

# GENIUS LOCI

# LASZLOVSZKY 60

edited by  
Dóra Mérai  
and

Ágnes Drosztmér, Kyra Lyublyanovics,  
Judith Rasson, Zsuzsanna Papp Reed,  
András Vadas, Csilla Zatykó



ARCHAEOLINGUA

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Budapest 2018

The publication of this volume was generously funded by



CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

ISBN 978-615-5766-19-0

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2018

ARCHAEOLOGUA ALAPÍTVÁNY

H-1067 Budapest, Teréz krt. 13

[www.archaeolingua.hu](http://www.archaeolingua.hu)

Copy editing and language editing: the editors

Layout: Zsanett Kállai

Map: Viktor Lagutov, Zsuzsa Eszter Pető, Mária Vargha, István Gergő Farkas

Front cover design: Eszter Bence-Molnár

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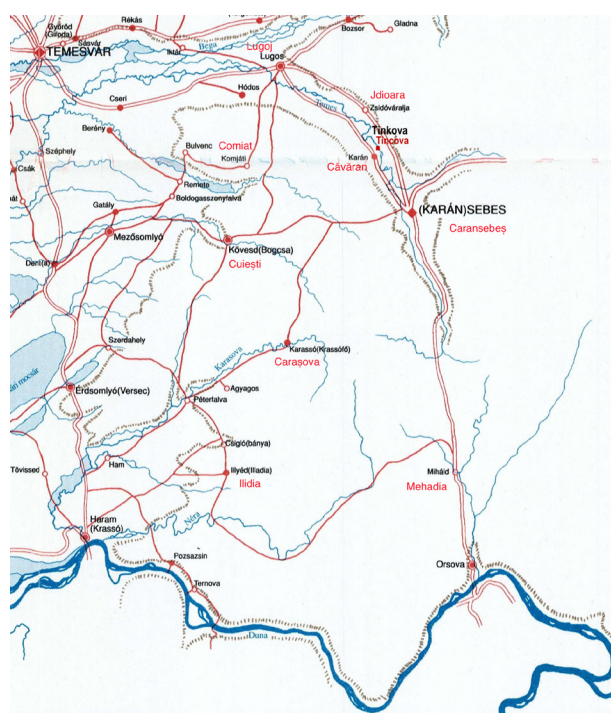
# Trespassing Pigs, Sons of Whores, and Randy Dogs: Marginalia on a Medieval Document from Caransebeș/Karánsebes

CRISTIAN GAȘPAR\*

*Iosepho Laszlovszky,  
magistro et conlegae, sexagenario*

Relatively few medieval documents survive from the part of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary bordered by the rivers Mureș/Maros, Tisza/Tisa, and Danube or the Banat<sup>1</sup> as it has been increasingly known since the eighteenth century. Among them, the one translated and commented upon below<sup>2</sup> is remarkable in several ways, not least for its length, all in all some 1,700 words of (sometimes quite juicy) Late Medieval Latin. Occasionally quoted by modern historians, it is rarely read in full or even very carefully,<sup>3</sup> and, to my knowledge, it has never been translated into a modern language in spite of its multiple claims on modern historians' attention. As a first step towards a better interpretation of this fascinating text, which I will attempt in full elsewhere, I present here an annotated translation<sup>4</sup> of the main parts of the document, three narratives which offer—in a Rashomon effect—three different perspectives on the same banal event, the impounding of some misbehaving pigs and the spiral of verbal and physical violence this generated. I hope Jóska, whose keen eye for juicy detail and unique talent as a raconteur I have had the privilege to enjoy throughout the years, will find this an appropriate birthday present.

The document<sup>5</sup> translated here is a letter of transfer (*litterae transmissionales*) of a case involving individuals from two privileged groups living in the medieval Romanian district (*districtus Volachalis*)<sup>6</sup> of Caransebeș/Karánsebes (Fig. 1). The plaintiff, Nicholas of Măcicaș/Macskási, was a member of a prominent noble family of Romanian origin<sup>7</sup> based in the village of Tincova/Tinkova (Fig. 2). Two brothers, Ladislaus and John, inhabitants of a neighboring urban settle-



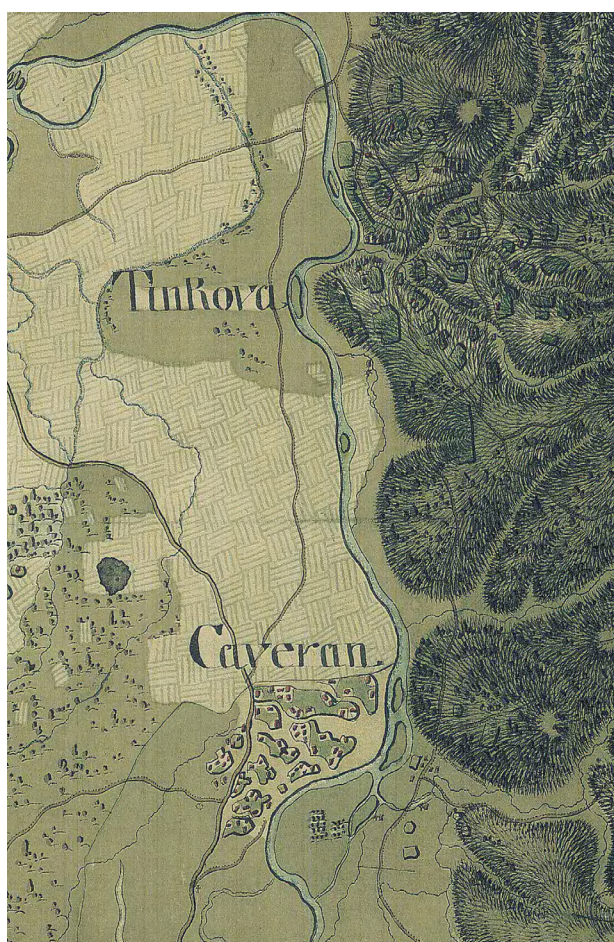
► Fig. 1. The area of the privileged Romanian districts in Banat. Based on Adrás Kubinyi, *Városfejlődés és vásárhálózat a középkori Alföldön és az Alföld szélén* [Urban development and the network of markets on the Great Hungarian Plain and on its fringes in the Middle Ages] (Szeged: Csongrád Megyei Levéltár, 2000), map 1 between p. 64-65.

ment<sup>8</sup> called Karán (Romanian Căvăran; since 1973, Constantin Daicoviciu; Fig. 3),<sup>9</sup> appeared as the defendants in the case. The initial complaint was brought before the judicial assembly of the nobles of the district of Caransebeș/Karánsebes<sup>10</sup> presided over by Jacob of Gârliște/Gerlistyei, the ban of Severin/Szörényi,<sup>11</sup> on 18 May, 1503. In accordance with the Romanian custom,<sup>12</sup> a committee of eight noblemen<sup>13</sup> was entrusted with hearing testimonies under oath, establishing the facts of the case, and giving judgement. They found for the plaintiff and convicted the defendants of violent irruption into his home as well as of verbal violence, sentencing them to pay a fine amounting to half of his man-price.<sup>14</sup> Dissatisfied with the verdict, the defendants made use

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of their privilege and appealed directly to the court of the royal presence. The ban granted their request and instructed them to appear either in person or through their representatives before the higher court on 7 June, 1503. The letter of transfer, issued on 19 May in Caransebeș, includes the three versions of events for the benefit of the higher court as well as an account of the procedure that followed,<sup>15</sup> which serves as the narrative framework into which they are embedded. The document was written in the distinctive hand of a scribe who seems to have spent a remarkably long time in the service of the bans of Severin/Szörény.<sup>16</sup>

In his narrative, the plaintiff complained “that intolerable damage was done incessantly<sup>17</sup> by animals to the crops on his lands. Having seen this, the said plaintiff ordered his tenants<sup>18</sup> to round up and impound all the animals and pigs which

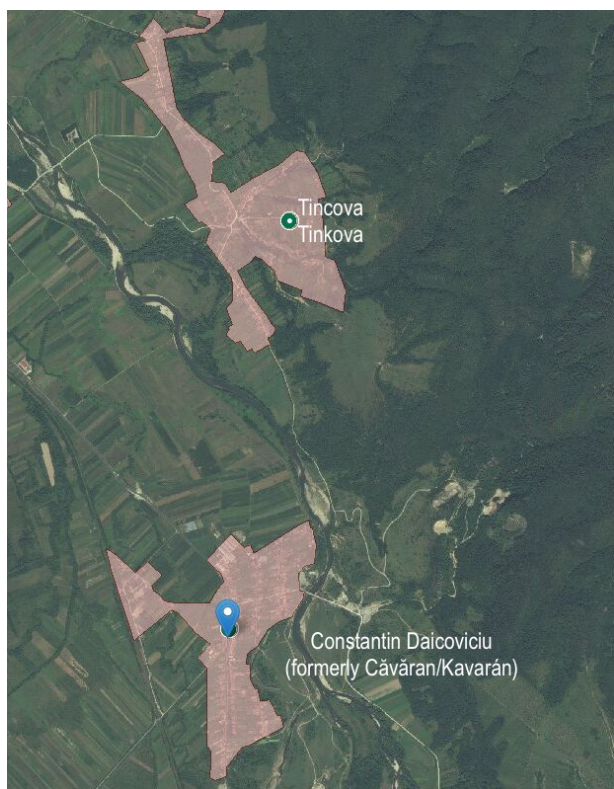


► **Fig. 2.** Căvărâș and Tincova in the second half of the eighteenth century. From the cadastral maps of Banat prepared for the Josephinian Land Survey (1769-1772), 108 “Caranschebescher-District gegend bey Căvărâș und Sakul an Temes Fluß.” Source: [https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fi%C8%99ier:Banat\\_Josephinische\\_Landaufnahme\\_pg108.jpg](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fi%C8%99ier:Banat_Josephinische_Landaufnahme_pg108.jpg) (public domain)

they should find in his fields. And one day his tenants had rounded up and impounded a herd of pigs<sup>19</sup> from the said fields and, on account of this, the above mentioned Ladislaus and John, citizens of the above-mentioned town of Căvărâș/Karán, having been invited to some feast, came to the said plaintiff’s estate, where the above-mentioned plaintiff has his residence. And after the feast, the above-mentioned Ladislaus and John of Căvărâș/Karán found out that the pigs had been shut up<sup>20</sup> there; mounting their horses, they charged at the home of the said plaintiff and there they abused him with various insulting and indecent words.<sup>21</sup> The said plaintiff said to them: ‘Why do you insult me in my own home? Leave me be, because if you should get any pigs from here, I am the son of a whore!’<sup>22</sup> Not even if the whole town showed up, unless you pay compensation!’ When they heard this, the above-mentioned Ladislaus and John said: ‘We, too, are just as much sons of whores as you are!’ Having seen this, the said plaintiff wanted to get rid of the above-mentioned Ladislaus and John and, without any insulting words, kept urging them to go away. They withdrew<sup>23</sup> for a short while, then returned again with drawn swords and charged at the home of the said plaintiff<sup>24</sup> for a second time and started to shout out loud: ‘Get out, you red-haired fox!’<sup>25</sup> May the dogs defile your mother!’<sup>26</sup> And so, after that, they went down to his stables to take their pigs away by force, but their pigs were not there. The above-mentioned plaintiff also came there with many of his tenants, so that the said Ladislaus and John could not take the pigs away, and left the said plaintiff’s residence without delay, shouting various and<sup>27</sup> tremendous words of abuse against the said plaintiff. The said plaintiff went after them all the way to the boundary of his property. When they saw this, the above-mentioned Ladislaus and John went back to him on horseback<sup>28</sup> and with drawn swords inflicted upon him much abuse of all kinds as well as a serious wound, and left him lying half dead on the ground.”

In contrast, the two defendants’ narrative, significantly poorer in juicy details, claimed “that they had indeed gone to the property of the said nobleman Nicholas of Măciș/Macskási, but not for any evil purpose, just to a feast, and after that feast they learned from some man that their pigs had been shut up in there, and so, they went up





► **Fig. 3.** *Constantin Daicoviciu (formerly Căvăran) and Tincova today. Based on Google Maps (<https://www.google.hu/maps/@45.5641525,22.142169,8796m/data=!3m1!1e3>); Imagery ©2018 CNES / Airbus, Map data ©2018Google).*

to the home of the said nobleman Nicholas, not with any evil purpose, but with all respect and with bowed heads and gentle words. And they inquired with him as for the aforesaid pigs. He gave them no answer as for the pigs, but insulted them viciously. And so, the said Ladislaus and John went down to the stables of said Nicholas where the pigs had been shut up<sup>29</sup> to see and find out whether they are theirs or not. When they saw that the pigs were not theirs, without delay they were off on their way to their homes. And when they had reached the boundary of the town of Căvăran/Karán, the aforementioned nobleman Nicholas of Măciș/Macskási went after them and, having reached them,<sup>30</sup> with his spear he immediately threw down one of them from his horse and left<sup>31</sup> him half dead.”

A third narrative, compiled during the inquest from the testimonies of the witnesses, presented the following version of events: “The aforementioned Ladislaus and John, having been invited one day to a feast by some honorable man, came to the property of the said Nicholas of Măciș/Macskási. And after the feast some man told them

that their pigs had been impounded there [after having been caught] in a field of millet. After they heard this, they called that man to go with them and show them where the pigs were being kept, so that they could check<sup>32</sup> whether those were their pigs or not. But that man did not want to go. But he said that they should go with him to his master, because he had impounded those pigs by the authority of his master; so that his master should do [whatever] he wanted with them in this business.

And they rode on horseback with that man to the house of the aforementioned Nicholas and immediately started shouting out loud: ‘Sir Nicholas, will you, please come out!’ [...] towards the house, they insulted terribly the above-mentioned man and wanted to trample him with [their horses]. The aforementioned plaintiff told them that [...]. ‘You, sir, have impounded our pigs!’ But he said to them: ‘It was our tenants who impounded them; so, go with them and see about the damage [...]. And after you pay that, have your pigs released!’ Ladislaus [and John], however, said: ‘We have caused no damage!’ But the above-mentioned man, who had called them to his [master] immediately replied: ‘My lord, it’s not just that they do not want to pay for our [losses], but they also insulted me terribly and wanted to trample me with [their] horses!’ When he heard this, the above-mentioned Nicholas of Măciș/Macskási said, cursing himself, that he should be the son of a whore if he gave them back without compensation; not just that, but he would also beat up the men and that whatever animals should cause him damage he would slaughter. When they heard this, the aforementioned men of Căvăran/Karán said to him: ‘Sir Nicholas, if you please, sir, do not insult and abuse us, because we are just as much sons of whores as you are!’ When he heard this, the above-mentioned Nicholas replied: ‘Get out of my house, you vagabonds!’<sup>33</sup> And the above-mentioned Ladislaus and John again answered him: ‘We are vagabonds just as much as you, sir!’ And so there they insulted each other terribly, and the said Ladislaus and John seized their weapons, but did not draw them out. When he saw this, the above-mentioned Nicholas again said: ‘Get out of my house!’

And so they started riding away on the road, but then they went back once more to the house

of said Nicholas, drew their weapons and shouted at him: 'You red fox, get out of the house! May the dogs defile your mother!' Nicholas said to them: 'My dears, get out of my house!' After some other insults (many and of all kinds!) they then went down to the stables of the said Nicholas, where the pigs had been shut up, to see whether they were theirs or not. After they took a look at them, they realized that those were not their pigs, and so, they took off towards their home, shouting as they went: 'Nicholas Macskási, get out and come down, you red fox! Because we will surely drag you out of your hole and you will die!'<sup>34</sup> His tenants heard all this. They ran to him and said: 'Sir, see how the men from Karán are provoking you to a duel! Let us go after them, because if they do this to you in your own home, we will certainly have no life here whatsoever in the future, but will have to move away!' The said Nicholas told them: 'One of you go after them and tell them to wait for me!' And so, one of his tenants went to the bridge of the castle<sup>35</sup> and shouted after them to wait for his master, the said Nicholas.

After that, the said Nicholas got up and went down after them. And after he had crossed the boundary [of] his [property] and had reached<sup>36</sup> the land belonging to the town of Karán, at first the retainer<sup>37</sup> of the said Nicholas drew near to the [two men] and started to insult them, and made death threats against them, and said: 'Come back here!' When he heard this, the above-mentioned Ladislaus went back. The aforementioned retainer struck his horse one blow on the muzzle. Meanwhile, Nicholas of Măciș/Macskási also got there and threw the said Ladislaus off his horse and to the ground. When he saw him lying on the ground, he rushed to him and said: '[My] son,<sup>38</sup> do not be afraid, you will not die! I mean to do no other harm to you!' When the aforementioned John saw this, he shouted at him: 'Nicholas, you killed my brother! May the dogs defile your mother! But you, too, will surely die!' And so, he spurred his horse towards the said Nicholas, and wounded him in his left arm. And after that, many of the tenants of the said nobleman Nicholas had arrived in the meantime, who together could have killed<sup>39</sup> those men from Karán, but the said nobleman Nicholas did not allow them to do so."

One can only lament that no further documents have survived to tell us whether the parties

took the case any further and, if so, what the final outcome was.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Today divided in unequal shares among Romania, Serbia, and Hungary, this geographic area corresponds to the territory covered in the Middle Ages by the counties of Temes, Krassó, Torontal, the banate of Szörény, and the southernmost parts of Arad and Csanád counties. Although routinely used by some modern historians, phrases such as "medieval Banat," convenient as they may be as a shortcut, are misleading; such usage projects back into the (medieval) past a toponymic, geographic, and administrative coherence (not to speak of the modern regional identity), that are certainly anachronistic. The name *Temesköz*, preferred by some Hungarian historians, even though grounded in medieval practice, is no better as it only referred to a part of the modern Banat, namely, the flatland area between the Timiș and Bega rivers, both called Temes in the Middle Ages. On this, see István Petrovics, "The Bishopric of Csanád/Cenad and the Ecclesiastical Institutions of Medieval Temesvár/Timișoara," *Transylvanian Review* 22, no. 4, suppl. (2013): 241.
- <sup>2</sup> Published by Frigyes Pesty, *A Szörényi bánóság és Szörény vármegye története* [The history of the banat and county of Szörény/Severin], vol. 3.1, *Oklevéltár* [Chartulary] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtár és Kiadó Hivatala, 1878), no. 127, 144–148.
- <sup>3</sup> As is clear from the garbled and distorting accounts of it one can sometimes read in modern scholarship; see, for instance, Ioan Aurel Pop, "Judecări după 'dreptul Țării Românești' în Banat în jurul anului 1500" [Judgements according to the *ius Valachiae* in Banat around the year 1500], *Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisiensis* 5 (2002): 29–30 and Lîgia Boldea, *Nobilimea românească din Banat în secolele XIV–XVI (Origine, statut, studii genealogice)* [Romanian nobility in Banat between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries: Origin, status, genealogical studies] (Reșița: Editura Banatica, 2002), 273.
- <sup>4</sup> The translation is based on my own version of the Latin text, which I have consulted in the digital reproductions available online (see below, n. 5); Pesty's publication of the text (see above, n. 2) contains several reading errors and omissions, which I have corrected in the process. The few places where the text of the original is no longer legible because of material damage are indicated with [...].
- <sup>5</sup> Arhivele Naționale ale României – Cluj, Fond familial Matskási, Seria I, Documente medievale, no. 64. A digital copy of the original is available online at [http://cautare.arhivamedievala.ro/MedievaliaDetails/faces/index?\\_afWindowMode=0&\\_afLoop=157313108410390&docid=CJ-F-00389-1-64&\\_adf.ctrl-state=i5t1836bd\\_4](http://cautare.arhivamedievala.ro/MedievaliaDetails/faces/index?_afWindowMode=0&_afLoop=157313108410390&docid=CJ-F-00389-1-64&_adf.ctrl-state=i5t1836bd_4). Another digital version of the document, based on a black and white microfilm, is available as part of the pre-Mohács Archives of Diplomas and Charters [DL/DF] collection the Hungarian National Archive (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár [MOL]) as DF 254963, accessible online at <https://archives.hungaricana.hu/en/charters/252141/?list=eyJxdWVyeSI6ICJTWk89KGJlbGlzdGVpKSJ9>. Both online versions erroneously identify the issuer of the document as a (never existing) Jacob Belistei/Belysthey, ban of Severin/Szörény.
- <sup>6</sup> The *districtus Volachales* were privileged administrative units created on the territories or districts of royal fortresses. These were inhabited mostly by Romanians and contained landed estates belonging to conditional nobles of Romanian origin (*knezes/kenezii*), who were later assimilated into the nobility of the medieval Kingdom of



Hungary. In 1457 eight such districts, located in a compact area in the modern counties of Caraș and Timiș, obtained a charter of global confirmation of their privileges from King Ladislaus V Posthumous. These included, among others, the right of their inhabitants to appeal directly to the court of the judge royal or that of the *personalis presentia regia*. See Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu, "From Kenezii to Nobiles Valachi: The Evolution of the Romanian Elite of the Banat in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 6 (2000): 125–127; and Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (London: Palgrave, 2000), 92–94.

<sup>7</sup> On this family, see Boldea, *Nobilimea*, 246–281.

<sup>8</sup> First attested in 1371 as an *oppidum*, Karán belonged to a vast category of urban settlements (Hung. *mezőváros* "market town") that were unwalled and under seigniorial jurisdiction. In the more precise classification of central places developed by András Kubinyi for the medieval Hungarian kingdom, Karán ranks very low, in category VI ("ordinary market towns and villages with market-town character") with 7 central place points. See István Petrovics, "Towns and Central Places in the Danube-Tisza/Tisa-Maros/Mureș Region in the Middle Ages," *Banatica* 26, no. 2 (2016): 85–87, 91. Probably a royal foundation of the early Angevin period, Karán numbered among its inhabitants a community of *hospites*, i.e., settlers who had acquired a special legal status during the process of colonization, but were not necessarily of foreign origin; see Petrovics, "Towns," 80; and Katalin Szende, "Continuity and Change in the Urban Network of Hungary in the Early Angevin Period," *Banatica* 26, no. 2 (2016): 53–75. On the privileged status of the inhabitants of Karán, see Costin Feneșan, "Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea" [On the privileges of Caransebeș up to the middle of the sixteenth century], *Banatica* 2 (1973): 157–163; and idem, "Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului și Căvăranului în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVI-lea" [On the privileges of Caransebeș and Căvăran during the second half of the sixteenth century], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie din Cluj-Napoca* 20 (1977): 303–311.

<sup>9</sup> Initially considered a part of the medieval town of (Karán) sebes, in the 1930s the location of medieval Karan was identified with the modern settlement of Căvăran (17 km northwest of Caransebeș); on the results of the archaeological investigation of the medieval settlement, see Dumitru Țicu, *Mountainous Banat in the Middle Ages* (Cluj-Napoca: Universitary Press, 2002), 95–96, 106; idem., "Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Banat during the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Reflection of a Border Area Identity," *Banatica* 23 (2013): 439; and Sabin Adrian Luca, *Descoperiri arheologice din Banatul românesc: Repertoriu* [Archaeological finds in the Romanian Banat: An inventory] (Alba-Iulia: Altip, 2006), 75.

<sup>10</sup> The *sedes iudiciaria/sedria* of Caransebeș/Karánsebes served as the equivalent of the county court for the eight privileged Romanian districts of the area.

<sup>11</sup> *Iacobus Gerlysthey*. Member of a powerful noble kindred of Romanian origin, Jacob of Gârliște/Gerlisteyi is attested as ban of Severin/Szörény between 1494 and 1508. See Ligia Boldea, "Tradiție și continuitate în lumea demnitarilor români ai Banatului de Canasebeș și Lugoj – Gârleștenii de Rudăria" [Tradition and continuity in the world of the Romanian officials from the banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj: the Gârleșteanu of Rudaria family], *Analele Banatului, s. n., Arheologie – Istorie* 22 (2014): 278–279. The ban was assisted by another official, the *iudex nobilium* (Hung. *szolgabíró*), the nobleman George of Olpar.

<sup>12</sup> *Iuxta ritum Volahie*. This refers to the often-attested application of Romanian customary law (*ius Valachicum*) in the judicial procedure of the courts in the privileged Ro-

manian districts; see Adrian Magina, "From Custom to Written Law: *Ius Valachicum* in the Banat," in *Government and Law in Medieval Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia*, ed. Martyn Rady and Alexandru Simon (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 2013), 71–77.

<sup>13</sup> Identified as the noblemen George of Bizerea/Bizere, Ladislaus Floca of Crâjma/de Korcsmafalva, George of Marga/Márgai, Stephen *litteratus* of (Caran)Sebeș/Sebes, Michael Zgriba of Sudriaș/Szederjes and another Michael from the same place, Blasius of Mâtnic/Mutnoki, and Michael of Tincova/Tinkovai. Many of these belonged to the handful of noble families that resided more or less permanently in Caransebeș/Karánsebes and held a variety of leading positions in the urban administration, that of the county, and in the office of the bans of Severin/Szörény. On the city elite, see Bálint Lakatos, "Városi nemesek Karánsebesen a 15–16. század fordulóján" [Noblemen in the town of Caransebeș/Karánsebes at the beginning of the sixteenth century], *Urbs. Magyar várostörténeti évkönyv* 3 (2008): 71–94. For the overlap of the various administrative structures in the area, see Adrian Magina, "At the Border of Transylvania: The County of Severin/ the District of Caransebeș in the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Transylvanian Review* 22, no. 4 (2013): 295–306.

<sup>14</sup> *In homagio uiuo suo*. In Medieval Hungary the *homagium uiuum* represented half of the total man-price (*homagium mortuum*) of an individual; here, given the noble, but not baronial status of the plaintiff, this would have theoretically amounted to 100 gold florins. This is the same amount as that prescribed in medieval Hungarian legal practice as "the fine of the tongue" (*emenda linguae*) for slanderous and defamatory language against a person of good name and respectable condition; see János Bak, Péter Banyó, and Martyn Rady, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 5, *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts Rendered by Stephen Werbőczy (The "Tripartitum")* (Idyllwild, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher, 2005), 343, 2.72.

<sup>15</sup> This is summarized in the introduction and footnotes to the present translation.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the one discussed here, sixteen other documents survive which were written by the same hand and issued mainly by the bans and vice-bans of Severin/Szörény, but also occasionally by officials of the town of Caransebeș/Karánsebes, for a total of forty-two years (1462–1504).

<sup>17</sup> Reading *intermissione* as in the original rather than *permissione* as printed by Pesty, *A Szörényi bánság*, 144.

<sup>18</sup> Lat. *iobagiones*.

<sup>19</sup> The original has *porcorum*, not *pecorum* as printed by Pesty, *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Reading *inclusi* with the original against Pesty's *reclusi* (*ibid.*).

<sup>21</sup> It would be interesting to establish in which language such insults were traded by the parties involved, especially given some of the dogmatic assumptions of traditional (nationalist) historiography about the ethnic, religious, and cultural identity of the nobles of Romanian origin in the area. A comprehensive investigation of linguistic usage among the members of this social group remains a *desideratum*.

<sup>22</sup> Lat. *filius meretricis*. More than a commonplace example of verbal abuse, given its implicit denial of legal and moral status, this expression is attested as an insult both in Romanian (in the version of Slavonic that served as chancery language in medieval Moldavia and Wallachia) and in Hungarian. For Romanian, see, for instance, the answers penned ca. 1480 by unnamed noblemen from three Wallachian border counties on the back of two letters of Ste-

phen the Great, ruler of Moldavia (1457–1504). In these, he requested their allegiance to the cause of one of his protégés, Mircea, described as “the son of My Majesty;” the Wallachians rejected this claim to authority and legitimacy by pointedly calling Mircea “the son of a whore” (*edno dete ot kurve*). See Ioan Bogdan, ed., *Documentele privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în secolele XV și XVI* [Documents about the relations of Wallachia with Brașov and Transylvania in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries] (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1905), 282–285, no. 229, and the detailed discussion in Ovidiu Cristea and Marian Coman, “O scrisoare pierdută: Ștefan cel Mare și boierii de margine ai Țării Românești” [A lost letter: Stephen the Great and the Wallachian border boyars], *Analele Putnei* 9 (2013): 23–51. In Hungarian, the expression, variously attested as *kurafi(a)*, *kurvafi(a)*, appears, for instance, in the Latin text of the so-called *Chronicon Dubnicense* (1479), which reports (in the vernacular) a phrase attributed to Hungarian soldiers during a battle dated to 1355 containing the insult *kwrwanewfya* (i.e., *kurva nõ fia* “son of a woman whore”); see *Chronicon Dubnicense cum codicibus Sambuci acephalo et Vaticano chronicisque Vindobonensi picto et Budensi accurate collatum*, ed. M[atthias] Florian (Pécs: n.p., 1884), 167. Similar phrases occur in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century charters; see, for instance, MOL DL 94567 (Buda, 7 July 1488): *gonosz kwrwafy pap* “evil priest, son of a whore,” *the hýres kwrwafy* “you infamous son of a whore.” See Paolo Agostini, “Adalékok a *kurva* szó etimológiájához” [Data concerning the etymology of the word *kurva*], *Magyar Nyelv* 87, no. 2 (1991): 206–207.

<sup>23</sup> I read *retrocedentes* as in the original, not *recedentes* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 145.

<sup>24</sup> Here the original has *ad domum eiusdem exponentis*, not *ad eundem exponentem* as printed in Pesty, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Lat. *exi ruse uulpis*. A colorful insult, which, in late-medieval Hungary would have carried connotations such as cowardice, deceitfulness, and infidelity, especially because of its association with significant Others, such as the Ottomans; see Ágnes Drosztmér, “Images of Distance and Closeness: The Ottomans in Sixteenth-century Hungarian Vernacular Poetry,” PhD Dissertation, Central European University (Budapest, 2016), 142–143.

<sup>26</sup> Lat. *canes coinquent matrem tuam*. Another vivid insult, attested for both vernaculars that may have served as the source of this somewhat euphemistic Latin translation. In Romanian (translated into Church Slavonic), a letter sent in July 1432 by the Wallachian ruler Alexandru Aldea (1431–1436) to the citizens of Sibiu/Nagyszeben tried to convince them of his good faith with the following self-imprecation: “whoever has ever told a lie, may the dogs fuck his wife and his mother!” (*da mu ebe pīs ženq i matere mu*); see Ștefan Pascu et al., ed., *Documenta Ro-*

*maniae Historica*, series D, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977), 295, no. 197. In Hungarian the image is attested indirectly by lexical items such as *ebadta*, *kutya-adta* “son of a dog” or *kutya-baszta* “dog-fucked”; see, for instance, Attila T. Szabó et al., ed., *Erdélyi magyar szótörténeti tár* [Historical dictionary of the Transylvanian Hungarian vocabulary] vol. 2.4, s. v. *eb* and vol. 7.3, s. v. *kutya*. A somewhat similar expression (minus the animal imagery) appears in Hungarian embedded in a Latin document issued by the county of Heves on 26 January 1489 (MOL DL 19472): *si uellet ... mater fieret meretrix uulgariter dicendo kurwalegen anyä ky* “may his mother be a whore if he ...”

<sup>27</sup> Reading *ac* as in the original, not *et* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 145.

<sup>28</sup> I prefer to read *equitantes* rather than *equites* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 145.

<sup>29</sup> Reading *inclusi* as in the original, not *reclusi* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Here *preueniens* seems preferable to *preueniendo* printed by Pesty, *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Reading *relinquens* rather than *relinquendo* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Here I read *reuiderent* as in the original, not *uiderent* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 146.

<sup>33</sup> Lat. *ribaldi*. The same insult (of Italian origin) is attested in 1515 in a Latin letter sent by Paul Thomory to the citizens of Prešov/Eperjes: *timeo a ribaldis Siculis*; see Samu Barabás, ed., *Székely oklevéltár 1219–1776* [Szekler chartulary 1219–1776], (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1934), 252, no. 142. Earlier, in a report produced by the chapter of Vasvár on 19 January, 1503 (MOL DL 106881–106883), in a long and detailed account of various acts of verbal and physical violence, the insult *ribaldus legatus* “the vagabond legate” is also mentioned.

<sup>34</sup> I have restored *te* in this passage, omitted by Pesty in his edition, *ibid.*, 147.

<sup>35</sup> An interesting detail about the outlook of the nobleman’s residence, here described as *castellum*.

<sup>36</sup> Reading *peruenisset* as in the original, not *uenisset* as printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 147.

<sup>37</sup> Lat. *familiaris*. If used consistently, this would refer to a member of the lesser nobility, who served in the entourage of his noble overlord. Such noble status would explain here the assertive attitude of this unnamed individual, who, unlike the *iobagiones*, engaged in direct verbal and physical violence towards the two defendants.

<sup>38</sup> The original has *fili*, instead of which Pesty (*ibid.*, 148), printed *frater* “brother”; this form of address, if not meant to emphasize rhetorically the plaintiff’s conciliatory attitude, may refer to a significant difference in age between him and the two defendants.

<sup>39</sup> I prefer to retain the original reading *poterant* against *potuerant* printed by Pesty, *ibid.*, 148.