












Josef Grulich, Václav Černý

The Image of Peasants in Serf Lists: South Bohemia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

*Wizerunek chłopów w spisach poddanych:
południowe Czechy w XVIII i XIX w.*

ABSTRACT

Serf lists are a unique Bohemian archival source, which was originally created by the manorial administration for the purpose of the effective registration of orphans and, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, all serfs. These lists were updated every year and even small children under one year of age were recorded. In estates where these lists were maintained, they tended to be drawn up by manorial officials until the abolition of serfdom in Bohemia in 1848. The serf lists aimed to record all persons with a permanent residence each village. The list for each village record was organized according to the social structure, from the highest to the lowest social stratum. The first section was reserved for full peasant holders, followed by smallholders, cottagers, and inmates. In a final section were recorded widows and orphans. The main purpose of this paper is to present the serf lists as an essential and informative archival source which provides indispensable

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information for historical and genealogical research. The authors seek to show how the serf lists can be used to study phenomena such as peasant mobility and migration, military service, servanthood, rural social structure, and craft apprenticeship.

Key words: serf lists, serfdom, rural society, South Bohemia, eighteenth century, nineteenth century, domestic service, servanthood, military service, crafts

STRESZCZENIE

Listy poddanych stanowią unikalne źródło archiwalne Czech, które pierwotnie zostało stworzone przez administrację majątku ziemskiego w celu skutecznej rejestracji sierot, a od początku XVIII w. wszystkich poddanych. Listy te były aktualizowane co roku i rejestrowano w nich nawet małe dzieci poniżej pierwszego roku życia. W majątkach, w których prowadzono te listy, były one zazwyczaj sporządzane przez urzędników dworskich aż do zniesienia pańszczyzny w Czechach w 1848 r. Listy poddanych miały na celu rejestrowanie wszystkich osób posiadających stałe miejsce zamieszkania w każdej wsi. Lista dla każdej wsi była uporządkowana zgodnie ze strukturą społeczną, od najwyższej do najniższej warstwy społecznej. Pierwsza sekcja była zarezerwowana dla pełnoprawnych chłopów, a następnie dla drobnych właścicieli ziemskich, chłopów i więźniów. W ostatniej sekcji odnotowywano wdowy i sieroty. Głównym celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie list poddanych jako istotnego i bogatego w informacje źródła archiwalnego, które dostarcza niezbędnych informacji do badań historycznych i genealogicznych. Autorzy starają się pokazać, w jaki sposób listy poddanych mogą być wykorzystane do badania takich zjawisk, jak mobilność i migracja chłopów, służba wojskowa, służba domowa, struktura społeczna wsi oraz praktyki rzemieślnicze.

Słowa kluczowe: listy poddanych, pańszczyzna, społeczeństwo wiejskie, południowe Czechy, XVIII w., XIX w., służba domowa, służba, służba wojskowa, rzemiosło

INTRODUCTION

This study is based on extensive research which the authors have carried out on the regions of Protivín and Třeboň in southern Bohemia (the modern Czech Republic). These two estates were part of the extensive domain of the princely Schwarzenberg family. In our research, the serf lists emerged as an invaluable source which opened up new perspectives. The present study has two objectives. First, it describes the Bohemian serf lists (Czech *poddanské seznamy* or *soupisy poddaných*) and examines whether they can be used as a substitute source of information for periods in which parish registers are partly or wholly lacking. Second, it shows how this source makes it possible to investigate many aspects of everyday life in early modern rural society which are largely invisible in other archival sources.

The serf list is a unique archival source which was drawn up by Bohemian manorial offices and is well known to Czech historians. Its importance

for demographic research was pointed out as early as in 1970 by Josef Křivka, who saw its enormous potential in providing a vast amount of information not contained in any other type of source and the possibilities of using it as a source to study migration¹. Nearly twenty years later, the Bohemian serf lists received new attention in an article by a collective of archivists and historians in the context of research on population history. This group of authors sought to assess the suitability of the serf lists for studying the age structure of the population. For their research they chose the large South Bohemian estate of Třeboň, which has one of the best preserved series of annually updated serf lists in the entirety of the Czech lands. Their study demonstrated the contribution the serf lists can make to the study of demographic indicators, such as the changing age structure of the population, in the pre-statistical era².

Czech history also benefits from a unique serf census, the 1651's Serf Register according to their Faith (*Soupis poddaných podle víry z roku 1651*), which was drawn up to record the entire population of Bohemia after the end of the Thirty Years' War. The title of this source is somewhat misleading, as the inventory also contains information on the free population (e.g. the nobility and the population of royal cities). Its purpose was to find out the number of inhabitants in each manor, especially the number of non-Catholics and the chances of their conversion to Catholicism. The 1651's religious census received considerable attention as part of an international research project called *Social Structures in Early Modern Bohemia* (*Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen, 16.–19. Jahrhundert*), which was pursued between 1992 and 1999 with the participation of researchers from the Czech Republic, Austria and Britain³. This census was drawn up only for the year 1651. However, it was not conducted in all administrative regions or circles (Czech *kraj*) of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and does not exist even for all settlements in the areas where it was drawn up.

¹ J. Křivka, *Význam poddanských seznamů pro demografická bádání*, "Historická demografie" 1970, 4, pp. 50–58.

² K. Dudáček et al., *On Using the 1661–1839 Lists of Subjects of the Třeboň Dominion to Study the Age Structure of the Population*, "Historická demografie" 1989, 13, pp. 59–124.

³ *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen. Ein regionaler Vergleich von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft in Gutsherrschaften, 16.–19. Jahrhundert*, eds. M. Cerman, H. Zeitlhofer, Wien–Oldenbourg 2002; *Untertanen, Herrschaft und Staat in Böhmen und im „Alten Reich“*, *Sozialgeschichtliche Studien zur Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. M. Cerman, R. Luft, München 2005; J. Grulich, *Obyvatelstvo chýnovského panství po třicetileté válce*, in: *Příspěvky ke každodenní kultuře novověku*, ed. V. Bůžek, České Budějovice 1995 (*Opera Historica*, 4), pp. 125–143; J. Grulich, H. Zeitlhofer, *Migration of the South Bohemia Population Before and After the Thirty Years War*, in: *Between Lipany and White Mountain. Essays in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemian History in Modern Czech Scholarship*, ed. J.R. Palmitessa, Leiden–Boston 2014, pp. 269–299.

In some regions, its creators – the royal commissioners – were content with a statement by the owner of an estate that there were no non-Catholics on his domain. As one of the most important sources for Bohemian history, it has been gradually published in complete editions according to historical administrative regions⁴.

The longstanding interest of historians in information-rich lists of serfs is evidenced by the number of works based on the analysis of continuous series of serf lists published after 1989 in Czech historical journals and essay collections. In 1993, for example, Pavla Horská investigated family strategies related to the transfer of landholdings in the area of the estate of Třeboň between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century⁵. A comparison of age structure and family status during the second half of the seventeenth and the middle of the nineteenth century on the Dobronice estate was carried out in 2005 by Michalea Holubová⁶. Thereafter, the interest in the serf lists among academic historians waned. On the other hand, thanks to the ongoing digitization of archival materials of South Bohemian estates stored in the State Regional Archive in Třeboň, the serf lists attracted huge interest from both amateur and professional genealogists.

Renewed interest of historians emerged in the second decade of the new millennium. Markéta Pražáková Seligová, who was previously involved in the project *Social Structures in Early Modern Bohemia*, used them in her extensive 2005 monograph on the life of serfs in the eighteenth century on the Horní Police estate in North Bohemia⁷. More recently, Ladislav Nekvapil used the serf lists for his analysis of the servanthood in early modern Bohemia⁸. This source was also indispensable for the re-

⁴ Basic information on the Population list according to religious belief of 1651 is given in the following studies E. Čáňová, *Soupis poddaných podle víry a studium historické rodiny*, "Archivní časopis" 1992, 42, 1, pp. 28–34; eadem, *Soupis poddaných podle víry*, "Paginae historiae: sborník Státního ústředního archivu v Praze" 1992, 0, pp. 69–81; E. Klepsová, *Soupis poddaných podle víry z roku 1651*, "Pod Zelenou Horou: vlastivědný sborník jižního Plzeňska" 2016, 19 (31), 1, p. 23; E. Maur, *Základy historické demografie*, Praha 1978, pp. 64–67.

⁵ P. Horská, *Rodinná strategie ve vesnici Záblatí na třeboňském panství (1661–1820)*, "Historická demografie" 1993, 17, pp. 131–152.

⁶ M. Holubová, *Venkovské poddanské obyvatelstvo podle věku a rodinného stavu v 2. polovině 17. století a v polovině 19. století. (Analýza poddanských soupisů pro panství Dobruvice)*, in: *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Ostravské univerzity 12. Profesoru Lumíru Dokoupilovi k sedmdesátinám*, ed. M. Myška, Ostrava 2005, pp. 33–36.

⁷ <https://fhs.cuni.cz/FHSENG-834.html> [access: 24.09.2024].

⁸ L. Nekvapil, *Poddanské seznamy a studium životních cyklů venkovského obyvatelstva v raném novověku. Příklad čelední služby na východočeském panství Choltice*, "Východočeský sborník historický" 2019, 36, pp. 45–63; idem, *Čelední služba v Čechách v raném novověku. Právní, sociální a ekonomické aspekty*, Pardubice 2020.

search of Věra Slováková, who studied childhood, adolescence, and related phenomena such as schooling, apprenticeship, and military service, based on the example of the estate of Slavkov u Brna in the second half of the eighteenth century⁹. Without serf lists it would not have been possible to carry out a systematic study of the military service of rural inhabitants of the area of Protivín and Třeboň at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries¹⁰. The same source was important for the creation of Josef Grulich's monograph focused on the spatial mobility of serfs in the second half of the eighteenth century, using the example of the suburban area around the town of České Budějovice¹¹.

SERF LISTS – THE DRAWING UP OF THE SOURCE

The serf lists were drawn up by the manorial office on each Bohemian feudal estate¹². An important role in this initiative was played initially by the need to record orphans, and later, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, all serfs. To begin with, manorial officials drew up so-called registers of orphans and serf children (Czech *registra sirotčí/stavění sirotků a dětí poddaných*, German *Waisenregister* or *Waisenstellungregister*)¹³. These records were drawn up at the annual presentation of orphaned serfs at the manorial office. Children without parents had to provide for themselves and therefore had to appear once a year in front of the officials of the estate on which they lived. If the orphans themselves could not find a job, the officials assigned them to work on the farm of another serf or a nobleman. The orphan lists thus emanated from the manorial officials' desire for a clear record of who was where, who was working

⁹ V. Slováková, *Služba v městském a venkovském prostředí na Moravě ve druhé polovině 18. století*, "Časopis Matice moravské" 2018, 137, pp. 273–293; eadem, *Životní poměry dívek a mladých žen ve vsi Křenovice v 18. století*, "Historická demografie" 2018, 42, pp. 211–237; eadem, *Dětství a dospívání poddaných na Moravě ve druhé polovině 18. století na příkladu slavkovského panství*, Brno 2022 (Knihnice Matice moravské, 49).

¹⁰ J. Grulich, V. Černý, *Venkované a služba v armádě na přelomu 18. a 19. století. Panství Protivín a Třeboň, 1775–1830*, "Historická demografie" 2022, 46, pp. 1–45; J. Grulich, V. Černý, *Od syna k rekrutovi, od vojáka k vysloužilci. Služba v armádě a její vliv na venkovskou rodinu. Jižní Čechy na přelomu 18. a 19. století*, Praha 2025.

¹¹ J. Grulich, *Migrační strategie. Město, předměstí a vesnice na panství České Budějovice ve druhé polovině 18. století*, České Budějovice 2018.

¹² Generally on manorial administration in Bohemia: J. Janák, Z. Hledíková, J. Dobeš, *Dějiny správy v českých zemích od počátků státu po současnost*, Praha 2005, pp. 229–238.

¹³ J. Grulich, *Populační vývoj a životní cyklus venkovského obyvatelstva na jihu Čech v 16. až 18. století*, České Budějovice 2008, p. 73.

for whom, as well as who did not show up for the annual registration day. This registration was first introduced on large aristocratic domains, later also on smaller estates¹⁴. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, manorial officials redefined orphans as referring to everyone who survived their own parents, including adult children. These persons ceased to be considered orphans at the moment of their independence. This occurred as a result of marriage, taking over a landholding, or establishing a trade or business¹⁵. Older adults were also commonly considered orphans. This was the case, for example, for a soldier who had been conscripted during his father's lifetime but could not return home until after his death. Thus, someone remained an 'orphan' until he or she married.

An important intermediate step on the way from the early census of orphans to the comprehensive serf list was the registration of all children – especially boys – regardless of whether they were orphans. Gradually, according to the logic discussed above, registration was extended to all children. For the sake of easier registration, the names of the fathers or both parents of the children were also entered into the register. However, detailed information such as age and place of residence was only provided for the children. This shows that the parents were not yet the subject of interest of the officials. The method of updating serf lists in the first half of the seventeenth century differed from that used in the later period. Initially, a single list was drawn up, and it was then continuously updated over a longer period of time through deletions and additions¹⁶.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, orphan lists were gradually replaced by serf lists (German *Mannschaftsbuch*, *Seelenregister*, *Mannschaftsregister*). It became normal to update the register annually, and to start including young children up to one year of age¹⁷. The poor economic situation after the end of the Thirty Years' War, which resulted in a decline in population, contributed to the expansion of the serf lists on many estates in Bohemia. There was an obvious effort on the part of the manorial office to record the location of each individual serf. Detailed records of their serfs gave noble landlords a much better ability to monitor the expansion and contraction of the serf population and to seek out labour for their own expanding demesne operations – for example, for the landlord's own demesne-farms. Especially during the main seasonal field work there was a noticeable shortage

¹⁴ J. Křivka, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁵ J. Grulich, *Populační*, p. 74.

¹⁶ J. Křivka, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 50–58; E. Maur, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–67; J. Grulich, *Populační*, pp. 73–74.

of labour despite the increasing coerced labour services which Bohemian landlords were demanding from the serfs. This situation was addressed through the use of casual hired labour¹⁸.

The method of registration evolved differently on the estates belonging to different landlords. Around 1850, such registration ended everywhere, although it had already been terminated on some estates at an earlier date¹⁹. For example, the last list of the estate of Protivín dates back to 1830²⁰; on the neighbouring estate of Hluboká nad Vltavou, however, the records end in 1848²¹, i.e. in the year that Bohemian serfdom was abolished. The surviving serf lists stored in the archives of the estate of Protivín represent a very interesting set of sources. They consist of a disjointed series of lists for different localities, reflecting the establishment of the Protivín estate and its piecemeal territorial expansion. A total of 200 volumes survive, including records from more distant small estates that were administered along with the Protivín estate. The serf



Map 1: Location of South Bohemia (current status)

¹⁸ J. Křivka, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.

¹⁹ E. Maur, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–67.

²⁰ Státní oblastní archiv v Třeboni [hereinafter: SRAT], Velkostatek Protivín [hereinafter: VProt.], inv. no. 1043, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/19, book no. 962.

²¹ SRAT, Velkostatek Hluboká nad Vltavou [hereinafter: VHlub.], ref. no. ID 5AU No 1, book no. 220.

lists surviving for selected localities differ slightly in terms of dating, especially in the seventeenth century. The most important noble family in South Bohemia – the Schwarzenberg dynasty – established its own system of administration on each newly acquired estate. On other South Bohemian estates belonging to this noble family, we find large numbers of serf lists: 376 volumes for the estate of Třeboň, 221 for Hluboká nad Vltavou, 314 for Český Krumlov, 95 for Prachatice and Volary, 112 for Přečín, 303 for Vimperk – 303. By comparison, there are 110 surviving volumes of serf lists for the royal city of České Budějovice.

Almost all the serf lists stored in South Bohemian archives have been digitised. If some of the South Bohemian estates do not have digitized lists, then either such lists were not drawn up at all for that estate, or they are stored elsewhere together with other archival material. This may be due to the fact that the estate was owned by a nobleman who had his main residence in another part of Bohemia. The individual lists are available in the digital archive of the State Regional Archive in Třeboň. A number of other Czech archives – such as the archives in Plzeň, Litoměřice and Prague – have also started digitizing their serf lists and gradually publishing them online.

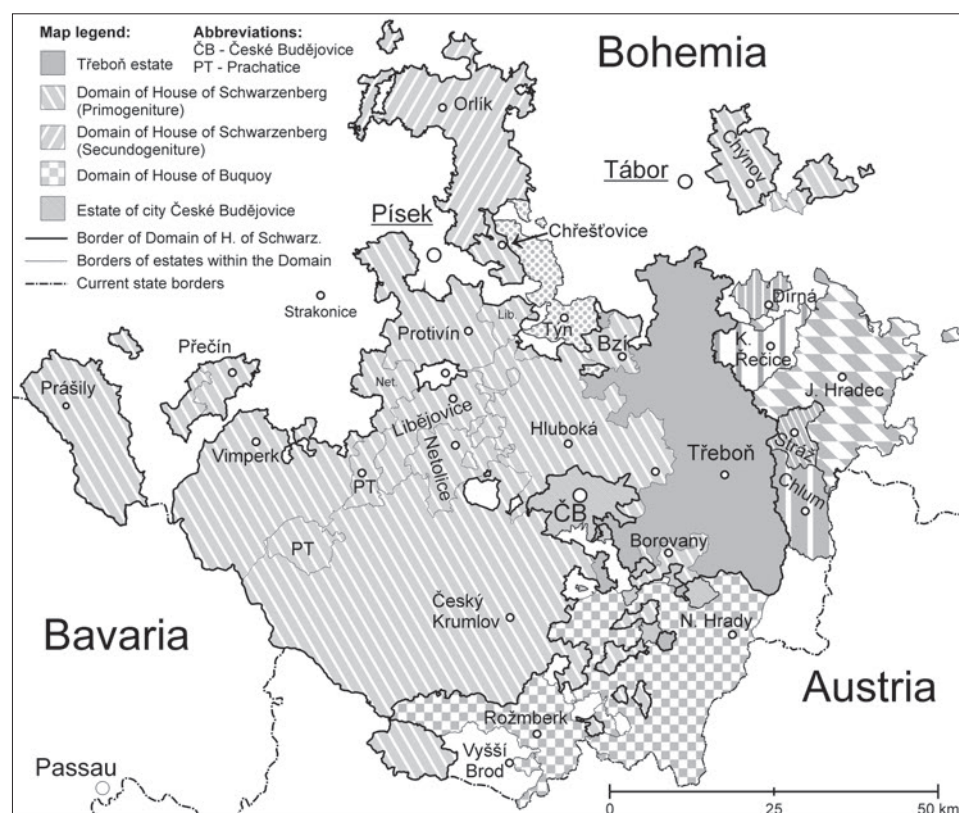
SERF LISTS – STRUCTURE OF THE SOURCE

The serf lists record all the village inhabitants who were supposed to reside in each locality that was recorded. The registration focused only on those persons who had a formal permanent residence in the place. They never registered the entire population present in the village, but rather only the persons formally belonging to the village. However, if someone was living in the locality working as a servant or only had a rented smithy in the locality while his official residence was in another village, he was listed in the locality where he formally belonged, which was usually his birthplace. In order to find out the total number of people living in a village in a given year, therefore, it would be necessary to go through the serf lists for the surrounding localities as well, and even then, it would be uncertain whether it would be possible to capture every individual.

The method of registering Bohemian serfs was gradually subject to minor changes, which inevitably affect the value of the source. The individual localities were ranked according to an established ordering within the lower administrative units (Czech *rychta*), which typically contained 2 to 4 villages apiece. Inside each village, the different strata were ranked according to social structure. Full peasants (Czech *sedláci*) and their families were the first to be recorded, with the size of the landholding given

for each farmer. They were followed by families of smallholders (Czech *chalupníci*), then by cottagers (Czech *domkáři*), inmates (Czech *podruzi*), and retirement-contract-tenants (Czech *výměnkáři*), with their families. The final part of the village register was reserved for widows (Czech *vdovy*) and orphans (Czech *sirotci*), who were recorded with the name of the deceased head of their families. This final section of the village register contained also widows together with their orphan children. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, unmarried mothers together with their illegitimate children were registered as widows and orphans. However, after the mid-eighteenth century they were recorded as single mothers with offspring, and were recorded with their original families.

As soon the houses in Bohemian villages were assigned numbers²², individual farmers (mainly full peasants and cottagers) were registered under a descriptive number and also under their family name. Peasants in the village continued to be arranged in the old established pattern



Map 2: Large Aristocratic Estates in South Bohemia (around 1802)

²² B. Lednická, *Sestavte si rodokmen. Pátráme po svých předcích*, Praha 2012, pp. 94–95.

of the traditional order of landholdings. Starting in 1808, a new classification was consistently introduced on the Protivín estate. From this point on, all households were ranked not in terms of the social hierarchy but rather in terms of descriptive numbers. The internal subdivisions originally maintained according to the social affiliation of the householders were now reduced to only two. The first section of the register contained the families living on each landholding, with the householders' social status noted through an attribution – full peasants (German *Bauer*), smallholders (German *Challupner*), cottagers (German *Häußler*), inmate (German *Innmann*), and retirement-contract-tenants (German *Ausgedienger*). The second section was reserved for widows (German *Witwen*) and orphans (German *Weisen*). In addition to the full peasant's family, families in a subordinate position – families of inmate and retirement-contract-tenants – were also assigned to individual landholdings, so that it is possible to partially reconstruct the composition of households.

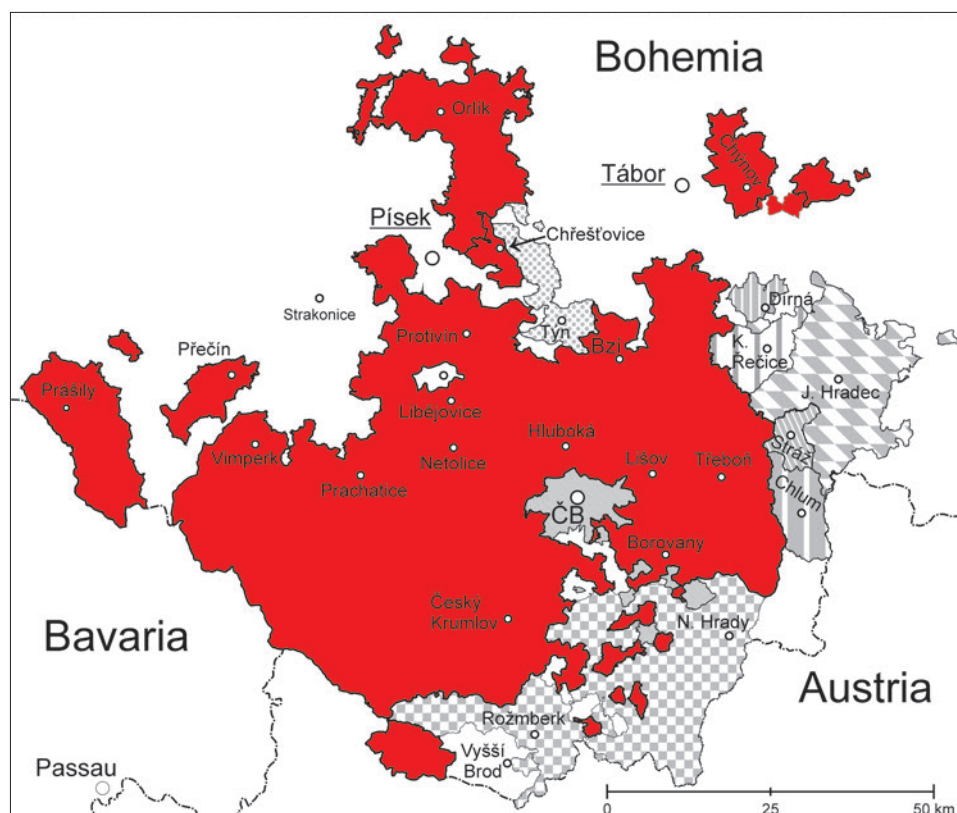
Orphans can only be traced back to their families of origin through additional genealogical research by the historian. The servants (Czech *čeled'*) were listed in service, i.e. in the household of their masters, not in relation to their own families of origin. The gradual changes in the serf lists reflected the efforts of the officials to keep more accurate records of their serfs. The reason for keeping separate records of orphans and widows was the development of the orphan lists.

The records of working personnel, whether for the manor or inside serf villages, were kept quite inconsistently. The first to be recorded were the blacksmiths and shepherds working in the villages of the estate. The same group also included the people employed by the manor in its demesne operations: shepherds, servants with different specialisations, bailiffs who supervised the agricultural work on the demesne-farm (Czech *šafář*), people who worked for the manor in the fields or with animals (German e.g. *Pferdknecht*, *Ochsenknecht*, *Schaaftermeister*, *Hammelknecht*), those who worked in the manorial forests (German *Jäger*, *Waldhöger*), those who worked on the manorial fishponds (German *Fischmeister*, *Bastyrz*, *Teichhöger*, *Fischknecht*), knackers (Czech *pohodný* or *ras*, German *Abdecker* or *Wasenmeister*). For most of the eighteenth century, the families of these people were recorded separately at the end of the inventory for the whole estate. Only rarely were they registered in the particular village where they actually lived. Only from the beginning of the nineteenth century did they began to appear regularly in villages under the descriptive number of a particular house.

The structure of the serf lists was not uniform. The manorial officials of the various estates approached them in different ways. There were even differences between different estates belonging to the same noble

owner. The South Bohemian estates of the aristocratic Schwarzenberg family illustrate this practice. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this noble dynasty was divided into two branches – the Orlík Secondogeniture and the Hluboká Primogeniture. Together two of the family lines owned a large part of southern Bohemia, but their lands were divided up into a number of estates. Even in Schwarzenberg estates located side by side, the serf lists were sometimes kept in different ways, as in the case of the estates of Protivín, Hluboká nad Vltavou, and Třeboň.

There were also Schwarzenberg estate on which the single volume of serf lists for a given year was divided into three sections. The first third of the volume was reserved for the householders and their families, the middle third for the inmates and their families, and the final third for the widows and orphans. Within these sections, the information was then broken down according to a fixed order of villages, which was repeated in each section. This is how the serf lists were kept in the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century on the estate of Libějovice, which the Schwarzenbergs acquired in 1801.



Map 3: Schwarzenberg estates in South Bohemia

It was only later that the order of the rubrics was modified to the form that was usual, for example, on the estate of Protivín.

Another variant was to separate the serf lists from the lists of orphans, so that each year had two books. The first contained lists of serfs of all social classes, while the second contained a list of orphans. This was the practice on the estate of Slavkov u Brna which belonged to the princely Kounic family and has been analysed by the Moravian historian Věra Slováková. A different special case is provided by the Schwarzenberg estate of Vimperk, on which there were as many as three books for one particular year. The first records the peasants and their families, the second records the families of inmates and retirement-contract-tenants, and the third book registers the orphans.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE SERF LISTS

The typical information that a researcher can find in a serf list includes the composition of the family, the names of the householder and his wife, the names of the children, and the ages of all persons in the family. As for the accuracy of the age given, it varies depending on the date of the list. Especially in the earliest serf lists, age tends to be somewhat inaccurate, mainly because the figure was written down when an individual was first recorded and then in the next list the clerk just added one year to the age given the preceding year. In serf lists from later periods, by contract,

K. Karel Drahonice	27	hauus
Karel Karel	27	
Karel Karel	8	
Karel Karel	7	
Karel Karel	12	
Karel Karel	5	
Karel Karel	18	hauus
Karel Karel	11	
Karel Karel	22	in Konec, 6. Drahonice in Drahonice, 6. Drahonice in Drahonice
Karel Karel	18	in Konec, 6. Drahonice in Drahonice, 6. Drahonice in Drahonice
Karel Karel	11	
Karel Karel	27	
Karel Karel	1	

Figure 1: Serf List for the Village of Drahonice on the Estate of Protivín in 1820 and 1821

Figure 1 illustrates the kind of information that can be gleaned from a single record of a particular serf household for two specific years. It shows a list of the serfs of the village of Drahonice on the estate of Pro tivín for the years 1820 and 1821. We see here the family of the peasant Martin Prokop with his wife and children, and also the family of the retirement-contract-tenant in that household, Vojtěch Čermák. The difference in the surnames of the two men suggests that Martin either married into the peasant holding or bought it. The description given for each person is extremely important. If the person in question was not currently located in the village, the reason will be recorded in the list. Thanks to this, it is possible to follow the place in which a servant was serving each year. For instance, in the case of František Čermák it is possible to see that he served one year with the tavernkeeper in Štětice and the next on the manorial demesne-farm. On the other hand, his sister served one

[illegible]

Figure 2: Serf List for the Estate of Hluboká nad Vltavou, 1845

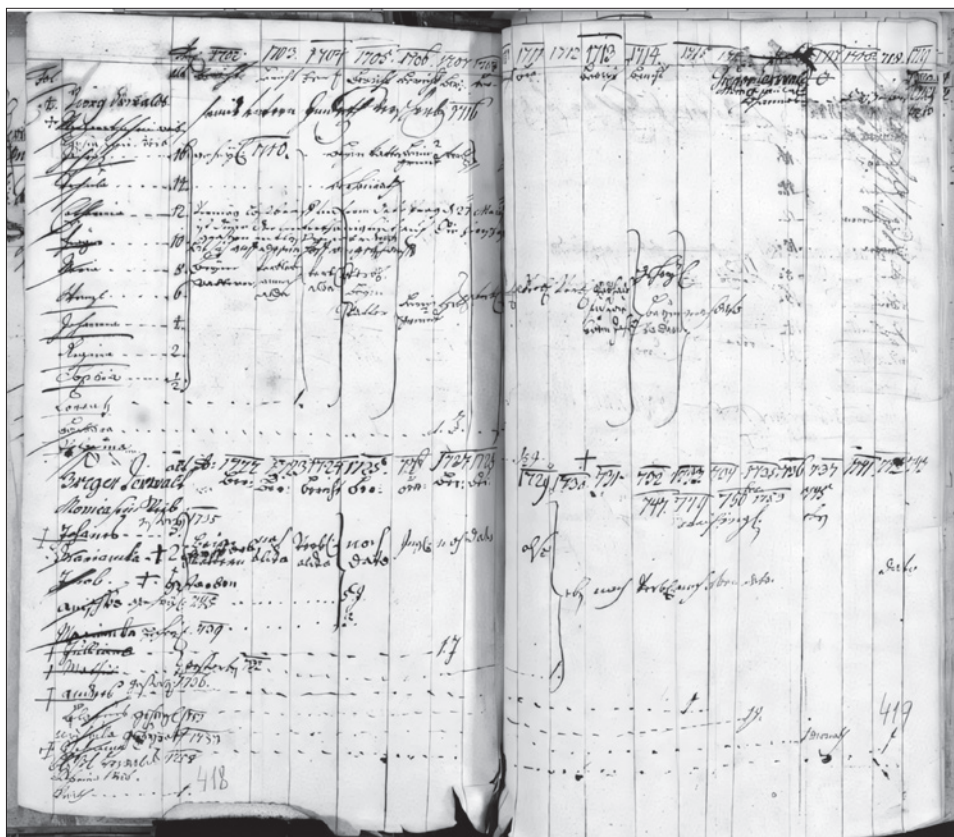


Figure 3: Serf List for the Estate of Český Krumlov, 1702–1756

year in her native village and the next in Madar's household in the more distant village of Zátaví. The daughter Marie had an illegitimate child in 1820, but in 1821 she married²³.

PEASANTS AND THEIR LIVES IN THE LIGHT OF THE SERF LISTS

The serf lists also shed light on the lives of those who inherited landholdings and headed their own households. A vivid example is provided by Matouš Hrnčír (Bůžek). From the parish and land registers we know that he was baptized in the village of Štěkeň on 27 August 1773²⁴. At the age of 31, on 25 November 1804, he married Mariana Uříchová, the daughter

²³ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1039, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/15, book no. 958, (1820–1821), p. 217.

²⁴ SRAT, Sbírka matrik Jihočeského kraje [hereinafter: SMJK], Farní úřad Štěkeň, inv. no. 5540, book no. 4, NOZ (1771–1790), fol. 12v.

of a full peasant from the same village²⁵. That same year, he took over the family landholding from his father and headed it for 37 years until his death on 18 November 1841 at the age of 68²⁶. Thanks to a comprehensive series of serf lists, his life story appears in its entirety. He first appears in this source the year after his birth²⁷, and from 1774 to 1791 he lived at home with his parents²⁸. He left home aged 18 or 19, and between 1792 and 1799 he served on the demesne-farm of a nearby manor house called Nový Dvůr (German *Neuerhof*), which was 2.1 km away from his native village²⁹. In 1800, aged 27, he was living as a household servant in the neighbouring village of Dobev³⁰ and in the years 1801–1802 he was a servant on the manorial demesne-farm in the village of Kestřany³¹. For the last year before he married and took over the family holding at the age of 31, he was back living at home with his father³². It is clear from the whole series of serf lists – without needing to carry out a family reconstitution using the parish registers – that Matouš's older brother Šimon was originally

Table 1: Matouš Hrnčír (Bůžek) in the Serf Lists (1792–1802)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1792	19	Neühof	–	–	2.1
1793	20	in Neüer Hof	–	–	2.1
1794	21	in Neüer Hof	–	–	2.1
1795	22	in Heüerhof	–	–	2.1
1796	23	in Neühof	–	–	2.1
1797	24	in Neühof	–	–	2.1
1798	25	in Neühof	–	–	2.1
1800	27	in Dobew	–	–	1.9
1801	28	in Kestřzaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1802	29	in Kestřzaner Hof	Knecht	–	4.0

²⁵ SRAT, inv. č. 5547, book no. 11, O (1791–1811), p. 96.

²⁶ SRAT, inv. č. 5553, book no. 17, Z (1833–1851), p. 67.

²⁷ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 451, ref. no. V AU No 6/77, book no. 370, (1774), p. 189.

²⁸ SRAT, inv. no. 451–468, ref. no. V AU No 6/77–6/94, book no. 370–387, (1774–1791).

²⁹ SRAT, inv. no. 469–475, ref. no. V AU No 6/95–6/101, book no. 388–394, (1792–1798), pp. 313, 317, 326, 332, 335, 336.

³⁰ SRAT, inv. no. 477, ref. no. V AU No 6/103, book no. 396, (1800), p. 162.

³¹ SRAT, inv. no. 1025–1026, ref. no. II 5AU No 1/1–1/2, book no. 944–945, (1801–1802), p. 385, 280.

³² SRAT, inv. no. 1027, ref. no. II 5AU No 1/3, book no. 946, (1803), p. 304.

intended to become the heir to the family holding. However, according to the 1795 serf list, he instead moved to a different holding³³.

The Moravian historian Věra Slováková has documented in her work how noble landlords hired servants to work on their demesne-farms and also in their own grand urban mansions. It was important for a leading Bohemian nobleman to have his own palace in Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg monarchy³⁴. The brother of Matouš, whose life-cycle we examined above, ultimately found employment in the house of his noble overlord in Vienna. He was named Antonín Hrnčíř (Bůžek) and was born in 1779³⁵. After serving on various manorial demesne-farms between 1800 and 1814, Antonín was registered as a vagrant for two years in his early forties. But from 1820 until 1830, when the serf lists ended, he was regularly registered as a servant in his overlord's household in Vienna³⁶. Despite the best efforts of the present authors, his life after 1830 could not be reconstructed because no serf lists were written up³⁷. The question remains unanswered as to how he came to serve in the Viennese residence of his overlord, and what were his further life vicissitudes after his service ended.

There is a great deal of information that can only be obtained from serf lists and is not to be found in any other locally available sources. Apart from servanthood, this applies especially to military service, the course of which is not observable by examining other serial sources such as parish or land registers. These two life phases – servanthood and military service – are intertwined in the life destiny of Šimon Martínek (Koudelka), who was born in 1768 in the village of Vítkov. His first year of servanthood is mentioned in the sources in 1785, when his father was listed as a retirement-contract-tenant and Šimon was reported to be working as a servant for his own brother³⁸. He worked for his brother in his native household until 1790, when he went to serve on the manorial demesne-farm of Nový Dvůr³⁹, after that on another manorial demesne farm called Dobeviský dvůr⁴⁰, then in the household of a full peasant

³³ SRAT, inv. no. 742, ref. no. V AU No 6/98, book no. 391, (1795), p. 336.

³⁴ V. Slováková, *Služba*, p. 287.

³⁵ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Štěkeň, inv. no. 5540, book no. 4, NOZ (1771–1790), fol. 41.

³⁶ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1039, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/15, book no. 958, (1820–1821), p. 182; inv. no. 1043, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/19, book no. 962, (1828–1830), p. 233.

³⁷ The authors went through the parish registers 04., St. Karl Borromaeus, now known as the Karlskirche, between 1830 and 1879. Unfortunately, they were unable to find a death or marriage record. <http://data.matricula-online.eu/en/oesterreich/wien/04-st-karl-borromaeus/?page=1#register-header> [access: 24.09.2024].

³⁸ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 462, ref. no. V AU No 6/88, book no. 381, (1785), p. 255.

³⁹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 467, ref. no. V AU No 6/93, book no. 386, (1790), p. 312.

⁴⁰ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 468, ref. no. V AU No 6/94, book no. 387, (1791), p. 330.

Table 2: Antonín Hrčič (Bůžek) in the Serf Lists (1800–1830)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1800	21	in Dobew	–	–	1.9
1801	22	in Kestrzaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1802	23	in Kestrzaner Hof	Männer	12 fr. 30 kr.	4.0
1803	24	in Protiwiner Hof	Pferdknecht	16 fr.	2.1
1804	26	in Kestržaner Hof	Pferdknecht	–	4.0
1805	26	in Kestržaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1808	33	in Protiwiner Hof	Pferdknecht	–	17.1
1810	34	in Protiwiner Hof	–	–	17.1
1811	35	in Protiwiner Mayerhof	–	–	17.1
1812	36	in Protiwiner Hof	Pferdknecht	–	17.1
1813–1814	37–38	in Protiwiner Hof	–	–	17.1
1816–1817	40	vagirt	–	–	–
1818–1819	42	vagirt	–	–	–
1820–1821	44	vagirt in Wien in Fürst- licher Haus	–	–	210.0
1822–1823	46	im fürstl. haus zu Wien	Hausknecht	–	210.0
1824–1825	48	in Schwarzenbergisch- er haus	–	–	210.0
1826–1827	50	in fürstl. Haus zu Wien	–	–	210.0
1828–1830	52	in fürstl. Haus zu Wien	–	–	210.0

named Vlach in the village of Kestřany⁴¹, and finally on the manorial demesne-farm in Kestřany⁴². In 1794, at the age of 26, he was conscripted into the Austrian army⁴³. He remained in the army until 1813, when at the age of 43 he married into the town of Vodňany⁴⁴, where he was freed from serfdom the following year⁴⁵. A very superficial knowledge of his life is confirmed by a note of the manorial officials from the serf list of 1817: ‘is supposed to be in Vodňany, where he was released’ (German ‘soll in Wodnian sein und dahin überlassen’)⁴⁶.

⁴¹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 469, ref. no. V AU No 6/95, book no. 388, (1792), p. 337.

⁴² SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 470, ref. no. V AU No 6/96, book no. 389, (1793), p. 331.

⁴³ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 471, ref. no. V AU No 6/97, book no. 390, (1794), p. 340.

⁴⁴ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1034, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/10 book no. 953, (1813), p. 174.

⁴⁵ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1035, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/11, book no. 954, (1814), p. 159.

⁴⁶ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1037, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/13, book no. 956, (1816–1817), p. 161.

Table 3: Šimon Martínek (Koudelka) in the Serf Lists (1785–1817)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1785	17	b. Koudelka in Dorf (Nro.11)	–	6 fr. 18 kr.	0.0
1786	18	b. Koudelka in Dorf (Nro.11)	–	–	0.0
1787	19	b. Koudelka in Dorf (Nro.11)	–	8 fr. 30 kr.	0.0
1788	20	b. Koudelka in Dorf (Nro.11)	–	9 fr.	0.0
1789	21	b. Koudelka in Dorf (Nro.7)	–	8 fr.	0.0
1790	22	Neühof	–	–	2.1
1791	23	in Dobewer Hof.	–	–	1.9
1792	24	b. Wlach in Kestřz	–	–	4.0
1793	25	in Kestřzaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1794	26	Krik	–	–	–
1797–1800	29–32	K	–	–	–
1802	34	Soldat	–	–	–
1803–1808	35–39	K:	–	–	–
1810–1812	40–42	Soldat	–	–	–
1813	43	Soldat. verheürathet in Wodnian	–	–	19.0
1814	44	Soldat. entlassen nach Wodnian	–	–	19.0
1815	45	Soldat	–	–	–
1816–1817	45	Soldat / soll in Wodnian sein und dahin uberlassen	–	–	19.0

The fact that girls' and women's lives were not at all boring is evidenced by the life story of Kateřina Martínek (Koudelka), born in 1772 as sister of the previous mentioned Šimon. Her life does not go straight from birth to marrying the ideal suitable man. Instead, from the age of 13 onwards, Kateřina spent her youth in servanthood⁴⁷. She began in 1785 by serving various peasants in her native village and its surroundings, then from the age of 24 onwards worked on various manorial demesne-farms, and finally married in 1805 as an orphan girl at the age of 33.

The idea that maidservants typically worked only for a short life-phase with a small number of employers is also undermined by the story of Kateřina Vlach, born in 1764 in the village of Kestřany⁴⁸. Kateřina's

⁴⁷ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 462, ref. no. V AU No 6/88, book no. 381, (1785), p. 255.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 299.

Table 4: Kateřina Martínek (Koudelka) in the Serf Lists (1785–1805)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1785	13	b. Koudelka in Dorf	dom. servant	–	0.0
1786	14	b. Vatter	–	–	0.0
1787	15	b. Starej in Dorf	–	5 fr.	0.0
1788	16	b. Řžežabek in Dobew	–	5 fr.	1.9
1789	17	b. Řžežabek in Dobew	–	6 fr. 20 kr.	1.9
1790	18	b. Hřzebik in Dobew	–	–	1.9
1791	19	b. Hřzebik	–	–	1.9
1792	19	b. Hřebik in Dobew	–	–	1.9
1793	20	b. Picha	–	7 fr. 20 kr.	0.0
1794	21	b. Pich Witkow	–	7 fr.	0.0
1795	22	b. Pich Witkow	–	7 fr.	0.0
1796	23	b. Hřzebik in Dobew	–	7 fr.	1.9
1797	24	Dobewerhof	–	–	1.9
1798	25	Kestrzaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1800	27	in Humnianer Hof	–	–	9.4
1801	28	in Humnianer Hof	–	–	9.4
1802	29	fo	–	–	–
1803	30	foroth	–	–	–
1805	31	verh.(eiratet)	–	–	–

servanthood career can be reconstructed in detail. In 1785, at the age of 21, she first entered service, with a full peasant named Hrdina in the village of Kestřany⁴⁹. In 1786 and 1790–1792 Kateřina served in the household of the full peasant Vlach⁵⁰, i.e. in her native household, headed by her brother Josef⁵¹. In 1788–1789 and 1794–1795 her residence in her household of birth was exchanged for servanthood with a farmer called Václav Brabec, nicknamed Kněz, in the village of Kestřany. Kateřina worked for him for the first two years for a wage of 6 florins and 20 kreutzers

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 463, ref. no. V AU No 6/89, book no. 382, (1786), p. 317; inv. no. 467, ref. no. V AU No 6/93, book no. 386, (1790), pa 356; inv. no. 468, ref. no. V AU No 6/94, book no. 387, (1791), p. 375; inv. no. 469, ref. no. V AU No 6/95, book no. 388, (1792), p. 386.

⁵¹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 463, ref. no. V AU No 6/89, book no. 382, (1786), p. 317.

and in 1794–1795 for the higher wage of 7 florins⁵². In 1793 she went into service with Bartoloměj Voct nicknamed Dolejší, a farmer and tavernkeeper in the village of Kestřany⁵³. In 1796, Kateřina moved to work as a servant in the neighbouring village of Lhota⁵⁴, where she served in the household of the full peasant Jan Holý nicknamed Pašek⁵⁵. Finally, she served for four years in the household of the estate gamekeeper in the village of Kestřany⁵⁶. In her final year with the gamekeeper, she received wages of 8 florins⁵⁷.

Table 5: Kateřina Vlach in Serf lists

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1785	21	b. Hrdina Dorf (Nro.3)	–	5 fr. 20 kr.	0.0
1786	22	b. Wlach in Dorf (Nro.5)	–	6 fr. 20 kr.	0.0
1787	23	b. Mutter	–	–	0.0
1788	24	b. Knies in Dorf (Nro.13)	–	6 fr. 20 kr.	0.0
1789	25	b. Knies in Dorf (Nro.13)	–	6 fr. 20 kr.	0.0
1790	26	b. Wlach	–	–	0.0
1791	27	b. Wlach	–	6 fr. 18 kr.	0.0
1792	28	b. Wlach	–	–	0.0
1793	28	b. Woczet (Nro.6)	–	7 fr.	0.0
1794	29	bei Knies in Kestřzan	–	7 fr.	0.0
1795	30	bei Kniez in Kestřzan	–	7 fr.	0.0
1796	31	beim Passek in Lhota	–	7 fr.	0.9
1797	32	b. Kestrzaner Joger	–	–	0.0
1798	33	b. Joger in Kestrzan	–	7 fr.	0.0
1800	35	b. Joger	–	8 fr.	0.0
1801	36	Verheirath	–	–	–

⁵² SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 465, ref. no. V AU No 6/91, book no. 384, (1788), p. 322; inv. no. 466, ref. no. V AU No 6/92, book no. 385, (1789), p. 316; inv. no. 471, ref. no. V AU No 6/97, book no. 390, (1794), p. 384; inv. no. 466, ref. no. V AU No 6/92, book no. 742; ref. no. V AU No 6/98, book no. 391, (1795), p. 384.

⁵³ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 470, ref. no. V AU No 6/96, book no. 389, (1793), p. 382.

⁵⁴ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 473, ref. no. V AU No 6/99, book no. 392, (1796), p. 383.

⁵⁵ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 166, ref. no. OS Písek 59, book no. 85, fol. 63.

⁵⁶ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 474, ref. no. V AU No 6/100, book no. 393, (1797) p. 354; inv. no. 475, ref. no. V AU No 6/101, book no. 394, (1798), p. 357; inv. no. 477, ref. no. V AU No 6/103, book no. 396, (1800), fol. 184v.

⁵⁷ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 477, ref. no. V AU No 6/103, book no. 396, (1800), fol. 184v.

Kateřina's servanthood ended on 7 July 1801 when at the age of 36 she Kateřina married the 50-year-old widower Matouř řvanter nicknamed Hajný, a smallholder in the village of Keřřany⁵⁸.

Service on the manorial demesne-farm was not of paramount importance. Much more important was service with individual householders. Two-thirds of the rural youths who gained experience in servanthood did so with various peasants in their own village of origin or in nearby villages. The story of Vít Wolf nicknamed Talafous, born in 1769 in the village Vítkov, was completely different⁵⁹. This man spent 16 uninterrupted years in service on manorial demesne-farms on the estate of Protivín.

Table 6: Vít Wolf (Talafous) in the Serf Lists (1789–1804)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1789	19	in Neüerhof	Männer	–	2.1
1790	20	Dobewer Hof	Männer	–	1.9
1791	21	Keřřzaner	–	–	4.0
1792	22	Keřřzan	–	–	4.0
1793	23	in Keřřzan Hof	–	–	4.0
1794	24	in Keřřzaner Hof	–	–	4.0
1795	25	in Dobewer Hof	–	–	1.9
1796	26	in Dobewer Hof	–	–	1.9
1797	27	Dobew	–	–	1.9
1798	28	Dobewer Hof	–	–	1.9
1800	30	in Dobew	–	–	1.9
1801	31	beim Libiegitzer Oberjäger	–	20 fr.	–
1802	32	in Tallinner Hof	–	–	15.3
1803	33	in Talliner Hof	Ochsenknecht	16 fr.	15.3
1804	35	Flößer	–	–	–

He was first recorded in servanthood by the local estate officials in the 1789 serf list. That year he was mentioned as a servant on the manorial demesne-farm whose Czech name was Nový dvůr⁶⁰, located not far from Vítkov. Vít's second workplace was the manorial demesne-farm

⁵⁸ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Keřřany, inv. no. 2672, book no. 12, O (1784–1828), p. 8.

⁵⁹ He was born into the family of Josefa Wolf (Talafous) and Anna, née Talafousová. He was baptized at the day of his birth 28th May 1769. SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad řtěkeň, inv. no. 5538 book no. 2, N (1739–1770), fol. 193v.

⁶⁰ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 466, ref. no. V AU No 6/92, book no. 385, (1789), p. 273.

whose Czech name was Dobeveský dvůr, where he worked in 1790⁶¹. From there, he moved for four years (1791–1794) to the manorial demesne-farm whose Czech name was Kestřanský dvůr⁶². In 1795–1800 he again served on the the manorial demesne-farm in Dobeš⁶³. The following year he served for a wage of 20 florins with the head gamekeeper of Libějovice⁶⁴. Then – with the exception of 1804, when he worked rafting wood on the river – he served on the manorial demesne-farm in the village of Tálín, where he took care of the oxen (German *Ochsenknecht*)⁶⁵. In May

Table 7: Bartoloměj Mašek (Pašek) in the Serf Lists (1810–1830)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1810	20	–	Landwehrmann	–	–
1811	21	–	Landwehrmann		–
1812	22	–	Landwehrmann		–
1813	23	beim Fischmeister in Kestřan	–	–	0.0
1814	24	–	Landwehrist	–	–
1815	24	–	Landwehrist	–	–
1816–1817	25	–	L. W. M.	–	–
1818–1819	27	lernet Zimmerhand- werk	Gessel	–	–
1820–1821	29	wandert	Zimmermann	–	
1822–1823	31	wandert	Zimmermann	–	
1824–	33	–	Zimmermann	–	
1825	–	mit Consens in Wien	Landwehrmann	–	
1826–1827	35	in Wien	Zimmermann	–	
1828–1830	36	in Wien	Zimmermann		

⁶¹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 3135, ref. no. V AU No 6/93, book no. 386, (1790), p. 305.

⁶² SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 468, ref. no. V AU No 6/94, book no. 387, (1791), p. 324; inv. no. 469, ref. no. V AU No 6/95, book no. 388, (1792), p. 332; inv. no. 470, ref. no. V AU No 6/96, book no. 389, (1793), p. 326; inv. no. 471, ref. no. V AU No 6/97, book no. 390, (1794), p. 335.

⁶³ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 472, ref. no. V AU No 6/98, book no. 391, (1795), p. 336; inv. no. 473, ref. no. V AU No 6/99, book no. 392, (1796), p. 336; inv. no. 747, ref. no. V AU No 6/100, book no. 393, (1797), p. 313; inv. no. 475, ref. no. V AU No 6/101, book no. 394, (1798), p. 311; inv. no. 477, ref. no. V AU No 6/103, book no. 396, (1800), p. 162.

⁶⁴ SRAT, VProt. inv. no. 1025, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/1, book no. 944, (1801), p. 385 (357).

⁶⁵ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1026, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/2, book no. 945, (1802), p. 372; inv. no. 1027, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/3, book no. 946, (1803), p. 304.

1805, at the age of 35 or 36, Vít married the young widow Dorota Krejčí (Cibulková)⁶⁶, née Hrubcová, from the village of Budičovice⁶⁷. Together with Dorota, he left the manorial demesne-farm of Nový dvůr. Vít rented manorial land (in Czech, he was a *pachtýř*), and died at the age of 54⁶⁸.

On the basis of the serf lists, the course of apprenticeships can also be traced very clearly. It is possible to follow how a young man rose up the hierarchy of a given craft on a particular estate. The life story of Bartoloměj Mašek (Pašek) from the village of Kestřany provides an interesting example. Bartoloměj was born in 1788 and joined the territorial army (German *Landwehr*, Czech *zeměbrana*) in 1810, at the age of 22⁶⁹. After eight years of military service, interrupted by one year as a servant with the chief water bailiff (German *Fischmeister*, Czech *porybný*) in the village of Kestřany⁷⁰, he began apprenticeship as a carpenter. In 1820–1823, he went

Table 8: Tomáš Černý in the Serf Lists (1781–1793)

Year	Age	Place of Residence (in original)	Position (in original)	Wage	Distance from Home Village (km)
1781	18	–	Schneider Jung	–	–
1782	19	–	Schneid Jung	–	–
1783	20	–	Schneid	–	–
1784	21	wandert	Schneider	–	–
1785	22	wandert	Schneider		
1786	24	wandert	Schneider		
1787	25	–	Schneider Gesell		
1788	26	–	Schneider Meister		
1789	27	–	Schneider Meister		
1790	28	Soldat	–	–	–
1791	29	in Krieg	–	–	–
1792	30	unbestiet in Krieg	–	–	–
1793	31	in Krieg	–	–	–

⁶⁶ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Heřmaň, inv. no. 1448, book no. 3, NOZ 1785-1827, p. 13 / p. 748.

⁶⁷ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1447, book no. 2, NOZ (1748–1785), fol. 116v; SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 471, ref. no. V AU No 6/97, pp. 237–238.

⁶⁸ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Kestřany, inv. no. 2676, book no. 16, Z (1800–1826), fols. 55v–56.

⁶⁹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1031, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/7, book no. 950, (1810), p. 293.

⁷⁰ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1034, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/10, book no. 953, (1813), p. 297.

'on the tramp' as a journeyman (Czech *vandr*)⁷¹, ending up in Austria where he stayed from 1824 onwards in Vienna with the consent of his overlord⁷².

Tomáš Černý, born in 1763 to a farmer in the village of Kestřany, also had an interesting career working at his craft⁷³. In 1784 he was listed 'on the tramp' as a journeyman tailor, and at latest by 1788 he attained the rank of master craftsman⁷⁴. In 1792, at the age of 30,



Map 4: Manorial Demesne-Farms on the Estates of Protivín, 1770–1830

⁷¹ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1040, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/16, book no. 959, (1822–1823), p. 284.

⁷² SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 1041, ref. no. IIA 5AU No 1/17, book no. 960, (1824–1825), p. 324.

⁷³ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Kestřany, inv. no. 2663, book no. 3, NOZ (1739–1776), p. 108.

⁷⁴ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 461, ref. no. V AU No 6/87, book no. 380, (1784), p. 304; inv. no. 465, ref. no. V AU No 6/91, book no. 384, (1788), p. 323.

he married Františka Hájková, whose father was chief manorial water bailiff in Kestřany (German *Fischmeister*, Czech *porybný*)⁷⁵. In the autumn of the same year Tomáš obtained permission from the manorial authorities to build a house on manorial land, which he owned until 1820⁷⁶. He also practiced his tailoring trade there. The couple's first child was born in Kestřany, Nro.1⁷⁷, i.e. in the manorial complex, consisting of the castle, two fortified houses, and a manorial demesne-farm. This was probably due to his father-in-law, who worked in manorial service as the overseer of the fish-ponds and had personal contacts with local officials. Other descendants were born in a newly constructed house in the village of Kestřany, which was given the descriptive number 53⁷⁸.

CONCLUSIONS

The evidentiary value of the serf lists is significant. They provide a documentary source which allows long-term tracing of individual households, so they can replace the very laborious and time-consuming family reconstitution method. The credit for this goes to the way in which serf lists provide detailed records of entire families, including even the youngest children, as well as the deaths and marriages of individual family members. At the same time, the serf lists provide data which is hard to find in any other sources. They record the reasons for the absence of individuals from the village and the specific places of their temporary and permanent residence elsewhere. Particularly important types of information are the records of marriage, release from serfdom to other estates, military service, physical disabilities, annual wages for servanthood, and the size of individual landholdings.

Like any source, the serf list must be subjected to proper criticism and also has its limits. One of the biggest limitations stems from the fact that the serf lists recorded the people who were supposed to be in the village, not those who actually were present. If certain persons were not in their home locality, the reason and the specific location of their current residence were subsequently given. These facts bring some limitations in the form of the impossibility of reconstructing the current composition of the whole household. Tracking down missing household members,

⁷⁵ SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Kestřany, inv. no. 2672, book no. 12, O (1784–1828), p. 4.

⁷⁶ SRAT, VProt., inv. no. 157, ref. no. OS Písek 56, book no. 76, fols. 520–521.

⁷⁷ The eldest son born in Nro.1 – Václav – was baptized on 25 July 1793. SRAT, SMJK, Farní úřad Kestřany, inv. no. 2665, book no. 5, N (1784–1820), p. 14.

⁷⁸ The daughter Marie Anna was baptized on 15 July 1796. *Ibidem*, p. 19.

usually persons in servanthood, requires studying a much wider pool of surrounding villages, with no guarantee that all missing persons will be found. It is not possible to track down possible residents who were serfs from elsewhere (from foreign estates) or members of the personally free classes who might have been residing in the village.

If the serf lists on a given estate were kept in such a way that they were updated annually, they can substitute for missing parish registers. They make it possible to find out for example the year of birth and thus the age of the individuals, the composition of the family, the order of siblings, the number of marriages of the head of the household, the duration of individual marriages, and the age at death. However, based on the serf lists, it is not possible to trace children who were stillborn or those who died shortly after birth. Although there are parish registers, serf lists can be helpful, for example, as an auxiliary source of information for complete family reconstitution. On the basis of the specific dates recorded in serf lists, it is possible to consult the parish registers in a targeted manner and thus save the time that would be required to go through the parish registers page by page.

Serf lists are helpful and even indispensable in studying labour mobility and migration by the serf population, thanks to the additional notes they often provide on the place of service and marriage migration. Because of the custom of typically holding the wedding at the bride's home, young men often got married outside their home parish, and the record of the place where they were married is often the only clue to their subsequent life destinies. From the serf lists it is also possible to find out relatively precise information about craft apprenticeships, journeymen's travels, settling in a new workplace, and joining a craft guild.

In the same way that serf lists are capable of substituting for parish registers with a certain degree of caution, they can also be used to a certain extent to substitute for land registers. In particular, they make it possible to trace the transfer of the landholding within the family from father to son, to the daughter's husband, or outside the family altogether, where it is also possible to capture changes of holdings and the arrival of a new farmer in another location on the same estate. In the context of studying of entry into marriage, serf lists become a very useful source for investigating social mobility within early modern rural society. This paper has only mentioned a few of the many possibilities of using serf lists for research; to provide a survey of all the topics for which they could be used could fill an entire book.

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