

English edition

Historical Geography Research Centre



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Historical Geography Research Centre



Excellence grant project of the Czech Science Foundation
Project ID: P410/12/G113

Project holder: The Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Project leader: Prof. Eva Semotanová

Project co-holder: Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague

Project co-researcher: Assoc. Prof. Pavel Chromý

Web: <http://www.historickageografie.cz/>

The Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences (hereinafter IH CAS) is a component of the network of domestic and foreign scientific, research and higher education institutions. Basic research is done in the field of Czech, Czechoslovak and general history. It is a world-leading research workplace, which systematically deals with the past of the Czech/Czechoslovak state in the full extent of its historical existence. Many outstanding specialists in the field are concentrated at its offices in Prague, Brno and České Budějovice. Professional reflection on the past and the role of the historical sciences in preserving the national memory and forming the national identity and culture in the broadest, multicultural sense forms an indispensable part of a civilized society. It contributes to the development of their positive value norms and through analytical and critical discourses provides the professional and wider publics with the necessary feedback. The IH CAS possesses a specialized library containing 250,000 volumes and publishes research outcomes in its own publishing house “Institute of History”.

The IH CAS has been involved in historical geography since 1953. In 1953, a Historical Geography Section headed by František Roubík was established under the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (hereinafter CSAS) and in 1954, this section became a Department of Historical Geography within the Institute of History CSAS. The *Atlas of Czechoslovak History* was processed in this workplace in the first half of the 1960s and published in 1965. A completely newly conceived counterpart to this work, the *Academic Atlas of the Czech History*, has been recently published in the Academia Publishing House (2014). The Committee for Historical Geography was established in 1967 and since 2005 historical geography conferences have been held under its sponsorship. The journal *Historická geografie / Historical Geography*, the pilot periodical of the discipline, was first published in 1968. The more than fifty-yearlong tradition of historical geography research is now continued by a work team consisting of Eva Semotanová, Eva Chodějovská, Robert Šimůnek, Aleš Vyskočil and Josef Žemlička.



The output of the project P410/12/G113, ‘Historical Geography Research Centre’ supported by the Czech Science Foundation (GA CR)

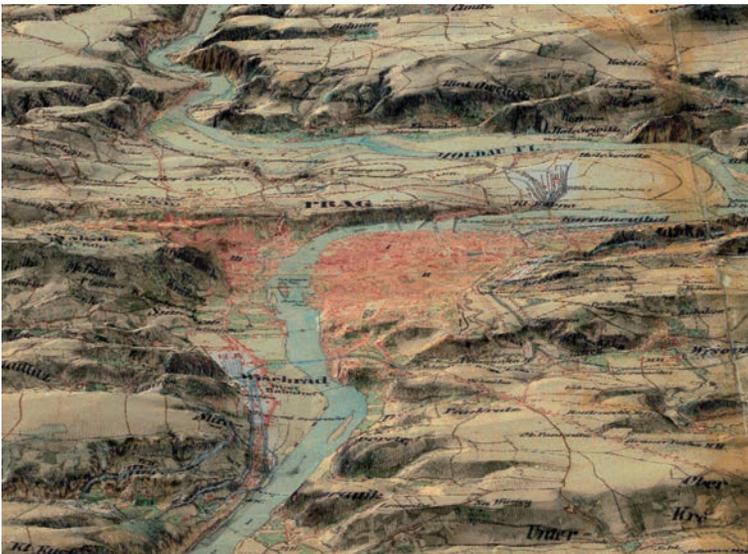
Cover image:

The Říp hill shrouded by myths is one of nation-building symbols of Czechia (photo Pavel Vychodil)

What is historical geography?

- a discipline on the intersection of natural, social, and technical sciences, and humanities, primarily connecting historiography and geography with two main functions: historical geography as an independent transdisciplinary branch of study and historical geography as an applied discipline;
- a discipline examining the “lost time” and “lost space” focusing on interaction of society and space (landscape) in the course of centuries. It studies problems associated with transformations of relationships between society and nature (people and their “lived space”) in various historical periods and on different geographical scales;
- a discipline contributing through reconstruction, analysis, interpretation and explanation of changes in time and space to the understanding of phenomena, processes, causes, mechanisms, impacts and the importance of transformations of historical (urban, rural) landscapes, regions and borders as well as natural and cultural heritage. In general, it deals with the importance of places for the development of geographical organization of society and territorial communities;
- a discipline giving answers to questions regarding recent social, economic, political, cultural and environmental problems as well as their roots in the past;
- a discipline applying modern technologies in the study and utilization of various written and iconographic sources from a variety of archives, map collections, public and private libraries as well as artefacts in cultural landscape (reconstruction maps in GIS, cartographic data visualization, 3D modelling, etc.);
- a discipline with a tradition lasting for over a century and with significant potential for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary cooperation in international scientific space.

3D model of Prague based on The Second Military Survey, 1873
(Eva Semotanová & Kateřina Křováčková)



The truth about the interdisciplinarity

Contemporary historical geography is a dynamic discipline that reflects developments in the social, natural and technical sciences. It is inspired by them and looks for new topics and possibilities for taking them up and analysing them. Historical geography is theoretically and practically linked to many other disciplines (e.g. archaeology, art history, urbanism, architectural history, historic preservation, landscape ecology, cartography and geoinformatics, environmental history and sociology, climatology, botany, paedology, etc.). The mutual relation between historiography and geography, as well as the position of historical geography in the system of sciences, has long been part of traditional discussions among historical geographers, historians and geographers.

Do historians need geography? Yes, historical development takes place in a geographical environment. Knowledge about the spatial organization of this environment is critical and the utilization of geographical knowledge in historical research is common. The course of history is linked to the course of landscape development, particularly settlements, communications and borders, as well as the development of the natural sphere. Human activities in the political, economic and cultural spheres are connected to the landscape. Natural catastrophes can play an important role in the course of the history of society. Space, and/or the landscape is *Theatrum mundi* – it is the stage upon which temporal events and processes take place, upon which actors do not enter and leave. Within historiography understanding the landscape contributes to revealing many processes and connections in the development of history. Historical geography and the use of historical (reconstruction) maps as methods and means of scientific research and instruments for working with scientific findings allow historians to understand past landscapes.

Do geographers need history? Yes, knowledge about the development of the geographical environment is necessary to understand its current state and for predicting and planning the future. Without history the processes and mechanisms which contribute to change cannot be understood. It cannot be simply differentiated if these are general processes (industrialization, urbanization, suburbanization, or concentration and deconcentration, diffusion, etc.) or specific processes (e.g. the transfer of Czech Germans after World War II, the insufficient settlements of the borderlands, the implementation of the “Iron Curtain”, etc.). Understanding the role of actors/subjects in socio-spatial changes is also indispensable.

Emergence and development of the Czech historical geography

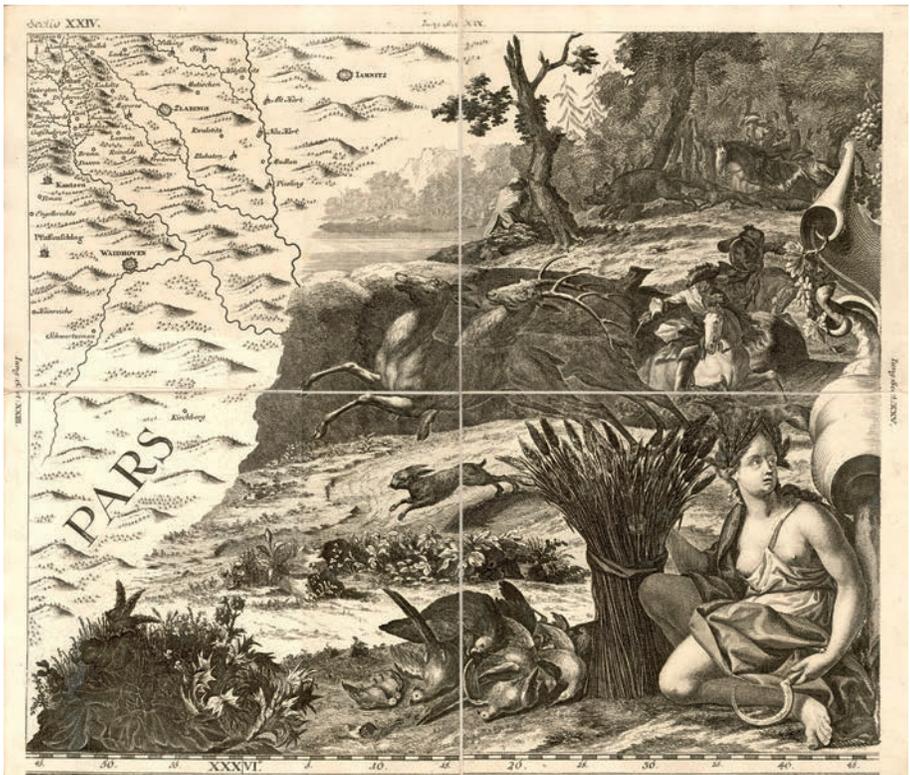
The traditions of historical geography in Czechia reach back to the second half of the 19th century, when historians and geographers started to realize the reciprocity and indivisibility of the observed environment (the landscape) and historical development. Historiography and geography gradually grew closer and topographic, regional studies and historical cartographical works, connected with names such as František Palacký, August Sedláček and Václav Vladivoj Tomek, were created. These and other top scholars enriched historiography and

geography with new approaches based on using topographic and cartographic sources and cartographic methods. However, the establishment of historical geography as a field did not happen until after the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Till the mid-20th century historical geography developed under the scholarly auspices of top scholarly figures in the field such as Josef Vítězslav Šimák, Bohuslav Horák, Ladislav Hosák and František Roubík. Historical geography was mainly oriented on regional history, the history of geography, historical topography and topographical names. From the point of view of theory and methodology this period of Czech historical geography can be considered to be “traditional”, even though it was not connected to “traditional” British historical geography, which was established by Henry Clifford Darby in the 1930s.

Starting in the second half of the 20th century cartographic methods and cartographic and material sources were used more frequently in Czech historical geography. Theoretical works focused on establishing a definition of the field and its position in the system of sciences, both as an independent discipline, and as a part of the geographical sciences or as an auxiliary science of history. Cooperation with

Hunting allegory in Baroque landscape depicted on Müller's map of Bohemia, 1720

(archive of The Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences)



medieval archaeology and historical demography was developed, especially for the study of historical geographical connections of the history of settlement. Compared to developments in British historical geography, this period of Czech historical geography can be defined 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 historical geographical character and their creators never advocated historical geography.

In the late 1980s ecological themes first appeared in Czech historical geography as a result of the ecologization of society in reaction to the worsening state of the environment. The development of the field occurred mainly within historiography, and less within geography, from which historical geography took several procedures as well as knowledge about contemporary ecology. Whereas at this time British historical geography research was labelled “post-modern” as it studied man as the agent of geographic change, and in the USA environmental history had been developing since the 1970s, until the early 1990s Czech historical geography was still thematically and methodologically working within the framework of “traditional” and “modern” historical geography. As a result, Czech historical geography research was to a certain extent lagging behind the international mainstream, which in the last quarter of the 20th century was focused on regional historical geography, cultural historical geography and the environmentalization of the field. However, during the 1990s and the early 21st century, the Czech historical geography successfully balanced the theoretical-methodological delay. The greatest merit is credited to Leoš Jeleček and Eva Semotanová who introduced newly conceived research topics to the Czech historical geography.

Czech historical geographers stood at the birth of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH). They took part in its founding conference in St. Andrews (2001), organized the 2nd international conference of the ESEH in Prague (2003), and regularly take part in other conferences of this organization. They also regularly take part in the conferences of the American Society for Environmental History (ASEH); they stood at the birth of the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations – ICEHO (2009), and take part in the Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape (PECSRL) and congresses of the International Geographical Union (IGU). Czech historical geographers represent significant group within the worldwide community of historical geographers and its meetings International Conference of Historical Geographers (ICHG). They get even greater recognition within the community since the successful Prague conference in 2012.

Czech historical geographers also take part in the European project of publishing historical atlases of towns with an expressive interdisciplinary character, supported by Commission internationale pour l'histoire des villes. A *Historical Town's Atlas of the Czech Republic* is a valuable contribution to the comparative study of urban areas on the international scale. It allows comparisons of the developmental trends of urban settlements within Central, Western and Eastern Europe. In addition, the Atlas is a remarkable publication achievement since a great number of old maps and plans that this volume contains had not been published

before. The *Historical Town's Atlas of the Czech Republic* fills up one of the “blank spots” in the Czech historiography and, at the same time, contributes to respectable presentation of our urban communities.

Contemporary historical geography is an independent transdisciplinary science. It combines the concepts of space and time with the natural and social sciences. It studies the state, development and transformation of the geographical environment in the past, the causes of those transformations, their results and any regularity therein. Through the utilization of more traditional approaches as well as modern technologies (e.g. 3D modelling, GIS), it attempts to understand and explain the historical roots of current conditions and the character of the geographical environment on various levels and to understand the development of the system of mutual relations between people and the landscape they live in.

Streams of Czech historical geographical research

Historical geography research in Czechia focuses on theoretical and methodological problems of the current historical geography in an international context. 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 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.

Regarding historiography, it should be mentioned 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 the transformations of 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* (since 1995), *LUCC Atlases* (since 2001); *Landscape Atlas of the Czech Republic* (2009), *Academic Atlas of the Czech History* (2014).

Codifying, structural and evolutionary assessment of landscape changes is particularly important for geographic research. Thus research in the Czech historical geography over the past two decades necessarily had geographical touch. Regarding codification, it particularly involves research into internal differentiation



Landscape memory. ↑The blooming fruit trees in České středohoří represent the reminiscence of the old fruit growing tradition in Litoměřice region. Nowadays, many orchards are abandoned and the region is more known as industrial (photo Zdeněk Kučera) ↓ The cross is built from old tombstones in Nahořečice, Karlovy Vary region. It remembers the “forgotten” inhabitants of the area (photo Zdeněk Kučera)



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 Czechia (i.e. dominantly positivistic evaluation of a quantitative character). Only then, the outcomes of quantitative analyses were verified by “probing” into case study areas on the level of micro regions or individual cadastres in various types of landscape). The broadly conceived research into land use and land cover changes 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). Along with the research into the landscape transformations, historical geographers concentrate on the investigation of landscape heritage and memory in relational to regional development as well as cultural transformations, processes forming places, regions and territorial identities, relict (historical geographical) boundaries as well as specific environments (e.g. military landscapes).

Based on evaluation of thematic focus and outputs of historical geographical research in Czechia, three dominating (in principle complementary) theoretical-methodological concepts of historical geography can be delimited within the current Czech historical geography. The first concept represents a traditional, mainly ideographically 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 represents nomothetical approaches based on quantitative analyses of socio-spatial changes (e.g. research on land use and land cover changes, social metabolism). This concept 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 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. The last of the mentioned directions has a significant neo-idiographic accent (it allows configuration of specific topics that characterize territorial differentiation of a certain spatial unit and affects its development, while the specific configuration of topics is only partially unique; interpretation of the topics is organized in a nomothetic methods).



Comparative photography of the Slapy river dam. ↑ The area of Ždán at the Vltava river and Sladařský creek confluence right after the filling of Slapy river dam in the late 1950s (archive of Vojtěch Pavelčík)
↓ The same place in 2013, the example of afforestation and touristification of the landscape

(photo Dana Fialová)



Research team

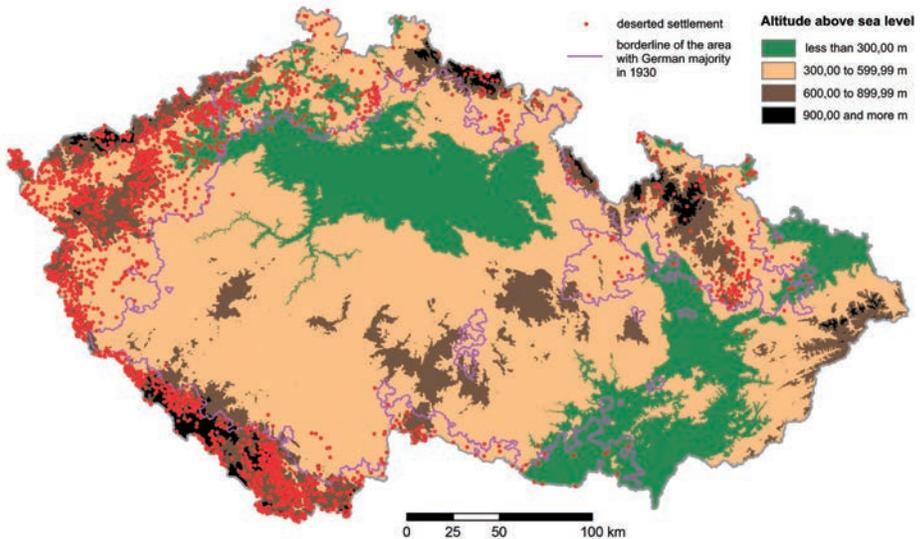
Prof. Eva Semotanová deals with historical geography, historical landscape, historical cartography and the history of cartography. She applies a number of interdisciplinary methods, promotes the use of reconstruction maps and atlas cartography in historical work. The main thematic circles of her research include the urbanized landscape and its development; in the study of urbanization processes, she focuses *inter alia* on the development of the Prague agglomeration from the end of the 18th century with an emphasis on the turn of the 20th century. In connection with the given problem, she also resolves the questions of the transformations of industrial landscapes as cultural heritage. The centre of the attention of E. Semotanová also includes historical regions, particularly Kłodzko (part of the Euroregion Glacensis), its map depictions and landscape changes in the 18th century (the Czech Baroque landscape in Central European space). Her work has been acknowledged with many awards including Magnesia Litera 2015. <http://www.hiu.cas.cz/en/people/members/semotanova-eva.ep/>

Assoc. Prof. Pavel Chromý focuses on issues of historical, cultural and regional geography, and environmental history in his research. He studies the processes of formation of regions and territorial identities, particularly in relation to the development of specific areas (e.g. borderland, peripheral, rural and cultural areas) and landscape transformations during the 19th and 20th centuries. Significant part of his professional interest is thus formed by the discussion of the significance of relict borders, symbolism of places and regions, landscape memory, natural and cultural heritage, and by its relations to regional development. He is a regional representative of Czechia and Slovakia within the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) and serves as the chair of Section for Historical Geography and Environmental History of the Czech Geographical Society. He is a member of the editorial boards of several international journals including the *Journal of Historical Geography*. He acted as a chair of the Local Organizing Committee of the 15th International Conference of Historical Geographers (ICHG) 2012 and he was a member of the International Scientific Committee of the 16th ICHG in London 2015. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pavel_Chromy

Team members: Assoc. Prof. Ivan Bičík; Dr Tomáš Burda; Dr Dana Fialová; Dr Petra Grešlová; Dr David Hána; Dr Martin Hanus; Dr Tomáš Havlíček; Dr Eva Chodějovská; Dr Vít Jančák; Assoc. Prof. Leoš Jeleček; Dr Magdalena Kašková; Dr Kamila Klingorová; Dr Zdeněk Kučera; Dr Silvie R. Kučerová; Dr Lucie Kupková; Assoc. Prof. Miroslav Maraďa; Dr Michal Semian; Dr Robert Šimůnek; Dr Miroslav Šifta; Dr Přemysl Štych; Dr Aleš Vyskočil; Prof. Josef Žemlička

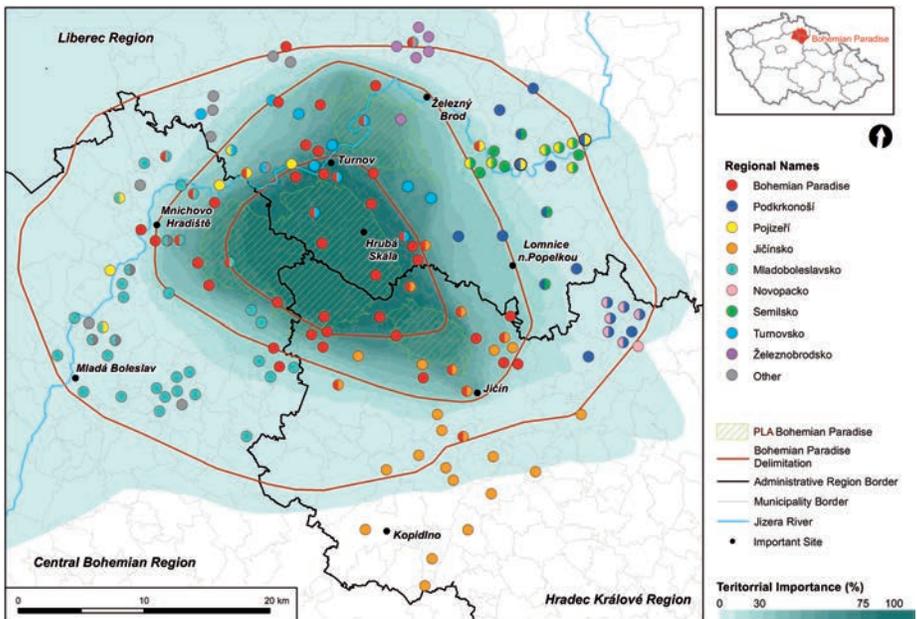
HGRC Contributions, Education, Achievements

The research centre focuses primarily on the following research topics: (i) The development of settlement systems and socio-geographical regions and towns – changes in the significance of centres, changes in functions of centres in the socio-geographical regional system, changes in the internal structure of settlements,



↑ Deserted settlements in the borderland of Czechia that has been abandoned since 1945 (Zdeněk Kučera)

↓ Delimitation of the Bohemian Paradise (Český ráj) region according to inhabitants' sense of belonging and their cognitive maps. The map shows the common recognition of vernacular region and its fuzzy border delimited across the administrative boundaries (Michal Semán)



territorial and architectural development of towns – the interpretation of changes in wider socio-spatial and historical geographical terms (emphasis is placed on centres, which have lost their leading function and position in the regional system). (ii) The development and changes in various landscape types – the perception and interpretation of changes, the evaluation of meanings, the symbolic values of landscape and landscape elements (the role of the landscape in the process of creation/formation of territorial and social communities). The comparative analyses of landscape transformation in industrial centres and their hinterlands as a result of modernization processes in the 18th and 19th centuries are anticipated. Small and larger regions within the Czechia are the subject of research, as they represent a typological base for the modelling of the forms and intensity of transformation of the geographical environment on the background of the development of (proto)industrial society. Social-demographic and historical geographical analyses of specific regions are conducted, based on a combination of procedures, approaches and sources with which historiography, geography and cartography work. (iii) The research of heritage (cultural and natural) – the identification and protection of heritage in the context of landscape transformation and the development of societal thought – an analysis of the inter-generational differences in the historical consciousness of the population (the perception of heritage), the role of education in the process of the formation, reproduction and transformation of heritage.

Historical geographical study of Middle Ages is very demanding due to a very small number of available historical sources. Therefore, it has to be conducted in cooperation with archaeology. Among the themes discussed by the researchers in HGRC should be mentioned issues of typology and interpretation of historical sources (especially in connection to the symbolism of landscape), and the study of the colonization process in Czechia in relation to transformations in landscape and settlement structure (e.g. establishment of towns, villages, monasteries and castles, deforestation and development of agriculture). Large attention is also paid to early modern landscapes of the 18th century and to their transformations caused by urbanization and industrialization in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. Historical geographical study of developments during the 19th and 20th centuries is being conducted in several directions. The first group is represented by the studies of long term land-use changes that occurred since the half of the 19th century (Database LUCS Czechia 1845–2010), which is based primarily on the utilization of statistical sources and comparative map sources (e.g. cadastral mapping). It strives to interpret land-use transformations in the light of major natural and societal driving forces and interpret these in the context of development of societal metabolism. The second group is represented by diverse studies of specific landscape, societal and cultural transformations that occurred, especially in the borderland of Czechia, during the second half of the 20th century. The consequences of the transfer of the Czech Germans, meanings of the Iron Curtain, settlement desertion, relict borders, transformation of the religious landscape, and development of peripheries are considered primarily. Along with more traditional sources of historical geographical research also modern technologies such as GIS and approaches of field and qualitative research (such as oral history) are being utilized in this



↑ Traditional Historical Geographical Conference brings the full house of historical geography friends to Albertov annually (photo Dana Fialová)

↓ Students learn to work with historical geographical sources during the field trip in Czech-Austrian borderland (photo Pavel Chomý)



research. The third group is represented by applied historical geography, especially in relation to interpretation, protection and management of natural, cultural and landscape heritage, management of tourism and recreation, regional development and marketing, place branding.

In the field of education, a new course entitled “Historical Geography and Cartography” has been included in the study plan of the master’s program in geography. This course is taught by HGRC team members. Work on accrediting a master’s program in historical geography and environmental history at the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague has begun. Most of the courses in this program will be taught by HGRC team members. The HGRC has further facilitated the increasing quality of research in doctoral programs at the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague; Ph.D. and undergraduate students have taken part in project work. To support talented Ph.D. students, the HGRC also subsidizes selected Ph.D. students in the STARS international program. One habilitation (Pavel Chromý) and four doctoral theses have been prepared and defended with the support of HGRC (Tomáš Burda, Eva Chodějovská, Martina Hupková, Michal Semian) so far. The members of HGRC also conduct regular discussions on visual historical geographical sources and a study of historical communications at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague.

Conference organization

Since 2005, **Annual Historical Geographical Conferences** have been held at the Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science. Since 2012, they have been organized under the auspices of the Historical Geography Research Centre. These conferences, annually focused on a specific topic (e.g. regions as places in space and time, urban and industrial landscape, dreamed-of landscape projects), regularly attract large and diverse audience from all over Czechia and Slovakia. In 2016, the HGRC activities and achievements were presented at the already twelfth conference entitled “Changing historical geography: Research and education”.

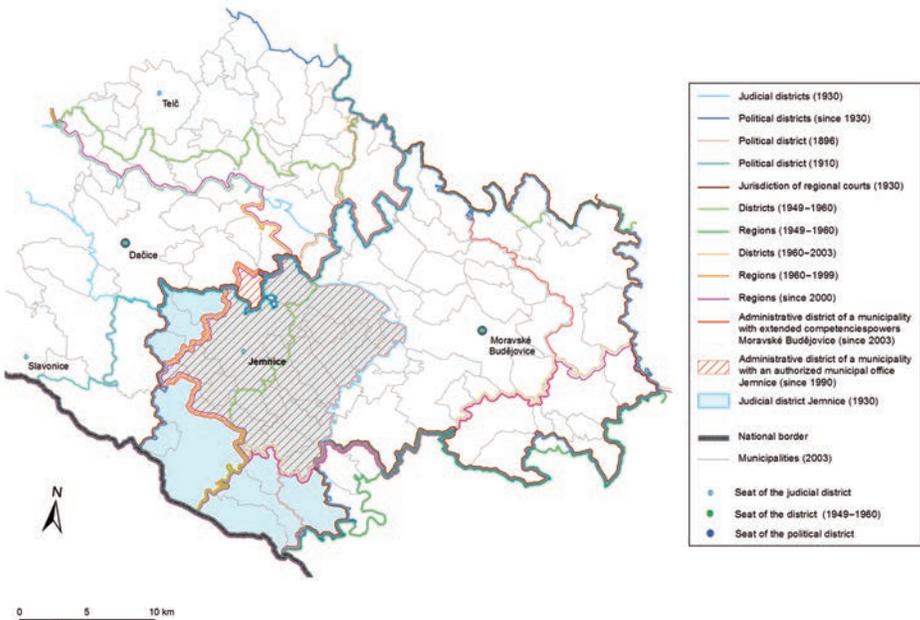
The **15th International Conference of Historical Geographers** was part of the conference series which is being held regularly every three years in different parts of the world since 1975. The international conference in Prague, August 2012, was organized by a committee consisting mainly of members of the HGRC team. The conference contributed greatly to the promotion of Czech historical geography in the international arena, as more than 300 experts from more than 40 countries attended and presented papers focused on various topics within historical geography. Prague was the first post-socialist city to host the ICHG conference. The Local Organizing Committee was in a very difficult position having to impress the world audience. Nevertheless, the rich academic as well as social programme including many one-day field trips and three-day post conference field trip to Southern Bohemia succeeded to do so and many scholars remember the time spent in Prague with joy.

In 2014, HGRC contributed to the organization of an **ESEH workshop** entitled “Why is There So Little Green in Czech and Slovak History? A Workshop on the

Horizons of Multi- and Interdisciplinary Cooperation in Environmental History” that was organized by the Department of Environmental Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, in cooperation with ESEH, the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, and the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, LMU Munich. The aim of the workshop was to examine the possibilities of expanding environmental history research in Czechia and Slovakia. In 2016, HGRC participated in the organization of the **ESEH PhD Summer School** in Environmental History “The Undesirable: How Parasites, Diseases, and Pests Shape Our Environments”.

In late summer 2016, HGRC organized **Central European Conference of Historical Geographers** in Prague in order to bring historical geographers and scholars from related disciplines together to discuss the latest development and research in the field of historical geography with the particular focus on the Central European space. HGRC thus, in the meantime before the next International Conference of Historical Geographers taking place in Warsaw 2018, offered a great opportunity to discuss recent developments within historical geography, including topics such as transdisciplinarity of historical geography, landscape transformations, natural risks and hazards, political geography of Central Europe, polarization of space, regional identity formation, place identity in geographical names, heritage, memory and tourism.

Reconstruction of the administrative border change in Jemnice region. Historical GIS of borders is useful tool in the research of problem peripheral areas (Tomáš Burda)



Journals

The journal *Historická geografie [Historical Geography]* presents historical geography as a field with a broad spectrum of themes, methods and sources. It follows the new ideas and perspectives of historical geographical research and the ongoing projects of historical geography. It has been issued since 1968. The conception of historical geographical research and the contents of the journal have been changing as modern sciences and its methods have changed. Despite that, the journal remains faithful to several main problem areas: historical geography of residences and the population, economic historical geography, the territorial development of the Czech Lands, physical geographical historical geography, history of cartography, historical cartography, the historical geography of culture and most recently environmental history.

Open access journal *Klaudyan* (<http://www.klaudyan.cz>) is a transdisciplinary multilingual journal issued with the support of HGRC and Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague and the publication is provided by the Section for Historical Geography and Environmental History of the Czech Geographical Society. It publishes articles on all aspects of historical geography, environmental history and cognate fields (e.g. landscape ecology, eco-politics, history of sciences and environmentalism in particular), book reviews and annotations, reports from conferences and other scholar community events etc., and also encourages a lively discussion of methodological and conceptual issues. The name is dedicated to a renowned Czech physician, who lived in the city of Mladá Boleslav and was an author of the first known map of the Kingdom of Bohemia printed in 1518.

Future prospects of HGRC

It is evident that at least three theoretical-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 areas and regions). 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-geographical regions and towns (changes of the centres’ significance, changes of the centres’ functions within the socio-geographical regional system, changes of the internal structures of settlements, territorial and

architectonic development of towns), interpretation of changes in broad socio-spatial and historical 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. Sociodemographic and historical 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 formation, reproduction and conversion of the heritage will be another topic. Activities of historical geographers will focus on areas of university 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: *“Na zemi bude pusto a smutno, řešetem hvězd do nebe spadne skřivan a jeho zpěv zůstane nedozpíván, kouř hvězdy začloní 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.”].

The Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague (hereinafter DSGRD) has been deeply involved in historical geography since 1980s. Core of the team of historical geographers has formed around its leader Leoš Jeleček who participated in research focused on investigation of long-term land use changes led by Ivan Bičík. Interpretation and explanation of social driving forces within landscape transformations (in Czechia and in various types of landscape) facilitated a subsequent intensification of international collaboration of the team members, especially within the IGU and further contributed to the development of environmental historical approaches (especially in relation to the studies of agriculture and social metabolism; cooperation within ESEH and ICEHO). Over the past ten years, historical geographical approaches at the department established within The Research Centre for Cultural and Historical Geography (KUHIG), with Leoš Jeleček, Pavel Chromý and Zdeněk Kučera as leading personalities. The Centre particularly specializes in research on issues of identity, heritage and religion (Tomáš Havlíček) and their overlapping with regional geography (especially of borderlands and peripheries; Vít Jančák), research on landscape and settlement transformations, regional development and institutionalization of regions (Michal Semian), regional branding (Magdalena Kašková), geography of tourism (Dana Fialová), geographical education, and historical GIS (Přemysl Štych). The team's findings are particularly applicable to the protection of cultural and natural heritage and regional development as well as within other fields of applied historical geography. The Centre publishes open access internet journal *Klaudyán*.

Organizing individual lectures and seminars within pre graduate and post-graduate education at the Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science (Leoš Jeleček, Pavel Chromý, Zdeněk Kučera) and the Faculty of Arts (Eva Semotanová) was also significant for the development of Czech historical geography (and environmental history) in the 1990s. More than ten doctoral dissertations with a historical geography character have been defended at DSGRD over the past ten years (tutors: Ivan Bičík, Pavel Chromý, and Leoš Jeleček).

Trends in recent research are marked by interdisciplinarity and growing cooperation between humanities, social and natural sciences. The **Historical Geography Research Centre**, founded in 2012, represents these trends. It strives to further deepen cooperation in the field of historical geography between different institutions and disciplines in relation to basic and applied research as well as to education. In particular, it establishes a joint institutional platform for historical geography research and education and it brings together team members from the Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences and the Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Science.

Within the research, emphasis is placed on:

1. discussion of theoretical methodological issues of historical geography and environmental history;
2. evaluation of the process of spatial polarization (rural, peripheral areas); border changes and problems of development of borderland (abandoned, recolonized areas);
3. study of urbanization processes and reconstruction of historical towns development and morphology;
4. interpretation of landscape and its functions; explanation of landscape transformation and its impetuses (historical land use and cover changes, social metabolism);
5. study of formation and reproduction processes of regions, territorial identities, and heritage; their role in territorial development, regional and tourism management.

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