

## LATE MEDIEVAL ESTATE ECONOMICS: THE EXAMPLE OF ŠKOFJA LOKA, SLOVENIA<sup>1</sup>

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At the south-eastern border of the German Empire a process of establishing a network of estates that was completed roughly by the end of the eleventh century, formed a new foundation for social and economic relations that remained practically unchanged during most of the Middle Ages. The agricultural potential of the territory began to be utilised in a more intensive way under the organizational framework of relatively large estates, whose emergence was mostly a result of royal donations of land to the upper social strata of the nobility (*Hochfreie*) and the clergy (*Kirchensfürsten*). While the estates of the former went through a number of changes and were mostly disintegrated during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and their parts reincorporated in new formations, those of the latter, to a great extent, continued into the fifteenth century in their original forms. Development of their estate economy and administration was adjusted to the fact that the residential seat of the lord was as a rule, situated outside of the given province.

Such an estate, that of the Bishop of Freising, Škofja Loka/ Bischofslack in Upper Carniola, present-day Slovenia, inspired the present study. There, well-preserved sources—charters, land registers (*urbaria*), and above all, estate account books—covered (with interruptions) most of the fifteenth century. An attempt is made here to draw an outline of the estate economics as well as some closely related aspects of its administration.

### • The Estate

The bishopric of Freising came into possession of its landed property in Upper Carniola by several imperial donations between 973 and 1033<sup>2</sup> as a part of the

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a shortened version of my M.A. thesis, defended at the Dept. of Medieval Studies, CEU, in June 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Urkunden Otto des II*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae (= MGH, D) 2.1 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1888), 56–7, No. 47; 78–9, No. 66; *Die Urkunden Heinrichs II und Arduins*, MGH, D 3 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1900–3), 35, No. 32; Franz Schumi, ed., *Urkunden- und Regestenbuch des Herzogtums Krain 1* (Ljubljana: privately printed, 1882–3), 146, No. 164. However, not all the donation charters are known. The latter was still

administrative and defensive reorganization of the southeastern borderland after the Hungarian invasion. In order to stabilise these vulnerable territories, the Ottonians tended to grant their land, which was by that time very sparsely populated, to the lay and ecclesiastical nobility who were establishing a new estate organization. In practice it did not mean that the Freising bishopric got an entirely depopulated property, but it was certainly the first to build an officially recognised system of administration on it.<sup>3</sup>

These circumstances enabled the bishop to create a geographically bordered and homogeneous estate on a territory of approximately five hundred square kilometres. The core territory consisted of two valleys, Selce/Selzach in the north and Poljane/Pölland in the south, leading from the western Carniolian border toward the east, together with the fertile lowland of the Sora/Zeier plain, which spreads in a northeasterly direction from the point where the valleys meet. Besides that, the bishop possessed a smaller area around Dovje/Lengenfeld, some twenty kilometres to the north, which although not contiguous, was considered a part of the Škofja Loka estate.<sup>4</sup>

During estate formation the broad framework of land units was kept. The original organization of a *župa*, a unit containing several villages governed by a patriarch, was modified in a way that the land was divided anew into individu-

seen in Škofja Loka in 1798 (V. F. Klun, "Diplomatarium Carniolicum," *Mittheilungen des historischen Vereines für Krain* 7 (1852): 59), while there is absolutely no information about the donation of the western part of Poljana valley. So far it was assumed (Pavle Blaznik, ed., *Urbarji freisingške škofije* (The land registers of the Freising bishopric), Srednjeveški urbarji za Slovenijo 4.4. [Ljubljana: SAZU, 1963], 26) that the trade contract about a not precisely located property in Carniola between the chapter and bishop of Freising from c. 1030 (Shumi, *Urkundenbuch*, 31–2, No. 23) referred to this territory, but, in my opinion, it more probably concerned the north-eastern part of the estate (*predium Strasista vocatum, et quicquid intra tres fluvios Libniza, Sabum, Zoura . . . situm est*), which Henry II in 1002 donated to bishop Gotschalk († 1006) *et post illius vitę terminum Frisingensis ecclesię canonicis* (MGH, D 3, 35, No. 32). The problem requires a separate discussion.

<sup>3</sup> The so-called *Supaneiverfassung*, a sort of self-government over the land by the community of free commoners, was, however, not recognized as a proper ownership and therefore the land, subject to these social relations, was considered a ruler's property. Sergij Vilfan, "Zemliška gospodstva" (Estates), in *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev* (henceforth *GDZS*): *Zgodovina agrarnih panog 2. Družbena razmerja in gibanja* (Economic and social history of the Slovenians: History of agriculture, vol. 2, Social relations and movements), ed. Pavle Blaznik, Bogo Grafenauer and Sergij Vilfan (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije for SAZU, 1980), 108.

<sup>4</sup> Pavle Blaznik, *Škofja Loka in Loško gospostvo (973–1803)* (Škofja Loka and the Loka estate [973–1803]) (Škofja Loka: Muzejsko društvo, 1973), 11–5.

ally possessed hides<sup>5</sup> (*hobae* or *mansi*). *Župe* were turned into lesser administrative units (*officia/āmbter*)<sup>6</sup> subordinate to the estate administration, although no ordinary estate-employed officials were introduced above them. The prior “clan chiefs” or *župani* (*sculteti/suppanen*) kept their position within the local community; additionally, they were incorporated into a newly established estate administration as heads of *officia*, who mainly ensured that their people delivered their dues in kind as well as labour services for the landlord.<sup>7</sup> Newly settled land (the first, medieval, phase of settlement took place between the early eleventh and mid-fourteenth centuries)<sup>8</sup> was organised in the same way, as the settlers were brought to the estate in relatively large, ethnically homogeneous groups, able to form separate *officia*. As a remnant of their foreign origin, different terms denoting leaders of the non-native communities can be followed deep into the fifteenth century; compared to the *župan* of the natives, the head of the Bavarian settlers from the territory of the Freising diocese was called *preco*, while the Carinthian immigrants from the possessions of the Freising chapter around Wörthersee/Vrbsko lake kept their *stifterius*.<sup>9</sup> The success of these arrangements can be demonstrated by the very low percentage of abandoned hides in the next centuries; 2,2% in 1318 and 3,9% in 1501.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of the fourteenth century the estate consisted of seventeen *officia* with almost 1300 hides (see *Table 1*). This relatively large territory was managed by a well-organized administrative system. At the top of it stood a resident administrator (*capitanens/pfleger*), responsible for the management of the

<sup>5</sup> The size of a hide depended on the type of landscape (flat land, mountain area, etc.); in the Škofja Loka estate it varied between 9 and 11 hectares. Sergij Vilfan, “Kmečko prebivalstvo po osebnem položaju” (Peasant population according to personal status), in *GDZS* 2.2, 322.

<sup>6</sup> As any translation into English would be misleading, the Latin term *officium* will be henceforth used to denote these lower territorial administrative units.

<sup>7</sup> Sergij Vilfan, “Soseske in druge podeželske skupnosti” (Rural communities), in *GDZS* 2.2, 36–8; Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 67–8.

<sup>8</sup> Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 39–41.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the Bavarian settlers of the *officium* Sorica, for instance, where settlement was still in process in 1291, it is stated in the land register that of the twenty hides they had at the time, “*preco, qui eisdem [Bavarians] pro tempore praesuerit, habeat unam [hubam] ratione sui officii.*” Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 165. A new, uniformed terminology was not introduced until 1501; the land register from that year uses the term *suppan* (*župan*) for the head of any *officium*. Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 68.

<sup>10</sup> Values are calculated on the basis of Blaznik’s table with inclusion of data on the *officium* Dovje from both land registers. Blaznik, *Škofja Loka*, tab. between page 430–1; Idem, *Urbarji*, 211, 315.

whole estate. It was he who represented the bishop in this remote place far away from Freising;<sup>11</sup> he appointed and deposed lower officials, controlled the usage of forests and rivers, took care of the defence system and town buildings, and even represented the bishop in the Carniolian diet.<sup>12</sup>

The second position on the estate in terms of importance belonged to the granary keeper (*granator/kastner*). The entire economic activity of the estate fell under the jurisdiction of the granary office (*kastenamt*): running the settlement, resettling fallow hides, gathering the peasants' dues and ducal taxes, storing and selling gathered goods. The *granator* was obliged to keep documentation regarding this activity and, at least until the mid-fifteenth century, report about it directly to Freising in the form of annual accounts.<sup>13</sup> This shows some degree of independence, which was later much diminished, as the administrator took over the care of estate account books.<sup>14</sup> When the link between the granary keeper and the central administration was abolished, the former became entirely subordinate to the administrator, to whom he reported annually about his office. In spite of this, it is likely that he kept control of the estate treasury.<sup>15</sup> As both of the offices were quite often granted to the same person,<sup>16</sup> it is not always possible to distinguish between the functions of each official. The situation was

<sup>11</sup> The distance of approximately 500 km took the bishop (with his escort) between two and three weeks. Pavle Blaznik, "Stare prometne povezave med Škofjo Loko in Freisingom" (The old traffic connections between Škofja Loka and Freising), *Loški razgledi* 15 (1968): 53–4.

<sup>12</sup> The bishop, as a landowner in Carniola, was obliged to attend the provincial diet, but because of the distance he tended to pass that obligation on to his administrator. Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 59–60.

<sup>13</sup> Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 60–1.

<sup>14</sup> This kind of practice is documented from 1488 onwards. Accounting Revision of the Škofja Loka Estate Granary Office, 1488–1490, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich, (= BayHStA), Hochstiftliteralien (= HL) 3, Repertorium (= Rep.) 53, Faszikel (= Fasz.) 295, Nummer (= Nr) 4, fol. 1 ff.

<sup>15</sup> This is indicated in a confirmation attached to one of the few preserved granary keeper's registers, which shows that the administrator was receiving money from the former: "Ich, Jacob Lamberger [the administrator], beken mit diser meiner handtgeschrift, das ich von meinem gueten frewndt Jorigen Sigesdorffer [the granary keeper] al[le]s das empfangen hab, das in dem register [of expenses] stett und sol im in der rayttung abgezogen werden." Register of the Škofja Loka Estate Granary Office, Feb.–June 1491, Archiv des Erzbistums München und Freising, Munich (= AEM), Heckenstalleriana (= Heck.) 164, fol. 29'.

<sup>16</sup> In the periods of 1349–1367, 1437–1440, and 1455–1488. Blaznik, *Škofja Loka*, 450–4; Account Book (= Acc. B.) Freising (= Fr.), 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 7, 47, 54.

more or less stabilised by the administrative reform of 1491, which at least for some thirty years re-established the “normal” state of affairs: namely, the division of responsibility.<sup>17</sup>

Table 1. Number of Hides on the Škofja Loka Estate in the Fifteenth Century<sup>18</sup>

| Officium         | Number of hides |       | Officium     | Number of hides |       |
|------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------|-----------------|-------|
|                  | Direct Admin.   | Fiefs |              | Direct Admin.   | Fiefs |
| Bitnje/Feichting | 278             | 29    | Žiri/Sairach | 87              |       |
| Gadmarii         | 18              |       | Hlevni vrh   | 29              |       |
| Godešič          | 83              | 10    | Strmica      | 70              |       |
| Poljšica         | 55              | 18    | Stripnik     | 82              |       |
| Brode/Wrodech    | 53              | 2     | Selce        | 84              |       |
| Javorje/Afriach  | 71              |       | Rudno        | 66              |       |
| Charinthianorum  | 80              | 2     | Sorica/Zarz  | 31              |       |
| Poljane          | 94              |       | Dovje        | 26              |       |
| Hotavlje         | 91              |       |              |                 |       |
| <i>Total</i>     |                 |       |              | 1298            | 61    |

However, the entire property was not joined under the estate administration; from the earliest periods the bishop followed the practice of recompensing his officials by giving them land in fief. The oldest land register from 1160 mentions twelve of them.<sup>19</sup> Their number increased considerably during the thirteenth century due to the extension of the administrative structure, but then it largely stabilised. In 1291, according to the later land registers, ninety-eight hides had been conveyed from the estate; this number decreased to ninety-two in 1318 and did not change again until 1501.<sup>20</sup> Some of the hides were donated to parish churches and monasteries or pawned to burghers and peasants (usually

<sup>17</sup> Blaznik, *Škofja Loka*, 170–4; Idem, *Urbarji*, 63, 364–6.

<sup>18</sup> Blaznik, *Škofja Loka*, 48–31; Idem, *Urbarji*, 211, 315; Pavle Blaznik, “Kolonizacija in kmetsko podložništvo na Sorškem polju” (The colonization and peasant subjects in the Sora plain), in *Razprave 2* (Dissertations, vol. 2), ed. France Stele (Ljubjana: SAZU, 1953), 175–87; Pavle Blaznik, “Zemljiška gospostva na besniškem ozemlju” (The estates in the Besnica territory), in *Razprave 2*, 250–56.

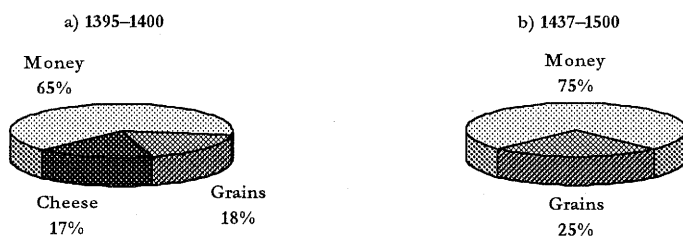
<sup>19</sup> “*Absque his restant duodecim beneficia, que diuisa sunt inter diuersos officiales . . .*,” Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 128.

<sup>20</sup> Blaznik, *Škofja Loka*, 53, 408–29.

split into small pieces);<sup>21</sup> however, according to a fief register from the 1420s, sixty-one hides were enfeoffed to estate officials (see *Table 1*).<sup>22</sup>

### General Features of Income and Expenditure

The economic potential of the estate was based mainly on crop production and livestock-breeding, in which the latter—as far as it can be determined on the basis of the rents—presented a less important part. Production was almost exclusively organised in the form of individual tenant holdings, which might have paid approximately one third of their yield to their lord.<sup>23</sup> The tenants delivered most of their rents in the form of money; moreover, the share of delivery of rent in kind decreased over the course of time. By the end of the fourteenth century the estate collected about two thirds of its income in cash, 18% in grain, and 17% in cheese; however, the latter began to be completely replaced by cash by the first half of the fifteenth century (see *Fig. 1*). Thus, the share of money in the estate income rose to three quarters in the period 1437–1500. A detailed analysis shows that the actual growth must have occurred between 1400 and 1437,<sup>24</sup> when the share of goods decreased proportionally (see *Fig. 2/a, b*). However, the rise in the percentage from grain in this period (25%) is due to rising prices, especially in the last decade of the century (see *Fig. 3*).



*Figure 1. Proportionate sources of income for the Škofja Loka estate 1395–1500.*

<sup>21</sup> Blaznik, “Kolonizacija,” 187–202.

<sup>22</sup> Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 222–40; Idem, “Kolonizacija,” 175–87.

<sup>23</sup> Although, it is impossible to investigate the estate production beyond the rents, according to some opinions cca. one-third would be an acceptable proportion. Pavle Blaznik, “Podložniške obveznosti do zemljiškega gospostva” (Tenants’ dues), *GDZS* 2.2, 257.

<sup>24</sup> No compatible sources are available for the period between 1400 and 1437, but the situation is noticeable from 1437 onwards.

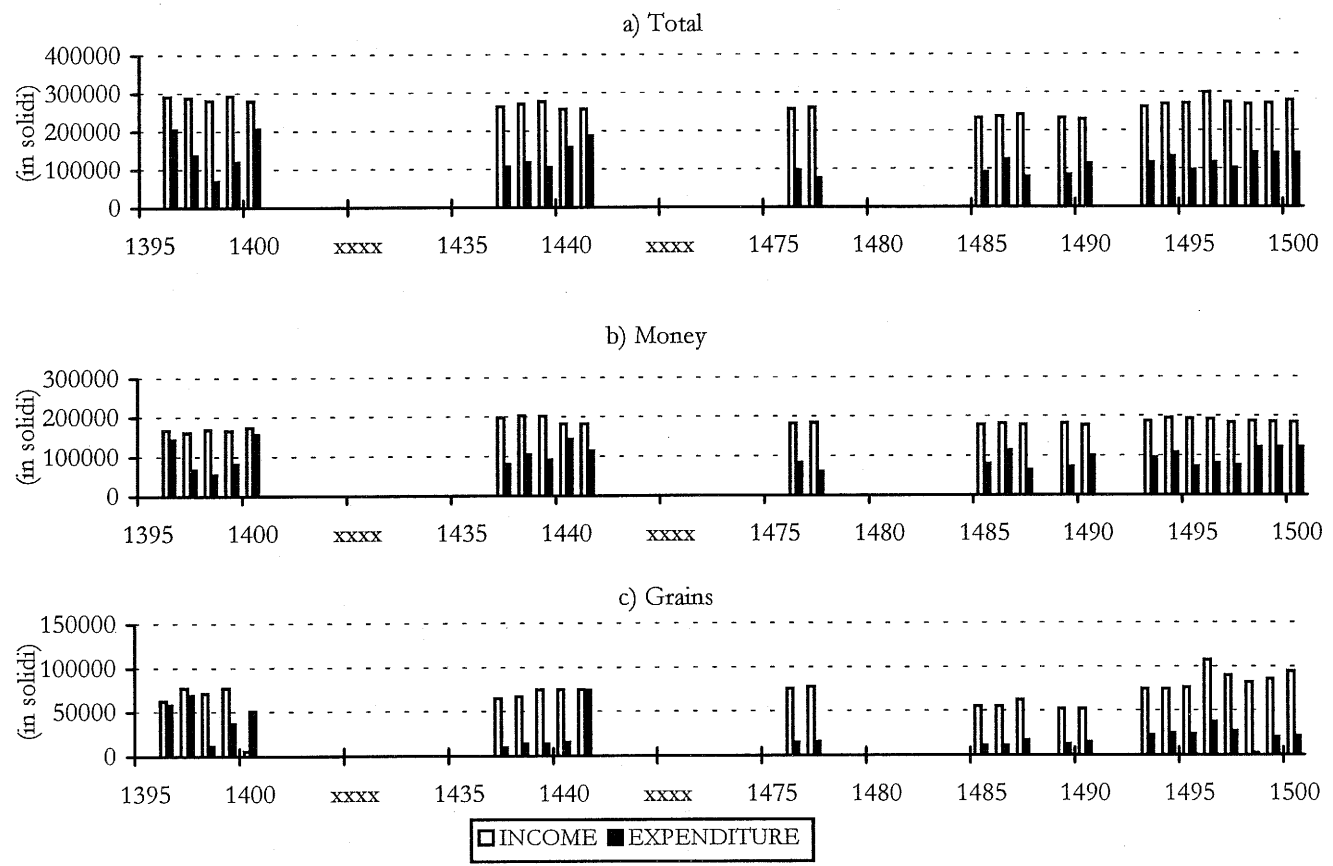


Figure 2. Yearly distribution of the income and expenditure for the Škofja Loka estate, 1395–1500.

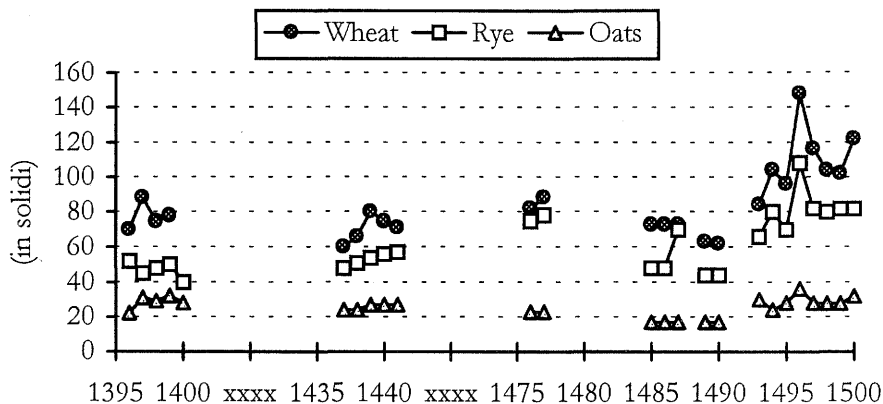


Figure 3. Fluctuation of the prices of grain per mut<sup>25</sup> on the Škofja Loka estate, 1395–1500.

Up to the end of the fourteenth century total income probably grew constantly, mainly due to an on-going process of settlement, but partly because of rising rent and higher prices.<sup>26</sup> In the 1390s it reached its highest level of approximately 1800 marks, which was never attained again until 1500 (with 1495 the only exception). A slight, but steady decline in income occurred throughout the fifteenth century, following an average of 1660 marks at the end of the thirties (1437–1441), 1620 marks in the late seventies (1476–1477), and 1470 marks at the end of the eighties (1485–1490), however, the economic growth is noticeable again in the last decade, when the total income reached around 1700 marks per annum (see Fig. 2/a).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The *mut* of Škofja Loka contained c. 123 litre. Matjaž Bizjak, “Žitne mere freisingških gospostev Škofja Loka in Klevevž” (Measurements for grain in bishop of Freising’s estates Škofja Loka and Klevevž), *Loški Razgledi* 45 (1999): 144.

<sup>26</sup> On the basis of existing sources it is extremely hard to give reliable conclusions before the 1390s. As far as settlement is concerned, remarkable changes can be noticed between the land registers of 1160, 1291, and 1318. Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 127–67, 179–218. The only more or less complete pre-1390s list of annual income, which is preserved from 1309, records a total to the tune of 918 marks 106 pence. J[oseph] Zahn, ed., *Codex Austriaco-Frisingensis* 3, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum: Diplomataria et acta* 36, (Vienna: Kaiserlich-Königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1870), 127–8. According to Blaznik, a growth of almost 50% in the next eighty-seven years is due to all three above mentioned factors. Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 111–3.

<sup>27</sup> In the territory under investigation during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Aquileia-Venetian monetary system was in use: 1 mark (m.) = 160 *solidi* (s.) or pence

Searching for the causes of this decline, it must first be pointed out that settlement, one of the major stimuli to the economic growth of an estate, was completed by roughly the mid-fourteenth century, which excludes any positive effect, even delayed, on the income in the period under investigation. Decisive factors can be found outside the estate, seen in the chain of events that affected the estate both directly and indirectly. A brief look at the chronology is quite illustrative:

- 1) In 1417, the Škofja Loka estate was pawned to the counts of Celje/Cilli for a period of four years in exchange for a huge loan of ten thousand guilders.<sup>28</sup>
- 2) From 1437 to 1443, during the war between Duke Frederick of Habsburg and the counts of Celje, the estate was exposed to fighting, especially in 1439, when it raged around Škofja Loka. The same year the inhabitants of Dovje complained about the violence done by the garrison of the neighbouring Celje castle Bela Peč/Fusine.<sup>29</sup>
- 3) A similar situation reoccurred some twenty years later, when Carniola became the scene of a struggle over the inheritance of the counts of Celje, who died out in 1456; a year later Škofja Loka was demolished and some villages in the *officium* of Bitnje were seriously damaged.<sup>30</sup>
- 4) In 1476, sixty hides in the Poljane valley were burned as a result of two Turkish attacks,<sup>31</sup> and finally,
- 5) in 1488, a peasant uprising broke out, mostly initiated by the unreasonable increase of provincial taxes.<sup>32</sup>

The above-mentioned disturbances resulted in two types of consequences: the first type immediately followed the event and was probably ameliorated in a few years; a 1477 account records a loss from burned hides in the amount of 13,5m. 16s., which was not even subtracted from the incomes but listed among

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(*denarii Aquilegense/Aglaier pfenning*). In addition, the florin and Hungarian guilder (gld.) were used with equal values of 86–93s. in 1396–1399 and 127–133s. in 1437–1500.

<sup>28</sup> BayHStA, Fr. Urkunden (= U.), 1417, March 7, published in P. Carolus Michelbeck, *Historia Frisingensis* 2.2. (Augsburg: Merz & Mayer, 1729), 222–3, No. 316.

<sup>29</sup> Blaznik, *Urbarji*, 30; BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 49, Nr 368.

<sup>30</sup> Franz Krones, *Die Freien von Saneck und ihre Chronik als Grafen von Cilli* (Graz: Leuschner & Lubensky, 1883), 140; BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 42, Nr 221–g.

<sup>31</sup> A list of hides burned down is included in Annual Account Škofja Loka (= Ann. Acc. Šk. L.), 1476, BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 36, Nr 194, fols 5'–6.

<sup>32</sup> Blaznik, "Upori loških podložnikov konec XV. in v začetku XVI. stoletja" (Peasant uprisings in Škofja Loka at the end of fifteenth and in the beginning of sixteenth centuries), *Loški razgledi* 2 (1955): 65–8.

the expenses.<sup>33</sup> Of far greater importance, however, were those disturbances affecting the estate economy over the long run. A reduction of one of the tenants' rents called *steyra annalis* or later *steyr(a) extraneorum* (to distinguish it from the town tax), because of the gap in sources first noticeable in 1437,<sup>34</sup> which cut 75 marks out of the annual estate income, can be put in connection with the discontinuity of authority between 1417 and 1421. It was never raised to the previous level again until at least 1500. This does not explain the further decline of income after 1441, however, and its rise in the early 1490s. A separate inspection of the fluctuation of the different shares in the yearly income from 1476 onward shows exactly the same trend with an even greater proportion for the grains and a rather stable situation in the case of money (see *Fig. 2/b, c*). In fact, these results match quite well the change of prices for the most important sorts of grains. In comparison to 1477, in 1485 prices of wheat fell 18%, those of oats 26%, and those of rye 38%, and the trend continued in 1489. A shift occurred in the early 1490s compared to the period of 1485–1490; the 1493–1500 average of the prices for wheat and rye grew 61%, while that of oats increased as much as 73% (see *Fig. 3*). The slight variations in the share of money are due to the fluid parts of income of minor importance, such as judicial penalties, *sterbrecht*, and *kauffrecht*, or rents paid every third year, for example *poklon* (*sbaigelt*), used for maintaining the constant number of sheep in the flocks.<sup>35</sup>

If it were hard to say anything reliable with regard to estate income before the end of the fourteenth century as far as expenditure is concerned, nothing could be said at all.<sup>36</sup> According to the oldest preserved account books, in the period of 1396–1400, 74% of the total was expended in cash, 25% in grains, and only 1% in cheese (see *Fig. 4/a*). The significant difference compared to the corresponding shares of the income, where cheese and grains were balanced, results from the fact, that almost the entire cheese supply was sold, which was not always the case with grain. On average, 24% of grain was still used for paying wages to estate officials, providing food for workers performing their duty of villeinage, or hosting the bishop's retinue and their horses during a

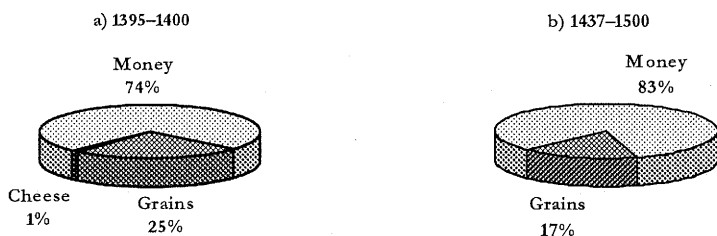
<sup>33</sup> Ann. Acc. Šk. L., 1477, BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 36, Nr 194, fol. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. lists of income in Acc. Bs Fr.: BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fol. 145' (1395–1401); Nr 70, fol. 7' (1437–1450).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. e.g. Ann. Accs Šk. L.: BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 516, fols 3–3' (1494); HL 3, Rep. 53, Fasz. 295, Nr 8, fols 5–5' (1495).

<sup>36</sup> Apart from some sporadic information on costs for *custodia castri* or wine purchases (e.g. Zahn, *Codex diplomaticus Austriaco-Frisingensis* 3, 126), there is no data available.

stay.<sup>37</sup> This changed slightly during the fifteenth century, according to the account books, mostly because of the bishop's absence. The share of grain dropped to 17% on account of increased sales, which resulted in a higher share of money (83%; see *Fig. 4/b*).



*Figure 4. Proportionate expenditure for the Škofja Loka estate, 1395-1500.*

In the years 1396-1400, total expenses oscillated between 434 and 1296 marks per annum. Lower amounts were noticeable in the period of 1437-1441 (668-1174m.), while in the rest of the century a gradual increase of expenditure can be observed as far as the average values of the documented periods are concerned: 540 marks between 1476 and 1477, 618 in 1485-1490, and 771 marks in 1493-1500. A very high level of annual expenditure for several years in the first two periods is due to exceptional situations in which the estate found itself at the time.

At the end of the fourteenth century a major project of improving the town walls was in progress. As far as we know, the town was surrounded by walls as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>38</sup> After almost one hundred years they might have become obsolete, required a thorough renewal, or perhaps had become too confining for the growing settlement. Whatever the reason, it resulted in construction activity of such dimensions that it cannot be compared with any other documented medieval period in Škofja Loka. The total amount of construction expenses in five years exceeds one thousand marks. The highest effort was put into the works in 1400, when more than 451 marks or 43,5% of the construction total were invested (see *Tab. 2*).

<sup>37</sup> E.g. Acc. B. Fr., 1395-1401, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fols 146'-7'.

<sup>38</sup> Bishop Conrad III invested 156 marks in improving the walls in 1314. Pavle Blaznik, "Loško mestno obzidje" (The town walls of Škofja Loka), *Loški razgledi* 4 (1957): 15.

Table 2. Expenses for Town Fortification in the Period 1397–1401<sup>39</sup>

| Year  | 1397           | 1398  | 1399          | 1400          | 1401          | Total          |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Amount                                      | 140m.<br>103s. | 100m. | 131m.<br>39s. | 451m.<br>33s. | 213m.<br>82s. | 1036m.<br>97s. |
| Share Concerning the Five-Year Construction | 13,6%          | 9,6%  | 12,7%         | 43,5%         | 20,6%         | 100%           |
| Share Concerning the Annual Expenditure     | 13%            | 23%   | 17,3%         | 34,8%         | ?             |                |

As already discussed, in the period between 1437 and 1441 the estate was witness to warfare. In the first four years this is noticeable in the accounts only through the increased activity of messengers<sup>40</sup> and an enlarged amount of losses (between 50 and 100m.), explained sometimes also as *von prunst wegen*.<sup>41</sup> It was not until 1441 that Škofja Loka had to support a squad of mercenaries. They cost the estate 286m. 6gld. and 240 *mut* of oats (= 40,5m.),<sup>42</sup> which explains the higher level of expenses in that year (see *Fig. 2/a*).

After 1476 no significant unusual expenses can be found in the account books. The gradual growth of expenditure should therefore be ascribed to growing operational costs of the estate, in accordance with general trends, which can also be observed in the fluctuation of grain prices (see *Fig. 3*). This is most efficiently illustrated by the expenses listed under the title of *potenlon et zering*, which covers the costs of messengers, business trips, guests, and the like. These expenses constantly increased during the given period; from 4,5 marks in 1476 to 151m. 58s. in 1490.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> The extension of the time-span to 1401 in this particular case is because separate accounts were kept for construction in this period. Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fols 85–6', 97–8, 148'–9.

<sup>40</sup> Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 9–9', 49–49', 56, 70'.

<sup>41</sup> Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 11, 52', 57', 72'.

<sup>42</sup> Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 123', 127'.

<sup>43</sup> The full (reachable) set of expenses reads as follows: 4,5m. in 1476, 9m. 57s. in 1477, 29m. 111s. in 1485, 28m. in 1486, 43m. 126s. in 1487, 50m. 31s. in 1489, and 151m. 58s. 1490 (the last decade of the fifteenth century is left aside, because the accounts from 1493 onwards do not specify this classification). Ann. Accs Šk. L.: AEM, Heck. 142, p. 229 (1476); BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 36, Nr 194, fol. 2' (1477); fols 4'–5 (1485); HL 3, Rep. 53, Fasz. 295, Nr 1, fols 3'–5 (1486); Nr 2, fols 3'–4 (1487); Nr 4, fols 5'–6 (1489); fols 12'–16 (1490).

Comparing the expenditures in cash fully characterises the general flow of expenses, which is not a surprise in light of a predominance of cash expenditures. In the few years when grain expenditure noticeably affected the total—1396, 1397, 1400, and 1441—this is always due to an increased consumption of oats, by the horses either belonging to the episcopal retinue or serving military purposes (see *Fig. 2/d*).<sup>44</sup>

The annual balance, which can be considered as the estate profit, reached a level close to one half of income in the period up to the 1441, generally speaking. From his Škofja Loka estate the bishop of Freising made between 1395–1400 an average of 870 marks a year or 48% of the total estate income; and in the years of 1437–1441, 814 marks or 49%. In the last decades of the fifteenth century the situation improved slightly: the estate profit reached 856 marks or 58% of the income between 1485–1490, and 946 marks or 55% in the years of 1493–1500. The percentage of 1476–1477, 77% (1084m.) is surprisingly high but this two-years period is too short to yield representative results, as the resources could have been accumulated for a few years and then disbursed (see *Fig. 2*).

### The Modes of Transfer of Revenue

As discussed, the costs of the estate management took roughly one half of the annual income. The other half represented the bishop's profit, but the actual revenue of the remote landed property—which Škofja Loka certainly was from the Freising prospective—depended on finding the most rational ways of transferring earnings to the places where they were needed (not necessarily to the residential and administrative centre). The transport of victuals, which was, according to Gertrud Thoma, practised during the early centuries,<sup>45</sup> was by the period under investigation replaced more and more by the transfer of money. Money was on the one hand acquired through the sale of goods, undertaken by the local management, and on the other hand increasingly provided by the peasants, who entered the market themselves and were able to pay their rents.

By the end of the fourteenth century only an insignificant part of the yield was still delivered in kind. In fact, the yield was not even a product of the

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Acc. Bs Fr.: BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fol. 14, 147 (1395–1401); Nr 70, fol. 127 (1437–1450).

<sup>45</sup> Gertrud Thoma, "Räumliche Mobilität als Folge von mittelalterlichem Streubesitz: Die Beziehungen des Bistums Freising zu seinen alpinen Besitzungen," in *Räumliche Mobilität und Grenzen*, ed. Thomas Busset and Jon Mathieu, Geschichte der Alpen 1998/3 (Zürich: Chronos, 1998), 153.

estate's land, but an imported commodity. The only thing that was still worthy of a long distance transport was good quality wine. Every year a caravan with approximately ten horses left for Trieste to buy *rebula* (*rainfall/rybollio*), white wine from the Istrian coast. The shipment was reloaded in Škofja Loka and sent further, usually as far as Oberwölz in Upper Styria, the centre of another estate of the bishop, where further transport was taken over by the local authorities. The wine was transported was considered a villeinage and, therefore, the peasants were not paid for it.<sup>46</sup>

Compared to this, much higher sums were involved in collection of money; this was the most usual way of realising the value of the estate resources. To some extent the delivery of the yearly profit was attached to the rendering of the annual accounts; however, it was not simply about paying up the balance. Until the mid-fifteenth century these financial acts took place before the bishop in person.<sup>47</sup> The granary keeper took a certain sum of money along with his accounts, but this was only the last instalment of the yearly delivery. The surplus (when the balance of the estate accounts was positive) was usually transferred into the next accounting period to cover current expenses. These sums were not very high (between one and three hundred marks) and their greater part consisted of goods that still had to be sold. Most of the money came into the bishop's treasury more frequently, by several remittances during the accounting period. The first preserved accounts (1396–1400) do not give detailed information on this; they only distinguish between the expenses covered through the receipts issued by or in the name of the bishop (*literae domini*) and sums which were delivered by the officials together with their accounts. However, those from the late 1430s and early 1440s reveal the transfer of money very clearly. Most of the yearly profit was sent to the bishop's Viennese residence in several instalments. Although the delivery could have been entrusted to any reliable employee (the transfers were probably initiated on

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<sup>46</sup> Elaborated entries concerning the wine purchase are part of every annual account. E.g. Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 9'–10, 51', 56', 71', 124; cf. Blaznik, "Stare prometne povezave," 50–2.

<sup>47</sup> Whenever the bishop paid a visit to his Škofja Loka residence—which at least at the end of the fourteenth century occurred quite often—it was most natural to use this occasion; otherwise, the granary keeper carried his accounts to the nearest residence used by the bishop at the given time. Among the annual accounts of the Škofja Loka estate from the period of 1396–1448 eight were rendered in Vienna and three in Škofja Loka. Acc. Bs Fr.: BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fols 10', 34, 81', 94, 146 (1437–1450); Nr 70, fols 7, 47, 54, 68, 122, 140' (1395–1401).

the bishop's request<sup>48</sup>) or exceptionally carried out by the granary keeper himself,<sup>49</sup> a few persons were regularly involved in these affairs. They belonged to the middle strata of the estate officials as far as can be judged on the basis of the rather short period from 1437 to 1441. In these years most of the deliveries were completed by the town judge Frederick: besides him, the scribe George and a certain Peter Mayer are frequently mentioned.<sup>50</sup> Sometimes they had to carry the money all the way to Vienna, but their usual destination was Villach/Beljak in Carinthia. There they turned over the money to John of Škofja Loka (?), the bishop's trustee, who arranged the further transfer to Vienna.<sup>51</sup>

By the mid-seventies this practice had changed. The changes accompanied the new policy concerning the rendering of accounts. In the second half of the fifteenth century the financial supervision was no longer done by the bishop himself; every year a mission was sent to all the bishopric's estates to audit the accounts. Not a single trace of remittance can be found among the expenses listed in contemporary accounts of Škofja Loka. On the contrary, strong proof exists for the auditing commission being entrusted with the entire transfer of money from the estate. In 1493, for example, the balance showed a surplus of 1089 guilders. One thousand of them were delivered in cash to the commission after rendering the account and the granary keeper gave them a promissory note for the rest, and they also took to Freising eighty-five guilders of the arrears from 1492.<sup>52</sup> But things did not always go that smoothly. In 1486 the commission managed to collect only 8,5gld. 15,5s. of the annual profit from the previous business year, while 1150 guilders remained unpaid. The reason for this peculiarity lay in the arrears that Jacob Lamberger, the administrator and granary keeper in one person, carried over from previous years; therefore, almost the entire collection of 1486–1469 guilders out of 1477,5–went on

<sup>48</sup> They certainly did not occur on a regular basis; the number of deliveries varied from three to six, the terms were not fixed, and the amounts of money were also very different. Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 11–11', 52', 58, 72'–73, 124'.

<sup>49</sup> Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fol. 72'.

<sup>50</sup> Acc. B. Fr., 1437–1450, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 70, fols 9', 11', 50, 56', 73.

<sup>51</sup> Johannes von Laakh was a well-situated merchant in Villach, also the town judge at the time, who arranged several money transfers for the bishop of Freising. Josef Žontar, "Villach und der Südosten. Zur Geschichte der wirtschaftlichen und verwandtschaftlichen Beziehungen Villachs und seiner Bewohner zu Krain, dem Küstenlande und Kroatien bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *900 Jahre Villach. Neue Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte*, ed. Wilhelm Neumann (Villach: Stadt Villach, 1960), 462–3. I was not able to determine whether the title "von Laakh" refers to Škofja Loka or not.

<sup>52</sup> Ann. Acc. Šk. L., 1493, BayHStA, HL 3, Rep. 53, Fasz. 295, Nr 7, fol. 16'.

account of these huge debts.<sup>53</sup> These commissions proceeded following the bishop's instructions and represented his authority; according to the instructions from 1487, they were given the power to remove Lamberger from his position if he were not be able to pay his debts, which actually happened in 1491.<sup>54</sup>

Before these commissions were introduced, a significant part of estate profit was spent by the bishop and his retinue during their frequent visits in Škofja Loka. Theoretically speaking, this was probably one of the most efficient ways of making use of the estate's profit, as all the problems and costs of the transfer were avoided. However, the image of the bishop's court travelling around and proportionally burdening all parts of the property with its presence would be quite misleading. The use of the secondary residences was predominantly a result of the bishop's administrative activity;<sup>55</sup> thus their frequency of use changed with the current episcopal administrative policy. Once the auditing missions to all estates on a regular annual basis were introduced, the mobility of the bishop's court was considerably reduced. In the years between 1396 and 1400 the bishop of Freising paid five visits to Škofja Loka, of which three took place in 1400. In the previous year his retinue stayed there for sixteen days, spent 142m. 53s., and consumed 152 wheels of cheese, 63 *mut* of wheat and rye, and 466 *mut* of oats (the value of the goods equalled approximately 122 marks<sup>56</sup>), which was close to one quarter of the annual estate profit. From the mid-fifteenth century onward these visits became quite rare; four of them are recorded between 1449 and 1475,<sup>57</sup> but not a single one from the last quarter of the century. Instead of this, accounts from this period list expenses of the auditing commission, which were much lower: recognisable expenses varied between 10 and 13 guilders plus 24 to 44 *mut* of oats.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> "Dj rät so zw Lakch sein gebesen, haben eingenomen alte schuld von dem pfleger facit 7<sup>m</sup> viii<sup>lvi</sup> ducaten s. 32, item von der neuen schuld ducaten viii<sup>lvi</sup> s. xv<sup>lvi</sup>, . . . item dj schuld Jacob Lamberger macht xi<sup>lvi</sup> ducaten." Ann. Acc. Šk. L., 1485, BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 36, Nr 194, fol. 6'.

<sup>54</sup> Pavle Blaznik, "Sixtova pisma" (Letters of Sixtus, bishop of Freising), manuscript, pp. 18, 39, Rokopisna zapuščina dr. Pavleta Blaznika, Zgodovinski Arhiv Ljubljana, Enota Škofja Loka.

<sup>55</sup> Thoma, "Räumliche Mobilität," 151–5.

<sup>56</sup> The prices can be found in Acc. B. Fr., 1395–1401, BayHStA, HL Fr., Nr 69, fol. 94'–96; cf. *Tab. 5*.

<sup>57</sup> The only proof are charters, issued by the bishop in Škofja Loka: BayHStA, Fr. U., 1449, April 22 (original lost, inserted in Fr. U. 1491, May 20); 1454, June 29; 1458, October 16; 1475, June 28.

<sup>58</sup> Only some of the later accounts specify this type of expenses: Ann. Accs Šk. L.: BayHStA, HL 4, Fasz. 36, Nr 194, fol. 2 (1485); HL 3, Rep. 53, Fasz. 259, Nr 2, fol. 2 (1487); Nr 7, fols 8, 16 (1493); HL Fr., Nr 516, fols 8, 15' (1494).

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The Škofja Loka estate proved to be well-organized and carefully administered by its episcopal owner, responding dynamically to most of the internal as well as external changes or threats. At least until the end of the fifteenth century the management succeeded in keeping the landed property homogeneous, losing only insignificant pieces of property in favour of fiefs, and reaching and maintaining the optimal level of settlement. While the latter was in progress—that is, up to the mid-fourteenth century—it was probably one of the main stimuli for the constant growth of the estate income, which stopped in the fifteenth century. Despite unfavourable circumstances in the middle of this century the income did not drop much; in fact its oscillation to a great extent corresponded to the general economic trends of the time. For most of the period studied the variation in total expenditure depended on occasional needs; the gradual growth on account of expanding administration is noticeable only in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. An increase of the proportion of cash in accounts of incomes and expenses in kind, which could also be ascribed to general late medieval trends, is here intensified by another factor; namely the long distance of the estate from its administering centre. The latter in fact represented a challenge to the episcopal administration searching for the optimal way of using the estate potential. It was found in transfer of cash combined with strict control over the local officials. This recipe survived long beyond the Middle Ages.

## APPENDIX

### STATISTICAL DATA<sup>59</sup>

Table 3.\*

*Proportionate Sources of Income and Expenditure for the Škofja Loka Estate, 1396–1500.*

| Period    | MONEY   |          | GRAINS  |          | CHEESE  |          |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
|           | Incomes | Expenses | Incomes | Expenses | Incomes | Expenses |
| 1396–1400 | 167 949 | 100 237  | 68 745  | 45 415   | 46 650  | 2 517    |
| 1437–1500 | 178 432 | 95 656   | 73 881  | 20 962   | —       | —        |

\* Cf. Figs 1 and 4.

<sup>59</sup> All the values in the tables are given in Aquileia–Venetian *solidi*.

*Table 4.\*\**  
*Yearly Distribution of the Income and Expenditure in Škofja Loka Estate, 1396–1500.*

| Year | TOTAL   |          | MONEY   |          | GRAINS  |          |
|------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
|      | Incomes | Expenses | Incomes | Expenses | Incomes | Expenses |
| 1396 | 291 172 | 204 269  | 168 126 | 143 136  | 62 390  | 57 915   |
| 1397 | 288 488 | 137 715  | 161 257 | 66 500   | 77 310  | 68 967   |
| 1398 | 282 008 | 69 464   | 170 142 | 54 606   | 71 066  | 11 940   |
| 1399 | 292 786 | 121 057  | 165 970 | 80 870   | 77 128  | 36 985   |
| 1400 | 280 082 | 207 364  | 174 250 | 156 071  | 55 832  | 51 291   |
| 1437 | 264 345 | 106 964  | 199 655 | 97 134   | 64 689  | 9 830    |
| 1438 | 270 916 | 118 454  | 203 624 | 104 267  | 67 273  | 14 187   |
| 1439 | 277 825 | 105 897  | 202 745 | 91 787   | 75 079  | 14 110   |
| 1440 | 257 063 | 158 047  | 182 099 | 142 974  | 74 964  | 15 100   |
| 1441 | 258 277 | 187 826  | 183 212 | 113 466  | 75 065  | 74 359   |
| 1476 | 258 022 | 97 204   | 182 045 | 82 989   | 75 977  | 14 251   |
| 1477 | 261 728 | 75 574   | 183 736 | 60 549   | 77 991  | 15 025   |
| 1485 | 234 443 | 91 233   | 179 333 | 80 521   | 55 109  | 10 712   |
| 1486 | 237 943 | 125 799  | 182 833 | 114 875  | 55 109  | 10 924   |
| 1487 | 241 861 | 79 645   | 179 020 | 63 192   | 62 841  | 16 462   |
| 1489 | 234 468 | 84 169   | 181 875 | 71 462   | 52 593  | 12 706   |
| 1490 | 230 713 | 113 590  | 178 295 | 99 381   | 52 418  | 14 209   |
| 1493 | 262 079 | 116 913  | 186 723 | 94 680   | 75 347  | 22 233   |
| 1494 | 270 069 | 131 822  | 194 898 | 107 226  | 75 171  | 24 596   |
| 1495 | 270 832 | 96 111   | 194 171 | 72 507   | 76 660  | 23 604   |
| 1496 | 299 923 | 117 701  | 192 046 | 80 333   | 107 877 | 37 368   |
| 1497 | 274 897 | 102 199  | 184 961 | 75 135   | 89 936  | 27 069   |
| 1498 | 269 274 | 142 042  | 186 777 | 120 106  | 82 479  | 21 936   |
| 1499 | 271 869 | 139 881  | 185 784 | 120 278  | 86 085  | 19 603   |
| 1500 | 279 725 | 141 242  | 184 805 | 120 278  | 94 954  | 20 963   |

\*\*Cf. Fig. 2.

Table 5.\*

*Fluctuation of Prices of Grain per Mut in the Škofja Loka Estate, 1396–1500.*

| Year | WHEAT |  | RYE  |  | OATS |
|------|-------|--|------|--|------|
| 1396 | 70    |  | 52   |  | 22   |
| 1397 | 88    |  | 45,3 |  | 30,7 |
| 1398 | 75,8  |  | 48   |  | 38,7 |
| 1399 | 78    |  | 50   |  | 32   |
| 1400 | —     |  | 40   |  | 28   |
| 1437 | 60    |  | 48   |  | 24   |
| 1438 | 66    |  | 51   |  | 24   |
| 1439 | 80    |  | 54   |  | 27   |
| 1440 | 75    |  | 55,5 |  | 27   |
| 1441 | 70,5  |  | 57   |  | 27   |
| 1476 | 82    |  | 75   |  | 23   |
| 1477 | 88    |  | 78   |  | 23   |
| 1485 | 72,5  |  | 47,5 |  | 17   |
| 1486 | 72,5  |  | 47,5 |  | 17   |
| 1487 | 72,5  |  | 70   |  | 17   |
| 1489 | 62,5  |  | 43,5 |  | 17   |
| 1490 | 61,5  |  | 43,5 |  | 17   |
| 1493 | 84    |  | 66   |  | 30   |
| 1494 | 104   |  | 80   |  | 24   |
| 1495 | 96    |  | 70   |  | 28   |
| 1496 | 148   |  | 108  |  | 36   |
| 1497 | 116   |  | 82   |  | 28   |
| 1498 | 104   |  | 80   |  | 28   |
| 1499 | 102   |  | 82   |  | 28   |
| 1500 | 122   |  | 82   |  | 32   |

\* Cf. Fig. 3.