




SEALS OF THE KHOTYN COUNTY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD. HISTORICAL AND SPHRAGISTIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract. *In the article, the authors have made a detailed sphragistic and historical analysis of the matrix seals that were found on the territories of the former Khotyn County (Northern Bessarabia). Most of them are made of bronze and belong to the interwar period when the region was part of the Kingdom of Romania.*

The material under consideration has a significant factual and illustrative potential, especially in museum work. It testifies that the interwar activities of many organizations and institutions in the Khotyn County remain insufficiently studied or have not become the object of scientific research at all, which poses the issue in a new light.

Keywords: *Khotyn County, Hotin, Kingdom of Romania, interwar, sphragistics, matrix seals, organizations, institutions.*

Rezumat: Sigilii din județul Hotin în perioada interbelică: analiză istorică și sfragistică. *Autorii oferă o analiză sfragistică și istorică detaliată a unor matrice de sigilii găsite pe teritoriul fostului județ Hotin din Basarabia de Nord. Majoritatea acestora sunt confecționate din bronz și datează din perioada interbelică, atunci când județul făcea parte din Regatul României. Materialul descris are un potențial factual și ilustrativ semnificativ, în special în domeniul muzeografic, ce denotă faptul că activitățile multor organizații și instituții din județul Hotin al perioadei interbelice rămân insuficient studiate sau nu au constituit, în general, un subiect independent de cercetare științifică, ceea ce actualizează problematica precizată.*

INTRODUCTION

The Khotyn (in Romanian: Hotin) area is a historical region between the Middle Dniester and the Prut River, which is also often identified with the northern part of Bessarabia. It started to form in the Middle Ages and crystallized completely in the Modern Period and, in terms of present-day territorial-administrative division, it covers the Dnistrovskyyi *raion* (district), part of the Chernivtsi *raion* (both in the Chernivtsi *oblast* (region) of Ukraine), as well as the northern border lands of the Republic of Moldova.

A special layer of historical information about the past of the Khotyn area contains sphragistic relics. Born in the 18th century, sphragistics is a special (auxiliary) historical discipline that studies seals and their prints on various materials. Matrices were special stamps of various shapes and sizes, as well as hems, rings-seals, scarabs, among others. Besides the traditional, most well-known and widespread prints now in the field of sphragistics, there are also ceramic marks, stamps on metal products, bulls, and lead seals.¹ All this variety is united by a common functional purpose – to confirm something, to certify: the person, authority, documents, quality, place and time of output manufacturing, etc. At the junction of sphragistics and heraldry, epigraphy, numismatics, prosopography, and genealogy, unknown and little-known facts of history, individual figures, clans, and institutions of power often appear.

In recent years, the interest in the Khotyn area's sphragistic relics has intensified among scientists. Thus, a considerable layer of sphragistic material is significant among the archaeological ancientry of the region, dating since the Antiquity to the Modern Period. Particular attention was given to the identification of the round lead seal-matrix of Bogdan I the Founder (1359–1365), the voivode of the Principality of Moldavia, and the mid-fourteenth century hanging trade seals of the Flemish city of Tournai, which were discovered on the hillfort of Teiul Verde to the west of Khotyn.² Western European textile seals of the 16th and 17th centuries have

¹ Vitaliy Havrylenko, *Shliakh do sfrahistyky* [The Way to Sphragistics], Kyiv-Lviv, 2014, 328 p.

² Liubomyr Mykhailyna, Oleh Odnorozhenko, Serhii Pyvovarov, *Pechatka voievody Bohdana. Sfrahistychni znakhidky z horodyshcha XIV st. v s. Zelena Lypa ta yikh znachennia dlia vyvchennia istorii formuvannia derzhavnoi heraldyky Moldavskoho hospodarstva* [The Seal of Voivode Bohdan. Sphragistic Findings from the Settlement of the 14th Century in the Village of Zelena Lypa and Their Significance for Studying the History of Formation of the State Heraldry of the Moldavian Principality], in "Sfrahistychnyi shchorichnyk" [Sphragistic Yearbook], Vol. IV, 2013, pp. 119-142; Maksym Mordovin, Ihor Prokhnenko, *Tovarna tekstylna plomba mista Turne z okolyts*

been identified in the Noua Suliță area: Zwickau, Zgorzelec, Grünberg, Poznań, and Gdańsk.³ A bronze personal seal with an arabographic inscription of the 17th century from the Kelmentsi area, where Khotyn is mentioned,⁴ seals of the Khotyn county *starosta* (elder) 1918⁵ and of the Council of Workers' Deputies of Khotyn of Bessarabian Governorate are also described.⁶

In addition to the above-mentioned findings, discovered either during archaeological research or accidentally, there are also a dozen new sphragistic relics of the 19th and 20th centuries that are related to the Khotyn area and still need to be studied and made available to the scientific community. Several dozen seals were collected on the initiative and assistance of Mykola Holovlov – Mayor of Khotyn (2014–2020) in order to open a specialized museum in the future. Seals were either collected from the local population or received from the Sheremetiev Museum in Kyiv. Most of the matrices known today relate to the interwar period when the region was part of Romania. This scientific research is aimed at describing and analysing them, as well as at defining their historical context. This sample, which is still relatively small, partly fills a chronological and spatial gap. As far as the territory of neighbouring Bukovina is concerned, imprints of the seals of rural communities at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries have long been collected.⁷

s. *Zelena Lypa* [Commodity Textile Seal of the City of Tournai from the Outskirts of the Village Zelena Lypa], in *Arkheolohiia Bukovyny: zdobutky ta perspektyvy* [Archaeology of Bukovina: Achievements and Prospects], Chernivtsi, Tekhnodruk, 2018, pp. 55-58.

³ Maksym Mordovin, Ihor Prokhnenko, *Zakhidnoievropeiski tekstylni plomby XVI-XVII st. z Novoselytskoho r-nu Chernivetskoï oblasti* [Western European Textile Seals of the 16th–17th Centuries from the Novoselytskyi District of the Chernivtsi Region], in *Arkheolohiia Bukovyny: zdobutky ta perspektyvy* [Archaeology of Bukovina: Achievements and Prospects], Chernivtsi, Tekhnodruk, 2020, p. 116-121.

⁴ Yuliia Mysko, Serhii Frantsuzov, *Turetska pechatka z Khotynshchyny (poperednie pov-idomlennia)* [The Turkish Seal from the Khotyn Area (Previous Message)], in “Novi doslidzhennia pamiatok kozatskoi doby v Ukraini” [New Research on the Monuments of the Cossack Era in Ukraine], 2015, Vol. 24, p. 568-570; Mykola Ilkiv, *Portatyvnyi soniachnyi hodynnyk iz Khotynskoi fortetsi: atrybutsiia, osoblyvosti vykorystannia, prostorovo-chasovyi kontekst* [A Portable Sundial from the Khotyn Fortress: Attribution, Usage Features, Space-Time Context], Chernivtsi, Tekhnodruk, 2019, p. 159-160.

⁵ Oleksandr Rusnak, Mykola Ilkiv, Mykola Holovlov, *New Seal of District Chief: to the Centenary of Ukrainian Authority in the Khotyn Region*, in “History Journal of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University”, 2018, No. 48, p. 38-49.

⁶ Oleksandr Rusnak, Mykola Ilkiv, Mykola Holovlov, *Pechatka rady robotnychykh deputativ m. Khotyn Bessarabskoi hubernii* [The Seal of the Council of the Khotyn City Workers Deputies of the Bessarabian Province], in *Arkheolohiia Bukovyny: zdobutky ta perspektyvy* [Archaeology of Bukovina: Achievements and Prospects], Chernivtsi, Tekhnodruk, 2020, p. 167-169.

⁷ Nicolai Grămadă, *Vechile peceti sătești Bucovinene 1783-1900* [The Old Bukovinian Vil-

Separate surveys have also been published, focusing on seals of the interwar period from neighbouring regions, for example: Galicia,⁸ Podillia,⁹ Transcarpathia,¹⁰ or the Odessa area.¹¹ At that time, these Ukrainian lands were part of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR. Although the method of processing sphragistic material has been carefully developed,¹² its systematization and introduction into scientific circulation is extremely limited. It is also worth noting that the majority of thematic publications are based almost exclusively on matrix prints, which limits research opportunities to some extent. Therefore, we believe that, in the future, the accumulation of a presentable database will make it possible to carry out a comparative analysis of this category of historical material, particularly within the framework of archival and museological studies.

THE SEAL OF THE RESTEA ATACI VILLAGE PARISH OF THE KHOTYN COUNTY

Round bronze seal. Cylindrical body, 3.8 cm in diameter and 0.5 cm in height; pyramidal core with rectangular base of 0.6×0.7 cm; overall height of the object: 2.3 cm; weight: 53.8 g. In the centre of the seal, there is a large coat of arms of the Kingdom of Romania. The shield with the crown is divided into quarters: the first shows an eagle (symbol of Wallachia), the second shows a bison head (symbol of Moldova), the third shows a lion (symbol of Oltenia), and the fourth shows dolphins (symbol of Dobrudja). Above the shield lies the coat of arms of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen ruling dynasty. Under the base of the

lage Seals 1783–1900], in “Codrul Cosminului”, Cernăuți, 1940, Vol. X, pp. 217-268.

⁸ Andrii Sova, *Z istorii pechatok tovarystv “Sich” Sniatynshchyny pershoi chverti XX stolittia* [From the History of the Seals of “Sich” Societies of Sniatyn Area in the First Quarter of the 20th Century], in “Sniatyn” [Sniatyn], 2016, Vol. 14, pp. 67-74.

⁹ A. B. Zadorozhniuk, *Podilski pechatky kintsia XVIII – seredyny XX st. (za materialamy sfracistychnoi koleksii Muzeiu Sheremetievkykh)* [Podillian Seals of the Late 18th–Mid 20th Cent. (Based on the Materials of the Sphragistic Collection of the Sheremetiev Museum)], Kyiv, 2010, 268 p.

¹⁰ H. I. Siartova, *Pechatky Zakarpatskoi kraiovoi orhanizatsii komunistychnoi partii Chekhoslovachchyny* [Seals of the Transcarpathian and Regional Organization of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia], in *Istorychni dzherela ta yikh vykorystannia* [Historical Sources and Their Use], Vol. II, 1966, pp. 247-255.

¹¹ I. S. Berezhnoi, *Pechatky revoliutsiinykh ustanov Odeshchyny* [Seals of the Revolutionary Institutions of Odessa Area], in *Istorychni dzherela ta yikh vykorystannia* [Historical Sources and Their Use], Vol. II, 1966, pp. 238-256.

¹² See for example: Dominika Pruszczyńska (Ed.), *Opracowanie materiałów sfracistycznych w archiwach* [Elaboration of Sphragistic Materials in Archives], Warszawa, Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2020, 220 p.

shield, the motto scroll displays an inscription in Latin: "NIHIL SINE DEO" (NOTHING WITHOUT GOD). On both sides, the shield is supported by lions. The whole lies under a purple mantle with fringe and ermine and is surmounted by a royal crown. The inscription in the circle: "PAROHIA RESTEA ATACI JUD. HOTIN 1918 ROMANIA" (PARISH RESTEA ATACI. COUNT. KHOTYN 1918 ROMANIA) (fig. 1.1). Thus, the dating of the seal falls during the reign of Ferdinand I of Romania (1914–1927), while the pattern of the coat of arms is characteristic of the period of his predecessor Carol I of Romania (1866–1914).¹³

The seal refers to the modern village of Dnistrivca of Kelmentsi area, known from written sources since the 18th century as Restev, Resteu, and Vârstova. To the north, at the crossing of the Dniester River, lay the settlement of Atachi. They were united into one settlement, Dnistrivca, in 1948. In 1981, the corner of the village Dnistrivca Atachi was flooded by the waters of the Dniester reservoir.

According to the census, at the beginning of the Romanian rule, 2078 people lived in the village of Restea Ataci. There were 532 households; there was a landlord's estate, a consumer cooperative "Riga", 16 water mills, 10 windmills, 3 oil mills, and 2 inns. There was a mixed elementary school, a gendarmerie station, a village post office, a telephone box, a village hall, and an Orthodox church. The materials of the first interwar Romanian census indicate that the ancient village church (which had already existed before the beginning of the 17th century) was destroyed in 1884 and, at the same time, a new wooden church of "The Protection of the Holy Virgin"¹⁴ was built at the expense of Konstantin Lishin¹⁵ (honorary citizen of Khotyn, General-Major). Obviously, it was this building that welcomed parishioners throughout the Romanian period.

Until 1925, Restea Ataci was part of Chelminețu (Kelmentsi) *volost* of the Lipcani *plasă*, of the Khotyn County.¹⁶ After the administrative reform, it be-

¹³ Constantin Moisil, *Stema României. Originea și evoluția ei istorică și heraldică* [Romania's Coat of Arms. Its Historical and Heraldic Origin and Evolution], in "Boabe de Grâu. Revista de cultură" [Wheat Grains. Culture Magazine], II, 1931, Nr. 2, p. 82-84.

¹⁴ *Dicționarul statistic al Basarabiei: intocmit pe baza recensământului populației din anul 1902, corectat prin datele actuale, statistice ale primăriilor și prin tabelele biurourilor de populație centralizate în 1922/1923* [Statistical Dictionary of Bessarabia: Compiled on the Basis of the 1902 Population Census, Corrected by Current Data, Mayoral Statistics, and by Tables of Population Bureaus Centralized in 1922/1923], Chișinău, Tip. societății anonime "Glassul țării", 1923, p. 336-337.

¹⁵ *Episcopia Hotinului. Date istorice și statistice: 1923-1925* [Episcopate of Khotyn. Historical and Statistical Data: 1923-1925], Chișinău, Tipografia Eparhială "Cartea Românească", 1925, p. 128.

¹⁶ *Împărțirea administrativă a teritoriilor alipite pe județe, plăși, voloste, notariate și comune* [Administrative Division of the Attached Territories by Counties, Plăși, Volosts,

longed to the *plasă* of Kelmentsi of the Khotyn County.¹⁷ Despite the fact that, as a part of Bessarabia, the Khotyn County had been subordinated to Chişinău since 1918 and that the pole of influence moved to Chernivtsi only in 1938, when, according to the Romanian constitution, Northern Bukovina and the Khotyn area were embodied into a single administrative-territorial unit – Ținutul (district) Suceava¹⁸ –, in religious matters, it changed its affiliation almost immediately.

As of 1922, the Khotyn area became part of the archdiocese of Chişinău and Khotyn, which included 1090 churches and chapels with 1104 priests, 20 monasteries with 882 monks and nuns.¹⁹ By the law of March 10, 1923, two new dioceses were established in Bessarabia: Khotyn (with a residence in Bălţi) and Cetatea Albă (with a residence in Ismail). The diocese of Khotyn covered parishes from Bălţi, Khotyn and Soroca Counties.²⁰ Also, in March 1923, Visarion Puiu became Bishop of Khotyn.²¹ In total, there were 6 deaneries in the diocese, which had 144 parishes and 163 churches.²²

However, on March 24, 1925, the Law for the Organization of the Romanian Orthodox Church proclaimed the Bessarabian Church a Metropolis with two dioceses: the Chişinău Archdiocese and the Cetatea Albă Diocese. The Khotyn diocese was subordinated to the Bukovina Metropolis with a residence in Cernăuţi. Such a change in governance raised the complaints of the Bessarabian clergy.²³

In the 1920s, the Restea Ataci parish was part of the 4th deanery, the arch-priest of which was Epifanie Bolboşenco (Briceni parish) and sub-priests were Vasile Jereghie (Noua Suliţă parish) and Vasile Nazarevici (Restea Ataci parish). Vasile Nazarevici also held the position of the deanery clergyman.²⁴ By the mid-1920s, the Restea Ataci parish had already covered 540 households. The same wooden church of “The Protection of the Holy Virgin” remained, above-mentioned Vasile Nazarevici (born on April 26, 1879) having been a prior of which since 1915 and Teodor Friptu (born March 22, 1897) a deacon since Feb-

Notaries and Communes], Bucureşti, Imprimeria Statului, 1921, p. 74.

¹⁷ *Enciclopedia României: Țara românească* [Encyclopedia of Romania: The Romanian Country], Bucureşti, 1938, Vol. 2, p. 217.

¹⁸ Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei* [The History of Bukovina], Bucureşti, Humanitas, 1991, p. 415.

¹⁹ Ştefan Ciobanu, *Basarabia: monografie* [Bessarabia: Monograph], Chişinău, Universitas, 1993, p. 301-302.

²⁰ Anatol Petrencu (Ed.), *O istorie a Basarabiei* [A History of Bessarabia], Chişinău, Serebia, 2015, p. 231.

²¹ *Episcopia Hotinului. Date istorice...*, p. 25.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

²³ Anatol Petrencu (Ed.), *O istorie...*, p. 231.

²⁴ *Episcopia Hotinului. Date istorice...*, p. 125.

ruary 1, 1923. Both had previously studied at a theological seminary.²⁵

THE SEAL OF THE KHOTYN GENDARME COMPANY

Round bronze seal. Low cylinder body, 3.02–3.08 cm in diameter and 1.03 cm in height; low rod with rectangular cross section (0.77×0.71 cm); total height of the object: 1.68 cm; weight: 38.5 g. The surface of the product is badly damaged but, in the centre of the seal field, a large coat of arms of the Kingdom of Romania can be seen (as in the previous case), and the engraved inscription in the circle reads: “ROMANIA * COMPANIA JANDARMI HOTIN *” (ROMANIA * COMPANY GENDARMERIE KHOTYN *) (fig. 1.2). Due to the state of preservation of the seal, it is premature to state whether the shield on the coat of arms has insets between the third and fourth quarters or not.

The gendarmerie is a special kind of state police, organized on military bases. In the Middle Ages, nobles who served in the Leibgarde of French kings were called gendarmes. In the 15th century, the word “gendarme” replaced the former term “knight” and extended to all well-armed riders, whether they were nobles or commoners. A corps of gendarmes was formed for the first time in France in 1791, to monitor the maintenance of order in the army and within the state. They were supposed to assist in the detention and escort of vagrants, prisoners, smugglers, as well as in recruitment. Whenever necessary, gendarmes provided armed assistance to local authorities in carrying out government orders. In the armies, there were special gendarmerie teams, which performed the duties of military police, and during combat they were on the battle lines to collect and send the wounded and to return those who were suitable for battle to service. Gradually, the name “gendarme” started to be used in other countries, displacing the former names of Zemsky huntsmen, Zemsky cavalryman, police hussars, police dragoons, etc. Thus, the gendarmerie became a special kind of state troops and cavalry police that featured military organization.²⁶

The Romanian gendarmerie was established on April 3, 1850, when prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica signed the Law for Reformation of Servants’ Corps into Gendarmes. This law established the legal status of the gendarmerie and set the principles of its organization and operation.²⁷

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁶ *Zhandarmy* [Gendarmes], in *Enciklopedicheskiy slovar’ Brokgauza i Efrona* [Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary], Sankt-Peterburg, Vol. XI (A), 1894, p. 717.

²⁷ *Jandarmeria Română. 161 ani de istorie. În slujba legii, ordinii și siguranței publice* [Romanian Gendarmerie. 161 Years of History. In the Service of Law, Order, and Pub-



Fig. 1. *The Seal of the Restea Ataci Village Parish of the Khotyn County (1) and the Seal of the Khotyn Gendarme Company (2).*

In the Khotyn area, Romanian gendarmes appeared after the establishment of the Romanian authorities, no earlier than the end of 1918, and remained in effect until 1940. The process of creation and deployment of the gendarmerie in the Khotyn County was regulated by royal decree No. 1198 of June 1, 1918, "The Law for the Organization of Rural Gendarmerie", according to which the structure of the Romanian Gendarmerie Corps (following the military model) included brigades, regiments, battalions, companies, platoons, sections, and gendarme stations.²⁸ Apparently, at that time the gendarmerie company was organized in Khotyn. After the creation of the 10th Chernivtsi Gendarme Regiment on November 15, 1920, among others, it included a company of gendarmes in Khotyn.²⁹

Taking into consideration the experience of European countries, on March 23, 1929, the Romanian Parliament adopted a new Law for the Organization of Rural Gendarmerie.³⁰ According to this and the Rural Gendarmerie Statute of July 20, 1929, the rural gendarmerie was defined as: "a military-organized corps, designed to oversee public safety in rural communities and fulfil other statutory responsibilities as subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, as well as local authorities in certain cases."³¹ Like the military, gendarmes were also controlled by the Ministry of War (later renamed the Ministry of National Security). This law also created a new organizational unit for gendarmerie management with headquarters in Bucharest – the General Inspectorate of Gendarmerie.³² The gendarme brigades and regiments were terminated, and the companies were renamed gendarme legions.³³ In November 1941, for example, Major Tr. Dragulescu was the commander of the Khotyn Gendarme Legion.³⁴ Therefore, the gendarmerie company in Khotyn had to be operational no later than 1929. Thus,

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁹ Vasile Bobocescu, *Momente din istoria Ministerului de Interne: 1821-1944* [Moments from the History of the Ministry of the Interior: 1821–1944], București, Editura Ministerului de Interne, Vol. I, 1996, pp. 144, 153.

³⁰ Ivan Toronchuk, *Rumunska zhandarmeriia na Bukovyni u mizhvoiennyi period (1918-1940 rr.)* [Romanian Gendarmerie in Bukovina in the Interwar Period (1918–1940)], in "Naukovyi visnyk Chernivetskoho universytetu" [Scientific Bulletin of Chernivtsi University], 2011, Vol. 578, p. 31.

³¹ Vasile Mihalache, Ioan Suciuc, *Din istoria legislației Jandarmeriei Române* [On the History of the Romanian Gendarmerie Legislation], București, Editura Societății Tempus, 1995, p. 353.

³² Anghel Andreescu, Neculai Munteanu, Octavian Burcin, Viorel Andronic, *Istoria jandarmeriei Române* [The History of the Romanian Gendarmerie], București, 2005, p. 52-53.

³³ Ivan Toronchuk, *Rumunska zhandarmeriia...*, p. 31.

³⁴ *Hotinskoe vosstanie (Sbornik dokumentov i materialov)* [The Khotyn Uprising (Collection of Documents and Materials)], Kishinev, Shtiintsa, 1976, p. 159.

the seal was used approximately between 1918 and 1929.

The materials of the Romanian census in Bessarabia show that, at the beginning of the interwar period, 59 gendarmes served in the rural part of the Khotyn County, one at a time in the following settlements: Balamutovca, Bălăsinesti, Bălkăuți, Bedragii Vechi, Briceni-Târg, Burlănești, Buzovița, Chelmineț (Chelmenți), Cipileuți, Clișcăuți, Cobâlceni, Colicăuți, Corjeuți, Cormani, Coteleu, Crestinești, Dăncăuți, Dinăuți, Dolineni, Drepcăuți, Edința, Hlina, Grămești (nowadays, Rzhavyntsi), Grimești, Groziniți, Grușovița, Hrinouți (nowadays, Grinăuți-Moldova), Ianouți (nowadays, Ivanivtsi), Larga, Lencouți, Lipcani-Târg, Lomacița, Lopatnic, Mămăliga, Mihalcovo, Nădărauți, Neporotovo, Nesfoia, Noua-Suliță-sat, Noua-Suliță-târg, Očnița, Pererâta, Rașcu, Rângaci, Româncăuți, Rușin, Săncăuți, Secureni-Târg, Seliște, Stălinești, Șebutiniți, Șirouți de Jos, Tărăsăuți, Trânca, Trebisăuți, Văscăuți, Vârstova, Zarojani, Zelena.³⁵

Gendarmerie units in the Khotyn area had to deal with the agents of “Zakordot” (short for Russian “foreign department”) – a deeply conspiratorial department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, similar in function to the intelligence and counterintelligence agencies.³⁶ “The Extract from the Report on the Work of the Foreign Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine in July–August 1921” states that, in the Khotyn County, “many raids were carried out on gendarme stations, *volost* administrations, on individual agents of Siguranța”, etc.³⁷ Romanian researchers confirm the attack on July 29, 1921, by a group of about 60 armed people, who fired on the stations of the Khotyn gendarmerie (one of them in Dăncăuți). In this fight, soldier Ion Șorodoc was killed. A similar case occurred on January 23–24, 1922, when the Gendarme Station in Dinăuți (also the Company of Khotyn Gendarmes) was attacked. Corporal Istrate Gheorghie died. In June 1922, the Bolsheviks who crossed the Dniester killed Lieutenant Filip Emilian – a commander of the platoon of gendarmes in Noua-Suliță (Company of Khotyn Gendarmes) – and, on September 22, 1922, the squad of L. Cojuharu defeated the Secureni Gendarmerie Station.³⁸

³⁵ *Dicționarul statistic...*, p. 360-365.

³⁶ “Zakordot” *v systemi spetssluzhb radianskoï Ukrainy: Zbirnyk dokumentiv* [‘Zakordot’ in the System of Special Services of Soviet Ukraine], Kyiv, NA SBU, 2000, p. 3-4; Liubov Shpakovskyi, *Romania in the Soviet Secret Policy of the Early 1920s*, in “Codrul Cosminului”, XXIV, 2018, No. 1, p. 214-218.

³⁷ “Zakordot” *v systemi...*, p. 146.

³⁸ *Narysy z istorii Pivnichnoi Bukovyny* [Essays on the History of Northern Bukovina], Kyiv, Naukova dumka, 1980, p. 180.

More often, however, the gendarmes dealt with the local population, helping fiscal authorities to collect taxes, and often used violence.³⁹ On several occasions, the Company of Khotyn Gendarmes was used by the Romanian government to suppress peasant revolts in the region. In particular, we have examples of 1929–1930 in the villages of Noua-Suliță (now Dnistrovskiyi district, Chernivtsi region), Neporotovo, and Rukhotin.⁴⁰

THE STAMP OF THE KHOTYN SIGURANȚA BRIGADE

Rectangular-trapezoidal bronze stamp. Matrix dimensions: 6.1×5.9 cm; thickness: 0.7–0.8 cm; weight: 163.1 g. Truncated-conic rod (0.8×0.8 cm); overall height: 3 cm. The upper narrow part of the stamp shows the middle coat of arms of the Kingdom of Romania, which differs from previous copies by the absence of a mantle with a royal crown. A quartered shield is placed above an eagle. Between the third and fourth quarters of the shield, a conical insert is visible, which was added to the coat of arms in 1922 after Transylvania joined Romania. The inscription over the coat of arms reads: “REGATUL ROMANIEI” (ROMANIAN KINGDOM); the inscription under the coat of arms: “MINISTERUL de INTERNE” (MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR) / DIRECȚIA POLIȚIEI și SIGURANȚEI 6^{le} (DIRECTORATE POLICE and SIGURANȚA 6th) / BRIGADA de SIGURANȚA (BRIGADE of SIGURANȚA) / HOTIN (KHOTYN) / N^o_ / 192_Luna_Ziua_ (192_Month_Day) (fig. 2.3).

Siguranța – secret political police service in the Kingdom of Romania, a special security service that operated in Romania during 1907–1940 (the beginnings of its creation date back to 1892). It originated after the peasant uprising in Romania in 1907, but the corresponding “Law for the Establishment of the Police Directorate and General Siguranța” was published on March 25, 1908.⁴¹

As Bessarabia entered Romania at the end of 1918, the Khotyn area⁴² also came under the jurisdiction of Siguranța. For Bessarabia, the Sub-inspectorate of General Siguranța (later transformed in the Inspectorate) started to operate in Chișinău. Its tasks were: to ensure internal order; to prevent and expose terrorist acts against Romanian military men, national movement leaders, and administration officials; to counteract the activities of hostile spies; and, above all, to

³⁹ *Hotinskoe vosstanie...*, pp. 58, 90-92.

⁴⁰ Oleksandr Dobrzhanskyi, Yurii Makar, Oleksandr Masan, *Khotynshchyna: Istorychnyi narys* [The Khotyn Area. Historical Essay], Chernivtsi, Molodyi bukovynets, 2002, p. 215.

⁴¹ Vasile Bobocescu, *Momente din...*, p. 84.

⁴² Ludmila Rotari, *Mișcarea subversivă din Basarabia în anii 1918-1924* [The Subversive Movement in Bessarabia in 1918–1924], București, 2004, p. 59.

destroy communist and irredentist propaganda that undermined the activities of the Romanian state.⁴³

The Sub-inspectorate of General Siguranța of Bessarabia (with its local crews and services) was subordinated to the Directorate of Police and General Siguranța in Bucharest (Ministry of the Interior) and the Internal Affairs Directorate of Bessarabia.⁴⁴ The organizer and the first head of Bessarabian Siguranța was Romulus P. Voinescu – the former head of Siguranța in Bucharest.⁴⁵ In 1919, this position was taken over by Dumitru Zahiu, in 1920, by Zaharia (Zinovie) Husărescu, and, between 1930 and 1940, it was held by Constantin Maimuca.⁴⁶

After new laws were adopted on June 22 and September 18, 1919, the structure of the Ministry of Interior was reorganized. In particular, the last decree divided it into central bodies (Technical Police Service, Control and Inspection Service, Directorate of Administration and Personnel, Directorate of Security Police) and external or territorial ones (Prefecture of the Capital-City Police, Regional Inspectorates of Police and Siguranța, County-Town Police Quaestorships (headquarters), Brigades or City Services of Siguranța and Police of Non-county Cities, Ports, Stations and Border Stations).⁴⁷ Accordingly, the subdivisions of Siguranța – brigades and services – were established in all counties of Bessarabia, including in Khotyn.⁴⁸ In January 1921, the Khotyn Brigade of Siguranța amounted to 14 employees under the leadership of Em. Catană.⁴⁹

At the end of 1928, the question of further reorganization of police bodies was raised. The Romanian government, led by Iuliu Maniu, aimed to reduce their expenses and, at the same time, make their work more efficient. In pursuit of this goal, before the reform, he had the number of civil servants reduced by minimizing required staff in the structure of Siguranța.⁵⁰ After the public debates on the reform of the Ministry of the Interior, the Government adopted “The Law for the Organization

⁴³ Vasile Bobocescu, *Momente...*, pp. 133, 151.

⁴⁴ Arhiva Națională a Republicii Moldova, Chișinău (ANRM) [National Archive of the Republic of Moldova, Chișinău], Fond 680, Inv. 1, File 2055, f. 23.

⁴⁵ Mihai Pelin, *Un veac de spionaj, contraspionaj și poliție politică: dicționar alfabetic* [A Century of Espionage, Counterintelligence, and Political Police: An Alphabetical Dictionary], București, 2003, p. 301-302.

⁴⁶ Pavel Moraru, *Organizarea și activitatea serviciilor de informații și siguranță românești din Basarabia în perioada anilor 1918-1944. Teză de doctor habilitat în istorie* [The Organization and Activity of the Romanian Intelligence and Security Services in Bessarabia During the Years 1918–1944. Doctoral Thesis in History], Chișinău, 2016, p. 62.

⁴⁷ Pavel Moraru, *Organizarea și activitatea...*, p. 62.

⁴⁸ ANRM, Fond 706, inv. 2, dosar 2, ff. 243, 245.

⁴⁹ ANRM, Fond 680, inv. 1, dosar 18, f. 129.

⁵⁰ ANRM, Fond 680, inv. 1, dosar 51, f. 3.

of the General State Police”, published in “Monitorul Oficial al României” on July 21, 1929 (Issue 159). Siguranța was united with other police structures.⁵¹ Thus, the stamp of the Khotyn Siguranța Brigade was used between 1922 and 1929.



Fig. 2. The Stamp of the Khotyn Siguranța Brigade (3) and the Seal of the Jewish Culture League (Kultur Lige) in Khotyn (4).

THE SEAL OF THE JEWISH CULTURE LEAGUE (KULTUR LIGE) IN KHOTYN

Round bronze seal. Straight cylinder body, 3.56 cm in diameter and 0.71–0.82 cm in height; elongated conical rod, octahedral in cross section (0.66×0.72 cm); overall height of the object: 2.56 cm; weight: 64.5 g. The protruding inscrip-

⁵¹ Pavel Moraru, *Organizarea și activitatea...*, p. 66.

tion in the circle: “LIGA CULTURALA EVREEASCA HOTIN ×” (LEAGUE CULTURE JEWISH KHOTYN); horizontal inscription of three lines in the centre (fig. 2.4).

Jewish Culture League is the common name for a number of cultural and social organizations, formed during the interwar period in Eastern Europe, as well as in some countries in Western Europe and America. In Romania, the first branches appeared during 1919–1920, mainly in Bessarabia and Bukovina. In Bessarabia, the Culture League was established in 1919 on the basis of the former International Jewish Labour Bund. It became the largest national-cultural Jewish society in the region.

Bund (General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia) was the Jewish socialist party in the Russian Empire, later in Poland and the USA. It was formed in 1897 at the illegal founding congress of Jewish social democratic groups in Vilnius. At the beginning of the 20th century, Bund was distinguished by its well-developed party structure. Bund Committees were operating within the major cities and there were primary centres in a number of cities and towns to ensure the operation of the lower levels of the party structure. Bund organizations had a rather extensive and well-established system of delivery for smuggling literature and weapons to Russia, as well as for transferring revolutionaries, which ran through Khotyn and Kamianets-Podilskyi, among others. In the local Jewish cemetery in the village of Stroești of the Khotyn County, Russian customs officers discovered a “pit” for the temporary storage of revolutionary literature, which was “run” by the cemetery guard. In Khotyn and Kamianets-Podilskyi, there were secret centres, which supplied revolutionaries with false documents to cross the border illegally.⁵²

It is not by accident that, when Bessarabia became part of Romania and Bund was reorganized into a Jewish Culture League, a whole network of the new structure emerged in Khotyn. The founder of the Khotyn Jewish League was Dr. Joseph Brickman, from Tighina, a former member of Bund, who participated in the formation of the League in Chișinău. In fact, he was a Soviet spy, member of the so-called Matius group. After its exposure he managed to escape to Ukraine, where he worked for the Kharkiv State Political Directorate (GPU), under the code name Tamin.

Like other Jewish societies, according to the statute, the Culture League was aimed at spreading the Hebrew language in all settlements where Jews

⁵² Aleksandr Bezarov, *K voprosu o meste i roli Bunda v processakh Pervoj russoj revolyucii* [On the Question of the Place and Role of Bund in the Processes of the First Russian Revolution], in “Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta. Istoriya” [Bulletin of Saint-Petersburg University. History], Sankt-Peterburg, 2018, Vol. 63, no. 4, p. 1086-1088.

lived, at developing Jewish culture, and offering mutual assistance in various matters. To achieve these goals, it was decided to open kindergartens, public schools, public universities, hospitals, etc. However, a lot of suggestions were not made. At the same time, the activities of Jewish societies contributed to the communization of Bessarabia. Each Jewish cultural organization was ruled by a committee headed by a president. The management committees consisted mainly of revolutionaries, usually former members of Bund. The basis of these organizations was Jewish youth, as well as representatives of other ethnic groups, dissatisfied with the situation in interwar Bessarabia. There were also many women among the members of Jewish societies and in some organizations entire families were active. In general, Jew-communists were important figures in the communist movement in the region and often worked to bring Bessarabia back to – at that time Soviet – Russia.

In each section of Jewish cultural organizations there was a library, the premises of which served as a meeting place for local members or a meeting place with Bolshevik couriers from behind the Dniester. According to the information of Siguranța, the holdings of the libraries mostly had communist literature from abroad: Lviv, Warsaw, Prague, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Riga, and even New York. Jewish cultural organizations in Bessarabia were connected with the international communist movement, supported by “Bolshevik bankers” in Europe and America. Under the guise of a national-cultural institution, the Jewish Culture League concealed subversive ideas, plans, and actions. Siguranța traced this in almost all the acts of terrorist and communist exposure that took place in Bessarabia over 9 years.⁵³

In 1922, in Chișinău, the United Bessarabian Federation of Culture League was established. The All-Romanian Culture League was founded in Bucharest in 1931. However, the organization was never very active there and, as before, genuine cultural work was carried out mainly in the provinces. In the late 1930s a series of anti-Semitic laws led to the banning of the Culture League in Romania.

THE SEAL OF NEDĂBĂUȚI VILLAGE HALL

Round bronze seal. The body of the seal is cylindrical. The rod is cylindrical. In the centre, there is a coat of arms in the form of a French shield with a stylized image of a castle with three towers. The spire of the middle tower is

⁵³ Viorica Nicolenco, *Extrema dreaptă în Basarabia (1923-1940)* [The Extreme Right in Bessarabia (1923–1940)], Chișinău, Civitas, 1999, p. 48-49.

crowned with a crescent, and the other two are crowned with flags or *bunchuks*. Above the castle, there are two crossed sabres and, above them, an equal-armed cross. The base of the shield under the castle is covered with horizontal strokes, which apparently symbolize the surface of water. The inscription above the coat of arms: “COM. RUCŞIN” (COM. RUCŞIN). Inscription in the circle: “PRIMARIA SAT. NEDABAUTI JUD. HOTIN * ROMANIA *” (HALL VILL. NEDĂBĂUȚI COUNT. KHOTYN * ROMANIA *) (fig. 3.5).

Until 1925, Nedăbăuți (Nedibăuți or Nedoboivtsi) administratively belonged to the Rucşin *volost* of the Khotyn County⁵⁴ and, after the reform, to Clișcăuți (Klishkivtsi) *plasă* of the Khotyn County.⁵⁵ Since the seal does not reflect the affiliation to the Rucşin *volost* but the commune (community), this gives grounds to assume that the seal was made and used after 1925.⁵⁶ Obviously, the coat of arms of the city of Khotyn as the administrative centre of the entire district is displayed on the shield, which had been used since the 19th century. If this opinion is correct, then the upper chronological limit of the artefact should be limited to 1930, when the new coat of arms of the city of Khotyn was approved.

According to the census, at the beginning of the Romanian rule, 4750 people lived in the village of Nedăbăuți. There were 530 households, a landlord’s house (destroyed), a village cooperative, 7 water mills, 4 windmills, and 2 inns. There was a mixed primary school, a village post office, a tax collection agency, a village hall, and an Orthodox church. The materials of the first Romanian inter-war census indicate that the village stone church “The Assumption of the Holy Virgin” was built in 1838 at the expense of General Ermolinski’s wife.⁵⁷ Apparently, this building received parishioners throughout the Romanian period.

According to the Bessarabian business catalogue of 1924–1925, in Nedăbăuți Simkha Feldman, Simon Sternberg and Simkha Satovski traded in groceries and snacks, and Fraico Goldenberg and Leiba Iacher kept inns. During 1918–1940, the village of Nedăbăuți was repeatedly mentioned in archival documents in the context of road repairs, the condition of which was one of the worst in the country,⁵⁸ and the emergence of bus routes.

⁵⁴ *Împărțirea administrativă...*, p. 74.

⁵⁵ *Enciclopedia României...*, p. 217.

⁵⁶ Oleksandr Rusnak, Mykola Holovlov, *Pечатка прымарии села Недобоивтси хромادی Рукшын Хотынскохо повиту* [The Seal of the Mayor’s Office of the Village of Nedoboivtsi, Rukshyn Community, Khotyn District], in *Arkheolohiia Bukovyny: zdotutky ta perspektyvy* [Archaeology of Bukovina: Achievements and Prospects], Chernivtsi, Tekhnodruk, 2019, p. 122-124.

⁵⁷ *Dicționarul statistic...*, p. 322-323.

⁵⁸ Oleksandr Dobrzhanskyi, Yurii Makar, Oleksandr Masan, *Khotynshchyna...*, p. 214.



Fig. 3. The Seal of the Nedăbăuți Village Hall (5) and the Seal of Notary S. Dobroselschi from Secureni of the Khotyn County (6).

For example, in the Khotyn County in the 1930s, the Khotyn–Clișcăuți–Cernăuți surfaced road⁵⁹ (via Nedăbăuți) was repaired. In 1938, the Khotyn prefecture allocated almost 0.5 million lei for the repair of Noua-Suliță–Nedăbăuți road.⁶⁰ In the Khotyn County, there were bus services on the following routes: Khotyn–Noua-Suliță (via Nedăbăuți and Cristinești), Khotyn–Cernăuți (via Nedăbăuți, Clișcăuți, Bocicăuți and Colincăuți).⁶¹

THE SEAL OF NOTARY S. DOBROSELSCHI FROM SECURENI OF THE KHOTYN COUNTY

Round bronze seal. Straight cylinder body, 3.49 cm in diameter and 0.99 cm in height; cylindrical-conical rod, 0.71 cm in diameter with horizontal opening at the top (0.37 cm in diameter); total height of the object: 2.54 cm; weight: 79.9 g. The small coat of arms of the Kingdom of Romania is schematically depicted in the centre of the seal field. That is, a crowned shield is represented with an eagle inside, which holds a cross in its beak. Above the eagle, there is a quartered shield without details. The engraved inscription in the circle reads: “ROMANIA BASARABIA” (ROMANIA BESSARABIA); in the circle outside: “NOTARUL PUBLIC S. DOBROSELSCHI SECURENI j. HOTIN +” (NOTARY PUBLIC S. DOBROSELSCHI SECURENI c. KHOTYN +) (fig. 3.6).

During the Romanian rule, there was an institution of public notaries in the Khotyn area. Notaries dealt with the certification of legal documents, official and private agreements, copies of documents, storage of documents, and securities. The materials of 9 notaries from the Khotyn County of the interwar period, including one from Secureni (Vasilescu Ștefan) have been kept in the repository of the State Archive of the Chernivtsi Region.⁶² This seal substantially supplements information about the notary corps of the region, since so far public notary S. Dobroselschi from Secureni has not been mentioned in specialized literature.

At the end of 1918, Khotyn and the whole of Bessarabia joined Romania, leading to further integration of the united provinces.⁶³ It was accompanied by

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Derzhavnyi arkhiv Chernivetskoi oblasti (DACHO) [State Archive of the Chernivtsi Region], Fund 19, Inv. 1, File 59, f. 4.

⁶¹ DACHO, Fund 26, Inv. 2, File 384, f. 7.

⁶² *Derzhavnyi arkhiv Chernivetskoi oblasti. Putivnyk. T. 1: Fondy doradianskoho periodu* [State Archive of the Chernivtsi Region. Guidebook. Vol. 1: Repository of the Pre-Soviet Period], Kyiv-Chernivtsi, 2006, p. 189-192.

⁶³ Ioan-Aurel Pop, Ioan Bolovan (Coords.) *Istoriya Rumynii* [History of Romania], Moskva, Ves Mir, 2005, p. 354; Anatol Petrencu (Ed.), *O istorie...*, p. 193.

legislative-institutional unification, a process that could not be carried out suddenly, but the Romanian authorities gradually tried to extend the legislation of the Romanian Old Kingdom into new territories.

Due to the previous organization of Bessarabia's legal system according to the Russian model, the Russian notary system was not abolished immediately, but it underwent certain changes: writing documents in Romanian and employing secretaries who spoke the language, taking an oath of allegiance to the Romanian state no later than 3 months after confirmation by notaries, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

An important source on the history of the Khotyn area (Northern Bessarabia) is represented by sphragistic relics, which have not yet been the subject of a separate scientific study. Despite the large number of prints on documents, until recently, the actual matrices were practically unknown. Many of the seals found today date back to the interwar period, when the region was part of Romania.

In particular, thanks to the research of local-lore experts, it was possible to identify and process: the seal of Restea Ataci Village Parish of the Khotyn County (1918), the seal of the Khotyn Gendarme Company (1918–1929), the stamp of the Khotyn Siguranța Brigade (1922–1929), the seal of the Jewish Culture League (Kultur Lige) in Khotyn (from 1919 on), the seal of the Nedăbăuți Village Hall (1925–1930), the seal of notary S. Dobroselschi from Secureni of the Khotyn County. The material under scrutiny has a significant factual and illustrative potential, especially in museum work. It testifies that the activities of many organizations and institutions in the Khotyn area in the interwar period remain insufficiently studied or have not become the object of scientific research at all.

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