

# PROLEGOMENON TO A HISTORY OF BRAVERY. THE NOBLEMEN IN BIHOR SERVING THE KING (13TH-14TH CENTURIES)\*

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## Abstract

The medieval world was structured on suzerainty-vassalage relations, which involve obligations framed within the already established formula of *consilium et auxilium* from the vassal's part. The suzerain, in turn, was obliged to help their vassal when the latter was in need of support. The contractual relation had as basis the feudatory and the domain ceded by the suzerain to the vassals for the labour carried out. The good functioning of these relations was often put to the test by multiple causes, that not few times the suzerains were left by some of their vassals in critical moments, or, on the contrary, some vassals were not supported in the conflicts that started with some of their neighbors, which could directly reverberate on the aforementioned relations. In such a context, the vassals' fidelity, when it proved itself exemplary, was remarked by the sovereigns, turning into an actual propaganda whose purpose was the glorification of bravery, courage and allegiance of the vassals towards the suzerains, as well as the wisdom and generosity of the latter for the labour carried out by the subjects. Obviously, the critical situations lived by the suzerains, some on the verge of losing their lives and throne, if they didn't benefit from help, determined them to pay more attention to the services carried out by the vassals.

Significant evidences of bravery are represented also by some exceptional situations or by some with profound significance in the unfolding of an armed conflict. At Codlea, Chak, Petru, Iacob and Benedict, sons of Chaz, serfs of the Bihor fortress, remained by Stephenn the 5th's side when he was being besieged in the fortress, and Petru and Iacob "were faithfully on the lookout next to our person, day and night". Also, the capturing of the commander of the enemy army represented without a doubt the pinnacle of courage, bravery and fidelity towards their own master. This is how the conquest of the Şinteu fortress took place, when Borsa Kopasz was caught, an important enemy of the king.

**Keywords:** Transylvania, suzerainty-vassalage relations, 13th-14th Centuries

The medieval world was structured on suzerainty-vassalage relations, which involve obligations framed within the already established formula of *consilium et auxilium* from the vassal's part. The suzerain, in turn, was obliged to help their vassal when the latter was in need of support. The contractual relation had as basis the feudatory and the domain ceded by the suzerain to the vassals for the labour carried out<sup>1</sup>. The good functioning of these relations was often put to the test by multiple causes, that not few times the suzerains were left by some of their vassals in critical moments, or, on the contrary, some vassals were not supported in the conflicts that started with some of their neighbors, which could directly reverberate on the aforementioned relations. In such a context, the vassals' fidelity, when it proved itself exemplary, was remarked by the sovereigns, turning into an actual propaganda whose purpose was the glorification of bravery, courage and allegiance of the vassals towards the suzerains, as well as the wisdom and generosity of the latter for the labour carried out by the subjects. Obviously, the critical situations lived by the suzerains, some on the verge of losing their lives and throne, if they didn't benefit from help, determined them to pay more attention to the services carried out by the vassals. The extreme situations through which they passed particularly make the suzerains realize the role of the courage, bravery and fidelity of their vassals. A big part

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<sup>1</sup> Philippe Nemo, *Histoire des idées politiques dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge*, Paris, 2007, p. 808-814; Horst Fuhrmann, *Guida al medioevo*. Traduzione di Paola Vasconi, 2009, p. 38-45; 111-121; Olivier Nay, *Istoria ideilor politice*. Translated by Vasile Savin, Iași, 2008, p. 109-114; Marc Bloch, *Societatea feudală. Formarea legăturilor de dependență*, vol. I, translated by Cristina Macarovici. Afterword by Maria Crăciun, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, p. 161-250.

of Medieval Europe evolved on the basis of these relations. Consequently, the documents following a military conflict describe the acts of bravery, courage and allegiance of the subjects. The text of the documents regarding privileges, donations stand out maybe more clearly than ever the intensity of the experiences of those engaged in a military or diplomatic conflict. It's one of the ways through which the suzerains publicly admit and transmit to the memory of those present and of the ones to follow through the written document, the acts of bravery and the loyalty demonstrated by the vassals towards the senior. As a bottom line, a raise in tonality in the description of the acts of bravery can be noticed, in the context in which the suzerain was confronted by extreme situations, and the intensity of his experiences is major.

The theme of courage, bravery and fidelity in Transylvania in the 13<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, although it appears frequently in the researches of the Romanian and Hungarian Historians, can represent an authentic research topic by consulting an adequate literature of specialty which should provide theoretical and methodological suggestions, through comparative analysis, through the inquiry of the documents kept in another grid, through the taking over of some analysis and interpretation methods from related fields: philology, medieval literature, religion and anthropology, ideas and political imaginary etc. The theme underwent a special attention from the European specialists and was specially investigated by historians<sup>2</sup>.

The exceptional situation which the Hungarian sovereigns passed through determines them to make a eulogy of fidelity and acts of bravery. To emphasize these situations, we will analyze the most relevant documents issued by the Hungarian sovereigns in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries to reward the vassals who faithfully served them in critical situations.

King of Hungary Bela the 4<sup>th</sup> was issuing on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1249 a donation act for Paul, *judex regis* and *comes* of Zala. In the document are mentioned the feats carried out and the proofs of fidelity that he did for the king in the fights for the conquest of the Clissa fortress, on the coast of the Adriatic, in the wars waged against the Ruthenians, Germans and Tatars. The document talks about the military confrontation with the duke of Austria, when Paul was taken prisoner, together with other 7 noblemen, from where he redeemed himself and the others for a thousand silver marks, gathered from personal resources<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, King Bela the 4<sup>th</sup>, as a reward for the numerous acts of bravery and for the sums spent, offers him domains in Transylvania, among them also some dominiums in Bihor County. Paul received in Bihor the following villages and lands: the estates of Jadani, Ocani, Felcheriu, Beliu, next to the Crişul Alb River, as well as the estates of Borsea, next to the Crişul de Mijloc River and the Sărand, Haieu, Bical, and Almaş estates<sup>4</sup>.

In turn, Stephen, Duke of Transylvania, will describe the difficult situation he lived as a result of the persecutions to which he was subjected by his parents. The future king will lead a policy in terms of the image for the justification of his actions against Bela. Consequently, the sovereign will know to make great use of the Royal Chancellery and to use the issued documents to impose a favorable image amongst contemporaries and posterity. It mattered less if King Bela the 4<sup>th</sup>'s reaction of punishing him was justified or not. The formulations like "Back when I was suffering harsh persecutions, beyond our fault, from our parents' part"<sup>5</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> Marc Bloch, *I re taumaturghi. Studi sul carattere sovranaturale attribuito alla potenza dei re particolarmente in Francia e in Inghilterra*. Prefazione di Jacques Le Goff con un Ricardo di Marc Bloch di Lucien Febvre, Trento, 2015, p. 33-62; Jacques le Goff, *Il re nell'Occidente medievale*. Traduzione di Renato Riccardi, Bari, 2008, p. 3-52; Marc Bloch, *Societatea feudală...*, p. 161-203; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Cele două corpuri ale regelui. Un studiu asupra teologiei politice medievale*. Translated by Andrei Sălăvăstru. Preface by William Chester Jordan. Afterword by Alexandru-Florin Platon, Iaşi, 2014, p. 225-243; Dominique Barthelemy, *La Chevalerie. De la Germanie antique à la France du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 2012, p. 75-194; Jean Flori, *La cavalleria medievale*, Bologna, 2004, p. 67-77; 89-100; Aldo A. Settia, *Rapine, assedi, battaglie. La guerra nel medioevo*, Bari, 2006, p. 183-256; Georges Duby, *Cele trei ordine sau imaginarul feudalismului*, Bucureşti, 1988, p. 112-118; Idem, *Le origini dell'economia europea. Guerrieri e contadini nel Medioevo*. Prefazione di Vito Fumagalli, Roma-Bari, 2004, p. 205-228; Sylvain Gouguenheim, *Le Moyen Âge en questions*, Paris, 2012, p. 113-122.

<sup>3</sup> *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XI, XII și XIII. C. Transilvania*, vol. I (1075-1250), 1951 (hereinafter DIR C, XIII, I), p. 335-336.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 337.

<sup>5</sup> *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XIII. C. Transilvania*, vol. II (1251-1300), 1952 (hereinafter DIR C, XIII, II), p. 94.

"especially in the time of our persecution and misery, when the merciless and cruel oppression of our parents in the contempt of parental love, willed to banish us beyond the borders of our country"<sup>6</sup>, "How we unfairly endured harsh persecutions from our parents"<sup>7</sup>, "especially during the time of our persecution and misery, namely when our parents, through a rough and cruel oppression, wanted to mercilessly cast us away and beyond our fault past the borders of our country"<sup>8</sup>, "when we were cast away like banished past the borders of our kingdom, by the rabid persecution of our parents"<sup>9</sup>, "during our persecution and misery"<sup>10</sup>, "especially during the time of our persecution and affliction, namely when the rough and cruel oppression started by our parents"<sup>11</sup>, "and we endured, although guiltlessly, the cruel and rough persecutions of our parents"<sup>12</sup> were aiming to transfer the responsibility for the breakout of the conflict towards the other part, Stephen considering himself the victim of his father's actions.

In other words, Stephen was persecuted and oppressed without being guilty by King Bela the 4<sup>th</sup>, who wanted to dismiss him from the dignity of Duke of Transylvania and from the quality of heir apparent of the kingdom. Moreover, the military intervention of King Bela against a subject, in this case his son, without any well-grounded reason, offered legitimacy to the victim to answer to the same extent, removing from the rebels' category both him and the noblemen who remained loyal to him. The constant, even obsessive, use of the terms like *persecution, misery, oppression, banishment* were meant to amplify the double drama lived by the Duke of Transylvania.

Duke Stephen makes the eulogy of fidelity, of allegiance that the subjects had to show the suzerain. The formulations in the documents are suggestive in this regard. We are dealing with a genuine arsenal of terms that define from diverse perspectives what fidelity means. In the issued documents appear frequently formulations that make the eulogy of allegiance, love, sincerity and courage that the vassal had to demonstrate towards the suzerain. Out of the 74 preserved documents, 35 contain references to the acts of faith and the reward offered by Stephen to the noblemen that helped him in the military confrontation. Out of the 35 documents through which Stephen rewards his subjects, the most frequently used term is the one of loyalty. This word appears 19 times. Other terms, but less used, that highlight the fidelity of the subjects, are namely: service, 9 times, endanger, 5 times, love, 3 times, sincerity, twice, devoted, once.

Fidelity involved a large palette of situations in which the vassal had to help the suzerain. Formulations like: "He proved to be so faithful to us, through love, sincerity and loyal service, that even endangered his life in front of others"<sup>13</sup>, "Faith, love, sincerity and loyal service were some of the faith and devotedness"<sup>14</sup>, "With honor and faith, being in ceaseless service to our house, facing for us other dangers of fate as well."<sup>15</sup>, "Through his love, through his honesty and his faithful service, he showed himself to us so devoted, that he courageously and firmly faces for us a certain death"<sup>16</sup>, are meant to emphasize once more the obligations that the vassals assume towards the suzerain<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 122.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 104.

<sup>17</sup> „Leaving aside all his goods and his house, endangering of death for us his sons and daughters, and leaving his servants and maids, and all his estates.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 109 „For the faith and the services of the so called Pouka and Barnabas, showed towards us and our kingdom, facing the danger with faith and dignity without ceasing in many and special circumstances and needs.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 111. „ For the services that he has faithfully brought, fighting manfully against our enemies.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 120; „[...] which have done to us and our kingdom, and with faith in many and various circumstances of fate, without sparing us any goods or sparing themselves” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 120 „Services worthy of praise and brighter as the light of day brought with faith and devotion facing thousands of deaths” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 122. „[...] they have been compelled in their steadfast faith to do us, in many circumstances for the

Among the donations made by Stephen we have some that are for his subjects in the County of Bihor. This way, King Stefan the 4<sup>th</sup>, in 1268, elevated to a noble rank “Chak, Petru, Iacob and Benedict, sons of Chaz, serfs of the fortress, noblemen in the past, becoming serfs of the fortress because of an ancestor full of avarice”<sup>18</sup>. They remained by Stephen the 5<sup>th</sup>'s side when he was being besieged in the fortress of Codlea, especially Peter and Jacob “who faithfully guarded our person, day and night”<sup>19</sup>. Likewise, in the time of the military conflict that Stephen had with the palatine Henric in Isaszeg, they “confronted the rows of fighters who were attacking and fighting with dignity, they got numerous severe wounds”<sup>20</sup>. As a reward for the fidelity they demonstrated, King Stefan the 5<sup>th</sup> decided they should be removed from the state of serfdom of the fortress of Oradea and were made free peasants among the royal servants<sup>21</sup>.

In 1268-1269, King Stephen the Young makes a donation for the same services of fidelity and honorable acts of faith to Cosma, the son of Count Cosma, from the Guthkeled family, who ceaselessly supported the king “[...] starting from the period of our youth, but especially when he was being besieged in the Codlea fortress”<sup>22</sup>. The king offers him some lands named Neek, that pertain to our fortress of Bihor, located near the Eriu, in Bihor County, deserted lands and devoided of inhabitants<sup>23</sup>. Also, the sovereign offers the same Cosma “a land named Ragald, located near the Eriu and in the Sătmar County, which land had been owned by a serf of the fortress of Sătmar, dead and with no descendants and settled as guest by our beloved mother, Queen Mary, right on this land or village, removed from the jurisdiction of the queen and of our fortress”<sup>24</sup>.

On September the 1<sup>st</sup>, 127, Ladislaus the 4<sup>th</sup>, King of Hungary, taking into account the acts of faith of “Peter, the son of Dorogh, and the services of his brothers, who are known to have repeatedly shined in different expeditions and in various difficult services of our kingdom. They, fighting with the enemy in an expedition of our father, the glorious King Stephen, under the fortress of Vidin, like it's said from real stories, was severely hurt, I have offered, returned and gave back the appointed land of Săcuieni to Petru the son of Dorogh and to his brothers, Laurentiu and Nicolae”<sup>25</sup>. From the document we find out that the domain of Săcuieni was taken arbitrarily by Count Pavel and by his sons, namely by Nicolae the Voivode, as well as by Count Stephen and Gregen. Likewise, in the final part of the document, we also find out that Nicolae Gregen, former voivode of Transylvania between the years 1272-1274, produced “numerous losses and damages to their domains when they were in our army”<sup>26</sup>. In other words, King Ladislaus the Cuman, when he decides to give back the land of Săcuieni to Petru and his brothers, he refers to two situations, namely: to the stealing of the domain, which happened after the Tatar-Mongol invasion, when a real turmoil of the properties in the kingdom was produced, and when they were in the army of King Ladislaus the Cuman. The acts of

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benefit of welcoming and obliging service to the armies, which they have done with faith and submission without sparing neither their goods nor their person.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 124. “[...] they have endeavored to make us indebted services, which cannot be tied here individually and which they have done with faith and zeal without sparing their goods or their being.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 125. “[...] insisting in the zeal of his unwavering faith, he was always with us and helped us through his faithful service” „Without fear of jeopardizing his life and his people in different circumstances of fate” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 128. „He has served us and our kingdom with an indebted and unwavering faith, and the merits worthy of praise of his faith he has always proved so brilliantly” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 133. „They brought us countless duty-worthy and praiseworthy services, serving us with all faith in the special expeditions we had to pursue.” DIR C, XIII, II, p. 135.

<sup>18</sup> DIR C, XIII, II, p.105.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p.105-106.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p.106.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p.112.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p.112-113. „The same Cosma, the son of Cosma from the Guthkeled lineage, Queen Elizabeth, gave him a village called Ragald, from the Sătmar county, located near Eriu, because he brought various duties and much evidence of faith to our beloved husband, Stephen the young and new king of Hungary and to the whole kingdom [...] has done many worthy and faithful services in Codlea” *Ibidem*, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p.195.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

bravery and faith which are referred in the document are the ones made in the time of Stephen the 5<sup>th</sup>, when Dorogh accompanied the king in the expedition for the conquest of the fortress of Vidin, where he was gravely wounded. Also, when Peter and his brothers were in the army of King Ladislaus, moment when Nicolae Geregen cause numerous losses and damages to the goods to their estates<sup>27</sup>.

The document issued by King Ladislaus the 4<sup>th</sup> on 30th January 1279 refers to the military conflicts between the years 1278 and 1279, which took place in the County of Bihor as well, where Nicolaus, the son of Paul Geregye, had numerous supporters. According to the king, that is when numerous abuses and crimes, betrayals and conspiracies towards the royalty occurred. The king mentions the moments in the following terms: "Toma of Kany – following the traces of our faithless ones, first on the ones of Voivode Nicolae, the son of Pavel, and then on the ones of Gregen, his brother – committed many acts of disloyalty and pillages in our country and, settling in the fortress of Voivode Nicolae and of Gregen, called Palota, that Toma emptied all the lands of our noble faithful ones from the Borşa family: of Count Toma and Master Ioan, the sons of Barnaba, of Master Roland and Stefan, the sons of Count Toma, causing them 300 marks worth of damage, because they, in the time of the uprisings and the fights instigated in our country by our faithless barons, remaining steadfast in the belief owed to us and to our crown, by no means did they want to join our faithless barons"<sup>28</sup>.

The king convokes in Oradea the general congregation, to judge the arbitrary actions and abuses committed by Toma of Kany<sup>29</sup>. Toma of Kany did not take part in the assembly from Oradea to defend himself against the charges brought against him and, according to the medieval law, he was sentenced to death for treason, for the annexing of the lands and for the arbitrary acts committed<sup>30</sup>. Toma de Kany's village of Vrws<sup>31</sup> was seized, unjustly occupied and ruled without a royal diploma, in the County of Bihor, as well as a vineyard located on the estate of the church in Oradea, on the location named Pyspukmal<sup>32</sup>, and all the movable goods<sup>33</sup>. All the confiscated goods were given by the king to Count Toma and to the magistrates Ioan, Roland and Stefan and to the other sons of Count Toma, namely Jacob, Ladislau, Benedict and Ioan, as well as the sons of magistrate Ioan, namely Petru, Ioan and Nicolae<sup>34</sup>.

Of great help was King Ladislaus the 4<sup>th</sup>'s deed of donation for Count Rofoy, nobleman of Nyr. The document issued on 1st January 1284 remarks the sacrifices that Count Rofoy, nobleman of Nyr, made on different occasions for the king and the royalty. The document of

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 201-202.

<sup>29</sup> "Therefore, when we went to Oradea in Bihor, together with some of our barons from the seven counties, namely from Bihor, Solnoc, Sătmar, Crasna, Bekes, Zarand and Szabolcs, we called the public assembly in Oradea. As such, the so-called Toma of Kany - who did not care to come to our assembly, was blamed before our majesty for the sin of theft and robbery, and was showed as a plunderer of the inhabitants of our kingdom by all the noblemen and other people of any state come from the seven counties to our assembly in Oradea and through their showing we were clear that the named Toma of Kany predated all Count Toma's estates and the renowned magistrates Ioan, Roland and Stefan, causing them a damage of three hundred marks." *Ibidem*, p. 202.

<sup>30</sup> „For his abuses and deeds of faith, we condemning him to death this Toma of Kany” *Ibidem*, p. 202.

<sup>31</sup> Abandoned settlement in Hajdú-Bihar County (Hungary).

<sup>32</sup> Episcopal coast (in Hungary).

<sup>33</sup> DIR C, XIII, II, p. 202.

<sup>34</sup> „I have given and given to the above-mentioned, to Count Toma and to the magistrates Ioan, Roland and Stefan and to the other sons of Toma, namely Iacob, Ladislau, Benedict and Ioan, as well as to the sons of the mentioned magistrate Ioan, namely to Peter, Ioan and Nicolaie and through them to their heirs. and to the descendants of their heirs, his village, <Toma's>, Vrws, being in Bihor County - which the named Toma did not possess as a royal donation or right purchase, but had co-founded it with the time when his lords, the named Nicolae voivode and Gregen, were behaving with great arbitrariness in our country and especially in the region of Oradea - together with all its uses between the old border signs and borders, with which it was bounded and owned by its previous lords. <I also gave them> for purchase the vineyard from the land of the church of Oradea, in the place called Pyspukmal and all its goods, movable and immovable, which despite the robberies and damages caused by the named Toma of Kany to Count Toma and to the magistrates Ioan, Roland and Ştefan, they seem to be few, yet we give them for all the damages and especially for the robberies endured by them, to rule them forever and ever.” *Ibidem*, p. 202-203.

donation highlights “acts of faith and honourable services” done for the king by Rofoyon, on the basis of the suzerainty-vassalage relations. The king records the important moments when the count showed his devotedness on the battlefield “[...] first I sent him together with Roland and Stefan, the sons of Toma, to crash Acho’s wickedness, son of Paul, who <pushed> by the fire of faithlessness, rose up against our majesty, circumstance in which a relative of Count Rofoyon was killed, with the name of Peter, and three servants were wounded; <afterwards> the second time at the encircling of the Scelench fortress, when before our eyes, the same Rofoyon, beaten all the while with rocks, was gravely hurt on his arm, for the faith he must not be showing”<sup>35</sup>. The writer of the document emphasizes all the services and sacrifices made in the favor of the king<sup>36</sup>. It’s not a simple sequence of dates and moments, but on the contrary, they should justify the generosity of the sovereign and to present a model to follow for other noblemen and servants of the king as well<sup>37</sup>. The document highlights the political and military uneasiness that enmeshed the kingdom, the king’s effort to calm the groups of power in the kingdom. Rofoyon’s effort, nobleman of Nyr, also made himself noticed at the siege of the Adrian fortress, in Bihor County, defended by Nicolae Geregye, as well as in the fights with Gyan, the son of Alard, in Transylvania. The sacrifices of Rofoyon’s family were remarkable, Ladislau meeting his end at the siege of the Adrian fortress, and Nicolae, in the fights with Gyan<sup>38</sup>. The king offered Count Rofoyon the village called Moch, together with the land of the fortress that belongs to that village, with all the income and everything regarding it<sup>39</sup>.

At the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at the lead of the Kingdom of Hungary came Carol-Robert of Anjou. His launch was difficult, because the king started an open conflict against the kingdom’s barons<sup>40</sup>. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1312, Carol-Robert rewarded magister Grigore, son of Laurentiu of Valea lui Mihai, for the acts of loyalty and the merits of his services<sup>41</sup>. Concretely, the king refers in the document to the military conflict that Matei Csák had, especially at the Rozhanovce battle on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1312, near Košice. According to contemporaries, since the time of the Tatars there hadn’t been such a tough fight in the kingdom an even though more fell on the king’s side, he had a glorious victory<sup>42</sup>. In this battle, according to the royal document, “the aforementioned magister Grigore, opposing the rough attempts of fate, wanting to die honorably in the royal faith, soaked in the sweat of the battle and with the purring of his body’s blood, he acted with dignity before the eyes of our majesty”<sup>43</sup>. King Carol-Robert gave the right to magister Grigore, as a reward for acts of bravery, to charge border tolls on his land, Valea lui Mihai<sup>44</sup>.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1319, King Carol-Robert gives magisterr Stefan, the son of Count Grigore from the Hunth Puzman family, at the request of the latter, “for his faithful services the Păușa land or domain, located in Bihor County, affirming that it belongs to a dead man without descendants and that’s why it’s in our right of offering”<sup>45</sup>. The argument of the king of Hungary for the donation was registered in the same document of eulogizing faithfulness, fidelity and devotedness towards the sovereign<sup>46</sup>. In the final part of the deed of donation, the king reveals us another reason for his

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> „[...] finally, when the traitorous nation of the Cumans had risen in arms against us in order to destroy our dignity and our kingdom and when to end their betrayal, we sent the so-called Roland...” *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> „Through the present people we want to make it known to all that in the reward of so many great and numerous services of Count Rofoyon, although they would deserve far greater rewards, I gave him, gifted him and I dedicated him and through him to his heirs and descendants of his heirs, to own it forever and steadfastly.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 254.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> Pál Engel, *Regatul Sfântului Ștefan. Istoria Ungariei medievale 895-1526*, p. 158-159

<sup>41</sup> *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XIV, Transilvania*, vol. I (1301-1320), [f.l.], 1953 (hereinafter DIR C, XIV, I), p. 201.

<sup>42</sup> Pál Engel, *op.cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> DIR C, XIV, I, p. 201-202.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 202. „So that from now he always can have from each cart loaded with salt four salt lumps, from an empty cart four Viennese dinars, for a cubitus of clean baize a share, for a cubitus of gray baize two Viennese dinars, also from a large loaded truck ... half a vierdung, also for a wine barrel a share, also for a horse or fatty beef for sale a Viennese dinar.”

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 316

<sup>46</sup> „And we, [...], remembering the faith and the exemplary worthy services of the magister Ștefan, through which he showed us to be worthy in many ways - in our different and various wars and in our both

generosity towards magister Stefan, namely “for the wound and hit received from our hand during a chivalric race without any enmity or on purpose, but which caused him the loss of three teeth, for which to forget the pain of his wound and to compensate for the bodily mutilation through the generosity of the legal highness”<sup>47</sup>.

In the autumn of 1325, King Carol-Robert was called to judge the quarrel between the noblemen Petru, alias Cyne, Dubou and Morouch, his sons, who had received from the sovereign's part the right to charge border tolls on their domain in the Olosig village, and the noblemen Ioachim and Petru, the sons of Durug, who had received, in turn, the right to charge border tolls in their village, Săcuieni, both in the Bihor County<sup>48</sup>. In the final decision taken by the Hungarian sovereign mattered the fact that the road coming from Sălard, through Săcuieni, is straighter for the ones going to Satu Mare, than the road going through the village of Olosig, meaning a logical argument also in the interest of travelers and merchants<sup>49</sup>. But, as it can be seen, another equally important argument, if not even more important, is the loyalty towards the sovereign. King Carol-Robert talks in the document about the numerous acts of bravery that the noblemen Ioachim and Petru, the sons of Petru, made for the king. Concretely, the sovereign refers to the conflict that he had in the year 1317 with Kopasz Borsa, who rose up against Carol-Robert and was defeated in his fortress Adrian in Sălard<sup>50</sup>. From the Adrian fortress, Kopasz Borsa sought refuge in his fortress Solumkow (Șinteu Fortress) in whose conquest magistrate Ioachim played a decisive role<sup>51</sup>. The king emphasizes the important role that the nobleman Ioachim had in the conquest of the Șinteu fortress and in the capturing of Borsa Kopasz. The king especially remarks the bravery of Ioachim in the following manner: “But the named magistrate Ioachim, although not without the death of many of the people close to him, or of his servants, not without the shedding of his blood or the blood of his people, defended and kept with such vigor the fortification entrusted him to defend, that our enemies, not being able to conquer it and the named Kopasz withdrawing from there, especially through the diligence of the named Ioachim, was cornered so that he could not hold for a long time the named fortress Solumkow due to the great shortage and hunger, so that that fortress being captured, the named Kopasz was brought forward caught to your highness”<sup>52</sup>. Likewise, in the same conflict led by the king with the nobleman Kopasz Borsa for defending the Mendzenth monastery, an extinct settlement, located in the southwest of Sântion, was killed during the Durug siege, the brother of Ioachim and Petru<sup>53</sup>. Thanks to the courage and fidelity of those serving the king, the Mendzenth monastery could not be conquered by Kopasz Borsa.

The military confrontation represents a barometer for measuring the fidelity of the subjects. The situations on the battlefield are often complex, the subjects serving their master in various ways. The serving of the suzerain even with the price of one's own life is a moment of summit on the fidelity scale, like Durug's case, who was killed, according to the sayings of the king. The sacrifices of Rofoyon's family were also remarkable, Ladislaus met his end at the siege of the Adrian fortress, and Nicolae in the fights with Gyan. Likewise, the armed confrontations that resulted in the injury of the fighting men represent authentic tests of courage and fidelity towards the master. During the military confrontation at the Solumkow fortress, when Kopasz Borsa forced the encircling, Ioachim resisted, but many of his close men died or were wounded.

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common and uncommon tasks as well, standing constantly beside us, with the greatest zeal of his faith - and so he became worthy to be well noticed, so that by his above-praised services much of our royal soul was comforted - and to this day he had not ceased to please our Majesty more and more day by day, as evidenced by both the steadfastness of his faith and the skill of his deeds.” *Ibidem*, p. 316-317.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 317.

<sup>48</sup> *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XIV, Transilvania*, vol. II (1321-1330), [f.l.], 1953 (hereinafter DIR C, XIV, II), p.164

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>50</sup> Pál Engel, *op.cit.*, p. 160. Tudor Sălăgean, *Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIII-lea...*, p. 350-351.

<sup>51</sup> “For its conquest I raised two reinforcements in front of it, in one of these reinforcements, I put on the aforesaid magistrate Ioachim, and in the other Stephen, the son of Apay, to beat especially the fortress and stop the food supplies to be taken to the fortress.” DIR C, XIV, II, p. 165.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*.

Magister Grigore, the son of Laurentiu from Valea lui Mihai, was also hurt in the military conflict that he had with Matei Csák, in the battle of Rozhanovce. In the conflict against Acho, the son of Paul, the enemies of king Carol, a kin of Count Rofoyrn with the name of Petru was killed, and three servants were wounded; afterwards, at the encircling of the Scelench fortress, when before the king's eyes, the same Rofoyrn hit all the while with rocks, was gravely hurt at his hand. The scars that remained after the healing of the wounds will constitute, after years, irrefutable proofs of the courage demonstrated on the battlefield.

Significant evidences of bravery are represented also by some exceptional situations or by some with profound significance in the unfolding of an armed conflict. At Codlea, Chak, Petru, Iacob and Benedict, sons of Chaz, serfs of the Bihor fortress, remained by Stephenn the 5<sup>th</sup>'s side when he was being besieged in the fortress, and Petru and Iacob "were faithfully on the lookout next to our person, day and night"<sup>54</sup>. Also, the capturing of the commander of the enemy army represented without a doubt the pinnacle of courage, bravery and fidelity towards their own master. This is how the conquest of the Şinteu fortress took place, when Borsa Kopasz was caught, an important enemy of the king.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*, p.105-106.