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## History, Philosophy and Politics (10<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>th</sup> Centuries)

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Edited by  
DANIELA MĂRZA • LIANA LĂPĂDATU

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*Densuş* (Hunedoara county),  
Orthodox church, 13<sup>th</sup> century, general view,  
photo by ŞTEFAN SOCACIU

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# Notes on the Documentary Mention of Hațeg in June 19, 1278\*

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TUDOR SĂLĂGEAN

**T**HE FIRST documentary mention of Hațeg, as a territory or possession (*terra Harszok*) is found in the Hospitallers Diploma of 1247<sup>1</sup>, but the first mention of the locality itself dates only from 1276. It is contained in a royal diploma that gives us, also, the name of the first *comes* of the Hațeg County, a certain Peter Aba, senior official of the Hungarian kingdom, which occupied as well, at the same time, the court office of *magister agasonum*. In other words, according to the information provided by royal diploma of 1276, the “county” of Hațeg was, at that time, a honor attached to the court dignity of an important political personage of the kingdom, which leads us to assume, given the historical context, that the possession of the “county” was of some importance, either strategical or financial.

Additional clarification regarding the status of Hațeg in the third quarter of the thirteenth century is offered by the royal diploma of 19 June 1278, far too little discussed by the medievalists. The latter document interpreter, the late Jakó Zsigmond, was finally able to make a correct reading of the document and to publish an useful regesta in his edition of Transylvanian documents published in 1997<sup>2</sup>. The previous editions<sup>3</sup> of the royal diploma contained the incorrect reading *Hozolo*, which made the locality unidentifiable. Since 1997, however, it became clear that the locality mentioned in the document as *Hatzok* it is, actually, Hațeg. Also, the same royal diploma includes Hațeg in the broad list of possessions that had been obtained by royal donation by Joachim Gutkeled (an important political personality of the time, who died in 1277<sup>4</sup>) at a date yet to be determined by the historical research. The same list of Joachim Gutkeled’s possessions includes also Mehadia, suggesting the onset of a historical context characterized by military action at the south-eastern borders of the kingdom.

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The document of 19 June 1278 sanctioned the alliance between the Csák and the Gutkeled families, the latter being represented by Stephen, leader of his family after the disappearance of his brother Joachim (1277). Issued under the guarantee of King Ladislas, Queen Elizabeth and a number of bishops, this act provides, in essence, to Stephen Gutkeled the return of all properties that belonged in the past to the late *banus* Joachim (and, among them, Hațeg and Mehadia), and the raise of the same character to the rank of judge of the royal court and *comes* of Moson, with an annual stipend (*stipendium*) of 1,000 silver marks<sup>5</sup>. In the same period has been renewed, in all likelihood, the Csáks alliance with Aba clan, whose new military leader, the future palatine Fyntha, had already gained a first victory over rebels in the county of Zips<sup>6</sup>. Aware of their inability to resolve the situation in Transylvania, the Csáks ceded the province to their aristocratic allies, which had, however, the difficult task to actually take it into their possession.

The first emergency in the face of this aristocratic triumvirate was at that time the campaign in Bohemia, undertaken by King Ladislaus in support of his ally Rudolf of Habsburg, and aiming to eliminate King Ottokar II of Bohemia, the most important enemy of the Hungarian king. Indeed, the Hungarian army who had a major role in achieving the victory of Dürnkrut (Marchfeld) against the Bohemian king was composed of three distinct forces: the Cumanians of King Ladislaus, and the armies of the clans Gutkeled and Csák<sup>7</sup>, with whom were present a number of servants of the Aba clan. The battle of Marchfeld (26 August 1278) was a turning point in the evolution of Hungarian civil conflict. In the winter 1278/1279, now under the leadership of the Aba clan, the joined forces of the winners of the various theaters of operations in the North and West of the kingdom, reinforced by local Transylvanian elements, began the assault on the Saxon rebels in the province of Sibiu, led by the noble Gaan (Gyan), son of Alard<sup>8</sup>. In the early autumn of 1279, after obtaining by the Aba clan the full control over Transylvania, a leading member of the family, Lawrence, was installed in the high office of the treasurer of the kingdom (*magister tavernicorum*)<sup>9</sup>. This change marked the collapse of the domestic political alliance concluded in June 1278 and end the costly collaboration with Stephen Gutkeled, who has been withdrawn by the office of the royal court and for its enormous stipend<sup>10</sup>. It is most likely that under these conditions the Gutkeled family have lost again their possessions Hateg and Mehadia, restored in 1278 – and this time they lost them forever.

Returning to the June 1278 document, we must note that a series of historical data lead us to the conclusion that Joachim Gutkeled's previous rule over the two mentioned localities was far from being distant and formal, having instead an obvious military dimension: thus, in both Hațeg and Mehadia were built in the same period of time dungeons with very similar planimetry, erected by craftsmen from the Western parts of the Hungarian Kingdom<sup>11</sup>. Adrian A. Rusu, in his remarkable monograph on the medieval fortifications of Transylvania, discovered that the dungeon of Hațeg had a hexagonal base, with sides of 6.20 to 6.30 m, and a wall

thickness of about 3 m. According to the author, the dungeon must have had three or four levels, whose openings, except for some fragments, have been lost altogether. It was built of local stone, and from Roman stone and bricks found in the area; the lime used for construction was probably obtained by melting Roman blocks of marble<sup>12</sup>. The Mehadia dungeon is very similar to the one in Hațeg: a hexagonal base with sides of between 6.50 and 7.70 m, the wall thickness of 2.20 to 2.30 m; the construction had, also, a ground floor and two or three floors<sup>13</sup>. Their similarity and very special quality, which are the distinctive features of the two towers, make us believe that they were built, at very close intervals, at the initiative of Joachim Gutkeled, the owner of both estates at that time and one of the highest representatives of the Hungarian aristocracy.

We should try to identify the time period within which Joachim Gutkeled have been assigned at this border with military tasks that could justify the costs of building such fortifications. In our analysis, we must keep in mind that Joachim Gutkeled lost these holdings in the years after 1274, when the aristocratic group was part of was overthrown from power by the Csák – Aba party. We already noticed, moreover, that in 1276 the *comes* of Hațeg was Peter Aba, a representative of that party. Before 1274, the only chronological interval when Joachim Gutkeled could perform a military mission in that region was the one when his brother Nicholas was the Voivode of Transylvania (1265-1270)<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, at that time of division of the Hungarian nobility into two parties, composed of the supporters of King Bela IV and of those of his son Stephen, the Gutkeleds opted, all of them, for the cause of the latter. If this is proved in the case of Nicholas, voivode of Transylvania and important military leader in the young king's army, we can not have any reason to doubt that his brother, Joachim, made a similar choice. Indeed, between 1263 and 1270 Joachim has not fulfilled any function on the "old" royal court<sup>15</sup>, because he left the camp of King Bela, entering the service of his son Stephen. One of the supporters of Prince Stephen in the period of the second civil war (1264-1266), he was among the beneficiaries of his donations, receiving Mehadia and Hațeg while performing a military task at the soth-eastern border of the kingdom<sup>16</sup>. We need to see, in this context, if the events beyond the Carpathians during the civil war justified the royal measure of withdrawing the possession of Hațeg from its previous ruler, voivode Litovoi, which was still in his possession in 1247. We must remember here that Litovoi's possessions in Oltenia were territorially and organically linked with the district of Hațeg, located on the north side of the Carpathians. Moreover, the Hațeg district itself was not a subject of the transaction between King and the Hospitaller Knights in 1247. According to King Bela's charter, the Hospitallers were allowed to collect for themselves a half of the royal quarters and the royal benefits in all possessions provided to them by the king, "except in Land of Hațeg and those related to it" (*excepta terra Harszoc cum pertinentibus suis*). The voivode of *Terra Lytua* was obliged by that treaty to help the knights *cum apparatu suo bellico*; in turn, the Hospitallers were obliged to help the Romanians as much as they could. A special mention - among

the most discussed in historiography - referred to justice: in the case of sentence for bloodshed, "the leaders of the country" (*maiores Terrae*), without ethnic distinction, could call for a trial at the Royal court, when the local sentence seemed unjust to them. It is quite clear that the South Carpathian possessions of Litovoi had, already, a different status compared to the district of Hațeg, which was in many ways excepted from the general conditions of the 1247 agreement. We understand from the document that there was, in the Jiu valley, a small principality (*kenazatus*) led by the voivode Litovoi (*terra kenazatus Lytuoy woiauode*), which belonged to the Banate of Severin; a half of the income benefits arising from this land was given by the king to the Hospitallers. There was also, in the same political structure led by Litovoi (*terra Lytua*), a *terra Harszoc cum pertinentibus suis*, "Hațeg territory and everything belongs to it"; in this latter case, as we can see, the king did not give away any of his benefits and incomes.

In the years after Hospitallers left Severin, the mission to defend the Danube frontier in the strategic area of the Iron Gates was entrusted to the Russian prince Rostislav Mikhailovich<sup>17</sup>, son in law of Bela IV and brother in law of Prince Stephen. As a result of an campaign in 1261, he expanded his control over western Bulgaria, with the center in Vidin, which he left at his death (1262), together with the title of tsar, as legacy to his son in law Sventislav. The territorial dominion inherited by Yakov Sventislav - vassal and ally of Hungary and, especially, of the young king Stephen, on whose military support he was dependent - included therefore, in all probability, also the regions north of the Danube that had been donated by Bela IV to the Hospitallers, or at least had a strong influence on them. In 1264, however, at the outbreak of the second civil war, Yakov Sventislav's political options turned to King Bela's party, which was initially joined also by the Transylvanian Saxons. In 1266, shortly after the victory over his father's troops, Stephen V conducted an expedition in Bulgaria, during which Sventislav was reduced to obedience. In subsequent years, in order to keep his Western Bulgarian possessions, he was supported several times by armies from Eastern Hungary and Transylvania.

Under these circumstances, it is logical to have occurred, probably on the occasion of the 1264-1265 civil war, an eclipse of the subordination of Litovoi to the young king Stephen. Stephen took this opportunity to take possession of Hațeg and to provide it to Joachim Gutkeled, who fortify it without any delay. The old links between Oltenia and Hațeg could not survive, therefore, to the internal and external turmoil opened by Stephen V. It is probably that in that context, the royal pressure on the Romanians, now exercised from two directions, has increased their hostility towards a harsh domination. The building, between 1265-1270, of the two castles with hexagonal dungeons from Mehadia and Hațeg testify that there it was a military threat against the south-west of Transylvania and east of Banat, that may have come only from the territory of Oltenia.

In 1272, after the death of King Stephen V and the onset of the political crisis in Hungary, the voivode Litovoi - perhaps a son or grandson of those mentioned in



1247 - extended his rule over the other small principalities in Oltenia and ceased to pay financial obligations previously imposed by the Hungarian royalty. It is possible that his recovery attempts were also extended as far as the Hațeg territories, where unrest and armed confrontations have developed around the year 1276, requiring the temporary creation of a royal county assigned to the *magister agasonum*, Peter Aba. The fact that the entry in 1276 is the first and last known attestation of this county shows without doubt that its establishment was an exceptional measure, necessary because of exceptional circumstances. And Peter Aba, the first and the last Earl of Hațeg, was, indeed, a man of exceptional situations. Without conspicuous impressive military and political qualities, he was noted, instead, as an expert in restoring order. In January-March 1279, he was named Earl of Sibiu, after the suppression of the Saxon rebellion<sup>18</sup>. In this capacity he led, of course, all the repressive measures designed to complete the pacification of the conquered territories. Also, when the Aba clan took over the political power, Peter was appointed judge of the royal court, essential for maintaining order in the kingdom. The exceptional circumstances that made necessary, in 1276, Peter Aba's presence in Hațeg must have been one of the same nature. Indeed, a document issued in 5 February 1302 shows that in the "time of turmoil," during the reign of King Ladislaus IV, the church in Peștiș (Hațeg district) was burned and destroyed, and with it an important diploma of a local family<sup>19</sup>. The same document shows also that the duplicate of the same diploma, preserved in church archives of the Transylvanian Chapter, had been also destroyed in 1277 during the attack of the city of Alba Iulia by Gyan, son of Alard<sup>20</sup>. The events described in the 1302 document took place, therefore, not very long before those in 1277. We have thus the confirmation of the fact that there had been in the Hațeg area, during this period, a number of serious events, so serious that they required the presence in the region of a man who was about to consolidate its reputation as a specialist of repression. Unfortunately, the nature of these events remains unknown to us.

Symptomatic to highlight the extent of the Hungarian domination's crisis over these regions is the fact that a military expedition against Litovoi could be organized only seven years after the beginning his rebellion, in 1272. The analysis of the two documents containing information about this event<sup>21</sup>, conducted in conjunction with the examination of the major internal developments of the Kingdom of Hungary during that period<sup>22</sup>, shows that this expedition took place in the first months of 1279, alongside with the expedition Fyntha, Peter and Amade Aba against the Transylvanian Saxons (about January to March 1279). The protagonist of the expedition, magister George Baksa, was a familiar of Lawrence Aba, who became ban of Severin in late 1278 or early 1279, only to retrieve, in the late summer of 1279 the responsibility of the royal treasury<sup>23</sup>.



## Notes

1. *Documente privind istoria României*, C., Transilvania, vol. I. p. 329-333, 418-426 (DIR).
2. Fejér G., ed., *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, Buda, 1829–1844, vol. V/2, p. 447-449 (CD).
3. CD, V/2, p. 447-449. Szentpétery Imre, Ivan Borsa, eds., *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke/ Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico-diplomatica*, vol. II/2-3 (1272-1290), Budapest, 1967, no. 2870 (Regesta Arpadiana – RA).
4. Jakó Zsigmond, ed., *Erdélyi okmánytár / Codex diplomaticus Transsylvaniae. Diplomata, epistolae et alia instrumenta litteraria res Transylvaniae illustrantia*, Budapest, 1997, no. 359. Engel Pál, *Magyarország világi archontológiája. 1301-1457*, Budapest, 1996, vol. I, p. 325.
5. CD V/2, p. 447-449; RA 2870; Jakó, *Erdélyi okmánytár*, loc.cit.
6. DIR, C., Transilvania, vol. II, p. 271-273; Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, Nicolae Densușianu, eds., *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* [Documents regarding the history of the Romanians], vol. I/1, Bucharest, 1887, p. 452-459.
7. A. Küsternig, "Probleme um die Kämpfe zwischen Rudolf und Ottokar und die Schlacht bei Dürnkrot am 26. August 1278," in *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Landeskunde*, 44-45 (1978-1979), p. 226-311; A. Pálóczi-Horváth, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians. Steppe peoples in medieval Hungary*, Budapest, 1989, p. 70-73;
8. It is quite sure that this expedition took place only in the first months of 1279, although the rebellion itself broke out in february 1277. Important elements of datation in CD, vol. V/3, p. 258-261.
9. RA, no. 3019, the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1279.
10. In July/August 1279 his last mention as judge of the royal court – RA, no. 2985. After a long vacation, the office will be taken in 1280 by Peter Aba – RA, 3056.
11. Adrian A. Rusu, "Cetatea Hațegului. Monografie istorică și arheologică" [The Hațeg Castle. Historical and archaeological monograph], *Sargetia*, XVI-XVII, 1982-1983, p. 341. On the Mehadia dungeon see Ștefan Matei, "Aspecte ale evoluției arhitecturii de fortificații în Banat în perioada feudalismului timpuriu" [Aspects of the development of military architecture in Banat in early middle age], in *Studii de istorie a artei*, ed. Mircea Țoca, Cluj-Napoca, 1982, p. 110-113.
12. Adrian A. Rusu, *Castelarea carpatică. Fortificații și cetăți din Transilvania și teritoriile învecinate (sec. XIII-XIV)* [The Carpathian castlement. Fortifications and castles in Transylvania and surrounding territories (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries)], Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 534.
13. *Ibidem*, p. 524.
14. *Korai Magyar Történeti Lexicon (9-14. század)* [Early Hungarian Historical Lexicon (9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries)], ed. Krisztó Gyula, Budapest, 1994, p. 193 (KMTL). Jakó, *Erdélyi okmánytár*, no. 426.
15. KMTL, p. 304.
16. Possibly *banus* of Severin in 1267.
17. Maria Holban, *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII-XIV* [From the chronicle of the Romanian-Hungarian relations in 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries], Bucharest, 1981, p. 86-89.
18. RA, no. 2942, 2946. In the same year 1279 he leaves this office to the younger brother of voivode Fyntha, Amadé (*Omodeus*) Aba – RA, no. 3019.

19. *Documente privind istoria României*, C., Transilvania, veacul XIV, vol. I (1301-1320), p. 13-15.
20. Jakó, *Erdélyi okmánytár*, no. 351.
21. St. Katona, *Historia critica regum Hungariae*, VII, p. 911-917; CD, V/3, 274-277; *Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus*, ed. G. Wenzel, XII, Pest, 1874, p. 434-437; Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, Nicolae Densușianu, eds., *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* [Documents regarding the history of the Romanians], vol. I/1, Bucharest, 1887, p. 452-459; A. Sacerdoțeanu, "Comentarii la diploma din 1285 privind pe magistrul Gheorghe" [Comments on the 1285 diploma regarding master George], in *Analele Universității C.I.Parhon*, Bucharest, *Științe sociale, Istorie*, 9, 1957, p. 27-43 etc.
22. Z.J. Kosztolnyik, *Hungary in the Thirteenth Century*, New York, 1996, p. 255-271; Szücs Jenő, *Az utolsó Árpádok* [The Last Arpadians], Budapest, 1993, p. 279-291; Zsoldos Attila, *Az Árpádok és alattvalóik (Magyarország története 1301-ig)* [The Arpadians and their subjects. Hungarian history to 1301], Budapest, 1997, p. 143-147.
23. RA, no. 3019.

### **Abstract**

#### Notes On The Documentary Mention Of Hațeg In June 19, 1278

The royal diploma of 19 June 1278, far too little discussed by medievalists after the removal of the incorrect reading Hozolo and its replacement with Hatzok, one of the many important contributions of the late Jakó Zsigmond, offers interesting new clarifications regarding the status of Hațeg in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Analysed in conjunction with a new interpretation of the archaeological data, the diploma suggests the correct datation and also reveals the connections between the fortified castles of Hațeg and Mehadia, unveiling at the same time new and interesting aspects of the relations between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Romanian political realms beyond the Carpathians.

### **Keywords**

Medieval Transylvania, Hațeg county, medieval Oltenia, voivode Litovoi, fortifications, Gutkeled family

