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**THE EXPANSION OF HUNGARIANS IN THE SOUTH-
WEST OF TRANSYLVANIA IN THE 10TH-13TH CENTURIES.
HISTORICAL REFERENCE POINTS**

**Expansiunea ungarilor în sud-vestul Transilvaniei
în secolele X-XIII. Considerații istorice**

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Abstract: *At European level, the end of the ninth century corresponds to the appearance of a people of Finno-Ugric origin in the vast Pannonian Plain: the Hungarians. For the past of Transylvania, the event was a milestone, because for more than a millennium the destinies of the two peoples, Romanian and Hungarian, were continually interwoven; to these new historical realities the southwest of the intra-Carpathian space was also connected, circumscribed, currently, the territory of current Hunedoara county.*

Keywords: Hungarians, Transylvania, Hunedoara, Romanian population, Christianity.

At the end of the 9th century, a new people appeared in the old Roman province of Pannonia: the Hungarians; for Transylvania, situated in the proximity of this geographical area, the moment meant the beginning of a new historical stage. Indeed, the insufficiency of pasture lands in Pannonia, corroborated with the need to facilitate access to the riches of the Transylvanian underground (salt, so necessary to humans and animals) led, from the outset, to the initiation of expeditions to the east, beyond the Western Carpathian line. Due to the crisis the Hungarian society was undergoing, and to the resistance opposed by the local people, possession of the territories plundered could not materialize at this stage; at most, it is possible to take into account the establishment of solitary groups among the locals.¹

Given the direction of Hungarians entering Transylvania through the Gates of Meseș, the south-west of Transylvania, now circumscribed to the territory of current Hunedoara County, was largely out of the impact of this first migratory wave. For example, there is no archaeological evidence of the presence of Hungarians at this stage of expansion in the Land of Hațeg,² in the Poiana Ruscăi Mountains or in the Land of Zarand, areas which were considered unsuitable for the

¹ Ștefan Pascu, Răzvan Theodorescu (ed.), *Istoria românilor, III, Genezele românești*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 2001, p. 235.

² Radu Popa, *La începuturile Evului mediu românesc. Țara Hațegului*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1988, p. 52.

settlement of large cattle breeders. The Necropolises of Deva („Micro 15” point)³ and Orăștie („Dealul Pemilor X2” point)⁴ certify, instead, the presence of groups of Hungarian warrior horsemen in the key areas of the Mureș Gorge, having the mission to ensure, in future, access to the salt deposits in the centre of Transylvania. Thus, the rescue excavations at the edge of Micro 15 district of Deva in 1974 led to the discovery of 5 (maybe even 6) graves belonging to Hungarian warriors from the 10th-11th centuries; the presence of a rider killed by an arrow demonstrates that the relations of the native population with the newcomers were not exactly peaceful.⁵ However, despite these discoveries, whose dating may go back before 950-there is the opinion that the Hungarian attacks against the Romanian pre-state formations took place starting with 937, in the conditions of the rapid military decay of the Bulgarian Tsardom-,⁶ the Mureș corridor could constitute only in the next century an effective way of Hungarian contingent penetration towards Transylvania.⁷

If these Hungarian expeditions at the beginning of the tenth century did not have the character of a genuine conquest, with the reign of apostolic king Stephen I (997-1038) it started the gradual and systematic incorporation of the whole Intra-Carpathian space in the Arpad kingdom; in connection with this, Transylvanian historian Kurt Horedt proposed five expansive stages, namely: 1. up to the Someșul Mic line (about 900); 2. up to the Mureș line (about 1000); 3. up to the Târnava Mare line (about 1100); 4. up to the Olt line (about 1150); 5. up

³ Radu R. Heitel, „Arheologia etapelor de pătrundere a maghiarilor în Transilvania intracarpatică”, in *Symposia Thracologica*, no. V, 1987, pp. 77-79; R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 52; Zeno Karl Pinter, „Spada medievală din mormântul de călăreț de la Deva. Considerații tipologice și cronologice”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XXV, 1992-1994, pp. 235-246; Aurel Dragotă, Ioan Marian Țiplic, „Scurt istoric al cercetărilor privind necropolele din Transilvania (sec. IX-XI)”, in *Corviniana. Acta Musei Corvinensis*, no. VI, 2000, pp. 130-131; Ana-Maria Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII. Interpretări istorico-politice și economice pe baza descoperirilor monetare din bazinul carpatic*, Bucharest, Paideia Printing Press, 2002, p. 400; Ioan Marian Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc în perioada migrațiilor și Evul Mediu timpuriu (secolele IV-XIII)*, Iași, The European Institute Printing Press, 2005, p. 122; Aurel Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate spirituală. Rit și ritual funerar în Transilvania și în Europa Centrală și de Sud-Est (sec. IX-XI p. Ch.)*, Alba-Iulia, Altip Printing Press, 2006, pp. 142-143.

⁴ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 122; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, p. 145.

⁵ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 52.

⁶ Alexandru Madgearu, *Românii în opera Notarului Anonim*, Cluj-Napoca, The Romanian Cultural Foundation/Center for Transylvanian Studies Printing Press, 2001, p. 143.

⁷ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 123.

to the Carpathians line (about 1200),⁸ described later by another Saxon historian, Thomas Năgler, thus: in the first two stages, the Hungarian power extended only nominally to parts of Transylvania, in the form of isolated settlements, and in the other three the massive colonization of the entire Intra-Carpathian arc took place;⁹ a similar hypothesis is offered by Radu R. Heitel, reducing the number of these stages to three: 1. The entry of the Hungarians through the Gates of Meseş to Cluj-Napoca-Dej-Alba-Iulia (Salt Area); 2. The conquest of the political party led by Gyula III; 3. Conquering the whole of Transylvania.¹⁰ The conquest of that „*Ultrasilvana terra*” led by Gyula III the Younger was the beginning of this new and violent stage;¹¹ the place of confrontation between the two camps seems to have been the plain of Orăştie.¹² The archaeological finds, in this case, draw the route followed by the Hungarian royalty from Pannonia to the centre of Transylvania, namely the Mureş valley.¹³

In the next period, the territorial incorporation covered the valleys of Geoagiu and Cerna, the Land of Haţeg and the gold rich depressions of Băiţa, Săcărâmb and Brad; the necropolises of Hunedoara certify these realities. In Orăştie („Dealul Pemilor X2” point) and Deva („Micro 15” point), funerals continued in the first decades of the 11th century.¹⁴ In 1910, during vineyard works, near Sânpetru Hill on the outskirts of Hunedoara, at the point named „The Hill of Treasures”, there were found more than 60 burial tombs, oriented to the west, belonging to stable inhabitants; 54 more were discovered during the systematic researches of the following year, the conclusion being that the necropolis was used for a short period of time, namely between 1020/1030 and 1100.¹⁵ This village community was created in the

⁸ Kurt Horedt, *Contribuţii la istoria Transilvaniei în secolele VI-XIII*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 1958, p. 116.

⁹ Thomas Năgler, *Aşezarea saşilor în Transilvania*, 2nd ed., Bucharest, Kriterion Printing Press, 1992, p. 115.

¹⁰ R. R. Heitel, „Arheologia etapelor de pătrundere”, pp. 77-79.

¹¹ *Istoria românilor*, III, p. 235.

¹² Ioan Marian Țiplic, „Necropola medieval-timpurie de la Orăştie-Dealul Pemilor X2 (Hunedoara) și bătălia dintre Ștefan I și Gyla-Gyula”, in *Analele Asociației Naționale a Tinerilor Istoricii din Moldova*, no. I, 1999, pp. 150-153.

¹³ A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, p. 26.

¹⁴ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 122-127, 236, 240; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, pp. 142-143, 145.

¹⁵ K. Horedt, *Contribuții la istoria Transilvaniei*, pp. 116, 144; R. R. Heitel, „Arheologia etapelor de pătrundere”, p. 78; R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 53; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 416; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 127, 238; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, pp. 143-144.

context of King Stephen I's preoccupations to control the rich mining area at the foot of Poiana Ruscăi Mountains; for this purpose, groups of Slavs were brought to the Cerna valley, whose colonization formed the basis of formation for the present localities Cristur, Pestișu Mare etc., mentioned documentarily only in the following centuries.¹⁶ All these discoveries belong to the „Bijelo-Brdo I” (c. 970-1092) cultural horizon.¹⁷ The graves grouped around Geoagiu rotunda, dating back to the 11th-12th centuries, are equally important for the chronology of the territorial extension of Hungarian authority over Hunedoara area.¹⁸

In the same way, through successive settlements, the Crown expanded its authority in other directions as well, the Hungarian Catholic communities gradually advancing in the valleys of the Mureș and Strei rivers, and in the neighbouring hilly areas.¹⁹ The necropolis of Streisângeorgiu („La Biserică” point) belongs to this period, dating back to the 11th-12th centuries, and culturally belonging to the second phase of the „Bijelo-Brdo” culture or the „Citfalău” group.²⁰ The centre of the county was fully incorporated until the middle of the 13th century; to the north, territorial incorporation must have evolved concurrently. The southern region of the current county, namely the Land of Hațeg and the upper Jiu Valley, although retaining wide autonomy, received in 1276 a form of shire organization, a sign of its inclusion within the borders of the Hungarian Kingdom.²¹

In the process of incorporating the intra-Carpathian space, the Hungarian royalty also met with strong resistance from two groups of migrant populations interested in the expansion of their own political hegemony over Transylvania. The first group, the Pechenegs, were reported in Transylvania in the 10th-11th centuries, large-scale military actions being organised against them so as to free this territory from their political domination. Even after their final defeat by King Ladislaus I (1077-1095), in 1085, the mention of the Pechenegs in southern Transylvania together with the Romanians, as soldiers subject to the

¹⁶ K. Horedt, *Contribuții la istoria Transilvaniei*, p. 145; R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 54.

¹⁷ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 128.

¹⁸ Gheorghe Petrov, „Raport preliminar asupra cercetărilor arheologice din Complexul medieval de la Geoagiu de Jos, jud. Hunedoara (campaniile 1993, 1994, 1995)”, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, year XXXIII, no. 1, 1996, pp. 403-413.

¹⁹ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 254.

²⁰ Călin Cosma, *Vestul și nord-vestul României în secolele VIII-X d. H.*, Cluj-Napoca, Nereamia Napocae Printing Press, 2002, p. 228; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 468; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 128, 242.

²¹ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 254-257; *Istoria românilor*, III, pp. 364-367.

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Crown, continued.²² Around 1100, solitary groups, grouped around a leader, were probably established in Hunedoara area, being assimilated until the end of the thirteenth century; they were responsible for the defence of the southern Transylvanian boundaries of the Kingdom, along the Carpathians.²³ With regard to the second Turkish group, namely the Cumans, the absence of archaeological discoveries, as well as the lack of anthroponyms and toponyms, leads to the idea that this migratory people did not settle, not even temporarily, in the territory of Hunedoara, although in the 12th-13th centuries are reported in neighbouring Oltenia.²⁴ Instead, the plunder expeditions-the localities on the Mureş valley were targeted-, followed by the two-year siege of Deva, in 1264²⁵ and 1324,²⁶ made the Romanians and the Hungarians from the south-west of Transylvania come into direct contact with them.

However, the shock to which Eastern Europe, and Transylvania too, was subjected was the great Mongol invasion of 1241-1242.²⁷ Entering southern Transylvania through two points, namely the Oituz Pass and the Olt Gorge, the Mongol troops, after junction under Bediak's command,²⁸ advanced in the spring of 1241 on the middle and lower course of the Mureş river, raiding and destroying the main opposition centres encountered; Orăştie and Deva had a lot to suffer, along with the other localities in the Mureş meadow.²⁹ However, the impact did not, as it was claimed, lead to a radical depopulation of Transylvania.³⁰ They did not want it to happen anyway, since the invaders were the main beneficiaries of the material values of the native population.³¹ The Cerna and Strei valleys were also affected; groups

²² Ștefan Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, 2nd ed., volume I, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1972, pp. 82-87.

²³ Florentina Liliana Rusu, „Fenomene istorico-demografice în Țara Hațegului din Evul Mediu până la 1900”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XX, 1986-1987, p. 245; R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 75-76, 267.

²⁴ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 270-271.

²⁵ Constantin Tănăsescu, „Din trecutul municipiului Deva. De la prima atestare documentară până în secolul al XVI-lea”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XX, 1986-1987, pp. 160-161.

²⁶ Ioan Andrișoiu, Ioan Petru Albu, „Deva și împrejurimile în secolele IV-XIV”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. VI, 1969, p. 68.

²⁷ Șerban Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea. Între Cruciată și Imperiul mongol*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1993, pp. 94-98.

²⁸ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 188.

²⁹ Ioan Lupaș, *Din istoria Transilvaniei*, Bucharest, Eminescu Printing Press, 1988, p. 45.

³⁰ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 275 (n. 62).

³¹ Henri Stahl, *Studii de sociologie istorică*, Bucharest, Scientific Printing Press, 1972, p. 42.

detached from the Mongolian army traveling through the Mureș corridor towards Hungary, advanced to Hunedoara-now the land and wood fortress on Sânpetru Hill was attacked and destroyed-and Hațeg Depression. Similar raids were certainly recorded over the period of about a year while the Mongols remained on the territory of the Kingdom. As the accessible already known areas were preferable, the villages in forested valleys, as well as the ones astray in the hills and the mountains of Hunedoara remained outside their immediate objectives.³² In the spring of 1242, Batu Khan ordered the withdrawal of the Mongolian army, a part of the military troops returning to their native areas through Transylvania; the Mureș valley saw again the destructive blow of the previous year.³³

The subsequent crisis was not easily overcome by the Hungarian royalty. A first step towards the recovery of the political situation in the intra-Carpathian area on the verge of anarchy was the attempt to rehabilitate the Transylvanian defensive system, followed shortly by the reorganization of the old territorial possessions; Romanians, together with the Saxons and the Szeklers, responded to the call to consolidate the eastern and southern borders of the Kingdom.³⁴ The contacts of the natives with these royal colonists were not recent. Concerning Hunedoara space, the temporal presence of the Szeklers, namely the massive Saxon colonization in the eastern part of the present day county can be traced documentarily and archaeologically since the 12th century.³⁵ With regard to the Szeklers, used by the Hungarian Crown in all stages of its expansion to the east, as an avant-garde,³⁶ documentary sources indirectly attest to their presence in the eastern part of Hunedoara as border guards for two or three generations.³⁷ They were succeeded by the Saxons, brought to Hunedoara sometime between 1100 and 1150; the first villages in which they settled were, according to tradition and documents: Romos (Hunedoara County), Cricău and Ighiu (Alba County);³⁸ the contemporary springs keep silent regarding other localities

³² R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 275-276.

³³ *Istoria românilor*, III, p. 451.

³⁴ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 160.

³⁵ Th. Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, pp. 116-117.

³⁶ Anton Drăgoescu (ed.), *Istoria României. Transilvania*, volume I, Cluj-Napoca, „George Barițiu” Printing Press, 1997, p. 270.

³⁷ F. L. Rusu, „Fenomene istorico-demografice”, p. 245.

³⁸ Th. Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, pp. 129, 139; Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Națiunea română medievală*, București, The Romanian Cultural Foundation/Center for Transylvanian Studies Printing Press, 1998, pp. 59-61; Anton E. Dörner, *Documente și cronici privind istoria*

around Orăștie colonized during the same period.³⁹ All were originally included in a shire administrative structure, of which, in 1224, the town of Orăștie was developed, inclusively in the province of Sibiu.⁴⁰ After 1241, due to the economic and demographic decline, Hungarian king Bela IV (1235-1270) allowed new groups of colonists to be brought; coming from the mining areas of central Europe, they were subsequently noticed both in Orăștie area and in Certeju de Sus and Baia de Criș depressions.⁴¹

From an administrative point of view, in the past decades it was considered that the entire south-west of Transylvania depended on the Hungarian political authority of Royal Alba. Rather, it must be taken into account the presence of a fortification or permanent reinforcement towards which the Hungarian or mixed communities installed in the area are gravitating. The earth fortress from Hunedoara, on Sânpetru Hill, attributed to the 11th-12th centuries, seems to have met these conditions;⁴² abandoned after the great Mongol invasion, its functions were taken over by another building, the current Castle of Huniads.⁴³ In fact, the territories under „*Saint Stephen's Crown*” underwent, since the 11th century, a vast process of organization; in 1111 a first dignitary was mentioned, „*Mercurius princeps Ultrasilvanus*”. Under the pressure of the Romanian tradition, in the middle of the 12th century, the intra-Carpathian space was then reorganized into a voivodeship, comprising several royal counties; the first documentarily attested voivodeship is Leustachius, in 1174.⁴⁴

In the years following the great Mongol invasions, the administrative-territorial reorganization of the Intra-Carpathian border area within the Transylvanian voivodeship became, for the Hungarian royalty, a stringent priority. Attempts to create a Hunedoara political superstructure, namely the county, enrol in this context, being taken as the starting point of the nucleus represented by the small wall fortress that replaced the earth fortification on Sânpetru hill in Hunedoara.⁴⁵ The

orașului și scannului Orăștie, I, 1200-1541, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut Printing Press, 2003, pp. 13-14.

³⁹ Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, p. 120.

⁴⁰ Th. Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, 224; A. E. Dörner, *Documente și cronici*, p. 14.

⁴¹ Th. Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor*, pp. 168-169.

⁴² R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 28, 216, 254.

⁴³ Gheorghe Anghel, „Castelul de la Hunedoara (Noi puncte de vedere asupra fazelor de construcție)”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XI-XII, 1974-1975, pp. 367-378.

⁴⁴ *Istoria României*, I, pp. 266-268.

⁴⁵ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 59.

first concrete step was to raise the citadel above Deva, mentioned in 1264,⁴⁶ based on a document from 1269. The political, administrative and military centre remained in Hunedoara, where, starting with 1265, a Catholic „Archdeaconry” (archpriestship) is mentioned. It is not known precisely the year Hunedoara County was established, but it has been constantly mentioned since 1276. Its surface, in the first decades of attestation, was restricted to the lower courses of the Cerna and Strei rivers.⁴⁷ It was not until 1324 when, with the help of the Cumans, voivode Thomas of Szecseny of Transylvania (1322-1342) banished the sons of former voivode Ladislau Kán (1294-1315) from Deva,⁴⁸ pulling the fortress and its possessions from their hands, one could speak of a north extension of the county, accompanied by the transfer of its administrative centre to the new location.⁴⁹

Regarding the incorporation and organization of the Land of Hațeg, royalism probably encountered great difficulties. Throughout the thirteenth century, the past of this „land” is uncertain, though its powerful knyaz structures in the later centuries let us see its own political reality, associated with the south-Carpathian pre-state formation of the Diploma of the Knights Hospitaller,⁵⁰ led by Litovoi.⁵¹ It can even be argued that the basis of the voivodeship of 1247 would have been the previous transfer of a nucleus of Romanian politico-military organization from the interior to the exterior of the Carpathian arch.⁵² However, both before and after 1241, the Hațeg formation seems to have recorded its own evolution; its different status is also highlighted in the Diploma of the Hospitaller Knights, which even suggests a vassal relationship of the Land of Hațeg towards the Kingdom. The detachment from the Oltenian voivodeship did not mean the integration of Hațeg space into the system of the royal administration; the Hungarian political-military authority is not reported in the area until the eighth decade,⁵³ when,

⁴⁶ Octavian Floca, Benjamin Bassa, *Cetatea Deva*, Bucharest, Meridiane Printing Press, 1965, p. 14.

⁴⁷ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 255.

⁴⁸ Ioan Lupaș, „Un voievod al Transilvaniei în luptă cu regatul ungar, voievodul Ladislau (1291-1315)”, in *Studii, conferințe și comunicări istorice*, volume II, Cluj, Romanian Book Printing Press, 1940, pp. 33-36; *Istoria românilor*, III, pp. 360-362.

⁴⁹ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 255.

⁵⁰ Ș. Papacostea, *Români în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 166.

⁵¹ *Documenta Romaniae Historica D. Relații între țările române* (ed. Ștefan Pascu, C. Cihodoriu, K. G. Gundisch, Damaschin Mioc, V. Pervain), volume I, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 1977, pp. 21-28.

⁵² R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 250-252.

⁵³ Ș. Papacostea, *Români în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 166.

following the well-known armed conflict of 1274,⁵⁴ between the Romanians of Voivode Litovoi and his brother Bărbat on the one hand, respectively the Hungarians led by county leader Peter and magister Georgius Baksa on the other, the county of Hațeg was founded around 1276;⁵⁵ from that period seem to date both the restoration of the Dacian fort from Banița and the foundation of the first three settlements of „royal guests” in the Land of Hațeg, Bretea Ungurească (now Bretea Streiului), Hațeg and Sântămăria Orlea.⁵⁶

It is only from this moment onward that we can talk about the integration of Hațeg depression into the Hungarian organizational system. This situation lasted until 1320-1324, when this territory, led by the castle owner of the royal citadel of Hațeg, became part of Hunedoara County; its new title was that of „district”. From the point of view of the territorial extension, Hațeg district from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries continued, without too much change, the „land” from the 13th century,⁵⁷ with its Romanian institutions, namely the valley knyazships and village knyazships, as well as the public assemblies gathered on the basis of the rules of Customary Law („jus Valachicum”); twelve such assemblies of the Hațeg knyazes are known between 1360 and 1494. Although most of the documentary pieces of news on these aspects of Romanian medieval society belong to the Hațeg environment, these realities certainly characterized the entire Transylvanian South-West.⁵⁸

As far as the existing Romanian knyazships are concerned, their number must have been extremely high compared to other areas of Transylvania; the Land of Hațeg country the custodian of most such administrative-political structures. Based on archaeological findings and discoveries-wall fortresses and fortified tower-houses (Răchitova, Crivadia, Suseni-Colț),⁵⁹ respectively courtyard chapels-⁶⁰several „valley

⁵⁴ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 277.

⁵⁵ *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, D, pp. 30-35; *Istoria românilor*, III, pp. 364-367.

⁵⁶ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, p. 71.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 256-257.

⁵⁸ In extenso, Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Instituții medievale românești. Adunările cneziale și nobilitare (boierești) din Transilvania în secolele XIV-XVI*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1991, passim.

⁵⁹ R. Popa, *La începuturile*, pp. 217-224; Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, II, pp. 301-303; Adrian Andrei Rusu, „Donjoane din Trasilvania”, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, no. XVII, 1980, pp. 177-194; Victor Eskenasy, Adrian Andrei Rusu, „Cetatea Mălăiești și cnezatul Sălașului (sec. XIV-XVII)”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie*, no. XXV, 1982, pp. 53-92.

knyazships” were identified, all gravitating around a fortified centre and comprising several „village knyazships”: Densuş, Râu de Mori, Râu Bărbat, Râu Alb, Silvaş, Britonia/Brethonia (Sarmizegetusa), Vad and Sâlaş; other „territorial” knyazships existed on the Cerna valley, at Streisângeorgiu, in Leşnic and in the town of Orăştie. Knyazship formations were also identified in the northern part of the present county; different in name, they were identical in structure and functionality to Haţeg valley knyazships, called voivodeships. Their presence was certified in the whole space of the old Zarand County, at Brad, Ribîţa, Băiţa etc.⁶¹ The number of Hunedoara knyazes and voivodes was high throughout the Middle Ages; only on the territory of Hunedoara county over 500 knyazes are recorded until 1541.⁶² There was also a high number of Hunedoara criers-executors of court decisions or fiscal obligations, as intermediaries between the voivodes of community unions and the territorial knyazes or ordinary community knyazes—documented until late in the 18th century.⁶³

With a complex military and institutional apparatus, acting as owners of villages and village groups (village knyazes and valley knyazes) with stone fortresses and keeps, with their own subjects from whom they levied patrimonial shares, established in public assemblies with wide powers and competencies, and judging by that „jus valachicum” or „jus keneziale”, the Romanian knyazes and voivodes fit perfectly into the historical ambiance of an evolving Europe. However, the impossibility to justify the possessions held, based on the rules of the Hungarian feudal law in force, caused a serious rupture within this ruling Romanian elite. Many rushed to legalize their superior social status by participating in the

⁶⁰ Radu Popa, „Vechile biserici de zid din Eparhia Aradului și pictura lor”, in *Episcopia Aradului. Istorie. Viață culturală. Monumente de artă*, Arad, Arad Bishopric Printing Press, 1989, pp. 223-242.

⁶¹ Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei, II*, pp. 495-501, 522-524, 568-570 & *III*, pp. 450-460; Adrian Andrei Rusu, „Miscellanea hatzegiana (informații și reinterpretări privitoare la Țara Hațegului în Evul Mediu)”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XX, 1986-1987, pp. 180-188; Ion Toderașcu, *Unitatea românească medievală*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Printing Press, 1988, pp. 63-64; Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania între anii 1440-1514*, Bucharest, Encyclopedic Printing Press, 2000, pp. 120-121.

⁶² Iosif Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. Studii și documente*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Printing Press, 1973, p. 166; Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei, III*, pp. 397-400, 427-431; Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ctitori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700*, Satu Mare, Satu Mare Museum Printing Press, 1997, pp. 29-31; *Istoria românilor, III*, p. 351.

⁶³ Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei, II*, p. 524 (n. 294) & *III*, pp. 471-478.

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endless military campaigns of the Hungarian Crown; some became Catholics. Most, however, thickened the ranks of the free peasantry or even vassal peasantry in the next few centuries.⁶⁴

The Hungarian royalty was in contact with this complex society since the beginning of its presence in the intra-Carpathian space, a society firmly stepping on the path of feudalism, whose natural evolution would have ended, in the absence of the violence of history, by adopting the form of state organization. As testimonies of the Romanians' territorial integrity and rights and freedoms in the past—a revival of the Romanian Hunedoara society occurred in the fifteenth century as a result of the participation of the local knyazships in the great European military clash during the time of voivode John (Iancu) Hunyadi—⁶⁵ only the knyaz assemblies remained (mentioned till late in the Middle Ages, mainly in Hunedoara area),⁶⁶ the romanian districts—„districtus Hatzak” (district of Hațeg, attested in 1360), „districtus de Hunyad” (Hunedoara district, attested in 1360), „districtus fluvii Stryg” (district of Strei, attested in 1377) and „districtus Iofgw” (district of Dobra, attested in 1387), all in Hunedoara county (subordinated, according to a document from 1371, to the district of „castri Dewa”, respectively „districtus Ribicza” (district of Ribîța, attested in 1444) and perhaps „districtus Fejerkeres” (district of Crișul Alb, attested in 1404) from Zarand—⁶⁷ and the unwritten customs

⁶⁴ I. A. Pop, *Instituții medievale*, pp. 49-52; Idem, *Nașinnea română*, pp. 62-65; I. Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească*, p. 120.

⁶⁵ Ștefan Pascu, „Rolul cneșilor din Transilvania în lupta antiotomană a lui Iancu de Hunedoara”, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie*, year VIII, no. 1-4, 1957, pp. 25-67; Ion Hațegan, „Cneji români în lupta antiotomană. Cneji bănățeni și hunedoreni în luptele lui Iancu de Hunedoara; atestări documentare (1441-1453)”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XIV, 1979, pp. 225-231; Adrian Andrei Rusu, „Un formular al cancelariei regale, din epoca lui Iancu de Hunedoara, pentru nobilii români din Transilvania”, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, no. XX, 1983, pp. 155-168; Idem, „Cneji români din Transilvania în epoca lui Iancu de Hunedoara: Cândeștii de Râu de Mori”, in *Revista de Istorie*, year XXXVII, no. 6, 1984, pp. 557-564; Viorel Lupu, „Cneji hunedoreni, luptători pentru creștinătate sub stindardul lui Iancu de Hunedoara”, in *Corviniana. Acta Musei Corvinensis*, year I, no. 1, 1995, pp. 61-70.

⁶⁶ Ioan-Aurel Pop, „Mărturii documentare privind adunările cneziale”, in *Revista de Istorie*, year XIV, no. 2, 1975, pp. 2103-2106; Idem, *Instituții medievale*, pp. 59-67, 85-119; Adrian Andrei Rusu, „Dovezi pentru continuitatea adunărilor românești din Țara Hațegului după mijlocul secolului al XV-lea”, in *Sargeția. Acta Musei Devensis*, no. XVIII-XIX, 1984-1985, pp. 169-174.

⁶⁷ Costin Feneșan, „Districtul Dobra și privilegiile sale până spre sfârșitul veacului al XV-lea”, in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie*, no. XVIII, 1985-1986, pp. 309-321; Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei, IV*, pp. 33-40, 63-64; *Istoria românilor, III*, pp. 548-549.

of Romanian customary law (tacitly accepted by the Hungarian authorities).⁶⁸

From a religious point of view, the new political context of South-Eastern Europe in the 9th-10th centuries brought with it a revival of North-Danubian Christianity, previously reduced to the status of a Christian island in a pagan sea. The Constantinopolitan missions in the Balkan-Danubian and Pannonian regions, resulting in the Christianization of Bulgarians, Moravians, Serbs, Russians and, temporarily, Hungarians, as well as the return of Byzantium to the Lower Danube in 971, accompanied by the reorganization of the episcopal system south of the Danube and in Dobruja, marked, from this perspective, the beginning of a new stage.⁶⁹ The gradual disappearance of incineration graves in relation to inhumation graves, a phenomenon beginning after 700 and completed in the next two centuries, shows that the Slavic-Romanian followers of this funeral ritual had become Christians,⁷⁰ this stage corresponding, according to recent historiography, to that of „*the second beginning of Christianity*” in the intra-Carpathian space.⁷¹ In other words, it is a re-Christianization of the early-medieval Transylvanian society, patronized by the political authority of the time, under the influence of the Slavic Christianity of Moravian type,⁷² at least two of the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Zandov/Jandov and Moznopon, seem to have arrived in the Romanian space at the turn of the 9th-10th centuries.⁷³ The introduction of the so-called „*Byzantine-Slav rite*” is attributed to this phase, i.e. the introduction of the liturgical Slavic language in the life of the Church,⁷⁴ both as a way of preserving the identity of the Eastern Romanian Christianity despite the attempts to attract it into the Latin-western sphere of influence, and as a means of cultural-religious progress, in a time when the church service books translated into Romanian were missing, but whose translation into the

⁶⁸ Ioan-Aurel Pop, „Statutul cnejilor supuși pe domeniile feudale din Transilvania în secolul al XIV-lea”, in *Civilizație medievală și modernă românească. Studii istorice*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Printing Press, 1985, p. 103.

⁶⁹ Nelu Zugravu, *Geneza creștinismului popular al românilor*, Bucharest, Vavila Edinf Printing Press, 1997, p. 486.

⁷⁰ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 115.

⁷¹ Coriolan H. Opreanu, *Transilvania la sfârșitul antichității și în perioada migrațiilor. Schiță de istorie culturală*, Cluj-Napoca, Nereamia Napocae Printing Press, 2003, p. 52.

⁷² I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 115.

⁷³ *Istoria României*, I, pp. 301-302; Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, 3rd ed., volume I, Iași, Trinitas Printing Press, 2004, p. 174.

⁷⁴ P. P. Panaiteșcu, *Introducere la istoria culturii românești. Problemele istoriografiei române*, 2nd ed., Bucharest, Minerva Printing Press, 2000, pp. 186-187.

language of the Transylvanian political leaders had already begun through the Christian saints of the Moravians and was in full swing through their disciples.⁷⁵

In Hunedoara County, the 10 burial tombs of Orăștie („Dealul Pemilor-X8” point), dated either in the second half of the 9th century or in the next century-belong to „Ciumbrud” group (Transylvanian aspect of the „Stare Mesto” culture of Moravia)-by their specific inventory (the guns are missing, and there are cross-pendants among the ornaments) and the positioning of the deceased (on the back, oriented to the east, with their hands on their chest, on the pelvis or raised),⁷⁶ represent the first archaeological evidence of the presence of Christian Slavs in this area.⁷⁷ Instead, the 68 burial tombs (sepulchral inventory specific to a warrior population) from the second necropolis of Orăștie („Dealul Pemilor-X2” point) are pagan, dating from the 10th century and the first decades of the next century, attributed to the Hungarians as well as to Pecheneg and Slav-Romanian elements;⁷⁸ the same are the ones in Deva („Micro 15” point).⁷⁹ Only the necropolises of Deva (the southern edge of the city),⁸⁰ Simeria Veche („În vii” point),⁸¹ Hunedoara („Dealul

⁷⁵ M. Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii*, I, pp. 174-175.

⁷⁶ Zeno Karl Pinter, N. G. O. Boroffka, „Necropola de tip Ciumbrud de la Orăștie „Dealul Pemilor”, punct X8”, in *Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis*, year XXXVIII, no. 1, 2001, pp. 319-346; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 114, 240; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, p. 145; Dan Gheorghe Teodor, „Obiecte creștine din secolele VIII-XI la nordul Dunării de Jos”, in *În memoria lui Alexandru Elian*, Timișoara, Timișoara Archbishopric Printing Press, 2008, p. 342.

⁷⁷ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 115; Sorin Marțian, *Biserica pe teritoriile fostelor provincii dacice (Transilvania, Banat, Oltenia) în secolele VII-XI. Aspecte de istorie, organizare bisericească, rit și cult*, Târgu-Lăpuș, Gutenberg Printing Press, 2006, pp. 150-151.

⁷⁸ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 120-125, 240; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, p. 145.

⁷⁹ R. R. Heitel, „Arheologia etapelor de pătrundere”, pp. 77-79; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 400; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 120, 124-125, 236; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, pp. 142-143.

⁸⁰ A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, pp. 344, 354, 400; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 127, 246; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, p. 143.

⁸¹ Dorin Popescu, „Săpăturile arheologice din R. P. România în anul 1962”, in *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche*, year XIV, no. 2, 1963, p. 455; Beniamin Basa, „Șantierul Simeria”, in *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice*, no. IX, 1970, pp. 225-232; Marius Muntean, „Studiul antropologic al scheletelor provenite din necropola medievală timpurie de la Simeria Veche (jud. Hunedoara)”, in *Analele Banatului*, no. VI, 1998, pp. 339-357; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 466; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, p. 242; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, pp. 146-147; Roxana Stăncescu and Costin-Daniel Țuțuianu, „Necropolă medieval-timpurie la

Comorilor” point)⁸² and Streisângeorgiu („La Biserică” point),⁸³ belonging typologically to the local horizon of Blandiana B-Alba-Iulia („Stația de Salvare II” point) of the European culture of Bijelo-Brdo, and belonging chronologically to the 11th-12th centuries (the late stage of this cultural group, called „Citfalău”, extends into the 13th century), suggest, through their inventory-absence of food, harness and other military accessories, appearance of coins, etc.-and by generalizing the West-East orientation of the deceased, the cultural homogenization of the Transylvanian communities and the definitive assertion of Christianity in the intra-Carpathian space.⁸⁴

In conclusion, in the 10th-13th centuries, the Hungarian royalty gradually occupied the entire south-western space of Transylvania, a territory of special strategic importance due to its border position. Evidence of the organizational structures of the past is visible until today.

Simeria sau Simeria Veche?”, in *Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis*, no. XLV, 2008, pp. 409-419.

⁸² K. Horedt, *Contribuții la istoria Transilvaniei*, pp. 116, 144; R. R. Heitel, „Arheologia etapelor de pătrundere”, p. 78; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 416; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 127, 238; A. Dragotă, *Aspecte de multiculturalitate*, pp. 143-144.

⁸³ C. Cosma, *Vestul și nord-vestul României*, p. 228; A. M. Velter, *Transilvania în secolele V-XII*, p. 468; I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 128, 242.

⁸⁴ I. M. Țiplic, *Contribuții la istoria spațiului românesc*, pp. 127-128.