



# Economy and population of an Early Modern village: Milčice — home of the most famous Bohemian peasant F. J. Vavák\*

Tomáš Klír — Dana Vodáková

The aim of the study is to provide basic socio-economic and demographic characteristics of Milčice in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and thus create the prerequisites both for an adequate interpretation of Vavák's *Memoirs* and for the study of these aspects of the peasant past, which other sources do not explain in similar complexity.

## KEYWORDS:

Central Bohemia; Early Modern Period; 1700–1800; Agrarian History; Demography; Peasant Economy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The *Memoirs* of František J. Vavák is a source that is unique in Europe and as yet seldom evaluated for knowledge of traditional peasant communities in the pre-industrial period.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the predominant types of sources, it opens a direct and exceptionally detailed approach to the past of a milieu, the members of which usually did not have the need or the opportunity to document their life for a long time in writing. We can hence only with difficulty find for Vavák's *Memoirs*, in fact having the character of systematic and long-kept journals, an adequate comparison, even in the wider European measure.<sup>2</sup> Whereas, in other European countries, monographic microstudies into the

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- 1 Jindřich SKOPEC (ed.), *Paměti Františka J. Vaváka, souseda a rychtáře milčického z let 1770–1816* [Memoirs of František J. Vavák, Neighbour and Reeve of Milčice from 1770–1816]. *Kniha I/1 (1770–1780); I/2 (1781–1783), II/1 (1784–1786); II/2 (1787–1790); III/1 (1791–1794); III/2 (1795–1797); III/3 (1798–1801), IV (1802–1806), V (1807–1810)*, Praha 1907–1938 (hereinafter only as *Vavák I/1, II/1* etc.); Stanislava JONÁŠOVÁ (ed.), *Paměti Františka Jana Vaváka, souseda a rychtáře milčického z let 1770–1816. Kniha VI–VII (1810–1816)*, *Prameny k dějinám českého myšlení* 11, Praha 2009 (prepared for publication by Martin Kučera).
- 2 Cf. Klaus-Joachim LORENZEN-SCHMIDT — Bjørn POULSEN (edd.), *Bäuerliche Anschreibebücher als Quellen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Neumünster 1992; IDEM (edd.), *Writing Peasants: Studies on Peasant Literacy in Early Modern Northern Europe*, Kerteminde 2002; Jan PETERS (ed.), *Mit Pflug und Gänsekiel. Selbzeugnisse schreibender Bauern. Eine Anthologie, Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit* 12, Böhlau 2003. Other texts by Czech peasants are not di-

world of traditional peasant communities have to rely usually only on external official written evidence, Czech historiography has a source, which illuminates otherwise hard-to-know parts of past reality.<sup>3</sup> In this place, we plan to present the basic socio-economic and demographic characteristic of Milčice, and thus create the prerequisites for a further systematic study of one of the many aspects, which *Memoirs* opens to us, specifically a general knowledge of peasant economy and families.<sup>4</sup>

František J. Vavák began to write his journal records in the early spring of 1770. From that time almost until his death in 1816, he relatively systematically recorded the weather fluctuations, seasonal course of agricultural work, the growth and harvest of the crops, the course of the grazing of the cattle and also the prices of agricultural products at the local and regional markets.<sup>5</sup> He then interspersed this basic, routine and more or less stable in content skeleton with other records of a diverse character and size.<sup>6</sup> What is substantial is that Vavák's notes mediated a view of peas-

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rectly comparable with Vavák, because they do not achieve his systematic nature and depth or are later and further already from the period of traditional agriculture. Cf. the contributions by Zdeněk Beneš, Marek Fapšo, and others in this issue.

- 3 Of many, at least Rainer BECK, *Unterfinning. Ländliche Welt vor Anbruch der Moderne*, München 2004. A basic synopsis of the other foreign micro-studies, see e.g. Eva ČERNÁ — Tomáš KLÍR, *Osídlení Krušných hor v mladším středověku a raném novověku: kontext a cíle interdisciplinárního výzkumu* [Settlement in the Ore Mountains in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: Context and Aims of Interdisciplinary Research], in: Ivana Boháčová — Petr Sommer (edd.), *Středověká Evropa v pohybu: k počtě Jana Klápště*, Praha, pp. 105–118 (here Fig. 1).
- 4 On the economic aspects preliminarily, see also Tomáš KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd v mladším středověku a raném novověku* [Settlement of Agriculturally Marginal Lands in the Later Middle Ages and Early Modern Period], *Dissertationes Archaeologicae Brunenses/Pragensesque*, Praha 2008, pp. 62–69. Further cf. František KUTNAR, *František Jan Vavák*, *Postavy české minulosti* 3, Praha 1941, pp. 94–125.
- 5 On the agricultural cycle and economy of the Milčice peasants, cf. T. KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 62–69; on the records of the weather, see, e.g. Rudolf BRÁZDIL — Oldřich KOTYZA, *Současná historická klimatologie a možnosti jejího využití v historickém výzkumu* [Contemporary Historical Climatology and the Possibility of its Use in Historical Research], in: Bronislav Chocholáč (ed.), *Historie a interdisciplinární výzkum*, Brno 2002, pp. 17–59; on Vavák's records of the price relations, cf. Josef PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách v 18. a počátkem 19. století* [Price of Corns and Market Circuits in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Philosophica et Historica* 3 (1977), 1979, pp. 9–49 (here pp. 19–20, 31–33).
- 6 On the assessment of Vavák's *Memoirs*, cf. F. KUTNAR, *František Jan Vavák*; Luděk ŠMÍD, *Lidoví kronikáři středního Polabí I. Franěk Jan Vavák — typ selského autodidakta a regionálního kronikáře* [Folk Chroniclers of the Middle Elbe River Basin I: Franěk Jan Vavák — Type of Rural Autodidact and Regional Chronicler], *Práce Oblastního muzea v Poděbradech B/1, Poděbrady 1967*; Stanislava JONÁŠOVÁ-HÁJKOVÁ, *Vavák a jeho pojetí českých dějin* [Vavák and his Conception of Bohemian History], *Český časopis historický* 35, 1929, Nr. 2, pp. 325–380, 548–602. On the life of Vavák, cf. also EADEM, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka* [Autobiography of F. J. Vavák], *Středočeský sborník historický* 13, 1978, Nr. 2, pp. 225–258, 14, 1979, Nr. 1, pp. 123–155.



ant economy before and after the onset of radical Early Modern reforms. From the *Memoirs*, or also from the *Description of the Village Milčice* and *Autobiography* it arises that Vavák still stood fully in the earlier socio-economic and demographic traditions with a deep-reaching continuity, and his journal entries reflect in such a noteworthy way the conflict of traditional and new-coming epochs.<sup>7</sup>

We first briefly characterize the village of Milčice, its ecological conditions, agricultural system and socio-economic and demographic structure of the peasant community. It will be important in that to determine what Milčice's relative position was on the imaginary socio-economic ladder of villages located in the Elbe River Basin (Czech: Polabí). We then confront the achieved determination with Vavák's description of Milčice, events and position with the aim of indicating new perspectives for the research of peasant communities.

## 2. MILČICE (1778/1785)

### 2. 1. GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Early Modern Milčice lay on the chamber Poděbrady estate, which in the period after White Mountain included at first 47 villages and the subject township of Poděbrady and Sadská, the number of villages rose to 58 after the closure of the manorial lords' courts and draining of the ponds during Raabization (the agrarian reform transformed the forced labour services of serfs to monetary payments to the overlord; 1777-1780/1783).<sup>8</sup> The territory of the estate was divided by the flow of the Elbe River (Czech: Labe) into two parts, on the slightly larger right-bank part with Poděbrady and the smaller left-bank part with Sadská (**Figures 1-3**).<sup>9</sup> Milčice was located in the

7 Vavák's description of Milčice ("Vypsání vsi Milčic") from 1796 was published along with the second part of the third book of the *Memoirs* (Vavák III/2, pp. 70-88); a biography from the same year was issued by S. JONÁŠOVÁ-HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, esp. pp. 123-129 (1979).

8 Cf. Lenka MATUŠÍKOVÁ, *Die Entwicklung der Wirtschafts- und Sozialstrukturen in der Herrschaft Poděbrady*, in: Markus Cerman — Hermann Zeitlhofer (edd.), *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen. Ein regionaler Vergleich von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Guts herrschaften, 16.-19. Jahrhundert*, Sozial- und Wirtschaftshistorische Studien 28, Wien — München 2002, pp. 59-69; Lenka MATUŠÍKOVÁ — Alena PAZDEROVÁ, *Regionen mit kommerzieller Landwirtschaft und in agrarischer Randlage im Vergleich: die Herrschaften Poděbrady und Rychnov nad Kněžnou*, *ibid.*, pp. 126-144; Lenka MATUŠÍKOVÁ, *Hospodářské a sociální poměry na panství Poděbrady po třicetileté válce* [Economic and Social Relations at the Estate Poděbrady after the Thirty Years' War], *Středočeský sborník historický* 22/23, 1996/1996, pp. 51-70; EADEM, *Rozvoj řemeslné výroby na panství Poděbrady v 17. a 18. století* [Development of Craft Production at the Estate Poděbrady in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *Historická demografie* 22, 1998, pp. 69-78.

9 On the Poděbrady estate within the chamber manor estate, Eduard MAUR, *Český komorní velkostatek v 17. století* [Bohemian Chamber Manor Estate in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century], *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philosophica et Historica, Monographia* 59, 1975, Praha 1976; IDEM,



neighbourhood of Sadská and also protruded to the southwest edge of the estate, to the neighbourhood of the Radim, Kostelec nad Černými lesy and Přerov estate. An important route from Prague to Silesia ran through the estate as well as the so-called Leipzig highway, connecting Vienna directly with Dresden and Leipzig, the importance of which dropped, however, after the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The economy of the serfs was oriented for the most part on market agriculture, with the natural sales market being the Prague metropolis and in a mediated way also the mountainous areas. A number of synthetic and regional studies has been to various degrees devoted to the economic and social relations on the Poděbrady estate in the Early Modern Period, and the estate was as included as a representative of the lower grain area in the extensive research project “Rural Social Structures in Bohemia in the 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, but Vavák’s records have never been consistently used in this regard.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.2. NATURAL CONDITIONS AND AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

While the Poděbrady estate was in the agro-climatically exceptionally favourable lowlands of the Elbe River Basin, the productivity of the agricultural production of the individual villages was diverse through the influence of uneven soil conditions (**Figures 1–2**). Both villages located on optimal black-earth soil (soil quality classes 2–4 of the Theresian Cadastre) and villages with one of the weakest of mineral soils at all, which lay on the wind-blown sands along the Elbe River (classes 7–8) were represented at the estate.<sup>11</sup> Milčice extended precisely on the boundary, which economically advantaged it in many regards also against the villages with hinterland entirely on loess black-earth soils. The partial natural disposition of Milčice was not inherently extremely favourable, but the crucial advantage was precisely the ecological diversity and possibility to combine suitably corn growing and the breeding cattle, effectively spreading the work capacity and also the fertility risk.<sup>12</sup>

The arable area of Milčice is composed of two contrastingly different places (**Figures 4–5**). First, from the south part situated on the higher Elbe River terrace, the black-earth brown soils of which were more easily tillable and provided relatively high and stable yields. Second, from the north part, which took a lower position, cov-

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*Zemědělská výroba na pobělohorském komorním velkostatku v Čechách* [Agricultural Production at the post-White Mountain Chamber Manor Estate in Bohemia], in: Prameny a studie 33, Praha 1990, pp. 3–129.

- 10 Cf. above. See further, Josef PETRÁŇ, *Poddaný lid v Čechách na prahu třicetileté války* [Serfs in Bohemia on the Verge of the Thirty Years’ War], Praha 1963; Markus CERMAN — Eduard MAUR, *Proměny vesnických sociálních struktur v Čechách 1650–1750* [Transformations of Village Social Structures in Bohemia, 1650–1750], *Český časopis historický* 98, 2000, Nr. 4, pp. 737–774; M. CERMAN — H. ZEITLHOFER (edd.), *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen*.
- 11 Aleš CHALUPA et al., *Tereziánský katastr český, sv. 1 a 2, Rustikál (kraje A–CH a K–Ž)* [Theresian Bohemian Cadastre, Vols. 1 and 2, Rustic (Regions A–CH and K–Ž)], Praha 1964/1966; on that, cf. Eduard MAUR, *Český tereziánský katastr*, review, in: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Philosophica et Historica* 3, 1972, pp. 127–131.
- 12 In more detail, see T. KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 62–69.



ered mainly by sediments from the Brooks Šembera and Milčický, which were tillable only with three-to-four draft animals and provided extremely instable yields. What is important is that (1) both parts of the arable land were complementary, hence crop failure in one part of the arable land was usually accompanied by a good crop in the second part; (2) also the agricultural cycle in both parts of the arable land was shifted, and so seasonal work was possible to spread effectively over a longer time period; (3) each of the two parts of the arable land offered optimal conditions for other corns, or other agricultural products. Moreover, Milčice did not suffer from a lack of meadows and pastures, hence a weakness, which usually affected other villages lying on quality soils, the whole hinterland was drawn into arable farming and fallow system (**Figure 6**).<sup>13</sup> We do not find this advantage, which also Vavák emphasized with the apt formulation “After all the pastures and breeding of cattle make this village lucky”, to a similar extent with any other village in the Poděbrady estate.<sup>14</sup>

The agricultural system of Milčice had all of the traditional features: it was characterized by a three-field fallow system; the cultivation of the traditional spectrum of corns, legumes and flax; non-systematic fertilization; ploughing dependent on the favourable physical features of the soil; ploughing the seedbeds and harvest by sickles. In terms of the breeding of livestock, cattle and sheep were not permanently in stalls and in the course of the year they grazed outdoors if possible (communal grazing); the supplies of forage were not large and before the winter and in crisis situations the cattle had to be slaughtered. Also the spread of the agricultural work during the year had a traditional character, which varied depending on the course of weather. The serfs were burdened with *corvée* obligations (forced labour of serfs to the overlord) only until 1777, when *corvée* was shifted to monetary payments within Raabization of the chamber estates.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

### Size of farmsteads

The basic socio-economic structure of Milčice remained relatively stable from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, until Vavák's childhood. For all of this period, the village was comprised of 12 peasant and 2 smallholder farmsteads/holdings (Czech: *selská / chalupnická usedlost*), the extent of the rustic arable land was always given in a conversion of around 350 ha (**Figure 7**). The peasant farmsteads were not the same size, but large farmsteads with an area of 1–2½ hides (9×, i.e. 75%) dominated.<sup>16</sup>

13 Ibid., pp. 62–67; Vavák III/1, pp. 79–82; S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, esp. pp. 123–129 (1979); Národní archiv v Praze [National Archive in Prague, hereinafter NA Prague], Josefský katastr [Collection of the Josephine Cadastre], Milčice with the incorporated village of Pečky, *fasse and documents*, inv. Nr. 1188. Cf. also Vavák III/2, pp. 79–81 (“Vypsání vsi Milčic”).

14 Vavák III/2, p. 82 (“Vypsání vsi Milčic”); see on that also Vavák III/1, p. 100 (1793).

15 T. KLÍŘ, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 62–69; Vavák III/1, pp. 79–82; S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, esp. pp. 123–129 (1979).

16 The measures used in the Early Modern Poděbrady estate are summarized, e.g. by August SEDLÁČEK, *Paměti a doklady o staročeských mírách a váhách*, *Rozpravy České akademie věd*



Three farmsteads were smaller, because their furnishing reached  $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hide. The normed area of the two smallholder farmsteads did not surpass  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a hide (**Table 1**). The village also had a butchery and pub, common shepherd's hut and smithy. Besides the urbarium and cadastral registries, there were several independent buildings of the landless, inmate-lodgers or Jews.<sup>17</sup>

The social structure did not change dramatically even during Vavák's life in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the number of smallholder (from 2 to 3) and peasant farmsteads (from 12 to 15) slightly increased.<sup>18</sup> As a consequence of the division, the difference slightly decreased in the furnishings of the large peasant farmsteads.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads with  $\frac{3}{4}$ – $1\frac{1}{2}$  hides of fields (9×) dominated in the village, there further followed medium large farmsteads with  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hide (4×) and on the other end of the spectrum two exceptionally large two-hide farmsteads had survived (**Table 2**). Raabization did not affect Milčice very much, only a few farmsteads were expanded by 1–3 measures of meadows from the parcelled common land (a square measure — Czech: měřice;  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a rod = 1918.2 m<sup>2</sup>).<sup>20</sup>

### Corn production and work demands — general remarks

The square or sowing size in and of itself informs only on the minimal work demands of the farmstead, not on the real economic possibilities, because those were depen-

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a umění I/66, Praha 1923, pp. 25, 62, 73, 77–79, 221–225. Payment: 1 hide (Czech: korec, strych) = 10 threescore seedbeds (Czech: záhon) = approx. 18.1 ha; 1 hide = 60 or 72 Bohemian rods (see rod, perch or pole); 1 Bohemian rod = 0.28773 ha.

- 17 Státní oblastní archiv Praha [State District Archive in Prague, hereinafter SDA Prague], Velkostatek Poděbrady [Collection of the Manor Poděbrady], inv. Nr. 2, urbarium of the estate from 1553 (Registra Urbur[ni] aneb Sprawni [Pan]stwi Podiebra[dskeho]), fol. 38<sup>v</sup>–40<sup>v</sup>; SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 3, urbarium of the estate from 1553 1590 (Urbur panstwi J.M.C. podiebradskeho zalozen Letha Panie 1590), fol. 18<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>r</sup>; Václav PEŠÁK (ed.), *Berní rula 12. Kraj Hradecký I*, Praha 1951, pp. 39–40. SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 553, revisitation of the excise tax rule from 1679 (Recalculace rustikálního katastru 1679); NA Prague, Tereziánský katastr [Collection of the Theresian Cadastre], Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 719, documents; NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fassé.
- 18 Situation for 1178: Situation for 1778 — SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 16, Geometrische Realausmessungs= Tabelle A, all of the rustic plots, which the serfs “held from time immemorial”, pag. 279–298. Situation in 1785: Situation for 1785 — NA Prague, Collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with the incorporated village of Pečky, fassé and documents, inv. Nr. 1188.
- 19 The number, which we list in this article, correspond to the first official numbering from 1771, which was used also for the Raabization plan from 1778, but there was a re-numbering of the farmsteads still during Vavák's life, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which essentially has remained valid to this day.
- 20 SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, Geometrische Realausmessungs= Tabelle A, inv. Nr. 16, pag. 279–298; NA Prague, Collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with the incorporated village of Pečky, fassé and documents, inv. Nr. 1188; Vavák I/1, p. 85; Vavák III/2, p. 78 (“Vypsání vsi Milčic”).



dent on the productivity of the soil. Therefore, the crucial questions are: How distinct could the market orientation of the Milčice farmsteads be? To which extent could the family of the farmstead holder cover the work demands and when was it already necessary to integrate permanently other manpower such as farm workers, maids and inmate-lodgers? With how large an economic risk were the farmsteads burdened? What were the differences between the individual farmsteads?

The approximate answer can be found in a critical analysis of the data of the Theresian (the national tax register compiled 1713–1757) and Josephine Cadastre (compiled 1785/1789), which registered the extent of the arable/sown areas, the level of the long-term average yields, the size of the meadows and pastures. The Theresian Cadastre also recorded the number of draft animals and other cattle. The first crucial indicator is **utility**, hence the relation of the net annual yield of bread corn and the ideal annual consumption of an adult individual. The second indicator are the **work demands**, which were dependent mainly on the size of the arable areas and the number of cattle raised. Firstly, according to the utility, we can approximately determine the relation of the subsistence and market production of the farmstead. Secondly, according to the level of the work demands then how much workforce of the farmstead is needed for its operation, hence when it could be still self-sufficient in terms of work and when it was already necessary to integrate more permanently the servants (Czech: čeledí) or inmate-lodgers (Czech: podruh). Naturally, the interpretation importance of the values listed in the cadastres, the method of the calculations and indispensable simplification require the broad discussion, which we summarize in another place — for traditional agriculture and three-field fallow system.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of the utility, we consider six measures of bread corn per person, hence about 18 measures for a biological family (2 adults and 2–3 children), as the boundary limit (a grain measure = 61.49 l; Czech: měřice). The amount of the potential surpluses, which could head for the market in some form, was then determined by the difference between the utility and the number of the people sustained on the farmstead. Large farmsteads had greater yields, but usually also required larger workforces. Naturally, the yields fluctuate from year to year, and so even smaller farmsteads could sometimes supply corn to the market, and on the other hand in bad years not even the large farmsteads had to have market surpluses. The influence also had a contemporary demographic composition of the farmsteads and a number of other economic and non-economic factors, which we will leave aside here. Farmsteads with a lower net yield than 18 measures could naturally be self-sufficient if they combined the food sources to be able to get by with a smaller amount of bread corns. Therefore, mainly the relative and contrast differences are important in the interpretation of the determined utility.

It is difficult to determine the labour demands of the farmstead, because the farmstead ensured its own operation but in the form of *corvée* also shared in the operation

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21 Tomáš KLÍR, *Agrarsysteme des vorindustriellen Dorfes. Zur Interpretation mittelalterlicher Ortswüstungen im Niederungs- und Mittelgebirgsmilieu*, in: Claudia Theune et al. (edd.), *Stadt — Land — Burg. Festschrift für Sabine Felgenhauer-Schmiedt zum 70. Geburtstag*, Internationale Archäologie, Studia honoraria 34, Leidorf 2013, pp. 139–157.



of the manorial economy. Based on various factors, we consider the boundary to be the extent of 12–18 rods (i.e.  $\frac{1}{6}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$  hide), hence the usual boundary between smallholder and peasant farmsteads and often also between farmsteads with and without a paired team of draught animals. The operation of farmsteads with less land was still taken care of by a single biological family, further manpower was not inevitably necessary; the less plots the farmstead had, the greater free labour capacity it had. The operation of a farmstead with a size around 12/18–36/54 of rods could still be handled by one biological family, but the integration of other manpower grew towards the upper boundary; one team was sufficient for tilling the plots, nevertheless it was usually necessary to maintain other draught and manpower because of the demands of the manorial lord. Farmsteads larger than 36–54 rods ( $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$  of a hide) could hardly have been self-sufficient in terms of work, they had to maintain more than one team and integrate more manpower. It would similarly be possible to derive the work demands from the number of cattle raised, as several Austria studies show.<sup>22</sup> We therefore in principle separate them into three main categories of serf farmsteads, namely (1) farmsteads with free work capacity (garden and cottage), (2) in terms of work more or less self-sufficient farmsteads (12/18–36/54 rods) and (3) farmsteads that were not self-sufficient in terms of work.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, the boundary was between the necessary and optimal number of manpower shifted to the farmsteads, namely 1–3 persons, because the historical evidence and economic-anthropological models consistently show that the farmstead holder and his closer family tried for a number of reasons to move the workload onto the servants and inmate-lodgers. If the low productivity of the agricultural soil did not block that, e.g. demographic-cultural factors, the farmsteads integrated more manpower than was necessarily, namely also with figuring in the *corvée* obligation.<sup>24</sup>

### Milčice farmsteads

The aggregate data of the first fasses and ocular visitations of the Theresian Cadastre from 1714/1715 show that in the good years the ideal utility of the Milčice arable land was 743 people, still 376 people in the bad years.<sup>25</sup> The visitation of 1726 adjusted the

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- 22 Michael MITTERAUER, *Formen ländlicher Familienwirtschaft*, in: Joseph Ehmer — Michael Mitterauer (edd.), *Familienstruktur und Arbeitsorganisation in ländlichen Gesellschaften*, Wien — Köln — Graz 1986, pp. 185–323 (here Taf. 2).
- 23 On a typology of settlement understood this way in the Early Modern Period, c.f. in more detail Tomáš KLÍR — Michal BERÁNEK, *A Social-Economic Interpretation of the Layouts of Deserted Villages. An Example of a Deserted Village at the “V Žáku” Site in Klánovice Forest in Prague*, in: Jaromír Žegklitz (ed.), *Studies in Post-medieval Archaeology 4*, Prague 2012, pp. 289–364 (here pp. 352–354); Tomáš KLÍR, *A Social-Economic Interpretation of the Regular Village Layouts in Bohemia and Moravia*, in: Jan Klápště (ed.), *Ruralia IX, Hierarchies in Rural Settlements*, Turnhout 2013, pp. 447–462.
- 24 E.g. M. MITTERAUER, *Formen ländlicher Familienwirtschaft*, p. 202; T. KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 186–195.
- 25 NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig), fol. 48–51.





individual values and the utility of the Milčice arable land in the long-term mean can be estimated at 453 people (**Figure 7**).<sup>26</sup> We can reach surprisingly similar values by an analysis of the data of the Josephine Cadastre, according to which the long-term utility of the arable lands fluctuated around 425 people (**Figure 8**).<sup>27</sup> Considering the number around 160–170 serfs (without servants), the subsistence of the Milčice farmsteads as whole was not threatened by anything in the long term and usually there were high market surpluses. A subsistence crisis was a rare event, which could affect mainly the numerous sub-peasant strata.

From the perspective of the labour demands, a large part of the serf farmsteads was distinctly not self-sufficient (1715–1726/1757). The trio of the largest peasant farmsteads required the presence of at least about 8 adults, other peasant farmsteads then around 4–6 adults. Only three farmsteads could have been self-sufficient in terms of work, including two smallholder farmsteads (**Table 3**). Milčice thus showed all of the typical characteristics of a village with commercially oriented agriculture. The group of 12 peasant families also had to be complemented by a high amount of permanently integrated manpower — male servants, maids and inmate-lodgers.

The data of the Josephine Cadastre (1785/1788) are available for the extent of agricultural production in Vavák's period.<sup>28</sup> We can complement the specific states of the cattle according to Vavák's *Memoirs*, to which he copied a report discharged to the suzerain office in connection with a cattle disease on 24 March 1799.<sup>29</sup> A comparison shows that the extent of the grain production and livestock as against the Theresian Cadastre still did not appreciably change (**Table 2; Figure 9–11**).

In the long-term perspective, all of the peasant farmsteads provided a large market surplus. Each of the largest farmsteads could feed besides itself around 15–30 other people in good and bad years, i.e. provide surpluses of around 90–180 measures a year at the market. Even the smallest of the Milčice peasant farmsteads would have a potential surplus covering the needs of another 5 people (30 measures) in good years. A significant surplus can be proved also in animal production.<sup>30</sup> The two smallholder farmsteads were focused rather on subsistence, of them, the larger one — Vavák's — could also have market surpluses in some years.

26 NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse (ocular visitation from 1726), fol. 48–52.

27 NA Prague, Collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with the incorporated village of Pečky, fasse and documents, inv. Nr. 1188. On the criticism of the data of the Josephine Cadastre for Milčice, cf. T. KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 196–197.

28 NA Prague, Collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with the incorporated village of Pečky, fasse and documents, inv. Nr. 1188.

29 Vavák III/3, p. 76 (1800).

30 NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig), no fol., farmstead Nr. 215–228.

## 2.4. THE POPULATION OF MILČICE

### Serf families

The number and composition of the serf families living in Milčice around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is presented in the register of the orphans and all serfs from 1745 and 1770 (**Table 4**).<sup>31</sup> Their data is roughly the same despite the generational change. The registers from 1770 are exceptionally valuable that the individual serf families were already localized by the number of the farmstead, and therefore the families could be interconnected and after correction place them also in the plan of the village from 1778 (**Figures 12–13**).<sup>32</sup> The registry data are also valuable, allowing the determination of family ties among inmate-lodgers and farmstead holders at least selectively, and naturally Vavák's *Memoirs* depicting several relatively complicated family relations and stories.<sup>33</sup> Naturally, the registers did not record a real number and composition of the Milčice population, because the servants belonging to other villages were neglected. From a demographic-reproductive perspective, the number of families is nevertheless important, which can be determined relatively well. For 1770, at total of 69 families and 162 serfs, of which 52 children below age 12 (**Table 4**), were to be in the village permanently. That number does not include "orphans" kept in the registers rather formally, hence unaccounted for people and men drafted into the army. Specifically, the list recorded:

- 11 peasant families, of which widows managed two;
- 4 smallholder families, of which one was managed by a widow (pub);
- 1 cottager family (Czech: domkář or baráčník);
- 18 families of inmate-lodgers and independently 1 crippled;
- 13 adult and 5 minor orphans;
- 3 widows.

With the vast majority of inmate-lodgers and adult orphans, the dominant source of subsistence can be assumed in agriculture; a craft was listed only in four cases and

31 SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 544, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 119r–126v; SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 165–175.

32 The order numbers in the registers (1770) for the most part correspond to the later street numbers (1771). Numbers 8 (general shepherd's hut) and 9 ("house") are problematic, because in the numbers from 1771, Nr. 8 is the common smithy and Nr. 9 the shepherd's hut. The localization of Number 19, which cannot be Nr. 19, because it was built in 1777, is problematic. Five orphans over age 12, 4 under 12 and 3 widows were unable to ascribe to any of the farmsteads.

33 SDA Prague, Parish Skramníky, Registry of born, married, and dead 1738–1761 (Skramníky 04) a 1761–1784 (Skramníky 05). Hereinafter only as Matrika Skramníky 04 and Matrika Skramníky 05. The biographical data on some families is provided also in the footnotes in the *Memoirs* (Vavák I–VII) and *Vlastní životopis* edition (S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*).



considering its settled variability a basic and indispensable service can be assumed for the operation of the farmstead and populace of the village (weaver, tailor, cobbler, carpenter). Milčice was otherwise from this perspective in the closest interaction with the nearby township of Sadská.

The familial ties of the holders of the peasant and smallholder farmsteads is striking. The widow managing Nr. 2 had the holder from Nr. 13 as a son-in-law and one of her other daughters was the widow at farmstead Nr. 12. The holder of farmstead Nr. 10 was married to the holder of farmstead Nr. 6 and his son from the previous marriage also managed Nr. 3. František J. Vavák himself was the son-in-law of the man managing Nr. 16, his aunt with his cousin were in the pub Nr. 18 and relatives also at farmstead Nr. 7. Two brothers held farmsteads Nr. 14 and 15.

Both the narrow family of the holder and further families of one, or more often two, exceptionally as many as four inmate-lodgers, lived at half of the peasant farmsteads.<sup>34</sup> The closer family members of the farmstead holder can be proved in the role of the inmate-lodgers (elder brother, son-in-law, husband of the niece: Nrs. 7, 13, 16), or the offspring of the former holder, who had had to sell the farmstead (Nr. 1). In some cases, the familial relation of the inmate-lodger to the holder cannot be determined (Nrs. 6, 12). Multiple-generational inmate-lodger families lived at two farmsteads (Nrs. 7, 13). Inmate-lodgers were lacking at half of the farmsteads. In one case, it can be explained that the wife of the farmstead holder owned another farmstead at which inmate-lodgers could be settled with a relation to both farmsteads (Nrs. 6 and 10).<sup>35</sup> In other cases, other adult males were present at the farmsteads, whether their own or adopted sons, or the older unmarried brothers of the holder (Nrs. 2, 11, 15, 17). Adult male relatives, adult offspring of the farmstead holder or the families of the inmate-lodgers were lacking only at farmstead Nr. 3. Three adult orphans of Milčice were integrated into the operation of precisely this farmstead, probably as servants.<sup>36</sup>

The smallholder farmsteads did not usually have buildings/dwellings of the inmate-lodger (Nrs. 4, 5 and /9/). While two inmate-lodgers were listed with their families at cottage Nr. 14, one of them was the son of the original holder (renter) and the second inmate-lodger was the son-in-law of the first inmate-lodger. Cottage Nr. 18 had the function of a pub and also a meat shop; the mentioned inmate-lodger was the son of the widow/holder and future heir, who concluded a marriage just before

<sup>34</sup> On the issue of the inmate-lodgers and the unclear status of people in the lists of the serfs, cf. Jan HORSKÝ — Markéta SELIGOVÁ, *Rodina našich předků* [Family of our Ancestors], Praha 1997, pp. 37–59, 82–97, 140–142; Alice VELKOVÁ, *Proměny venkovské společnosti v letech 1700–1850* [Transformations of Rural Society in 1700–1850], *Český časopis historický* 105, 2007, Nr. 4, pp. 809–855; literature on the demography of peasant families is also summarized by e.g. Eduard MAUR, *Dějiny rodiny v české historiografii* [History of the Family in Czech Historiography], in: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Studia Historica* 60, pp. 9–22 (here esp. pp. 15–19).

<sup>35</sup> We see such behaviour later also with Vavák, who after acquiring a peasant farmstead in 1778 settled an inmate-lodger in his existing dwelling/cottage.

<sup>36</sup> The presence of male servants and maids as the rule is proved in many places of Vavák's *Memoirs*.



the property transfer. Building number 8 was likely the general shepherd's hut. Two inmate-lodgers with their families lived at building number /19/, which could not be located. The adult sons of one of the inmate-lodgers made their living by a craft (cobbler, carpenter). The question is which family to connect with the general smithy, because the label of a smith is lacking in the registries.

What is important is that nobody of the Milčice serfs was listed in the registries from 1770 as male servants or maids serving in another village. It testifies to the need for manpower, which the village did not cover demographically, and so immigration could outweigh emigration. On the contrary, records can be found with serfs from the surrounding villages that served in Milčice — e.g. the orphan (22 years) from Chotouň to Milčice estate Nr. 3.<sup>37</sup>

Based on family ties, we can divide the Milčice inmate-lodgers into two somewhat different but not sharply defined groups. The first group was the close relatives of the peasant farmstead holders, hence members of the peasant class, who at the given moment did not hold an independent farmstead, but they had the prerequisites for that and often also the ambition. The number of these inmate-lodgers was mainly connected with the current demographic-economic situation of the individual peasant families. The example of social mobility would be the inmate-lodger, who married the niece of the holder from Nr. 7 and after several years bought one share of farmstead Nr. 1, separated for debts (1777). The second group of inmate-lodgers was formed by people with closer ties to the family of the farmstead holder; they were often inmate-lodgers in several generations, or offspring of the smaller peasants and smallholders from the surrounding villages; these inmate-lodgers had a lower social status, their children worse prospects for a good marriage and the members of this group in times of want, old age and isolated could rely only on the general not the family peasant support.<sup>38</sup> The differences between the two groups of inmate-lodgers can also be followed relatively distinctly in the *Memoirs*, in which Vavák used the label of inmate-lodger often with a pejorative tinge and unflattering context, usual for the members of the second group, and only in a calculated way also for the inmate-lodgers with a peasant origin, if he wanted to humiliate them. Thus, for Vavák, the inmate-lodgers were “serving”, anonymous and not full-fledged class, moving on the edge of the peasant families and bearing a distinct labour burden.<sup>39</sup>

### **Servants and seasonal wage labour**

The changeable and internally hierarchized component of the Milčice farmsteads was the servants. In a model description of the large peasant economy from 1793 Vavák distinguishes between the bailiff (Czech: *nádvorník*), groom (Czech: *pacholek*), spital servant (Czech: *špitálník*), ploughman (Czech: *pluhař*), oxman (Czech: *volák*), older

<sup>37</sup> SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 187.

<sup>38</sup> Vavák I/2, pp. 192 (1783); II/1, p. 2 (1784); III/1, p. 4 (1791).

<sup>39</sup> E.g. Vavák I/2, p. 2 (1781), 29, 34, 56–59 (1782); II/1, pp. 5–6 (1783); II/2, p. 145 (1790); III/1, pp. 4–5 (1791), 92 (1792) and others.



and younger maid, which were paid an uneven remuneration (**Table 5**).<sup>40</sup> In other places of the text he also mentions in various contexts the bailiff, grooms, spital servants or generally grooms and maids.<sup>41</sup>

According to their needs, the largest Milčice farmsteads had 4–5 farm workers (grooms), headed by the bailiff, and several maids (Nr. 1–3), but most of the farmsteads got by with 2–3 farm workers, complemented with maids. The number of farm workers naturally fluctuated depending on the demographic composition of the holder's family, inmate-lodgers and the annually variable economic possibilities. For instance, after the crop failure in 1790 only the minimal number of farm workers were hired in the villages around Milčice, at the largest farmsteads at most two farm workers, at the other one farm workers and one maid. On the contrary, this situation helped Milčice, because the farm workers released elsewhere entered work here under more modest conditions.<sup>42</sup> It is nevertheless the case that even in Milčice it was a minimal requirement for a medium peasant farmstead to have at least one farm worker and one maid, in whatever demographic and economic constellation.<sup>43</sup> Precisely the possibility to limit the number of farm workers as needed proves convincingly that the work capacity of the Milčice farmstead holders and their families, or also the inmate-lodgers, remained unutilised in normal years. In total, the average number of farm workers in the village can be estimated at 20–30, maids perhaps half that number.

Extensive grain production in combination with the limited number of manpower forced Milčice farmsteads, just like the majority of the others in the Elbe River lowland to hire temporarily paid labour in the seasonal peaks, specifically harvesters and binders for the grain harvest.<sup>44</sup> Thanks to Vavák's *Memoirs*, we know that Milčice lay on the boundary where harvesters mixed coming from the Giant Mountains (Czech: Krkonoše) foothills and from the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands (Czech: Vysočina, Českomoravská vrchovina).<sup>45</sup> The hired harvesters were, however, connected with a number of unforeseen difficulties, because the harvest took place in different time periods each year and the harvesters could miss the optimal interval; there could be a surplus in some years and on the contrary a shortage at other times — e.g. in 1792 and 1793 harvesters almost did not arrive, because they preferred their domestic spinning.<sup>46</sup> The demands and expenses of the Milčice farmsteads were relatively high during the harvest; in 1795, when there were sufficient harvesters, six harvesters lived for instance at the Vavák's farmstead for an entire month. If they harvested the grain in the fields of both Vavák's farmstead Nr. 16 and cottage Nr. 4 (a total of 112 rods), it would mean an average of one hired labourer for 12.5 rods of sown area within the

40 Vavák III/1, p. 98 (1793).

41 E.g. Vavák I/2, pp. 34–35, 64 (1782).

42 Vavák III/1, p. 1 (1791). Vavák does not write directly on Milčice, but from the context it is possible to derive the optimal numbers of the servants at a Milčice farmstead.

43 Vavák II/2, p. 89 (1789).

44 In the general context, e.g. M. MITTERAUER, *Formen ländlicher Familienwirtschaft*, pp. 213–221.

45 Vavák III/2, p. 51 (1796).

46 Vavák III/1, pp. 64–65 (1792), 95 (1793); III/2, p. 20 (1795), 51 (1796).



three-fields fallow system, so for the entire village about 60 harvesters and an uncertain number of binders.<sup>47</sup> The wages of harvesters in 1792–1793 was approximately 1 Gulden per stack of the seedbeds (7.2 rods), Vavák thus made only around 10 Guldens for that. Naturally, the data for Vavák's farmstead does not have to be representative.

### 3. MILČICE IN A RELATIVE COMPARISON

#### 3.1. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

The relative differences in the efficiency of agriculture between the villages of the entire Poděbrady estate can be determined synoptically and quickly on the basis of the data of the Raabization operators, who evaluated the rustic holding of the serfs for 1778 for the purpose of the repartition of the corveé payments.<sup>48</sup> **Figure 14** shows the ration of the overall land furnishing (all types of plots, including meadows) and amount of the set payments, thus the approximate efficiency of the agricultural production of the individual villages. Milčice along with neighbouring Pečky and nearby Chotouň and Velim ranked among the best. Not far from Milčice, however, there was also villages with the worst agricultural effectivity on the whole estate. A look at the map of the soil-quality evaluation of the second Theresian Cadastre (1757) shows that villages like Milčice, Pečky, Chotouň and Velim were almost the best in terms of grain growing that were in Bohemia, whereas villages like Hradištko, Písty and Kostelní Lhota were on the contrary the worst. Extreme contrasts thus met in the small left-bank section of the Poděbrady estate (**Figure 1-2**).

It is possible to continue with an analysis of the first fasse and visitation of the Theresian Cadastre (1714/1715) and compare how much soil had to be cultivated in the individual villages for one person to be maintained (**Figure 15**).<sup>49</sup> It is valid that these subsistence demands grew exponentially with the dropping fertility. We can model the situation both in the best in terms of fertility and on the contrary in the bad years, where the reality lay somewhere in between. The relative results are very similar to those of the previous case. It is also possible to read from the graph generally that to assure the ideal amount of bread grain for one biological family in the group of the best villages it was sufficient to till only 5–12 rods of soil, with the majority of the other villages 10–28 rods and with villages with extremely bad conditions

<sup>47</sup> The Josephine Cadastre registered approximately 1157 rods (korec) of arable land belonging to the Milčice rustic inhabitants. The harvest took place in a model way on 2/3 of the area.

<sup>48</sup> SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, Individual Berechnung der Contribution, Robotrelution, Grundzinse der Kaiser. Königl. Kammeral Herrschaft Podiebrad, inv. Nr. 31.

<sup>49</sup> NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig), fol. 1–77; NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 719, spisy (extracts from the fasse and their rectifications).



30–52 rods.<sup>50</sup> So, already a smallholder farmstead in Milčice could produce a market surplus, whereas in the worst evaluated villages not even a ¼ hide farmstead had to be capable of this.

### 3.2. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE POPULATION

In terms of the social structure and number of serf families, Milčice met all of the typical characteristics of a market-oriented village, lying on quality lands in the midst of the grain area and with good sales possibilities (**Figure 16–17**). Large peasant farmsteads dominated in the village, at which a relatively high number of inmate-lodgers and farm workers were bound. Also the ratio of the size of the cultivated areas to the total number of serf families and serfs in general was exceptionally high (**Figure 18**). In other words, the village had a relatively small demographic, but enormously high agricultural potential. Similar characteristics as in Milčice can also be found in other villages lying on the quality soils.<sup>51</sup> The villages on worse soils, usually wind-blown sands, showed the opposite. Rather small peasant, smallholder farmsteads and cottagers prevailed in the villages with poor agricultural conditions (**Figure 19**). Relatively more serfs also lived in them, which in combination with the low sustenance of the ploughed land meant life on the boundaries of subsistence. Relatively the most serf families lived in villages with extremely low sustenance of the ploughed land, which can naturally explain the possibilities of sustenance outside of agricultural production — these villages lay in the forests along the navigable Elbe River. An apparently paradoxical rule arises from the whole graph of the left-bank part of the Poděbrady estate that the greater the agricultural potential of the village, the lower its demographic potential was (**Figure 18**). A discussion of the causative relations would exceed the framework of this study.

### 3.3. INTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS

The differences were not only between villages but also between the individual farmsteads. It therefore seems desirable to compare Milčice with other representatives of both agriculturally effective villages and those weaker. For the comparison, we selected nearby Chotouň from the first group and neighbouring Kostelní Lhota from the second (**Figure 2, 3, 17**). We can project into one graph the subsistence of each farmstead and the size of the tilled area; for simplification, we use the long-term fertility averages provided in the fasses of the Theresian Cadastre from 1726 and the Josephine Cadastre from 1785/1788 (**Figure 6–8**).<sup>52</sup>

50 For a biological family, we calculate 2 adults and 1–3 children with demands as 1 adult (i.e. for a family demands like for 3 adults).

51 We excluded Pečky from these calculations and the graph, because the village was divided property of more estates and the Poděbrady part did not have to be representative.

52 NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse (ocular visit from 1726), fol. 32–39, 48–59.



The village **Chotouň** had the same number of farmsteads, approximately the same size of arable land and similarly productive corn growing like Milčice, but it differed in the absence of meadows and only a small share of pasturelands in its hinterlands (5%).<sup>53</sup> The socio-economic structure of both villages was however diametrically opposite. Whereas in Milčice a wide range of variously large peasant farmsteads from half-hide to two-hide were relatively equally represented, Chotouň was strongly polarized and as opposed to 6 two-hide farmsteads there stood four very small farmsteads, and the interval between them was filled by only two farmsteads. Around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, five peasant farmsteads with a pub were bought by one holder, and this economic whole, although formally still divided, was maintained for all of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in diverse modifications.<sup>54</sup> There is a striking dramatic change in the demographic structure of Chotouň between 1745 and 1770, namely in all social categories (**Table 6**). The number of serfs doubled (103 → 210), where this growth was caused by the increase of the cottagers and inmate-lodger families and their members. The number of peasant families remained more or less the same, but the number of children and free sons and daughters decreased significantly. The share of peasant and smallholder families dropped in total number from 48% to 29%.<sup>55</sup>

The socio-economic structure of **Kostelní Lhota** was relatively balanced; the village was composed of a large amount of variously sized farmsteads, among which the group of one-half to one-hide farmsteads predominated.<sup>56</sup> The low size polarization of the farmsteads in Kostelní Lhota can be explained in the long-term perspective that the growth of the area did not bring the farmsteads any significant market surpluses, because the increase of surplus production was accompanied by a corresponding increase of manpower, which then used it. It was thus advantageous to maintain a subsistence extent of agricultural production with only slight overproduction.<sup>57</sup> It was not that way in Chotouň and Milčice where the increase of tilled area meant a rise in market production and the possibility to shift the work to wage labourers; the limit naturally was the optimal connection of the individual means of production.<sup>58</sup> The data of the Theresian and Josephine Cadastre distinctly differed for Kostelní Lhota. According to the Theresian Cadastre, the village was comprised of farmsteads on the border of subsistence, according to the Josephine some farmsteads were already divided into smaller ones and the productivity shifted to higher

53 For the areal size of the meadows, cf. NA Prague, Collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Chotouň, fassé and documents, inv. Nr. 1189.

54 See in detail Vavák I/2, 25 (1781); II/1, pp. 5–10 (1784); II/2, pp. 72–74 (1787).

55 SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 544, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 127r–133v; SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 85–99.

56 For more detail on Kostelní Lhota, see T. KLÍR, *Agrarsysteme des vorindustriellen Dorfes*, pp. 148–152; IDEM, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 57–61.

57 For its model, see e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 186–195.

58 On that, see e.g. T. KLÍR — M. BERÁNEK, *A Social-Economic Interpretation*, pp. 299–300.





market surpluses. With the number of serf families, Kostelní Lhota was the largest village on the left-bank side of the Poděbrady estate (**Table 7**). Between 1745 and 1770, the number of registered serfs still increased, namely by 50% (281 → 429), but unlike Chotouň it was the influence of the dramatic increase of peasant families (18 → 32), with a more or less constant number of inmate-lodgers. It was recorded for 14 serfs in 1770 that they serve in other villages.<sup>59</sup>

In the overall comparison, the socio-economic and demographic structure of Milčice approached the model type of village of fertile corn-producing areas.<sup>60</sup> In this regard, it had the more distinctive form of nearby Chotouň. Large peasant farmsteads dominated in both villages, the number of which remained the same, or lowered even more, and which used inmate-lodgers and wage labourers abundantly. In the neighbourhood of Milčice a village of a different type also lay on the windblown sands — Kostelní Lhota, where the number of peasant families increased, the size of their land furnishing approached the subsistence boundary and the workload thus lay on the family of the farmstead holder.

#### 4. A MIRROR OF VAVÁK'S MEMOIRS

##### 4.1. MILČICE AS A MISERABLE VILLAGE

In the *Memoirs*, the exceptional agricultural potential of the Milčice farmsteads is not overemphasized anywhere, but some passages prove that Vavák was very aware of it.<sup>61</sup> He usually mentioned the priority position of Milčice indirectly namely by repeated enumeration of all the possible negatives, which it entailed — especially the high burden of the contributions (state taxes) and corvée payments.<sup>62</sup> Vavák's *Memoirs* thus show us how one-sided the view was built only on the excise tax declarations and documents, which on the one hand registered the high economic potential and successfulness of the Milčice serf farmsteads but on the other hand were an instrument for lowering their affluence. The high economic potential of Milčice thus was not subjectively evaluated very high by the peasant, instead they excessively

<sup>59</sup> SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 544, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 85r–99v; SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, Register of the building of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 112–137.

<sup>60</sup> On that synoptically, see M. GERMAN — E. MAUR, *Proměny vesnických sociálních struktur*, pp. 742–770.

<sup>61</sup> Vavák II/2, p. 138 (1790) — other than Milčice Vavák included also Velim, Pečky, Bobnice, Chleby and Rašovice among the villages with good soils and also large farmsteads.

<sup>62</sup> Synoptically, see Vavák III/2, p. 85 (“Vypsání vsi Milčic”); Vavák I/1, pp. 78–79 (1776); II/1, p. 92 (1786); II/2, pp. 69, 88–90 (1789), 120, 138–139 (1790); III/1, pp. 97–100, 112 (1793); III/2, p. 81 (1796). The corvée payments, also called urbarium payments, were paid by the serfs to the chamber estates after the cancellation of corvée within “Raabization” (1777/1783).

harshly perceived the negative aspects, which it brought. Milčice therefore appears in places in Vavák's *Memoirs* not as the agriculturally most effective village on the Poděbrady estate, but rather as one of the most pathetic and oppressed, whether by the authority, the state or fire and other natural catastrophes.

Nevertheless, the high burden of the land Milčice farmsteads was not only the subjective feeling of the holders but had also a real impact. As a consequence of the interplay of several unfavourable events, including devastating fire and hail, Vavák's father burdened by debts had to sell his peasant farmstead of more than two hides, from which however he managed in time to separate with the consent of the authority a smallholder farmstead with a significant property area of 18 rods (Nrs. 3–4).<sup>63</sup> During the crop failures and famine in 1770–1771, it was again two of the three largest Milčice farmsteads (Nrs. 1–2), which found themselves in critical danger, so that still before it was ripe their holders reaped green rye for need.<sup>64</sup> In the end, one of these farmsteads was confiscated for debts and divided (Nr. 1).<sup>65</sup> Decline affected another farmstead (Nr. 13) in the 1780s.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, in favourable years these farmsteads had high market surpluses, their holders had the highest social status in the long term and the members of their families were marked by social mobility.<sup>67</sup>

The complaints about the extremely high burden of Milčice in Vavák abound after 1787, when the long-term average fertility of the Milčice fields was increased by officials by one-third as against the data provided by the peasants during the preparations of the Josephine Cadastre.<sup>68</sup> In the two subsequent places in the *Memoirs*, it is possible to find also a model balance sheet of the expenses and incomes of a peasant farmstead, which attempts to prove the unfortunate situation of the holders. In this balance sheet, Vavák always concealed income from livestock production, since they were not directly taxed, and other sundry income from the application of the vacant capacity e.g. for bound wood and other transports, but it also arises from his balance sheet that Milčice farmsteads could afford demanding operation, maintain the relevant capital means and above all to transfer workload from a family of landlords to wage labourers. What burdened Vavák's mind was rather the awareness how many means were escaping from the farmstead than emergency or existential threat. The complaint from the peasants from neighbouring Kostelní Lhota, left to their own work and living in the risk of starvation, would probably sound completely different.

In relative terms the vast majority of villages in the Poděbrady estate came out worse than Milčice, namely in all of Vavák's mentioned items. The contributions and corvée payments were set relatively dependent on the gross yield of the fields, but considering the nonlinear dependence of the net yield on the soil quality Milčice came out the best of all the villages. The costs for the operation of the farmsteads then did not depend on the incomes of the farmsteads but the extent of cultivated

63 S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, pp. 239–240 (1978).

64 Vavák I/1, p. 19 (1771).

65 Vavák I/1, p. 88 (1777); III/1, pp. 112–113 (1794).

66 S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, pp. 136–140 (1979).

67 Vavák III/2, pp. 75–76 (“Vypsání vsi Milčic”).

68 Vavák II/1, pp. 111–112 (1786); II/2, pp. 20–21, 36–39 (1787).



area, which favoured Milčice even more. On the other hand, the heavy burden calculated according to the long-term average yields could truly be financially ruinous, if several negative factors coincided in the form of local crop failure, natural catastrophes, the demographic constellation and the unfortunate character of the holder. It arises from Vavák's records that the loss of the farmstead was perceived as a family disgrace, which explains why he devoted so many places in his texts repeatedly to the sensitive topic of the sale of his father's farmstead.<sup>69</sup>

The real economic power of Milčice appears in Vavák's *Memoirs* indirectly, e.g. in March 1771. At that time, a large part of the village and serf farmsteads suffering from a shortage of grain and the land languished in a famine, in Milčice 245 measures of surplus corn were registered, the most on the entire estate. Just before the harvest when the prices peaked, some Milčice peasants could still trade with corn in secret.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, Vavák could describe the crop failure and famine in 1770–1772 rather as an outside observer, and if he described the horrors then, they concerned the surrounding economically weaker villages, particularly neighbouring Kostelní and Písková Lhotas. In these neighbouring villages, people reaped less they had sown, and rumours even said that they dug up and ate carrion during the famine. The epidemic also took the most victims there.<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2. THE MARKET INTEGRATION OF THE FARMSTEADS

Milčice farmsteads had the potential to produce long term high corn and livestock surplus. Farmstead Nr. 16, which František Vavák managed from 1778, had according to the Josephine Cadastre an average three-year net yield of winter crops, i.e. bread grains, of around 578 measures. If we subtract the demands of 6 adults (36 measures per year), there still remained annually on average around 160 measures (107 rods), of which a large part was necessary to sell at the market. Similarly, also a significant part of the spring crops, especially barley, and livestock products had to head for the market. It is therefore not surprising that for all of his life Vavák systematically followed and recorded the price range at the local and regional markets, which he often placed even in exceptionally interesting causal relationships (**Table 8–10; Figure 20a–e**).<sup>72</sup> We do not plan to provide a complete analysis of the whole range of price records here, but we will focus only on some aspects and only on the first half of the year (1770–1794).

In the studied segment of 25 years, Vavák recorded price ranges 309 times, of which the vast majority concerned the local market. Several times, Vavák independently provided the prices at the market in Prague, Jičín, or in other places.<sup>73</sup> The

69 On the disgrace of the indebted peasant, cf. S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, pp. 136–140 (1979); Vavák III/2, p. 21 (1795).

70 Vavák I/1, pp. 10–11, 18 (1771).

71 T. KLÍR, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 54–55; Vavák I/1, pp. 22–23 (1771), 33–34 (1772).

72 On that, see also J. PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách*, pp. 32–33.

73 For the village of Milčice, the Theresian Cadastre mentioned the market centres in Prague, Chlumec nad Cidlinou and Hradec Králové. Also the foremen from the Liberec district



density of the price records strikingly increased after 1778, when it stabilized at 10–20 annually. In terms of the systematic accumulation of information, Vavák acquired it second hand both from coachmen and the surrounding peasants riding to the market places.<sup>74</sup>

Vavák systematically recorded the prices of basic grains (wheat, rye, barley and not always oats), which he relatively often complemented with the prices of peas and millet, later also hay and straw. The mentioned spectrum reflects the crops, which the peasants most often and to the greatest extent took to the market — hence bread grains, barley for malt and fodder. Vavák recorded the prices of other crops — beans, vegetables, fruit and at a time of high volatility also meat and other commodities rather seasonally and only some years.

Vavák usually recorded the prices from the perspective of the purchaser and at the upper limit of the price bracket even mentioned several times sarcastic remarks like: “... barley 2 Gulden 15, instead of 2 Gulden 30 Kreuzers — misers even wanted 3 Gulden.”<sup>75</sup> The real rife of the peasants as sellers is nevertheless regularly documented in his records, e.g. the beginning of 1787: “... I was in Prague ... barley 1 Gulden 54 Kreuzers ... and also 2 Gulden 12 Kreuzers; at this last agreement I was the only one to sell barley.”<sup>76</sup> Naturally, also peasants could be forced to buy grain, e.g. if they lacked it for sewing, or if the old ran out at the beginning of the summer and the new had not yet been harvested.<sup>77</sup>

Milčice peasants sold bread grains for the most part directly, or through coachmen, who mediated the connection between the lowlands and the mountainous regions. The weather and the current state of the routes therefore had an influence on the price, because if they were not passable and the coachmen did not travel, demand was lacking and the prices of grain stagnated. If it was convenient, Milčice peasants took the bread corns themselves to the Prague market, where, however, thanks to the good accessibility they faced strong competition coming from other fertile regions. For that reason, grain prices in Prague were mainly similar to the local ones and it did not pay off to speculate with small differences considering the transport costs. Only of the price difference surpassed the boundary of 15–20 Kreuzer per rod, or 10–15%, did it pay to transport them to the Prague market (1787).<sup>78</sup> Vavák quite often

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were to buy the corn. This generalizing record, which only partially corresponds to Vavák's records, is repeated with most of the villages of the Poděbrady estate. Cf. Milena BORSKÁ-URBÁNKOVÁ, *Obilní trhy a ceny v Čechách v 18. století* [Grain Markets and Prices in Bohemia in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century], in: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Philosophica et Historica* 3 (1977), 1979, pp. 109–138.

<sup>74</sup> Vavák I/1, p. 128 (1779); I/2, p. 160 (1783); II/2, p. 61 (1788). Generally, J. PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>75</sup> Vavák I/1, p. 96 (1778).

<sup>76</sup> Vavák II/2, p. 1 (1770).

<sup>77</sup> E.g. Vavák I/1, p. 19 (1772); II/2, p. 145 (1790); III/1, pp. 14, 20 (1791).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. the data on tolls and the deduction on the profit from each mile, which Vavák presented according to the Josephine Cadastre; Vavák II/2, pp. 21–22 (1787). On that, see also J. PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách*, pp. 20–21.



recorded the prices also in Jičín, which were usually higher than the Prague and local ones, and on the contrary he only exceptionally mentioned those from Chlumeč, which were usually lower and for which the seigniorial administration would redeem them in necessary cases.<sup>79</sup> Also the more distant price ranges and data on the trade with grain also ended up in the *Memoirs*, if they had a perceptible influence on the local and Prague markets, or on the activities of the coachmen.<sup>80</sup> Milčice peasants transported mainly barley directly to the Prague market, then fodder for cattle, fruit and vegetables, the prices of which there were usually substantially higher than at the local market. Vavák's mentions of cooperation between the peasants are unique, who joined in the transport and sale of goods.<sup>81</sup>

Fundamental differences between the rather subsistence and market-orientated peasants arise from some records. Vavák, representing the second group, had free work capacity also in the course of some season jobs, could speculate with grain and personally transport to market places like Prague. Not even a slight blanket crop failure did not hurt him, but thanks to the rise of prices rather the opposite as proved by his record: "... if those spring freezes had not killed the shoots a bit and the granaries not taken, perhaps they would have paid a Tolar (thaler) for rye and a Gulden for barley, which would not have brought many good things to peasants."<sup>82</sup> In contrast to that, the subsistence-orientated peasant was directly threatened by every drop in the crop, lost even the very low market surpluses and therefore could not take advantage of the high prices. He also could hardly free himself from agricultural jobs, thanks to which he was dependent on the local market.

## 5. THE BUILT-UP AREA AND SOCIO-TOPOGRAPHY

### 5.1. BUILT-UP AREA

We can evaluate the layout of Milčice for the first time in detail from the Raabization plan from 1778 and Vavák's description from 1796 (**Figure 21**).<sup>83</sup> The village then comprised 20 house numbers including 15 peasant and 3 smallholder farmsteads with pubs, a general forge and common shepherd's hut. The majority of the farmsteads were arranged around a relatively small rectangular green (135 x 85 m). There were dwellings of the inmate-lodgers and several small craftsmen in the village, the situation of which fluctuated and were complemented by members of the peasant families. These dwellings were usually built on the courtyard area of the farmstead.

79 E.g. Vavák I/1, pp. 90–91 (1777); I/2, p. 123 (1782).

80 On that in more detail also J. PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách*, pp. 19–20.

81 E.g. in September 1784 Vavák along with another peasant transported barley to the Prague market, which we know about only thanks to the accidental encounter with Emperor Joseph II; Vavák II/1, p. 40.

82 Vavák III/1, p. 20 (1791).

83 Vavák III/2 ("Vypsání vsi Milčic"), pp. 75–82.



The built-up area was spread on the slope, which separated the upper and lower Pleistocene terraces (192–198 m a.s.l.), where the southern row of farmsteads copied the upper edge of the slope (ca 200 m a.s.l.) and the northern row its foot (ca 190 m a.s.l.). The three largest peasant farmsteads had the most distinctive buildings in terms of mass, moreover situated on the dominant and higher placed southern side of the green (Nrs. 2–3 were especially massive). The building constructions of the peasant farmsteads were already stone in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of the barns. In the 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the village several times burnt down entirely or partially, where these events were most reflected in the appearance of the built-up area of the green.<sup>84</sup> Several residential buildings might have been two-storeyed originally, but in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century already lowered and ground floor. Milčice differed from a number of surrounding villages with its abundant stone constructions, where entirely wooden buildings dominated and fires caused greater damages.<sup>85</sup>

## 5.2. DIVISION OF THE PEASANT COMMUNITY

The length of Vavák's *Memoirs* fluctuated in individual years (**Figure 22**). There was a dramatic increase in pages after 1780, at the time of the culminating Josephine reforms. A substantial part of his records then was devoted to the issue of non-Catholics and the division of the Milčice peasant community into catholic and protestant parts, which was accompanied by squabbles, which Vavák likely describes as scarier than what really happened.<sup>86</sup> Interesting aspects come out if we project the socio-economic and socio-topographic context onto Vavák's dramatic story.

In terms of the social status and size of the farmsteads, only two of the traditional Milčice farmsteads (including one "reeve house"; Czech: *rychta*), one new peasant farmstead, one cottage and the common smith, who held a total of 20% of the ploughed land claimed the protestant faith at first. The situation changes after a few weeks, when two more holders converted, including the holder of the most prestigious and largest of the peasant farmsteads (Nr. 2). After these conversions, the Protestants held almost 40% of the arable land. That explains the great effort, which the catholic side led by Vavák placed on a change of the decision of the holder of Nr. 2. A year later, however, they had failed to avert the conversion of another young holder from the prestigious and formerly also a "reeve" farmstead Nr. 17.<sup>87</sup> In the aggregate total,

<sup>84</sup> SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 2, urbarium of the estate from 1553 (Registra Urbur[ni] aneb Sprawni [Pan]stwi Podiebra[dskeho]), fol. 38<sup>v</sup>–40<sup>v</sup>; SDA Prague, Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 3, urbarium of the estate from 1590 (Urbur panstwi J.M.C. podiebradskeho zalozen Letha Panie 1590), fol. 18<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>r</sup>; V. PEŠÁK (ed.), *Berní rula 12. Kraj Hradecký I*, pp. 39–40; Vavák III/2 ("Vypsání vsi Milčic"), pp. 83–84.

<sup>85</sup> Vavák III/3, p. 114 (1801).

<sup>86</sup> Synoptically, see F. KUTNAR, *František Jan Vavák*, pp. 26–28.

<sup>87</sup> Non-Catholic positions, the course of conversion, the roles of individual persons and families, various squabbles and disputes, cf. Vavák I/1, pp. 44–45 (1774); I/2, pp. 3 (1781), 26–30, 34–35, 50, 53–65, 107, 109, 113, 117–121, 126 (1782), 164–168, 175–180, 192 (1783); II/1, pp. 38–39 (1784), 52–53 (1785).



the Protestants had in the end a third of the farmsteads, approximately a third of the arable land and included half of the tradition, prestigious and “reeve” farmsteads. If also farmstead Nr. 2 were to convert permanently, the situation in Milčice would be balanced. In terms of the number of individuals, a total of 22 men and women, hence approximately only 13% of the serfs, converted to the protestant faith permanently.<sup>88</sup> The shift to the protestant faith thus concerned rather the socially well situated peasant families, less so the inmate-lodgers. On the other hand, we know thanks to Vavák that a number of people worse situated in terms of status stopped observing catholic traditions, but for tactical reasons remained formal Catholic.<sup>89</sup>

It is a question to which extent religious and social convictions can be seen from the division of Milčice peasants into protestant and catholic part, or a reflection of the internal tension of the peasant community. Conversion then would not have been such an expression of conviction but an active means by which the complicated relations between the peasant families were transformed. From this point of view, the topographic context is also interesting. After the announcement of the patent of tolerance three of the five farmsteads located in the north, lowest placed row and two farmsteads in the eastern row on the slope gradually converted. On the contrary, none converted permanently from the southern farmsteads, which dominated the entire village in size and height. The centre of the non-Catholics first lay in the farmstead neighbouring Vavák, then from 1783 Vavák was surrounded by a protestant farmstead also from the other side, from which several comic situations naturally arose.<sup>90</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

Milčice was a typical representative of a village in a fertile lowlands area, with market-orientated grain and livestock production and with exceptionally good sales possibilities.<sup>91</sup> Vavák's *Memoirs* specify in a valuable way the method of economic

88 The list from 1787 presents the number of 22 people: SDA Prague, Collection of the Manor Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 536, the list of conversions to the evangelical faith (Individual Consignation [...]). The ongoing list from the end of the winter 1782, including 28 persons, is provided by Vavák I/2, p. 34.

89 Vavák I/2, p. 53 (1785).

90 E.g. Vavák's unwanted meeting with evangelical pastors in 1791; Vavák III/1, p. 40.

91 On the general concept of the different social-economic development of individual Bohemian regions (production areas): J. PETRÁŇ, *Poddaný lid v Čechách*; more recently M. CERMÁN — E. MAUR, *Proměny vesnických sociálních struktur*; M. CERMÁN — H. ZEITL-HOFER (edd.), *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen*; Markus CERMÁN — Robert LUFT (edd.), *Untertanen, Herrschaft und Staat in Böhmen und im "Alten Reich"*, Sozialgeschichtliche Studien zur Frühen Neuzeit, Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum 99, München 2005; most recently Alexander KLEIN — Sheilagh OGILVIE, *Occupational Structure in the Czech Lands under the Second Serfdom*, Economic History Review Volume 69, 2016, pp. 493–521. Of the earlier studies, e.g. also Josef PEKAŘ, *České katastry 1654–1789* [Bohemian Cadastres 1654–1789], Praha 1932, p. 353 (references to the differences of mountains and regions); Aleš CHALUPA, *Venkovské obyvatelstvo v Čechách v Tereziánských katastrech (1700–1750)*



connection on the regional level with the mountainous regions and Prague as well as on the local level with the neighbouring township of Sadská.<sup>92</sup> The pronounced, although relatively stable socio-economic and demographic structure, with a predominance of large farms and the high representation of inmate-lodgers and servants, corresponded to the productive and commercial agriculture. With the aid of Vavák's entries and the birth, marriage and death registries, we can reveal a close group of interconnected peasant families and the ways they dominated the entire village. At the same time, there was tension among them and individuals, including Vavák, who activated diverse tools to make their position stand out, to maintain it, or to change it.

A broader comparison confirmed that the Poděbrady estate was exceptionally heterogeneous and a considerable part of the villages followed a different developmental trajectory than Milčice.<sup>93</sup> As a consequence of the less favourable conditions, agriculture in many villages surpassed the subsistence level only with difficulty and their socio-economic structures, dynamics and demographic behaviours approached the model known in large part from the so-called transitional, or mountainous, areas. An analysis of approximately twenty villages in the vicinity of Milčice showed several important connections, of which it is possible to point out the strong negative correlation between their demographic and agricultural potentials.

The fundamental differences between the economically thinking of the subsistence and market orientated peasants are often in conflict in Vavák's entries. The first for instance perceives the weather and course of agricultural jobs very sensitively and worries about a good harvest, while the second on the contrary revels in the spring freezes, which potentially reduce the yields but increase the price of corn and the profits from it. Or is happy about the crop failure forcing the surrounding peasants to make their servants redundant, which then happily enter service in Milčice even for a lower wage. As a devout peasant, he is sorry for the poor, who suffer hardship during the times of high prices; on the other hand, he is somewhat disappointed when prices do not increase according to his optimistic expectations despite a weaker crop and trips through the area by the army. He also records the price range from the view of the purchaser, and has the successful salesman therefore as a miser, but himself is happy when he manages to sell it more expensively than the others. The burden of the land tax and corvée payments subjectively weigh on him greatly, because they lower his prosperity, but forgets in his indignation that the peasants in the neighbouring village have to sell not the work of the servants and inmate-lodgers but their own and as a reward still have to face the risk of starva-

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[Rural Populace in Bohemia in the Theresian Cadastres (1700–1750)], Sborník Národního muzea v Praze, Řada A – Historie 23, 1969, pp. 197–378.

92 On the question of the economic ties of the individual parts of Bohemia, cf. J. PETRÁŇ, *Ceny obilí a tržní okruhy v Čechách*, pp. 34–44. More recently e.g. A. KLEIN — S. OGILVIE, *Occupational Structure*.

93 On the internal differentiation, see also L. MATUŠÍKOVÁ, *Die Entwicklung der Wirtschafts- und Sozialstrukturen*, pp. 59–61; EADEM, *Hospodářské a sociální poměry*, p. 52; M. CERMAN — E. MAUR, *Proměny vesnických sociálních struktur*, p. 754.





tion every year. We can naturally find the merger of different thought worlds also on other than economic levels with Vavák. It is enough to mention that a peasant and avid reader, appearing before emperors, bishops and canons, high officials and maintaining relations with Bohemian revivalists and the enlightened, did not hesitate to believe in witches changing into frogs, water goblins in fishponds and imps in pastures.<sup>94</sup>

Vavák was among the large peasants with free labour capacity, which he devoted not only to market activities but many other activities, including exceptionally productive writing, thanks to which we also know him. If we were to seek how his peers used this free time, we would find a partial answer in his *Autobiography* (1796):

“And already then [1762] observing many people rich or proud and otherwise handsome, I considered them to be stupid, I did not hold anything with them and warned them as well as all of those equal to me, youths — friends etc., who went for music to the pubs, for cards, bowling, on Sunday and holidays they wandered here and there and wasted time wickedly. I bore ill will against that and never learned any such game, but always read something or wrote or drew, putting something into myself or writing something, drawing etc.”<sup>95</sup>

Thus, by a coincidence a source unique in Europe was created in Milčice in the form of journal entries of a traditionally managing peasant, in the end covering one half-century and having the length of several thousand pages. The skeleton of the journals comprised systematically kept entries on the weather, agricultural activities and economic decision-making, which were so routine, mass and cyclic, that their actors or other contemporaries normally did not record them. Precisely in these entries, with the nature of long series, we see an exceptional source of information for research of the Early Modern rural family and serf communities. Instead of the entries specifying the testimony of the traditionally available written sources of the state and patrimonial administration, they allow a study of the peasants as active individuals, purposefully utilising or on the other hand exceeding the social, economic and cultural rules at the turn of the epoch.

<sup>94</sup> Vavák I/1, pp. 115–116 (1779); III/2, p. 13 (1795).

<sup>95</sup> S. JONÁŠOVÁ–HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, p. 248 (1978).

## TABLES

Nr. of the farmstead	Peasant farmsteads				Smallholders
	1, 2, 3	10, 12, 16, 17	7, 11, 13, 15	6	5, 14
Sown land (rods)	141–146	92–108	51–79	31	4–14
Draught power (paired team)	3–4 (5–6 horses, 1–2 oxen)	2–3 (5 horses, 1 ox)	1–2 (2–3 horses, 1 ox)	1 (2 horses)	0 (1 horse, or 1 ox)
Cattle	10–17	5–11	7	5	2
Sheep and goats	26–30	9–14	9–15	9	0
Swine	9–14	8–15	7	6	3
Estimate of the minimal manpower (adult)	6–8, of whom 4 men	5–6, of whom 2–3 men	4–5, of whom 2 men	2–4, of whom 1–2 men	2, of whom 1 man
Utility max.	36–41	23–31	12–22	8	2–4
Utility min.	22–25	14–19	8–13	5	1–2

**TABLE 1.** Serf farmsteads in Milčice according to the Theresian Cadastre (fasse and ocular visitation 1714/1715 and 1726). House numbers complemented following the numbering in 1771.

Legend: utility max. — utility in years with a good crop; utility min. — utility in years with a bad crop.

NB: Jan Vavák, father of František J. Vavák worked farmstead Nr. 3 until 1753.

NA Prague, collection Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabellen vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrady, ungültig), fol. 48–51; Nr. 788, fasse (ocular visitation from 1726), fol. 48–52.

Nr. of the farmstead	Peasant farmsteads				Smallholders	
	2, 3	12, 16, 17	13, 15	7, 10, 11, 18, 20	1, 6, 19	4, 5, 14
Sown area (rods)	127–144	91–96	78–82	52–61	36–45	5–16
Cattle	10–14	9–12	4–10	6–8	6	3–4
Utility	47–58	32–35	27–32	13–23	14–18	2–6

**TABLE 2.** Serf farmsteads in Milčice according to the Josephine Cadastre (1785/1788). House numbers according to the numbering from 1771.

NB: Jan Vavák worked smallholder farmstead Nr. 4, created in 1753, and from 1761 František J. Vavák. From 1778 František J. Vavák also managed farmstead Nr. 16, he settled an inmate-lodger at cottage Nr. 4.

NA Prague, collection of the Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with incorporated village Pečky, fasse and documents, inv. Nr. 1188.



Nr. of the farmstead	1	2	3	6	7	10*	11	12	13	15	16	17
Estimate of minimal manpower	6/8	6/8	6/8	2/4	4/5	5/6	4/5	5/6	4/5	4/5	5/6	5/6
Reality (men-women)	6-5	2-1	4-1	4-4	4-3	2-1	4-2	3-5	2-2	2-1	4-3	3-2
Total real	11	3	5	8	7	3	6	8	4	3	7	5

**TABLE 3.** Balance of the manpower at the serf farmsteads in Milčice, without servants of “non-Milčice” origin (1770).

NB: estimate of the necessary manpower according to the number of raised draught power (working animal) and cattle.

	Families			Orphans and widows	Unmarried mothers and their children	Σ
	Peasant	Smallholder and cottager	Inmate-lodger			
<b>Coupled families</b>	12 → 11	3 → 5	18 → 20	—	0 → 1	<b>33 → 36**</b>
<b>Widowed and unmarried</b>	1 → 2 (♀)	2 (♂) → 1 (♀)	2 (♂) → 0	2 (♀) → 3 (♀)	3 → 1	<b>7 (10) → 6 (7)***</b>
<b>Sons over 12 years</b>	12 → 9 (18 → 9)*	5 → 0	6 → 6	8 → 12 (9 → 21)*	1 → 0	<b>31 → 27 (39 → 36)*</b>
<b>Daughters over 12 years</b>	3 → 3	1 → 3	2 → 7	8 → 2 (1)	0 → 0	<b>14 → 12 (14 → 13)*</b>
<b>Sons to 12 years</b>	12 → 4	1 → 5	10 → 9	5 → 1	2 → 0	<b>30 → 19</b>
<b>Daughters to 12 years</b>	11 → 6	2 → 6	15 → 17	1 → 5	1 → 0	<b>30 → 34</b>
<b>Total people over 12 years</b>	32 → 32 (38 → 32)*	9 → 12	42 → 53	26 → 16 (27 → 26)*	3 → 1 (4 → 1)*	<b>112 → 113 (120 → 123)*</b>
<b>Total children</b>	23 → 10	3 → 11	25 → 26	6 → 6	3 → 0	<b>60 → 53</b>
<b>Total people</b>	<b>55 → 42 (61 → 42)*</b>	<b>12 → 23</b>	<b>67 → 79</b>	<b>32 → 22 (33 → 32)*</b>	<b>6 → 1 (7 → 1)*</b>	<b>172 → 166 (180 → 176)*</b>

**TABLE 4.** Serfs in Milčice in 1745 and 1770 according to the registry of orphans and all serfs. Before the arrow, the situation in 1745, after the arrow in 1770.

Legend: \* — in parentheses indicates the number of men in the army and people unaccounted for; \*\* — number of paired families, i.e. 66 → 72 people; without orphans and widows; \*\*\* — without unmarried mothers; ♂ — widower or bachelor; ♀ widow.

NB: Both registries were gradually updated after being written down, without it being possible to more precisely categorize in time the annotations. The initial, raw data is therefore presented in the table.

SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. č. 544, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 119<sup>a</sup>-126<sup>a</sup>; SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 165-175.

“Bailiff”	Groom	Spital servant	Ploughman	Oxman	Older maid	Younger maid
26 gulden	24 gulden	16 gulden	20 gulden	15 gulden	10 gulden	9 gulden

**TABLE 5.** Servants and annual wages of servants around 1793 according to F. J. Vavák (III/1, p. 98).

NB.: “bailiff” — foreman among the servants (leader; Czech: *nádvorník, rataj*); groom — servant (Czech: *pacholek*); spital servant — servant not living at the farmstead, but in the general building for the poor (spital; Czech: *špitálník*); ploughman — servant hired for tilling (Czech: *pluhař*); oxman — servant hired for grazing cattle (Czech: *volák*). On that cf. also the editorial notes of Jindřich Skopec (Vavák III/1, p. 98).

	Families			Orphans and widows	Unmarried mothers and their children	Σ
	Peasant	Smallholder	Inmate-lodger			
<b>Paired families</b>	8 → 9	4 → 8	13 → 21	—	—	<b>25 → 38**</b>
<b>Widowed</b>	—	0 → 2 (♂, ♀)	0 → 1 (♂)	2 (♀) → 5 (♀)	1 → 0	<b>2 → 8***</b>
<b>Sons over 12 years</b>	8 → 1	3 → 4 (3 → 8)*	5 → 10	4 → 10 (12 → 21)*	—	<b>20 → 25 (32 → 40)*</b>
<b>Daughters over 12 years</b>	11 → 2	2 → 3	2 → 8	2 → 10 (4 → 12)*	—	<b>17 → 23 (19 → 25)*</b>
<b>Sons to 12 years</b>	10 → 6	1 → 13	9 → 23	3 → 2	—	<b>23 → 44</b>
<b>Daughters to 12 years</b>	10 → 7	1 → 8	12 → 17	3 → 2	—	<b>26 → 34</b>
<b>Total people over 12 years</b>	35 → 21	13 → 43 (13 → 47)*	33 → 61	8 → 25 (16 → 38)*	1 → 0	<b>60 → 132* (68 → 149)</b>
<b>Total children</b>	20 → 13	2 → 21	21 → 40	6 → 4	—	<b>43 → 78</b>
<b>Total people</b>	<b>55 → 34</b>	<b>15 → 64 (15 → 68)*</b>	<b>54 → 101</b>	<b>14 → 29 (22 → 42)*</b>	<b>1 → 0</b>	<b>103 → 210 111 → 227</b>

**TABLE 6.** Serfs in Chotouň in 1745 and 1770 according to the registry of orphans and serfs.

Also daughters and sons serving in other villages are included. Before the arrow, the situation in 1745, after the arrow in 1770.

Legend: \* — in parentheses indicates the number of men in the army and people unaccounted for; \*\* — number of paired families, i.e. 50 → 74 people; without orphans and widows; \*\*\* — without unmarried mothers; ♂ — widower or bachelor; ♀ widow.

NB: Both registries were gradually updated after being written down, without it being possible to more precisely categorize in time the annotations. The initial, raw data is therefore presented in the table.

SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. č. 544, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 127<sup>r</sup>–133<sup>r</sup>; SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, registry of the state of orphans and all 1770, pag. 165–175; SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 176–188.



	Families			Orphans and widows	Unmarried mothers and their children	Σ
	Peasant	Smallholder	Inmate-lodger			
<b>Paired families</b>	18 → 32	9 → 17	37 → 38	—	— → (3)	<b>64 → 87**</b>
<b>Widowed</b>	3 (♀) → 1 (♀)	1 (♀) → 2 (♂)	0 → 1 (♂)	7(6) (♀)* → 24 (♀)	3 → 2 (4 → 3)*	<b>11 (10) (vdovy) → 26***</b>
<b>Sons over 12 years</b>	10 → 25 (11 → 25)*	6 → 9	6 → 12 (6 → 14)*	12 → 31 (37 → 57)*	—	<b>34 → 77 (60 → 105)*</b>
<b>Daughters over 12 years</b>	13 → 17	4 → 4	4 → 15	14 → 24 (18 → 26)*	2 (4) → 0*	<b>37 → 60 (43 → 60)*</b>
<b>Sons to 12 years</b>	14 → 26	5 → 12	19 → 11	1 → 13	—	<b>39 → 62</b>
<b>Daughters to 12 years</b>	15 → 27	9 → 16	15 → 12	1 → 16	—	<b>40 → 71</b>
<b>Total people over 12 years</b>	56 → 105 (57 → 105)*	27 → 44	84 → 66 (84 → 66)*	32 → 79 (62 → 79)*	3 → 2 (4 → 3)*	<b>202 → 296 (234 → 296)*</b>
<b>Total children</b>	29 → 53	14 → 28	34 → 23	2 → 29	—	<b>79 → 133</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>85 → 158 (86 → 158)*</b>	<b>41 → 72</b>	<b>118 → 89 (118 → 90)*</b>	<b>34 → 108 (64 → 136)*</b>	<b>8 → 4 (12 → 9)*</b>	<b>281 → 429 (313 → 459)*</b>

**TABLE 7.** Serfs in Kostelní Lhota in 1745 and 1770 according to the registry of orphans and all serfs. Also daughters and sons serving in other villages are included. Before the arrow, the situation in 1745, after the arrow in 1770.

Legend: \* — in parentheses indicates the number of men in the army and people unaccounted for; \*\* — number of paired families, i.e. 128 → 174 people; without orphans and widows; \*\*\* — without unmarried mothers; ♂ — widower or bachelor; ♀ widow.

NB: Both registries were gradually updated after being written down, without it being possible to more precisely categorize in time the annotations. The initial, raw data is therefore presented in the table. SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 544, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1745 (Kniha Syrotcz[i] Kral: Panstwi Podiebradskeho Za Rok 1745), fol. 85<sup>r</sup>-99<sup>v</sup>; SDA Prague, collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, registry of the state of orphans and all serfs 1770, pag. 112-137.



Market	Local market, or in comparison with the Prague one	Prague — 40 km (listed independently)	Jičín — 50 km	Others (Hradec Králové — 60 km, Mladá Boleslav — 40 km, Chlumec nad Cidlinou — 30 km, Trutnov — 80 km)
Number of entries	281	14*	9	7

**TABLE 8.** Entries of the corn price range at various places in the Memoirs of F. J. Vavák (analysed only for 1770–1794). The mentioned aerial distances are rounded and are only of orientational value. NB: local market — Milčice, Sadská, prices of corn in the purchase of coachmen.

Factors	
Increasing price (demand rises, offer drops)	Lowering price (demand drops, offer rises)
Crop failure	Good harvest
Drivable roads — coachmen drive	Import of corn from abroad
Time of seasonal jobs — peasant farmers do not transport corn to the markets	Peasant farmers have free work capacity and can supply the market (outside of agricultural seasonal peaks)
Period of sowing — peasant farmers use up threshed grain	Peasant farmers have to sell products — payment of monetary obligations, payment of the servants, craftsmen etc.
War tax, military warehouses — peasant farmers do not transport corn to the markets	
Army in Prague	Good access to market places

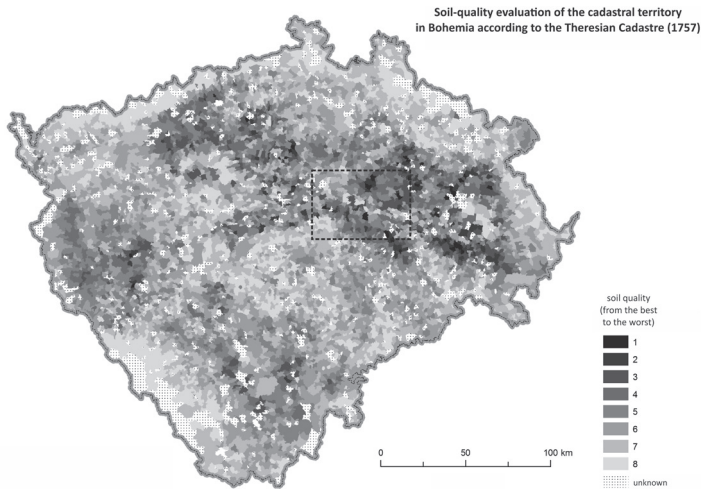
**TABLE 9.** The main price-influencing factors of agricultural crops according to the *Memoirs* of F. J. Vavák (1770–1794).

Month	Movement of prices
July — August	harvest — fall in prices; first winter crops, later spring crops
August — October	price increase during the autumn ploughing and sowing of winter crops
October — December	decline in prices — the market to a greater extent is getting progressively threshed grain; peasant farmers must sell corn in bulk to meet financial obligations; peasant farmers have time to supply the market with corn
January — February	fluctuation and stagnation of prices
March	price increase during the spring ploughing and sowing of spring crops
March — April	decline in prices after the completion of the spring planting
May — July	rise in prices before the harvest

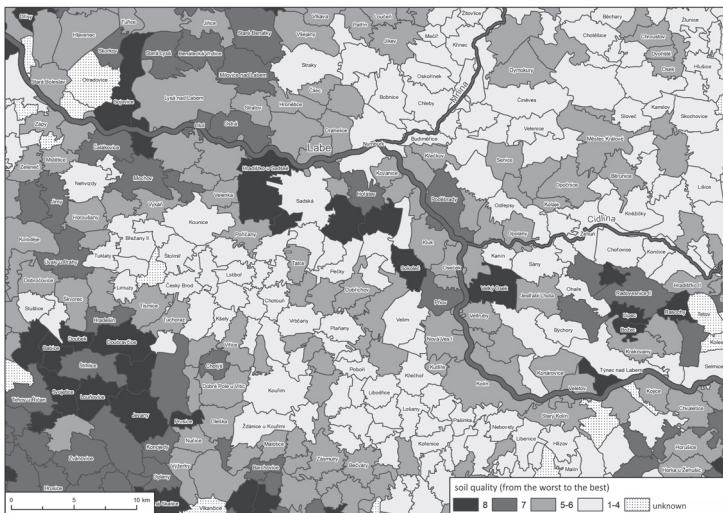
**TABLE 10.** Basic price tendency of grain corns in course of the year with an average harvest — according to a number of entries by F. J. Vavák (1770–1794).



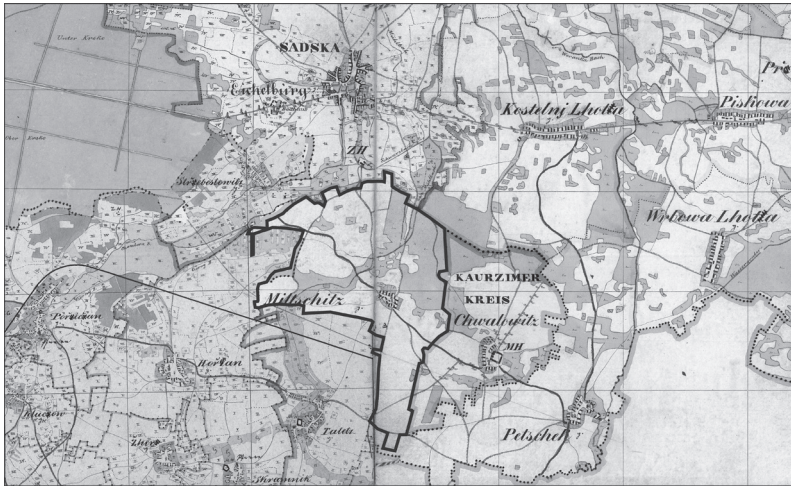
## FIGURES



**FIG. 1.** Soil-quality evaluation of the cadastral territory in Bohemia according to the Theresian Cadastre (1757). The map provides a general overview of the natural dispositions for grain production. The cadastral territory according to the Stable Cadastre (1842). Compare the cut-out with Fig. 2. NB: Soil-quality evaluation according to A. CHALUPA et al., *Tereziánský katastr*. The vector data for the cadastral territory was provided by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, Prague. The map was created by T. Vojtěchovský.

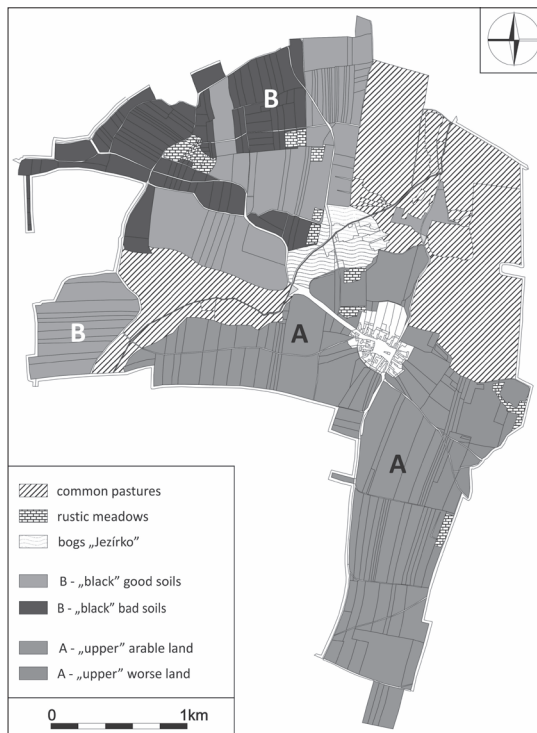


**FIG. 2.** Milčice and environs — soil-quality evaluation of the cadastral territory (1842) according to the Theresian Cadastre (1757). Milčice was in the category of the most highly rated villages. NB: The map was created by T. Vojtěchovský.



**FIG. 3.** Milčice, Kostelní Lhota and its environs on the so-called Map of Cultures of the Kingdom of Bohemia (1837–1843).

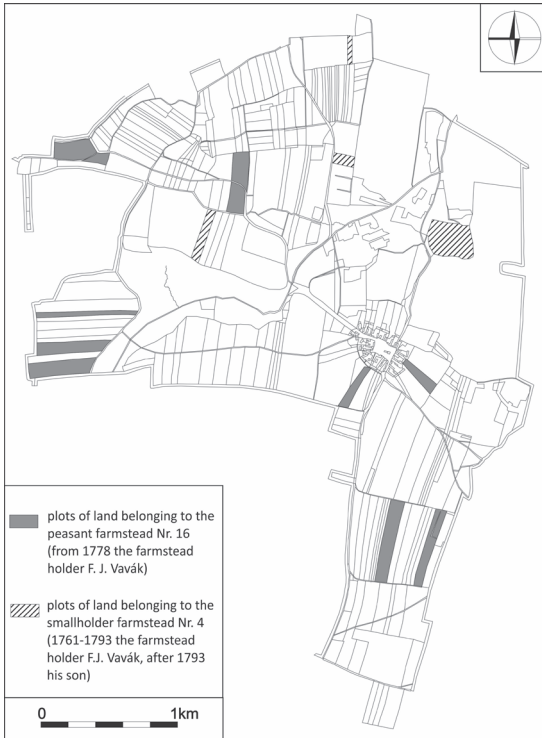
NB: Central Archive of Surveying and Cadastre, Prague, Collection Stable Cadastre, inv. Nr. 51, Culturesquellele k.k. Mappierungs Inspektorats..., district Poděbrady (Nr. 23) and Kouřim (Nr. 52).



**FIG. 4.** Milčice — usage of cultivated land and the characteristic of the arable areas (1778). Data of the Raabization plan put on the background material according to the plan of the Stable Cadastre (1842).

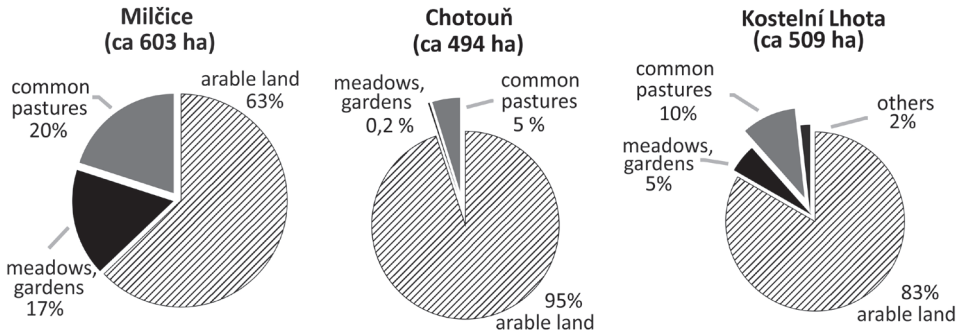
NB: Raabization plan Milčice — SDA Prague, Collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 4535 and 4536, Grund-Ris des zur Kaiser-Konigl. Cammeral Herrschaft Podiebrad gehorigen Dorfs Miltzitz (coloured and non-coloured versions). Plan of the Stable Cadastre — Central Archive of Surveying and Cadastre, Prague, Collection Stable Cadastre, imperial fingerprints of the plans of the Stable Cadastre, Nr. 4641. The plan of the Stable Cadastre was digitised by A. Augustinová.





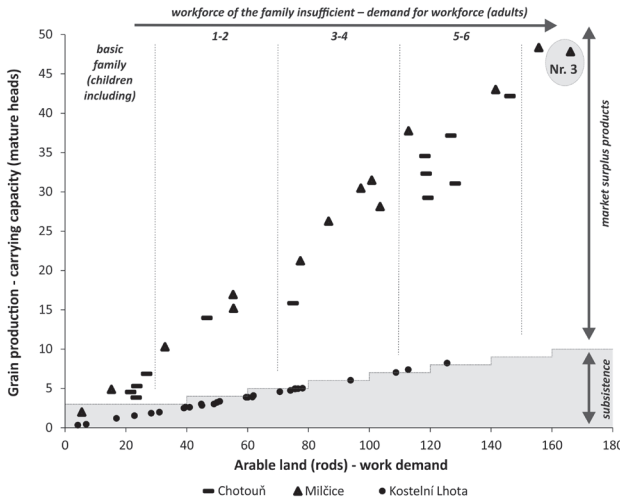
**FIG. 5.** Milčice — the distribution of plots of land belonging to the smallholder farmstead Nr. 4 and peasant farmstead Nr. 16 (1778). Data of the Raabization plan put on the background material according to the plan of the Stable Cadastre (1842).

NB: The plan of the Stable Cadastre was digitised by A. Augustinová.

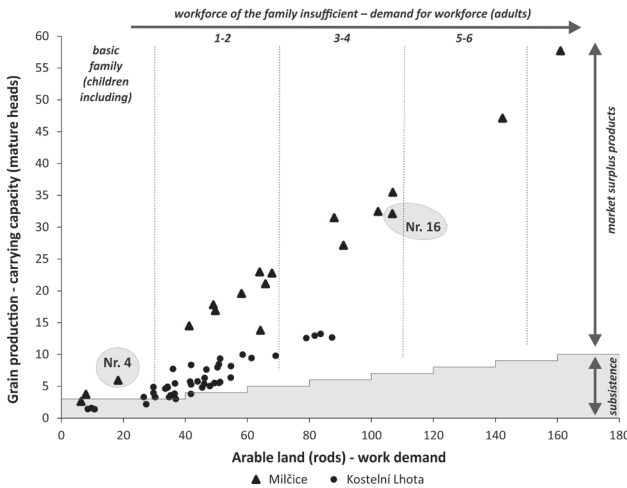


**FIG. 6.** Usage of the hinterland in Milčice, Chotouň and Kostelní Lhota according to the Josephine Cadastre (1785/1788).

NB: NA Prague, Collection Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with incorporated village Pečky, fassé and files, inv. Nr. 1188. For Kostelní Lhota — T. KLÍR, *Agrarsysteme des vorindustriellen Dorfes*, pp. 148–152; IDEM, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 57–61.



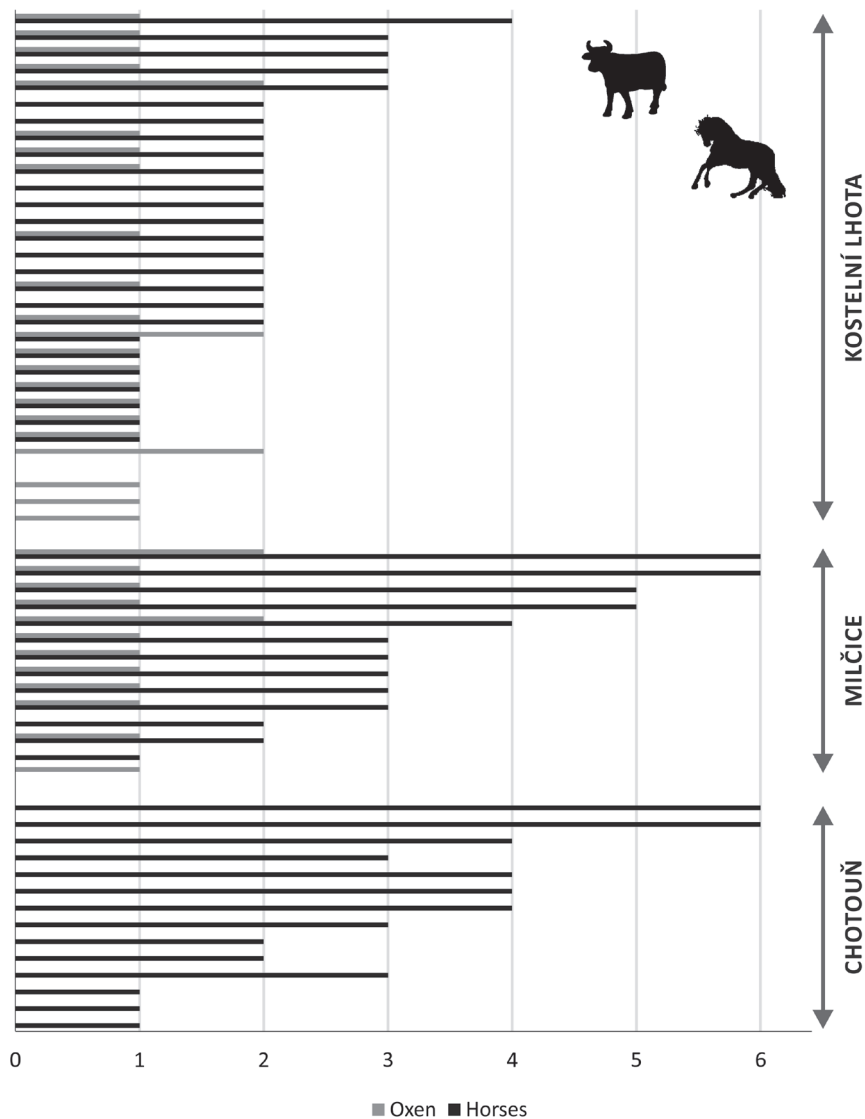
**FIG. 7.** Utility, work demands and subsistence level and market production of the farmsteads in Milčice, Chotouň and Kostelní Lhota. According to the Theresian Cadastre (1726). The boundaries of subsistence reflect the jumping growth of the work forces with the increasing extent of arable areas. Nr. 3 — family farmstead of F. J. Vavák.  
 NB: NA Prague, Collection Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse (ocular visitation from 1726), fol. 48–52.



**FIG. 8.** Utility, work demands and subsistence level and market production of the farmsteads in Milčice, Chotouň and Kostelní Lhota. According to the Josephine Cadastre (1785/1788). The boundaries of subsistence reflect the jumping growth of the work forces with the increasing extent of arable. Nr. 4 and 16 — smallholder and peasant farmstead of F. J. Vavák.  
 NB: NA Prague, Collection Josephine Cadastre, Milčice with incorporated village Pečky, fasse and files, inv. Nr. 1188. For Kostelní Lhota — T. KLÍR, *Agrarsysteme des vorindustriellen Dorfes*, pp. 148–152; IDEM, *Osídlení zemědělsky marginálních půd*, pp. 57–61.

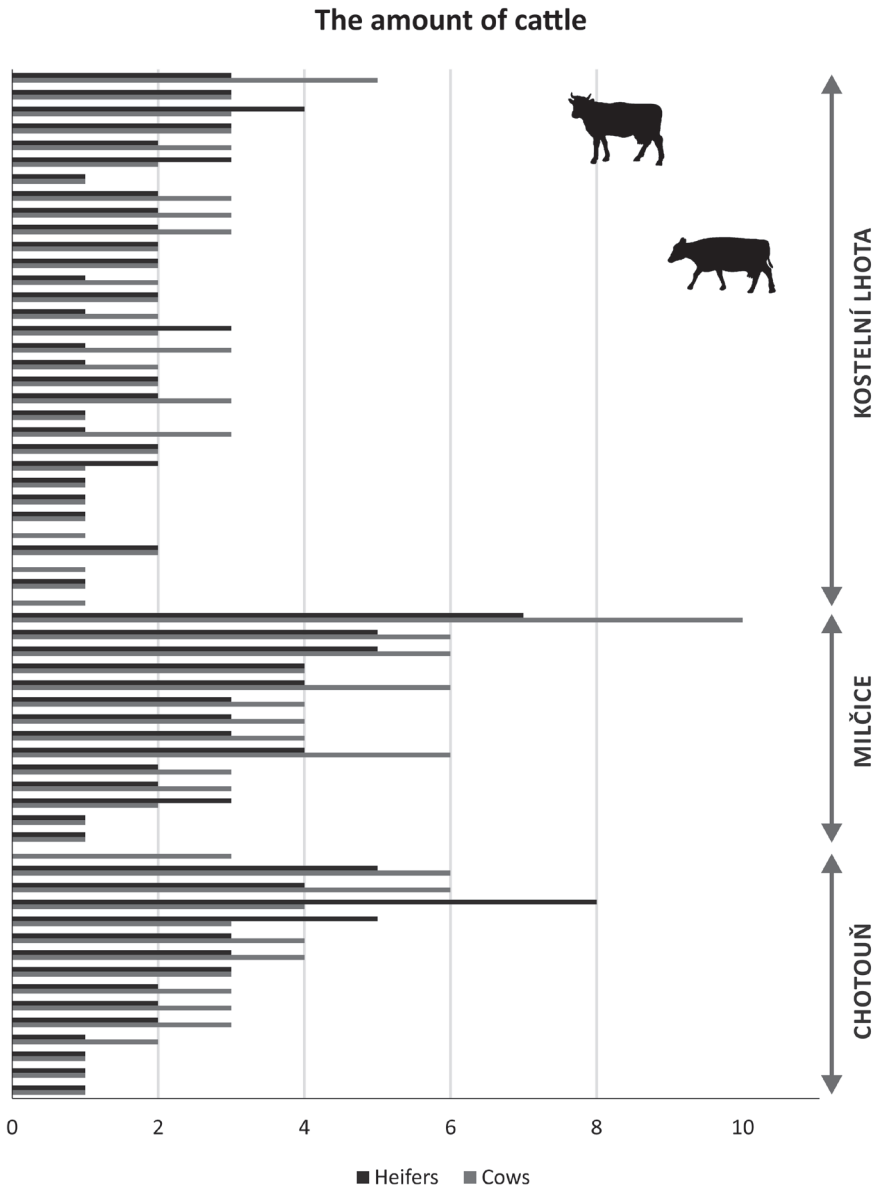


### The amount of draught force



**FIG. 9.** The amount of draught force at the serf farmsteads in Milčice, Kostelní Lhota and Chotouň (1715). The farmsteads in each village are arranged in descending order according to the number of horses and oxen. In terms of interpretation, the absence of bulls in Chotouň is significant, and on the contrary their high representation in Kostelní Lhota.

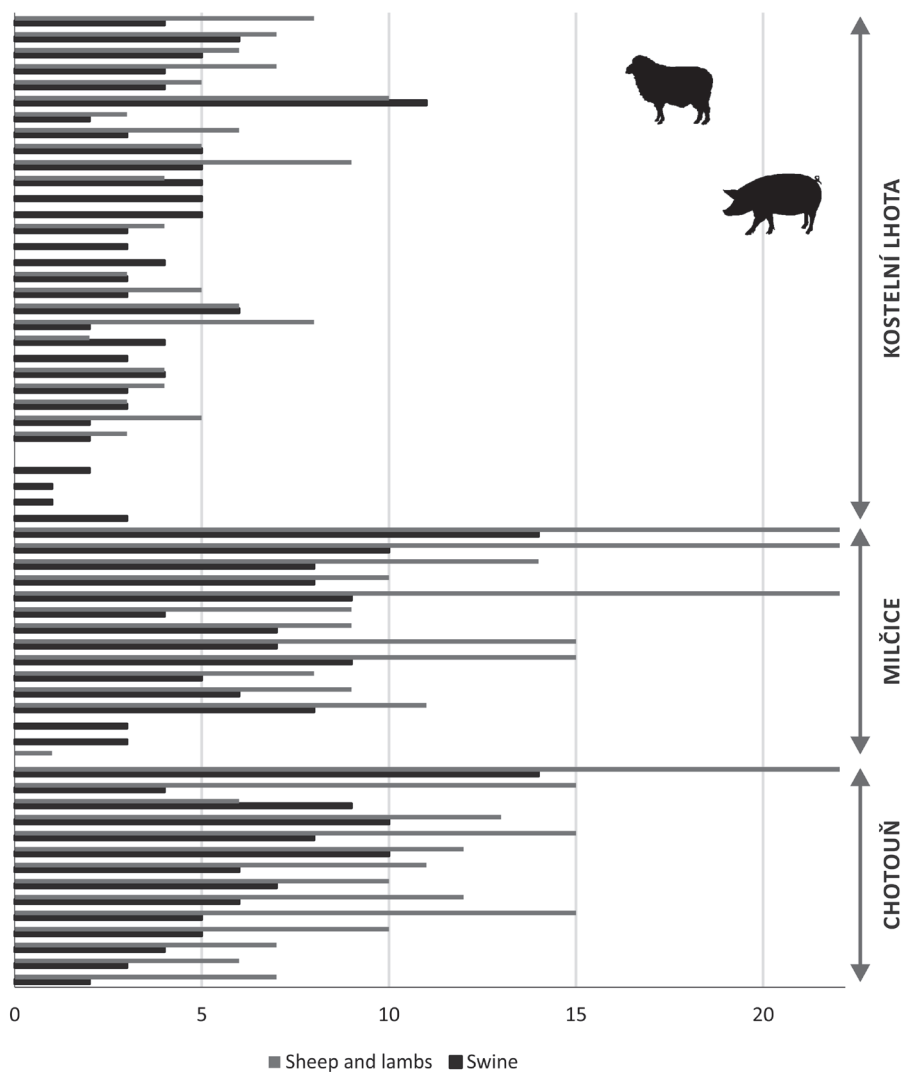
NB: NA Prague, Collection Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig).

























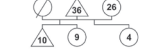









**FIG. 10.** The amount of cattle at the serf farmsteads in Milčice, Kostelní Lhota and Chotouň (1715). The farmsteads in each village are arranged as in Fig. 9. The high number of cattle in Milčice is striking as against the low number in Kostelní Lhota.



### The amount of the flock



**FIG. 11.** The amount of the flock at the serf farmsteads in Milčice, Kostelní Lhota and Chotouň (1715). The farmsteads in each village are arranged as in Fig. 9. The high number of the flock in Milčice is striking as against the low number in Kostelní Lhota.

Sown area (1726, rods)	Layout Farmstead Nr.	Family of the holder (1770)	Family of inmate-lodgers and orphans (1770)
146			
134			
123			
109			
95			
94			
93			
80			
70			
52			
51			
31			

**FIG. 12.** Serfs at the peasant farmsteads in Milčice, without servants of non-Milčice origin. According to the registers building of orphans and all serfs from 1770.

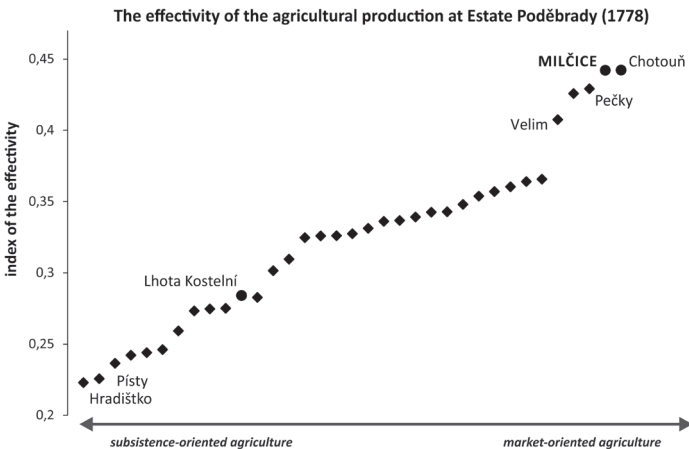
NB: **Nr. 1:** one of the inmate-lodgers was the son of the previous holder, who had to sell the farm for debts (cf. Register 1745, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>); **Nr. 3:** orphans did not have a demonstrable relationship to the holder; the holder was the son of the holder from Nr. 10; **Nr. 6:** the female holder of the farmstead was married a second time to the holder of farmstead Nr. 10 (Registry Skramník 05, married on 11 January 1762; cf. also Vavák I/1, p. 15); **Nr. 7:** its own building, standing on the courtyard's open area, was tied spatially to the farmstead (Vavák I/2, pp. 24–25). This building was held hereditarily by the brother of the holder, listed in the registers 1770 among the inmate-lodgers, labelled in the registers 1745 as a weaver. Another of the inmate-lodgers had as his wife the daughter of this inmate-lodger, who thus was also the niece of the farmstead holder (Registry Skramník 05, married on 7 January 1766); **Nr. 10:** the holder had a son at farmstead Nr. 3; **Nr. 11:** a lame relative of the holder (nephew?) at the farmstead as an inmate-lodger; **Nr. 12:** to the family of the holder see Vavák I/1, pp. 136–137; **Nr. 13:** to the family S. JONÁŠOVÁ-HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka*, pp. 137, 148–149; **Nr. 15:** to the family Vavák I/1, p. 45; **Nr. 16:** the farmstead of Vavák's father-in-law (to the family S. JONÁŠOVÁ-HÁJKOVÁ, *Vlastní životopis F. J. Vaváka.*; Vavák I/1, p. 93); **Nr. 17:** to the family Vavák I/2, pp. 178–179.



Sown area (1726, rods)	Layout Farmstead Nr.	Family of the holder (1770)	Family of inmate-lodgers (1770)
18	4	28, 33, 12, 9, 7, 5, 3, 0	
15	14	25, 20, 0	31, 33, 25, 17, 8, 6, 0, 4, 1
6	5	74, 49, 43, 12, 10	
	18 - pub	68, 28	31, 18, 8, 6, 0
	8 - smithy		32, 28, 9, 7, 5, 0
	9 - shephard		41, 52, 23
	?		59, 48, 37, 37, 25, 23, 21, 13, 8, 6, 2, 11 widow cobbler carpenter

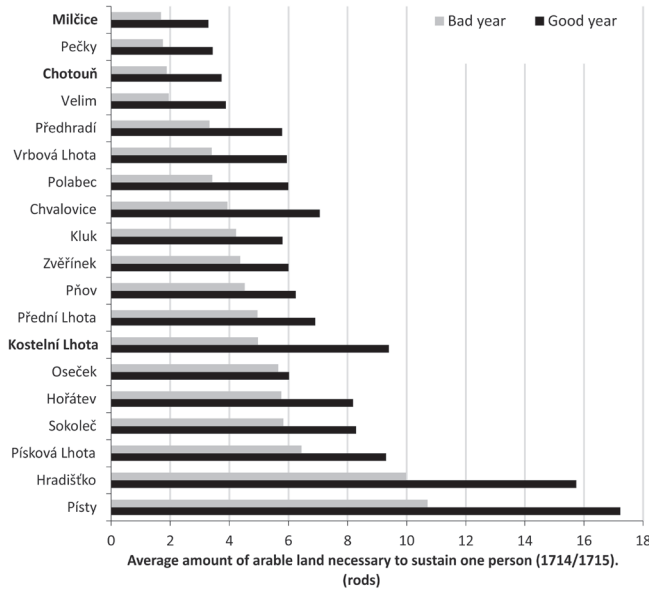
**FIG. 13.** Serfs at smallholder farmsteads in Milčice, without servants of non-Milčice origin. According to the registers building of orphans and all serfs from 1770.

NB: **Nr. 4:** farmstead of F. J. Vavák; **Nr. 14:** The inmate-lodgers tied to Nr. 14 were relatives — the elder (I.) was the father-in-law of the younger (II.) (Registry Skramník 05, married on 13 January 1762); **Nr. 18:** the inmate-lodger was the son of the female holder and heir of the farmstead. The female holder was the aunt of F. J. Vavák; **Number (19):** the building cannot be safely identified.

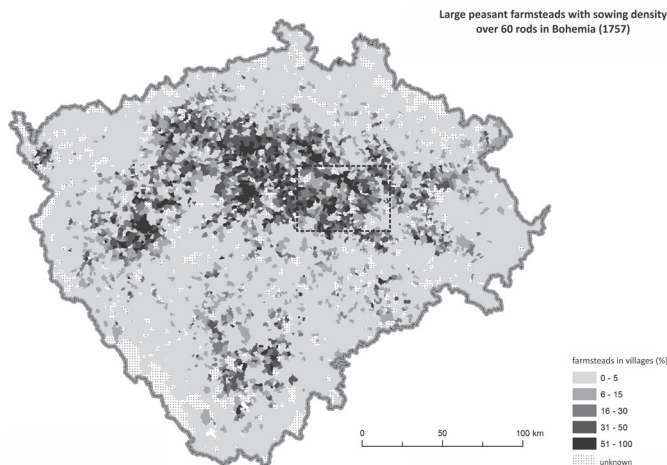


**FIG. 14.** The effectivity of the agricultural production at Estate Poděbrady according to the Raabization operators (1778). The individual villages are arranged in ascending order according to the index, which expresses the share of corvée payments and total arable area.

NB: SDA Prague, Collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 16, Geometrische Realausmessungen = Tabelle A: all of the rustic plots which the serfs had held “since time immemorial”.

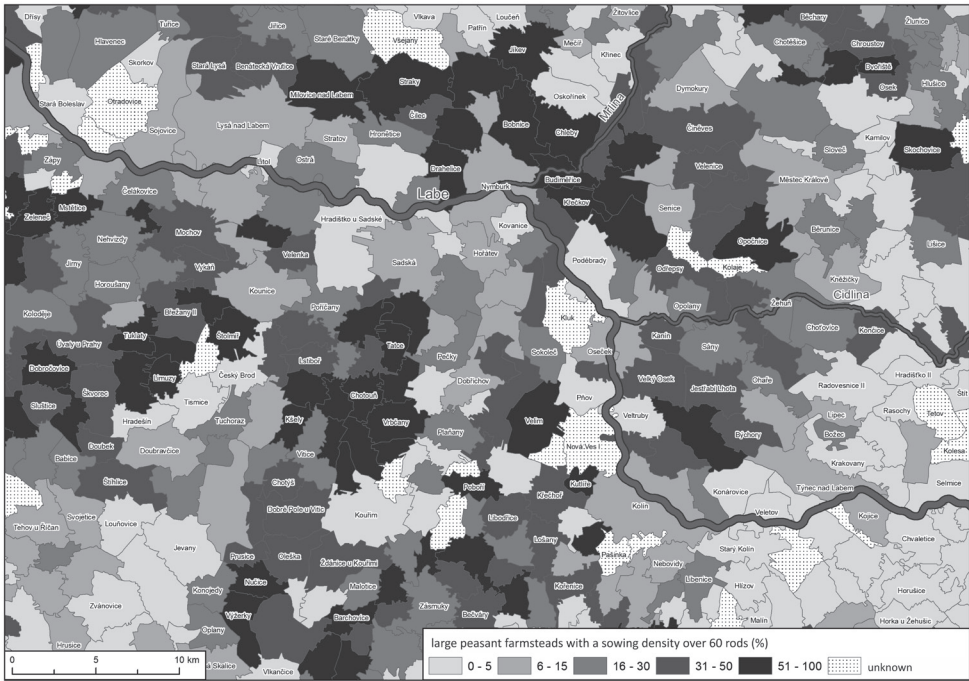


**FIG. 15.** Average amount of land necessary to sustain one person in a year with a good or bad crop — left-bank part of the Poděbrady Estate (1714/1715). Milčice shows the best characteristic. NB: NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (Bekanntnistabella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig).

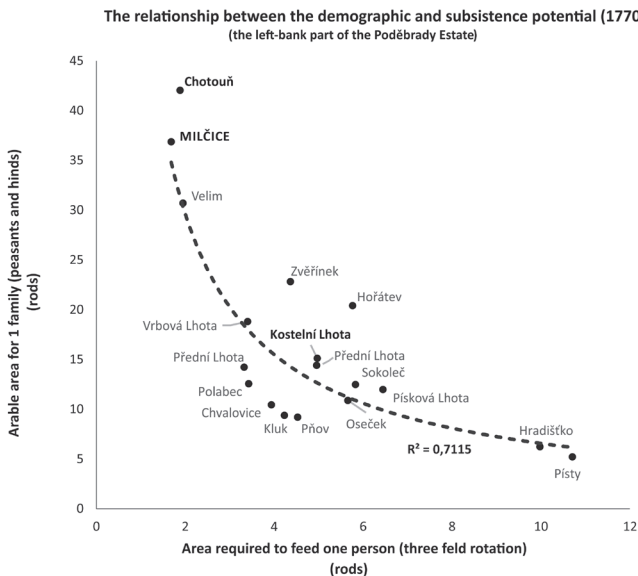


**FIG. 16.** Large peasant farmsteads with sowing density over 60 rods in Bohemia (1757). The map provides a general overview on the level of commercialization of agricultural production. Cadastral territory according to the Stable Cadastre (1842). Compare the cut-out with Fig. 15. NB: Soil-quality evaluation according to A. CHALUPA et al., *Tereziánský katastr*. The vector data for the cadastral territory was provided by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, Prague. The map was created by T. Vojtěchovský.

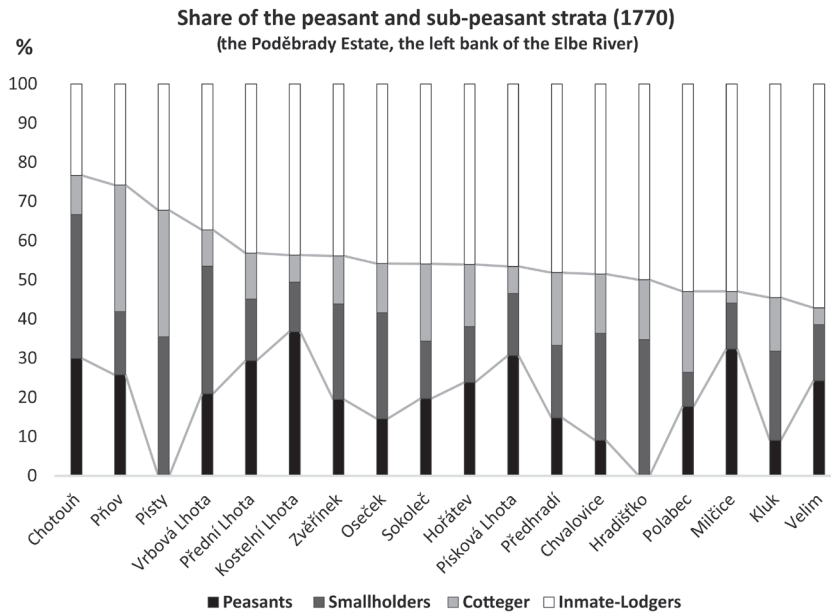




**FIG. 17.** Milčice and environs — large peasant farmsteads with a sowing density over 60 rods (1757). NB: Soil-quality evaluation according to A. CHALUPA et al., *Tereziánský katastr*. The vector data for the cadastral territory was provided by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre, Prague. The map was created by T. Vojtěchovský.

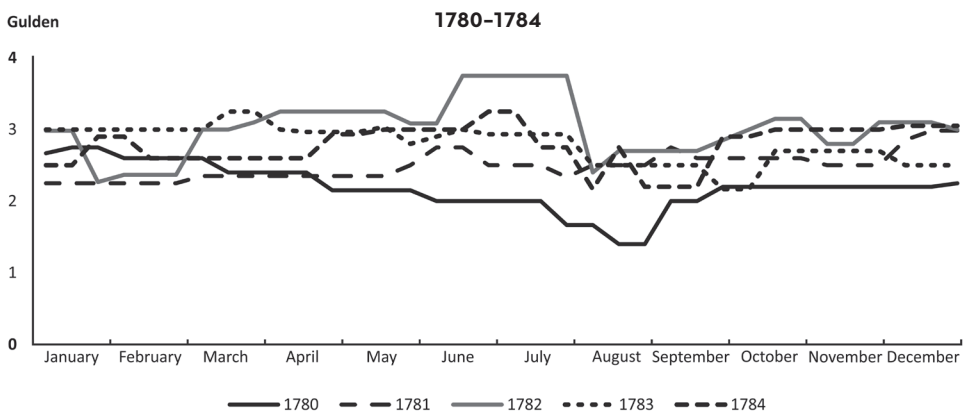
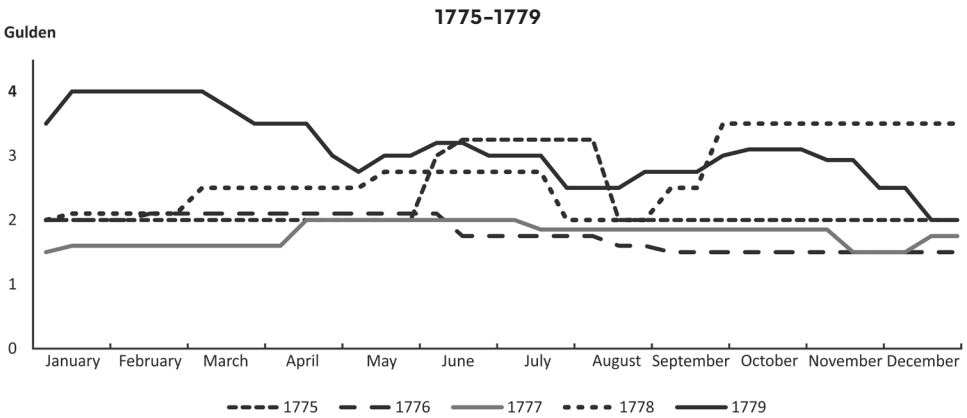


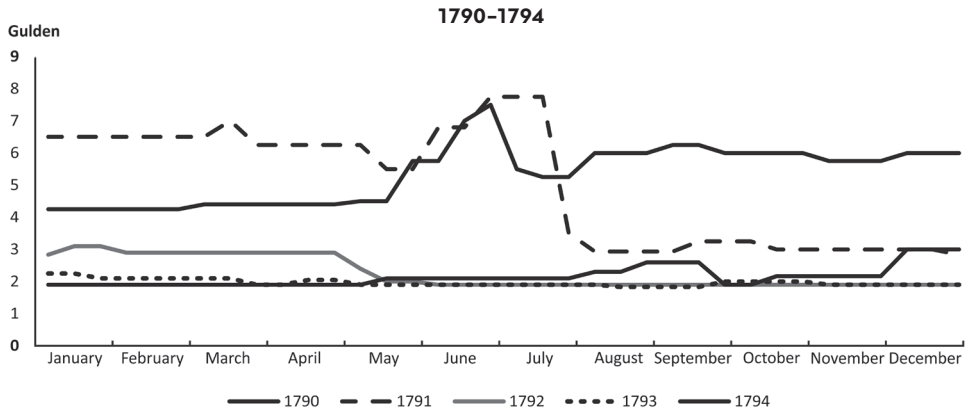
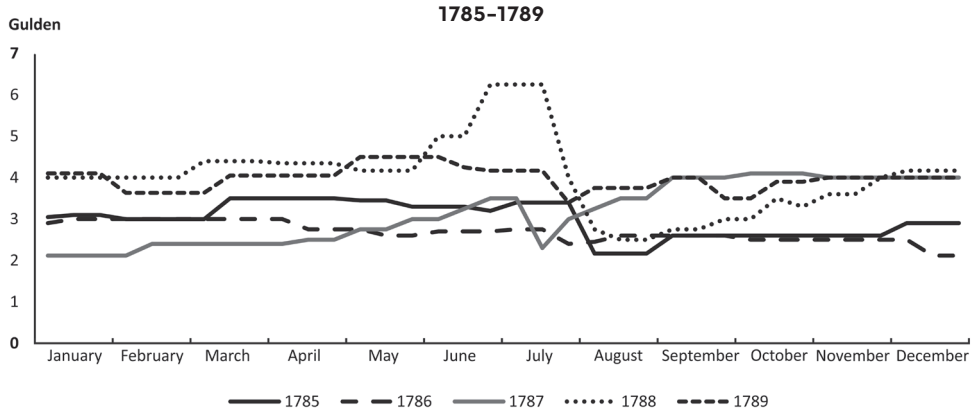
**FIG. 18.** The relationship between the demographic and subsistence potential — the left-bank part of the Poděbrady Estate (1770). NB: Number of serf families — SDA Prague, Collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, register of the position of orphans and all serfs 1770. Utility — NA Prague, Collection of the Theresian Cadastre, Estate Poděbrady, Nr. 788, fasse 1714/1715 (*Bekanntnista-bella vom Jahre 1714 und Visitationsbefund vom Jahre 1715 der Herrschaft Poděbrad, ungültig*).



**FIG. 19.** Share of the peasant and sub-peasant strata in the left-bank part of the Poděbrady Estate (1770).

NB: SDA Prague, Collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 545, register of the position of orphans and all serfs 1770.

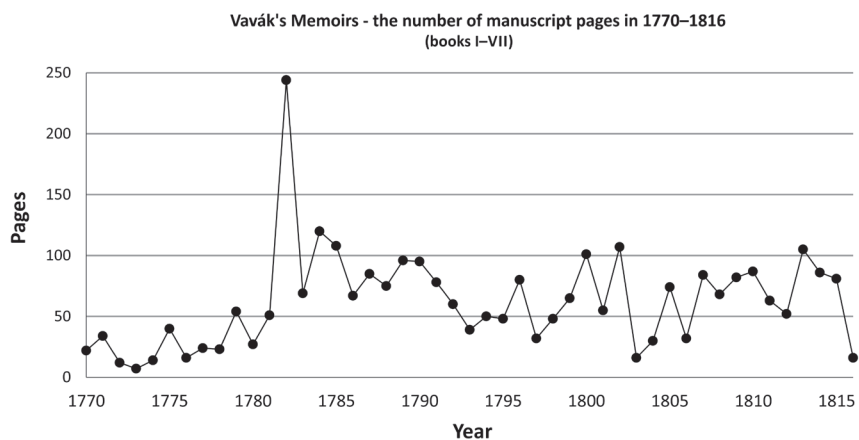




**FIG. 20A-E.** Prices of rye on the local market recorded by Vavák in 1770-1794 (total of 281 data, annually averaged 11 data, interpolated). Vavák usually listed the price interval, the lower level is shown in the table.



**FIG. 21.** Built-up area of Milčice according to the Raabization map from 1778 (dark grey non-combustible building structures). The birthplace of F. J. Vavák was farm Nr. 3, which his father had to sell (1753). F. J. Vavák at first was a holder of smallholder farmstead Nr. 4, in 1778 he took over in addition the farmstead of his deceased father-in-law (Nr. 16), where he also moved and where he died of a condition. NB: Raabization plan of Milčice — SDA Prague, Collection Manor Estate Poděbrady, inv. Nr. 4535 and 4536, Grund-Ris des zur Kaiser-Konigl. Cammeral Herrschaft Podiebrad gehorigen Dorfs Miltzitz (colourised and non-colourised versions).



**FIG. 22.** Variation in the number of manuscript pages in Vavák's *Memoirs* in 1770–1816 (books I–VII).

**RÉSUMÉ:**

František J. Vavák, living in the Central Bohemian village Milčice, began to write his journal entries in 1770. From that time until almost his death in 1816, he routinely and systematically recorded among other things the weather fluctuations, progress of the seasonal agricultural work, the growth and harvest of crops, process of grazing the cattle and also the prices of agricultural products on the local and regional market. In these records with the nature of a long series, we see a source of information that is exception in Europe for research of early modern rural families and peasant communities. Vavák's journals specify not only the testimony of traditionally available written sources but also allow the study of peasants as active individuals, deliberately using, or on the contrary transgressing the social, economic and cultural rules at the turn of the epochs. The aim of this study was to provide the basic socio-economic and demographic characteristics of Milčice in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and thus create the conditions for and adequate interpretation Vavák's *Memoirs*.

Milčice was a typical representative of a village in a fertile lowland area, with market-oriented grain and livestock production, and with exceptionally good sales opportunities (chap. 2). Vavák's *Memoir* specifies in a valuable way the method of the economic interconnection at both the regional and local levels (chap. 4). The exceptionally productive and commercial agriculture corresponded to the distinctive although relatively stable socio-economic and demographic structure, with a predominance of large peasant farmsteads and a high representation of inmate-lodgers and servants (chap. 2). With the aid of Vavák's records and registers, we can uncover a narrow group of mutually connected peasant families and ways by which they ruled the entire village (chap. 2.4.). At the same time, there was tension among them and individuals, including Vavák, activated diverse tools to stand out, maintain or change their position (chap. 5). The wider comparison confirmed that the Poděbrady estate was extremely heterogeneous and a considerable part of the village followed a different developmental trajectory than Milčice (chap. 3). As a result of the less favourable conditions of agriculture in many villages, the subsistence level was surpassed only with difficulty and their socio-economic structure, dynamics and demographic behaviour was closer to the model we know to a great extent from the so-called transitional or mountainous areas. An analysis of approximately twenty villages near Milčice showed several important connections of which it is possible to point out the distinctive negative correlation between their demographic and agricultural potentials.

**PhDr. Tomáš Klír, Ph.D.**, works in the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. In his research interests is interconnection of archaeology with other humanities, as well as with natural disciplines (above all agrarian history, settlement geography and economic anthropology (tomas.klir@ff.cuni.cz).

**Mgr. Dana Klířová (née Vodáková)**, studied history of arts at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the Charles University, with interest on building-historical analysis and drawing reconstructions. She is curator of the art and historical collection of the Town Museum in Čelákovice, p. o. (dana.vodakova@seznam.cz).

