

Opavian Suburbia from 14th to 16th Century. A Dynamically Developing Territory or a Changeless State?

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In 1965 František Matějek pointed to the mutual rivalry between what we can call municipal and manorial economy in the 16th through the 17th century. However, the question to what extent did the residues of the duchy land tenure made it hard for the municipal council to gain control of all the suburban domains whose legal status was different seems to remain unexplored – the conjecture here is that it was just the foregoing landlord domain that tried to prevent the municipality from making attempts at the use of the considerable economic potential and benefits that the overall area of the Opavian suburbia definitely rendered. The purpose of the following contribution therefore lies in showing whether or not did the municipal council succeed in exploiting at least some parts of the suburbia and, if they did, whether the latter underwent some changes that suited the interests of the community.

Key words: Landlord domain. Opava. Suburb. Transformation.

In the 1930s Rudolf Fitz in his unpublished dissertation about the beginnings of Opava arrived at the conclusion, that one of the most important cities of the Moravian-Silesian border has not arisen by a single act of foundation but through a gradual development. Utilizing the contemporary methodical innovations in the analysis of Stable cadastre,¹ this German archivist identified land conditions and primary historical sources of the so called primary settlement core (Vorsiedlung), which according to his opinion has concentrated in the area of the both subsequently delimited main squares.² Although this disciple of Theodor Mayer (influenced by Adolf Zycha's research results) turned his attention to the area behind the latter city walls as well, it was the part of the urban zone he identified as the oldest layer of the Opavian settlement.³ Retrospectively orientated study into the conditions of the Opavian suburbs has allowed Fitz to state, that an apogee of the observed areas came in the course of the 16th century when the territories in the vicinity of the city underwent a radical transformation as a result of a lively building.⁴ In place of the former city pastures in front of the Jaktař gate a regular housing grouped on the both sides of the main streets emerged. For this reason a new sawmill, a mill house and a water line had to be built much further from the city gates.⁵ The limited space in the immediate proximity of the city called for a construction work also in more remote parts of the suburbs. With regard to that the city council watched all demesnes nearby which were still beyond its influence with suspicion. Efforts for gaining control of these areas by the town councillors arouse inquiries about the changes in their property rights during the late medieval period, which were in other respects precisely what Fitz's analysis of the structure and power of the individual peripheral settlements observed only marginally.

1 NODL, M. Německá medievalistika v českých zemích a studium sociálních a hospodářských dějin. In *Německá medievalistika v českých zemích do roku 1945*. Praha 2004, 21-65.

2 By his results Fitz testified the ideas of STUMPF, G. Die Entwicklung des Stadtbildes von Troppau. In *Die Heimat-Blätter zur Vertiefung des Heimatsgefühles*. Vol. 1. 1923, 43-45.

3 Zemský archiv in Opava (ZA Opava), Rudolf Fitz, inv. n. 202, cart. 6 a 7, sign. 10, 202-203. The thesis is called Die Entstehung der ehemaligen schlesischen Landeshauptstadt Troppau. By his results Fitz corrected the Zycha's ideas about the oldest opavian settlement which should be situated in front of the city fortification.

4 ZA Opava, Rudolf Fitz, inv. n. 202, cart. 6 a 7, sign. 10, 172-177.

5 Státní okresní archiv v Opavě (SOA Opava), Archiv města Opavy (AMO), inv. n. 219, sign. I Bb 9, fol. 101r-v.

However the main ownership layout of Opava's adjacent areas was stated already at the time of its location, when the municipality gained a vast corpus of lands on the north-west outskirts of the city. Axis of this area has been represented by the land route coming out from the Jaktař gate and connecting the city with Krnov and Hlubčice. The Jaktař gate as along with two other Opava's gates were documented for the first time during the Polish-Ruthenian siege as early as 1253. As far back as in the 13th century was in front of the aforementioned gate formed a suburb predominantly comprised of small-sized fields submitted to the city jurisdiction.⁶ The area north-east and east of the city remained contrarily mostly in the ruler's hands. Suburban life had been developing particularly on both sides of the route passing through the Ratiboř gate and leading further to Upper Silesia and Minor Poland.

Local burghers owned only pasture land (so-called Gansov) which stretched on both sides of the river Opava and was located on the west of the aforementioned land route. Proprietary situation was over time further complicated by the estates of nobility and Church rarely supplemented by those subjected to the city law.⁷ The municipality was the holder of some pastures in the smallest of the Opava's suburbs of so-called the Hradec suburb similarly to the Ratiboř gate case. Also the settlement to the south of the city was predominantly filled with minor homesteads. However in the course of the 14th century the formation of the so-called Schneller Farmstead was created due to the secondary concentration of these homesteads. For decades thereafter it represented a dominant compound of the whole area, because of its vast affiliated estates stretching from Hradecká gate to the fields belonging to the village Kylešovice.⁸ We have got the evidence supporting the municipal ownership of Schneller farmstead for almost a century as early as 1427, whereas the area in the south-western part of the suburb belonging to the Order of the German Knights was beyond the control of the city council. Corpus of these estates had become not only the centre of the Opavian commandery, but also a site for the parish church of Virgin Mary who held the patronage over the Order.⁹ This ownership layout of the estates in the vicinity of Opava preserved its validity also in the course of the 14th century. From the topographic viewpoint, the situation in the suburbs underwent relatively significant changes (emerging of farmsteads and some farm buildings in front of the Jaktař gate, erection of the church dedicated to Saint Catherine and the Saint cross chapel before the Ratiboř gate and others),¹⁰ but from the proprietary perspective no important transfers took place there. When Duke Přemek moved closer to the city environment as he built his modest residence in the eastern tip of the urban area, he contributed to the stabilization of the ownership in observed areas. Even though as early as the second half of the 13th century Opava had exacted from Mikuláš I. the privilege in which this illegitimate child of Přemysl Otakar II. had pledged not to build his own castle within the town, now Přemysl managed to put fears of the town councillors to rest. Despite the fact that the residence had been built outside the city walls on the ruler's lands, it made use of the city fortifications by blending into them. Besides, the residence was separated from the city by an additional moat. The ruler's estates located in front of the Ratiboř gate were used

6 PRIX, D. Opava vrcholného středověku. In MÜLLER, K. – ŽÁČEK, R. et al. *Opava. Historie, Kultura, Lidé*. Praha 2006, 57-95.

7 PRIX, D. *Opava vrcholného středověku...*, 80-86.

8 According to the 15th century account the court has been situated „...za židovsků zahradů mezi dvěma cestama, totiž mezi vrchní cestů s jedné až po silnici, kteráž na Hradec vede a mezi těma dvěma cestama s strany druhé až dolův po samý veliký rybník...“, comp. ZA Opava, Josef Zukał, inv. n. 181, not numbered.

9 PRIX, D. Počátky a rozvoj ve 13. století. In MÜLLER, K. – ŽÁČEK, R. et al. *Opava. Historie, Kultura, Lidé*. Praha 2006, 339-348.

10 PRIX, D. *Počátky a rozvoj...*, 69-86.

for the provision of the ruler's court. This fact might have been perceived positively by the city council. At least parts of these estates were intended for an Opavian reeve (the closest co-operator of the ruler in the city) who had been becoming increasingly extraneous element in the city organism. It's this redirection of resources towards the castle that caused the weakening of his formerly strong position in the city administration. In a very short time the reeve was drawn into the municipal apparatus as one of its ordinary elements and his former functions were taken over by the burgomaster whose appointment was fully in the hands of the council.¹¹ The estates lying to the east of the route leading to Ratiboř extending on the both sides of the river up to the confluence of Opava and Moravice were hereby attached to the ruler's residence. And thus this domain also included villages located outside of the suburbs Kylešovice (on the right bank of the river) and Kateřinky (on the opposite bank of the river).¹²

Researchers dedicated their attention to this domain as far back as the end of the 19th century when Vincenc Prasek formulated a thesis about the conditions in Kateřinky area and its gradually dwindling ruler's estates. The part of the domain on the left bank of the river was administrated from the so-called Small Farmstead with adjacent fields located just in the Kateřinky area. In the late medieval period, diversely large estates had been separated from this farmstead which was ceded by the Opavian rulers to their servants or the Church institutions. That's the reason why Prasek could state that „*the history of Kateřinky should show us how the ruler's demesne had been dwindling from time to time*” and pointed out that as a consequence of this, eight manorial lords later existed in Kateřinky.¹³ Stanislav Drkal in his study describing the history of the Opavian castle adhered to the Prasek's fundamentally justified statement.¹⁴ He however extended the aforementioned thesis on the whole ruler's possession. In the spirit of contemporary historiography Drkal didn't hesitate to declare the whole process as a collapse of the financial administration and plundering by the feudal nobility and the city Opava at the expense of the ruler's revenues.¹⁵ (Correct) thesis about the dwindling ruler's estates (logically) hasn't eluded Martin Čapský either since he anticipated that the crumbling of the suburban estates was related with the crumbling of the whole ruler's demesne. Division of a demesne which affected the Opavian Premyslids already in the 14th century (afterwards also in the following century) significantly limited their economic potential and further complicated generous manner, which ranked among the most important ruler's virtues.¹⁶ For this reason arguably Čapský concluded that at the end of the 15th century „*ruler's demesne [in the Ratiboř suburb – authors comment] was reduced to the castle and the small enclaves in direct possession, and that the latter possession holders... must have been putting together one up to two tracts of fields and some local homesteads to properly reward loyalty of their noble supporters*”.¹⁷ If we neglect the fact, that Prasek formulated his thesis for the completely different corpus of lands, it is possible to deny this view of the diminishing

11 ČAPSKÝ, M. *Vévoda Přemek Opavský (1366 – 1433). Ve službách posledních Lucemburků*. Brno 2005, 115; ČAPSKÝ, M. Opava v pozdním středověku. In MÜLLER, K. – ŽÁČEK, R. et al. *Opava. Historie, Kultura, Lidé*. Praha 2006, 98-101.

12 Further delimited „the borders” of the chamber estates POHANKA, V. Proměny zeměpanské domény v prostoru středověkého Ratibořského předměstí města Opavy. In *Slezský sborník* (109) 2011, 1-2, 9-25.

13 ZA Opava, Vincenc Prasek, inv. n. 834, cart. 9, fol. 33r. Similar ideas outlined: PRASEK, V. Svobodný dům někdy hrabat Vlčkův v Opavě. In *Program c. k. českého vyššího gymnasia v Opavě V*. 1888, 4.

14 Further in text will be for the opavian residence used inconsequent concepts castle, chateau. To both of the concepts: MACEK, J. Hrad a zámek. Studie historicko-sémantická. In *Český časopis historický* (90) 1992, 1, 1-16.

15 DRKAL, S. Historie opavského zámku. In *Opava – Sborník k 10. výročí osvobození města*. Ostrava 1956, 134-164.

16 IWANČZAK, W. *Po stopách rytířských příběhů. Rytířský ideál v českém písemnictví 14. století*, Praha 2001, 50-87.

17 ČAPSKÝ, M. *Opava...*, 103.

ruler's demesne by also considering Rudolf Fitz's conclusions. Nevertheless it's prudent to put the mentioned concept to a test.

A mere fleeting look into the preserved historical sources actually indicates its plausibility. During the reign of the Opavian Premyslids there was some farmland in front of the Ratiboř gate that was donated to a few of the ruler's subjects and Church institutions. Hans Kuncz obtained a garden¹⁸ and burgher Hanko gained a farmstead with two tracts,¹⁹ his favourite Knights Hospitaller presented Duke Mikuláš with a farmstead in Kylešovice and later added lands of the size of four tracts,²⁰ whereas some smallholders passed over to the Dominican order,²¹ and finally Opavian Franciscan nuns extended their possessions to include a farmstead with some fields.²² This trend even intensified at the end of the 15th century when the Opavian territory was ruled by the dukes of foreign origin (Podiebrads, Korvins). At that time the castle scribe Jiří was awarded half of a deserted tract for his services;²³ castle burgrave Hansel obtained a garden²⁴ from Duke Jan Korvín and Jindřich Donát from Velká Poloma acquired some land to set up a garden from the same Duke.²⁵ He rewarded the services of Albrecht Kavan zDědibab even more magnanimously when he acquired a prospering Manorial mill with associated lands.²⁶ Burgher Gabriel received a suburban garden from Vladislav II.²⁷ and huntsman Štěpán obtained a part of a deserted land in Kylešovice.²⁸ Also the Opavian Minorites didn't go empty-handed after they acquired a farmstead with a half of a tract²⁹ another deserted tract was given to the Dominican order at the very end of the 15th century.³⁰

If we recapitulate this tedious enumeration, we can state that the ruler's demesne in front of Ratiboř gate in the late Middle Ages was indeed reduced by the whole line of estates. But if we pay closer attention to the quality and extent of these donations, we can observe that the estates rarely exceeded an area of a garden or half of a tract. These small grounds certainly didn't have any serious impact on the economical performance of the ruler's demesne especially when some of these devolved back on Opavian dukes as an escheat. Yet at the outset of the 16th century the ruler still held all the essential farmsteads firmly in his hands. That is valid for both the Small Farmstead, which was however reduced in the previous period by some farmland and up to this moment unmentioned Great Farmstead. This was located in the vicinity of the castle and administrated all the right-bank estates including these in Kylešovice. Numerous donations to Opavian monasteries present a specific problem. As

18 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 33v.

19 PRIIX, D. Opava..., 92.

20 KOPETZKY, F. *Regesten zur Geschichte des Herzogthums Troppau (1061 – 1464)*. Wien 1871, 74. no 264; estates presented: DRKAL, S. *Opavská komenda maltézských rytířů po třicetileté válce (1650 – 1660)*. Příspěvek k hospodářským dějinám velkostatku. In *Slezský sborník* (52) 1954, 12, 368.

21 KOPETZKY, F. *Regesteen...*, 178-179.

22 FOLTÝN, D. *Encyklopedie moravských a slezských klášterů*. Praha 2005.

23 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 95r-96v.

24 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 219, sign. IBb 9, fol. 39v-40r.

25 PRASEK, V. *Svobodný dům...*, 5.

26 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 219, sign. IBb 9, fol. 40v-41r.

27 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 102r-103v.

28 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 110v-111r.

29 PRIIX, D. *Počátky a rozvoj minoritského kláštera v Opavě ve středověku*. In *Opava. Sborník k dějinám města 1*. Opava 1998, 57.

30 ZA Opava, František Tiller, inv. n. 6, fol. 115r-119v.

the rulers held patronage over all Opavian convents, we can't consider the aforementioned donations as being definitely lost in respect to the ruler's demesne. In spite of a formal renunciation, the presenting person wasn't losing all the proprietary rights towards the given possession.³¹ Duke Přemek, who didn't hesitate reward his courtier Mikuláš Bulač in 1407 with a homestead in Kylešovice, which had been given earlier by his father to Opavian Hospitallers serves as a good example. The Knights were thereafter compensated for their willingness by the perpetual pay for the ruler's subjects in Kylešovice.³² That implies that the estates of the Church institutions constituted rather specific component of the landlord domain. If we look on the whole process in that perspective, the picture of a rather stable domain deliberately diminishing only by small-sized estates appears before us. The process of disintegration of the ruler's demesne accelerated after seizing control of the Opavian land by the royal dynasty of Jagellonians at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The reason was simple. Distant duchy in Budín served to the residing rulers only as a marginal source of income. That gradually cleared the way for donations of formerly untouchable parts of the demesne.³³ Duke Zikmund, younger brother of the Czech and Hungarian king Vladislav II., bestowed to his courtier Albrecht Sobek ze Sulejova of the Opavian county several gardens in Kateřinky and Kylešovská street.³⁴ The Duke behaved even more generously to Václav Olšanský z Olšan. At the beginning of the 16th century his real estate was exempt from taxes to the ruler's Treasury and furthermore allowed him to brew beer and take wood for his own needs from the forests around Hradec nad Moravicí. At the same time Duke handed over a half of a tract separated from Small Farmstead and even large-sized meadow stretching from Great Farmstead to the river Opava to his courtier Schneller's Farmstead, which had passed to the ruler's demesne not long ago by an escheat.³⁵ Once unthinkable manifestation of generosity therefore represented for the ruler's demesne loss of the parts of estates in Kateřinky, predominant building of the Hradecké suburb and division of estates belonging to Small Farmstead, which however proved to be extraordinary. Great Farmstead as opposed to Small Farmstead actually didn't become a victim of decline. On the contrary, it was documented on cadastre maps still in the 19th century. Although it resulted in a substantial reduction of the ruler's demesne, talking about its total collapse in the course of the 16th would be highly overstated.

From the beginning of the 15th century part of the Ratibořské suburb was utilized by Opavian rulers for the construction of a pond network. Along with his pond, Duke Přemek inundated a part of estates belonging to the reeve in Kylešovice and Duke Viktorín who established one more pond in the neighbourhood acted similarly also.³⁶ These large-sized

31 BOROVSÝ, T. *Kláštery, panovník a zakladatelé na středověké Moravě*. Brno 2005, 11-19; BOROVSÝ, T. *Formy a funkce klášterního patronátu v době posledních Přemyslovců*. In *Kościół w monarchiach Przemysławów i Piastów. Materiały z konferencji naukowej Gniezno 21–24 września 2006 roku*. Poznań 2009, 275-284; the same illustrated on the example of knights orders: JAN, L. *Ivanovice na Hané, Orlovice a johanitský řád. Příspěvek k poznání struktury a ekonomiky rytířských duchovních řádů do konce 15. století*. In *Časopis Matice moravské* (61) 1992, 2, 225.

32 ČAPSKÝ, M. *Vévoda...*, 99.

33 Of course it played the role of prestige and the level on the hierarchically arranged social ladder. Because of it, the donations from the king had to be more generous than in the previous years. On the art of proper donation here mainly NEJEDLÝ, M. *Fortuny kolo vrtkavé. Lásky, moc a společnost ve středověku*. Praha 2003, 75.

34 To that thing INDRA, B. *Opavská papírna*. In *Opava - Sborník k 10. výročí osvobození města*. Ostrava 1956, 165-190. The role of Sobek on the court of Sigismund KOŽÁK, P. *Dvorská společnost hlohovského a opavského vévody Zikmunda Jagellonského*. In *Dvory a rezidence ve středověku. Vol. II. Skladba a kultura dvorské společnosti*. Praha 2008, 257-284.

35 ZA Opava, František Tiller, inv. n. 7, fol. 210v-213r.

36 ZA Opava, Slezský stavovský archiv, inv. n. 12; SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 106r.

ponds were connected to smaller ponds spreading out on the right bank of river Opava. Even in the first half of the 16th century, when revenues from formerly very lucrative business were past their prime, we can still document eight ponds.³⁷ Inundation of insufficiently fertile grounds in areas liable to flooding represented their most efficient utilization at that time, because until then they had served only as pastures.³⁸ From the mid-16th century a lively construction activity in suburbs developed to increase the demand for building plots and so the portion of ponds had been drained to give way to a new settlement which was naturally subjected to the ruler's sovereignty.³⁹ Even though we can, thanks to the vast corpus of primary historical sources, accept the thesis about the gradually dwindling ruler's estates, we are compelled to definitely disprove its possible degradation into the collapse of the ruler's revenues, as it once Stanislav Drkal stated completely unsuitably. Ruler's estates in the course of the 16th and the 17th century were constantly occupying significant areas in the suburbs. This statement is leading us therefore back to the original question. To what extent did the impossibility of seizing control of the ruler's demesne, which was taking up most of the space in Opavian outskirts, reflect in the efforts of the city council to subjugate remaining extraneous enclaves in the vicinity of Opava? The pressure for homogenization of the city society and for seizing the control of the city space, which recently Jaroslav Miller⁴⁰ highlighted in this publication, led the councillors to an assault on the local Jewish community settled inside the Opavian urban area near the Jaktář gate. Jews actually represented one of the ruler's prerogatives which is why they were directly subjugated to the ruler and therefore exempted from the obligation to „suffer with the city“. ⁴¹ Although in the course of the 15th century Silesia experienced a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms, there is no evidence that the Opavian Jews suffered the same fate. It was probably caused by the fact that Mikuláš I. (13th century) had renounced a part of his revenues coming from Jews in favour of the Opavian councillors. Only at the very end of the 15th century, so at the time of Opavian economic recession the councillors began to watch spitefully on the fixed annual payments which were obliged to be paid by the Jewish community. These payments were independent of inflation and current financial needs of the rulers, therefore Jews in comparison to the city were carrying increasingly less burden of the ruler's debts. That is apparently the reason for the anti-Jewish lobby which succeeded on the court of Duke Jan Korvín when he permitted his subjects to expel the Jews out of the city at the turn of the 15th and the 16th century. The councillors received ruler's permission at the time when Opavian land came under the spotlight of Vladislav II. Jagellonian who was trying to provide for his younger brother Zikmund through certain Silesian principalities. Korvín who had lost his main political auspices after the death of his father Matyáš, settled with the exchange of remote Silesian lands for secure estates in Slavonia.⁴² The Opavian land fell into hands of Vladislav who shortly after that commanded

37 ZA Opava, Hejtmanský úřad knížectví opavsko-krnovského v Opavě 1507 – 1784, inv. n. 46, cart. 2.

38 ZA Opava, Rudolf Fitz, inv. n. 202, cart. 6, sign. 10,196-197.

39 This fact supports the Urbare of the former landlord domain, which shows from fol. 99r that suburban places which are obligated pay to opavian chateau. ZA Opava, Velkostatek Opava-zámek, inv. n. 2. The new settlement described in your retrospective probe Fitz, P., ZA Opava, Rudolf Fitz, inv. n. 202, cart. 6, sign. 10, 172-177.

40 On the motivation for such action MILLER, J. *Uzavřená společnost a její nepřátelé. Město středovýchodní Evropy (1500 – 1700)*. Praha 2007.

41 LE GOFF, J. – SCHMITT, J. *Encyklopedie středověku*. Praha 2002.

Appurtenance of Jews to the landlord domain too JAN, L. *Václav II. a struktury panovnické moci*. Brno 2006, 38-50. To the opavian community SPYRA, J. *Żydzi w Opawie (do 1848 r.)*. In *Opava. Sborník k dějinám města 2*. Opava 2000, 15-17.

42 KOŽÁK, P. *Zástavní pán nebo "freyer Fürst"? Několik poznámek k opavské vládě Zikmunda Jagellonského*. In *Confinia Silesiae. K životnímu jubileu Rudolfa Žáčka*. Opava 2008, 87-97.

the council to re-settle the expelled Jews in the city. And so the councillors had to wait for the definitive success of their efforts until 1522 when Vladislav's son Ludvík gave consent to the expulsion of Opavian Jewish community from the city.⁴³

In the 1520s, the endeavours to subjugate extraneous territories in Opava's surroundings intersected with the spreading of the Reformation thoughts, which triggered intensification of pressure on the Church possessions frequently occupying fine land close to the city walls. But at first this convenient opportunity allowed the council to definitely take over the parish church and estates of the Order of German Knights. Secularization of the Baltic order state in 1525 complicated already difficult situation of the heavily indebted Knights even more. Opavian knight commander Georg Fink solved this grave situation in his own way. He converted to Lutheranism, got married to a daughter of a local burgomaster and handed over the administration of the order property and three villages designated for the provision of Opavian presbytery to the city council.⁴⁴ Even king Ferdinand I. himself, who was a supporter of Catholicism, could not do anything substantial with the newly developing situation in 1542 he realistically confirmed the city patronage of the parish church. He merely insisted that the council designate only persons properly approved by the bishop of Olomouc.⁴⁵ The council's assault against the property of Dominican order, which held grounds located in front of the Jakař gate, was greatly facilitated too. In 1542 the whole community of the monastery was annihilated by an outbreak of a plague. The city council therefore confiscated the empty compound together with its archive and estates. Once prospering monastery ended up in decay because the Bohemian Order province hadn't had enough personal reserves available. Dominicans were eventually saved after the fusion with a much stronger Polish Order province in 1556. Only then the brothers were capable to begin a struggle for restitution of their property. The councillors were however constantly ignoring their demands and what's more they even neglected recurring emperor's appeals for rectification. Dominicans succeeded to regain a part of the estates and the monastery archive as late as in 1569. At the very end of the 16th century, prior Felix z Vilna achieved thorough revision of the dispute, as he had managed to win an entire row of trials leading to restitution of majority of the former monastery estates. In the first place convent regained an important farmstead in front of the Jakař gate with attached pastures and estates. The farmstead then remained in the ownership of Dominicans till the abolishment of the Order at the end of the 18th century.⁴⁶ The knight commander Jiří Lesota ze Stěblova took the opposite approach to the combatant Dominican prior's. He rather agreed to co-operation with the councillors, which was a decision that saved Knights of Malta from the repeated disputes with the city. Apart from the aforementioned estates in front of the Ratiboř gate, which the Order kept also in the 17th century, Hospitallers possessed the Muchov Farmstead in front of the Jakař gate, which during the time came under the spotlight of the councillors. The record about the fact that „*all the right and justice...on that farmstead...was awarded before by His Majesty the King*” to commander knight serves as proof of the Order's rightful possession.⁴⁷ In spite of this the commander knight made concessions to the city council and sold the farmstead to the city in 1555 for 300 florins.

43 ČAPSKÝ, M. *Opava...*, 117-118; SPYRA, J. *Žydzi...*, 15-17.

44 But the city council villages Křiřovou, Smíchova a Mikolajovice sold already in year 1561 to Albrecht of Fulštejn, SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 72v-73v.

45 PRIX, D. *Pozdně gotická obnova města*. In MÜLLER, K. – ŽÁČEK, R. et al. *Opava. Historie, Kultura, Lidé*. Praha 2006, 397-399.

46 FOLTÝN, D. *Encyklopedie...*, 538-540.

47 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. IBb 19, fol. 60r-63r.

The compliance of Jiří Lesota was rewarded by the council which renounced its rights to the altar in the church of St John's in favour of Hospitallers.⁴⁸ Councillors confirmed the interest in Muchov Farmstead as they made it the greatest farmstead in their holding.⁴⁹ Superiority of the city over a long period was felt also by the Minorites who settled in front of Ratiboř gate by Duke Vilém in the half of the 15th century. Poverty which should had been a main attribute of the monastery truly accompanied this convent from the beginning of the 16th century. On that account the city could make use of its economic potential and consecutively bought up the large-sized monastery grounds. In 1563, the kvardian had ceded a major part of the monastery garden which then became a settlement in the so-called New Street with 36 houses to the councillors.⁵⁰ Five years later kvardian Martin decided to sell also „*a part of the monastery garden by the same church and by the street closer to the city gate called Ratibořská*“ to the municipality „*knowing the common good of this city so well*“. The councillors intended to build a graveyard on the gained grounds, the kvardian obtained 150 florins, which had to be used for a reconstruction of the dilapidated monastery.⁵¹ Nevertheless the monks definitely forsook the poor monastery a few years later and the councillors then built a new hospital in its place.⁵² At least from the 1540s, the strong pressure of the city council step by step genuinely unified the legal conditions outside of the Opavian gates. However the compound of the former Přemyslid castle was still avoiding any possible interference from the city, which was increasingly uncomfortable especially with regard to the proximity of the city. As far back as in 1515 the castle, which had served only as an administration centre for the suburban estates, was pledged by the Vladislav Jagiello for the first time. Prince of Teschin Kazimír of the Upper Silesia county who in the time of the growing Turkish danger decided to move from the insufficiently defensible Teschin to a more fortified Opava became a new holder of the compound became.⁵³ Other pledge holder Jiří Cetrys zKynšperka also considered the compound as his own residence, however from the half of the 16th the holders were attracted primarily to the compact suburban demesne. Although the King's domain originally bestowed the compound on the Opavian nobles, they didn't have enough funds at their disposal and so they transferred former Přemyslid residence to persons who constantly caused problems to the councillors. Shortly after that the city council got into an argument with Jan Plankar over beer brewing. The councillors were addressing similar problems also with Ojř zFulštejna, who not only brewed beer but also claimed judicial rights for the suburban areas, which had already been given to the councillors by Duke Viktorín Poděbradský.⁵⁴ Disputes emerged also over the sovereignty of some estates. Fulštejn was trying to pull certain suburban areas under his jurisdiction, although they had been registered in the city books. We cannot either exclude the possibility of its illegal alienation by the municipality.⁵⁵

48 Ibidem.

49 MATĚJEK, F. Městské a zámecké panství opavské koncem 16. a v první polovině 17. století. In *Slezský sborník* (63)1965, 3, 347-351.

50 ZA Opava, Rudolf Fitz, inv. n. 202, cart. 6, sign. 10, 173.

51 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 219, sign. IBb 9, fol. 106v-107v.

52 ZUKAL, J. *Paměti Opavské. Črty kulturní a místopisné*. Opava 1992, 29-36.

53 ČAPSKÝ, M. „...okna sklenná, ale některá kolečka od povětrí vybita...“: Reflexe rozpadu zeměpanské rezidenční sítě na pozdně středověkém Opavsku. In *Korunní země v dějinách českého státu. Vol. III. Rezidence a správní sídla v zemích České koruny ve 14. – 17. století*. Praha 2007, 199-206.

54 DRKAL, S. *Historie...*, 136-140.

55 Already at the beginning of the 16th century hetmans of Opavian duchy repeatedly complained that burghers carried some possession under the authority of city council by registering their possession to the city books, although they ever before belong to the landlord domain, see ČAPSKÝ, M. „...okna sklenná, ale některá kolečka...“, 192.

These everyday arguments finally resulted in a seemingly uncomplicated solution. In 1562 the councillors took the castle into their holding for 20 thousand florins for 20 years.⁵⁶ Not even this step fully stopped the competitors as it has been proved by František Matějek.⁵⁷ Besides, the whole project later proved to be a lossmaker because the municipality raised the necessary money by taking out a loan with interests which had made this venture even more expensive.⁵⁸ In 1562, it seemed that the unification of urban and suburban areas under the authority of the city council was completed. Of course the estates registered in the city books remained beyond its competence, but the verdict of the King Ferdinand did not lead to the coerced inclusion of the persons liable to city taxes under the provincial jurisdiction.⁵⁹ The councillors seized control of the significant part of the church demesnes on the outskirts of Opava and also dictated how the former ruler's demesne was run. It shows that the specific position of Opava as a residence city resulted in a very stable proprietary situation in the surroundings. From a topographic perspective the Opavian suburban settlement until the end of the 16th century experienced three intense transformations⁶⁰ while the proprietary situation remained almost changeless.

Property shifts started to come to an end by a symbolical unification of former ruler's demesne only from the beginning of the 16th century. Although we can expect profound changes⁶¹ from the outskirts of a significant city in Opava's case the perspective is certainly of great importance.

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56 DRKAL, S. *Historie...*, 138-139.

57 MATĚJEK, F. *Městské a zámecké panství...*, 344-359..

58 DRKAL, S. *Historie...*, 138-140.

59 SOA Opava, AMO, inv. n. 218, sign. I Bb 19, fol. 49v-50v.

60 A masterful describe of topographical transitions of opavian suburban proposed PRIX, D. *Opava...*, 81-87.

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