

## **HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE FORMATION OF THE ISOLATED FARM SYSTEM IN CSONGRÁD COUNTY**

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The specific element of the Hungarian settlement structure is the isolated farm which was formed by the Hungarian history and the special nature of the plain, and which an independent settlement and system as the result of the historical development. It developed on the uncommassatated lands and steppelands of settlements with large confines and where latifundium did not exist er the rapid decomposition of the latifundium system and the capitalization of agriculture led to the strengthening of individual farming. The isolated farm became the centre of the small-scale agricultural production and later it was a dwelling-place, too. In our country the formation of the isolated farm system brought forth the modernization of farming. István Balogh was correct when he said: "this system of farming even in its mere extensive type meant a greater capital- and work intensity than the feudal farming. It is due to this settlement system that the Great Hungarian Plain could give food to a population rapidly growing and it could even export a considerable part of its products".

In Csongrád county because of the different natural endowments of the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza and the territory east of the River Tisza and because of the different economic and historical development of these territories a specific double-faced isolated farm system developed. While in the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza the isolated farm system is relatively preserved, in the territory east of the River Tisza the number of isolated farms has profoundly decreased. Why did the isolated farm become deeply rooted in the western part of the county and why did it weaken in the eastern part? How did the connection of the closed settlement and its isolated farm system develop? How did the isolated farms — in the two different regions — adjust to the circumstances changed by the socialist reforms? To analyze these important problems it is definitely necessary to deal with the formation of the isolated farm system.

The scientist, who wants to examine the whole isolated farm system of the county, has to compare the two types of isolated farms. If this paper succeeded in it, it would be the first work to compare the two typical regions of isolated farms, situated in the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza and in the territory east of the River Tisza.

### **The Development of the Isolated Farm System in Csongrád County till the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century**

On the present territory of Csongrád county isolated farms could already develop in the time of the conquest. There were plenty of fish and game and an abundance of good grazing lands here. Along the ponds near Szeged isolated farms of fishermen

developed. The rivers and ponds ensured the people living there enough to live on. On the grassy steppe-land we could have seen dwellings of livestock farmers, too. Before people settled down and they switch over from livestock farming to plant cultivation the latter could only be temporary dwellings.

After the Tartar-Mongol invasion people resettled in the region. On the territory east of the River Tisza which was protected against floods a small village settlement system developed. Most of these villages could be small weiler-type settlements which were small communities consisting of few houses and inhabitants. The depopulation of the small villages started before the Turkish invasion and the fields turned into steppe-lands, too because it was hard to cultivate the argil and sodic land and the pressure of the latifundium increased. The Turkish invasion accelerated the process and finished it.

On the drift-sand of the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza small settlements also developed. László (Cumanian) IV. settled the Cumanians here who were wandering and later already plundering on the Great Hungarian Plain. But the Cumanians who were used to free life soon ran away from their dwellings. In this way a contiguous deserted steppe-land developed, a part of which was annexed to Szeged by King Matthias. On this steppeland only a few villages remained. (PÉTER NIKLAY 1938) On this grassy steppe-land livestock farming was important, therefore it could have large isolated farm system before the Turkish invasion as well. These isolated farms were temporary dwellings and the dwellers were shepherds or farm-hands.

During the Turkish invasion the territories east of the River Tisza became almost uninhabited. The Turks raided the region several times, the inhabitants fled to the islands of the moorland near the River Tisza and they dared to move back to the towns only when the Turks disappeared. Even Vásárhely — though it was a chaos estate, the property of the bashaw of Gyula — was destroyed several times, and started to develop only at the beginning of the 1700s. While in the eastern part only those settlements remained which could join the above mentioned fluctuation, in the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza Szeged and the fields belonging to it became the property of the sultan. Szeged could constantly survive because it was a chaos-town. Its population increased rapidly, for, as a result of the tyranny of Turkish landowners (spahis, bashaws, beys) many of the inhabitants of their estates "sarais" (in other words farm-steads) which lay on the steppe-lands farther from the town, fled to the chaos-towns. After all it was impossible to claim back their escaped villains from the sultan. Later they rented their destroyed dwellings and steppe-lands from the Turkish warriors but — though they had large territories — they could not get rich from livestock farming because of the bad public security — writes Károly CZIMER (1927). The citizens went back to nomadic life the farming, which was becoming strong around the town before the Turkish invasion, was replaced by livestock farming. But livestock farming on the great steppe-land is impossible without dwellings.

Like in Szeged isolated farms could remain around Csongrád, too because Csongrád was also a chaos-town. Szentes — like Vásárhely — was destroyed several times by the Turks, and no isolated farm system has yet developed in the tide-lands of the River Maros.

Along the River Tisza isolated farms specialized in fishing and hunting increased

in number. Those who fled to the islands of the moorlands and reeds near the river were still kept up by the river.

After driving out the Turks the population of the towns increased rapidly. Villains who fled to the northern part of the country were gradually returning and settled down in the towns.

Szeged regained most of its steppe-lands. Furthermore, already in 1712, following the handing in of its 13 point application, its representatives were invited to the Pozsony Diet and in 1719 the town regained all of its privileges, became a free royal town. Among the 13 points several can be connected with the isolated farms. In point 4 the town asks that "Foreign wine may not be taken into the town". Moving out of the town is further supported by point 7, according to which the peasants of the town should not participate in "services without recompensation".

As the public safety became better the seizures of land covered the steppe-land, too. The thing that helped the development of new isolated farms was that the territories seized in this way became private property. Besides livestock farming plant cultivation started and it also contributed to the increase of isolated farms. The town tried to increase the number of its landownerscitizens. It recognized the right of ownership to the seized lands on condition that the owners are not allowed to give up the ownership. Later the seizure of lands was restricted. lands were sold in perpetuity.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the picture of the empty, uncultivated steppe-lands has completely changed. According to S. GULÁCSY (1927) the stock of horses, cows and oxen has tripled and the stock sheep has sextupled after the 75 years following the year of 1719. the author speaks about changes in quality as well: the spreading of merine sheep which replaced a Hungarian kind that gave rougher wool. "In certain years 2000 tons of wool was carried away from Szeged."

Referring to plant cultivation which was gradually spreading beside livestock farming, GULÁCSY says that at the end of the 1780s "an enormous quantity of corn was produced on the abundant fields and it was in these years that Szeged became the first and the biggest corn market of South Hungary". The most important plants beside wheat and maize on black soil and rye and potato on sand were tobacco, grapes and red pepper. Tobacco was also exported since 1770; "In 1793 40 ships of tobacco were transported from Szeged to Trieste." (S. GULÁCSY, 1927)

In 1747 — according to the map of Ábrahám KALTSCHMIDT. (REIZNER, 1900.) (See Fig. 1.), the first cartographic source, 137 "tuguriums" were indicated, 72 of them lay on the steppe-lands of Alsóváros and 65 were on those of Felsőváros. These dwellings were situated 6—7 km far from the skirts of the town on the average. (See Fig. 1.) As Antal JUHÁSZ (1974) mentions, the map of Antal BALLA, head engineer of Pest county signes already 280 dwellings in 1778, 143 of them are situated on the meadows of Felsőváros.

While on almost all the estates in the present district of Szeged (with the exception of the Dorozsma dwellings and the tide-lands of the River Tisza) they could start small farming, based on the bourgeois form of property and paralelly to it the formation of the isolated farm system began at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, on the other parts of the country the latifundium tried to restore its power. After regaining the fields the landowners called the fled inhabitants back to the areas which were populated by a small number of people. For some — longer or shorter — period of time some advantages were granted to those who returned and in some cases they were

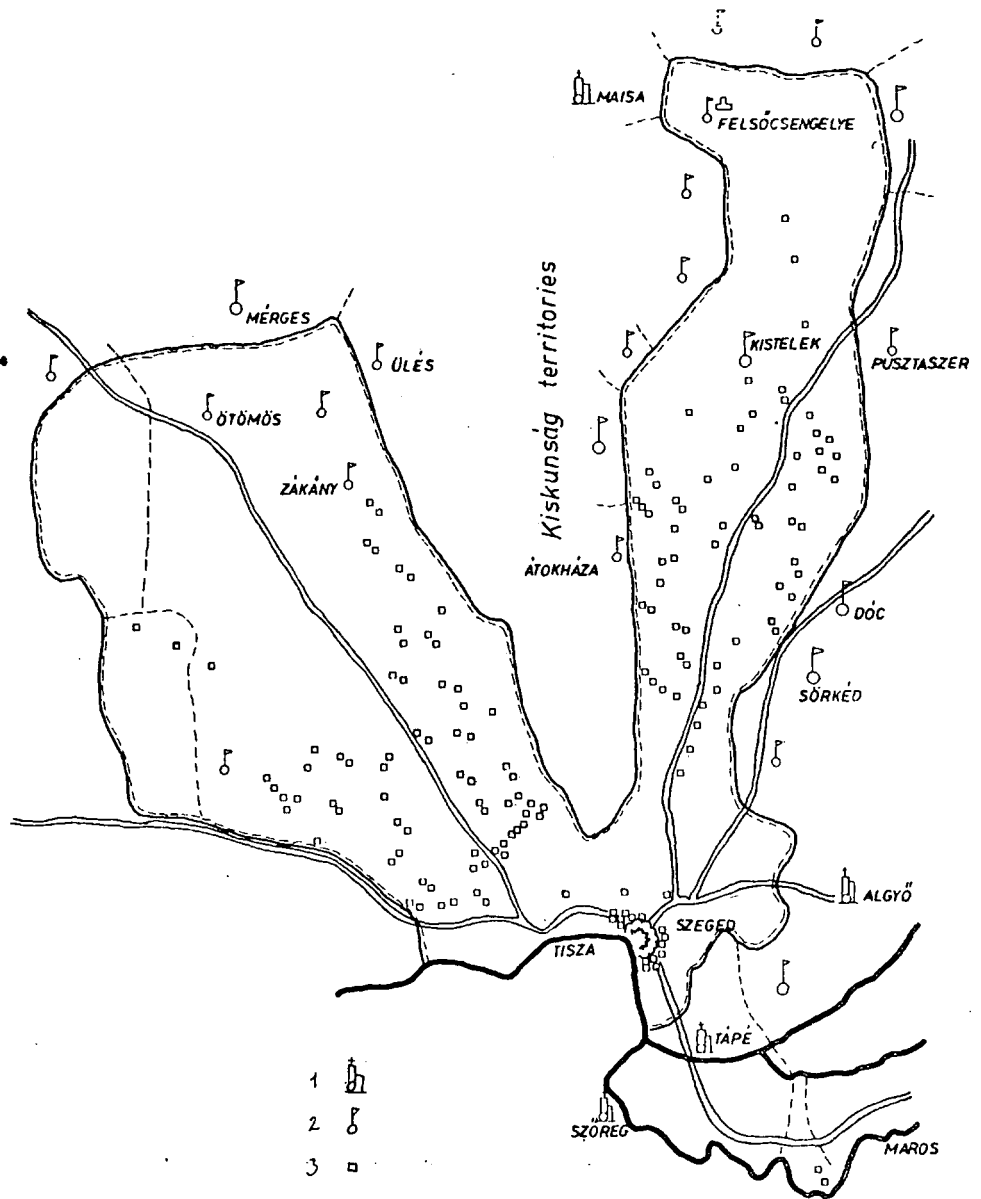


Fig. 1. The lay-out of the outskirts of Szeged in 1747 (after REIZNER)

1: village 2: estate 3: cottage

given fields to ensure their subsistence. But building dwellings was prohibited. The only exception was the town of Csongrád. Count Sándor KÁROLYI, the landowner, leased the steppe-lands in the district belonging to his estate to the citizens of Csong-

rád, and the inhabitants acquitted their debts by different "charges". Taxes were continually increasing and therefore many of the settlers moved away after the cessation of the given advantages. In spite of this, the population of the town increased and got richer. The agreement between the count and the town contributed both the occupation of steppe-lands and to the building of new dwellings. In 1771 a number of steppe-lands belonged to the town: the steppe-lands of Gyója, Fehértó, Ellés, Újfalu and Felgyő, which was a farm-stead centre. (FOLLAJTÁR, 1938.)

On the territories east of the River Tisza the most prominent change in the increase of the number of isolated farms was brought by the closing of the statute labour and the manumission compensation. During the closing of the statute labour the villains working on the latifundiums first became only villains with certain "charges" and not peasant labourers. This, however, — beside the cultivation of the latifundium — meant already that the villain had — even if only in leasa — a field, which was cultivated by he, himself. But the towns and the villages made an effort to cease this situation and sooner or later they purchased the fields on their confines. Therefore on the parts of the county which lay east of the River Tisza the isolated farm system started to develop only in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the steppe-lands owned by Szeged it was only the external zone of the isolated farms which was uninhabited, though its utilization had already begun. Seizures of land were finished and obtaining of fields was possible only by purchase. The leased estate also appeared and in this way even such ex-cottiers could obtain fields who could have not afforded to buy them.

Continuous moving to the isolated farms began already at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These people who shifted quarters with their whole family were mainly those who rented their fields and usually owned no house in the town. The development of extensive livestock farming towards that of half-extensive laid a claim for plant cultivation. The spreading of labour-intensive cultures (e.g. growing maize) in plant cultivation moving to their farms became necessary for the conventional domestic servants. The authorities prohibited continuous moving out for several reasons. As it was declared in the cities — these people withdrew themselves from rates and taxes, public safety was bad on the isolated farms, and the education of children was not proper. No isolated farm could be built on a field less than 25 "holds" (14,25 hectares). In spite of it building started on smaller estates as well. And if the authorities "sometimes ordered the destruction of the isolated farms... this, in the long run, was unsuccessful". (I. GYÓRFFY, 1923.)

The town of Szeged, after all, welcomed its profitable, rapidly expanding isolatio farm system. As we can see in the case of Mihály SZÚCS (1914) the town was against the idea of the formation of farm-steads and villages.

While, after all, everybody was able to obtain a field by seizure of land or by free purchase, everyone could have and cultivate his own land, but only those could have a share in the lands redeemed by manumission who financially contributed to it. The size of the fields they got depended in the rate of contribution. So — beside the stratum of owners — a stratum of poverty-stricken, landless cottiers appeared, who could do nothing else but to hire himself out to landowners. The owner seldom moved out to the isolated farm because he had a considerable number of farm-hands at his disposal and so farming was directed from his house in the town. Therefore in the parts east of the River Tisza close connections were established between the central settlement and its isolated farm system.

We can see the spatial settlement of the isolate farm system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the military maps made under the reign of emperor Joseph II. Several authors (A. BORBÉLY, I. REIZNER) who studied these maps mention that the notation system of the maps is not uniform. There are differences both in the notation system and the illumination according to areas. Neither the notation system of the isolated farms is uniform. In spite of this their situation is well illustrated on these maps. A particular functional zonality in the isolated farm system near Szeged at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries can already be separated after the maps made under the reign of emperor Joseph II.

Beyond the zone of the inner grazing lands near the town, on the black soil and the sand which surrounded it a grapes- vegetables- and fruit-growing area developed. The third belt is a transitory zone, where beside the dwellings of those who dealt with livestock farming, plant cultivation also appeared. In the outer zone of livestock farming we can hardly find any dwellings. (See Fig. 2.)

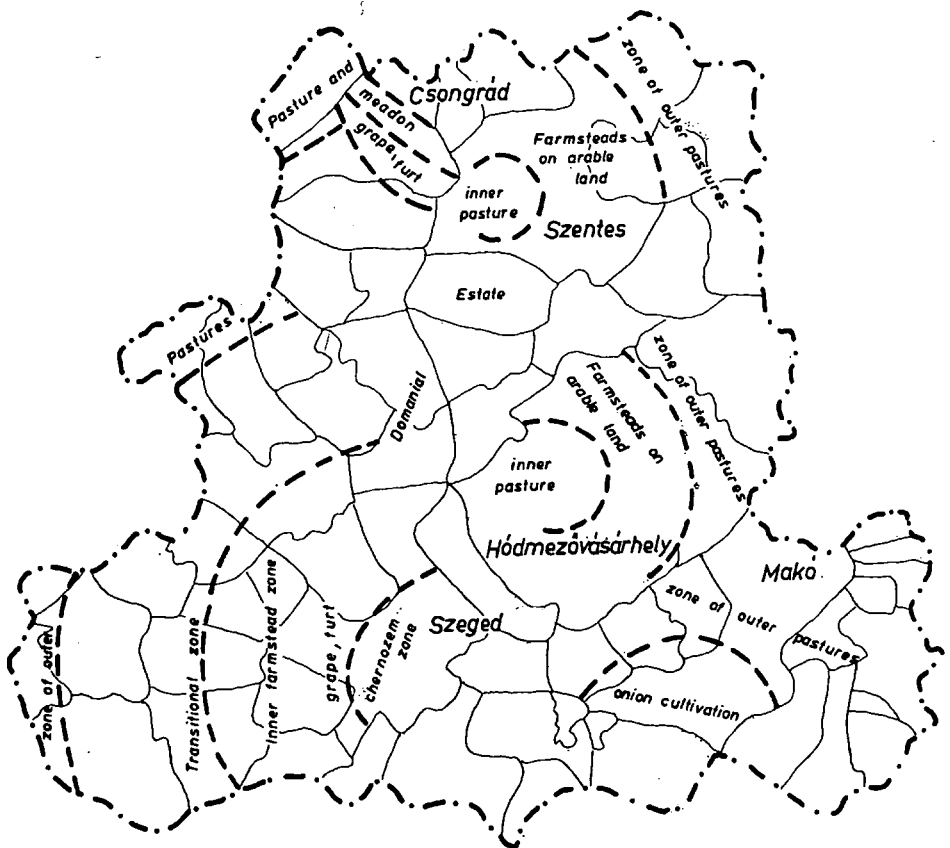


Fig. 2. Farmstead regions round the towns (hypothetic figure)

No isolated farm developed on the territory of the inner grazing lands near the town. The so-called tractable animals were shepherded and grazed here in winter. Even later only a few isolated farms were established in these areas which undoubtedly shows that their function remained the same for a long time.

On the edge of the black soil zone and sand which surrounds the inner grazing lands densely situated isolated farm settlements can be found. On the isolated farms of Alsó -and Felsőváros the growing of vegetables, red pepper and tobacco is already more important than livestock farming. On the sand, at the edge of the black soil near Szatymaz and Mórahalom the fruit and vine growing contributed to the rapid increase of the number of isolated farms. (See figure 3.)



*Fig. 3. Farmsteads of Mórahalom and Ásotthalom*

On the maps made under the rule of Emperor Joseph II. we can see that the isolated farm system was already very significant even in the transitory zone. We can find major groups of isolated farms along the roads radially entering Szeged. The fact that these are located along main roads proves that these farms were in a very close connection with the town. In the surroundings of "Kistelek steppe land" there are 24 isolated farms. The draw wells of these farms give evidence of grazing on the edge of the steppe-land. It is worth mentioning that the isolated farms are arranged similarly to row of farms. The explanation of this can be that on the edge of the steppe-land anybody could graze his animals freely and it was this kind of settlement which hindered the animals in the least. The isolated farms were situated not exactly beside roads of heavy traffic but rather on the edge of low sand-hills, opposite to the dominant direction of wind. The other reason for it was that the row of sand hills meant greater protection for them. (See figure 4.)





*Fig. 4. Farmsteads of Kistelek and Úllés*

The most important activity here was still livestock farming; it is proved by the great number of draw wells. On the edge of steppe-land, along the Halas road, similarly to Kistelek, the scattered isolated farms of the steppe-land Úllés reflect the expansion of isolated farms.

The spreading of these isolated farms can be seen very well on the map of the area south-west of Mórahalom and south-east of today's Ásotthalom. The edge of bogs near Mórahalom is already full of isolated farms, and the fact that there are already some small scattered farms among the sandhills south of the road to Baja shows that the occupation of this area has already started.

The outer zone of isolated farms is almost uninhabited. The draw wells of the fields show that this area is already used for grazing, and the spreading of isolated farms and the occupation of the outer grazing lands is only a question of time. (See figure 4 and 5.)

The interesting thing about the outer zone is that in the surroundings of the county border there are no isolated farms, not even the isolated farms of Majsza, which is very near the border have spreaded over here. Probably the bad public security of the border zone has also contributed to it.

The isolated farm system could develop much more, on that part of the county which lies near Csongrád, between the River Tisza and the River Danube. The dwellings were missing from the tide-lands of the River Tisza. (Not even the estimates from 1856 inform us about the existence of these isolated farms.) There are also very few isolated farms on the steppe-land of Dorozsma. Dorozsma had administrative ties with Kecskemét, that is, it was the edge area of the other town with huge fields and isolated farms.

The maps made under the reign of Emperor Joseph II. cannot inform us about





Fig. 5. Farmsteads of Csengele and Kistelek



Fig. 6. Farmsteads of Hódmezővásárhely



the isolated farm system of the territory east of the River Tisza. Because of the domination of latifundium there were only a few farmsteads (Nagymágocs, Szegvár, Fábiansebestyén). (See figure 7.) Dwellings can be found on the higher areas protected from flood, in the surroundings of Hódmezővásárhely and Szentes. The great number of draw wells in the fields show that a part of this territory has already been used as a grazing land, but the huge steppe-land between Vásárhely and Orosháza is still deserted. In the surroundings of Makó the utilization of the outer zone is already very significant. (See figure 8.)

### **The Development of the Isolated Farm System from the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Days**

But the development of isolated farm system was not finished. Following the emancipations of villains and the introduction of the new inheritance law (according to which even women could inherit the property) as well as the segregation of the "large community" the subdivision of the large estates — on the territory between the River med around the towns here also. (See figure 3.)

In the inner zone the inner grazing-lands can be found with the same function as that of in the surroundings of Szeged.

In the cesond zone the land cultivating farms can be found, which is the stage of grain and maize growing. On that part of this zone, which is in the surroundings of vásárhely — in the direction of Orosháza, on the higher yellow soil — even vineyards were developed.

The third and at the same time the most extended zone was the territory of the outer grazing-lands in the vicinity of towns which were left in the common property of the houseowner farmers. Their livestock was grazed together. The town prohibited the ploughing of the outer grazing-lands and fined those very strictly who were building here without permission.

However, this outer zone was wound up much more rapidly than that of the area between the River Tisza and the River Danube. Further division of land were enforced by the grain prosperity, the boom in maize. It is also very interesting that here the subdivision of land started much later.

The new order of succession and the separation of farms was very rare even at the estimate of 1856. There were only a few isolated farms on the grazing-lands: Gorzsa, Soltpalé, Barcirét, Körtvéeyes. The area which became cultivable as a result of the protection against flood and the drainage of marshes was soon occupied by isolated farms. On the confines of the towns the division of land obtained by manumission compensation and a more organized development of isolated farm system than that of the territory between the River Tisza and the River Danube started only at that time. Otherwise it is also confirmed by the regular arrangement of these farms.

The dwelling house and the farm-yard of the isolated farm was usually situated in the geometrical focus of the narrow parcels of land. From here, even the remotest part of the estate was easily accessible. Each isolated farm had a separate interconnecting road to the cartroads which lead to the centre of the town. (This regular row of isolated farm system — especially on the confines of Hódmezővásárhely — is rarely interrupted by an interbuilt isolated farm even today.)

According to the estimate of 1856, which can be found in the County Archives and which I could look at only show that three functional zones were for Tisza and the River Danube — has started. The grain prosperity that lasted until the middle of the 1880-s also contributed to this process very effectively. As a result of grain prosperity plant cultivation became the most prominent activity, but this demanded a more intensive cultivation of large estates. Thus the moving of the population out to the fields became very frequent. New isolated farms were built on the inherited estates; the owners of these farms lived there permanently. Because of the gradual moving out to the fields, the connections of the isolated farm system of Szeged and of the town, which were commented by Erdei, were broken even before the turn of the century. The isolated farm was not a complementary part of the town house any longer, but separated from the town it became an independent settlement.

The estates of the town Szeged were occupied by these isolated farms in a very short time. In the second half of the XIX. century there was no land to be divided, because the confines of the town were full of isolated farms. It can be proved by those sources which say that the people from Szeged bought vineyards for themselves in Bácska and Bánát.

On these territories of the county which lie east of the River Tisza the population of isolated the joint families here also helped to plough the outer grazing lands. At the time of the redevision of land the small-holder bought a territory for the heirs on the outer grazing lands. That's why the regularity of settling is a characteristic of the outer zone as well. The cottier without house and land could not obtain fields even at the time of the later devisions of land; even only few of them could get it on lease. According to the things mentioned above the outer territories of the isolated farm system grew younger.

The development of the isolated farm system around Makó is a little bit different. In the second half of the 19th century the large farmer could rarely find a farm-hand for himself. On both the small estates and medium-sized farms there were onion-plantations to which handwerk is indispensable. The landless cottier could also obtain it. Though first he got it on lease, later he could buy it for the income acquired from the onion-plantations. It is not accidental that Makó did not belong to the "Viharsarok" (place of discontent). The other towns of the territory east of the River Tisza excluded these cottiers even from the possibility of landowning, so their dissatisfaction kept increasing.

For people who grew onions it was necessary to live on the isolated farms. But the isolated farm system around Makó did not separate as that around Szeged and they kept contact with the town and in most cases they also kept their houses there. The onions were sold with the help of Makó, so it is due to the onion that the town could keep its isolated farm system. (Later it had a great significance even at the time of the decomposition of the isolated farm system.)

The isolated farm system around the larger villages of the territory east of the River Tisza (Mindszent, Szegvár, Nagymágozs, etc.) also shows a special development in the period between the absolute monarchy and the turn of the century. In this area the fields were divided by the landowners while on the other parts they ran manorial farming so the number of farmsteads was also significant here. The case is nearly the same in the area of Csanytelek, Tömörkény, etc.

There is no isolated farm even on the territories on the territories east of the River Maros. It was a defended frontier region. The parts — which became uninhabited



during the Turkish invasion — were settled by people from the Northern part of the country. They got land for guard duty but isolated farms did not develop because of the inhabitants' settlement traditions.

Generally speaking about the second large period of the development of the isolated farms in this county we can say that the plant cultivation was much more important than the livestock farming. This required people to live on the isolated farms constantly. The connection of the isolated farm and the town did not cease yet, it did not become a real dwelling yet. (Usually it was inhabited only at the time of the agricultural works.) The new, really great swarming began at the turn of the century when the isolated farms became constant dwellings and got separated from the town.

By the turn of the century only a little uncultivated grazing land remained. The isolated farm could find its possibility for development in intensification of agriculture. The further subdivision of the estates and the rapid increase of the population required the better cultivation of the lands. It could only be possible if they lived there. Around Szeged and Makó the growing horticulture also joined to this. The connection between the central settlement and the isolated farm loosened. The livestock farming began to be more important again. The subdivided estates strived for self-sufficiency. It was helped by the fact that they could not sell their negligible surpluses. If they brought it into the town they had to sell it at such a cheap rate that they could buy almost nothing for it. "A real *circulus victiosus* can be seen" (I. WEISS, 1931). The peasants were to grow maize, to fatten animals, but nobody took care of buying up their products.

The towns endeavoured to make a greater profit out of the isolated farms but did almost nothing for them. (Szeged helped them the most.) The exploited isolated farm system became poor, "poverty is greater than on the Trans-Danubia" (I. WEISS, 1931) the development of the isolated farm came to a deadlock.

Poverty was the greatest in the isolated farms of Hódmezővásárhely. The subdivided small estates which generally grew wheat and maize could not change their production structure because of the disadvantageous soil and the backwardness of the people's mind. After the boom in corn this production structure was enough only to keep the living standard on a minimal level. Poverty was followed by running into debts then many times by the selling of the estate. The number of the landless agrarian proletarians moving to the town was increasing. If in size not equal but a similar progress can be seen on the other parts of the areas of the county on the territory east of the River Tisza — except the surroundings of Makó.

In the isolated farm system of Szeged, which was becoming independent, the products were changed faster. The labour-intensive vegetables and fruits can be grown more profitably on the sand so the smaller isolated farms were more productive. In spite of this the result was the stratification in the society of the isolated farms. Another interesting phenomena can be noticed. The forming of the villages in the upper isolated farms began. Csengele and Kistelek — which were gathered round the district police stations beside the road to Budapest — administratively separated from the town.

A newer settling towards the isolated farms began with the division of land after the liberation. This meant a greater increase on the divided latifundiums such as: Sándorfalva, Tömörkény, Csanytelek and on the territory east of the River Tisza: Mindszent, Szegvár, Nagymágocs, etc. The forming of the villages continued.

This process was accelerated by pointing out the centres of the isolated farms at the beginning of the 50's, at the time of the collectivisation and by the orders forced on the isolated farm system.

After the large-scale transformation of agriculture the decomposition of the isolated farm system began with the separation of the work- and dwellingplace. But the isolated farm system did not cease to exist as fast as we expected it in the 50's. Actually in certain fields it begins to find its place in the large-scale agriculture.

*Let us summarize what has been said:*

1. In the county the isolated farm system in the territories east of the River Tisza followed the formation of the isolated farm system on the area between the River Danube and the River Tisza with a phase delay.
2. The unity of the dwelling- and workplace was realized at the same time on the territory east of the River Tisza.
3. On the sandy territories the formation of the isolated farms began with the nomadic type of livestock farming. On the territory east of the River Tisza the isolated farms were formed directly on the plough-lands.
4. The prosperity of grain and the new order of succession resulted the subdivision of the land between the River Danube and the River Tisza and the inhabiting of the outer grazing lands on the territory east of the River Tisza.
5. The isolated farm system of the sandy territories became a constantly inhabited, separate settlement by the end of the 19th century because of their constant moving out. On the territories east of the River Tisza it was in close connection with the town and the "town and its surroundings" connection remained.
6. Because of the directed moving out the isolated farm system of regular settlement structure is characteristic of the territories of the territories of the county east of the River Tisza, while on the sandy areas they are scattered because of undirectedness.

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