó* [jailer].[35] The makers of various commodities known from the late Middle Ages may also be added here: *pajzsgyártó* [shield-maker], *asztalgyártó* [table-maker], *kannagyártó* [pitcher-maker], *nyereggyártó* [saddler], *szíjjártó* [girdler], etc., and this mechanism of word formation is still active today (*jegyvizsgáló* [ticket inspector]). While *énekmondó* fits perfectly into this series, the examples offer no clues as to the date when the word first came to be used, but neither do they exclude an early date. The word itself is also noteworthy because it refers to singing with the verb 'speak.' This combination is attested much earlier and was used more widely than the expression énekmondó. The first occurrences date from the mid-fifteenth century and it became quite widely used in the sixteenth century: "I speak a song unto you," "Sing unto the Lord and speak a song to His

32 Gerardi Moresenae, *Deliberatio,* 70; Zolnay, *A magyar muzsika*, 282; *Deliberatio,* 256–57.

33 Pap, *Históriák és énekek*, 7–59.

34 Póli, *Jovenianus császár históriája* (1593), see: Orlovszky, ed., *Régi magyar költők tára*, 336.

35 Györffy, "Az Árpád-kori szolgálónépek," 290–92; Heckenast, *Fejedelmi (királyi) szolgálónépek*, 131.

name!" *(Hussite Bible)*,[36] "Let us speak a pleasing song with thanksgiving" (Orbán Batthyány), "Let us speak a new song unto our Lord" (Mihály Sztárai).[37] These examples verify the linguistic embeddedness of the combination because Hungarian written texts from earlier centuries are few and far between. Yet, there is one point that would indicate the archaic nature of the expression: phrases with a similar structure are widespread in Turkic languages. In modern Turkey, the singing of any genre is denoted with the verb *söylemek* [speak]: *türkü söylemek* [sing (speak) a folk-song], *sarki söylemek* [sing (speak) a song], *destan söylemek* [sing (speak) an epic song]. The same phrase and structure can be found in Uzbek *(kusik ayt-),* Kazakh *(en ajtu- / ән aŭmy)*, and Turkmen *(aýdym aýtmak)*, in which the words denoting various types of songs are associated with the verb *ayt-* [speak], an archaic form. In these cases, although the words used differ, the notion of singing is nevertheless expressed with the same linguistic logic as in Hungarian, which is not typical of other languages. Given the strength of the Turkic–Hungarian linguistic connections and the identical logic behind the 'to speak a song' phrases in the Turkic languages and Hungarian, their similarity is hardly coincidental and can be regarded as an indication of the Hungarian expression's archaic nature. Therefore, we appear to have possible reminisces of the steppean Turkic connections of the Hungarian expression for the performance of epic songs, which harks back to the pre-Conquest period.

The third perspective is provided by the musical instruments used to accompany epic songs. While we know nothing about the melodies or how the songs were actually performed, the written sources make the occasional mention of the instruments. The most frequently mentioned instrument is the *cithara*, which appears in Anonymous's chronicle (*dulces sonos cythararum* [sweet sounds of zithers]), alongside the lyre and the lute. Despite the uncertainties in the terminology of medieval musical instruments, these were quite certainly lute-family string instruments. It is instructive that the early Hungarian Bible translations usually render *cithara* as fiddle [*hegedű*] ("Psallite domino nostro in cythara; in cythara et uoce psalmi," Sing unto the Lord with the fiddle; with the fiddle and the voice of a psalm).[38] This word is rather old in the Hungarian language, and since it has no external connections, it is feasible that it was an internally formed word, the implication being that its appearance in the Carpathian Basin can be linked to the arrival of the ancient Hungarians.[39] Regrettably, we do not know what type of instrument it actually denoted, since the first description dates from the late seventeenth century when it designated a bowed string instrument,—like today—and a distinction was drawn between German,

36 *Apor-kódex,* 49, 55, 60, 62.

37 Szilády, ed., *Régi magyar költők tára*, vol. 4, 56; Szilády, ed., *Régi magyar költők tára*, vol. 5, 155.

38 Psalms 98:5. *Apor-kódex,* 27, 49, 69, 94, 101.

39 Benkő, ed., *A magyar nyelv,* 82.

Polish, and Hungarian fiddles. However, we know that the medieval *cithara* was a plucked and not a bowed string instrument, and it is therefore possible that *hegedű* [fiddle] was used in a broader sense.

There is another Hungarian instrument name that appears to date from the pre-Conquest period and denoted a plucked string instrument, the cobza (Hung. *koboz*). This was an instrument distinctive to the world of the steppe, whose name was the Turkic designation of the widely used long-necked lutes, or of one of their variants.[40] Although in Hungarian linguistic studies this instrument is generally linked to the thirteenth-century arrival and settlement of the Cumans, its name crops up in earlier documents,[41] and as it is the *par excellence* musical instrument used by the epic singers of the steppean peoples, it seems reasonable to assume that it was familiar to and used by the Hungarians of the Conquest period. Curiously enough, the cobza usually denoted a plucked string instrument among the steppean peoples, although in some cases it designated a bowed string instrument (e.g., the Kazakh *kobyz*).

Moreover, occupation names were formed from both the fiddle and the cobza (*hegedűs* [fiddler], *kobzos* [cobza-player]),[42] which are also attested in the medieval charters of Hungary in relation to epic singers, in other words, to professional performers. In Hungarian, the Biblical King David is often described as a fiddler: "David is still a fiddler in this world," are the words of Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, the most famed Hungarian minstrel in the mid-sixteenth century.[43] The cobza was not merely one of the Turkic peoples' several musical instruments, but was expressly the attribute of epic singers. Similarly, the singers themselves, representing one particular type of performers, were designated according to the instrument accompanying their songs: cobza-player, fiddler, or lute-player. Thus, the data on the epic singers of the Árpádian Age can be complemented with the names of the musical instruments brought from the east—whose names were obviously not adopted in the Carpathian Basin—and the instruments themselves, among which the cobza was explicitly associated with epic songs in its original Turkic context. The duality of the Hungarian word as well as of the Turkic word transplanted into Hungarian is far from infrequent in early Hungarian culture. The Turkic background of an instrument used by performers of epic songs again points to the pre-Conquest period and the Turkic world.

40 Sudár, "A magyar koboz."

41 First attested in a 1193 charter, in a rather enigmatic expression '*in coboz terra*.' In 1237, it appears as a personal name *(Choboz)*. Rajeczky, ed., *Magyarország zenetörténete*, 99; Benkő, ed., *A magyar nyelv*, 509.

42 First attested in 1326: *Johannes dictus Kobzus* (and also one of the earliest mentions of a musician in Hungary); 1394: *Stephanus Hegedus*. Szabolcsi, "A középkori magyar énekmondók," 27, 29.

43 Tinódi, *Krónika,* 387.

In conclusion, it appears that in Hungary the tradition of epic songs was present already in the period preceding the earliest written texts and that there can be no doubt that these songs preserved the memory of the events of the Conquest period. It is possible that in view of its close Turkic analogies, the verb 'speak songs'—which in later times was quite clearly related to the epic songs—can be linked to these epic songs. Given its Turkic background, the word *koboz* [cobza], probably adopted before the Conquest period, likewise points to eastern traditions. When arriving to the Carpathian Basin, the ancient Hungarians brought with them the culture of the mounted nomads of the steppe, into which the performance of epic songs fits in perfectly. Taken together, the various strands of evidence reviewed in the present paper provide sufficient proof for the presence and activity of epic singers in the Hungarian Conquest period.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 192–216
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.11

An Alternative Proposal Explaining the Origin of the Word and Social Group 'Székely'

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Received 11 October 2023 | Accepted 13 February 2024 | Published online 24 July 2024

Abstract. The word 'Székely' or 'Szekler' was formed from the Hungarian verb *szökik* (jump, move fast, escape, run away) using the suffix '-l/ly' creating deverbal nouns. The original meaning of the word is fast-moving (person), fugitive, or runaway. The formation of the social group began in the eleventh century. The process was brought about the establishment of the landlord system and frequent wars which led to the escapes and 'wanderings' of slaves and free people coerced into bondage. The refugees mainly settled in the sparsely populated border region, where the institutional vacuum offered them favourable conditions to avoid the control of the feudal state. Here, the groups of different ethnic origins acquired a unified identity. We can understand the process of the formation of the community by using the conceptual frameworks of 'unintended consequences, self-organization, spontaneous order, and exaptation.' The spontaneous process may have been replaced by the conscious organizational efforts of the Hungarian kings only around 1100. This was followed by the first mention of the Székelys in the Battle of Olšava in 1116.

Keywords: Székely/Szekler, fugitive, state formation, *üzbég/izbég*, 'wandering,' frontier, institutional vacuum, Cossacks, unintended consequences, self-organization

The origin of the Székely/Szekler[1] name and group represents a more intriguing problem than that of any other Hungarian ethnographic unit. The original explanation maintained that, as suggested by the original sources of the thirteenth century, the Székelys had lived in the Carpathian Basin already at the time of Árpád's Conquest, they were King Attila's people, and the descendants of the Huns. The Székely issue is traditionally closely linked to the origin of the Hungarians and the date/dates of their settlement in the Carpathian Basin, therefore it carries a strong emotional charge. The literature on the topic has recently been reviewed by several researchers.[2]

1 The German Sekler/Szekler derives from the Hungarian Székely and this form entered the international literature.

2 Kordé, "A székelység;" Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 12–15.

According to Loránd Benkő and László Klima, the structure of the word refers to Hungarian formation, and this is also my starting point.[3]

The etymology

The stem of the word Székely is the Hungarian verb *szök(ik)*. Its etymon is the Turkic verb *sek-*.[4] The occurrence of the version *szëk(ik)* is well documented until the nineteenth century; its meaning is 'jumps, dances, escapes, leaves unnoticed, breaks out, or goes out.'[5] Already in Old Hungarian, the stem was supplied with several suffixes.

The deverbal suffix '-l/ly' is connected to *szëk-* with a short, closed *-ë-*.[6] This formative may be added to intransitive verbs, resulting in a nomen agentis: *akadály, apály, aszály, dagály*, etc. In some of the nouns formed in a similar way *(fogoly, fonal, lepel)*, the second vowel retains its brevity, just as in Székely. The word *szëkëly* formed in this way might mean 'fast-moving (person), fugitive, or runaway.'

The verb *csökik* offers us a good analogy: it is also a verb of Turkic origin, also connected with the suffix '-ik', and is similarly intransitive.[7] The original meaning of its derivative *csekély* is a 'river section with shallow water, ford.'[8] So *csekély* can also be considered a *nomen agentis*. Another similarity is that a short '-ë-' was fixed in the first vowel of the suffixed word, while '-ö-' is considered a normative vowel shift in the verb. The place name Szekcső[9] has also preserved the original vowel of the stem *szëk(ik)*.

According to Katalin D. Bartha, the suffix '-l/ly' was no longer used in the Old Hungarian period. The word *csekély* clearly proves that the suffix was still active when at least one group of Turkic loanwords was borrowed. Neither the Turkic *čök-* nor *sek-* bear any Chuvash, Common Turkic, or other phonetic characteristics indicating the date of the reception. The borrowing may go back to the period before the Hungarian Conquest, that is, the late Proto-Hungarian period. Fugitives and fords already existed at the time, and the formation of the word *szëkëly* could precede the birth of the Székely social group by centuries. At the same time, I note that the transition between the Proto-Hungarian and the early Old Hungarian period is no longer considered a rigid boundary.[10]

3 Klima, "A székelyek."

4 Róna-Tas and Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 815–18.

5 Szarvas and Simonyi, eds, *Nyelvtörténeti szótár*, vol. III, 322–26; Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1454.

6 D. Bartha, *Magyar szóképzés*, 73–74.

7 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 230; Róna-Tas and Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 261–65.

8 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 197.

9 Dunaszekcső (Kiss, *Földrajzi nevek*, 398); Kaposszekcső (Kiss, *Földrajzi nevek*, 684).

10 Ligeti, *A magyar nyelv*, 525; Papp, *Magyar nyelvtörténet*, 16.

The word *Székely* is first encountered as a personal name in the form of *Scichul* in the founding charter of the abbey at Bakonybél.[11] In my view, we are not dealing with a personal name derived from the name of an ethnic group,[12] but with the stigmatizing name of a servant prone to escape. Many examples of similar naming can be cited from the same period: *buta* (stupid),[13] *fattyú* (bastard),[14] *hazug* (liar),[15] *szegény* (poor),[16] *tolvaj* (thief),[17] and *tompa* (dull).[18] Other derivatives of *szökik* were also recorded as personal names (Zecuseu, Zekeu) for the first time.[19] The noun *Csángó*, meaning 'wanderer' or 'vagabond,' also first appears as an element of personal names, and later becomes the name of a Hungarian ethnographic group.[20] The disappearance of the common noun *szëkëly* may have been caused by the fact that the word took on a special meaning from the twelfth century onward. A similar process, therefore, may have taken place, as in the case of Hajdú, whose original meaning (cattle drover)[21] fell out of use after the social group Hajdúk received privileges.

The Turkic verb 'sek-' has a Turkic derivative recorded only once with a somewhat similar meaning to Székely. The sense of *sekerči* (brigand)[22] is not far from that of a 'fugitive:' a brigand is nothing but a criminal who violates social constraints and norms, and is constantly on the run from the central authority.

The original pronunciation of the word was *szëkël(y)/szëköl(y)*.[23] The stretching of the first vowel occurred after the organization of the administrative units called

11 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1407. In the Árpád Era, the letters 'i' and 'y' were also used to write the sound 'ë.' (Benkő, *Az Árpád-kor*, 90, 93, 101, 106–7) The letter 'u' might also denote the sound 'ö.' (Benkő, *Az Árpád-kor*, 90, 92–93, 112–16)

12 Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 258.

13 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 150; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 73.

14 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 361–62; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 134.

15 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 540; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 151–52.

16 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1404; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 383.

17 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1527; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 345.

18 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1528; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 345–46.

19 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1454; Fehértói, *Árpád-kori*, 383–84.

20 Benkő, "A csángók eredete," 275–76.

21 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 512–13.

22 Róna-Tas and Berta, *West Old Turkic*, 817.

23 According to Loránd Benkő, the first vowel might have been a long open 'ē,' so he reconstructs the entire word form as *szēkël/szēköl*. (Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 261–64) The refutation of the hypothesis that assumed a sound 'i' or 'é' in the first syllable played an important role in the formation of his opinion, on the other hand, he did not consider the possibility of a short closed 'ë.' However, the spelling during the period of the house of Árpád and Loránd Benkő's train of thought does not rule out the existence of the form *szëkël/szëköl*. For the vowel of the second syllable: Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 262–64. The palatalization of '-l' may have taken place from the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. (Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 264)

szék (Lat. *sedes*, chair). Instances of phonetic interference in folk etimologies are well known in Hungarian, e.g., *gemkapocs/gépkapocs*. The linguistic process could not happen before the consolidation of the *szék*-system, that is, before the fourteenth century.[24] People started looking for the word *szék* in the name Székely from the end of the sixteenth century onwards.[25] Nonetheless, even in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, it was suggested that the noun Székely is related to the verb *szökik*.[26] This may indicate that in the early modern period, the pronunciation of the word fluctuated for a long time between the form *szëkël*y and *székël*y, and the phoneme 'é' displaced the 'ë' relatively late.

This correlates well with the phonological history of the noun *szék*. It also has a Turkic origin and contained a short open 'e' initially that was elongated and turned into a long open 'ē.'[27] In the majority of Hungarian dialects, 'ē' then became a long close 'é' in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[28] The word *szék* the lengthening of the first, short close vowel of the word *szëkël*y just after this linguistic process was completed.

The thirteenth century narrative of Simon of Kéza fits well into this chronology. He relates that *after* his defeat in the battle of Krimhild, Csaba flees to Greece with the fifteen thousand Huns who survived the battle: "[…] *exercitus Chabae sic devincitus et prostratur*, quod perpauci filii Ethelae Hunique remanerent. […] Fugiit igitur Chaba cum XV millibus Hunnorum in Graeciam ad Honorium […]."[29]

Completely independent of Csaba's Huns, Simon also mentions three thousand Huns who fled *during* the battle: "Remanserant quoque de Hunnis virorum tria millia *ex praelio Crimildino erepti per fugae interfugium*, qui timentes occidentis nationes in campo Chigle usque Arpad permanserunt, qui se ibi non Hunnos, sed Zaculos vocaverunt."[30]

In other words, they 'ran away' *(elszöktek)* from the battle. This is why they do not follow Csaba, and 'in their fear,' they will take on a new name. Although there is no clear indication that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the escape and the new name, it can be inferred from the context. Otherwise, it makes no sense why the author separates the Székelys from the defeated Csaba even before the end of the battle. The context suggests that Simon still understood exactly the original

24 Györffy, "Székelyek," 48; Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar*, 624.

25 Sebestyén, "A székelyek," 33–35.

26 Sebestyén, "A székelyek," 34. This also suggests that the vowel of the first syllable was originally 'ë' rather than 'ē.'

27 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1406.

28 Benkő, "A székely népnévről," 261–62.

29 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores,* vol. I, 162.

30 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores,* vol. I, 162.

meaning of the word Székely, and this resulted in the birth of the aetiological story. His procedure is consistent with the medieval approach, i.e., ethnonyms may refer to certain qualities and actions of people.[31]

Dezső Pais attributed a similar meaning to the word Székely.[32] There are two significant differences between our opinions. On the one hand, according to Pais, the etymon of the word is entirely Turkic: the Turkic suffix '-l' is connected to the Turkic verb *sik-/säk-*. On the other hand, in his view, this Turkic-speaking Sikil/Säkil ethnic group was identical with the Chun/Hun people of the Avar population who fled from the Franks. The consequence of these two hypotheses is that, according to Dezső Pais, the Székelys were originally a Turkic-speaking ethnic group that joined the Hungarians during the Conquest.

In my view, the origin of the Székelys is to be found in completely different historical circumstances.

Üzbégs and other runaways

One feature of Hungarian history in the eleventh century is 'wandering' *(kóborlás)*.[33] According to charters and laws, in parallel to the development of the landlord system, masses of people were forced to leave their homes if they wanted to avoid subjugation to the new owners appointed by the king. The path of the groups that wanted to preserve their complete freedom naturally led to the peripheral regions of the country, where the royal power followed them with some delay.[34] The peak of the process can be tied to the second half of the eleventh century.[35]

Chapter 25 of St Stephen's First Book of Laws (BL) already mentions *servi* and *milites* who ran away *(fugerit)* from their masters.[36] Chapter 2 of Saint Ladislaus's Third BL[37] mentions the group of '*wzbegs*.'[38] The word, of Slavic origin means 'runaway or fugitive.' Chapter 13 mentions the *joccedeth*, who collected *res fugitivae*, including *fugitivorum hominum*—without reference to their legal status.[39] Chapter

31 Barney et al., eds, *Etymologies of Isidore*, 9.2.41–132.

32 Hasan and Pais, "A székely név," 208–9.

33 Kristó, *A magyar* állam, 347–50; Kristó, *Magyarország*, 66, 128–29, 142–43, 156.

34 Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar*, 361; Kristó, *Magyarország*, 151–52.

35 Kristó, *A magyar* állam, 349–50.

36 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 148.

37 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 174.

38 Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar*, 298.

39 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 177.

29 already mentions *servi fugitivi* separately.[40] Chapter 14 of Ladislaus's Second BL deals with thefts by *servi profugi*.[41] In the charter of the Garamszentbenedek Abbey, *omnis vagus et profugus* are mentioned separately.[42] Chapter 19 of Coloman's First BL talks about settlers driven from their land *(veteres coloni eiecti)*,[43] Chapter 39 mentions fugitive castle peoples *(de civibus ad fugam facientem)*,[44] chapters 41–44 use the term 'wanderer' *(vagum [servum])* to denote runaway servants.[45] Thus, it seems that although in some cases legal documents tried to distinguish between 'wanderers' and 'fugitives,' it proved impossible to separate the two groups. One term primarily describes the lifestyle of the group, the other refers to how the community grew. In terms of its composition, we find both free persons and former slaves among them.

According to Attila Zsoldos, in contrast to the traditional view outlined above, 'wandering', at least in the form we all learned about, simply did not exist.[46] He proposes to modify the previous model on four important points. His first comment concerns the social composition of 'wanderers,' because as he argues, we find no trace of free 'wanderers' in the decrees. I would emphasize that the essence of my hypothesis would be unaffected if these certain 'wanderers' were only recruited from servants. Nevertheless, the above-quoted law of St Stephen makes a clear distinction between fugitive *servi* and fugitive *milites* who were free beyond dispute. Chapter 22 of St Stephen's First BL also talks about forcing free people into servitude.[47] If the victim did not want to wait for the end of the legal process, which may have been uncertain in terms of its outcome, he probably chose to escape as an immediate solution. He probably did not have much to lose, because it was not he who received compensation for the illegal restriction of rights, but the king and the *ispán* ('*comes*,' the head of a county).

Another important conclusion drawn by Attila Zsoldos concerns the timeline, since the expulsion of free people persisted in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[48] As a result, he also reckons that from the eleventh century, significant groups of free persons were forced to leave their former residences, although he excludes them from the category of 'wanderers'—unjustifiably, in my opinion. The persistence of

40 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 180.

41 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 170.

42 Györffy, ed., *Diplomata Hungariae*, 218.

43 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 186.

44 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 188.

45 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 189.

46 Zsoldos, "Kóborlás," 227.

47 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 148.

48 Zsoldos, "Kóborlás," 225–26.

the process only means that the possible exogenous growth of the Székely groups did not stop in the late eleventh century. The fact that the Székelys were relocated into Transylvania and their collective privileges were recognized may have put an end to the joining of new 'wanderers.' The resettlement—in addition to populating the eastern areas of the kingdom and protecting the border there—may also have had the positive side effect that the group no longer offered an example to follow[49] for those who tried to remove themselves from the feudal system.

Thirdly, Attila Zsoldos believes that the cause of 'wandering' can be found in the wars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, rather than the development of a new economic and social structure.[50] As will be discussed later, the state of war also contributed to the formation of similar social groups in other eras and places.[51] The myth of the origin of the Székelys states specifically that they fled from a war. But again, I see no reason why we should not take notice of the documents according to which the people living on the donated land could have been forced to leave even during a peaceful change of ownership. In history, it is rare for a social process to have a single cause, and sometimes it is difficult to decide whether different phenomena have the same ultimate cause.

Finally, Attila Zsoldos considers it impossible that 'wandering' should have played a role in populating the border areas, because whoever fled the war, probably ran wherever he could.[52] This is a logical argumentation, against which a similar reason would be sufficient: for those who want to avoid the horrors of war in the long term—especially if there is nowhere to return to—uninhabited or sparsely populated areas provide an ideal destination. The warring parties usually waste less resources on the destruction of such areas: because less loot can be expected there, and it is also more difficult to supply the armies in medieval conditions.[53] Among others, the latter reason contributed to the creation of uninhabited areas between tribes and states (Hung. *gyepűelve*). The next section will discuss the historical examples providing evidence that the frontier may indeed be a target for various refugee groups.

In addition to the Latin terms *vagus, profugus*, we also know the term *üzbég*, which is of Slavic origin. This naming may have been used in territories where a significant Slavic population lived and participated in the 'wanderings.' The settlements whose names can be associated with the phenomenon occur in these areas (Nyitra and Sáros Counties).[54] Although we only know Latin and Slavic terms from

49 Scott, *The Art*, 6.

50 Zsoldos, "Kóborlás," 227.

51 Kopytoff, "The Internal," 7.

52 Zsoldos, "Kóborlás," 227.

53 Scott, *The Art*, 178–79, 182.

54 Kristó, "Üzbég," 63–64.

written sources, there had to be a Hungarian word to designate 'wanderers,' since the formation of the feudal state primarily affected the Hungarian-speaking population living in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin. I would argue that this term was *szëkël(y)/szëköl(y)*.

Gyula Kristó first discussed the relationship of Székelys and 'wanderers.' He argued that a large number of Hungarians who wanted to preserve their freedom joined the Székelys, who were originally a Turkic people.[55] Elek Benkő rejects this possibility because in his view joining the Székelys could hardly have been a matter of free choice for a large number of non-free masses, neither on the side of the royal power nor on that of the Székelys.[56] His criticism is based on the hypotheses that a) a unified Székely status existed in the eleventh century, b) the royal power and the Székelys themselves wanted to exclude anyone from the opportunity to join them. However, there is no historical, linguistic, or archaeological data to indicate that the Székely status and privileges existed before 1100. Most of our 'knowledge' about the early Székelys is nothing more than a set of hypotheses cemented into a received opinion. Moreover, the anthropological data presented below also support the heterogeneous origin of the late medieval Székelys.

Gábor Vékony considered the Székelys a Hungarian-speaking group that lived within the borders of the Carolingian Empire.[57] The existence of the Székelys in Abaúj and Bihar Counties makes this hypothesis improbable. There is no indication that the Székely people once formed a huge, contiguous bloc in Transdanubia. Their patchy distribution corresponds mainly to the edge of the Hungarian-speaking area in the eleventh century,[58] not the extent of the Carolingian Empire.

Those living in areas adjacent to the border region were more successful in escaping the *joccedeth* than fugitives living in the central area.[59] This is why we find the Székelys mainly around the *gyepűelve* (uninhabited frontier zone),[60] and not because they were settled there by a central authority. Only later did these areas receive landlords; consequently for a while free people could create independent communities and settlements here.

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55 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 149–50.

56 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 68.

57 Vékony, "A Kárpát-medence," 1335.

58 Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 273.

59 Suitable *refugium* and *nonstate space* might be the marshy, forested regions abundantly found in the Carpathian Basin. (Scott, *The Art*, 6, 13, 25–26, 130–32, 182, 190, 261). The appearance of the Székelys in the interior of the country can also be inferred from the founding letter of Garamszentbenedek Abbey quoted above: *vagi* and *profugi* could even settle on church estates (Györffy, ed., *Diplomata Hungariae*, 218).

60 Györffy, "Székelyek," 46.

The role of the frontier

The institutional vacuum on the uninhabited, sparsely populated frontiers[61] surrounding the territory of settled peoples and states, sometimes created for defensive purposes (Hung. *gyepűelve*), always provided an opportunity for the formation of new ethnic groups.[62] Refugees trying to escape state power may have come from different ethnicities, but their shared fate would forge a new unity amongst them. The best-known examples are perhaps the ʿapîrû[63] and the Cossacks,[64] who, like the Székelys, are inseparable from military service. In the case of the Székelys, the reason for this is not that they were an annexed auxiliary people, but that, to preserve their freedom, they moved to a border region where they could only count on the protection provided by themselves. The example of the Cossacks is also perfect because, despite their Slavic language, the group—molded from different ethnic and social elements—formed an independent ethnic identity against the Russians and the Poles who spoke a related language, just as the Székelys did, as linguistically inseparable from the Hungarians. The Cossacks did not perform services for their rulers by being assigned to other military formations, but—like the Székelys—preserved their separate standing as auxiliary troops. On the other hand, there is a clear connection between 'Cossack' and the name Kazakh. One of the possible etymons of the latter is the verb *qaz-*, which means 'to wander.'[65] In other words, the Cossacks were also 'wanderers, fugitives' who, like the Székelys, preserved their freedom. Since they settled on the borderlands of rival kingdoms, it is not surprising that they appear for the first time as border guards in Russian-language sources.[66]

Groups fleeing central power, organizing themselves into communities, and developing an independent ethnic identity were created not only under nomadic conditions. The phenomenon is well documented on almost every continent. The name of the Seminole Indians may come from the Spanish *cimarrón* meaning 'fugitive.' Originally, it was probably used to denote groups of different origins that tried to remove themselves from the authority of the Spanish, British, and American states, and therefore migrated to the sparsely populated Florida.[67] In the same category we

61 Kopytoff, "The Internal," 25.

62 Gerhard, "Frontier"; Kopytoff, "The Internal."

63 Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure"; Bottéro, "Les Habiru"; Rainey, "Unruly Elements"; Na'aman, "Ḫabiru."

64 Scott, *The Art*, 259–61. Lee, *Qazaqlïq* examines the phenomenon of *qazaqlïq* and the ethnogenesis process of Cossacks and Kazakhs in detail.

65 Lee, *Qazaqlïq*, 21–23.

66 Lee, *Qazaqlïq*, 41.

67 Frank, *Seminole*, 15, 31–32, 41–43.

have the 'maroon' communities formed in different parts of the American continent, which were founded by escaped slaves.[68] According to Igor Kopytoff, the majority of today's African societies can be traced back to processes in the frontiers.[69] In Southeast Asia, a separate concept ('Zomia') was created for the geographical area that, due to its difficult access, offered refuge to groups fleeing the territories of neighbouring states during the past millennia.[70]

The reason behind this process is simple: refugees are forced to create communities of a certain minimum size, which can provide security to the residents.[71] We have some decrees from the era of the Árpáds that can also be interpreted as showing that the organization of 'wanderers' into communities had begun also in Hungary. Chapter 19 of St Ladislaus's First BL decrees that the people of villages that have left their churches must be forced to return.[72] Chapter 13 of the synod held during the time of Coloman contains a similar order.[73] Some researchers associate the phenomenon of 'wandering villages' with shifting cultivation,[74] others with nomadic, animal-keeping communities.[75] Gyula Kristó argues that the relocation carried out due to the exhaustion of the soil would not have been restricted by law, since there was a natural and economic constraint behind the phenomenon. His truth is supported by Chapter 11 of St Ladislaus's First BL: if a village was too far from the church, a single person could represent the entire community at Sunday and holiday masses.[76] It seems that the decrees of Ladislaus and Coloman were applied not to communities that changed their location within a closed area, but to those who wanted to leave the surroundings of all churches—and not a particular one.[77] Apart from this, their livelihood could still be based on farming. Examples from Africa, Asia, and America show that slash-and-burn agriculture may be due to a deliberate decision because it is easier to avoid state control, especially taxation, with more mobility, be it a hunter-gatherer, animal breeder, or soil-shifting lifestyle.[78] Recognizing this, central authorities—similarly to the rulers of the era of the Árpáds—always tried to

68 Kopytoff, *The Internal*, 76; Scott, *The Art*, 25.

69 Kopytoff, *The Internal*, 7; González-Ruibal, *Archaeology of Resistance*.

70 Scott, *The Art*.

71 Scott, *The Art*, 185.

72 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 161.

73 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 208.

74 Szabó, *A középkori*, 58; Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar*, 208.

75 Kristó, *Magyarország*, 158–59; Kristó, *A tizenegyedik század*, 147–48; Kristó, ed., *Korai magyar*, 615, 667.

76 Kristó, *A tizenegyedik század*, 146; Závodszky, *Törvények*, 160.

77 Kristó, *A tizenegyedik század*, 147–48.

78 Scott, *The Art*, 182–207.

force villages to remain in place and coerced their population to switch to farming methods that made control feasible.[79]

Chapter 1 of St Ladislaus' Third BL may deal partly with the inhabitants of these villages: "Post hec inquiratur a cunctis optimatibus et populo, si quam villam sciant furto diffamatam […]."[80] Similarly, Coloman's decree 62 does not speak of individual thieves, but of a village of thieves.[81] Stolen goods were easiest to sell by those groups who lived in the border region, far from state control.[82] Due to the mass occurrence of this delict, it may have been necessary to strictly ban animal trade in the border region.[83] In any case, it is clear from St Ladislaus' above-mentioned decree fourteen that runaway servants were a security problem.

The group identity of the Székelys that emerged from the eleventh century is the explanation for the fact that in medieval sources their name regularly appears in the company of ethnic groups. This is why Gyula Kristó insisted on the 'skl etymon and that the Székelys were originally a Turkic-speaking tribe, rejecting the linguistic opinions.[84] But the case of the Hajdúk shows how easily an independent identity can develop under convenient circumstances: the first appearance of the word can be dated to around 1500;[85] a century later they were already settled down and received privileges. Subsequently, they kept their identity until the modern era; in military campaigns they fought in independent troop—just as the Székelys. Michael B. Rowton proposes the use of the term 'social ethnonym' for such group names (Hebrew, Cossack, etc.).[86]

The formation of the Hajdúk cannot be separated from the wars of the sixteenth century. With reference to the opinion of Attila Zsoldos, I would accept that similar circumstances may have played a major role in the appearance of the Árpád Era 'wanderers.' Although different ethnicities may have participated in the genesis of the Hajdúk, there is no doubt that, from a linguistic point of view, they form one of the ethnographic groups of Hungarians. Gyula Kristó cites László Kósa and Antal Filep,[87] who speak of "real and ostensible ethnographic units explained by regional differences." In their perception, Székelys and the Hajdúk belong to the

79 Scott, *The Art*, 5, 12, 39, 179–80.

80 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 173.

81 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 191.

82 For the perks of settling in the border region, see González-Ruibal, *Archaeology of Resistance*, 83–85.

83 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 170–71.

84 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 11–23.

85 Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 512.

86 Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure," 15–20.

87 Kristó, *Tájszemlélet*, 6.

same category. In the case of the Székelys, it is therefore not necessary to assume that they were joined auxiliary people with an independent tribal organization before the eleventh century.

László Révész drew attention to the fact that among the presumed early Székely settlement areas in Western Hungary, only the area around Lake Fertő contains archaeological finds dated to the first half of the tenth century. Because in the Őrség, Őrvidék, and Göcsej, the finds related to Hungarians appear in the second half of the tenth century, it may be ruled out that the ancestors of the Székelys living in Transylvania[88] were resettled at this time or during the time of our first kings from here. Instead, we have to take into account the survival of the ninth-century population, who may have played a role in the ethnogenesis of the Székely people. Hungarian cultural influences can already be detected at the foot of the Alps in the eleventh century.[89] This also suggests that the genesis of the Székelys is inseparable from the eleventh century and the 'wanderings.'

During the research of the early 'Székely' anthropological material from Székelyföld (Ținutul Secuiesc), "a strikingly wide circle of similarities has emerged."[90] Based on physical anthropological data, the population of the Petőfalva (Peteni) and Zabola (Zăbala) cemeteries in Háromszék (Trei Scaune) was not formed during the time of the Conquest but is related to the population of the preceding Carolingian period. The anthropological material from Udvarhelyszék is different: those buried in the Szentábrahám (Avrămești) cemetery show a connection to the anthropological material from cemeteries of the ninth–tenth centuries of Transdanubia. The anthropological material of the Basins of Csík (Depresiunea Ciucului) and Gyergyó (Depresiunea Giurgeului) shows a closer resemblance to the Udvarhelyszék (Scaunul Odorhei) than to the Háromszék material. A similar picture emerges based on the genetic analysis of today's Székely population.[91] From an anthropological point of view, the Székelys of Transylvania are not a uniform population. Naturally, it is debatable whether the integration of the pre-Conquest population into the Székelys took place exclusively under peaceful conditions. During the campaigns of the thirteenth century, the Székelys regularly picked slaves from both Eastern and Western Europe.[92] It cannot be ruled out that the Székelys of the eleventh century in Western Hungary acted similarly, taking advantage of the conflicts of the time, and this also increased the significance of the autochthonous elements in their ethnogenesis.

88 Révész, *A 10–11. századi temetők*, 97–99; Langó, "Bestimmung."

89 Révész, *A 10–11. századi temetők*, 98–99.

90 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 65–67; Fóthi et al., "Embertani leletek," 543–52.

91 Borbély et al., "High Coverage."

92 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 64.

This is consistent with linguistic data: the early Székelys lived in different areas of the Carpathian Basin, and their dialects developed after the Conquest. Some of the dialects of Székelyföld can be related to the Hungarian groups around Őrség, Őrvidék, and Pozsony (Bratislava), and others to the Hungarians of Baranya and Valkó Counties.[93] The place names also indicate that the Székelys came from different parts of the Hungarian-speaking area—in addition to the above, from Bihar—and that they 'brought along' some of the place names used in their old homelands.[94] The territorial division of the eleventh–twelfth century Székelys documented in historical sources was therefore not preceded by a unified settlement area and central (princely or royal) resettlement.[95] In the latter case, we should encounter a uniform dialect in these areas inhabited by the Székelys and—after the repeated resettlement to Transylvania—in today's Székelyföld. Instead, even after 800 years the latter preserves its various dialects. In essence, Székely clan names suggest the same:[96] the integration of the Székelys was preceded by the disintegration of the Hungarian tribes, which unfolded during the tenth–eleventh centuries and the organization of the feudal state.[97]

After the Conquest, the anthropological and dialectal characteristics of medieval Székelys developed independently in different areas of the country. The tenth–eleventh century non-Hungarian groups in the Western frontiers, whose ancestors lived in the Carolingian Empire, also played a role in the ethnogenesis of the Székelys. It may have been this group that originally used the so-called Székely script. In this writing system, the signs of the Eastern European runic script were supplemented with the letters of Glagolitic and Cyrillic.[98] Even Simon of Kéza, who created the Hunnic–Hungarian linkage in his work, thought that the Székely script was not Hungarian, but originated from a foreign group living with the Székelys.[99] The term *Blackis* mentioned by Kéza[100] is usually thought to be referring to Transylvanian

93 Benkő, "Nyelvészeti adalékok."

94 Benkő, "Megjegyzések a víznevekről."

95 Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272–73.

96 Györffy, "Székelyek," 50–58. There are personal names of different (Hungarian, German, and Slavic) origins, ethnonyms (Besenyő), and tribal/settlement (Kürt, Jenő) names amongst them. Regarding personal names, György Györffy drew attention to the fact that they are typically Christian. (Györffy, *Székelyek*, 54) This too infirms the hypothesis that the organization of Székelys took place before the foundation of the Christian kingdom.

97 On the process of 'tribal disintegration – reintegration,' 'detribalization – retribalization' in the Middle East: Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure."

98 Vékony, "A Kárpát-medence," 1332–34; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians*, 440–41; Sándor, *Székely írás*, 123–46.

99 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 53.

100 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores,* vol. I, 162–63.

Vlachs, since at Kéza's time the Székely people were already living in their current homeland. But the term 'Vlach' generally means a Romanized population, regardless of geographical location. Transdanubia also had a Romanized population[101] and a runic writing system in the Avar Age.[102]

Simon himself uses the term Black/Vlach for the trans-Danubian Romanized population: "Pannoniae, Panfiliae, Macedoniae, Dalmatiae et Frigiae civitates […] natali solo derelicto in Apuliam per mare Adriaticum […] Blackis, qui ipsorum fuere pastores et coloni, remanentibus sponte in Pannonia."[103] Based on the context, the term Pannonia in this case refers to the territory of the former Roman province, not to the whole of Hungary.

The unequal distribution of the runic inscriptions in Székelyföld may be connected to the different prehistory of individual Székely groups.[104] Most and earliest inscriptions are from Udvarhelyszék, whose population shows similarities with the Carolingian population of Transdanubia from an anthropological point of view.[105] The Székely script used for limited purposes may have been suitable as a means of dissimilation[106] emphasizing the elite status of the Székely people.[107] At the same time, its system, language, and scope of use are radically different from the Latin script serving the kingdom. That is the reason why it survived only in a group that came into existence against the state and successfully preserved its autonomy throughout the Middle Ages.

The beginning of royal intervention

The self-organizing process of the eleventh century outlined above was followed by a different royal policy in the twelfth century. From the point of view of the establishment of the kingdom, the first hundred years were defined by trying to provide defense against the dangers posed by 'wanderers' (theft, smuggling, and further escapes). In some areas of the sparsely populated country, autonomous communities may have been formed, whose mere existence meant a threat to a central power that wanted to regulate the lives of all the people living in its territory.[108] Around the turn of the century, the leaders of the kingdom recognized the potential

101 Deletant, "Ethnos and Mythos," 67–85; Vida, "Conflict."

102 Fehér, *Kárpát-medencei*.

103 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores,* vol. I, 156–55.

104 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 54, 56.

105 Fóthi et al., "Embertani leletek," 545.

106 Scott, *The Art*, 173–74.

107 Scott, *The Art*, 32, 225; Sándor, *Székely írás*, 258; Révai, "Magyar literatura," 60.

108 Kopytoff, "The Internal," 30.

opportunities inherent in the Székelys and began to use them to serve their own goals. The outcome of various measures, the organization of the Székelys into a unified group spanned roughly a century.

It seems that Coloman was the first ruler to take steps to reintegrate the group, which was becoming an independent entity, into the system of the kingdom. The problem primarily affected the peripheral areas of the country, and we know that Coloman dealt with affairs of the border region in several of his decrees (First BL 36, 76, 82). The settling of the case of the Székelys living there may also be related to the clarification of the conditions of the frontiers. Chapter 45, which regulates the uniform taxation of free people, directly follows Chapters 41–44 concerning 'wanderers' of slave origin. It lists several groups classified as free. First of all, Coloman abolished the eight denarii tax that every free person had had to pay before. Subsequently, the decree notes the people of the castle *(várnép)* who perform a weekly service (Group 1) and other free persons independent from the former (Group 2), who still have to pay eight denarii. Finally, there are two sentences: "Si autem liberi, qui regi per fines eorum transmigra(n)ti equos, currus subductorios et servicia stipend(i)aria suppeditabant, IIII denarios persolvant. Et similiter liberos, qui cum eis cohabitare consenserint, aut exeant."[109] (Groups 3–4)

In the last sentence, the law notes a fourth group of free people who live with the third group. The former are obliged to leave if they refuse to pay the tax that others do. Since the tax of four denarii replaces the eight denarii one, it may be deduced that the members of the fourth group did not experience the new regulation as a tax reduction, but as an increase, and therefore the law expects that there will be people who would rather leave than pay. The logic of the text suggests that this is a group of free people to whom the king is now extending the obligations that have been imposed on others for a long time. These could have been the 'wandering' Székelys who had moved to the frontiers to preserve their freedom and independence and, thus, successfully avoided taxation, until around 1100 they were finally overtaken by the royal power.

Ten years after the birth of these decrees, the first reference to the Székelys, mentioned as a group separate from the Pechenegs and the Hungarians, is contained in the description of the 1116 Battle of Olšava.[110] According to Elek Benkő, they were distinguished from others by their freedom created on the model of collective, ethnic privileges.[111] This was rooted in the eleventh-century history of the Székelys, which ran independently of the free subjects of the kingdom until around 1100. It

109 Závodszky, *Törvények*, 189.

110 Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores,* vol. I, 436.

111 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 18.

may have facilitated the reintegration of similar groups in other areas and eras as well if the central power managed to use them as military elements.[112]

It transpires from the narrative sources that the formation of the independent ethnic consciousness of the Székelys began during this century-long period. Anonymus already calls them the people of King Attila, which only means that the Székelys and Hungarians are related,[113] and they are distinguished by their different historical fate. It is difficult to say whether the Székelys of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries thought that they were earlier inhabitants of their country than the Hungarians, and the medieval writers merely supplemented this with the story of the Hunnic origin, or we owe the entire construction to chroniclers. If it is a Székely tradition, there are two possible explanations. On the one hand, the autochthonous population that merged into the Székelys might not only have contributed to the formation of the Székelys' hybrid identity with their writing system and genetic heritage as well as with the real tradition that their ancestors had lived in the Carpathian Basin before the Hungarians. But it is also conceivable that the 'we-were-here-first' self-consciousness of the Székelys was born out of defiance against the royal power: when the tax collectors appeared, they already considered themselves indigenous to the frontiers.[114] The possibility that they might be descendants of an earlier wave of immigration in the given area has arisen for other groups forced to the periphery, but genetic tests contradict these assumptions[115]—just as in the Székelys' case. It might be worth considering the possibility that the historical tradition of the Székelys influenced thirteenth-century historians. Is it not possible that Anonymus and Simon of Kéza connected Árpád and the Hungarians to the Huns because this was a response to the Székely historical tradition stating that they had descended from the Huns?

The next step in the formation of the Székelys was their resettlement in Transylvania. Certain long-preserved phenomena (land ownership based on clans, social structure, etc.)[116] can be easily explained by the fact that for a long time their 'wandering' ancestors successfully avoided the institutions of the kingdom, although it is debatable to what extent these phenomena represent ancient traditions[117] traceable back to the time of the Conquest or are the results of the conscious economic and social policy against the institutions and property relations of the kingdom.[118]

112 Na'aman, "Ḫabiru," 262.

113 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 19.

114 Kopytoff, "The Internal," 22, 52–61.

115 Scott, *The Art*, 25, 183.

116 Györffy, "Székelyek," 47; Kristó, *A székelyek*, 86–96.

117 Kopytoff, "The Internal," 3, 33–39.

118 Lee, *Qazaqlïq*, 49; Scott, *The Art*, x, 8, 24, 29–30, 185, 188, 208–16, 259–70, 274–82.

Gyula Kristó raised the possibility that the Székelys of Transylvania migrated from the western border to their new homeland as part of a spontaneous movement.[119] It is not impossible that in the eleventh century smaller or larger groups of 'wanderers' appeared in Transylvania as well, but only from the neighbouring lowland areas, for example, following the course of the River Maros.[120] However, it seems very unlikely that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, without local knowledge, i.e., without a precise goal, masses of people from different areas of the country would have set out on the journey of up to 500 or 600 kilometres, driven by their ideas, to find the area where, from the thirteenth century onwards, the Hungarian kings created the Székely seats. The central power must have played the main role in the settlement of the Székelys in Transylvania.

Not all Székelys undertook—and probably not all of their groups were offered—the move of hundreds of kilometers, lasting several months, to unknown eastern territories. Those who stayed,[121] even if they were able to keep their freedom for a while, sooner or later merged into one of the larger social groups. Their different fate could also be related to their number. Even after the Mongol invasion, the Székelys of Váty lived in Baranya County, and only received the right from King Béla IV to go to war individually.[122] In 1272, Stephen V raised some of them to the status of servientes, while the rest merged into serfdom. The Székelys of Tolna[123] and Szabolcs[124] Counties might have suffered a similar fate: only the lucky few were able to preserve their freedom.[125] There is no sign that the Székelys living in the Bega and Temes regions ever provided military service.[126] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the counties of Zemplén[127] and Abaúj, forest rangers were called Székely; in the Abaúj village of Regéc this meaning of the word was recorded as late as the early eighteenth century.[128] We see something similar in the case of the Cossacks, whose

119 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 119, 151.

120 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 132; Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 263–64; Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272. Using archaeological methods, this presumed west–east migration cannot be demonstrated with complete certainty (Gáll and Hőgyes, "11. századi migrációk").

121 Györffy, "Székelyek," 46–47; Kristó, *A székelyek*, 77–79; Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 68.

122 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 34–35.

123 Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272; Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 36.

124 Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272; Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 41–42.

125 Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 43, 45–46.

126 Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272.

127 Kristó, *A székelyek*, 13–14.

128 Sebestyén, "A székelyek," 34; Benkő, "A székely néprésznév," 263; Benkő, "A székelység szerepe," 272; Benkő, *A középkori Székelyföld*, 41.

fate was significantly influenced by their status: whether they entered the service of the state or private landlords, or preserved their independence.[129]

Unintended consequences, self-organization, and exaptation

The terms 'joined tribe' and 'tribe organized for border protection' are certainly the most frequently used conceptual frameworks in the debate about the origin of the Székelys. The former includes the assumption that their origin is not a research topic of Hungarian social history, while the latter sees its birth as the consequence of 'intelligent design.' Instead of these theories, I recommend conceptual frameworks used in other social sciences that provide a theoretical background for the linguistic and historical hypothesis outlined above.

One of these frameworks is the concept of 'unintended/unanticipated consequences/results.'[130] Its essence is that since no single decision-maker has all the necessary information, even the best-intentioned measures have unforeseen consequences that may trigger long-term processes.

The next concept to take into account is 'self-organization.' Self-organization is a general phenomenon that can be observed everywhere, from the inanimate environment to biological and cultural processes.[131] 'Spontaneous order' is also not an unfamiliar concept to practitioners of social sciences.[132] Although we tend to believe that the various phenomena and institutions of human culture, including social groups, could only be created by great legislators and wise rulers, in fact, in most cases, legislative decisions are preceded by a long cultural evolution, whose existence is just acknowledged by the lawmakers. Recognizing the processes that preceded the legislative acts in the early Árpád Era is made significantly more difficult by several factors: a lack of sources, the nature of the extant sources, and our way of thinking.[133]

The third concept is 'exaptation.' In biology, exaptation is the version of preadaptation when a gene, tissue, or structure developed for a certain purpose later

129 Fedinec et al., *Ukrajna története*, 154–62. See also the meanings of the term *hajdú* (Benkő, ed., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 512). The diverse reintegration of the ʿapîrû also resulted in the fact that their groups of different sizes or individuals can be found in many spheres of activity depending on space and time. (Bottéro, "Les Habiru," 100–3).

130 Menger, *Investigations*, 130–33; Merton, "Unanticipated Consequences." For Menger, the concepts of unintended consequence and self-organization are commingled.

131 Kauffman, *At Home*; Strogatz, *SYNC*.

132 Hayek, *Studies*, 96–105; Menger, *Investigations*, 129–59; Szafruga, *Politics*, 7–71.

133 Strogatz, *SYNC*, 34; Szafruga, *Politics*, 7; Menger, *Investigations*, 148.

acquires a new function.[134] The phenomenon of exaptation seems to cross the boundaries of the organizational levels of inanimate nature, biology, and human society, similarly to the rules of network organization.[135] Accordingly, the concept is already used for various phenomena of human culture,[136] including social networks.[137]

The three phenomena are obviously not independent of each other: certain unforeseen consequences can trigger self-organizing processes that result in the emergence of a social cluster, which may eventually acquire a new function within the network of society. Since royal measures are better documented than spontaneous processes, the importance of the latter may easily be hidden. As an analogy, I refer to the already mentioned Hajdúk. Fortunately, the sixteenth and seventeenth century sources are much more abundant and varied than for the actions of Stephen Bocskai to blot out the processes of the preceding hundred years.

Conclusion

Belief in 'progress' is part of the modern European view of history. Thus, we tend to see the foundation of the Christian kingdom as a positive or at least necessary stage of development.[138] However, significant groups of people in the eleventh and twelfth centuries experienced this process quite differently and did not intend to integrate into the new secular and ecclesiastical structures or give up their previous independence. The adaptation of the Western economic and social system in Hungary therefore started unexpected processes: pagan rebellions, frequent wars, and 'wandering.' These parasocial groups[139] appeared primarily on the frontiers. It was difficult to control them, and they posed a potential threat to the stability of the kingdom. Something had to be done with this group, and it was Coloman who recognized not just the threat but also the opportunity. This is the explanation why these 'wanderers' suddenly disappeared from twelfth-century sources—they had found their place in society under a different name.

Historical processes rarely proceed along a straight line, and perhaps even more rarely is their starting point a deliberate design. The Pechenegs and the Cumans were organized on the Eurasian steppe not because their descendants would one day become military auxiliaries of the Hungarian kings. Spontaneous processes have

134 Futuyma, *Evolution*, 261, 486, 547.

135 Frenkel et al., "Adaptation and Exaptation."

136 Lass, "How to Do;" Knappett, *Archaeology*, 155–56, 159.

137 Murphey, Fukada, and Falout, "Exapting."

138 Clastres, *Society Against*, 189–218; Scott, *The Art*, 8.

139 Rowton, "Dimorphic Structure and the Parasocial Element."

more solid consequences than non-spontaneous ones. The *őrök* (guards) and *lesők* (scouts) who were organized by the central authorities for a certain military task did not evolve into a group similar to the Székelys. They lacked the social cohesion created by previous spontaneous processes.

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 217–245
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.12

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Re-Evaluating the Eleventh Century through Linked Events and Entities

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Abstract. This report presents the aims and ongoing progress of the ERC-funded project "Re-Evaluating the Eleventh Century through Linked Events and Entities" (Grant #101002357). We introduce the rationale for the project and the innovative solution for recording historical data that we have developed, known as the STAR model. We then give details of the four case studies undertaken in the project, which will shed new light on the movement of people, the understanding of place and space, and the production of texts within and among Christian societies of the eleventh century. Through the work of this project, we hope to be able to represent, examine, and illustrate the multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations that arise in the history of a century that was so pivotal to the development of the modern Near East and Europe.

Keywords: digital history, data modeling, medieval studies, eleventh century, eastern christianity

The history of the Christian world during what we might call the 'short eleventh century,' wedged between the 'long tenth century' that extends by some accounts to 1033 and the advent of the Crusading movement in 1095 that arguably kicks off the twelfth,

is extremely challenging to study for a number of reasons. These range from a lingering Western colonialist bias that results in disproportionate attention to and generalizations about the Middle Ages based on events in France and the Holy Roman Empire to the imbalance in the survival of contemporary evidence that also favors Western Europe to the sheer multiplicity of languages, cultural contexts, and types of evidence that must nevertheless be connected. Here lies the historical objective of the RELEVEN project: to seek to create a more coherent and connected picture to match the coherent and increasingly connected Christian world that Jonathan Shepard[1] and Peter Frankopan,[2] among others, have argued comes closer to how the different inhabitants of this world conceived it in terms of the space they inhabited, the people around them, and the written artifacts, pointing in many cases to the intellectual ideas that circulated around it. The importance of such a connected approach is clear in light of recent trends toward thinking in terms of a Global Middle Ages.[3]

The methodological challenge of re-thinking how digital data about the past can and should be represented arises from the observation that, although there has been a huge drive in the last twenty years to render collections into open repositories of data that can be mined by the researcher, the usefulness of these repositories is too often doubted, even dismissed with the claim that such data collection and analysis is necessarily positivistic.[4] Scholars of the medieval world, in particular, have generally not been able to profit as much as others from the 'big data' trends of digital humanities—while we have much more data than one scholar can reasonably grapple with using paper notes alone, it is rarely enough to support the use of the sort of exploratory statistical and machine-learning methods that appear so promising for contemporary history and modern literature. Yet it is critical that we find some way for the medievalist to profit from breakthroughs driven by digital methods, as opposed to mere digital remediation; without this, it becomes difficult to argue that Digital Humanities is making any real difference to traditional working methods after all.

These two challenges, the historical and the methodological, come together as the objectives of the RELEVEN project. The core idea is to put scholarly interpretation and source provenance, rather than 'simple' but often misleading or incomplete facts, at the center of our approach to data construction. For this, we have developed the STAR model ('STructured Assertion Record') as the basis of our data collection practices. In order to demonstrate the potential of such a data-driven approach to such heterogeneous data, to best harness the digital work that has already been

1 Shepard, "Storm Clouds and a Thunderclap," 127–53.

2 Frankopan, *The First Crusade*.

3 Cp. Holmes and Standen, "Towards a Global Middle Ages," 1–44.

4 Drucker, "Humanistic Theory"; Fuchs, "Critical Digital and Social Media Research," 37–49.

done, and to get a sense of the trends circulating broadly during the period of interest, we focus within the project on three thematic strands as they relate to the 'short eleventh century': People and Movement, Place and Space, and Textual Culture. Here, we will introduce the basic principle of the STAR model and describe the four case studies—movement around Central Europe, questions of identity formation in northern and eastern Italy, the construction of a communal historical narrative in Armenia, and the correspondence network around Michael Psellos as a source for understanding the educational norms and mobility of persons within Byzantium.

An innovative practice for the capture of historical data: the STAR model

The treatment of historical information as a collection of assertions rather than plain facts is the methodological basis of RELEVEN. We therefore need to address the question of how we can robustly express conflicting information in our historical sources and our present-day reconstructions and even how we can use digital methods to express the multi-perspectivity that is so sought after in today's historical methodology. In so doing, we aim to provide a clear counter-example to the common assumption that digital history projects are positivistic by their very nature. The opportunity to do this is provided by our focus on the eleventh-century Christian world, which involves very many perspectives and very contested events, of which only one or two narratives are generally known.

At the heart of our digital work is the STAR model, which stands for STructured Assertion Record. We use the STAR model to approach the problem that, on the one hand, Linked Open Data (LOD) is a very popular model for many sorts of data collections, including those within the cultural heritage domain. On the other hand, as mentioned above, LOD was designed basically without controversy in mind. One of the consequences of its design is that the collection of facts, or assertions, represented in an LOD store tends to get dissociated very quickly from the context that is very often associated with important meaning or cultural implications for the data that was collected.[5] The other common approach, known as the 'factoid model,' used primarily in prosopographical databases,[6] has the strength that its data statements are always connected to the primary source from which it was taken, but the weakness is that if a statement is not made in a primary source, it cannot be represented in the database at all.[7]

5 Kahn and Simon, "Feast and Famine," 86–100.

6 Pasin and Bradley, "Factoid-Based Prosopography and Computer Ontologies," 86–97.

7 Baillie, "Alternative Database Structures for Prosopographical Research," 117–32.

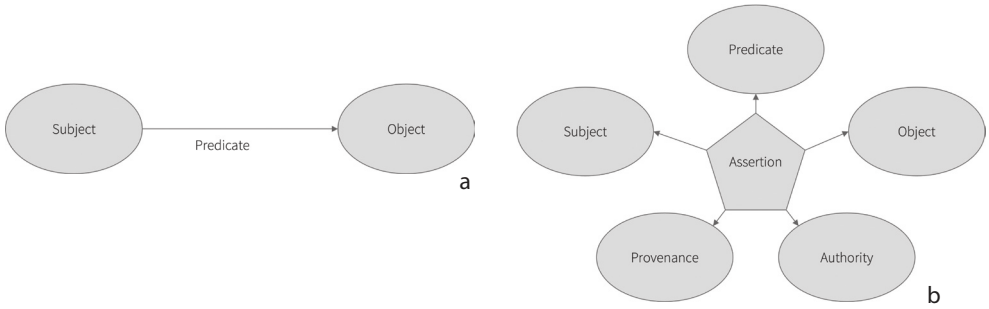

Figure 1 An information statement in regular Linked Open Data LOD (a) and in the STAR (b) model

The schematic of a typical LOD statement is given in Figure 1a: it consists of an entity that is the subject of the statement, a relationship that denotes a property of that entity—one might think of this as the verb—and an object, which is the value (or content) of that property. The same statement is represented in Figure 1b according to the STAR model. The statement is now rather more complex: the relationship (or property) that was previously only a connection between two entities is now itself an entity. This is known as 'reification.' All three entities—the subject, predicate, and object—are then connected to a core 'assertion' object, which also provides a connection to an entity representing the authority for the statement (that is, who made the claim) and one representing the source (that is, on what basis the claim was made).

One of the first crucial tasks was to find out how our approach could fit with existing models, if at all. Indeed, the problem of conflicting assertions has received an increasing amount of attention in the last several years, and a relevant revision was published in 2019 to the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CIDOC-CRM), which is increasingly becoming the fundamental standard for the computational modelling and representation of cultural heritage data. We have based the specifics of our model on CIDOC-CRM version 7.1.2; the specific entities and properties we have adopted to form the assertions are shown in Figure 2. The use of our STAR model to represent the data we collect underpins each of the case studies presented below.

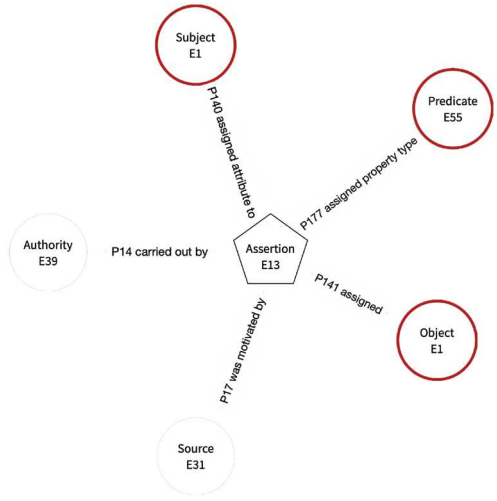

Figure 2 The STAR model according to the CIDOC-CRM standard

Movement and Power in Central Europe (Rózsa)

The focus of the RELEVEN project on the Eastern borders of Christendom is also evident in its interest in Central Europe. The eleventh-century history of this region provides a challenge for modern scholars due to its turbulent politics, cultural and religious transformation, as well as the quantitative and textual issues of our source material. However, Central Europe is a problematic geographical and geopolitical concept as its meaning, terminology, and definition have been changed many times in accordance with different political and intellectual intentions.[8] The project employs the latter term to refer to a region that encompasses Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland, as well as some smaller Wendish and Baltic polities. As a successor of the Frankish Empire, the Holy Roman Empire was subject to conditions significantly different from those affecting other regional polities. Even so, the empire is frequently considered to be part of Central Europe and so has not been entirely excluded from the analysis as it had numerous connections with its eastern neighbours.

What is the significance of Central Europe to the Christian world in the eleventh century? This century marked a transition period in the spheres of religion and politics. The Christianization of Bohemia started in the ninth century, while the conversion of Poland and Hungary began in the tenth, but the process lasted until the thirteenth century.[9] Nevertheless, Christianization forged special bonds between Central Europe and the rest of Christendom, which are of interest to our research on the movement of individuals and the perception of space.

The primary focus of this case study on Central Europe is the problem of how local rulers utilized itinerant individuals for their policies. One can identify specific factors—namely, Christianization, political and administrative development, and conflicts—that prompted people to move. The importance of this issue can be illustrated through the career of Saint Gerard of Csanád. Gerard was born in Venice and moved to Hungary in the 1020s. He spent some years in Bakonybél as a hermit, then was appointed the first bishop of Csanád by Stephen I. As a prelate, he played an important role in the politics of Hungary even after the death of Stephen I.[10] Through these events, it is evident that a foreigner visited Hungary, engaged with several notable figures of that polity in various locations, maintained a presence as a religious man, and traveled to specific places on official assignments. Gerard's movements were significant, and various meanings can be attributed to them. This raises the question of how the king of Hungary addressed this situation. Nevertheless, this is just one example

8 Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, 1–39.

9 Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages,* 315–28.

10 Most of these events are mentioned in the two lives of Gerard: Szentpétery and Madzsar, "Legenda Sancti Gerhardi Episcopi," 471–506.

that highlights the value of spatial movement in politics, as evidenced by a variety of cases. In truth, the scope of this research is not on the careers of individuals or those whose different journeys are documented in primary sources but rather on the possible underlying patterns in the individuals' movements. It is also worth stressing that the research is more focused on the rulers' responses to the movements of others than the sovereigns' itineraries. Nonetheless, the presence of the ruler can occasionally be an important factor in the case of the movement of another individual.

Historians have already observed numerous movements in medieval Central Europe, yet a thorough analysis within the regional context remains necessary. One can approach the historiography of this topic from different angles, and the political aspects of journeys have especially attracted the interest of modern historians. Central Europe has received increased attention in recent decades, yet the focus of observation was seldom on movement. Nora Berend contributed to several volumes that revolved around this region.[11] Dániel Bagi analysed the division of political power in eleventh- and twelfth-century Central Europe.[12] Péter Báling observed the diplomacy and foreign affairs of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland as the manifestations of dynastic and personal ties.[13] While some analyses focus on movement, their main concern is usually specific types of motion, such as migration, colonization, pilgrimage, and exile.[14] It is clear that historians recognized the significance of movement in the politics of eleventh-century Central Europe. However, itinerant individuals, their journeys, and their role in politics were overshadowed by other topics or scholars focused on specific kinds of agents (e.g., pilgrims) and activities (e.g., colonization). Therefore, there is room for a comprehensive analysis of the political use of 'individuals on the move'.

The case study poses specific questions regarding the political implications of individuals in motion. Despite the focused nature of the topic, it is necessary to take into account numerous factors in order to come to a comprehensive understanding. What was the function of the movements that seemed to be influenced or managed by the central government? Who were the agents of these directed actions? In what ways did the court intervene in movements that were not directly induced by the central government? Who benefited from the rulers' oversight of these movements? What role did the church play in this process and policy? Many of these questions are inherently part of the broader topic. They mainly explore the relationship between

11 Berend, *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*; Berend, *Expansion*; Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*.

12 Bagi, *Divisio Regni*.

13 Báling, *Az Árpád-ház hatalmi kapcsolatrendszerei*.

14 Piskorski, "The Medieval Colonization of Central Europe," 215–35; Csukovits, *Magyar zarándokok*; Kersken, "Hungary as a Place of Exile in the Middle Ages," 300–20.

agency, competence, and various personal aims. The role of the church appears to be an exception, an additional topic of interest. However, given the realities of eleventh-century politics and the significant role of the church in various domains, the inquiry into the church's involvement in this process remains a compelling question to explore. These questions establish the groundwork for what can be investigated while also pointing out the challenge of figuring out how much and what kind of information can be acquired from the source material.

The political changes in Central Europe shaped the region's written culture and, thus, the available source material. Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland had to re-establish their foundations for their literary production in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Historiography emerged as the last among the various literary genres in Central Europe. The earliest known preserved or theorized examples were compiled at the end of the eleventh century or the beginning of the twelfth century: the *Chronicle of the Bohemians* by Cosmas of Prague, the *Gesta principum Polonorum* by Gallus Anonymus, and the hypothetical old gesta of the Hungarians.[15] Political treatises and hagiography appeared in the region's literature in the early eleventh century. Yet, the official documents and written laws marked the beginning of a new cultural era, illustrating the preferences and needs of the emerging polities of Central Europe. This slow development means that the internal sources of local history were very scarce in the first half of the eleventh century. Modern historians often rely on external sources, especially those written in the Holy Roman Empire, although these source materials tend to address the matters of Central Europe peripherally. A wide variety of sources is necessary for this observation, as different genres have various interests and provide unique contexts for understanding movements.

The case study employs a methodology aligned with its specific questions and the general goals of the RELEVEN project. The key connection between the two perspectives is the interest in prosopographical data. The basis of this case study is the study of individual journeys. This aligns with the structure of the RELEVEN database, which organizes the majority of historical data according to events. The analysis of movement comprises two phases: first, recording evidence about individual movements, and second, conducting a study to explore tendencies based on the factors identified in the first phase. The first part includes collecting data based on six factors associated with an individual journey: 1) the agent of the movement, 2) the geographical dimensions of the event (i.e., places involved in it), 3) the aim(s) of the activity, 4) the proponent(s) of the movement, 5) the beneficiary or beneficiaries of the event, and 6) the benefit(s) of the activity. The second part is a comprehensive study that explores tendencies according to the factors defined in the first stage. By structuring both the individual and the comprehensive phase around the six

15 Veszprémy, *Történetírás* és *történetírók*, 59.

factors, the case study avoids relying on less relevant typologies or classifications. This approach effectively focuses the observation on aspects that are closely linked to the political utilization of geographical movement.

Research on the movement of individuals and its political significance is currently underway. The division of the research into two phases pertains more to methodology than to the timeline. As such, the research repeatedly alternates between the two steps throughout the project in order to derive insights from the investigation. Certain publications further refine the scope of observation by showing the practicality of the topic and the methodology of this case study. The initial publication of this case study is about a bishop's journeys from the Holy Roman Empire to Hungary.[16] Further publications on specific topics related to this case study, such as Stephen I's policies on moving individuals and the role of itinerant people in the *imitatio imperii*, are also in progress. An analysis focusing on personal movements contributes to our understanding of eleventh-century Central European politics. However, there is the need for the careful evaluation of eleventh-century details, given the prevalence of modern theories and interpretations of the fragmentary evidence in primary sources. The issue of primary sources and modern interpretations represents another juncture at which the research on Central Europe aligns with the interests of the project.

The *nationes*: Formation of an Identity (Prajda)

According to the historiography, a civic identity began to crystallize in Italy in the twelfth century. The birth of the term and the phenomenon of the *nationes* themselves, translated into English as trading nations, is seen by historians as the culmination of this civic identity. At this early stage, scholars traditionally identify four leading *nationes* in the form of the medieval maritime republics: the Amalfitans, the Pisans, the Genoese, and the Venetians.[17] The origins of the Republic of Lucca also date back to the same period, but it was not until the thirteenth century that its merchants, alongside the Sienese and Florentines, became significant players in long-distance trade and banking.[18] However, by the second half of the fourteenth century, the importance of the Pisans and Sienese in these two areas had diminished considerably. At that time, the Venetians were joined in the Adriatic by the two other leading nations that were almost completely new to this geographical area: the Genoese and, above all, the Florentines.[19]

16 Rózsa, "Augsburgi Brúnó és Szent István," 615–37.

17 Tangheroni, "Trade and Navigation," 127–46.

18 Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 42–3.

19 On the Genoese in fourteenth-century Dalmatia, see: Prajda, *Italy and Hungary in the Early Renaissance*, 87, 95, 114. On the Florentines in the same period, especially: 47–54, 86–90.

Despite the chronology generally accepted by the scholarship, in a recent monograph, *The Donkey and the Boat: Reinterpreting the Mediterranean economy, 950–1180*, published in 2023, Chris Wickham maintains that the commercial revolution began in the period between 950/1000 and 1180, which he calls the "long eleventh century."[20] In this metanarrative of the historiography, the evolution of the *nationes* plays a crucial role. Contrary to previous scholarship, Wickham argues that the Commercial Revolution was more about the intensification of connectedness between regional economies than about Italian long-distance merchants, especially the Genoese and Venetians, venturing to distant destinations in the Mediterranean.[21]

The scholarship has provided a definition of the *natio* and linked the development of the term to the so-called 'barbarian invasions' (that is, the great migrations of the High Middle Ages).[22] The term was used to describe the ethnicity and the language of individuals.[23] Indeed, in documents from Venetian territory, the term *natione* was already in use in the eleventh century. In a source datable to 1022, a woman was mentioned as "qui professa sum ex nacione mea lege vivere Alemannorum."[24] In 1028, the two *comites* of the comitatus of Treviso, father and son, are cited by the local notary as "qui professi sumus ex natione nostra lege vivere Salica."[25] In a similar fashion, in a document drawn up a year later on the Rialto by a Venetian notary, another woman is mentioned as "ex natione mea lege vivere Longobardorum."[26] These expressions, *Longobardorum, Salicorum,* and *Alemannorum,* all refer to the very same *natio,* which starting from the sixth century, lived in the Peninsula.[27]

In these two successive periods and historical contexts, how should we understand the term *natio*? How, if at all, did the German *natio* of the eleventh century differ from that of the Venetians and the Genoese, for example, in the twelfth century? Starting from this period onwards, the term *natio* was applied to communities of the same origins settled abroad that had institutionalized representation in a given place.[28] Thus,

20 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat*, 1; Abulafia, "A Radical Rethink of Mediterranean History," 12–3.

21 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat*, 625–26, 62.

22 Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique*, 3–9. For a historiographic overview, see: Quertier, *Guerres et richesses d'une nation*, Introduction, 2.1.

23 Gasparri talks about a collective identity of the Longobards. Gasparri, "Rapport introductif," 17–31.

24 *Corpus delle fonti di Venezia*, n. 26. (27/08/1022). I wish to thank Stefano Gasparri for the collection. Published in: Lanfranchi, *S. Giorgio Maggiore*.

25 n. 43. (06/10/1028). Published in: Lanfranchi and Strina, *Ss. Ilario e Benedetto e S. Gregorio.*

26 n. 44. (07/05/1029). Published in: Lanfranchi, *S. Giorgio Maggiore*.

27 Gasparri, "Le molteplici identità etniche," 493–504. Pohl, "Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition," 221–39.

28 Quertier, *Guerres et richesses d'une nation*, Introduction, 2.1. Petti Balbi, *Mercanti e nationes*

in the application of the term 'nation' to the Germans, Venetians, and Genoese, for example, the common element was their status: they were all strangers *(forestieri)* in that given place, born elsewhere. However, the emphasis in the two cases seems to be different. Meanwhile, in the case of the Barbarians (i.e., Longobards), the scholarship (for example, Stefano Gasparri) emphasizes their origins and language as a reason for developing an identification of the term *natio*.[29] At the same time, in the case of the trading nations, scholars stress the institutionalization of a foreign community abroad.[30]

The institutionalization of territorial control by the trading nations in the form of commercial consulates and warehouses *(fondachi)* established by the Genoese and Venetians started following the First Crusade in 1096. As with their participation in the crusade, the foundation of these institutions also had a dual nature.[31] On the one hand, to develop territorial control and diplomatic representation; on the other, commercial purposes. According to scholars (for example, Enrico Basso), the First Crusade, a milestone in this development, requires further analysis.[32] The event may also be seen in the context of the evolution of a collective or civic identity, and as the decisive moment ending the short eleventh century. This, indeed, contrasts with the theory advanced by Wickham about the 'long eleventh century' in which the *nationes* play a limited role.

In the case of Genoa, as with Amalfi, there are virtually no sources that could give us any indication of the development of a civic identity as early as the eleventh century.[33] Although the written sources on Venice, and especially Florence, are far more abundant, they must be treated with extreme caution when drawing conclusions about issues of identity. The sources become more consistent only in the twelfth century, which is one of the main reasons why much of the scholarly discourse on civic identity in Italy begins with this date.[34] The same is true when we try to study questions of an economic nature. According to Wickham, commercial contracts, for example, have survived only from Genoa and Venice, but they are exclusively bound to church collections. Thus, they do not concern private individuals or secular powers.[35] In his estimation, there are altogether thirty-five such documents from Venice and a further seventy-one of an economic nature. However,

nelle Fiandre. I Genovesi in età bassomedievale, 55–60.

29 Gasparri, "Le molteplici identità etniche," 493–504.

30 Petti Balbi, "Introduzione," XI–XXIII.

31 Petti Balbi, *Negoziare fuori patria*, 1–14; Balard, "Consoli d'Oltremare (Secc. XII–XV)," 83–94.

32 Basso, *Strutture insediative ed espansione commerciale*, 16.

33 For a discussion of the relationship between Genoese citizens and the Church until the mid-twelfth century, see: Petti Balbi, *Governare la città*, 61–67.

34 Cammarosano, *Italia medievale*, 39.

35 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat*, 471.

they predominantly deal with immobile properties and provide little to no information on commerce.[36] Thus, it is reasonable to assume that before the twelfth century, references to merchants involved in trade were also scarce.

In the Florentines' case, Enrico Faini claims that before the end of the twelfth century, the sources infer the complete absence of a civic identity.[37] In the development of a civic identity, he attributes a leading role to the secular memory of the collective actions of the citizenry.[38] Only in that period, he claims, did the first signs of collective memory start to appear, embodied by the *annales*.[39] However, even at the end of the eleventh century, the Lucchese merchants were preoccupied with the Florentines. In 1081, the bull issued by Henry IV in favor of the former specified that such privileges applied only to the "cives Lucenses."[40]

At the same time, some historians collocate the beginnings of the path that led various trading nations like the Pisans and the Genoese to their eventual hegemony in the Mediterranean with the eleventh century. Enrico Basso has articulated that, in the case of the Genoans, this path was marked by two significant conflicts with Maghribi merchants in Mehedia in 1087 and in Valencia and Tortosa in 1092 and 1093.[41] Even though these attempts failed, a detailed analysis of the involvement of these trading nations in the First Crusade, according to Basso, might show the changes which became evident in the century that followed. In fact, in the twelfth century, Genoa drew up significant commercial treaties which helped expand its merchant network abroad. From the Venetians' point of view, as Basso has pointed out, the commercial treaty with Byzantium in the eleventh century was of utmost importance. It was a determining factor in the spread of their commercial networks as well as in the birth of a Venetian *natio*.[42] The exact date on which this agreement happened is still fertile ground for debate among historians. Scholars have typically accepted that the Golden Bull of the Byzantine emperor, Alexios I, which conferred upon merchants of Venice greater autonomy in trading with the Eastern Mediterranean, is datable to 1082.[43] More recently, a new date, 1092, was proposed.[44]

36 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat*, 509–10.

37 De Angelis, "Cittadini prima della Cittadinanza," 169–90.

38 Faini, *Firenze nell'età romanica*, 26.

39 Faini, *Firenze nell'età romanica*, 24.

40 Faini, *Firenze nell'età romanica*, 23.

41 Basso, *Strutture insediative ed espansione commerciale*, 16.

42 Basso, *Strutture insediative ed espansione commerciale*, 17–22.

43 Nicovich, "The Poverty of the Patriarchate of Grado," 1–16.

44 Frankopan, "Byzantine Trade Privileges to Venice," 135–60.

Even before this date, during the awakening of this civic identity, the initial diplomatic alliance between Hungary and the Venetian ruling elite took an unexpected turn. In 1000, Doge Pietro II Orseolo conducted an expedition to Dalmatia. Following this, thanks to the Venetian elite's interest in the territory, he was the first Venetian doge to take the title *dux Dalmaticorum*.[45] Shortly after that date, in 1011, the marriage between his son, Ottone, already doge of Venice, and Stephen I's sister created a diplomatic alliance with the newly formed Christian kingdom on one side and the Adriatic city already in expansion on the other. Following Stephen's death in 1038, the Hungarian crown went to his nephew, Pietro di Ottone Orseolo, who, after a short reign, was sent into exile by local lords in 1041. In 1044, he made his return and, for a short period of time, once again was able to hold the Hungarian throne. In 1046, he was definitively driven away by a pagan rebellion.[46] Until that point, Dalmatia was in the sphere of interest of both Venice and Byzantium. During the century, the Normans made attempts to occupy the port cities on the southeastern shore of the Adriatic against Byzantium. In these conflicts, Venice was on the latter side.

As far as the primary sources attest, at the beginning of the eleventh century, Hungary had no interest in the Adriatic. In 1091, Ladislaus I conducted the first campaign to occupy the Croatian throne and thus also the Dalmatian towns.[47] Within a century, the personal union between the crowns of Hungary and Croatia through Coloman led the Kingdom on the Adriatic to become the chief adversary of the Venetian *nation*. However, in 1098, the Hungarian king and the Venetian doge made an agreement that the former would retain Croatia and the latter Dalmatia. This changed shortly afterward when Coloman was crowned king of Croatia and of Dalmatia in 1102.[48]

As we have seen, the eleventh century also represented a watershed in the evolution of the trading nations. In his analysis of identity in the post-Roman Adriatic, Francesco Borri argues for the pivotal role of the sea and its trade networks.[49] Following this line of thought, the dominion of the Adriatic and its shores were presumably of strong significance in the development of the Venetian *natio,* too. The question of the identity of the population living on Venetian territory in the short eleventh century will be the subject of further research that compares the available written evidence, especially with mainland Lucca and Florence at the time.

45 Ortalli, "Pietro II Orseolo," 13–27.

46 Báling, "The Orseolos," 13–26.

47 Körmendi, "Szent László és Horvátország," 443–77.

48 Gál, *Dalmatia and the Exercise of Royal Authority*, 11–3.

49 Borri, "The Waterfront of Istria," 51–67.

The Armenians between Byzantium and the Seljuq Turks (Read)

> "The life of the house of the Armenians came to an end. For in one year, the two brothers, Ašot and Yovhannes, who held the kingship of our land, were raised from this earthly life. Their throne of constancy was moved and was never again stable. The princes departed from their patrimonial inheritances and became wanderers in a foreign land; thereafter districts were ruined and looted by the house of the Greeks."[50]

> "In the same year, the gate of Heaven's wrath opened upon our land. Many forces moved from T'urk'astan, their horses as swift as eagles, with hooves like solid rock. Their bows taut, their arrows sharp, well girded, and the laces of their shoes were never untied. Having arrived in the district of Vaspurakan, they attacked the Christians like insatiably hungry wolves to food."[51]

This is how the Armenian historian Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi, writing in the late 1070s, described the year 1045. In doing so, he framed the Armenian experience of the eleventh century in two distinct halves. The period until 1045 was conceptualized in terms of the gradual and inexorable expansion of the Byzantine Empire, culminating in the annexation of the Armenian Kingdom of Ani, the displacement of its social elite, and the decline of its society. The period after 1045, on the other hand, was defined by the Seljuk Turks. Interactions between the Seljuks and Armenian communities were constructed in terms of destruction, brought about by divine punishment and framed by apocalyptic biblical paradigms. Some fifty years later, the Armenian chronicler Mattʻēos Urhayecʻi (Matthew of Edessa) shared this view, writing from his vantage point in the early twelfth century:

> "I myself had considered writing about the bitter events of these latter days of ours, about the terrible wrath which the Armenian people bore from the long-haired and loathsome nation of Edomites—the Turks—and from their brothers, the Byzantines."[52]

Matthew's equivalence between the Seljuk and Byzantine Empires and the comparable damage they inflicted on the Armenians tends to compound the idea that the Armenian experience of the eleventh century was characterized by loss and dislocation. Both Aristakēs' and Matthew's reflections have proved remarkably durable and continue to define much of our understanding of Armenian history at this juncture.[53]

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50 Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi, *Patmutʻiwn Aristakisi Lastivertcʻwoy*, 55.

51 Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi, *Patmutʻiwn Aristakisi Lastivertcʻwoy*, 64–5.

52 Urhayecʻi, *Žamanakagrutʻiwn*, 112–13.

53 Greenwood, "Aristakes Lastivertcʻi and Armenian Urban Consciousness," 88.

The way in which scholarship has characterized the historical experience of Armenian communities in the eleventh century has undoubtedly been crystalized by the selective treatment of Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi and Mattʻēos Urhayecʻi. This approach has subsequently reproduced a discursive framework that situates itself firmly within the horizons provided by these two key primary sources. The realities of losing independence to Byzantine and Turkish expansion and the subsequent dislocation of Armenian communities have always sat uncomfortably within the nationalist and methodologically state-based conventions of Armenian historiography, which privileges periods in which Armenian-speaking communities became organized into proto-states or kingdoms.[54] Secondary works have consequently tended to focus on the conditions that preceded the loss of Armenian kingdoms to the Byzantine Empire in the tenth and early eleventh centuries or, more commonly, jumped to the re-emergence of Armenian-led states in Cilicia at the end of the century.[55] Cowe, for example, has argued that the tenth and eleventh centuries are "pivotal for an understanding of the Armenian Middle Ages, marking as they do the zenith of the renewed Armenian Kingdom under the Bagratuni dynasty in the tenth, its gradual demise in the first half of the eleventh century, and the subsequent transition via a Sebastia-Cappodocia interlude toward the establishment of another state to the south of historic Armenian lands, in Cilicia."[56] Though the narratives of Aristakēs and Mattʻēos make for compelling reading, they were created using specific literary and ideological frameworks. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a re-assessment of these two historiographical works has been a key feature of more recent studies, which have begun to re-frame the Armenian experience of the eleventh century.

Published in 2017, Greenwood's article *Aristakēs Lastivertcʻi and Armenian Urban Consciousness* set out to tackle what he describes as the 'unhappy narrative' of the period and, in doing so, marked a particular change of direction in approaching eleventh-century Armenian history.[57] In a short but deep-diving analysis, Greenwood argues that the *History* and its discussion of interactions with the Seljuk Turks reveal the emergence of an urban consciousness amongst Armenian communities in the eleventh century, challenging a long-term scholarly contention that frames urban spaces as an alien element in medieval Armenian society. Drawing on understudied colophon and epigraphic evidence to support his re-reading of Aristakēs, Greenwood's reflection on eleventh-century Armenian communities is defined by transformation, not destruction.

54 Greenwood, "Social Change in Eleventh-Century Armenia," 196–7; Aslanian, "From Autonomous to Interactive Histories," 95–7.

55 Garsoïan, "The Byzantine Annexation," 187–98.

56 Cowe, "Armenian Integration to the Sebastia Region," 111.

57 Greenwood, "Aristakes Lastivertcʻi and Armenian Urban Consciousness," 88.

Nicholas Matheou's 2018 thesis, *Situating the History Attributed to Aristakēs Lastivercʿi, 1000–1072,* shares a great deal with Greenwood's approach and goes further. Matheou's study provided a new and dynamic critical apparatus with which to better understand the *History* of Aristakēs.[58] This complete reappraisal of the source brings greater consideration to the aims and ideological horizons of the composition and seeks to place the work within the context of the agency and historical situation of its author. In doing so, Matheou implements an effective critique of the methodologically nationalist appropriation of the eleventh century by drawing our attention to the circumscribed use of the *History* in projecting a singular, national reading of Armenian history.[59]

In 2017, Tara Andrews' foundational study on the *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa: *History as Apocalypse in a Crossroads of Cultures: Matthew of Edessa and His Chronicle* brought a dynamic and much-needed re-assessment of this valuable twelfth-century source. Setting the composition in the context of its creation and the apocalyptic ideological framework of its narrative, Andrews challenges the reader to rethink the hostility that is often assumed to be inherent in Matthew's survey of eleventh-century events.[60] Andrews' work is arranged in terms of interactions between Armenians and their neighbours, and her chapters that examine exchanges with the Byzantine and Seljuk Empires do not follow the traditional narrative of loss and dislocation. Through a new reading of the *Chronicle*, complex interplays and the multiple lived realities of Armenian communities are put at the forefront of the argument, whilst wholesale assertions about loss and dislocation are challenged. As Andrews, Greenwood, and Matheou have proven, there is more valuable information in the works of Aristakēs Lastivercʿi and Mattʿēos Urhayecʿi which can be unlocked by re-reading them within a more nuanced and thoughtful framework.

Another route to re-considering the narrative of eleventh-century Armenian history can be found in a set of largely neglected material. A complementary and equally important source for the eleventh century is a collection of fifty-five colophons, which offer a series of unique insights into Armenian communities and their experiences of this period. Colophons transmit a range of information concerning the manuscripts in which they are found: they provide crucial data about the sponsorship, dating, and production of medieval codices, offering a window into the processes of production behind any given codex and the lived reality of those responsible for its creation and use. That colophons themselves represent a sophisticated literary genre is being increasingly recognized. The burgeoning field

58 Matheou, "Situating the History Attributed to Aristakēs Lastivercʿi."

59 For further development of this argument, see: Matheou, "Hegemony, Counterpower, and Global History," 208–36.

60 Andrews, *Mattʿēos Urhayecʿi and His Chronicle*.

of 'colophonology' is beginning to connect these unique sources across linguistic and disciplinary boundaries, telling us more about the trans-regional stylistic and rhetorical patterns that colophons convey.[61] The Armenian colophon tradition is particularly rich and, whilst its historical and literary value has been demonstrated by Sanjian and Zakarian from the thirteenth century onward, a thorough study of the period that pre-dates the thirteenth century remains a major desideratum.[62] The potential of eleventh-century colophons has been demonstrated by Greenwood, who used a small selection from the period to support his argument regarding Armenian urban identity.[63] Concurrently, Mathews and Van Lint have highlighted the value of using the colophon from the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (ms. 2556) to comment on contemporary reactions to the "turbulent decades of Seljuq conquest."[64] Despite their value, no historical database contains information drawn from these rich sources. The 1988 out-of-print edition of Artašes Matʻevosyan remains the only way to access this valuable earlier material, and this is perhaps why their full value has yet to be utilized. There are several challenges that hinder the use of this publication: colophons are not always represented in their entirety, shelfmarks and foliation are not up to date, there is no indication of the editorial work behind the transcription, which masks key linguistic and scribal features, nor does the collection contain a supporting apparatus to further facilitate the study of the material, which, to date, remains untranslated.[65] One of the outputs of the RELEVEN project will be the *Digital Corpus of Eleventh-Century Armenian Colophons*: encoded according to the TEI-XML standard, it will be provided with accompanying translation, a scholarly apparatus and manuscript images visualized in the open-source software Edition Visualisation Technology (EVT).

This brings us to the approach of the present case study within the RELEVEN project**.** In his article *Raiders and Neighbours: The Turks (1040–1304),* Dimitri Korobeinikov first suggested that Armenian colophons might provide an alternative route to understanding the Armenian experience of the eleventh century, specifically in terms of the relationship between Armenians and the Byzantine Empire.[66] Comparing the colophon evidence with the historiographical, Korobeinikov concluded that "one should treat with caution the blood-curdling descriptions of the Turkish invasions found in the Byzantine and Armenian sources, for these

61 Kiraz and Schmidtke, *Literary Snippets*.

62 Zakarian, *Lived Reality in Medieval Anatolia and the Caucasus*; Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts 1301–1480*.

63 Greenwood, "Aristakes Lastivertcʻi and Armenian Urban Consciousness," 97.

64 Van Lint and Mathews, "The Kars-Tsamandos Group," 85–96.

65 Matʻevosyan, *Hayeren Jerʻagreri Hišatakaranner 5–12 Dd*.

66 Korobeinikov, "Raiders and Neighbours," 692–727.

incursions had yet to break Byzantine power in Armenia, and extensive areas were more or less unscathed."[67] The use of Armenian colophons to rethink this period is precisely the basis on which the present RELEVEN case study seeks to build. In contrast to the historiographical narratives of Aristakēs and Matt'ēos, which are anxiously preoccupied with the destructive effects of Byzantium and the Seljuq Turks, few colophons reflect on this presence so clearly. Instead, they tend to contain different representations of relations between Armenians and the Byzantine Empire, reflections on Perso-Islamic ideals of rulership, and a variety of different priorities about the lived realities of the eleventh century; rarely do they project disruption or loss in the style of the historiographical material. There is no doubt that the arrival of the Seljuks represented an uncertain period of transition for Armenian communities, who had relied on localized political systems as well as Byzantine Imperial structures to support their everyday lives, but this does not mean everyone perceived the effect of the Seljuks in the same way. The introduction of Armenian colophons into the RELEVEN database will not only supply new data regarding people, places, and texts but also provide a highly effective method of querying the production of the past in the more familiar eleventh-century Armenian historiography. Utilizing the interplay between these sources, this case study aims to cut through the traditional readings drawn from the historiographical source material and gain new perspectives on the historical experiences of Armenian communities during the eleventh century.

The Letters of Michael Psellos: Networks, Diplomacy, Mobility (Anđelović)

The value of letter collections for historical research on pre-modern societies has long been recognized.[68] Epistolography has been perceived as a more 'trustworthy' genre for historical research than historiography as, to a certain extent, it presents both a 'mirror' of a letter's author and adjusts the content, tone, and language register to a recipient.[69] Letter-writing as a literary genre with immediate social impact is thus particularly present in the case of early Christianity,[70] Late Antiquity,[71] and

67 Korobeinikov, "Raiders and Neighbours," 701.

68 See, for example: Gully, *The Culture of Letter-Writing in Pre-Modern Islamic Society*.

69 On these features of Byzantine letter-writing, see: Papaioannou, "The Epistolographic Self," 333–52.

70 For the importance of letters in early Christian context it suffices to mention that, of the twenty-seven books that make up the New Testament, twenty-one are in the form of letters.

71 Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters. An Anthology with Translation*.

Byzantium,[72] whereby elites in the Christian context not only showcased their literary interests through letters but also advocated their ideologies and maintained power. Eleventh-century Byzantium is not an exception, and of 15,000 Greek letters from the period between 300 and 1500 CE that have come down to us,[73] about 3.6 percent were authored by a single person—Michael Psellos.

Born to a middle-class family in central Constantinople near the monastery of *Ta Narsou* in 1018 as Konstantinos, Psellos was one—and often referred to as the most prominent—of the influential polymaths belonging to the mid-eleventh-century elite, educated in rhetoric, law, and philosophy.[74] Psellos served in provincial administration before a spectacular career in the state apparatus, especially under the patronage of the emperor Konstantinos IX Monomachos in the years 1042–1055, after which he experienced disfavor and a short monastic retreat. The turbulent period for this rhetorician, teacher, diplomat, and philosopher was followed by him serving as an imperial advisor, most notably to Isaakios I Komnenos (1057–1059) and Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078).[75] Psellos died in or shortly after 1078, and his life and career thus tie in with the so-called 'short' eleventh century, that is, the period between the death of Basil II in 1025 and the rise to power of Alexios Komnenos in 1081, "the pivotal period in Byzantine history"[76] that saw significant shifts in terms of the political and economic circumstances of the Empire.[77]

Moreover, it is Psellos' towering literary output that has preoccupied the attention of modern scholars who have studied what he can tell us about philosophy, politics, and the highly rhetorical literary culture of Byzantium of his era more generally.[78] Psellos' literary production surpasses in volume the oeuvres of many other authors not only of the eleventh century but of the Byzantine millennium altogether. Although he is mainly known for his *Chronographia*, a historiographical

72 For letter-writing in Byzantium in general, see the collection of essays in Bernard, "Michael Psellos," 125–45; Riehle, ed., *A Companion*.

73 Riehle, ed., *A Companion*, 2. For the importance of letter-writing in middle Byzantium and especially on the forms of addressing in Byzantine epistolography, see: Grünbart, *Formen der Anrede*.

74 For the most concise biography of Psellos, see: Rosenqvist, *Die Byzantinische Literatur*, 100–4.

75 For Psellos' relationship to the emperors during his lifetime in more detail, see: Jeffreys, "Psellos and 'His Emperors'," 73–91.

76 Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*, xxviii.

77 For Byzantium in the eleventh century in more detail, see: Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204*, 99–114; Haldon, *A Social History of Byzantium*, 191–2; Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry*, 10–7; Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*.

78 For more on Psellos' literary output, see: Ljubarskij, Η προσωπικότητα και το έργο του Μιχαήλ Ψελλού. On Psellos' rhetorical self in his writings, see: Papaioannou, Ἡ ρητορικὴ καὶ ὁ λογοτέχνης.

narrative and philosophical tractate covering the time from Basil II to Michael VII,[79] Psellos wrote numerous other pieces in nearly every Byzantine genre, composing letters, orations, rhetorical exercises, poems, histories, etc.[80] Living at the time when as many as thirteen emperors and empresses governed the empire with only three patriarchs at the head of the Constantinopolitan see during the same period (1025–1081), Psellos positioned himself at the crossroads of imperial and ecclesiastical elites and thus witnessed the fragility of the imperial power and a tumultuous *Kaisergeschichte*. Psellos' contact with members of the Constantinopolitan elite, as well as of the provincial ones and with monastic centres, is conspicuous, particularly in the case of Psellos' epistolographic corpus that presents an invaluable source of the social, intellectual, and political history of eleventh-century Byzantium.

Until recently, all Psellos' 556 letters (518 Psellos' and 38 of uncertain authorship but attributed to Psellos), addressed to more than 150 different, often unidentified recipients, were "scattered over various collections."[81] Every attempt at studying Psellos' letters entailed the consultation of numerous publications, sometimes with conflicting attributions and datings, which did not help this fascinating epistolographic collection attract a wider audience, especially compared to Psellos' historiographic writings. In 2019, however, all Psellos' letters were finally brought together in an excellent edition prepared by Stratis Papaioannou.[82] This edition facilitates our research to a considerable extent and further points out the benefits of the letter collection of Psellos as a Byzantine elite official for our knowledge of the period. Despite the lack of evidence suggesting that Psellos intended to compile his letters into a collection and the absence of any original manuscripts from his lifetime containing his correspondence, the afterlife of this epistolographic corpus testifies to Psellos' letter-writing as an epistolographical model in the subsequent centuries of Byzantine literature.[83] The main interest of the Byzantines in Psellos' letters was primarily due to their literary qualities, which made them suitable for school exercises.

79 On *Chronographia*, see: Pietsch, *Die Chronographia des Michael Psellos: Kaisergeschichte, Autobiographie und Apologie*.

80 In an impressive catalog of everything believed to have been written by Psellos and of all printed editions of his works since the fifteenth century as well as of the bibliography, editions, and translations of each of Psellos' texts until the year 2005, P. Moore lists as many as 1,100 works attributed to Psellos and 1,790 manuscripts containing at least one work by Psellos, see: Moore, *Iter Psellianum*.

81 Lauxtermann and Jeffreys, eds., *The Letters of Psellos*, 11. More precisely, Psellos' letters were scattered over nine major collections and partially in various studies, see: Lauxtermann and Jeffreys, eds., *The Letters of Psellos*, 447, for the list and overview of these collections.

82 Psellos, *Epistulae*.

83 On the legacy of Psellos' letters, starting with the twelfth century, see: Papaioannou, "Fragile Literature," 289–328 as well as Grünbart, "The Letters of Michael Psellos," 933–46.

This interest was particularly due to the letters' allusive rhetoric and irony despite these features also having been labeled as obscuring our knowledge of the period. Yet, beyond their literary appeal, Psellos' letters are invaluable for offering insights into politics, diplomacy, power, and mobility within Byzantine society during the mid-eleventh century. As such, Psellos' letters provide us with knowledge that ties in with the main themes of the RELEVEN project—people and movement, place and space, and textual production.

Psellos' letters, which were sent to over 150 different recipients, already make up a significant source of material in the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*. This material has been updated and supplemented with a more detailed list of Psellos' addressees in the edition by Papaioannou. In addition to personal names, these recipients belonged to different social classes and their dignities and titles are more often than not stated in the letters. Psellos owned at least four monasteries outside Constantinople, and numerous letters sent to the *kriteis* of the provinces where these letters were located present a unique insight into how the Constantinopolitan elite-maintained power and negotiated ownership and economic aspects of their properties. What is more, letter carriers figure prominently in Psellos' letters, and we know of numerous cases where a carrier of Psellos' letter is a person on whose behalf Psellos sent a letter, informing us about the carrier's path, expectations, and activities. For instance, a monk carrying a letter in c. 1065 visited a highly positioned official at Byzantine court, switching various costumes and acting now as a bishop and now as a theatrical character, playing different tragic and comic songs, bathing the official, making his bed, and tending his horses, at the same time being a good scribe.[84] As such, Psellos' letters thus not only contribute to our knowledge of prosopographical data but also of the mobility of letters, their production, and the process of writing, sending, and receiving a letter in eleventh-century Byzantium.

While Constantinople, quite expectedly, occupies the central position in Psellos' oeuvre, the topographical information Psellos' letters provide us with is unique. As mentioned above, Psellos' recipients occupied different social positions—emperors, patriarchs, provincial elites, metropolitans, bishops, monks—and many of them were based on the Byzantine periphery at the moment of receiving a letter. Not including all the place names mentioned by Psellos, he dispatched letters to as many as forty locations outside Constantinople, spanning from Cyprus and Antioch in the southeast to Dyrrachium on the western border of the empire. The distribution covers all the Byzantine provinces, including smaller towns and metropolitan sees in between, showcasing Psellos' wide network of associates and ecclesiastical structures. Thanks to Psellos' frequent positioning as a broker, we are informed of the mobility of individuals and even groups in the Byzantine countryside and their

84 Psellos, *Epistulae*, 167.

dependence on provincial heads, with Psellos as an influencing reference. A notable example is a group of monks from Kappadokia at the reception of the *krites* of this Byzantine province asking for a certain favor in c. 1065, with Psellos acting as a mediator. Residing in Constantinople, Psellos introduced the monks through the letter as a powerful asset and recommendation.[85]

Last, epistolography as a genre in general and Psellos' letters in particular represent an unparalleled source for textual production. The letters serve not only as witnesses to the production and mobility of texts in the relational context of senders, scribes, carriers, and recipients, but they also contain references to other works of literature. This is particularly the case with Michael Psellos, whose education in rhetoric, philosophy, law, and Christian teachings made him quote ancient authors such as Homer, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as the Bible and the Church Fathers. These quotations often point to a shared cultural and educational interest between Psellos and his recipients, either as his ex-pupils or as his former colleagues, at the time of correspondence with Psellos occupying important offices in the state apparatus or in the Church.[86] A letter from c. 1045 to an unnamed churchman and Psellos' former fellow student abounds in Homeric references and reflects a deep knowledge of the *Odyssey* by both Psellos and his correspondent, wherein Psellos desperately asks his friend to provide him with a copy of Plutarch.[87]

Covering the focal research points of the RELEVEN project—prosopographical research, transregional mobility and topography, and textual and literary production—the letters of Michael Psellos represent an invaluable primary source for the social, cultural, political, economic, and literary history of eleventh-century Byzantium. With the recent appearance of a single and updated edited critical volume—for the first time—the letters of Psellos provide us with unique insight into "monastic governance, tax systems, judicial procedures, court ceremony,"[88] the discourse of patronage, educational, political, and cultural interests of the Constantinopolitan elite, as well as into the mobility and practices of marginalized groups such as nuns and monks. Psellos' letters, therefore, represent a convenient research subject for a novel "relational approach"[89] and digital methods such as network analysis, visualization through maps, and topic modelling, allowing us to further situate this fascinating diplomat, advisor, philosopher, teacher, and rhetorician and his contemporaries alike into the social world of eleventh-century Byzantium.

85 Psellos, *Epistulae*, 724.

86 Bernard, "Educational Networks in the Letters of Michael Psellos," 13–41.

87 Psellos, *Epistulae*, 616.

88 Bernard, "Michael Psellos," 142.

89 Preiser-Kapeller, "Letters and Network Analysis," 460.

Dissemination and outlook

One of the main aims of the RELEVEN project is to develop and demonstrate a new set of practices for the digital collection of data about historical persons, places, and texts; it follows that one of the most important outputs of the project will be the dataset itself. This will be released according to the FAIR principles and with due attention to the archiving and preservation of the data that we collect. Another important aspect of the project is the need to acknowledge and reuse existing data collections, which implies a data-level interlinkage between our data set and several others, including the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, the Pleiades gazetteer, the Syriaca dataset, and more. A website is currently under development which will showcase some of the advantages of our data collection methods. Users will have the ability not only to browse our data collection but also to visualize the differing—and sometimes conflicting—viewpoints about the life and career of a person, or the borders of a territory, or the genesis or transmission of a text.

Beyond their representation in the dataset and website visualizations, the project team has also had the opportunity to present our methods and our findings to fellow scholars at several major conferences both in medieval history and in digital humanities. We maintain an active online presence on our website and social media, where we inform the interested public about our activities and progress.

The case studies presented here, apart from forming an important part of our data collection, will comprise the basis for a jointly-authored book in which we take a fresh, trans-regional, and interconnected look at the connections between persons, their conception of the places they inhabited, the texts they produced and the trends and ideas that circulated in these texts during a century that was so formative for so many of the national groups that now inhabit Europe, the Caucasus, and the Near East.

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HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 246–248
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.13

Modelling Christianisation: A Geospatial Analysis of the Archaeological Data on the Rural Church Network of Hungary in the 11th–12th Centuries. By Mária Vargha.

Archaeolingua 11. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2022. 160 pp. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2vm3b7n

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This geospatial-archaeological work is a major contribution to different fields. It greatly enhances our understanding of the process of Christianisation in East Central Europe. It is a groundbreaking work because it examines a crucial development that had only been looked at through historical sources before, which, of course, in this context, are very limited and can often be misleading. There are, of course, sources about East Central Europe in the tenth and eleventh, and way more in the twelfth century, but these have become extensively used even if they reflect only part of the reality and are often centred on particular layers of society which represented only a small part of the population. Mária Vargha has used the burial sites, churches, monasteries, and secular centres, their context, and interrelation to trace the Christianisation process. The data retrieved from hundreds of sites and thousands of burials proved to be a very valuable source for the analysis of the Christianisation of the Kingdom of Hungary. Many volumes have dealt with this topic, but often, these were very archaeological texts limited to a certain site, comparison of sites, or maybe a smaller region, and only in rare cases did such investigations go beyond limited areas, for obvious reasons: the quantity of the data. So far, there has been a lack of critical discussion of the archaeological records, and no one has provided a deeper understanding of the transition that happened between the tenth and the twelfth centuries. A major issue has been the lack of methodology, the ability and need to deal with big data, and the separation of archaeology and history. Vargha has used the relatively raw information from these works, mainly archaeological information from unpublished excavations or data from field-walking, and created a broader picture that transmits important information not only to archaeologists but to anyone wanting to know about the Christianisation of a new East

Central European state and the peculiarities of the Kingdom of Hungary. Separately, such sites do not offer much to archaeologists, and thus, their study often does not go beyond an excavation report. However, when examined together, their comparative geospatial analysis with known centres and the landscape offers much more than that—they provide an excellent source base to investigate Christianisation and state-formation processes. The results of the analysis of these sites are compared to the theories of the historical reconstruction of the same developments. Vargha also notes that there is a great dividing line in the scholarship whereby some people deal only with Conquest-period pagan tombs, and others research only Christian cemeteries (p. 19). Many of the sites are mixed, which creates problems in understanding them. Fortunately, Vargha's approach avoids the many pitfalls of such projects by putting aside individual conversions and looking at institutionalisation. This way, she has been able to contextualise these and the different types of burials and their relationship to different types of power centres. The book has several intriguing maps, which reflect the spatial network analysed in the text.

Regarding these maps, it must be mentioned that there is a lack of data from some places and an abundance of data when one or several archaeologists dealt with certain areas for years and created a solid chronology. The lack or abundance of data are handled very well because, in many cases, the author explains why something is likely and why something is not using other comparisons and historical data. It should also be emphasised that these maps are approximate and thus not definitive.

The book is also an English-language handbook for minor topics connected to the main line of investigation. It explores and summarises topics such as the very interesting question of the baptism of the population in Hungary in the eleventh century (pp. 12–5). It provides an impressive and well-written historiographic overview of different issues connected to burials and the many difficulties and often problematic terminology that have accompanied the scholarship on the topic of cemeteries in this transitional age (esp. pp. 12–9, 23).

The extensive historiographical section is followed by a part that deals with innovative methods that have not really been used in the field or topic, as is made evident from the historiographic section. In the very detailed methodological section, Vargha provides an intriguing discussion on archaeologists and big data research and addresses the problems and the benefits of such research, which, as she writes, is, or was, not often favoured by archaeologists. Her discussion and introduction on geospatial big data are also worth consideration not only by archaeologists but also by historians and even art historians. Vargha's work is the first to be dedicated to big data in a medieval East Central European context.

The main analytical section (the fourth chapter) is a very compact commentary on the maps, which delivers the evidence, analyses it, and presents concise and thoughtful

interpretations. These are texts that help to understand what stands behind the maps. Finally, towards the end, before the general conclusion, there is a section that compares the historical theories and her material. Among the important results and reinterpretation based on her analysis, I will mention a few here: there is a famous law from King Stephen that ordered the building of a church for every ten villages; this became a topos. From Vargha's analysis, it seems that even in the eleventh century, there was a very serious church-building campaign that we know of only partially, but clearly, this was a widescale process that can be observed all over the inhabited territories of the state. This was quite a stable network, even if it was looser than the twelfth-century one. In sources, the pagan revolts seem much more important, but in reality, there is not much indication of these, especially when eleventh- and twelfth-century church networks are compared, and so far, no attempt has demonstrated the visibility of these in the archaeological sources (p. 67). The author makes several important observations about the relation of castles, monasteries, and churches that contribute greatly to our understanding of state formation and Christianisation from multiple perspectives (see the relevant sections for each century and a summary: pp. 101–4). In conclusion, the main points about the relations between sites such as field cemeteries and churches or the location of monasteries and remarks made earlier are restated in a clear and succinct manner. Finally, the conclusion ends with thoughtful observations on the nature of institutionalised Christianity (pp. 103–4).

Overall, the book is easily readable and enjoyable, with a very good narrative flow, even for non-specialist medievalists. In some cases, unexpected but fascinating discussions are presented about research methodology, for example, in the case of contemporary ideologically motivated research and the issues with the dominance of the Conquest Period and the damage caused by its research to the remains of later periods (p. 18). What could be identified as a shortcoming of the book is that the maps often portray extensively only the territories of modern-day Hungary and that often, even then, the results are approximate, gathered from the available data, often from reports. The lack is not attributable to the author but rather to the problems of scholarship and methodology, for example, the lack of the recognition of eleventh-, twelfth-, and thirteenth-century ceramics (p. 54). I think it is also important to emphasise that, in the future, greater regional and interregional collaboration is needed for the creation of such works since, in many cases, the flow of information is very much limited by linguistic borders, as can be seen in some of the maps where even inside the former Kingdom of Hungary geographical limitations had to be defined because of the lack of the proficient analysis of such sites.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 249–254
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.14

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Christianization in Early Medieval Transylvania. The Oldest Church in Transylvania and its Interpretation. Edited by Daniela Marcu Istrate, Dan Ioan Mureşan, and Gabriel Tiberiu Rustoiu.

East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450 83. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. 524 pp.

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This volume, published under the auspices of Brill Publishers, offers a selection of studies that strive to discuss the earliest history of Christianity in Transylvania.[1] Most of the papers were written by Romanian authors, while the rest were penned by Hungarian and Serbian researchers. In 2011—an archaeological sensation in recent decades in Romania—an excavation led by Daniela Marcu Istrate revealed the remains of the church located west of St Michael's Cathedral in Alba Iulia, which had presumably stood on the territory of a former Roman fortification from the mid-tenth century until the latter half of the eleventh century. This discovery has given new impetus to the academic discourse concerning the early history of Christianity in Transylvania.

The volume consists of the works of twenty authors. Four studies discuss archaeological matters, nine examine historical issues, and one paper outlines a constructional and re-constructional topic. The volume is a work of a high standard, including several images, charts, and maps that contribute to the understanding of the written text by experts from various disciplines.

In her opening study, Daniela Marcu Istrate, head of the aforesaid excavation, offers a thorough presentation of the uncertainties related to the early history of Christianity in Transylvania, the natural features and the architectural characteristics

1 The publication of this review was sponsored by the HUN-REN–PTE–ELTE Medieval Hungarian Ecclesiastical Archontology Research Group; ID number 1421707.

of Alba Iulia—the latter rooted in Antiquity—, the society of the city, as well as the church buildings discovered in the vicinity of St Michael's Cathedral ("From the Greek Bishop Hierotheos to the Latin Bishop Simon: The Churches in Alba Iulia and the Controversies Related to the Beginnings of the Diocese of Transylvania"). With the help of the tombs found in the area, Marcu Istrate convincingly dates the existence of the church to the period between the mid-tenth and mid-eleventh century, identifying the building as a Greek-cross plan church with four pillars and Byzantine features. The author outlines the controversy over the identification of the church, firmly opposing Miklós Takács's view, who linked it to Latin Christianity. Marcu Istrate argues that the Catholic cathedral was clearly built after the demolition of the Greek-cross plan church, which had probably been connected to the mission of Hierotheos.

Florin Curta formulates a different view in his study, focusing on the relations between the region of Southern Transylvania and Bulgaria ("Bulgaria beyond the Danube: Water under the Bridge, or Is There More in the Pipeline?"). With the help of the (partially Bulgaria-related) ninth- and tenth-century finds discovered in the Stația de Salvare cemetery in Alba Iulia, the author strives to identify the 'Bulgaria beyond the Danube' mentioned in connection with the siege of Adrianople in 813. He argues that if a relationship existed with Southern Transylvania, its traces must also show among the examined finds—the church found in 2011 can also be interpreted in this context. Instead of linking the church to written sources (including those related to the mission of Hierotheos), Curta examines the urban water pipe segments (ceramics) typical of the cities in the region. Such segments were also found in Alba Iulia, indicating that the settlement may have been an outpost in the direction of the Great Hungarian Plain, serving as the residence of a Bulgarian lord, later dismantled due to the war between Byzantium and the Kievan Rus and the activities of St Stephen.

The study authored by Horia Ciugudean**,** Aurel Dragotă, and Monica-Elena Popescu analyses the ninth–tenth-century findings discovered in the aforementioned Stația de Salvare cemetery, a key factor with regard to the dating of the church excavated in 2011 ("The Transylvanian Cradle: The Funeral Landscape of Alba Iulia in the Light of »Stația de Salvare« Cemetery [9th–11th Centuries]"). This cemetery is one of the most crucial tomb finds in Transylvania, whose research, having started in the early twentieth century, has gathered momentum mainly in recent decades. The authors' analyses, focusing on various criteria, are thorough works in which the text and the high-standard charts mutually support each other. The examined cemetery is a good example of the co-habitation and joint development of different peoples, as graves related to Hungarians also appear beside those of the Bulgarian population of the Mures Valley from the first half of the tenth century onwards. However,

according to the authors' reconstruction, the presence of Slavic and Romanized (!) populations can also be presumed outside the ancient fortress, over whom control exercised by the Bulgarian elite was replaced by Hungarian rule in the 900s.

The last archaeological study, related only tangentially to the topic of the volume, was penned by Călin Cosma ("Byzantine Bronze Reliquary Crosses with Embossed Figures Discovered in Romania"). Based on his catalogue and typology of the surviving fifty-three crosses with figures, the finds can be dated mainly to the tenth and eleventh centuries. The place and date of the crosses' creation and the site where they were found can be linked to the then-political goals of Byzantium and the progress of the conversion to Christianity.

Tudor Sălăgean's work is the first historical study in the volume, focusing on the tenth-century history of Transylvania, striving to give some context to the mission of Hierotheos in light of the most recent archaeological results ("From *Terra Ultrasilvana* to *Regnum Erdeelw*: Notes on the Historical Evolution of Transylvania in the 10th Century"). However, instead of a moderate summary of the available sources and the relevant Romanian and Hungarian literature, Sălăgean has penned a rather confused study on the topic, whose approach and set of tools may be considered outdated. Sălăgean uses the accounts given by Anonymus and the Illuminated Chronicle with no more than minimal criticism, overlooking pieces of Hungarian literature more recent than the works of Gyula Kristó. Sălăgean's position is also confused as regards the church excavated in Alba Iulia in 2011: without any justification, he rejects Kristó's views on the Catholic episcopal seat moving from north to south, and he links the destruction of the Greek-cross plan church to the pagan revolt of 1046, albeit admitting that we have no knowledge of any events that may have taken place in Transylvania in connection with the rebellion. Overall, the author argues that after defeating the pagan Gyula the Younger, St Stephen not only recovered his maternal heritage but also *re*-established the Diocese of Transylvania.

Much more considerable professional guidance is provided for understanding historical problems—also burdened by political controversy—in the historiographic work authored by Jan Nicolae on the eighteenth-century 'discoverer' of Hierotheos (Hagiography and History in Early Medieval Transylvania: from the Byzantine Bishop Hierotheos [10th Century] to the German Historian Gottfried Schwarz [18th Century]"). The Lutheran bishop-scholar, who lived between 1707 and 1788, penned his work on the early history of the conversion to Christianity in Hungary in the late 1730s from an Eastern perspective, considering the mission a complete success. The analyses of the responses given to Schwarz's work make it clear that while his theory was well received among Protestants and the late-eighteenth-century Romanian historians in Transylvania, it was rejected by the Jesuit historians of Hungary: they even put the existence of Hierotheos into question.

In a work that re-evaluates the ecclesiastical and political career of Patriarch Theophylact, Dan Ioan Mureşan focuses especially on the foreign relations and Christian missions of the Byzantine Empire ("Patriarch Theophylact, the Horses, and the Hungarians: The Religious Origins of the Byzantine Mission to Tourkia"). The author's key result is a novel dating of Hierotheos's mission in Transylvania: he argues that Bulcsú converted to Christianity in 943 for political reasons, that is, to reinforce the peace between Hungary and Byzantium and that the Gyula may have visited Constantinople as early as around 946. According to Mureşan's noteworthy argument, the patriarch may have been a suitable mediator between the empire and the Hungarians, who were considered to be equestrian people, partly due to his well-known passion for horses.

Alexandru Madgearu examines the development of church organisation in the Lower Danubian region against the backdrop of the reinforcement of the Byzantian power from the mid-tenth century until the early eleventh century ("Ecclesiastical Consequences of the Restoration of Byzantine Power in the Danubian Region"). The author touches on several church organisation-, foreign policy-, and military history issues in connection with the early history of Hungary. However, not all of them are closely related to the topic of the volume. According to Madgearu, Hierotheos carried out his proselytising activities in the Maros–Körös interfluve instead of Transylvania, as the archaeological finds indicate that Byzantian relations are concentrated in this region. The author endorses the position that the territorially based Latin and Greek church organisations functioned in parallel within the kingdom of St Stephen.

In the first study of a volume penned by a Hungarian author, Gábor Thoroczkay stresses that Hungarian Christianity has both Western and Eastern roots, and while the former is more important, the latter is also noteworthy ("Some Remarks on the Church History of the Carpathian Basin during the 10th and 11th Centuries"). He presents the sources of the mission of Hierotheos and strives to provide guidance for the political landscape of the region in the era concerned. Albeit earlier, Thoroczkay, too, was more inclined to consider that the church excavated in the 1970s was the first Latin cathedral dating back to the mid-eleventh century; now, in the light of the new archaeological results, he accepts the possibility that the church was built in Byzantine style in the tenth century. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that the church can indeed be linked to the activities of Hierotheos. It was built for the Slavs of Alba Iulia and the Hungarians who migrated to the settlement in the tenth century.

Éva Révész examines the spatial extent and timescale of the activities of Hierotheos and his successors ("Gyula's Christianity and the Bishopric of the Eastern Mission"). According to the author, it is of particular importance that four more people appeared as metropolitans of Turkia in the church of Greek Rite. Révész

argues that this indicates the functioning of the Eastern Rite church organisation. In her opinion, the activity of the bishop of Turkia is also demonstrated by the fact that the Greek monasteries founded early on continued to function until the late eleventh century, since the operation of the Greek bishop, who ordained and supervised the Greek priests, was the condition of the continuous existence of the church. According to the author, Hierotheos's successors carried out their activities through missions within the Latin church organisation, presumably with the Greek Rite monasteries as bases. Based on Bulgarian and Serbian models, Révész argues that the bishop of Turkia may have also been the head of an important Greek monastery.

Boris Stojkovski provides an overview of the Greek Rite monasteries that operated in Hungary in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries ("The Byzantine Monasteries of Medieval Hungary Revisited"). The study offers an up-to-date, comprehensive overview of the monasteries in medieval Hungary, albeit without an examination of the actual subject matter of the volume, that is, the church of Alba Iulia and the early church history of Transylvania. Thus, the study might rather have fitted at the beginning of the historical part of the volume as an introduction of a sort, outlining the role of Greek Rite Christianity in medieval Hungary.

Șerban Turcuș strives to present the eleventh-century Hungarian state and church against the backdrop of contemporary German and Vatican political thought ("The Hungarian Kingdom between the Imperial Ecclesiology of Otto III and the Pontifical Ecclesiology of Gregory VII"). The author believes that the Hungarian state and church organisation were initiated by Emperor Otto III and supported by Pope Sylvester. However, the Hungarian historical literature attempts to belittle their significance and exaggerate the role of St Stephen. On several occasions, Turcuș accuses the Hungarian researchers of basing their theories on late medieval chronicles and pieces of hagiographic literature instead of using contemporary sources. At the same time, at the end of his study, Turcuș himself relies on a document issued by the Holy See in the early twentieth century in an attempt to demonstrate the dependence of the medieval Hungarian church, clearly exiting the theoretical context of the period under examination. Other than repeatedly reprimanding Hungarian historiography, Turcuș ignores the Hungarian literature almost completely and blatantly disregards the results of Hungarian work regarding both the comprehensive church history research and critical source analysis. His approach and style hinder academic discussion—or any discussion, for that matter—and one might (rightly) find them provocative in a volume aiming at the shared cultivation of the historical heritage of Transylvania.

The study penned by Adinel C. Dincă and Mihai Kovács examines the foundation and early history of the Latin Diocese of Transylvania, as well as its place in the Hungarian and regional church organisation ("Latin Bishoprics in the 'Age of Iron'

and the Diocese of Transylvania"). The authors stress that the Diocese of Transylvania was one of the easternmost dioceses not only of the Hungarian Kingdom but also of Latin Christianity as a whole, and thus, it maintained significant cultural relations with Eastern Christianity. Dincă and Kovács firmly reject the view that the territorially based Greek and Latin Rite church organisations would have operated in parallel in eleventh-century Hungary. Regarding the issue of Hierotheos, the authors prefer to abstain. In agreement with the results of the Hungarian medieval research, they date the foundation of the Latin rite Diocese of Transylvania to the first decade of the eleventh century and derive its unique name, referring to the area, from the function related to missionary activities, emphasising that such proselytising bishoprics existed throughout Europe in the early phase of Christianisation.

Nicolae Călin Chifăr and Marius Mihail Păsculescu provide an overview of possible ways to reconstruct the church of Alba Iulia ("The 10th–11th-Century Pillared-Church in Alba Iulia: Reconstruction Proposals"). The authors stress that the discovered remnants allow various building types to be outlined, and the Greek-cross plan church is just one of the possibilities. They juxtapose their observations in Alba Iulia with similar churches found throughout the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. The authors also emphasise that neither the quantity nor the quality of the finds allow for the presentation of a final reconstruction model. The abundance of images and the high-quality graphic models included in the study not only illustrate the chapter but also provide enough guidance for those unfamiliar with architectural history to follow the author's line of thought.

Overall, on various academic levels, the studies published in the volume examine several aspects of the controversial issues associated with the early history of Christianity in Transylvania. Some of the issues that are covered are rather problematic and difficult to support with sources. It is unfortunate that no more Hungarian experts authored papers for inclusion in such a representative volume, as this would have increased its versatility and enabled the presentation of the results of Hungarian historiography concerning the early history of Transylvania more efficiently to an international readership.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 255–258
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.15

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Der Thurzo-Kodex – eine einzigartige Quelle zum europäischen Bergrecht und Münzwesen um 1500. Edited by Miroslav Lacko and Erika Mayerová.

Innsbruck–Vienna: Studien Verlag, 2022. 546 pp.

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The so-called Thurzó Codex, a German-language codex preserved by the Bavarian State Library in Munich, is well known to urban and mining historians. It was referred to as early as the nineteenth century, and some parts were published in Hungary and abroad. Most recently (in 2021), Renáta Skorka, from Hungary, published and interpreted Hungarian-related legal texts from the codex. However, the publication of the entire codex still needed to be undertaken. Although the document collection was already available online in a digitised form, there was also a demand for a transcribed and printed variant. Therefore, we cannot but welcome the fact that the two Slovak researchers, Miroslav Lacko and Erika Mayerová, have transcribed and edited the whole text so that it can be published, which is a considerable achievement.

The first known owner of the codex was György Thurzó. The text can be divided into two major units. The first part (fols. 1r–81r) was completed by the scribe on 25 September 1500. It was, therefore, prepared before this date or, according to the editors, before 1501. In this large unit, we can find texts related to the town and mining law of Jihlava (Iglau, now in the Czech Republic) and documents associated with mining in the Kingdom of Hungary. The transcription of this part was carried out by Mayerová. This text was originally written in two columns, and Mayerová has retained this solution in the edition.

In contrast to the texts with legal content, the second major unit (fols. 82r–163r) edited by Lacko received little attention earlier. This is the later part, written by a different hand than the first one. It specifically served the purpose of helping the count of the chamber, as it contains information about, among other things, mint coinage,

the fineness of European gold coins, the technology of cementation, the exchange prices of gold and silver, as well as the *pisetum* payable to the archbishop. It can rightfully be linked to Kremnica (Körmöcbánya, now Slovakia).

While Kurt Rein, who analysed the codex in detail,[1] believed that the second part was made in the mid-1510s, Lacko dates it to between 1500 and 1506. In his opinion, it can be connected to the activities of the father, János Thurzó, rather than the son. He argued that János Thurzó became the count of the chamber of mines and mints in Kremnica in 1498 and introduced new measures, and he also took the cementing office in 1505. Cementing was regarded as a secret, and he could have hardly learnt about it earlier. The importance of the text recorded in the codex is enhanced by the fact that it was the earliest description of the technique used in Hungary. We can add to this point that the following two sources from which the method can be learnt were written in Transylvania (in 1541 and sometime in the second half of the sixteenth century).

Mayerová has briefly presented the German language used in the codex, preparing a highly useful vocabulary for the chapter she authored.

The longer introductory study was authored by Lacko. The paper, which is almost as long as a book, primarily focuses on the person of János Thurzó, but it also summarises the history of the family up to the 1520s. The activities of the Thurzós have been explored by numerous volumes and studies in a variety of languages. Of the scholars, special mention should be made of Marian Skladaný from Slovakia. Lacko's knowledge of the scholarly literature is truly impressive: he has relied on all the relevant Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, German, Austrian, and Czech works. Furthermore, he was not content with using secondary sources; he carried out archival research as well.

The length of the present review does not allow us to discuss all the details of the introductory study, which is rich in data. We can only highlight a few major findings here. The author discusses the origins of the family, among other things. While the German-language research considers them to be the descendants of Austrian nobles who immigrated to *Scepusium*, Lacko regards the ancestors to be lance-bearers from *Scepusium*, adhering to the view held by Hungarian and Slovak historians. This is a fact based on written evidence. It can be added that the personal name 'Turzó' itself also occurs (in the forms 'Turuzo' and 'Turso') in Hungarian sources dated to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Nearly every detail of the activities undertaken by János Thurzó (1437–1508) can be read in the work. The burgher of Levoča (Lőcse, now Slovakia) became a citizen of Cracow and was also a member of the municipal council between 1477 and 1508. Lacko rightly emphasises Cracow's importance. As a busy, prestigious

1 Rein, "Der Münchner Thurzo-Kodex, 1966"; Rein, "Der Münchner Thurzo-Kodex, 1967"; Rein, "Der Münchner Thurzo-Kodex, 1968."

merchant town, it created a solid basis for Thurzó's wide-ranging activities. We learn about his relatives living there and the history of the family properties. Lacko's study reflects the image of a large entrepreneur with broad international connections who was in contact with the citizens of many cities (Nuremberg, Augsburg, Leipzig, Gdańsk, and Toruń, etc., in addition to the Hungarian towns) and founded companies with them that existed for a longer or shorter period. The author also discusses in detail the family background and relationships of his business partners.

Thurzó's most important field of activity was related to mining. It was in this field that he developed his greatest engineering innovations. One of these was the process of copper refining that he invented in Mogiła, and it was a closely guarded secret. In this way, the black copper of Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya, now Slovakia) could be prepared for the extraction of silver in trickle furnaces. The lead required by this procedure was imported from Ołkusz (Poland). He was also engaged in the extraction of water from mines. His other invention was a high-performance water extraction machine *(Kehrrad)*, built in Baia Mare (Nagybánya, now in Romania) towards the end of his life. With this equipment, he was able to bring subsoil water to the surface from a greater depth than ever before.

The chapters of the introductory study discuss where and what János Thurzó did. We obtain a comprehensive picture of his activities in Ołkusz, Kutná Hora, and Rammelsberg, for example. The latter two settlements are famous for their copper mining, where Thurzó built furnaces, including a trickle furnace, together with his business partners.

The Fugger-Thurzó company was established in 1494, and the book details its operation. Thurzó built a trickle smelter in Moštenica (now Slovakia), which, according to Lacko, started working in 1496/97. From the beginning of 1498 (from 2 February, based on Lacko's data), János Thurzó and his son, György, leased the mining and minting chamber in Kremnica. The author calculated the scale of gold and silver mining. However, according to the more recent calculations by Oszkár Paulinyi,[2] only 1,075 (rather than 1,254) marks of gold were produced annually in Kremnica in the 1480s and 1490s, and production later stabilised at around 1,000 marks. Additionally, the country's silver production was not 17,000 marks, as the book says, but considerably more than that. Together with mining in Baia Mare and Transylvania, it must have exceeded 30,000 marks. Thanks to Banská Štiavnica (Selmecbánya, now in Slovakia), the largest amount of silver in the kingdom was brought to the surface in the mining region of Kremnica.

Lacko has presented János's last will, which was drawn up in favour of his wife in Cracow, in January 1507. However, it would have also been worth touching upon

2 Paulinyi, "Kimutatások a körmöcbányai bányakamarai körzet nemesfémtermeléséről," 334, 346.

his last will made in Buda on 28 February 1507, which unfortunately has only been preserved in a secondary copy.[3] In this latter document, János Thurzó arranged, among other things, the fate of his mines and furnaces in Hungary and elsewhere.

János Thurzó involved his son, György, in his businesses early on, and they became the counts of the chamber in Kremnica together. Research has so far assumed that it was this György who married Anna Fugger in 1497 and died in Augsburg in 1521. However, from a Cracow document, Lacko has inferred that it was another person. In his view, János's son György married a woman from Cracow and died in 1515. The other György, in fact, was his son, who married the Fugger girl and died in Augsburg (and not the father). So this latter György must have been very young at the time of his wedding. At the same time, it is a fact that the person mentioned in the marriage contract with Anna Fugger (1497) is György, son of János, who referred to Anna as his spouse. Lacko's finding, therefore, requires further supporting data.

Overall, it can be said that after a comprehensive introduction the authors have published a document the second part of which has been overlooked by research until now, even though it provides valuable information regarding economic history and engineering history, among other things. Their volume, therefore, responds to a long-felt need.

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 259–262
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.16

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Stadt im Wandel / Towns in Change. Der Donau-Karpatenraum im langen 18. Jahrhundert / The Danube-Carpathian Area in the Long 18th Century. Edited by Mathias Beer, Harald Heppner, and Ulrike Tischler-Hofer.

Neue Forschungen zur ostmittel- und südosteuropäischen Geschichte / New Researches on East Central and South East European History / Recherches nouvelles sur l'histoire de l'Europe centrale et orientale 13. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2023. 456 pp. https://doi.org/10.3726/b20613

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The papers in this volume are based on the proceedings of two international conferences held in 2021. *Stadt und Zukunft. Europa und sein Südosten im 18. Jahrhundert / Town and Future. Europe and its Southeast in the Eighteenth Century,* was organized by the Society for Eighteenth Century Studies on South Eastern Europe, the Austrian-, Slovenian- and Hungarian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. The second conference, called *Fenster zu "Neuen Zeiten:" Die Stadt im Wandel des langen 18. Jahrhunderts im Donau-Karpaten-Raum,* was organized by the Commission for the History and Culture of the Germans in South-Eastern Europe. The volume's editors are Mathias Beer, who covers the history of migration from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, Harald Heppner, who researches transformation processes in Southeastern Europe since the eighteenth century, and Ulrike Tischler-Hofer, who studies transcultural phenomena in Southeastern Europe from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

The German and English language studies in the volume examine changes in urban space in the Danube–Carpathian region during the long eighteenth century. The region includes present-day Eastern Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Western Romania, Northern Serbia, Northern Bosnia, and parts of Slovenia and Croatia. The volume is divided into four major thematic units, each exploring a specific change and its associated problems in urban space. There is information on the development of cities in the eighteenth century, as well as on historical issues of specific

cities. Insights into urban administration and life courses can also be gained through guilds and various social groups of the towns.

The first thematic unit of the volume is titled "Change in Urban Space". In the first essay of the block, Christian Benedik (Graphic Art Collection of the Albertina, Vienna) examines what constituted beauty in cities during the early modern period, and how cities underwent changes. It also provides an insight into the image of contemporary Vienna and the development of the cities of the Habsburg Monarchy as seen by Friedrich Wilhelm Taube, an educated eighteenth-century traveller. Eleonóra Géra (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) discusses the changes in public healing in Buda, outside the imperial city. In addition to healing and hygiene, the author explores the services associated with baths during the period. The text also gives an overview of the visitors to the Buda baths and the modified clientele after the expulsion of the Turks. Greta Monica Miron (Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca) presents a city with a unique function, using the example of Blaj, a Transylvanian episcopal town. She describes the decision-making process and how the decision-makers influenced the city's development, architecture, and social structures, and how these made the city an episcopal seat. Filip Krčmar's study (Historical Archive of Zrenjanin) focuses on a memoir of Serbian military officer Simeon Piščević, providing insights into the cities of Central and Western Europe, their urban culture, and their inhabitants' way of life during the eighteenth century. Written by Ulrich Becker (Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz), the final paper in the block focuses on Graz and its suburbs. It uses the example of *suburbia* to illustrate the problems and changes that occurred at the time.

The second block, titled "Change in Urban Society," comprises five papers. Each of them illustrates the changes that occurred in the eighteenth century through the examples of different communities. Eleonóra Géra's case studies demonstrate the complexity and ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of Buda guilds. Karl-Peter Krauss (retired from the Institute of Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies in Tübingen) also focuses on the guilds. However, he takes a historical anthropological approach to the journeymen settled in the Kingdom of Hungary. Krauss also uses case studies to illustrate how the journeymen managed to integrate into established local structures. Luka Vidmar (Milko Kos Historical Institute, Ljubljana) presents the history of the ecclesiastical and secular societies of eighteenth-century Ljubljana, focusing on their cosmopolitan and multilingual nature and their wide network of contacts. Nenad Ninković (University of Novi Sad) takes us from Carniola to the Serbian territory. Here, we learn about the significant social role of the Karlowitz bishopric and the Serbian Orthodox Church, particularly in education, under the influence of the baroque and the enlightenment. Written by Rudolf Gräf (Institute of Social and Human Sciences, Romanian Academy of

Sciences, Sibiu), the final essay in this block takes us on a journey to the mountain towns of the Banat. It examines industrialization and the social and cultural impact of German settlers on the Banat.

The longest thematic unit, "Change in the Public Space of the City," comprises eight studies that explore problems of contemporary public administration. They use various methods, including case studies and network analysis. In the first paper, Eva Kowalská (retired from the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava) discusses the daily life of different denominations in the royal and mining towns of Upper Hungary, and their conflicts. As shown, the ethnic, social, and religious diversity of the region often led to disharmony. István H. Németh (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest) focuses on changes in urban administration and self-government during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well as the emergence of a new elite in the free royal towns. Andor Nagy (Károly Eszterházy Catholic University, Eger) analyses the network of relations of Saxon officials in Brasov. He investigates whether officials with relatives in prominent and influential positions had a better chance of obtaining higher positions. Harald Roth's (German Cultural Forum for Central and Eastern Europe, Potsdam) study traces the history of the Saxons living in Transylvania in the eighteenth century. He shows how Austrian rule affected the Saxons in Transylvania and their relationship with the local Romanian population. Vanja Kočevar (Milko Kos Historical Institute, Ljubljana) sheds light on changes in the representation of the monarchy by showing Emperor Charles VI's 1728 procession to Ljubljana and the homage he paid to his subjects. The focus of the study is mainly on representation in the town's public spaces. Peter Mario Kreuter (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg) gives an insight into administration of Oltenia/Lesser Wallachia through the life and work of Gheorghe Cantacuzino and Nicola de Porta. Tanja Žigon (University of Ljubljana) presents the late modern Ljubljana press and its changes, demonstrating how the periodicals became vehicles for the transfer of knowledge and culture. Mihai Olaru (New Europe College, Bucharest) presents the process of the separation of the public and private spheres in Wallachia, using several quotations from charters, regulations, and ordinances.

The last block of the volume, "Change in the Private Sphere of Urban Space," begins with a study by Márta Velladics (National Heritage Protection and Management Ltd., Budapest) that uses the example of the Harruckern Castle in Gyula to illustrate the multifaceted functions of castles and manor houses in the eighteenth century. These structures served not only as the residence of the lord of the manor but also as archive, prison, county and town centre. Ádám Hegyi (University of Szeged) examines the relationship between the Reformed Church and the inhabitants of the free royal towns in Novi Sad, Szeged, and Timișoara. The study explores several aspects

of their coexistence during eighteenth century urbanization. Sandra Hirsch (West University, Timișoara) explores the private sphere of urban life, including eating habits and daily routines in the Habsburg Banat, shedding light on the food and household utensils of its inhabitants, as well as what was considered a luxury and the types of goods traded. Marko Štuhec (University of Ljubljana) discusses the influence of various cultures on Carniolan cities. The article explores how the aristocratic elite of a semi-peripheral province adopted innovations from Vienna, the Ottoman Empire, France, and Italy in their own homes. The last essay in the volume is written by Dušan Kos (Milko Kos Historical Institute, Ljubljana). It provides an insight into the concepts of health, physical and mental well-being, and the prevention and treatment of certain diseases in eighteenth century Habsburg provinces, particularly in the capital of Carniola. The study focuses on Franz Heinrich Baron Raigersfeld and his family, as their diary, that they kept over several decades, contains a wealth of relevant information.

The authors of the studies are renowned researchers/historians of the Danube–Carpathian region, which lies between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, and which is special due to its unique political, economic, and cultural character. To illustrate and deepen the understanding of the essays, the volume contains pictures, tables, and maps, and many of the papers also have quotations from the original sources. The different scholarly approaches add to the variety of the studies and provide useful new information for researchers. *Stadt im Wandel / Towns in Change* can help us obtain a deeper understanding of the complexities and unique nature of East Central and Southeastern Europe in the long eighteenth century.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 263–267
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.17

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Prosperität und Repräsentation. Facetten des Aufschwunges im Donau-Karpatenraum (1718–1914). Edited by Harald Heppner.

Danubiana Carpathica 12 (59). Berlin–Boston: W. de Gruyter – R. Oldenbourg, 2022. 331 pp.

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The twelfth volume of the *Danubiana Carpathica* contains the edited versions of the conference lectures held at the 2018 conference in Graz, organized under the same title *(Prosperität und Repräsentation)* by the Kommission für Geschichte und Kultur der Deutschen in Südosteuropa, the Institut für donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde and the Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts im südöstlichen Europa. The two concepts that frame the studies of this volume are prosperity and representation, which are call words for the twelve essays that explore the possibilities of economic prosperity following the Treaty of Passarowitz (Pozsarevác, Požarevac), which had a profound impact on the history of the Danube Basin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The majority of the papers examine the transitions in the economic structure, social stratification and ethnic changes in the region, the responses to the challenges of the need for economic modernisation that this treaty produced, the patterns of representation and the expansion of economic wealth. The time horizon of the studies spans the period from the 1718 peace treaty to the entry of the Habsburg Monarchy into the World War I. Going beyond the scope of a narrow, sample-based study, many of these papers focus on long-term tendencies. Ernst Dieter Petritsch's (Austrian State Archive) analysis of the trade and shipping aspects of the Passarowitz peace treaty provides a glimpse into this wider perspective. After the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, the Habsburg Monarchy developed its economic policy in the direction of the Balkans and beyond, orienting itself towards the Adriatic and Black Sea trade. One of the most important steps in this commercial quest was the conclusion of the trade-related clauses of the peace treaty of 1718, which established a reciprocal system of diplomatic and consular service and determined the long-term

activities of the merchants of the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy on the Danube and in the Balkan territories under Ottoman control. Petritsch's economic analysis, complemented by a presentation of the sometimes theatrical elements of the peace treaty, is quasi continued in Kurt Sharr's study on the border demarcation problems associated with the peace treaty of Passarowitz, which deals with the cartographic representation of this former theatre of war. In the decades following the cartographical activity of Marsigli and Müller, it became increasingly important to carry out actual field surveys based on land surveying, convert the results into map sheets, and make the results of these surveys available to the wider public. Kurt Scharr (Department of History and European Ethnology, University of Innsbruck) analyses three maps by Matthäus Suetter, an imperial geographer from the early 1730s and draws attention to a novel phenomenon: the fact that narrow, linear boundary lines, completed by built landmarks, now independent of natural features (rivers and mountain ranges), came into existence. The cartographic representation of such borders and their conversion into a relatively inexpensive printed product enabled people of the era to conceptualise the state as a delimited, representable entity, even if the cartographic prints sometimes did not correspond to the real territorial unit established at the negotiating table. János Kalmár (Faculty of Humanities, Eötvös Loránd University) examines Hungary's trade opportunities in the context of the changing economic policy of the Habsburg Monarchy when purely fiscal considerations were replaced by comprehensive economic concepts. His main questions are how the economic modernisation of the Viennese court was reflected in the integrating Habsburg Monarchy, how the court shaped its customs policy toward Hungary, and how the production and exports of the Banat (Bánság) and Bačka (Bácska) estates were organised. Another important issue addressed in János Kalmár's study is the alternatives offered by the Hungarian general assemblies; he asserts that a limited group of Hungarian landowners and intellectuals, receptive to reform, actively sought opportunities to engage in trade, even though administrative and infrastructural obstacles undoubtedly posed serious difficulties in this regard.

The three following studies deal with the changes in ethnic relations in the Carpathian basin and the Balkans, investigating the different socio-cultural characteristics of the nationalities living there and their economic role in the emerging economic boom. In his study, Karl-Peter Krauss (Institute of Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies in Tübingen) explores the concept of yield optimisation, drawing on extensive archival materials and employing numerous illuminating examples. He focuses on the economic correspondence of two female members of the Batthyány and Hadik families, which reveals the pure rationality with which the two aristocratic ladies were involved in agricultural production and assessing the fluctuations in the agricultural market. They sought to increase their incomes

by settling German settlers on their estates to increase their yields and boost the productivity of their estates. This approach gives Karl Peter Krauss the opportunity to sketch the profile of an 'average' settler and reflect on the nature of aristocratic representational intentions that resulted from prosperity. Olga Katsiardi-Hering (Department of History and Archaeology, Kapodistrias University) focuses on the question of what types of economic and cultural improvements can be identified in relation to the Orthodox peoples of southeastern Europe between 1718 and 1774. 'Greek merchants' appeared in the region in large numbers, even gaining a foothold in Trieste and Vienna. Beyond the commodity-moving phase of trade, they also held positions related to the organisation of exchange and logistics, the control of market processes and the insurance sector. Their settlement was facilitated by a number of religious and economic privileges granted by Maria Theresa, but from the 1770s onwards, immigration controls were tightened: passports with identity and biometric data were introduced and forced resettlement programmes were launched, creating mixed-population trading communities. Julia Richers (Institute of History, University of Bern) focuses on the economic activities of the Jewish community of Pest, Buda (Ofen) and Óbuda (Alt-Ofen). She traces the process of settlement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and illustrates a hitherto little-mentioned development: the decisive role played by the Hungarian nobility in facilitating the settlement of this population with strong economic ties (e.g. Orczy House), highlighting the differences between the various neighbourhoods. While Pest provided opportunities for Jewish settlement by widening the scope of its legal framework, Buda strongly resisted ethnic diversification.

Rudolf Gräf (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Babeş-Bolyai University; Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Romanian Academy) draws a sketch of the changing picture of agrarian society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a result of industrialisation, using Transylvania and Banat as examples. He differentiates between the two regions by noting that in Transylvania, there was no structural change in economic life due to property and tax systems that had remained unchanged for centuries. Conversely, in Banat, in the case of 'greenfield investment,' new industrial crops, animal breeds, agricultural processes, and production techniques emerged in the economic environment of an increasingly capitalising and 'classless' spirit of Josephinism. Irmgard Sedler (Museum of Kornwestheim) examines the self-representation of the military and official elites of Transylvania and Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Hermannstadt), in particular, from an art historical perspective. The argument, supported by numerous illustrations, shows that the newcoming nobility brought with them the Enlightenment ideals of Viennese influence. The taste for late Rococo and Classicist features can be identified in visual-cultural products and furnishings. This intercultural impact had a fertilising effect

on the self-representation of the region's receptive, wealthy, sometimes multi-ethnic elite. Filip Krčmar's (Historical Archive of Zrenjanin) study focuses on the early economic development of Nagybecskerek (Зрењанин/Zrenjanin, Großbetschkerek) during the time when Maria Theresa granted the town free trade and extensive municipal rights, as well as the prospect of free royal city (*libera regia civitas*) status in 1769. The analysis shows how people of different ages made use of this opportunity and how the Queen and a concrete mixer can be put together in the same picture; in other words, how the privilege of Maria Theresa is remembered from the nineteenth century to the present day. Maja Godina Golija (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences) evaluates changes in fashion trends and dress culture using examples from Lower Styria. Her text reveals not only how fashion changed from the late eighteenth century to the early 1900s, but she also points to the fact that fashion is a necessary expression of social status, a representation of social group identity to the outside world. The change in fashion trends slows down as it moves outwards along the centre-periphery axis, and national trends are very much in evidence in the area.

The last two papers deal with different printed materials: Olivia Spiridon (Institute of Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies in Tübingen) tries to describe the everyday life of a small town, Lugos (Lugoj, Lugosch), by analysing a newspaper published periodically from 1853 onwards, while Karin Almasy's (Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Graz) research reviews selected postcards as sources for historical study. Spiridon notes that in the pages of the local newspaper, which also functioned as a mouthpiece for the central government, we find information on crop prices, auctions, local cultural life, and school events, but also lists of foreigners visiting the town, itinerant actors and merchants. Olivia Spiridon explains that the *Lugoser Anzeigers* was an important starting point for the later development of the life of the press in the area, and in its second phase, between 1858 and 1861, it was a more liberal newspaper that reflected more openly on local issues. Karin Almasy explores the visual and linguistic imprints of prosperity and modernisation by analysing postcards published in Lower Styria in the early twentieth century. Illustrated postcards were an extremely popular form of communication in the first decades of the twentieth century, and they deserve the interest of historians as a source in many respects. Almasy identifies traces of the prosperity that resulted from modernising education, transport systems, and production in the region in the small postcards. As a result of the school network that was being built up, the masses could now read and write, which meant that the average person was also involved in the flow of information. The visual messages on the postcards—the roaring locomotives, the modernising urban spaces, the factories—are also a reflection of the belief and pride in progress.

Summarising the content of the studies briefly presented above, we may claim that in addition to the fundamental concepts of the title (prosperity and representation), some other keywords may be taken under consideration, such as modernisation, information flows, and ethnic diversity, which connect the articles in this volume. These latter concepts are derived from the specificities of the region where most of the studies are set, the peripherical areas of the Danube-Carpathian basin, far from Vienna and Pest-Buda. As the editor of the volume, Harald Heppner (University of Graz), notes, there is currently no comparable collection on the subject. Thus, the present selection can be seen as a gap-filler in this respect. It is particularly important to note that, the volume attempts to interpret the economic and socio-cultural changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from their eighteenth-century roots, to provide the reader with links between eras, to identify prefigurations and to show the trends and developments that resulted from previous historical changes.

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 268–274
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.18

The Life and Death of States. Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty. By Natasha Wheatley.

Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2023. 424 pp.
https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691244082

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"There should be no doubt about it: the precondition of an Austrian consciousness is the knowledge of the state's history. Without the knowledge of what the dynasty and the people have achieved and what kind of role Austria fulfills in the development of humanity, no one will enthuse over the state."[1] This statement was formulated in a memorandum in 1889 by Alfons Huber, perhaps the most remarkable Austro–German historian of his generation. Like several historians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Huber also identified Austrian imperial identity with enthusiasm for the state; nevertheless, if someone had posed the question, "Very well, Professor, but what *is* the state?" Huber might have been in trouble giving a straight answer. How did they define the state in the late Habsburg Monarchy, when such a concept was particularly convoluted and the former presented several peculiarities which contemporary ideas about the state could only interpret as anomalies? This is only one question to which the remarkable book of Natasha Wheatley provides us with new answers.

Austria is again thought of as a "little world in which the big one holds its tryouts,"[2] as it was for Carl E. Schorske and Moritz Csáky, among several others. This time, however, these tryouts do not concern modern culture (as for Schorske[3]) or globalization (as for Csáky[4]) but modern legal thought. As legal theories could not make sense of the Monarchy, it became a stimulating environment for innovation in modern legal thought concerning questions of state and sovereignty—innovations which largely determine our contemporary world order. Wheatley advises those of

1 Huber's Memorandum is published in *Alfons Huber,* 451.

2 From the poem of Friedrich Hebbel as quoted by Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna,* xxvii.

3 Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna.*

4 Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis Zentraleuropas.*

her readers who are only interested in the development of modern legal thought to skip the chapters that mainly deal with the questions of historical context. However, this reviewer would advise the reader not to do so for two main reasons. First of all, this contextualization is not a redundant enumeration of historical events but a substantial part of understanding the complex nature of the Habsburg Monarchy, which inspired some of its best minds to rethink legal theory. Furthermore, and more importantly, there is a great deal to learn about the Monarchy from Wheatley's book, which fits with the most important trends in Habsburg historiography in four aspects. As a historian of the Habsburg Monarchy, I will mainly concentrate on these aspects of this rich work.

In the past few decades, leading historians of the Habsburg Monarchy have broken with the traditional nation-focused way of looking at its history and treating it as a conglomerate of nations. Rather, they strive to examine the Monarchy as a whole.[5] Wheatley follows this now increasingly dominant way of thinking when presenting the constitutional workings of 1848–49 (chapter one), and the Compromise of 1867, its varying interpretations, and its opponents (chapters two and three). The Monarchy's polyglot nature does not pose difficulties for her, as proposals for reshaping the empire's structure were all written in German in order to reach the necessary circles in the imperial elite. In chapter one, Wheatley pays particular attention to the Kremsier Constitution, especially the clash between the linguistic-national concept, which implied a complete reshaping of the historical regions, and those ideas which aimed at preserving historical aspects in the empire's structure. Although the constitution never came into force, its importance can hardly be overexaggerated: it was the first time that the nationalities were accepted as the empire's constituent parts. Also, the dilemmas the constituents faced would constantly reemerge for every reformer. The remainder of the chapter presents the different plans for the reorganization of the Monarchy up to 1861, including the ideas of some often-forgotten figures such as Antal Szécsen.

Besides some minor issues (e.g., contrary to what the author says, Josef Alexander von Helfert was not a liberal politician [p. 48]), I have two remarks regarding the chapter. The author constantly speaks of the 'national' aspect; however, this term (nation, national) was extremely vague; the notion was used by lawmakers to express very different things, as Gerlad Stourzh has shown in detail.[6] Moreover, contemporaries were also aware of the problems with the notion and

5 Pieter M. Judson sees the essence of the paradigm-changing works on the Habsburg Empire over the last three decades in the choice of either the imperial or the (micro) local level, apart from the nation, as the scale of research. Judson, "»Where our commonality«," 7, footnote 13 (with a rich bibliography). Of course, Wheatly's approach falls into the former category.

6 Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung.*

urged terminological clarifications.[7] Naturally, it was not Natasha Wheatley's task to provide a full genealogy of the concept; nevertheless, she could have alluded to the problem. Furthermore, it is a bit puzzling that while Wheatley discusses in detail how the Habsburg Monarchy's structure was that of a composite monarchy, she constantly calls the Habsburg polity an 'empire' instead of referring to it with the more natural term 'monarchy.' In my view, this solution is also tenable (after all, many contemporaries called it that); however, some more reflection on the terminology would have been welcome.[8]

Chapter two discusses the legal debates leading to the Compromise of 1867 and the opposing Austrian and Hungarian interpretations of it. This exhaustive analysis is even more welcome, considering that the landmark book of Pieter Judson does not discuss this unique formation in much detail.[9] The significance of the Compromise lies also in the fact that, as Wheatley shows, Austrian constitutional history and theory as a discipline developed largely as a consequence of the debate between Wenzel Lustkandl and Ferenc Deák.

Chapter three presents the debates about the legal status of the Monarchy's lands and nations. In the works of three major Czech figures (Josef Kalousek, Hugo Toman, and Karel Kramář), we see striking similarities between their arguments and those of Deák. Their main strategy consisted of opposing law and fact: although Habsburg rule encroached on their *Staatsrecht*, this never ceased to exist *de jure* and only waited to be awakened. Other reform theorists, such as Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, proposed acknowledging ethnic nations as legal collectives.

The two main protagonists of the book, Georg Jellinek and Hans Kelsen, are introduced in detail in chapter four. With this, we have arrived at another important field of Habsburg history, the research of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. One might assume that after the great number of monographs and studies devoted to the subject, there is not much left to say. However, the contrast between the two great legal minds is a perfect example of the opposition of the liberal and the psychological man, as well as of Vienna's generational conflicts—that is, if Jellinek had not been chased away from the imperial capital by antisemitism.

Although both men broke with historical thinking, Jellinek did so still in the spirit of liberal optimism. He was convinced that Western theories were inadequate for grasping the problem of the state in Central Europe; a new, different knowledge was needed. He reinterpreted the phenomenon of the state in the framework of neo-Kantianism, making the distinction between *Sein* (is) and *Sollen* (ought).

7 E.g., Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee.*

8 The most recent literature on the problem is Connelly, "Was the Habsburg Empire?"

9 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire.*

Jellinek found that as far as legal thought was concerned, the state was a *Sollen*: law was a science of abstraction, the sole task of which was to make the state juridically thinkable; it was not its duty or even capacity to grasp its 'real essence.' Jellinek hence concluded that positivism, which had been based on the empirical observation of the material world, was not adequate for legal phenomena. Nevertheless, in his next major work, the scholar set out to study the connection between the state as a legal phenomenon and the state as a social-political order; that is, he wanted to research *Sein* and *Sollen* at the same time. This ambition was heavily criticized by Hans Kelsen. The Viennese legal scholar accepted that the state is essentially a *Sollen*, a system of 'ought.' But Kelsen went even further: he vehemently denied the validity of the essentialist, anthropomorphic fictions about the state. According to him, no one stands behind the state; these sorts of concepts were created based on the model of God worship, the decline of which reinforced this false idea even more. Not only was it false, but it also led to the dangerous fetishization of the state. Kelsen argued that the state and the legal order were not two separate things, as if the former were something standing outside or above the latter. Instead, the state existed only as the unity of the legal order. It is easy to see how the multi-national Habsburg state could not lend itself to any essentialist definitions. In fact, as Kelsen himself explained, his theory can be regarded as one of many anti-essentialist Austrian theories: Sigmund Freud, who had a strong influence on the scholar, denied the existence of the soul (after all, another essence), while physicist Ernst Mach elaborated a theory of physics without force.

Chapters five and six discuss the challenges which emerged with the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy and the creation of new states. Contemporary theories of the state lacked a temporal aspect and could not conceptualize the death and birth of states. How could one imagine the state dying when its most important feature was precisely that it outlived all of us, enabling the state to take upon itself obligations that could not be met within the lifetime of several generations? The birth of a state was equally problematic: as positive legal thought broke with the idea of the divine or the dynasty legitimizing law, it assigned this right to the state. Yet how can a state be started legally when the essential condition of legality is the state itself?

By presenting these dilemmas and their solutions, Wheatley joins yet another exciting trend in Habsburg historiography: research into the questions of continuity.[10] Interestingly, continuity is very perceivable in the case of the new Czechoslovak state. Leading Czech statesmen argued with the logic of the imperial legal order. Following the footsteps of the personalities discussed in chapter three, they emphasized the difference between the legal and factual survival of statehood. In their

10 Judson underlined the importance of continuity. Inspiring research in this regard is e.g., Egry, *The Empire's New Clothes*.

official acts, the Habsburgs always acknowledged the existence of a Bohemian state (legal continuity), even if their governing practices contradicted this idea (factual discontinuity). With this argument, Czech statesmen avoided the theoretical problems that came with the birth of a new state: there was no birth, only the revival of a state which existed a long time before the Habsburg Monarchy itself. However, the problems of the imperial constitutions were inherited as well, namely the dilemma of the linguistic-ethnic versus the historical principle as it first appeared to the Kremsier constituents. The arbitrary mixture of these two principles (the historical in the case of Bohemian territories inhabited by Germans and the ethnic in the case of Slovaks) created a grave legitimacy deficit for the Czechoslovak state.

The dilemmas regarding death and birth posed themselves to the greatest extent in the case of the new Austria. Austrian statesmen declared complete discontinuity between their new state and the fallen Monarchy, even claiming that the name 'Austria' only had dynastic significance; 'Austria' did not exist legally. But how could a new state come to life? Contemporary legal theory thought of such an event as a 'pure fact,' which practically meant that, legally, it was an empty space. Hans Kelsen and his circle set out to integrate the phenomenon into a logically consistent legal system. Eventually, their solution consisted of placing international law at the apex of the legal pyramid: international law is above, before (not necessarily historically, but in terms of legal logic), and after the state; accordingly, it could determine the conditions for the formation of a new one. Wheatly presents brilliantly how the hectic Habsburg constitutional developments of the second half of the nineteenth century influenced the elaboration of the key concepts (e.g., the *Grundnorm* and the *Stufenbau*) behind this idea.

The final chapter is, to a certain extent, also related to a prominent question in Habsburg historiography: the problem of (post-)colonialism and the Monarchy. Nevertheless, Wheatley's question does not concern whether the Monarchy had colonies or whether the post-colonial theoretical framework could be applied in the research of its history, but the impact of its legal innovations on the legal interpretations of decolonization. For the death and birth of states became a constant problem in the world during the twentieth century. The legal innovations inspired by its early arrival in Central Europe became 'legal flash points' during the process of decolonization after World War II.

Leading legal minds of postcolonial states structured their arguments according to some version of the above-mentioned strategies elaborated in Central Europe after World War I. Many claimed that their state possessed pre-imperial sovereignty, which existed long before colonialism and only had to be reverted. The reference to international law was much more problematic: whereas international law was

the answer for the Kelsen circle and the great legal minds of the twentieth century influenced by it (e.g., Krystyna Marek), it tended to represent the problem for legal thinkers in postcolonial states. The main dilemma was how states that had just got rid of colonial rule could integrate themselves into an international legal system which was created by the colonial powers without the consent or contribution of the new states. With the closing thoughts of the final chapter, the reader is guided back to Central Europe, where the major questions regarding the death and birth of states posed themselves yet again after 1989.

"Easy to fly through the book [it] is not"—this remark made by Otto Mayer to one of Georg Jellinek's main works (p. 158) is also valid for Natasha Wheatley's book. However, the author's talent for explaining complex legal theories in a way that non-specialists can understand them has to be admired. Also exemplary is how Wheatley handles central notions of Habsburg history, which have no real equivalent in English (e.g., *Staatsrecht* and *Volksstam*): she explains the specificities of the notions and then refers to them in their original form. *The Life and Death of States* is an intellectually highly rewarding read which deserves an eminent place among the most important literature on Central Europe published in recent decades.

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Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 275–278
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.19

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Rechtsgeschichte und Volksbräuche (Ausgewählte Studien). By Ernő Tárkány Szücs. Edited by Janka Teodóra Nagy and Szabina Bognár.

Ungarische Rechtshistoriker. Budapest: Gondolat, 2021. 320 pp.

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It is the expressed aim of the *Ungarische Rechtshistoriker* series to make Hungarian legal history research accessible to the general public in a foreign language. Its sixth volume, *Ernő Tárkány Szücs: Rechtsgeschichte und Volksbräuche (Ausgewählte Studien)*, published in 2021, does much more than that: it introduces a perhaps lesser-known, outstanding legal historian and ethnographer, provides an insight into his most important Hungarian works, and brings together all his writings published in foreign languages over almost twenty years so that the interested reader need not look any further. This book is an excellent resource for researchers and readers in a wide range of academic fields interested in the work of Ernő Tárkány Szücs.

The book is structured in four parts: a preface, selected studies, an epilogue, and letters. In the preface, there are four essays. After a classical foreword, an essay by Janka Teodóra Nagy introduces the book's 'protagonist', lawyer and legal ethnographer Ernő Tárkány Szücs, born in 1921, primarily through his major works, highlighting the many international awards he won and his relevance far beyond his death in 1984. In the third essay, it is again Janka Teodóra Nagy who provides an insight into Ernő Tárkány Szücs' monumental seminal work, *Hungarian Legal Folklore*, published in 1981, which is a significant and authoritative work documenting research results for representatives of legal history, legal cultural history, ethnography, history, legal sociology, and legal anthropology. That book has been the subject of numerous reviews and is listed as recommended reading in several

Hungarian university departments. In the essay, Nagy actually continues the biography begun in the previous essay in that she reports on how Ernő Tárkány Szücs had conducted his research in the most authentic research atmosphere during the last decade and a half of his life and inspired new generations of legal ethnographers with his methodology and research results long after his death. The last essay in the preface part of this volume describes the activities, research and publication results of the Tárkány Szücs Ernő Legal Cultural History and Legal Ethnography Research Group, founded in 2011, which can be considered the intellectual heritage of Ernő Tárkány Szücs.

Perhaps two main achievements are worth highlighting with regard to the life, work and legacy of Ernő Tárkány Szücs that the editors of this volume, Nagy and Bognár, acknowledge with deep respect and professional admiration. First, he never ceased his research and work despite the lack of support or acknowledgement from his immediate surroundings, and second, he had an education in multiple disciplines, which helped him conduct his research and publish his findings in a way that made them accessible to members of all disciplines. His work, including extensive research on-site on multiple locations, collecting and documenting folk customs, wills, legal mining practices, or the labelling of animals, etc., has been well received abroad and to this day provides a rich well of information as the basis of contemporary research. Yet, in his home country during his life, Tárkány Szücs had difficulty finding a permanent academic position and advancing his career. His interdisciplinary focus makes his work accessible to many, and his findings provide valuable bases for subsequent research. His groundbreaking findings have been reprinted even after his untimely death, and his legacy is maintained, i.a., through the work of the research group dedicated to him, or this volume presented here.

The second part, selected studies, is the core of the book and contains eleven pieces of writing. The first is a German-language summary by János Connerth of Ernő Tárkány Szücs' *Majtély's Ancient Legal Life*, published in Hungarian in 1944. The second is a summary of the contents of the *Testaments of Vásárhely*, also published in Hungarian in 1961. The subsequent nine pieces are Ernő Tárkány Szücs' foreign-language studies, published during his lifetime, in chronological order. The four English-language and five German-language papers were published between 1967 and 1981 and have received considerable positive responses. The works primarily present the results of empirical research in the field of legal folklore and make them accessible to the non-Hungarian-speaking audience. One of the main merits of the book published in the *Ungarische Rechtshistoriker* series is that it presents these studies in chronological order so that the interested reader does not have to look for Ernő Tárkány Szücs' earlier writings in foreign languages as they are all available in this volume. Perhaps it would have been even clearer to the reader if the

editors had separated the first two texts from the other reprints, but of course, the interested reader will probably want to read through all the texts, and it will be clear to him or her which are by Tárkány Szücs and which by other authors.

The third part is the epilogue, where Szabina Bognár first commemorates this outstanding researcher, Ernő Tárkány Szücs, on the centenary of his birth. In this piece of writing, the interested reader can learn more about Ernő Tárkány Szücs as a person and about his scientific career. It tells of his early research and interests, as well as the difficulties he faced in the 1960s in trying to establish his research in the field of legal history. Success came when he was invited to join the Ethnographic Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1975, followed by a number of other academic opportunities. His major work, published in 1981, brought him the long-awaited national recognition, and six months before his death, after a long struggle, he was awarded the title of Doctor of Ethnography on 30 November 1983. The results of his work have been carried forward by many legal historians and ethnographers, including those in the Tárkány Szücs Ernő Research Group. In the second piece in the third part, Janka Teodóra Nagy paints a realistic picture of the achievements and state of Hungarian legal ethnography research after 1981. The author does not fail to emphasize the importance of Ernő Tárkány Szücs' work since his paper *Hungarian Legal Folklore* from 1981 can be seen as the foundation of legal ethnography research. The scientific research results from that book fill a gap between many disciplines and contribute greatly to a full interpretation of the research results. The development of several modern legal fields, such as legal cultural history, legal ethnography, legal sociology, and legal history, have benefited greatly from research on empirical origin over the last forty years. Even the transnational and international legal disciplines look back to the past for future insight. That is why the work of Ernő Tárkány Szücs is significant and worthy of recognition and was perhaps somewhat overlooked during his lifetime, which situation is being remedied by the diligent work of the scholars who care for his intellectual legacy, including through the volume presented here.

In the fourth and last part, the editors publish some of the original, never before published correspondence of Ernő Tárkány Szücs, which is kept in the archives of Hódmezővásárhely. Ernő Tárkány Szücs' first addressee was Karl-Sigismund Kramer, the German ethnographer and professor at the University in Munich and from 1966, that of Kiel, with whom ten of his letters exchanged between 1959 and 1969 are published in German in the volume. Herbert Spruth, a German lawyer and genealogist, corresponded with Ernő Tárkány Szücs in 1962; three of these letters are included in the book. Hermann Baltl, an Austrian jurist and legal historian, head of the Austrian Institute of Legal History at the University of Graz, wrote to Ernő Tárkány Szücs in 1982, offering assistance with his research in Vienna at the time. Louis Carlen,

a Swiss jurist and politician, exchanged letters with Ernő Tárkány Szücs in 1982 as Professor of Legal History and State Canon Law at the University of Freiburg, two of which appear on the last pages of this book.

In conclusion, the book, published in 2021 by Janka Teodóra Nagy and Szabina Bognár, is a great help for readers interested in legal ethnography and the work of Ernő Tárkány Szücs. It has the extraordinary merit of bringing together previously published works in English and German, making the researcher's biography, life's work, research results, as well as summaries of his main writings accessible to those not well-versed in the Hungarian language. This is a wonderful help for the international promotion of Hungarian research results.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 279–284
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.20

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

The Past 80 years of Hungarian Minority

Struggle for Survival. The Transcarpathian Hungarians (1944–2022). By Erzsébet Molnár D., Natália Váradi, Karolina Darcsi, Ildikó Orosz, and István Csernicskó. Budapest: Méry Ratio Publishing, 2022. 240 pp.

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Significant results have emerged in the past two decades in the scholarly examination of the twentieth-century history of Transcarpathia, primarily made possible by establishing the framework for scholarly exploration, including the collapse of the Soviet Union, the establishment of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Hungarian College of Higher Education in Transcarpathia, and the gradual opening of archives in Ukraine. The most significant outcome of this work is arguably the multi-authored volume entitled *Transcarpathia, 1919–2009: History, Politics, Culture*, published both in Hungarian and Ukrainian. With no more than a few partial studies up to this publication, the English-language history of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia after 1944 is particularly welcome. Therefore, it is important that the study collection titled *Struggle for Survival: The Transcarpathian Hungarians (1944–2022)*, edited by Andrea Bocskor, István Csernicskó, and Erzsébet Molnár D., has been published, in which the instructors of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Hungarian College of Higher Education in Transcarpathia provide an overview of the events of the last eighty years. (In 2023, under the auspices of the Committee of National Remembrance, it came out in Hungarian as well.)

The volume is overtly imbued with current political implications. Andrea Bocskor, the Member of the European Parliament, clearly identifies in the Foreword that "our volume will bring our readers […] to identifying with our aspirations!" (p. 13). In this regard, the primary aim of understanding the past of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia is to pave the way for its present endeavours: "Thus, in this volume, we focus the beginning of our narrative on Transcarpathian Hungarians in this [Soviet] period because the roots of today's aspirations, our

fidelity to our national identity and our mother tongue, loyalty to our homeland and the Transcarpathian Hungarian community lie somewhere here. If our ancestors, surviving such a difficult period […] were able to preserve their national identity in their homeland, it is also the moral duty of today's generation not to give up the struggle for survival." (p. 10).

This attitude also determines the discussion in the book made up of five big chapters, as the history of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia is fundamentally depicted as a history of conflict with the contemporary state centre. In the first three chapters, devoted chronologically to 1944–1953, 1953–1991, and 1991–2022, the authors examine the repression suffered by the Hungarian minority and the political aspirations of the local Hungarian community. The last two chapters assess issues of educational and language rights over the last nearly eighty years.

In the first chapter, Erzsébet Molnár D. presents the human rights violations in Transcarpathia under the communist regime between 1944 and 1953. While the author briefly outlines how the affiliation of Transcarpathia changed in the first half of the twentieth century, she concludes that among the historical turning points, joining the Soviet Union had the most severe consequences: "[…] until 1944 the territory was part of Central Europe and within that the Carpathian Basin in a social, economic and cultural sense; but with the 1944 shift of power, it became part of a dictatorial, class-based empire that was built on the deprivation of rights" (p. 15). For tens of thousands of people, the change in power meant not only deprivation of their rights but also physical annihilation through ethnic cleansing. The historian outlines the geostrategic aims of the region's Soviet annexation; methodologically, she presents simultaneously the violent process of Soviet occupation and annexation and the efforts to maintain apparent legitimacy. Alongside the chronological overview of events, Molnár D. points out that although the new social and political structure of the region was not precisely known in October 1944 when the Red Army 'liberated' it (pp. 18–20), the Soviet leadership had no intention whatsoever of surrendering Transcarpathia to others, for example to the Czechoslovak state (pp. 19–20).

Molnár D. explicates the methods applied against the population. Characteristic of Soviet dictatorship, constant fear and intimidation, uncertainty, deprivation of rights, discrimination, exclusion, as well as deportations and physical annihilation were the means that they would use as liberators of the region. In presenting the communist terror, the first chapter of the book focuses mainly on the *Malenkij robot*—ethnic cleansing based on the principle of collective guilt, as well as on violations of due process and show trials. As Molnár D. also points out, since the Soviet Union was dissolved and Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, ethnic Hungarians and Germans deported on ethnic grounds have not been rehabilitated to this day (p. 45).

In the second chapter, Natália Váradi discusses the struggles of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia from 1953 to 1989. She uncovers the Hungarian community's fight for legal equality against the backdrop of social, economic, and administrative changes following Stalin's death. Somewhat in parallel with the first chapter, Váradi also outlines the ideological work of the era, particularly its impact on local historical churches—Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Reformed. The author takes note of the martyrdom of Reformed pastor Endre Gecse, who died because of torture in KGB investigative custody in 1959.

The chapter places particular emphasis on cross-border relations and outlines the relevance of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution for Transcarpathia. From the perspective of revolutionary events, Transcarpathia indeed played a pivotal role, as "it becomes the scene for deportations, interrogations, control of military and political operations" (p. 65). Soviet tanks passed through the oblast on their way to Budapest, and the Soviet political leadership settled in Ungvár (Uzhhorod, UA), where, among others, deportees from Hungary were imprisoned. Váradi briefly lists three groups of young people—from Mezőkaszony (Koson, UA), Nagyszőlős (Vynohradiv, UA), and Gálocs (Haloch, UA)—who, according to KGB documents, operated in the oblast during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the following months, reputedly as "anti-Soviet politicising groups spreading leaflets" (p. 68). The author connects the presentation of the Hungarian minority's fight for legal equality with the description of the content requirements of the so-called Petitions of 1963, 1971, and 1972. She concludes: "The message of the 1963, 1971 and 1972 Petitions to the minority living today in Transcarpathia is that there is a chance to fight for minority rights only if there are individuals who speak up and take up the legal fight." (p. 95). In this regard, the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association, established in 1989, holds a prominent position.

The third chapter, unlike the previous two, focuses specifically on the political history of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia in the sovereign Ukrainian state between 1991 and 2022, established after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Karolina Darcsi aptly describes the conditions of the early 1990s: "The struggle of local and central leadership groups and power elites for the redistribution of political and economic power began, and the regime change started." (p. 99). In a segmented analysis, the author describes the most important milestones of political changes in Ukraine from its independence to gaining EU candidate status in June 2022, alongside modifications to minority legislation starting from 1990. Concurrently, the opportunities of local Hungarian minority advocacy groups and their endeavours to assert political, primarily collective rights, are also presented, focusing mainly on various autonomy attempts—from territorial to cultural autonomy. Based on the interpretation of relevant laws from the period, Darcsi concludes that the rights of Ukrainian minorities have continuously operated at an individual, rather than a

collective, level. Whenever there was a chance for positive change at the legislative level, the authorities and their representatives found ways to render the initiatives unworkable—whether it was about the delineation of electoral districts, fulfilling promises of the ruling power, or weakening anti-Hungarian sentiments. Nonetheless, the author is hopeful about Ukraine's full membership in the EU, "where it is hoped that the minority rights will also be treated in a European manner" (p. 141).

In the fourth chapter, Ildikó Orosz discusses Hungarian-language education in Transcarpathia from 1946 to 2021. She starts with the assertion that "[e]very single segment of ethnic minority is influenced by politics" (p. 143). In this spirit, Orosz highlights that the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia was under the authority of various states throughout the twentieth century without having any say or influence on this matter. Consequently, local minority education policies have always been dictated by the prevailing power. The chapter addresses separately the development of Hungarian-language education and its challenges in 1945–1966, then in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally in independent Ukraine—with the latter receiving most emphasis.

It is underlined that before the 1996 Ukrainian constitution, the first educational policy laws allowed space for the establishment of institutional networks for minorities—it was during this time that the Transcarpathian Hungarian Pedagogical Association (KMPSZ) was formed, followed by the establishment of the Foundation for the Transcarpathian Hungarian College initiated by the Pedagogical Association KMPSZ and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association (KMKSZ). The Foundation has since continued to maintain the educational institution, then known as the Transcarpathian Hungarian Teacher Training College (currently under the name of Ferenc Rákóczi II Hungarian College of Higher Education). However, following the adoption of the 1996 Ukrainian constitution, Orosz speaks of intensifying anti-minority sentiments. She states that the 1996 constitution defined Ukraine as a monolithic nation-state from the outset, and subsequent legislation increasingly relied on this framework, both during the introduction of a unified admission system (2007) and the adoption of the Education Framework Law in 2017. Following the events of 2014, "intolerance regarding the use of the language of minorities increased among Ukrainian politicians" (p. 161). The author also addresses the programs and projects aimed at supporting Transcarpathian education over the past thirty years, which have indeed enabled significant developments throughout the oblast. However, simultaneously, Orosz laments that these initiatives have often provided grounds for harassment by Ukrainian authorities.

Finally, the book concludes with István Csernicskó's chapter, in which the topics of language rights, violations, and restrictions in Transcarpathia between 1944 and 2023 are addressed. The linguist begins his discussion by elaborating on the definition of language rights. This is followed by a brief summary of the language rights

held by the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic during the Soviet era, and how these rights were transgressed by the violation of language (human) rights from the deportations of 1944 to changes in birth registrations and the change of place and personal names. While Csernicskó clearly sees the political aim of Russification during the Soviet era, he also draws attention to the fact that the dominance of Russian over other languages was achieved without any constitutional or legal codification.

Furthermore, Csernicskó briefly presents the linguistic legislative regulations in independent Ukraine, mainly showing how the language rights of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia have been restricted in recent years. He highlights the fundamental conflict that after 1991, but especially since 2014, "the Ukrainian state language policy insisted that Ukrainian should take over all the functions previously fulfilled by the Russian language, while national minorities wanted to use their mother tongue in as many language use areas as possible" (p. 195). According to the linguist, the legislative steps taken since 2014 indicate a language policy direction that strengthens the position of Ukrainian at the expense of other languages used in the country. He gives several concrete examples of how these regulations restrict the language rights of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia and how most of these legislative changes are incompatible with Ukraine's international commitments, thus constituting a withdrawal of existing rights.

While the descriptions and discussions in the five chapters are clear and consistent, addressing an essential conceptual inconsistency is necessary. On pages 99–100, the author refers to both the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine of 16 July 1990, which pronounced the sovereign rights of the Ukrainian SSR within the Soviet Union, and the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine of 24 August 1991, which declared the separation from the Soviet Union, using the same term ("Declaration of Independence"). Furthermore, it may have been more useful to incorporate the results of Ukrainian historical scholarship, for example, considering studies such as Vasil Mishchanin's 2019 doctoral dissertation dealing with the Sovietization of Transcarpathia (1944–1950), which was also published as a monograph, and Mishchanin's other extensive volume entitled *Political History of Transcarpathia through the Prism of Ukrainian Statehood* published in 2022 and covering the period from 1918 to 1950. In addition, there are numerous valuable archival source editions published in Uzhhorod in the 2010s and 2020s.

The tables, contemporary photographs, and colour maps add to the understanding of the analyses in the book. For foreign readers, the bibliography containing recommended literature on the topic and the chronology of the history of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia from 1944 to 2022 concluding the book may be of great assistance.

Overall, it is a positive development that we now have an English summary of the history of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia. Nevertheless, while the authors of the five chapters have provided concise summaries of their topics, there are still unfulfilled expectations. Understanding the situation of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia also requires insight into their everyday life in the Zakarpattia Oblast, from labour migration to mixed marriages, as some aspects of daily life are only covered in Natália Váradi's study. Supplementing the political and violent history of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia with social history, that is, an interdisciplinary approach to the topic, would be an important gap-filler both from a historical perspective and in terms of representing the Hungarian community in Europe. Hopefully, in the future, a volume of this kind will also enrich the range of publications aimed at gaining familiarity with the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia.

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 285–287
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.21

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

The Rise of Comparative History. Edited by Balázs Trencsényi, Constantin Iordachi, and Péter Apor.

Budapest: Central European University Press, 2021. 404 pp.

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The Rise of Comparative History edited by Balázs Trencsényi, Constantin Iordachi, and Péter Apor and published by the CEU Press is a prodigious volume on the discipline of the comparative perspective applied to the academic field of historical studies. First and foremost, it is a reader of key texts, originally written in various languages by scholars of various nationalities, that aims to show and promote the comparative method and transnational history-writing in its entirety for scholars to use in their research and to understand history not only limited to local points, but on a higher level, to encompass the history of predominantly East Central Europe from the time of the Middle Ages moving on to the World War I and well into the interwar period. The choice of this rather broad timeline allows the editors to list a vast number of experts who have worked in the field of comparative history and encourage readers to establish connections. The book is also a wonderfully representative way to display what comparative history is. Louis Davillé, one of the authors defining the comparative method, shows that, "[…] in its superior form, science is a system of relations." Following the Introduction where the three editors offer "A View from East Central Europe," the book is divided into three major sections, which helps the reader easily maneuver among the chapters: the editors focus on making the comparativist tradition as well as recent debates readily available to students and advanced researchers alike.

In the first major section titled "Defining the Comparative Method," we read papers by outstanding early twentieth century scholars whose intent was to prioritize comparison as an analytic tool for scientific investigation. Beginning with Kurt Breysig's piece, we immediately get an insight into how he believed the comparative method could move beyond the purely descriptive method, that had been the prominent way of history writing for several centuries. His study is followed by the findings of Louis Davillé's 1913 "Comparison and the Comparative Method, Particularly

in Historical Studies," where he tried to integrate the comparative method into a framework of scientific inquiry. Then, we read Henri Pirenne's 1923 "On the Comparative Method in History," where his aim was to overcome what he refers to as 'racial' bias between European nations when inspecting differences and similarities between them from a historical viewpoint. As we see in Henri Sée's "Historical Science and Philosophy of History," he took inspiration from Pirenne's work and believed that a historian's duty was to explain historical change by the method of comparison. The section closes with Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch's 1928 paper evaluating the advantages and the limitations of the comparative method.

The next two major sections introduce the East Central European contemporaries of the West European scholars included in the first section. "Structures and Institutions" begins with a 1931 essay by Otto Hintze, who tackles two broader themes and their differences from the perspective of sociology and history. First, Hintze explores the role of the medieval system of estates in the birth of modern constitutionalism and how it was related to institutional and constitutional development, looking at the whole of Europe. Second, he attempts to answer how historical individuality in its singularity can be made compatible with comparative historical studies. Our attention is directed at the Balkan Peninsula in Jovan Cvijić's 1918 anthropogeographic study, in which he analyses the psychological and sociocultural features of communities living in the Balkans. His study contributed greatly to the emergence of Balkan Studies, which rose to significant presence in the 1930s. Next, in favor of comparative history, in "The Common Character of Southeast European Institutions," Nicolae Iorga warns us as early as 1929 against writing national histories in isolation: he emphasizes that historians should place their findings within the framework of universal history. This is followed by Jan Rutkowski's 1928 argumentation that a comparative analysis could highlight certain regional trends in Polish socioeconomic history which, in turn, could be contrasted with Western European developments. Gheorghe I. Brătianu's 1933 essay focuses on the history of the Black Sea and applies a comparative perspective. Starting from the position that "[a] more profound knowledge of the economic and social history of Eastern Europe has revealed to historians that the social evolution of the West and that of the East have been proceeding in opposite directions in the modern era", he compares the historical development of Eastern and Western Europe in the early medieval period. The second section of *The Rise of Comparative History* ends with István Hajnal's 1942 essay "On the Working Group of the Historiography of Small Nations," where he presents Hungarian historians' wish for a transnational comparative approach to history.

The third section is titled "Beyond the National Grand Narratives," reiterating the warning that we should not inspect developments in history in isolation. This section gives space to Marceli Handelsman's 1932 comparative study that looks at "The Development of

Nationalities in Central-Eastern Europe" and analyses the social and political conditions of the emergence of nationalism. In answer to the question, he raises in his 1934 "What is Eastern Europe," Oskar argues that it is a historical region, and he introduces the notion of Central Europe. An excerpt from Charles Seignobos' last major work published in 1938 tours the interconnected events of the 1848 revolutionary period and states that the French development served as a model for further movements. Taken from the very first issue of the *Revue Internationale des études balkaniques,* Milan Budimir and Peter Skok's 1934 "Aim and Significance of Balkan Studies" is directly connected to Balkan Studies and enunciates the wish to create a regionally encompassing common historical narrative. In "The Effect of the War in Southeastern Europe," first published in 1936, David Mitrany analyses how the World War I affected the Balkans: here, comparative history serves political criticism and further promotes the importance of the region. The history of the Balkans receives remarkable attention in the book that the paper comes from. Victor Papacostea's 1943 "The Balkan Peninsula and the Question of Comparative Studies" also argues that historians of the Balkans should go beyond national compartments. Finally, we arrive at "Southeast Europe and the Balkans," originally published in1943, where Fritz Valjavec defines Southeast Europe in the complexity of politics, culture, and religion.

The Rise of Comparative History is a truly fascinating read dedicated to the comparative method in historical research. The editors deserve acknowledgement for their meticulous work in selecting texts and providing vital theoretical foundations. When read together, the papers create an inclusive overview of Western and Eastern European history. In order to help orientation and interpretation, preceding the studies, readers will find each scholar's biographical data and a summary and evaluation of their oeuvre. The book also draws attention to the fact that while from the 1990s the comparative method received various forms of criticism, it remains a major tool of inquiry. Thus, historians are encouraged to continue the comparative tradition in their research. Therefore, *The Rise of Comparative History* is not only a greatly useful reference, but a book that may inspire historians in their own field of study.

HSCE | Historical Studies on Central Europe

Historical Studies on Central Europe 4, no. 1 (2024): 288–293
doi.org/10.47074/HSCE.2024-1.22

Hungary's Cold War: International Relations from the End of World War II to the Fall of the Soviet Union. By Csaba Békés.

New Cold War History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022. 414 pp.

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Csaba Békés's book stands at the forefront of international historical research, as indicated by its publication in the series edited by Odd Arne Westad, *New Cold War History*.

From the very first sentence, the author emphasizes that his work is the fruit of the 'archive revolution' that began following the collapse of the Communist regimes in East Central Europe in 1989. Indeed, the accessibility of archival materials from former Soviet bloc countries has opened up tremendous opportunities for historians, and Békés takes full advantage of this opportunity. His book offers a new interpretation of the Cold War period from 1945 to 1990 (or, according to Békés, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991), outlining its theoretical frameworks and introducing numerous new concepts based on over thirty years of persistent archival research. His theoretical assertions are primarily grounded in careful analysis of Hungarian, American, and British archival documents, as well as published Soviet sources, rather than being purely theoretical constructs, as the author regularly reminds his readers.

Békés briefly lists his theoretical innovations and new interpretations in the introduction, and then elaborates on them in detail within the main chapters, embedding them within historical contexts. Here are some examples:

- Regarding the Sovietization of Eastern and Central Europe, Békés argues that it was neither the cause nor the consequence of the Cold War confrontation. However, he emphasizes that the process began as early as 1944, with local Communist parties assuming dominant positions in every country in the region by 1945–1946. He interprets the gradual nature of Sovietization as a gesture by Stalin to ensure Western, especially American, cooperation for as long as possible.

- One of the author's most significant claims pertains to the periodization of the Cold War, specifically concerning the nature of détente. According to Békés, from 1953 to 1991, despite the escalating arms race, the relationship between the opposing superpowers was characterized by continual mutual interdependence and compelled cooperation, while the inherent antagonism remained evident. He attributes the constant presence of détente to the desire of both superpowers to avoid military confrontation at all costs due to the potentially catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war. The author relates the 'watershed' nature of the year 1953 not primarily to the death of Stalin, but to the development of the hydrogen bomb and the American testing in 1952 and the Soviet testing in 1953.
- Békés distinguishes between real crises and 'pseudo-crises' within the Cold War era. He categorizes crises that occurred within blocs (such as the 1953 uprising in East Germany, the 1956 Polish and Hungarian crises, the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia, and the 1980–1981 Polish conflict within the Soviet bloc, as well as the Suez Crisis on the other side) as pseudo-crises, which, despite vigorous propaganda efforts, did not surpass the framework of cooperation between the superpowers and did not pose a genuine threat to the other bloc. On the other hand, crises deemed genuine (such as the two Berlin crises, the Korean War, and the Cuban Missile Crisis) carried the risk of military confrontation between the two superpower-led blocs.
- The author also outlines a new interpretative framework when discussing Hungarian foreign policy after 1956, emphasizing its tripartite determinism: the country's dependency not only on the Soviet Union (1) but also on Western countries for maintaining a functioning economy through advanced technology, trade relations, and loans (2). Meanwhile, the country engaged in lobbying efforts within multilateral forums of the Soviet bloc, particularly within the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, to assert its national interests (3). This is closely related to the author's new insight into two groups of Eastern European countries observed in the late 1960s and early 1970s regarding their relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany. The security-concerned sub-bloc (East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia) prioritized security issues stemming from the lack of a German peace treaty, while the economy-oriented sub-bloc (Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) emphasized economic benefits anticipated from Bonn. An effective relationship with the West was essential for sustaining the Kádár regime's standard of living policy.
- The author introduces the concept of 'constructive loyalty' primarily to describe Hungary's foreign policy towards Moscow, which consistently emphasized adherence to the Soviet direction and close cooperation on the international

stage while striving to assert its own interests differing from those of the Soviet Union during bilateral negotiations (e.g., in the fields of raw materials and energy supply), testing Soviet tolerance in the process.

- An example from the end of the examined period: Csaba Békés introduces the concept of 'floating' the Brezhnev doctrine to characterize Gorbachev's policy towards Eastern and Central Europe from 1988 to 1991. He argues that the Soviet leadership deliberately made contradictory statements regarding the changes in East Central Europe during this time: while implicitly rejecting the possibility of military intervention, it never categorically stated that the Soviet Union would not intervene even if political changes in a particular allied country led to the collapse of the socialist system and the establishment of parliamentary democracy. This presumed strategy may have contributed to the fundamentally peaceful nature of changes in East Central Europe.

The author examines the entire spectrum of East–West relations—as suggested by the subtitle of the book—with a European focus, encompassing all the states of the Soviet bloc. An important contribution to Cold War historiography is his use of numerous Hungarian documents, which are often inaccessible to non-Hungarian-speaking researchers, to shed light on the background of significant international events. For example, an important insight into the origins of the Cold War confrontation comes from a speech by General Secretary Mátyás Rákosi on 17 May 1946, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party, in which he reported on his negotiations with Stalin and Molotov on 1 April 1946. Stalin's main message was to accelerate the process of Sovietization and prepare for the complete takeover of power. This speech occurred more than a year before the announcement of the Marshall Plan, indicating that American aid was not the sole trigger for completing Sovietization. Similarly, insights into high-level Hungarian-Soviet meetings can be gleaned from the notes on First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party János Kádár's first negotiations with the new Soviet leadership following Khrushchev's removal, held in Moscow on 9–10 November 1964. During these meetings, Kádár outlined what Békés calls the Kádár doctrine, which stated that Moscow's sovereignty was also limited: in their decisions, Soviet leaders had to consider the interests of the entire Soviet bloc.

Békés also draws on Hungarian sources, such as the report prepared for the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Government at the July 1988 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Warsaw, to discuss the proceedings of the meeting, which marked a turning point in the history of the Soviet bloc and the entire international Cold War system. In fact, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze openly admitted at a closed meeting for foreign ministers that the Soviet Union was 'facing a critical situation' and could

no longer afford a permanent arms race with the West, as it surpassed the Eastern Bloc 'in every possible respect.' He emphasized that ending the arms race was an absolute priority. With this statement, the Soviet Foreign Minister acknowledged that the decades-long competition between the two world systems had ended in total defeat for the Soviet bloc. According to Békés, this dramatic admission marked 'the beginning of the end' for the Soviet bloc. Based on a report from a meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on 28 July 1989, the author argues that Gorbachev's vision of a 'common European home' received the most positive reactions from the Soviet Union's two main enemies during World War II, West Germany and Italy. Békés also uses Hungarian sources to reconstruct the internationally significant process of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

Through decades of in-depth research, Békés has been able to examine the events of the Soviet bloc and Hungarian foreign policy in the context of the entire 1945 and 1991 period, comparing earlier and later events and situations. For example, when speculating about the likely scenarios if the Soviet military interventions in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968 had not happened, he uses as a comparative basis the Eastern European transformations of 1989, when there was no Soviet intervention, the collapse of the socialist system and the establishment of parliamentary democracy and a market economy developed in the countries involved. When examining Soviet crisis management within the bloc, the author introduces the concept of the Mikoyan doctrine, which seeks to find a political solution first in the event of anti-system movements unfolding in an allied country, possibly using local forces to suppress them, and only resorting to Soviet military force if these measures fail. He points out that, learning from the failure of the armed intervention in Budapest on 24 October 1956, the Soviet leadership only resorted to a military 'solution' as a last resort during the events in Czechoslovakia and later in Afghanistan. However, in the case of the Polish crisis of 1980–1981, their goals were achieved. To justify the claim that the second Soviet armed intervention in Hungary, which began on 4 November 1956, would have occurred even without the Suez Crisis, Békés recalls that the Western powers responded with similar passivity to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, although they were not under similar pressure at the time. The author also points out that the framework established by the Soviet government statement of 30 October 1956, announcing possible talks on the withdrawal of Soviet troops, fundamentally shaped the relationship between Moscow and its East Central European allies until the late 1980s. While these frameworks were more flexible than before, they still conditioned the stability of the socialist system and the preservation of alliance relations.

The book provides numerous additional interesting and important insights into the Cold War era. Békés discusses the immense international ambitions of

Hungary's Stalinist dictator, Mátyás Rákosi, and the precursors to the new Soviet foreign policy that emerged following Stalin's death, which is considered the starting point of international détente. He presents the formation of the Warsaw Pact, which became a forum for multilateral consultation within the Soviet bloc by the 1960s, significantly contributing to the international emancipation of countries in East Central Europe. The author analyzes the 'active foreign policy' doctrine proclaimed by Moscow in 1954, aimed at enhancing the international acceptability of the satellite states. The author provides a detailed explanation of why János Kádár rejected Nikita Khrushchev's offer in the spring of 1958 to withdraw Soviet troops from Hungary, considering it one of Kádár's most irresponsible foreign policy decisions during his lengthy rule. The book also discusses Hungary's secret mediation attempt during the Vietnam War and Kádár's role as a mediator during the Prague Spring of 1968. Of significant importance is Békés's observation that the process initiated in the 1960s, at Soviet initiative, which led to the convening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, contributed significantly to strengthening the Western relations of Soviet ally countries, expanding their international negotiation experience, and professionalizing the Hungarian diplomatic corps.

Békés primarily relies on international literature to take a firm stance on the causes of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the collapse of socialist systems. Contrary to previous interpretations, he considers the role of the human rights campaign initiated by US President Jimmy Carter as marginal. He attributes greater significance to the destabilizing effects of economic relations with the West, particularly with West Germany. However, he views the definitive weakening of the Soviet Union's internal strength as the decisive factor in the collapse. Furthermore, he illustrates with numerous examples that during 1989–1990 the transition period, Western governments made it clear to both the Hungarian government and the opposition that they desired the continuation of the Warsaw Pact and did not support neutrality efforts.

The exposition of the work is proportionate: the author writes appropriately about different periods and topics. The precisely developed endnotes and thoroughly prepared appendices (detailed listing of sources, extensive bibliography, and geographical, personal, and subject indexes) further enhance the professional level of the volume.

We must briefly address some shortcomings as well. When analysing Hungary's Western relations, Békés does not give sufficient attention to France, which had significant leverage in both European integration and NATO. This omission is particularly noteworthy in the context of the 1960s, regarding the reception of de Gaulle's Eastern policy within the Soviet bloc. France was a prominent partner for Hungary's

Western opening in the 1960s, preceding the *Ostpolitik* of West Germany. Selecting Paris to initiate the Western rapprochement was logical for Hungary, since France was also approaching Moscow at that time, thus the Soviets could not accuse Hungary of befriending an enemy, as might have been the case with the United States or the United Kingdom. The logically anticipated natural partner, West Germany, had not yet fully normalized its relations with the Soviet Union and other bloc countries at that time. Austria, on the other hand, was only a regional player and, strictly speaking, was not part of the Western bloc.

The assertion that Western public opinion might have 'felt somewhat guilty' about the Polish and especially the Hungarian tragedy is not supported by my extensive international archival research experience.

Regarding the Suez Crisis, it should have been mentioned that one of its triggering factors was the nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956, and a brief outline of its main events should have been provided. Békés opines that it is still unclear whether the news of the Hungarian Revolution reached the British, French, and Israeli delegations negotiating the planned Suez Crisis in Sèvres on 22–24 October 1956, since according to the diary of Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, he learned about the outbreak of the revolt in Budapest only after his return to Israel on 25 October. However, French and Israeli sources indicate that the Budapest events were indeed discussed at the meetings and French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau, most probably mentioned the Budapest events to reassure Ben Gurion, who feared Soviet retaliation. Pineau believed that the Soviet Union's troubles in Poland and Hungary reduced the likelihood of Soviet intervention in Egypt.

Finally, the two chapters discussing international aspects of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution lack reference to the approximately 200,000 refugees who fled the country after the revolution. Their successful reception and management significantly contributed to the establishment of the international refugee reception system that still operates today.

All in all, Csaba Békés's book is a significant contribution to Cold War literature, rich in new discoveries, and a world-class achievement that is sure to attract lively international interest. It will undoubtedly become a fundamental international reference and methodological starting point for detailed historical studies of other countries in the Soviet bloc.