

MUZEUL ȚĂRII CRIȘURILOR

CRISIA

L

O R A D E A • 2 0 2 0

ROYAL AND PALATINE CONGREGATIONS IN BIHOR COUNTY (13TH-14TH CENTURIES)¹

Sorin ȘIPOȘ*

ABSTRACT

Like everywhere in Europe, in the Hungarian Kingdom, in the 13th century, several judicial assemblies were taking place, the ones in Székesfehérvár (*Alba Regia*) standing out. Since the second half of the century, on Saint Stephen's Day, gatherings (*synodum, concillium*) in which the King was crowned started to take place, however it was also there that the various complaints of the servant were examined. The stipulations of the Golden Bull, in the year 1222, also encompass the first elements that reveal additional functions of these gatherings. Out of the 17 general assemblies, two were presided by Ladislaus IV, in 1279, and by Bela 4th, in 1291, and the one in 1284 by Roland Borșa and Bartolomeu, bishop of Oradea, by royal order, and 3 were presided by Dousa, in the capacity of judge delegated by the king. The 11 remaining assemblies were palatine assemblies, among which one was presided by Filip the palatine, three by Vilhem Drugeth, palatine and judge of the Cumans, one by Ladislaus, duke of Oppeln, palatine and judge of the Cumans, and two by Nicolae of Gara, palatine and judge of the Cumans. Regarding the judged matters, the majority of them were problems related to property, iniquities, robberies, murders, establishing borders, document confirmations, tribute exemptions and customs rights confirmations. In the general assemblies presided by Ladislaus IV and Andrew III were pronounced rulings, through which the nobles that had betrayed the king were sentenced to death and had their properties seized. These were the gatherings where the most complicated matters were judged. An important congregation was the one presided by Roland Borșa, voivode of Transylvania, and Dominic, bishop of Oradea, which regulated the customs rights in the kingdom, in this case, the Birtin customs. In most of the trials, the actors involved are members of the nobility and representatives of the clergy, and only in one case do we have the representatives of a community filing a lawsuit against a noble for land.

Keywords: Royal and Palatine Congregations, Bihor County, Hungarian Kingdom, 13th-14th centuries

Like everywhere in Europe², in the Hungarian Kingdom, in the 13th century, several judicial assemblies were taking place, the ones in Székesfehérvár (*Alba Regia*) standing out. Since the second half of the century, on Saint Stephen's Day, gatherings (*synodum, concillium*) in which the King was crowned started to take place, however it was also there that the various complaints of the servant were examined³. The stipulations of the Golden Bull, in the year 1222, also encompass the first elements that reveal additional functions of these gatherings⁴.

According to the aforementioned document, the king was obligated to hold annually on Saint Stephen's Day a gathering in Alba Regia, where the palatine, the judge of the royal court (*iudex curie regie*), had to participate personally along with him⁵. In an apparently contradictory manner,

1 Varianta în limba română a acestui studiu a fost publicată în *Istoria Bihorului. Civilizație. Societate. Economie. Mentalități*, coordonatori: Gabriel Moisa, Sorin Șipoș, Aurel Chiriac, Radu Romînașu. Prefață Ioan-Aurel Pop, Editura Muzeului Țării Crișurilor, Oradea, 2018, p. 304-312.

* Universitatea din Oradea; e-mail: sorin.sipos@yahoo.com

2 Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Adunările de stări în Europa și Țările Române*, București, 1996.

3 Susana Andea, *Congregațiile palatinate și voievodale sec. XIII-XIV*, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, 7-8.

4 *Documente privind istoria României, veacul XI, XII, XIII*, vol. I, [f.l.], 1951, p. 189-193. Following DRI, C, XI, XII, XIII/I.

5 *Ibidem*, p. 190-191; Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, 2013, 7-8.

the gathering of the estates offered the necessary support to the king to impose himself on the estates, but, at the same time, the gathering also became the best means that the estates had at hand in order to limit the potential abuses coming from the king⁶.

The documentary information of the 13th century that concerned the judicial practices on the Hungarian territory suggests the occasional functioning of some judicial assemblies. The highest-ranking dignitary of the kingdom, the king, led such assemblies, by convoking several neighboring counties⁷. In order to turn the congregational system into a functional one, the king resorted to the formula of instituting some provincial congregations, probably meant to pull the representatives of the nobility from under the suffocating authority, exerted, in counties, by the aristocratic clans, and, at the same time, meant to remove the obvious disadvantage in which the nobility found itself in relation to the barons at the general congregations of the kingdom⁸.

As soon as the right of judgment, exclusively belonging to the king, was extended by royal order to other high-ranking dignitaries too, the palatine appeared at these gatherings as well⁹. The initial and sole goal, for quite a while, consisted in the extermination and restraining of the thieves and wrongdoers, to which was then added the judging of the acts of violence, the cases concerning the land possessions following suit at the end of the 13th century¹⁰. The beginnings of the reign of Charles I of Hungary brought changes in the carrying out of these palatine gatherings. They are almost out of the picture and the role of itinerant judges is now fulfilled by royal judges designated by the king. In this position we find Dousa of Debrecen, in northwestern Transylvania, royal judge delegated by the king (*judex specialis, judex per dominium regem deputatus*)¹¹. Within the general congregations (*congregationes generales*), presided by the king in exceptional situations, and usually by the palatine of the Hungarian king, in which all the nobility in the county (counties) was obligated to participate, a special case are the gatherings announced through shouts in the places with human agglomerations, markets, fairs etc. At such proclaimed congregations (*proclamata congregatio*), the participation was general, not anymore restricted to the nobility, at least according to the documentary declarations. It's the place where the lists of wrongdoers from the areas, with the thieves, with the document, seal, money forgers etc. are drafted, being included on the list amounting to the capital punishment, with the loss of all movable and immovable properties possessed by the people in question¹².

In Bihor County, in the 13th to 14th centuries, general gatherings with the participation of the representatives of several counties were held, presided by the king or by a representative of the king, the palatine, the count of the Cumans or the royal judges designated by the king. In the neighboring counties, such gatherings were also convoked, in which representatives of Bihor county participated and where causes related to the county were discussed.

The first one, in chronological order, is the general assembly (*congregation generalis*) in Oradea, on January 30th 1279, in fact an announced gathering, in which partook the barons/nobles and the people of other estates and conditions in the counties of Bihor (*Byhor*), Solnoc (*Zonuk*), Satu Mare (*Zathmar*), Crasna (*Crazna*), Békés (*Bekes*), Zarand (*Zarand*) and Szabolcs (*Zabouch*), when the deeds of Toma of Kany were judged¹³. Since the time of Ladislaus IV of Hungary, the idea of provincial assemblies had been imposed, where the provincial nobility could express its point of view

6 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

7 *Ibidem*, p. 36.

8 Tudor Sălăgean, *Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIII-lea. Afirmarea regimului congregațional*, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 215.

9 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

10 *Ibidem*, p. 36.

11 *Ibidem*.

12 *Ibidem*, p. 43.

13 *Documente privind istoria României*. Editorial board: Ion Ionașcu, L. Lăzărescu-Ionescu, Barbu Cămpina, Eugen Stănescu, David. Prodan, Mihail Roller, veacul XIII, C. Transilvania, vol. II (1251-1300), The Publishing House of the Academy of People's Republic of Romania, 1952, p. 225. Following DRI, C, XIII/II. Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

without being intimidated by the magnates and barons of the kingdom. The Bihor, Solnoc, Satu Mare, Crasna, Békés, Zarand and Szabolcs counties constituted, according to Tudor Sălăgean, a well-defined congregational province. What is more, the general congregations were convoked according to the old administration forms and the historical realities. The counties participating in the congregation of Oradea overlapped almost entirely with the territory of the duchy led by Menumorout¹⁴.

The assembly addressed the attitude of some nobles in the kingdom, members of the group that had supported Bela IV in the conflict with Stephen V. The document talks about the events that took place at the beginning of the reign of Ladislaus IV (1272-1290). After the death of Stephen V, the nobles in exile, having Nicolae Köszegei as their leader, from the Herder family, seized control of the capital. The function of voivode of Transylvania was taken over by one of the most constant supporters of the aristocratic restauration regime, Nicolaus, son of Paul Geregye¹⁵. The latter managed during this period to lay the foundations for an important family domain in the counties of Bihor, Solnoc and Crasna, through methods that the testimonies of the epoch considered illegal and violent¹⁶. The authority in the kingdom was exerted by Queen Elisabeth, but the baron groups Csák and Hérder will exert an effective authority over the country, that will bring about numerous conflicts between the Csák group, that supported Stephen V, and the ones from the Herder family, supporters of King Bela IV.

The document refers to the military conflicts in the years 1278 and 1279, between the two groups, carried out in Bihor County too, where Nicolaus, son of Paul Geregye, had numerous supporters. According to the king, that's when numerous abuses and iniquities, treacheries and machinations against the royal crown were performed. The king reminisces those moments in the following terms: "Toma of Kany – going after our disloyal people, first the voivode Nicholas, son of Pavel, and then Gregen, his brother – committed many acts of disloyalty and robberies in our country and, settling in the fortress of voivode Nicholas and of Gregen, called Palota, that man Toma deserted all the domains of our loyal nobles in the Borșa lineage: of Count Toma and of magister Ioan, sons of Barnaba, of magister Roland and Ștefan, sons of that count Toma, causing them 300 marks worth of damage – because they, during the upheaval and fights stirred up in our country by our disloyal barons, remaining steadfast in the loyalty owed to us and our crown, by no means wanted to join our disloyal barons¹⁷".

Thoma of Kany was being accused in front of the general assembly that he had joined some powerful nobles, namely the former voivode of Transylvania, Nicolaus Geregye, and his brother, Gregen, with the intent of undermining the king's authority. Because of that, Thoma of Kany and the members of the Geregye family are accused of acts of disloyalty and robbery. In the summer of 1276, the palatine Peter Csák had devastated the episcopal cathedral in Veszprém, action shortly followed, on February 21st 1277, by the destruction by the Transylvanian Saxons of the cathedral in Alba Iulia, whose protagonists were Roland, son of Mark, and the former voivode of Transylvania, Nicolaus Geregye, mentioned in the document¹⁸. The latter had withdrawn, since 1275, after the coming to power in Transylvania of the Csáki family, on his vast properties in Bihor county, protected by a system of fortifications that included fortresses like Adrian, Piatra Șoimului and Palota. In this region, the Geregye lineage could count on the services of a number of affiliated noble families, among which were Kata, Mykula and Kany¹⁹.

Thoma de Kany settled in one of the fortifications of voivode Nicolaus Geregye, Palota, from where he deserted the domains of the nobles in the Borșa lineage. The members of the Borșa family were prejudiced, namely count Toma and magister Ioan, sons of Barnaba, as well as Roland and Ștefan, sons of count Toma Borșa.

14 Tudor Sălăgean, *Transilvania în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIII-lea*, p. 237.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 166.

16 *Ibidem*.

17 DRI, C, XIII/II, p. 201-202.

18 Tudor Sălăgean, *op.cit.*, p. 179.

19 *Ibidem*.

The Bihor branch of the Borșa family entered, at a time that can't be specified, in the possession of some properties located in the majorly Romanian region on the upper course of the Crișul Negru river. The unusually rapid ascension of the Bihor branch of the Borșa lineage, until the highest levels of the political hierarchy of the Hungarian Kingdom, can find its explanation only in the favorable conjuncture around the year 1280, caused by the support that the family of count Toma enjoyed from the part of two eminent personalities of the moment: archbishop Lodomerius, former bishop of Oradea, who had become in 1279 archbishop of Strigoniou, and Ladislaus IV.

The military operations in this region extended, due to the fierce resistance of Nicolaus Geregye and his allies, until the late autumn of 1278, some of the rebels' centers continuing their resistance also during the next year²⁰. The document also shows the causes for which the Borșa family suffered iniquities from the part of Thoma of Kany²¹.

Ladislaus IV the Cuman, after coming of age and achieving military successes, especially the victory in Marchfeld on August 26th 1278 against Otokar II Przemysl, but also against the Kőszegi clan and the Geregye family, decides to rectify the abuses and punish the traitors. The king convokes in Oradea the general congregation, in order to judge the crimes and abuses committed by Thoma of Kany²². Toma didn't participate in the assembly in Oradea to defend himself against the brought accusations and, according to medieval law, was sentenced to death for treachery, for the occupation of domains and for the inequities committed²³. The village of Vrws²⁴, unjustly occupied and ruled without a royal diploma, in Bihor county, a vineyard located on the land of the Church in Oradea, on the place called Pyspukmal²⁵, and all movable goods were confiscated from him²⁶. All the seized goods were given by the king to count Toma and magisters Ioan, Roland and Ștefan and to the other sons of count Toma, namely Iacob, Ladislaus, Benedict and Ioan, as well as to the sons of magister Ioan, namely Petru, Ioan and Nicolae²⁷.

20 *Ibidem*, p. 184.

21 "[...] because they, during the upheaval and fights stirred up in our country by our disloyal barons, remaining steadfast in the loyalty owed to us and our crown, by no means wanted to join our disloyal barons. And when, the childhood years already gone, we reached by God's mercy adulthood and assumed with full right the leading of our country, restraining the wrongdoers and robbers with the help of God, we decided to bring the citizens of our country, which have so far suffered such grave injustices and damage on the part of the wrongdoers and robbers, back to the old state of tranquility and peace." DRI, C, XIII/II, p. 202.

22 "Consequently, going to Oradea, in Bihor, with some of our barons from the seven counties, namely Bihor, Solnoc, Sătmăr, Crasna, Bekes, Zarand and Szabolcs, we called the general assembly in Oradea. Given that the above-mentioned Toma of Kany – who didn't see to it to come to our gathering, was blamed in front of our Majesty for the sin of theft and robbery and was publicly shown as robber of the citizens of our kingdom by all the nobles and people of any estates who had come from the seven counties to our gathering in Oradea, and through their showing this, we were convinced that the aforementioned Toma of Kany robbed all the domains of count Toma and of the stated magisters Ioan, Roland and Stephen, causing them three hundred marks worth of damage." *Ibidem*, p. 202.

23 "For the iniquities and acts of disloyalty, us sentencing this Toma of Kany to death". *Ibidem*, p. 202.

24 Abandoned settlement in Hajdu-Bihar county (Hungary).

25 The abbey hill (in Hungary).

26 DRI, C, XIII/II, p. 202.

27 „[...] I gave and gifted to the above-mentioned, count Toma and magisters Ioan, Roland and Ștefan and to the other sons of count Toma, namely Iacob, Ladislaus, Benedict and Ioan, as well as to the sons of the forenamed magister Ioan, namely Peter, Ioan și Nicholas, and through them to the inheritants and the successors of their inheritants, his village <Toma's>, Vrws, located in Bihor county – which the aforementioned Toma didn't possess as royal donation nor from fair temperance, but he had invaded forcefully during the time when his voivodes, the forenamed Nicholas voevod and Gregen, were behaving very iniquitously in our country and especially in the land of Oradea – together with all its uses between the old landmarks and borders, with which its boundaries were established and with which it was controlled by its previous owners. <We also put it> and its vineyard up for sale, located near the land of the church in Oradea, in the place called Pyspukmal and all its goods, movable and even immovable, which, although compared to the robberies and damages caused by the forenamed Toma of Kany to count Toma and magisters Ioan, Roland and Stephen, seem to be few, we still give it to them for all the damages and robberies they endured, to own them steadfastly and for good". *Ibidem*, p. 202-203.

The next general assembly convoked in Bihor County took place on August 1st 1284, in the village of Episcopia Bihorului, under the lead of Bartolomeu, bishop of Oradea, and Roland Borșa, recently named voivode of Transylvania and count of Szolnok²⁸. Unusual are also the manner of convocation and the drafting of the paper. The document mentions that King Ladislaus mandated the two, at the request and advice of the barons and nobles in the kingdom, regarding the collection of customs duties in inappropriate places. In the general assembly, the matter advanced by the noble Toma, son of Pancrațiu from the Chanad lineage, regarding half of the customs in Birtin, was judged. Toma presented as evidence a privileged document, drafted by the chapter of Oradea with regard to half of the customs in Birtin²⁹. The other half of the customs was owned by magister Achon, son of Paul³⁰. There had been misunderstandings and trials between Toma and Laurențiu, sons of Pancrațiu from the Chanad lineage, and count Paul, son of Each, for the Birtin customs and for the settlements of Săcădat (*Zadádoth*), Ineu (*Inew*), Săbolciu, **Țețchea** (*Chetka*) and Birtin (*Berthem*), which were eventually solved through the ruling of King Bela IV on March 29th 1256³¹. In the royal document of 1256, it was being specified that Ladislau and Toma had received half of the customs in Birtin, which was being requested in Vadu Crișului, and count Paul leaves it with full rights, whether the Călata road opens or not, to the aforementioned Laurențiu and Toma and their descendants, just like their father had and all their other ancestors had had it before the arrival of the Tatars³². This document, authenticated in the chapter of Oradea, was most likely presented by magister Toma, in front of the general assembly held in Episcopia Bihor. The borders of Birtin triggered a process that ended with a deal between the parts in front of the Convent on Oradea's Hill, when the agreement between count Nicolae, son of Ioan, and Ladislaus and Toma, sons of Pancrațiu, regarding the borders of the **Șuncuiș**, Birtin and Josani (*Jofamezew*) settlements was authenticated³³. On this occasion, in the delimitation of the three lands took part honest neighboring men, namely: count Paul, son of Each, precisely the one whom the sons of Pancrațiu settled in front of King Bela IV a few years back, as well as Lampert, son of Nicolae, and others³⁴.

The document wasn't specifying how much was to be paid for the goods transported through the customs and the products for which customs duty was collected. The leaders of the gathering, along with the four judges of the nobles in the county, asked the nobles from Bihor present and the gathering about the amount of the customs duty in Birtin. They answered that the Birtin customs had been arranged and established since old times, without mentioning the amount that had to be paid. In this situation, Bartolomeu, bishop of Oradea, and Toma, voivode of Transylvania, after consulting with the four judges, decided that at the Birtin customs, for each cart loaded with salt, two boulders of salt and two small dinars should be collected. Likewise, for each cart loaded with freight, cloth, wine or other commodities, a customs duty of half a grossus was to be requested. Half of the custom tax was to be taken by count Toma, and the other half to be left for magister Achon. The assembly decided not to collect taxes from the ones traveling on horseback or on foot, or from the empty or even loaded crates that were going from one place to another, however without trading³⁵.

After the reign of King Ladislau IV the Cuman, assassinated by order of the archbishop Lodomerius³⁶, prince Andrei, the nephew from the first marriage of Andrei II with Tomasina

28 *Ibidem*, p. 261.

29 *Ibidem*, p. 261.

30 *Ibidem*, p. 261-262.

31 *Ibidem*, p. 16.

32 *Ibidem*, p.18.

33 DIR, XIII/II, p.53

34 *Ibidem*.

35 *Ibidem*, p. 262.

36 Tudor Sălăgean, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

Morosini, who came from a rich family of patricians in Venice, succeeded him on the throne³⁷. Andrei III tried to consolidate the royal authority, severely weakened during Ladislau the Cuman, but didn't manage to establish peace in the kingdom, due to the lack of support from the high nobility³⁸. In September 1290, Andrei III organized in Buda a general congregation of the Kingdom, that confirmed and adopted its reforming program, offering it a status of organic law³⁹. At the beginning of 1291, the king headed towards Alba Iulia, where the general congregation of Transylvania was convoked, in order to submit to the assembly his reforming program. On his way to Alba Iulia, the king stopped by in Oradea, on December 31st 1290, where he remained at least until January 7th⁴⁰.

The general congregation taking place in Oradea on January 5th 1291, presided by King Andrei III, fell within his general policy of strengthening the authority of the central power, of identifying and attracting the loyalty of as many of the nobles as possible. At the congregation convoked in Oradea took part all the nobles and other people of authority (*universis nobilibus et omnibus aliis generalibus hominibus*) from the counties of Bihor (*Byhariensis*), Szabolcs (*Zabouch*), Satu Mare (*Zatmar*), Solnoc (*Zolnuk*), Crasna (*Crazna*). The nobles present at the general congregation declared Ștefan, son of Mihail, son of Ubul, a public criminal, destroyer and killer⁴¹. Ștefan was accused of causing 600 marks worth of damage to the villages of Petru, son of Anghel, and of Ladislau, son of Aldar. The accusation was also extended to the killings that he had committed on the occasion of the robberies and destructions. Ștefan fled from the royal court, right on the day of the general gathering, and hid. The general gathering decided that for all the accusations, the noble should be sentenced to death, decreeing that wherever the convict Ștefan would be found, he should be killed, without being judged⁴². We don't have information about the enforcement of the decision for Ștefan, son of Mihail. We note that the general assembly presided by the new king Carol Robert, the same Ștefan, in his and his brothers' name, was claiming back a bunch of domains. Probably the death sentence wasn't carried out during the reign of Andrei III, and after the coming to the lead of the kingdom of Charles I, the noble asked for justice.

In some situations, although the convocation was made in the name of the king, the one presiding the general congregation could be a high-ranking clerk of the Kingdom of Hungary, empowered by the king to preside the assembly. This is what happened in the first half of the 14th century, when Charles I delegated magister Dousa, count of Bihor and Szabolcs and judge for the general assemblies convoked for five counties in the northwestern parts of the kingdom. At the death of King Andrew III, a fierce battle for succession started in the kingdom. It required the active intervention and involvement of the Holy See for the pretender Charles III to be recognized as King of Hungary by the aristocratic groups in the country.

In Sălăcea, on August 1st 1317, magister Dousa presided the assembly in which took part representatives of five counties, also called special assembly (*in congregationem nostra speciali*), together with Emeric, bishop of Oradea⁴³. The complaint judged in the gathering was that made by Ștefan, son of Mihail, son of Ubul, and by his brothers, Ladislaus and Emeric, against the former palatine Omodeu and his sons, Ioan and Ladislaus, who had unjustly occupied some domains, their restitution being decided after a thorough investigation⁴⁴. The decision pronounced by magister Dousa, at the request of nobleman Cosma cel mic from Bihor county, confirmed the two privilege

37 Pal Engel, *Regatul Sfântului Ștefan*, p. 136.

38 *Ibidem*, p. 136-137.

39 Tudor Sălăgean, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

40 *Ibidem*, p. 231.

41 *Ibidem*, p. 231.

42 *Ibidem*, p. 454.

43 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

44 „[...] that have unjustly invaded their domains Semjémy, Napkur, Szent Michály and Tuth. After a thorough investigation of the matter, magister Dousa returned the forenamed domains to their legitimate owners “*Documente privind istoria României*. veacul XIV, C. Transilvania, vol. I (1301-1320), p. 276. Following DIR, XIV/I.

letters from King Charles⁴⁵, through which he was pulled from under the authority of any clerk in the county and received the Resighia (Rezege) customs⁴⁶. In 1268-1269, King Ștefan cel Tânăr gifted Cosma, son of count Cosma, from the Guthkeled lineage, some “lands called Neek, who belonged to our fortress Bihor, located near Eriu, in Bihor county, which we spared and got out of dependence from those fortresses”⁴⁷. The king gifted to the same Cosma a piece of land called “Ragald, located near Eriu and in the county of Sătmar, which had belonged to a serf of the Sătmar fortress, dead and without heirs, and settled as guest by our beloved mother, Queen Mary, right on this land or in this village, pulled out from under the jurisdiction of the queen and of our fortress”⁴⁸.

A special assembly took place in Debrecen, on August 19th 1317, presided by the same magister Dousa, for the aforementioned counties. The matter judged was the one raised by Petru, son of Ioan, for the occupation of his domain *Eghazas Semyen*⁴⁹ by the people in Semienul Mare⁵⁰, deciding for its restitution and the establishing of regulations against its unjust use⁵¹.

Another congregation presided by Filip, the palatine of Hungary, judge of the Cumans and count of Zips and Ujvar, was carried out on October 30th 1323⁵², in Myxe⁵³, Bihor County. In the presence of the county’s nobles and of 8 jurors, the Deapoi⁵⁴ customs was abolished, which had been settled against the law by the sons of Lucaci, and the customs right was reinforced in Parhida for Ioan, son of Ivanka, son of count Cosma⁵⁵. It was decided that the ones who won’t respect the decision made in the assembly and will follow a different road will have all their things confiscated⁵⁶. On July 5th 1334, near Bihor Abbey, a new congregation presided by Nicolae Drugeth took place, the palatine and judge of the Cumans, in which the nobles from Bihor participated. Among the matters debated in the gathering was also the one related to the Nogzygeth island, about which it was decided that pertained to the Cherechiu (*Keraky*) and Chiribiș (*Therebes*) possessions, and not to Marghita, like magister Lachk, count of the Szekelys, had claimed⁵⁷. Another matter discussed in the assembly was about the monasteries dedicated to “Saint John”, located next to the Criș River, that is in Sânton and Zeureg, towards which Leuku, son of Mykou and Zoard⁵⁸, son of Chepan manifests the intention of filing a suit for their retrieval⁵⁹.

On September 18th and 21st 1335, the palatine of Hungary and judge of the Cumans Vilhelm Drugeth presided near the Saint Stephen Monastery, the protomartyr in Dealul Orăzii, the gathering of the nobles from the counties of Bihor and Crasna. The palatine confirmed, together with the four judges of the nobles, the fact that the Rikus estate was of inheritance⁶⁰. A few years later, on June 20th 1337, near the Saint Stephen Monastery in Oradea’s Hill, the same palatine, in the general congregation of the Bihor and Crasna counties, confirms contestation and the forbiddances raised by Ladislaus and Nicolae of Nagysemjén, against selling by Ioan, son of Edigiu, of the domain parts and the border part in Kallö⁶¹.

45 *Ibidem*, p. 280

46 *Ibidem*, p. 276.

47 *Ibidem*, p. 276.

48 *Ibidem*, p.112-113

49 Today it’s part of the now called Kállosemjéu village.

50 *De Magno Semien*, nowadays called Kállosemjéu, village in Szabolcs county (Hungary).

51 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 64. DIR, XIV/I, p. 278.

52 DIR,vol. II (1321-1330), p. 94.

53 Nowadays Micske, pustă aproape de Oradea.

54 Plain on the territory of the Roșiori commune, Bihor county.

55 DIR,vol. II (1321-1330), p. 94.

56 *Ibidem*, p. 94.

57 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

58 Probably Szöreg, village in Csanád county, Hungary.

59 DIR, XIV/ III, p. 328.

60 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 76.

61 DIR, XIV/III, p. 419.

A general assembly of the counties of Bihor and Crasna, led by Nicolae, palatine of Hungary and judge of the Cumans, took place near Oradea, between August 22nd and 29th 1349, in which the destruction of some skiffs was discussed. At the request of one of the parts, the matter was postponed and its judging was decided to be done in Buda⁶².

Nicolae, palatine of Hungary, presided the congregation in Oradea, on July 20th 1355, in which all the nobles in Bihor participated, when the palatine gifted the Tarnuk estate, in Bihor county, which had come in his possession as a result of the proscription of Pousa of Tarnuk⁶³. At the request of Jacob and Paul, sons of Dousa, the palatine offered them, on the basis of kinship, the Tarnuk estate. The document drafted in the gathering also mentions the fact that the the nobles and the assessors in Bihor county surrendered the sons of Pousa of Tarnuk, because they had been outlawed⁶⁴.

The general assemblies succeed each other at close intervals. There are gatherings in which only the representatives of the nobility in Bihor county participate and general gatherings in which nobles from more counties participate. In the 14th century gatherings were convoked in which only representatives of the Bihor and Crasna counties took part. On June 29th and July 6th 1360, the general congregation for the counties of Bihor and Crasna was carried out near the village of Santău, presided by Nicolae Konth, palatine and judge of the Cumans. In the gathering, the matter raised by Petru, son of Mihail of Sanislău, was discussed, against the people in Sălacea, led by Petru and Gheorghe, judges in Sălacea, that they took from his estate, three years before, 4 serfs of his and their goods valuing 100 marks. Given that the judges didn't show up at the general gathering, nor did they sent anyone on their behalf, they were sentenced to pay a fine towards the aforementioned Petru, if they couldn't prove themselves innocent⁶⁵.

Several years later, on July 1st 1370, the general congregation met in Oradea, for the counties of Bihor and Crasna, presided by Ladislaus, duke of Opper. The document issued at the gathering talks about the judging of the matter between the noble in Bator and the nobles in Suplac, regarding the two estates. More precisely, Ladislaus, son of Ioan, son of Briciu of Bator, showed in the gathering that he had lent to Leukus, Grigore and **Ștefan**, sons of Grigore, son of Laurențiu of Suplac, two hundred florins for redeeming their estate, Tarcea, without the defendants returning him the estate. Ladislaus denounced that "despite the fact that he was ready to pay in front of the Chapter in Oradea the sum of money, the aforementioned Leukus, Grigore and **Ștefan**, sons of Grigore of Suplac, didn't want to fulfill the duties showed in the other letter of the chapter, nor did they want to show up for that deadline in order to fulfill the above-stated things, which is why magister Ladislau didn't ask to give the chapter the said sum of money"⁶⁶. Consequently, the assembly decided that "Leukus, Grigore and **Ștefan** should pay Ladislaus 200 florins, sum he spent for the first tenor at the royal court. Besides, Ladislau, should he want to, will take an oath of how much he spent for this trial, in front of the count of the royal chapel, and the sons of Grigore would be bound to pay him the expenses made"⁶⁷.

On December 6th 1378, the general assembly met again in Oradea for Bihor county. Nicolae of Gara, palatine and judge of the Cumans, led the gathering, in which participated the nobles' community in Bihor county. In the gathering it was decided that in the trial between the nuns from

62 DIR, XIV/IV, p. 497.

63 *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, vol. X (1351-1355). Under the editing of Acad. Ștefan Pascu, Bucharest, 1977, p. 349. Following DRH, X.

64 *Ibidem*.

65 *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, vol. XI (1351-1355). Under the editing of Acad. Ștefan Pascu, Bucharest, 1981, p. 523-524.

66 *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, vol. XIII (1356-1370). Under the editing of Acad. Ștefan Pascu, Bucharest, [1991], p. 797. Following DRH, XIII.

67 *Ibidem*, p. 797.

Saint Ana Monastery in Oradea, represented by Ladislaus, priest and rector of the altar of Andrew the Apostle in the Church of Oradea, and Ladislaus of Lazlohaza, who had occupied the Somogy estate of the nuns, both parts should present their evidence. The palatine also decided in the matter between the provost of Lelez, represented by Nicolae, son of Ioan, with Ladislaus, son of Nicolae of Memdzenth, that forecedly took five serfs from the Myxe village, that because the defendant didn't show up, he should "be fined four marks"⁶⁸.

Nicolae of Gara presided the general gathering of the nobles in the counties of Bihor and Crasna, carried out in Oradea, between October 14th and 21st 1381. On this occasion, the forbiddance raised by the nobles in Puthnuk against the nobles in Tileagd, for making use of the Uileac possession, was confirmed⁶⁹. The Chapter of Oradea proved indeed true, on June 5th 1379, the contestation made by the same Simion, on behalf of Ioan and Mihail, sons of Laurențiu, in front of the chapter, that "on May 30th 1379, magister Ioan, son of Clement of Tileagd, came armed to the Uileac estate and cruelly kicked and beat Petru and Nicolae, the serfs of their respective rulers, as well as other serfs, and robbed them and brought down some of the women"⁷⁰. The case was postponed by Gheorghe of Told, count of Bihor, and by the four judges of the nobles, on July 12th 1397⁷¹. However, Elizabeth, the youngest queen of Hungary, on June 10th 1380, commands the Chapter of Oradea to investigate another complaint forwarded by Mihai and Ioan, sons of Ladislaus of Puthnuk, regarding the iniquities committed at their expense by the nobles in Tileagd⁷². The nobles in Puthnuk were denouncing that, on May 18th 1380, Nicolae, son of Nicolae of Tileagd, got one serf of theirs, namely Ladislaus, son of Benedict of Uileac, pulled by the hair and dragged along with the horse. Besides, Ioan, son of Clement of Tileagd, ordered on several occasions in this year that the fields should be grazed by their horses and their servants too⁷³. On August 10th 1380, the Chapter of Oradea reported to Louis I of Hungary that the investigation they were carrying out was confirming the iniquities committed by the nobles from Tileagd, at the expense of the nobles in Puthnuk, and it was established that on October 6th 1380, the parts involved would show up in front of King Louis⁷⁴. Although the general assembly confirmed the obstacle raised by the nobles of Puthnuk and although the judicial authorities noted that Nicolae, son of Nicolae of Tileagd, committed numerous abuses, the trial was prolonged, without a final solution being reached⁷⁵.

For the 13th-14th centuries, documentary records were kept for a number of 17 general gatherings carried out in Bihor county. Out of the 17 gatherings, in one of them participated the representatives of 7 counties - Bihor (*Byhor*), Solnoc (*Zonuk*), Satu Mare (*Zathmar*), Crasna (*Crazna*), Békés (*Bekes*), Zarand (*Zarand*) and Szabolcs (*Zabouch*), at 5 were present representatives of 5 counties, Bihor (*Byhor*), Solnoc (*Zonuk*), Crasna (*Crazna*), and Szabolcs (*Zabouch*) or Bihor (*Byhor*), Solnoc (*Zonuk*), Crasna (*Crazna*), și Szabolcs (*Zabouch*), Satu Mare (*Zathmar*), and in 7

68 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p.

69 „rising from among the others, Simion, son of Simion of Zuha, in the name of Ioan, son of Ladislaus and of Mihail and Martin, sons of Mihail, nobles of Putnuk, his voivodes saw to it that they show us as a contestation that in the current year, Nicholas, son of Nicholas of Tileagd, occupying forcedly some lands and grasslands of these masters of his, called Uileacu, finding themselves in trial, keeps them, and through his serfs in Tileagd, make so that they are kept uninterruptedly and that at the recently passed celebration of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin they got fifty stacks of cereal and sixty of hay taken by force from these lands and grasslands“. *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, vol. XVI (1381-1385), Bucharest, 2014, p. 126. Following DRH, XVI; Susana Andea, *Congregațiile palatine și voievodale sec. XIII-XIV*, Cluj-Napoca, 2013, p. 180.

70 *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, vol. XV (1376-1380), Bucharest, 2006, p. 580. Following DRH, XV.

71 *Ibidem*, p. 605.

72 *Ibidem*, p. 766.

73 *Ibidem*, p. 766.

74 *Ibidem*, p. 700.

75 There were 11 more documents over the years 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385 that provide information about the conflict between the nobles in Puthnuk and the nobles in Tileagd, in DRH, XVI.

participated the counties of Bihor and Crasna. In the general assemblies in the years 1334, 1355 and 1378, only the nobles in Bihor county took part, and in the case of the assembly presided by Borşa and by Bartolomeu, bishop of Oradea, although it was a general gathering convoked through royal letter, the participating counties aren't mentioned.

Out of the 17 general assemblies, two were presided by Ladislaus IV, in 1279, and by Bela 4th, in 1291, and the one in 1284 by Roland Borşa and Bartolomeu, bishop of Oradea, by royal order, and 3 were presided by Dousa, in the capacity of judge delegated by the king. The 11 remaining assemblies were palatine assemblies, among which one was presided by Filip the palatine, three by Vilhem Drugeth, palatine and judge of the Cumans, one by Ladislaus, duke of Oppeln, palatine and judge of the Cumans, and two by Nicolae of Gara, palatine and judge of the Cumans.

It's very important to mention the first presided assemblies were general assemblies in which seven and 5 counties participated respectively. This happens until the beginning of Charles I's rule, namely in 1323, when the last gathering is recorded. After that, at the convoked gatherings participate the representatives of two counties, Bihor and Crasna, or only from Bihor county. We tend to believe that the presence in the general gatherings of the representatives of more counties must be related to the situation of the central power in the kingdom. When the Kingdom of Hungary found itself in a crisis, during Ladislau IV and Andrew III, we observe a reinforcement of the local institutions, and in this case, of the general assemblies convoked in those counties that had formed in the past the duchy of Menumorout. As the royal authority strengthens from the middle of the reign of Charles I, and particularly during Louis I, we witness a weakening of the provincial institutions; now, the gatherings are convoked with the participation of at most two counties, which slowly prompts the disappearance from the contemporaries' conscience of the existence three centuries before of a political formation similar to the duchy, over which the counties were established. Much stronger is the provincial tradition beyond the mountains, in Transylvania, where a voivodeship-like entity had been functioning from the beginning, having a voivode as leader, which managed in the second half of the 13th century and first decade of the next one to imprint in Transylvania the feeling that it's a separate country⁷⁶. In Transylvania, the general congregations functioned and were carried out in parallel with the ones in the kingdom, emphasizing the feeling that it is a province with a large autonomy that tends towards being a state in itself.

Regarding the judged matters, the majority of them were problems related to property, iniquities, robberies, murders, establishing borders, document confirmations, tribute exemptions and customs rights confirmations. In the general assemblies presided by Ladislaus IV and Andrew III were pronounced rulings, through which the nobles that had betrayed the king were sentenced to death and had their properties seized. These were the gatherings where the most complicated matters were judged. An important congregation was the one presided by Roland Borşa, voivode of Transylvania, and Dominic, bishop of Oradea, which regulated the customs rights in the kingdom, in this case, the Birtin customs. In most of the trials, the actors involved are members of the nobility and representatives of the clergy, and only in one case do we have the representatives of a community filing a lawsuit against a noble for land. A part of the decisions pronounced at the gatherings presided by the palatine or by the royal judge weren't definitive, the convict being able to appeal to the king for the cancellation of the sentence⁷⁷.

76 Tudor Sălăgean, *op.cit.*, p. 237-243.

77 Susana Andea, *op.cit.*, p. 48.