

# The Appearance of “Feudalism” and “Feudal” Forms of Property in Medieval Hungary

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**Abstract.** This paper presents the changes in the concept of feudalism from the end of the eighteenth century to the present day in both general and Hungarian medieval research. The author notes that the concept of feudalism has been losing ground for decades in general medieval research. The system which was previously thought to be feudalism never really took root in Hungary, but certain phenomena close to the European standard can be recognized: *praedium*, *nobiles praediales*, etc. The second part of the study examines the appearance of honour (*honor*) in Hungary, the heyday of which, according to the renowned Hungarian historian Pál Engel, was during the Angevin period. The final part of the study deals in detail with the possible patterns and antecedents of the honour system in the Árpáadian period.

**Keywords:** Hungary, feudalism, historiography, honour, system of honour

In the present study, I wish to explore the issue of a historical phenomenon that, when Marxist ideology was at its apogee, used to be applied as an explanation for the functioning of society as a whole, while nowadays little attention is paid to it: the phenomenon of feudalism. After I examine the changes in the meaning of the term, I propose to summarize the functioning of honour (*honor*) as the institution deemed the most “feudal” in nature by Hungarian research.

As is commonly known, the term *feudalism* originates from the medieval Latin word *pseudum*, which referred to a type of property subject to certain obligations in early medieval Western Europe. Contrary to popular belief, the term created from *pseudum* does not originate from Marxist theory, but was first used in the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment, as a term for the fragmentation caused by the power of oligarchs, and later, during the French Revolution, to describe the *ancien régime* as a whole. In Marxism—one of the most, if not the most, complex influential theories regarding philosophy, history and economics in the mid-nineteenth century—*feudalism* was considered as one of the consecutive social

structures (or to use Karl Marx’s term: formations), that followed the slave-owning and preceded the capitalist society. According to this theory, feudalism was the exploitation of the peasantry as a subjugated class, on the basis of land ownership, where exploitation took the form of imposing payments to be made in the form of work, crops and—later—money. It should be noted, however, that neither Karl Marx nor Friedrich Engels—his closest colleague and ideological comrade—developed the theory of feudalism in such a detailed manner as, for example, the theory of capitalism, but only addressed its definition with shorter or longer references. Thus, it was left to posterity to accurately expound and reconstruct Marxist theory regarding feudalism. A fair share of this reconstruction was undertaken by Hungarian scholars: it will suffice to refer here to Ferenc Tőkei, sinologist and Marxist theorist, or to László Makkai, a leading scholar in numerous fields of the history of the medieval and early modern periods, who can also be considered as a Marxist scholar as far as his career after 1945 is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

The term “feudalism” was certainly not used exclusively by Marxist historians; however, it should definitely be noted that the term essentially bore two different meanings basically everywhere in European historiography. One of those meanings was the so-called “vassalage” (in French: *vasallité*) that created, according to this view, a social pyramid, a relationship of superiority and subordination in medieval Europe after the Carolingian era (which emerged most clearly in France). The basis of this societal structure was, obviously, the fief burdened with services (*feudum* or *beneficium*, in French literature also: *fief*). The other substantial meaning was the demesne-based structure (*allodium*, in French: *réserve* or *terre seigneuriale*), where demesnes were cultivated by serfs who, gradually, became the fee-paying, land-holding peasantry by the later centuries of the Middle Ages. I do not intend to provide a complete overview of the history of scholarship; however, I will attempt to offer a brief summary of the most influential theories with non-Marxist roots on the issue.

A major theory was introduced in the first half of the twentieth century by the French scholar Marc Bloch, who claimed that the constant element in the feudal society was the demesne, the existence of which preceded, but also survived vassalage as a societal interrelationship. According to Marc Bloch, there was a watershed around the year 1050 in the period that commenced under the Carolingians (in about 900) and ended in the middle of the thirteenth century. Another high-impact theory is linked to the name of the Belgian François-Louis Ganshof, who construed

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1 For the definition of feudalism and the prehistory of the concept, see: Györffy, *István király és műve*, 587–600. For the elaboration of the theory of feudalism in Marxism, see: Tőkei, “A feudalizmus alapvető szerkezete,” 287–377; Makkai, “Marx a feudalizmusról,” 13–48. Ironically, a high-quality university textbook with Marxist approach on feudalism was written at the very end of state socialist period in Hungary: Gyimesi, *Középkori egyetemes történet*.

feudalism in a more restricted way: as a legal and military phenomenon that concerned only the relations of the nobility within the framework created by the concepts of overlord, vassal and military service.<sup>2</sup>

In French historiography, a theory appeared as early as the nineteenth century (represented by Jules Michelet), and reappeared in the twentieth century with even more weight (represented by Georges Duby, and later Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel), according to which feudal society faced a severe crisis around the year 1000 when the power structures that characterized the Carolingian era ceased to exist, accompanied by the increasing dependency of the rural population (the so-called feudal mutation theory).<sup>3</sup>

Following such high-impact theories, the “disintegration” of the concept of feudalism applied in Western Europe was observable from the 1970s onwards. First, Elizabeth A. R. Brown, a medievalist from the United States, criticized the fact that the term “feudalism” was used to refer to nearly the whole medieval period in Western Europe. Later, well-founded criticism (represented by Dominique Barthélémy of France, and Stephen D. White of the United States) arose regarding George Duby’s theory that the crisis emerged around the year 1000. Susan Reynolds, a British medievalist, even considered that feudalism was merely a term of the jurisprudence of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that it never existed in the form elaborated by historians. Representatives of modern German historiography have also commented on the issue: recently, Steffen Patzold disputed the notion that the overlord-vassal relationship became a dominant organizing principle as early as the ninth century, and claimed that such relationships appeared only in a later period.<sup>4</sup>

In Hungarian research, as regards the basic theses, standpoints worth taking into consideration have been formulated in recent decades on medieval economic and social structures—even if nowadays such standpoints might seem outdated in the light of Western European terminology. The aforementioned scholar, László Makkai suggested that the starting point of “feudalism” in Western Europe occurred later (around the year 1000) than the date proposed by Marc Bloch, and also stressed the significance of industrial innovations (e.g. watermills and windmills). Gyula Szvák, an expert in the field of Russian history, highlighted, within the frameworks of a concept of feudalism still considered valid in Russian

2 Bloch, *La société féodale*; Ganshof, *Qu’est-ce que la féodalité?*.

3 Michelet, *Histoire de France*; Duby, *La société aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*; Poly and Bournazel, *La mutation féodale*.

4 Brown, “The Tyranny of a Construct,” 1063–88; Barthélémy, *La mutation*; White, *Feuding and Peace-Making*; see also White, *Re-Thinking Kinship*; Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*; Patzold, *Das Lehnswesen*.

historiography, that the developments which occurred in Russia differed from those in Eastern and Central Europe, and pointed out that Russia remained in an early-feudal state until the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, it is apparent that the terms “feudal” and “feudalism” essentially lost the meaning previously assigned to them. Nonetheless, in the long-established Russian historiography, for instance, earlier definitions have still endured.

The issue of the existence of feudalism (vassalage) in Hungary has attracted considerable controversy in domestic historiography. Firstly, Gyula Szekfű, a notable historian of the first half of the twentieth century, should be mentioned. In one of his famous early works entitled *Serviensek és familiárisok* [*Servientes and familiares*], he considered *familiaritas* (i.e. the phenomenon of the servant nobility entering the service of a lord), which appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century, as the Hungarian equivalent of vassalage, even though he denied the existence of a Hungarian feudal land structure. In the high-quality research on medieval history conducted in the Horthy period, major researchers like Bálint Hóman, Ferenc Eckhart or Eszter Waldapfel (a student of Hóman) argued for the existence of the characteristics of vassalage in Hungary (the existence of beneficial properties, the obligation on court dignitaries and of warriors to provide military service),<sup>6</sup> while other renowned parties to the discussion (Péter Váczy is particularly worthy of note) rejected all such arguments, considering the lands granted by St Stephen as hereditary *in proprium* donations, rather than *beneficium* properties.<sup>7</sup>

Elemér Mályusz, who was influenced by the sociology developed by Max Weber, referred to the characteristics he considered as typical of vassalage in a rather inconsistent manner: he named Church properties as having such characteristics at certain points, and the king's escort at others. In fact, he construed the period between the issuing of the Golden Bull (as explained below) and the middle of the fifteenth century as the era of vassalage in Hungary. György Bónis—also influenced by Max Weber—who wrote his monograph directly after the Second World War, made more well-founded statements. In his view, neither vassalage nor beneficial rights existed in Hungary; it was merely that more loyal service was expected in return for the donated property. Bónis believed that the characteristics of the Hungarian structure were rather archaic, or patrimonial. It should be noted

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5 As regards Makkai's observation and the high-level debate that followed it (with contributions by such as Zsigmond Pál Pach and Jenő Szűcs), see: Makkai, *Az európai feudális rendszer genezise*; Szvák, “O rannefeodal'nom,” 52–58.

6 Szekfű, *Serviensek és familiárisok*; for a useful summary of his results, see: Almási “Familiaritás,” 210–12; Hóman and Szekfű, *Magyar történet*, 230; Eckhart, “Jog- és alkotmánytörténet,” 312–19; Waldapfel, “Nemesi birtok jogunk kialakulása,” 134–67, 259–72.

7 Váczy, “A hűbériség szerepe,” 369–92.

though, that he nonetheless considered the Church nobility and the local nobility (i.e. *not* the national *nobilitas*) as exhibiting some characteristics of vassalage.<sup>8</sup>

Obviously, Hungarian historiography after 1945—heavily influenced by Marxism—did believe in the existence of feudalism in Hungary. Emma Lederer, a professor at Eötvös Loránd University, even dedicated a whole monograph to the development of the phenomenon in the country; however, in a not particularly well-written book, she provided more of an overview of the society and administration of the Árpadian period—considered nowadays as completely outdated—than an exploration of the two branches of feudalism (vassalage and the demesne-based structure). The scholars developed the periodization of the period in question by the end of the 1960s, which—paradoxically—can be best learned from the concise articles of a lexicon published after the changes of 1989–1990. According to this, the period that commenced at the turn of the tenth and the eleventh centuries and ended in the middle of the thirteenth century, characterized by manorialism, by the absence of towns and by strong royal authority, was named *early feudalism*, and the period that lasted from the thirteenth century until approximately 1440, reaching its peak under the Angevins and characterized by the production of goods, the general use of money, free movement of agricultural population, the appearance of peasant holdings and the progress of urbanization, was named *mature feudalism*. Nevertheless, dissenting opinions were also articulated: György Györffy referred to the “feudal” era in Hungary (until the civil transformation) as the *era of the jobagionatus*, and attributed the characteristics of vassalage to certain provinces established at the foundation of the state, as well as to the lands held by the castle warriors [*iobagiones castris*] (as explained further below).<sup>9</sup>

Following the regime change in 1989–1990, the concept of “feudalism” lost ground in Hungary as well. Moreover, a debate attracting widespread attention took place in the 1990s between Pál Engel and Gyula Kristó, two great historians of the period. Engel suggested the application of the concept of *demesne-based structure* [Hung.: *uradalmi rendszer*], since political feudalism (i.e. the pyramid created by vassalage and property burdened by service) was not present in Hungary, while Kristó was not averse to the use of the earlier terminology, since it primarily bore the meaning of a social structure that lasted until the emergence of the capitalist system, and was a determining factor also in Hungary. Nonetheless, András Kubinyi, an expert on the Late Middle Ages, cautioned against linking *familiaritas* with vassalage, since the former phenomenon was also present in Western Europe,

8 Mályusz, “A patrimonális királyság,” 18; Mályusz, “A karizmatikus királyság,” 32–33, 40–41; Bónis, *Hűbériség és rendiség*, passim.

9 Lederer, *A feudalizmus kialakulása*; Varga, *Vita*; Kristó, “Korai feudalizmus,” 368–69; Petrovics, “Érett feudalizmus,” 196–97; Györffy, *István király*, 591–92, 598.

under the name of *bastard* or *contractual feudalism*. Thus, the existence of a specific phenomenon present also in the West cannot be construed expansively, i.e. cannot be deemed as evidence of the existence of vassalage in Hungary.<sup>10</sup>

I will now summarize my own beliefs with regard to the existence of Hungarian “feudalism”. Firstly, I wish to briefly address the beneficial character attributed by many scholars to the property of castle warriors. Simon of Kéza wrote the following regarding this social group in his well-known work, penned in the middle of the 1280s:

“Castle warriors [iobagiones castri] are persons of noble condition but small means who approached the king and were granted land from the lands belonging to the castle, on the understanding that they should guard the castle and its fiefs [pseudacastri] in time of war.”<sup>11</sup>

As we can see, in the quoted text, *pseudum* is not directly related to the possessions of castle warriors. In fact, as regards castle warriors, it is not the legal status of the lands they received in usufruct that is remarkable, but the legal status of the social class itself. This class started to develop by the end of the eleventh century when a person’s freedom (*libertas*) was not necessarily complete, but could lead to the dependency of the individual concerned. This is what happened to the majority of the class of *miles* of the age of St Stephen, who joined the castle structure and, thus, the once free warriors became possessions of the king, although their social prestige remained for centuries. Having regard to the foregoing, there are no traces of the phenomenon of Hungarian “feudalism” to be sought here.<sup>12</sup>

It is much less frequently pointed out—although stressed by István Szabó, the great agrarian historian and foremost expert in the issue—that the *praedium*, i.e. the lord’s medieval “agricultural holding” cultivated by serfs was, essentially, the equivalent of the *villa* or *réserve* in *Western Europe*, mostly referred to as demesne [Hung.: *uradalom*] or manor [Hung.: *majorság*] in Hungary. This form of production, even though it had started to disintegrate by the beginning of the thirteenth century, was similar to its counterpart in Western Europe which had existed centuries earlier.<sup>13</sup> Thus, it must be noted that there existed an institution in the frameworks of production, i.e. not an institution of nobility, that was perfectly equivalent to European models.

10 Engel, *Beilleszkedés Európába*, 24–26; Kristó, *Magyarország története (895–1301)*, 148–49; Kubinyi, “Szekfű Gyula,” 62–63.

11 Veszprémy and Schaer, *Simonis de Kéza*, 182.

12 As regards castle warriors, see: Zsoldos, *A szent király szabadjai*.

13 Szabó, “A prédiüm,” 51–122, as regards stressing the Western models, see: Szabó, “A prédiüm,” 57, 59–60, 78.

My third observation, which is not novel either, is consistent with a factor stressed by György Bónis: several special noblemen (the Church *praediales*, castle noblemen, *fili iobagionum*, the noble pikemen of Szepesség, part of the nobility of Slavonia, and, for a certain extent, the Romanian *knez*) did hold properties burdened with service, more precisely, with military service. Taxes were also levied on them; however, they had judicial self-governance, and were present for a fairly long period in Hungarian society (until the civil transformation). Certainly, it is mostly their property burdened with service that make such noblemen similar to certain Western European phenomena; yet no chain of vassalage existed into which they could have integrated, and they possessed no prerogatives deemed typical in Western Europe.<sup>14</sup> However, it may not be coincidental that both institutions similar to Western European models—i.e. the lord’s “agricultural holding” and the noblemen owing service—can be related to the same term, whether used as a noun (*praedium*) or in its adjectival form (*praedialis*). It seems that this term was meant to indicate the Hungarian social-economic phenomena that were equivalent to European models.

One further institution existed in Hungary that was similar to European standards, even more so than the *praedium*: the fief granted with office, i.e. the honour (*honor*). It should be noted as regards the environment of the history of scholarship in which the concept of honour was developed, that the last decades of the twentieth century witnessed numerous crucial events affecting Hungarian medieval research. The history of many unknown, hardly known or misinterpreted institutions was revealed in the this period, despite the fact that medieval studies was merely one of the “tolerated” branches of scholarship—and some essential auxiliary sciences (for instance genealogy) were not even tolerated—, and ensuring the continuance of the training of researchers was dogged by many difficulties at the scholarly universities both in Budapest and in other cities. Among such discoveries, specific significance can be attributed to the exploration of the problematic features and dual image of the “castle counties” [Hung.: *vármegye*] and “castle districts” [Hung.: *várispánság*] by Gyula Kristó, as well as to József Gerics’s development of the models and operation of the Hungarian estate system at its early mature state, i.e. at the end of the thirteenth century. However, the most widespread attention was beyond doubt attracted by the exploration of vassalage or fief related to office—i.e. honour—by Pál Engel, the great medievalist, at the beginning of the 1980s.

Engel’s theses are to be found in a few publications in English, where the following main claims were made. In the fourteenth-century Hungary, the importance of castles and the demesnes linked to them increased. Essentially, following the disintegration of the castle counties established under the Árpáds, castles

14 Bónis, *Hűbériség és rendiség*, 183–216, 331–65; Engel, “Praedialis nemes,” 556–57; Solymosi, “Egyházi nemes,” 181–82.

provided the basis for the governance of the country. Engel found confirmation of his claims in twentieth-century German historiography, where the connection between castles and political power was established.<sup>15</sup> After demolishing the power of the oligarchs and provincial lords<sup>16</sup> who had paralyzed the state during the late Árpáadian and early Angevin periods, Charles I, the able Angevin ruler who came to Hungary from Naples, divided up the administration of the country on the basis of fiefs granted with office, i.e. the so-called honours. Obviously, this required the recovery of royal property and castles, which meant that approximately 150 stone castles were retained as royal assets until the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Honours were essentially counties or castle areas linked to offices held by the barons of the realm or by others (for instance, the family most loyal to the ruler. For example, the Drugets, who held the office of palatine, were granted the counties of North Eastern Hungary, while the respective judge royal [*iudex curiae regiae*] held the castles in the northern part of Trencsén County for an extended period). The person to whom the honour was granted held the territories entrusted to him "as honour" (*pro honore possidere* or *tenere*) "during the good pleasure" (*durante beneplacito*) of the king. The most significant elements of those territories were, in line with the above, the castles and their demesnes. The holder was entitled to all revenues related to the honour (with the exception of the gate-tax), and, in return, he—with his family and *familiares*—handled the administration and kept order within the territory of the honour, which might have been as large as one or more counties (within this territory, every issue—from the management of economic life to jurisdiction—fell within the scope of the office-holder's powers). The subordinates served the count holding the honour—who, as noted above, might have been a national dignitary—as vice-count (*vicecomes*) or as castellan (*castellanus*). The honour was most probably handed over to its holder orally, since no written sources concerning the process remain. However, a part of an account book from the year 1372 offers an insight into the everyday life of the honour of Benedict Himfi, count of Temes, by revealing the "budget" of a few months' duration regarding the honour granted with his office. The Hungarian name for the term "honour" was presumed by Engel to be "*becsű*".

The honour system did not cover the entire country: many counties were never governed in such manner, and its role effectively ended during the reign of Sigismund (1387–1437) due to the donation of royal properties, with a few

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15 The two works most frequently referred to by Engel: Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft*; Ebner, "Die Burg," 11–82.

16 In Hungarian medieval research, the terms "oligarch" and "provincial lord" were used as synonyms for many years. For discussion of the significance of the difference between them, see: Zsoldos, *A Druget-tartomány*, 11–36.

extraordinary territories left as exceptions (such as the territories under the authority of the count and castellan of Bratislava). The erudite historian mentioned above revealed the European background of the honour in detail, and stressed that, in Europe, honour constituted an early system, observable throughout the continent prior to the development of hereditary fiefs. However, curiously enough, Engel did not elaborate the background of the honour in Hungary. He made references to the fact that the territory of the Voivodate of Transylvania and of the Banate of Slavonia were functioning as honours already in the Árpáadian period, and also referred to a relevant article in the Golden Bull; however he left the exploration of the prelude to the development and establishment of the honour system to posterity.<sup>17</sup>

Even though nowadays it is largely forgotten, the fact is that the theory of the honour structure, at the time of its presentation, was criticized by a major scholar of medieval political history and power structures, Erik Fügedi. It is clear to me that Fügedi had no truly decisive arguments against the theory; in particular, he did not deny the close relationship between castles and the exercise of power in the relevant period, he merely disputed the development of honour territories. As Fügedi saw it, the most significant actors of the Angevin state, as regards politics and power—apart from the national dignitaries and the counts of county (*comes comitatus*), or even preceding the latter—were castellans (*castellani*) who were authorized to administer military, economic and judicial issues in the castles and their demesnes.<sup>18</sup>

A deeper exploration of the honour system was carried out only several years after Engel's works were published. Several studies were written on the economic role of honour territories,<sup>19</sup> but the observations of Attila Zsoldos—who started examining the Angevin era after his research into the Árpáadian period—can be considered as the most significant. In a brief study, he explored the events following the death of Demeter Nécsei, which occurred in the year 1338. Zsoldos established that after the demise of Nécsei, who had held the office of the master of treasury (*magister tavernicorum*) and was granted the counties of Bihar and Trencsén as honour (*pro honore*), the administration of these territories was provisionally taken over by the palatine. This does not seem to have been an isolated case but represents a general tendency, a theory which is supported by two other cases that occurred under Charles I and another under Louis I.

Recently, in a separate monograph, Attila Zsoldos explored the background of perhaps the most prestigious honour, that held by the Druget family, which lasted from 1315 to 1342 in northern Hungary. The Drugets, who arrived from Naples

17 Engel, "Honor, castrum," 91–100. See also: Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, 151–53.

18 Fügedi, "Királyi tisztség," 483–509; Fügedi, *A középkori*, 9–11; Fügedi, *Ispánok, bárók, kiskirályok*, 196–206, 247–49.

19 Haraszti Szabó, "A 14. század eleji megye," 133–59.

with Charles I, held the palatinate throughout his reign. The province administered by them—which encompassed a significant part of the country and was basically created in order to monitor and counteract the oligarchic territory of Matthew Csák, who died only in 1321—exhibits several similarities, as well as several differences compared to the territory of the Voivodate of Transylvania and the Banate of Slavonia, both of which had been established earlier. At first, William Druget exercised powers as judge royal (*iudex a domino rege deputatus*) (which phenomenon is comparable to the development of the Banate of Macsó), and later he and his relatives as successors managed the vast honour basically irrespective of the palatinate held by them. Such provinces had separate *magistri tavernicorum* and judges, whose seat was in Vizsoly, the center of the province, and whose activities ceased definitively only in 1341. As regards the differences between this territory on the one hand, and the Voivodate of Transylvania and of the Banate of Slavonia on the other, no one was ever appointed as formal deputy of the Drugets. Zsoldos stressed that the development of the Drugets’ province also had political reasons (Matthew Csák), as did its termination (the change of ruler, and the intention to reduce the influence of the Drugets).<sup>20</sup>

For my part, I only attempt to make a humble contribution to the issue of the honour. That is, in the present paper, I wish to collect the studies that seem to be related to the antecedents and development of the honour system of the Árpáadian period, whether these studies were intended to address the issue of the honour or were undertaken regardless of it. To the best of my knowledge, no such collection has yet been presented.

Firstly, I wish to refer to the research by János Horváth Jr., who was a renowned philologist of medieval Latin texts in the mid-twentieth century. In a voluminous study published in 1966, he attempted to justify the knowledge of the Greek language of the *gesta* author (P. master) (whom Horváth believed to be Peter, bishop of Pécs), as well as the multi-faceted relations with the Byzantine Empire of the same author. As one piece of evidence, Horváth brought up the fact that Árpád, in recognition of his merits (*pro beneficio*), appointed chieftain Bors the count (*comitem constituit*) of Borsod, a castle in northern Hungary, and *curam sibi condonavit* he whole territory. Horváth claimed that this Latin expression (*curam alicui condonare*) was the calque of a Byzantine Greek expression applied as a term of constitutional and public law, i.e. πρόνοιαν αναθέτειν/ἀναιθέναι. In Byzantium, *pronoia* was a kind of property granted with office that appeared in the twelfth century, through which tax revenues were granted to leading officials until they were revoked. If Horváth was right, and we prefer not to choose the expression “entrust the care of” as a translation of the said Latin term, the translation becomes relatively

20 Zsoldos, “Üres honor,” 455–77; Zsoldos, *A Druget-tartomány*, passim.

difficult. For my part, I would perhaps choose the paraphrase “entrusted to him with office”. This would imply that a type of property quite similar to the honour appeared by the end of the 1210s in Hungary—at least as a *gesta* author strongly influenced by his own times, the reign of Andrew II, perceived it.

Horváth’s suggestion was criticized several years later by István Kapitánffy, an expert on the history of Byzantium. Kapitánffy believed that the expression *curam alicui condonare* was not equivalent to the aforesaid Greek expression. According to him, the proper Latin translation of that term would be *providentiam imponere/superponere alicui*. Kapitánffy stressed that Anonymus always wrote of eternal donations, not of revenues revocable by the ruler.<sup>21</sup>

A paper written by Árpád Nógrády a quarter of a century ago, which attracted a great deal of attention, is closely related to the polemics of Horváth and Kapitánffy. Nógrády drew attention to the fact that, at the end of the twelfth and in the first third of the thirteenth century, certain counties (Nógrády listed fifteen of them, most significantly Bács, Bihar, Sopron, Bodrog and Pozsony) were chosen to be granted to national dignitaries besides their offices of palatine, *comes curiae regiae* etc. Although we have little knowledge of the revenues assigned to the offices held by the barons and counts at this time, this phenomenon resembles the system observed by Engel in the Angevin period. Thus, properties granted with certain offices (more precisely: linking a county and its revenues to the office of a national dignitary) certainly did appear at the time of Anonymus, in the last years of the reign of Béla III (1172–1196) and under Andrew II (1205–1235). This, however has not been and could not have been taken into account by Kapitánffy when criticizing the arguments of János Horváth Jr.

It should be noted that the honour-like donation of counties was so significantly present in the relevant period, that the Golden Bull, issued in the year 1222, even attempted to restrict the linking of dignitaries and court offices appearing at that time (*magister agazonum, magister pincernarum, magister dapiferorum*) to the office of count of county [*comes comitatus*] (literally, the Golden Bull attempted to restrict the simultaneous holding of two offices). The Golden Bull prescribed that only the most significant barons, i.e. the palatine, the ban (of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia), the *comes curiae regiae* and the queen’s *comes curialis* were entitled to do so.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, I wish to refer to the study written by Gyula Kristó in the 1970s on feudal disintegration that has already been mentioned. In the relevant paper, Kristó, late professor of the University of Szeged, not yet aware of Engel’s research, analyzed

21 Horváth, “Die griechischen,” 26–39; relevant lines from the anonymous *gesta* author: Rady, Bak, and Veszprémy, *Anonymi*, 48; for the criticism of Horváth’s claim, see: Kapitánffy, “Die ungarische Anonymus,” 69–76.

22 Nógrády, “Magistratus et comitatus tenentibus,” 157–94; the relevant edition of the Golden Bull in Latin and in Hungarian: Érszegi, *Az Aranybulla*, 32, 33.

in detail the development of the offices of the Ban of Slavonia and of the Voivode of Transylvania, as well as the powers vested in them. Obviously, the monograph, which was written almost five and published four decades ago, is considered partially outdated nowadays (for example, Kristó's theory that the historical antecedents of the office of the voivode were to be found in the presence of Bulgarians in South Transylvania, which presence was most probably non-existent at the time when King St Stephen founded the state).<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the overall picture presented by Kristó indicates that, substantially, both the voivode and the ban administered the properties as honours as early as the Árpáadian period (after some time, the voivode appointed the counts of counties subordinate to him, and both the voivode and the ban exercised extensive authority over military affairs, jurisdiction and the economy. For the next one and a half centuries after 1263, the Voivode of Transylvania also held the office of the count of the vast Szolnok county, which, for instance, could serve as a model for the system applied in the Angevin period).<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, the overview presented above does not answer all the questions that arise with regard to the roots of the system of honour in Hungary. Yet, it might indicate that research, sometimes unintentionally, as we have seen in the case of the chronicle research conducted by János Horváth Jr., indicated the path by which the antecedents of the historical institution of Hungarian honour—explored with great erudition by Engel Pál and accepted by most Hungarian medievalists—is to be (or should be) sought. It is also worth stressing that if the presence of honour in the Árpáadian period is later proven, then it will be revealed that there is yet another significant military-administrative phenomenon of medieval Hungary—beside the *banderium* system for instance—that cannot be considered as an innovation introduced by the dynasty that arrived in Hungary from Naples in the fourteenth century.

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23 On the debates about the characterization of the Kingdom of Saint Stephen, see: Makk, “De l'État de Saint Étienne,” 625–38.

24 Kristó, *A feudális széttagolódás Magyarországon*, 84–138. Short summaries: Almási, “Bán,” 78; Kordé, “Vajda,” 707.

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