

The Political Relations between Wallachia and the Hungarian Kingdom during the Reign of the Anjou Kings*

Marius Diaconescu

1. Introduction

During the Middle Ages, the political relations were governed by certain specific requirements. The medieval state meant one and the same with the sovereign's person - emperor, king, prince, etc. The relations between the medieval states were the same as those between their rulers. The basic principle of the feudalism was that of the vassality which designed the relationship between the ruler and the vassal¹. The relations of the Romanian states with the neighbouring ones, especially with the great powers, follow the same feudal principles.

The historiography has often approached the relations between Wallachia and the Hungarian Kingdom, in studies particularly focused on this topic as well as in syntheses. The works of classical authors as D. Onciul², N. Iorga³, and Gh. Brătianu⁴, to refer only to the best known researchers of the problem, have been enriched, within the Romanian historiography, by other writings, more or less relevant⁵. Some of the contributions strictly tackling the subject are especially remarkable as compared to the rich literature published during the last 50 years. Maria Holban's studies, collected in a volume significantly entitled *On the History of the Romanian-Hungarian Relationships*⁶ compelled recognition in the Romanian literature, despite many discrepancies and far-fetched interpretations lacking

* The hereby research is part of a series tackling the relationships existing between Wallachia and Hungary until 1526.

¹ M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, I-II, pp. 145 et passim.

² D. Onciul, *Radu Negru și originile Principatului Țării Românești*, in idem, *Scieri istorice*, I, București, 1968 (critical edition, edited by A. Sacerdoțeanu), pp. 328-428; idem, *Originile principatelor Române*, in *ibidem*, pp. 560-715.

³ N. Iorga, *Lupta pentru stăpânirea Vidinului în 1365-9 și politica lui Vladislav Vodă față de Unguri* (following up: *Lupta pentru stăpânirea Vidinului*), in *Convorbiri literare*, XXXIV, 1900; idem, *Carpații în luptele dintre Români și Unguri* (following up: *Carpații în luptele dintre Români și Unguri*), in *AARMSI*, s. II, t. XXXVIII, 1915-1916; also the syntheses concerning *Istoria românilor*, the book *Criitorii*, București, 1937, passim.

⁴ Gh. I. Brătianu, *L'expédition de Louis Ier de Hongrie contre le prince de Valachie Radu Ier Basarab en 1377*, in *RHSEE*, 1925, pp. 73-82; idem, *Les rois de Hongrie et les Principautés Roumaines qu XIVe siècle*, in *Bulletin de la Section historique de l'Academie Roumaine*, XXVIII, 1947, pp. 67-105.

⁵ I. Minea, *Magyar-bolgár-oláh érintkezés Nagy Lajos alatt*, Budapest, 1907; idem, *Războiul lui Basarab cel Mare cu regele Carol Robert (noiembrie 1330)*, *CI*, 5-7, 1929-1932; V. Motogna, *La războaiele lui Vlaicu-Vodă cu Ungurii, 1368-9*, in *R. Ist.*, IX, 1923, fasc. I, p. 12-20; I. Lupaș, *Atacul regelui Carol Robert contra lui Basarab cel Mare. 1330 (Lupta de la Posada)*, *ACMI*, secția Transilvania, 1930-1931; C. Lăzărescu, *Despre lupta din 1330 a lui Basarab voivode cu Carol Robert*, *RI*, XXI, 1935; E. Lăzărescu, *Despre relațiile lui Nicolae Alexandru voevod cu ungurii*, *RI*, XXXII, 1946; etc.

⁶ Maria Holban, *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII și XIV*, București, 1981, passim.

reasonable demonstrations. S. Iosipescu takes the question into consideration from another perspective, adding valuable nuances, in a collective volume about the process of constitution of the Romanian states⁷. Ş. Papacostea has paid during the latest decades a special attention to the birth of the Romanian states, going over various topics connected with the ones concerning the relations with the Hungarian kingdom. The latest serious researches on this subject in the Romanian historiography have meant to prove the importance of the international commercial routes, which crossed the territories of the Romanian states for their establishment as states⁸ or approached the reinterpretation of some new sources published by Hungarian historians⁹. A valuable synthesis referring to the 13th century Romanians properly places the evolutions of the Romanian space within the international frame and offers a survey over the Romanians' history of that age¹⁰. This contribution is especially precious for the understanding of the evolution of the Hungarian suzerainty over the Southern-Carpathian territories during the 13th century.

The Hungarian historiography, beside those general studies approaching the Anjou dynasty, in which the connections with Wallachia were also included, like A. Huber's¹¹ and B. Homán's¹² works, records particular attempts to research the topic. J. Pataki's¹³ endeavour to bring together the contributions of Romanian and Hungarian historians has tried to present a general picture of the relations established between the kings of Hungary and the voivodes of the Romanian states during the 14th century. The latest contribution is L. B. Kumorovitz's¹⁴ work, which reveals original documentary information and makes the correction of a wrong dated conflict between the Romanian voivode and King Louis.

The diversity of the historiographic approaches of the topic made us reassess the relations between the rulers of Wallachia and the kings of Hungary from a neutral perspective. The most part of the Romanian historiography has focused on the conflicts between the two sides. Often overstates the relevance or the position of a military victory within the context of the respective relationships in order to try and support the independence of Wallachia and minimised the

⁷ S. Iosipescu, *Românii din Carpații Meridionali la Dunărea de Jos de la invazia mongolă (1241-1243) până la consolidarea domniei a toată Țara Românească. Războiul victorios purtat la 1330 împotriva cotozirii ungare*, in vol. *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, București, 1980, pp. 41-96.

⁸ Ş. Papacostea, *Începuturile politicii comerciale a Țării Românești și Moldovei (secolele XIV-XVI). Drum și stat*, (following up: *Începuturile politicii comerciale*) in *SMIM*, X, 1983, pp. 9-55.

⁹ Idem, *Domni români și regi angevini: înfruntarea finală (1370-1382)* (following up: *Domni români și regi angevini*), in idem, *Geneza statului în evul mediu românesc*, Cluj-Napoca, 1988, pp. 113-130.

¹⁰ Idem, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea. Între cruciată și Imperiul mongol* (following up: *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*), București, 1993.

¹¹ A. Huber, *Ludwig I von Ungarn und die ungarischen Vassallenländer*, Wien, 1884, pp. 7-10; 32-38.

¹² B. Homán, *Gli Angioni di Napoli in Ungheria 1290-1403*, Roma, 1938, pp. 300-304; 384-388; 401-405 etc.

¹³ J. Pataki, *Anjou királyink és a két román vajdaság*, Kolozsvár, 1944.

¹⁴ L. B. Kumorovitz, *I. Lajos királyunk 1375. évi Havasalföldi hadjárata (és „török”) háborúja*, in *Századok*, 117, 1983, no. 5, pp. 919-979

significance of the vassal relationships during the epoch. On the other hand, the Hungarian historiography minimised at its turn the independence acts of Wallachia, as well as the cases when the Hungarian armies were defeated. Our study is trying to rediscuss the topic and balance the two trends, and also to point at some common places of the historical writing. Without claiming to achieve an exhaustive approach of the topic, we try to sum up the political relations between Wallachia and Hungary during the Anjou epoch.

2. The Origins and the Beginnings of the Hungarian Suzerainty

Hungary's foreign policy during the period of the founding dynasty, the Arpadian, was usually aggressive, permanently offensively oriented, with annexationist purposes. The 13th century also meant the beginning of the Saint Stephen's kingdom expansion towards the regions of the Danube springs, south of the Carpathians¹⁵. This expansion should be naturally understood as ruling in the sense of the vassalage relationships that characterised the Middle Ages. From a political point of view, the Cumans were the owners of the territory located between the Carpathians and the Danube. There is indisputable proof that, at one moment, the kings of Hungary were suzerains over a large part of this region.

The privileges granted to the Teutonic knights¹⁶ by King Andrew II after 1211, after the colonisation of the land of Bârsa (located in the Southeast of Transylvania, within the Carpathian curvature) show that the Cumans inhabited the territory south of the mountains. They were considered as enemies of the kingdom at that moment¹⁷. The document does not allow us to determine whether the Cumans ruled the entire territory lying between the Danube and the Carpathians. In the meantime, the Teutonic knights who settled in the land of Bârsa seem to have been an outpost facing the Cuman territories. Later documents, issued after granting the mentioned privileges, indicate that the knights also possessed lands relatively located south of the mountains (stretching from river Bârsa's springs, in the mountains, to the Danube)¹⁸. The Teutons did not hesitate to be the first who occupied it after settling in the land of Bârsa. They soon built a city, placed there by means of a papal document, "*beyond the snowy mountains*" (*ultra mons nivium*)¹⁹. The Hungarian king reconsidered, at a certain moment, the legacy

¹⁵ Ș. Papacostea, *Începuturile politicii comerciale*, p. 10, claims that the motive of the territorial expansion of the Hungarian kingdom towards the Danube springs was economically defined, aiming at obtaining the access to the Eastern commerce.

¹⁶ The bibliography: H. Glassl, *Der Deutsche Orden im Burzenland und in Kumanien*, in *Ungarn Jahrbuch*, 3, 1971, pp. 23-49, apud Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 31, note 69.

¹⁷ *Documenta Romaniae Historica, D. Relații între Țările Române* (following up: DRH, D.), I, pp. 1-3.

¹⁸ Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 31.

¹⁹ DRH, D., I, pp. 1-3.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

granted to the knights and took away the cities and the lands, including those situated beyond the mountains²⁰.

Recent studies concluded that the purpose of allowing the Teutons to settle in the land of Bârsa was to support the Latin Empire of Constantinople, as part of the crusade and the unification of the two Churches²¹. Thus, the interests of the Hungarian kingship in establishing a defence base against the Cumans, direct documentary facts themselves, appear to be of secondary importance²².

The territorial expansion of the Teutons outside the Carpathians arch was not any longer guaranteed by the Hungarian king, because of the dispossession of the occupied region directly protected by the papacy. The documents do not provide an exact location of the circumscribed territory, being rather terse in offering information. Consequently, the thesis according to which, by means of their expansion, the Teutons put an end to the black Cumania and extended their territory to extreme limits²³ proves exaggerated.

A part of the Cumans was christianised within the immediately following years. They presumed that, once protected by the Hungarian Catholic king, the pressure of the Tartars, who crushed them at Kalka, would decrease. The Catholic Church was successful among the Cumans and a special bishopric was founded especially for them²⁴. The spreading of the Catholicism, supported by the Hungarian monarchy indicates a penetration of the Hungarian power south of the mountains²⁵.

The territorial expansion of the Teutons beyond the territories initially meant for them, followed, because of different reasons, by their driving away from the region, as well as the christianising of some of the Cumans, living in the proximity of the zone conquered by the Teutons. That made up the pre-requisites of the extended authority of the Hungarian king south of the Carpathians. The territory corresponding to this stage of the expansion is circumscribed to the one lying from the curvature of the Carpathian Mountains to the Danube. It is not possible to specify the form and the period of the Hungarian domination (most likely only a formal suzerainty) exerted over this territory. It is merely a matter of assumptions and probabilities²⁶.

Around the same period, the Hungarian royalty attempted, and partially succeeded in rooting itself in the other side, the Western one, of the territory south of the Carpathians. Around the year 1233, in the context of the conflicts between

²⁰ The examination of the documents and of the entire problem concerning the history of the Teutonic knights in the land of Bârsa as well as their territorial expansion in Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-48.

²¹ Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 32-33 and the note 75.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 32.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 34-35.

²⁴ DRH. D., I, pp. 14-18. On this question: I. Ferent, *Episcopia cumaniilor*, București, 1931 (in Hungarian language: *A kunok és püspökségük*, Budapest, 1981); L. Makkai, *A milkoi (kun) püspökség és népei*, Debrecen, 1936.

²⁵ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 47, presumes that the Teutons had exerted "a sort of domination with the center in their citadel, Crucpurg" over the territorial formations (principalities?) in the region.

the Kingdom of Hungary and the Bulgarian Czarism from the first half of the 13th century, for a short interval, a certain form of Hungarian domination was established in the Severin region. In 1233, the existence of a *banus* of Severin is certified²⁷. As for the following years, there is doubt whether a *Banate* of Severin really functioned due to the laconic character of the information²⁸. At the same time, one cannot almost entirely deny the existence of a Hungarian domination, before the devastating invasion of the Mongolians. As a result of the conflicts with the Bulgarians, the Hungarians were not able to take over that territory and to organise it integrally. However, after 1233, it became a permanent aim to achieve. The initial reason for occupying this territory was to establish a defence position and an offensive base against the Bulgarians. Actually, the organisation form of *Banate* was characteristic to these marginal territories, which were assigned a strategic role. The fact that the *banus* of Severin were mentioned three times, in 1233, 1240 and 1243 states the strategic option of the Hungarian authority. The fact that, in the Knights Hospitalers' Diploma from 1247, no *Banate* of Severin is mentioned, but a land of Severin also demonstrate the complete failure of the action. Nevertheless, we stress that the territory appears to be under Hungarian domination in 1247, even though it was only a formal one! The region of Severin also presents an interdependence of the military campaigns, based on force, and the missionary ones, aiming at converting the population to Catholicism²⁹, similar to the situation of the Eastern region of the Southern Carpathian territories. The substantial missionary activity of the Dominican friars in the land of Severin indicates its position within Hungary's influential area³⁰.

Since it is certified that the Hungarian kingship title included those of king of Bulgaria and of Cumania after the conflicts with the Bulgarians in 1230, one can take into consideration a new modified political reality, south of the Carpathians, undergone within the domination area of the Hungarian kingdom. The intensification of the actions initiated by the papacy in the region acknowledges the fact that it derived from a political change, on the basis created by Hungary's expansion³¹. The installation of the Hungarian authority was also enabled by the intervention, with the papal mandate, in the conflict between the Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Romanian-Bulgarian Czarism before the Mongolian invasion³².

During the 13th century, the Romanian communities were already organised in territorial-state formations of small dimensions. In *Assertion on the St. Demetrios' Wonders*, John Stavrakios, in his account of the battles between the Byzantines and the Bulgarians, mentions the part played by some Northern

²⁷ Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (following up: *Documente*), I/1, p. 126. The international context: Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 41-42.

²⁸ Maria Holban's discussion *op. cit.*, pp. 49-89 is subjective. The author emphasizes too much the internal context of the Hungarian kingdom.

²⁹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/1, pp. 153, 154-155, 182-184.

³⁰ Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 42.

³¹ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

³² *Ibidem*, pp. 43-48.

Danubian political organisms called "little reigns" or "governments"³³. The existence of certain political forms is suggested in a document issued by Pope Gregory IX in which measures are recommended to be taken for the conversion of some "peoples" called "walati" (Romanians) in the area of the Cuman bishopric³⁴. The term *populus*, used in plural, does not have an ethnic meaning, for which the Pope used the term *natio*, but that of a human community as part of a political organism³⁵. The same meaning must be conveyed for the "ulagh" peoples, certified in the universal chronicle of Raşid od-din, which were defeated by the Mongolians during the invasion from 1241³⁶. The Knights Hospitalers' Diploma issued in 1247, but which refers to circumstances prior to the Mongolian invasion certifies the existence of such Romanian political forms³⁷.

The great Mongolian invasion from 1240 - 1241 reversed the power balance in the region³⁸. The reorganisation of the devastated regions required several years as well as a new strategy to design, one that could have been appropriate for the new context³⁹. The danger of a new Mongolian aggression seemed impending⁴⁰.

A quite valuable source concerning the nature of the relations between Hungary and the south-Carpathian territories after the Mongolian invasion is the document known in historiography under the title of "*Knights Hospitalers' Diploma*". Willing to restore the defensive ability of the kingdom in the parts threatened by the Mongolians, the King of Hungary, Béla IV, settled Knights Hospitalers in the south of the Carpathians. The political situation at the half of the 13th century results clearly enough from the privileges granted in 1247⁴¹.

The king gave the Knights Hospitalers the following territories and benefits: the entire land of Severin, with its mountains and all the belongings, together with Ioan's and Farcaş's principalities (*knezates*) up to the river Olt, except Voivode Litovoi's land. Litovoi's land was going to remain a Romanian territory as it had been before⁴². At the first sight, all the territorial formations listed above may

³³ Apud *ibidem*, pp. 58-59, and the note 3.

³⁴ DRH, D., I, p. 20: „In Cumanorum episcopatu, sicut accepimus, quidam populi qui Walati vocantur, existunt...“.

³⁵ Ş. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 62-64.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 64. For another interpretation, according to which the term would mean the multitude of the Romanians: A. Decei, *L'invasion des Tatars de 1241/1242 dans nos région selon la Djami ot Tevarikh de Fâzil ol-lah Rasid od-Din*, in *RRH*, XII, 1973, 1, p. 103.

³⁷ Ş. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 61.

³⁸ About the Mongolian invasion and its consequences in the Carpathian space: *ibidem*, pp. 90-124; Gy. Kristó, *Az Árpád-kor haborúi* (following up: *Az Árpád-kor*), Budapest, 1986, p. 111-131.

³⁹ For the dimensions of the disaster brought about by the Mongolian invasion, as well as for the subsequent measures, see J. Szűcs, *Az utolsó Árpádok*, Budapest, 1993, pp. 3-74.

⁴⁰ About the regional context after 1241: Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-78.

⁴¹ DRH, D., I, pp. 21-27.

⁴² „*totam terram de Zeurino cum alpibus ad ipsam pertinentibus et aliis attinentiis omnibus, pariter cum kenezatibus Joannis et Farcasii usque ad fluvium Olth, excepta terra kenezatus Lytuoy woiauode, quam Olatis relinquimus, prout iidem hactenus tenuerunt...*“, DRH, D., I, p. 22.

seem as parts of the land of Severin⁴³. A few paragraphs further, the reference concerning the military obligations is made to the land of Severin as a whole⁴⁴. Or, for that matter, when it is used as a comparison term viewing the rights held by the knights in Cumania. All these can be explained by the fact that the full list of the territorial formations was no longer presented. The land of Severin was a different territorial entity as compared to the other mentioned formations. When the material benefits were recorded, the reference is made to the entire land of Severin, and to the mentioned principalities (*knezates*), stating a separation.

The donation was thought in such a way that half of all the benefits, the incomes and the jobs from the whole land of Severin and the above mentioned principalities (*knezates*) were kept by the king, while the other half went to the knights. The churches, those already built and those which were supposed to be built in the future were excepted, as they were rightfully owned by the knights, in the terms of accepting the rights of the church hierarchs, that is they received *ius patronatus* as well. The knights entirely owned the mills, built or to be built "in all the counties above mentioned" (*infra terminos prenominarum terrarum*) - suzerain right - as well as all the buildings and crops raised by the knights at their own expense, the hay fields and pastures for their cattle, the actual fisheries and the future ones. The only exceptions were the fisheries on the Danube and the ponds at Celeiu (*Cheley*), which were owned by the king as well as by the knights. The knights were also allowed to take advantage of half of the incomes and benefits "collected in the name of the king" (*regi colligentur*) coming from the Romanians dwelling the land of Litua (*Lytua*), except the land of Hațeg. The Romanians were obliged to help the knights with their military means for the defence of the country, and the knights, at their turn, had to give them help and support. The king also gave them all the Cumania, except the land of Seneslau, the Voivode of the Romanians, which were still owned by the Romanians, like before, in conditions similar to those of the land of Litua. From the land of Seneslau, the knights would only benefit of half of the incomes. But from the rest of Cumania, for 25 years from the moment of their beginning to rule, the knights would have all the benefits, which they would have to share with the king. The expenses for guarding the cities and defence works would also be paid together. The king promised his support, even personally, for building the citadels in Cumania and for defending the county of Cumania. The document also includes some other prescriptions, which are not relevant for our topic.

A few distinctions must be made concerning the territorial formations and the nature of the relationship between them and the royalty or the knights. The knights became owners of the land of Severin and of Ioan's and Farcaș's principalities (*knezates*). Only half of the incomes were meant to the king. The king remained the direct suzerain of the land of Litua from whose incomes he only gave

⁴³ Maria Holban, op. cit., pp. 82, 83, 85 studies it as a whole, up to the Olt river, which enclosed the mentioned territorial formations. Also, Ș. Papacostea, *Românii în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 80 et passim; etc.

⁴⁴ „pro numero personarum exercitus de Zeurino pariter et armorum“, *DRH, D.*, I, p. 23.

half to the knights, with the exception of the land of Hațeg. The land of Litua is one and the same with Voivode Litovoi's principality (*knezate*), not with the land of Olt as sometimes it is interpreted. A resembling statute with Litovoi's principality had Seneslau's principality, on the left side of the river Olt. It is about two different types of domination. The king preserved his right as a direct suzerain over Litovoi's and Seneslau's principalities (*knezates*)⁴⁵. These territories belonged to the Romanians, like before, in the circumstances of vassality to the Hungarian King⁴⁶. The land of Severin and the principalities (*knezates*) of Ioan and Farcaș were donated to the knights, which is a proof of the fact that these were directly included under the royal ruling⁴⁷. Obviously, the king was still the knights' suzerain. The third category of relations includes the so-called Cumania, situated on the left side of the river Olt, south of the Carpathian Mountains. It was very well noticed the fact that the region of Cumania had to be conquered first⁴⁸ and only then governed. So, the knights received the right to conquer a territory evidently circumscribed in the name of the king. Cumania had a totally different statute as compared to the other south-Carpathian territories over which, one way or another, the Hungarian suzerainty was exerted. It is interesting to emphasize the fact that the king preferred to keep his old suzerain-vassalic right for these territories, too. Only a part of them, as a result of the donation, had a different owner appointed by the king - the Knights Hospitalers. One cannot deny that these territories had a prior similar statute to those of the lands of Litua or of Seneslau. The only difference consisted maybe in a stronger effect of the Hungarian domination or in a loose territorial organism.

The fact that in 1247 there is no evidence of a *Banate* of Severin, but only of a land of Severin (the same as in documents issued before the Mongolian invasion) shows the failure of the Hungarian authority of organizing a *Banate* here⁴⁹. It is probable that the *banus* mentioned in the previous period represented the royal authority in the region, meaning that they were on an intermediary position for the unstable relations with the leaders of the territorial formations in the region. This land of Severin appears as a clearly defined territorial entity, which excludes the principalities (*knezates*) of Ioan and Farcaș as well as that of Litovoi. It is rather closer to the territory of the *Banate* of Severin, territorially acknowledged in the next centuries, around the cities of Mehadia and Severin. This territory would become a property of the Crown in few years after the failure of the Knights Hospitalers' settlement. After 1260, for at least two decades, a steadfast series of *banus* of Severin began, which proves, in an incipient form, of course, the rooting of the royal authority. The re-establishment of the *Banate* of Severin takes

⁴⁵ Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 140, claims, without any foundation, that the superposition of the statutes of Seneslau's land with that of Litovoi's land "rather seems the expression of a desideratum of the royal power, of a plan to be fulfilled, than of a reality".

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 80.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

⁴⁸ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 84-85.

also place in the context provided by the conflicts with the Bulgarians⁵⁰, reinforcing the strategic meaning of such a territorial institution.

The knowledge concerning the incomes and the services owned by the Crown in those territories, as well as the detail concerning the fisheries on the Danube and the ponds in Celeiu (Cheley) also prove that at that moment, 1247, a certain suzerainty was exerted, one way or another, over those territories. A "*bilateral nature of some collaboration and protection relationships*"⁵¹ is out of the question. As the Hungarian king conceived the situation, the respective territories were parts of his kingdom. It is probable that the Mongolian invasion might have favoured the Hungarian State in this region, meaning that, threatened by the devastating danger, the leaders of the Romanian territorial formation accepted the Hungarian suzerainty, virtually offering protection.

The existence of the taxes and military help from the local people, organized into specific state-territorial formations – principalities (*knezates*) -, and of the military support from the suzerain authority, could indicate the existence of some actual vassalage relationships. Obviously, these relations did not precisely follow the occidental rules of the feudal relations.

The taxes, that is the material aspect of the vassalage relations, meant their main expression, beside the formal acknowledgement of the Hungarian king as suzerain. Any attempt towards independence was annihilated by means of military force, as the case of voivode Litovoi proves, in 1270, during the minority of King Ladislau IV the Cuman⁵².

The continuity of the vassality relations was secured during the 13th century with the help of armed forces. Because the voivode of the Romanians, Litovoi, unified a part of the Southern Carpathian territories (*included in his name a part of our kingdom, lying beyond the Carpathians* - as the king accuses him) and refused to send the rightful incomes to Ladislau IV the Cuman, the suzerain sent an army which re-established the old system. The confrontation was bloody, the voivode being slain, and his brother taken prisoner⁵³. The prisoner offered a big ransom for himself and accepted to pay the tribute⁵⁴. It is interesting the fact that, initially, the king did not disagree with the territorial unification. He only requested that the usual material "rights" should be delivered: "*with all our urges he did not take care of paying the incomes that we were entitled to from that part*". The

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 85-89; Gy. Kristó, *Az Árpád-kor*, pp. 136-137; J. Szűcs, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.

⁵¹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁵² Gy. Kristó, *Az Árpád-kor*, p. 142, dates the conflict in 1272. But the crisis situation in Hungary was until 1276: J. Szűcs, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-291. R. Popa, *La începuturile evului mediu românesc. Țara Hațegului*, București, 1988, pp. 251-252, dates the event in 1275-1276.

⁵³ Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 142, overstates the significance of the military conflict and minimalizes the unstable character in Hungary during that period.

⁵⁴ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 30-33.

motive of the punishing measures against the rebels was the tribute usually requested⁵⁵.

As it has recently been underlined⁵⁶, the punishing action of the Hungarian army restored the previous order only partially. It was successful considering the facts that the ruler was subjected, the Hungarian suzerainty was re-established, and the tax had still to be paid, but the unification of the Romanian political formations could not be broken any longer. It has to be added that the Hungarian suzerainty was re-established over all the territories, including those ruled by Litovoi⁵⁷.

One must emphasize that the Romanian voivode's rebellion took place in a period of internal crisis within the suzerain system, during the minority of Ladislau IV the Cuman. Litovoi tried to acquire independence from under the Hungarian king's suzerainty and take over other territorial formations, too, subjects them to the same suzerain power⁵⁸. It is the first known attempt to unify more territorial formations south of the Carpathians and to escape from the Hungarian suzerainty⁵⁹. Litovoi's initiative became one of the starting points⁶⁰ - considered as a precedent - for the future acts of liberation of the Southern Carpathian territory, as well as a foundation for the up-coming process of unification and constitution of the Romanian state.

At the beginning of the 14th century, Hungary was affected by a lasting internal political crisis, due to the dynastic changes and to the conflicts for the throne. Another Romanian political leader in the south of the Carpathians, Basarab I, Tihomir's son, took advantage of the inner turmoil of the Hungarian kingdom. He succeeded in unifying the most parts of the Romanian State formation south of the Carpathians in one state, known as *Wallachia*, *Valahia*, *Ungrovlahia* or *Terra Transalpina*. The circumstances which led to the constitution of the Romanian state were numerous: the internal evolution of the Romanian society⁶¹, the establishment of the Tartar domination in the region of the Lower Danube at the end of the 13th century⁶², as well as the internal conflict in Hungary, which was the suzerain state over Southern Carpathian territories. Basarab I achieved, after about half of a century, what Litovoi tried to do in 1270, taking advantage of the same profitable

⁵⁵ A. Sacerdoțeanu's comment of the document, in *Comentarii la diploma din 1285 privind pe Magistrul Gheorghe*, in *Analele Universității „C.I. Parhon”*, București, seria Științelor Sociale, Istorie, 9, 1957, pp. 27-44.

⁵⁶ Ș. Papacostea, *Români în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 142.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, loc. cit., considers without any reasons that the territories occupied by Litovoi were lost by the kingdom.

⁵⁸ *DRH, D.*, I, pp. 30-33: „*Lythway wayuoda, unacum fratribus suis, per suum infidelitatem aliquam partem de regno nostro, ultra alpes existentem, pro se occuparet et proventus illius partis nobis provenientes nullis amonitionibus reddere curabat ... per eiusdem magistri Georgii servitium, tributum nostrum in partibus eisdem nobis fuit restauratum. ...*”.

⁵⁹ The success of the unification was also mentioned by S. Iosipescu, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁶⁰ D. Onciul, *Scieri istorice*, I, pp. 354-355 and II, pp. 632-633, underlined the importance of the event in the enlargement of Wallachia.

⁶¹ The foundation of Wallachia was approached in a rich historical literature. Cf. N. Stoicescu, „*Descălecat*” sau „*intemeiere*”? *O veche preocupare a istoriografiei românești. Legendă și adevăr istoric*, in vol. *Constituirea statelor românești*, București, 1980, pp. 97-164.

⁶² Ș. Papacostea, *Români în secolul al XIII-lea*, pp. 167-168.

context: the internal crisis of the suzerain power. A part of great importance in the constitution of the Romanian State was played by the internal evolution of the society. But it is common with the Romanian historiography that this cause is exaggerated, the internal evolution of the Romanian society⁶³, while the role of the political crisis in Hungary is minimised⁶⁴. Given the conditions, in which a powerful state, with suzerain traditions and claims, was bordering the territory, only a crisis within it could offer an auspicious context in order to obtain the constitution of a relatively independent state by means of unifying more vassals and subdued political organisms.

3. Between the Suzerainty of the Kings of Anjou and Independence

The first information concerning the relations between the new Romanian State and King Carol Robert, the founder of the Anjou dynasty in Hungary, are subsequent to the process of state unification. In 1324, the Hungarian king calls the Romanian Voivode Basarab I "our Voivode of Wallachia" (*woyuodam nostrum Transalpinum*) in an internal document and points out the success of a previous deputation to him born by a Hungarian subject⁶⁵. The relation was not, until that moment, clearly framed⁶⁶. Carol Robert was engaged in the conflicts aiming at his recognition as king for about two decades. It is probable that the deputations to which this particular document refers were asking for the Voivode Basarab's support against the king's enemies who came from the Southern part of the kingdom. One of them had even been present on the Wallachian boundaries, in the Severin region.

The Mehadia citadel in the Severin region was governed by the members of the Theodore family⁶⁷ who joined the anti-royal side during the crisis in Hungary. The conflict between the Anjou king and the oligarchy sharpened during the years 1314 - 1317. After 1316, the king was present in the vicinity, in the

⁶³ Șt. Olteanu, *Evoluția procesului de organizare statală la est și sud de Carpați în secolele IX-XIV*, in *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, tom 24, 1971, no. 4, pp. 757-775; Fl. Constantiniu, *Premisele apariției statelor feudale românești*, in *SAI*, XXVI, 1974, pp. 5-11; etc.

⁶⁴ Although this pre-requisite was underlined by N. Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, III, București, 1937, p. 156.

⁶⁵ DRH, D., I, pp. 36-37: "... item in deferendo pluribus vicibus nostras legaciones ad Bazarab, ..., ubi sue legacionis officium fideliter et laudabiliter adimplevit...". *Anjou-kori oklevéltár* (following up: AO), VIII, Budapest-Szeged, 1993, nr. 360-361, pp. 182-183.

⁶⁶ S. Iosipescu, *op. cit.*, p. 71, admits that by the characterization of Basarab as the king's voivode, Carol Robert was the Romanian voivode's suzerain.

⁶⁷ P. Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301-1457*, I, (following up: *Archontológia*), Budapest, 1996, p. 367. Gy. Györffy, *Adatok a románok XIII. századi történetéhez és a román állam kezdeteihez* (II), (following up: *Adatok*), in *Történelmi Szemle*, 1964, VII, nr. 3-4, p. 539 considers, without valid arguments, that the Severin *Banate* region was ruled by ban Theodore family together with the Bulgarian despot from Vidin. The same supposition: Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor háborúi* (following up: *Az Anjou-kor*), Budapest, 1988, pp. 79-80.

Timișoara citadel almost every year for a period⁶⁸. At first, the king tried to persuade the rebels in the citadel to surrender. After capturing *banus* Theodore, whose son, John, rebelled in the Mehadia citadel, the king sent him away, guarded by a group of loyal servants, to be tied to horse tails, in front of the citadel, trying to make the rebels in it surrender. This strategy was wrong, for the ones inside, helped by the military force of the Bulgarians from Vidin, tried, instead, to release the prisoner, although uselessly⁶⁹. The event took place sometimes before the 23rd of October 1217⁷⁰. The purpose of the action was not achieved as the citadel continued to be in the hands of the rebels. The Crown conquered the citadel only after another campaign, to which the king himself took part, developed from December 1321 to February 1322, period in which the king was present for a longer period in the region. On the 23rd of November 1321 he was in Timișoara, where we find him again from the 6th of January to the 9th of February 1322; after this he left to Buda⁷¹. This was not a proper conquest as the good turns of another nobleman, Martin, Bugar's son, were used⁷². The capitulation can be explained also in the circumstances in which the king had victories on every front after 1318. During the spring of the same year, 1322, the documents certify the appearance of Szécsi Dénes⁷³, an owner of a castle at Mehadia serving the king. Only after this campaign he could have received the citadel, because on the 16th of December 1320 he was known only as possessing the castle in Jdioara, while on the 18th of March 1322 he was already a castle owner at Jdioara and Mehadia⁷⁴.

In a later document, from 1329, his and his brothers' faithful deeds are reminded and the king mentions the act of his appointment as owner of a castle at Mehadia, to resist in front of the Bulgarians, of Basarab, the Voivode of Wallachia, the schismatic king of Serbia, and to the Tartars⁷⁵. Dénes is certified in his quality of castle owner of Mehadia (Myhald) constantly between the 18th of March 1322 and the 26th of November 1324. In 1327, we learn about him again in his quality of castle owner of Mehadia, beside his title of High Steward (*magister dapiferorum*)⁷⁶.

We insisted on Szécsi Dénes' investment and activity as owner of a castle at Mehadia because this historical character had a significant role for the evolution of the relations between Basarab, the voivode of Wallachia, and the king of

⁶⁸ P. Engel, *Az ország újraegyesítése. I. Károly küzdelemei az oligarchák ellen (1310-1323)*, (following up: *Az ország újraegyesítése*) in *Századok*, 122, 1988, no. 1-2, pp. 137-139.

⁶⁹ Gy. Györffy, *Adatok*, pp. 547-548. *AO*, IV, Budapest-Szeged, 1996, nr. 605, pp. 228-229. The translation of the fragment discussed here in Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷⁰ P. Engel, *Archontológia*, I, p. 367, dates the attempt in 1314. Györffy György, *Adatok*, p. 540, dates it in 1316

⁷¹ P. Engel, *Az ország újraegyesítése*, p. 139.

⁷² The demonstration for the rebels' capitulation: Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 92, the note 11. Györffy György, *Adatok*, p. 539, considers that there was only one action of retrieving the citadel, in 1316, after which the king appointed his castle owner. The distinction between the two campaigns has been very well made by Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁷³ Györffy György, *Adatok*, pp. 548-549.

⁷⁴ P. Engel, *Az ország újraegyesítése*, p. 130, the note 171.

⁷⁵ *DRH. D.*, I, p. 41.

⁷⁶ *AO*, IX, Budapest-Szeged, 1996, p. 302.

Hungary. The Hungarian historian Györffy György states that after the king conquered the Mehadia citadel, even he considers to have taken place in 1316, at the same time with his castle owner's investment, he would have also invested Basarab as voivode of Wallachia⁷⁷. There is no proof to support such a statement. One cannot take yet into consideration any claim of the Hungarian kings to invest Romanian voivodes south of the Carpathians. The Romanian leader could at the most accept to pay the tax requested by the king, which meant that he acknowledged the suzerainty.

Wallachia was founded by means of a gradual unification of the Southern Carpathian territories. As we mentioned above, Voivode Litovoi took the first steps around 1270 during the political crisis in Hungary. His failure delayed the process only for a few decades (probably the difference of one generation). The unification developed, of course, under the pressure of the strongest ruler. One can only presume things concerning the stages fulfilled towards the constitution of the Romanian State. The fact that, at the beginning of the 14th century, the Mehadia citadel in the centre of the Severin *Banate* was governed by a Hungarian nobleman, and the last known *banus* of Severin is certified around 1291⁷⁸ does not imply that the Hungarian suzerainty was not, one way or another, exerted here during this interval. One of the rebels, Theodore, was called under the *banus* title. Also, the document does not specify the *Banate* in which he was a dignitary. The former *banus* who lost their position, as well as other civil servants, used to preserve their titles, honorarily. The Mehadia citadel was located on the territory belonging to the *Banate* of Severin, a citadel governed by *banus* Theodore and his son John at the beginning of the 14th century. Taking into account that it is not impossible that this *banus* title to have been related to the *Banate* of Severin so that he could have been the last *banus* of Severin before the starting of the political crisis in Hungary. This is only an assumption with a high level of probability! It is possible that during the civil wars developed at the beginning of Carol Robert's reign the Bulgarians from Vidin to have occupied the Southern side of the Severin *Banate*, on the Danube bank. Anyway, a possible reign of Basarab over this territory before 1325⁷⁹, or even over a part of it⁸⁰ is out of the question. The castle owner of Mehadia is certified even from 1324.

The historiography interpreted the fact that Basarab was called *our Wallachian voivode* in a royal document from 1324 as a proof that he would have accepted the Hungarian suzerainty so that the king would acknowledge his reign over the Eastern regions of the Severin *Banate*⁸¹! The castle owner of Mehadia does not vanish from the papers before the issuing of this document. Still in

⁷⁷ Györffy György, *Adatok*, p. 541.

⁷⁸ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/1, pp. 511-512. The contestation of the validity of this document by Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 126, the note 1, is not justified

⁷⁹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 106, ascribes to Basarab the ruling over Severin, which would have escaped the Hungarian suzerainty during the political crisis under Ladislau IV the Cuman [sic!]

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 130. The author claims that the Eastern side was ruled by Basarab.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 130. P. Engel, Gy. Kristó, A. Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301-1526*, Budapest, 1998, p. 77.

November 1324, thus after almost half a year, the castle owner of Mehadia is certified⁸². The 1324 document appreciates the repeated deputations performed by the beneficiary of the diploma. These deputations could take place any time from the coronation of the king or from the initiation of Basarab's activity as voivode of Wallachia! We can only presume a date *ante quem*: 1324. The deputations sent to the Romanian voivode can be rather considered as negotiations meant to make his collaboration sure, or at least to obtain his neutrality in the conflict the king had with the oligarchy, quite close to the boundaries of Wallachia. The denomination of Basarab as a voivode faithful to the king shows the fact that the problem of clarifying the relations with Carol Robert had not yet been actual. A short time before, the king had accomplished the establishment of the regime in his kingdom. After solving the internal problems, it is possible that the king should have started the reassessment of the relationships with the traditional vassals of the Hungarian Crown⁸³. The relations between the power which claimed suzerainty on the basis of the inheritance from the Arpadian crown and the voivode of a country constituted as a result of the unification of the territories previously subjected to the Hungarian king became tense only at this moment!

The true nature of the relations between the Hungarian king and the voivode of Wallachia is revealed only during the next year, 1325, when Basarab is called "*faithless towards the holy royal crown*" (*sancte regie corone infidelem*)⁸⁴ and praised by a rebel from Hungary. Basarab's power was obviously overbid when the rebel glorified him and asserted that it was greater than that of the king. This attitude accounts for the position the Wallachian voivode gained because of his rebel stand against the Hungarian king. Undoubtedly, Basarab I, the founder of Wallachia wished to acquire independence from the Hungarian Crown. Carol Robert's claims must be understood as a continuation of the political line adopted by the Hungarian kings in the past who were suzerains of the Romanian state formations rulers south of the Carpathians. The Romanian State, by its voivode's actions, proved independence in its manifestations, from a new position, even of force, towards the former suzerain power.

Basarab's rebellion did not instantly modify the situation of vassality to the Hungarian king from the foreign policy perspective⁸⁵. Pope John XXII, in a letter from 1327, still placed him under Hungarian jurisdiction, as he considered that the lands over which he was ruling were still situated within the Hungarian kingdom⁸⁶.

⁸² AO, VIII, no. 320. Maria Holban's entire demonstration, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-140 is not justified.

⁸³ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 80, correlates the question of the relationships with Basarab to that of those with the Bulgarians.

⁸⁴ DRH, D., I, pp. 37-38.

⁸⁵ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 81, places a certain foray of the Tartars in Hungary with the support of the Romanian voivode in 1326 and claims that after its defeat Basarab became a vassal of the Hungarian king. Based on the far-fetched interpretation of the documents from 1329 about Szécsi Dénes and the Mehadia citadel (mentioned above) and from 1327 (the one sent by the Pope), the assumption is not founded on viable arguments.

⁸⁶ "... in terris tibi subiectis in regno Hungarie consistentibus...", DRH, D., I, p. 39.

Along with the independence movement, the Romanian voivode went on with his activity of expanding the state beyond the Southern Carpathian territories. This is how one can explain why he occupied the Severin region at a certain moment. This moment can be identified somewhere closer to the year 1330, when it is proved that Severin belonged to Basarab⁸⁷. In 1327 we still find a castle owner serving the king at Mehadia, the same Szécsi Dénes⁸⁸. As this dignitary position is not mentioned during the interval that goes from the last mention in 1324 and the first one in 1327 may generate any hypothesis. It is possible that Basarab could have occupied the land of Severin and the citadel of Mehadia at a certain moment. It is a possibility but no one can definitely assert that things happened precisely within this interval. It is also likely that the Romanian voivode could have conquered Severin after 1237, too, or not very long before 1330. The importance of the citadel present in the region, Mehadia (the citadel of Severin was not raised yet), derives also from the fact that the author of *Chronicon Pictum* from Vienna, which describes the episode of the conflict from 1330, mentions the conquest of the citadel by the royal army distinguishing it from the Severin region⁸⁹. The conquest of the Severin region by Basarab frustrated Szécsi Dénes, great royal official who had also had the attributes of castle owner of Mehadia. One can thus explain the fact that this official was one of the movers of the military campaign, by the side of the voivode of Transylvania⁹⁰.

The climax of the conflict was recorded in 1330, when Carol Robert personally led a military campaign against Voivode Basarab I. Ulterior documents and medieval chronicles offer details about this campaign. It is not impossible that the resolution concerning this campaign could have been taken in the circumstance in which the Romanian voivode's alliance system with the Bulgarian czar, the Tartars and the Cumans collapsed as a consequence of their being defeated by the Serbian king, Uros III, at Velbujd⁹¹.

Chronicon Pictum from Vienna is the main narrative source, which generated various interpretations in the historiography. No matter what the context in which this particular episode was recorded, sometimes towards the year 1370, the text contains fundamental information apart from the narrative structure and the "literary" style of the author. The main inspirational source was of course the tradition, which considering the short time passed from the date of the event (almost 40 years) is virtually identical with the reality. In short, the king entered Wallachia through Severin around September, aiming at banishing the Romanian voivode, Basarab, as this was illegitimately ruling the country and had refused to pay the rightful tribute to the king. After the conquest of Severin and of the citadel, Szécsi Dénes was the one to receive them along with the *banus* dignity.

⁸⁷ Gy. Györffy, *Adatok*, p. 546, admits the impossibility of precisely determining the date and connects it with the political constellation around the year 1330.

⁸⁸ P. Engel, *Archontológia*, I, p. 367. *AO*, XI. nr. 302.

⁸⁹ *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum* (following up: *SRH*), ed. E. Szentpétery, I, Budapestini, 1937, p. 497.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

⁹¹ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 82.

The next episode tells about the peace offer coming from the Romanian voivode, whose proposition consisted of accepting the quality of subject, paying the sum of 7000 silver marks, renouncing at Severin, the promise to pay the tax annually and sending his son to the king's court. The king's arrogance is eloquently pictured and tends to have a moralising aim⁹². The king turned down the peace offer despite the advice of his counsellors⁹³. The next scene describes the battles which were fought somewhere in a mountainous zone, in a narrow path. The natural setting was in favour of the Romanians. The disaster suffered by the royal army is again described in a picturesque manner. Worth to remember is the episode of the king's disguise, who changed his clothing and royal signs with a young man of his suite⁹⁴. The original chronicle also contains three extremely suggestive painted scenes accounting for the main events⁹⁵.

Other details about the king's campaign are to be found in documents issued subsequently which mention, more or less objectively, the event. The defeat of the Hungarian troops in an ambush on the way back is obvious, and confirmed by the internal Hungarian documents. Noblemen from Transylvania who took part in the battle shortly told the episode during the next year. The dramatism of the fights results from the witnesses' depositions who said that "*since the fate was adverse... they were defeated and subjected*" (*sed quia fortuna adversante... devicti et debellati cum aliis fuissent*)⁹⁶. The defeat of the Hungarian army is directly admitted in other internal documents, too, which were issued by other institutions than the king⁹⁷. During the fights, the vice-chancellor of the royal court was also killed, and the royal medium seal was lost. Even the king fell off the horse, being rescued by one of his knights⁹⁸. The event is usually recorded in a relatively obscured manner in the official documents⁹⁹. The Hungarian army reached the capital city, Argeş, which it seems to have been destroyed¹⁰⁰.

The pre-requisites, which led to the development of the king's campaign, can be reconstituted: Basarab I's refusal to accept the vassal statute, the refusal to pay a tribute and the conquest of the Mehadia citadel and of the Severin region.

⁹² *Ibidem*: „*Sic dicite Bazarad. Ipse est pastor ovium mearum, de suis latibulis per barbas suas extraham.*“.

⁹³ The scene is suspect. The basic idea of the episode remains plausible.

⁹⁴ *SRH*, I, pp. 498-450.

⁹⁵ Can be seen in the facsimile edition of the chronicle: *Chronicon Pictum* (Phototypice impressum), Edidit Helicon Hungaricus, Budapestini, 1964, pp. 143, 144 and 146.

⁹⁶ *DRH. D.*, I, p. 42.

⁹⁷ „*In presenti exercitu domini Karoli, dei gratia serenissimi regis Hungarie, dum idem dominus rex fuisset percussus et convictus per Bazarab woiuodam Transalpem (!) Olacorum*“, Gy. Györffy, *Adatok*, p. 553, no. VIII.

⁹⁸ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 67-68.

⁹⁹ Maria Holban contestation, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-113, are often exaggerated and not justified

¹⁰⁰ *DRH. D.*, I, p. 58. The archaeological researches brought up a burned layer that could be date aroun 1330, so on the occasion of the Hungarian king's campaign: N. Constantinescu, *La Residence d'Argeş des voivodees roumains des XIIIe et XIVe siecles : Problèmes de cronologie à la lumière des récentes recherches archéologiques*, in *RESEE*, VIII, 1970, no. 1, p. 31. Maria Holban's contestation, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-115, who denies the validity of the documentary information about the settlement of the royal camp close to Basarab's capital city and the possibility of its conquest is not justified.

The Hungarian king considered that the Romanian voivode was unrightfully and unfaithfully ruling Wallachia¹⁰¹. The king considered himself the lawful master of the voivode: he claims that the latter rose against him "without fear and despising the fact that those who attempt to stand against their rightful lord prove to be openly against the divine laws"¹⁰². It is especially significant for Carol Robert's stand concerning the problem that he considered himself the lawful master of the voivode, according to some "divine" laws. The king's claims are framed within a classical perspective in the age. As the king saw things, Basarab had a similar statute to any of the subjects in his kingdom. He considered Wallachia as an integrate part of the Hungarian kingdom, which he, as king, had to distribute to one who was his faithful servant. The voivode, who did not acknowledge his suzerainty, was thus thought as a rebel and a traitor¹⁰³.

The absence of direct information forces us to only speculate about the subsequent evolution of the 1330 conflict. The relations between Carol Robert and Basarab I did not seem to better, because in the documents that mention the later military campaign, the *unfaithful* appellative persists as connected to the Romanian voivode's name. It is not impossible that the king, preoccupied with other foreign policy priorities, should have temporarily accepted the situation *de facto*. Indeed, Basarab's success marked an important moment in the state evolution of Wallachia and conferred it an independent statute, which could not be argued at that moment¹⁰⁴. When studying this event, some cautions are strongly recommended as much in the Hungarian historiography, which minimizes the defeat of the royal army¹⁰⁵, as in the Romanian historiography, which overstates the dimensions and significance of Basarab's victory¹⁰⁶. Nobody can deny the fact that Basarab won a battle, but it was not the whole war. A war, in the sense of the, almost incessant pressure coming from the Hungarian royalty to impose the confirmation of its suzerainty.

One unsolved problem is the statute of the Severin region after the failed military campaign from 1330¹⁰⁷. *Chronicon Pictum* informs us that at the beginning of the campaign Severin was set free and Szécsi Dénes was invested as *banus* of the Severin *Banate*¹⁰⁸. Only in 1335 the Hungarian dignitary is mentioned in documents also in this position, which he owns until around 1341¹⁰⁹. The absence of the mentioning of this position in the documents along with that of Great

¹⁰¹ DRH, D., I, p. 57: "... dictam terram nostram Transalpinam in preiudicium sacri diadematis regii et nostri infideliter detinentes ...".

¹⁰² DRH, D., I, pp. 50-51: "... non verens, nec attendens, ut qui naturali domino resistere moliuntur, divinis dispositionibus manifeste videntur obviare...".

¹⁰³ DRH, D., I, pp. 50-51: "... et se nostre maiestati sediciose et prodicionaliter opposuit...".

¹⁰⁴ P. Engel, Gy. Kristó, A. Kubinyi, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, pp. 84-85, Bertényi Iván, *Magyarország az Anjouk korában*, Budapest, 1987, p. 102.

¹⁰⁶ See the notes 3, 4, 5, 6.

¹⁰⁷ D. Onciul, *Originea principatelor*, p. 638, claims that Severin remained under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian king.

¹⁰⁸ SRH, I, p. 497.

¹⁰⁹ P. Engel, *Archontológia*, I, p. 32.

Steward (*magister dapiferorum regalium*)¹¹⁰ allows any kind of assumptions. Anyway, if one admitted that Basarab reoccupied Severin after the 1330 victory, then an explanation would have to be given, still hypothetical, concerning the way in which the king regained domination of the Severin *Banate* in 1335. Much more plausible would be the assumption that Basarab's victory was followed by the conquest of Severin. Anyway, the question is still disputable¹¹¹.

The new Hungarian king, Louis I (1342 - 1382) inherited from his father the *statu quo* established by the failed campaign in 1330. Some time during the first year of Louis I's reign a substantial change occurred in the relations with Wallachia. John of Târnave's chronicle (*Vita Ludovicii*) contains a piece of information highly contested by some historians. After the king would have come to Transylvania to suppress an uprising of the Saxons who refused to pay the usual material obligation (*census*), in 1344, the ceremony of pledging vassality by the Wallachian voivode would have taken place¹¹². We must identify the informational basis, which allowed the elaboration of this chapter in the author's text. The information is perfectly valid from the point of view of the basic facts: the pledge of the Wallachian voivode. As we will see, in 1365, Louis I requested from Vladislav Vlaicu, the new Wallachian voivode, to take his oath of obedience, with all its implications. This had a precedent, which could only be the pledge of his forerunner. Nicholas Alexander's oath is also confirmed by documentary sources of the age. First of all, the date of this event is controvertible: 1344 or afterwards?

In a document from 1355, the king praises the special services brought by the bishop of Oradea, Demetrius: "*he more than once set off to Alexander, son of Basarab, our Wallachian voivode, on the occasion of negotiating, settling and reinforcement the peace and understanding between us and him*"¹¹³. The document confirms the chronicler's assertion and even partially corrects it. The homage was expressed subsequent to some negotiations (that is diplomatic pressures) led by a royal servant, a high clerical personality. Louis I's approach is part of the initial period of his reign, when, naturally, the subjects had to pledge their obedience to the suzerain. Which were the actual premises determining the Romanian voivode to swear his faithfulness is impossible to establish. Dating bishop Demetrius' deputations further complicates precisely dating when the homage took place. The

¹¹⁰ This dignity was constantly held between 1322 and 1341: *ibidem*, p. 46.

¹¹¹ The demonstration made by Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-138, is not justified.

¹¹² „*De obedientia Alexandri wayuode Transalpini/ Cum autem esset in partibus memoratis. quidam princeps seu baro potentissimus Alexander wayuoda Transalpinus ditoni eiusdem subiectus. qui tempore quondam Karoli regis patris sui a via fidelitatis divertendo rebellaverat. et per multa tempora in rebellione permanserat, audita pietatis ac etiam postestatis eiusdem Lodowici regis fama. ad ipsum sponte personaliter veniens circa confinia ipsarum partium ad pedes regie maiestatis humo tenus est prostratus, et ad obedientiam ac fidelitatem debitam reductus et integritatus solennia munera et exenia, cledonia prestando et suum dominium ac sanctam coronam recognoscendo cum gaudio et letitia ad propria remeavit, et ab illo tempore fidelitatem conservavit*”, Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, (ed. Elisabeth Galántai et Julius Kristó), I, Budapest, 1985, [§133], p. 162.

¹¹³ „*ad Alexanderm Bozorabi, wayuodam nostrum Transalpinum. occasione pacis et concordie inter nos et eundem tractande, disponende et firmande*”, *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 70-71.

1355 document states that they were performed after the achievement of the pontifical office ("*post adeptum pontificale officium*"). The official papal investment is dated on the 15th of July 1345¹¹⁴. The discrepancy between the chronicle date and the document one is at least of one year. But a certain error could have interfered in drafting the document, which is however not significant for the objective of the action itself. The reference point is the achievement of the pontifical office. Even before, when Demetrius held an inferior position, though important, that of high clerical official (*praepositus*) at Buda, he also served the king in a similar quality, as a messenger. Demetrius' main job in the king's company appears thus to be the performing of deputations. The king came in 1344 at the Southern boundaries of Transylvania, which would converge, with the dating of the pledge in the chronicle¹¹⁵. We incline to believe that the time of this event, the Wallachian voivode's oath, is the year 1344¹¹⁶.

During that period, two associated rulers governed Wallachia, Basarab I together with his son, Nicholas Alexander¹¹⁷. Nicholas Alexander appears for the first time in a papal document, mentioned among those who had been sent letters containing the urge to convert to the Catholic Church¹¹⁸. He seems thus to have been the real leader south of the Carpathians, probably exerting his attributions as a ruler along with his father, but in an executive leading position, naturally having the approval of Basarab I, who is known to have passed away only in 1352. In 1351, mentioning Carol Robert's 1330 expedition, King Louis mentioned Basarab I only as his father's unfaithful ("*infidelem ipsius patris nostri*")¹¹⁹, which may bring another argument concerning the acceptance of the suzerainty by the Wallachian rulers.

Nicholas Alexander's fidelity was not consistent. Some time before 1359 he rebelled against the king. The moment can be placed more precisely before the royal campaign against the citadel of Zara, certified as a *post quem* moment in the 1359 document. Consequently, Vladislav's rebellion took place before the 1356 campaign. Meaning that a radical change intervened during the immediately following period after February 1355, when he is called by the king "our Wallachian voivode"¹²⁰. The Wallachian voivode, Nicholas Alexander's independent position also left its mark on the internal political life of the Romanian State. The pro-Hungarian faction was forced to emigrate and took refuge at King Louis's court. Their deed was appreciated and rewarded after several years. Louis

¹¹⁴ *Documente privind istoria românilor (DIR)*, C, Transilvania, veac XIV, vol. IV, no. 320.

¹¹⁵ On the 15th of June 1344, the king was in Braşov, and until the 28th of July in Transylvania: P. Engel, *Királyitineráriumok 1324-82, 1387-1437*, (following up: *Királyitineráriumok*), Kézirat (mss.), Budapest, 1995, p. 14.

¹¹⁶ Bertényi Iván, *op. cit.*, p. 191, claims that the Romanian voivode would have yielded for fear of a Hungarian military campaign.

¹¹⁷ Şt. Ştefănescu, *Ţara Românească de la Basarab I „Întemeietorul” până la Mihai Viteazul*, Bucureşti, 1970, pp. 39 et passim.

¹¹⁸ „Alexandro Bassarati”: *DRH, D.*, I, p. 60.

¹¹⁹ *DRH, D.*, I, p. 67.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 70-71.

does not forget to mention their action even in 1359, from "the time when Alexander Basarab, ..., did not want to acknowledge us as his lawful lord"¹²¹. He was probably paying the deed of the unfaithful Romanians who betrayed the voivode in the moment of another rebellion with donations, to strengthen their attitude. The mention of the voivode's rebellion in the past tense shows that during that moment, 1359, the two sides were not in conflict any longer¹²².

Determining the voivode to accept the quality of subject of the Hungarian king again probably happened before 1358, when Louis I issued the commercial privilege in favour of the Braşov merchants, according to which they were free to bring their goods over the territory between Ialomiţa and Siret, without paying the custom duty¹²³. The decree of granting the privilege to the Braşov merchants was possible because of a certain weakening of the Mongolian domination and the expansion of the Hungarian authority towards the region of the Danube springs. It is framed within the general commercial policy of the Anjou Hungary, actively interested in its implication in the eastern trade¹²⁴. The document could be released in the circumstances in which the Romanian voivode, the direct ruler of this territory, was the king's subject¹²⁵. The Braşov merchants' freedom of trading in Wallachia was an essential component of the relationships between Wallachia and the kingdom of Hungary during the 14th to the 16th centuries¹²⁶. The confirmation of these liberties by the Romanian voivodes had been a constant request of the Braşov people.

It is claimed that the privilege granted to the merchants by Louis provoked the Wallachian voivode's opposition and a new outburst of their conflict in the following year, 1359¹²⁷. There is an argument which contradicts at least the date of the outbreak of the conflict: from the document issued in favour of the Romanian boyars who had betrayed Vladislav "in the time when he did not acknowledge us as his lawful lord"¹²⁸ does not result that there was a conflict going on at the moment. If it had been, it would have certainly been mentioned, at least using the epithet *our unfaithful* etc. The document refers to the period in which the voivode did not confirm the king's suzerainty as to an event already passed, not as to a present one. The rebellion began before the starting of the campaign against the citadel of Zara, to which the boyars took part, so before 1356. It ceased, in a mysterious context today, before the releasing of this donation document and, more than probably before granting the commercial privilege from 1358.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 73-74: "... qui eo tempore, quo Alexander Bazarade. ..., nos pro domino naturali recognoscere renuebat...".

¹²² In this context, Ş. Papacostea's statement, *Începuturile politicii comerciale*, p. 14, according to which the conflict between the Romanian voivode and Hungarian king would have outbroken in 1359 is inaccurate.

¹²³ *DRH, D., I*, p. 72.

¹²⁴ Ş. Papacostea, *Începuturile politicii comerciale*, p. 11.

¹²⁵ The document determined a series of contradictory opinions: Ş. Papacostea, *Începuturile politicii comerciale*, p. 13, the note 15.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹²⁸ *DRH, D., I*, p. 73.

After 1359¹²⁹ or at least any time after issuing the document discussed here, the relations became tense again, irreversibly. The last year of Nicholas Alexander voivode's reign appear to have been, from a document released by the king after the death of the voivode, as a new period of rebellion. Louis I accused him to have encroached upon his sworn faith and the documents elaborated concerning the deals, the donations and the incomes rightfully belonging to the king, as lawful master, and also to have forgotten "*the advantages received*" from the king¹³⁰. The rebellion and the independence manifestations of the Romanian voivode resumed in his last years of life were taken over by his successor and by the Wallachian boyars. Subsequent to this independent tendency, immediately after Nicholas Alexander's death, his son, Vladislav Vlaicu, sat on the throne with the boyars' assent, without waiting the resolution, which should have come from the king.

The king's response, who immediately organised a military punishing expedition, suggests a new perspective upon the vassality relationships. The Hungarian king tried to reform this field of his reign too, promoting Western concepts. The documents which accounts about this reforming conception is the summoning order issued by King Louis in sight of a military campaign against the Romanian voivode. The document is especially important as it justifies, from the perspective of the Hungarian royalty, the claims for suzerainty and defines the concept of vassality. The Hungarian king was not content that Vladislav Vlaicu, the deceased voivode's son, Nicholas Alexander, persisted in the unfaithful and rebelling attitude of his father and did not accept the king as a rightful master. Vladislav was crowned as ruler of Wallachia without asking the "*permission*" of the king. The suzerain accused him of an "*untrue coronation*", an investment which "*was only right*" to be given by the king "*in the tradition of the entitlement and order conferred by birth*". The signs of power should have been rendered by the king¹³¹. The military campaign against Vladislav was justified by Louis's obligation, in his quality as king of Hungary and keeper of the old custom of the late Hungarian monarchs, and also because of "the established tradition of the

¹²⁹ The Orthodox Metropolitan Seat in Wallachia was founded in 1359, with the approval of the Patriarchate for the transfer of the metropolitan bishop Iachim from Vicina to Argeş. The historians understood this as an independent attitude of the Romanian voivode and a proof for the self-determination of the country. The approaches for the founding of the metropolitan seat is of course dated before 1359, so the act must not be correlated with the momentary relations with the Hungarian king. By the foundation of the metropolitan seat, the Romanian Orthodox Church, previously subjected to the Bulgarian one, acquired its independence.

¹³⁰ DRH, D., I, pp. 78-79: *...wayuoda Transsalpinus, tanquam inmemor beneficiorum a nobis receptorum et ingratus fidem suam et litteras utrobique super certis pactis, censibus et an[...] nostri dominii naturalis nobis debitis, inter nos et ipsum initam et emanatas, ipsa adhuc vita mundiali perfruente, temerariis ausibus [...]are non expavit...*

¹³¹ DRH, D., I, p. 78: *... Ladislaus, pravos mores imitatus paternos, nos tanquam suum dominum naturalem minime [...]ssens, inconsultis nobis et inrequisitis, in eadem terra nostra Transsalpina, que iure et ordine genitore nobis debetur, titulum suum fictum erigens in cor* neliam domini, a quo sua debent dependere insignia, in ipsius terre nostre dominium, ex perfida voluntate et connivencia Olachorum et habitatorum terre eiusdem, loco patris [...]ericus se subrogare...*

kingdom" to regain the boundaries and marginal lands from any rebel, by virtue of the power given to him by God to defend his rights¹³².

The document presented reveals the conception Louis the Great had about the vassality relations. The following principles can be summarised:

- The suzerain was the "lawful" master of the vassal;
- The suzerain rendered the vassal's insignia of power;
- The relation between the suzerain and the vassal, which presumes obligations from both sides was recorded within a written document;
- The vassal had to pay several taxes and honour certain material requirements;
- The suzerain was the beneficiary of "*the entitlement and order conferred by birth*", meaning that he could inherit the power over the vassal from his predecessor;
- The king had the responsibility, according to the tradition and customs of the kingdom, to initiate armed actions in case of rebellion;
- Disrespect towards the suzerain's rights meant that the vassal was rebelling and, consequently, he had to be punished by means of military repression;
- The suzerain's power to defend his rights was given by God.

Even though the document does not record this, a comparison with the information in the 13th century, mentioned above, allows us to presume that there was also a military obligation - *auxilium* - probably mutual. This also comes out from the events connected to the Hungarian campaign south of the Danube in the following year, when Vladislav Vlaicu was asked to offer his military support¹³³.

There are signs of an attempt of the Hungarian king to reform the vassality relationships as well. Louis of Anjou's conception is closest to the Western vision on the feudal relationships. He applied it in the case of other vassals also, at the Southern boundaries as well as the Eastern ones.

The explicit aim of the military campaign from 1365 is somehow different from the real one. We do not know for sure if there was eventually a real campaign against the Romanian voivode¹³⁴. It is only certain that during the summer of that year the Bulgarian Czarism of Vidin was conquered. Probably this was the initial objective of starting the military campaign from 1365¹³⁵. The Hungarian king took

¹³² *Ibidem*: "... nosque, prout a Deo nobis iura nostra defendendi facultas attribuitur et potestas, circa reoptencionem ipsius terre n[...], qui ex antiqua consuetudine sanctorum regum piorum nostrorum predecessorum et consuetudine regni Hungarici approbata ad [...]stificandas metas et confinia eiusdem regni nostri a faucibus quorumlibet rebellium rebellando, ipsi regno nostro reapplicare et reannectere, astricti et obligati totis nisibus inhyamus et toto posse anhelamus...".

¹³³ DRH, D., I, pp. 88, 90-91, 93-95, 96-97.

¹³⁴ From the 23rd to the 30th of June the king was in the Severin Banat: P. Engel, *Királyitineráriumok*, p. 30. Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 152, does not leave out the possibility that the Romanian voivode had obeyed before the moment when the Hungarian army crossed the boundaries into Wallachia.

¹³⁵ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 153, claims that during 1360, the Hungarian king had to face a Romanian-Bulgarian-Serbian coalition, reinforced by matrimonial relations, in the Balkans. Initially, the campaign from Bulgaria was unleashed against Vladislav Vlaicu whom the Hungarian king succeeded in taking out from the coalition. P. Engel, Gy. Kristó., A. Kubinyi, *op. cit.*, p. 85. Homán

advantage of the weakening of the Bulgarian Czardom because of the division produced between the two brothers, Stracimir and Şişman, to complete his possessions. Maria Holban very well saw the real motivation of this action: the old claims of the Hungarian crown in the time of the Arpadians over Bulgaria¹³⁶.

Probably that the conquest of Vidin and its annexation to the kingdom of Hungary under the form of a *Banate* had also a contribution to the improvement of the Romanian voivode's position¹³⁷, who was strategically almost completely surrounded by the Hungarian military forces. Vladislav remained on the throne of Wallachia, but he accepted the Hungarian king as suzerain. In October 1366, the Romanian ruler was not called a rebel any longer, but the king recognised him as his voivode (*vaivode nostri Transalpinii*)¹³⁸. The Romanian voivode may have obeyed during that year as an effect of some diplomatic pressure¹³⁹.

The acknowledgement of the Hungarian suzerainty was also mentioned in the official document under this title. He became a voivode "by God and his majesty's grace" (*Dei et regie maiestatis gracia*) and called Louis "our rightful gracious lord" (*naturalis dominus noster graciosus*)¹⁴⁰. The historiography states that this kind of denomination took its form because of the fact that the document was elaborated by the Hungarian chancery, the only thing the voivode had to do being to put his signature on it¹⁴¹. The text that contains the custom duty regulations for the Braşov merchants was indeed drafted in the royal chancery and sent to the voivode with a knight of the royal court, as the document it shows. But Vladislav Vlaicu released the document, recording the title and the other components, from his voivodal chancery where he used scribes for the papers written in Latin! Consequently, the title must be understood properly, as it is recognition of the Hungarian king's suzerainty.

The same document in which we find the first privilege granted by a Romanian ruler to the Braşov merchants is the only one kept up to the present day. As we have said, the text itself of the document proves that the paragraphs concerning the commercial matters were sent by the king with one of his knights. It is possible that those values could have been negotiated¹⁴². For a more accurate assessment of the character of this document a comparison should be made with the custom duty taxes requested at that time in Hungary. A certain identity could

B., *op. cit.*, pp. 384-385, sustains that Wallachian voivode, Nicholas Alexander, relied on this coalition and can afford it to deny his faith as early as 1357.

¹³⁶ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-159, with a discussion about historiography. Cf. Gy. Kristó. *Az Anjou-kor*, pp. 153 et passim.

¹³⁷ N. Iorga, *Lupta pentru stăpânirea Vidinului*, p. 980, considers that the Romanian voivode consented to simulate obedience in order to keep Severin, which he had ruled for a long time. In exchange for the tribute promise and the oath, he would have received Făgăraş too. The king and the Romanian voivode presumably subjected Vidin together.

¹³⁸ *DRH. D.*, I, p. 83.

¹³⁹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁰ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 86-87.

¹⁴¹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 149; Ş. Papacostea, *Începuturile politicii comerciale*, p. 14 and the note 17.

¹⁴² Ş. Papacostea, *loc. cit.*

suggest the constraint of those values. We can understand from the document that Vladislav accepted the relation of vassality with the Hungarian kings at the time. What some would call a compromise and a success of the voivode's political view, which was allowed to rule over a territory enclosing a commercial route¹⁴³, appears, nevertheless, to be a document which the suzerain actually imposed. The confirmation coming from a vassal, who was the direct governor of the territory meant a guarantee for the merchants' privilege in the event of virtual impediments coming from the Wallachian officials.

The Romanian voivode's attitude was not consistent. In the first part of the year 1368, he still appears as vassal of the Hungarian king, requested to collaborate with the Bulgarian *banus*, the Himffy brothers¹⁴⁴. In July 1368, at the beginning of the Bulgarian uprising against the Hungarian domination, he even was asked to bring military support for the repression¹⁴⁵. Vladislav's obligation to provide military help did not derive from his quality of *banus* of Severin¹⁴⁶, but from that of vassal of the Hungarian king¹⁴⁷. Although he initially promised to give the requested help¹⁴⁸, some time towards August 1368 he decided to join the king's enemies. In September, the king ordered the gathering of the nobility army in order to proceed to a campaign against the Romanian voivode¹⁴⁹.

The development of the conflict between the Hungarian armies and the voivode's troops was studied from various angles. Documentary mentions as well as John of Târnave's chronicle have been used as information sources. All the interpretations, as we have noticed, contain an inadvertence¹⁵⁰. The general functional assumption was that the king attacked Wallachia from multiple directions¹⁵¹. An army coming from Transylvania presumably entered through the place where the spring of river Ialomița was while another, led by the king, would have come from Bulgaria and tried to retrieve Severin. The objection is logical. What would the king have searched for in Bulgaria only to return to Severin afterwards? The only probable explanation is that the king intended to fight on two different fronts. An army, led by him personally, was going to re-establish the Hungarian suzerainty in the Bulgarian *Banate* from Vidin. Another army, led by the voivode of Transylvania had the mission to determine that the Romanian

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ *DRH, D.*, I, pp. 88-89.

¹⁴⁵ *DRH, D.*, I, pp. 93-94. The correct date of the document in Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 183, the note 98.

¹⁴⁶ As Thallóczy L. claims, *Nagy Lajos és a bulgár bánság*, in *Századok*, 34, 1900, p. 587.

¹⁴⁷ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 187, is wrong when he claims that the request for troops to support the Bulgarian bans was not part of the obligations currently held by the voivode.

¹⁴⁸ *DRH, D.*, I, pp. 90-91.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 91-93.

¹⁵⁰ A different assumption, caused, among others, by the absence of knowledge concerning all the possible sources at that moment, was proposed by N. Iorga, *Lupta pentru stăpânirea Vidinului*, pp. 984-988. He placed the campaign against Wallachia in 1369, after Vladislav would have conquered Vidin.

¹⁵¹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-193. After he analyses Thallóczy's and I. Minea's opinions, resorts to an exaggerated interpretation. Cf. și Thallóczy L., *op. cit.*, pp. 589 et passim; etc.

voivode Vladislav Vlaicu would submit against to the Hungarian king. The cause of the failure of the Hungarian armies and Vladislav Vlaicu's victory can be explained only in this context: the royal army's division on two fronts, with two initially different targets.

We must separate the basic information in the text of John of Târnave's chronicle as compared to the literary structure and, also, the advocating formulae used by the court chronicler¹⁵². Vladislav Vlaicu's victory is unquestionable. The Hungarian troops coming from Transylvania suffered a disaster. The Transylvanian voivode was killed along with other high noblemen and knights and the army was scattered. The initial success of the Hungarians at the citadel of Dâmbovița, narrated by the chronicler, seems rather like a makeshift meant to soften the disaster of the Hungarian army. The same purpose is designed for the mentioning of the failure of the king's army to cross the Danube before the disaster suffered by the troops in Transylvania. The battle (or the battles) fought by the Transylvanian voivode's army and the Romanian army led by Dragomir (the title of *count* given by the chronicler is inappropriate) took place most probably in the midst of October 1368. Subsequent to the announcement of the king, who was in Bulgaria, he tried to cross the Danube so as that he should subdue the rebelling voivode. When did the king try to cross the Danube and, according to the chronicle, was stopped by Vladislav Vlaicu's Romanians? The fact that on the 12th of November 1368 the king's camp settled over the Danube, in front of the Severin citadel cannot be considered as a clue that he would have tried to cross the river, through that place and that, afterwards, the Romanian voivode would have stopped him. The attempt could have been anywhere on the Danube, from Vidin to Severin. Whereas the king issued a document from Severin¹⁵³ on the 14th of November, proof that he had succeeded in crossing the river.

The progress of the fights in the Severin region during that period is certified by the complaints coming from the Romanian knezes of the Sebeș district to Benedict Himffy against the new requirements from 1369. The knezes said that from the moment "*when that quarrel outburst*" between the king and the Romanian voivode, they permanently kept at least two hundred people guarding the mountains, day and night, until winter came. Over the winter, a contingent of 500 soldiers "*of the best ones*" remained in the citadel of Mehadia, "*until the return of our lord, the king*"¹⁵⁴. The information of this document offers a series of clarifications concerning the progress of the events. The two sides fought for the Severin region. But if the Mehadia citadel was in the hands of the royal army, it is only natural to presume that Vladislav Vlaicu could, at the most, have kept the Severin citadel.

¹⁵² The critical text of Johannes de Thurocz's chronicle: *Chronica Hungarorum*, (ed. Elisabeth Galántai et Julius Kristó), I, Budapest, 1985, [§168], pp. 181-182.

¹⁵³ P. Engel, *Királyitineráriumok*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁴ DRH, D., I, pp. 96-97: "...in montibus alpium semper ad minus ducentos homines propter illorum die ac nocte usque ad iemnem conservavimus; insuper nos cum quingentis hominibus collectis melioribus similiter usque ad reversionem domini nostri regis ibi in Mihald mansimus...".

Although, as it has been said, the fact that the king was over the Danube on the 12th of November, in front of the Severin citadel does not imply a siege as well. Much more plausible would have been the attack over the citadel from the northern bank, taking into consideration that the king possessed a bridgehead at Mehadia.

The defeated king retreated because of the winter, a period not fit for a military campaign. The retreat forced by the cold weather also results from the letter written by the Romanian knezes of the Sebeş district, who were saying that they had guarded in the mountains until the winter came. On the other hand, the date of the releasing of the nobiliary army, which was strictly regulated outside the country, had been previously set, from the beginning of the campaign, on the 4th of December 1368¹⁵⁵. The letter from the 4th of December 1368 by which the king completely forgave his castle owners from the three Bulgarian citadels, Vidin, Lagan and Belogradcik, in the situation in which they would have been obliged, because of different reasons, to surrender them¹⁵⁶, is also part of the same context, of giving up the campaign because of the winter and of the releasing the army to retire. The king finished the campaign defeated, but he was surely thinking of coming back in spring. He did not put aside the objectives of the campaign, as the numerous garrisons left back in the citadel of Mehadia, and the further development of the event show.

The Romanian voivode took advantage of the *statu quo* established after the failure of the Hungarian campaign. During the next winter Vladislav Vlaicu took over Vidin. The information about this campaign of the voivode is available only from chronicles written later, which requires a certain limitation in using them. The Franciscan chronicle¹⁵⁷ states that Vladislav Vlaicu entered Vidin following the local population's call, so he didn't conquer the city by force. Mauro Orbini's chronicle, fulfilled over two centuries since the events, states exactly the contrary, and colourfully enriches the episode including a possible deportation of the population over the Danube¹⁵⁸. The fact we can helpfully use from Orbini's chronicle is the resistance of the Hungarian garrison in the citadel of Vidin. The two chronicles do not exclude each other, because the Hungarian inhabited the citadel and Genovese soldiers whereas the neighbouring city was inhabited by the native Bulgarians. Another valid information is the one concerning the returning of the Hungarian king and the Romanian voivode's retreat from Vidin. Maria Holban's contestation of the authenticity of the information is not justified¹⁵⁹. The same letter sent by the knezes of the Sebeş district from 1369 shows that they had 500 of their best soldiers in the citadel of Mehadia "*until the king's arrival*" ("*insuper nos cum quingentis hominibus collectis melioribus similiter usque ad reversionem domini nostri regis ibi in Mihald mansimus*")¹⁶⁰. We cannot exactly determine which the

¹⁵⁵ DRH, D., I, pp. 91-92 and the note 1 (p. 92).

¹⁵⁶ *Történelmi Tár*, 1898, p. 366.

¹⁵⁷ *Chronicon observantis provinciae Bosnae Argentinae*, in *Starine*, Agram, t. XXI-XXII, p. 11, apud Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 și 193-194.

¹⁵⁸ Mario Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi*, p. 470, apud Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 194, the note 127.

¹⁵⁹ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, p. 194, the note 127.

¹⁶⁰ DRH, D., I, pp. 96-97.

period was when the king came in the region again. The king's return could be placed some time between the 18th of March when he was in Szantó and the 4th of May when he was in Oradea¹⁶¹. Vlaicu's action result was making the king re-examine his position concerning the Balkan problem. The compromise achieved consisted in liberating Czar Stracimir, his regaining the throne of the Bulgarian Czarism of Vidin and the leaving out of the possibility to create a Hungarian *Banate*. The czar remained the vassal of the Hungarian king with the guarantee provided by Vladislav Vlaicu and by Dobrotici, the despot from Dobrugea¹⁶². The compromise was actualised in August 1369 the latest. It is likely that the conflicts with the Turks mentioned in a document from 1372 were also taking place during that period, which actually were the first confrontations, between the Romanian and the Hungarian troops, on the one hand, and the Ottoman ones, on the other hand.

Vladislav Vlaicu was confirmed as ruling the Severin *Banate* and also received the duchy of the Făgăraş land¹⁶³. One could also presume that he would have pledged obedience to the king anew. Despite all these new ruling position, meant to keep him faithful to the suzerain, the lack of consistency Vladislav Vlaicu proved in his political actions reappeared after several years.

The relations between Vladislav and Louis grew worse again around 1374. In July, certain Wallachian boyars who betrayed the voivode and took refuge in Hungary were found at the king's court. They accused the Romanian voivode that he had presumably formed an alliance with the Turks designing together an unknown plan. The king initially resorted to a diplomatic abeyance, expecting for the advice and confirmation of the accusations from the closest territorial faithful official, the count of Timiș, Benedict Himffy¹⁶⁴. Probably the king was not willing of involving into a "diplomatic dispute" with the Romanian voivode because of the traitors.

Seemingly the accusations put forward by the traitor boyars were confirmed by the king's counsellor, because during the autumn of the same year war preparations in the county of Timiș were recorded¹⁶⁵. The new political option of the Romanian voivode took the form of an alliance with the Turks and the Bulgarians¹⁶⁶. Consequently, during the summer of 1375, Hungarian troops

¹⁶¹ P. Engel, *Királyitineráriumok*, p. 36.

¹⁶² *DRH, D.*, I, p. 95.

¹⁶³ See the chapter tackling the Romanian rulers' governments in Hungary present in the hereby study.

¹⁶⁴ *DRH, D.*, I, p. 107.

¹⁶⁵ Fejér G., *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, IX/4, p. 567-568. Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, I/2, p. 218.

¹⁶⁶ Carmen Laura Dumitrescu, *Le Voivodee donateur de la fresque de Saint-Nicholas-Domnesc (Argeș) et le problème de sa domination sur Vidin qu XIVe siècle*, in *RESEE*, XVII, 1979, no. 3, pp. 541-558, analysing the graphite of a mural painting, draws the conclusion that Radu I occupied Vidin around 1375. The assumption was contradicted by Maria Holban, *Peut-il être question d'une seconde occupation roumaine de Vidin ; par Radu Ier, suivant de près celle de Vladislav Ier (Vlaicou) de l'année 1369?*, in *RESEE*, XVIII, 1980, pp. 443-457.

attempted to subdue the rebelling voivode¹⁶⁷. The matter concerns the so much argued campaign against Wallachia, which is usually placed in 1377 by the historiography, as an effect of the partial knowledge about the sources¹⁶⁸. During that year, Vladislav Vlaicu passed away, probably in the context of the military conflict, or previously, in mysterious circumstances, and Radu I followed him on the throne¹⁶⁹.

The 1375 conflict¹⁷⁰ was developed in more stages. The campaign, in course during the period between May and September, unfurled on two combat zones: the first, in the Severin *Banate* and in Wallachia, and the other one in Transylvania between Braşov and Sibiu, on the Făgăraş duchy territories. The clash from Wallachia took place some time in the first days of June, initially. A second Hungarian army fought the voivode's supporters from the Transylvanian duchies. It is too much for us to claim that there was, at a certain moment, the danger of a foray of the Romanian voivode's army into Transylvania¹⁷¹. In a document from the 25th of July 1375, the king wrote to the bishops of Transylvania and Vac that he had received their message. By that message the bishops communicated that the Saxons retired from the army, which endangered the king's safety where he was, at Zsombor, suggesting that he should move to a safer place¹⁷². Ş. Papacostea states that the army sent to Wallachia was defeated, which created an unstable position for the king in Transylvania¹⁷³. The "probable" assumption of the historian is that "there was the danger of a Wallachian invasion". The reputed historian's theory immediately fails at a more careful analysis of the document. The bishops who led the action and informed the king that the Saxons had withdrawn and that the sovereign himself was in danger were somewhere in Transylvania. Otherwise, the danger threatening the king would not have been imminent. The distance between the king's residence and the fighting place was quite small for the sovereign to be

¹⁶⁷ This Hungarian military campaign is less known to the Romanian historiography. The study of this episode in the Romanian-Hungarian relationships was approached with erudition by the Hungarian specialist in the Middle Ages period, L. B. Kumorovitz, *I. Lajos királyunk 1375. évi Havasalföldi hadjárata (és „török”) háborúja*, in *Századok*, 117, 1983, no. 5, pp. 919-979. The historian demonstrated, using original information, that the campaign known in the historiography to have taken place in 1377, dated according to some external narrative sources, actually took place in 1375.

¹⁶⁸ The presentation of the problem in the Hungarian and Romanian historiography in L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 950-957. The discussion about the original information presented by the Hungarian historian in the Romanian historiography was made by Ş. Papacostea, *Domni români și regi angevini: înfruntarea finală (1370-1382)*, in idem, *Geneza statului în evul mediu românesc. Studii critice*, Cluj-Napoca, 1988, pp. 113-130. The first edition was published in *AIIA „AD Xenopol”*, Iași, XXIII, 1986, 2, pp. 571-581. The Romanian historian used only a part of the original documentary information and ignored the most part of the conclusions the Hungarian historian drew. The new interpretation is not always a realistic one! Also, at p. 123, note 38, he still claims the existence of a clash between the voivode's army and Hungarian king's one, in 1377!

¹⁶⁹ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 169.

¹⁷⁰ Ş. Papacostea, *Domni români și regi angevini*, p. 120, claims the parallel existence of the conflicts with Moldavia and Wallachia.

¹⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 122.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 121. L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 976.

¹⁷³ Ş. Papacostea, *Domni români și regi angevini*, p. 122.

in danger because of the Saxons' withdrawal from the army. Which was the motive of the Saxons' leaving? The leaving of Wallachia seems unlikely as only a defeat as those from 1330 and 1368 could have determined it. In this case even the bishops should have had to take a rapid refuge in Transylvania. The Hungarian historian, Kumorovitz L. Bernat, proposed as a possible interpretation a military conflict in the Făgăraș region, between an army belonging to the Romanian voivode, which defended his Transylvanian possession, and Hungarian troops, which aimed at retrieving them in the name of the king¹⁷⁴. This assumption seems much more acceptable, as Făgăraș lay in the immediate neighbourhood of the Southern Transylvanian Saxons. Another clue which places these battles in the Făgăraș region is the king's request to the bishops: "*we beseech you, for our sake, to guard and keep that place and send our missions their the best way you can...*"¹⁷⁵. The royal troop commanders had thus to guard and keep a certain place. In any case, it was not situated in Wallachia. If there was the danger of a foray of the Romanian armies from the south of the Carpathians, this presumed the defeat of the Hungarian ones, which implied their hasty retreat. The tone of the letter does not infer that the king's situation would have still remained unstable at his new residence too¹⁷⁶.

The second army about which the king wrote to the bishops he would let them know if any news had occurred, was the one which took the action in Wallachia, probably towards the Severin region. At the beginning of September, Benedict Himffy scored a victory, as the Cenad bishop informs his wife: "*magister Benedictus, ... , victoria potitus fulciatur*"¹⁷⁷. Where had those battles taken place? It could have been anywhere in Wallachia. It is more likely that the success was related to the Severin region. A subsequent counter-campaign is to be explained in these circumstances. During the first half of September the Timișoara region was devastated because of the conflicts in progress there¹⁷⁸. The place of the happening, close to Severin, indicates the meaning of a campaign developed in order that the Romanian voivode should retrieve Severin.

According to the Hungarian historian, one of the aims of the campaign was to stop the Turks' advance, who came closer to the Hungarian boundaries by means of the alliance with Wallachia's voivode. The second aim, which is apparent in the context of the battles from the south of Transylvania, was to recuperate the possessions from the unfaithful voivode: the duchy of Făgăraș and the Severin *Banate*¹⁷⁹. The first is only an assumption. The presence of the Turks is revealed by the accusations from 1374, implying that Vladislav Vlaicu was in alliance with the Turks. Their actual contribution to the battles becomes probable only in their quality as allies of the Romanian voivode especially on the occasion of the campaign in the Severin and Timiș regions during the autumn of 1375. One of

¹⁷⁴ L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 961.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 976. Ș. Papacostea, *Domni români și regi angevini*, p. 121.

¹⁷⁶ Ș. Papacostea, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

¹⁷⁷ L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 976, doc. no. 5.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 977, doc. no. 6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 967.

Benedict Himffy's daughters, numbered herself among the victims of that campaign, was enslaved and taken to the island of Crete.

Maria Holban assumed that the episode of the Severin citadel conquest achieved by the *banus* of Mačva, Nicholas de Gara's troops, after the failure of the Hungarian armies, as it is recorded in John of Târnave's chronicle, must be separated and located later¹⁸⁰. Nicholas de Gara was *banus* of Mačva - quality in which he is mentioned by the chronicle at the time of the Severin Conquest - only until 1375¹⁸¹. This dignitary led indeed the 1375 campaign¹⁸² and it seems that the success promoted him to the position of Palatine of Hungary during the same year. In 1376, J. Treutel¹⁸³ is certified to have become the new Hungarian *banus* of Severin.

The Hungarian historian who studied and highlighted this conflict from 1375 reached the conclusion that Louis fought the allied forces of the Romanians, Bulgarians and Turks. The Hungarian armies' victory removed the Ottoman danger for the following years, and the Romanian voivodes' territories in Hungary were retrieved¹⁸⁴. But it is acknowledged a fact that Wallachia was not subjected to the Hungarian suzerainty.

Still in November 1377, King Louis I was hoping to subdue the Romanian State south of the Carpathians¹⁸⁵. Among the measures taken by the king, as following of these events was the raising of the Bran citadel at the Southern borders of Transylvania¹⁸⁶. The Romanian voivode had followers in the Severin *Banate*, whose fortunes were seized in 1376¹⁸⁷, and probably in the Făgăraș land, fact that would explain the conflicts in the Southern Transylvania¹⁸⁸.

The emergence of a new power factor in the Balkan region, the Turks, allowed the Romanian voivode to initiate a new sort of foreign policy¹⁸⁹, which would leave its sign on a permanent basis for the future statute of Wallachia. For the first time in the history of Wallachia, the country's voivode chose to go along with a different power so that he should counterbalance the pressure of the Hungarian royalty.

Another conflict took place in 1382 between the new voivode of Wallachia, Radu I (1374 -1383) and the Hungarian king. The only piece of

¹⁸⁰ Maria Holban, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194 and the note 123. The Turkish and papal implications were very well anticipated by the author.

¹⁸¹ Although he is mentioned in this quality for the last time on the 22nd of February (P. Engel, *Archontológia*, I, p. 28), he could have been appointed a Palatine only between the 5th of July, when the position was declared vacant, and the 13th of October 1375, when he is first certified as such. P. Engel, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁸² L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 967.

¹⁸³ P. Engel, *Archontológia*, I, p. 32.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁵ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 110-112.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁸⁸ L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 976, doc. no. 4.

¹⁸⁹ P. Engel, Gy. Kristó, A. Kubinyi, *op. cit.*, p. 87, dates the beginning of the cooperation between the Turks and the Romanians in 1373.

information is found in a letter issued by the king on the 11th of July 1382 in favour of some noblemen who had to take part to the Palatine's troop during the campaign from Wallachia¹⁹⁰. Nicholas de Gara was the Palatine of that period¹⁹¹, the same who led other military campaigns against Wallachia. One only can speculate in what the reasons of this campaign from 1382¹⁹² were concerned given the present available information. Maybe that the appearance of the Hungarian Kingdom arms in Radu I's coat of arms means the vassality oath taken to Louis I¹⁹³.

After King Louis the Great's death, a period of internal crisis followed, with international implications. The new Wallachian voivode, Dan I (1383-1386), who attacked and occupied the Severin *Banate*¹⁹⁴ took advantage of this context. It is interesting to notice that the Romanian knezes from the Severin region stood against the Romanian voivode, as the Wallachian army destroyed some of their assets and documents.

The last years of Louis's reign were troubled by the Wallachian voivodes' independence manifestations. After 1374, the king's suzerainty over the Romanian State was not practically permanent. The failure of the Hungarian royalty is obvious, despite the campaigns from 1375 and 1382. This period of independence made up a precedent, which allowed Mircea the Old to initiate a far-reaching foreign policy, after 1386.

4. The Character of Vladislav Vlaicu's Ruling in Transylvania

Wallachia's rulers (as well as Moldavia's ones beginning with the 15th century) exerted certain rights of "ruling" over some territories and lands in Hungary, situated in Transylvania. The history of these governments was approached by historiography either from the perspective of their dating, or from that of their significances¹⁹⁵. A certain examination concerning the characters of these reigns is necessary. The Romanian historians have the propension to overbid the character of the Romanian rulers' activity in Transylvania. It is usually considered that the territories circumscribed to the *Banate* of Severin and to the

¹⁹⁰ L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 978, doc. no. 9: „eo quod idem Laurentius filius Stephani cum eodem palatino, domino suo ad presentem exercitum nostrum ultra partes Transalpinas proficiscituratur”.

¹⁹¹ P. Engel, *Archontologia*, I, p. 4.

¹⁹² L. B. Kumorovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 971, considers that this campaign outburst because of Radu I's response towards the institution of the Argeş Catholic bishopric. The idea was assumed by Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 177. The supposition does not seem to be plausible. The absence of the necessary information does not allow us to unravel the causes of this campaign. Any assumption is only a matter of probability.

¹⁹³ L. B. Kumorovitz, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹⁴ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 123-124.

¹⁹⁵ D. Onciul, *Titlul lui Mircea cel Bătrân și posesiunile lui*, in *Convorbiri literare*, XXXVI, 1902, pp. 716 et passim; P.P. Panaitescu, *Mircea cel Bătrân și suzeranitatea ungurească*, AARMSI, s. III, t. XX, 1938; I. Moga, „*Marginea*”, *Ducatul Amlașului și scaunul Săliștii*, in idem, *Scrieri istorice. 1926-1946*, Cluj, 1973, pp. 56 et passim; etc.

duchy of Făgăraș were part of Wallachia. Ș. Papacostea only analyses "the title of fief, thus *retractable* [our underlineation]" of the Făgăraș duchy ruled by the Wallachian rulers, within the feudal-vassals relationships¹⁹⁶.

There are several sorts of "ruling", differentiated by the character of exerting the property rights. We will approach only those, which are connected to the period, tackled hereby. Firstly, the position of *banus* of Severin held by the Romanian voivodes, in certain periods, is one topic we are interested in. Then, a similar category must include the "ruling" over the duchy of the Făgăraș land, as it will be presented further¹⁹⁷. The Hungarian king, Louis I, granted the *Banate* of Severin and the duchy of Făgăraș to Vladislav Vlaicu, the Wallachian voivode, for the first time. In 1368, Vladislav was certified as *banus* of Severin and duke of Făgăraș¹⁹⁸. The date when the Romanian voivode received the duchy can be placed in 1366, subsequent to his submission during the previous year¹⁹⁹. During 1366, the king was in Transylvania for a longer period, when he could have regulated the new relations with the Romanian voivode.

There is no proof that Basarab I would have actually ruled, for a longer period, the *Banate* of Severin. He may have claimed it, taking into account the fact that the new Romanian State was continuously expanding its territories, in the attempt to unify all the Southern Carpathian regions. But the Mehadia citadel, in the Severin *Banate*, is certified by King Carol Robert's government in 1324²⁰⁰ as well as in 1329²⁰¹. The line of *banus* indicates again the fact that the *Banate* was belonging to the Hungarian kingdom²⁰². It is probable that only before the 1330 campaign he would have possessed, for a short time, the Severin region. Only after 1366, the Wallachian ruler received the *Banate* for the first time from the Hungarian king.

First of all, we must clarify the fact that any position in the Hungarian kingdom, from that of voivode of Transylvania to that of *banus* (of Slovenia, Croatia, Severin, etc.) or count, was obtained, beginning with the Anjou period, *pro honore*. At the same time, certain royal estates were also donated *pro honore*. That is they did not have the same statute with that of the irreversible feoffs, including the right of inheritance, etc, but a temporary character. The duration of such a position depended on the king's benevolence, according to the loyalty and services shown by the beneficiary. The official or the nobleman who was the beneficiary represented the royal authority within the territory circumscribed to his jurisdiction, reiterating its attributions. The material importance of the position consisted in the fact that an important part of the incomes collected from the respective territory -

¹⁹⁶ Ș. Papacostea, *România în secolul al XIII-lea*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁷ The estates and citadels ruled by the Romanian voivodes in Transylvania during the following periods (the citadels Bran and Bologa, the Vinț estate, etc.) are included into a separate category. We will discuss their case another time.

¹⁹⁸ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 86-88; both titles on the conventional signs of the seal

¹⁹⁹ Gy. Kristó, *Az Anjou-kor*, p. 157.

²⁰⁰ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 36-37.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

²⁰² See the discussion about these aspects in chapter 3, pp. 15-19.

taxes, fines, etc. - belonged to the official. The king remained the owner *de iure* of the estate²⁰³.

The character of the way the Romanian rulers from Transylvania governed is disputable from the following point of view: were they identical with the other positions and *pro honore* estates from the rest of Hungary or did they have the statute of definitively donated estates?

The *banus* of Severin dignity was a *pro honore* position, together with the other similar ones in the Hungarian kingdom, which depended on the king's benevolence and the beneficiary's fidelity. This dignity had previously existed in the Hungarian kingdom. It is interesting that Louis I granted the Romanian voivode the title of *banus* of Severin precisely when that territory functioned as a connecting bridge between the inner territory of the kingdom and the new *Banate* of Bulgaria at Vidin, created after the Bulgarian Czar had been banished and administered by the Hungarian noblemen²⁰⁴. At that moment, the Vidin *Banate* was not considered only a vassal province, but an integrate part of the kingdom. In such circumstances do not seem plausible that the king would have taken away a part of the country, with a special strategically importance, and donated with full rights, even to a vassal, as the Romanian voivode was. Vladislav Vlaicu was nothing else than an official of the king in his quality of *banus* of Severin. At last, from the point of view of the royalty, which did not hesitate during the crisis and conflictual period to take the *Banate* back and give it to a Hungarian nobleman²⁰⁵.

There was a difference between the conceptions of the two sides. The Romanian voivode considered himself the ultimate master of the Severin *Banate*, because in short time, in 1370, he created the second metropolitan seat in the country "of Severin", with the support of the Constantinople Patriarchate²⁰⁶. On the other hand, after 1382, Voivode Dan I attacked and probably conquered the Severin region, taking advantage of the internal crisis context from Hungary. It is especially important to observe that the Romanian voivode encountered the Romanian knezes' opposition, destroying their houses and documents²⁰⁷. This event which was recorded in the document may suggest the orientation of the Romanian feudal power in the Severin *Banate*. The temporary character as well as the dependence of the investment on the king's benevolence and on the beneficiary's fidelity, the main traits of a *pro honore* position, are accounted for by the further evolution, by the alternation of the Romanian voivodes and Hungarian noblemen who bore the title of *banus* of Severin.

²⁰³ P. Engel, *A Honor (A magyarországi feudális birtokformák kérdéséhez)*, in *Történelmi Szemle*, 81, 1981, no 1, pp. 11-19. Cf. idem, *Honor, vár, ispánság. Tanulmányok az Anjou-királyság kormányzati rendszeréről, in Századok*, 116, 1982, no. 5, pp. 880-920.

²⁰⁴ Szakály F., *Phases of Turco-Hungarian Warfare Before the Battle of Mohács (1365-1526)*, in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Budapest, XXXIII, fasc. I, 1979, p. 69.

²⁰⁵ The most specific case in 1375-1376, after the campaign against the Romanian voivode.

²⁰⁶ V. Achim, *Ecclesiastic Structures and Political Structures in 14th Century Wallachia*, in *Church and Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by M. Crăciun and O. Ghitta, Cluj-Napoca, 1998, pp. 123-135.

²⁰⁷ *DRH, D.*, I, pp. 122-123.

Compared to the *Banate* of Severin, which was previously constituted, during the 13th century, the Făgăraș duchy, Southern Transylvanian territory, was created only in the context of the suzerain-vassal relations with the Wallachian ruler. There is one piece of information that can be found to confirm our assumption. In 1372, when he issued a donation document, Vladislav called himself, among others "*duke of the newly founded land of Făgăraș*" (*dux nove plantacionis terre Fugaras*)²⁰⁸. The Romanian translators of the document made an error when they wrote, "*duke of the newly acquired land of Făgăraș*"²⁰⁹. The adequate meaning of the word "*plantaciones*" in this context is the freshly created one, *founded* instead of *acquired*. The Hungarian historians unreasonably claim that the use of this term is a proof of the colonisation of the Romanian population brought from the south of the Carpathians to Făgăraș, which would have been implemented by the Romanian voivode²¹⁰. The statements of the Hungarian historians are exaggerated, being caused by the immigration theses. In the 13th century, this region was called "terra Blachorum", a proof of the existence of the Romanian peoples.

The Făgăraș land, known in the previous documents as a country of the Romanians, was not previously organised as a duchy. This was especially created for the vassal voivodes of Wallachia. This duchy from the south of Transylvania, made up of around 25 villages and boroughs, most of them Romanian, was organised in this administrative form in the context of Louis I's reform of the system of suzerain-vassal relationships. The Romanian voivodes' ruling over these territories was not complete, as it was inner their country. It was only a commissioned position. The voivodes were the rulers of estates the main owner of which was still the king.

The character of the Romanian voivodes' governments in Făgăraș is emphasised in the circumstance of a donation made by Vladislav. The voivode offered a borough and four villages from the Făgăraș land to knight Ladislau of Dăbâca "*from our lord, the king, and from us*" (*ex parte domini nostri regis et nostri*)²¹¹. The voivode mentions that he made the donation during the period in which he was a subject of the Hungarian king (*cum eramus in gratia copiosa domini nostri Lodvici*). He asks king Louis, his lawful lord, and his successors, "*to confirm and sanction our letter and to confirm and settle our donation...*"²¹². The mention of the fact that the donation was made during the period of obedience, not during the rebellion, to the suzerain king, aims at confirming the full and indisputable character of the donation document. The appeal to the king for confirming the donation, as well as mentioning the fact that it came from the king - primarily -, and from the voivode - secondarily - proves the character of the

²⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 104.

²¹⁰ *Korai magyar történelmi lexikon (9.-14. század)*. Főszerkesztő: Gy. Kristó, Budapest, 1994, p. 221.

²¹¹ *DRH. D.*, I, pp. 103-105.

²¹² *Ibidem*: "... *Quare supplicamus serenissimo domino nostro Lodovico, illustri regi Ungarie, domino nostro naturali, eiusque successoribus, quatenus litteras nostra presentes in vigore suo confirment et corroborent et donacionem nostram...*".

Romanian voivode's government over the territories situated within the Carpathians. It was not a complete one, but a commissioned one, as well as the implied attributions. It is about a delegation from the king's sovereignty over a certain territory, circumscribed to the title of duke of Făgăraș.

The initial meaning of the title of *banus* of Severin had by the Romanian voivodes, was that of a dignitary in the Hungarian kingdom²¹³. Only the duchy of Făgăraș, and later that of Amlaș, had the statute of an estate given according to the proper vassality customs and principles. But also with a temporary right, with partial, commissioned attributions. The fact that the voivodes understood something different afterwards and transformed the circumscribed territories in actual feoffs, which they considered to have inherited, was possible because of the internal evolution in Hungary. One has to stress the fact that their ruling did not presume their annexation to Wallachia, but their administration within the kingdom of Hungary. This conception was at least the point of view of the Hungarian royal office. A proof of the special character of this feoff can even be the name of it: duchy. The Romanian voivode who ruled the duchy automatically became a duke. The importance of the duke title in the medieval hierarchy supports the statute of a *pro honore* feoff. The title could not be granted but by the suzerain king, suzerain of the new senior.

A totally different conception about the rights implied by ruling the Făgăraș duchy was shared by the Romanian rulers. The difference consists in contesting the right of reconsideration of the donation in case of unfaithfulness, as well as the claims for the inheritance of the feoff. Even in the 16th century, many years after Făgăraș was no longer earmarked to the Romanian voivodes, they claimed it with the right of inheritance²¹⁴.

An open question for today's research is the competence of the voivode in his quality of duke of Făgăraș. He made donations in favour of his faithful servants. In the subsequent donation documents, issued later, the king is no longer required to confirm the donation. Which does not mean those similar documents would not have been issued along the time, having been lost. It is certain that beginning with Mircea the Old the Romanian voivodes donate estates, fully or partially, the same way it happened in the actual Wallachia. The Romanian voivodes performed sovereign actions - donation, ennobling - in Făgăraș as in the inner country²¹⁵. Boyars from the actual Wallachia received estates in Făgăraș while boyars from Făgăraș received estates south of the mountains. These movements in the 15th century question the voivode's competence, in his quality of duke, to elevate anybody to a nobiliary rank or make donations in the duchy. The Romanian historiography considers that the ruler exerted his complete jurisdiction in Făgăraș²¹⁶, identical to the one in Wallachia. But it is to be explained by means of

²¹³ N. Iorga, *Carpații în luptele dintre români și unguri*, p. 89. admits that Vladislav was the Hungarian king's dignitary in his quality of *banus* of Severin.

²¹⁴ D. Prodan, *Iobăgia în Transilvania în sec. al XVI-lea*, II, București, p. 10.

²¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.

²¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-13.

vassality principles. The duke, in this case the Romanian voivode, could manifest his complete authority, that of a senior, towards his subjects. The duke of Făgăraș is included in a category superior to that of the usual nobility from the Hungarian kingdom. He was the vassal of the king, but a senior for his subjects. According to his rights as a senior, he could dispose of the seniorial rights as he wished.

Promoting a part of the Romanian population elite from Făgăraș to the "boyar" rank (term which corresponds to the quality of nobleman in the Romanian countries) is to be explained by the Romanian voivode's necessity to create a new social basis for his government. The boyar title possessed by the Romanian noblemen from Făgăraș and kept until later, after definitively regaining the region from the Romanian voivodes, is a proof that they had been promoted to this social rank during the period when the Romanian rulers owned this territory as dukes of Făgăraș. The Romanian voivodes' (and Făgăraș dukes) competence to ennoble and make donations must be correlated with the attributes implied by the duke title. Obviously, it did not mean the same with what it had been during the 11th - 12th centuries²¹⁷, but the meaning of partial sovereignty was still preserved. The question of the Romanian voivodes' governments in Transylvania will have to be resumed from this perspective too, that is the significance of the duke title and its attributions.

In the historiography, beginning with D. Onciul, it has been considered that the Romanian voivodes' vassality to the Hungarian king concerned only the context of their governments in Transylvania and *Banate*²¹⁸. The role of these possessions was to strengthen the vassality relationship, going on in the context in which the Hungarian king pretended to be the heir of the Arpadian Crown and, implicitly, of the territories under the Hungarian suzerainty in the 13th century. The ruling in Transylvania appears as a compensation for the fidelity and the homage. Their donation took place in the context of Vladislav Vlaicu's new reign, begun through the disputation of the king as a suzerain and owing to his place in Louis I's strategy in the Balkans.

5. Conclusions

The pre-requisites of the suzerainty claims of the Hungarian kings over Wallachia are to be found in the beginning of the 13th century, when the Hungarian domination was exerted, in various forms, over some territories south of the Carpathians. The territorial expansion of the Teutons, after 1211, outside the territories initially distributed, followed, because of different reasons, by their driving away from the region, as well as the christianisation of a part of the Cumans, situated close the zone conquered by the Teutons, constituted the premises of the Hungarian king's authority south of the Carpathians. The territory

²¹⁷ Gy. Kristó, *A XI. századi hercegség története Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1974, passim: idem. *A feudális széttagolódás Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 26-83.

²¹⁸ D. Onciul, *Originea principatelor române*, p. 652.

corresponding to this stage of the expansion is circumscribed to the region lying within the arch of the Carpathian Mountains towards the Danube. At the same time, military campaigns were recorded in the Severin region too; they were interdependent with the missionary ones, attempting at the population conversion to Catholicism, the same as in the Eastern region of the South-Carpathian territories. The Diploma of the Knights Hospitalers in 1247 includes different degrees of exerting the Hungarian suzerainty south of the Carpathians after the great Mongolian invasion.

During the second half of the century the attempt of a Romanian voivode to unify the territories and escape from the king's domination, taking advantage of the internal crisis in Hungary, was rapidly annihilated by means of force. In the 13th century, the Hungarian suzerainty over some Southern Carpathian territories was exerted by acknowledging the king as suzerain, paying a tribute and by mutual military support.

At the beginning of the 14th century, another Romanian voivode took profit of the internal crisis in Hungary and unified the South-Carpathian territories, making up one country, Wallachia. The new Anjou king, Carol Robert, considered himself the rightful suzerain of the new state, created by the unification of the old state-territorial formations, which had been under the Arpadian domination, from which the king had taken over the Hungarian throne. Basarab refused to pledge obedience, which brought a military campaign in 1330, concluded with the defeat of the Hungarian army and the acceptance of the *statu quo*. Only in 1344, in a context, which cannot be cleared up, the voivode associated in reigning, Nicholas Alexander pledged vassality to the new king, Louis. The Romanian voivode's last years of ruling were marked by new tendencies towards independence for which the king did not succeed in taking effective punishing measures.

Only in the 1365 years, the king, who still claimed his suzerain rights, in a classical Western formula, could, using the military pressure, obtain the obedience of the Romanian voivode. The acceptance of the Hungarian king's suzerainty was temporary and depended on the military pressure also present in the international context. Regaining the independence drew punishing military campaigns along with it, which, at least in 1368, ended with the Romanian voivode's victory. His implication in the problems of the Bulgarian Czarism of Vidin, as well as the military success, re-established, on a new basis, the vassality relationships. The Romanian voivode received the duchy of Făgăraș in the south of Transylvania.

The second rebellion of the voivode was favoured by the appearance of a new power factor in the region, the Turks. Generally, after 1374, for two decades, the Romanian rulers, taking advantage of a favourable foreign context as well as of the internal crisis in Hungary, manifested their independence reported to the suzerainty claims of the Hungarian kings. This was also a temporary situation. The presence of the Anjou arms on the Romanian coins confirms the statute of vassality the Romanian voivodes had to the Hungarian kings.

The Romanian rulers' vassality to the Hungarian kings was temporary, and marked by a series of military conflicts. The Romanian voivodes permanently tried

to liberate from the Hungarian claims. This desideratum was reached only sometimes, also due to the international context or to the momentary interest manifested by the Anjou kings concerning the problem of subjecting the Romanian voivode. The conflicts with the Anjou kings fundamentally contributed to the consolidation of the Romanian State system in the circumstance of defining the vassal's obligation as compared to the Hungarian kings' interposition. The independent actions, more often after 1355, constituted a favourable premise for the next voivode, Mircea the Old (1386-1418) to develop a far-reaching policy. The change of positions was achieved when a new power factor in the region appeared, the Turks. The relations between the Romanian rulers and the Hungarian kings entered a new stage, different from the one of the Anjou period.