

REVIEWS

HUDÁČEK, Pavol. *CASTRUM SALIS. Severné pohraničie Uhorska okolo roku 1000. (CASTRUM SALIS. The northern frontier of the Kingdom of Hungary around the year 1000)*. Bratislava: Veda, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2016, 478 pages. ISBN 9788022415354. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/histcaso.2018.66.5.6>

Pavol Hudáček's book, which originates from the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Science, has a foreword, list of abbreviations, 6 chapters, a conclusion, English summary, map supplement, list of sources, bibliography and index.

The foreword (p.xi-xiii) acquaints us with the aim of the author to trace the beginnings and subsequent history of the Castrum Salis and the historic region of Šariš in which it is located. He also directs attention to the whole northern frontier region of the Kingdom of Hungary, in the middle of which Šariš was situated.

Chapter 1: *Castles of the 9th – 10th centuries and Castrum Salis* (p. 1-64) solves the question of early medieval settlement, bringing us archaeological evidence from prehistory to the 10th century combined with the misty and very indirect written sources concerning this period. He devotes attention to Prince Salan, who is mentioned by the Anonymus chronicler of Hungary. Salan was identical with the Great Moravian Prince Svätopluk. Anonymus changed the name Svätopluk into Salan from the name Szalánkemén Castle (today Stari Slankamen) at the confluence of the Tisa and Danube, near which stood Titel, where Salan had his seat according to Anonymus.

The centre of attention is the question of whether Castrum Salis already existed in the Great Moravian period, whether there was continuity of Slavonic settlement after the coming of the Magyars and the relationship of Castrum Salis to the Przemyslids of Poland, in relation to their position on the salt road in the 10th century. The author presents a detailed consideration of the locality Várhegy, south of Solivar, where Castrum Salis probably stood. He includes not only the modest archaeological evidence from Várhegy, but also from the nearby castles of Obišovce (Stráža) and Šarišské Sokolovce (Hradová Hura) and hill settlements at Fintice and Hradisko pri Terni, which are dated to the 9th – 10th centuries. The castle at Šarišské Sokolovce has traces of fire in the form of burnt clay. It could have been burnt at the same time as the castle at Spišské Tomášovce/ Smižany during the attack of Svätopluk I.

The castles at Obišovce and Šarišské Sokolovce disappeared in the 10th or 11th centuries.

Thanks to its position in the middle of the Prešovská Kotlina Basin, Castrum Salis had the role of a centre. Salt was already transported through this frontier region from Transylvania to Poland in the Great Moravian period. Castrum Salis controlled the route along the valley of the rivers Hornád and Torysa to the Zborov and Dukla passes to Little Poland and Kraków. Salis was either a Great Moravian castle, or it appeared only in the 10th century, when it took over the role of the castles at Obišovce and Sokolovce, which disappeared at this time.

Chapter 2: *The Gesta Ungarorum, Anonymus and the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle* (p. 65-104) is devoted to the narrative sources. Anonymus and the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle mention Castrum Salis but not the other chroniclers. According to the Annales Sancti Crucis, Boleslav fled from Poland to Hungary in 1079 after the violent death of Bishop Stanislav of Kraków, and died in a monastery in the frontier region of Hungary. However, in reality it was not a monastery but a castle because the author of the annals had changed *castrum* into *claustrum*. Boleslav II could have settled in a castrum in the frontier region of Hungary as one version of the Annales Sancti Crucis known as the Codex Sochaczewski states. The other surviving copies have *claustrum*. Boleslav went *in castrum Salis*, where he found entertainment in hunting as the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle mentions. The Polish Prince Boleslav II was in the same position as Břetislav son the Prince and King of Bohemia Vratislav II (1085 – 1086 – 1092). Břetislav had to flee from his father to Hungary, where King Ladislav I settled him at Bánov in the County of Trenčín. Břetislav settled his retinue of two thousand there, while living at King Ladislav's court himself.

Chapter 3: *Boleslav Chrabrý and Castrum Salis* (p. 105-152) examines in detail the role of Castrum Salis around the year 1000 and solves the relationship of Prince Boleslav Chrabrý of Poland with the Kingdom of Hungary. It informs us in detail about the extensive previous historical considerations of Boleslav Chrabrý directed towards his relationship with the Nitra region, and analyses the mention of Castrum Salis in the Hungarian-Polish Chronicle, and of the Hungarian – Polish frontier, which was also the frontier of the Nitra region. It takes an interest in the relationship of Boleslav Chrabrý and the Prince of Nitra Ladislav Lysý, and finally in the relationship of Prokuj with Castrum Salis. Prokuj was driven from Transylvania by King Stephen I of Hungary, and he entered the service of Boleslav Chrabrý at Castrum Salis. According to György Györffy, the Polish – Hungarian conflict could have happened only in connection with the expulsion of Prokuj from a castle on the Hungarian – Polish frontier before 1018. The author defends the view that Boleslav Chrabrý occupied the Nitra region in 1003. The Saxon chronicler Thietmar mentions Prokuj castle as *quandam urbem*. He did not know more about it or about other castles in Hungary. The author inclines to the view that this castle was not Salis but Bratislava.

Chapter 4: *Castrum Salis and Anonymus* (p. 153-208) carefully and critically analyses the information from Anonymus about the castles of the upper Tisa basin: Užhorod (Uh), Boržava, Zemplín, Borsod, Tarcal, Serenč and Sárospatak (Patak, Ketelpataka). It is also concerned with the monastery of Százd and Sheriff (*comes*) Peter, mentioned in a document perhaps from 1067, and the bishopric of Eger to which this region was subject in religious matters, Krásna nad Hornád and the relationship between the castles of Salis and Borsod. The author came to the conclusion that “*the Castle of Zemplín was situated on the right bank of the Bodrog, so it did not belong to the County of Užhorod. It was probably part of the neighbouring County of Borsod*”, which also included “*land on the left bank of the Bodrog apart from the Zemplín hills*”. He further states that the “*royal court and chapel at Patak/Sárospatak*”, which lay in this territory, were royal properties “*located in the territory of the County of Borsod and later of Zemplín*”. When writing his work, Anonymus may have had in his hands the above mentioned donation charter for

the monastery of Százsd issued by Sheriff Peter about 1067. It mentions the oldest Abov properties, some of which Sheriff Peter granted to the monastery. Royal properties are also recorded in a document from 1261/1271 concerning properties and rights that the bishopric of Eger gained from Stephen I and Ladislav I. The original charter may have issued by Stephen I in 1009. The document from 1261 corrected the names of counties according to the current situation. *Castrum Salis* guarded the northern part of the County of Borsod, which has received considerable attention from the author. Combining the information from the Hungarian-Polish chronicle and the Hungarian Anonymus gives us the territorial extent and boundaries of the large County of Borsod.

Chapter 5: *The frontier region of Hungary, trade, salt and routes in the 11th – 12th centuries* (p. 209-316) informs us about the royal frontier forests in the Carpathians, the gates of the country, barriers and frontier castles. It is concerned with routes, markets and trade, especially the trade in salt. It comes to the important conclusion that in the 11th – 13th centuries, *Castrum Salis* did not defend the salt water springs developed in its surroundings, but was the one royal salt store in the Hungarian – Polish – Rus frontier region, where salt from Transylvania was stored.

Castrum Salis with its favourable position at the confluence of the Torysa and Sekčov controlled the route through the Carpathians. The route divided north of the castle, with one branch going to the frontier crossing between Pečovská Nová Ves and Červenica, while the other crossed the frontier between Demjata and Raslavice. Royal customs posts, settlements of frontier guards and royal markets (*fora*) in the settlements below county castles were established. It is very probable that the main route to Poland and Rus through the valleys of the Hornád and Torysa actually went through *Castrum Salis*. There were several salt castles in the Kingdom of Hungary. The salt brought from Transylvania along the rives Mureş and Tisa was stored in the castles at Szalánkemén (Stari Slankamen), Titel and probably also Alpár. The salt trade was regulated by the Golden Bull of 1222. Salt did not have to be stored in the interior of the kingdom with the exceptions of the castles of Szalancs and Szeged, but only in the frontier regions. A charter for the monastery of Domos from 1138 mentions the transport of salt *ad forum Sumbuth*. This *Sumbuth* may be Esztergom, which appears in an anonymous legend about the suffering of St. Vojtech as *Sobottin*, meaning Saturday Market. The main salt stores of the Arpád dynasty were the castles of Szalancs, Szeged and perhaps also Szolnok, as well as the Transylvanian castles of Torda, Doboka and Dés. Salt was also stored in the frontier castles of Bratislava, Moson and Sopron. Since *Castrum Salis* also lay in a frontier region and got its name from salt, it is very probable that Transylvanian salt was transported to Poland and Rus through this castle. Salt was also stored at *Castrum Ferreum* (Kismárton, Eisenstadt) in the County of Sopron. Another *Castrum Ferreum* (Vasvár, Eisenburg, Železný Hrad) was the centre of the frontier County of Vas. The two frontier iron castles had nothing to do with the extraction of iron ore, but were storage places for iron near the Hungarian – German frontier. *Castrum Salis* with a name similar to *Castrum Ferreum* was also a frontier storage place where salt from Transylvania was stored. The long distance route from Hungary to Poland and Rus guarded by *Castrum Salis* was called a *magna via* or *via regis* in the 13th century.

Chapter 6: *The northern frontier of Hungary and Castrum Salis* (p. 317-380) concentrates on the County of Šariš, the relationship between the castles of Salis and Šariš, frontier crossings, districts and guards in Šariš. The author tries to identify the territory of Castrum Salis starting from information on the royal estate of Sívár / Solivar in the 13th century. Ladislav IV granted to George Simon's son Sívár/Solivar and Sópatak / Sol', which lay on the left bank of the Sekčov, together with an extensive forest extending to the Topľa. The Sekčov was clearly the western boundary and Topľa was the eastern boundary of the royal estate mentioned in 1261 as the *districtus predii nostri de Souuar*. To the north it was bounded by the Redník (now the Medziansky), Ladianka and Šebastovka brooks, to the west by the rivers Sekčov and Torysa. The southern boundary began where the Bohdanovský brook flows into the Torysa and went across the Slanské vrchy hills between the villages of Čízatice and Kecerovce to the the Topľa. The author accepts the view of Branislav Varsík that Castrum Salis probably disappeared in 1242 as a result of the Tartar invasion. Solivar/Sívár Castle gained the villages that had belonged to Castrum Salis.

The conclusion (p. 381-392) emphasizes that Castrum Salis was important for the storage of salt, but was never the centre of a large territory like that of a county castle. It resembled the castles of Locsmánd or Kapuvár on the western frontier of Hungary or Šintava, Hlohovec, Bana and Beckov in the Váh valley. It can also be compared to Castrum Ferreum on the western frontier of Hungary, which was also important for storage, but of Hungarian iron rather than salt.

The book is supplemented by an English summary (p. 393-405), maps (p. 406-408), list of sources and bibliography (p. 409-460) and index (p. 461-477).

Pavol Hudáček's monograph gives an excellent overview of the little known Castrum Salis and the whole northern frontier region of Hungary in the Early Middle Ages, when this castle had an important role as a storage place for salt from Hungary intended for export. The thorough argumentation and detailed explanation testified to the author's wide knowledge of the sources and literature as well as his ability to solve complex questions of detail on the micro-regional level as well as the context in the whole Kingdom of Hungary and Central Europe. The author's detailed analysis and consistent synthesis with clearly formulated results and new findings extends our knowledge of medieval Slovak and Hungarian history, while reaching into the wider Central European region. Pavol Hudáček's book addresses historians with various orientations and the wider educated and cultured public in Slovakia and in other countries both nearby and further away.

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