

Viticultural Institutions in the Vineyard Areas of Western Slovakia

Instituțiile viticole în podgoriile din vestul Slovaciei

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Abstract: The study focuses on the analysis of viticultural institutions in the towns of western Slovakia, with particular emphasis on their structure, competencies, and personnel composition. It presents individual bodies, their internal functioning, authorities, and roles related to the organization and regulation of viticultural production. The research shows that these institutions formed an important part of the urban economy, helping to stabilize the production process, ensure wine quality, and protect the interests of producers. The personnel composition of these bodies reflected the social status and professional experience of members of the local community, which contributed to the effective operation of viticultural structures. The findings highlight the significance of these institutions for the economic and social development of towns and open space for further research into regional and chronological specifics of their evolution.

Keywords: viticulture, viticultural towns, western Slovakia, viticultural institutions, Little Carpathian region.

For centuries, the southwestern slopes of the Little Carpathians in western Slovakia have provided suitable conditions for vine cultivation. People in the past were able to make good use of them, securing for viticulture a significant position in the economy of the country for a long period of time. Vineyard production was, for many centuries, the dominant occupation for the majority of inhabitants in the towns and villages of western Slovakia. In this study, we will not discuss viticulture itself or its history in our geographical area in greater

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depth. Research and the current state of knowledge on the history of Slovak viticulture are at a very high level today, yet there remain topics that have not yet received deeper scholarly treatment. We have therefore focused in this study on an issue that has for many years escaped the attention of Slovak historians. We have already partially addressed the individual vineyard institutions that operated in the vineyard localities of western Slovakia in various earlier works¹.

The seventeenth century was a period in which several towns and small towns of western Slovakia experienced a significant developmental shift. Over its course, the administration of municipal affairs acquired stable forms, and the offices of municipal officials and employees became consolidated, ensuring the management of all aspects of administrative, judicial, and economic life in the individual towns of western Slovakia². The most important towns of western Slovakia were situated at the foot of the southern slopes of the Little Carpathian Mountains. Since the Middle Ages, the Little Carpathian wine-growing region had been forming in this area, and it became one of the most significant wine-growing regions of the entire Kingdom of Hungary.

Even before preparing this study, we had to take into account the geographical delineation and extent of the Little Carpathian region. Today, the Little Carpathian wine-growing region exists in this area, and we focused on the vineyard localities located precisely in its „heart“, that is, its core. Unfortunately, a precise and unchanging boundary of the Little Carpathian region cannot be established, because vineyards in the past were planted even in places where no trace of them exists today. It is no coincidence that the oldest vineyard regulations from the territory of Slovakia have been preserved precisely from the most important wine-growing centers, which were above all the free royal towns (*libera regiae civitas*) situated in this geographical area³. These towns formed an

¹ We discuss vineyard institutions in more detail in the work: Michal Franko, *Organizácia a správa viničných hôr malokarpatských miest Svätý Jur, Pezinok a Modra*, Trnava, Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, Veda, 2018, 185 p.

² In that period, unlike in other centuries, the absolutist ambitions of the ruling Habsburg dynasty had not yet fully manifested or prevailed, and the towns within the Kingdom of Hungary maintained a relatively high degree of autonomy. Martin Hrubala – Petra Pospechová – Peter Wittgrüber, *V službách mesta. Z vývoja pezinskej samosprávy v 17. – 19. storočí*, Pezinok, Mestské múzeum v Pezinku a Mesto Pezinok, 2005, p. 8.

³ From the Little Carpathian region, a vineyard ordinance from Vajnory has been preserved. This ordinance was introduced into use in Vajnory by the convent of the Cistercian monastery of Heiligenkreuz, which owned Vajnory (Weinarn) from the year 1297 until the middle of the 16th century, when the town of Bratislava purchased them from the convent. The Heiligenkreuz Monastery issued this ordinance for the vineyards in Vajnory sometime between the years 1460–1470. The Vajnory vineyard ordinance is considered the oldest preserved vineyard ordinance from the territory of Slovakia. Ferencz Kováts, *A vajnori hegyközség rendtartása 1460–70-ből.*, in „Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle“, nr. VII., 1900, pp. 469–470.

imagined pentapolis. They were Bratislava, Svätý Jur, Pezinok, Modra, and Trnava. Each of these towns, of course, had its own internal development and evolved in its own direction⁴. However, all the aforementioned localities were important production centers, both in terms of the quantity and the quality of wine. In the economy of the Little Carpathian towns, there existed one significant unifying element – vineyard production, which was followed by the wine trade. The majority of the inhabitants of these towns owned or leased at least one vineyard, and viticulture was their main or a significant secondary occupation⁵. Successful and progressive development of the Little Carpathian towns was ensured not only by viticulture but also by the advantages arising from their geographical location. The Little Carpathian production centers lay on an important route that connected northeastern Hungary with the southern parts of the country, especially in the direction of Moravia and Austria. Even today, these towns are situated beneath the slopes of the Little Carpathians, along the main route between Bratislava and Trnava, which were already in the Middle Ages significant political, commercial, and cultural centers of western Slovakia⁶.

All matters related to viticulture were a regular subject of deliberations of the municipal magistrates of western Slovak towns. From the Middle Ages until the beginning of the 20th century, viticulture constituted one of the main sources of income for the municipal treasuries of most towns and villages in western Slovakia⁷. The municipal magistrates closely supervised and coordinated vineyard production, deciding, for example, on the beginning of the grape harvest, setting the wages of vineyard laborers, determining the conditions for importing foreign wine, regulating the sale of domestic wine, and jointly revising and supplementing the vineyard regulations in force at the time⁸.

⁴ Anton Špiez, *Malokarpatské vinohradnícke mestá Modra, Pezinok a Jur na prelome 17. a 18. storočia*, in „Západné Slovensko 3“, 1976, p. 48.

⁵ Imre Nagy, *Monumenta Hungariae Juridica – Historica. Corpus statutorum – Statuta et Articuli municipiorum Hungariae cis Danubianorum*, Tomus IV, vol. II. Budapest, 1897, 821 p.

⁶ Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Inventár stredovekých listín, listov a iných príbuzných písomností, inv. no. 3991. Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Inventár listín a listov II. diel, inv. no. 5385.

⁷ Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Magistrát mesta Bratislavy, Hospodárska kniha (dane, inventáre majetkov bratstiev, cechové artikuly, platby, dohody) / Wirtschaftsbuch 1364–1538, 3a1, inv. no. 10662.

⁸ For example, in the minutes of the magistrate of the town of Bratislava (today the capital of the Slovak Republic), a record from the year 1683 has been preserved stating that great damage had occurred in the Bratislava vineyard hills (municipal vineyards), and the Bratislava magistrate would ensure that the grape harvest would take place within the set time and would strictly enforce compliance with the regulations relating to the course of the harvest. In addition, the magistrate ordered that anyone who caused any damage in the vineyard and was caught doing so would immediately pay a fine of 20 denars. In the revised municipal statutes of Bratislava

The importance of viticulture and winemaking in the wine-growing localities of western Slovakia is also evidenced by the existence of a special office of the vineyard master (Ger. *Bergmeister*, *Perckmayster*, Slovak *Pereg*, *Horný*, Lat. *Magister montium*) – the so-called vineyard office (Ger. *Bergrecht*, *Berggericht*, *Bergambt*, Slovak *Slovutné perecké právo*)⁹. The vineyard offices of the towns of western Slovakia held an important and consistently stable position within municipal administration. At present, no specific instructions are known or preserved that would clarify in greater detail the composition of the vineyard offices and provide an understanding of their precise functioning¹⁰. Therefore, the activities and personnel composition of these institutions must be reconstructed on the basis of the numerous references contained in archival materials. The same applies to the other specific features of the vineyard offices of individual towns and villages of western Slovakia. For this reason, in preparing this study we relied primarily on archival sources from which we drew the necessary information. Each vineyard office was in some way distinctive, and its activities in many respects reflected the aims and interests of the municipal magistrates or village councils.

It is, however, generally known that vineyard offices dealt with all important matters concerning viticulture. Their responsibilities included, above all, the organization and administration of the vineyard hills in a given wine-growing locality, as well as ensuring the protection of the vineyards and their harvest.

In the wine-growing localities of western Slovakia, they functioned either as municipal or communal institutions. This self-governing body concentrated within itself supervisory, judicial, and regulatory powers over the entire viticultural community. The composition of the vineyard office was conditioned by several factors. It was related to the local extent of the vineyards, as well as to local tradition and the form of municipal administration

from 1683, there is also a prohibition on transporting and selling foreign wine in the town without permission from the authorities. Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Magistrát mesta Bratislavy, *Zápisnice zo zasadnutí mestskej rady a index (Sitzungsprotokolle des Stadtrats und index)*, 1634–1640, 2a9, inv. no. 10677, 1683–1687, 2a14, inv. no. 10703.

⁹ In western Slovakia, since the 13th century, there had been a sizeable population that had immigrated from the German lands. Germans were significantly represented until the 19th century and were active even in the leadership of almost every town in western Slovakia. Moreover, most documents from the period under study are written, alongside Latin, in the German language. See: Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Magistrát mesta Bratislavy, *Zápisnice zo zasadnutí mestskej rady (Actionale prototcollum)*, 1402–1506, 2a1, inv. no. 10662., 1539–1548, 2a2, inv. no. 10663, 1548–1565, 2a3, inv. no. 10664, 1566–1577, 2a4, inv. no. 10665, 1578–1589, 2a5, inv. no. 10666.

¹⁰ It is questionable whether such instructions existed at all; the archival material has so far neither confirmed nor disproved their existence.

of which the office was a part. In the sixteenth century, the vineyard office was always headed by a single master, to whom four assessors were elected¹¹. In the seventeenth century, the number of vineyard masters increased to two, and the number of assessors to six or seven¹². The lowest component of the office was represented by the vineyard guards – *hájnik* and their assistants. The vineyard office thus clearly had the character of a collegial body. The activities of the office were coordinated by regulations that were recorded in the individual vineyard regulations. The vineyard regulations represented, in a certain sense, general directives and instructions coordinating the activities of the various vineyard institutions¹³.

The vineyard offices of the wine-growing towns of western Slovakia were significantly subordinate to the individual municipal magistrates and possessed only a relatively small degree of autonomy. This subordination manifested itself, for example, in the fact that the municipal magistrates confirmed the election of the vineyard masters and their assistants, assigned duties to them as needed, supervised and coordinated their activities, and approved the vineyard regulations, which they continuously supplemented and adjusted according to current needs¹⁴. The municipal magistrates could even punish the vineyard masters and their assistants if they did not adequately fulfill their duties¹⁵. From some towns of western Slovakia, we have preserved references indicating that the local municipal magistrates appointed a fiscal (a representative of the town) to the vineyard court, who supervised and monitored the course of the administrative and judicial proceedings of the individual vineyard offices. The municipal fiscal was permitted to intervene actively in the judicial process and

¹¹ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Pezinok. Protokol a pozemková kniha vinohradov, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355. (hereinafter ŠA BA, pM, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355).

¹² Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Modry, Zápisnice vinohradníckych majstrov, Bergprotokol 1661–1782, inv. no. 643. (hereinafter ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Bergprotokol 1661–1782, inv. no. 643.).

¹³ Franko, Organizácia a správa, pp. 27–28.

¹⁴ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Modry, Liber statutorum 1617–1664, inv. no. 1296, p. 72–78 (hereinafter ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Liber statutorum 1617–1664, inv. no. 1296.).

¹⁵ The first addendum to the Pezinok vineyard regulations, recorded in the Pezinok vineyard book, dates from 15 January 1592 and orders the vineyard master and his assistants to go out into the Pezinok vineyards every 14 days and check how the workers are cultivating the ecclesiastical, hospital, and orphan vineyards, as well as the vineyards of all inhabitants. In the case of poorly performed work, the vineyard master and his assistants were to be punished. However, the record does not specify what form of punishment was to be applied. ŠA BA, pM, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355.

had the authority to annul the verdict issued by the vineyard court or to order a review of the entire process¹⁶.

The vineyard offices did not have a separate designated building in the towns. The vineyard masters conducted their official duties either in an assigned room at the respective town hall or in their own homes. The personnel of each vineyard office worked daily whenever necessary. In spring and summer, the agenda focused on the immediate needs in the vineyards, while in autumn and winter property matters related to the vineyards were usually addressed. Throughout the entire year, various delicts and disputes between vineyard owners were handled.

The work duties of the personnel may be divided into administrative and judicial activities, as well as fieldwork (measuring and dividing vineyards, inspections, supervising work in the vineyards, directing vineyard owners, vineyard laborers, and *vincúri*, checking wells, the condition of roads, turning areas, and so on)¹⁷.

At the head of every vineyard office stood the vineyard master. He served as the chief administrator of the vineyards, and this position was known in all countries where a developed organization and administration of vineyard hills existed and where vine cultivation was carried out on a larger scale. The vineyard master directed the vineyard office and presided over the vineyard court¹⁸. We can form an idea of his activities in the individual vineyard localities and periods precisely from the vineyard regulations and their addenda¹⁹. He was elected to the position for one year and did not have a fixed or precisely determined salary

¹⁶ For example, the Town Council of Modra took such a step on the grounds that at that time „many boorish things“ were taking place before the Modra vineyard court. Provision no. 5 of the Modra vineyard regulations. ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Liber statutorum 1617–1664, inv. no. 1296.

¹⁷ ŠA BA, pM, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355. ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Bergprotokol 1661–1782, inv. no. 643.

¹⁸ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Pezinok, Artikuly pereckého majstra v Pezinku, Lad. IV., Nr. 10. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Pezinok, Koncepty, spisy 1607–1769.

¹⁹ The vineyard regulations were, in a sense, a „living organism“. Their content was continuously changing, supplemented with new provisions, while older provisions were either abolished or specified in greater detail, and through such interventions the so-called *additamenta* – addenda – came into being. These addenda essentially complemented the older vineyard regulations and specified or expanded their individual provisions. They were usually not written into the regulations themselves but were recorded beneath them or elsewhere in the vineyard book. Michal Franko, *Additamenta – dodatky pezinských a modranských vinohradníckych poriadkov*, in „Studia Historica Tyrnaviensia XIX.“, Kraków, Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, 2017, pp. 190–206. See also: Vajnorský vinohradnícky poriadok z 15. storočia. Kováts, Ferencz. A vajnorai hegyközség rendtartása 1460–70-ből., p. 469–470.

for his work²⁰. He received as his remuneration a portion of the proceeds from selected fines and from various administrative or procedural fees²¹.

The vineyard master and the right to his free election are mentioned separately also in the urbarium of King Ferdinand I. from the year 1559. From the Little Carpathian vineyard regulations we learn, for example, that the vineyard masters possessed several powers. These included, for instance, disciplinary or supervisory authority, which they exercised over the persons working in the vineyards. Subject to them were above all the laborers, such as diggers, who worked in the vineyards in short-term or long-term wage or employment relationships. The vineyard masters were permitted not only to supervise the laborers but also to impose fines on them if they found that they were not performing their work adequately or that their work was of poor quality²². In addition, they were permitted to exercise disciplinary authority also over the vineyard wardens, whom they could fine and, in more serious cases, even deprive of personal freedom²³. The masters also supervised public order in the vineyard hills, for which they were vested with the so-called police authority, on the basis of which they could detain and fine persons who were moving there without authorization, causing damage, or engaging in other

²⁰ This changed over the course of the 19th century, when the municipal authorities established a fixed base salary for him along with the corresponding rewards. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Jur pri Bratislave, Perecký protokol 1843–1852, inv. no. 958, Perecký protokol 1853–1891, inv. no. 959.

²¹ Similarly, vineyard masters in Moravian wine-growing localities were remunerated. There, they received certain proceeds from imposed fines as well as various fees, which they sometimes shared with the landowning authorities or other individuals. Jiří Bílý, *Ius Montium. Právo moravských vinohradních hor v kontextu střední Evropy. Část II.*, Ostrava, KEY Publishing s.r.o., 2020, p. 26. In the vineyard regulations of Svätý Jur from 1650, there are several provisions that mention revenues for vineyard masters, for example provision no. 6: „How to proceed when someone is caught causing damage in the vineyard, how to act in the case of a fine – how to impose a fine“. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Spisy Magistrátu mesta Svätý Jur – základný rad (1639–1662), škatuľa 67, inv. no. 1245.37, SM 1650 (hereinafter ŠA BA, pM, Spisy MmSVJ, 1639–1662).

²² Vineyard masters also supervised the performance and quality of the work carried out in the vineyards. Provision no. 8 of the Modra vineyard regulations from 1602: „...und so sie (Pergmeistern) in der Arbeit einige untreu finden haben sie der Arbeiter macht zue straffen. und also, das offt sie im Kreuz neben der Untreu aufschlagen von ieder Kreuz dreÿ Kreuzer im gruben aber so offt sie auch ein Kreuz aufschlagen...“ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Modry, Kniha prisah a inštrukcií, Liber juramentorum ab Anno 1607 usque Annum 1643, inv. no. 1307 (hereinafter ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Liber juramentorum).

²³ Provision no. 11 of the Modra vineyard regulations from 1602: „...auch die Huetter Tag und Nacht in den Weingärtten bleiben und zue nacht in ihren Huetten Liegen und wan sie zue nacht durch die Bergmeister nicht erfunden werden, seint sie auch durch Bergmeister zue straffen.“ ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Liber juramentorum.

prohibited activities. Quarrels, fights, and loud shouting were likewise forbidden in the vineyards. In addition, the masters monitored that vineyard owners and their laborers moved through the vineyard hills only along the proper – official – paths and roads, and that they did not create new footpaths or shortcuts. They ensured that the roads and paths were kept clean and always passable. They also protected the vineyards from livestock, dogs, and other wild animals. They were allowed to hunt wild game in the vineyards, but only in such a manner that the vineyards were not damaged in the process²⁴.

The administrative powers of the vineyard masters concerned primarily matters of property law and record keeping. They were responsible for maintaining, safeguarding, and storing the so-called *perecké protokoly*. At this point, we shall pause to briefly explain what the *perecké protokoly* – the vineyard books – actually were. Vineyard books, sometimes also referred to as vineyard protocols, are the books (minutes) of the vineyard masters, which bear period designations in German such as *Berg Büch*, *Berg Prothocoll*, or *Bergamts Buch*²⁵. In western Slovakia these books were called „*perecké*“ books or „*perecké*“ protocols. They are official records that served for the registration of official business and were intended for both the internal and external needs of the respective vineyard office. The preserved examples of such books contain primarily entries concerning the course of official proceedings in administrative, judicial, or economic matters and were created to record the respective act. Their core consists of entries on the election of vineyard masters and assessors, on the division of property, on the valuation of vineyards, on the placement of boundary stones in the vineyards, on the investigation of offenses committed in the vineyards, and similar matters²⁶.

Vineyard protocols represent an exceptional insight into the functioning and activities of the vineyard offices and courts of individual wine-growing towns or villages. The protocols appear as independent books in the vineyard towns of western Slovakia regularly from the second half of the sixteenth century onward. This is connected with the development of administration and, of

²⁴ Concerning the protection of vineyards and the impounding of livestock found in the vineyards, for example, provision no. 5 of the Svätý Jur vineyard regulations from 1650 states the following. ŠA BA, pM, Spisy MmSVJ, 1639–1662.

²⁵ ŠA BA, pM, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355.

²⁶ Ema Drábiková, *Človek vo vinici*, Bratislava, VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 1989, p. 159. See also: Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Modry, Zápisnice vinohradníckych majstrov, 1661–1782, 1721–1782, inv. no. 643, 644. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Pezinok, Protokoly a pozemkové knihy vinohradov, 1589–1713, 1714–1814, 1779–1832, 1812–1936, inv. no. 355–358. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Svätý Jur, Perecké protokoly, 1663–1761, 1763–1795, 1796–1820, inv. no. 954–956.

course, with the development of viticulture itself in the individual towns. The vineyard books were kept in the various wine-growing localities approximately until the mid-twentieth century²⁷. From a content perspective, these sources are richly structured and contain a wealth of valuable information for the study and research of the history of viticulture and winemaking. Some vineyard books also include the verdicts of vineyard courts, since the vineyard masters presided over the so-called vineyard courts and, from time to time, acted as plaintiffs in criminal proceedings²⁸. Delicts related to viticulture were punished by vineyard courts predominantly with monetary fines. In the wine-growing law of western Slovakia, corporal and capital punishments – those that would infringe upon the physical integrity of the offender or significantly affect his personal freedom – were almost entirely absent. From the sixteenth century onward, capital and corporal punishments were replaced by monetary fines, and this applied not only in the sphere of viticulture. Nevertheless, we also have recorded cases of the opposite situation. For example, in the seventeenth century, a convicted person in western Slovakia was permitted to exchange a monetary penalty for a corporal one. In the vineyard statutes of the city of Bratislava from 1683, a provision mentions the possibility for indigent thieves to substitute a monetary fine with ten blows of a stick²⁹.

The vineyard masters never exercised judicial authority on their own, but collectively, together with the assessors of the vineyard office and other municipal officials³⁰. In the wine growing localities of western Slovakia, the existence of vineyard courts (*Slávne perecké právo*) is documented in writing from the seventeenth century onward. These courts dealt with less serious disputes, that is, all matters concerning vineyards and conflicts arising within them³¹. More serious, long-lasting, or complicated disputes were adjudicated in the wine-growing towns of western Slovakia by the respective municipal courts³².

²⁷ See: Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Jur pri Bratislave, Perecký protokol 1936–1939, inv. no. 961. Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Pezinok, Protokol a pozemková kniha vinohradov 1812–1936, inv. no. 358.

²⁸ ŠA BA, pM, Bergbuch 1589–1713, inv. no. 355.

²⁹ Richard Horna, *Výčepnické právo vinohradníků. Zvláštní otisk z časopisu Vinařský obzor z r. 1940–41*, Brno, Novina v Brně, 1941, pp. 23–24.

³⁰ Štátny archív v Bratislave, pracovisko Modra, Magistrát mesta Modry, Kniha súdnych výrokov, inv. no. 337.

³¹ The court was called in Slovak „Slovutné perecké právo,“ and in German „perecké právo“ (*ein Ehrsa(h)men Berggericht, ein Ehrsa(h)men Bergrecht, wohlweiße Bergrecht*). ŠA BA, pM, MmM, Liber statutorum 1617–1664, inv. no. 1296.

³² Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Magistrát mesta Bratislavy, Zápisnice o trestných súdnych rokovaníach / Protokolle aus den Verfahren in Kriminalangelegen, 1584–1602, 4g2, inv. no. 11412.

The aforementioned powers of the vineyard masters applied primarily within the vineyard hills entrusted to their supervision. The previously mentioned assessors (sworn officials) served as the extended arm of the vineyard masters. The vineyard masters delegated to the assessors a portion of their powers and duties. The assessors even functioned as an advisory body to the vineyard masters, as they were always elected from among experienced vineyard owners. The assessors attested certain important acts of the vineyard masters and, together with them, exercised disciplinary, police, and administrative authority³³. Moreover, they essentially represented the entire wine-growing community and the vineyard masters in their absence. They were elected to the office at the same time as the vineyard masters. In the Middle Ages, they were appointed to the position by the ruler through his representative, and later by the landowning authority. In the wine-growing towns of western Slovakia during the modern period, they were appointed by the municipal magistrate, and in villages by the village council. They served in office for one year, and a vineyard owner became an assessor only after taking the prescribed oath³⁴. From the older vineyard regulations we learn that originally only two assessors were elected to assist the vineyard master, and later their number increased as needed³⁵. The councils of assessors expanded in parallel with the expansion of the municipal areas covered by vineyards.

In listing the officials of the vineyard office, we must not forget the position of the *hájnik* (vineyard warden), who was an important figure in the protection of the vineyards. This is an ancient institution that likely arose at the very beginnings of intensive vine cultivation³⁶.

The vineyard warden served as a permanent supervisory body, and they were elected to their position by the vineyard master together with the assessors at the assembly of vineyard owners. Their main task consisted in protecting and safeguarding the vineyard harvest from both people and animals³⁷. The number of vineyard wardens depended on the extent of the vineyards on the vineyard hill, and their payment consisted of selected fines, fees, and occasionally

³³ Bílý, *Ius Montium* II., p. 38.

³⁴ the oath of the assessors of the Modra vineyard office from the years 1607–1608 is recorded in the Modra book of oaths in the German language. ŠA BA, pM, MmM, *Liber juramentorum*.

³⁵ ŠA BA, pM, *Bergbuch* 1589–1713, p. 15–36.

³⁶ In western Slovakia, in many sources the *hájnik* was referred to as *hájny*, *Hütter*, *Huter*, or *Hitter*. In the Bratislava vineyard regulations from 1570, for example, he is recorded as *hüeter*. *Archív hlavného mesta SR Bratislavy, Kniha cechových štatútov*, 135–140, sign. Ce 387., fol. 161 (hereinafter AMB, *Kniha cechových štatútov*, 135–140, sign. Ce 387.). In provision no. 13 of the old Modra vineyard regulations, the term *hütter-guard*, vineyard warden – is mentioned. ŠA BA, pM, MmM, *Liber statutorum* 1617–1664, inv. no. 1296.

³⁷ ŠA BA, pM, *Bergbuch* 1589–1713, inv. no. 355.

payments in kind³⁸. In some vineyard localities, however, they also received a wage, the amount of which depended on the extent of the vineyards under their supervision. For example, in the Bratislava vineyard regulations of 1570 it is stated that the vineyard warden shall receive as remuneration 4 kreuzers for each quarter-plot of vineyard, 2 kreuzers for each eighth-plot, 1 kreuzer for each sixteenth-plot, and 2 denars for each thirty-second-plot of vineyard³⁹. The office of the vineyard warden has survived on the territory of Slovakia up to the present day.

An analysis of vineyard institutions in the towns of western Slovakia shows that these bodies played a key role not only in the organization and supervision of vineyard production, but also in the broader urban life. Their structure, competencies, and personnel composition reflected the economic importance of viticulture for the respective regions, while at the same time providing a framework for maintaining order, quality, and continuity within the viticultural tradition.

The vineyard institutions and their officials operated on the basis of defined rights and obligations that ensured the efficient functioning of vineyard production. The personnel composition of these bodies was not accidental – it relied on experience, social standing, and the trust of the community. In this way, a system was created that was capable of responding to the needs of producers – vineyard owners – protecting their interests and at the same time guaranteeing the quality of the production destined for the market.

The findings confirm that vineyard institutions constituted a stabilizing element of urban economies and significantly contributed to shaping the municipal self-governmental and social environment. A thorough understanding of them allows for a better comprehension of the everyday functioning of towns in a period strongly tied to viticulture, while also creating space for further research focused on comparing regional specificities or examining the development of these institutions over a broader chronological span.

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³⁸ Franko, Organizácia a správa, pp. 39–40.

³⁹ Provision entitled „*Was das huettgeldt von iedem Weingarten der huetter sey?*“ AMB, Kniha cechových štatútov, 135–140, sign. Ce 387, fol. 161.

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