



The Participation of the Medieval Transylvanian Counties in Tax Collection*

András W. Kovács

Research Institute of the Transylvanian Museum Society

wkovacsandras@eme.ro

In Transylvania the county authorities had to assist in collecting royal (state) taxes owed by the serfs of noble estates (like in other parts of Hungary). In 1324 the king exempted the Transylvanians from paying the tax called *collecta* that they previously had to submit to the voivode. (Based on analogies, it can be suggested that this tax was collected either because of the cancellation of the yearly renewal of money or the refusal of the compulsory exchange of older money.) From 1336 the yearly renewal of money and with this the compulsory exchange of the former money ceased to exist. In order to compensate this profit of the treasury (the chamber), King Charles I (1301–1342) assessed a new tax, which similarly to the previous one was called the chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*), but the “gate” (household or *porta*) became the taxation unit. This tax, according to the lease contract of the Transylvanian chamber from 1336, was also collected in Transylvania, but in 1366 King Louis I (1342–1382) exempted the Transylvanians from paying it. In 1467 the king tried to have the tax called *tributum fisci regalis* (that substituted the chamber's profit) collected also in Transylvania, whereon an uprising broke out. This latter tax and the more and more frequently collected extraordinary tax (*subsidiium, contributio, taxa*) usually made up one florin per household. For the upkeep of their delegations sent to the king, the Transylvanian counties collected an occasional tax, the so-called courting money (*pecunias udvarnicalis*), from their serfs. There is data of its collection from the fifteenth century on. These taxes, normally collected from estates located in territory of the counties, were exempt from payment because of royal privilege or because they belonged to the town of Szeben (Sibiu/Hermannstadt), the Seven Seats (‘Sieben Stühle’), but estates of the towns of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg), Brassó (Braşov/Kronstadt), Beszterce (Bistriţa/Nösen, Bistritz), and Medgyes (Mediaş/Mediasch) were also exempt. These settlements' exemption from paying the taxes had to be confirmed by recurrent voivodal (or sometimes royal) mandates sent to the vicevoivodes of Transylvania, the county authorities, the tax assessors, and tax collectors.

Keywords: Middle Ages, Transylvania, tax collection, counties, *pecunia udvarnicalis*, *taxa*, *contributio*, *subsidiium*

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Introduction

This study investigates the royal (state) taxes collected in Transylvania, the eastern province of Hungary, from the serfs who lived on noble estates, and the role county authorities¹ played in the process until 1526. The taxation of these counties (Belső-Szolnok, Doboka, Kolozs, Torda, Hunyad, Fehér, Küküllő), because of a local tax and the exemption from paying the chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*), differed from the taxation of other parts of the country, and was fundamentally dissimilar from the taxes paid by the privileged Transylvanian Székely and Saxon areas.

Fourteenth-Century Taxes

The most important bodies of the financial administration were the chambers; the Transylvanian chamber probably existed already by the end of the Árpádian period.² In 1324 King Charles I exempted the Transylvanian nobility and their serfs from paying the lodging and upkeep tax (the *descensus* and the *victualia*) as well as the tax named *collecta*, which until then had to be submitted to the voivode of Transylvania (*vayvoda Transsilvanus*), the officeholder appointed by the king to lead the province.³ From 1336 the chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*) became the direct tax of the serfs, which bears its name from the previous practice in which the treasury (chamber) earned profit through the yearly renewal of the money and the compulsory exchange of old coins. The taxation unit from that time on was the *porta* (household).⁴ According to the lease contract of the Transylvanian chamber from 1336, the levying of the household tax in the counties belonged to the jurisdiction of the chamber count, and the tax had to be collected by the officers of the chamber count (*per comitum camere nostre vel suos officiales*) in the presence of a delegate of the archbishop (of Esztergom), of the master of the treasury (*in presentia hominum domini archyepiscopi et magistri tawarnicorum nostrorum*), and the county authority. The count (*comes provincialis; ispán*) and the judges of the nobles (*iudices nobilium; szolgabíró*) received one-third of the fine that was

1 On the functioning of counties, see Tringli, "Le contee in Ungheria," and Tringli, "Megyék."

2 Weisz, "Kamaraispánok az Árpád-korban," 85, 87.

3 CDTrans, 2: no. 510. Cf. Weisz, "A kamara haszna okán szedett collecta," 556 (the *collecta* had to be paid for the rejection of the mandatory exchange of money or, in case the new money was not issued, it was collected as chamber's profit); Weisz, "Royal Revenues in the Árpádian Age," 258.

4 Engel, *Kamarahaszna-összeírások*, 3.

inflicted on those who refused to pay the tax.⁵ In 1366 King Louis I exempted the Transylvanian nobles and their estates from paying the chamber's profit (and the upkeep tax).⁶ Although later royal confirmations of the privilege charter are not known, the serfs of the Transylvanian nobles enjoyed this exemption for a long time (until 1467). Outside of Transylvania the chamber counts with their administration, the tax assessors and tax collectors (*dicatores, exactores*) assisted by county authorities, were in charge of collecting the tax.⁷

Extraordinary and local taxes however were sometimes also levied in Transylvania. According to a charter from 1368, the *officialis* at Szentimre (Sântimbru) of Péter Járái, vicevoivode of Transylvania (1344–1350, 1359–1368), with the help of the judges of nobles of Doboka and Kolozs Counties, had to collect a tax, four denars for each plot (*mansio*), awarded to the vicevoivode by the nobles of the country.⁸ There is no later reference to this tax.

Courting Money

The nobility of the Transylvanian counties collected the courting money (1448, 1456, 1477, 1488, 1499: *pecunias udvarnicales*)⁹ or courting denars (1466: *denarios udvarnicales*)¹⁰ from their serfs for the upkeep of their delegations¹¹ sent to the king. The contemporary name of the tax according to data from 1491—if it is not a misspelling—may have been *udvarló pénz*,¹² which, if one can connect with later mentions (1619, 1710), also attests to the meaning of the adjective 'courtier' (*udvarló*) as a 'person who does service at the court.'¹³ There is no data on the collection of the courting tax elsewhere than in Transylvania.

The (deputy) counts (*comites* and *vicecomites*) and the judges of the nobles in Transylvania took part in the collection of this local (and extraordinary) tax

5 *Decreta Regni Hungariae* 1301–1457, 90–94. Cf. Hóman, *A magyar királyság pénzügyei*, 236.

6 CDTrans, 4: no. 492.

7 Gábor, *A megyei intézmény*, 114–18; Engel, *Kamarabaszna-összeírások*, 6.

8 TelOkI, 1:92. (with erroneous dating to ca. 1350). The more probable dating of the charter is 9 August [1368]. (CDTrans, 4: no. 710). In 1366 the collector of the royal castle estates revenues (*iura regalia, collecta*) that belonged to the *honor* of the voivode was Pál, provost of Szeben, beside whom Péter [Járái] vicevoivode delegated an other person (CDTrans, 4: no. 544).

9 1448: DL 44524; 1456: WassLt, no. 454; 1477: DL 45675; 1488: DF 245105; 1499: DF 261080.

10 1466: DL 31170.

11 Transylvanian delegates in the royal court for instance in 1369: CDTrans, 4, no. 736; 1496: DF 245425, etc.

12 *pecunias ulgariter udvarlopenz* [!] (DF 245385, charter preserved in a contemporary copy).

13 SzT 13:707.

directly. In 1448 the Transylvanian vicevoivodes ordered the barons, nobles, and people of all origin and rank in Szolnok County to collect the courting money from their serfs because the Transylvanian nobles decided to send a delegation, including Miklós Kémeri and János son of Gyerő of Gyerővásárhely, to the prelates, barons, and honorable persons of the country in Buda; but many people disregarded paying the money. So they again ordered the collection of money by the first day of the next court period of Szolnok County, and if nobles would again deny fulfilling it, the task shall be remitted to the vicecounts and the judges of the nobles to have it collected from every single estate under the fine of three marks.¹⁴

In 1456, at the assembly called by the vicevoivodes to Torda (Turda/Thorenburg) of Transylvanian nobles, Székelys, and Saxons, the deputies of the *universitas* of the nobility reported that they elected Tamás Lökös (Wass) of Cege (Țaga) to join the delegation to the king, and he was given 32 gold florins of courting money (*pecunias udvarnicales*) for garments and horses. Afterward, the heirs of Tamás Lökös gave testimony that the deceased did in fact spend the money on clothes and horses.¹⁵ According to this account, the courting money was paid only by the nobility of the counties and not by the Székelys and Saxons. The exemption of the Saxons is also confirmed by the fact that royal, voivodal, and vicevoivodal mandates disallowed the Transylvanian nobility and the counties from collecting courting money from the estates that were lying in county territories but were attached to the Seven Seats ('Sieben Stühle,' its center was Szeben; 1488; 1491; 1492; 1501; 1505).¹⁶

In 1477 upon the request of Erzsébet, widow of János Dengelegi Pongrác, voivode of Transylvania (1475–1476, 1467–1472, 1475–1476), King Matthias (1458–1490) exempted her serfs from paying the courting money and sent a mandate to the voivode of Transylvania, the vicevoivode, and the county

14 DL 44524.

15 WassLt, no. 454.

16 The royal and voivodal mandates forbade the collection of the courting money from the following estates: Rovás (Rävășel/Rosch), which belonged to the Virgin Mary Church of Szeben (1488: DF 245105); Monora (Mănărade/Donnersmarkt), Csanád (Cenade/Scholten), Sorostély (Soroștin/Schoresten), and Holdvilág (Țăpu/Abstdorf), which belonged to the abbey of Egres ([Igrış], 1491: DF 245385); Csanád, Monora, Sorostély, Holdvilág, Bolkács (Bălcaciu/Bulkesch), Zsidve (Jidvei/Seiden), Nagyekemező and Kisekemező (Târnava/Grossprobstdorf and Târnăvioara/Kleinprobstdorf), which belonged to the Seven Seats (1492: DF 245158); Volkány (Vulcan/Wolkendorf), which was the possession of the Saint Nicholas parish church of Segesvár ([Sighișoara/Schässburg], 1501: DF 278466); Nagyekemező, Kisekemező, Rüz (Ruși/Reussen), Bolkács, Zsidve (belonged to the parish church of Szeben, 1505: DF 245623). Sometimes the courting money was also referred to as *taxa* (1488) or *collecta* (1492).

authorities stating such.¹⁷ Although it was the king who forgave its collection, the courting tax was not a tax collected for the ruler; in 1499 and 1501 voivode Péter Szentgyörgyi (1498–1510) referred to the royal taxes (*contributio regie maiestatis*; *taxa regalis*) and the courting money (*pecunia udvarnicalis*) as separate types of taxes.¹⁸

In 1492, when upon the request of the abbot of Kolozsmonostor (Cluj-Mănăştur), King Vladislas II (1490–1516) exempted the serfs of the abbey from paying the courting money, the abbot himself also called this tax in Transylvania an occasional one, but which the people of the abbey had not paid in living memory.¹⁹

In 1496, Vladislas II ordered that the tax the Transylvanians called courting money should be collected from all serf-holding nobles proportionately to their estates, with the exception of those nobles only who already live in the royal court.²⁰

So the courting money was an occasional tax that the nobles of the Transylvanian parts would levy for no other reason than to cover the expenses of the delegates sent to the court. This is the reason why Székelys and Saxons did not pay it: as privileged peoples they appealed their issues on their own, and, what is more, the nobility of the counties was not entitled to offer any tax in their name.

Extraordinary Taxes

From the coronation of Matthias onwards, there is a markedly large quantity of data on the collection of extraordinary—including war—taxes,²¹ but the data on their collection originates mostly from the archives of Saxon towns.²² The war taxes however had been collected earlier as well, and in Transylvania too.²³

17 DL 45675.

18 DF 261080 and DF 278466.

19 DL 32511. The charter is quoted in Jakó, “A kolozsmonostori apátság,” 64, fn. 286. See also Szabó, “A kolozsmonostori apátság gazdálkodása,” 56 fn 159.

20 DF 245425 (19th-century copy: DF 253810).

21 The *contributio* (*contributio generalis pro defensione regni ... Hungarie*: DL 30207) was also collected in 1464 in Transylvania; in 1468 King Matthias exempted the Székelys of Aranyos and Maros Seats from paying the taxes of the treasury (*tributum fisci regalis*) that were to be generally assessed (KmJkv, 1: no. 1793).

22 Kubinyi, “A Mátyás-kori államszervezet,” 106–11.

23 E.g. in the protocols of the convent of Kolozsmonostor—in connection with an estate transfer—in an undated entry, dated by its editor to 1454, the war tax (*exercitialis contributio*: KmJkv 1: no. 1161) was already referred to.

The taxes passed by the Hungarian diet also applied to Transylvania, but the Transylvanian nobility in itself had no right to vote on the tax.²⁴

In 1467 King Matthias eradicated the chamber's profit (*lucrum camerae*) when the taxes of the treasury (*tributum fisci regalis*) were substituted for it;²⁵ this was also to be introduced in Transylvania. However, after the Transylvanian uprising of 1467, the previous tax system was reintroduced (and even if more families lived behind one "gate," they still had to pay only after one household). From the 1470s onwards, when Matthias had the extraordinary tax (*subsidiium*, i.e., benefit, or *contributio*, i.e. tax) collected, he included the chamber's profit in it, meaning that the *lucrum camerae* (or portal tax) was not collected separately; the two taxes added up to one florin per *porta*.²⁶ The normally passed tax to be paid by tenant peasant households was collected yearly.²⁷

The so-called royal account book of treasurer Zsigmond Ernuszt from 1494–1495 preserved the name of the royal tax collectors (*exactores et dicatores*) who were sent to Transylvania (in both years they were István Istvánfi and Miklós Kápolnai), their salaries (300/331 florins), as well as the sum of the tax levied on the seven Transylvanian counties. In every county, the tax collectors were accompanied by the counts and the judges of the nobles, who also received salary from the treasury (168/148 florins). In 1495 during the period of tax levying, the treasury either granted an honorarium to ten better-off Transylvanian nobles (*potioribus nobilibus regni Transsilvanensis*) or exempted their estates from the tax payment (probably because they mediated for the undisturbed collection of the tax).²⁸

The levying (of the serfs) of nobles—one of the contributions (*contributio*) of the three privileged "nations"—was not amongst the largest Transylvanian

24 Mályusz, *Az erdélyi magyar társadalom*, 59; Kubinyi, "Erdély," 69.

25 Thallóczy, *A kamara haszna*, 95; Nógrády, "A lázadás ára," 137.

26 Gyöngyössi, "A kamara haszna," 146–47; E. Kovács, "Mátyás és az erdélyi lázadás," 19. There are two examples of the payment of the one-florin tax in Transylvania: in 1470 in the Fogaras (Făgăraș/Fogarasch) district (*in sede Fogaras*) a one-florin tax for each household was collected (Ub, 6:469); in 1478 Matthias exempted the salt extractors of Vizakna (Ocna Sibiului/Salzburg) from paying the that tax (Ub, 7:179). In 1473 the serfs of the counties paid a one-florin tax (Ub, 6:545–46; quoted in Kubinyi, "A Mátyás-kori államszervezet," 106).

27 Solymosi, "Az Ernuszt-féle számadáskönyv," 414.

28 Kubinyi, "Erdély," 69, 72–73. The source quoted here: Engel, *Geschichte*, 1, 38–39, 47, 149–50, 160. The sum assessed to the counties (1494/1495): Kolozs: 5643/5583, Fehér: 6788/6688, (Belső-)Szolnok: 2806/2756, Doboka: 3102½/3100, Hunyad 5654½/5604½, Küküllő: 3377/3307, Torda: 4071½/4051½, all together: 31442½/31090 florins. From this sum however only 17057½/19615½ came actually in.

incomes of the king. The instructions and reports²⁹ written during the reign of King Ferdinand I (1526–1564) in Transylvania (1552–1556), of which the ones by royal deputies György Werner and Pál Bornemissza are likely the most important, testify to this.³⁰ Thanks to the sophisticated literacy of the Habsburg administration, previously unknown data of major significance is available for this short period that also mirrors the medieval situation. According to the treasurer Péter Haller, the deficiencies of the collection of Transylvanian contribution can be attributed to the negligence of the counts; it was not possible, not even with voivodal powers, to force them to have the taxes collected, which was confirmed by the collectors of the *contributio* as well (1553).³¹ According to a 1554 letter of László Gyalui Vas, Transylvanian financial director (*supremus proventuum Regie Maiestatis in Transsylvania administrator*) of Ferdinand I, sent to an unknown recipient, it was almost impossible to collect the remainder of the *contributio* of the Transylvanian counties even with the power of the voivodes.³²

There are no surviving tax accounts from the territory of the Transylvanian counties from before 1526.³³ The participation of the counties in collecting the taxes for the king at this point is verified by the following charter evidences.

On December 4, 1464, King Matthias ordered his tax collectors (*dicatoribus*), Antal Patai Dezső and Mihály Zsuki, to present him their tax accounts.³⁴ There is no information concerning the representatives of the county authority who were ordered to accompany them (previously Antal Dezső was count of Kolozs and Doboka Counties in 1460). From 1470 there is data pertaining to a royal tax collector of Fehér and Küküllő Counties called Miklós Piri (*de Piry*).³⁵ A damaged charter of Matthias from 1472 urged the authority of one of the—probably Transylvanian—counties to collect the *contributio* from the estates of the nobles.³⁶

On February 4, 1499, Péter Szentgyörgyi, the voivode in a mandate to Doboka County—to the comites or the vicecomites and judges of the nobility—

29 Oborni, *Erdély pénzügyei*, 173, 180 (mandate of King Ferdinand I to Péter Haller, treasurer in 1553).

30 Engel, *Geschichte*, 3, 10–12 (the chapter entitled: De contributione subsidiorum in Transylvania).

31 Oborni, *Erdély pénzügyei*, 253–54, 259.

32 *Ibid.*, 268–70.

33 C. Tóth, “Lehetőségek és feladatok a középkori járások kutatásában,” 402–3; Solymosi, “Az Ernuszt-féle számadáskönyv,” 414. The part with relevance to Transylvania of the account of the treasurer Osvát Szentlászlói (Túz) is from the beginning of the 1490s: Neumann, “A királyi városok adóztatása,” 105.

34 DF 255167.

35 Ub, 6:469. The tax collector in his letter written to Szeben asks for sending its delegates as the households (*porta*) could only be conscribed in their presence.

36 DF 257817. The addressee may have been one of the Transylvanian counties as the charter was preserved in the Malomfalva (Morești) archive of the Kemény family.

and the *universitas* of its nobility urged them to collect the royal tax (*contributio regie maiestatis*) from the serfs of the county according to the register of the tax assessors, as the deadline set by the tax collectors, Tamás Harinai Farkas and János Somkeréki Erdélyi, had passed.³⁷

In 1513 the voivode János Szapolyai (1510–1526) forbade Kolozs County from collecting the 47 florins of royal tax (*subsidia maiestatis regie*) owed by István Zsuki based on his wealth totaling 53 *portas*. He addressed the order to the authority of Kolozs County and to the tax collectors (*exactoribus presentis subsidii*);³⁸ in 1518 it was also Szapolyai who sent a mandate to the authority of Hunyad County to gather and hand over to the tax collectors the 60-denar tax offered to the king (*subsidium sue maiestatis*) by the Transylvanian nobles;³⁹ while in 1526 he ordered Fehér County to pay the royal tax (*subsidia maiestatis regie*) to the delegate of the treasurer.⁴⁰

It was possible to compensate for the unpaid taxes directly from the estates of the nobles who denied payment, but this had to be brought into effect by the counties. In 1523 the vicevoivode István Tomori (1523–1526) informed Torda County that there was no longer any need to avenge the estates of Tamás Háportoni Forró as he did in fact pay the taxes (*subsidium regie maiestatis*).⁴¹

In Transylvania tax collection was supervised by the voivode,⁴² and the related lawsuits also belonged to the jurisdiction of his court, not that of the counties. In 1499, the voivode Péter Szentgyörgyi instructed every Transylvanian county that the lawsuits concerning the *contributio* due to the king and the courting money should be heard in front of the voivode and not at county courts.⁴³ The example of the lawsuit below does not contradict this principle: in 1483 the voivode, István Báthory (1479–1493), ordered the steward (*provisor curie*) of Csicsó (Ciceu) castle to bring those servants and serfs of Mihály Szerdahelyi from Retteg (Reteag) who set themselves up for tax collectors and taxed the serfs of István Erdélyi at Virágosberek (Florești), Németi (Mintiu), and Csépán (Cepari/Tschepan) to the coming court period of Belső-Szolnok County. So the

37 KárolyiOkl, 3:32–33.

38 SzapolyaiOkl, 390–91.

39 SzapolyaiOkl, 413–14.

40 SzapolyaiOkl, 513–14 (DL 63046.) Cf. DRMH, 4:258.

41 Szabó, *Országgyűlések II. Lajos korában*, 195 (DL 47526).

42 Neumann, “Dózsa legyőzője,” 96.

43 DF 261080.

lawsuit was not about taxation,⁴⁴ but about the related fraud, and by his authority, the voivode gave the order to the *provisor*.

Exemptions

In villages owned by and legally “attached” to the Saxon towns and seats but lying in county territory, the taxes paid by the serfs of the county nobility were not collected.⁴⁵ The “separation” from the county primarily meant the exemption from its authority, but it went hand in hand with the exemption from the taxes collected in the counties as well as the exemption from mandatory soldiering. This of course did not mean that their tax-paying and soldiering duties ended, but that these duties had to be fulfilled according to their new environment. This paper does not aim to list every area that was exempted from county taxation and soldiering (e.g., the whole of the Székely Lands and Saxon Lands, for a while the Fogaras District, which was outside of the county organization, as well as towns that paid taxes in a different way, their lands, and also some market towns). In the following pages we will only discuss those cases that have data on the prohibiting of county tax collectors or on exemptions typically in the case of settlements that previously belonged to the authority of the counties but later were attached to one of the privileged towns, seats, or districts. The orders issued on these matters preserve important, elsewhere irretrievable data mostly on county taxation, as they specify what kind of tax should not be collected there.

The abbey of Kolozsmonostor

As noted above, according to the privilege charter of August 27, 1492 issued by King Vladislas II, the estates of the monastery of Kolozsmonostor were exempted from paying the courting money.⁴⁶ Based on this it can be assumed that the serfs of other ecclesiastical institutions were also exempted from paying this tax, but as of now no further data confirms this.

44 TelOkl, 2, 157–58 (DL 74219).

45 On the estates of the Saxons in the counties, see Müller, *Stüble und Distrikte*, 306–9. The tenant villages in the counties received by the Saxon as donations were listed only partly in the conscription of the household heads of the Seven Seats in 1488. See Draskóczy, “Az erdélyi Szászföld,” 4–6.

46 1492: DL 32511, quoted in Jakó, “A kolozsmonostori apátság,” 64 fn 286.

The estates of the Saxon Seven Seats and the town Szeben

The inhabitants of the settlements lying in the territories of the counties but owning Saxon privileges were taxed differently than other serfs of the counties. From the fifteenth century numerous royal, voivodal, and vicevoivodal mandates survive which forbade the assessment and collection of the county taxes at the privileged settlements. As the majority of these estates lay in Fehér and Küküllő Counties, the addressees in most cases were the authorities of these two counties or the tax collectors being sent there, and in the case of the royal charters usually the voivodes and the vicevoivodes. For instance, the addressees of the mandate of Matthias dated to June 9, 1475 were the collectors of the one-florin tax of the Transylvanian parts, but primarily those of Fehér and Küküllő Counties, and the grantees were the Saxons of the Seven Seats and Two Seats (“Zwei Stühle”), the Barcaság (districtul Bârsei, Burzenland, *terra*), Brassó and Beszterce (both *civitates*), furthermore the abbeys of Kerc (Cârța/Kerz) and Egres, and the estates of the provostry of Szeben attached to the Saxons. The reason for this exemption was the obligation of the Saxons to pay a total of 10,000 gold florins, taking care of the division of this burden themselves.⁴⁷ The methods of taxation applicable to the estates attached to the Saxon seats became established relatively late. In 1473 the envoy of Beszterce to Szeben was informed that the county tax would be collected also from the (county) territories attached to the Seven Seats.⁴⁸

The exemption of the settlements from taxation had to be provided with recurrent voivodal (sometimes royal) mandates addressed to the vicevoivode, counties, tax assessors, and tax collectors.⁴⁹

47 Ub, 7:53 (DF 244998).

48 Hegyi, “Radna,” 51. The document quoted here: “certe possessiones ipsis septem sedium Saxonibus annexas de novo et per regiam maiestatem donatas, que alias ad comitatus nobilium connumerare fuissent, dicari deberent et dicati sunt de facto” (Ub, 6:546). Cf. Ub, 7:135–36.

49 1434: Ub, 4:528 (DF 244749); 1469: Ub, 6: 394–95 (DF 245176); 1476: Ub, 7:104–5 (DF 245012); 1485: Ub, 7:399–400 (DF 245886); 1488: DF 245101–245102; 1491: DF 245385; 1492: DF 245153, cf. Neumann, “Királyi hatalom,” 51–52; 1492: DF 245158; 1493: DL 36614; 1495: DF 245215 and 245217; 1495: DF 245417 (cf. DF 245418, quoted in Draskóczy, “Az erdélyi Szászföld,” 5 fn 23); 1499: DF 245280 (privilege charter); 1504: DF 245617; 1508: DF 245663; 1509: DF 245679; 1511: DF 245708; 1513: DF 245722 and SJAN-SB, Urkunden, 5, no. 1235 (SB-F-00001-1-U5-1235); 1514: DF 245739 and 245741; 1515: SzapolyaiOkl, 360–61; 1543: SJAN-SB, Urkunden, 4, no. 416 (SB-F-00001-1-U4-416).

The abbey of Egres, the provostry of Szeben, the lands confiscated from Miklós Salgói, and the estates of the abbey of Kerc

In 1416 King Sigismund (1387–1437) sent a mandate to Miklós Csáki, voivode of Transylvania (1402–1403, 1415–1426), to further allow the *hospites* living on the estates of the abbey of Egres called Monora, Csanád, Apátfalva (Holdvilág), and Sorostély (all in Fehér County) to join the ‘banderial’ army of the seven Saxon seats and to prevent the Transylvanian nobles from forcing them under their own banderia.⁵⁰ In 1416 the king, on the request of Imre, his special chaplain and abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Egres, forbade anyone from the occupation or collection of the incomes, the *census*, and the *collecta* of the same estates of the abbey after the abbot’s death as he put these lands under the protection of the Seven Seats.⁵¹

In 1424 King Sigismund donated the Saint Ladislav provostry to the town of Szeben, including its three estates (Nagyekemező, Kisekemező, Rűsz), and from the estates of Bolkács and Zsidve in Küküllő County, the sections that were confiscated from Miklós Salgói.⁵²

The abbey of Kerc and its estates enjoyed the privileges of the Seven Seats in terms of jurisdiction, taxation, and soldiering already in the thirteenth century,⁵³ but in 1474 King Matthias once again donated the estates to the Holy Virgin Church⁵⁴ of Szeben.

50 ZsOkl, 5: no. 1896. = Ub, 4:17–18. These four estates of the abbey of Egres had already been placed under the protection of the Saxons of Szeben by King Charles I in 1315 (CDTrans, 2: no. 228). The German and Hungarian names of Apátfalva refer to its ownership by the abbey of Egres. The later name of Apátfalva is Holdvilág (see e. g. 1491: DF 245385).

51 ZsOkl, 6: no. 969. = Ub, 4:53–56. From the confirmation of the charter dating to 1494 (DF 245208).

52 Temesváry, *Erdély püspökei*, 325–26; Müller, *Stühle und Distrikte*, 305. The donation charter: Ub, 4:217–220. = ZsOkl, 11: no. 972 (DF 244687).

53 In 1264 Duke Stephen exempted the abbey of Kerc and its estates from the *descensus* demanded by the voivode of Transylvania and the barons, and made possible for them to pay the taxes together with the Saxons of Szeben and conforming to the privileges of those (CDTrans, 1: no. 250). This privilege was confirmed by the forthcoming kings as well (CDTrans, 1: no. 316 and 577; 2: no. 49) and was even further extended in 1322 by King Charles I, who attached the abbey of Kerc and its estates to Szeben (CDTrans, 2: no. 420). See as well 1469: Ub, 6:394–95 (DF 245176).

54 Ub, 7:5–6, 7:138–39. For the estates—(Szász)apátfalva (Apoş/Abstdorf), Földvár (Feldioara/Marienburg), Glimboka (Glámboaca/Hühnerbach), Kercisóra (Oláhker/Cârţişoara), Kisdísznód (Cisnădioara/Michelsberg), Kolun (Colun/Kellen), Mese (Meşendorf/Meschendorf), Miklóstelke (Cloaşterf/Klosdorf), (Szász)keresztúr (Cris/Deutsch-Kreuz)—see CDTrans, 2: no. 420; ZsOkl, 6: no. 1712. = Ub, 4:68; ZsOkl, 6: no. 1736. = Ub, 4:71; Müller, *Stühle und Distrikte*, 305; Hegyi Géza, *Erdély és a Szilágyság birtokviszonyai 1341-ben* [The estate structure of Transylvania and Szilagy region in 1341] (map, appendix to CDTrans, vol. 4).

Péterfalva (Petiș/Petersdorf) and Rovás

In 1486, King Matthias issued a mandate to the Transylvanian voivode and Fehér County in which he ordered that no tax (*taxa, collecta*) paid by the (serfs of the) nobility of the county shall be collected from the inhabitants of the Péterfalva and Rovás estates, as he attached these territories to the Saxon seats and exempted them from the authority of the Transylvanian voivode and the *comes* of Fehér County, as well as from soldiering (the two estates were earlier bequeathed by the widow of Péter Veresmarti to the Virgin Mary Church of Szeben).⁵⁵ In 1488, referring to a royal privilege (*exemptionalis*), vicevoivode István Telegdi forbade Fehér County from collecting the royal taxes or the courting money from the inhabitants of Rovás as the estate belongs to the Virgin Mary Church of Szeben.⁵⁶ However, even later on, there were noble holdings to be found at Rovás, where noble and voivodal jurisdiction remained.⁵⁷

Talmács (Tălmăciu/Talmesch)

The king had the right to remove a settlement from the jurisdiction of the county. In 1453 King Ladislas V (1440–1457)—actually János Hunyadi (1452–1455), who wielded power with the title of chief-captain (*supremus capitaneus regie maiestatis*)—detached from Fehér County the castles of Talmács and Latorvár (Lotrioara/Lauter), as well as Vöröstorony (Turnu Roșu/Rothenturm) and its related estate and donated these to the Seven Seats. He also extended the Seven Seats' right to the donated estates,⁵⁸ the donation being confirmed by Matthias in 1468.⁵⁹ Later this estate formed the basis of the Saxon sub-seat (Filialstuhl) of Talmács.

55 Ub, 7:411–12 (DF 245073). In 1460, the two estates got into the possession of Péter Veresmarti, royal judge (*index regalis*) of Szeben as pledges (Ub, 6:75–76).

56 DF 245105.

57 DF 245090–245092.

58 Ub, 5:374–76, 5:384–85. Talmács, Latorvár, Vöröstorony, Kistalmács (Tălmăcel/Klein-Talmesch), Bojca (Boița), Plopy, Porcsesd (Porcești), *predium Crevczerfelth*, Oltalsósebes (Sebeșu de Jos/Unter-Schewisch), Oltfelsősebes (Sebeșu de Sus/Ober-Schewisch) (*utraque Sebes*).

59 Ub, 6:358.

Rukkor (Rucăr/Ruckersdorf)

In 1453 King Ladislas V donated half of Rukkor, along with the estate of Talmács, to the Seven Seats,⁶⁰ but its fate was different than that of other estates because its other half was obtained by the Saxons only in 1486.⁶¹ In 1488 Matthias banned the Transylvanian counties and the tax collectors there from assessing taxes on Rukkor, the tax of which had to be added to the *census* of the Saxons.⁶²

Fogaras and Omlás (Amnaş/Hamlesch)

The district (*districtus*) of Fogaras and the estate of Omlás came into the possession of the Seven Seats as a royal donation in 1469,⁶³ which then was confirmed by Matthias in 1472 and again in 1483.⁶⁴ In 1486 Fogaras came back into the hands of its previous owners, the Vingárti Gerébs.⁶⁵ The villages of the estate of Omlás later formed the Saxon sub-seat of Szelistye (Sălişte/Grossdorf). In 1485 the tax collectors of Fehér and Küküllő Counties had to be forbidden from collecting taxes from Omlás and Talmács (and other Saxon estates).⁶⁶

Felek (Feleacu) (estate of Kolozsvár)

In 1377 King Louis I gave the ‘sheep fiftieth’ (*quingagesima ovium*, this was a tax due to the king) of the Romanian serfs of Felek village to its owner, the town of Kolozsvár, and further forbade the tax collectors from the collection this tax.⁶⁷ In 1415 King Sigismund also guaranteed the town that the Romanian inhabitants of Felek shall not be obligated to turn in the sheep fiftieth and foodstuffs (*prandium*),⁶⁸ and in 1478 King Matthias issued a mandate to the Transylvanian tax collectors forbidding them to oblige the peasants of the two estates of Kolozsvár, Felek, and Fejérd (Feiurdeni; this latter was also donated

60 Ub, 5:375.

61 Ub, 7:468–69.

62 DF 245103.

63 Ub, 6:436–37.

64 Ub, 6:532–33, 7:343.

65 Ub 6:195; DL 65135., Quoted, along with other data on the ownership of Fogaras, in Balogh, *Az erdélyi renaissance*, 227–28.

66 Ub, 7:399–400 (DF 245886), cf. Nussbächer, “Posesiunile oraşului Braşov,” 327.

67 DF 280997.

68 Ub, 3:642. = ZsOkl, 5: no. 58.

to the town by him) to pay the taxes collected in the province, as their taxes should be tallied with that of Kolozsvár.⁶⁹ In 1509 the palatine (1504–1519) and *regie maiestati locumtenens* Imre Perényi (1509–1510, 1510–1511, 1515) ordered the collectors of the *taxa* and the *contributio* of Transylvania not to count the serfs of Felek amongst those of the county, nor to collect their taxes.⁷⁰

The estates of Brassó

The estates of Brassó that lay in Fehér County were also exempted from the taxation of the county. In January 1496 King Vladislas II—in response to the complaints of the town of Brassó—ordered the tax assessors and tax collectors of Fehér County not to demand provisionment (*victualia*) from the estates of Tohán (Tohanu/Tohan), Zernyest (Zărnești), Újfalu (Barcaújfalu; Satu Nou/Neudorf), Sárkány (Șercaia/Schirkanyen), and Páró (Părau/Mikesdorf). This was because he donated them to the Corpus Christi altar of the parish church of Brassó for his salvation and in terms of taxation attached them to the town; therefore its inhabitants shall not pay taxes in the manner of the serfs of noble estates.⁷¹

Brassó received Töröcsvár (Bran/Törzburg) and its estate from King Vladislas II in 1498 as a pledge.⁷² On July 24, 1500,⁷³ in terms of paying the *contributio* and *taxa*, and soldiering, King Vladislas classified the serfs and other inhabitants living on the estates of Brassó as Saxons, mandating that voivode Péter Szentgyörgyi, treasurer János Bornemissza (1500–1504), and the tax assessors shall tax them accordingly. From the estates mentioned in the privilege—Pürkerec (Purcăreni), Zajzon (Zizin), Tatrang (Tărlungeni), Szentmihály (Cernatu), Türkös (Turcheș/Türkesdorf), Bácsfalu (Baciu/Batschendorf), Krizba (Crizbav/Krebsbach), Apáca (Apața/Geist; estate complex of Töröcsvár), Sárkány, Mikefalva (= Páró),⁷⁴ Újfalu (holdings of the town), Zernyest, and Tohán (the latter two

69 Ub, 7:197. King Matthias donated half of the village Fejérd and the market-town (*oppidum*) Kolozs to Kolozsvár in 1470 (KvOkl 234–35).

70 DF 281010. = Pop et al., *Feleacul*, 78.

71 DF 247078. For the history of Sárkány and Páró, which were considered to be parts of Fogaras *district*, see Nussbächer, “Poseșiunile orașului Brașov,” 326–33.

72 DF 247080. = Trauschenfels, *Zur Rechtslage*, 3–4, no. III. For the pledging of the estate of Töröcsvár to Brassó and its later history, see Nussbächer, “Contribuții,” 30–31.

73 DF 247090 = Trauschenfels, *Zur Rechtslage*, 6–7, no. V.

74 *Mikefalva* is the other name of Páró (Nussbächer, “Poseșiunile orașului Brașov,” 326).

belonging to the Virgin Mary parish of Brassó)⁷⁵—some were in Fehér County and accordingly were exempted from county taxation. On June 24, 1501 in response to the complaints of the magistrates of Brassó and the Barcaság district, King Vladislas II gave a mandate not only to the county authorities but also the *universitas* of the nobility of the Transylvanian parts that they shall not assess taxes on the town of Brassó and its estates in the Barcaság and the tax collectors should not demand the *taxa* and the *census*, because they would then be taxed twice; in the meantime he also ordered the voivode Péter Szentgyörgyi to protect the grantees.⁷⁶ In 1533, voivode István Báthory (1530–1534) explained in his answer sent to the authorities of the town Brassó that he had received their letter expounding on the privileges and exemptions of the town (namely, that Törösvár and its parts belonged to the church of Brassó and since the “holy kings” these had been exempted from the *contributio*, that is from the *taxa regia* and the *exercitatio*, or had been paying those together with the Saxons) and that he also received knowledge of the fact that not long before, when the Saxons paid two florins per capita as *subsidiium*, Brassó refused to pay the tax, and as a result the inhabitants of Törösvár and its parts did not pay the tax at all, be it as Saxons or as nobles.⁷⁷

The district of Radna (Rodna) (estate of the town of Beszterce)

Not long after the decision of the diet of 1467, which declared that the castle estates of Radna, Omlás, and Fogaras cannot be given away, in the autumn of 1469 Matthias gave the district of Radna (*districtus Radna*) to the town of Beszterce. The Saxon lands also counted amongst the royal domains, so this did not mean the contempt of the 1467 decision, in the background of which the king’s wishes can be supposed anyway. In 1472 King Matthias—in answer to the complaints of the town of Beszterce—ordered the tax assessors and tax collectors not to tax the Romanians (*Vallachos*) living in the district of the valley of Radna (*in districtu Rodna Velgje*).⁷⁸

75 For the acquisition of Zernyest and Tohán, see Müller, *Stüble und Distrikte*, 306.

76 DF 247093.

77 SJAN-BV, Collection Schnell, 2, 102 (BV-F-00001-03-2-102).

78 Hegyi, “Radna,” 50–51. Cf. Ub, 6:535.

Volkány (estate of Segesvár)

Volkány was bestowed to Segesvár from Fehér County by King Matthias in 1487.⁷⁹ King Vladislas II confirmed it again in 1491,⁸⁰ and so did King John I (1526–1540) in 1531. In 1501, Péter Szentgyörgyi, the voivode of Transylvania—with reference to the royal donation that the mayor of Segesvár, Anthon Polnar, presented—ordered the incumbent counts, vicecounts, and tax collectors not to collect the royal *taxa* and the courting money in Volkány, the estate of the St. Nicholas Church of Segesvár; and also forbade the county to fine the people of Volkány, as had happened a couple of times in the past.⁸¹ In 1521, when Louis II (1516–1526) confirmed the belonging of Volkány to Segesvár, he mandated the Fehér County authority and the *universitas* of its nobility to respect the extension of the rights of Segesvár.⁸² In 1527 it was Péter Perényi, voivode of Transylvania (1526–1529), who ordered the Transylvanian county authorities and the tax collectors not to force the inhabitants of Volkány to pay in any way the taxes levied on the county, as that would constitute double taxation of the village.⁸³

Pócstelke (Păucea/Puschendorf; estate of Medgyes)

In 1508 Vladislas II exempted the serfs who lived at the part of Pócstelke that belonged to the St. Margaret Church of Medgyes from paying any ordinary or extraordinary royal tax (the estate of Pócstelke was bought for the church by the town),⁸⁴ and in 1514 he ordered Küküllő County not to collect any tax at all (*taxa*, *contributio* and *subsidiium*) in the estate part of Medgyes at Pócstelke.⁸⁵

The above-listed exemptions (with the exception of Kolozsmonostor, and the its privileges later acquiring Pócstelke) are all recorded in the section of the 1494/1495 royal account book registering the exempted county territories (although it does not give details about the estates of Szeben). According to this

79 DF 278460 = Hurmuzaki, II/2:300. = Müller, “Die Schäßburger Bergkirche,” 342. Cf. DF 278462 and DL 13225.

80 DF 278462. = Müller, “Die Schäßburger Bergkirche,” 344–45.

81 DF 278466 (for its copy: DL 13225). = Müller, “Die Schäßburger Bergkirche,” 347–48.

82 DF 278467. = Müller, “Die Schäßburger Bergkirche,” 354–55.

83 Müller, “Die Schäßburger Bergkirche,” 355–56.

84 DL 29926, quoted in Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, 5:890–91.

85 The mandate of Vladislas II from December 19, 1514 to Küküllő County (transcribed in the charter of Ferdinand I dated to November 13, 1552), Archiv der Evangelischen Kirchengemeinde Mediasch, no. 120. I thank Adinel Dincă for drawing my attention to the charter.

source, amongst others, no tax was collected from Fogaras (the king forgave that to its previous landlord, Péter Geréb), from Radnavölgye, from the estates of Szeben, from “Csanád” (this meaning the Csanád, Monora, Apátfalva, and Sorostély estates of the abbey of Egres), and neither from the village of Felek, which belonged to Kolozsvár.⁸⁶

Conclusions

The direct state tax of the serfs, the chamber’s profit (the *lucrum camerae*), was collected from 1336 onwards also in Transylvania with other local taxes; however, King Louis I exempted the Transylvanians from paying these in 1366. So far we only have fifteenth-century data on the collection of the so-called courting money in the Transylvanian counties for the upkeep of the delegates sent by the Transylvanian nobles to the royal court. When in 1467 instead of the *lucrum camerae* King Matthias introduced the *tributum fisci regalis* and wanted to collect it in Transylvania, an uprising broke out. After its fast repression only the one-florin tax was collected with growing intensity. The collection of the taxes of the counties was supervised by the leading officeholder, the voivode (and his deputy, the vicevoivode). The settlements which belonged to any of the privileged towns (Kolozsvár, Beszterce, Brassó) or to the Saxon Seven Seats, or which received a privilege themselves, were exempted from the jurisdiction of the counties, did not pay the taxes collected by the counties, and did not take part in the banderial army of the counties.

The sources do not suggest whether the counties were divided into smaller units, such as districts, and if so what role these played in taxation.

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86 Engel, *Geschichte*, 1:39, 1:149. The account book does not mention Hunyad/Bánffyhunyad (Huedin) although—according to a document which was preserved only in a simple copy—in 1503 King Vladislas II gave mandate to the treasurer János Bornemissza, the royal tax collectors, and the authority of Kolozs County that no royal tax (*taxa* or *contributio*) shall be collected from the town of because of its role in the trade of Transylvania. DL 36850. This data should be considered as of doubtful authenticity until the emergence of the original charter.

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