

# DIGNITIES AND PATRIMONIAL OWNERSHIP IN THE BANAT OF CARANSEBEȘ AND LUGOJ: SIMON OF CARANSEBEȘ FAMILY'S DOMAIN

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An essential attribute of the medieval familial structures, namely the landed patrimony is to define the profile of a familial nucleus, it gives it a material substance and backs the familial nucleus within the social chart of the time in the main of the cases. Simon of Caransebeș family's history, on which we aim to discuss from a patrimonial point of view in the present study, presents an interesting variant within the social elites in the Banat, following the relative unspecific way that the family's domain was being constituted in the course of time. Pesty Frigyes registers that family with the name of a biblical resonance<sup>1</sup> among the Romanian noble families from Caransebeș and Mehadia, together with the nobles of Fiat, Jojica, Măcicaș, Gârlișteanu, Găman, Racoviță, Peica, Pribek, Vaida, Fodor, Floca, Marga sau Bobic<sup>2</sup>. The appellative “of Caransebeș” that comes together with the patronymic from the beginning of its documentary revealed history till the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, shows certainly enough the urban ambient where that familial nucleus was constituted in. It is impossible to prove till the present moment if we may speak about a collateral branch of a noble family with roots in the previous centuries and set in Caransebeș to make itself a particular fate, or about an urban family which, in a context beyond of our control, rose in the world through growing rich and being ennobled.

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<sup>1</sup> Iorgu Iordan, *Dicționar al numelor de familie românești*, București, 1983, p. 415-416.

<sup>2</sup> Pesty Frigyes, *A Szörényi vármegyei hajdani oláh kerületek*, Budapest, 1876, p. 40 (further on: Pesty, *Oláh kerületek*); idem, *A Szörényi bánság és Szörényi vármegye története*, I, Budapest, 1877, p. 455 (further on: Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*).

But what is to assert unhesitatingly is that that family was an exponent of the “new” nobility of function<sup>3</sup>, which proliferated within the eastern Banat yet in the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a series of its members being attested repeatedly as owners of castles, prime-magistrate judges, bailiffs or jury men of Caransebeș, an almost complete palette of the local dignities. So, a named Ioan Simon was both vice-comes of Caransebeș in 1586<sup>4</sup>, and a castellan of Caransebeș in 1584-1586 and 1588-1590<sup>5</sup>. Gheorghe Simon in 1534-1535<sup>6</sup>, his son Ioan Simon senior, in 1586<sup>7</sup>, and the last one’s son, Ștefan Simon, in 1646-1647<sup>8</sup>, were also prime-magistrate judges (*judex primarius*) of Caransebeș, an exceptional continuity in function within a family for three generations, that is a rare case in that time documents. Finally, for *judex nobilium* of Caransebeș Petru Simion junior, in 1603-1604<sup>9</sup>, Mihail Simon, in 1608-1609<sup>10</sup>, and Gheorghe Simon, in 1643<sup>11</sup> and in 1650-1654<sup>12</sup>, were also mentioned, and all those representatives of the family’ forth generation were cousins-german by the father’s side. The all above are an eloquent proof for that family active involving in the daily social-economic and political-juridical life of the town,

<sup>3</sup> Costin Feneșan, *Diplome de înnobilitare și blazon din Banat (secolele XVI-XVII)*, Timișoara, 2007, p. 13-14; Ionuț Costea, „*Solam virtutem et nomen bonum*”. *Nobilitate, Etnie, Regionalism în Transilvania Princiară*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 165-166; Ioan Drăgan, *Privire generală asupra nobilimii românești din Transilvania în secolele XVI-XVIII*, in *Itinerarii istoriografice. Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, coord. Dumitru Țicu, Rudolf Gräf, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 281-282, 285, 288-289; Ligia Boldea, *Aspects du „cursus honorum” dans le Banat a l’époque du roi Matthias Corvin: noblesse patrimoniale et noblesse de fonction*, in *Banatica*, 20/II, 2010, p. 82-83.

<sup>4</sup> *Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae*, ed. Szilagyi Sándor, III, Budapest, 1877, p. 223, art. XXXIII.

<sup>5</sup> Pesty Frigyes, *A Szörényi bánság*, I, p. 322-323.

<sup>6</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, III, p. 194; Dragoș Lucian Țigău, *Aspecte din activitatea prim-juzilor orașului Caransebeș în secolele XV-XVI*, in *Studii bănațene*, coord. V. Leu, C. Albert, D. Țicu, Timișoara, 2007, p. 132; Lakatos Bálint, *Városi nemesek karánsebesen a 15-16. század fordulóján*, in *Urbs. Magyar várostörténeti évkönyv*, III, Budapest, 2008, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> *Az erdélyi fejedelmek Királyi Könyvei 1582-1602*, ed. Fejér T., Rácz E., Szász A., I, Cluj/Kolozsvár, 2005, p. 204; D.L. Țigău, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> Costin Feneșan, *Documente medievale bănațene (1440-1653)*, Timișoara, 1981, p. 192-193 (further on: Feneșan, *Documente*); D.L. Țigău, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, I, p. 324; Pesty Frigyes, *Krassó vármegye története*, IV, Budapest, 1883, p. 233 (further on: Pesty, *Krassó*).

<sup>10</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 249 and 259.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 337.

<sup>12</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, I, p. 328.

a fact that sends forth its privileged statute, the manifested respectability, scholarship, and the material wealth intrinsically asked by such functions.

If seen on the whole, the Simon family's domain as it developed during the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries rather compels attention through its eclectic and haphazard character, a vulnerable enough and less sustainable one. It is a particular example within the Romanian elites in the Banat, part of them being characterized by an outstanding consistence and lastingness of their landed ownerships. In contrast with other representatives of the medieval nobility in the Banat, we have no documentary information at our disposal to certify the existence of a landed patrimony of the Simons before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, around of which the privileged noble statute should have grown, a statute that was acknowledged or got at a given time by the central authority. From this point of view the familial domain reconstitution is a provocation and a good possibility to analyze different facets of the patrimonial structures development in the medieval Banat, which follow certain patterns to a point, but also develop enough specific features, the case of Simon of Caransebeș family being eloquent in the matter.

In fact, since the first reference information that date in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we may point out the existence of some familial ownerships in Caransebeș, consisting in houses, mills, gardens or vineyards, an opinion that is justified due to the functions that this families' members are to exercise in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> town of Caransebeș. It is impossible to accept that dignities like prime-magistrate judge of the town or castellan of Caransebeș city could have been apart from a material wealth (including ownerships inside the town) that had to found the family's social position. In point of fact, a document of 1544, a multi-significant one for the family's history, presents no ambiguity: these who buy a series of estates in the homonymous district are nobles of Caransebeș, sons and grand-sons of the first mayor who is documentary attested as proceeding from Simon family at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Definitely, a series of documents to prove the previous assertions have been preserved. In a document from the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 1590<sup>13</sup> Ioan Simon senior's house in Caransebeș is mentioned, the vicinity of which there was the house of Nicolae, Vasile, Petru and Ioan Tivadar of Caransebeș; following Nicolae Tivadar's merits as a scribe at the great Chancellery of the principality, those ones were ennobled and their houses together with the vineyards within

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<sup>13</sup> *Az erdélyi fejedelmek Királyi Könyvei 1582-1602*, p. 368.

the town borders became free of tithe, *nona* (a tithe consisting in the ninth part of produce), tax and habitual corvées. In the next year, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1591, on the occasion of a lawsuit to set the limits of an alodial garden that was inherited by Ladislau Lățug and his relatives from Ecaterina Pataki, the garden of Elisabeta Simon (Francisc Mâtniceanu's widow) is also mentioned<sup>14</sup>. More than this, the last one's will (written down on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1599<sup>15</sup> in the presence of more nobles from Caransebeș) as a widow of one of the castellans of Caransebeș, mentioned, besides the possessions, the kitchen gardens from the town that were willed to her grand-daughter Ana Simon and her sons, and a house willed to noble Francisc Fodor and his sons. Another document is dated on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1642 and proves that more of the family's members – Ladislau Simon, Ștefan Simon and Gheorghe Simon – owned several vineyards on the Teiuș Hill, within the town of Caransebeș limits<sup>16</sup>. A later datum from 1688, after thirty years away from the syncope at the Banat elites' level that was produced by the Ottomans occupation of the Banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj in 1658, is also suggestive for the family's presence within the ownership system of the town of Caransebeș; having come back in their native land with the Habsburg troupes, many representatives of the noble families from the Banat claimed their rights to the Austrian authorities that were too less willing to admit *restitution in integrum* of the rights that elite had had before 1658. However, in order to prove their good intentions, the new authorities order a conscription of all the houses and real estates from Caransebeș that the former owners or their descendants were demanding; that action was confirmed by an act dated on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1688<sup>17</sup>, that registers 170 houses, places for houses and other real estate within the town of Caransebeș precinct. Houses of Petru Simon, Gheorghe Simon, Ioan Simon, Ladislau Simon, and Gabriel Simon *cum appertinentiis praeter molendinum* are among the registered buildings, as well as Ștefan Simon's house with outbuildings and the afferent mill, the house of Nicolae Simon and her daughter, and that one of Ilie and Sydo Simon. In all probability, they were the representatives of the fifth and the sixth generations, a proof of nobles Simon of Caransebeș massive presence in the town ownership system.

<sup>14</sup> Feneșan, *Documente*, p. 78.

<sup>15</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 224-225.

<sup>16</sup> Feneșan, *Documente*, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup> C. Feneșan, *Caransebeșul la începutul celei de-a doua stăpâniri habsburgice*, in *RI*, VII, 1996, 1-2, p. 77-85.

The family's ownerships in Caransebeș were certainly not sufficient both for its social statute that was ever better outlining by the middle of 16<sup>th</sup> century and for its members 'flowering. Thus we notice a series of actions that took place then in order to effectively constituting the family's own landed estate, a lot of trials to control, partly at least, by means of favorable matrimonial alliances estates that belonged to other families' ownership system in the Banat or Hunedoara, as well as individual ownerships constituting by some of the family's members, not depending of the joint estates that was largely spread within the Romanian nobility in the Banat. We consider that the real question that that family had to face when ascending and asserting itself at Caransebeș leadership level is the fact that, till the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, almost the whole landed potential of the mountain and hilly Banat had been well enough delimited and acknowledged as such by the central power's acts with a probative value, which had been issued yet in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was in our opinion the main reason the selling-buying act from the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 1544<sup>18</sup> was founded on, by which the elected Nicolae Walkay and Gașpar Menyhar sold for 600 forints the possessions Pipirig (*Peperiygh*) under another name, *Mochkafalwa* from Comiat, Barna from Bujor, and all the possessions parts from *Gamza*, *Pokolpathaka*, *Zelha*, *Zorlent* (*Zorylencz*), *Dragwbrathfalwa*, *Hoobycza*, *Glood*, *Mochkaan*, *Măgura* (*Magyra*), *Ozyey* and *Whezyowa* from Caransebeș district to nobles from Simon of Caransebeș family, namely to Ladislau Simon and his brothers Ioan and Ștefan, all of them being the late Gheorghe Simon' sons, and to Nicolae Simon's descendants, respectively, his sons Mihail, Ioan and Gașpar, and his daughter (*puella*) Elisabeta. The document has a particular relevance from the point of re-constituting the familial patrimonial structures. Actually, by that landed acquisition, the Simons sanctioned their statute of possessory nobility (*nobiles possessionati*)<sup>19</sup>, the family's members being mentioned beginning with the next century also as nobles of Zorlențu Mare.

The eclectic character of that landed ensemble is outlined by the previous ownership system upon some of the bought possessions. We shall insist on these details as for our study economy the spatial identifying and a brief history of these possessions might be relevant for the partly new-fangled way that a late noble structure of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries used to be set.

<sup>18</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Engel Pál, *Regatul Sfântului Ștefan. Istoria Ungariei medievale 895-1526*, ed. A. A. Rusu, I. Drăgan, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p. 354.

Considering the territorial disposal of these possessions at the crossing line of the former privileged districts (belonging to the Banat of Severin) and the unprivileged districts (belonging to the county of Timiș and later to the domain of Hunedoara) we may put into relief the way the territorial-administrative mutations took place with the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and also those ones regarding the patrimonial ownership system.

Pipirig, Gamza and Zorlențu Mare settlements for instance were certainly included into the privileged district of Comiat within the previous centuries, where the joint ownership of the Romanian kneaz and noble families is well enough put into relief during the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>20</sup>. According to historian Viorel Achim's opinion, the fact that repeatedly, in 1435 and 1437<sup>21</sup>, the district and the borough of Comiat were pledged to brothers János and John of Hunedoara (and so included in the great domain of the city of Hunedoara) could have generated the risk to have been transformed into a hereditary possession of Corvinus. The insistence and the concrete action of the district representatives who redeemed the former pawn, determined the royalty to restore the district liberties and rights by the privileges diploma from the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1457<sup>22</sup>, it being since then off the domain of Hunedoara and the Corvinus family's ownership. We opine that the next decades the patrimonial system of the district did not passed through substantial changes. But we may also presume that the ever incrementing conflicts between the Magyar royalty and the Ottoman power, more and more near the respective area, as well as the race for the Hungarian throne that determined partisan reactions even within the noble elites from the Banat, could lead, in the 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, to certain changes of the landed ownership due to some elements out of the Banat territory that protruded the local system; the personages who initiated the selling act from 1544 prove such a presumption.

In details, as regards the possession of Pipirig (*Pepergyh*) it seems that there were two settlements (disappeared today) with the same name, one of them in the privileged district of Comiat, the other one in the unprivileged district of Bujor<sup>23</sup>. Viorel Achim, who includes the village in the settlements of Comiat district register, opined that the redoubled toponyms *Mochkafalwa* was

<sup>20</sup> Viorel Achim, *Districtul Comiat. Contribuție la geografia istorică a Banatului în evul mediu*, in *AnB* (S.N.), Arheologie-Istorie, II, 1993, p. 248-249.

<sup>21</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, III, p. 351; Pesty, *Oláh kerületek*, p. 66.

<sup>22</sup> V. Achim, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>23</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, II, p. 100.



created by the Chancellery and derived from one of the village's owners; the author identified that owner as having been Ladislau *Mozka*, the one that had represented the district of Comiat in the Romanian districts reunited meeting in 1452<sup>24</sup>. At the same time a disappeared today settlement named Pipirig (*Peperek*, *Pepergyh*) is noted in the neighboring district of Bujor, near by Barna; that one belonged to the great domain of Hunedoara since the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the Corvinus ownership and after of George of Brandenburg between 1511 and 1534<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, although the document from 1544 localizes the settlement in the district of Comiat, it wouldn't be out of the question that the real village was that one in the Bujor district that was sold together with the neighbor settlement Barna, while the other villages that had belonged once to Comiat district, were that time in the district of Caransebeș.

The estate of Gamza has in its turn a rich history that reminds, among other things, about the tradition of the Romanian ownerships of knezes in the previous centuries. Disappeared today, the settlement was placed in the Middle Ages in the area of the Sacoș-Zăguzeni Hills, between Mâtnic și Zorlenț<sup>26</sup>, on the place of nowadays village Zorlencior, according to some opinions<sup>27</sup>. Its first documentary attesting date in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in the donation act from the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1352; by this act the county lord Posa of Szer and his sons, Ladislau și Ștefan, donate to the knezes of Mâtnic the waste land of the Mâtnic valley placed at Gamza estate limits, and delimited from this one by a forest<sup>28</sup>. In the next century the estate belonged to the Romanian community of the noble knezes of Comiat, and a century later we find it in the district of Caransebeș, as a Simon family's possession.

The acquisition of Zorlenț estate proved to be of a great importance as it seems to have a strong economic potential, so that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the family of Simon added it to nobiliary range; it is to be found as such in

<sup>24</sup> V. Achim, *op. cit.*, p. 257; Ioan Aurel Pop, *Instituții medievale românești. Adunările cneziale și nobiliare (boierești) în secolele XIV-XVI*, Cluj-Napoca, 1991, p. 71.

<sup>25</sup> Iosif Pataki, *Domeniul Hunedoara la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. Studiu și documente*, București, 1973, p. 290, 294.

<sup>26</sup> Csánki Dezső, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a hunyadiak korában*, II, Budapest, 1894, p. 38; Pesty, *Oláh kerületek*, p. 49; V. Achim, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>27</sup> Dumitru Țicu, *Banatul montan în evul mediu*, Timișoara, 1998, p. 328.

<sup>28</sup> Pesty, Krassó, III, p. 28; Maria Holban, *Deposedări și judecăți în Banat pe vremea Angevinilor și ilustrarea lor prin procesul Voya (1361-1378)*, in *SMIM*, V, 1962, p. 64; I.A. Pop, *Din mâinile românilor schismatici. Românii și puterea în Regatul Ungariei medievale (secolele XIII-XIV)*, Chișinău, 2011, p. 107, 144, 150.

the possessions census that was made at the Habsburg' request at the end of the century. Geographically it is today placed in the north of Caraș-Severin County, at a distance of about 25 km from Caransebeș, on the Pogăniș River which traverses the Sacoș-Zăgujeni Hills<sup>29</sup>. During the Middle Ages the estate was included in the district of Comiat yet in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, at the limit between the counties of Caraș and Timiș<sup>30</sup>. The first documentary attestations dating in 1499 and 1503<sup>31</sup>, shows a joint ownership of more nobles, a specific way to exercise the possession right on the land at that time. Zorlenț stepped into Ștefan *Wassa* of *Wyd*' ownership in unknown circumstances, and after became one of the main components of Simon of Caransebeș family's domain.

Another acquisition of the year 1544 was *Barna* (*Barnaflawa*, *Birna*, *Berna*), Bârna today, on the Saraz valley (a tributary of the Bega River), in the east of Timiș county, at about 16 km far from Lugoj. In the Middle Ages it belonged to the unprivileged district of Bujor, initially part of the county of Timiș and of Hunedoara domain later<sup>32</sup>. It seems that Simon' ownership of that estate was only a temporary one, or even a random one, as it is not found in the act of the year 1591 through which the family was reconfirmed by the prince in its ownerships. The data of the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – beginning of the next one show that the estate was repeatedly the object of certain princely donations to a series of the Principality dignitaries (Ștefan Jojica, Sigismund Sarmassagh, Paul Keresztesy or Gabriel Bethlen)<sup>33</sup>, together with other possessions that had belonged once to the district of Bujor and were integrated that time in the domain of Hunedoara.

Finally, the landed acquisition included also several villages and some villages abandoned terrains from the district of Caransebeș that seem to be of less dimensions. From all about, *Pokolpathaka*<sup>34</sup>, *Zelha*<sup>35</sup>,

<sup>29</sup> V. Sencu, I. Băcănar, *Județul Caraș-Severin*, București, 1976, p. 45-46; Nicolae Ilieșiu, *Monografia istorică a Banatului*, ed. D. Țeicu, București, 2011, p. 344; D. Țeicu, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>30</sup> Csánki D., *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>31</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, III, p. 474; V. Achim, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>32</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, II, p. 53-54; I. Pataki, *op. cit.*, p. 294. At the beginning of the 16th century, the domain of Hunedoara was in succession owned by the widow of Ioan Corvin and George de Brandenburg (her second husband) and by Valentin Török of Ennyng after.

<sup>33</sup> L. Boldea, *Asupra avatarurilor unei cetăți medievale: Jdioara anilor 1548-1658*, in *AnB* (S.N.) Arheologie-Istorie, XIV/2, 2006, p. 53-57.

<sup>34</sup> A disappeared settlement nearby Ohabă and Zorlencior. Pesty, *Krassó*, II/2, p. 126; Coriolan Suciu, *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, II, București, 1968, p. 387.

<sup>35</sup> A disappeared settlement today, placed between Zorlențu Mare and Ezeriș. See: C. Suciu, *op. cit.*, p. 431.



*Dragwbrathfalwa*<sup>36</sup>, *Glod*<sup>37</sup> and *Machkaan*<sup>38</sup> are today within Zorlențu Mare perimeter. Another settlement *Hoobycza* (Ohabîța) was once a village in the district of Lugoj, and it was donated to nobles Nicolae Turcin of Gamza and to Mihail Korneth<sup>39</sup> both of them from the district of Comiat. As for *Magwra* (Măgura) and *Ozyey*, they were identified in the area of Ohaba-Mâtnic, and had been part during the previous centuries from the ownership of the family Mâtnic of Ohaba-Mâtnic<sup>40</sup>. In fact, it seems that those two possessions ownership was also a temporary one, because in a document from the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1585 they are anew registered in the Mâtnics' landed patrimony that was at that time disputed among more of the family's branches<sup>41</sup>.

Te settlement of *Whezyowa* (Vasiova) ownership was a haphazard one too, the village being placed within the present limits of the town of Bocșa, between Bocșa Română (Romanian Bocșa) and Bocșa Germană (German Bocșa)<sup>42</sup>.

We wished to relate in detail all these territorial-geographic aspects in order to point out the image of an eclectic landed domain, without any historical antecedents, set through juxtaposition of some settlements that during the previous centuries belonged to different districts (Comiat, Bujor, Caransebeș) under and also (the community of nobles knezes of Comiat, Mâtnic family, Hunedoara domain); all those came in circumstances that are out of our control, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, into possession of some nobles out of the Banat, being after bought by the family of nobles Simon of Caransebeș. A difference is to stress here, which we believe to individualize this family in a certain measure. In the course of time the landed transactions used to be an essential aspect of the economic activity the possessors of lands were involved in, either to increment their patrimonial domains, or to solve

<sup>36</sup> A disappeared prediu, localized today between Ohabîța and Zorlencior. See: Pesty, *Krassó*, II/1, p. 119; C. Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 319.

<sup>37</sup> A disappeared locality nearby Zorlențu Mare. See: Pesty, *Krassó*, II/1, p. 196; C. Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>38</sup> A disappeared settlement nearby Zorlențu Mare. See: Pesty, *Krassó*, II/2, p. 14; C. Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>39</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, II/2, p. 80; C. Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 379.

<sup>40</sup> C. Suci, *op.cit.*, p. 365; L. Boldea, *Nobilimea românească din Banat în secolele XIV-XVI (origine, statut, studiu genealogic)*, Reșița, 2002, p. 306.

<sup>41</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 115; L. Boldea, *O familie nobilă română a Banatului montan în epoca Principatului: Mâtnicenii de Ohaba-Mâtnic*, in *Itinerarii istoriografice. Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, coord. Dumitru Țicu, Rudolf Gräf, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 261.

<sup>42</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, II/2, p. 273.

certain problems of a financial nature. The family of Simon seems to buy in 1544 a whole landed patrimony; they who sell these estates are not from the Banat, the document noticing that Nicolae Walkaly kept for him the possession of *Wyd* in the county of Szabolcs, and *Myhalfalwa* in the county of Bihar. We cannot specify how they came into possessing those estates and the terrains of abandoned villages that had been once part of the privileged district of Comiat. Certainly after the eyalet of Timișoara constituting the area where those villages were localized was exactly within the contact space between that one and the future banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj; that last one was outlined after 1552 and was an uncertain zone with probable fluctuant limits in the long run, a fact that surely made vulnerable any ownership formula. It is probably one of the reasons that Walkay abandoned those ownerships. We can only emit the hypothesis that the nobles Simon's family made that acquisition that could have been a potential risk, following its desire to sanction and legitimate its social-juridical statute within the nobiliary community of Caransebeș, beside the evidence of a supplementary source of goods and earnings.

In the long run, the domain the members of Simon family had bought in the 16<sup>th</sup> century proved to be enough stable, a fact that was spotlighted by the document of the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1591<sup>43</sup> through which prince Sigismund Báthory re-confirmed the family's ownership right over the possession Zorlențu Mare and Gamza, the terrains of abandoned villages of *Pokolpathaka*, *Zelha*, *Dragobrathfalwa*, *Ohabicza*, *Glod*, *Maczkan*, *Fratest*, and *Rekettie*, as well as over the forest of Măgura. The reconfirming was asked by the family which lost the original possession acts, and was given for the loyal services of its members to the princely authority. Two of the nobles Simon who made the transaction in 1544 (Ioan Simon senior and Ioan Simon junior) and their grand-son Petru Simion junior were the diploma beneficiaries. The other members of the family mentioned 40 years before in the buying document were surely no more alive at that time. Elisabeta Simon still remained but certainly her marriage to family Mătniceanu' member did away with her from the paternal family's patrimonial system. It is also to note that the document does not mention anymore some of the former bought possessions, namely Pipirig and Bârna and also Măgura and *Ozyay* (the last ones in the Mătniceanu family's patrimony meanwhile). On the other side, two other possessions are

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<sup>43</sup> *Az erdélyi fejedelmek Királyi Könyvei 1582-1602*, p. 394.

included in that familial domain never being mentioned previously: *Fratest*<sup>44</sup> and *Rekettie*<sup>45</sup>, possible acquisitions after 1544.

Considering this point of the debate, we might note that the family of the nobles Simon of Caransebeș strengthened its patrimonial domain that had been mainly got through a landed transaction, and stabilized it despite its territorial placement (at the limits between the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj and the eyalet of Timișoara) which, in our opinion, conferred it an increased vulnerability. However, we may estimate that comparing with other noble familial much larger domains in the mountain and hilly Banat, this family's patrimonial ensemble must have proved to be insufficient for the enough numerous descendants<sup>46</sup> who were obliged to perpetuate the traditional system of joint ownership. In consequence of it, we see that ones of the family's members strived to develop a separated estate by different transactions or advantageously marrying to representatives of other noble families from the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj, or from Hunedoara County.

In fact, another particular aspect of this family's history is given by the women's statute within the familial ensemble, who played a more active and definite role if compared with other familial nuclei. They took part thus on equal terms with the family's male representatives to landed transactions, inherited lands not only their dowry and dotal goods, wrote down wills and went to law for their rights, in front of local or central authorities. We may appreciate such a situation, less presented in the case of other noble families in the Banat, as resulting both from certain personal affinities and from the interest that, by their help, the family might accede to other successional goods – as we shall see on the basis of a series of documents. There is both the situation of some nobles' wives within Simon family, where they have the landed goods of the families they came from, and the one where female descendants of Simon family have the right of ownership possessions belonging to other patrimonial structures, as heiresses or following their marriages. Therefore we may assert

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<sup>44</sup> A disappeared terrain in the county of Severin, Caransebeș district. See: Pesty, *Krassó*, II/1 p. 162.

<sup>45</sup> A disappeared settlement placed between the villages of Valea Mare and Fârluig. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was owned by knezes and nobles from the district of Comiat. See: *Krassó*, II/1 p. 139; V. Achim, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>46</sup> See the genealogical table of Simon family in L. Boldea *Identități premoderne bănățene: o familie de demnitari ai banatului de Caransebeș și Lugoj în secolele XVI-XVII*, in *Banatica*, 22, 2012, p. 116.

that due to those women, the family of Simon of Caransebeș came to benefit for a while of landed goods proceeding from other domain structures what surely increased its earnings and wealth.

For instance, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1578, Ioan Simon senior acted for her wife Ana Băcuț (*Bakoczy*), a descendant of families Fiat of Armeniș and Băcuț of Clopotiva, and her aunt, Caterina, in a lawsuit with their relative Ludovic Fiat, for the possession right on Fiat family's landed patrimony<sup>47</sup>. It was in fact, a sequel of a long chain of lawsuits between the female branch and the male branch of the family Fiat of Armeniș that began in 1531. Those lawsuits complexity was given by the confrontation between two successional principles: that one of heir legacy and that of *prefaectio* (heiress legacy) the women from the Fiat family had obtained from king Louis II, in 1525<sup>48</sup>. Naturally Ioan Simon senior was deeply interested in her wife's backing as the benefits from her parts of Fiat's estates surely were not all negligible.

Ana Băcuț was also one of the beneficiaries of a princely donation in the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1591<sup>49</sup>, through which the possession rights on and the earnings of the estates of Clopotiva Mare, Clopotiva, Ohabița and *Zachyal* from the county of Hunedoara were re-confirmed following the original documents loss, in favor of the well known family Băcuț of Clopotiva's descendants no matter their sex<sup>50</sup>. So, the couple Ioan Simon and Ana Băcuț added new possessions parts to their own estate that were useful for their family with three sons to be inherited: Ladislau, Mihail and Ștefan.

The mentioned above couple was not the unique possessor of estates in the neighboring county of Hunedoara. There was an enough spread phenomenon in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, according to which a series of Romanian noble families from the Banat used to have ownerships within that county that were

<sup>47</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bántág*, III, p. 421-422. There were disputed parts of the estates Buchin, Poiana, Poienița, *Neweo*, the villages of Petroșnița, Vălișoara and Goleț, the abandoned villages terrains *Cerenecz*, *Pecherencz*, *Miraya*, village of Criva and the two villages of Bolvașnița, the vilages Poreca de Sus and Poreca de Jos after, the abandoned terrain of *Simonolcz*, the villages of Armeniș, Feneș, Sadova, Slatina, *Zarazpatak*, and the abandoned terrains of *Chywro*, *Nagypatak* and Secaș.

<sup>48</sup> See the that law proceeding in L. Boldea, *Nobilimea românească*, p. 238-242; D.L. Țigău, *Familia Fiat de Armeniș în secolele XV-XVIII*, in *Banatica*, 14, 1996, p. 14, 33.

<sup>49</sup> *Az erdélyi fejedelmek Királyi Könyvei 1582-1602*, p. 382.

<sup>50</sup> Băcuț of Clopotiva family was a known Romanian noble family from Hațeg area, with roots in the Romanian kneazes community of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. See: Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Cititori și biserici din Țara Hațegului până la 1700*, Satu Mare, 1997, p. 187-189.

obtained by princely donations, buying, pawning or matrimonial alliances (the cases of families Jojica, Ivul, Buceșnița, Vaida, Măciș are well known). We do not know how Ioan Simon junior, her sister Elisabeta and Ana Simon, their niece to brother came to have possessions in that county; what is sure is that on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1590, the three Simon family's members together with representatives of Vaida and Jojica families went to law against three nobles from Măciș<sup>51</sup> family for the estate from the county of Hunedoara; unfortunately, the document does not notice the possessions in questions.

The noble ladies Elisabeta and Ana Simon were to write an interesting page of Simon of Caransebeș family's history; aunt and niece, both of them were Nicolae Simon's descendants. How their positions were within the family, their contracted marriages in the influent family of Mănticeanu, as well as their ways to administrate their own estates make a conclusive example of the fact that the patterns and social compulsions upon that time women became relaxed: the noble woman began more and more visible and active in her family's economy and social life, that meant a certain liberty of movement, almost unregistered in the previous centuries documents. For example, Elisabeta Simon, yet a young girl, was co-opted by her brothers and cousins as an equal part in the landed transaction of 1544. Due to her family's position in the town of Caransebeș, Elisabeta Simon contracted an extremely well placed marriage with a personage of much account among the town nobles, namely Francisc Mănticeanu, one of the castellans of Caransebeș for many years (1561–1563 and 1571–1572)<sup>52</sup>. The couple unfortunately had no child, so that in 1585 after Francisc Mănticeanu's death, the question of the relatives' successional right on the ownership parts of the Mănticeanu's landed patrimony was brought into the local authorities' judgement. According to the time law, widow with no child whose husband hadn't written his will, had the title to the whole husband's estate as long as she rested unmarried<sup>53</sup>. It was the possible reason for which Elisabeta Simon came into conflict with her dead husband's relatives when the question of his legacy was raised, as it was an important part of Mănticeanu's estate. The series of litigations started on the

<sup>51</sup> A. Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, III, București, 1931, p. 210-211 (further on: Veress, *Documente*); D.L. Țigău, *Familia nobililor Vaida în secolele XVI-XVII*, în *AnB* (S.N.), Arheologie-Istorie, XVI, 2008, p. 206.

<sup>52</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bántag*, III, p. 298; Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 90.

<sup>53</sup> *Apud* Livia Magina, *Un destin feminin în Banatul sfârșitului de secol XVI: Barbara Moise*, în *AnB* (S.N.), Arheologie-Istorie, XIX, 2011, p. 286.

8<sup>th</sup> of June 1585<sup>54</sup> when the members of all the three branches of the family (respectively, Mâtniceanu, Fărcaș and Groza-Țeicu) surrendered to castellans Gheorghe Gârlișteanu and Nicolae Florea, and bailiff Ladislau Lățug's bail, to ask for seizing them with the parts of the estates from the villages of Măru, Mâtnic, *Belien*, *Morencz*, Ohaba, Sacu, Cernota, and also from the territories of the abandoned settlements *Ozestia*, *Puztatele*, *Zederyes*, *Nalacz*, Măgura, *Zlawapatak* and *Zgribest* in the county of Severin, Caransebeș district – ownerships that rested after the descendatsless death of Francisc Mâtniceanu. The late's widow Elisabeta Simon opposed during that first appearance, and asked for her possessions to remain her as long as she would bear his husband's name. Only three days after, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1585<sup>55</sup> the situation became involved, when she came to the village of Morencz where other impediments were put to her. It seems that in the end Elisabeta Simon was allowed to keep the ownership upon his late husband's possessions till the end of her life<sup>56</sup>.

Elisabeta Simon's will from the 6 of June 1599<sup>57</sup> (written down in the presence of more Romanian nobles from Caransebeș) is also extremely suggestive for a noble woman of that time and for the right on having her goods. Through her will, the noble lady had both the inherited from his husband goods, and those ones that she earned by herself all along her life. The main beneficiaries proved to be the couple of Lupu Mâtniceanu and her niece Ana Simon, as well as Ioan Simon's sons (we believe that Ioan Simon was her brother). Lupu Mâtniceanu received first of all the estates parts from the villages Sacu, Mâtnic, *Morencz*, Cernota, Ohaba, Ruginos, Măru and *Zgribest* that had belonged to Francisc Mâtniceanu. He also was given the glade, the hay fields and the cultivated fields around Morencz, which had been probably bought by the will's author. She left to Ana Simon and her sons the mills from Măru and Morencz that had been built at the expensive of her<sup>58</sup>, half of the kitchen gardens and an amount of money; Ioan Simon's sons were given a hay field at Racovița, as well as the cattle, grains and money that would remain after her death. Noble Francisc Lazăr was also given the lands the will specifies to be his share, and Francisc Fodor was given a house in Caransebeș near by his own dwelling. In her way, Elisabeta Simon proved to have been a

<sup>54</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 73.

<sup>55</sup> Feneșan, *Documente*, p. 70.

<sup>56</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, II, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 224-225.

<sup>58</sup> Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, II, p. 5.



good manager of her husband's estate, but also of her own that she increased all along her life and had by will after her death, with a distinct fondness of her family to which she would let the main part of her estate.

Elisabeta's niece, Ana Simon may be also an example of how the noble families' female descendants became part and acted within the familial patrimonial system. Marrying Lupu Mâtneanu she also entered the numerous and influential family of Mâtneanus. Since her youth she faced a first question of inheritance when, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1582, after her father, Mihail Simon's death and following a previous understanding between that one and his brother, Ioan Simon junior, (the young girl's uncle) she would to be given a part of villages Domaşnea, Cornea, Cănicea, Cornereva, Bogâltin and Zăgujeni; but Ioan Simon did not do such a thing and kept the goods under his ownership<sup>59</sup>. It is of interest the fact that those possessions (towards south, on the Timiş-Cerna valley, at a certain distance from the Simon family's domain) were not part of the Simon family's landed patrimony, being jointly possessed by the families of Vaida, Moise and Fodor who disputed them for more decades<sup>60</sup>. We do not know how Ana Simon's father got the possession of some parts of those estates. It is sure that they belonged to his estate, so he considered himself to have the right of leaving her daughter that legacy; his brother Ioan Simon agreed it at least as long as Mihail Simon was alive. After Mihail Simon's death the uncle refused to reverse the understanding and kept for him the respective parts of estates he had no right on. Ana Simon's case that was brought to price justice in 1582 and to years later it would be re-brought with Lupu Mâtneanu, her husband's backing, a fact that certainly improved the juridical argumentation. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1584<sup>61</sup>, prince Sigismund Báthory of Somlő asked more nobles from Caransebeş to look for Ioan Simon junior and admonish him for his refuse to hand over to the plaintiff the parts from the parental inheritance; he was also asked either to submit the princely will, or to come to the Court in order to clarify the situation. Although we do not know the final decision of that lawsuit, we presume an amiable understanding between Ana Simon and his uncle, as on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1590<sup>62</sup> we have already seen that the two ones together with representatives of Vaida and Jójica families summoned before the judge the nobles Francisc, Petru and Pavel Măciuş for

<sup>59</sup> Feneşan, *Documente*, p. 65; I. Costea, *op. cit.*, p. 106 and 111.

<sup>60</sup> D.L. Țigău, *Familia nobililor Vaida*, p. 205.

<sup>61</sup> Feneşan, *Documente*, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> Veress, *Documente*, p. 210-211.

the estate they had in the county of Hunedoara, but the document does not notice the possessions in question.

At the end of the century, Ana Simon became the main beneficiary of her aunt Elisabeta Simon's will, together with her husband Lupu Mâtneanu; so, she personally and her sons received more mills at Măru and Morenț, kitchen gardens, precious objects and money, she and Mihail Fodor's wife being obliged to support the will's author till the end of her life. Her husband in turn received a great part of Mâtneanu's estate for which he would repeatedly go to law with his collateral relatives the next years<sup>63</sup>. After her husband's death, Ana Simon directly involved in Gabriel and Ioan Mâtneanu, his sons' legacy rights preserving; so she opposed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1624<sup>64</sup> to the princely decision through which the so-called "Zagyvai parts" of Mâtneanu's estate had to be attributed to Francisc Groza, called *Farkassi* of Sacu. It seems that Ana Simon's opposition stood no chance, those "Zagyvai parts" remaining in Francisc Groza's ownership.

Besides those patrimonial relative compact structures which constituted either the familial patrimony, or ownerships belonging to other successional masses, temporarily entering under the family's control through legacy or matrimonial alliances, other possessions are punctually noticed; those possessions came into Simon family's ownership in a certain context that we cannot specify. Ioan Simon seems thus to have had a land at *Velcest* (in the former unprivileged district of Marginea) in the county of Hunedoara, one of his loyal men (*Negwl Ferkezk*) being on May 1598, among the neighbors and representatives of the county called to assist at nobles Ștefan and Valentin Török of Enningh's taking hold on Marginea *oppidum* and its pertinences<sup>65</sup>. A certain Ladislau Simon had at his turn a representative at Hezeres (Ezeriș), on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1602, when the castle and the borough of Lugoj together with their all pertinences were donated by the prince to Andrei Barchay of Bârcea Mare and her wife Drusiana Bogathy<sup>66</sup>.

*The Conscriptio portarum* from 1603, made by Simon Lodi, ban of Caransebeș and Lugoj, at the Imperial Court asking in order to know the region fiscal potential<sup>67</sup>, is also important for our present study. A certain Ioan Simon

<sup>63</sup> Boldea, *Mâtneicii de Ohaba-Mâtnic*, p. 262-264.

<sup>64</sup> Pesty, *Krassó*, IV, p. 280.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 216.

<sup>66</sup> Feneșan, *Documente*, p. 123.

<sup>67</sup> Adrian Magina, *Conscrierea porților districtului Caransebeș în anul 1603. Considerații*

was registered with by a unit at *Feseo Zăgujeni*, *Muszel*, Feneș, Iablanița and Cornereva, and a half at *Glob*. Those possessions were in the south-eastern corner of the Banat, on the Timiș-Cerna passage, the former privileged district of Mehadia, so to say at an enough long distance from the familial domain ensemble. A question mark still remains on the circumstances that Ioan Simon came to have those parts of possessions.

Another document from the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1642<sup>68</sup> shows that Ștefan Simon together with other nobles from Caransebeș had the right of ownership on the estates of *Machova* (Maciova), *Pestere* (Peștera), on the Timiș River, and Obreja on the Bistra Valley. Those nobles were at that time at law with the princely fisc, and having to devide the law expenses according to each one estate in those villages.

Finally, the documents also point out the fact that Simon family had several vineyards on the Teiuș Hill nearby Caransebeș, those ones of Ladislau Simon, Ștefan Simon and Gheorghe Simon being mentioned in 1642. In fact, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1642<sup>69</sup> it is noticed an understanding between Ladislau Simon on one side, and Nicolae Măciș together with his wife Sara Găman (the first one's niece to sister) on the other side, according to which Ladislau Simon gave the last ones for ever a lain fallow vineyard on the Teiuș Hill; the condition was that the two ones would not have children, the respective vineyard should return to Ladislau and his sons. It is of interest the fact that after a while, as Nicolae Măciș had succeeded to grow there a fertile vineyard, a new change took place: Nicolae Măciș gives the restored vineyard to Ladislau Simon, and the last one gives back to Nicolae his former vineyard for a perpetual ownership. We cannot but presume that Ladislau Simon used in his favor his relative's skill in growing vineyards, and noble Măciș used that ability for having a vineyard of his and his descendants own.

At the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Simon family as well as all the other representatives of the Banat Romanian elites, experienced the deadlock of the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj unconditional yielding to the Ottomans in 1658. The moment had ominous effects on the Banat nobiliary community due to the

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*pe marginea unui document*, in *Pe urmele trecutului. Profesorului Nicolae Edroiu la 70 de ani*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 289-295. There were registered 95 localities with 335 units on which the princely fiscal authority probably collected 335 forints about, if we take into consideration that each unit had a public obligation of 1 forint.

<sup>68</sup> Idem, *Notarii Caransebeșului în secolul al XVII-lea*, în *AnB* (S.N.), Arheologie-Istorie, XIX, 2011, Anexa, doc I, p. 307-308.

<sup>69</sup> Feneșan, *Documente*, p. 178.

dissolving of the ownership system that had been consolidated for centuries, the majority of the noble families exiling themselves. In the case of Simon family we can only presume that it went to the neighbor county, Hunedoara, where we know that some of its members had possessions yet in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1688 it certainly came back in its native land, as other many representatives of the noble families from Severin county, under the circumstances of the second military occupation of the Banat by the imperial troupes. As we have seen above, the imperial conscription of 1688 that registered 170 buildings, places for houses and other real estate (mills, vineyards, gardens) inside or outside the fortress of Caransebeș, included the real estate of no less than nine members of Simon family, an eloquent proof of how that exponent of the nobility in the Banat survived the times hardships and came back home hoping that its native land would have a normal political life so that the family would restore the social and patrimonial structures ante-1658. The last testimonies on the family' patrimonial goods date on 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1699<sup>70</sup>, and they relate on the fact that an *egregius* Sigismund Simon succeeded to retrieve usufructuary the estates of Zorlențu Mare and Vârciorova, where from he collected the population's taxes and paid a quota to the imperial fisc. From the document data results that, from Zorlențu Mare estate for instance, the imperial fisc collected 440 Rhenish forints, a large amount if reported to other villages, and the same villages gave 140 ducats, 140 pails of maize, and *potkovina* (the horseshoe tax) of 1 forint, in 1697–1698, while at Vârciorova they collected 30 ducats and 30 pails of maize. They are the last information on the familial domain of nobles Simon of Caransebeș as the temporary Ottomans' re-coming in 1699, and the total integration of the Banat in the Hapsburg Empire after, in 1718, put an end to the Romanian nobility's history in the Banat.

In all, the domain of the family Simon of Caransebeș, with its 13 estates that constituted the stable nucleus of the landed patrimony (without considering the possessions that were random ownerships of different members of the family) didn't rank among the great landed domains of the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj. We presume for this reason that the problems it had to face were not so complex or acute as they were in the case of other structures of a greater dimensions, which belonged to some emblematic families of that time: Bizere-Găman, Fiat de Armeniș, Mătniceanu, Măcițaș, Vaida or Jojica, for example. In fact we do not know to have been any processual law cause

<sup>70</sup> C. Feneșan, *Stăpâni și supuși în comitatul Severinului în timpul celei de-a doua ocupații habsburgice (1688-1699)*, in *Banatica*, 14, p. 161, 166 and 186-221.

among the family's members on the reason of the right of the familial domain ownership share. We dare say that such a fact was also a result of a certain concord among the members of that family of magistrates in Caransebeș, an almost uncommon situation in the case of the noble families within which the frictions and divergent interests of their different branches frequently degenerated in litigations and their solutions were asked in law. On the other side, we have found that more members of the family (males and females in the same measure) came to own parts of other successional masses following certain transactions or matrimonial alliances, and for them the family's members didn't hesitated to go to law tenaciously when needed.

They created by those means opportunities to increase individually patrimonial goods concentrated in the north of the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj also extended to the neighbor county of Hunedoara.

The distinct way that that patrimonial ensemble was constituted during the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly founded on a landed acquisition, particularizes someway that family and differentiates it from other exponents of the Banat nobility the ownership of which came from the Romanian knezes' ownership system, officially recognized by the royalty during the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although we may presume that it wasn't a singular case within the Banat nobiliary elites' panoply; it was only another way with the help of which certain families of local small magistrates in the town of Caransebeș in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries succeeded to consolidate their nobiliary statute as result of constituting some domain patrimonies on the basis of transactions and landed acquisitions of some estates of parts of estates that proved along the time to have been available either by a descent extinction, or by some noble families from the Banat moving into Transylvanian counties, or following some financial needs that determined certain families to exempt from parts of their familial estates, by selling or by pawning. They are different and shaded facets of the economical-social of the eastern Banat in the Principality era, which are worth analyzing in order to fulfill the general picture of the nobiliary domain structures developed during the Middle Ages.

## DEMNIȚĂȚI ȘI STĂPÂNIRE PATRIMONIALĂ ÎN BANATUL DE CARANSEBEȘ ȘI LUGOJ: DOMENIUL FAMILIEI SIMON DE CARANSEBEȘ

### *Rezumat*

Reconstituirea domeniului funciar al familiei nobile Simon de Caransebeș permite analiza unor aspecte particulare ce țin de evoluția structurilor patrimoniale nobiliare în Banatul medieval. În primul rând, este vorba despre o familie care poate fi încadrată „noi” nobilimi de funcție, afirmată în cadrul Banatului de răsărit începând cu secolul al XVI-lea. Această realitate se reflectă cu pregnanță și în ceea ce privește patrimoniul său familial; nu dispunem de nicio informație documentară care să certifice existența unui patrimoniu funciar al familiei Simon anterior secolului al XVI-lea, în jurul căruia să se potențeze statutul privilegiat nobiliar, recunoscut sau dobândit la un moment dat din partea puterii centrale. Din această perspectivă, domeniul familiei Simon, așa cum s-a dezvoltat el pe parcursul secolelor XVI-XVII, atrage mai degrabă atenția prin caracterul său eclectic și conjunctural, destul de vulnerabil și relativ puțin sustenabil în timp. Este un exemplu particular în cadrul elitelor românești bănățene, parte din ele caracterizate printr-o remarcabilă consistență și durabilitate în timp a stăpânirilor lor funciare. Se impune o distincție care credem că individualizează într-o anumită măsură această familie. În decursul timpului, tranzacțiile funciare au constituit un aspect esențial al activității economice în care posesorii de pământuri au fost angrenați, fie pentru a-și augmenta domeniile patrimoniale, fie pentru a rezolva anumite probleme de natură financiară. Familia Simon pare că își cumpără în 1544 un întreg patrimoniu funciar, încropit prin alăturarea unor așezări localizate în secolele anterioare în districte diferite (Comiat, Bujor, Caransebeș) și aflate în stăpâniri diferite (comunitatea cnezilor nobili de Comiat, familia Mâtnic, domeniul Hunedoarei), care a ajuns în împrejurări care ne scapă, la începutul veacului al XVI-lea, în stăpânirea unor nobili străini de spațiul bănățean, de la care sunt cumpărate de familia nobililor Simon de Caransebeș.

În decurs de jumătate de secol familia nobililor Simon de Caransebeș și-a consolidat domeniul patrimonial dobândit în mare parte printr-o tranzacție funciară, l-a stabilizat, în pofida faptului că dispunerea sa teritorială, la limita dintre banatul de Caransebeș și Lugoj și eialetul Timișoarei, i-a conferit în opinia noastră o vulnerabilitate sporită. Cu toate acestea, putem aprecia că în comparație cu alte domenii nobiliare familiale dezvoltate în spațiul Banatului montan și piemontan, mult mai extinse, ansamblul patrimonial al acestei familii trebuie că s-a dovedit a fi insuficient unei descendențe destul de numeroase, obligată să perpetueze sistemul tradițional al stăpânirii condvizionare. Ca urmare, constatăm că unii membri ai familiei s-au străduit să își dezvolte un patrimoniu separat, recurgând la diferite tranzacții sau la căsătorii avantajoase cu reprezentante ale altor familii nobile din banatul de Caransebeș și Lugoj sau din comitatul Hunedoarei.