

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA REGARDING THE FORTRESS FROM CARAȘOVA-HILL GRAD, COMMUNE OF CARAȘOVA, CARAȘ-SEVERIN DISTRICT

Silviu Oța, Liana Oța

The fortress from Carașova became the object of the specialty historical literature since the XIX century. This thing was due to some documents emitted by the royal chancellery, the royal functionaries or private institutions. Both the locality and the fortress, during the Middle Ages, entered for different raisons, in the attention of the Magyar and Ottoman authorities. In this paper, far from wanting to solve all the problems related to the fortress and its neighbouring village, named Carașova (we will use the contemporary official name so we wouldn't create confusions), we would like to talk about some problems and confusions made by the historians who treated this subject. Part of the arguments we used are basing also on the archaeological information resulted after three research campaigns in the fortification (1998, 2000 and 2001).

The special attention that the fortress received, was not the same during its functioning. It will have a greater importance beginning with the end of the XIV century, when the Turks came at Middle Danube. Because it was placed in the southern area of the Hungarian Kingdom, automatically entered in the southern defensive system of this country. We only have to mention that, at the beginning of the XV century, it was leaded, at least formally, by Filipo Scolari, county leader at Timiș. In the following years, when the Teutonic knights came to the southern Banat, Carașova was still part of the southern Hungarian defensive system, as one of the northern points¹. More that that, it was placed in the center of one of the privileged Romanian districts, mentioned in the royal diploma from 1457².

The location of the site

The fortress Carașova is placed on the border of the commune bearing the same name, in Caraș-Severin district. (Pl.1-Carașova on the map of Romania). Comparing to the locality of Reșița, it is placed at the kilometric borne 10 of the National Road 58 (Pl.2-Regional map indicating the site). From this borne to the fortress are approximately 500 m. The place chose for its building is a strategic observation point in the area, (toward west and north), on great distance. As far as the roads or the economical aspects were concerned, the surrounding area has no special importance. The relief is of karst type, so very few favorable for agriculture, being more propitious for fruit tree growing and animal growing.

¹ I. Hațegan, *Cavalerii teutoni în Banatul Severinului (1429-1435)*, in "Tibiscus", 5, 1978, Timișoara, p. 193.

² D. Țeicu, *Banatul montan în evul mediu*, Timișoara, 1998, p. 434.

Made of stone, the fortress was build on the top of a hill known under the name of Grad. On three sides it is bordered by a precipice (approximately 200 m deep), and on the only access road, from the bottom of the hill, were dig two defense parallel ditches. On the side from the village was left a small access road on the edge of the precipice, the wall between the two ditches being interrupted. The top of the hill is formed, all the way to the ditches, by a small calcareous stone plateau difficult accessible. On the base of the hill on which the fortress was build there is a road accessible only for vehicles with animal traction. From there, the road stops and, for strategic reasons, there are only two paths.

The history of the research

The data we are having today over the fortress from Carașova are extremely summary. In the specialty literature appeared, for more or less objective reasons, some mistakes. They are caused by the wrong interpretation of the documents or of the chronicles from that time. The fortress from Carașova, more exactly „Grad”, entered in the specialists attention at the end of the XIX century. A special study hadn't yet been written, but were published other passages from county monographs or other kind of studies. The main paper dedicated to the Caraș county in the Middle Age begun to be published in 1882, during the Austrian – Hungarian monarchy and belongs to the historian Frigries Pesty³. As far as we are concerned, the Magyar historian offered a correct list of the owners of the castle⁴ who leaded effectively or theoretically the fortress from 1323 until 1364. The rest of the enumerated owners of the castle are only supposed. Pesty considered that the first mention of the fortress was the one in 1230. After 1520, the same historian believes that the fortress and its owners do not appear anymore in the documents and all the information related to them is legendary⁵.

Almost in the same time, J. Szentklaray published in Budapest, in 1900, the volume *Krassóvármegye Őshajdana*⁶. Although the two historians present two fortresses bearing the same name, (Krassó și Krassófvár) thei explanations are pretty confuse. The first one was also named under the name of Haram. The second fortress, also placed on Caraș River, existed at Carașova, at the northern limit of the Aninei Mountains. The last one was named Krassófvár.

The Romanian historiography from the inter-war period and that after 1945 undertook the confusions made by the two historians and in some cases even continued them. This situation was caused mainly by the fact that the fortress was unknown (some authors wrote papers without even visiting the fortress). There were also missing elementary architectural knowledge and the documentary and

³ Fr. Pesty, *Krassó vármegye története*, II-1 (1884), II-2 (1885), III (1882), IV (1883), Budapest.

⁴ *Idem*, 1884, II/ 1, p. 165.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 265.

⁶ J. Szentklaray, *Krassó vármegye Őshajdana*, Budapesta, 1900.

archaeological study on the medieval fortresses from Hungary. Traian Simu, in his paper *Originea crașovenilor*, appeared at Lugoj in 1939⁷, reached the conclusion that the fortress Caraș (Haram) is the same one with that from Carașova. From here he came to associate historical events related to Haram, with those from Carașova. At p.93 he mentions, like Pesty, for instance, that the first documentary mention is the one at 1230, during the reign of King Andrei II. Then he made a connection between Carașova and the events from 1247, when Țara Severinului was conceded to the knights of the order of St. John through the act 2 June 1247. At 1266 he thinks that the fortress was donated to the county leader of Cuman origin, Parabuch, by King Ștefan V, for his services, because it was a royal property.

The same mistakes were repeated one by one by V. Tufescu, Coriolan Suciu (*Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, Vol. I, p.121⁸, vol. II, p. 313⁹), Theodor N. Trâpcea, Ștefan Matei and Ștefan Pascu.

Theodor N. Trâpcea in the article *Despre unele cetăți medievale din Banat* (*Studii de Istorie a Banatului*, 1/1969, p.23-82)¹⁰, Carașova is mentioned as appearing in the documents in the year 1230, as royal fortress, being described as a stone fortress. In the same time, the author of the articlearticolului precizează că a fost menționată în documente până la underlines that it was mentioned in documents until the end of the XVI century (p.63). Among the events in which the fortress was involved, are mentioned the Crusade from 1396, when the western armies heading for Nicopole were stationed here, the years 1551 when it was conquered by the Turks and the year 1595 when it was conquered again by the Transylvanian armies. The presentation is not accompanied by footnotes in which the author should have mentioned the source of information. So from the start the passages from his study where he referred to the fortress are doubtful and unlikely.

In the year 1979, Ștefan Matei published an article with the title "Fortificațiile de pe teritoriul Banatului în lumina izvoarelor scrise" („Banatica” 5/1979, p. 255-263)¹¹. He identified the fortress of Carașova with „the Fortress of the Caraș County”. The year of the apparition in documents was considered as being 1247 (see the footnote 38 at p. 260). The last owner of the castle at Carașova was considered as appearing in documents in the year 1355. On the same page the author of the article mentions that at the middle of the XIV century was build another fortress because starting with 1363 in the documents appeared the fortress Karassofeu, which was mentioned until 1437. The author undertook the

⁷ T. Simu, *Originea crașovenilor*, Lugoj, 1939.

⁸ C. Suciu, *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, I, 1967, București, p. 121.

⁹ *Idem*, II, 1968, București, p. 313.

¹⁰ Th. Trâpcea, *Despre unele cetăți medievale din Banat*, in „Studii de Istorie a Banatului”, 1, 1969, Timișoara, p. 23-82.

¹¹ Șt. Matei, *Fortificațiile de pe teritoriul Banatului în lumina izvoarelor scrise*, in „Banatica”, 5, 1979, Reșița, p. 255-263.

information furnished by Pesty and asserted the same thing, that the fortress had the same owners of the castle like those in Vrșac¹².

In the same year Adrian A. Rusu published a list of the owners of the castle from Transylvania in the XIII-XIV¹³, among which he remembers those from Carașova.

In the same period Ioan Hațegan, in an article about the presence of the Teutonic knights in Banat¹⁴, he mentioned the fortress Carașova as being the northern point of the defensive system organized by them in southern Hungary.

If the majority of the historians offered a more or less accurate description of the fortress, Șt. Pascu has entirely different opinions. In the first volume of the work *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*¹⁵, appeared at Cluj-Napoca in the year 1971, p.134, we find out about the existence of the fortress Caraș, but not localized. At p.154, it is mentioned as royal fortress, without specifying any document of the reference. In the second volume of the same work¹⁶, at p.238 we find out that the fortress Caraș (mentioned along with Satu Mare, Moldovenești etc.) was named Carașova and functioned starting with the IX-X centuries next to Haram, Cuvin and Orșova. Moreover, in the first volume it was said that it was a royal fortress, and in this one that in fact is a peasant fortress made of land with stockade in the center of a Romanian principality. Still at p.246 are mentioned two fortresses: Haram and Carașova, none of them with the document in which they were mentioned. Two pages forward (p.248), Carașova was mentioned as royal fortress, and at p.249 was no longer made of land, but of stone. Passing over the deficient description, we also find out that it was destroyed by the Turks in the battle for Mohacs (!).

Other mentions about the fortress Carașova are to be found at Th. O. Gheorghiu¹⁷, but the data is undertaken after the information found in other specialty works. In *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania*, appeared under the signature of C. Suciu, were mentioned the locality Carașova in the first volume¹⁸ and Crassou in the second volume¹⁹.

New data about the fortress Carașova were recently published by D. Țeicu in the volume *Banatul Montan în Evul Mediu*, appeared in 1998 at Timișoara. The

¹² *Idem*, p. 261. We must say that in the documents signed by the owners of castle in Vrșac, only in the document from 1323, they sign with this double function, as owners of the castles from Carașova and Vrșac. The rest of the documents are signed only as owners of the castle from Vrșac, which makes us believe that it is rather a guessing made by Pesty, and not a real fact.

¹³ A.A. Rusu, *Castelanii din Transilvania în secolele XIII-XIV*, in „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca”, 22, 1979, p. 71-98.

¹⁴ I. Hațegan *op.cit.*, p. 191-196.

¹⁵ Șt. Pascu, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, I, 1971, Cluj-Napoca.

¹⁶ *Idem*, II, 1979, Cluj-Napoca.

¹⁷ Th. O. Gheorghiu, *Arhitectura medievală de apărare din România*, București, 1985, p. 42, 69, 225.

¹⁸ C. Suciu *op.cit.*, I, p. 121.

¹⁹ *Idem*, II, p. 313.

data he offers are, archaeologically and historically speaking, the closest to reality compared to all the studies published until now²⁰.

Starting with 1999, until 2002 were published three reports of archaeological research regarding the fortress Carașova²¹. Their purpose was to publish exact information about a site that has been destroyed by the treasure hunters. The archaeological materials recovered with this occasion, and also from private collections (a lance point dating from the XVI century, used by the armies from central Europe, the fragment of a knife of Stiria, discovered on an arson level) proved that the available historical information also is confirmed by archaeology.

Concerning the period from the beginning, we can say that there never existed a land fortress, as Șt. Pascu tried to assert. The fortress was exclusively made of stone, at least in its lower part. The recovered pottery cannot be dated earlier than the end of the XIII century. Some earlier fragments (aside the prehistoric ones), can also be carried. They were discovered in the filling land between the precincts and an interior building, being brought there in order to create a plane ground on which they could circulate, because the rock was bend. At the beginning, before the fortress was build, most likely the ground was "clean". Probably there were at most few trees and small land areas between the calcareous stone. Another argument pleading that the fortress is not an early one, is the fact that there were discovered small pottery fragments from Petcheneg type boilers, dating from the XI-XII centuries, or the beginning of the XIII century.

The absolute chronology based on the discovered coins is not helping too much at the dating of the fortress. There are known only two coins proceeded from here, one issued during the reign of Baiazid II (1481-1512)²² and others from the times of Sigismund of Luxemburg (1384-1437) until 1524²³.

The analysis of the mortar drawn from different areas and levels of the building process, proves that the sources of the raw material used at its production are brought from different points. This indicated the fact that it couldn't be found in sufficient quantities in a certain point that could be conveniently exploited. This is another argument to prove that here could not have been build fortresses of wood and land because the raw material for it was lacking. The stone they used was plenty and probably resulted both from the arrangement of the place and from nearby. At 150 m east from the fortress can still be seen a great hollow in the hill in which there are

²⁰ D. Țeicu, *op.cit.*, p. 211-212.

²¹ S. Oța, L. Oța, S. Ionescu, *24. Carașova, jud. Caraș-Severin, punctul „Grad”*, in „Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România. Campania 1998” (further on it will be quoted CCA), București, 1999, p. 22-23, D. Țeicu, S. Oța, L. Oța, *36. Carașova, jud. Caraș-Severin, Punct: Grad*, in „CCA. Campania 2000”, București, 2001, p. 57-59, D. Țeicu, S. Oța, L. Oța, *50. Carașova, com. Carașova, jud. Caraș-Severin, Punct: Dealul Grad*, in „CCA. Campania 2001”, București, 2002, p. 85-87.

²² D. Țeicu, S. Oța, L. Oța, CCA, 2002, p. 87.

²³ Fr. Pap, *Repertoriu numismatic al Transilvaniei și Banatului secolele 11-20. Despre circulația monetară în Transilvania și Banat secolele 11-20*, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 49.

impressive amounts of broken stone. Is the only place on the entire hill where you can find something like that. For the construction could be also used the stone resulted from the digging of the defensive ditches in the rock.

The fortress ceased to function at the end of the XVI century. It is also confirmed a violent destruction, in the last faze of its functioning, in the north, west and south-west, being identified a destruction and arson level. The last published volume regarding the medieval fortifications dating from the XIII-XIV centuries was signed by A. A. Rusu in the year 2005: *Castelanarea carpatică. Fortificații și cetăți din Transilvania și teritoriile învecinate (secolele XIII-XIV)*. The fortress Carașova was also analysed by the author under several aspects. Its name was translated from Magyar (Krassóffő) as Spring of the Caraș²⁴. The following pages (146, 180, 183, 200, 202, 209, 228, 231, 235, 237) were dedicated to the description of the different fortification elements and arrangements (defense ditches dug in stone etc.). At page 180 we find out in great surprise that there was a stone bridge foot, but this is only a presupposition. On the field such a thing was not observed. The defense ditch dug into stone in front of the fortress was almost full with limestone resulted from the destruction of the precincts and remained rubbish. So we can't speak about the dating of constructive elements that haven't yet been discovered. Moreover we need to mention one more time that when studies about the architecture of the fortresses in Banat have been written, at Carașova were not yet done archaeological researches. In the digging reports we proved that in the first stage of using the fortress, the entrance was not where some fellows assumed, but in south-west, where the access road was. Regarding access gates or doors into the fortress (mentioned at page 183), these modified while the perimeter of the fortress enlarged. In the first construction faze there were two entrances, each one at one extremity. In the last faze we cannot speak anymore about two of them because the access might have been done through the third precincts, where we saw a interruption. The old access road was blocked by a wall which was probably prolonged until the edge of the precipice²⁵. Thus, by enlarging the surface of the fortress, the ancient entrances were not anymore access ways into the fortress. They were rather entrances into the building complex from the upper part of the rock. At page we can read: "the Fortress Carașovei has a chamber complex at the foundation level, which can identify the interior palace". We would say that the mentioned walls are not only at the foundations level, but also elevate to the ground floor level (seen from the inside of the fortress). The interior building complex is not but the ancient fortress which, regarded from the whole fortress, seems like an interior palace. The rooms we suppose to be interior are caused by the

²⁴ A. A. Rusu, *Castelanarea carpatică. Fortificații și cetăți din Transilvania și din teritoriile învecinate (sec. XIII-XIV)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 41.

²⁵ In the place where we suppose that it was the edge of the mentioned wall. The rock seems broken together with its ending. In these conditions it is difficult to assume if there was a door or not. It is a sure thing that the entrance from the south-east of the first fortress remained in use at that time.

bad topographic raise and the lack of architectural study. What it was thought to be separating walls between the rooms are not but remains kept standing from the ancient fortress to which was added the new precinct. The archaeological researches didn't discover inside any separating walls. Another remark of the author is that there might be an interior chapel into the fortress of Carașova (page 209). At this level of the researches (60-70% of the surface was dug), was not identified such a building. Moreover, the interior palace is nothing else but an angled passage with variable breadth from 1,80 m to 3,50 m and length of about 21 m. If there existed such an arrangement, it was probably upstairs.

At the pages 220-221 are mentioned the "dwells" or the utilitarian annexes from Carașova, and as bibliography *Cronica 2000*. It is true that south from the so-called palace placed between the NE side precincts and the wall which covers the top of the rock (4,00 m thick) was discovered a room. It was placed between the same interior wall and the no. 1 precincts and its role was hard to define. What we can say is that no fireplace hasn't been found in this space. In the room one could also enter from the east, where there was an entrance, but also from the west, through a 0,50 m breadth passage, which was placed between the first precincts and end of the wall which covered the top of the rock. The lack of a heating device on the ground floor is typical for the entire fortress. The only remained device dates from a late period. In that moment the fortress already had suffered important destructions, so it might date from the end of the XVI century or even later. This might signify that the fortress was inhabited only upstairs, the ground floor being destined to other activities. It is also possible that the eventual heating devices could be destroyed by the treasure hunters who unsettled the stratigraphy.

After that are mentioned dates of the first appearances in documents and materials discovered into the fortress. Generally speaking, the information is well presented and is based on the last studies about it, excluding the less credible information.

The recent Magyar literature confirms that the fortress of Carașova was part of the defense system of south Hungary in the XV century²⁶ and that its beginnings must be placed somewhere at the beginning of the XIV century²⁷.

Gy. Györffy is the first who managed to separate the documents regarding Krassóvár and Krassóffővár and to establish the fact that there are two fortresses that at some moment bore the same names or similar ones. The suppositions are now confirmed also by archaeology. This kind of research is the most precise to be able to prove Gy. Györffy's affirmations and to eliminate the documentary information published until now. This information asserts that the fortress also functioned in the previous period and the dating descends until the IX-X centuries.

²⁶ E. Fügedi, *Castle and Society in Medieval Hungary (1000-1437)*, în „Studia Historica”, 187, Budapesta 1986, p. 134, Map 18, p. 138, Map 19, p. 146.

²⁷ Gy. Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország Történeti Földrajza*, III, Budapest, 1987, p. 489-490.

Lacking this research, part of the Romanian historiography and not only, probably would have persisted in its beliefs that here was the residence of the Caraș County in the Middle Ages. This thing is only partially true.

The historical sources

Studying the historical sources we considered only the documents emitted from 1323 onward.

The earlier documents, no matter how they were interpreted or read, are worthless for the fortress of Carașova. For that we would like to give some examples. First of all, in 1266 the Cuman county ruler Parabuch did not fulfilled the function of county ruler of Caraș (by this we do not understand Carașova), he only received its lands²⁸. The document emitted in the mentioned year is explicit regarding the role of Parabuch in that time and the royal donations he received. Moreover, the lands of the Caraș fortress were in the southern area of Banat, on the inferior river bearing the same name. If he would have placed on a map the lands of Caraș fortress, the author would have noticed that they concentrated around the fortress of Haram (or Krassóvár)²⁹. Even the farther lands of the fortress Caraș, like Voila next to Semlin, donated by the king to the knights of the order of St. John, were still on south Banat³⁰. To these adds the fact that no document mentions at least one nobiliary or royal possession on the mountainous area of the future Caraș County, as it is known in the XIV century. For the XIII century the history of the Caraș County is well known regarding its possessions. No Romanian historian who studied the fortress Carașova (the Carașova from nowadays) hasn't yet explained why it appears on the superior course of Caraș only in the XIV century, without its so-called possessions mentioned in the XIII century. If anybody might have tried to answer this question, then he would have realized that there are two different fortresses, both placed on the same river, but in different points. It wasn't necessary to look for an imaginary fortress at the sources of the river. The Magyar notion of "fő" must not be taken *ad literam*, but as a notion referring to a region placed upstream (on a river), in an unknown yet space (inhabited too), where at that time were their useful regions (the regions of the Magyars or of the nobles). For that time the notion could mend the center of a region, but this theory must be analysed from one locality to another, considering other information too.

Analysing the documents we can see that the fortress Caraș and its owners are others than those from Carașova. At 1335 the last one was placed on the domain of the archbishops of Kalocsa, who had here their own castle owners.

²⁸ S. Oța, *Populații nomade de stepă din Banat (secolele XI-XIV). I. Pecenegii și cumanii*, in "Prinos lui Petre Diaconu la 80 de ani", Brăila, 2004, p. 495, S. Oța, *Domenii ale pecenegilor și cumanilor în Banatul istoric*, in „Studii de Istorie a Banatului”, 26-27, Timișoara, 2002-2003, p. 232, 233.

²⁹ S. Oța, *Câteva date de ordin istoric privind evoluția teritorială a Comitatului Caraș până în secolul XIV*, in „Muzeul Național”, 14, București, 2002, p. 37-38.

³⁰ Documente privind Istoria României, seria C, XI-XIII, p. 332 (further on it will be quoted DIR, C.).

Around the same date (1343) there was also a county ruler (Pousa) and a vice count (Lorand) of Caraș who emitted acts from Haram (Caraș), and not from Carașova. This proves that there it was the chair of the county ruler, at least for juridical problems. The argument used by Gy. Györffy to prove that Haram is identical with Caraș was that from 1330 Posa of Szer is mentioned county ruler of Caraș, either of Haram³¹. We believe that these arguments are enough to prove that the events from the XII, XIII at partially the XIV centuries can be related to Caraș (or Haram) and not with Carașova.

The documentary historical information is very summary and refers very few to the fortress and more to its castle owners.

The first sure dates about the fortress are from the year 1323, when at its leadership is mentioned the magistrate Nicolae³². The same person was in parallel also owner of the castle Vrșac (former Érd Somlyó). At this date the fortress belonged to the King of Hungary, Carol I Robert de Anjou (1308-1342). A few years later, in 1335, it had another owner, the magistrate Thouka³³, representative of the archbishop of Kalocsa. Already in 1358, it was back in the king's possession. In the year 1382, according to the data published by E. Fügedi, it was still in the royal possession³⁴. At the beginning of the XV century, as castle owner was signing Filipo Scolari (1405 and 1406³⁵). For a long period of time the data was very few. The period between 1520 and 1551 is very insecure regarding the military actions to which it was subjected. From 1551, when the area entered in the Pashalic Timișoara territory, the fortress Carașova entered in Turk possession.

In the period of the Ottoman rule over Banatului, the fortress is not mentioned in the Ottoman documents, but only the Carașova locality. The Turk chronicles from that time are not mentioning it either³⁶. Their information is purely orientative. We can only see that the Ottoman chroniclers centres mainly on the description of the battles around the great fortresses³⁷, with the small or middle ones.

Some historians and archaeologists asserts that it was destroyed by the Transylvanian armies in 1595, but this opinion is not confirmed by any document or writing. Their affirmations do not contain notes about the sources of their information. Moreover, C. Suciú doesn't have in his dictionary, at the year 1551,

³¹ Gy. Györffy op. cit., p. 489.

³² *Idem*, p. 469, 476.

³³ DIR, C, XIV, III, p. 361.

³⁴ E. Fügedi, *op.cit.*, p. 124, Map.16.

³⁵ Fr. Pesty, *op.cit.*, III, p. 250-251.

³⁶ *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române*, I, București, 1966.

³⁷ Frequently are mentioned the fortresses Timișoara, Lipova, Șoimoș, Igrış, Margina, Felnak, Cenad, Becikerek, Mako, Gyula, Ciala, Arad etc (Mehmed Bin Mehmed, p. 413, 415). Together with them are mentioned, for instance, "...the numerous castles which are related to them. The mischief-makers who lived in them, hurrying to flee, all were found empty and those necessary for the defense were occupied" (Mustafa Ğelalzade, in *Cronici turcești*, I, p. 287). This might also mean that the fortress Carașova lost its meaning during the XVI century.

references to the fortress Carașova. What might lead other authors to such an interpretation is the paper *Historia de Rebus Transsylvanicis*, signed by Wolfgangi de Bethlen³⁸. Evlia Celebi, in his trip to Banat, doesn't mention anything about the ruins found there, although for other similar fortresses, still functional or not, gives certain information³⁹.

In the specialty Romanian literature, many mistakes are due to the fact that the fortress Caraș from the documents was identified with that from Carașova, and Krassófvár was believed to be another fortification which must be searched at the source of the Caraș river. Also it wasn't considered that the fortress Haram identifies with Krassóvár, and Krassófvár is Carașova. That is why the documents emitted until 1323, considered that were referring to Carașova, are actually concerning the fortress at Haram.

In an article published in 2002⁴⁰, we tried to bring arguments regarding the territorial evolution of the Caraș County. We considered that the mentioned county didn't formed in only one stage, as it was known in the XIV century, but gradually, gathering new territories which were added administratively. The first secure documents regarding Carașova dates only from 1323. All the documents referring to the superior basin of the Caraș River, dates only from the XIV century. This might draw attention to the moment in which the Magyar Royalty begun to be economically and military interested in the region. Until 1323, no document reminds domains of the great nobility in the area. This doesn't mean that in the superior basin of this river there never existed noble properties. It only means that economically and strategically there never had any special value until that date. The small dimensions of the fortress suggests that, at least in the first faze, it was only an observation point in the area. The real date of its building remains uncertain, specially because it was made of stone, a fact that indicates that it was probably build after the Tartar – Mongolian invasion from 1240-1241. It is very unlikely that a stone fortress was built in that region before that date. When the castle owner appeared in the documents, in 1323, probably it was already functional, so the date of its building is earlier with several years. It could have

³⁸ Wolfgangi de Bethlen, *Historia de Rebus Transsylvanicis*, I, p. 497-498. Regarding this work I had access to the second edition appeared in the year 1782 at Sibiu. There is mentioned also the fact that Mehmet Beglerbegul conquered several fortresses in, among which Ilidia (Illadim) and Vrșac (Somlium) in the year 1551. In the third volume of the same work, appeared in the year 1783 (second edition), in the year 1595, p. 576, is mentioned that in July, G. Borbély conquered from the Turks two castles, Varsocs (Vrșac) and Bokcsa (Bocșa). The description of the situation of Transylvania and Banat, in that year, is convincing in the author's description. We can only say that we can assume that the fortress from Carașova was destroyed in those times and hasn't been remade, like other fortresses.

³⁹ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, IV, București, 1976, p. 326-753. It is also true that Evlia Celebi clearly mentions that he wrote about those places he visited or received information.

⁴⁰ S. Oța, *op.cit.* p. 36-43.

been built only in a higher chronological interval. Probably in those times it still had small dimensions, like those described in the digging reports as being faze I.

Considering the results of the archaeological researches developed until now, we think that the fortress from Carașova must not be confounded with Haram (or the fortress Krassóvár). Also it must be done a more careful separation of the documents referring to the two fortresses, to avoid any more confusions. Unfortunately, lacking some ample researches at Haram, we cannot draw more conclusions and find more arguments about the period in which the fortress functioned.

CÂTEVA DATE ISTORICE ȘI ARHEOLOGICE ASUPRA CETĂȚII DE LA CARAȘOVA-DEALUL GRAD, COM. CARAȘOVA, JUD. CARAȘ-SEVERIN

- Rezumat -

În prezentul articol, autorii realizează o analiză a literaturii istorice din România și Austro-Ungaria cu privire la cetatea de la Carașova-Grad (com. Carașova, jud. Caraș-Severin, în evul mediu cunoscută în special cu numele de Krassófvár).

Prima parte a articolului cuprinde o localizare exactă a cetății pentru a evita confuzii cu alte cetăți cu un nume asemănător (Krassóvár) sau presupuse ca existând de-a lungul râului Caraș și având același nume.

Partea a doua este o analiză a literaturii istorice (de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și din secolele XI și XXI) cu privire la cetate și la confuziile care s-au creat în legătură cu ea. Acestea s-au datorat în special faptului că pe același râu, la vărsarea în Dunăre, cât și pe cursul său superior existau două cetăți cu nume relativ asemănătoare. Mai mult decât atât, cetatea de lângă Dunăre mai purta și un alt nume, Haram pe lângă cel de Krassóvár. Câteva confuzii datorate stadiului cercetărilor, unor preluări sau citiri defectuoase a unor informații precedente, au declanșat apariția unei întregi literaturi, din păcate fără valoare și acoperire reală. Din punct de vedere istoric, lucrurile au fost clarificate abia în 1987 de către istoricul maghiar Gy. Györffy. Supoziția sa conform căreia este vorba de două cetăți distincte, dar cu nume asemănătoare aflate pe cursul aceluiași râu, Caraș, a fost confirmată și arheologic în urma a trei campanii de săpături (1998, 2000, 2001).

În finalul articolului sunt amintite sursele istorice care privesc exclusiv cetatea Carașova (Krassófvár), excluzându-le pe cele referitoare la Haram (Krassóvár).