

Borough landed estate of Sušice. From borough villages to abolition of corvee and its results (abstract)

The aim of this doctoral thesis lies in its contribution to a complex problem of economic development of Czech landowning towns in the post-White Mountain period. The research is focused on a selected problem of town feudalisation, i. e. analysis of the importance as well as extent of their seignorial activities. Czech historiography has dealt with such a topic rather marginally, because towns used to be understood as a strange element in feudal environment, which on the contrary created conditions for social modernisation. Aristocratic (chamber) or church landed estates used to be studied as a matter of priority. Introductory chapter balances current research on the topic of borough landed estates. General survey of the research in Western Europe is presented first. Seignorial ambitions of towns are part and parcel of a vast outlined study of mutual relation between the town and the country. The topic has already been applicated in archaeology and medievistics. For the Early Modern period the research has been fragmented between agrarian and urban history, the methods of which approach the topic with various results (above all the work of Adolf Zeman about Pilsen and Rokycany in the 18th century).

Analytic part of the thesis consists of six chapters introducing the topic of the borough landed estate in three levels. Each of them is firstly outlined in general conditions (chapters 2, 4 and 6), then followed by the analysis of the situation based on a particular example (chapters 3, 5 and 7). The town of Sušice in South-West Bohemia, as a subject of the microstudy, is an example of an average town in terms of the extent of its landing estate as well as specifics of its development.

The first part of the research lies in the description of extent and importance of borough landing estates in feudal organisation of the Czech state as well as the definition of ways, how they came into existence. The author has come to a conclusion, that the situation is a consequence of transformation of borough villages, secularization of church land in the period of the Hussite revolution (hospital, monastic and parochial property) and by own purchase of allods. The process of creation of borough dominions was concentrated into the era between approx. 1450–1550, when towns used to dispose of the biggest political power and tried to approach the status of nobility not only in the question of property but also legally (the possibility of purchasing allods, promotions of burghers into the estate of nobility and the like). Towns used to reach their biggest territorial expansion, approaching even 25%, which is probably overestimated by some historians. The following period after 1547 to the White Mountain brought reconstruction of dominions, often lost as a consequence of sovereign's sanctions after the first Estates upheaval. Events after 1618–1620 meant another interruption of continual development. Confiscations did not reach the same extent as in 1547 and the situation deteriorated due to the Thirty Years' War. Following economic depression limited the possibilities of seignorial ambitions of Czech landowning towns up to the end of the 17th century. Bigger territorial transfers were in motion in the first half of the 18th century, because towns did not substantially change thier domains during the following period up to 1848.

The second topic of the analysis focuses on economic contribution of a landing estate to the town's management. Towns used to enlarge their land domains extensively with only minimal interest in central administration. Even under such circumstances these domains counted for important income motivating to further purchases (even in situations of financial stringency). Economic competition of aristocratic landing estates strengthened since the first half of the 16th century. Nobility started the establishment or improvement of their serf towns and supported effort of their inhabitants during beer production and the like. Towns began their building activities in the field of manufacturing operations with the aim of increasing income inspired by the economic behaviour of nobility. The first fish ponds were being built since the second half of the 15th century and systematic network of Maierhofs (poplužní dvory) was realized 100 years later. Seignorial breweries began their existence as the last. Towns themselves did not bring more substantial

innovation (some authors of economic treatises of town origin were only exceptions) and limited themselves to passive imitation of aristocratic models. The Thirty Years' War contributed to economic retardation. Towns as a part and parcel of the Royal chamber had to carry large amount of war expenses and often became refuge for soldiers during winter time and the like. In such situations town dominions served as reservoirs of kind (from serfs) and money (ideal subject of pledge). They were also limited by economic policy of the state, guild system and proceeding economic superiority of serf towns and aristocratic landed estates, which was mostly evident in the post – White Mountain period. In such a situation the state tried to support the towns' economy and introduced several arrangements – the commission for rising towns started its existence in 1705, the empress Marie Terezie ordered to rent municipal economy and a new phenomenon called the Raabisation was introduced in dominions of two thirds of landowning towns since 1778 which in fact meant liquidation of Maierhofs and their division among owners of no land and tiny farmers. The attitude of towns towards these reforms was critical and conservative. Current carried analyses of town economies proved the fact, that landed estates brought key income to the town treasury in positive numbers. The importance of the Raabisation remained only in social level, because in fact town economies became dependent on payment discipline of their serfs. Raab's intentions did not lie in improvement of towns' incomes, despite evident general need. It limited renting farms or single yards (so called velkopacht) in the first half of the 19th century.

The final part of the topic pays attention to the role of the town as a landlord towards their serfs. Czech historiography tried to understand town landlords as mild, because townspeople as an estate were nearest to serf people. There is also evident influence of Hussite traditions, because towns usually accepted the utraquism. Initial situation was an output of complicated legal relations. Particular parts of dominions used to be of different legal origin – church property (záduši), borough villages and also classical allods. The fire of the tabulae terrae, register of landed property, in 1541 and consequent intabulations in connection with a long interregnum and consequent strengthening of political power in the post – Hussite century removed the differences. Confiscations between the years 1547 and 1620 helped all the situation. Towns, as well as aristocratic landed estates, also controlled movement of their serfs and tried to lower their privileged status (Chodové from Domažlice). The extent of corvee remained low until the Thirty Years' War. The situation started to change (increase) after the half of the 17th century, when the status of serfs on town dominions deteriorated in further areas. Town owners seized serf land for enlargement of the dominions' economy, limited the movement of serfs in consequence with shortage of labour forces and increase of corvee. Compulsory labour could have been carried out in towns (maintenance of common buildings, import of salt and the like) themselves in contrast to aristocratic dominions. Towns also removed the last remains of earlier legal bonds (serf village of the town of Jaroměř). Serfs reacted by drawing up complaints to their superior institutions. Another step was getting involved in big Peasants' Uprisings in 1680 (Polička) and 1775 (Trutnov). Raabisation as an alteration of feu duty became an important source of conflicts between serfs and landlords since the 80s of the 18th century. Originally only monetary pay started being required even in in-kind corn or in its monetary equivalent (according to market prices of corn) in the era of the Napoleonic Wars and after the Financial patent from 1811. Serfs understood the situation as a breaking the agreements from the era of subdivision of yards (dvorů).

Pieces of knowledge about essential developing contours occur in chapters 3, 5 and 7, applied to the development of the borough landed estate of Sušice. The town gained its landed estate from pre-Hussite serf villages, church and hospital property, but examples of unrestrained secularisation were not excluded. After the purchase of villages from the property of the mighty aristocratic House of Šihovský of Rýzmbek before 1547, the town of Sušice controlled the dominion of about 225 settled inhabitants, which according to its area belonged to light above-average towns. Sušice lost majority of estates due to confiscations and later purchases enabled partial reconstruction of former dominion of about 141 settled inhabitants by 1620. Economic situation before the White Mountain was influenced by increasing indebtedness, escalating during the Thirty Years' War. The town of Sušice started creating its network of Maierhofs (Špitálský dvůr – Hospital's yard already existed in

the 60s of the 16th century, the yard in Rok at the latest in 1599, purchase of Bohdašice 1615). The town raised the number of its Maierhofs to seven (after latest territorial changes: Špitálský dvůr, Malá Chmelná, Vrabcov, Rok, Divišov, Červené Dvorce, Hartmanice and established seignorial brewery in Vrabcov) after the Thirty Years' War probably in an effort to face the burden of indebtedness. The analysis of the town's economy between the years 1701–1778 (chapter 5) proved the fact, that the landing estate guaranteed economic stability despite the loss-rate of the town's own economy. Economy of the yards was the most profitable, then the profit from the seignorial brewery in Vrabcov (but its profitability was lowered by a complicated system of allowances in kind for town employees). Corvee, the price of which unfortunately was not mentioned in accounting, helped to keep the ballance. All the yards underwent the Raabisation in 1783. Landlords used to make an agreement with serfs about the payment of feu duty in cash, which could be exchanged for kind (corn) every 10 years. The landlord tried unsuccessfully to follow this step first in 1804 and definitively since 1813. Serfs refused payments in corn which opened the disagreement lasting for the whole first half of the 19th century. Even if the Provincial Court admitted the legitimacy of landlord's requirement, the payment of frozen money was very slow and pushed the town's economy towards indebtedness (money was missing for contributions and municipal officials).