



The Town of Gölnicbánya in the Árpád Era*

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In this article, I describe the emergence and early development of Gölnicbánya (today Gelnica, Slovakia) from a settlement-historical and historical-geographical approach, mainly based on the diploma material of the Árpád and the early Angevin Eras concerning the settlement and its region. I examine the origin of the town in the context of the northern expansion of the royal forest-estate of Torna and the economical upgrading of Szepes, which dates to the beginning of the thirteenth century. I show how Gölnicbánya became the primary center of the county's southern part in the second half of the thirteenth century thanks to mining and holding markets. I offer a detailed analysis of the provisions of the privilege charter from 1287, emphasizing that the border description covered a larger area far beyond the original extent of the settlement. I contend that although the charter refers the donations of two predecessor kings, the points set new provisions. Finally, I show how the economic importance of Gölnicbánya became apparent during the internal wars following the extinction of the Árpád dynasty and the consolidation that was underway in the early fourteenth century.

Keywords: Settlement history, urban history, historical geography, regional social history, economic history.

The formation and early history of Gölnicbánya (today Gelnica, Slovakia) is a critical point in Hungarian urban historical research on the Middle Ages. The early history of the settlement is obscure, but at the end of the thirteenth century, the town appears as an important regional economical center. Gölnicbánya was mentioned for the first time in 1278, when Ladislaus IV (also known as Ladislas the Cuman), laid down the customs tariffs for the town's markets.¹ In 1280, the king offered 100 marks a year from the income of the Gölnicbánya silver mine to the papal legate Philipp, Bishop of Fermo, because he had tried to impede the convocation of the synod of Buda.² The town obtained its first known privilege charter in 1287, which refers to the privileges donated by Béla IV and Stephen

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1 1278: *ÁÚO*, vol. 9, 204–5. The 1246 charter, which mentions the town Gölnicbánya, is a fake and was composed in the fourteenth century: *CDES*, vol. 2, 153. (*RA*, no. 2926).

2 1280: Theiner, vol. 1, 347 (*RA*, no. 3066). For the legation of Philipp, see Kovács, “Alter ego domini.”

V. However, no mention of these donations is found in other sources.³ A few decades later, these privileges became an example, as in 1317 Charles I granted the people of Zsidópataka the freedoms that the citizens of Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) and Gölnicbánya had already been enjoying.⁴

From this short overview, it is clear that the development of Gölnicbánya was based on mining and holding markets. Moreover, both had reached and maintained a significant level of advancement through the course of the decades before the town was mentioned in the sources. The rise of Gölnicbánya can be described in detail through the tried and tested methods of the Hungarian settlement-historical and historical-geographical research. However, it is not adequate solely to gather the sources concerning Gölnicbánya. We must also consider the wider context in which the town became increasingly important, including the surrounding lands and settlements.⁵

The Beginnings

The source of the Gölnic (Hnilec) River, from which the town took its name, lies on the eastern side of Low Tatras at the foot of Mount King (Kráľova hoľa, 1946m). The river flows southeastwards through the narrow valleys in the Slovak Ore Mountains. It turns to the northeast between Svedlér (today Švedlár, Slovakia) and Remete (today Mníšek nad Hnilcom, Slovakia) and then takes the Szomolnok (Smolník) Stream from the right, finally joining the Hernád River at Szentmargit (today Margecany, Slovakia). The Slavonic name of the river, which means rotten water, took its place in the Hungarian language through German transmission. According to a view widespread among linguists, the term came into Hungarian at the latest at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as the *g* turned into an *h* in the Slavonic at that time.⁶ According to a popular view based on this observation, Gölnicbánya was founded by German settlers in the second half of the twelfth century. Gusztáv Heckenast questioned this contention and drew attention to the fact that the archaic Slavonic forms appear in the written sources from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the

3 1287: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 67–68; Almási, “Gölnicbánya.”

4 1317: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 88 (*AOkl.*, vol. 4, no. 602).

5 For old and outdated syntheses, see Wenzel, *Magyarország bányászatanak*, 75–79; Hajnóci, *A székesi bányavárosok*, 66–68; Csánki, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza*, vol. 1, 251; Fekete Nagy, *Székeség*, 126–36. For the Slovak research, see Martin Homza, “Gelnica,” in *LSMS*, 151–63.

6 Melich, *A honfoglalás kori Magyarország*, 374; Kiss, “A Felvidék víznevei,” 15.

surrounding region. Based on this, he argued that the town had been founded only after the 1241–1242 Mongol invasion.⁷ Although he emphasized correctly the unreliability of the linguistic-based chronology, he could not cite any data about the river or the town. If one examines all the available sources and, in particular, the border descriptions, however, it is clear that the name of the river already appeared with a *g* at its first contemporary mention (1255), and this form was in use in the period under discussion.⁸

It is worth noting that Hungarian vernacular geographical names often appear in the sources from the area surrounding the town at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A source from 1282 mentions the “Hársmező” (Linden Meadow) in the forests that belonged to Gölnicbánya. The “Ökör-hegy” (Mount Bullock) and the “Szénkő” (Coal Stone) are also mentioned in the border description of the 1287 privilege charter. The place “Jakóréte” (Meadow of Jacob) is mentioned in 1325, also on the town’s periphery.⁹ These data reveal that a significant Hungarian-speaking population lived in the region that was able to preserve its cultural identity. This is also proven by the settlement’s name, in which the Hungarian word “bánya” (mine) appeared even in the earliest sources.¹⁰

Based on these data, the early history of Gölnicbánya cannot be explored through a comparison of the linguistic concepts regarding the etymology of the river’s name and the historical conclusions based on the written sources. Due to the presence of the archaic Slavonic forms in the toponymy of the region, no time limits can be determined. The linguistic-ethnic diversity and the use of vernacular names, seen in sources from the late thirteenth century, prove that the various ethnic groups had been living together for a long time. From my point of view, given the lack of direct data, the context of public history offers the most reliable framework within which to describe the emergence of Gölnicbánya.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Gölnic region was annexed by the royal forest estate of Torna. This is mentioned in the 1243 privilege charter of Olaszi (today Spišské Vlachy, Slovakia), which notes that the village

7 Heckenast, “Vashámor,” 3–4.

8 1255: “ad fluvium Gylnych vocatum” – *CDES*, vol. 2, 345. The 1243 privilege of Béla IV, which mentions the river, remained only in a fourteenth-century transcription: *R4*, no. 744.

9 1282: MNL OL DF 262668 (*R4*, no. 3162); 1287: Almási, “Gölnicbánya,” 47 (*R4*, no. 3464); 1325: MNL OL DL 2393 (*AOkl.*, vol. 9, no. 176).

10 1280: “de argentifodina nostra Guylnvchbana vocata circa Scepes” – MNL OL DF 289173 (*R4*, no. 3066).

was founded by German and (as the name of the settlement shows) Valloon royal mining people resettled from Torna. According to the source, the villagers' taxes were specified by Prince Coloman, the younger brother of Béla IV, who had held dominion over Szepes from the 1210s to 1226, when he became the duke of Slavonia.¹¹ Shifting economic trends prompted the mining people to be resettled. At the turn of twelfth and thirteenth centuries, iron mining ceased in Galyaság and the Bódva region. The exploitation of the Slovak Ore Mountains then began in the Gömör and Szepes regions.¹² Two important conclusions can be drawn from the mention of Coloman. First, the development of the mining region may have prospered under the governance of Coloman and his escort. Second, his presence in Szepes gives the temporal framework of these economic and social tendencies. Olaszi's location proves that the Torna forest estate expanded northwards at least to the Hernád River, which means that the villages of the Gölnic region were also founded by the royal mining people. This in turn implies that the beginnings of Gölnicbánya date back to the first third of the thirteenth century, when the Germans settled in lands occupied by indigenous Slavonic groups.

The German-speaking population of medieval Szepes was not homogenous.¹³ After the Mongol invasion, Saxon settlers came to the region, and they were granted collective privileges by Stephen V in 1271. Their privilege charter was confirmed by Charles I in 1317, who supplemented the rewritten text with a list of the settlements that formed the Saxon community. These villages all came into existence north of the Hernád River. Alcnó is the only settlement that was founded on the right bank of the river, however it was an external part of Olaszi. The Hernád River determined the settlement system of Szepes and clearly separated the German-speaking groups of the land, as the 1299 record about the foundation of the Carthusian monastery of Létán Hill (Klástoris, 760m) proves. According to the source, the mountain, which rises on the right bank of the river, was located along the border of the Saxon province (“situm in

11 1243: “hospitibus nostris in villa Ollassy de Tornava congregatis et congregandis” – *CDES*, vol. 2, 84 (RA, no. 742). For another interpretation, see Kristó, *Vármegyék*, 391. For the village of Olaszi, see Fekete Nagy, *Szepesség*, 123–24; Peter Labanc, “Spišské Vlchy,” in *LSMS*, 474–79. For Coloman and his presence in Szepes, see Font and Barabás, *Coloman*, 63–68.

12 Dénes, “Galyaság,” 279–80. For the geographical conditions of the region, see Skawiński, “Fyzicko-geográfické pomery,” 46–47.

13 On the German people of Szepes in the Middle Ages, see Kristó, *Nem magyar népek*, 144–49.

terminis nostre provincie”).¹⁴ This makes clear that the privileged Saxons didn’t expand southwards from the Hernád River. These tendencies can be explained by the aftermath of the Mongol invasion. The villages in the Hernád basin were exposed to the destructive invading forces, while the settlements of the Gölnic region were defended by the mountains, which were difficult to cross, so the mining people could survive the invasion without significant losses.¹⁵ As a consequence of the different structures of their settlements, the Gründers of the Gölnic region and the Zipsers of Szepes spoke different dialects, and the differences between these two dialects still constitute a cultural difference between these two groups today.¹⁶

While the kingdom was being rebuilt in the wake of the Mongol invasion, Béla IV reorganized the royal forest estates in Northern Hungary, which led to the creation of new counties. It is worth noting that the king dealt directly with this region in May and June 1243, as he released three charters arranged for the surrounding territories. On May 31, the privilege charter of Olaszi was released. On June 2, the king donated the royal estate of Pelsőc (today Plešivec, Slovakia). Finally, on June 7, he gave collective privileges to the lancers of Szepes.¹⁷ These tendencies show that the county system of Szepes was also formed after the Mongol invasion, from the northern parts of the Torna forest estate and the lands along the banks of the Poprad and Hernád Rivers, which were referred to as the Szepes Forest (*Silva Zepus*) by Anonymus, who was Béla III’s notary.¹⁸

After these territorial reorganizations, the estate of Pelsőc was attached to Gömör County. According to the 1243 charter, the borders started from the mouth of the Szomolnok Stream and then followed the stream to its source. The last section extended from the source of the Gölnic River to the mouth

14 1271: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 55–56 (*RA*, no. 2116); 1317: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 89–90 (*AOkt.*, vol. 4, no. 634). The 1299 historical record survived only in a copy from 1649: MNL OL DL 1541. For an outdated publication of the source, see *JS*, vol. 1, 433–36.

15 The destruction of the Szepes region is also proven by a 1249 charter of Béla IV. In that year, the chapter of Szepes requested that the king confirm their privileges given by Andrew II, because the archive of the church had burned down during the attack of the Mongols: *CDES*, vol. 2, 230 (*RA*, no. 910).

16 On German immigration in a Central European context, see Szende, “German Settlers.” On the ethnographic tendencies, see Bruckner, *A Szepesség népe*, 12–13.

17 May 31: *CDES*, vol. 2, 84 (*RA*, no. 742); June 2: *CDES*, vol. 2, 85–88 (*RA*, no. 744); June 7: *CDES*, vol. 2, 88–89 (*RA*, no. 745).

18 Dénes, *Bódvaszilas*, 36–48; Kristó, *Vármegyéek*, 391–93. For data concerning the anonym notary, see *Anonymus*, 70–71. According to József Hradszky, Anonymus called the forests near the village Szepesi (today Moldava nad Bodvou) in Abaúj County the Forest of Szepes. See Hradszky, “Szepesvármegye,” 6.

of the Szomolnok Stream.¹⁹ The territories east of the Szomolnok belonged to the premonstratensian provostry of Jászó (today Jasov, Slovakia). As the 1255 privilege charter of the monastery reveals, the border of its properties ran northwards from the Bódva River to the source of the Szomolnok Stream and then continued along the stream to the Gölnic River, which separated the ecclesiastical estate from parts of Szepes, at last in the tributary streams of Gölnic southeastwards among the mountains to the Ida River.²⁰ Thus, the original territory of Gölnicbánya did not extend farther than the Galmus Mountains north of the river and the land between the Hernád River and the Gölnic River east of the town.

The Early Privileges

Although this territory wasn't as large as the borders described in the 1287 charter, the town's agglomeration already covered the southern part of the county, south of the Hernád River. Thanks to this, the importance of Gölnicbánya rose in the administrative system that emerged immediately after the Mongol invasion. Since Béla IV had dealt directly with this region in May and June 1243, the first privilege charter might also have been released at this time to support the development of the mining region attached to Szepes County.²¹

19 1243: "Prima meta incipit in Genucz iuxta magnam viam, ubi Scumulnukan cadit in Genucz et per eandem aquam ascendit ad caput eiusdem Scumulnuk... ad caput fluvii Gulnucz, per quem, qui est pro meta, descendit ad praedictam metam Sumulnuk et ibi terminatur" – *CDES*, vol. 2, 87. For map, see *ÁMTF*, vol. 2, 470–71.

20 1255: "tendit ad fontem Sumugy Bulduafeu vocatum; relicto ipso fonte tendit ad alium fluvium Umulnukfeu vocatum et per eundem fluvium descendit ad fluvium Gylnych vocatum, qui separat a terris et metis Scepus et in eodem fluvio Gylnych vadit usque Nyznanou potoka et abinde descendit ad fluvium Bornanou potoka vocatum; et per eundem fluvium ascendit ad alpes Golcha vocatas et dividit ipsas alpes et transit versus orientem et ab inde descendit ad fluvium Ida" – *CDES*, vol. 2, 345. On the monastery of Jászó, see *ÁMTF*, vol. 1, 96–100.

21 József Hajnóci also thought that Gölnicbánya obtained its first privileges in 1243, but he didn't give countenance to his concept: Hajnóci, *Bányavárosok*, 66–67. Hradzsky mentions the date 1264 also without any argument: Hradzsky, "Szepesvármegye," 22, 69. Dezső Csánki then used this data in his historical geographical masterwork, which led to the acceptance of the date in the secondary literature: Csánki, *Történelmi földrajz*, vol. 1, 251. As distinct idea of Hradzsky, Csánki cited a charter, although 1284 can be read in the date of the source, see MNL OL DL 26704. Richard Marsina drew a parallel with other privilege charters and argued that Béla IV released the first privileges to Gölnicbánya after 1248: *CDES*, vol. 2, 221. Marsina's idea was accepted by Gyula Kristó: Kristó, *Nem magyar népek*, 148. Jenő Szűcs dated the town's first privileges to the period "after 1255": Szűcs, *Arz utolsó Árpádok*, 53.

It is more difficult to determine the topicality of the privileges given by Stephen V. After Béla and his son had divided the kingdom in the 1260s, Szepes belonged to the part under Béla's rule, but Stephen was also interested in this region, as indicated by many sources.²² In 1265, he rewrote and confirmed the privilege charter of Olaszi as *junior rex*. Later, in 1271, acting as the king of Hungary, Stephen gave collective privileges to the Saxons of Szepes.²³ Unfortunately, his donation politics do not give any insight into when he turned his eyes to the Gölnic region.²⁴

The content of these privileges is unknown, but the sources from the late thirteenth century contain clear indications of the direction of the town's economic development. In the 1270s and 1280s, Gölnicbánya appeared as a mining town and a commercial center with high incomes, which confirms that these sectors were supported by the original privileges.

According to the tradition that was registered in the 1487 statutes of the seven mining towns of Upper Hungary, Gölnicbánya was the oldest mining town. Although this category of settlement became clearly distinct only in the Angevin Era, they had started developing in the middle of thirteenth century.²⁵ The Mongol conquest had broken the eastern economic relations of Hungary, and in the following decades, the Hungarian Kingdom gradually integrated into the economical and mercantile system of the West. Thanks to this, Hungarian mining, especially silver mining, reached a significant level of development, which is clearly shown by the fact that a quarter of the silver mined in Europe came from the Hungarian mines at the end of the thirteenth century.²⁶ Gölnicbánya and the surrounding region were the center of this development, as is clearly shown by the offering of Ladislaus IV in 1280 to give 100 marks a year from the income of the Gölnicbánya silver mine to the papal legate. The 1278 customs tariffs also offer an indication of the mining development, as it determined in detail the value of gold, silver, lead, iron, and the timber used in the mining process.

22 1261: *CD*, vol. 4/1, 162–64 (*RA*, no. 1778); 1267: *RA*, no. 1866; 1269: *ÁOkl.*, 63. On the conflict between Béla IV and Junior King Stephen, see Zsoldos, *Családi ügy*.

23 1265: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 50 (*RA*, no. 1838); 1271: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 55–56 (*RA*, no. 2116).

24 Stephan released six charters to towns and hospes communities as junior king and five more as the king of Hungary. See Szende, “Kiváltságolás,” 56. On the reign and policies of Stephen, see Szűcs, *Az utolsó Árpádok*, 107–52.

25 Skorka, *A gölnici bányajog*, 30–36, 52–53. On the development of the mining towns, see Weisz, “Mining Town Privileges.”

26 Szűcs, *Az utolsó Árpádok*, 227–30.

It is worth noting that the 1278 ordinance was based on the 1255 customs tariffs of Buda, and the king just tailored several points to the local needs. The regulations show diversity not only in the scale of products but also in the measurement units in use. Both local products, for example metals, timber and fish, and imported goods, for example cloths, can be found in the regulations. Although the measurement units were arranged to the concrete products, most of the items were measured in wagons. The text mentions the great wagon named quintal (“de curro magno... quod vulgo masa dicitur”), which was the typical transport vehicle for long-distance trade in the thirteenth century.²⁷ This makes clear that the town’s markets had not only a local but also a regional importance. The first known marketplace of Szepes was Szombathely (today Spišská Sobota, Slovakia), which appeared under this name (*Forum Sabati*) in 1256, but it had lost its importance to Késmárk (today Kežmarok, Slovakia) by the late 1260s, and the settlement’s name “Szentgyörgyhegy” (Mount St. George) became permanent. Késmárk obtained customs-free status on its markets in 1269, which guaranteed the town’s leading role in the economy. The seat of the ten-lancers, Szentlászló (today Spišský Štvrtok, Slovakia), appeared as Csütörtökhely (*Quintum Forum*) for the first time in 1292, which shows that the market acquired greater importance in the late thirteenth century. Other markets in Szepes were only mentioned first in sources from the fourteenth century, which means, that there were two important economic centers in the county in the middle of the thirteenth century: Késmárk in the northern parts and Gölnicbánya to the south of the Hernád River.²⁸

The royal privilege charters released to settlements used to allow the election of the mayor and the parish priest. The council of Gölnicbánya first appeared in the 1287 privilege charter, which specifies that the confirmation of donations was requested by the mayor and the jurors, although the text does not give their names. The first mention of the town’s parish priest can be found in the 1286 verdict of Lodomer, Archbishop of Esztergom, which settled the conflict between Provost Jacob and the canons. According to the source, the provost had to pay one mark in the presence of Gölnicbánya’s parish priest and

27 For an analysis of the 1278 customs tariffs in detail, see Weisz, *Vámok és vámszedés*, 178–79, 451–52.

28 1256: *CDES*, vol. 2, 362 (R4, no. 1078); 1269: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 51–52 (R4, no. 1636); 1292: *Csáky*, vol. 1, 21–22. On Csütörtökhely, see Fekete Nagy, *Szepesség*, 191–96. On Szombathely: Fekete Nagy, *Szepesség*, 206–7; Karín Fábrová, “Spišská Sobota,” in *LSMS*, 466–73. On Késmárk, see Fekete Nagy, *Szepesség*, 215–19; Karín Fábrová, “Kežmarok,” in *LSMS*, 171–82. On the markets in Szepes in the Middle Ages, see Weisz, *Markets and Staples*, 38–41, 191–93.

the Cistercian Abbot of Savnik (today Spišský Štiavnik, Slovakia). In 1329, the parish priest of the town appeared as the general vicar of the provost.²⁹

The economic importance of Gölnicbánya was clear in the civil war of the 1270s. The ispán of Szepes, Roland son of Mark, rose up against Ladislaus IV in the autumn of 1274. He took hold of royal goods and harassed the people of the land. The king and his ispán were reconciled by Saint Kinga of Poland (the daughter of Béla IV of Hungary), and the king kept Roland in his favor. In 1277, Roland revolted again and joined the uprising of the Geregye kindred, who built an oligarchic lordship in the Transztisza region. After the fall of the Geregyes, the king sent his veteran warlords, Finta of the Aba kindred and George of the Baksa kindred, against Roland, and in the battle, which took place at an unknown site, the rebel count fell. According to the 1285 donation charter of George, in which his merits are listed, Roland had occupied Szepes with the town of Gölnicbánya (“unacum Gylnuchbana”).³⁰ It seems clear that Roland invaded the town to ensure that he would be able to use the town’s economic power, its incomes from mining, and its markets to put up long-term resistance. Although other sources make no mention of the occupation of Gölnicbánya, it is almost certain that the revolt led by Roland somewhat hampered the town’s development. The rebel count probably made an attempt to found his own oligarchic territorial lordship, and the oligarchs of the age usually considered the towns as resources and tried to draw profit from them.³¹ It is certainly no coincidence that Ladislaus IV arranged the customs tariffs in 1278 just after the revolt in order to preclude cheating and abuses (“volentes amputare omnem calumpniam et sopire materiam iurgiorum in tributis exigendis sive persolvendis”).³² Although the source makes no mention of Roland, he probably monopolized the incomes from the customs.

In 1282, the king donated an uninhabited forest between Gölnicbánya and the Hernád River (“silvam nostram desertam et inhabitabilem a Gulnychbana incipiens usque ad Harnad”) to a citizen of the town named Jekel, who gave his name to the village Jekelfalva (today Jaklovce, Slovakia). The border description of the estate mentions Korompa (today Krompachy, Slovakia) on the right bank of the river and the silver mine of Svedlér to the west of the Szomolnok Stream,

29 1286: *MES*, vol. 2, 208–13; 1329: MNL OL DF 281704 (*AOkl.*, vol. 13, no. 95, 663).

30 On the civil wars, see Zsoldos, *Adorján bárom ostroma*, 28–51. For the archontology of the ispáns of Szepes, see Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 205–6. The 1285 privilege charter of George: *EO*, vol. 1, no. 406.

31 On the urban politics of the oligarchs, see Kristó, *Széttagolódás*, 161–66.

32 1278: *AÚO*, vol. 9, 204.

which also became a settlement in the fourteenth century.³³ In 1328, the villages Szentantal and Szentmargit appeared in the same territory.³⁴ This suggests that some settlements came into existence spontaneously, but other villages were founded consciously through royal donations. Jekel got his estate with noble rights, which made him be able to settle people on his territory and have legal authority over them. Gölnicbánya thus lost territories and, more importantly, natural and human resources.

The 1287 Privilege Charter

The oldest surviving privilege charter of Gölnicbánya was issued in 1287 by Ladislaus IV. According to the preamble, the king confirmed the privileges donated by Béla IV and Stephen V, including the estates, territories, the gold, silver and iron mines, the waters and forests, and all incomes from these resources at the request of the mayor, the jurors, and the citizens. Although the text clearly refers to the donations of two predecessor kings, the charter details only three provisions:

(1) In all litigations between the citizens and those who lived within the borders of the settlement the town was given exclusive jurisdiction. According to János Bárdossy, who commented on the source at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the privileges of the town were significantly damaged under the revolt led by ispán Roland, which necessitated the restoration of the status of the community. Bárdossy cited the arenga of the 1287 charter, according to which the king sought to ease the situation of his subjects, who suffered from harassment and oppression.³⁵ In contrast with Bárdossy's thesis, the 1278 customs tariffs clearly shows that the king has already arranged the case of the settlement after the revolt. Moreover, the 1280 offering to the papal legate regarding the incomes from the town's silver mine proves that the settlement

33 1282: "quandam silvam nostram desertam et inhabitabilem a Gulnychbana incipiens usque ad fluvium Harnad et abhinc sursum usque campum Hasmezeu vocatum et deinde usque viam, per quam itur ad Kurumpah et ad Zepus a parte orientis, item a parte meridionali usque ad Balapatok, dehinc directe usque ad argenti fodinam Seyler vocatam" – *RA*, no. 3162.

34 1328: MNL OL DL 83199 (*AOkt.*, vol. 12, no. 300).

35 1287: "Regali incumbit maiestati suos subditos, turbationibus et necessitatibus oppressos ab ipsa turbatione et necessitate misericorditer relevare, et eisdem in eorum iuribus indemniter conservare... Nos itaque, qui ex officio debiti et suscepti regiminis nostri subditos nostros oppressos turbationibus et iuribus eorum pro fidelitate nobis debita et impensa privatos relevare tenemur" – Almási, "Gölnicbánya," 47. The commentary of Bárdossy, see *SS*, vol. 1, 331–32.

had again embarked down the path towards development. The preamble of the 1287 charter also proves that the town's government was working, as it specifies that the confirmation was requested by the mayor, the jurors, and the citizens.

(2) The villages that emerged within the borders of the town were prohibited from holding markets, and their inhabitants were obligated to trade at the markets in Gölnicbánya. In this provision, we find an early form of the ban-mile right (*Bannmeilenrecht*), which was borrowed from the German legal system. This institution ensured the monopoly of a market within a determined territory, in its advanced form usually one mile, but sometimes the monopoly concerned only a few products. In this case, the prohibition concerned the territory of Gölnicbánya in order to hamper the economic and the political independence of the villages in the town's periphery, and in this way to grant raw material and foodstuffs for the settlement.³⁶

(3) The king ensured the citizens of Gölnicbánya the right to work undisturbed within the borders of the town, including the fishermen on the rivers and the burners and lumberjacks in the forests. Because proper silviculture was indispensable to mining, the privileges of the mining towns usually determined the rights of citizens to logging from a territorial perspective, usually within the borders of each settlement, as in the case of Gölnicbánya.³⁷

Interestingly, the 1287 privilege charter does not touch on some questions that usually appear in the royal charters released to mining towns or dealing with mining activity.³⁸ The provisions don't concern mining, apart from the formal preamble, which mentions the gold, silver, and iron mines of the town. The fact that Gölnicbánya had high incomes from mining at the end of the thirteenth century indicates that the most important questions had been arranged in the previous decades, for example the right to search for ore and metal. It is also worth noting that the 1287 charter doesn't detail the situation of the local market. Although its monopoly was ensured, the charter does not indicate its type and date. In my opinion, the arrangement of these questions was in no way urgent or pressing in 1287, because the privilege charter of Ladislaus IV essentially set new provisions necessitated by the developments of the previous decades, even if it refers to the donations of two predecessor kings. The common denominator

36 On the ban-mile right and its economic importance, see Fügedi, "Középkori magyar városprivilegiumok," 33; Weisz, *Markets and Staples*, 38–41.

37 Weisz, "Mining Town Privileges," 303–5. On the silviculture of the mining towns, see Magyar, *Erdőgazdálkodás*.

38 On the typical privileges of the mining towns, see Weisz, "Mining Town Privileges."

of these provisions is the fact that they prevail within the borders of the town. Although the territorial aspect is not surprising in the case of a settlement, it is worth analyzing the border description in detail.

According to the 1287 charter, the border of Gölnicbánya started from the road to Dryn (“a via Dryn”) and then ran to the house of hermits (“ad domum heremite”) and Ökör Mountain (“ad montem bovum, qui Wkurhegh vulgariter nuncupatur”), where it turned towards the source of the Szomolnok Stream (“ad caput cuiusdam fluvii Smolnyk nominati”). It then ran to the houses where the iron that had been mined was melted and purified (“ad domos seu aedifica, in quibus ferrum flari et purgari consuevit”), from where it turned towards the source of the Kallós Stream (“ad caput cuiusdam alterius fluvii Valkensesyn nominati”), arriving at last at Szénkő Mountain, a place where customs were taken (“ad montem Scynkw nuncupatum, usque ad illum locum, ubi tributum exigi consuevit”).³⁹ The borders cover almost the full catchment of the Gölnic River, except the territory in its eastern part, which was taken from the town and given to Jekel in 1282. This means that Gölnicbánya got hold of the southern part of Szepes County, to the south of the Hernád River. It is worth noting that the border description of the 1287 charter incorporates the territories in the western and eastern neighborhoods of the Szomolnok Stream that belonged to the estate of Pelsőc in 1243 and to the Premonstratensian provostry of Jászó in 1255. Two years later, in 1289, Wýgandus, provost of Jászó, protested at the chapter of Szepes, because the king had attached a large forest estate at the Gölnic River from his monastery to Gölnicbánya (“super eo, quod serenissimus dominus noster rex Ladislaus de possessione sui monasterii porcionem possessionariam in magna quantitate iuxta fluvium Gylniyh existentem, ad montana sue nove civitatis Gylniyhbanya abstulisset”), but he hadn’t paid the promised compensation. The litigation ended in 1342, when the provostry came to an agreement with the governments of Gölnicbánya and Szomolnokbánya (today Smolník, Slovakia), which became independent during the first half of the fourteenth century. This meant that the citizens were allowed to cut half of the monastery’s forests between the Gölnic and Bódva Rivers. In return, they had to pay one unit of white cloth, but the territory still remained in the property of Jászó.⁴⁰

39 On the identification of each point of the border description, see Hajnóci, *Bányavárosok*, 66–67; Jáchim, “Páni z Jakloviec,” 91. For the orology and hydrography of Szepes in the Árpád Era, see Števík, “Prírodno-geografické pomery,” 103–14.

40 The charters released during the litigation were rewritten by the chapter of Lelesz in 1510: MNL OL DF 230080. See also: Csőre, *Erdőgazdálkodás*, 275.

The westernmost point of the border is the Szénkő (Tri kopce, 1056m), which is found in the northeastern ranges of the Ore Mountains. An important long-distance trade route ran under the mountain, which came to Szepes from Gömör County and led to Poland following the Poprad River.⁴¹ Due to its location, it seems doubtful that the market customs were paid at the Szénkő, because only those merchants could have been called to account here who came to or left the town from or to the west. In the second half of the thirteenth century, Gölnicbánya began to play a more important economic role in the region, but the sources mainly show the importance of the southern, northern, and eastern relationships. A border description from 1255 mentions the road to Jászó, which ran on the left bank of the Gölnic River, then turned southwards at Remete and followed the Szomolnok Stream. The 1284 border description of Kolcsó (today Klčov, Slovakia), a village in the eastern neighborhood of Lőcse (today Levoča, Slovakia), mentions the road, that came from Gölnicbánya. Some border descriptions from 1318, 1321, and 1325 mention the roads connecting Gölnicbánya with Szinye (today Svinia, Slovakia) and Újfalú (today Chminianska Nová Ves, Slovakia), villages in the neighborhood of Eperjes (today Prešov, Slovakia).⁴² The lack of the western relations could be explained simply by the fact that the southern part of the county belonged to the town. The intensity of the eastern relations is also clear, because the main trade route in the region followed the Hernád River and brought the rise of several settlements, for example Kassa in the second half of the thirteenth century.⁴³ Due to its peripheral location, the merchants usually didn't go around Szénkő, because they usually chose the roads that led to the important markets. The markets of Gömör and Abaúj counties were accessible by the southern and eastern roads, and the crossing points on the Hernád River provided access to the other markets of Szepes. Considering

41 The location of Szénkő is defined by a border description from 1260: *CDES*, vol. 2, 452–53 (*RA*, no. 1239). See also Števík, “Prírodno-geografické pomery,” 110.

42 1255: “pertransit ipsum fluvium magna via, quae vadit versus Iazov per locum Heremitorii” – *CDES*, vol. 2, 343 (*RA*, no. 1061); 1284: “ad unam viam, qua venit de Gulnuch” – *Hoklt.*, 101–3 (*RA*, no. 3329); 1318: “in unam viam, que transit de Stoina in Gelnyczbaniam” – *CD*, vol. 8/2, 186–88 (*AOklt.*, vol. 5, no. 102); 1321: “in unam viam, que transit de Swyne in Gelnuchbaniam” – *CD*, vol. 8/2, 306–8 (*AOklt.*, vol. 6, no. 270); 1325: “in viam magnam, per quam itur de Wyfolu versus Gelnichbana” – MNL OL DF 269903 (*AOklt.*, vol. 9, no. 569 and vol. 10, no. 573).

43 For Kassa, see *ÁMTF*, vol. 1, 102–8; Miroslava Slezáková and Katarína Nádaská, “Košice,” in *LSMS*, 194–216.

that the road under the Szénkő led to Krakow, I think that some kind of road toll was taken here, which is not mentioned in other sources.⁴⁴

During the analysis of the border description, it is worth touching on the manuscript tradition of the 1287 privilege charter. The original copies of the 1287 charter and its confirmations from 1318 and 1327 by Charles I are lost. In 1359, Louis I rewrote and confirmed his father's 1327 charter, which contained the text of the 1287 privilege charter and its 1318 confirmation, but this charter is also lost. Its text was rewritten by the chapter of Szepes in 1699, which has survived in six copies. In 1637, the chapter of Szepes rewrote the text of the 1327 charter at the order of Ferdinand III, which was confirmed by the king in the same year. The original copy of this variant is also lost, but its text is known from the 1813 rewriting by Francis I. An original charter issued by Louis I from 1367 epitomizes the provisions of the 1287 privilege charter, but its preamble makes clear that the excerpt was made of a charter issued by Louis I, probably the 1359 charter, which contained not only the original 1287 charter but also its confirmations.⁴⁵ A comparison of the known variants reveals an interesting contradiction at the beginning of the border description. The sources that copy the 1699 rewriting of the 1359 charter indicate that the border description was composed using the report of a comes (“*prout idem comes nobis retulerat*”). However, the borders were reported by the citizens according to the 1367 extract (“*prout iidem cives eidem domino Ladislao regi retulissent*”), and this form is also found in the 1813 copy, which rewrote the 1637 confirmation of the 1327 charter (“*prout iidem cives nobis retulerunt*”). The modern source publications by Lubomír Juck and Tibor Almási publish the text in the latter way, and Iván Borsa also published the border description in this form, following the 1367 extract.⁴⁶

A comparison of the surviving copies does not give a clear answer to the question, because the variants abound in misspellings and hiatuses. However, the historical geographical analysis clearly proves that the border description of the 1287 privilege charter covers territories that had belonged to other estates in the previous decades. Thus, the citizens couldn't refer to these territories as their own

44 For the types of road tolls, see Weisz, *Vámok és vámszedés*, 13–14.

45 For the manuscript tradition of the 1287 charter, see Almási, “Gölnicbánya,” 45–46. Almási gathered four variants of the copies of the 1699 charter, and two more can be added based on the digital database of the Collection of Medieval Documents. These variants are signed by underline: 1359/1699: MNL OL DL [24805](#), 24896, 71419; MNL OL DF 258631, 287781, [291733](#); 1327/1637: MNL OL DF 276159; 1367: MNL OL DL 67376.

46 1287: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 67–68; Almási, “Gölnicbánya,” 47; *R-A*, no. 3464. The latter listed the old, outdated publications.

property. As the 1287 protest made by the provost of Jászó reveals, Ladislaus IV promised compensation for the forests of the monastery. Thus, it is clear that the extension of the borders was initiated by the king to ensure the development of Gölnicbánya with more raw materials.⁴⁷ Given this, I am concerned that the variants mentioning the comes in the beginning of the border description stand closer to the truth, and in the usual way, the king may have delegated a *homo regius* to designate the borders of the settlement. The pronoun “idem” suggests that he had been mentioned in the text before, but that part could have been lost the same way, as most of the known variants do not contain the 1287 date of the charter. The mention of the citizens in the 1367 extract and in the confirmations issued by the Habsburg rulers might have been the results of a mistake in the reading of the text.

Outlook: Gölnicbánya at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century

As distinct from modern source publications, Bárdossy published the text based on the 1699 rewriting. He thought that the *comes* mentioned in the beginning of the border description was Andrew, son of Polanus mine judge (*iudex montanus*) of Gölnicbánya.⁴⁸ Andrew was one of the ancestors of the Berzeviczy family, one of the most important noble families in Szepes since the beginning of the thirteenth century. The first estates of the clan lay at the foot of the Tatra Mountains. Later, the family got donations in the forests between the Spiš Magura and the Dunajec River, and they started collecting estates in Sáros County in the thirteenth century.⁴⁹ One of them, Kakas, son of Rikalf, appears as mine judge of Szomolnokbánya in 1327, and Bárdossy assumed from this data that the family might already have held this position in Gölnicbánya at the end of the thirteenth century. In the previous decades, the Slovak secondary literature assumed the origins of the mine judge’s office of Szomolnokbánya may have led back to the end of the thirteenth century and that Rikalf had it when the office still worked in Gölnicbánya.⁵⁰ However, this interpretation is inconsistent with the sources, because the members of the family didn’t hold any political

47 Fügedi, “Középkori magyar városprivilegiumok,” 47.

48 For Bárdossy’s comment, see *SS*, vol. 1, 332.

49 On the early history of the family, see Labanc, *Vývoj šľachty na Spiši*, 17–43; Berzeviczy, “A Tarkóciak,” 414–25.

50 1327: MNL OL DL 68804. For the Slovak research with more references, see Labanc, *Vývoj šľachty na Spiši*, 41–42.

offices in the Árpád Era. Although most of the clan stood with Wenceslaus III after the extinction of the Árpád line, Kakas pledged himself to Charles I. After the fall of the Aba kindred in 1311–1312, the king entrusted the castle of Szepes to Kakas, who later became court judge (*curialis comes*) in the county and appeared as the mine judge of Szomolnokbánya under the regional lordship of the Druget family.⁵¹ The chronology based on the sources clearly shows that Kakas got supervision over mining at this time, when his political career reached its high point. The sources concerning the town and its surroundings don't let one assume that the office of the mine judge emerged in Gölnicbánya.

After the adherents of Charles I had expelled the armies of Wenceslaus from Szepes in the autumn 1304, the region fell under the control of Amadé of the Aba kindred, the most powerful landlord of northeastern Hungary at the time. The German citizens of Kassa descended upon the escort of Amadé and murdered the warlord in the September of 1311, and the king forced his widow and sons to give the castles, settlements, and all natural and material resources to the crown. In the third point of the Treaty of Kassa they undertook to give Szepes and the towns Gölnicbánya and Kassa, with all of their thirtieths, customs, taxes, and other incomes, back to the king (“Scepus, Gylnuch et Cassa cum universis tricesimus, tributis, censibus et quibusvis obvencionibus... resignamus domino nostro regi”).⁵² Charles I realized the political importance of the towns, and he supported their economic development from the beginning of his reign in order to create a stable home front during his fights against the oligarchs. The success and social popularity of this politics are proven by the *Georgenberger Chronik*, as it tells that Louis I and his father cared for the towns and improved their lots.⁵³ In the case of Gölnicbánya, the 1318, 1327, and 1359 confirmations of the 1287 privilege charter clearly prove that the town enjoyed the support of the Angevin kings. In 1317, Charles I granted the people of Zsidópataka the freedoms that the citizens of Kassa and Gölnicbánya had already been enjoying, which also shows the importance of the town.⁵⁴

51 In 1302, Kakas supported Wenceslaus, who confirmed his rights to an estate donated originally by Andrew III. *RDES*, vol. 1, 92 (*AOkl.*, vol. 1, no. 284). In 1308, Charles I also confirmed the donation made by Andrew III as a remuneration for Kakas' services in the 1304 occupation of the castle of Szepes: MNL OL DL 1173 (*AOkl.*, vol. 2, no. 436). Kakas was mentioned as *curialis comes* in 1314: *CD*, vol. 8/5, 91–92 (*AOkl.*, vol. 3, no. 854). On the Druget family and its lordship in Szepes, see Zsoldos, *A Druget-tartomány*.

52 1311: *RDES*, vol. 1, 391–93 (*AOkl.*, vol. 3, no. 150). On the events, see Kristó, *A rozgonyi csata*.

53 For the data of the *Georgenberger Chronik*, see *SRH*, vol. 2, 284. On the urban politics of Charles I, see Zsoldos, “Károly és a városok.”

54 1317: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 88 (*AOkl.*, vol. 4, no. 602).

The confirmation of the privileges was requested by Mayor Perenger in 1318 and then by notary Kolin in 1327. The 1330 last will of William Druget, ispán of Szepes, indicates that Mayor Perenger was hanged for his crimes by order of the ispán, but William left 30 marks to the town (25 for the homicide and 5 for masses) for the sake of his conscience.⁵⁵ It is worth noting that William became the ispán of Szepes in the summer 1327, and it was notary Kolin, who asked the king for the confirmation in October of that year. These circumstances imply that William executed the mayor just after he had become the lord of region, then the notary, who temporarily took over the government of the town, turned to the king to defend the town's rights before the ispán could have infringed on them. The mayor's name and the notary's name suggest that Gölnicbánya was ruled by the German-speaking elite.

The appearance of Kolin is very valuable, because the first written document of the town's government survived only from 1395, but the mention of the notary proves that there was already some urban literacy in Gölnicbánya in the early fourteenth century. Although the imprint of the medieval seal of Gölnicbánya is known only from 1497, the two-barred cross depicted in the coat of arms refers to the thirteenth-century origin of the seal.⁵⁶

Thanks to the development which took place during these decades, new settlements came into existence on the periphery of the town, but the villages, which emerged spontaneously, couldn't secede from the mother town. This was only possible through direct foundation or royal support. According to a 1368 charter issued by Louis I, which is known only in extract, along with the abovementioned Korompa, Jekelfalva, Szentmargit, and Svedlér, other villages, namely Abucuk, Zakárfalva (today Žakarovce, Slovakia), Folkmár (today Veľký Folkmar, Slovakia), Kojšfalva (today Kojšov, Slovakia), Prakfalva (today Prakovce, Slovakia), and Kuncfalva also emerged in the territory of Gölnicbánya. With the exception of Kuncfalva, these settlements don't appear in the sources from the previous decades, which proves their dependent status and also indicates that they came into existence in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁵⁷ Kuncfalva

55 1330: MNL OL DL 71270 (*AOkl.*, vol. 14, no. 473). According to Martin Homza, the mayor executed by Count William was not Perenger, who appeared in 1318. Martin, Homza, "Gölnicbánya," in *LSMS*, 157. His misunderstanding is based on a publication by Charles Wagner, who wrote the mayor's name incorrectly in the form *Nerenger*: AS, vol. 1, 127–31.

56 1395: MNL OL DL 83450 (*ZsOkl.*, vol. 1, no. 4127). On the beginnings of urban literacy in medieval Hungary, see Szende, "Városi írásbeliség." On the seal of Gölnicbánya, see Szende, "Hivatali írásbeliség," 514–16.

57 1368: *CD*, vol. 9/4, 114–19.

was founded in 1326, when Thomas castellan of Szepes arrented an estate to Kunc from Szalók to settle it.⁵⁸ The village Wagendrüssel (today Nálepkovo, Slovakia) emerged in the same way, as its territory was donated to a nobleman, count Batiz, in 1290, though he sold the village to a citizen of Gölnicbánya named Pecoldus in 1315.⁵⁹ Szomolnokbánya became independent through royal support. The early settlement emerged on the estate of the Premonstratensian provostry of Jászó, but the territory was attached to Gölnicbánya in 1287. In 1327, the king granted the privileges of Selmečbánya (today Baská Štiavnica, Slovakia) to the town and founded a mint in the settlement. According to a source from 1338, almost the whole northeastern part of the kingdom was under the authority of the mint of Szomolnokbánya, including Szepes, Abaúj, Sáros, Zemplén, Ung, Gömör, Borsod, and Heves Counties. Some have even suggested that the beginnings of the mint may have led back to Gölnicbánya, but the sources don't offer any convincing evidence in support of this theory.⁶⁰

Conclusions

Over the course of a century in the late Árpád Era, Gölnicbánya became an important mining town and economic center of Upper Hungary. The settlement emerged in the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the German mining people from the Torna forest estate settled in the valleys of the Gölnic River, where Slavonic indigenous groups lived. After the county organization of Szepes was founded in the 1240s, Gölnicbánya became an important center of its southern part. The privileges donated by Béla IV and Stephen V led to the rapid development of the town, which became one of the most important economical centers of the region by the 1270–1280s thanks to its mining and markets, which brought high incomes. In these decades, the population of the surroundings of the town grew, settlements came into existence and began to move towards independence. These changes made it necessary to rearrange the status of the town. Ladislaus IV issued the first known privilege charter of Gölnicbánya in 1287, which indicates strategic town planning policies. Thanks to the support of

58 1326: MNL OL DF 262903 (*AOklt.*, vol. 10, no. 455).

59 1290/1315: MNL OL DL 74786 (*AOklt.*, vol. 9, no. 44).

60 On Szomolnokbánya, see Daniela Dvořáková and Martin Štefánik, “Smolník,” in *LSMS*, 437; 1327: *VMMS*, vol. 1, 110–11 (*AOklt.*, vol. 11, no. 227); 1338: *MES*, vol. 3, 306–12 (*AOklt.*, vol. 22, no. 150). For the conception concerning the mint, see Weisz, “Váradi kamara,” 94–104.

Charles I in the beginning of the fourteenth century, Gölnicbánya reached the high point of its early development.

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