

Eszterházy Károly Catholic University  
Doctoral School of Historical Sciences  
*Early Modern Period of the Hungarian History*



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**The Economical Conscriptions of Ladislaus Fáy  
from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century**

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## **Topic of the thesis**

My thesis focuses on the economic activity of an Upper-Hungarian nobleman called Ladislaus Fáy (†c. 1694) from 1666 to 1683 based on his Account Book. As a source the Account Book is useful for economic research and tries to complete the previous results about this topic.

We could not speak about the Fáy's economic activity without examining the family's history. The interesting careers are also important elements in my work which show us the importance of the family. In the first part of my thesis I focus on the history of the family members and their properties in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After that, I continue with the chapters about their economic activity, first of all about the tax payment and other incomes of Ladislaus Fáy. On the other hand, I intend to show the importance of animal stock and viticulture in his estates.

The Fáy family became important during the 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and its history shows us the opportunities for political and economic advancement. At this point one of the main questions is, are they similar to other noble families with the same social and financial status or not?

This is interesting because the Fáy family's property was in a multicultural and multireligious region, and for this reason it provides us with insight into the opportunities of the Hungarian nobility there.

Their family estates were located in the Upper-Hungarian region which was the part of the Habsburg Monarchy but bordered on the Principality of Transylvania and Ottoman Empire. Considering the location of this territory, the Upper-Hungarian nobility tried to find their place in the policy of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the early modern period, political activity in the Hungarian Kingdom was not uniform and the Fáy family is a perfect example of this. The family members can be found in the service of both the Habsburgs and the Princes of Transylvania because of their extensive holdings. It changed from the 1630's because we can find the members of the Fáy family in the service of the Prince of Transylvania which could also mean a military and/or diplomatic activity. The choice sometimes depends not only on the location of a noble man's estates but also on the religious issues. At this point the goal is to show the importance of the Fáy family in the history of the region.

In addition to this, it is important to speak about the history of the family estates which were located in the counties of Upper-Hungary. The development of these estates influenced by the the Ottoman and Habsburg soldiers as well. It is interesting to examine how Ladislaus Fáy acquired these lands. Some of them he received to his parents or grandparents or any other relatives as a family heritage but he also could buy them which were located usually near to his available estates. The question is why did he choose exactly these estates? Did he want to unify his properties this way?

The next part of the thesis works with the text of the Account Book which contains important data to the annual economical management in the estates of Ladislaus Fáy. Considering the history of the Upper-Hungarian region, it is important to speak about the tax payment for the Hungarian noble men in the continous presence of Ottoman soldiers. We can conjecture if Ladislaus Fáy could collect the taxes in his estates which were located almost or completely in the territory of Ottoman Hungary, it is worth to examine the frequency and the regularity of this payment. Obviously this data could show us not only

the power of Ladislaus Fáy but also the Hungarian nobility in this area.

There are some economical questions which we can clarify about this topic. We can see for example the most significant or the smallest profit of Ladislaus Fáy which based on the incomes and outcomes of his estates. Considering the important role of this region in the wine- and cattle-trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is interesting to ask does Ladislaus Fáy take part in the trade activity like this?

Since we know that after the Ottoman expansion, some of Fáy's estates were located or bordered on those which the Ottomans had, he tried to make some profit of the location of his estates. One of the opportunities was renting his estates in the area by other noble men or serfs which ruled by the Ottomans. According to the previous research, the Hungarian nobility in this region, received huge amount of money to renting their estates by other people. It is important to ask does Fáy also have income from this activity? And if yes, how many?

Related to this topic, it is interesting to examine the renting of some taxes which was also generally accepted practice here during this period. The Hungarian noble men

sometimes rented those taxes which the serfs were payed for the Catholic Church. Since the Church did not want to work with the those serfs who were living in the Ottoman area the Hungarian nobility could use this opportunity and thanks to this income they could make a huge benefit as well. According to the previous research, Ladislaus Fáy also rented this kind of ecclesiastical tax.

One of the goals of this research is to show information about Ladislaus Fáy's property management, tax payments, animal stock and viticulture from 1666 to 1683. The Account Book shows us what the position was of the noble whose properties were scattered across different parts of a fragmented country subject to varying rule (Ottoman or Habsburg). Based on this, the thesis is dealing with economic history in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After those chapters which are dealing with the history of the family, the properties and the economy, the thesis publishes the whole text of the Account Book.

## **The results of previous research on the topic**

Thanks to many previous research, the number of the academic literature about the history of the Hungarian nobility increased significantly in the past few years. We already have many information about those noble families in the 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries who were living in the Hungarian Kingdom, especially in the western part of the country. They usually worked as a soldier or an officer and tried to increase their power and wealth in this region.

Many new researches which are dealing with the nobility in Upper-Hungary is not advanced yet but there are some new information focusing on this topic in the past few decades. The case studies of *Emma Iványi*, *Éva Gyulai*, *Zoltán Borbély* and *Lajos Gecsényi* are dealing with the opportunities and the careers of Hungarian noble men. Besides this, *Tamás Bodnár* focuses on the history and importance of Hungarian noble families which were living in Borsod County in Upper-Hungary.

The Hungarian historians almost did not examine the history of the Fáy family until now, especially in the early modern period. There are some information which are

dealing with the history of the Fáys' in the middle ages and in the 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, sometimes published by a family member without any academic point of view.

On the other hand, there are many opportunities for the new research in the economic history. The specialized literature draws attention to the battle of Mohács in 1526 because in the next twohundred years this event determined the direction of the society, the economy and the policy in Hungary. The continous warfare and the expansion of the Ottoman army caused difficulties in the everyday life and managing of the estates, collecting of the taxes and so on. This is the reason why the research about the history of the estates of the noble families is important in the early modern period because these studies show us how the Hungarian nobility managed their estates or what kind of incomes and outcomes did they have in their properties or what was the most important sector in their estates?

From this point of view, I consider two works as particularly important. The first one is the book of *Éva Szirácsik* about the history of Ferenc Ibrányi's estates. He was one of the noble men in Upper-Hungary, his properties



were scattered across this region in many counties. In this book *Éva Szirácsik* published an economic registration (in Latin *urbarium*) about the serfes and the labor in 1656 and examined how these estates functioned in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The second one is also a case study by *Ágnes R. Várkonyi* based on a published source. This was the economic diary of András Szirmay (1656–1723) who was also a noble man from Upper-Hungary. In his diary he wrote about the managing of his estates and vineyards, trade and so on. These two books show us what was the most important attributes in these estates and how the economy could work in the Hungarian Kingdom during this period.

There are a couple of works which were dealing with the estates of Ladislaus Fáy. One of them is the book of *Ferenc Szakály* which shows us the most important attributes of the tax payment in the Ottoman Hungary. He talked about Ladislaus Fáy as a strong and powerful noble man of the region and emphasized that Fáy was the man who were always fighting for his own economic interests sometimes against the Ottomans as well. The other one was *Gyula Benedek* who published a part from the Account

Book of Fáy about the history of Tiszapüspöki. He wrote about the tax payment of the serfes in the estates of the noble man in this town which was one of those properties which Fáy received as a heritage in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, it is important to mentioned the brief biography of *András Péter Szabó* about the life and the career of Ladislaus Fáy.

### **Methodology and research**

Because of the amount of sources in the archives we can say, there are many information about Ladislaus Fáy and his estates during this period which a historian can use and build up a part of the history of the Fáy family. It is important to emphasize that there were some major fires in the Hungarian national archives during the Second World War and at the time of the anti-communist uprising in 1956 which destroyed the major part of the sources about the family. Fortunately, we can still reconstruct the history of the family in the 17<sup>th</sup> century perfectly. We can find sources about many lawsuits, last wills and any other conscriptions about the estates in the archives of the Fáys (*The National*

*Archives of Hungary, Fáy family Archives, P 1729*) which can help to show data about the economic history of Ladislaus Fáy. It is possible to reconstruct the history of the family during the early modern period which based on the familial correspondence. We can still find the Account Book of Ladislaus Fáy here which was the main source of this thesis.

Furthermore, there are many useful data in the other part of the archives called *Urbaria et Conscriptiones* (E 156) which contains many conscriptions and notes about the estates of the nobility. Ladislaus Fáy and his brother, Stephen Fáy (†1710) also participated in the Magnate Conspiracy (1664–1671) against the Habsburg emperor. Because of it, Ladislaus Fáy spent a long time in a prison and lost the biggest part of his estates. During the confiscation, the officers of the Habsburg Court wrote descriptions about the properties of Fáy. These are very important documents for us because based on these inventories and other conscriptions we can collect information about the appearance and the size, the animal and serfes of the estates in the 1670's.

There are also many interesting sources in the *Hungarian Chancellory Archives* (A 57) but the most important document of them is the so called Royal Books (in Latin: *Libri Regii*). This source can show us information about the history, the acquisition of estates in the Hungarian Kingdom and about official lawsuits and their results and so on.

There are many published sources in the Hungarian historical literature. One of them is the notice books of the counties. This kind of source contains information about the assembly of the counties in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for example about the name and sometimes the speech of the noble men who participated in it or about the important cases of the county. In my research, the most important notice books were the sources of those counties where the Fáy's estates were located because the various family members participated in the leadership of those counties where they were living and having their properties. Based on these notice books, we could see clearly which noble families were the most significant in the county at that time. Besides this, from the Fáy's perspective it was an

interesting question who do the family members maintain a relationship with in the county?

Because of the importance of having relationship to other noble families in the region, the correspondence between the noble families was very important source in my research. The Fáy family had a strong connection to other noble men in Upper-Hungary based on the letters of the *Rákóczi Family Archives* (E 190) and other archives in the countryside (for example *Tolna County Archives*).

### **Important results of the dissertation**

The first part of the thesis focuses on the history of the Fáy family and their estates, and mainly deals with economic history and works on the managing estates of Ladislaus Fáy. The second part publishes the Account Book of Fáy which contains data about the tax payment, management and condition of the estates from 1666 to 1683.

The Fáys were the members of the wealthy Hungarian Protestant noble families (in Latin: *bene possessionati*) during the early modern period in the Upper-Hungarian

region. There were important members of the Fáy family, for example a Protestant chief judge from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Stephen Fáy III († before 1618) who was interestingly loyal to the Habsburgs, but his son also named Stephen IV (†1639/1640) who already served George Rákóczi I, the Prince of Transylvania. It is important to emphasize the Rákóczi family was one of the most significant families in Upper-Hungary. This is why it was so important to talk about the service of Stephen Fáy IV in the court of George Rákóczi in the 1630's. He was the man who established the successful advance of the Fáy family. His two sons, Ladislaus and Stephen V (†1710) could continue this way and build the reputation of the family.

Ladislaus Fáy was the writer of the Account Book and in the beginning of his career, he worked in the service of the Hungarian palatine Francis Wesselényi (1605–1667). Because of this service, Fáy was well-informed and he had a good connection with the participants of the Magnate Conspiracy. After that, Ladislaus Fáy also participated in this uprising. Many of the Protestant nobles including Fáy as well were captured and confiscated their estates. This

event determined his and his children's life. His brother, Stephen Fáy V was the captain of Murány Castle and participated in Rákóczi's War of Independence.

The thesis gives many new information about economic history in the 17<sup>th</sup> century especially about the managing of estates. The properties of Ladislaus Fáy were scattered across the Upper-Hungarian region. Based on the sources of the family archives it is already clear how Ladislaus Fáy acquired his estates. Some of them he received to his parents, grandparents and other relatives but he also could buy new ones in his neighbourhood. Probably he tried to unify his estates because that way he could be stronger and collect the taxes more efficient.

The Account Book of Ladislaus Fáy contains information about the incomes, outcomes and other cases in the estates which were located on the border of the Ottoman and Habsburg territory or in Ottoman Hungary. The incomes of Fáy based on the taxes which he collected as a landlord. On the one hand the serfes payed them as cash. It is important to emphasize there were many different type of taxes in Hungary at that time. But on the other hand they could give other products like fish, chicken

or wild animals for example deer; or grapes, raisin, leather, boots and slippers and so on. If a town in Fáy's estates had a mill or a brewster which constantly functioned there by the serfes they also have to pay a tax for it to Fáy. Besides that, Fáy had a huge income for the renting of his estates in the Ottoman area by other noble men and/or serfes. The amount what the people payed for the renting of the estates, from the middle of the 1660's constantly increased which was very advantageous for Fáy.

The Account Book shows us one of the most important incomes of Fáy was renting of those taxes which the serfes payed for the Catholic Church, mainly in Pest-Pilis-Solt County in the Ottoman area. It is especially true about the renting of the taxes of the grain, the honey, the lamb and wine. Besides that, Ladislaus Fáy had lesser benefit of the mill and brewster tax.

Fáy had a big vineyard in the most important wine-producing and trading region in the Hungarian Kingdom called Tokaj-Hegyalja. The maintenance of his vineyard needed a lot of money therefore the bigger part of his outcome was hiring employees to work with grapes. He was one of those owners of vineyard who preferred the



better and more useful wagework toward the labour of the serfes. Despite this consciousness, we do not have any information about his wine-trading or his wine production.

As part of my research I tried to emphasize the importance of the animal stock in the estates of Ladislaus Fáy. The number of the animals changed constantly which based on the constant count. The majority consisted to sheeps but there was a significant number of the pigs and beeves. We have some information about the using of the meat or feeding up the pigs. Besides that, we can speak about those people and their salary who were working with the care of the animal stock for example shepherds, hostlers and so on.

I intend to show the economical management of an Upper-Hungarian noble man in the 17<sup>th</sup> century through to using his Account Book. This is an extraordinary source because deals with the estates of Ladislaus Fáy whose properties were on the one hand on the border of the Habsburg and Ottoman territory, on the other hand in the Ottoman area. This is almost a new research field in the historical science therefore this thesis could be a starting point in the future economical research projects.

## **Publications related to the thesis**

Kajali Pál levelei apósához, Fáy (V.) Istvánhoz (1689–1700) (*Kajali Pál's letters to his father-in-law, Steven Fáy V between 1689–1700*). In: *Lymbus* (2022) 457–507.

Adalékok egy diáklázadás történetéhez. Kazinczy Péter ismeretlen levele Fáy Lászlóhoz 1667-ből (*Kazinczy Peter's unknown letter to Ladiuslaus Fáy about the rebellion in the Reformed College in Sárospatak (1667)*). In: *Theologiai Szemle*, 2022/1. 21–24.

Adalékok I. Rákóczi György egy felső-magyarországi szervitorának feladataihoz: Fáy IV. István levelezése (1633–1639) (*Correspondence of Steven Fáy IV the client of George Rákóczi I (1633–1639)*). In: *Aetas*, 2021/2. 152–166.

Egy Rákóczi-familiáris, Fáy (IV.) István levelezése 1633–1639 között (*The correspondence of Steven Fáy IV between 1633–1639*). In: *Lymbus*, 2020, 181–214.

Házassági stratégiák egy felső-magyarországi köznemesi családban: A Fáyak és rokonaik a 17. században (*Strategy by marriage of a noble family in Upper-Hungary. The Fáy*

*family and their relatives in the 17<sup>th</sup> century*). In:  
Doktorandusz hallgatók IX. konferenciájának  
tanulmányai, Ed. Rita Szuromi, Eger, 2020. 107–134.