

# The Palatine Assemblies from Timiș and Caraș Counties and the Documents They Issued in the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries\*

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**T**HE HISTORIANS' concern for explaining the process of the formation and operation of this body,<sup>1</sup> that is, of the general assemblies held for one or several counties and presided over by the palatine for judicial purposes, has revealed that the 14<sup>th</sup> century represented the peak moment of their functioning. In essence, these assemblies became itinerant courts of justice where sentences were passed by the kings or other dignitaries, usually the palatine, who, by virtue of the mandate received from the king, passed judgments on the latter's behalf along a pre-established route. In 1280,<sup>2</sup> the palatine began the series of trials held in the general assembly (*congregatio generalis*) of the county, even though we have been unable to detect any periodicity or particular rules for convening them. In fact, only after 1314 could one truly speak of a general palatine assembly. During the reign of Charles Robert of Anjou, especially towards the end of his reign, this practice became customary, and then, during the time of King Louis I, it reached its apogee. A solution was thus found for settling the lesser disputes of the nobility by convening one, two, or three counties in a general assembly. What was visible throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century was the tendency to abandon convening a large number of counties in judicial assemblies; the option adopted was that of the palatine judge traveling to the general assembly of one or, possibly, two counties.

The palatine held these assemblies both under royal command and as part of his duties as a palatine<sup>3</sup> (*tam de mandato vestro regio, quam ex ordinarii officii mei palatinatus debito*), but we must say that the documents do not mention the existence of royal commands in all these cases. Sometimes the documents include formulations indicating the initiator of and the motivation for organizing congregations *ex percepto et mandato domini regis specialis . . . ad compescendos fures et malefactores congregacionem . . . celebrassemus. . .*<sup>4</sup> Starting from here, the idea that palatine assemblies were always held under royal command was generalized.

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The most frequently invoked reason for convening itinerant courts presided over by the palatine or his deputy, who was appointed by the king,<sup>5</sup> was that of eradicating thievery, malefaction, etc. Other motives were then added to these, some of them not explicitly avowed, such as: the recovery of royal possessions that had been alienated in time and of various regalian revenues, etc. The justice reform measures taken by the Kings of Hungary Charles Robert of Anjou and Louis I also regulated the activity of palatine assemblies, which registered the peak of their functioning at that time, but ceased their activities one century later.

The judicial powers of the palatine assemblies were limited to the counties from the Hungarian kingdom. This means that assemblies were never convoked for the counties in the Voivodship of Transylvania, which were under the jurisdiction of the voivode, or for the counties that were under the authority of the bans. The privileged cities, the Saxons, the Szeklers, etc., were also not required to attend these assemblies.

According to late thirteenth-century regulations relating to the place where such assemblies could be held, they had to take place in open fields, outside the settlements. The documents mentioned this in the place of issuance, since they were issued near a village, near a town . . . (*prope villam<sup>6</sup>, prope civitatem<sup>7</sup>*). In most of the cases, this provision was observed, but there were many situations in which the assembly was held in a village, in a city (*in villa, in civitate*), or sometimes in the city suburbs. Assemblies could be summoned on holidays, but also randomly at the octaves or quindenies of a church festival or on the Thursday, Wednesday, etc., before or after a holiday. Fluctuations such as those shown above continued to occur until 1347. After that year, palatine assemblies were constantly convened on Mondays and only exceptionally on other days.

As regards their duration, they initially lasted 1-3 days; in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the rule was that they should be held for six days, while in the next century, the number of days grew to 14–15. The documents issued by such an assembly mentioned, as a rule, in the final protocol, the day of the assembly on which they were issued. For example: given on the seventh day of our assembly (*datum septimo die congregationis nostre*).<sup>8</sup> The month and day of the document were reckoned in relation to that.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, people were summoned to the palatine assemblies by proclamations or musters in public places, especially in the county boroughs. It is estimated that this had also been the path followed in previous centuries for making the date and the location of the future palatine congregation public. We do not know of any written invitations to participate that may have been preserved. It may also be added here that while the venue tended to become permanent for each county or counties associated in the congregation (for example, Şemlacu Mare for Caraş County, or Timişoara for Timiş County), the date changed depending on the moment when the palatine started his itinerary. There was no specific date by month, or a particular day that was observed in the palatine's judicial periplus.

Initially, the convocation was addressed to all the nobles of the county, besides whom, in certain cases, people of every estate and condition could also be summoned. Under this nomination should be understood people who had estates but had no recognized nobiliary title. The presence of serfs, ordinary people and the residents from the domains was

out of the question, their cases being heard by the domanial authority of the landowner. Ordinary people (*communes, populares*) could be encountered in palatine assemblies only in exceptional situations. At the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> and during the next century, the convocation was addressed increasingly only to the noblemen's community (*universitas nobilium*).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the nobility had the essential role in these congregations. The noblemen heard their own subjects in the domanial court, and they were also the spokesmen and defenders of their subjects' interests in the assembly.<sup>10</sup> The nobles who enjoyed certain privileges or exemptions from the king were not required to attend these assemblies.

Regarding the proceedings of a palatine assembly, some clarifications are needed. According to the decisions reached by the assembly of the estates in 1291,<sup>11</sup> the palatine had the right to pass judicial sentences in any province of the kingdom, with the exceptions mentioned above. The palatine, the vice-palatine or another designated deputy chaired the meeting. He was assisted in the act of justice by his proto-notary, who had the seal, and by a chaplain, before whom the required oaths could be submitted. Attending were the *comites* of the participating counties, the *vice-comites*, the four judges of the nobles (*iudices nobilium*), and the representatives of the closest places of attestation or chanceries. 1324 saw the appearance of assessor jurors (*iurati assessores*), 12 in number, elected from among the nobles of good reputation by those present at the meeting, their temporary office ending with the dismantling of the congregation.<sup>12</sup> The role of these jurors was all the greater since they often remained until the end of the assembly, while the nobility left the site after a day or two.

Presiding over the general assembly, the palatine heard cases submitted right there, in the assembly, cases deferred from one palatine assembly to another, and sometimes cases remitted by the county judicial seat (the *vice-comes* and the four judges of the nobles, with other nobles who took part in the trial).

Oral testimony prevailed for a long time as a means of probation, and only later, in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, did written documents take its place. It is worth mentioning here that according to juridical practices and legislative regulations, the palatine determined the number of oath helpers, depending on the social status of the accused and, of course, the gravity of their deeds. The testimony submitted by the oath helpers brought by both parties, sometimes in impressive numbers, did not regard the deed or the accusation itself, which they had most often not even witnessed. It related to the credibility, dignity, and honor of the one for whom they swore the oath. The situation changed when orders were given for an on-site investigation, to be carried out by a person designated by a place of attestation and by a person representing the county, who ascertained in writing whether the charge was true, either entirely or partly. Sometimes, within the course of a congregation, the charge was brought, the complaint was made, and after the on-site investigation was ordered, the result of the inquiry was communicated, the case being once again subjected to trial. Most of the times, palatine assemblies set new trial dates for the presentation of evidence, the supporting documents and the rights invoked. The case was usually transferred for trial to the royal court, but there it was again the palatine who had to pass judgment; as a rule, the court judge did not take over these cases, just like the palatine did not interfere in the sentences passed by the royal court judge. There were also instances where the palatine assembly postponed the ruling in the

case until the convening of the next immediate assembly in the neighboring counties, probably in order to shorten the trial duration.

The palatine assembly issued the final sentence in certain cases, in a solemn form, written on parchment, the same institution functioning also as an executive body. However, there were some limitations as regards the sentences that were passed and enforced by the palatine. Thus the decision to execute a noble could not be given without obtaining the king's assent in this respect.<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the trial and all its stages were conducted on behalf of the king and not of the palatine, who chaired and led the general assembly.

In general, it has been noted that the age of King Louis I was the golden age of palatine assemblies; these were held with a certain regularity, in traditional places along a well-known route. Later the intervals at which these assemblies were convened increased. One explanation could be the growing importance of written documents and their priority over the oral evidence given by witnesses in support of the rights defended or the accusations leveled in court. The procedures were simplified, the trial process was fluidized, and things consequently began to evolve in a different direction, in which intermediary authorities were less and less to be found. However, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the monarchy made more and more efforts to revitalize an institution that was increasingly perceived at the level of the counties as unnecessary and burdensome for the meager existing finances. Attempts were made to replace the palatine, who was outside the borders of the kingdom, with other dignitaries. The king, who was on the move through the realm on account of various military campaigns, provided the opportunity of organizing such gatherings. At other times, officials from the area were appointed. Thus, Petru of Perenyi, former *comes* of the Szeklers, *comes* of Maramureş, Ung, Ugocea, Zemplén between 1404 and 1410, was sent to hold assemblies in the counties: Satu Mare, Bereg, Ugocea, Szabolcs, etc. The duration of these assemblies began to grow: they sometimes lasted for one month, being perceived as an excessive burden for the counties, which sought means of eschewing that obligation and solving their judicial problems on their own. In 1464, King Matthias Corvinus took special measures to reintroduce palatine assemblies but without much success, since the counties would rather pay redemption fees than convene an assembly. In 1478, the same King Matthias Corvinus exempted several counties from this obligation; nonetheless, the counties: Cenad, Timiș, Arad Zarand and others nearby were forced to continue holding such assemblies (though not for long) because of the inordinate increase in the number of thieves and criminals in the area. Then, in 1486, the king dissolved this obligation for all the counties in the kingdom (*Quod iudicium generale sive palatine aboleatur a modo nullo unquam tempore celebretur*)<sup>14</sup>. There were some attempts in 1492, in 1514 or 1523 to resume previous practices but without results. The place of the general palatine assembly held with one, two or more counties was taken by the general assembly of the county, which now had new responsibilities.<sup>15</sup>

The analysis of the documents issued by the palatine assemblies<sup>16</sup> allows us to reconstitute, with some gaps, the route followed by the palatine and the counties envisaged for such congregations, which included the counties in northwest Transylvania: Satu Mare, Bihor, Crasna, Zarand, Arad, Cenad and those located south of the Mureş: Timiș and Caraș. Usually initiated at the end of April, the series of palatine assemblies

was concluded at some time in the autumn, at the end of October.<sup>17</sup> The first itinerary of Palatine Nicolae of Zsámbék,<sup>18</sup> which included the area of Caraş County for the first time, dates back to 1347. It began with the assembly of Győr and Komárom Counties (30 April), continued with Pozsony and Moson (7–10 May), Nyitra and Trencsén (14 May), Nógrád and Hont (28 May and 2 June), Borsod and Heves (4 June), Abaúj and Sáros (18–24 June), Szepes (25–28 June), Szabolcs and Bereg (8–11 July), Satu Mare and Ugocea (16–25 July), Zarand and Bekes (30 July–6 August), Csongrád (13–16 August), Caraş (20 to 26 August)<sup>19</sup> and reached Keve and Torontál (27–30 August).<sup>20</sup>

A different itinerary from 1349 included the participation of twenty counties in the sixteen assembly meetings that were held. Starting from Somogy County (11–16 May), it continued through Zala (18–23 May), Pozsony (15–21 June), Nyitra and Trencsén (22–25 June), Bars (29 June–4 July), Nógrád and Hont (6–11 July), Heves (13–18 July), Abaúj (27 July–1 August), Zemplén and Ung (10–16 August), Szabolcs and Bereg (17–22 August), Satu Mare and Ugocea (17–22 August), Bihar and Crasna (24–29 August), Timiş (14–19 September),<sup>21</sup> Caraş (21–26 September),<sup>22</sup> Szerém (21–24 September), and it ended with the assembly of Baranya County (5 October). Where the dates overlapped, as for instance on 17–22 August or 21–26 September, the latter in the case of Caraş and Szerém Counties, it is obvious that the palatine was replaced by the vice-palatine in one of the assemblies, but all the documents were issued exclusively in the palatine's name.

A somewhat unique situation occurred in 1355, when we know of only four assemblies in a series that was obviously longer, but which also included the Banat region. The series started with the assemblies of Pest and Pilis Counties (9 June), Bihar (20 July), Bereg and Szabolcs (29 July), from where, after a break, it continued with the assembly of Caraş and Keve Counties (18–21 November),<sup>23</sup> held in Haram and presided over by the Ban of Severin, Dionisie Lackfi, *comes* of Caraş and Keve.

The Banat area was again envisaged in 1360, when the succession of palatine assemblies convened by Nicolae Kont started with the gathering of Pest and Pilis Counties (11–14 June), followed by Bihar and Crasna (29 June–6 July), Bekes and Zarand (6–12 July), Arad and Cenad (13–19 July), Timiş (27 July–3 August),<sup>24</sup> Caraş (3–9 August),<sup>25</sup> Csongrád (17–21 August), Bodrog (24–30 August), Valkó (14–21 September), Baranya (21–27 September), Tolna (28 September–3 October), Abaúj and Sáros (2–8 November) and Torna (16–23 November).

Four years later, in 1364, a new itinerary of palatine congregations began, with the inclusion of the Banat area, but this time a reverse route was followed: Pest and Pilis (27–30 March), Fejér (22–30 April), Veszprém (1–8 May), Baranya (20–26 May), Bodrog (1–8 July), Csongrád (8–14 July), Keve and Torontál (15–22 July), Caraş (22–30 July),<sup>26</sup> Cenad and Arad (5–10 August), Satu Mare and Ugocea (2–11 September), Szabolcs and Bereg (9–16 September), Zemplén and Ung (23–30 September), Abaúj and Sáros (2 October), Gömör and Torna (14–23 October).

In 1370, Palatine Ladislaus of Oppeln undertook a new judicial itinerary through the kingdom, starting with the assembly of Caraş County (12 May),<sup>27</sup> and going through Arad and Cenad (15–21 May), Zarand and Bekes (19–26 June), Bihar and Crasna (1–6 July), Satu Mare and Ugocea (11–22 July), Szabolcs and Bereg (29 July–8 August), Zemplén and Ung (5–16 August), Abaúj and Sáros (22 August–4 September), Pozsony

(14–21 October), Győr and Komárom (16–25 October). Without necessarily following a particular itinerary, in 1378, the palatine Nicolae of Gara was present at the general assembly of Caraş County, held according to custom near Şemlacu Mare, between 30 August and 8 September,<sup>28</sup> after which, between 6–December 15, he attended the assembly of Bihor County. The death of Louis I (1382) decreased the frequency of this judicial practice, reserved almost entirely to the palatine. General assemblies were also convened during the reign of King Sigismund of Luxembourg, but they no longer covered the same broad area of the kingdom. In the Banat area,<sup>29</sup> there were general assembly meetings for one or more counties, but without the participation of the palatine.<sup>30</sup> Probably the Ban of Severin played a similar role in 1391, when he convened assembly meetings for the Romanian districts in the area,<sup>31</sup> especially since the position of a ban was associated with the quality of *Comes* of Timiş County in 1387, 1392–1393, 1408–1409.

In the region under consideration, the palatine's place in these general assemblies was taken, at a certain moment, by Pipo of Ozora, who had cumulated almost every title of *comes* for the counties in the area (*Comes* of Arad, Caraş, Cenad, Keve, Timiş, having also the function of *Comes* of the Royal Salt Treasury. Period documents mentioned the functioning of several general assemblies (*congregatio generalis*) held with the nobles' community (*universitas nobilium*) at the king's command (*ex speciali regia commissione*<sup>32</sup>, *de regio edicto*<sup>33</sup>). It is difficult to make a distinction between a simple county judgment seat, commonly held several times a year, and a larger gathering of estates. We believe that such estate assemblies were held on 11–19 October 1394,<sup>34</sup> when the counties of Timiş and Caraş, or Cenad, Timiş and Caraş were listed as participants in some of the documents. Another estate assembly took place from 1 to 9 October 1405, near Timişoara, where the counties mentioned were: Timiş Cenad, Caraş and Keve.<sup>35</sup> What may be noted is that all the documents show the same leader—Pipo of Ozora—and the same venue—Timişoara. Contrary to well-established diplomatic practices, most of the documents issued here speak only of the assembly of Arad County, making no reference to the broader participation of other counties. Like before, many of the cases pending at various stages were submitted to the judgment of the royal curia.

Concerning the organization of these estate assemblies from the Banat, the question that naturally arises refers to the legislative basis underlying the trials presided over by the palatine within the framework of the general assemblies in the area. What remains to be analyzed in more depth is whether the community or the assembly of the noblemen (*universitas nobilium*) from the counties that participated in the judiciary process through elected judges, simply abided by the laws of the kingdom or also took into account the customs, forms and practices specific to the Romanian nobility here.<sup>36</sup>

Irrespective of their location and the county or counties involved, all the palatine assemblies had a judicial character; hence, the documents they issued reflected these aspects. The trial proceedings hosted by these gatherings generated a series of documents which, in one way or another, guaranteed generic rights, the right of ownership, and so on: these were ensured by the authentic seal of the palatine. Practically all the stages of a trial can be found in the documents issued by a general palatine congregation (provided that the parties involved were nobles and the litigations had a certain value). We may thus find letters of summons, of citation (*littere citatorie*),<sup>37</sup> citation and intent-to-sue letters (*lit-*

*tere citatorie et evocatorie*), letters of investigation (*littere inquisitorie*),<sup>38</sup> deferral letters (*littere prorogatorie*),<sup>39</sup> letters of sentence (*littere sententiales*), letters of forfeit (*littere judiciales*),<sup>40</sup> letters of defense and injunction (*littere protestatorie et prohibitorie*),<sup>41</sup> etc.

A special category of documents were those emitted by the general assembly of Caraș County on 12 May 1370,<sup>42</sup> which was convened for the purpose of eradicating the thieves, robbers and wrongdoers. It is the only document of its kind known to have been issued in this area. It should be noted that no similar document from this chronological segment is known of or preserved for the entire Voivodeship of Transylvania; from the entire Hungarian kingdom, only about ten such nominal lists of the persons included in the register of outcasts have been preserved. According to our information, such lists were drafted in the general palatine assemblies held for the counties: Zemplén (1299), Abauj and Sáros (1347), Veszprém (1351), Zala (1357), Baranya (1364), Bodrog (1364), Gómór and Torna (1366), Caraș (1370), Gómór and Torna (1381). Already in the year 1330, the references to this practice indicated that they were made under the lawful custom of the country and according to the “register” (*iuxta consuetudinem regni et registry nostri*).<sup>43</sup> A comparative analysis of the lists preserved reveals a special category of documents, which included several compulsory characteristics. This was the only kind of document issued in the palatine assemblies that nominated the panel of judges: the judges of the nobles, assessor jurors, and the vice-comes (*vice-comites*) present. Since inclusion on these lists was the equivalent of a death sentence and the forfeiture of all property for the individuals in question (measures enforceable by anyone who caught them), the documents were sometimes reinforced by adding the signets of the trial participants next to the palatine’s seal. Obviously the offenders were nominated along with the offence they had committed. There is no detectible hierarchy in the manner these offences were listed in the registry, either according to the seriousness of the deed, or to the social status of the offender, since here can be found nobles, priests, castellans, serfs, clerks, etc. From this perspective, the list drawn up for the county of Caraș is somewhat poor, since it does not mention the nobles, the clerks who forged documents, the priests who hosted thieves, etc. In essence, those who were nominated for Caraș were knezes, royal serfs accused of loitering or sheltering brigands; serfs from some nobiliary estates accused of more or less the same crimes, to which are added two more individuals who were charged with making counterfeit money. What is surprising here is the fact that there are persons mentioned by name whose offences, for which they were convicted, are not specified. The resolution was reached in the public assembly; the document was drafted on paper, and it has the seal (seals) applied on its reverse.

It was not our intention here to make an inventory of all the types of documents issued in the name of the palatine on the occasion of a general assembly. We shall limit ourselves to noting that the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century brought about, in addition to the massive replacement of parchment with paper, an explosion in the number of written documents, as well as a diversification of the types of documents. All these are also evidence of increasing overall confidence in the legal value of these documents and, why not, of the interest manifested by society in the skill of writing and deciphering it through reading.

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## Notes

1. Gábor Gyula, *A megyei intézmény alakulása és működése Nagy Lajos alatt* (Budapest, 1908); Istványi Geza, "A generalis congregatio," *Levéltári Közlemények* (1939): 51–83, (1940): 179–207.
2. Istványi Géza, "A generalis congregatio," 56.
3. Hajnik Imre, *A magyar bíróság szervezet és perjog az Arpád-és vegyes-házi királyok alatt* (Budapest, 1899), 66–67.
4. *Documenta Romaniae Historica, C. Transilvania (DRH.C)*, ed. Ștefan Pascu et alii, vol. 10–15, (Bucharest, 1977–2006), no. 33.
5. Bonis György, Degré Alajus, Varga Endre, *A magyar bírósági szervezet és perjog története* (Zalaegerszeg, 1996), 19–20.
6. Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény (DF) 251726; Diplomatikai Levéltár (DL) 91558.
7. DL 52038; DL 52039.
8. DL 91557.
9. DL 4076; DL 41053.
10. Hajnik, *A magyar bírósági szervezet*, 66–84, 97–119.
11. DL 30586; *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania (DIR.C), veac XIII, (1251–1300)* (Bucharest, 1952), no. 397.
12. DL 91403; DL 91557; DF 251726.
13. Nyers Lajos, *A nádor bírói és oklevéladó működése a XIV. században (1307–1386)* (Kecskemét, 1934), 13.
14. Kubinyi András, "A Mátyás-kori államszervezet," in *Hunyadi Mátyás Emlékkönyv Mátyás király halálának 500 év fordulójára*, ed. Rászo Gyula, Molnár Lazlo (Budapest, 1990), 110–111.
15. DL 77141.
16. Gábor, *A megyei intézmény*, 127–139. Out of the numerous palatine assemblies, we have only focused here on those held in the area of Caraș and Timiș Counties.
17. Our research is based on accessing the online versions of the documents found at [mol.arcanum.hu/dldf](http://mol.arcanum.hu/dldf).
18. Cf. Engel Pál, *Magyarország világi archontológiája*, vol. I (1301–1457) (Budapest, 1996), 3.
19. DL 41053; According to Gábor, *A megyei intézmény*, 129, the vice-palatine attended the assembly.
20. The assessment of the duration of an assembly is based on the known documents. It is orientative and perfectible insofar as new documents may be discovered.
21. DL 4076.
22. DL 91403. Given that the palatine simultaneously issued documents in Buda too (DL 4078, DL 76947), he may have had a deputy in the person of the vice-palatine.
23. DL 91483; While it obviously did not fall into the category of palatine assemblies, it nonetheless was far more than a mere county assembly.
24. DL 91556.
25. DL 91557, DL 91558, DL 51898.
26. DL 52037; DL 52038; DL 52039; DL 41583.
27. DL 91759; DL 5860; *DRH.C*, 13, no.511.
28. *DRH.C*, 15, no. 284, 286.
29. Dumitru Țeicu, *Banatul montan în evul mediu* (Timișoara, 1998), 417–458.
30. Istványi, "A generalis congregatio," 204, considers that the last palatine assembly was held in 1397.



31. Pesty Frigyes, *A szörény-vármegyei hajdani oláh kerületek* (Budapest, 1897), 52–53; Viorel Achim, “O instituție românească în Banatul medieval: adunările obștești din districte,” in Achim, *Banatul în evul mediu. Studii* (Bucharest: Albatros, 2000), 63–77; Viorel Achim, “Considerații asupra adunărilor judiciare reunite ale districtelor medievale din Banat,” in Achim, *Banatul*, 87–97.
32. DL 92124; DL 29220.
33. DL 92247.
34. DL 52850; DL 52849; *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, vol. I (1387–1399), (Budapest, 1951), 399–400, no. 3655, 401, no. 3671.
35. DL 4176; DL 53259; DL 78647; DL 92248; *Zsigmondkori*, vol. II/1–2, (Budapest, 1956, 1958), no. 4176, 4179, 4188.
36. Costin Feneșan, “Districtul românesc Mehădia la sfârșitul secolului al XIV-lea,” *Banatica* 5 (1979): 205, 266–270; Gheorghe Ciulci, “Procese civile judecate după ‘jus Valachicum’ în Banat,” *Banatica* 6 (1981): 225–236; I. A. Pop, *Instituții medievale românești. Adunările cneziale și nobiliare (boierești) din Transilvania în secolele XIV–XVI* (Cluj Napoca, 1991), 85–88, 103–106; Avram Andea, *Banatul cnezial până la înstăpânirea habsburgică (1718)* (Reșița, 1996), 45–164.
37. DL 51898.
38. DL 41583.
39. DL 91760, DL 52039.
40. DL 91556, DL 91847.
41. DL 52041; *DRH.C*, 12, no. 303.
42. DL5860, DL 91759; *DRH.C*, 13, no. 511. The document is preserved in two original copies.
43. DL 2596.

### Abstract

#### The Palatine Assemblies from Timiș and Caraș Counties and the Documents They Issued in the 14<sup>th</sup> –16<sup>th</sup> Centuries

This study reconstitutes the palatine assemblies held in Timiș and Caraș Counties from the Banat area during the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as well as those held by the *Comites* of Timiș in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The scriptural production of these assemblies is analyzed, the emphasis being laid on the documents issued in 1370 and, in particular, on the list of wrongdoers which was unique in the area and quite rare in the Hungarian kingdom. The conclusion of the study indicates that in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as the use of paper was generalized and its costs became lower, the number of written documents considerably increased and their types diversified. This is interpreted as evidence of increased confidence in the value of written documents and, at the same time, it is seen as an argument in favor of an increase in the number of those who could read written documents.

### Keywords

Caraș, Timiș, palatine, general assembly, document, county