The Functional Territorial Units in Transylvania (10ᵗʰ–16ᵗʰ centuries)

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IT IS essential to highlight the fact that the territorial unity of Transylvania has been determined by a complexity of favourable factors, each with its well-defined role in the process. Its unique and outstanding geography, its exceptional ethno-demographic base, its distinct economic system, its specific social and administrative structures and, above all, its individual system of spatial and temporal statuses and institutions of political, cultural, or other nature built during the process of a long-lasting historical evolution, all these aspects have come to concur in a harmonious way to the unity of this land. The huge diversity of historical circumstances with their manifestations and mutual influencing eventually promoted complementary relations amongst its regions. These provided the inhabitants with living environments of exceptional economic conditions, well-differentiated in order to be mutual supporting, and, reunited, to create the harmonious unity of today's Transylvania. Statistically, Transylvania occupies some 40%, more exactly 42,1% of the Romanian territory and accomodates 33,8% of its population, which makes more than a third of its total number of inhabitans. Situated in the central, western and north-western part of Romania, Transylvania is characterised by a well-defined complexity of geographic elements, particularly favoured by its position, its geological structure and orographic evolution. All these aspects, taken together, have been a permanent and generous source of optimal conditions for human life (Pop, 1997).

Kniezates and voivodates

THESE TYPES of organisation evolved from initially small rural communities called communals. They were known as forms of organisation of rural communities that resulted from the fusion of the private and the collective properties on basis of strong economic and self-administration relations. The names 'kniezates' and 'voivodates' were first mentioned in the works of the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga. They were also known as rural Roman formations, or communal unions, and were based on an economic, social, political and cultural system of organisation. Gradually, the com-

munals situated in unitary geographical areas such as the hydrographical basins merged their territories and human potential into communal unions, a more complex form of terittorial. These prestatal territorial structures took shape along river courses, fact which explains their name, 'valley kniezates.' Historically, the kniezate is defined as a hereditary form of feudal dominion characteristic of the prestatal period of the Romanian history. These new structures, common for the Romanian and the Slavic peoples during the Middle Ages, were statal political organisations, the configuration of which was the result of the joint action of several factors. In some historical records, like those dating from the 10th to 14th centuries, they are recorded as large territorial structures named voivodates or countries. The voievodate is, in fact, a union made up of several communals or kniezates and ruled by a voivode (a military leader). The first Transylvanian voivode is recorded to have been "Leustachius Voyvoda" in 1174. The oldest political systems of this kind date back to the second half of the 10th century, their presence on the Transylvanian territory being associated to fact that the Hungarian population changed their expansion routes towards the east of Europe. These settlements were kniezates and voivodates of mixed population (Romanian, Pecheneg-Cumans and Slavic, in various proportions), ruled by military leaders recorded in Hungarian annals with the name of 'dukes' (from the Latin 'dux'). They were found in Banat, Crişana and in Transylvania. Glad's voivodate, was bordered by the rivers Mureş, Tisa, Danube and by the Carpathian Alps, his seat having most probably been in Cenad (Urbs Morisena). Anonymus notes in his chronicles that, on entering Transylvania, the Hungarian tribes met here a local population organised according to three political forms of administrations ruled by voievodes. The fact that there had already existed a Romanian population in Transylvania at the moment of its conquest by the Hungarian Kingdom, is noted by some modern Hungarian historians as well. In his "Geschichte der Ungarn," Horváth Mihály admits that Transylvania had already contained a Romanian population by the time the Hungarians entered Panonia (Lehrer, 1991). He ruled over other castra as well, such as Ursoua (Orşova), Horom (Palanca or Pescari, Kewe (Cuvin), and also had a citadel on the Timiş valley situated nearby Foeni, a former Roman castrum (Rusu, 1997). Menumorut ruled over Crişana through his strategic forts from Biharea, Zalău and Sătmar, as well as from Transylvania, where "dux Gelu" was able to defend his territory from his forts from Cluj-Mănăştur, Dăbâca and Moldoveneşti. Gelu, the duke of the Romanians (dux Blacorum), ruled over the voievodate situated in Transylvania (terra Ultrasilvana), but its borders have never been precisely established. The earthen forts from Moigrad, Cuzdrioara, Şirioara, Dedrad, Chinari, Moreşti and Moldoveneşti are believed to have been its borders, his seat being located either in Dăbâca or in Cluj-Mănăştur (Rusu, 1997). Two voivodates are attested to have existed in the 11th century. The first, situated in the heart of Transylvania and based in Bălgrad (Alba-Iulia), was led by Gyla, the other in Banat, was led by Ahtum. In Transylvania, the functional territorial structures reflected, on the one hand, the struggle between the Romanian autonomies and on the other the centralisation tendencies of the Kingdom of Hungary. After the uprising of Bobâlna (1437–1438), due to the privileges granted by the Kingdom of Hungary to the units under the domination of the privileged "nations" the local Romanian majority was finally excluded from the political life of the voivodate. Part of a Catholic state, Tran-

sylvania was confronted now with a centralised and religiously-discriminating political system. The Diploma (Edict?) of 1366, released by king Louis I, decreed the system of "official" religion that granted the participation to the political life to Catholic members exclusively. Beginning with 1437, began to function the pact known as Unio Trium Nationum, which was an agreement signed during the uprising of Bobâlna by the Catholic Church, the aristocracy and the patricians. It was meant to favour the privileged "nations," who consisted of Hungarian, Saxon and Szekel citizens, and slighted the majority population, made up mostly of Romanian peasantry.

Counties and countries (land)

THE COUNTY is a functional territorial structures from of administration run by a count and intstituted in Transylvania by the Hungarian Crown. Originally, in the European medieval legal system, the Latin Comitatus was used to designate the region governed by a count. Later Comitatus was adopted by other languages too in association with words from the indigenous lexicon. Thus, in French it is associated to Comté, in English to County, and in German to Grafschaft (from 'Graf' = count). In the Romanian language, 'comitat' entered through German affiliation, seemingly because in scholarly German, the Latin Komitatus was used until as late as the 19th century. Initially, the Romanian word 'comitat' was rendered by the Hungarian word varmeghie, which penetrated the lexical stock from Hungarian (vármegye, or rather megye, meaning 'county' or 'district'). The earliest historical documents to mention the first Hungarian counties in Transylvania, namely those which were seated in the citadels of Alba, Turda, Cluj and Dăbâca, date back to no earlier than the 12th century. As a rule, the counties, first royal then nobiliary, occupied the areas in the immediate vicinity of a castle. The oldest date from the 12th century, and symbolise the Arpadian kings' undertaking to incorporate Transylvania in their State. Hence, the county and the Romanian district were to coexist for a long period of time. The administrative situation in Transylvania had a completely different status from that in the other two principalites. Thus, during the Hungarian government (13th century till 1541), Transylvania had 12 counties in its royal jurisdiction, several Saxon and Szekel chairs, two Saxon districts (Braşov and Bistriţa), which coexisted with the traditional Romanian structures—the districts, the countries or the communals. Ţara Maramureşului, Ţara Silvaniei, Ţara Bârsei and Ţara Făgăraşului held a special position, in that during the 12th–14th centuries, they contributed to the medieval stability south and east of the Carpathians. The system of division into counties, Szekel and Saxon seats and Romanian and Saxon districts did not undergo major changes from those of earlier periods. The older counties that belonged to the voivodeship, i.e. Alba, Cluj, Dăbâca, Hunedoara, Târnava, Turda and Inner Solnoc, were joined by the counties of Partium and Banat, Bihor, Crasna, Middle Solnoc, Maramureş, Arad, Zarand, Banatul Lugojului and Banatul Caransebeşului. The counties, just as the formerly mentioned districts, were partitioned into circles 'circuli' (Lat.), 'kerűletek' (Hung.) which, in turn, were subdivided into several centre-nettings

'processus' (Lat.), 'járások' (Hung.), according to the number of centres included in that jurisdiction (Andea, 2002). Another Latin word, county (comitat) began to circulate in Transylvania, while in Moldova the word state or land (from Rom. 'a ţine de' meaning 'to be under the jurisdiction of'), designating the territory that was under the jurisdiction of a residence town. Later, only the name 'district' was used to designate the administrative units in question. (Popovici, 1980). According to the old customary law (Pop, 2010), the Romanian population was organised within the territory of a country in rural communals and communal unions, ruled by kniazs and voivodes, (terrae), and formed a constitutionally acknowledged state known as Universitas Valachorum. The oldest Hungarian written record that contains references to medieval Transylvania is an act of donation made in 1075 by king Géza I of Hungary (1074–1077) to St Benedict Abbey. In it, the referred to territory is mentioned under the name of "Terra ultra silvan," in translation "the land beyond the forest." Transylvania just like its corresponding term Erdély (erdö-silva and elu-ultra), signifies "the land beyond the forest," more precisely beyond Meseş forest. (Lehrer, 1991). Deriving from the Latin terra, the country (Rom. 'ţara') was a territory inhabited by a politically and administratively organised population. A divine union between man and nature, the country is the most representative form of Romanian territorial autonomy. The countries represent distinct features generated by territorial characteristics, human or of another kind, which led to the formation of units each having their own individuality. Such units are Ţara Chioarului, Ţara Făgăraşului, Ţara Moţilor, Ţara Silvaniei, Ţara Haţegului, Ţara Maramureşului etc. The regional autonomies if these Romanian countries, situated in the surrounding areas of Transylvania (Ţara Făgăraşului, Ţara Almaşului, Ţara Haţegului, Ţara Maramureşului, Ţara Lăpuşului), and partially tolerated by the Hungarian authorities, are brought to an end by the downfall of the Arpadian Dynasty (1301). Between the 14th–15th centuries, the countries will be reorganised into Romanian districts ("districtus (v)olachales" or "districtus valachorum"), ruled by dignitaries appointed by the Crown. Today are known about 60 such olachale districts. Also, these countries were ecumenical centres controlled by a distinct type of anthropic system. (Pop, 2007). Of great consequence for Transylvania, Ţara Maramureşului, Ţara Bârsei, Ţara Făgăraşului contributed between the 12th–14th centuries to its medieval stability south and east of the Carpathians. In 1532, saw the print in Basel Johannes Honterus' Chorographia Transylvaniae [Sybenburgen], which contained the first map of Transylvania. It is important to note here the fact that the map contains the German names of several territorial subdivisions that were in reality Transylvanian countries. These are Althland or Ţara Oltului, lying between the river Olt and Hârtibaci, Burzenland or Ţara Bârsei, Weinland or Ţara Vinului between the two Târnava rivers, Nősnerland or Ţara Năsăudului between the valley of the rivers Bistriţa and Mureş (Pop, 2007). In 1541, Honterus reprints this document in Braşov, to which he annexes 15 maps, 4 general and 11 regional, the ninth of which is the map south-eastern Europe, respectively the middle and lower Danube basin, including the three Romanian provinces mentioned both separately (Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania) and together, under the generic reference of "DACIA." This name was spelt integrally in uppercase, fact which may actually express the author's intention to speak of the three countries' ethnic unity, and also foreshadow the crucial historical event

from 1600, i.e. the first political and territorial unification of these three countries under prince Mihai Viteazu (Michael the Brave). A copious supply of data, Honterus's map has served as an important documentary source for subsequent cartographic research on this Romanian province, today being an appreciated and valuable document of geographical history relating of the Principality of Transylvania during the first decades of the 16th century (Pop, 2007). At the turn of the 10th century, another inter-Carpathian autonomous formation is mentioned to have existed in Transylvania, Kulan's country (terra Kulan), subsequently inherited by Kulan's son-in-law, Beliud (Rusu, 1997). According to archaeological proof, this country was located in the centre of Transylvania with the capital in Alba Iulia.

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Abstract
The Functional Territorial Units in Transylvania during the 10th–16th centuries

Writing a paper indicating the historical-territorial units, their evolution as well as the varied changes recorded in the name and structure of the territorial administration across Transylvania (from the 10th to 16th centuries) has become necessary due to the radical transformation undergone by the said administration as well as to the need to better inform the general public and particularly the specialists concerned with historical, territorial, geographic, economic, political or social, etc. issues or those engaged in territory research meant to support public or territorial planning policies. After the dissolution of the Dacian state as a result of king Burebista's dethroning, the Roman Empire established its Danubian borders and incorporated, one by one, all the regions situated on both banks of the Lower Danube, then within Roman jurisdiction. Only the union of the Transylvanian Dacian defied the Roman Empire and remained firm in their decision to continue its process of consolidation into statal units. This situation brought about long periods of warfare under king Decebal, which ended with the defeat of the Dacians and the transformation of a large part of Dacia into a Roman province. "Transylvania," or "Ardeal," are two names commonly used in reference to the Romanian territory covering the entire western side of the Carpathian Alps. Another name the Romanians use for this territory is "Ardeal." Due to its particular and, at the same time, outstanding geographical individuality, its unique ethno-demographic base, its distinctive economy and social-administrative structures at work between the 10th and 16th centuries—the kniezates and the voivodates, the counties and the countries and above all, due to its own system of statuses and spatial-temporal institutions of political and cultural type that took shape throughout a long process of historical evolution, the administrative homogeneity of Transylvania is the consequence of an intense diversification of the historical conditions with their specific symptomatology and inter-conditionings that supported the complementary relationships amongst its regions. All these aspects have begot life environments of extraordinary economic potential that are well-differentiated enough so as to support one another, and, when reunited, to achieve the overall homogeneity of today's Transylvania.