

ANDRÁS W. KOVÁCS, *The Voivodes and Vice-voivodes of Transylvania as comites of Alba County (comitatus) in the Middle Ages*

**Abstract:** The present study discusses the specific organizational traits of the medieval Alba County (from the eleventh century up to 1541), one of the seven counties in the voivodate of Transylvania of that period. Alba County, organized by the Hungarian royalty, seems to have been the very first Transylvanian county and covered, in the beginning, almost the whole southern part of the province.

The administration of Alba County has specific traits, which can be related to the circumstances at the early organization of the county: 1. During the reign of the Arpadian kings, in most of the known cases, the *comes* of Alba County was the voivode of Transylvania, the royal official appointed at the head of the province. 2. From the beginning of the fourteenth and up to the fifteenth century the vice-voivode of Transylvania held the office of *comes* of Alba County, while the notary of the voivode, at least in some cases, received the title of *vice-comes* of the county. 3. Starting with the fifteenth and until the first decades of the sixteenth century the *comes* of Alba County was not the vice-voivode anymore, but the office was occupied by one or two of his deputies, who were usually called "*vice-comites*". 4. Even though the voivodeship/vice-voivodeship was related to the office of *comes* of Alba, the administrative structure of the *comitatus* Alba had all the characteristics of the other Transylvanian counties (there were two noble judges, elected from among the local nobility, and the *sedes iudicialia* discussed the cases of these latter).

**Keywords:** Medieval Transylvania, Voivodes and Vice-voivodes of Transylvania, Alba County, *comes*, *iudex nobilium*.