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The Protection of the Northern Borders of the Kingdom of Hungary (Slovakia) with Poland in the Middle Ages

Abstract

The frontier defense system of the Kingdom of Hungary, which consisted of guard settlements, gates and border fortifications-made of piles of stone and earth, rows of fallen trees, artificial hedges – as well as ditches (*gyepű* in Hungarian) was established in the 11th century. This so-called “gyepű line” was guarded by special troops called *speculatores*, consisting mainly of Hungarians, Siculs, Pechenegs and Cumans. It surrounded the territory of the state from all sides like a hoop. On the northern border of Hungary, in present-day Slovakia, a defensive system was built on road crossings leading to Moravia, Poland and Galicia. It used the mountain ridge of the Carpathians, which formed a natural barrier between the countries mentioned, and disappeared during the 13th century. But it is from this period that most written data is available, when some frontier guards were promoted and reached the ranks of nobility, while others left their guard posts and moved to another location. Most of them were bestowed by the king together with the settlement upon new aristocratic owners. It was also the case with frontier guard sites located toward the Polish border. Many of the frontier settlements manned with border guards were deserted by their former inhabitants (Fintice, Slivník). The Tatar invasion of 1241 showed that this system was ineffective. Therefore, Hungarian crown began the construction of new stone castles, a few of which had already existed before and proved their worth. New stone fortresses had been erected throughout the country, but especially near the borderline. A whole chain of castles was established in the Little Carpathians, the valley of the Váh River, as well as the Orava Castle, Liptov, Spiš, Stará Lubovňa Castle, etc., which better suited the new requirements of the Kingdom's defense.

Keywords: Middle Ages, Polish-Hungarian (Slovak) border, border protection, *confinium*, border patrol units

Słowa kluczowe: średniowiecze, granica polsko-węgierska (słowacka), ochrona granicy, *confinium*, jednostki straży granicznej

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In the Middle Ages, the northern border of the Kingdom of Hungary consisted of the Carpathian Mountains ridge. This natural geographical barrier separated the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary from Poland for centuries. The mountains acted as a dividing line already during the period of the Principality of Nitra in the 9th century. After the arrival of the nomadic Magyar tribes¹ at the end of that century and the formation of the Kingdom of Hungary a hundred years later, the Hungarian state sought to push the border all the way to the Carpathians. It was no surprise that the ecclesiastical boundaries of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Esztergom coincided with the original boundaries of the Principality of Nitra. The Polish-Hungarian border along the line of the Carpathians, which survived until the 20th century, was established as the Polish territorial conquest came to a stop. Bolesław I the Brave extended his kingdom south to the Danube and Tisa Rivers² in the early 11th century. The confirmation of the founding charter of the bishopric of Prague (1086) stated that the border of the Kingdom of Hungary passed through the Tatra Mountains.

According to the *Gesta Hungarorum* (*The Deeds of the Hungarians*), which provides a detailed history of the arrival of the Hungarians to the Carpathian Basin, Bunger's son Borš was sent to Poland to check the country's borders and fortify them up to the Tatra Mountains. Borš recruited the sons of the inhabitants as a military reserve before returning to the military leader, Árpád³. The anonymous *Gesta* was completed at the beginning of the 13th century. Its accuracy is considered doubtful as it is not a chronicle. The reason for this is that the word *gesta* means "deeds" or "acts", which is a type of medieval entertainment literature. However, the evidence for the country's boundary leading through the Tatra Mountains is solid.

The well-known Hungarian historian György Györffy proposed that the old Magyars had conquered the territory of Slovakia as far as the Tatra Mountains and Little Carpathians by 900. According to him, the evidence for this is a mention of the village Levente in the Liptov region in 1297. This village disappeared in the Middle Ages and its location is uncertain, but it apparently lay near Uhorská Ves village. Györffy thought it was named after the eldest son of Grand Prince of the Magyars Árpád, Levente, who, after the fall of the Great Moravian Empire, married a Moravian princess of the Moymirid

¹ The Hungarian self-designation is Magyar. Š. Ondruš, 2001, p. 25–40. P. Engel, 2001, p. 9. J. Gulya, 1997, p. 85–98. L. Szegfű, 1994, p. 428–429. P. Királyi, 1997, p. 173. P. Királyi, 1990, p. 221–225. K. Czeglédy, 1956, p. 56–63. C. A. Macartney, 1968².

² Gallus Anonymus, p. 32. "Nam termini Polonorum ad litus Danubii ad civitatem Strigoniensem terminabantur; dein in Agriensem civitatem ibant, demum in fluvium, qui Tizia nominatur, cadentes, regirabant iuxta fluvium, qui Cepla nuncupatur, usque ad castrum Salis, ibique inter Ungaros, Ruthenos et Polonis finem dabant.", the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle, M. Homza (ed.), 2009, p. 150. It is thought that Polish boundaries were completed in 1018 or 1029, p.38; N. Verešová, 2001. The author assumes that Bolesław I the Brave held Slovakia for only a short time (2–3 months).

³ An anonymous notary and chronicler of King Béla III of Hungary, 'Anonymus' (1173–1196), wrote this work. Ae. Jakubovich – D. Pais (ed.), 1937, p. 58.

dynasty. After the defeat of East Frankish army at the Battle of Pressburg in 907, Levente settled on the confluence of the longest tributary to the Morava, the Thaya River, whose older German name is Laventenburch. His summer residence was on the upper reaches of the river Váh, in the Liptov region⁴.

Although Györffy's story about Levente in Liptov is probably inaccurate, it is likely that as early as the 11th century, the external border of the Hungarian state passed through the main ridge of the Carpathians⁵. However, there are some schools of thought that say the Kingdom of Hungary did not have a solid and precise state border formed until the mid-13th century⁶. It was not necessary, as the wide unpopulated zone between the two countries fulfilled this function⁷. The following theory, developed by the historian Branislav Varsik, has become widespread in Slovak historiography. Varsik proposed that the northern border of the Kingdom of Hungary only gradually reached the main Carpathian ridge, given that Hungary supposedly conquered the territory of Slovakia in several stages⁸. The argument for this theory is that there was no settlement in northern Slovakia that was named after old Hungarian tribes.

At the same time, Medieval Polish chronicles provide information on the southern border of Poland, which reached the Danube River during the reign of the Duke of Poland, Bolesław I the Brave⁹. According to many Polish historians, thanks to the markers put in place by this Duke, the Hungarian-Polish border reached the Danube and Tisa Rivers and remained there until the 12th century¹⁰. These opinions are based on the *Wielkopolska Chronicle* from the second half of the 13th century, which state that the son of Coloman, King of Hungary, Stephen received Spiš ("castellanium de Spiss") as a dowry from the Polish Duke, Bolesław III Wrymouth (1107–1138) and his daughter in 1108. The works of the Polish chronicler Jan Długosz provide another important source for the medieval history of the Hungarian-Polish border¹¹. However, they are written from the Polish perspective and the author's bias is apparent. Nevertheless, he respects the Carpathians as a border between the Kingdom of Hungary and Poland in several parts of his extensive work. He marks the Tatras as the mountains of the Kingdom of Hungary, from which the river Dunajec springs. He also writes about the Beskid Mountains, stating that they separate the Polish lands from the Pannonian ones. At the top of the hill of the same name, at the Sobień Castle, there is said to be a stone carved with an

⁴ *Magyarország története I/1*, p. 604. Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 43. According to Anonymus, however, Prince Menumorot gave his daughter to another son of Árpád, Zoltán of Hungary. P. Ratkoš, 1988, p. 403.

⁵ F. Uličný, 1970, p. 6–14.

⁶ M. Kring, 1938, p. 475–486.

⁷ M. Homza, 1998a, p. 28

⁸ B. Varsik, 1994c, p. 12–13.

⁹ *Gallus Anonymus Chronicle, Hungarian-Polish Chronicle, Chronica Polonorum by Wincenty Kadłubek and Wielkopolska Chronicle*. See also: A. Bielovodský, 1946, 2017², p. 32–50.

¹⁰ M. Homza gives an overview of his opinions on the topic, 1998a, p. 13–33. M. Homza, 1998b, p. 19–61. From the Polish side: R. Grzesik, 2003, p. 341–348.

¹¹ J. Rajman, 2018, p. 85–112.

inscription in Russian Cyrillic, which was once placed there by the Russian Duke Leo to mark the borders of the Hungarian and Polish Kingdoms¹².

Relations between the two countries were not always friendly, and it was necessary to ensure that border protections were in place¹³. During the reign of the Árpád dynasty in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, border protection was organized through a system of military zones or border patrol units in which groups of castle folk called “guards” (in Latin *speculatores* or *custodes confiniorum*, in Hungarian *örök*, in Slovak *stráže*) were distributed¹⁴. To this day, we are reminded of them through some local names such as Stráža, Stráže, Strážov, Strážne, Strážske, Streháre or Streženice. They were distributed throughout the kingdom and in fortified wastelands bordering colonized areas called *indagines* (in Hungarian *gyepű*, in Slovak *Preseka*) and gates (in Latin *porta*). These *indagines* arose alongside or at intersections of important roads and watercourses leading out of the country. They were formed from felled trees that were placed in a way that made it impossible to cross and as such they served as obstacles or roadblocks¹⁵. The most common tree for the *indagines* was the apple tree or plum with prickly branches, which is why there are villages in the borderland with settlements called *Jablonica* (an apple village), *Jablonové* (apple-like) or *Jablunkov* or *Slivník* (apple or plum village)¹⁶. *Indagines* could also be made of thorns.¹⁷

A similar border defense system protecting colonized areas was found elsewhere in Bohemia, Moravia and neighboring Poland¹⁸. The King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa mentioned this fact in his letter from 1157. According to him, Poland was excessively fortified by natural and artificial obstacles. His royal and imperial predecessors could only reach the Oder River with great difficulty. Reportedly, Frederick Barbarossa crossed

¹² “Dvnagecz... cuius... fons in Alpibus altissimis Hungarie, quorum nivalis semper vertex, qui Thatri wilgo appellantur”, Annales, lib. 1–2, p. 75. “Byeskođ, mons prope castrum Sobyen terras Polonicales a Pannonicis disterminans”, Annales, lib. 1–2, p. 105. A. Bielovodský, 2017, p. 50.

¹³ Invasion of the property of Komes Bohumír by an unnamed Polish Duke (and Orava castellan Mojš) 1290, DL 94 406. Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 56. From the Late Middle Ages: “Rex Poloniae et dux Vitaldus... regni nostri publici hostes... confinia regni nostri a parte Poloniae hostiliter subruere niterentur”, G. Fejér (ed.), 1842, X/5, p. 115, Nr. XLV.

¹⁴ “custodes... confiniorum, qui vulgo ewrii vocantur”, 17. Chapter The Laws of King Ladislaus I of Hungary, Book II. L. Závodszy, 1904, p. 172–173. H. Göckenjan, 1972, p. 12–22. A. Borosy, 1977, p. 543–557. A. Zsoldos, 2000, p. 105. B. Klein, 2009a. P. Roháč, 2014, p. 6–27.

¹⁵ “nobiles cum ipsorum iobagionibus... in via indagines facientes cum veribus ligneis et aliis fortaliciis preparatis in eisdem indaginibus”, 1442, J. Mihályi, 1900, p. 321, Nr. 186. In 1229, subjects from the Moson Castle were forced to cut out these indagines (“ad incidendas indagines”). Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 163 To enact the Golden Bull decree of 1231, the king forced servants to cut out *indagines* and dig ditches (“ad secandas indagines, ad fossata facienda”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 268, Nr. 375).

¹⁶ B. Varsik, 1994a, p. 245–251.

¹⁷ “indagines spinarum”, 1255, G. Wenzel (ed.), 1861, p. 288, Nr. 175. “indagines spineti”, 1347, F. Sebök (ed.), 2007, p. 281, Nr. 512. M. Slivka, 2003, p. 430.

¹⁸ H. Göckenjan, 1972, p. 5–22.

these obstacles that the Poles prepared in narrow and steep places from dense tree trunks only with God's help¹⁹.

Almost three hundred years later, in 1433, King of Poland Władysław II Jagiełło also built roadblocks in order to prevent the march of Hussite troops across his territory. But the Taborite garrison removed them with hatchets and fire and cleared the way to the Hungarian border²⁰. The use of trees for the defense of roads and borders was clearly still relevant at the time. The *indagines* were built not only at the borders of the country, but also around fortresses and towns²¹.

The defense system was carried out by border guards, mentioned in the laws of the first Hungarian Árpáds as a group organized as part of the castle of the county and divided into tenths and hundredths²². It was a population mainly of Hungarian origin. However, the Hungarians also used the skills of other ethnic groups such as Siculs (in Latin *Siculi*, in Hungarian *Székelyek*), Pechenegs and Cumans people (Polovtsians). Their settlements can be found in exposed places, crossings, passes, and wherever else border defense forces were concentrated.

A set of internal and external borders—a state line and a defense line, respectively—was created, with a sparsely populated area behind the large frontier zone (*ultra indagines*). In Hungarian, this area was called *gyepűelve* (*confinium* in Latin), that is the fortified border region or military zone²³. It was gradually dismantled as the internal defense border moved further north²⁴. In our overview of the Hungarian(Slovakian)-Polish *Confinium* and its defense facilities, we will proceed from west to east.

Western Slovakia

The oldest *indagines* in the north-west of Slovakia, toward the Polish border, were built by the Hungarians in the 11th century. They were located in the area of the Velké Uherce village, Ostratice village and Klíž village in the Middle Nitra region, in former Nitra County²⁵. Although historical records do not directly reference guards or *indagines* in this area, local names indicate their

¹⁹ “Polonia quamvis arte et natura admodum munita esset, ut antecessores nostri reges et imperatores vix magna difficultate ad fluvium Odera pervenissent, nos tamen in virtute Dei clausuras illorum, quas in angustiis locis precisa arborum densitate fecerant et magna ingenii mole abstruxerant, penetramus et fluvium Oderam transivimus”, Ph. Jaffé (ed.), 1864, p. 601–602. J.W. Sedlar, 1994, p. 207–208.

²⁰ “Clause enim erant per arborum incisiones mandato regis... Polonie vie”. *Annales*, lib. 11–12, p. 82.

²¹ R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 121–122, Nr. 153. P. Roháč, 2014, p. 13. See note. Nr. 15.

²² I. Chapter III. Law book of King Ladislaus I of Hungary. L. Závodszy (ed.), 1904, p. 172–173.

²³ Unlike the Moravian-Hungarian border, there were no special border counties in areas neighbouring the Kingdom of Poland. K. Tagányi, 1921, p. 105–121. K. Tagányi, 1913. F. Fodor, 1936, p. 113–144. Gy. Kristó – F. Makk – L. Szegfű, 1973, p. 639–660. G. Vékony, 1983, p. 215–236.

²⁴ R. Marsina, 1984, p. 52.

²⁵ B. Varsik, 1994c, p. 12–13.

presence. The settlement of Velké Uherce (in Hungarian *Nagyugróc*) got its name from the nationality of the border guards, who were Hungarians. Historically, Slovaks called Hungarians *Uhri*²⁶. The settlement was not named by any old Hungarian tribal name. By the beginning of the 11th century, the integration of old Hungarian ethnic groups into one whole had occurred and the names of older tribes such as Megyer, Kürt-Gyarmat, Nyék, Jenő, Kér, Keszi, and Tarján had disappeared²⁷. There are traces of them in southwestern Slovakia, where they lived in the 10th century, but not further north. The tribes arrived there first in the 11th century, when they were given the name *Ugor*. On the other hand, the settlement of Ostratice was given its name because of the existence of old *indagines*²⁸. The village is located near the former guard settlement Pečeňany named after the Turkic tribe of Pechenegs²⁹. Furthermore, the name Klíž is derived from the Slovak term *kluž* (from Latin *clusa*, *clausura*) meaning a pass³⁰.

Guards were employed in the Považie region against invasions from Moravia and Bohemia. They used the natural lines of the rivers Váh and Dudváh, with *indagines* built on the crossings of the Little and White Carpathians. Guard units in the frontier area came from the ranks of the Hungarians or the so-called ethnic military auxiliaries: Siculs, Pechenegs. Pointing to this are the local names of the Sekule village in Záhorie region or Pečeňady and Uhry near Považská Bystrica. Some written sources from 1208, from the area of Skalka nad Váhom and Bohunice near Ilava, mention *indagines*³¹. Guard settlements are recognized in the local names of the Stráže (today Šaštín-Stráže and Krakovany-Stráže) or Streženice near Púchov.

Central Slovakia

Few Hungarians came through the mountains to the north in central Slovakia, as the mountainous terrain slowed their progress. According to Anonymus, Notary of King Bela III—who wrote his *Gesta Hungarorum* about the Magyar conquest of the Carpathian Basin in the beginning of 13th century—“a third of the old Hungarian army together with the inhabitants of the country went to the Zvolen mountains to build wooden and stone fortifications to prevent the Czechs or Poles from stealing in their empire”³². However, at the time of the arrival of the Magyar tribes, no old Hungarian garrisons were recorded in the

²⁶ “Vgrich”, 1274, E. Szentpétery, (ed.), 1961, II/2–3, p. 114, Nr. 2562, P. Ratkoš, 1984, p. 30–31.

²⁷ B. Varsik, 1984b, p. 166.

²⁸ “terra Strece”, 1193, R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 95, Nr. 102. “possessio Cerne Ostrzeticz”, 1501, DL 21 050. B. Varsik, 1984b, p. 14.

²⁹ “terra Besenyev”, 1323, “possessio Pechenyiz”, 1474, A. Fekete-Nagy, 1941, p. 167. B. Varsik, 1984b, p. 166. B. Varsik, 1984a, p. 216.

³⁰ “Clus”, 1230, Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 410. B. Varsik, 1984b, p. 162.

³¹ R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 116, Nr. 148.

³² P. Ratkoš, 1968, p. 399. For the English translation also see: *Anonymus*, p. 75: “the third part of the army should go with the inhabitants of the land to the forest of Zvolen, to make

Zvolen area. The garrison settlements of the old Hungarians from the 10th century lay to the south, in the valley of the Hron River. They were probably in the vicinity of Kozárovce village and east of it, in the valley of the Ipel River, in Hont County and Nógrád County³³. This is evident in the local names that came from the old Magyar tribes and other toponyms related to defense³⁴. The founding date of the royal fortress Pustý hrad near Zvolen (also known as the Old Castle of Zvolen) is estimated by historians to be around the last quarter of the 12th century³⁵.

The integration of the region into the Kingdom of Hungary is thought to have occurred in the second half of the 11th century, although some scholars suggest that it happened a century later³⁶. The Árpáds set up a royal hunting district in the Zvolen Forest, protected by forest guards (*custodes silvarum*). The names of settlements Hájniky, today part of Sliač, and Badín village are reminiscent of this³⁷. No border guard settlements existed there in the 11th century. The center of this royal property, called a *prédium* in the sources, was Zvolen. There, a royal county was formed, which included the surrounding districts of Turiec, Orava and Liptov³⁸.

At the end of the 12th century the guards moved further north to the Váh region and reached Žilina. The Polish-Slovak (Hungarian) *confinium* in this area is mentioned in a written historical record from 1244, when Béla IV of Hungary donated the property of Kysuce region to his loyal servants. It says that the region was along the border with Poland and was deserted³⁹. Two garrison villages were established in the area: Strážov and Strážne. However, the first written records of both settlements come from a later period.

Strážov⁴⁰

Historical records from 1393 recorded this village as both Strážov and Stráža, and as belonging to the Lietava Castle⁴¹. It is located at the mouth of the Ra-

strong fortifications on the border of the realm both of stone and wood lest at any time the Czechs or the Poles should enter their realm to rob and plunder.”

³³ B. Varsik, 1994b, p. 102, 104.

³⁴ They did not reach Gemer in the 10th century. It was only in the second half of the 11th century when they crossed the Slaná River, into the Rimava River Basin and the valley of the Blh River. The names of the settlements Ostrany with its peaks, Stráž and Striežovce, serve as evidence of this. This is also known in Hungarian as Levártfalva, meaning “a shooting range”. The village *Stráža (known since 1296 as “Straza”), lay in the valley of the river Turiec in the Middle Ages. B. Varsik, 1994d, p. 65. The border patrol guards moved from Gemer to Spiš in the 12th century.

³⁵ M. Plaček, M. Bóna, 2007, p. 247.

³⁶ J. Žudel, 1984, p. 168.

³⁷ Hájniky: “villa custodum silvarum” from the year 1250, R. Marsina (ed.), 1987, p. 242, Nr. 349 and Badín: “superior villa custodum silvarum” from the year 1282, DL 63 899 a 63 900.

³⁸ M. Ďurková, 1996, p. 165.

³⁹ “terram quandam in confinio Poloniae existentem, desertam et habitatoribus omnino carentem”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1987, p. 111–112, Nr. 167.

⁴⁰ Today a part of the city of Žilina.

⁴¹ “possessio Straso”, DL 8078. A. Fekete-Nagy, 1941, p. 189.

jčanka River, pouring into Váh in Žilina. There was a crossroads at this point. One road led from the Rajec valley in the south, to the Kysuce region in the north and further to Poland. The other one was from west to east. The garrison settlement at this location was replaced by the nearby Castle Budatín.

Stráža

It was recorded under the name of Stráže in the year 1439 as part of the Old Castle (originally called Varín Castle)⁴². Stráža guarded the road leading to Orava.

Orava

As early as 1265, the town of Tvrdošín was said to be located at the Orava River, acting as a toll station and leading to Poland and Silesia. This important route, a *publica via*, led from the Polish city of Kraków, through Orava to Nitra or Zvolen. Reportedly, around the year 960, Árpáds secured this road by locating a Norman-Russian patrol from the Kolping tribe in the town of Kubín. This town is referred to as Kulpin in Byzantine sources and Kolbjagi in Russian ones⁴³. However, this theory seems rather unlikely for a number of reasons. Other garrison settlements in Orava are not mentioned in medieval sources.

Liptov

In the Middle Ages, the area of Liptov did not feature many border guard stations. It is worth mentioning that the name of the village of Prosiek was derived from the term *presiek* or *preseka*, as the *indagines* were called. Prosiek village lay on an important road connecting Liptov to Orava. “Prosiek” first appeared as the name of a creek in 1287, whereas the village of Prosiek was mentioned in records as early as 1352, with one referring to its owners and indicating that it had already existed during the reign of the king King Ladislaus IV of Hungary (1272–1290). Interestingly, official historical records did not translate this name into Hungarian (*gyepű*)⁴⁴. Hungarian border guards arrived in Liptov in the 11th and 12th centuries, when they founded a garrison settlement, Uhorská Ves⁴⁵.

⁴² “possessio seu villa Strase”, J. Teleki (ed.), 1853, p. 45, Nr. 21. See also: A. Fekete-Nagy, 1941, p. 189.

⁴³ Gy. Györffy, 1959, p. 87–91. Gy. Györffy, 1983, p. 84. Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 44, 79.

⁴⁴ “Zarazprozek”, A. Húščava, 1930, p. 27. “Prezky”, DL 73 557. F. Uličný, 1987, p. 207.

⁴⁵ Uličný implies arrival of Hungarians to Liptov and border guards distribution in the 11th century (F. Uličný, 1987, p. 90), whereas Varsik suggests it was in the 12th century. B. Varsik, 1984a, p. 209–224.

Uhorská Ves

This village was first mentioned in records in 1230⁴⁶. Its original defense role was then already a thing of the past, and the Hungarian guards had abandoned it, as part of it became the subject of donation. It was adjacent to the land of *Liptov, one of the oldest settlements in the area, after which the whole county was named; this also points to the importance of the border guards settling there⁴⁷.

Bešeňová

This settlement is sometimes included among garrison settlements. It derived its name from an important family, the Pechenegs, who immigrated to Liptov in the middle of the 14th century and apparently performed military service in the comital castle. It was Gregory Pecheneg (Besenyő in Hungarian), a *Komes* (Count) of the Pechenegs and his relatives, who had settled there. The first mention of the settlement named after this Pecheneg family comes from 1454⁴⁸.

Eastern Slovakia

Spiš county

In the opinion of many Polish historians, Spiš was originally Polish but came under Hungarian rule when Hungarians colonized the area. This view is based on the aforementioned claims of the Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) Chronicle, according to which Stephen, the son of King of Hungary Coloman, was given Spiš as a dowry from the Polish Duke, Bolesław III Wrymouth together

⁴⁶ “terram vacantem... que quondam fuerat ville, que vulgo Mogiorfolu vocabatur, quam dividit a terra Lyptou torrens... Beuchna”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 257, Nr. 361.

⁴⁷ According to the Hungarian historian Györffy, the Liptov region was the summer residence of the Grand Prince of Hungary, Levente. This theory is based on the name of the extinct settlement of Levente mentioned in one historical record of 1290. The other piece of evidence is by the fact that the Slavs from the valley of the river Slaná once called the hill Kráľová hoľa by the term Kenez; in Uhorská Ves village, the first important seat of Liptov, the ancestors of the sons of jobagions (“filii iobagionum”) lived here before the Tatar invasion, with their names preserving the memory of the Magyar magnates Jutač, Salók and Lád, who once in the 10th century formed the military parade of the prince. This procession had apparently integrated with the Slavs in Etelkez and could speak the language of the locals. The border hills, trees and watercourses in Liptov, which had Slavic names, were re-named using Hungarian names (eg Mély patak = Hlboký potok, Száraz = Suchý potok, etc.) and this bilingualism was maintained by the descendants of the sons of jobagions until the end of the millennium. Gy. Györffy, 1998, p. 44. This Györffy theory is far-fetched and cannot be taken seriously. F. Uličný, 1987, p. 89–90.

⁴⁸ “Besenyőfalva”, J. Karácsonyi, 1896, p. 518. P. Engel, 1996, p. 477. Until then the village was mentioned in the sources as Marcellfalva. B. Varsik, 1984b, s. 170.

with his daughter Judith. However, this was only a fabrication of the author without any real basis⁴⁹.

We learn about the so-called “Polish” *confinium* and *indagines* from several historical records on the valley of the Poprad River in Spiš. This is where the road from central parts of the Kingdom of Hungary led north to Poland, making it a strategically important area. According to Anonymus, Notary of King Bela III, the Grand Prince Árpád conquered the local population as far as the Spiš forest⁵⁰. However, this was only a fact imagined by the medieval novelist. Instead, it is thought that the Hungarian guards reached Spiš at the end of the 11th or beginning of the 12th century⁵¹. Apparently, they came from the more southern Gemer region. This is suggested by the name of a local garrison, Gemerör, or Gemerské Stráže, and is indirect evidence for the theory that the internal defense line of the Hungarian kingdom shifted to the north⁵².

In 1256, Bela IV of Hungary donated the royal forest in Spiš to Comes Jordan. It was located on both sides of the Poprad River, between the Hungarian and Polish *confinia*, the Siminy Hill (Levoča Mountains) and the Tatra Mountains. At that time, the border check point with Poland was mentioned as well as the “keeper” (Latin *custodia*)⁵³. The village of Maldúr-Podhorany was established in the area, and there are records from 1297 indicating that *indagines* existed here, too. The *indagines* were also mentioned in 1282 near Bušovce (Stragari), which borders Maldúr-Podhorany⁵⁴. In 1272, Stephen V of Hungary gave away a forest near Kežmarok on the right side of the Poprad River, which stretched to the entrance gate to the fortified area at the Poprad River, at the border with Poland (Křížová Ves)⁵⁵. In 1288, Magister George of the House of Sós defended the kingdom from the invasion of the Tatars at the *confinia* (military zone) at Spiš. This is where the Tatars invaded Hungary, through the Dunajec and Poprad valleys. However, they only reached the barrier of the *indagines*, where they were stopped by the nobleman Juraj. The journey through the valley of Poprad was therefore an important route, well secured by several defense facilities⁵⁶.

In addition to the Poprad valley, *indagines* could also be found elsewhere in Spiš. Records from 1344 mention closed *indagines* and gates where the road

⁴⁹ M. Homza wrote about the problem of determining the Hungarian-Polish border in Spiš in several of his articles. M. Homza, 1995, p. 201–214. See also R. Grzesik, 2003, p. 341–348.

⁵⁰ Ae. Jakubovich – D. Pais (ed.), 1937, p. 73.

⁵¹ B. Varsik, 1977, p. 194.

⁵² M. Števík, 2002, p. 51–63.

⁵³ “quandam silvam nostram regalem in districtu Scepes, ab utraque parte fluvii Poprad, inter indagines regni nostri et confinia Polonie et inter montes Scimia et alpes Tarczal existentem... prima meta... incipit in porta regni nostri versus Poloniam tendendo in ascensu custodie usque montem niveum Thortol vocatum”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1987, p. 382–383, Nr. 550.

⁵⁴ E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 292, Nr. 3150. “circa indagines”, G. Fejér (ed.), VI/2, p. 117–119.

⁵⁵ “silvam iuxta metas ville Keysmarch... usque portam in confinio Polonie iuxta Paprad constitutam”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1943, p. 134, Nr. 2154–2155.

⁵⁶ “ad finitimas partes regni nostri versus Scepes... in eodem confinio et circa indagines terre Scepes”, G. Fejér (ed.), 1830, V/3, p. 395.

running along the Poprad valley crossed over to the valley of the Dunajec River⁵⁷, somewhere to the east of Veľký Lipník village. This was almost at the border of the kingdom, which in this area was formed by the Dunajec, as stated in these documents⁵⁸. In this case, the border between the two countries reached beyond the main ridge of the Carpathians and on to the Zamagurie region. This illustrates that the exact line of the border was formed by settlements of local noble families. Records from 1277 refer to one *indago* that acted as a border in the village of Ruskinovce⁵⁹. This deserted settlement lay on the road connecting the capital of Spiš-Levoča to Kežmarok, and central Spiš to the Poprad valley. In the same year, a boundary perambulation of the *Belá estate (today in Markušovce) alluded to an old *indago* located on the old road leading to Spiš from Jasov⁶⁰. In Spiš, garrison settlements were located in the locations described below⁶¹.

Stráže pod Tatrami

Stráže pod Tatrami is today part of the town of Poprad. Historical records mention this part of the town under the name of the patron of the local Church of Saint Michael the Archangel, or under the Hungarian name Gemerör (*Gemerské Stráže). Their Slovak name Stráž is found in Polish historical records from 1564⁶².

Osada svätého Michala

In relation to the town of Kežmarok, historical records from 1423 mention that guards and fishermen lived here once. This now-abandoned settlement

⁵⁷ “Ubi... dictus Arnoldus... indaginem clausam et portam fuisset et nunc esse debere asseruisset”, I. Nagy (ed.), IV, p. 474, Nr. 284. These defence facilities were reportedly “out of order”; in fact, when terrain correction records were made, they were not listed!

⁵⁸ “venissent usque ad fluvium Danavich nuncupatum, nunc pro meta regnum Hungarie et regnum Polonie ab invicem separantem”, I. Nagy (ed.), IV, p. 474, Nr. 284.

⁵⁹ “rivulus ille dividit indaginem supradictam inter populos ecclesie et Saxones”, G. Fejér (ed.), V/2, p. 414

⁶⁰ “meta ascendit in veterem Gepeu et ibi cadit in veterem viam Jazo... descendendo”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 182, Nr. 2773.

⁶¹ We do not mention among them this village of Dlhé Stráže near Levoča. This village, also called Lengvarty, got its name from the German given name – Langwart. However, the original residence was registered as ‘Bicere’ (1278), ‘Bicir’ or ‘Pecher’ (1407). According to Hungarian historiography, the term pecér, pl. pecérek marked breeders of hunting dogs. A. Fekete-Nagy, 1934, p. 185–186. Apparently Jarabina village in Upper Spiš does not belong, here either. Its first mention in the sources is in 1329. It was not preserved in the original, and so its later records use its garbled form: “Giermp”, “Ewer”, “Esau”, “Evi”. A. Fekete-Nagy, 1934, p. 249. The form of ‘Ewr’ is considered to mean that it housed guards (Hungarian ör). V. Šmilauer, 1932, p. 280. M. Števík, 2002, p. 56–57. However, the first listing is more similar to today’s name. It appears before in 1342: “Ierubina”, G. Fejér (ed.), IX / 1, p. 52. Compare its designation with year 1408: ,Gyrem alio nomine Zumbach’, DL 9431–9433.

⁶² “Gumur”, 1275, “Gumurur”, 1280, “Gumureur”, 1317, A. Fekete-Nagy, 1934, p. 38–39, 46–47. M. Števík, 2007, p. 15. “Strasz”, B. Varsik, 1977, p. 194.

of St. Michael used to be in the location of Michalský vršok near the railway station⁶³.

Strážky

North of the town of Kežmarok, this settlement was first mentioned in 1251 under the Hungarian name Ör⁶⁴. In 1298, the local people asked the Spiš Count to relieve them of their duty of guarding the royal customs gate near the village of Bušovce (Vzturgar), since the *indagines* at this gate were cut off from all nearby villages; the townsmen could no longer provide these services for the benefit of the king⁶⁵. In any case, the episode indicates that these defense stations were still operational at that time.

Bušovce (*Stragar)

This was the last of the garrison settlements in the Poprad valley. It was originally called *Stragar, indicating that it was primarily populated by guards. Later, when the guards left the village, it changed its name. Both names are mentioned in historical records from 1367. The fact that the guards were once based here is also supported by a document describing the boundaries of the area from 1282, which refers to closed *indagines* and gates. The term guard (*custodia*) is recorded in documents on these places as early as 1256⁶⁶.

Hrabušice

The defensive role of this village is indicated by its Hungarian name, Capost, which includes the term *kapus*, or keeper of the gate. It was first mentioned in local records in 1260, when no guards were present there yet. It is worth noting that within the territorial bounds of this village existed a border guard or observation point southeast of Hrabušice—in an elevated area where ruins of a Carthusian monastery (called *Lapis refugii* in Latin) remain today—built on the site of a refuge used during the period of the Tatar invasions⁶⁷.

⁶³ “de terris quondam speculatorum et piscatorum, quas populi de Foro Caseorum suis excolunt araturis”, DL 8795. State archive Poprad, Town Archive Kežmarok. Fasc. XXXVIII, No. 4.

⁶⁴ “Eur”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1987, p. 258, Nr. 370. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 194.

⁶⁵ “populi de villa Ewr... quia indagines in porta theloniaria domini regis prope villam Vzturgar existentis ab omnibus villis circumiacentibus essent omnino a parte et incise”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1987, p. 202, Nr. 4183.

⁶⁶ “Busson... Stragar”, A. Fekete-Nagy, 1934, p. 233. “Mete terre Stragar... meta... tendit in silvam magnam nigram, que contiguatur terre et metis Polonie, post hec... versus orientem circa indaginem clausam et ibi iuxta portam fluit una aqua et per illam descendit in fluvium Poprad”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 292, Nr. 3150. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 197. See reference nr. 51.

⁶⁷ “Saxones de villa Capost”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1987, p. 453, Nr. 650. “Kapusdorf”, 1284; “Kabusdorf”, 1294, “villa Compositi”, 1298, “Kabisdorf”, 1328; “Kabuz”, 1427; “Kaposztafalva”, 1440, “Kapwstafalwa”, 1519, D. Csánki, 1890, p. 251. M. Marek, 2009, p. 144. “mons speculationis”, 1299, G. Fejér (ed.), VI/2, p. 210–211. M. Slivka, 2003, p. 431. According to other

Markušovce

The original name of this settlement was *St. Michael. The villages protected by this *patrocinium* were used for the defense of the border. As noted earlier, the village of Stráže at the city of Poprad in the region of Spiš, which was guarded by special populations (*speculatores*), as well as the settlement in Kežmarok area that also played a defensive role, all featured churches dedicated to St. Michael. The hamlet of Bela was situated in the area of Markušovce. When determining boundaries, an old *indagine* was described as located on the old road from Jasov and Strážna Hôrka Hill in 1277. There was a network of roads leading from the south to Spiš and further north to Poland⁶⁸.

Šariš county

The internal border of the country—and thus also the *confinium* next to the neighboring Abov county in the Košice basin—moved to Šariš probably at the turn of the 12th century, upon the arrival of the Magyars⁶⁹. In 1269, the village of Smilno was located in the area behind the *indagines*, in the direction of the Kingdom of Poland. The first references to the village of Tročany⁷⁰ and to the royal hunting grounds at *Bačovo Pole and Kamenica come from one year later⁷¹, these villages were also located behind the *indagines*. At the end of the 13th century, the village of Červenica near the town of Sabinov and the village of Kamenica lay in Šariš region (Šariš county), behind the *indagines* at the border with Poland⁷². The Hungarian name for Červenica was Veresalma (Vörösvágás), meaning a red apple tree, which indicates that the *indagines* were made of such trees. In 1345, the *indagines* were also found near the village

scholars the name was derived from the Old High German word “kabez” or “compost” meaning cabbage. See: J. Grimm, W. Grimm, 1873, p. 1686–1688, L. Kiss, t. 1, p. 684 The Slovak linguist Rudolf Krajčovič derives the name of Hrabušice from the Slovak (Slavic) word “hrabišče”, which means scarified ground. This steamy soil along the road leading through the village from central parts of the Kingdom to the north made it impossible to proceed and so it served as obstacle or roadblock. R. Krajčovič, 2004, p. 615–616.

⁶⁸ A. Fekete-Nagy, 1934, p. 105. “meta per eandem viam circuit montem Stroahorka vocatum”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 182, Nr. 2773. M. Slivka, 1998, p. 83–112. Idem, 2003, p. 438. M. Števík, 2002, p. 52.

⁶⁹ This theory stems from the fact that some local names using “g”, which the Hungarians took over from the local Slovak population: the Beck and Gerendel settlements in Nemcovce village, the hill and stream Maglovec. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 225, 250–255.

⁷⁰ “terram nostram Trochan vocatam, ultra indagines sitam... ad castrum nostrum Sarus pertinentem”, 1270, E. Nagy (ed.), 1891, VIII, p. 130–131, Nr. 120.

⁷¹ “loca venacionis nostre, ultra indagines, prope terminos terre nostre existencia, in exitu ad Poloniam... Bachamezey et Torkueley vocata”, E. Nagy (ed.), 1891, VIII, p. 136, Nr. 106.

⁷² “terram... Weresalma vocatam, in comitatu de Sarus ultra indagines, in exitu ad Poloniam existentem”, 1287, E. Nagy (ed.), 1891, VIII, p. 254, Nr. 205. “duas possessiones... Torkow et Weresalma vocatas, ultra indagines in comitatu de Sarus existentes”, 1296, G. Wenzel (ed.), X, p. 227, Nr. 153.

of Raslavice, in the valley of the Sekčov River⁷³. Until the end of the 14th century, this border area was known as the province or district of Gepel.

There was also a border check point on the Torysa River, an entrance to the area behind the *indagines* and further to Poland. It was somewhere between the aforementioned villages Červenica and Pečovská Nová Ves⁷⁴. A gate on the royal road leading to the town of Bardejov was the Bardejov Gate. In 1261, the village of Jánovce was mentioned as located beyond this border check point⁷⁵. It was probably between Raslavice and Tulčík. The village of Koprivnica was also located beyond the gate of Bardejov, in the area of Raslavice; its owners recorded this fact upon selling it in 1283⁷⁶. The village of Kapušany was named after the border check point, located at the crossroads of the road leading from Prešov and bifurcating further to Bardejov and the Topľa River. Kapi was its Hungarian name, after the people that lived at the gate defense post⁷⁷.

The *confinium* in Šariš was mentioned in historical records from 1277. The property along the Hungarian *confinium* at the *indagines* and border with Poland and Russia was bestowed upon nobleman Otto of Biberstein by King Ladislaus IV of Hungary. This included Raslavice, Tročany, Jánovce, Kobyly, Bardejov, Mokroluh, Gaboltov, Marhaň, Smilno and Radoma⁷⁸. In 1300, King Andrew III of Hungary mentioned the estate of Plaveč located in the Polish *confinium* next to Spiš⁷⁹. In 1337, King Charles I of Hungary gave the Rikolf family some royal forests in the Polish *confinium* in the Šariš county, above the Mušina stream⁸⁰. In 1348, King Louis I of Hungary commissioned Master Nicholas to establish two villages, Topľa and *Vrchdubová, in the forest of *Vrchdubová (Dubuafew) located near the border with the Kingdom of Poland⁸¹.

The location of the village of Kobyly was recorded in 1319 and 1321 by the Hungarian term of *gyepűelve* or *gyepűel*, which means “behind the *indagines*.” In 1338, the abandoned settlement of *Čapľany near Oľšavce was located in the province of Gyepűel. In 1374, the village of Kučín was said to be located in the district or territory of Gyepűel. In 1387, records placed the villages of

⁷³ “indagines wlgariter Gepu”, G. Fejér (ed.), VIII/3, p. 159–160. F. Piti (ed.), 2013, p. 57, Nr. 29.

⁷⁴ C. Wagner (ed.), 1774, p. 310–312, Nr. 14. E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 360, Nr. 3386. E. Nagy (ed.), 1881, II, p. 36, Nr. 30. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 238.

⁷⁵ “quandam terram Belcella nuncupatam, ultra portam Bardfa existentem”, G. Fejér (ed.), V/1, p. 162.

⁷⁶ “de ultra portam Barthfa a parte Polonie”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 312, Nr. 3224.

⁷⁷ “villa Kapy”, 1248, B. Varsik, 1977, p. 245–246.

⁷⁸ “universas possessiones seu villas iuxta terminos, metas seu indagines regni nostri et regni Polonie ac Ruzye existentes”, DL 980. G. Wenzel (ed.), IX, p. 166–167, Nr. 111. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 322.

⁷⁹ “possessionem seu terram Palocsa vocatam, iuxta Scepus, in confinio Polonorum existentem”, G. Fejér (ed.), VI/2, p. 251.

⁸⁰ “silvam in confinio Polonorum et vicinitate ipsorum in comitatu Sarus super quendam rivulum Mussina patak existentem”, G. Fejér (ed.), VIII/4, p. 231, Nr. CVI.

⁸¹ “in silva Dubuafew vocata, in confinio regni Polonie existenti, duas villas seu possessiones... Thopla et Dubuafew... congregare debeat”, E. Nagy (ed.), 1887, V, p. 226, Nr. 106.

Tročany, Malé Tročany, Kochanovce, Olšavec, *Čaplany and *Kyzyl in the Gyepüel district. Finally, at the end of the Middle Ages, in 1511, Gyepülység was recorded as located in the village of Brezovica, situated between the Spiš and Šariš counties⁸². The defense posts in Šariš are mentioned specifically in the locations discussed below.

Fintice

Fintice was located near Kapušany's royal gate to the kingdom. In 1272, this garrison post manned with royal guards was abandoned by its inhabitants and given to the noblemen from beyond the Drava River by King Stephen V of Hungary. It is worth noting that sources referred to the border Stráž Hill, today's Stráža, as reambulation was carried out⁸³.

Slivník

Slivník lay to the north of Fintice, near Tulčík, where a toll station had been located. Before 1282, the border patrol guards also lived in Slivník. But it was abandoned, and Queen Elizabeth then gave it to another person⁸⁴. There were more of these garrison settlements in the past. Not all are mentioned in written historical records. They were also documented in some other sources.

For example, the village of Plaveč near the Poprad River was mentioned for the first time in 1269 as "Paloucha", and it also appeared in this form in later written records⁸⁵. The name suggests that it could have been inhabited by Polovtsians or Plavci once, as this was the Slovak name for members of the Cuman ethnic group. The fighting skills of the Cumans were used by the Árpáds in the Hungarian army, and they were put to work as border guards. The original meaning of the name Plaveč can be derived from the Old East Slavic word for sail or from the adjective for pale, light yellow, or blonde. It is thought that Cumans inhabited this area from the end of the 11th century, which means that the Hungarian-Polish border was already being marked on the ridges of the Carpathians.

⁸² "in Gebuel", V. Sedlák (ed.), 1987, p. 238, Nr. 510; "in districtu Gepeel", V. Sedlák (ed.), 1987, p. 269, Nr. 587; "in comitatu Sarus, in provintia Gepeuel, in possessione Chaplan", 1338; "in districtu seu terra Gyepuel", DL 6248 a 6219; "in comitatu de Sarus, in districtu de Giepel", E. Nagy – J. B. Nagy – D. Véghely (ed.), 1878, p. 336; "Gyewpeelseg", K. Tagányi, 1913, p. 148. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 226–227.

⁸³ "terram speculatorum nostrorum vulgariter ewr dictorum, FFyntha vocatam, vacuum et habitatoribus destitutam in comitatu de Sarus existentem... in latere montis Stras", A. Ipolyi – E. Nagy – D. Véghely (ed.), 1873, V, p. 46–47, Nr. 37. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 228. F. Uličný, 1990, p. 75.

⁸⁴ "villam nostram Scylwa vocatam... ubi speculatores morabantur", E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 290, Nr. 3146. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 238. F. Uličný, 1990, p. 347. Elizabeth of Sicily was Queen of Hungary (1272–1290) by marriage to Ladislaus IV of Hungary.

⁸⁵ B. Varsik, 1977, p. 234–236. B. Varsik, 1984b, p. 175–176. M. Marek, 2010, p. 203–215.

Another ethnic group involved in patrolling the border at Šariš was Oghuz Turks, or Uzes. Members of this Turkic tribe settled in Hungary, apparently along with Pechenegs people. They, too, worked as border guards. Their name sounds like the village name Uzovce (Hungarian Uzfalva)⁸⁶, which was given after one of the noble family members of Tekule who lived in the 13th century and was called Uz. The Tekule family was active in Šariš, Uzovce and the villages of Terňa, Hubošovce, Roškovce, Babí Potok and Lúčka, which they owned as well⁸⁷. Originally, they probably settled there as border guards.

In addition to the aforementioned border guards in Šariš county, there were another type of guards, the so-called park keepers of the royal forests, who lived in the settlements of Ražňany (formerly Ňaršany) and Podhorany (formerly Hažgut). In 1283, they asked the king to relieve them of guard duty and promote them to nobles. The king promoted them to royal servants and gave them half of the local property⁸⁸.

Zemplín and Ung counties

In Zemplín, the “Polish” *confinia* originally reached southern parts. It is assumed that the oldest border line was the river Latorica. To the south, we can find old Magyar (Hungarian) tribal names or names with preserved nasal vowel; a linguistic element that disappeared in the 11th century, when border guards moved farther north. This is suggested by several local names such as Strážne (Őrös), Jovra (Őr), Velké Kapušany (Kapus) and Pavlovce nad Uhom (Palóc)⁸⁹.

In 1284, a village with the Hungarian name of Gyepűelve (“behind indagines”) was mentioned in historical records together with the village of Vyšné Nemecké⁹⁰. While it since disappeared, it lay somewhere in the neighborhood of Vyšné Nemecké, on the country road from the city of Uzhhorod to the village of Tibava. It is evidence that the *indagines* and inner defensive line of the kingdom lay to the south of the Uh River, on the Latorica River.

In the 12th or 13th century the inner defensive border of the kingdom moved to central Zemplín region⁹¹. The affiliated villages of the Čičava Castle, located to the north of it, were located behind the *indagines*. In 1270, we learn that two of the villages affiliated to this castle, Dlhé Pole and Višňov, lay behind the *indagines*⁹².

⁸⁶ de Wzfalua”, 1370, I. Nagy – F. Deák – Gy. Nagy, 1879, p. 289–290.

⁸⁷ M. Marek, 2009, p. 323–324. F. Uličný, 1990, p. 338.

⁸⁸ “custodes silvarum nostrarum de villa Naas”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 326, Nr. 3265, “custodes silvarum nostrarum de villa Asguth”, I. Nagy – F. Deák – Gy. Nagy (ed.), 1879, p. 99–100, Nr. 94. E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1961, p. 326, Nr. 3266. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 228–229.

⁸⁹ B. Varsik, 1977, p. 477–482.

⁹⁰ “possessiones Gepevelv et Felnempti... existentes in comitatu de Ung”, A. Ipolyi – E. Nagy – D. Véghely (ed.), 1880, VII, p. 186, Nr. 144. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 479, 547. F. Uličný, 1995, p. 74. “indagines vulgo Gepu” G. Fejér (ed.), III/2, p. 69.

⁹¹ B. Varsik, 1977, p. 479.

⁹² “possessionem Chychywa vocatam in comitatu de Zemplen sitam, in confinio Polonie cum villis ad ipsam pertinentibus, Hussceumezeu et Wysno vocatis”, G. Wenzel (ed.), 1874,

Further evidence of *indagines* and territories beyond them dates back to the 14th century. From a document from 1335, we learn that the *indagines* were built near the village of *Brutovce (Buruchfalva), located on the border of Zemplín and Ung counties, south of the town of Strážske.⁹³ Two years later (1337), the area north of the nearby village of Jasenov was referred to as the province of Gepel, the area behind the *indagines*.⁹⁴

According to a historical record from 1346, there was also an abandoned Zemplén estate of *Misle behind the *indagines*. The Brekov Castle and neighboring settlement of Strážske lay within its territorial bounds⁹⁵. The tradition of marking territories with the expression “behind the *indagines*” lasted until the 15th century, after which the old defense system and *indagines* collapsed. Evidence from 1413 indicates that Vlachs lived in the Humenné estate around the Cirocha River in the district of Gepel⁹⁶.

Jovra (today Storožnica)

This village originally belonged to the nearby royal Uzhhorod Castle. It has been referenced in records since 1288⁹⁷. Royal guards were placed there by the monarchy in the second half of the 11th century.

Velké Kapušany

This town was located on a country road leading from the centre of the Kingdom of Hungary to Galicia in the northeast⁹⁸. At Kapušany, the road intersected with the road leading to the town of Michalovce. Near Kapušany, across the Latorica River, there was also a ford. The settlement was strategically important. The first mention of it dates back to 1218, when it became the subject of a gift to the Premonstratensian monastery in Leles. The monastery was founded and donated by the Bishop of the town of Vác, Boleslav. According to other historical documents, however, the settlement had belonged to the monastery from the end of the 12th century. Thus, its defensive role had already been lost by that time⁹⁹.

XII, p. 53, Nr. 5. “litteras... super colacione... terre ultra indagines Hozzywmezew vocate”, E. Szentpétery (ed.), 1930, p. 486, Nr. 1593.

⁹³ “meta... venit ad indagines vulgo gepew vocatas”, Gy. Nagy (ed.), 1887, p. 146, Nr. LXXVI.

*Brutovce village lay in the valley of Zbudza beck, which divided the village into two halves, Zemplín and Ung. F. Uličný, 1995, p. 43–44.

⁹⁴ “meta... iungit quendam semitam de... villa Jezenew in provinciam Gepel ducentem”, Gy. Nagy (ed.), 1887, p. 146, Nr. LXXVI. Jasenov lay north of Strážske town.

⁹⁵ “dimidietatem possessionis... Mysle... ultra indagines in comitatu Zemplenyensi existentis sitam a parte terre Ewrmezey nuncupate... cum castro Borkow”, DL 85 268. F. Piti (ed.), 2014, XXX, p. 224, Nr. 365.

⁹⁶ “in districtu Gepel”. Gy. Nagy (ed.), 1889, p. 125, Nr. CI.

⁹⁷ “terram castri de Vngh Ewr vocatam”, A. Ipolyi – E. Nagy – D. Véghely (ed.), 1876, p. 331, Nr. 239. F. Uličný, 1995, p. 107.

⁹⁸ “viam publicam, que ducit de Kapos in Vngwar”, 1379, DF 209 723.

⁹⁹ “predium... nomine Kopus”, R. Marsina (ed.), 1971, p. 145, Nr. 190++. F. Uličný, 1995, p. 251–253.

Nová Stráž

This now-abandoned settlement was mentioned in sources from the 14th–16th centuries. It was situated in the neighborhood of the village of Žbince. Its name was written in the Hungarian form of Új Őr, meaning “New Guard”, which suggests that it had been established more recently than the garrison settlement of Strážske. However, in historical documents we can also find a Slovak entry in the form of Stráža¹⁰⁰.

Strážne

This village in southern Zemplín, in the Bodrog region (Medzibodrožie in Slovak), was built in front of the oldest border line spanning across the Latorica River. In historical records, it appears under the Hungarian form Őrös, meaning a guard post along the border. The earliest records of this settlement are from 1310. At that time, it was owned by noblemen¹⁰¹.

Strážske

The official Hungarian name of this town was Őrmező, meaning “watchfield”, which indicates the nature of the original settlement. It was established as a garrison settlement in central Zemplín, on the most recently built internal defensive border line, before the *indagines*. The oldest mention of it comes from 1337, when it belonged to the king as part of the Brekov Castle estate¹⁰². These guard settlements featured no guards according to their first mentions in historical sources. Gradually, with the settlement of the northern parts of Zemplín by the Vlach population in the 14th–15th centuries, the old border defense collapsed and the district behind the *indagines* also disappeared.

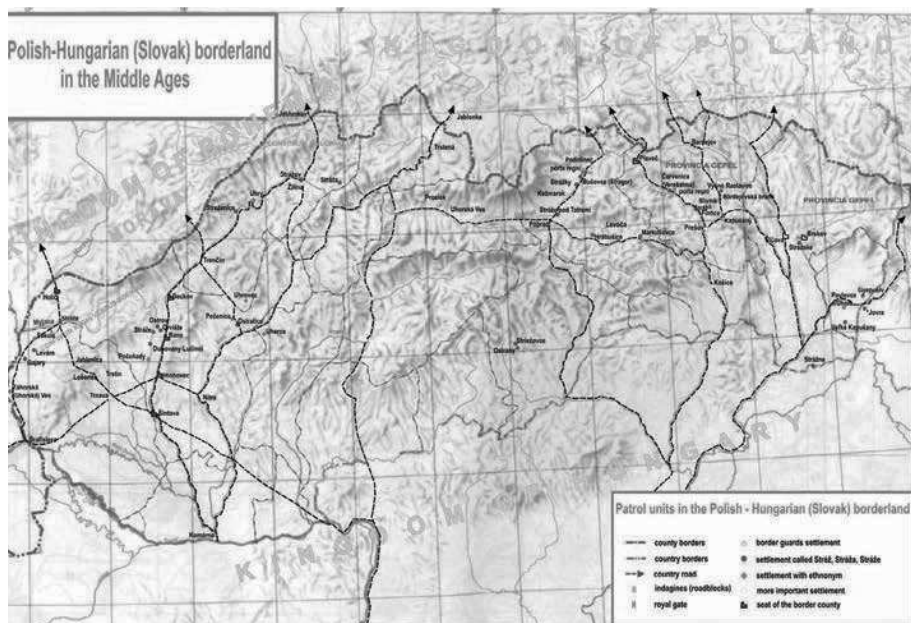
In conclusion, we can say that the system of border defense in the Kingdom of Hungary; which consisted of border patrol stations, confines and *indagines*; disappeared in the 13th century. Some border guards were promoted to nobility as Spiš lancers, while others ceased to work as guards and moved to another location. Most of them were given by the monarch to new aristocratic owners, along with the settlements. This also applied to defense facilities located in the direction of the Polish border. The Tatar invasion of 1241 showed that the system was inefficient, and so the monarchy began the construction of new stone castles, as a few of them had existed before and had proved their worth. New stone forts were situated along the perimeter of the country. A whole chain of castles was established in the Little Carpathians, Považie, Orava Castle, Liptov,

¹⁰⁰ “possessionum... Wyuar”, E. Nagy (ed.), 1887, V, p. 278, Nr. 147; “intra metas predii Strasa alias Wyeor”, 1595, F. Uličný, 2001, p. 495.

¹⁰¹ “possessiones... Wrus”, V. Sedlák (ed.), 1981, p. 350, Nr. 816. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 478. F. Uličný, 2001, p. 496.

¹⁰² “viam de villa Ewrmezew”, Gy. Nagy (ed.), 1887, p. 134, Nr. LXXIV. B. Varsik, 1977, p. 479. F. Uličný, 2001, p. 496–497.

Spiš, Stará Ľubovňa, and other localities, which corresponded to the need for better defense of the kingdom.



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Anonymus = Anonymus and Master Roger. Anonymi Bele regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum. Anonymus, Notary of King Béla, The Deeds of the Hungarians, ed., transl. and annotated by Martyn Rady and László Veszprémy. *Magistri Rogerii Epistola in miserabile Carmen super destructione regni Hungarie per Tartaros facta. Master Roger's Epistle to the Sorrowful Lament upon the Destruction of the Kingdom of Hungary by the Tatars*, transl. and annotated by János M. Bak and Martyn Rady, Budapest–New York 2010.

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