

## The Foreign Trade of Eighteenth Century Bohemia

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During the final stages of the Old Regime, Bohemia, like many other countries of early modern Europe witnessed a period of growth both in industrial production and in commerce.<sup>1</sup> The economy progressed despite the severe decline of the political institutions of the Czech state, the oppressive system of serfdom and *roboty*, and the general plight of the majority of the population.<sup>2</sup> In whatever manner these regres-

<sup>1</sup> For the advancement of the Bohemian economy during the eighteenth century see in particular: ARNOŠT KLÍMA, *Manufakturní období v Čechách* (Praha: ČSAV, 1959); JAROSLAV PURŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik der industriellen Entwicklung in Böhmen im letzten Viertel des 18. Jahrhunderts", *Jahrbuch der Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1965, Teil 1): 160-196; HERMAN FREUDENBERG, "Industrialization in Bohemia and Moravia in the Eighteenth Century", *Journal of Central European Affairs* 19 (1960): 347-356; idem, "An Industrial Momentum Achieved in the Habsburg Monarchy", *The Journal of European Economic History* 12 (1983): 339-350; DAVID F. GOOD, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750-1914* (Berkeley: U.C. Press, 1984); N.T. GROSS, "The Industrial Revolution in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1750-1914", in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe*, ed. Carlo M. Cipolla, vol. 4 (Sussex, Eng.: Harvester Press, 1976), pp. 228-278; GUSTAV OTRUBA, "Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung Böhmens und Mährens im Spiegel der ältesten Österreichischen Handelsstatistik, 1790-1839", *Bohemia* 2 (1961): 153-163; idem, "Anfänge und Verbreitung der böhmischen Manufakturen bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts (1820)", *Bohemia* 6 (1965): 231-331; W. HIEKE, *Literatur zur Geschichte des Industrie in Böhmen bis zum Jahre 1850* (Prag, 1893); A. FRANCIS PRIBRAM, *Das böhmische Commerzkollegium und seine Tätigkeit* (Prag, 1898); A. SALZ, *Geschichte der böhmischen Industrie in der Neuzeit* (München und Leipzig, 1913); EDMUND SCHEBEK, *Böhmens Glasindustrie und Glashandel. Quellen zu ihrer Geschichte* (Prag, 1878); JOSEF SCHREYER, *Kommerz, Fabriken und Manufakturen des Königreichs Böhmen*, 2 vols. (Prag und Leipzig, 1790).

<sup>2</sup> For the plight of the rural population in Bohemia see WILLIAM E. WRIGHT, *Serf, Seigneur, and Sovereign: Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia* (Minneapolis: Univ. Press, 1966); JOHN KOMLOS, "Institutional Change under Pressure: Enlightened Government Policy in the Eighteenth-Century Habsburg Monarchy", *The Journal of European Economic History* 13, No. 3 (Winter 1986): 427-482. In

sive traits may have limited the potential for economic advancement, the country not only recovered from the previous periods of stagnation, but in some cases even prospered.<sup>3</sup> In the eighteenth century the trajectory of the free "capitalist" economy and of that based on "feudal" seigneurial rights obviously coexisted and to some degree even converged, thus providing Bohemia with the scaffolding for early industrialization. Foreign trade, exports in particular, reflected the economic upswing. The products of Bohemian industry and agriculture were exported not only to the rest of Europe, but through Spain, England and France to other parts of the world. Bohemian foreign trade proved to be very lucrative. A huge and apparently steady positive commercial balance and large commercial profits afforded Bohemia the capital flow that together with other resources secured the country with a unique financial place in the Habsburg Monarchy.

### Commercial Statistics

Although the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries marked the beginning of Austrian efforts to gain a share of colonial commerce, the Habsburg court was long unable to correctly grasp the commercial position of its state in the contemporary world, and to exploit any real opportunities for the advancement of Austrian foreign trade. This short-coming was to a considerable degree the result of a failure to keep adequate

Bohemia the *roboty* reached its peak during 1760s. At that time most of the farmers were forced to send every week-day one person with one or two draught-horses to work on the manorial fields. Serfdom became most oppressive at the same period. However, only owners of agricultural land (one third of the rural population) were fully affected by this system. (See Jiří Svoboda, *Feudální závislost poddaných na české vesnici v době tereziánské*”, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Phil. et hist.* 3 (1969): 71-106.

<sup>3</sup> The process was recently analyzed by EDUARD MAUR in a collective work *Přehled dějin Československa I/2, 1526 až 1848* (Praha: Academia, 1982), pp. 319-374. Here also extensive bibliography.

records. Whereas England and France kept records of their trade from 1696 and 1716 respectively, the Austrian government lacked any statistics on foreign trade until the 1740s. At that time the Habsburgs began to record the total value of the foreign trade of their individual hereditary lands but failed to pay any attention to the foreign trade of the Monarchy as a whole.<sup>4</sup> Basic financial data for the commerce of the united customs area of the Habsburg Empire began to be collected in 1776 and 1777,<sup>5</sup> but the first financial evidence of the foreign trade of the whole state was not recorded until the late 1780s. Significantly, the Habsburg government failed to gather complex and detailed statistical information about the destinations of exports from its lands until the 1820s.

The local Prague government, the Bohemian *Guberno*, seems to have realized the importance of foreign trade statistics earlier than the Viennese centre. Bohemian imports and exports were registered as early as 1732-35.<sup>6</sup> These records, the first commercial statistics in the Monarchy, show the specific values of im-

<sup>4</sup> For the survey of the commercial statistics of the Habsburg Monarchy see HERBERT HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchie in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts", in *Die wirtschaftliche Situation in Deutschland und Österreich unter um die Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert: Bericht über die erste Arbeitstagung der Gesellschaft für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte in Mainz 4.-6. März 1963* (Stuttgart: Gustav Fischer, 1964), pp. 61-66. GUSTAV OTRUBA, "Der Aussenhandel Österreich unter bes. Berücksichtigung Niederösterreichs nach der älteren amtlichen Handelsstatistik", *Der niederöstr. Arbeiter* 1 (Vienna, 1950). (Here are published the statistics of the Monarchy and its provinces during the 1790s). Idem, "Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung".

<sup>5</sup> The patrimonial lands of the state had been united (with the exception of Tyrol and *Vorlande*) in a customs area in 1775. It was enlarged in 1784 by Galicia. Hungary, however, formed a separate customs area. See e.g. HERMANN KELLENBENZ, *The Rise of the European Economy: An Economic History of Continental Europe from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p. 293. For the critical review and the analysis of statistics of 1776, 1777, and 1782-1788 see HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchie", p. 78. The statistics for the whole Habsburg Monarchy did not include TYROL, *Vorlande*, and the Habsburg's possessions in Italy (*ibid.*, p. 62).

<sup>6</sup> Published by SCHEBEK, *Böhmens Glasindustrie*, p. 169, and by PRIBRAM, *Das böhmische Commerzkollegium*, p. 246ff. See also KLÍMA, *Manufakturní období*, pp. 427-428, 465.

ported and exported agricultural and industrial merchandise. While the bureaucracy in Bohemia probably continued to record the monetary value of foreign trade during the following years, statistics pertaining only to the years 1752, 1768, 1771, 1784, 1789 and the 1790s have been preserved or found. Some of them exist in several versions.<sup>7</sup> Valuable information on foreign commerce contain records supplied by the manufacturers and traders in 1753-1813 in the *Kommerz und Manufactur Tabellen*. These documents register in detail the industrial production of the country in all districts, estates, cities and towns. Moreover, the *Kommerz (Mercantile) Tabellen* of 1753 record the names of countries to which the Bohemian traders exported their goods. Although the significance of the *Tabellen* has already been recognized and some of the records published,<sup>8</sup> the versions containing commercial data are still unknown in the historical literature.<sup>9</sup>

Despite their relative adequacy, the commercial statistics of eighteenth-century Bohemia enable historians to formulate only

<sup>7</sup> For the survey of the statistics of foreign trade of Bohemia during the 1730s and 1760s see HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchy", pp. 66-69; and KLÍMA, *Manufakturní období*, pp. 427-431, 465. HASSINGER and KLÍMA, however, did not notice that the statistics of 1768 published by V. GOEHLERT in "Historisch-statistische Notizen aus Böhmen", *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* (MVGDB) 11 (1873): 292-293, contain serious mathematical errors and are not complete. For the statistics of foreign trade of Bohemia during the 1790s see OTRUBA, "Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung", pp. 162-163. The commercial statistics of 1752 and 1771 pertain to industrial production only. For the statistics of Bohemian foreign trade with industrial products in 1792, 1796, 1797 see J.A. RIEGER, "Verzeichnis derer in Böhmen erzeugten und zum Verschleiss gebrachten verschiedenen Manufakturartikel im Jahre 1792", in *Archiv der Geschichte und Statistik in-sbes. von Böhmen*, v. 3. (Dresden, 1785); PURŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik", Part. 2, Tables 41, 42.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Part 1, pp. 162-163; MARIE LIŠKOVÁ, "Zemské manufakturní tabely 1775-1798", *Sborník archivních prací* 32 (1982): 550-575.

<sup>9</sup> Abstracts from the "Mercantile Tabellen pro A. 1768" in the memorandum of the Bohemian *Guberno* pertaining to the Bohemian foreign trade perspectives of the late 1760s (s.d.) in *Státní ústřední archiv*, Praha (hereafter cited *SUA*), Collection of Manuscripts, A342/21, b37. The 1753 "Tabella" containing the names of the countries to which the Bohemian producers exported their goods is held in *SUA*, The Archives of Agriculture and Forestry.

approximate conclusions. The representative value of the statistical sources is limited mainly by the fact that most of them have been preserved for individual years only. Some of the statistics contain substantial mathematical errors. Fortunately, these are recognizable, and can easily be corrected.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the extent of unreported smuggled merchandise constitutes a major difficulty.<sup>11</sup> The statistics compiled by the customs stations entirely fail to recognize this important aspect of foreign trade and as a result greatly underestimate the quantity of exported as well as imported goods. The difficulties in the historical interpretation of these statistics are exacerbated by the equivocation of the term "Bohemian trade". It was used indiscriminately, and often included commercial relations with other countries in addition to the domestic trade of Bohemia or the Austrian Monarchy.

### Basic Trends

Given the pitfalls and limitations of the statistical sources, the basic trends of Bohemian foreign trade during the eighteenth century can be roughly summarized in the following way: in 1732-35 the foreign commerce of Bohemia had an average total value of 8.3 million gulden per annum.<sup>12</sup> By 1768 this had in-

<sup>10</sup> In particular, the commercial statistics of Bohemia of 1768 published by V. GOEHLERT (*Notizen aus Böhmen*) are in error. These statistics do not include the value of agricultural products imported from or exported into the countries outside the Habsburg Monarchy. The editor apparently used an incomplete or incorrect manuscript of the original statistics. Moreover, he made mistakes when summing up the data he published. However, although total figures are in error, partial data relating to foreign trade of several Bohemian industries are undoubtedly correct. (Goehlert's errors led Klíma to the erroneous conclusions that Bohemian trade stagnated after 1750. See *Manufakturní období* p. 430).

<sup>11</sup> Documents pertaining to smuggling across the Bohemian borders in the late eighteenth century are held in *SUA*, CG Publ. 1764/73, B3, 102. In 1771 Maria Theresa ordered even capital punishment for those who smuggled grain in armed groups. See her Patent of 3 Oct 1771, *ibid.*, B3, 102, 6, 31.

<sup>12</sup> Based on data published by SCHEBEK and PRIBRAM (see Note Nr. 6). During 1732-1735 Bohemia imported goods to the value of 12.4 mil. gulden, i.e. 3.1 mil. gulden per year. Her exports reached 20.97 mil. gulden (5.24 mil. gulden per year).

creased by 40% to 11.7 million gulden.<sup>13</sup> The figures, which have been adjusted to include commerce within the Habsburg Monarchy, indicate that the total value of Bohemian foreign trade may have risen another 40% during the final third of the eighteenth century and have reached 16 million gulden for the years 1796-97.<sup>14</sup> Since prices in European markets increased some 50-60% during the second half of the eighteenth century,<sup>15</sup> 100% absolute growth in the value of Bohemian foreign trade from the 1730s to the 1790s would translate to approximately a one third increase in real terms.

<sup>13</sup> In 1768 Bohemia's total exports were worth 7.69 mil. gulden (5.46 mil. gulden outside the Habsburg Monarchy and 2.23 mil. gulden to the countries belonging to the Monarchy). At that time Bohemia imported merchandise to the value of 4.02 mil. gulden (2.075 mil. gulden from outside the Monarchy). While the exports of industrial products reached the amount of 5.7 mil. gulden (4.1 mil. gulden to the countries outside the Habsburg Monarchy), the imports of manufactures amounted to 1.46 mil. gulden (373,000 gulden from outside the Monarchy). See Note no. 9.

<sup>14</sup> The commercial statistics of the 1790s exist in various versions. In 1795 the Austrian statistician J.A. RIEGGER published statistics showing value of the exports of industrial products of Bohemia of 1792 outside the Monarchy (*Archiv der Geschichte*, vol. 3, p. 19). These statistics were apparently based on the records of the producers, i.e. they recorded also the goods that were smuggled outside the country. On the contrary statistics published by Otruba for 1789 and the whole of the 1790s refer apparently only to the merchandise that went through the customs stations. ("Der Aussenhandel Österreich", p. 37). Here the average annual value of Bohemian commerce is recorded to be 9.7 mil. gulden. The figures do not include Bohemian exports and imports inside the Habsburg Monarchy. (For a critical review see HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchie", p. 64). Another version of the commercial statistics for 1796 and 1797 were published by Purš ("Struktur und Dynamik", Part 2, Tables 41, 42). For 1797 they recorded the exports and imports of industrial products and raw materials to be valued at 8.9 mil. gulden. All versions of the statistics of the 1790s understood under the term "Bohemian exports" indicate the goods that were sold outside the Habsburg Monarchy only. The adjustment (to 14.46 mil. gulden) is done in tune with the earlier statistics (1768) which indicate that around 25% of Bohemian commerce consisted of agricultural products, and that the value of Bohemian industrial products sold inside the Habsburg Monarchy accounted for 40% of the exports outside the Monarchy (29% of the total exports).

<sup>15</sup> For the wholesale prices at the Exchange of Amsterdam see N.W. POSTHUMUS, *Inquiry into the History of Prices in Holland* (Leiden: E.J. Brill), p. CII-CIII. For the historical research on prices in Bohemia see JAROSLAV HONC, "Přehled literatury k dějinám cen a mezd v Československu za léta 1788-1962", *Zápisový katedry čs. Dějin a archivního studia UK 6* (Praha, 1962): 27-44.

The total nominal value of Bohemian trade grew faster than the number of inhabitants of the country. During the second half of the eighteenth century the population increased by 50%, from 1.97 million to 2.90 million.<sup>16</sup> The annual per capita value of Bohemian foreign trade, which was 4.9 gulden in 1732-34, rose in the 1790s to 5.5 gulden.<sup>17</sup> However, when adjusted for inflation the per head value of Bohemian trade may actually have decreased by some 17%.

Surprisingly, during the first third of the eighteenth century the per capita annual value of the foreign trade of Bohemia was about equal to that of France. In the contemporary French *livres tournois*, the proportion was assessed at 12.97 (Bohemia in 1732-34): 12.85 (France in 1733-35); expressed in fine silver, the ratio of the pertinent data was 60.17 g (Bohemia): 57.89 g (France).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For the 1730 the number of inhabitants is estimated to be 1.8 mil. The earliest census data are for 1754 (1.971 mil.). In 1767/1768 Bohemia had 1.9878/2.021 mil. inhabitants, respectively. During the early 1790s Bohemia had 2.9 mil. inhabitants. For the analysis of the earliest census data see e.g. FR. KUTNAR, "Česká obrozenecká společnost na prahu velké buržoasní revoluce francouzské", *Sborník Vysoké školy pedagogické v Olomouci, Hist. II*, (Praha: SPN, 1955), pp. 8-9. The statistics were published by F. DVOŘÁČEK, "Soupisy obyvatelstva v Čechách a na Moravě v letech 1754-1921", *Československý statistický věstník* 5 (1924). The census data for 1789-1793 were published by JOS. ANT. RIEGGER in *Skizze einer statistischen Landeskunde Böhmens* (Prague, 1795), vol. 3, p. 87 and appendix. Statistics for 1754-1790 have been published recently by PETER GEORGE MUIR DICKSON in *Finance and Government under Maria Theresia, 1740-1780* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), vol. 2, pp. 438-439.

<sup>17</sup> The calculation is for 1797. For the adjustment see Note Nr. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Mutual comparison between the value of Bohemian and French foreign trade can yield only approximate data. For the purpose of this article all conversions are based both on the contemporary exchange rate of the Austrian gulden and the *livre tournois* to the Pound Sterling, and on the content of the fine silver in the currencies. The two methods, of course, do not provide the same results. During the eighteenth century there was a rate of exchange of 8-9 Austrian gulden and 24 *livres t.* to one Pound Sterling. One gulden thus equaled 2.82 *livres t.* [In 1763 8.5 Austrian gulden equaled one Pound Sterling. See P.G.M. DICKSON, *Finance and Government*, vol. 2, pp. 370-371. In 1783/93 in the East India trade the approximate exchange rate of the *livre t.* in terms of the Pound Sterling was 24:1. See HOLDEN FURBER, *John Company at Work: A Study of European Expansion in India in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 349. In 1791 Jacques Necker reckoned the Pound Sterling at 24 *livres t.* See his *Historical Review of the Adminis-*

A comparison with England and Wales presents a far less favourable scenario. During the period 1732-34 the per capita annual value of the foreign trade of England and Wales was more than five times greater than that of Bohemia.

During the remainder of the eighteenth century, the foreign commerce of Bohemia grew at a slower pace than that of France and England. Although any precise comparison is impossible we can presume that from the 1730s to the 1780s/90s the relative growth rate of the total volume of the foreign trade of France and England advanced more than two times faster than that of Bohemia. In fact by the 1780s/90s the ratio between the yearly per head values of Bohemian and French foreign trade completely turned in favour of the latter. The rate amounted to 15.00 livres t. (5.5 gulden): 39.91 livres t., i.e. 64.29 g: 179.80 g in the equivalents of fine silver. Colonial trade was largely responsible for the difference.<sup>19</sup>

*tration of Mr. Necker* (London: Robinson, 1791), p. 149]. The rate of exchange by bills used in bank transactions was similar. E.g. in 1760 and 1773 in Hamburg one Pound Sterling equaled 4.25 and 4.34 (respectively) *Reichsthaler* Banco, i.e. 8.5 (8.7 respectively) Austrian gulden. In 1750 and 1773 in Paris one Pound Sterling equaled 22.84 and 24.10 (respectively) *livres t.* See JOHN J. MCCUSKER, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), p. 311. Here also the analysis of the agio and *Reichsthaler* Banc (p. 62). During 1770-1748 the Austrian gulden equaled 12.28 g of fine silver, during 1750-1767 11.70 g, during 1767-1795 11.69 g. See RUDOLF GEYER, "Zur österreichischen Münzpolitik, 1524-1790", *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 66 (1933): 106-107 (for 1767-1790); ALFRED F. PRIBRAM, *Materialien zur Geschichte der Preise und Löhne in Österreich* (Wien: C. Ueberreuters, 1938), B.1, p. 77. Until 1785 the value of the *livre t.* equaled 4.505 g of fine silver. See PIERRE VILAR, *Or et monnaie dans l'histoire 1450-1920* (Paris: Flammarion, 1974), p. 243. The ratio between the value of fine silver in the Austrian gulden and *livre t.* was thus 1:2.6-2.7.

<sup>19</sup> The total value of French foreign trade increased from 277.5 mil. livres t. during the period 1733-1735 to 1,061.6 mil. livres t. p.y. during 1784-1788. (Since French foreign trade collapsed in 1793, the statistics for France are taken for the 1780s). See E. LAVASSEUR, *Histoire du commerce de la France* (Paris, 1911), vol. 1, p. 512. The almost fourfold increase translates into not even a twofold increase if the numbers are adjusted for 50-60% inflation. For a short analysis of the dramatic development of French foreign trade during the eighteenth century see FRANCOIS CROUZET, "England and France in the Eighteenth Century", in *Social Historians in Contemporary France: Essays from 'Annales'*, ed. Marc Ferro (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 59-86. First published in *Annales* 21 (1966): 254-291 under the title "Angleterre et France au

To evaluate Bohemian trade solely in terms of imports and exports may be somewhat deceptive. The reason for this is that Bohemia witnessed a great imbalance between exports and imports. Since the former normally surpassed the latter, data pertaining to the total value of foreign trade could lead to an underestimation of its overall importance. In the early 1730s (1732-35) Bohemia annually exported goods to the amount of 2.9 gulden per head (the equivalent of 35.61 g of fine silver or 7.90 livres t.) which slightly exceeded French exports and re-exports.<sup>20</sup> Later,

XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle: Essai d'Analyse Comparée de Deux Croissances Economiques"). In comparison the total value of foreign trade of England and Wales rose from 19 mil. p.y. in 1730-1734 to 31 mil. p.y. in 1784-1788, i.e. more than two thirds in constant prices. See ELIZABETH SCHUMPETER, *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 15-16.

The per capita calculations are based on the analysis of the French population during the eighteenth century by PETER MATHIAS and PATRICK O'BRIEN in "Taxation in Britain and France, 1715-1810: A Comparison of the Social and Economic Incidence of Taxes Collected for the Central Governments", *The Journal of European Economic History* 5, Nr. 3 (Winter 1976): 604. The authors assume that the population of France rose from 21.6 mil. in the 1730s to 24.3 mil. in 1765 and 26.7 mil. in 1785. For the analysis of the problem see in particular LOUIS HENRY "The Population of France in the Eighteenth Century", in D.V. GLASS and D.E.C. EVERSLEY, eds., *Population in History* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965), pp. 434-456; J. DUPAQUIER, "Sur la population française au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Revue historique* 239 (1968), translated into English in R.E. CAMERON, ed., *Essays in French Economic History* (Homewood, Ill., 1970).

The statistics of English trade during the eighteenth century (until 1798) are based on the commodity valuation of 1696. Therefore there is no need for adjustment for inflation. See RALPH DAVIS, *The Industrial Revolution and British Overseas Trade* (Leicester, U.K.: Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 77-80; and SCHUMPETER, *English statistics* (introduction by Thomas S. Ashton). It seems that it is still impossible to compare the volume of Bohemian foreign trade with that of Germany. The latest estimate by Hermann Kellenbenz of the per capita value of German trade in the late eighteenth century (more than 9 Thaler or 13.5 Austrian Gulden) is evidently inflated and based on erroneous assumptions. The author includes even the transfer trade through Hamburg in German foreign trade (*The Rise of the European Economy*, p. 376).

<sup>20</sup> In 1733-1735 the value of the exported and re-exported merchandise from France was 154.2 mil. livres t., i.e. 7.14 livres t. per capita, i.e. the equivalent of 32.17 g of fine silver. See LAVASSEUR, *Histoire du commerce*, p. 512. For the data for Bohemia see Notes no. 12,16. After the Seven Year War France having approximately 24 mil. inhabitants exported and re-exported the merchandise in the value of 391.6 mil. livres t. (1764-1776), i.e. the annual per capita value of 16.32 livres t. which equaled 73.52 g of fine silver (ibid., p. 512), while Bohemia having 1.9 mil. inhabitants exported merchandise to the value of 4.1 Gulden per head, i.e. the equivalent of 47.93 g

the per capita value of Bohemia's exports grew, faster than her population even if inflation is taken into account.

## Balance of Payments

A relatively large preponderance of exports over imports was clearly one of the most important features of eighteenth-century Bohemia's foreign trade.<sup>21</sup> The overall financial balance of foreign trade was in Bohemia's favour in all of the years for which statistics have been preserved. During the eighteenth century Bohemian exports offered a relatively large and steady flow of capital. In 1732-35 the financial value of Bohemian exports exceeded the value of imports by 40% (20.9 million gulden: 12.4 million gulden). In 1768 the value of exports reached almost double that of imports (7.7 million gulden: 4.0 million gulden), leaving the country with a financial surplus of 3.7 million gulden.<sup>22</sup> The balance of Bohemian foreign trade remained positive by at least the same amount during the last decades of the century.<sup>23</sup>

of fine silver, or 11.56 *livres t.* Bohemian exports per head were thus about 50% less than the export and re-exports of France while the value of English exports and re-exports per head represented more than 18 Austrian Gulden, i.e. more than four times that of the Bohemian total. (During 1767-1771 England and Wales having 7 mil. inhabitants exported and re-exported goods to the value of £ 77.4 mil. in prices of 1696. See SCHUMPETER, *English Statistics*, p. 15). For Bohemia see sources quoted in Notes Nr. 6,9.

<sup>21</sup> For the mercantilist concept of a positive commercial balance as the source of money see e.g. WERNER SOMBART, *Der moderne Kapitalismus* (Munich, 1924), vol. 2/2, p. 941; recently JOHN C. CONYBEARE, *Trade Wars: The Theory and Practice of International Commercial Rivalry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 141. For the survey of the problem in the Habsburg Monarchy and Bohemia see in particular ARNOST KLÍMA, "Mercantilism in the Habsburg Monarchy with special reference to the Bohemian Lands", *Historica* 11 (1965): 95-119, VALENTIN URFUS, "Český merkantilista Jan Dryštof Bořek a jeho sbírka", *Časopis Národního muzea* 140 (1971): 71-82.

<sup>22</sup> Based on statistics quoted in Notes Nr. 6, 9.

<sup>23</sup> OTRUBA, "Der Aussenhandel Österreich", p. 37. In fact the trade balance was even more favourable to Bohemia. The mentioned statistics recorded the trade outside the Habsburg Monarchy thus underestimating total Bohemian exports by perhaps almost one half (See Note nr. 14). According to the statistics published by Riegger

By contrast, in the 1790s the foreign trade of the rest of the Habsburg Monarchy exhibited a negative balance to the amount of 6-7 million gulden per year.<sup>24</sup> The profits of Bohemian foreign trade thus significantly offset the trade deficit of the whole Monarchy.<sup>25</sup> Although it is difficult to estimate how much of the profits of foreign trade ended up directly in the hands of the central government, it is clear that during the eighteenth century the Habsburgs drew disproportionately huge amounts of their revenues from Bohemia. Her finances became indispensable for the very existence of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>26</sup>

### Structure of Exports

Bohemian exports consisted largely of industrial products. Textiles, primarily low quality linens and yarns represent the most important category of goods manufactured in Bohemia for foreign markets. In the early 1730s and in 1768, Bohemian linen

Bohemian foreign trade in industrial products in 1796 and 1797 showed a positive commercial balance of 6.9 and 6.7 mil. gulden respectively (See PUKŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik", Part 2, Tables 41, 42). The trade in agricultural products, however, was apparently financially passive for Bohemia.

<sup>24</sup> OTRUBA, "Der Aussenhandel 'Osterreich' ", p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> Bohemia was the most important exporter of all "lands" of the Habsburg Monarchy. With less than one seventh of its population she contributed a quarter of the total exports of the Monarchy.

<sup>26</sup> For an analysis of Austrian finances under Maria Theresa see recently DICKSON, *Finance and Government*, and JAMES C. RILEY, *International Government Finances and the Amsterdam Capital Market, 1740-1815* (Cambridge: University Press, 1980). Riley considers the financial position of the Austrian Monarchy in 1740-early 1790s superior to that of its rival (See pp. 128, 131). During the second half of the eighteenth century Bohemia had 13.5-15% of the total population of the Monarchy (Austrian Lands, Bohemian Lands, Hungarian Lands) but her share of the total amount of required taxes was 29-31%. (In 1749 Bohemia was requested to pay a contribution of 5.2 mil. Gulden, i.e. 31% of the total amount of 16.61 mil. Gulden; in 1767 Bohemia's share remained 5.2 mil. Gulden, and the total amount of contributions reached 17,71 mil. Gulden. The number of inhabitants is calculated to be 1.97 mil. for Bohemia and 13.1 mil. for all central lands in 1749, and 2.0 mil. and 14.7 mil. in 1767 respectively. Bohemia's direct share of the total revenue of the Habsburg Monarchy of the second half of the eighteenth century was 20-23%. For the statistics see DICKSON, *Finance and Government*, vol. 2, pp. 398-399, 384.

and yarn accounted for 30-40% of all exports from Bohemia. In 1768, these products, together with wool, constituted more than half of the total exports.<sup>27</sup> The demands of the Continental and English textile industries for semi-raw material, and the requirements of the overseas colonists for light fabrics proved to be one of the most important external factors in the success of Bohemian foreign trade.

In addition to fabrics, glass was another important export item.<sup>28</sup> While Bohemian textiles were in demand on the world markets primarily because of low cost, Bohemian glass competed by its extraordinary quality and elegance. Its commercial success was closely related to a number of discoveries, artistic innovations and technological procedures that had been utilized since the end of the seventeenth century. The most important invention was the production of potash-lime crystal glass. This type of hard, colourless and sparkling glass enabled artisans to apply the old methods of grinding and polishing that had been previously used in the working of Bohemian garnets. Whereas Bohemian crystal, often engraved and coloured with paints, enamel or gold, became a fashion of the European aristocracy, and the wealthy,<sup>29</sup> Bohemian "milk glass", a cheap substitute

<sup>27</sup> Based on statistics published by SCHEBEK, PRIBRAM and GOEHLERT (See Notes Nr. 6,7; errors in Goehlert's edition are corrected).

<sup>28</sup> Between 1768 and 1797 the value of various kinds of Bohemian glass sold in foreign countries grew from 360,000 Gulden to 1,458,000 Gulden. The calculation is based on statistics published by HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchy", p. 67 and PURŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik", Part 2, Tables 42, 43.

<sup>29</sup> For the significance of Bohemian glass in the eighteenth-century world economy see KELLENBENZ, *The Rise of the European Economy*, p. 258. In his contribution to *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), v. 5 Kellenbenz stated that during the eighteenth century "Bohemia gradually took the lead as the principal glass producer [of Europe], and Bohemian crystal came to be imitated even in Italy" (p. 506). Already in the 1680s Bohemian glass was bought by the English Court [JAN KLEPL, "Rozmach českého skla", in VILÉM MATHESIUS (ed.), *Co daly naše země Evropě a lidstvu* (Praha, 1940), p. 209]; in the 1750s Bohemian chandeliers were bought by the Sultan of Turkey and by the Russian Court. See OTTO LUDWIG LOSCANI "Relation über... Manufactur-Gattungen", of 1756, published by AUGUST FOURNIER in "Handel und Verkehr in Ungarn und Polen

for china, was designed for mass retailing not only in Europe but also overseas.<sup>30</sup>

As in England, France and Russia, the foreign trade of Bohemia became a catalyst for early industrialization.<sup>31</sup> Although domestic demand was undoubtedly the main factor in the industrial advancement of the country, the strong demand for Bohemian products in foreign markets significantly accelerated the development. Contemporary statisticians calculated that during the late eighteenth century approximately one third of all the industrial production capacity of Bohemia depended almost exclusively on foreign markets.<sup>32</sup> In addition to glass exports, foreign trade also proved extremely important for the advancement of the biggest of the Bohemian industries, linen production, which then provided at least partial subsistence for about half a million spinners and weavers, i.e. nearly one third of the entire male population of the country. Half of the linen and yarn produced was exported out of the Monarchy.<sup>33</sup> Since this

um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts", *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 69/2 (1887): 474.

<sup>30</sup> Contribution by OLGA DRAHOVÁ in *Geschichte der böhmischen Glases und Gegenwart im Fachzweiguntern* (Nový Bor: Crystalex, 1985), pp. 22-26. For Southern Bohemia VILÉM KUDLIČKA and JIŘÍ ZÁLOHA, *Umění šumavských sklářů* (České Budějovice, 1986).

<sup>31</sup> In 1792 the whole industrial production of Bohemia was recorded as being worth 35.6 mil. Gulden; the value of the exports of industrial products outside the Habsburg Monarchy was 11.9 mil. Gulden. (RIEGGER, *Archive der Geschichte*, vol. 3., p. 19). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the statistics for 1797 which were published by PURŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik", Part 2, Table 43. In these statistics the total amount of the industrial production of Bohemia was valued at 29 mil. Gulden, and the exports of manufactures (outside the Monarchy) at 8.7 mil. Gulden. For the relationship between foreign trade and early industrialization see e.g. PETER KRIEDTE, "The Origins, the Agrarian Context, and the Conditions in the World Market", in *Industrialization before Industrialization: Rural Industry in the Genesis of Capitalism* (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> In 1792, 1797 60-90% of the whole production of Bohemian glass was exported. (PURŠ, "Struktur und Dynamik", Part 2, Table 43; OTRUBA, "Anfänge der böhmischen Manufakturen").

<sup>33</sup> In 1792 from the total Bohemian linen production valued at 16.8 mil. Gulden merchandise to the amount of 8.0 mil. Gulden was exported (RIEGGER, *Archive der Geschichte*, vol. 3, p. 19). The statistics of the spinners and weavers were published by

merchandise could be produced by children, foreign trade may have also indirectly provided some incentives for population growth.

Although agriculture and forestry played a decisive role in the eighteenth-century Bohemian economy, only relatively small quantities of agricultural products were sold on world markets. In the early 1730s Bohemian agricultural merchandise, in particular, grain, timber, hogs, feathers and hops constituted only one third of all exports from the country. In the late 1760s the fraction of these products in Bohemian exports as a whole even decreased, amounting to only one quarter of the entire value. Interestingly, agricultural products, mainly wine, seemed to prevail in Bohemia's imports.<sup>34</sup> The relatively small export of agricultural products from Bohemia and the large share of imports apparently resulted from world market conditions. Bohemia had lost her traditional markets in Germany. The Bohemian bureaucracy blamed the prohibitive commercial policy of the German states, the decrease in prices of Saxon grain, and the "expensive" Austrian gulden, for the stagnation of Bohemian grain exports.<sup>35</sup>

The curtailment in the demand for Bohemian grain had an important socio-economic impact. The aristocracy, having lost the incentive for enhancing its *Gutsherrschaft*, had now even more reason to allow money substitutions for *robot*a duties of

MARIE LIŠKOVÁ, "Zemské manufakturní tabelky", p. 574-575. The majority of spinners and weavers were employed in factories. They mostly worked in the putting-out system. In 1793 Bohemia had total population of 2,939 053 persons (RIEGGER, *Skizze einer statistischen Landeskunde*, vol. 3, p. 87).

<sup>34</sup> For 1732-1735 see HASSINGER, "Die wirtschaftliche Situation", p. 66. In 1768 the value of agricultural products exported from Bohemia was 1.94 mil. Gulden (i.e. 25% of the value of total exports); the value of those imported to Bohemia was 2.55 mil. Gulden (i.e. 64% of total imports). See Note no. 9.

<sup>35</sup> The inquiry about the economic advancement of Bohemia conducted by the Viennese government among the district offices in 1765 (SUA, ČG Publ. 1764/73, R 166). See also JIŘÍ SVOBODA, "Návrhy hospodářsko-společenských reforem Čech v době tereziánské", *Zápisky katedry československých dějin a archivního studia Univerzity Karlovy* 2 (1957): 76-93.

the serfs. Significant *robot*a reductions ordered by Maria Theresa in 1775 as well as the widespread practice of changing *robot*a duties into fees thus resonated throughout the world market mechanism.

### The Geography of Bohemian Exports

Most of the mentioned statistics fail to include the specific destinations of Bohemian merchandise. However, various other sources show that the foreign trade of Bohemia was primarily directed to her neighbours. Somewhat less than one third of all exports remained in the Habsburg Monarchy. Apparently, at least one third was sold to other Central European countries. The remaining third was destined for Spain, France, Portugal, England, Russia and a number of overseas locations.<sup>36</sup> The identification of Bohemian merchandise in overseas markets is tedious and in many instances impossible because Bohemian products usually appeared on the colonial markets as goods exported from France, Spain, Portugal or England. Moreover, English and French commercial statistics fail to distinguish between Bohemian and Austrian merchandise. As a result Bohemian products are included in and categorized under, the heading of Austrian goods. Nonetheless, exports of Bohemian glass and textiles to the Spanish and French colonies, and to North America were indeed explicitly recorded on several occasions. A few reports even confirm the direct export of Bohemian merchandise to the colonies by Bohemian merchants.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> In 1768 29% of Bohemian exports were directed to the countries belonging to the Habsburg Monarchy. See Note no. 9. In 1782-1791 more than one half of the Bohemian exports of linen (outside the Habsburg Monarchy) went to Prussia, and one third to Spain, Portugal and Italy (HASSINGER, "Die wirtschaftliche Situation"), p. 68.

<sup>37</sup> For the exports of the "Spanische Leinwand Handlungs Compagnie" (established in 1767) to America through Cadiz see BOHEMIAN *Guberno* and its Commercial Committee to the Viennese Court, s.d. (1771), *SUA*, The Collection of Manuscripts, A 342/21, b 37; also J. PEUCHET, *Dictionnaire universel de la géographie com-*

Table 1  
DESTINATIONS OF BOHEMIAN EXPORTS IN THE 1750-1770s<sup>38</sup>

Merchandise	Place of Production	Destination of Exports
Linen & Yarn	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Spain Portugal Holland Bavaria
	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Austria (Vienna) Saxony England
	Northern and Eastern Bohemia (District of Bydžov)	Silesia Italy Switzerland Austria (Tyrol) Spain Holland
	Northern and Eastern Bohemia (Districts of Bydžov and Boleslav)	
	Eastern Bohemia (Districts of Hradec Králové and Chrudim)	Silesia Austria (Vienna) Hungary
	Southern Bohemia (District of Budějovice)	Austria (Vienna and Linz) Hungary
	Southern Bohemia (District of Prácheň)	Germany
	Various	America

*mercante* (Paris, 1800), vol. 3, pp. 72-73. The export of Bohemian linen and yarn to America through English entrepreneurs was mentioned in the *Proposals for the advancement of Bohemian commerce* elaborated by the Bohemian *Guberno* sometime in 1771. (SUA, CG Com 1755/72, A 39, 1-2, 1771). For the exports of Bohemian linen to the Spanish colonies in America through France see the *Memo of the Bohemian merchants in Arnau to the Bohemian Guberno*, 12 Feb 1782 (SUA, PG 1771/81, 10/8, Box No. 16). In the 1780s F. Romberg's trade company in Ostend exported to America linen from Bohemia. It was recorded explicitly as the material for the production of shirts for slaves (Ibid.). The exports of Bohemian glass to America and Bohemian linen (produced in the Granz Herkott factory in Prague) through Portugal to America is mentioned in J.A. RIEGGER in his *Materialien zur altern und neuen Statistik von Böhmen*, (Prague, 1788), vol. 3, pp. 22, 62, 63. For the exports of Bohemian glass to America see also F.J. MAIRE, *Memoire sur la circulation interieure du commerce dans les Etats de la maison d'Autriche* (Strassburg, 178), vol. 2, pp. 130-134.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum by Josef von Scotti relating to the exports of Bohemian industrial products, June 1774, SUA, CG Com 1773/83, A1/2, fasc. 62.

Memorandum of the Bohemian *Guberno* pertaining to the possibilities of expanding Bohemian exports, s.d. (1771), SUA, The Collection of Manuscripts, A 342/b 37 (Source b). *Manufactur Tabellen* for the estate Vimperk, 3 Nov 1764, *Státní archiv Český Krumlov*, the Collection V imperk, IV, K beta, 14a/17. *Mercantile Tabellen*, 17 53, SUA, The Archives of Agriculture & Forestry. *Manufactur Tabellen* for the estate Vimperk, 6 Nov. 1766, *Státní archiv Český Krumlov*, the Collection Vimperk, IV, K beta, 14a/17.

*The Foreign Trade of Eighteenth Century Bohemia*

*Table 1. Cont.*

Merchandise	Place of Production	Destination of Exports
Cloth (Wool) & Raw Wool	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň)	Austria (Tyrol) Bavaria Switzerland
	Northern Bohemia (District of Rakovník, Litoměřice and Boleslav)	Switzerland Austria Saxony Hungary
	Southern Bohemia (District of Tabor and Budějovice)	Austria Hungary
	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň and Žatec)	Austria (Tyrol) Bavaria Switzerland Saxony
	Western Bohemia (District of Klatovy)	Hungary Turkey Transylvania
	Eastern Bohemia (District of Hradec Králové)	Austria (Vienna)
	Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)	Austria (Vienna) Hungary Transylvania
	Stockings Caps Gloves	Northern Bohemia (District of Boleslav)
Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)		Austria (Vienna, Trieste) Prussia Saxony
Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)		Austria (Vienna)
Hats	Southern Bohemia (District of Prácheň)	Russia (Ukraine, Volynia)
	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň)	Bavaria
	Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)	Saxony (Leipzig) France (Lyon) England
	Glass	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)
Southern Bohemia (District of Prácheň)		Spain France Holland Turkey Saxony (Leipzig) Russia (St. Petersburg) Silesia Portugal (Lisbon) America
Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň)		Saxony Russia (Moscow)

Table 1. Cont.

Merchandise	Place of Production	Destination of Exports
Mirrors	Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)	Portugal Turkey
	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Poland Holland Spain Russia (Moscow) Saxony (Leipzig)
Portugal Smalt	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň and Žatec)	Holland (Rotterdam and Amsterdam)
Paper	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Saxony (Dresden)
Iron	Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)	Hungary
	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň)	Bavaria (Nuremberg) Saxony
Sheet Metal	Western Bohemia (District of Plzeň and Beroun)	Austria (Vienna)
Copper	Western Bohemia (Cheb)	Saxony
Spoons	Western Bohemia (District of Beroun)	Saxony
Hops	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Bavaria Saxony Austria Hungary
		Silesia Bavaria
Grain	Northern Bohemia (District of Rakovník)	Saxony
	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Saxony
Fruit	Northern Bohemia (District of Rakovník)	Silesia
	Eastern Bohemia (District of Hradec Králove)	Silesia Saxony
Fish	Northern Bohemia (District of Litoměřice)	Silesia
	Eastern Bohemia (District of Hradec Králove)	Austria
Butter & Cheese	Southern Bohemia (District of Prácheň and Budějovice)	Austria (Vienna) Silesia
	Eastern Bohemia (District of Hradec Králove)	Austria (Vienna)
	Eastern Bohemia (District of Chrudim)	Austria (Vienna)
	Central Bohemia (District of Čáslav)	Austria (Vienna)
	Southern Bohemia (District of Prácheň)	Austria (Vienna)

Even though the advancement of Bohemia's foreign trade was deeply affected by the Atlantization of European commerce, the geography of her exports outside the Austrian Empire to a considerable degree reflected the dynastic bonds of the Habsburgs. As a rule Bohemia directed her commerce primarily to countries traditionally connected or politically allied with the Monarchy. However, it seems that Bohemian trade survived changes in the foreign diplomacy of the Viennese government. The merchants tended to keep established connections and ignore, at least for a time, changes in diplomatic alliances. The development of trade between Bohemia and Silesia illustrated this tendency. The huge Bohemian export of yarn and linen into Silesia survived her annexation by Prussia. Despite all legal restrictions banning trade between Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy, in 1782-1791 Bohemia was reportedly selling to Silesia 55% of all the linen and yarn that she needed for her industry and exports.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Bohemian merchants tried to profit from vicissitudes in political alliances, and to penetrate the markets of the new political allies of Austria.

### Commerce with France

The commercial ties between France and Bohemia interestingly show how foreign trade mirrored changes in the system of political and diplomatic coalitions. Until the early 1760s direct trade between the two countries was almost nonexistent, which reflected the political hostilities between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons.<sup>40</sup> However, after the diplomatic revolution of 1763 the Habsburg government launched efforts to establish commercial relations with France and her colonies.<sup>41</sup> In 1767

<sup>39</sup> HASSINGER, "Der Aussenhandel der Habsburg Monarchie", p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> For the Austrian laws that outlawed trade with France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see KELLENBENZ, *The Rise of the European Economy*, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> In 1764 the Viennese Banker J. Fires dealt on behalf of the Habsburg Court with the plenipotentiary of the French government Praslin in Paris, and with the

official negotiations between Austria and France established commercial naval connections between Terst and Marseilles. At that time Bohemia was already exporting small quantities of glass and hats directly to France through Hamburg.<sup>42</sup> The breakthrough in the long lasting commercial stalemate between Bohemia and France was brought about by Swiss trade companies in the 1770s. Using the old privileges of 1516 to export duty free merchandise to France, the Swiss entrepreneurs began to buy large amounts of linen in Bohemia. After it was further elaborated they exported the whole volume of this product to France. Its value reached half a million gulden a year. Between one third and one half of this Bohemian linen was reportedly again exported from France either to various colonies or through Cadiz to the Spanish colonies in America. Swiss participation in the revival of Bohemian trade lasted approximately one decade. The abrogation of Swiss commercial privileges by the French Court on 24 December 1781 undoubtedly terminated Swiss commercial activities in Bohemia.<sup>43</sup>

members of the *Chambre de Commerce* in Marseilles. The negotiations continued until 1769. See gen. controller of finances in Marseilles to the *Chambre de Commerce* in Marseilles, 17 Jun 1764; Prastin to the *Chambre de Commerce* in Marseilles, 18 Jun 1764; The Archives of City of Marseilles, *Chambre de Commerce de Marseilles*, Archives anterieures à 1801, Serie H 66/Trieste.

For a brief account of the official Austrian efforts to increase the commerce of the Habsburg Monarchy with France see WILHELM KALTENSTADLER, "Die österreichische Seehandel über Triest im 18. Jahrhundert", *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 56/2 (1969): 48-49; GASTON RAMBERT, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille 7, De 1660 à 1789. L'Europe, Les Etas-Unis* (Paris, 1966), pp. 528-532.

<sup>42</sup> The merchandise was exported by the Bohemian merchants Palm, Kraus, Ant. Zahn and Johann Zahn, and by the owner of the glass factory in Röhrnbürg (estate Vimperk, South Bohemia). Memorandum of 6 Nov. 1766, Adler, Statní Archív Český Drumlov, The Collection Vimperk, IV K beta, 14 a/27.

In the early 1760s Bohemian exports to France were so small that even the extremely detailed contemporary statistics of the Bohemian commerce through Trieste in 1760 and 1762 omitted to mention France as the trading partner of Bohemia. See SUA, ČG Com 1755/72, H 5, 1762, and H48, 1763.

<sup>43</sup> The trade was organized by Swiss companies in St. Gallen and Altstätten (Johann Mathes Thum) and by the Bohemian merchants in Hostinné (Arnau) and Nová Paka. See BOHEMIAN *Guberno* to District Office Bydžov, 9 Dec 1781; Mer-

Despite the end of the Swiss connection, French-Bohemian relations continued in the 1780s and early 1790s and survived at least the beginnings of the French Revolution. In the late eighteenth century French exports to Bohemia prevailed in the trade between the two countries. Bohemia imported mainly French wines and other luxuries (coffee, almonds, cooking oil, etc.) for the nobility and rich bourgeoisie. Although the import of wine was generally forbidden, the Prague authorities granted all requests for exemptions. French exports to Bohemia were carried out from Marseilles by the commercial company Perron which also provided various financial services to customers in Bohemia. The preserved accounting books of the company show that during 1787-92 it sold to various partners living in the area of present day Czechoslovakia merchandise to the amount of 1.1 million livres t.<sup>44</sup>

### The Organization of Commerce

Bohemian foreign trade was organized by domestic as well as foreign commercial companies and merchants. While the export of glass was the domain of domestic entrepreneurs, commerce involving Bohemian linen and yarn was traditionally also carried on by traders from foreign countries. The German commercial companies (Gewandschneider und Viatis of Nuremberg, Peller of Nuremberg) which had been buying Bohemian linen and yarn during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries<sup>45</sup> were in the first half of the eighteenth century outpaced by their En-

chants of HOSTINNE to *Bohemian Gubernu* 30 Jan 17682, 12 Feb 1782, SUA, ČG 1771/81, 10/8. The copy of the edict by Louis XVI of 24 Dec. 1781. Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Archives de la Société commerciale Perron-Hasslauer et C<sup>ie</sup> de Marseille, Grand Livre F XIII E 17, E 18, 1787/98, K XLIII, E 20, 1791; the Archives of the City of Marseilles. Among the imported goods coffee predominated (at the end of the eighteenth century coffee became fashionable even among the underprivileged groups of the Bohemian population. See e.g. FRANS SCHRECKHAUSEN to *BOHEMIAN Gubernu*, 19 Jan 1791, SUA, ČG Com 1794/1805, 24/1/232).

<sup>45</sup> KLÍMA, *Manufakturní období*, pp. 137-143.

glish counterparts (John Nurse, John Coulstron, Robert Allason).<sup>46</sup> Their commercial success was based primarily on the ability to organize the production of rough linen in Bohemia. The most successful of these companies was that of Robert Allason who established his own enterprise in Rumburk. Although the English companies continued to buy Bohemian linen during the second half of the eighteenth century, their commercial activities diminished in favour of Austrian, Swiss, Turkish and domestic entrepreneurs and merchants.<sup>47</sup>

In the early 1770s the administration in Prague compiled a list of the thirteen wealthiest Bohemian merchants and commercial companies. The value of goods held in their stocks was appraised at 2 million gulden. All of them operated from the northern and northeastern parts of Bohemia.<sup>48</sup>

Among the Bohemian merchants, the exporters of glass were the most persistent and ingenious in their business pursuits. Records enable us to trace their enterprise from the late seventeenth century onward. At the beginning of this period merchants went abroad on foot carrying small amounts of glass in

<sup>46</sup> KLÍMA, "English Merchant Capital in Bohemia in the Eighteenth Century", *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 12/1 (Aug 1959): 34-48.

<sup>47</sup> *Survey of the industrial production in Bohemia* by the Commercial Committee of the Bohemian *Guberno*, 9 May 1774, SUA, CG Com 1773/83, A/2. For the activities of the Austrian entrepreneurs in Bohemia in 1774 see reports to the Commercial Committee of 19 Mar 1774, *ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> See BOHEMIAN *Guberno* and its Commercial Committee to the Viennese Court, s.d. (1771), quoted in Note Nr. 37. The two first companies organized also the production of linen on the basis of the putting-out system. The data pertaining to the exports of the Trautenauer Company quoted from KLÍMA, *Manufakturní období*, p. 315, and from OTRUBA, "Anfänge der böhmischen Manufakturen", p. 249. Other important companies in Bohemia of the 1760s and 1770s included Ant. Kristian Kittel Co. (Blattendorf), Kristof Palme Co. (Parscheu), Franz Palme (Parscheu), T. Rautenstrauch (Langenau-Salice), Hiecke-Rautenstrauch-Zinke (Hayda-Nový Bor), Ant. Meissner Co. (Starkenbach). See Bohemian merchants to the BOHEMIAN *Guberno*, 21 Feb. 1764, Mar. 1764, SUA, ČG Com 1764, H44, and BOHEMIAN *Guberno* to the Litoměřice District office, 27 Dec. 1771, *Státní Archiv* Litoměřice, Com. 1770/84, F1/1.

For the commercial companies in Bohemia of the 1790s and for the direction of their exports see also RIEGGER, *Archiv der Geschichte* vol. 3, pp. 21-43; SCHREYER, *Kommerz, Fabriken und Manufacturen*, vol. 1, p. 62ff., KLÍMA, *manufakturní období*, pp. 311-318, 340-341.

Table 2  
COMMERCIAL COMPANIES OF BOHEMIA (1771)

Company or Merchant	Location	Exported Goods	Destination
Spanische Leinwand Handlungs Co.	Nové Zamky (Neuschloss)	Linen	Spain, America
Trautenau Co.	Trutnov (Trautenau)	Linen	Russia, Turkey, Greece
Georg Ant. Janke Co.	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Spain, Holland
Preissler Co.	Estate Sloup (Burgstein)	Glass	Spain
Adam Ziegenheim Co.	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Portugal
Fr. Ant. Trauschke	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Spain, Turkey
Bredschneyer	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Russia
Johann Heydrich Gotscher (Gutscher)	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Holland, Italy
Fr. Schier	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	Italy
Ant. Zahn	Nový Bor (Hayda)	Glass	France
Fr. Kraus	Kamenický Šenov (Steinschenau)	Glass	France, Russia
Palme & Lange Co.	Kamenický Šenov (Steinschenau)	Glass	France, Italy, Turkey
Johann Zahn	Kamenický Šenov (Steinschenau)	Glass	France

wheelbarrows mainly to Germany and southern Europe. They left Bohemia in the spring and returned in the autumn. However, soon they were able to substantially enlarge their undertakings. They purchased horses and carriages, and transported glass articles by caravans and teamsters.<sup>49</sup> By the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Bohemian glass traders were able to establish their first warehouses in Cadiz, Lisbon and Oporto. By the 1730s these had been transformed into steady trading stations. During the eighteenth century Bohemian traders expanded their commercial enterprises not only to almost all of the important Atlantic ports on the West European continent but also to Russia and the Middle East.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For the Bohemian glass companies see SCHEBEK, *Böhmen's Glasindustrie*, pp. 61-146; KLEPL, "Rozmach českého skla", p. 209; FRANTIŠEK MAREŠ, *České sklo*, p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> For trading stations ("Faktorien") of the Bohemian glassmerchants established in foreign countries during the eighteenth century see in particular KLEPL, "Rozmach

These trading operations usually belonged to commercial companies consisting of 3-12 "shareholders" who not only invested money in the enterprise, but usually also worked there directly. They shared the profits as well as the losses. Most of the profit, however, was divided according to the work expended rather than the initial investment. While the bosses usually remained in Bohemia, the work at foreign locations was done by their sons who lived abroad until they reached 35-40 years of age. Each of the stations was served by 6-8 people. Their way of life was almost monastic in its strictness. The young merchants were forbidden to leave their home for any reason other than business and worship. They were expected to live in celibacy, and to strictly observe the moral principles of the Catholic Church. The asceticism of Bohemian merchants working abroad matched the very well-known rigid discipline of their Protestant counterparts in Germany.<sup>51</sup>

From time to time Bohemian glass merchants and glass producers attempted to enhance their profits by eliminating mutual competition.<sup>52</sup> Although documents are scant they indicate that the first attempt of this kind took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century in South Bohemia. The producers fixed wholesale prices and committed themselves not to undersell glass 'pearls' and probably also other glass products on foreign markets. In 1705 a Bohemian "Glass Meister" attempted to compete with other Bohemian producers by selling glass *corals*

českého skla", pp. 210-211; Q. QUELLE, "Die Faktorien der sudetendeutschen Glashändler in Spanien und Portugal", *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* 11 (1937): 387-391. According to Quelle in the 1770s there were twenty such stations in Portugal and Spain alone.

<sup>51</sup> See KLEPL, "Rozmach českého skla", p. 211; SCHEBEK, *Böhmens Glasindustrie*, pp. 65-288. For the relationship between Protestantism and modern Capitalism see e.g. essays by Max Weber in STANISLAV ANDRESKI (ed.), *Max Weber on Capitalism, Bureaucracy and Religion* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1983), pp. 109-137.

<sup>52</sup> For strong tendencies toward fixing prices in the European commerce of the eighteenth century see in particular the analysis of the Amsterdam exchange by N.W. POSTHUMUS, *The History of Prices*, p. LXXV.

in Vienna, Nuremberg and Augsburg for lower prices, but was forced to abide by the agreement.<sup>53</sup> Another attempt to eliminate mutual competition was reportedly launched by fourteen glass merchants of Northern Bohemia in 1715.<sup>54</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this agreement, aimed at monopolizing the sale of Bohemian glass, entailed price fixing as well. In 1739 the increase in wholesale prices and their fixation was indeed a matter of agreement among the glass producers of the Čáslav district. The glass merchants challenged this commercial practice.<sup>55</sup> Although it is difficult to evaluate the success of these and other similar attempts to limit the competition in the foreign trade of Bohemian glass,<sup>56</sup> it seems that all efforts to control the prices of Bohemian glass were doomed and short-lived. The growing participation of the Bohemian nobility in glass production, the contradictory interests of the merchants and producers, the manufacturing of Bohemian type of glass in foreign countries, and the different and changing conditions in world wide markets interfered with attempts to manipulate the prices of Bohemian glass. On the other hand, it is clear that Bohemian merchants were able to keep the trade of Bohemian glass in their own hands.

While the glass exporters bought their merchandise directly from the producers, other merchants obtained goods for export on the local markets. These markets and their growing significance in the economy of the country made any manipulation of wholesale prices increasingly difficult. It is noteworthy that the

<sup>53</sup> Statement by the "Glass Master" Hans Tüschler, 20 Apr. 1705, *Státní Archiv Český Krumlov*, the Collection Vimperk, VAP 6,2 The action against Tüschler was led by Michael Müller who produced glass in Helmbach-Windeberg *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> JOSEF SIEBER, *Geschichte der Stadt Haida* (Haida-Arnsdorf, 1913), p. 110.

<sup>55</sup> KLEPL, "Rozmach českého skla", p. 211; MAREŠ, *České sklo*, pp. 139-140, 231-232.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. on 13 January, 1769 the glass producer Ignac Fr. Plöchinger (Sherau) complained that another producer A. Müller had competed with him by selling glass for lower prices. See *Manufactur Tabellen* by Ignac Fr. Plöchinger, 13 Jan. 1769, *Státní archiv Český Krumlov*, The Collection Vimperk, IV K beta 14a, 31. Similar complaints about price competition was submitted also by glass producer Fr. Ant. Adler (Röhrnburg) 14 Nov 1756. *Ibid.*, IV K beta 14a, 21.

system of serfdom did not prevent hundreds of merchants from traveling freely around the country or from selling or purchasing goods almost anywhere.<sup>57</sup> In the 1760s they had at their disposal about 400 local markets per year in Bohemia alone.<sup>58</sup> A preserved record of a single market in Pilsen (Plzeň) of 1763 shows that it was attended by 1203 merchants. The market lasted for two weeks. The city organized four such events per year. Each of them may have displayed merchandise in the value of 200,000 gulden.<sup>59</sup> Plzeň enjoyed the reputation of being able to organize extensive fairs. The total turnover of merchandise in the local markets in Bohemia, indeed, apparently reached the value of several million gulden per year.

The profitability of long distance trade is best reflected in the assets of the merchants. Preserved registers of the assets and belongings of Bohemian glass merchants at the time of their deaths on the whole reveal great prosperity.<sup>60</sup> Occasionally, it is possible to trace the profits of a commercial company. During 1775-

<sup>57</sup> Reportedly there were six hundred migrating merchants in Bohemia in 1770 (Frantz Hanisch von Grestenthal to Commercial Concessus of the Bohemian *Guberno*, 21 Mar 1770, SUA, ČG Com 1775/1782, 1770, A2/779). In practice the Bohemian system of serfdom did not impose any ban on traveling around the country (Svoboda, "Feudální závislost", p. 86-91).

<sup>58</sup> Commercial Inspector von Lieblein to the Commercial Concessus of the BOHEMIAN *Guberno*, 1 Aug 1769, SUA, ČG Com 1755/1772, 1769, H 19.

<sup>59</sup> Note of the Commercial Inspector of the BOHEMIAN *Guberno* Karl Rath, 15 Nov. 1763, SUA, CG Com 1755/1772, 1764, H 3. The "Fasten Market" in Plzeň in February 1779 was visited by 853 merchants. They traded linen, yarn, leather, silk, muslin, cotton, stockings, needles, gloves, old silver, paper, spices tools, paints, brass, tin, religious objects. See *Pilsner Fasten Market Tabella pro Anno 1779*, and relevant report of the District Governor, 12 Mar 1779, SUA, CG Publ. 1774/1783, B3/1/1. The attractiveness of the market in Plzeň was based on the privileges that guaranteed the city free trade. The goods sold here (and in Cheb) were not subject to any duty (until 1784). See ADOLF BEER, "Die österreichische Handels-politik under Maria Theresia und Josef II", *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 86 (1898): 201.

<sup>60</sup> In 1791 the inventory of the estate Česká Kamenice recorded the assets of Karl Sebastian Heizel's commercial enterprise to be more than 50,000 Gulden. The money was invested in Istanbul (Constantinople). His associate Fr. Ant. Heizel had 70,000 Gulden. At the time of their deaths the merchants Gottfried Munzderg and Jos. Kr. Zweigelt left 35,000 and 34,000 Gulden respectively. Josef Horn held 11,000 Gulden of the commercial capital in Poland, while Josef Janel invested his capital in Naples,

92 the Hiecke-Rautenstrauch-Zinhe Co. of Hayda recorded a profit to the amount of 276,680 gulden; during the following six years the profit from a capital of 230,000 gulden reached 94,146 gulden (i.e. approximately 8% per year). The company sold glass to Spain, and also had some commercial contacts with Mexico and Peru.<sup>61</sup>

### Bohemia and Habsburg Commercial Policy

The extent of Bohemian foreign trade in the eighteenth century was affected by the system of rules and regulations gradually established by the Habsburg government. Protective tariffs and customs aided the advancement of the early industrialization of Bohemia which provided the basis for the commercial expansion of the country. However, during the second half of the eighteenth century many aspects of Viennese commercial policy began to be disadvantageous to Bohemian foreign trade, and were opposed by many members of the local administration as well as by manufacturers and traders. As early as 1765, several district governors questioned the positive effects of the prohibitive measures imposed against the imports of many foreign goods by the Habsburg Monarchy. They argued that the simple logic of retaliation would completely endanger the trade of all countries that had pursued the prohibitory policy for too long. Instead of imposing regulations on foreign trade, they argued the Habsburg Court should undertake steps in the monetary sphere, e.g. to repeal the duty imposed on exports and alter the exchange rates. Interestingly, the notion that contemporary exchange rates impeded the advancement of foreign trade was formulated by several officers in East and Central Bohemia,

etc. See "Inventarien Buch for das Jahr 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1796, *Státní archiv Děčín*, the Collection Česká Kamenice (fol. 13, 56, 60, 89, 213, 259). The trade with glass was apparently more profitable than its production.

<sup>61</sup> SIEBER, *Geschichte der Stadt Haida*, pp. 126-128.

who hinted that the Austrian gulden was overvalued. Two of the district governors defended the principles of completely free trade, and demanded the termination of all governmental regulation of foreign trade.<sup>62</sup>

In 1771 the theoretical economic discussion about the principles of Viennese "cameralism" grew into open revolt against the practical aspects of the commercial policy of the Habsburg government. At that time the Court set about intervening in Bohemian foreign trade wilfully and in the most radical fashion. Considering the predominantly northern orientation of the commercial naval routes of Bohemian foreign exports through Hamburg as contradictory to the official effort to expand the foreign trade of the Monarchy to Southern Europe and Asia,<sup>63</sup> and to lessen the supposed dependence of Bohemian trade on Saxony and Prussia, the Viennese administration decided to divert them without delay.<sup>64</sup> On 1 April, and again on 21 June,

<sup>62</sup> See the inquiry of 1765 quoted in Note Nr. 35. Free trade was demanded by the governor of the Rakovník District Jan W. Wassmuth and by that of Litoměřice District Fr. V. Reiský z Dubnic. For the discussion of free trade policy among the members of the Habsburg administration see in particular Beer, "Die österreichische Handelspolitik", p. 73ff.

<sup>63</sup> This commercial strategy emerged in Vienna in the early eighteenth century when it became clear that Great Britain, France and Holland would prevent the Habsburgs from establishing their own colonial companies. The expansion to the South was to be realized through the Austrian port of Trieste, proclaimed a free port in 1718. Trieste was designated to become the main centre of the foreign trade of the Monarchy, and the outpost for the further commercial advancement of the Empire. However, from the beginning the governmental efforts to promote Trieste met with marginal success only. The city's geographical role itself undermined the possibilities of the port in world trade. Moreover, the Viennese government was too penurious and inefficient to make Trieste attractive even for the commercial connection between the Adriatic ports.

See KALTENSTADLER, "Die österreichische Seehandel", and IVAN ERCEG, "Aussenhandel der Nordadriatischen Seestädte als Faktor im Entstehung der kapitalistischen Beziehungen im Oesterreich im 18. and 19. Jahrhundert", *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschafts-geschichte* 55 (1968): 464-480.

<sup>64</sup> KELLENBENZ, *The Rise of the European Economy*, p. 289. For Austrian foreign trade through Trieste see KALTENSTADLER, "Die österreichische Seehandel" (The author quotes incorrect data for Bohemian foreign trade of 1768 from the incomplete contemporary statistics. See the last part of his article p. 30).

Maria Theresa issued a decree ordering the Bohemian merchants to use the port of Trieste exclusively for their long-distance exports and imports. The Court justified the new law in financial terms invoking the cheap sea transportation from the port of Trieste, and threatened to impose an extra 10% customs duty on Bohemian commerce if the merchants would not abide by the rules in 6-12 months.<sup>65</sup>

The ordinance provoked vigorous protests from Prague. The Bohemian *Guberno* together with the Bohemian merchants argued that the Court had completely ignored the extremely costly price of transportation between Bohemia and Trieste as well as the fact that Bohemian exports were directed not only to the "south" but also to the "north", i.e. Russia, Holland, Denmark and England. Furthermore, they remonstrated that the new measures would destroy the established commercial connections of the Bohemian traders without providing them with any sufficient substitute.<sup>66</sup>

The decree was eventually rescinded. If implemented it would have undoubtedly had a detrimental if not catastrophic impact on Bohemian long-distance exports. The Bohemian merchants, having at their disposal a cheap water connection through the Elbe (Labe) to the port of Hamburg, lacked any reasonable incentive to send their goods overland to the port of Trieste. In fact, at the end of the 1760s Bohemian long-distance trade used the port of Trieste for only 1% of its exports and 10% of its imports.<sup>67</sup>

The attempt on the part of the Habsburg government to abruptly divert the commercial naval routes of Bohemian trade

<sup>65</sup> The decree of Maria Theresa of 1 April 1771, and the copies of the circulars of the BOHEMIAN *Guberno*, 6 May 1771, 12 Jul 1771; *SUA*, ČG Com 1755/1772, 1771, J 70.

<sup>66</sup> *BHEMIAN Guberno* to the Court of Maria Theresa, 25 Apr. 1771. *Ibidem*.

<sup>67</sup> For merchandise exported from and imported to Bohemia through Trieste in 1760 see the list of 27 Feb. 1762, *SUA*, ČG Com 1755/1772, 1762, H 5. For the year 1767 see *ibidem*, 1770, A 6.

reflected the fashionable belief in the overwhelming importance of legal measures which could be used indiscriminately by the administration as a magic tool to introduce quick reforms not only in the sphere of state administration, internal politics and religion, but also in the socio-economic conditions of the country. Maria Theresa applied this principle with an alacrity and naiveté that mirrored the surprising extent of her inability to tackle the economic and financial problems of the Austrian Monarchy.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

In the 1730-40s Bohemia found herself at the threshold of a general economic upsurge. By that time she had already witnessed modest growth in industrial production which had provided a solid base for her recuperation in the sphere of foreign commerce. Significantly, the extent of the per capita value of the foreign trade of Bohemia seemed then to be equal to that of France. Although her limited access to colonial markets, an agrarian system based on *robota*, and the fiscal policy of the Habsburg government prevented the country from maintaining parity with the leading power of the Continent, Bohemia obviously was not simply an appendage on the periphery of the European commercial "core".<sup>69</sup> The analysis of the volume,

<sup>68</sup> For the commercial policy of Maria Theresa and Joseph II see in particular Beer, "Die österreichische Handelspolitik", pp. 3-204; GUSTAV OTRUBA, *Die Wirtschaftspolitik Maria Theresias* (Wien: Bergland, here also extensive bibliography).

<sup>69</sup> The concept of peripheral regions that included also Central Europe assumes that in early modern times they were reduced to assisting the economy and commerce of the west European "core". According to this notion serfs in the periphery produced mostly raw materials and food while free workers in the core manufactured industrial products. See KRIEDTE, *Industrialization before Industrialization*, p. 36; IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN, *The Modern World System. Vol. 1: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origin of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. (New York: Academic Press, 1974), pp. 103-129.

The economic development of Bohemia during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries indicates that the concept is based on many inferential data.

structure, and results of Bohemian exports not only undermines such a notion but indicates their considerable direct impact on the broad spectrum of social and economic phenomena, such as the beginnings of industrialization, the social stratification of the underprivileged groups, population growth and even the evolution of the *robot* system. But the main significance of Bohemia's expanding commerce probably lies in the huge positive financial balance it generated because it was money that defined the strength, set the pace and often even determined the nature of all important changes and reforms that began to transform Bohemia into a modern country.

