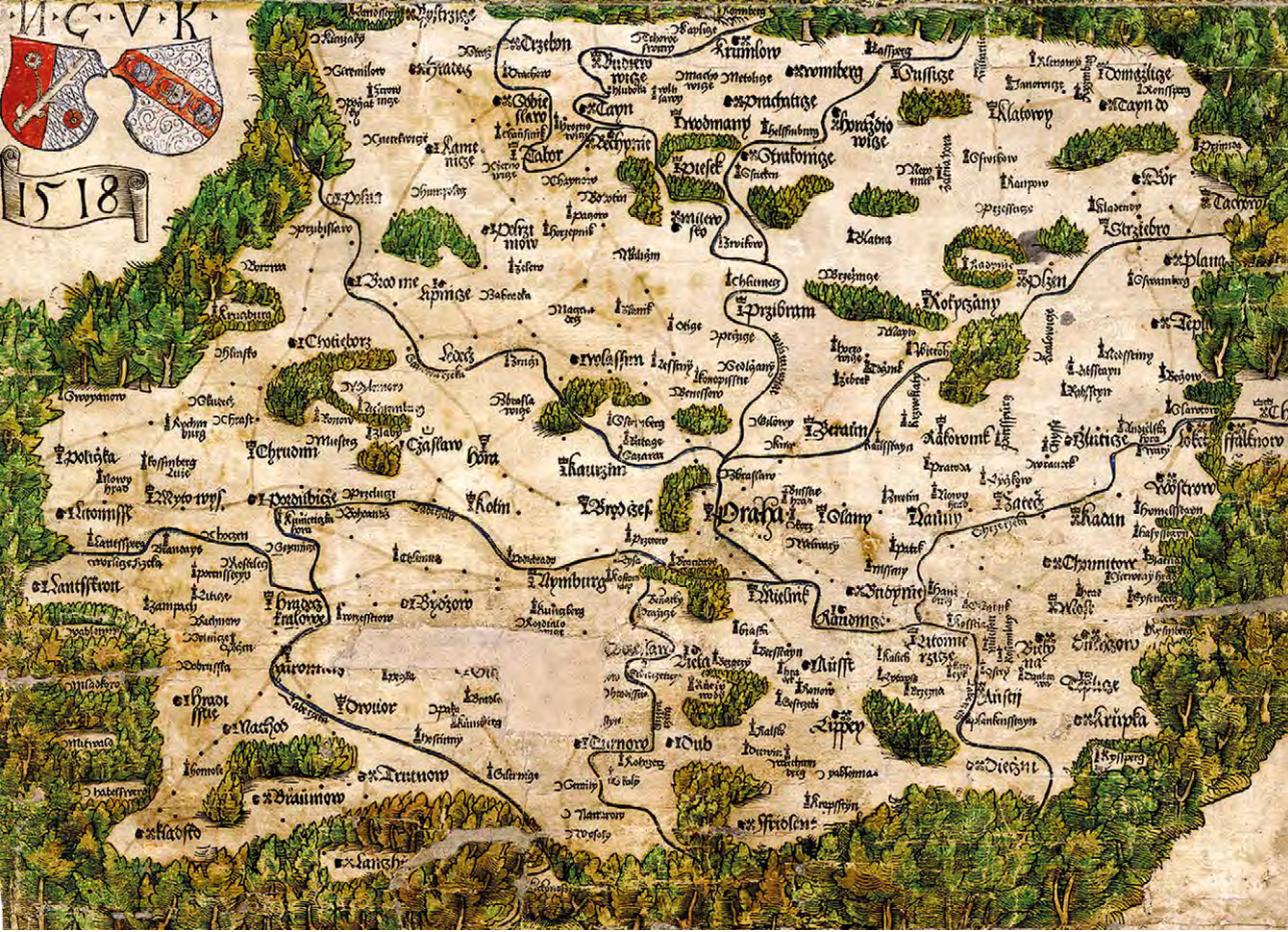


SECOND EDITION

A HISTORY OF THE CZECH LANDS

JAROSLAV PÁNEK,
OLDŘICH TŮMA
ET ALII



A History of the Czech Lands

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JAROSLAV PÁNEK, OLDŘICH TŮMA ET ALII
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Historical emblem of the Bohemian Kingdom. A two-tailed jumping lion was an emblem of the Bohemian Kingdom from the 13th century. It has been used till today as part of the state emblem of the Czech Republic. Engraving from a new edition of the *Renewed Land Ordinance for the Bohemian Kingdom* from the 18th century.



PRO TU NAŠI REPUBLIKU



VYTRVÁME AŽ DO KONCE

Vojtěch Preissig's poster, *For Our Republic, We Shall Persevere to the End*, from 1918.

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Introduction to the second edition

At the beginning of May 2004, the Czech Republic joined the European Union. The histories of the individual states in this community are both perceived and known to varying degrees. When the European past is narrated, a small number of states dominate, either because of the extraordinary culture they produced or the power that they wielded; while the others are either occasionally remarked upon or completely overlooked. Nearly every child in primary school knows at least something about the former, while the latter remain vague or utterly unknown even to most educated people. The former are usually and automatically perceived as the axes of any framework of a common European history, while generally speaking even renowned experts have little to say about the latter. To this group belong mainly those states that seem at first glance “young”, including the new members of the European Union. Little is known of them, and thus these countries have no choice but to strive to show that they too have indisputably belonged to Europe for a very long time. Some of these countries at least have the advantage of a name that has not changed for centuries: Poland and Malta, to give two instances, have held the same appellation for over a thousand years and thus they are generally identifiable.

Czechia (*Česko*) however does not have that advantage. Although the historical lands which constitute it – that is, Bohemia (*Čechy*), Moravia (*Morava*) and the southern part of Silesia (*Slezsko*) – have belonged together for many centuries now, the framework of their state has changed many times in that period. Sometimes the change was profound, on other occasions it was only formal; but each change destabilized these countries in the eyes of Europe. After Great Moravia (*Velká Morava*; 9th century) there came the Bohemian Principality (*České knížectví*) whose ruler occasionally donned a royal crown (9th to 12th centuries); and the Bohemian Kingdom (*České království*; from the end of the 12th century), which in the 14th century spread its territory to the north and took the title of the Crown of the Bohemian Kingdom (*Koruna Království českého*) or the Bohemian Crown (*Česká koruna*). In 1526 this state, made up of five crown lands, entered a confederation with the lands of Austria and Hungary, becoming one of the three main parts of the Habsburg Monarchy. After an unsuccessful attempt to re-arrange Europe on the basis of the Estates, in which the Bohemian Confederation was to have a firm place (1619–1620), the Habsburg conception of Central Europe was established. The Czech state was ever more firmly bound to the Viennese governing centre, until the year 1804 when it almost dissolved into the Austrian Empire in the long process of centralization. After the

dualistic transformation of the Habsburg monarchy into Austro-Hungary in 1867, Bohemia, Moravia and Czech (at that time Austrian) Silesia became part of the western half of the monarchy, named Cisleithania (*Předlitavsko*).

Austro-Hungary was defeated in World War I, with Czechoslovaks participating politically and militarily in anti-Habsburg resistance. This enabled the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic (*Republika československá*), which in the years 1918–1938 became an active element in the system of European states. The Munich Agreement of 29 September 1938 limited this independent state to the reduced Czecho-Slovakia (*Česko-Slovensko*), which under the pressure of Nazi Germany collapsed with the creation of the Slovak Republic (14 March 1939). The remainder of Bohemian and Moravian territory was occupied by the German army on 15 March 1939, and the following day the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (*Protektorát Čechy a Morava*; in German, *Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren*) was established. After liberation by the Soviet and American armies at the beginning of May 1945, the restored Czechoslovak Republic (*Československá republika*) emerged. As a consequence of a Communist putsch in February 1948, it became one of the satellites of the Soviet Union and in 1960 changed its name to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (*Československá socialistická republika*). The federalization of this state led at the beginning of 1969 to the administrative unification of the Czech Lands under the name the Czech Socialist Republic (*Česká socialistická republika*). The fall of the Communist regime in November 1989 brought several smaller changes to the country's name: it was now the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (*Česká a Slovenská Federativní Republika*), which at the close of 1992 was divided into two independent states through agreement between Czech and Slovak political representatives. On 1 January 1993, our overview of Czech history ends with the birth of the independent Czech Republic (*Česká republika*).

These regular transformations of the state's framework paradoxically had little impact on historical Czech territory. The Czech Republic occupies more or less the same tract of land as the territory ruled by the Bohemian princes roughly one thousand years before. It was then, as it is today, inhabited by Slavs who from ancient times took the common appellation of Czechs (*Češi*) and who – in view of the traditions of the historical lands – sometimes refer to themselves as Czechs, Moravians (*Moravané*) and Silesians (*Slezané*). However, important national minorities also lived on this territory, helping to create the history of this space – mainly Germans, Poles and Jews, and in the modern era Romanians and Slovaks. National minorities represent fully fledged subjects of the history of this space, just as all the inhabitants of all the historical lands (including those who for longer periods in the past belonged to the territorially expanded Czech state). This given state of affairs, like the integral connection of Czech history with that of Europe, was crucial to the preparation of this book.

Those who initiated and organized the work, like the authors of individual chapters, are members of two institutes of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic – the Institute of History, which is concerned with the period from the beginning of the Middle Ages to World War II, and the Institute of Contemporary History, which concentrates on research from the 1940s to the contemporary period. The authors are for the most part also lecturers at Charles University in Prague, and in some cases at Masaryk University in Brno. Thanks to this, they

were able to exploit their pedagogical experience with university students in drawing up the individual chapters, and so present a text which would have been impossible without the close co-operation of the institutes of the Academy with the foremost Czech universities. The aim of such a large collective of authors was not to continue long-standing, endless debates about the sense, interpretation and periodization of the events of this country's past, but to present a domestic readership, as well as readerships in several foreign languages, with an overview of Czech history that was as factually accurate and as cogent as possible. They concentrated on the development of the state and the inhabitants with special emphasis on social, cultural and political metamorphoses, as well as religious and national aspects.

Prior to the first edition of the Czech version of this book (2008), there were no single-volume comprehensive histories of the Czech Lands available for the public. Even worse was the absence of a similar work for foreign readers until the extended English version of this book was published (2009). While all our neighbours have already published such works in the main languages, Czech historical writing has lagged behind. It was this gap that motivated our work and in this volume we thus attempted to summarize and present the fruits of recent research on Czech history for a wider public. Given the ever increasing distance from events in modern history that the older generation still remembers, it was possible to supplement this volume with text from the early years of the third millennium.

Since a publication of this kind cannot present all the information that might be expected, we placed especial emphasis on the bibliographies, both to this introduction and the individual chapters. These are not merely lists of all the important works, but a selection of mainly book-length publications that offer syntheses and other approaches, and we combined works that are now classics of the genre as well as more recent research. Apart from major monographs and studies, we also draw attention to books that, while maintaining a reliable standard of expertise, are also accessible to a wider readership thanks to the style in which they were written. Readers, encouraged to study Czech history more deeply as a result of our overview, should find sufficient sources in these bibliographies for their further explorations.

Jaroslav Pánek – Oldřich Tůma

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I. Territorial Development and the Transformation of Landscape



Bohemian crown lands on the map by Franz Johann Joseph von Reilly from the year 1791. Viennese cartographer F. J. J. Reilly produced the 1:2000000 scale map of the Bohemian crown lands for the atlas *Schauplatz der fünf Theile der Welt*. The map shows not only Bohemia, Moravia, but also the whole of Silesia, whose major part belonged to Prussia from 1742, and Upper and Lower Lusatia, ceded to Saxony in 1635. The title of the map is adorned with a Rococo cartouche, copperplate.

1 The Formation of the Geographical Core of the Czech State

A range of lands or regions – in various modes of dependence, both closer and looser or in the form of personal union – have been connected with the geographic core of the Czech state in the course of the preceding centuries. However, during the thousand years of its history, not only did the boundaries of the state, lands, regions, local and other forms of administration change, but so too did the terms and names which expressed Czech statehood. The original political designation of individual state entities are recorded in maps and written sources – above all in Czech, Latin and German. Deeds and bills from the Middle Ages, and documents from the Modern Era capture the transformations and variations of the political and geographical nomenclature.

The geo-political and military-strategic significance of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia has always been influenced by its “classic position in the heart of Europe”. From prehistoric times, the Czech Lands have been distant from the economic, cultural and, later, political centres, even though an important trade route crossed the territory of today’s Moravia and Slovakia (the Amber Road which joined the Mediterranean region with the Baltic coast). Protected by mountains at its border, in the notional centre of the continent, with no marine harbours and without access to the large waterways (excepting the Elbe which rises here and the Danube nearby), without extensive fertile lowlands, the Czech Lands remained for centuries rather at the margins of the great political, economic and social processes of Europe. For the most part these were manifest in the Czech Lands after something of a delay and often less intensely.

František Palacký, the most important Czech historian of the 19th century, in the introduction to *The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*, cogently expressed the mutual bonds of natural conditions and developmental opportunities of both the society and, to an extent, the geo-political standing of the Czech Lands, mostly Bohemia, within the European framework: “Nature itself, having completed and formed Bohemia as a particular unit, thus predetermined the main character of Czech history... Distance from the sea, lack of great navigable lakes and rivers in the land, and that very wreath of border mountains which obstructs commerce and connection with the rest of Europe: these factors isolated Bohemia,



An aerial view of the Říp Mountain from a distance

and this lack of natural routes into the country was only compensated when artificial ones were carved out later.”

The Czech state, its core and borders, were formed from the beginning of the 10th to the beginning of the 11th centuries. However, before this, there were two attempts to constitute a state in the Czech basin and the Moravian valleys: Samo’s realm and Mojmir’s Great Moravian Empire. The Frankish merchant Samo, leader of the rebellious Slavs against the Avars in the first half of the 7th century, created a strong tribal union of Slavs after a series of victories over the Avars in Central Europe around the year 623 or 624. It is not possible to determine the exact territorial extent of the union, named Samo’s Realm (*Sámovova říše*), due to the lack of written information and archaeological sources. As the experts differ, we can only demarcate Samo’s tribal union vaguely. Its centre was most likely located in Moravia. Members of the union included Slavic tribes in Bohemia, Serbs of Prince Dervan, along the Elbe (Polabian) and the Saale rivers, northwest of Bohemia, and perhaps even part of Carinthia, also inhabited by Slavs. The borders of the tribal union were not stable, but changed in response to the political situation of the moment in Central Europe. Samo’s realm joined in common battle against the Avars and later against the Frankish king Dagobert I. After Samo’s death around 658 the historical sources are silent on the subject of the continuity or dissolution of the realm, and we

can neither assert nor rule out the possibility of further political events in the former centre of Samo's realm during the 8th century.

In the first half of the 9th century, we know of another power centre that began to form on our territory in southern Moravia around Valy near Mikulčice and Staré Město near Uherské Hradiště, and in Slovakia in the environs of Nitra. With the connection of the two regions by Mojmir I after Pribina was run out of the Nitra region around 833–836, the core of what would become Great Moravia (*Velká Morava*) was formed, including the settled territory of the Moravian valleys and the Nitra region. Its southern border reached into today's Austria in the area to the south-west of the confluence of the rivers Morava and Dyje (Thaya).

The Great Moravian Empire reached its utmost territorial and political extent in the era of Prince Svatopluk. Most probably after 883, Svatopluk expanded his influence to Bohemia, as well as to the Serbian tribes settled along the river Saale and apparently in the years 874–880 encroached upon the region of the Silesian tribes around the upper Oder and Vistula. In the years 883–884 Svatopluk took control of Pannonia; in the east his power probably reached as far as the upper Tisza after fighting in the years 880–882. Although the Great Moravian Empire was more powerful and its political system firmer than Samo's tribal union, the demarcation of Great Moravia's border remains a theoretical construct, founded as in the case of Samo's empire, upon available archaeological and written sources. It is not possible to draw on a map with any degree of exactitude those regions which are presumed to have formed part of the empire.

By the beginning of the 10th century after the fall of the Great Moravian Empire, the centre of political life shifted to Bohemia, where the Czech state (*Český stát*) began to form through the expansion of the Central Bohemian Přemyslid domain. Boleslav I began the unification process after 935 and to the end of the 10th century the Přemyslids controlled the entire territory of Bohemia including the eastern Bohemian domain of the Slavnikovce. Under Boleslav's governance there were also territorial conquests among his princes: in northern Moravia, to the Váh region, Silesia, Lesser Poland (the Cracow region), Sandomierz and further east to Čerwonograd. It seems that the Piasts pushed the Přemyslids back to Bohemia by the end of the 980s, and in the years 1003–1004, the Polish prince Bolesław the Brave controlled Bohemia. Only in 1019 did the Přemyslid Oldřich win Moravia back (that is, mostly the northern part of the country), joining it to the Bohemian principality and entrusting its administration to his son Břetislav. The territorial core of the Czech state, which was strongly influenced by natural conditions, had been formed for the centuries ahead.

The natural barrier, protecting the inhabitants of the Czech Lands and its seats, was created by a mountain zone covered by impassable woods, and with a notional border running through its middle. In the territories unprotected by mountains with dense forests, a natural border was lacking and it was mainly the south-eastern border of Bohemia and the southern border of Moravia that changed most often, and differ most from the present state.

In the time of Břetislav's reign in the years 1035–1055, Kłodzko (presumably from the 10th century), the regions of Zittau, Weitra and Zagost were part of Bohemia; however the regions of Cheb, Aš, Nová Bystrice and Landštejn did not belong to it. In southern Moravia the border with Austria was further south, and only about half-way through the 11th century

did it settle on the river Dyje. In north Moravia, Břetislav conquered the territory around Hradec nad Moravicí and thus laid the foundations of the future region of Opava. Beyond the Moravian Pass, he penetrated to the rivers Ostravice and Pszczyna. For a short period after his invasion of Poland in 1039 he controlled Silesia, the Cracow region and part of Greater Poland, including Gniezno and Poznań; but he had to give up this conquered territory over time. The Přemyslid princes gained several further lands during the 11th and 12th centuries for a transition period: in the years 1075–1076, the Dohna region; in the years 1076, 1085 and 1158 (to 1256) the Bautzen region; and from Hungary in 12th century on the right bank of the Olšava and Morava south of Uherský Brod in the direction of Hodonín. They forfeited the Sušice region (1124–1265) and part of the Weitra region (1179 saw the loss of territory in the regions of Vitoraz-Weitra; in 1186 the region to the west of Weitra was made over in fief to the line of Kuenrings).

By the end of the 12th century, the integrity of the Czech state was profoundly disturbed by the dissensions of the Přemyslids. Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa made over Moravia to Conrad Otto in 1182 as an imperial appanage and declared it a free margraviate independent of Bohemia. In 1187 Barbarossa also raised the Prague bishopric to the level of imperial principality. However after the death of the Bohemian prince Frederick (*Bedřich*) in 1189, when the Moravian Margrave, Conrad Otto ascended to the prince's throne in Prague, the Czech Lands were again unified. The independence of the Prague bishopric came to an end in 1193, since at that time Bishop Jindřich Břetislav from the Přemyslid line became Bohemian prince.

The territory of the Czech state was further enlarged in the second half of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th during the reigns of Přemysl Otakar II, Wenceslas II (*Václav*) and Wenceslas III. The expansionist policies of Přemysl Otakar II, motivated by the desire to strengthen his family and the ruler's power, turned to the south. In 1251, Přemysl Otakar II took Upper and Lower Austria, Styria (to 1254, and again to 1260), in 1253 Pitten and 1269 Carinthia, Carniola and most of Friuli (1270). To the west of Bohemia he gained the Cheb region for ten years (1266–1276). However he had to give up all these territories to Rudolf I of Habsburg in 1276. In 1256 the Bautzen region was yielded to Brandenburg; in contrast however the Sušice region was returned to Bohemia in 1265. Kłodzko briefly became part of the Piast region of Wrocław in 1278.

Wenceslas II, with his desire for greater power, turned his interests to the north-east and south-east. In 1290 he regained Kłodzko and in the years 1289–1292, gradually, the regions of Bytom, Opole, Těšín and Cracow; in 1291 also the western part of Cheb. In 1296 however he definitively lost the remainder of the Weitra region, over which Rudolf I of Habsburg gained control. As Polish king Wenceslas II extended his lands to Greater Poland (1300–1306), for his son, later Wenceslas III, he accepted the Hungarian crown in 1301. The emergent Přemyslid confederation which, in 1305 at the beginning of Wenceslas III's reign, was still made up of the Czech Lands, Poland and part of Hungary, collapsed with the death of the last Přemyslid in 1306.

In the 10th century the establishment of secular power together with the guarantee of the material and social standing of the ruler and his retinue led to the division of the country

into two smaller appanages (*úděl*; in Latin documents “pars”), administrated by members of the ruler’s line. These were not administratively independent territories, and in Bohemia, unlike Moravia, their sizes were not fixed and they were not heritable. For instance from the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th, we know of the appanage belonging to Wenceslas’s brother, Boleslav, in Stará Boleslav; also to Boleslav III in Žatec or to Jaromír and Oldřich in the Kouřim region. In the 1030s, Jaromír had land in the Plzeň region, and in the beginning of the 13th century also in the regions of Chrudim and Čáslav. Hradec Králové and Kłodzko are also mentioned.

After Prince Oldřich took control of Moravia, the first appanage was established; during the reign of Vratislav II two (of Olomouc and Brno); and by the end of the 11th century, three appanages (of Olomouc, Brno and Znojmo). The Moravian appanages were politically and territorially more stable than those of Bohemia. The Olomouc appanage possessed the castle network of Olomouc, Přerov, Spytihněv, Břeclav and Hradec nad Moravicí; the Brno appanage only the castle network of Brno; the Znojmo appanage of Znojmo and Bítov. The appanages ceased to administrate the regions half-way through the 12th century. In Moravia, they came to an end in 1197; in Bohemia only at the beginning of the 13th century. One of the reasons for the disappearance of these appanages was the extinction of the Děpoltic line, the last auxiliary branch of the Přemyslids, in 1223, and the coronation of Wenceslas I as the younger king in 1228.

Along with the appanages, there was also a castle administration in Bohemia and Moravia, or, in other words, a castle system. In the Bohemian crown lands of the early Middle Ages, the castle system formed the foundation of state power and administration. Executive functions and, gradually, those connected with tax were taken over by castles; presumably by the end of the 10th century, by the year 993, there is proof of the existence of castle provinces belonging to some of the new Přemyslid castles, for instance in the regions of Bílina, Děčín and Litoměřice. At the close of the 10th century among the administrative castles were Mělník, Kouřim, Čáslav, Mladá Boleslav, Žatec, Litoměřice, Bílina and Děčín; by the end of the 11th century also Chrudim and Hradec (Králové). Gradually castles that had been established earlier but in more remote places were joined with the administrative castles which were located in old settled territory, the fertile lowlands. Among the former there was above all Plzeň (Stará Plzeň or Starý Plzenec), and by the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th, Sedlec, Prácheň, Netolice, Doudleby, Chýnov and perhaps Bechyně. About mid-way through the 12th century the castle of Vraclav near Vysoké Mýto, founded by Břetislav I, became the centre of the castle province; in Moravia the castles of Olomouc, Přerov, Brno, Spytihněv, Břeclav, Bítov, Hradec nad Moravicí and Znojmo were of administrative level. The castle system, which created the basis of the state administration in Bohemia and Moravia from mid-way through the 11th century, began to fall apart in the second half of the 13th century during the rule of Přemysl Otakar II. Only at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th was the function of the castle network taken over by the regions (*kraj*). What were originally tax regions gradually turned into multifunctional administrative units.

2 The Bohemian Crown Lands

The next significant territorial transformations of the Czech state are connected with Luxemburg dynasty on the Bohemian throne, and mainly the dynastic policies of Charles IV. John of Luxemburg regained the Bautzen region in 1319; for helping the Roman King Ludwig of Bavaria the Cheb region also in 1322; and the purchase of the Görlitz region in 1329 (all of upper Lusatia – this name began to be used for the Bautzen and Görlitz regions from the 15th century – was added in 1363). The regions of Aš and Selb were integrated into the Cheb region in 1331. Among John of Luxemburg's significant successes in the area of foreign military activities was the addition of Upper and part of Lower Silesia in the years 1327–1335. The jural relationship of the Silesian principalities and Moravian enclaves in Silesia to the Bohemian crown lands developed and metamorphosed in the following centuries. The Czech state inherited Luxemburg itself through the father of John of Luxemburg, Henry VII.

During the rule of Charles IV, and then continuously from the 15th century, the terms Bohemian crown lands (*země Koruny české*), the Crown of the Bohemian Kingdom (*Koruna českého království*), *Corona regni Bohemiae*, or in short, the Bohemian Crown (*Koruna česká*) began to be used. Already on May 19, 1329, John of Luxemburg employed this general designation of the state for the group of lands under his rule. From 1348 Charles IV used this designation for both the original territory of the Czech Lands as well the added lands and foreign fiefs. The crown of St Wenceslas became the symbol for all the territories which made up the Czech state under one ruler. The basis of this territorial complex was the Bohemian kingdom; other territorial units began to be commonly referred to as auxiliary or incorporated lands. Charles IV, whose territorial gains were facilitated above all by his marriage policy, joined two further Silesian principalities to the Czech state, Świdnica (1353, through marriage; 1368 through inheritance) and Jawor (1368), Lower Lusatia (1368), and Brandenburg, which he purchased in 1373. In 1353 he gained the greater part of the Upper Palatinate, and two years later he definitively added it to the Czech state. At the same time through purchases and liens of castle, domains and towns in Vogtland, Meissen, Thuringia, Mecklenburg and Upper Palatinate, he created a dense network of foreign fiefs (in Latin called *feuda extra curtem*). He built a systematic zone of fiefs in Bavaria which linked to fiefs in the Upper Palatinate. In the 18th century, František Martin Pelc, historian and representative of the Enlightenment and national awakening, designated the Czech territory of the Upper Palatinate in the time of Charles as New Bohemia (*Nové Čechy*).

Near the end of his life, Charles IV in 1377 arranged the administration of territories of the Bohemian crown lands in such a way that the unity of the Crown would be maintained after his death. Wenceslas IV however was unable to hold together the crown lands he inherited from his father. In 1401 he lost the Upper Palatinate. In 1402 the Margrave of Meissen gained Dohna as fief. The same year Sigismund ceded the territory of Neumark to the Teutonic Knights, and part of Brandenburg from the 1140s; in 1415 he gave Brandenburg in lien to the Hohenzollerns and in 1423 Moravia also in lien to his son-in-law Albrecht of Austria (to 1437). The territory of Cheb was gradually reduced, almost to its present extent. During the