

The Mongol Invasion of 1241–1242 in Transylvania Military and Political Preliminaries*

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FROM SEVERAL points of view, the great Mongol invasion of 1241–1242 represented an exceptional event for the historical evolution of medieval Transylvania. It dealt the ultimate blow to the former military and administrative structures of the kingdom, with royal castles as county residences. In the second half of the 13th century, the kingdom's institutions would change forever. The responsibilities of the royal officials, who supported themselves from the exploitation of the royal domains, were to be assumed in their overwhelming majority by the provincial nobility, from then onwards turned into the kingdom's main military force. The institutional changes that occurred were to be accompanied by a rearrangement of the province's social structure, process during which the lesser nobility would soon gain the foremost importance. All the more important was the redefinition of ethnical relations within the province, during which the Romanians started working together with official institutions, given their military potential the royalty could not have managed without. At the same time, the great Tartar invasion radically changed Transylvania's international position. It was this event that practically put an end to the Crusade in Southeastern Europe in the first half of the 13th century, initiated together with the advent of the Eastern Latin Empire (1204).

The most trustworthy source that depicts the hurdles the Mongols had to cross in conquering Transylvania, the only one that casts a light right from within the Tartar world, is the monumental work written by the Persian erudite Rashid od Din,¹ *Djami ot-Tevarikh* ["The Sum" or "The Complete Collection of Histories"]. Although written at a later date (around the year 1307), it bears the great merit of using, for

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the period previous to Möngke's reign (1251–1259), besides the work written by Juvaini,² a great deal of other oriental sources, nowadays lost. One which is impossible to track back nowadays supplied him with the precious and detailed information related to the operations run by the Mongols against the Transylvanian military complex and its outer-Carpathian territorial extensions. What is the startling detail in this account?³ According to Rashid od-Din, the invasion corps led by Kadan, Büri and Böček, on the southern flank of the great invading army, waged no less than *five* battles on their march (three against the *Sasan*'s,⁴ one against the *Ulagh*'s⁵ and another against the ruler *Mišelav*⁶), compared to just *one* mentioned on the northern flank, where Baydar's and Ordu's armies were advancing. Considering the fact that the latter can only be the great battle of *Wahlstatt* (April 9, 1241), during which the Mongols crushed the German and Polish armies led by duke Henrik II of Silesia, the comparison speaks for itself of the remarkable opposition put up by the defensive system in Transylvania. There are few reasons for us to suspect Rashid od-Din of biased account or conscious distortion of reality. This emphasis laid on the importance of the Transylvanian defensive system might have been subject to incomplete documentation, which might have caused the Persian historian to embrace a unilateral perspective of the events. Even though assuming certain precautions in this respect is justified, the value of the information conveyed by Rashid od-Din is still remarkable. In truth, a great deal of additional argumentation concords in highlighting the consideration with which the Mongols approached the powerful military system of Transylvania, as well as the difficulties they encountered on breaching it.

First of all, we must consider the sheer *numbers* employed in this operation. There is no doubt that the Mongols deployed no less than three armies⁷ of the total of seven to this end, destined to the operations on their western flank. The total number of the invasion forces has been estimated at approximately 120,000–140,000 men⁸, including the auxiliary forces recruited from the conquered territories.⁹ How were these forces organized? Given the Mongols' use of a military structure based on the decimal system¹⁰ could indicate that each of the *Noyons* in the Genghis-Khanian family disposed of a contingent (*tiimen*) of approximately 10,000 warriors. Of the approximately 10 *tiimens*, one for each of the commanders mentioned in written sources¹¹ the greatest one was led by the direct commandment of Batu and Subutai, who were the core of the Mongolian offensive. This army was estimated at over 50,000 men.¹² The Mongols that operated in Poland, led by Baydar, Ordu and Kaidu, numbered approximately 30,000–40,000 men. At Wahlstatt, these troops, after their timely joining the others, managed to defeat the army of duke Henrik II of Silesia, estimated at approximately 30,000 warriors, before the arrival of the support troops sent by the king of Bohemia. Thus, the three commanders operating on the southern flank may have mastered approximately 30,000 fighters, which meant 10,000 on the Severin direction (enough for the mission seemingly entrusted to Böček), and 20,000 against Transylvania.¹³ No matter how circumspect we may

approach these figures,¹⁴ it seems hard to question that proportion-wise, the forces on the southern flank were in this case approximately 1/4 of the total number of warriors of the great invasion, respectively 3/8 of the total forces that engaged in the battle against Hungary. The military force was at any rate much too great for a war zone considered to be secondary in importance, deprived of major objectives especially in the conditions in which on the other two lines of offensive the Mongols were expecting greater forces than they already had.

Moreover, the commanders of the three armies on the southern flank enjoyed a well consolidated military prestige and at the same time held important positions in the empire's political hierarchy. *Kadan*, one of the sons of the great khan Ögö dai, was the most notorious of them, at the same time the one with the highest military merit. He had brought it onto himself as early as 1235–1236, when he was the great commander of one of the three great Mongolian armies to invade the Song Empire.¹⁵ Kadan had also attended the great European campaign of Batu and Subutai, bringing his contribution to the conquest of Riazan (1237)¹⁶ and a decisive contribution to the Tchernigov victory.¹⁷ He then joined Möngke in the expedition against Circassians on the Kuban River (1238).¹⁸ Together with Berke, in 1239–1240, Kadan may also have attended the annihilation of the Cumans' resistance in Dešt-i Kipčak, while Batu himself was besieging Kiev. This might explain Batu and Subutai's decision to entrust him with the command of the western flank during the offensive on Hungary, which had two precise missions to undertake: the eradication of the Transylvanian military complex, and consequently the plundering of the areas colonized by the Cumans by Bela IV's royal grant. The settlements were concentrated mainly in the western part of the strip between the Danube and the Tisza rivers, also on the valleys of the rivers Criș, lower Mureș and Timiș.¹⁹ In the winter 1241/1242, Kadan broke off the defensive line organized along the Danube by Paul Geregye, count of Alba Regalis, thus opening the way for the second Mongol offensive, which stretched all the way to the Austrian boundaries and the Dalmatian coast. In addition, during the Mongol retreat in the spring–summer of the year 1242, Kadan did not miss the chance of becoming the conqueror of Serbia and Bulgaria. In his turn, *Büri* was also part of the great Genghis Khan kindred, as the son of Chagatai. Becoming together with Güyük one of Batu's main adversaries, he played a major role in the conflicts over power within the imperial family, which he finally fell victim of. His military prestige originated from the time of the Russian campaign and seemed to have been largely due to his tight cooperation with Kadan: in almost all circumstances the two warlords are mentioned as acting together.²⁰ Finally, *Böčək*, Tului's seventh son, had covered himself in glory in the battles waged against the Bulgarians on the Volga, the Alani, the Russians and especially the Cumans.²¹ The mission assigned to him during the 1241 campaign was a strategically major one: that of going round the Carpathians and of entering Hungary via the town of Severin, thus cutting the potential retreat of Kuthen's Cumans towards the Balkans.

Despite this impressive display of force, the Mongols could only break the Transylvanian fortified frontier at a later date in comparison with the evolution of the military operations on other battlefields. Thus, the *northern flank* of the great invading army had started out the war against Poland in February 1241,²² when the towns of Lublin and Sandomir were conquered (February 13).²³ On March 18, Baydar won the Chmielnik²⁴ victory, and on March the 28th he won Krakow.²⁵ In late March and early April, Baydar's and Kaidu's troops joined in at Breslau and crushed duke Henry II's army in Wahlstatt, near Liegnitz,²⁶ on April the 9th. On the *central* front, the army under the command of Batu forced its way through the Verecke pass on March the 10th 1241, and two days later they literally blew to smithereens the army of the palatine count Dionysius Hederváry, who had unsuccessfully tried to block their entry into the plains²⁷. On March the 15th, Batu's avant-gardes were already spotted near the town of Pest²⁸, and two days later the army corps under the command of Šaiban reached the Danube near the town of Vác.²⁹ Over the next few days, the Mongol troops pillaged a number of settlements on the left bank of the Danube, with records of the clashes with Ugrinus Csák, Calocea archbishop, duke Frederic of Austria and bishop Benedict of Oradea.³⁰ Eventually, in early April, after confrontations around the capital area, Batu started his simulated retreat to the east, orchestrating the huge diversion which would end in attracting the royal army in the Mohi ambush (11 April, 1241).³¹ In exchange, on the *southern flank*, the invaders' successes were not quick to come. The breach of the Carpathians was only accomplished in 31 March,³² at a time when on the other battlefields clashes were heading towards a turning point. Thus, at the time Batu made his appearance before the city of Buda or when Baydar was setting Krakow on fire, no Mongolian rider had yet set hoof in Transylvania, and the day the royal army suffered a decisive defeat in Mohi, Kadan and Büri's troops barely touched the Transylvanian cities of Cluj and Sibiu.

Putting these facts together raises an issue most historians have been unable to explain, and were not even capable of taking notice of: how can one explain the delay in the Mongols' entry in Transylvania? In the lack of any evidence or arguments to justify a late onset from Kadan, Büri and Bocek, the key to this mystery lies in the above-quoted account of Rashid od-Dinh and in the historical data which confirm it. Analyzing it can lead to a single conclusion: the Mongols crossed the Carpathians only on March 31st because the resistance they put up with outside the Carpathian arch and at the borders of Transylvania hindered their advance. At the same time, there could have been additional causes, related to the Mongols' amassing area before launching their attack on Transylvania. As we are about to see, these troops seem to have been at a larger distance from Hungary's frontier than the main army corps in the north and center. We are thus entitled to assert that Transylvania was one of the main targets of the great invasion of 1241, and the resistance the invaders encountered on their way proved the careful planning had been perfectly justified, as was the preoccupation manifested by the Mongols to annihilate Transylvania's military capacities.

With the great battle of Kalka (1223),³³ the vast yet unstable Cuman “empire” was undergoing the last stage of its disintegration. This confrontation had shed light on both the winners’ military superiority and on the seriousness of the crisis undermining the Cuman political system, depriving it of the slightest chances of survival. In addition, the solution of the most important Cuman leader, khan Kuthen, had proven its inefficiency before this new eastern threat: the alliance with the Russian lords. Not only the Russian military support, despite its consistency,³⁴ failed to save the day; but later evolutions, marked by the reiteration of Russian-Cuman disparities, clearly proved that establishing a comradeship between these two secular enemies was close to impossible. Under the circumstances, only one power with an interest in this territory had the capacity to lend a helping hand to both the Cumans and the Russians against a possible new Mongolian attack. That power was Hungary.

HUNGARY’S INTEREST in the Cuman steppe was rather recent. It was part of the papal policy towards Eastern Europe, especially after the creation of the Eastern Latin Empire after the 4th Crusade. Hence Hungary’s actions in this respect were joined more or less enthusiastically by two recently set up confessional orders, *The Teutonic Order*, installed by king Andrew II in Bârsa country (1211),³⁵ and a missionary order, the *Order of the Preaching Brothers*, the founder of which, St. Dominic de Guzman, had engaged in Christianizing his fellow Cumans.³⁶ *The Teutons* started out by erecting an impressive fortification system in eastern Transylvania, making it impenetrable to the then seemingly serious Cuman attacks, and despite the extremely dire conditions the same Teutons made their offensive by expanding their authority over off-Carpathian territories, to an extent hard to assess.³⁷ Immediately after Kalka, however, the Grand Master Hermann von Salza had the initiative to transfer the Teuton enclave in Bârsa country, together with its off-Carpathian expansions, under the direct command of the Pontifical Seat.³⁸ Thus, any allegiance to Hungary was removed and the way opened to free expansion eastward, which in 1225 aroused the energetic opposition of King Andrew II. Ousted by military means, the Teutons left a complicated heritage from the juridical point of view, yet militarily solid, enabling Hungary, for the first time in its history, to consider the military expansion all the way to the Danube tributaries, and political influence over the Cuman steppe.

After 1225, the key player in this new political approach was prince Bela, the next in line to the crown of Hungary, which his father, king Andrew II, appointed king of the newly created office of *duke of Transylvania*,³⁹ immediately after the Teutons have been ousted. This quality, consolidated by the sovereign’s attributions as the associate king of Hungary,⁴⁰ gave Bela not just full authority over the levers of the entire Transylvanian military complex, until then deprived of unique command, but also over the kingdom’s entire eastern policy. The control became exclusive since the time when—following the conflict between Andrew II and the Pontifical Seat—Bela

became one of pope Gregory IX's favorites, who intended to make him what his father could never achieve: a true Crusade leader, at least in terms of its Balkan and Eastern European strategies. Since he assumed this role, prince Bela's projects in the east benefited not just from the high papal protection but also from the immediate support of the Dominican Order, shortly after its come to life the most important instrument in the hands of the pope in Eastern Europe.

Given the disarray in the Cuman world in the aftermath of Kalka battle, the results of the fruitful combination of Hungarian (Transylvanian) military pressure with the Dominicans' missionary propaganda did not fail to appear: in 1227, Bortz/Burch's Cuman tribe, most likely located in the western Cuman steppe, close to Transylvania, embraced Christianity and consequently the Pontifical Siege's political protectorate, with Hungary's military structure as a go-between. To better manage the Christianizing-related problems of this area, in the same interval, the pope set up the Cumans' bishopric, the name in itself the manifest of an ambitious political program.⁴¹ Naturally entrusted to the Dominican Order, this bishopric became the administrator of a territory which comprised, following the Teuton donation of 1224, a part of the pontifical heritage (*terra Sancti Petri*). Therefore, since Rome's jurists still considered the conflict between Hungary and the Teutonic Order still open, prince Bela was in no position to assume the title of King of Cumania, or to appoint Hungarian officials in these territories – even though he was their military protector.

The gap instated in the Cuman world with the christening of Bortz's tribe was fought back by Khan Kuthen, who refused to become Bela's ally due to his bent on his older project to ally with the Russian princes, until the eve of the great Mongolian invasion of Eastern Europe. In 1230, prince Bela's campaign against knez Daniil Romanovich and against Kuthen was joined in by another Cuman warlord, Begovars,⁴² which proves the Hungarian influence in the steppe was in full swing. The two great foes of Hungary pursued their political decision throughout the entire 1227-1233⁴³ span. After 1235, however, as the Mongols resumed their offensive, they changed their strategy completely. Ever since 1229, the Mongols become a common presence on the Volga banks; thus, two of the Cuman tribes (*Durut* and *Töksoba*) took the decision to accept their sovereignty.⁴⁴ In an attempt to hurdle the Mongols as far away as possible from their own borders, the Hungarians had made contact with the Greater Hungary from the river Volga, using the same tireless Dominican missionaries. But this relationship never consolidated: in 1236, *frater* Ricardus learnt, in Suzdal, that Greater Hungary had already been blown to smithereens by the Mongolian might. The great invasion of Europe had started.

Hungary's efforts to broaden their influence in the Cuman steppe and beyond, culminating with Dominican missionaries present down the Volga river could not have escaped the attention of Mongolian chiefs. The great *kuriltai* of 1235, which had taken the decision to attack the Cuman steppe, had explicitly concluded Hungary as one of the Mongols' potential opponents⁴⁵. The account of *frater* Julianus,

the Dominican missionary sent by Bela towards Greater Hungary Mare, is evidence of the Mongols' preoccupation with the Arpadian kingdom,⁴⁶ and so is Batu's attempts to establish diplomatic contacts with the king,⁴⁷ from the very onset of the military operations on the Volga. Batu's endeavors to liaise with Bela is confirmed by Mattheus Parisiensis' chronicle, which reads that two of the missions dispatched to Hungary were entrusted to a former English Templar, who deserted his order to enter the Tatars' service.⁴⁸ Batu's insistence undoubtedly concealed a more menacing approach, but proved the Mongols' availability for discussions,⁴⁹ their primary objective being, probably, that of diplomatically ridding themselves of the Hungarian competition on the battle to dominate the Cuman steppe.

King Bela's refusal can only be interpreted as an acceptance of the challenge. In reality, the great Mongolian offensive had itself opened the gates of the Orient, as even khan Kuthen, his constant adversary, and some of the Russian lords asked for his help and accepted his alliance and protection.⁵⁰ This newly-acquired influence, after almost two decades of unfruitful attempts, could however only be preserved by means of political and missionary activities. Bela's new eastern allies were awaiting a concrete engagement on their side as far as the clashes with the invaders were concerned, especially with regards to overt military engagements.

In this context, the Cistercian Albericus Trius-Fontium mentions in his chronicle an 1239 Hungarian offensive against the Mongols, run by a *comes Ultrasilvanus*. After an initial success, in a battle "near the Meotida's swamps"—the then name of Azov Sea⁵¹—the leader lost his life before the invaders.⁵² This information sheds a new light on the events prior to the great invasion of 1241, and so does Franciscan Nicolaus Trivettus's chronicle, written in early 14th century, which reads of an attack against the Tatars led by "one of the Polish or Hungarian princes". This caused great distress among the Mongols with regards to their relationship with the Arpadian kingdom, but their "idols" revealed the internal contradictions which divided the Hungarian society.⁵³ The "prince" mentioned by Trivettus was most likely the *comes ultrasilvanus* mentioned in Albericus' account. The gaps in the sources however raise a series of issues related to identifying the character and his position in the hierarchy. This "county chief", also mentioned in a pontifical document of 1238,⁵⁴ may have been a voivode's *locum tenens*, with attributions of military chief of the frontier, who perhaps exerted his authority in the extra-Carpathian territories where the Cumanian bishopric lay.

The Transylvanian expedition of 1239 must have undoubtedly been connected to the clashes between the Mongols and khan Kuthen, the latter on the verge of giving up on the resistance which initially seemed to enjoy pretty good chances of success.⁵⁵ His decisive defeat the same year sealed the fate of the entire steppe in the northern Black Sea region. Consequently, Kuthen was forced to take refuge in Hungary,⁵⁶ at the head of his Cumans. After this date, king Bela's efforts concentrated exclusively on the defense of his own kingdom. He therefore refused to intervene to help the town of Kiev under siege by Batu, despite great knez Mikhail Vsevolodovich's re-

quests for aid.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Bela did not hesitate to welcome to Hungary both knez Mikhail and later Daniil Romanovici, the sole of the Russian knezes to have sent troops to Kiev.

The reasons for which the Mongols attacked Hungary are thus obvious, and so are those that made them hesitate in doing so. The asylum Bela gave to all who asked for it and enlisting refugee Cumans turned the Hungarian kingdom into a potential contender of the recent Mongolian conquests. At the same time, the military campaign of the *comes ultrasilvanus* was not just an intolerable offense, but also evidence that the Arpadian kingdom had the capacity to turn its offensive plans into concrete actions. This irrefutable evidence warned Batu and Subutai that, unless the Hungarian menace was to be dealt with, the conquest of the Cuman steppe could never be complete. Tackling with the Hungarian issue made it necessary to deal a most severe blow on Transylvania, at that time Arpadian Hungary's main bastion in the east. □

Notes

1. *Rashid od-Din*, born in Hamadan (Persia) in 1247, started his career as the personal doctor of Ilkhan Abaqa (1265-1281), and eventually became the financial advisor of his grandson Ghazan (1295-1304), who assigned him with the duty to write a complete history of the Mongols and their conquest. Unfortunately, a major part of his monumental work was lost. J. A. Boyle, "Juvaini and Rashid al-Din as Sources on the History of the Mongols," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis (New York, 1962).
2. *The History of the Conqueror of the World*. Ala ad-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini (c 1226–1283) was the son of Baha ad-Din (minister of finance of the great khan Ögödei), and held important offices in the political system of the Mongolian empire. J.A. Boyle, 1962.
3. "And Kadan and Büri heading towards the Sasan people have defeated this people after three fights. // And Böček walked down the Kara Ulaghi road through the mountains there defeated that brave Ulagh people. And from there he entered the forests and the Yaprak Tak mountains at Mišelav border and defeated the enemies who were there ready to fight", translation A. Decei, "Invazia tătarilor din 1241/42 în ținuturile noastre după Djami' ot-Tevarikh a lui Fāzl ol-lah Rāsīd od-Din," in id., *Relații româno-orientale. Culegere de studii* (București, 1978), 194.
4. Saxons of Transylvania. The entire analysis of the text in A. Decei, 193–208.
5. Identified with the Romanians outside the Carpathians. For this issue see more recent Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea. Între Cruciată și Imperiul Mongol*.
6. For Mišelav-related discussions see D. Onciul, *Originile principatelor române*, 95, 155–158, which proposes the Mišelav=Seneslav identification, accepted, with or without additional argumentation, by A. Decei, *Invazia tătară*, 205–206; A. Sacerdoțeanu, *Marea invazie*, 45 and Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, 137, n. 2. However unaccepted by V. Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI-XIV*, 161–162; *Marile migrații*, 406–407, or D. Mishin, "Information on the Vlachs in Medieval Islamic Literature (Arabic and Persian)," in *Romanian Civilization*, 6 (1997):2, 41–47.

7. A. Sacerdoțeanu, *Marea invazie tătară*, 33, counted four Mongol armies, considering Bochetor and Böček two distinct characters. In his turn, V. Spinei considers that several Mongol armies were roaming in the outer Carpathian space. Indeed, Rogerius shows that together with Bochetor, other commanders crossed the river Siret (*Bochetor autem cum aliis regibus, fluvium qui Serech dicitur transeuntes, Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, ed. G. Popa-Lisseanu, 5, 33); nonetheless, he might have referred to Kadan and Büri. As for Bochetor, see Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 406—which identifies him either as Böček, son of Tului, or with Bärkäčar, son of Jochi; this name could also represent a derivative of the term *ba'atur* (“hero”, “brave”). Lacking more conclusive evidence we consider Rashid od-Din’s testimony as decisive: of the three commanders mentioned by him, identifying Bochetor with Böček seems the most plausible.
8. The 50,000 men indicated by R. Grousset, *L’empire des steppes (Attila, Gengis-Khan, Tamerlan)* (Paris: Payot, 1965), 328, represents a general estimate of the armies that set off, in 1236, in Batu’s and Subutai’s European campaign. A similar figure is proposed by V. K. Košcev, “Esce raz o cislennosti mongol’skogo vojska v 1237 goda,” in *Voprosy istorii* (1993):10, 131–135: 130,000–150,000 men, of whom only 50,000–60,000 Mongols. These estimates are confirmed by the research of a nomad shepherding specialist: according to Denis Sinor (“Horse and Pasture in Inner Asia History,” in *Oriens Extremus*, 19 (1972): 1/2, 171–183), the Hungarian *puszta* could have withstand, under normal conditions, anything between 68,600–107,300 Mongolian riders; the Mongols retreated in 1242 due to the difficulties they faced with feeding their animals, which means their number must have been much greater. Contemporaries’ estimates (500,000 troopers at Rogerius, *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, 5, 32; 500,000, of whom 40,000 “centurions” and “decurions”, at Simon de Keza, *Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, 4, 56) are undoubtedly exaggerated.
9. V. K. Koscev, *loc. cit.* According to Rogerius’ statements, 40,000 Ruthenes opened the way for Batu’s army through the passes of Forested Carpathians, and 600 hostages taken from Rodna guided Kadan in his advance westward (*Carmen miserabile, Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, 33).
10. V. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 343
11. A. Sacerdoțeanu, *Marea invazie tătară*, 28
12. Figure indirectly confirmed by the analysis which show that in the Mohi battle the Hungarian army run by king Bela had roughly the same dimensions (40,000-50,000 at B. Homan, Gy. Szekfü, *Magyar Történet*, 1 (Budapest, 1935), 406, etc.).
13. Similar opinions on the distribution of the Mongolian forces on the three directions are available at A.T. Komjathy, *A Thousand Years of the Hungarian Art of War*, Toronto, 1982, p. 20: 60,000 for Batu’s army, respectively 40,000 each for the northern and southern flanks.
14. As for the caution we need to approach figures in oriental sources, see Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 342–343.
15. R. Grousset, *L’empire des steppes*, 323.
16. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 388
17. *Ibid.*, 390
18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibidem*, p. 291. Cf. royal document of 1279, E. de Hurmuzaki, N. Densușianu, eds., *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, I/1 (Bucharest, 1887), 427; *Documente privind istoria României*, C., *Transilvania*, veacul XIII, 2 (1251–1300), 219.
20. In Riazan, Cernigov etc. battles, see Spinei, 388, 390.
21. A. Decei, *Invazia tătarilor*, 204.
22. Or even January-February in Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 395.
23. A. Sacerdoțeanu, *Marea invazie tătani*, 31.
24. *Ibid.*
25. V. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 395.
26. For the sources and bibliography of the Wahlstatt battle see Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 398, n. 236.
27. Rogerius, 31; Kosztolnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 139.
28. Rogerius, 33; Kosztolnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 151.
29. Rogerius, 34; Kosztolnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 152.
30. Rogerius, 34–37.
31. On the Mohi battle see Kosztolnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 154–160.
32. *Annales Frisacenses, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, XXIV, 65–67; F. A. Gombos, ed., *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungariae*, 315; Jakó Zs., ed. *Erdélyi okmánytár/Codex diplomaticus Transsylvaniae*, 1 (1023–1300) (Budapest, 1997), 191.
33. V. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 280–282, with the indication of the sources; R. Grousset, *L'empire des steppes*, 308.
34. R. Grousset, indicates, for the Russian army, a number of 80,000 men, probably over evaluated.
35. As for the role played by the Teutons in the Bârsa Country in the broader context of the eastern European crusade, see H. Zimmermann, *Der Deutsche Orden in Burzenland. Eine diplomatische Untersuchung*, Weimar–Wien, 2000; Ș. Turcuș, *Sfântul Scaun și românii în secolul al XIII-lea* (Cluj-Napoca, 2001), 205–233; id., “Christianitas și românii: note privind locul românilor în realitatea creștină occidentală la începutul secolului al XIII-lea,” in *ActaMN*, 34 (1997): 2, 23–27; Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, 31–36.
36. Numerous testimonies on the intentions of St. Dominic on the christening of the Cumans in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum Historica*, 16 (Roma, 1935):2, 34–35, 162, 217, 294, 378 etc. For R. F. Bennet, *The Early Dominicans. Studies in Thirteenth-century Dominican History* (Cambridge, 1937), 108, St. Dominic allegedly grew a beard and is often represented as such with this intention in mind.
37. For the most competent discussion see V. Spinei, “Contribuții la istoria spațiului est-carpatic din secolul al XI-lea până la invazia mongolă din 1241,” in *Memoria antiquitatis*, VI–VIII (Piatra-Neamț, 1981), 109–111; V. Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI–XIV* (Bucharest, 1982), 66–68.
38. Transfer approved by Honorius III on April the 30th 1224 (*Grata Deo et*), A. Potthast, ed., *Regesta pontificum Romanorum* (Berlin, 1875, 7232); *Documente privind istoria României*, C., *Transilvania*, 1:204–205, 381–382; E. de Hurmuzaki, N. Densușianu, eds., *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, 1:1, 85–86; F. Zimmermann, C. Werner, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, 1:29–30.
39. The exact date of the appointment is yet uncertain. He was most certainly in office on August the 1st 1226, when his brother Coloman was already duke of Slavonia, Fejér G.,

- ed., *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, 3:2. 90; cf. Kosztołnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 96.
40. Crowned in 1214, cf. Kosztołnyik, *Thirteenth Century*, 49.
 41. As for the activity of the Dominican Order outside the Carpathians and the founding of the Cumania Bishopric see I. Ferenc, *Cumanii și episcopii lor* (Blaj, 1931); V. Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI–XIV*, 68–70; Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, 66–69; Ș. Turcuș, *Sfântul Scaun și românii*, 284–302; id., *Christianitas și românii*, 19–21.
 42. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 284.
 43. *Ibid.*, 283–284.
 44. *Ibid.*, 282.
 45. Juvaini, apud Spinei.
 46. L. Bendeffy, “Fontes authentici itinera (1235–1238) fr. Iuliani illustrantes,” in *Archivium Europae Centro-Orientalis*, 3 (Budapest 1937): 1–4, 38, 42.
 47. A letter addressed by Batu to the Hungarian king, entrusted to the Dominican missionary by the Suzdal knez reproached Bela for not giving any answer to the 30 (!) ambassadors already sent. Two readings of the letter at G. Wenzel, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus*, 7:549 sq and 554 sq.
 48. Mattheus Parisiensis, 4:274.
 49. Similar messages had been sent by the Mongolians to the Russian knezes before the Kalka battle, see John Fennel, *The Crisis of Medieval Russia: 1200–1304* (New York, 1989), 65.
 50. Rogerius, 22–23.
 51. cf. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 401.
 52. *Contra Tartaros vero misit comitem Ultrasilvanum, qui in quodam angusto transito paludum Meotidarum ita confregit primum cornum illorum, quod ceteris retro respicientibus, iam in illis partibus perisse putabatur memoria eorum cum sonitu*, F. A. Gombos, ed., *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungariae*, 1:33.
 53. *Tartari subactis Georgia, India, Armenia maiore ac Turkia, per unum de principibus Poloniam et Hungariam sunt aggressi. Cum vero timerent intrare Hungariam, consulentes idola, dum hostias immolarent, tale accepisse feruntur responsum: Ite securi, quia spiritus infidelitates et discordiae vos praecedent, quibus inter se turbati Hungari vobis minime praevalerunt*. F. A. Gombos, ed., *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungariae*, 4017, 1707. Since the chronicler highlights the fact that the Mongols were afraid to attack Hungary, but not Poland, then we naturally conclude the afore mentioned “principle’s” aggression occurred from the Arpadian kingdom.
 54. A certain Ladislaus, said to possess the same quality of “count of Transylvania”, is mentioned in the same interval (11 February 1238) in a document issued by Pope Gregorius IX (*nobilis vir Ladislaus... comes eiusdem diocesis /Ultrasilvane/*)—*Documente privind istoria României*, C., *Transilvania*, veacurile XI, XII și XIII, 1:316–317, 414; A. Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, 1 (Roma, 1859–1860), 161–162; Jakó Zs., ed. *Erdélyi okmánytár/ Codex diplomaticus Transsylvaniae*, 1 (1023–1300), 187. However, he was not Transylvania’s entitled voivode. Voivode Pousa was mentioned as such on January the 29th 1238, Szentpétery I., Borsa I., eds., *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke/Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico diplomatica*, 637. It seems plausible to identify him as Ladislaus Aba, veteran of the Galitia campaigns where his brother Myke (Miko), former Bihor county leader (1212–1222) had lost his life. In 1234, as a reward for his military merits, King Andrew II donated the Demetrius broth-

- ers and Ladislaus Aba a series of properties in Bihar - Szentpétery I., Borsa I., eds., *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke./Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico diplomatica* 527 with text; *Documente privind istoria României*, C., *Transilvania*, veacurile XI, XII și XIII, 1:276–280.
55. According to Rogerius' testimony, Kuthen had succeeded to defeat the Mongols two times; it was at the third confrontation only that he was taken by surprise and was forced to admit defeat—*Carmen miserabile*, 5 (*Izvoarele istoriei românilor*), 23.
56. Rogerius estimates their number at approximately 40,000, with their families, *Carmen miserabile*, 23 (*circa quadraginta milia dicebantur*). A. Pálóczi-Horváth—*Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians: Steppe People in Medieval Hungary* (Budapest, 1989), 60–61—questions this figure, pointing out that the area in which the Cumans were reinstalled by Bela IV in 1246 could support 17–20,000 families at the most.
57. V. Spinei, *Marile migrații*, 392–393.

Abstract

The Mongol Invasion of 1241–1242 in Transylvania: Military and Political Preliminaries

Better prepared than other Central-European countries to face the Mongol onslaught, Transylvania opposed to the invaders a much stronger resistance. Led by Kadan and Büri, the Mongols managed to break the Transylvanian defensive system only in the last days of March, at a time when the other invader armies have already reached the surroundings of Buda or conquered Krakow. Within this ampler expansion of the western world, Transylvania had played a role yet insufficiently highlighted so far, but which explains the reasons for which this province was such an important objective for the great Tartar offensive. The 1241 invasion was the event that annulled most progresses Christian Europe had made eastwards at that time, putting an end to a century of colonization and crusade.

Keywords

Transylvania, Mongol Invasion 1241–1242, Cuman steppe, Teutonic Order, Dominican Order, Cumanian bishopric, East European Crusade