

THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF BOHEMIA
AND MORAVIA AS REFLECTED IN THE
AUSTRIAN TRADE STATISTICS (1790—1839)

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Under the Empress MariaTheresia the first trade statistics of the Austrian Monarchy were issued in 1778. However the trade activities of the different countries of the crown were not yet considered. The first statistics dealing with the various countries did not appear until 1790, the year of the Emperor Josef II's death, and they continued till 1839. After this date the printed reports no longer take into account the share of the different countries in import and export. In the century following the Treaty of Westphalia not Bohemia but Silesia was the important industrial and trading country of the Monarchy. Not until the loss of Silesia was Austria forced to industrialize Bohemia and Lower Austria systematically.

By the death of Josef II Bohemia was the most important exporting country of the Monarchy (5.7 Mill. fl.), while Lower Austria had the highest import rate (11.4 Mill. fl.). It is characteristic of the development between 1790

and 1839 that Lower Austria, Bohemia's main industrial competitor, increased its export twelve times during this period, while only doubling its import, whereas Bohemia only trebled its export, increasing its import by one and a half; also, comparing the export trade of all the countries of the Monarchy Bohemia shows a considerable lagging. Between 1790 and 1839 the whole import of the Monarchy rose by 325%, the share of Bohemia by 140%. The whole export rose by 569%, Bohemia's share only by 224%. Despite this retarded development the country remained almost continuously an important factor in the export trade balance, remaining a dependable support to Austrian economic development.

In determining the trends of Bohemian economics it is instructive that according to the Customs reports of 1830 and 1839 Bohemia had practically no economic connections with Hungary and Transylvania, whereas Moravia in 1839 was linked to these countries with a quarter of its import customs and two thirds of its export customs. The author assumes as cause for the weaker economic development of Bohemia, particularly when compared with that of Lower Austria, the conservatism of the Bohemian industry. The wool industry often still worked with old methods, and the introduction of the steam-engine was delayed by the abundance of natural water-power. In making Trieste also Bohemia's port Maria Theresia damaged the natural trade connection with the northwest (Hamburg). It was only after the construction of the North-Southern Railway (began 1841) that this unhealthy trade situation changed. After 1848 the Bohemian industries were modernized.