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Thoughts on the formation and settlement development of the medieval County of Crasna, during the 11th -13th centuries

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The study on the development and formation of the early medieval counties in Transylvania is a very difficult process that must be approached with great caution, not only because of the abundance of issues that arise during the investigation, but also due to the influence of emerging nationalist writing directions both in Hungarian and Romanian historiography. We refer here to the eternal question of continuity or the issues of primacy in Transylvania. Therefore, throughout our present research we apply an interdisciplinary method to try and form a most correct image on the historical phenomena concerning our area of study. The theory on the formation of Crasna county on the basis of the 7th-10th century preliminaries, meaning the presence of a massive Slavic population block from the period of the Avar Khaganate, plunges this small area into the administration of the Hungarian Kingdom from an early period (first half of the 11th century – end of the 12th century). The image of the early formation is drawn by the written sources, dating to the second half of the 12th century, when there are summoned up all the elements of a county structure. The rapid development of the administration unit of Crasna has several causes, among which we must mention it geographical position that facilitates commercial and military infrastructure, but most of all, the inhabitation of colonists starting from the beginning of the 13 century also gives a boost to the internal evolution of the county. We definitely have to mention the fact, that future research, mostly ones of archaeological character will hopefully bring light on even more elements that shall bring important contributions regarding the medieval image of this small county.

Keywords: Crasna, Barcău, castrum, terra, villa, possessio, Nepocor, early county, settlement preliminaries, hospites

1. Introduction

Although it is of early formation (12th century) the County of Crasna received less attention, in comparison with the information potential that carries with itself, concerning the formation and evolution of Transylvania's administration and organization processes during the 11th-13th centuries. Though the detailed analysis of social, economic and military phenomena in the county is only at its debut, -being possible through the PhD research entitled *Castrum Carazna. O cetate ascunsă în ambient social clar. Contribuții arheologice la formarea și dezvoltarea Comitatului Crasna în sec. XI-XIII, [Castrum Carazna. A hidden fort in a clear social ambient. Archaeological contributions to the formation and development of Crasna County during the 11th – 13th centuries]* -, during the accumulation and corroboration of data provided by written sources (despite the fact that for the 11th and 12th centuries these are very few and with a doubtful character), and archaeological research theories start to reveal linking among themselves in a way that we are on the verge of being able to form a clearer image on the medieval realities of the studied area. We feel the need though, to expound the fact that the mentioned research represent the start of a work platform concept, even more, tit actually tries to

set future research directions and aims. If we try to see this small medieval administration unit from different angles, we realize it offers such a broad range of information so that acquiring a thorough perspective needs to be the objective of a complex team of researchers. That is the keynote at the base of this research work in the field of palaeography, archaeology, digital geography, topography, toponymy, linguistics, etc.

The primary aim of this study is processing the document-based data relevant to the origin, evolution and disappearance of the settlements in the county, a concise analysis of the social phenomena that took place in the mentioned time frame and also, using the cartographical data, we will examine the links between these habitats and the infrastructure of this area (roads, customs, estates, and possession boundaries).

The chronological segment taken into consideration is set in the period of time between 11th *and* 13th centuries, defined in the reference literature as Arpadian Period. The inferior chronological limit is set, to be exact, at the end of 11th century, when we have the first written record[1], rewritten in 1227, which describes the presence of prince Coloman[2] in the area included in the study, mentioning the fact that: *Colomannus.....pus Princeps fuit in Crassou ciuitate*.[3] Although the document is considered to be of a doubtable, false nature, we still have a series of information that will be verified in a different study, in the very near future. The superior chronological limit is marked by the extinction of the Arpadian Dynasty, at the beginning of 14th century, a time which brings new realities throughout the kingdom. The effects of this fracture are sensed at a local level too, despite the fact that the new king is building his administrative system on the ruins of the old one, bringing, however, some changes at the superior political level. This modification of the old system to include new political elements was experienced mainly in the central administration of the county[4].

2. Research history[5]

An impressive work that details, among other aspects, the county's settlements, was published in 1901[6]. In its six volumes, Petri Mór gathers and issues information about Crasna and Solnocul de Mijloc County (both of which form Sălaj County from today, as well as from 1867), about the monuments situated on the territory of those counties, description of the nobility possessions, the history of the nobility families, as well as the history of each settlement in Sălaj County. However, the positivist manner used in editing these information, is not integrated with arguments of historical nature, a fact that we undertake the responsibility for, throughout the present study. From Petri, we use, for now, only the information regarding the settlements in Crasna County, mentioned during the 11th – 13th centuries, adding information derived for other sources in order to acquire a thorough perspective on the settlements in the studied area.

Györffy György in the third volume of his extensive work[7] – created with an accuracy and a methodology of research that is being envied even nowadays – offers not only information based on written sources and explanations on the origins of the county, but also a thorough review of the settlements in the area. In terms of the county's formation, Györffy starts by analysing the toponymies in the area, concluding that the toponymic word stock in the Valley of Crasna and Barcău derives form names of a Slavic etymology (Crasna-Kraszna, Zăuan-Zovány, Valcău-Valkó, Coznici-Kaznacs), Hungarian etymology (Barcău-Berettyó, Bozieș-Borzás), as well as toponymies that alternate between Slavic and Hungarian in the written sources (i.e. the names of the villages Periceiu, Sici, Recea și Ilișua). Thus, the author infers that the Hungarians, when they settled down, found a population of Slavic origin in the area[8].

Elena Muscă[9], attempts to compile a review of the documented settlements, without offering any interpretation of the data, exerting, as sole source, the works of C. Suciu[10]. Thus, she creates a list of places, whose review or evaluation, in our opinion, shouldn't be included in the present study, mostly because of the author's contributions as"great scientific value"[11].

Kristó Gyula[12] creates a very good analysis on the expansion of the habitats and their increase in number on Transylvanian territory during 11th – 13th centuries, especially in its north – north-western area. The author, relying on toponymy, anthroponomy and the very few data derived from written sources, launches the theory that the Hungarians start to settle in the north of Transylvania in the beginning of the 11th century[13].

3. Geography (Fig. 1, 2)

Set in the transition sector between the Great Transylvanian Plateau and the Western Plains, the geography of the area in which the county lays, is formed mainly by smooth valleys alternating with hills and small scale depressions formed by these units. Actually, all boundaries of the county are set on natural enclosures: northward the limit is set on Vulturului Hills and the confluence of the Crasna and Zalău Valleys; southwards rise the Plopișului Mountains; eastwards the Meseș Mountains assure protection but also access through the well-known Meseș Gate passage point; westwards the unit is closed by the northbound turn of the Barcău River. All these geographical units actually form a micro zone that during all historical periods played a very important economic and military role.

The not too high hills (Măgura Șimleului, 596 m *asl*, and the foothills of the Meseș and Plopiș Mointains), offer natural, easy to fortify peaks, as it can be observed by the position of the mediaeval fortifications from Șimleu Silvaniei, Tusa, Subcetate, Marca points that are set on important strategic spots for the surveillance of the valleys and gorge passing points.

The county is set on the upper course of two mid-water discharge rivers so, in matters of hydrology we can differentiate two major basins: the Crasna (south-north direction) and Barcău (east-north-west direction) rivers with their smaller feeder valleys form very smooth, mostly southern display terraces, providing excellent habitat conditions[14].

The written sources that we have available mention a small number of geographic elements of the county, since the 11th century. The number of the mentions increase in the 13th century, mostly those, on the valley of Crasna in contrary with the valley of Barcău, which is mentioned only from the beginning of the 14th century. The informations from the documents refer in the majority of the cases, to possession boundary descriptions that use geographical elements as reference points: fields, valleys, streams, peaks, roads, forests, or forest parts, etc. In these conditions, we have the following informations:

3.1. Crasna and its feeders

1090-1093 - *...Scecos sua sylua...* - the forest that belonged to Mesta, positioned around *Boyza*, today's village of Boziaș[15];

1217 - *...magnatum nostrorum in fluvio Karazna...* - document that describes the right for customs on the river[16];

1259 - *...aqua Karazna...*, *...aqua Crazna...*; feeders – *fl. Zewarkofew*, *Kalofew*, *Pethlend pothoka*, *pothok Bykadywr*, *Istokw*, *Zekpathaka*, *Wydama pathaka*, *Egres-* in the description of the boundaries for the domain of Șimleu[17];

1270 – feeders of Crasna – *fl. Zolina*, *fl. Seredunke*, *Eleupotok* – appear as elements of the *Huruat* possession which is donated by king Ladislas V. The description is made by the abbot of Meseș[18];

3.2. Hills and forest parts

1259 – *berch Cank(l)w*, *Achabykfw*, *Mwgmalatho*, *Erezstewen*, *Somosmal berch*, *berch Kereky*, *Irswa berch*, *Hochenhalma*, *Somlyo kebel*, *Bochochan bykfew* - in the description of the boundaries for the domain of Șimleu[19];

1270 – *silva Harum Bugarfyu...iuxta tertium Bugar* - appear as elements of *Huruat* possession which is donated by king Ladislas V. The description is made by the abbot of Meseș[20].

As mentioned above, most of the places that documents describe are set on the valley of Crasna and are reference points in domain boundary descriptions. The explanation of the multitude of place names in this valley lays in the fact that the river, with its smooth terraces that although they are quite low, do not form marsh areas, so this direction was one of the most frequently used road for salt transportation[21]. Actually in the area of Șimleu the north-western main road splits in two main paths: one of them going northward in the direction of Eriu (Ér) valley, the other one southwards in the zone of the Criș.

4. Settlement preliminaries and historical considerations (Fig. 3)

The past 25 years brought a real intensification of archaeological research in our area, most of these researches being caused by the explosion of industrial an infrastructural investments, but also systematic research has recorded an increasing tendency. The results of these researches have recently seen the light of the printing shop, through the latest publication of Dan Băcueț-Crișan[22] (County Museum of History and Art, Zalău, Sălaj County), who discusses the settlements, cemeteries and settlements of the area, during the 7th – 11th centuries, concluding, that the phenomena, processes and historic events (?) are reflected in the archaeological finds and that the author's research is only a stage in the north-western Transylvanian studies on the period around 1000[23].

Another author who discusses settlement development and habitat elements (houses, dwellings, annexes) in archaeological point of view, concerning the migration period, is V.V. Vizauer[24], who gathers all information on the topic, provided by excavation publications, concluding, that the appearance of the western Slavic population in the northern part of Transylvania, can be observed by the large settlement "stations", as of them one at Nușfalău (8th – 9th centuries)[25]. He also refers to the cohabitation of the Slavs with the local population, fact that is extremely interesting, mainly due to the fact, that this phenomena can barely be proven archeologically. We share the thought, that a few pieces of grey wheel-made pottery among a large quantum of hand-made pottery is not offering enough proof of the local`s traditional crafts inherited by the roman provincial techniques[26]. Instead, we can accept a theory that broadens the mentioned viewpoint, meaning that Transylvania played a very important role in Central European commercial infrastructure landscape, not forgetting the fact, that Avar, Bulgarian and even Byzantine influences could have brought this type of "luxurios" pottery. Even more, we see the chronological constructions based on pottery dating as of doubtful character.

As we will see further on, according to Băcueț-Crișan's researches, the valleys of the Crasna and Barcău Rivers are vehemently populated during the 7th-11th centuries. We have used the repertoire[27] only for the aim, to project these researched points not differentiating their types.

5. The villages (11th – 12th centuries)

Through the lines below, we will conduct a review of the settlements mentioned in documentary sources during the chronological bearings we enlisted above. Before we do that, it is necessary to set a few methodological norms, therefore at every village, we have placed the year of appearance in frame. Their names are the original ones from the documents, written with italic characters, but the bold ones design their Romanian name used at present, for easing their identification. In matters of bibliography,

we have used two main sources: Jakó Zsigmond, who gathered and commented all documents emitted in Transylvania, or elsewhere, but concerning Transylvania, for the period set for 1023-1300[28], and the Romanian translation of the documents concerning Transylvania[29].

Further on we have to mention, that we are dealing with three types of settlements, each type knowing its features and period of existence-development. During the period set between the 11th – 13th century, documents mention several types of settlements, such as: *villa, locus, praedium, possessio*, but only one of these, haven't changed the designation of its meaning: **a.** *villa* – as the village itself; only later on, by the mid-13th century appears rarely associated with *vicus* and *pagus*, meaning certain parts of a village. These settlement have well determined boundaries, not just in matters of territory, but from juristic point of view as well, meaning that *villa* concerns its inhabitants, the community as well, as it is very well reflected in the early 11th century decrees and also, we have to be aware of the fact, that these villages were in the property of someone. **b.** *Terra* has its common usage period starting from the 11th century, until the end of the 13th, when it becomes *possessio*. Terra designates in fact a certain territory that is not necessarily has to be inhabited or worked in some way, meaning, that it is the territory owned by someone, on which there can be several *villa's*. When a certain *terra* is inhabited, the expression form used is *terra seu villa*, form mostly used after the 1260's. Another problematic issue intervenes, when the written source mentions *terra castri*, meaning the land that is in the property of the royal fort, but due to its division, mostly from the debut of the 13th century, it is very difficult to trace weather the terra of the *castrum* was inhabited or not, in other words, villages of the *terra* belong or not to the jurisdiction of this royal institution. **c.** *Possessio*, as its proper sense designates, from the first half of the 13th century means the sum of the estate owned by nobility. In this light we have to deals also with the fact, that *possessio* meant in some cases a part of a village, an entire village, or, even the sum of several villages. It is still not very clear (mostly because from the last quarter of the 13th century the term becomes extremely common), if it has been used on only a property, or the entire village. The semantic transformation finalizes in the moment, when the written sources are already using the well-established *portio possessionaria* (end of 13th – debut of 14th centuries), when it does not designates the property itself, but the legal status of the settlement, as being the property of a noble[30].

It is absolutely essential to treat as well issues concerning the village names that we will see below. We are totally aware of the fact, that etymology comes as an auxiliary aid for our incursion and analysis, knowing also the fact, that settlement labels have suffered massive changes through different periods of history. We also have to be aware of the fact, that in the majority of the cases, place names change even if there is not recorded a movement of population in the area. Again, we return to the analyses made by the well-known linguist Kniezsa István[31]. In the following we will exemplify settlement names that are keeping their close-to-original forms even today. (ger.= German; hu. = Hungarian; pol. = Polish; sl. = Slavic.)

Nr.	Name	Etim.	Form	Meaning
1	*Botocun*	-		unknown
2	*Bogus*	sl.	*Bogûs*	pers. name
5	*Bygloz/Bylgaz*	sl.	*bêl+gozd/gvozd*	white forest
6	*Chehy*			designates *hospes* population
8	*Coznis*	sl.	*Koza, dim. Koznič*	goat, dim. little goat
20	*Carasna*	sl.	*krasna*	beautiful/red
13	*Huruat*			designates *hospes* population (Croatian)
15	*Ilswa*	sl.	*jelšava*	alder tree
17	*Kechel*	ger.	*Kātzel*	pers. name
22	*Lesmer/Nesmer*	sl.	*Načemir*	pers. name
		pol.	*Naczemir*	pers. name
24	*Lomperth*	ger.	*Lambrecht*	pers. name
25	*Maledei*	sl.	*Mladěj*	pers. name
31	*Perechen*	sl.	*prěčane*	ones on the other side
34	*Rathon*	ger.	*Ratwin*	pers. name
35	*Rechie*	sl.	*rzišče*	ditch/fosse
38	*Wathasomlyowa*	hu.	*somló-somlyó*	pers. name Watha+Hungarian common hill name=Watha's Hill
39	*Wolko*	sl.	*Vȍlkov*	place name
		pol.	*Vȍlkz*	pers. name

5.1 Repertoire of the villages (Fig. 4, 5)

Botocun, villa. 1213 *Zoloc* of *Kechel* accused villagers *Marcus*, *Juan* and *Marcelus* from *Botocun*, of unlawful deprivation of four cattle, with the aid of a foreign *pristaldus*. [**Bădăcin**] (DIR C, I, 56, Jakó, I, 139) 1259 Appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Bogus, villa. 1214 *Micicu* of *Bogus*, is guarantor of *Rufdon*, on the trial concerning the sale of a horse. (DIR C, I, 60, Jakó a, I, 141) 1263 King Stephen V, donates village *Bogus* to *Ponyt* and his successors, for his services during the Tartar Invasion, mentioning that once, Bogus was the village of *hospites castri*. (Jakó a, I, 207) 1285 The Chapter of Eger proves the possession interchange between Nicolaus son of ban *Nicolaus de genere Myskouch*, who switched half of *Bogus* with possessions in Borsod county. [Boghiș] (DIR C, II, 268-269, Jakó a, I, 267)

Ban, villa. 1213 *Golsa* of Ban accuses its villager *Sedun*, for burning down its house. The trial is conducted by *Agya*, granger of Crasna, pristaldus *Luca* of *Kouachi*. *Sedun* proves his innocence through the red iron probe. (DIR C, I, 47, Jakó a, I, 137) 1214 *Cives* from the village, with the support of centurion *Tumpa* affirm, that certain villagers of Ban are in the same status of *cives*, although they are *hospites genere Ruthenos*. *Chedur*, Rutheinian serf proves, that the accused ones are relatives of him, so they are free *hospites*. [Ban] (DIR C, I, 59-60, Jakó a, I, 141)

Bozia, terra. 1090-1093/1227 Original document emitted by king Kálmán dated to the end of the 11th century, transcribed by King Andreas II in 1227. The document refers to certain privileges and possession donations around Bozia for Nezdin kindred members (*Tola, Wonc, Iwan, Denc, Stepan, Wolcan, Poch, Bungi, Wich* and *Mic*). [Bozieș] (Jakó a, I, 167)

Bygloz/Bylgaz, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Bilghezd] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 201)

Chehy, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Cehei] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 201)

Cesar, terra. 1219 *Altum Leonardum*, son of *Ponecus* was called to trial by *ioubagiones castri Carazna*, accusing him for violently taking in possession part of village *Cesar*. [Cizer] (DIR C, I, 101, Jakó a, I, 150)

Coznis, terra. 1213 *Perman* of *Ipu* accused the serfs of *Buncu* of *Coznis* for thievery. [Cosniciu de Jos] (DIR C, I, 56, Jakó a, I, 139-140)

Deudas, terra. 1208 Trial of the buffalo hunters against sons of Gunther, whom presumably occupied *Deudas*, village that belonged to the hunters. [Disappeared village, somewhere between Ip and Leșmir] (DIR C, I, 42, Jakó a, I, 133)

Dirsig, villa. 1213 *Dirsig* of *Dirsig* was accused by *Georgium filium Ponota* and *Gyulam et Forcos filios Casta* with the act of *violentia* against them. [Disappeared village, somewhere north-west from Șimleu, on the outskirts of Balc] (DIR C, I, 48, Jakó a, I, 138)

Ghywrktheleke, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Giurtelecul Șimleului] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Gemelchen, terra 1090-1093/1227 Original document emitted by king Kálmán dated to the end of the 11th century, transcribed by King Andreas II in 1227. The document refers to certain privileges and possession donations around *Bozia* for *Nezdin* kindred members (*Tola, Wonc, Iwan, Denc, Stepan, Wolcan, Poch, Bungi, Wich* and *Mic*). It is quite strange, because the transcript say *terram Gemelchen quae et alio nomine Bozia vocatur*. Further on, it is mentioned also *aquam Gemelchen*, which is a feeder of River Barcău, that joins the main course near *Bozia*. [Bozieș] (Jakó a, I, 167)

Huruat, villa. 1213 *Rahina* of *Huruat* accuses his villager called *Zama*, for stealing his axe. (DIR C, I, 47, Jakó a, I, 137) 1270 At this moment deserted village, the abbot of Mezes describes its boundaries. [Horoatu Crasnei] (DIR C, II, 120-121, Jakó a, I, 221-222)

Iklod, possessio. 1217 King Andreas II gives toll rights on Crasna River, among others, to *magni Beles* from *Iklod*. [Măeriște] (Jakó a, I, 147)

Irswa/Iloswa, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Ilișua] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Ipu/Ypu, villa. 1208 Trial of the buffalo hunters against sons of Gunther, whom presumably occupied Deudas, village that belonged to the hunters. (DIR C, I, 42, Jakó a, I, 133) 1213 *Perman* of *Ipu* accused the serfs of *Buncu* of *Coznis* for thievery. [Ip] (DIR C, I, 56, Jakó a, I, 139-140)

Kechel/Rechel, villa. 1213 *Zoloc* of *Kechel* accused villagers *Marcus*, *Juan* and *Marcelus* from *Botocun*, of unlawful deprivation of four cattle, with the aid of a foreign *pristaldus*. [Meseșenii de Jos] (DIR C, I, 56, Jakó a, I, 139)

Kyryis, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Crișteleс] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Korogh, terra/Kourongy villa. 1213 *Seraphin* of *Kourongy* accuses one of his villagers with thievery. (DIR C, I, 45, Jakó a, I, 137) 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Disappeared village in the outskirts of Pericei] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Karasna Carazna, Carasna. [1205–1235] The written sources that are currently available to us speak only about the county, its administrative structure and inhabitants. The village that is bearing the same name only appears later, in 1445 as part of the domain of Șimleu.

Lagud/Lagwd, villa. 1259 Village that appears

in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Disappeared village between Giurtelecul Șimleului and Uileac, on the left bank of River Crasna] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Lesmer/Nesmer, partem. 1213 Village mentioned in a trial initiated by *Quid*, son of granger *Olibrius*. [Leșmir] (DIR C, I, 46, Jakó a, I, 137)

Leustah, possessio. 1299 Village *de iuxta Karazna*, that appears in a document concerning the possessions of *Dionisius filio Pete de genere Tomay*. [Disappeared village, unidentified location] (DIR C, II, 496, Jakó a, I, 327)

Lomperth, possessio. 1217 King Andreas II gives toll rights on Crasna River, among others, to *nobiles de Lomperth*. [Lompirt] (Jakó a, I, 147)

Maledei, villa. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Mălădia] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Mata/Matha, villa. 1219 During a trial concerning property rights Toma, son of Tup of Matha swor on Saint Ladisla's grave that he is innocent. [Disappeared village, unidentified location] (DIR C, I, 100-101, Jakó a, I, 150)

Mynoraw/Mynorow/Monyorow, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Disappeared village, unidentified location] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 201) The chapter of Eger approves, that *Nicolaus*, son of ban *Ponyth* owes half of possession *Bogus* along with *terra Mynorow*. [Györffy identifies this village as being Huseni[32]] (DIR C, II, 268-269, Jakó a, I, 267)

Nog, villa/Naghfalw, terra. 1213 In the trial concerning *Perman* of *Ypu*, is mentioned among other *arbitris*, a certain *Ders de villa Nog*. (DIR C, I, 56, Jakó a, I, 139-140) 1249 King Béla IV donates among others, *terra Noggffalw* to *Paulus*, royal judge (DIR C, I, 335-337, Jakó a, I, 194) 1259 Appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Nușfalău] (DIR C, II, 268-269, Jakó a, I, 201)

Otman/Achoman, terra. 1283 The Chapter of Warad proves that inhabitants of *Otman*, *Buthmer*, son of *Bunna* and *Buda*, son of *Buthmer* sold their inheritance rights to magister *Ladislaus* and his brother *Michaelis*. [Disappeared village, that can be identified between Balc and Camăr] (DIR C, II, 247, Jakó a, I, 259)

Pechey, villa/Pechel, terra. 1214 According to the *pristaldus*, *Pomel* of *Pechey* accused his villagers, *Domus et Tumpa* and *Basa* of *Saicu*, with robbery. (DIR C, I, 61, Jakó a, I, 141) 1270 In the boundary description of *Huruat*, made by the abbot of *Mezes*, *terra Pechel* appears as *Huruat's* neighbour. [Peceiu] (DIR C, II, 120-121, Jakó a, I, 221-222)

Perechen, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Periceiu] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 203)

Pethlend, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. It also appears as *Pethlend pothoka* (stream) [Unidentified village] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 203)

Poyaspotoc, terra. 1219 *Lulan*, son of *comes Vata* is accused by serfs of *castrenses de Karazna*, for occupying without any right the land of *Poyaspotoc*. [Disappeared village, south of Periceiu, settlement signalled by the stream Polyaspatak, southern feeder of River Crasna, and Polyas forest, south of Periceiu] (DIR C, I, 100-101, Jakó a, I, 150)

Rathon, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Ratin] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 201)

Rechie, terra. 1270-1272 The Chapter of *Warad* proves that *Paulus* and *Hunt*, sons of *Laurentius* shared *terra Rechie*, donated by King Stephen V, in the presence of comes *Dedach*. [Recea] (Jakó a, I, 227)

Saicu, villa. 1214 According to the *pristaldus*, *Pomel* of *Pechey* accused his villagers, *Domus et Tumpa* and *Basa* of *Saicu*, with robbery. [Unidentified settlement] (DIR C, I, 61, Jakó a, I, 141)

Sczeck/Sczeek/Seech, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Siciu] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 203)

Wathasomlyowa/Bathasomlwa, possessio. 1258, 10th of November Document emitted by the Chapter of Alba Iulia, proving that *Watha filio Watha et Pusa filio Dionisius* sell their possession *Wathasomlyowa* for 120 marks, to *Roland* (*de genere Ratot*), palatine and granger of Bratislava and to *magister Mauritius*, the queen's judge and granger of Nitra (DIR C, II, 26-27, Jakó a, I, 200) 1259, 10th of July By the request of *Roland* (*de genere Ratot*), palatine and granger of Bratislava and *magister Mauritius*, the queen's judge and granger of Nitra King Béla IV confirms and strengthens the act emitted in 1258, but due to the fact that de act emitted a year before at Alba Iulia does not contain the boundary description of the possession, the Chapter of *Warad* performs the perambulation of the land. [Șimleu Silvaniei] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 200-203)

Wolko, terra. 1249 King Béla IV donates among others, *terra Wolko* to *Paulus*, royal judge [Valcăul de Jos] (DIR C, I, 335-337, Jakó a, I, 194)

Wydamapathaka/Wyduna, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Probably along Vidiei stream, that is a southern feeder of Crasna, joining it at Uileacu Șimleului] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Wylak/Iwylak, terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Uileacu Șimleului] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 202)

Zeek/Zeekpathakam terra. 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Unidentified settlement] (DIR C, II, 27-31,

Jakó a, I, 203)

Zwan, *terra/Zovan, terra*. 1249 King Béla IV donates among others, *terra Zwan* to *Paulus*, royal judge (DIR C, I, 335-337, Jakó a, I, 194) 1259 Village that appears in the boundary description of possession Șimleu. [Zăuan] (DIR C, II, 27-31, Jakó a, I, 201-202) 1299 The inhabitants of *Zovan* raise charges against the monks form the monastery in the village. (DIR C, II, 471-472, Jakó a, I, 328)

6. Analysis, theories

11th -12th centuries. First of all we have to make some observations on the early period settlements, namely *Gemelchen* and *Bozia*, which are mentioned in the document we have spoken of before. The „original" document (dated to the period set before King Colomanus's departure to Poland- 1090-93) was transcribed and confirmed by King Andreas IIIrd[33] and, again transcribed and confirmed on the 9th of Januray 1250 by king Béla the IVth[34] due to the fact, that the document suffered damages during the Tartar Invasion (as *homines de genere Nopoc-Mezte* sustained). In the following, we present the original text of the 1227 document:

A. Ch. 1227. Idem Andreas priuilegium Regis Colomanni, generationi Nezdini in Transiluania collatum, transcribit et confirmat.

Andreas, Dei gratia, Rex Vngarorum, omnibus, quibus praesens scriptum patuerit, salutem et omne bonum. Ad vniuersorum notitiam tam praesentium, quam futurorum volumus peruenire, quod homines de genere – – – ad nostram accedentes praesentiam, nobis priuilegium Colomani Regis exhibuerunt, quod propter nimiam vetustatem a nobis renouari humiliter petierunt, cuius series talis est: Colomanus – – pus Princeps fuit in Crassou ciuitate Mesta, cui Rex donauit Ciuitatem Crassou, et i – – – non suscipit, sed et ipse petiuit, vt non daret decimas; terra fuit planicies Bubalorum, et mera planicies, Scecos sua sylua. Necopor vestem ferens et eius nepos Nezdino portat – – – dextram cyrothecam portat, nec decimas det, nec in exercitum vadat, nec cum villa debitum persoluat Nezdinus. *Nomina vero supradictorum hominum sunt haec: Tola, filius Nezdin, Wonc, Denc, filius Iwan, Stephan, Wolcan, Poch, Bungi, Wich, Mic, quorum petitionibus satisfacere volentes priuilegium ipsorum – – fecimus rescribi, quibus et quamdam terram* – – Gemelchen*, quae et alio nomine* Bozia *vocatur – – – – fuerat, sibi et per eos – – – – bus contulimus possidenda. Cuius meta incipit a meta Gutfrex, et vadit iuxta aquam Gemelchen, vsque ad metam Cepan, filii Cepan, et inde reuertit ad metam praedictae Gutfrex, et pars praenominatae aquae – – Simeony, pars isti. Et vth nostra donatio perpetue stabilitatis – – – obtineat, praesentem paginam dupplicis sigilli nostri concessimus in testimonium fidei munimine roboratam. Anno Domini MCCXXVII. Regni nostri anno XXIIII.*[35]

The document clearly shows that *Mesta* and his descendants, *Nepocor* and *Nezdinus* inhabited the area set at the confluence of *Valea Mare (aquam Gemelchen)* stream with Barcău River, fact that becomes more interesting, if we analyse the map concerning the preliminary settlement situations, where we can clearly see, that in this area there is a massive settlement network dated to the 7th – 11th centuries. (Fig. 6)

There is still a heavy argument on the meaning of *„cui Rex donauit Ciuitatem Crassou"*, meaning that *Mesta* did not accept the *ciuitatem*, instead he asked for acquittal of tithe payment. The historiography is very doubtful on this document, affirming, that in fact this is not a document emitted by Colomanus, but only his *notitia*, on the privileges he offered. Actually, this theory of Györffy received vehement critiques, reforming his thoughts later on, affirming, that Mesta did not received the *castrum* grangership, but the rank of *civis* of *castrum Crassou* meaning the ministration right for *Crassou*, further on, the document is actually given by Ladislas I the Saint, but after Mesta refused the privilege, Colomannus, as bishop gave this recommendation, meaning acquittal of tithe, tax payment and military service. Even if this theory is accepted, the term of *civitas* needs very careful explanation. The word *civitas*, in the early period usage, meant fort, city, county of the *castrum*, and theoretically *civis* can be derived for the meaning of the right of ministration, although it is quite clear that the 11th century term was used to point out the ones, whom belonged with services to the *castrum* (*várnépek*-hu), or it is quite unbelievable, that the duty was a subject of donation, or privilege. Anyway, until these issues are cleared off, it is quite difficult understanding what actually this privilege donation meant[36].

Furthermore if we take onto analysis the situation shown on the map, no wonder that *princeps Colomanus fuit in Crasson(u) ciuitate* and gave privileges for the persons mentioned, fact that proves, these people were considered superior members of their communities. The document also tells us, that these people were in charge of the royal buffalo hunting fields on the Barcău Valley, craft that (among salt and noble metals) were considered royal rights as well. Furthermore, we can presume that during the (1208), 1213 and 1214 red-iron probe at Oradea it is about the *comes venatorum bubalinorum* from these villages, namely *Joachim*, *Stephanus* and *Paulus*, so we can see that there is a separate *comes* designated to these territories[37].

A possible theory for the early formation of this very small county relies exactly on this situation: massive population block/blocks, (given also the etymology of their names and possible western Slavic origins proven by archaeological material) were seen as necessary to be contextualized in the early administration of Transylvania, so, county Crasna (krasna-Красна) was being seen as a small administration unit on a massive Slavic population. Let us not forget, that the area of *Gemelchen* and *Bozia* is set in the proximity of the area of Nușfalău (*Nușfalău-Someșeni Group*). Also taking in consideration the phenomena occurred during the mid-third of the 9th century, when due to the Bulgarian presence on the Mureș Valley, the Slavic population withdraws in the Plopiș-Meseș wedge, where, still are known the geographical names bearing theory early presence . In the same time, Kristó also places this issue on the platform of population movement from the west, proving, that the members of the *Napkor/ Nepocor/Necopor* genus set out from today's Szabolcs county, fact proven by the existence of the village Napkor, even today[38].

For the 12th century, we see according to the written sources, a formed medieval county (around 1164), that has a *castrum*, a *centuria* and all the elements of a unit that has finalized its process of formation. Our only and largest disadvantage is, that for this period we don't have enough archaeological material published, to be able to form the slightest idea on the settlement network. As we have seen above, for the 13th century, thanks to the chancellery development of the time, we have a large number of settlements mentioned. In this context, we can form a slight image on the structure of the county.

13th century. By the first half of the 13th century the centre of the county has already ten possessions, entitled with the attribute of *terra castri*, which for this period can be said that it is an impressive number: *Botocun*, *Bygloz*, *Ban*, *Cesar*, *Huruat*, *Kyrys*, *Craznawar* (?), *Mata*, *Poyaspotoc* and *Wyduna*[39]. (Fig. 7 – *with one specification: Craznawar is not set on the map, because it has not been yet identified on the field*). The position of these settlements belonging directly under the jurisdiction of the *castrum*, may reveal the fort's position, mostly, if we take into consideration the 1259 boundary description of the *possessio Wathasomlyowa*, where, on the south-eastern border, the name Craznawar is mentioned, setting it somewhere in the triangle between *Wathasomlyowa*, *Rathon* and *Mynoraw*[40]. (Fig. 8)

The rapid settlement development is caused not only by the fact that one of the most important salt trade routes go through the county (Györffy sustain as being the main cause for the very early county formation), but we assist also on customs posts mainly on the Crasna valley, if we take a short glimpse on the map discussing the *possessio* settlements (*p. Iklod, p. Wathasomlyowa, p. Lomperth, p. Leustah* – Fig. 9). It is very likely to suppose, that these settlements all had customs outposts (mostly if *Iklod* an *Leustah* were involved in such activities), mostly because they are set on one of the main routes coming from east, but this time passing through the Valea Ragului passage, in the direction of Horoat, Stârciu.

The rapid population growth has to be written on the account of massive colonization in the period, as we have seen the Germanic etymology names, written sources on *hospites de genere Ruthenos* and the settlement names formed by population names (Czech, Croatian). Even more, Karácsonyi enlists the *homines de genere Nopoc-Mezte*, discussed above, in the *Rutheni* branch colonized here, concluding their religion of being Greek rite, because they refuse to pay *decima*.

By the end of the 13th century we can see a well formed possession relationship in the county so according to Györffy[42], by this time the division of *castrum* possessions are dissolved and new owner appear in the county with land inherited, bought or switched. (Fig. 10)

Larger possessions in the early period of the county were held by one of the most controversy-surrounded genus, Csolt, whose nest was in Békés County. The genus had two main branches dominated by *Vata I* and *Csolt I*. The first of them, had two sons: *Iulius*, who owned *Kourogh* (1213) and *Vata II*, who is actually selling the possession of Șimleu in 1257[43].

The later *genus*'s (from the first half of the 13th century), as visible on the map rule most of the county's territories. Their origins and development will be the subject of a later study.

7. Conclusions

As being one of the smallest administration units in the "Realm of Saint Stephen" the county of Crasna knows a very interesting, -but in the same time full of mysteries- formation and development. We are quite convinced, that as start in its integration process, preliminary factors have played a huge role, meaning that the populations and their settlement density played one of the main roles in the desire of including the territory of Crasna and Barcău in the early administration of Transylvania. If we create the ensemble offered by written sources and archaeology, but also linguistics we can accept the theory of *Nepocor-the unconquered*. Even more, the early military architecture of the county and mainly the one on the Barcău Valley shows a clear social stratification present in the area, but, with the mention that these phenomena (according to the archaeological material gathered through field research) take place during the 12th century, scarcely admitting a late 11th century debut. We are also very confident in the fact, that future research will solve these problems.

As we have seen above, the geographical position of the county is extremely well used, not only speaking of the valleys with their land and pastures, but customs outposts on the rivers, activity that enriched the local owners, but the royal budget as well. Same geographic situation favours formation of infrastructure, trade-roads that are used on the territory in the county, included in the main passage corridor west of the Meseș-gate, fact proven. This infrastructure was used not only for commercial purposes, but military as well, sometimes with positive character, but sometimes not (Tartar Invasion).

It seem extremely difficult to create an image on a county during its formation and two centuries of development, relying only on written sources, linguistic approaches and very light archaeological research, this is why our encounter appears to be only a positivist relating of the information and facts. Until archaeological research does not backup information provided by sources we are not able to emit acceptable theories on the situations and historical processes of this period.

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Notes

1. Georgius Györffy, *Diplomata Hungariae Antiquissima,* I 1000-1131, Budapest, 1992, 95/ 276. – in the followings as DHA.
2. *Colomannus prince.ps [Varadiensis episcopus].*
3. Fejér Georgius, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, Tomi III, 2, Budae, 1829, 484.
4. Engel Pál, *Beilleszkedés Európába a kezdetektől 1440-ig [Pliancy to Europe from the beginnings until 1440]*, 1990, Budapest, 269.
5. In this case we discuss specially the research history concerning our area of study, and only mentioning general Hungarian historiography.
6. Petri Mór, *Szilágy vármegyte monográphiája [The monograph of Szilágy County],* I-IV, Zalău, 1901.
7. Györffy György, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történelmi földrajza [Historycal geography of Hungary during the Árpád-dynasty]*, III, 1987, Budapest.
8. Györffy, 1987, III, 503
9. Muscă Elena, *Repertoriul localităților din Sălaj în secolul al XIII-lea [Repertoire of the 13th century settlements of Sălaj County]*, în Acta MP, XI/1987, Zalău, 199-205.
10. Suciu Suciu C., *Dicționar istoric al localităților din Transilvania [Historical dictionary of Transylvania's settlements]*, II, Bucureşti, 1967.
11. Elena Muscă, medievalist of the *County Museum of History and Art* from Zalău, known –among other examples-, for her theory of water filled ditches of *Subcetate* hilltop fortress, theories presented in the pedagogy periodical *Şcoala Noastră-Revistă pentru educație și cultură pedagogică [Our school-Pedagogical education and culture magazine]*, 1995 and 1996.
12. Kristó Gyula, *A korai Erdély (895-1324)[Early Transylvania 895-1324]* , Szeged, 2002.
13. Kristó 2002, 144.
14. Mac I., Idu P. D., *Dealurile și depresiunile Silvaniei [Hills and Basins of Silvania region]*, în *Geografia României [Geography of Romania]*, IV, 1992, 39-48.
15. DHA, 276.
16. Szentpétery Imre, *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke. Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico diplomatica [Critical notes on the documents emitted by Arpadian kings],* I/1, Budapest, 1923, 115.
17. Ipolyi Arnold, Nagy Imre, Véghely Dezső, *Hazai okmánytár [National document repertory]. Codex diplomaticus patrius [,* VI, Budapest, 1876, 89-93.
18. Szentpétery 1943, 49-50.
19. Ipolyi- Dezső 1876, 89-93.
20. Szentpétery 1943, 49-50.
21. Györffy 1987, III, 505
22. Băcueț-Crișan, Dan, *Contribuții arheologice privind Nord-Vestul României, în secolele VII-XI. Cercetări în Depresiunea Silvaniei [Archaeological contributions concerning north-western Romania during the 7th – 11th centuries. Researches sin the Basin of Silvania]*, Cluj Napoca, 2013.
23. Băcueț-Crișan 2013, 109.
24. Vizauer, Valentin Victor *Așezări și locuințe medievale timpurii în Transilvania (sec. VI-VII/IX-X)[Early medieval dwellings and settlement in Transylvania (6th – 7th / 9th – 10th centuries)] (*, Cluj Napoca, 2008
25. Vizauer 2008, 157.
26. Băcueț-Crișan 2013, 106.
27. Băcueț-Crișan 2013, 111-138.
28. Jakó Zsigmond, *Erdélyi okmánytár [Document repertory of Transylvania] I.* (1023-1300), Budapest, 1997.
29. *Documente privind istoria României [Documents concerning the history of Romania]*– C/Transilvania, secolele XI, XII, XIII/I-II, Bucureşti 1951-1952.
30. Szabó István, *A falurendszer kialakulása Magyarországon. X–XV [Formation of the village system in Hungary during the 10th – 15th centuries]. Század*, Budapest,

1966, 36-54.
31. Kniezsa István, *Keletmagyarország helynevei [Place names of eastern Hungary]*, in *Magyarok és Románok* [Hungarians and Romanians], Ed. Deér József, Gáldi László, Budapest,1943, 267-277.
32. Györffy, 1987, III, 517
33. Fejér 1829, II, 235-236.
34. Jakó 1997, 194.
35. Fejér 1829, II, 484.
36. Zsoldos Attila, *A szent király szabadjai [The "liberi"of the saint king]*, Budapest, 1999, 22-23.
37. Zsoldos Attila, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000-1301 [Secular archontology of Hungary between 1000 and 1301]* , Budapest, 2011, 242. and Karácsonyi János, Borovszky Samu, *Regestrum Varadinense examinum ferris candentis ordino chronologico digestum... [Chronological order of the red iron trials of Oradea]*, Budapest, 1903, crit. 255, 290, p. 16, 19, 73, 78, doc. 1, 33, 44, 107
38. Bóna István, *Dáciától Erdőelvéig. Erdély és a Kelet-Alföld a népvándorlás korában* (271-895) [From Dacia to *Erdőelve. Transylvania and the Eastern planes during the migration period]* în. *Erdély rövid története [Short history of Transylvania]*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1989, p. 94.
39. Kristó 2002, 151.
40. Györffy, 1987, III, 505.
41. Ipolyi- Dezső 1876, 90. Kristó 1988, 487.
42. Györffy 1987, III, 506
43. Karácsonyi János, *A Magyar nemzetségek a XIV. század közepéig [The Hungarian kindreds until the middle of the 14th century]* , I-III, Budapest, 1900, I, p. 379-381.

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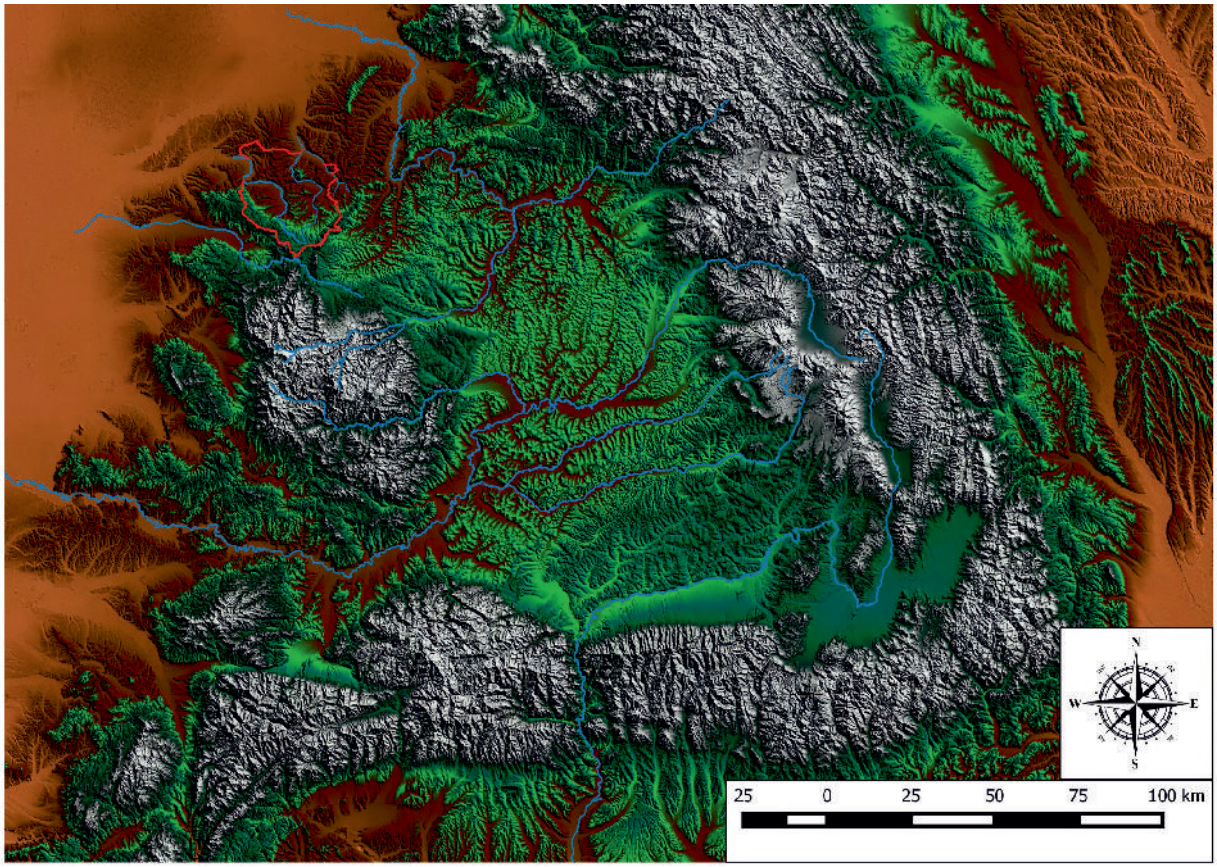


Fig 1. Position of the county in north-western Transylvaina

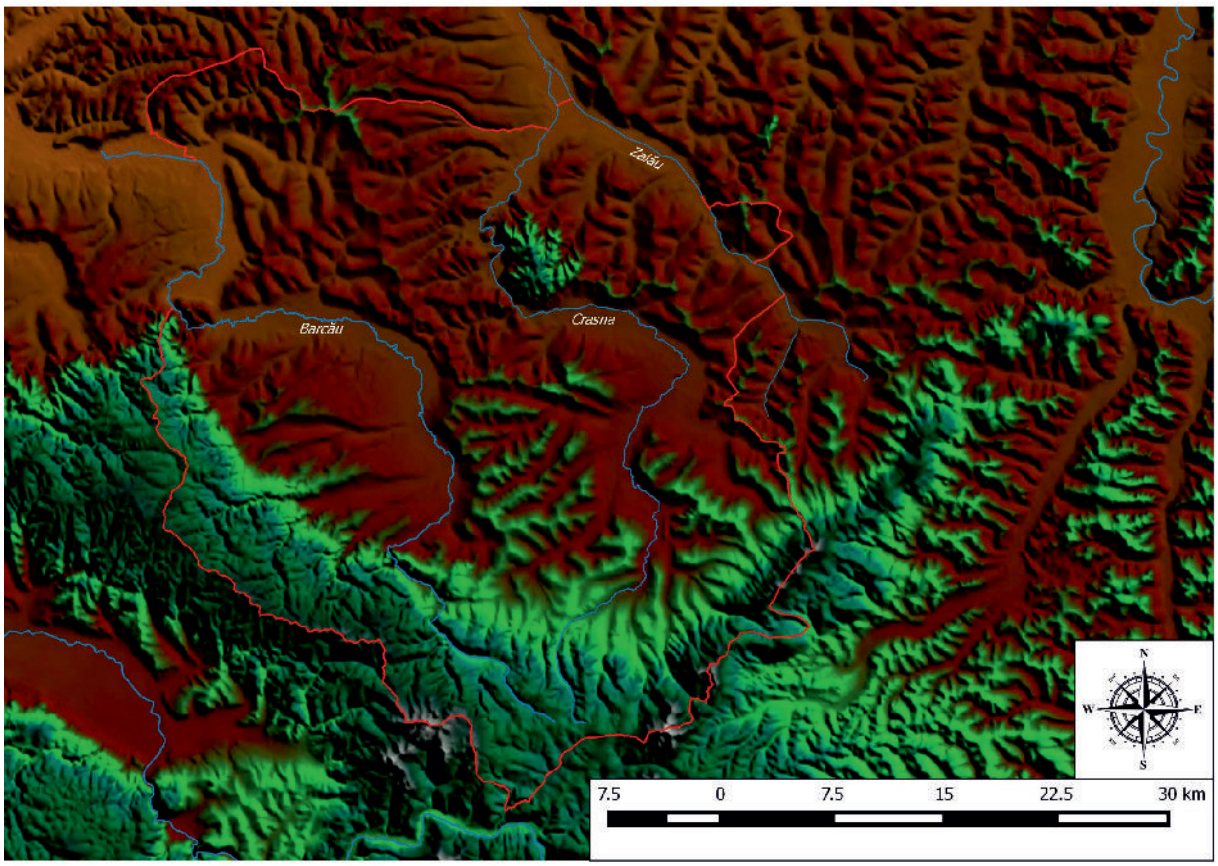


Fig 2. Basins of the Crasna, Barcău and Zalău Valleys

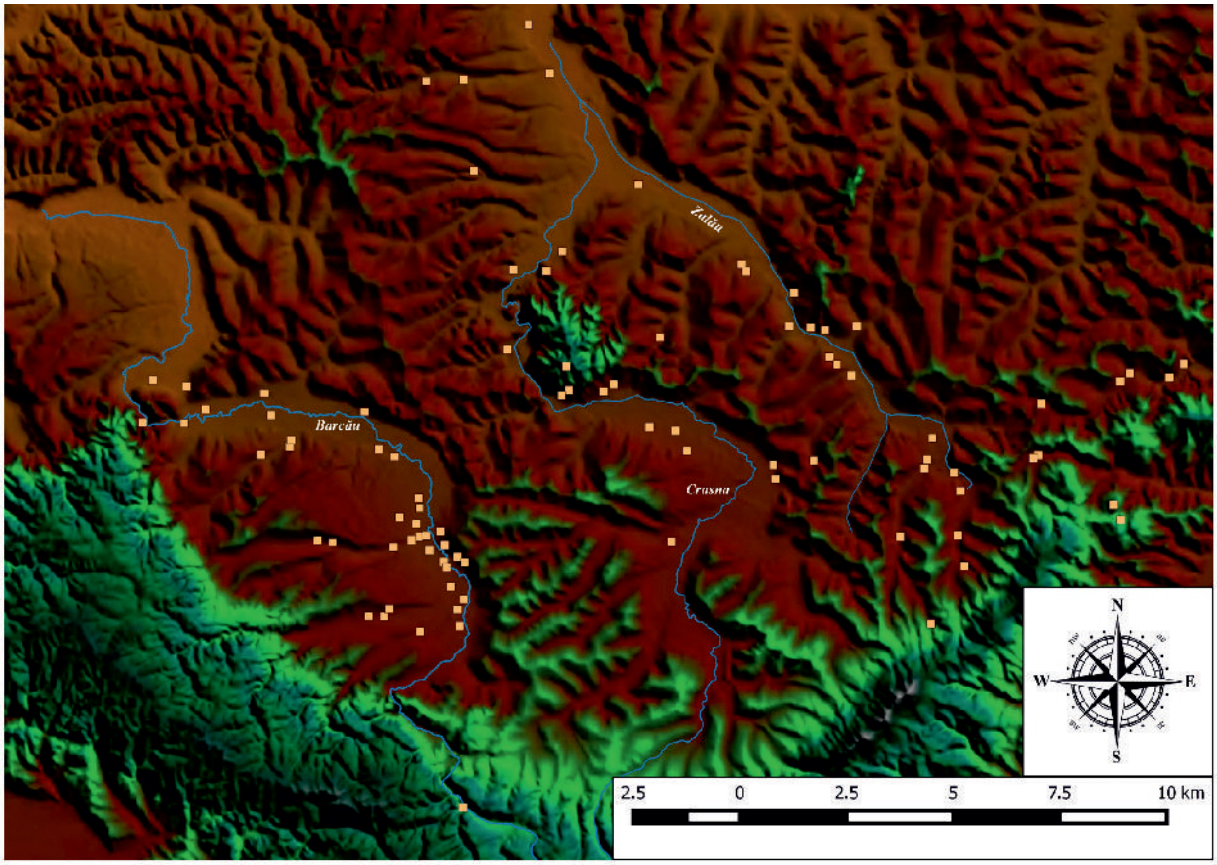


Fig 3. Early medieval settlement density in the Crasna and Barcău Valleys (according to Băcueț-Crișan, 2013)

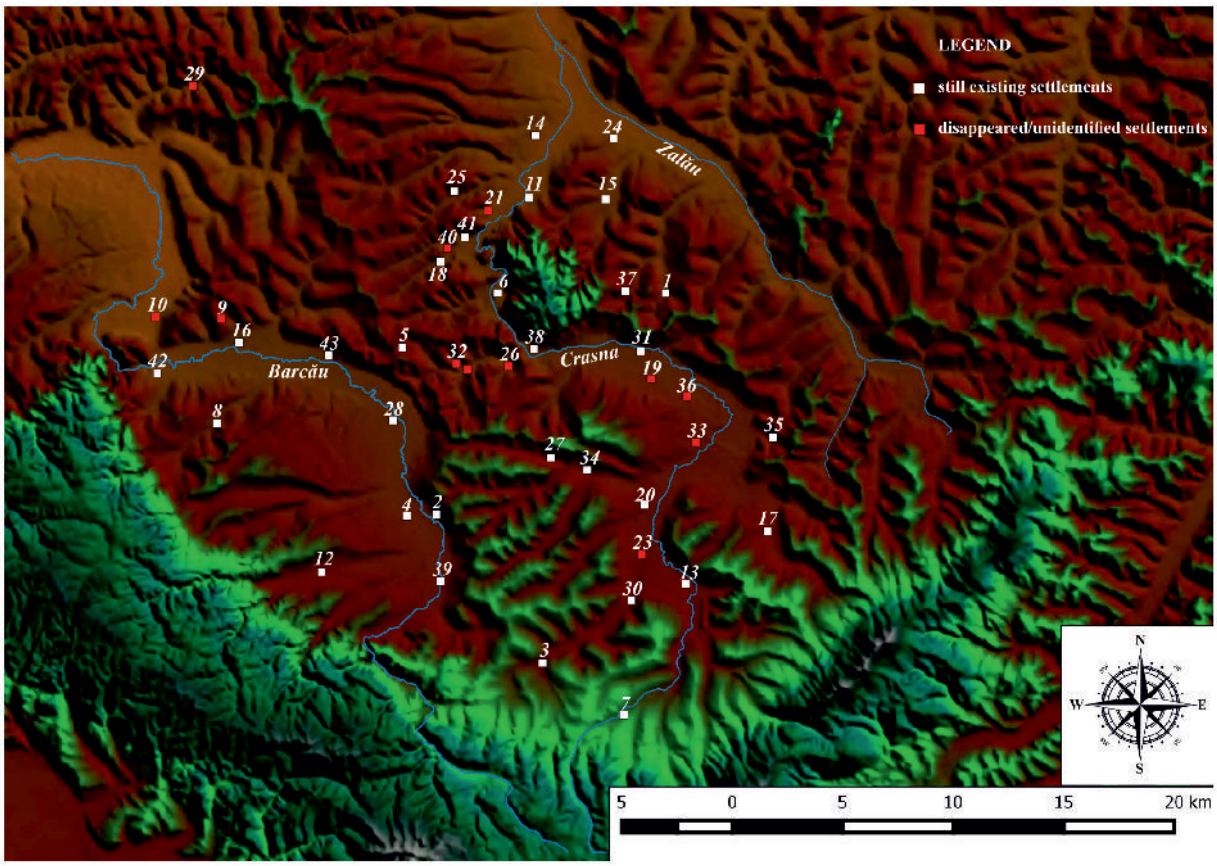


Fig 4. Settlements of the county mentioned in the written sources (11th - 13th centuries)

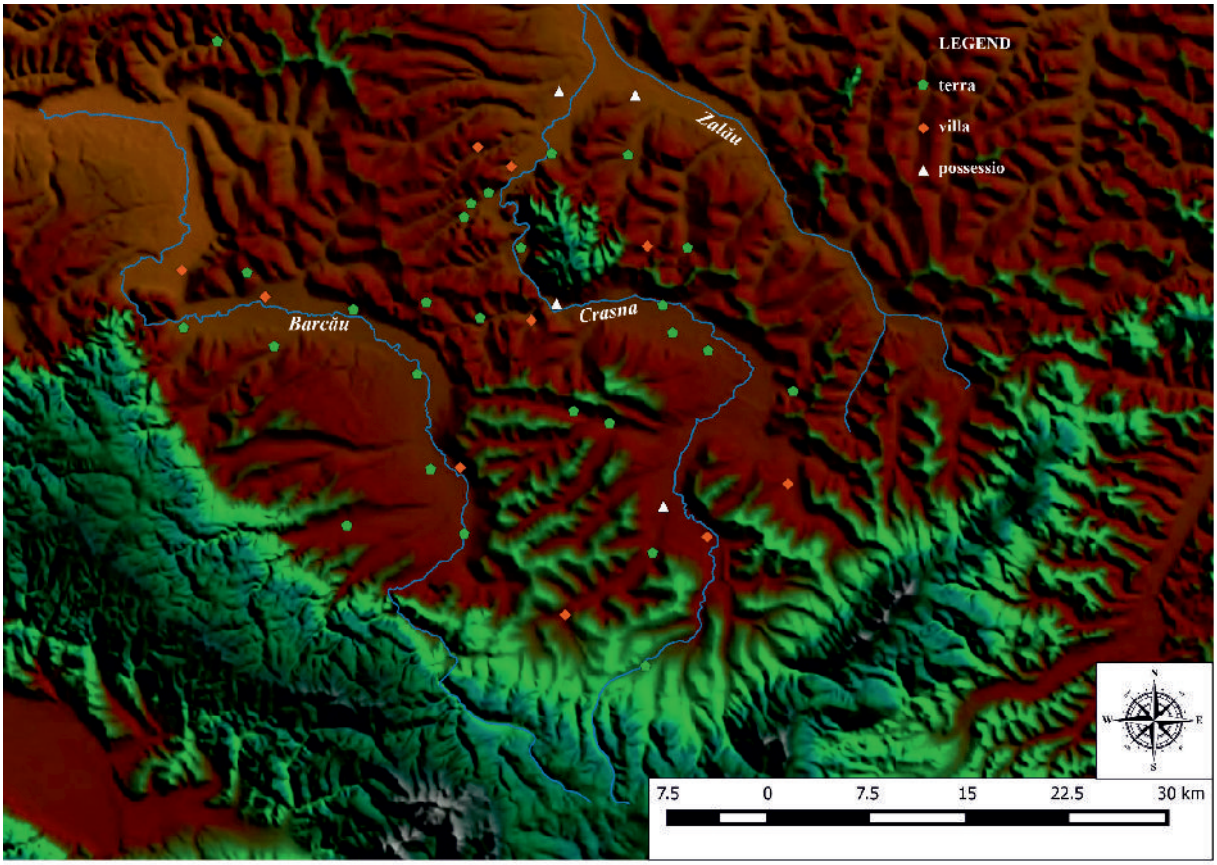


Fig 5. Settlement types mentioned during the 13th century: villa, terra, possessio

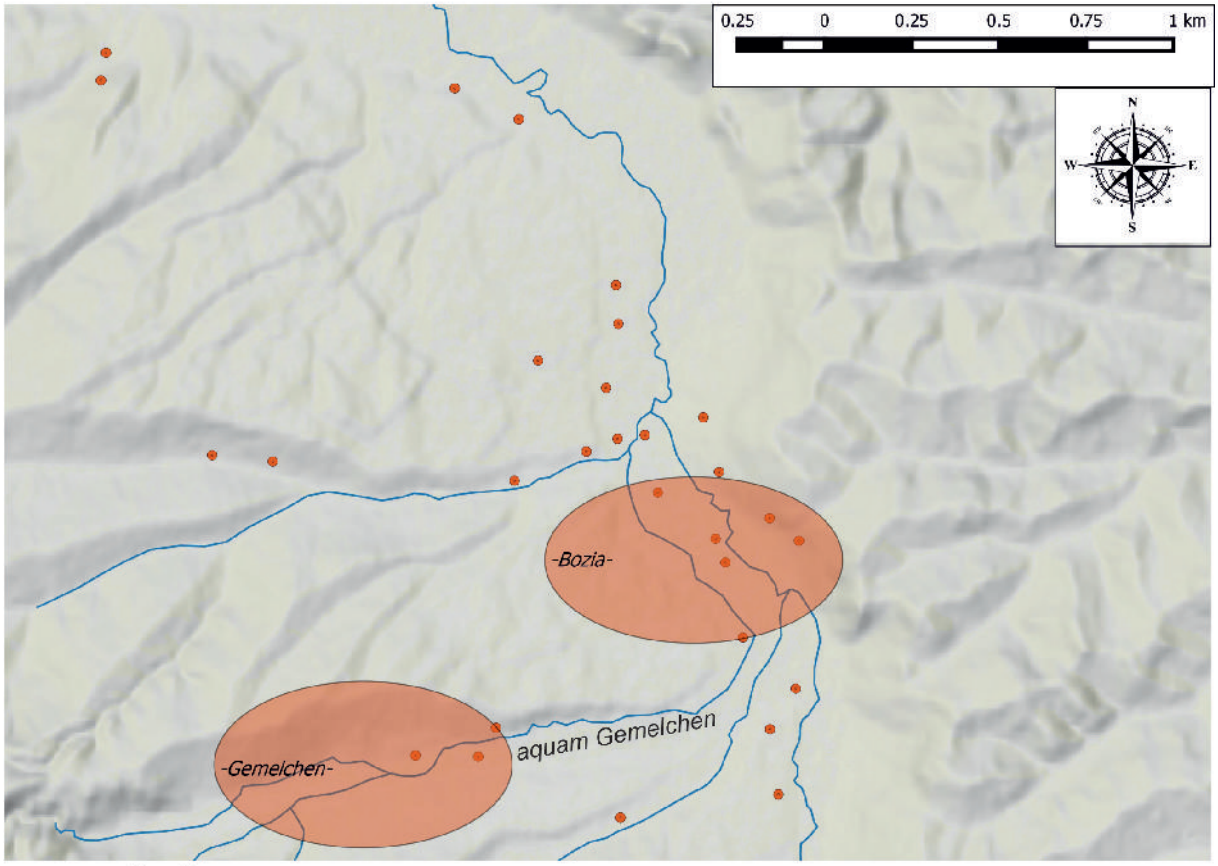


Fig 6. Position of the mentiond villages according to the early medieval settlement block

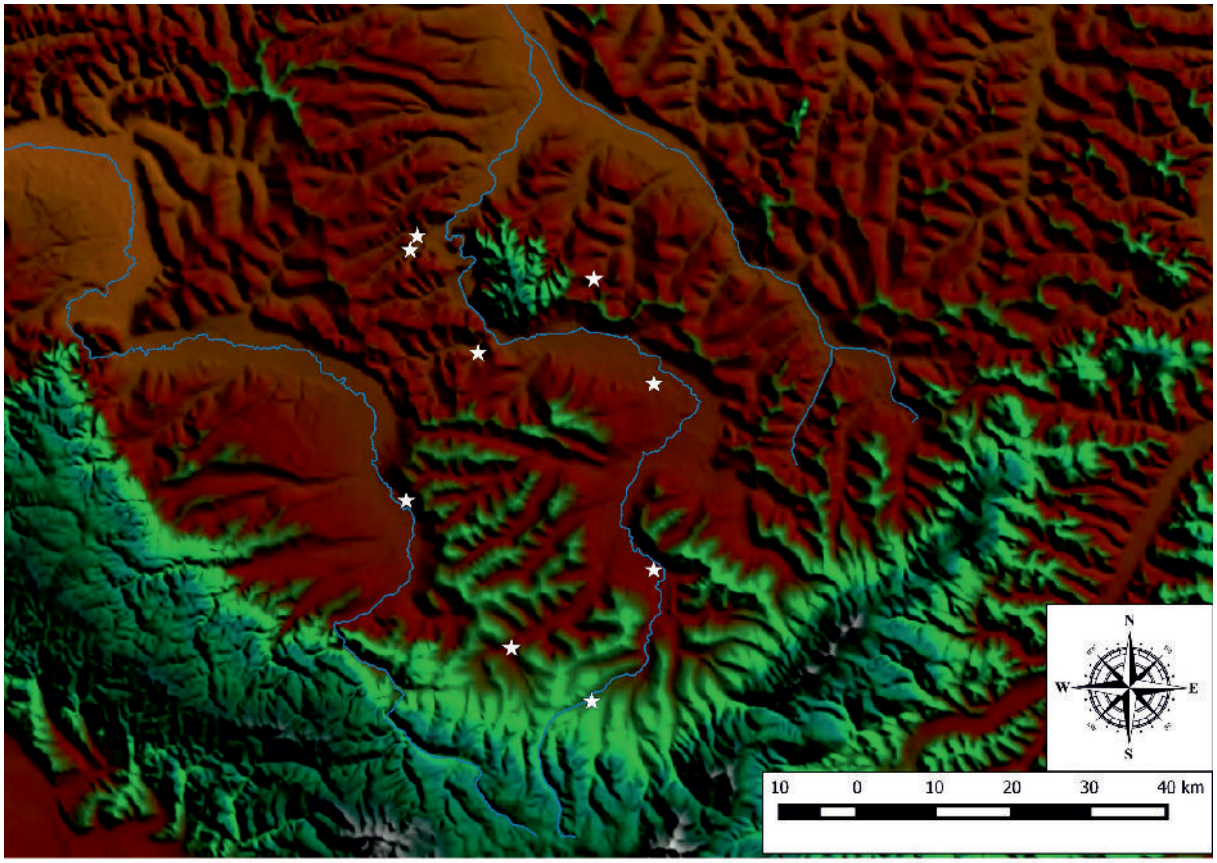


Fig 7. Settlements mentioned with the attribute of -terra castri-

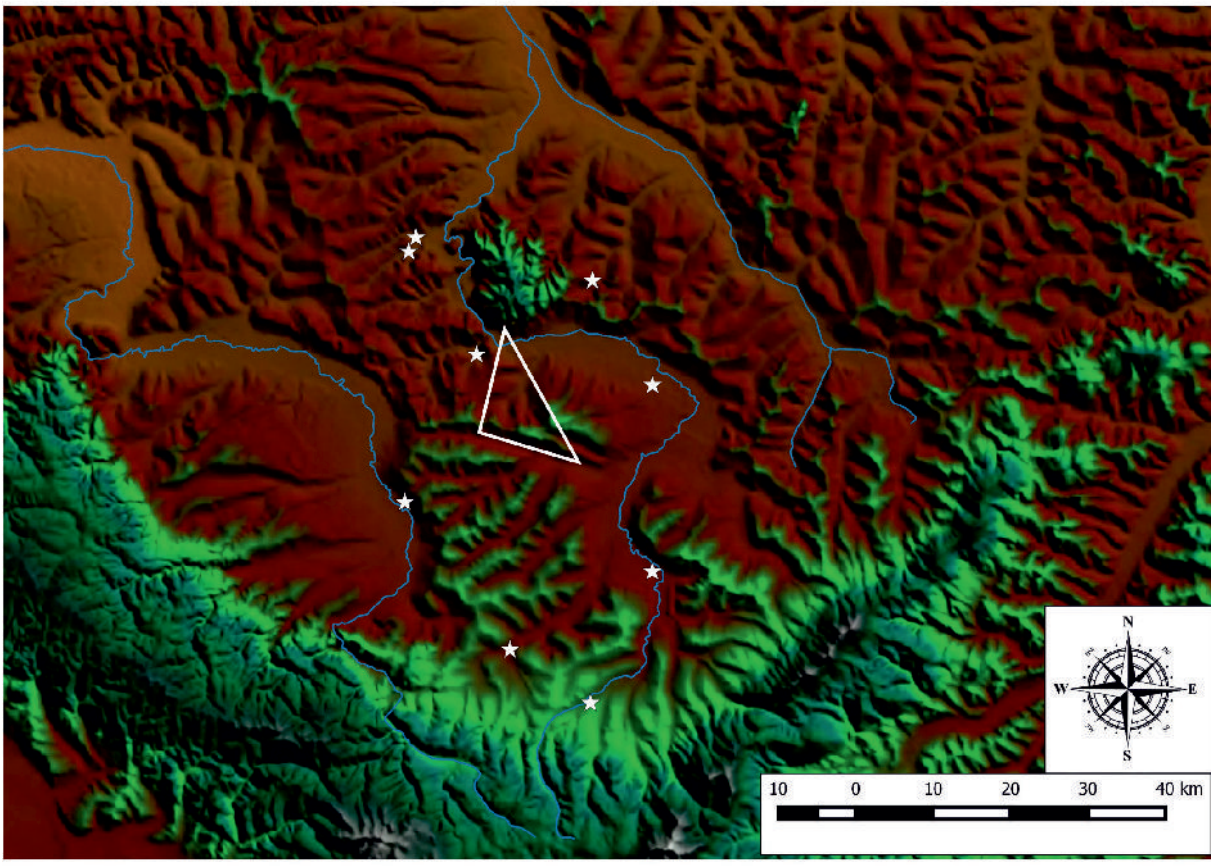


Fig 8. Possible location of Craznawar

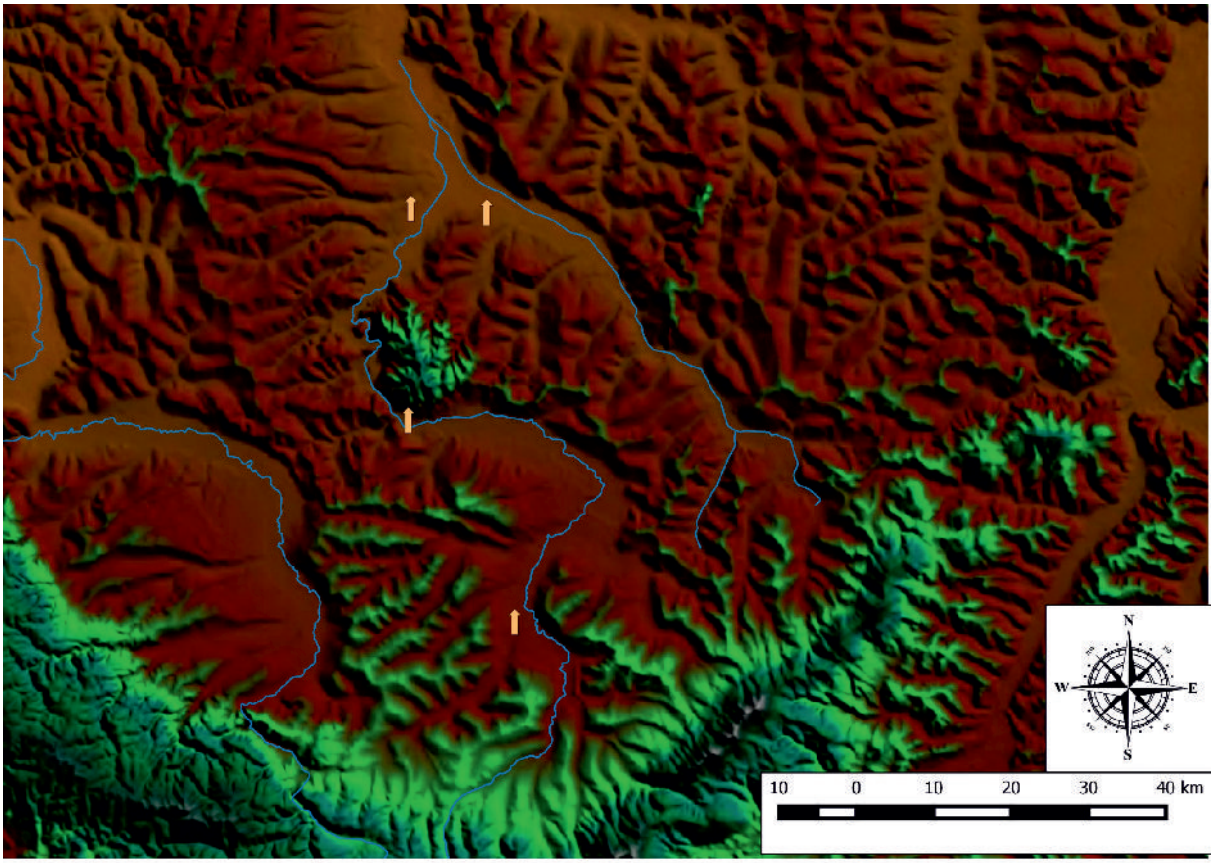


Fig 9. Settlements mentioned with the attribute of -possessio-

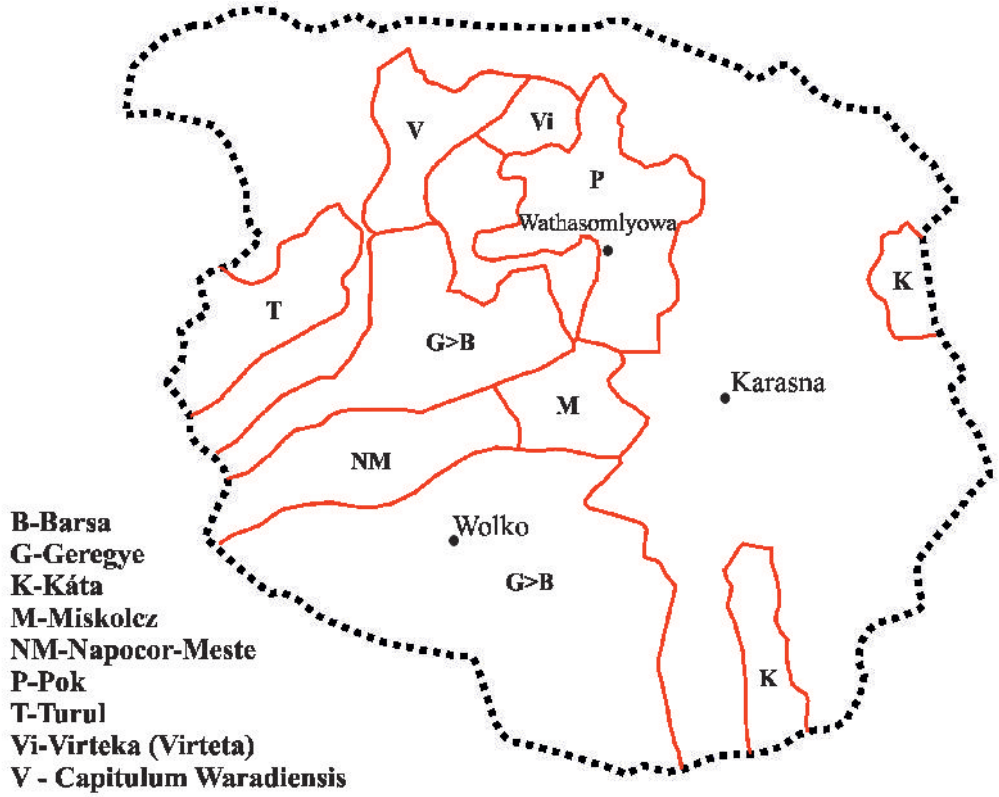


Fig 10. Late 13th century possessions in Crasna County (according to Györffy 1987)