

THE DOMAINS OF THE CISTERCIAN MONASTERY OF
SAAR AND THE NATIONALITY OF ITS SUBJECTS IN
THE YEARS 1407, 1462 AND 1483

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Through fortunate circumstances, three land-registers of the 15th century (for 1407, 1462 and 1483) for the domains of the monastery of Saar have been preserved. Stored in the Prague National Museum, these documents were published in 1961 by Dr. Metoděj Zemek and Engineer Josef Pohanka.

The Cistercian abbey of Saar, *Fons Sanctae Mariae*, situated in the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, and part of the Bishopric of Prague, had to face numerous vicissitudes between its foundation in 1240 (foundation charter from the year 1252) and its dissolution in 1784. Richly endowed and supported by important noble families, such as the Kunstadts and the Lichtenburgs, the monastery soon had extensive and, in part, widely dispersed property holdings stretching as far as southern Moravia and even to the area of Troppau and Mährisch-Ostrau. Destroyed by the Hussites in 1422, it found a powerful protector in the person of George of Podiebrad, and, following a confiscation, was able to have its holdings recognized by Matthias Corvinus. Later the monastery increasingly lost its importance.

The first land-register of 1407 lists a total of 17 localities with 317 tributaries directly under the administration of the monastery; the second, from 1462, includes 23 with 430; and the third (1483), 43 with 742. In each instance, the town of Saar had the greatest number of subjects: 93, 97 and 104. The localities varied in size, from those that were no larger than a hamlet to villages with 50 subjects. Taking seven persons to a household, the town of Saar had 651 (1407), 679 (1462) and 728 (1483) inhabitants.

With some exceptions, the area cultivated by the peasants was generally not large. Most of them — 71 (1407), 125 (1462) and 218 (1483) — cultivated half a *Labn*, and many (68, 77 and 155) only a quarter of a *Labn*. But some cases can be found where they only had a tenth or even twentieth of a *Labn* at their disposal.

On regularly fixed calendar dates — April 24 (St. George), September 28 (St. Wenceslaus), less frequently on September 16 (St. Gallus) and September 29 (St. Michael), and also at Christmas, Easter, Pentacost and other important days — the taxes of the tributaries were collected. Not only peasants, but also artisans were among the monastery's subjects. Seldom in the smaller localities, they were frequently found in the larger villages, and were especially numerous in Saar, 35% of whose inhabitants in 1462 were practicing a craft.

The publicans enjoyed one of the more lucrative trades. In Saar alone, there were, according to the first land-register, 34 public houses. In the countryside, the village magistrates exercised the right to issue licences for public houses and for hunting.

A detailed examination of the names (Christian and family) of the tributaries — it should be noted that double names were by no means the rule in the Bohemian lands in the 15th century — leads to the conclusion that the population of the town of Saar in the year 1407 was predominantly German, with 18.4% Czech as against 64.4% German names; the remaining 17.2% cannot be clearly identified, being for the most part names of saints in the full original form which gives no clue as to nationality. In 1462 the German element still predominated in the town with 49.5%, but the Czech population had already increased to 37.9%. By 1483 the latter had risen to 48%, thus gaining the majority, for the German share was only 33.3%. There were also German settlers among the rural population, and in isolated cases also villages with a German majority. The three South Moravian villages of Kallendorf, Kl. Grillowitz and Naschetitz, mentioned in 1483, remained German until their inhabitants were forced to leave in 1945/46.

H. Altrichter has already dealt with the nationality of the members of the Cistercian Order in Moravia, coming to the conclusion that in the period prior to Charles IV, the abbey of Saar was a German monastery. He prepared a list for the 13th century comprising 68 names, which can be considered complete. It includes only five members with Czech names, compared with 34 with German names, Altrichter classifying the remaining 25 as open to question.