

# The Noble Judges in Timiș County

## (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

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### Instead of introduction

SPECIALIZED LITERATURE has advanced several discussions and opinions on the appearance of noble judges, as well as hypotheses about their institutional continuity. As with most political-administrative bodies specific to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, these officials were not the innovation of the Angevin dynasty,<sup>1</sup> because their activity had also been known in the previous century. According to the older historiography, the *judices nobilium* represented a transformed version of the royal servitors' institution, mentioned in the famous document from the year 1232 concerning the settlement of a dispute from Zala County.<sup>2</sup>

Recently there have appeared a series of hypotheses contesting this. Tringli István contends that one can talk about the noble judges only beginning from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or, more precisely, from 1273, when they were first mentioned in Orbász Źupa of Lower Slavonia.<sup>3</sup> Even if he contests an earlier dating, the researcher admits that the judges appeared against the background of the decay registered by the institution of the royal judges, who functioned in the counties.

However, it was precisely this fact that was recorded by the royal servitors in Zala, who complained to the king that the distance between the counties and the heart of the kingdom had slowed down the course of the judicial proceedings and delayed the presence of the delegate judges and, on that ground, they requested and received the privilege of hearing and deciding on disputes and wrongdoings in their own county.<sup>4</sup> A location was therefore chosen, in this case Kehida, as was the number of judges who would preside over the trials. No doubt their sittings and judgments had the aspect of comital assemblies because the aforementioned document speaks of *uniuersis seruietes... citra et ultra Zalam*.<sup>5</sup> We do not have access to evidence showing that these assemblies were attended by the *comes* or his subordinates, which is why we consider that the *seruietes regis* in Zala County formed an institution that preceded the one of the noble judges.

This hypothesis is linked not so much to the terminological references, because their name in Hungarian recommended them as servants of the judges, a meaning that their Latin denomination also came close to, but to the political-administrative transformations occurring in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

In this case, the absence of the *comes* and his representatives was motivated by the fact that he himself was involved in a dispute that the *servientes regis* wanted to judge,<sup>6</sup> a situation that was exceptional even in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when other legal authorities were responsible for handling such cases.<sup>7</sup>

The strongest argument in favor of our opinion is the lack of elected representatives of the *servitors*, which indirectly certifies the absence of another institution, namely the county court of assize. Still, there are sufficient testimonies demonstrating that the sessions of the king's subjects in Zala had the characteristics of comital or provincial assemblies, attesting therefore a process whose results led to the emergence of new administrative institutions.

## The situation inside the administrative unit

UNLIKE IN Transylvania, where the noble judges acted in twos, there were four such judges in the seats of justice from the Banatian counties, as required by the laws and decrees for the rest of Hungary. Unfortunately most of their names remained unknown to history, because very little documentary information has been preserved about their activity and identity. Thus, in the case of Timiș County, we only know the names of eleven noblemen who had the appellative *judex nobilium*<sup>8</sup> over the course of two centuries, but in one case, the assignment of the title remains uncertain.<sup>9</sup>

The first document preserved from the sitting of a county assize court goes back to 15 December 1321, and attests the participation of three noble judges.<sup>10</sup> We do not know for what reason the fourth was absent and which of the families Ștefan, Grigore and Mihai came from, but we may assume that they were provincial nobles. The sitting took place in Timișoara, in the presence of *Comes* Nicolae Treutul and proves that this settlement hosted the seat of justice at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

In chronological order, the following judge mentioned in the sources is Benedict, son of Dumitru. Besides the fact that he took part in the investigations carried out in the lawsuit between Moyus of Ozlar and Nicolae Orrus, debated in the assize of 8 July 1343,<sup>12</sup> we have no further information about this character.

Until the year 1409, when Valentine Panik was mentioned, there was no further documentary evidence relating to the noble judges' activity. What we know about this noble is that he participated in investigating a case, but his name was not mentioned by any other historical source. For this reason, we do not know if Valentin was a relative of Petru Pany's, ennobled by Governor Iancu of Hunedoara, a few years later, with the villages Páln and *Zachachyi*,<sup>13</sup> or whether he came from Cluj County, where there was an estate called Panik<sup>14</sup> As regards Timiș County, we do not know of any locality that might have had this name.<sup>15</sup>

The first known representative of the Muron<sup>16</sup> family who bore the title *judex* was apparently Ioan, who held this office in 1467.<sup>17</sup> Of course, there is no question that this was not the noble bearing the same name and having similar duties in 1346,<sup>18</sup> but a descendant of his, from the same family. Even if the document does not specifically refer to him as magistrate of the nobility, there are indications that his Ioan's predecessor

had held this position, but these clues are not beyond dispute. Judging from the information we have, we may ascertain that at least five noblemen from this family held the offices of noble judges or officers of the assize court.

What is unclear is the quality of Peter Kwre, whose name was added later, after the mention *judex nobilium* above it and the name of Ioan Muron.<sup>19</sup> We do not know why his name was initially omitted. We may take into consideration an error of the notary's or subsequent decisions of the assize court, but we cannot deny his self-understood quality as a magistrate. However, we also cannot exclude the possibility that he was an officer of the assize court or of the county who accompanied Ioan Muron in conducting the investigation.

In the same document, before the two names, one can detect the existence of an anthroponym which was subsequently written off, probably because his task was assigned to Ioan Muron and Petru Kwre. His first name was Andrei (*Andream*) and his mention after the syntagm *unum ex nobis* gives us every reason to consider that he was one of four magistrates of the county in 1467.

While we know he was one of the judges in 1481, neither the locality nor the family of origin is known in the case of Paul the literate.<sup>20</sup> According to the decree issued in 1435, a magistrate's activity lasted at least one year, after which time he could retire, but the law suggests that judges could remain in office even after the expiration of their term.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps Paul was in office for 12 months because the one who conducted the investigations during the next year was Valentin *Moruny*.<sup>22</sup> As we could see, the participation of the nobles of Muron in the legal activities from Timiș was well known, especially since the members of this family had repeatedly held the offices of: noble judges, the king's men or *procurators*. However, we do not know how the judges' commissions were divided in the seat of justice, and whether they conducted on-site investigations by each of the four judges in turn, over a certain period, which is why we cannot categorically state that Paul was replaced by Valentin of Muron. The last *judex nobilium* mentioned in the 15<sup>th</sup> century sources is Francisc of Dóci. Of course, this was not the homonymous comes of the camera, but a noble from Timiș, who came from the village Dóc. We do not know if the medieval village hearth corresponded to that of present-day Dolaș, situated about 20 km southwest of Ciacova, but the toponymy suggests a continuity of habitation in the old settlement. This is a more credible hypothesis than considering Francis to be a member of the Dóczy family, which originated in Bratislava County, but had gained roots in the Banat following the relation of familiarity with Iancu of Hunedoara.<sup>23</sup>

Among the same officials may be included Mihai *dictus* Poztos, son of Benedict, about whom the documents say that he was a magistrate of Timișoara in 1390.<sup>24</sup> There is no information to the effect that he was one of the judges of the Timiș assize court, either that year or before; on the other hand, the title of *judex* could represent another function or quality. In the absence of other information, we cannot identify another seat of justice in Timișoara aside from the comital one. The uncertainties related to its activity persist also because the documents present him both as a plaintiff and the owner of villages in Hațeg County<sup>25</sup> and as an accused party in a matter pertaining to one of these properties.<sup>26</sup> We also learn that Mihai was *cives de Themeswar*, a situation that gave him the opportunity to be a member of the assize court, which was convened precisely in

this borough, but most of the noble judges known in Timiș, whose origins can be traced, belonged to the provincial gentry, with manors and courts located in villages. The activity of this character has been shed light upon by István Petrovics, who claims that Mihai Postos was master of the borough of Timișoara for more than a decade, from 1390 until 1402, as the documents attest, which is why a longer activity is not excluded. According to the Hungarian historian, on Saint George's Day, that is on 24 April, those who were to lead the destinies of the kingdom's boroughs were elected in all these settlements. In the case of wealthier families from other parts of Hungary, the tendency was to inherit this office or hold it for more than a decade. Insofar as Mihai Postos is concerned, the historian is puzzled by the fact that he was the leader of the borough for more than a decade, given that Timișoara was not a town with royal entitlements and he was a cloth merchant who did not come from a well-established family.<sup>27</sup>

Still, the results of our research, based on the assumption that the judges' identity is discerned only by the presence of the title *judex nobilium* remains modest, especially since the period under scrutiny spans over two centuries. There have been certified several situations in which the judges commissioned to carry out inquests no longer had their position mentioned when the documents were drafted. For example, in Szabolcs County, Ramocsaházi Egyed had, on 6 September 1413, the quality of a magistrate, while three months later he was merely an envoy of the seat of justice. Similar situations were encountered in the years 1418 and 1421, when the judges were Megyeri Adorján and, respectively, Ladislau Magyi. Moreover, the judges in 1425 have been identified based on the list of those who were mandated by the seat of justice to undertake various missions.<sup>28</sup> For the other 39 people,<sup>29</sup> who did not have the regular title, but were mandated by the seat of Timiș, we should therefore follow any clue that might prove they were members of the assize court.

One of the judges' first duties was testimony, which the first known decree, issued by Charles Robert, refers to. According to this document from the beginning of the third decade, one or two of the four judges participated with the *comes'* man in the inquests and on-site investigations.<sup>30</sup>

Like the kings' decrees, all the documentary information we have had access to proves that the noble judges attended and conducted the investigations ordered by the seats of justice. In Szabolcs County, of the 39 commissions received by the judges, 27 referred to investigations at the scene of the place.<sup>31</sup> The situation in Transylvania was slightly more different, since here one of the two judges had to conduct the inquiries.<sup>32</sup>

Given that some documents omitted to mention their titlature, it is difficult to identify the position of those mandated in the absence of further information. Still, we consider that one clue that reveals their relationship with the court of assize is the expression *ex nobis*, often used by notaries. In fact, this attribute emphasized the status of those mandated as members of the assize court.

The formula is more convincing when complemented by the mentions *unum* or *duos ex nobis*, and the number or those commissioned to investigate case was higher. Given that only vice-comites, juror assessors and judges constituted the court of justice, it becomes quite clear that the identification of other officials, in such cases, is out of the question.

For example, the Timiș assize court mandated Ștefan *dictus* Genge and Dominic, son of Benche to investigate the complaint filed by Petru of Baty, but it is only about

the former that we learn he was *unum ex nobis*,<sup>33</sup> that is, one of the members of the county assize court. Besides, it should not surprise us that the same Ștefan Genge was commissioned to conduct inquiries the following year too,<sup>34</sup> which demonstrates that he was a constant member of the assize court. Therefore we consider that in this case it was not a mistake of the scribe, who may have omitted Dominic: it simply shows that Ștefan was a full member of the institution, even without the documents recording his title as *judex nobilium*.

We can prove this hypothesis much more clearly in the case of Benedict, son of Dumitru, who was commissioned to conduct inquiries together with Nicolae, son of Benedict *de Sancto Martino* (Sânmartinu Maghiar). Of the two, only the former was referred to as *ex nobis* and *judicem nobilium*: rendered like this, these formulas demonstrate that not all those who participated in investigations or received various assignments were members of the seats of justice. In this context, Nicolae did not have the position of a magistrate, but was merely a representative of the institution, as a man of the county or of the *vice-comes*.

The locality Andyckfalva is among the vanished and geographically unidentified settlements in the county, and the only assumption related to it has been proposed by the historian Milleker, who considers the toponym was close to that of the village Andocsfalva, located somewhere near the Timiș River and Ictar-Budinț.<sup>35</sup> From this place came Nicolae, son Dominic, who in 1372 was empowered to investigate the complaint of an official from Saswar.<sup>36</sup> We do not have further information about this character who had the quality of *unum ex nobis* and the *comes* appellation. This attribute or title that Nicolae had was found amongst the wealthy gentry, the reference being, in this case, not to the office itself, but to his social status. Obviously, the *comes*' responsibilities did not entail executing the tasks ordered by the assize court, the rapport being in fact quite reversed, given that the function was held by the barons. Things become much clearer if we consider that the same title was found with Ștefan Genge and Benedict, judges of the nobles. Therefore this function made it possible to include Nicolae among the members of the assize court, giving him a social status that was in some way better than that of the county men.

The last envoy about whom we learn that he was among those who formed the seat of justice was Petru of Chuban, even though the reference to him was not late, but came from 1389, towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the location, an obscure fact remains the absence of the *ex nobis* expression and its semantic variants from the subsequent documents. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were no more mentions attesting that the envoys were members of the seat of justice; instead, other formulas appeared, betraying the existence of patterns used by notaries or by those who drafted the documents of the institution. Starting from 1406, we learn that envoys were *per nos deputato*,<sup>38</sup> and from the third decade on the following expression became customary: *testimonio sigilli nostri et per nos jurare faciendo dixit et est confessus eomodo*.<sup>39</sup>

In other words, starting from the first decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, mention was made just of their being commissioned by the authorities, without further examples, but from 1429 up until the turn of the century, all the documents issued by the seat of justice, which certified the investigations conducted, mentioned the fact that the reports had

been made respecting the protocol. Those mandated returned to the seat of the assize court presenting the seal of the authorities, and then swore an oath. The seal belonged to one of the members of the assize court, a magistrate perhaps, thus ensuring greater credibility for the mission. According to some views, any noble could conduct inquiries bearing the seal of the authorities, so in situations when this formulation appeared, the noble judges could be excluded from among the delegates.<sup>40</sup>

We may include Gheorghe of Chechtelek<sup>41</sup> among the judges and nobles: he was a character whose delegation by the comital seat was not attested by the documents, but one of the reasons that convinced us to propose this hypothesis was his participation in three inquiries over a period of approximately four years. From 1410 until 1414, he alone carried out the inquiries ordered by the institution, which proves that he was one of its constant members and possibly even one of the judges. The historian C. Tóth Norbert has confirmed what the decrees of Kings Sigismund and Matthias suggested, namely a longer activity of these officials, demonstrating that the judges from Szabolcs County carried out their activity for a period between 1 and 23 years.<sup>42</sup> Another argument which supports our opinion is the fact that he belonged to the Chechtelek family, whose members, we find, actively participated in the administrative life of the county.

Without relativizing the hypothesis presented and maintaining some confusion, we shall admit that when their titlature is absent, the identification of the noble judges can hardly be discerned by the presence of a diplomatic formula preferred by the notaries. Not even the mention *ex nobis* is a guarantee of this, as some sources suggest. For instance, in 1471, the seat of justice from Bodrog County sent four nobles to conduct inquiries, mentioning that they were *quatuor ex nobis*, of which only one had the title of *judex nobilitium*, although he was listed among the judges in the intitulation of the document.<sup>43</sup> Undoubtedly, not all the four judges of the county could be responsible for executing the command, but only one, as we can see from the those recounted; notwithstanding all this, we are told that the other three nobles were also part of the assize court. Of course, their quality was that of men of the county in the service of the judges, but they were not confounded with the latter.

In conclusion, we may say that the *ex nobis* formula did not always expose the noblemen's status as judges, but it did so to a high degree, and especially where one or two nobles were referred to in the company of several envoys, their administrative position was certain.

It is difficult to pronounce ourselves on the function of all those about whom the documents provided no clue and designate them as noble judges. From among the 50 people mentioned as being in the service of the assize court, about 12<sup>44</sup> we do not have any information specifying their quality, which is why we believe they were the county's men. Thus, only 15 people, a small number of the total, were identified as noble judges, a reality which shows that three quarters of the investigations ordered by the comital seat were carried out by the county's men.

THE NOBLE JUDGES AND THE MEN EMPOWERED BY THE SEAT OF JUSTICE  
TO CARRY OUT INVESTIGATIONS IN TIMIȘ COUNTY

No	Judges	Other mentions	Date	References	Family Locality
1	Stephanus	– <i>judex nobilium</i>			
2	Gregorius	– <i>judex nobilium</i>			
3	Michael	– <i>judex nobilium</i>	15.12.1321	Anjoukori oklevéltár 6, 353	
4	comitem Stephanus dictum Genge	– <i>vnum ex nobis</i>	02.04.1337	DL. 51.054 [=Pesty, Temes, 44–45]	
5	Dominicus, filium Benche	– <i>vnum ex nobis</i>	27.10.1338	DL 40789	
6	comitem Benedictum filium Demetri			DL 51054 [=Pesty, Temes, 44–45]	
7	Nicolaus filium Benedicti de Sancto Martino	– <i>vnum ex nobis</i> – <i>judex nobilium</i>	08.07.1343	DL. 40914 [=Pesty, Temes, 73–74; Anjoukori oklevéltár 27, 470, 599]	Sânmartin
8	Ioan Folz dictus Hog of Nijmty	– <i>duos ex nobis</i> – <i>ydoneos ac fidedignos</i> – <i>nobiles homines nostris</i>	12.12.1346	DL 91376	Nemeti
9	Ioan, son of Ilie of Murun	– <i>duos ex nobis</i> – <i>ydoneos ac fidedignos</i> – <i>nobiles homines nostris</i>	12.12.1346	DL 91376	Muron
10	Iacov, son of Petre dictus Wadum of Peterlaka	– <i>homines nostris</i>	02.08.1351	DL 41167	Peterlaka
11	comitem Nicolaum filium Dominici of Andyckfalua	– <i>vnum ex nobis</i>	12.10.1372	Pesty, Temes, 122	Andyckfalua
12	Ioan of Adrianfalva	– <i>homines nostris</i>	01.07.1376	DL 42011 [=Documenta Romaniae Historica 15, 50]	Adrianfalva
13	Laurențiu of Chechtelech		20.08.1387	DL 52557 [=Pesty, Temes, 152]	Chechtelek

14	Petru of Chuban	– vnum ex nobis	11.05.1389	DL 42421	Chuban
15	Mychael dictus Poztos	– <i>judex de Temessuar</i>	24.02, 21.09, 28, 31.10.1390	Pesty, Temes, 185, 188, 195–196	
16	Toma of Rauazd	– <i>homines nostris</i>	12.09.1392	Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, I, 2622	Ravazd
17	Gall of Numpti	– <i>homines nostris</i>	09.11.1400	DL 42753	Nemeti
18	Blasiu of Muron		23.06.1405	Pesty, Temes, 367	Muron
19	Georgius filius Ladislai of Balasfalua		21.07.1405	DL.53.251 [=Pesty, Temes, 356–357, 367]	Balásfalua (Blajova)
20	Iohanes, son of Petru of Tosalas		23.03.1406	DL 92260	Tószalas
21	Ladislau, son of Mihai of Calaka	– <i>per nobis deputato</i>	06.04.1406	DL 92262 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, II/1, 4611]	Calaka (Călăcea)
22	Ioan literatus of Mondola	– <i>per nobis deputato</i>	25.01.1407	DL 53369 [=Pesty, Temes, 387]	Mondola
23	Petru, son of Ioan of Karol		20.09.1407	DL 92296 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, II/2, 5739]	Karol
24	Gallus Parvus of Kenez		15.05.1408	DL 92310 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, II/2, 6103]	Kenez (Satchinez)
25	Francisc, son of Emeric of Muron		15.05.1408	DL 92311 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, II/2, 6102]	
			11.12.1408	DL 92327 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, II/2, 6469]	Muron
26	Valentin Panik	– <i>judex nobilium</i>	08.08.1409	Pesty, Temes, 420	
27	Clementis of Bethlem	– <i>homines nostris ad id deputati</i>	17.06.1410	DL 85594 [=Pesty, Temes, 428–429]	Bethlen



			DL 53558 [=Pesty, Temes, 435-436]	
28			DL 48226 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, III, 2954]	
	Gheorghe of Chechtelek		DL 53805 [=Pesty, Temes, 491-492]	Chechtelek
29	Petru of Dóczi	- <i>homines nostris</i>	DL 43301 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, V, 1009] DL 43303 [=Pesty, Temes, 517]	Dóczi
30	Paul of Chechtelek		DL 54154 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, VIII, 221]	Chechtelek
31	Francisc of Kenez		DL 93924 [=Mályusz, Zsigmondkori, VIII, 492]	Kenez
32	<i>Petrum filium Gerardi dicti Kozoros de Ujfalu</i>		DL 54482 [=Pesty, Temes, 592]	Ujfalu
33	Besan of Beel	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal and swearing an oath	DL 54684 [=Pesty, Temes, 624-625]	Beel
34	Petru Ceh of Ujfalu	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	DL 54770	Ujfalu
35	Bartolomeu of Chechtelek	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	DL 54800	Chechtelek
36	Ștefan of Choba	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	DL 43942	Choba
37	Ioan of Pordany	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal		Pordany
38	David of Wijgerd	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	DL 44038	Ujgerd

39	Andrei Checheuik of Nempti	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	23.04.1437	DL 55082	Nemeti
40	Ioan Sarzay of Nemeti	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal		DL 55083	Nemeti
41	Dominic, son of Ștefan of Peterd	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal		DL 68369	Peterd
42	Andrei of Dolay	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal			Dolay
43	Ștefan Talmadi of Wyfalu	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	22.09.1439	DL 44266	Ujfalu
44	Emeric of Nemeti	<i>infrascripta inquisitionem. faciendo misimus...</i>	05.11.1443	DL 44355	Nemeti
45		reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	03.12.1443	DL 55266	
	Nicolae, son of Nexe of Beel	reinforcing the accounts by submitting the seal	19.06.1453	DL 55541	Beel
46	Andrei	<i>judex nobilium ?</i>			
47	Ioan Muron	<i>judex nobilium</i>			Muron
48	Petru Kwre	<i>judex nobilium</i>	23.06.1467	DL 16552	
49	Paul the literate	<i>judex nobilium</i>	01.05.1481	DL 18477	
50	Valentin Moruny	<i>judex nobilium</i>	1482	DL 18743	Muron
51	Franciscus Dóczi	<i>judex nobilium</i>	20.02.1487	DL 97461	Dóczi

## Notes

1. Ioan Aurel Pop, *Din mâinile valahilor schismatici. Români și puterea în Regatul Ungariei medievale (secolele XIII-XIV)* (București: Litera, 2011), 189–216.
2. Holub József, *Zala megye története a középkorban*, vol. I. (Budapest, 1929), 105; Váczy Péter, “A király serviensek és a pátrimoniális királyság,” *Századok* 61–62 (1927–1928): 357–360; Scheftsik Gyula, *Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok vármegye területének története 1876-ig, A nemesi vármegye kialakulása, tisztikara, igazságszolgáltatási és közigazgatási szerepe* (CD); C. Tóth Norbert, *Szabolcs megye működése a Zsigmond-korban*, (Nyíregyháza, 2008); W. Kovács András, “Szolgabírák és járások a középkori Erdélyben,” *Erdély Múzeum* 72, 3–4 (2010); W. Kovács András,

- “Administrația comitatului Hunedoara în Evul Mediu,” *Sargeția* 35–36 (2007–2008); Szakály Ferenc, “Tolna megye középkori szolgabírái,” *Történelmi Szemle* 39, 3–4 (1997).
3. Tringli István, “Megyék a középkori Magyarországon,” in *Honoris causa. Tanulmányok Engel Pál tiszteletére*, (Budapest, 2009), 497–498.
  4. Wencel Gusztáv, ed., *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. XI (Budapest, 1873), 249–251.
  5. *Ibid.*, 249–251.
  6. Georgius Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civili*, vol. III/2, (Budae, 1829), 315–318.
  7. Franciscus Döry, Georgius Bonis, Vera Bácskai, eds., *Decreta Regni Hungariae*, vol. I (Budapest, 1976), 240–241; the exceptional presence of the king, the palatine or the court judge.
  8. See Annex.
  9. Magyar Országos Levéltár, Diplomatikai Levéltár (DL) 16552.
  10. Petrovics István, “A Temes megyei tisztikar legkorábbi kiadványai,” *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis. Historica* 116 (2002): 26.
  11. The Hungarian researcher Enikő Csukovits considers that given the scarcity of the sources, it is impossible to know which was the see of the judicial court in Timiș County up until the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Csukovits Enikő, “Sedriahelyek – megyeszékhelyek a középkorban,” *Történelmi Szemle* 39, 3–4 (1997): 366.
  12. Pesty Frigyes, *Oklevelek Temesmegye és Temesvárváros történetéhez*, ed. Ortvy Tivadar, vol. I (Pozsony, 1896), 73–74.
  13. DL 44566.
  14. DL 36390.
  15. Csánki Dezső, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában*, vol. I–II (Budapest, 1890–1894) (CD); Felix Milleker, *Délmagyarország középkori földrajza* (Temesvár, 1915), 221–228.
  16. A vanished settlement, close to Murani. We do not deny the possibility that the hearth of the medieval village lies underneath the one of the modern locality.
  17. DL 16552.
  18. DL 91376.
  19. DL 16552.
  20. DL 18477.
  21. Nagy Gyula, Kolosvári Sándor, Óvári Kelemen, eds., *Corpus Juris Hungarici, Magyar törvénytár. 1000-1526. Évi törvényczikkek* (Budapest, 1899), 254.
  22. DL 18743.
  23. Márki Sándor, “A Dóczyak Aradban,” *Turul* no. 4 (1891); the historian wrongly identifies Dóczy with Nagylucsei, especially since there was no kinship between the two clans.
  24. Pesty, *Temes*, 185.
  25. *Ibid.*, 185–188.
  26. *Ibid.*, 195–196.
  27. István Petrovics, “Egy 14. századi temesvári bíró: Posztós Mihály,” *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis. Historica* CIII (1996): 94–99; Petrovics, *A középkori Temesvár. Fejezetek a Begaparti város 1552 előtti történetéből* (Szeged, 2008), 62–64.
  28. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 58.
  29. See Annex.
  30. Döry, Bonis, Bácskai, eds., *Decreta*, I, 75: *Secundo est notandum, quod si exactores iudiciorum domini palatini vel iudicis curie regie ad tales processus egrediuntur, tunc regium hominem et testimonium capituli vel conventus quo supra ac hominem comitis necnon unum vel duos ex quatuor iudicibus secum ducere debent pro testimoniis.*
  31. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 68.

32. W. Kovács, "Administrația," 214.
33. Pesty, *Temes*, 44–45.
34. DL. 40789.
35. Milleker, *Délmagyarország*, 156.
36. Pesty, *Temes*, 122.
37. DL. 42421.
38. DL 92262 [=Mályusz Elemér, ed., *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, II/1, (Budapest, 1956), no. 4611]; DL 53369; [=Pesty, *Oklevelek*, 387].
39. Pesty, *Oklevelek*, 624–625.
40. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 69.
41. vanished settlement, whose geographical location has not been identified. Csánki believed it was situated somewhere on the banks of the Bârzava, which is why he could not decide which of the two counties to assign it to, Timiș or Caraș. In Romanian, the toponym nearest to Chechtelek would be Checea, but the latter settlement was mentioned as Kewche or Keche in the documents (Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, CD). We should also consider the toponym Cestereg (Csósztelek in Hungarian), located in Cuvin County, near the border between Timiș and Torontal Counties. Engel Pál, *Magyarország a középkor végén. Digitális térkép és adatbázis a középkori Magyar Királyság településeiről* (Budapest, 2001, CD). Still, the most plausible hypothesis is that the settlement lay on the territory east of Remetea; this is supported by the information that in the year 1323, Chech village belonged to the domain owned by the Himfy family—Milleker, *Délmagyarország*, 172–173.
42. Tóth, *Szabolcs megye*, 60.
43. Kammerer Ernő, Döry Ferencz, eds., *A zichyi és vásonkői gróf Zichy-család időseb ágának okmánytára*, vol. XI, (Budapest, 1915), 86: *Nos Nicolaus Pan et magister Martinus de Wyllyam vicecomites, item Michael de Kethaz et Johannes de Syde iudices nobilium comitatus de Bodrog memorie commendamus, quod cum nos ad videndam et audiendam aministracionem iudicii Georgii Chonthok, Stephani Mosalgo et Benedicti Kayandi iudicium et juratorum civium egregiorum Nicolai et Symonis de Kyswarda per ipsos in opido Mathywhaza constitutorum quatuor ex nobis, videlicet prefatum Johannem de Syde iudicem nobilium, Michaelem Ollary, Blasium Lenarth et Johannem Nag de Barath de sede nostra iudiciaria duxissemus transmittendos...*
44. See Annex.

### Abstract

#### The Noble Judges in Timiș County (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries)

In the Middle Ages, the noble judges' institution represented the core mechanism of the nobiliary county. Unlike in Transylvania, where the court assizes were chaired by only two judges, in Timiș four elected nobles were mandated to this effect. The scarcity of the sources leaves the juridical activity of this county in obscurity: here only 50 nobles were mentioned in relation to the operation of the seat of justice, and only one-tenth of these had the title of *iudex nobilium*. The documents show that throughout their lives, magistrates were the retainers or vassals of the high nobility, in whose service they tried to prosper and improve their livelihood. Their activity was generally juridical—they were responsible for carrying out on-site investigations, issuing subpoenas in court cases—but the royal conscriptions show that their duties included the collection of taxes or the census of the county residents.

### Keywords

County, noble judges, seat of justice, the county's men, royal servitors.