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Serfdom and Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia.

On Josef Grulich's Book *Migrační strategie: Město, předměstí a vesnice na panství České Budějovice ve druhé polovině 18. století*, České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2018, 286 pages

Poddaństwo a mobilność w osiemnastowiecznych Czechach.

Uwagi nad książką Josefa Grulich, *Migrační strategie: Město, předměstí a vesnice na panství České Budějovice ve druhé polovině 18. století*, České Budějovice 2018, Wydawnictwo: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, ss. 286

Abstract

The article discusses a book focusing on migration strategies as exemplified by the area surrounding the city of České Budějovice in the second half of the eighteenth century. Formally, the peasant population in Bohemia was bound in serfdom until 1781, which has until recently been believed to have considerably curtailed its mobility. The underlying research is based mostly on letters of discharge and

Abstrakt

Artykuł omawia książkę poświęconą strategiom migracyjnym, czego przykładem jest obszar otaczający miasto Czeskie Budziejowice w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku. Formalnie ludność chłopska w Czechach była związana pańszczyzną do 1781 roku. Do niedawna uważano, że znacznie ograniczało to jej mobilność. Zasadniczo badania opierają się głównie na listach zwalniających i rejestracji urodzeń,

registers of births, marriages and deaths. The author sets out to explain the migration strategies followed by the residents of villages situated in the surroundings of a major urban center. He discusses the migrants' main motivations and the ways in which they tried to relocate within the bounds of the law. Special attention is paid to movements relating to labor markets and matrimony. The issue of migration strategies is discussed against a vast social background.

Keywords

Serfdom, rural-to-urban migrations, České Budějovice, marriage, employment, migration strategies

małżeństw i zgonów. Autor postanawia wyjaśnić strategie migracji stosowane przez mieszkańców wsi położonych w pobliżu dużego ośrodka miejskiego. Omawia główne motywacje migrantów i sposoby prób przenosin podejmowanych w granicach obowiązującego prawa. Szczególną uwagę zwraca się na ruchy związane z rynkami pracy i małżeństwem. Problem strategii migracyjnych jest omawiany na szerokim tle społecznym.

Słowa kluczowe

poddaństwo, migracje z obszarów wiejskich do miejskich, Czeskie Budziejowice, małżeństwo, zatrudnienie, strategie migracyjne

Migration strategies can be considered one of the most important elements of human mobility. Research into this phenomenon in historical times is not an easy endeavor. It is a prerequisite for the researcher to have a good knowledge of both the source base and the area under analysis. Josef Grulich selected for his analysis the micro-region of the city of České Budějovice, an area that had already been the focus of his research interest.¹ The book is divided into 7 chapters, with 35 tables, 4 genealogical charts, 4 maps, and 21 illustrations. The book is concluded by an extensive annex (pp. 208–231) and a sizeable English summary (pp. 269–282).

The objective of the research project was to highlight the migration strategies of the rural population in the context of suburban and urban areas where the newcomers underwent social change. The author used this specific subject to test a theory based on normative sources, namely that of “second serfdom” (in Czech, *teorie druhého nevolnictví*), which allegedly limited the mobility of the serf population – in some countries of East and Central Europe as late as the

¹ Josef Grulich, *Populační vývoj a životní cyklus venkovského obyvatelstva na jihu Čech v 16. až 18. století* (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2008); Grulich, *Migrace mestskeho a vesnického obyvatelstva. Farnost Ceske Budejovice 1750–1824* (České Budějovice: Nová tiskárna Pelhřimov, 2013).

mid-nineteenth century. It is also believed to have been a factor in the slower industrialization and urbanization of this part of the continent. In this aspect, while forgoing a more detailed study, Czech historiography clings to the opinion of the significance of the formal abolition of serfdom in 1781, which allegedly triggered a massive influx of peasants into towns.

The geographical area covered by the study was the demesne owned by the city of České Budějovice. One of the major urban centers in southern Bohemia, it became the seat of the state administration and a bishopric in the eighteenth century, in addition to being a garrison town. In 1789, it had 632 households, with an estimated population of 5,000. It was also an intermediary center in the trade of salt brought in from Upper Austria, and boasted vibrant crafts, especially those involved in textile production. In addition to České Budějovice itself, the demesne included the mining town of Rudolfov and 48 villages. These settlements were situated within the boundaries of Saint Nicolas Parish in České Budějovice and 18 rural parishes. České Budějovice was a medieval royal town, which later proved able to accommodate all the newcomers within its space surrounded by the city walls and the waters of the Vltava and Malše rivers. The migrants, mostly peasants and minor craftsmen, found lodgings in one of the three suburbs (Pražské, Svinenské, or Krumlovské) and in the nearby villages. The increasingly rich city acquired some 30 villages in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, steadily extending the area of its demesne. The population of these villages thus became serf subjects of the city of České Budějovice. Other villages were held by the nobles and the Church, in some cases through mixed ownership. The issue is well illustrated by the maps featured in the book (pp. 18–25).

The primary source base for the research was provided by 1,073 so called “letters of discharge” (or “release letters”) (in Czech, *zhostni list*, in German, *Losbrief*) dated between 1750 and 1787. They either transferred serfs to someone else’s seigneurial authority, due to a change in the place of residence after a peasant married, or released them from serfdom altogether when they e.g., intended to acquire real property in the city and settle there on a permanent basis. The information of the seigneur’s approval was also included in the entry of the migrant’s marriage in the relevant register. Letters of discharge were issued for a fee, at the request of the interested parties, by the local judicial administration, both at the place that the serfs were leaving and at the destination of their migration (in České Budějovice, immigrants were somewhat higher in number than emigrants, accounting for 52.8% of petitioners, and most of them headed for the city as the capital of the region). Departure without permission resulted in deportation and a fine. The discharge procedure applied only to the part of Europe where freedom of movement was limited by serfdom (e.g., in Lower Austria, whilst it was not required in the western German lands). The request was in most cases submitted by

the parents, but if they were no longer alive, then usually by the migrant him- or herself. In addition to peasants' private reasons for such migrations, these moves were also caused by the mutual interests of the landlords with regard to swapping serfs, e.g., due to newly contracted marriages.² The ownership diversity of landed estates influenced the number of requests for either complete release from serfdom (manumission) or change of seigneur, because such permission had to be obtained, even for marrying someone in a nearby village.

Letters of discharge had been known to Czech historians before, but not used widely, especially in migration research. The choice of the watershed period is conditioned by the largest number of such certificates being issued at the time. Moreover, despite the abolition of serfdom in Bohemia in 1781, the administration continued to issue such documents for several more years. Used in Bohemia as early as the thirteenth century, letters of discharge were an element of landlords' control over the flows of the labor force, of which considerable shortages occurred during the country's accelerated development after the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). The source under study mostly provided information on permanent migrations. Temporary migration (e.g., for education or apprenticeship in a craft) required a special letter of authorization. Letters of discharge are only an indirect source of information about seasonal laborers, e.g., when a temporary movement turned into permanent residence at the place of employment, combined with matrimonial plans. In addition to letters of discharge, the State Archive in České Budějovice holds requests for discharge containing statements of reasons for intended migration, and also correspondence exchanged in the course of related procedures. This provides valuable material for comparative studies. The source base is complemented by registers of births, marriages and deaths, mostly accessible online. In preparing his case studies, the author also used the minutes of city council meetings, lists of orphaned minors, and land title registers.

Migration research involves studies conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the opinion of the author, who derives his methodological approach from demography, the initial statistical angle made it subsequently possible to describe migration strategies in qualitative terms. For this purpose, he used microhistorical and genealogical methods (e.g., the individual case of Elisabeth

² In nearby Poland, serfs' migration matters were handled in a similar manner. In both countries, a term deriving from Roman law was in use, *manumissio* (Ger. *Manumissionsbrief*) to describe the act of a seigneur releasing one of his serfs on his own accord. It appears that, in Poland, the grant of discharge did not entail such scrupulous documentation as in Bohemia. This may have contributed to the exaggerated opinions of the recorded trials of fugitive peasants. Manumissions are scattered among hundreds of other matters recorded in the books kept by the nobles' courts; Maria Trojanowska, "Wpisy zwolnień z poddaństwa w Księgach Grodzkich Lubelskich," *Rocznik Lubelski* 29–30 (1987–1988), 113–115; see Aniela Kiełbicka, *Zbiegostwo chłopów w województwie krakowskim na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989).

Grießhuberová, which fills a whole chapter, or that of the pauper František Lackner of Strážkovic, who settled on the landed estate of Leopoldsdorf near Vienna after a few years of migration, pp. 66–68). Furthermore, the narrative is enhanced with numerous quotations from the documentation of the discharge procedures (drafted mostly in German, which was the official language of the Czech administration).

The author also points out some Czech historians' reluctance to use mass analyses, lingering despite the tremendous progress in computer analysis capacity. He refers especially to researchers in whose observation of the life of old-time peasantry, preference is given to interrogations conducted by criminal courts, with a view to avoiding the "misleading" qualities of the quantitative approach. Grulich argues that letters of discharge make it possible to account for people who never had any problems with the law, of diverse age, marital and social status, and health condition (pp. 7–8). In the area of historical demography, databases have been popularized in Czech historiography over the last several decades, notably by Eduard Maur, and are increasingly present among the tools used by researchers.³

As the author conducted his research in a geographical area that had been the object of his earlier analyses, the book omits some of the issues relating to methodology and sources that were discussed in related publications (pp. 8–9). Instead, he highlights the previously neglected subject of release from serfdom. Undertaking an analysis against a vast comparative background, taking into account international literature and Czech historiography (including, notably, the previously mentioned Eduard Maur, an experienced researcher in social history), the author addresses the development of quantitative methods in historical research and their tendency to miss the individual "human being," who has, after all, his or her own personal experience as opposed to "averaged data." Following in the footsteps of Italian microhistorical studies, this led to the complete domination of the anthropological approach in Czech historiography in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The return of mass analyses shows signs of growing openness on the part of historians to interdisciplinarity, with historical demography as the avant-garde of the trend (p. 11).⁴ While in some countries (e.g., Denmark, the Netherlands, the United States) there have been teams dedicated to implementing standardized demographic databases for years, according to the

³ Eduard Maur, "Na okraj francouzských metod historickodemografického bádání," *Historická demografie* 2 (1968), 72–80; Alexander Klein and Sheilagh Ogilvie, "Occupational structure in the Czech lands under second serfdom," *Economic History Review* 69 (2016), 493–521.

⁴ Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Ioan Bolovan, and Sølvi Sogner, eds., *A Global History of Historical Demography: Half a Century of Interdisciplinarity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2016).

author, this is something still largely absent from Czech practice and such efforts are made by just a few individual researchers (pp. 11–18).

The data compiled from the letters of discharge have been complemented with the registers of births, marriages and deaths in 16 parishes encompassing villages owned by České Budějovice. Additionally, the search for migrants involved researching a number of parishes in other areas (e.g., in Lower and Upper Austria, where digital databases of historical vital registers are available). Marriages accounted for 70.9% of all cases of requests for discharge covered by the research. While letters of discharge issued by the municipal office of České Budějovice were characterized by considerable credibility and based on entries in vital registers, what proved helpful in this research was the database of the population of České Budějovice's Saint Nicholas Parish, created by the author during a previous research project, which facilitated prompt cross-referencing and checking information on 1,073 migrants (the database covers 12,518 births, 12,316 deaths, and 5,614 marriages). Entries of marriage made it possible to verify information on the migrants' families, their social and occupational status, and their place of birth. The author used various digitized church registers, notably the *Matricula* website, containing sources from the area of today's Austria, Germany, and Poland.⁵ While, in keeping with the law, entries of marriage usually stated the migrants' places of birth, in the central Saint Nicholas Parish in České Budějovice the place of the migrants' current residence was specified in most cases. This can be associated with the progressive assimilation of the newcomers. In this context, the author observes that studying rural-to-urban migrations solely on the basis of vital registers is "unthinkable" (pp. 30–36, 97–98). Nevertheless, the interdependence of employment-driven and marital migrations calls for a more attentive look at the use of marriage registers in research, even though they account for a small percentage of the overall mobility.⁶

The Microsoft Access software proved to be the most useful tool for the author in identifying and collating migrant characteristics, such as provenance, changes in place of residence (former, current, and intended), or family background, and in standardizing the migrants' surnames (e.g., surnames determined "by the household of origin" and those derived from the father's occupation), place and type of employment, and the migrant's age. Some difficulties were presented by the identification and location of toponyms, which were written in their German and Czech forms. Helpful, if labor-intensive, sources included cadasters dated 1654 and 1757, affording no less than 98% efficiency. In measurements of spatial

⁵ <http://data.matricula-online.eu/en/>; accessed 29 June 2019.

⁶ Jeremy Hayhoe, *Strangers and Neighbours: Rural Migration in Eighteenth-Century North-east Burgundy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 16–41.

distances covered on foot between the village of birth and the final destination, such applications as Google Maps and Mapy.cz were used. In the database prepared by the author, extra space was left for data pertaining to the person whom the migrant intended to marry, and also the circumstances of his or her migration (if specified). The most important factor in reproducing the migration strategies was the cross-referencing of data between letters of discharge and vital registers, for both quantitative and qualitative analyses (pp. 36–44). It is noteworthy that the database enabled the author primarily to identify migrants' motivations, whether personal, relating to family, or social and occupational. As the author points out, it was only the combination of the various types of documentation that made it possible to reproduce credibly the actual course of specific migrations.

In the opening sections, the author describes population flow management. Driven by visions of a better life, beset by natural disasters and wars, aware of their uncertain future and forced to perform hard physical labor, peasants gravitated towards urban centers, where they were always welcome as a labor force. In towns, income was more predictable and less dependent on the forces of nature. This attractiveness may have been a factor driving the depopulation of rural areas, which is why, already at the early stage of creating a town, special ordinances restricting the movements of the serf population were issued, and the fifteenth century brought about more and more voices pointing to the necessity of holding letters of manumission. The Czech land diet (Ger. *Landtag*) decreed that migrants travelling without special certificates, who were furthermore not seasonal workers tolerated by the authorities, should be treated as criminals (1498). The laws became even more restrictive in the late sixteenth century. Individuals who gave lodgings to illegal migrants faced financial penalties (pp. 45–51).

The author has demonstrated that the most letters were issued in the decade between 1760 and 1769 (36.3%). It was also the period of the most intense control over population flows. In the period 1776–1786, some 30 letters of discharge were issued annually, and interestingly the abolition of serfdom in 1781 did not change that number. Throughout the period under study, there was no change in the main reasons for migration either (marriage and desire to improve one's material well-being and social status). Greater opportunities for the migrants, in the author's opinion, came only with urbanization and industrialization, which began to develop towards the mid-nineteenth century. In terms of seasonality, the most requests for manumission turned out to have been submitted in October and January (20.6%). The author correlates this with the period when yearly employment contracts expired, and it was also an appropriate time to get married (except for the Advent and Lent periods) (pp. 51–55).

The requests were drafted by clerks, as serfs were usually illiterate. They were also subject to a fee, whose amount was linked to the migrant's trade and

wealth, and in České Budějovice these were assessed by the municipal treasurer. The amounts charged were seldom high, oscillating between 6 and 15 guildens. When obtained, the release from serfdom remained in force even if the marriage intended outside one's native village did not come to pass. Usually, the matter was handled within a few days, although the period tended to be longer for migrants from more distant areas, on account of the time required for the delivery of related correspondence exchanged by post. Only less than 1% of requests were turned down. Many discharges took place as part of a swap of serfs by landlords, which the author considered a common practice for the geographical area under review. It was known as a friendly loan, to be "repaid" in the future. Refusal could be caused by a petitioner's criminal past or lack of a descendant capable of taking over the farmstead from ageing or deceased parents, or possibly some unresolved liabilities that the petitioner still owed to the local community. For greater effectiveness, the serfs not only used appropriate argumentation (to receive the release or be exempt from the fee), but also tried to secure for themselves an influential protector, e.g., an organist or the administrator of the estate to which they wished to relocate (pp. 58–59, 61, 66–68).

A separate chapter discusses the main features of such migration. Grulich also conducts a comprehensive review of research on rural migration in Europe. As he points out, despite different source bases in various countries (e.g., censuses), the results of such research are quite convergent, e.g., with regard to the reach of movements (table 4.3). As in other European countries, slightly more than half of the internal migrations undertaken by the residents of villages near České Budějovice took place within a distance of 15 km (50.9%). Movements along longer distances, in excess of 50 km, were rare, and mostly connected with military service. Women migrated more often than men (requests were submitted for 613 females and 460 males), and were even more dominant in movements of shorter distances (up to 30 km), usually in connection with relocating to their future husband's home (in case of men the reason was usually labor migration; pp. 72–76). Two-thirds of the movements (emigration and immigration alike) were between neighboring villages, undertaken as a result of marriage and subjection to another seigneur. People emancipated from serfdom were more likely to settle in the suburbs and in the city, where they would also take over some real property. Some of the freed peasants did not declare the destination of their migration in their manumission requests. The author, however, came to believe that they had spent their lives within the same micro-region. Based on the available sources, it was determined that only 2.5% of the emigrants had left the micro-region under study. The neighboring land of Lower Austria was a more popular destination while fewer migrants chose Prague and Moravia. From the reverse perspective, no fewer than 90.1% of the migrants entering the landed estates owned by the

city of České Budějovice had come from its micro-region. More distant areas of origin included such neighboring areas as region of Prácheň or Tábor. Fewer people came to České Budějovice from Moravia or Upper and Lower Austria (pp. 74–86).

The reciprocity principle in the exchange of serf subjects between demesnes would not always result in actual symmetry (table 4.11). Considerably more migrants from the nearby villages headed for the royal town of České Budějovice than in any other direction. For example, in comparison with the estates of Český Krumlov, the advantage in the ratio of migrants was 91 : 15. The reciprocity principle failed particularly in long-distance migration, where complete emancipation was used rather than accepting the protection of another manor (as exemplified by the case of artillerymen stationed in the Budějovice garrison). This was also the case with the travels of craft apprentices, which usually ended in marriage at some location other than their place of birth. That could also have been a factor in a local woman's migration to her prospective husband's village (p. 96). More information on long-distance migrants can be found in registers recording transfers of real property. The author offers an insight into their characteristics through representative examples from the Czech and neighboring lands and regions (Moravia, Styria, Upper and Lower Austria, and Lower Franconia). The longest-documented migratory trip came to nearly 400 km, with the town of Würzburg as its final destination. The exchange of correspondence with regard to such migrants could take months (pp. 90–98).

The rather short Chapter 5 focuses on migrant characteristics. Many of them were single (51.3% of women, 35.2% of men), and permanent migration combined with matrimony was usually their objective. Other groups, accounting for less than ten percent, were widowed individuals, and families, including parents with children, childless couples, incomplete families, and in fewer cases siblings (pp. 99–104). Following his statistical considerations, the author provides short profiles of selected migrants, e.g., individuals citing solitude and illness as reasons for migration (pp. 105–106). A problematic issue for landlords was that of the hereditary subjection of migrants' children to serfdom. This was conditioned by the mother's bondage to a specific demesne (in times of war, many women migrated because they were soldiers' wives or concubines). There were even cases where migrants' children had to legalize their stay outside their parents' native village, which they had never seen in their lives (pp. 106–108).

Chapter 6 discusses various reasons and motivations for intended migration. The author collates them in 6 tables, shown in various lights. No less than 63.1% of reasons were connected with contracting a marriage at the place where the migrant had met his or her partner and where they intended to settle permanently. Other motivations involved in such requests included the migrants' taking over

the farm household left by their parents, and also orphanhood (the average lifespan during that period was 25–28 years; people who survived their first 15 years had a life expectancy of 54–57). In half of the requests, the petitioner's father was no longer alive, which could expose the remaining family members to impoverishment or necessitate setting up a household of their own. In fewer cases, the single reason was prospective employment, education, or apprenticeship for a trade. Candidates for crafts are known to have been between 5 and 22 years of age, and they were mostly interested in such trades as carpenter, bricklayer, tailor, or blacksmith. Both old people and those in their prime cited health problems or disability – experienced either by themselves or their loved ones – as reasons for their requests. In addition to such circumstances, recent widowhood or orphanhood compelled serfs to seek less strenuous work outside the place of their current residence.⁷

Separate attention is paid to veterans' requests. By serving in the army, which took between 7 and 21 years, a man could count on stable pay (as could the recruit's parents), some form of social insurance, and also a chance to find less arduous employment after leaving the service. Roughly every fourth recruit was killed in service. Veterans returning after years of service did not wish to take up employment in farming but instead sought less strenuous employment outside their village, which was why they submitted requests for release from serfdom. In some cases, the manor would start efforts – even before the end of a recruit's service – to have him returned to his village in order to secure the future of the family farmstead. It is further known that few people cited pursuit of happiness or legalization of their current place of residence as their reason for migration. The narrative is complemented with spatial measurements (which the author managed to complete for 76.5% of the migrants released from serfdom). There is also a discussion of a case of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy caused by a migrant, which the manor perceived as grounds for taking the woman over into serfdom (pp. 123–130).

In addition to intended marriage, reasons for the migrations of the rural population included loss of parents, poverty, employment opportunities and related security of sustenance. The most common way to avoid impoverishment was military service for men and marriage for women. Other options included learning and practicing a craft (especially for children whose health condition rendered them inadequate for hard work in farming), as well as employment as house servants or laborers. Another issue to be taken into consideration was which of the children would inherit the farm household (in Bohemia, the youngest son was

⁷ See Markéta Skořepová, *Ovdovění a osiření ve venkovské společnosti. Panství Nový Rychnov (1785–1855)*, (České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2016).

preferred for succession until 1787, and after that year it was the eldest son who theoretically became the owner). Hard work on the farm could compel people prone to illness to seek a less strenuous occupation in town. There was also the duty to provide care for ill and aged relatives. This is why ageing parents would sometimes request release from serfdom because they wished to move in with their children who had set up autonomous households. Often, requests were also submitted by migrants intending to move with a view to providing care for their parents (pp. 132–144).

Separate attention is paid to migrants settling down in the suburbs (accounting for some 11.5% of individuals requesting release from serfdom). That was the area where a large number of people of both sexes who had come from the countryside in search of employment also sought a prospective spouse. The author further provides examples of residents of the countryside surrounding České Budějovice who emigrated to Austria in search of temporary employment (e.g., they took lodgings in the suburbs of Vienna) and, after accumulating some wealth, returned to their native town and purchased real property there. As the author points out, the problem of such movements has not to date attracted the interest of Austrian historiography.

The last chapter is a very thorough microhistorical study.⁸ According to the author, “the use of quantitative and qualitative methods is not only out of the question in microhistorical approaches but is actually complementary” (pp. 159–193). Here is how the author argues for the inclusion of the case study of Elisabeth Griebhuberová in the book: “to gain a better understanding of the migrations of peasant serfs and how the manor authorities approached the problem.” A broad source base is used to reconstruct the life of an average housemaid in the suburban area just outside České Budějovice, the daughter of a migrant from Upper Austria, who – after years wandering around in search of employment – found herself in Vienna, some 200 km away. There she started a new family with another migrant, hailing from the Austrian town of Enns. The woman gave birth to three children, and when her husband’s serious illness caused the family’s impoverishment, 30 years after her migration she reported to České Budějovice to claim the estate of her deceased mother. The municipal authorities, however, arrested her and she spent four months on remand for marrying outside her village without the required consent. She claimed that she had not been aware of the requirement.

⁸ An overview of the development of microhistorical research in Czech lands was given by Markéta Skořepová in her paper entitled *A Way to the Ordinary People. Microhistory in the Context of the Czech Rural History*, delivered during the 2018 World Economic History Congress in Boston, commanding the considerable interest of the audience at the panel discussion on *Applied Microhistory: Theoretical, Ethical and Methodological Issues*; <http://wehc2018.org/applied-microhistory-theoretical-ethical-and-methodological-issues/>; accessed 3 July 2019.

It was not until her husband promised to pay the manumission fee that Elisabeth was released. The city, however, claimed the right to her children. Elisabeth filed a complaint against České Budějovice with Empress Maria Theresa (1766). Finally, the central state government sided with the city, which demanded the handover of Elisabeth and her children. The provincial government of Lower Austria, however, did not hand Elisabeth over, pleading the long period of her assimilation in Vienna, the fact that she had a very ill husband and decent hard-working children, who, despite their difficult situation, refrained from supporting themselves by begging, which was more than could be said for many other immigrants (1767).

Conclusions

Contrary to the opinions hitherto prevailing in Czech historiography, the author has demonstrated that migration took place with the same intensity both before and after the abolition of serfdom. The request procedure was a mere formality, meant as a way for clerks and manors to profit financially, given that next to none of such petitions were denied, and the matter was usually handled quite expeditiously. In the České Budějovice area, peasant migrations undertaken with a view to marriage or employment were usually confined within a distance of 20 km, i.e., within a day's walking distance (these accounted for 57% of the requests under study).

The reasons for permanent migrations were mostly related to marriage and the search for better employment. The author has demonstrated the material role of the migrant's social network (composed, for the most part, of family members) in shaping migration strategies. The book sheds light on the functioning of a community formally subjected to serfdom, where life necessities and common sense had to give way to legalistic norms. There are quite a few similarities to Polish lands here. The level of detail in the records of discharges provides a better insight into the official, clerical aspect of the migration project and also into the migration strategies developed, as well as the very experience of movement. In most cases these are new findings, based on solid documentation. The research has been described in the context of the current global trends in migration history. Defining the personal traits of the migrants and their reasons for migrations, as well as the use of measurements of spatial distances covered has made it possible to undertake comparative studies vis-a-vis other European countries during that period. The research has been presented in foreign conferences, and also widely consulted, notably with Sheilagh Ogilvie of the University of Cambridge (pp. 9, 26, 74). The research results prove surprisingly similar for the various countries, despite the lingering of serfdom in this part of the continent (the largest reach

of migration occurred within a range of 15–20 km). Even more reason to appreciate the author's labors is found in the fact that no research along these lines has previously been undertaken in the Czech Republic. The book under review is therefore of a pioneering nature, while being also a model for similar studies of East and Central Europe's early modern rural societies, living in the realities of serfdom.

The completed research project – contrary to Marxist historiography's narrative of the serfs' bondage to land – did not return evidence of the peasants' mobility being considerably limited by the feudal landlords. There were sporadic formal regulations, such as the Renewed Land Constitution of 1627, which curtailed mobility by imposing the requirement to obtain the landlord's consent to serfs' leaving the village, but the practical need for a labor force tended to overcome the legal norm. What really counted was the consensus reached between two manors, e.g., in the case of exogamous marriages, as a married serf couple could have only one feudal lord over them. In addition to taking into account the formal issues identified above, peasants' migration plans were close to their own most crucial needs, i.e., making a living, or improving the standard of living, for themselves or for their loved ones. Consequently, the primary goal of the work, i.e., to identify the migration strategies of the serfs moving between villages, suburbs and the city, appears to have been accomplished.

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**Serfdom and Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia.
On Josef Grulich’s Book *Migrační strategie: Město, předměstí a vesnice
na panství České Budějovice ve druhé polovině 18. století*, České Budějovice:
Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2018, 286 pages**

Summary

Based on quantitative and qualitative studies, the author has demonstrated that the migration attitudes of the population of the areas around České Budějovice changed little in the course of the latter half of the eighteenth century. They were not influenced by the abolition of serfdom in 1781, either. Most of the reasons for which serfs requested manumission or consent to settle in another landlord’s demesne involved the issues of marriage and employment, as well as the effort to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families. Most movements occurred within a range of 20 km. The predominant group among the migrants was unmarried women, marriage being their primary goal. However, longer distances were covered by men in their movements undertaken in connection with e.g., military service or the practice of a craft. The statistical research was illustrated with a series of examples in a microhistorical approach, whereby the author has managed to offer a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon of migration strategies.

**Poddaństwo a mobilność w osiemnastowiecznych Czechach.
Uwagi nad książką Josefa Grulichy, *Migrační strategie: Město, předměstí a vesnice
na panství České Budějovice ve druhé polovině 18. století*, České Budějovice 2018,
Wydawnictwo: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, ss. 286**

Streszczenie

Autor dowiódł na podstawie badań ilościowych i jakościowych, że postawy migracyjne ludności w okolicach Czeskich Budziejowic niewiele się zmieniły w ciągu drugiego półwiecza XVIII wieku. Nie wpłynęło na nie również zniesienie poddaństwa w 1781 roku. Większość powodów, dla których poddani wnioskowali o uwolnienie lub zgodę na osiedlenie się u innego pana ziemskiego, była związana z małżeństwem i pracą, jak również ze staraniami o polepszenie standardu życia własnego i rodziny. Dominowały przemieszczenia w zasięgu 20 km. Wśród migrantów przeważały kobiety stanu wolnego, a ich zasadniczym celem było małżeństwo. Jednak to mężczyźni pokonywali dłuższe dystanse w swoich przemieszczeniach, na przykład w związku ze służbą wojskową czy praktykowanym rzemiosłem. Badania statystyczne zostały zilustrowane szeregiem przykładów w ujęciu mikrohistorycznym, przez co autorowi udało się ukazać zjawisko strategii migracyjnych w sposób kompleksowy.