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***Villages and Landowners in Neamt Region from the Late
Fourteenth Century to the Mid-Seventeenth Century***

Doctoral Thesis – Summary

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I. Introduction¹

Studying the evolution of land ownership in the Romanian space in the Middle Ages and identifying those who benefited from such ownership is an important trend in historical research which started in the late nineteenth century and continues to this day. This is a natural undertaking, especially since it is well-known that, in the Romanian medieval society, land was the main asset and the boyars represented for a thousand years the dominant social class from which rulers were elected and officials were recruited.

Historians have dedicated a large portion of their writings to this general issue, whereas research on the particular factor (as is the case of Neamt region, for example) was reflected to a lesser extent in historical writings. With a view to the need for syntheses, the monographs and works that would highlight the contribution of the local factor to the development of society are still lacking.

This doctoral thesis, entitled *Sate și boieri în ținutul Neamț de la sfârșitul secolului al XIV-lea până la jumătatea secolului al XVII-lea [Villages and Boyars in Neamt Region in the Late Fourteenth Century to the Mid-Seventeenth Century]*, aims at highlighting the local factor in the general evolution of the Romanian medieval society in general and of the Moldavian medieval society in particular.

Whereas the existence of an emotional incentive in addressing such issues is undeniable, as the author is from Neamt region, the motivation in choosing this theme is, above all, scientific. By reconstructing the history of the most important social category in Neamt during the Middle Ages, i.e. the boyars, and its relationship with the ruling power and by analyzing the evolution of land ownership, some aspects of social and political history may be elucidated and could lead to an understanding of the different genealogical relations between aristocratic families.

¹ This work was supported by the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646].

To this end, this thesis undertakes to investigate the evolution of land ownership in Neamt region, by the middle of the seventeenth century, to study whether Neamt villages were owned or not by members of the same family and the reasons underlying changes in ownership, as well as to perform, to the extent allowed by the information available, several case studies on boyars who owned villages in Neamt region.

This last point was developed by highlighting the role played by various owners of the villages in Neamt region in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of the state, pointing out the importance of family ties in social development. This type of research, called prosopography, was introduced in Romanian historiography more than a decade ago by Maria Magdalena Szekely, through her doctoral thesis – *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareș [The Counsellors of Petru Rares]*, and it is this model that was followed here. Of course, the classical scheme of a prosopography could not be applied in all situations that have been analyzed (family, career, land ownership, foundation / cultural activity), as the lack of information from historical sources resulted, as appropriate, in the treatment of only a few of these issues.

The theme chosen for research has not been addressed in the literature. However, certain aspects of local history found their place in historiography since the late nineteenth century. It is worth mentioning here *Dicționarul geografic al județului Neamțu [The Geographical Dictionary of Neamtu Region]*, written by Constantin D. Gheorghiu, which, in addition to purely geographical details, also contains some historical information. The work was to be integrated, a few years later, in volume five of *Marele dicționar geografic al României [The Great Geographic Dictionary of Romania]*. In the interwar period, one should note the concerns with local history of pr. Constantin Matasă, the founder of the first exclusively archaeological museum in Moldova (1934). In the same period, Professor Victor Andrei carried out the first comprehensive study on the territorial evolution of the old area of Neamt, and historians such as Constantin A. Stoide, Constantin Turcu, and Mihai Costăchescu introduced in historiography a series of medieval documents relating to land ownership in Neamt region. Also in the interwar period, monographs were printed for

several localities from Neamt County. Few, however, amount to the requirements of scientific papers. It is worth mentioning the monograph of Ghigoești village, prepared by Gheorghe Mareș and Dumitru Mareș, in which the authors, in addition to historical information, also published photos from that period (for example, an old wooden church, now destroyed), as well as several medieval documents, owned by some locals, descendants of Urdugaș-Dumbravă family, donated in the early twentieth century to the Library of the Romanian Academy. There have also been drafted monographs of historical monuments, such as Neamt Fortress, among which those written by arch. Narcis Crețulescu and the historian Ilie Minea are worth mentioning. In the second half of last century, books were published on the history of some landmarks in the city of Piatra Neamt, such as that signed by the late Leon Șimanschi², while other works are but pale, poorly documented attempts amended in the literature.³

Nevertheless, the evolution of land ownership in Neamt region was little researched. Villages that were part of fair districts in Moldova (including Neamt) have been reported, since 1965, by D. Ciurea, in his study on administrative organization,⁴ and two years later, by Constantin C. Giurescu⁵. The list is not complete in any of the two historians, and the publication during the last decades of new documents, in the

² Leon Șimanschi, *Curtea și biserica domnească din Piatra Neamț [The Royal Court and the Royal Church of Piatra Neamț]*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1969.

³ v. Gheorghe Verșescu, *Istoria monografică a orașului Piatra Neamț [The Monographic History of the City of Piatra Neamț]*, Bucharest, 1971 and the review of this work, signed by I. Caproșu, in “The Yearbook of << A.D. Xenopol >> Institute of History” (hereinafter: **AIIAI**), Tome IX, 1972, pp. 547-550; see also Vasile Gherasim, Ionel Marin, *Piatra Neamț. Monografie [Piatra Neamț. A Monograph]*, Piatra Neamț, 1972 (365 p), and the review signed by I. Caproșu in **AIIAI**, Tome X, 1973, p. 515-516.

⁴ D. Ciurea, *Organizarea administrativă a statului feudal Moldova (sec. XIV-XVIII) [Administrative Organization of the Feudal State Moldavia (14th-18th Centuries)]*, in **AIIAI**, Tome II, Iași, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1965, p. 143-235.

⁵ Constantin C. Giurescu, *Târguri sau orașe și cetăți moldovene din secolul al X-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea [Moldavian Fairs or Towns and Fortresses from the Tenth Century until Mid-Sixteenth Century]*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1967. Recently, a doctoral thesis was completed that continues this work, until mid-eighteenth century – see Marius-Constantin Chelcu, *Orașul moldovenesc de la jumătatea secolului al XVI-lea până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea [The Moldavian Town from Mid-Sixteenth Century to Mid-Eighteenth Century]*, Iași, 2011, PhD thesis in the manuscript at the Library of the Faculty of History, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, under lot no. IV-1497.

monumental collection **DRH**, A., Moldova, is likely to bring amendments in this respect, which were reported in the Annexes to this thesis. Recently, a monograph of Targu Neamt was published, signed by Professor Dumitru Luca⁶, who reproduced the lists of villages in the district made by the two abovementioned historians, without any additions. Some references to land ownership on the valley of Paraul Alb are found in the work *Războieni-Valea Albă și împrejurimile. Monografie istorică, economică și social-culturală* [*Războieni-Valea Albă and the Surrounding Areas. Historical, Economic and Socio-Cultural Monograph*], released in 1977, edited by Constantin Botez, Antoaneta Macovei, Alecsandru Tacu and Constantin Turcu⁷.

The issue of the nobility was dedicated quite a large portion of historical research. Thus, the genesis and evolution of nobility, as well as aspects related to land ownership, dignities or its habitat in the Romanian Middle Ages and the early Modern Era were analyzed by a number of historians such as: Ion Tanoviceanu, Radu Rosetti, Dinu C. Arion, I.C. Filitti, Constantin Giurescu, Henri H. Stahl, Constantin Cihodaru, Nicolae Grigoraș, P. P. Panaitescu, Nicolae Stoicescu, Ștefan S. Gorovei, Gheorghe Platon, Alexandru Florin Platon, Iolanda Țighiliu, Maria Magdalena Szekely, Petronel Zahariuc, Valentin Constantinov, Cristian Nicolae Apetrei, Mihai Dim. Sturdza, and Lucian-Valeriu Lefter.

The sources used in our study are internal medieval documents edited and published in national collections of sources published under the aegis of the Romanian Academy or older collections of documents, and, to a lesser extent, unique documents – in funds from Iasi National Archives (Documents Fund and Manuscripts Fund) and

⁶ Gavril Luca, *Târgu Neamț. Monografie* [*Targu Neamt. A Monograph*], edited by Gheorghe Dumitroaia, Piatra Neamț, “Constantin Matasă” Publishing House, 2008.

⁷ See the collective volume *Războieni-Valea Albă și împrejurimile. Monografie istorică, economică și social-culturală* [*Războieni-Valea Albă and Their Surroundings. Historic, Economic and Socio-Cultural Monograph*], editors coordinators: Constantin Botez, Antoaneta Macovei, Alecsandru Tacu and Constantin Turcu, Bacău, 1977, in which, in Chapter IV – *Evoluția social-economică a așezărilor* [*The Socio-Economic Development of Settlements*], Corneliu Istrati signs a subchapter titled *Din feudalismul dezvoltat până la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea* [*From Developed Feudalism until Mid-Nineteenth Century*], where he makes several references to land ownership in Neamt County, mentioning some of the local landowners from the 16th – 19th centuries.

Neamt National Archives (Documents and Letters Collection, Agapia Monastery Fund, Piatra Neamt Town Hall Fund).

Also, in order to identify and analyze the original documents inventoried in archives, we also used the tools provided by the archives in Bucharest and Iasi, that is, *Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhiva Istorică Centrală a Statului [The Catalogue of Moldavian Documents in the Central State Historical Archive]* (Volumes I-II, 1387-1652), *Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Direcția Arhivelor Centrale. Supliment I [The Catalogue of Moldavian Documents in the Central Archives Department. Supplement I]* (1402-1700) and *Catalog de documente din Arhivele Statului Iasi. Moldova [Catalogue of Documents in Iasi State Archives. Moldova]*, Volume I (1398-1595).

The main issues encountered in our approach regard, on the one hand, the fact that, for the period under discussion, there is no uniform and comprehensive collection of documents and, on the other hand, the archival funds are only to a small extent inventoried, with thousands of documents currently unavailable for researchers. In addition, other problems derive from the nature of the historical document, which requires interpretation, which can often cause errors, which will be discussed below, in the first chapter. Such errors can be real traps for any researcher, especially since they appear in original documents, too.

The main method of research was the critical and comparative analysis of documents from the studied period, corroborating the information with further data from various sources to verify their authenticity. We also applied synthesis, statistical analysis, analogy, issuing and checking hypotheses.

Part I – The Villages in Neamt Region. Evolution of Land Ownership (End of 14th Century to Mid-17th Century).

The structure of this work, in two parts, was immediate, given the issues at hand: the evolution of land ownership in villages in Neamt region and prosopographical reconstructions regarding boyars owning lands in Neamt region.

Chapter I – Errors, Ambiguities, Inconsistencies, and Forgeries in the Original Documents from the 15th to 17th Centuries. Several Implications

In this chapter we mentioned some of the problems posed by working with the historical document, referring here to different types of inconsistencies appearing in the original medieval documents, which form real “traps” in which the researcher may fall. Thus, we made the following classification of the flaws that appear in documents: errors, ambiguities, omissions, inconsistencies, and false information, each with various subdivisions and specific examples, gathered from internal documents.

Chapter II - Evolution of Land Ownership in the Villages of Neamt Region (15th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In Chapter II from the first part of this thesis we have provided an analysis of land ownership evolution, until the middle of the seventeenth century, in each of the over 350 villages from Neamt region (in alphabetical order), some of which are now extinct. The issues we studied were: village location, using the information from the document, in conjunction with those offered by working tools (geographical dictionaries, *Tezaurul toponimic [The Toponymic Thesaurus]*, index of localities, maps, etc.), documentary attestation, following the ownership “trail” (whether the land remained in the possession of the same family or passed into the possession of other boyar families, monasteries, or the reign; the reasons that led to such changes), the type of land ownership that characterized the village (princely, boyar, monastery), the current state (if village still exists or has disappeared in the meantime).

Part II: Boyars who Owned Land in Neamt Region. Case Studies (End of the 14th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In the second part, we have undertaken several studies on boyars who owned villages in this area, grouped according to social status, into the members of the Council (with or without an official position), small officials, and “country” boyars, ordered alphabetically. In this section of the thesis we aimed to capture the impact of

kinship on the “transfer” of land ownership in the region, as well as the social ascent of some boyars and the historical role played by some of them.

Chapter I. Members of the Royal Council (Late 14th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In this chapter we conducted several prosopographical studies regarding various boyars who owned land in Neamt area, who were part of the Royal Council up to mid-seventeenth century. They have been ordered according to hierarchy (from the highest to the lowest ranking officials) and alphabetically. The first chapter refers to some of the counsellors who held official positions: Andrei hetman (former great vornik of the Lower Land, mistaken in historiography with Andrei Corcodel, a hetman in turn), the vorniks Crâstea cel Mare, Lupu Vărzar, Oană vornik of Suceava and Vlad de la Pârâul Alb, logofeti (chancellors) Costea, Ioan Dobrul, Mihul and Sima, parcalab (chief magistrate) of Cetatea Alba Stanciul Marele, several parcalabs of Neamț (Cozma, Dragoș Viteazul, Duma Dulcescul, Gheorghe Arapul, Seachil parcalab, Șandru of Neamț), several parcalabs of Roman (Epifanie from Bahnă, Gavril Onciu, Pătrașco Boldescu, Ștefan Blendea), vistiernic (treasurer) (Eremia vistiernic, Oană Porcu), stolnic (seneschal) (Bogdan stolnic, David stolnic), ceașnici (Băloș, Iliăș) and common vornicks (Ionașco Jora, Gheorghe Moțoc and Mic Crai). The second chapter is dedicated to advisers without official positions: Bratul Netedul, Cozma Șandrovici, Fetea Negru, Ion Jumătate, Lazăr de la Tulova and Mihail Popșa). For all the boyars mentioned above we have contributed genealogic contributions (developing family trees, identifying kinship), historical contributions (correction of errors, as in the case of Andrei hetman, Ștefan Blendea or Gheorghe Arapul), as well as the identification of their career path and the land they had owned.

(Many of these boyars have been the subject of communications that we have delivered during the doctoral studies at various scientific events at local or national level.)

Chapter II – Small Officials who Owned Land in Neamt Region (15th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In this chapter we analyzed the cases of 27 small officials who owned lands in Neamt area, among which we mention the treasurer II, Gheorghe Roșca, confused in historiography with Gheorghe Arapul, of whom we talked in the first chapter, Damian – treasurer III and globnic Laslău, the first two being the subject of communications at local or national level, during the doctoral period. The boyars discussed in this chapter have been ordered hierarchically and alphabetically.

Chapter III. Boyars without Official Positions and Wives who Owned Land in Neamt Region (15th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In this chapter we have presented synthetically the cases of 200 country boyars without official positions. Due to the lack of documentary information, the space dedicated to many of them in this thesis was reduced. Nevertheless, we have also conducted larger genealogical and historical studies, of which we exemplify those dedicated to boyars such as Crăciun Belcescu, Luca Dereptate, Toader Urdugaș and Ivan Uscatul. About the first three we also wrote several presentations during the doctoral period, given at national level (The National Commission of Heraldry, Genealogy and Sigilography of the Romanian Academy – Iasi Branch, the 15th Congress of Genealogy and Heraldry - 2010).

Conclusions

Many of the boyars we have identified as owners of villages located in Neamt region also had properties in other areas. We must immediately make clear that, in their overwhelming majority, they also had responsibilities in the administrative apparatus (councillors, high officials and small officials).

Most of the “country” boyars with properties in Neamt region and without official positions only owned villages (or parts of villages) in Neamt region. Exceptions are, of course, those boyars who had properties in Câmpul lui Dragoș, a historical region that stretched south of Neamt area and north of Bacau and Trotus

areas; they, obviously, owned villages on both sides of the boundary between the counties. Besides these, also by way of exception, we can also mention the cases of high boyars who, although they had no responsibilities in the central or local administration, had large “estates”, some consisting of tens of villages (e.g., Cernat Ploscar and Tador Limbădulce), but this situation only applies for the fifteenth century. In the subsequent period, especially in the seventeenth century, we observed that the wealth of the boyars was directly proportionate to the official position they held (this is the case of high boyars, such as Nestor Ureche, Nicoară Prăjescu, Iordache brothers and Toma Cantacuzino, Gheorghe Arapu etc.). Here may be mentioned, however, a notable exception: Gheorghe Roșca, who, following purchases, inheritances and successful marriage alliances (with the royal family, through the two marriages), managed to gather an impressive wealth (over 30 villages!), although the highest position he ever held was that of treasurer II.

Descendants of small boyars from the fifteenth century are mentioned until late mid-seventeenth century. Most of them have fallen socially to yeomen, and some even to peasants (“peasantry”), losing not only their properties, but also their freedom. An example is the case of the descendants of boyar Crăciun Belcescu. Whereas he owned three villages in the first half of the fifteenth century, two hundred years later, in the first half of the seventeenth century, his descendants were mentioned in the documents of that time as “yeomen”, the three villages (Belcești, Negoești and Șerbești) having a lot of co-owners. One of them, father of Varvara of Belcești, had lost his property and his freedom at one time, but managed to buy his freedom back; this can be derived from a translation from the eighteenth century of a document from the reign of Petru Șchiopul (Peter the Lame) (July 2, 1591), recently published by us, mentioning that he had been a peasant, “when they had been in peasantry”.

An explanation for the fall of the families of small boyars from the fifteenth century is the fact they maintained the initial land assets, which, redistributed from one generation to another, decreased considerably. Added to this were a number of factors such as: failed marriages, which failed to lead to increased wealth, absence of family members from among the officials (especially as in the seventeenth century

aristocracy is increasingly associated with holding an official position), increase of the amount of taxes in the last quarter of the sixteenth century as a result of the financial crisis experienced by the Ottoman Empire, all leading to the impoverishment of the petty aristocracy.

In general, the rulers confirmed the villages from Neamt area to the boyar families or to the monasteries who had previously owned them. Of the 361 villages identified as belonging to Neamt region, by the middle of the seventeenth century, 214 were exclusively aristocratic possessions that were never part of the royal or monastery properties, which indicates a rate of approx. 59.2% for the boyar "estate". A total of 29 villages were exclusively monastery properties (approx. 8%).

We are not aware of villages that would have belonged only to the districts of the two towns (Targu Neamt and Piatra), especially since it is known that, starting with the second half of the sixteenth century, especially during the rule of Peter the Lame, the disintegration of the districts is becoming increasingly apparent and many of the princely villages become the property of boyars or monasteries. In the remaining villages (118), land ownership had an extremely dynamic evolution, going through all forms of ownership (39 villages, 10.8%), or from boyar to monastery ownerships (47 villages, 13%) or from rulers to boyars and vice versa (16 villages, 4.4%) and, finally, from rulers to monasteries and vice versa (16 villages, 4.4%). Of course, these calculations are approximate given the extent of the data we could gather from the sample documents to which we had access. However, it can be noted that, by far, boyar land ownership was dominant in Neamt region, representing almost two thirds of the region's surface, followed, at great difference, by monastery property.

Studying the evolution of land ownership in villages in Neamt, we have found that, in two centuries and a half, a series of boyar families have continued to own old villages uninterruptedly (for example, the descendants of the Belcescu, Limbădulce, Urdugaș-Dumbravă families, the descendants of boyars such as Costea al lui Dragoș, Ivan Uscatul, Tatul Herlic etc.), others with some intermittencies, due to seizures made by various rulers (Beldiman, Boul, Ciolpan, Prăjescu, Ureche, etc.).

Periods of political instability, as well as the crisis in the interval 1432-1457, and the rebellions of groups of boyars during the rules of Ștefăniță, Petru Rareș, Alexandru Lăpușeanu or Ștefan II Tomșa had an impact on the evolution of land ownership in Neamt region. In times like these, seizure of villages took place, some of the landlords died, and others were forced to go into exile. While some aristocratic families have suffered because of such events, losing core members as well as land rights, other families were “beneficiaries” of crisis periods, getting rich from the donations offered by the rulers. For example, in the first half of the fifteenth century, after Prince Ilias is permanently removed from the throne by his half brother (1442), many of the boyars who had served him until then were deprived of their possessions, their villages passing in the property of some of Ștefan II’s loyalists. Among the “destitutes” of this period are Băloș ceașnic, Fetea Negru, Mihail Popșa, Giurgea Ceretianul, Ivașco din Sirețel, Costea Dragoșevici, Zianco etc. “The newly enriched” are boyars such as Mihail logofăt, Mic Crai, Oană Porcu, Baico or Tador Limbădulce; the first three were members of his Council, and the last, it seems, was a relative of the ruler. The balance will be re-established during the rule of Stephen the Great, when these boyars, or their descendants, were deprived of the villages which had been given to them by previous rulers and were only left with those inherited from their ancestors, which made up the family’s original land heritage. As a result, the three children of Oană Porcu owned during the rule of Stephen the Great only three villages, although their father had owned over 20; Baico had owned in the first half of the fifteenth century no less than 10 villages, but at the end of this century he only had one (Almaș), which he shared with his brother, Ivan. The land “property” of Limbădulce family, supporters of Prince Petru Aron, was also the target of seizures during the long reign of Stephen the Great, as some villages of Tador Limbădulce passed into the possession of the boyars, monasteries (Neamt Monastery) or re-entered the district of Târgu Neamț. Basically, we can state that during the reign of Stephen the Great a process of “resettlement” took place by returning the properties of ancient aristocratic families, which had fallen out of favour with previous rulers because of their devotion to their rivals.

The same situation can be observed in the sixteenth century. After the defeat of a part of the boyars, in 1523, Ștefăniță Voda seized their estates, giving them to some of his relatives who were not involved in the plot, an example being the “estate” of chancellor Ivanco, which the ruler gave to his cousins, brothers Stârcea, all grandsons of the old Tăbuci from Boian. The villages of counsellor Cozma Șarpe, another “heinous man”, passed in the property of Neamt Monastery, being recovered by his descendants, Boul family and a branch of the Ciolpan family, only during the reign of Peter the Lamé (e.g., Davideni village). The second reign of Alexandru Lăpușeanu did not pass without consequences for the landowners from Neamt region. One of them, parcalab Seachil, disappears in this period, and it is possible that he was among the 47 killed by order of the ruler, especially since he held the position of parcalab (chief magistrate) of Neamt during the reign of Despot Voda, after he had previously been medelnicer to Alexandru Lăpușeanu, during his first reign. Also during the second reign of Alexandru Lăpușeanu there may have taken place the seizure of the villages Crăcăoani, Hindăoani and Solomonești from the Hindău family, which had already happened during the reign of Peter the Lamé. Other cases of seizures are those occurring at the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the first reign of Ștefan II Tomșa.

As for the monastery villages, we found that they generally remained in the possession of the same monasteries. We identified several cases of villages that have passed from one monastery to another, being subject of litigation (Vânători Village, on Bistrita river), or from monasteries to boyars and vice versa, due to seizures (Războieni village, owned by Prăjescu family, which Ștefan II Tomșa, during both of his reigns, gave to Sf. Ilie Monastery of Suceava).

Another observation is that, in order to make the removal permanent, some rulers have used various methods: annulment of the old uric (document), by destroying it or, when it was not found, with a special note in the newly drafted document: “if the old uric is found, do not never ever trust it”; another method was giving villages seized from the boyars to monasteries, from where they were more difficult to recover by the descendants of the “heinous men”: Gostilă, descendant of ceașnic Balos manages to

recover, during the reign of Stephen the Great, only some of the villages seized by Ștefan II from his uncle, namely, in particular, those given to some boyars, such as Mic Crai, but not Băloșești village, on the Neamt river, donated to Neamt Monastery for which he litigated during the reign of Petru Aron, and of Stephen the Great. Another method was changing the name of the village as soon as it was included in the estate, which is natural if we consider that most villages bear names derived from those of their former masters, now in disgrace. The name change went to hinder their potential recovery, especially if a longer period of time passed from its dispossession.

The analysis of land ownership development has led us to identify kinship between various boyar families who had villages in Neamt region: Belcescu-Urdugaș, Belcescu-Brae, Blendea-Brae, Blendea-Ciolpan, Bașotă-Ciolpan, Bașotă-Blendea, Beșetea-Uscatul, Boldescu-Birtoc, Boldescu-Limbădulce, Buhuș-Seachil, Buhuș-Prăjescu, Ciocârlie-Boldescu, Ciocârlie-Dereptate, Herlic-Bașotă, Ciolpan-Prăjescu, Bașotă-Șofrac, Șoldan-Șofrac, etc. Marriages between members of these families are suggested by the fact that villages that belonged to certain families, are, at some point, in the hands of others. Occasionally the documents explicitly mention these relations, in kinship terms or by phrases such as “their clan”, “their kin”, “their relatives” etc. Conversely, following “the flow of ownership” in villages of Neamt region (and not only!) helped us to clarify genealogical matters. For instance, clarifying the ancestry of Ștefan Blendea, parcalab (chief magistrate) of Roman, whom Nicolae Stoicescu supposed to have possibly been the son of Grigore Blendea. In this thesis we show, based on documentary proof, that Ștefan Blendea’s father was priest Ion Blendea from Tupilați. In addition, also based on documents of that period, we managed to provide another genealogical reconstruction for this family: a brother of Ștefan Blendea, Hilip Blendea from Mihăești, was married to a daughter of Drăgan Ciolpan and was thus kin to two of the most famous boyar families in the seventeenth century.

The large number of villages in Neamt region, located mainly in river valleys in the hill and plain areas, and less in the western, mountainous part, shows a high density of habitation in the period we had in view. Unfortunately, the sources available to us are extremely scarce as regards demographic information.

Annexes

Finally, in the annexes to this thesis, we have compiled a list of boyars who owned lands in Neamt area, where we also included possible ownership of other lands, a list of villages from Neamt region during the mentioned period, their documentary attestation, and the synthetic presentation of the evolution of land ownership (in Annex 5, on the villages, we highlighted in bold the princely and monastery ownership, to distinguish them from the boyar ownership), a few tables on princely ownership, and a map with the approximate location of the villages in Neamt area.

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