

DIANA IEGAR, *A frail balance of power: Judicial conflicts between nobles and townsmen in Ugocsa county (fourteenth century)*

Abstract: This work aims to reconstruct, to the extent possible, the judicial conflict ensuing between the town Vinogradovo (in the former Ugocsa county), belonging to the personal demesne of Queen Elisabeth of Hungary, and its neighbors, the noblemen of Ardó, members of the royal household and of the aristocracy of Ugocsa county around mid-fourteenth century. The reconstruction of this litigation under a wide array of aspects, the examination of the influences that could influence the results of the legal actions in the conditions of a still poorly defined law system, maintaining a significant amount of customary elements represents a real challenge for the medievalist. The uneven level of preservation of the primary sources, often insufficient, makes the case study the most fit method of investigation.

The significant number of documents referring to this conflict, the network of interests created around the opposing parties, the subtle, but nevertheless demonstrable, involvement of the political and social elites in the apparently minor litigation make this case study an excellent example of the manner in which personal relations and balance of power manifested on every social level in the Middle Ages. For the areas bordering Ugocsa (such as Satu Mare, Maramureş, Transylvania) the analysis of the litigation between noblemen and townsmen represents a valuable analogy especially for the reconstruction of aspects that can be detected indirectly, by examining the political changes among elites, whose influence over local phenomena was considerable.

Keywords: Vinogradovo, litigation, county aristocracy, townsmen, *civitas*.