

Editorial

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Nearly each historian or historical geographer dreams to live long enough to see how the period he has lived will be interpreted. He wishes to confront his subjective view on everyday life reality with sources which have been hidden and found only after dozens of years and, consequently, at least partly to discover and extrapolate new links – both causes and consequences – of events, phenomena or processes we are now experiencing or being a part of them.

We are at the beginning of a new year which is, especially in the Czech context, marked by important historical experience. The Czech TV has come with Crucial Eights programme intended to remember to the Czech public key years of our history ending by a “magical” eight.

These years are perceived as historical milestones having changed or changing the quality of historical time – systems (political, economical, administrative, etc.) are changing, qualitatively different processes are getting weaker or stronger, both socio-economical and socio-cultural environment is getting different. Historical milestones are often used, as auxiliary watersheds, also when monitoring and evaluating the permanently ongoing or rather accelerating changes of environment, or of landscape as a whole, including the changes of their functions, values, of the way they are perceived by and influencing the society and individuals.

We can presume that also the coming year ending by an “eight” will be a milestone for Czech historical geographers. By the end of 2007, Czechia has become a part of the so-called Schengen space of the European Union. The year 2008 will be the 15th anniversary of the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and at the same time of the birth of the independent Czech Republic, the 40th anniversary of federalization of Czechoslovakia, the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the Communist regime, the 70th anniversary of the after-Munich occupation of Czech borderland and the 90th anniversary of renewal of the Czech state and creation of Czechoslovakia. Other anniversaries will be undoubtedly remembered as well.

All the above-mentioned events are largely connected with the changed function of border. Each of them influenced the life of people in the whole territory of our state, and especially the society in border areas, as for instance delimitation of borders, limitation of accessibility and permeability of them (the Iron Curtain) or, on the contrary, a weakening of the function of the landscape as barrier. Consequences of many of those events and processes can be still seen in the landscape of the Czech borderland. Landscape is an historical source, into which people inscribe their history. Consequences of many of those events are still evident in the socio-cultural differentiation of Czechia in the sense of the dichotomy borderland – inland, in the existence of problematic areas (borderland), in a different sentiment of unity between population and territory (landscape) they live in.

Also for that reason we can view the year 2008 with the hope that Czech historical geographers and environmental historians will amplify their research activities in border areas aimed

at general or specific development processes that have been going on there, as the traditional and already established research into land use changes or space polarization or the newly formed research into the process of formation of regional identity and identity of regions or formation of landscape as heritage. For the first time in our history, the whole state border of Czechia has become rather an administrative limit within the European system. Already this statement and this point of view confirm our prospects of revival of historical-geographical research in borderland. We hope to be able to present its results in 2009 at the 14th Conference of Historical Geographers in Kyoto, Japan, and at the 1st World Congress of Environmental History in Copenhagen, Denmark.

On behalf of the editorial board and on my own behalf, I wish a happy year 2008 to all readers and authors of Klaudyán.

Pavel Chromý (Deputy Editor in Chief)