

Theses of the Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

The economic and social history of the Regéc estate during the term of Rákóczi possession (1646–1711)

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1. Background, Scope and Objective of the Thesis

The thesis focuses on the economic history of the Regéc manor in the 17th century. Our scope is limited to the ownership of the Rákóczi family, therefore we investigated the farming of the Abaúj county estates from 1646 to 1711. The topic itself is quite extensive, since the economy of the manor concerns not only the land and vineyards in the hands of the landlord, but also the serf economy, since the latter is the driving force and integral part thereof. The study of serf farming also entails a study of society. This shall will cover all these aspects, but will focus on the allodial management of the manor, and will therefore not go into detail on society and its changes.

Our choice of topic was motivated by two things. The author has been mapping the history of the Régec manor for many years. In the course of her work, she has studied the history of the castle and the associated parts of the estate, the most important details of which are included in this thesis. It was necessary to do this because it allows us to understand how and for what reasons the manor came into the hands of the Rákóczi family, and to understand the path that led to the development of the manor's outlay. In the course of her work about the history of the manor, the author came across the economic documents pertaining to Regéc from the early 17th century, which leads us to the second reason.

While the history of land ownership was not one of the most researched topics among historians, the gap was even greater when it came to the economy. Today, economic history is no longer one of the most popular fields of research, which is why we can only mention four authors that have specifically dealt with the Regéc manor.

The essay seeks to answer the question: what changes did the period between 1646 and 1711, when the Rákóczi family was in power, bring to the manor's economy? How did allodial farming develop in the 17th century, which sector played the leading role? How was the manor managed and how efficiently? Knowing that some manors had seen a boom in industrial activity by the end of the 17th century, was this also the case in Regéc? Did the Rákóczi family increase the number of their manors and what measures did their officials take to maintain the economy? Ultimately, can we talk about economic prosperity?

2. Outline of Sources and Methods Used

The first such work was written in the first decades of the 20th century, when research into economic history was booming, and historical works exploring the management of various

manors were being produced in large numbers. Edit Jármay also researched Regéc under the auspices of the Domanovszky School; subsequently, she published her summary work entitled 'The Farming at the Regéc Manor in the 18th Century' in 1930.

Jármay wanted to paint a comprehensive picture of the economic management of Regéc; she detailed the ranks of the estate's officers and their job functions, and how the management of the manorial allodiocracy was pursued in general. Her study covers most of the 18th century, the period when the manor was no longer in the hands of the Rákóczi family, but ruled by Lipót Trautsohn, Prince of Austria. It only touched data from the 17th century, covering only the years 1646 and 1697. The role of these data was comparative, not to depict the economy of the period. In her comparisons, Jármay lists the number of serfs, rural plots and the quantity of grain harvested. However, her data are flawed in many respects, as she has adopted the figures recorded by the urbaria in full, even though these sources contain many counting errors, just as we have encountered several in our research.

István Bakács examined the ownership of the estates and the fate of their archives. In his study, he details the development of the manor's archives during the Trautsohn family's ownership of the manor and the documents it contains, covering the entire 18th century. His work is less concerned with economic history, but, like Jármay, he also describes the system of management.

When mentioning the works detailing the Regéc manor, we cannot pass by the work of László Makkai. In his writings focusing on the economic study of the Rákóczi manors in Upper Hungary, he studied the Regéc manor several times. In his book "The economic documents of the estates of György Rákóczi I", written in 1958, which is still considered a basic work, he processed the surviving sources of both the Hungarian and Transylvanian estates. In the case of Regéc, this concerned only the census of 1646. Makkai also used economic data from Regéc from the 17th century in his other works, including a summary of 'Peasant and farm agricultural production in the 17th century', which includes a large amount of important data. Although his studies and books go into great detail about the economic performance of the various manors and the incomes of the serfs and peasants, drawing important conclusions that are still relevant for economic history studies, his work cannot be said to have covered the history of the Regéc manor over the entire 17th century. He is merely referring to selected data, from which it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the course of the Regéc economy.

For a very long time after Jármay's work, no one had scrutinized the estates under study in similar detail. Subsequently, Brigitta Czinger was the first to examine the 1646 urbarium. Although Makkai had already published and processed the data, Czinger tried to approach them

from a new direction, seeking the answer to the causes of the negative socio-economic changes that had taken place. In her research, she focused on the impact of the wars of György Rákóczi I., how they affected and influenced the life on the manor. However, Czinger did not go further in her research. Although she compared her results with those of other wine-producing regions, she did not discuss the changes that occurred in later periods. This could have provided him with additional information on how long the devastation caused by the armies of György Rákóczi I lasted and whether the Regéc estate was able to regenerate.

The fact that so few people have studied the economy of the Regéc manor in depth does not mean that the topic has completely disappeared from the collective memory of historians. Some of its data have been used in countless works by countless researchers, particularly in connection with the study of field towns. In his study on the society of the Highlands region, István Orosz has repeatedly referred to the *armalistae* living in the territory of the Regéc manor and the changes in their numbers. But János Varga or Ferenc Maksay also used data from the former Rákóczi estate. In short, there is no complete, comprehensive work on the 17th century economy of the manor. This gap has prompted the author of this dissertation to try to fill in this blank as much as possible, provide additional data to the known history of Regéc, and try to produce a more comprehensive study thereof.

In the process of gathering sources, we were confronted with the answer to the question that had evaded us before: why had no economic study of the 17th century been carried out until now? It is because very few sources from that period have survived. In practice, the only known data are from the 1640s to 1650s, and only a few sources relating to Regéc can be found up to 1680. Whatever material we do have is scattered across the various collections of the Hungarian National Archives. After the defeat of the Rákóczi War of Independence, the family's collection was taken over by the imperial troops, from where it was transferred to the Szepes Chamber and then to Bratislava. There they began to be sorted, which meant that they got rid of many documents that were no longer of any use. And of what use could be the decades-old economic records of manors, which had long since 'lost their meaning'? The Rákóczi material suffered further damage with the creation of the National Archives. Then, in 1784, it was transferred from Bratislava to Buda, where the remaining documents lost their previous organized nature. During the Second World War, the archives building was bombed, and the resulting fire was one of the worst to affect the Rákóczi family archives. The organisation of the remaining material began in the 1950s, with the Rákóczi War of Independence as the main theme, so only the material related to it was extracted from the various collections.

It was therefore necessary to go through several foundations in order to collect and process as much of the surviving material on Regéc as possible. A large part of the documents was kept in the Archivum Patakiense Rákócziano-Trautsonianum, marked E 197. As the material mainly consists of documents dating from the Trautsohn family's rule, what remains of the Rákóczi era is much less extensive and covers the end of the first decade of the 18th century. Similarly, economic data from these years can be found in the foundations entitled 'Economic documents', which form part of the records of the Rákóczi War of Independence, under the reference G 29. We also gathered documents from the years 1680–1690, most of which are part of the Szalay Collection (E 554). Our research has been greatly assisted by the availability of online urbaria and appraisals.

Being a Hungarian manor, there are very few sources from abroad that may be linked to Regéc. They are located in the archives of the city of Košice (Archív mesta Košice). The documents mostly testify to the sale or purchase of vineyards in Tállya by the citizens of Kassa. But the Schwarzenbachiana Collection also contains sources concerning forest leases and transport.

For the documents of the years 1640–1650 we had to visit the Hungarian National Archives again, where we found the economic documents of the years we were looking for in the archives of the Nádasdy family (E 185) and in various parts related to the Chamber (E 205, 210). However, no material from the period 1660–1680 was found. Only in the correspondence of the Rákóczi family were we able to find sources of an economic nature. Especially one of their officers, György Bendi, sent several informative letters on the subject of sowing, harvesting or flooding in a given year.

Our direction of research was influenced and led by two things. The author of this thesis has come across the name of Vilhelm Draheim several times during his research of the documents of the period and administration before the Kollonich-Klobusiczky era. Among these sources were economic ones – censuses, appraisals, receipts – and private ones, which had a strong political flavour, since they gave an insight into the internal struggles of the Szepes Chamber under Imre Thököly. As the material on Draheim's life and career had not yet been processed, the New National Excellence Programme gave us the opportunity to change this by looking at the career of a selected official for two cycles. The primary question for this inquiry was how and why the rapidly rising career of the Chamber's prefect ended with a prison sentence. Most of the sources relating to Vilhelm Draheim could be found in one place, namely the archives of the Thököly War of Independence and its foundations. A smaller number of documents concerned the foreign archives. As Draheim lived in Kassa (Košice), his private

papers were found in the archives of the City of Košice. The probate sources – wills and the distribution of property – were kept in the Slovak National Archives (Slovenský národný archív). Some of the results of the deep dive into the career of civil servants and administrators are presented in the chapter on civil servants and manorial administration. The reasons for their placement are twofold. On the one hand, Vilhelm Draheim himself was – albeit loosely – connected to the manor of Regéc, as he was the chamber prefect who examined certain documents and later dealt with the economic affairs of the confiscated Rákóczi estates, including Regéc. On the other hand, the in-depth study has also given us the opportunity to gain a broader insight into the administrative system of the manor and the people involved in it. Similar considerations have led to the inclusion of information on János Jantó and the Klobusiczky family. The life of Ferenc Klobusiczky, a member of the latter family, is also important because he had estates within the manor which contributed to the enrichment of the family.

However, it is not this, but the lack of resources for at least 20 years that has most influenced the direction of research. Our first aim was to look at the economy in its entirety, to see how it had changed over the last ten years. This question has not changed since then, but the lack of resources has made it necessary to reassess the way in which the analysis was to be carried out. A full survey of the allodial economy of the Regéc manor was not possible. Therefore, we focused our research on the initial and final state of the dynasty's property. The large number of surviving sources from the beginning and the end of the Rákóczi rule gave us the opportunity to compare the changes of these two periods, asking the question: can we speak of prosperity during this period from 1646 to 1711?

In order to provide as broad a picture as possible and to place the results in the economic history of the manor, we have extended our comparisons in two directions. On the one hand, we included documents dating back to the period of Miklós Eszterházy's ownership, which provided us with an adequate contrast. On the other hand, we have tried to extend our timeline to the first years of the Trautsohn estate. This way, we wanted to assess the impact of the War of Independence and the changes that came with the new owner in the 18th century. Furthermore, the "Esterházy and Trautsohn sources" provided a framework for our research. However, this framework is of no value without a further basis for comparison, a reference point which would enable us to place our manorial data in a national context. We have therefore tried to include the economic results of other manors in our survey of the various economic sectors. We included neighbouring Rákóczi manors as well as manors in Transdanubia. Thus,

some data of the manors of Tokaj, Szerencs, Ecsed, Murány, Szepes and Rohonc-Szalónak were included in the framework of the national reference.

3. New Scientific Outcomes of the Thesis

3. 1. How Did the Allodial Economy Develop?

The study of the allodial management of the manor was divided into several parts, the dominant principle being, of course, the economic sectors and units. Accordingly, the cultivation of vineyards, fields, meadows and forests were presented separately, as were the livestock and the manor centres that housed them.

Being a manor in the Highlands, the importance of vineyards is not surprising. A significant part of the surviving resources is related to this agricultural sector. An examination of the manor's documents shows that a well-established and complex system was set up in this connection, with different levels of activity and the system was developed. One of the major changes that can be detected by comparing the records from the beginning and the end of the century is the attempt to select allodial vineyards into a single category, which was made up of poorly productive areas and areas with poor/parched vines. However, this also had its own background. The idea behind this rationalisation of production was that vineyards in close proximity to each other were much easier to cultivate, whether it was a question of carrying out individual tasks or moving labour, and those in better condition could produce more with less effort. However, even before this idea was born, the Rákóczi family and the people who managed the production had the opposite idea: to include as many vineyards as possible in the allodial production. As a result, by 1680 the allodial vineyard has almost doubled in size compared to 1646. This period of the 17th century, however, coincided with a country-wide labour shortage, linked to the exodus of serfs, the depopulation caused by the wars and the mass planting of vines. The effects of this process were also reflected in the proliferation of allodial vineyards. Of the 45 vineyards (in 1680), 7 were completely bare and another 7 were uncultivated and overgrown. This picture certainly contributed to the above-mentioned rationalisation, the first step of which was to divide the poorly productive vineyards into vines, or to sell or rent them out, which also brought the estate double benefits. The previously unused land was generating income against – the main purpose of the measures, especially the division into vines – and the serfs were gaining vineyards, from which they were increasingly excluded by the mass arrival of the townspeople and nobles. Although these measures were already in

place, albeit very rarely, from the 1660s, the greatest change was brought about by the Szepes Chamber, which managed the vineyards from 1686. By 1691 the number of vineyards under allodial management had been drastically reduced. In other words, the larger scale of the aforementioned restructuring was planned more by the Szepes Chamber than by the Rákóczi family. The Chamber realised sooner that it was more profitable to lease or rent out the aforementioned plots. The system established at that time was continued by Ferenc Rákóczi II, who, after regaining his family estates, made no further changes. Only the joint management of the vineyards of Tállya and Szántó can be considered a more significant change.

The results of these measures could be measured in terms of yields. However, the conditional mode is not accidental. Agricultural production was influenced by a number of factors, and this was particularly true during the 17th century. Before going into more detail, we need to look at the yields over the period. There is an exponential increase until 1650, after which there is a stagnation and even a significant decline in that year. This phenomenon is not unique, but affects the whole region, which suggests that a larger-scale event must lie beneath. In general, wars affecting the region can be blamed for such a case, but it was not until 1655 that the armies of György Rákóczi II set off for Poland, affecting the manor. Thus, we can only blame the weather, which is supported by the letter of the Regéc provisor. This was not the last year in which the weather intervened. After the high yields of the 1680s, the gradual decline from 1689 onwards reached its lowest point in 1696, a period which coincides with the Little Ice Age. The first decades of the 18th century show even worse results, clearly a consequence of the struggle for freedom. There is one other important point to be made about crop yields. An examination of the sources shows that, in addition to the fall in the wine yields of the farms, the same and even greater decline was observed in the vineyards from 1650 onwards. In comparison, this is in no way to be identified with the proliferation of the wine-growing sector's size! The phenomenon is more likely to be linked to the vineyard depopulation.

In summary, there was an intention on the part of the Rákóczi family to change the way they cultivated grapes, but they used the less profitable method of keeping the poorly productive land. But even so we find higher yields at the beginning of our era. Why? We believe the factors mentioned above may lie beneath. That is, the Little Ice Age and the wars that went with it.

A similar centralisation can be observed in arable farming. However, unlike in the vineyards, no sharp line can be drawn to indicate the starting date of the change. What we can see is that between 1646 and 1712 there was a steady increase in the amount of land registered as arable land. The most significant change, however, is that the increase also took place in specific areas, creating ploughing centres along the course of the Szerencs stream. These centres

were Fony, Tállya-Rátka and Szántó. However, the data may be misleading, as the actual cultivated area was only a third of that recorded. Why were the available arable areas not used? One answer – apart from the fact that the geographical situation is, of course, a determining factor – lies in the profile of the estate. With the decline in the servant population, the remaining labour force was used more in the vineyards, albeit for low-skilled but mass work. On the other hand, there was no need to fully cultivate the land. There was no need to do so, as the evidence suggests that the primary purpose of maintaining allodial farms was not to participate in trade but to maintain the internal economy. The same is true for vine growing. Although we know that in the early 17th century there was a significant trade in wine, there is no trace of this in later documents, and the wines from the allodiums and vines were sold at the taverns for internal consumption, generating a significant profit. The products of arable crops were also intended for internal consumption – to pay and feed seasonal labourers, recruits and officials, etc. But if the land is under-utilised, and the labour force is scarce, why is the land growing? The phenomenon is precisely linked to depopulation. Abandoned land, formerly under serf cultivation, has been annexed to allodiums. The increase in arable land is therefore mainly an indicator of the decline in the population of the manor and of the fact that some of the serfs, seeing greater profit in vine-growing, have abandoned arable farming.

Like arable farming, livestock farming was a secondary activity in the economic organisation of the manor. The primary function of the livestock farms, which were set up in the lighthouse centres, was also to provide for the estate staff. There was no significant meat and dairy farming. Of all the animals kept in the farms, sheep were the largest in number; we may establish that sheep farming was the sector which received the most attention and took the leading role. However, if we look at the inventories of the period under focus, we do not see the most idyllic picture of the manor centres. Ruinous, dilapidated shafts, cellars, unusable farm buildings, the destruction of which was blamed on German troops in many places. Although the situation was not perfect, it cannot be said that the Regéc manor farming was underdeveloped. It had its faults, no doubt, but the system worked; and, despite these errors, it was able to provide for the manor, with the extensive staff of the manor being an indicator of the same.

3. 2. Was There Industrial Development?

In relation to industry, we can distinguish three sectors: the glass industry, the brewing of beer and liquor, and the population engaged in industrial activities on the estate.

The first manor of the Regéc estate was founded quite late, in 1698, upon the initiative of Ferenc Rákóczi II. The manor expanded further with the glassworks. On the one hand, the forests, which had been a largely unexploited source of power and money, were being used at last – they were extensive around Regéc. From this point of view, it is incomprehensible why such huts had not been set up on the estate's territory earlier. Especially as we know that on other Rákóczi estates two such establishments were operating at the same time. This issue is further compounded by the other benefit of the establishment of a glasshouse: the production of wine bottles. Although in most cases barrels were used to store and transport the wine, from the end of the century onwards, the so-called salted glass was also used for wine storage. The development of the glassworks in the Rákóczi period is not really known. It was influenced by its late foundation and then by the War of Independence, as a result of which the glassworks suffered damage. However, we do see signs of a revival of cultivation. This can be seen in the stone crushing mill built by bailiff István Szilvássy, which speeded up the process of glass production. Apart from this, the Regéc manor was at the same technical level as the Makovica plant, with three furnaces, a mill, houses for the workers, stables and a well-built irrigation system. The manor was responsible for the construction of the industrial complex. The burden of operating and creating any innovations, such as a table furnace and attracting more workers, was now borne by the tenant. The Regéc manor was run on a tenant system, following the customs of the time. As glass production required a high level of skill, the craftsmen and tenants came from abroad. The first tenant of the Regéc glassworks, Tamás Hutnik, was also of Polish origin, and he ran the glassworks until the end of the Rákóczi family's ownership, when the works came under squire in 1712. Our data contradict the statement of Jármay and László Veres, who claim that the industrial unit operated for years without a tenant. In fact, this lasted only for a year, and Polish craftsmen were working on the estate again from 1713. The lack of major development in our era was also influenced by poor tenant construction. In fact, the tenants were granted a licence for a period of only three years, after which they always had to apply for renewal. This tight timeframe hardly gave the master the chance to make enough profit to pay the workers and cover the improvements. This system was changed not in the period under our focus, but much later, in the first third of the 18th century, after which the lease contracts between the landlord and the master glassmaker were already several decades old. But was it worth it for the Rákóczi family to maintain the lease system? From the point of view of the products produced, clearly yes. Under the contract with Hutnik, the master was obliged to deliver a certain amount of glassware to the manor each year. The glass was therefore supplied without any particular expenditure. And that was not much at all. The accounts show that a lot

of glass was gathering dust in the cellars of Regéc. From a financial point of view, it was also worthwhile maintaining the lease. The rationale is the same: small expenditure – greater financial benefit.

As regards the brewery of the Regéc manor, sources clearly refute Jármay's statement that there was no such brewery on the estate in 1646. In reality, at the time of Menyhért Alaghy's tenure (1612–1631), the alcoholic beverage was already being brewed in the palisade under the castle. Since wine drinking was a tradition in the region, beer production and consumption did not rise to a dominant position. Nevertheless, beer was brewed and a brewing facility was maintained until 1686. However, when the castle was blown up, the brewery was destroyed as well, and attempts to restart production elsewhere in the manor were unsuccessful, with the brewery forced to remain closed until 1697. By this time, the new brewery had been completed, and beer was brewed in Tállya, and a few years later in Fony. Although initially beer was not so popular in the pubs, this changed at the end of the first decade of the 18th century, leading to a boom in the number of breweries. An examination of the censuses suggests that this was due to the effects of the War of Independence. Beer could be produced more quickly than wine, and was cheaper and could be sold in pubs, not to mention in general supplies. The breweries built at the end of the 17th century were already established under a new economic spirit. As with the glasshouse, their management was rented out to tenants, and the same could be said of the distilling and selling of liquor. Although the latter were generally rented by the municipalities, sometimes the exclusive rights – and thus wealth – in the municipality was acquired by a single person. The tenant system ended with the Rákóczi era in 1710, when the breweries were returned under the control of the squire. For 3 years, the brewmaster worked as an employee of the manor, after which Fábián Moskovitz leased the premises for 10 years, his contract including the exclusive right to brew beer and liquor. During the period of the Rákóczi family's ownership, they were unable to generate such a large income from brewing. While the new approach to leasing deserves credit, its potential remained untapped.

The number of craftsmen on the estate was not high either. Although their percentage in the population has increased, this is linked to the depopulation of the estate. In fact, the number of craftsmen has not changed significantly since the beginning of the century, ranging between 20 and 30 during the period under scrutiny. Once again, if only percentages are compared with data from other manors, it can be said that the figures for Regéc do not deviate from the national trend. In fact, however, this figure of between 20 and 30 percent is a low one. Most of the craftsmen working on the Regéc estates were employed as cobblers or, not surprisingly, as boddlers.

The products they delivered as tax were part of the economy of the manor, i.e. they were used to pay contracted employees (excluding, of course, barrels delivered by the *bodnars*). It was not only the work of the serf artisans that served economic self-sufficiency, but also, according to the accounts, that of the industrial plants mentioned above. There was no trade between them either. From a financial point of view, therefore, they were not of much use to the manor, but their purpose was not to provide for the manor's internal needs, which both the glassworks and the brewery achieved. Industrial development is therefore evident from the establishment of the factories alone and the new economic aspect – renting.

3. 3. How Effective Was the Management of the Estate?

When examining the economy of the manor, a key question is how efficiently the officers managed the manor and how much care they exercised to maintain the economy. When examining the management system, we were able to distinguish three periods, which followed the changes in the Rákóczi estate. The first phase, between 1646 and 1686, continued the estate management system of the previous period. This order did not deviate from the national trend, and even the changes in it can be detected in the same way in the Regéc manor. This is reflected in the change in the responsibilities of the castle commander and provisor, culminating in the extension of the latter's powers. The most significant change in the administrative system took place during the period of the chamber administration (1686–1694). At this time, not only the appointed administrator of the House of Rákóczi, Ferenc Klobusiczky, supervised the management of all the estates in Upper Hungary, but also the Szepes Chamber, which appointed a special auditor to control them. Although this system came to an end with the accession of the prince and the takeover of his family estates, a similar structure was set up with the establishment of the Economic Council. However, despite all these changes, one thing is clear: at the lower levels, or rather at the level of the manor, there was no change – apart from the abolition of the office of castle commander, which was connected with the castle being blown up – that continued to be governed by the court magistrate, assisted by the sheriff and magistrates at the level of the municipalities. The only possibility for fraud was the slowness with which the annual accounts were examined, as they were often submitted years after the fact. Despite this, however, personal fraud was not very frequent. It is true that the huge sums paid out to János Jantó under one pretext or another are very interesting. From the “upper levels”, i.e. from the magistrate and the prefect, the management of the manor seems to be adequate: we see that there are instructions addressed to the economic officers, with the aim of

improving it. But did they have any effect? This can no longer be said of the administration at the lower, local level. Officers were not the most careful in maintaining economic life. There are numerous records of meadows, ploughs and even vineyards being left to lay unused by not being cultivated, thereby damaging the allodial economy. Thus, the magistrates were not always able to fully impose their will, which in turn led to a lack of supervision by local officers, which also raises the question of the responsibility of magistrates and governors.

3. 4. What Social Changes can be Observed in the Focus Period?

An examination of the population shows that there is a clear break along the lines of the major wars. The armies of György Rákóczi I and the imperial troops brought about a decisive destruction of the population.

A decline in population means a decline in manpower – this is what characterises the whole 17th century. However true it may be that the vineyards offered the serfs and the free agents a way out of the slope of deep poverty, on the whole we may see with a serf society that is losing its strength, sinking further and deeper down. Their situation was made worse by the desertion of the land, by the exodus of the nobility to the countryside, with the nobles moving into the country towns and by the serfs being released as taxpayers. The increasing growth of the latter group also affected the livestock figures, especially in Tállya and Szántó. Servants who paid their serf duties were not fully surveyed in the urbaria. We only know the size of the sessio they cultivated, not the amount of plough animals they kept. There was no need to record this data, as they did not serve either on foot or with cattle. For the same reason, the number of vineyards recorded was also reduced. The vineyards of the serfs were not recorded. This is not to say that the number of vineyards cultivated by serfs did not decrease, since the nobles who moved in and the towns in the Highlands bought up more and more vines, but our data are somewhat distorted by the fact that the number of serfs paying taxes was not recorded.

The situation of the servant population, and the general population as a whole, is also reflected in changes in the farmland stock. The emergence of dwarf plotters, desertification, and living on a pittance only underline the above statements. The extent of the impoverishment affecting the serfs is demonstrated by the comparative figures with other estates. Particularly noteworthy is the ratio of livestock per household. Not only is this far below the national average, but we have not observed such a low number anywhere in our comparisons. Only the figures for Rohonc-Szalonak show some similarity, but even they were better than the Regéc figures.

Decline in population has triggered new processes. This had an impact on the tax and service system of the manor. The taxation of a settlement is also reflected in our case. It could be linked to the strengthening of the local municipality, but this is not always the case. Although the number of livestock per household was relatively high in Alsóvadász, the municipality experienced a high level of depopulation. The same is the case in the field towns we examined. Although there is undoubtedly capital in the settlement, the serfs are impoverished. This is the reason why they later abandoned the lump-sum tax, which weighed much heavier on this class. By the mid-1670s, Tállya itself was so short of money that the town council was forced to resort on several occasions to loans of considerable size.

The effect of the population change and the tax exemption of certain settlements on the service system was such that the remaining serfs had to bear a greater burden. Because of this, and against this, the serfs spoke out as soon as and as they could. They had two ways of doing this. Either they wrote to their lords a pleading letter, of which there are not many examples in our region, or they complained to the census takers, hoping that they could intervene in their case. This was the rarest situation. In the *urbarium*, when reading the servitude of the serfs, a phrase is constantly coming to mind that the serfs of other settlements were forced to work in order to improve living conditions of other serfs. But as we move forward in time, reading these documents, we see that it was not the serfs who were helping them that they had complained to before, but the serfs themselves who were trying to find a way out of their burdens. They did this by paying hired labourers to do the heavy work for them. Even this proved more bearable than toiling with cattle or on foot, and at least the serfs had more time to tend to their own farms.

The labour shortage also brought about changes in the allodial management of the manor. This is reflected in the increasing use of hired labour and seasonal workers. But the emergence of paid vineyard workers is not the only reason. It was not advisable to jeopardise the high income from vine-growing by using serfs as labourers. It was not because the serfs were unable to cultivate the vines professionally – since most of the serfs had vines of their own – that vines were ruined or in a bad state, but because they did not want to opt for this. And their negligence damaged many vineyards. It was more profitable to employ paid labourers.

3.5. Was There Economic Prosperity?

Unfortunately, we cannot state this unequivocally. A study of the manor's resources does not reflect a prosperous economic life. The Regéc estate had much better indicators in the short period of time under the rule of Miklós Eszterházy, and these data are characteristic of both the

farming and the society. And Edit Jármai's research shows that even during the reign of the Prince of Austria, who visited Regéc only once, the farming figures were far better. In this period, we can already see wine sales, the estate's industrial facilities were being developed, even beer tasting was booming, which of course cannot be separated from the German population who settled there. And this is another point in which the improved situation of the manor is reflected. Already in the 1714 urbarium, we see many newcomers who, judging by their names, were of German origin. The appearance of German newcomers was a novelty in the area. Up to that time, the names suggested settlers of Slovak or Polish origin. However, the German migration from 1714 onwards was not a spontaneous phenomenon. One of the measures taken by the Prince of Austria was to increase the population by settling Germans in the manor. These newcomers were first settled in the field towns and larger villages, and many of them engaged in some form of industry or trade.

In all these respects, can we say that Rákóczi's manorial management was bad? The answer is clearly no. It is true that there was no trade, and some indicators show a very volatile picture, but that was not the point of this economy: it was not expected to perform along these lines. Our sources only support the objective of self-sufficiency, and that is what the economy was run for. From this point of view, however, we have a system that is working properly, and there is even progress and aspiration in various areas. Centralisation in manor centres, arable land cultivation, vineyards, extensive manorial staff and developing sheep farming are just a few examples. However, the industrial establishments show this development most clearly.

Even in terms of financial management, we cannot call the Regéc management bad. Although the estate's reserves seem to be minimal (6%), they were sufficient for self-support and the economy was not in deficit. This, of course, required that part of the income be reinvested in farming, which was reflected in the estate's most profitable sector: wine-growing. Overall, the financial management system of the Regéc estates was a general one, with wine-growing accounting for the bulk of the income, and vines for the bulk of the expenditure.

Apparently, there was more potential in the manor than the Rákóczi family could exploit. Why didn't they achieve more? Our answer is that the manor was self-sufficient, and the primary aim was to maintain the economy, not to make a big profit. But why would a manor be only self-sufficient if it had much greater economic potential? The answer to this question, in turn, is based on external factors. For an economy to be truly prosperous, it needs calm economic conditions (both internal and external) and people to implement (build) and operate the improvements. The 17th century was not in favour of these objectives. Wars were raging practically all the time. The rebellions of György Rákóczi I, Wesselényi, then Imre Thököly,

the expulsion of the Turks, the uprising in the Highlands and then the War of Independence. This in turn naturally affected human resources. The destruction experienced in Regéc is not an isolated phenomenon, but a nationwide one.

Under these circumstances, the Rákóczi family made futile attempts to increase or maintain the population and to stimulate the economy, but they failed. In the absence of labour and peace time, development was impossible. And these are the real obstacles to any kind of farming system with higher results, which pushed the system towards self-sufficiency. In our opinion, the period between 1646–1711 can therefore be described as one of the most difficult in the history of Regéc. A period that is characterised by the ability to overcome difficulties, as well as attempts to change and make a fresh start.

3. 6. Where Can We Place the Regéc Estate among the Other Rákóczi Estates?

The value of the Regéc manor stemmed from its vineyards in the Highlands, and its strategic location. It was also for these reasons that György Rákóczi I wanted to own the estate, which would increase the number of his manors in Upper Hungary. It was undoubtedly not Regéc that brought the most wealth to the family, but estimates made during the century show the estates having highly valuable manors, the value of which even exceeded that of Sárospatak. It is not by chance that Tokaj was the leader in this field. Because of its location, the Regéc manor was in close contact with the estates of Sárospatak and Szerencs, and even with Makovica, which was located at a considerable distance. This relationship created economic cooperation. Before the Regéc manor was founded, the Zboró glassworks supplied the estate's needs. But from Makovica came not only glass, but also workers, who were hired to do harvesting work. There is no record of Regéc sending labourers in return, but we do know that produce was being supplied, mostly to Szerencs. The largest related expenditure relates to the visit of Ferenc Rákóczi II, who, although staying in Szerencs, was sent a lot of delicacies by the neighbouring estate. Sometimes they even gave money to the local bailiff, who did the same when money was needed in Regéc. The manor even made use of the meadows of Szerencs, where it grazed its allodial cows. The manor of Makovica, on the other hand, used Regéc for the seasonal rearing of its sheep. But similar exchanges and shipments were also made to Sárospatak, with wine and crops being supplied the most.

In other words, even if the Regéc manor was not the most profitable, it occupied an important place among the Rákóczi family's estates. It was a link in an economic chain based on the cooperation and economic assistance of neighbouring or closely situated estates.



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List of publications related to the dissertation

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