



The History of the Macsó and Barancs Territories until 1316

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In the early thirteenth century, the Kingdom of Hungary took control of the northern Balkan territories situated between the Drina, Sava, and Danube Rivers. This region was known as Trans-Syrmia or Sirmia Ulterior, though Southern Slavic sources commonly referred to it simply as Syrmia. At the time, this name referred to all the land south of Hungary's borders and east of the Drina, without clearly defined boundaries. Apart from a brief period in the 1270s when forming banates was attempted, these lands were controlled by the women of the Árpád dynasty and their husbands until 1319. In 1284, the former King of Serbia, Dragutin was granted Macsó, along with Bosnia, Belgrade, and Barancs-Kucsó, and attempted to establish a vassal state of Hungary. After his death in 1316, his son Vladislav lost control, allowing King Milutin of Serbia to seize Macsó. In response, King Charles I of Hungary launched a military campaign, reclaiming the territory by 1319 and reinstating the banate and the title of ban was then given to Hungarian noble families as an honor. This study examines the history and administration of the territories known in secondary literature as the Banate of Macsó and Barancs, covering the period up to 1319 and the military campaigns of King Charles I of Hungary.

Keywords: Syrmia, Macsó, Kingdom of Hungary, Serbia, Angevin dynasty

The interest of the Kingdom of Hungary in the territory of the northern Balkans, bordered by the Drina, Sava, and Danube Rivers, reached the point of military expansion at the end of the twelfth century, as the Hungarian crown was able to take advantage of Byzantine internal struggles following the death of Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1143–1180). These territories, known as the Trans-Syrmia or Macsó (Mačva in Serbian) and Barancs (Braničevo in Serbian), began to come into closer contact with the Kingdom of Hungary in the early thirteenth century. With the exception of the 1270s (when an attempt was made to turn the territories south of the Sava-Danube line into a so-called banate, i.e. a frontier province governed by a governor or “ban”), the women of the Árpád dynasty and their husbands held these lands until 1319.

Research into the history of the area is complicated by the fact that there is no known surviving archival source base in the archives in Serbia and Bulgaria.

We can reconstruct the events of the more than one hundred years covered in this paper mainly on the basis of Hungarian source material. Narrative sources, such as the Chronicle of Antivari or the work of Serbian Archbishop Danilo II,¹ make only passing mention of the areas under study. In the discussion below, I reconstruct the history of the administration of the territories referred to in the secondary literature as the Banate of Macsó and Barancs from the beginning until 1319, until the military campaigns of King Charles I of Hungary (1310–1342).

The Banate of Macsó in Hungarian and South Slavic Historiography

The history and archontology of the banate and bans of Macsó were first dealt with by Frigyes Pesty in his study published in 1875.² The first monograph that dealt with the subject was an introductory study to the source publication compiled by Lajos Thallóczy and Antal Áldásy on the connections between Hungary and Serbia, published in 1907.³ In this study, however, the Macsó region was mentioned more as a place of diplomacy or warfare between the Hungarian kings and the Serbian rulers, without no discussion whatsoever of the process by which the territories south of the Sava River, surrounded by the Kolubara and the Drina Rivers, were organized into a Hungarian dependent territory in the thirteenth century. Thallóczy attempted to describe the topography of the Macsó province, and regarding this I would like to emphasize two main issues. In his opinion, the Macsó region extended across the Drina River, and he also included parts of Inner Sylvania and Szávaszentdemeter (today Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia). Another noteworthy detail concerning Thallóczy's map is the location of the castle of Macsó, which he placed on the site of the present-day settlement of Valjevo.⁴ Alongside the introductory study to this source publication, the work of Lajos Faragó, published in 1911 in the Kaposvár State High School's newsletter, also merits mention.⁵ The most recent comprehensive article on the history of Macsó in Hungarian was the encyclopedic glossary of the archaeological background of Macsó, written by Péter Rokay and Miklós Takács,⁶ which, being a glossary, does not contain the findings of independent

1 Danilo II, *Životi kraljeve*.

2 Pesty, "A macsóí bánok." The thirteenth century archontology of the bans of Macsó was also compiled by Mór Wertner, see Wertner, "Az Árpádkori bánok."

3 Thallóczy and Áldásy, *Okelevéltár*, 5–124.

4 Ibid., 482–83.

5 Faragó, "A macsóí bánóság."

6 Rokay and Takács, "Macsó," 421.

research but rather offers a summary of the accepted conclusions of the existing secondary literature, mainly from the South Slavic territories. Other Hungarian researchers have touched on the thirteenth-century history of Macsó, of course, but not a single monograph has been written on the subject in the last hundred years. South Slavic (mainly Serbian) historians have shown much greater interest in the medieval history of the Macsó region. This increased interest is understandable, as the former Macsó region was and still is the province of Mačva, which was liberated from Ottoman occupation and is part of present day Serbia. I would like to highlight the work of two historians from among the writings by many South Slavic researchers. In doing so, I summarize the findings of South Slavic historians on Macsó.

Chronologically, the first work on which I focus was written by Mihajlo Dinić about the areas inhabited by Serbs in the Middle Ages.⁷ Although he dealt with the history of the name of Trans-Syrmia, which was used as the name of the territories south of the Sava River before the name Macsó appeared and was used from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, Dinić mainly focused on the reign of Dragutin in Syrmia (Srijem in Serbian).⁸ According to him, the Hungarians named the region Macsó, either because they already had a county called Syrmia (which was organically linked to the kingdom, as the county structure had already been formed) or because they wanted to name the newly acquired territory after its center.⁹ According to Dinić, Belgrade was part of Banate of Macsó when it was organized in the 1270s.¹⁰ He also described how the Serbian king Stephen Dragutin received the territory of Macsó after losing his throne,¹¹ along with Usora, Soli, and Bosnia, from the Hungarian king Ladislas IV after June 11, 1284.¹² Along with Macsó, Belgrade also fell into the hands of Dragutin, who then established his residence there.¹³ The territories ruled by Dragutin were called “the Syrmia territories” by his Serbian contemporaries, and Dragutin himself was

7 Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 140.

8 Ibid., 44, 273.

9 Ibid., 285.

10 Ibid., 337.

11 Ibid., 127. In fact, on June 11, 1284, Queen Elizabeth still bore the title of Princess of Macsó. Ibid., 132.

12 After the dethronement of Dragutin, until 1284, when he received the Macsó-Bosnian territories from his brother-in-law, he was able to retain some areas between Raška and Trebinje. (See Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 124–26), and he still held part of Raška after 1284 (see Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 144, 281). The towns of Rudnik and Arilje also remained in Dragutin’s hands. In the latter he built a monastery where he was buried (Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 140–42, 144). Both during Dragutin’s reign in Serbia and after his abdication, Trebinje remained in the hands of the Serbian queen mother Queen Jelena (Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 145).

13 Ibid., 337.

called Stephen of Syrmia.¹⁴ Before the 1970s, the view that Dragutin had also ruled the inner parts of Syrmia was accepted in the Serbian secondary literature, but this notion was refuted in 1978 by Mihajlo Dinić.

Another noteworthy historical work on thirteenth-century Macsó in the South Slavic historiography is Sima Ćirković's study published in 2008.¹⁵ According to Ćirković, present-day northern Serbia came into Hungarian hands in the late twelfth century.¹⁶ The province of Macsó as an institution had no Byzantine antecedents.¹⁷ The Byzantine administrative arrangement, with imperial offices and ecclesiastical centers in the larger cities, may have been preserved; the largest settlement may have been Sirmium around 1020. Referring to Byzantine sources, Ćirković claims that in the twelfth century not only Zimony (today Zemun in Serbia, north of the Sava River) but also Bács (today Bač in Serbia) on the left bank of the Danube was included in the territory of Syrmia.¹⁸ According to him, the names Inner-Syrmia¹⁹ and Trans-Syrmia,²⁰ which referred to the area between the Danube River and the Sava River, and the area between the Drina, Sava, and Kolubara Rivers, may have been created at this time, around the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and clearly represented a Hungarian perspective.²¹ Among the Serbs, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the name Syrmia was used to refer to the area south of the Sava River, while among Hungarians, the name Syrmia was used only to refer to the Syrmia County between the Danube River and the Sava River. The Byzantine tradition, according to Ćirković, was established in Hungarian circles after the foundation of the bishopric of Syrmia in 1229, according to which the name Syrmia was used to refer to territories on both banks of the Sava River.²² The castle of Macsó could have stood there, hence the name of the area,²³ but it is not possible to identify the precise location of the castle on the basis of archaeological or archival sources. Ćirković refutes Thallóczy's view that the castle of Macsó would have been on the site of the present-day settlement of Valjevo. He does not attempt to pinpoint its exact location, but

14 Ibid., 281.

15 Ćirković, "Zemlja Mačva."

16 Ibid., 3.

17 Ibid., 4.

18 Ibid., 7.

19 In Latin *Sirmia Citerior*, in Serbian *Ovostrani Srem*.

20 In Latin *Sirmia Ulterior*, in Serbian *Ovostrani Srem*.

21 For more on the topic see Ćirković, "Zemlja Mačva," 7; Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 140.

22 Ibid., 7.

23 Ibid., 4.

he explains that the castle could have been closer to Száva-szentdemeter than to Debrc, the center of Dragutin.²⁴

According to him, the name Macsó was only used by the Hungarians. It does not appear in Serbian or Byzantine sources, and neither does Belgrade. The Orthodox Church sources mentioned only Sirmium as the suffragan bishopric of the Archbishop of Ohrid.²⁵ He contends that in the early thirteenth century the region south of the Sava River was granted to Margaret, daughter of King Béla III, who was mentioned as the lady of Macsó. This territory had no defined borders. It extended as far as the Serbian territory of the Nemanjić dynasty.²⁶ After the Mongol invasion, the province was given to Anna, daughter of King Béla IV of Hungary, and her husband Rostislav Mihailovich (who was then Duke of Macsó), and after Rostislav's death in 1263, their sons Michael and Béla were given the title of Dukes of Macsó. Duke Béla was murdered in 1272, after which the bans of Macsó and Bosnia and the bans of Barancs and Kucsó appeared in the charters, while between 1280 and 1284 Queen Elizabeth was recorded as the duchess of Macsó and Bosnia.²⁷ Čirković did not analyze the reign of Dragutin in detail.

The most recent study of the medieval territorial extent of Macsó and the collection of medieval settlements in the territory of the banate of Macsó was carried out by Ana Vukadinović Šakanović, who focused her study on the late medieval conditions due to the more favorable availability of sources.²⁸ Attila Pfeiffer wrote a summary study on the location of the Macsó castle.²⁹ Đura Hardi studied the history of the lords of Macsó,³⁰ and Márta Font wrote a thorough study on Rostislav Mihajlovich, who was a prominent lord of the province in the thirteenth century.³¹

24 Ibid., 3–4.

25 Ibid., 8.

26 Ibid., 4.

27 Ibid., 6.

28 Vukadinović Šakanović, “Teritorija.”

29 Pfeiffer, “Macsói Bánság.”

30 Hardi, “Gospodari”; Hardi, *Itinerarij*.

31 Font, “Rosztyszlav.”

In the Crossfire between Byzantium and the Kingdom of Hungary: Trans-Syrmia at the End of the Twelfth Century

In the area bordered by the Danube, Drina, and Kolubara Rivers, which was called the Macsó territory from the thirteenth century onwards, Slavs probably settled at the encouragement of the Avars, but their presence is only indicated by place names, and archaeological finds do not support this theory. At the beginning of the ninth century, the area was captured by the Bulgarian Empire, and after this empire fell, from 1018, the area belonged to Byzantium.³²

The name Syrmia, which also refers to the area south of the Sava River, first appeared in the twelfth century in the Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja. In the relevant part of the work, also known as the Chronicle of Antivari,³³ in the description of the battle between Ban Beloš, who retreated after the death of King Béla II, and the Hungarians who attacked him, the name Syrmia in the chronicle referred to the territory south of the Sava River as well, since the Chronicle mentioned the town of Belyén (Bellina),³⁴ which was south of the Sava River, as part of Syrmia (partes Sremi).³⁵ That the presbyter meant the territory on the right bank of the Sava River as Beloš' Syrmian parts is clear from the fact that when he wrote about the treaty after the battle lost by the Hungarians, he said that Beloš prohibited his opponents from crossing the Sava River from its beginning to the mouth of the Danube River, i.e. until Belgrade.³⁶ The extent to which the presbyter had precise topographical knowledge of the southern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary is not known, but the southern Slavic literature accepts the description of the extent of Syrmia in the Chronicle.³⁷

32 Rokay and Takács, "Macsó," 421.

33 The Chronicle also known as Regnum Sclavorum. See Šišić, *Ljetopis*; Mošin, *Ljetopis*; Mužić, *Ljetopis*, 255–98.

34 "Et non multum longe ab eadem ecclesia in uno monticulo construxit rex castellum, vocavitque illud suo nomine Bello. [...] Post haec caepit rex [Beloš] preambulare per terram et per regnum suum. Quodam itaque tempore, dum esset rex in partibus Sremi, Sremani congregantes se cum Ungaris commiserunt praelium cum rege. In quo loco ceciderunt Sremani cum Ungaris, et facta est eis contritio magna. Ab illo ergo die dicta est planities illa, in qua factum (est) praelium, Bellina, nomine regis ob victoriam, quam habuit ibi rex, usque hodie. Post haec Ungari ad regem miserunt quaerendo pacem." Mužić, *Ljetopis*, 273.

35 On the location of Belyén (today Beljin, Serbia) see Ternovácz, "A szerémi püspökség," 463, footnote no. 49.

36 "Rex praeterea fecit pactum cum eis hoc modo: ut ab illo die in antea non auderent transire flumen Sava, et a loco unde surgit, et sicut currit usque quo intrat in magno flumine Donavi, neque homines regis transirent in illam partem, neque illi in istam." Mužić, *Ljetopis*, 273.

37 Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 273, Šišić, *Ljetopis*, 321.

In my opinion, Ćirković's view, according to which the distinction between the inner parts and Trans-Syrmia would have been established as early as the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, is not correct. Even if we accept the presbyter's account, we can place the origin of the name in the mid-twelfth century at the earliest, but it is more likely that the author was mistaken in his use of the geographical name. In documentary sources, the name Inner and Trans-Syrmia first appears much later, in 1229, in the bull of Pope Gregory IX, dated March 3.³⁸

After the death of Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in 1180, Byzantine-Hungarian relations were characterized by a particular dichotomy. On the one hand, King Béla III of Hungary acted as a defender of Byzantine interests, while on other occasions, he sought to acquire territories that belonged to Byzantium. Regarding Byzantine-Hungarian relations, Ferenc Makk pointed out that the Kingdom of Hungary was always the active party, taking advantage of Byzantine political infighting, while Byzantium was the passive, defensive partner.³⁹ In 1180–1182, King Béla III first reconquered the Croatian, Dalmatian, and Bosnian territories and also Syrmia, which were annexed by Emperor Manuel in 1167. In the second phase of the Hungarian expansion against Byzantium's Balkan territories, between 1183 and 1185, as an ally of the Serbian Grand Duke Stephen Nemanja, who was fighting for independence from Constantinople, Béla III conquered the vast territory between Belgrade and Sofia. As a result of the Hungarian conquest in the Balkans, the Bulgarians also launched their own struggle for independence.⁴⁰ Relations in the territories south of the Danube-Sava line changed completely. In 1185, the Kingdom of Hungary and Byzantium made peace, which King Béla III wanted to confirm with a dynastic marriage. His daughter Margaret was married to Emperor Isaac II (1185–1195), and Margaret received the Balkan territories between Belgrade and Sofia, which had been occupied by the Hungarians, as a dowry.⁴¹

38 Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 3, 305–6.

39 Makk, *Magyar külpolitika*, 212.

40 *Ibid.*, 213.

41 *Ibid.*, 213–14. See also Hardi, "Gospodari," 67–68.

Trans-Syrmia or Macsó in the Thirteenth Century

In 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, Byzantium was dissolved, but on its ashes a number of new states were born. The Serbs and Bulgarians, who had long fought for their independence, took advantage of the power vacuum to create their own states, with the territories south of the Danube River falling into Bulgarian hands. King Emeric of Hungary tried to arrange a crown for the Bulgarian Kolojan with the pope, who, recognizing the Hungarian king's ambitions in the Balkans, bypassed Emeric and sent a crown directly to Kolojan. By accepting the papal crown, the Bulgarian Church was forced to join the Catholic Church. The (now united) Bulgarian Archbishop of Veliko Tarnovo was also given the title of Archbishop of all Bulgarians and Vlachs, bringing the orthodox bishoprics of Belgrade and Barancs under the jurisdiction of Veliko Tarnovo and thus into ecclesiastical union with Rome.⁴²

After 1210 and by 1218 at the latest, King Andrew II of Hungary had recaptured the castles of Belgrade and Barancs, which had fallen into Bulgarian hands.⁴³ After burying her third husband, King Béla III's daughter Empress Margaret returned to Hungary in 1222,⁴⁴ accompanied by her two sons, John (Kolojan),⁴⁵ born to Emperor Isaac, and Gyletus⁴⁷ (William), born to Margaret's third husband, Nicholas Sentomna of Salona.⁴⁶ In a charter issued by Pope Honorius III in 1227, Margaret was listed as a noblewoman and Empress of Constantinople, while John/Kolojan was only listed as a nobleman.⁴⁷ Péter Gyetvai believes that John was listed as Prince of Syrmia in several charters of King Béla IV between 1240 and 1241,⁴⁸ but I have found no evidence of this in the charters. The title of Prince of Syrmia did not exist at the time.

42 Bárány, "II. András balkáni külpolitikája," 134. In the case of the Orthodox Church of Serbia, the union between the Roman and Greek Church quickly failed, as in 1219–1220 the Autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church was founded, headed by Saint Sava, the first Serbian archbishop. See *ibid.*, 143.

43 Fine, *The Late Medieval*, 102; see also Gyetvai, *Egyházi szervezés*, 55; according to Attila Bárány, Barancs and Belgrade were in Hungarian hands probably in 1210, but certainly in 1217: Bárány, "II. András balkáni külpolitikája," 139.

44 Gyetvai, *Egyházi szervezés*, 55–56.

45 In a charter of 1233 he is listed as Calo-Iohannes (filius quondam Iursac Imperatoris Constanti-napolitani), with a Greek name. Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 3/2, 351; see also Wertner, "Margit császárné," 597; he is also mentioned as Colo-Johannes and as a count of "Kewe" in a charter of King Béla IV of 1235. Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4/1, 27.

46 On Gyletus, see Rokai, "Gyletus," 124–27.

47 Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 3, 264, Theiner, *Vetera monumenta*, vol. 1, 72.

48 Gyetvai, *Egyházi szervezés*, 56.

He was first listed as lord of Syrmia (and count of Bács) in the spring of 1240.⁴⁹ In his aforementioned bull of March 3, 1229, Pope Gregory IX wrote that the population of Trans-Syrmia ruled by Margaret was Greek-ritual regarding their religion, and they were mostly Greek and Slavic,⁵⁰ and that the Latin bishopric of Syrmia, established in 1229, was intended to convert them to Rome.⁵¹ Although the diocese of Syrmia had its designated center at the time of its foundation, Kő (also known as Bánmonostor, today Banoštor in Serbia) or Kőér, at the northern foot of Fruška Gora, in Inner Syrmia, its jurisdiction extended mainly to the region of Trans-Syrmia.⁵²

In 1232, after the Bulgarians had briefly gotten their hands on it, the territory of Belgrade and Barancs passed permanently into Hungarian hands.⁵³ Pope Gregory IX, in his bull of March 21, 1232, asked the bishop of Csanád to investigate the Bulgarian bishops of Belgrade and Barancs, who had previously united with the Latin Church and who wished to remove themselves from the jurisdiction of Rome, and if they did not return to the allegiance of the Latin Church, to annex the two bishoprics to the Latin bishopric of Syrmia.⁵⁴ This leads us to the conclusion that the territory of the Trans-Syrmia was not geographically defined. The term simply referred to the areas south of the Sava River and the Danube River that were under Hungarian rule, and in the years after 1220–1232, Belgrade and Barancs may have belonged to this territory. It is not known whether the two dioceses, which had moved away from Rome, were then incorporated into the bishopric of Syrmia. Around 1228, the Bulgarian Tsar John Asen II (1218–1241) broke the ecclesiastical union with Rome and established an autocephalous archbishopric in Veliko Tarnovo.⁵⁵ In my view,

49 “Johannes dominus Syrmie et comite Bachensi.” 21 March 1240 (between the palatine and the judge royal) Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4/3, 552; 23 September 1241 (between the Transylvanian voivode and the ban of Slavonia) Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 4, 135; 14 August 1242 (here already in a more prominent place, between the archbishop of Esztergom and the palatine), Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 4, 158; 16 November 1242 in the name of Johannes Angelus (again in a more prominent position between the archbishop of Esztergom and the palatine), Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 4, 175. See also Čirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 3, 5.

50 Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. 3, 305–6.

51 For more on the earliest history of the diocese of Syrmia, see Ternovác, “A szerémi püspökség,” 457–59; according to Mihajlo Dinić, the Catholic Church was not present in any form in the Trans-Syrmian region before 1229. Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 278–79.

52 Ternovác, “A szerémi püspökség,” 463–66.

53 Fine, *The Late Medieval*, 129. Between 1235 and 1237, the two castles were briefly occupied by the Bulgarian Tsar John Asen II. See *ibid.*

54 Theiner, *Vetera monumenta*, vol. 1, 103–4; See also Gyetvai, *Egyházi szervezés*, 60.

55 Bárány, “II. András balkáni külpolitikája,” 150, 154–55.

the bishopric of Syrmia, based in Kő, could have exercised conversion and spiritual jurisdiction in the areas surrounded by the Drina, Sava, and Kolubara Rivers, later called the banate of Macsó. The orthodox bishoprics of Barancs and Belgrade (which belonged to the archbishopric of Ohrid before the rise of Veliko Tarnovo) were ecclesiastically attached to the Orthodox archbishop of Veliko Tarnovo and were secularly dependent on Hungary.

After the Mongol invasion, Béla IV gave the territories south of Sava River to his daughter Anna and her husband Rostislav Mihailovich, probably as early as 1247⁵⁶ but no later than 1254.⁵⁷ The name Macsó first appeared in a charter in 1254. The use of the name Syrmia-Macsó for the territories south of the Sava River was not yet clear at that time. In his charter of December 17, 1256, King Béla IV issued a grant regarding land that was “in the district of Macsó, in the county of Syrmia, beyond the Sava.”⁵⁸ At that time, it is clear that the name “Macsó” was used to refer to the area surrounded by the Drina, Sava, and Kolubara Rivers,⁵⁹ as the area east of the Morava River was not yet under Hungarian rule.

The year 1247 was also a milestone in the history of the church in southern Hungary. It was then that the pope moved the seat of the bishopric of Syrmia from Kő, which was in the Inner Syrmia territories (which had been ravaged by the Mongols), to Szenternye (today Mačvanska Mitrovica in Serbia) in Trans-Syrmia.⁶⁰ By this time, the Latin-rite ecclesiastical presence in the Macsó territories must have strengthened to such an extent that the bishop’s seat and the cathedral chapter could be moved there.

During his reign, Rostislav united the territories on the southern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary, from Bosnia to Barancs. He tried to keep good relations with the Bulgarian Tsar Michael I Asen (1246–1256) who married

56 Rokay and Takács, “Macsó,” 421; Hardi, “Gospodari,” 71–72, Font, “Rosztyiszlav,” 71. The charter of King Béla IV of June 2, 1247 refers to him only as “Rostislav prince of Galicia and ban of Slavonia,” with no reference to a title of Syrmia or Macsó: Szentpétery and Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek*, no. 853.

57 “Rostislav prince of Galicia and lord of Macsó, the son-in-law of the king” (in the list of dignities of the charter, he is listed after ecclesiastical dignitaries, before the palatine): Szentpétery and Borsa, *Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek*, no. 1011; see also Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 50.

58 “In comitatibus infrascriptis, scilicet [...] Syrimiensi in districtu de Mako vltra Zawa.” Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. 7, 429–31.

59 This is important to point out, because Belgrade was later also included in the Macsó territory.

60 They wanted to replace the ruined Kő with a well-defended seat. The pope suggested Szávaszentdemeter or Szentgergely, north of the Sava River, but the committee of Hungarian ecclesiastical dignitaries chose Szenternye opposite Szávaszentdemeter, which was already in the Trans-Syrmian territory. For more information see Ternovác, “A szerémi püspökség,” 466–68.

Rostislav's daughter. In 1256, Tsar Michael was killed in a boyar revolt led by his cousin, Asen Kaliman.⁶¹ He seized power under the name Asen Kaliman II and married the widowed wife of Michael I Asen, but he died a few days later (with the widow's help). In order to protect his daughter, Rostislav invaded Bulgaria, pushed all the way to Veliko Tarnovo, and laid siege to the city. He did not take Veliko Tarnovo, but retreated to Vidin, where he took the title of Tsar of Bulgaria in 1257.⁶² He managed to retain Vidin and the title of tsar, despite Bulgarian invasions, as well as Bosnia, Macsó, and the Barancs province until his death.⁶³ The title of Duke of Macsó (like the earlier Trans-Syrmia) included the Barancs lands, in addition to the Macsó district defined above.⁶⁴

Rostislav is referred to in the sources as the Duke of Macsó.⁶⁵ Anna was mentioned as Duchess of Macsó and Bosnia in a document dating from 1254–1264⁶⁶ and as Duchess of Galicia, Bosnia, and Macsó after her husband's death in 1262.⁶⁷

In the charter issued on December 17, 1256, King Béla IV defines the region of Trans-Syrmia in the following way when granting land: in county of Szerém, in the Macsó district located beyond the Sava.⁶⁸

After the death of Rostislav, the title of Duke of Macsó and Bosnia was also held by the king's youngest son, Béla.⁶⁹ Duke Béla was surrounded by the power struggle between his uncle, the future King Stephen V, and his grandfather (in which he supported King Béla IV), and he was also attacked from the south by King Uroš I of Serbia.⁷⁰ In this Serbian attack, Michael, son of Peter, of the Csák clan, later the count of Veszprém, came to the aid of Duke Béla and captured King Uroš's son-in-law and son of the Serbian king's master of treasury,

61 Szeberényi, "A Balkán," 326.

62 Fine, *The Late Medieval*, 171–72; Szeberényi, "A Balkán," 326.

63 For more information see Fine, *The Late Medieval*, 174–75.

64 On relations between the Kingdom of Hungary and neighboring Serbia in the mid-thirteenth century see Gál, "Béla és Uroš."

65 Dux de Machou. Rokay and Takács, "Macsó," 421.

66 Szentpétery and Zsoldos, *Hercegek, hercegnők és királynék*, 61.

67 "Ducissa Galitiae ac de Bosna et de Mazo." Theiner, *Vetera monumenta*, vol. 1, 273. This papal bull calls the princess Agnes instead of Anne. Mihajlo Dinić used the term vojvodkinja for Anna, which means "the wife of the vojvode" or maybe "princess." For further literature, see also Čirković, "Zemlja Mačva," 5. Čirković erroneously dated the death of Rostislav to 1263. *Ibid.*, 6.

68 "In comitatibus infrascriptis, scilicet Chanadiensis, Thimisiensis, Syrmienensis, in Districtu de Mako, ultra Zawa." Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. 7, 431.

69 "Bela Dux de Machow et de Bozna." Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. 8, 255; Fine, *The Late Medieval*, 175.

70 Čirković, "Zemlja Mačva," 6. Duke Béla's title regarding Macsó and Bosnia was last mentioned in the sources in 1271. See *ibid.*

for which he received a generous ransom.⁷¹ During the war, King Uroš I himself was taken prisoner by the Hungarians.⁷² Although Duke Béla was last mentioned in a charter in 1271,⁷³ he died almost a year later, when he was murdered by Henrik Kőszegi in November 1272.⁷⁴

The Banates of Macsó, Barancs and Kucsó

After the assassination of Duke Béla, Macsó was briefly organized as a banate. In 1272, the first documentary evidence of the new banates formed on the territories that were the vassals of the king of Hungary appeared: the bans of Macsó, Usora, Bosnia, Barancs, and Kucsó.⁷⁵ The first known ban of Macsó was Roland of the Rátót clan (son of Domokos), who also held the office of the palatine of Hungary.⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that in the year 1273 three persons were mentioned in the documents as bans of Macsó,⁷⁷ and then between 1272 and 1279 five such officials were mentioned in the documents,⁷⁸ all of whom held the title of ban of Bosnia apart from John, who seems to have been the exception, and Ákos of the Albert clan, who appeared only in a false document.⁷⁹ From 1280, Queen Elizabeth's titles included the title of Duchess of Macsó.⁸⁰

After the death of Rostislav Mikhailovich in 1262, who had successfully retained and secured the Barancs province from the south with his Bulgarian conquests, his sons, Béla and Michael, shared the Barancs territories, and after Michael's death in 1266, Béla remained the leader of Barancs, on the right bank of the Pek River, along with Bosnia and Macsó. In my opinion, the Barancs area at that time meant the area to the east of the border river of the banate of

71 Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4/3, 490.

72 Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 5/1, 238–40; See also Fejér *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4/3, 490.

73 Theiner, *Vetera monumenta*, vol. 1, 299; Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. 3, 247; Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 6.

74 Petrovics, “Béla herceg,” 93.

75 Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 6. The banate of Barancs and Kucsó gradually disappeared from the sources during the fourteenth century.

76 Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51.

77 Beside Roland of the Rátót clan (March 30, 1273) Egyed of the Monoszló clan (son of Gregory) Egyed (May 1273), John (May 1273), the abovementioned Egyed again (June 2, 1273) appeared as bans. Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51.

78 Albert “The Great” of the Ákos clan (son of Erdő) appeared only in a forged charter. Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51.

79 Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51.

80 “Ducissa de Machu.” Elizabeth's title of Princess of Macsó first appears in a charter dated before August 19, 1280. See Szentpétery and Zsoldos, *Hercegek, hercegnők és királynéik*, 127.

Macsó, Kolubara, bordered by the Danube River, including Belgrade. After the aforementioned murder of Béla in 1272, a ban was appointed to the head of the Barancs territories: Gregory the son of Mark of the Péc clan, who is mentioned in the documents as the ban of Kucsó and Barancs between 1272 and 1273.⁸¹

Kucsó was also situated on the right bank of the Pek River south of Barancs, and there are no significant sources from its earlier history. It probably shared the fate of Barancs, which was situated less than 40 km to the northwest. It was previously neither a religious nor a major administrative center. Like Barancs, Kucsó was ruled by Rostislav Mihailovich and his sons until the death of Duke Béla. It is possible that in 1272, when the new banates were formed, there were no separate banates of Barancs and Kucsó, but a single one made of the two territories. The case of Barancs-Kucsó was probably different from the case of Macsó and Bosnia,⁸² when the same person was appointed head of two provinces, which were historically and geographically separate but neighboring, sharing the fate of serving as a “buffer state.” Gregory the son of Mark of the Péc clan may have been ban of Kucsó-Barancs rather than the ban of Kucsó and the ban of Barancs. This question will probably never be answered with sufficient certainty, due to the extremely limited number of surviving sources. The name of Tekes’ son Stephen is mentioned in a source from 1279. Stephen only held the title of the ban of Kucsó.⁸³ After this date, the title of ban of Barancs-Kucsó no longer appears in the sources, and neither Barancs nor Kucsó played a major role in the further history of medieval southern Hungary.

81 “Banus de Kucho et Boronch” (MNL OL DL 104891, Szentpétery and Borsa, *Árpád-házi oklevelek*, no. 2329), “banus de Boronch et de Kuchou” (MNL OL DF 248637, Szentpétery and Borsa, *Árpád-házi oklevelek*, no. 2363). The sources mention him between November 27, 1272 and May 14, 1273. See: Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51.

82 Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 51–52. The person of the ban was also the same in the case of the banates of Usora and Soli (both Henrik of the Héder kindred [son of Henrik], and Ernye of the Ákos clan [son of Erdő] bore the title of ban of both territories, see Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 53), but Usora and Soli are mentioned as two separate territories by earlier sources (for example, see Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 4, 237.)

83 Zsoldos, *Archontológia*, 52; Szentpétery and Borsa, *Árpád-házi oklevelek*, no. 3019; “Stephanus banus de Kulchou” (MNL OL, DL 85215).

The Kingdom of Stephen Dragutin in Syrmia

As mentioned above, from 1280 to 1284, Queen Elizabeth, widow of King Stephen V of Hungary, held the title of Duchess of Macsó. Dragutin, the former Serbian king who had lost his throne in 1282 and had married Catherine of the Árpád dynasty (the daughter of Stephen V), received the territory of Macsó from his brother-in-law King Ladislas IV after June 11, 1284,⁸⁴ as well as Usora, Soli, and Bosnia.⁸⁵ Along with Macsó, Belgrade also passed into the hands of Dragutin, who could then create his residence there.⁸⁶ The territories ruled by Dragutin were called “the Syrmian territories” by Serbian contemporaries, and Dragutin himself was called Stephen of Syrmia,⁸⁷ the king of Syrmia.⁸⁸

Dragutin’s main ambition was to create a new Serbian state under his rule by unifying the kingdoms he had received from Ladislas IV. Presumably to prevent this, in 1291, Dorman and Kudelin, lords from Barancs, called in the Mongols (according to Ćirković, the Cumans),⁸⁹ whom Ugrin of the Csák clan defeated at a port on the Sava River.⁹⁰ By this time, Dragutin’s center had become Debrč, where he set up his court.⁹¹ One might ask why he did not make Belgrade his seat. In my view, Belgrade must have been a key fortress for the Hungarian king, and the Hungarian leadership could not have allowed Dragutin to establish the seat of his “Syrmian kingdom” in this strategically important settlement. Whether Belgrade was in the possession of Dragutin or the Hungarian king in the 1290s is not known for certain. According to a charter issued in 1298, the Mongols destroyed Macsó and then prepared to attack Hungary.⁹² A royal charter from March 20, 1310 states that the Serbian king Milutin, together with John of the Smaragd clan, son of Ajnárd, attacked Hungary and led devastating

84 Dinić, *Srpske zemlje*, 127. On June 11, 1284, Queen Elizabeth still bore the title of princess of Macsó. Ibid., 132.

85 For more details, see *ibid.*, footnote 12.

86 Ibid., 337.

87 Ibid., 281.

88 Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 7.

89 Rokay and Takács, “Macsó,” 421; Cf. Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 3.

90 Rokay and Takács, “Macsó,” 421.

91 Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 3.

92 In a charter issued by King Andrew III in 1298, he donated the village of Pabar to Matthew, Paul, Michael of the Csák clan (sons of count Orbán), because they had gained merit against the Mongols, who had destroyed the Macsó region and were about to attack Hungary. Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár*, vol. 12, 617.

raids in the counties of Syrmia and Valkó.⁹³ Dragutin died in 1316, and his son Vladislav inherited Macsó, but he was driven out from the territory by his uncle, King Milutin of Serbia in 1316.⁹⁴

Between 1317 and 1319, there was a war between Hungary and Serbia for the Macsó territories occupied by King Milutin, and two campaigns were led by the Hungarians to retake the region. During the first campaign, in January 1317, the Hungarian army crossed the frozen Sava River to recapture Macsó, which had been occupied by the Serbs.⁹⁵ In the cold winter weather, the port to cross the river was marked out by the count of Sopron, Nicholas, the son of Amádé from the Gutkeled clan, while on the other bank of the river, the Serbian army was waiting for them.⁹⁶ Hungarians were also found in the Serbian army who previously had confronted King Charles of Hungary, namely Andrew, Lotár, and Dezső of the Gutkeled clan, the sons of Dénes, who was the son of Lotár.⁹⁷ King Charles I of Hungary personally took part in the campaign, and he also captured the castle of Macsó that year⁹⁸ and the castle of Kolobar (Kolubara).⁹⁹ According to the contemporary documents, Paul Nagymartoni,¹⁰⁰ Nicholas, the son of Amádé of the Gutkeled kindred who was the count of Sopron,¹⁰¹

93 “Cum Iohanes filius Erardi concepto spirito malicie, Stephano Regi Seruie nostro emulo dampuabiliter adhesisset, et contra spectabilem virum magistrum Ugrinum [...] ac partes regni nostri, de Sirmia, et de Wolko, collectis suis complicitibus, nequiter dimicaret, et seviret.” *Anjou-kori okmánytár*, vol. 1, 197.

94 Rokay and Takács, “Macsó,” 421.

95 The questions surrounding the dating of the campaign were clarified by Pál Engel, who placed the date of the campaign between January 6 and February 20, 1317. See Engel, “Újraegyesítés,” 115, footnote 123. Cf. Ćirković, “Zemlja Mačva,” 13.

96 “Demum cum ad expugnanda castra de Machou et subiiciendum ipsum regnum nostro regimini ac reprimendam vesanam insolenciam sclavorum scismaticorum ipsius regni, per quos nobis et regno nostro grande scandalum oriri videbatur et fuerat iam exortum, exercitum validum movissemus et difficilis transitus iluvii Zave per algorem hiemalis temporis opposito ac resistente nobis exercitu dictorum sclyorum gentis scilicet regis Urosii adversarii nostri in littore seu portu transitus processum nostrum retardaret, ipse magister Nicolaus tanquam yir strenuus fortune se submittens contra predictos scisrnicos ante omnes alios cum suis transeuudo exercitui uostro transitum seu vadum securum preparavit.” Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 9, 117–19; *Anjou-kori okmánytár*, vol. 2, 69–70; for a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 7, no. 86.

97 *Anjou-okmánytár*, vol. 2, 127–30; for a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 8, no. 203.

98 Engel, “Újraegyesítés,” 115, footnote 123.

99 *Anjou-kori okmánytár*, vol. 2, 91–93. For a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 7, no. 534; Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 8/5, 156–64; for a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 10, no. 194.

100 Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 8/2, 200.

101 *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 2, 69–70.

Alexander Köcski,¹⁰² sons of Doroszló,¹⁰³ Mark of Rady,¹⁰⁴ the sons of Bereck of Bathur (of the Gutkeled clan) all fought in the war.¹⁰⁵ After King Charles I recaptured the rest of the Serbian-occupied parts of the Macsó district, in early 1319,¹⁰⁶ during the second campaign in Macsó, he restored the whole banate of Macsó. The office of ban was granted to Hungarian noble families, the Drugets, Ostfis, Garais, Horvatis, etc.¹⁰⁷ On September 16, 1319, King Charles issued a charter in Macsó.¹⁰⁸

Summary

The northern Balkan territories bordered by the Drina, Sava, and Danube Rivers came under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Hungary in the early thirteenth century. This region was called Trans-Syrmia(s), Sirmia Ulterior, but Southern Slavic sources often referred to the area simply as Syrmia. At the time, this was understood to mean all the territory lying south of the borders of Hungary, east of the Drina, without any actual designated borders. Between 1230 and 1240, King Béla III's daughter Margaret and her son John ruled the province of Trans-Syrmia as lady and lord of Syrmia. It was at this time that the Hungarian-ruled district of Macsó began to be permanently separated from the territories of Belgrade and Barancs, which were often harassed by Bulgarian military campaigns.

The territories of Trans-Syrmia (including Bosnia) were given to Rostislav Mihailovich between 1247 and 1254, who held the title of Duke of Bosnia and Macsó (Barancs and Belgrade were not among his titles, nor were they among the titles of his wife Anna). By taking Veliko Tarnovo, Rostislav gained the title of Bulgarian Tsar, securing Barancs and Belgrade from the southeast. After his death in 1262, the title of Lady of Macsó was held by his wife. He was succeeded as Duke of Macsó by his son Béla, who also shared the Barancs territories with his brother Michael. After the murder of Béla in 1272, the territory of Macsó

102 During the siege, he was pelted with stones from the castle, for which the king later compensated him. *Hazai Okmánytár*, vol. 1, 124. *Anjou-kori oklevéltár*, vol. 7, no. 290.

103 *Anjou-kori okmánytár*, vol. 2, 91–93, *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 7, no. 534.

104 MNL OL, DL 86970. For a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 9, no. 65.

105 Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus*, vol. 8/5, 161–62. For a summary, see *Anjou oklt.*, vol. 10, no. 142. See also *ibid.*, no. 194.

106 Engel, “Újraegyesítés,” 115, footnote 123.

107 Rokay and Takács, “Macsó,” 421.

108 MNL OL, DL 50671.

became a banate for seven years (the title of ban of Macsó was mostly held by the same person as the ban of Bosnia). In 1284, the Serbian king Dragutin, who had lost his throne, was given Macsó, together with Bosnia (including Usora and Soli) and the territories of Belgrade and Barancs-Kucsó. According to Serbian sources, Dragutin attempted to establish a new kingdom as a Hungarian vassal state as King of Syrmia, but after his death in 1316, his son Vladislav failed to hold on to power. His uncle, King Milutin, conquered the Macsó territories (Belgrade may have remained in Hungarian hands, but the fate of Barancs is unknown). In the winter of 1317, King Charles I of Hungary personally led a campaign against Milutin, and by 1319, he had recaptured the Macsó territories, where he restored the institution of the banate of Macsó, and the title of ban was then conferred on Hungarian noble families as an honor.

Already in the thirteenth century, the areas between the Drina and Kolubara Rivers were referred to as the banate of Macsó in both historical literature and popular thought. It is clear from the above that this is incorrect: the name Macsó was first used for the region only in 1254, and the title of ban of Macsó appeared in the documents of the period under study between 1272 and 1279. It was only in the Angevin period, after 1319, that the institution of the Macsó banate took root.

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