

HISTORICAL DEMOGRAPHY AND GENEALOGY. THEIR APPROACHES IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

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Abstract: This study is a reflection on the possibilities for cooperation between the fields of historical demography and genealogy. The first part of the paper summarizes the development of genealogy as a discipline in the Czech context. The paper goes on to recapitulate theoretical and practical examples of the involvement of genealogy in historical-demographic research in western historiography, especially in the North American context. The paper then discusses Czech development from the 1960s to the present. The paper compares the possibilities of both approaches by introducing the creation of a database using the classical application of the method of family reconstitution, discussing its pitfalls and the characteristics of such research in the Czech context. The paper then presents the possibilities of applying genealogical approaches and evaluations the situations in which applying such approaches is most appropriate.

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Introduction

This study summarizes the mutual influence of historical demography and genealogy in past scholarship. At the same time, it reflects on the basic differences between the historical-demographic method of family reconstruction and the genealogical method. The aim of the author, whose research is focused primarily on social history, family history and rural history, is to point out the possibilities of applying genealogy in those fields and to discuss its contribution to the creation of quantitative databases, to which it can add a qualitative dimension thanks to its focus on individual and individual phenomena.

Genealogy is one of the auxiliary fields in history. Its purpose is to study the relationships among individuals arising from their ancestry. Although it has been experiencing a boom over the last 30 years and is one of the few fields in history that has drawn an unprecedented level of interest from across the general public, it is not perceived favourably in the Czech historiography. The mass popularity of

genealogy is the reason why the unclear boundaries between genealogy and family trees are being blurred. A family tree is supposed to be a widespread hobby, while genealogy is regarded as a scholarly method, which a historian uses to examine familial relationships and their changes without any personal interests and without any societal pressures (Hlaváček – Kašpar – Nový, 2002: 141).

These differences were more extensively elaborated on by Viktor Palivec as early as in the 1940s (Palivec, 1941: 1–2). He divided genealogy in a wider sense (*Familienkunde*, *Sippenkunde* in German) into genography and genealogy in a narrower sense. By the term genography – a family tree – he meant descriptive genealogy (*Familiengeschichte* in German), which can be most useful in chronicling, as opposed to genealogy (*Familiengeschichtsforschung* in German) in the sense of the examination of lineage which can be useful for historical and biological purposes (*die naturwissenschaftliche Familienkunde* in German). A researcher who uses genealogy in their research will not be content with merely compiling a “bloodline chart”. Their primary goal is to analyse the reconstructed relationships and to interpret them in a wider context. The blurring of the boundaries between the definitions of a family tree and genealogy resulted in the fact that family tree research currently tends to be seen as an archaic term for genealogy. However, the discussion panel titled *The Misery of History?! Genealogy, DNA and Family History*, which was held as part of the 12th Congress of Czech Historians in Ústí nad Labem in 2022, clearly showed that the way genealogy is perceived by the professional community has started to change significantly for the better, and that genealogy can also serve as a prominent interdisciplinary tool integrating social sciences and natural sciences.

Genealogy, and by extension family tree building, has undergone considerable evolution in the Czech context. Periods of strong interest have alternated with periods of distinct downturn. In the Czech context, the first peak of interest can be dated back to the 1930s and 1940s. At that time, a large amount of family tree building guides and periodicals were being published and included articles from the prominent historians of that period. Multiple organisations were founded, among which particularly the *Rodopisná společnost československá v Praze* [Family Tree Society of Czechoslovakia in Prague], which published *Časopis rodopisné společnosti československé v Praze* [Journal of the Family Tree Society of Czechoslovakia in Prague], stood out (Vošta, 2019: 54–55). The short-lived (1941, 1946–1948) journal *Rodokmen* [Lineage], which was published by the *Svaz přátel rodopisu* [Union of the Friends of Family Tree Building] from 1939 onwards, initially under the title *Členské zprávy Svazu přátel rodopisu v Praze* [Membership Reports of the Union of the Friends of Family Tree Building in Prague], offered more diverse content (Černý, 2021b: 16–17).

The impulse that triggered this strong response in the society of that period, was that a contest for the longest farming peasant family was announced in the mid-1930s. The source materials for the contest, which took place under the auspices

of the Association of Rural Chroniclers and the Czech Agricultural Council, were examined by a commission, whose members included, for example, the historians Václav Černý and Václav Davídek as well as the Director of the Archive of the Ministry of the Interior Jaroslav Prokeš. The goal was to highlight and to express appreciation to peasant families who demonstrated uninterrupted succession on a single rural landholding for a period of at least 100 years (Davídek, 1941: 37–170). There was also a similar initiative in the form of a contest organised by the Regional Trade Council for entrepreneurs who were able to demonstrate that the tradition of their business dated back 100, 150 and 200 years respectively (Melkesová, 2008: 14–15).

The organisational activities and results of the research by family tree researchers of German nationality remain largely ignored nowadays. From late 1927 and early 1928 onwards, they associated in Ústí nad Labem where the *Zentralstelle für sudetendeutsche Familienforschung* was founded by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Heimatforschung in Aussig*. Until the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established, this association had been publishing a periodical titled *Sudetendeutsche Familienforschung*, the publication of which was resumed in the 1970s and continues to the present day. This association, of course, was not the only one of its kind in Czechoslovakia at that time. Another Sudeten German family tree building organisation was *Der deutsche Verein für Familienkunde für die Tschechoslowakische Republik*, founded in Prague in 1929, which published a journal titled *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Vereines für Familienkunde für die Tschechoslowakische Republik*. The phenomenon of what is referred to as *Familienbücher* (*Sippenbücher*) is linked to German family tree research. The creation of these books was inspired by the German context and an effort to reconstruct the family histories of families settled in certain locations for many generations. Later on, this phenomenon was negatively associated with the Nazi ideology “Blut und Boden” (Schlumbohm, 2021: 116). Under the influence of this ideology, a megalomaniacal project was launched, which involved processing hundreds of thousands of parish registers from dozens of thousands of locations inhabited by Germans. In spite of around 14,000 workers having been employed for this purpose, very little of the material that was obtained was published before the project was terminated in 1943. The extensive residual data of this project are still deposited in Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie – the branch office of Sächsisches Staatsarchiv in Leipzig. The book series titled “Deutsche Ortssippenbücher”, the publication of which has been ongoing since the 1950s, is also based on this project (Pánek, 2018: 185–221; Melkesová, 2008: 15–21). In spite of the negative connotations, these materials are still very valuable. They can also be useful in current historical-demographic research, as is the case of the works by Hans H. Donth (Nekvapil, 2020: 195; Nekvapil Jirásková, 2019: 76).

The establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939 resulted in a decline in the activities of these associations and in the termination

of publication of the overwhelming majority of family tree periodicals. People were required to present evidence of a non-Jewish origin, based on records of vital events, in order to be able to perform certain occupations, particularly the ones related to the civil service. The specialised *Lineage Office for Bohemia and Moravia – Sippenamt für Böhmen und Mähren* was set up for these purposes (Melkesová, 2008: 13–19).

The revival of interest in family trees at the level of individual citizens after World War II was interrupted by the rise of the Communists to power in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. The impacts of this included, for example, definitive closure of genealogical associations and termination of publication of their periodicals. This did not change until the political situation eased up in the 1960s. Among others, the *Česká genealogická a heraldická společnost* [Czech Genealogical and Heraldic Society] was founded in Prague, which has existed, with a break, up until now and which published its journal titled *Listy genealogické a heraldické společnosti v Praze* [Bulletin of the Genealogical and Heraldic Society in Prague], which is still published today under the title *Genealogické a heraldické listy* [Genealogical and Heraldic Bulletin]. In the early 1970s, it was joined by *Genealogické a heraldické informace* [Genealogical and Heraldic Information], published by the Moravian branch office of the society in Brno at that time (Plichta, 1997: 3–7).

The period after November 1989 can be regarded as the second peak of interest in genealogy in the Czech context. In 1990, the Czech Genealogical and Heraldic Society in Prague was renewed and, in 1996, the *Moravská a genealogická společnost v Brně* [Moravian Genealogical and Heraldic Society in Brno] split off to become an autonomous entity. As interest grew among the general public, new family tree compilation guides were also published. However, due to the digitization of the most frequently used archived materials, which has been taking place since approximately 2007, the content of these guides quickly became obsolete. In this respect, the broadcast of a programme on the Czech Television titled *Tajemství rodu* [Ancestral Mystery], based on the *Who Do You Think You Are?* international franchise, had a crucial impact. This sparked a really massive public interest in genealogy and in the services of professionals and created a demand for up-to-date literature (Černý, 2018: 153–154).

Genealogy and Historical Demography in Western Historiography

In the Western European context, the work by the historian Louis Henry and the archivist Michel Fleury from 1956 onwards had an absolutely crucial impact on the development of historical demography. They drew attention to a source which had not been used up until that time: parish registers. Subsequently, they published together the family reconstitution method based on excerpts from church records (Fleury – Henry, 1956; Maur, 1978: 77–782; Maur, 1968: 72–83). Louis Henry himself was very well aware that the most demanding aspect of

research utilising this method consists in making excerpts from the records and carrying out the actual family reconstitution. He believed that he could speed up research significantly by utilising genealogical material that had already been created. He verified this hypothesis in practice as early as in the same year when he analysed the population of the Swiss city of Geneva (Henry, 1956). As source material, he used a publication mapping the genealogy of individual Genevan burgher families from the sixteenth to the twentieth century (Choisy, 1947).

Two years earlier, a 1954 book by Jacques Henripin, the founder of Canadian historical demography and the Department of Demography at the Université de Montreal, had been based on a similar concept. Henripin had studied in Paris and the dissertation that he successfully defended was written with guidance from Louis Henry. His 1954 book, in which he carried out a demographic analysis of population trends among French settlers in Canada in the early eighteenth century, was based on that dissertation (Henripin, 1954). Thomas Hollingsworth focused his interest in a somewhat different direction. In his demographic analysis, he covered population trends among the lower nobility in the United Kingdom (Hollingsworth, 1964).

Efforts towards further development of mutual cooperation between historical demography and genealogy can be observed from the 1960s through the 1980s. In North America, authors focused mainly on the theoretical possibilities of utilising genealogy in demographic research in connection with the family reconstitution method (Dyke – Morrill, 1980). Thanks to the development of computer technologies, they were able to create computer software that could interconnect individual persons documented in vital records based on their blood and kinship relations. The Canadian and Western European historiography created what is now referred to as automatic computer-aided family reconstitution thanks to the fact that these regions were considerably ahead in the necessary technologies and the related development of database software (Desjardin – Beauchamp – Legaré, 1977).

In this respect, the greatest successes of North American historiography are their demographic-genealogical databases. In the United States, *The Utah Population Database* (UPDB) is a platform of this kind. The Huntsman Cancer Institute of the University of Utah was originally behind its creation. The main goal was to research the connections between genetics and incidence of cancer in a certain sample of the population. As opposed to that, the Canadian databases were continually created for the purposes of demographic analyses. The first one of them, the *BALSAC population database*, was created through cooperation between Université Laval, McGill University, and Université du Montréal, and its family reconstitution is based primarily on the registers of married Catholics. These were locally supplemented by information on births and deaths. Overall, this database covers the period from 1621 to 1971. Another important Canadian database is *RPQA – Registre de la population du Québec ancien* [Population Register of Historic Quebec]. Two research centres with shared staff, specifically the

Département de démographie at Université de Montréal and the *PRDH – Programme de recherche en démographie historique* [Research Programme in Historical Demography], were behind its creation. *Institut Généalogique Droin (IGD)* based in Québec also participates in ensuring the operation of the programme and the use of this database. The programme was launched in 1966 with the aim of reconstituting the French settlers of the Province of Québec based on the evidence in parish registers and other sources from its beginnings in the seventeenth century until the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the decades of its existence, experts from such disciplines as history, demography, genealogy, medicine, linguistics, anthropology, biology and genetics have been involved in this programme. The inherent interconnection of PRDH with genealogy is also rooted in its basic motto: “*Genealogy serving science, and science serving genealogy!*” (Grulich, 2018: 15–17). The database contains more than 700,000 transcribed entries from population registries of baptised, married and buried persons, originating from 135 Roman Catholic parishes from the years 1621–1799. They have been supplemented by many thousands of records of deaths from the first half of the nineteenth century. Development in the creation of these multidisciplinary platforms is further heading towards the integration of the BALSAC database and the RPQA database and their integration with the digitised censuses. The newly created database called Integrated Infrastructure of Quebec Population Historical Microdata (IMPQ) will contain nearly 6 million persons from the parish registers and marriage contracts supplemented with nearly 10 million persons from the censuses from the years 1852–1911 (Dillon, 2018: 34).

The Western European historiography definitely did not lag behind and the idea of collaboration between historical demography and genealogy was highly topical. This is clearly evidenced by two monothematic issues of *Annales de démographie historique*. The first, which was published in 1976, printed papers by the authors who stood at the inception of this concept – Louis Henry and Thomas H. Hollingsworth. The fact that this topic also resonated in the German historiography is evidenced by a paper authored by Arthur E. Imhof. Six years later, another monothematic issue was published, which was divided into two sections – *Démographie historique, généalogie et histoire sociale* and *Démographie historique, généalogie et génétique* (Černý, 2021b: 18–21). Particularly thanks to the methodological and, above all, technological development, which was advancing more rapidly than in the Czech context, the western historiography was able to create extensive demographic databases serving the purposes of a quantitative analysis and containing tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of persons. In the French context, this development culminated in the launch of the unique *TRA project*, initiated by Jacques Dupâquier. Thanks to active collaboration with French genealogists, a database of the descendants of 3,000 married couples whose surnames started with the three letters TRA, was created (Honc, 1986: 34–38; Grulich, 2018: 10–18).

Historical Demography and Genealogy in the Czech Context

The inspiration and methods of historical demography spread into the Czech context through experience and contacts established by Czech historians in France since as early as the late 1950s. However, the late 1960s was the crucial period in this respect (Maur, 2013: 563). The first researcher who tried to point out the possibility of cooperation between genealogy and historical demography in the Czech context was the demographer Josef Srb. He used his own genealogical research as the initial sample for his analysis. Using an example of three geographically unrelated groups of bearers of his surname, which he called tribes, he tried to identify unique phenomena typical of each of them. In his work, he clearly demonstrated the feasibility of such research. From the methodological point of view, Josef Srb saw a fundamental difference between the work of a family tree compiler and the work of a demographer in terms of the possibilities of long-term research: *“By their nature, most historical-demographic studies are what is referred to as cross-sectional studies: the population of a specific territory is studied over a limited period of time, even if such a period of time may be relatively long. In spite of this, these studies mostly do not involve examination of a long period of time. As opposed to that, family tree studies take on the form of a longitudinal analysis: in these studies, we trace a lineage or lineages over several generations, usually spanning several centuries”* (Srb, 1969: 125–131).

It is undoubtedly interesting that Josef Srb wrote his ground-breaking text in the Czech context without having been familiar with similar research in Western Europe or Canada. Those were not introduced to the Czech general public, including the community of historians, until five years later through the work of Eduard Maur who particularly appreciated the quantity of material that genealogists were able to collect, and the considerable explorational potential, which this material offered for future historical-demographic researchers. He justified his view particularly with the considerable savings in time, which a demographer would otherwise have to spend collecting the basic data for research: *“(…) saves the laborious process of making excerpts from sources and reconstituting families, which in itself is uninteresting to a demographer, unlike a genealogist, and is carried out by a demographer only as the means necessary for statistically processing individual pieces of data”* (Maur, 1974: 4–7).

Unlike western historiography, which was constantly progressively developing, particularly thanks to utilisation of computer programmes and the expansion of databases since the late 1960s, the Czech historiography started to stagnate in this respect (Polišenský, 1974: 3–7). The root cause was the reduction of activities of the Czech Genealogical and Heraldic Society in Prague, which had the direct consequence of terminating contacts between genealogists and demographers. And yet during the 1980s, the historian Jaroslava Honcová was still advocating the use of genealogy in sociological research and in studying the transformation of

the Czech rural context associated with the collectivisation of agriculture. In her endeavours, she was also supported by her husband Jaroslav Honc (Maur, 2006: 55–59) who published an original demographic study, the purpose of which was to document the population development of more than a hundred Czech aristocratic families from the early sixteenth century until the end of the eighteenth century (Honc, 1969: 20–51).

The four meetings of genealogists and heraldists, organised in Ostrava in the years 1980, 1983, 1986 and 1989, had a very strong effect. Honc and Honcová regularly attended these meetings. Particularly the third meeting (1986) was of fundamental importance in this respect because it was the meeting with the highest number of presentations dealing with the possibilities of collaboration between genealogists and demographers. Jaroslav Honc presented a paper discussing collaboration between demography and genealogy in France. In this paper, he wondered about the failure of the contemplated joint research of Czech genealogists and historical demographers. Eduard Maur was behind this idea in early 1983 and the research was supposed to be carried out by members of a taskforce called “Eight” from the Czech Genealogical and Heraldic Society in Prague, which specialised in family forms and reconstitution of bourgeois and aristocratic families. However, as a consequence of reorganisation of the Society, the project never materialised (Honc, 1976: 1–13; Honcová, 1984: 76–79).

The fact that genealogy offered major benefits, and not only for historical demography, was evidenced by the high number of economic historians attending the third meeting of genealogists and heraldists in Ostrava. Among them, there was also Milan Myška who saw great explorational potential of genealogy in the study of social mobility as part of economic history. He reminded the audience of the usefulness of “micro-genealogical” studies of families of entrepreneurs. A planned study of workmen’s families, whose members had been employees of Vítkovice Ironworks since they were founded in 1828, was presented by Jiří Palát (Müller, 1986: 124–127, 131–134). The goal was to create a set of data for each family and to organise an exhibition in the museum in Vítkovice. The results of his work became the content of a publication, which served originally as a guide to the exhibition, and which was actually put together (Palát, 1989). The culmination of these developments was a study by Eduard Maur printed in the mid-1990s where the author described the various systems of inheritance law and their application in Bohemia. Among other things, the research was based on family chronicles of two settled peasant families from the Nymburk county and the Semily county (Maur, 1996: 93–118).

Later on, experts involved in historical-demographic researches became less interested in genealogy. For nearly 20 years, not a single mention of possible connection appeared in the professional literature. The reason behind this was that the interest of Czech historical demography was focused on the *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen* international project since the mid-1990s. The studies that were

created as part of this project and as a follow-up on this project and which were based on the family reconstitution method, came closest to the application of genealogy, especially in those cases where they tried to decipher the kinship relationship between the previous owner and the new owner in connection with transfers of rural landholdings (Grulich – Skořepová, 2015: 50–75). Interest in genealogy was not revived until the 2014 publication of an article by Barbora Kuprová, which focused on the use of a genealogical computer programme in historical-demographic research activities (Kuprová, 2014: 155–177). This article opened a discussion in the pages of the *Historical Demography* journal (Černý, 2015: 105–122). The matter of using genealogy in researching the network of social relationships inside a rural community was also discussed at a panel discussion titled *Possibilities for Studying Family Relationships in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, which was held during the 11th Congress of Czech Historians in Olomouc (Velková, 2018: 246).

In recent years, the popularity of genealogy has also been reflected in the high number of undergraduate theses dealing with the graduates' own families or locations related to their ancestors. This trend also led to improvement in the quality of genealogy education at Czech universities. In many places, genealogy is no longer perceived as one of the less important auxiliary fields of history. In spite of that, regrettably, attempts to apply genealogical methods in historical research are not very frequent. In this respect, the works by students of the Institute of History at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice are an exception. The outstandingly good thesis by Hanka Tlamsová stands out among them. She based her thesis on a genealogical database of families of “showpeople” or “fairground people”, *Schausteller* in German, *světští* in Czech. This special socio-occupational group is most often associated with fairground amusements and circuses, is characterised by strong family ties and a nomadic way of life, and is therefore closed off to the majority society. Tlamsová's thesis documented lineages of showpeople from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Such research could never be done without the involvement of genealogy. Separate publication outcomes, which dealt with marriage strategies (Tlamsová – Černý, 2019: 67–99) and with the circumstances surrounding the selection of first names (Tlamsová, 2021: 46–56), have also originated from this research.

Another dissertation featuring the analysis of the possibilities to use siblings of heirs of landholdings was also based on a genealogical database of 41 families. In addition to the selection of an heir, the dissertation focused on domestic service and the process of getting trained in a craft, military service, and the circumstances of entering into marriage (Černý, 2019). A separate study dealing with nuptiality was also based on this dissertation (Černý, 2021a). Micro-history also offers ample opportunities to apply genealogy and has been found useful in historical-demographic research. The life of Alžběta Griebhuberin née Waßnerin, which was presented by Josef Grulich in his book on migration strategies, can

be seen as an example of this. In that instance, the application of genealogy was crucial to uncovering the kinship network and explaining the defining moments of the main female character's life (Grulich, 2018:159–193).

Creating databases “*for one's own use*” is a common practice in Czech historical demography. A historian creates their own database for the purposes of their research, which covers a chosen area, and only shares the results of their analyses with other researchers. This trend, which is alien to, for example, Canadian historical demography, hinders the development of further research because when the creator of the database dies, the database is usually lost. The succeeding generations of historians are condemned to keep creating other new databases. And yet, they could use the already created data sets to investigate their theories, develop their concepts, and elaborate their answers to questions. In this respect, it is commendable that Hana Tlamsová made most of her database available to the professional community as well as to others in the form of a two-volume lexicon (Tlamsová, 2020; Tlamsová, 2022).

The Family Reconstitution Method

Since as early as the work by Louis Henry and Michel Fleury in 1956, where they presented this method for the first time, the method of family reconstitution has drawn considerable attention from the professional community. This methodological inspiration spread into the Czech scholarly world through contacts between Czech and French historians since the second half of the 1960s. As early as the beginning of the following decade, studies based on the family reconstitution method started to be written in our country, too, and they are still being written to this day. However, particularly before the mid-1990s, there were few studies of this kind. The reason was the time-consuming process of making excerpts from a number of parish registers and, even more importantly, the subsequent manual examination of such excerpts. The situation improved with the expansion of computer technologies, and the gradual digitisation of basic sources was of great assistance.

The first studies of this kind were associated with Eliška Čáňová. She carried them out together with Pavla Horská using the Břevnov neighbourhood in Prague as an example (1972) as well as, more extensively but without finishing the research, in the county of Broumov (1972). Other localities followed, such as the town of Rudolfov (1972) covered by Jaroslav Honc, or the city of Ústí nad Labem (1974) and the town of Budyně nad Ohří analysed by Ladislav Dušek. In the mid-1980s, Petr Mužík (1986) contributed with his research focused on Domažlice, and Ludmila Fialová published the first results of the family reconstitution she had carried out for Jablonec nad Nisou (1992). She continues to analyse the collected data along with her students (Grulich, 2002: 137–139). The next generation of historians using family reconstitutions in their research was more or less

involved in the *Soziale Strukturen in Böhmen* project. This includes particularly the area of the town of Štáhlavy, covered by Alice Klášterská Velková (2009), and the parish of Kapličky, covered by Austrian historian Hermann Zeitlhofer (2014). The compilation of family forms was significantly easier for the latter. The author was able to use a unique genealogical source from the church of the Cistercians in Vyšší Brod – the family cadastres (*Familienkataster* in German, *rodový katastr* in Czech). Marika Poullová (2006, 2007) also used these sources as a basis for her analyses for the parish of Rožmberk nad Vltavou (Černý, 2021b: 21). The youngest generation of historians is represented by Markéta Skořepová, Šárka Nekvapil Jirásková and Barbora Janáková Kuprová with their studies based on family reconstitutions for the estate of Nový Rychnov (2013), the village of Stružinec (2017), and the estate of Škvorec (2020) (Grulich – Skořepová, 2015: 59; Nekvapil Jirásková, 2019: 71–75; Janáková Kuprová, 2020).

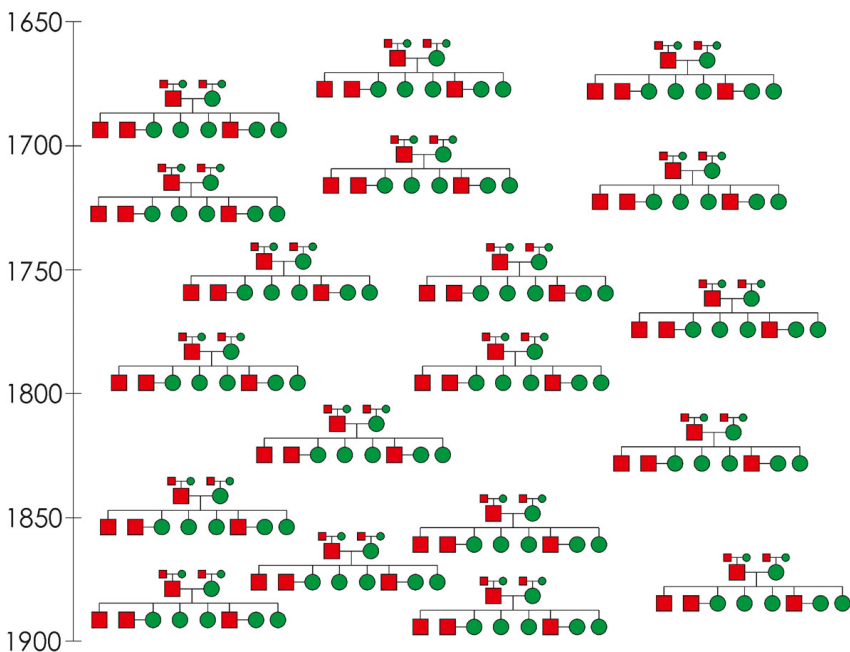
In order to assess the degree to which the application of genealogy in historical demography is different from the family reconstitution method, it is necessary to generally outline the research process based on this method. In practical terms, Barbora Janáková Kuprová divides the application of the method into three stages, which are not entirely interdependent. The first one involves extracting all the names from parish registers. This is followed by the processes of actually reconstituting each family, creating family reconstitution forms and dividing them into categories according to the achieved completeness of reconstitution. Only then can a historian carry out the calculations of demographic indicators, which he or she is interested in and which are the outcome of his or her research (Janáková Kuprová, 2020: 46).

The basic prerequisite is to make excerpts from the source base, which means applying the method of complete extraction of all names from the parish registers. The result is the creation of a certain type of index of names. This makes it significantly easier to search for the parish register entries necessary for reconstituting specific families. The existence of an index of names created by the church parish administrators can make this stage of research significantly easier. However, their dating usually varies and before the obligation to maintain such indices was enacted (1790), their existence had depended on the personal initiative of the given parish priest or dean (Maur, 1972: 50). With these indices, there is also a problem with the way they are structured. In most cases, the indices of married persons only contain the surname or prename of the groom, although there are exceptions. It is also possible to encounter an index written according to prenames, not surnames. The prerequisite for reconstitution of each family is a marriage and the formation of a married couple, to which their descendants are assigned. In order to capture the births and deaths of most individuals in the parish registers, Louis Henry recommends extracting names from the registry of births at least 30 years before the first marriage and extracting names from the

registry of buried, i.e. deceased, individuals at least 30 years after the date of the last marriage in the database (Janáková Kuprová, 2020: 41–42).

The process of combining entries and persons into family units, that is, the actual family reconstitution, can be seen as a clear parallel to genealogical research. The basic difference between the two, and the problem with applying the family reconstitution method as opposed to genealogy, is its dependence on a demarcated geographical unit. The goal of a historian studying demographic development is to reconstitute all families that produced children or at least all married couples living in a certain area. A historical demographer tries to find all parish registers entries regarding the specific family, that is, from the marriage of the parents (the starting point of observation), through the dates of their births, the dates of births, marriages and deaths of all their descendants, up to the death of one of the spouses (the ending point of observation). If the wife died first, then a marriage of the widower means that a new isolated family was started. There is also the separate issue of setting aside marriages referred to as “presumed marriages”. These are marriages, of whose existence the demographer knows but for which the demographer is unable to create a family form because he or she did not find a record of the wedding.

DIAGRAM 1. DATABASE CREATED THROUGH FAMILY RECONSTITUTION



Source: author’s own work.

Migration is the greatest enemy of the family reconstitution method. The method is ideally intended to be applied to an enclosed population where there was absolutely no migration of the inhabitants of the region or where such migration was minimal. This is a major obstacle on the road to creating an ideal family form. For example, it is not a problem to find a record of a marriage for a woman because the wedding usually took place in the place of residence of the bride. However, if a son married a bride who came from a neighbouring parish or a neighbouring estate, then this piece of information will be missing. If a daughter who got married left with her husband from a different estate, a historical demographer will have a record of the marriage in the register but a record of her death and information on her descendants will be missing from the family form. It would be possible to describe more similar cases. The result of this phenomenon is a low success rate of family reconstitution, which depends on the ratio between the total number of family forms and those forms where the starting and ending points of observation are known. Thus, depending on the level of migration, the success rate may vary. In western historiography, discussions about the representativeness of the method have regularly appeared (Kasakoff – Adams, 1995; Ruggles, 1999). For example, Louis Henry documents a 62 % success rate for “his” village of Crulai. Barbora Janáková Kuprová reports a mere 32.0–37.4 % success rate for the estate of Škvorec depending on the length of the researched period (Janáková Kuprová, 2020: 46–49). Šárka Nekvapil Jirásková generally states that the usual value is below 50 % (Nekvapil Jirásková, 2019: 72).

Genealogy

The family reconstitution method views individual families as autonomous units. As opposed to that, thanks to identification of blood and kinship ties, genealogy sees several families as a part of a single unit – the lineage. A historian thus may focus their analysis in a descending order from the examined population, through individual lineages and their generational units – families – down to individuals. The time required for research using genealogy depends on the applied search pattern. From among the different types of the results of reconstitution of genealogical ties, three are probably most suitable for historical demography. Each of them is time-consuming to a different extent, and each requires different levels of genealogical expertise. When working on reconstitution of a certain lineage, a genealogist proceeds retrospectively from the proband (the subject of the genealogical study) towards the oldest documented ancestor.

A *pedigree* (*Ahnentafel* in German, *vývod* in Czech) containing only the direct ancestors of a proband as well as a *direct lineage* (*Stammlinie* in German, *přímá linie* in Czech) can be described as a chart that is almost completely unsuitable for historical-demographic researches. This is the most basic way of putting together a line of succession and when a genealogist uses this method, he or she most often

follows the male line. For each generation, a genealogist searches for a record of marriage in a parish register and the dates of birth and death of the spouses, or a record of a marriage between the widowed person and the vital statistics of the new partner. An extended version of this, which has its justification in terms of its usefulness in historical demography, is *direct lineage with siblings*. With this method, a genealogist first seeks out the direct lineage and then adds the data on siblings at the levels of individual generations. A genealogist finds their dates of birth and death and, if applicable, information on marriage and vital statistics of the bride. The result is a version of a chart which is interesting even from a demographical point of view, and a researcher can compile any desired number of such charts based on pre-set criteria.

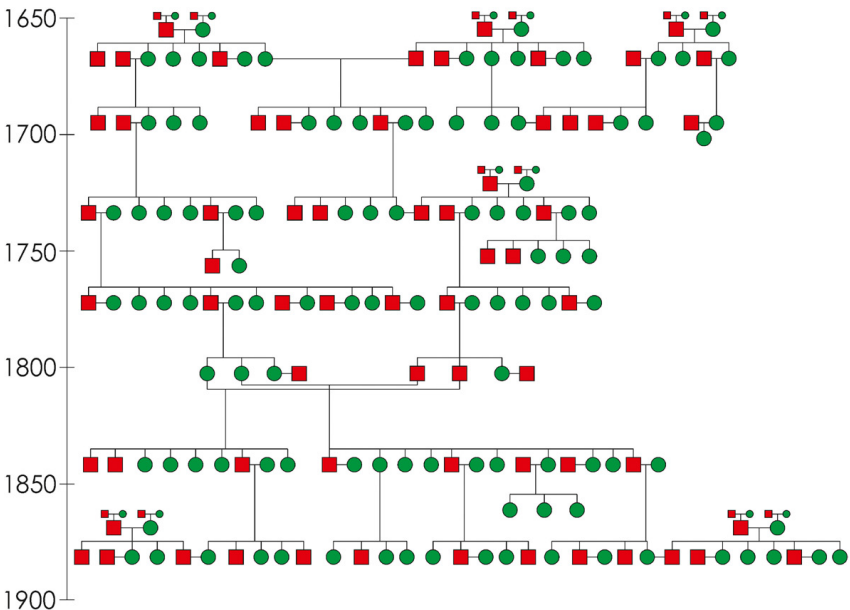
With respect to the number of individuals included, the two versions described below are the most interesting ones to a historical demographer. They are similar and the way of creating them is also virtually identical. These versions are a *bloodline chart* (*Stammtafel* in German, *rodokmen* in Czech) and a *complete family tree* (*Nachkommentafel* in German, *rozrod* in Czech). In both cases, a historian usually proceeds retrospectively at the beginning, meaning from the proband to the oldest documented ancestor. After reaching the oldest documented ancestor, the procedure is reversed and the researcher proceeds towards the present and searches for descendants of the oldest documented ancestor. In doing so, the researcher may choose from two options. For a *bloodline chart*, the researcher searches for and adds information on all the descendants of the oldest documented ancestor who bear the surname of the proband. In practice, there is a certain inconsistency which involves including out-of-wedlock children of single mothers, after whom they received their surnames. For married daughters, all information on them and their partners is collected while information on their descendants is not collected. The problem, which has not yet been resolved in theory, is adoption of surname according to the name of the original owner of the village house. Nevertheless, it is probably satisfactory that the decisive factor is kinship along the agnatic line (Marečková, 2004: 64–68).

The most demanding version, which, however, is also the most interesting one from the point of view of genealogy as well as historical demography, is a *complete family tree*. Its compilation starts the same as with a bloodline chart, meaning that the researcher retrospectively works to find the oldest traceable person in the lineage and, subsequently, starts from that person and searches for their descendants towards the present. However, unlike with a *bloodline chart*, the researcher searches for absolutely all descendants of the oldest documented ancestor along both the agnatic and cognatic lines, regardless of marital status, legitimacy of descendants or adoption of surnames according to the name of the original owner of the village house. In both versions, the result of such a procedure can be a set of families interconnected by blood ties, spanning a period from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, which may contain more than 1,000

individuals in the case of a bloodline chart and several times more than that in the case of a complete family tree.

The major advantage as compared with the family reconstitution method is the fact that genealogy is not, and cannot, be limited in geography and time. This allows a historian to follow migration strategies even across generations. However, it is necessary to choose one of the charts, each of which has its advantages and disadvantages, and then stick to it during the research. The historian can also choose criteria for selection of an examined sample and can focus lineage reconstitution on specific social groups of the population. As soon as the researcher starts to interconnect multiple individual isolated families with horizontal and vertical blood and kinship relations, the matter at hand is genealogy. Unlike a family tree, the goal of genealogy is certainly not to reach the oldest ancestor, whatever it takes. Rather, the goal is to decipher the kinship networks.

DIAGRAM 2. STRUCTURE OF A DATABASE CREATED BY APPLICATION OF GENEALOGY



Source: author's own work.

A demographic database based on genealogical research offers a very wide range of possible applications. First of all, it makes it possible to examine all demographic indicators in the same way as family reconstitution. It also makes it possible to study the intervals between births, the duration of marriage, marital

fertility, infant mortality, marriage age, and life expectancy. Thanks to the fact that it is not limited geographically, it makes it possible to bridge over aspects that are problematic for family reconstitution, such as different manorial lord affiliations of a betrothed couple or their different parish affiliations. This makes it possible to study specific social-occupational groups which are associated with frequent migration such as “showpeople” or knackers in the Czech countryside. In the case of such groups, applying the family reconstitution method is absolutely pointless. Without the use of genealogy, these groups would be unobservable from a demographic point of view. The same can be said about other segments of rural society, which may not be generally associated with migration like the aforementioned groups but with which a high degree of spatial mobility is observable nonetheless. These are most often serfs who were subject to a given manorial lord, as was the case with ordinary settled inhabitants. However, the migration of such groups was most often linked to their employment, in which they served a manorial lord or a municipality. Thus, the manorial officials made decisions determining their work locations and municipalities leased municipal premises to them to carry on their trades. In the case of such groups, genealogy offers a completely new range of possibilities for examining intergenerational migration linked to the transmission of an occupation in other ways than along the paternal line and the need to find a new work location. Studying the migration of, for instance, millers, blacksmiths, shepherds, farm bailiffs or rural teachers with the help of genealogy offers a historian the opportunity to seek answers concerning topics which are otherwise impossible to tackle.

A broad field of application opens up for genealogy in those cases where demographic research is interconnected with the social history and social aspects of the life of rural people as well as other population groups. Using genealogy, it is possible to reconstruct the social homogamy of marriage partners as well as networks of social relationships and how they changed. The issue of social mobility in connection with entering into marriage is an enormously interesting issue that often escapes attention. Church dispensations connected with kinship links between a betrothed couple are a completely ignored topic, and the same is true for the degree of kinship interconnection within village communities in general. Genealogy also lends itself to studying the influence of kinship ties on the choice of godparents. This is closely related to the choice of a child’s prename, particularly in those cases where a child was given a non-traditional name at baptism. The choice of prename according to a child’s gender and birth order, which is frequently mentioned in the literature, has also not been researched, at least not in the Czech context (Skořepová, 2016: 80).

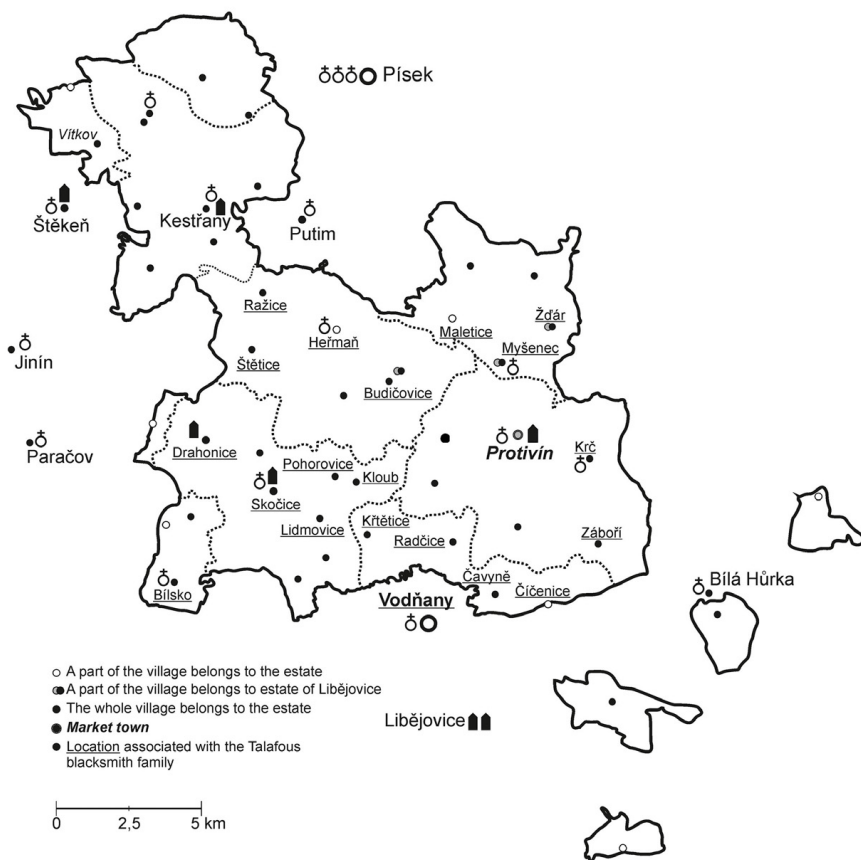
Micro-Historical Excursion – How the Son of a Peasant Became a Blacksmith

The theoretical bases of a historian's work need to be put into action and their benefits need to be tested using specific examples. For this purpose, a micro-historical investigation was carried out, in which the Talafous family from South Bohemia was used as an example. This family is associated with the blacksmith's trade, an occupation not usually associated with increased spatial mobility. The genealogical succession of the family was traced using a *bloodline chart*. The focus was placed particularly on intergenerational migration connected with the transmission of the trade from father to son as well as on the work mobility within the lives of specific blacksmiths.

The Talafous family were originally peasants. Their traces can be documented under the nickname Talafous in the 1547 rent-roll [urbář, urbarium] of the estate of Písek. The complicated situation regarding the preservation of the land registry books (*Grundbücher* in German, *gruntovní knihy* or *pozemkové knihy* in Czech) makes it possible to follow the genealogy of the family approximately from the 1620s onwards and, in greater detail, from the 1670s thanks to the existence of the first serf lists for the estate of Drahonice. Serf lists are archival sources that were created to track the population of the serfs subject to a specific estate. The serf lists are usually structured by village and, within each village, by social categories – peasants, smallholders, cottagers, agricultural labourers, widows and orphans. These sources bore various names: *Waisenregister* or *Mannschaftregister* in German; *soupisý poddaných* or *poddanské seznamy* in Czech. From the late 1680s on, it is also possible to use the surviving parish registers of the parish of Kestřany.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Talafous family was divided into multiple branches. In that generation, four sons survived into adulthood. The two oldest ones obtained landholdings in neighbouring villages and adopted other nicknames based on the names of the original owners of the houses they took over. The middle son Lukáš remained in his father's house and landholding. The youngest son Vít (ca 1666–1740) took over the blacksmith's shop in Ražice by marrying the widow of the previous holder. In 1700, Vít bought the manorial inn in that village from the manorial lord. Next year, thanks to the fact that he paid off the debt that was secured by the smithy, and due to the fact that he was raising two sons of the previous blacksmith, he was also allocated the village smithy in Ražice. Vít retained the inn and probably did not himself work as a blacksmith thereafter. However, all his sons grew up to become blacksmiths. The oldest son Jan was a blacksmith in Drahonice for most of his life (Genealogical Chart 1), the middle son Petr started as a blacksmith in the village of Pohorovice 6 km away, and the youngest son Matěj became a blacksmith in his home village of Ražice (Genealogical Chart 2).

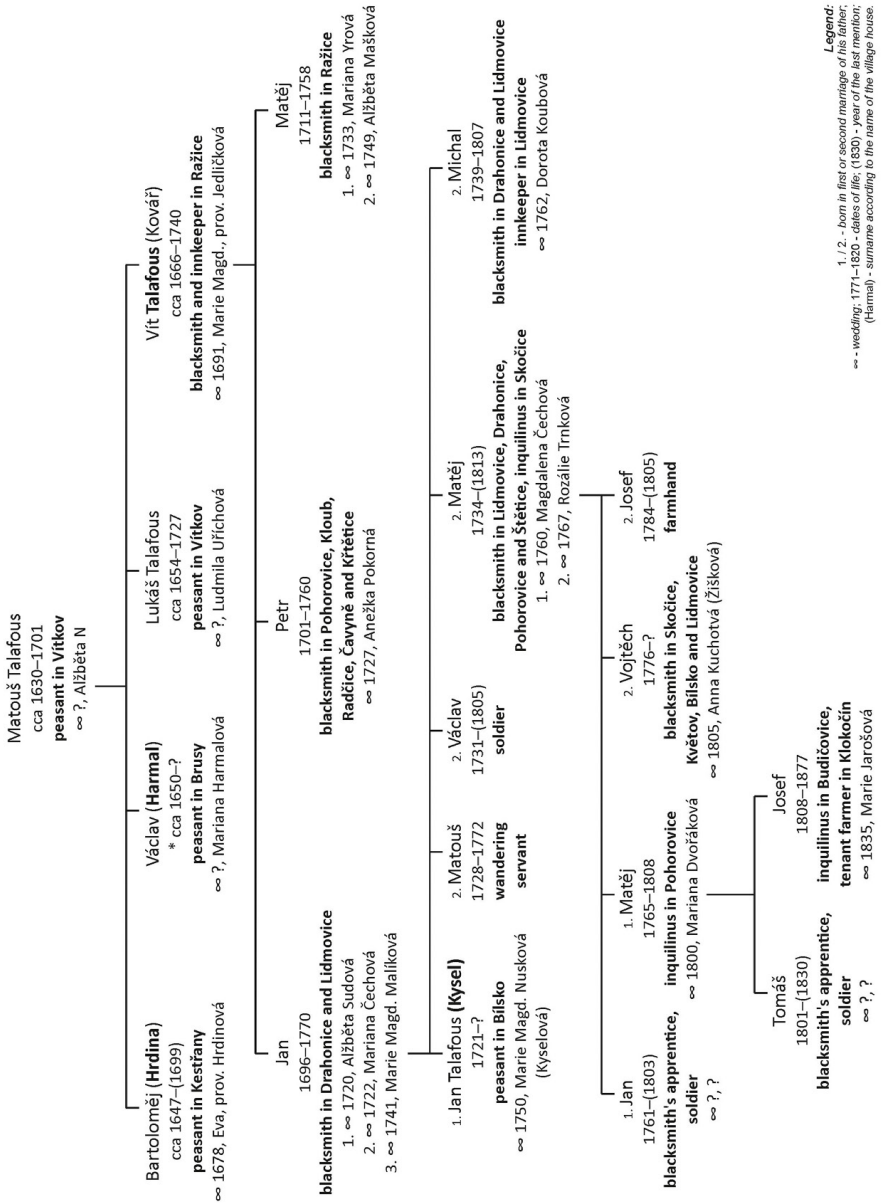
MAP 1. LOCATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TALAFOUS BLACKSMITH FAMILY AND THE PARISH STRUCTURE OF THE ESTATE OF PROTIVÍN (1800)



Source: author's own research.

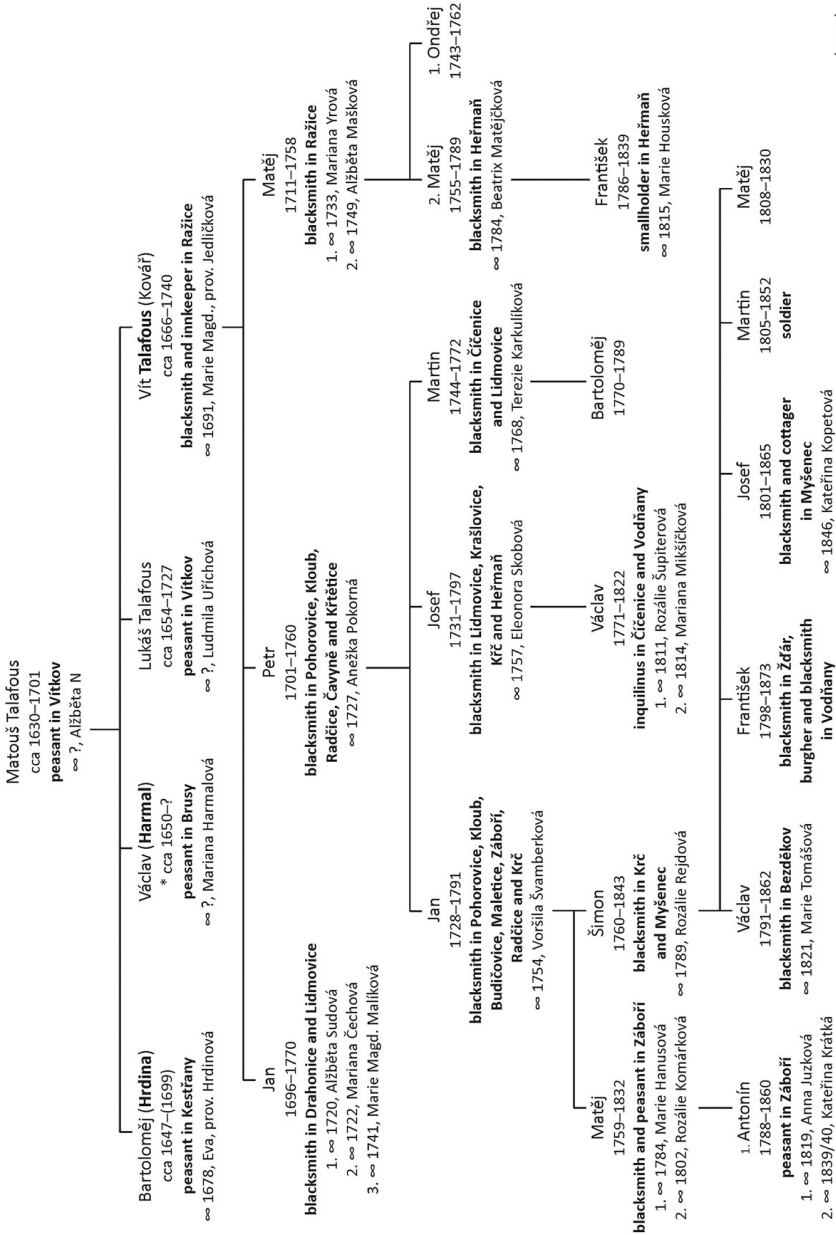
The example of the sons of Vít Talafous already shows the intergenerational migration of craftsmen as well as the work mobility of individual blacksmiths during their lives. Both indicators were directly influenced by the existence of suitable workshops – village smithies. It was a frequent custom that a blacksmith had “a place of permanent residence” in a certain locality, where he was registered by the manorial officials, but also had a “place of business”, which might be in a neighbouring village. The officials recorded this situation on both sides, meaning that if the blacksmith in question did not live in the village with the smithy, they wrote his name next to the smithy along with the name of the village in which he was registered. Conversely, in a record of the blacksmith and his

GENEALOGICAL CHART 1. THE TALAFOUS BLACKSMITH FAMILY (PART 1)



Source: author's own research.

GENEALOGICAL CHART 2. THE TALAFOUS BLACKSMITH FAMILY (PART 2)



Legend:
1. / 2. - born in first or second marriage of his father;
∞ - wedding, 1771–1820 - date of life, (1830) - year of the last mention;
(family) - surname according to the name of the village house.

Source: author's own research.

family, the officials wrote an additional piece of information concerning where he performed his trade in the year in question. Usually, a blacksmith also lived in the place where he performed his trade and his children were born there, as well.

In order to avoid the need to describe all acts of migration of individual members of families, these acts of migration were entered into the genealogical chart. It contains a selection from the *bloodline chart* of the Talafous family, capturing the blacksmith part of the family from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century. All male members of the Talafous family who reached at least the age of 18 years were recorded. If the craft tradition was interrupted, the replacement occupation was recorded. The endpoint of the research, which lies in the first half of the nineteenth century, was enforced by the lack of data, particularly for the parish of Skočice. This resulted from the introduction of new separate parish register volume for individual villages as part of the reforms implemented by Joseph II. These parish registers for small locations with a low annual number of events are held at the relevant village offices or town halls up until today, in accordance with the applicable retention periods. This somewhat limits the possibilities of more extensive extraction of data from them.

The focus of this micro-historical excursion has been to point out that even for a common part of the settled rural population, such as the family of a village blacksmith, there is evidence of considerable spatial mobility. The result is that the blacksmith married outside his place of birth and that the blacksmith's children were born in different localities belonging to different parishes. Such mobility has a direct impact on the completeness of family records and thus on the success rate of classic family reconstitution, which can be increased in a fundamental way by using genealogical approaches.

Conclusion

In theoretical terms as well as through a specific micro-historical investigation, the study presented here clearly illustrates the benefits of using genealogy in historical demographic research. The interest in possible collaboration between genealogists and historical demographers has deep roots in the Czech context. However, these roots were not built upon without interruption after 1990. The situation in western historiography has been different up until today. This is partly because Louis Henry himself, the founder of historical demography as a scientific discipline, realised the benefits of genealogy for research into the development of population in the past. Extensive demographic databases containing hundreds of thousands or even millions of individuals, which are based on genealogical research and are often still available and useful to genealogists today, have been created and are constantly being expanded not only in France, Germany, and Switzerland (Fertig – Guzzi-Heeb, 2021) but, above all, overseas in Canada and the United States.

As one of the few paths which is able to attract interest from the general public in studying the past, genealogy is capable of accumulating finances for new software applications, which allow for cheap and user-friendly networking of a larger number of researchers and for their collaboration on multiple genealogical databases. This is made possible by the easy way of sharing a database through an internationally recognised GEDCOM file (.ged), which most genealogical software applications are able to import. Some computer programmes also allow for continuous updating of a database in a computer through an account on the manufacturer's website. With knowledge of log-in information, multiple persons can work on the same database. We should also mention the digitisation of parish registers, which are the most coveted sources for genealogical and demographic purposes. This has helped to relieve significantly the workload of archive research rooms and enabled anyone to have access to sources at all times. The heuristic stage of historical-demographic research has thus been speeded up and also made easier by the fact that researchers working with digitised and published materials are not constrained by the limited number of volumes of archival sources made available for a single visit.

There is only a small component of truth in the claims that frequently point out the indistinguishability between the procedures used by genealogy and the family reconstitution method. Certainly, the heuristic stage of research is basically the same – excerpts are made from parish registers. However, the fact alone that the family reconstitution method views a family as an isolated unit, which is also examined on an isolated basis, speaks for itself. The author of this study does not mean to say that the family reconstitution method does not have its important place in historical demography. Nevertheless, it is substantially limited by its inevitable clear geographic and temporal demarcation in such a way that a historian would need to go beyond such demarcated territory in order to obtain all the necessary data.

In this respect, it is also imperative to recognize the basic differences between historical demography and genealogy as approaches to our understanding of historical reality. Historical demography is a discipline primarily focused on the study of the demographic behaviour of the population in the period before the introduction of modern population statistics, i.e. before the first modern census (in Bohemia in 1869 and 1857 respectively; Berrová, 2006: 276). By its very nature, historical demography aims at the analysis of aggregate data and populations. Thus, it is fully sufficient for studying anonymous data, whether they have been obtained by the aggregative method or by reconstitution of families.

The approach of genealogy differs, in that it manifests itself primarily in focusing on the individual within the network of his or her kinship relationships – the family and the unique phenomena associated with the life of that family. Although it is not always the aim of genealogy to find the oldest possible ancestor and to compile a family tree, it is usually perceived as such. Nevertheless, the work of

a genealogist can result in a large database of thousands of interrelated persons. In this respect, it must be recognized that historical demography and genealogy are separate epistemological systems, but ones that work with the same sources and have a considerable potential for mutual enrichment.

The primary aim of this study has certainly not been to explicitly evaluate which approach is „better“ and which is „worse“. The author, who is not only a historian but also a professional genealogist with long experience, has sought to point out that genealogical approaches can be of significant assistance in situations where historical-demographic methods, especially family reconstruction, fail. Both approaches must be considered legitimate, and the use of one or the other depends entirely on the aims of the researcher, as well as on the population or social group he or she seeks to analyse.

The example of the Talafous family in South Bohemia, discussed in this article, illustrates the broad possibilities of analysing specific labour migration associated with performance of certain occupations in an otherwise stable population of enserfed people. Such research may point out the fact that a higher than usual rate of spatial migration does not necessarily have to be associated with completely specific or even marginal groups of village population such as “showpeople” or knackers. This is just one of the fields in which the use of genealogy opens up new opportunities for interdisciplinary research into the lives of the population of the Czech lands in the past.

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