

***Historical Geography in Czechia, Historická geografie/Historical Geography*,
Vol. 38, No. 1, 2012, The Institute of History Academy of Sciences
of the Czech Republic, v.v.i., Prague, pp. 232**

The journal *Historická geografie – Historical Geography* (HG) is certainly the most influential periodical in Czechia dealing with research on the interaction of nature and society, as well as on landscape in time and space. Its younger partner, an internet journal for historical geography and environmental history called “Klaudyan” (see www.klaudyan.cz) since 2007 has been published by Dept. of Social Geography of Charles University in Prague Faculty of Science. On the pages of HG the readers can find articles about a broad variety of topics in historical geography and in other related disciplines. The journal presents historical geography as a inter-disciplinary branch of science with a broad range of focus, methods, approaches, and sources. The journal examines new thoughts, perspectives, and projects in historical geography research as well the work of institutions dealing with historical geography. Science and research are changing, and so *Historická geografie* is also changing.

Nonetheless, several main themes in historical geography that have long held the attention of researchers can be identified: the historical geography of settlements (especially cities) and populations, economic historical geography, the territorial development of Czechia, historical physical geography, the history of cartography, historical cartography, the methodology of historical geography, historical cultural geography, and, more recently, the state and changes of historical landscapes and environmental history. The journal also contains articles about theory, methodologies, and terminology of this discipline and also prints sections of dissertations (or bachelor’s and master’s theses).

The journal first came out in 1968 predating the *Journal of Historical Geography*, the main international journal in the field, which commenced publication in 1975. At first HG was published annually, but since 2009 it has been

published twice annually. It is published by the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v.v.i., Prague. Beginning with Issue 30 in 1999 *Historická geografie* has been a peer-reviewed journal.

In mid-2012 Volume 38, Issue 1 of HG was published on the occasion of the 15th International Conference of Historical Geographers, which was held August 6-10, 2012 in Prague. In the nearly forty years that these conferences have been held, the Prague conference was the first to take place in a post-Communist country (for more information about the conference see the *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38 (2012), pp. 465–466, *Informace České geografické společnosti*, 31, 2012, No. 2, pp. 49–52; *Bulletin Akademie věd ČR*, 2012, No. 11, pp. 20–22, and early coming *Klaudyan* 2012, 8-9, Issue 2 (www.klaudyan.cz).

An English-language edition of HG was first published in 1980 on the occasion of the 24th International Geographic Conference held in Tokyo. The next English issue was published for the 25th Congress of the International Geography Union in 1984 in Paris, and finally a third English issue was published in 1988 on the occasion of the 26th Congress of the International Geography Union in Sydney. In all volumes about half of the articles were written by foreign authors, including some from western countries¹.

¹ L. Jeleček, V.V. Annenkov, Eds (1980), *Historical Geography and Historical Changes in Spatial Organization of Economic Activities*. “Historická geografie – Historical Geography”, Vol. 19. Published on the occasion of the 24th International Geographical Congress in Tokyo 1980. Section 9 – Historical Geography. ICWH of the CSAS, Prague, 413 p., 38 maps and graphs; L. Jeleček, V.V. Annenkov, Eds (1984): *Historical Changes in Landscape and Spatial Organization of Rural Areas*. “Historická geografie – Historical Geography”, Vol. 23. Published on the occasion of the 25th International Geographical Congress Paris-Alpes 1984. Pre-congress symposium No 22, Nancy. Prague, ICWH CSAS, 318 p.; L. Jeleček, V.V. Annenkov, Eds (1988): *Historical Geography of Environmental Changes*. “Historická geografie – Historical Geography”, Vol. 27. Published on the occasion of the 26th International Geographical Congress Sydney 1988. ICWH CSAS, Prague, 400 p.

All articles in this reviewed issue were written by Czech historical geographers and were published in English. This allowed the authors to present the broad spectrum of current themes in contemporary Czech historical geography to international readers. The editorial board put together a collection of eight research articles and three reports. Two of the reports focus on recent publications in the field of historical geography and in related fields: the *Landscape Atlas of the Czech Republic* and the *Historical Town Atlas of the Czech Republic*, whereas the third report is on the annual interdisciplinary conferences of historical geography organized by the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, v.v.i. and the Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague.

The first study, entitled “Development and Current Trends in the Czech Historical Geography,” by Eva Semotanová and Pavel Chromý provides a concise summary of the development and the current state of this scientific discipline. It also presents some of the main recent findings in Czech historical geography research and outlines the challenges facing Czech historical geography today. It also emphasizes the significant institutional changes that have taken place in this field, which for a certain period after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 developed in two separate “wings” – “geographical” and “historical”. In 2012 a joint research center was established in Prague to join these two wings: the Historical Geography Research Centre of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences and of the Geography Section of the Faculty of Science of Charles University in Prague. The research center is financed by a seven-year grant from the Czech Republic Science Foundation for supporting excellence in basic research.

The main tasks of the center, as well as Czech historical geography as a whole, include research drawing from three concepts of historical geography theory and methodology, which arose gradually starting in the 1990s. The main research topics will continue

to be the development of the settlement system, regions, and towns; the interpretation of changes in a broader socio-spatial and historical geographical context; the study of changes in different types of landscapes; and conducting comparative analyses of landscape transformation in industrial centers and their hinterlands as a result of modernization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Small and medium regions in Czechia will undergo complex analysis using a combination of approaches, methods, and data used in historiography, geography, cartography, and geoinformatics. There will also be focus on research on heritage, both cultural and natural, and its identification and protection in the changing landscape and in a dramatically changing society. Generational differences in how heritage is perceived will also be analyzed as will the role of education in the formation, reproduction, and conversion of heritage. At the threshold of the third millennium Czech historical geography is a discipline that has important things to say about developing and protecting current landscapes based on the knowledge about past landscapes, and can thus contribute to the positive development of today's landscape in accordance with the European Landscape Convention.

The other articles in this issue focus on the landscape at various times in history. Robert Šimůnek explores the landscape of Medieval Czechia from the perspective of modern science. In his study he outlines topics in the historical geography of Czechia's former territory in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries that are currently being worked on and others which have potential in the future. He emphasizes that these issues are quite broad in scope and encompass history, archeology, toponymy, literary theory, art history, and economics and social history, as well as natural sciences. One of the main focuses of this research is the issue of demarcating, naming, and thus mastering the landscape, as well as reconstructing how medieval people viewed the landscape. Ideal research subjects are areas that have a combi-

nation of written, cartographic, and material sources available documenting, for example, the development of borders or important medieval roads. As the landscape was mastered, composed landscapes developed, which can be studied by analyzing how “typologized” landscapes were seen and portrayed, as well as by examining material objects in the landscape, such as medieval castles, town panoramas, etc. According to the author, the goal of such analysis and research (which includes studying the remnants of economic and cultural landscapes, remains of historical roads, and the landscape of abandoned medieval villages, examining the landscape as a sacred space, etc.) should be to produce a holistic reconstruction of the historical landscape in selected regions.

Eva Chodějovská deals with another era in her study of the landscape of early modern Czechia. In her article, she outlines the most important studies on this topic that have been conducted in Czechia since the nineteenth century. She refers to many books, studies, and Internet resources written from the perspective of different fields of science. The author outlines the available cartographic and iconographic sources and discusses the possibilities for digitalizing them. She then examines how scientific interest in the landscape of the early modern Czech lands developed. The modern study of the early modern landscape grew out of historical regional studies, as cultivated by J. V. Šimák and F. Roubík, as well as out of a movement in art history that focused on the historical composed landscape of the Baroque (Z. Wirth). There are several contemporary approaches to studying the early modern landscape: some research focuses on past natural environments, whereas other studies are based on the methods of history, historical geography, philosophy and cultural studies, historic preservation, the geographic study of landscaping and gardening, and archeology. NGOs, environmental movement groups, and some private foundations also contribute to landscape research by collecting

data about the landscape changes, and by editing publications.

Markéta Šantrůčková's study “The Principles and Development of Landscape Parks in the Czech Republic and Their Study from the Perspective of Historical Geography” focuses on landscape parks, which are studied using approaches that combine methods used in different fields of the natural and social sciences, including dendrology, garden architecture, economics, environmental and art history, biology, etc. The author focuses on the principles of park design and the creation and the appearance-defining design elements of parks; she characterizes the main landscape park styles from the time when landscape parks were first developed on the British Isles in the eighteenth century to their expansion to continental Europe, and examines their reception in France (through the writings of Rousseau) and in Germany (through the writings of Kant and Hirschfeld). Early landscape parks primarily reflect three esthetic categories - beauty, the sublime, and the picturesque. Thanks to the close relationship between landscape park design and painting, gardens and landscapes were perceived as picturesque. Parks were considered to be comprehensive works of art, influenced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by both Classicism and Romanticism. Landscape parks worked with space, matter, and time and were understood to represent idealized landscapes that were artificially created through a complex process. Landscape parks were popular in Europe throughout the entire nineteenth century. The author also discusses current functions and use of these parks. Here, historical methods, such as studying and interpreting written sources, are used in combination with geographical methods, such as using a GIS to analyze maps, conduct field research, surveying, etc.

In the article “The Tale of the Landscape in the Czech Lands in the 19th Century” the author, Aleš Vyskočil deals with the transformation of the traditional landscape into an industrial and urban landscape in the nineteenth

century. The author examines important political, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual changes occurring in society at that time. The landscape also underwent similar dynamic changes then. People were the main factor in this process, as they began to intensively transform the relatively stable cultural landscape that had existed up until that point by changing the landscape and settlement structure and land use patterns. All of these processes and changes increased in intensity in the second half of the so-called long nineteenth century, when the natural environment was permanently altered. The Industrial Revolution, essentially the product of a complex process of innovations, which culminated in Czechia in the 1870s–1880s fundamentally affected the geographical organization of society. Thus, industrialization and the steam engine disconnected production from the natural allocation of material and energy resources; this affected the entire landscape, not just areas around factories. Industrialization also caused urbanization, depopulation of the countryside, burgeoning suburbanization, restructuring of the entire settlement network as there were massive changes in migration patterns, and the development of transportation with the railroad at the forefront. These changes were present in the landscape long into the twentieth century, and many of them can still be observed today.

In “Urban Landscape in the Period of Industrialization” Jiří Kupka deals with the same period and thus similar processes. His study focuses on the transformation of the urban landscape of Prague as a result of industrialization. The author examines the natural attributes of the urban landscape, primarily its relatively stable topography and hydrology as well as its vegetation. Vegetation underwent a massive change in the period studied; these changes are linked to the creation of urban green spaces at that time. The body of the article focuses on the concept of the public urban park and the awakening of interest in urban landscapes and urban green spaces in general. The author views these developments as reac-

tions to rapid industrialization, the worsening environment, and the physiocratic thought of the Enlightenment from the late eighteenth century. The article maps the development of urban green spaces, the first public parks and the spaces on which they were created, and an increasing interest in the landscape surrounding the city on the part of Prague’s residents. The green city concept developed at the end of the nineteenth century as an alternative form of urban life in a healthy environment.

Whereas the nineteenth century saw the development of the landscape and the growing role of people in its transformation, the twentieth century was dominated by landscape degradation and changes in the people’s access to the landscape. This was particularly the case in the second half of the twentieth century in many peripheral areas in Czechia affected by the post-war transfer of the Czech German population and by large-scale landscape devastation brought about by mining in some mountain border regions by inadequate re-settlement and by the existence of the Iron Curtain. Zdeněk Kučera and Silvie Kučerová deal with this phenomenon in their article “Historical Geography of Persistence, Destruction and Creation: the Case of Rural Landscape Transformations in Czechia’s Re-settled Borderland”. In the article they discuss the transformation of the rural Czech borderland in the second half of the twentieth century. They define the borderland as areas with a German-speaking majority according to the census of 1930; those were the same areas affected by the transfer of those German speakers after 1945. They characterize fundamental changes in the landscape resulting from the transfer, and then focus on specific changes in the model area of the Žlutice micro-region in the Karlovy Vary Region/province. Just like other landscapes, borderland landscapes reflect past events and eras and are therefore palimpsests -- the products of multi-historic heritage. Landscape changes there were the result of both specific processes occurring in borderland areas, as well as the

result of general processes occurring throughout all of Czechia. The transfer of the Germans disrupted continuity in landscape cultivation and interpretation. Remote areas with less favorable conditions for agriculture were only partially resettled and many settlements disappeared all together. Some areas directly adjacent to the state border were closed to the public. The population transfer also resulted in cultural changes; settlers adapted the landscape to meet their needs, while the local landscape and environment affected their cultural behaviors and patterns. The year 1989 was a turning point, as local communities began to foster interest in transforming their regions. The goal is not to return the landscape to its original state, but to create relationships with the landscape based on historical and inter-generational continuity. The landscape of the borderland has changed in inalterable ways, yet it remains a lived-in landscape (although by fewer people), and thus it is a fluctuating landscape. Natural conditions, economic factors, and the inherent modes of agriculture in mountainous and sub-mountainous areas significantly limit agricultural production. Here agriculture is primarily extensive in nature and pastures dominate, including forestry; in these areas the portion of arable land has declined greatly, while the portion of permanent grasslands and forest has risen. This is an environmentally positive trend. It is interesting to note that similar changes have taken place in the landscape border regions with Slovakia where no Germans lived before.

In the last article "Historical-Geographical Aspects of Duality in Europe" the author, Aleš Nováček presents his original method for studying the transformations of spatial differentiation in greater detail than the transformation of the duality of the European continent from antiquity to today. It is based on the hypothesis that Europe has been historically and permanently "divided" into two parts. In the second half of the twentieth century the duality of Europe consisted of the democratic and capitalist West and the totalitarian and

Communist East. This view did not change after 1989; its roots can be traced back into history as well. This duality can be observed in many phenomena, and thus four historical-geographical aspects are distinguished: cultural, economic, political, and ethnic ones. The author uses specific indicators to study these aspects. Changes in their significance over time are presented in a complex table. Aleš Nováček concludes by briefly describing how the duality of Europe has formed since around 500 BC to the present. He distinguishes between two main types of duality: 1) primary duality, which describes the relationship between two distinct and relatively equal European regions, each with their own core; 2) secondary duality, which describes an unequal relationship between the two regions, where one is more developed and dominant and has its own core, while the other is dependent and less developed and lacks its own core. In the conclusion, he also divides the development of European duality into two different phases -- the first phase took place from the first to eighth centuries CE; he then divides the second phase into five sub-phases up until 1989.

In the conclusion of this issue of HG, reports are given on two important publications that Czech historical geographers have greatly contributed to over the past ten years. The first work reported on is the *Landscape Atlas of the Czech Republic*; Ivan Bičík, Pavel Chromý, and Vít Jančák were each responsible for chapters in this atlas. It came out in 2009 and was the result of the work of almost 300 experts from tens of institutions from all over Czechia. Tatiana Hrnčiarová was the editor-in-chief. The eight chapters of the atlas include historical maps and current maps depicting the transformation of the landscape and its current state. The third chapter is dedicated to the historical landscape; readers can learn about how the territory of the modern Czech state was formed and settled, how its settlement and transportation networks developed, how Czechia or Czechoslovakia state borders and the arrangement of administrative units

were changed, how employment evolved, etc. Land use changes in Czechia are described in great detail from the nineteenth century to the present.

Eva Semotanová writes about the publication of the *Historical Town Atlas of the Czech Republic*, one of the results of a European historical atlas project. By 2011 twenty-three volumes of this atlas had been published mapping the development of towns in Czechia starting from the old maps and finishing with current regional planning maps. Three volumes are

dedicated to Prague neighborhoods - Libeň, Vinohrady, and Smíchov.

Volume 38, Issue 1 of *Historická geografie*, the first English-language issue in 24 years, gives an overview of historical geography in Czechia at the start of the third millennium and informs the reader of its history, indicating the possible future research in the field. ■

Tomáš Burda
Faculty of Science
Charles University in Prague

Acknowledgements: This article was written as part of the Historical Geography Research Centre project supported by a grant of the Czech Republic Science Foundation (P410/12/G113).