

## *CENSUS VALACHORUM* IN MID-16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY UPPER HUNGARY

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**ABSTRACT:** The Vlachs in mid-16<sup>th</sup> century Upper Hungary had different obligations than all other subjects of the feudal estate. The sum of all fiscal obligations of the Vlachs is summarized in the census of the Muráň castle estate, which always designates it under the name “*census Valachorum*”, a phrase that includes the delivery of sheep, lambs, quarks, or pieces of harness for horses.

Their main obligation consisted in a number of sheep, lambs, and goats according to the size of their flock, which they delivered around the Pentecost. Another obligation typical of the Vlachs was the bellows cheese. For every flock was due a harness (*cinctorium*), named at times after its Hungarian equivalent, *heveder*. If this harness is common to a number of the feudal estates, on the Muráň castle estate it was supplemented by a wool fabric, called in Hungarian *nemez*, and in Latin *subsellium*, probably because it was used as felt padding for the horseback, under the saddle.

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Following the battle of Mohács in 1526, the northern parts of the medieval kingdom of Hungary came under Habsburg rule, by virtue of their title as kings of Hungary. Because of this administration's preoccupation with the fiscal incomes due to the royal treasury, the archives have preserved certain fiscal records from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century concerning the counties of Upper Hungary. The censuses, land records, and all other fiscal registers give the present-day scholar the occasion to investigate the rural and urban medieval society, as the various social, economic, political, and cultural realities are recorded in greater detail by these sources than they are in other types of documents.

These fiscal registers convey a lot of information about the Vlachs in northern Hungary, in a territory that forms modern-day Slovakia, with details that encompass those of the charters in the earlier centuries. Our attention was drawn above all by those information regarding the fiscal obligations of the Vlachs, in particular the so-called Vlachs' tax (*Census Valachorum*). Sometimes this is also called *census Ruthenorum* for the same settlements where other documents register the *census Valachorum*, and at times the *Ruthenorum* is revised in *Valachorum* by writing it over. We don't envisage a debate on the ethnicity of those people who paid this tax, as this would involve a separate research effort, able to sum all opinions and arguments given in the histo-

riography<sup>1</sup>. What is certain is that the said Vlachs' tax was paid by the sheep breeders that differed from the usual inhabitants of the feudal estate, as they were identified primarily by their Vlach ethnonym.

In this stage of the research, our approach will group the information on a number of feudal estates, organized around a castle. Without any pretention to deliver a definitive research on the subject, through the case studies that we analyse we hope to detect the characteristics of the Vlachs' fiscal obligations in northern Hungary in mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

### THE DUTIES OF THE VLACHS ON THE ESTATES OF THE ORAVSKÝ HRAD AND LIKAVA

The first information on the Vlachs' duties date back to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. On the occasion of King Matthias passing through northern Hungary, the delegates of the Vlachs in three villages asked for the confirmation of their ancient privileges. Two delegates of the Vlachs "of this country" presented before the king and in their own name and that of all other Vlachs living on the estates of Kňažia and Medzibrodie nad Oravou, which belonged to the Oravský hrad castle, and Valaská Dubova, which belonged to Likava castle, showed his majesty that the Vlachs possessed from ancient times certain liberties that up to that time their ancestors and themselves had kept. They then asked the king to be confirmed in their ancient rights and liberties:

1. to be exempt from any payment of the kingdom's general contribution.
2. to be exempt from any labour at the castles.
3. each Vlach has to present himself for judgement before the voivode elected by all Vlachs, having the right to appeal the king or the castellans of the two castles.
4. they are exempt from the toll duties for their goods that they bring to the market to sell, or those that they might buy at the market for themselves.
5. they are free to graze their sheep in the forests belonging to the two castles.
6. they have the following obligations to the castle: each year the Vlachs that raise sheep must give to the castle they belong to the twentieth part (five sheep in every

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<sup>1</sup> From the rich bibliography on Vlachs' colonization in Upper Hungary (largely nowadays Slovakia), with contradictory opinions on their ethnicity, we cite only few of the most relevant works: Karel Kadlec, *Valaši a valašské právo v zemích slovanských a uherských* (The Vlachs and the Vlachs' law in the Slavic and Hungarian countries), (Praha, 1916): passim; Václav Chaloupecký, *Valaši na Slovensku* (The Vlachs in Slovakia), (Praha 1947); Peter Ratkoš, "Problematika kolonizácie na valašskom práve na území Slovenska" (The problem of colonization according to Vlachs' Law in the territory of Slovakia.), *Historické štúdie*, 24 (1980): 181-222; Juraj Žudel, "Vývoj osídlenia Slovenska od počiatkov valašskej kolonizácie do konca stredoveku" (The development of settlement in Slovakia from the beginning of the Vlach colonization to the end of the Middle Ages), *Archaeologia historica*, 13 (1988):7-15; Ján Beňko, "Doosídľovanie južných (slovenských) karpatských svahov valachmi a ich etnicita" (The settlement of the southern (Slovak) slopes of the Carpathians by Vlachs and their ethnicity), in *Pogranicze etniczne polsko-rusko-słowackie w średniowieczu*, ed. S. Czopek (Rzeszów 1996): 279-289.

hundred); from one hundred goats likewise five bucks; every Vlach that owns sheep must deliver each year a ram and a bridle (*cingulo*); those who don't possess sheep must pay one Groschen for every ox.

In exchange for these exemptions, the Vlachs had to bear weapons at all times to protect the roads, namely bows or slings (*balistas*). They are obliged to guard all roads against villains. At the castellan's order, they must escort the travellers to safety. When necessary, armed young men must be at the castellan's disposal, for as many days as the latter requires. If one refuses the military obligations, he is to be mulcted with six sheep for the first time, and that same amount for the second and third time. If he refuses for the fourth time, all his assets are confiscated by the king.

Because they have the liberty to graze their sheep in the castles' forests, they are allowed to leave those forest for no more than a quarter of a mile. If they breach this limit and cause damage to the neighbours, the guilty party will pay six sheep. If one of the Vlachs will bring his sheep to graze in a different country or land, without enjoying this liberty, he is to be punished according to the custom in the realm as in other similar cases.

King Matthias acknowledged, approved, and confirmed this liberties of the Vlachs by means of an open letter bearing his signet ring seal, issued March 31, 1474 in the town of Ružomberok.<sup>2</sup>

King Matthias' document was later confirmed by King Louis II of Hungary in 1526 by means of a charter. In its turn, this was confirmed by a charter of King Ferdinand I in 1550, by request of the prefect of Oravský hrad castle. Ferdinand made a few modifications though. With reference to the tolls, the Vlachs were to pay the so-called *tricesima*, the duty collected by the treasury, while preserving presumably the exemption from other internal duties that were collected by the nobles. As for the weapons, instead of bows and slings that were already obsolete, the Vlachs were from then on required to use pistols (*scloppos manuales*). Besides the Vlachs on the three estates previously noted, others were added, who lived in Ustie nad Oravou and Bziny, two villages that had recently (*denuo*) came to pertain to Oravský hrad castle, and so the letter ok King Matthias failed to mention them.<sup>3</sup>

In 1551 the vice palatine Francis Reway took over Likava castle for King Ferdinand<sup>4</sup>. In the same year he made an inventory of the revenues from the village that belonged to the castle, an operation repeated a few years later. Between the two censuses there are minor differences, which might be explained by the census taker's changing perspective, but they offer invaluable data on the Vlachs living on the estate of Likava castle.

In Švošov lived four Vlachs, who had the obligation to provide a lamb on Easter, and had to pay the twentieth (*vigesima*) from their sheep on Pentecost. Those who did

<sup>2</sup> Kadlec: 494-496.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, 496-497.

<sup>4</sup> Magyar Országos Levéltár (The Hungarian National Archives), Budapest, Hungary, Urbaria et Conscriptioes (further it will be quote: UetC), fasc. 92, no. 4 (14.08.1551).

not possess a flock of sheep from which to be levied the *vigesima*, had to deliver five lambs. The Vlachs had also to prepare the shelter for their master's sheep, to shear them, to bring the collected wool to the castle, to defend the mountains and the forests together with the other Vlachs, to catch the villains hiding in the woods, and to travel on their own expense wherever their master sent them<sup>5</sup>.

Another census from the same period of time testifies for the conversion of the Easter lamb into a money obligation, equivalent to 50 dinars for a lamb. The twentieth from the sheep was also levied, as in the case of other Vlachs. Each Vlach had to deliver on Saint John the Baptist's day a quark and a bridle (*cingulus*) called *heweder*. The quarks were valued at 2 florins, while the bridles at 20 dinars. The Vlachs were also charged with preparing the sheepfold for their master's sheep, their shearing, capturing the brigands and thieves that were hiding in the woods, guarding the mountains and forests, as well as the military service on their master's command.<sup>6</sup>

In the village of Gombáš, along with the four serfs that paid the usual tax, there were present two Vlachs in 1551: one of them paid the tax like the rest of the Vlachs, but the other only gave a quark and a bridle.<sup>7</sup> A few years afterwards, the documents register only one Vlach, who paid the tax according to the Vlach custom: a quark and a bridle, valued together at 55 dinars.<sup>8</sup>

The Vlachs in Lúčky delivered on Saint John the Baptist's day a quark and a bridle for every plot of land. On Easter they provided a lamb, and on Pentecost they paid the *vigesima*. Those who did not own a flock of sheep, were held to deliver 5 sheep in the first year and 10 in the second.<sup>9</sup>

From all the Vlachs under the control of Likava castle were collected each year the twentieth of their sheep flocks, totalling about 250 sheep, which could be sold for 125 florins.<sup>10</sup> One can thus estimate that the Vlachs on Likava castle estate possessed around 5000 sheep. With the exception of those on the estates of Švošov and Gombáš, there was further collected a quark and a bridle from each Vlach, valued in all at 14 florins.<sup>11</sup>

The Vlachs had also to provide workforce for their master's sheepfold and for shearing. On the size of this sheep flock the annual incomes offer a relevant image. Each year the estate sold lambs and barren sheep valued at 200 florins, gained another 200 florins from the dairy products, and a further 32 florins from selling the shorn wool.<sup>12</sup> If we consider the price of a sheep at 50 dinars, it follows that every year

<sup>5</sup> UetC, fasc. 99, no. 21 (Regestum super numero et labore colonorum et proventibus arcis Lykawa 1551): 4.

<sup>6</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72 (Pertinentia et Proventus castri Likawa): 29: "Exigitur ab eis vigesima pars agnorum sicut ab aliis Walachis".

<sup>7</sup> UetC, fasc. 99, no. 21: 5.

<sup>8</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72: 30: "qui seorsim censum et redditum dat secundum modum Walachorum".

<sup>9</sup> UetC, fasc. 99, no. 21: 14.

<sup>10</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72: 36.

<sup>11</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72: 37.

<sup>12</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72: 36-37.

around 400 lambs and barren sheep were being sold. The price for a quark was also 50 dinars, indicating a production of at least 400 quarks from the sheep flock of the Likava castle landlord.

Each season 16 florins were levied in lambs and quarks for the use of the pasture lands pertaining to the castle by foreign Vlachs and those coming from other counties.<sup>13</sup> The villages of Bobrovec, Bobrovček, Pavlova Ves and Liptovský Trnovec jointly owned the mountains where the Vlachs' sheep flocks grazed by the mercy of the landlord, similar to the pasture lands of the town of Liptovský Mikuláš.<sup>14</sup>

The castle's income from the Vlachs is also evident in the inventory of the assets present inside the castle. In 1554 there were 183 sheep's quarks and two Košice jars filled with cheese (*Bronza*), except for one of them, which was a quarter empty,<sup>15</sup> and in a different place there were 76 little jars filled with bellows cheese, called *Brinza*.<sup>16</sup> Of course, these could as well have come from the castle's own flock, which was also looked after by the Vlachs, as previously noted. *Brinza*, the bellows cheese, is a dairy product particular to the Vlach shepherds.

#### CENSUS VALACHORUM ON THE MURÁŇ CASTLE ESTATE

The Muráň castle (in Slovakian Muráňsky hrad) was situated at the high altitude of 935 m, near the hill Ciganka, today in the National park Muráňska Planina, in the South of Poprád. The Muráň castle that appears documented from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (in 1271 *arx Mwran*) had a number of owners during the Middle Ages<sup>17</sup>. The castle's estate comprised the neighbouring villages and towns in a fluctuating number across the ages.

The most important of the military events it went through happened in the summer of 1549, when the Habsburg troops made of Spanish, German, and Hungarian soldiers besieged the castle for almost three months<sup>18</sup>.

Because of the wars in the region, the villages and towns depopulated at mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, Jelšava, a town situated just a few miles south from the villages herein analysed, numbered in 1557 only 15 villeins and 67 cotters, while 160 households had been ravaged by the Turks<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72: 37.

<sup>14</sup> UetC, fasc. 15, no. 72, p. 6, 9, 11 și 21.

<sup>15</sup> UetC, fasc. 96, no. 4a (Inventarium arcis Lykawa..., 9.09.1554): 3-4: "duo vasa Cassoviensia Bronza plena minus quartali uno".

<sup>16</sup> UetC, fasc. 96, no. 4a: 14.

<sup>17</sup> Pál Engel, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1301-1457* (The secular archontology of Hungary 1301-1457), I, (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1996), 370.

<sup>18</sup> Zoltán Korpás, "Egy spanyol zsoldosvezér levelei a XVI. századi középén vívott magyarországi háborúkról. Adalékok Bernardo de Aldana magyarországi tevékenységéhez (1548-1552)" (The letters of a Spanish mercenary leader from the middle of XVI. century about the wars waged in Hungary. Contributions on the activities of Bernardo de Aldana in Hungary), *Fons*, VI (1999), no. 1-2: 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 73 (Bona veteris dominii..., 1557): 392.

The censuses of the 16<sup>th</sup> century for the villages of the Muráň castle estate present a series of data concerning the Valachian tax (*census Valachorum*), while their inhabitants are repeatedly marked as Vlachs<sup>20</sup>. Sometimes the scribe, who has written the tax register, has used name Ruthenians, but he has corrected in Vlachs. For instance, in Kopráš, in 1584, wrote initially the serf paid Ruthenians tax (*census Ruthenorum*), but later he corrected in Vlachs tax (*census Valachorum*)<sup>21</sup>.

More information about the Vlachs taxes we can find in an investigation at the end of 1564 about the abuses of captain of the castle<sup>22</sup>. The absence from some inventories of the bellows cheese and quark is due to the negligence of the administrators, which not always registered these obligations. For instance, for the years 1563 and 1564 the Muráň castle administrator was criticized for not having collected the quotas or having failed to register them.

The sheep delivered on account of the tax were slaughtered by the butcher of the Muráň castle according to the food requirements. In 1564 the butcher declared that he had slaughtered 350 sheep and goats, a figure that comprised both the tax delivered by the Vlachs, as well as the animals bought at a price of 3 for 1 florin. In December 1564 the castle's cave kept 145 quarks collected from the Vlachs on account of their annual obligations.

That same month an inspector of the castle's revenues, Sigismund Korossy, uncovered a series of frauds committed by the Muráň castle's captain. In the village just beneath the castle, bearing the same name, Muráň, lived a day labourer shepherd, a certain Paul, settler from among the Vlachs (*Paulus, hospes Valachorum*), who declared under oath that he had under his care 675 sheep and goats, but that he did not know to whom they belonged, the captain or the treasury. Between June, 10 and July, 30 the shepherd had prepared 120 quarks, which equals to two-three pieces per day. He had also prepared bellows cheese (*Berenze*). The captain took all the cheese and quarks into his home inside the castle without declaring anything to the inspector. Although the abuses perpetrated by the captain are not central to our present inquiry, it is worth noting that the mercenaries serving at the castle complained against the captain, who used to offer them for their meals poor goat meat (*carnes caprinas nullius valoris dat eis in usum*), despite taking sheep from the Vlachs on account of their tax. Likewise, they did not know what the captain did with the quark delivered by the Vlachs, as they never received any at their table.

The inspector interrogated a number of officials and servants about the problems discovered. The first investigation concerned the fiscal duties of the Vlachs. A castle official declared under oath that he knew nothing about the sheep delivered by the

<sup>20</sup> An analysis of the Vlach villages on this estate was undertaken by Ila Balint, "Die walachische Bevölkerung der Herrschaften Murány, Csetnek und Krasznahorka", *Acta Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, III (1957), fasc. 1-4: 113-148.

<sup>21</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 77: 11 : "solvit census Ruthenorum. ... N(ota) : Ruthenorum id est Valachorum".

<sup>22</sup> UetC, fasc, 24, no.75 : 2-29.

Vlachs (*ratione tributi a Valachis*) in the past year. He gave further details that are extremely significant to the present research. From one hundred sheep two were due as tax, and from one hundred lambs again two.

Later on the inspector recorded another aspect of the tax paid by the Vlachs: “the labourers, which they call in their native language *pracowne* and *zthrwssene*, receive from each flock an old sheep and a lamb” (*etiam laboratores, quos ipsi wlgari lingua sua appellant pracowne et zthrwssene a quolibet grege accipitur agnus unus antiquus ac unus agnellus*). The word *laboratores* (labourer, that who works) covers a certain meaning. We shall try to indicate it with the help of the two words: *pracowne* and *zthrwssene*. Without attempting a linguistic exegesis, for which we lack the required abilities and knowledge, we signal that the first word, *pracowne*, is the medieval written form of the modern Slovakian word *pracovné*, that means job. The second word, *zthrwssene*, is more closed to the modern Polish word *strzyżenie*, meaning shearing. I suggest the Polish origin of this word, because the equivalent in Slovakian language is *strihanie*. The signification of the two words is underlined by the Latin word – *laboratores*, those who work or labourers. Thus we can deduce that this part of the tax paid by the Vlachs represented a duty on the shepherd’s activity and that it consequently was levied for the whole flock, regardless of the animal count.

Each Vlach who possessed one hundred sheep was required to supply two pieces for the horses’ harnesses: *subsellium wlggo nemeez appellatum ac cinctorium selle wlggo heweder dictum*. The first, *subsellium wlggo nemeez appellatum*, has to be felt padding for the saddle, because the word *nemeez* in Hungarian language means felt. *Cinctorium selle wlggo heweder dictum* has to be harness, because the word *heweder* in Hungarian language means harness or belt.

The obligations of the Vlachs shepherds were rounded by two quarks for every hundred sheep and a third one called *pracowny* (*item a centum ovibus antiquus quilibet hospes Valachorum dat caseos 2 et tertium caseum pracowny vocatum*). This third quark probably served the same purpose as the sheep and lamb for which Slovakian words were used. Moreover, on the occasion of tax gathering each had to supply one quark as gift (*item uniusquisque tempore decimationis dat caseum unum loco muneris*).

The Vlachs who did not have enough sheep to make for a whole fiscal gate or session offered annually three marten furs and for half session two marten furs. The cotters living in Polomka had to deliver four marten furs. From the Vlachs in Šumiac and Telgárt who lacked sheep or goats delivered in one year seven and a half marten furs for two and a half fiscal gates.

The same castle official told the inspector that the inhabitants, that is the Vlachs of the estate, did not usually pay the common tax for the royal treasury (*dica*) because the tax gatherers of his royal majesty were absent and there was no one to collect it.

In Lehotka the inspector recorded that there were six villagers plus the judge. Five of them raised sheep and paid the usual tax. The judge testified under oath that in

the *Zdychazkych* Mountains herded sheep of the captain, but he was unaware of their number<sup>23</sup>.

The Vlachs in Polomka and Bacúch had to deliver three bellows of cheese (*item utres wlgo Themlowy 3 Berenze refectos idem Valachi solent omni anno dare*)<sup>24</sup>. The word *Themlowy* has Hungarian origin, *tömlő* means bellows. The word *Berenze* has Romanian origin, *brânză*.

The tax for the sheepfold (*caula ovium*) in Mount *Thyzozka* was 2 florins annually and the same amount was also due for the sheepfold in *Thyowecz*.

In the 20 villages and towns that made the castle estate in 1584 lived Vlachs too, or at least the inhabitants who paid the Vlachs tax. There are three situations recorded by the census: one or more of the inhabitants in a settlement paid the Vlachs tax, all villagers who raise sheep paid the said tax, and those who did not raise sheep paid with a certain amount of cash on account of this Vlachs tax.

In the town of Muráň, along with other villeins who had fiscal obligations, lived three villagers who paid the Vlachs tax, which amounted to two sheep or two lambs in every hundred, a harness (*cinctorium*) for horses, one felt padding for the saddle (*subsellium*), as well as two quarks<sup>25</sup>. In the village of Mokrá Lúka only one villein of the inhabitants paid the Vlachs tax<sup>26</sup>. In another village on the estate, Kysnow, a census taken in 1598 shows that among the 10 villeins two (probably Andre Koprascski și Michal Koprascski who, by their name, seem to originate from Kopráš) paid the Vlachs tax because they raised sheep<sup>27</sup>. All the above cases prove that the Vlachs tax was paid by the sheep owners, regardless of the village they settled in and irrespective of the fact that the village was not entirely populated by Vlachs. It was in practice a customization of the duty, the Vlachs and those assimilated to them having to pay the said tax, while other subjects delivered other obligations.

Three neighbouring villages under Ottoman rule, Revúcka Lehota, Mnišany, and Kopráš, had a common bailiff in 1584 who administered the Vlachs tax owed to the castle. The census taker made a short notice next to his name that he paid the Vlachs tax and later someone else, to avoid any confusion, added that he did not pay it for himself, but rather for the three villages of which inhabitants were shepherds and that the bailiff administered this revenue. On account of the same tax, the three villages delivered annually a bellow of cheese<sup>28</sup>. The case of these three villages raises a few neces-

<sup>23</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 75 : 26.

<sup>24</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.75:26.

<sup>25</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 77:1: "Isti solvunt census Valachorum, id est de singulis centum ovibus dant per annum oves sive agnos duos, cingulum equinum unum et subsellium similiter unum. De caseis vero centenis solvunt caseos duos. »

<sup>26</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 77:13 : "Unicus saltem est hic colonus Jacobus Helpensky solvit census Wala-chorum".

<sup>27</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.79:35 : "Duo sunt, qui alunt pecora, ex quibus solvunt usitatum census Wala-chorum".

<sup>28</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 77:11: "Iste iudex trium istarum possessionum solvit census Valachorum. / Non pro se solum, sed ipsae tres villae solunt census Walachorum, quia sunt opiliones et iudex adminis-trat... Coloni istius possessionis dant pro census annuatim Brensei tunnam unam."



sary remarks: they were put under a common bailiff, among his tasks was the administration of the tax, by collecting and delivering it, finally, all three villages had to deliver conjunctively a bellow of cheese. This situation indicates a common origin of the three villages, perhaps two of them were formed by swarming from the initial one. It is possible that they shared the administration of the pasturelands because of this common origin and that would explain the obligation regarding the bellow of cheese. Towards the end of the century they had diverging evolutions, probably following the settlement of new migrants. The village of Mnišany started from 1592 to pay the tithe in sheep and lambs,<sup>29</sup> which was a different tax system from that of the Vlachs. In 1598 of the six villeins living in the village, only three who raised sheep paid the Vlachs tax<sup>30</sup>.

Three other villages, Telgárt, Šumiac, and Vernár delivered one bellow of cheese to the castle on account of their tax in 1584,<sup>31</sup> a situation that did not change by the end of the century<sup>32</sup>.

The village of Muránska Zdychava, which was under Ottoman rule in 1584, had a bailiff and four villeins. The census taker recorded that they were Vlachs (*Walachi isti*). Just like other Vlachs and Ruthenians they paid the tax from sheep and quark. On the day of St. George those who did not raise sheep paid one florin, according to a later note<sup>33</sup>. The Vlachs tax was converted to cash at some point. In 1594 for the Vlachs tax the village paid 4.5 florins<sup>34</sup>. In 1598 the villeins who raised sheep paid the Vlachs tax, that is two sheep for every hundred annually, two lambs, two quarks and for an entire flock one lamb that was called *Pracho Withy*, a harness (*cinctorium*) for horses, and one felt padding for the saddle (*subsellium*). Those who did not raise sheep paid one florin instead<sup>35</sup>.

We can resume the Vlachs tax (*census Valachorum*) in the villages on the Murán castle estate consisted in two sheep for every hundred sheep, two lambs, two quarks, a bellow cheese, a harness for horses and one felt padding for the saddle, one lamb, one old sheep and one quark as price of labor. For instance, in 1564 in 11 villages were 48 villeins who had 9188 sheep. They paid to the captain of the castle 204 sheep, 150 lambs, 195 quarks, 81 harness, 91 one felt padding for the saddle, and 145 sheep have been redeemed with the price of 33 denars each of them.

<sup>29</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 77 :12: “Anno 92 haec possessio primum coepit decimam de ovibus et agnelis dare”.

<sup>30</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 79 :25 : ”Inter istos colonos habentur tres, qui alunt oves, ex quibus solvunt censum Walachorum, ut supra”.

<sup>31</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.77 :12-13 : ”Isti sunt Walachi et habent sessiones colonicales integras numero 3... Tirgart cum duobus pagis Semecz et Wernerdorf solvit pro censu ad Muran 1. tunnam prinsae. Reliqui, qui oves habent solvunt censum Walachorum”.

<sup>32</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.79 :31.

<sup>33</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.77 :12: “Walachi isti habent sessiones colonicales integras numero 4½ ... Solvunt praeterea isti prout alii Walachi seu Rutheni de ovibus et caseis.”

<sup>34</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no.77:19.

<sup>35</sup> UetC, fasc. 24, no. 79:27-29: “Walachorum censum solvunt coloni, de singulis centum ovibus dant per annum agnos duos, agnellos totidem et duos caseos et ex integro grege unum agnum Pracho Withy vocatum, cingulum equinum, subsellium unum.”

THE FISCAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE VLACHS  
ON KRÁSNA HÔRKA CASTLE ESTATE

According to a census in 1570,<sup>36</sup> the Romanians on the Krásna Hôrka castle estate had their own bailiff, Bernard of Kovacsvas, which the document titled as mayor (*scultetus*), responsible for collecting the taxes in compliance with their ancient customs (*omnes volachi habent secundum antiquam eorum consuetudinem privatum iudicem Bernardum Scultetum de Kowachwagas*). The Vlachs' bailiff, mayor Bernard, possessed an entire fiscal gate together with his brother, along with a desert cotten's plot. It should be noted, however, that in the village that he inhabited no other Vlach lived. He was also the owner of a mill, for which he paid an annual tax of 4 florins to the castle.

The Vlachs were intermixed with inhabitants of other ethnic origins, but they paid distinctly their taxes. In the village of Pača Vlachs lived alongside Hungarians. We draw attention to the fact that one of the Vlachs was Benedict Magyar (the Hungarian) and he served as village judge, but he personally paid the tax to the judge of all Vlachs. This latter only collected the tax from the Romanians who possessed an entire fiscal gate and 50 dinars for a half gate, that is a total of 3 florins, as no tax for half gates was collected.

The Vlachs who owned sheep had to pay the castle administrator a lamb on Easter day. From their sheep and goats they paid the twentieth, totalling 56.5 sheep and 22 goats. By calculating the quarks and butter delivered and still to be delivered, ensues that for each flock, its size notwithstanding, one had to pay annually 6 quarks and 2 jars of butter. Both villeins and cotters paid the said taxes. Presumably one fiscal gate numbered several families, as the tax payers list mentions a few persons over those already registered in the householders list, for instance in Pača and Betliar. The Vlachs in Pača did not pay the tithe, nor the ninth.

By comparison, the Hungarians paid on St. Michael's day the usual tax of 1 florin for an entire fiscal gate and 50 dinars for a half gate, totalling 4 florins. With the exception of the Vlachs, all others paid the small tax on the three instalments on St. George's, St. Michael's, and on Christmas day, 8 dinars for an entire fiscal gate and 4 dinars for a half gate, in all 96 dinars that were left to the castle's administrator.

There were a number of common obligations for the Vlachs and the Hungarians. Each whole fiscal gate delivered a cart of firewood and a chicken on Christmas day, and every two half gates did the same. For pigs each fiscal gate paid 50 dinars, and every half gate only 30 dinars. The administrator was paid 4 florins and 30 dinars representing the equivalent of a jar of cherries.

In the village of Úhorná the Vlachs paid the same taxes. The bailiff was exempted from delivering the quark (*caseum non solvit, eo quia iudex est*), and this was pro-

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<sup>36</sup> Richard Marsina and Michal Kušik, *Urbáre feudálnych panstiev na Slovensku, I (XVI. storočie)*, (Bratislava, 1959): 248-260.

longed for one year after he was no longer in office, according to an account regarding a subject from Čierna Lehota. The Vlachs in Korna Lipa paid the same twentieth for their sheep and goats, quarks and butter, but had also to pay the tithe to the castle, but not the ninth. Those in Betliar and Malá Poloma paid the same taxes, only that their bailiff was not exempted from delivering the quarks and butter.

The Vlachs in Gočovo paid the same twentieth, except for their bailiff, who was once again exempted from delivering the quarks and butter. They were all exempted from the small tax, but instead paid the ninth to the castle and the tithe to their priest (*decimam autem parrocho eorum*).

The Vlachs in Honce did not raise sheep nor goats, since they paid no twentieth, but instead paid both the usual and the small tax to the Vlachs' bailiff, Bernard, three times 6 dinars for every half fiscal gate.

In Vlachovo the inhabitants, of which only 3 were Vlachs, paid the treasury the usual 1 florin tax per fiscal gate, and the small tax in three instalments of 7.5 dinars for every whole or every two half gates. Only the three Vlachs, including the village judge, paid to the Vlachs' bailiff a tax of 50 dinars on St. Michael's day and delivered the twentieth from sheep, along with the quarks and butter.

When the Vlachs settled individually in the villages, not always did they subject to the customary Vlach fiscal system. In Araňaška lived only one Vlach, who served also as village judge. Next to his name the Vlach ethnicity was registered. He paid the twentieth from sheep and goats, but was exempted from delivering the quarks due to his office. The same was true for the bailiff in Henckovce. In a different village though, Dlha nad Oravou, where two Vlachs lived, distinguishable by their Olah name, they were completely assimilated fiscally to the other inhabitants.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Vlachs had different obligations than all other subjects of the feudal estate. There was no identity of Vlachs' obligations in their entirety. There are differences from one area to another, from one period to another. But the census takers always mentioned them as Vlachs, in order to explain the difference in obligations from the rest of the subjects on the estate. The sum of all fiscal obligations of the Vlachs is summarized in the census of the Muráň castle estate, which always designates it under the name "*census Valachorum*", a phrase that includes the delivery of sheep, lambs, quarks, or pieces of harness for horses.

Their main obligation consisted in a number of sheep, lambs, and goats according to the size of their flock, which they delivered in the spring, usually around the Pentecost. The number of sheep varied from one region to another. Presumably it used to be initially a sheep with a lamb in every 50, like it was in Transylvania and in other parts of the kingdom of Hungary, a duty known as the fiftieth of the Romanians. The Diet in Transylvania established in 1548 the amount of the fiftieth or the sheep

tax of the Romanians: one sheep with lamb for every 25 sheep, one sheep with lamb and a young sheep for every 50 sheep, two sheep with their lambs for every 75, or two sheep with their lambs and a young sheep for every 100 sheep. With 2 dinars one could redeem the sheep over the number.<sup>37</sup> The memory of this fiftieth tax survived on the Muráň castle estate, where two sheep in every hundred were levied. On other estates it turned into twentieth, that is five sheep in every hundred. Besides, the Diet in Bratislava was to set at one point the amount of the sheep tax, thus uniforming the twentieth fiscal system across the lands under Habsburg rule.

Another obligation typical of the Vlachs was the bellows cheese. No matter the name it appears in the fiscal registers or the censuses of the castles, the bellows cheese is a clear indicator of the Vlach presence on that estate. In 1557 Šarišský hrad castle ruled also over 28 Ruthenian villages, meaning Vlach, some of these of recent foundation, which numbered among their annual obligations a measure of bellows cheese (*Brenze cubulum unum*) and a counterpane (*lodiceum unum*).<sup>38</sup> Toward the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century this typically Vlach obligation was sometimes transformed in cash. For instance, of the 37 villages on Oravský hrad castle estate, a sum of money was collected on St. Michael's day for the cheese (*pro Bronza*), according to a census in 1602.<sup>39</sup>

For every flock was due a harness (*cinctorium*), named at times after its Hungarian equivalent, *heveder*. If this harness is common to a number of the feudal estates, on the Muráň castle estate it was supplemented by a wool fabric, called in Hungarian *nemez*, and in Latin *subsellium*, probably because it was used as felt padding for the horseback, under the saddle. We can presume that this *subsellium* on the Muráň estate is similar to the counterpane (*lodix*) in the villages of the Šarišský hrad estate.

Similar obligations were shared by the Vlachs in Poland: the twentieth from the sheep, the bellows cheese, and the pieces of harness.<sup>40</sup> The harness is mentioned in the Polish sources as *poprąg*.<sup>41</sup>

These fiscal obligations of the Vlachs in Northern Carpathians are similar to those of the Balkan Vlachs. The Ottoman sources of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries indicate the tax of two sheep in every hundred, along with that of the harness.

Notwithstanding the various theories regarding the origin of the Vlachs, from the Balkans to medieval Poland, this identity in fiscal obligations is not fortuitous. We hope that future researches on the Vlach society in its entirety, regardless of the medieval or present day borders, will be able to explain why the Vlachs in Northern Carpathians shared identical fiscal obligations with their fellows in the Balkans.

<sup>37</sup> Sandor Szilagyi (ed.), *Monumenta comitalia regni Transylvaniae*, I (Budapest, 1875): 241.

<sup>38</sup> UetC, fasc. 4, no. 48:47-65.

<sup>39</sup> UetC, fasc. 1, no. 12:6-74.

<sup>40</sup> Grzegorz Jawor, *Așezările de drept valah și locuitorii lor din Rutenia Roșie în Evul Mediu târziu* (The Settlements of Vlachs' law and their inhabitants in the Red Ruthenia in the late Middle Age), translated in Romanian by Gabriela Gavril-Antonesei (Iași, 2012): 101.

<sup>41</sup> Dumitru D. Mototolescu, *Jus Valachicum în Polonia* (Jus Valachicum in Poland), (București, 1916): 45. Quotes from the documents in footnote 1: "unum poprąg ad equum", "unum cingulum alias poprąg", "cingulum equinum alias poprąg".