A Historical Demographer by Fate, or Lumír Dokoupil at Ninety

Prof. PhDr. Lumír Dokoupil, CSc. celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 25 August 2025. Since 1962, he has been a member of the Department of History at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ostrava (originally the Pedagogical Institute and later the Faculty of Education in Ostrava), which amounts to an astonishing sixty-four years of service – indeed, a tenure comparable to the reign of Queen Victoria. It is true that Lumír Dokoupil has never "ruled" the department, either formally or informally, yet he is a consummate veteran. He is regarded as a living chronicle of both the department and the faculty, and his visits to current members of the department are always welcomed and attentively received.

Lumír Dokoupil was born in the village of Hrabová, now a borough of Ostrava, which at the time lay on the very periphery of the core of the Ostrava industrial region. His family was directly affected by the specific economic, social, and demographic development of the area. For example, one of his aunts married a Galician immigrant in 1913. The Dokoupil family, however, arrived in the Ostrava region from the opposite direction, as documented in a genealogical-biographical study published in 2011.[1] Originating in the Drahany Highlands, it was only his father, Jaroslav Dokoupil, who – via Brno – settled in Hrabová, where he married Ludmila Benešová in 1933. Shortly thereafter, their only son, Lumír, was born. Professor Dokoupil thus represents, in a sense, a living illustration of the modernisation process he would later study throughout his life – the demographic transition. As he himself likes to remark, his father was one of eleven children, his mother one of five siblings, whereas he himself was an only child.

He graduated from the College of Education in Olomouc, where he had originally intended to study philosophy and history; however, as philosophy was not offered, he was obliged to replace it with Czech language studies. This proved fateful in its own way, as he has devoted himself to this field throughout his professional career, most often as an editor and copy-editor of historical works. After a brief period teaching at a secondary school in Hlučín, he was recruited by Milan Myška to join the newly established Department of History at the Pedagogical Institute in Ostrava. Since that point, Lumír Dokoupil's entire career has been closely associated with this institution, as well as with a field of research he had not previously envisaged – historical demography.

Although he had initially specialised in medieval history, a research project on industrial regions was beginning in Ostrava, prompting him to turn to statistics, and specifically demography. At that time, the highly progressive field of historical demography was still largely unknown, with only two centres of research in Czechoslovakia – Prague and Ostrava. Lumír Dokoupil often recalls that, until the 1980s, large numbers of students chose to specialise in historical demography in their theses. Statistics, in effect, offered a means of avoiding ideologically conditioned topics. Those unwilling to engage with the history of the labour movement would opt instead for historical demography. Owing largely to this, Professor Dokoupil encountered no significant difficulties with the regime, even during the period of normalisation, although as a copy-editor he frequently handled texts whose content did not afford him much pleasure. By contrast, students' theses on historical-demographic topics have remained firmly in his memory, and even today he can still, remarkably, often recall without hesitation which locality a given student studied and whether the work was of high or lesser quality.[2]

Lumír Dokoupil has published a substantial body of historical-demographic studies, the most significant of which were collected in a volume published in 2015 on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.[3] When the Centre for Economic and Social History was established at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ostrava in 2008, he became one of its leading figures and founded a historical-demographic research group which aimed to complete a long-term investigation of the Ostrava region within a broader territorial framework referred to as Austrian Silesia and north-eastern Moravia. The research culminated in the project *Historický proces modernizace (na příkladu Rakouského Slezska)* [*The Historical Process of Modernisation (Using the Example of Austrian Silesia)*] in 2013–2017, which produced a monograph on the demographic development of the region during the demographic transition,[4] as well as

[1] DOKOUPIL, Lumír: *Do třináctého pokolení*. Ostrava 2011.

[2] See LIPOVSKI, Radek: Diplomové práce z problematiky historické demografie na katedře historie pedagogické fakulty v Ostravě v letech 1969–1991. *Historická demografie* 34, 2010, 1, pp. 81–102; LIPOVSKI, Radek: Závěrečné práce z problematiky historické demografie a dějin rodiny na katedře historie Ostravské univerzity v Ostravě v letech 1991–2010. *Historická demografie* 34, 2010, 2, pp. 208–222.

[3] ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš et al. (eds.): *Lumír Dokoupil : Z díla historického demografa*. Ostrava 2015.

[4] DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: *Populace Rakouského Slezska a severovýchodní Moravy v éře modernizace (od 60. let 19. století do první světové války)*. Ostrava 2014.

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a chapter in the concluding two-volume publication *Rakouské Slezsko v procesu modernizace 1742–1914* [*Austrian Silesia in the Process of Modernisation, 1742–1914*].[5] The team drew upon excerpting from Austrian statistical sources carried out by Lumír Dokoupil as early as the 1980s; at the time, however, there was no longer sufficient support for such research, and the data remained in manuscript form until they were later digitised and analysed. Only a historical demographer can understand that, without this earlier work of excerpting, the subsequent studies would scarcely have been possible.

The group subsequently participated in a project to create a historical atlas of Czech Silesia, contributing to its principal output,[6] which was published in print and, mainly, in electronic (PDF) and interactive formats.[7] In addition, the team worked on a monograph examining the relationship between humans and the landscape within the defined region.[8] Their research was also presented at the international level, particularly through conference participation and contributions to edited volumes and other publications.[9]

Lumír Dokoupil has also engaged with a wide range of other historical topics. Throughout his career, he has devoted himself to editorial work, having studied the Czech language and being skilled in linguistic editing of various texts. Moreover, his meticulousness is evident not only in historical demography. For many years, he has been compiling and editing biographical entries for the *Biografický slovník Slezska a severní Moravy* [*Biographical Dictionary of Silesia and Northern Moravia*];[10] he also participated editorially in the *Lexikon českých historiků 2010* [*Lexicon of Czech Historians 2010*].[11] Together with Milan Myška, he prepared for publication the correspondence of two prominent Czech historians, František Kutnar and Ladislav Hosák.[12] In collaboration with Petr Popelka, he also edited the memoirs of another historian, Arnošt Klíma,[13] known

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[5] DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: Demografický vývoj v letech 1869–1914. In: ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš et al.: *Rakouské Slezsko v procesu modernizace 1742–1914*, II. Ostrava 2020, pp. 869–951.

[6] HRUŠKA, Lubor – JAROŠOVÁ, Lenka – LIPOVSKI, Radek (eds.): *Velký historický atlas českého Slezska : Identita, kultura a společnost českého Slezska v procesu společenské modernizace s dopadem na kulturní krajinu*. Ostrava 2021.

[7] *Velký historický atlas českého Slezska : Identita, kultura a společnost českého Slezska v procesu společenské modernizace s dopadem na kulturní krajinu*. Online, accessed 5 March 2026. Available at: https://atlas-slezska.cz/.

[8] LIPOVSKI, Radek – HRUŠKA, Lubor – JAROŠOVÁ, Lenka: *Lidé a krajina českého Slezska : Identita, kultura a společnost českého Slezska v procesu společenské modernizace s dopadem na kulturní krajinu*. Ostrava 2021.

[9] DOKOUPIL, Lumír: Two Kraus Generations in Ostrava. In: ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš (ed.): *The Involvement of Businessmen in Local and Regional Public Life in Central Europe 1800–1914*. Ostrava 2009, pp. 150–156; DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: The Family and Household in the Ostrava Region as a Nascent Industrial Centre According to Historical Census Data. In: FAUVE-CHAMOUX, Antoinette – BOLOVAN, Ioan (eds.): *Families in Europe between the 19th and 21st Centuries : From the Traditional Model to the Contemporary PACS*. Cluj-Napoca 2009, pp. 193–210; DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: The Death Rate for Small Children in Austrian Silesia and in North-East Moravia over the Course of the First Demographical Transition. In: ARRIZABALAGA, Marie-Pierre et al. (eds.): *Many Paths to Happiness? : Studies in Population and Family History : A Festschrift for Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux*. Amsterdam 2010, pp. 261–283; DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: The Difference in Natural Reproduction between Industrial and Agricultural Regions during the First Demographic Transition : 1881–1913 : (the case of the Ostrava agglomeration). *Romanian Journal of Population Studies* 6, 2012, 1, pp. 25–50; DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: The Religious Situation in Austrian Silesia in the Context of the Modernization Process. In: ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš – ZÁVODNÁ, Michaela (eds.): *Creating an Interdisciplinary Paradigm using the Example of Modernization in a Region (Austrian Silesia)*. Ostrava 2015, pp. 131–165; DOKOUPIL, Lumír – NESLÁDKOVÁ, Ludmila – LIPOVSKI, Radek: Stillbirth Rates from 1881 to 1913 in Austrian Silesia and North-East Moravia. In: HOHENWARTER, Michaela – IBER, Walter M. – KRAUTZER, Thomas (eds.): *Mensch im Mittelpunkt : Bevölkerung – Ökonomie – Erinnerung : Festschrift für Peter Teibenbacher zum 65. Geburtstag*. Wien 2019, pp. 115–132.

[10] *Biografický slovník Slezska a severní Moravy*. Online, accessed 6 March 2025. Available at: https://ff.osu.cz/khi/26072/knizni-publikace-clenu-katedry-historie/. The latest issue was published in 2024: DOKOUPIL, Lumír – ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš – DANĚK, Radoslav (eds.): *Biografický slovník Slezska a severní Moravy : Supplementum* 7. Ostrava 2024.

[11] LIPOVSKI, Radek – DOKOUPIL, Lumír – ZÁŘICKÝ, Aleš (eds.): *Lexikon českých historiků 2010*. Ostrava 2012.

[12] MYŠKA, Milan – DOKOUPIL, Lumír (eds.): *Listy z časů naděje i zklamání : Z korespondence Františka Kutnara s Jaroslavem Markem*. Ostrava 2015.

[13] POPELKA, Petr – DOKOUPIL, Lumír (eds.): Vzpomínky Arnošta Klímy na studijní pobyt v Anglii v roce 1967. *Časopis Matice moravské* 140, 2021, 2, pp. 371–387.

in Czech historiography particularly for his research on proto-industrialisation and, in Anglophone scholarship, for his contribution to the Brenner Debate.[14] Alongside his colleagues, Lumír Dokoupil has also been involved in a collaborative project with linguistic departments at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ostrava and the Wallachian Open-Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, which focuses scholarly attention on the distinctive region of Moravian Wallachia. Three conferences held within this framework have thus far resulted in three publications, to which Lumír Dokoupil contributed both as an editor and an author.[15]

The Department of History as well as the Centre for Economic and Social History regard Lumír Dokoupil as an exceptionally devoted colleague, scholar, teacher, and, when necessary, a critic too. They therefore wish him good health, strength to overcome life's difficulties, and enduring well-being in his personal, family, and professional life.

Radek Lipovski

[14] See several studies on Arnošt Klíma in *East Central Europe* 9, 1982, no. 1–2.

[15] URBANOVÁ, Svatava – DOKOUPIL, Lumír – IVÁNEK, Jakub – KADLEC, Petr (eds.): *Valašsko – historie a kultura*. Ostrava – Rožnov pod Radhoštěm 2014; URBANOVÁ, Svatava – DOKOUPIL, Lumír – IVÁNEK, Jakub – PUMPR, Pavel (eds.): *Valašsko – historie a kultura II : Obživa*. Ostrava 2019; URBANOVÁ, Svatava – DOKOUPIL, Lumír – IVÁNEK, Jakub – PUMPR, Pavel (eds.): *Valašsko – historie a kultura III : Duchovní život*. Ostrava 2024.