

Information Concerning Currency Circulation in Maramureş County during the 14th-15th Centuries¹

Ioana-Terezia Pop

Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

email: ioana_21_33@yahoo.com

Abstract: This study examines, through the lenses of social and economic history, cases in which coins were present in the lives of the local social elites of Maramureş. The published documents that have been analysed are concerned with the economic situation of Maramureş County in the 14th and 15th centuries. The study focuses on currency circulation in the micro-area of Maramureş County that lies southeast of the Tisza River. The analysis highlights six everyday life situations in which coinage was present: pledges and sales of land, robbery, the payment of fines and litigation expenses, hoarding up money and property, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, agreements or the payment of liabilities or damages. This research has led to the identification of similar situations in the Kingdom of Hungary, highlighting the fact that the Maramureş society adopted not only the institutions of the kingdom, but also its monetary system as reflected by the currency circulation at that time.

Key words: Maramureş County, social history, coins, nobles, currency circulation, microhistory

Rezumat: Informații referitoare la circulația monetară în comitatul Maramureş în perioada secolelor XIV-XV. Prezentul studiu analizează prin intermediul istoriei sociale și economice acele cazuri în care monedele erau prezente în viața elitelor sociale maramureșene. Astfel, au fost investigate documentele edite care privesc situația economică a comitatului Maramureş în secolele al XIV-lea și al XV-lea. Datorită particularităților spațiului geografic al comitatului Maramureş, studiul își propune să identifice caracteristicile circulației monetare într-o microzonă a comitatului Maramureş situată la sud-est de râul Tisa. Analiza evidențiază șase situații din viața cotidiană în care monedele sunt prezente: zălogirea și vânzarea pământurilor, jaful, plata amenzilor și cheltuielilor de judecată, teaurizarea banilor și a bunurilor, răscumpă-

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rarea prețului sângelui pentru omor, înțelegeri sau plata unor obligații sau a unor pagube. Pe baza acestei analize s-a putut observa o asemănare cu situații existente în alte regiuni ale regatului maghiar, dar s-au și putut reliefa modalitățile prin care societatea maramureșeană a adoptat nu doar instituțiile regatului, ci și sistemul monetar reflectat de circulația banilor.

Cuvinte cheie: comitatul Maramureș, istorie socială, monede, nobilime, circulație monetară, micro-istorie

In his treatise *De origine, natura, jure et mutationibus*, Nicholas Oresme (d. 1382), Bishop of Lisieux, a counsellor of the King of France and an influential thinker in the second half of the 14th century, wrote the following: "money does not directly relieve the necessities of life, but is an instrument artificially invented for the easier exchange of natural riches. And it is clear without further proof that coin is very useful to the civil community, and convenient, or rather necessary, to the business of the state."² Echoing the medieval philosopher, Carlo M. Cipolla (1922-2000), an economic historian, states that a difference should be made between the terms *coin* and *money*. Whereas the former should be seen as a medium of exchange, just like any other goods used in the early Middle Ages, the latter word indicates the monetary system of a governance.³ While under the law of God and nature, all things were given to men to be used jointly, under human law goods were owned individually and divided unequally.⁴ In the early Middle Ages, coins were used with a sole purpose: so that alongside other means of payment, goods or labour, serfs could pay off their debts to their landlords.⁵ Economic expansion and changing perspectives on coins, which were rarely regarded simply as units of measurement or exchange any longer, may have originated in the pressure exerted by seigneurs on productive forces.⁶ In addition to their unilateral function

² Nicolas Oresme, apud. Jonathan Williams, Joe Cribb and Elizabeth Errington (eds.), *Money: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 77.

³ Carlo M. Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilisation in the Mediterranean World, Fifth to Seventeenth century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 9.

⁴ Diana Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 17.

⁵ Cipolla, *Money, Prices and Civilisation*, p. 3.

⁶ Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), pp. 177 and 257.

mentioned above, coins gradually accumulated other functions as well, being also used in transactions or as a store of value.⁷ A complex overview of the multiple functions of coins, which was to take shape along the centuries, was put forth by St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430), a philosopher, theologian and Doctor of the Church: "What is so uncertain as something that roles away? It is appropriate that money is round, because it never stays in one place."⁸

The sovereign played the lead role in the organization, authorization and control of the monetary system.⁹ The Hungarian Kingdom underwent a period of stability and economic development during the reigns of Charles I (1301-1364) and his successor Louis of Anjou (1342-1382).¹⁰ Charles I left his imprint by promoting the development of mining and regulating the monetary system. The reform the king initiated in 1323 entailed the relinquishment of annually-issued coinage and the introduction of coins with a constant value.¹¹ Thus, it was stipulated that one-denarius silver coins should be issued and that florins, made of gold and inspired by the Italian coins originally struck in Florence, should also start getting minted. These were the main monetary values.¹² Another important coinage reform was launched by Matthias, King of Hungary (1458-1490), in 1467. The decrees he issued at that time concerned improving the quality of the silver denarius in relation to the florin.¹³ Following this reform, the monetary system in the Kingdom of Hungary was based on florins, denarii, groschen and obols.¹⁴ The fact that a significant part of what was produced was commercially traded indicates the inclusion of the Maramureş area in the system of the Hungarian Kingdom.¹⁵

⁷ Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

⁸ Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

⁹ Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, p. 88.

¹⁰ János M. Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary* (5 vols., Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1992-2005), vol. 2, p. XXIII.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. XXV.

¹² Octavian Iliescu, *Istoria monetei în România [The History of Coins in Romania]* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2002), pp. 61-62.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁴ Bogdan Murgescu, *Circulaţia monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea [Currency Circulation in the Romanian Countries in the 16th Century]* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), p. 103. One florin was the equivalent of 100 denarii, one groschen represented 4 denarii, and one obol was worth ½ a denarius.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The nobility of the county was predominantly Romanian. Over the course of the two centuries examined in this study, its members received recognition of this status by being awarded letters of ennoblement. Starting especially in the 15th century, documentary sources present the diverse ways in which coinage circulated among the nobility in Maramureş County. This study aims to explore these documentary attestations regarding the use and functionality of currency in this county. Emphasis is laid on the geographical space of Maramureş County, located southeast of the Tisza River, an area that is better known thanks to the archaeological and documentary information that has been preserved. The situations in the geographical space of the county located northwest of the Tisza will be considered alongside the cases encountered in the documents studied for Satu Mare County. Through both of the micro-areas under examination, the study focuses on the old Land of Maramureş, which adopted the county model of administrative organization and the economic system of the Hungarian Kingdom in the second half of the 14th century.

The present article is divided into two parts: in the first we shall enumerate the main archaeological finds consisting of coins that circulated in Maramureş County and discuss the information related to this issue that has appeared in more recent studies on the institutional and social history of Maramureş County. Secondly, we shall analyse documents referring to cases of coinage usage in the area.

A. As regards archaeological discoveries, we should first mention *The Archaeological Repertoire of Maramureş County*,¹⁶ in which the author, Radu Popa, presents the coin finds unearthed at Giuleşti and Cuhea. We should also present the coin hoard from Vadu Izei, which comprises items from the 15th-17th centuries.

The Numismatic Repertoire of Transylvania and Banat in the 11th-20th Centuries, compiled by Francisc Pap,¹⁷ refers to only one hoard discovered at Sighet, containing coins from the 16th and 17th centuries.

The volume *Coin Hoards and Monetary Finds in the Collection of the Maramureş County Museum* includes the coinage discovered in this area and preserved in the Maramureş museum, offering data about the hoard

¹⁶ Carol Kacsó, *Repertoriul arheologic al Judeţului Maramureş [Archaeological Repertoire of Maramureş County]* (2 vols, Baia Mare: Editura Eurotrip, 2011).

¹⁷ Francisc Pap, *Repertoriul numismatic al Transilvaniei şi Banatului sec. 11-20: despre circulaţia monetară în Transilvania şi Banat sec.11-20 [The Numismatic Repertoire of Transylvania and Banat, the 11th-20th Centuries: On currency circulation in Transylvania and Banat, the 11th-20th centuries]* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, 2002).

from Vadu Izei.¹⁸ Of the 739 coins found in a pewter jug, six date from the 15th century. Of these, one denarius was issued by Vladislav II, King of Hungary from 1498 to 1501, five groschen halves having been minted by the Polish King John Albert in the period 1492-1499.

The most important coin finds are those discovered and published by Radu Popa during the archaeological campaigns carried out under the joint headship of the County Museum in Baia Mare County Museum and the Institute of Archaeology of the RSR Academy in Bucharest. The village of Cuhea (the present-day Bogdan Vodă) benefited from two archaeological campaigns, conducted in the periods 26 May – 26 June 1964 and 17 July – 22 August 1965.¹⁹ Of the four points that were investigated, reference will be made only to the “Convent” sector. This sector targeted the discovery of the old stone church belonging to the nobles of Giulești. This is the second village with a relevant coin find. An archaeological survey was conducted here in 1966. The campaigns of the years 1967 and 1968, which lasted a period of 65 days, completed the image of both the stone church belonging to the nobles of Giulești and the village hearth, fulfilling the two objectives of the campaign.²⁰ The other surveys conducted in Ieud, Sarasău and Sighet did not lead to any coin finds.²¹ In Giulești, research brought to surface two silver denarii issued by Queen Mary (1382-1387), two denarii minted by Sigismund of Luxembourg (1427-1437) and another eleven coins, six of which were struck during the timespan we focused on, namely the 14th and 15th centuries.²²

¹⁸ Chirilă Eugen - Socolan Aurel, *Tezaur și descoperiri monetare din colecția muzeului județean MM [Coin Hoards and Monetary Finds in the Collection of the Maramureș County Museum]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Județean Maramureș, 1971), pp. 21-43.

¹⁹ Radu Popa - Mircea Zdroba, *Șantierul arheologic Cuhea [The Cuhea Archaeological Site]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Regional Maramureș, 1966), p. 3.

²⁰ Radu Popa, *Cnezatul Marei [The Knezate of Mara]* (Baia Mare: Muzeul Județean Maramureș, 1969), p. 28.

²¹ Radu Popa, ‘Noi cercetări de arheologie medievală în Maramureș. Șantierul Sarasău’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 22/4 (1971): 601-626, excavations were conducted in Sarasău in the spring of 1966 (p. 601 in the study) and Idem, ‘Urmele unui sat dispărut din feudalismul timpuriu în hotarul Sighetului Marmației’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 26/ 2 (1975): 271-282, excavations were conducted at Valea Mara, on the border of Sighet, in the autumn of 1968, more specifically from 22 to 30 October (p. 271 in the study).

²² Popa, *Cnezatul Marei*, pp. 31-35 and Popa - Zdroba, Mircea, ‘Ctitoria cnezilor giuleșteni. Un nou monument românesc din piatră în Maramureș’, in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 20/2 (1969): 280-281.

The research undertaken at Cuhea identified: two silver denarii issued during the reign of Queen Mary of Hungary (1382-1387), a silver denarius, issued by Louis I, King of Hungary, in 1343, and another struck between 1346-1349, two denarii issued by Stefan Dušan, Tsar of the Serbs, in the period 1331-1346, and two groschen issued by Louis I, King of Hungary, in 1346-1351. Fragments of two other coins were also identified. These may have been coins of the latter two types. In any case, they seem to have been issued during the same timeframe, 1346-1351.²³

In the historiography of the problem, it is Radu Popa's contributions that deserve mention first and foremost. The archaeologist ascribed the coin finds in the region to the trade in high-quality earthenware (as attested by the potsherds discovered in the archaeological sites investigated) and to the possible existence of blacksmitheries in the area. The urban centres in the county could have been marketing areas for the products crafted by the inhabitants of Maramureş. Goods such as the green enamel pottery produced at Cuhea or potsherds from a painted tumbler certainly came from outside the borders of the county. It is possible that the coins from the small hoard that also includes those issued by Serbian Tsar were related to King Charles Robert's participation in his military campaigns to Serbia. In the early stages of cemeteries, the numismatic inventory was absent. Similarly, coin ownership and currency exchange were sporadic in the economy of the county, but in time, the Maramureş society rallied to the various financial operations practised in that period,²⁴ as we shall reveal in the next part of our study.

Moreover, the historian Ioan Drăgan's study concerning the Romanian nobility in Transylvania emphasizes the importance of holding a nobiliary ownership document and signals out the expenses incurred for obtaining these diplomas that attested proprietorship over the lands owned. Another relevant reference is to the seals of Stanislau of Dolha, Vice-Comes of Maramureş, who owned, among other things, a round seal in 1419.²⁵ This reference may be related to the discovery of

²³ Popa - Zdroba, *Şantierul arheologic Cuhea*, p. 38 and Popa, 'Biserica de piatră din Cuhea și unele probleme privind istoria Maramureşului în secolul al XIV-lea', in *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche*, 17/3 (1966): 517-520.

²⁴ Popa, *Țara Maramureşului în veacul al XIV-lea* [*The Land of Maramures in the 14th Century*] (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997), pp. 126-128.

²⁵ Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania între anii 1440-1514* [*The Romanian Nobility in Transylvania from 1440 to 1514*] (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2000), pp. 195-198.

nine rings, 7 of which were signet rings, in Giulești. Radu Popa, the archaeologist who discovered them, considered that there was a link between these signet rings and the role played by the inhabitants of this village (Giuleșteni) at the helm of the county.²⁶

A reference that exceeds the chronological range under study here, but can be useful, by analogy, to the present research is found in Aurel Feștilă's research on the exchange of goods between the inhabitants of Baia Mare and those of Maramureș in the mid-17th century. The goods that the people of Maramureș sold to the townsmen of Baia Mare included: animal hides (martens, foxes, wolves, rabbits), sheep's wool, wax, textiles (pillow cases, tablecloths), coarse, thick woolen long coats and planks of wood. In exchange, as it can be noticed from the documents, the peasants of Maramureș returned to their villages with salt, wine, grain, icing, plums and even with 30 scythes for the village of Moisei.²⁷ The commercial ties between the town of Baia Mare and the micro-area a part of the references to currency circulation in Maramureș southeast of the Tisza were detectable before the 17th century. It is known that in 1479, Ioan Forintvero, an inhabitant of Baia Mare, had large estates in Bocicoiul Mare and Lunca la Tisa, and that he also owned a house in the borough of Sighet.²⁸ A document from the year 1459 mentions that "at the source of the said river Maramureș," the road "heads once again towards the area of the citadel [known as] River of the Ladies; from there, it climbs straight to the west; eventually, it makes a turn and joins the other borders of the said town of Sighet."²⁹ This reference is found at the end of the document that retraces the boundaries of the town of Sighet. Trade ties were also influenced by price rises in 16th-century Europe.³⁰

These represent only County, the target of this study being to outline a comprehensive and complex image of the circulation of currency and goods both in the County of Maramureș, and outside it, not only in this study, but also in future studies.

²⁶ Popa, *Cnezatul Marei*, p. 36.

²⁷ Aurel Feștilă, *Monografia municipiului Baia Mare [A Monograph of the City of Baia Mare]* (Baia Mare, 1972), pp. 352-356.

²⁸ Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, *Diplome maramureșene din secolele XIV și XV [Letters Patent issued in Maramureș in the 14th and 15th Centuries]* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Societății Culturale Pro Maramureș „Dragoș Vodă”, 2009). (Hereinafter Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*), doc. 314, 315.

²⁹ Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 248 (247). River of the Ladies, the present-day Baia Mare.

³⁰ Murgescu, *Circulația monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, p. 16.

B. Documentary information was grouped according to how it relates to the economic life of the county. The reference source is the volume of Maramureş letters patent published by Ioan Mihalyi of Apşa.³¹ Currency circulation may be traced in cases of land pledges, designed to cover financial needs, of property theft, the payment of fines and litigation expenses, hoarding up money and property, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, agreements or the payment of liabilities or damages.

Many of the financial transactions and assets owned by the nobles or residents of Maramureş County were not recorded in documents.³² Considering the fact that the volume of documents we have consulted is limited, the phenomenon of currency circulation can be analysed only from an incomplete perspective here.

One way in which money circulated at that time was through pledges. In *Tripartitum*, Ştefan Werbőczy noted that pledges could be looked at from two standpoints: the perspective of the debtor, who temporarily transfers (some of) his ownership rights for the benefit of someone else, out of necessity, and the perspective of the creditor, who holds, for a while, the debtor's ownership rights over a property and the revenues derived from it by paying the debtor a sum – capital – for the land received.³³ The Hungarian lawyer condemned pledges because many of the creditors refused to return the estate received as surety even if the debtor managed to raise the capital for which the estate had been pledged.³⁴ Following such a pledge, an estate could be regarded as alienated, since the amounts were too high to be returned,³⁵ but there were also exceptions, as discussed below.

In 1449, the son of Petru Gherheş of Sarasău decided that out of his penalty of 50 marks issued in the mint from Buda, he would be able to pay only half of the amount to the county; in order to obtain the rest of the money, he pledged the third part of the Breb estate to Nan Pop, with the possibility of redemption.³⁶ Also because of necessity, half of

³¹ See footnote 28 for the full reference of this work.

³² Ion Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei monetare în Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea', *Studii şi materiale de istorie medie*, 4 (1960): 31.

³³ Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 5, I: 81.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I: 80.

³⁵ Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 42-43. See also Murgescu, *Circulaţia monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, p. 199.

³⁶ Mihalyi, *Diplome ...*, doc. 198.

the estates Șugătag, Hărniciești and Mara were pledged in the year 1475, namely 16 sessions (*sesii*, plots of land) with their 30 serfs, in exchange for 400 Hungarian florins.³⁷ It was in the same context that the pledging of two sessions in Săliște and one in Moisei, for 40 gold florins each, took place in 1486.³⁸ The series of these pledges continued in 1487, when, in exchange for 27 gold florins, two serfs' sessions were pledged: one on the Șieu estate and another in Poienile Șieului.³⁹ In the year 1488, parts of the estate in Leordina, Rozavlea and Poienile Izei, belonging to the widow Stana, were pledged for 150 gold florins to the widow's daughters, Marișca and Caterina.⁴⁰

A special case was that of the year 1490, when Lupșa and Dan demanded that their father's death should be redeemed. To atone for this murder, the aunt of the defendant, George Vancea of Oncești, and the defendant's brothers pledged to the sons of the murdered victim, Dan, two serfs' sessions in Nănești, worth 20 gold florins, with redemption rights. However, the descendants of George Vancea of Oncești redeemed the two estates.⁴¹ Another relevant case occurred in 1498, when the noble Lady Marișca pledged to her cousins, in exchange for 50 gold florins, three of her sessions on the Leordina estate.⁴²

All these pledges were made with the aim of overcoming certain situations of financial impasse, the pledged amounts ranging from 27 florins to 400 florins. In the cases studied, we also came across evidence of the redemption of a pledged estate, presented in the document of 9 February 1490, when two serfs' sessions were repurchased in the village of Nănești, for the sum of 50 gold florins.

In the Middle Ages, robbery and assailment represented ceaseless means of appropriating goods and money.⁴³ Criminals or *publici malefactores* were outlawed in the county assembly and their properties were confiscated.⁴⁴ There were two cases of theft, the first in the year 1462, when Mihai Stibor stole a gold florin from Lady Margareta,⁴⁵

³⁷ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 306.

³⁸ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 336.

³⁹ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 339.

⁴⁰ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 341.

⁴¹ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 347.

⁴² Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 358.

⁴³ Sabău, 'Contribuții la studiul circulației', 46.

⁴⁴ Bak et al. *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 4, p. 329.

⁴⁵ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 261.

and the second in 1479, when Petru of Deseşti stole 200 florins and other goods from the estates in Bocicoiul Mare and Lunca la Tisa, belonging to the nobleman Ioan Forintvero from Baia Mare.⁴⁶ Besides these cases, there were recorded instances in which property records, goods and estates were stolen.⁴⁷ In these cases, the value of the damage was mentioned.

The cases investigated involved murder, theft, damage and injury, but also the forced occupation of some estates. The most valuable things that were pillaged were property records, whose value ranged from 400 gold florins up to 1,000 gold florins.

In what follows, we shall focus on agreements, on payments of liabilities or damages. In the 14th-century, a custom that gained acceptance was that the gentry should pay certain amounts of money in order to obtain a good or to settle a litigation in which they represented the plaintiff or the defendant. This led to an increase in the exchange of payments and bilateral obligations, as the gentry were forced to pay certain amounts of money to obtain goods or obtain the resolution of a trial they were parties to. This intensification in the use of money can be seen as an evolution, given the fact that unilateral payment prevailed in the first decades of the period, the subjects paying now in money what they had previously paid for in goods. This obviously enhanced the revenues of the notables and the ruler.⁴⁸

The agreement between the nobles Mihail of Şugătag and Ioan of Giuleşti regarding land plots in Copăceşti, Dorozlău and Berbeşti was made in the year 1421 and included the proviso that should either of the parties oppose the court ruling, they would be forced to pay 200 marks.⁴⁹ Another agreement concerning ownership over certain estates was struck between the nobles Petru Gherheş of Sarasău and the nobles of Giuleşti, Mihail Vlad and George Ivanca, in 1453. The arrangement was that the Breb estate and half of the Copăceşti estate would remain in

⁴⁶ Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 314.

⁴⁷ See Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 130(138), doc. 268, doc. 314, doc. 317, doc. 318. In this letter patent, it is noted that the assailments targeted the destruction of objects in the plaintiffs' house: gates, chairs, tables, but also the occupation of their house, their estates and of two milling houses. The plaintiffs were also deprived of grains, their serfs were killed, their parish church in Bocicoi was torn down, and its icons and candles were stolen.

⁴⁸ Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 32-34.

⁴⁹ Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 149.

the possession of Petru Gherheș, while the noblemen of Giulești would receive 25 pure gold florins and goods worth 100 florins from Petru Gherheș.⁵⁰

With regard to the Cuhea estate, the decision concerning the establishment of its borders was issued by the county officials in 1471, stipulating that should either of the parties not abide by its terms, they would have to pay 25 marks issued in the mint from Buda to the other party.⁵¹ In the year 1474, a resolution was reached in the lawsuit concerning the division into four equal parts of the Nănești and Valea Stejarului estates belonging to the nobles in Oncești, and should either of the parties file another lawsuit, they would be liable to pay 100 gold florins, not counting the fees of the comes and the judges.⁵² The year 1475 saw the division of other estates. The widow Anca and her sons received half of the estates: Ocna Șugataș, Hărniciești, Desești, Mara, Nireș and two parts of Giulești and Doroslău, while the other half of the said estates and the third part of Giulești and Doroslău went to Ioan Micle and his sons; the latter was to pay 100 florins of pure gold, not counting the fees of the comes and the judges.⁵³ The conflict between Ioan, the son of Andreica of Vișeu, and Andreica's widow was settled only in the year 1498. Hence, Ioan allowed his stepmother to live on the nobiliary estates throughout her life; she was free to dispose of her assets, which included 4 florins.⁵⁴

Six cases were investigated in the third situation. They were concentrated in the eighth decade of the 15th century. These were mainly cases concerning the division of certain estates and the establishment of boundaries between them.

Regarding the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, the transition from payment in kind to payment in coins occurred relatively early in the 14th century, payment in kind being nonetheless used during that period, albeit exceptionally.⁵⁵ The amount paid as bloodwite depended on the social status of the victim and the status of the perpetrator. The price for barons was 100, while that for townsmen and nobles was 50 marks.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 218.

⁵¹ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 295 (293).

⁵² Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 303.

⁵³ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 307.

⁵⁴ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 357.

⁵⁵ Sabău, 'Contribuții la studiul circulației', 39-40.

⁵⁶ Bak et al., *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, vol. 5, p. 451.

The assault perpetrated against Petru Gherheş of Sarasău by the townspeople of Câmpulung la Tisa was judged in the year 1457, when the wrongdoers were forced to pay 100 heavy-weight Buda marks, but also 25 gold florins as bloodwite for the death of one of the plaintiff's serfs. In the document, it is noted that if either party should protest the ruling and reopen the case, they would be obliged to pay 50 Buda marks.⁵⁷ The sons of the late Dan of Onceşti, Lupşa and Dan, demanded in 1490 to be redeemed from the estate of the defendant George Vancea of Onceşti and received as pledge two serfs' sessions in Năneşti, but the plaintiff's descendants redeemed them.⁵⁸

In this case, two situations have been investigated: the first involved the redemption of a serf's death for a bloodwite of 25 gold florins, while the second situation concerned redeeming the death of a noble for a bloodwite of two serfs' sessions.

Besides the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, the payment of ransom for prisoners, of services or of those who fought in a duel, fines and litigation costs also came to be made in cash.⁵⁹ An example is the case of the son of Petru Gherheş of Sarasău, who was sentenced to pay 50 Buda marks in 1449, when the defendant's father paid half the amount to the comes; the other half, which he was supposed to give to the plaintiff, Nan Pop, was given in exchange for the pledged third part of the Breb estate, with redemption rights.⁶⁰ The violence done against Petru Gherheş of Sarasău was indicted in the year 1457. According to the sentence that was passed, the townspeople in Câmpulung la Tisa were to pay 100 heavy-weight Buda marks and 25 gold florins for the redemption of one of the plaintiff's serfs, with the provision that should either party deny the sentence and reopen the case, they would be bound to pay 50 Buda marks.⁶¹ In the year 1461, there was a reference to a fine of 100 pure gold florins, applied in case one of the parties did not comply with the sentence.⁶² The case involving the deceased Nan Pop and Petru Gherheş of Sarasău was heard in the year 1476, when the sentence included the provision that the party that resisted judgement being passed on the noblemen would be fined 50

⁵⁷ Mihalyi, *Diplome* . . . , doc. 235 (236).

⁵⁸ Mihalyi, *Diplome* . . . , doc. 347.

⁵⁹ Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 40-41.

⁶⁰ Mihalyi, *Diplome* . . . , doc. 198.

⁶¹ Mihalyi, *Diplome* . . . , doc. 235 (236).

⁶² Mihalyi, *Diplome* . . . , doc. 256 (253).

Buda marks.⁶³ The case concerning the occupation of the Comârzana estate and of a serf's session was resolved in the year 1483, when it was ruled that the perpetrator should pay 50 marks, the sentence being subsequently changed to four gold florins.⁶⁴ In 1488, some nobles were asked to submit the letters patent confirming their ownership over several estates in Maramureş County in a case relating to the possession of said estates; the nobles were bound to pay 30 marks because they had not shown up in court.⁶⁵

The amounts to be paid under sentence, even where the settled dispute was reopened, ranged between 50 Buda marks and 100 Buda marks or gold florins. In one case, several nobles were fined 30 marks.

If payment in cash gained ground, hoarding up money and property became less important from the 14th century on. Some reserves came to be used as usurious capital. Money was increasingly accessible to the masses or could be removed from circulation, counting as private reserves, but in cases of need it could be put back into circulation.⁶⁶ There are documents showing that although transactions came to be made, in part, with the help of money, there were nonetheless instances in which assets represented a means to cover financial needs. Mention should be made here of the girdle that was a subject of dispute among the nobles of Giuleşti in 1384.⁶⁷ Moreover, other letters patent we have investigated refer to cases in which the payment set under court rule changed from payment in money to payment in kind, with a value equivalent to the amount specified. Lady Margareta, for instance, had a small hoard in 1462 – the already mentioned gold florin.

Records of ownership include references to hoarded assets, whose value could be estimated to considerable amounts, considering the fact that even the drafting of these records was costly. Another noble woman came to freely dispose of her four florins, as specified in the letter patent issued in 1498. Another relevant letter patent was issued in 1417, mentioning the fact that items of clothing were expensive and were always potential targets of a theft.

The latter situation is illustrated by a few references to the cases of assets that included property records or a girdle.

⁶³ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 310.

⁶⁴ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 323.

⁶⁵ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 340.

⁶⁶ Sabău, 'Contribuţii la studiul circulaţiei', 41-42.

⁶⁷ Mihalyi, *Diplome...*, doc. 49.

As regards the north-western area of the county, the documents contain eight entries relating to the sale, pledge and exchange of estates or parts of estates.⁶⁸ This type of documentary records dates from the second decade of the 15th century. Half of these documents are placed chronologically in the first part of the 15th century and the other half in the second part of this century, the amounts varying between 24 and 700 florins. We have also examined the case of an exchange involving, on the one hand, the Sarcad and Macaria estates and, on the other hand, the Cuşniţa and Caraţca estates.⁶⁹ Those who requested the exchange were to pay all the legal expenses for the transaction to the notary, pledging to cover the costs of any potential future disputes.

The documents relating to the north-western area of the county present four cases of robbery and assaillment. In the cases studied it was goods, not coins that were stolen: garments, badger hides, horses, a bag with property records.⁷⁰ Insofar as agreements and obligations were concerned, the third situation mentioned in documents relating to the north-western area of the county refers to a case dating from 1423.⁷¹ At that time an agreement was made between cousins, who wanted their ilk to be considered noble; the fine for noncompliance with the agreement was to be 50 heavy-weight marks. As regards the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, we have investigated a case involving the redemption of a nobleman's death in exchange for 50 Buda marks.⁷²

Fines and court fees represented other situations encountered in the north-western part of the county. There is available information on five cases, dating from the first three decades of the 15th century.⁷³ Here the fines for crimes ranged between 3 and 6 marks, while the fine for reopening a case was either 50 or 30 marks. A special case refers to the fine of 450 florins and the legal expenses necessary for refilling a lawsuit, which reached the price of 200 denarii. The fines appear to have been lower in the north-western area of the county, but the amount set for reopening a case was generally the same throughout the county, namely 50 marks.

For the north-western part of the county we have information

⁶⁸ Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , doc. 107, doc. 145, doc. 147, doc. 183, doc. 278, doc. 337, doc. 346.

⁶⁹ Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , doc. 209 (211).

⁷⁰ Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , doc. 92, doc. doc. 116, doc. 142 (140), doc. 309.

⁷¹ Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , doc. 151.

⁷² Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , doc. 304.

⁷³ Mihalyi, *Diplome*. . . , 102, doc. 109, doc. 117, doc. 131 (132).

about goods of treasury value, such as: badger hides, ladies' garments, horses and property records.⁷⁴

The information in the documents presents a series of interesting cases that evince the role of money in Maramureş County during the 14th and 15th centuries. Across Maramureş County there were registered certain peculiarities, despite its seemingly unitary status. In the south-eastern part of the county, land was the main issue under dispute, to a greater extent than in the north-western area of the county, where land was pledged: here, therefore, the aim was to redeem, not sell land as in the north-western part of the county. The nobles in the south-eastern part of the county made transactions in their own territory, having few contacts with the nobles in the north-western area of the county and also holding few estates in this space. By contrast, the nobles from the northwest had contacts with those in Bereg County, located nearby, owning several estates and high value assets (recorded in documents) in this neighbouring county than southeast of the Tisza. In fact, the realities in the micro-areas southeast of the Tisza and northwest of the Tisza were similar, with certain differences resulting from contact with an adjoining county and from the geographical isolation of the former micro-area.

The examination of the situations in the neighbouring county of Satu Mare, in the timespan from 1350 to 1380, highlighted the existence of similar cases to those researched for the present study.⁷⁵ Of the 35 researched documents, twelve present cases of pledge, sale and redemption of a pledged estate, eleven other cases present situations of robbery and assailment, three cases concern agreements relating to the payment of obligations or damages; there are six instances referring to the payment of bloodwite as compensation for the murder of serfs and nobles; we have researched two cases of fines and litigation expenses; as regards the hoarding of goods or coins, we have studied five situations.

⁷⁴ Mihalyi, *Diplome. . .*, doc. 209 (211), doc. 116, doc. 142 (140),

⁷⁵ The documents researched for Satu Mare County are included in the volumes of documents: *Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania*, (6 vols, Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1977-2006), vol. X (1351-1355), documents 5, 8, 16, 19, 27, 30, 57, 104, 126, 135, 148, 194, 248, 279, 336; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XI (1356-1360), documents 98, 111, 197, 202; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XII (1361-1365), documents 170 and 182; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XIII (1366-1370), documents 126, 168, 178, 188, 361, 541; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XIV (1371-1375), documents 43, 161, 236, 245; DRH C. Transilvania, vol. XV (1376-1380), documents: 154, 217, 237, 251.

The coins used in these cases were marks and florins, but marks were used in the majority of the cases.

The documents relating to currency circulation in Maramureş County, in the timeframe 1300-1500, feature six situations people were confronted with in the economic field, namely: pledges, robbery, agreements or the payment of damages, the payment of bloodwite as compensation for murder, fines, litigation fees and money hoarding. As demonstrated in this study, coinage became a medium of exchange this community increasingly resorted to. Archaeological coin finds in the two villages, Giuleşti and Bogdan Vodă, reinforce the image of a society that adopted the monetary system of the Hungarian Kingdom, the coins that circulated on its territory including: groschen, denarii and florins. Moreover, this was a community that conducted trade with the neighbouring counties, both to sell surplus agricultural products and to purchase raw materials for the production of goods necessary for everyday living. In Satu Mare County, a territory that adopted the administration of the Hungarian Kingdom two centuries before Maramureş County, we have studied the same situations in which coins were present.

An analysis of currency circulation in a well-defined area like Maramureş County reveals an interesting fact. Recourse to coinage had subtle institutional implications and could be seen not only as a factor of standardization at the level of the Hungarian Kingdom, but also as a consequence of the adoption of the kingdom's administration. Trade, tax and medieval law were factors that fostered the use of coins in the area analysed in the present study. Future research could identify more clearly whether or not there were any differences between the two micro-areas of Maramureş County bounded by the River Tisza. More specifically, whether the geographical isolation of the micro-area southeast of the Tisza had any economic and institutional consequences and whether the micro-area situated to the northwest was more open, at these two levels, given its contact with the neighbouring counties of Bereg and Ugocsa. What can also be researched is the rapport between the frequency with which payments in kind and coins were made over the course of those two centuries. The research questions that arise highlight the need for studies on the social and economic history of Maramureş County, the last of the counties that were incorporated in the Kingdom of Hungary.