

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the late migrations, the 7<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries represented for Central and Eastern Europe a period marked by territorial changes, accompanied by social, political and economic transformations. On the edge of the great political powers of the period, both inside and outside (in the vicinity), in fortifications, towns and settlements, everyday life presents different characteristics compared to that inside their territories. Raids, conflicts, administrative changes, instability, as well as the influence of great powers on neighbouring territories, are just some of the factors that strongly influenced the evolution of these communities. This fluctuating process, almost permanently under the "shadow" of conflict, led to specific forms of political-historical and cultural development, recorded or not in written sources, but revealed through archaeological investigations and confirmed by interdisciplinary analyses.

The present volume is dedicated to the presentation of these specific forms, and for this purpose, researchers were invited to contribute, whose studies bring to light new discoveries, approaches, and interpretations, which will contribute to a better understanding of certain local and broader phenomena.

According to their geographical location, the contributions focus on territories that during this period were either part of or under the influence of Central and Southeastern European political powers. For the first geographical area, the studies address regions in the Carpathian Basin that fell within the sphere of influence of continental powers such as the Avar Khaganate, the Carolingian Empire of the Franks, Great Moravia, and the Kingdom of Hungary. A comparative analysis is conducted on three settlements in the Sylvania Depression (northwestern Romania); the territory inhabited by the Vistulans is proposed to be expanded through the inclusion—based on new discoveries—of four hillforts in the northern border region (Poland); the possibility of the Hungarian army's presence in the Carpathian Basin as an ally in the Carolingian-Moravian conflict prior to the year 895 is analysed, based on a coin hoard discovered in Hungary; a fortress and monetary discoveries from a necropolis, both now located in southwestern Romania, are also presented.

Most of the contributions refer to the border areas of the Byzantine Empire, both in its immediate vicinity and within its territory, presenting various aspects through the interpretation of written sources, archaeological discoveries, radiocarbon analyses, and monetary circulation. Covering territories from Serbia to the Black Sea coast, and from east of the Carpathian Mountains to the Balkan Mountains, the studies address topics such as evolution of settlements, daily life, community beliefs, features of material culture, the presence of migrating populations, the destruction of certain fortresses and the founding of new ones, administrative organization and reorganization, craftsmanship, and the circulation of goods and currency, historical

geography hypotheses, etc. Two contributions focus on the construction timeline of two fortresses located on the empire's Danubian frontier, substantiated by the results of radiocarbon analyses and new stratigraphic data.

A contribution is added that presents interesting aspects of monetary circulation after the stated period and the evocation of one of the precursors of medieval Dobrujan archaeology, the researcher Petre Diaconu, whose birth has turned one hundred years old in 2024.

The topics addressed broadly span the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, with most contributions focusing on the period between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The archaeological sites presented are located today within the territories of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Serbia. Among these, we mention: Adamclisi (*Tropaeum Traiani*), Aghireș, ancient Augusta, Medieval fortress "Golemiya grad", Golyamo Peshtene, Hârșova (*Carsium*), Iași, Ipotești, Jászfelsőszentgyörgy, "Kaleto" fortress near Mezdra, Kastritsi, Kostkowice, Kostol (*Pontes*), Marca, Mizia, Novosel, Păcuiul lui Soare, Petrich Kale, Porț, Ruyno (Kartal Kalé), Siedlec, Udórz, Vălcani, Vladimirescu, Medieval fortress Vratitsa, Zlatar, Złoty Potok, etc.

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