

# The Lower Mureș Valley, a Link between Central Europe and Transylvania in the Early Middle Ages (Archaeological Evidence)\*

Florin MĂRGINEAN\*\*

**Abstract:** *Archaeological discoveries made in the lower Mureș valley, a micro-region of the Carpathian Basin, revealed an intense habitation during the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus fulfilling the role of connecting corridor between the Transylvanian and Pannonian areas. These are the reasons that persuaded us to present some medieval realities, mainly based on archaeological evidence. From a chronological perspective, the present project only envisaged the period of the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the micro-region in question and this corridor too came under the authority of the Hungarian Kingdom. In order to indicate the importance of the Mureș corridor as transit area between Transylvania and the central European region, we will attempt to corroborate the few written sources with the results of archaeological researches. We shall also try to identify the impact of its transit role on the micro-region. One can certainly add to the transit of goods, mentioned in documents and attested by archaeological evidence, another element the ideological transit. This is connected to the promotion of Christianity according to both: the Byzantine and especially to the Western Rite, through the medieval monastic orders (Benedictines, Cistercians, and Paulinians) and later on, through an entire network of village or parish churches. The monastic orders attested in our area brought, besides the dogma of the Western Church, a series of technological innovations, with applications in agriculture, animal husbandry, hydro-ameliorations, and constructions. All these elements eventually created an ideological wave from the West and a material one from Transylvania.*

**Keywords:** *habitation, early Middle Ages, Lower Mureș Valley, Carpathian Basin.*

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\*\* Muzeul Județean Arad, George Enescu Square No. 1, Arad (finnlands@yahoo.com).