

## The Pecheneg Settlement along Hungary's Northwestern Frontier

Sarolta Tatár

### Introduction

The intention of this paper is to describe one way of medieval contacts between Hungary and the Orient, namely how the Turkic speaking Pecheneg guards were settled in three counties, Moson, Sopron and Győr along the Western frontier of the Hungarian Kingdom. A method that compares written sources to historical geography will be used here. This method is applicable when researching the Hungarian Middle Ages, since early medieval Hungarian settlements were often named after the owner, or the tribe that settled there. Therefore, besides written documents, maps of medieval Hungary might reveal additional information about social and military organizations.

Pechenegs were reported first in the 7-8th centuries as habitants in Central Asia and were involved in the westward migration of the Oguz which started from the present Mongolian territories<sup>1</sup>. They later lived by the Ural and Volga rivers. In 894, when they were expelled from their homeland by the Oguz and the Khazars, they occupied the Hungarian homeland called Etelköz (part of present Ukraine), forcing the Hungarians to settle in the Carpathian Basin (the historical Hungary) in 895-6. In the 10th century, the sovereign of the Hungarian (still Oriental-type pagan) state, *Zolta* obtained a peace with Pecheneg tribes in Etelköz and was also given an Oriental wife for his son *Taksony*. The princess was called „Cumanian” by Master P. (Anonymus), the author of the *Gesta Hungarorum*, (written AD 1200 approximately). According to Gy. Györffy, since the Cumanians (another Turkic people) did not reach the frontiers of Europe until the middle of the 11th century, this „Cumanian” wife must have been Pecheneg (Györffy 1990, 108).<sup>2</sup> Among the first Pechenegs immigrating into Hungary during the reign of *Zolta* and *Taksony* (955-970) were the chief *Thonuzoba* and his son *Urkund*, who became the ancestors of the Hungarian *Tomaj* kindred, as their story is told by Master P. (Anonymus, chapter 57, SRH I, 116-117). The historicity of *Thonuzoba* is generally accepted by historians (Szegfű 1982). Györffy then conjectures that *Thonuzoba* probably came as a member of the retinue together with the anonymous Pecheneg princess. According to Anonymus, *Thonuzoba* was settled near the river Tisza, by Abád. Since there is a prevalence of the Pecheneg tribal name *Talmač*<sup>3</sup> in this, eastern part of the country, reflected in the Hungarian place name *Tolmačs*, Györffy believes that *Thonuzoba* was from the *Talmač* tribe (Györffy 1990, 109).<sup>4</sup>

Two sources indicate that some Pechenegs were used as frontier guards by the kings: according to Anonymus, the head of the state, *Zolta*, father of *Taksony*, settled Pechenegs in Moson county to defend the Western frontier<sup>5</sup>, and the Chronicon Picton describes how Pechenegs and Székelys were the vanguard of the Hungarian army, e.g. in the battle by Olsava against the Czechs in 1116, and in 1146, when the Hungarians marched on Austria (SRH. I: 113-114, 435-436 and 456). *Kordé* made an effort to discredit the information regarding *Zolta* (Györffy 1990, 110, and *Kordé* 1990, 3-20), but it is generally accepted that at least a part of the Pechenegs were military personell in north-western Hungary, because a diploma written in 1224 in Latin confirms them in that capacity.<sup>6</sup> This document is the privilege of the village *Árpás*, which describes the military service of the local Pechenegs, and the fines and taxes they had to pay, based on their status (F. III/1, 362-64 and Györffy 1990, 127).

There are no diploma surviving which could tell us the exact time when the Pecheneg guards were settled in the three counties mentioned above. Our medieval sources mention Pechenegs in the villages *Kajár*, *Tét*, *Nagybarát*, *Árpás* and *Kulcsod* in Győr county, in a cluster by *Barátfalu* and *Monóudvar*, and by *Királyudvar* and in *Pátfalú* in Moson county, an island in the Danube by *Pozsony* (now Bratislava), on the border of Moson county and the village *Pecsenyéd* (now *Pötsching*, Austria) and a toponym (*Besenyőkuta* „the well of the Pecheneg”) by the village *Hegykö*,

<sup>1</sup> Golden 1972, pp. 58-68.

<sup>2</sup> Györffy proves in many instances that Anonymus mirrors the political and ethnic situations of his own times when he describes the distant past, and that many of the ethnonyms in his work describes other ethnicities.

<sup>3</sup> *Tolmač* or *Talmač* was the 6th tribe in the Pecheneg tribal confederation, according to Constantinos Porphyrogenetos § 37 (Moravcsik, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Á. Nagy (1969), after analyzing the archaeological material of the Pechenegs in the Tisza region (not a frontier area), proposed that the earliest Pechenegs were settled there together with Hungarian tribal warriors in clusters as military retinue.

<sup>5</sup> „...in eodem confinio ultra lutum Musun collocavit etiam Bissenos non paucos habitare pro defensione regni sui, ut ne aliquando in posterum furibundi Theotonici propter iniuriam sibi illatam fines Hungarorum devastare possent.” (SRH. I, chapt. 57, 113-114).

<sup>6</sup> Still, most of the Pechenegs became usual rural population and assimilated as such (Robotka 2000, 398-400).

both in Sopron county<sup>7</sup>. Unfortunately most of these sources were written as late as in the 13th century, when noble families as well as private individuals understood the benefits of written documents and became used to deal with juridical cases in writing. This happened especially after 1181 when king Béla III required by law that every case must be present in written form before him. The oldest document in these counties concerning the Pechenegs is a list from 1086 over the estates of the monastery in Pannonhalma, which mentions arable lands owned by Pechenegs in Kajár.<sup>8</sup> So, these sources testify that Pechenegs lived well settled in this region in the 12th century already. In lack of written sources from the 10-11 century, toponyms can be used to elaborate the chronology of the settlement. One kind of the oldest Hungarian toponyms were identical with the proper name of the first settler, the owner, or the kindred, or their ethnic name, while all Indo-European language speakers (German, Slav, later Rumanian) around Hungarians develop their toponyms by suffixes or other additions to the proper name. This unique linguistic method was supposedly based on a nomadic lifestyle, when the dwelling place of a person was changeable but the proper name was constant. Although some toponyms were changed during the centuries and this method was occasionally still in use several hundred years after the population became firmly settled, it became less and less usual after ca 1250 (L. Kiss 1997, 177-8). So, by studying this special type of toponyms it is possible to establish contact between historically known kindreds, ethnic groups or sometimes even persons and suggest a chronology. So toponyms based on the ethnonym Pecheneg, their tribal names or names of kindreds and individuals, known from chronicles and other sources as Pechenegs or being obviously Turkic will be used to carry out this task.

### A. The Pecheneg presence

By collecting the early Pecheneg toponyms I will prove that members belonging to these ethnic group settled in the region. The following toponyms formed from Pecheneg ethnonyms are to be found in these three counties:

#### 1. Besenyő

- *Besenyő* „Pecheneg” by v. Lovászpátona (first mentioned in 1086, technically in Veszprém c., but on the border of Győr c.),
- *Besenyőkuta* „the well of the Pecheneg” by v. Hegykő in Sopron c. (first mentioned in 1597),
- *Pecsenyéd* „Pecheneg (place)” in Sopron c. (first mentioned in 1216/1397).
- It was also suggested that the village *Szerecseny* „Sarracene”, Győr c. (first mentioned perhaps in 1086, surely in 1256), was populated by Pechenegs, because Sarracene meant a Muslim in medieval Europe and this religion and name were reported among them (Györffy 1990, 126-129, 155). There are no placenames composed from Pecheneg tribal names in Győr, Moson and Sopron c.

Besenyő and Szerecseny belong to the ancient type of toponyms, developed from ethnic or personal names, without a suffix. Besenyőkuta is formed as a possessive expression, where the owner was doubtless the *Oslí* kindred (see later), who owned land in the village, as documented from the 13th century. Although the owners were Pechenegs, the population was probably not, because Hegykő (originally Igkő „holy stone”) is a Hungarian toponym. Pecsenyéd is formed by the Hungarian denom. nom. suffix *-d*, which is quite common in place names, e.g. Abád (first mentioned in 1177) < Aba (personal name), Agárd (first mentioned in 1211) < *agár* „greyhound”, Ózd (first mentioned in Baranya c. in 1216, in Borsod c. 1272) < Oguz, (Turkic ethnonym, cf Györffy I, 1987 170, 357, 797, 846). However, the facts that the toponym kept an archaic form with the original Turkic *p-* and *-č-* (instead of the secondarily Hungarian *b-* and *-š-*) and which German variant, Pötsching originates of the shorter form without *-d*, witness to an ancient toponym. It is therefore most probably that Pecsenyéd, like Besenyő and Szerecseny, belongs to the most ancient type of toponyms, like those developed without adding a suffix.

2. The three most iconic Pecheneg names (Thonuzoba, Urkon/Urkund and Tomaj) are supposedly of Turkic origin (cf. Gombocz 1915, 3, 24). There are no toponyms based on these names in Moson c. However, there are the following places found in Győr and Sopron Counties:

- toponym *Urkony* between the villages Mezőörs and Bönyrétafal, Győr c.,
- *Urkony* by v. Fehértó in Győr c.,
- v. *Egyházasurkony* („Urkony which has a church”, first mentioned in 1241), Sopron c., probably destroyed during the Mongolian invasion in 1241-2, now two toponyms *Urkony* by Fertőd, Sopron c. (Csánki III, 634, Kiss-Paszternák 2000),
- placename *Urkony* in the vicinity of v. Sopronkeresztúr/Deutschkreutz, earlier Sopron c., now Austria (Kristó-Makk-Szegfü 1973-4, I, 67).
- the estate *Tomaj* by v. Répcszemere, Sopron c. (mentioned in 1405, Csánki III, 633).

The question is whether the person or persons these places were called after is identical with the son of Thonuzoba. There are two persons called *Urkony* in the tradition recorded by Anonymus. One is the son of a Hungarian named *Eusee* (r: Óse), the ancestor of the *Szalók* kindred, which owned land along the river Tisza in Eastern Hungary. The

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Györffy 1990, 124-128.

<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that the Ottoman wars (1526-1697), which devastated the southern and central part of the country, especially Transdanubia and other wars in the region destroyed approximately 50 % of our written documents from the Middle Ages. Now there are ca 200 000 Hungarian diploma known from before 1526, in addition to chronicles, law texts, etc.

<sup>9</sup> In case no other date is given, the toponyms on this list are first recorded in modern times, after the Middle Ages.

other is the son of Thonuzoba<sup>10</sup>, the ancestor of the Tomaj kindred. The first centre of both kindreds were by the river Tisza, but Tomaj owned land also in other regions.<sup>11</sup> Although their presence is not attested by any written source in Sopron c., it can not be excluded that they were present here but moved away before it became usual to secure possessory rights in writing. In any case, persons called Urkund/Urkony occur later in the Tomaj kindred as well, namely in 1219, 1240 and in 1280 (VR § 1, HO VIII, 36-7, 208, Györffy II, 1987, 496).

Sources also mention persons called Urkund of other or unknown kindreds (Fehértói 2004, 781)<sup>12</sup>, two of them in our region:

- Petrus, son of *Wrcund*, *iobagio*<sup>13</sup> (jobbágy, military personell) of Sopron Castle, is mentioned several times between 1238 and 1367 (UB I, 184-5, 230, 294, II, 14).

- Luca, grandson of *Urcund* was a *iobagio* of Moson Castle in 1268/1269 (UB I, 346, Györffy IV, 1998, 174).

Both the father and the grandfather of these men lived in the 12th century. Because of both the social status and the late occurrence of this military man in Sopron it is less probable that these places were called after him, even less after the man who was connected to another, i.e. Moson c. Still, they could very well have been Pechenegs, who were given the name inspired by tradition or even fashion. In spite of its relatively widespread use, Urkund is a proven Pecheneg name, and as such it occurs several times among the Pechenegs settled along the Sár river in Fejér and Tolna counties<sup>14</sup>. A possible ethnic connection between Urkony by *Bönyrétaalap* and *Mezőörs* and the Pecheneg group along the Sár river, Fejér c. is attested as well by the proper name *Alap* of Turkic origin (< *alp* „hero, courageous warrior” Rásonyi – Baski I, 53), which became a toponym: villages *Alap* (now *Bönyrétaalap*) in Győr county and another *Alap* in Fejér county. The grandson of a Pecheneg called *Oluph/Alaph* is mentioned here in 1293 and 1328 (Györffy II, 1987, 345), i.e. his grandfather must have been an important personality, mentioned in addition to the father as well. The fact that both Urkony and *Alap* are attested among Pechenegs in these two regions make the impression that they not only belonged to the same ethnic group but also immigrated or were organized approximately in the same period. It is noteworthy that one of their villages in the region Sár (*Besenyő*, today *Aba*) was mentioned already in 1192 (Györffy 1990, 136).

The occurrence of the placename Tomaj in Sopron c., suggests that this kindred appeared in Sopron c. at some point. The name Urkony was attested of several members of this kindred.

There was one more noble Pecheneg kindred, called *Oslí*, which owned land along the road from Győr to Sopron and further to the western border. Their historic past in the region beside documents written in the 13th century and later, is attested by the name *Oslí*, which was the name of their main village in Sopron c., and also the name of the kindred and a personal name that was often used by them. All forms of this name were based on the name of an ancestor (Tatár 2014, 11-36).

## B. The occupation of the Pechenegs

### I. The frontier and its guards

The western frontier had several layers of defence system in the 9th-14th centuries. According to an ancient strategy, spaces were left deliberately empty around the kingdom, so the enemy would have no logistical bases when attacking the inland. This empty space was called the *gyepűelve* „the space on the other side of the *gyepű*”, and was guarded by special forces who settled inland, in the region called *gyepű* (i.e. fallow land).<sup>15</sup> Thus, *gyepű* and *gyepűelve* as parts of the defence system complemented each other. In the 10th century the western-most frontier of Hungary lay by the frontier fortress Melk (now in Austria), which was built by the Germans, before it was conquered by the Hungarians, then conquered back by the Germans in 984 (Kiss-Tóth 1987, 128). After this, the *gyepűelve* stretched until the Enns river in the 10th century. This line was abandoned by the Hungarians in the 11th century (Tagányi 1913, 97-104). So the frontier moved towards east during these centuries. The *Annals of Altaich* are the earliest source that described the man-made obstacles of Hungary at the turn of the millennium

<sup>10</sup> The name is spelled in three versions: *Urcun*, *Urcund* and *Ircundium* (Latin acc.) (Anonymus §§ 49, 57, SRH. I: 116-117 and others). It was pronounced Urkony and Urkund, which is not identical with Örkény, as it was wrongly assumed earlier (Kiss - Paszternák 2000, 79). The final *-d* is a Hungarian denom. nom suffix. The final *-ny* / *-n* is a usual dialect form, cf. *szappan/szappany* „soap”, *fon/fony* „to wreath, to spin”, etc.

<sup>11</sup> In Vas county by Nagytílaj, Lesencetomaj and Badacsontomaj by Balaton, by Nágocs in Somogy and by Regöly in Tolna counties, cf. Kristó – Makk – Szegfü 1974, II. 44.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. a habitant in v. Bökény, Bihar c. in 1214/1550 (Györffy I, 1987, 606); *Wrchon*, member of the *Aba* kindred, landowner in v. Bölse, Abauj c. (now Slovakia) in 1232 (Györffy I, 1987, 72-3, CDES I, 284); *Urkon*, whose son was landowner in the v. Visznek, Heves c. in 1232 (HO VI, 112, Györffy III, 1987, 145); a noble man in 1282 (Károlyi I, 15), etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Iobagio*, i.e. *jobbágy* was military personell, but not in the same sense as the Pechenegs of Árpás. A *iobagio* is an armed servant, but the Pechenegs of Árpás were given collective rights on ethnic basis.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. 1322: the Pecheneg László, son of Johannes and his brother *Urkund* in v. Szedreg; 1324: *Urcund* and Philip, sons of the Pecheneg Nicolai (Veszpr. reg. no 150, 149, Györffy 1990, 137-9), etc.

<sup>15</sup> The Hungarian chieftains and tribes left names only in the inner reaches of Moson and Sopron counties, bordered by the Lajta and Sopron Mountain ranges, which provide natural obstacles.

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(Kristó – Makk – Szeffü 1973, 639). The rivers Feistritz, Lapincs/Lafnitz<sup>16</sup> and Lajta/Leitha had been the border rivers of the Karolingian margraves (Kiss - Tóth 1987, 129). The peaceful relations with the Germans came to an end with the death of Henry II, the brother-in-law of king Saint Stephen I of Hungary, in 1024. Skirmishes happened along the frontier, which developed into war in 1030. German forces invaded Hungary, and St Stephen emptied the region between the Leitha and Rába rivers, so the enemy would not find food. The Germans turned back from the river Rába and were defeated by Vienna by the Hungarians. In the peace treaty Conrad II renounced his rights to the region between the Leitha and Fischa rivers, and a strip of land by the Western bank of the river Morava. It is likely that St Stephen designated these regions to be *gyepűelve* (Györffy 1983, 309-313). Hostilities had arisen after the death of St Stephen in 1038, when the German emperor Henry III had tried to conquer Hungary, so it was always important to defend this frontier. The *gyepű* was guarded by special forces, in Latin called *speculatores* (Hung. ör „guard”), *exploratores* („spies”) and *sagittarii* (Hung. *lővér*, „archer”) (Kristó – Makk - Szeffü 1973, 651). Many historians supposed that the guards were tribal warriors.

This question concern one undecided problem of Hungarian history: why are toponyms formed from the name of the seven Hungarian landtaking tribes (*Megyer*, *Jenő*, *Kér*, *Keszi*, *Nyék*, *Tarján* and *Kürt-Gyarmat*, the last one obviously organized of two components) to be found all over the Carpathian Basin? The historians could not decide whether these tribal groups were settled widespread due to their military function by the frontiers or the fortresses, the centres of the counties; or was this a spontaneous, landtaking settlement when the ethnic unites were divided while their tribal names were still used; or common members of the tribes, still using their tribal names, tried to escape from the consequences of the new feudal order by settling outside of their original territories. Concerning the military duties of the Pechenegs, it is necessary to survey the possible connection between their and the Hungarian tribal settlements, because according to Á. Nagy (1969) the Pechenegs, especially the Tomaj kindred, were settled in the vicinity of Hungarian tribal warriors, as a kind of military entourage.

While there are no Hungarian tribal toponyms in Moson c., there are several of them in Győr and Sopron counties. (Pecheneg settlements are not necessarily in their close vicinity):

- *Kistarján* and *Újtarján* („Little T.” and „New T.”) under Pannonhalma, Győr c.,
- *Megyer* in the north of Győr c.,
- *Tarján*, *Gyarmat* and *Keszővölgy* („village of K.”) in the vicinity of villages Szerecseny, Tét and Kajár, Győr County,
- *Tarján* and *Nyék* next to v. Kál in the south of Sopron c.,
- *Kürtöskér*, *Nemeskér* and *Újkér* („Kér with a horn”, „Noble Kér”, „New Kér”) between villages Szemere and Lövő („archer”) in the south of Sopron c.,
- *Nyék* by the city of Sopron, close to Urkony,
- *Kér* by Pecsényéd, Sopron c.,
- *Kürtösmegyer* („Megyers with a horn”), and *Nemeskér* („Noble Kér”) and *Újkér* („New Kér”) are all close to the toponym Tomaj.

Because it is not known whether the settlement of these tribal groups was carried out as military personell at all and due to a royal order (not necessarily by a written decree), this correlation could not help to decide the period when the Pechenegs were settled here as guards. However, their military function is proved by the chronicles and the privileges of Árpás as well, which is not the case concerning the Hungarian tribal groups. Their settlements did not necessarily happen in the same time. It is noteworthy that in the time of the settlement the newly arrived Pechenegs were obviously treated as one ethnic unity. Urkony by Nyék and Tomaj by Megyer and Kér make the impression that they were settled in the lifetime of Urkony, son of Thonuzoba, i.e. at the beginning of the 11th century.

The Pechenegs were incorporated into this order and had to cooperate with the Hungarian guards, who were or were not settled there in tribal unites. The following circles can be identified:

1. In Moson c. there were Pecheneg settlements along the northwestern bank of the Fertő/Neusiedl Lake (Bensenyő, Pátfalu, Féltorony, Monóudvar, Barátfalu) close to *Királyudvar/Curia Regis* „Royal court” where Pechenegs owned land before 1203 (1990, 124). A string of documents<sup>17</sup> mention how these were given to the monastery of Heiligenkreuz, and the Pechenegs dislocated. In this vicinity the v. *Lajtakáta* (Káta by the river Lajta) was identified as a possible Pecheneg frontier guard settlement. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos called the Pecheneg fortifications for -κάτα, -γάτα in his book *De administrando imperio* (chapter 37th, cf. Robotka 2000, 395), cf. Chagatay *qatay* „earthen rampart” (Németh 1930, 33, FNESZ 1988, II, 9).<sup>18</sup> This ethymology makes it likely that it was a Pecheneg frontier guard settlement. In 1339, the king affirmed the ancient privileges of the Káta guards,

<sup>16</sup> In such cases, the first toponym is Hungarian, the second one is the foreign (German or Latin) variant.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the diploma issued by King Imre of Hungary in 1203, where he gives a land previously owned by the Pechenegs to the monastery of Heiligenkreuz (Weis I, 38, UB I, 40, Reg. Arp. n. 206 = 1203/1208: W. I, 97, Reg. Arp. n. 233, Weis I, 42, W. VI, 344, UB I, 59 and Weis I, 77, UB I, 129-30, Reg. Arp. n. 470, and Weis I, 50, UB I, 69, Reg. Arp. n. 332 and Weis I, 63, W. I, 183, UB I, 88, Reg. Arp. n. 385 and Weis I, 72, W. I, 261-62, UB I, 118-9, Reg. Arp. n. 458 and Weis I, 104, W. I, 109, UB I, 161, Reg. Arp. n. 615 and Weis I, 93, UB I, 169, Reg. Arp. n. 615 and Weis I, 132, W. II, 271, UB I, 251, Reg. Arp. n. 1093 and Weis I, 214, UB II, 113, Reg. Arp. n. 2882 and Weis I, 116, UB II, 119).

<sup>18</sup> Vörös (2002, 627-628) has questioned this ethymology without offering an alternative.

denying the count of Moson any right in inhibiting their privileges, and demanding only that they must do service on swift horses with good weapons. The road leading to Káta is mentioned in 1209 as a border road (Györffy 1998, IV, 152). These guards defended the main road from Győr to Vienna through the bridge of the Lajta river, called *Király hidja* „the king’s bridge” in the Middle Ages (now Bruck a.d.Leitha, Austria). Toponyms like Tétény, named after one of the landtaking chiefs in 895/6, the royal court and the king’s bridge witness to the continuity of the defence system from the beginning of the Hungarian rule through the Arpadian kings until even to the 20th century, this being one of the most important ports through the „iron curtain”.

2. West of the Fertő/Neusiedl Lake, there were v. Örpordány (1395: *Ewrpordan* „Pordány of the guards”<sup>19</sup>) and v. Pecsényéd/Pötsching, both Sopron c., close to the river Lajta, which made the frontier (Györffy 1990, 126). Between the v. *Röjtökör* „the guards in ambush” and Pecsényéd is the placename *Feldvár* „earthen fortification”. There is a further earthen fortification system called *Magyarárok* „Hungarian ditch” in its vicinity (Kiss-Tóth 1987, 129). Towards the town Sopron there is the toponym *Lóvér* „archer”. Behind this line there is the toponym *Gyula*, a well-known name in the Kán kindred, which descended from chief Tétény.

3. The original home of the Pecheneg Oslí kindred must have been the v. *Oslí*, east of the lake, close to *Kapuvár* „the fortress of the port”. In the 13th century they owned land along the road from the river Lajta to Győr, in the close vicinity of places like *Röjtök(muzsaj)* „ambush”, *Egyházasurkony*, *Urkony*, the village *Kapi* „port”. The toponym *Tétény* by the v. Vitnyéd witnesses to a place owned or governed by this landtaking chief. Before the road reached Győr, there were Árpás, the privileged settlement of Pecheneg guards.

This survey shows a well-established defence system along the river Lajta from the royal bridge in Moson to the southern part of Sopron c. These two parts of the frontier were backed up by settled guards along two roads, which went from Győr respectively on the northern (Moson) and the southern (Sopron) side of the lake. Beside the extensive marshes along the lake and the Rába, Marcal and other rivers there were man-made military installations, defending the country, attested also by toponyms: ditches, earthen fortifications, wading places called „port” guarded occasionally also by a fortress (e.g. Kapuvár). Toponyms attest here to the military forces as well, like guards, guards waiting in ambush and archers. It is noteworthy that from the first generation of the landtaking leaders chief Tétény occurs here twice and later his descendant, Gyula.

The Pecheneg frontier guards were already in place along the Western frontiers by the time the German Emperor Henry III attacked Hungary in 1051. A mixed army of Hungarians and Pechenegs met the emperor, attacking him every night with poisoned arrows and with traps and at the end defeated his army (SRH. I: 348-49).

## II. Royal entourage?

Earlier the question was raised whether Thonuzoba really was the father-in-law of Taksony, and in such capacity belonged to the retinue of the Árpadian Dynasty. Recently I tried to answer this question by elaborating a survey of Pecheneg toponyms in the vicinity of those called after early Hungarian princes (Tatár, 2013, 456-464), therefore only some toponyms and their connections will be mentioned here. Obviously there are three chronological horizons to be dealt with:

1. *Between the landtaking in 895-6 and the reign of St. Stephen*: A marshland by Kapuvár, Sopron c. is called after chief Tétény, one of the seven leaders of the landtaking.<sup>20</sup> According to the chronicles, *Kál* (in some sources also called *Bogát*), who held the title *karcha/horka/harka* „supreme judge”, was his descendant and presumably the chief of the Turkic and Iranian, so-called Kabar/Kavar groups who joined the Hungarians when they left westwards from the Pontic steppes. This title occurs in the name of the v. *Harka* by Sopron. The title was held by *Bulcsú* (+955), descendant of Kál, during the reign of *Fajsz/Falicsi*. Fajsz was the cousin and predecessor of Taksony.<sup>21</sup> The ownership of Kál and his family is attested by toponyms in the northernmost part of Vas c. by villages like *Sajtoskál*, *Bulcsú* and *Tompaládony* (after Lád, Bulcsú’s kindred). Harka and the villages in Vas c. is connected by the ancient Roman road<sup>22</sup>, so their function as responsible leaders along the western frontier is obvious. Even more so because groups which joined an Oriental state, were usually put to such military functions.<sup>23</sup> Bulcsú, the son of the horka Kál

<sup>19</sup> It occurred already in 1376 as the village of the royal guards (*spiculatores*, r.: *speculatores regis*), later Lajtapordány/ Prodersdorf Csánki III, 1897, 625.

<sup>20</sup> Another person, connected to the landtaking event was Szabolcs. One of his descendants was Csák, whose name occurs in the toponym Csáktelek, which exact localization is unknown. According to Anonymus, Szabolcs was the son of one of the seven tribal leaders, Előd, while according to the chronicles, he was himself a tribal leader during the landtaking and in any case the ancestor of the aristocratic Csák kindred. Csáktelek occurs in a diploma from 1326 together with other possessions belonging to a noble family of v. Vág in Sopron c. (HO V, 2004, 101-2, Csánki III, 1897, 603). However, their villages are very widespread in the county therefore their exact localization is impossible to determinate.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Moravcsik 1988, 49 and the chronicles.

<sup>22</sup> The Roman Empire conquered Transdanubia (i.e. Hungary west of the Danube) after 35 BC and held it until 433 when the Huns got this territory. By the end of the 5th century, the Roman and romanized population mostly disappeared from Pannonia, as it was called in Roman times. The Romans built here many cities (e.g. *Scarbantia* i.e. Sopron, *Ad Flexum*, i.e. Moson, *Arrabona* i.e. Győr), fortifications (e.g. *Mursella* close to Árpás) and excellent roads.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Göckenjan 1972.

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was a contemporary of Taksony, the head of the pagan Hungarian state in the 10 century<sup>24</sup>. Pecheneg place names do not occur together with Kál along the Roman road.

So the Pechenegs must have been settled in these surroundings later. Thonuzoba is not mentioned here as royal entourage or frontier guard. However, according to chapter 57, (SRH. I, 113-114), Zolta settled Pechenegs by the borders beyond the lake in Moson c. to defend the country from the Theutons, that is, Germans. Kordé has questioned the validity of this source: his argument rests on the fact that the Pechenegs had attacked the Hungarians in 895, causing the Hungarians to immigrate from their previous homeland in Etelköz (today Ukraine), and into present-day Hungary, thus the animosity of the two peoples would be great in the first half of the 10th century, and since Zolta was the son of the Landtaking Chief Árpád, his period would be too early to assume friendship between the two peoples. Kordé believes that Anonymus took the name Zolta from a known chief of the Pechenegs, who lived in Moson c. in the 11th c. (Györffy 1990, 110, and Kordé 1990, 3-20). However, Kordé accepts Anonymus' information that Thonuzoba came in the reign of Taksony, son of Zolta. That Thonuzoba should be welcomed by the Hungarian chief, makes sense if this chief was related or connected to the Pecheneg (by Anonymus „Cumanian”) princess, the wife of his son. These two data support each other, and they indicate that the Hungarians managed to negotiate a peace treaty of some sorts with the Pechenegs who had earlier defeated them, and the Pecheneg bride sealed this treaty. According to Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos (writing about 950, during the reign of Taksony, whom he mentions), the Hungarians could not be persuaded to fight against the Pechenegs, saying that they could not defeat them (chapt. 3). This statement is repeated in chapt. 8, where the emperor describes how one of his envoys did try to persuade the Hungarians to attack the Pechenegs. This information indicates a Hungarian-Pecheneg peace treaty as well. It is not illogical to assume that Pecheneg envoys and tribal members came as entourage with the wife of Taksony, during the reign of Zolta. So it is possible that Zolta settled Pecheneg frontier guards beyond the lake in Moson County. Kordé's proposal that Anonymus conflated two historical persons is not acceptable because Anonymus writes about chief Zolta in several passages, identifies him as the son of Árpád, and creates a distinct portrayal of him in many passages, some which have nothing to do with the Pechenegs. It is impossible to prove beyond doubt that the settlements known as Pecheneg in Moson c. in later Latin documents are the exact same settlements created by Zolta, but their location fits the description. All in all, Anonymus' statement on the issue of Pechenegs in Moson is within the range of possibility.

In any case, the Pecheneg presence in this period is undoubted.

2. The reign of the first Christian king, St. Stephen (between 1000 and 1038) represented both continuity of the Hungarian rule and a Christian - European renewal. From this period at least two toponyms based on the names of the king's relatives are to be found in Sopron c. There are two villages called *Bogyoszló*<sup>25</sup>, the grand-grandson of Taksony and the cousin of the king (Kristó – Makk - Szegfü 1973, 51): one below Sopronkeresztúr, the other above Magyarkeresztúr, i.e. along the same west-eastern route, as Tétény, mentioned above. Furthermore there is a toponym Gyula by Lépesfalva (Loibersdorf) by Sopron. Several persons were called by these name among the descendants of Tétény, a.o. king St. Stephen's maternal grand-father and the governor of Transylvania (according to Anonymus chapt. 24), and several others in the *Kán* kindred, according to written documents (Karácsonyi 1900/1995, 735-44).

The counties were organized by St. Stephen based on royal possessory rights and the existing fortresses as centres.<sup>26</sup> They were often called after their first leader (Latin *comes*, i.e. Hung. *ispán*)<sup>27</sup>, as e.g. Sopron, or after some geographic characteristics, like Moson after the marshlands. Toponyms after important persons as Kál must have existed here before *Sopron*, got this name after the Christian comes, *Sophronius*. Still this surroundings west of the Fertő lake and its marshes, in a safe distance from the German border was an important centre, where the Pechenegs not as a retinue but as guards got their function and places to settle, perhaps at the end of the 10th century, in any case before 1051, when they defended the country against the German emperor together with the Hungarian forces.

Recent Pechenegs immigrants are not mentioned here in this period of martial contacts with the Pechenegs again on the eastern frontier of the country. According to the greater legend of the holy king St. Stephen (written around 1080), the Pechenegs attacked Transylvania sometime between 1014-1017, but were repelled by the strengthened fortifications (SRH II, 389). However, Pecheneg fractions continued to spill into Hungary in the 11th century, as a result of having been pushed by the Oguz Turks, who in turn were pushed by the Cumans. The minor legend of St Stephen (written after 1083) tells how 60 rich Pecheneg aristocrats and their men migrated from Bulgaria into Hungary, but were robbed by the king's soldiers whereupon the king had the robbers hanged to give justice to the Pechenegs (SRH II, 398-399). King St Stephen died in 1038. Györffy supposes that there must have been more Pecheneg campaigns into Hungary, because the Chronicon Picton writes that Hungarian princes *Endre* and *Levente*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos, Moravcsik 1988, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Bogyoszló comes from the South Slavic name Budislav/Budzislav (Kiss 1988, I: 229). There were other persons by this name in Hungary as well (listed in Fehértői 2004, 156).

<sup>26</sup> About the debat around the methods used during this process cf. Kristó 1988, 21-99.

<sup>27</sup> The *ispán* (comes in Latin) was the highest dignitary in the medieval Hungarian counties, appointed by the king. He resided in the county fortress, and was both judge of the peoples living on the territory of the county, administrative head to the whole county, and military leader of the county forces.

sought refuge among the „Cumanians”<sup>28</sup> after 1031, and at that time, they found Hungarian prisoners of war among them (SRH I, 336 and Györffy 1990, 112).

In any case, in the second half of the 11th century, the Pechenegs as military personell in these three counties participated in the internal wars between the Árpáadian throne pretenders.

3. The Pecheneg immigration continued during the 11-12th centuries. In 1048, the Pechenegs overflowed Byzantium in greater numbers, partly due to a civil war between *Tirák* and *Kegen*, two Pecheneg chiefs (Györffy 1990, 104). On the eastern border, after some peaceful years, the kings and princes, especially St. László I had to face their attacks, which resulted in more settlements. According to the chronicles, Jan, comes (ispán) of Sopron also captured a band of marauding Pechenegs in Byzantine service when these came to the rescue of Nándorfehérvár (today's Beograd), while the castle was under siege by the Hungarian king in 1071 (SRH. I: 369-71). It may be presumed that these Pechenegs were settled by him, probably in Sopron county, since it was normal Hungarian practice to turn war prisoners into auxiliary peoples.

### Conclusions

The Pechenegs, this Oriental, Turkic speaking people was settled partly as peasants and partly as frontier guards along the Northwestern border of Hungary. It is impossible to say how much their original way of life differed from that of the Hungarians at that time, both peoples being originally a mixed nomadic-seminomadic-agrar population, possibly to different degrees.

The Pechenegs occurred in Moson and along the main road to the wading place on the river Lajta probably not during the first (Tétény) but only in the second (Zolta) generation after the Hungarian conquest. Here, the royal authorities organized the defence (e.g. Királyhida), still keeping the Pecheneg guards by the border, while on the eastern shore of the Fertő lake, their places came into the possession of the church.

Along the other main road which still goes from Győr by the southern shore of the Fertő lake and westwards, one of the landtaking chiefs, Tétény is the oldest authority who is attested by toponyms. However, later, during the third (Taksony) or even the fourth (Géza and St. Stephen) generation i.e. in the second half of the 10th century - 11. century, Pechenegs were settled along the road (Urkund/Urkony and Oslí). South of this road, by the border of Sopron c. is found the name of the kindred Tomaj, which indicates a connection to Urkund/Urkony.

Between Sopron and Szombathely, the centre of Vas c. longer south, the defence of the frontier was probably the responsibility of Kál, the supreme judge at the beginning. From the second half of the 10th century, his descendant, Bulcsú was mostly based in Vas c.

Although the Pechenegs were at first the typical free mounted archers of the *gyepű* and *gyepűelve* system, they became obviously successfully inculturated and later assimilated in the Hungarian defence system, usually as military personell. Archeologist did not determine the time when the earthen fortifications, ditches and even perhaps the fortresses were built here. Some of them could have been used by the Pechenegs (Káta). In any case, Hungarians re-used Roman buildings for various purposes including defence e.g. in Sopron, probably from the very beginning.<sup>29</sup>

Their ethnic history is not ended in the middle ages: by visiting these villages I found groups who are called Pechenegs by their neighbours even today, without knowing what that name means. This tradition might have survived thanks to a strong ethnic consciousness helped by a military organized past. As far as I know, this is the one of the very few regions where the ethnicity of this people of Asian origin is still remembered and as such a precious contribution to human history. I plan to write more extensively on Pecheneg traditions in this region in the future.

<sup>28</sup> When assessing the information about “Cumanians” in today's Ukraine in the 11th century, then the same principle applies as mentioned above. Since the Cumanians did not appear in Europe before the 12th century, these „Cumanians” must have been Pechenegs, who inhabited that land before it was conquered by the actual Cumanians. There are many examples of 13th century ethnonyms which the author of the *Gesta Hungarorum* (Anonymus, magister P.) used to describe conditions before his own time.

<sup>29</sup> In any case the classic *gyepű* and *gyepűelve* which existed in the 10-11th centuries, was replaced by new fortifications in the 13th century (Kristó – Makk – Szegfű 1973). Although the Roman ruins were not always used as they were originally intended: In the case of Visegrád-Sibrik Hill the Hungarians took a Roman fortress into use as a fortification for the ispán. But in Rójtökmuzsaj, they only found a Roman villa on Zsebedomb, which they used as a burial place in the 10th century. Some of the people buried here were probably border guards based on finds of quivers with arrows in some of the graves. In other words, the villa rustica was no longer used for its original purpose (verbal communication from archaeologist János Gömöri).



### Abbreviations

c = county v = village

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