

Not demesne but money: lord and peasant economies in early modern western Slovenia

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Abstract

The paper discusses the feudal economy of the southern apex of the Elbian divide in European feudal history. It provides quantitative evidence that demonstrates how the feudal economy in western Slovenia was characterized by the weakness of the demesne economy, a substantial share of the lord's income coming from manorial rents, and by a high degree of non-agricultural activity among the peasant population. It ends with an explanation of why one path was taken, and others not followed.

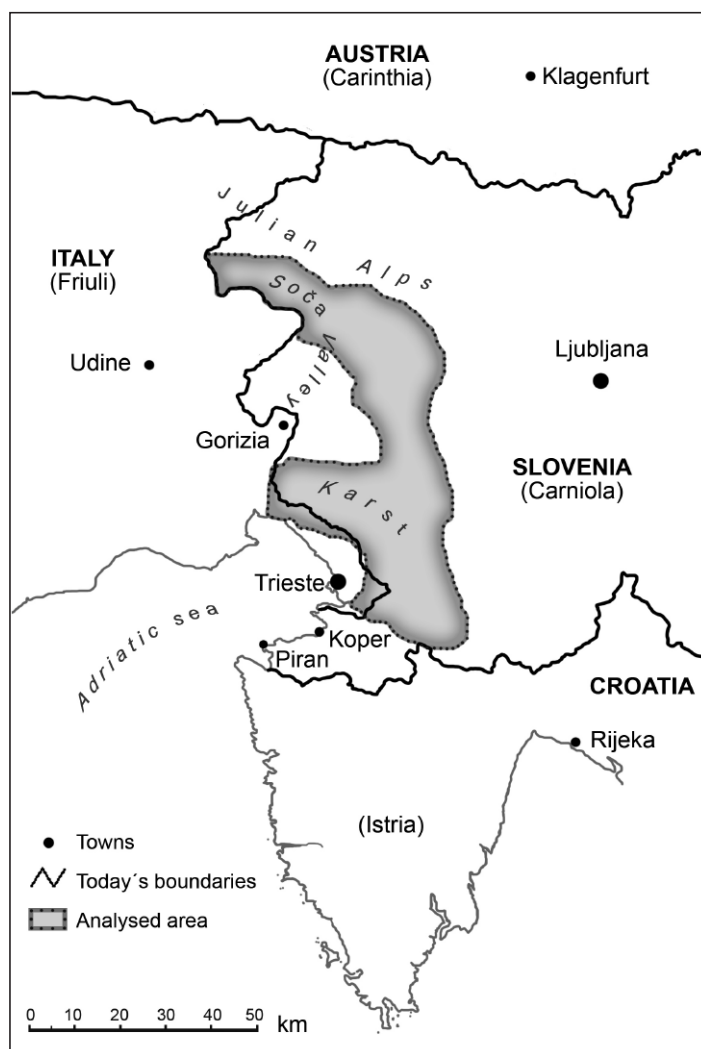
With a broad stroke, Ferdinand Braudel saw the 'second serfdom' expanding 'across ample spaces, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, to the Balkans, to the kingdom of Naples, Sicily, and from Moscow ... crossing Poland and Central Europe, to the approximate line that connects Hamburg with Vienna and Venice'. The overly simplified east-west divide in feudal development prompted well-founded doubts some decades ago.¹ This article discusses the nature of feudal economy at one of its apexes, namely in western Slovenia, located at the southern end of the divide, 'between Vienna and Venice', to provide the quantitative evidence so far lacking about the feeble role of the demesne economy in the area, and to identify alternative developments. In terms of feudal regimes, the Habsburg lands were characterized by significant differences between those in the west (Tyrol, Salzburg), the east (Upper and Lower Austria, Inner Austria), the north (Bohemia and Upper and Lower Austria) and the south (Inner Austria).² While this paper is concerned with western Slovenia, it is also a contribution to our understanding of early modern Central European feudal economies, in the Habsburg lands in particular.

Our analysis concentrates mainly on the Habsburg county of Gorica or Gorizia (*Grafschaft Görz*) with some reference to the duchy of Kranjska/Krain/Carniola, both of which were part of Inner Austria in the late sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The area

¹ F. Braudel, *Civiltà materiale, economia e capitalismo* (secoli XV–XVIII), II, I (1981), pp. 261–2. For some criticism A. Wyczański, 'Le paysan, la tenure et le bail en Pologne au XVI^e siècle', *Annales* 33 (1974), p. 772, and M. Aymard, 'L'Europe moderne: féodalité ou féodalités?', *Annales* 36 (1981), pp. 426–35.

² H. Valentinitzsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebun-

gen in Österreich in der frühen Neuzeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der innerösterreichischen Länder', in J. Peters (ed.), *Gutsherrschaft als soziales Modell. Vergleichende Betrachtungen zur Funktionssweise frühneuzeitlicher Agrargesellschaften* (1995), pp. 279–97.



MAP 1. Area of study, showing modern political boundaries.

Drawn by: Katja Ratoša.

bordered Venetian Friuli to the west and Venetian Istria to the south. The closest 'major' towns were the Habsburg towns of Trieste and Gorizia/Gorica and the Venetian ones of Udine, Koper/Capodistria, and Piran/Pirano, although in the early modern period only Udine exceeded 10,000 inhabitants, while Trieste, Gorizia and Koper were about half that size. The countryside was traversed by cross-border, long-distance merchant routes between Austria, Hungary and Croatia on the one hand and Italy and the Adriatic on the other, as well as by interregional north-south trade flows (from the county of Gorizia north to the duchy of Carinthia), and local countryside-town trade connections (Map 1).

In the area under discussion, that is the Soča/Isonzo Valley in the Julian Alps and the Karst plateau on the north Adriatic coast, the economic and administrative structure was marked by relatively large and compact manorial estates (*Herrschaft*) with extensive areas under the jurisdiction of manorial courts (*Landgericht*). Large manors usually possessed judicial authority, which means that the holder of the manorial court would usually be the

largest feudal lord in that area. In the vicinity of towns the pattern of landholding was more fragmented, with a large number of small estates.³

With the acquisition of the county of Gorica/Gorizia in 1500, the Habsburgs acquired the large manors and ample forests that became part of the Inner-Austrian 'Court Chamber' (*Innerösterreichische Hofkammer*), which managed the estates and finances of the Habsburg archdukes. In the sixteenth century the Habsburg archdukes would grant the manors in this area in the form of 'pledge' (*Pfand*) to both old and new nobles while in the first decades of the seventeenth century they would sell them.⁴ The pledges and sales led to a concentration of administrative, judicial, and economic power in the hands of few noble families, each having control over large portions of the countryside, irrespective of the location of the manors in the county of Gorica/Gorizia or in the duchy of Carniola. The first two centuries of the modern era were therefore marked by a long process of temporary or permanent alienation of administrative, jurisdictional, and economic rights and finally the cameral estates themselves to the benefit of local elites. This means that the institutional preconditions for the development of the demesne economy were present. The necessary preconditions of local, interregional and international markets were also present.

The extant archival material offers two types of sources that provide a relatively integrated picture and are particularly valuable for research into the economic and social conditions of the countryside. These are manorial extents (*Urbar*) and summary statements of the annual income of manors (*Einkommens-Extrakt*). Manorial extents have been extensively used by Slovene and Austrian historians,⁵ as have the summaries of annual income, although to a lesser extent in Slovenia.⁶ Both sources offer a rather static picture, and from their use only a structural and synchronic view can be obtained. The same is true for this area where the sources available are those found throughout the Habsburg lands generally.⁷ There is a lack of annual accounts in sufficiently long series to allow diachronic reconstructions of long- or even medium-term income dynamics on the manors.

The summaries of annual income were created to estimate the value of the manors when

³ S. Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospodstva', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovenecv. Zgodovina agrarnih panog* (2 vols, 1970, 1980), II, p. 200; A. Panjek, 'Un contributo per la storia economica e sociale del Carso nel '500. Presentazione di una fonte', *Metodi e Ricerche*, ns, 16/2 (1997), pp. 41–56. Smaller and scattered manors and estates were prevalent in number, for instance, in Carniola, F. Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele in zgodnji kapitalizem* (1991), pp. 39, 72. In the western part of the county of Gorica/Gorizia, that is in Habsburg Friuli, the agrarian structure differed considerably, being much the same as in Venetian Friuli.

⁴ The *Pfand* differed from a mortgage because the object of the transaction, that is the manorial complex, did not stay in the possession of its owner and credit-receiver (the archduke), but was transferred into the hands of the subject giving the credit (the nobleman), who would then manage and exploit it.

⁵ For the Primorska region, M. Kos, *Srednjeveški urbarji za Slovenijo (Urbaria aetatis mediae Sloveniam spectantia)*, III, *Urbarji slovenskega Primorja* II, (1954).

⁶ Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospodstva', p. 204; P. Blaznik, 'Podložniške obveznosti do zemljiškega gospodstva', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, II; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 230–1; most of all E. Umek, 'Reformirani urbarji deželnoknežjih gospodstev na Kranjskem', *Zgodovinski časopis*, 23 (1982), pp. 311–20, in Austria, H. Knittler, *Nutzen, Renten, Erträge. Struktur und Entwicklung frühneuzeitlichen Feudaleinkommen in Niederösterreich* (1989), and B. Bastl, *Herrschaftsschätzungen. Materialien zur Einkommens- und Besitzstruktur niederösterreichischer Grundherrschaften 1550 bis 1750* (1992).

⁷ See B. Grafenauer: 'Viri in literatura', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, I, pp. 7–12; Knittler, *Nutzen*, pp. 11–12.

they were given in pledge or sold by the Chamber. Before the first decades of the seventeenth century, all the large manors in the Primorska region (the littoral part of Western Slovenia) were owned by the prince, so these sources allow an examination of a large and compact part of the countryside that extends from the mountainous area of the upper Soča/Isonzo Valley (Julian Alps) to the Karst at its moment of sale. In this paper, we analyse the summaries of income for seven manors in the area: Senožeče (whose income summary was made in the year 1615), Schwarzenegg (1618), Socerb (1620), Reifenberg (1624), Vipava (1624), Tolmin (1633), and Duino/Devin (1637).⁸ These represent the greater part of the larger manors existing in the region at that time (except for the manors of Kanal, Novigrad and Prem), and cover most of the territory. Due to the short period of time in which they were compiled and the almost complete geographical coverage they offer, these summaries offer the opportunity to secure a detailed and relatively complete synchronic picture of the structural characteristics of the manorial economy in this area. To the west and to the south, in fact, there were no manors of the kind discussed here, but other institutional forms of tenancy and possession, as well as different forms of production relations, similar to those present in the nearby Republic of Venice.⁹ The period in which our summaries were produced, that is the first half of the seventeenth century, corresponds to a time when in Central and Eastern Europe the tendency towards the strengthening of the demesne economy was already underway.¹⁰ This makes our source suitable for our purpose, which is to verify through quantitative indicators whether we can speak, for western Slovenia, about a developing demesne economy.

The summary of annual income is a synthetic list of all the income of the individual manor: it lists the *Zins*, the tithe, different leases, the vineyard tax, income from grazing, *corvée*, and receipts from public law offices and manorial rights (fines, death duties, transfer fees, road tolls, taxes, mills, hunting and fishing fees and so on). In addition, the summary includes the value of demesne property or the revenue generated by the demesne economy. The analysis of this material raises a number of methodological problems. These include reconciling different units of measurement, the value of produce expressed in money (price), the information provided by the *Zins* and tithe, the estimate and calculation of *corvée* and demesne property, the differentiation between revenue and rent, and, last but not least, a correct systematization of the variegated forms of income. All these problems have been discussed elsewhere, so

⁸ Senožeče: Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, Graz, (hereafter StLA), IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 15, fos 10–19 (*Senošetsch*, 1615); Schwarzenegg: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 12, fos 1–5, 8–14 (*Schwarzenegg*, 1618); Socerb: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 18, fos 1–9 (*St. Serff*, 1620); Reifenberg: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, fos 29–33 (*Reiffenberg*, 1624); Vipava 1624: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, fos 17–21 (*Wippach* with *Baumkirchenturn*, 1624); Tolmin: urbar 1633, ASPG, AGP III – Urbari, nr. 49 (*Tolmino*); income summary, StLA, Archiv Lamberg, K. 175, fo. 2 (*Tolmein*, 1651); Duino: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 113, H. 7 (*Tybein*, 1637).

⁹ A. Panjek, *Terra di confine. Agricoltura e traffici tra le Alpi e l'Adriatico: la contea di Gorizia nel Seicento*

(2002), pp. 37–42, 61–6 in particular.

¹⁰ L. Żytkowicz, 'Trends of agrarian economy in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary from the middle of the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century', in P. Burke et al. (eds), *East-Central Europe in transition. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century* (1985), pp. 59–83. In the same publication see also L. Mákkai, 'Economic landscapes: historical Hungary from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', pp. 24–35; A. Wyrobisz, 'Economic landscapes: Poland from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', pp. 36–46; I. N. Kiss, 'Agricultural and livestock production: wine and oxen. The case of Hungary', pp. 84–96.

that here only the solutions that emerged from the earlier discussion are briefly presented as necessary.¹¹

Drawing on the summaries of manorial income made by the Habsburg Chamber, we first look at the forms taken by the lord's rent. In the following section we examine the scale of the demesne economy before turning to a discussion of the peasant economy. Finally we offer some thoughts as to why some developments did not happen in western Slovenia.

I

In our analysis of the lord's rents, the following categories are used. 'Land-rent income' consists of rents and payments in money and kind that the manorial lord received for the exercise of his rights over cultivated and non-cultivated land and the agrarian activities of the peasant population in general: from farms, plots of land, commons, and forests, from *Zins* and vineyard taxes (*Bergrecht*), tithes, rents, grazing rents and so on. 'Income from public functions' consists of receipts deriving from the lord's public rights and competencies in a broader sense (the manorial court, royal prerogatives, taxes) that were not directly connected with agrarian activities: so court taxes and fines, inheritance and sales taxes on farms, road and bridge tolls, taxes levied on goods entering the area, excise duties, parish fair dues, artisan taxes, and receipts from hunting and fishing. The third category employed here consists of rent in the form of labour services, the value of which is based on their money value as estimated in the sources themselves. This data can then be further divided to distinguish rent paid in money from that paid in kind or in labour services (Table 1).

As Table 2 shows, the pattern of rent receipts differed from manor to manor, but despite the differences, there are similarities, which are discussed here. Among the most salient of the common features there is the high level of income from land and rights which reflects the power in the hands of lords, particularly on the large manorial estates (Tolmin, Duino, Reifenberg, Vipava, Schwarzenegg).¹² Income from these sources formed 50 to 80 per cent of the total rent. As Table 2 shows, the share of rent in kind ranged from one third to two thirds, with the exception of the mountainous manor of Tolmin, where it reached only a fifth of the total value. Although land rent was most often taken in kind, about 15 to 20 per cent was received in money, so that on all manors money income exceeded a fifth of the total rent. In two cases it even formed as much as two thirds, as on the Tolmin manor (in the mountains) and in Socerb (due to the cash payments made at the toll-houses that formed part of the assets of the manor).¹³ The proportion of land rent paid as money was large since the lords tended to commute rents in kind (Table 3).

In manors such as Schwarzenegg, Duino, Reifenberg, Vipava and Tolmin, with vast lands and therefore a higher number of *Hube* and *Korb/Keuschler* (farms and cottagers), and

¹¹ Panjek, *Terra di confine*, pp. 45–66; id., 'Fevdalna renta in agrarno gospodarstvo na Krasu na podlagi cenitev gospostev (1615–1637)', *Acta Histriae* 12 (2) (2004), pp. 3–18.

¹² Within the judicial area of these major estates there were other landlords, too, while the same manors

also held farms located beyond the boundaries of their own manorial court. Considerably smaller and fragmented manors also existed; with the exception of the Socerb manor, these are not dealt with in detail in this paper.

¹³ StLA, Lamberg, K 175, fo. 2.

TABLE 1. Rent structure across manors: money, kind, labour services^a.

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Money</i> %	<i>Kind</i> %	<i>Labour services</i> %	<i>Total</i> %
Senožeče 1615	55.2	41.5	3.3	100
Schwarzenegg 1618	24.0	62.6	13.4	100
Socerb 1620	66.8	31.0	2.2	100
Duino 1637	51.3	32.3	16.4	100
Reifenberg 1624	22.7	59.0	18.2	100
Vipava 1624	26.8	62.5	10.8	100
Tolmin 1633	68.7	22.3	9.1	100

Note: ^a Dues in money include the *Robotgeld* (labour services converted into a payment in money), where collected.
Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 131.

TABLE 2. Rent structure across manors: land-rent, public functions, labour services.

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Land rent</i> %	<i>Public functions</i> %	<i>Labour services</i> %	<i>Total</i> %
Senožeče, 1615	57.2	39.5	3.3	100
Schwarzenegg, 1618	77.1	9.5	13.4	100
Socerb, 1620	41.9	55.9	2.2	100
Duino, 1637	54.1	29.5	16.4	100
Reifenberg, 1624	75.2	6.5	18.3	100
Vipava, 1624	82.7	6.2	11.1	100
Tolmin, 1633	47.0	38.7	14.2	99.9

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 131.

TABLE 3. Money income in the rent of manors.

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Land-rent in money</i> (gulden)	<i>Income from public</i> <i>functions in money (gulden)</i>	<i>Total</i> (gulden)
Senožeče, 1615	235.9	563.6	799.5
Schwarzenegg, 1618	455.8	297.5	753.3
Socerb, 1620	156.3	803.1	959.4
Duino, 1637	1,362.4	1,739.1	3,101.5
Reifenberg, 1624	752.7	304.3	1,057.0
Vipava, 1624	1,152.9	350.0	1,502.9
Tolmin, 1633	2,729.3	4,269.3	6,998.6
Total	6,845.3	8,326.9	15,172.2

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 46; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 130.

TABLE 4. Main forms of natural income in the rent of manors (quantities).

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Wheat (hl)</i>	<i>Oats (hl)</i>	<i>Other grain (hl)</i>	<i>White wine (hl)</i>	<i>Teran wine (hl)</i>	<i>Small cattle (head)</i>
Senožeče 1615	90.1	91.9	39.2	37.5	3.9	81.0
Schwarzenegg 1618	130.9	205.7	219.3	0.00	0.00	359.0
Socerb 1620	17.0	23.7	37.0	38.8	0.00	0.0
Duino 1637	107.1	143.5	15.3	17.6	66.8	318.0
Reifenberg 1624	185.9	186.2	142.4	191.8	97.3	11.5
Vipava 1624	187.2	154.9	156.6	251.6	197.3	150.0
Tolmin 1633	147.4	407.7	253.5	0.00	0.00	118.0
Total	865.6	1,213.7	863.4	537.3	365.2	1,037.5
Total in kg	64,921	45,512	64,753	–	–	–

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 48; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 130.

TABLE 5. Total rent across manors.

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Total rent (gulden)</i>	<i>Lord (gulden)</i>
Senožeče, 1615	1,427.97	Porzia
Schwarzenegg, 1618	3,146.96	Petazzi
Socerb, 1620	1,436.95	4,583.91
Duino, 1637	5,899.05	Thurn/della Torre
Reifenberg, 1624	4,641.34	Lanthieri
Vipava, 1624	5,683.61	10,324.95
Tolmin, 1633	11,026.01	Coronini
Total	33,261.89	–

Sources: Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', p. 47; id., *Terra di confine*, p. 132.

consequently dependent peasants, *corvée* formed a significant portion of the total rent, ranging from one tenth to one fifth of the total; in other cases the economic potential and importance of *corvée* was much lower.

Rent in kind was mostly received as wheat, oats and, where vines could be cultivated, as wine, a prevalence that can be attributed to their being fixed as forms of rent in the tribute registers as much as to the lords' preference. However, as demonstrated by the wide range of grain and other produce, agriculture was essentially mixed, responding to both the nutritional needs of the peasant population and to the harsh natural conditions, typical of karst and mountainous areas.

Those receiving rent in kind were provided with readily vendible market goods that could be sold in the towns of Gorizia and Trieste and along the border with the Republic of Venice. The fact is that the quantities were relatively limited, since it is possible to calculate that the rents in kind from the largest manors in this area (Table 4) would not be sufficient to meet the food needs of a single neighbouring town: the grain from all rents could feed 800 people for one

year while there would be only enough wine for 369 people for a year.¹⁴ In the larger manorial estates the total value of the feudal rent ranged from 3,000 to 6,000 *gulden* a year while in the extensive Tolmin manor it exceeded 10,000 *gulden* (Table 5). The quantities are again relatively modest. The total value of all the rents of all these manors would amount to 33,262 *gulden*, which, at the price commonly used in the manors' own estimates (not far off market prices at the time), could buy 8,316 hl wheat, which could feed 2,848 people for one year.

II

At this point, it is reasonable to ask whether the lords chose to intensify their demesne economy in order to increase the relatively poor incomes they secured through their manorial rents.

The possibilities of estimating the importance of the demesne economy are limited by the scarcity of data on the demesne estates. Most of our estimates from the early seventeenth century include the real property value of demesne estates, but not their revenue. In these cases our methodology is to compare the real property value of the demesne estate and the capitalized values of different groups of rent income of manors. In a few cases it is possible to use figures for demesne revenue as well. Where available, information on the quantity and type of servile labour obligations and the quality of the demesne lands is used in an attempt to interpret the role of demesne economy.

In the instances that allow us to make an estimate of the importance of demesne revenues in comparison with other sources of income, it is possible to see that the value ranges from 3 per cent to slightly more than 5 per cent of the whole (Table 6). The modest role of the demesne economy is confirmed if we use the real property value of the demesne as an indicator: in no case does its value exceed 3.5 per cent of the capital value of the manor (Table 7).

On the other hand, we have noted how in several cases the value of the *corvée* represented a consistent share of the rent at about 15–18 per cent, and that its capitalized value could reach such a proportion of the total value of a manor (Tables 1, 2, 7). It is reasonable to check in a different way whether the lords exploited this resource to such an extent, by examining the dimension and quality of the demesne estates in relation to the peasants' *corvée* obligations.

When it was surveyed in 1624, the demesne estate of the manor of Vipava consisted of one *Maierhof* (a farm incorporated into the demesne¹⁵), eleven meadows, seven fields, and four vineyards (whose yield was estimated in an earlier survey of 1572 at 655 litres of white wine and 1,035 litres of red). There was then the (unpopulated) Baumkircherturm complex, a tower to which was attached land itemized in a survey of 1572 as a *Maierhof* (with land covering a

¹⁴ The calculation includes average daily consumption of 0.6 kg of grain per person, the weight of 75 kg for one hl of grain, and 37.5 kg for one hl of oats; daily wine consumption was estimated at 0.67 lt. These averages are based on P. Malanima, *Economia pre-industriale. Mille anni: dal IX al XVIII secolo* (1995), p. 500; G. Panjek, *La vite e il vino nell'economia friulana: un rinnovamento frenato. Secoli XVII–XIX* (1992), pp. 155–63; A. Fornasin, 'Lontano dal mercato. Prezzi,

costi di trasporto e consumi dei cereali nella montagna friulana (secolo XVIII)', in A. Gardi, M. Knapton, F. Rurale (eds), *Montagna e pianura. Scambi e interazione nell'area padana in età moderna* (2001), pp. 56–7; Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', 49–50.

¹⁵ The *Maierhof* had often been composed of farms that later passed under direct management, F. Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs* (1969), p. 240.

TABLE 6. Demesne revenue in relation to the land-rent and income from public functions.

	<i>Land rent</i>		<i>Income from public functions</i>		<i>Robotgeld</i>		<i>Demesne revenue</i>	
	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%
Vipava 1572 (without Baumkirchenturm)	2,897	93.1	90	2.9			124 ^b	4.0
Reifenberg 1572	2,130	90.4	101	4.3			126	5.3
Tolmin 1633/1651	5,168	50.0	4,272	41.2	568 ^a	5.5	350	3.4

Notes:

Values in *gulden* are rounded to the nearest whole unit.

^a Incomplete sum.

^b Only the wine demesne production is calculated.

Source: StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fols 9–20, 29–40; Panjek, *Terra di confine*, p. 94.

TABLE 7. Value of the demesne estate in relation to the capitalized income value.

	<i>Capitalized land rent</i>		<i>Capitalized income from public services</i>		<i>Capitalized corvée</i>		<i>Real value of property</i>		<i>Real property value of forests</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%	<i>gulden</i>	%
Schwarzenegg, 1618	48,456	66.9	5,950	8.2	8,443	11.6	1,880	2.6	7,733	10.7	72,552	100
Socerb, 1620	12,030	38.8	16,062	51.8	647	2.1	294	1.0	1,999	6.4	31,032	100
Duino, 1637	63,879	51.2	34,781	27.9	19,321	15.5	737	0.6	6,000	4.8	124,718	100
Reifenberg, 1624	69,813	72.6	6,067	6.3	16,947	17.6	3,369	3.5	0	0	96,135	100
Vipava, 1624	94,059	80.7	7,000	6.0	12,613	10.8	2,940	2.5	0	0	116,612	100

Note: values in *gulden* are rounded to the nearest whole unit.

Source: StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 11, ff. 17–21, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 10, ff. 29–40, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 90, H. 12, ff. 1–5, 8–14, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 91, H. 18, ff. 1–9, StLA, IÖHKS, K. 113, H. 7.

total of nine *Tagbau*,¹⁶ approximately 3 ha), one garden, three vineyards, and some meadows. At that time the Baumkircherturm demesne was cultivated with the *corvée* of 16 *Huben* (larger farms), each of which had to provide four days of *corvée* with draft animals and eight days of

¹⁶ The sources do not allow a precise definition of the area of a *Tagbau* (meaning 1 day ploughing labour) in this area. One possibility is that they correspond to the *campo goriziano*, that is the 'Gorizia field' (equal to the *campo friulano piccolo*), measuring 0.35 ha. Other sources raise doubts about whether on the stoney Karst soils, the 'field labour day' could be the same as on the Gorizia and Friuli plain. Since most of the pre-metric agrarian surface measures in Europe ranged from 0.3 to 0.4 ha (W. Kula, *Measures and Men* (1986); A. Panjek, *Terra di confine*, p. 76), and given the harder work necessary on karstic and prealpine grounds, we apply here a conversion rate of one *Tagbau* to 0.3 ha.

manual *corvée*. No data concerning the quantity and form of *corvée* is available for the major part of the manor. It is only known that in 1624 *corvée* was compulsory for a total of 196 *Huben* and 220 *Keuschler* (cottagers). The different capacity of the latter is implicitly stated, namely that 'all have to at least help in manual *corvée* activities ... so that the *corvée* of each cottager can be calculated with that of another', that is on average or approximately. The 1624 estimate also mentions that the lord had implemented new, 'extraordinary' ploughing services, which amounted to adding 14 days a year to the regular *corvée*, but the peasantry preferred to pay in money (*Robotgeld*) rather than services. The new *Robotgeld* was significantly higher than the value of the 'old *corvée*'.¹⁷

Based on a valuation of 1624, the demesne estate of the manor of Reifenberg consisted of five meadows (52 *Tagbau* – approximately 18 ha), two uncultivated fields (2.25 *Tagbau*, less than 1 ha), two *braide*, some gardens, a wine cellar at Štanjel, and some partly derelict facilities (*Maierhof*). *Braide* refer to plots of land cultivated in a variety of ways, including orchards, vines, grain, and vegetables. In this case one *braida* included a vineyard and a cultivated field (2.5 *Tagbau* – a bit less than 1 ha), while the other included one cultivated field (10.3 *Tagbau* – approximately 3.5 ha). There is no data on the extent of the gardens 'situated all around the castle hill'. The manorial lord of Reifenberg could use *corvée* provided by 249 *Huben*, many of which were inhabited by several peasant families, 'all obliged to labour', and 524 *Keuschler*. Although the source does not specify the type of service nor the number of days of labour requested from each peasant, the sum of the *Huben* and cottagers, at 773, which also represents the minimal number of days of labour at the disposal of the lord, allows us to conclude that *corvée* was more than sufficient to cover the necessary activities on the 54.2 *Tagbau* of meadows and 12.8 *Tagbau* of arable land (partly covered with vines and gardens), of which the demesne consisted. It is thus probable that part of the labour force remained unused and that their *corvée* was converted into a money rent. The 1624 valuation does not provide any data on revenue yielded by the demesne economy, while in 1572 the average yield of the *braide* was 13 hl of white wine, 97 hl of *teran* red wine, and 100 *pesenali* of 'various grains' (rye, spelt, millet, and oats, approximately 1,600 kg). In addition, there were two *Maierhof*. In 1572 the one located in Branik, the village near the castle, maintained an independent cultivation function, producing 70 *pesenali* of mixed grain. Another was converted into a stable and winter and summer pasture for a flock of approximately 400 sheep.¹⁸

At Schwarzenegg the demesne land was larger. In 1618 it consisted of two *Maierhof* of unknown size (one was cultivated as a garden, orchard, and *teran* vineyard), and various fields and gardens, divided into four entire *Huben* for a total of 80 *Tagbau* (about 27 ha). In addition, there were some meadows, their production being estimated at 200 *Fueder* of hay, and forests. As with other demesne estates, no indications are available concerning the income earned from forests; what is known is their estimated real property value, which was significant. The Schwarzenegg summary accurately lists the *corvée* obligations of the subject population: 157 days of carrying services, 81½ days of ploughing, 146½ days of unspecified *corvée*, 367½ days of manual work, 268 *Fueder* of hay and grain to be transported to the

¹⁷ StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fos 9–20, 21–7; StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 17–21.

¹⁸ StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/10, fos 29–40, StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 29–33.

castle, 30½ days of manuring, 450 days of various forms of manual *corvée* owed by the *Untersassen* (villagers with virtually no land), 36 days of hoeing and reaping of the demesne *braide* situated near the castle by the closest *Hube* (one day each), in addition to the complete maintenance of castle gardens that had to be done by eight *Untersassen* who lived in their vicinity, and construction work at the castle. The records of the demesne do not provide any data concerning the extent of its agricultural land. Nevertheless, a comparison of its size with compulsory *corvée* labour allows a partial estimate of its use in direct production. The delivery of 268 sheaves of hay can be related to meadows whose size was estimated at 200 sheaves, and 81½ days of ploughing is close to 80 *Tagbau* of field area. Considering the low productivity of *corvée*, the quantity and variety of *corvée* obligations as well as the larger size of the demesne estate, it can be deduced that in Schwarzenegg the larger part of the available *corvée* (if not all of it) was utilized. Only when discussing the packing or carting services to the towns of Gorizia, Rijeka/Fiume/St Veit am Pflaum, and Trieste (*Samfahrt*, *Weinfahrt*), do the commissioners explicitly state that unused obligations were to be converted into one *gulden* of *Robotgeld*.

In 1637 the demesne estate of the manor of Duino consisted of one *Maierhof*, several meadows, one garden in front of the walls of Duino borough (*Merkht Tybein*), one vineyard below the castle, two fields, and forests. The former and current owners bred a large number of cattle and horses. Speaking of *corvée*, the estimate states that the Count Thurn used *corvée* for the construction of two mills and that the castle was mostly built using compulsory labour. The accurate quantity and typology of agricultural obligations are not mentioned and data concerning the size of the demesne estate are also absent. Therefore, any conclusions as to the use of *corvée* on demesne land would be uncertain, although the two fields mentioned are not likely to be the basis for a significant demesne economy.

In 1620 the demesne estate at the manor of Socerb was very small. In addition to three gardens and some meadows it mostly consisted of woodland. The description of *corvée* obligations is not complete: only 33 days of labour are mentioned while the type of the majority of obligations remains unstated, but the extent of *corvée* was certainly low.

From a mid-eighteenth century description of the 'manor and district' (*Herrschaft und Hauptmannschaft*) of Tolmin, we know that the old castle hill was surrounded by small demesne fields and meadows (*Acker- und Wiesflegken*), *braide* and *dobrave* (meadows). The tillage of the *braide* was performed by 82 *terrenari* (heads of *Hube*) drawn from nine different villages. Fifty-four *terrenari*, each of whom had to plough 7½ *vaneze* which their women had to sow, were sufficient for the 420 *vaneze* that were cultivated on average each year. In addition, each *terrenaro* had to supply the manorial lord with 15 'two-wheeled *zagotto*' of manure, of which only approximately 30 would actually be used. The reaping, raking, and transporting of hay from the meadows (*dobrave*) was divided among eight communities. One village community was bound to carry hay to the manor 'house', enjoying in return the right to pasture in the *dobrave*, where the manorial lord was only entitled to the 'first grass'. The meadows in the mountains, producing two *mede* of hay a year, were reaped in alternate years by villagers from two communities, who were paid eight Venetian *lire* for each load they transported. The wood needed by the manorial lord 'in his house for burning' had to be delivered free of charge, while it was the duty of the *terrenari* from three villages to supply the castle with the necessary water

and that of the *cossani* (cottagers) from a village to repair the access road to it. In numerous cases the obligations exceeded the needs. Many services were remunerated with meagre payments so that the cost of labour in the *braidà*, for instance, amounted to approximately 38 *lire* (about 8½ *gulden*) a year. Transportation activities were included as well: the manorial lord could ask a serf to carry out two carrying services a year extending beyond the boundaries of the manor but still within the county of Gorica/Gorizia, for which he would be paid by the number of horses he used. Carrying *corvée* within the boundaries of the manor would be remunerated based on the daily rate of one *lira* for each man and another for each horse. These *robot*, too, could be converted into money rents. In the Cerkno area (about a third of the manor's territory), all *corvée* services were converted into money.¹⁹ This is what the situation was like in the mid-eighteenth century. For the previous century we only know the value of demesne production and of that *corvée* generally converted into money, based on an estimate made by the Chamber in 1651. Nevertheless, we are unable to estimate either the proportion of *robot* effectively used for production purposes or the proportion used for carrying services. In any case, if compared to total manorial income, the importance of demesne production clearly appears to be marginal; if we could include the share of *corvée* not used for cultivation it would seem even less important.

It is therefore possible to say that in western Slovenia, the main feature common to holders of manors was the limited economic role of their demesne economy. Among the manors analysed, the highest demesne contribution to income was from Schwarzenegg manor in the meagre Karst highlands, where land cultivated by means of *corvée* amounted to at least 80 *Tagbau* (approximately 27 ha) of arable land. Conversely, demesne production only contributed to 3.4 per cent of total income in mountainous Tolmin (Table 6). In several cases the demesne partly consisted of former peasant farms, which in Inner Austria were often annexed by lords aiming at the formation of larger demesnes.²⁰ But in our area there are no indications of any systematic policy of peasant evictions (*Bauernlegen*) that would reveal an ambition to enlarge demesnes. Furthermore, through a comparison of the amount of labour services within the feudal rent and the extent of demesne land, we have observed that an oversupply of compulsory labour was more likely than any need for its full exploitation (with the possible exception of Schwarzenegg). There was also the possibility of a tendency to commute servile obligations into money rents. Thus, while it is certainly true that, in the manors under discussion, demesne land was an integral part of the feudal production system, it is also necessary to stress that in western Slovenia the availability of *corvée* allowed for the existence of the demesne, but did not necessarily determine its extent and consequential economic importance. Therefore, the causal relation between the possibility of exploitation of compulsory services and the development of the demesne based on compulsory labour, as proposed by Topolski, seems not to be applicable.²¹

This interpretation can be confirmed by previous findings, for instance Blaznik's, that 'in Primorska *corvée* labour in general was very little used', and Vilfan's, that in Slovenia 'efforts

¹⁹ ASPG, SP, II, b 723/VI, fo. 63.

²⁰ Valentinitich, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 284, 290.

²¹ J. Topolski, *La nascita del capitalismo in Europa. Crisi economica e accumulazione originaria fra XIV e XVII secolo* (1979), p. 230.

for the restoration of the demesne economy' were largely absent, being least perceptible in the west but stronger in the east, most so in Prekmurje. Similarly, Slovene and Austrian historians have observed that, with the exception of the manors located in the eastern territories of the present Republics of Austria (Burgenland) and Slovenia (Prekmurje), which belonged to the Hungarian lands at the time, there was a general tendency for the commutation of *corvée* into money rents. This gives no support to any attempt to attribute an important role to the demesne economy. Despite the persistence of the (generally small) demesnes and the presence of *corvée*, we may reasonably conclude that feudal relations in western Slovenia were not developing into a demesne-based economy. On this basis it is possible to associate western Slovenia with Inner Austria, where the phenomenon of large demesnes and *corvée*-based manorial economies was also rare.²²

III

The peasantry could hold farms either as lifelong tenancies, which tended to be *de facto* hereditary, or on the basis of 'purchase right' (*Kaufrecht*), which legally granted the peasant the right to inherit and sell the farm. This situation was generally found throughout a major part of Inner Austria. Since the 'purchase right' had to be bought by the peasants, the introduction of the *Kaufrecht* was supported by the Chamber, whose aim was, most likely, to increase its incomes, but also to institutionalize what was happening in practice, as the peasants tended to manage the farms as if they were their own. This is made clear by the fact that many of the *Huben*, that is the biggest farms, were actually inhabited and exploited by more families than the estate acknowledged. In the Karst manors, the Chamber's surveyors noticed that many of the *Huben* were 'occupied by four, five or even more' peasants, while in the manor of Tolmin in the eighteenth century there is a case of a *Hube* whose land was divided between 18 different peasant households (who of course had other land, too). The rural population tried to avoid the payment of dues on land transactions and therefore divided the farms secretly. But the division of farms could also be made clear, and fractions of *Huben* (half a *Hube*, a quarter, a sixth etc.) prevailed over whole farms. Apart from this, in early modern times, we also see the growth of smallholdings with little arable land, such as the cottagers and the *Untersassen*.

The size of farms was very small, few of them being larger than 5 ha, unless in the higher mountains, where farms (*Rut/Gereut*) were actually comprised of large alpine meadows. In such a situation, given the meagre conditions that the Karst land offered to agriculture, and given the scarcity of arable land in the Alpine area, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the peasant population could not make its living from agriculture alone.

Although detailed research on the sustainability of peasant farms is difficult to undertake, such an interpretation is confirmed by contemporary sources. Philip Cobenzl, lord of the very small Štanjel manor in the Reiffenberg area, wrote in 1606 that in the village of Štanjel the Karst was:

²² Blaznik, 'Podložniške obveznosti', p. 265; Vilfan, 'Zemljiška gospodstva', pp. 174, 197–9; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 40, 72, 223–4. For Inner Austria, see Valentinitsch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 279–97.

barren, wild and stony, without any natural element but the wild wind, with not a fathom of land where to lay the plough for a handful of grain. Not more than two inhabitants of the village can live longer than four or five months on their harvest, while all the others, as the poor cottagers and daily labourers, and even among them a few, manage to live 14 days on their own grain ... The gardens are pure naked rock, and it is necessary to bring land from elsewhere.²³

There is some exaggeration in this account, in the sense that not all the Karst was like this, but broadly speaking, everything it says has been confirmed by recent research. As early as 1552 the provincial estates of Carniola claimed that 'in particular in Carniola and Karst the peasants could not remain on their farms without trade and their carrying activities'.²⁴ In 1634 the exactor manager of the tollhouse in Tarvisio, Carl Rechpacher (Rechbach), wrote to the Carinthian provincial estates, to whom he was responsible, that the Predel-pass road (near Bovec, along the Soča/Isonzo road that connected Gorizia to Carinthia) was largely 'used by the peasants and cottagers of nearby jurisdictions, with their horses so small and weak that sometimes they could barely carry three or four buckets of wine in order to find some subsistence and satisfy their overlord'.²⁵ Being a border zone, smuggling and occasional acts of intimidation and violence against the archduke's customs guards, were rife.²⁶ Even J. W. Valvasor, a member of the Royal Society, on the last page of his monumental description of the Duchy of Carniola at the end of the seventeenth century, mentioned the peasants' need to obtain incomes from outside their farms as one of the striking economic and social characteristics of the region.²⁷

Throughout the period examined here, a large part of the population of the western Slovenian countryside continued to trade the produce of their lands on the local and neighbouring markets, carrying them on their shoulders, with donkeys and horses, carts and handcarts, establishing autonomous flows and entering middle-range ones. According to Gestrin, around the year 1600, 'the involvement of the countryside in the market economy and the dependence of a major part of the peasant population on it was such that the process of commercialization could not be stopped'. The activities related to merchant flows leading to Trieste were particularly important and necessary for 'numerous cottagers' between the borough of Postojna and the Adriatic coast (the area we are analysing in this article). Among Slovene historians Gestrin in particular has explored this theme and noticed a contest between the towns and the countryside to gain control of rural trade. In proving the importance of non-agricultural income to the rural population, it is also relevant to recall his observation that demands for rights in trade and transport and complaints about obstructions to them, were a consistent feature of the major peasant uprisings in Slovenian lands.²⁸

²³ StLA, IÖHKS, K 90/11, fos 79–81.

²⁴ Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, p. 252.

²⁵ Kärntner Landesarchiv, Klagenfurt (hereafter KLA), AS, C I, K 619/4, fos 173r–75v.

²⁶ A. Panjek, 'Über die südliche Grenze Kärntens in der frühen Neuzeit: Kleinhandel, Schmuggel und Saisonarbeit im Ostalpenraum', *Carinthia I*, 190 (2000), pp. 401–13; H. Hassinger, *Geschichte des Zollwesens*,

Handels und Verkehrs in den östlichen Alpenländern vom Spätmittelalter bis in die zweite Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (1987), pp. 223, 237.

²⁷ J. W. Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Crain* (4 vols, Laibach [Ljubljana], 1689), IV, last page.

²⁸ Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 79–80; id. 'Boj za podeželsko trgovino med mestom in vasjo od konca 15. do srede 17. stoletja', *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*,

Let us now have a look at the extra-agrarian activities from the peasant's point of view. What prompted the western Slovenian peasants to adopt what appears to have been a general orientation towards the market? Their involvement in a mixture of commercial and transport activities was undoubtedly a necessity: for the majority of peasants the acquisition of extra-agricultural income represented a strategy whereby they could both achieve a level of subsistence and be able to pay their feudal, provincial, ecclesiastical and state rents and dues. But the fact that it was a necessity does not mean that it was a passively accepted solution. On the contrary, the multiplication of households beyond the level of subsistence provided by land indicates that the rural population counted on and exploited the possibility of access to alternative activities, such as trafficking. In this respect, the proximity of the towns of Trieste and Gorizia and of the border with the Republic of Venice, as well as the existence of a consolidated network of long-distance commercial flows and local streams, legal or illegal, crossing the countryside, represented a sort of promise of employment.

Aymard, in his discussion of the relations between peasant self-consumption and the market, distinguished between peasants who made the minimum possible recourse to the market (Chayanov), farmers who made a direct response to market demands (Labrousse), and the impasse of growth as a consequence of reaching the maximum possible ratio between population and production through technical inertia (Le Roy Ladurie).²⁹ The solution adopted by the rural population in western Slovenia appears to be a different one still: the recourse to non-agricultural forms of activity that allowed them to exceed the limits set by environmental conditions and the nobility's monopoly over land. New households could develop without access to enough land to grant them subsistence based on self-production only. Given the characteristics of the major part of the territory, which was unsuitable for large-scale agriculture, and the lack of options for specialization (wine and stock-farming partly excepted); given too that such specialization as was present was in many aspects a consequence of the need to supply the produce-rents specified in the tribute registers (*Urbar*) and the extra additional demand for wheat, oats and wine by the lord; the peasants' response to market demand was not exhibited by their choosing between crops but by their adoption of extra-farming activities. The quest for money was a response to rent pressure but also represented an element in a more complex and comprehensive economic strategy by the rural population, in which one part of their subsistence was provided by the farms and the other by by-employments, ranging from cross-border smuggling to working as day labourers. Since the phenomenon did not subside throughout the early modern era, and continued even later, it may be considered to be a structural element of the rural economy in this area, but it also shows western Slovenian peasants exploiting their economic 'agency' in the same way as other European peasant populations have been shown to do.³⁰

Note 28 *continued*

12 (1973); id., 'Kmečka trgovina kot ozadje kmečkih uporov', *Situla*, 13 (1973), pp. 45–67; P. Blaznik, 'Enote individualne posesti', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, I, p. 170; Panjek, *Terra di confine*, pp. 161–72.

²⁹ M. Aymard, 'Autoconsommation et marchés:

Chayanov, Labrousse ou Le Roy Ladurie?', *Annales* 38 (1983), pp. 1392–3.

³⁰ On the economic agency of the early modern European peasants see, for example, G. P. Sreenivasan, *The peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487–1726: a rural society in early modern Europe* (2004).

IV

In this final section, we will try and answer the question, why did lords in western Slovenia not develop the demesne economy, but favoured money rents instead? Despite the absence of research, we can say that the phenomenon of large demesnes based on *corvée* appears to be rarely encountered in Inner Austria, defined here as the provinces of Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Gorica/Gorizia.³¹ Here the geographical conditions significantly limited the opportunities for large-scale exploitation of compulsory labour.³² In this respect western Slovenia reflects the environmental conditions in Inner Austria, where the predominantly hilly and mountainous landscape significantly limited the space suitable for demesne complexes oriented toward the production of grain for the market.

Another significant obstacle to the development of the demesne economy can be identified in the legal *status* of the rural population in Habsburg Austria, who were personally free and not bonded to the land. Although the question about the growing personal dependency of the peasants is still largely unresearched, in general, intensifying tendencies are believed to have predominated over reducing ones and personal dependency is supposed to have gradually increased between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. We have already noticed Vilfan's observation that in Slovenia the 'second serfdom ... developed to different extents, decreasing from the east toward the west' and that 'serfdom least considerably intensified in the Mediterranean space', the Adriatic littoral we are observing here. In fact, in the Primorska region, no instances of the harsh intensification of compulsory labour services have been found so far, and where labour services were increased, lords demanded additional carrying services, which is in accordance with the tendencies expressed by the manorial lords in Carniola, or simply resulted in the introduction of new money rents, as we have mentioned above in the case of the Vipava manor.³³ The great interest shown by the lords in the carrying services of their peasants is understandable, as this was the method used to get the produce collected as rent to market. In the case of grain, the markets were mostly in the local towns, where demand was strong since the area was not self-sufficient in grain production. The lords' wines were sold not only in the nearby towns, where the local nobility enjoyed consistent monopoly rights on the wine market, but were also exported into other Habsburg provinces, especially Carinthia and Styria. And the lords did not hesitate to use legal as well as illegal routes and paths in their wine trade, just as their peasants did.³⁴

In addition, in mountainous areas in particular the peasants were fully aware of their rights and willing to defend the forms and conditions inherited through customs and tradition.³⁵ The practice of taking legal action to try and affirm their rights against their lords was widely used by the rural population. Furthermore, from the late fifteenth to the eighteenth century, the southern Habsburg lands were disturbed by a succession of local uprisings as well as

³¹ Valentinitisch, 'Gutsherrschaftliche Bestrebungen', pp. 279–97.

³² Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, p. 242.

³³ S. Vilfan, 'Kmečko prebivalstvo po osebnem položaju', *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina*, II,

p. 341; Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 298–302.

³⁴ Panjek, *Terra di confine*, pp. 173–205; Panjek, 'Fevdalna renta', pp. 48–9.

³⁵ Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, pp. 235–6.

peasant movements extending over several provinces at a time. Irrespective of the immediate and contingent results of peasant movements, long-term latent rebelliousness and attention to the preservation of rights limited the freedom of action of manorial lords. Movements of rebellion with strong anti-manorial elements, as well as against new taxes that affected rural trade, occurred in Gorizia county: in the Tolmin manor and district alone the peasants arose some 20 times between the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and in 1713 they instituted the 'great uprising' known as the 'Tolminski punt' that extended over the whole county and lasted a few months.

This means that even if some institutional pre-conditions were present, since there were large manors with demesnes and entitled to *corvée*, and although there was ready access to the urban markets, interregional and international commercial flows that represented the necessary stimulus for the Topolski's development of the 'demesne based on *corvée* labour', other factors that hindered any such development prevailed.³⁶ At the institutional level, the pre-existing degree of peasant 'serfdom' was insufficient. It could not be significantly increased for social and cultural reasons, since the peasants would constantly appeal to courts and often rise in support of their 'old rights'. Last but not least, the environmental conditions seriously limited the possibilities for large-scale grain production.

Given the extent of the peasants' extra-agricultural activities, it is important to notice that the illegal trafficking of the peasants was not only tolerated but openly defended by the local manorial lords. The lords of Karst manors, for example, not only claimed the right of first instance for their courts to judge prosecutions of illegal trade but also withheld collaboration from the archduke's toll officials and guards, and openly hindered their control of traffic crossing the countryside, as was claimed by those in charge of the Chamber's tollhouses in the Gorizia area in 1567 and much later in 1691.³⁷ In defiance of royal and archducal regulations, the judicial bodies of the Karst manors (Reifenberg, Štanjel and Žablje) would not allow the guards of the Gorizia customs office to enquire into and resist contraband. This means that the widespread participation of the rural population in smuggling could rely on the support of the manorial lords. Clearly, these interventions were neither disinterested, nor a mere expression of antagonism between local authorities and officials in the service of the state. When the manorial lords denied the customs officers armed support in the repression of smuggling or hindered their operations, they did so for a reason. The participation of the rural population in the market, whether legal or illegal, represented a form of by-employment to use peasants' less productive time and labour. The toll officials and guards had to cope with the hostility of local lords because the peasants' additional income from these activities increased the fiscal basis at the disposal of the manorial lord.

In this respect the behaviour of the manorial lords in Primorska was entirely in line with what Gestrin noted: 'Without recourse to non-agrarian activities, with only the income from farms, the peasants would not have been able to meet the increased feudal and state burdens. The feudal lords were well aware of this fact'. In the sixteenth century and later, they opposed the attempts of towns to restrict rural commerce as well as the ambitions of the Chamber to

³⁶ Topolski, *La nascita del capitalismo*, pp. 213–28; *kulturne krajine Krasa* (2006).
A. Panjek, *Človek, zemlja, kamen in burja. Zgodovina*

³⁷ StLA, IÖHKS, K 122, fo. 6.

TABLE 8. Money income compared to total rent across manors.

<i>Manor</i>	<i>Money income in the rent of manors</i>	<i>Total rent (in gulden)</i>	<i>Ratio between money rent and total rent^a</i>
Senožeče 1615	799.48	1,427.97	
Schwarzenegg 1618	753.28	3,146.96	
Socerb 1620	959.40	1,436.95	
Duino 1637	3,101.52	5,899.05	
Reifenberg 1624	1,057.00	4,641.34	
Vipava 1624	1,502.91	5,683.61	
Tolmin 1633	6,998.59	11,026.01	
Total	15,172.18	33,261.89	45.6

Note:

^a Percentage calculated on the basis of the hypothetic sum in the table, therefore representing a rough estimate.

Sources: Data from Tables 3 and 5.

increase fiscal burdens. The statements made by the feudal lords in defence of rural trade and transport activity 'can be synthesized as follows: without commerce the peasants could not survive on their farms nor could we collect tributes from them and demand taxes'. These were indeed self-interested arguments that, however, were not objected to: 'not even the prince, or his provincial officers, the *Vizedomini* in Ljubljana, ever questioned them, despite knowing the situation well'.³⁸

Undoubtedly, the manorial lord could only benefit from the trading activities of his peasants, however minute they might have been. The peasant, part of whose subsistence depended on extra-agricultural activities, secured a higher income and his dependence on the produce of his land was reduced. As a result, the recipient of rural rent had a greater possibility of demanding rent as money without breaching the subsistence basis of his peasants. The conditions coincide with those observed in most manors in Carniola, where, throughout the sixteenth century, the rent was becoming more and more monetary in nature, particularly in the manors situated in areas crossed by or close to merchant routes.³⁹

Our analysis of the major manors in the Slovenian littoral region allows a rough quantification of this phenomenon: almost half of the lords' rent income was in money (Table 8). Although a part of that came from tolls and fees paid by people who were not subjects of the manors (merchants, traders and so on), such a figure clearly indicates how in western Slovenia the means used by the feudal lords to increase their income from their estates was not by intensifying demesne production, but by directing and supporting their peasants' participation in the market.

³⁸ Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele*, pp. 250–1.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

V

In conclusion, it is possible to draw up a list of reasons why the western Slovenian lords did not develop the demesne economy, but favoured rent in money. The reasons are, as we have seen, geographic, legal, socio-cultural and economic in nature. First of all, the geographical conditions significantly limited the space suitable for demesne complexes oriented toward extensive agriculture and large-scale production. Second, the legal *status* of the rural population, who were personally free and not bonded to the land, was an obstacle to a large-scale exploitation of compulsory labour. Third, the peasants' great attention to the preservation of their rights and customs, as well as their willingness to take legal action and tendency to rebelliousness limited the freedom of action of manorial lords. Fourth, the agrarian production of most of the peasant households did not enable them to achieve self-sufficiency, nor did the extension of the cultivated area during the early modern period seem to have significantly changed the population-resources ratio. Lords could not raise their rent-income in kind over a certain limit without risking the disruption of the existing economic balance in the countryside, which would undermine their very own economic basis (by reducing the peasants' solvency). In these circumstances, the resources that were most capable of enhancement were the peasants' trading activities, and it was these, rather than an enlarged demesne economy, which the lords came to exploit for their own profit.