

LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN
MODIFICATIONS OF REGULAR OPEN-FIELD SYSTEMS
IN BOHEMIA

Martin Dohnal

In this study, an extraordinary piece of archive material is analyzed: a description of rural land ownership in the 1670s and 1680s which makes it possible to reconstruct the layout of plots in selected communities belonging to the Jesuit domain of Bernatice near Tábor. On the basis of these findings, the author discusses alterations to the field system in the late middle ages and the early modern age, conducting comparisons with other parts of Europe. It seems that some plots were redefined and reassigned in the late middle ages. One can also deduce that the share of dominical lands increased in the period before the battle of the White Mountain in connection with more grounds being cultivated by the lords themselves, with an enlargement of the percentage of arable land in general, and with the construction of a large number of fish ponds. For the period after the Thirty Years' War, the study proves that the

size of the arable area as a whole decreased, while dominical lands grew once more and rustical land tenure experienced considerable changes in connection with the postwar reassignment of deserted plots. The author further analyzes the 18th-century reforms of the field system and the resulting changes on the examined plots.