

Land administration in Bohemia in space and time through map applications

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The paper focuses on the development of territorial possession, the formation of tenure units and their hierarchy over time and, in general, on a gradual transformation of medieval forms of ownership into the modern society of the 19th and 20th centuries. This is performed on the example of the historical territory of Bohemia using modern tools of digital cartography and geographic information systems.

Among the professional and lay public, there is an ever-increasing deficit in the capture of comparable territorial units over time using modern cartographic methods, especially in the Central European area, which represented a part of the multinational Habsburg Empire for several centuries. This problem has been investigated on many sub-probes processing isolated areas over time or larger areas at one temporal point. A more comprehensive view of the global development of tenure over time is lacking in the Czech environment and is currently being addressed by interdisciplinary research on the boundary of historiography, historical geography and digital cartography, which was made possible by the implementation of modern methods, especially the use of geographic information systems within several recent years.

There are several main sources of knowledge for the formation and transformation of estates and territorial administration units and their influence on the development of the landscape in the modern age: mainly, the map works created by precise geodetic measurements, especially the later period from the mid-19th century and the so-called Stable cadastre of the Habsburg monarchy. These maps are not only topographically accurate, but especially user-friendly, understandable and, thanks to their properties, enable comparative studies also concerning the interpretation of long-term development trends. But it is still a time-isolated source. Topographies and schematisms, which clearly and exhaustively show the development of the given units in several time levels, represent other valuable data on the development of the manorial administration, especially from the second half of the 17th century to the middle of the 19th century and within the whole area of the Czech Lands. These are, in particular, cadastres, inventories made after the Thirty Years' War and in the mid-18th century for collection purposes, and topographical manuals summarizing the state of the settlement and its tenure structure in the second half of the 18th century and in 1848. These inventories also provide valuable insight into the beginning of the spatial differentiation of the territory, which includes the gradual emergence of municipalities and their hamlets, the formation of the economic background of the manors in the form of factories, sawmills, sheepfolds, farms and other works.

The main output of the project will be a map application, within which it will be possible to monitor the development of the subject matter at several different points in time since the end of the Thirty Years' War until 1848 when the manorial administration in its classical form ended and was replaced by new forms of territorial administration. These new forms, which mainly include newly formed municipalities, political and judicial districts and related structures, are further captured and visualized until 1920 when further fundamental reforms took place. At that time, a modern Czechoslovak republic was already being established and the foundations of modern territorial administration were laid.

The application will also make it possible to understand the rebirth of classical feudal ownership into later manor estates and administrative units emerging in parallel. Through a robust database model, it is possible to store information extracted from source editions or

topographic manuals into a point database of sites through a web map application, and based on spatial relationships also to monitor the development of the localities and their tenure structure over time. The application reflects not only the development of area units, such as cadastral municipalities or entire estates but also, according to possibilities within individual sources, allows to capture the affiliation of small economic or other hamlets or works to larger settlements and to a certain degree monitor economic relations in the area and their changes.

In cooperation with archivists, partial probes are also being created in western, northern and southern Bohemia, with the help of which selected smaller localities are examined in even greater detail – other cadastral aids, land registers, urbaria and other suitable preserved inventories are utilized, which can often be used to trace the property structure until the 14th or 15th century. This is not possible to perform globally throughout the territory of Bohemia due to occasionally burnt archives or the generally torsional state of some preserved sources. It was also not appropriate to mix somewhat differently developing tenure and manorial relations in other parts of the countries of the Czech Crown – therefore the application is limited to the historical territory of Bohemia.