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DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT TRENDS OF THE CZECH HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The contribution presents existing results of the Czech historic-geographical research, the current state of scientific discipline, and also challenges that is the Czech historical geography facing. It deals with development of thematic orientation of historic-geographical research in course of the 20th century, introduces leading persons of individual generations and define the three today's theoretic-methodological orientations of historic-geographical research. Since the year 2012 historic-geographical research has gained a common institutional platform: the Historical Geography Research Centre. Further research in the field of historical geography in Czechia will develop the Baker's four key traditions of historical geography: changing distribution, changing environments, changing landscapes, changing areas and regions

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Introduction

Historical geography in the Czech Lands was established in the 19th century together with many other (modern) disciplines of scholarship. Its roots are thus quite deep; the fifth generation of scholars has symbolically been professing it from the imaginary arbor vitae. Holding the 15th International Conference of Historical Geographers in Prague in August 2012¹ presents one of the new-age milestones in the development of the discipline not only in the Czech, but probably also in the entire Central European milieu. The Czech historical geographers percept this important event as an opportunity to introduce the results of the Czech historic-geographical research, the current condition of this discipline and the challenge that the Czech historical geography is facing to international professionals. While collaboration on historical geography has largely been determined by institutionalism over the past two decades and the research has proceeded within the “historical” and “geographical” wings of the Czech historical geography, the year 2012 is important for institutionalisation of a joint platform in the historical geography research. The platform involves establishment of the Historical Geography Research Centre based on a seven-year grant project that supports excellence in the basic research and is backed up by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic.² Building the imaginary “bridge” between history and geography has thus come true.³

The advancement of historic-geographical thinking, development of the discipline and discussions regarding conceptual issues served as a topic for several studies published mainly in Czech in *Historická geografie* throughout the 1980s.⁴

¹ Refer to <http://www.ichg2012.cz>.

² Project P410/12/G113 Historical Geography Research Centre (Main applicant: Prof. Eva Semotanová – The Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i., Prague; co-applicant: Dr. Pavel Chromý – Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Prague; 16 members of the research team in total).

³ We must not forget the disciplinary periodical *Historická geografie*, which has been in print since 1968, an existence and activity of the Commission for Historical Geography attached to the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i. and the Historical Geography and Environmental History Section of the Czech Geographical Society and, over the past decade, the traditional annual conferences of historical geographers, that hitherto acted as a platform for mutual collaboration among interested researchers representing various disciplines. The establishment of the joint research centre, however, means a change in historic-geographical research on an institutionally and qualitatively different level.

⁴ Alan R. H. BAKER, Historical geography in Czechoslovakia, Area 18, 1986, pp. 223–228; Zdeněk BOHÁČ, Úkoly komise pro historickou geografii při ČSAV a tematické okruhy prací, publikovaných ve sborníku *Historická geografie v letech 1968 až 1982* (vol. 1–20) [Tasks of the

As regards more recent works, we should mention the most important works, i.e.: *Historická geografie českých zemí* [Historical Geography of the Czech Lands]⁵ by Eva Semotanová and works by Zdeněk Boháč, Pavel Chromý, Leoš Jeleček, Ota Pokorný, Eva Semotanová and Jaroslav Vaniš.⁶ The authors discuss formation of

Commission for Historical Geography Attached to CSAS and thematic spheres of works published in the *Historická geografie* collection between 1968 and 1982 (vol. 1–20)], HG 22, 1983, pp. 69–95; Leoš JELEČEK, Current Trends in the Development of Historical Geography in Czechoslovakia, HG 19, 1980, pp. 59–102; IDEM, Historická geografie v Československé akademii věd a v Československu 1952–1982 [Historical geography in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and in Czechoslovakia between 1952 and 1982], Geografie 88, 1983, pp. 213–222; IDEM, Nástin vývoje československé historické geografie [Outline of the development of the Czechoslovak historical geography], HG 22, 1983, pp. 11–51; Dušan TRÁVNÍČEK, K vývoji české historické geografie po druhé světové válce [To the development of the Czech historical geography after World War II], HG 22, 1983, pp. 53–60.

⁵ Eva SEMOTANOVÁ, *Historická geografie Českých zemí* [Historical Geography of the Czech Lands], Praha 1998 (2nd updated edition 2002, 2006).

⁶ Zdeněk BOHÁČ, *Nové perspektivy Komise pro historickou geografii* [New perspectives of the Commission for Historical Geography], HG 28, 1995, pp. 7–9; Pavel CHROMÝ, *New trends in Czech and world historical geography*, in: *Acta Facultatis Rerum Naturalium Universitatis Comenianae, Geographica Supplementum*, 1999, No. 2/I, pp. 267–278; IDEM, *Výzvy pro českou historickou geografii* [Challenges for the Czech historical geography], HG 31, 2001, pp. 87–108; Leoš JELEČEK, *K utváření a koncepci historické geografie životního prostředí* [To the creation and conception of historical geography of the environment], GGÚ ČSAV Reports 27, (Praha/Brno) 1990, pp. 5–15; IDEM, *Nová historiografie? Environmentální dějiny v USA: vývoj, metodologie, výsledky* [New historiography? Environmental history in the USA: development, methodology, results], ČČH 92, 1994, pp. 510–540; IDEM, *Environmentální dějiny v USA a geografie* [Environmental history in the USA and geography], Geografie 99, 1994, pp. 261–269; IDEM, *The Ecological Situation Changes in the Czech Republic 1948–1989: Some of their Historic–Geographical Causes and Connections*, in: *The Changing Nature of the People–Environment Relationship: Evidence from a Variety of Archives*, edd. Ian G. Simmons – Antoinette M. Mannion, Prague 1995, pp. 101–111; IDEM, *Historická geografie* [Historical geography], in: *Všeobecná encyklopedie o čtyřech svazcích* [Comprehensive Encyclopaedia in Four Volumes]. Vol. 2, Praha 1997, p. 174; IDEM, *Environmentalizace historické geografie, historiografie a historický land use* [Environmentalisation of historical geography, historiography and historical land use], HG 30, 1999, pp. 53–84; IDEM, *Environmentální dějiny v Česku, Evropě a USA: počátky a některé širší souvislosti* [Environmental history in Czechia, Europe and the USA: the origins and some broader connections], *Klaudyán* 3/2000, see <http://klaudyan.psomart.cz> and <http://www.klaudyan.cz>; IDEM, *Environmentální dějiny a česká historiografie a historická geografie* [Environmental history and Czech historiography and historical geography], in: *VIII. sjezd českých historiků, Hradec Králové 10.–12. září 1999*, ed. Jiří Pešek, Praha 2001, pp. 306–325; Ota POKORNÝ, *Historická geografie a geografická historie* [Historical geography and geographical history], Geografie 97, 1992, pp. 114–116; Eva SEMOTANOVÁ, *Historická geografie. Zmizelý prostor a čas* [Historical geography. The lost space and time], ČČH 93, 1995, pp. 177–188; EADEM, *Kam směřuje naše historická geografie?*

individual historical geography directions that have originated in this country over the past century. They usually base their discussions on analyses of thematic research into individual schools or, should we say, their “leading” personalities. The current research tendencies, however, can also be evaluated in theoretic-methodological aspects and within international circumstances. When specifying the subject of the Czech historical geography, this evaluation even seems inevitable.

This contribution introduces historical geography, its advance and formation into a separate field of scholarship, forming of individual schools, transformations of the thematic focus and the future of research within the newly established research centre. On a general level, the authors contribute to a never-ending discussion on the relation between historiography and geography.

Historical geography: the essence of existence

The relationship between historiography and geography and the actual position of historical geography in the system of scholarly disciplines has long belonged to the traditional topics of discussion within the community of historical geographers, historians and geographers not only abroad,⁷ but also in Central Europe.⁸

[Where is our historical geography heading for?], HG 28, 1995, pp. 11–16; EADEM, Historická geografie a její místo v systému věd [Historical geography and its place in the system of sciences], AUC – Philosophica et Historica 1996, No. 1 (= Z pomocných věd historických 13), pp. 115–122; EADEM, Historickogeografický výzkum v Historickém ústavu AV ČR [Historic-geographical research in the Institute of History of the AS CR], HG 29, 1997, pp. 374–375; Jaroslav VANIŠ, Historická geografie jako vědní obor [Historical geography as a scientific discipline], HG 2, 1969, pp. 3–21.

⁷ For example Alan R. H. BAKER, Historical geography: a new beginning?, Progress in Human Geography 3, 1979, pp. 560–570; IDEM, Některé aspekty britské historické geografie v letech 1966–1986 [Certain aspects of the British historical geography between 1966–1986], HG 26, 1987, pp. 25–43; IDEM, On Relations of Geography and History, Historically Speaking 5, July/August 2004, 6, pp. 27–29; IDEM, Geography and History: Bridging the Divide, Cambridge 2003; IDEM, On the Significance of History for Geography: Historical Geography as Holistic (or Total) Geography, Klaudyán 4/2007, 1, pp. 7–12, see <http://www.klaudyan.cz>; Robert A. BUTLIN, Historical geography: through the gates of space and time, London 1993, Brian GRAHAM – Catherine NASH, Modern Historical Geographies, Edinburgh 2000.

⁸ Pavel CHROMÝ – Leoš JELEČEK, Tři alternativní koncepce historické geografie v Česku [Three alternative conceptions of historical geography in Czechia], HG 33, 2005, pp. 327–345; Peter CHRASTINA, Historical geography in the 21st century. Annales Universitatis Apulensis. Series Historica 13, 2009, pp. 183–195; Zdeněk KUČERA, Historical geography between geography and historiography, Klaudyán 5/2008, 1, pp. 5–13, see <http://www.klaudyan.cz>; IDEM, Historická geografie mezi geografii a historiografií [Historical geography between geography and historio-

The present Czech historical geography (as a separate branch of scholarship) has a strongly trans-disciplinary character. It touches the Earth and the man, connects the space with the time, natural sciences with social and technical sciences and humanities. It monitors not only the condition and transformations of the geographical environment in the past, causes that created the transformations, their conditionality and consequences (or corresponding rules), but also perception of the space, meanings that the society and the individuals attributed to the organisation of space and changes of the environment (e.g. in the context of formation, reproduction and collapse of regions, relationship to the existence and different meanings of relict and historiographic boundaries in the sense of collaboration barriers). It makes an effort to grasp and understand historical roots of the present condition and character of the geographic milieu on various a regional levels and in different types of landscapes; recognition, interpretation and explanation of the development of mutual relations between the people and the inhabited environment and problems arising from their “failures”.⁹

It is obvious that, with growing inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approaches to solving current social and environmental issues, the traditional classification of sciences and searching for imaginary positions of historical geography among scholarly disciplines and an effort to delimitate “accurate” boundaries between individual disciplines or a definition of the historical geographers’ roles present a merely partial matter. In a sense, they involve a “social construct” that proves the scholars’ need for self-identification, reproduction, development and innovation of the research tradition, or in some case justify the essence of their scholarly and pedagogical activities. When the recognition process is governed by elementary sciences, this searching may seem pointless and inconceivable to many people. We need not explain this fact to representatives of a discipline that has been immanent to an inter-disciplinary approach for more than a century and whose identity has been outwardly weakened by akin “new” disciplines.¹⁰ In this situation, however, the hitherto more or less underestimated discussion regarding application of the existing historic-geographical understanding, methodological approaches and utilisation of

graphy], HG 34, 2007, pp. 9–19; Eva SEMOTANOVÁ – Pavel CHROMÝ, Historická geografie: most mezi historií a geografii [Historical geography: A bridge between history and geography], in: Historie v kontextu ostatních vědních disciplín [History in the context of other scholarly disciplines], edd. Jan Dvořák – Tomáš Knoz, Brno etc. 2008 (= IX. sjezd českých historiků. Pardubice 6.–8. září 2006), pp. 231–246.

⁹ E. SEMOTANOVÁ – P. CHROMÝ, Historická geografie (see note 8).

¹⁰ Here we mean environmental history, for example.

“traditional” historic-geographical sources of information in solving the mentioned issues of the social and natural character should be regarded as fundamental.

Do historians need geography and geographers history? Together with Alan R. H. Baker,¹¹ we believe so. Historical progress occurs in a changing geographical milieu. Knowledge of development of this environment’s spatial organisation is necessary not only for understanding the historical events, but mainly the trajectories of the historical advancement. Application of geographical knowledge in historical work is commonplace. Periodisation of history is connected with periodisation of landscape development, especially as regards settlements, communications and boundaries, but also the natural sphere. The man’s activities in the political, economical and cultural spheres coincide with the landscape and the environment. Even natural disasters can play an important role in periodisation of the society’s history. The space, or shall we say the landscape, is a “Theatrum mundi” – it creates a stage of events and processes that take place in time, where the actors do not enter or leave – the actors, i.e. the man and the society, are merely present on the stage. In historiography, recognition of the countryside contributes to detection of many process origins and connections in the historical development. It is historical geography and special utilisation of historical (reconstruction) maps used as a method and tool for research and processing of scholarly outcomes that provide the historians with recognition of the landscape in the past (and the “past”, already transformed landscapes). Understanding development of the geographic environment, or perhaps interaction between the society and the environment, is also essential for understanding its current condition, forecasting and planning the future (conceiving the advancement and affecting the future development of the territory). It is impossible to explain the current problems of the society and activities of the individuals in the environment (including motivations and value orientation of the individual/society), processes and mechanisms applied in the socio-spatial changes (development of territorial differentiation) without knowing the history and development contexts. Without knowledge of the history, it is also impossible to easily distinguish whether socio-spatial changes come as a result of general dominant processes (concentration or deconcentration of functions, diffusion of innovations, industrialisation, urbanisation, suburbanisation etc.) or temporarily and spatially restricted, unique and unrepeatable specific processes (in the Czech milieu, e.g. the transfer of the Czech Germans after World War II, insufficient settlement of borderland areas, creation of the Iron Curtain). Whether they come as a result of the structures or whether the socio-spatial changes were primarily not caused by the given space and time of the key actors’/subjects’ initiative (e.g. members of royal families, noblemen, politicians,

¹¹ History is not intelligible without geography. – Geography is not intelligible without history. A. R. H. BAKER, *On the Significance* (see note 7), p. 7.

businessmen, environmentalists, public and private institutions, professional developers, networks of actors, etc.) both outside and inside the monitored territory. Whether they are not the result of deepening socio-economical or socio-cultural differences between spatial units and territorial communities (“central–semiperipheral–peripheral”, “rich and poor”, “advanced and undeveloped”; territorially graspable differing patterns in the behaviour and conduct of individuals, tension and conflicts arising from the dichotomy “we” and “others”), perhaps even efforts to “straighten up” or “cure” territorial or social inequalities (e.g. by means of developing strategies or various policies affecting development of the society’s geographical organisation).

Emergence and development of the Czech historical geography

As mentioned above, the tradition of historical geography in the Czech Lands reaches deep into the second half of the 19th century when historians and geographers started to realise the mutuality and inseparability of the perceived environment (landscape) and historical evolution.¹² Historiography and geography gradually came closer. Topographic and natural history works by historians František Palacký, August Sedláček or Václav Vladivoj Tomek emerged. These and the other leading personalities of the Czech scholarly life enriched historiography and geography with new approaches, supported by topographic and cartographic sources and methods.

Historical geography as a scientific discipline, however, emerged after the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Until the second half of the 20th century, historical geography progressed in the spirit of scholarly postulates by the leading persons in this discipline Josef Vítězslav Šimák, Bohuslav Horák, Ladislav Hosák and František Roubík. It focused on regional national history and geography (hometown), history of geography, historical topography and geographical terminology. Specifics of geographical terminology that first appeared in the Czech Lands in the early Middle Ages in connection with Celtic, Antique and German roots, include triple-language geographical names (Latin, Czech, German) and important turnovers, especially after World War II. At present, toponymy, i.e. study of geographical names, is a separate discipline, closely connected with historical geography. This era of the Czech historical geography can be classified as “traditional” from a perspective of theory and methodology. This applies, although the Czech historical geography was not connected with the “traditional” British historical geography, which was established by H. C. Darby in the 1930s.¹³

¹² E. SEMOTANOVÁ, *Historická geografie* (see note 5).

¹³ Ronald J. JOHNSTON – Derek GREGORY – Geraldine PRATT – Michael WATTS, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Oxford 2000, pp. 337–341.

After the second half of the 20th century, a cartographic method and cartographic as well as tangible sources were applied in the Czech historical geography.¹⁴ Theoretical works focused on a definition of the discipline and its position in the system of sciences as separate disciplines, partial geographical sciences or auxiliary historical sciences. Collaboration with medieval archaeology and historical demography developed in the historiographic field, mainly as regards study of historic-geographical contexts involving history of settlements. If compared with the development of the British historical geography, this stage of the Czech historical geography can be specified as “modern”. Nomothetically oriented works affected by the quantitative revolution, focused on a long-term development of the settlement system, emerged in geography. Despite a great emphasis on evolutionary assessment, they were never classified as works of a historic-geographical character and their creators never advocated historical geography.¹⁵

In the late 1980s, ecological topics first appeared in the Czech historical geography as a result of environmentalisation of the society, prompted by deterioration of the environment. Theory, methodology and systemising in historical geography have been tackled by Jaroslav Kašpar, Leoš Jeleček, Zdeněk Boháč, Eva Semotanová. Although the British historic-geographical research was called “post-modern” with regard to the man’s study of geographical changes and in the USA, environmental history developed in the 1970s, the Czech historical geography still oscillated topically and methodologically within the “traditional” and “modern” historical geography. This fact contributed to a certain delay of the Czech historic-geographical research behind the international trends that focused on regional historical geography, cultural historical geography and environmentalisation of the discipline in the last quarter of the 20th century.

However, during the 1990s and the early 21st century, the Czech historical geography successfully balanced the theoretical methodology delay.¹⁶ The greatest merit is credited to Leoš Jeleček and Eva Semotanová who introduced newly conceived research topics to the Czech historical geography – they stood at the birth of

¹⁴ The most significant work that appeared in the Czech historical geography in this period is undoubtedly Atlas československých dějin [Atlas of the Czechoslovak History], ed. Jaroslav Purš, Praha 1965.

¹⁵ E.g. Martin HAMPL – Václav GARDAVSKÝ – Karel KÜHNL, Regionální struktura a vývoj systému osídlení v ČSR [Regional Structure and Development of the Settlement System in CSR], Praha 1987.

¹⁶ Pavel CHROMÝ, Historická a kulturní geografie a nové přístupy v regionálním studiu [Historical and Cultural Geography and new approaches in regional studies], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague 2004.

its current dominating subject orientation (mainly long-term land use changes and historical towns) –, but also a new generation of historical geographers (Eva Chodějovská, Pavel Chromý, Zdeněk Kučera, Robert Šimůnek, Aleš Vyskočil).

Theoretical and methodological essence of the Czech historical geography: research objectives

The current Czech historical geography is a dynamically developing discipline. It reflects advancement in social, natural and technical sciences as well as in humanities. It finds inspiration in them and searches for new topics and potentialities that can be grasped and processed. Historical geography is theoretically and practically connected to a number of other disciplines (e.g. archaeology, history of art, urbanism, history of architecture, conservation, landscape ecology, cartography and geoinformatics, environmental history, historical sociology, historical climatology, botany, pedology, etc.).

Historical geography research in Czechia focuses on theoretical and methodological problems of the current historical geography in an international context.¹⁷ It pays great attention to basic research into historical (urbanised as well as rural) landscape as regards revolutionary changes of the Czech landscape in the past, within international (particularly Central European) circumstances and issuing the outputs in professional international and domestic publications. Finally yet importantly, it focuses on education of young research workers who are essential for development of the discipline, lectures and conferences, which enable a closer connection between the life in scholarly and academic workplaces.¹⁸

¹⁷ See note 8.

¹⁸ For example, five dissertation theses on historical geography have been defended over the past two years. Zdeněk KUČERA, *Principy a problémy geografického studia krajiny* [Principles and Problems of the Geographic Study of Landscape], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague 2010; Silvie KUČEROVÁ, *Územní diferenciacie elementárního vzdělávání v Česku v 2. polovině 20. století (Vliv na lokální a regionální rozvoj)* [Territorial Differentiation of Elementary Education in Czechia during the Second Half of the 20th Century (Its Influence on Local and Regional Development)], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague 2010; Robin RAŠÍN, *Krajina česko-rakouského pohraničí: vývoj a dědictví* [The Landscape of the Czech-Austrian Borderland: Development and Heritage], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague 2010; Aleš NOVÁČEK, *Dualita Evropy: historickogeografická analýza vývoje a její vymezení* [Duality of Europe: Historic-geographical Analysis of the Development and its Delimitation], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague 2010; Markéta ŠANTRŮČKOVÁ, *Využití a modelace reliéfu při krajinných úpravách na černínských panstvích*

Regarding historiography, we should mention several priority topics that the historical geography research follows or should follow in the future. These topics reflect issues peculiar to the historical science, or perhaps their connection with the space and spaciousness in the sense of a particular landscape. It involves more complex and new (analytic) views on the mentioned “stage” of the historical evolution, i.e. development of the Czech landscape throughout the history, including observations of the human role in transformations of the landscape and capturing historical circumstances and causes of landscape transformations. Restoration of regional history in the form of regional analyses, understanding the essence of the region and research into model territories has strongly affected historical geography. Probes into historical landscape, Baroque landscape, urbanised and industrialised landscape are subject of processing. Proto-urbanisation and landscape urbanisation processes are frequently discussed issues on an international level. It can be documented by the following atlas projects: Historical Town’s Atlas of the Czech Republic (in print since 1995),¹⁹ Landscape Atlas of the Czech Republic (2009),²⁰ Academic Atlas of the Czech History (in print, 2013).

Codifying, structural and evolutionary assessment of landscape changes is particularly important for geographic research. This is why research conducted in “geographic” direction of the Czech historical geography over the past two decades has necessarily been affected by geographical “handwriting”. Regarding codification, it particularly involves research into internal differentiation of landscape changes on the level of the state, regions, micro regions and localities. Research into the long-term mid-nineteenth century landscape changes initially focused on evaluation of a database on land utilisation from the first half of the 19th century, interpretation and explanation of trends, connections and conditions of land use changes, mainly in the context of the political and socio-economic development in the Czech Lands (i.e. dominantly positivistic evaluation of a quantitative character). Only then, the outcomes of quantitative analyses were verified by “probing” into model territories on the level of micro regions or individual cadastres in various types of landscape of socio-cultural impacts). The broadly conceived research into land use and land cover changes

[Use of Terrain Modelling to Landscaping in Landscape Parks], Dissertation thesis, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science, Dept. of Physical Geography and Geocology, Prague 2011.

¹⁹ Component of the European Historic Town’s Atlas Project (under the auspice of the International Commission for the History of Towns). More than twenty volumes have been published (see the report in this issue, pp. 215–222).

²⁰ Tatiana HRNČIAROVÁ – Peter MACKOVČIN – Ivan ZVARA et al., Atlas krajiny České republiky [Landscape Atlas of the Czech Republic], Průhonice 2009, incl. e.g. Historická krajina. Oddíl 3 [Historical Landscape. Section 3], edd. Pavel Chromý – Tatiana Hrnčiarová – Peter Mackovčín, pp. 73–96 (see the report in this issue, pp. 207–215).

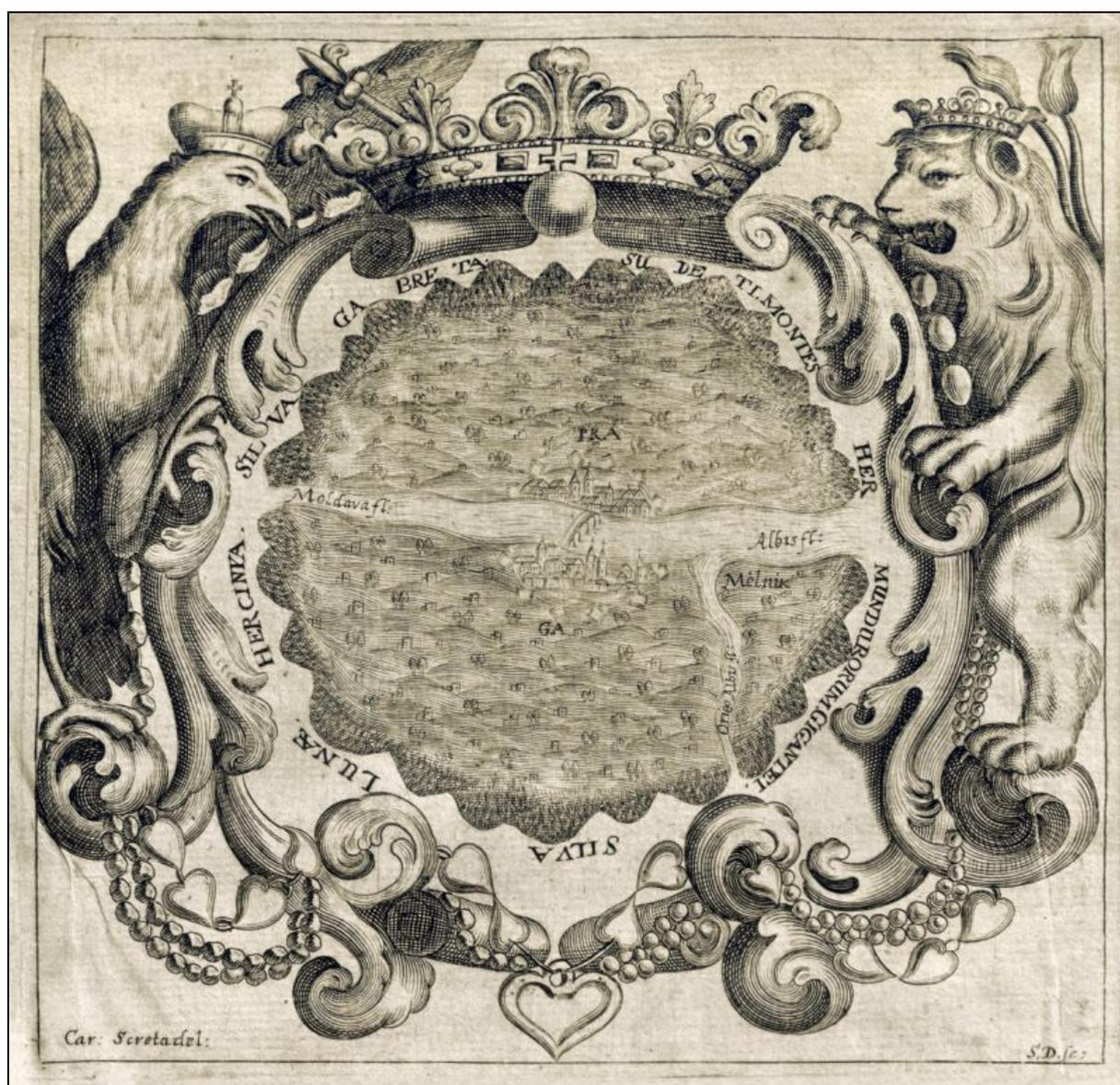


Fig. no. 1. Karel Škréta's jr. Map of Bohemia in Bohuslav Balbín's *Miscellanea* (1679). Stylized circle picture of Bohemia is divided by the Vltava and the Labe rivers into three unequal parts, framed by border mountains. – © The Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i.

interprets social driving forces in landscape transformations, evaluates impact of societal transformations on the landscape (post-industrial, post-totalitarian) and contributes to a discussion on the mechanism of socio-spatial changes (mainly in intensively transformed landscapes, large towns' neighbourhood, peripheries and borderland).²¹ Together with the research into the landscape changes, historical geographers

²¹ For example Ivan BIČÍK – Pavel CHROMÝ – Vít JANČÁK – Leoš JELEČEK – Lucie KUPKOVÁ – Vít ŠTĚPÁNEK – Jana WINKLEROVÁ, *Land Use/Land Cover Changes in*



Fig. no. 2. Panoramic veduta of Prague from the year 1865 of an unknown author. Prague Castle and the Lesser Town are pictured on the left side, the Old Town and New Town on the right side along the Vltava river in the south-north axis. – © The Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i.

Czechia over the past 150 Years – An Overview, in: *Land Use/Cover Change in Selected Regions in the World. Vol. I, Part IV*, edd. Yukio Himiyama et al., Asahikawa 2001, pp. 29–39; Ivan BIČÍK – Leoš JELEČEK – Pavel CHROMÝ – Lucie KUPKOVÁ – Luděk ŠEFRNA, Comparison of land use changes in and outside biosphere reserves in Czechia, in: *Land Use Changes in Comparative Perspective*, Chapter 19, edd. Yukio Himiyama et al., New Delhi 2002, pp. 249–258; Ivan BIČÍK – Leoš JELEČEK – Vít ŠTĚPÁNEK, Land-Use Changes and their Social Driving Forces in Czechia in the 19th and 20th Centuries, *Land Use Policy* 18, 2001, pp. 65–73; Pavel CHROMÝ – Vít JANČÁK – Jana WINKLEROVÁ, Land use changes in the peripheral regions of Czechia, *AUC – Geographica* 38, 2003, No. 1, pp. 95–103; Jiří JANÁČ – Leoš JELEČEK – Pavel CHROMÝ, LUCC in East Central and Southeast Europe post-communist countries from 1960s to the end of the 20th century and its historic-geographical roots, *AUC – Geographica* 45, 2010, No. 2, pp. 19–30.

concentrate on the landscape memory,²² perception of the landscape transformations, processes forming territorial identities, regions and places²³ and relict (historic-geographical) boundaries²⁴ as well as specific landscapes (e.g. military landscapes, defence sites²⁵).

Based on evaluation of thematic focus and outputs of historic-geographical research in Czechia, three dominating (in principle complementary) theoretic-methodological concepts of historical geography can be delimited within the current Czech historical geography. The first concept represents a traditional, mainly idiographically

²² Pavel CHROMÝ, Memory of Landscape and Regional Identity: Potential for Regional Development of Peripheral Regions, in: *Dealing with Diversity. 2nd International Conference of the European Society for Environmental History Prague 2003*, edd. Leoš Jeleček et al., Prague 2003, pp. 246–256.

²³ Pavel CHROMÝ – Silvie KUČEROVÁ – Zdeněk KUČERA, Regional Identity, Contemporary and Historical Regions and the Issue of Relict Borders. The Case of Czechia, *Regions and Regionalism* 9, 2009, No. 2, pp. 9–19; Zdeněk KUČERA – Silvie KULDOVÁ – Pavel CHROMÝ, Heritage in Landscape or Landscape as Heritage – the Case of Landscape Change Management in Protected and Development Areas in Czechia, *Europa XXI* 17, 2008, pp. 87–96; Zdeněk KUČERA – Silvie KUČEROVÁ-KULDOVÁ – Pavel CHROMÝ, Landscape heritage between areal preservation and areal development – the case of Czechia, *Geographia Polonica* 81, 2008, No. 2, pp. 5–23.

²⁴ Pavel CHROMÝ, Historical-Geographical and Cultural-Geographical Research of the Development in Border, Marginal and Peripheral Regions in Czechia, in: *Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Geographical Space at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Andrzej Kowalczyk, Warsaw 2003, pp. 187–192; IDEM, Historickogeografické aspekty vymezení pohraničí a jeho geografické analýzy [Historic-geographical aspects of delimitation of the borderland and of its geographical analysis], *Geografie* 105, 2000, pp. 63–76; IDEM, Historickogeografický pohled na české pohraničí [Historic-geographical view on the Czech borderland], in: *České pohraničí – bariéra nebo prostor zprostředkování? [Czech borderland – a barrier or a space for mediation?]*, edd. Milan Jeřábek et al., Praha 2004, pp. 33–44; Pavel CHROMÝ – Jan SKÁLA, Kulturněgeografické aspekty rozvoje příhraničních periferií: analýza vybraných složek územní identity obyvatelstva Sušicka [Cultural-geographical aspects in the development of borderland peripheries: An analysis of selected elements of territorial identity among residents of the Sušicko region], *Geografie* 115, 2010, pp. 223–246; Silvie KULDOVÁ – Zdeněk KUČERA, Historická česko-německá etnická hranice a proměna krajiny pohraničí [Historical Czech-German ethnic border and transformation of the borderland], in: *Historie v kontextu ostatních vědních disciplín [History in the context of other scholarly disciplines]*, edd. Jan Dvořák – Tomáš Knoz, Brno etc. 2008 (= IX. sjezd českých historiků. Pardubice 6.–8. září 2006), pp. 247–261.

²⁵ Tomáš SEIDL – Pavel CHROMÝ, Environmental Conservation in military training areas – source of spatial conflicts? *Europa XXI* 21, 2010, pp. 103–115. IDEM, Problémy integrace marginálního území do regionálního systému – příklad vojenského újezdu Boletice [Problems concerning the integration of marginal regions into the regional system: Example of the Boletice military training area], *Geografie* 115, 2010, pp. 44–63.

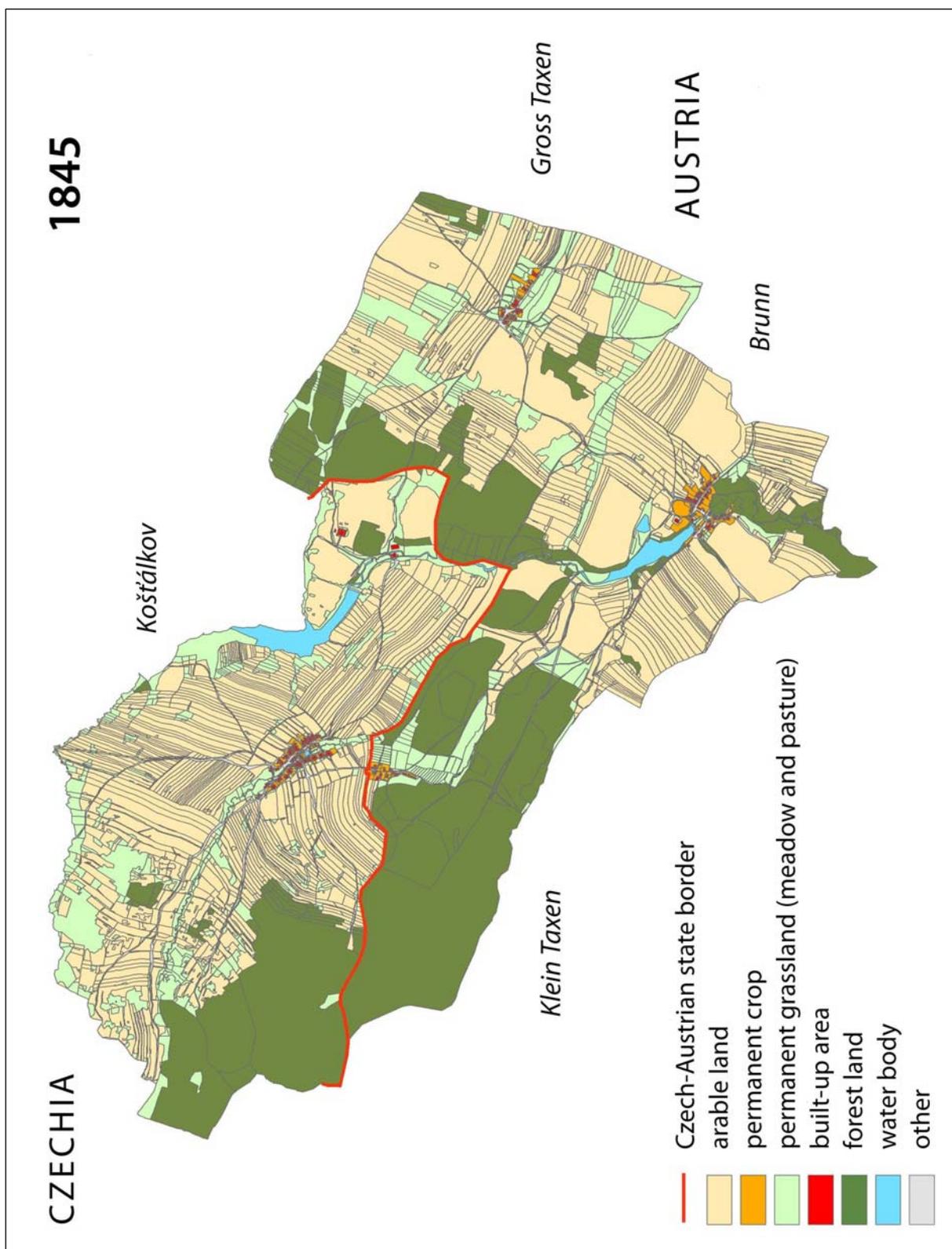


Fig. no. 3 (see p. 24).

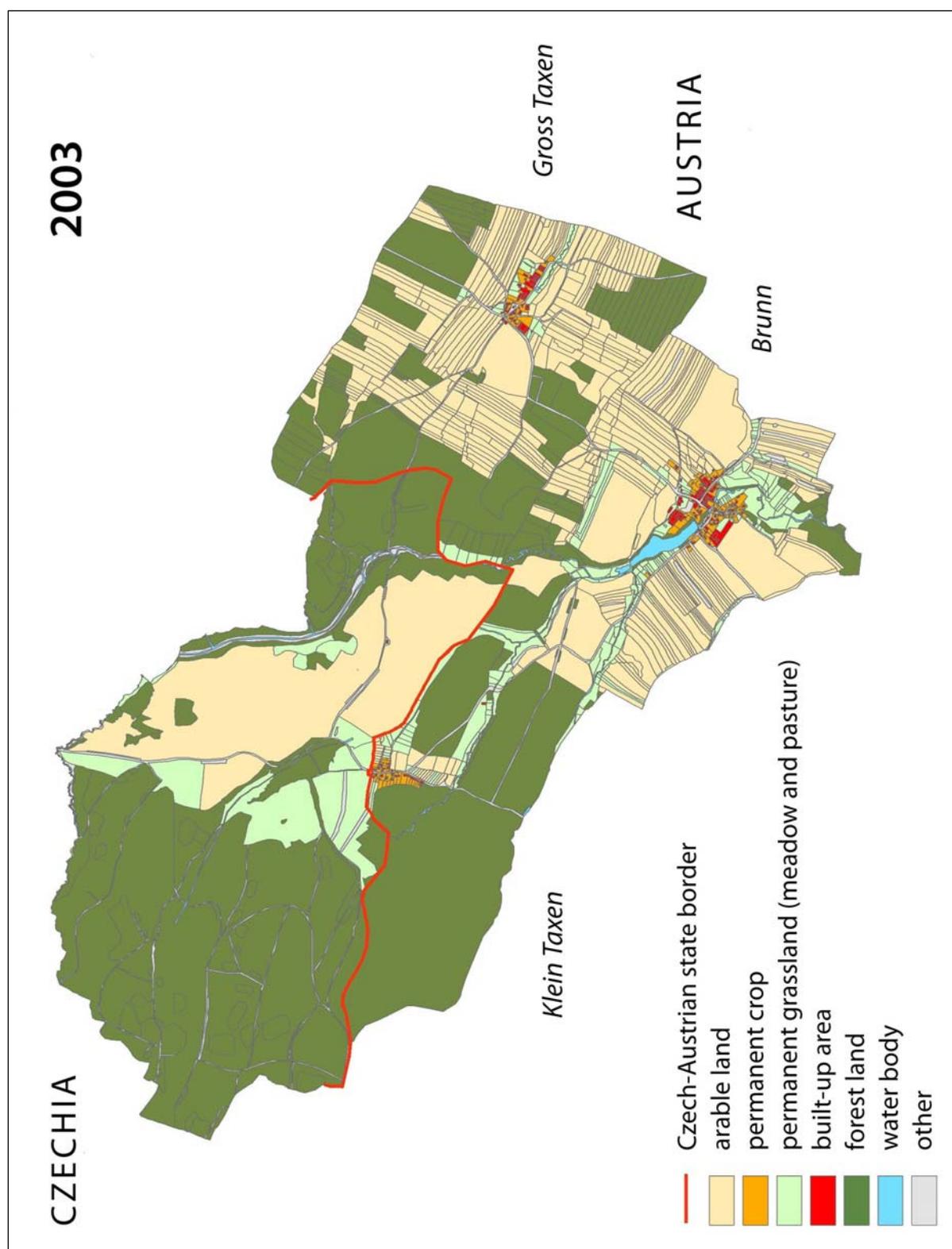


Fig. no. 4 (see p. 24).



Fig. no. 3–5. Landscape of the Czech-Austrian borderland (1845, 2003). The transfer of German population after WW II led to a crucial land use and land cover change (abandoned villages, chaotic repopulation etc.). Landscape structure and land cover changes document a different development of the settlement system, a different influence of economic systems, the process of space polarization, and in the modern history also the process of joining the European Union (changes of the landscape functions from once dominant production to recreational function). – Maps: Přemysl ŠTYCH – Pavel CHROMÝ – Jana WINKLEROVÁ, Vliv geopolitických změn na využití krajiny v česko-rakouském pohraničí – Košťálkov (Gottschallings) a Klein Taxen [Effect of geopolitical changes on land use in the Czech-Austrian borderland – Košťálkov (Gottschallings) and Klein Taxen]. Využití krajiny (1845, 2003), land use (1845, 2003), Part 3, Map 61 + 62, 1 : 35 000, in: T. HRNČIAROVÁ – P. MACKOVČIN – I. ZVARA et al., Atlas krajiny České republiky (see note 20), p. 85. – Photo © Pavel Chromý (2009).

oriented historical geography connected with promoting its recognitory role. This concept has been preferred by historians up to now. The second concept involving modern historical geography is dominant in geography. The third concept involves post-modern (humanistic orientation) historical geography with a significant overlap into cultural geography. Its development can be detected not only in the field of historiography and geography, but also in related (close to historical geography)

disciplines. In line with development of the “new” cultural geography, increased attention is paid to manifestations of culture in a way of life and significance of values and standpoints for making decisions regarding various spheres of life in the historical landscapes, including formation of the cultural and natural heritage. The impact of various actors and (territorial) communities on forming the character of their symbolic areas and conflicts regarding the development of the territory remains a less treated issue in the Czech historical geography. We can say that the last of the mentioned directions has a significant neo-idiographic accent (it allows configuration of specific topics that characterise territorial differentiation of a certain spatial unit and affect its development, while the specific configuration of topics is only partially unique; interpretation of the topics is organized in a nomothetical method).

A significant issue concerning potentialities and boundaries of source research, website application and portals has been tackled in historical geography research in Czechia in the early 21st century and is comparable with international research. After 1989, the Czech historical geography became enriched with systematic utilisation of certain less accessible or completely unavailable research sources. It particularly concerns original copies of the first and second military survey maps from the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century deposited in Staatsarchiv-Kriegsarchiv in Vienna; they were publicised on a map portal of the Geoinformatics Laboratory, University J. E. Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem (<http://www.geolab.oldmaps.cz>) after 1989 together with the third military survey maps from the last quarter of the 19th century. These detailed maps contain a large amount of topographic as well as thematic data that are compatible within the entire territory of the Austrian Monarchy. Vertical and oblique aerial photographs, which could not be studied before 1989, also became very important. At present, photographs from the 1930s in a chronological series can be used in an archive of aerial photographs in the Military Geographical and Hydrometeorological Institute in Dobruška under certain conditions. Aerial photographs of the Czech territory present a superb comparative material for understanding transformations of the landscape mainly before and after 1948.

New Czech trends in application of cartographic sources over the past decade involve on-line publication on the Internet. An enormous, perhaps even uncontrollable advance of digitalisation of map archives, resources and collections is being experienced. However, this hampered by great fragmentation and inhomogeneity mainly in elaboration methodology (e.g. selective criteria of digitalised sources, quality of resolution of the scanned data, cataloguing methods and cataloguing programs, metadata format, etc.).²⁶ Specialists have concentrated on digital processing

²⁶ These facts are currently discussed in two projects of a program entitled National and Cultural Identities granted by the Ministry of Culture CR, i.e. a project called Cartographic sources

of these map sources, thus allowing more advanced utilisation over the past few years. These potentialities include comparison of illustrations on old maps by their overlapping (i.e. tessellation, georeferences, change of scale, transparency), automatic searching for (detecting) objects on the maps (i.e. detection of objects in raster pictures), automatic analysis of a content of the digitalised map (i.e. georeference and classification of raster pictures), usage of digitalised maps in user applications (i.e. on-line availability of digitalised maps in a suitable standardised method). However, a mere map digitalisation and free on-line availability is no longer sufficient for browsing.²⁷ We cannot responsibly and definitely determine what opportunities of further processing the cartographic sources can offer, especially as regards maps coming from the pre-nineteenth century because their cartographic illustrative quality is greatly compromised.

Historical geography outputs also gain new forms in Czechia; web portals accompany printed textual outputs, image and map outputs and CD ROMs. We can mention a portal of the Historical Town's Atlas of the Czech Republic in both Czech and English versions for the No. 19 volume – Královské Vinohrady.²⁸ The authors anticipate its extension with other Prague quarters (former independent towns) Libeň and Smíchov.

The listed methods of presenting map sources or outcomes of scholarly research, however, encounter numerous conceptual, technical and technological challenges. A strong point is that the digitalised map sources are user friendly and the original documents are sufficiently protected regarding protection of the cultural heritage. The weak points include permanency of the on-line outputs, necessity of safe backup, and transfer of the data to new media after some time and even a danger of digital darkness.

as a cultural heritage research in new methodologies and digitalization technologies, availability and utilisation of old maps, plans, atlases and globes (the Research Institute of Geodesy, Topography and Cartography in Zdíby and the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i. in Prague) and the project Technologies for publication of map collections CR: methodology and software for protection and utilisation of cartographic works of the national cartographic heritage (the Moravian Land Library in Brno, Faculty of Science, Masaryk University in Brno and Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science). Map digitalization is also tackled by specialists in archiving science, care of historical monuments, etc.

²⁷ Eva SEMOTANOVÁ – Milan TALICH, Kartografické zdroje jako kulturní dědictví a formy jejich zpřístupňování [Cartographic sources as cultural heritage and forms of their accessing], http://www.czechmaps.cz/data/seminar_041111/Semotanova_Talich_digitalizace_2011.pdf, downloaded 26th November 2011.

²⁸ <http://maps.fsv.cvut.cz/praha/index.html>, downloaded 26th November 2011.

Historical landscape as a historical geography topic

Landscape, mainly historical landscape, has become a newly recovered phenomenon in Czechia over the past few years. It tends to be celebrated, mythicised, poetised, covered in spiritualism, idealised, restored – and destroyed. It becomes a cult that can be glorified in emotional verses confessing love to the native land. It is attributed with super-terrestrial and magic properties that breathe out of forests, meadows, rivers and hillsides; in the past, they allegedly decided battles, evoked zealous patriotism, determined the course of history – now, hopefully, they help to find a sense of the earth-life. A modern issue that emerges in connection with historical landscape is “memory of the landscape”, or “soul of the landscape”. Memory of the landscape has become domesticated because of broad popularisation and publicity in the media and is commonly used by many specialists.²⁹ It accurately implies the landscape charisma emanated by locations saturated with history and stories, venerated peaks or romantic nooks with footprints of magic human activity, with memorable trees, springs and wells. Locations that have become a symbol, enveloped with extraordinary “genius loci”. Nevertheless, only the man attributed the landscape with the characters, feelings and images of the human mind. The landscape, however charming it may be, will only remain part of the nature that is deprived of thinking.³⁰

Historical landscape presents a rich topic. The landscape, development and transformations of cultural landscape in the past are studied by specialists of various disciplines (i.e. archaeologists, landscape ecologists, botanists, geologists, art historians, urban specialists, garden and landscape architects, historians, geographers, historical geographers, preservationists – we could continue in a long list of professions), numerous institutions, communities and, in a good sense of the word, erudite amateurs. A more elaborate recapitulation of the diversity of viewpoints, opinions, theories and methods would undoubtedly require a separate study – perhaps even a discourse. The specialists search for a seed of reality under a layer of spiritual paint. It represents a thorough understanding and description of the historical landscape, explanation of causes, laws, extraordinary aspects of its evolution and finding inspirations for the current world. Nevertheless, people are still attracted by the bygone stories and myths, return to them and work with them. They include the fourth dimension of the historical landscape.

²⁹ Václav Cílek is one of the leading authors, specialists and promoters of science with landscape topics (Václav CÍLEK, *Krajiny vnitřní a vnější* [Internal and external landscapes], Praha 2002, and other publications).

³⁰ Eva SEMOTANOVÁ, *Historická krajina, smysl, stopy, hledání a nalézání* [Historical landscape, the sense, traces, searching and finding], in: *Sborník prací Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity – řada společenských věd* 215, 2007, No. 22, pp. 101–110.

Historical geography provides an image of historical landscape in a certain way, affected with theoretical and methodological apparatus that is inherent to this discipline. Even here, we can find different viewpoints on the given topic, more geographical or more historical; they, however, do not exclude each other. They interpret the historical landscape more inspiringly and variedly. Deeper understanding of the historical landscape contributes to detection of many causes and consequences of the society's historical evolution. The attribute "historical" is determined by the subject of the study, i.e. the landscape that existed in the past (as a contrast to the present cultural landscape), survival of traces – remains of landscape elements and testimony of historical textual, map and image sources – that co-created this landscape (and now document it) and historical information that is connected with the landscape, e.g. an impact of historical processes or events (including battles and war conflicts, large migration, epidemics, activity of important people, etc.). We always mean cultural landscape, i.e. a landscape that the man co-transformed. An important role is attributed to the intellectual heritage of the Annales school.

The shape of the landscape in various chronological horizons is partially preserved in the present cultural landscape thanks to greater as well as smaller traces, concealed as well as visible. Apart from natural impacts, traces of the historical landscape capture many historical events of political, economical, social and cultural character. The preserved traces are disappearing together with the more distant past. In some cases, especially where the landscape has been badly damaged, traces of human activities of the recent decades are disappearing. Interdisciplinary approach, strictly applied in mutual provision and incorporation of findings on the historical landscape within the participating disciplines can lead to a relatively complex reconstruction of the searched for landscape.

What type of findings on the historical landscape and its memory can we obtain? Especially findings regarding the overall character of the landscape over a certain period, conditions and transformations of the landscape elements in chronological layers, partial traces of the landscape memory and creation of their image by means of particular probes. We must not forget an ethnologic, artistic and philosophical aspect of the issue.

The existing research into historical landscape on the Czech territory enables a partial description of its main transformation. We can recognise two main stages in its evolution: a stage of rural (historical, cultural) landscape lasting from Neolithic Age to the mid-nineteenth century and a stage of industrialised landscape from the mid-nineteenth century until recent past or almost present time. Partial division of the historical landscape is determined by the prevailing trends and characteristic features of its development together with a "revolutionary" turmoil when the landscape elements are fundamentally transformed.



Fig. no. 6. Sidelong aerial picture of the Říp Mountain in Central Bohemia, described in many legends about the origin of the Czech nation. – Photo © Martin Gojda (2006).

An epochal and revolutionary period is characterised by the second half of the 12th century, the 13th and the 19th century. To what extent the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century can be regarded as revolutionary, only experts will decide in due time. We assume that together with a particular impact of processes and risk factors on the Czech landscape and European development, continuity of the landscape development and connections to the historical landscape is partly endangered. The risk factors involve mainly intensification of agriculture, urbanising and suburbanising processes, transformations of traffic infrastructure, tourism, recreation and globalisation of the society.

Despite all the discovered facts and application of the most advanced methods, there is a question whether the image of the historical landscape can be integral and “truthful”. Reconstruction of the historical landscape proceeds on the basis of preserved traces. However it will probably remain a mere image, a composed mosaic or a puzzle game with white spots as if the man searched for forgotten memories,

but failed to find them. The specialists' objective is not meticulous reconstruction of the historical landscape. The changing life of the society transforms its landscape that adopts, for better or worse, the new life place and style. The study of historical landscape focuses on application of the discovered findings in modelling new, modern and harmonious landscapes.

Existing platforms for collaboration of Czech historical geographers

The *Historická geografie* is the main Czech peer reviewed journal that shapes historical geography as a discipline with a broad spectrum of topics, methods and sources. The journal also monitors new ideas and prospects of historic-geographical research and projects. It has been issued since 1968 by the Institute of History Publishing. Conferences and publishing activities associate specialists from various research centres in Czechia. Another important platforms for collaboration are the Committee for Historical Geography attached to the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v. v. i. and the Section of Historical Geography and Environmental History of the Czech Geographical Society (hereinafter referred to as ČGS).³¹ A traditional space for common meetings and exchange of ideas and findings is a congress of historians and geographers (e.g. a congress of historians in Hradec Králové 1999, Pardubice 2006, Ostrava 2011, geographical congress in České Budějovice 2006 and Ostrava 2010).

A joint platform for exchange of historic-geographical findings has been a traditional conference held annually since 2005: „*Cesty historické geografie, centra, trendy, projekty, perspektivy*“ [Directions of historical geography, centres, trends, projects, prospects] (2005), „*Historická krajina a mapové bohatství Česka: Prameny, evidence, zpřístupňování, využívání*“ (2006) [Historical landscape and map richness of Czechia: Sources, registration, accessing, utilisation]; „*Společnost a krajina v minulosti na rekonstrukčních mapách*“ (2007) [Society and landscape in the past on reconstruction maps]; „*Regiony – časoprostorové průsečíky?*“ (2008) [Regions – space-time intersections?]; „*Vnímání krajiny v minulosti – historická krajina dnes*“ (2009) [Perception of landscape in the past – historical landscape today]; „*Krajina města – město v krajině*“ (2010) [The landscape of town – town in the landscape]; „*Průmyslová krajina jako kulturní dědictví*“ (2011) [Industrial landscape as a cultural heritage] and „*Krajina a společnost v geografickém názvosloví*“ (2012) [The landscape and society in the geographical names]. (For further details see below, pp. 222–227.)

Czech historians and geographers participate in international conferences of historical geographers (Belfast 1998, Quebec 2001, Auckland 2003, Hamburg 2006,

³¹ It also publishes the internet journal *Klaudyán* (<http://www.klaudyan.cz>).

Kyoto 2009); organisation of the 15th International Conference of Historical Geographers in Prague (2012) symbolizes a significant credit on the level of international collaboration. Important international network lies in collaboration with a team of Prof. Paolo Micalizzi, Dipartimento di Studi Urbani, Facoltà di Architettura, Università Roma III., who is involved in historical iconography and cartography of towns – accession of cartographic works in digital environment, then with International Commission for the History of Towns for comparative urban studies, in regional studies with the Polish-Czech Scholarly Society (Polsko-Czeskie Towarzystwo Naukowe – Ośrodek Współpracy Polsko-Czesko-Słowackiej Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego) and in research into rural landscape with Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa in Nitra (Slovakia).

Czech historical geographers also stood at the birth of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH). They participated in its establishing conference in St. Andrews (2001), organized the 2nd international ESEH conference in Prague (2003)³² and regularly participate in other conferences of this society (Florence 2005, Amsterdam 2007, Copenhagen 2009, Turku 2011). They regularly participate in conferences held by the American Society for Environmental History (ASEH); they stood at the birth of the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations – ICEHO (2009), they participate in the Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape (PECSRL), congresses and conferences of the International Geographical Union (IGU).³³

Conclusion: prospects of the Czech historical geography

It is evident that at least three theoretic-methodological concepts of historical geography formed in Czechia over the 1990s. On the one hand, they reflect the existing development of the discipline in the Czech, but also Czechoslovak scholarly conditions; on the other hand they take increasing inspiration in foreign influences. For the development of the Czech historical geography over the past two decades, the separation into the “historical” and “geographical” directions proved a key factor, together with relaxation of the political situation in the early 1990s when space for plurality of theoretical and methodical approaches used in the free world emerged.

Alan R. H. Baker deeply elaborates on the four key traditions of historical geography (changing distribution, changing environments, changing landscapes, changing

³² Dealing with Diversity, edd. L. Jeleček et al. (see note 22).

³³ Land Use / Land Cover Changes in the Period of Globalization, edd. Ivan Bičík – Pavel Chromý – Vít Jančák – Helena Janů, Prague 2002.

areas and regions).³⁴ The Czech historical geography is developing these traditions as well. In line with traditions and the existing research activities of the Czech historical geographers, activities of the newly established Historical Geography Research Centre will logically focus on: research into the settlement system and socio-geographic regions and towns (changes of the centres' significance, changes of the centres' functions within the socio-geographic regional system, changes of the internal structures of settlements, territorial and architectonic development of towns), interpretation of changes in broad socio-spatial and historic-geographical connections (emphasis will be put on the centres that have lost the control functions and position within the regional system; research into the development and changes of various types of landscape (perception and interpretation of changes, evaluation of the significance, symbolic values of the landscape and landscape elements, role of the landscape in the process of forming territorial and social identities and communities), processing of comparative analyses of transformations of the landscape in industrial zones and their facilities as a result of modernising processes of the 18th and 19th centuries. The research will concentrate on smaller or medium-sized regions in Czechia which will provide typological groundwork for modelling forms and intensity of the geographical transformation on the background of a (proto)industrial society. Socio-demographic and historic-geographical analyses based on a combination of procedures, approaches and source materials used by historiography, geography and cartography will be conducted. Research into the heritage (cultural and natural), identification and protection of the heritage in the context of the landscape changes as well as development of the societal thinking, analysis of the generationally different historical awareness of the population (perception of the heritage), the role of education in the process of forming, reproducing and conversion of the heritage will be another topic.

Activities of historical geographers will focus on areas of Tertiary education while paying attention to improving research conducted within doctoral studies, suggesting accreditation of the doctoral study programme Historical Geography and Environmental History.

The Czech historical geography on the threshold of the third millennium is a discipline which can greatly affect creation and protection of the contemporary landscape by viewing its historical connections with the past and thus contribute to its development in agreement with the European Landscape Convention. Historical geography brings the man closer to the nature from where he emerged, teaches him to percept, understand and grasp the rules of their mutual coexistence. It makes an effort to join inseparably the memory of the landscape with our national and European cultural heritage so that we do not have to say together with Jaroslav Seifert:

³⁴ A. R. H. BAKER, *Geography and History* (see note 7).

„Na zemi bude pusto a smutno, řešetem hvězd do nebe spadne skřivan a jeho zpěv zůstane nedozpíván, kouř hvězdy zacloní a slunce uhasí.“ [“There will be desolation and sadness on Earth, the lark shall drop in the sky through a sieve of stars and its song shall remain unsung, smoke shall cloud the stars and smother the sun.”]³⁵

Eva Semotanová – Pavel Chromý

Vývoj a současné trendy v české historické geografii

Historická geografie se v Česku, podobně jako mnohé další (moderní) vědní disciplíny, etablovala již v průběhu 19. století. Její kořeny jsou tak poměrně hluboké a z hlediska pomyslného stromu života se k nim symbolicky hlásí již minimálně pátá generace vědců. Za jeden z novodobých mezníků vývoje disciplíny lze považovat pořádání 15. mezinárodní konference historických geografů v Praze v srpnu 2012 (<http://www.ichg2012.cz>). Příspěvek představuje nejen dosavadní výsledky českých historickogeografických výzkumů, stávající stav vědní disciplíny, ale i výzvy, které před českou historickou geografii stojí. Zatímco v posledních dvou desetiletích byla spolupráce na poli historickogeografických výzkumů významně determinována institucionálně, výzkum se realizoval převážně v rámci „historického“ a „geografického“ křídla české historické geografie, rok 2012 je pro českou historickou geografii významný i z hlediska institucionalizace společné platformy historickogeografického výzkumu. Tou je vznik Výzkumného centra historické geografie na bázi sedmiletého grantového projektu na podporu excelence v základním výzkumu uděleného Grantovou agenturou ČR. Od pádu totalitního režimu se v průběhu 90. let 20. století v Česku zformovaly minimálně tři teoreticko-metodologické koncepce historické geografie. Ty reflektují jednak dosavadní vývoj disciplíny v podmínkách české, ovšem také československé vědy, jednak se výrazněji inspiroují zahraničními vlivy.

Česká historická geografie rozvíjí tradice světové historické geografie. Aktivity nově vzniklého Výzkumného centra historické geografie se proto logicky, v návaznosti na tradice a stávající výzkumné aktivity českých historických geografů, zaměří zejména na výzkum vývoje sídelního systému a sociogeografických regionů a měst (změn významu center, změny funkcí center v sociogeografickém regionálním systému, změny vnitřní struktury sídel, územní a architektonický vývoj měst), interpretaci změn v širších socioprostorových a historickogeografických souvislostech (důraz bude kladen na centra, která ztratila řídicí funkce a pozici v regionálním systému); výzkum vývoje a změn různých typů krajiny (vnímání a interpretace změn, hodnocení významů, symbolické hodnoty krajiny a krajinných prvků, role krajiny v procesu utváření územních a sociálních identit a komunit), zpracování komparativních analýz proměn krajiny v průmyslových centrech a jejich zázemí v důsledku

³⁵ Jaroslav Seifert, *Město v slzách* [City in Tears], Praha 1989, p. 50 (Stvoření světa [Creation of the World]).

modernizačních procesů 18. a 19. století. Předmětem výzkumu budou regiony menší a střední velikosti v Česku, které poskytnou typologickou základnu pro modelaci forem a intenzity proměn geografického prostředí na pozadí vývoje (proto)industriální společnosti. Budou zpracovány sociálně-demografické a historicko-geografické analýzy konkrétních regionů, vycházející z kombinace postupů, přístupů a zdrojových materiálů, s nimiž pracují historiografie, geografie, kartografie a geoinformatika. Výzkum dědictví (kulturního i přírodního), identifikaci a ochranu dědictví v kontextu proměn krajiny i vývoje myšlení společnosti, analýzu generačně odlišného historického vědomí populace (vnímání dědictví), role vzdělávání v procesu formování, reprodukce a konverze dědictví.

Česká historická geografie na počátku třetího tisíciletí je disciplínou, která může výrazně ovlivnit tvorbu a ochranu současné krajiny viděním historických souvislostí krajin minulých a přispět k jejímu poznávání a rozvoji ve shodě s Evropskou úmluvou o krajině. Historická geografie přibližuje člověka k přírodě, odkud vyšel, učí vnímat, poznávat a chápat pravidla jejich vzájemného soužití. Usiluje o to, aby se paměť krajiny stala neoddělitelnou součástí našeho národního a evropského kulturního dědictví.