

Measures and Regulations of prices in selected noble counties of the 17th and 18th centuries

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The income of self-governing regions in former Hungarian Kingdom from crafts and trade represented a very important part of their budget. Nobility issued the regulations for prizes of various goods and local measures. Those legal rules were considered the most significant jurisdiction in those autonomous regions. The study wants to present regional noble counties of Bratislava, Nitra, Tekov and Spiš and their economic activities during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Key words: Nobility. Measures. Regulations. Region. Rules.

Measures and regulations of prices of craftsmen's products were the main economic competences of the noble counties in the 17th and 18th centuries. At that time, those self-governing noble territorial counties represented unique autonomous and relatively independent political power including vast authorities. Namely, the price regulations of craftsmen's products and wages have been less investigated topics in the Slovak historiography. But since 1625 the prices had been quoted in general congregation of counties' statutes even for the free royal towns. My paper tries to follow the research which has been done in Slovakia by outstanding historians, such as Alexander Húščava, Štefan Kazimír, Zuzana Nemcová and Anton Špiesz, who devoted their research to the counties and their economic competences in measures, weights and price regulations. I have also used works by outstanding Hungarian historians Géza Pálffy, Lajos Gecsényi and István Bogdán who have devoted their expertise to political and economic situation in the 16th century Hungary, as well as the economy of noble counties and measures and weights in the 17th and 18th centuries.

We have to start with a brief development of various efforts for the unification of weights and measures which the counties used as the starting point for the regulations of prices. The inequality of weights and measures in Hungary at the beginning of the 15th century made the King Sigismund of Luxemburg to initiate the unification of their system. His efforts were directed mostly towards economic development of towns, cities and the whole kingdom. The two of his edicts published in 1405 included articles on the introduction of weights and measures, which were used in Buda, the capital, for the whole country. Those unified weights and measures were valid in all free royal towns, noble small towns, at the castles and in villages. The violation of those regulations should have been sanctioned, but those unifying efforts were not effective because numerous exceptions prevented the introduction of unified weights and measures in Hungary. We can present an example of an unsuccessful emperor's effort to introduce Buda ell as a uniform measure in trade with cloth for the whole Hungary in that year.¹ In 1427 Sigismund of Luxemburg published the decree on regulated prices of some

1 BOGDÁN, István. *Magyarországi űr-, térfogat-, súly- és darabmértékek 1874-ig* [online]. Magyar Országos Levéltár kiadványai, IV. Levéltárban és történeti forrástudományok 7. Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991, p. 677. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <https://library.hungaricana.hu/en/view/MoLDigiLib_MOLkiadv4_07/?pg=4&layout=l>

goods for the army. In his decree No. 5 of 1504 Vladislav II, the king, introduced the system of weights and measures valid for the whole country. Those legal regulations included also general regulations on the prices.² In his legal code of Hungarian legal regulations *Opus Tripartitum* of the year 1517, Štefan Werbőczy introduced the amount of royal arpen from the royal cord for the evaluation of noble properties.³

The law of the year 1527, which was passed by the Hungarian diet in order to unify the fragmentation in the use of weights and measures, missed the action because the villeins could, according to later accepted regulations, use local weights and measures. The legal articles from the years 1504 and 1527 did not include precise data on measures which should have been obligatory for Hungary. Those should have been Buda measures.⁴

The Hungarian diet tried to introduce unified measures in the country in 1527. According to the article No. 23, the King Ján Zápoľský was obliged to create unified measure for the whole Hungary. Its copy should have been sent to all the counties where weights and measures used in selling and buying goods should have been controlled by deputy district administrators. Deputy district administrators should have controlled the usage of weights and measures in the given counties and towns.⁵

At its session on the 6th January 1588, the Hungarian diet decided on the introduction of old Buda measures according to the sixth article of the second decree of Sigismund of Luxemburg from the year 1405. The deputy district administrators were responsible for the introduction of those measures and weights in free royal towns, landlords' towns and villages. This legal regulation was confirmed by the Emperor Rudolf II in his decree of the 26th January 1588 as a legal article No. 16. The introduction of those regulations failed again because of the resistance of landlords and free royal towns.⁶

By the year 1550 Bratislava dry measure (metreta) represented 53.72 litre, or 40.29 kg, while it was then local measure in Bratislava territory. Being the valid measure in Bratislava County in the years 1551 – 1696, it covered the amount of 62.01 litre, or 46.56 kg. It became the measure for the whole country in the years 1593 – 1696 and also in the years 1697 – 1807 when it represented 53.72 litre, or 40.29 kg.⁷ Bratislava quart or bucket, as a local measure represented 0.6714 litre, was valid by the year 1592 as a regional measure and subsequently from the year 1593 as the measure for the whole country (0.8393 litre). Buda quart or bucket (0.8393 litre) was valid for the whole country by the 17th century and also in the 17th and 18th centuries as the local measure of 0.9157 litre.⁸ In the year 1551 Bratislava dry measure (metreta) covered 75 quarts (1 quart = 0.83332 l), i.e. 62.4491 l and from the half of the 17th century it was valid for the whole Hungary. It was the same as Roman provincial measure *amphora castrensis*. The content of that measure was the same as that of Bratislava bucket. Trnava dry measure (metreta) was half that bucket and according to the law No. 38/1622, 2/1635 and 31/1647 it required the natural tax in corn. It included 32 quarts (1 quart =

2 HÚŠČAVA, Alexander. *Polnohospodárske miery na Slovensku*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo SAV, 1972, p. 18.

3 NEMCOVÁ, Zuzana. *Regulácia mier a váh v mestách v 16. – 18. storočí*. In: RAGAČOVÁ, Júlia (Ed.). *Miery a váhy v dejinách ľudskej spoločnosti*. Bratislava : MV SR, 2006, p. 43. Also: HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 18.

4 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 22.

5 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Regulácia mier a váh...*, p. 44.

6 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 23.

7 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarország...*, p. 734.

8 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarország...*, p. 729.

0.8333 l), i.e. 26.6656 l and was used by the end of the 17th century. It lost its special position in the second half of the 17th century in favour of Bratislava County. In the 16th and 17th centuries a lot of local measures in the territory of present day Slovakia were derived from those units.⁹

The dry measure (metreta) in Vrbové town represented 34.45 litre in 1551. In the year 1571 two Vrbové dry measures (metretas) were equal to three Trnava dry measures (metretas). The content of dry measure (metreta) in Vrbové was 40 litres and that measure was used in trade with corn.¹⁰ It was used also as square measure for measuring arable land in Nitra County in the 17th century. Its content was 625 square fathoms, i.e. 2, 250 m².¹¹ Dry measures (metretas) used in Nové Mesto upon the river Váh corresponded to 53.3 liter.¹² In the year 1558 Hlohovec used local measure which included 23.75 of Vienna pint (39.56 litre). The content of one such dry measure was 39.99 litre and represented 1.5 of Trnava dry measure (metreta).¹³ King Ferdinand's II legal article No. 38 from the year 1622 declared that the measurements of contribution (subsidiu) for the soldiers in bordering territories should have been done in Košice bucket (gbel), Trnava dry measure (metreta) and Kőszeg bucket (gbel) and they were derived from the gates (porta) on Saint Ondrej's day. By the year 1630 Košice bucket (cubulus) was 2.5 of Trnava dry measure (metreta), i.e. 77.60 litre, or 58.20 kg wheat. The change took place within the years 1630 and 1715 when that bucket was 93.12 litre, or 69.84 wheat, i.e. 3 Trnava dry measures (metretas). From the year 1715 up to the beginning of the 19th century its amount changed into 2 Bratislava dry measures (metretas)¹⁴, i.e. about 124.16 litre, or 93.12 kg wheat. That unit was used in the territory of Spiš chamber.¹⁵ The laws No. 1538/26 and 1553/17 determined not only the prices for the army but were also guidelines for deputy district administrators of the counties when providing regular checking.

Using their regulations, the Counties tried to control the prices of goods, craftsmen's products and also the amount of wages which help them predominate the nobility in regional economy, namely as far as the free royal towns, their rivals, was concerned. When speaking about the regulations in the above mentioned counties, two types of regulations could have been identified: general and partial regulations (the price of one group of goods, wages or kinds of craftsmen's products, or one product or wage). It was the general congregation that published general regulations and partial regulations of various kinds of goods, labour and wages. The maximal prices of most goods, services or wages were included in general regulations. Sometimes the minimal prices of meat were also defined. The prices of one group of goods, the level of the given wage, or group of goods could be found in partial regulations. These partial regulations could be approved by particular congregation which confirmed even the prices of meat and natural wages of threshers and harvesters. Noble counties published price

9 KAZIMÍR, Štefan. Pôvod a sústava starých mier na sypaniny na Slovensku. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 1988, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 15, 17.

10 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, p. 30.

11 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarországi...*, p. 712.

12 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, p. 25.

13 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, p. 21.

14 English – Slovak dictionary for some measures: arpen - jutro, quart- holba, measure - merica, ell - lakeť, bucket – gbel, okov.

15 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarországi...*, p. 733.

regulations as their statutes which belonged to their general congregation authority. Price regulations were valid in the county after having been approved by more than half of the county nobility. It was the deputy district administrator and higher administrative officials ("služni") who were responsible for keeping the regulated prices of products, goods and wages.¹⁶ Regulations of prices and wages prevented their excessive increase.

The general part of the price regulation document presented the measures valid in the given territory, as well as their proportions, exchange rates of coins, "postav" of cloth in ells – length, measures of products made of wood, measures of barrels, the coins withdrawn from circulation. In the 16th century the prices of goods were lower than the prices of agricultural products. In the 16th century the counties regulated the prices only according to current need, namely in the dwellings of the army.

Every habitation with market privileges watched their weights and measures because they guaranteed economic prosperity. By the last third of the 19th century different cereal measures played significant role in merchants' transport costs. Unified measure would have resulted in the decline of local markets which guaranteed food supply for the inhabitants. Because of the above mentioned efforts towards unified measure for corn, which would have been valid for the whole former Hungary, were not successful.¹⁷

Being the legal representative of district administrator, the deputy district administrator's duties included not only to call and chair general congregation, judicial court (sedria) and manage other county representatives, but by the end of the 17th century also supervise financial administration of the county. According to the law No. 15/1729 in every county there should have been one deputy district administrator, as some regions elected 2, or even 4 deputy district administrators. On the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the notary, as another elected official supervised all the administrative agenda of the county. He was also in charge of county archives and from the 17th century even of the county treasury.¹⁸ During the second half of the 17th and 18th centuries a deputy notary, a scribe, and a lawyer joined the county administration. The perceptor became an elected county official after the tax reform took place in the 70s of the 17th century. He was in charge of collecting taxes and their distribution between the county and Hungarian Chamber, as well as for establishment of tax register with final account. He was also in charge of county tax agenda.¹⁹ The legal article No. 40/1625 handed the authority of price regulations in to noble counties. Together with the county's authorities even the free royal towns in the county's territory, as the representatives of guilds and inhabitants, could do the price regulations. The nobility enforced their exclusion from that process because since the year 1625 it had been the nobility who had taken the charge of price and wage regulations as an important tool of its economic power. The laws No. 92 of the year 1649 and the law No. 31 of the year 1655 and the practice of the counties resulted in the long term stability of the craftsmen products' prices.²⁰ The laws passed by the Hungarian diet in the years

16 LEHOTSKÁ, Darina. *Průručka diplomatiky*. Bratislava : Slovenská archivná správa, 1972, p. 296.

17 KAZIMÍR, Štefan. Budínska obilná miera. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 1973, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 77-78.

18 NEMCOVÁ, Zuzana. Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice v 16. – 18. storočí na základe obsahovej analýzy jej písomných prameňov. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 2004, vol. 34, no. 2, p. 16.

19 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice...*, p. 17.

20 KAZIMÍR, Štefan. Mestská trhová výroba, remeslo, obchod, ceny a mzdy. In: KOHÚTOVÁ, Mária – VOZÁR, Jozef (Eds.). *Hospodárske dejiny Slovenska 1526 – 1848*. Bratislava : Veda, 2006, p. 42.

1655, 1659 and 1696 should have introduced the use of Buda or Bratislava measures all over the kingdom as the only obligatory measures. The criminal authority of county bodies in the violation of regulated prices increased too. The effort for the unification of measures and weights in the Hungarian territory was closely connected with the regulation of the prices of craftsmen's products, services and the level of wages for the work. Gradually this tool of economic policy became representation of counties' autonomous positions.

The legal article No. 40/1625 stated that district administrator, his deputy, magnates and noblemen and the representatives of free royal towns, who represented the craftsmen, set the prices of food and products at the general congregation. Legal articles No. 1649/92, 1659/71 extended the punishments for the violation of regulated prices of food, products and labour of craftsmen, such as payments of sanctions and confiscation of goods. Free royal towns represented the interests of their inhabitants and craftsman's guilds, but they had to respect regulated prices.

The law No. 31/1655 tried to unify the measures in Hungary on the basis of Buda or Bratislava measures but because of the poor cooperation of Hungarian authorities this intention could not become true.²¹ Price regulations were valid when approved by more than half nobility from the given county present at general congregation as its highest body.

At its session, the general congregation as the highest body of noble county made decisions about taxes, such as county tax, military tax, state tax, financing and transport of the army, building the fortifications, levies, declaration of king, paladin, other Hungarian representatives' laws and decrees, as well as other decisions (intimata) of Hungarian governors' council. The county congregation approved also statutes (statutum), which (being its legal regulations) were valid in the territory of the given district and referred to various internal matters.²² From the year 1625, general regulation of prices of craftsmen's products and wages for their work were also included there.²³ The districts preserved the etalons and gauging scales as their measuring apparatuses for the precision of measures and weights in the county house together with the archive.²⁴ They were controlled by deputy district administrator and the administrative official ("slůžni") from the 16th century and from the half of 18th century it was the Hungarian Royal Governor's Council who was in charge of weights and measures.²⁵

Leopold's I legal article No. 71 of the year 1659 was meant to amend the non-uniformed system of Hungarian measures by appointing fines for non-observance of price regulations. The peasants who did not stick to the use of unified measures and regulated prices of goods should have had to pay the sanction of 40 gold coins. The citizens of free royal towns, landlords and clerks should have had to pay 100 gold coins.²⁶ The chief district administrator, deputy district administrator, prelates, magnates and other noblemen, as well as free royal towns, as the representatives

21 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Pol'nohospodárske miery...*, p. 25.

22 PÁLFFY, Géza. *A Magyar Királyság és a Habsburg Monarchia a 16. században. Második, szövegében változatlan kiadás.* Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2015, p. 313.

23 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Regulácia mier a váh...*, p. 13.

24 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarországi...*, p. 725.

25 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarországi...*, p. 726.

26 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Pol'nohospodárske miery...*, p. 25.

of merchants and craftsmen at general congregation, decided about the regulated prices in the counties. The regulated prices were put up on boards at the market places. The price of goods and wages should have covered living and production expenses of craftsmen. It was determined according to the survey of raw materials prices and expenses. Higher administrative officials ("služni") controlled that. The prices and sanctions for exceeding them were determined by county authorities for the following crafts: butchers, tanners, soap-boilers, furriers, boot-makers, Slovak shoemakers, German tailors, smock-frock makers, clothier, cap-makers, bricklayers, smiths, wheelwrights, coopers, joiners, locksmiths, rope-makers, saddlers, weavers, chandlers and wax-chandlers.²⁷

Hungarian royal governor's board, whose activities were restored by King Charles III in 1724, controlled the economic agenda of noble counties by unification and coordination in publishing regulated food prices.²⁸ Even the inventory of the year 1720, which was done in the whole country because of the need to find out the real state of dwellings for better collection of taxes, should have had standard data in Bratislava measures under the threat of being punished when giving false information.²⁹ For tax purposes, the property should have been evaluated according to Bratislava measure similar to the year 1715. The aim was to make the tax income of the state more clear and the amount of prices and wages was regulated in it. The prices of meat increased on the market in the second half of the 18th century. After the approval of Pragmatic Sanctions by the Hungarian diet in 1723, the King Karol III (Charles III) restored the activities of Hungarian Royal Regency Council to represent the monarch in all areas of state administration during his absence in Hungary. Bratislava was its seat. Economic activities of counties control included daily delivery of tax collectors' accounts. The counties received printed manual for keeping accounting books from the Council and the Council supervised the unification and coordination of food-prices regulations. Counties and Regency Council's correspondence was arranged by sending instructions to its county authorities after František Štefan Lotrinský had been appointed the viceregent for Hungary in 1732.³⁰ Intimates as the Council's decisions, delivered King and Regency Council's orders for counties and towns. In the second half of the 18th century these documents were printed circulars. The orders on taxes and on exaction of arrears of taxes were sent to counties by Hungarian Chamber.³¹ Using mutual correspondence, individual counties were exchanging information on goods-prices regulations, as well as on markets as an important part of their economic and legal autonomy within former Hungary. The counties let the royal towns also know about tax liabilities and on granted market and toll privileges.³²

27 KAZIMÍR, Štefan. Pramenná hodnota cenových a mzdových limitácií žúp zo 17. a 18. storočia. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 1966, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 234.

28 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice...*, p. 21.

29 KOHÚTOVÁ, Mária. K hodnote daňových súpisov z rokov 1715, 1720 a ich údajom o počte obyvateľstva. In: *Historický časopis*, 1984, vol. 32, no. 1, p. 88.

30 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice...*, p. 21.

31 KLAČKA, Jozef. Kongregačné písomnosti Bratislavskej župy 1579 – 1849. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 1967, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 102-103.

32 KLAČKA, J. *Kongregačné písomnosti...*, p. 104.

Even in the 18th century the unified corn measure, which a number of Hungarian monarchs had tried to introduce, was repeatedly opposed by the counties as they tried to keep their local measures in their territory. In 1715 the King Karol III (Charles III) issued his first decree by the law No. 63/1715. According to this decree all counties and towns in Hungary should have used Bratislava weights and measures. Even in the years 1716 and 1719 the monarch's mandates tried to dispose of the inequality of weights and measures. Some counties did their best to introduce Bratislava measures, but vast majority was boycotting that unifying effort of the monarch and Mikuláš Pálffy, the palatine.³³ In its intimates the Regency Council ordered repeatedly Bratislava unified dry measure (metreta) to be used. That was the case even in 1727 when, under the threat of sanctions, the Council required information from counties and towns in what extent they were applying the unification of weights and measures. According to the law No. 63/1715 all old weights and measures should have been destroyed and following Bratislava measures, the new ones should have been used. The introduction of unified weights and measures in Hungary was confirmed by Hungarian diet in the law No. 14/1729. The Regency Council responded to numerous complaints on the usage of old weights and measures in the markets, fairs, pubs, shops, wind mills, when collecting tolls and in connection with in-kind rations from the serfs for their landlords their intimates in the year 1737 when the Council called on the counties to introduce the unified measures into practice. Some counties obeyed that order, but disunity in the use of weights and measures in Hungary went on.³⁴

Since the reign of Karol III (Charles III) and throughout the reign of his daughter Maria Theresa, the interference of the state in counties' functioning was gradually increasing. In the 40s of the 18th century the number of civil servants and the number of General Congregation's session increased from 2 to 3 in a year and in the year 1775 to 6 in that year.³⁵ General tax collector issued the records on the county's expenses, the register of taxed inhabitants and statements on domestic and military treasury. The county's annual accounts were sent for check up by the Regency Council. The Emperor put emphasis on the development of agriculture and therefore she ordered planting of new crops, i.e. potatoes in order to supply the inhabitants with enough food. Regular reports on the state of cattle and horses were sent to Regency Council by county's representatives. All counties sent also data about the export and import of corn, wine and cattle together with their food, product and services price regulations. General congregations dealt also with the state of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and dams in the given county's territory.³⁶

The counties were repeatedly ordered by the Regency Council to use Bratislava measures. They were obligatory even according to the intimates issued in the years 1742, 1751, 1756 and 1757. These obligations were issued due to the fact that metric disunity damaged Hungarian economy. The Council's efforts for the unification of measures in Hungary were all in vain by the half of the 18th century. But the Regency Council tried hard in its effort to put unified weights and measures into practice with respect to the laws of 1764. Although the counties and towns used the price tables for food in markets according to Bratislava measures in the years 1767 – 1780, that

33 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 28-29.

34 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 29.

35 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice...*, p. 22.

36 NEMCOVÁ, Z. *Život a správa Bratislavskej stolice...*, p. 23.

did not remove the variedness of weights and measures. Maria Theresa tried to push through the use of Bratislava measures in Croatia in 1760. At that time Zagreb County asked Bratislava County for the report about Bratislava dry measure (metreta) and bucket. The report included information about 64 Bratislava quarts (53.332 litres), or when using it for corn, the dry measure (metreta) covered only 48 quarts (39.984 litre). Bratislava town used copper model dry measure (metreta) with etched year 1551, but it was impossible to prove the time of origin. Its precision was questioned in 1775 by Varasdin and Zala Counties which were afraid of the application of unified measure due to expected economic damages. Bratislava County and Bratislava town were ordered by Regency Council to investigate and provide model measures.³⁷ The measurement revealed that copper measures, which were sent by Bratislava in 1773 to Zala County, were larger than dry measure (metreta) and bucket from Buda (64 quarts). The consequence of such disunity was the need to find out whether Bratislava measures were equal with Buda measures according to the law No. 31/1655.³⁸

Maria Theresa, the Emperor's, mandate and the Regency Council's intimates of the year 1776 ordered Bratislava County to find out precise size of Bratislava measures. Bratislava town sent the original dry measure (metreta) of the year 1551 and that of the quart for liquids. The dry measure contained 74 Bratislava quarts (61.642 litre) which was proved by pouring millet into it. The content of Bratislava County's dry measure was the same. The bucket, which belonged to Bratislava town, had 64 quarts. The town and the County suggested 64 quart dry measure (metreta) according to Bratislava bucket as the unified measure for Hungary. The economic committee of the Regency Council supported the 74 quart dry measure and in the intimate issued in October 1776 required that counties and towns in Hungary would use that unified measure and 64 quart bucket. The Council was concerned with the introduction of Lower Austrian dry measure (Stockerau) as the unified measure for corn in Hungarian territory and tried to persuade the Royal Court to support its introduction in the years 1764 – 1776.³⁹

In 1776 the Regency Council published the intimate in which, under the Emperor's mandate, asked the counties and towns to cooperate with its economic committee in checking their weights and measures. Bratislava measures should have met the Vienna ones. Bratislava town created precise procedure for the measurement of measures-and-weights accuracy. The dry measures (metreta) of the year 1551 and that of the 1776 were the same = 74 quarts. Even in the year 1780 the Regency Council tried to introduce unified dry measure in Hungary and ask Buda town for their measures. The committee in Bratislava re-measured the Buda and Bratislava dry measures and confirmed they were equal. Bratislava dry measure of 1551 contained 74 quarts and represented the only legal dry measure for corn in Hungary.⁴⁰ According to the intimates issued by the Regency Council in 1781, the measures of all counties and towns should have been adapted to Bratislava measure. In 1781 Buda municipality asked Bratislava to elaborate measures of that place. And the arguments about the size of Bratislava dry

37 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, pp. 31-32.

38 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 33.

39 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, pp. 34-35.

40 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, pp. 36-37.

measure were settled.⁴¹ The law No. 22 of the year 1807 presented for the first time the official size of dry measure and bucket as 64 quarts (54.2976 litre) for whole Hungary.⁴²

BRATISLAVA COUNTY

In the 17th and 18th centuries Bratislava County published several price regulations. The first one was published in 1614. It included maximum prices for the products of tailors, shoemakers, saddlers and harness-makers. That was one of the oldest regulations in the Slovak territory. That document was approved by general congregation of Bratislava County on the 24th March, i.e. on Monday after Palm Sunday, at its session in Šamorín.⁴³ That county's statute was written in its oldest congregation protocol of the years 1579 – 1617. It is an official book of a diplomatic category which includes recordings from general congregation sessions of Bratislava nobility, as well as those of judicial court (*sedria*), i.e. county's court.⁴⁴ In 1614 the prices of a pound of meat for Bratislava butchers were fixed in denariususes. For not keeping those prices, the butchers had to pay 12 gold coins to higher administrative official ("služni"), or in free royal towns, to the magistrate and municipal council. In the years 1668 and 1672 further general regulations followed. This price regulation was issued by the County in the time when then nobility did not have any control over prices of goods, products and services in the free royal towns Bratislava and Trnava within its territory. In spite of that, its content proves that the nobility of Bratislava County was well aware of the importance any control had over regional economy.

The end of the 17th century in Bratislava County, as well as in whole Hungary, is known for the search of various economic problems solution, such as the prices of meat, dates of markets and coordination in delivering portions and carter's trades for the army. The county published instructions for its ambassadors in Vienna when negotiating about the prices of meat in the year 1696. Because of the taxes, the meat was very expensive in the Hungary.⁴⁵

In order to stabilize economy, the year 1704 František Rákoci decreed to regulate the prices in counties. The Bratislava County's regulation of the year 1706 stated the prices of wheat, rye, mixture of wheat and rye ("suržica") barley and oats.⁴⁶ The prices of fodder, corn, cattle and the prices of raw materials affected also the prices of craftsman's products. The craftsmen production and merchants' trade very often lost.⁴⁷ Regulated prices of craftsmen's products could not cover production costs, not even be profitable. During of the estates uprisings Bratislava County suffered from great burden in supplying Emperor's or rebels' armies and so used price regulations of goods, products and services for keeping control over its economy in the beginning of the 18th century.

41 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 38.

42 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 48.

43 ŠPIESZ, Anton. *Remeslo na Slovensku v období existencie cechov*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 1972, p. 298.

44 KLAČKA, J. *Kongregačné písomnosti...*, p. 95.

45 Štátny archív v Bratislave (hereinafter ŠABA), fund (hereinafter f.) Bratislavská župa I., Kongregačné písomnosti (hereinafter BŽ I., AC), 1696, fasc. 14, no. 10 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.crarc.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

46 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pramenná hodnota...*, p. 234.

47 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pramenná hodnota...*, p. 233.

During the František Rákoci's II uprising, the Bratislava County territory was an important base for corn-supply for Hungarian rebels ("Kuruci"), as well as for the Emperor's army. The general congregation session took place in Trnava on the 25th August 1706 when Josef I, the Emperor, held peace talks with the rebels. At the general congregation of Bratislava County session there was approved the regulation of maximum prices for craftsmen's products in production and trade.⁴⁸ It is written in Hungarian language with Latin words in some parts of the text. The county authorities had to inform the Hungarian rebels ("Kuruc") about the price regulations on corn and on carter's trade for the army. Because of exceeded amount of applications for corn and food supplies, the county representatives resisted the pressure of both sides highlighting the bad economic situation.⁴⁹ The county representatives sent the news to Mikuláš Berčéni, the Earl, about the carter's trade regulations and those on the corn according to the number of gates (porta), as well as the news about the regulations of carter's trade and of the fodder according to the number of gates (porta), about the post connection in the county, on the regulations of carter's trade and fodder according to number of gates (porta) divided in the domains, towns and villages in the county. They informed him also about their bad economic situation in the year 1704.⁵⁰ In the following year 1705 the regulations of weekly supply of eggs and poultry, the supply of oat, meat, butter and eggs for the army at Červený Kameň, together with the regulation of bread transport from Trnava to Smolenice and the regulations of wages for the workers in the vineyards were approved by general assembly of the county.⁵¹

On the 4th February 1707 the particular congregation approved partial price regulations on salt, millet, oil and other market products.⁵² František Rákoci's mandate of the year 1706 resulted in county's obligation towards the army by stating the amount of supplies, their extent according to the gates (porta), the quota of soldiers according to gates, its obligation to appoint Pavol Amber the district commissioner responsible for supplying the army with food and looking after the fulfilment of military supplies to be kept in Bratislava, Trenčín, Nitra, Liptov and Orava counties. The district commissioner was also responsible for prosecuting the deserters and dealing with other criminals in the county.⁵³

During the uprising the food-supply for both the Emperor's army and the rebels in the western districts of then Hungary was not easy at all. For example, from June to December 1704 in the territory of Rab county there were five military regiments of Emperor's army with the commanders Teutschmeister, Viermond, Wernecky, Hannibal

48 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1706, fasc. 3, no. 1 [online] - Limitatio rerum venalium in Inclyto Comitatu Poseniensi 1706. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#3137343739x1143>

49 NEMCOVÁ, Ž. *Regulácia mier a váh...*, p. 19.

50 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1704, fac. 2, no. 2; fasc. 3, no. 3; fasc. 4, no. 5; fasc. 8, no. 4; fasc. 10, no. 2 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

51 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1705, fasc. 5, no. 2, no. 3, no. 4; fasc. 4, no. 1 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

52 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1707, fasc. 2, no. 1 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

53 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1706, fasc. 4, no. 1 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

Heister and Barajti who fought against František II Rákoci's troops. According to the final account, their accommodation and food cost 35,700 gold coins.⁵⁴

The regulations were valid at the markets and fairs not only in the territories of free royal towns Bratislava and Trnava, but also in landlord's towns and villages on the territories of landlords' properties. It was Bratislava County which appointed the prices of meat according to the place of sale. During the whole 18th century the changes in the prices of beef could be followed in written documents annually. The price could have been higher in the village, where there was the landlord's permanent residence, or in a town where the army stayed for winter. The prices of beef, given by the county, represented 4.5 and 5 denariuses a pound for the towns. Bratislava butchers or some other districts were preferred by higher prices. The prices of candles were approved by the county according their own table of the year 1764 which was dependent of the price of tallow. The prices of corn varied in markets because they were determined by local authorities.⁵⁵ The price of tallow was dependent on the market price of meat. Retailers complained about the free royal towns and landlord's towns procedures that required the goods to be sold under the regulated price for copper money.

The price regulations in Bratislava County of the year 1706 and the craftsmen listed in it illustrate difficult situation during František II Rákoci's uprising which devastated the economy of already exhausted Hungary. Crafts are part and parcel of our regional history and they illustrate people's everyday life not only in the territory of former Bratislava County, but also in the whole Slovakia. In December 1695 the general congregation session of Bratislava County decided about the validity of Bratislava measures in its territory since the year 1696 under the threat of confiscating grain when identifying the irregularities. Trnava and Šamorín protested against that decision and they were successful, and because of their privileges, they were given the exception according to which the county made them free from the use of Bratislava measures as the obligatory measure for corn. But it was valid only by November in the same year.⁵⁶

According to the inventory of gates of the year 1695, the amount of taxes should have been round about 2 million gold coins. The counties were not able to influence the price of salt because that amount was appointed by the Emperor in Vienna.⁵⁷ The loaf of bread cost 5 denariuses. It was dark bread (4 pounds 16 half ounces). One Bratislava measure of mixture of wheat and rye ("suržica") cost 50 farthings. The price of beef was lower around the Saint John the Baptist's holiday when the cattle were pastured. It was higher because of the expenses on the cattle around Saint Martin's. The price of meat in towns was the highest, the price of meat in little towns was lower and the price of meat in villages was the lowest.⁵⁸ The butchers kept complaining about the regulated prices of meat because they were losing their profit from its sale through the rural country. The prices of all kinds of cloth and leather were fixed by county public authorities with regard to butchers' requirements. The thirtieth's payment required the

54 GECSÉNYI, Lajos. Gazdaság, társadalom, igazgatás. Tanulmányok a kora újkor történetéből [online]. Győr : Győr-Moson-Sopron Megye Győri Levéltára, Győr Megyei Jogú Város Levéltára, 2008, p. 60. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/GYOV_SK_2008_Gazdasag/?pg=62&layout=l>

55 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pramenná hodnota...*, p. 242.

56 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, pp. 26-27.

57 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1699, fasc. 5, no. 2 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.cracr.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

58 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pramenná hodnota...*, p. 242.

amendment of meat prices for free royal towns and for landlords' towns and villages. Bratislava County regulated the prices of beef, pork veal, lamb and mutton, sometimes even fish. Other foodstuff and craftsmen's work was regulated from time to time, i.e. if the producers complained or when there was oscillation in prices of raw materials for appropriately regulated prices of craftsman's products. They were fixed by the counties in order the level of wages and prices for the goods were suitable for the craftsmen and merchants' living conditions. In the first half of the 18th century the prices of goods were low which influenced also wages and the prices of craftsmen's products. In the year 1706 the price of corn was regulated very rarely because the nobility was not interested in those prices very much. That article was dependent on weather because if the harvest was not good, the prices went up. In the first half of the 18th century the daily payments for bricklayers, carpenters and their apprentices, fixed by the local council in Bratislava County, were even higher.⁵⁹

Regency Council as the highest Hungarian administrative body recommended the prices of meat, corn, fish and craftsmen's wages, as well as regulated prices for the army in Hungarian counties. Mutton was sold for 7.5 denariuses a pound. The meat from cows for sold for 8 denariuses a pound in towns and 7.5 denariuses for the same amount of that product in little towns and villages. One pound of bacon cost 30 denariuses. One pound of fat was sold for 35 denariuses. One pound of soap cost 18 denariuses. Bratislava County made decisions about the prices of meat and the butchers from Bratislava, Stupava, Modra, Pezinok, Svätý Jur and Trnava complained very much about its regulation.⁶⁰

Bratislava County's decisions about the prices of meat varied because of the differences in kinds of corn in higher administrative officials' districts. The regulated prices were as follows: the dry measure (metreta) of wheat cost 2.8 gold coins. Ordinary prices without regulation would have been 19 gold coins a dry measure of wheat as the most expensive goods. According to the prices of corn the bakers baked white or brown bread. The prices of corn and cattle influenced the prices of products and craftsmen's wages. The prices of products and the level of wages were regulated by the county even in the years 1721 and 1734.

TEKOV COUNTY

Deputy district administrator, who was first mentioned in Tekov County in 1322, represented the district administrator. Up to the half of the 15th century, the deputy district administrator was the vassal of the district administrator. Since that time Tekov nobility voted the deputy district administrator during their general congregation session. Many noblemen had their property not only in Tekov County, but also in neighbouring Nitra County. Due to that, the same persons as district administrators and deputy district administrators were in the office for both counties. For example, that was the case of Forgáč family members.⁶¹ Because of the increased amount of tasks for the deputy district administrator, there was the need to appoint two deputy

59 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1726, fasc. 1, no. 4; 1727, fasc. 6, no. 18; 1728, fasc. 1, no. 6; 1731, fasc. 6, no. 6; 1741, fasc. 2, no. 10; 1790, fasc. 4, no. 9; 1721, fasc. 4, no. 5 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.crarc.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

60 ŠABA, BŽ I., AC, 1726, fasc. 10, no. 50; fasc. 10, no. 64; 1728, fasc. 9, no. 10; 1730, fasc. 10, no. 21 [online]. [cit. 1.5.2017]. Available on the Internet: <http://www.crarc.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3738#21>

61 NOVÁKOVÁ, Veronika. Vývoj správy a spisomňovania v Tekovskej stolici do roku 1526. In: *Slovenská archivistika*, 1988, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 36.

district administrators in Tekov County from the second half of the 15th century. Two noblemen in that post were first mentioned in 1427.⁶²

Higher administrative officials, who were the representatives of Tekov County, had been known from the year 1321. According to the law of the year 1290 those representatives and the district administrator had legal authority and published decisions and documents on the investigations, together with Tekov district administrator and the deputy district administrator from the year 1321 up to the year 1486.⁶³ The deputy district administrator, high administrative officials and assessors on oath were members of judicial court ("sedria").

In its session of the year 1693, Tekov County's general congregation renewed its statute of the year 1599 about the use of Bratislava dry measure (metreta) (Buda measures were the base) as the obligatory measure of 64 quartas, i.e. 54.2976 litre. That decree was extended earlier in the years 1636, 1650 and 1653. The year 1693 made the use of 64 quartas Bratislava measure obligatory in Tekov County. That act resulted in the protest of free royal mining town Kremnica.⁶⁴ In spite of the county's decrees, in the year 1694 Kremnica refused to use unified measures referring to its free-royal-town status. Majority of Hungarian counties used various local measures and their own statutes therefore unified measures could not be used in practice in Hungary.⁶⁵

On the 10th October 1686 the general congregation renewed the validity of price regulations in Tekov County (of the 15th December 1675) represented by Ladislav Hunyady, the deputy district administrator, Štefan Simony, the higher administrative official, Ondrej Hunyady, the notary and Adam Beliczay. Every craftsman's products should have been sold according to regulated prices. It was supervised by higher administrative official of the given district. The violation of that regulation resulted in confiscation of goods, or sanction of 12 gold coins. The next violation of the price was fined by 40 gold coins. The third violation was announced to county's judicial court. If the higher administrative official had ignored the announced infringement, he was fined 100 gold coins. The butchers should have first offered their leather to Tekov shoemakers. If they had not been interested, the leather could have been sold to other merchants. On the 21st March 1697 Tekov County approved partial regulation of blacksmiths' products in Hungarian language at their general congregation session in Topolčianky. For example, new horseshoes cost 40 denariuses, new ridge-plough in the lower districts cost 1.5 gold coin.⁶⁶ In the years 1686 and 1697 the County issued price regulations in pursuit of getting control over goods, products and services in order to improve economic situation of its inhabitants who suffered from high tax load from the Emperor's court and by consequences of war with Osman Empire.

Nitra County opposed at its general congregation in Nový Hlohovec on the 26th November 1698 because of disadvantageous old local measure used in Oslany town.⁶⁷ "Sapo" was its name. Before the year 1715 its content was 1.5 of Bratislava dry measure

62 NOVÁKOVÁ, V. *Vývoj správy a spisomňovania...*, p. 37.

63 NOVÁKOVÁ, V. *Vývoj správy a spisomňovania...*, p. 37.

64 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, pp. 28-29.

65 HÚŠČAVA, A. *Polnohospodárske miery...*, p. 26.

66 Štátny archív v Nitre (hereinafter ŠANR), f. Tekovská župa I., Kongregačné písomnosti, 1686, fasc. 17, no. 25; 1697, fasc. 27, no. 70.

67 ŠANR, f. Tekovská župa I., Kongregačné písomnosti, 1698, fasc. 28, no. 26, 67.

(metreta), i.e. 93.75 litre.⁶⁸ In the year 1706 the Tekov County and Hont County as well as Nitra County published common regulations. It was the butchers who often protested against regulated prices. In the year 1763 the butchers from Vrábľe town asked for new price of beef. In the 1769 the same request was presented by their colleagues in the whole county. It was the most frequent amount in price regulations in Bratislava, Tekov, Nitra, Hont and Komárno counties. Tekov County published its own general price regulations of goods, wages and services in the years 1700, 1704, 1705, 1713, 1725, 1743, 1752, 1754, 1756, and 1761. Those documents have not been dealt with properly yet.⁶⁹

NITRA COUNTY

According to county statutes of the year 1580 Trnava measures should have been used. In the year 1690 Nitra County decreed the unification of measures according to Bratislava dry measure. Its prototype should have been deposited with Nitra bishop.⁷⁰ In the year 1792 Nitra County published price regulations of parts of garments. In the same year Hont County published price regulations for garments. Komárno County published general price regulations in the year 1794.

František Rákoci was the head of Hungarian confederated ranks. On the 7th April 1706, according to his decree, the Economic Council, based in Zvolen, admonished Nitra County for not having published price and wages regulations. In the year 1706 Nitra County was obliged to send deputy district administrator, higher administrative official and one of the assessors on oath to the negotiations of counties which devoted their attention to regulations of products and wages. In its appendix the eight point's instruction for county's fiscal Pavol Rajčáni included the order to withdraw silver and gold coins from circulation and replace them with copper coins (*vőrös pénz*). It was the copper money of less quality to be used for trade transactions during 1704 – 1711 in the time of Rákoci's uprising.⁷¹ This document is an example of directive interference of Kuruc Hadsereg's representatives into county's economy in order to gain the most means for warfare but without proper analysis of economic possibilities of Nitra County.

SPIŠ COUNTY

On 28th October 1627, according to the law No. 40 of the year 1625, Spiš County published general price-and-wages regulation which was valid 40 years. In the year 1610 the price regulation took place after nobility and Spiš citizens' agreement was signed (13 deposited towns to Poland were included). On the contrary in the year 1625 these parties could not reach any agreement. The development of market price of the ell of thick Spiš cloth recorded the changes in the first half of the 17th century. Levoča ell (*Leutschauer Elle*) was an interesting unit in that territory. It was used in Levoča town and its surroundings in the 17th century. Its length was 62.2 cm. Even the Hungarian ell (*ulna hungarica, ulna minor*), which had been derived from the royal ell, was of the same length. From the year 1715 Bratislava ell (*ulna posoniensis*) should have been

68 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, p. 25.

69 ŠANR, f. Tekovská župa I., Kongregačné písomnosti.

70 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pôvod a sústava starých mier...*, p. 25.

71 ŠANR, f. Nitrianska župa I., Kongregačné písomnosti I., I. manipulačné obdobie 1640 – 1710, inv. no. 543.

used all over Hungary. Its length was 78.30 cm. The pattern of that unit (etalon) was walled up into Bratislava Town Hall gate.⁷²

Spiš County published also another general price and wage regulations in the year 1668. It took place because of the decrease of real value of money in the 60s of the 17th century which was followed by the increase of prices. The regulation had to stop further growth. The prices of goods, services and wages dropped. The regulations of the years 1682 and 1688 confirmed the regulation rate of the year 1668; the only exception were the goods made of leather which could have been more expensive. In the year 1704 Rákoci published the decree on the regulation of prices for the army which should have been published by the counties. In the year 1704 Spiš County published general price regulations as a tool for managing economy according to František Rákoci and Mikuláš Berčeni's decree on price regulations. In the years 1627 and 1706 regulated prices in the county were only slightly under the market prices of goods and products. It was the result of price regulations of the year 1627.

Since the year 1668 the Spiš thick cloth's regulated price was 20% lower than before. The regulated price of beef in Levoča of the year 1704 was 3 – 3.5 denarius. In the same year the market price reached 4 denariuses in comparison with the regulated price of the year 1696 which was 4.5 of denarius. Craftsmen and day-labourers' wages are important for social history. Economic history is represented in regulated prices of craftsmen's products and raw materials. But the low quality copper money was taken into consideration; some regulated prices were lower than the real ones and economy disorganization took place which resulted in publishing new regulations of the year 1706.⁷³ In the 17th century the county did not regulate the craftsmen wages. The prices were the same as in Bratislava County. There were many privileged areas situated in Spiš County territory which did not belong under its supervision. It was the Province of 13 Spiš towns whose territory was backed up by Poland. It was also Province of 11 Spiš towns and the Province of 10 Spiš lancers, who had their own administration. The trade with Poland played the key role in Spiš County's economics. Levoča and Kežmarok, as regional and international trade centres, played a significant role. Those factors influenced county's economy namely in the 17th and 18th centuries. Publishing price regulations the noble administration tried to control and protect the economy against the tax load from the Emperor's Court as well as the requirements from Emperor's and rebels' armies on food supply during of the estates uprisings.

Price regulations in the present Slovak territory represent a significant source for economic history of the 17th and 18th centuries because they offer craftsmen's products, their prices. These facts enable the study of the history of guilds in the counties. It may also contribute to the acknowledgement of social structure of landlord towns as the centres of manors and counties. Social history has been included in foremen and apprentices' wages of various crafts including the day-labourers. The investigated counties, i.e. Bratislava, Tekov, Nitra, and Spiš counties, represent only a small sample to enable further more complex research because this is an interesting topic worth that research. By means of publishing price regulations as the statutes and by keeping local measures and weights, County nobility tried to keep control over regional economy in the County's territory in hard times of the estates uprisings, in the war against Osmans and Emperor Court's interference into economic and legal autonomy of the counties.

72 BOGDÁN, I. *Magyarországi...*, p. 698.

73 KAZIMÍR, Š. *Pramenná hodnota...*, pp. 236-237.

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